

Harlesden 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 Harlesden 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 Harlesden Conservation Area was originally designated in March 1994.

List of properties within the Conservation Area:

High Street: 1-85, 2-104, 97-109, The Royal Oak PH,
The Green Man PH

Station Road: All Souls Church and Vicarage

Wendover Road: Post Office

Manor Parade: 1-18

Acton Lane: Church and Presbytery of Our Lady of
Willesden

The Croft: 1



High Street



High Street

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 and 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.

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.



Acton Lane

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, Harlesden Town Centre is at risk from insensitive development. The surrounding wards are some of the most deprived within the Borough and the town centre reflects this with a range of low cost shops and services within the buildings. These buildings are of an age where significant maintenance work is required in order to preserve and enhance the character and identity of the area.



Acton Lane

All of the residential Conservation Areas of Brent are now protected by an Article 4 Direction which should help to stop the decline in character through permitted development and in time reverse the influence of unsympathetic development. However, this is not the case in Harlesden Town Centre because all commercial

and shared residential units do not have Permitted Development rights.

2.0 Location and Setting

2.1 Location and Context

The Conservation Area lies within the Harlesden & Kensal Green wards of the London Borough of Brent. It is situated in an area of dense Victorian development, towards the southern boundary of the borough. Harlesden is a bustling shopping area and is designated as a Main District Centre within the Unitary Development Plan 2004.

2.2 General Character and Plan Form

The general built form of the Conservation Area is largely one of tall narrow fronted premises, three and four storeys in height, crowding in upon a comparatively narrow highway. The layout of the High Street forms a dog leg and at the centre point of the town the Jubilee Clock creates a key focal point.

Although there are similarities in scale, there are wide varieties in style and elevational treatment. The attractiveness of the buildings lies largely above shop level, with comparatively few of the original shop fronts having survived.

2.3 Landscape Setting

The topography of this Conservation Area is relatively consistent, although the level begins to rise on Acton Lane towards the Church and Presbytery of Our Lady of Willesden.

There is no visual connection to the wider London context from the Conservation area. Building heights and local topography mean that there are no significant views to either man made or natural landmarks.



5 High Street



Acton Lane

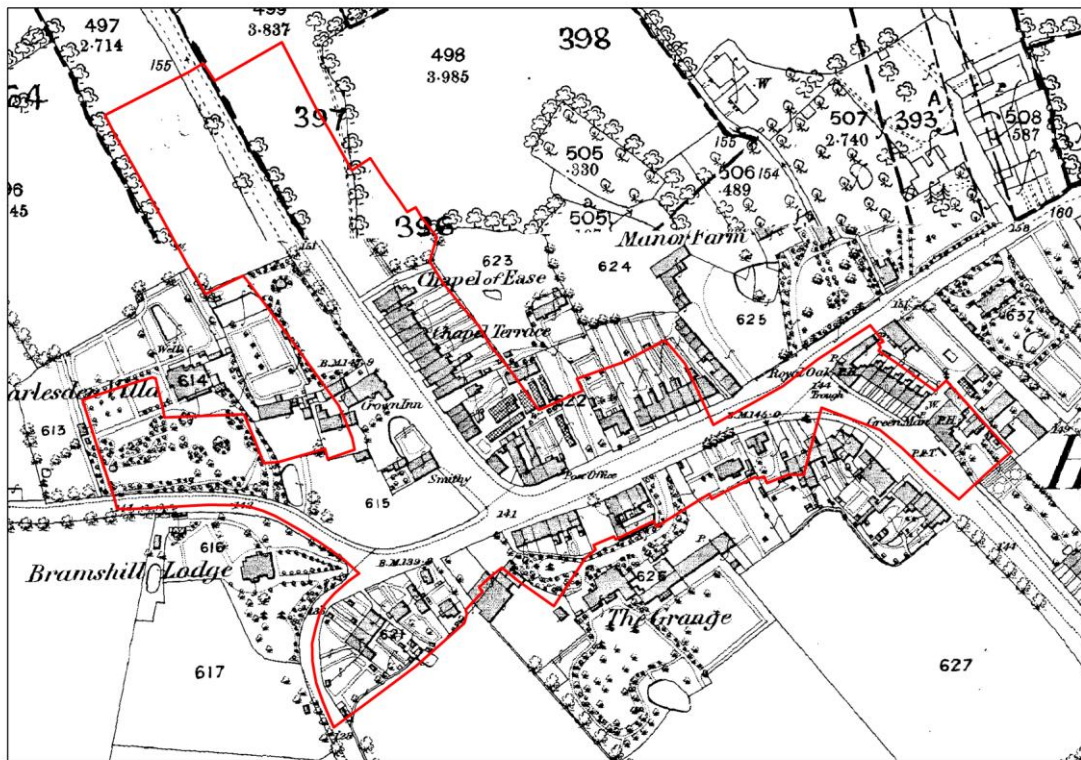
3.0 Historic Development and Archaeology



