

Lawns Court Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

Brent Council



Character Appraisal

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Appraisal

This appraisal will identify, analyse and describe the historic and architectural character of the Lawns Court Conservation Area. It will identify the factors that lead to the declaration of the Conservation Area. It will highlight the prevailing quality, level of preservation of the details that define the character of the conservation area.

The analysis will consider the merits of the layout, streetscape, buildings and the natural environment. It will identify the principal elements of these factors that define the character and establish how the ongoing alteration of these essential elements and gradual development has either preserved or detracted from the overall quality. Following on from the appraisal a series of recommendations will be produced.

The appraisal will outline a strategy for the future of the area suggesting further protection and controls that will prevent future decline.

The Lawns Court Conservation Area was originally designated in June 1995. The area comprises of 6 two and part three storey apartment blocks.

A conservation review in 2003 highlighted the need for greater planning controls to protect the conservation area from detrimental change through permitted development. Lawns Court however does not require the extra protection given by an Article 4(2) Direction as apartments do not benefit from permitted development rights.

List of properties within the Conservation Area:

The Avenue: Lawns Court1-50

1.2 Planning Policy Context

Definition of a Conservation Area

Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest with an overall quality and character worthy of preservation or enhancement. The strength of their character is dependent on the way the individual buildings and gardens compliment each other. The Local Planning Authority is responsible for designating Conservation Areas from the legislation set down in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This enables the Council, with the aid of localised design criteria and additional controls over Permitted Development, to influence the type of physical changes that would otherwise be detrimental to the area.

Statutory Framework

Local Authorities are obliged by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to undertake periodic reviews and re-surveys of their Conservation Areas. The Act requires this to ensure that Conservation Areas retain the character that brought about their designation. If Conservation areas retain their designation but do not retain their essential character, they undermine the credibility of a Conservation Area status. They also dilute the available resources for Conservation Work.

Designations

The standards by which historic areas are judged worthy of Conservation Area status have changed significantly, (In particular since the publication of PPG15 in 1994). Conservation Area assessment has become more stringent to prevent the designation of areas that either, have very low levels of building and landscape preservation or, are designated for strategic reasons. The Borough like many other Local Authorities has a number of Conservation Areas that were designated some time ago and which are no longer of a sufficient standard to retain their designation as Conservation Areas.

Policy Context

Conservation Areas are protected by hierarchy of policies at national regional and local levels. The Planning (listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the legal framework for the development and protection of the historic environment. Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 expands upon and develops the policies from the Act which together with London Plan establishes a regional frame work for the development of London's historic environment. The historic areas of the Borough are also subject to local control through the core policies of the Local Development Framework and Supplementary Planning guidance.

Change and Development

As with all Conservation Areas, Lawns Court is at risk from insensitive development. As families grow the need to extend and improve homes becomes more acute. The housing stock is also of an age where more significant maintenance work is required prompting owners to replace doors and windows and roof coverings. There is also the pressure to split larger houses into smaller multi occupancy units which not only has an impact on the houses but the setting of buildings and the number of cars that residents want park off road. However, residents are becoming more aware of the value of an historic house and its location in an area of character and more owners are keen to retain the "original features" that prompted them to buy their home. The residential conservation areas of Brent are all now protected by Article 4 Directions which should help to stop the decline in

character through permitted development and possible in time reverse the influence of unsympathetic development.

2.0 Location and Setting

2.1 Location and Context

The Lawns Court Conservation Area sits within the large suburban dormitory of northwest London and is surrounded by many developments from the late 1920's through to the end of the 1930's. Although these developments are contemporary to the Moderne apartment blocks of Lawns Court they are primarily semi detached or detached houses in a neo vernacular or Arts and Crafts style. The Conservation Area is contiguous on its east boundary with the mock-Tudor Barn Hill Conservation Area and fronts onto The Avenue, a main road from Preston to Wembley Park. Relative property prices within the Conservation Area imply that residents enjoy a relatively high level of income.

2.2 General Character and Plan Form

The special character of the area is based not only on the design of the buildings and that of the open space but also on their street setting and the street scenes. Lawns Court Conservation Area is a planned development built along a main road, The Avenue. It comprises of as a string of six linear apartment blocks of varying lengths set out in a doglegged pattern so as to accommodate a small communal triangular green between the central four blocks and the main road. The blocks are up to three storeys high and are the depth of a typical suburban house. Three of the blocks are three apartments long, two are four apartments long and one is six. In addition to the triangular green the blocks are set back behind communal front garden buffers. There are also private rear gardens for each of the ground floor flats. The development has two parking areas behind these gardens accessed from Basing Hill and Mayfields, each originally containing around a dozen garages. The Avenue is one of the more principle roads in the area and is therefore wider than roads in the suburban estate behind, which contains mostly detached and semi detached houses and bungalows laid out to a garden suburb principle by the same developer. The apartment blocks of Lawns Court can be read as a physical buffer between this busy road and the estate. Each ground floor flat has its own front door and front path which gives the blocks a rhythmic quality similar to terraced houses.

2.3 Landscape Setting



Block 1-12



Block 13-18



Block 19-24



Block 25-34



Block 35-40

The estate was developed on virgin agricultural land and the layout was not influenced by any existing roads or geographical features. The Conservation Area was developed towards the bottom of the natural hill of Barn Hill, with the slope rising perpendicular to The Avenue (which is relatively flat). The gradient is countered in the front gardens with low brick retaining walls along the front boundary which raise the front gardens up to 8 steps above the pavement level. Buildings across from the conservation area are set below road level by a similar amount. This allows for significant views from Lawns Courts and a sense of space and sky.



