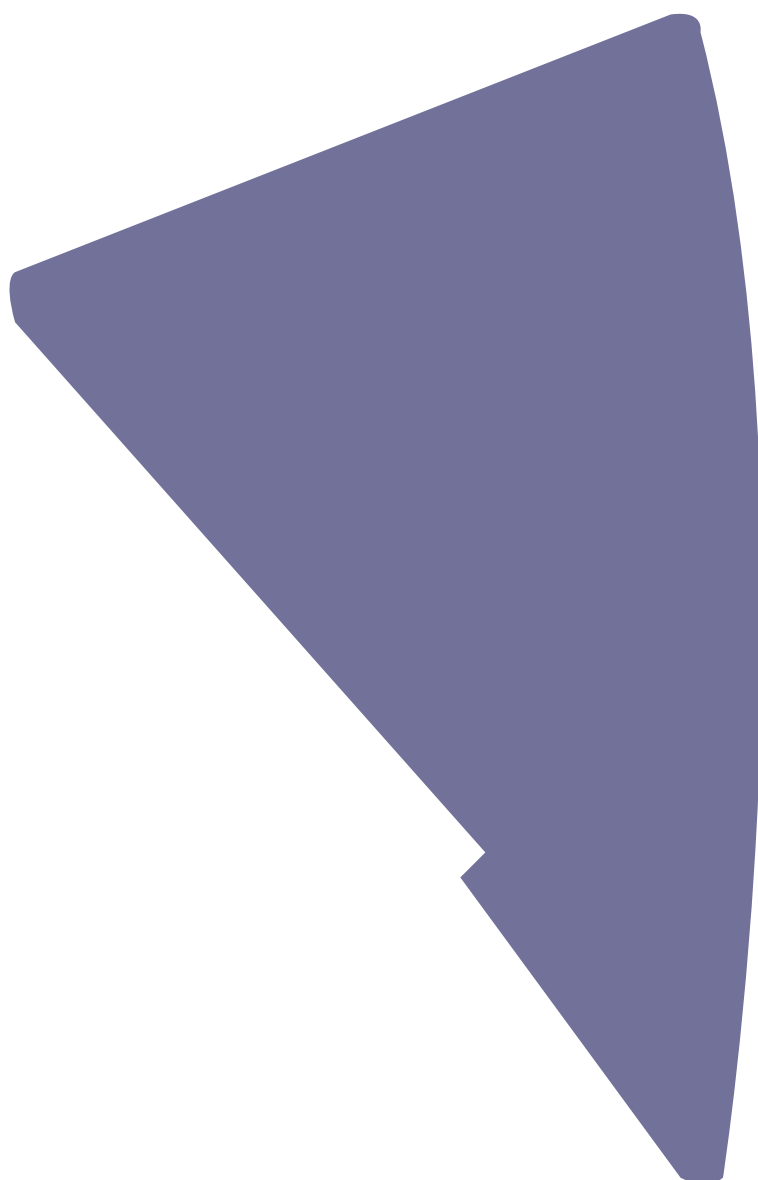


ST BERNARDS CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN



SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

CROYDON COUNCIL

ISSUE

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
adopted at full Council 24 April 2014

This document is available to view and download
online at:
[www.croydon.gov.uk/environment/conservation/
conservation-areas](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/environment/conservation/conservation-areas)

PUBLISHED BY

Spatial Planning Service, Croydon Council
Zone B, 6 Floor
Bernard Weatherill House,
8 Mint Walk
Croydon CR0 1EA
www.croydon.gov.uk

Email: spatial.planning@croydon.gov.uk
Tel: 0208 4071385

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CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION

The St Bernards Conservation Area was
designated on 10 October 2008

CONSERVATION AREA GENERAL GUIDANCE

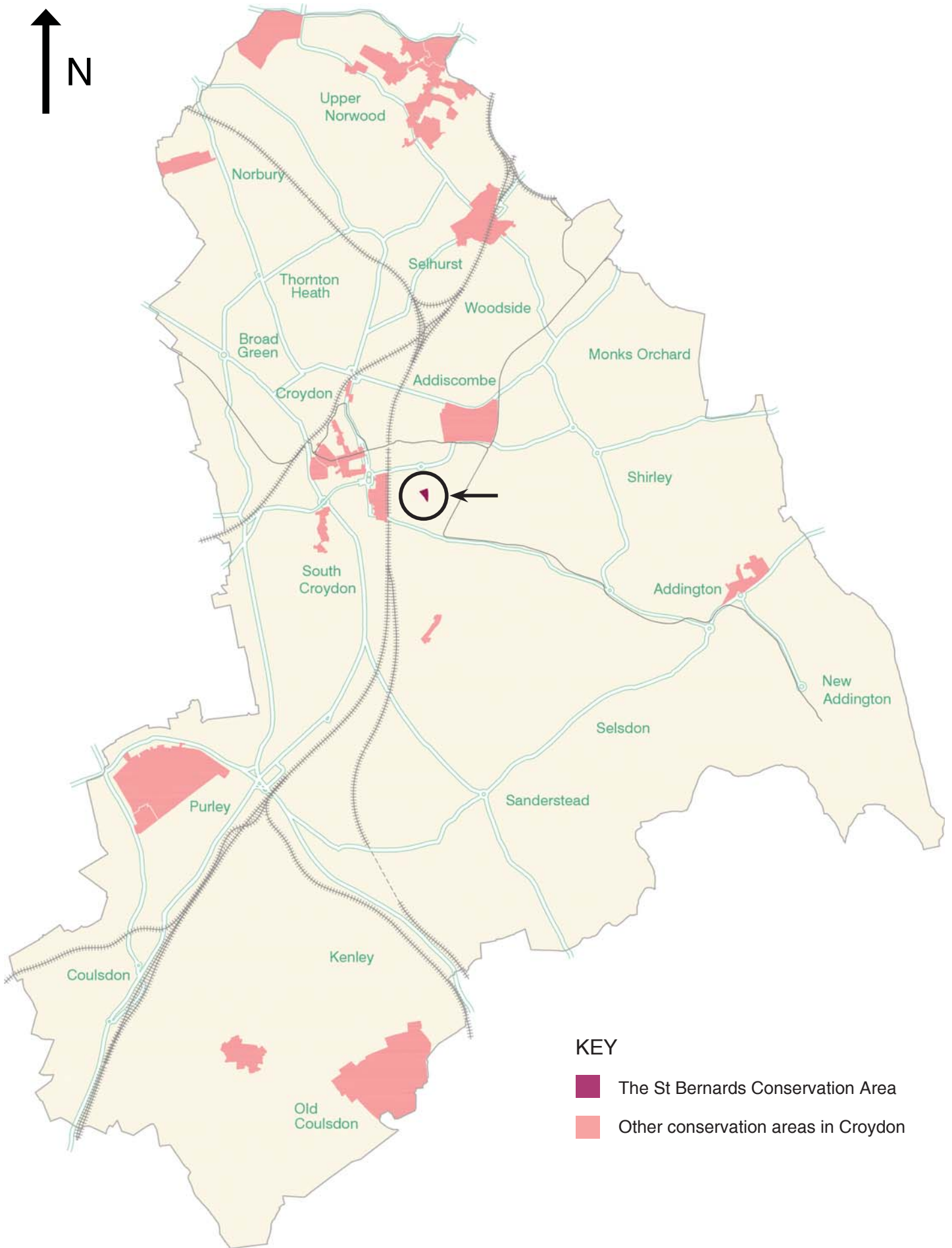
Please read this document alongside the
Croydon Conservation Area General Guidance
SPD (adopted April 2013). This document is
available online at:
[www.croydon.gov.uk/
environment/conservation/conservation-areas](http://www.croydon.gov.uk/environment/conservation/conservation-areas)

CROYDON LOCAL PLAN

The Croydon Local Plan and other
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[http://www.croydon.gov.uk/
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Map 1. The location of the St Bernards Conservation Area and other conservation areas in Croydon.

INTRODUCTION





Above: Map 2. The boundary of the St Bernards Conservation Area
Previous Page: South facing balconies and window boxes at St Bernards

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHAT IS A CONSERVATION AREA?

1.1.1 A conservation area is defined as an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Please see section 1.3 of *Croydon's Conservation Area General Guidance SPD* for further information.

1.2 WHAT IS A CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN?

1.2.1 A *Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan* is a document produced to supplement the Croydon Local Plan, the London Plan, and Croydon's *Conservation Area General Guidance SPD*.

1.2.2 An Appraisal defines the principal qualities that constitute the conservation area's special character, also identifying threats to this character. It is important to note that assessments made in this document are non-exhaustive, and further elements of architectural or historic interest may be present.

A Management Plan addresses the issues raised in the Appraisal and provides area-specific development guidelines to supplement those provided in Croydon's *Conservation Area General Guidance SPD*; potential enhancement schemes are also explored. For further information please see section 1.5 of the *Conservation Area General Guidance SPD*.

1.3 WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THIS DOCUMENT?

1.3.1 This document is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to the Croydon Local Plan: Strategic Policies (adopted April 2013) and is a material consideration when planning applications affecting the conservation area are assessed.

1.3.2 All planning applications for sites within the St Bernards Conservation Area should be informed by both this SPD and the Croydon *Conservation Area General Guidance SPD*.

1.4 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

1.4.1 Anatole Management (see section 7) and the Mid Croydon Conservation Area Advisory Panel (see section 1.5 of the *Conservation Area General Guidance SPD*) supplied information to inform the production of this document prior to public consultation, which ran from 2 September - 14 October 2013. The draft document was available to view and download on the Council's website and hard copies were available from local libraries. Site notices were placed in the conservation area, letters were sent to all properties located within its boundary, an article was published in the Croydon Guardian and two events were held at the Central Croydon Library and the Living Water Satisfies Cafe in Crystal Palace on 23 and 26 September respectively.

1.4.2 Following the consultation all responses were considered and where appropriate, the document was amended prior to a recommendation to full Council for adoption.



South facing elevations of a St Bernards terrace, viewed from the Piazza (see Map 8 on p.15)



Entrance to St Bernards from the west

1.5 DESIGNATION BACKGROUND

1.5.1 The St Bernards Conservation Area was designated in October 2008, as part of the 2007-2008 Borough-wide review of conservation areas and local areas of special character. The St Bernards Conservation Area was designated to assert its historic and architectural significance as an outstanding example of Modernist housing in Croydon and protect it from development that could harm its special character.



Detail of window box and balconies, important original architectural features

1.6 STATEMENT OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

1.6.1 St Bernards is a distinctive group of twenty-one locally listed Modernist houses built from 1969-71 by Wates Company as part of their extensive re-development of the Park Hill Area. St Bernards was designed by the Swiss architects Atelier 5, inspired by their earlier project at Siedlung Halen, Berne, Switzerland. The actual design of the St Bernards houses is relatively simple, yet coherent. They are constructed largely from brick and timber. As a group they are of a high architectural quality and are an outstanding example of Modernist housing, described by Nikolaus Pevsner as 'a group with few equals in Britain' (1973).



