

**ACTON PARK
CONSERVATION AREA
Management Plan**

APRIL 2009

ACTON PARK CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. POLICY	3
3. CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION.....	5
3.1. CHARACTER APPRAISALS	5
3.2. ARCHIVES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PAST	5
4. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL.....	6
4.1. PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT CONTROL	6
5. PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT.....	8
5.1. UNDERSTANDING THE ASSET	8
5.2. MAINTAINING QUALITY	9
5.3. PRESERVE OR ENHANCE	10
5.4. ELEMENTS AT RISK	10
5.5. MONITORING AND REVIEW	17
5.6. CONSERVATION STRATEGY AND PRACTICE	17
5.7. A4D CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACTON PARKCA	18
6. CONSULTATION	19

1. Introduction

This plan sets out the local authority's approach to managing the future of the Acton Park CA. It is based on an appraisal of the character of the CA, the statutory planning policies affecting the area, the role of other local authority services in the area, and the requirements and aspirations of local people – both residents and businesses.

It is very much a partnership document, 'owned' by all parties involved in producing it. This partnership approach means that the plan will be respected, and will be guided by the conduct of all the partners.

2. Policy

This Management Plan indicates how the policies in the Local Development Framework (LDF), along with other matters, will figure in the on-going management of the Acton Park CA. It is not a planning policy document itself however, and it does not form part of the Local Development Framework (LDF).

Ealing's Local Development Framework comprises a series of documents. The following documents have a bearing on the Conservation Management Plan:

- The 'Unitary Development Plan' (UDP), also known as the Plan for the Environment. This contains the statutory policies for development in the CA and elsewhere in the borough. Volume One of the UDP has policies for all types of development. There is a specific policy on conservation in Chapter Four on Design (policy 4.8). Volume Two of the UDP shows sites and areas across the borough. The Acton Park CA is indicated in Table 10.12 and Map 8 in Volume Two of the UDP. The UDP also has a "Proposals Map" which specifies the definitive boundary of the Acton Park CA. It should also be noted that the UDP comprises the development plan for the borough along with the Mayor of London's London Plan. For most purposes, the London Plan policies are reflected in the UDP, and there are cross-references to them in the UDP.

Acton Park Conservation Area Management Plan

- The series of Supplementary Planning Guidance and Supplementary Planning documents provide more detailed guidance on how the statutory policies should be applied. These cover topics, sites and areas.
- The Local Development Scheme sets out the programme of work on future planning policy. This includes reference to a Supplementary Planning Document on Conservation, which is currently being prepared, and which has undergone formal consultation in 2007-2008. In the New Year the Council's preferred options for the planning of the borough will be published.
- The Statement of Community Involvement sets out the Council's commitments to community involvement in all aspects of town planning, including matters pertaining to the Acton Park CA.
- There are also other documents providing background information and monitoring data in the LDF. All published information on the Local Development Framework is on the Council's web site at www.ealing.gov.uk/planpol

3. Conservation Area designation

Acton Park is one of 29 (twenty-nine) of L.B. Ealing's Conservation Areas (CAs) and it is managed, like the others, by the legal regulations of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990*. The Council operates its responsibilities under the Act to "preserve and enhance" the character of the CA. The Council will also undertake regular reviews of the area to monitor the quality of development and the effectiveness of its policies and guidance.

3.1. Character appraisals

The Council has completed a **DRAFT** Character Appraisal for the Acton Park CA, of which this Management Plan is a further part. The Appraisal has been produced to describe and evaluate the special architectural and historic interest of the CA. The statement of character will provide a basis from which to evolve not only the making of development control decisions, but also for the informed framing of design guidance. The Appraisal is the basis for the direction of this Management Plan, identifying the elements of special interest of the Acton Park CA that require attention or effort. The Appraisal also provides a valuable resource upon which to defend Appeals against refusal of planning permission.

3.2. Archives and the importance of the past

The CA contains a good deal of historic fabric and evidence of this has been included in the Appraisal to demonstrate the evolution of the area, particularly over the past 150 years or so.