Block 41-50

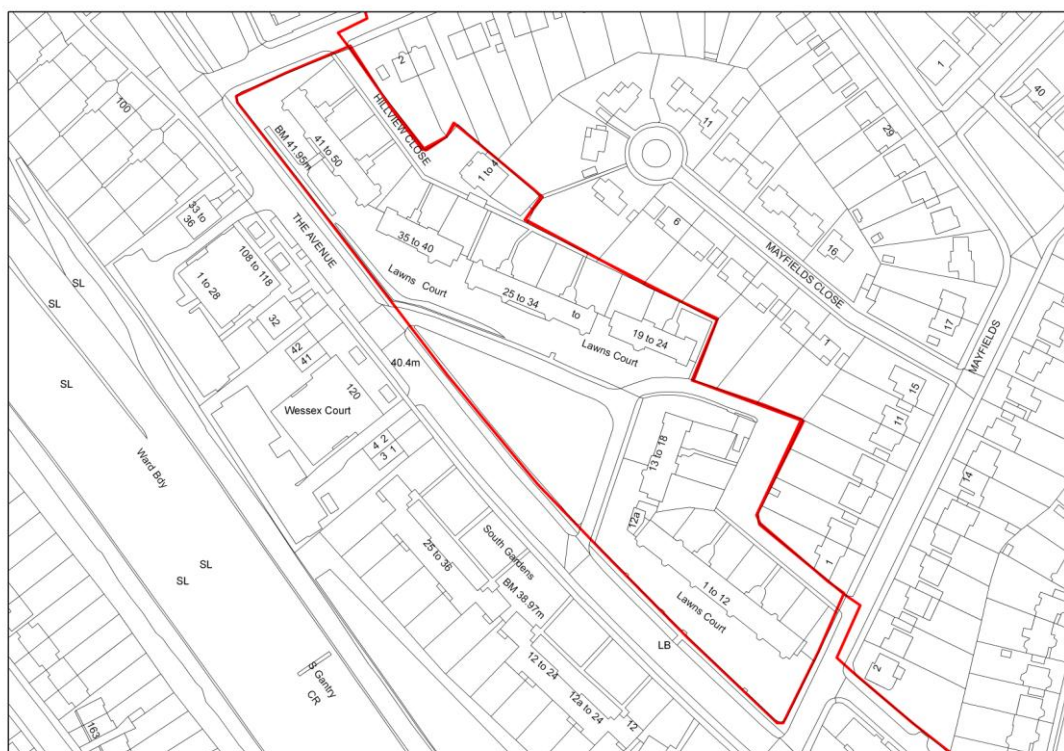
3.0 Historic Development and Archaeology

3.1 Origins and Historic Development

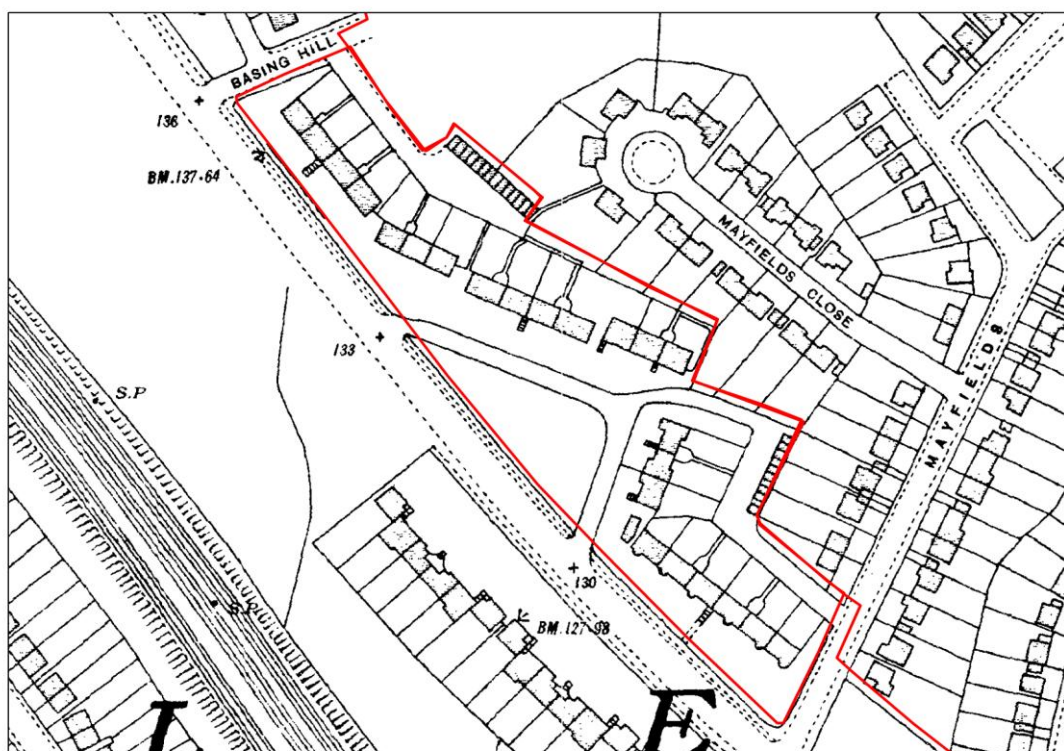
Lawns Court was developed on the lower west side of Barn Hill for which there are historic references as early as 1547 at which time the area was known as Bardonhill. As a gravel-topped hill, there may have been earlier settlement here but no evidence for this has come to light. However, the most significant period for the area is the late eighteenth century when the area formed part of the Uxendon estate owned by the Page family. The family engaged Humphry Repton, a celebrated landscape designer of the time, to remodel the landscape of the Barn Hill area as part of a newly formed *Wembley Park*. Before the area was finally purchased for housing development in the 1920s, the hill had been part of a golf course that had benefited from the features that Repton had established. The Barn Hill estate was acquired for development for development in 1923 by Messrs Haymills who may have been speculating on the likely impact of the British Empire Exhibition of 1924-25 and taking advantage of the improved road network along Forty lane which had preceded it. The first phase of Barn Hill's development occurred in 1926-1929 and thereafter Haymills expanded their interest to the north and west throughout the 1930s. Barn Hill was being developed along Mock-Tudor lines, but even while this was in progress new architectural ideas in suburban development were already gaining currency. The Moderne or International Style flowered briefly in the 1930s, its trademark being a horizontal effect created by a flat roof a bands of white rendering. Lawns Court was built by Haymills in this new style along The Avenue on the Holland Estate of Forty Farm between September 1932 and December 1933.



