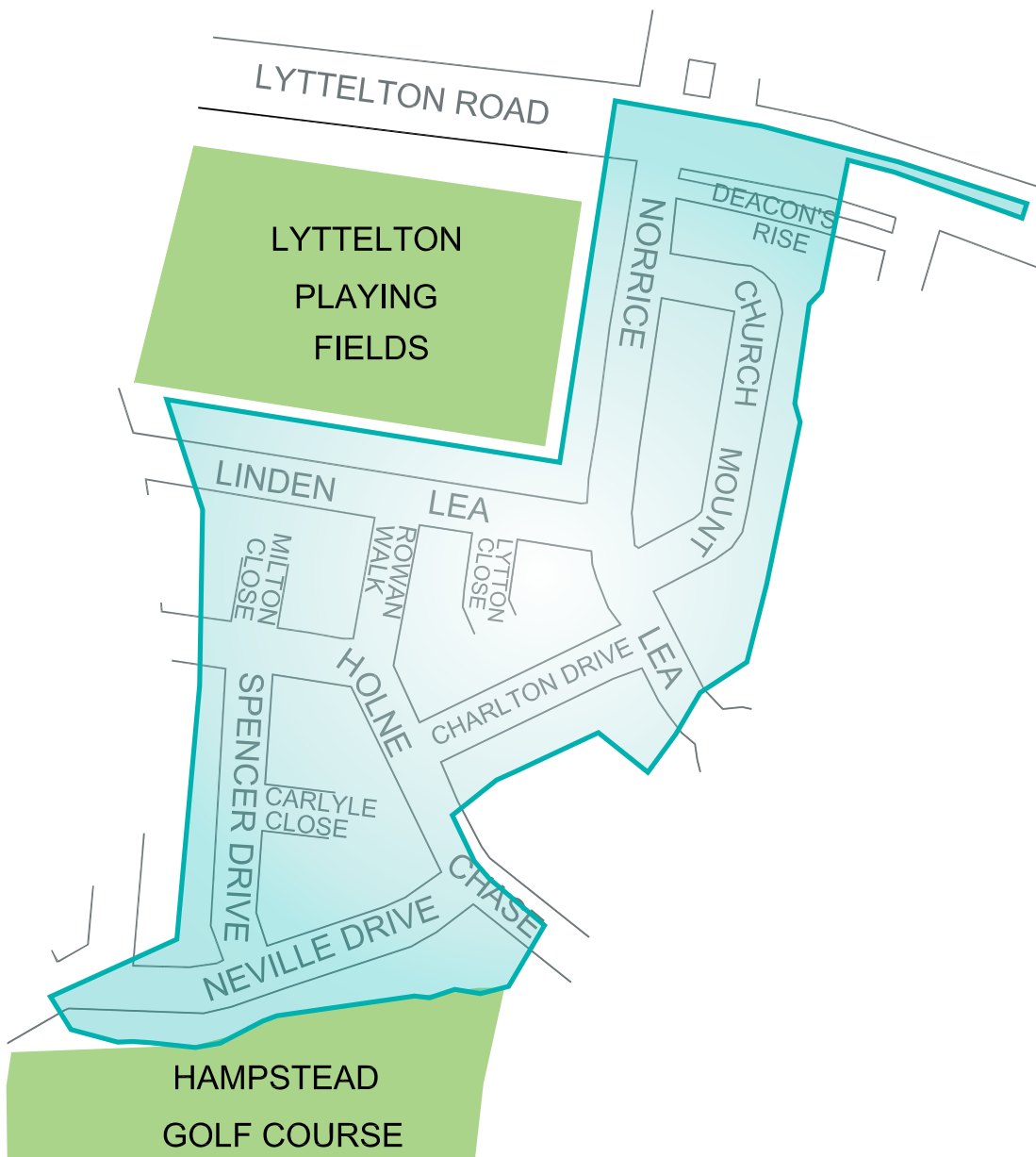


Hampstead Garden Suburb

Holne Chase and Norrice Lea – Area 13

Character Appraisal



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Map of area

Character appraisal

Section 1 Background historical and architectural information

1.1 Location and topography

The Holne Chase and Norrice Lea area lies in the eastern part of the Conservation Area. The land slopes gently down towards the northwest to the level land bordering Mutton Brook. The layout of various streets reflect the local gradient, for example the steep slope of Church Mount. The area is bordered by the open, green areas of the Hampstead Golf Club to the south and Lyttelton Playing Fields to the north.

