

ACTON GREEN CONSERVATION AREA Character Appraisal



MARCH 2008

ACTON GREEN 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 1982.

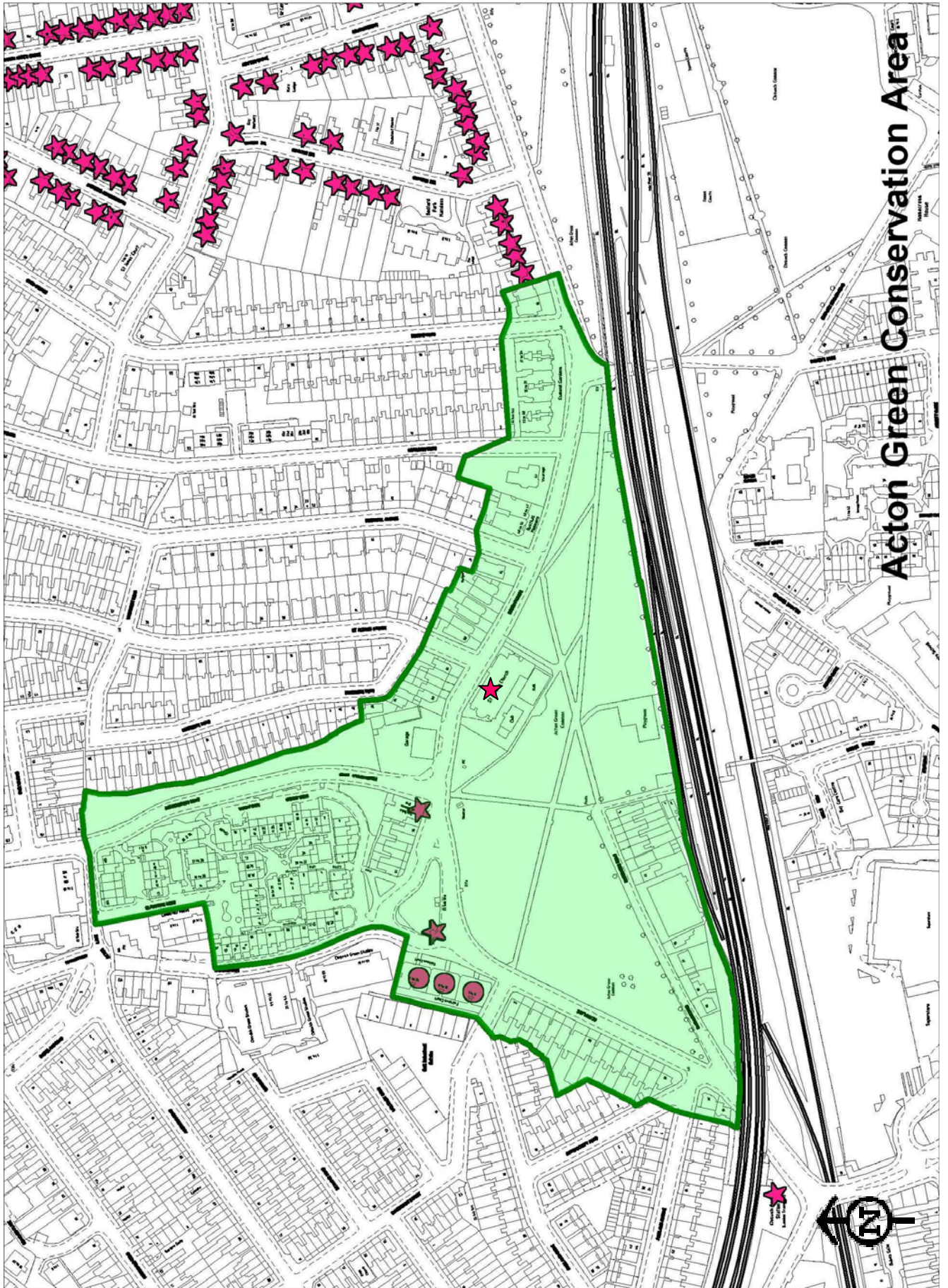
The scope of this appraisal is summarised in the following points:

1. Assessment of the special interest of the architectural heritage of Acton Green 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 Acton Green 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.



