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 Willesden Green 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 Willesden Green Conservation Area was originally designated in January 1993 and takes the form of a Victorian commercial centre with buildings of note by several well-known architects: James Brooks, Newman and Newman and Gabriel contributed St Andrew's Church, the library and the bank premises respectively. Sexton’s Spotted Dog (1881) and Clark’s faience-tiled Met. Station of 1924 are worthy of note.

List of properties within the Conservation Area:

- Heathfield Park: 1-41, 2-10, Synagogue
- High Road: 1-151, 2-108, St Andrew's Church, former Library, Willesden Green Baptist Church, The Spotted Dog, Stevens Cottages
- Huddleston Road: Huddleston Hall
- Linacre Road: 41
- St Andrews Road: Vicarage, Social Services Offices
- Walm Lane: 1a-47, 58-92, Willesden Green Station and 1-24 Rutland Park Mansions
- Willesden Green Station Parade: 1,3,5
- Willesden Lane: Electric House, 275-293, Presbyterian Church of Wales, 1-9 Queens Parade, 265-273

1.2 Planning Policy Context

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

**Statutory Framework**

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

**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, Willesden Green is at risk from insensitive development. As the local population grows and becomes more affluent consumers on the High Road will demand higher quality and a greater variety of services. These improvements should reflect the
changing aspirations of Willesden Green but also reflect the area’s past.

Residents, traders and shoppers are becoming more aware of the value of an historic and attractive centre and are keen to retain the heritage that prompted them to buy their home commercial property and do their shopping. The Conservation Areas of Brent are all now protected by an Article 4 Direction which should help to stop the decline in character through lack of investment and possible in time reverse the influence of unsympathetic development. There are special pressures on the character of Willesden Green from higher density development in the commercial areas - The area is well served by public transport which has led to an increase in densities proposed. Willesden Green has a more urban character than the majority of the Borough’s other Conservation Areas which means that higher densities must be considered if the Council’s responsibility to provide homes for people in Willesden is to be taken seriously. The challenge is to ensure the preservation of the areas character whilst at the same time enabling higher density development.

2.0 Location and Setting

2.1 Location and Context

The Willesden Green Conservation Area is located in the south-east of the Borough of Brent in North-West London. Willesden Green’s shopping parade forms a linear centre over one mile in length occupying the High Road and Walm Lane and their tributary roads from Church End in the west to Willesden Green Underground Station in the east.

The population of the conservation area is currently estimated at 1000. The area is characterised by its late Victorian architecture and after years of Post-War decline is now seen as an increasingly attractive location for young professionals.

2.2 General Character and Plan Form

The Conservation Area is a mixed use centre but is marked by a common, distinctive retail based architectural vocabulary. The whole estate was originally laid out around Willesden Green though this has since disappeared. The Conservation Area has a linear form running along the High Road and Walm Lane. The junction of these two roads and the junction at the original library are foci within the Area; whilst the St Andrews group of buildings and Willesden Green Tube Station
mark the boundaries of the Conservation Area. The Heathfield Park Estate is somewhat of a bolt-on having a very different leafy, residential feel from the much busier main roads.

2.3 Landscape Setting

The Conservation Area could be divided in two, in terms of its topography; High Road is flat whereas Walm Lane is on an incline leading up to Willesden Green Tube Station. Heathfield Park is also built on a small hillside. Original buildings have been retained on both sides of the road throughout the Conservation Area. Although the Conservation Area is essentially a shopping centre, Willesden Green has a relatively high proportion of trees within its streetscape.

3.0 Historic Development and Archaeology

3.1 Origins and Historic Development

Willesden Green has a long history with the area being recorded in the Doomsday Book of 1086 as 'Wellesdone'. By the 14th Century a small settlement had formed around a woodland clearing, which later became Willesden Green. By the middle of the 18th century the village had grown and had its own pub, 'The Spotted Dog'. At this time Willesden Green was notorious for what was called 'baby farming' where unwanted infants from London were sent to be nursed.