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 or builders. Development in this area of the 300 acres took place between 1935 and 1938 in the final major building phase in the Suburb. Neville Drive and Church Mount have examples of later 1950s architecture.

1.3 Originating architect(s) and planners

J.C.S. Soutar, the Trust Architect, and C.G. Butler, the Chief Architect of the Co-partners designed many of the properties and clearly liaised closely. A relatively restricted group of established architects undertook much development such as M. De Metz, G. B. Drury and F. Reekie, Welch, Cachemaille-Day and Lander, and J. Oliphant. H. Meckhonik was a developer/builder and architects in his office may have designed houses attributed to him.

1.4 Intended purpose of original development

The majority of homes were designed for middle-class owner-occupiers, as evidenced by the provision for cars in garages and driveways. By the 1930s there was no incentive to provide social housing and the Co-partners acted as land holder development entrepreneurs sensitive to the aspirations of potential buyers.

1.5 Density and nature of the buildings

This area is of much lower density than the pre-war and early 1920s parts of the Suburb. There is a mixture of two-storey detached and semi-detached buildings, many with rooms in the roof spaces. Most plots are of a similar size but there are some that are much larger; notably those at the corners of closes, and in the south side of Neville Drive and the Winnington Road end of Holne Chase.

Section 2 Overall character of the area

This is an attractive residential area in which trees, hedges, and planting complement solidly built houses. The road layout is varied with some curved streets and closes making the most of the natural gradient. Plots are large and the scale of the houses reflects this; the general ambience is calm and spacious. Lyttelton Playing Fields and Hampstead Golf Course provide a green backdrop.



Most of the properties fit Mervyn Miller's (2006) description of 'well-mannered' houses designed by established architects working within the traditional styles common in the late 1930s development of the Suburb. In this area, Soutar and Butler built houses, both in a late Arts and Crafts style and in Neo-Georgian mode. Lytton Close is an enclave of Grade II listed Modern Movement houses of exceptional interest designed by G.C. Winbourne ([Photograph 1](#)). With flat roofs, glazed rooftop pavilions, and balconies, the design is eclectic, confident and eschews the compromises found elsewhere in the Suburb in Moderne-style houses. Other architects introduced some cautious Art Deco or Moderne detailing on otherwise plain brick houses; for example H. Meckhonik's windows and doorcases in Linden Lea. There are also occasional 'exotic' houses and houses of particular individuality which enliven the roads.

Notwithstanding the variety of architectural styles, consistencies in the height of buildings, rooflines and materials and the abundance of trees and planting ensure that a sense of harmony prevails. The character of the area is vulnerable to changes that ignore these factors and the symmetry that binds groupings together. This can be seen in Church Mount and a section of Neville Drive where developments in the 1950s sit uneasily within the general ambience and detract considerably from the character of the area.

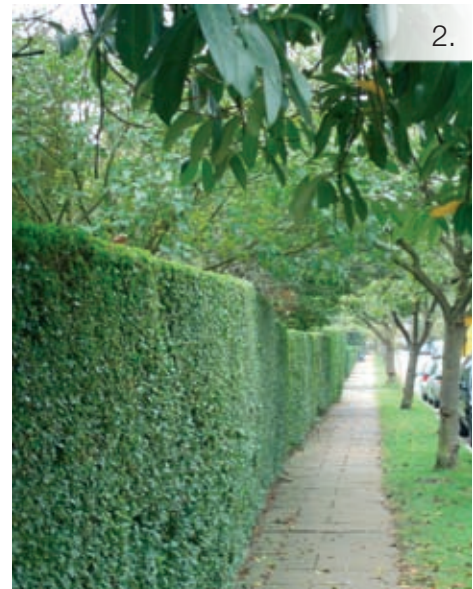
2.1 Principal positive features

Layout and public realm

- low-density development
- most roads have relatively light traffic and the area is quiet
- curves in road layouts provide attractive streetscapes
- cul-de-sacs add interest and intimacy to the layout and contribute to the peaceful residential character of the area
- traditional street signage and relatively few examples of obtrusive street furniture.

