

4 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AREA

4.1 The most important archaeological site in the Borough lies in the Bishops Park Conservation Area. Excavations at Fulham Palace have uncovered Neolithic pottery, flint implements and features dating to circa 3,000–4,000 BC. Some of the flints may date to the even earlier Mesolithic period. There is also evidence of Iron Age occupation but the most extensive settlement evidence to date is of the Roman–British period, 3rd–4th centuries and possibly 5th century AD. Ditches, pits, gravel surfaces, coins, pottery, animal bones and items of women's jewellery; as well as building materials, stone brick and tiles, infer a substantial settlement. Its exact nature though is not yet known. (Some of the finds are on public view, on site, in the Museum of Fulham Palace). The settlement appears to be centred on a road or trackway, probably in use since pre-Roman times, connecting with a ford across the Thames, linking Fulham with Putney. There is evidence of similar occupation there. The crossing continues as the 'modern' Putney Bridge. Other excavations, that have been carried out by the Fulham Archaeological Rescue Group at Fulham Palace between 1972–1986, have produced building rubble and finds from now demolished Medieval and Tudor Palace buildings.

4.2 The earliest mention of Fulham in documents is in the year 704–05 AD when, what was to become the Manor of Fulham, virtually identical to the present London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, was acquired by the Bishop of London from the Bishop of Hereford. Clearly, Fulham was already a 'going concern', the name 'Fulham' is of some antiquity.

4.3 A few probable Saxon shreds of pottery have been found as would be expected. The site of the 'first' Saxon palace appears to have been identified west of the present palace buildings, now partly covered by the Handicapped Adventure Playground. Excavations in 1975/6 uncovered much medieval building debris and pottery mainly dating from the 13th century ¹.

4.4 Fulham had always been an agricultural district up to the 19th century ². The northern half of the Conservation Area, which includes the extension to the recreation ground (the 1903 extension to Bishops Park) and four streets of late 19th century housing development, used to be under cultivation ³.

5 CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

5.1 The riverside location of the conservation area provides important panoramas both outward from the conservation area and inwards towards the conservation area. It is of strategic importance in defining the character of the River Thames, forms part of the river walk and is within the riverside Area of Special Character. The area includes part of a rowing course of international importance, it provides a long established and famous sailing course, and it is a recreational and educational facility used all the year round by many people including youth groups.

5.2 Much of the conservation area is of archaeological value. The grounds and former moat of Fulham Palace and the Warren are a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the remainder of the southern part of the conservation area is within the Fulham Village Archaeological Priority Area.

5.3 The character of the main body of the conservation area is derived from the open landscape areas of Metropolitan Open Land consisting of Bishops Park, the grounds of Fulham Palace and the Warren. This contrasts with the grid pattern of Victorian residential properties to the north and the mixed use area at the intersection of Fulham High Street, New Kings Road and Putney Bridge Approach. There is also a school, and two churches within the conservation area.

5.4 The conservation area can be split into sub-areas for the purposes of the character assessment in order to distinguish areas of similar character and similar periods of historic development.

These are shown on the plan of the conservation area on page 17.

The sub-areas are:

- A** The Northern extension
- B** Fulham Palace, The Warren (The Fulham Palace Meadow Allotments) and Bishops Park including All Saints Church
- C** Fulham High Street and Putney Bridge Approach

A The Northern extension

5.5 This sub-area is characterised by a rectilinear street pattern of four residential streets running east/west across the conservation area between Fulham Palace Road and Stevenage Road. Woodlawn Road is the central spine running through the centre of the sub-area, bisecting the four residential streets at right angles and extending to Bishops Park Road to the south, providing interesting internal views

5.6 The residential properties, Victorian semi-detached, were constructed between 1897 and 1901 in lots by several contractors. Their consistent style and detail implies the use of pattern books, rather than the work of a single architect. They are attractive, well-maintained red brick terraces, all of a similar overall design with pediments and bays, window surrounds and embellishments such as canopies, stucco and mouldings. The complexity of the ornamentation diminishes with distance from Bishops Park and in general much of the original detail remains, with relatively few of the windows and doors having been replaced.

5.7 The properties along the west side of Fulham Palace Road⁴ follow the pattern of the area though their setting is affected by this busy road. Most of their original features remain.

