

**Bracken Knoll
No. 17 Courtenay Avenue
London
N6 4LP**

HERITAGE STATEMENT

To accompany a submission for Planning Permission



October 2023 (c)

Prepared by:



Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture. Ltd.
62 British Grove, Chiswick, London W4 2NL
T: 020 8748 5501 F: 020 8748 4492

Bracken Knoll, Courtenay Avenue, Baseline Heritage Statement

All Rights reserved.

Copyright © Stephen Levrant : Heritage Architecture Ltd.

While Copyright in this volume document report as a whole is vested in Stephen Levrant : Heritage Architecture Ltd., copyright to individual contributions regarding sections of referenced works belongs to their respective authors, and no part may be reproduced, transmitted stored in a retrieval system in any form or by any mean whether electronic, mechanical, via photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the previous consent from Stephen Levrant : Heritage Architecture Ltd.

Document production © Heritage Architecture Ltd 2023.

Issue: August 2023

Heritage Architecture Ltd is Registered in England 3053944 • VAT GB656883581.

Registered office: 5 Technology Park, Colindeep Lane, Colindale, NW9 6BX

Correspondence to be addressed to 62 British Grove, London, W4 2NL or: Suite 1.06 Canada House, Chepstow Street, Manchester M1 5FW

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION.....	4
1.1	Aim of this Report.....	4
1.2	Summary	4
1.3	Authorship.....	5
1.4	Methodology Statement	5
1.4.1	Literature and Documentary Research Review	5
1.4.2	Area Surveying.....	6
1.5	Planning Policy Guidance and Legislation.....	6
2	GENERAL INFORMATION.....	7
2.1	Statutory sites	9
3	CHARACTERISATION APPRAISAL	11
3.1	Introduction.....	11
3.2	The Origins and Development of the Area	12
3.3	Map Progression.....	15
3.4	Townscape Character	22
3.5	The Contribution Made By Open Spaces and Other Natural Elements	30
3.6	Local Details and Materials.....	30
3.7	Negative Factors.....	30
4	DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE.....	32
4.1	Background.....	32
4.2	Bracken Knoll – As existing	40
4.2.1	Front Elevation.....	40
4.2.2	Rear.....	42
4.2.3	South Elevation	43
4.2.4	North Elevation	43
4.2.5	Interior	44
4.2.6	Greenery and Screening	44
5	SIGNIFICANCE APPRAISAL	45
5.1	Introduction.....	45
5.2	Assessment criteria	46
5.3	Bracken Knoll.....	46
5.4	The Highgate Conservation Area – Sub-area 7: Bishops.....	47
5.5	Appraisal of the Contribution of the Subject Site to the Conservation Area	48
5.6	Significance plan analysis – front elevation.....	50
5.7	Summary of Significance	51
6	IMPACT ASSESSMENT & CONCLUSION	52

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim of this Report

This report has been prepared by Heritage Architecture Ltd (HA) on behalf of the applicant to accompany a Planning Application for Ground Floor rear extension, first floor rear extension and new side dormer at Bracken Knoll, No. 17, Courtenay Avenue [subject site] which is located within Sub-area 7 – ‘Bishops’ in the Highgate Conservation Area in the London Borough of Haringey (LB Haringey). Bracken Knoll is neither statutorily listed, nor locally listed; it is not identified as a positive contributor to the conservation area and is not aligned with a key vista¹ as prescribed by the policies of the London Borough of Haringey.

The heritage statement assesses the subject site, giving careful consideration to the conservation area and neighbouring properties and demonstrating that the proposed development has been informed by an understanding of the significance of the Highgate Conservation Area and of sub-area 7 – Bishops, in particular.

The assessment includes:

- Assessment of the site/historic context in compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- Assessment of the significance of the heritage asset/s that might be affected by the proposed works;
- Assessment of the property’s contribution to the conservation area
- An outline assessment of the potential impact of the proposed works upon the significance of the identified heritage assets

This heritage statement is to be read in conjunction with other documents submitted for Planning Permission and relies on the drawings and Design & Access Statement produced by the Designer: Duffy Associates

1.2 Summary

Bracken Knoll is located to the east side of Courtenay Avenue in the Bishops sub-area of the Highgate Conservation Area designated in 1967, and which overlaps both the London Boroughs of Haringey and Camden: Bracken Knoll is situated within the boundaries of Haringey. The subject building, with its main elevation dating to the 1920s and 1990s, is almost certainly a composition via the hand of Christopher Cooper, a draftsman who was responsible for several other houses on the road, and who was employed by brothers Charles Henry Bourne Quennell and Walter Quennell in suburban developments in the Hampstead area, which embraced the principles of historicism, and the astute revival of older styles. The contribution made by Bracken Knoll to the Conservation Area is considered to be **neutral**; and it is neither statutorily designated nor locally listed. Permission to demolish the house with the exception of the principal façade was granted in 2017 as a re-application of a 2013

¹ London Borough of Haringey, *Conservation Area No. 1, Highgate Conservation Area – Character Appraisal*, 2013, p157; Bishops Sub-Area No. 7 Map

consent (London Borough of Haringey Council Planning, HGY/2017/1560 and HGY/2013/2486) – this was never implemented, but alterations carried out in *circa* 1990 (extant; HGY/1990/0636) altered the original design, especially to the garden side of the house, with a sizeable extension.

The significance of the subject site has been assessed as part of this report: Bracken Knoll, is not an accomplished architectural piece, and has been significantly altered twice, prior to 1960; and again in the 1990s; and as a result, it is deemed to have **low artistic** and **architectural** significance. It is also assessed to have **low to medium** archaeological significance and **low** historical significance, as elaborated in section 5 Significance Appraisal. Its Contribution to the conservation area is **neutral**.

Over recent years significant changes have taken place to the character of Courtenay Avenue, with many of the new houses introducing contemporary architectural language and interpretation of the traditional design. The new design seeks to reflect some of the stylistic features seen in new development in the area, but also responds to the historic significance and changes that have taken place. The proposed scheme will retain almost all of the existing house, including bulk and mass, and the main roof ridge height and roof form; and extends modestly further into the garden, with a new façade treatment, in a contemporary manner. This approach found favour with Haringey Council at a pre-application consultation, subject to some further design refinements, which have been incorporated into this final design. The mature landscaping will be retained and nurtured so that the road will retain its verdant character. The proposed scheme provides a modest increase in living space centred on the “Social Kitchen” and living area, with enhanced relationship to the garden landscape. Overall, it will thus preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

1.3 Authorship

This heritage statement has been prepared by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture Ltd, which specialises in the historic cultural environment.

- Stephen Levrant [RIBA, AA Dip, IHBC, Dip Cons (AA), FRSA] – Principal Architect
- Maida Kaiser [Dipl.Ing.Ar, Mr. Arh] – Senior Architectural Conservation Associate
- Lucy Denton [BA (Hons), MA, FRSA FRGS FRHistS] – Architectural Historian

1.4 Methodology Statement

This assessment has been carried out using desk-based data gathering and fieldwork. The methods used in order to undertake the study were the following:

1.4.1 Literature and Documentary Research Review

The documentary research was based upon primary and secondary sources of local history and architecture, including maps, drawings and reports. This report has been developed using online and documentary resources and using previous knowledge and expertise gained from working on similar schemes in the area.

1.4.2 Area Surveying

An area visit was conducted in November 2021.

1.5 Planning Policy Guidance and Legislation

The assessment of the alterations on buildings in a conservation area has been prepared taking into account the information contained in:

- *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, 2019, updated 2021
- *Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)*, 2019
- *London Plan*, 2021
- *Haringey Development Management Policies*, July 2017
- *Haringey Strategic Policies*, 2013 with alterations July 2017
- *Highgate Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan*, 2013
- *Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management*, 2019
- *Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment*, 2015
- *Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets*, 2017
- *Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance*, 2019
- *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*, English Heritage, 2008

2 GENERAL INFORMATION

Bracken Knoll is located to the east side of Courtenay Avenue, a private cul-de-sac of twenty-two 'large, detached mansion houses'² initially developed in the late 1920s on land formerly part of the densely forested mediaeval Bishop's Wood. Courtenay Avenue is arranged approximately on a north to south axis within what is now the Bishop's sub-area of the Highgate Conservation Area, in the London Borough of Haringey. Bracken Knoll, almost certainly one of Christopher Cooper's (*v.i.*) designs, appears to fall into the period of his involvement in developments here which began in *circa* 1927, and which includes other houses such as Sproughton to the north west corner of the road set back in its own gardens. Bracken Knoll was not delineated on the Borough Map of Hornsey of 1925, but its style to the front and material palette of red-brown brick and plain tile covered roof confirm to Cooper's hand – as does the mostly symmetrical principal elevation with first floor windows positioned just under the eaves, although the central bay is predominantly a 1990 amendment by architect Peter O'Donnell, which entailed the removal of a balcony and large window, increased the proportions of replacement fenestration, added a portico. O'Donnell also created a large extension to the rear, creating a symmetrical centrepiece to the garden side, dominating the previously modest domestic scale that Cooper seems to have been particularly keen on achieving.

Evidence relating to the history of the house is very limited, and no primary source references can yet be located; aerial photographs showing the property are only available from the middle of the last century, and which appear to show little alteration to the house since then, until it was reconfigured by *circa* 1960 with an extension to the rear (canted bay, French doors to garden) and then in *circa* 1990 with additions, especially to the east side. Consents to demolish the building behind its principal elevation were granted submitted in 2013 and renewed in 2017 (London Borough of Haringey Council, HGY/2013/2486 and HGY/2017/1560) appear not to have been implemented. Bracken Knoll was one of several developments overseen by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners – and the form of the house by Cooper, albeit a distorted version incorporating 1990 changes, is somewhat disjointed in its modern form with *oeil de boeufs* flanking the main entrance, also emphasised by a portico with Tuscan columns.

² London Borough of Haringey, *Conservation Area No. 1, Highgate Conservation Area – Character Appraisal*, Consultation Draft October 2012, p105



Figure 1: The location of the subject site (approximate boundary outlined in red).

Charles Henry Bourne Quennell, lead architect of the developments in the area for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, is regarded as ‘a little-known figure’³, absurdly so, given his aptitude for producing skilfully designed houses generally in an adroit collective renaissance of historic styles. Christopher Cooper, who also worked for Quennell nearby at Compton Avenue, is almost entirely obscure, and is really only known locally. Very little has been discovered of his career, hampered by his status as a not-formally qualified architect, (he does not appear in the “Who’s Who in Architecture” of relevant years) but is known only as a draftsman who also produced “The Knoll” and “Far End” on Compton Avenue, both of which survive in ‘good condition’⁴. He also contributed several substantial houses in Courtenay Avenue, as well as Denewood Road and elsewhere in the vicinity, dating predominantly to the 1920s. These were a series of “mini-mansions” in a suburban setting, predominantly “riding on the coat tails” of CHB Quennell whose influence is overt. They are all suited to the new suburbia emerging during the inter-war years although Courtenay Avenue, like Denewood Road, ‘has no formal pavements, just verges, which gives it a ‘slightly rural feel’⁵ rather than the more usual suburban appearance.

Courtenay Avenue leads northwards from Hampstead Lane towards Highgate Golf Course, created in 1904 on a portion of land formerly in the possession of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and which was used as part of the mediaeval hunting grounds of the Bishop of London.

