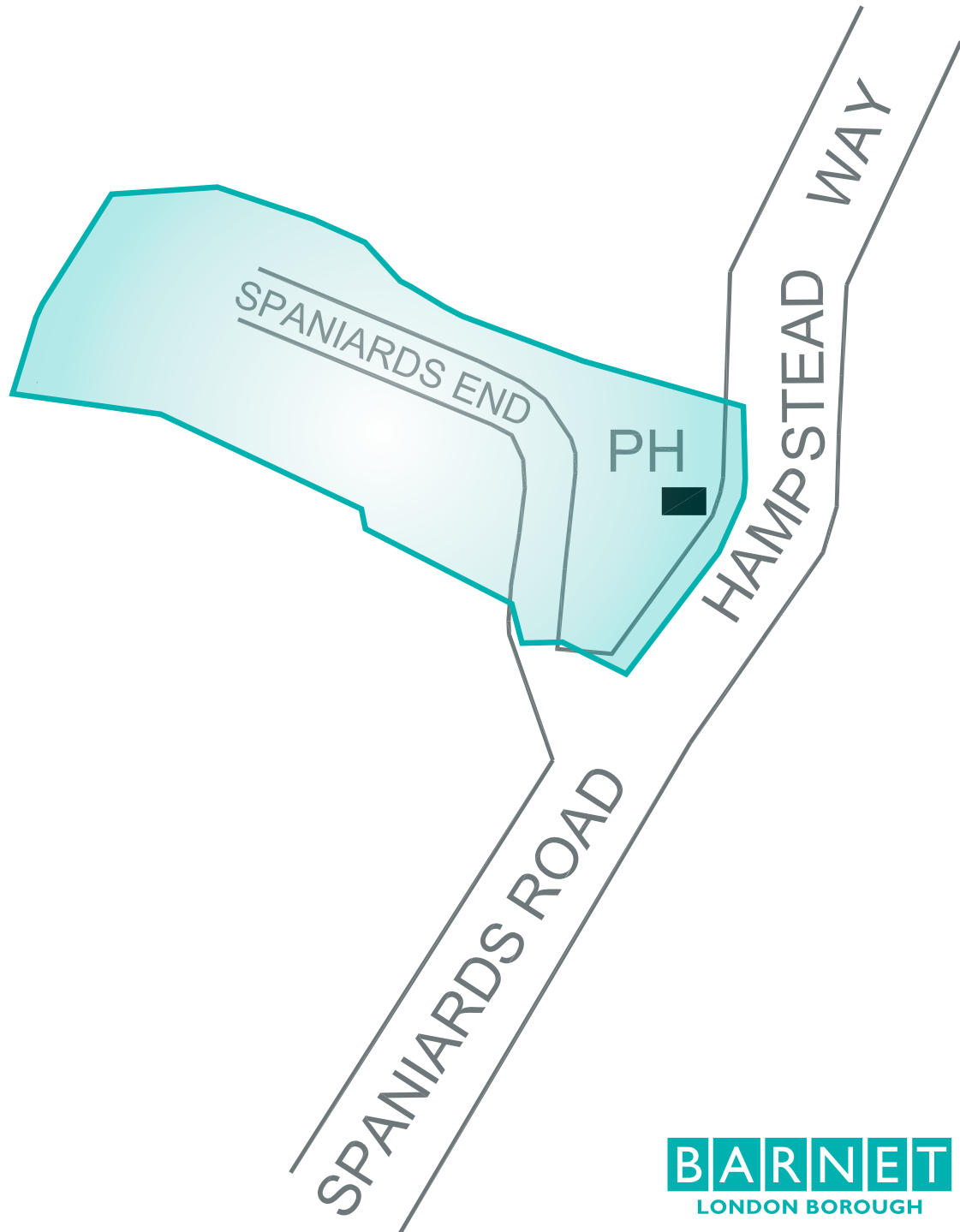


Hampstead Garden Suburb

Spaniards End – Area 17

Character Appraisal



BARNET
LONDON BOROUGH

HAMPSTEAD - GARDEN - SUBURB - TRUST

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Character appraisal

Section 1 Background historical and architectural information

1.1 Location and topography

This cul-de-sac runs off the main road by the Spaniards Inn and drops steeply down the slope to the north-west. At the top end are a group of historic buildings, with newer houses, including some distinguished modern designs, further down the hill.

