

Local list description and map for Waxwell Close and the gardens of Waxwell Farmhouse

Adopted at Cabinet on 23rd September 2021

This area meets the following criteria for local listing:

- (A) Date and rarity.** The older a designed landscape is, and the fewer the surviving examples of its kind, the more likely it is to have special interest. Likely to be designated are:
- i. sites with a main phase of development post-1840 which are of special interest and relatively intact, the degree of required special interest rising as the site becomes closer in time
- (B) Further considerations** which may influence selection, and may exceptionally be sufficient by themselves to merit:
- i. Sites having an association with significant persons or historic events
 - ii. Sites with a strong group value with other heritage assets

Summary and introduction:

The houses of Waxwell Close and their communal garden are of special interest as they were built as artisans' cottages in 1927 for low wage earners at the behest of Reginald Brightman, the owner of nearby Waxwell Farmhouse. This was in response to Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald's appeal for a larger stock of housing of moderate rates. They are now privately owned. The gardens to the early C17th Waxwell Farmhouse are of special interest for their association with Waxwell Close and for remaining open and largely intact since the 1890s when the Captain and Mrs Trotter purchased the property, converted the house and laid out beautiful gardens. The Waxwell Close plot that was laid out as Waxwell Close was purchased in 1915 by Mrs Trotter, whose heir Brightman was. The gardens have a strong association with the grade II listed Waxwell Farmhouse and form part of the Waxwell Close Conservation Area.

Details:

Waxwell Close, a semi-circular neo-Georgian style development, was designed and laid out in 1927 at the behest of Reginald Brightman in response to Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald's appeal for a larger stock of housing of moderate rates. Bridgeman's enthusiastic response was probably a result of his strong socialist ideals. He was the heir of Mrs Annie Trotter of Waxwell Farmhouse (grade II listed

today) who had purchased the plot for Waxwell Close in 1915 and who was throughout her life a committed Christian and, like her husband Captain Edward Trotter, a philanthropist who had worked in the slums. Waxwell Close is has been designated a conservation area since 1980.

Waxwell Farmhouse dated from 1600 and continued in farming use until the 1890s when it came into the ownership of the Trotters. In the words of E A Jelf writing in the early C20th, the Trotters converted the house into a 'beautiful place of residence, with lovely flower and fruit gardens, and wild walks ending in a fairy dell'. The Elizabethan house was extended with a mock-rustic wing. The plot of land later developed as Waxwell Close plot remained undeveloped until 1926 and, together with land where Nos. 68 and 98 - 118 (even) Waxwell Lane were built, was owned in the late C19th by William Barber and later by T. Evans.

Mrs Trotter spent her last years at Farm Cottage, which adjoined the Farmhouse. In 1947 Waxwell Farmhouse was purchased by The Grail, a Roman Catholic lay community of women, who lived and ran a centre here until 2012, when they are relocating to Winchester. The property has now been purchased by Westminster Diocese. By the 1960s the Farmhouse was expanded with an accommodation block, chapel and meeting hall and until 1991 The Grail used to host an annual summer garden party open to the public. The garden is special today for having remained largely intact.

The gardens are associated with the top of the Lane where is another heritage asset, the Wax Well from where the road takes its name, the blocked-up brick well-head remaining in an area of grass beside the road. So-called by the C13th, it may be Anglo-Saxon in origin and the waters reputedly had miraculous powers, apparently curative of eye troubles and even benefiting those 'on the point of death'. Water from the well was the main source for the local population until the Colne Valley Water Company was established in 1873. A pump was installed in Victorian times and was last used in c.1900.

Sources:

Joanne Verden 'Ten Walks Around Pinner', (The Pinner Association) 1999 ed; LB Harrow 'Waxwell Close Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy (Draft)' (2008/9);

Walter W Druett 'Pinner Through the Ages' (1st published by Hillingdon Press, 1937, reprinted by Ringstead Press, 1980)

London Parks and Gardens Trust, The London Inventory Historic Green Spaces, Harrow 2003

London Gardens Online:

<http://www.londongardensonline.org.uk/gardens-online-record.php?ID=HRW053>

National list description:

Waxwell Farmhouse: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1079661>