³ McKellar, Elizabeth, C.H.B. Quennell (1872-1935): Architecture, History and the Quest for the Modern, in *Architectural History*, Volume 50, 2007, p211

⁴ London Borough of Haringey, *Conservation Area No. 1, Highgate Conservation Area – Character Appraisal*, Consultation Draft October 2012, p104

⁵ London Borough of Haringey, *Conservation Area No. 1, Highgate Conservation Area – Character Appraisal*, 2013, p144

2.1 Statutory sites

The subject site at Bracken Knoll, No. 17 Courtenay Avenue, is located within the boundaries of the Highgate Conservation Area (*see figure 3*), which was designated on 21st December 1967. Initially, the Haringey-designated Highgate Conservation Area comprised the main village of Highgate, Bishopswood area, the Gaskell estate and an area enclosed by Southwood Lane, Jacksons Lane, Archway Road, Muswell Hill Road and Wood Lane as far as Queen's Wood. It was substantially extended on 27th September 1990 to include the upper and lower parts of the Archway Road, as well as the Miltons and Shepherd's Hill sub-areas. In 1994 the Conservation Area was further extended to include properties on Stanhope Road. The Highgate Conservation Area straddles the boundaries of the London Boroughs of Haringey and Camden: the subject site located within the bounds of the London Borough of Haringey.

There are relatively few statutorily designated heritage assets within the vicinity of the subject site; there are also few locally listed buildings close by – and none on Courtenay Avenue. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal of 2013 notes that 'most of the existing buildings contribute to the homogenous character of the sub-area'⁶ and contribute positively to the significance of the Area.

Of the few statutorily designated buildings within the vicinity of Bracken Knoll, the closest is East Weald on The Bishop's Avenue, a Grade II Listed house, and one of the first built as part of these developments pursued by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in around 1910. Built to a collaborative design by Henry Victor Ashley and Francis Winton Newman, East Weald demonstrates the aesthetic difference in standards in these houses – this is one of the best examples of the overall scheme – with its central arched entrance with large oriel window, and decorative tile embellishments and sculptural stone panels. Considered to be one of the 'best houses in The Bishop's Avenue'⁷ built for William Park Lyle as his London residence, not a speculative scheme, but for a specific patron, it also 'embodies the affluent domestic taste of the Edwardian period... designs for the house were shown at the 1910 and 1911 Royal Academy Exhibitions...'⁸ Further to the west is Spaniards Mount, a Grade II Listed 1935 composition by Adrian Gilbert Scott, very much of the period, and 'notable for the way in which the architect has blended historicist detail with a Modernist feeling for mass and form.'⁹

To the south of Courtenay Avenue is the parkland associated with the Kenwood Estate, which is a Registered Grade II* Park and Garden defined by an outer boundary wall running alongside the southern side of Hampstead Lane. Kenwood, originally a house of *circa* 1616 built for King James I's printer, John Bill, passed through several owners in the 18th century, including the Duke of Argyll and Lord Mansfield, who commissioned Robert Adam to make changes to the interiors, although it was sold out of Mansfield ownership in the early 20th century, leased to a series of tenants, and then finally acquired by Lord Iveagh in 1925. He bequeathed the house to the London County Council in 1928 before it was transferred to English Heritage in 1986. The mansion is Grade I Listed, along with the Grade II Listed East Lodge, and

⁶ London Borough of Haringey, *Conservation Area No. 1, Highgate Conservation Area – Character Appraisal*, 2013, p157

⁷ Historic England, List Entry No. 1389513, 20th November 2001

⁸ Historic England, List Entry No. 1389513, 20th November 2001

⁹ Historic England, List Entry No. 1259431, 28th November 1996

the Grade II Listed Park Flats, originally a second stable block to Kenwood built in *circa* 1795, converted to apartments in the 20th century.



Figure 2: Bracken Knoll, identified, within a verdant, suburban landscape, and mostly modern rooflines especially to the west side of Courtenay Avenue

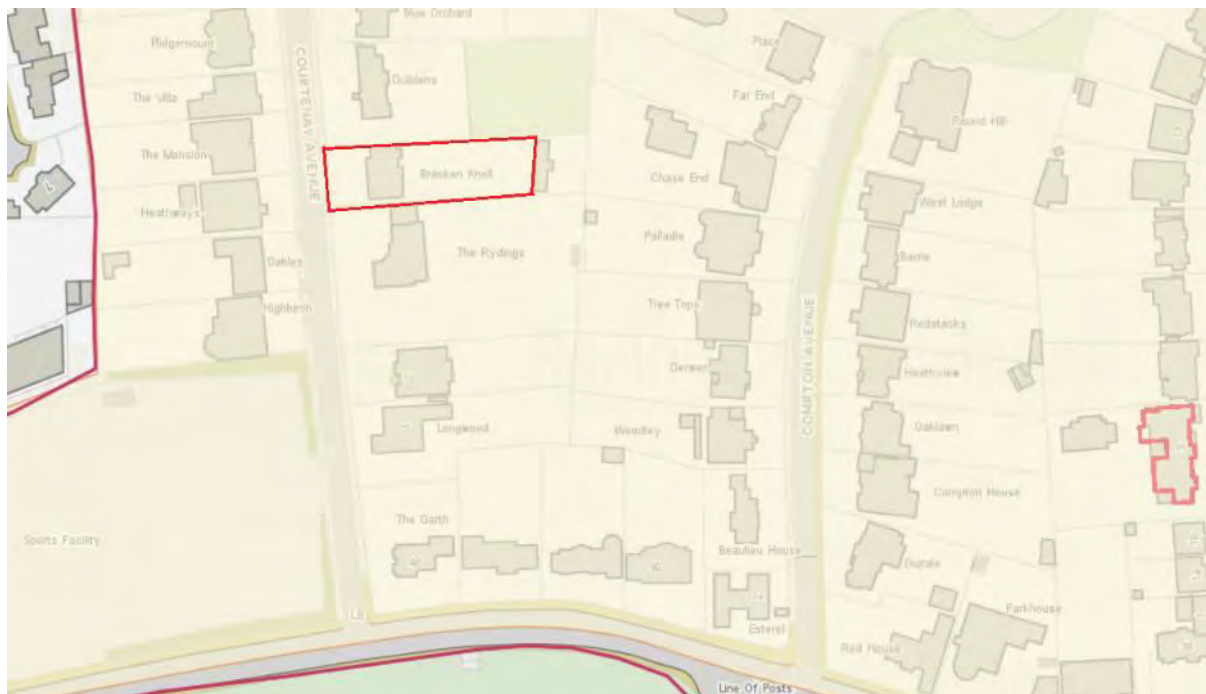


Figure 3: Highgate Conservation Area Map, showing the subject site outlined in red close to the boundary to the west and south; building marked in pink is the Locally Listed Nos. 200-206 Grand Parade, Highgate Haringey Council, December 2021

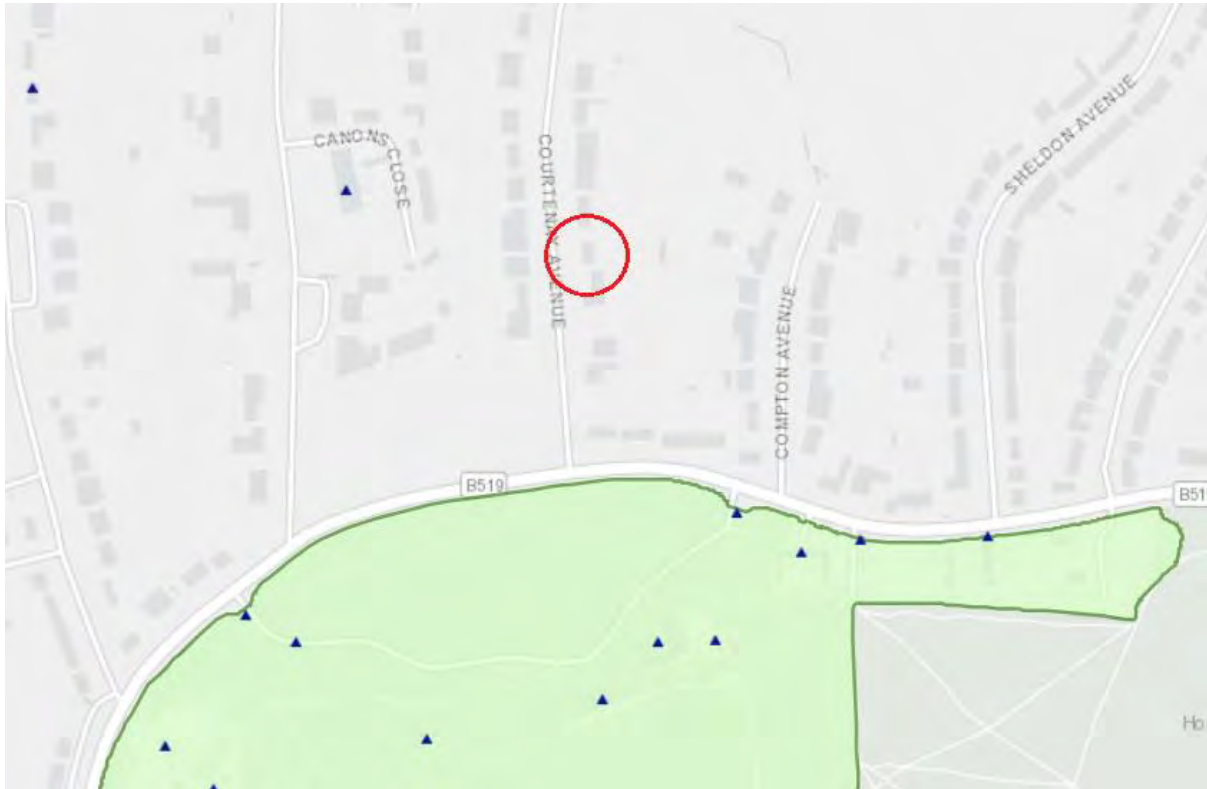


Figure 4: Proximate heritage assets, with the subject site identified in red; Kenwood's Grade II* Registered Park and Garden is to the south

3 CHARACTERISATION APPRAISAL

3.1 Introduction

Highgate Conservation Area is characterised by an intriguing variety of styles of buildings, and, as such, has been subdivided into distinct districts, of which the Bishops sub-area is one, based on historical development of the settlement, land ownership and patronage, and prevailing architectural styles. The whole of Courtenay Avenue including Bracken Knoll is located within the boundaries of the Bishops sub-area (No. 7). Although NPPF Paragraph 194 requires that the Conservation Area as a whole is considered for development proposals, the sub-area will be considered in this assessment, along with implications for the setting of proximate heritage assets. The Bishops sub area lies between Highgate's historic town centre and the boundary of the London Borough of Haringey to the west. This sub-area comprises predominantly high-quality buildings by a group of architects, most notably Charles Henry Bourne Quennell who designed largely in the Arts and Crafts and English Domestic styles.

The area is defined by houses manifested in corresponding aesthetic themes of the early 20th century, made especially eye-catching in large garden plot settings, intentionally designed to incorporate remnants of the mediaeval landscape and the mature trees which were once part of the Bishop's Wood, which is a feature of the garden at Bracken Knoll: Quennell, in particular, encouraged the

retention of ‘good trees, old hedgerows, any little irregularity of shape of building plot that will mask its general naked appearance and squareness, [which] should be allowed to remain’¹⁰. This suburban landscape is exemplified by an openness to the developments with further green spaces adding to the verdant backdrop – including the Golf Course located to the north east of Courtenay Avenue which is designated Metropolitan Open land. The incorporation of mature trees within the Ecclesiastical Commissioners’ scheme of the early decades of the 20th century augments the sense that these houses, and the terrain on which they were built, developed organically; Quennell *et al* had exquisitely fashioned a collective scheme which merged with a setting permeated with historic references – and their combined architectural composition fittingly corresponded in reiterating early styles via the domestic form.

