

Draft response to proposed Shortlands Village Conservation Area consultation

Summary

We support the creation of the Shortlands Village Conservation Area and agree with the BEAMS report that option B is preferable. However, we do have some concerns about: -

1. Whether the map shown at https://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/file/6439/proposed_shortlands_village_conservation_area_boundary¹ as retrieved at 18:44 on 6 August, 2020, correctly identifies the intended boundary of the proposed Conservation Area at the railway embankment in Ravensbourne Avenue;
2. Elements of the assessment by BEAMS, particularly in relation to the boundary of the Assessment Area/ proposed Conservation Area and adjoining roads and, secondly, the rationale (or lack of it) for some of their justifications;

In addition, we would like to propose amendments to the Conservation Area boundary.

Introduction

Ravensbourne Valley Residents is a residents' association of approximately 500 subscribing members. The proposed Conservation Area north of Beckenham Lane falls within the area that our association covers.

We have been involved in discussions about the proposed Conservation Area since inception and in a meeting at that time we formally approved in principle the concept of a Conservation Area in Shortlands Village. In preparing this response, we have advised our members widely by Tweet and newsletter, published our draft response for comment by members and discussed the issue at our meeting on the 3 September where this response was formally approved. [obviously, at the draft stage this has not yet happened, but this maps the intention]

Background

The proposed Assessment Area as considered by BEAMS Limited had its origin in suggestions from the Bromley Civic Society. Some of the suggestions from BCS, we understand, were quite specific whilst others, for example, where the boundary should lie in the area of Ravensbourne Avenue north of Downs Hill, were vaguer.

1. The boundaries of the Assessment Area and possible mapping errors

The BEAMS report specifically included the railway embankment in Ravensbourne Avenue together with its fine pine trees. The map in the BEAMS report clearly included this area. However, the official Bromley consultation map (see ¹ above) does not include this area which appears to be a mapping error by Bromley. **We believe the Conservation Area should include the embankment.**

2. Issues relating to the boundary of the proposed Conservation Area

a) The boundary in Ravensbourne Avenue, north of Downs Hill.

As mentioned previously, we understand that the boundary in this area was merely a vague suggestion by BCS. That this vague suggestion should now be formalised as a boundary down the middle of the road appears idiosyncratic.

We note that the BEAMS report accepts that the east side of Ravensbourne Avenue should be included in the Conservation Area but makes no assessment as to whether the western side of Ravensbourne Avenue north of Downs Hill should be in the Conservation Area or not. In other words, the BEAMS report neither considers whether the west side should be included nor, alternatively, does it give reasons why it should not be included in the Conservation Area – it seems to simply assume that down the middle of the road is where the boundary should be.

Looking at the road, it is clear that the architectural merit of both the west and east sides of Ravensbourne Avenue is similar and therefore inclusion of the west side is justified. Further, it would also make sense to extend the Conservation Area westward so it was contiguous with the existing Downs Hill Conservation Area.

We believe that any extension to the west of Ravensbourne Avenue should extend northwards to include 159 Ravensbourne Avenue but would not include 161 where the form of the buildings changes from three-bed semis to a more varied style (with 161 being a detached property):-



This suggestion results in the following boundary (green line):-



Additionally, we would specifically mention the property at no. 133 Ravensbourne Avenue which is particularly interesting and appears to predate surrounding houses. This property appears worthy of including in the Conservation Area irrespective of decisions about the rest of the west side of Ravensbourne Avenue.



Above: 133 Ravensbourne Avenue

b) The golf course extension north of Farnaby Road

The BEAMS report expresses a clear intention to include the golf course in the Conservation Area and specifically mentions that such a designation would add an additional level of protection to the course. It is therefore a little surprising that the proposed boundary does not include the extension of the golf course on the north side of Farnaby Road. We note that the BEAMS report makes no judgement about this, which again is surprising.

We believe that the Conservation Area should include all of the golf course and this would result in the following (part) approximate boundary of the Conservation Area



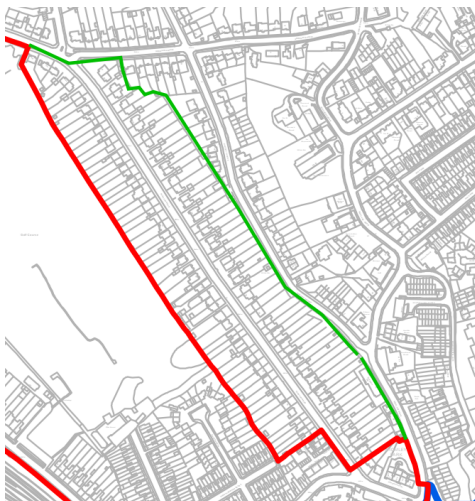
c) Farnaby Road southwards from the golf course

It is surprising that the BEAMS report makes no mention of Farnaby Road for the majority of its length from the golf course southwards towards Beckenham Lane. As this road lies immediately outside the initial assessment area, it is not clear why BEAMS have made no mention of whether it should or should not be included in the Conservation Area.

