

CHURCHFIELDS CONSERVATION AREA Character Appraisal



MARCH 2009

CHURCHFIELDS CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

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1. Introduction

1.1. The definition and purpose of conservation areas

According to Section 69 of the *Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, a Conservation Area (CA) is an “area of special architectural or historic interest the character and the appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance”. It is the duty of Local Authorities to designate such areas and to use their legal powers to safeguard and enhance the special qualities of these areas within the framework of controlled and positive management of change.

1.2. The purpose and status of this appraisal

The CA was first designated in 1969 and extended in 1974 and 1997. An area appraisal was published in 1999 and adopted as part of the UDP.

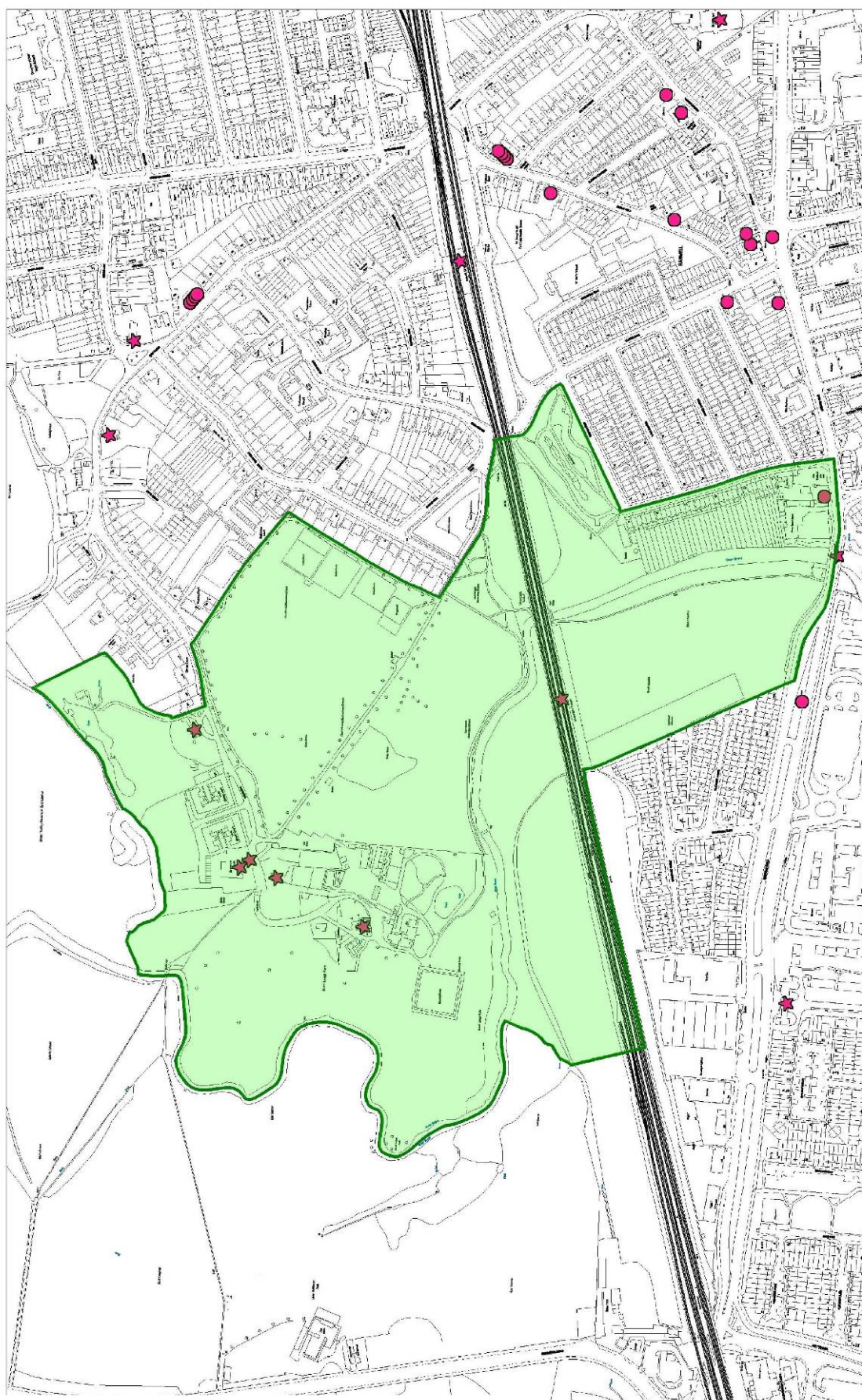
The scope of this appraisal is summarised in the following points:

1. Assessment of the special interest of the architectural heritage of Churchfields CA highlighting elements of special merit, which contribute to the character.
2. Assessment of the actions needed to protect and enhance the special qualities of the CA.
3. Assessment of the need to revise the boundaries of the CA.

This document replaces the existing appraisal published in 1999. However, it is not intended to be comprehensive in its scope and content. Omission of any specific building, space or feature or aspect of its appearance or character should not be taken to imply that they have no significance.

The methodology of the CA Character Appraisal for Churchfields follows the guidance provided by the *Planning Policy guidelines 15: Planning and the Historic Environment* (1994); the *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals by English Heritage* (2005); and the *Guidance on Management of Conservation Areas by English Heritage* (2005).

The analysis has been conducted on the basis of visits to the area, the involvement of local associations, and with consultation of primary and secondary sources on the local history and architecture.



★ Listed Buildings
● Locally Listed Buildings

Churchfields Conservation Area

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1.3. Summary of special interest

- Churchfields CA is situated in the former historic County of Middlesex, in the western part of today's London Borough of Ealing. Churchfields is part of Elthorne ward and Hobbayne ward.
- Churchfields CA abuts Hanwell Village Green CA to the east and shares its southern boundary with the St Marks Church and Canal CA,
- Hanwell is mentioned in the Domesday Book as a manor and the medieval village grew nearby the church which, by the 12th century, existed on the site of the present Church of St Mary.
- The CA is predominantly open land which falls away from Church Road following as it does the curve of higher ground that looks out over the Brent River Valley. The River Brent curls around this high ground and continues downwards towards the canal and eventually Boston Manor and the Thames at Brentford. The site appears hilly although the drop is only some 100 metres between Church Road the Uxbridge Road, with the incline after continuing to gently fall towards the Thames.
- The green open land contained within the CA consists of **three distinct spaces** with the River Brent running through them, and the Wharncliffe viaduct cutting across from east to west dividing land to the south;
 - Churchfields Recreation Ground to the south-east of St. Mary's Church;
 - Brent Lodge Park to the south-west of the church, and,
 - Brent Meadow to the south of the Wharncliffe Viaduct.
- The three open spaces are each focused around a listed building, structure, or complex of historic buildings, with the majority of the surviving built fabric being developed after the arrival of the railway in the late 1830's.
- The conservation area has mainly a Victorian and Edwardian architectural character with a few of the key listed buildings reflecting an earlier rural character which preceded the coming of the railway.

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- The CA is dominated by the imposing Wharncliffe Viaduct (Grade II Listed), completed in 1837 and widened in 1877
- To the north of the Viaduct, the Church of St Mary (Grade II* listed) cuts an imposing figure balanced on a spur overlooking the Brent River Valley.
- Scattered around the Church are other listed buildings namely, Rectory Cottage (Grade II) opposite the church which housed the earliest school in the area, Brent Lodge stables (Grade II) which lie behind. To the east of the church is The Hermitage (Grade II)
- The development which followed in the late 19th century ranges from the impressive Victorian villas in the adjacent conservation area of Hanwell Village Green to the later Edwardian artisans terraces further down the hill towards the Uxbridge Road, an early through route between London and the West of England.
- Several air raid shelters remain from WWII. One is on private land outside the Hermitage, but there is also a complex on public land fronting Church Road.



2. Location and setting

2.1. Location and context

Churchfields Conservation Area is divided between two large wards, Hobbayne and Elthorne which make up a middle section of the borough of Ealing. The area is predominantly flat with levels rising by no more than 100 metres across the whole borough. However, since the majority of that level change is concentrated from Lower Boston Road to the Church of St.Mary it makes the setting of the church appear more hilly from the Wharncliffe viaduct looking north.