3.2 The Origins and Development of the Area

Bracken Knoll is located in between the villages of Highgate and Hampstead to the north of Hampstead Lane and the parkland of the Kenwood Estate. The historic provenance of the terrain here is imbued with the mediaeval pursuits of the See of London who used the Hornsey estate land as their deer park and hunting ground, the only indication of which is the remains of the moated lodge on Highgate Golf Course (within an Archaeological Priority Area¹¹). The activities of the Bishops of London in this rural periphery of the capital were established by the 11th or 12th century, although the lodge was described as ruinous as early as 1593 which indicates the decline of the importance of sports: the toponymy of Haringey is purported to derive from *haringe*, ‘meadow of hares’¹² which may be related to pursuits here. The original route of Hampstead Lane which ‘ran westward from the Gatehouse [in Highgate] by 1677’ and which was recorded in 1774 as ‘Caen Wood Lane’¹³ might have been formed to access the lodge, connecting the hilltop settlement with its rural hinterland.

¹⁰ Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture, online blog: Planning the Peripheries: C.H.B. Quennell and Early 20th Century Suburban Housing, 2021

¹¹ Greater London Historic Environment Record, No. 080313/00/00

¹² Sherington, R.O., *The Story of Hornsey*, 1904, p13

¹³ Baggs, A.P., Bolton, Diane, K., and Pugh, R.B., Hornsey, including Highgate: Highgate, in *A History of the County of Middlesex*, Volume 6, Friern Barnet, Finchley, Hornsey with Highgate, 1980, pp125-133



Figure 5: 'Plan of the Grounds about Kenwood House' in 1793, with 'Bishop's Wood' immediately to the north of the house, and 'New Road' (part of Hampstead Lane) beyond. 'Wood Land' to the very north was 'belonging to the See of London' British Museum, 1880,1113.5593



Figure 6: North Road, Highgate, looking towards the Gatehouse, Dean Wolstenholme the Younger, 1875
Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution, Ref. OP6

Highgate – the toponymy of which is presumed to refer to the gate at the top of the steep toll road along the modern Highgate Hill opened by the Bishops in 1386, but which may be a derivation of *haeg*, as in hedge-gate to the deer park, augmenting the sporting theme – does not appear in written documents until 1318 when the Lord of the Manor of Hornsey was charging tolls to those using the track at Spaniards public house on Hampstead Lane¹⁴. It is not until the 15th century when 'the

¹⁴ Hornsey Historical Society, *A Brief History of Highgate*, online edition, 2021

structure of at least one mediaeval jettied building is known in the High Street. There was some ribbon development along Highgate Hill in the 16th and 17th centuries. It became a popular spot for the wealthy to build their retreats¹⁵ enticed by the health benefits of fresh air beyond the City: ‘in 1450, an hospital for lepers was established near Highgate, and in 1665 another for children on the Hill, both avowedly to partake of the blessings of this clear and exhilarating atmosphere.’¹⁶



Figure 7: Aerial view of The Bishop's Avenue, 1920, with Spaniard's Farm of 1814 identified

This openness of the topography, at a convenient distance from the polluted capital, was a precipitating factor in the construction of a number of large dwellings in their own grounds close to Highgate, including Beechwood (built on Hampstead Lane in 1840 by George Basevi), Kenwood (also Hampstead Lane, originally 17th century, extended in the 18th and 19th centuries for the Earls of Mansfield) and Athlone Towers (formerly Caen Wood Towers, built in 1872), and each survives, although farmsteads such as Spaniards Farm (*see figure 7*) which existed in a countryfied terrain with unrestricted prospects were increasingly hemmed in via later developments precipitated by the commercial interests of the Bishop's Avenue in the late 19th century, and the gradual spread of house-building eastwards on Hornsey Manor land.

¹⁵ London Borough of Haringey, *Conservation Area No. 1, Highgate Conservation Area – Character Appraisal and Management Plan*, 2013, p19

¹⁶ Prickett, Frederick, *The History and Antiquities of Highgate*, Middlesex, 1842, p2

3.3 Map Progression

The following maps show the development of the area from 1761.

1. 1761 John Rocque's Correct Plan of the Cities of London...
2. 1895 Ordnance Survey
3. 1912-1915 Ordnance Survey
4. 1925 Plan of the Borough of Hornsey
5. 1935-1938 Ordnance Survey



Figure 8: John Rocque's A Correct Plan of the Cities of London, Westminster and Southwark, 1761 (approximate site indicated by red circle)

John Rocque's map of 1761 depicts the bucolic environment in between Highgate and Hampstead in the mid-Georgian period, with the landscape to the north of 'Ken Wood House', a dwelling originally of 1616 and composed of brick, shown as a surprisingly controlled, mostly wooded terrain with a large, open area to the west of what is now Courtenay Avenue. The clearing – shown as a sharp-edged broad rectangle – suggests that this terrain was managed, rather than being allowed to grow organically, and was later partly replanted in the 19th century; some of the open space appears to have been used as the Highgate School sports fields. Rocque delineated roads traversing the woods, including what was the original road, which was deemed to run too close to Kenwood House, relocated further north later in the 18th century.



Figure 9: 1893 OS (published 1896; approximate site indicated in red)

By 1896, the Bishop's Avenue had been laid out to the west, cutting through the Bishop's Wood, although the developments pursued by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, including Courtenay Avenue, Compton Avenue and Sheldon Avenue had not yet begun even though Lambeth Palace Library holds a map of the latter dating to 1890¹⁷ suggesting the broader scheme was thoroughly protracted. The terrain here was still very much a countryfied panorama: 'most of the former Hornsey Park and Hornsey woods east of the Bishop's Avenue formed part of Manor farm which, in 1886, consisted of 466 acres in Finchley and Hornsey, administered from the farm-house next to the Great North Road... the acreage contracted with building and with leasing to Highgate Golf Club and other sports clubs.'¹⁸ The rectangular gap in the woodland captured by Rocque in 1761 seems to have been semi-planted, and the paths, which may have provided the outline of the layout of later roads, crossing the forest from west to east seems to have gone, or been significantly reduced in status (*see figure 8*). Hampstead Lane has also been moved to a curved line further north as part of David Murray, Viscount Stormont's changes he pursued on his succeeding to the earldom in 1793 – and it was one of the first things he did, occupied with its relocation until 1796, 'diverting [it] ... away from the forecourt, to provide the house with more privacy...'¹⁹

¹⁷ Lambeth Palace Library, Church of England Record Centre, Archive Collections, ECE/11/5/159; the only apparent document relating to the scheme held at the archive

¹⁸ Baggs, A.P., Bolton, Diane, K., and Pugh, R.B., Hornsey, including Highgate: Highgate, in *A History of the County of Middlesex*, Volume 6, Friern Barnet, Finchley, Hornsey with Highgate, 1980, pp59-64

¹⁹ English Heritage, *History of Kenwood*, online edition, 2021



Figure 10: 1912-1915 OS Map (approximate site indicated in red)

By 1915, several of the larger mansions along The Bishop's Avenue had appeared, including East Weald and Bishop's Mead to the east side of the road; and Barons Court, Kenmore and Dane Court to the west, each characterised by extensive garden plots with glasshouses and the remnants of the ancient woodland incorporated within early 20th century boundaries. Courtenay Avenue – and related streets developed via the Ecclesiastical Commissioners' commercial endeavours such as Compton Avenue and Sheldon Avenue – was not yet constructed. There is no indication of the route these roads would take: the woodland is unchanged apart from the new dwellings on The Bishop's Avenue, and there are no marks which would suggest where they were intended to go. Spaniards Farm, with a farmhouse of *circa* 1814, is shown to the west of Barons Court, although its landholdings were increasingly restricted as a result of lease arrangements relating to the 20th century expansion of the Hampstead Golf Club to its west; the land associated with the farm was also 'leased on 999-year building leases to Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust in 1914, 1931 and 1934.'²⁰

²⁰ Baggs, A.P., Bolton, Diane, K., and Pugh, R.B., Hornsey, including Highgate: Highgate, in *A History of the County of Middlesex*, Volume 6, Friern Barnet, Finchley, Hornsey with Highgate, 1980, pp59-64



Figure 11: Plan of the Borough of Hornsey, 1925, with the approximate location of the site outlined

The 1925 Plan of the Borough of Hornsey demonstrates the protracted nature of the development pursued by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and their architects including C.H.B. Quennell and Christopher Cooper, and that even by 1925, only Sheldon Avenue had been laid out. Compton Avenue is delineated as a roadway, although there are no houses to its sides yet; several dwellings are shown to the north of Hampstead Lane near the sizeable, secondary stable block belonging to the Kenwood Estate. Courtenay Avenue has yet to be constructed, and the site of Bracken Knoll remains as natural woodland – again, there are no clues as to the ultimate layout of the road which would follow only two years later. The plan shows that Sheldon Avenue was exemplified by buildings constructed relatively close together compared with the spacious settings on The Bishop's Avenue, and instead followed the curve of the south eastern end of the Golf Course.



Figure 12: 1935-1938 OS (modern site boundary of Bracken Knoll marked in red)

Bracken Knoll is shown for the first time on the 1935-1938 OS map – which also demonstrates the extent of suburban development which had taken place since the 1910s-1920s, as well as the difference in size between the large edifices on The Bishop's Avenue and the more diminutive dwellings on Courtenay Avenue. Bracken Knoll was relatively small compared with several of its neighbouring houses on the road – including The Rydings to the immediate south, and the much more substantial mansions on The Bishop's Avenue. The house was also laid out on a simple rectangular plan without the elaborations of large, bow windows or wings, ranges or projecting bays in a semi-mirroring of Heathways to the west side of the road, by another architect, but set out on an uncomplicated arrangement, albeit since rebuilt in 2006. As a result of the intensity and completeness of development, the mediaeval (and later replanted) woodland formerly belonging to the See of London, and here in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, had been cleared with the exception of scattered mature trees kept intentionally to gardens of the new houses. The roads had been spatially allied with the Highgate Golf Course to the north, either leading to its boundary forming the extent of the cul-de-sac, or running alongside its margins to its south east.



Figure 13: 1960 OS (site boundary marked in red)

By the 1960s, there appear to have been few changes to the layout of Courtenay Avenue: houses including The Rydings and High Birch to the southern end of the road are delineated on the same plan as in the 1930s, as is Bracken Knoll – with two small extensions to the rear of the house since the mid to late 1930s, one of which appears to form a canted bay to the southern end of the garden elevation; the other is to the east end of what was then a separate garage outbuilding to the north, since rebuilt and connected to the principal property, but originally with a very narrow gap between the two. The garden plot of Bracken Knoll, as in the 1930s, extended further to the east, but has since been marginally reduced (by 1990, sold off to Chase End on Compton Avenue²¹) – but this is not the only alteration: the more recent history of the house includes revisions of *circa* 1990, transforming the garden elevation and instituting it with a three-bay, two storey central section with flanking single storey sections with a sloping catslide-like roof to the north side. A consented scheme of 2013-2014, resubmitted in 2017, to rebuild the structure behind the principal façade appears not to have been implemented. Modern maps also reveal much more substantial modifications or the outright replacement of several the houses here, causing significant aesthetic changes to what was a unified scheme: only six of the twenty-two houses are ‘original’ examples, and the demolition of Ridgeway was consented as recently as 2013, along with Somerlese in 2016, both replaced by much more substantial edifices changing the spatial arrangement, as well as articulation, massing, and form.

The following list demonstrates the extent of redevelopment on Courtenay Avenue:

1. **High Birch** - the original house is thought have been designed in 1928 by C.H.B. Quennell. The first house was demolished in 1990 and a new house built in place with a substantially larger footprint. The new design has symmetrical brick composition with adoptions of Neo-Georgian components.
2. **Red Gables** - the original house is thought have been designed in 1930 by Christopher Cooper. This

²¹ London Borough of Haringey Council, Planning Ref. HGY/1990/0636

was demolished in 1994 and a new house built in place with a symmetrical new front with a northern wing incorporating a garage.

