

Report: Conservation Area Character Appraisals

1.0 CONTENTS and PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out the policy background to conservation area character appraisals. It identifies the existing and future need for appraisals and the way in which they will fit into the new planning system. The report also highlights the current and future procedures required for conservation area management, and the relationship of appraisals within them.
- 1.2 The document attached comprises three parts. The Introduction is standard and describes the background to conservation area designation in general terms, and for L B Hounslow as a whole.
- 1.3 The second part is a group of documents comprising an individual character appraisal for each of the three conservation areas that lie all or partly within Heston and Cranford Area Planning Committee's area.
- 1.4 The individual character appraisal for each conservation area is provided in accordance with the intention identified in UDP policy Env-B.2, 4.15. Their content and format are described in more detail in section 6 of this report.
- 1.5 The third part is again general, being an explanation of the approach that should be taken to work on buildings in conservation areas. This is proposed as the basis for a general management framework, and which is to be extended to cover aspects of work in more detail.
- 1.6 This material is brought to the committee for information and commentary, and also for approval to present it to Sustainable Development Committee, for authorisation to undertake public consultation. This will commence a conservation area management regime that accords with the new planning system in terms of public involvement, sustainability appraisals and environmental assessments.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The committee is requested to note and comment on the conservation area appraisal statements; and to recommend them to SDC for approval on a stand-alone basis, and as a basis for extending the appraisal process into a management framework relating to the new consultative and flexible planning system.
- 2.2 The committee is requested to note the identified pressures, and to comment further on potential for change in and to the conservation areas. Comments could include requiring investigating possible changes such as:
- Extension or reduction of the boundary areas;
 - Further properties to be included on (or excluded from) the non-statutory List of Buildings of Townscape Character;
 - Identification of key issues for enhancement ie neutral or negative areas, tree planting or management,
 - Emphasis on special features for preservation by way of Article 4(2) reduction of permitted development
 - Emphasis on extra care to be taken eg on traffic management and streetscape issues
- 2.3 The effect of these comments, and pressures on the character of the conservation area will be tested during survey and feedback at a further consultation process, and results will be brought back with appropriate recommendations at a later date.
- 2.4 The committee is requested to note the principles for consideration of development proposals set out for each area. Again these are not intended to be complete, and the opportunity to extend these and augment with more specific detail will follow from the baseline appraisals once they are approved.
- 2.5 The committee is requested to note that development control guidelines, as set out in the supplementary planning guidance for the relevant conservation areas, will stay in force until they are superseded by the requirements of the new planning system. **The existing guidelines will not be superseded by these statements at this stage.**

3.0 CURRENT POLICY BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Designation of Conservation Areas has been possible since the Civic Amenities Act 1967. It has remained the method of putting area-based conservation policies, in support of a special interest, ahead of the presumption for development. It began with, and still works best, with public endorsement.
- 3.2 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which empowers the method requires (Section 69) that every local planning authority shall from time to time determine which parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas, to be **“an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”**.

The duty is then imposed on the planning authority, by Section 72, to pay special attention, whilst exercising their planning powers (for example, in relation to applications) to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

- 3.3 Further explanation on how to evaluate the special interest, and then manage the area/s designated is described in Planning Policy Guidance note (PPG) 15, Planning and the Historic Environment, (September 1994). This remains the primary government guidance on conservation areas, although it is expected to be updated relatively soon.
- 3.4 Under the new planning system: the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, Hounslow Borough's UDP of December 2003 and its supplementary guidance will have to be replaced by a Local Development Framework (LDF). This introduces a family tree or portfolio of policy *documents*, which will collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the Borough. Integral to the production of these documents is the statutory requirement to carry out sustainability appraisals assessing the social, economic and environmental impacts of each planning document.
- 3.5 The London Plan is part of the statutory development plan and is a material consideration in determining planning applications. The UDP of December 2003 and its supplementary guidance are "saved" as policy for a period of 3 years from commencement of the Act, ie until September 2007. The currently adopted supplementary planning guidance on conservation areas (1997), saved along with the current UDP, will have to be re-built to complement the new planning framework.
- 3.6 The current (December 2003) UDP includes a dedicated range of Heritage policies at ENV-B.2. The currently adopted supplementary planning guidance (SPG) 1997 was consulted upon with the contemporary UDP, therefore Chapter 7, comprising the statements on conservation areas, is part of the "saved" policy. This includes statements for:
Cranford Village, Heston Village and St Paul's Bath Road.
- 3.7 The Residential Design Guidelines, illustrating designs that may be considered appropriate, are adopted SPG. There is a specific chapter on conservation areas.

