



**40 QUEEN'S GROVE, ST JOHN'S
WOOD, NW8**

CONSERVATION AREA ANALYSIS

December 2007

Clarges House
6-12 Clarges Street
London W1J 8HB
Tel: 020 7493 4002
Fax: 020 7312 7548
www.montagu-evans.co.uk

Executive Summary

This report considers the special interest of no. 40 Queens Grove both intrinsically and in relation to the whole of the St. John's Wood Conservation Area (hereafter 'the Conservation Area' or the 'CA'). Then this report moves on to consider the appropriateness of the proposals for the site's redevelopment with a new house.

This report has been prepared with reference to planning policy considerations on heritage matters, as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment. Consequently it deals with the following:

- The character and appearance of the host Conservation Area, and its historic interest
- The contribution of the existing building on the site to this character and appearance, specifically considering whether it makes a positive contribution to that area
- The effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the area, specifically whether they will either preserve or enhance the area in line with provisions of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Accordingly we consider, first, the principle of demolition of the subject building, and, second, the effect of the proposals on the area's special interest.

We have concluded that the property makes no positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Consequently, in accordance with guidance in PPG15, we do not consider that there should a presumption in favour of its retention.

The question of an appropriate replacement design – part two of the analysis – needs to be considered in light of broad architectural principles (materials, height, scale, relation of solid to void, and so on) and in terms of the building's character.

In some conservation areas – many high streets – it is enough to consider the intrinsic design quality of a proposal because the context is varied, and the emphasis should be firmly on enhancement. In others, where there is a uniform and meritorious townscape, the emphasis should fall clearly on preservation, by means of a design that is strongly contextual and closely follows precedent.

In this case, there are a limited range of influences, essentially the 1930s 'neo-Georgian' and the Regency, though even within each there is some variety of form and detailing and character.

Pastiche of the former is in our view not appropriate; to follow a mediocre precedent produces mediocrity. A scholarly facsimile of the latter (adapted to modern requirements) would be inappropriate given the wider historic environment of which this small CA forms part, for reasons we expand on below.

The appropriate response in our view is one that might be termed 'contemporary contextualism', a modern house essentially, but one that is not expressive or assertive at least on its public side. What has been developed is a twenty-first century interpretation of the suburban villa – the essential and underlying character of this and the adjoining Conservation Area in Westminster which taken together form the historic asset as a Regency villa suburb.

At the same time by this term what we have in mind is an approach that reinterprets a tradition one finds across this part of the Borough and corresponding parts of Westminster, of modern houses in suburban contexts.

As it happens, the language of the Modern Movement has been developed, historically, on the villa typology. What is proposed is a reinterpretation of this tradition as well.

The emerging design has been conceived in that spirit, as a gentle interpretation of established traditions that are characteristic of the Conservation Area and the wider locality. As such the proposals will both preserve and enhance the Conservation Area, exceeding statutory provision and the planning policy and guidance that flows from this.

It is material that these proposals are not being brought forward on a speculative basis, but as the private home of an individual whose commitment to high quality design and cultural endeavour more widely speaks for itself. And it is also material that the architects instructed to develop these ideas have a proven track record for award winning design. The proposals have been conceived as a complete work of design, and their quality should be considered in the round as any proper work of architecture should, not merely as an elevation. An appreciation of this intrinsic high quality is essential to understanding the enhancement delivered by the proposals.

The Approach: Background

Conservation area designation is intended – to paraphrase statute and national planning policy guidance (PPG15) – to ensure the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the area.

As distinct from other forms of heritage protection (listing, say, scheduling or non-statutory designations) the conservation area designation is not restrictive. The object of regulation is to deliver either preservation (which means the avoidance of harm) or enhancement (which has a more conventional meaning). There is equal emphasis in statute and policy guidance on both tests, and this dual objective is achieved through the positive management of change. More general design advice (PPS1) is there to encourage innovative design. Neither PPS1 nor PPG15 encourage pastiche, even in sensitive contexts. The guidance supports an imaginative response, but one that pays attention to established architectural principles.

