



CASTLECROFT GARDENS

Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Proposals

March 2010

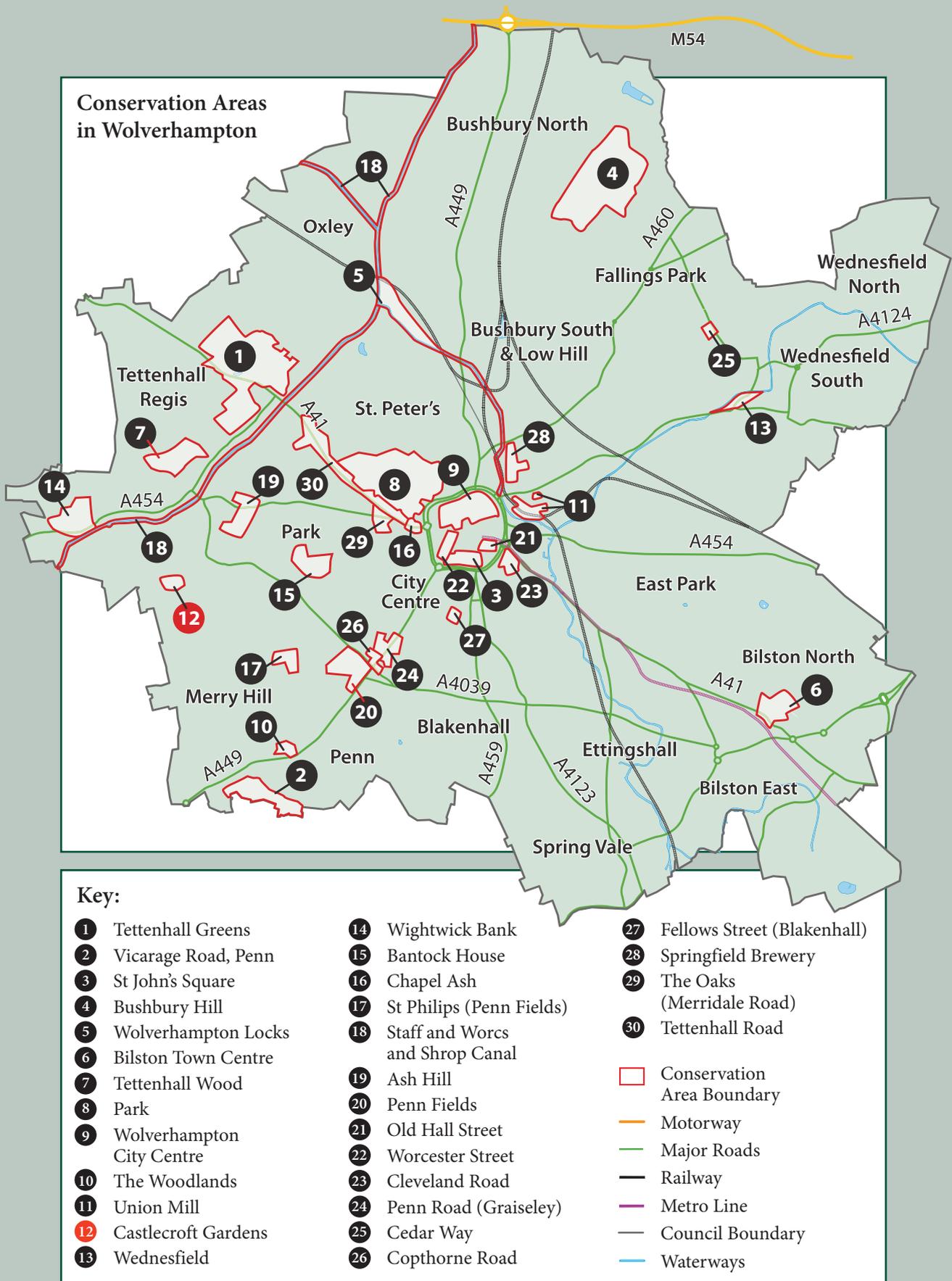
Wolverhampton
City Council



Conservation Area Character Appraisal

This document is the appraisal for the Castlecroft Gardens Conservation Area which the Council approved on 1st March 2010.

To find out more about appraisals for other conservation areas in the City see the Council's website at www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/conservationareas



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Above:

General View of Castlecroft Gardens

1. Introduction

The Castlecroft Gardens Conservation Area was designated by Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough Council on 28th July 1998 and the boundary was further extended on 21st June 2010.

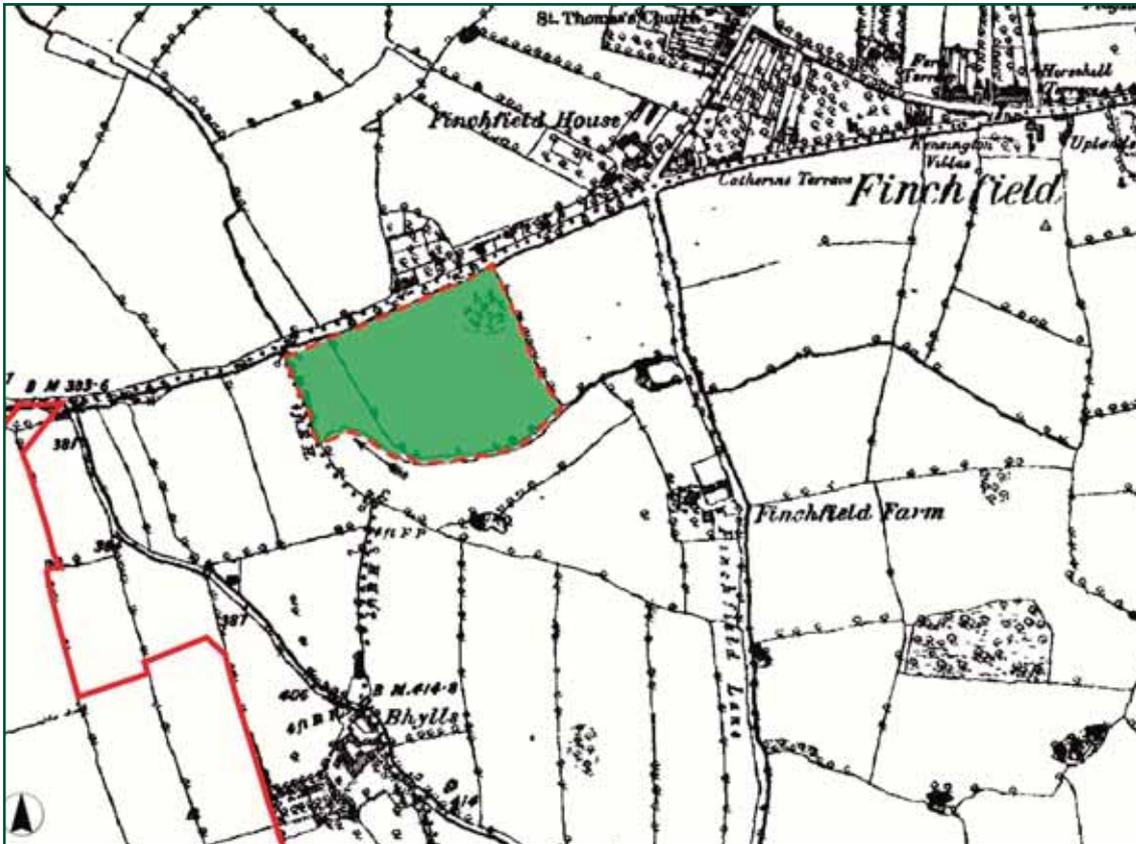
This document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the Castlecroft Gardens Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement. The omission of a particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as “an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.

Section 72 specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

This appraisal satisfies the requirements of the legislation and provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the Castlecroft Gardens Conservation Area can be assessed.



Above:

Extract from the 1880s 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey map showing rural character of the area.

2. Location and setting

The Castlecroft Gardens conservation area is located within the northern part of a triangle of land bounded by Finchfield Lane on the east, Bhylls Lane to the south-west and Castlecroft Road to the north. It lies approximately 3.25 km to the west of Wolverhampton city centre.

The conservation area is sited on almost level ground which gently slopes down to the south and west into the valley of the Finchfield Brook. The land was in agricultural use up until the early years of the 20th century. The natural soil cover is a

reddish-brown clay with a band of alluvial soil wrapping around the west and south sides of the conservation area associated with the now partially culverted Finchfield Brook, which joins the Smestow Brook .75km to the North West.

The conservation area lies within Merry Hill Ward.

3. History

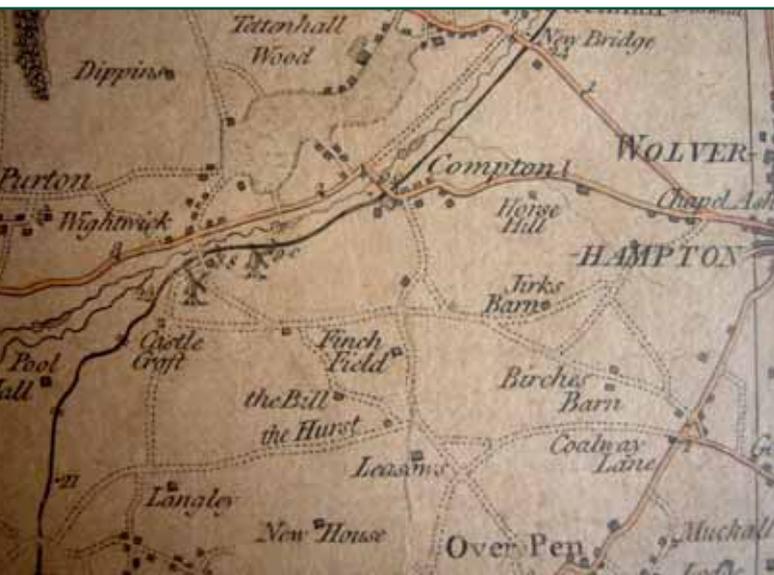
Castlecroft Gardens conservation area is a unique housing development located in the suburbs of Wolverhampton in Finchfield. This unique development was created by a Canadian builder, Major Kenneth Hutchinson Smith, who arrived in Britain during the First World War. His vision was to create a typical English village comprising of traditional houses, a village green and maypole. Unfortunately Hutchinson Smith died in 1945 before his idea was fulfilled.

