

Appendix B: Character Area Assessments

Group 1 - Headlands North, The Drive and Queensberry Road

This character area takes in the part of Headlands extending northwards from the junction with Glebe Road to the junction with Bowling Green Road, including The Drive and Queensberry Road. It is a predominantly residential part of the neighbourhood area located south of the Town Centre and within close proximity to the Railway Station. The majority falls within the Conservation Area. Non-residential uses are mostly professional services operating discreetly out of large converted former houses.

Headlands, Queensberry Road and The Drive are relatively wide roads with footways on both sides. Grass verges are not present reflecting the more urban character of this area. Headlands winds gently through the area and rises gently up to a high point around The Drive, before sloping gently down to the junction with Bowling Green Road and Sheep Street. Queensberry has a pronounced curvature and rises steeply from Station Road to the junction with Headlands.

In terms of the pattern of built development, nearly all buildings are set back a similar distance from the road on a consistent building giving a sense of formality to the street. Buildings are separated from the road by relatively short front gardens and behind brick boundary walls, although some timber fencing and railings are present. Brick walls tend to be embellished with stone copings and detailing, and with courses of blue engineering brick. The grain of built development is generally tight with narrow spaces between buildings serving to enclose the street and limiting views out of the area and giving a sense of solidity.

Vegetation is a defining characteristic of this area of the neighbourhood. Street trees are present throughout the area and on both sides of the highway. Large mature street trees are growing at regularly spaced intervals on Queensberry Road, giving the road a leafy mature character. The trees on Headlands tend to be intermittently spaced and are generally smaller tree varieties, being subservient to the planting in front gardens.

Front gardens tend to feature planting, particularly on Headlands where the dense covering of planting (matures trees, hedgerow and shrubs) in front garden provides rich texture and green and red coloured tones in the street scene. The planting tends to obscure the lower parts of buildings in the street, such that buildings tend to 'punch' above the planting, and this gives a consistent softness and leafy maturity to the street scene in views along Headlands.

On Headlands, many buildings are of a similar age and to date back the Victorian era, with relatively very few modern buildings. There is a mixture of large detached and large semi-detached houses, with a few short terraces and the odd bungalow. Nearly all buildings extend across 2 or 3 storeys, with the 3rd storey partly in the roof space served by a dormer window. Red brick and slate or grey tile covered roofs are by far the dominant building materials.

The exceptions are a few buff brick and stone buildings, and the use of pebble-dash render in places. Projecting gables and bays to the front elevations are common to most buildings and traditional timber sash windows are present on many buildings. Detailing consists of high quality dressed stone surrounds to door and window openings, and stone date stones and name plaques are common, and express individuality. Chimneys feature on nearly all buildings.

On Queensberry Road the buildings are predominantly large Victorian era semi-detached houses of red brick and slated roof houses, with wide frontages and tall roofs. Most are across two storeys with some 3 storeys; the third storey in the roof space. Bays and sash windows are common, as are stone window detailing, particularly window and door surrounds, and chimneys are common.

There are buildings in the area that are distinctive in their own right. The grade II listed St Peter's School building (Sunnylands) is a large and highly detailed building on the corner of Headlands and The Crescent, and set behind a tall brick boundary wall. The Gotch semis (58 and 60 Headlands) are distinctive due to their scale, prominence and architectural style. Headlands surgery is unique in being constructed from local ironstone. 'Ferndale' is distinctive due to its position set well from the road and constructed from buff brick.

In general terms, this area is consistent in character and appearance. The buildings, whilst displaying subtle differences in appearance and size are united by their common use of building materials and richness of detail that give a sense of solidity and quality. Being set on a formal linear building line and behind a dense and continuous belt of planting within front gardens, gives a mature consistency to the street scene.

Group 2 – Broadway, Hawthorn Road, Garfield Street, Argyll Street, Roundhill Road, St. Michael's Road and Glebe Avenue

This character area contains the properties that are located on and around Broadway, Hawthorn Road, Argyll Street, Garfield Street, Roundhill Road, St Michaels Road and Seagrave Street. The area is predominantly residential, although there are a number of shops, a church, school, care home, and working men's club located approximately in the centre of the character area.

The street pattern in this area is arranged in a formal grid like pattern with long roads running east to west, and north to south. Land levels in the area are highest at the centre of Broadway and slope downwards towards London Road to the east, St Michaels Road to the south and Headlands to the west.

In general terms the buildings in this area are arranged in a linear row and fronting the grid like roads. Spaces between buildings are usually very narrow and the architectural style and materials of the buildings in this area are generally consistent. Where front gardens exist, they are mostly short and usually hard surfaced, with little vegetation growing. The area is very well contained with few views out of the character area to other parts of the Town, although the spire of Saints Peter and Paul Church is visible from both Broadway (89-91) and when looking north up Argyll Street. The school bell-tower is visible from lower ground to the south. The characteristics give the area a formal urban Victorian character; however, there are nuances to these general characteristics.