The first-step of this process is to consider what is special about the area in the first place, and then to analyse the contribution of a particular building or feature to that special interest (as expressed through character or appearance).

There is no published or emerging draft appraisal for the St. John's Wood Conservation Area in the London Borough of Camden (hereafter the 'Conservation Area'). Consequently we have derived a statement of significance which is set out in this report.

An important consideration is the fact that St. John's Wood, a small conservation area, is clearly part of a larger historic entity. The designation complements a corresponding, and larger conservation area, across the Borough boundaries, in Westminster. The Camden element was clearly designated to provide complete protection for this single, larger historic entity. Indeed, the two adjoining conservation areas have the same name.

In assessing the special interest that justified the designation of the Camden element, we have had regard to the Conservation Area Audit that has been prepared by the neighbouring authority.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report is prepared on behalf of Sir Stuart Lipton in support of the redevelopment of No.40 Queen's Grove with a new private house. No.40 Queen's Grove is situated on the northern side of the street opposite the junction with Woronzow Road. The borough boundary with Westminster runs along the centre of the road, and then heads south along Woronzow Road. The property falls within the St John's Wood Conservation Area in Camden and is opposite the St John's Wood Conservation Area designated by the City of Westminster.
- 1.2 This report is provided in support of applications for the consents -- Planning Permission and Conservation Area Consent needed to achieve this redevelopment.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to show why, in our view, the proposals meet the criteria for demolition of unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas as set out in national planning policy (Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, hereafter PPG15) and recent English-Heritage, best practice guidance. This report also refers to corresponding London plan and Camden Adopted Unitary Development Plan policies in respect of demolition in a Conservation Area.
- 1.4 It starts by setting out the national and local planning policy context and then reviewing the history of the development of the Conservation Area and then assessing its predominant character. The report goes on to set out the criteria from PPG15 and considers the merits and contribution of the existing buildings in relation to the character and appearance of the St John's Wood Conservation Area and also the setting of the adjoining St John's Wood Conservation Area, within Westminster. Accordingly we then analyse whether or not the proposed replacement building would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

2.0 SITE IDENTIFICATION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

- 2.1 The London Borough of Camden St John's Wood Conservation Area and the London Borough of Westminster St John's Wood Conservation Area are identified at figure 1 and figure 2 respectively.
- 2.2 No.40 Queen's Grove has pared down neo-Georgian characteristics, constructed in stock brown brick and clay tiled, steeply pitched hipped roof with dormers and multi pane timber sash windows. There is also a parapet at roof level. Adjoining the property to the west are two more neo-Georgian style houses developed at roughly the same time but not (as we later discuss) as part of a single planned group. A photograph of the present property is shown at figure 3.
- 2.3 On the opposite side of the road numbers 27, 30, 31, 32, and 33 are all grade II listed. Notably along Queen's Grove on the opposite side of Ordnance Hill is the terrace of No's 2-22 which is Grade II listed. The listed buildings of the Conservation Areas are highlighted in red at figure 4, all of which are Grade II. The application property has been highlighted in green. The proposals therefore affect the setting of listed buildings, in association with which there is a statutory provision seeking the preservation of their setting. Since this setting is indistinguishable from the character of the Conservation Area, we consider that a separate assessment of this impact is not required. Any development that affects the Conservation Area's character or appearance must also affect the setting of these listed buildings, and in this instance passing the Conservation Area test would of necessity satisfy the listed building setting test.

Relevant Planning History

- 2.4 No.42 Demolition and rebuild of existing dwelling. Granted 22 Feb 2000. Ref: PE9900345. This has been implemented.
- 2.5 No.41 Demolition and rebuild of existing dwelling behind retained facades. Granted 8/12/06. This has been not yet been implemented.
- 2.6 No.41 Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of a two storey single family dwelling. Withdrawn 31/5/07.
- 2.7 No.41 Erection of a building comprising basement, ground, first floor and roof storey for use as a single-family dwellinghouse (following the demolition of existing single dwellinghouse). Pending. Submitted 14/08/07.



