

# **Mount Stewart 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 Mount Stewart Conservation Area. It will identify the factors that lead to the declaration of the Conservation Area. It will highlight the prevailing quality, level of preservation of the details that define the character of the conservation area.

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

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

The Mount Stewart Conservation Area was originally designated on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1993. In November 1994 an Article 4 Direction was applied to the Conservation area to restrict developments that are generally permitted under GDPO 1995 (as amended) which is intended to preserve the architectural character that prevails within the Conservation Area.

#### List of properties within the Conservation Area

<b>Abercorn Gardens</b>	<b>21-27</b>
<b>Bouverie Gardens</b>	<b>1-19, 2-22</b>
<b>Carlisle Gardens</b>	<b>1, 2-8</b>
<b>Grenfell Gardens</b>	<b>1-17, 2-18</b>
<b>Mount Stewart Avenue</b>	<b>1-37, 2-84 and School</b>
<b>Shaftesbury Avenue</b>	<b>1-103, 2-104</b>
<b>Sheridan Gardens</b>	<b>1-19, 2-26</b>
<b>Trevelyan Crescent</b>	<b>1-67, 2-74</b>

A conservation review in 2003 highlighted the need for increased 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.



Grenfell gardens



Sheridan gardens

## 1.2 Planning Policy Context

### Definition of a Conservation Area

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

### Statutory Framework

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

### Designations

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

### Policy Context

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

### Change and Development

As with all Conservation Areas, Mount Stewart is at risk from insensitive development which can alter the valuable character of the area. The Borough is experiencing a



Trevelyan Crescent



Bouverie Gardens



2 Grenfell Gardens  
Page 4

growth in the size of families within a household and the need to extend and improve homes as a result. It is also apparent that the housing stock is of an age where maintenance works are required prompting owners to replace doors and windows and roof coverings. Where appropriate all the Conservation Areas in the Borough of Brent are all now protected by an Article 4 Direction, it helps to limit the decline in character through controlled development and possibly, in time, reverse the influence of unsympathetic development. The partial Article 4 Direction for the Mount Stewart Conservation Area came into force in November 1994 and the existing Design Guide was adopted three months earlier in the August of that year. Through this extra protection and guidance the residents are becoming more aware of the historic value of buildings and their location and are keen to retain the "original features" that prompted them to buy their home. There are special pressures on the character of Mount Stewart from development on its boundaries - The area is well served by public transport which has led to an increase in densities proposed for development adjacent to the Conservation Area.

## **2.0 Location and Setting**

### **2.1 Location and Context**

The Mount Stewart Conservation Area is located in the northwest of the London Borough of Brent and is one of two designated conservation areas in the Kenton Ward. The area lies on the elevated ridge between Woodcock Hill and Preston Hill. To the west the area is bounded by the primary circulation route Woodcock Hill. To the east properties lie either side of Shaftesbury Avenue which in the 1930's Town Planning Scheme was intended to be an arterial road, providing a through route to Kenton however the road is now a Cul de sac. This Conservation area is one of the many suburban housing estates developed during the housing boom in the 1920s and 30s which characterise the landscape of the North of the Borough.

### **2.2 General Character and Plan Form**

The special character of the area is based not only on the design of the buildings and that of the open space but also on their street setting and the street scenes. The estate itself is not without a wider historic interest, being a planned suburban neighbourhood laid out by Frederick & Charles Costin.

Mount Stewart is typical of a 1920's and 30s residential development. House types exhibit a Mock-Tudor style with variable elevational treatments with deeply recessed



Shaftesbury Avenue

porches distinguished by decorative detailed brickwork. It is also typical of the houses to have staircases expressed on the front elevation with diaper work on the ground floors and distinctive landing windows between the ground and first floor. This unusual approach gives the estate a more individual character than some of the more speculative housing development of the period. The high quality architectural character is underpinned by relatively wide generous roads that are in the main, tree lined with grass verge buffers between roads and pavements. Boundary treatments are predominantly low brick walls with Privet/Holly planting behind.