Before Hutchinson – Smith

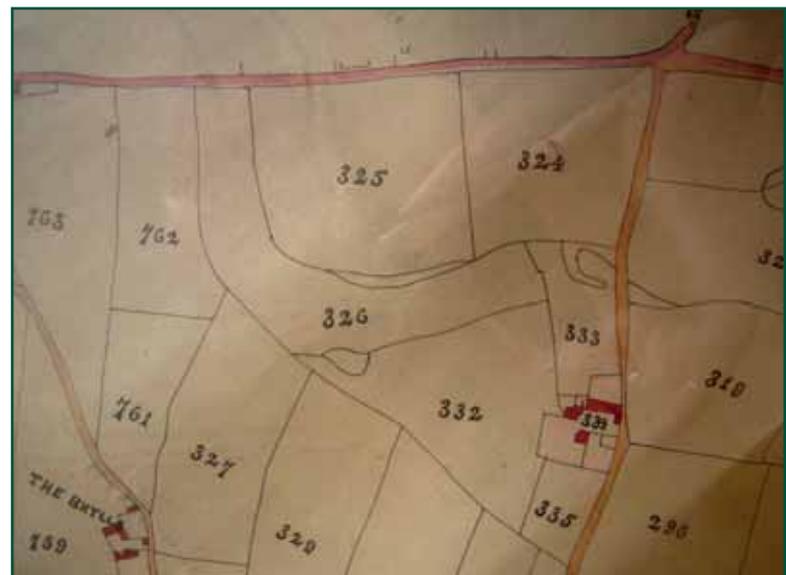
The area where Castlecroft Gardens stands today is marked on the William Yates' map of 1775 with the words 'Finch Field', a reference to a farmhouse that once stood just to the east, outside the modern conservation area boundary. The routes of the three roads: Finchfield Lane, Bhylls Lane and Castlecroft Road are clearly shown indicating that these were already well established by the late 18th

century. A short distance to the west can be seen the name 'Castle Croft', a reference to an early 18th century farmhouse (today located in Staffordshire) after which Hutchinson Smith chose to name his new development.

The Penn Tithe Map of 1842 and the later 1880s Ordnance Survey map (See page 3) shows this area of Wolverhampton as a largely rural area with isolated farmhouses. The actual site of what was to become Castlecroft Gardens comprises two fields bounded by the Castlecroft Road (then known as Finchfield Road) to the north, by a tree lined hedge to the east and the Finchfield Brook to the south and east. The Finchfield Brook issues approximately 1km to the east of the conservation area and flows in a westerly direction. Although today it is partially culverted it can still be seen in places outside the conservation area in open land known as Coppice



Above:
Extract from the William Yates Map 1775



Above:
Extract from the Penn Tithe – Castlecroft Gardens was built on the field numbered 325 and part of field 326

Road open space and to the rear of Smestow School. At Finchfield Lane the brook once fed a Medieval moat, lying just beyond the conservation area boundary, destroyed in 1983 when houses were built. The stream course then runs along the route of Glendale Close forming the rear boundary of Nos 14 – 32 Castlecroft Gardens where it flows through a culvert. At this point it makes an abrupt turn north and reappears where it today forms the rear boundary of the gardens to Nos 2-12 Castlecroft Gardens. This section of the brook once formed part of the ancient boundary between the parishes of Lower Penn and Upper Penn.

The Castlecroft development was built on land which once formed part of the Penn Hall Estate, a 280 acre site which passed to Thomas Bradney in 1747 when his relative Dr. Raphael Sedgwick died. He commissioned the building of Penn Hall, off Vicarage Road, which was completed around 1795 and is now a Grade II* listed building. The estate remained in the Bradney Persehouse family throughout the 19th century but was divided up in 1894 following the death of John Persehouse with one area, totalling 51 acres, being passed to Mr William Evans. This land was sold in 1900 to Lydia Whitehouse, widow of James Whitehouse of Dudley, and her three daughters Fanny Eliza, Mary Elizabeth and Lydia Emily who bought the land at £67 per acre.

Lydia Whitehouse died in 1923 and left the land in the care of her daughters under the Whitehouse Trust who eventually sold 9 acres to Major Kenneth Hutchinson Smith for £3000 in 1926.

The Development of Castlecroft Gardens

Major Kenneth Hutchinson Smith came to England in 1915 when serving with the Canadian forces during the First World War and stayed in the country following his marriage to an English girl

in 1918. Following the war he established a business designing and building houses using traditional and reclaimed materials with a small team of skilled craftsmen. A majority of his best known houses were built as individual commissions in the West Midlands and most of these were constructed using salvaged elements of timber framed buildings. However he was already building houses and bungalows in the Finchfield area between 1920 and 1925 in what can best be described as a North American Colonial Revival style. Most of these houses are still standing today and although they are less well known than his more characteristic timber framed houses they are also interesting in their own right. It is likely that as he became more familiar with the vernacular building traditions of England he changed his style to reflect that of his adopted home. Nevertheless income from this earlier housing development work enabled him to move forward with the dream of creating an English model village and to purchase the 9 acre site which was to become Castlecroft Gardens in November 1926.

Hutchinson Smith's inspiration for his new estate came mainly from the medieval timber framed buildings of the West Midlands. In common with many others in the inter-war period Hutchinson Smith was dismayed at the unthinking destruction of the traditional vernacular buildings of England in the name of progress. In an era before the concept of the 'listed building' had been thought of many historic houses were being demolished to make way for new developments and road widening projects up and down the country. As there was no mechanism in place at the time to protect such buildings in situ Hutchinson Smith took it upon himself to record buildings he became aware of and salvage materials for reuse in his projects, in some cases reconstructing virtually entire buildings and converting them to dwellings.

Having purchased the Castlecroft Gardens site he established his headquarters, a two roomed timber framed building and builders yard, on the site of what is today No 42 but which in Hutchinson Smith's grand plan would eventually become the village green complete with a Maypole. The Whitehouse Trust had imposed a number of restrictive covenants on the purchase and to some extent these dictated the early development of the site. The key restrictions were as follows:

- Only detached or semi-detached houses could be built.
- No property, including garages and other outbuildings should cost less than £500.
- No trade, manufacturing or processes involving noxious, dangerous or offensive processes could be carried out.
- All building plans had to be approved by the previous owners or their surveyor.

The covenants also required the construction and maintenance of a chestnut pale fence of between 4' and 5'6" in height around the site. Partial remnants of this fence still survive and can be seen off Glendale Road.



Above:
Surviving chestnut pale fence off Glendale Close.



Above:
1 Castlecroft Gardens.

The development of the estate can be established with some confidence from maps and building plans held by the Wolverhampton Archives Service (although just because building plans were approved it does not necessarily mean houses were built immediately afterwards). The first house to be built in Castlecroft Gardens proper was probably No 1 (Brantley) plans for which were approved by the Public Works Committee on 18th January 1927. This house stands on a raised site that turns the corner off the main road into the new estate and must have been conceived as something of an advertisement at the entrance to the new estate.

Hutchinson Smith probably obtained approval for the construction of Nos 113-143 Castlecroft Road at the same time but these plans have not survived. It seems likely that Hutchinson Smith began by building these eight pairs of semi-detached houses to raise capital for his Castlecroft Estate project. Evidence from the deeds of these properties confirms that he was selling these houses by spring 1928, if not earlier, and they are most likely contemporary with No 1.

The next house to be built was probably No 14. This substantial colonial style house stands at an angle to the new road with its main elevation facing south west and hidden from public view (see picture on page 21). This was the house which



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Above:
1950s Ordnance Survey map showing confusing numbering of the houses.

Hutchinson Smith had been building for his own use whilst developing the estate and although the family eventually chose to live elsewhere we can assume that it was one of the first to be built. Whilst building plans have not been located to confirm this there is evidence of an early date for construction on the 1950s Ordnance Survey map of the area. It would appear that the houses were numbered in sequence as they were built which caused some confusion for the postman until the road was renumbered in the 1960s. Although not all of the houses have numbers on the 1950s map, if the sequence is compared with the known dates from building plans which were submitted to the council for approval in the 1920s and 30s an approximate order of construction can be derived. No 19 (today's No14) is the lowest number shown on the 1950s map to appear on any of the houses in Castlecroft Gardens.

The house numbered 20 on the 1950s map, and hence possibly the third to be built, is today No 12 (Holly Cottage). Originally it was known as The Moat House and so called because the then open Finchfield brook enclosed the garden on two sides. The plans for this house, along with plans for No 5 (Thurlstone), were approved on 6th June 1928. These two houses stand opposite each other on the curve of the road and effectively framed the entrance into the main part of the estate which at the time was divided into building plots.