North-east end of a St Bernards terrace adjacent to the communal gardens

1.6.3 Houses are arranged in a series of terraces over a slope in a good quality landscape. All traffic is segregated from housing and areas of communal open space. Despite the development's high density, each house has a sense of privacy and all are orientated downhill, separated from the road, while retaining a strong sense of community through the pedestrianised nature of the area and the shared areas of communal open space.



View of St Bernards from Chichester Road

APPRAISAL



The following Appraisal defines the characteristics that make the St Bernards Conservation Area special, including its wider context, historic development, townscape, streetscape and architectural character. It also describes its current condition.

Previous page: Steps leading to a St Bernards pathway from Chichester Road



The nearby Park Hill Water Tower in Park Hill



Shops in the Park Hill area

2.0 CONTEXT

2.1 LOCATION AND SETTING

2.1.1 The St Bernards Conservation Area is situated in the Fairfield Ward and lies within the Park Hill Village, a large housing estate developed by the Wates Company in the 1960s and 70s. The St Bernards Conservation Area is approximately one mile south east of Croydon's town centre.

2.1.2 The area around Park Hill is a series of neighbourhoods conceived as a group focussed around a nucleus including shops, schools and a parish church. The area is suburban in character, with many mature trees and much planting present. St Bernards is distinct from other groupings of houses in the Park Hill due to its high quality architectural conception and unusual and coherent Modernist design.

2.1.3 The St Bernards estate is laid out in a triangular formation, bounded by Chichester Road to the north and the busy Park Hill Road to the east. Chichester Road is approximately 11.5m wide; playing fields opposite give an open, leafy feel to the conservation area's setting. There is a cul-de-sac by the side of St Bernards which connects the Fairfield Path from Park Hill Road with Chichester Road.

2.1.5 Park Hill Recreation Ground, an historic area of parkland on the Council's Local List of Historic Parks and Gardens (See Section 4.5 of the *Croydon Conservation Area General Guidance SPD*), is also in close proximity. Situated on Park Hill are the Grade II Listed Water Tower, designed by Baldwin Latham, Borough Engineer, and built in 1867 of intricate brick construction, and the locally listed Coombe Cliff

house, built for John Horniman, the tea trader and public benefactor, currently used as an educational centre. Horniman's spectacular ironwork conservatory, originally constructed at Coombe Cliffe in 1894, was removed from the building in 1984, and re-erected at the Horniman museum in Forest Hill in the 1990s.

2.1.6 St Matthew's Parish Church (locally listed), built from 1965-72, is located nearby on Park Hill Road. Designed by the architect David Bush to be an integral component of the Park Hill community, it contains windows by John Hayward that incorporate pieces of Victorian stained glass from the demolished St Matthew, George Street, which St Matthew's was constructed to replace.



Stained glass window at St Matthew's Parish Church

2.2 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

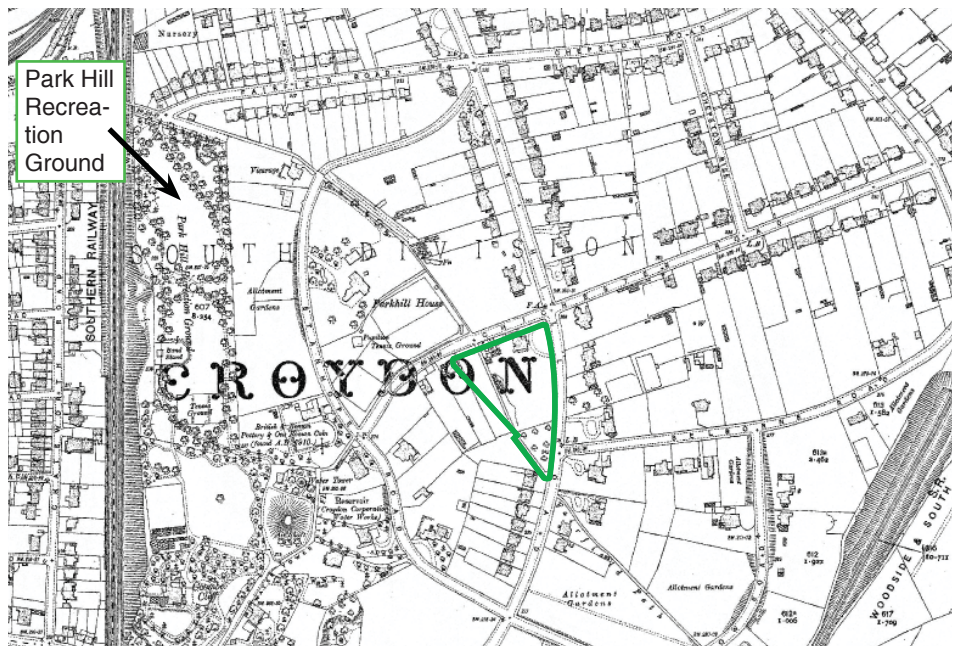
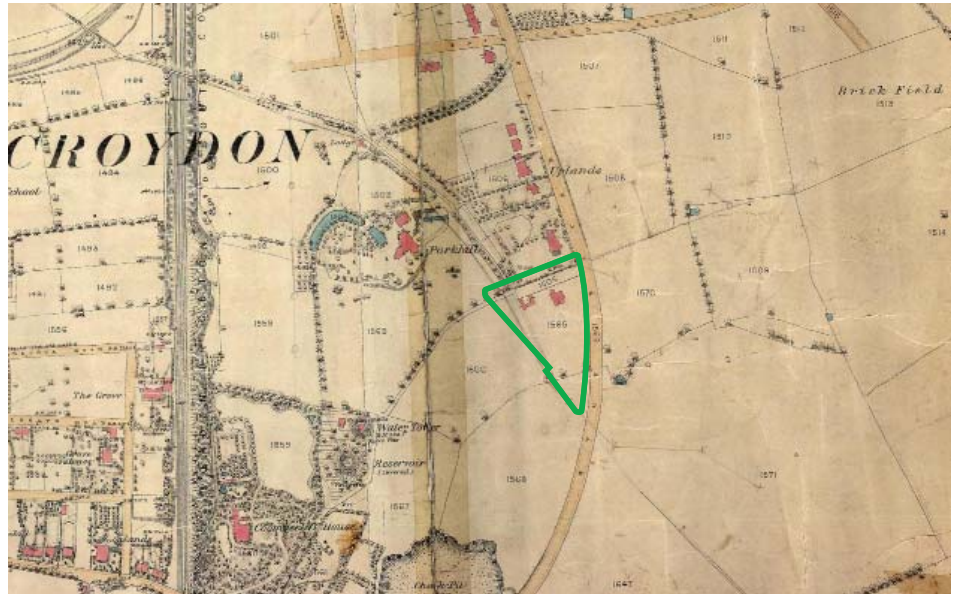
2.2.1 For over 800 years the ancient Park Hill estate was a deer hunting park for the Archbishops of Canterbury, who kept a summer residence at Croydon, now the Grade I Listed Old Palace School. The estate was increasingly used for agriculture and as a racing ground.

2.2.2 Croydon experienced much growth throughout the 19th century. Due to its proximity to the town centre, the Park Hill estate was attractive for development and in the late 19th century it was bought by the Croydon Corporation. Many substantial detached properties in large plots were built to the east and south-east of the Park Hill Recreation Ground, on and around where St Bernards is now situated. The Park Hill Recreation Ground opened in 1888.

2.2.3 After the Second World War, there was demand for more housing in the area. In the 1960s the construction company Wates started to re-develop Park Hill. Many Victorian properties were demolished and replaced with smaller, higher density, modern dwellings. Speculative housing developments were increasing in Croydon, as in many other British towns and cities.



Number 3 Chichester Road, now demolished. An example of Victorian housing that once existed in the area.



Maps 3, 4, and 5 (from top): Historic maps from top: 1868, 1933, 1970. The green line indicates the boundary of the present-day conservation area



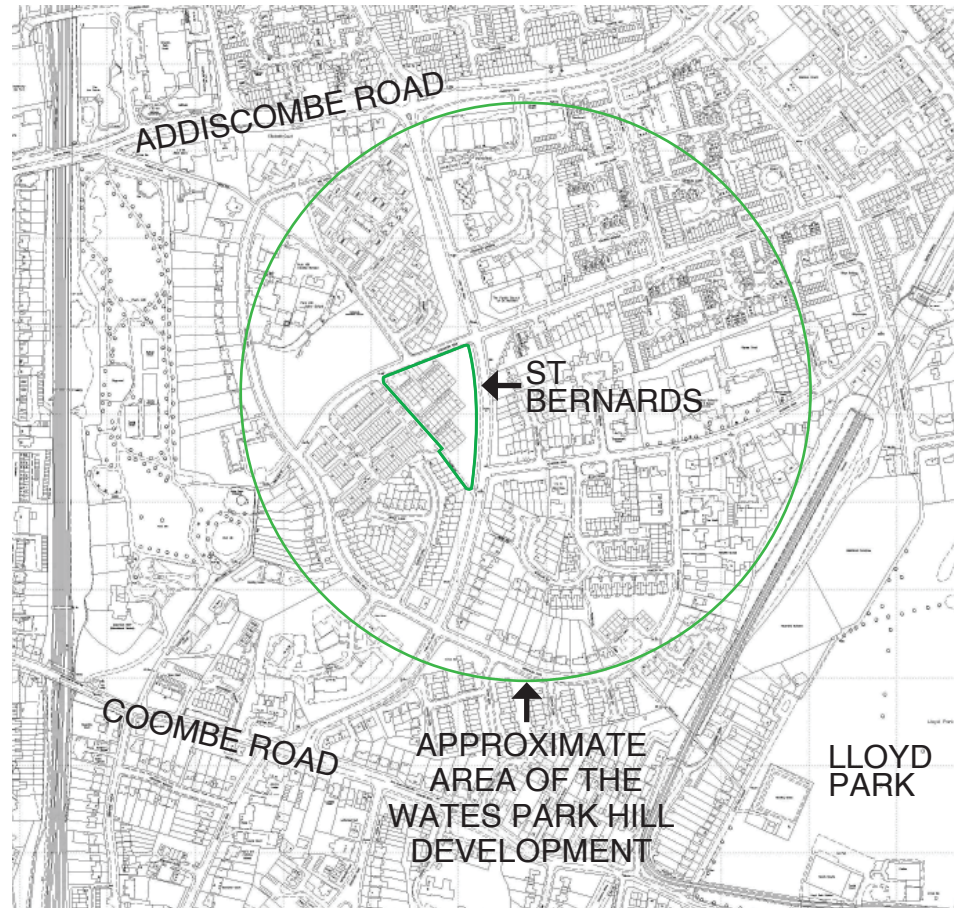
Aerial photographs: 1956 (top) and 2006 (bottom). The green line indicates the current conservation area boundary

WATES AND THE PARK HILL CONCEPT

2.2.4 The Wates Company, still active today under the name of 'Wates Group', was established in 1897 by Edward Wates and his three brothers as an independent family-owned company based in Croydon. During the 1920s and 1930s Edward's sons, Norman, Sir Ronald and Allan, expanded the company through speculative house building and then extended their activities into general contracting. During the Second World War, the company built aerodromes, army camps, factories and most notably, developed a speciality in constructing pre-cast and *in situ* reinforced concrete barges and floating docks. The company supplied major parts of the Mulberry Harbours that were towed across the Channel after D-Day. After the War, the company used this knowledge of pre-cast concrete to develop high-rise and low-rise industrialised housing systems and built over 60,000 houses and flats using these techniques.