### **2.3 Landscape Setting**

The original tree planting in the grass verges as befitted a suburban development of the 1930's, has been maintained and supplemented over the years and still presents tree lined streets contributing to the 'green suburban' setting. The low front boundary walls and hedges between dwelling houses have also contributed to an open and expansive streetscape setting. However, over time, with the increasing demand for car parking within the curtilage, the majority of the forecourts within the estate have been altered and paved, resulting in a much harder character for the front gardens of Mount Stewart. There has been much more control since the adoption of the Article 4 Direction and subsequently the retention of adequate soft landscaping in the forecourt through design guidance and improved planning policies.

## **3.0 Historic Development and Archaeology**

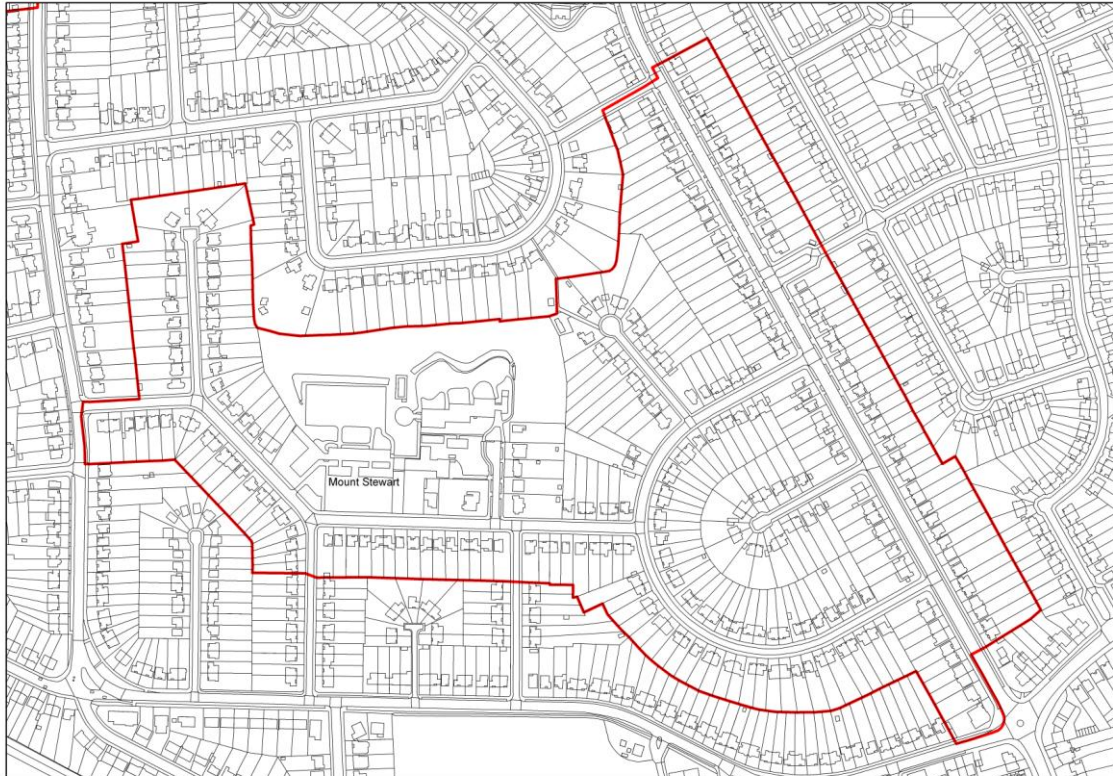
### **3.1 Origins and Historic Development**

The farmlands bounded by Woodcock Hill and Preston Hill formed part of the Lyon Farm estate centred on John Lyon Farm in Preston Hill. Since the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century the income from the farmlands had assisted in maintaining Harrow School which John Lyon had founded in 1572. The farmhouse on Preston Hill was rebuilt in 1708-09 and survived until 1960. It was therefore the Harrow School authorities who, realising the value of their estate in the housing boom of the 1920/30s, sold off land for development by F & C Costin and the roads on the estate were named after prominent Harrovians including Lord Mount Stuart (1744-1814) eldest son of the third Earl of Bute, the Prime Minister, and the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Shaftesbury probably better remembered today.