Right:
Semi-detached houses on Castlecroft Road.





Above:
No 5 Thurlstone and No 38 Stow House

No 38 (Stow House) has long been reputed to be the first house on the estate but on the 1950s maps it is numbered as 21 implying that it probably dates from 1928. No building plans have been located for this house but it is very similar in general form to No 5, the significant differences being the choice of external wall finishes. No 5 is entirely timber framed in appearance on the front elevation whilst No 38 shows a mix of tile hanging and herringbone brickwork as well as timber frame. It may be that Hutchinson Smith was showing off the palette of materials that potential clients may like to choose from when commissioning a house on the new estate but he built the houses on sites in different parts of the estate so that the similarities between the two houses were less evident? Hutchinson Smith does seem to have developed certain house types which were repeated but customised them to meet client requirements and to ensure that no two houses were ever totally identical.

Three months later in October 1928 Hutchinson Smith submitted plans for No 7 (Pennings) a substantial double gabled house (see photo on page 20). Plans for a further two houses were approved in May the following year. No 40 (The Porch House) (see photo on page 26) is one of the more distinctive houses in Castlecroft Gardens and deliberately so because this was one of the houses sited to overlook the intended village green that Hutchinson Smith was temporarily using for the site of his builders yard. Hutchinson Smith seems to have been careful in the design of buildings that would be seen from his proposed village green and many could be described as more unique or picturesque designs. The second house approved in 1929 was No 28 (Broomey Bank). Interestingly on the building plans the owner of the site is given as N M Bates with Hutchinson Smith as the building contractor indicating that this was not a speculative build but that Hutchinson Smith has a definite client. The front elevation of No 28 is virtually identical to No 12 although the internal arrangements differed slightly on the plans. The similarity is disguised by the fact that Broomey Bank is built face on to the road whereas No 12 was built at an angle.



Above:
Building plans submitted by Hutchinson Smith for Pennings.

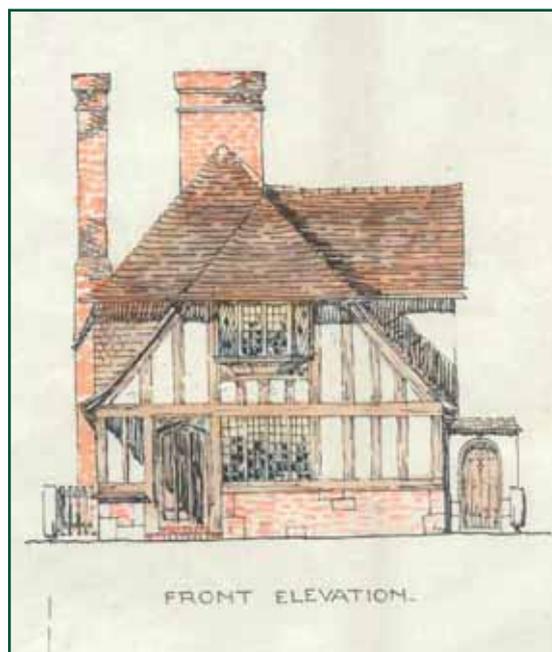


Above:
Broomey Bank (compare with the photo of Holly Cottage on page 21)

September 1929 witnessed the stock market crash on Wall Street and the world economy started to go into decline. This was to affect Hutchinson Smith's business in time but for the next couple of years a steady stream of new commissions continued. The next house to be built was No 32 (Whiston), also built at an angle to the road with the main elevation facing onto the garden. The plans submitted in spring 1930 show this as a house with tile hanging to the first floor and a stone base course. It may be that these features have been altered since construction or the house may never have been built as intended since they are not in evidence today. (Nos 16 and 36 Castlecroft Gardens show a similar elevational treatment to that originally intended for No 32.) Whiston is also one of three houses on the estate where Hutchinson Smith used drawings prepared by Margot Ulrik who was a graduate of the Royal Academy of Arts and worked from offices in Chandos Street, London.

In 1931 plans for only one house were approved, No 34 (Pine Lodge). This house is said to contain timbers reclaimed from Bentley Hall near Walsall which had been taken down in 1929 and materials presumably stored in Hutchinson Smith's yard (see photo on page 25). In contrast 1932 was a busy year for Hutchinson Smith. Plans for three houses

were submitted in quick succession, the first being for No 36 (Greystones) (see photo on page 26), approved in January, in which Hutchinson Smith seems to be trying rather unsuccessfully to emulate Margot Ulrik's drawing originally prepared for No 32. Interestingly, the site plan for this house has the words 'hard court' indicated on the opposite side of the road confirming Hutchinson Smith's intention to develop this space for tennis courts. The other two houses to be built in 1932 were No16 (Inglenook) a deceptively large house which gives the impression of a quaint cottage from the road and No 30 (Orchards) a fine double fronted house which boasted a room for a maid located next to the kitchens (see photo on page 24). Plans for both Nos 16 and 30 were drawn up by Margot Ulrik and are beautifully colour washed. Perhaps Hutchinson Smith needed to present his proposals in a more eye catching way to attract buyers in the more difficult economic climate?



Above:
Drawing by Margot Ulrik of No 16 Inglenook

In 1933 and 1934 Hutchinson Smith submitted no known plans for approval by the council. It may be that he had plenty to do building and selling the three houses approved in 1932 but certainly by this date the economic downturn was having a serious effect on the availability of loans for home buyers. Hutchinson Smith's more unusual creations were said to be difficult to sell and expensive to build so by 1935 he was persuaded to build three smaller, more ordinary houses. Plans for Nos 20, 22 and 24 were approved in January 1935. A standard house design was proposed but as built each is slightly different in an attempt to make sure the unique character of the estate was not too compromised by the erection of three identical dwellings in a row.



Above:
Nos 20, 22 and 24 are not as distinctive as other houses in Castlecroft Gardens.

By June the same year however Hutchinson Smith was also seeking approval for a larger house on the opposite side of the road at No 15 (Wentworth). Hutchinson Smith reused the same plans with which he obtained approval for No 7 in 1928 and whilst the internal layouts may be similar the external appearance of the two houses is very different (see photos on pages 20 and 22).

The rear elevation of No 15 is particularly attractive showing exposed beams at the first floor, probably designed to be appreciated from the proposed village green.

It is likely that No 26 (Roker) also dates from around 1935/36. This is another of the symmetrical fronted houses with tile hanging at first floor. This house is also distinguished as the only one in this part of the estate with a front boundary wall although it cannot be confirmed whether this was the original intention.



Above:
Front boundary wall at No 26

In 1936 Hutchinson Smith had the opportunity to acquire a complete timber framed building which was being demolished for road widening in nearby Shifnal. The reconstruction of this late 16th century building was approved by the council on 14th March 1936 and it would appear that Hutchinson Smith was determined that the building should be rebuilt as accurately as possible and not given a large extension to accommodate modern conveniences as some of the buildings on the estate had been. This approach was vindicated in 1966 when the building, now known as The Buttery, was added to the Statutory List. The house is rather shoehorned in to a narrow plot between



Above:
*The Buttery in its original location in Shifnal
 (Courtesy of Shropshire Archives)*

Nos 1 and 5 and effectively fills what had been an access route to the estate building yard. This is another example of Hutchinson Smith carefully siting one of his more unique buildings so that it would not only command a view of the village green but could also be seen from it and create an attractive setting for the open space. He may even have originally intended what is now the front elevation of No 3 facing onto Castlecroft Gardens to face onto the village green.

The following house to be built was probably No 17 and although no building plans have been located in the Wolverhampton Archives this house has the number 37 on the 1950s Ordnance Survey map implying it was constructed after the Buttery which was No 36 on the same map. The principle elevation of this house is very similar to Inglebrook

The next project was a semi-detached pair of houses also located next to the proposed village green; Nos 9 (Timbers) and 11 (Lyndhurst) (see photo on page 21). Plans were approved in June 1937. Previously described as an almost complete barn relocated from either Suffolk or Surrey, this pair of houses has the distinctive appearance

of a Wealden House, a medieval house type characteristic of the central weald but also widespread throughout the south-east of England and into East Anglia. The building may well have been used as a barn in the latter days of its life and it is possible that Hutchinson Smith was on the look out for a house of this type to compliment his collection at Castlecroft Gardens. It is unlikely that Hutchinson Smith was not aware of what he was doing. He wanted the classic recessed Wealden front of the building to be seen from the village green and hence deliberately built the houses back to front!



Above:
No 17 in the foreground and its neighbour No 19

Building plans for the final two Hutchinson Smith houses have not been located in the archives but Nos 19 and 21 are late and may well have not been completed until after the outbreak of war. No 19 (Grey Beams) is said to incorporate the relocated remains of a 17th century cottage from Pattingham. No 21 (Little Oak) also has a projecting timber framed wing at the front but

nothing is known of its origins (see photo on page 23). There was a potential building plot available next to Little Oak and another plot almost directly opposite but these two sites were left undeveloped until after the war. Other than these two remaining plots it is likely that Hutchinson Smith never intended for the rest of Castlecroft Gardens ever to be developed leaving the village green, space for two tennis courts and a slightly boggy site adjacent to the Smestow Brook, as communal open space.

