

Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane Conservation Area. It will identify the factors that led 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 Buck Lane Conservation Area was originally designated in February 1979 as a result of heightened awareness of the work of the designer, Ernest Trobridge brought on by John Betjeman's programmes on Metroland, research into Trobridge's life and times and studies undertaken by the then Oxford Polytechnic. The designated area centres on the cross roads at the top of Wakeman's Hill and includes the remaining Trobridge properties on the hill top, giving a coherent boundary and broader context to a readily definable area whilst protecting views into and out of the area.

A conservation review in 2003 highlighted the need for greater planning controls to protect the conservation area from detrimental change through permitted development. In February 2005 an Article 4(2) Direction was applied to the Conservation Area as part of a wider application of special control to all of the Borough's historic areas.



Buck Lane



Buck Lane

List of properties within the Conservation Area:

Ash Tree Dell:	1 - 51, 2 - 64
Buck Lane:	1 - 45, 2 - 48, 86 - 104
Buck Lane:	Upminster House, Highfort Court
Buck Lane:	Stonegate Court, The Triangle
Hay Lane:	56 - 68
Hayland Close:	1 - 21 consec.
Highfield Avenue:	46 - 66
Highfield Avenue:	Mountaire Court, Shirley Court
Highfield Avenue	Tudor Gates
Pear Close:	1 - 18 consec.
Wakeman's Hill Avenue	Rochester Court
Wakeman's Hill Avenue	Whitecastle Mansions



Haylands Close

1.2 Planning Policy Context**Definition of a Conservation Area**

Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural and historic character with an overall quality 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 law 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.



Ash Tree Dell

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.



Whitecastle Mansions

Change and Development

As with all Conservation Areas, Buck Lane has been 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 and of a design where more significant maintenance work is required prompting owners to replace doors and windows and roof coverings. 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 Conservation Areas of Brent are all now protected by an Article 4 Direction which should help to stop the decline in character through permitted development and possible in time reverse the influence of unsympathetic development. The area is not well served by public transport so there are no particular development pressures for increasing housing densities.

2.0 Location and Setting

2.1 Location and Context

The Conservation area includes parts of seven roads in the north-east corner of Fryent ward in the London Borough of Brent. The area straddles Buck Lane, including culs-de-sac to the rear. The Conservation Area sits within the large suburban dormitory of northwest London and is surrounded by less flamboyant suburban developments of the late 1920's through to the mid 1930's.

2.2 General Character and Plan Form

The special character of the area is based largely on the design, grouping and setting of the buildings. The estate itself is not without a wider historic interest, because of the way it was funded, designed and developed. It is entirely residential in form and its hill top location affords



Highfield Avenue

impressive views, some privately enjoyed, which add to the character of the area. Such features together create an enclave of attractive and distinctive character within an area of otherwise everyday suburban landscape. Its high quality architectural character is reinforced by its historic and relatively narrow and winding road location. Boundary treatments are predominantly low stone/brick walls with Privet planting behind. In many cases, particularly to corner plots, close-boarded fencing is used. Only a few of the plots have entirely lost their landscaped frontages.



Buck Lane

2.3 Landscape Setting

The estate was developed on virgin agricultural land accessed from two medieval lanes whose names reflect hunting in the area which continued to the end of the 19th century and the 14th century land ownership by the De la Haye family. The character of the area benefits from its hill top location which, at 92 metres above sea level, is the highest point in the Borough of Brent. The hill name – Wakemans Hill suggests an early lookout or signalling station of some long forgotten time or event. The hill was originally gravel topped but the gravel was excavated in the 1920's for road construction. The land form falls steeply to the west, south and east of the Conservation Area, originally to the medieval field systems that lay to the rear of the medieval villages of Roe Green and The Hyde. The rise and fall of the topography means that perambulations around the roads possess long distant views out of the Conservation Area as significant corners are turned.

3.0 Historic Development and Archaeology

3.1 Origins and Historic Development

With the age of the name of Wakemans Hill and its close proximity to the Roman *Watling Street* evidence of early occupancy might be anticipated but early remains have so far not been found. References to the village of Roe Green can be found as far back as the 14th century and The Hyde, renamed Colindale in the tide of suburban development would have had inns and beer houses which served the long distance traveller to and from London. Kingsbury Green itself had remained something of a rural backwater until the 1920's.