3. **Heathways** - the house was designed in circa 1929-1930 by architects Meakin Archer & Co in brick with a tiled roof. The house reflected a number of familiar C.H.B. Quennell's details from his commissioned work in the Templewood Avenue area before WW1. Original house demolished in 2006 and new Neo-Georgian house built on site (HGY/2006/0270 and HGY/2006/2411).

4&5. **Three Oaks (with White Lodge)** - the house has now been demolished but was originally a Christopher Cooper design. White Lodge is extant.

6. **Ridgemount** - the house was designed by T. M. Wilson FRIBA, architect, in 1928 and has since been demolished, with a new house built on the site.

7. **Oakbank** - the house was designed by Christopher Cooper in 1928; it has since been demolished and replaced by a house which is an "Arts and Crafts" imitation that follows a footprint comparable to that of Ridgemount.

8. **Woodlands** - Woodlands was designed by Browett Taylor & Co., a firm of surveyors. However, the original building was demolished, and the site was redeveloped in 1997.

9. **Courtenay House** - the house was designed and produced in 1929 by C.H.B. Quennell. The plot is the largest on the street, and the house was once the most unspoilt and handsome of original houses in Courtenay Avenue. The house was demolished recently, and a new large Neo-Classical house built.

10. **Greenbanks** - the house is another example of Christopher Cooper work, designed in 1929.

11. **Hillsdown** - a house designed by Christopher Cooper in 1929; however, it was altered beyond recognition and has since been demolished.

12. **Sproughton** - a house designed by Christopher Cooper in 1927; the house is set back beyond the end of the avenue and therefore cannot be seen from the street; it was purportedly the earliest to be designed, and relates spatially more closely to White Lodge and the houses on The Bishop's Avenue.

13. **Longwood** - the house is fairly modern; the site was vacant till the 1980s. The design is simple, clean and not driven from the developments of the original Courtenay houses.

14. **Fouzia** - the plot was vacant with the new house being developed relatively recently. The design has no links to the "Arts and Crafts" movement, but deploys Neo-Classical design elements.

15. **The Rydings** - the house was designed in 1928, by T. P. Bennett & Sons. The house is concealed from public view as a result of dense planting.

16. **Bracken Knoll** - the house was designed in 1928 by Christopher Cooper. Consent was granted in 2017 for demolition behind the façade as an exact copy of a previously consented scheme from 2013-2014 (HGY/2013/2486), but it was not implemented, and the changes to front and rear elevations undertaken in *circa* 1990 remain extant.

17. **Guildens** - the house was designed by C.H.B. Quennell in 1928, although it is by no means his most successful design. Application for the façade retention scheme approved at the Appeal in 2021.

18. **Blue Orchard** - the house was designed by C.H.B. Quennell in 1928; it is a simple design – however, externally has been altered very little and therefore one of Quennell's most original buildings to have survived on the street.

19. **Beaulieu** - the house was designed in 1930 by Christopher Cooper. Consent (2006/1910) was granted for demolition and reconstruction with a large Arts and Crafts house which is now complete.

20. **Branksome** - the house is a low-cost scheme, designed by an in-house draughtsman in Quennell's estate office, in 1930. The house is heavily concealed behind high hedges. Consent was granted for demolition and replacement house in 2021.

21. **Ridgefield** - consent was granted in 2013 for its demolition and reconstruction as a Neo-Classical house, which was recently completed (HGY/2013/0131).

22. **Somerlese** – consent was granted on appeal in May 2016 for its demolition; September 2019 (HGY/2019/1481) for the construction of a new replacement house with garage currently under construction and in November 2020 (HGY/2020/2062) for the construction of a link between the house and the garage.

3.4 Townscape Character



Figure 14: No. 1, Stormont Road in circa 1915, with Hampstead Lane to the right, looking east; demonstrating the early built environment, intentionally mingled with the historic natural setting

Because of the influence of Quennell on Cooper's work and its rather debased expression in Bracken Knoll, it is worth examining the origins of and implications of the design and context. The built environment between Highgate and Hampstead is an example of a collaborative aesthetic scheme pursued by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the now unappreciated skills of principally the Quennell brothers – Walter as developer, and Christopher as architect, the latter with interests in craftsmanship, furniture manufacture and the history of objects, and how they were used. C H B Quennell is often regarded as an "Arts & Crafts" architect for his use of materials and fine craftsmanship in building, although his designs are distinctly influenced by classical motifs. His work on larger, high status, houses do not immediately have an association with the style so prevalent in the majority of the neighbouring Hampstead Garden Suburb.

Christopher Cooper was among several associated names of the period who joined this early 20th century collective oeuvre, as an assistant in CHB Quennell's office, turning out houses as a mutual commercial endeavour which was at least part influenced by the architectural genetics expressed in C.H.B. Quennell's publication of 1906, *Modern Suburban Houses*. Cooper was very obviously greatly influenced by Quennell, who would have directed his work in their office; even when Cooper worked under his own name, the essence of Quennell prevails but, unfortunately, with the flair, élan and capabilities of his master.

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners were particular about the standards achieved at this combined development of several streets which are defined by a certain rhythm (they determined plot size, usually generous) and scale. The houses on Courtenay Avenue, Sheldon Avenue and Compton Avenue started out with an identifiable visual theme adhering to Quennell's ideals in combining history 'with a search for efficiency and design appropriate for the modern world'²².

Hence, as directed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, there was originally a jaunty abundance of smart architectural styles reviving earlier and classical elements in curious, inventive amalgamations imbued with historical reference and elaborate domestic expression. However, many houses have been altered with heavy-handed additions, diminishing the uniformity of what could be considered effectively a single scheme: 'increased demolition and rebuilding in recent years is undermining the character of the area'²³. Quennell – and the other architects involved here – produced a series of what corresponded to his archetypal modern homes, mingling the familiarity of historical styles, and modern conveniences, an aspiration found in numerous examples of his output – especially his earlier dwellings at Redington Gardens in West Hampstead ('Quennell-land'²⁴), undertaken with the developer and builder, George Washington Hart, and considered by Pevsner to be his best work²⁵ (and of which three illustrations were included in *Modern Suburban Houses*). The exquisite architectural genetics of Quennell's houses can be found on Courtenay Avenue, Sheldon Avenue and others where Cooper *et al* have taken on the theme: Quennell was concerned with 'history and a search for efficiency and design appropriate for the modern world. Both of these preoccupations were widespread among his generation, although, apart from a few notable exceptions, rarely can they be found combined to as great a degree as in Quennell'²⁶.



Figure 15: Rear elevation of a Type VIII House by C.H.B. Quennell
Taken from *Modern Suburban Houses*, 1906

²² McKellar, Elizabeth, C.H.B. Quennell (1872-1935): Architecture, History and the Quest for the Modern, in *Architectural History*, Volume 50, 2007, pp211-246, online extract, Cambridge University

²³ Hammerson, Michael, *Highgate from Old Photographs*, 2013, p

²⁴ Cherry, Bridget and Pevsner, Nikolaus, *The Buildings of England – London 4: North*, 2002, p232

²⁵ Cherry, Bridget and Pevsner, Nikolaus, *The Buildings of England – London 4: North*, 2002, p232

²⁶ McKellar, Elizabeth, C.H.B. Quennell (1872-1935): Architecture, History and the Quest for the Modern, in *Architectural History*, Volume 50, 2007, p211

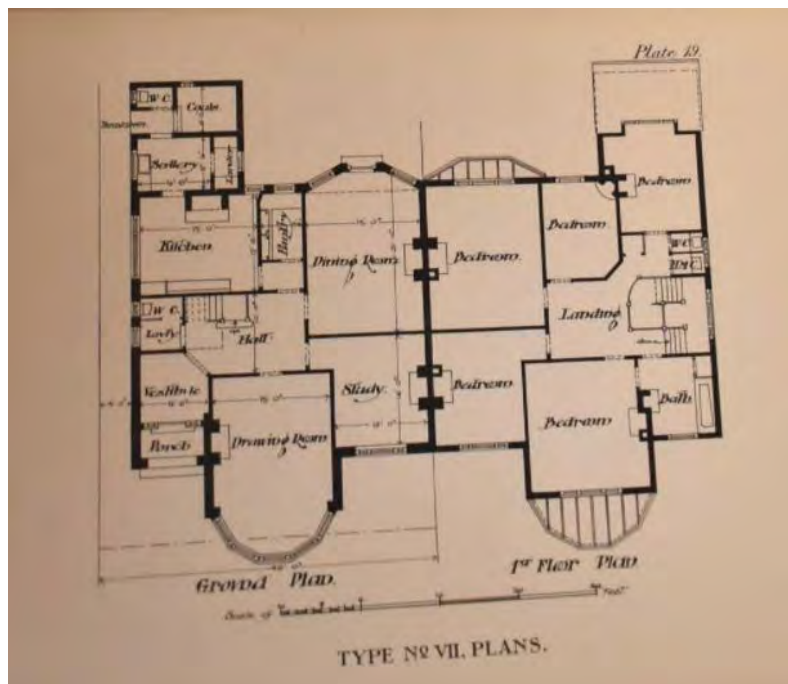


Figure 16: Floor plans featured in Quennell's 1906 publication, *Modern Suburban Houses*

Quennell also expressed interests in the 'sociological implications of architecture'²⁷ as well as standardisation of domestic buildings, as in a certain model should be expected, which was achieved in the endeavours pursued by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners on this historically significant landscape in between Highgate and Hampstead – Robert the Bruce was said to have stayed at the hunting lodge. New additions and replacement houses have often been built in modern format – including on Sheldon Avenue, originally almost exclusively designed by C.H.B. Quennell, where a relatively new grey-brick, two story edifice with large windows and pared back, geometric façade contrasts with red-brick examples along the street, several of which have been built using a more coherent material palette including clay tile roofs. Additions on Courtenay Avenue include Courtenay House in the Neo-Classical style, and Woodlands, rebuilt in the 1990. Even though, several of these houses have been rebuilt, at least there are consistent elements, including the height of eaves levels; and there are examples of skilful architectural interpretations, restating the classical style of their predecessors.

²⁷ McKellar, Elizabeth, C.H.B. Quennell (1872-1935): Architecture, History and the Quest for the Modern, in *Architectural History*, Volume 50, 2007, p211; citing *The Times* obituary



Figure 17: No. 32, Hampstead Lane in 1927 – called ‘Wood Edge’ as it marked the eastern periphery of what was the Bishop’s Wood, mostly wiped out by the developments of Courtenay Avenue, The Bishop’s Avenue and Sheldon Avenues in the 1920s and 1930s

Courtenay Avenue now, however, represents for the most part a very varied built environment, made up of eclectic mix of dwellings in a modern architectural language reflecting the traditional idioms. Despite changes, these broad streets still demonstrate the aspirations of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in giving attention to views, gradients, and bends in the road, creating an overall artistic ensemble which originally merged town and country at the suburban periphery of the city. There is variation in topography which has led to agreeable visual contrasts: the houses on the west side of Courtenay Avenue are higher than those on the east. The incorporation of pre-existing ancient woodland within the grounds of houses adds to the sense of longevity, as well as uncluttered streets which enhances the sense of space. The frontages of houses are also defined by low boundary enclosures to the streets and gap views between buildings to rear gardens which are valuable features in enhancing the verdant character of these roads.

The Management Plan also notes that greater variety of styles augments an eclectic mix and architectural diversity²⁸ more broadly within the Conservation Area, although more houses have been demolished or altered since the Appraisal was adopted in 2013.

Several of these replacement buildings on Courtenay Avenue and on the streets nearby could be considered accomplished iterations of the classical idiom and relate well to the historic and evolving street-scene, character and appearance of these early 20th century developments. Both Courtenay Avenue and Compton Avenue are short, private cul-de-sacs, and are broadly inaccessible to the general public. That there is also a great variety of architectural exhibition means there is some aesthetic nonconformity compared with the rest of the Conservation Area.

