

Barn Hill Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

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 Barn Hill Conservation Area. It will identify the factors that led to the declaration of the Conservation Area and it will highlight the prevailing quality, level of preservation of the details that define the character of the conservation area.



Barn Hill

The analysis will consider the merits of the layout, streetscape, buildings, architectural details 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 Barn Hill Conservation Area was originally designated in March 1990 due to the architectural qualities of the houses within it. However it had been recognised as an important historic area within the Borough as early as an “*Area of Local Character*” – for which special policies were applied. The boundary of the Conservation Area was further extended in January 1993. It has a unique setting on the side of the hill overlooking the new National Stadium, the town centre and further towards the prominent spire of St. Mary’s Church on Harrow-on-the-Hill.

A recent conservation review highlighted the need for greater planning controls to protect the conservation area from detrimental change through permitted development. In 1995 an Article 4 Direction was applied to only part of the Conservation Area reflecting the wider application of special control to all of the Borough’s historic areas, but the result of this is that only some streets receive greater protection from unsympathetic alterations.



Basing Hill

The following is the list of properties within the Conservation Area. House numbers underlined are subject to an Article 4 Direction:

Barn Hill:	<u>1 - 99</u> , <u>2 - 46</u> , <u>46a</u> , <u>b</u> , <u>c</u> , <u>48 - 88</u> & Barn House
Barn Rise:	<u>3 - 53</u> , <u>55 - 73</u> , <u>2 - 50</u> , <u>52 - 60</u> , <u>62 - 66</u>
Barn Way:	<u>1 - 35</u> , <u>37 - 69</u> , <u>2 - 48</u> , <u>50 - 76</u>
Basing Hill:	1 - 55, <u>2 - 70</u>
Beverley Gardens:	1 - 55, <u>2 - 58</u>
Brampton Grove:	1 - 37, <u>2 - 28</u> , <u>46 - 64</u>
Charlton Road	1 - 12
Corringham Road:	<u>1 - 53</u> , <u>2 - 42</u>
East Hill:	1 - 31, <u>2 - 18</u>
Eversley Avenue:	<u>1 - 33</u> , <u>2 - 34</u>
Forty Avenue:	1 - 18, (Grand Parade)

Grendon Gardens:	<u>1 – 7</u> , <u>15 – 45</u> , <u>2 – 10</u> , <u>12a</u> , <u>12 - 34</u>
Mayfields:	1 – 41, 2 - 40
Mayfields Close:	1 – 16 (consecutive, inc)
Midholm:	<u>1 – 11</u> , <u>15 – 23</u> , <u>2 – 26</u> , 28 - 32
The Crossways:	<u>1 – 29</u> , <u>2 - 32</u>
West Hill:	43 – 71, 66 – 104, <u>106</u>
Wickliffe Gardens:	<u>1 – 9</u> , <u>2 – 12</u>

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 has a responsibility for designating Conservation Areas under 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 may be detrimental to the area.



Wickliffe Gardens

Statutory Framework

Local Authorities are obliged by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to undertake periodic reviews and 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.



Mayfields

Policy Context

Conservation Areas are protected by a 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 Conservation Area has an adopted Design Guide.

Change and Development

The homes within The Barn Hill Conservation Area are under pressure form the need to increase accommodation for growing families. The Barn Hill Conservation Area has had controls over the design, scale and materials used for extensions and the replacement windows since 1995, and restrictive policies on side extensions since about 1981. Whilst there is no doubt that the character of some of the houses within the estate has changed though uncontrolled alterations prior to the Article 4 Direction, the estate as a whole remains worthy of its preservation. The need for increased accommodation will continue in the future. Bu it is hoped that the adopted controls and sensitive innovative design will ensure that the predominant character of the Barn Hill Conservation Area would be preserved whilst still meeting the demand for change.



Midholm

As with all Conservation Areas, Barn Hill is at risk from insensitive development. 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 houses, but the setting of buildings and the number of cars that residents want to park off road. However, residents are becoming more aware of the value of their historic houses and the location in an area of character and more owners are keen to retain the "original features" that prompted them to buy their home.