Acton Green Conservation Area

- ★ Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Buildings

1.3. Summary of special interest

- Acton Green CA is situated in the former historic County of Middlesex. The CA is within the ward of Southfield in the London Borough of Ealing.
- The plan-form of the central part of the CA is strongly determined by the presence of Acton Green Common and the properties clustered around it. The Common with its mature trees and railway embankment behind it, are the dominant features of the area. St Albans Church is the major landmark and focal point of the area.
- Once an outlying hamlet, Acton Green became a parish with the building of St Alban's Church in 1877/8. In 1642 the Area of Acton Green formed part of the field battle of Brentford.
- Within the CA two area of character can be identified: **Sub Area 1:** Acton Green; **Sub Area 2** Beaconsfield Estate
- The CA has a diverse architectural heritage but mainly from 19th and 20th century, with Victorian terraces, turn of the century mansion flats and the Victorian Church of St Albans and the late Victorian/Edwardian pub of the Duke of Sussex.
- The CA has a mainly residential use with a few retail units along South Parade.
- Mix of construction material but mainly red bricks (yellow stocks only on rear elevations and on the terraces along Hardwicke Road), tiled roofs, prominent gables and tall chimneystacks, white painted casement and sash windows, tile hanging and half timber embellishments.

2. Location and setting

2.1. Location and context

Acton Green CA is situated in the former historic County of Middlesex. The CA is within the ward of Southfield in the London Borough of Ealing.

Acton Green CA is 1.42 Km² in area and it is south east of Ealing Town Centre between Acton and Chiswick. Acton Green CA includes the western part of Acton Green Common. The CA is bounded to the south by the raised embankment of the District and Piccadilly lines, to the east by Bedford Park CA and to the north and west by slightly later residential developments of generally similar scale but less distinctive character.

2.2. General character and plan form

The plan-form of the central part of the CA is strongly determined by the presence of Acton Green Common and the properties clustered around it. The CA includes the length of Acton Lane from the railway bridge at Chiswick Park Station to the junction with Beaconsfield Road, an area to the north between Beaconsfield Road and the continuation of Acton Lane, and then along South Parade as far as Esmond Road to the east. The CA is mainly residential, with a few shops along South Parade, a public house and the Church of St Albans.

The Common with its mature trees and the railway embankment to its southern side, are the dominant features of the area. St Albans Church is the major landmark and focal point of the area.

2.3. Landscape setting

Acton is divided into northern upland clay and southern gravel, which drops away towards the Thames.

From the Geological Survey it appears that the underlying geology of the area is Langley Silt ("Brickearth"), but gravel is also present, especially towards the southern border of and around the Common. The land in this area is flat and low-lying with no notable topographical features.

The CA landscape setting is provided by Acton Green Common identified as "Public Open Space with Ealing's UDP, and by the District line / Piccadilly line identified as Green Corridors¹.

The CA adjoins Bedford Park CA on the eastern side. Otherwise on the northern, western side Acton Green CA is set within a broad area of late Victorian and Edwardian development.

¹ UDP Vol 1 p. 45, policy 3.4 and, Vol 2, p.12.



Approach to the CA from
Chiswick Station



Approach to the CA from
the east along South Parade



The railway embankment forming
the south boundary of the CA



Acton Green with St Albans
Church in the background

3. Historic development and archaeology

3.1. Historic development

Once an outlying hamlet, Acton Green became a parish with the building of St Alban's Church in 1877/8. In 1642 the Area of Acton Green formed part of the battlefield of Brentford, when a Royalist assault on London led by Prince Rupert was repulsed by the Parliamentarians. Acton Lane was originally called Bromcroft Lane and houses of the same name (demolished in 1870c.) stood on its west side immediately south of Antrobus Road. In the present day Acton Green is what remains of the ancient Common.

Acton Green had been famous for its many laundries since the 1860s when the gentrification of areas like Notting Hill displaced working class families who settled further west to continue their cottage industries.

Several trades to complement the laundries were generated: hand-woven baskets and hampers were made in Antrobus and Bollo Bridge Roads; mangles, wringers, washing machines and tubs were supplied from Trussler in Bollo Bridge Road. By the 1880s Acton had its own soap-makers, including a soap works behind the Cambridge House Laundry. The need in the early days to transport the washing by horse-drawn vans also gave rise to the need for smithies and chaff merchants.

Light industries, some to support the laundries, were also established in the area at the end of the 19th century, and scattered remnants of these small factories or workshops can still be seen today. One of the largest factories was Evershed & Vignoles, built in 1933, at the bottom of Acton Lane, to where the company had originally moved in 1903 and which employed 4,000 people making many kinds of electrical test equipment.

When the railway first opened on the 1st of July 1879, "Acton Green" was the original name given to what is now Chiswick Park Station; it was renamed "Chiswick Park and Acton Green Station" in 1887, until it became simply "Chiswick Park Station" in 1910.



Victorian Villas along Hardwicke Road, now partially demolished. 1900c.



Duke of Sussex Pub. 1900c.



Old Chiswick Park Station. 1900c.

Acton Green Conservation Area Character Appraisal

1865 OS Map

At the time of the first OS map, Acton Green appears surrounded by a few scattered buildings, some large semi-detached villas along Hardwicke Road, The Duke of Sussex Public House is clearly marked and it is surrounded by a few other small buildings. Terraces appear along Gladstone Road and Beaconsfield Road. The rail tracks on the south side of the common are clearly shown. (Unfortunately the western section of the CA appears to be a missing sheet of the map, therefore we are unable to comment exhaustively.)

