

SPRING GROVE

Boundary: See Map 24

Date of Designation: 2001

Date of Extension: None

Additional protection to the area: Listed building; the large open areas (although privately owned) include Metropolitan Open Land

Special Architectural and/or Historic Interest

Although based on an historic house, the special interest of Spring Grove derives from an estate planned to be a grand Victorian suburb. The Davies original estate planning still remains, albeit in an evolved form, in much of its splendour, with the prevailing pattern of development mostly being respectful. Tall classical-style villas standing in spacious gardens, the grandiose Italianate stuccoed mansion of Campion House, the characteristic Gothic structure of Lancaster House, and more subtle Arts and Crafts styled semi-detached properties, along with others amalgamate into the whole.

The classical element was emphasised by the “Bath-stone” of the prevailing material. Davies used large, lipped terracotta facing tiles bedded onto a backing block; this enhances the apparent quality of the buildings. The “limestone” was set as ashlar with a fine joint, with genuine stone surroundings and detail. A very smooth surface and the squarish regular pattern gives them away, but the large numbers of properties in this or a similar form of construction, remaining, give a further harmony of material, colour and form.

The conservation area has many other components, in terms of its built form, that were not envisaged in the original Davies scheme but still form an essential part of the area known as Spring Grove, whilst other elements make the area cohesive and contribute to the quality environment, such as the greenery afforded by tree-lined roads and front garden settings.

History

In 1436 the undeveloped eastern end of the small town of Hounslow was known as Smalborow. The name developed to Smallberry Green and the first mention of a house is in 1647, during the Civil War, when Sir John Offley built a house on this site and called it Spring Grove. Offley was allowed to keep his property throughout the Commonwealth as he supported Cromwell, and the house remained in the family for over 100 years. Elisha Biscoe bought the house in 1754 and then replaced it with a Georgian building. In 1780 the property was let to Sir Joseph Banks who rented land around the estate to grow fruit and vegetables and graze his flock of Merino sheep. Banks assisted General Roy in the first Ordnance Survey preparatory work which took place on Hounslow Heath, and the instruments were stored at Spring Grove. It was Joseph Banks who wrote the origin of the name:

A spring arises in a small grove within the precincts of Spring Grove, which is no doubt the origin of the name. This spring is carried in leaden pipes into the house; the waste water runs through a small basin and pond in the pleasure ground before it escapes to ‘Smallberry Green’ (Banks in Morris, 1983)

The estate was sold by the Banks’ beneficiary and in 1830 was left to Henry Pownall who altered the house again. The Pownalls left in 1849 and in 1850 the house was

bought by Henry Daniel Davies, a member of the legal profession and a speculator in estate development. In 1853 at the Tryon Estates auction Davies also purchased 228 acres north of Spring Grove extending to Jersey Road, East to Wood Lane and west towards Lampton. Ann Tryon was the sister of Sophia Bulstrode, who had no children and left part of the estate to her sister. The branch line of the London and South Western Railway Company's line from Windsor to Waterloo established a station at Isleworth in the late 1840s or early 1850s.

Spring Grove House

Davies lived at the house while the estate was built and in 1860 moved to Thornbury House, which was the largest on the estate, and Spring Grove was let. In 1886 Andrew Pears bought Spring Grove House and rebuilt it in the Victorian style, completed in 1893. This date together with the initials AP can be seen on the Lodge, which was the main entrance the House. The Pears family also moved from Spring Grove House after a relatively short period, to a house on St. John's Road. Following their departure the house ceased to be a private residence, having failed to reach its reserve price at auction.

During 1922 Middlesex County Council purchased the house and opened Spring Grove Secondary School in 1923. The school became a Grammar School in 1944 but moved to Lampton in 1959. The school was later known as Isleworth Polytechnic, then Hounslow Borough College and finally West Thames College as it is known today.

History of the early estate.

The Grove was the first road planned, and followed the boundary fence of Spring Grove House. By 1853, following the purchase of the larger estate Davies had planned the roads and allocated various building plots after which building commenced. Davies had laid out Osterley Road, Thornbury Road and Eversley Crescent by 1855 and placed an advertisement in the Illustrated London News 'This estate of nearly 300 acres finely wooded has been laid out for villas and commodious detached dwellings with lawns and gardens of half or one acre with perfect drainage for houses which are well supplied with gas and water.' Nearly 100 houses had been constructed by 1877. Properties were let to City gentlemen, those in the professions and retired army and naval officers.

Spring Grove went into decline when many residents, including Davies, lost money in the 1870s. They had invested heavily in the Agra and Anglo-Florence Land Company. In 1888 the Middlesex Independent reported that many large houses in Spring Grove had been let and there was an indication of a return to prosperity. One factor that added to revival was the extension of the District Railway line from Acton to Hounslow Town in 1883. Smaller villas were built in Thornbury Road and other roads in the area and the population increased steadily to World War One.