Landscape and trees

- ornamental trees and occasionally, larger forest trees line the roads; trees on the golf course are visible between houses on the south side of Neville Drive
- some specimen trees provide focal points, for example the horse chestnut tree at the top of Carlyle Close
- attractive open space at junction of Holne Chase and Rowan Walk, with a view towards the spires of Central Square; a variety of tree species clustered on the two greens provide a focal point from all approaches
- all streets have grass verges which soften their appearance
- immaculately kept privet hedges mark most property boundaries ([Photograph 2](#)).



Building type and design

- houses are varied in design and scale but the majority are built in a traditional manner drawing on styles characteristic of the Suburb; these include Neo-Georgian and its variants, Arts and Crafts, Moderne, and the occasional 'exotic' with white walls and green pantile roofs
- some roads or sections of roads are built as architecturally consistent groups, designed by single architects such as Butler, Soutar, Oliphant and Welch, Cachemaille-Day and Lander for example, Milton Close, Carlyle Close, sections of Linden Lea and Spencer Drive
- in contrast, Neville Drive and Church Mount houses were designed individually by a large number of different architects; some of these buildings contribute positively to the character of the road with strong design and detail
- grade II-listed Lytton Close, designed by Winborne in 1935, is a striking example of Modern Movement, with white, flat-roofed building.
- the majority of houses have integral garages which can be an important part of the design for example, central garages, linked garages, garages with decorative friezes in plaster or brick, garages incorporated into gables ([Photograph 3 see overleaf](#))

- dormer windows are a feature in some front elevations and sometimes continue to the side and rear elevations.



3.



4.

Materials and detailing

- uniformity of building materials and detailing within groups by the different architects
- Arts and Crafts-influenced houses characterised by ornamental brickwork, heavy timbered doors, brick mullion windows ([Photograph 4](#))



5.

- Neo-Georgian houses are characterised by sash or casement windows, doorcases, prominent chimney stacks, steep roofs sometimes with parapet, dormer windows ([Photograph 5](#))

- typical elements of Moderne style houses are curved steel with horizontal glazing bar windows, horizontal decorative render or stone bands, flat roofs, decorative metal balconies, white rendered walls, doors with central glazed vertical panels and decorative ironwork
- high-quality decorative brickwork, throughout the area such as brick mullion windows, door arches, voussoir or soldier headers above windows, brick quoins, tile creasing and Art Deco doorways (Photograph 6).



2.2 Principal negative features

Landscape and trees

- loss of front gardens to create hardstanding for cars
- the dearth of front gardens and trees in the middle section of Church Mount.

Building type and design

- alterations to houses that affect the symmetrical patterns within groups of houses
- alterations to houses that affect the integrity of the design, particularly loft and side extensions
- houses which are not compatible with the character of the road and substantially detract from that character, for example, some buildings in Church Mount and Neville Drive
- examples of poorly-integrated 1950s homes, many of which have also been substantially modified, such as Nos. 7-15 (odd) Neville Drive
- houses extended to plot boundaries result in a crowded feel and loss of 'setting' for the house which is a key feature of the Conservation Area as a whole.

Materials and detailing

- inappropriate replacement doors and windows
- loss of original style garage doors and unsuitable replacements
- unsympathetic paving materials in drives and areas of hardstanding
- introduction of low walls and piers to front boundaries which detracts from original soft hedged edges to the road
- use of poor-quality or inappropriate materials in repairs and alterations
- fussy, wrought ironwork decoration out of character with the architectural styles.