Figure 1 :St John's Wood Conservation Area – London Borough of Camden

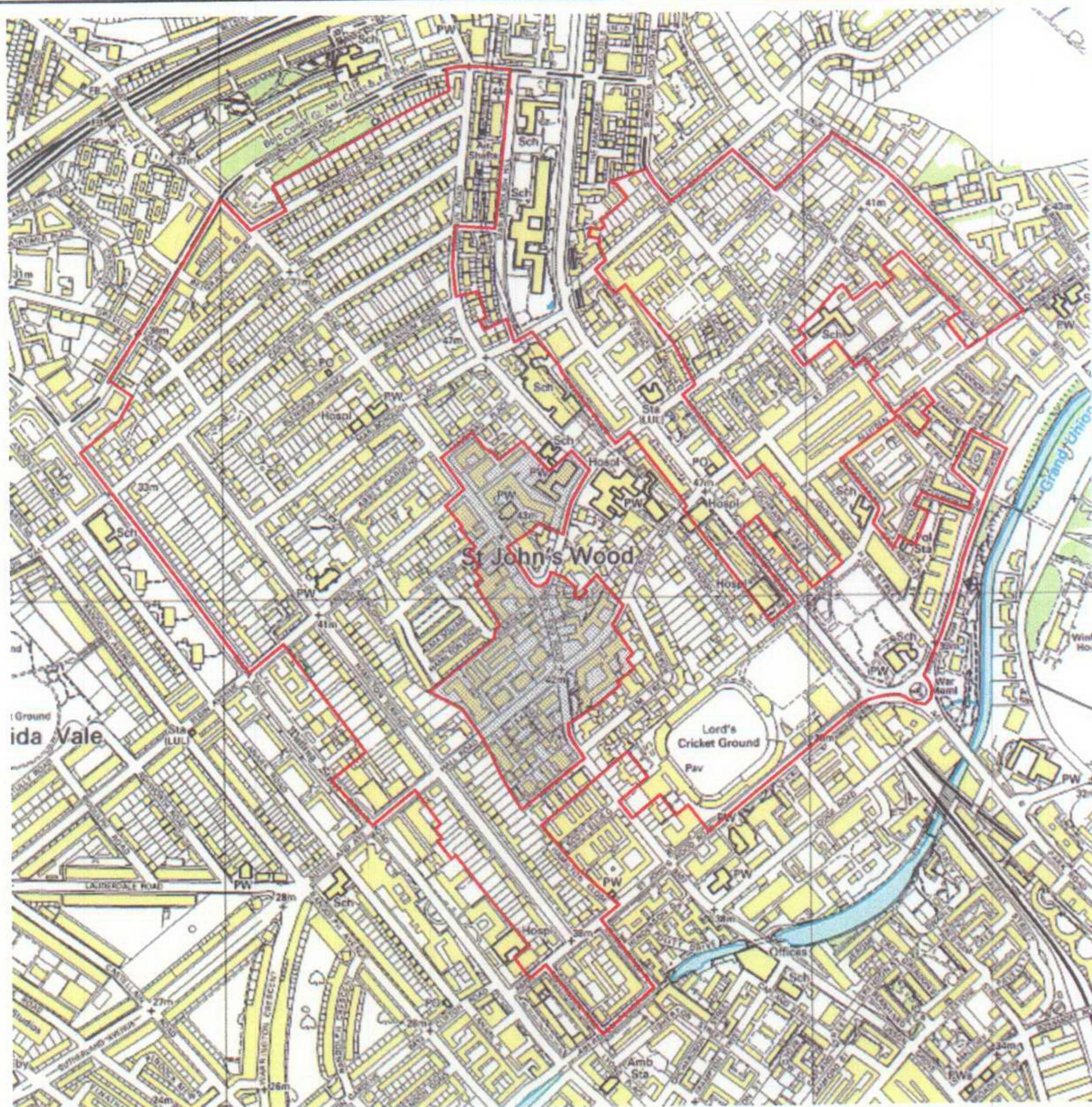


Figure 2: St John's Wood Conservation Area – Borough of Westminster



Figure 3: No.40 Queen's Grove



Figure 4: Listed Buildings Within the Immediate Vicinity

3.0 PLANNING POLICY AND THE TESTS FOR DEMOLITION.

- 3.1 No.40 Queen's Grove is not listed but falls within the St John's Wood Conservation Area in the London Borough of Camden and adjoins the St John's Wood Conservation Area in the City of Westminster. Therefore, its demolition and redevelopment comes under the scope of statutory provision and national guidance in the form of Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment. These provisions are outlined below.

Section 72 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas act, the preserve or enhance test.

- 3.2 Section 72 states that in exercise of planning powers within a Conservation Area, local authorities are required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Thus the statutory provision is satisfied if the development does one thing or the other, and there will be cases where proposals will both preserve and enhance a Conservation Area. The meaning of preservation in this context (according to PPG15) is generally taken to be the avoidance of harm. Character relates to physical characteristics but also to more general qualities such as uses or activity within an area. Appearance relates to the visible physical qualities of the area.
- 3.3 There is no statutory provision that covers development impacts upon the setting of conservation areas. This criteria is rather advised in PPG15, which states that the preserve or enhance test should apply to development in the setting of a conservation area. The development falls within the setting of Westminster's adjoining Conservation Area, but as the two Conservation Areas are part of the same historic entity we consider that assessing the impact on Camden's component is the relevant test.

- 3.4 The potentially affected adjoining Conservation Areas are identified at 3.1.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment

- 3.5 Demolition of unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas is discussed at paragraphs 4.25 – 4.29 of PPG15, with paragraph 4.26 advising it is desirable to take into account the part played by the building in the architectural and historical interest of the area. The decision maker should have regard 'in particular' to the 'wider effects on the area', including the buildings surroundings and the area as a whole.
