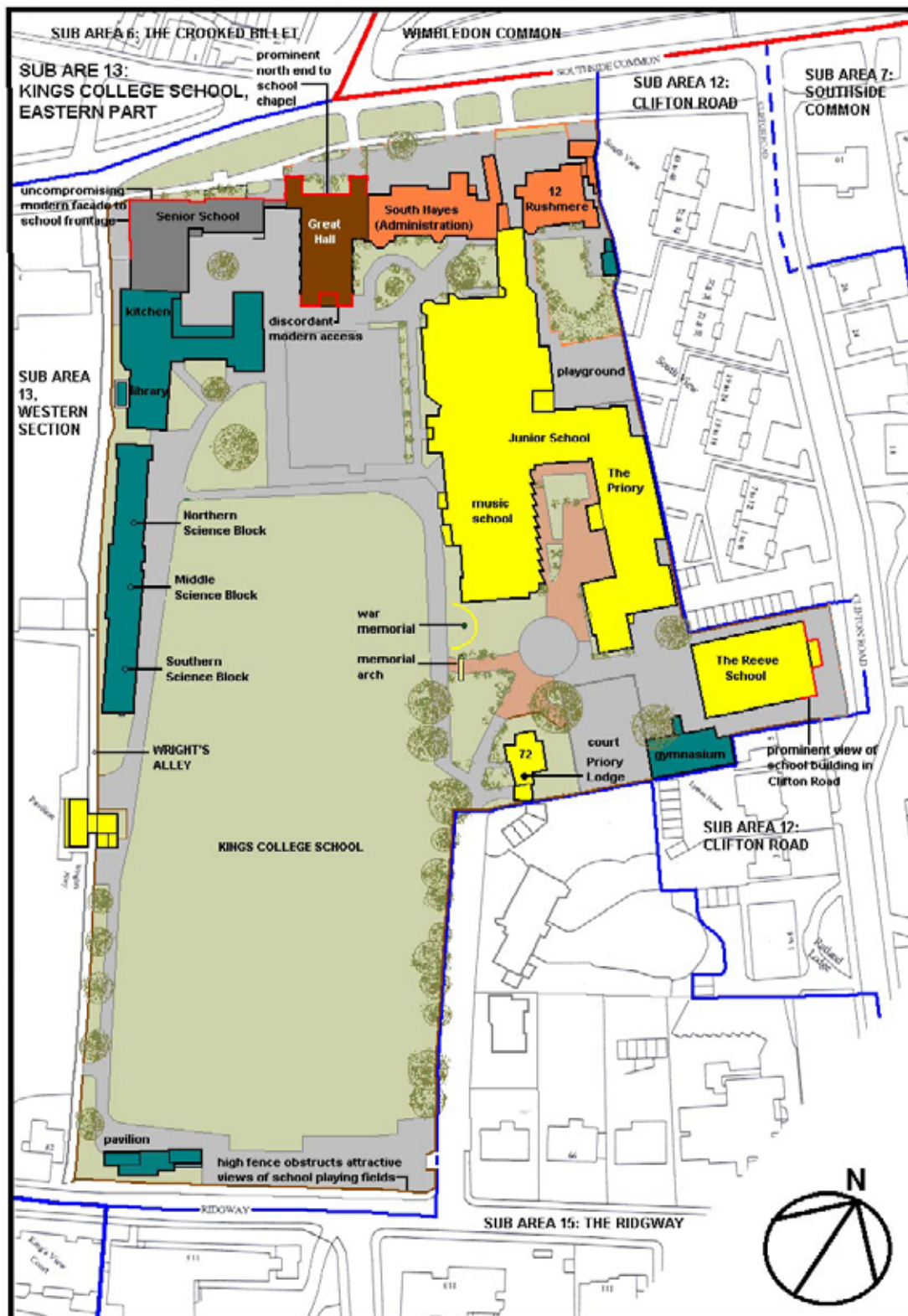


Map of King's College School, Eastern Section



It is not appropriate here to set out a history of the development of the school, but the following brief indicates the dates at which major portions of the school were added were taken from Thomas Hinde's book *A Great Day School in London: A History of King's College School* James & James, 1995]. (The location of some of the buildings is shown on the maps of the Sub Area):

