

# CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

## VII FARNCOMBE ROAD

### **Location and Population**

Largely residential and retaining an affluent appearance, Farncombe Road lies less than half a mile east of Worthing town centre. It links Brighton Road to Lyndhurst Road, in a sinuous line running roughly north-south, parallel to Chapel Road and the High Street. The sea is visible from Farncombe Road across the Aquarena car park.

### **Origins and Development of Settlement**

Settlement in Farncombe Road began with a series of substantial villas in the mid-nineteenth century. This was followed later in the century by semi-detached housing. Twentieth century development filled the empty plots on Church Way and replaced some of the villas.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1875 shows the land east of Park Road as largely undeveloped. West of Farncombe Road was grazing land; some of the 2 metre high flint boundary wall, with its brick piers gateway and stable access, still stands. The gateway is visible between Nos. 56 and 58 Madeira Road, leading to Griffin House (No. 21 Farncombe Road). The L-plan stables appear on the 1875 map and survives, in part, beneath a remarkable late nineteenth century rockery in the back garden of No. 11 Farncombe Road. All the building plots align with Church Walk, which runs in a straight line eastwards and itself probably reflects the alignment of the original field system. The sinuous line of Farncombe Road appears to be a deliberate design, but may partly be due to the need to provide a plot large enough to house a villa (No. 11) with stables behind it.

### **Architectural and Historic Qualities**

The essential architectural character of the area is defined by its large villas. The prevalent features of these include:-

- Two, occasionally three, storeys.
- Proportions: mostly double-fronted (3 bays), with over-all height, length and width being roughly equal.
- Shallow-pitched, hipped roofs in natural slate.
- White stucco or yellow brick elevations.

- Canted bays.
- Timber sashes with horns - single or double paned.
- String course dividing ground and first floors.
- Decorative eaves cornice.
- Quoining - vermiculated (eg No. 6 Farncombe Road and Nos. 101-103 Brighton Road) or plain (eg No. 9 Farncombe Road).
- Classically inspired doorways, with columns, pilasters, consoles etc.
- Four or six panelled wooden doors.
- Slender, rendered chimney stacks; many have been removed, but the chimney breasts are still evident in the external walls, distinguishing original villas from the pastiche villas of Horton Court.

The later nineteenth and early twentieth century houses are characterised by steeper-pitched roofs with gables. Some are more strikingly different, with red and yellow brick banding ("streaky bacon" style) and gabled porches. No. 25 Farncombe Road (St. John Ambulance H.Q.) has a clay tiled roof with decorative ridge tiles and a corner turret with a lead-covered ogee cupola.

No. 23 Farncombe Road is the only house in the conservation area with flint elevations and the 1875 map shows a long, narrow building on this site. It is therefore, potentially, of some historic interest, though in style quite different from the Victorian villas. The gable end of a flint building has survived as part of the southern boundary wall of Griffin House. These structures may be remnants of a pre-Victorian period of development.

### **Negative Factors**

Modern infilling has introduced alien building materials and styles, in particular: tile hanging, pantiles and other non-traditional roof tiles, metal and plastic window framing, leaded lights, wide window openings, non-traditional red-brown brick, unrendered red brick chimney stacks, lack of external horizontal banding to emphasise internal divisions, mock half-timbering and different size or proportions of buildings. Griffin House is especially at odds with its surrounding, being 5 storeys high, with continuous banks of windows and a flat roof; it dwarfs the historic villa development. Conversely, Kiloran (on the corner of Church Walk and Farncombe Road) and Ludlow Court are of much squatter proportions than the villas. The proximity to the road of the two storey office building - one of the outbuildings of St. John Ambulance Brigade - makes its detrimental impact on the area much greater than that of the ambulance shed at the rear, although they are both unsympathetically designed and detailed.

Although the telegraph poles are of some interest (one has a finial), the lines they support detract from the open character of the street. The streets do not appear to be heavily parked, yet poles carrying restriction sign-plates proliferate, adding unnecessary clutter to the streetscene. Illegal parking, however, may be the cause of the denudation of some of the grass verges.

## **Streetscape**

All the buildings are set well forward on their plots to produce generous back gardens, yet far enough back from the pavement to give the streets their broad, open aspect. This effect is reinforced by the generous grass verges between road and pavement and by the wide roadways. Mature trees throughout the area, both in gardens and verges, create a pleasant setting for the buildings. Well-kept original red brick pavements also contribute to the area's settled, long-established appearance, though some have been replaced by driveways and man-hole covers. Low boundary walls of boulder-flints with red-brick bandings and piers, provide an attractive division between garden and thoroughfare for most properties. They are a significant part of the street scene. The building lines follow the road, with most houses being set 8-10 metres from the edge of the pavement; this, and the generous spacing between the houses affords a series of changing vistas to anyone travelling along Farncombe Road.

The Grade II listed Victorian lamp standard which stands at the centre of the conservation area provides a vital focal point. The surrounding flower-beds display it to good effect. The modern ornate, lamp-posts are also satisfactory in their contribution to the character of the area. The pillar-box on Farncombe Road is distinguished by its lack of any royal cipher.