4.0 CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENTS / APPRAISALS IN GENERAL

- 4.1 The purpose of designating Conservation Areas is to put into the decision-making process, when considering proposals for change, the *character* of an area. The area is a defined landscape made up of individual buildings, their settings and groupings, with trees, streets and other important spaces.
- 4.2 There is no standard legal specification for Conservation Areas, other than the general definition in the Act (shown in bold in 3.2 above), but all the guidance emphasises that designation should be based on a description of the *special interest* that can be defined and justified. This is often called a Conservation Area Statement.

- 4.3 The statement identifies the attractiveness or interest of an area and what makes it special. It is the justification for the way in which individual owners and potential developers are restrained, and directed, in order to enhance or preserve the character.
- 4.4 “Character” is less easy to define than a purely physical description and is distilled from many aspects, ie it can have more than a visual effect. An identity of *place* can be found through the other senses, and the way in which an area influences or is influenced by its particular context can be quite profound.
- 4.5 PPG15 paragraph 4.4 advises, “*The definition of an area’s special interest should derive from an assessment of the elements that contribute to (and detract from) it. The assessment should always note those unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the special interest of the area*”. The reason is that “*It is important that designation is not seen as a means to an end in itself: policies will almost always need to be developed which clearly identify what it is about the character or appearance of an area which should be preserved or enhanced and set out the means by which that objective is to be achieved.*” (Section 4.9).
- 4.6 The definition needs to be sound in order to justify the policies and restrictions that flow from it: not just in the conservation areas, but as a material consideration of proposals which would affect their setting, or views into or out of them.
- 4.7 Recognising that changes may occur after designation and because of the restraints that designation imposes, the P(LBCA) Act requires the relevance for, and of, a conservation area to be regularly *reviewed*. This is to see whether the policies are still appropriate, and are being successful in retaining the special interest.
- 4.8 Success and appreciation of an area may be such that a review might find the boundaries could be extended. Others may have been less successful, eg the amount of permitted development may have eroded the character to a stage where the special interest has been lost. Age, accidents and development imperatives may have led to such extremes of alteration that the special interest is no longer sufficient, in part or in whole, to justify conservation area status.
- 4.9 To help the understanding of what creates “character”, both for designation and management purposes, in the mid 1990s English Heritage and the English Historic Towns Forum provided guidance documents. These included what a review might entail; describing these assessment activities as *appraisals* of conservation areas.
- 4.10 English Heritage document *Conservation Area Appraisals* 1995 focussed on identifying the special interest of the area, and included neutral and negative impacts that might lead to opportunities for enhancement. The term “appraisal” therefore describes not just the definition of special interest, but those aspects which need policies to make something happen, and now often includes the follow-up – or continuing - review process required by Section 71 of the P(LBCA) Act.

- 4.11 *Conservation Area Appraisals 1995* also identified the potential for following up with a conservation *study*. This could include explanations of development control principles relating to the special character, and specific control needs. Enhancement schemes and proposals could be gathered under the umbrella of the specific character area, as part of its *management*. Article 4 Direction is a major management option (which also requires considerable resources to implement and monitor).
- 4.12 In Hounslow borough, management takes the form of general but well-defined principles in the UDP, with more detailed aims in the Supplementary Planning Guidance for pre 1997 conservation areas. And Article 4(2) Direction has been introduced for Bedford Park (parts only) and Gunnersbury Triangle.

5.0 FUTURE PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

- 5.1 The current (December 2003) UDP sets out an intention for the existing or proposed detailed conservation area statements to be published as supplementary planning guidance. This intention is overtaken by the new planning system.
- 5.2 English Heritage has updated and consolidated their guidance, in the light of
(a) the new planning system;
(b) the local authority Best Value Performance Indicators, which in 2005/6 include performance in relation to the historic environment.
(*Guidance on conservation area appraisals* and *Guidance on the management of conservation areas*, EH August 2005).
- 5.3 Beneath the overarching policies, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) can “supplement higher level policy in controlling erosion of the special interest that warrants designation and, where appropriate, guiding the form of new development.” (*Guidance on the management of conservation areas*, EH August 2005.)
- 5.4 EH explains that conservation character appraisals as such, defining the special interest, will not become supplementary planning documents (SPD) on their own. Therefore they can be made available without first going through the sustainability evaluation and at least be in position more quickly.
- 5.5 The character appraisal statements can be adopted by the council, however, together with any additional information, in order to explain the council’s understanding of its planning duties under the P(LBCA) Act to give due consideration to its conservation areas.
- 5.6 The statements are then available to form supporting evidence for one or more conservation area policy SPD, complete with development control principles and other management proposals, after the due consultations and sustainability evaluations. SPD does not have the maximum statutory importance in decision-making, but it is an important material consideration when a decision is made about a planning application. SPD’s will need to be consistent with policies in the new planning framework and with national and regional planning guidance.