Buildings in the north of the character area on Broadway, Hawthorn and the parts of Argyll Road and Garfield Road that extend north of Roundhill Road are grouped mostly in very long red brick Victorian terraces. Most extend across 2 storeys and on Broadway rooms in the roof void (with dormer windows) are common. Some buildings on Broadway extend across 3 storeys. Architectural detailing is generally present throughout the area, but more common and elaborate on Victorian terraces, e.g. Stone window surrounds to bay windows, door surrounds and stone porches on Broadway and Hawthorn Road. House names and build dates carved into stone lintels of Victorian houses on Broadway and Hawthorn give individuality that is less common on streets to the south. Roof types are mostly gabled with ridges orientated parallel to the roads. Front projecting gables and dormer windows are particularly common on Broadway. Chimneys are nearly always present and the pattern of chimneys is particularly visible on the terrace roofs on Hawthorn Road.

There are fewer terraced buildings on Roundhill Road and St Michaels, and the parts of Argyll Road and Garfield Road that extend further south of Roundhill Road, and a comparatively greater number of detached buildings, including some bungalows. Modern buildings that infill space between older buildings are common. Spacings between buildings tend to be wider and there are 'steps' in the building line. Where terraces are present they tend to be shorter.

Red brick and dark tiled roofs are most common, but there is more variety in this part of the area with a number of buildings on Roundhill Road and St Michaels being constructed from buff brick and render is

also common. Architectural detailing is less common on buildings in this part of the area. Timber fencing and hedges are also more common than brick front walls.

Regular spaced trees grow along both sides of Broadway and frame the street. Trees are less common and more occasional on other streets, e.g. Hawthorn Road and Roundhill Road.

Distinctive buildings on this area are the tabernacle tin church of St Michaels Church which sits in spacious well planted grounds, and the Victorian Hawthorn primary school which fronts Hawthorn Roads and backs onto Broadway.

Group 3 - The Crescent and Kensington Gardens

This character area consists of The Crescent and Kensington Gardens. It is a predominantly residential area, with the exception of St Peter's School (Sunnylands), which is a grade II listed building set within large grounds.

The Crescent is a relatively wide road with grass verges and footpaths on both sides. It joins Headlands at one end and Queensberry Road at the other. The Kensington Gardens cul-de-sac of modern bungalows extends off The Crescent. The Crescent slopes down relatively steeply from Headlands and remains generally level as it extends towards its junction with Queensberry Road. Kensington Gardens slope down away from The Crescent. This reflects the general fall in land levels from east to west.

The Crescent is well defined and enclosed on both sides by buildings and boundary walls/fences. The tall side boundary wall to St Peter's school that fronts The Crescent is an imposing feature in the street scene.

There are Lime Trees growing in the grass verges on both sides of The Crescent. A variety of tree species are growing in the grounds of St Peter's School and within the rear gardens of properties on the west side of Queensberry Road and Headlands. These trees are visible in this character area and they give the area a leafy character and a green backdrop in the street scene.

All buildings in this area are set parallel to the road. The spaces between them are relatively narrow, especially the buildings on the west side of The Crescent that back onto the railway. These narrow spaces enclose the street and views from within the area looking out are limited.

Front gardens vary in size, but most are relatively short. Roughly half of the properties do not have on-plot parking spaces. Front gardens are usually separated from the footpath by fences or walls, although the occasional hedgerow is growing. Rear gardens tend to be larger than the fronts.

Most buildings extend across two storeys, however there are a good number of interwar and modern bungalows in the area, mostly in two distinct groups. There are a few modern three storey flat blocks which are located adjacent to St Ann's Care Home.

The style of buildings in this area and the materials they are constructed from varies and reflects incremental development over the years. The most common building style in the area, by a narrow margin, is the interwar c. 1930's suburban house or bungalow that has a hipped roof, a bay window, and is constructed from red brick with tiled roofs, and white/cream painted render. Architectural detailing tends to be limited by comparison to other areas, but bay windows are common projections on the older buildings, as are chimneys which give interest to the roofscape.

Group 4 - Headlands South, The Close, Cranleigh Road, Lonsdale Road and Kettonby Gardens

This character area takes in the area of the neighbourhood that extends northwards from the junction of Headlands and Bishops Drive/Ostlers Way to its junction with Glebe Avenue. It takes in all of the cul-de-sacs that join Headlands, and part of Glebe Rd.

Land uses in this character area are almost exclusively residential. Non-residential property includes the Bishop Stopford School and Kettering Fire Station, which are located next to one another and consist of a range of purpose-built buildings set in larger grounds.