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

The above features are found throughout, but certain aspects are more characteristic of particular parts of this area. To illustrate some of these features the Holne Chase and Norrice Lea area can be divided into five sections.

- 3.1 Spencer Drive, Carlyle Close, Milton Close and Charlton Drive
- 3.2 Holne Chase and Rowan Walk
- 3.3 Neville Drive
- 3.4 Norrice Lea, Church Mount and Deacons Rise
- 3.5 Linden Lea and Lytton Close

3.1 Spencer Drive, Carlyle Close, Milton Close and Charlton Drive

Character and landscape



These roads are characterised by grass verges, a pleasing variety of street trees and well-kept privet hedges. Three large established oaks at the entrance to Spencer Drive may relate to old field boundaries. The two closes are narrower, more intimate in scale and add variety to the layout. However, on-street parking restricts road space further and encourages serious damage to grass verges by heavy load vehicles, such as at the entrance to Carlyle Close ([Photograph 7](#)).

Architecture

The west side of Spencer Drive (2-24) is mostly by Soutar, 1935-6. This is an essentially symmetrical composition of detached and semi-detached houses, with minor variations in architectural detail, such as segmental and canted bay windows, and location of garages. Consistent red/brown brick, steep tiled roofs, brick details surrounding doors frames and leaded casements with brick mullions provide attractive continuity. A few houses have had front dormers added, which detract from the simplicity of the elevation. Nos. 18-20 are heavily dormered and no longer remain symmetrical, in contrast with the matching pair at 6-8 which have no dormers and therefore have a more restful façade.

The original white Modern Movement house at No. 26 by Stewart Grey (1934) was demolished for structural reasons. It was rebuilt in a Soutaresque style and fits the context. Nos. 28 and 30 are interlopers, white exotics, more in tune with the variegated architecture of Neville Drive. No. 28 is a flat roofed design by Welch, Cachemaille-Day and Lander, (1934), the parapet enlivened by a coping of glazed green pantiles. A third storey has been added, but is sensitively designed to blend in, set back from the parapet. No. 30 has an open swan-necked pedimented doorcase and shutters, giving it a jaunty Deco-Baroque style ([Photograph 8 - see overleaf](#)). 17 Spencer Drive, on the corner of Neville Drive, is an oddity of 1937 by the architect Katona for MeckhoniK. It has a heterogeneous collection of features, with an over-scaled rubble-faced stone arched front door, iron grills and balcony railing and a half-arched corner niche.



The east side, including Carlyle Close, is by Welch, Cachemaille-Day and Lander in 1935-6. Elements of Modernism are expressed in the curved horizontal steel windows and Deco doorcases, but the houses are otherwise quite traditional ([Photograph 9](#)).



9.

Carlyle Close is an asymmetrical group with pairs of houses stepping up the hill and three detached houses at the highest point. These houses have shallower tiled roofs with wide overhanging eaves. The pairs of houses on the north side have broad curved bays facing south to catch the sun and linked garages under the setback at the centre of the composition. Those on the south side display less fenestration (their main windows 'front' onto the rear gardens) and are more conventional, but they do have very attractive

timber porches. Nos. 8 and 9 retain their original front doors, with horizontal glazing bars. Many front gardens have been lost, often to unsympathetic paving or tarmac. The variety of modern garage doors also detracts from the unified aesthetic.

Milton Close is comprised of generously proportioned semi-detached houses designed by Butler between 1934-36; with two L-shaped detached houses turning the corners at the head of the close. Front tiled dormers echo the shallow gables at either side of each block which house the integral garages (except for Nos. 3 and 4 which have central garages). Quoins of contrasting brick, casement windows

and attractive front doors with restrained doorcases give character to this grouping (Photograph 10). A handsome silver birch provides a focus on the attractive green at the head of Milton Close. However, the total loss of five front gardens to hard standing and use of unsympathetic materials detract from the character of the Close.



10.