Part of the Barn Hill Conservation Areas is protected by an Article 4 Direction which should help to stop the decline in character through the work carried out under *permitted development* rights. In time it may also be possible to reverse the influence of unsympathetic development. However, part of the Barn Hill estate is not subject to the Article 4 Direction and has declined more significantly.



Barn Way

2.0 Location and Setting

2.1 Location and Context

The area's character derives from its hillside setting and layout as much as from a wide variety of designs which have a distinctive Mock-Tudor character. The 85 metre high hill dominates the estate. The design of the houses and their mature landscape setting are particularly attractive and the dips in the road, the inclines, the views



Barn Hill

between houses and glimpses over Wembley and across to Harrow gives the estate a special charm which is worthy of protection. The Conservation Area is located in North Brent and is next to Barn Hill open space. Barn Hill is situated to the north of Wembley Park Station.

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 on their role and mutual contribution to the street scene. 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. Barn Hill is typical of a 1920s “Mock-Tudor” residential development with a relatively high quality of individual architectural character. This quality is underpinned and developed by the 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 mature hedge planting behind. Houses at crossroads have been enhanced with individual architectural detailing such as decorative chimneys and moulded brick eaves and verges. The Character of the Conservation Area is defined by Barn Hill Open Space, just out side the boundary at the top of Barn hill.

What makes Barn Hill special are the landscape features which are characteristic of Repton, in particular the practices of planting belts of trees sweeping down from the summit. The summit lies outside the Conservation Area in the adjacent Fryent Country Park. In this hillside setting Haymills constructed large two storey houses of brick and render and the majority are with pegged timber beams. The contours of the hills are reflected in the Estate’s layout. Between Corringham Road and Barn Hill, which runs north up the slope, are lateral; east-west roads that broadly follow the line of the contours. The Hill comes to a crest at about Midholm before rising again in Barnhill Open Space

2.3 Landscape Setting

The celebrated landscape designer, Humphry Repton, remodelled the landscape of the Barn Hill area in 1793 and his landscape survived as a private estate for almost a century. At the beginning of the 20th century it was turned into a golf course and then developed for housing from 1926, following the British Empire Exhibition held at Wembley Park in 1924-1925. The open nature of the Conservation Area develops a character of green spaces with house set in, rather than the usual more restricted residential character of houses with garden settings.



Barn Way



Barn Hill

3.0 Historic Development and Archaeology

3.1 Origins and Historic Development

There are historic references to the Barn Hill area from as early as 1547 at which time the area was known as Bardon hill. It is thought that there may have been earlier settlement but as yet no evidence for this has come to light. However, the most significant period for the area is the late eighteenth century when the area formed part of the Uxendon estate owned by the Page family infamous in the 16th century for the Babington conspiracy against Queen Elizabeth. The family engaged Humphry Repton, a celebrated landscape designer of the time, to remodel the landscape of the Barn Hill area as part of a newly formed “*Wembly Park*”.