The Appraisal deals with its evolution from this time up to the 21st century. Historic maps of the late 19th and 20th century demonstrate how the Acton Park CA has evolved in a well edified residential area north of Ealing Broadway.

Archival material, taken chiefly from the local sources maintained by L.B. Ealing, has been included in the Appraisal to provide a sense of historical depth and to illustrate the reality of Ealing's past. Elements of this past may still be felt and understood, thus posing questions about protection and enhancement as the development of sites and to existing property within the CA inevitably unfolds.

4. Development control

As a result of the demand for development, the character of the CA is under constant threat posed by unsympathetic, poorly designed and executed new buildings, extensions and alterations. Most of these are already controlled by existing legislation, administered by the Council's professional officers. High quality development control plays an important part in managing changes to the CA.

4.1. Principles for development control

The Acton Park CA and its immediate surroundings are under development pressure. Acton Park has a very quiet and suburban character, it is as restful episode in the very busy and traffic-led environments of The Vale to the south and East Acton Lane to the east of the CA. Acton Park includes residential buildings of Victorian/Edwardian heritage: in particular the CA includes Victorian & Edwardian semidetached and detached houses. But the CA also includes the Locally Listed Acton Central Station (just outside), a Locally Listed pub, a school and the Regency complex of the Goldsmith's almshouses (Grade II*).

Nevertheless the poor quality of later developments provides opportunities for improvements. The residential streets of the CA, although they do not offer opportunities for major developments, are under a lot of pressure for small scale interventions to the residential properties. Sensitive and responsive management is required in order to cope with this pressure and the following principles will be adopted to guide the Council in its control of development:

- 1) The Council will apply the principles, guidance and regulations outlined in the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* and the broader guidance of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15)* and any subsequent revisions or additions.
- 2) The Council will apply the policies outlined in its *Plan for the Environment, the Unitary Development Plan (UDP)* as adopted in October 2004, until such time as these policies are replaced by policies in the emerging *Local Development Framework*.
- 3) The Council will require all planning applications to be supported by a Design and Access Statement and PPG 15 Justification Statement where appropriate. The Design and Access Statement should be a brief but thorough guide to the reasons for the development and how the

Acton Park Conservation Area Management Plan

design fulfils, together with a statement concerning any access issues that may exist. Officers of the Council can provide assistance to applicants with more information and with examples on file of successful Design and Access Statement or PPG 15 statements.

- 4) A major requirement for any development proposal in a CA is quality, covering the design, materials, workmanship and execution.
- 5) The Council will not dictate on the choice of architectural styles of any proposed new buildings, extensions or alterations but the position may be simply put as follows:
 - Contemporary and Modernist styles are entirely acceptable if they are high in quality and provided that they remain sympathetic in the context and towards the host building and/or other neighbouring buildings

OR

- Replicas of good, older buildings may be preferred provided that they are properly researched and high in quality. The design, scale, massing and detailing of such Traditionalist schemes should accurately replicate the contextual, local materials.
- 6) The drawings through which proposals are submitted should clearly and competently demonstrate the intentions of the development, preferably being accompanied by photographs and anything else that can demonstrate the project's aims.
 - 7) The Council will make use of technically experienced and qualified Officers in guiding the assessment and determination of all applications received.
 - 8) Applications for work in CAs must be accompanied by clear indications of the materials to be used in producing the external finish and architectural details of the proposed buildings. Actual samples of the materials should be submitted as part of the preparations of the scheme and/or in the course of beginning on-site building operations.

- 9) Where possible, the Council recommends pre-application consultation. Planning Services and applicants may thus work jointly to produce schemes that are successful and high in quality. Experience has demonstrated that advance work of this sort is the most effective and efficient way of preparing applications.