The CA is bounded by the Victorian houses of Hanwell Village CA to the east and by Brent Valley Golf club to the west. This extends the visual boundary of the CA towards Golf links, the next built up area. The tree cover is such that the towerblocks for the estate are hardly visible looking west, even in Winter.

The southern boundary of the estate is the Uxbridge road. Beyond this the river flows into the Canal and St.Marks CA but the otherwise pleasant view is marred by the bulk of the new Ealing Hospital.

The backs of small 1930's semi-detached houses and terraces are visible to the west as the river flows and to the east the backs of the late victorian/edwardian terraces of Half Acre road have gardens which run down to the rivers edge.

The CA constitutes a large portion of open land in an otherwise built up suburb and with the golf club lends the area a far greener character than might be expected.

There is no direct link to the green belt but the CA is now a part of section 8 (Osterley Lock to Greenford) on the Capital Ring and also links with Grand Union Canal Walk and the Brent River Park Walk.

The recreation ground is Metropolitan Open Land as is, Brent Lodge Park and the Meadows. The Brent River Valley is a nature reserve and protected as such.



Looking west over the Brent River Valley towards the towers of Golf Links



The gardens of Half Acre Road provide important tree cover for the eastern bank of the Brent.



Wharncliffe Viaduct and Brent Meadows viewed from the Bridge

2.2. General character and plan form

The dominant character of Churchfields, Brent Meadows and the river valley is of open space. These are remnants of the open common land that surrounded the medieval settlement of Hanwell. Church Road is the only road in the north of the CA and, as its name implies, terminates at the church and Rectory Cottage opposite. A lych gate marks the entrance to an access road which continues into the grounds of Brent Park Animal Centre and passes the Grade II listed Stable block which once served Brent Lodge (now demolished).

A path cuts diagonally across the recreation grounds linking the Church to Alwyne Road. This is an ancient route which predates all the roads and used to be the main route from Greenford down to the River Thames at Brentford.

At Alwyne Road the edge of the CA continues under the viaduct past the top of Connelly Dell and follows the edge of the park to the bottom of Half Acre Road where the CA boundary is the front pavement of the western side of the road.

2.3. Landscape setting

The Church of St Mary stands on an imposing ridge of high ground which stands above the curving Brent valley.

The River Brent was straightened in several places north of the Uxbridge Road in the 1920's, in particular just north of the church which has left the 'oxbow' lake as a remnant of the river's old course. The area north of Church Road is mostly London clay with some gravel beyond that again. A strip of alluvium follows the course of the Brent with gravel deposits to the south.

The open, grassy recreation grounds are bordered by deciduous woodland along the River Brent and dissected by a mature treelined path, commonly known as Church Path, which is now being replanted with occasional Oaks.

A bandstand appears to the west of the path from the 1910 os and is situated near the glebe stone which still rests there, protected by a wire cage. It was no doubt built to celebrate the opening of the park in 1898. Due to vandalism and lack of maintenance funding the bandstand has now been removed.



Church Road



Ealing in 1741-5 by John Rocque



Looking north-west along the Church Path



Warmemorial

3. Historic development and archaeology

3.1. Historic development

Churchfields is an enclosure of Glebe (church) lands and common land, most of which has never been built on, rather than brown field which was identified as a public park. This adds to the area's more natural, open, aspect and the public lands, coupled with the visual extension of the Golf Club, Brent Meadows, and the River Brent which continues past the southern boundary of the Uxbridge Road into the adjacent conservation area of St.Marks and Canal side, lend the whole area a far more rural aspect than one would expect within the greater London environs.

This is a direct result of decisions made in the late 19th century to protect the area from encroachment of speculative house building, and ringfence some space for outdoor recreation for the burgeoning population which experienced exponential growth in the last 50 years of the 19th century. Two residents wrote to the local paper in February 1887 suggesting a recreation ground as a suitable memorial for Queen Victoria's Jubilee, but it took many other residents and councillors 10 years to raise the funds to buy the land known as The Church Fields for £5000 (to be paid back over 49 years). As a result, Churchfields, Hanwell's first public park, opened with much celebration in 1898. Subsequently, the Brent Valley Golf Course opened in 1910 and secured this wider area of open land. Hanwell was merged with Ealing in 1926.

The area around the Church of St.Mary is considered the site of the earliest Hanwell settlement and the choice of the area makes sense when you consider the advantages of the site i.e. its aspect, on higher ground above the River Brent; as it was served by a fresh water spring which can still be found in the grounds of the Hermitage, and that it was next to the ancient footpath between Greenford and the River Thames.

Two of the remaining glebe stones (ancient boundary markers) still show the remnants of carving, some of which is still legible and reads as, "glebe land belong".



One of the two glebe stones left
and shown in the OS map of 1865



Glebe stone

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1865 OS Map

The first OS Map shows that the fundamental layout of Churchfields CA is already recognisable. The church is that which we see today, built in 1841, and is shown along with The Hermitage, Rectory Cottage, the Stables, Wharncliffe Viaduct and Hanwell Bridge, which are all statutorily listed. Also shown are, the small cottage next to the Hermitage which still exists, and the Viaduct Inn next to the bridge which is locally listed and was part of the earliest development along this section of the Uxbridge Road. Behind it is shown the Poor House, and sister school to that founded in the building Rectory Cottage replaced.

1890 OS Map

The first large Victorian villas are now apparent with their back gardens bordering the newly acquired community playing fields. The ancient route which the Church Path now follows is clearly visible passing the church and splitting into three directions on the north bank of the Brent.

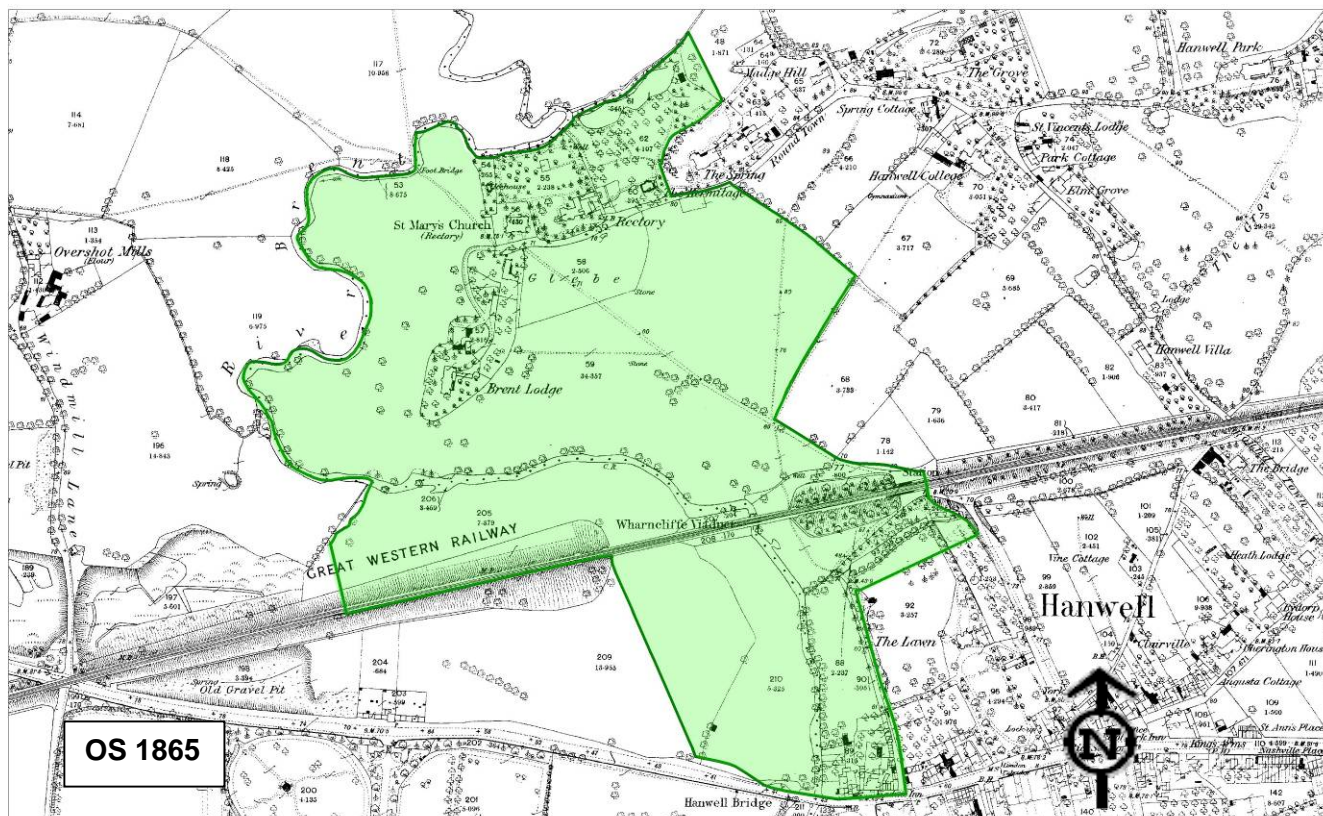
1910 OS Map

Half Acre Road appears to complete the built form of the CA.