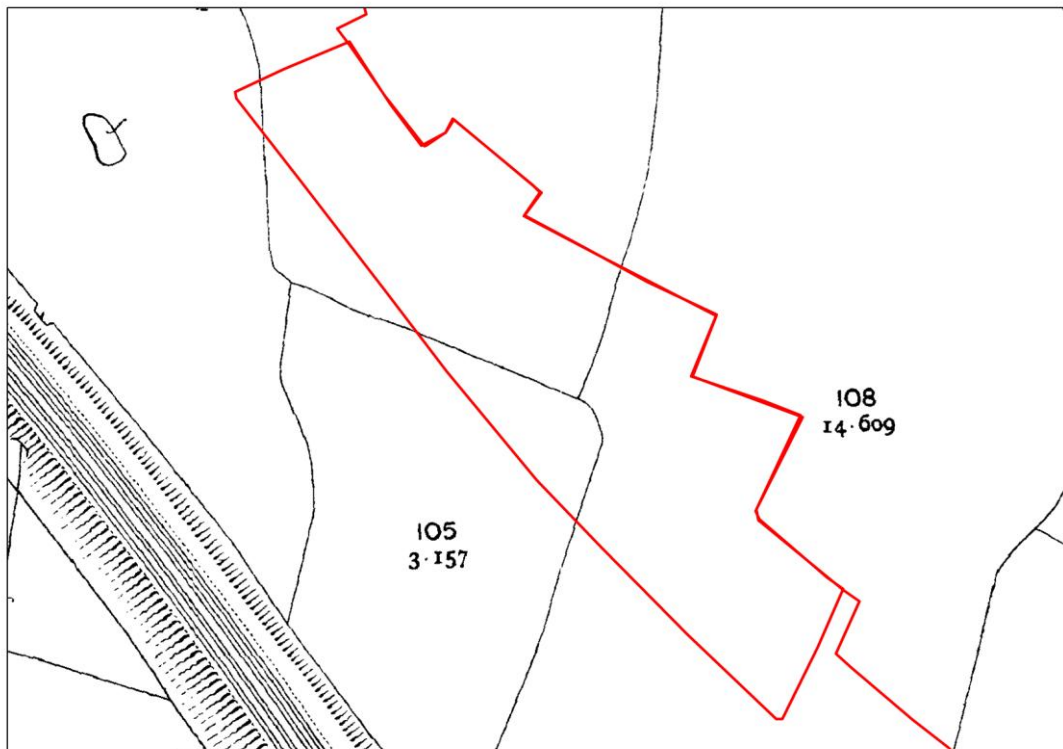
Steps from pavement to gardens



Lawns Court c.2006



Lawns Court c.1940



Lawns Court c.1910

3.2 Archaeological Significance and Potential

The Estate is laid out over well cultivated agricultural land and there are no records of either archaeological features or artefacts being discovered during construction or subsequent development of the buildings and spaces. The Sites and Monuments record for London has no entries for the areas or any area in close proximity to the boundary of Lawns Court.

4.0 Spatial analysis

4.1 Character and inter-relationship of spaces

Lawns Court Conservation Area is a planned residential estate of low rise apartment blocks. What sets it apart and makes it “special” is the distinctive and singular character of inter-relationship of buildings and open space. Lawns Court is contemporary to and developed by the same developers building firm as the mock-Tudor Barn Hill estate behind. The Lawn Court apartment blocks form a defined, liner buffer wall between the busy main road, The Avenue, and the detached and semi-detached houses. While the dense planting on the front boundary protects Lawn Court itself from the traffic on The Avenue and creates a real sense of enclosure and



Block 19-25



Block 41-50

privacy forms the public realm. Where the gardens are raised above street level this extends this privacy and sense of private ownership.

