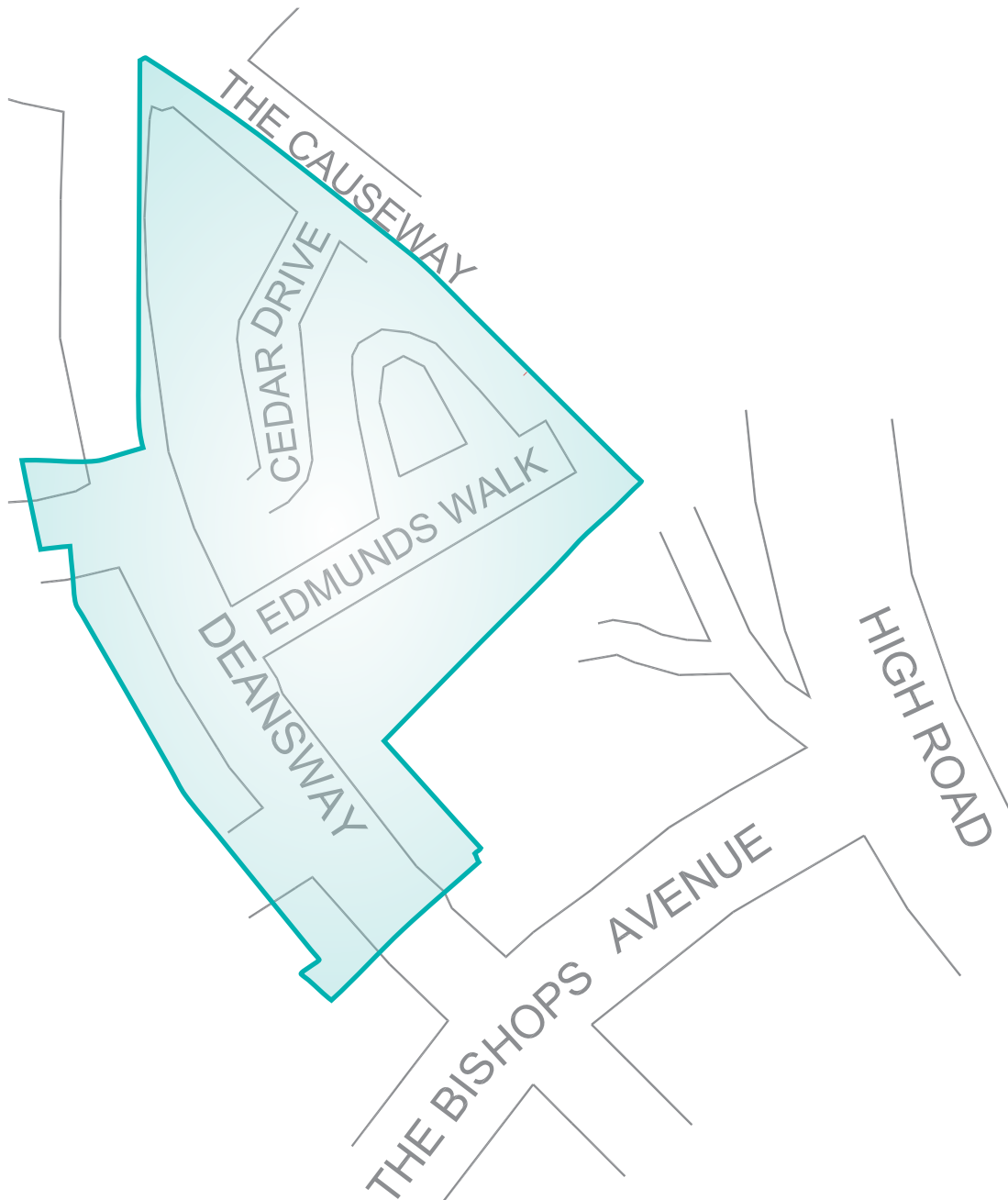


# Hampstead Garden Suburb

## Deansway and Edmunds Walk – Area 12

Character Appraisal



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# Character appraisal

## Section 1 Background historical and architectural information

### 1.1 Location and topography

Deansway and Edmunds Walk lie at the northeast corner of the Conservation Area, towards East Finchley. The area forms a rough triangle, with the junction of Deansway and East End Road to the north, and the gardens of The Bishops Avenue to the south. The land slopes gently down towards the southeast. Deansway follows this slope, curving slightly, which gives a more rural feel to the road. The cul-de-sac of Edmunds Walk is enclosed between Deansway and the railway boundary.

