

# **CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**

## **XX ROBSON ROAD**

### **Location and Topography**

Robson Road runs south from the West Park Receptions Ground for about 250 metres, then turns sharply to the west and runs into Shaftesbury Avenue. The designated area extends north from the bend in the road and includes the junction of Robson Road and Trent Road. The land is fairly flat and the roads are straight, allowing clear views westwards of the large, Shaftesbury Avenue conservation area, which contains buildings of a similar age and style.

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

Robson Road was originally farmland. It did not become a routeway until the mid 1930s, when it was developed for residential use as part of the West Park Estate by Messrs R. R. Maddison and W. Brookes.

### **Architectural and Landscape Qualities**

The houses in the conservation area are fine examples of modern movement inspired architecture. Building Control records show that No. 6 Trent Road was designed by M Rainsford Fletcher, the architect of some of the properties on Shaftesbury Avenue.

The buildings have the modern movement's characteristic massing, flat roofs, parapets, white-painted concrete, steel window frames, crisp detailing and juxtaposition of cubist forms with curved, sweeping forms. The Estate as a whole provides a good 'moderne' setting; most houses have pitched roofs and brick walls, with a few modern movement inspired features shared by the buildings in the conservation area, in particular, smooth-rendered, flat-roofed, canted bays with steel window framing.

### **Roofs**

In common with most modern movement architecture, the houses on the Robson road have flat roofs built on different levels. These were originally constructed of asphalt on timber framing. The upper storeys are set back from the external walls and their roofs overhang. The second storey usually has a parapet.

All the houses in the conservation area are 3 storeys high and the building line is straight. Bay windows and recessed upper storeys are the main source of variety in the street elevation. The development is denser on the east side of Robson Road, the houses to the west are mostly sited on large corner plots. The conservation area contains 4 semi-detached pairs and 3 detached houses. A fifth semi-detached pair of similar design lies outside the boundary (Nos. 78-80 Robson Road) and contributes to the area's setting. The road is fairly wide and paved on both sides and the houses have moderately large front gardens and integral garages, giving the street a spacious, uncluttered appearance. Trees in the front gardens contrast with the crisp lines of the buildings and add variety to the streetscene.

## **Fenestration**

Window replacement has deprived this area of some of its original character.

## **Doors**

The few surviving original front doors and garage doors are wood panelled and of a standard design. The top panel of the front door is filled with leaded stained glass (eg. No. 64). Several of the porches have been enclosed and new doors added.

## **Prevalent Building Materials, Textures and Colours**

Wall surfaces are smooth concrete, painted white or pastel colours giving a uniform effect. The (approx.) 0.5 metre high red-brown brick, basket-weave garden walls survive throughout the area. Occasional stretches of shiplap fencing placed behind the walls are detrimental to the area's special character.