5.8 There is a strong uniform building line throughout with the properties fronting onto the streets and the facades providing a definite rhythm with their brick gables. The short front gardens are bounded mainly by low brick walls, with hedges

or railings above in places. These are important in defining the street space, with the hedges softening the essentially hard space.

5.9 All the streets are broad providing quite a spacious feeling with green views of Bishops Park to the west and a view of Craven Cottage at the end of Finlay Street. Ellerby Street and Doneraile Street are tree lined which provides a softer environment capturing the street space. The footpaths, of precast concrete slabs, are in relatively good condition providing a uniform finish. Most parking is on-street.



Doneraile Street

5.10 Woodlawn Road has a character of its own, defined mainly by the sides of the properties, the two storey bay windows overlooking the street being important features, and high brick garden walls. Planting in back gardens, particularly trees, is important in softening this hard street, as is the view south to Bishops Park. Views to the backs of properties are evident throughout.

5.11 A considerable number of rear and roof extensions have been built. Unfortunately, in a number of cases these have been insensitively designed. The rear extensions are easily visible in this terrace/garden, garden/terrace layout, especially in Woodlawn Road. Similarly, some roof extensions bear little relation to the rest of the building, though the majority of them are of the same design and scale.

5.12 The mansion blocks of Bishop's Mansions fronting onto Bishops Park Road provide a uniform facade of a greater scale than the properties behind. There are slight variations between the different mansion blocks though they provide a uniform appearance due to their form and scale. Generally they have central bays, some with pediments, others balustrades, and symmetrical end bays with paired balconies in between. These properties have kept their original features and the strong rhythm of the fenestration patterns is important to the character of the area.

5.13 They are important in the setting of Bishops Park, enclosing the space to the north behind the line of trees along the boundary of the park. The park is defined by railings which are an important feature. The semidetached properties along Stevenage Road perform a similar function though they are less evident from the recreation area behind the screen of trees.

5.14 Within this uniform residential layout there are a few nonresidential properties. These include Jack Tizard School (just outside the conservation area) and St. Etheldreda's Church and Vicarage.

5.15 St. Etheldreda's Church on Fulham Palace Road was built in 1955-58 to the design of Guy Biscoe, and replaced the church of 1896-97 by A.H. Skipworth destroyed by bombs in World War Two. It consists of a straight forward concrete portal frame with plain brick walls with small cross shaped window details. The tower has a slatted belfry, which is a well-placed landmark in Fulham Palace Road ⁵. The Arts and Crafts Vicarage (Building of Merit (BOM)) adjacent to the church at number 81 Doneraile Street is now the only remaining building of the ecclesiastical group designed by Skipworth.

B Fulham Palace, The Warren (Fulham Palace Meadow Allotments) and Bishops Park, including All Saints Church

5.16 The southern half of the conservation area is characterised by the open area of the grounds of Fulham Palace, the Bishops Park ⁶ and the Warren (Fulham Palace Meadow Allotments). They provide an attractive break in the built-up area, as well as providing open-air facilities, especially for sport and recreation. The entire area is designated Metropolitan Open Land and a Nature Conservation Area. Bishops Park and Fulham Palace Gardens is included in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens (Grade II*).

5.17 Bishops Avenue is a long tree lined cul-de-sac running east/west along the northern boundary of the sub-area, connecting Fulham Palace Road to Bishops Park, and bounded by good railings. From Bishops Avenue the change in scale and character is evident from the built up residential nature of the northern extension to the open low scale development of the central sub-area of the conservation area. On the southern side at the eastern end is the former St. Mark's School which despite the light nature of its structure has quite an impact on the area, though it is well screened by mature trees.



Trees along river walk in Bishops Park

5.18 Bishops Park runs the full length of the western boundary of the Bishops Park Conservation Area. The mature trees form an important soft edge to the riverside which is a feature of strategic importance. Views outward from the conservation area provide for the important panorama of the south bank of Putney from Putney Bridge northwards. The bend of the

river at this point accentuates the length of the panorama. Views inward towards the conservation area from Putney accentuate the landscaped, open character of the area. Views into the main body of the conservation area are restricted due to the dense belt of mature trees along the western boundary. There are many interesting internal views within Bishops Park including those of Fulham Palace and All Saints Church.