By 1911, the expanding suburbs of N.W. London had attracted the Belfast-born architect - Ernest George Trobridge - to the edge of London's countryside at Golders Green where he set up practice as an estate agent, surveyor and architect. Shortage of funds in his own pocket and from Building Societies led him to



Hayland Close

promote property development along co-partnership lines. By this means friends, relatives and prospective clients invested in land acquisition and building construction or in property acquisition and management. In September 1915 he moved out of Golders Green for a less expensive rented property in Hay Lane, Kingsbury to escape the bombing raids.



Hayland Close

Trobridge (1884-1942), whose ideas were influenced by the Swedenborg Church, left Hay Lane in 1922 and came to live at "Hayland" in Kingsbury Road, a house, now listed, which he had originally built for his father-in-law and where he remained until his death.

With the resumption of building construction after 1918 Trobridge was ready to meet the pent-up demand having formulated plans for cheap and rapid house construction in the revival of "ancient methods" in timber framing and cladding - a form which he considered would last long and materials which he thought would be readily available. Trobridge patented his "Compressed Green Wood Construction" and in 1920 the Ministry of Labour agreed a scheme of employment of disabled ex-servicemen. With the prospect of Government building grants Trobridge purchased ten acres of land at Slough Lane, Kingsbury and erected a large mill. However, in December 1920 the House of Lords threw out the Housing Subsidy Bill, several clients withdrew from the scheme and he was left bankrupt.



Hay lane

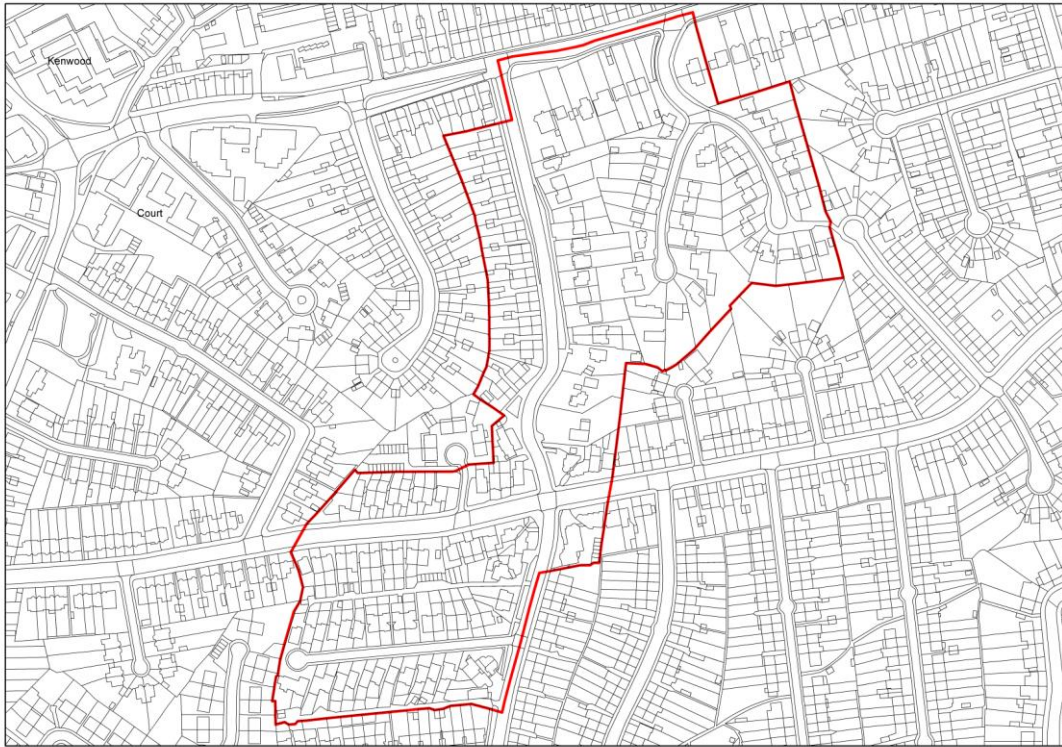
By mid-1921 however, his fortunes had revived and purchasers were to hand for his Ferndene Estate at Slough Lane and the Elmwood estate in Stag Lane. By the end of September 1922 twenty houses had been completed in the area. Each house was built for a specific customer and to aid development he established co-partnership schemes. In 1925/26, a local developer, Harry J. Aldous, acquired the Colin Park estate which lay between Colindeep Lane and the Edgware Road (in the London Borough of Barnet) and the fields opposite which extended over Wakeman's Hill. The latter he developed as the Summit Estate. The Co-partnership scheme established for the development of the Summit estate (Buck Lane) from about 1929 was the Kingsbury Cross Co-Partnership and most of that estate is now included in the Buck Lane Conservation Area. The "cross" related to the cross roads on the hill top proposed for a shopping centre in the Kingsbury Town Planning scheme.