²⁸ London Borough of Haringey, *Conservation Area No. 1, Highgate Conservation Area – Character Appraisal and Management Plan*, 2013, p6

It is contended that the conservation area appraisal underplays the positive role of the modern replacement buildings on Courtenay Avenue and on the streets nearby; this is likely because some have received consent and been built following the publication of the document, but also because the emphasis of the analysis appears to be focused on the historic character and appearance as opposed to the present. Many of the replacement buildings are considered to be exceptional in their design and Neo-Georgian classical literacy and relate well to the historic and evolving architectural language, character and appearance of the streets in question; they must all therefore be regarded as either neutral or positive contributors to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and Bishops Sub-Area.

There are only six out of twenty two properties on Courtenay Avenue that have not been re-built or reconstructed in the new style. Courtenay Avenue should be seen in its own context, its appearance is visually independent of the rest of the Conservation Area.

The appeal inspector for the consented scheme (Appeal Ref: APP/Y5420/W/19/3243272) has noted the following about the character and appearance of the road: *"...given the considerable number of replacement or remodelled developments that have been permitted in Courtenay Avenue, this road no longer provides an example of high quality residential development of the period. This is exemplified on the opposite side of Courtenay Avenue very near to the appeal site where larger replacement dwellings have been constructed with relatively little separation distance between them. Its character and appearance has fundamentally changed as a result of these developments and the previous uniform and homogenous character of the road no longer exists. The character and appearance of the road as a whole and its contribution to the overall historic significance of the CA has lessened over time."*



Figure 18: View along Courtenay Avenue



Figure 19: Hyper-modern replacement houses, including The Villa and The Mansion, on Courtenay Avenue



Figure 20: Guildens, to the immediate north of Bracken Knoll



Figure 21: Oakbank, originally a Christopher Cooper house, demolished and replaced by an Arts and Crafts recreation



Figure 22: Woodlands; original house demolished and replaced in 1997 in rather bland format



Figure 23: Courtenay House, demolished and replaced with this Neo-Classical version

3.5 The Contribution Made By Open Spaces and Other Natural Elements

Sub-area 7 is characterised by the retention of mature trees within often extensive garden boundaries – the Ecclesiastical Commissioners stipulated plot size – and wide roads which define the suburban character and appearance of the area. Additional substantial green space including Highgate Golf Club – across which there is a view from the northern end of Courtenay Avenue – and the grounds of Kenwood House to the south of Hampstead Lane are vital components in contributing to the setting of Highgate village, as well as to the character and appearance of the road, and associated side streets. The sports facilities associated with Highgate School also contribute to the open green space.

The generous garden plots to private houses, where visible via side elevations, mostly add to the character of the Conservation Area, although many houses have been rebuilt closer together, obscuring these views, many of which are inaccessible to the public in any case (private roads). The retention of mature trees, however, represent the significant historical provenance of what was formerly the Bishop's Wood and the land ownership of the See of London. Gardens help to separate different areas of urban development by forming green corridors that break up the built-up areas and provide valuable habitats and routes for wildlife.

3.6 Local Details and Materials

The Bishops Sub-area 7 is characterised by consistency – or what would have been – in the employment of red-brown brick as a building material, not unexpected given the reiteration of 17th century styles – especially by Cooper, along with the use of red and dark brown clay tiles to roofs, often hipped or typified by steep pitches, and which even include examples of the half-hip, a vernacular style usually found to southern counties, alongside a limited number of flat roofs. The modern Courtenay Avenue has deviated from this original material palette and stylistic themes, perhaps more so than adjacent streets as original houses have been replaced, and where examples of the use of pink, yellow, grey and dark London stock bricks can be found, along with render, and occasional incorporation of stucco and stone. There are variations in the spatial patterns of fenestration and window types – including casements, leaded lights, painted double sashes, and dormers. Façades are often given movement with the incorporation of canted bays or even Venetian windows (No. 20 Sheldon Avenue), and Oakbank, a recent rebuilding of an earlier abode, has incorporated a variety of textures to its main elevation including different coloured bricks and window surrounds. There are, however, instances on Courtenay Avenue of bland, road-facing elevations – including The Villa and The Mansion – which are devoid of detailed historic reference, and relate a modern interpretation instead with over-sized windows (no mullions or transoms) and incongruous contrast with render and rich tan-colour brick.

3.7 Negative Factors

Negative factors outlined in the Conservation Area Management Plan relate to 'incremental changes... to architectural features, materials and details of domestic properties' the most noticeable of which are 'removal or alteration of timber sash windows, timber panelled front doors... decorative timber

porches... chimney stacks and pots, ridge tiles and finials and decorative plasterwork'²⁹. It is most obvious that the chief dynamic which is causing changes of the aesthetic regularity on Courtney Avenue is the upgrading and extension of houses built to designs which often stray from the visual theme of the area. Modern development is also often cramped, squandering 'views between houses and the open leafy character of the streets'³⁰ and, where boundary walls have been built too high with large gates, creating an 'overly enclosed effect.' The gatehouses at the entrance to both private roads, Courtenay Avenue and Compton Avenue, are also seen as negative contributors to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area given their appearance as structures of no architectural merit; they look like temporary and flimsy buildings.

²⁹ London Borough of Haringey, *Conservation Area No. 1, Highgate Conservation Area – Character Appraisal and Management Plan*, 2013, p6

³⁰ London Borough of Haringey, *Conservation Area No. 1, Highgate Conservation Area – Character Appraisal and Management Plan*, 2013, p156

4 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

4.1 Background

Courtenay Avenue was laid out to the north side of Hampstead Lane during the late 1920s broadly concurrently with Sheldon and Compton Avenues when the ‘period between the World Wars saw the last fields and woodland along the north side of Hampstead Lane give way... A few large houses thus linked Highgate with the eastern part of Hampstead...’³¹ Although there are few available photographs of Bracken Knoll, aerial photography demonstrates the development pursued by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and their architects, including not only Quennell, but Cooper, and the relatively brief time period in which these initial houses emerged. A view across the golf course to the north and east dating to *circa* 1920 (*see figure 24*) shows the densely forested Bishop’s Wood in situ with Courtenay Avenue yet to be laid out, although The Bishop’s Avenue had been constructed by this date – at the end of the 19th century, albeit not developed until the start of the 20th century, precipitating the elaboration of what was a first-rate commercial scheme pursued by the landowners. The history of the roads here is sometimes misrepresented – probably as a result of a lack of primary evidence – but their inception is later than 1920³² in any case, and a plan of the Borough of Hornsey made in 1925 (*see figure 11*) confirms that Courtenay Avenue does indeed post-date this survey.

The early houses on the road were chiefly devised by Cooper – a draftsman who also designed the brick-built Sproughton in 1927-1928, along with Oakbank, High Birch, and Bracken Knoll, and as such they conform to a certain aesthetic refrain and material ‘colour scheme’. The Rydings was extant at least by 1929 as it appears in local press in relation to its new owners and their business interests in G and R Cinemas, although references to Bracken Knoll during the period are hard to locate. There is very little on the architectural evolution of the house – and almost nothing on its early tenure or for whom it might have been built, or whether a speculative endeavour; later occupancy is better recorded in press reports which post-date the middle of the 20th century, but that there is a dearth of information is a little odd. It does not possess the same social interest as other properties on the road, including Sproughton – although its original form matched the aesthetic standard of the latter. Perhaps because it is located within a smaller garden plot meant that it did not attract the same stellar buyers, who included those interested in the performing arts, including at Red Gable, where in 1931 a director of a theatre company, Thames Theatres Ltd., was recorded in *The Bioscope* of June that year.

The architectural provenance of the house has been attributed to Christopher Cooper, (v.s.) an informal draftsman who worked in the office of Quennell as well as under his own name, as here. Amid the output of ‘houses... in a free English domestic style, paler versions of [Quennell’s] work around Redington Gardens, Hampstead’³³, the work of Cooper goes mostly unacknowledged, including by Pevsner *et al* who also omits Courtenay Avenue altogether in his assessment of the area, while taking in Stormont

³¹ Baggs, A.P., Bolton, Diane, K., and Pugh, R.B., Hornsey, including Highgate: Highgate, in *A History of the County of Middlesex*, Volume 6, Friern Barnet, Finchley, Hornsey with Highgate, 1980, pp125-133

³² Baggs, A.P., Bolton, Diane, K., and Pugh, R.B., Hornsey, including Highgate: Highgate, in *A History of the County of Middlesex*, Volume 6, Friern Barnet, Finchley, Hornsey with Highgate, 1980, pp125-133

³³ Cherry, Bridget, and Pevsner, Nikolaus, *The Buildings of England – London 4: North*, 2002, p413

Road and Sheldon Avenue, where the suburban architectural environment is ‘much diluted since’³⁴, although both early and later examples respectively survive in both these streets.



Figure 24: Aerial view taken in 1920: Courtenay Avenue is yet to be laid out on its north-south axis, still dense woodland at this date, although The Bishop’s Avenue is extant, left, with White Lodge already shown to the north east next to Highgate Golf Course

Historic England, EPW005115

Although Cooper is accepted as the designer of “The Knoll” and “Far End” on Compton Avenue, and High Birch, also on Courtenay Avenue, his output in the English domestic style, and the Arts & Crafts influenced – including at neighbouring Soughton as well as Bracken Knoll – does not garner much attention. None of his works is formally designated nationally – contrasting with Quennell who has a series of his works in north London, as well as Essex, acknowledged for their stylistically skilled manifestations, most of which are Listed Grade II.³⁵ It should also be noted that there are few newspaper reports which refer to the development on behalf of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in the early 20th century, and Quennell’s subordinate, Cooper, is absent not only from the RIBA Library, but Lambeth Palace Library’s Church of England records at which only a single map in relation to the scheme of *circa*

³⁴ Cherry, Bridget, and Pevsner, Nikolaus, *The Buildings of England – London 4: North*, 2002, p413

³⁵ Historic England, List Entry No. 1079822, 14th February 1985, amended 15th February 2017

1890 is held. Only one drawing for Cooper's work appears to survive at the London Metropolitan Archives for a property in Mill Hill, Hendon – Down House – for which 'G. Christopher Cooper' submitted plans in 1937 as one half of the partnership of Phillips and Cooper³⁶; and records held at the Bedfordshire Archives and Record Service relate to a possibly different Cooper designing carriage, wicket and wooden gates in collaboration with C.H.B. Quennell for The Pyghtle Works³⁷ of circa 1910.