Harlesden Conservation Area c. 2006



Harlesden Conservation Area c. 1940



Harlesden Conservation Area c. 1870

3.1 Origins and Historic Development

Harlesden was one of the earliest commercial centres in Brent and its growth from a country village to suburb was linked to the expansion of the capital's rail network in the nineteenth century.

The London to Birmingham Railway was opened through Kensal Green and the southern edge from Willesden to Hertfordshire in July 1837. A station did not appear at Willesden until 1842 or at Harlesden until 1912. Willesden Junction Station (beyond Willesden Parish's boundary) was opened in 1866 and was accompanied by railway cottages. On the south-east side of the station the North London line provided a station for Harlesden and Kensal Green on the Broad Street - Kew (now Richmond) line, assuming that Euston as a terminus would become too congested and the means of transit across London inadequate and inconvenient. To meet all the feeders and distributors nearly all the express trains in and out of Euston were stopped at Willesden Junction

The railways brought people and trade, and people and trade encouraged the railway to enlarge its services. Willesden Junction became an important railway centre with extensive yards and sidings between 1873 and 1894. People came to find work and with them came the building prospectors. The green fields of Harlesden and the neighbourhood soon became the haunt of builders,

with housing in Minet Avenue, Acton Lane, Bramshill and Nightingale Roads appearing in the mid-1890s and early 1890s.

In 1870 Harlesden included three public houses, all now rebuilt and five terraces of properties as well as country houses and farms. An 1874 map of the area shows a small cluster of buildings around what is now the junction of the High Road with Park Parade. The Chapel of Ease (now at 27 High Street) marks the northern point of development and a small terrace of development on the eastern side of the high street (now 111 -129 High Street) marks the southern end. Harlesden's rapid development took place between 1880-1910 accelerated by the establishment of major industries and by the coming of the trams. The horse drawn tram service introduced to the Royal Oak by 1888 by the Harrow Road and Paddington Tramway Company brought a cheap and regular public transport system for the first time. The service was electrified in 1906.

The centre developed plot by plot by speculative builders-cum-landowners constructing small parades of shops with "houses" above. Some of the then existing terraces of houses were extended forward to create shops at ground floor level, as at Harlesden Terrace (75-85 High Street) extended by architect T.E. Rickard following 1878. Other terraces like that adjoining the Royal Oak were demolished and rebuilt. Of the older properties, the original Chapel of Ease with its foundation stone of 1869 still survives at 27 High Street.

3.2 Archaeological Significance and Potential

Harlesden High Street lies within an Archaeological Priority Area as designated in the Council's Unitary Development Plan 2004.

4.0 Spatial analysis

4.1 Character and inter-relationship of spaces

The special character of the Conservation Area was and is derived from the historic setting. It is the variety of different styles along the relatively short section of road which give it a distinctive character with a traditional appeal. The main character of space is defined by the 4 and 5 storey buildings and their relationship to the High Street. The distance between the buildings and width of the road is relatively consistent throughout the Conservation Area and provides a strong sense of enclosure. There is general uniformity in the building line and heights, which gives the area a strong cohesive



High Street

identity. The buildings however vary in detail design and materials.