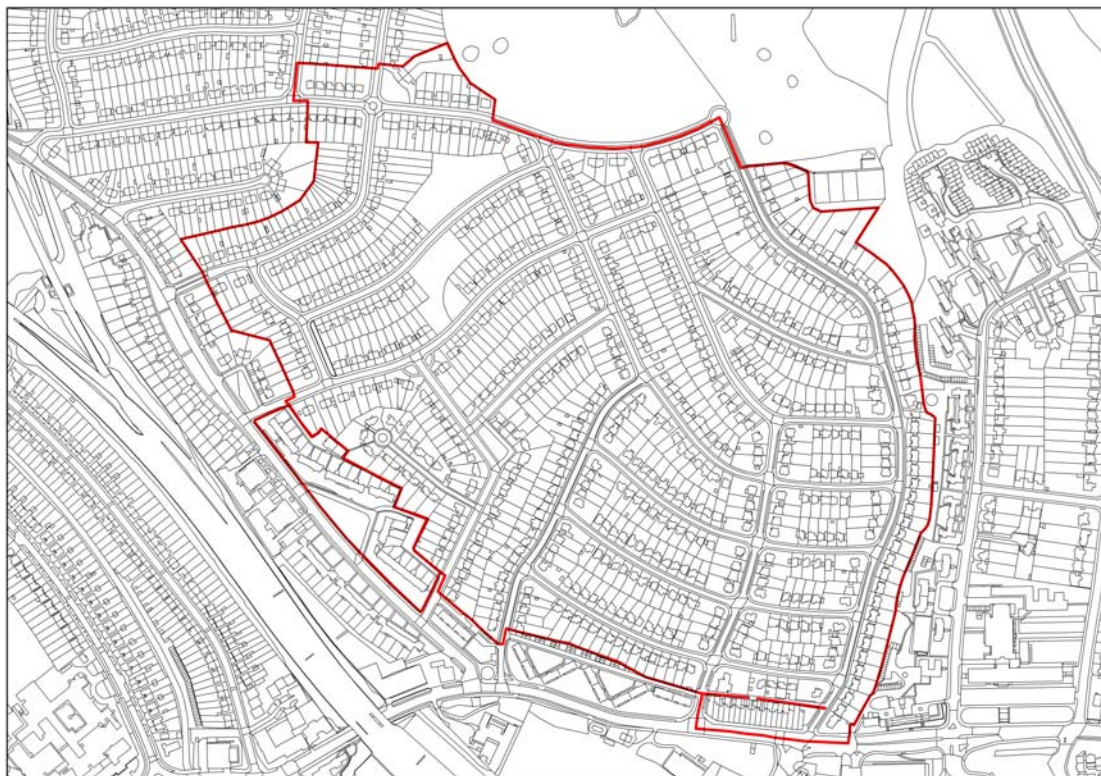


Barn Way

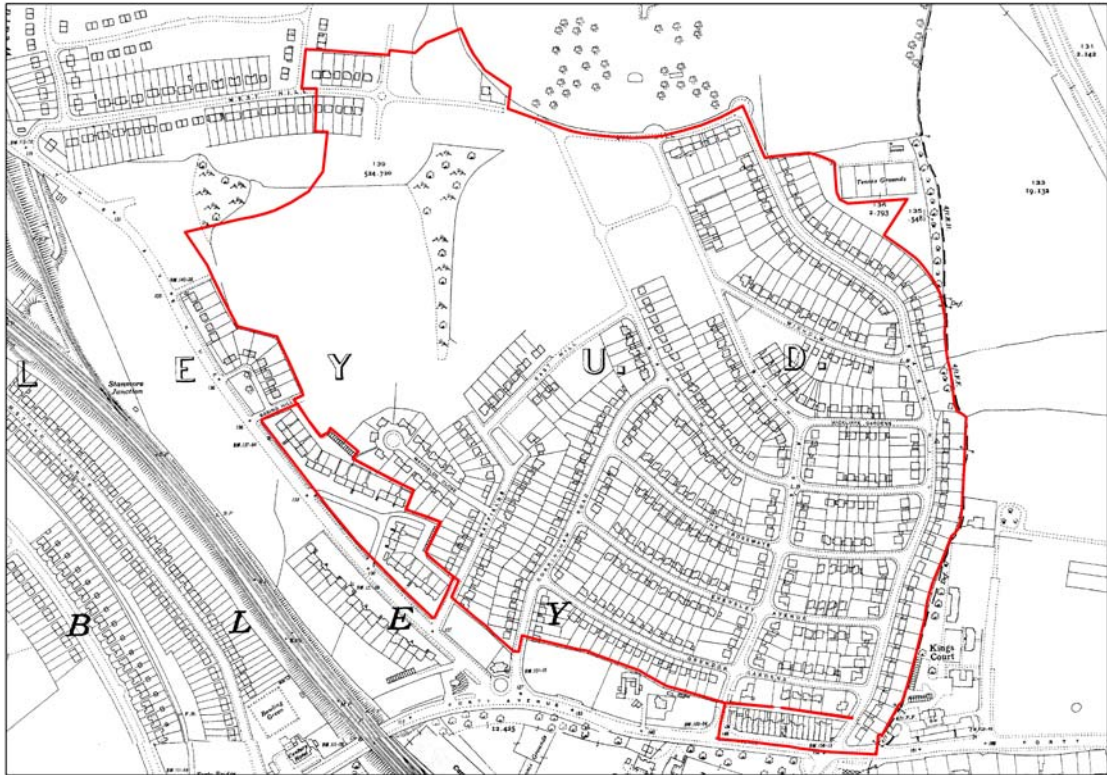
As part of this re-modelling, Repton built follies including temples and, on the top of Barn Hill what was referred to in an 1820's guide as a “prospect tower”. Before the area was finally purchased for housing development in the 1920s, the hill had been part of a golf course. The Barn Hill estate was acquired for development in 1923 by Messer's Haymills who may have been speculating on the potential from the British Empire Exhibition of 1924-25. The first phase of Barn Hill's development occurred in 1926-1929 when Corringham Road and Barn Rise were laid out.