## **Local Details**

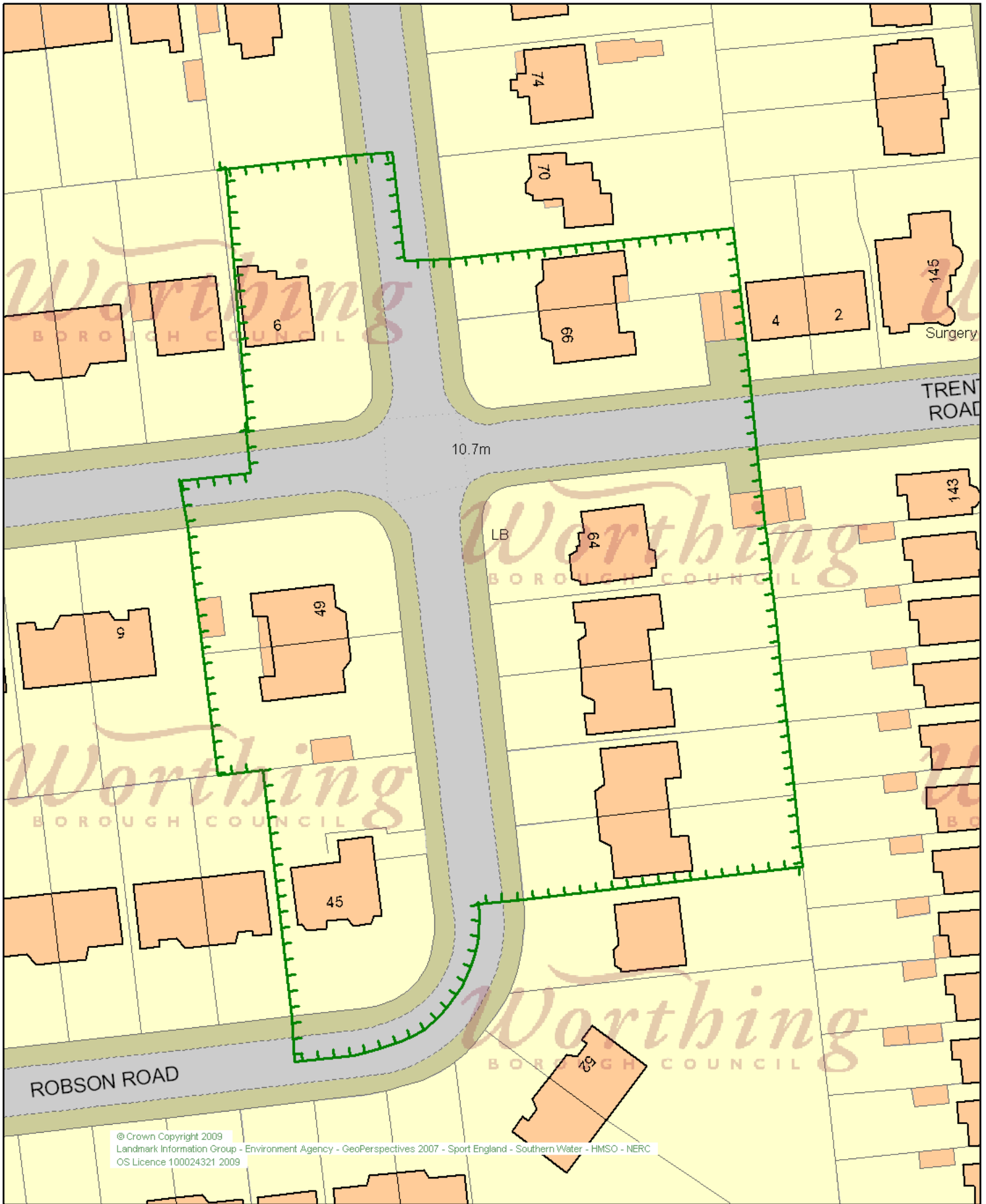
Lamp-posts in the area are squat concrete affairs which do not accord well with the architectural style of the houses.

Rainwater goods are generally white, blending happily with the white-painted walls.

## **Enhancement Opportunities**

- Clean the graffiti from the junction box and sign of Robson Road.
- Clean away litter and provide litter bins of special design.
- Resite television aerials so that they do not impinge upon the roofscape or main elevations.
- Repair and repaint No. 4 Trent Road (on the corner plot at the junction with Robson Road).
- Demolition of the inappropriate porch (to No. 45a) above the garage at No. 45 Robson Road.
- Remove the overhead telegraph wires and poles.
- Reinststate the original style of steel window frame where it has been lost (using No. 49 Robson Road and No. 6 Trent Road as models).

- **Retain the basket-weave brick front garden walls. Remove any additional wooden fencing (eg. at Nos. 62, 49 and 66).**
- **Replace the lamp-posts with others of a more graceful design.**
- **Permit demolition and redevelopment in a modern movement derived style of Nos. 70-76 (even), in order to link Nos. 78 and 80 with the rest of the group.**



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