1930 OS Map

Brent Lodge is still shown, but was demolished in the early 1930s .

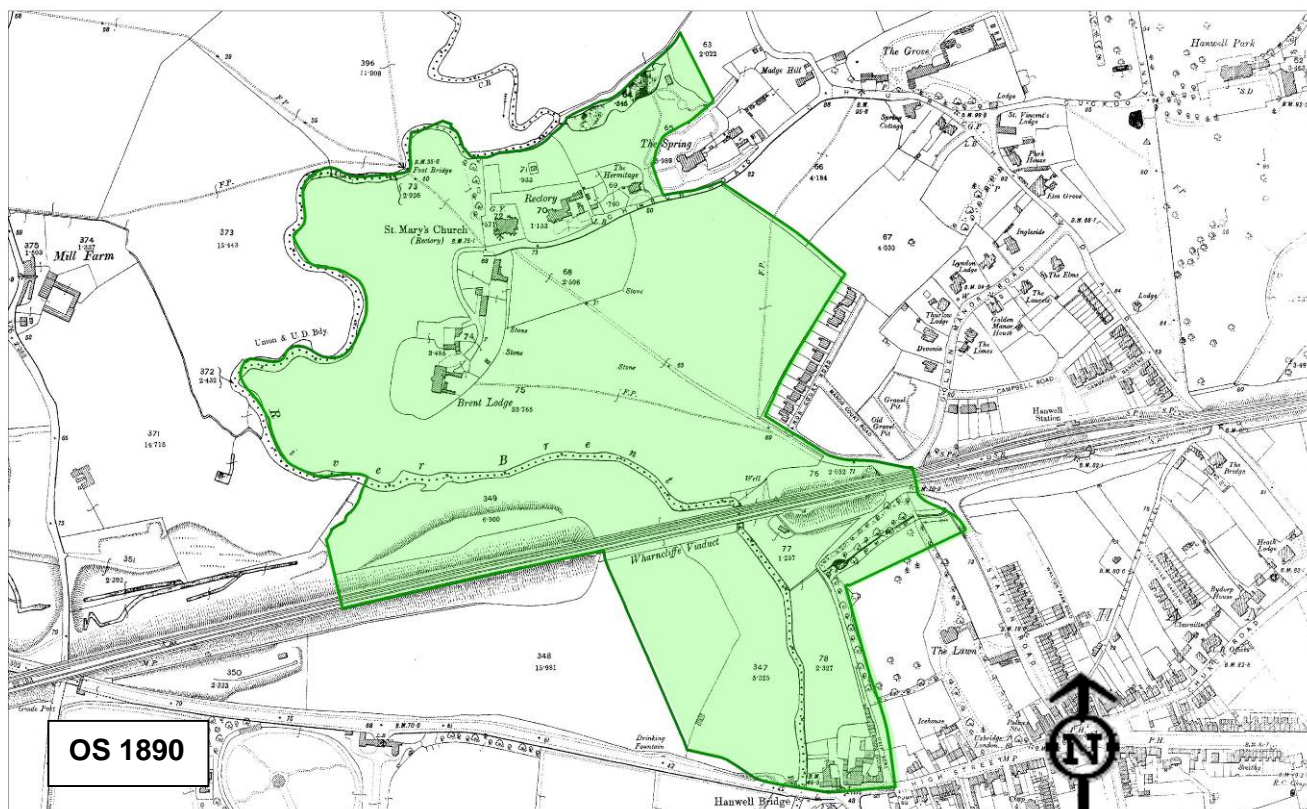
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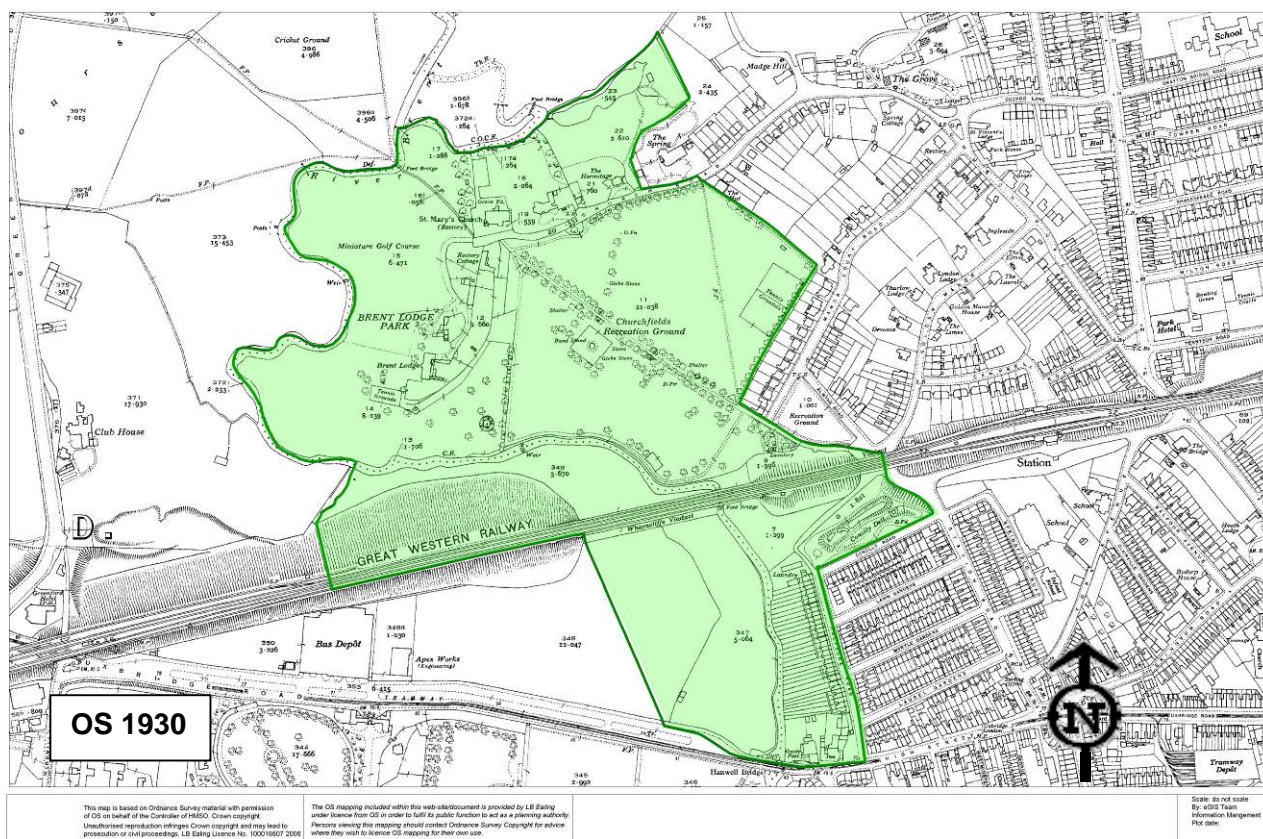
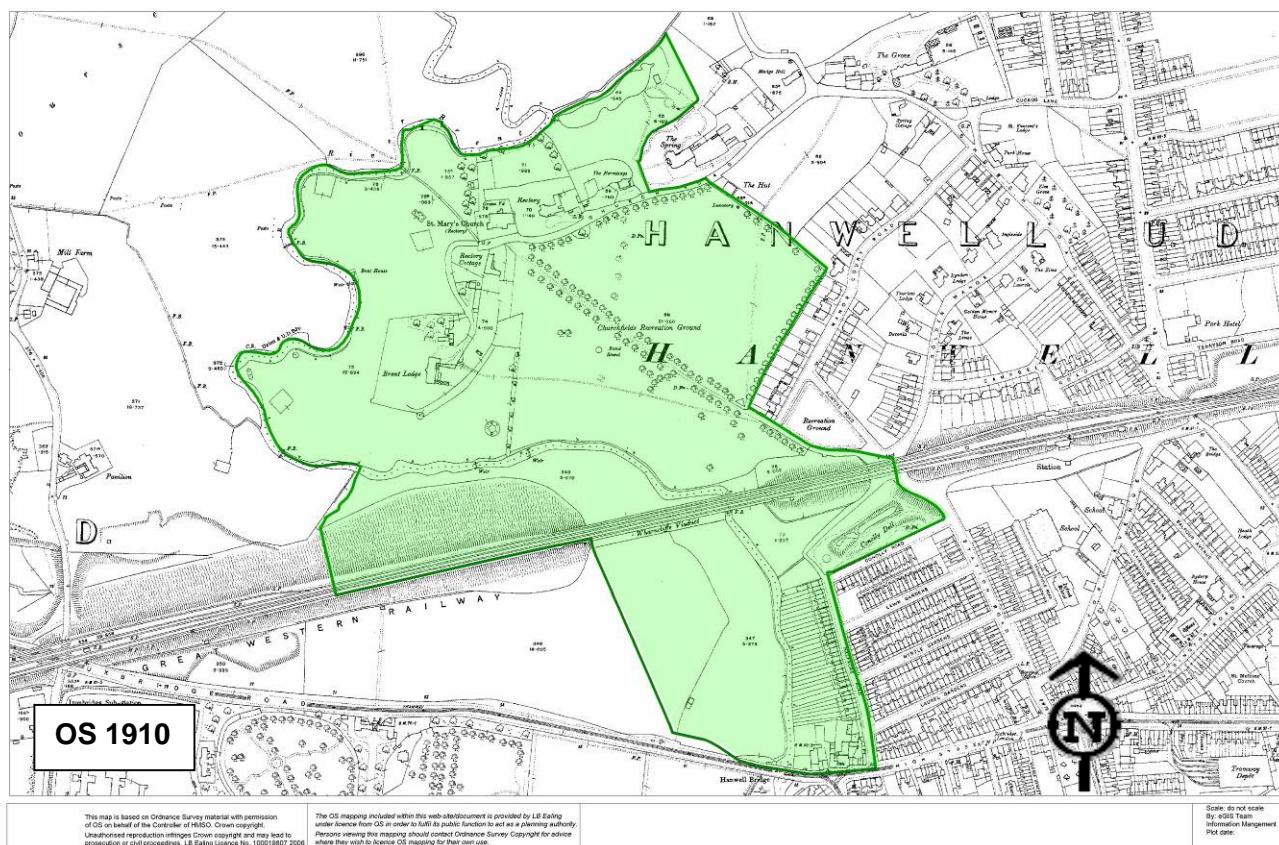


