

### **Topography**

- 1.2.2 Topographically the dominant feature of the Conservation Area is the hill upon which most of Camberwell Grove Conservation Area is situated. The village of Camberwell grew up along the more level area to the north, with wealthy families developing the land on the hill itself. Although the whole area is now developed, the hill still makes a significant impression.

### **Sub Areas within the Conservation Area**

- 1.2.3 Figure 1 shows the boundary of the Conservation Area. For the purposes of this appraisal it is divided into five sub-areas, which broadly represent differences in age and building type. Camberwell Grove is considered in two sub-areas north and south of the railway (sub-areas 1 and 2) for ease of reference: in terms of building type and character the two sub-areas are similar.

## **1.3 Planning history**

- 1.3.1 Camberwell Grove Conservation Area was originally designated in June 1970 under the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and later extended in February 1980.

### **Unitary Development Plan Policies**

- 1.3.2 The Unitary Development Plan for the London Borough of Southwark was adopted in 1995. There are three policies in the Plan that relate to the conservation, protection and enhancement of areas of character, buildings, ancient monuments, historic areas, parks and gardens of environmental quality, architectural interest and historical importance.

### **POLICY E.4.1: Conservation Areas**

- 1.3.3 'Where appropriate, the Council will designate new Conservation Areas and extend existing Conservation Areas. The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. The Council will prepare guidelines to identify their special qualities. Identification of the special architectural and historic qualities of an area will be based on detailed analysis of the area. This will include the architectural and historic quality, character and coherence of the buildings and the contribution which they make to the special interest of the area.'

### **POLICY E.4.2: Proposals Affecting Conservation Areas**

- 1.3.4 'Conservation Area Consent for demolition in Conservation Areas will not normally be granted except where certain conditions are met. These conditions are as follows:
- i) Consent will not normally be given for the redevelopment of, or partial demolition of buildings, or part of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area;
  - ii) There are acceptable and detailed plans for the site of the building to be demolished or partially demolished. Demolition is not to be undertaken before a contract for the carrying out of the works of redevelopment has been made, and planning permission has been granted for the development.

### **POLICY E.4.3: Conditions for Planning Permission in Conservation Areas**

- 1.3.5 'Planning permission for proposals affecting Conservation Areas will not normally be granted except where certain conditions are met. These conditions are as follows:
- i) The design of any new development or alteration demonstrates that a high priority has been given to the objective of positively preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area;

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- ii) Proposals should pay special regard to historic building lines, scale, height, and massing, traditional patterns of frontages, vertical or horizontal emphasis, plot widths and detailed design e.g. the scale and spacing of window opening, and the nature and quality of materials;
- iii) Schemes should be drawn up in detail (outline applications will normally not be accepted);
- iv) Drawings of the proposals should show the proposed development in its setting and indicate any trees to be retained, lost or replaced,
- v) A proposal for a site adjacent to or outside a Conservation Area will be unacceptable if it would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- vi) The proposed use will not adversely affect the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.'

### **Further Information**

- 1.3.6 *This document is not exhaustive, and further advice and information can be obtained from the Planning Department, London Borough of Southwark.*

## **2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Origins**

- 2.1.1 The name Camberwell has a variety of possible meanings. The place had a reputation as a spa with health-giving properties, and an early usage for the word camber is to indicate “bent” or “crooked”. It is likely that Camberwell refers to water from a well that could cure “crooked” or crippled people.
- 2.1.2 One of the first references to Camberwell is in the Domesday Book as a village or manor with its own church and land for ploughing and growing corn, and with meadows and woods. The recorded Lord of the Manor was Haimo, Sheriff of Surrey. Later it was passed by marriage to the Earl of Gloucester and then in the 1400-1500s to the Duke of Buckingham. The first local government of Camberwell was formed in 1674, when The Vestry was appointed. This lasted until 1900 when the Borough Council replaced it.