### 1.2 Development dates

The land was part of the 300 acres leased from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, circa 1911, and developed under Co-partnership control from 1927 onwards. The Trust Architect J.C.S. Soutar laid out the plots but the houses were designed either in blocks or, less frequently, in ones and twos by individual architects. The northern end of Deansway was developed first in 1929 with the rest of the road and Edmunds Walk following between 1935 and 1937. Nos. 20 to 26 (even) were rebuilt in 1951 after war damage.

Two parts of the area are not part of the land developed as Hampstead Garden Suburb. The site of the Former National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery lies in the southeastern corner; this site is currently being developed with flats and a new building for the Institute, the local Further Education College. In the north, Cedar Drive was developed in the late 1960s with three blocks of flats fronting a service road.

### 1.3 Originating architects and planners

The work of two designers dominates the character of the area. C.G. Butler, architect to the Co-partnership Tenants, designed the earliest houses in Deansway in an Arts and Crafts-influenced style. Edmunds Walk and part of the southern section of Deansway form an enclave of picturesque timber framed houses designed by R.H. Williams of Finchley. Another architectural firm, Burgess, Holden and Watson of Beaconsfield, added flats in a similar style and Frank T. Winter built a group of four houses in 1951 in a Tudor style. There are no listed buildings.

### 1.4 Intended purpose of original development

This is an area designed largely for owner residents. The provision of garages reflects the date and type of development – middle-class householders who could afford to run a motor car. Easy access to East Finchley Tube station via a footpath made, and continues to make, the area attractive to commuters into central London.

## 1.5 Density and nature of the buildings

This is low density residential development. There is a mixture of detached and semi-detached two storey houses without basements, each house has a garden and many have an integral garage. In Edmunds Walk there are 14 maisonettes designed to look like asymmetrical semi-detached houses.

In addition, Nos. 1-3 and 2-16 The Bishops Avenue, whilst being part of the Hampstead Garden Suburb, and within the Trust area, have been appraised in the separate Conservation Area Character Appraisal Statement for The Bishops Avenue.

## Section 2 Overall character of the area

This is a south-east facing area in which trees, hedges and gardens complement well designed houses creating an overall impression of an attractive, residential area, well suited to the site.

An enclave of 1930s 'Old English' style houses in Edmunds Walk and Deansway make a unique contribution to Hampstead Garden Suburb. Built from reclaimed materials, they are both picturesque as a group and, individually, of high quality in design and detail. Some of these houses are arranged around a small green with mature willow trees, which sets off the mellowness of the reclaimed brick and tile, timber beams, sweeping peg-tile roofs and decorative detail of the houses. The whole composition is very confident and romantic ([Photograph 1](#)).



1.

This style of building was popular in the late 1920s and 1930s as a reaction against the modern and a rediscovery of the reassuring comforts of rural England after the War. The style was popularised in publications such as P.A. Barron's "The House Desirable" (1929), illustrated with charming photos of seemingly ancient houses bearing all the mellow patina of age but including all the comforts of a modern home.

Other houses in Deansway are more restrained in style with generally Arts and Crafts details. They sit happily enough with the Old English style houses as they are similar in scale and also use high-quality materials and detailing, but look a little prim against the staggering timber frames and twinkling leaded lights of the Williams houses.

By contrast, Cedar Drive is a development of low-rise flats built on a site previously occupied by "Woodlands", a large Victorian villa set in landscaped grounds. It is a cul-de-sac with no direct connection to Deansway or Edmunds Walk and impinges very little on the overall character of the area.

Developments outside the area have an impact on the overall feel of the area. To the north, tall blocks of flats appear over the roofs at the top of Deansway, and new building by East Finchley station (as yet uncompleted) intrudes on the rooflines of Edmunds Walk. The impact of the new flats being built on the former hospital site is yet to be seen. Some repairs, with inappropriate materials and poor replacement doors, detract from the character of the area, as does the loss of front gardens to hardstanding and unsympathetic paving materials.

