

## 3 HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

### 03 LISTING AND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

#### 3-03.01 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Designed in 1968 and built between 1972 and 1978 by the London Borough of Camden Architects Department, Alexandra Road Estate is one of the most ambitious examples of the innovative new social housing emerging from the Department at this time, and of new housing in Britain. Its architect was Neave Brown.

Camden was formed in 1965 from the London Boroughs of Hampstead, Holborn and St Pancras and was one of the largest, wealthiest and most ambitious of the new London Boroughs. The architect's department under the leadership of Sidney Cook was, like all local authorities, under great pressure to build large amounts of housing. Camden developed low rise, high density schemes to meet this demand rather than the system built high rise schemes adopted by many other local authorities. The Estate was seen as an opportunity to improve a whole area by the inclusion of a public park and the provision of social buildings such as the community centre, shops and special needs school.

The street is the dominant element in the design and seen as a modern translation of the traditional London Street, where the sum of the whole exceeds the individual parts in creating a meaningful urban space. All dwellings are entered directly from the streets, which are freed of traffic by the parking garage provided at low level. At Alexandra Road, Rowley Way can be seen as one of the most successful examples of the segregation of traffic and the pedestrian, and it remains a successful social space.

The linear stepped section was influenced by work developed by Leslie Martin - an idea also developed by Denys Lasdun at the University of East Anglia (1962-68) and by Patrick Hodgkinson at the Brunswick Centre in Bloomsbury (1967-72). At Alexandra Road the stepped section enabled all dwellings to have a sunny outdoor space and was further utilised to shield the estate from the noise of the railway line to the north. Alexandra Road Estate also represents a development of Neave Brown's earlier work for housing societies, undertaken while he was in private practice, at Winscombe Street and Fleet Road. Though on a much smaller scale, these too were essays in high-density developments of stacked dwellings and the considered sequencing of spaces moving from public and semi-public to private and semi-private.

The construction of the Estate is of white board marked concrete with areas of self-coloured render. The predominant materials are light in colour with contrasting joinery, inside and out. Concrete was the natural material from which to form the large, complex section, and the areas of self-coloured render are a reference to the Regency terrace. At Alexandra Road the quality and detailing of the materials is high. Internally the planning of the individual flats is flexible with spaces divided by storey height doors and sliding partitions. The care devoted to the internal fittings was perhaps unique amongst local authority departments at this time.

The quality and importance of the estate has been widely recognised both in England and abroad. It is a powerful icon of the optimism and idealism that underpinned post-war public sector architecture. It continues to be regularly visited by architectural students and practitioners.

### 3-03.02 ORIGINAL LISTING

#### List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

**Name: ALEXANDRA ROAD ESTATE INCLUDING WALLS, RAMPS AND STEPS COMMUNITY CENTRE AND BOILER HOUSE TO ALEXANDRA ROAD ESTATE NUMBERS 1-21 (INCLUDING A AND B TO EACH NUMBER) NUMBERS 4-119 (INCLUDING A AND B TO EACH NUMBER ON SOUTH SIDE, AND A-K TO EACH NUMBER ON NORTH SIDE)**

**List Entry Number: 1130403**

#### Location

ALEXANDRA ROAD ESTATE INCLUDING WALLS, RAMPS AND STEPS, ROWLEY WAY COMMUNITY CENTRE AND BOILER HOUSE TO ALEXANDRA ROAD ESTATE, ROWLEY WAY NUMBERS 1-21 (INCLUDING A AND B TO EACH NUMBER), 1-21, AINSWORTH WAY NUMBERS 4-119 (INCLUDING A AND B TO EACH NUMBER ON SOUTH SIDE, AND A-K TO EACH NUMBER ON NORTH SIDE), 4-119, ROWLEY WAY  
The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

**County:** Greater London Authority

**District:** Camden

**District Type:** London Borough

**Parish:**

**National Park:** Not applicable to this List entry.

**Grade:** II\*

**Date first listed:** 18-Aug-1993

**Date of most recent amendment:** 11-Jan-1999

### Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

**Legacy System:** LBS      **UID:** 477882

## Asset Groupings

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

## List Entry Description

<http://list.historicengland.org.uk/printreport.aspx?img=1&ld=1>  
1 of 4 05/06/2015 11:15

## Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

## Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

## History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

## Details

CAMDEN

TQ2683NW AINSWORTH WAY 798-1/71/1403 Nos.1-21 (Consecutive) 18/08/93 (including A and B to each number) II\*