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3.2. Archaeology

The UDP highlights the whole of the Brent River Valley as an area of archaeological priority due to its long history of human settlement.

The site upon which the Church of St.Mary now stands is recognised as the medieval centre of Hanwell and is the third church on the site since at least the 12th century.

The name, Hanwell, is most probably derived from a spring which rises close to the church, within the grounds of the Hermitage on Church Road.

Hanwell was originally linked to the Uxbridge Road via a track running north from Brentford. This right of way still runs past the Church and crosses the Brent via a small pedestrian bridge before continuing north to Greenford.

The oldest archaeological remains found to date, that prove early settlement in Hanwell, were unearthed some way away at the site of Oaklands School, when in 1886, some Saxon graves of the late 5th or 6th century were found. It is evident that there is still a considerable amount of information which could be gleaned from professionally run digs and, as a result, any development taking place in the area which requires the digging of substantial foundations would be expected to include provision for such investigation.

4. Spatial analysis

4.1. The character and inter-relationship of spaces within the area

The general layout of Churchfields CA has remained the same since the recreation ground was opened to the public in 1898. Church Road is made up of a wide variety of residential buildings and the eastern boundary of Churchfields CA is indicated by buildings only being to the north side, whilst to the south is the open recreation ground which visually bleeds into the meadows beyond the viaduct and the Brent River Valley beyond the Church. The end of the road is demarcated by the Lych Gate just beyond the Church of St.Mary and Rectory Cottage and the access road which leads on to the Brent Park Animal Centre with its loose clustering of small single storey buildings and two storey 1930s gardeners lodge and listed stables. The building plots are as varied in this section as the buildings themselves and the grain is loose with all buildings of three storeys or less. This low-rise lack of uniformity adds to the drama of the elegant church spire rising above.

The only other residential properties included in the CA are the western side of Half Acre Road, to the south of the viaduct, which are smaller terraced properties from the late Victorian period. The front walls of these properties have lost some of their earlier uniformity but have fortunately been saved from demolition since the front gardens are not big enough to offer hard-standing for cars. As a result the street frontage still retains its continuity and its pleasant suburban character greatly enhanced by the street trees.

Half Acre Road ends with a looser group of buildings, some of which are very old, that make up The Viaduct Inn, its car park and a small beer garden. The Inn is adjacent to the Environment Agency depot that lies between it and the listed bridge. The depot is not attractive, but does service the river Brent and allows important views across to the Viaduct Inn and the backs of the residential buildings along Half Acre Lane. These visual links between the Meadows, the Viaduct, the Victorian terraces and the Inn are vital to the character of the area.



The Church of St.Mary seen from the Stable



The gate to Church Path



Viaduct Inn on the corner of Half Acre Rd. and Uxbridge Rd.



Hanwell Bridge looking towards the Viaduct Inn

4.2. Key views and vistas

From Hanwell Bridge looking north towards the Wharncliffe Viaduct is an imposing sight. The viaduct is shown to its best advantage at this point as it towers above the River Brent and the meadows below. The feeling is of being transported back to the early days of the railway, cutting a swathe through rural Middlesex, and this is greatly added to by the listed bridge, locally listed pub and tree lined river.

As you pass under the viaduct the view of The Church of St. Mary on the spur of land above the Brent and rising from the base of the Viaduct is highly evocative of the rural past preceding the coming of the railway and reminiscent of a photo from the same direction in 1905, which shows how little this view has changed. The demolition of the Rectory to make way for the 1930's maisonettes is the most dramatic change, and their positioning so close to the church is regrettable. However, they are a low key addition which does not compete for attention or detract from the overall impression of bucolic charm.

The bright blue roofs of Ealing Hospital, are visible above the viaduct from many vantage points around the Church looking south, and destroy the character of the Meadows when looking south.



Looking north along the River Brent towards the Wharncliffe Viaduct



Looking south from the recreation running between the Church and Alwyne Road



The Church of St.Mary viewed from the south-west corner of the recreation grounds.