1.2 Development dates

There are, as set out above, two very distinct groups; the historic buildings dating from the 18th century and the more modern buildings of the 20th and 21st century.

1.3 Originating architects and planners

Little is known of the historic architects but the more recent development includes noteworthy houses by Patrick Gwynne, H.C. Higgins and Alison Brooks.

1.4 Intended purpose of original development

Apart from the Spaniards Inn, all the buildings are residential, though some have been converted from other uses – such as Casa Maria and the outbuildings to the west of the Public House car park. The Pub itself may have started as a private residence; possibly the house of the Spanish Ambassador to the Court of King James. While this original use is not factually proven, it would explain the name given to the building and the area.

1.5 Density and nature of the buildings

Houses are quite tightly packed together in places with odd juxtapositions between the buildings. However, the topography and level of tree cover and landscaping give the appearance of very low density development and, given the size of most of the houses and some of the plots, this is not misleading.

Section 2 Overall character of the area

The layout, with low density housing set well back from the road gives a pleasant, verdant environment. The road itself is private, and is a cul-de-sac. There is therefore very little traffic movement or disturbance.

The trees are of particular importance. All are protected by being within a conservation area, ensuring that notice is given to the local planning authority before any works are carried out. In addition, there are a number of Tree Preservation Orders on individual trees including limes, oaks, hornbeam, pine and beech. The more formal garden landscaping around the houses adds to the overall greenery that makes an important contribution to the character of this part of the Conservation Area.

2.1 Principal positive features

Layout and public realm

- the quietness of the private cul-de-sac and the topography create an informal and pleasant road with none of the usual street clutter.

Landscape and trees

- as noted, there are significant trees and good landscaping giving an enhanced setting to the individual buildings.

Building type and design

- the contrast between the cluster of good historic buildings and good new buildings is visually exciting.

Materials and detailing

- timber boarding, render and brick used traditionally (with slate or tile roofs) or in a modern way with flat roofs.

2.2 Principal negative features

Layout and public realm

- there is a problem with traffic parking on the pavements due to the narrowness of the road, restricting pavement access for pedestrians
- inappropriate gates and boundary walls have had a detrimental impact on the leafy, open character of the area.

Landscape and trees

- frontages are generally well landscaped but the driveways and garage doors can be over prominent.

Building type and design

- those buildings that do not make a positive contribution are few but the contrast makes them less attractive.

Materials and detailing

- mostly of a high standard, those buildings with poor or badly maintained materials stand out in contrast.

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

Although they can be linked by being either in the historic group or the modern group, the houses do not form a cohesive set; rather it is the landscape that binds them together. The buildings are therefore described individually, starting with the most important historic structure.



1.

This is The Spaniards Public House (Photograph 1). The building dates from the 17th century and is an attractive ensemble. It is white rendered to the rear (street) elevation with long sliding sashes to the elevated lower floor and smaller '3 over 3' sashes to the upper floor. There is an old tiled roof, with a later wing projecting on the left with a small secondary door under a sweeping roof. The frontage has white picket fencing and attractive hedge planting, though this elevation is festooned with pipework. The gable end (north side) shows the full three storeys, with two windows to the return and another window to the parallel range facing over the car park. There is an entrance door with a large lantern over it and the name of the pub elegantly above. The car park is a large tarmac area but the picket fence and tree planting break up the visual impact from the street. The

terraces also help the setting of the historic building. On this side, the main structure is obscured by a two storey timber boarded range with shallow monopitch. It has vertically sliding sash windows to the first floor and larger windows to the ground floor bar area. The main internal spaces are much altered but retain an historic character with much timber framing and panelling. The Spaniards Inn is Grade II Listed and, together with the former Toll House across the road, in Camden, it forms a picturesque and un-modernised group creating a pinch-point, or forced traffic calming, on this busy road.