The subtlety of implied ownership in the front gardens is quite unique and reflects the interest in egalitarian landscapes expressed in Modern Movement theory. All ground floor flats have their own front paths and boundary gates. The communal entrances also have paths, although these are wider, leaving the visitor in no doubt of their communal status. However, the front gardens are one continuous landscape that extends the entire lengths of the blocks, without party hedges or fences. So although the residents benefit from the visual amenity of open and cohesively planted garden space there is a relationship between each ground floor flat and the space in front. This is emphasised with owners adding individual touches to the front gardens immediately in front of their flats.

Due to the linear terraced composition of the blocks, there is little visual connection between the front landscaping and that at the rear. These gardens here are distinctly different being divided by fences into private gardens for each of the ground floor flats. Some of the flats above have roof terraces which add a more complex social relationship between connections of external spaces that is typical in suburban environments.

The small triangular green has an open but leafy character connecting it as much to the public realm as the apartment blocks.

4.2 Views and Vistas

There are no significant framed or set piece views of a formal nature both in and out of the Conservation Area. The Conservation area is too small and linear to capture and contain one's gaze with any specific intent. However due to the raised position of Lawns Court and its topographical command over the properties on the opposite side of The Avenue there is a very large sky.

5.0 Character Analysis

5.1 Definition of Character Zones

Lawns Court is a well defined and consistent apartment development. There are no significant changes in character within the boundary of the Conservation Area.

5.2 Activity, Prevailing and Former Uses



Private entrance and path



Block 1-12

The Lawns Court Conservation Area is a purpose built speculative housing development of the 1930's. The land was previously agricultural and had no influence upon the setting out and development of the estate. The land use has remained consistent to this day.

5.3 Architectural and Historic Qualities of the Buildings

The character of Lawns Court Conservation Area is defined by linear apartment blocks in the Moderne style set in generous well-planted mature garden buffers. The blocks were designed by noted architects Cashmaille-Day and Lander with a strong horizontal character, unadorned white rendered finish, sweeping lines and stepping form.

The blocks comprise of single storey apartments of a squarish plan with windows to front and rear. Blocks are either 3, 4 or 6 apartments long on the ground floor. The short blocks are consistently two stories high. The others step up to three stories in the middle. In addition the longest block also steps down to single storeys and each end. This stepping form creates roof terraces for the upper flats.

The elevations are fairly pragmatic and unadorned with horizontal window opening and glazing bars. However some traditional suburban characteristics have been introduced such as bay windows, which break the horizontal dynamic and sculptural chimneys on in the corners of the stepping roofs. Unfortunately the chimneys only remain on block 25 to 34 where they and much needed balance and verticality to the overall composition as well as terminating the original balastrading to the roof gardens. The chimneys are steeped in shape, echoing the form of the building below.

The larger blocks have communal centrally located entrances at first floor with grand sweeping external staircases in front. Although other forms at Lawns Court are rigidly geometric and linear these staircases are of a sensuously sculptural and expressive plastic form. The curved forms are echoed on the inside cheeks of the recessed entrance porches.

Although the blocks have been built to a standardised form and plan type, there is a clear development in the detailing and material finishes from the first of the blocks to be built to the last. This is most probably an attempt by the builders to adapt the unadorned elevations to an English climate as most details are concerned with shedding water. The first blocks have smooth render which does not shed water well and stains easily. On the



Chimney on Block 25-34



First Floor Communal Entrance Door



External Staircase Detail

latter buildings rougher render is used and the elevations look fresher as a result. On the last blocks drip rails have been added to the facade above window and door openings. Rendered cowls have been placed above airbricks and where overflow pipes exit. A rebated drip detail has been added to the sweeping staircase.

6.0 Audit of Heritage Assets

6.1 Contribution of Significant Unlisted Buildings

Lawns Court Conservation Area has a consistent character defined by the six Moderne apartment blocks. No building expresses itself as having any greater significance than the others. There are no statutorily listed buildings in the area.

From a historical perspective moderne architecture is valued as an early pragmatic approach to building design. It eliminated the ornaments and detail that often decorated the facades of traditional buildings, and rationalised the use of often new materials and openness to structural innovation



Bay with original windows



Staircase Block1-12

6.2 Prevalent and Traditional Materials and Finishes

In Lawns Court all elevations are finished in render. This render is smooth troweled on the earlier first buildings and roughcast on the latter. Windows were originally thin steel 'Cristal' Style windows although unfortunately many have been replaced by bulky PVC. Front garden paths are crazy paved. Along the boundary and around changes in external levels are low dark brick walls.

6.3 Local Details

Lawns Court was constructed using methods and techniques that were common throughout the country during the rise of the suburban estate. Most materials were regionally sourced and can be found in suburban housing schemes of this period throughout London.

6.4 Public Realm Audit

Typically, Lawns Court has a very straightforward public realm of flagged footpaths flanking tarmac roads. The street furniture is ministry standard concrete kerbs and drainage with standard proprietary metallic lighting and services equipment. However, the roads through and into the Conservation Area are lined with small grasses verges that add to the character of the area.

6.5 Contribution of the Natural Environment

In general Lawns Court has a very green character defined by the relatively densely planted trees in front gardens and along the public pavements and the triangular green where there are a number of mature spruce trees. In the front a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees is a part of the now prevailing character. Indeed, the coniferous planting provides a green setting for the area during the winter. Along most front boundaries are broad and healthy private hedges.