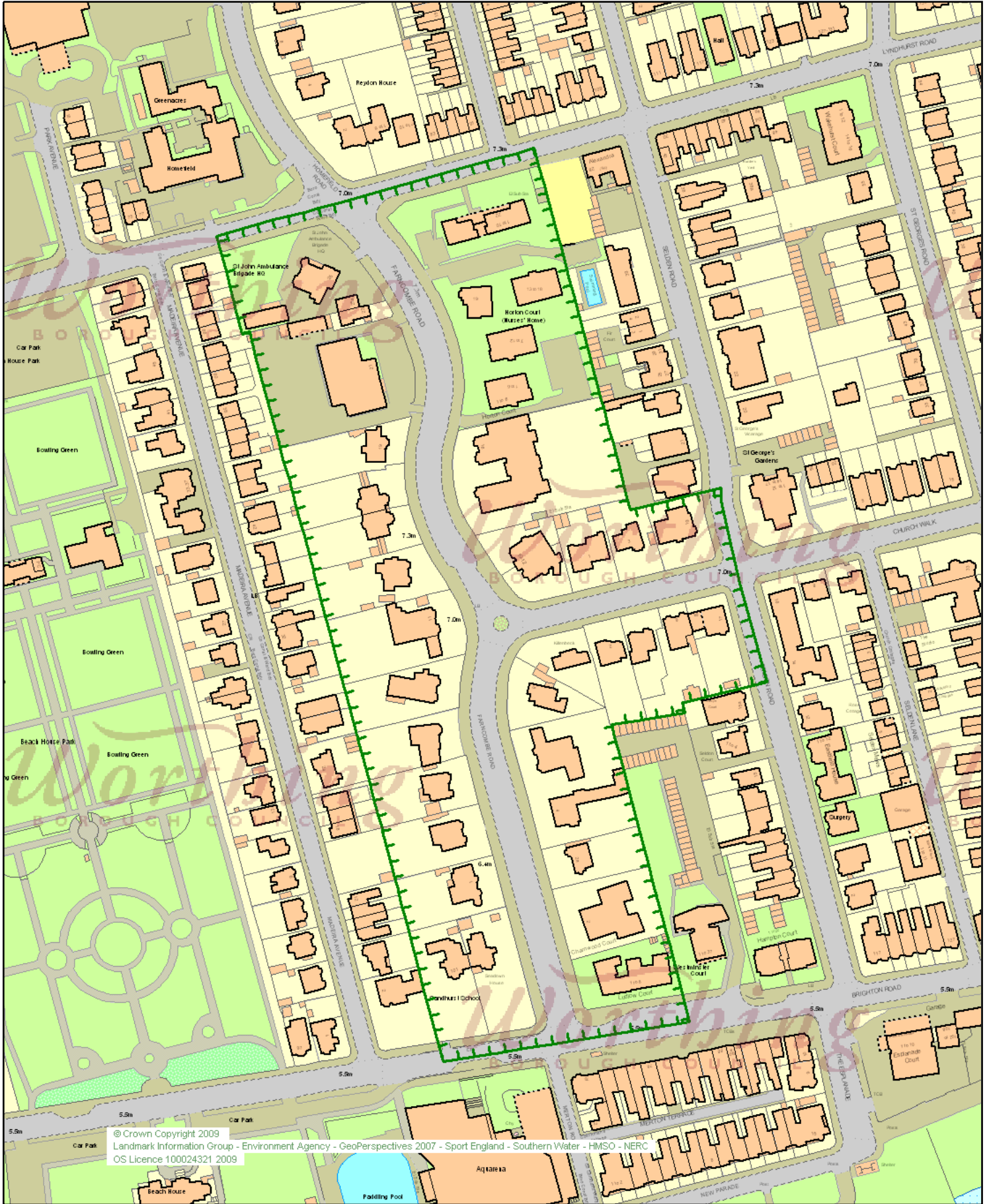
In both Church Walk and Farncombe Road, the roofline is fairly even. Apart from the undesirable interruption of Griffin House, the skyline is punctuated only by trees and chimneys.

## **Enhancement Opportunities**

- Parking restriction signs proliferate; rationalise these and reduce their numbers in both Church Way and Farncombe Road.
- Paint the coat of arms and other embellishments on the listed lamp standard.
- Remove overhead lines and poles (although one has a pointed finial and might remain)
- Relocate the junction box at the southern end of the road onto the verge.
- Replace the boundary wall of No. 19.
- Reseed grass on the bare patches of verge, particularly outside No. 15.

- Provide litter bins of special design.
- Replace the railings opposite the Aquarena (on Brighton Road) with safety barriers of special design.
- Encourage boundary planting, especially flowering trees.
- Permit demolition and appropriate redevelopment of the following sites:-

Griffin House  
Ludlow Court  
Lyndhurst Road Flats  
St John Ambulance outbuildings.



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