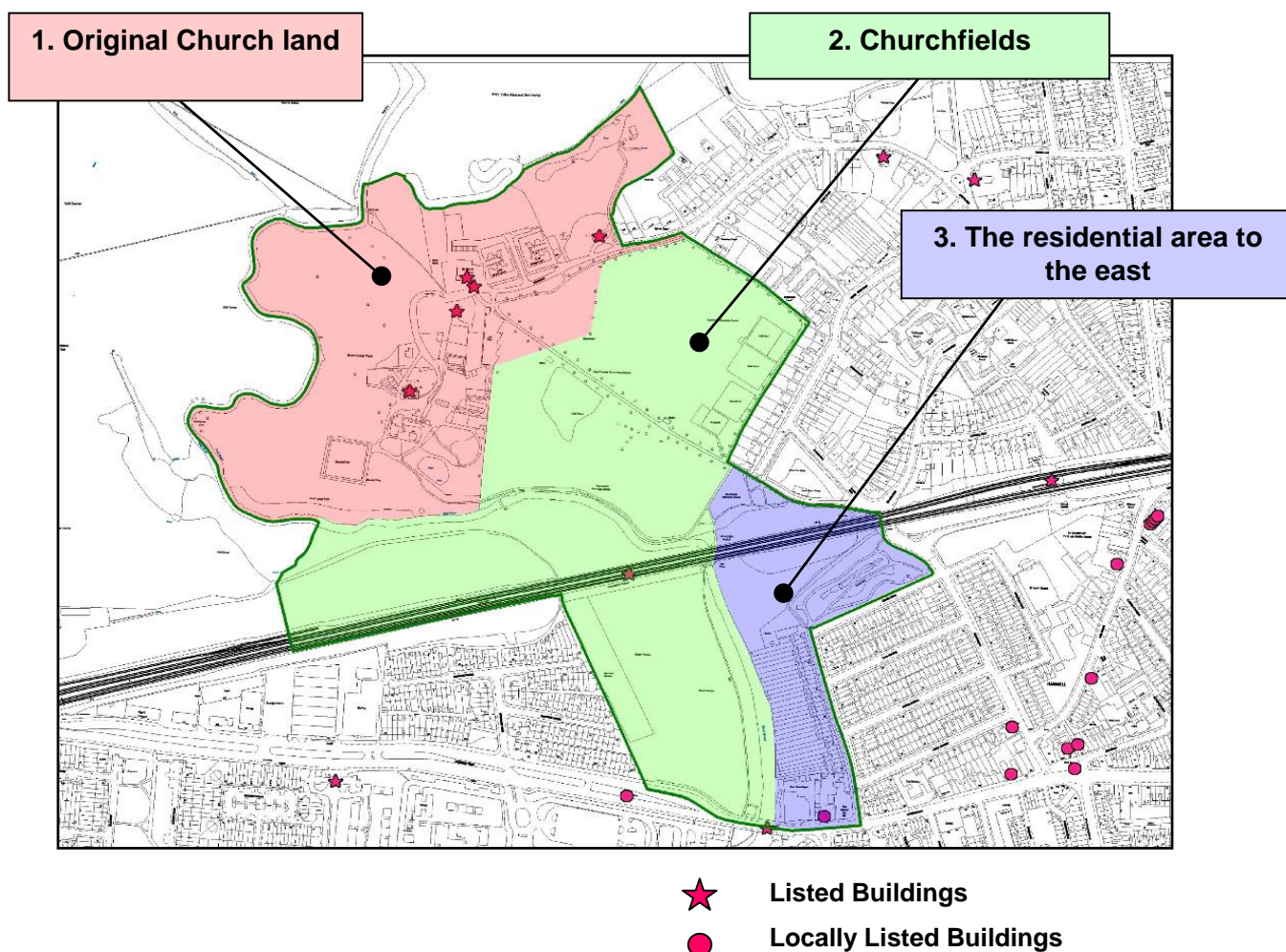
The character of the conservation area

4.3. Character Areas and the quality of architecture

This section deals with the value and location of prominent historical buildings within the boundary of the CA. It includes structures and areas that represent important architectural and natural landmarks in Churchfields CA and that significantly contribute to its character. This section has been subdivided to reflect the fact that the character of the CA changes significantly within its boundary.

The CA breaks down into three sub-areas of character:

1. Church of St. Mary and surrounding glebe lands
2. Churchfields recreation ground
3. The residential area to the east



4.3.1. Sub Area no 1: Church of St.Mary and surrounds

This area is focused around the Church of St.Mary and much of the area originally owned by the Church and known as glebe land. The Church which by its relative height and position, acts as a landmark. This area also covers the properties on the north side of Church Road within the CA and is completed by Brent Lodge Park to the west.

4.3.2. Sub Area no 1 architectural interest

Clustered around the site of St.Mary's Church at the end of Church Road, medieval Hanwell developed into a complex of fine buildings, some of which still survive.

The Church of St. Mary we see today is, at least, the third incarnation of a Christian church on the site. Although an illustration of the exterior of the medieval church survives, little is known about it although it is thought to have been a similar size to the surviving medieval church in Greenford. There are, however, several illustrations of the church which replaced this in 1781. By the 1780s Hanwell's population had grown to the point where the little church was inadequate and Thomas Hardwick, who had recently built the church of St.Lawrence at New Brentford (which still exists), was commissioned to design a new church. This church, in turn, became too small for the growing congregation and in 1841-2, Gilbert Scott in association with W B Moffatt, designed the present building. Built in an Early English style of flint with stone and white brick dressings, the tower at the south-west is topped by a broach spire. Listed Grade II* in 1950 the church also has several notable monuments in the churchyard, in particular the Glasse monument which was listed Grade II in 1989.

Although not worthy of listing, the maisonettes which were built adjacent to the Church in the 1930's are a polite and suitably subordinate architectural style and do not detract from the listed church and houses either side. They could be improved through better maintenance and by the retention or restoration of original doors, windows and other features.

The 1930's was an important time for the development of west London suburbs and it is notable that not more development took part in along this top section of Church Road at this time.

The maisonettes are part of a series of interesting 1930's additions most notably the café and the gardeners lodge,



Church of St Mary. Grade II*



Church of St Mary, Grade II* and 1930s maisonettes.



Rectory Cottage, Grade II listed

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which were built to replace the grand Brent Lodge which suffered a fire and was demolished in the early 1930s. Also surviving are a few artefacts and features from the original building such as a small section of wall, some original outbuildings which were converted into toilets and most evocatively the original gates to the lodge.

The Animal Centre, which is built on the site of Brent Lodge, has recycled a few outhouses and elements left from the grand house but also adds a charming and popular destination. The stable, grade II listed, is part of the age before cars and the diversity of architectural styles, periods and functions are so varied as to create a character that is evocative of the area as it must have been before the coming of the railway. The Stables were listed in 1981 and is described as built of yellow stock brick with gauged arches, two storeys with a slate hipped roof.

Opposite the church is Rectory Cottage, Grade II listed in 1972. The core of this delightful building dates from 1800c and It replaced the earlier building Samuel Glasse, rector of the parish, had bought and equipped to provide a school. The school opened with 24 pupils, in 1782. The present building is two-storeys with colourwashed plaster. The fenestration is quaint with leaded lights and pointed light mullion casements

The true Rectory for the church was demolished in the 1930s to make way for the maisonettes and flats we see adjacent to the Church today.

Moving away from the Church along Church Road it is not far to the next listed building, which was designated as Grade II in 1953. The Hermitage is a rare example of an early 19th century Cottage Orn  and contributes greatly to the surviving character of the CA. The thatched roof is hugely evocative of the country and nearly 200years ago when it was built, was displaying a somewhat nostalgic view of a bucolic existence that was far more poetic than the reality has ever been. The Hermitage is now the only thatched building left in the borough. The quatrefoil and point arched casement windows with ornamental glazing bars are worthy of special mention in the listing as is the unusual ogee arch above the doors. Many of these feature reflect those of Rectory Cottage which preceded the Hermitage by some few years. The boundary wall is a major part of the street character and extensive grounds to the rear are now designated a wildlife area.



1930s caf  within Brent Park Animal Centre.



The Hermitage, Grade II listed



The Stables, Grade II listed

4.3.3. Sub Area no 2: Churchfields

This sub-area covers the whole of the recreation grounds to the north of the imposing Wharncliffe Viaduct and continues south of the viaduct to incorporate Brent Meadows as far as the Uxbridge Road.

4.3.4. Sub Area no 2 architectural interest

The area is dominated by the imposing Wharncliffe Viaduct (grade II), its construction spanning the end of the Georgian era, the Regency period, and standing as an impressive omen of the Victorian age which began in its year of completion, 1837, with the accession of Queen Victoria. Built by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the Viaduct was widened in 1877 which is presumably when the station moved eastwards from the top of Station Road where it had been originally to Campbell Road. For more information on the Grade II listed building please refer to the appraisal for Hanwell Village Green CA.

The backs of the Victorian villas on Manor Court Road are an important boundary to the CA and have fortunately, in the main, been extended with some restraint.