The 19th Century saw the growth of Willesden Green, through the expansion of the Metropolitan Railway. The railway brought professional middle management to the area who built large town houses alongside farms supplying hay, milk and horses to London. Poorer quality cottages had been and were also being constructed during this period. After the opening of Willesden Green Station in 1879 Willesden became the fastest growing district in London. The rapidly increasing population were served by the St. Andrew's Church and St. Gabriel's Churches. St.Andrew's also facilitated a school, a men's club, a parish library and a soup kitchen.

The 20th Century saw the suburbanisation of Willesden Green as farmhouses were replaced by villas and cottages and Willesden Green was joined up with Brondesbury, Cricklewood, Chapel End, Harlesden and Kensal Rise. This process meant that by around 1910 most of the original Green disappeared and the High Road had become a retail centre. The area was characterised by its working and middle class population. The World Wars had a significant impact on this population, with the area
suffering severe unemployment during World War I and being the target of heavy bombing due to its industrial and transport significance during World War II.

Post-War Willesden Green went into a period of decline with The High Road suffering from traffic congestion. An upturn in fortunes was heralded in the 1980s after retailers were awarded grants to improve their shops and the opening of a new library in 1989. This process was continued in 2001 when Brent Council announced a HERS regeneration scheme for Willesden Green backed by English Heritage. As a result of increasing property prices in more fashionable, adjacent suburbs and an improved urban landscape Willesden Green is becoming an increasingly attractive destination.
Willesden Green Conservation Area
Character Appraisal/Management Plan

Willesden Green c.1940

Willesden Green c.1940
3.1 Archaeological Significance and Potential

The Conservation Area was agricultural land until the mid-19th Century 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 Willesden Green. As designated by Brent Council’s Unitary Development Plan - 2004 the Willesden Green Conservation Area is not in a ‘Site of Archaeological Importance’ or an ‘Archaeological Primary Area’

4.0 Spatial analysis

4.1 Character and inter-relationship of spaces

High Road and Walm Lane are the foci of the Conservation Area with the tributary roads breaking up the focus and acting as nodes of activity/interest. The only significant modern development within the Conservation Area, located opposite Willesden Green Underground Station has been sympathetically designed and is in keeping with its surrounds.

4.2 Views and Vistas

The High road is the principal arterial route which curves gently from St.Andrews Church through to the Station this means that the long distance views are truncated by the curvature. Internally views are framed by the streets that branch off the high road creating framed vistas of 1870, terraced housing. The bends and junctions create glimpses that encourage the viewer to continue his or her exploration. When moving from east to west the curvature in the road first exposes than closes the view of St. Andrew’s Church.

5.0 Character Analysis

5.1 Definition of Character Zones

The Conservation Area is a well defined and consistent mixed use centre. The only significant change in the character of the area is Heathfield Park. The High road is commercial retail uses lining the principal road through the area. Heathfield Park however, is a definite independent residential area of large well designed town houses and villas that is completely separated from the high street by the junction with Walm lane
5.2 Activity, Prevailing and Former Uses

Willesden Green Conservation Area is predominantly a retail centre with office and residential spaces above groundfloor retail units. The exceptions to this are Rutland Mansions, The Spotted dog, Willesden Green Library Centre, the Police Station, the churches, Heathfield Park Estate and the Underground Station.

5.3 Architectural and Historic Qualities of the Buildings

Architecturally the best buildings are now statutorily listed. The St Andrew’s group of the church, school & vicarage are the only Grade II listed buildings within the Conservation Area and are by the prominent Victorian architect James Brooks (1825-1901). The church, dating from 1886-1887 is an impressive Early English style brick building with stone facings and a central roof spire is complemented by its picturesque vicarage (1888) and Church Schools (1889). The original Willesden Green Library by the architects Newman and Newman was built in 1893-4 in an “Arts and Crafts” Tudor style with an unusual roof configuration to cap the rather complex plan form. The new library opened in 1989 and is situated at the rear of the original library. The centre now includes a cinema, arts complex, cafe and bookshop. The bank opposite forms a pleasant junction.

Further along High Road is Spotted Dog Public House. The former country Pub on the site was demolished and rebuilt for a Mr Dobbin to plans dated 1881 by H W Sexton in an attractive Victorian style. It is the only grey brick building within the Conservation Area. Beside it lies GA Sexton’s Stevens Cottages, from about 1840, and originally called Spotted Dog Cottages. At the junction of High Road and Walm Lane is Barclays Bank. Built as bank premises by E. Gabriel in 1902, it was originally occupied by the London and South Western Bank.