See under: Alexandra Road Estate including walls, ramps & steps ROWLEY WAY. CAMDEN

TQ2683NW ROWLEY WAY 798-1/71/1403 Nos.4-119 (Consecutive) 18/08/93 (incl. A & B to each number on S side, and A-K to each number on N side) II\*

See under: Alexandra Road Estate including walls, ramps & steps ROWLEY WAY. CAMDEN

TQ2683NW ROWLEY WAY 798-1/71/1403 Community Centre and Boiler House to 18/08/93 Alexandra Road Estate II\*

See under: Alexandra Road Estate including walls, ramps & steps ROWLEY WAY. CAMDEN

TQ2683NW ROWLEY WAY 798-1/71/1403 Alexandra Road Estate including 18/08/93 walls, ramps & steps

(Formerly Listed as: ROWLEY WAY/ AINSWORTH WAY Alexandra Rd Est inc. Rowley Way, Ainsworth Way and walls, ramps, steps) II\*

Includes: Community Centre and Boiler House to Alexandra Road Estate ROWLEY WAY. Includes: Nos.4-119 (incl. A & B to each number on S side, and A-K to each number on N side) ROWLEY WAY. Includes: Nos.1-21 (including A and B to each number) AINSWORTH WAY. Housing estate. Designed 1968; built 1972-78.

Designed by Neave Brown of Camden Architects' Department. Site-cast board-marked white, unpainted reinforced concrete. Flat roofs. Three parallel east-west blocks, the northern forming an acoustic wall to shield the estate from the adjacent railway line. The northern pair of blocks facing in towards the pedestrian street Rowley Way, and organised with stepped elevations facing in towards Rowley Way, each level providing private outdoor areas for every home.

EXTERIOR: block A is of 7 storeys, Block B of 4 storeys. To the south of Rowley Way are play areas and a public park, separated by concrete walls and banks and by planting into a sequence of small spaces with built-in seating. Attached to the south is Ainsworth Way comprising 3 linked rows of 3-storey terraced houses. Block A, Rowley Way comprises 2-storey, 2-bed flats at the top and 2-storey, 3-bed flats at the bottom with 3 layers of single storey 1-bed flats between. Block B comprises 4 storeys of 2 and 3-bed maisonettes. There are garages beneath Block A and Rowley Way itself, which is paved in red terracotta blocks. Balconies to Blocks A and B have thick reinforced concrete handrails with glass panels beneath; floor to ceiling glazing to Rowley Way with thick dark-stained window frames. Ainsworth Way houses each comprise 1 bay, with paired entrances; top storey set back providing roof terrace with floor to ceiling windows and heavy reinforced concrete balustrade with glass panels beneath. Thick timber windows. Ground floor slightly raised over garages. Community centre is attached to the east of Ainsworth Way and Rowley Way, and has the boiler house below, with its tall 3-shafted metal chimney. The community centre is on 1 level, and of an irregular, triangular plan; horizontal strip windows and roof terrace. To north and west are attached ramps and staircases, including East Bridge and West Bridge. To the west also attached to Ainsworth Way housing is the play area and public park; play areas of irregular shape at several levels, linked by ramps and steps and enclosed and contained by robust board marked concrete walls and planting boxes, often diagonally set, sometimes curved and some with inset seats.

INTERIORS not inspected

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: the 3 blocks which comprise Ainsworth Way are linked by low reinforced concrete walls, enclosing built-in seating areas; there is a further seating area attached to the west of Block B Rowley Way, with a raised circular section paved with granite sets and a lower rectangular section. (Architectural Review: August 1979; Architecture and Urbanism: November 1980; New York Times: 3 December, 1978). Listing NGR: TQ2605683913