#### **Mediaeval economic base**

- 2.1.3 The village had its own mill and supported itself from the surrounding fields. Barley was grown and there was a brew-house in Peckham Road. It had trade from London supplying the city with fresh fruit and vegetables and milk, and many market gardens grew up in the area. Camberwell’s parish church is St Giles, and the present church was completed in 1844 on the site of the original church mentioned in the Domesday Book, to replace the mediaeval church that was destroyed by fire in 1841.
- 2.1.4 Camberwell was well known for its fair, which originated in 1279 and was held on Camberwell Green at the end of August and finished on the feast day of St Giles. Such autumn fairs were important commercial occasions: often for the hiring of the workforce for another twelve months following the summer harvest. Camberwell Fair was held for three weeks originally, but by the 1700s it lasted only 3 days and was for entertainment only. It was eventually abolished in 1855 and the site was handed over to the Vestry to make sure that the green stayed an open space.

#### **18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries - urbanisation**

- 2.1.5 Advances in transport allowed Camberwell to begin to develop from a country village during Georgian times, attracting wealthy residents because of its reputation for clean air. Coaching networks flourished during this period, and the construction of new bridges over the Thames to bypass the congestion of London Bridge allowed much more convenient journeys to the City and Westminster. Westminster Bridge was built in 1750 and Blackfriars in 1769, with new road routes into the Surrey side of the river. Camberwell New Road was built in 1818 to link Camberwell with Vauxhall Bridge, which was built in 1816.
- 2.1.6 By 1800 two firms each ran coaches 7 times a day from Camberwell to Gracechurch Street in the City. This was an expensive form of transport, as tolls had to be paid. In the mid-1800s the horse-drawn bus was developed and began to come into use in Camberwell. The first buses were introduced in 1851 to carry visitors to the Great Exhibition by Tillings bus company. The original business was very successful and eventually became incorporated into London Transport, maintaining the same routes.

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Figure 2 Greenwood's map of London and suburbs, 1830, showing Camberwell Grove as a tree-lined avenue "The Grove", and the earliest houses in Grove Park.

### Mid 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century – public transport

- 2.1.7 In 1862 the railway line was opened to Camberwell, followed by stations at East Dulwich and later Denmark Hill. Denmark Hill station is still in operation but used to be much bigger with large waiting room and open fires. It has now been restored, but the Phoenix and Firkin pub now occupies part of it. The railway service was very popular, and in 1871 it attracted competition from the tram companies using lines laid in the street. By the early 1900s as many of 250 trams passed every hour at peak times around Camberwell Green, on 14 different routes.
- 2.1.8 However, ease of access and the development boom in Camberwell undermined its exclusivity, and wealthier people moved out of the area. Most of the large old houses, which were designed for a single family and supporting staff, came to be occupied by several families. In parallel with this increased density of development, social and welfare provision increased. The Mary Datchelor School for Girls was founded in 1876, and the William Booth Memorial College was erected. In 1914 Maudsley hospital was built, named after Henry Maudsley, an eminent psychiatrist. The hospital specialises in the treatment of mental and neurological illness.

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### World Wars

- 2.1.9 In the first two years of World War I, over 100,000 men joined up at Camberwell Town Hall, 4,500 from Camberwell's gun brigade. With such a large conscription, the Borough suffered very many casualties. During World War II Camberwell was hit badly by air attacks. Some protection was provided by air raid shelters, like the one in Evelina Mansions (in New Church Road north of the Conservation Area), which had a shelter in the basement 20 feet long and 6 feet high. Children had to be evacuated but, even so, 1014 residents of the Borough of Camberwell were killed in wartime attacks. 5,650 houses were destroyed and almost all of the area had some kind of damage by the end of the War.
- 2.1.10 After the war, there was a desperate need for accommodation and a new building programme started by the council, infilling bomb sites first. The central section of Camberwell Grove is an example, where modern blocks of flats break the continuity of the line of early town houses.

