

Northwick Circle Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

Brent Council



Character Appraisal

Contents

The Appraisal	1.1
Planning Policy Context	1.2
Location and Setting	2.0
Location and Context	2.1
General Character and Plan Form	2.2
Landscape Setting	2.3
Historic Development and Archaeology	3.0
Origins and Historic Development	3.1
Archaeological Significance and Potential	3.2
Spatial analysis	4.0
Character and inter-relationship of spaces	4.1
Views and Vistas	4.2
Character Analysis	5.0
Definition of Character Zones	5.1
Activity, Prevailing and Former Uses	5.2
Architectural and Historic Qualities of the Buildings	5.3
Audit of Heritage Assets	6.0
Contribution of Significant Unlisted Buildings	6.1
Prevalent and Traditional Materials and Finishes	6.2
Local Details	6.3
Public Realm Audit	6.4
Contribution of the Natural Environment	6.5
Extent of Loss, Intrusion or Damage	6.6
Capacity for Change	6.7
Community Involvement	7.0
Boundary Changes	8.0
General Condition	9.0
Recommendations	10.0
Technical Terms	11.0
Contact Details	12.0
Appendix One: Management Plan	

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Appraisal

This appraisal will identify, analyse and describe the historic and architectural character of the Northwick Circle 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 Northwick Circle Conservation Area was originally designated in April 1989 and incorporated part of the Northwick Estate. The original designated area around Northwick Circle was subsequently revised and extended in 1993 to include the radial streets such as Greystone, Lapstone, Norcombe and Upton Gardens, which provide a wider setting for the central "Circle". The extended conservation area provides a broader context and directs and protects views into and out of the area whilst forming a coherent boundary to a readily definable area.

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



Northwick Circle



Northwick Circle



Northwick Circle

List of properties within the Conservation Area:

Ashridge Close:	1 - 11, 2 - 12
Briar Road:	1 - 35, 39 - 55, 2 - 44
Dovedale Avenue:	1 - 21, 2 - 22
Draycott Avenue:	Gdns. r/o 37 - 39
Draycott Close:	1 - 72, 2 - 12 and adj. premises
Greystone Gardens:	1 - 21, 2 - 40
Lapstone Gardens:	1 - 41, 2A, 2 - 26
Mentmore Close:	1 - 11, 2 - 12
Norcombe Gardens:	2, 4
Northwick Circle:	1 - 34 inc
Upton Gardens:	1, 2 - 22
Wellacre Road:	1 - 9, 2 - 20
Winchfield Close:	1 - 21, 2 - 26
Woodcock Hill:	66, 68 and St John's Church

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

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

Statutory Framework

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

Designations

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

Policy Context

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

2.0 Location and Setting

2.1 Location and Context

The Conservation area covers four Enumeration districts within the Kenton ward of the London Borough of Brent. The area has a population of approximately 2500 and is located just south of the A4006 Kenton road, on the boundary with the London Borough of Harrow.

The Conservation Area sits within the large suburban dormitory of northwest London and is surrounded by many similar developments from the late 1920's through to the end of the 1930's. Relative house prices within the Conservation Area imply that residents enjoy a reasonably high level of income.

Change and Development

As with all Conservation Areas, Northwick Circle is at risk from insensitive development. As families grow the need to extend and improve homes becomes more acute. The housing stock is also of an age where more significant maintenance work is required, prompting owners to replace doors, windows and roof coverings. There is also the pressure to split larger houses into smaller multi occupancy units, which not only has an impact on the



Northwick Circle



Winchester Close

houses, but the setting of buildings and the number of cars that residents want park off street. However, residents are becoming more aware of the value of an historic house and its location in an area of character and more owners are keen to retain the “original features” that prompted them to buy their home. Where necessary, the residential Conservation Areas of Brent are all now protected by an Article 4 Direction. This should help to stop the decline in character through permitted development and possibly in time reverse the influence of unsympathetic development. There are special pressures on the character of Northwick Circle 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.

