

West Cambridge Suburbs Project

6 listings Grade II; 6 listing amendments;

1 upgrade to Grade II*

1 addition to the Register of Parks and Garden at Grade II

The Defined Area Survey of the West Cambridge suburbs was set up to identify and assess buildings of potential special interest, and to amend the List entries for a number of buildings already designated. This area of the city contains a large number of architect-designed houses built between 1870 and c.1920 and represents a significant development in suburban design. The former medieval West Field, covering about 200 acres, was owned primarily by the colleges which had always strongly resisted any building west of the Backs (the stretch of land which runs along the back of the riverside colleges), but the loss of revenue from the later C19 agricultural depression led to the decision to lease the land in building plots. The demand for large family homes was partly fuelled by a new statute passed in 1882 that finally allowed Cambridge dons to marry without having to give up their fellowships. Subsequently three new institutions were established – Newnham College in 1875, Ridley Hall in 1877, and Selwyn Hostel (now College) in 1879 – and many suburban houses were built piecemeal over almost half a century.

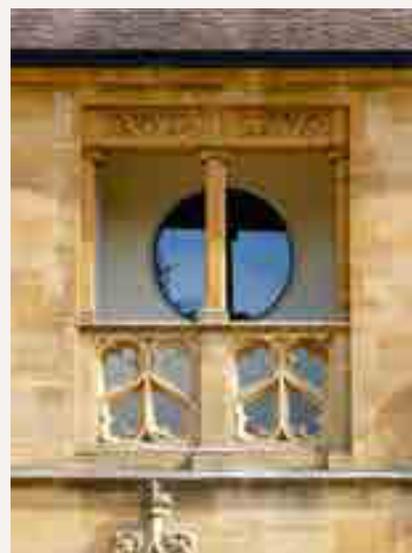
Although economic necessity had forced the colleges to allow building on the land, they were determined to keep a strict control over the residential development. This consisted almost entirely of high-end middle class housing, interspersed with university playing fields, without any community facilities such as churches or shops. There was no overall plan but the landowners ensured that take-up was restricted to an affluent market by issuing leases that specified numerous conditions, including minimum plot sizes, minimum house costs, and specification of superior building materials, usually red brick and tiles. The great majority of building leases were taken up by academics who commissioned either local or London-based architects, many of whom are now considered to be amongst the finest of the late Victorian and Edwardian ages, notably MH Baillie Scott who designed nine houses here, ES Prior, JJ Stephenson, and Ernest Newton



Upton House, Grange Road²⁹



Front elevation, The Stone House, 3 Madingley Road⁶⁹



Detail, The Stone House, 3 Madingley Road.



Pergola, 48 Storey's Way³¹

This period is characterised by several architectural movements, notably the Queen Anne style, Arts and Crafts, and Neo-Georgian, all of which are represented in the West Cambridge suburb.

Upton House on Grange Road (1912) by A Winter Rose is one of the most original and imaginatively designed houses in the suburb. It demonstrates the Edwardian fusion of revived Classicism with the ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement, but goes beyond this in its playful treatment of classical forms and motifs. Whilst evoking the general impression of a Georgian country

manor house, the anticipated symmetry is inverted to create an intriguingly irregular façade. Another unexpected design is The Stone House on Madingley Road (1896) by Edward Doran Webb, so-called because it is one of very few houses in West Cambridge executed in a material other than red brick. The warm yellow sandstone is enhanced by fine carvings to the hood mouldings, door surrounds and the balcony. In addition to new designations, 48 Storey's Way (1913) by Baillie Scott has been upgraded to Grade II* and the garden has been added to the Register. Baillie Scott regarded most contemporary houses as shallow, showy and pretentious, and he was inspired by the 'old work' to create houses that were 'full of a still, quiet earnestness which seems to lull and soothe the spirit with promises of peace'. 48 Storey's Way perfectly embodies this aspiration in its masterly composition, plan form, detailing and craftsmanship. The design of the garden is carefully integrated with that of the house to create an open and dynamic relationship between the inside and outside space, and is structured into what Baillie Scott called 'outdoor apartments' connected by straight paths. The house and garden together form an exceptional ensemble, one of the best examples of this major architect's work



48 Storey's Way.