4.2 Views and Vistas

There are a number of significant views within the Conservation Area. Looking along the High Street towards Station Road, the Jubilee Clock provides a centre point, which is framed by the All Souls Church and Vicarage. The Royal Oak Public House creates a landmark at the key junction where the High Street meets Manor Park Road and Park Parade. The views from the Jubilee Clock at the heart of the town centre generate a strong impression of what was once a major commercial centre within the Borough and views up Acton Lane towards the Church and Presbytery of Our Lady of Willesden create a strong sense of local identity.



All Souls Church



Jubilee Clock

5.0 Character Analysis

5.1 Definition of Character Zones

The Conservation Area is a well defined and consistent mixed use town centre. There are no significant changes in character within the boundary.

5.2 Activity, Prevailing and Former Use

The area has a range of uses as expected within a town centre. Retail uses predominate at ground floor level, whilst there is a degree of residential and office use on upper floors. There are also a number of other uses such as ecclesiastical, takeaways, bookkeepers and banks. In 1870 Harlesden included three public houses, all now rebuilt.



Public House, 34 High Street

5.3 Architectural and Historic Qualities of the Buildings

Architecturally the best buildings are now statutorily listed. All Souls Church and its vicarage were built in 1879. The church is built in an eclectic mix of Early English and Continental Gothic styles and is celebrated for its elaborate octagonal roof (architect E.J Tarver - (1841-1891).

The local landmark, the cast-iron Jubilee Clock was erected in 1887 to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

The Green Man and adjoining terrace were rebuilt on the site in 1906-1907 (architects Harrison and Ward) are Arts and Crafts buildings with Queen Anne influences. The pub has a symmetrical red brick façade with two shaped gables, stone dressings and depressed flanking



The Green Man

arch to service yard with oriel window over. Ground floor composed of wide depressed stuccoed arches.

The Royal Oak (1891-1893) and adjoining terrace at 97-103 High Street (built 1898-1900) are both locally listed. The pub is constructed in an Elizabethan Revival style while the terrace is italianate with references to Flemish renaissance styles. Both are of red brick with stone and stucco dressings.



The Royal Oak

6.0 Audit of Heritage Assets

6.1 Contribution of Significant Unlisted Buildings

Although there are a number of statutorily listed buildings – 105-109 High Street (Grade II), The Green Man Public House (Grade II), All Souls Church (Grade II*), Church of Our Lady of Willesden (Grade II) and Jubilee Clock (Grade II) – and locally listed buildings - Royal Oak Public House, 97-103 High Street - there are also some exemplary buildings which are not listed.

2-26 High Street are period Victorian terraces of the mid 1870s sporting round headed windows with florid capitals and decorative arches and key stones. Original bracketed eaves cornice and shop front pilasters survive only in places. The original bank and the bank buildings built following 1891 are attractive four storey buildings incorporating pedimented roof dormers. The former public house at 34 High Street has a poor ground floor design but above the decorative brick and tile work, ballustrades and bargeboards present an attractive and somewhat unexpected frontage.

The remaining shop premises largely date from two distinctive periods - 1880-1884 and 1902-1907; 74 High Street (dated 1882) and 1-15 High Street date from the former and No.29-51 from the latter, all with characteristic architectural embellishments.



105 High Street



Bank Buildings

6.2 Prevalent and Traditional Materials and Finishes

Buildings are predominately constructed of brick with yellow stock used on the earlier buildings and a range of red bricks used on later developments. Most have a rich and eclectic treatment of natural stone and stucco dressings.

6.3 Local Details

Harlesden was laid out by private developers and has features common to most parts of commercial London



97 High Street

developed during the late Victorian period. There are no specific or distinguishing factors other than the broad variation in style and period.