2.2.5 In the post-War period Wates completed several large housing estate developments in Dulwich and elsewhere around London. In the 1960s Wates turned their attention to the Park Hill area, an area of approximately 120 acres roughly half a mile south east of East Croydon Station.

2.2.6 Once the development principle was established, Wates employed a consultant architect and planner, Anthony Minoprio. After six years of negotiations an agreement was reached on an outline masterplan. The Wates team envisioned the 'rambling, obsolete Victorian houses' being 'replaced by modern



Map 6: The Park Hill Area

homes of crisp, clean design in settings to which careful attention is given to landscaping' (Croydon: Wates Built Homes).

2.2.7 A Wates marketing booklet stated their vision: 'Park Hill Village will become a township of 7000 to 8000 people, living in modern houses and flats in an environment planned for seclusion and spaciousness.' Communities were to be 'entities with a strong element of self containment where people broadly from the same stratum of society live together' in 'urban villages, which are one of the most attractive ways of living in towns'. The booklet further claimed that Park Hill village was to be 'the first attempt in the mid-20th century to create an environment comparable to the village-in-a-town of the 18th and 19th centuries.' The idea was to create different 'sectors' that could be relatively self-

sufficient while still forming part of the urban village.

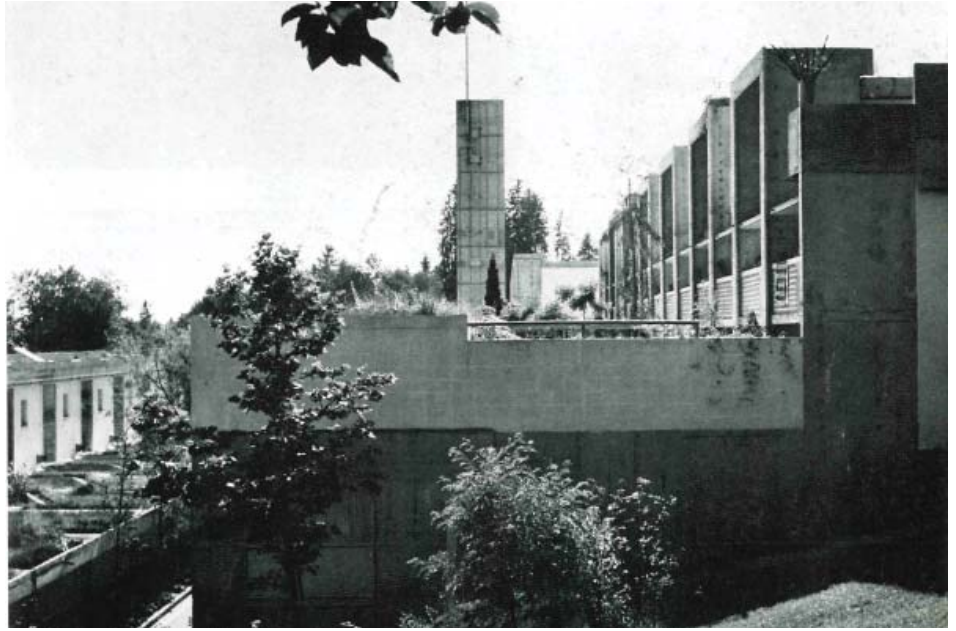
2.2.8 A governing principle for the Park Hill redevelopment was to segregate traffic and parking from housing. It was proposed that no house should front on to a road. Instead garages, which every flat and house in Wates' Park Hill Village was to be provided with, were to be approached by service roads. Road layout was designed to discourage through-traffic.

2.2.9 The area was to have a shopping precinct, and it was planned to have a church, a village hall, a restaurant and a public house. The existing Archbishop Tennison's grammar school at Selbourne Road was to be retained and supplemented with the new Park Hill primary school on Stanhope Road.

2.2.10 All residents were to have access to a generous amount of shared open space to provide space for children to play and to enhance the prospect from each house. Good landscaping was highly valued; the Wates booklet stated that 'careful planning makes houses belong to the landscape and not impose themselves on it.'

2.2.11 All neighbourhoods were to have a 'Garden Trust' with an annual service charge. The Managing Trustees of these Trusts were to be responsible for the management and maintenance of private roads and shared landscaping areas to ensure that the surroundings were kept to a good standard for all residents.

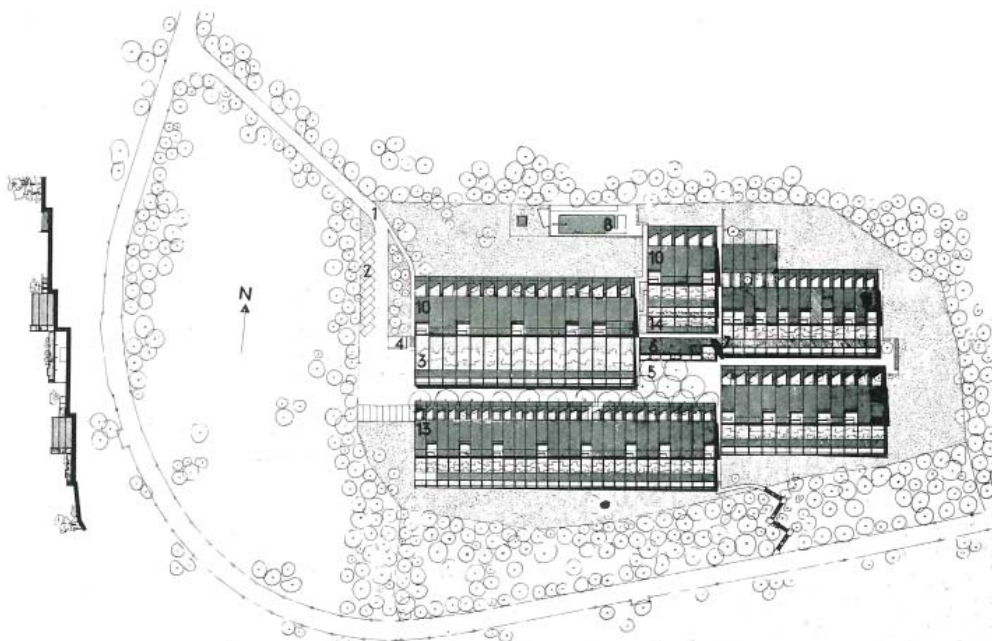
2.2.12 Wates originally intended to have a range of architects working on different parts of the Park Hill development, to provide architectural diversification and to avoid monotony. The commissioned architects who designed good groupings of houses included Team 4 (Norman Foster, Richard Rogers, Su Brumwell and Wendy Cheeseman), Austin



Vernon & Partners (who designed the 'atrium' houses on Tipton Drive and Copping Close off Brownlow Road), Frederic MacManus & Partners and Atelier 5. As it happened, due to financial reasons much of the design work was done by in-house architects under Kenneth Bland. As a result much of the development, whilst still based on Wates' visionary principles is more conventional in its design when compared to the neighbourhoods designed by a range of architects earlier in the process.

ATELIER 5 AND ST BERNARDS

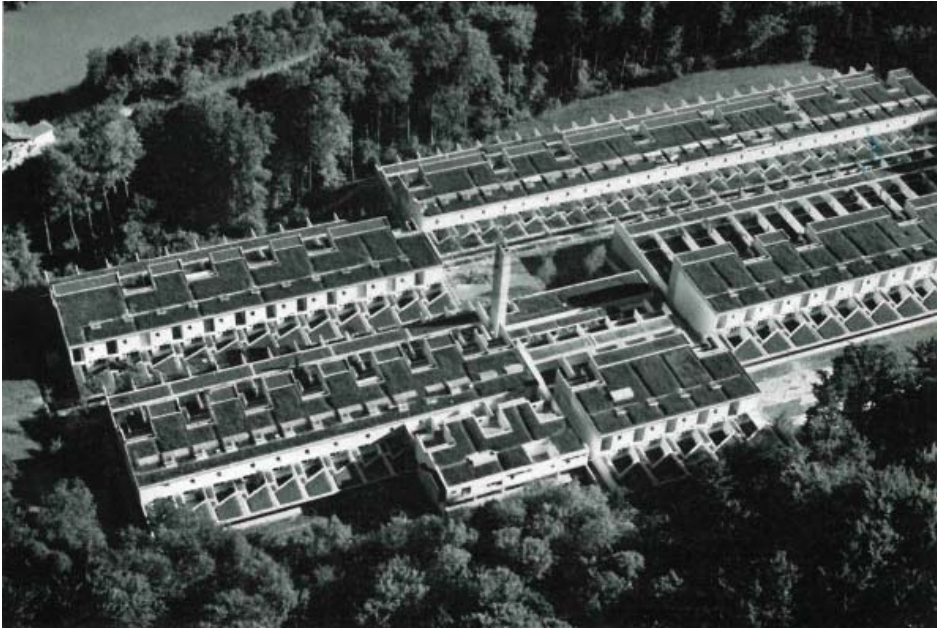
2.2.13 In 1964, a group of Wates executives visited Siedlung Halen, near Berne, Switzerland to see a development designed by the Swiss architects Atelier 5, an innovative practice founded in 1955 in Basle by five young Swiss architects. They had a shared vision based on their admiration for Le Corbusier, who was formative in the establishment of the International Style and the spread of Modernist architecture. Siedlung Halen (1959-61)



SIEDLUNG HALEN SITE PLAN AND SECTION

1. Access Road
2. Parking
3. Underground Garage
4. Petrol Station
5. Village Square
6. Shops and Restaurant
7. Underground Power and Utilities
8. Swimming Pool and Games
9. Steps
- 10-13 Housing
- 14 Studio Apartments

Above, top and overleaf: photographs, site plan and section of Siedlung Halen. R. Banham, *The New Brutalism*, 1966



least ten years and who had become a partner in 1969, to design a similar housing project for Croydon. This was to be one of Atelier 5's first major commissions after the completion of Siedlung Halen and remains their only project in the United Kingdom.

2.2.17 As part of the commission the practice were invited to visit Croydon to advise on the selection of an appropriate site; St Bernards was chosen due to its established landscape features and physical similarities to the Berne development with the south-facing slope.

was Atelier 5's first project and was finished in 1961, taking six years to complete.

