

Annex – History of The Area

Location

Situated on the slopes to the west of Hampstead towards Finchley Road, the Conservation Area is defined by the relationship of the streets and houses to the contours of the hills. These slopes contained a number of tributaries of the Westbourne River which rises at the top of the Heath. When the area was developed the streams were culverted and now flow underground. The Westbourne itself also flows underground, emerging to form the Serpentine in Hyde park and then again underground before it joins the Thames.

The name Frogna means a nook of land frequented by frogs, so is consistent with the many ponds which formerly characterised the area.

History

The following paragraphs provide a brief overview of the historical development of the area based on the sources acknowledged in the bibliography.

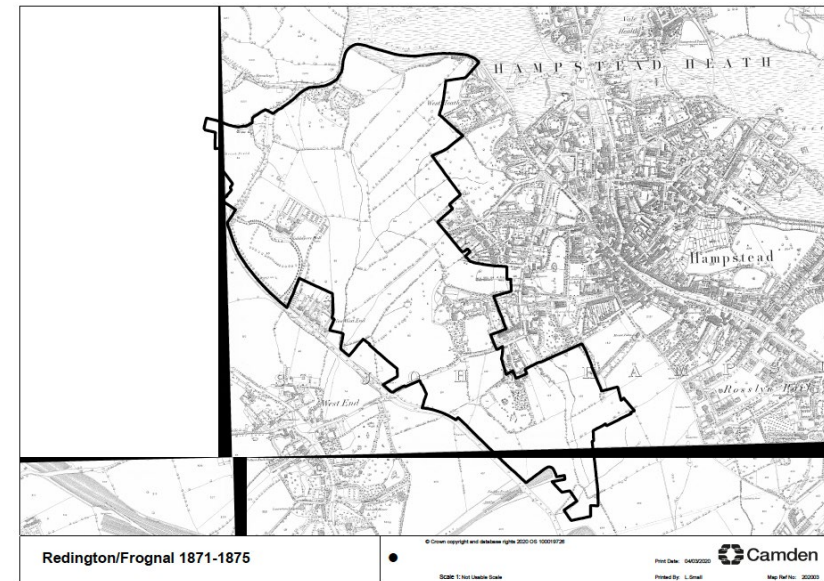
Early Development

Up until the 1870's the area now comprising the Redington / Frogna Conservation Area was undeveloped fields separating Hampstead Village and Frogna Lane to the east from West End to

the west. By the mid-18th century three of the roads within or bordering the Conservation Area were established as country lanes and tracks. Frognal and West End were linked by West End Lane – part of which was to become Frognal Lane in 1895. Duval's Lane, or Devil's Lane as it was also known, became Platt's Lane in 1837, taking its name from the local landowner Thomas Platt. A route roughly following the boundary between open heath land and enclosed fields, on the north western edge of the Conservation Area, was also established by the mid-18th century. This is now West Heath Road. To the north of West End Lane, a footpath is evident on the 1814 map linking Branch Hill to West End. This today is the approximate route of Oakhill Avenue. Towards the end of the 18th century a military telegraph station was established on a high point towards the northern end of Duval's Lane. Telegraph Hill as it became known, formed one of twelve signal posts designed to link the Duke of York's London headquarters with the east coast on the threat of a French invasion. The south-western boundary of the Conservation Area was formed in the 1830's by the construction of the Finchley Road.

Mid-Nineteenth Century

By the mid-19th century the majority of the area was in the ownership of the Maryon Wilson family. They farmed the area from the Manor Farm, Frognal, which was located to the north-west of the junction between Frognal and Frognal Lane until about 1780 when the farm relocated to the south-west side. More modest sections of the area were owned by Henry Weech Burgess (to the north of Platt's Lane) and Thomas Pell Platt and John Teil (to the south of Platt's Lane). John Teil, an East India merchant who ran a flourishing leather business with tanneries in Kidderpore near Calcutta, built Kidderpore Hall in 1843. Following his death in 1854 his estate was broken up and in 1889 the Hall and adjacent two



Map 1871-1875

acres of land were purchased by Westfield College. The College was founded by the pioneer of women's university education Miss Constance Garnett as a women's college in 1882 in Maresfield Gardens, off the Finchley Road. A reservoir was formed on land to the north-east of the College in 1875 by the West Middlesex Waterworks. Thomas Pell Platt, an oriental scholar and Librarian of the British and Foreign Bible Society occupied Childs Hill House at the northern end of Platt's Lane. This house was demolished in 1904. The site of Child's Hill House is now Telegraph Hill and part of Rosecroft Avenue. On the 1866 map both of these properties are shown with extensive landscaped grounds, and in the case of Kidderpore Hall, with a long sweeping driveway from Finchley Road. Apart from the above house there were only two other buildings of note in the area by 1866, Frognal Park – on land now occupied by Greenway Gardens and Chesterford Gardens – and Frognal Priory. The latter building was an unusual mix of architectural styles built by a retired auctioneer who filled its interior with his collections of furniture and curios. The Priory was demolished in 1880 and its grounds became Lindfield Gardens and Frognal Close.