Soutar designed the south (even numbers) side of Charlton Drive in 1937, and Butler the north side (odd numbers). Each side displays features and brickwork detailing characteristic of the respective architects. Soutar utilises brick mullions, round bays and decorative brick arched doorways; Butler deploys designs very similar to those of Milton Close with gables enclosing garages and casement dormer windows in the front roof elevation. The styles complement each other and create a harmonious whole in which symmetrical and mirror designs play an important part. All houses have integral garages.

3.2 Holne Chase and Rowan Walk

Character and landscape

Holne Chase links two through routes in the Suburb, Winnington Road and Meadway, and is therefore busier than other roads in the area. At the Winnington Road end, the large detached houses have shallow carriage drives instead of front gardens. In many cases the driveways are of unsympathetic materials that jar with the predominantly brick buildings and detract from the mature character of the street. The road here has a hard, open feel but as it continues down the gentle slope there are more mature trees and a greener character. The turn into Rowan Walk is marked by two small greens with a variety of trees, hornbeam, silver birch, mountain ash and acer, that form an attractive focus from all points of approach. From here there is a view towards Central Square and the church spire.

Architecture

There are sections of Holne Chase and Rowan Walk where groups of houses by a single architect bring a sense of a designed environment. These groups have core affinities in proportions and materials, and are differentiated by particular combinations from the architect's characteristic stylistic repertoire. Such groups are vulnerable to changes to individual houses that undermine their cohesion.

For example, Nos. 4-10 Holne Chase form a group of four detached houses by De Metz. They are plain brick with strong central door treatments and tall staircase windows above. No. 10 has been substantially extended altering the basic proportions and has rooflights at the front of the house; this detracts from the character of this group. Houses which make a positive contribution to the character of the street include:

- no. 9 by Katona: a symmetrical design, parapet façade with urn finials, sash windows and brick pavilions to the side creating a courtyard. The unusually placed door in the left linking quadrant is balanced by a window in the right-hand quadrant ([Photograph 11](#))
- no. 11, a classical house by Soutar, echoes its neighbour with some elegant pineapples on its parapet
- no. 17, a well-proportioned, elegant Neo-Georgian building by Soutar is actually a one room deep front to an electricity substation
- nos. 23-29 an Arts and Crafts influenced group by Butler 1936. 23-25 are detached houses linked by garages; steep roofs with central front dormers and four tall chimneys dominating the roofline. Bay windows with brick mullions flank the front doors. Nos. 27-29 are mirror-image detached houses, shallow gables with brick mullion bays, windows to one side of the front door and integrated garage to the other
- on the north side, Nos. 34 and 36, also by Butler in 1937, are larger houses utilising similar stylistic features to grander effect.



Holne Chase merges imperceptibly into Rowan Walk with a coherent run of houses, 26 Holne Chase to 14 Rowan Walk, by Drury and Reekie 1937. It is a low-key corner treatment but, in context, it works because of the symmetry of the designs and restrained detailing such as the arched porches on Nos. 4 and 10 ([Photograph 12](#)) and the decorative brickwork and round two-storey bay windows on the end

pairs. Nos. 16-22 also by Drury and Reekie show Modernist influences in the strong horizontal lines of the projecting eaves, long curved Crittall bays, corner windows and set back garages ([Photograph 13](#)).



There are overdone and added features which detract from the character of these roads. For example, extensions which disturb rooflines (No. 3 Rowan Walk, No. 13 and 15 Holne Chase ([Photograph 14](#)),



replacement doors and windows, decorative features out of scale with the house, use of unsympathetic materials such as the use of polished granite in porches.

3.3 Neville Drive

Character and landscape

Neville Drive runs west-east and is gently curved, with an incline towards the east. The two sides of the road have different ambiances. To the south, plots are very large and the houses substantial; they back onto the golf course, with glimpsed views of trees and greenery between and behind buildings. Street trees and mature planting in front gardens provide a green setting for the traditional 1930s houses. On the north side of the road, there is less greenery, boundaries are often marked by

low stone walls; in some cases the forecourts are open to the pavement. The architecture is much more varied and the open frontages do not reflect the Garden Suburb character.