## 2.2 Historic pattern of housing



Figure 3 Edward Stanford's map prepared in the 1860s

- 2.2.1 Before houses in were built Camberwell Grove it was well known for its tavern, called Grove House, with tea gardens and a bowling green which attracted visitors from London on day trips. Camberwell Hall adjoined it and was a fashionable venue for balls during the 18th century. Both the Tavern (though now rebuilt) and Camberwell

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Hall stand today. Camberwell Hall is now a private school. Most development in the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area is planned - rather than evolved - designed to provide good quality housing in a green setting. It is primarily a residential environment and most of the original houses remain in residential use. Only the alignments of Camberwell Church Road and Denmark Hill, which border the north and west sides of the Conservation Area, derive from historical routes.

- 2.2.2 Camberwell Grove and Grove Lane were built after 1776 when an earlier mansion house and land belonging to the Cock family was sold and demolished. The earliest terraces are on the eastern side. 33-45 and 79-85 date from 1770-80s when Dr Lettsom owned land at top of hill. 169-183 Grove Crescent were built in 1819 and in the same year Grove Chapel was built. The oldest houses in Grove Lane are 18-62 on the west, built in the late 1700s and known as Queens Row. Greenery is important to the design concept, provided by street trees and generous front gardens, while the strong building line of the development remained the dominant characteristic.