Maryon Wilson

Much of the shape, form and pattern of development of the area is a consequence of the pattern of land-ownership and the decisions of individual landowners, particularly the Maryon Wilson family. The development of Redington / Frognal might have begun in the first half of the 19th century had it not been for Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson's long and unsuccessful battle to develop his landholding on Hampstead heath. In 1829 he tried to obtain a Private Act of Parliament to enable him to develop both his 356 acres of farmland to the west of Hampstead and a section of the Heath to the east of the Village. The threat posed by his proposals became the focus of

a wider campaign to protect common land all around London. Sir Thomas refused to compromise and effectively legislatively ensnared the development of his more significant landholding. Had Maryon Wilson's applications to Parliament been limited to his relatively uncontentious land, much of the Redington / Frogna area may have been developed prior to, or in tandem with, the development of the lower Hampstead slopes at Belsize Park. Had this been the case the style and form of development would have been markedly different.

Upon the death of Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson in 1869 his brother, Sir John, gave up the long and acrimonious battle to develop on the Heath, and sold the land to the Metropolitan Board of Works in 1872. The development of the fields to the west of Hampstead Village began to take shape. By the 1870's there were very strong financial incentives for the landowners to sell or develop their landholdings. There was increasing demand from wealthy Londoners seeking what Hampstead could offer. As the Belsize Park area to the south had by this stage been largely completed, the Heath was now protected from development and the owners of substantial houses in Hampstead were selling off their grounds for development, the remaining Hampstead slopes became the natural location for residential expansion.

It appears that the Maryon Wilson estate sold off fields or areas of land large enough for half a dozen or so houses at a time, or gave options for pieces of land to be developed over time. To keep the standard of the area of a high quality and the architecture harmonious, the Maryon Wilson family made covenants (still existing today) to control appearance, materials and size of buildings and enhance the character of their surroundings. At Chesterford Gardens for instance, covenants were made requiring

buildings to be more than 20 feet from their front boundaries and no stable or garage blocks were allowed within the frontage.

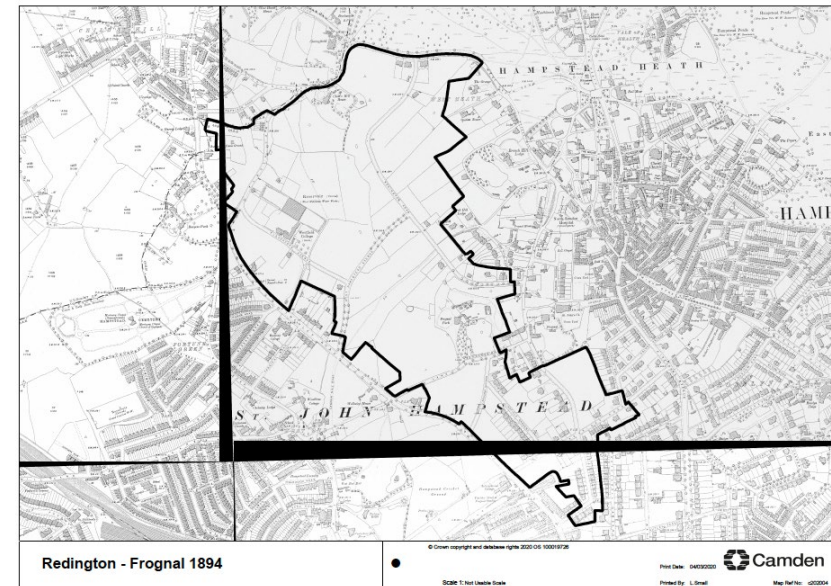
Major Development 1870 onwards

It is evident from the 1906 map that early development of the Conservation Area was concentrated within the southern and north-western parts of the area. Whilst many of the roads within the area were laid out by the early 20th century, development along them appears to have been slower by today's standards. Some of the earliest development of the estate was at the south-eastern end of Redington Road where five houses were built in the 1870's. These included the semi-detached pair at Nos. 2 & 4 by Philip Webb (1876), which demonstrate the influence of William Morris and the rather Gothic styled house by Theodore K. Green (1875-6) at No. 6.

The roads that make up the southern part of the Conservation Area, namely Lindfield Gardens, Arkwright Road, the southern stretch of Frognal were laid out and partly developed by the mid 1890s. The work of the Scottish architect Norman Shaw is featured at No. 39 Frognal. Other notable buildings on Arkwright Road include No. 28, a large Queen Anne style house by R.A. Briggs of 1891, the former Hampstead Central Library, (now Camden Arts Centre by Arnold Taylor (1897) and on Frognal, University College School by Arnold Mitchell (1906-7).