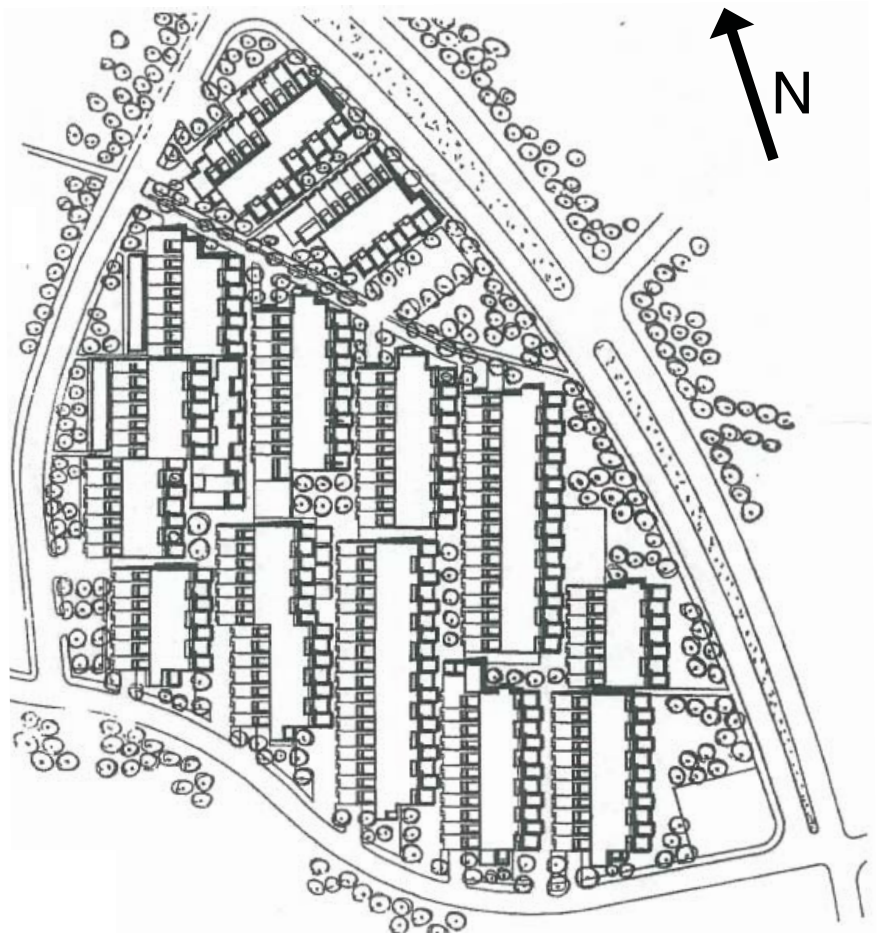
2.2.14 A development of eighty houses built on the slopes of the Alpine foothills, Siedlung Halen was laid out in terraces stepping down the hillside allowing for views from one house over another. Traffic and housing areas were segregated and car parking was situated in a basement location at the perimeter of the development.

principles demonstrated at Siedlung Halen were evidently very influential on the Park Hill Village as well as St Bernards. In 1966 the Wates executives commissioned Anatole du Fresne of Atelier 5, who had worked in the practice for at

2.2.18 An application for outline planning permission reveals that 161 houses on a site of 10.5 acres was originally proposed. In the end Wates did not complete the St Bernards development as planned

2.2.15 The overall design allowed for privacy in high density housing while retaining a sense of community and providing traffic segregation and safe children's play. As put by the *Architectural Review* (1966), mountainside housing developments such as Halen achieved 'a mean between cottage and point block without the obvious disadvantages of either.' The *Architect's Journal* (1970) also observed that Siedlung Halen recalled 'late Corbusian projects such as the famous *Roq et Rob* settlement, or the pilgrimage hostel of Saint Baume.'

2.2.16 The Wates executives were clearly impressed as the



Original St Bernards Site Plan, from the Architects Journal

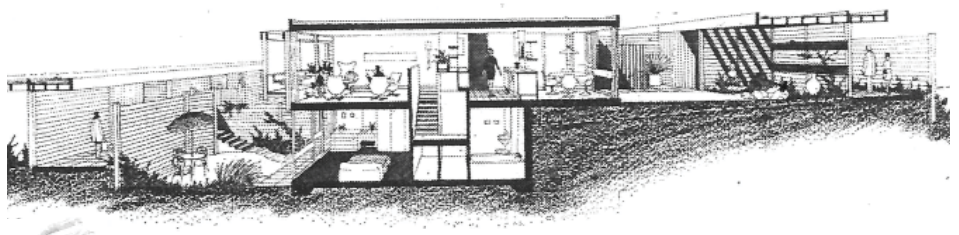
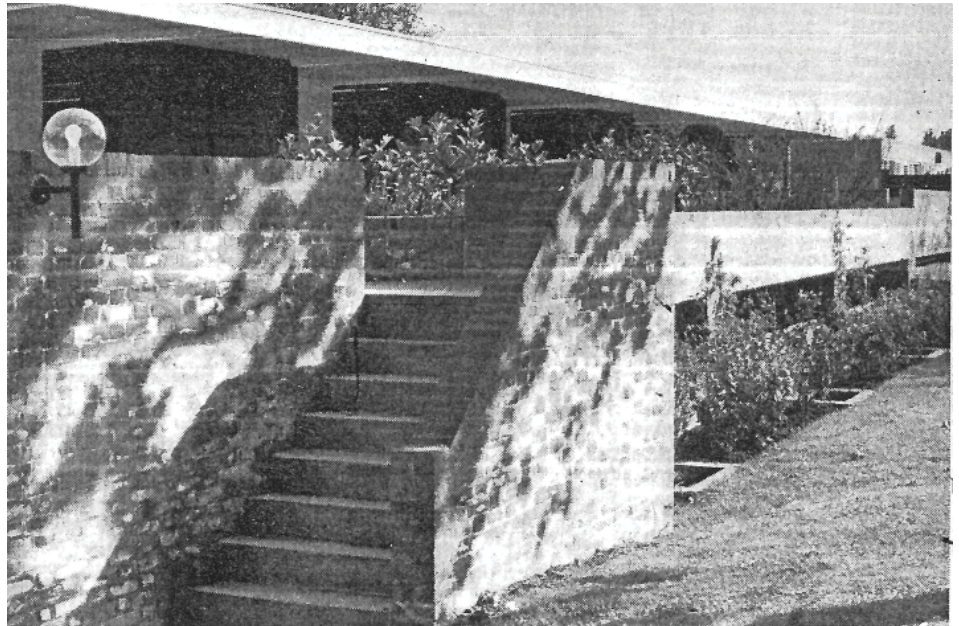
and only 21 houses were constructed. It is not clear precisely why the area was called St Bernards, other than it being a Swiss reference.

2.2.19 Such reductions were symptomatic of the fact that as the Park Hill project progressed, original aspirations were toned down, most likely for financial reasons. It is likely that the construction of St Bernards proved too costly to implement on the scale originally proposed. The existing development at St Bernards was constructed in 1969-70.

2.2.20 The quality of the St Bernards development was recognized as soon as it was completed and awarded the 1971 Croydon Housing Design Award for being 'a radical departure from the English suburban norm'. The Architects Journal (1970) stated that 'Built in brick and timber, St Bernards is a happy marriage of rational planning and natural materials... it is not often that the developer risks the construction of speculative housing any further advanced in concept than rows of semis which litter our urban areas...Wates' efforts are praiseworthy in exploring the market in this way'.

2.2.21 The architectural significance of St Bernards is widely recognised, including by the Twentieth Century Society. This recognition was further acknowledged by the designation of the area as a conservation area in October 2008 – the Cabinet Report recommending the designation describes the area as 'a remarkably intact and well-preserved example of modernist housing'.

2.2.22 It has been suggested that the scheme, along with

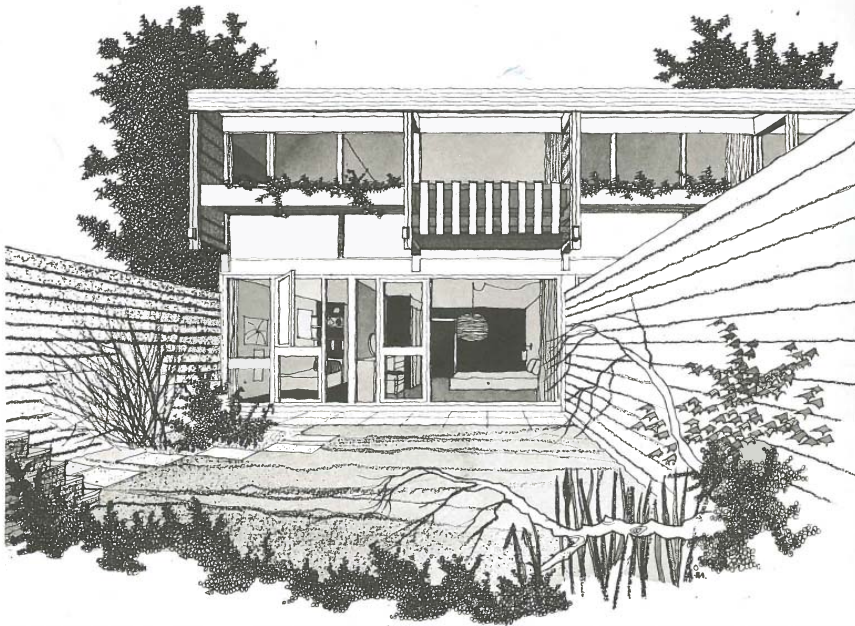


Images of St Bernards from the *Architect's Journal* (1970): photograph of staircase leading to a walkway (top), photograph of a terrace of houses from the piazza (middle) and cross section drawing (bottom)

Atelier 5's original development at Siedlung Halen, may have helped to inspire other modernist housing estates in London, for example the Maiden Lane estate in Camden, designed by architects Benson and Forsyth.