- 1780s: Rushmere, No. 12 Southside Common
- 1899: The Great Hall (the only part of Sir Banister's Fletcher's scheme for the north front to be completed)
- 1914: Northern Science Block
- 1917: Memorial Library
- 1921: War Memorial
- 1927: Classrooms, house rooms, tower, dining room, kitchen
- 1928: Gymnasium
- 1935: Swimming Pool
- 1951: Middle Science Block
- 1955: Junior School (replacing The Priory, which had been purchased in 1949)
- 1958: Southern Science Block
- 1981: Junior School (second rebuilding)
- 1988: Colyer Hall Theatre
- 1988: Swimming Pool enclosed

Because of the extent of the Sub Area, it is necessary to illustrate it on two maps, the division occurring along Wrights Alley, an historic lane bisecting the School grounds. It was named after Robert Wright, a resident of Southside House from c.1800 to 1832, and may have been part of a route leading as far as Merton Common. A survey of 1617 refers to it as *a lane leading out of the Common to the common field* through land called "Ward hawes". [Milward 1989 pp.11-13]



Character:

The School Sports Fields from the Chapel Roof

The imposing school buildings along the northern edge of the Sub Area face on to Woodhayes Road and provide a marked contrast to the intimate scale of those around the Crooked Billet, opposite. The individual buildings vary considerably in character and in architectural quality, the imposing gable and projecting towers of the Victorian gothic Great Hall, for example, having stood the test of time better than the Senior School wing immediately to the west.

Behind the eastern section of this facade, blocks of accommodation have been constructed on the northern half of the site on each side of a central court, and link through further east as far as Clifton Road. These buildings form the hub of the School, the grounds to the west of Wright's Alley being largely given over to playing fields.

The southern part of the Sub Area consists almost entirely of open space, and provides a pleasant break in the built up character of the Ridgway, which runs along the southern boundary. The vistas northwards are however obscured by a high timber fence whose removal would considerably enhance the views from this part of the Ridgway.

The character of each part of the Sub Area is considered in conjunction with the buildings they contain, starting with those on the eastern side, adjoining Clifton Road, and continuing along the northern boundary, on Woodhayes Road. Most of these buildings form part of King's College School.

Buildings

Of the thirty or so buildings which make up Kings College School, the great majority have a positive or at least neutral effect on the character of the Conservation Area: Southside House is the only few grade II* listed building in the Conservation Area, Gothic Lodge and the Great Hall are listed grade II, Rushmere is locally listed, ten or so buildings make a positive contribution, the impact of another ten or so is fairly neutral, and only two, the Senior School building west of the Great Hall and the swimming pool building on the western boundary, might be regarded as have a negative impact.

KING'S COLLEGE SCHOOL

Since the buildings which comprise the School are not arranged simply along the road frontages but also extend into the site, they are described in the following order:

- A: Those along the Southside frontage east of Wright's Alley, from east to west;
- B: Those projecting southwards on the eastern side of the central court south of the Chapel;
- C: Those adjoining Clifton Road;
- D: Those projecting southwards between the central court and Wright's Alley;
- E: Those along the Woodhayes Road frontage west of Wright's Alley.