Next to The Spaniards Inn, is Erskine House, a building that may contain parts of the former wing of the major house on this site though it has been thoroughly refurbished. It is white rendered with parapet walls and sash windows with a large glazed opening at first floor level. This echoes the description of Lord Erskine's house but the building is not listed as being historic. It is a three storey structure with a lower wing projecting out towards the road and contributes positively to this group of historic buildings and to the character of the area.

The houses known as Evergreen Hill and Heath End House were built on the site of the original Erskine House and date from circa 1788. The front range with four windows is weatherboarded and faces south-west. Behind is a brick range with roof parallel to the front. The houses are Listed Grade II, and the wall in front of them (running back to Erskine House) is of red brick, 18th century and separately listed. It gives a definitive edge to the main road and also provides privacy for the gardens behind. The houses have had a number of illustrious owners including Dame Henrietta and Canon Samuel Barnett who used it as their country retreat from 1889 up to the outbreak of the 1st World War. It was to this house that they brought young men and women from the East End, for weekends, to enjoy the clean air and healthiness. The house was at that time surrounded by heathland, woods and the fields of Wyldes Farm.



To the left hand side of Heath End House is a later brick building known as Heath End Cottage ([Photograph 2](#)), dating from the 19th century. It has a painted brick front and stock brick side wall. It is of two storeys and has a garden wall and railings to the west which, with the Cottage, are listed. The Cottage is part of a row of outbuildings running northwards including 2 and 4 Spaniards End, again 19th century brick with slated roof and sash windows. This symmetrical pair should be on the Local List.



High Beech ([Photograph 3](#)) is more altered as are the structures behind Firwood Cottage (10 Spaniards End) ([Photograph 4](#)) which is a more recent bungalow. These outbuildings though do form the backdrop

to the car park of the Spaniards Inn, enclosing this group of historic structures and making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

Facing all of these buildings, on the western side of Spaniards End is a property formerly known as The Firs – now sub-divided into The White House ([Photograph 5](#)) and The Chantry ([Photograph 6](#)). The original house dated from 1734 with some re-building in the 19th century. The building appears as one imposing house of white stucco with Tuscan porches, panelled doors and good fanlights to the front. The windows are vertically sliding sash and the slate roof has been replaced by a flat roof behind the parapet wall. The rear elevation has a large two storey bow window with a smaller bow to the right and a conservatory attached to the square south wing. The north wing has an infill block in the north-west corner. The whole elevation is cream rendered with, again, vertically sliding sash windows.



Casa Maria ([Photograph 7](#)) is a separate structure and is the converted Billiards Room of the main house. Originally of a Spanish appearance with arched openings, the recent refurbishment has given it a more prosaic residential character. The gates and rusticated stone piers in front and the railings to The Chantry are also features of note. All these buildings and structures are Listed Grade II.



Behind The White House, the road turns sharply left and descends steeply. On the right hand side, beyond the driveway to the building behind Firwood Cottage, is 12 Spaniards End ([Photograph 8](#)).

This is a modern house, flat roofed with many horizontal planes giving a cool elegance to the building emphasised by the simple use of materials – glass, brick and painted timber fascias – and good detailing. It is of a different style but has some of the character of Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie Houses. It makes a positive contribution to this part of the Conservation Area. 14 Spaniards End (Photograph 9) is more neutral, being a smaller bungalow with gable end to the road; of brick and tile hanging. An unexceptional but unobtrusive house, it uses the slope cleverly to give two storeys to the northern elevation with balcony and metal balustrading having a 1950s feel.