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- R. Banham, *The New Brutalism*, 1966
- 'Ledge Discipline', *Architectural Review*, June 1966
- 'Croydon Atelier 5', *Architect's Journal*, 17 June 1970
- 'St Bernards' *The Builder*, 1 May 1970

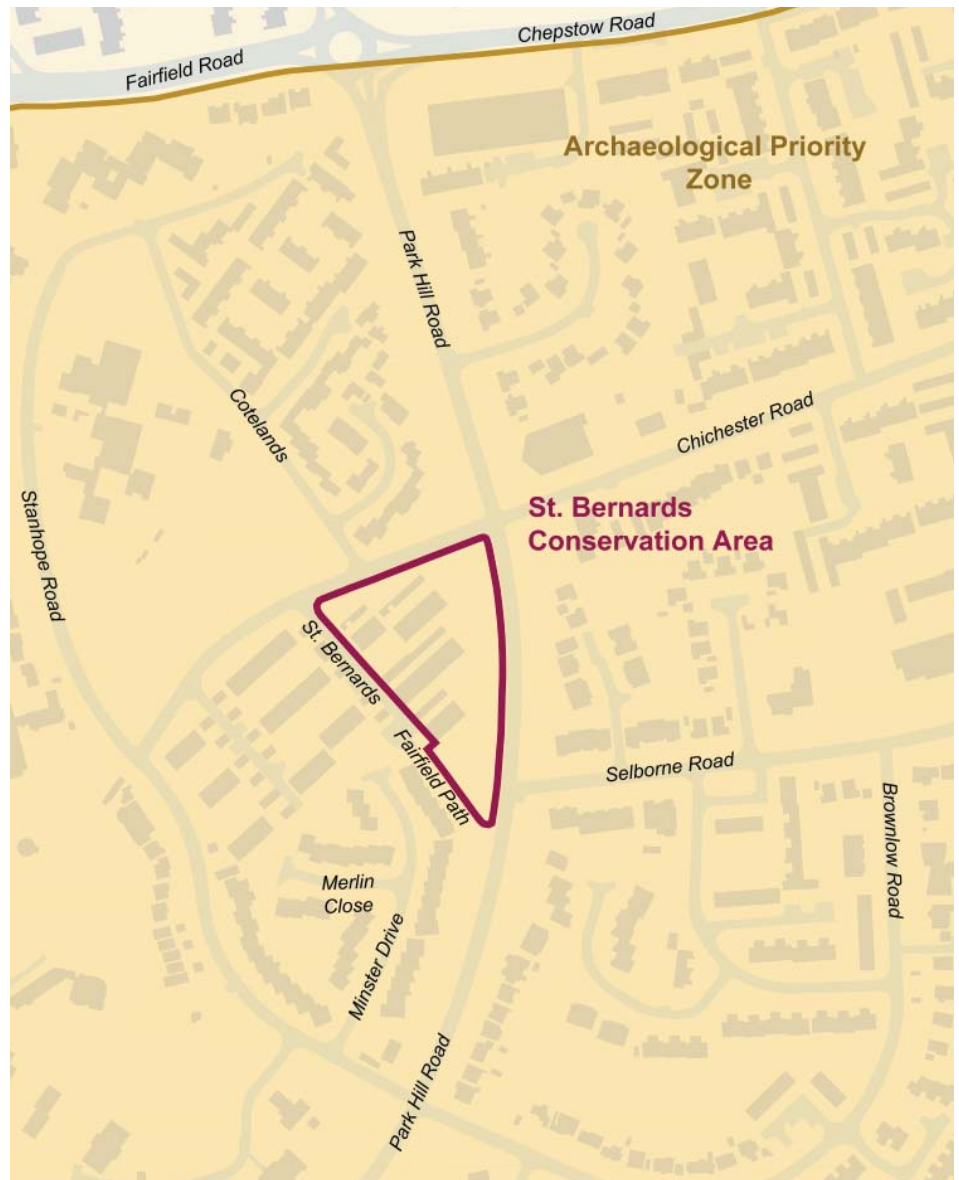


Sketches of St Bernards produced by the architects for a Wates promotional booklet

2.3 ARCHEAOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

2.3.1 The St Bernards Conservation Area is contained within the Croydon Archaeological Priority Zone (APZ), which indicates a high probability of archaeological interest below ground. APZs are designated to help protect archaeological remains that might be affected by development. Please see section 4.5 of *Croydon's Conservation Area General Guidance SPD* for further information.

2.3.2 Archaeological finds on Park Hill, include Iron Age potsherds, a Roman bowl, and the remains of Park Hill farmhouse and farmstead. Details of archaeological finds in the area, including grid references of their location, are held by the Greater London Historic Environment Record, managed by English Heritage (see Appendix for contact details).



Map 7: The location of the St Bernards Conservation Area within the Croydon Archaeological Priority Zone

3.0 TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

Townscape is the arrangement and appearance of buildings, spaces and other physical features in the built and natural environments.

3.1 LAYOUT AND PLAN FORM

3.1.1 The St Bernards Conservation Area comprises twenty-one separate houses laid out on a north-west to south-east axis in a coherent grouping, arranged over four terraces connected by a series of pedestrian walkways and open spaces (see Map 8). The grouping forms a triangular shaped conservation area boundary.

3.1.2 All houses have gardens to the front and back. Houses are arranged over two levels in a stepped formation and are entered from the north-west through gardens. Two different house types are present, one with a three-bed arrangement and the other with a four-bed arrangement (see section 5) grouped in small terraces. All houses also have back gardens that are accessed from the lower level and most have gates to access communal areas beyond.

3.2 DENSITY AND LAND USES

3.2.1 All buildings in the conservation area are residential, single household dwellings with space also allocated to common outdoor areas and a shared underground garage.

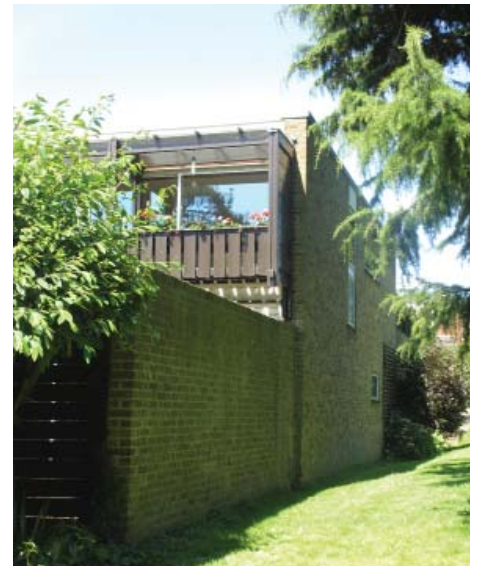
3.2.2 Houses in the St Bernards Estate are grouped in a fairly high density of twenty-one properties in 0.9 hectares. The layout is carefully designed to give a good balance of open space and privacy and seclusion (see Map 8).



Communal open space at St Bernards



End of terrace to St Bernards cul-de-sac



End of terrace to communal space



View over rooftops from within a St Bernards house, showing the flat roofs and mature landscaping



3.3 BUILDING HEIGHT, MASSING AND PROPORTIONS

3.3.1 All houses are designed as a unified whole and are generally consistent in height, massing and proportion.

Although houses are arranged over two levels, due to the stepped layout they give the appearance of having a single storey when viewed from the north-west. The stepped design and flat roofs give the impression of low-rise living, creating a surprisingly spacious feel for a high density development.

3.3.2 The St Bernards development has a simple and geometric massing. The flat roofs have skylights only visible from the upper level of houses situated further up the slope.

3.3.3 The south-east elevations of houses have a high proportion of glazing to wall massing (almost all glazed). The end of terrace walls to the north-east and south-west are almost entirely solid brick walls with some small window openings.

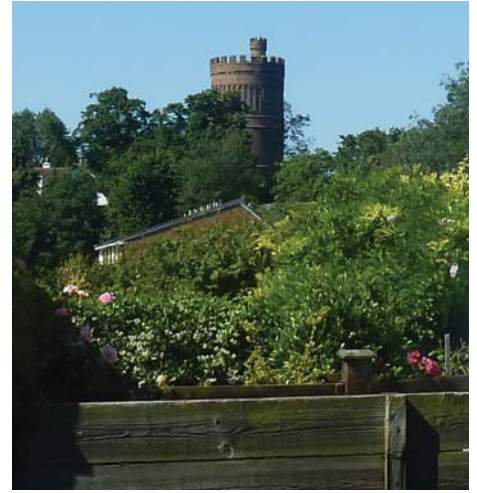
3.4 ASPECT, TOPOGRAPHY AND VIEWS

3.4.1 The St Bernards Conservation Area is located at approximately 80m above sea level over a south-east facing slope with a gradient of 1:20 (see Map 9). Chichester Road runs along a ridge of high ground from which the slope where St Bernards is located falls away.

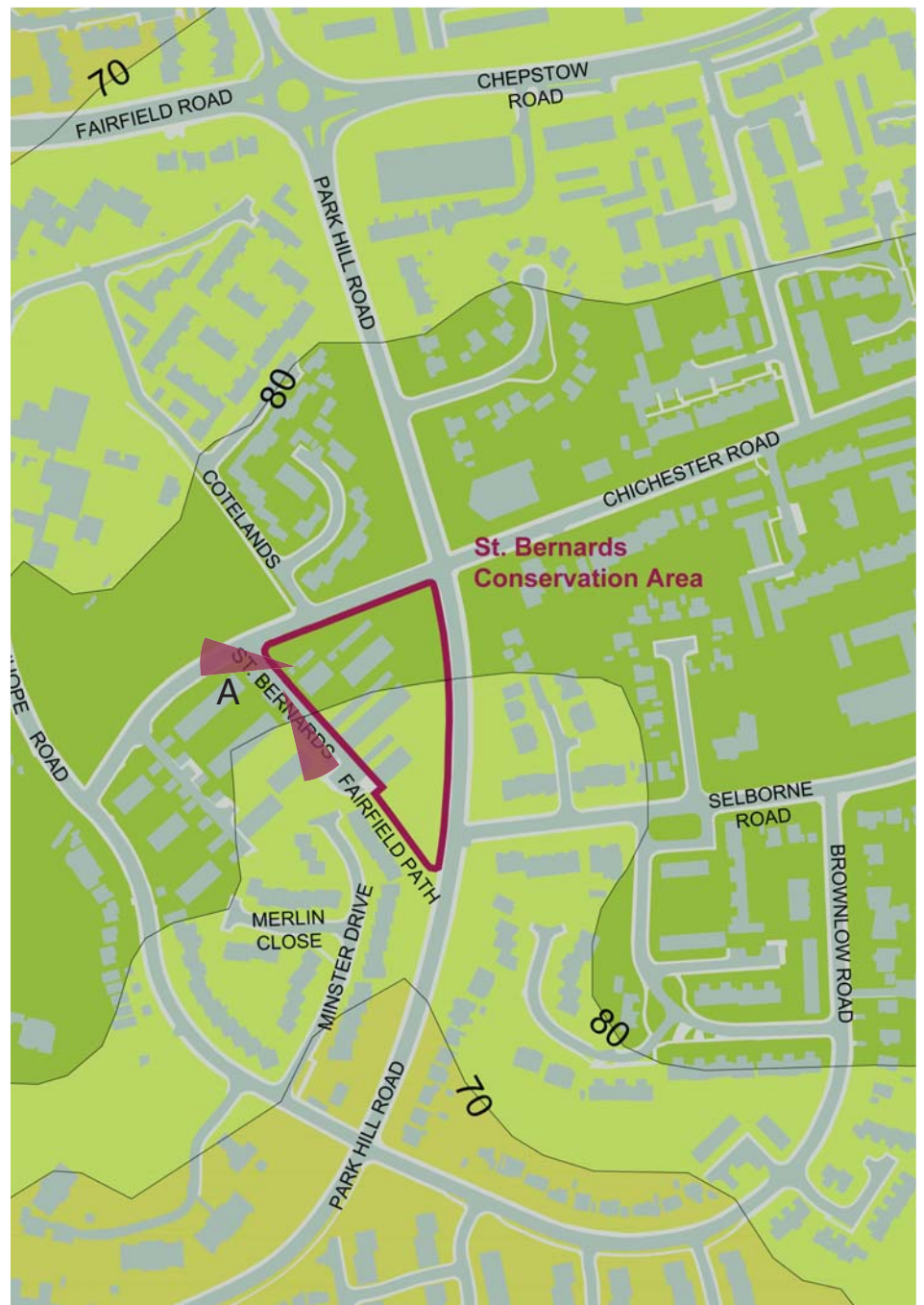
3.4.2 The development is orientated towards the south-east. Part of the philosophy behind the south-east facing stepped arrangement of houses at St Bernards was to give each property a pleasant aspect facing away from roads and avoiding butting up against other houses. St Bernards once had an impressive south-

east view towards the Surrey Downs, however due to the presence of mature trees in the conservation area, this view is now obscured.