After Hutchinson Smith Period

Hutchinson Smith died on 7th September 1945 and his assets were disposed of, including remaining land at Castlecroft Gardens. However, some of the land at Castlecroft Gardens does seem to have been sold as early as January 1945 when builders Henry Gough submitted plans for the construction of a pair of semi-detached houses on the site of what is today Nos 6 and 8. Although approved the houses were never built but Henry Gough's interest continued and a further application followed in 1949 for three identical pairs of semis on the sites of Nos 2-10. Once again these were never built. Shortly afterwards H D Sparrow submitted plans for the construction of No 4 and although approved in November 1949 work on site did not commence until the spring of 1951. The architects were Johnson and Giles of Willenhall and the detailing of this house and No 2 is so similar that it seems likely they were from the same practice. Neither of these two houses makes any pretence of imitating the classic Hutchinson Smith style of building.

Henry Gough continued to have an interest in the site in 1950 as contractor for No 10 being built for Henry Alphonse Alliston. The architect for this house was Eric Smallwood and the house is an uncompromisingly modern design of the period and sadly much altered since it was originally built.



Above:
Nos 2 and 4 Castlecroft Gardens

By contrast the architect of No 6, A C Thornton of D B Evans building contractors used applied timber framing, rustic brickwork and leaded lights in an attempt to make the house being built for a Mr Jubb blend in with the work of Hutchinson Smith. This house was approved in January 1950 and most likely built shortly afterwards.

The final house to be built in this part of Castlecroft Gardens is No 8 (Tudor Lodge) in 1954. No plans for this house have been located but it is clearly designed by an architect of some sensitivity working to create a house in keeping with the Hutchinson Smith style.

In 1955 the Castlecroft Gardens Residents' Association was established specifically to purchase land still in the ownership of the Executors of the Hutchinson Smith estate. The principle reason for wishing to take control of this land was the poor condition of the road which was only partly tarmacked and not really suitable for the increasing number of motor vehicles used by the residents. The road remains in the control of the trustees of the Residents' Association to this day and is entirely maintained by them, including the verges, street trees and street lighting.

Hutchinson Smith's original concept for his dream village was probably finally brought to an end in 1956 when houses were built on the sites originally reserved for the proposed village green and communal tennis courts. Number 42 is a large mock timber framed house designed by architect WH Page which now closes the view at the end of the cul-de-sac of Castlecroft Gardens and No 35 a substantial house built on the site of the tennis courts was designed by Arthur J Penberthy. In 1959 two further houses were added to either side of No 35. One is No 23 another mock timber framed house which faces south and a poor imitation of the Hutchinson Smith style. Once again Eric Smallwood is the architect but the design is totally different style to the house he designed at No 10 almost 10 years earlier. The second is No 33, an unusual dormer bungalow, once again by Arthur Penberthy. Both of the houses he built in Castlecroft Gardens turn their backs on the road with rather plain façades leaving the best elevations hidden from view behind large enclosed gardens.

The one remaining plot which Hutchinson Smith had probably intended to be developed was between Nos 26 and 28 and another mock timber framed house was built on this site in 1984.



Conclusions

Hutchinson Smith was creating a fantasy, a quaint chocolate box lid image of a midlands village where each house had its own unique character. He gathered together salvaged building materials and when he was lucky enough to acquire a whole building he lovingly rebuilt it and normally incorporated it into an extended building to provide a modern family home. His attention to detail was not confined to the outside of his buildings. Beamed interiors and reclaimed fireplaces and staircases all found their way into his creations whilst the craftsmen who worked under him produced traditional style new work to complement the old. At Castlecroft he was doing more than building houses. He clearly had in mind the creation of a community who would share the benefits of his village green and communal hard courts and manage the maintenance of the private road and its soft grass verges. Completion of his dream village was hampered by the economic depression of the 1930s and the outbreak of war. Hutchinson Smith died in September 1945 and it unclear in what economic circumstances he left his estate but the remaining plots of land at Castlecroft were rapidly sold off and his original vision was forgotten. Whilst all of Hutchinson Smiths buildings survive at Castlecroft Gardens several have been altered and extended and new additions to the layout have compromised the integrity of the original concept. Hutchinson Smith created just 24 out of the total 34 houses which stand in Castlecroft Gardens today. Having said this, the area retains much of its original charm and character and it remains one of the most unique inter-war developments in the region.

Left:
No 35 Castlecroft Gardens

4. Character and appearance of the conservation area

General description and summary of special interest

The Castlecroft Gardens Conservation Area is a compact estate laid out and largely dating from the 1920s and 30s developed by the designer and builder Major Kenneth Hutchinson Smith. Comprising a unique collection of individual dwelling houses constructed utilising reclaimed materials and traditional building techniques the area retains the quality and atmosphere of a self-contained hamlet within the south-western suburbs of Wolverhampton.

The original conservation area boundaries were drawn to include the 24 original Hutchinson Smith builds within Castlecroft Gardens plus a further 10 built after his death together in a well treed setting. An extension designated following further research into the area comprises eight pairs of large semi-detached houses also designed and built by Hutchinson Smith facing onto Castlecroft Road.



Above:

The area is characterised by the variety of traditional building materials and techniques used by Hutchinson Smith.

The conservation area is notable for the following:

- A unique example of an inter-war experiment in town planning;
- A large concentration in one small area of buildings by the designer and builder Major Hutchinson Smith;
- The architectural unity of the area's buildings, which largely date from the 1920s and 1930s;
- The individual style and design of houses in the area which form the setting of the Buttery, a grade II Listed Building;
- The variety of traditional construction techniques, high quality craftsmanship and the use of reclaimed building materials, especially timber frame;
- Well-treed environment and attractive open fronted cottage style gardens.

Present character: activities and uses

The area was developed as a small and exclusive private estate during the inter-war years when Wolverhampton was expanding westwards. Castlecroft Gardens has a quiet and tranquil atmosphere protected from the busy main road by Nos 113-143 Castlecroft Road. The properties are exclusively in residential use as individual dwellings with attractive mature gardens.



Above:
Open porches characterise the area.

Development of street pattern

Castlecroft Gardens was laid out by Major Hutchinson Smith and the roads and verges remained in the ownership of his widow until 1965 when they were purchased by the residents association which continues to have responsibility for maintenance. The road layout has not altered since the 1930s.

Castlecroft Road to the north of the conservation area was well established by the late 18th century and was previously known as Finchfield Road. On the Yates map of 1775 it appears to lead to Castlecroft farmhouse which is of early 18th century date.

Architectural and historic character

The original concept for the Castlecroft Gardens development had been to create a hamlet or model community which included a group of traditional style houses together with a village green and tennis courts for the use of residents. Although Hutchinson Smith's vision was not fulfilled in its entirety the area retains a picturesque architectural quality which is unique in the city.

The development in the area commenced with the building of eight pairs of semi-detached houses fronting onto the main road. Within Castlecroft Gardens itself each property is individual in terms of its design or detailing although the scale of building and overall character of materials used is largely uniform. The 1950s additions are of variable quality and whilst to some extent these have compromised the uniform appearance of the area the fact that they are individual, architect designed houses reduces their impact on the overall character of the area.

The materials used to construct the Hutchinson Smith houses were in many cases reclaimed, giving the buildings a patina of age and historic character which belies their relatively recent date of construction. Tall chimney stacks, sweeping clay tiled roofs, open porches and traditional leaded window lights are common. The high degree of craftsmanship used in the construction of the houses is evident in some of the smaller and inconspicuous detailing which adds charm and character on an intimate scale.

Building types and prevalent building form and plot sizes

The prevalent building type is the domestic dwelling either detached or semi-detached the majority of which were built over a 20 year period. Two storey houses are the norm with occasional attic rooms. Several have detached or semi-detached garages but many of these are later additions.

The detached houses generally stand in generous well treed gardens and several have no formal front boundary walls or fences. Some have paved over front gardens which detracts from the green ambience of the estate.

Building materials

The area is characterised by the eclectic mix of traditional building materials, in many cases salvaged from old buildings which were being demolished sometimes combined with contemporary, inter-war, new materials.

The semi-detached houses on Castlecroft Road have painted roughcast render.

Timber framing is a prominent and characteristic building material in the conservation area. Panels are infilled with render and in some cases combined with brick nogging. Render is generally painted white or cream with a few examples of unpainted and textured render, most notably Nos 15 and 16, believed to be the original finish created by Hutchinson Smith. Timbers are also more often than not coloured black with the exception of Nos 15 and 40 where they are left a natural silvery grey. No 5 has recently had timbers stained brown although this may mellow with age. The style of timber framing varies according to the age and authenticity of the reconstructions with examples of box frame and close studding found side by side.



Above:
Timber frame with render and brick nogging infill panels.

Wooden framed windows with leaded lights are the most common window type in the Hutchinson Smith buildings in particular. These are sometimes canted or square bays supported on carved brackets. Later brick houses tend to have metal windows.

Stone is rarely used except for an external chimney at No 36 and low boundary walls and wall plinths.



Above:
Reclaimed stone used in the chimney of No 36.

There are several examples of clay tile hanging used on the front elevation of the first storey of properties including Nos 1, 14, 36, 38. Plain clay tiles are also the most common roofing material.



Above:
Sweeping clay tiled roof and dormer window.

Some of the post war houses have applied timber framing to mimic the style of the older Hutchinson Smith houses but others are of brick construction.