5. Preservation and enhancement

5.1. *Understanding the asset*

The Character Appraisal, of which this Management Plan forms a part, is central to understanding the Acton Park CA and its future needs. As a result of the appraisal process, including the public consultation exercise, the aspects of the area that are under the most threat have been identified and a number of negative features, which need to be addressed in this Management Plan, identified. These are as follows:

Spatial:

- Infills between properties spoil the original spatial relationship between properties and their architectural proportions and consequently they change their contribution to the streetscape.
- Use of utilitarian materials such as concrete slabs and tarmac
- Areas of poor paving with disturbed street surfaces
- Some gap sites that create fractures within the urban grain
- Loss of front garden boundary walls, trees and fences
- Facility cabinets create visual clutter and obstruct pedestrian flow

Acton Park Conservation Area Management Plan

Buildings:

- Poor condition of some of the buildings in the CA
- Poor quality later developments that are not sympathetic with earlier and valuable architectural elements
- Uncoordinated street furniture
- Poor quality extensions and alterations generally
- Roof extensions destroying the original configuration of historic properties and disturbing the roofscape of the CA
- Side extensions resulting into a terracing effect thus disrupting the original spatial relationship between properties
- Satellite dishes on many front elevations
- Some buildings in need of repair and require restoration of lost architectural features such as cornicing, windows, and doors
- Poor quality roofing materials, such as concrete tiles, have replaced the original natural slate or tile roofs
- Refuse storage placed on the front yard of properties thus negatively effecting the visual amenity of the townscape and of the architecture

5.2. *Maintaining quality*

The Council's attention to quality in the Acton Park CA will be maintained through its contribution to the following elements of development and alteration.

1) Quality of applications

In line with PPG15, the Council will not accept outline applications for proposals in CAs. Full applications will be required to be supported by properly 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.

2) Quality of materials

The Council will normally require that materials proposed are submitted as part of an application and not as a Condition.

3) Details

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.

4) Experienced persons

The Council will always advise that applicants appoint both consultants and builders who have experience in historic building work.

5.3. *Preserve or enhance*

As outlined in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) proposals for work within the historic environment and, in particular, within CAs must, as a minimum, preserve the character of the CA. 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 CA. In meeting these fundamental requirements the Council will require that proposals are demonstrably a faithful replication of the local historical precedent or a high quality contemporary building as described above.

5.4. *Elements at risk*

As previously described, the quality of any CA can be damaged to a significant degree by the loss of historic details whether 20th century in origin or earlier and the nature of this threat has led to the CA designation of Acton Park and other parts of the Borough. The Council regards it as important to preserve certain details for the sake of the contribution they make to local architectural character.

Therefore, the protection of the following elements of the historic environment in Acton Park CA will be of high priority:

1) Alterations and extensions to roofs and their covering materials.

The roofscape is an important element of the character of the CA. Any works whether for new buildings, extensions, alterations or the replacement of existing roof coverings, **require planning permission** to ensure that special care and attention is paid to the scale, the massing, the design and the materials employed.

- **Dormer windows**

Inset dormer windows will usually be accepted on the rear roof slopes but only very rarely on the front or the side depending on their visibility from the CA and on the original design of the house in question. Dormer windows should not dominate the roof slope.

Dormer windows should be of traditional design. A roof shape in keeping with the original profile is preferred but a flat roofed dormer may be necessary in smaller or shallower roofs, to allow 500mm to the ridge, valleys and hips. All dormer windows should be finished with moulded eaves, cornices and timber fascias. Where possible the window(s) of the dormer should align with the windows of the main house. In some instances, where the roof slope is either too shallow or too small, the insertion of a dormer window may be considered totally inappropriate.

There should be no tiling on the front elevation unless the specific design of the property allows so.

- **Roof extensions**

Roof extensions may be considered only at the rear of the properties and where not visible from the CA. in general roof extension should take the form of dormer windows.

Roof extensions should be built within the existing roof slope: they should not be wrapped around two roof slopes, exceed the height of the ridge, or form a continuation of the wall below. Changing a hipped roof to a gable should be avoided.

The ridge of the roof should not be raised to accommodate greater headroom: this will change the proportion of the house and may spoil the character and uniformity of the street scene.

- **Rooflights**

Rooflights will usually be acceptable on the rear roof slopes and on occasion on the sides. Any rooflight should be a “conservation rooflight” which lies flat in the roof.