Figure 25: Aerial view, 1945; with Bracken Knoll identified, laid out on a simple rectangular plan

Cooper's endeavours are undistinguishable in his aesthetic style. It is probable that Bracken Knoll was produced less as a specific commission, and more likely as a speculative venture along with most houses along the road, and its initial occupiers are unknown; very few references relate to its social history, with the exception of an advertisement for 'Cook-General and House Parlour Maid... own sitting room and bathroom' placed twice in the *Tewkesbury Register and Agricultural Gazette* on 17th and 24th August 1946 by Mrs Guissin at 'Bracken Knoll, Courtenay-avenue'. Guissin was the wife of French-born Maurice Guissin, who is also recorded in 1946 at No. 146 Chatsworth Court, London, W8 (business address), as Assistant Managing Director of a Tobacco manufacturing company³⁸. Although, again, little documented, Guissin was a successful entrepreneur who, in collaboration with Ernest Edwin Mills 'built up a £1,427,000 business... just sold for £350,000 investments for which they paid £25,000 last January... It began eight years ago when the two started up two small firms, Bocnal Tobacco and Fifteen Tobacco

³⁶ London Metropolitan Archives, LMA/4070/03/A06686; Phillips and Cooper were recorded as builders of Stanmore

³⁷ Bedfordshire Archives and Record Service, Z 764/5

³⁸ *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 15th August 1946

with £2,000. Sales rose. Last year the two partners had hoisted them to more than 18,000,000 cigarettes a week.³⁹

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
V Guildens Avenue	138								
V Bracken Knoll	139								
V Rydings	140								
"Garage Flat"	141	1	Turner Ernest W	M	8 Mar 12	M	Motor Van Driver		

Figure 26: Section from the 1939 Register, showing Bracken Knoll and adjacent principal houses were vacant



Figure 27: Bracken Knoll in 1948, identified
Historic England, EAW014550

Bracken Knoll is less part of the organic development further north incorporating White Lodge, Soughton and the large houses on The Bishop's Avenue, and more part of the regularly spaced and aligned houses on the main part of the road, as well as the illusion of longevity via the resuscitation of a traditional style of architecture. Bracken Knoll was one of the earlier houses to follow Soughton of *circa* 1927, and probably a year later in 1928, an intriguing connection given the spatial orientation of the earlier house tucked away to the north west of the road, 'disconnected' from the layout of the rest of Courtenay Avenue marking the transition between the formality of the roadside houses, and the looser arrangements on The Bishop's Avenue and White Lodge. The 1939 Register of occupiers and their associated properties at the start of the Second World War reveals that Bracken Knoll was vacant, along with Guildens and The Rydings, albeit that the 'Garage Flat' belonging to the latter was lived in by Ernest Turner, a 'motor van driver'.

³⁹ *Liverpool Echo*, 17th August 1946



Figure 28: Bracken Knoll in 1952 (identified)
Historic England, EAW046476

Aerial photography of 1948 and 1952 shows Bracken Knoll first in autumn or winter when the tree cover had thinned out, then in summer when concealed behind a verdant screen of mature trees. It is difficult to make out specific details relating to the architecture of the house in either case, although it forms part of a broader composition which encompasses an aesthetic theme of the Arts and Crafts and the English Domestic Revival – including details such as use of the Flemish brick-bond, plain clay tiles, found to Guildens to the north – as well as a certain scale which relates to the overall composition of a first-rate suburban development. Bracken Knoll is patchily recorded in local press, with very few appearances – except for advertisements for domestic staff, including one placed in the *Acton Gazette* in September 1969 for ‘Resident Cook Housekeeper wanted for middle-aged couple in Hampstead Highgate area, own furnished flat... very good conditions and salary... [apply] Mrs Phillips...’⁴⁰ but otherwise remains obscure. Bracken Knoll is a compact relatively modest house built to a design almost certainly by Cooper but altered in 1990 to ‘fill-in’ the balcony and change the fenestration to the central bay as well as main entrance, with substantial extension to the rear built over two storeys, and single storey additions to its sides.

⁴⁰ *Acton Gazette*, 25th September 1969



Figure 29: Bracken Knoll, principal façade, 1990, little altered from 1928



Figure 30: Bracken Knoll, principal façade, after 1990 consented proposals



Figure 31: Bracken Knoll, rear elevation, 1990, with added canted bay and balcony to the south end of circa 1960



Figure 32: Bracken Knoll, rear elevation, post-1990 changes

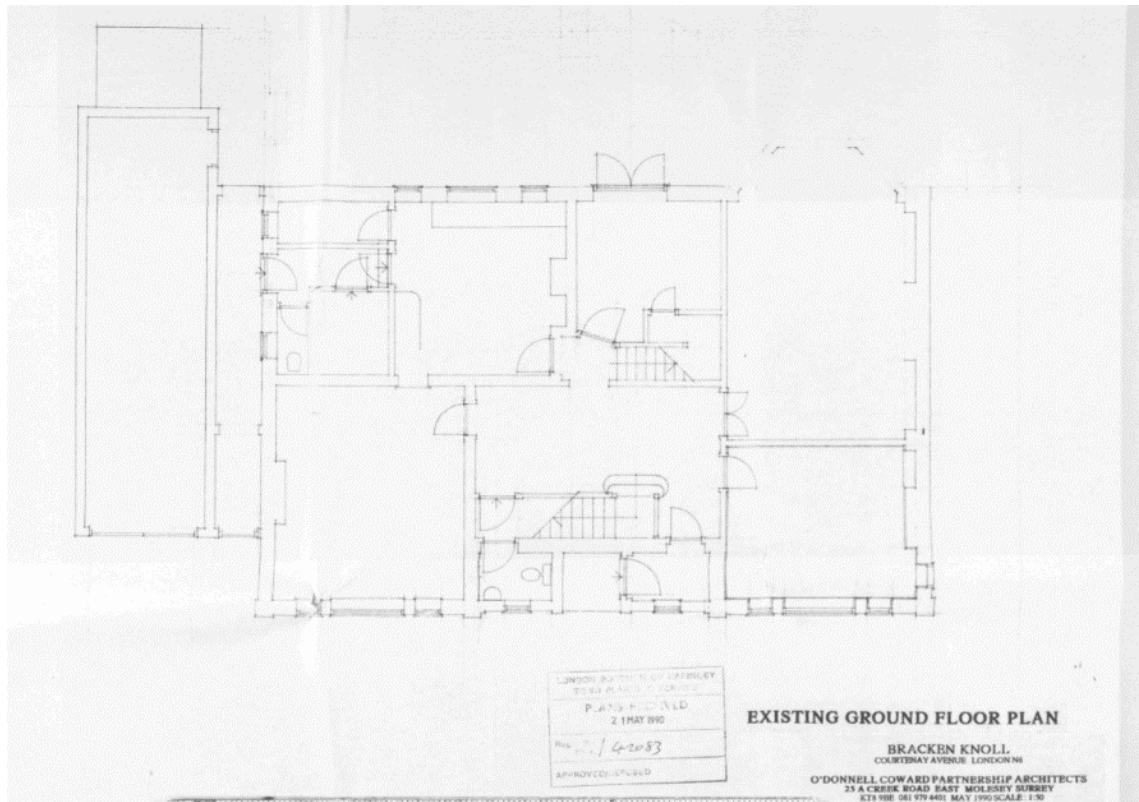


Figure 33: Ground floor plan of Bracken Knoll in 1990

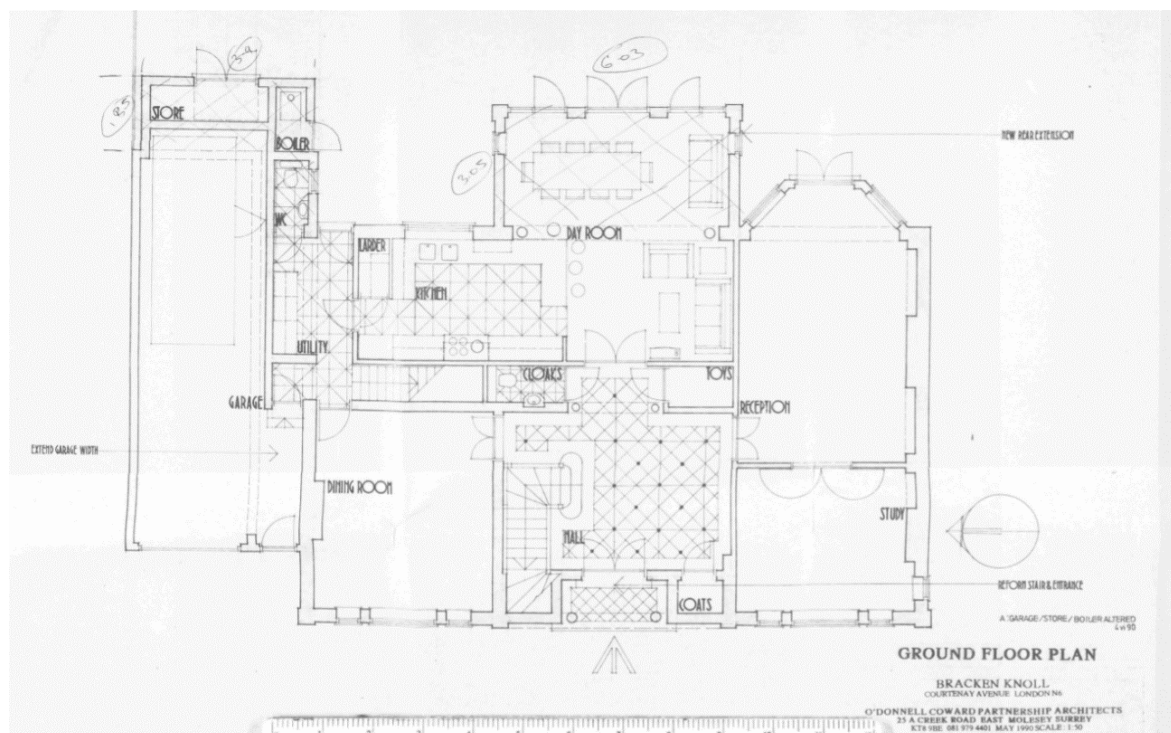


Figure 34: Proposed ground floor plan (extant), 1990
London Borough of Haringey Council, HGY/1990/0636

4.2 Bracken Knoll – As existing

Bracken Knoll is set in between The Rydings and Guildens on Courtenay Avenue to the east side of the road, one of a series of houses laid out in consistent rhythm, despite variation in original architectural form, in garden plots consistent with the scale of each property, close to the open space of the Highgate Golf Course to the north. Originally built in 1928, Bracken Knoll has undergone several substantial changes, recorded by consented schemes for alteration, including in 1990 a 'rear central extension to provide new day room with bedrooms over the first and second floors; raising the garage roof to provide new accommodation with front and rear facing dormers' along with the 'remodelling of the front entrance bay to provide revised porch with central access and windows over' (HGY/1990/0636), all of which were executed, and are extant.

The house seems to have been retained in its much of its original late 1920s form – despite earlier alterations - until *circa* 1990 when this series of alterations was pursued with the intent of modifying it and enhancing its size and stature. This also transformed the aesthetics of the early design, not only in-filling the principal façade with a new portico, and larger windows doing away with Cooper's balcony, but extending and obscuring the rear elevation with a two storey, centrally-placed extension. The architect of this 1990 scheme, Peter O'Donnell, astutely employed the existing material palette, including brick and clay tiles, for the additions and changes to Bracken Knoll – all of which is extant, despite later consents including in 1995, when permission was granted for the conversion of the house into two self-contained units, one of which had access to the garden (HGY/1995/0769). In 2012, changes to the dwelling were pursued again via the addition of a single storey extension to the rear, although neither of these consented schemes appears to have been implemented. In 2013, the demolition of the house – retaining the principal façade – was consented with rear elevation proposed in similar format, articulation and massing to the 1990 scheme by O'Donnell, albeit designed with less detail to brickwork and fenestration: again, this appears not to have been implemented at the time of consent, and the application was revived to the same proposed scheme in 2017 by Julian Arendt Associates – and, again, consented, but not executed.

4.2.1 Front Elevation

The front elevation of Bracken Knoll is partly the composition by Cooper of 1928, amended by architect Peter O'Donnell in *circa* 1990 to modernise the structure, albeit utilising an appropriate material palette and suitable style to correspond with Cooper's original composition infused with the motifs of the English Domestic Revival of the early 20th century. The house, with altered fenestration to the first floor, central bay, and new portico and round windows to the ground, all undertaken by O'Donnell, has changed the early format. Cooper's design was a simple rectangular arrangement, almost a squashed U-plan (recessed central bay with balcony, since removed and extended) over two storeys with attic level, with slightly projecting outer bays to the front, the whole of the west side symmetrically set out with first floor brick gallery-style feature and large leaded light window set behind (*see figure 29*).