Charles Quennell

The architectural character of a large amount of the conservation Area is the result of a highly prolific partnership between the architect Charles H.B. Quennell and the Irish builder-developer



Map 1894

George Washington Hart. Due to their dominance in the production of houses in the northern part of the Conservation Area, accounting for roughly one hundred houses over a period of sixteen years, it has been dubbed “Quennell-land” by Service (1989) and Cherry and Pevsner (1998). In 1896 Hart started developing land on either side of Platt’s land including Briardale and Clorane Gardens to the north and Rosecroft, Hollycroft and Ferncroft Avenues to the south. Whilst not all of this area was developed by the Quennell/Hart partnership, their houses make up a large proportion of the dwellings on each road. Development began in the late 1890’s at the western end of Platt’s Lane and at the ends of Briardale and Clorane Gardens nearest to it. This was followed by the development of larger houses at the northern end of Ferncroft Road (Nos. 3-23; and Nos. 2-18). From 1904 Quennell and Hart built stretches of Redington Road and Heath Drive, then Oakhill Avenue and parts of Kidderpore Avenue from 1906. Further stretches of Redington Road, Redington and Templewood Gardens and Templewood Avenue formed the final stages of the partnership from 1910-1914. Quennell adopted a variety of styles for his houses ranging from restrained Arts and Crafts to more formal Neo-Georgian. He used rich red and soft orange brickwork, clay roof tiles, occasional areas of tile hanging and render, gables, and bay and dormer windows.

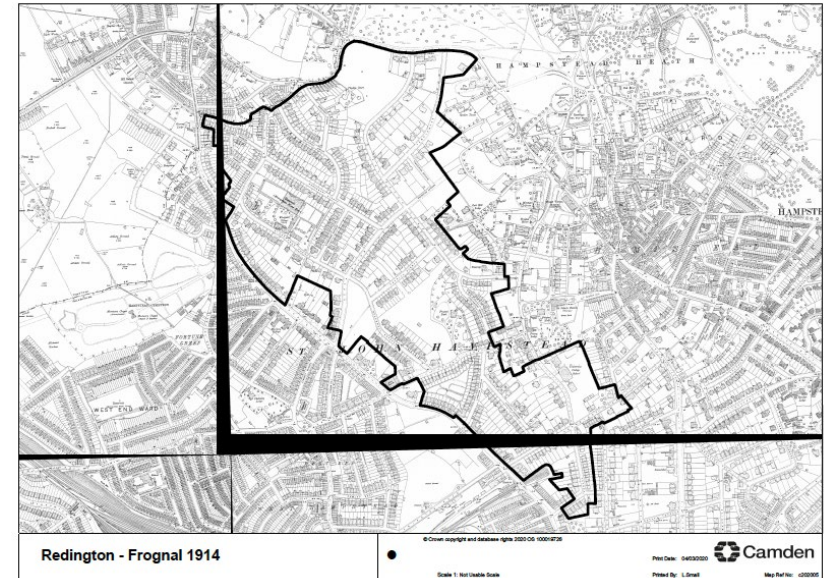
During the development of the Redington / Frogna area, Hart set up an on-site sales office – first on the corner of Ferncroft and Hollycroft Avenues and later on the corner of Redington Road and Templewood Avenue. Potential buyers would be shown plans of houses under construction and then taken on a tour to any sites that took their interest. According to Service (1989) there was a considerable turnover of owners of the new properties in the early years, possibly due to property speculation. Hart had a house at

No. 20 Redington Road built for him, which was presumably designed by Quennell.

The influence of Quennell is less apparent in the central part of the Conservation Area, which includes Bracknell Gardens, Oakhill Avenue and Greenaway Gardens. These roads feature a mix of Neo-Georgian and Arts and Crafts Free Style houses built either prior to, or shortly after, the 1914-18 war. The work of the architect C.H. Saunders and the builder W.J. King are dominant here although Quennell and Hart and William A. Burr with builder James Tomblin are also featured.

The northern end of Kidderpore Avenue contains possibly the most impressive group of buildings in the Conservation Area. St Luke's Church and its adjoining Vicarage were designed in 1897 by Basil Champneys in a comparatively restrained style. At the junction with Platt's Lane there is Annesley Lodge (8 Platt's Lane) designed by the pioneer Arts and Crafts architect Charles Francis Annesley Voysey for his father in 1895-6.

The quiet and green environment and the attractive houses attracted, and still attract, famous people to the area. The children's book illustrator Kate Greenaway had a house designed for her by R. Norman Shaw at No. 39 Frogna and lived there from 1895 to 1901. The sculptor Sir Hamo Thornycroft RA lived at No. 16 Redington Road. The same house was also owned by the eminent engineer Sir Owen Williams who was responsible for a number of innovative reinforced concrete buildings in the 1920s and 1930s. The sound of the German operatic soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf was often heard on summer evening emanating from the house she shared with her husband, the impresario Walter Legge, on Oakhill Avenue.



Map 1914

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