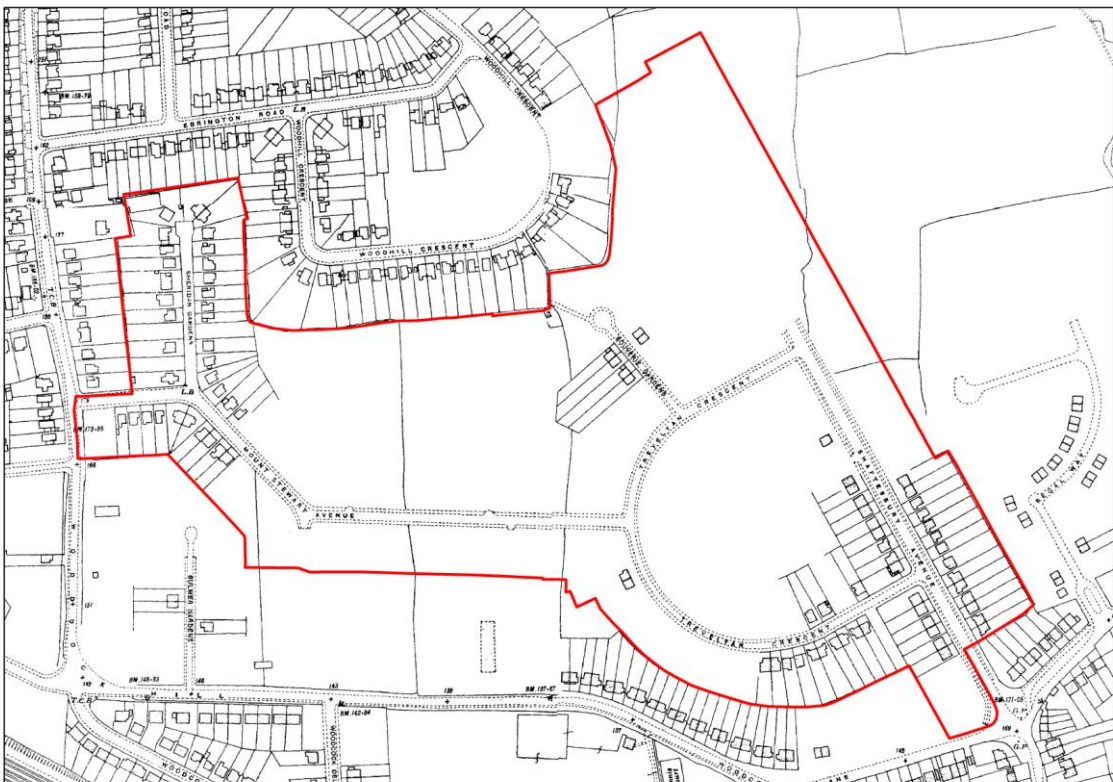


Carlisle Gardens

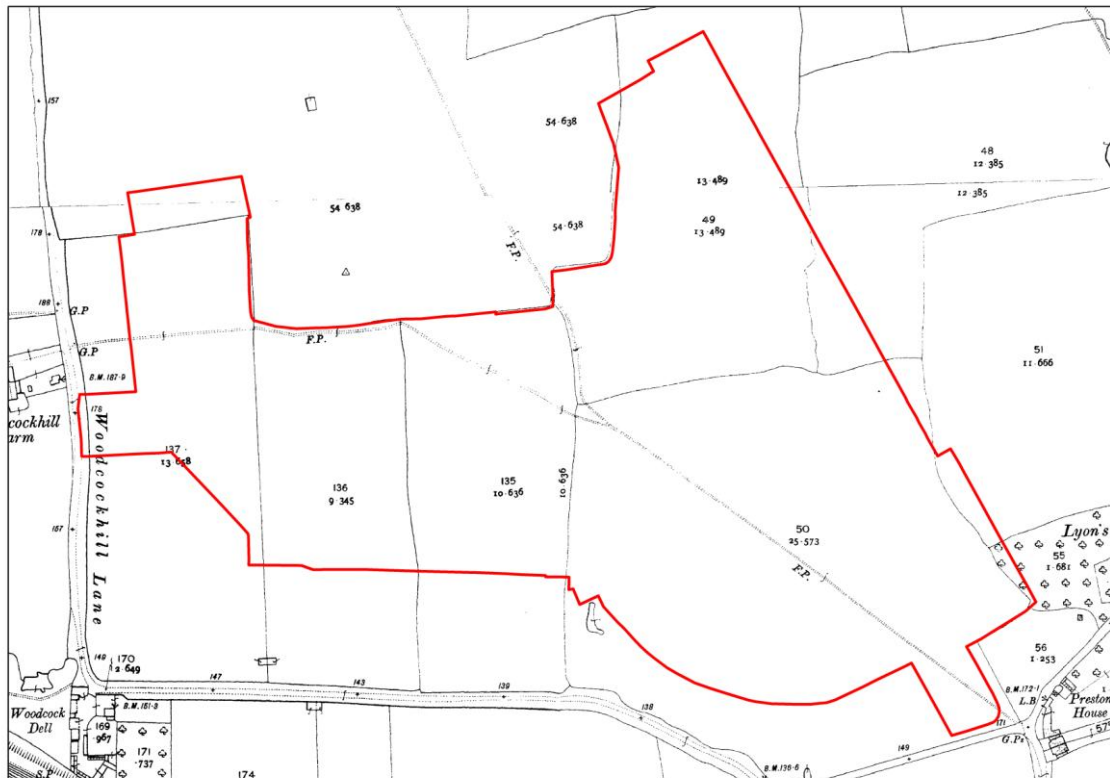




Mount Stewart c.2006



Mount Stewart c.1940



Mount Stewart c.1910

### 3.2 Archaeological Significance and Potential

There are no records of archaeological remains being discovered during construction of the estate as the site was predominately agricultural. The name of Preston, meaning the priest's farm, is of early medieval date and the homestead was located around the Lyon Farm site outside the boundaries of the Conservation Area.

## 4.0 Spatial analysis

### 4.1 Character and inter-relationship of spaces

In their overall plan for the Preston Estate and before the advent of Planning Control in 1948, F & C Costin set out design and planning criteria and embodied them in the Title Deeds of the houses as restrictive covenants. This was to ensure that the future character of the estate would be preserved. The restrictive covenant only allowed for semi-detached and detached dwelling houses with no more that three detached houses or two pair of semi-detached houses of similar elevation within the vicinity. This is the reason why there are no bungalows within the estate and the plots have more that thirty feet of a frontage. This sets it apart and makes it "special" giving Mount Stewart a distinctive and singular character defined



3 Sheridan Gardens



by the inter-relationship of buildings and open space. The area was largely developed around the circular Trevelyan crescent and expanded and grew from this early feature.

## 4.2 Views and Vistas

Mount Stewart Conservation Area is blessed with a high density of tree coverage and although located on an elevated ridge, views out from the Conservation Area are limited. However, the views and vistas within the 'green suburb' are more intriguing as the curves and corners of the vehicular routes slowly reveal the attractive combination of well detailed brick houses sitting in a mature and established natural landscape. The overall impression of the area is further enhanced by the changing levels between streets plots and roads; which add to the progressive and changing views within the area. It is not clear whether this was a happy coincidence, or the result of a layout cleverly