The principal elevation was emphasised not by bulky quoins, but by four large brick pilasters – although the design lacked the large dentil detail at eaves level characteristic of the 17th century Wren-style, and instead applied elements which referenced the Arts and Crafts, including shallow arches above the ground floor outer bay windows in a shape which slightly suggested eyebrow dormers; the

upper storey windows were pushed up to the eaves line. The roof was covered with plain clay tiles with hipped gables to the front two outer bays, with separate garage to the north, since altered and rebuilt, albeit that it originally had a similar roofline to the main house. Here, the visual theme of the main house was on symmetry – this is the formal front to the road – although the rear elevation as designed by Cooper was expressed via a less rigid format introducing a variation on placement of windows, their shape and size, although the garden side had undergone changes by the 1960s when a canted bay had been added to its south end. Cooper's original composition is still recognisable, although has been modified by amendments made by O'Donnell, which have added a sense of grandeur that was not there before in Cooper's muted 17th century influenced domestic revival.



Figure 35: Brick-built garage extension to the north side of Bracken Knoll, view from the road



Figure 36: Main façade of Bracken Knoll, view from the road

4.2.2 Rear

The rear exhibits O'Donnell's central bay, added in *circa* 1990, and which appears to have survived, along with side bays of single storeys, all covered in plain clay tiles, as was the architect's intention in 1990 – in order to harmonise new elements with the existing design, incorporating red-brown brick, including eaves detail, in order to acknowledge the principles of Cooper's original model. The early format of the east elevation of Bracken Knoll used casements tucked up under the eaves in a variety of sizes, set out on a semi-symmetrical format in response to the garden setting. Later changes to this side of the house include a canted bay which had been built by *circa* 1960 and which, according to O'Donnell's drawings of 1990 (HGY/1990/0636) was to the ground floor with French doors leading out into the garden, with balcony above, accessed via double doors from a bedroom. These were removed during the alterations of *circa* 1990, along with most of the original fenestration, such that the east

elevation of Bracken Knoll is less an expression by Cooper, and more a modern rendition attempting to coordinate with the aesthetic premise of his initial scheme. Despite the use of corresponding materials, and an understanding of the early 20th century format, the house has nevertheless lost some of its domestic language, and the relative simplicity which defined works by Cooper. The extension of *circa* 1990 instead created a sense of stateliness to the rear elevation, including incorporating pilaster-style treatment to the edges of the extension, and a visual emphasis on symmetry – arguably inappropriate in relation to its architectural genetics; as such, only two windows to the north side, upper storey of the garden side are original to Cooper’s 1928 house.



Figure 37: Rear elevation to Bracken Knoll with substantial 1990 additions; only the two windows to the first floor, right, are original to Cooper’s scheme of 1928

4.2.3 South Elevation

The south elevation of the building continues the theme of the front elevation with the Wren-ish architectural leitmotifs of hipped roof but is relatively plain with very limited fenestration with single casement dormer with leaded lights to the attic storey, and single light to the side at first floor level.

4.2.4 North Elevation

The north elevation of Bracken Knoll is distorted by the addition of the garage, rebuilt in *circa* 1990 along with other changes made to the main house. Previously separate from the principal structure via a narrow footpath, it is now attached to the fabric of the main house, and assembled in different format – including doing away with the hipped gable – than Cooper’s 1928 outbuilding which better complemented the roofline of the rest of the composition. There are no openings to the garage to the north side, and only two larger windows visible to the first floor of the main house, along with a casement which appears to have formerly been a blank window, and skylights to the extension attic

storey, as well as original roof; the tall, brick-built stack to this side of the house is also plainly visible. A view of the north side of the principal dwelling makes clear the impact of the 1990 additions which added to the bulk of the building, and contorted the domestic scale, even though the use of appropriate materials has been consistently applied.



Figure 38: Oblique view of Bracken Knoll broadly from the north

4.2.5 Interior

The planning history of the house reveals that there have been changes to the interiors of Bracken Knoll, including to the ground floor main entrance where the 1928 staircase behind the main door on the west wall was removed, and a new version installed to the north side of the entrance hall. Cooper's house was originally accessed via door to the side under the balcony; to the other side, as balance to the main façade, was a WC, all of which was removed during the 1990 modifications – along with a doorway leading from the hall into the study to the south west corner of the house, looking out over the front driveway, absorbed as part of a larger reception room running the full depth of the house, and which necessitated the removal of a partition wall. A new internal hallway to the side of the dining room was also added in *circa* 1990 to access the rebuilt garage from within the house, changing the plan-form of the ground floor, also impacted by the removal of walls and a secondary staircase to the east side of the property where dayroom and kitchen were reconfigured also as part of the 1990 scheme.

4.2.6 Greenery and Screening

The garden is well-maintained and provides almost impenetrable screening from the east side where mature tree cover from the former Bishop's Wood is especially dense. The house can be glimpsed from Courtenay Avenue from both entrances to a curving 'carriage drive', although the planting to the front also provides some screening, as well as framing to the architectural composition behind. The setting of Bracken Knoll is allied to the spatial relationships of other houses facing the road in a consistent layout, with each house originally set back from Courtenay Avenue in large garden plots.



Figure 39: Aerial view of Bracken Knoll from the west

5 SIGNIFICANCE APPRAISAL

5.1 Introduction

The NPPF (Para 189) states that *“In determining applications local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should also be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on that significance.”*

Significance is defined by Historic England as “The sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of a place, often set out in a statement of significance”.

A significance assessment has been provided to ascertain historical development of the property and its contribution to the conservation area. It outlines the findings of the background research, based upon visual inspection of the building and its setting, and primary and secondary sources of local history and architecture, including maps, drawings and reports.

The appraisal of significance is the result of desktop research and analysis and a site visit conducted in November 2021 in order to inform the significance of Bracken Knoll.

Significance is determined on the basis of statutory designation and professional judgement. Our approach for determining significance builds upon our professional experience and the guidelines contained in two main national documents: the DCMS ‘Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings’ (November 2018) and in the Historic England’s ‘Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance’ (October 2019).

The first document states that the special interest of a building is determined based on its Architectural and Historic Interest, assessed through the principles of Age and Rarity, Aesthetic Merits, Selectivity and National Interest. Historic England identifies three potential points of interest that can be held by heritage assets: artistic and architectural, historical and archaeological.

5.2 Assessment criteria

This descriptive appraisal will evaluate the significance of the subject site against Historic England's criteria outlined in the aforementioned Historic England's 'Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance'. These points encompass the following points of interest and are in line with the statutory definitions set out in the NPPF:

- **Archaeological interest** There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- **Architectural and artistic interest** These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.
- **Historic Interest** An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

In order to determine the significance of a certain component of a heritage asset the sum of its artistic and architectural, archaeological or historic interest needs to be disaggregated and determined.

The grading of values is considered using three categories: **low, medium and high**.

5.3 Bracken Knoll

Archaeological

The archaeological significance of Bracken Knoll is **low to medium** given its position at the edge of the landscape which was once the Bishop's mediaeval hunting grounds to the north, now mostly transformed into the Highgate Golf Club. This historic terrain was extant by the 13th century of which little remains above ground with the exception of the remnants of the hunting lodge, a 'substantial stone building'⁴¹ to its north western edge close to early 20th century housing developments. Although beyond its boundaries, the subject site is within the vicinity of the associated Tier 1 Archaeological Priority Area – Bishop's Lodge, Highgate – as well as within the boundaries of the Tier 3 Hornsey Park Archaeology Priority Area. The former may contain 'kennels, animal traps and other earthworks associated with hunting'⁴², while the Hornsey Park Priority Area has already yielded a 'Roman lamp,

⁴¹ London Borough of Haringey and Oxford Archaeology, *Archaeological Priority Area Appraisal*, March 2021, p23

⁴² London Borough of Haringey and Oxford Archaeology, *Archaeological Priority Area Appraisal*, March 2021, p23

earthwork remains of the park pale, boundary banks and earthwork remains.⁴³ Haringey's APA is due to be updated in the next five years, but the previous assessment of the area has not found Courtenay Avenue to hold any potential for archaeological interest. Furthermore, it is known that Bracken Knoll was built in an undeveloped area of woodland with no earlier recorded phases of building or occupation.

Architectural and Artistic

The architectural and artistic value of Bracken Knoll is **low** as an example of the work of the very little-known draftsman Christopher Cooper (seems to have worked in the office of Walter Quennell in the late 1920s), albeit much changed in the 1990s, which retains fabric mostly to the principal façade and side elevations. None of Cooper's schemes are statutorily designated or Locally Listed, unlike C.H.B. Quennell, with whom he also worked for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in the 1920s. Bracken Knoll appears to be a manifestation of the Wren-esque form imbued with the influence of the Arts and Crafts, and although the 1990 modifications devised by O'Donnell utilised the original materials and vague form, they have nevertheless, distorted the domestic scale, proportion and bulk of the original composition of 1928, especially to the rear, and have also in-filled the balcony to original façade, which broke up the arrangement, and provided a sense of prestige. What is left of original design is found mostly to the outer bays of the principal façade, side elevations and two upper windows to the garden side; the main hipped roof remains mostly intact, although the garage to the north side of the house has also gone – this augmented the domestic, Arts and Crafts-style collective hipped roofline to gables.

The house has also been subject to changes within, and the plan-form of the 1928 dwelling has been substantially altered, with additions of hallways, removal of partitions, relocation of doorways and extension to the rear with a canted bay and French doors by 1960, later altered again in *circa* 1990. It is probable that the new rooms were added in 1990 ('day room', adjacent to the kitchen) while 1928 features have been removed altogether – including both the staircases, principal and secondary.

Historical

The historical value of Bracken Knoll is **low** as a surviving model of the early 20th century development undertaken by a draftsman and barely decipherable to its main front, due to substantial changes to its form. Bracken Knoll has a limited social interest as a speculative work, and its early occupiers are not yet known; of those who are, they are commercial professionals, and little documented.

5.4 The Highgate Conservation Area – Sub-area 7: Bishops

Archaeological

The archaeological value of the Bishops Sub-area is **low to medium** as it is part of the hunting grounds formerly in the possession of the Bishops of London from the 13th century, and of which the former stone-built hunting lodge is partly extant as remains to the north west edge of the Highgate Golf Course. Much of the Sub-area is located within the Tier 3 Archaeology Priority Area covering Hornsey Park, and where archaeological investigation has yielded find spots of note.

⁴³ London Borough of Haringey and Oxford Archaeology, *Archaeological Priority Area Appraisal*, March 2021, p80

Architectural and Artistic

The architectural and artistic value of the Bishops Sub-area is **medium** as a collective example of aesthetically accomplished works of the early 20th century developed as a broadly coherent scheme via the hands of several architects, including C.H.B. Quennell, about whom surprisingly relatively little has hitherto been known despite his prolific out-put and attributed listings. He had, however, along with his brother Walter, and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners who granted building leases here from 1906 onwards, a significant impact on the built milieu of the Sub-area, albeit that much of the early character has been changed in the recent years with new developments and introduction of the contemporary style in their place. Several of these new constructions are stylistically proficient and reflect the ideology which drove the format, the style, the layout of these wide and verdant side-streets. There are few statutorily designated buildings in the Sub-area, with the exception of a cluster further east closer to the village of Highgate including No. 9, View Road, a Grade II Listed composition of 1899 by Michael Bunney. Further to its south is the Victorian Gothic No. 16, Broadlands Road of the mid-19th century, also Grade II Listed.

Historical

The historical value of the Sub-area is **low to medium** given its early status as part of the See of London's hunting ground, although its significance as a consistent development pursued by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners from 1906 onwards is of some note. This was not a model village, but a relatively uniform scheme nevertheless which sought to provide the best housing in a suburban setting where the town met the country – the dividing lines between the two were intentionally blurred. Some of its original character has been changed and evolved via modern intervention and redevelopment.

