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Guidelines for Residents and SGCARA for Planning Applications

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to help guide residents and the SGCARA committee when making or reviewing planning applications within the Wandsworth Borough Council's Sutherland Grove Conservation Area (SGCA) or immediate vicinity as described within.

Planning proposals made in a Conservation Area are subject a number of restrictions from different protocols such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Local (Wandsworth) Plan and the London Plan as well as other planning guidelines, eg those found in the SGCA Appraisal and Management Strategy (updated 2023). See the link to the latter on the SGCARA website:

<https://www.sgcar.org.uk/our-conservation-area-special-status/>

SGCARA's best preliminary advice is to check out ANY changes you are proposing for the exterior of your property with Wandsworth planning *before* you make an application. Changes include to the house itself, the front boundary and front garden.

You can do this by emailing: WandsworthConsUrbDesign@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk (Phone 020 8871 6631 or 020 8871 7564 only if email is not available to you.)

Checking out in advance the legitimacy of your planned changes in the ways suggested, can make a real difference to avoiding Objections, either from nearby neighbours or SGCARA. We'd much rather celebrate the application-proposals of residents that enhance SGCA, than have to Object to those that don't. However, where a scheme would genuinely affect the character of SGCA, we do have a duty to speak up (see sections 2.3 and 2.5 below)

Taking pre-Application advice from the Planning Dept is strongly advised.

<https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/make-a-planning-application/pre-application-advice/>

2. BACKGROUND

1. The Sutherland Grove Conservation Area Resident's Association (SGCARA) covers the conservation area designated by the London Borough of Wandsworth on 23 November 1992

as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”

2. The **obligation of residents** when considering an application for planning permission is to ensure that any proposed changes that require such permissions are in accordance with all planning protocols including Wandsworth Borough Council’s SGCA Management Strategy, as outlined in section 4 below.
3. As stated in SGCARA’s constitution, the “*purpose of the Association shall be to **promote and assist the preservation, conservation, protection, enhancement and improvement of the geographic area** of benefit together with the amenities available to it, and to **discourage anything which would tend to be detrimental** to the area or its amenities*” [section 3.1]. In this context, the 'geographic area' covers the strict boundaries of Sutherland Grove Conservation Area (SGCA) itself and the 'setting' of SGCA. (The 'setting' of a Conservation Area or Heritage Asset includes houses and features on the periphery and immediate vicinity of it.) The 'setting' of SGCA most notably includes 166-176 Sutherland Grove. In this context, the **duty of the SGCARA Committee**, is to ensure “*that matters which might change or adversely affect the geographic area of benefit or amenities associated with it are monitored, consulted upon and considered by the Committee as appropriate, including environmental, planning, building, transport, and policing matters*” [section 6.1(a)]
4. Wandsworth Council undertook an **update** of the Sutherland Grove Conservation Area (SGCA) **Appraisal and Management Strategy** in 2023. The principal aims of Conservation Area Appraisals are to:
 - a. *Describe the historic and architectural character and appearance of the area which will assist applicants in making successful planning applications and decision makers in assessing planning applications;*
 - b. *Raise public interest and awareness of the special character of their area;*
 - c. *Identify the positive features which should be conserved, as well as negative features which indicate scope for future enhancements.*
 - d. The full **2023 Appraisal and Management Strategy** can be found at the following location:
<https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/sutherland-grove-road-conservation-area-appraisal>
5. SGCARA is a Consultee in all planning applications within the geographic area of SGCA as described in point 2 above, and we compile submissions where felt useful. We endeavour to tread a sensitive line between our obligation to uphold the character of the SGCA geographic area and respecting the vision that SGCARA residents have for their properties.

3. GUIDELINES

1. **All planning applications made by residents** should meet the guidelines set out in the Wandsworth Borough Council's SGCA Management Strategy as outlined in section 4 below.
2. Planning applications submitted for properties within SGCA and the 'setting' of SGCA should be **monitored and reviewed by the committee**.
3. All planning applications should be reviewed by the committee in the context of the Council's own **2023 Sutherland Grove Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy** (noted above) **as well as other planning guidelines, such as NPPF, Local Plan and London Plan. Local norms are also established, partly in response to the hilly topography of SGCA.** Any submissions to the planning applications, positive or negative, **may** make reference to the relevant section(s) in the **2023 Management Strategy document or the other planning guidelines**, to support the response.