- 3.6 PPG 15 places a presumption in favour of retaining buildings that fall within a Conservation Area, which make a positive contribution to its character and appearance. Accordingly PPG 15 advises that where a building or group of buildings are judged to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas, there will be a presumption in

favour of their retention and the decision maker should have regard to the advice set out in the PPG in relation to proposals for the demolition of listed buildings. The substantive difference in designations – listing is about historic fabric and intrinsic interest, conservation area designation is about the character or appearance of the area – mean that the demolition tests should be applied broadly. Thus, para 4.27 advises that the decision is entitled to have regard to the merits of the proposed replacement building in a conservation area; this consideration is not applicable to proposals to demolish listed buildings.

- 3.7 Para 4.26, does also advise that 'account should clearly be taken of the part played in the architectural and historic interest of the area by the building for which demolition is proposed.' It goes on then to draw distinction between the effects of demolition on the 'building's surroundings' as distinct from 'the conservation area as a whole'. Moreover in more general terms – in relation to listed buildings and conservation areas – the PPG emphasises the importance of careful assessment as the basis for decision making, an approach which is now more widely advocated in best practice guidance. And at 4.27 the PPG indicates these are instances where a building makes 'little or no such contribution', which again suggests a discriminating approach.
- 3.8 The assessment criteria for demolition of buildings that do make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area are laid out at para 3.16 – 3.19 and are the same tests that are applied when considering the demolition of a listed building.
- 3.9 In assessing whether the building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, we have now English Heritage's Guidance on Management of Conservation Areas and Conservation Appraisal Guidance (2006).

Statutory Development Plan

- 3.11 The Statutory development plan consists of:

- The London Plan
- The London Borough of Camden Adopted Unitary Development Plan 2006

- 3.12 In this instance regard should be had to the adjoining St John's Wood Conservation situated within Westminster and the policies within the City of Westminster Adopted Unitary Development Plan 2007 and the St John's Wood Conservation Area Audit 2006. These are material considerations.