## 2.1 Principal positive features

### Layout and public realm

- curve of streets and planning of cul-de-sacs relate sympathetically to the topography
- some pavements have grass verges which are particularly wide in the southern part of Deansway
- no obtrusive street furniture, traditional street signage.

### Landscape and trees

- views down Deansway to trees and open green space in the distance
- number and scale of trees; there are mature oaks and other trees in the central grass reservation at the northern end of Deansway and the willows on the Green in Edmunds Walk are particularly attractive, whilst elsewhere, there are cherry and other ornamental flowering trees lining the streets
- privet hedges mark most property boundaries on Deansway; in Edmunds Walk the frontages are more open and the planting of the front gardens sprawls attractively over low brick walls onto the pavements
- planting in front gardens often complements and enhances the buildings.

### Building type and design

- buildings are designed mostly in either Arts and Crafts or Old English styles; within each stylistic group there are core consistencies in proportions, rooflines and fenestration styles
- although there some differences in size, houses are reasonably similar in scale, so that the overall impression is harmonious
- Arts and Crafts houses often have gables, sometimes with the top half rendered and brickwork at ground floor level; other features include tile-hung downswept roofs, and half-dormers with steeply pitched gambrel roofs  
([Photograph 2](#))



2.



- Old English-style houses have roof lines, studwork gables, brick nogging, dormer windows, and many exposed beams (Photograph 3)
- interesting houses are highlights
- comparatively few houses have had damaging alterations to the original design; there are examples of sympathetic extensions
- mix of timber and steel windows, some with diamond paned or rectangular leaded lights which create interesting reflections.



## Materials and detailing

- traditional workmanship, building styles and materials
- within each stylistic tradition, there is uniformity of building materials
- Arts and Crafts, brick with plaster, wood or stone decoration, tile roofs, casement windows and high-quality brickwork embellishing otherwise plain houses (Photograph 4)
- Tudor-style houses are built from first class materials reclaimed from vernacular buildings outside London; the use of old brick, tiles and timbers sets these Tudor-style houses apart from other examples of the genre, both within the Suburb and outside
- building textures include herringbone brickwork, old tile roofs, and timber studding.



## 2.2 Principal negative features

### Public realm

- broken pavement slabs repaired with tarmac
- a few satellite dishes in prominent view

- buildings outside the Conservation Area are visible above the rooflines at the northern end of Deansway and in Edmunds Walk; they intrude on the street compositions (Photograph 5).



### Building type and design

- one example of a garage badly incorporated into a house with doors replaced with a bow window
- other garage incorporations affect the symmetrical characteristics of adjacent houses and the repeat patterns of the street.

### Materials and detailing

- inappropriate replacement windows and doors (not common but existing)
- unsympathetic paving materials in drives and areas of hard standing.

## Section 3 The different parts of the main area in greater detail

Whereas the above features are found throughout the area, certain features are more characteristic of particular parts of the area. To illustrate some of these features the Deansway area is divided into three sections.

- 3.1 Northern section of Deansway
- 3.2 Edmunds Walk and southern section of Deansway
- 3.3 Cedar Drive

### 3.1 Northern section of Deansway

#### Character and landscape

The northern section of Deansway is very wide, divided by a central reservation with grass and large oak trees that visually separates one side of the street from the other. Only the eastern side of Deansway lies within the Conservation Area; the contrast between the two sides of the road is marked. Looking northwards, two tall blocks of flats rise above the rooflines, again emphasising that this area is at the boundary of the Conservation Area. The verges in this section are paved in red engineering brick and there are no trees in the verges. The pavements are in good repair. The hedge line is continuous and provides an attractive frame for the houses; the predominant species used is privet.

#### Architecture



Numbers 1 to 31(odd) are by Butler. These are the earliest houses in this area, built between 1927 and 1929. They step down the hill in a sequence of groupings in which the pattern of repetition of designs is a key factor in the street composition. This sequence generates interest on a straight section of the road. Nos. 1 to 7 are asymmetric semi-detached houses, originally with one side having a tile-hung double height bay window and the other featuring a shallow central brick gable with arched doorway. No. 7 appears to be in its original state (Photograph 6) whereas No. 1 has a replacement bow window and the brick gable has been painted white (Photograph 7).

8.