A: SOUTHSIDE COMMON

Rushmere, No. 12 Southside, from the front and the rear



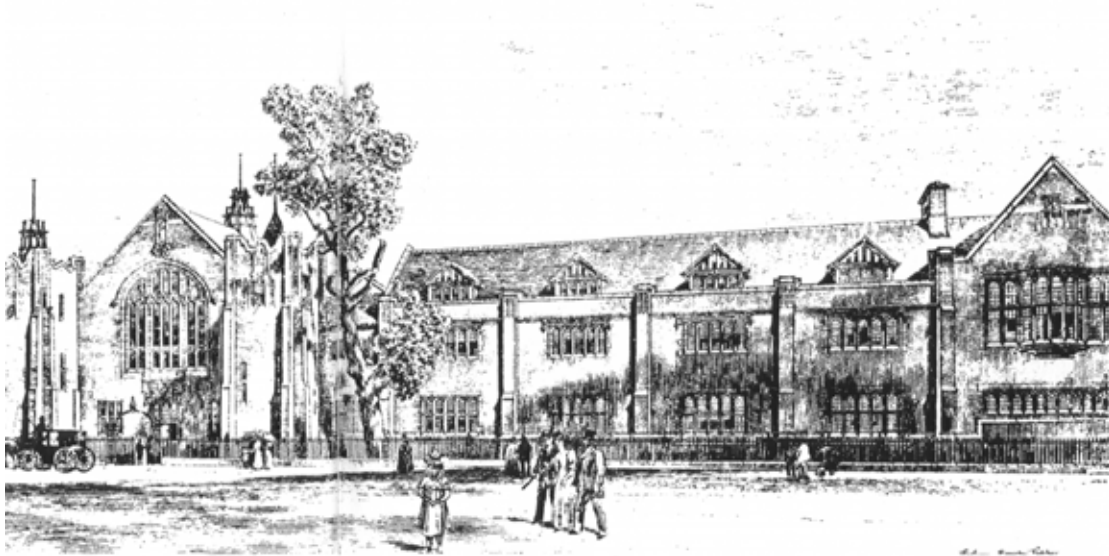
No. 12, Rushmere: No. 12 is an imposing if simple Georgian style detached three storey building in stock brick built in the 1780s [Milward 1989 p.146]. It is **locally listed** and is described by Pevsner as *an 18th C. farmhouse, three-bay front with brick bands, much altered and extended in the C.19* [p.457]. Pevsner is presumably referring partly to the four storey rear wing which has been designed to blend with the front section. The gravelled front court is devoted to car parking and is approached by pleasantly simple five-bar double gates. A separate projecting single storey wing to the west appears to form part of the original house, which was built by Watney, a local farmer, the present sports fields originally being farmland. It is now approached from the attractively landscaped garden south of the house. A planted screen separates the southernmost section of the garden, which is a hard paved play area.

South Hayes: Pevsner was presumably referring to South Hayes in his entry for King's College School when he wrote:

Transferred from Somerset House in 1897. A plain rendered Georgian house (Cooke: 1750) with a Tudor porch and, attached to it, the broad chapel-like brick front of a neo-Perpendicular range by Sir Bannister Fletcher, 1899. More buildings of the C.19 and C.20. [pp.453-4]

South Hayes was the first building to be occupied by King's College School when it moved from the Strand, having been used as a boarding school since the 1820's [Milward 1998, p.49]. Both South Hayes and a smaller building to the west are indicated on the 1772 map. The detached three storey building in white render with dominant string courses at each floor

level is **locally listed**. The original rear garden now forms a well landscaped secluded corner off the main court behind the School chapel.



The original scheme by Sir Bannister Fletcher for the north front of the School, the 1899 Chapel as built, and the modern Senior School adjoining the Chapel

The Great Hall: The **grade II** Great Hall was designed by Sir Bannister Fletcher and built in 1899. As befits the author of the definitive *A History of Architecture in the Comparative Method*, the neo-Perpendicular design, with its high gable and projecting wings of red brick with ornamental stone parapets and window surrounds and tracery, makes a most distinguished contribution to the Conservation Area.

The southern end of the chapel forms the central dominant feature of the adjoining court. Unfortunately, its well proportioned civic presence has been compromised by the construction of a symmetrical pair of stairs giving external access to the chapel's upper level. Although the access stairs are constructed of similar brick to the main building, a more elegant or elaborate design would have been more appropriate.

The Senior School: The chapel is linked to the 1960s part of the Senior School building, whose horizontal lines attempt to contrast with the vertical emphasis of the Chapel. However, its uncompromising box-like design of red brick panels and lead-faced infill panels has failed to stand the test of time as successfully as its earlier neighbour, and now appears out of sympathy with its surroundings, and particularly the intimate scale of the buildings around the Crooked Billet. It is perhaps unfortunate that Sir Bannister's original scheme for the School's north front was only partly completed. The central court south of the Great Hall is an open area of tarmac at present largely used as a car park and surrounded by low red brick walls.



B: EASTERN SIDE OF THE CENTRAL COURT *The Junior School from the Chapel roof*

Junior School and Music School: These parts of the School are accommodated in the modern wing lining the eastern side of the court. Each floor of the three storey red brick and tile building steps back, and the bands of windows separated by sloping roofs and terraces give a strongly horizontal emphasis which provides a suitable contrast in deference to the vertical accent of the Great Hall. At the southern end one-and-a-half storey Music School block in red brick is dominated by a shallow red tiled roof with hipped and gables roofs on the west side and continuous dormers along the south side. A flat roofed extension on the east side has a saw-tooth profile.