London Plan

- 3.13 The London Plan's Policies on heritage are of a general nature and are presented in the chapter on design matters generally. No specific guidance is given on the demolition of unlisted buildings within a Conservation Area.

The London Borough of Camden adopted Unitary Development Plan

- 3.14 The following policies from the UDP are relevant to this proposal:

B7 - Conservation areas

A - Character and appearance

The Council will only grant consent for development in a conservation area that preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the area. The Council will not grant planning permission for development outside of a conservation area that it considers would cause harm to the conservation area's character, appearance or setting.

- 3.15 This policy reflects statutory provision closely.

B - Demolition of unlisted buildings

The Council will not grant conservation area consent for the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area, unless exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention.

- 3.16 This policy reflects the presumption in favour of retention set out in PPG15 para 4.27.

- 3.17 The City of Westminster's Adopted Unitary Development Plan has a policy, DES 9(B) on conservation areas.

- 3.18 The City of Westminster St John's Wood Conservation Area is presently under review. A draft area audit was carried out in February 2006.

4.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT: A Regency Suburb

- 4.1 As an area just on the outskirts of the capital, in London's immediate hinterland, St. John's Wood has an extensive documentary history, one that is entirely typical of those areas which became the earliest of London's planned suburbs. John Summerson was the first architectural historian to draw attention to the early plans for comprehensive suburban development prepared by the Eyre Estate, in the 1790s.

Up to the 17th Century

- 4.2 At this time the area was a dense oak forest forming part of the Great Forest of Middlesex. The Domesday book of 1086 denotes the area as part of the Ancient Manor of Lilestone (Lisson) assessed at a value of five hides. In 1238 the Manor was given to the Knights Templar and in 1323 bestowed on the Knights of the Order of St John of Jerusalem (Knights Hospitallers) an Augustinian order of Monks, hence the name St John's Wood. Part of the forest was in the ownership of the Monastery and was arguably its greatest asset.
- 4.3 After the dissolution of the Monastic orders in 1539 the land reverted to the crown, and Henry VIII, felled the trees for ship building and, for the furnishing and construction of Royal Palaces. Smith cites Ernest Law's 'A History of Hampton Court', where he comments in relation to the Great Hall, "timber, chiefly oak, was bought in enormous quantities from Dorking, Holmwood, Leatherhead and St John's Wood". Henry VIII also established Royal Hunting grounds in what became known as Marylebone Park to the east. By the mid 17th century most of the trees had been felled and the area was declared as only fit for grazing rather than retaining it for forestry and for the following years the land produced dairy products for the capital. A map at figure 4 shows the landscape at this time.

