

25: WANDSWORTH COMMON

(c) SPENCER PARK

(For an account of the history of the area see **Wandsworth Common: Introduction.**)

History

In 1866 the 5th Earl Spencer redeemed the lease on the Mansion in the north east segment of the common and the land was sold off for development. By the late 1870s the development of this land known as Spencer Park was well under way with buildings looking out over the common, and enclosing a Park which was formally laid out with grassed areas, paths and planting. A large lake, known as "The Black Sea", had been drained and a row of trees planted around the edge of the common.

Buildings & Townscape

The area comprises a group of substantial detached and semi-detached villas grouped around the fringes of Wandsworth Common, with the open space of Spencer Park laid out to the rear. The houses were mainly laid out from about the 1870s onwards. They are two or three storey buildings set in substantial plots, constructed mainly of yellow stock brick.

North Side generally comprises groups of detached and semi-detached early- and mid-Victorian villas. They are substantial, mainly three storey buildings, of yellow stock brick with some rustication to basements.

The first of the Spencer Park houses were 35-49 North Side (1872). They are four pairs of substantial three storey buildings of yellow stock brick construction with stone quoins and projecting square-column porches. No.31 North Side by Maurice Pocock, has a roof based on the design of Hampton Court. No.33 was built in 1932. Nos.38-40 (not part of the Spencer Park Estate) have imposing Corinthian columned porches to the front. Several have their original boundary walls complete with balustrading.

On Spencer Park most of the villas are Gothic Victorian in inspiration, although 2 & 3 Spencer Park are a classical composition with rusticated quoins, plain elevations and parapet with globe finials above. Unusually, they are of concrete construction, dating from circa 1872, to the designs of Johnston & Mather Architects. They have decoration to banding below parapet and below windows. Town houses (now 56-59 North Side) replaced 1 Spencer Park in 1972. Nos.51, 53 and 55 North Side are 1930s houses built in the garden of No.49.

Only six Victorian houses were built on the railway side of the park of which two remain, much adapted (19 and 20 Spencer Park). No.21 became flats in the 1930s and blocks of flats built in the 1960s occupy the remaining sites on this side.

The footways have retained their original York stone paving slabs with square shaped stable blocks used for crossovers.

Located on the small piece of common between Spencer Park and the railway is a cattle trough and drinking fountain provided by the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association in 1890.

In Windmill Road is situated the "Windmill", a windpump dating from about 1840 (listed Grade II). It was built to pump water back into the Black Sea lake from the adjoining London and Southampton Railway cutting. It has a hexagonal weatherboarded body and cap on a hexagonal brick base. It originally had four double shuttered patent sails and a fan wheel mounted on the cap. No doubt these were removed after the windpump became redundant with the infilling of the lake in the 1870s. Nearby are parish boundary markers, listed grade II.

This character statement is intended to give an overview of the development and current character of the conservation area; it is not intended to be prescriptive, nor to be a summary of planning constraints or an inventory of individual buildings or other features whether listed or otherwise.