Next door though, 16 Spaniards End (Photograph 10) is an exceptional modern design. A modest house has been enlarged and transformed by ABA Architects, and is now a careful and artful complex, known as the VXO house because of the supporting metal motifs. The carport being held by thin posts and a large red vertical metallic circle; the house having a dramatic timber clad cantilever supported on a red V-shaped column in front of a blue artwork wall by Simon Patterson and the garden pavilion/gymnasium being a glazed box with red X-shaped supports. The structures themselves are of interest and the juxtaposition and views between them make this an important complex. It is recommended that the building be added to the Local List to reflect its individual interest and contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



18 Spaniards End (Photograph 11) is another large, modern house, with a number of horizontal planes and interlocking blocks. While less exciting than No. 16, it is a well designed and detailed house making a positive contribution even though largely hidden behind the landscaped frontage. It is of blue brick, with timber to the deep fascias. Flat roofed and single storey, it utilises the slope to give garage and other accommodation at basement level.

Finally, on this side of the road is Patrick Gwynne's The Firs (20 Spaniards End) (Photograph 12). Grade II Listed, this 1959 house is an outstanding building. The flank walls are curved, opening out to the garden on the south-west. Here a two storey glazed screen gives views out. The house externally looks a bit like a TV set but the screen is for those inside to see out not vice versa. It is a remarkably composed, refined and elegant structure with yellow brick side walls, a red brick terrace and glass and render to the garden front. The building is approached from the side where a simple door is sheltered by a canopy linking house to garage. To the rear, the building is more solid with brickwork and glass blocks. A round ended structure acts as an outbuilding and a curved pool follows the line of the north-west wall.



The former tennis court, separated by a row of evergreen trees, is now the site of a new house (Plot 3b). This is to be a simple timber clad box on a solid base. A further assessment will be made when this Appraisal is reviewed.



In the south-west corner, beyond this new house is 17 Spaniards End (Photograph 13), all but lost to view from the street, it can be seen in glimpse views from the Heath. It is an interesting design, all angles and planes, utilising the awkwardly shaped plot and sloping site to create a building and spaces around it that are intimate and private while providing a light interior and pleasant westerly garden.

Although of limited impact, this imaginative and reticent building makes a positive contribution to the character of the area.



Adjoining this, on the southern side of the road is 15 Spaniards End ([Photograph 14](#)). From the front this appears as a modest bungalow with rendered walls and concrete tiles to the pitched roof. It has no features of particular interest though there is a deep boarded fascia concealing the eaves. The house has been massively enlarged with conservatories and extensions on the garden front. It again takes advantage of the slope to create an

extra storey at the south.

13a Spaniards End is a somewhat curious building, all but invisible, and sandwiched between Nos. 13 and 15. Again it uses the awkward site and steep slope to create intimate spaces. A redevelopment proposal has been approved which would retain these qualities, with grass roofs and no public frontage. As with Plot 3b, an assessment will be made when this appraisal is reviewed.



13 Spaniards End ([Photograph 15](#)) is a more sophisticated, modern design by Higgins and Ney. Originally known as "Highbrow", it is now a diplomatic residence. The house is a building of carefully arranged volumes; the first floor in brick projecting out slightly from the brick ground floor. The building steps up behind this with a clever use of levels and massing to create court-yards and terraces. It is crisply detailed with careful and restrained use of materials and slot windows. It is a positive contributor to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. 11 Spaniards End ([Photograph 16](#)) appears to be an older though much altered building. It is actually a fairly plain building of little historic interest. It is of red brick with straight gables; L-shaped with a wing running back on the left hand side. There are three long dormers to the rear. Standard brick with 1930s style glazed door and tall (altered) windows to both floors. The house has a massively cantilevered eaves detail at the front. To the east is the garden and impressive rear elevation of The Chantry/White House (as described above).