planned in three dimensions. The open character allows some restricted views through into rear gardens and to the rear of houses on adjacent streets these open views through the street façade to rear gardens expose roofscapes with decorative chimneys and ridges. Trees and other natural planting are also visible between individual homes.



View along Sheridan Gardens

## 5.0 Character Analysis

### 5.1 Definition of Character Zones

The Mount Stewart Conservation Area has no clearly defined individual zones. The area was set and built out in a relatively short time which defined and established a consistent character through the area. The unique but coherent character and architecture does define the area; setting it apart from similar but less carefully designed residential developments in the immediate vicinity of Mount Stewart.



View along Trevelyan Crescent

### 5.2 Activity, Prevailing and Former Uses

The Mount Stewart Conservation Area is a purpose built speculative housing development of the 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. The only other defined planning use in the area is the Mount Stewart School.

### 5.3 Architectural and Historic Qualities of the Buildings

F & C Costin were one of the leading builders of "Mock-Tudor" architecture within London and earned a good

reputation for the quality of design, detailing and construction of their housing. The Mount Stewart Conservation Area reflects their efficient common 'pattern book' approach.

However, there is a broad range of elevation treatments which give each dwellinghouse their individuality and subsequently enhances the character of the area. Overall, the houses are based on an Arts and Crafts approach to medieval architecture the organic plan forms are elevated with relatively large areas of brickwork punctuated with windows that reflect the role of the room within. Red brick elevations with decorative diaper and moulded brickwork support long sweeping roof planes broken with projecting bays and dormers as seen at 55 Trevelyan crescent. The half timbering in varying combinations is a common theme within the estate and is usually in filled with white rough cast rendering. Other variations include decorative diaper and moulded brickwork.