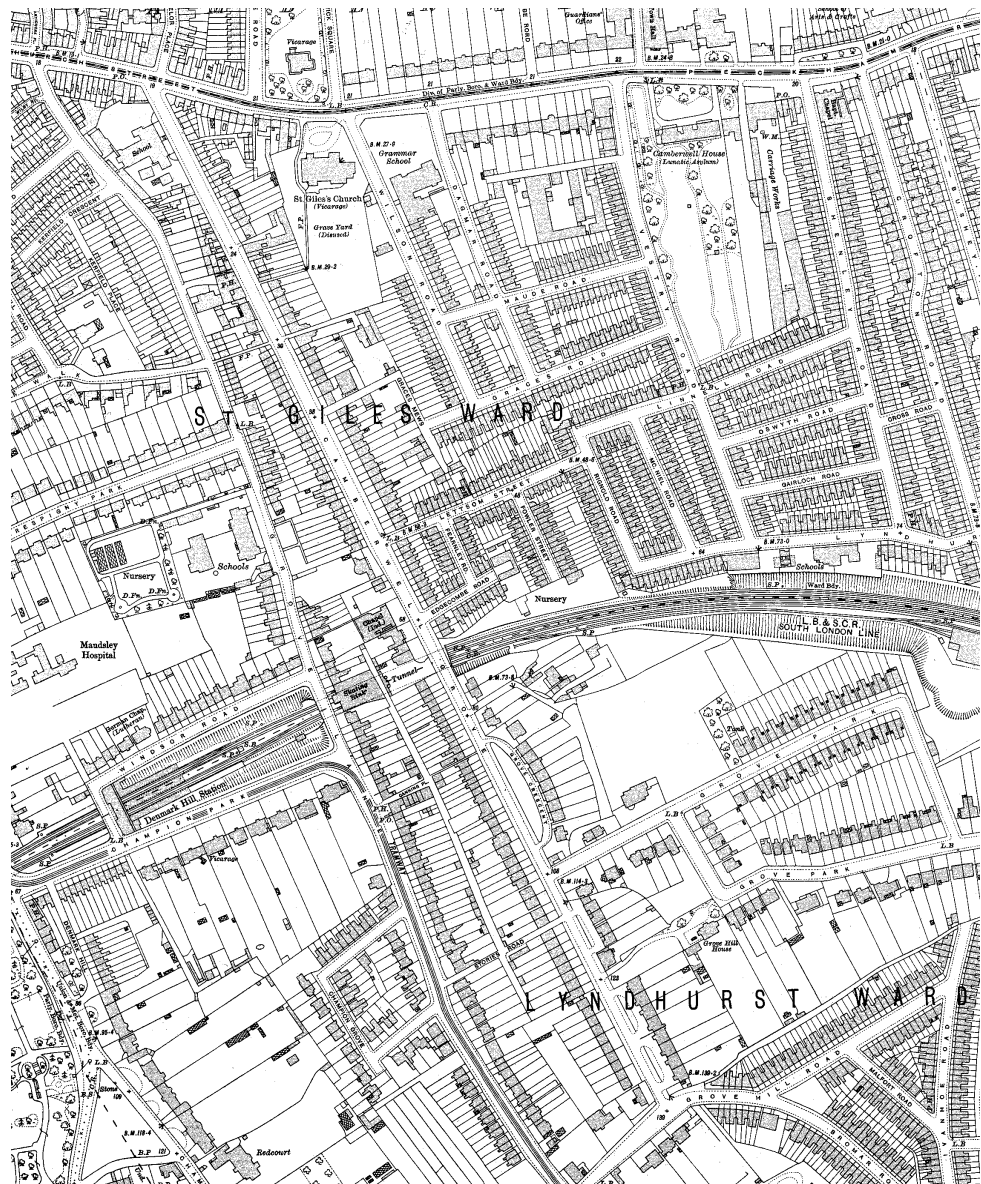


Figure 4 Camberwell Grove, 1914 Ordnance Survey Plan, showing the area built up more or less as it is today, with the exception of later war damage and the Salvation Army college which replaced villas in Champion Park.

## **Camberwell Grove Conservation Area**

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- 2.2.3 At Grove Park, the importance of landscape planting was advanced further, and the key planning principle was to provide fine houses with aspects onto green areas. Developed by Chadwick in the 1830s and 40s, it followed the taste for exclusive housing set overlooking green parkland and, until 1906, the larger houses on the south side of Grove Park looked onto a central garden. This approach to the speculative development of high-class housing areas was common in the London suburbs and fashionable towns in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2.2.4 Middle class suburbs expanded during the Victorian era, for example, at De Crespigny Park. These developments could not afford the extravagance of the original landscape setting of Grove Park, but street trees, front gardens and separation between pairs of houses were, and remain, important to the areas' intended character. Development intensified with construction of small scale terraced housing on the fields east of Camberwell Grove and Lyndhurst Way and semi-detached housing on the central gardens of Grove Park.

**3 THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA**

**3.1 Broad Context**

- 3.1.1 The Camberwell Grove Conservation Area is based on the two long residential streets of Camberwell Grove and Grove Lane, built between the 1770s and 1840s. In addition, it includes areas of historic interest in Champion Park, Denmark Hill and Grove Park.
- 3.1.2 At the lower, northern end of Camberwell Grove, the Conservation Area has a more mixed character, and it includes the short section which lies on Camberwell Church Street that is characterised by local shops, pubs and restaurants in a busy "high street" kind of environment. Here St. Giles Church and the Mary Datchelor School underline the neighbourhood centre function. The western side of the Conservation Area between Denmark Hill and Grove Lane has a strong institutional character, based on the extensive building complexes of the Salvation Army College and the Maudsley Hospital.
- 3.1.3 Denmark Hill, Champion Park and the southern part of Grove Lane are important traffic through routes, which provide most people's experience of the Conservation Area. They nevertheless have a strong distinctiveness, particularly Champion Park in its elevated position with views along the Denmark Hill railway station and the dominating tower of the Salvation Army College and Denmark Hill as a broad city-scale avenue. Grove Lane has a less imposing avenue character with residential scale development. Camberwell Grove, too, is an elegant residential avenue, a character which is both enhanced by the very long straight prospect down hill from its south end and marred by traffic, parking and traffic-calming.