Later buildings on the estate

The Great West Road was built in 1925 and as industries developed, traffic increased in the Isleworth area. The road also severed Thornbury Road and St. Mary's Crescent and in doing so divided Osterley and Spring Grove. In the 1920s and 30s the building boom covered most of the remaining spaces in Spring Grove. Isleworth secondary School for boys opened in 1939 and the Duchess of Gloucester

home in 1950, both on Ridgeway Road on plots not developed by Davies. Much of the post war infill has taken place on sites previously occupied by original Davies houses.

Character Appraisal

Spring Grove estate benefits from the wide-open spaces of the large institutions, and nearness to Osterley Park. It played an important part in the development of the area east of Hounslow. Several core historical areas can be identified in the existing street pattern, which are linked together by the readily identifiable original street network. The earliest networks are on the western side of the estate, with routes to St. Mary's church and Lancaster House (Brunel University) dominating the eastern side. Spring Grove House continues to dominate the whole area, mainly through the road patterns made to form around it and its lodges, which are more visible than the house. Of particular note is the junction of Osterley Road and The Grove, where despite the open streetscape and attractive green space, the design has not changed since its conception in the 1850s. The following describes some of the features of the area in greater detail.

Borough College now "Lancaster House" (part of Brunel College).

Borough Road College (Grade II) was built in 1867 as London International College, a boarding school for boys, which was designed to teach foreign languages. In the *Buildings of England*, Pevsner considered it a large, neatly symmetrical Gothic structure in polychrome brick with projecting wings and a central turreted tower. A landmark is another, taller tower sited on its west elevation. On the ground floor a series of portrait medallions whose choice could not be more characteristic: Shakespeare, Montesquieu, Goethe, Dante, Aristotle, Cicero. It is set in spacious grounds and its Gothic character dominates the area. In 1890 a teacher training college moved to this location from Borough Road, Southwark, and for it a number of extensions have been built over a hundred year period, with its mature trees and playing fields contributing to the character of the area. Brunel College is in the process of vacating the whole site (2005-6).

College Road

The lower part of College Road extending from London Road to Ridgeway Road was laid out, although not named, by 1865. The first buildings on College Road are shown on the Ordnance Survey revision of 1894, and were built on this lower section. In 1905 College Road to Borough Road from Highfield Road was still rural. The streetscape of College Road and its relationship with Davies' Estate is still very much a feature of Spring Grove, particularly as the lie of the land that allows the spring to drain away is so visible. Inter war properties on College Road fit well with other properties in Spring Grove to form a second phase of development of good quality.

Clifton Road, Villiers Road, Pembroke Place

These roads had been laid out by 1865 and form part of one of the historic areas of Spring Grove. The properties in this area are modest cottages in comparison but are well preserved and provide an interesting variation to the grander villas of The Grove for example. The properties on these roads were constructed in the 1880s and 1890s.

The Grove

The large houses on the outer curve of The Grove were part of the Davies development. At the turn of the 19th 20th centuries and in the 1920s, properties on the inner curve of The Grove were developed and are well-preserved examples of development of this period. Whilst it is recognised that there is more recent, occasionally unsympathetic infill in The Grove, often this has been on the outer curve, where the large Davies plots have been sold off for more dense development. In this respect, The Grove is coherent mix of property types and ages, which, on the whole, complement each other.

London Road

When the Davies estate was conceived, London Road was known as Great Western Road. Development on the northern side was confined to the areas on either side of the Spring Grove House, the two entrances to The Grove. Shops and a Post Office were in existence by 1865 at the junction with Thornbury Road, opposite the Milford Arms, and remain today. The conservation area also includes Isleworth station, in LSWR's early 'house style', which together with the bridge and high-level platforms forms a local landmark. The station has historic links with the estate, as residents were offered season tickets at a reduced rate due to Davies' links with the railway.

Osterley Road

This is one of the most legible and attractive areas in Spring Grove. A wide, level and treelined avenue, it retains its Victorian charm to a degree that later additions go relatively unnoticed. The school on Ridgeway Road is visible, but is an attractive thirties design, and the neat playing field acts a buffer. Part of the northern section of the road was the in the garden to Thornbury House. It would appear that the road was built to provide access from The Grove to St. Mary's Church, which may explain its design location, equidistant from both entrances to The Grove and opposite Spring Grove House.

The Church of St. Mary

The church was opened in 1856 and was designed by John Taylor the younger in the decorated style, using stone facing over brick: a new form of construction invented by himself. The church is large with a nave, chancel and vestries and was designed to take galleries when these should be needed. The two tiers of windows are for this purpose, but the galleries were never built. To the south west of the building stands a combined porch and tower surrounded by a full broad spire. Davies paid for the church and was its patron for many years. It is a landmark within the area and the spire can be seen from long distances away.