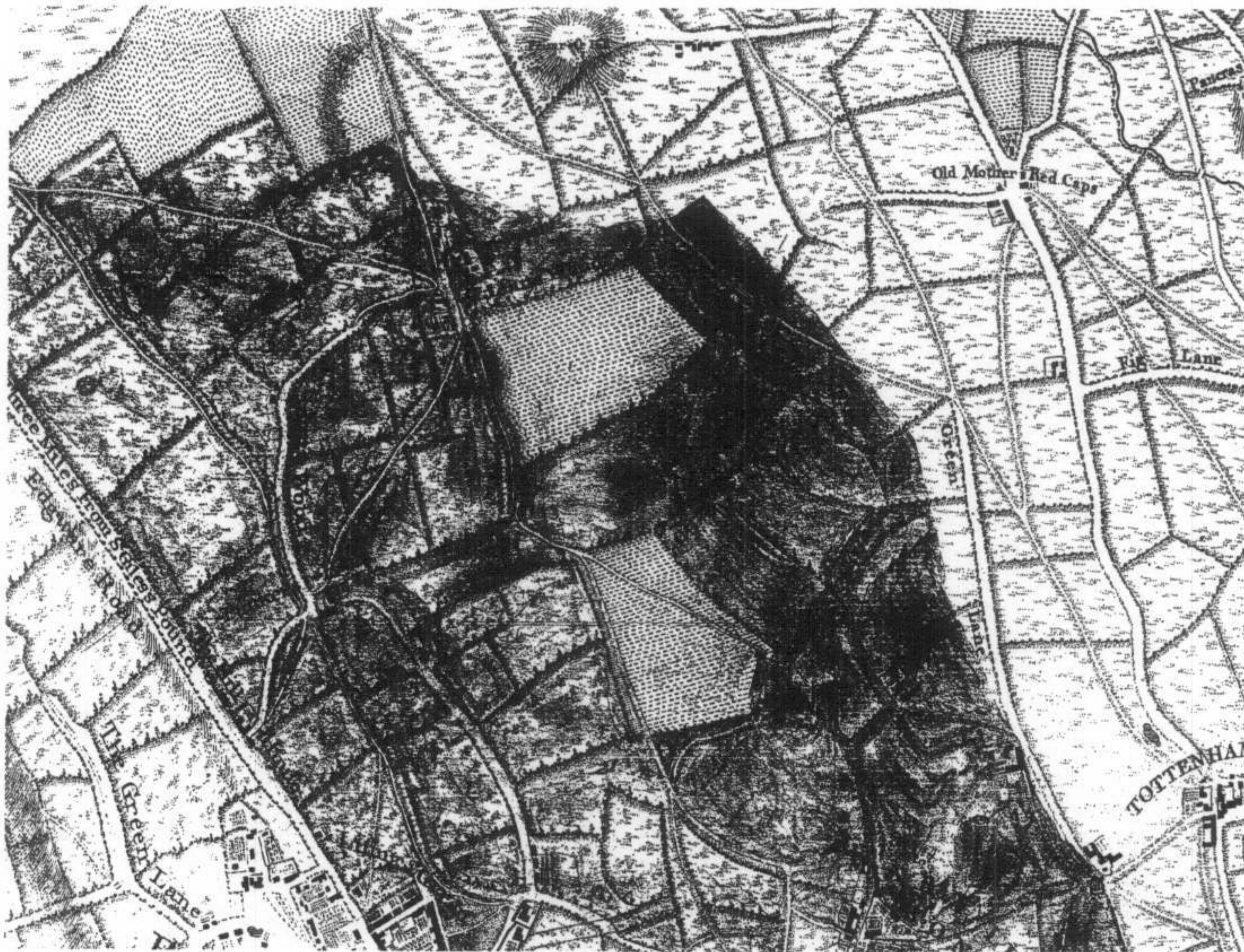


Figure 4: Map of St Johns Wood 1745

18th Century

- 4.4 In the 18th Century the Crown (Charles II was on the throne) sold 500 acres of the land to Henry Lord Wotton for £1300, it was passed down through his family until, Henry Samuel Eyre a rich merchant of Bishop's Gate, obtained the largest portion in 1732 (500 acres). (Queen's Grove is on land which formed part of the Eyre estate). What is now Hamilton Terrace to the east was part of the Harrow School Estate, and pockets of the Portman Estate are to the south, such as Norfolk Road. In 1794 plans were drawn up for the Eyre estate, on the model of Bath with a crescent, circus and a square. However, this was never implemented, the war with the French and an economic down turn are often cited as the reasons. From 1802 development on the Eyre estate was directed by John Shaw, a young architect inspired by the town-planning ideals of the late 18th century. His plan consisted of a circus of detached and semi detached houses, sat in their own grounds. The war again prevented the full implementation and the area predominantly remained in use for agricultural purposes until the mid 19th Century.

19th Century

- 4.4 It is in this period that the most significant changes occurred to the landscape and the earliest developments were being built in a scattered manner over the Eyre Estate. These developments included a chapel in 1812, Lord's Cricket Ground in 1814 and in 1827 the terraces started to appear along St John's Wood High Street, which at that time was called Portland Town Road. A small selection of villas standing in substantial garden plots were also constructed along Wellington Road and Avenue Road. It was in 1811 that John Nash