- 5.7 Best Value Performance Indicator BV 219b states that “Clear and concise appraisals for the character of conservation areas provide a sound basis for their designation and management, and will inform local development documents.”
- 5.8 Best Value Performance Indicator (BV 219b) explains that *Character appraisals should highlight the special qualities of individual conservation areas as the basis for the policies that the local authority adopts to maintain and enhance character and appearance.*
- 5.9 English Heritage’s guides were published in August 2005, and set out requirements in a clear and consistent way. Yet they still describe themselves as consultative documents. This is indicative of the degree of change expected in the process, and continuing adaptation needed to manage and if possible strengthen the special character of conservation areas.

6.0 HESTON AND CRANFORD AREA’S APPRAISALS

- 6.1 English Heritage’s August 2005 *Guidance on conservation area appraisals* was subtitled “Understanding Place”, and the basis for defining “the character “ is much the same as the 1995 guides. The major difference seems to be the greater emphasis on public participation.
- 6.2 The conservation area appraisal statements for Heston and Cranford Area generally follow this guidance. They describe the origins and existing features as the area was at designation, aspects of special interest and the resulting character. They may need to be updated in the light of changes to the area, especially the neutral and negative aspects.
- 6.3 Each individual conservation area’s document is divided into four sections. The first section identifies the current status of the conservation area as a position statement, analysing its origins and the resulting physical character. This factual information is from generally available sources, such as was provided - or could have been provided - at the time of designation, and through observation. It forms the relatively static baseline of the appraisal process, identifying the essence of the conservation area and its special interest.
- 6.4 The second section of each appraisal statement is a brief summary of the current pressures on the area, as found during development control. This could be further extended. It is a more dynamic aspect, may have affected the special interest and character, and may be continuing.
- 6.5 The third section of each appraisal begins to note proposals and opportunities. This will allow the appraisals to be developed, through consultation, as part of the management framework, or even influence the boundaries of the area.
- 6.6 The last section of each appraisal notes recommended guiding principles, to be added to the existing guidelines’ supplementary planning guidance (where these already exist) for individual areas. Again these will form part of the development of the management framework, particularly for development control.

7.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There is no requirement in the P(LBCA) Act to consult prior to a designation, although it is good practice to do so. However section 71 places a duty on the local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their conservation areas, and this has always required consultation. Article 4(2) Directions are such a option.
- 7.2 Previous guidance has encouraged consultation as good practice. In addition, Best Value Indicators will require an appraisal to be carried out as part of future conservation area designations.
- 7.3 The new planning system emphasises the need for community consultation before guidance such as supplementary planning documents can be adopted.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The UDP of December 2003 and its supplementary guidance are “saved” as policy for a period of 3 years, from commencement of the Act, ie until September 2007. The London Plan is also part of the statutory development plan and is a material consideration in determining planning application. Heritage policies are included in the UDP. The currently adopted supplementary planning guidance on conservation areas (1997), saved along with the current UDP, will have to be re-built.
- 8.2 The conservation appraisal statements are produced to set out the current position, will discharge the UDP commitment as far as is currently available to the council, and address the requirements of BV 219b.
- 8.3 The appraisal statements will be an integral part of any further appraisal study. Together they will then be available to support and inform the production of supplementary planning document/s on management, to be continued as and when resources are available, and as required by BV 219c.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION:

- 9.1 The committee is requested to note and comment on the introduction and conservation area appraisal statements;
- 9.2 The committee is requested to recommend these to SDC for approval on a stand-alone basis and, including public consultation, as a basis for a further appraisal study process.
- 9.3 The committee is also invited to note the statement on the *General principles of work within conservation areas*, with a view to its inclusion in the general management framework, and further expansion into more detail.

10.0 APPENDICES

- (1) Introduction to the conservation area character appraisal statements (general)
- (2) The 3 conservation area character appraisal statements for the Heston and Cranford planning area.
- (3) A statement on the *General principles of work within conservation areas*
- (4) Bibliography

Note: Maps showing the conservation area boundaries and their buildings of special interest will be available to the meeting and at a later date on the website

Aerial view maps showing the individual conservation area boundaries will be available to the meeting and at a later date on the website

APPENDIX ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL STATEMENTS.

SUMMARY

The purpose of designation is to put the into the decision-making process when considering proposals for change, the character of an *area* - which is a defined landscape made up of individual buildings, their settings and groupings, with trees, streets and other important spaces. The statement identifies the attractiveness or interest of an area in which it is important that individual owners and potential developers are restrained, to assist the collective benefit.

Best Value Performance Indicator (BV 219b) 2005/6 explains that *Character appraisals should highlight the special qualities of individual conservation areas as the basis for the policies that the local authority adopts to maintain and enhance character and appearance.*

The conservation area character appraisal statements form a starting point, to show clearly the original position, with a brief indication of changes and pressures on the area. It is proposed that the statements be endorsed as working documents with further considerations to be added. The statements form the background from which further appraisal of the boundaries and policies can take place, and as part of the management strategy.

CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION

Origin and significance.

The ability to designate areas - rather than individual buildings - which were considered in the public interest to preserve or enhance, derived from the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. This was a reaction to the wholesale loss, or wrecking, of familiar and “cherished” places. It was a ground-swell opposition to clean-sweep clearances, and to selfish development or redevelopment that was insensitive to its context. Nearly 40 years on, the way in which urban context is appreciated in the design process owes a great deal to conservation area policies: celebrating local identity, in scale, detail and variety.

The first designations tended to be of very obvious groups of buildings, often tightly formed around individually special - and often Listed - Buildings, landscapes or small areas of strongly similar architectural design. Many such building groups have in fact been Listed. Later it was seen that larger areas, where less obvious origins such as topography, routes and use had produced a special character, could benefit from being designated. By retaining the special interest and with careful consideration given to design and knitting-in of changes, these areas often thrived aesthetically and benefited economically.

General policies on conservation areas

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special interest. The Council as the local planning authority has a duty (under section 69) to consider which parts of the London Borough of Hounslow, being of special architectural or historic interest, should be designated as conservation areas in order to preserve or enhance their appearance.

Recognising that changes may occur after designation and because of the restraints that designation imposes, the Planning (Conservation and Listed Buildings) Act 1990 requires that the need for new conservation area designations, and the results of having existing ones, be reviewed from time to time. This is to see whether the policies are still appropriate, and are being successful in retaining the special interest.

Success and changing appreciation may be such that the boundaries could be extended. Some have been less successful. The amount of permitted development may have eroded the character past a stage where the special interest has gone. Age, accidents and development imperatives may have led to such extremes of alteration that the special interest is no longer overwhelming, in part or in whole.

Current protection

Designation introduces legal controls: over demolition of unlisted buildings and the need to advise the Council before carrying out work to trees, to give time for a possible tree preservation order to be made instead. It reduces the level of "permitted development" that a house-holder may not otherwise need planning permission for. Designation also enables the use of London-wide planning policies - via the London Plan – and borough policies, which are designed to preserve or enhance the special interest of such an area. The Council also has a duty (under section 71) to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.

London Borough of Hounslow's conservation areas.

The borough of Hounslow, because of its location and topography, has produced a great range of different characters. Its position on the west of London has made it a route for highways since Roman times, and an accessible place to live near the less healthy city, but up-wind of it. The rivers, commercial waterways and the bordering River Thames have provided many artefacts, occupations and attractions: the products of its landscape and geology used from beer to brick-making. The long shape stretches from near rural landscapes to high-density residential areas both suburb and city-grid. *Pevsner* notes the areas of architectural riches within the borough:

The Parks enfold mansions of national repute: Chiswick House, Gunnersbury, Osterley, Boston Manor and Syon House. Away from the main roads are picturesque riverside stretches of Chiswick and less familiar interesting houses in Isleworth. At Brentford there is The Butts, an exceptionally attractive and unspoilt group of houses of c1700. The Victorian suburbs that developed in the grounds of older houses are appealingly varied, from relics of grand villas of Grove Park Chiswick and Spring Grove, Isleworth and the cosier and consciously artistic Bedford Park. The twentieth Century brought the 1930's factories of the Great West Road.

APPENDIX TWO

The 3 Conservation Area character appraisal statements for the Heston and Cranford planning area.

At this stage they remain draft documents.

Mark J Price, Grad Dip HB Cons AA, IHBC, former conservation officer for the borough, compiled the 26 basic character appraisal statements. Information has been added as gained through observation and feedback from development control. Current (1997) supplementary planning guidance remains valid, with additional pointers to commence the next stage of the management policy.

For comments on source, such as "Pevsner", please see the bibliography.

CRANFORD VILLAGE

Boundary: See Map 5

Date of Designation: 25 June 1991

Date of alteration or extension: None

Additional protection to the area: parts are designated Metropolitan Green Belt, Nature Conservation Area, Archaeological Priority Area.

Special Architectural and/or Historic Interest

The special architectural and historic interest lies in the quality of the early 18th century buildings, which form the heart of the village. Cranford Park and the other lush open spaces provide an appearance of open farmland. Later 20th century buildings are carefully laid out around squares and in linked groups with ample open space around them.

History

The village, before the Second World War, consisted of that common English rural combination of a great house in a park with the parish church close by, and the village some way off. (Pevsner). The Borough boundary position has severed the area, with the majority of the Park and church in Hillingdon and the village in Hounslow. As the two are interrelated the total development of the area is described here. The Park and Church form the Cranford Park Conservation Area with the London Borough of Hillingdon. The former mansion within the park was demolished in the 1930's and all that remains are the cellars which date from 1720. The one remaining above-ground building is the Stables. These were originally L-shaped but now consist of a rectangular block. The church dates from the 15th Century with a stair turret all of flint rubble apart from the top, which is in brick. There are also 17th and 18th Century walls running alongside the motorway. These walls continue for some quarter of a mile before turning southwards and stopping at a gateway by a stream called the Frog Ditch. From the gateway mentioned above, there is a small bridge that crosses the River Crane. The park has great landscape interest with features from different eras.

