

**CHURCHFIELDS
CONSERVATION AREA
Management Plan**

MARCH 2009

CHURCHFIELDS CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

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1. Introduction

This plan sets out the local authority's approach to managing the future of the Churchfields 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 Churchfields 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 Churchfields 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 Churchfields 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.

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- 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 will be subject to formal consultation in the Autumn of 2007. In May of 2007, 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 Churchfields 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

Churchfields 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 Character Appraisal for the Churchfields 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 Churchfields 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, since the coming of the railway.

The earliest settlement in the area was called "Yealing". Archaeological evidence shows that parts of Ealing have been occupied for at least 7,000 years. 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 Churchfield CA has evolved yet remained one of the last vestiges of Hanwell's rural past the character of old Middlesex.

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 both Hanwell's and the wider borough 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 Churchfields CA and its immediate surroundings are under strong development pressure. Churchfields, in front of the church and overlooking the Brent, were bought in 1898 for the public which was a response to the growing concern for the health of the burgeoning population which followed the expansion of the railway network. When added to the wider Brent Valley and the golf course, this area covers a substantial acreage. This lends the CA a rural character which is evocative of old Middlesex at around the time of the building of the canals and the railways which followed. Several key properties enjoy statutory listing on Church Road, but even here there have been bulky extensions to what were relatively small domestic buildings and alleged encroachment of the wildlife sanctuary which constitutes the majority of the land surrounding The Hermitage. There is also concern that the loose grain and irregular plot size that creates the unique character of this area will be under ever greater pressure from infill development and side extensions.

The terraces in Half Acre Road date from the late Victorian/Edwardian period and completed the spread of development between the north of the viaduct, further east along the Uxbridge Road and The Viaduct Inn adjacent to the bridge. The west of Half Acre Road replaced the Poor House which stood there from the late 18th Century. Any development to the rear of these terraces have a disproportionate affect on the character of the Brent River and the Brent Meadows. These 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. Although not identified in the UDP as having any development sites, 74 Half Acre Road, where the building known locally as the Hanwell Laundry still stands, and is currently subject to a planning application for new residential properties. The following principles will be adopted to guide the Council in its control of development on this site and with regard any other applications:

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- 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*.

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- 3) The Council will require all planning applications to be supported by a Design and Access Statement. This should be a brief but thorough guide to the reasons for the development and how the design fulfils these, 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 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 generally dictate 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 acceptable if they are high quality and provided that they remain sympathetic to the context, scale and massing of 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 Churchfields 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:

- The encroachment of parking upon the green to serve the park and the Animal Centre
- Use of utilitarian materials such as concrete slabs and tarmac where less formal paths and access were the character.
- The urbanisation of the rural character through the loss of boundary fences and their replacement with brick walls, railings and controlled gates.
- The overgrown infill of back land areas and gap sites that create the loose open character within the rural/sub-urban grain
- Loss of front garden and trees to hard-standing for cars.

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Buildings:

- Loss of earlier and valuable architectural elements to terraces on Half Acre Road, both front and back.
- Poor quality extensions and alterations generally
- Satellite dishes on some front elevations
- Poor quality roofing materials, such as concrete tiles, have replaced the original natural slate or tile roofs

5.2. Maintaining quality

The Council's attention to quality in the Churchfields 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) U-PVC (Unplasticised Poly Vinyl Chloride) in window frames and other architectural elements

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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, the Churchfields 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 Churchfields 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.

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 Churchfields CA.

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

The roofscape and low rise tradition is an important element of the character of the CA and of the setting of the Grade II* listed church as well as the buildings overlooking the Brent River, Meadows and Hanwell Bridge. 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 rarely on the front or the side. They should not dominate the roof slope. In the case of the western terraces of Half Acre Road the rears of the properties are of particular concern due to their substantial impact on the open rural character of the Brent River Valley.

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.

There should be no tiling on the front elevation.

• Roof extensions

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.

Due to the impact on the character of the Brent River Valley, roof terraces will also be resisted to the rear of Half Acre Road terraces.

• Rooflights

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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.

- **Tiles**

Tiles /slates should match the original in type, material and colour. Interlocking tiles are rarely appropriate.