Pear Close

In 1932 the then Metropolitan line (now Jubilee) was opened through Kingsbury to Stanmore. The publication of the plans and the opening of the station, coupled with the improvements to the road network laid out for the British Empire Exhibition back in 1924/25 and the

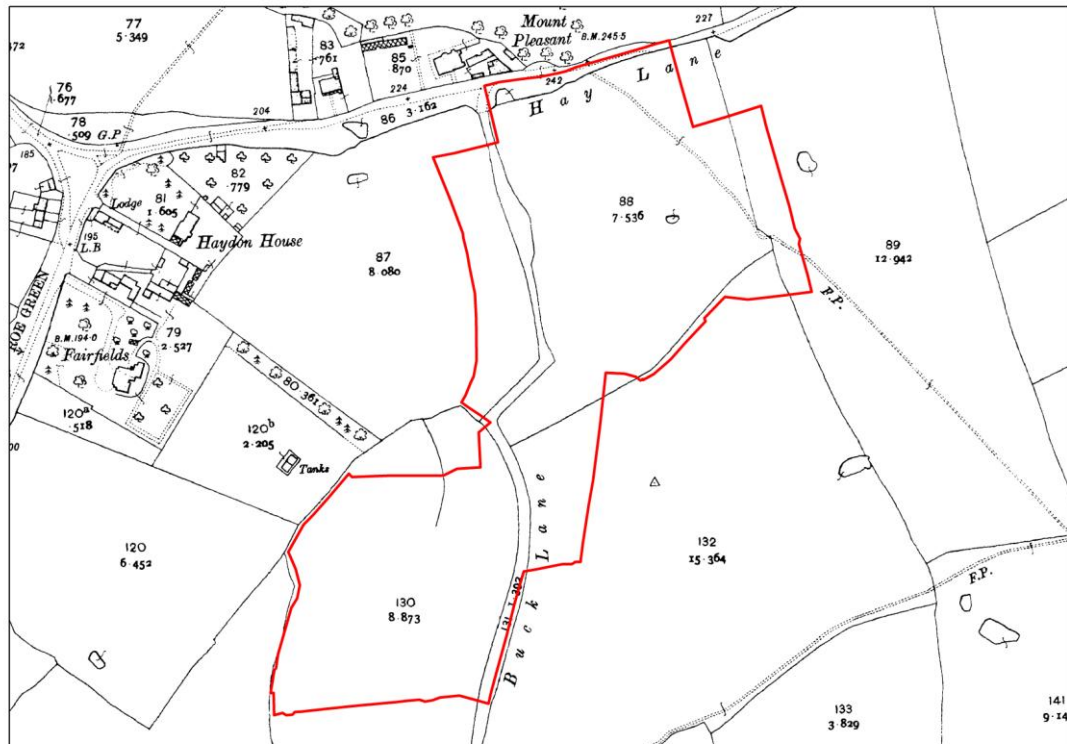
creeping tide of housing estates along Church Lane encouraged and facilitated the development of the area.



Buck Lane c.2006



Buck Lane c.1940



Buck Lane c.1910

3.2 Archaeological Significance and Potential

The houses in the area were laid out from the late 1920's over 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 area

4.0 Spatial analysis

4.1 Character and inter-relationship of spaces

Buck Lane Conservation Area is an infill residential estate, which is part of suburban Kingsbury. It formed part of the development of agricultural land whose field boundaries determined its layout and extent. What sets it apart and makes it "special" is the distinctive and singular character of Trobridge's buildings, their inter-relationship and setting. buildings and open space. The area was developed in the period 1929-1937.

4.2 Views and Vistas

The most significant public views both in and out of the Conservation Area are east from the summit towards Hampstead, north-east to Totteridge, west towards St. Mary's church spire on Harrow-on-the-Hill and south from Buck Lane past the new national stadium to the north downs. Private views from upper floors or flat roof tops provide a wider view across London.