Architecture

The eclectic mixture of house styles reflects the number of architects involved in the development and the economic realities of the period. Most houses were built in the mid-1930s with a number of 1950s developments on the north side. The houses are generously spaced, and, in most of the road, the contrasting styles do not jar or overwhelm each other. Individual houses of interest include:

- Bunkers Dip (No. 101 Kingsley Way) by Hepworth, situated at the end of Neville Drive facing down Kingsley Way. It has a staircase turret, small arched northern windows, canted ridge-line and moulded door with decorative fanlight. An inappropriate replacement window spoils the façade. Locally listed, this is a house of considerable interest
- no. 2, a handsome house by Sutcliffe with a steep tiled roof behind a central parapet and two set back wings
- no. 6, an austere an elegant house by Butler with brick quoins, detailing and a chimney-breast and stack as a feature of the front elevation
- E. L. Freud's 1935 design at No. 14 shows Modernist influences in the horizontal run of windows on each floor
- no. 16 is white brick with a green pantiled roof. A stepped gable topped with a sailing ship weather vane brings a playful note to the street. Its neighbour No. 18 is a more restrained Cape Dutch-influenced house. Both are highlights

there are two Modernist houses of note on the north side. No. 1 is a sympathetically extended white-painted brick house with balconies above the two semicircular bays which flank the Art-Deco front door. No. 21 is a white rendered house by R. G. Booth in 1935 and has his characteristic streamform bays, the first floor line is continued to form a porch at ground level with a balcony above. There is a roof terrace and a surprising pantiled roof pavilion. The whole effect is both dramatic and redolent of Palm Beach rather than North London ([Photograph 15](#)). Sadly, this house is currently hidden from the street by high hedges and gates.



On the northern side Nos. 3, 7-15 by Victor Bloom and Partners (1957-60) are of typical 1950s 'contemporary' style. All have large, front windows enhancing their flat, geometric appearance, wood boarding panels as a decorative feature and an open design. Some have been substantially modified and as a group they sit uneasily with the 1930s developments and do not add to the character of the area.

3.4 Linden Lea and Lytton Close

Character and landscape

The northern side of Linden Lea backs on to the Lyttelton Playing Fields. The road is slightly narrower than Holne Chase and this provides a more intimate feel. Mature trees and numerous front hedges soften the dominant brickwork, creating an attractive aspect. Lytton Close runs to the south. Interestingly, it has no focal point, as after a slight bend, the close ends in two driveways. This concentrates attention on the sweep of houses throughout the road. Ornamental cherry and birch trees line the close, yet the palm trees, strategically placed in some front gardens, seem more appropriate to the architecture. Front boundaries are delineated by low brick walls, some of which have privet, laurel or beach hedges above them.

Architecture



Linden Lea benefits from the unity provided by the planned groups built by H. Meckhonik and J. Oliphant. Nos. 4–22 (even) and 33–47 (odd) were built by Meckhonik in 1935–6 and 1938 respectively. Buildings within the Nos. 4–22 group differ, but have stylistic continuity through features like brick mullions, round bay windows (both one and two storey), and brickwork details. Interesting Art-Deco brickwork can be seen around some front doors such as Nos. 12 and 14. A matching pair of semi-detached houses at Nos. 18 and 20 has a striking façade with front gables enclosing small central balconies with brick pillars and Art-Deco brickwork above the elaborate front doors ([Photograph 16](#)). The Nos. 33–47 group is symmetrical, with the central houses, Nos. 41 and 39 detached but linked through an archway between the projecting garages.

Nos. 11 to 31 were designed by Oliphant between 1934–5. Similar features run throughout, such as round and canted bay windows and decorated gables enclosing integral garages. There is interesting



ribbed brickwork at Nos. 17 and 19. One semi-detached design is replicated three times, containing an eye-catching central balcony with brick balustrade, canted bay windows with brick mullions, and central garages. Once again, the repeated pattern is disrupted by later dormer additions on some properties (Photograph 17).

