



23. SNEYD PARK CONSERVATION AREA

DESCRIPTION

- (1) A gently undulating area located just to the north of Durdham Down and bounded by the Avon Gorge and Valley to the east is the setting for the Sneyd Park Conservation Area, a verdant residential suburb of north Bristol.
- (2) In the south, three phases of development influence the character of the Conservation Area. Some of the large detached houses, which were built in the second half of the 19th Century when the estate of Sneyd Park was sub-divided into substantial plots for individual residences still remain. These reflect the pattern of building and character of development which still prevails today. The most renowned of these is Cooks Folly, a Victorian castellated extravaganza



which overlooks the Avon Gorge. The wealthy merchants who moved into the area funded the magnificent St. Mary Magdalene Church whose tower is a prominent landmark in the area.

- (3) In the inter-war period development to the north of the Victorian houses occurred. Larger than average semi-detached and detached houses were constructed. Many were influenced by the 'Arts and Crafts' style and were typical in style to many of the speculative suburban buildings in north-west Bristol although the density of development was somewhat lower than in other areas.
- (4) The demand for housing in the post-war period created an intensive period of development. Initially many of the large houses were either converted into flats or redeveloped at a higher density with new blocks of flats. Then properties with large gardens sold off plots for smaller housing.
- (5) A significant development during this period was the creation of Churchill Hall of Residence, a generously laid out complex of institutional buildings in the parkland setting of Stoke House Theology College. More recently Old Sneyd Park, the original grounds of Old Sneyd House, has been developed for open plan housing of a nondescript character.
- (6) From its origins to today, landscape has been an important element in the character of the area, which together with rubble walls defines and encloses streets and provides the setting for housing; creating a very mature arcadian suburb.
- (7) The western part of the Conservation Area contains the Avon Valley and the gateway to the Avon Gorge. The open green slopes and floodplain of the valley, currently used as playing fields, gives way to wooded slopes which mark the commencement of The Gorge.

KEY ISSUES

Traffic and Movement

- (1) The increasingly heavy usage of Stoke Hill as a commuter route leads to intrusion of traffic related pollution and noise into the area and downgrades its character as a rural route.
- (2) The Portway on the low lying water meadows fronting the River Avon has severed visual links with the river and introduced traffic noise into the locality.

Land Use

- (3) Continuing pressure for new housing in the area has led in the past to the loss of original houses, the further sub-division of large gardens and the development of existing open land for residential use. This would increase the density of development and diminish the open character of the Conservation Area.
- (4) There is a need to retain the residential character of the area.

Townscape

- (4) Further loss of original large detached houses would damage the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, which is dependant on a balance between landscaped settings to plot coverage by development.
- (5) The sub-division of large gardens into plots for smaller houses, if left unchecked will damage the historic pattern and character of building in the Conservation Area.
- (6) The layout, form and design of new housing developments, particularly with their open plan layouts, has in the past been out of keeping with the essential character of the area.



- (7) Recent housing development on previously open land has intruded into views across the Conservation Area. Further insensitive housing development on open land, particularly in the Avon Valley and Avon Gorge would threaten the scenic value of this landscape feature of national significance.

GENERAL ENHANCEMENT OBJECTIVES

- (1) Sub-division of large gardens will only be considered in those parts of the Conservation Area where the character and pattern of development will not be significantly affected.
- (2) A study will need to be undertaken to identify properties where sub-division of large gardens may be appropriate.
- (3) A study will need to be undertaken to identify those areas of open land where development for residential use may be appropriate.
- (4) The City Council will resist the demolition of original large detached houses in this Conservation Area, as they are essential to the character and appearance of the area.
- (5) The layout, form, design, landscaping and means of enclosure in new residential developments in the Conservation Area needs to respect the traditional forms characteristic of the area.
- (6) The City Council will oppose the development of open land in the Avon Valley and Avon Gorge. Elsewhere development of open land will only be permitted in those areas where the character of the Conservation Area will not be harmed.
- (7) Non-residential uses out of character with the area will be resisted.