- **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 local character and for ensuring that new proposals that include chimneys are high in quality of design, materials and execution.

7) Extensions

The proliferation of unsightly and over-scale rear, side or roof extensions are regarded as detrimental to the historic environment of Churchfields CA. 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.

8) Brickwork

The management of brickwork and the pointing of walls is a critical issue in preserving detail in the Churchfields CA. The Council will discourage the use of rendering, pebble dashing, painting and other new surfaces over existing original brick facades.

9) Rear plots, outbuildings and boundaries

Garden buildings should be small-scale and sited discretely, taking care not to locate them 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 that they blend with the natural environment surrounding the River Brent and the Brent Meadows.

They should be kept away from the waters edge to maintain the natural environment.

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 back gardens will be appropriate in their materials and

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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.

As opportunities for new improved development occur, the Council will seek to ensure that any new buildings “preserve or enhance” the CA and that, where possible, negative features are removed.

10) Signage

Extra care should be given to the choice and nature of signage throughout the recreation grounds, Conolly Dell and the Animal Park in order to maintain the areas more rural character and resist urbanisation.

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 inappropriate locations. In the Churchfields 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.

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Telecommunication installations are regarded as causing great potential harm to the historic character of the Churchfields 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*.

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 in 3.1.

5.4. *Elements at risk*

As previously described in the Appraisal and summarised in section 5.2 of this document – Maintaining Quality -, the quality of the Churchfields CA has been damaged to a degree by a variety of factors including:

1. Poor quality later developments
2. Satellite dishes on many elevations
3. Loss of historic features from many of the buildings, such as front doors, gates and windows.
4. Use of poor quality materials for roofs, windows and facing materials
5. Encroachment of development on open land around the Hermitage and along the River Brent
6. Loss of local historic lamp-posts and potential loss of other features in the public realm such as the original gateway to Brent Lodge, the Lych Gate, the railings to the eastern boundary.

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7. Urbanisation of front boundaries and loss of front gardens to hard standing. Creation of gated compounds.
8. Upkeep of open spaces, which at present are fairly well maintained but could come under pressure due to lack of resources, and specialised technical knowledge
9. Loss of Chestnut trees to Leaf Miner Moth and the more lethal Bleeding Canker disease
10. Further encroachment of cars and parking on the recreation grounds
11. Closing off of access and historic rights of way through the golf course
12. The declining condition of the bridge crossing the Brent on the ancient pathway travelling north-south past the Church of St.Mary

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 Conservation Areas) 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. 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 also be needed to be maintained to assess and monitor the CAs with the aim of the preservation of the areas in the long term. Overall, the Churchfields CA must be protected for both its residents and business owners, and a programme of improvements instigated to achieve its preservation and enhancement.

Article 4 Direction considerations for Churchfields CA

The CA appraisal of Churchfields Ca has shown how the character of the CA's special character is being compromised by inappropriate development that include:

Building bulky roof and rear extensions

Large dormer windows or roof terraces that disrupt the roofscape

Loss of traditional windows and doors together with alteration to characterisc glazing divisions

Loss of front gardens, trees and hedges and an urbanisation of front boundaries along Church Road through replacement of fences with brick walls and railings often with remote controlled gates.

Loss of boundary features along Half Acre Road.

Hard standing for cars at the front and side of some properties.

Replacement or alteration to traditional brick and tile finishes.

The Council could consider if it is appropriate to propose the application of A4D in parts of the CA and on selected classes of development.

The adoption of an A4D would result in the requirement for planning permission to be obtained for all new windows and doors, extensions, porches, changes to the front elevation materials and roofs, and the creation of new driveways and vehicular hardstandings and changes to boundary treatments. Such controls would ensure a greater ability to manage changes to these elements that contribute to character and if eroded will constitute a threat to the significance of the area's setting and special character.

The serving of an A4D on family dwellings, and stricter development control over incremental changes to flatted properties, will in time result in improvements to the visual appearance of the CA, but also in a substantial restriction of the Permitted Development Rights. Any proposal would, of course, be subject to public consultation.

6. Consultation

The strength of the Churchfields 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 local community who have provided the authors of this work with the expert views and knowledge to help 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.