3.4.3 Due to its position above sea level and south-east orientation, the area has an open skyline with no large buildings visible, with the exception of the Park Hill Water Tower. This is visible from within St Bernards and Chichester Road (view A).



View A: the Park Hill Water Tower



Map 9: Topography and views in the area

4.0 STREETSCAPE CHARACTER

4.0.1 Streetscape is the outward facing visual appearance and character of a street or locality.

4.1 PUBLIC REALM AND OPEN SPACE

4.1.1 St Bernards was designed to provide open space to all residents in the form of a landscaped central piazza and a large grassed area to the south-east of the houses. These spaces and the public realm within St Bernards, including walkways, are generally excellently maintained, with the piazza recently having been re-surfaced with asphalt (it was originally paved - see photo on p.12).

4.1.2 The houses and communal areas at St Bernards were designed to be 'car-free'. The area is highly accessible on foot by way of a series of pedestrian walkways leading to each house's front door and bottom garden gate. Visitors are guided around the estate by maps mounted at each entrance. Parking, one space per house, is provided in an underground car park. This feature was a crucial part of the original vision, and continues to promote a self contained and pleasant living



View north across the piazza towards a terrace of houses (see Map 8 on p.14)

environment for residents. A small, above-ground visitor's car park is accessed from Chichester Road, set in a recessed space surrounded by trees and shrubbery and not visible from within the conservation area itself.

4.1.3 Pathways in St Bernards are brick paved in a geometric pattern and are generally in a good condition.

4.1.4 The roads, kerbs and footways surrounding the conservation area on Chich-

ester Road and St Bernards cul-de-sac are generally in a good condition, free of excessive road markings with a low demand for on-street parking. Footways are asphalt with grass verges in places.

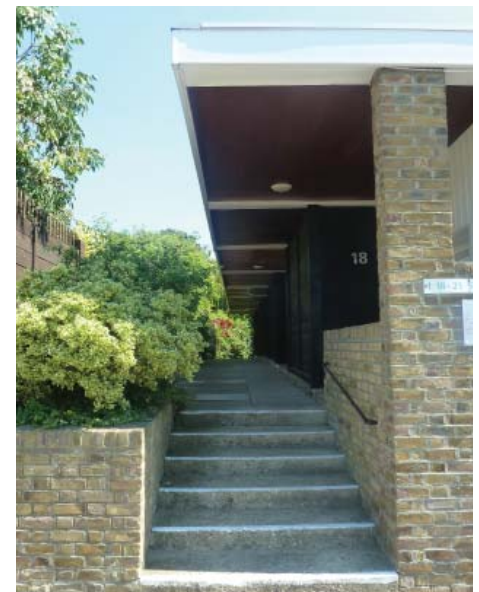
4.1.5 Outside of the conservation area boundary there are several poorly maintained garages on St Bernards cul-de-sac connected to the adjacent housing development. This site is also often subject to illegal fly-tipping and adversely affects the conservation area's setting.



Steps leading out of the piazza



Pathway leading off Chichester Road



Pathway from St Bernards cul-de-sac

4.2 STREET FURNITURE

4.2.1 There is little street furniture present in the conservation area mainly due to the fact that there is no public highway. Street furniture present includes a lamp-post on St Bernards Path and various small-scale signage for the visitors car park and area maps of St Bernards located at the entrance to the complex on Chichester Road and St Bernards cul-de-sac.

4.2.2 There are a few bollards, to prevent cars encroaching onto footways, along with railings to demarcate pathways and steps, and to assist pedestrian safety.

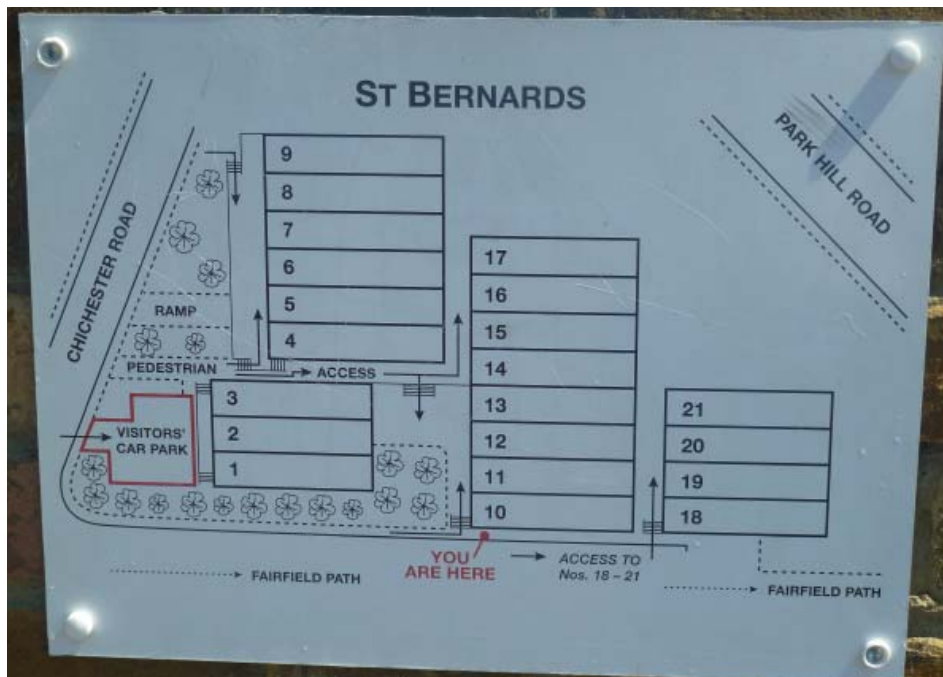
4.2.3 The television antenna serving all the St Bernards houses is well concealed atop a telegraph pole within a group of trees and greenery.

4.3 GREENERY AND TREES,

4.3.1 The large extent of trees and planting in the communal areas has a significant positive impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

4.3.2 A significant number of mature trees are present in the shrub border along Park Hill Road, shielding the houses from the busy traffic. These are of a range of species including elms, chestnuts, maples and limes. The most striking trees present in the area are very large conifers, the cedar by no 9, and a group of Scots / Corsican pines to the south of numbers 15-17. These trees are likely to pre-date the houses and probably were once situated in the gardens of the Victorian houses previously on the site.

4.3.3 Elsewhere in the conservation area there is also a very large oak and some smaller



Footway within St Bernards



Well concealed TV antenna



View of St Bernards from Fairfield Path

ones by the Fairfield Path, as well as some more unusual trees including a Judas tree by no 1 St Bernards, an Indian bean tree in the Piazza and a gingko by the visitor's car park. There are also a number of colourful and carefully maintained borders and planting schemes present, many of which are maintained by private residents. Greenery and planting in the communal areas, including the Piazza and the grassed areas are managed on behalf of the residents by Anatole Management Ltd. The belt of trees between the eastern edge of the communal area and Park Hill Road is managed by Croydon Council, who owns this section of land.

4.4 BOUNDARY TREATMENTS

4.4.1 St Bernards is bounded along its eastern edge by tall, dense tree cover and low brick walling separating the houses from the busy Park Hill Road. St Bernards is also sharply delineated along its eastern edge by the outer walls of the houses,

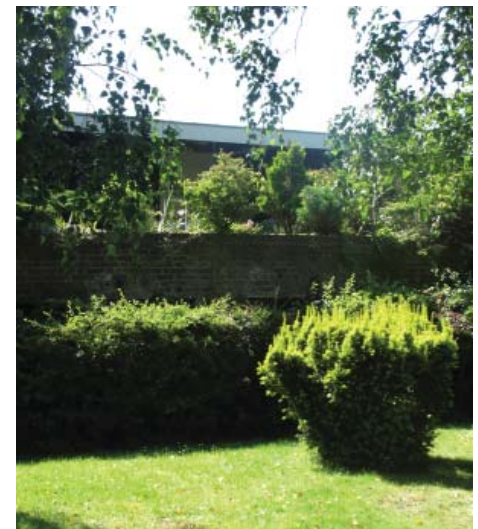
which have no interaction with the road except for some small windows.

4.4.2 These boundaries combine to create a clear demarcation between St Bernards and its surrounding area, with the effect of a discrete, highly private development distinct from its neighbours. St Bernards does not invite casual wandering through; and it is unlikely that people will enter the development 'by accident'.

4.4.3 Gardens to the front and rear of each house are well shielded from the communal areas. The lower gardens are separated by high fencing with gates that open to pedestrian footpaths. The upper gardens are enclosed by a covered walled area that acts as the main point of entry to each house. This structure contains front doors, post boxes and refuse storage areas, original to the development. The houses themselves are accessed through the front gardens.



Mature planting and a Cedar tree



Greenery in communal areas



Fencing dividing the private lower gardens from the walkway

5.0 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

5.1 ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT AND CHARACTER

5.1.1 St Bernards is a Modernist housing development of twenty-one individual dwellings in a comprehensive unit. The architects, Atelier 5, were influenced by Corbusian principles and by their earlier scheme at Siedlung Halen (see section 2.2). At St Bernards the architecture consists of simple, elegant and functional architectural forms that are well integrated with the landscape and topography. The buildings contain simple detailing. The contrast of brick and timber contributes to the visual interest of the buildings.



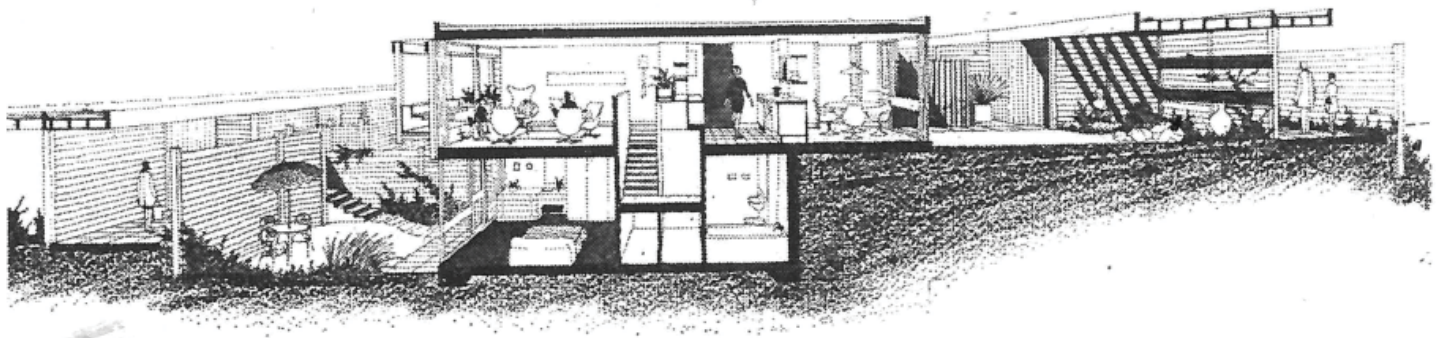
The north-east elevation of a terrace, showing the porch structure to the right and fenced upper garden between that and the main house

5.1.2 The design of St Bernards is a coherent architectural entity as opposed to a collection of individual buildings of merit. The layout of the development and the interaction between communal spaces and houses are as important as the design of the buildings themselves, as is the integration of the architecture and the landscape.