Grendon Gardens



Barn Hill c.2006



Barn Hill c.1940



Barn Hill c.1910

4.0 Spatial analysis

4.1 Character and interrelationship of spaces

The public space, grass verge and trees, have a natural character which enhances the character of the houses and local environment. The public realm is fundamentally the relatively broad black topped road flanked by some surviving natural stone but mainly concrete kerbs which define flagged and black top pathways. The public private interface was originally defined by low castellated brick walls with privet hedges behind. One of the biggest threats to the Conservation Area is the loss of the areas boundary markers to provide access to new car parking.



Mayfields

4.2 Views and Vistas

The relationship between the layout of the roads and the positioning of the houses cascading down the hillside sets this Conservation Area apart from other residential areas. The changes in level make Barn Hill unusual in Brent in that there are views over between and around the houses to distant locations, such as the Stadium and Harrow on the Hill. The mature landscape setting is particularly attractive and the dips in the roads, the inclines, the views between well spaced houses and glimpse over Wembley and across, to Harrow is unique. Maintaining the gaps between houses has been a long-established key policy for the area in facilitating views and preserving the open setting of buildings.



View out of the Area from Barn Hill

The contours of the hill are reflected in the layout of the Estate which is an important part of the area's character. Between Corringham Road and Barn Hill, which run north up the slope, are lateral east-west roads that broadly follow the line of the contours. The Hill comes to a crest at about Midholm before rising again in Barn Hill open space. The progression of the Conservation Area to West Hill takes in the tree belts of Brampton Grove and Basing Hill that are survivors of the original eighteenth century landscaping.



Corringham Road

5.0 Character Analysis

5.1 Definition of Character Zones

The Barn Hill Conservation Area is a consistently residential area with a consistent character running through and out of the Conservation Area. Although, the local architectural detailing varies from residential street to residential street the mass scale and form remains consistent between the eastern and western areas. The relatively short development period of the estate has meant that the Conservation Area has a relatively consistent residential character.

5.2 Activity, Prevailing and Former Uses

The area was laid out as a residential estate of single family units and the use has prevailed ever since there has been some sub division of the houses to provide flats and apartments

5.3 Architectural and Historic Qualities of the buildings

The houses in Barn Hill generally follow a basic consistent design philosophy of an “L”, “C” or rectangular plan form. Unlike some other residential areas of the borough, a greater variety of house designs can be found here; making the area exceptional in that whilst the builders of the estate used standard design palettes, the character of the area appears to be one of individually designed and constructed homes. There is a mixture of two and three story houses but the external character is similar despite the variation in scale. Overall, the houses are based on a stylised Arts and Crafts interpretation of medieval architecture the plan forms are elevated with relatively large areas of brickwork punctuated with windows that reflect the role of the room within. Red brick elevations with decorative diaper and moulded brickwork support long sweeping roof planes broken with projecting bays as seen in Barn Hill and Midholm. The half timbering in varying combinations is a common theme within the estate and is usually filled with white rough cast rendering. Other variations include decorative diaper and moulded brickwork.