2.2 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 round a central building with a social function. The estate was also given a club, shops, schools and even a golf course. Together, the open space and the surrounding residential streets form an enclave of attractive and distinctive character within an area of otherwise everyday suburban landscape. Northwick Circle is typical of a 1920's and 30s residential development. Its 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 stone/brick walls with Privet/Holly planting behind. In many cases, particularly to corner plots, close-boarded fencing is used. In terms of its layout, the Conservation Area is dominated by the central Circle from which radiates the principal circulation roads of the estate such as Lapstone Gardens, Greystone Gardens, Wellacre Road, Upton Gardens, Norcombe Gardens and Dovedale Avenue. These were named after villages close to Lord Northwick's estate near Blockley, Gloucestershire. It is apparent that the principles expounded by the Garden City movement have in some part been applied to Northwick Circle.

2.3 Landscape Setting

The estate was developed on virgin agricultural land and the layout was not influenced by any existing roads or geographical features. The Conservation Area falls gently from the Northwest to Southeast with a relatively flat area within the Northwick Circle road. This relatively flat



Dracott Avenue has generous grass verges



Wellacre lane



View along Lapstone Gardens showing fall towards the Railway

topographical character means that perambulations around the roads and avenues are full of revealed views as significant corners are turned within the Conservation Area. 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.

3.0 Historic Development and Archaeology

3.1 Origins and Historic Development

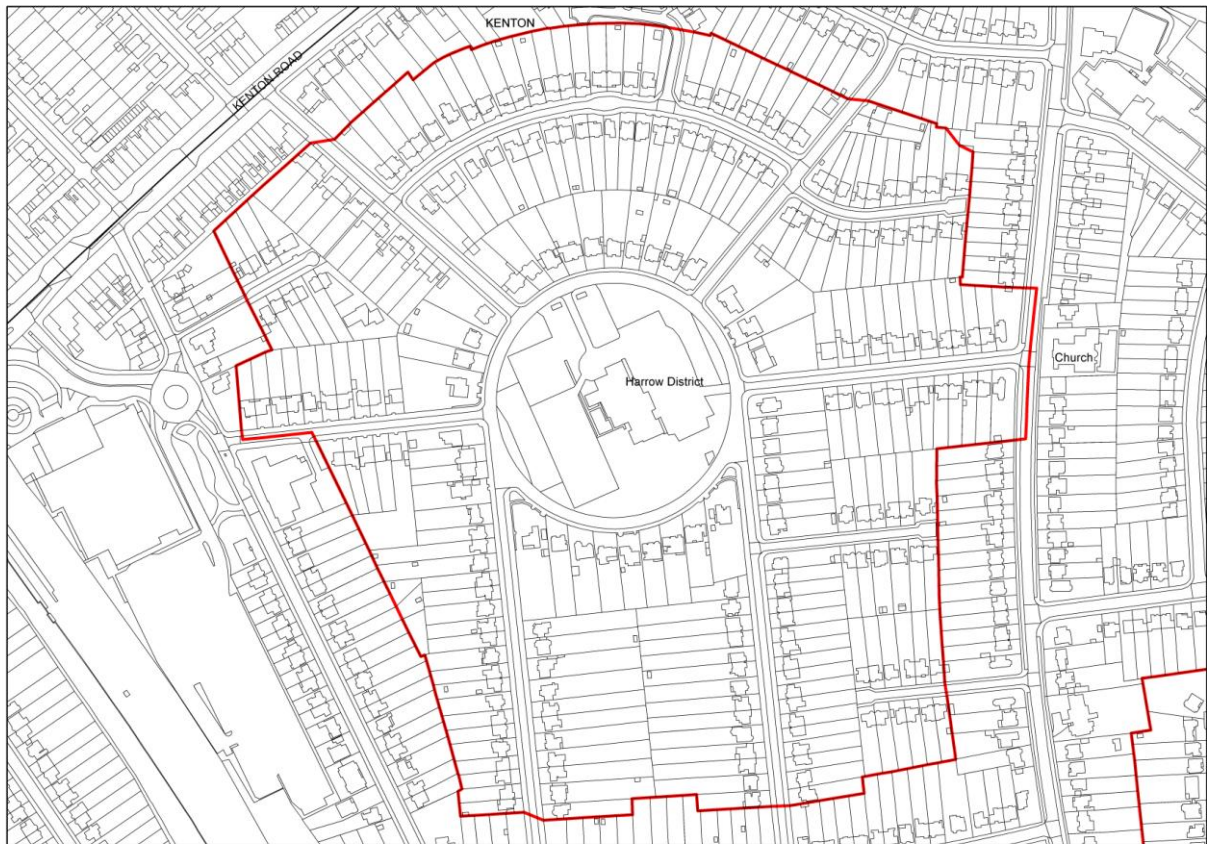
Kenton and its immediate surroundings lay in the Manor of Harrow held for many years by the Lords Northwick until the death of the 3rd Lord in 1887. His widow survived until 1912 and her son-in-law, the fifth son of the sixth Duke of Marlborough died in 1911. So it was her grandson, Captain Edward George Spencer-Churchill (1876-1964), a first cousin of Sir Winston, who became Lord of Harrow Manor in 1912. Unfortunately, at the time of his investiture he was left with two sets of death duties to pay.