The next two pairs of semis are in red brick; L-shaped in plan, enlivened by panels of herringbone brickwork and blind arches over the ground floor window, painted timber doorcases and hoods. Typically here, a central pair of symmetrical semis, 19 and 21 is framed by asymmetrical L-shaped pairs which mirror each other ([Photograph 8](#)). Nos. 35 and 37 are identical to 19 and 21, although 37 has been



9.

substantially altered using unsympathetic materials and finishes on both the front elevation and in the partially paved garden; the hedge has been removed ([Photograph 9](#)). Nos. 27 and 29 are unusual in not having chimneys. They advertise, what in 1929 was up-to-the-minute gas heating, by a pair of gas flues poking through the centre of the roof.

Nos. 33 and 33a make up the terminating feature viewed from Brim Hill. They were designed by Paul Mauger, an architect who did much work at Welwyn Garden City. An arresting design, the

pantiles, mansard roofs, horizontal steel windows and perforated brick balcony display Modernist influences (Photograph 10).



### 3.2 Edmunds Walk and southern section of Deansway

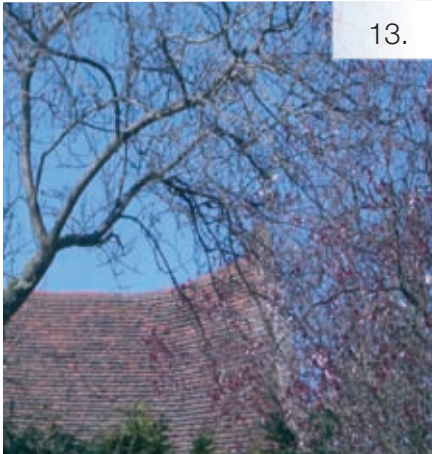


There is no central reservation in this section of Deansway; instead there are wide grass verges and large chestnut and lime trees edging the pavements. A sequence of four pairs of larger semi-detached houses by Collins, in 1935, lies on the western side of the road. They are brick built, Arts and Crafts in style, and have some elements similar to the Butler houses (Photograph 11).



However, the defining feature of this area is the defiantly picturesque Old English style employed by R.H. Williams and Burgess, Holden and Watson between 1935 and 1937. Edmunds Walk is a showpiece, with all the houses in the cul-de-sac built from softly aged, reclaimed materials.

The cul-de-sac opens onto a green, with mature willow trees adding to the 'romantic' evocation of the architectural style. Sweeping roof lines are important, (Photograph 12) as are half-timbered gables, leaded casement windows, exposed beams, brick nogging, porches and oak doors. Notable houses include the asymmetrical pair of semis at Nos. 5 and 7, No. 15, a corner house which is more restrained (no



13.

timber framing) than most with parapet gables and a lively ridgeline shaped to suggest great age ([Photograph 13](#)); and No. 21 which has been extended, maintaining the roof line and using identical reclaimed materials. Nos. 35 to 53, a sequence of maisonettes presented as five linked 'houses', frame one side of the green ([Photograph 14](#)). Nos. 20 to 26, on the south side of the green, were rebuilt after war damage in late Arts and Crafts Tudor and are more sober in their effect.



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The Tudor-style houses in Deansway are all individual designs attributed to R.H. Williams, C.A. Williams and L.J. Williams and are equally strong, incorporating the same exuberant elements found in Edmunds Walk. They include Nos. 49-53 and 59, and Nos. 56-66. No. 58 is a small-scale Wealden house, with



15.

studded first floor with a recessed centre with leaded windows ([Photograph 15](#)). No. 62 is another Wealden-style house, with a hipped roof, tile-hanging flanking the central recessed plaster and studded first floor. Both of these houses have eaves carried across on an authentic brace detail. No. 66 incorporates a garage under a catslide roof with a dormer window above. A tall casement window set into a herringbone brick wall illuminates the

stairs ([Photograph 16 - see overleaf](#)).

16.



### 3.3 Cedar Drive



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This is a late 1960s development of 32 flats in three staggered blocks set in landscaped grounds. The flats are three storeys high, built in pale red brick with shallow concrete tile roofs and planked timber front balconies. The blocks step down the gently sloping site with a hammerhead garage court at the bottom of the hill ([Photograph 17](#)). Some window replacements are noticeable but the character of the blocks has been maintained.