The entrance to the Priory building, The lodge at 72 Ridgway, and the memorial arch



The Priory: The “Priory” is a part one and part two storey red brick building to the east of the Music School and separated from it by a small landscaped court. A two storey projecting entrance bay on the west side is topped by a curved roof which is echoed in a similar curve to an open single storey porch. Although the building was built quite recently, the curved roofs, projecting brick headers and royal insignia are reminiscent of the buildings at the 1951 Festival of Britain.

War Memorials: To the south of the Music School and Priory is a courtyard containing a playground enclosed by high level chain link fencing. Between this court and the main School

playing fields is a small war memorial backed by a semi-circular hedge, and a later memorial in the form of a partly buried circular arch. To the east of the court are the buildings adjoining Clifton Road.

C: CLIFTON ROAD

The Reeve School: The foundation stone of the Reeve School was laid on 24 June 2000. It lies between the court and Clifton Road and its modern design makes a pleasant feature at a prominent point on the western side of the road. It is a carefully detailed detached two storey building in red brick with a steeply pitched roof topped by a skylight.

Gymnasium; The recently built detached two storey gymnasium on the south side of the courtyard has not been designed to as high a specification as the Reeve School, being clad in timber with an aluminium roof and a “low tech” projecting dog-leg staircase.

D: WEST SIDE OF THE CENTRAL COURT

The Pavilion across Wright's Alley

The Senior School, kit-chen and library: The rear part of the Senior School to the west of the chapel forms the north and west sides of a paved court, its three storey harsh rectangular concrete and brick profile contrasting unsympathetically with the earlier more traditional



two storey brick and tile building on the south side. One wing of this building faces east over the central court, and the other two face south and east over a landscaped area to the west of the court on which at the time of writing a new building was under construction.

Science Block: Lining Wright's Alley is the Science Block, which was built in three phases. The ground and first floor windows of this three storey building are vertically proportioned to counteract the general horizontal emphasis, and the top floor has a continuous row of dormers within a grey tiled roof.

Pavilions: South of this range is a small elegant timber two storey sports pavilion of ingenious design, since it bridges over Wright's Alley to provide facilities for both parts of the School. On the southern boundary, next to the Ridgway, is another larger pavilion and a car park

E: WOODHAYES ROAD

The Lodge, 5 Woodhayes Road: Immediately west of Southside House stands The Lodge, No. 5 Woodhayes Road, a detached seven bay two/three-storey building with projecting bays and ornamental gables which is also known as the Boarding House. According to the 1983 edition of Pevsner, *“Nos. 2 and 4 are a pair of C.18 five bay houses, each with a slightly projecting, pedimented three bay centre, Brick and rubbed brick. Tuscan doorways, No. 4 has its original glazing bars.”* [p. 458]. The rear garden is partly enclosed and partly open to the School grounds.

Sports Hall: To the west of No. 5 is a recently built sports hall in red brick whose flat roof is camouflaged by a pitched roof surround. It is fronted by an attractive nineteenth century red brick lodge with a semi-circular entrance under a half-timbered gable which appears to have formed the entrance to an earlier building, was later used as a boarding school and is now a staff flat. Immediately to the south is a further two storey sports building in red brick with white banding and a corrugated metal roof which won the Merton Design Award in 1994-5.

Pavilions, rifle range and swimming pool: To the south of this sports complex and The Lodge is a range of tennis courts and the small tennis pavilion. South of this is Major Field, with the modern rifle range and swimming pool buildings to the east. Another playing field to the west, south of Nos. 6 to 7 Woodhayes Road, accommodates a further pavilion and the wall separating it from Peregrin Way forms the western boundary to the School and the Sub Area.

No. 6 and 6b, Gothic Lodge: A detached two storey **grade II listed** house built in 1763 with a central canted bay, and rear additions of about 1880-90. It was first known as Gothic Cottage, then Gothic House. According to Pevsner, Gothic Lodge *is indeed in the Gothick style, with pretty ogee-arched and crocketed heads to the upper windows. The date 1763 on a lead pump-head. Original staircase and some chimneypieces. The house was much enlarged c. 1880-90* [p.458].

