



## 22. KINGSWESTON AND TRYM VALLEY CONSERVATION AREA

### DESCRIPTION

- (1) The Conservation Area has as its spine the prominent ridge of land linking the villages of Shirehampton and Henbury containing the former great estates of Kingsweston House and Blaise Castle House.
- (2) To the west the grounds of Kingsweston House originally extended to the banks of the River Avon to the south; their quality and character is now recognised as of merit being included within the List of Historic Gardens in Avon. Many features remain relating to the architecture, layout, planting and arrangement



which are contained in Penpole Wood and Shirehampton Park. Sir John Vanburgh's House and related Baroque features are also surprisingly intact.

- (3) To the east, the Harwood's estate is also still existent and contains lodges, follies and many prehistoric features relating to the more hilly topography based around Castle Hill, Coombe Hill and the steep escarpments of the River Trym. Between the two lies a limestone downland with mature woodlands to the south at Southside Wood and to the north at Evergreens Wood.
- (4) The principal roads traversing the area, Napier Miles Road, Shirehampton Road and Kingsweston Road still retain the character of estate roads within a parkland setting and together with their stone boundary walls and rural character do much to retain the natural charm of the area.
- (5) Above the River Trym at Coombe Dingle located along Grove Road and its backlands is a loosely grouped area of individual houses with generous gardens making up a mixed suburb of some distinction.
- (6) All across the area the escarpments give rise to exceptional long views both to the north west over to South Wales and south and south east over the River Avon and up to the Bristol Downs. The extent, history and quality of the open space mature landscape and its topography make this area a memorable experience to walk, ride and drive in, and this unspoilt character needs to be retained together with an adequate maintenance and careful husbanding of the woodlands.

## KEY ISSUES

### *Traffic and Movement*

- (1) The principal roads through the area are now more heavily trafficked resulting in a deterioration of the quality of their enjoyment use by pedestrians and a downgrading of the adjacent landscape.
- (2) There is pressure on the estate roads especially along Kingsweston Road for modifications to verges, boundary walls and junctions to cater for increased traffic flows, resulting in loss of the rural character of the roads and their traditional relationship with the landscaping.
- (3) To the south the Portway has created a barrier between the original landscaped park to Kingsweston House and the River Avon.

### *Land Use*

- (4) The area is principally one of open space with related leisure uses set in mature landscaping. Pressure exists where pockets of land remain outside this use for insertion of residential units. These have been inappropriate and intrusive and have led to a loss of cohesion of the estate layouts, and loss of the rural character.
- (5) Intensification of leisure uses has led to the provision of car parks within the area often of a poor quality and unrelated to the landscape in which they are inserted.
- (6) Many of the historic buildings within the area have been adapted to new uses. These, whilst retaining the buildings themselves have given rise to pressures to extend, develop, infill and provide additional car parking spaces within their landscape settings.

### *Townscape*

- (7) The estate landscape and its appearance is sensitive to change and pressures for adaptation to 20th Century needs. Lack of understanding as to its original character has in many cases has led to a reduction of its attractiveness.
- (8) Lack of landscape maintenance in management and good husbandry of the parkland has led to a reduction in mature trees, and loss of landscape clarity in many cases, enabling erosion of key parts of a coherent estate.



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- (9) The area is notably accessible for pedestrians, however lack of clear signposting and identification of footpaths and rights of way discourage full use of the opportunities available.
- (10) Lack of maintenance, clearance of footpaths, removal of litter and reinstatement of path surfaces leave much to be achieved in many cases.
- (11) The boundary walls, typical of the area are in need of repair and repointing and subject to pressures for removal along the highway to achieve better visibility.
- (12) In addition to the moulding and planting of the topography, the 19th Century planned landscapes includes many fine features relating to watercourses, and visual incidents on skylines. These need to be maintained and kept in repair where satisfactory and brought back into use where derelict.
- (13) Within the Coombe Dingle and Trym Valley Area development has often been of a character degrading and reducing the quality of the landscaped gardens and traditional buildings. There is a need to encourage a more sensitive approach to potential development, and protect the established layout and built form.

### GENERAL ENHANCEMENT OBJECTIVES

- (1) An environmental landscape management scheme needs to be prepared, emphasising provision for cyclists and pedestrians, in conjunction with the Highway Authority. This should address the need to relate improvements to the estate roads to the historic landscapes of which they form an important element.
- (2) The insertion of new residential units within the Conservation Area on land forming part of the original estates of Kingsweston and Blaise Castle will be resisted as detrimental to the character and reducing the landscape component of the area. Preservation of the landscape is seen as the principal objective within this Conservation Area.
- (3) Encouragement will be given to the integration of existing car parks into the landscape through the use of screening typical to the locality to enable a more harmonious relationship with the rural character of the area.
- (4) Where new car parking is being considered this should be designed to be integrated into the landscaping and utilise planting and materials traditional within the Conservation Area.
- (5) New uses for the estate buildings should not lead to over-development and should seek to resolve problems of reusing derelict or under-maintained stone buildings. New buildings should also complement the scale and character of the rural and residential environment and should conform to the City Council's Conservation Principles P2–P10.
- (6) The City Council will apply Principles P11–P19 in the Conservation Handbook to extensions and alterations to traditional buildings within the Conservation Area.
- (7) A landscape management plan needs to be prepared in conjunction with the Leisure Services Directorate and other interested parties for the estates in public ownership. This will need to address the retention and replenishment of the estate grounds and their continuing maintenance and upkeep. Any development of the open pastureland forming the traditional setting to the estates or included within the estates themselves and framing the principal views will be resisted. A strategy for encouraging clearly delineated access into the area needs to be devised, and should include a comprehensive signposting system.



- (8) As part of a management plan provision will need to be made for the maintenance, clearance and repair of the traditional footpaths within the estates.
- (9) It will be expected that the traditional stone boundary walls to fields, roads and general curtilages will be retained and repaired.
- (10) The outstanding contribution of the historic landscape and parkland is made up from a number of contributions such as follies, drives, watercourses and lodges. It is essential that these are retained, improved and given adequate maintenance. The City Council will give encouragement to schemes which will achieve this objective.
- (11) The City Council in September 1988 adopted a set of policies relating to an extension of the Conservation Area to include Coombe Dingle. These policies are set out in Section 4 in a separate document '*Proposed Extension, Coombe Dingle*' which will apply as part of the General Enhancement Policies for this section of the Conservation Area.