1890 OS Map

The most notable change in the OS Map of 1890 is the Church of St Albans and the annex School and Vicarage, built in 1877. The row of terraces at the eastern side of Hardwicke Road (Nos 5-10) is shown. Also the terraces flanking Acton Lane had been built, whilst the site today occupied by Fairlawn Court was occupied by two substantial houses, Ivy Lodge and Acton Green Lodge. South Parade appears in its present configuration. Finally the rail tracks are clearly marked as "Metropolitan Dist. RY Ealing Extension".

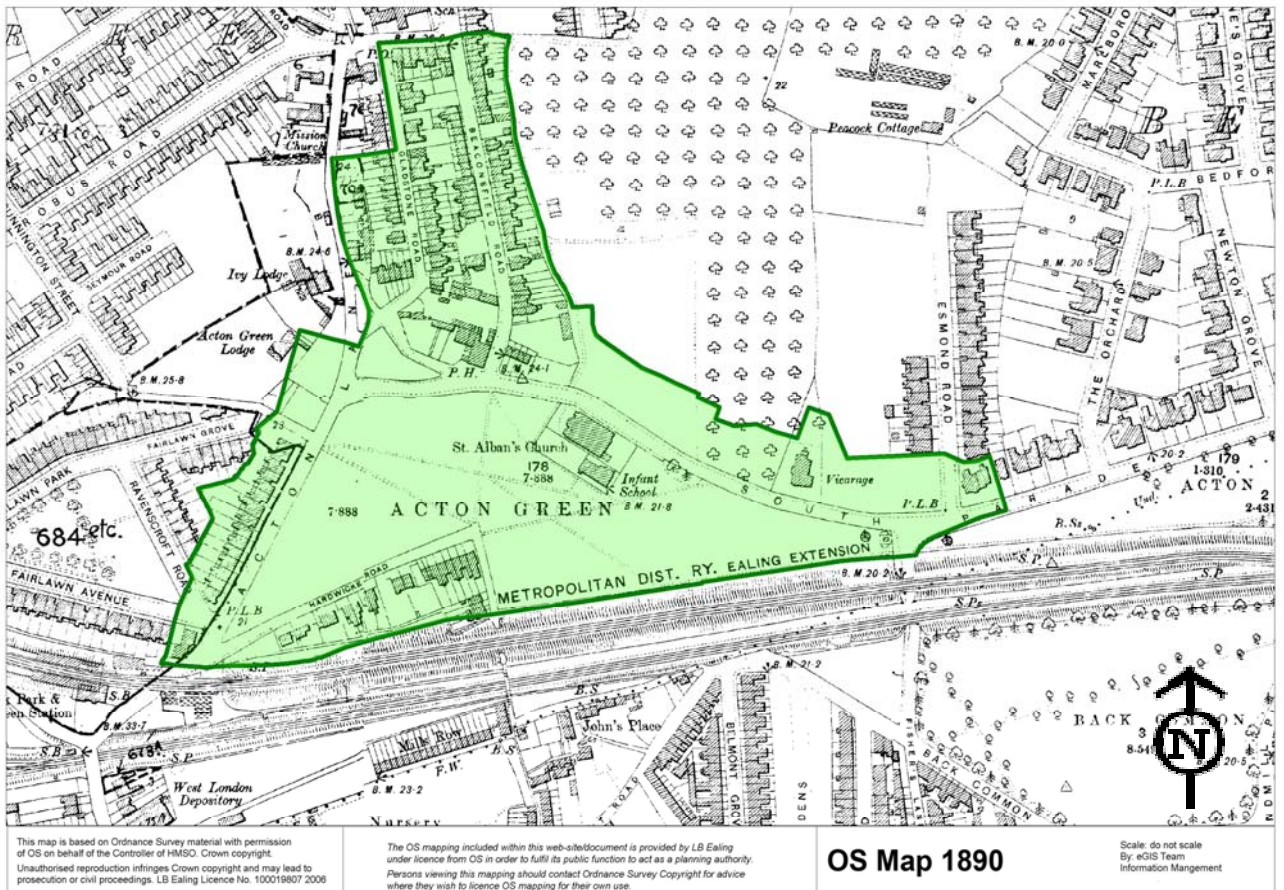
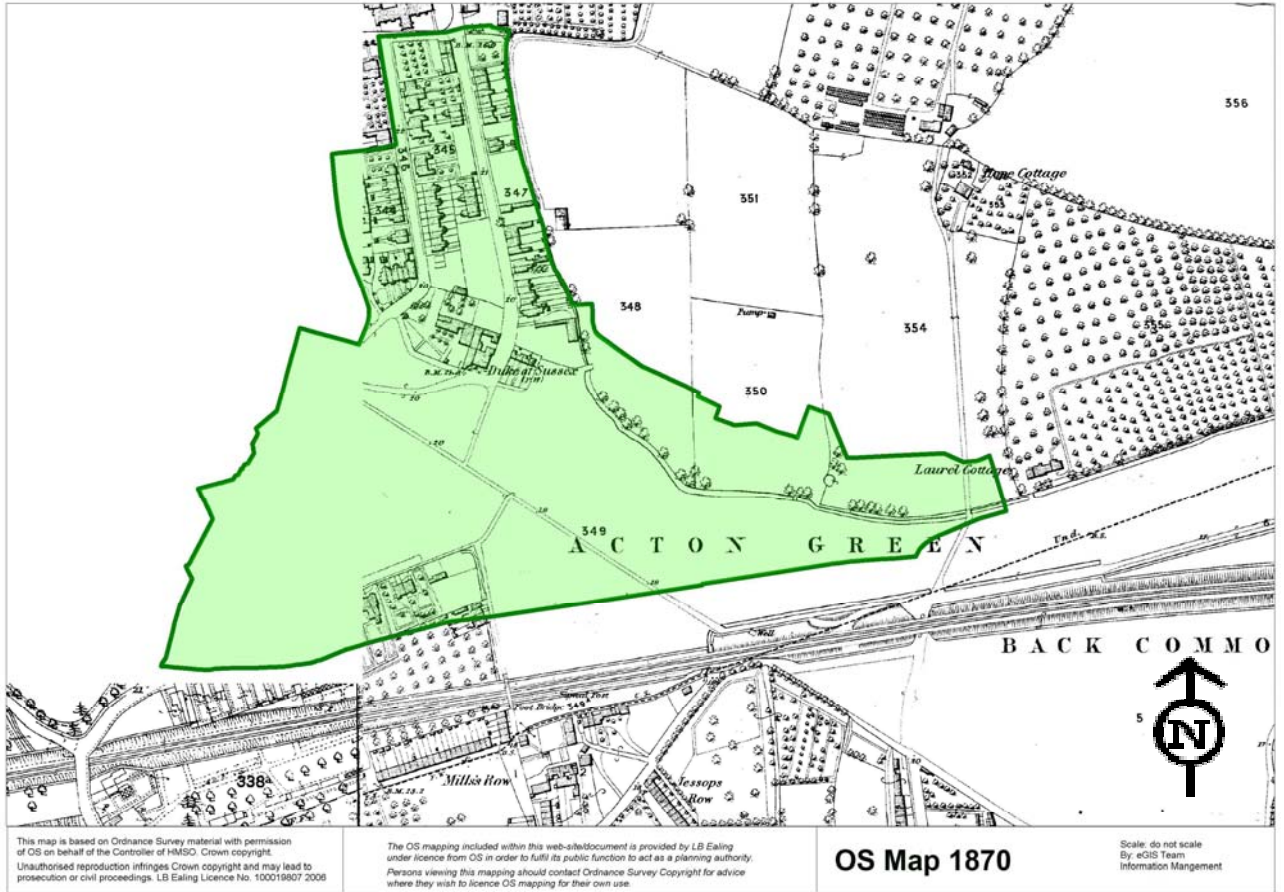
1910 OS Map