4. GUIDANCE FROM THE 2023 SGCA MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- Specifically, the **SGCA Management Strategy** includes the following extracts for consideration by way of example. **ALL EXTRACT IN RED FOR CLARITY.** However, please refer to the **Management Strategy** document for the full text and additional considerations - the full **2023 Appraisal and Management Strategy** can be found at the following location:
<https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/sutherland-grove-road-conservation-area-appraisal>

WINDOWS

- *It is encouraged that residents, in the first instance, retain and repair existing original timber windows.*
- *If replacement is required, all aspects of the window should be considered including opening type, glazing bar pattern, horns to sashes, and depth. Windows should be timber and are generally plain casement or with the appropriate square or diamond leaded window pattern.*
- *Where original or historic windows survive, simple like-for-like replacements would likely cause the least harmful impact on the existing appearance of a building and therefore the character and appearance of the area.*
- *Like-for-like replacements also benefit from being able to be carried out without the need for planning permission.*

DOORS

- *Like windows, it is encouraged that residents, in the first instance, retain and repair any existing original timber doors.*
- *If a replacement is required, then it should match the original door for the property. Overly contemporary doors contrast with the traditional detailing of the host dwelling*

and are unsuitable.

ROOF EXTENSIONS

- *Hip to gable extensions are uncommon and not suitable, creating an imbalance between semi-detached pairs and infilling important gaps.*
- *Dormer extensions are most suitable to the rear elevation where they are the least visible, and side dormers may be suitable dependent on the context of the host dwelling, with the spacing between houses and the setting of them in their respective gardens, meaning side elevations may be revealed, are key considerations.*
- *Materials are key to incorporating new elements into existing buildings, and a sympathetic approach should be considered first. Appropriately sized dormers set within existing roof parameters are more suitably finished in a matching roof material, such as pantiles, to mitigate its appearance.*
- *Windows should be of a reasonable scale and match the host dwelling.*
- *Lead or zinc clad dormers have been introduced but these are often not suitable, contrasting sharply with the traditional domestic architecture and materials.*
- *Front dormers are also unsuitable.*

OTHER EXTENSIONS

- *Houses in the Conservation Area were predominantly designed to have symmetrical or mirrored elevations, and the extension of the appearance of the front elevation, particularly within a pair, can cause a harmful imbalance and disrupt the wider streetscape.*
- *Given the irregular placement of dwellings in response to the curvature of the road, some locations may be well concealed, and extensions would be considered on a case-by-case basis.*

GARAGE CONVERSIONS

- *There are some examples of successful infilling of garages, where the replacement infilling and window is sympathetic to the positioning and proportions of the garage itself.*
 - *Extending forward or the creation of projecting bays is often inappropriate, introducing an uncharacteristic element to the host dwelling's design and creating further imbalance within a pair.*

GARDENS

- *Full hard landscaping creates uninviting frontages and should be avoided.*
- *Parking within gardens is similarly harmful to the character and appearance and will be resisted.*

BOUNDARIES

- *Planting such as hedges are also increasingly common, and contribute to the suburban character, but should be of a variety that is suitable scaled to avoid concealing the garden from the public realm.*
- *Boundaries are otherwise typically low brick walls which match the host dwelling. Metal is uncommon, as is render, and both should be avoided. Where boundaries are incapable of repair, new boundaries should be informed by the context of surviving historic examples to similar typologies as well as the context of adjacent boundaries, to reinstate a sense of cohesion to the streetscape.*
- *The removal of part or all of a boundary wall is uncharacteristic and creates an overly urban appearance, in addition to an undesirable interruption to otherwise consistent boundary lines.*

PAINTING AND EXTERNAL FINISHES

- *Painting is uncommon and should only occur if the existing location has already been painted, and an appropriate colour should be selected to maintain the overall neutral palette of the Conservation Area. Most often existing colours should be refreshed, or neighbouring houses can be referenced to create a harmonious appearance.*
- *Most often buildings would utilize contrasting materials, typically with the ground floor in another finish than the first floor, or with contrasting materials applied to architectural details, and this creates a visual richness to the area.*
- *Frequently dwellings have been altered to apply a single finish to all elevations, most often white render, and this has eroded the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, creating a homogenized streetscape, and is not a suitable approach. The restoration of original finishes will be viewed as a heritage benefit.*

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- *Not all solutions will be appropriate across the Conservation Area, and a case-by-case approach should be adopted, which fundamentally considers the context, construction, and condition of a building to determine which solutions would be the most suitable and effective.*
- *Solar Panels and equivalent technology are most suitably placed on rear or side elevations where they are hidden from the public realm – principal elevations and roof slopes facing the public realm are less appropriate as they generally make the most substantial contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.*
- *New technologies, such as PV panels disguised as slates and sitting flush with roof materials, may be suitable in the appropriate context, and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.*