6.4 Public Realm Audit

The poor quality of the public realm within the Conservation Area reflects the general lack of investment within the town centre. Typically, Harlesden has a very straightforward public realm of flagged footpaths within granite kerbs flanking tarmac roads. The street furniture is ministry of transport lamp standards and drainage fittings with other standard proprietary metallic lighting and services equipment. The Conservation Area is very much urban in character.

The focus of the town centre at the Jubilee Clock is particularly poor with regards to the general environmental quality. It is located on a traffic island with little attempt to mitigate the negative impacts of vehicles on pedestrians.



Jubilee Clock

6.5 Contribution of the Natural Environment

The contribution of soft landscaping within this Conservation Area makes little contribution to the natural environment of Brent. There is an almost complete lack of planting of any type other than a single tree located next to the Jubilee clock and a row on Acton Lane.

6.6 Extent of loss Intrusion or Damage

Design of alterations to front elevations

Shop fronts and are constantly changing the character of buildings and subsequently the character of the area. As technology for signage has changed, more and larger signs have been installed. This has resulted in the loss of key architectural features including pilasters, console brackets and stall risers. The installation of security shutters and grilles has further eroded the overall quality of the urban environment.

The decline in the area has been related to the general lack of investment in the buildings and public realm over a long period of time. This has led to the loss of architectural features through their replacement with lower cost alternatives.



42-44 High Street

To help promote the re-introduction of these features, the Council has produced a Shopfront Design Guidance specific for Harlesden. It is available from the Council's Regeneration & Design team (Tel 020 8937 5346.)

Design, materials and extent of extensions

As the Conservation Area is predominantly made up of Shop/business units with flats above, the impact of extensions is limited to the rear of properties. This has less of a perceived impact on the character of the Conservation Area by the casual observer, but has exacerbated the impact on rear yards and spaces. Inappropriate design, scale, massing, and use of poor quality materials is prevalent.

Changes to fenestration

In some instances, 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 buildings and detract from their original character.

Roof alterations

Limited development to rooflines has been undertaken within the conservation area and there is an example of an unsightly front dormer window altering the character of a building.

Painting

There are examples of part or whole front elevations of properties having been painted red or brick red, affecting the overall appearance of the buildings.

6.7 Capacity for Change

The Conservation Area is under pressure from the lack of investment or poor investment in the building fabric, leading to the erosion of building detail.

The Conservation Area has arguably reached a stage where there is little capacity for further erosion of these architectural features.

6.0 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.

7.0 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



99 High Street



16 Manor Parade



3 Manor Parade

Harlesden Conservation Area is sensibly defined and will not be assessed until the next major review.

8.0 General Condition

Harlesden 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 where necessary Article 4 Directions to all residential Conservation Areas to prevent insensitive development. The Condition of the Harlesden 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 horned and frieze paned Victorian sashes that were common along the upper storeys of the shopping parades are now replaced with PVCu casements of various configurations.

Rear yards and spaces

The rear of the parades and commercial buildings have for many years been extended and altered mainly without formal planning permission the result is an incoherent unsympathetic agglomeration of buildings that were not designed and manufactured from materials to hand. Although this area is to some extent isolated from the Conservation Area it also needs to be controlled.

9.0 Recommendations

The Harlesden Conservation Area has reached a stage where significant investment in both the public and private realm is required to maintain the quality of the Area.

The Council has developed a programme to upgrade the town centre environment and 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

6.0 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.
Pargetting -	Carved and moulded decorative plaster work.
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.
Soldier Course -	A row of brickwork vertically placed

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.

10.0 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 Harlesden 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 Harlesden 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 Harlesden.

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 Harlesden and the Council is committed to a long term partnership.

2.5 Character Appraisals

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

3.6 An Equitable Historic Environment

The Conservation of the historic environment at Harlesden 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 Harlesden 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 Harlesden 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 Harlesden 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 Harlesden 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 Harlesden.

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

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

6.0 The Future

6.1 A Responsive Plan

The management plan for Harlesden 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 Harlesden 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 particular 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 Harlesden 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 Harlesden.

London Borough of Brent
Planning Service



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