Architecturally, this road is, we would suggest, of more merit than Ravensbourne Avenue and it is not clear why the (east side) of Ravensbourne Avenue has been included in the Conservation Area whereas the majority of Farnaby Road has not. BEAMS provide no rationale for this decision.

We believe that the properties (odd and even numbered) in Farnaby Road to the east of the golf course should all be included in the Conservation Area and where relevant, this should include the garden boundaries abutting Madeira Avenue. This proposed boundary line could then run south along the west side of Highland Road which would then have the merit of bringing the Synagogue into the Conservation Area. The Synagogue is an important historic building and was originally the Children's Church, built by Samuel Cawston in approximately 1890.

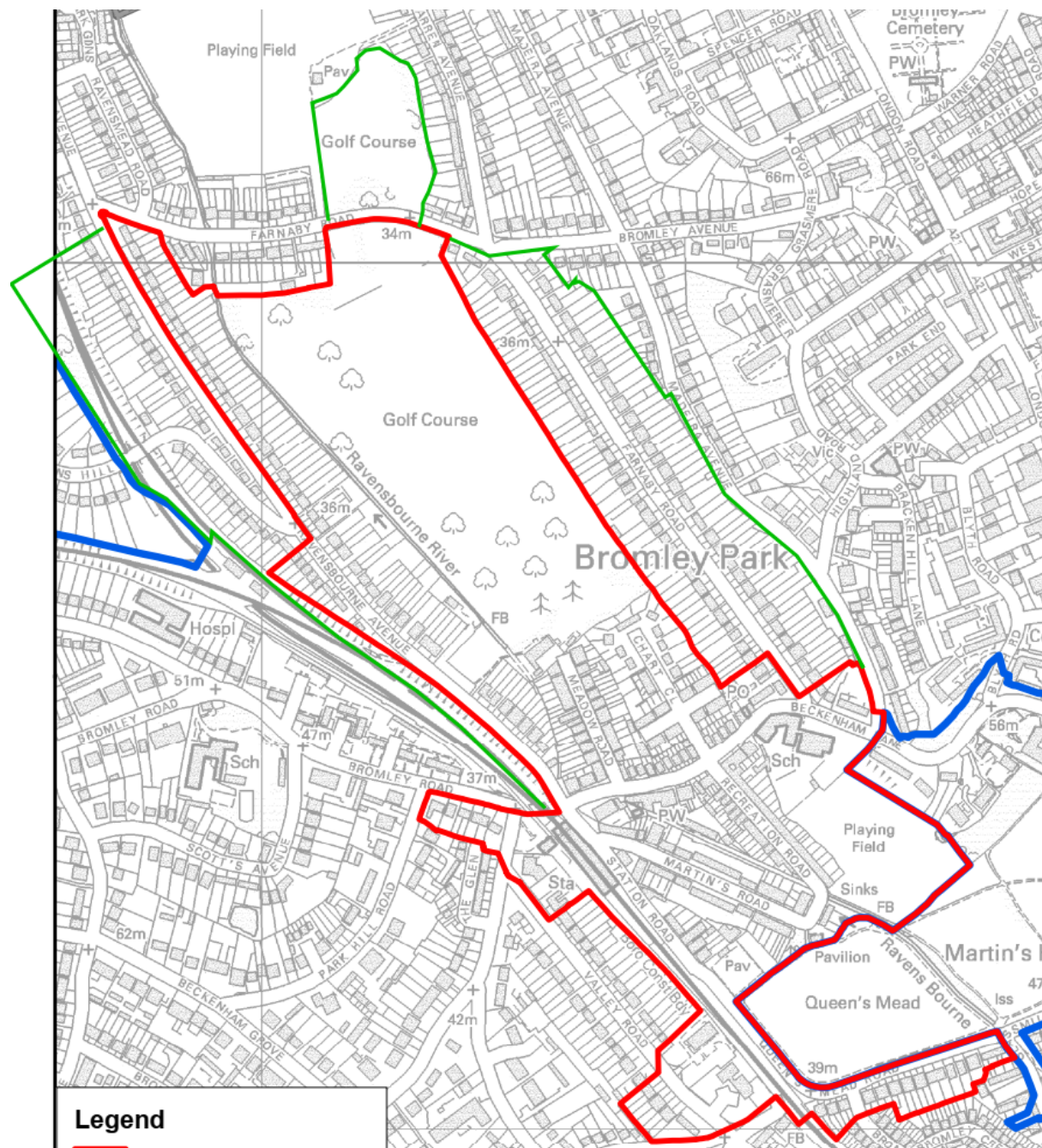
See green line on diagram below:-



Above: Synagogue

Summary

We support the creation of the Conservation Area. For the reasons given above we believe it should be extended as follows (green line)



Yours faithfully

Ravensbourne Valley Residents