Cranford village has been fragmented by roads and now is in several parts: the end of the High Street near Bath Road, The Parkway towards Heston, and the old church to the West in Cranford Park described above. The M4 passes over The Parkway on a reinforced concrete viaduct of 1964 (Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners). The South end of the High Street is a straggling lane with a small building of The Village Lock-Up (Grade II). This was known as the Round-House, in brick with conical rendered roof. It dates from 1838 and was used to imprison people caught on Hounslow Heath. Stansfield House (Grade II) is a large 18th Century brown brick house set back from the road. This is essentially all that remains of the original 18th Century Cranford village. The rest of the conservation area consists of buildings dating from the second half of the 20th Century. The Hotel facing the junction of The Avenue with Bath Road dates from 1930 by E B Musman and is in a modest form of the Scottish Baronial style, with crow stepped gable and turrets. Above the front entrance is the Berkeley shield of arms – a reminder of the aristocratic owners of Cranford Manor since the time of James I. There are matching buildings used as shops across the Bath Road., forming three angled corners of this cross roads. The fourth, matching building on the northeast corner has been lost and redeveloped at right angles. The main streets of The Avenue and Firs Drive contain well maintained, detached and semi-detached properties of the 1930's in cleverly designed groups around small greens.

Character appraisal

The character derives from the remnants and rural landscape of the Park, and the effect on and of a relic village. The Parkway is a hugely busy road, with the north end of the High Street surprisingly quiet and hidden by comparison.

The north-western section of the conservation area, which contains Cranford Park, is of great landscape interest. It contains many structures of historic importance, including the little humped-back bridge over the River Crane, a listed building shared with L B Hillingdon. The parkland provides a vast panorama of open land and woods, still having a rural atmosphere.

The High Street, particularly the section that joins The Parkway, still retains its rural village character. Number 42, Stansfield House, dominates and the later housing around it has been designed with large plots. There is very much an open aspect with undeveloped parcels of land with mature trees, providing the former village setting. Even the school has been set back from the road. Further down, a village hall and two churches, although both dating from the 1970's, help to preserve a village atmosphere.

The residential estate between the High Street and Bath Road are good examples of 1930's suburban housing, many with attached garages. The main streets of The Avenue and Firs Drive are well preserved and carefully designed in groups around large and small Greens. Some have attractive mock Tudor fronts with interesting roof designs. The rendered fantasy structures originally denoting each corner of the Bath Road junction, now has one side included in a hotel; three of the original four survive. Although small in scale for the huge traffic load, they supply an idiosyncratic charm to an otherwise overwhelmed area.

The Firs Estate was designed by John Laing and Sons Ltd, and Firs Drive by D A Adam. These too add to the village setting. The spacing between these houses is an important feature of this character, expressing the modest density of the development. Most houses retain their enclosed front gardens, laid to grass with hardstandings only in front of the original garages.

Pressures on the conservation area

- Scale of proposed development relating to that of the busy main roads rather than to the village, which could impinge on the skyline and setting
- Need for maintenance and repair of walls, and of characterful buildings such as The Lock-up which depends on meaningful use and supervision
- Gradual loss of openness, space and greenery through infill development, conversion of garage space to other uses, side and rear extensions and additional off-street parking
- Loss of verges and gardens: householder preference for parking to avoid rat-run traffic

Potential

To be appraised at a later stage.

Guiding Principles

In addition to statutory requirements, UDP principles and existing supplementary guidance, the following guidelines special to the area will be included in those evaluated:

- Open rural setting or open urban form should be maintained
- Village character should be considered for scale and spacing, and skyline
- 20th century estates were carefully planned – the principles of proportion should be maintained
- Gaps between buildings should not be infilled
- Boundary treatment should be preserved or reinstated
- Take every opportunity for additional trees

HESTON VILLAGE

Boundary: See Map 9

Date of Designation: 25 November 1974

Date of Extension: None

Additional protection to the area: Listed buildings, Green Chain, St Leonard's Church is a Local Landmark; part a Archaeological Priority Area, Local Open Space.

Special Architectural and/or Historic Interest

Special architectural interest lies in the old centre around the war memorial and the church, and in the quality of the early 18th century buildings, which form the heart of the village. The large open fields and open spaces around the church provide an appearance of a settlement at a junction in a rural area. Later 19th and 20th century buildings are carefully laid out, carefully designed or linked in groups with ample open space around them.