5.19 Bishops Park has five distinct spaces providing a variety of formal and informal spaces which link well together. The park stretches eastwards to meet Fulham Palace Road and forms a pleasant frontage to the road up to the King's Head P.H.. Set lower than the road it provides relief from the traffic along a well planted walk. The park contains many mature trees which are important in defining its character, and the setting of Fulham Palace and All Saints Church.

5.20 The tennis courts, bowling green, etc. of Bishops Park are of low scale. The Park falls within the visual corridor linking Richmond Park to St. Paul's Cathedral. This area forms a natural break between the built up nature of the conservation area to the north and the lower scale development to the south. The tennis pavilion (BOM) of mid-twentieth century construction provides an interesting feature in the area.

5.21 The open grassed area with pitches south of the Fulham Football Ground provides for formal recreation and is important due to its open aspect and landscape quality in relation to the development to the north and east.

5.22 The central recreational area has a formal layout including the site of the former theatre and bandstand, pond, playground, boating lake, paddling pool, sand pit and hardstanding. The tea room/kiosk (BOM) was constructed during the first part of the twentieth century. The terracotta and brick boundary walls and steps to the playground, and the railings and gates to Bishops Park in Stevenage Road are both 'buildings' of

local merit. These form quality features of interest within the landscape.



Tree lined avenue in Bishops Park

5.23 The open grassed area (for dog walking) west of Fulham Palace has an informal character with a tree lined avenue and river views. The handsome uniform railings form a tidy edge to the river bank and the tarmac path along here is in good condition.

5.24 The landscape becomes formal again by Pryor's Bank (BOM) ⁷ at the southern end of the Park. This is a late 19th century picturesque lodge, half timbered and rough cast, standing in a garden laid out in 1853. It is an important feature on approaching the conservation area from Putney via the Putney Bridge. This is accentuated by the fact that Pryor's Bank and the formal gardens are at a lower level from that of the bridge and therefore a full appreciation of the building and its setting can be gained.



Fulham Palace - listed Grade I

5.25 Bishops Avenue leads to the principal entrance to Fulham Palace ⁸. The entrance to Bishops Avenue (in Fulham Palace Road) used to be semicircular in form and consisted of dwarf walls with iron railings supporting a pair of iron gates. The red brick lodge (BOM), 1872, has an impressive chimney stack, brick detailing and shaped bargeboards with a catslide roof forming a porch. This was originally used by the Bishop's coachman. The building to the west of this is also a building of merit and has retained its original features.

5.26 The feature building in this area is Fulham Palace, listed Grade I ⁹. It is a courtyard house of Medieval origin standing in grounds to the west of Fulham Parish Church and is the former country seat of the Bishops of London.



Gates and lodge to Fulham Palace - listed Grade II

5.27 At the principal entrance to the palace from Bishops Avenue there are sturdy 19th century Gothic gate piers (listed Grade II) and a picturesque early 19th century barge-boarded lodge (Grade II) with colossal twisted chimneys and circular turret. An ornamental stone bridge remains over the filled moat (Grade II) and forms part of this entrance.

5.28 The Chapel (Grade II) occupies the site of the palace's Medieval kitchen and service rooms. It was built in 1866-67 by Butterfield. The exterior has diapering with trefoil lancets and a quatrefoil in the west wall.

5.29 Within the palace grounds there are late 18th century stable buildings (Grade II), which are now garages and a 17th century barn existed nearby until the 1950's. East of the palace there is a late Medieval brick garden wall with bee holes (Grade II) and an entrance (Grade II), which now leads to a herb garden beside the derelict early 19th century vineries.

5.30 The Palace and associated buildings and features provide an outstanding feature within its landscape setting, both visually and historically. Fulham Palace grounds and the Warren are a Scheduled Ancient Monument. This open area allows long views within the conservation area towards the riverfront park, and the development to the east, with Parkview Court a particularly dominant element.

5.31 In the southern part of this sub-area is the landmark building of All Saints Church ¹⁰ (Grade II). The Vicarage Gardens and the cemetery form the visual setting of the Church and link it to Bishops Park. The Church is particularly evident in riverside views. The War Memorial (Grade II) in the Vicarage garden was designed in 1921 by Alfred Turner and contains bronze figures of Peace, and a kneeling cherub.



*All Saints Church - listed Grade II**

5.32 The gates and railings to Bishops Park at the Putney Bridge Approach (BOM's) form an impressive entrance into the park and to the church from the south. There are good granite curb stones here and most of the original york