Main façade features include the extensive range of two storey bay windows some with first floor Oriels and hanging bays constructed using finely detailed timber sub structures. These architectural mechanisms give the front façades and the streetscape an interesting articulation allowing light and shade to vary the character of the area throughout the day. The casement windows are one of the most important elements within the Conservation Area constructed from relatively slender and elegant metallic and timber mouldings and are variously glazed with a high quality leaded lights with painted and stained glass lights and quarries. The detailed drip mouldings give substance to the transoms, making the windows a predominant part of elevational composition. The original designers of the state paid special attention to the road junctions, providing elaborate chimneys with decorative relieved and diaper brickwork. The properties are well spaced apart adding to the estate’s general open character which provides glimpses of attractive views across the estate and into private gardens beyond.



Barn Rise



Barn Hill



Midholm

6.0 Audit of Heritage Assets

6.1 Contribution of Significant Buildings

Barn Hill Conservation area has a very consistent residential character defined by the large homes on broad residential streets. This consistent character is unbroken by any unusual or Local or statutorily listed buildings.

6.2 Prevalent and Traditional Materials and Finishes

The contribution of the major constituent elements to the character of Barn Hill 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 of an extremely high quality in Barn Hill. It is fortunate in that a lot of the contributing detail has survived. The Conservation Area benefits from the application of good quality red brick expressed in relief and in diaper work, plain clay roof tiles are common and add to the overall perception of quality. Half timbering is applied to elevations and in filled with rough cast rendering.



Eversley Avenue

6.3 Local Details

Barn Hill 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, Barn Hill 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 concrete and metallic lighting and services equipment. However, the roads through and into the Conservation Area are lined with small grassed verges that add to the semi rural character of the area.



Grendon Gardens

6.5 Contribution of the Natural Environment

In general, Barn Hill 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 buildings. 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.



Midholm

6.6 Extent of loss Intrusion or Damage

Design of alterations to front elevations

The Character of most houses within the Conservation area is defined by the quality of detail and composition. The thoughtful articulation of elevations helps to define the organic vernacular character. Unfortunately, in a number of cases the recessed entrance porches have been in filled in an unsympathetic manner damaging both the character and design of the houses and in turn the street scene. Infilling between bay windows and garages has had a similar impact and these additions mask details and architectural features whilst at the same time ruining the carefully considered proportions of design.



Midholm

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 in Barn Hill Conservation Area significantly affecting the appearance of individual buildings and the open suburban character of the Conservation Area.

Changes to fenestration

In some instances, original windows and doors have been replaced by inappropriate modern alternative materials and designs using UPVC. Replacements with unsympathetic modern materials can be out of keeping with the traditional houses and detract from their original character.



Beverley Gardens

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. Examples of bulky roof lights – looks unsightly and affects the visual appearance of the property in the street scene



The Crossways

Painting

There are examples of part or whole front elevations of properties having been painted red or brick red, affecting the overall appearance of houses. In many cases, the painting was not to cover damaged brickwork!

Formation of Drives

The formation of vehicular accesses (in some instances more than one) for the purpose of providing off-street

parking in front garden areas has caused a serious erosion of wide grass verge areas along the pavement. This has significantly affected the original tree lined street scene with its wide grass verges.

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 hard standing 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.



Eversley Avenue

6.7 Capacity for Change.

The Conservation Area is under pressure from insidious small scale change through erosion of building detail. Barn Hill is a relatively affluent 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



West Hill

7.0 Community Involvement

There is a Barn Hill Residents Association who is consulted on receipt of all planning applications. They play a significant role in partnership with planners in order to maintain the quality of the Barn Hill Conservation Area. They network with the residents and disseminate the policy guidance contained in the Barn Hill Design Guide thus helping educate the residents and the new comers on the estate towards the importance of maintaining the heritage. They maintain a website which contains useful information about the Barn Hill Resident association and the "Hill". They also circulate a newsletter regularly bringing the residents up to speed of developments on the estate.