- **Roof-based sustainable technology**

It is recognised that there is an overwhelming need and increasing pressure to be less reliant on more traditional heating and hot water producing technologies. With due regard to this solar panel and photovoltaic panels will be considered and assessed on a case by case basis. They may be considered acceptable on a rear roof slope or

elsewhere if they are visually not intrusive to the CA. This will need to be assessed on individual case basis.

- **Tiles**

Tiles /slates should match the original in type, material and colour. Interlocking tiles are rarely appropriate. House styles, materials and details vary extensively within the CA, therefore an assessment by a conservation specialist or by the Conservation Officer should inform the proposals for material replacements.

- **Chimneys**

Chimneys are a particularly important element of the character of the Borough's CAs and the Council has a clear preference for the retention of existing chimneys where they contribute positively to the architectural merit of individual houses and to the local character and for ensuring that new proposals that include chimneys are high in quality of design, materials and execution.

2) Window frames and doors

Guidance will be given as part of the Acton Park Management Plan for the retention of existing traditional windows and doors and will be specifically concerned to avoid and to advise against pollutants and non-renewable materials as replacements.

In particular, the Council has a well-founded preference for traditional, renewable materials and will therefore exercise its powers to advise and to insist, in cases where appropriate against the use of architectural elements and fenestration details in U-PVC or other manufactured substitutes. For buildings which are in commercial uses, or for flats, planning permission is usually required to install such windows and the Council can take enforcement action against any windows which have been installed without permission. For family houses, although there are currently relatively few in the Acton Park CA, the Council can also control the use of such modern details and materials through an Article 4 Direction. More information is provided in section 5.7 – *Article 4 Direction considerations for the Acton Park CA*.

Plastic window frames and doors are not felt to be able to replicate the quality and appearance of original timber windows in CAs. U-PVC is non-renewable and contributes to pollution. When used elsewhere on buildings, such as porches, barge-boards and conservatories it can have a negative effect upon visual appearance that should not be permitted in CAs. Depending on the individual circumstances, aluminium may not be considered an acceptable replacement for steel in window frames.

Acton Park Conservation Area Management Plan

Generally, the Council believes that it is the attention to detail and the specific concern about quality at all levels that will help to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Acton Park CA.

3) Brickwork

The management of brickwork and the pointing of walls is a critical issue in preserving detail in the Acton Park CA. The rendering or cladding of any original brick surface previously exposed will require planning permission (GPDO 2008, Part 1, Class A.2 (a)). The Council will discourage the use of rendering, pebble dashing, painting and other new surfaces over existing original brick facades.

4) Front and side plots

Whilst most of the buildings in the residential areas of the CA face onto the street, with concealed gardens and yards behind, a substantial number of properties are set back from the streetline with large front yards. The management of front yards is crucial both for the appearance and character of the street as well as for the architectural character of properties.

Elsewhere in the existing CA, the Council will ensure that the removal of existing traditional boundaries and gardens will be resisted and that proposals to replace or develop boundaries or front or side gardens will be appropriate in their materials and of high quality design that is compatible with the historic character of the CA. The removal of mature trees, unless dead, should not be permitted in order to create hardstandings.

Please note that recent **changes to the GPDO (General Permitted Development Order 2008)** have put two important conditions to the creation of hardstanding (Part 1, Class F) that where: (a) The hard surface would be situated on land between a wall forming the principal elevation of the dwelling house and a highway, and (b) the area of ground covered by the hard surface replaced, or the area would exceed 5 square meters – either the hard surface shall be made of porous materials, or provision shall be made to direct run-off water from the hard surface to a permeable or porous area or surface within the curtilage of the dwelling house.

A number of service buildings and single storey garages, and a few unsympathetic later constructions, detract from the general quality of the CA. As opportunities for new improved development occur, the Council will seek to ensure that any new buildings “preserve or enhance” the

Acton Park Conservation Area Management Plan

CA and that, where possible, negative features are removed.

5) Open spaces

Acton Park is the principal open spaces in the vicinity of CA. Its use, maintenance and upkeep should be in line with their UDP designations.