Boundary walls and fences

Many of the properties have gardens with open frontages which in some cases merge with the grassy verges, others have low unobtrusive stone boundary walls and sometimes green boundaries composed of shrub planting and clipped hedges. No 36 has a front boundary of dry stone wall style construction and part hooped fence on a low stone rubble base and No 34 has a close boarded fence on a white rendered plinth with matching gate piers. The latter is an unfortunate suburban intrusion on the street scene which Hutchinson Smith had most likely planned to have an open informal appearance of an old fashioned village. No 26 has a fairly high brick front wall and gate piers possibly contemporary with the construction of the house.

The houses on Castlecroft Road have more formal frontages with red brick front walls often with blue brick copings although several have open frontages with paved front gardens for parking of cars.

The rears of Nos 33 and 35, which face nos 30 and 32, are enclosed by a high close boarded fence and a dense evergreen hedge. The appearance of the fence is softened by the grass verge planted with silver birch otherwise this would be more intrusive.

The rears of Nos 14 to 32 back onto Glendale Close and are effectively screened by generally well maintained fences and this boundary is also well treed. To rear of No 22 a ruinous section of original (1926) chestnut pale fencing survives (see photo on page 6). Nos 2-10 back onto the Smestow Brook. The Finchfield Brook formerly ran along the boundary of No 12 but was culverted in the mid 1960s.



Above:
Close boarded fence and grass verge to the rear of Nos 33 and 35.

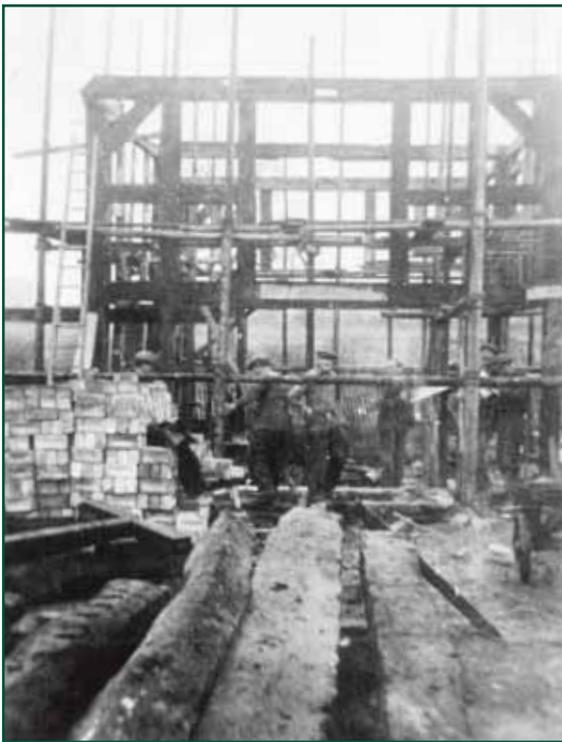
CASTLECROFT GARDENS CONSERVATION AREA TOWNSCAPE APPRAISAL MAP



Listed buildings

A listed building is one that is included on the Government's Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. These buildings are protected by law and consent is required from the City Council before any works of alteration, extension or demolition can be carried out. The Statutory List includes one entry within the conservation area:

- **No. 3 Castlecroft Gardens, The Buttery** - Grade II Listed building. This late 16th century building, originally located in the Market Place in Shifnal, was threatened by demolition as a result of road widening proposals and rescued and re-erected in Castlecroft Gardens in 1936. Prior to this it had been the premises of H Haddon the butchers and the building was adapted for use as a dwelling by Hutchinson Smith. Despite the fact that it had been moved it was added to the Statutory List in 1966.



Above:
The Buttery in the process of being reconstructed in 1936. Photo courtesy of Ron Davies.



Above:
The Buttery now.

Locally listed buildings

The 'Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide', a government endorsed guidance document produced to accompany Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, advises local authorities to compile a 'local list' of heritage assets. Protection of such assets will then become a material consideration when determining planning applications. When applying for planning permission for works that

would affect a building included in the City of Wolverhampton Local List applicants should ensure that the development will not have an adverse effect on features of special character or historic interest.

There are 19 houses in the conservation area with Local List designation. Further details are given below.



Above: No 5 Thurlstone



Above: No 7 Pennings

- **No 5 Thurlstone** - Date 1928. Three bay asymmetrical elevation with prominent gable to the right and central porch with room over. Applied timber framing above a brick plinth and plain clay tiled roof. Distinctive projecting squared bay windows supported on shaped brackets to first floor with replacement leaded light windows. Tall chimney stack on the right and garage with pitched lean to roof. Recently restored.

- **No 7 Pennings** – Date 1928. Symmetrical three bay elevation with two prominent bays. Brick plinth with timber frame above infilled with brick nogging of various patterns. Plain clay tiled roof and two tall chimneys. Leaded light windows, those to the first floor project slightly and are supported on brackets with carved faces. Formerly open porch has been glazed in and former semi-detached garage has been converted to a room.



Above: *Timbers and Lyndhurst*



Above: *No 12 Holly Cottage*



Above: *No 14*

- **Nos 9-11 Timbers and Lyndhurst** – Date 1937. Substantial timber framed building said to have been relocated from Surrey or Suffolk now divided into a semi-detached pair of houses. Almost symmetrical front elevation with two projecting bays each with an open porch on the inner corner. Ground floor timber frame with herringbone brick nogging above a brick plinth. First floor and attics timber framed and render infill. Left hand gable has arched braces to first floor and that to right has squared frame with half hipped roof. Leaded light casement windows. Roof is plain tiled with three low chimneys. Garages to either side with lean too roofs. The rear of the building shows features typical of a Wealden house with a central recess and flying wall plate which would give the original structure a 14th or early 15th century date. Much altered but an interesting curiosity.
- **No 12 Holly Cottage** (originally The Moat House) – Date 1928. Symmetrical three bay elevation with central recessed porch with brick detailing. Projecting first floor with coved overhang. Very plain regular timber frame with regular spaced leaded light casement windows set within timber frame. Hipped roof with plain clay tiles and a tall chimney to rear right. Former lean too garage has been converted to a room. Sits at a slight angle to the road.
- **No 14** - Date c1928. Brick house built end on to the road the principle elevation facing south-west is symmetrical with tile hanging to the first floor. Timber casement windows face onto the road either side of a substantial chimney stack. Hipped clay tile roof. The style of this house is more reminiscent of Hutchinson Smith's earlier houses built in a north American Colonial Revival style although the tile hanging on the upper floors became a popular elevation treatment for houses in Castlecroft Gardens.



Above: No 15 Wentworth



Above: No 16 Inglenook

- **No 15 Wentworth** - Date 1935. An asymmetrical elevation and even though the plan for this house was identical to that produced for No 7 the two houses could not be more different externally. Three bays with two projecting wings. The gable to the left has exposed unpainted timber framing with a jettied upper floor. The ground floor frame is filled with brick nogging and that above with natural unpainted render, probably Hutchinson Smith's original. The central recessed bay has tile hanging to the upper floor and porch below. The right hand wing has an unpainted render finish with an attractive hipped gable with swept eaves. Leaded light casement windows and plain clay tiled roof with two short chimneys.
- **No 16 Inglenook** – Date 1932. One and a half storey front gable with a half hipped roof provides a deceptively modest front elevation to this is four bedroomed detached house. Timber frame with brick nogging to the ground floor and textured unpainted render above and oriel window tucked under the eaves. Open porch to the left and curtain wall with arched opening to the right giving access to the rear. Attractive clay tiled roofs and two tall chimneys. This is one of three houses that Hutchinson Smith built to a similar design although this probably remains in the most original condition of the three.



Above: No 17



Above: No 19 Grey Beams



Above: No 21 Little Oak

- **No 17** – Date 1936. The second house to be built in Castlecroft Gardens with this style of elevation. One and a half storey front gable with a half hipped roof very similar to No 16 but with black and white timber framed appearance and a different arrangement of rooms to the rear. This is a narrow plot and out of necessity the house has a longer narrower wing to the rear. Oriel window at first floor just beneath the eaves, one tall chimney and plain clay tiled roofs.
- **No 19 Grey Beams** – Date 1939/40. L shaped house the principle wing of which comprises a relocated 17th century timber framed building from Pattingham. Plain box frame with white painted render, blacked timbers and leaded light windows. Plain rendered wing with hipped roof to side with lean to porch. Plain clay tiled roofs and two tall chimneys.
- **No 21 Little Oak** – Date 1939/40. L shaped house with projecting front gable containing central timber framed section with downward arched braces. Oriel window to first floor with plain tiled projecting gable above. All windows have rectangular leaded lights. Plain rendered cross wing to the rear. Plain clay tiled roofs and two tall chimneys. Later double garage extension to right.



Above: No 26 Roker



Above: No 28 Broomey Bank



Above: No 30 Orchards

- **No 26 Roker** – Date 1935. Symmetrical three bay elevation with smooth rendered plinth and textured render above at ground floor. Tile hanging to first floor. Central timber door with side lights; all windows leaded light casements. Hipped clay tile roof with two chimneys. Large later flat roofed extension to left. Brick front boundary wall.

- **No 28 Broomey Bank** – Date 1929. Symmetrical three bay elevation with central recessed porch with brick detailing. Projecting first floor with covered overhang. Very plain regular timber frame with herringbone brickwork nogging to lower sections. Regular spaced leaded light casement windows set within timber frame. Hipped roof with plain clay tiles and a tall chimney to rear right. Original lean too garage to left. The front of this house is almost identical to No 12.

- **No 30 Orchards** – Date 1932. Three bay one and a half storey house with two front projecting bays. That to the left has a half hipped gable and that to the right a plain gable. Recessed porch with timber frame filled with brick nogging.