6.6 Extent of loss Intrusion or Damage

Design, materials and extent of extensions

Many original windows and doors have been replaced by inappropriate modern alternative materials and designs. Replacements with unsympathetic modern materials can be out of keeping with the traditional houses and detract from their original character. There are some small extensions to ground floor flats and many of the exposed porches on the first floor entrances of the short blocks have been given light weight porches.

Roof alterations

Most chimneys have been removed which has had a detrimental impact on the character of the. Roofs have been repaired with felt and many of the junctions between roof and elevation are not as crisply finished as the modern style requires.

6.7 Capacity for Change

The Conservation Area is under pressure from insidious small scale change through erosion of building detail. Lawns Court is an affluent and prosperous residential area that benefits from a large proportion of owner occupied flats that are relatively well maintained. The residential nature of the area means that the restrictions of the Planning Act and the GDPO will prevent radical change in terms of land use and intensification

7.0 Community Involvement

The Council will maintain continued consultation with the residents of the Conservation Area. The appraisal will be published electronically to enable the document to be responsive to the changing circumstances and priorities of the residents and the need to preserve the character of the area.

8.0 Boundary Changes

In 2003 The Council undertook a comprehensive review of its conservation areas, at this time all areas were analysed for the rigour of their boundary definition and at this time Lawns Court Conservation Area is sensibly



Flat 12a



New entrance porch

defined and will not be reconsidered until the next major review.

9.0 General Condition

Lawns Court Conservation Area has suffered like all the Boroughs Conservation Areas with decline in character through works carried before conservation Area designation. The Condition of the Sudbury Court Conservation Area has declined most significantly in the following areas:

Render

Like many Monderne building of the period, Lawns Court suffers in the English weather. Render on many of the elevations is discoloured, saturated and loose. Some elevations have been patchily repaired and painted.

Windows and Doors

Replacement of windows and doors has been and continues to be the primary cause of character decline.

Chimneys

The loss of chimneys has detrimentally effected the composition of most of the blocks. Unfortunately it is unlikely that these will ever be replaced

10.0 Recommendations

The future of the Lawns Court Conservation Area is now more secure with the publication of the Character Appraisal and Management Plan. However in order to develop and enhance the character of the area the following recommendations need to be addressed:

- i) The review and publication of a Conservation Area Design Guide.
- ii) Improved liaison between the community and the Council.
- iii) Regular monitoring of completed developments their accordance with permitted plans and overall design and material.
- iv) Continued review of conservation Area policy to respond to cultural and ecological change.
- v) Greater input into design development by Conservation trained Council officers

11.0 Explanation of Technical Terms

Brick bond -	Arrangement of bricks in a wall, combining bricks laid lengthways (stretchers) and bricks laid widthways (Headers)
Casements -	An opening window frame.
Console bracket -	A decorative wall bracket which supports a bay window, part of a roof or other feature that projects out from the house.
Drip Rails -	A sill like section mounted above the opening casements of windows to shed water
Dentils -	Bricks set at interval to produce a decorative band
Eaves -	The junction of the wall and the lower edge of the roof
Glazing bars -	The bars of wood or metal which separate individual glass panes
Half-timber -	Often called 'timber framing', this means timbers applied vertically or horizontally to the walls of houses as a decorative feature.
Hopper head -	A cast box for collecting rainwater, which feeds into a drainpipe.
Imperial bricks -	The bricks used to build the Barn Hill houses, which are larger than today's bricks.
Jambs -	The side sections of a door or a window frame.
Leaded light -	A window made of small pieces of glass joined by strips of lead.
Parapet -	A section of a wall that projects above the eaves of a flat roof.
Roughcast -	Rendered wall finish with small stones added to the mixture.
Reveal -	The part of a wall that turns back towards the window frame in its opening
Sill -	The bottom section of a window frame that projects out from the wall to allow rain to run away.
Spalled bricks -	Bricks that have lost their front faces through frost damage.
String course -	A projecting band of brickwork,
Terracotta details -	Specially shaped and moulded bricks used as decorative features.

12.0 Contact Details

The Planning Service
Brent House

349 High Road,
Wembley,
Middlesex, HA9 6BZ

Email: tps@brent.gov.uk

Website: www.brent.gov.uk/planning

Conservation advice:

Regeneration Design team

Tel: 0208 937 5018

Fax: 0208 937 5207

Planning Advice:

South Area Planning Team

Tel: 0208 937 5265

Fax: 0208 937 5207

Landscape Design Advice

Landscape design Team

Tel: 0208 937 5248

Fax: 0208 937 5207

Building Regulations Advice

Building control

Tel: 0208 937 5499

Fax: 0208 9375

Appendix 1: Management Plan

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1.0 The Management Plan

1.1 The Management Strategy

This plan is intended to provide a focused and structured approach for the future and management of Sudbury Court Conservation Area. The plan will build upon and develop the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities identified by the appraisal process and create a coordinated framework for future development. The Plan will rationalise the statutory and policy requirements with the aspirations of local residents. A thoroughly debated plan will provide a point of reference with agreed and consistent aims for all those concerned with the future of Sudbury Court Conservation Area.