Headlands is the principal highway in this character area. It has a wide road tarmac surfaced carriageway that winds its way gently through the area. Granite like 'conservation' type kerbs separate the carriageway from wide footways on both sides of the road. Street trees grow intermittently in the footway. The cul-de-sacs that join Headlands are mostly short, narrow and straight in alignment.

The topography of the area is more or less level apart from a relatively steep incline when travelling northwards along Headlands from the Bishops Drive/Ostlers Way junction to around the Fire Station. The rising land provides a vantage point for long distance views out of the Town and across the countryside to the south west.

Plots vary in shape and size, with some very long plots on the west side of Headlands that extend towards the railway line; backing onto the properties on Ostlers Way and Gardens. Garden sizes are mostly generous giving the area a relatively low density.

Buildings are nearly always positioned at the front of plots to the face the highway, with a good sized front garden in-between. Rear gardens tend to be more spacious than the fronts. The spacings between buildings are mostly narrow, so that buildings are positioned in a row and relatively close to one another, although wider spaces are present between certain buildings. The close spacings between buildings serves to enclose the street on both sides, limiting views out of the area and giving a sense of solidity in the street scene.

Properties nearly always have a dedicated vehicle access to the highway. Vehicle parking spaces are mostly located in front and/or sides of buildings; some to the sides of buildings. Front gardens tend to have relatively even proportions of hardstanding to soft landscaping.

Tandem development, defined as where a building is located behind another building and shares access with that building and has no highway frontage, is not present in this character area.

Most buildings are detached, although there are some semi-detached detached houses and the occasional short terrace (107, 109 and 111 Headlands). Buildings have pitched roofs, with the exception of the flat roofed building at (no. 133 Headlands).

Architecturally, few buildings in this character area are identical to one another, but most have some common architectural elements reflecting their interwar build date and the suburban garden city movement architecture. Most buildings are wide and low, accommodating two storeys, and are constructed from brick with tile covered roofs, and have chimneys. Painted and pebbledash render finishes are found in the area along with slate covered roofs. Window openings tend to be horizontal in proportion with subdivided panes.

Most buildings higher than two storeys are confined to the Fire Station and the group of Flat Blocks at The Links and Kettonby Gardens. A few bungalows can be found, such as 64 to 68 Headlands.

The distance between the front of each building and the road tends to be regular across the area, giving generous front garden areas. The buildings are not set on a rigid building line, but instead follow a loose arrangement that responds to the curvature of the road.

Front boundaries are nearly always defined by robust walls and/or fences. These are generally low height (circa 1 m. tall) and provide good enclosure to the street and clear definition between public and private spaces. Front boundaries are often supplemented by planting.

Planting is a defining characteristic of this area of the neighbourhood. Front gardens in particular mostly have a good covering of planting (trees, shrubs and grasses), that provides rich texture and green coloured tones in the street scene. Planting in front

gardens forms a near continuous belt of greenery that either obscures or filters views of the buildings in the street. This gives a softness and leafy maturity to the street scene that is clearly visible in views looking down Headlands. It provides visual consistency to the street scene by lessening any differences in architectural style from one building to the next.

Group 5 - Bishops Drive, Slade Crescent Ostlers Way and Ostlers Gardens

This character area is located alongside the railway line and takes in the modern residential properties located on Ostlers Way, Ostlers Gardens, Bishops Drive and Slade Crescent. It is defined by modern houses arranged on cul-de-sacs.

The buildings are generally set back from the road by equal distances giving a continuous building line and spaces between buildings are relatively narrow and consistent. There is a regimented pattern to the development and a continuous rhythm of buildings and spaces. Front gardens tend to be short and most are not enclosed by fences or walls. There is a generous well-defined area of open green on Bishops Drive that is partly surrounded by the buildings on Slade Crescent. Incidental green opens space is found between Ostlers Way and the railway. Gaps between some properties along Bishops Drive and Slade Crescent provide views to the countryside, reminding the viewer that the area is on the edge of the Town.

Most buildings in the area contain two storeys, although there are some bungalows on Bishops Drive. Buildings on Bishops Drive and Slade Crescent are very similar in appearance. They were likely designed and built by the same company. All are simple and plain with flat fronts, low pitched gabled roofs, constant eaves heights, wide oblong windows and constant window sill and head heights. No architectural detailing is present and all are built from one type of red brick or one type of yellow bricks. Roof lines are unbroken by chimneys. These commonalities mean the buildings are seen as a coherent group.

By comparison the buildings on Ostlers Way and Ostlers Gardens show more variety in form and architectural style. There are gabled roofs and half hip roofs, with varying eaves heights. There are occasional dormer windows and bay windows. Garages are provided mostly in detached buildings, with some integral to the house. Brick and tile colours are generally consistent. Hanging tiles are common. Windows panes are fitted with decorative lead.