Textured rendered walls above a brickwork plinth. Leaded light casement windows. Sweeping clay tiled roofs with central dormer above the central porch and two wide chimneys. Large modern flat roofed extension to right.



Above: No 32 Whiston



Above: No 34 Pine Lodge

- **No 32 Whiston** – Date 1930. Symmetrical principle elevation facing south west onto gardens. All smooth render with hipped clay tile roof. It is possible this house was originally built with clay tile hanging to first floor as this seems to have been the intention from the original Hutchinson Smith drawings. Casement windows with leaded lights and slightly off centre doorway. Principle feature on the elevation facing the road is a tall stepped chimney with an inglenook style projection at ground floor. Blue plaque to Hutchinson Smith on outbuilding facing the road.
- **No 34 Pine Lodge** – Date 1934. Front elevation has projecting two storey central gabled wing, painted render with slightly projecting oriel window to first floor and gable supported on brackets above with close studding and decorative carved barge boards. One and a half storey double bayed wing set back to the left with herringbone brick nogging to lower timber frame and recessed open porch. Sweeping plain clay tiled roof with twin dormers above. This roof treatment is replicated on the modern extension to the right to accommodate a double garage with rooms above. Said to contain timber elements salvaged from Bentley Hall. Rendered front garden border wall surmounted by low close boarded fence and gate piers, probably not original. Original timber framed garage building to rear.

Castlecroft Gardens Conservation Area Appraisal



Above: No 36 Greystones



Above: No 38 Stow House



Above: No 40 The Porch House

- **No 36 Greystones** – Date 1932. Symmetrical frontage of three bays with textured painted render to ground floor and tile ganging above. Casement windows with leaded lights and central recessed porch beneath carved lintel. Central timber door with leaded sidelights and herringbone brick nogging below. Gabled roof with plain clay tiles and substantial chimneys to either side. That to the right built of stone blocks, brick and tile and that to the left plain brickwork. Exposed timbers in gable ends. Modern carport to left. Front dry stone wall with brick gate piers and fancy wrought iron gate.
- **No 38 Stow House** – Date 1927/8? Three bay asymmetrical elevation with prominent gable to the right and central open timber framed porch with room over. Right hand gabled bay has regular applied timber frame above brick. Left hand bay has brickwork ground floor and tile hanging above. Plain clay tiled roofs, two chimneys, that to the right has attractive double diagonal stacks. UPVC replacement windows with applied leading. Detached garage.
- **No 40 The Porch House** – Date 1929. Asymmetrical main elevation with a prominent projecting gabled wing with close regular timber framing. Large 12 light leaded casement window to ground floor and four light first floor window supported by three brackets with carved faces. Central open porch has an attractive gabled room above with a small oriel window. The left hand bay has tile hanging to the first floor. This house faces onto the village green site and hence has a good west facing elevation with a projecting bay window. Clay tiled roofs with plain barge boards; tall slender chimney to the right and central shorter chimney. Set back garage with waney edged board gable may be original. One of Hutchinson Smiths best houses on the estate.

Buildings of Townscape Merit

In addition to listed and locally listed buildings there are a number of unlisted buildings which have been judged as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. This follows advice provided in English Heritage guidance on conservation area character appraisals, which stresses the importance of identifying and protecting such buildings.

All of the houses in the conservation area have been assessed as having townscape merit. There is a general presumption in favour of retaining all Buildings of Townscape Merit.

Focal points, vistas and views

There are no single focal points or vistas in the conservation area. The uninterrupted views to the frontages of the houses made possible by the open plan design give long attractive views to the front elevations of the houses on the north side of the main section of Castlecroft Gardens. Of particular note is the view west along Castlecroft Gardens (from around No21) where the road gently curves and falls down towards the Finchfield Brook.



There are fleeting glimpses of the rears of houses from the end of the cul-de sac where the village green had been intended. Enclosure of rear gardens and construction of garages has all but closed these once intended views.



Above:
Secluded entrance to Castlecroft Gardens

The entrances into the estate from Castlecroft Road are very secluded and not overtly noticeable to a passer-by. This is significant as it amplifies the special character of the road before it has even been accessed and viewed. It suggests a secret location, hidden away from the outside hustle and bustle of the developing city. This impression resonates as the street is entered with clear contrasts to the immediate surroundings.

Left:
View west from outside No 21 Castlecroft Gardens

There are no far reaching views across the surrounding landscape from ground level. Initially the Gardens would have been partly surrounded by fields but these disappeared with the increase in residential development nearby. The view out of the area from the cul-de-sac is closed by a large specimen oak tree.

Historic associations

The houses in Castlecroft Gardens are probably the most significant group of buildings designed and built by Kenneth Hutchinson Smith.



Above:

Wolverhampton Civic Society Blue Plaque

The buildings where Hutchinson Smith obtained many of the old timbers and materials he used in his buildings also hold significant associations. This adds a new dimension to the character of Castlecroft Gardens reinforcing its distinction from the surrounding area.

Buildings/estates where materials for Castlecroft Gardens were taken from include Bentley Hall, Walsall (the Victorian building demolished in 1929 probably contained remnants of the earlier Elizabethan Hall), Lymore Hall, Montgomery (substantial half timbered house dating from the 16th & 17th centuries and demolished 1931), Montgomery Castle (stone from the site) and the Deanery in Wolverhampton (demolished 1921).

Some of the buildings are almost complete structures re-located to the area including Nos 9-11 an almost complete Wealden House and No 19 a wing of which was once a 17th century cottage from nearby Pattingham (see photo on page 23).

Open spaces, green areas and trees

Hutchinson Smith envisaged the creation of a small village with a green in the centre which was to be the hub of activity for people living in Castlecroft Gardens. Unfortunately this never materialised before his death in 1945 and the Gardens are deprived of what would have provided a unique element of the area and quite unlike anything nearby. The road does however provide a large amount of greenery which is greater than that of surrounding roads including The Avenue and Westfield Grove.

Roadside trees in Castlecroft Gardens are principally Silver Birches, Cherries and Robinia most of which have been planted by the Resident's Association since the 1950s. The three large trees on the boundary with houses on Westfield Grove and Castlecroft Grove and three others in front gardens of houses facing onto Castlecroft Road are oaks and these pre date the construction of the development being originally trees in field boundary hedges. There is also a small oak in the garden of Little Oak (No. 21).

There is no formal public open space in the conservation area but the fact that there is no pavement, only grass verges between the road and the front gardens along much of Castlecroft Gardens creates an open verdant character.



Above:
Protected trees frame the view of No 42.

There are TPO trees in the conservation area. An oak tree on Castlecroft Road fronting Nos 86 & 84 should also be noted although situated outside the present conservation area boundary. This tree is located directly opposite the lower entrance to Castlecroft Gardens and when viewed from the Gardens is centrally framed between the two entrance houses to Castlecroft Gardens. This adds an extra dimension to the setting and positively contributes to the special character.

There are trees along the boundary between Castlecroft Gardens and Glendale Close which provide a backdrop to the gardens and shelter it from the road (Glendale Close) behind.

Public realm

Castlecroft Gardens is a private road, unadopted by the Council. The highway and verges are managed by the trustees of the Castlecroft Gardens Residents Association and maintained to a high standard which compliments the exclusive character of the area. The carriageway is black tarmac with speed bumps at intervals. Kerbs are concrete, probably those installed in the 1960s. Verges, where they exist are grassed and there are a number of verge side trees many of which are silver birch which make an important contribution to the character of the area. The north side of the cul-de-sac arm of Castlecroft Gardens has a paved footway, part crazy paving and part more formal paving. There are a number of street lights the columns of which are of traditional design but they have rather unattractive later 20th century lamps.



Above:
Traditional lamppost base

The footpath outside the semi-detached houses on Castlecroft Road is maintained by the Council and has concrete kerbs and green aggregate finish.

5. Issues

Positives

- Special historic character and appearance (see summary);
- Unique architectural quality of the conservation area's buildings,
- Spacious, low density development,
- Pleasant well treed environment;
- Tranquil atmosphere;
- Historic associations
- Good public transport – bus stops on Castlecroft Road and nearby.

Negatives

- Extensive hard surfaces in some front gardens for car parking.
- Satellite dishes in prominent places including on chimneys.
- Loss of traditional architectural features including original windows.

Threats

- Continuing incremental loss of original architectural details (see above).
- Use of inappropriate repair and restoration techniques by new property owners.



Above:
Pleasant well treed environment.