2.0 Policy

2.1 The Local Development Framework

The Planning Service at Brent Council will produce as part of its Local Development Framework a set of core policies for the control of development within Conservation Areas. In particular the core document will address the fundamental principle of “Preserve or Enhance” from the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Planning Policy Guidance Note 15. The core policies will deal with alterations to existing buildings, new development, the built landscape and the natural environment. Policies will also be adopted to respond to the pressures of large scale development in residential historic areas.

From the core policies a series of guidance documents which will be supplementary to the LDF will be produced. These supplementary documents will expand upon the basic policy principles giving specific guidance regarding materials, construction details and techniques for development in the Conservation Area.

In addition to the supplementary development guidance documents the LDF will identify and possibly initiate a number of “Area Action Plans” which may include the Conservation Area within its remit. The special requirements of designated Conservation Areas will be a principal consideration in the development of “Area Action Plans”

2.2 The Community Involvement

As part of the Development of the LDF the Council has produced a “Statement of Community Involvement” which outlines its strategy for consulting people who live, work and play in the London Borough of Brent. All documents produced as part of the LDF will be consulted upon using

the principles and processes described in the document. Hard copies are available from the addresses shown in contact details at the back of this document, or can be viewed on the Council website. The strategies outlined in this document will guide the Councils involvement with the residents of Sudbury Court.

2.3 Conservation Area Designation: Council

The management of the Conservation Area will be at all times legally regulated by the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Council will discharge its responsibilities under the act to “Preserve and Enhance” the character of its Conservation Areas. Also the Council will undertake regular reviews of the area to monitor the quality of development and the effectiveness of its policies and guidance. A review has just been completed and as a result the character appraisal and management plan has been produced.

2.4 Conservation Area Designation: Residents

The Designation of the Conservation Area and the subsequent application of an Article 4 Direction have placed a responsibility on all residents to carry out development of their properties and gardens in a way that preserves or enhances the character of the Conservation Area. The Article 4 Direction has also removed the permitted development rights of all residents in regard to the public face of their building. The Council is sympathetic to the extra burden that an Article 4 Direction places upon residents so has waived fees for applications for development that was previously permitted. The involvement of the residents of the conservation area is central to the successful preservation of the character of Sudbury Court and the Council is committed to a long term partnership.

2.5 Character Appraisals

The Council has produced a character appraisal for the Sudbury Court Conservation Area of which this plan is a part. The appraisal has been produced to provide a basis from which to develop not only development control decision making, but the informed development of design guidance. The appraisal will be the basis for the direction of this management plan, identifying the elements of the conservation area that require special attention or effort. The appraisals will also provide a valuable resource from which to defend appeals against refusal of planning permission.

2.6 Archives and Information

The heritage archive at Brent Council is available for public inspection at any time and provides a valuable resource for the management of the area. Copies of designation reports, schedules for the Article 4 Direction and background histories are available. The archives hold records of the development of the historic environment in Brent.

3.0 Conservation Strategy and Practice

Brent Council has recently carried out a review of its historic areas and now has 22 designated Conservation areas, with Article 4 Directions designated where necessary. This means that the Council has significant level of control of development within Sudbury Court Conservation Area. The preservation of the character of the area will require careful management through the application of Best Practice within a number of the Councils activities. The Council will need to retain technical advisors specialising in the preservation and conservation of the historic buildings and landscapes. The principal elements that make up the historic landscape of the area will require review, reassessment and monitoring to enable a high quality conservation service for the residents of Sudbury Court. This management plan requires the careful and competent application of its core policies to ensure the long term preservation of the area. Overall, Sudbury Court must be protected and preserved for the residents that live within it and indeed its numerous visitors. However, for the area to maintain a sustainable community, the policies that guide its development must be responsive to contemporary as well as historic pressures.

3.1 Development Control

Arguably the most damage to the character of the Conservation Area is caused by unsympathetic development through poorly designed and executed new buildings, extensions and alterations. Therefore, the role of development control is pivotal to the management of sensitive but responsive change in the Area. To help with management the following principles will be adopted to guide Development Control decision making.

- i) The Council will apply the principles, guidance and regulation outlined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the broader guidance of Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 and any subsequent revision or additions.

- ii) The Council will apply the adopted policies outlined in both the UDP 2004 and the emerging LDF.
- iii) The Council will require that all planning applications will be supported by a brief but thorough design guide that describes the ideas and reasoning behind the submitted design.
- iv) The fundamental requirement of any proposal for development in a Conservation Area is quality. All proposals must be of the highest quality design, proposing high quality materials and be executed to the highest standards of workmanship.
- v) The Council will not dictate the architectural style of any intervention but proposals must be either:

A high quality, contemporary design, that is at the same time sympathetic to the character of its context and neighbours.

Or,

A well researched replication of the high quality historic design, scale massing and detailing with strict replication of local materials.

Unfortunately scheme proposals often fall between these two standards and so compromise the character of the area.

- vi) The Conservation Area design guide will be a primary material consideration in the Councils' assessment of applications for development in the Sudbury Court Conservation Area.
- vii) The Council will use technically experienced and qualified officers in guiding the assessment and determination of all applications received.
- viii) The Council will expect that proposals for development in Conservation areas will be clearly and competently demonstrated through the submission of clear accurate drawings, photographs and specifications.
- ix) All applications for work in conservation areas must be accompanied with clear indications of

proposed materials. Physical examples of materials must be submitted prior to commencement of work.

- x) Where possible the Council recommend pre application consultation with the planning Service to help with the requirements for a high quality application.