## **Selected Sources**

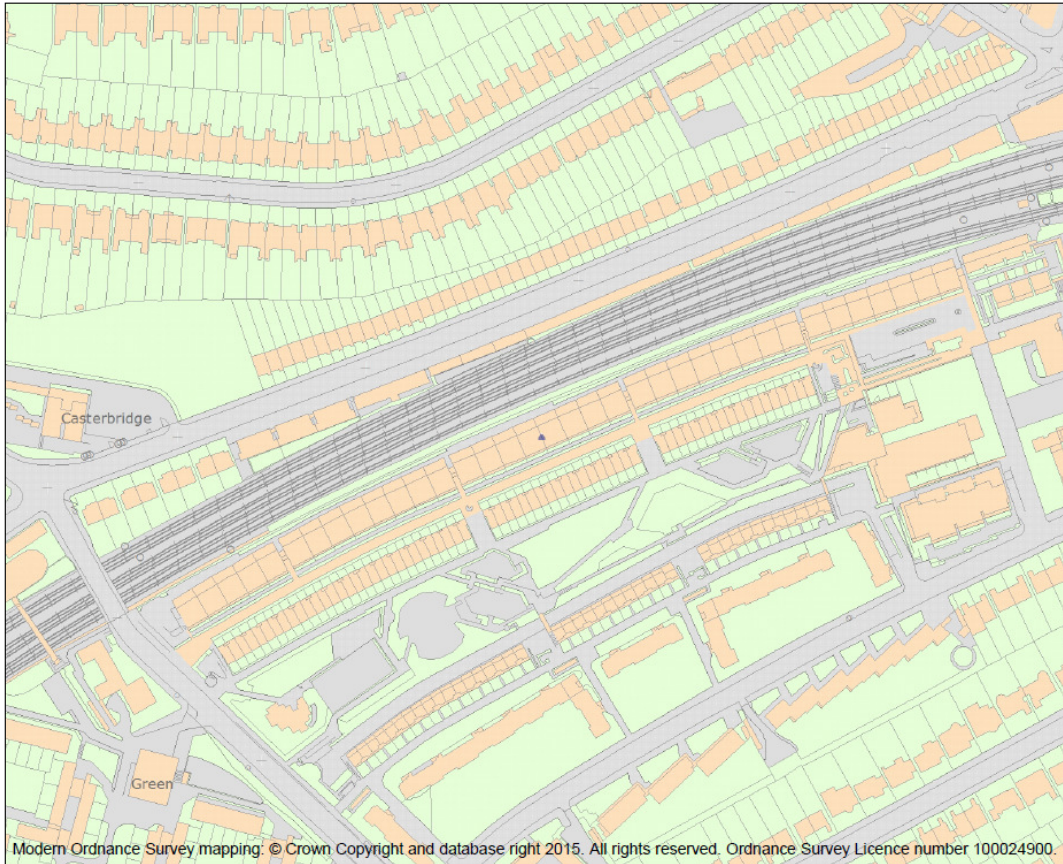
### **Books and journals**

'New York Times' in 3 December, (1978)

'Architecture and Urbanism' in November, (1980)

'Architectural Review' in August, (1979)

## Map



This is an A4 sized map and should be printed full size at A4 with no page scaling set.

**Name:** ALEXANDRA ROAD ESTATE INCLUDING WALLS, RAMPS AND STEPS  
COMMUNITY CENTRE AND BOILER HOUSE TO ALEXANDRA ROAD ESTATE  
NUMBERS 1-21 (INCLUDING A AND B TO EACH NUMBER)  
NUMBERS 4-119 (INCLUDING A AND B TO EACH NUMBER ON SOUTH SIDE, AND A-K TO EACH NUMBER ON NORTH SIDE)

<b>Heritage Category:</b>	Listing
<b>List Entry No :</b>	1130403
<b>Grade:</b>	II*

<b>County:</b>	Greater London Authority
<b>District:</b>	Camden
<b>Parish:</b>	Non Civil Parish

For all entries pre-dating 4 April 2011 maps and national grid references do not form part of the official record of a listed building. In such cases the map here and the national grid reference are generated from the list entry in the official record and added later to aid identification of the principal listed building or buildings.

For all list entries made on or after 4 April 2011 the map here and the national grid reference do form part of the official record. In such cases the map and the national grid reference are to aid identification of the principal listed building or buildings only and must be read in conjunction with other information in the record.

Any object or structure fixed to the principal building or buildings and any object or structure within the curtilage of the building, which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July, 1948 is by law to be treated as part of the listed building.

This map was delivered electronically and when printed may not be to scale and may be subject to distortions.

<b>List Entry NGR:</b>	TQ 26056 83913
<b>Map Scale:</b>	1:2500
<b>Print Date:</b>	26 November 2015



**National Grid Reference: TQ 26056 83913**

The below map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - [1130403.pdf](#) - Please be aware that it may take a few minutes for the download to complete.

<http://list.historicengland.org.uk/printreport.aspx?img=1&ld=1>

3 of 4 05/06/2015 11:15 © Crown Copyright and database right 2015. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900. © British Crown and SeaZone Solutions Limited 2015. All rights reserved. Licence number 102006.006.