Fairlawn Court appears along Acton Lane on the site of Acton Green Lodge. The northern side of South Parade appears completely edified in its current configuration including Esmond Gardens blocks.

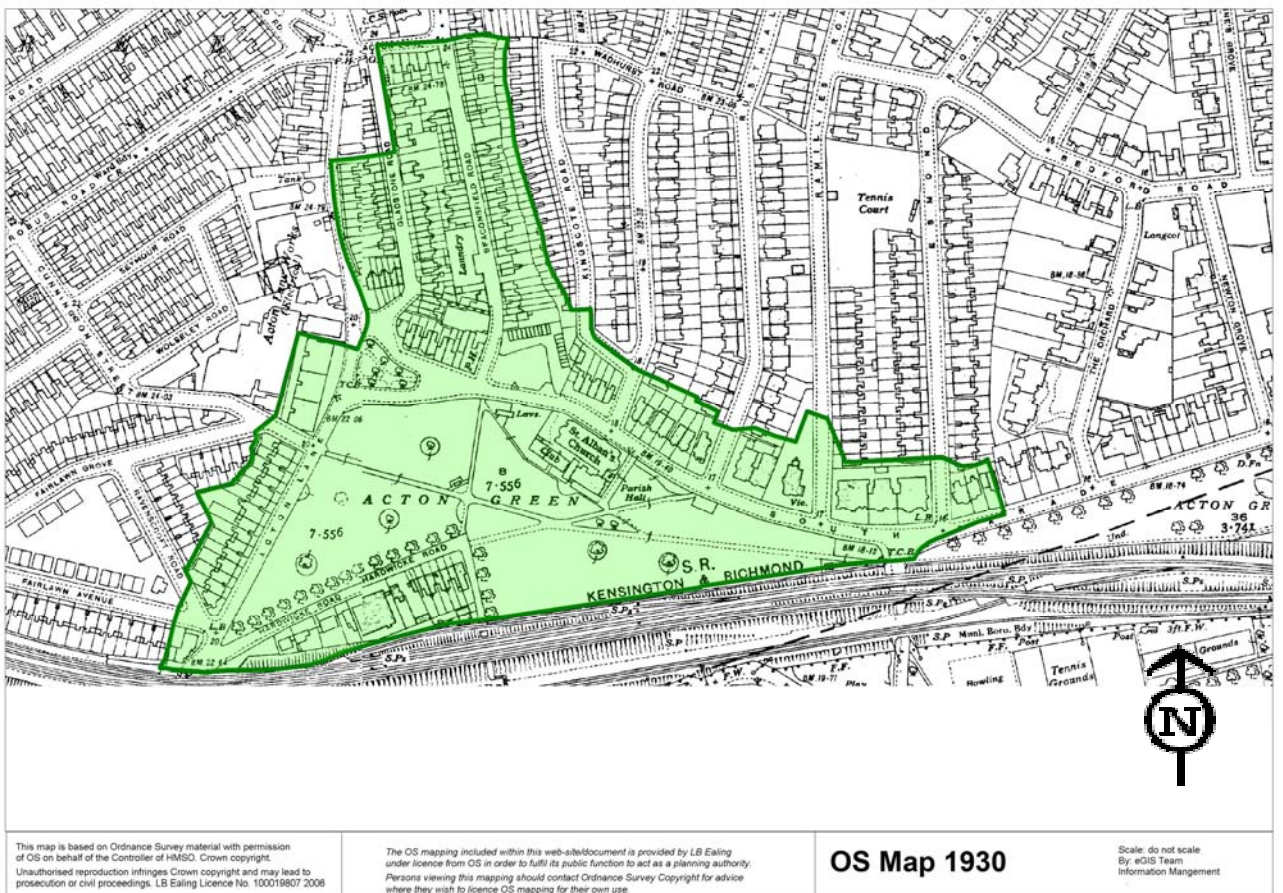
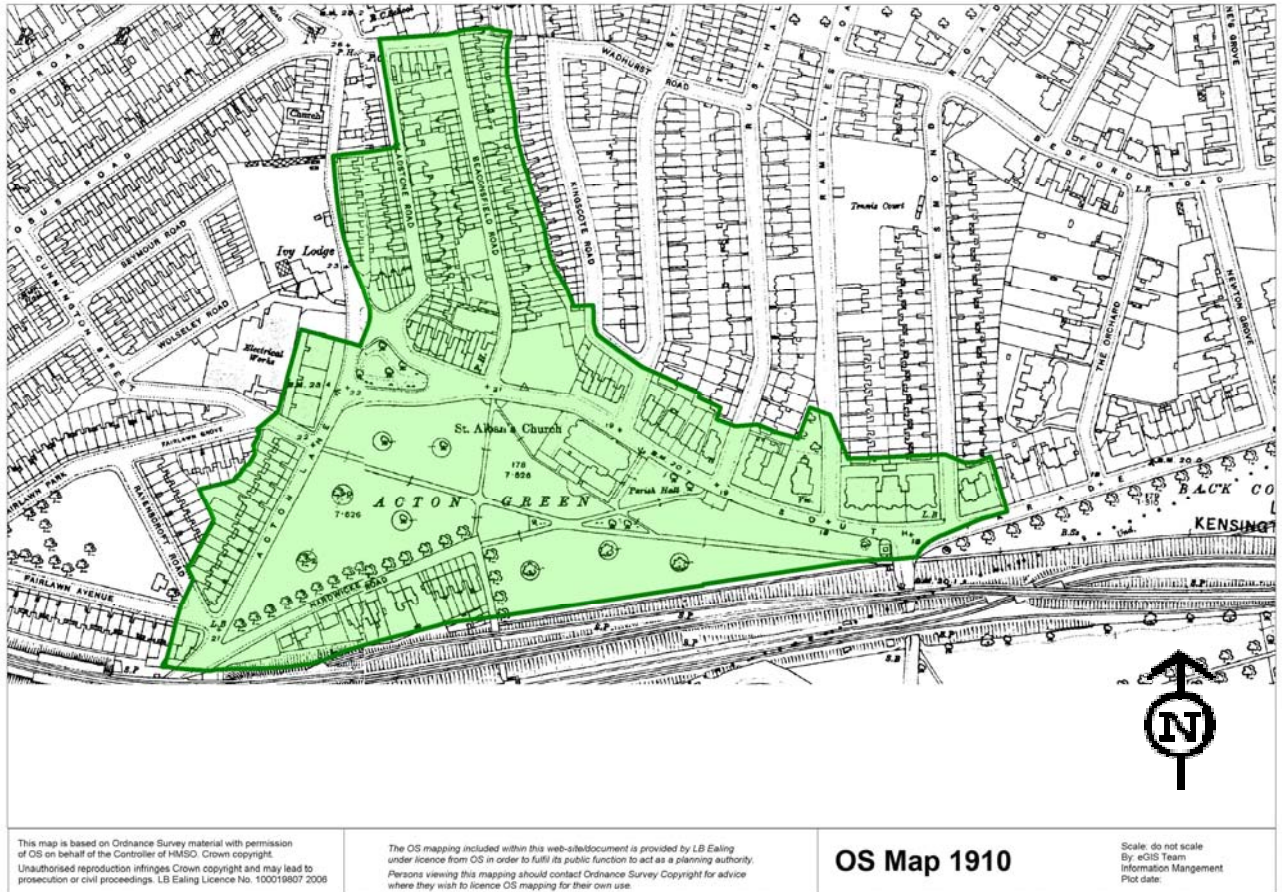
1930 OS Map