History

Heston is familiar to most travellers only as a service station on the M4. It began as a hamlet within the parish of Isleworth; by the 16th Century it had developed into a large parish including Sutton, Lampton, Wyke and Osterley Park. The old centre forms the heart of this conservation area and has been much rebuilt. A number of early 18th Century buildings survive around the Church of St Leonard and substantial Victorian buildings of interest follow artery roads. Also within the conservation area is the complete 1960's Wheatland's Estate by Ronald Lyon built to provide housing of various needs.

Character Appraisal

The Heston Conservation Area has very much an 18th Century village charm. Its urban framework has the characteristic elements of a traditional settlement largely 18th Century, but with medieval origins particularly in its siting on old roads. A road crossing formed by a junction of Heston Road and New Heston Road with Church Road creates a focal point marked by a 15th Century church, the vicarage and War Memorial (Grade II). The church of St Leonard's (Grade II) appears medieval and, although rebuilt in 1863-6 by T Bellamy, gives an air of being much older. It forms an attractive group with the Vicarage (Grade II) of 1780; and with the church hall of 1880 (Grade II) and crowded by large trees gives an appearance of being in the country. A footpath network also of historic origins connects the knot of buildings disposed around the road crossing, also a feature of the area. The pedestrian and footpath system connects the residential and shopping areas to the west with the school, and with the local and national open space of the former Heston farmlands and onwards to Osterley.

Stepping away from this, the rows of shops line the conjoining roads with the 1914 War Memorial forming the centre point. The road layout has not altered much since the 18th Century and timber framed buildings are a reminder of this. However, more prevalent is replacement and infill development of the 19th and 20th Centuries. These mostly retail premises are very restrained and architecturally well detailed with decorative elements typical of the period. They have also respected the village context by being small scale using a palette of traditional materials.

The character is of a hamlet at a crossroads, in this area of flat land and open skies, with road-side settlements only one-plot-deep in an agricultural landscape. Further south on Heston Road the conservation area has a more rural feel because there are fewer buildings lining the streets and fields become more dominant. The open spaces give the area a very agricultural appearance indicating their origins. The wider open setting of playing fields, and Osterley Park in the distance, extends the horizon. In 19th and 20th Centuries there was expansion with public buildings. The buildings here form an interesting group, particularly the old Infant School of 1861, which is a picturesque small scale symmetrical building of polychrome brick, Gothic with a bell-turret; and further on the Heston Community School of 1925 with its fire station at the entrance. Old walls aligning the linking paths are together important features.

Along Heston Road to the north (towards the M4) the conservation area still has a very much village character partly from the areas of green open space, particularly The Green. This is where the village expanded in the 1960's. Our Lady Queen of the Apostles Roman Catholic Church further maintains the village character, built in 1961 by Burles & Newton architects, which forms a focal point. The Wheatlands Estate, by Ronald Lyon, was built in the early 1960's and was very carefully planned. From the main road only the small scale development is prominent with Westbourne House tower block looming at the end. The estate has a village character and has well proportioned buildings designed with careful landscaping. From within the estate although the buildings are clearly of modern materials they have been consciously designed to be of a domestic scale and form with many grassed areas. From within the estate you are not aware of the earlier aspects of village beyond.

Pressures on the area

- Since designation there has been considerable infill and this is increasing in scale and intensity because of the convenience to the M4 and A4.
- The M4 itself, together with the Heathrow flight path, creates a high level of noise pollution.
- Proposals for re-allocating space between the community facilities and housing etc, and to build to greater size and density will alter the openness and scale on the edge of the area and on the approaches to the conservation area.
- Reconstruction of the schools is threatening the existence of small-scale historic buildings formerly provided by and for the community, along the road, and some of the historic path routes. The scale, materials and grain, and relationship of the buildings will also alter. The design of replacements therefore require careful consideration.
- New developments westward on New Heston Road could also affect the setting

Potential

To be evaluated at a later date, but would include:

- Retain / incorporate road-side older buildings to keep the identity and historic relationship with the grain of the area and the street.
- Add buildings to the List of Buildings of Local Townscape Character.
Of particular note are those on Heston Road:
the two public houses, the Rose and Crown, and the Old George (with its attached 1675 gravestone);
and the group in the Heston School's Campus comprising the Infants School (former National Industrial School) and Caretaker's house, pre 1870, and the Old Heston Fire Station 1895.
Together these buildings provide a sense of scale, grain and community all of which are important to the continuity and character of the conservation area.
- Attempt to retain some of the paths and walls which form the old links in new proposals.