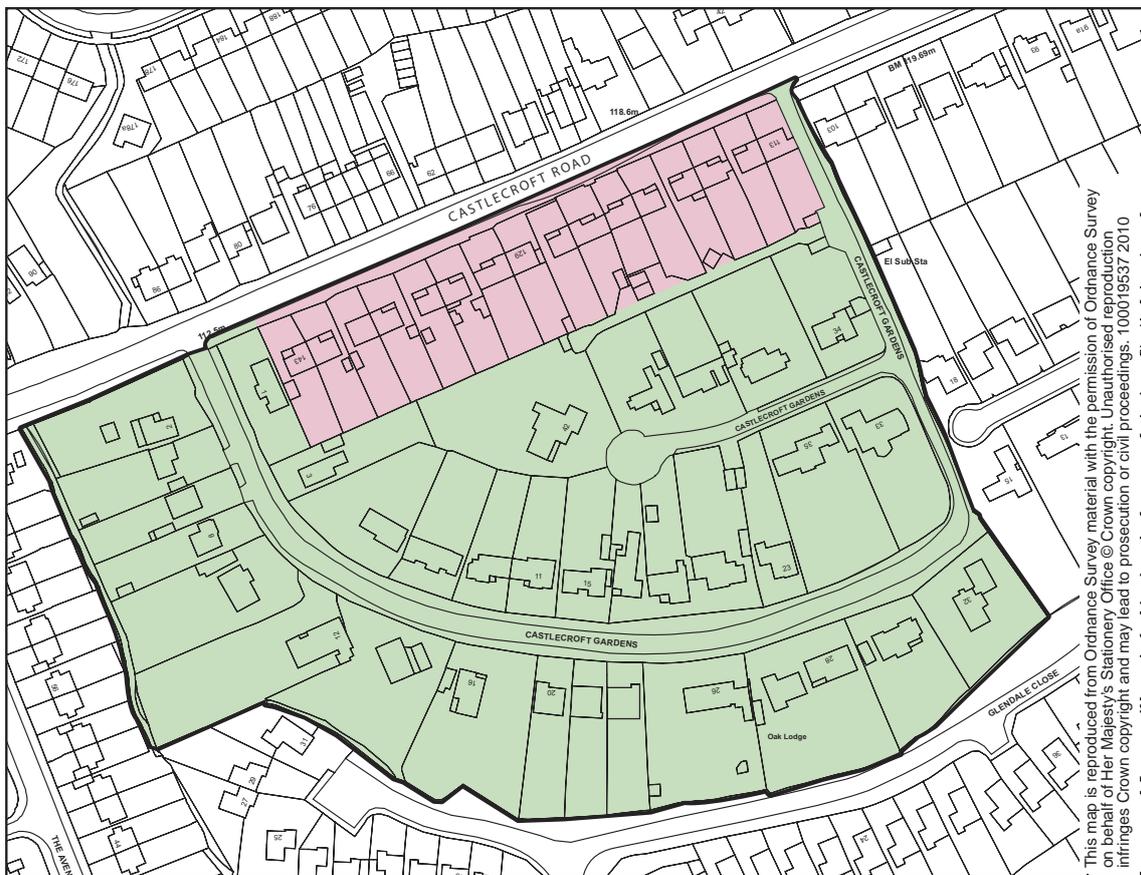


Above:
Satellite dishes in prominent places.

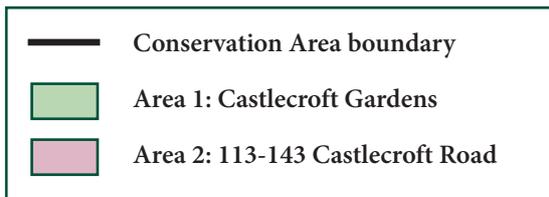
6. Introduction to Character Areas

The conservation area has two distinct character areas:

- Area 1: Castlecroft Gardens
- Area 2: 113-143 Castlecroft Road



CASTLECROFT GARDENS CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER AREAS



Area 1: Castlecroft Gardens

Principle features

- The 16th century Buttery, a grade 2 statutorily listed building;
- The individual style and design of the other houses;
- Prevalence of the use of timber framing in many of the buildings;
- Quiet village like atmosphere;
- Unenclosed front gardens extending to the road;
- Large rear gardens and mature trees.

Castlecroft Gardens is an important example of the work of the Canadian born builder and house designer Major Kenneth Hutchinson Smith. It is a compact estate built during the 1920s and 30s comprising a unique collection of individual dwellinghouses, many constructed utilising reclaimed materials and traditional building techniques, that lend the area a quality and atmosphere of a self-contained hamlet. The road contains 24 original Hutchinson Smith houses plus a further 10 individual architect designed detached houses built after his death. Many of the houses have attractive mature cottage style front gardens with open frontages, in places merging into grass verges creating a natural unity. Rear gardens are large and well treed, several of these being covered by Tree Preservation Orders.

Most of the Hutchinson Smith houses are included on the Wolverhampton Local List and No3, The Buttery, a 16th century timber framed building relocated from Shifnal, is a grade II Listed Building. Generally the houses are in a good state of repair and retain most of their original external features including distinctive leaded light windows, reclaimed timber doors, open porches and brick or stone chimneys. The timber framed houses stand

out in the development with panels infilled with textured render and decorative brick nogging. Tile hanging and sweeping clay tiled roofs are also a distinctive feature of many of the houses.

The post war houses in the area are of variable quality and design but their overall scale and individuality reduces any negative impact on the overall character of the gardens. Nos 35 and 33 in particular are notable for their contemporary designs dating from the later 1950s.

The public realm of Castlecroft Gardens is well maintained and distinguished by grass verges, road side trees and traditional street lamps. There are several old oak trees along the eastern boundary which probably pre-date the development.

Local features

- Civic Society blue plaque commemorating major Kenneth Hutchinson Smith;
- Window brackets with carved faces at The Porch House;
- Original render and silver grey oak beams at Nos 15 and 16;
- Chimney at No 36 constructed of reclaimed stone;
- Traditional lamppost bases.

Negative features

- Satellite dishes on some chimneys;
- Original windows replaced with UPVC at Nos1 and 38;
- Extensive areas of block paving and imprinted concrete in front gardens of Nos. 12, 23 and 35;
- Front garden wall at No 34.

Area 2: 113 – 143 Castlecroft Road

Principle features

- Unity of 8 semi-detached pairs of houses;
- Busy main road.

These 16 semi-detached houses were built by Hutchinson Smith and although they do not have the same degree of individual distinctiveness of his houses in Castlecroft Gardens they do have features and characteristics that make them recognisable as his work. They were the first houses to be built on the land he purchased in 1926 and facilitated the development of the more ambitious Castlecroft Gardens to the rear. Today they stand between the two access roads into Castlecroft Gardens and as such form a buffer between the Gardens and the busy main road and surrounding suburban neighbourhood.

The houses were built as eight identical pairs of substantial semi-detached houses with painted roughcast, open timber porches, sweeping plain tiled roofs and leaded light windows. One or two have been extended to the side, porches have been enclosed and there is a variety of paint schemes but they retain a relatively uniform and striking appearance in the street scene. As a group they make a positive contribution towards the townscape of the area when passing along Castlecroft Road.

The houses are built set back from the road behind generous front gardens the front boundary walls of which are generally of brick. It is likely that originally these front boundaries were more informal hedges interspersed with mature oak trees of which remnants survive. Many gardens have been paved over to provide parking to the detriment of the character of the area.

Local features

- Surviving hedgerow oak trees in front gardens;
- Sweeping plain tiled roofs.

Negative features

- Loss of architectural detail;
- Paved over front gardens.



Above:
Houses on Castlecroft Road frontage



Above:
Detailing of house on Castlecroft Road

7. Management proposals

Conservation Area Review

The Castlecroft Gardens Conservation Area was reviewed in 2009 and a new appraisal and management proposals went out to public consultation between 12th October and the end of November. The results of the consultation were analysed and in early 2010 the Council approved the management proposals and amendments to the appraisal.

As part of the review an extension to the conservation area to include a group of houses on Castlecroft Road was considered and this was approved by the Cabinet (External Relations) Panel on 21st June 2010.

A number of buildings were also added to the Local List details of which are given on pages 20 to 26 and they are also shown on the Townscape Appraisal map on page 18 of this document.



Above:

Typical pair of semi-detached houses in the Castlecroft Road extension to the Conservation Area.

Use of Article 4 directions

Article 4(2) Direction covering dwelling houses

Castlecroft Gardens has a particularly distinctive and high quality built environment which will easily be eroded by incremental changes such as the loss of original building materials and architectural detailing, the replacement of original leaded light windows with uPVC and paving over of front gardens. For family houses, such changes are called “permitted development” as set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (amended 2008), and owners do not need permission from Wolverhampton City Council as the local planning authority.

However, powers exist to the Council known as an Article 4 (2) direction, to withdraw some of these permitted development rights in the interests of preserving and enhancing the special character and appearance of the conservation area. An Article 4 (2) direction requires that house owners or tenants obtain planning permission for a number of lesser alterations which would normally be considered permitted development.

Following consultation in the conservation area an Article 4(2) Direction was made and confirmed withdrawing permitted development rights for unlisted dwellinghouses identified as buildings of townscape merit in the conservation area (see map on page 18). This will help to ensure the preservation of unique architectural features and traditional materials by requiring planning permission to be obtained before any works are undertaken.

The following properties in Castlecroft Gardens are covered by the Article 4(2) Direction:

1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, Oak Lodge adjacent to No 28, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 40 and 42.

In detail, the Article 4(2) direction withdraws permitted development rights for a prescribed range of development which materially affects aspects of the external appearance of dwelling houses in the conservation area. This includes various kinds of development fronting a highway, waterway, or open space, such as the enlargement, improvement, or other alteration of a dwelling house; the construction of an external porch; and the painting of a dwelling house, or of a building or enclosure within its curtilage (i.e. enclosed garden or other land associated with a house). The Article 4 (2) direction also withdraws the permitted development rights to demolish a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure, if it is within the curtilage of a dwelling house and fronts a highway, waterway or open space.

For further information about the Article 4(2) Direction contact the Historic Environment Service (see page 40 for details).

Future use of Article 4 Directions

The conservation area was extended following the consultation in 2009 and as a result the Council will aim to carry out further consultation on the making of an Article 4 Direction, similar to that which covers houses in Castlecroft Gardens, for the houses on Castlecroft Road.

