

Bromley Town Centre Conservation Area

Heritage Walks

LOWER HIGH STREET

(start at Ethelbert Road, opposite the entrance to the Glades)

Metro Bank (76) occupies the site of Bromley House, a Georgian Mansion set in extensive grounds demolished in the 1930s. The original door case and portico were saved and are attached to the Town Church around the corner in Ethelbert Road.

The milestone outside HMV shows Bromley as being 10 miles from London Bridge and 14 miles from Sevenoaks. It is a modern replacement of an 18th century stone in the exact position of the original.



Ravensfell House

Admiral Casino (98) occupies Ravensfell House which was the first of a number of fine villas overlooking the Ravensbourne Valley built after the coming of the railway in 1858. The row of shops, Ravensfell Parade, was built on what had been the extensive front garden of the house in the 1930s.

Clarks (109), **Gap** etc. occupy **Aberdeen Buildings**. This comprises eight shop units built in 1887 by local butcher, Amos Borer, grown rich in the boom years after the coming of the railway in 1858. The architecture is French Empire thought to

be a tribute to the Emperor Napoleon III and Empress Eugenie living in exile at Camden Place Chislehurst for whom Mr Borer was 'Purveyor of Meat' by Royal Appointment to the Prince of Wales.



Aberdeen buildings

Flying Tiger (111) crafting store occupies Tweed Cottage, a late Georgian cottage formerly the home of Thomas Dewey later Alderman Dewey, Mayor of Bromley, Baronet and local dignitary. The house marks the southern boundary of the pre-Victorian town, it being open land from here on.



Importers when it was the Army and Navy store's canteen

Burger King (117) stands on the site of the much missed Importers Coffee House, an 18th century town house with a fine 1930s mahogany panelled coffee house to the rear. The old house was the home, for a while, of the Marquis of Townshend. Both house and Coffee House were destroyed in 1987 for the present development.



Marks & Spencer (123)—the left hand four bays were built for the company in 1904 on the site of Redwood House and is an early example of the up and coming chain store concept. The right hand four bays were added in the 1950s to the same design. The design is Arts & Crafts neo Georgian. Special features are the heavily toothed (dentiled) cornice, rusticated columns (pilasters) and the bow windows with beautiful floral swagged motifs in embossed lead.

Hotters Shoes and **Chopstix Noodle Bar** (130) occupy the last remaining Georgian properties, now the only surviving evidence, of the scale and character of this side of the High Street since the massive demolitions in the 1970s & 80s. Before Chopstix renovated the shop, it had a remarkable display of period furniture suspended in place where the first floor would be.

The Central **Library/ JD Sports** (153) etc, occupy the 1960s 'brutalist' building by architect Owen Luder which tragically replaced the beautiful and famous White Hart Coaching Inn.



Lidl up to Decathlon (160) occupy what was described by a representative of the Royal Fine Art Commission on architecture and design as ‘the worst piece of new townscape he has seen in any town in the UK. Many historic buildings were sacrificed including on the site of Decathlon one dating from 1712 the demolition of which prompted local people in 1984 to campaign for the town centre conservation area which now protects the major part of the old town.



White Hart Inn

WHITE HART SLIP

The Slip, now leading to the Glades from market Square is one of the town’s ancient footpaths across the Bishop’s Palace lands (occupied by the borough’s Civic Centre for many years,

now redeveloped) . In the centre of what is now the Glades concourse stood the Gates to Queens Garden (Grade II Listed) now relocated to the Kentish Way entrance of the Garden.

MARKET SQUARE

Market Square is described in detail in our Walk 1 leaflet. It is the centre of the Old Town which until the coming of the railway in 1858 comprised a single street. The Market Charter was Granted to Bishop Gandalf by King John in 1205. The limits of the town are still marked by existing buildings – Bromley College in the Upper High Street and Tweed Cottage (Flying Tiger) in the Lower High Street.



The Island shops and Old Town Hall before 1930.

CHURCH ROAD

The Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul was destroyed in WWII but the tower dating from around 1400 survived as did the Lych Gate designed by architect James Piers St Aubyn 1854. The old Church was sited adjacent to the road which accounts for the kink in its layout. The new Church was consecrated in the early 1950s and set back to the other side of the tower. There a number of interesting gravestones including that of Elizabeth (Tetty) Johnson wife of the famous Doctor Johnson. The pink granite obelisk is the tomb of the Lord of the Manor Coles Child, who bought the Palace (Civic Centre) and Manor from the Diocese of Rochester in 1842. For the amusement of the more observant the new church has fragments of the old

church embedded in its exterior walls such as cross sections of columns, decorative foliage and a fragment of an ancient Green Man.



Kingston Cottages is the name of the terrace of cottages opposite the church which date from around the early 1870s and like those in South Street give a clue to the modest character of the town before the Victorian expansion following the coming of the railway.

St Pauls Square is a late 1960s housing development on the site of the old Vicarage and a pair of quaint cottages.

To return to the start, either:

** (the long/pretty way) continue down Church Road and turn left into Church House Gardens. The road way can then be followed round and up the hill to return to the High Street opposite the Aberdeen buildings. Turn left back to the Glades entrance.*

** retrace steps to Market Square and enter the Glades shopping mall by White Hart Slip. The start of the walk is the other end, one storey down.*

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www.bromleycivicsociety.org.uk

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