6) Extensions

The proliferation of unsightly and over-scale rear, side or roof extensions is regarded as detrimental to the historic environment of Acton Park CA. Especially where properties were designed as detached or semidetached houses, side extensions in particular can result in a terracing effect that erodes the traditional spatial character (this is particularly evident along Eaton Rise). For this reason, applications for extensions of this sort will be carefully considered and, where necessary for the preservation of local character, will be resisted. In particular, **please note that the recent changes to the GPDO** (General Permitted Development Order 2008) have made compulsory to request planning permission for any side extensions to a dwelling house. (Please refer to Part 1, Class A – A.1, A.2 and Conditions A.3).

Whilst there is often scope to extend a house at the rear, it is nevertheless important to make sure that extensions are built in keeping with the main house and its neighbours. It may be possible to see the back of the house, from a nearby road or footpath or from neighbouring gardens. Even if it isn't visible, a well-designed extension, which complements the main house, will enhance its appearance and therefore its value.

If the building is rectangular in plan, extensions should not be built across the full width of the house. Rear extensions should not wrap around the back and side of the house.

If a house is 'L' shaped, it may be possible to infill the shape of the house with a conservatory, depending on the relationship with the neighbouring property. The conservatory should be set back slightly from the end of the projecting wing and not involve the total removal of the back or side walls of the house.

Three metres depth is a good guide for an acceptable depth of extension. It may be possible to extend further back, or preferable to retract. This will depend on the size of the existing house, its relationship with its neighbour, and the acceptability of the roof pitch (where appropriate).

Acton Park Conservation Area Management Plan

Unless the original house style is flat-roofed, it will usually be appropriate to build a pitched roof. The angle of the slope will be dictated by the requirements of the tile and slate needed to match the main roof. Eaves details should reflect those of the main house, for example boxed gutters, open rafter ends, splays etc.

Sometimes flat roofed extensions could be appropriate depending on the character of the house. Flat roofs should be finished with parapets on all sides and with tile creasing and brick on edge. Good quality modern designs can be acceptable too, particularly glazed or frameless structures which allow a view through to the elevation of the house behind.

7) Outbuildings

Garden buildings should be small scale and sited discretely, taking care not to locate too near trees. They should be for ancillary garden use and comprise a single, modest-sized room. Timber is the most appropriate material to ensure they blend with the landscape.

For development within the curtilage of a dwelling house **Please note that recent changes to the GPDO** (General Permitted Development Order 2008) Part 1, Class E (conditions E1, E2., E3.)

8) Urban density

The generous plots in which houses are sited within some residential streets within Acton Park CA is considered to be one of the outstanding characteristics of the CA and all aspects of this openness will be protected.

All forms of over-development will be resisted; existing open spaces and gardens will preferably be maintained and their improvement will be sought. The future of existing gap-sites in Acton Park CA will be given the most careful consideration in determining planning applications.

9) Shop fronts and signage

There are no shops within the CA.

10) Traffic

In general, the traffic within the CA is not intense and does not effect the calm and rural ambience of the CA. Yet, on the edge of the CA along The Vale and East Acton Lane vehicular traffic can get very heavy.

Acton Park Conservation Area Management Plan

The Council's *Development Strategy for Ealing Centres*¹ – in the *Easier Movement* and *Transport* section proposes the enhancement of public transport and the introduction of traffic calming measures to be implemented by 2012. The Council could in fact consider the installation of some traffic management measures to try and reduce the speed of through traffic along the main thoroughfares and other improvements to provide greater pedestrian priority along key routes.

11) Satellite Dishes and Telecommunication Installations.

Satellite dishes are a common problem in many CAs. They disfigure the fronts of historic buildings and also cause a loss of historic character when fixed in locations that may be seen from the streets and open spaces.

In the Acton Park CA, satellite dishes are regarded by the Council as not being in character and therefore will only be acceptable when they cannot be easily seen from the streets or other public parts of the area.

The rules governing satellite dishes in CAs are significantly tighter than outside such areas. These state that the installation of a satellite antenna on any building or structure within the curtilage of a family house in a CA is only permitted development if the following conditions are met:

- The dish does not exceed 90 mm. in any dimension;
- No part of it must exceed the highest part of the roof;
- It is not installed on a chimney;
- It is not on a building exceeding 15 metres in height;
- It is not on a wall or roof slope fronting a highway or footway;
- It is located so its visual impact is minimised;
- It is removed as soon as it is no longer required; and
- There is not a dish already on the building or structure.