Perhaps with this financial commitment in mind and the 1912 opening of Kenton railway Station, Spencer Churchill proposed a development of relatively expensive houses around the established Northwick Park Tennis and Social Club. The club had been established in five-acres of grounds and operated as a sports and social centre until 1953 when the Harrow District Masonic Council occupied the substantial clubhouse. The First World War not only delayed construction work but also changed the expected clientele. The early 1920s saw the rise of middle class families seeking homes of their own in attractive semi rural surroundings. Captain Spencer Churchill saw the opportunity to satisfy the aspirations of the rising middle class and saw this part of Kenton as a chance to pay some of his crippling bills. The contractor R.H. Powis laid out the streets in 1923, the same year that the Northwick Park Station was opened on the Metropolitan Railway. Initially the construction of the estate was divided between a number of builders including Messrs Cramb Bros. of Finchley. The Cramb brothers started by laying out building the houses on what is now Wellacre Road between 1923-25. At the same time construction started on Northwick Circle and by the end of 1925 work to Briar, Greystone and Lapstone Roads was well advanced. However, because of their superior designs and workmanship Costins became the sole developers of the Northwick Park Estate. Using a various versions of a basic plan form and elevational theme Costins began to in fill Spencer-Churchill's estate layout. The road names of the relatively broad leafy



The Tennis club from Dovedale Avenue

streets – Lapstone, Upton, Wellacre etc. – were taken from villages close to Spencer Churchill's country seats at Northwick Park, Blockley, and Gloucester.