A plaque on the front facade commemorates the fact that the novelist Frederick Marryat (1792 to 1848) lived there. It was also the first house in London to have electric light, since it was occupied from 1874 to 1914 by Sir William Preece, Chief Engineer at the Post Office and a friend of Marconi [Milward 1998, p.106]. He also made the Lodge a museum of Egyptian, Persian and Oriental antiques.

Part Two: Other Buildings in the Sub Area



No. 6b, Gothic Cottage, and No. 7 Wilberforce Road

No. 3, Southside House and Holme Lodge (not part of King's College School): Southside House is a detached **grade II*** listed house of two storeys plus basement, the façade of which is said to have built in 1687 around an old farmhouse by Robert Pennington, who fled London from the plague in 1665. The house is now owned by one of his decedents who opens it for guided tours. The house contains many relics of previous inhabitants and guests (including the Prince of Wales, Nelson and Lady Hamilton). It was extended in 1776 to give it the appearance of two houses [Milward 1989 p.83]. The importance of the building is indicated in this list description:

Plum brick, red dressings, tiled mansard roof to crenulated parapet. 10 bays, 2 storeys plus basement and attic in mansard. Entrance fifth bay from left; pedimented Doric doorcase. Panelled door. Square and headed windows. Second to fourth and seventh to ninth bays set forward between pediments each with inset thermal windows. Sashes, glazing bars (some ? Canted bay window to right of entrance; ground floor arched niches to ? and eighth bays.

Ogee domed timber clock tower to centre of roof. Rear elevation also of architectural interest. Attached stable block to south. Good interior including turned baluster staircase in double height galleried hall; C17 fireplace in dining room and hall (?). Much C18 panelling. Some war damage sustained.

The coach house immediately to the north is listed **grade II** for group value, and the adjoining house, Holme Lodge, now forms part of Southside House.

No. 6b, Gothic Cottage: Any Gothick features Gothic Cottage may have had have disappeared and No. 6b now appears to be an architecturally undistinguished modern building of one-and-a-half storeys rebuild in white render. Although the shell of the easternmost of the two blocks may retain some hidden features of interest, the western section, with dormer windows in a fake mansard roof, appears to be new.

No. 7: A detached single storey brick and tile cottage built in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in the mock Tudor style with ornate barge boarding and finials to the gables and ridge. No. 7 was considered for local listing, but since it has suffered from unsympathetic alterations, including a side addition and roof extension, it was not regarded of sufficient quality. When it was considering the boundary of the Conservation Area, the VicSoc suggested that

Extending the Area over the whole of the small zone bounded by Wright's Lane (sic), Woodhayes Road and Ridgway would protect a large and well screened Victorian house at 7, its numerous fine trees, and its Lodge Cottage (?). It will also help to provide a rational North West boundary for the Conservation Area now proposed.

Of course, the present boundary extends further north than Woodhayes Road, but the VicSoc's comments indicate that it acknowledged a change in character to the north of Woodhayes Road, and this is reflected in Sub Area 6, The Crooked Billet. The area west of No. 7 is included in Sub Area No.14, the Peregrin Way Area.

Positive and Negative Features

Overall, the presence of the King's College School adds considerably to the character and prestige of Wimbledon and to the Conservation Area, the contribution of the facades facing on to Woodhayes Road being generally positive and the panorama of the rear facades across the playing fields adding to the special attractions of the Area. The architectural and townscape qualities of the individual buildings ranges from outstanding in the case of the Chapel to unsympathetic in the case of the modern Senior School, while the others are generally of a high standard, with the Junior and Music Schools forming a positively subservient contrast to the dignity of the Chapel and the Reeve School making a positive contribution to Clifton Road. The retention and adaptation of Rushmere and South Hayes is also to be applauded because of their historic interest and importance.

Beyond the School grounds, Southside House, Gothic Lodge and No. 7 Woodhayes Road also contribute considerable to the character of the Sub Area.

Preservation and Enhancement

Because of the way in which the buildings have generally been carefully designed both individually and in juxtaposition with each other, almost the entire composition merits retention, and any further additions or alterations require equal care. One enhancement would involve replacing the high fence along the southern boundary with something more visually permeable to enable the vista across the playing fields to be more widely appreciated.