Wharncliffe viaduct looking south
from Church Path



Backs of Victorian villas on Manor
Court Road

4.3.5. Sub Area no 3: The Residential Enclave to the north east

The terraces from the late Victorian/Edwardian period, completed the spread of development between The Viaduct Inn (as it was renamed after and the building of the Wharncliffe Viaduct in 1837) and replaced the Poor House which stood there from the late 18th century. The backs of these terraces have a disproportionate affect on the character of the Brent River and the Brent Meadows which constitute the southern most part of the CA and the northern tip of the adjacent Canal and St.Marks CA to the south of Hanwell Bridge.



mid-Victorian terrace on the western side of Half Acre Road

4.3.6. Sub Area no 3 architectural interest

The Viaduct Inn – this locally listed public house stands on the eastern side of Hanwell Bridge and is a very attractive gateway to the village of Hanwell. An inn has been present on the site since 1730 and was formerly known as the Coach and Horses, changing its name with the coming of the railway. Core elements of the building appear to be quite early but extensive interior and exterior alteration over the centuries makes this an unlikely contestant for statutory listing. Its setting has also been severely undermined by intrusive transport infrastructure and road markings as well as the unattractive depot which separates it from the eastern abutment of the listed bridge. For all this the Viaduct still exerts an important atmosphere of Victorian expansion and is evocative through its positioning of the early turnpiked Uxbridge Road (1714) and the increasing development and encroachment on common land.



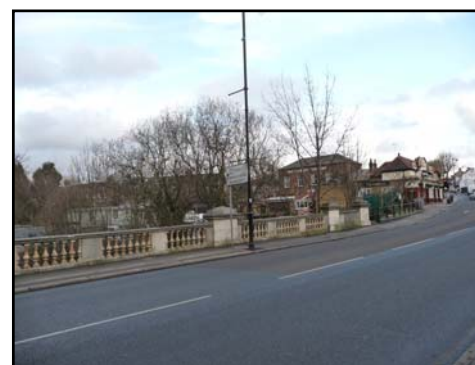
Conolly Dell

The Inn was also adjacent to both the poor-house and the school which lay directly behind it at the beginning of Halfacre (now Halfacre Road) up until the early 19th century. By the arrival of the railway in 1838 there were already several terraces of houses along the main road and nearby and some of these are included in the adjacent CAs, Hanwell Village Green and St.Marks Church and Canal, and Hanwell Clock Tower.



An example of good restoration

Hanwell Bridge was Grade II Listed in 1981 and is described as having 2 arches to the north side and steps to the west. It has stone with cement-filled cast iron balusters and to the south side 3 arches of 18th century brick but with 19th century stonework. It also incorporates 2 outer arches from a 6-arch medieval bridge on the south side (the bridge was widened on the north side).



Hanwell Bridge, Grade II listed and the Viaduct Inn

4.4. Key unlisted buildings

White Cottage, which lies between the maisonettes and The Hermitage, lends itself to the rural character and was built around the time of the Hermitage, or even before since it is visible on the first OS in 1865.

A surprising number of the original street gas lamps survive along the Church Path and these are made even more interesting due to their subsequent layers of alteration, the most notable being their conversion to electricity some time in the 1930s. There is some local consternation regarding the imminent removal of these for their refurbishment and reinstatement elsewhere in the borough. Many still have the hooks which held the gas lighters ladder safely in place

In the north-east corner of the recreation grounds lie a series of underground air raid shelters from WWII. These are a rare survival of such communal shelters and there has been much interest in recording their construction. They are presently being monitored for subsidence and attempts will be made to record the network for posterity..

Also notable at this eastern boundary are the handsome cast iron railings which somehow survived WWII when so many other examples were lost to the war effort.

An Ice House is situated near the Church. Although in poor repair, this was built in the early 19th century (? To be verified) and was used to store the ice from the oxbow lake harvested over the winter months.

A few relics survive of Brent Lodge which was destroyed by fire and demolished in the 1930s.

The war memorial on the western side of the recreation ground.



White Cottage, Church Road



One of a few remaining original lampposts scheduled for removal and renovation.



Railings to eastern boundary of Recreation Ground



The original gate post and lamp from Brent Lodge and a surviving relic.

4.5. Building materials and local details

Sub Area 1 : Church and Glebe lands

Huge diversity of materials including:

Thatch, rough stucco, ornamental windows and painted brickwork and render, colourwashed render.
Flint with stock brick dressings, and stone.

brick, pointed quatrefoil windows, crissal windows and wooden sash.

Sub Area 2: Recreation ground

Old lampposts about to be removed.
Low key path tarmac with wooden edging

Old field gate at viaduct end of path

Tennis courts and play equipment modern, hedge that has overgrown into row of low trees. Brick

Sub Area No 3: eastern residential

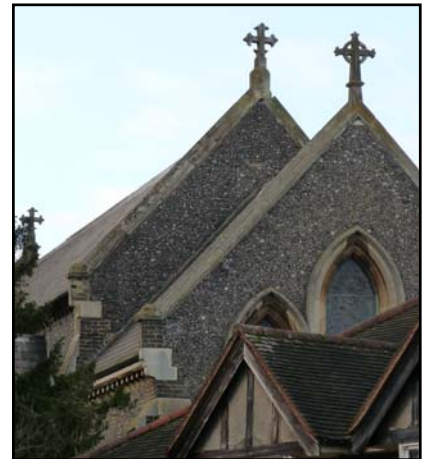
London stock brick

Wooden sash windows.

Glazed bricks of viaduct inn



Thatch and stucco



Flint and stone



Victorian railings



Wooden sash and glazed tiles

4.6. Contribution of open spaces, trees and landscape

The open nature of Church fields recreation ground and the Brent Meadows added to the Brent Golf Club, create a large swathe of open land and woodland in an otherwise developed suburb. This is the main feature of Churchfields CA if not the main focus. The open land provides the setting for a group of buildings at the end of Church Road. Centred around the Church of St.Mary the buildings and structures, such as the lych gate, thatched Hermitage, and stuccoed Rectory Cottage create a diverse and unique impression.

The heavy treeline to the west protects the views out and even in winter, when the mainly deciduous woodland is free of leaves, only the very tops of the residential towers at Golflinks and the blue roofs of Ealing Hospital are visible.

The site is classed as Metropolitan open land and as such is protected from built development.

An encouraging prospect is the apparent regeneration of elms around the stable and within the wildlife sanctuary behind the Hermitage, that appear to have weathered the scourge of Dutch Elm Disease and are now regenerating. If this is the case, it could be of great importance.

Conolly Dell on Conolly Road, was built in memory of John Conolly an innovative and philanthropic Victorian surgeon, who lived in a house nearby called The Lawns. This was demolished in the early 20th century, but the landscaped gardens and a monument to the famous doctor still survive, if somewhat damaged. Its layout is far more picturesque and demanding when it comes to management. A spring which still runs through the site was landscaped, but the lining of the 'stream' has failed and the water leaks through. There are currently attempts being made to rectify this. The character is very different to the more municipal open grass area appearance of the recreation grounds and the wilder, more natural open feel of the meadows which follow the course of the River Brent.



Mature trees on Half Acre Road



St.Mary's viewed from the West



Conolly Dell and the viaduct beyond

4.7. The extent of intrusion or damage (negative factors)

The properties to the western side of Half Acre Road are mainly included to protect the natural edge to the Brent river. They have long gardens which run down a gentle slope to the rivers edge. The loss of large trees here and the further visual and physical encroachment of roof and rear extensions, along with river terraces, would greatly affect the character of early Victorian expansion. Much of this early character is still recognisable through the interaction between the viaduct across the meadows, the public house and terraces behind a strong tree line of large mature trees following the river.

Bulky roof extensions and additions to the existing fabric ruin the attractive suburban residential character and dominate the listed building nearby.

Front gardens have been lost to car parking and start to urbanise the area, as do inappropriate front walls and railings and electronic gates. The loss of front garden trees and shrubs together with urbanisation of garden boundary treatments, constitutes a threat to the area's character. Boundary fences and hedges were an important feature in rural 19th century and most of 20th century, Middlesex. However, large portions of original boundary fences have been demolished and replaced inappropriately. This has resulted in the progressive urbanisation of some of Church Road.

Ealing Hospital, with large blocks and dark blue bulky roofs, is visible above the viaduct from many vantage points around the Church looking South. It looms across the Brent Meadows and dominates the Uxbridge Road. The listed St. Bernards Hospital has a far more attractive aspect, but is mostly blocked from view by the new hospital.