5.1.3 St Bernards consists of parallel terraces staggered over a slope linked by pathways (see Map 8 on p.14). There are two types of house design: a single terrace of three-bedroom houses (type 1) and three terraces of four-bedroom house (type 2). The overall layout allows for two enclosed private gardens per house, one at



South east elevation of a terrace



Cross section of a typical St Bernards house from the Architect's Journal, 1970. The main point of entry is through the upper garden; the main living area is on the upper level facing south, giving the best aspect; sleeping arrangements are on the lower level, leading out to the lower garden.

upper and one at lower level forming a buffer zone between houses and public areas (see Map 8 on p.14). The upper garden includes a garden store and pergola.

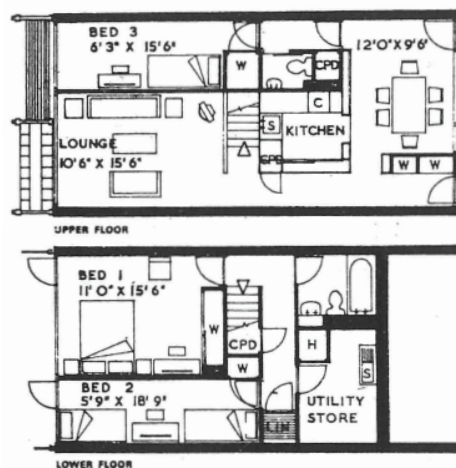
5.1.4 The most visible parts of the buildings are the stepped end-of-terrace brick walling and the south-east facing, mostly glazed, elevations. The architecture of the latter is expressed through the interaction of the glazing and the projecting timber balconies, with vertical panelling to one bay, arranged in a two bay composition per house. This repeats along the terrace forming a rhythmic pattern along the terraces providing articulation and visual interest.

5.1.5 A striking part of the architectural character of St Bernards lies in the intelligent treatment of internal layouts. House plans, arranged in a rectangular footprint, are designed to provide open-plan living. There are slight variations between the house types (see plans below). In both house types the front door leads through the upper garden to the upper level, which contains the kitchen, dining area and living area, which is located facing to the south-east to give the best aspect out of the large windows. The lower level contains the main bathroom, utility areas and two bedrooms, which open out to the lower garden. Some houses have re-arranged their internal layout.

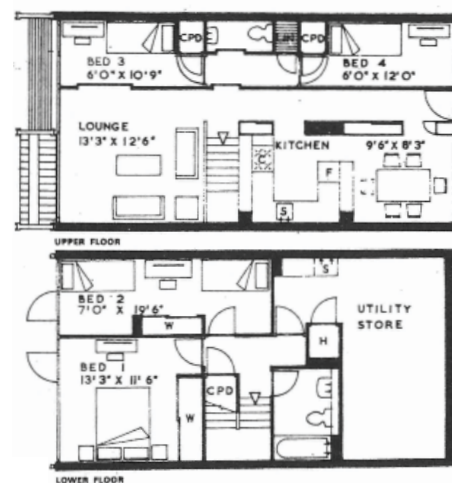
5.2 HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF BUILDINGS

5.2.1 All houses in the conservation area are on Croydon's Local List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest and make a positive contribution

TYPE 1: Three bedroom houses



TYPE 2: Four bedroom houses



Original house plans for St Bernards (Architect's Journal, 1970)

to the special character of the conservation area. Demolition of any building is considered to constitute substantial harm to the conservation area and there is a presumption in favour of their retention (please see the Management Plan and Croydon's *Conservation Area General Guidance SPD*).

5.3 MATERIALS

5.3.1 The St Bernards development is constructed from the following materials:

- London stock brick - for walls
- Timber - for balconies and porches
- Glazing - for canopies
- Concrete - mainly for construction and the underground car-park

5.3.2 Many of the windows that were originally timber framed have been changed to uPVC.

5.3.3 Paint colours applied to the exterior of houses are consistent throughout the area as they are specified by the management company:

- Chocolate brown for balcony timbers
- White walls
- Green painted front doors
- Teak staining on wood



An example of the high quality construction detailing present



The underside of balconies

6.0 CONDITION AND THREATS

6.1 GENERAL CONDITION

Overall the St Bernards Conservation Area is in excellent condition and well maintained. Buildings retain their original character, as do the communal areas.

However there are some examples of properties that have, in recent years, fallen into slight disrepair due to a lack of maintenance. Other minor alterations have also occurred, including the replacement of original skylights with modern alternatives and original timber windows with aluminium or uPVC units. In addition some canopies that were originally timber in construction have been replaced with uPVC.

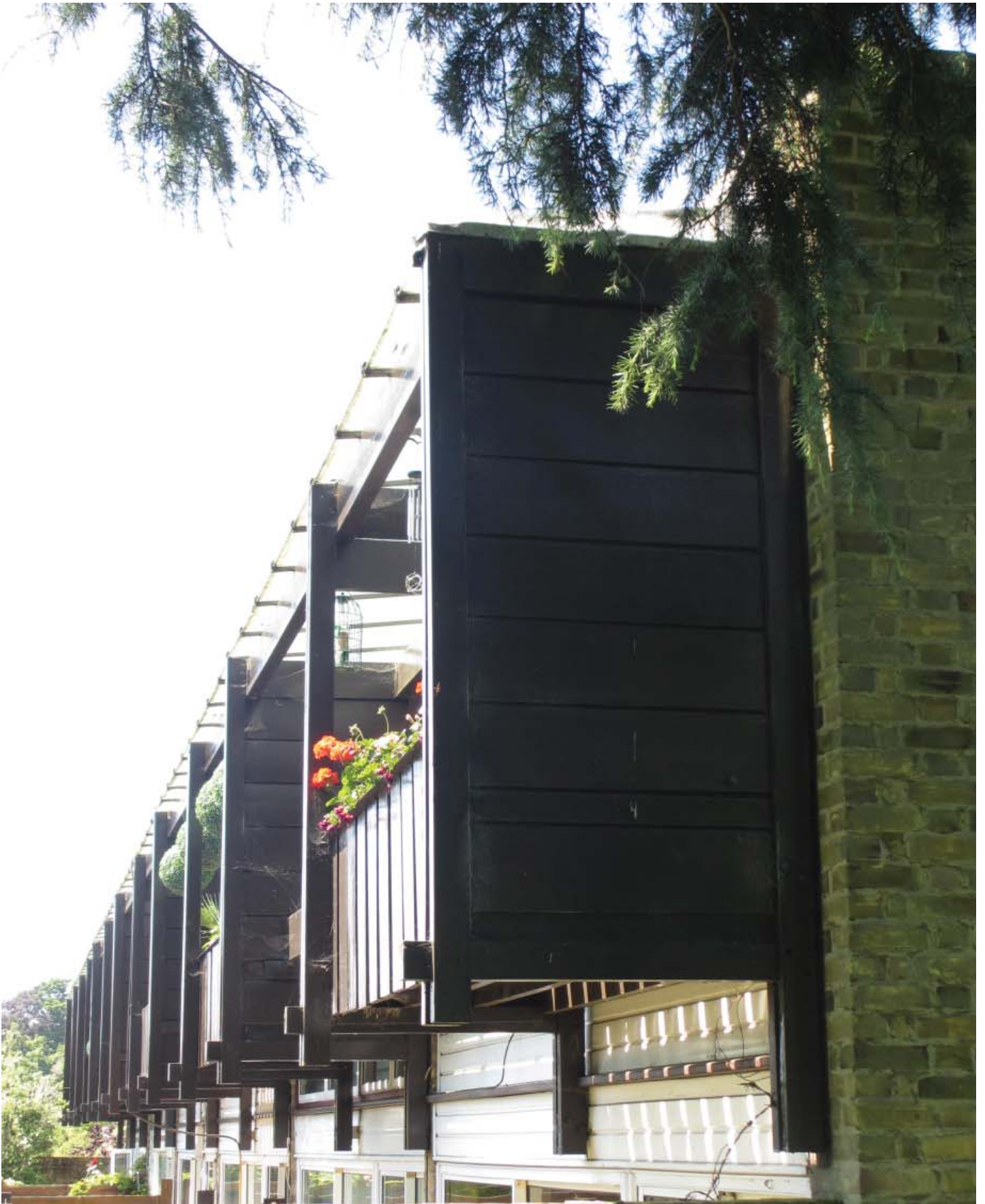
6.2 THREATS

- Installation of satellite dishes and other extraneous fixtures visible from communal areas and the street
- Erection of extensions and outbuildings
- Deterioration of buildings through lack of maintenance
- Loss of landscaping features
- Inferior re-pointing of brickwork

Another issue in the area is the result of general maintenance works carried out by third parties, for example gas works, where reinstatement surface materials have been mismatched with the originals. There are a few examples of this throughout the area (see photographs below).



Examples of mismatching materials that have been replaced following works carried out by third parties



MANAGEMENT PLAN

This Management Plan provides area-specific guidance on development, maintenance and enhancement in the St Bernards Conservation Area. It supplements, and should be read in conjunction with, Croydon's *Conservation Area General Guidance* SPD, which provides general development and maintenance guidance for all conservation areas in Croydon.

7.0 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

8.0.1 It is the responsibility of the property owner to be aware of the designations that apply to their building and the area within which it is situated.

7.1 LOCALLY LISTED BUILDINGS

7.1.1 All of the properties within the St Bernards Conservation Area are Locally Listed. For further information please see section 4.5 of the *Conservation Area General Guidance* and *Locally Listed Buildings* SPDs.

7.2. ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

7.2.1 The Appraisal identifies changes to properties in the conservation area that have resulted in a negative impact on its character and appearance, some of which are the result of permitted development. The Council maintains the right to serve an Article 4 Direction if deemed appropriate to protect the special character of the conservation area. For further information please see section 2.5 of the *Conservation Area General Guidance* SPD for further information.

7.3 BUILDING REGULATIONS

7.3.1 Please see section 8 of the *Conservation Area General Guidance* SPD.

7.4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

7.4.1 Archeological investigations may be required for development that involves groundworks. Please see section 4.5 of the *Conservation Area General Guidance* SPD for further information.