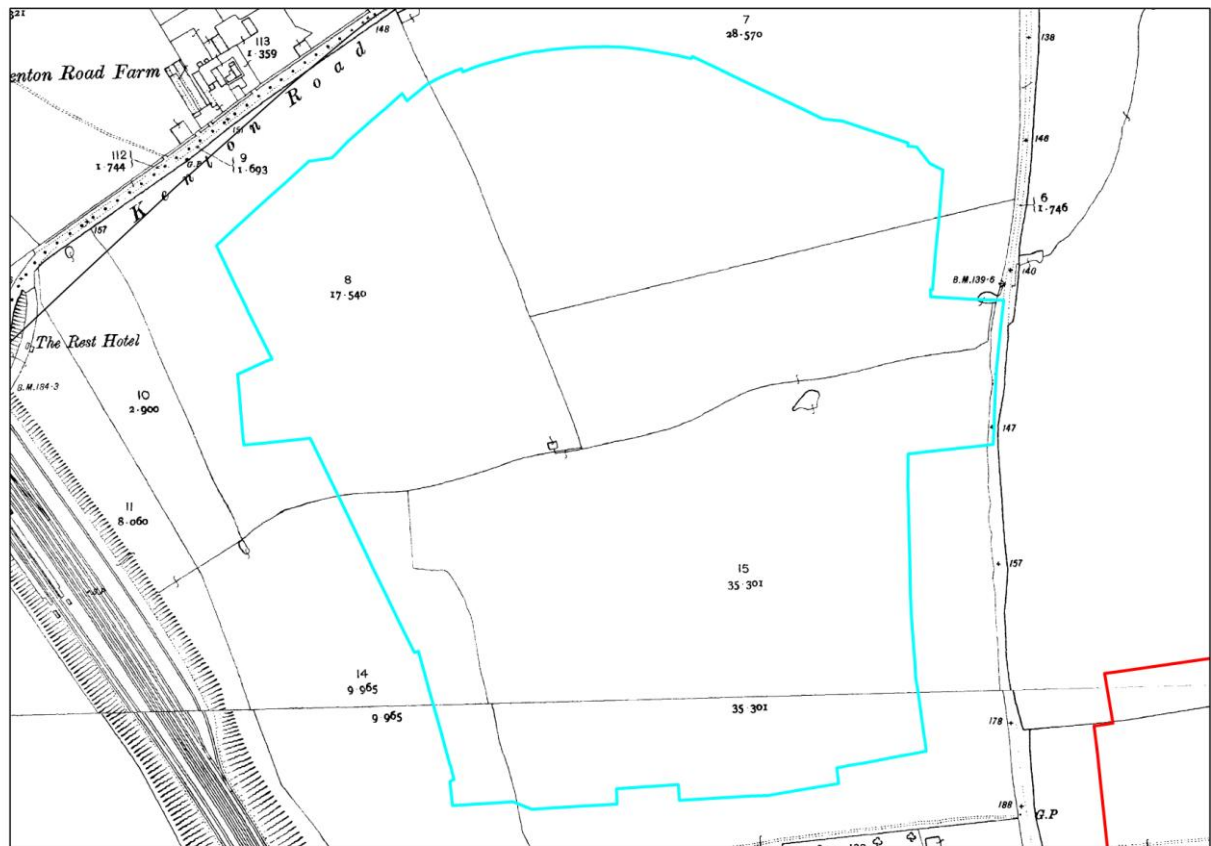


Northwick Circle c.2006



The Planning Service

Northwick Circle c.1940



Northwick Circle c.1910

A second set of designs approved by Wembley Urban District Council in 1927 enabled Costins building programme to extend on from 1928 into 1930 and were still completing houses up until 1932. In Costins brochures for the estate, they refer to the construction of detached mock Tudor houses:

3.2 Archaeological Significance and Potential

The Estate is laid out over well cultivated agricultural land and there are no records of either archaeological features or artefacts being discovered during construction or subsequent development of the buildings and spaces. The Sites and Monuments record for London has no entries for the areas or any area in close proximity to the boundary of Northwick Circle. The local farmsteads – Sheepcote and Woodcock Hill and the principal home farm of Sudbury Court – all lay at some distance from the area.



The Circle is laid to Lawn

4.0 Spatial analysis

4.1 Character and inter-relationship of spaces

Northwick Circle Conservation Area is a planned residential estate, which is part of suburban Kenton. What sets it apart and makes it “special” is the distinctive and singular character of inter-relationship of buildings and open space. The area was largely developed in the period 1924-1937 and planned on a geometric street layout which was focused on the large open recreation space that is now the Circle. The circle is the defining feature of the Conservation area and remains to this day the principle contributor to the open and expansive rural character not found in other contemporary suburban developments within the Borough. The estate as a whole constitutes an attractive suburban area characterised by various compositions of stylised medieval houses within large garden plots that maintain and define the separate nature of individual homes.



View along Dovedale Avenue



View along Greystone Gardens

4.2 Views and Vistas

The most significant views both in and out of the Conservation Area are from the Church into the Circle and the Masonic lodge along Dovedale road and from the lodge back to the church. The views are framed by the two storey houses that flank the road.

The Conservation Area has an open character defined by the spaces between buildings. These spaces allow views through into rear gardens and to the rear of houses on adjacent streets. Such open views through the street façade allow glimpses into rear gardens and exposed roofscapes with decorative chimneys and roof detailing. Concentrations of trees and other natural planting are also visible between individual homes.

5.0 Character Analysis

5.1 Definition of Character Zones

Northwick Circle is a well defined and consistent suburban area, there are no significant changes in character within the boundary and the suburban grain of the area flows through and out of the Conservation Area.

5.2 Activity, Prevailing and Former Uses

The Northwick Circle 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.

5.3 Architectural and Historic Qualities of the Buildings

The character of Northwick Circle Conservation Area is defined by the large, well-detailed stylised Arts and Crafts influenced houses set in generous well-planted mature garden plots. The houses follow a basic consistent design philosophy but vary greatly in their composition. Unlike some other residential areas of the borough, this conservation area has greater variety of individual house designs. The area is exceptional in that although the builders of the estate used standard design packages the character of the area appears to be one of individually designed and constructed houses. All the houses follow the same basic principle of L or E -shaped plan form with projecting circular or 45 degree bays. Many have brick plinths with applied "black and white" timber to first floor and bay gables. The houses are nearly all capped with typically steep sweeping roofs with sprocketed eaves sitting on projecting soffits.