Guiding Principles

In addition to statutory requirements, UDP principles and existing supplementary guidance, the following guidelines special to the area will be included in those evaluated:

- Preserve village setting and scale around the central core of the church and war memorial
- Watch for vistas where roads curve and meet
- Attention to detail with the 18th and 19th buildings that face the main roads
- Historic nature of especially (now) pedestrian routes and walled paths linking through the church land and village, and through the school
- 19th and 20th century community buildings (eg fire station and schools) and are important to the history of the area, relate well to the road, and open land (also forming the setting of Osterley Park). Their scale and grain as well as appearance and historic fabric are important to the conservation area's identity and character.
- Wheatlands Estate – extensions are very sensitive as this estate is modular and carefully planned. Gardens and landscaping are low and an essential to the character. Extensions should not dominate or harm the area's character by excessive scale of unsympathetic design and materials.
- Grassed areas and trees are important generally to enhance spaces
- To require new groups and infill developments of buildings – where permissible - to respect former relationships with street patterns and buildings, as well as scale and grain.

ST PAUL'S CHURCH, BATH ROAD

Boundary: See Map 15

Date of Designation: 14 April 92

Date of Extension: None

Additional protection to the area: Sports ground is Local Open Space

Special Architectural and/or Historic Interest

The special architectural interest of this conservation area now resides in the character of the Victorian Church, a landmark, and the quality of the surrounding streets. An open space adjacent adds to the open view and agricultural origin.

History

St Paul's originated as a humble settlement along the road out of London. It was the last stop for coaches before the main roads west diverged across the desolate Hounslow Heath. Victorian suburbs with their own churches, such as this one, developed westward along the Bath Road. What remains in this conservation area is some of the earlier Victorian development around the church and a well-designed and laid-out 1930's housing estate.

Character Appraisal

Church of St Paul

St Paul's Church (Grade II) was designed by Habershon and Pite and constructed between 1873-4, to give a medieval appearance, in ragstone. The southwest tower and spire is a landmark in the area. It has a large decorative window to the nave, transept, and chancel. The clerestory has trefoils and quatrefoils. It has much late 20th century stained glass. It also has a steep sloping roof covered in slate which is laid in alternating colours. Behind the church is a former vicarage (now Barter House) which is constructed of Stock bricks and is in the Gothic style. The roof is also in slate and it features pointed gables. To the rear of the church is another housing development (Barter House Nos. 1-12) constructed in the 1990's, designed to be in keeping with the vicarage also using stock bricks. The church is surrounded by tall mature trees and shrubs. It continues the building line of properties along the Bath Road.

Bath Road

299-305 are two large pairs of semi-detached properties dating also from the 1930's. They have an unusual design with long sloping roofs covered in clay tiles and a front gable that forms a catslide roof over the porch. The properties still retain their symmetrical appearance.

287-297

These are three large pairs of Victorian semi-detached properties that are all similar in style. They feature raised quoins to the corners and windows which have been painted black and the brickwork painted white. Originally the properties also featured side entrances (set-back) but these have been mostly altered. These properties form part of the early suburb that built up around the church but because of the location facing the main road are larger than the usual terraced Victorian house with ample grounds.

264-275 is a 1930's shopping parade. It is four-storey and features large gables and dormers. It is nicely detailed with half timbering and a large pitch roof. The shop-fronts still retain their original blue faience pilasters. 251-267 is another shopping parade, this time much earlier. The original terrace was set back from the road and dates from the 1850's. The tall three-storey terrace, which is stucco finished, can be seen behind the existing 1930's single storey shopfronts which have been built forward on the ground floor. The terrace features original plaster surrounds to windows, balconies and cornice.

233-245, and 247 and 249

249 is from the 1840's. It is a double fronted detached property but heavily altered and rendered. 247 is another detached property of the same date but retains its original integrity. Unfortunately the windows are not original. 243/245 are three-storey semi-detached villas dating from around 1870's, originally in brick with decorative surrounds to the windows and front doors. They still retain most of their integrity but one half has been stucco-finished. 233-241 is another group of 1930's semi-detached houses, similar to those in St Paul's Close but slightly larger.

Playing fields and green areas

Also included within this conservation area is the Sports Ground, which is situated behind the church and also the properties along Bath Road and St Paul's Close. The sports ground predated but formed part of the original layout of St Paul's estate. Originally a field, it now has a very rural, meadow-like character. The properties that surround the Grounds are visible through the mature trees, and with their ample grounds contribute to this rural character. The Hounslow Bowls Club is at the rear part and provides a more ordered appearance. There is also a small square Victorian building which is part of the railway, the Valve House, which straddles a way-posted former route across the field.

St Paul's Close

This housing estate was built in the 1930's on agricultural land to the rear of Blenheim House, (since demolished) and utilised the access drive, which ran past it, as the entry road. The railway forms one boundary, although the Hounslow West station (the ticket hall and shops a 1931 listed building, but the former terminus was built in 1884 as the Cavalry Barracks station) is excluded.