The most notable change is the replacement of the semi-detached Victorian Villas on the south side of the common, along Hardwicke Road by the large foot print of the electricity sub-station. The Railway is now marked "Kensington & Richmond".

Acton Green Conservation Area Character Appraisal



Acton Green Conservation Area Character Appraisal



3.2. Archaeology

Acton Green Common is identified as an "Archaeological interest area" within the Ealing Plan for the Environment, 2004 (UDP). Acton Green Common has had in fact a possibly medieval hamlet around the Green, the edge of a Roman Road and possibly a Roman settlement in the south.

The find of Iron Age coins near Bollo Lane suggests a settlement from much earlier times. We know that a Roman road ran via Bayswater, Goldhawk Road across Acton Green Common to Staines, Silchester and Bath. A Roman VI Legion tile is reported to have been found in the Acton Green area, and Kelly's Directory for 1890 says: "a Roman urn and silver coins were found at Turnham Green in 1731".



4. Spatial analysis

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

The layout of the CA is determined by the presence of the large green, and the streets surrounding it. Buildings mainly evolve around the green, along Acton Lane on the eastern side, along South Parade on the northern side and along Hardwicke Road on the south-western side. Three main nodal points in the CA layout are the Chiswick Station Bridge in the south west, the crossing of Fisher's Lane and South Parade in the south east corner, and in the central part of the CA where Acton Lane turns east and isolates a small part of the green. The rail-tracks embankment constitutes the southern boundary and a visual and physical barrier to the south of the CA. The area of Beaconsfield Road, although in the CA, does not have much visual interaction with the central section of the CA evolving around the Green, nor does it have much connection with it in terms of character and visual appearance.

Roads surrounding the green are busy with vehicular traffic; this contributes to the physical separation between houses and the green, thus partially spoiling the enjoyment of the green for the residents of the CA.

In its central position on the northern boundary of the green, the Church of St Albans is the focal point of the CA. Buildings around the green are of a range of sizes and proportions. Early Victorian buildings tend to be of more minute proportions, 2-storey in height and arranged in terraces or small detached cottages. They tend to sit on narrow, long plots with deep front yards. Late Victorian terraces along Acton Lane are of more generous proportions and sit on larger plots, yet with very small front yards. Turn of the century mansion blocks have a much larger footprint and tend to reach three/four storeys in height. An element that contributes to define the spatial relationship between properties, and between the streets and the green, is the various fence types and property boundaries, which in some cases are correctly retained, but some other cases have been eroded.

The modern development of Beaconsfield Estate in the northern part of the CA presents a very tight grain with flats closely arranged according to a rather informal pattern.

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The height of blocks varies from two to three storeys. Glimpses of the roofscape of the development are visible from the Green and from Acton Lane looking north.

4.2. Key views and vistas

Due to the flat topography of Acton Green CA, there are no natural vantage points that allow views embracing the entire CA. The only more comprehensive views are obtainable from the District and Piccadilly line trains using the embankment at the southern edge of Acton Green. The rail embankment is the strongest boundary feature; all other sides are permeable and defined solely by the change in character from Bedford Park to more generic late Victorian developers' sprawl.

Wide views towards Acton Green from South Parade, from Acton Lane and Hardwicke Road contribute to the suburban and leafy character of the CA.