A number of other threats to the special character of the CA are due to inappropriate development or alterations of the original fabric or properties' layout.

Later boundary walls have been executed with materials, design or technologies that are inappropriate with respect to their context. The thinning of trees and hedges along properties' boundaries also detracts from the Victorian/Edwardian character of Half Acre Road.



**Bulky roof extensions spoil the
roofscape in residential areas**



**Monument to Dr John Conolly
(1794-1866)**



**Inappropriate replacement of the
railing.**



**Derelict garages behind the listed
church are an eyesore**

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The CA is under a number of other threats that include:

- Extensions that are disrupting the traditional spatial relationship between buildings
- Bulky dormer windows at the rear, at the front and at the side of properties that disrupt the original proportions and character of historic properties as well as the roofscape of the CA.
- Rooflights on front slopes
- Each house period identified within the CA displays a very distinct character reflected in the design and quality of the joinery. The loss of the traditional fenestration patterns, together with later doorways where materials, design and decoration patterns are not in keeping with the character of the property is a major concern for the quality of the architecture in the CA. Inappropriate replacements weaken the finish of the houses and give them a bland look.

4.8. Public realm and street furniture

The natural, rural charm of Church Road is key to this part of the CA's character. Although visitors arriving by car can cause problems in the summer, CPZ's and their attendant paraphernalia have been avoided and the car park kept to a reasonable size, and thoughtfully designed.

The wall around the church and the Hermitage denote their grander feel. Rectory Cottage, also listed, has a more homely feel with a boundary of fence and hedge. These points enhance the character and tell the story of this section of the CA.

The Lych Gate is an important feature and creates a clear entrance to Brent Lodge Park and the Animal Centre. It greatly adds to the rural character. A glebe stone still sits by the side of the road just to the west of the Lych gate.

Railings to the eastern boundary of the recreation ground are very fine and appear to be quite old. It is curious how they survived the salvaging of iron during WWII, when so many other properties had theirs removed for the war effort. The adjacent property marked on the OS of 1910 and 1930 as 'the Hut' was demolished in the 1970s to make way for a small housing development.

The hedges dividing the recreation grounds from the road are another key feature which give the area a more rustic character and reduce the impact of cars on the recreation ground.



Car Park serving the recreation ground & Church



Church Road outside the Hermitage

4.9. General condition

The overall condition of most of the fabric in the CA is very good. Even properties identified as having some negative impacts on the character are well kept. There is some concern about specific houses and the garages behind the church, but overall the impression is of a prosperous and respectable community. There is negligible litter and graffiti is occasionally prominent (i.e. the top of the viaduct along the railway lines), but not endemic. The recreation grounds may occasionally suffer from vandalism but not excessively.



Outbuildings encroaching upon the wildlife area

4.10. Problems, pressures and capacity for change

There are no development sites identified in the UDP for the Churchfields CA there are however sites which are a cause for concern and their imminent, or possible, redevelopment are to be monitored closely.

74 HALF ACRE is a site at the viaduct end of the road and lies between Conolly Dell and the River Brent. Behind two 1930's infill houses is a Victorian building known as the Hanwell Laundry. The adjacent site has a pending application for several houses where an old garage stands.



Development plot at the end of Conolly Dell and Halfacre Road

The maisonettes were built in the 1930s and require considerable maintenance, i.e. blocked guttering, cracked render etc. Some doors, and most of the windows, have been replaced with newer uPVC models unsympathetic to the building design. The site could also be targeted by speculative developers if it is all under one ownership.

The Hermitage – Out-buildings and hard-standing are encroaching on the hermitage estate and the wildlife area to north.

New boundary treatments are urbanising the CA. Traffic management could ruin character, through excessive signage, road markings and equipment.

Loss of allotments to the rear of the maisonettes is a concern. As are the garages, which cut into the churchyard and setting of Grade II* church.

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The Golf club have requested an informal right of way be closed off to dog walkers and ramblers. This is seen by many local people as a key route through the area and join up to ancient right of ways north of Boles Bridge.

The ancient path which runs north to south past the church could be under threat if the bridge which is now nearing the end of its lifespan were closed.

Stables are at risk and need urgent works carried out on them.

The 'bunny park' as The Animal Centre is widely known, is a huge bonus which brings in many families and local support. However, far too many visitors are arriving via car.

Future care must be taken to monitor the health of the trees, especially the trees which line the diagonal path across the recreation grounds and the woodland edge which protects the views from surrounding development. The threat of Leaf Miner moth and Weeping Canker which are attacking Chestnut trees elsewhere in West London and Oak Processionary Moth which was first spotted in Syon Park in 2004, require the trees to be closely managed.

5. Suggested boundary changes

Since the boundary is surrounded by other CA's and/or wildlife areas there seems little opportunity or need for extension. Consultees are invited to comment on this for further investigation.

6. Community involvement

In accordance with English Heritage guidance, the Council has involved key stakeholders during the appraisal process, a list of which is appended. This initial consultation process has been undertaken in a number of on site meetings with representatives of local amenity groups and in the form of a questionnaire sent to key stakeholders based in and around the CA. The questionnaire called for careful consideration and in some instances detailed responses. Due regard to the questionnaire responses has been paid in this text. Residents of the CA will be given the opportunity to comment on the draft Appraisal during February 2009.

7. Summary of issues

- Loss of front garden trees and shrubs
- Loss of front yard fences to create parking for cars
- Urbanisation of the village cluster around church.
- The general inappropriate design of recent developments:
 1. New boundary walls with inappropriate material and design with the addition of out of character decorative railings and controlled gates.
 2. Changes to the fenestration
 3. Continuous porches
 4. Painting over brickwork
 5. Bulky dormers that disrupt the roofscape
 6. bulky side and rear extensions.

8. Planning and Policy framework

A summary of the principal legislation and policy guidance applicable to Churchfields CA is set out below:

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the process of assessment, definition, or revision of boundaries and formulation of proposals for CAs as well as the identification and protection of Listed Buildings. Authorities are required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA, or in case of Listed Buildings, to have special regard for their preservation in the exercise of their powers under the Planning Acts.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 15, for local and other public authorities, property owners, developers, amenity bodies and public, sets out Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, CAs, and other elements of the historic environment. *Ealing Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP)* or *Local Development Framework (LDF)* includes its statutory policies for implementing the Acts and apply the PPG. This Appraisal should be taken into account when considering planning or listed building applications within the Conservation Area.

The prime objective of the relevant legislation and guidance is the preservation and/or enhancement of character or appearance of CAs. Any proposed developments which conflict with that objective should be normally expected to be refused. PPG 15 and local policy also support a presumption in favour of preservation of any buildings or objects which are considered to make a positive contribution to the character of a CA. At the same time, it is recognised the need to accommodate changes which respect or reinforce the character of the area in order to maintain its vitality.

Many local planning policies – not only those for design and conservation – can affect the developments in a CA. For instance policies on sustainable development, meeting housing needs, affordable housing, landscape, biodiversity, energy efficiency, transport, people with disabilities, employment and town centres can all influence development and the quality of the environment in CA. However, policies concerned with design quality and character generally take greater importance in CAs. The adopted UDP's section on Urban Design includes policies dealing with:

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- Design of Development (4.1)
- Mixed Use (4.2)
- Landscaping, Tree Protection and Planting (4.5)
- Statutory Listed Buildings (4.7)
- Conservation Areas (4.8)
- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Interest Areas (4.9)
- Commercial Frontages and Advertising Signs (4.10)

Throughout the Urban Design section, references are made after each policy to further relevant documents and policies, including:

- *SPG 5: How to Prepare an Urban Design Statement*
- *SGP 12: Greening Your Home*
- *Ealing LA21: Keeping Your Front Garden Alive*
- *PPG 15: Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas*
- *PPG16: Archaeology and Planning*
- *PPG 19: Outdoor Advertisement Control*
- "By Design - Urban Design in the Planning System: towards a better Practice"(CABE & DETR, 2000)
- "By Design – Better Places to Live: A Companion Guide to PPG 3" (CABE, 2001)
- *The London Plan*, Policy 4B.5, 4B10, 4B11, 4B12, 4B14

Policy 4.8 for CAs states:

- The Council will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of CAs and their setting.
- New developments, built or otherwise within or adjacent to the CA, will be permitted provided that they are well related to the existing character of the area in terms of its historic and architectural quality and green setting. The Council requires that any development proposal adheres to the Council's specific CA guidelines.
- The council will refuse planning permission and CA consent for development of existing buildings, unless the proposed replacement development will preserve or enhance the character of the CA. Where appropriate, the Council will also make Article 4 Directions that restrict development rights granted by the General Permitted Development Order.
- It is the Council's intention to create new and extended CAs in the Borough, in areas which merit this status, having regard to the individual quality of the area as a whole.