5.5 Appraisal of the Contribution of the Subject Site to the Conservation Area

The following questions contained in the Checklist "*Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*" (Historic England Guidance, 2016) might be asked when considering the contribution made by unlisted buildings to the special architectural or historic interest of a Conservation Area. A positive response to one or more of the following **may** indicate that the unlisted building makes a positive contribution provided that its historic form and values have not been eroded.

'Is the building the work of a particular architect of regional or local note?'

Response: No. Christopher Cooper was a draftsman who appears to have worked in the office of Walter Quennell, but was certainly not an architect of regional or local note.

'Does it have landmark quality?'

Response: No. The building contributes neutrally to the overall character and appearance of the streetscape of Courtenay Avenue without having a strong individual presence.

'Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?'

Response: No. Many of the buildings in the Bishops sub-area of the conservation area have been similarly altered or completely reconstructed in recent years and only some characteristics could be said to be similar.

‘Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?’

Response: No. There are no adjacent statutory designated heritage assets or the locally listed buildings adjacent to this property.

‘Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?’

Response: No. There are no adjacent statutory designated heritage assets, and this property can at best be described to make a neutral contribution to the conservation area.

‘Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?’

Response: No.

‘Is it associated with a designed landscape e.g., a significant wall, terracing or a garden building?’

Response: No.

‘Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?’

Response: Somewhat. As previously explored, it is not a design by a notable architect, but it was a typical example of the wave of development that spread across this area in the early 20th century.

‘Does it have significant historic association with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?’

Response: No.

‘Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?’

Response: No.

‘Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area?’

Response: No. This was the first property to be built on the site, the area was woodlands prior to this development.

‘Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area?’

Response: No, due to its piecemeal changes and additions and it is not an example of good quality early 20th century design.

5.6 Significance plan analysis – front elevation



The above significance mapping of the front elevation follows the overall assessment of the existing house (sections 4.2 and 5.3), but also provides a more in depth understanding and analysis of the front elevation. As expanded above any limited contribution of the house to the conservation area, as well as any intrinsic special interest, are very limited to the front elevation only.

This is due to the facts that original composition of the front facade is still recognisable, although heavily modified in the 1990's, and that it was part of the historical streetscape of the early 20th century development of the area. This is all retained in the present proposal.

As elaborated above the house itself has a low architectural and aesthetic interest, and no specific design or craftsmanship quality, but as a part of the overall development of the area it kept some common and unifying characteristics in terms of its bulk, mass, articulation (including prominent chimney stacks), siting and spatial nature as well as materiality. These are the characteristics that are assessed above, rather than specific details and individual building elements.

It should also be noted that the significance categories used here are relative to the site/existing building overall significance and are not absolute categories. Essentially, the highest significance is awarded to the overall building spatial quality – its general bulk, mass, scale and articulation. The same is applied to the existing materiality, which is not easily translated on the above drawing.

Next level down, of considerable significance, are two projecting hipped bays framed by two storeys tall brick pilasters, including taller ground floor windows with shallow arches and smaller first floor windows under the eaves.

The roof itself is of some significance, as although it is original, it is quite plain and of common design with no special interest or heritage value. It contributes to the building's overall character and appearance only as part of the whole and not due to any of its innate qualities.

The central bay has been substantially altered in the 1990's and has weakened the original composition introducing alien and inappropriate elements out of scale. It therefore has no significance, but detrimental impact.

The side garage wing is also a modern 20th century addition and similarly has no significance, but overall neutral impact on the elevation as a whole.

5.7 Summary of Significance

As ascertained in the Historic England and Haringey's existing APAs, this area has no specific areas of archaeological interest, but due to the proximity of the APA's it is therefore rated **low to medium** for the purposes of this assessment. As explored in the previous section, the property was a design by a draftsman and was not an accomplished design to start with. There is no particular interest in the design of the building as it stands today and along with the piecemeal changes over the years Bracken Knoll is considered to have **low** architectural and artistic interest. There is no known personages or events of any historic significance associated with the property, as a result the historic interest is also, **low**.

The existing house has no specific design or craftsmanship quality, but only limited contribution as a part of the overall development of the area, as it kept some common and unifying characteristics in terms of its bulk, mass, articulation (including prominent chimney stacks), siting and spatial nature, as well as materiality. Therefore, any contribution of the house to the conservation area are very limited to the front elevation only. However, this contribution is not specifically linked to a particular element or a feature of the existing building, but more to a general spatial quality and materiality common to the original development of the area.

Furthermore, in undertaking the above assessment (section 5.5 Appraisal of the Contribution of the Subject Site to the Conservation Area) of a non-statutory listed site within a Conservation Area, no wholly positive answers have been provided in response to the checklist.

As such, it is considered that overall significance of Bracken Knoll and its contribution to the conservation area are **neutral**.

6 IMPACT ASSESSMENT & CONCLUSION

A Design & Access Statement with a series of plans, sections and elevations have been provided by Duffy Associates, Designer. This information gives a detailed indication of the scope and type of work proposed. The following is a high-level commentary of the proposed scheme, and supplements and elucidates the detailed architectural drawings and the Design & Access Statement which are to be regarded as the fully detailed extent of the proposal.

The design proposals have been amended from that presented at pre-app and then subsequently submitted with the application to reflect the comments and advice received (Figure 40).



Figure 40: The scheme submitted at the application stage following the pre-app consultation.

However, some further comments have been received from the officers following the application submission and the can be summarised as:

- *“The inconsistency of design is carried through to the first-floor extensions which appear as separate elements to the extension below and to the host building. The proposed mix of render and timber cladding with the existing brickwork and clay tiles contributes to this inconsistency.”*
- *“The newly proposed flat roof has allowed the roof form of the host building to be better appreciated, the interaction between the parapet at the height shown with the existing sloped roof would not result in an appropriately sleek or refined detail and needs revising.”*
- *“The different proportions of the proposed openings, the mix of materiality and detailing create an incoherent design. The resulting composition would be uncharacteristic of the prevailing historic character of the host building and this part of the conservation area resulting to less than substantial harm to the significance of the conservation area.”*

- *“The composition of the proposed rear elevation to ground and first floors would benefit from greater transparency, design consistency and elegant detailing to achieve a context-led response to the prevailing historic character of the host building and this part of the conservation area.”*

Following the latest comments from the officers the scheme has been revised further to address and respond positively to these. In essence, the revisions to the proposed design are as follows:

- First floor extensions are to be rendered to match ground floor extensions, to give uniformity to the new construction.
- Contemporary glazing retained, dimensions revised:
 - The ground floor central elevation opening reflects the width of the existing French door on the first floor as the base module
 - The ground floor and first floor side wings reflects the width of the existing windows on the first floor as the base module
- The impact of the first floor extension flat roofs has been minimised with the reduction in width of rear projections to show the line of the original roof and eaves at the back.
- Some further reduction to the windows width.
- The new proposed railings are in Arts and Crafts style, which takes inspiration from an image in the ‘Arts and Crafts: Craftsmanship’ section on the RIBA website. The terraces on other properties on Courtenay Avenue have glass balustrades, no railings present.
- New pilaster details at all corners of new extensions with accentuated coping stone to achieve better detail.
- Reduced height of garage extension, to leave the existing pitched roof untouched.

This is demonstrated fully in the Design & Access Statement and the revised drawings.



Figure 41: The current revised scheme following the latest comments from the officers

These proposals preserve the majority of the built form, beyond any mere facadism, and provide new extensions in the spirit of previous additions. The applicant and design team have made numerous changes to the proposals since the pre-application feedback and the scheme has evolved to have added focus on understanding of the relationship between the subject building and its setting within the conservation area. The ways in which the scheme has evolved to meet officer concerns are set out in the DAS. The proposal seeks to make changes to the house to meet the requirement of a modern family home, by modestly enlarging and adapting the house.

The design inspiration was driven by a contemporary approach to Arts & Crafts principles, such as clarity of form and structure, high-quality materials, honesty in detailing and craftsmanship. The materials do not attempt to ape the earlier existing but express the aesthetics and technology of the present day. There is no pretentious faux-classical pomposity that characterises some of the new houses being proposed or constructed in the vicinity. The only concession to historicism is the new dormer, which, as it forms part of the retained original roof, is more fitting in a matching style. The roof of the first floor extension now allows for better visibility of the existing roof and low eaves height as the rear projections have been reduced in width and are clearly read as a modern and subservient addition. Overall, the extension at the rear is modest in size and massing, and consistent in its design approach, but clearly distinct from the host building in its materiality and expression, whilst being respectful and subservient in its simplicity. It is providing a new chapter in the building's evolution and preserving, at the same time, its contribution to the conservation area and its immediate setting in Courtenay Avenue.

Essentially, the house will retain its basic footprint, mass, bulk and height, as well as the interior plan form, apart from where the additions are promulgated. The changes are largely confined to the rear elevation where projecting bays step outwards echoing directly the slightly irregular plan form of the existing. They also step upwards keeping to the established bay widths. These are all given flat roofs and reduced in width to reduce bulk further and leave the original roof form and central gable as dominant features. The materiality is an expression of contemporary idiom contrasting bricks with the simple unembellished rendered finish. The new addition presents a domestic scaled intimate, cohesive approach and declares its modernity. The fenestration uses larger units than would have been the case historically, but these are also representative of contemporary technology and materials. Their scale is dictated by the limits of the new envelope and give the whole new composition a feeling lightness and repose.

In terms of the layout and plan form, again, the majority of the house is preserved, the new accommodation provides the central "Social kitchen" and living area, which now defines the character and culture of our present era and is the heart of the family house. The new work addresses the garden very successfully, allowing the interplay between interior and exterior spaces to prevail.

It will provide accommodation and facilities to a higher standard in keeping with the increasing area demands. The new house will also have alterations to become a more sustainable and energy efficient home in comparison to the existing or any of the previously consented façade retention schemes. Mature landscape to the front and rear will be retained providing screening but will also offer some glimpse views into the plot from the streetscape.

Section 5.5 above assessed the contribution that the property makes to the conservation area – Bracken Knoll was found only to make a neutral contribution and the section 3 notes that the

prevailing character of Courtenay Avenue has fundamentally changed over time as a result of the recent developments, so the previous uniform and homogenous character of the road no longer exists. The character and appearance of the road as a whole and its contribution to the overall historic significance of the CA has lessened over time.

The design analysis and visuals in the Design & Access Statement and the drawings show that in townscape terms the proposed building retains the front elevation and thus its contribution to the conservation area – neutral though it may be – is preserved.

The proposed design offers improvements and enhancement to the existing building, which, is of low architectural merit having had several extensions and alterations. The new design aims to reflect on the identified characteristics and qualities of the original building in terms of scale and proportionality and responds to now prevalent architectural language of the locality where there are examples of contemporary additions. The roofscape with its chimneys and dormers is retained. The new extensions are to be constructed in high-quality materials and with appropriate craftsmanship.

In essence, a rather mundane house from the hand of a draughtsman, is given a new and fitting reconditioning, to provide a modest level of new accommodation, in a rational and cohesive contemporary form. The original house is retained and the additions while having an empathetic scale, express our own age, without any adverse clash with the retained architecture.

Overall, the proposals have been based on a thorough understanding of the subject site and the wider area in terms of the prevailing architectural style and historical development. The proposed additions have been designed as to cause no adverse impact on the heritage asset (conservation area), but to preserve and enhance its significance. The current proposed works are required to make better use of available space and further equip the building to function as a comfortable and modern single-family home.

It is, therefore, considered that the impact of the proposed works would not harm the conservation area, but would preserve its character and appearance. It is therefore concluded that the proposed works satisfy the relevant clauses of the NPPF. These are consistent with the spirit of local policies and national conservation principles.