A number of the houses in the conservation area are of such special interest that it is not only the front of these houses which are of architectural importance. Hutchinson Smith often designed houses with special features and materials which



Above:

In some cases it is more than the front of a building that is important. An Article 4(1) Direction can help protect the side or rear of a house from unsympathetic changes in the future

were unique to each property. In such cases it may be considered important to protect Hutchinson Smith's architectural legacy bringing under planning control alterations which may affect features which are of architectural importance that are not on that part of the house that faces the road. Indeed, some of his houses were built side on to the road so the main elevation is not clearly visible from the road. During the 2009 consultation the Council sought the views of local residents in particular as to whether they would favour such an approach to protect the more interesting of the Hutchinson Smith houses. Of those who responded 71% were in favour of some additional planning controls being introduced. Some of those who responded expressed the view that all houses in the conservation area should be protected and others felt that only the best of the Hutchinson Smith houses should be covered. The Council will aim to undertake further consultation with property owners and the Castlecroft Gardens Residents Association on this matter with a view to agreeing on which houses could be included under any further Article 4 Directions.



Opportunities for enhancement

The council will also seek to encourage:

- Restoration of architectural detail/reversal of unsympathetic alterations where there is sound evidence of the originals, which is essential to the design and character of key historic buildings.
- Promote awareness of the value and importance of the conservation area amongst residents with a view to highlighting the importance of carefully considering any alteration or demolition (particularly that which does not require planning permission) and encouraging high standards of maintenance;
- Produce advisory guidance and ‘best practice’ notes to assist in retaining the area’s prevalent historic character and appearance e.g. written advice regarding (a) alterations to historic buildings, (b) development within conservation areas, (c) the use of materials and (d) tree management.

Monitoring and review

This document should be reviewed every five years in the light of the Local Development Framework and emerging government policy. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the conservation area;
- A photographic record of the area;
- An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in this document have been acted upon, including proposed enhancements;
- A building condition survey;
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action;
- Publicity and advertising.

8. Implications of conservation area designation

Statutory provisions

Designation as a conservation area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the “preservation and enhancement” of the area. These are as follows:

- The local authority is under a general duty to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area, and has a particular duty to prepare proposals (such as conservation area appraisals or grant schemes) to that end;
- In the exercise of any powers under the Planning Acts with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, the Council must take into consideration the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area;
- Extra publicity is given to planning applications affecting conservation areas. This is usually achieved through the use of advertising in the local newspaper;
- Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of most unlisted buildings and boundary walls in a conservation area and the local authority or the Secretary of State may take enforcement action or institute a criminal prosecution if consent is not obtained.
- Written notice must be given to the Council before works are carried out to any tree in the area;
- The display of advertisements may be somewhat more restricted than elsewhere;
- The Council or the Secretary of State may be able to take steps to ensure that a building in a conservation area is kept in good repair (similar to the powers which protect listed buildings);
- Limited financial assistance may be available for the upkeep of a building in the conservation area through grant schemes with English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund, (though these are usually targeted to areas of economic deprivation).

It is recommended that any proposals for new development or alterations of existing buildings, including the installation of satellite dishes, in a conservation area should be discussed with a planning officer at the Council before commencing work on site. Telephone enquiries should be made to City Direct (01902) 551155.

The requirements for planning permission in a conservation area

Certain works to family houses within a conservation area, which are normally considered to be “permitted development”, require planning approval from the Council. The overall effect of these additional controls is that the amount of building works which can be carried out to a family house or within its grounds without needing to submit a planning application is more restricted in a conservation area than elsewhere.

It is difficult to summarise all of the rules so it is always best to check in advance with a planning officer at the Council to find out if permission is required for any of the following:

- Building any kind of extension or out building;
- Verandas, balconies or raised platforms of any kind;
- Any change to the chimneys or roof including inserting new windows;
- External cladding.

Satellite dishes

The rules governing satellite dishes in conservation areas are significantly tighter than outside such areas. The number, size and location of proposed installations will be taken into account. Before buying or renting an antenna or satellite dish it is advisable to check with a planning officer at the Council whether planning permission is required. Permission from the owner or landlord of a property may also be required if you are renting.

Solar panels

Solar panels traditionally need to be set on south or west slopes of roofs. The attachment of a solar panel to the roof of a building in a Conservation Area requires planning permission. This applies to all buildings including dwelling houses.

In situations where the impact of a solar panel on the roof would be considered detrimental to the character of the conservation area it is unlikely that planning permission would be given.

Wind turbines

Wind turbines are normally attached to the wall or chimney of a building or outbuilding or free standing.

On all buildings in Conservation Areas which are not dwelling houses planning permission for wind turbines is required. On dwelling houses wind turbines may require planning permission depending on their dimensions, proposed height and position on the building in relation to the roof line and the neighbouring properties so it is advisable to check with a planning officer at the Council before proceeding with installation. In gardens the structures are restricted by height therefore any functional wind turbine is likely to require planning permission.

There are significant noise issues associated with wind turbines which applicants need to consider when submitting a planning application.

Wolverhampton City Council will consider the merits of individual planning applications and their impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Where there is a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of a conservation area, it is unlikely that planning permission would be given.

Trees

Within conservation areas, anyone intending lopping or felling a tree greater than 75 mm. diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground must give the Council six weeks written notice before starting the work. This provides the Council with an opportunity of assessing the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area, in which case a Tree Preservation Order may be served. This protects the tree from felling or inappropriate lopping. Fruit trees are no longer exempt, although slightly different constraints occur where the tree forms part of a managed forest or is in another agricultural use.

A number of trees in the conservation area are already protected by Tree Preservation Orders.



The Unitary Development Plan

The Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2001-2011 is a planning document which contains policies and proposals for the physical development and use of land, including measures for the protection and improvement of the environment. The UDP is used by the Council in reaching decisions on planning applications and proposals, which should be accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Chapter 6 of the UDP contains policies for the historic environment including conservation areas.

The adopted UDP can be viewed at the following locations:

- Online by visiting the following website:
www.cartoplus.co.uk/wolverhampton_2
- Wolverhampton City Council, Regeneration and Environment (Reception 24, Second Floor), Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton
- Wolverhampton Central Library and branch libraries across Wolverhampton

Copies can also be purchased from the Planning Policy and Area Plans team 01902 555636

These policies will eventually be superseded by new policies contained in the Local Development Framework, work on which is in progress.

To keep up to date with the current situation see the Council's web site at:

www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/environment/planning/policy/ldf/introduction.htm

Bibliography and Maps

Davies, Ron. One Man's Dream: The architectural art of Major Kenneth Hutchinson Smith (1992)

The Brochure (1984) (unpublished account of the area produced by the Castlecroft Gardens Residents association)

Wolverhampton History and Heritage website (www.localhistory.scit.wlv.ac.uk)

William Yates' Map of the County Of Stafford 1775

Penn Tithe Map 1842

Ordnance Survey Map 1889, 1919, 1938, 1955

Conservation Areas: A Brief Guide and List of Conservation Areas in the City of Wolverhampton (*copies available from the Historic Environment Service at the City council – see opposite*)

Sources of further information

Wolverhampton City Council

Historic Environment Service
Regeneration and Environment
Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square
Wolverhampton WV1 1RP
Tel: 01902 555625 / 555622 / 555617

www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/conservation

For information about conservation areas in Wolverhampton

English Heritage – West Midlands Region

The Axis
10 Holliday Street
Birmingham B1 1TG
Telephone : 0121 625 6820
For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)

37 Spital Square
London E1 6DY
Tel: 020 7377 1644
For an excellent range of technical advice leaflets



Sustainability Statement

The Wolverhampton Revised Unitary Development Plan (UDP) sets out the Council's policies which are used for development control purposes. This plan will be replaced in 2008 by a new kind of policy document called a Local Development Framework (LDF) comprising a number of documents including Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) which will provide detailed policies on specific issues. These documents will require sustainability appraisal.

Recent guidance from the government and English Heritage (2005) indicates that Conservation Area Appraisals (CAAs) should not be adopted by local authorities as SPD and therefore do not require sustainability appraisal. CAAs will however be used to support forthcoming SPD on the Historic Environment which will require sustainability appraisal.

By their very nature, conservation area appraisals focus on the environmental aspects of a historic area but can also acknowledge social or economic problems which have links to environmental conditions. CAAs can highlight issues but cannot guarantee the timing or implementation of solutions. For example highway issues may depend upon programmes within the West Midlands Transport Plan or the identification of need for significant investment in buildings may rely on securing funding from external sources, the availability of which may be restricted. The identification of the need for investment in the context of a CAA can however be beneficial when bidding for resources or reviewing programmes.

Preparing CAAs can have social and economic benefits. They can renew the interest of local people in heritage and local history and raise awareness of conservation issues. In turn this can help to enhance community identity and encourage participation in the planning process.

Designation or extension of a conservation area can provide an impetus for environmental improvements which in turn can improve the satisfaction of local people with their neighbourhood as a place to live. However, a potentially negative aspect may be the upward influence on house prices in conservation areas which could affect affordability of houses in an area. Economic benefits are likely to accrue in particular where the image of an area is improved as a business location or as a visitor destination, generating local income and employment.

Appraisals help focus attention on the need to maintain and enhance the quality of local landscapes and townscapes and conserve and protect the local historic environment. Protection of trees and green landscapes may protect or provide biodiversity habitats and provide opportunities for people to appreciate wildlife, which is of particular value in metropolitan areas.



Wolverhampton
City Council



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