3.2 Review of Conservation Systems

The Planning Listed buildings and Conservation Area Act 1990 requires that the Council review its historic environment to maintain an understanding of the pressures and changes within the Borough. However, the Council is committed to continuous review and has recently completed a re-survey of its Conservation Areas after which 10 Areas were de-designated. Sudbury Court retained its designation and will require continuous monitoring to ensure that its development is sensitive and responsive. The Council would consider a 5 year cycle a reasonable long term review period.

3.3 Planning Guidance

The Supplementary Planning Documents are critical in guiding development within Sudbury Court Conservation Area. It is essential that the guide is easy to use by residents, builders and designers alike. It needs to be clear about its role and give simple straightforward advice to residents. Therefore, the Council in conjunction with residents will periodically review the guide to maintain its continued validity. As previously stated the guide will be a material consideration in the consideration of applications submitted to the Planning Service.

3.4 Planning Policy Guidance Note15

Central Government has a policy role in the management of the country's historic areas and its PPG 15 Planning and the Historic Environment. However the Council's own Supplementary Planning Documents are critical in guiding development within Sudbury Court Conservation Area. It is essential that the guide is as easy to use by residents as builders and designers. It needs to be clear about its role and give simple straightforward advice to residents. Therefore, the Council in conjunction with residents will periodically review the guide to maintain its continued validity. As previously stated the guide will be a material consideration in the assessment of applications submitted to the planning Service.

3.5 Technical Advice

Following the recent Conservation Area review, the Executive recommended the appointment of a Conservation Assistant to increase the specialist advisory service available to the residents of all its Conservation Areas. Strategically the Council will, in conjunction with the residents association, encourage pre application consultation to reduce time wasted in both scheme development and application assessment. The increased technical staff resource will also enable more frequent and comprehensive review.

In order to maintain up to date technical advice the Council will ensure continued professional development for its conservation staff. This will enable the Council to manage the inevitable compromises required between the needs of the historic and natural environments as requirements for energy conservation become more demanding and complex.

In day to day management of the historic environment the Council will liaise and coordinate with English Heritage who can offer further specialist technical advice in support of the planning services work. The Council will endeavour to maintain this close working relationship to secure the long term preservation of Sudbury Court Conservation Area.

3.6 An Equitable Historic Environment

The Conservation of the historic environment at Sudbury Court will be managed in an equitable and fair manner in line with the Councils regulations on officer conduct and equal opportunities. The Council will undertake its management of the Sudbury Court Conservation Area in compliance with the Equality Standard for Local Authorities, The Brent Action Equity Plan and all other equalities legislation. Conservation work within the area will also require the application of the principles and guidance with the Disabilities Discrimination Act 2005, the codes of practice in BS8300 and the general guidance published by English Heritage.

4.0 Preservation and Enhancement

4.1 Understanding the Asset

The Character Appraisal of which this plan forms a part is central to understanding the Sudbury Court Conservation Area and its needs for the future. The results of this assessment will influence the review and development of the Design Guide, concentrating efforts on the elements

of the Conservation Area that are under the most threat; including rear extensions, window replacements, roof re-covering and front garden plots. The appraisal has also highlighted the better preserved areas of the Conservation Area and how the lessons of preservation of this element of the historic structure can be learned.

To fully understand the pressures on the character of Sudbury Court it is important to understand the pressures and needs of the community. The approach and viewpoint of the residents is important in making the management of the area responsive and sensitive. Management strategy and development guidance must take into account role of the community and the pressures that individuals experience in their home life.

To enable the integration of the needs of the fabric with the human considerations, the Council will endeavour to maintain continued liaison with the community through consultation. In addition to this Character Appraisal, attendance at Area Consultative Forums, and conservation forum meetings is proposed.

4.2 Maintaining Quality

One of the defining elements of Sudbury Court Conservation Area is the quality of design composition, construction detailing and the execution of the work. It is this attention to detail that will protect quality at all scales of interventions into the historic environment. To ensure the preservation of character, quality has to be maintained throughout the whole process of any proposed change. The Council will ensure that quality is maintained through its contribution to the following elements of development and alteration.

Quality of applications

- i) In line with PPG15 the Council will not accept outline applications for proposals in Conservation Areas. Full applications will be required to be supported by well drafted accurate scale drawings with plans, sections and elevations. In many cases for large schemes the Council will also expect analytical drawings, showing proposals in context, either through streetscape sections or three dimensional images.

Quality of materials

- ii) The Council will, where possible, require that materials proposed are submitted as part of the application and not as a condition.

Detail

- iii) Where appropriate to aid in the assessment of an application the Council may require the submission of large scale construction detail drawings. This enables officers to check the quality of what is proposed and ensure that on site design is not left to the builder.

Experienced persons

- iv) The Council will always advise that applicants appoint both consultants and builders who have experience of historic buildings work.

Specialist Advice

- v) Whenever possible the Council will provide a specialist advisory service to compliment the skills of consultants and builders.

Article 4 Directions

- vi) In order to reduce the decline in quality through alterations carried out as permitted development the Council has applied Article 4 Directions where appropriate to all its residential Conservation Areas including Sudbury Court.

PVCu Window frames

- vii) After many years of investigation and experimentation the Council has finally accepted that PVCu will not allow manufacturers to replicate the quality of original timber windows in Conservation areas - PVCu is also a significant pollutant. Therefore, the Council will not approve PVCu window frames in the Conservation Area.