5.0 Character Analysis

5.1 Definition of Character Zones

Trobridge's properties can be clearly identified amid a well defined and consistent suburban area, whose grain flows through and out of the Conservation Area.

5.2 Activity, Prevailing and Former Uses

The Buck Lane Conservation Area comprises for the most part individually styled properties built for and part funded by specific customers during the late 1920's and 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

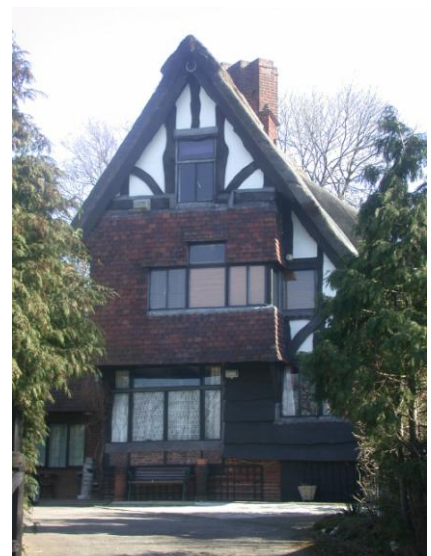
The character of Buck Lane Conservation Area displays a prize selection of Trobridge's intricate designs and show his respect for materials. In 1926, Aldous engaged Trobridge in the development of the Summit Estate and Trobridge employed his patented Compressed Green Wood Construction which is evident at 3-5 Buck Lane and 12 Hayland Close. Built in 1926, these are typical of his early style, which is that of timber framed, timber boarded houses with steep pitched thatched roofs, leaded light windows with stained glass, internal timber partitions and floors. inglenooks and brick fire places. The houses are elevated above ground on brick piers on elm piles. The external cladding varies from horizontal Elmwood boarding to the traditional wood pegged timber beams with rendered panels. The Buck Lane properties are now listed. No. 3 Hayland Close - one half of a proposed semi-detached pair - is of this style but has been much altered. The detailing of these and his many other properties indicates an impressive respect for materials and their working by local craftsmen. At 15-16 Hayland Close (built in 1927) the timber cladding is absent and the thatch gives way to tile. There are small gables at each end of this two-storey semi-detached pair and the ground floor is brick-built with tile hanging above. The same form of brick and tile treatment is evident at no. 19 Hayland Close. The



3 Buck Lane



12 Hayland Close



45 Buck Lane

development of the hill top - the highest point in the Borough of Brent - incorporates some of Trobridge's last thatched houses in Kingsbury, of which the three storey tile hung house at 45 Buck Lane, built in 1929/30, is perhaps the most impressive. A linked two storey extension has been added to this property and other recent, mixed attempts to imitate or reflect the palette of Trobridge's materials can be found at 15, 17, 19 and 21 Buck Lane, the former two being more quirky and successful. Trobridge's hardwood housing however is a feature of the post 1914-18 war period but it is not peculiar to Kingsbury. Various firms of builders were licensed to carry out his hardwood patents, elsewhere in the country.



35-37 Buck Lane

By 1930, housing subsidies were no longer available and Trobridge was meeting increased competition from the tide of suburban house builders who had been attracted to the area. Other builders were active outside the Summit Estate but in what is now the Conservation Area. F.G. Bradbury, for example built the standard two-storey semi-detached houses, punctuated by shared drives, at nos. 2-48 in Buck Lane. They survive as a relatively unspoilt though unremarkable group of inter-war semi-detached houses with bay fronts and first floor oriel windows. Such houses as these though were being built in brick at a cost significantly lower than that of Trobridge's timber and thatch dwellings. The rising cost of timber and the more plentiful supply of brick must have influenced his design approach and his response was typically unorthodox and dramatic. On Wakeman's Hill he created what has been described as "English architecture through the ages". Rochester Court on Buck Lane (1935-37) has been faced with stone as if in imitation of Rochester Castle. Tudor Gates (1935-36) incorporates Tudor features of the period – namely herring bone brickwork and twisted chimneys. Highfort Court (1936-37), with its crenellated roofline and tower, reflects the theme that "the Englishman's home is his castle". Highfort Court and Whitecastles Mansions are cement rendered two storey structures with inset stonework, turrets and arrowslits, crenellated roof parapets, rounded entranceways with brick reveals and tile creasing in the roof gables. Within this fantastic reconstruction of different architectural styles jettied timber roof gables are introduced at Whitecastle Mansions and Tudor Gates over the first floors. Stonegate Court incorporates a steep pitched angular roof, a feature which is used to greater effect at Mountaire Court. The three stories of Mountaire Court overlook earlier development at 46-66 Highfield Avenue (the original name of Highfield Gardens survives on the wall) and these are of comparatively modest design style but nevertheless attractive two storey hipped and pitched roofed flats with leaded small pane windows.