The estate is pleasingly designed and laid out around three cul-de-sacs. The properties all display the same features and when built were mostly identical. They are all grouped in symmetrical pairs, two-storey, with a double height bay window and gable. The ground floor is constructed in brick, Flemish bond, the first floor is half timbered with alternating herring bone brick panels. Most properties also retain their original garden wall and some have original porches. The windows were originally square leaded light casements. Some properties had a garage to the side. The roofs feature a central chimney and were covered in clay tiles. No. 79 is a well preserved bungalow of the 1930's with steep clay tiled roof. No.1a and b is an earlier house that has been rendered. Blenheim Court is two blocks of 1950's type housing, simple in design but respecting the scale of the area and the enclosing walls use second-hand stock bricks. St Paul's Close has a pleasing overall quality, architectural detail and completeness, better than that of the standard 1930's suburban layouts seen in the rest of Hounslow.

Pressures on the area

- Erosion of the character of the housing estate due to some unsympathetic and proportionately large extensions, especially porches of various sizes and designs which do not respect the “mock- Tudor” character; resulting in loss of integrity of buildings and layout in the estate
- Overlarge and /or poorly designed two storey side extensions eroding spatial quality – to the estate
- Poorly designed alterations and extensions to properties along the Bath Road looking into the playing fields: design quality being more of a problem than size, resulting in loss of original form and architectural quality
- Commercial use of buildings along the main road, resulting in loss of forecourts and domestic character

Potential to be surveyed further

- To increase quality by removing or incorporating earlier alterations

Guiding principles

- Preservation of St Paul’s Church and its setting as a Victorian landmark.
- Particular attention to the design of new shopfronts along Bath Road.
- Attention to the upper parts of the shops along Bath Road.
- Attention to symmetry and scale on all the semi-detached buildings, particularly on the street frontage
- Careful design of rear extensions where visible.
- Awareness of side extensions and symmetry.
- The gaps between and surrounding properties should be considered.
- Preservation of the open but rural aspect of the Sports Ground.
- Some attractive classical-style Victorian villas nearby are not included, but form part of the setting and should be considered,
- Street trees are important and should be protected, enhanced

APPENDIX THREE

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF WORK WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS

Standards of design.

The Council has a duty to designate areas of special interest in the Borough as Conservation Areas; ie the existing character of such areas is either historically important or architecturally interesting, or both. So to preserve or enhance this character, development in conservation areas must be of a high standard of design and have regard for the existing architectural style, scale, proportion, position, materials, roof, boundary treatment and landscaping within and around the site.

All forms of development within a conservation area, including conversions, will affect the outside appearance of the property. Works such as the replacement of a roof, installation of new windows, removal of boundary walls, removal of a chimney will all impact on the overall appearance of the property and area. Individual changes can cumulatively create a large effect. The Borough has illustrated potentially acceptable design “solutions” in the Residential Guidelines SPG, and how these should be modified for use in a Conservation Area. However analysis and understanding, leading to skilled design and one-off solutions are likely to provide the best results.

The conservation approach.

The primary need is to understand and augment the properties and their context in an appropriate way. Buildings were almost always designed to provide a logical appearance relating to their aspect, access, scale, height and use. They were then influenced by available technology and contemporary regulations, all being exaggerated or minimised to provide the required aesthetic. Therefore alterations need to be based on an understanding of the reasons and merits of the original construction.

Appearance derives from aesthetically preferred proportions and materials and styles which varied historically (austere / regulated / quiet to revival gothick – or - classical to exuberant / decorative to vernacular etc); but has also been heavily influenced by the conditions at the time of construction. Sizes, materials and positions of buildings have been planned and regulated since Elizabethan times.

Some regulations derived from best practice to maintain safety and these affected appearance as well as construction. Fire protection brought parapets, heights and position of chimneys, setback of windows in the facade, distances between them and other properties, position and amount of inflammable material around windows or for cladding and roofing. Sanitation and drainage requirements influenced soil-and-vent-pipes in relation to windows, styles and numbers of gutters and down-pipes.

The social importance of rooms and which floors they were on affected ceiling heights and the sizes and proportions of windows.

Above all, the technology available to the period of construction was influential, such as: spans of floors and roof beams influencing bay widths; wall materials influencing their height and thickness; roof pitches dictated by the particular materials' fixing and overlaps; opening mechanisms and the size and weight of glass affecting window frames and panes; the structural use of arches and lintols... and affecting appearance.

Designers have always taken all these parameters and made them into a whole by exaggerating and minimising certain aspects.

There are many texts that explain construction relating to different periods.

- **Applications should describe the likely impact of the proposal on the special interest of the area.**
- **Alterations or addition of new buildings should subtly refer to the logic and reason behind the appearance of the existing, and add to that character, not destroy or negate it.**
- **Applications should show the adjacent buildings and context, and sufficient detail to ensure that good quality design and construction are intended.**
- **Proposals are required to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.**

APPENDIX FOUR

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- which was itself assisted, among others, by Andrea Cameron.***