8.0 General Condition

Barn Hill 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 Barn Hill Conservation Area has declined most significantly through window and door replacement, boundary removal and roof alterations

9.0 Recommendations

The Need for Conservation Area Policies

Residents of the Borough occupying single family dwellinghouse enjoy what is known as “Permitted Development” rights. These rights mean that certain types of building work can be carried out without having to make an application to the Council for permission. Over the years, many changes in the Barn Hill Conservation Area have occurred under Permitted Development. These changes in some instances have altered the external design/appearance of the properties in a way that affects the special character, and appearance of individual buildings and the Conservation Area as a whole. When proposals for further alterations are submitted, attempts should be made to alter extant unsympathetic developments in order that these go towards preserving the character of the original houses. Recent examples such as extensions to 31 Barn Rise and 1a Grand Parade illustrate that with the appropriate use of materials and reproduction of existing architectural features and detailing, existing buildings can be enhanced.

Barn Hill Conservation Area unlike other Areas within the Borough has not suffered the same extent of decline in character through works carried out as permitted development. This is due in part to the Article 4 Direction that has been in place some years. However some loss of character can be seen in the non directed area and the following defining elements of the areas character will need careful management.

Windows and Doors

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

Front Garden plots

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

Extensions

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

10.0 Recommendations

The future of the Barn Hill Conservation Area was secured with the application of the Article 4 Direction and the situation may improve with the publication of the Character Appraisal. However, in order to develop and enhance the character of the area the following recommendations need to be addressed:

- i) The review and publication of a Conservation Area Design Guide.
- ii) Improved liaison between the community and the Council.
- iii) Regular monitoring of completed developments their accordance with permitted plans and overall design and material.
- iv) Continued review of Conservation Area policy to respond to cultural and ecological change.
- v) Greater input into design development by Conservation trained Council officers.

11.0 Technical Terms

Brick bond -	Arrangement of bricks in a wall, combining bricks laid lengthways (stretchers) and bricks laid widthways (Headers)
Casements -	An opening window frame.
Console bracket -	A decorative wall bracket which supports a bay window, part of a roof or other feature that projects out from the house.
Drip Rails -	A sill like section mounted above the opening casements of windows to shed water
Dentils -	Bricks set at interval to produce a decorative band
Eaves -	The junction of the wall and the lower edge of the roof
Glazing bars -	The bars of wood or metal which separate individual glass panes
Half-timber -	Often called 'timber framing', this means timbers applied vertically or horizontally to the walls of houses as a decorative feature.
Hopper head -	A cast box for collecting rainwater, which feeds into a drainpipe.
Imperial bricks -	The bricks used to build the Barn Hill houses, which are larger than today's bricks.
Jambs -	The side sections of a door or a window frame.
Leaded light -	A window made of small pieces of glass joined by strips of lead.
Parapet -	A section of a wall that projects above the eaves of a flat roof.
Pargetting -	Decorative moulded or incised external plaster work
Roughcast -	Rendered wall finish with small stones added to the mixture.
Reveal -	The part of a wall that turns back towards the window frame in its opening
Sill -	The bottom section of a window frame that projects out from the wall to allow rain to run away.
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 937 5

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 Barn Hill 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 Barn Hill 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 Barn Hill.

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 Barn Hill and the Council is committed to a long term partnership.

2.5 Character Appraisals

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

- x) Physical examples of materials must be submitted prior to commencement of work.
- xi) 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. Barn Hill 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 Barn Hill 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 Barn Hill 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 Barn Hill Conservation Area.

3.6 An Equitable Historic Environment

The Conservation of the historic environment at Barn Hill 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 Barn Hill 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 Barn Hill 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 Barn Hill 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 Barn Hill 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 Barn Hill.

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 Barn Hill 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 Barn Hill Conservation Area.
- ii) The Council will maintain an up to date understanding of current funding sources and where possible apply for funds for Barn Hill Conservation Area through Townscape Heritage Initiatives and other special schemes.
- iii) Not all enhancements require 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 Barn Hill Conservation Area. To maintain a rigorous monitoring system the Council will:

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

6.0 The Future

6.1 A Responsive Plan

The management plan for Barn Hill 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 Barn Hill 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 Barn Hill 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 Barn Hill.

London Borough of Brent
Planning Service



March 2006