Similarly, strict controls exist on commercial buildings and flats, and it is likely that planning permission will be needed for any satellite dish which is on the front elevation of a building, or a roof facing the highway. If in any doubt, contact the Council's relevant development control officer.

¹ *Ealing Centre – A Strategy For Sustainable Improvement 2002-2012*. October 2002

Acton Park Conservation Area Management Plan

Telecommunication installations are regarded as causing great potential harm to the historic character of the Acton Park CA. The law governing the erection of masts and antennae is complex and whilst some companies have licences which allow some structures to be put up in CAs without planning permission, the legislation does allow for consultation with the local authority concerned before the work is put in hand. Further information can be found in the second edition of PPG8 *Telecommunications*.

12) Public Realm

The character appraisal for Acton Park CA has identified that there are a number of improvements that could be made to improve the quality and coherent appearance of the public realm:

The stakeholders' consultation responses suggest more coordinated street furniture would be welcome. Area should be paved with materials of quality.

13) Trees.

The mature street trees in the CA provide an important part of Acton Park CA special character. Their maintenance and any necessary replacement works are to be approached with sensitivity to this special character.

5.5. Monitoring and Review

The Council will review its CA Appraisals as part of a five-year programme of regular review and monitoring in compliance with policy reflecting the obligations imposed by the Planning (Listed Buildings and CAs) Act 1990.

5.6. Conservation Strategy and Practice

Ealing Council is in the process of reviewing its 29 designated CAs, some of which have in place Article 4 Directions (A4D) where these are appropriate. A4D means that some of the usual Permitted Development Rights of individual property owners (under the General Permitted Development Order, 1995) are withdrawn. Therefore, further significant changes or developments that would affect the special character of a certain CA would require planning permission. Although Acton Park CA is not currently being proposed for widespread A4D measures, the Council will consider if it is appropriate to propose the application of A4D in parts of the CA and/or on selective classes of development.

To maintain all aspects of the “special character and appearance” of the 29 CAs, the Council will need to retain technical advisors specializing in the preservation and conservation of historic buildings, landscapes etc. A regular five-year cycle of study and review will need to be maintained to assess and monitor the CAs with the aim of the preservation of the areas in the long term. Overall, Acton Park must be protected: firstly for its residents but also for the many non-residents who pass through this remarkable urban oasis on a daily basis.

5.7. A4D Considerations for Acton Park CA

The CA appraisal of Acton Park CA has shown the ongoing deterioration of the special character of the area due to a number of threats that include:

- building extensions disrupting the original special relationship between properties and the rhythm in the streetscape
- bulky roof extensions disrupting the roofscape
- loss of traditional fenestration patterns together with later doorways that offer material, design and decoration patterns which are not in keeping with the character of the CA
- loss of front garden trees and fences together with loss of garden walls to create parking for cars. Also, the insertion of tall railings and superfluous large brick gate piers
- clutter around buildings associated with the subdivision of large houses into flats: gas meters, waste bins, letterboxes and doorbells/ intercoms, satellite dishes.

The adoption of an Article 4(2) direction could result in the requirement for planning permission to be obtained for all extensions, porches, vehicle access and hardstandings, changes to wall surfaces and roof tiles, removal of chimney stacks and window replacements. Such controls would ensure a greater ability to manage changes to these elements that contribute to the character and if eroded will constitute a threat for the significance of the CA and for its setting. For this reason the Council will consider the application of A4(2) directions to parts of the CA. Any proposal would, of course, be subject to public consultation.

6. Consultation

The strength of Acton Park CA Appraisal and Management Plan relies on the knowledge and commitment of residents and other key stakeholders. Both documents have been produced in partnership with members of the CA panel and other interest groups across the wider Borough of Ealing community who have provided the authors of this work with the expert views and knowledge to help to positively shape the future of the CA. **Wider views will be sought in the lead up to adoption of both the Appraisal and Management Plan, and thereafter in every five-year period of review.**