However, what makes Northwick Circle special is the variation in size layout and detailing of the basic form. Unlike many other speculatively built residential developments in the borough, at Northwick Circle there is a mix of larger and intermediate houses particularly on the "Circle". The larger more formal houses tend to be based loosely upon traditional medieval E-plans with large well-built porches. These house types sold the medieval idyll to the rising middle classes - allowing them to be Lords of their own semi rural Manors. Significantly, the houses built later in the estate's development have more informal rambling house compositions with long sweeping roofs and large tall chimneys and are typified by No. 34 Northwick Circle. The majority of houses have generous garden plots with significant gaps between individual houses. This generous layout established by the Estate developer helps to maintain the individuality of the homes. The original designers of Northwick Estate took great care with the design of houses - bestowing upon them a very definite rural character. To reinforce this semi agrarian character the gardens were carefully set out and planted with very good examples of Poplars Ash cherry, Cypress and in some cases willow.

6.0 Audit of Heritage Assets

6.1 Contribution of Significant Unlisted Buildings



Lapstone Gardens



Northwick Circle



Dovedale Avenue

Northwick circle Conservation area has a very consistent residential character defined by the large homes on the very fine residential streets. There are no statutorily listed buildings in the area but the Church of St Johns provides a dramatic stop to the view along Dovedale Avenue from the Masonic hall.

The Townscape role of St.John's makes it an extremely important component of the overall character of the Area. The Church was designed by C. R. Brightiff practising from offices in Baker Street and was completed by September 1932. Unusually for this relatively late date, the church is in an "Edwardian classical" style and is built in a grey red Multi brick. The detailing is almost Romanesque with recessed stepped door and window reveals. The principal west door and other porch and chapel doors are finished with Portland stone detailing to architraves. The Church represents a visual focal point that punctuates the otherwise consistent character of the area.

The Church is an interesting if not outstanding example of early twentieth century architecture. It is relatively well detailed and constructed and sits comfortably in the residential context. Ultimately the church acts as a landmark in an area of otherwise consistent building scale. The Church contributes to the setting of the central circle providing a full stop to the long view along Dovedale road.

The Masonic hall, which was once the sports and tennis club, enjoys a very green and open setting, sitting in the centre of the generous central open space. The building although having developed in a rather ad hoc way, compliments the scale and character of the houses that surround it. The Building was erected before the housing development, which now surrounds the generous lawned setting of the clubhouse. The building was designed in a domestic vernacular, employing many of the architectural motifs subsequently used on the areas residential buildings. The club was considered important enough to hold the All England Lawn tennis championships in 1932.



St. Johns Tower



St. John's church Woodcock Hill

6.2 Prevalent and Traditional Materials and Finishes

The contribution of the major constituent elements to the character of Northwick Circle 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 the Northwick Circle Conservation area. Northwick Circle is particularly fortunate in that a lot of the contributing detail has survived.

Northwick Circle Conservation Area owes as much to the quality of building detail as to the broader townscape setting for the definition of its character. It is fortunate that many of the original doors and windows remain in place.

The Northwick Circle estate is fortunate that many of the well-designed and detailed chimneys have survived intact. The detailing varies significantly. Brick roughcast and terracotta mouldings have all been used to add character and interest to one of the most distinctive elements of the houses in Northwick circle.

The original designers of the buildings at Northwick Circle used a relatively varied palette of materials including brick, plain clay tiles, stone and timber. Detailing is quite often picked out, using both trowelled and roughcast render either infilling applied timber framing or as an elevational finish.

6.3 Local Details

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

6.4 Public Realm Audit

Typically, Northwick Circle 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 rural character of the area.

6.5 Contribution of the Natural Environment

In general, Northwick Circle 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 character. Indeed, the coniferous planting provides a green setting for the area during the winter.



Greystone garder



Briar road

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 infilled 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.

Examples of unsympathetic front extensions infilling between Bay windows and garages detracting from the original style/character of the houses and should be avoided.