Generally, the Council is convinced that it is the attention to detail and specific concern about quality at all levels that will help preserve and enhance the character of Sudbury Court Conservation Area.

4.3 Preserve or Enhance

As outlined in "Planning Policy Guidance Note 15" (Planning and the Historic Environment). Any proposals for work with the historic environment and in particular in Conservation Areas must as a minimum preserve the character of the Conservation Area. The Council supports this standard as a basic requirement but will always encourage applicants and their agents to develop schemes that will actively enhance the character of the Conservation Area. In meeting these fundamental requirements the Council will require that proposals are demonstrably a faithful replication of the local historic

precedent or a high quality contemporary building as described in Section 3.1 (v) above.

4.4 Enhancement Initiatives

As with the most Local Authorities, the London Borough of Brent has a restricted general budget so has no specific allocation for Conservation Areas. However, the Council has been successful in securing external funding for enhancement initiatives for its Conservation Areas, Therefore:

- i) The Council will, where appropriate, continue to seek external funding to support its work in Sudbury Court Conservation Area.
- ii) The Council will maintain an up to date understanding of current funding sources and where possible apply for funds for Sudbury Court Conservation Area through Townscape Heritage Initiatives and other special schemes.
- iii) Not all enhancement requires financial input. The Council will ensure that there is a regularly updated Design Guide for the Conservation Area to help residents with alterations and extensions to their homes.

4.5 Elements at Risk

As previously described the quality of the Conservation Area can be significantly damaged by the loss of historic detail and the loss of this type of detail has led to the de-designation of a number of the Borough's Conservation Areas. Therefore, the Council is convinced that it is the preservation of detail that will subsequently make the biggest contribution to the preservation of character. The protection of the following elements of the historic environment will be a high priority:

Roof Covering

- i) The plan requires that the special care will be taken in the management of roof recovering and replacement.

Chimneys

- ii) Chimneys are a particularly important element of Conservation areas and the plan requires that they should be one of the most significant management issues.

Window Frames and Doors

- iii) The Plan requires that Design guidance will be specifically concerned with replacement windows, the prevention of pollutants and sustainability.

Roof Covering

- iv) The plan requires that the special care will be taken in the management of roof recovering and replacement.

Brickwork

- v) Management of brickwork treatment is a critical issue in preserving character.

Front Plots

- vi) The preservation of front gardens and their boundary walls, fences and hedges is critical in preserving the character of streetscape. The careful management of these elements will be a significant issue in responsive design guidance and development control.

Extensions

- vii) Extension and alteration will be managed through broader specific design guidance for rear extensions.

Satellite Dishes

- viii) The proliferation of satellite dishes has had significant impact on all Conservation areas and will need to be addressed in Design guidance.

4.6 Training and Communication

Where appropriate the Council will ensure that its Conservation Service is up to date and fully conversant with current practice. To achieve this, the Council will ensure that its officers follow a structured training plan. From this the Council will endeavour to attend Forums and resident group meetings to disseminate good practice to residents and their agents.

5.0 Monitoring and Review

The Planning Service is obliged by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to review its Conservation Areas from "time to time". Brent Council has regularly carried out reviews of its historic areas and in 2003 completed a thorough re-evaluation; culminating in the de-designation of some conservation areas that had lost the character that led to their special status. The

review enabled the Council to then concentrate its limited resources on the remaining Conservation Areas enabling the production of this Character Appraisal for Sudbury Court Conservation Area. To maintain a rigorous monitoring system the Council will:

- i) Encourage greater involvement in the guardianship of Sudbury Court by the residents group.
- ii) Establish a regular visual survey of the area by conservation or enforcement officers.
- iii) Depending upon resources re-evaluate the character of Sudbury Court Conservation Area every 5 – 8 years.

5.1 Development Control

The Development control process is controlled by the Unitary Development Plan and the supplementary guidance that is developed from it. In order to maintain a high standard of decision-making the Council will ensure regular training and review of policies that control the decision making process.

5.2 Design Guidance

The Council will produce a responsive design guide for Sudbury Court that can be reviewed as part of the broader re-evaluation process outlined in section 5.0 iii).

5.3 Community Involvement

The Council will encourage residents to carry out their own review of the management of Sudbury Court Conservation Area and submit their findings for inclusion in wider assessments.

6.0 The Future

6.1 A Responsive Plan

The management plan for Sudbury Court Conservation Area is intended to be a development framework for anyone involved or concerned about the future of the area. It outlines the issues that need consideration and action if we are to preserve and enhance the character of the Sudbury Court Conservation Area.

Most importantly, this plan will be responsive and reactive to the changing needs of its residents. It is purposely strategic, not specific, to enable it to accommodate

changes in society and changes in society's expectations. At the same time it will maintain the balance with the need to preserve character.

This plan is also flexible enough to be adjusted to respond to the frequent changes in legislation and regulation that influence the built environment - In particularly the Council's eventual change from a Unitary Development Plan to a Local Development Framework.

Overall, it is in everyone's interest to preserve and enhance the character of Sudbury Court Conservation Area. This plan is intended to build upon the Character Appraisal, coordinate and focus the various needs and requirements of everyone involved in the protection and enhancement of the landscape of the Conservation Area.

London Borough of Brent
Planning Service



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