7.5 TREES IN PRIVATE GARDENS

7.5.1 Please see sections 5.14 and 7.3 of the *Conservation Area General Guidance* SPD.

8.0 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

8.0.1 Development at St Bernards is closely controlled through the original house deeds, managed in the first instance by the management company Anatole Management Ltd. Part 2 of the third schedule of the original deeds states that the exterior appearance of buildings, walls, fences and other existing elements are not to be altered, that no additional buildings, walls, fences and other elements are to be constructed and that no building is to be used for any purpose other than a that of a private residence for a single household, unless agreed in writing from the management company.



Timber balconies along a terrace at St Bernards

8.0.2 All development within the St Bernards Conservation Area must also be in line with Croydon's Local Plan Policies and should preserve or enhance its special character.

8.0.3 Guidance for many additional types of development is provided in the *Conservation Area General Guidance SPD* and not repeated here.

8.0.4 The Council will investigate reports of unauthorised development (see section 7 of the *Conservation Area General Guidance SPD*). As part of this assessment a full survey of the area as visible from public areas has been made, which will be used as evidence when reviewing any reports of unauthorised development.

8.1 DEMOLITION

8.1.1 The demolition of buildings in the St Bernards Conservation Area will be not be permitted as all buildings make a positive contribution to its special character. For further information please see section 5.1 of the *Conservation Area General Guidance SPD*.

8.2 NEW DEVELOPMENT

There are no vacant sites appropriate for new development within the St Bernards Conservation Area.

8.3 DEVELOPMENT AFFECTING THE CONSERVATION AREA'S SETTING

8.3.1 Any development in close proximity to the conservation area boundary, and therefore in its immediate setting must respect its townscape, streetscape and architectural character and should not adversely affect its setting or views of, or from the conservation area.

8.4 EXTENSIONS

Due to the nature of the original design of buildings, proposals for extension of any part of buildings in the St Bernards Conservation Area will not be considered to appropriate.

8.5 CHANGES OF USE

8.5.1 Where planning permission is required, proposed changes of use will not considered acceptable. The original deeds state that no house shall be

used for any other purpose than that of a private residence.

8.6 BALCONIES

8.6.1 Balconies are key external features of buildings in St Bernards and should be retained and maintained in timber to match the original and painted to the colour specified by the management company.

8.7 WINDOW REPLACEMENT

8.7.1 Original timber framed windows in most houses have been replaced with uPVC alternatives. Ideally, all replacement windows should be of timber construction to match the original, however the use of uPVC as an alternative for windows set behind timber balconies does not dramatically affect the character and appearance of buildings as they are largely hidden.

8.7.2 The design of any window replacements is of key importance and the existing dimensions of window openings and size and slenderness of window frames should be matched in any replacement.

8.7.3 Building Regulations now require a domed window as opposed to the original flat window skylights. Skylight window or dome replacements should be of as sympathetic a design as possible. There are several examples of acceptable replacement domed skylights on roofs at St Bernards (see photo). Light or sun tubes may be an appropriate alternative to new skylights.

8.8 CLADDING, RENDERING OR PAINTING OF WALLS

8.8.1 Exposed brick walls should not be clad, rendered or painted due to the negative impact this would have on the character and appearance of buildings in the conservation area.

8.8.2 The management company specifies paint colours to be used for balconies, front doors and canopies. These are described in paragraph 5.3.3 of this document.

8.9 CANOPIES

8.9.1 Several canopies located to the north of properties, originally of timber construction, have been replaced with uPVC. Any further replacements should

be of timber construction and should be agreed in writing with the management company.

8.9.2 In a number of cases, thin panels of uPVC have been fixed on to the front edge of the wooden canopies on the north of properties to prevent damp seeping into the canopies. These have not had any significant impact on the appearance of the estate and may be allowed by the management company in the future, provided that the colour and dimension of the panels are appropriate.

8.10 EXTERNAL FIXTURES (INCLUDING ANTENNA AND SATELLITE DISHES)

8.10.1 All external fixtures should be located in the least visually intrusive location.

8.10.2 As explained in section 4.2, a master television antenna serves all houses at St Bernards. Any additional microwave antenna and satellite dishes may require planning permission, and permission in writing from the management company, and should not be located on roofs. If required, such extraneous features may

be located in an area not visible from public areas, for example private gardens.

8.10.3 A consistent approach should be taken to the installation or alteration of services, such as gas flues, electrical wiring etc, to ensure the appearance of the conservation area is maintained.

8.10.4 All wiring or external service runs should be concealed or located in existing conduits. All gas flues should be carefully sited to minimise their visual impact.

8.11 GARDENS

8.11.1 Private gardens should be well maintained. Any structures erected in gardens, including garden sheds, should not project higher than the height of the existing fences so as to not impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Please see sections 5.13 of the *Conservation Area General Guidance SPD* for further information.



A replaced domed skylight that meets current Building Regulations



Timber overhanging canopies

9.0 ENHANCEMENT

9.0.1 The St Bernards Conservation Area benefits from aspects such as built in refuse storage and existing way-finding signage. The Council welcomes and supports further enhancement schemes proposed by property owners or the local community provided the original design and layout of the area is retained.

9.0.2 Property owners are encouraged to undertake minor repair works in line with the guidance provided in this document and subject to approval by the Management Company, that will improve the condition and appearance of their properties and have a wider positive impact on the conservation area as a whole. Much enhancement of buildings and the wider area does not require planning permission; for advice on what works require planning permission please either see the Planning Portal or contact the Council's Development Management service (see Appendix for details).

9.1 BUILDING MAINTENANCE

9.1.1 Regular attention is required to stop buildings and features falling into a state of disrepair. The Council therefore recommends that regular maintenance is undertaken to retain the collective value of the area.

9.1.2 Some minor works, if left unattended, may result in unnecessary decay and damage, which could lead to the need to conduct more complex and expensive repair works that may require planning permission at a later date. Basic maintenance recommendations include:

- The regular clearing of debris in gutters and rainwater pipes
- The pruning of vegetation in close proximity to buildings

- The regular re-painting of timber features

9.1.3 For further information please see section 6 of the *Conservation Area General Guidance SPD*.

9.1.4 It should be noted that the Council has the right to serve a Section 2.15 Notice if the condition of a building is adversely affecting the amenity of the conservation area, and Urgent

Works or Repairs Notices if buildings fall to an unacceptable state of repair. For further information please see section 7.2 of the *Conservation Area General Guidance SPD*

9.2 MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC AREAS

9.2.1 Regular maintenance of public areas should be undertaken. All necessary replacement materials, including those for paths, boundary treatments,



Well maintained southern elevation of a terrace of houses in St Bernards with important architectural features of balconies and timber panelling

stairs and external lighting should be selected on a like for like basis.

9.3 TREE MANAGEMENT

9.3.1 Trees in communal areas should continue to be well maintained. It is recommended that an arboricultural report is drawn up to set out both a short and long term maintenance strategy to ensure that the landscape and trees are well managed. Six weeks prior notice should be given to the Council for all proposed tree works in conservation areas. Please see section 5.14 of the Conservation Area General Guidance SPD for further information.

9.4 ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS

9.4.1 The energy efficiency of many houses in the conservation area could be improved through some straight forward retrofitting measures. For example due to their solid wall construction, internal wall insulation and roof insulation are both appropriate measures for houses at St Bernards, which would greatly improve their thermal performance as the existing insulation is minimal.

9.4.2 A consistent approach to the installation of energy efficiency measures should be taken wherever possible.

9.4.3 For further information and recommendations on other retrofit measures please see section 9 of the *Conservation Area General Guidance SPD*.

10.0 APPENDIX

10.1 WEBSITES AND OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

A) USEFUL WEBSITES

- Croydon Council Planning and Conservation web pages:
www.croydon.gov.uk/environment/conservation
www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration
- English Heritage web pages:
www.english-heritage.org.uk
www.helm.org.uk - (for access to English Heritage documents
www.english-heritage.org.uk/your-property/saving-energy
- National Planning Policy Framework and associated guidance:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2
- The Planning Portal
www.planningportal.gov.uk
- Greater London Historic Environment Record:
www.heritagegateway.org.uk (managed by English Heritage)
- Greater London Authority (for the London Plan):
www.london.gov.uk/thelondonplan
- Department for Communities and Local Government
www.communities.gov.uk
- Building Conservation Directory:
www.buildingconservation.com
- Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance:
www.sdfoundation.org.uk/stba

B) RELEVANT CROYDON COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

(DOWNLOADABLE FROM ABOVE WEBLINK)

- *Croydon Conservation Area General Guidance SPD*
- *Planning Application Validation Checklist*
- *Local List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest SPD*
- *Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD*
- *Landscape Design SPG*
- *Public Realm Design Guide*

C) RELEVANT NATIONAL GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS (WEBLINK ABOVE)

- *Archaeology and Planning in Greater London* (English Heritage 2011)
- *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (English Heritage 2012)
- *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (English Heritage 2011)
- *Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments* (English Heritage 2011)
- *Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings*, which is a series of English Heritage guidance documents available to view and download at www.helm.org.uk/climatechange
- *By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System* (CABE, 2000)
- *The Urban Design Compendium* (English Partnerships, 2000/2007)
- *Responsible Retrofit of Traditional Buildings* (Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance 2012)
- *A Stitch in Time* (IHBC and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, 2002)

10.2 CONTACTS

Croydon Council, Bernard Weatherill House, 8 Mint Walk,
Croydon CR0 1EA; www.croydon.gov.uk
Tel/Email: 0208 7266000; contact.thecouncil@croydon.gov.uk

- Spatial Planning (Urban Design and Conservation):
Tel: 0208 4071385; Email: spatial.planning@croydon.gov.uk
- Development Management (including Enforcement & Tree Officers): Email: planning.control@croydon.gov.uk
- Building Control Team, Croydon Council:
Email: building.control@croydon.gov.uk
- Waste Management Team, Community Services, Croydon Council: Tel: 0208 726 6200
- Croydon Local Studies Library and Archives Centre:
www.croydon.gov.uk/libraries Tel:0208 7266900; Email: local.studies@croydon.gov.uk

English Heritage, London Region
Tel/Email: 020 79733000; london@english-heritage.org.uk

The Twentieth Century Society
Tel/Email: 0207 2508985; caseworker@c20society.org.uk
www.c20society.org.uk

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
Tel/Email: 0207 3771644; info@spab.org.uk; www.spab.org.uk
Technical helpline: 0207 456 0916

The Building Conservation Directory
Tel/Web: 01747 871717; www.buildingconservation.com

The Energy Saving Trust
Tel/Web: 0800 512012; www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society
Contact: Brian Lancaster: Tel: 0208 6686909

Register of Building Conservation Accredited Architects
Tel/Web: 01625 523784; www.aabc-register.co.uk

Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
Tel/Web: 0207 3073700; www.architecture.com

Mid Croydon Conservation Area Advisory Panel
(please contact the Spatial Planning Team for details)

Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society
Contact: John Greig (Secretary)
Email: greig647@btinternet.com

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