The Metropolitan Railway opened Willesden Green Station in 1879, and was rebuilt with an attractive faience tiled frontage by the railway architect C.W. Clark to plans of 1924. The Willesden Green United Synagogue is the final statutory listed building within the Conservation Area, built within the Heathfield Park Estate it dates from the 1930s and is significantly different from all the other listed and notable buildings within the Conservation Area.
6.0 Audit of Heritage Assets

6.1 Contribution of Significant Buildings

Listed buildings within this area include:

**Statutory List**
Church of St Andrew (Grade II)
St Andrew’s Church School/Islamic College (Grade II)
St Andrew’s Vicarage (Grade II)

**The Local List**
Willesden Green United Synagogue, Heathfield Park
Barclays Bank, 5 High Road
Spotted Dog, 38 High Road
Willesden Green Library
Willesden Green Station

Although not listed Rutland Park Mansions designed by G.A. Sexton (1898) on the eastern side of Walm Lane is an impressive example of residential Victorian architecture and arguably one of the most attractive buildings within the Conservation Area. The Metropolitan Railway villas of the Willesden Park Estate (1881) opposite were converted into shops at ground floor level between 1907 and 1913.

The development of country house estates is evinced by 147-151 High Road built on the Gowan Lea Estate following 1898, 52-64 High Road built on the Peacock House estate for Cowley and Drake (1894), and 35-43 High Road built on the frontage of The Poplars for Lilley and Skinner following 1895 (Architect A Sykes).

The attractive parade of shops at Nos. 13-33 High Road sport pediments above the windows. Built around 1883 were for one James Ellis the best of these buildings is probably the Barclays Bank. Opposite St Andrew’s Church is Willesden Green Baptist Church by E Harding Payne from plans drawn in 1902 and the police station by Higgs and Hill (1896).

6.2 Prevalent and Traditional Materials and Finishes

The prevalent finishes are stock London brick and redbrick with either plain clay tile or natural slate roofing materials. Most of the detailing is typical of this period of eclectic Victorian architecture, displaying stylised Renaissance, Tudor, Gothic and other classical forms. The high road like all commercial centres has suffered from detail decline but there are a number of surviving horizontal sashes with various configurations and numbers of panes within. Most common in the frieze pane sash typical for the period.
6.3 Local Details

Willesden Green was laid out by private developers and has features common to most parts of commercial London developed during the late Victorian period. There are no particular specific distinguishing factors other than the broad variation in style and period.

6.4 Public Realm Audit

Typically, Willesden Green has a very straightforward public realm of flagged footpaths within granite kerbs flanking tarmac roads. The street furniture is ministry of transport lamp standards and drainage fittings with other standard proprietary metallic lighting and services equipment. The Conservation Area is very much urban in character, with the landscaping at the public space at the Willesden Green Library Centre providing an almost incongruous distraction from the rest of the hard landscape. There are a number of attractive shopfronts within the area but the re few and far between making the interface between buildings and

6.5 Contribution of the Natural Environment

Willesden Green despite its name makes little contribution to the natural environment of Brent. The exceptions are the few trees on High Road and Walm Lane, the leafy suburban feeling Heathfield Park and the landscaping that was done in conjunction with the development of Willesden Green Library Centre.

6.6 Extent of loss Intrusion or Damage

Design of alterations to front elevations
shop fronts and are constantly changing the character of buildings and subsequently the character of the area. These changes have made both positive and negative contributions to the urban environment. Most of the Conservation Area is original although there are small plots of Post-War infill. Shopfront design guide is extremely important and the proposed design guide will deal with the important issues of materials scale of signage stall riser’s door location and articulation.

Design, materials and extent of extensions
As the Conservation Area is predominantly made up of Shop/business units with flats over and because of this The impact of such extension is limited to the rear of properties which has less of a perceived impact on the character of the Conservation Area by the casual observer but has exacerbated the impact on rear yards and spaces inappropriate design, scale, and massing, and use of poor quality materials is prevalent.
Changes to fenestration
In some instances, original windows and doors have been replaced by inappropriate modern alternatives both in terms of materials and designs. Replacements with unsympathetic modern materials are not only damaging to the historic character but to the environment in general.