Views of the Church of St Albans from various points in the CA and from various points within the green are of significant importance to the character of the CA. The Church with its imposing architecture acts as a landmark feature within the CA and adds distinction and interest to the streetscape.



**View of St Albans Church
from the Green**



**View of the CA from the
railway tracks**

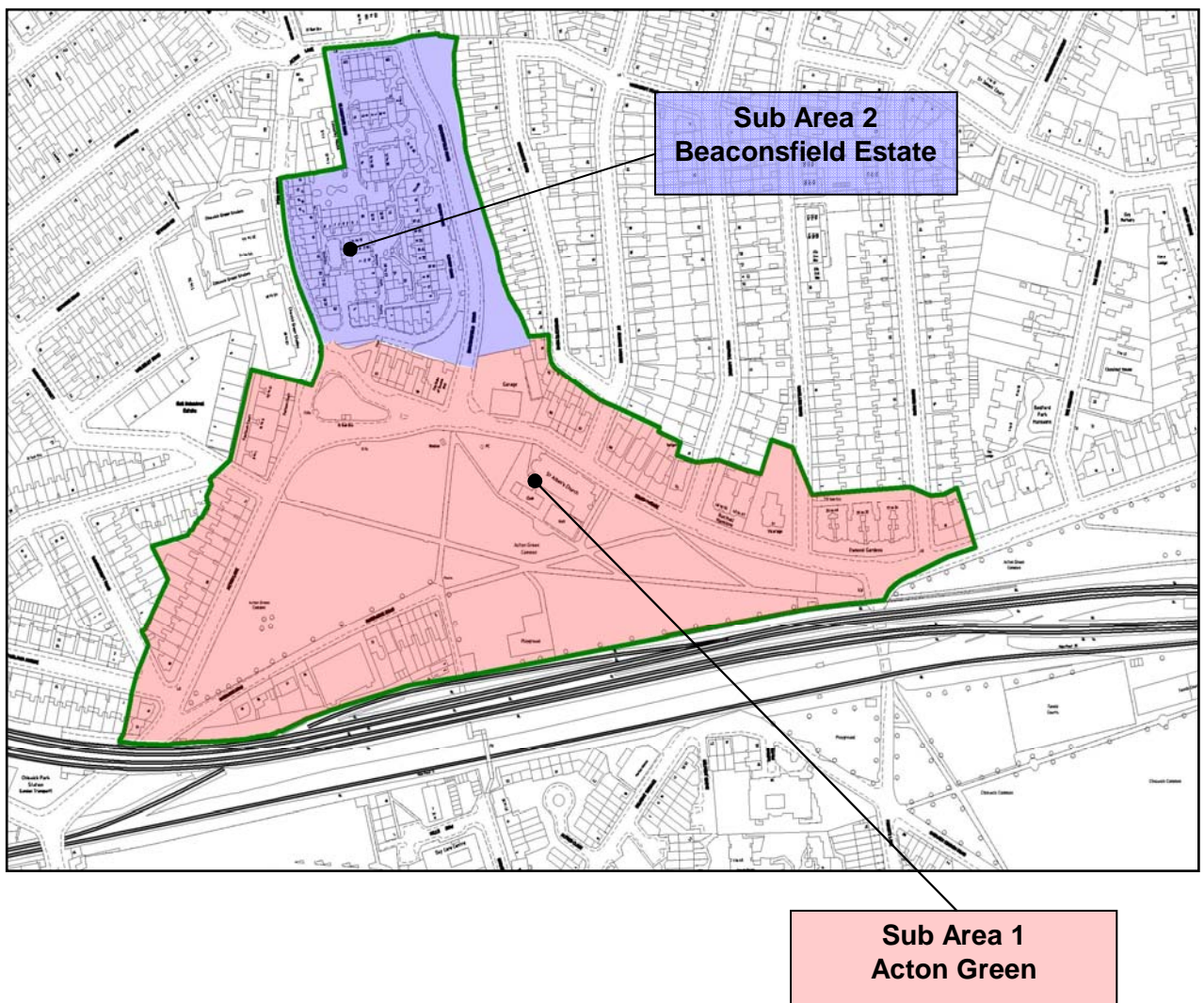
5. The character of the conservation area

5.1. Character Areas and the quality of architecture

This section has been subdivided to reflect the fact that the character of the CA changes within its boundary.

The CA breaks down into two main areas of character.

- Sub Area 1: Acton Green
- Sub Area 2: Beaconsfield Estate



5.1.1. Sub Area no 1

As the only open space in the area, Acton Green is different in character from the surrounding residential areas. It is a flat, triangular, grassed municipal park largely surrounded by mature trees, bounded on the west and north by main roads and bus routes, and on the south by the raised embankment of the District and Piccadilly lines, all of which cause considerable intrusive noise.