Whitecastles Mansions



Whitecastles Mansions



Highfort Court

Trobridge's development of flats began on the southern slopes of Wakeman's Hill, as at Ash Tree Dell in 1933, and moved towards the hilltop where Rochester Court was finished in 1937. Much of Ash Tree Dell incorporates tall brick chimneys, Tudor style timber-work, rendering and tooth-edged brickwork. There is also some stained gloss work and tile hanging at first floor level but here he introduces in a decorative pattern brick edging and tile creasing around the round-headed entrance ways - a feature which he used to notable effect at Upminster House in Buck Lane.

Upminster Court is a two storey block of flats with brick chimneys and a tiled pitched roof. The ground floor is brick faced and the first floor is rendered. Between the two a wavy line of vertical tile creasing caps the ground floor windows and doors and expands over the first floor rendering to take on a castellated appearance in brickwork, incorporating the first floor windows over the entrance ways. A turreted southern elevation to the building with twisted Tudor style chimneys heralds Tudor Court in Highfield Avenue .

6.0 Audit of Heritage Assets

6.1 Contribution of Significant Unlisted Buildings

The street scenes of the Buck Lane Conservation area, although of a consistent residential character, provide the visitor with numerous surprises. Two examples of Trobridge's Compressed green elmwood construction are statutorily listed; the remainder are surprisingly not but receive acknowledgement through local listing and protection through conservation designation and Article 4 control.

The townscape role of the castellated buildings and their neighbours at the focal point of the crossroads provide a central set piece but throughout the area the roads with their grass verges, the front boundary hedges and trees and gaps and views provide an attractive setting for all the buildings.

Details of the buildings are given above but the role of the unlisted buildings in the area and their impact on the area's character is of major importance and should not be underestimated.

6.2 Prevalent and Traditional Materials and Finishes

The contribution of the major constituent elements to the character of Buck Lane is apparent to all who visit the area (and there are organised groups that visit it). However, no less important is the quality of detail that the



Stonegate Court



Rochester Court



Mountaire Court

buildings in the Conservation area enjoy. Trobridge was a remarkable designer and, as he was keen to point out, a home maker rather than a house builder.

The design of doors, windows, walls, piers, chimney stacks etc is always of extremely high quality in the area and Buck Lane is particularly fortunate in that a lot of the contributing detail has survived. Indeed, the area owes as much to the quality of building detail as to the broader townscape setting for the definition of its character

6.3 Local Details

Buck Lane was constructed using methods and techniques that were common throughout the country during the Arts & Crafts period and the rise of the suburban estate. The elm wood was locally sourced from Kingsbury's own elms but most materials were regionally sourced and can be found in suburban housing schemes of this period throughout London.

6.4 Public Realm Audit

Typically, Buck Lane 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, Buck Lane and Hay Lane contain grass verges denoting the original alignment of the old highway and these add to the rural character of the area.

6.5 Contribution of the Natural Environment

In general, Buck Lane has a very green character defined by the relatively densely planted hedges and trees to garden boundaries and along the roads of the estate. Older trees like oaks survive as reminders of the former field boundaries.

Losses of front gardens to entire frontage hardstandings do occur in Hayland Close and Buck Lane but are relatively few so that the green character of the street scenes predominate.

6.6 Extent of loss Intrusion or Damage

Design of alterations to front elevations

The Character of most houses within the Conservation area is defined by the quality of detail and composition.

The thoughtful mix of materials used in the elevations helps to define the special character.

Unfortunately, the use of upvc or aluminium in many cases of replacement windows rather than wood is



Chimney Tudor Gates



Corner Window 39 Buck Lane



Stairs Highfort Court

damaging to both the character and design of the houses and in turn the street scene.

The proliferation of satellite dishes on street frontages is also inappropriate in preserving the 1930's character.