**4 Trevelyan Crescent**

Main façade features include the extensive range of two storey bay windows first floor Oriels and hanging bays constructed using finely detailed timber casements. These architectural mechanisms give the front façades and the streetscape an interesting articulation allowing light and shade to vary the character of the area. The casement windows are constructed from relatively slender and elegant timber mouldings and are glazed with a high quality leaded light windows with painted and stained glass lights and quarries. The dentiled drip mouldings add a pleasing weight to the transoms, making the windows a predominant and extremely important element of all front elevations.



**5 Mount Stewart Avenue**

These features are common and variously used on the houses throughout the estate the individual designs have their own names: including – Chatsworth, Waverley, New Mayfair, Langham, Cavendish and Dorchester. In particular Mayfair and Langham houses are more common within the estate. Mayfair houses are detached and usually set asymmetrically on their plots with the principal front gable adjacent to the side boundary. On the opposite wing they have projecting stairwells with front oriel windows. The Langham Houses are semi-detached with prominent front gables on each half of the pair and gable ends. Usually this is decorated with herringbone brickwork.



**6 Carlisle Gardens**

## 6.0 Audit of Heritage Assets

Mount Stewart Conservation area has a very consistent residential character defined by the large homes on broad residential streets. There are no Local or statutorily listed buildings within the Conservation Area.

## 6.1 Contributions of significant buildings

Mount Stewart Conservation area has a very consistent residential character defined by the large homes on broad residential streets. There are no Local or statutorily listed buildings within the Conservation Area.

## 6.2 Prevalent and Traditional Materials and Finishes

The contribution of the major constituent elements to the character of Mount Stewart is apparent to all that visit the area. However, no less important is the quality of detail that the buildings in the Conservation area enjoy; the design of doors windows, gates corbel brackets etc is always extremely high quality in Mount Stewart. It is fortunate in that a lot of the contributing detail has survived. The Conservation Area benefits from the application by Costins of good quality red brick expressed in relief and diaper work, plain clay roof tiles are common and add to the overall perception of quality. Half timbering is applied to elevations and in filled with rough cast rendering.



2 Carlisle Gardens

## 6.3 Local Details

Mount Stewart was constructed using methods and techniques that were common throughout the country during the rise of the suburban estate. Most materials were regionally sourced and can be found in suburban housing schemes of this period throughout London. It is perhaps the front projecting stairwell that is the only distinctive element in the Conservation Area.



Oriel Carlisle Gardens

## 6.4 Public Realm Audit

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

## 6.5 Contribution of the Natural Environment

In general, Mount Stewart Conservation Area has a very green Character defined by the relatively densely planted trees to garden boundaries and along the roads of the estate. Species such as Cherry, Purple Plumb, Hawthorn, Oak and Ash proliferate. These trees help to provide a natural framing for views in and out of the area and between spaces within the area. Trees are an essential part of the character of the area and the mix of deciduous and coniferous trees is a part of the now prevailing



Oriel Carlisle Gardens

character. Indeed, the coniferous planting provides a green setting for the area during the winter.

## 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 articulation of elevations helps to define the organic vernacular character. Unfortunately, in a number of cases the recessed entrance porches have been in filled in an unsympathetic manner damaging both the character and design of the houses and in turn the street scene. Erection of new front porches including infilling between bay windows and garages has had a similar impact, affecting the open suburban semi rural character of the Conservation Area.



Timber Window Grenfell Gardens

### Design, materials and extent of extensions

Extensions of less than 50 cubic metres (subject to certain provisions) can be built 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. The impact of such extension 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 Mount Stewart Conservation Area significantly affecting the appearance of individual buildings and the open suburban character of the Conservation Area. 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 traditional houses and detract from their original character.

### Roof alterations

In some instances, bulky projecting roof lights have been installed to the side and rear elevations of the properties, which have a detrimental impact on the character of the roofscape, which is an important aspect of the Conservation Area character.

### Painting

A number of properties have been painted red or brick red, which not only affects the overall appearance of the house but the overall character of the area. In many cases, the painting was not to cover damaged brickwork!