Ridgeway Road

3-17 Ridgeway Road of approximately 1900 are properties for Harry O'Reilly on land previously known as Syon Crescent. The Osterley Park Construction Company built many of the remaining properties on the 'odd' side of the road. On the 'even' side P. Chase Gardener, who built many of the thirties estate properties, designed Nos. 20-34. Blake, the architect for The Grove Building Company, designed No 120 in the 1930s, a short while after his work on The Grove. Isleworth and Syon School, and the Crown Court, replaced a large number of properties on Ridgeway Road. Middlesex County Council constructed the Isleworth and Syon Boys' School in 1936-

8. It has one and two storey ranges dominated by a powerful tower, with a more progressive tall, curved staircase window, a feature of the period and a worthy addition to the Estate.

Thornbury Road

At the time of the early estate only a few houses were built beyond the junction with Eversley Crescent, possibly because it led to Thornbury House. No 94, Clifton House remains on a site of similar proportions. The section adjoining London Road forms part of one of the oldest remaining parts of Spring Grove. The Milford Arms, 4-8 and 12-22 are all shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1865 and lie in close proximity to the London Road shops of the same period. Further along, 17, 21, 23 and 55 and Osterley Mansions are all pre-1865. There is a wide range of property types on this road, which runs from London Road to Jersey Road, now broken by the Great West Road.

Campion House (formerly Thornbury House).

Davies built Thornbury House as part of the estate, and moved to the house in the 1860s. Thornbury is the village in Gloucestershire from where the Davies family originated. At that time landscaped gardens stretched from the house to the site of St. Mary's Church. In 1911 Thornbury House became the base of the Jesuit Order for men with a late vocation to the priesthood, and the name of the house was changed. Though now flanked by more recent development the original property is a substantial stuccoed building with a projecting portico and range of steps. A formal ornamental garden leads from the original building. The order moved away in 2005.

Osterley Mansions (Grade II)

Honnor's Home was built in 1860 as almshouses for the saddler's company. It was sold in 1903 and converted to Osterley Mansions. It is constructed of red brick with stucco dressing and contributes to the conservation area.

Trees

Some of the streets in Spring Grove were designed as tree lined avenues. These streets retain their now mature trees, which are an important feature of the estate. Mature trees within gardens and private grounds, and in spacious front gardens, are also important to the character of the area.

Recent developments / consents, which have / could have affected the character of the conservation area:

- Construction of West Thames College along London Road
- Refurbishment of the former cinema / construction of flats
- Development on top of and behind the former post office
- Refurbishment / change of use of Lancaster House and re-development of the Brunel university site (consented)
- Proposed enlargement of Crown Court
- Proposed refurbishment / change of use of Campion House and redevelopment of its grounds
- Repair and redevelopment in the grounds of 28 The Grove
- Demolition and increase in density of 46-48 The Grove
- 101 The Grove (523 / 101 / P1: 2 house allowed on appeal)

Pressures on the area

- Noise and pollution from A4
- Redundancy / relocation of the educational buildings leading to sale and potential largescale redevelopment of the large open spaces
- Enlargement of the remaining buildings leading to intensification development over historic plots / increased site usage
- Similarly for the judiciary buildings, with proposals out of scale to the domestic footprint and not of traditional educational style or outline
- For dwellings, the value of the area and properties being high there is demand for enlargement, especially roof extension, and redevelopment to greater intensity of buildings and site,
- Repair needs of the early buildings following dilapidation or extension (especially idiosyncratically used terracotta-faced blocks to simulate ashlar, characteristic to the early buildings; replacement of early c20th steel windows)
- Repair and improvement needs of the later modernist buildings: shell improvement, replacement of early c20th steel windows
- Parking needs of subdivided and areas of intensified dwellings: whilst still being perceived an area of high car-ownership preference, so eroding the verdant edges, and trees threatened, by cross-overs

Potential

- To rework the scale and continuity of buildings during development of former piecemeal development
- To make good use of re-located open space without losing its benefit
- To undertake good tree-survey and planting

Guiding Principles

- The layout of the original Davies Estate and plot forms are essential to the character
- The earlier buildings are of special interest in form and materials
- Later 20th century infilling on the whole has been carefully planned and is in keeping
- Spatial quality and boundary treatment forms an essential element to the area
- Mature trees are part of the original design and present character
- Large dormers are likely to be obtrusive
- The gaps between buildings make up part of the character and should be considered
- Redevelopment should be of good and compatible quality and style
- Focal points and elegant buildings with a spaciousness nature are necessary to remain in character



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London Borough of Hounslow LA086444 2001



 **Hounslow**

SPRING GROVE CONSERVATION AREA.

Drawn by S.C.

Date NOVEMBER 2002

Scale N.T.S.

Drg No. A3 - 24

London Borough of Hounslow

Mike Jordan,
Borough Planning Officer,
The Civic Centre, Lampton Road, Hounslow, TW3 4DN

AREA = 24.122ha

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