Roof alterations
Limited development to rooflines has been undertaken within the conservation area however several unsightly satellite dishes are visible on the rooftops of the third floor flats. Unfortunately original natural slate roofs have also been replaced with concrete interlocking tiles.

Traffic Calming
As predominantly a retail centre the Conservation areas suffers from over signage and significant traffic calming especially at the Willesden Green Library Junction. The introduction of these unsympathetic elements is extremely damaging to character.

Front gardens and boundary walls/hedges
The front plots to some commercial spaces Heathfield Park remains as original with both walls and hedges remaining to front and sides of dwelling houses. This is also true of the Vicarage at St Andrew’s Church.

6.7 Capacity for Change
The Conservation Area is under pressure from the needs and expectations of its traders and residents commercial properties have changing needs for signage and display that is properly controlled will detract from the quality of the environment. As house prices increase within neighbouring areas the increased desirability of Willesden Green to affluent purchasers will increase the pressure for development/extension of the housing stock and new buildings. In what is currently a mixed-use retail centre the restrictions of the Town and Country Planning Act and the General Permitted Development Order will prevent radical change in terms of land use and intensification as the immediate area and its environs continue to attract development.

7.0 Community Involvement
The Council will maintain continues consultation with the residents and traders of the Conservation Area who have engaged with the Council in the recent Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme. 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 Willesden Green Conservation Area is sensibly defined and will not be reviewed until the next major re-survey

9.0 General Condition

Willesden Green unlike other Conservation Areas within the Borough has not suffered to the same extent as residential areas, as commercial, retail, and multi-occupied buildings do not benefit from permitted development rights. The Condition of the Willesden Green Conservation Area has declined most significantly in the following areas:

Windows and Doors
Replacement of windows and doors has been and continues to be the primary cause of character decline. The horned and frieze paneled Victorian sashes that were common along the upper storeys of the shopping parades are now replaced with PVCu casements of various configurations.

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

10.0 Recommendations

The future of the Willesden Green Conservation Area has been improved through the work of the HERS programme. However the limited funds available have only made minor improvements to the building stock in order to develop and enhance the character of the area the following recommendations need to be addressed and developed:

i) The review and publication of a Conservation Area Design Guide with specific advice on shopfronts.
ii) Improved liaison between the community both residential and commercial and the Council.

iii) Regular monitoring of completed developments their accordance with permitted plans and overall design and material application and execution.

iv) Continued review of conservation Area policy to respond to economic, cultural and ecological change.

v) Greater input into design development by Conservation trained Council officers.

vi) Improved liaison with the Councils transportation engineers to apply the principles of “Street for All” (published by English Heritage 2005)
## 11.0 Explanation of Technical Terms

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

The Planning Service
Brent House
349 High Road,
Wembley,
Middlesex, HA9 6BZ

Email: tps@brent.gov.uk
Website: www.brent.gov.uk/planning

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

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

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

Building Regulations Advice
Building control
Tel: 0208 937 5499
Fax: 0208 9375
Appendix 1: Management Plan

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1.0 The Management Plan

1.1 The Management Strategy

This plan is intended to provide a focused and structured approach for the future and management of Willesden Green 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 Willesden Green 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 Council's involvement with the residents of Willesden Green.

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 Willesden Green and the Council is committed to a long term partnership.

2.5 Character Appraisals

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

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 Willesden Green 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. Willesden Green 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 Willesden Green 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 Willesden Green 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 Willesden Green Conservation Area.

3.6 An Equitable Historic Environment

The Conservation of the historic environment at Willesden Green 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 Willesden Green 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 Willesden Green 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 Willesden Green 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 Willesden Green 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 Willesden Green.

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 Willesden Green 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 Willesden Green Conservation Area.

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

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

6.0 The Future

6.1 A Responsive Plan

The management plan for Willesden Green 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 Willesden Green 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 Willesden Green 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 Willesden Green.
Willesden Green Conservation Area
Character Appraisal / Management Plan

London Borough of Brent
Planning Service

March 2006