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The criteria for further designation or extension of CAs are sets out as:

- The area concerned must be the setting for one or more of the following:
 1. Listed Buildings, or a group of buildings of good design from any period especially when they create an attractive townscape.
 2. Urban open spaces or historic village greens.
 3. Features of historic or archaeological interest including industrial or transport heritage.
 4. Landscape features including, water, trees, and gardens of value for their plant, wildlife or their amenity of the surrounding area.
 5. An historic street pattern.
- The area should have some cohesion of character worthy of preservation.
- The benefit of preserving that character must be considered to be greater than the loss of certain permitted development rights having regard to the financial and resource implications of such action.

Detailed advice on policies contained in the UDP, on restrictions on Listed Buildings, residential and commercial properties in Conservation Areas, and for guidance on the procedure to apply for permission, can be obtained from the London Borough of Ealing, Planning and Surveying Services, Perceval House, 14-16 Uxbridge Road, London, W5 2HL, Tel 020 8825 6600, email: planning@ealing.gov.uk, or, alternatively, from the Council's website at www.ealing.gov.uk.

9. Glossary

Ashlar hewn blocks of masonry neaten and laid in horizontal courses

Arch the spanning of an opening by means other than a lintel. Most commonly arches are curved and made up of wedge shaped blocks. Numerous variations exist e.g. Blind, Triumphant, Vernacular

Band an unmoulded, projecting string course, often delineating a floor/storey

Bargeboards projecting boards set against the incline of the gable of a building

Bay the vertical division of the exterior, (or interior) of a building marked by a window opening. They may be Round, (or Canted) or Square

Bond style of laying Headers, (bricks laid with the long side at right angles to the face of a wall), and Stretchers, (bricks laid with the long side along the face of the wall), within masonry courses. Flemish Bond is where alternate Headers and Stretchers are used in the face of the wall. English Bond is where alternate courses of bricks in the facing wall are either Headers or Stretchers

Buttress a mass of masonry or brickwork projecting from or built against a wall to give additional strength

Capitals the top or head of a column, pier or pilaster, which relate to Classical architecture

Casement a window hinged vertically to open like a door

Cladding an external covering applied to a structure for protective/aesthetic purposes

Coade Stone an artificial cast stone used from the second half of the 18th century for decorative keystones

Column an upright, often supporting, structure either, round, square or rectangular in form

Coping a capping or covering found on top of a wall. They can be flat or sloping to discharge water

Cornice a projecting, decorative moulding found along the top of a building refers to a cornice made up of a series of small square blocks **Dentil Cornice**

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Corbel a projecting block, usually stone, supporting a horizontal beam

Course a continuous layer of stones or bricks found in a wall. Referred to as String, (horizontal) or Soldier (vertical)

Cupola a dome that crowns a roof or turret

Curtilage the available space attached to a property which forms a singular enclosure

Door hood a projected moulding above an exterior door designed to through off the rain

Dormer window a projecting window placed vertically in a sloping roof with a roof of its own

Dressings a decorative feature made of stones, most commonly set around windows

Eaves the underpart of a sloping roof overhanging a wall, (Oversailing), or flush with it

Elevation the external wall or face of a building

Façade commonly the front face of a building

Fanlights a window, often semi-circular with radiating glazing panels, found over a door in Georgian buildings

Fenestration the arrangement of windows in a building

Finial a formal ornament, (usually in Fleur-de-Lis) at the top of a gable, pinnacle or canopy

Footprint the total area over which a building is situated

Gable the triangular upper part of a wall found at the end of a ridged roof

Grain refers to the arrangement and size of buildings in the urban context

Hardstanding an area of hard material used for parking cars within the curtilage, (often front garden space) of a house

Hipped roof a shallowish pitch with sloping at the vertical ends

Keystone central wedge-shaped stone at the crown of an arch

Churchfields Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Mortar mixture of cement, (or lime), sand and water laid between bricks as an adhesive

Lintel a horizontal supporting element of timber, metal or stone found across the top of a door or window

Mansard roof has a double slope where the lower part is steeper than the upper part

Moulding a continuous projection or groove used decoratively to throw shadow or rain water off a wall

Mullion a vertical element (glazing bar) that divides a window into two or more lights

Pantile a roofing tile with a curved S shape designed to interlock

Parapet a low wall used as a safety device where a drop or edge exists

Pediment a low pitched Gable above a Portico

Pier a solid vertical masonry support (or mass) found in buildings and walls

Pilaster a shallow pier projecting slightly from a wall

Pinnacle a small pyramidal or conical shaped crowing element

Pitched roof the most common type. Gables exist at each end of the pitch

Plinth the projecting base of a wall or column

Pointing the exposed mortar finish to brick or masonry joints

Polychromatic multi-coloured brickwork

Portico a roof supported by columns, usually attached as a porch to a building

Quatrefoil a set of decorative openings, often leaf shaped cut into an arch

Quoins dressed bricks found at the corners of buildings, usually laid so that the brick faces are alternately large and small

Ragstone rubble masonry, rough building stones or flints, generally laid in irregular courses

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Recess space set back in a wall, often the setting for an entrance porch

Render plaster or stucco applied to a wall

Rooflight a window set flush into the slope of a roof

Rusticated masonry cut in huge blocks, often in its original hewn state, that is normally found on the lower half of buildings

Sash window a window that is double hung with wooden frames (sashes) that slide up and down with pulleys

Sepulchre a recess with Tombchest designed to receive an effigy of Christ

Sett paving slabs

Sills the horizontal element found at the base of a window or door frame

Stucco a form of plaster used internally or externally to decorate or protect

Transom a horizontal bar of stone or wood across a window

10. Bibliography

English Heritage, *Guidance on Conservation Area Management Plans*, 2005

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Ealing Library Service, *Ealing In the 1930s& '40s*, 1985

A.A., *Ealing and Brentford: a History of the county of Middlesex*, 1982

Ealing Library Service, *Ealing as it was*, 1980

11. Appendix - Stakeholder consultation

11.1. List of stakeholders consulted

Ealing Civic Society

Hanwell Planning Advisory Panel

Councillors:

Elthorne Ward

Julia Clements-Elliott

Amit Kapoor

Jonathan Oxley

Hobbsayne Ward

Colm Costello

Phil Greenhead

Rosa Popham

11.2. Churchfields Conservation Area Appraisal Questionnaire sent to stakeholders

1. Please list any special qualities, distinctive features or areas, which you consider a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.
2. Can you identify any key features – within the built or natural environment – that you feel have been eroded over time?
3. Can you identify any development that has taken place since designation, which you feel had a negative impact of the character of the conservation area? If yes, why?
4. Can you identify any areas on the attached map that you consider should be included or excluded from the Conservation Area? Please give your reason.
5. How effective do you consider the present controls over development to be? Please explain.
6. Apart from the Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area, are there any buildings or structures that you consider are of architectural or historical significance? Please give details.

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7. Can you identify any open spaces, significant trees or hedges that you feel make a significant contribution to the special character of Conservation Area? Please list
8. What would you say were the most significant views, vistas or panoramas, within, into or from the Conservation Area? Please give details.
9. In your opinion, what impact does road traffic have upon the Conservation Area?
10. Do you think there are any areas that would benefit from being car-free? If so please describe.
11. Are the streets and public areas generally appealing and easy to use? Please comment.
12. Do you think that street furniture is in character with the Conservation Area? If not, what improvements could you suggest?
13. Do you have any concerns about personal safety within the area? Please give details.
14. Do you feel that sufficient Conservation Area direction exists to guide development proposals? Please give details.