Figure 5 200-218 Camberwell Grove – recently renovated

**Views to and from the area**

- 3.1.4 There are some significant views to and from major landmarks in the area. One of the two most significant landmarks is St. Giles Church Spire:, which is prominent in views eastwards along Camberwell New Road and from Camberwell Green, westwards along Peckham Road and southwards along Benhill Road. The second major landmark is the tower of the Salvation Army College, which is visible from a very wide area within and outside the Conservation Area because of its position on the Denmark Hill ridge. The same elevated position affords extensive views southwards over Dulwich and Streatham.

**Local Materials and details**

- 3.1.5 Most of the Conservation Area was constructed between the late 18th century and early 20th century, using a relatively limited range of materials to classical and, later, revivalist architectural styles. The commonest facing material for the earlier buildings is yellow London stock brick, or occasional red facing bricks, frequently with Portland/artificial stone or stucco dressings. Fully stuccoed façades are



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widespread from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and both brick and stucco occur throughout Camberwell Grove and Grove Lane. Roofs are usually covered in slate and constructed to shallow pitches, with overhanging or parapeted eaves, or in some cases with slated mansard attic storeys.

- 3.1.6 In later buildings the materials palette varies to brickwork decorated with coloured banding in blue, buff and red engineering bricks. Dressings in stone or stucco are commonly used and there is widespread use of rubbed red brick. English revivalist styles frequently employ timber and plaster decoration with steeper, plain tiled roofs with eaves and gable boards: the later development of Grove Park and Champion Grove demonstrates this pattern. Exceptionally, materials used in the two major landmark buildings vary from this typical range, with ragstone brought in from Kent at St. Giles Church and dark brown brick at The Salvation Army College.

#### **Architectural Details**

- 3.1.7 Through the 18<sup>th</sup> and most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, designs followed classical themes. Their essence is a strongly ordered form based on the structural components of the building, that creates regular rhythms of window and door openings in façades, and a careful proportion of window area to wall area. The heights of elements often reduce in upper storeys to give a slightly enhanced vertical perspective.



Figure 6 91 Camberwell Grove – typical late 18<sup>th</sup> century classical proportions – tall proportions to the first floor and reduced window heights at upper levels.

- 3.1.8 Any repetitiveness maybe relieved by the introduction of horizontal string-courses and cornices at floor and roof levels and balancing vertical elements such as pilasters. The visual balance of window proportions can be changed by the use of moulded surrounds and pediments to increase their prominence relative to the wall area. An important element related to many of the classical house designs are railings protecting basement areas and steps up to ground floor entrances.

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Figure 7 *Edwardian housing, Champion Grove*

- 3.1.9 In the late 19th century there is a change in style to a more vernacular "English" expression. Building forms are more piecemeal, assembled as careful composition of smaller scale elements of gables, bays and porches. Pitched roof-lines are an important element of this vernacular image and there are references to early English architecture in timber and rendered gable panels and moulded woodwork. The examples in the Conservation Area are generally fairly restrained and retain elements like vertical sash windows established in the classical designs.



Figure 8 *Edwardian detailing*

### **Streetscape**

- 3.1.10 Original ground surfacing materials have been lost throughout the Conservation Area. The most significant surviving element is the broad, flat granite kerbstones, which are still widespread. In places the original stone sett street surfaces remain, but most are now tarmac and almost everywhere stone flagged footways have been replaced in concrete slabs or tarmac.
- 3.1.11 Something of the original streetscape remains at Grove Crescent with railings, stone flags, and granite kerbs (see above), and the carriageway is rolled gravel, rather than setts. The access to St. Giles Churchyard between nos. 71 and 73 Camberwell Grove is paved in red brick, some of which are a little more burnt than others to give a mellow variegated effect. A good modern design of street lamp is also used here that consists of a simple globe beneath a shade, hanging cantilevered from a plain black column. The pattern is used in other Southwark Conservation Areas and would be suitable elsewhere in the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area.