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 Northwick Circle 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



Lapstone Gardens



Lapstone Gardens



Lapstone Gardens



Bulky Dormers - unbalance the scale of the roofscape

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. Low walls with Privet and Holly planted behind is typical of the area.



Briar Road



A Well preserved boundary wall

6.7 Capacity for Change

The Conservation area is under pressure from insidious small scale change through erosion of building detail. Northwick circle 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 will prevent radical change in terms of land use and intensification

7.0 Community Involvement

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

8.0 Boundary Changes

In 2003 The Council undertook a comprehensive review of its conservation areas, at this time all areas were analysed for the rigour of their boundary definition and at this time Northwick Circle Conservation Area is sensibly defined and will not be adjusted until the next major review.

9.0 General Condition

Northwick Circle 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 Northwick Circle Conservation Area has declined most significantly in the following areas:

Windows and Doors

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

Front Garden plots

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

10.0 Recommendations

The future of the Northwick Circle Conservation Area is now more secure with the application of the Article 4 Direction and 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.
Console bracket -	A decorative wall bracket which supports a bay window, part of a roof or other feature that projects out from the house.
Drip Rails -	A sill like section mounted above the opening casements of windows to shed water
Dentils -	Bricks set at interval to produce a decorative band
Eaves -	The junction of the wall and the lower edge of the roof
Glazing bars -	The bars of wood or metal which separate individual glass panes
Half-timber -	Often called 'timber framing', this means timbers applied vertically or horizontally to the walls of houses as a decorative feature.
Hopper head -	A cast box for collecting rainwater, which feeds into a drainpipe.
Imperial bricks -	The bricks used to build the Barn Hill houses, which are larger than today's bricks.
Jambs -	The side sections of a door or a window frame.
Leaded light -	A window made of small pieces of glass joined by strips of lead.
Parapet -	A section of a wall that projects above the eaves of a flat roof.
Roughcast -	Rendered wall finish with small stones added to the mixture.
Reveal -	The part of a wall that turns back towards the window frame in its opening
Sill -	The bottom section of a window frame that projects out from the wall to allow rain to run away.
Spalled bricks -	Bricks that have lost their front faces through frost damage.
String course -	A projecting band of brickwork,
Terracotta details -	Specially shaped and moulded bricks used as decorative features.

12.0 Contact Details

The Planning Service

Brent House
349 High Road,
Wembley,
Middlesex, HA9 6BZ

Email: tps@brent.gov.uk

Website: www.brent.gov.uk/planning

Conservation advice:

Regeneration Design team
Tel: 0208 937 5018
Fax: 0208 937 5207

Planning Advice:

South Area Planning Team
Tel: 0208 937 5265
Fax: 0208 937 5207

Landscape Design Advice

Landscape design Team
Tel: 0208 937 5248
Fax: 0208 937 5207

Building Regulations Advice

Building control
Tel: 0208 937 5499
Fax: 0208 9375

Appendix 1: Management Plan

Contents

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: Council	2.3
Conservation Area Designation: Residents	2.4
Character Appraisals	2.5
Archives and Information	2.6
Practice	3.0
Development Control	3.1
Review of Conservation Systems	3.2
Planning Guidance	3.3
Planning Policy Guidance Note 15	3.4
Technical Advice	3.5
An Equitable Historic Environment	3.6
Preservation and Enhancement	4.0
Understanding the Asset	4.1
Maintaining Quality	4.2
Preserve or Enhance	4.3
Enhancement Initiatives	4.4
Elements at Risk	4.5
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

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 Northwick Circle 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 Northwick Circle 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 Northwick Circle.

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 Northwick Circle and the Council is committed to a long term partnership.

2.5 Character Appraisals

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

3.6 An Equitable Historic Environment

The Conservation of the historic environment at Northwick Circle 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 Northwick Circle 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 Northwick Circle 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 Northwick Circle 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 Northwick Circle 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 Northwick Circle.

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

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

6.0 The Future

6.1 A Responsive Plan

The management plan for Northwick Circle 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 Northwick Circle 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 Northwick Circle Conservation Area. This plan is intended to build upon the Character Appraisal, coordinate and focus the various needs and requirements of everyone involved in the protection and enhancement of the landscape of the Conservation Area.

London Borough of Brent
Planning Service



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