Lytton Close provides a striking architectural contrast to Linden Lea. Designed by G.

G. Winbourne in 1935, the close is flanked by symmetrical brick houses, giving no indication of the excitement of the cul-de-sac. The close itself is a Grade II-listed Modern Movement gem of white, flat-roofed detached and semi-detached homes, with provision for rooftop sunbathing more appropriate for a sunny Mediterranean climate.



The horizontal bars of the rooftop railings, projecting bays and windows indicate 'Liner architecture' influences. The interesting curved recess above the front door provides room for the rooftop bay and first floor balcony and is emphasised by the curved windows (Photograph 18). Garages are integrated into the body of all houses except No. 9 due to its detached corner position. Several houses still have original front doors with 'fiddle-scroll' tracery over their central vertical glazed panels. Sadly some modern replacements of garage and front doors are not sympathetic, and many houses cry out for better maintenance. Television aerials also detract from the distinctive flat roofline.

3.5 Norrice Lea, Church Mount and Deacons Rise

Character and landscape

Distinctive features of this area are the steep rise of Church Mount and the proximity of the heavy traffic of Lyttelton Road. Deacons Rise runs alongside this dual carriageway and, though sheltered by a belt of planting, still suffers from the noise and pollution of the arterial road. In all three roads many front gardens have been lost to hardstanding and the softening effect of planting is absent in some sections.

Architecture

The Norrice Lea Synagogue and its hall and classroom block dominate the entrance to Norrice Lea from Lyttelton Road. The synagogue was designed by Maurice de Metz and completed in 1935. It was later extended and substantially rebuilt after severe bomb damage in the war to the hall and classrooms. Projecting, shallow parapeted bays with tall, arched staircase windows flank the imposing Portland stone portico and balustrade. The effect is both dignified and grand, yet the building relates to the other buildings in the road in roof height and materials. The adjoining block is extended and overpowering in its scale and it has no architectural distinction ([Photograph 19](#)).



On the west side of the road a group of houses by Caspari have distinctive metal windows, shallow roofs and show modernist influences in their horizontal lines. No. 26 has an original door case and is perhaps the most successful of this group. At the junction with Linden Lea, the gentle curve is marked by a sequence of Neo-Georgian houses Nos. 33-43, by Butler. These are the most distinguished houses in the road, showing Butler's refined Lutyens-influenced style. Nos. 39 and 41 have linked garages and provide an end view from Linden Lea ([Photograph 20](#)).

Church Mount consists of detached houses individually designed in the late 1930s and the mid-1950s by a number of different architects. The 1950s developments reference few of the architectural features that characterise the Suburb, and are not of a quality to make a strong impact on their own. They sit uneasily with the earlier 1930s houses. This lack of cohesion in the road is further emphasised by the paved front gardens, the variety of materials used and the closeness of the houses. The environment cannot absorb the multiplicity of styles and the resulting effect at the higher end of the road is harsh and confused, substantially detracting from the character of the road overall. As the road curves and slopes down, there is more greenery and the houses, predominantly from the 30s, have some interesting

features. For example, No. 28 (Drury, Fraser and Reekie) has a huge two-storey, semi-circular bay with a tiled conical roof. The windows in the bay are set in brick piers and the oversized bay marks the corner with aplomb adding fun to a sombre road. No. 24 (De Metz 1936) is an interesting late Arts and Crafts house which pays homage to modernism in the tall staircase window and the horizontal lines of the front bay (Photograph 21).



Deacons Rise has an interesting sequence of four large detached houses by Butler (Nos. 32-26 Lyttelton Road or 3-6 Deacons Rise). Garages link the end houses, while the middle pair are joined by a wall containing separate access doors to the back gardens. The end houses enclose the sequence with shallow projecting gable and corner doors and porches. The houses have been much altered and 'fill in' garages have blurred the original design. There is much paving over of front gardens and heavy parking.