Design, materials and extent of extensions

Extensions of less than 50 cubic metres (subject to certain provisions) can be built to houses without planning permission (where no other extensions exist) and these, although comparatively small, can be damaging particularly where they close the gaps existing between properties. Flats however, of which there are many, have no such rights and here, in many cases, the installation of new windows is unauthorised.

The impact of such extensions or alterations is exacerbated further by an inappropriate design, scale, and massing, and use of poor quality materials. New porches often have a poor relationship to the original front elevations of houses. There are examples of such extensions in the Buck Lane Conservation Area significantly affecting the appearance of individual buildings and the open suburban character of the Conservation Area.

Changes to fenestration

In many instances, especially where the flats are concerned, original windows and doors have been replaced by inappropriate modern alternative materials and designs. Replacements with unsympathetic modern materials is generally out of keeping with the traditional suburban houses and detract from the original character of the area, especially where designers like Trobridge had such a deep respect for the materials he employed.

Roof alterations

In some instances, bulky projecting dormer windows have been installed to the side and rear elevations of the properties, which whilst taking advantage of the long distant views, have a detrimental impact on the character of the roofscape, which is an important aspect of the Conservation Area character.

Painting

There are examples of part or whole front elevations of properties having been painted red or brick red, but these are few enough that they do not affect the overall appearance of houses.

Formation of Drives

There are good and bad examples of the formation of vehicular accesses facilitating parking in front gardens in terms of width and materials which the recent Article 4 seeks to control and influence.



**Unsympathetic widow replacement
Highfield Avenue**



Porch Infill Pear Close



**Extended porch and hardlandscaped
front garden Pear Close**



Front dormer Pear Close

Front gardens and boundary walls/hedges

Few of the front gardens in the area have been totally hard surfaced to provide car parking on the frontage. The removal of front boundary walls/hedges is not acceptable, but examples of this are relatively few so that they do not affect the overall appearance of properties.

The parking of cars on frontage hardstanding can be unsightly and harmful to the appearance of the property and the suburban character of the Conservation Area. Although there are a number of different treatments to front boundaries, they are all part of the character of the area. In many cases, original front walls and their circular piers survive although many are badly in need of repair and maintenance.

6.7 Capacity for Change

The Conservation area is under pressure from insidious small scale change through erosion of building detail. – Buck Lane is an affluent and prosperous residential area that benefits from a large proportion of owner occupied houses that are relatively well maintained. The residential nature of the area means that the restrictions of the Planning Act and the GDPO through the Article 4 Direction will prevent radical change in terms of land use and intensification.

7.0 Community Involvement

The Council will maintain continues 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 Buck Lane Conservation Area is sensibly defined and will not be adjusted until the next major review.

9.0 General Condition

Buck Lane Conservation Area has suffered like all the Boroughs Conservation Areas with decline in character through works carried out as permitted development. The Council has in response to this, applied Article 4 Directions to all its areas to prevent insensitive development. The Condition of the Buck Lane Conservation Area has declined most significantly in the following areas:

Windows and Doors

Replacement of windows and doors has been and continues to be the primary cause of character decline. The article 4 Direction and a designated conservation enforcement officer will help to reduce this type of insensitive development.

Front Garden plots

Front boundary walls are being removed and garden plots are being paved over to provide large parking spaces that significantly reduce the residential character of the area.

Extensions

In general poor selection of materials is leading to a serious decline in character through incongruous building materials and detail the Council must control this part of development to improve the impact of new extensions.

10.0 Recommendations

The future of the Buck Lane Conservation Area was secured with the application of the Article 4 Direction and the situation may improve with the publication of the Character Appraisal. 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 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.
Pargetting -	Carved and moulded decorative plaster work.
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 Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane.

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 Buck Lane and the Council is committed to a long term partnership.

2.5 Character Appraisals

The Council has produced a character appraisal for the Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane. This management plan requires the careful and competent application of its core policies to ensure the long term preservation of the area. Overall, Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane 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. Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane Conservation Area.

3.6 An Equitable Historic Environment

The Conservation of the historic environment at Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane.

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 Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane Conservation Area.
- ii) The Council will maintain an up to date understanding of current funding sources and where possible apply for funds for Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane Conservation Area. To maintain a rigorous monitoring system the Council will:

- i) Encourage greater involvement in the guardianship of Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane Conservation Area and submit their findings for inclusion in wider assessments.

6.0 The Future

6.1 A Responsive Plan

The management plan for Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane 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 Buck Lane 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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