### **Formation of Drives**

The formation of vehicular accesses (in some instances more than one) for the purpose of providing off-street parking in front garden areas has caused a serious erosion of wide grass verge areas at pavement level. This has significantly affected the original tree lined street scene with its wide grass verges at pavement level.

### **Front gardens and boundary walls/hedges**

Many front gardens in the area have been hard surfaced to provide car parking on the frontage. In some instances this has involved the removal of front boundary walls/hedges, and where boundary walls are replaced they are often inappropriate design and materials. In some instances, whole front gardens of houses have been hard surfaced to provide off-street parking. The parking of cars on front 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, front plot enclosures do not reflect the original scale and designs of front boundaries.

Mount Stewart Avenue



Low Wall Mount Stewart Avenue

## **6.7 Capacity for Change**

The Conservation area is under pressure from insidious small scale change through erosion of building detail. - Mount Stewart 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 Change**

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 Mount Stewart Conservation Area is sensibly defined and will not be adjusted until the next major review.

## 9.0 General Condition

Mount Stewart 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 Mount Stewart Conservation Area has declined most significantly in the following areas:

## 10.0 Recommendations

The future of the Mount Stewart 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 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.

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

Website: [www.brent.gov.uk/planning](http://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 One: Management Plan**

**The Management Plan 1.0**

The Management Strategy 1.1



**Policy 2.0**

The Local Development Framework	2.1
Community Involvement	2.2
Conservation Area Designation: Brent Council	2.3
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Review Systems	3.2
Planning Guidance	3.2
Planning Policy Guidance Note 15	3.3
Technical Advice	3.4
An Equitable Historic environment	3.5

**Preservation and Enhancement 4.0**

Understanding the asset	4.1
Maintaining Quality	4.2
Preserve or Enhance	4.3
Enhancement Initiatives	4.4
Training and Communication	4.5

**Monitoring and Review 5.0**

Development control	5.1
Design Guidance	5.2
Community Involvement	5.3

**The Future 6.0**

A Responsive Plan	6.1
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**1.0 The Management Plan****1.1 The Plan**

This plan is intended to provide a focused and structured approach for the future and management of Mount Stewart 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 Mount Stewart Conservation Area.

## **2.0 Policy**

### **1.1 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”

### **1.2 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 Mount Stewart

### **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 resident 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 Mount Stewart and the Council is committed to a long term partnership

#### **2.5 Character Appraisals**

The Council has produced a character appraisal for the Mount Stewart 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, all with Article 4 Directions. This means that the Council has a significant level of control of development within Mount Stewart 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 Mount Stewart. This management plan requires the careful and competent application of its core policies to ensure the long term preservation of the area. Overall, Mount Stewart 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**

Arguable 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 Mount Stewart 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.
- xi)

### **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. Mount Stewart 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 Mount Stewart 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 Note<sup>15</sup>**

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 Mount Stewart 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 Mount Stewart Conservation Area.

### **3.6 An Equitable Historic Environment**

The Conservation of the historic environment at Mount Stewart will be managed in an equitable and fair manner in line with the Council's regulations on officer conduct and equal opportunities. The Council will undertake its management of the Mount Stewart 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 Mount Stewart 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 area and how the lessons of preservation this element of the historic structure can be learned.

To fully understand the pressures on the character of Mount Stewart 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 particular this Character Appraisal, Attendance at Area Consultative Forums, and conservation forum meetings.

### **4.2 Maintaining Quality**

One of the defining elements of Mount Stewart 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 will apply Article 4 Directions to all its residential Conservation Areas including Mount Stewart.

#### **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

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 Mount Stewart 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 Mount Stewart Conservation Area.
- ii) The Council will maintain an up to date understanding of current funding sources and where possible apply for funds for Mount Stewart 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 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. The Council will expect the quality of new brickwork to match the exacting standards of the original builders including the execution of details and diaper work

**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. Material selection for new extensions will be closely monitored.

**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 Mount Stewart Conservation Area. To maintain a rigorous monitoring system the Council will:

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

## 6.0

## The Future

### 5.3 A Responsive Plan

The management plan for Mount Stewart 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 Mount Stewart 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 Mount Stewart 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 Mount Stewart.