

De-trunking of Falloden Way?

Falloden Way has been the A1 Trunk Road only since 1955. Prior to that it was the A555 and before that Addison Way. The A1 designation had been given to the original Great North Road from London to Edinburgh under the Ministry of Transport Act 1919 when road-labelling started and it applied to High Road, East Finchley, and what is now the A1000 through High Barnet to South Mimms. It was redesignated as a result of campaigning within the Finchley Chamber of Commerce by local shopkeepers who wished to divert traffic from their road on to a route through the Suburb.

The Effect
With trunk road status, responsibility for planning, maintenance and all upkeep and changes to the roadway and adjacent footways and verges passes from the local authority to central government - originally the Ministry of Transport, then the Department of Environment, then the Department of Transport and now the Highways Agency. The actual implementation of their maintenance decisions was delegated to an Agent, traditionally the local authority, but more recently this has been awarded to private contractors - in our case Mouchel Consultants.

The distancing of decision-making resulting from the imposition of trunk road status is a serious matter for those affected by such roads. Central government does not have the same attitude, or sense of responsibility to local residents and it can be very difficult to affect or change potentially damaging decisions through the only avenues open, intervention by parliamentary representation. This difficulty, presumably, lies behind many of the more insensitive decisions taken by Ministry officials over trunk roads.

While a local authority has a statutory obligation under the Civic Amenities Act 1969 to 'preserve and enhance' conservation areas within their boundaries, the Ministry of Transport has admitted on many occasions at public inquiries that it does not, and does not feel any obligation to take into account the special needs of conservation areas through which its trunk roads run.

A good example of the negligent attitude of the Ministry, though by no means the only one, is in the matter of street cleaning. Some years ago when Falloden Way, Market Place and Lyttelton Road were particularly badly affected by unswept litter, I was able to discover that the contract for the entire A1 within Barnet, some eighteen miles of kerbside, had been let by the Ministry of Transport to one man and his teenaged son, who advanced a little each day with their Anglia van until they reached the borough boundary, then crossed over and returned down the other side. According to the contractor himself, under this arrangement householders on the route could expect to have their street swept once every eighteen months!

The Process
Administratively, trunking and de-trunking is an uncomplicated procedure. A Notice is published announcing the Secretary of State's intention, then, after the

statutory period of notice, a stroke of the pen completes the process. It was done fairly recently over the stretch of the A5 from Staples Corner, on the North Circular Road, to Cricklewood Broadway. The argument to support the same treatment for our stretch of the A1 is that a trunk road, as defined in the Highways Act, is a high capacity road designed to carry *long-distance through traffic* (my italics). With the M25 and North Circular Road provided at enormous public cost to cater for precisely this element of traffic, duplicating their function through one of the nation's most prestigious conservation areas cannot be other than a serious error in economic, planning and heritage terms and one which deserves a rapid remedy. It could be argued that the continuation of trunk road status *anywhere* within the North and South Circular Roads should end, since it allows the Ministry to encourage traffic to penetrate the orbital roads unnecessarily.

Benefits for the Suburb of de-trunking
With the designation lifted, responsibility for the road and its future would revert to the local authority, where our own democratic influence could play its part. In addition, the local authority could honour its obligations under the Civic Amenities Act, free from the malign and over-riding influence of the Highways Agency. Monstrosities like the Traffic-Master masts by Mutton Brook would not receive automatic Highway Agency approval.

If it were the Suburb's wish to implement a traffic management scheme for the whole area, it could be approached without the fatally disabling handicap of having a trunk road, with all its special needs, plunging through the middle of it.

If lower speed limits were thought likely to reduce accidents, these could apply to all roads in the Suburb, a measure which the Highways Agency would certainly overrule in the case of Falloden Way - Aylmer Road.

Conclusion
In the light of all current planning philosophy, the designation of a once private street through an outstanding conservation area can only be regarded as a serious error of judgement. Its continuation for so many years is no reason not to recognise this error and correct it, particularly in the present climate of aiming to control and reduce traffic and its harmful effects.

TERRY RAND



Street trees planted in the road rather than on pavements provide much needed shade in the summer.

Garden Suburbs Down Under

Contact has been established this summer between the Suburb and some of our counterparts in Australia with separate visits by the HGS Trust's Dr Mervyn Miller and RA Chairman Richard Wakefield.

Mervyn Miller, long time Trust Council member and an internationally acknowledged authority on the history and future direction of the Garden City Movement, was on a five week Australian lecture tour during which he spent 10 days as Visiting Scholar in residence in Adelaide where Colonel Light Gardens is a garden suburb strongly influenced by Letchworth and Hampstead Garden Suburb.

Colonel Light Gardens comes under Mitcham City Council and their officers and the local Residents Association were eager to make comparisons with their English counterparts and to discuss policies for conservation of their environmental heritage.

Mervyn Miller was following in the steps of Charles Reade, an Englishman who went on a

Garden Cities and Town Planning Association lecture tour in 1914 and who was to become the Town Planner of South Australia. He had, it appears, also worked in Unwins office in 1911. "His plan for Colonel Light Gardens has many details influenced by Hampstead Garden Suburb," says Mervyn Miller "although the buildings, mainly constructed in the 1920s, are predominantly the Californian style bungalow, which was universally popular at the time."

...and in Sydney
Meanwhile Richard Wakefield, on a private visit to Sydney, was able to reciprocate last years call on the Suburb by Susan Jackson-Stepowski, the Chairman of the residents association of the Garden Suburb of Haberfield, Australia's first garden suburb which, having been started in 1901, predates HGS by five years. Haberfield is a western suburb of Sydney and like Colonel Light Gardens consists largely of single storey houses but in an earlier style known as Queen Anne/Federation. Conservation

is even more of a challenge in Haberfield than it is here and their RA is trying very hard to educate residents particularly by means of its version of Suburb

News which is extremely forthright about individuals who fail to toe the line as well as offering awards to those who do.

RICHARD WAKEFIELD



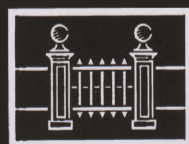
Mervyn Miller and his lecture poster in Adelaide



Tracy Schneider who, with husband Paul, has recently completed a stunning conservation job on their typical Haberfield home



...with Susan Jackson-Stepowski showing distinctive verandah.



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