The railway embankment has recently been reinforced with a substantial concrete wall, which is unsightly. Along the eastern stretch of South Parade on the north side, houses are set well back from the road and protected by boundary walls and fences, which form a long protective barrier defending the principal residential zone. The focal point of the area is the St Albans Church occupying the northern side of the green and facing onto South Parade.

The architectural character of the buildings surrounding Acton Green is very varied. It reflects the fact that buildings have been developed at different times, with different styles, and with different uses.

Approaching the CA from Chiswick Underground Station, the west side of **Acton Lane** (from No 12 to No 44) is lined with 3-storey red brick Victorian terraced houses with a variety of ornate gables and very exuberant detailing, such as timber porches, and projecting bays. The roofscape is very articulated thanks to high pitch roofs with projecting gables, dormer windows and corner turrets.

Fairlawn Court is a 4-storey turn of the century Mansion flats (**Locally Listed**) of red brick, with well-trimmed privet hedges on the street frontage.

Just outside the CA but prominently seen from the corner of the Green, is Chiswick Green Studios, a modish conversion of an industrial building into loft apartments.

South Parade commences where the road turns to the east, isolating a small area of the green. Closing the place to the north side is a short terrace of two-storey turn of the century houses (from Nos 79-81). The terraces have canted bay windows, projecting timber porches and small front gables with half-timber embellishments. Where remaining, timber sash windows display a good design, with the upper hung section divided in several small arched panes. The terraces exhibit very good curved brick and terracotta decorations and other interesting detailing such as doors with elaborate stain glasses and hoods with timber brackets.



Acton Green



Terraces along Acton Green
seen from the north towards south



Fairlawn Court



Nos 79-81 South Parade

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On the corner with Beaconsfield Road is the elaborately decorated Duke of Sussex Public House of 1898 (juggling from 1870s OS map, a public house was probably on this site previously). The Duke of Sussex Public House (**Listed Grade II**) facing Acton Green was designed by specialist pub architects Shoebridge & Rising. The building has 2-storey plus attic and cellars. The principal elevation on Beaconsfield Road has three bays, two windows with a 2-storey extension containing staircase and kitchen. The attic storey has two, steeply pitched attic dormers with gables with exposed timber beams overhanging a tripartite bay windows. External walls are stuccoed, and small Diocletian window separates the two bays. On the first storey the elevation is decorated with tile hung walls, and is articulated thanks to two Shavian 'Ipswich oriels' with ornamental cornice above. At the ground floor are large, arched windows to the left, a corner entrance (now blocked) and entrances to the right indicated by ornamental ironwork containing the name 'Duke of Sussex'. The interior is now open plan (but sections of the original partitions still survive) and offers an unusually rich, turn-of-the-century pub interior. The pub is a very strong corner feature but a garage and a row of shops - all of which detract from the setting of the Listed Building and the appearance of the CA - occupy the opposite corner.

From No 54 to 65 is a group of much altered, average turn of the century houses (from 61-65 terraces, from 56 to 60 semi-detached, and No 54 detached).

To the east of Rusthall Avenue the appearance and character of South Parade changes and takes more the character of the neighbouring Bedford Park.

Rusthall Mansions is a 3-storey block of flats in red brick, with an articulated frontage of three bays with white stucco bands and heavy profiled cornice.

The Church of St Albans (**Listed Grade II**), described in Pevsner as a 'large raw red basilica on the edge of the green' dominates the open space when viewed from the south, although its visual impact on the street scene is muted by the large mature trees which screen it from view. The view of the church from the Green is unfortunately obscured by the temporary church hall and club buildings (the latter in green painted corrugated iron).



Duke of Sussex



Corner entrance of the
Duke of Sussex



Rusthall Mansion



St Albans Church

Acton Green Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The Vicarage matches the church in its use of red brick with stone window mullions and surrounds.

Between Ramillies and Esmond Road is a 4-storey mansion block in red brick, the upper floors rendered with half-timber embellishments. The block is notable for its distinctive corner treatment, which forms an important feature in the townscape. The view from the narrow part of the Green when looking west, screens out both the embankment and the large bulk of the church, the curve of South Parade being defined and enclosed by the large plane trees in the footpath.

Hardwicke Road runs south of the Green, along the railway embankment. The best part of the road is the eastern side where, from No 5 to No 10, there is a well-preserved row of Victorian terraces in stock brick with white stucco trimming. Other Victorian cottages are spoiled by the overpowering massing of the 1920s electricity substation, built on the site of Victorian semidetached villas, clues of which are still perceivable at No 12 and 15.

From No 17 to 19 are detached Victorian cottages. They still retain their overall appearance but have been much altered with later additions and replacements, e.g. Rebecca Cottage, 1852, has been spoiled with inappropriate window replacements and front porch. Also gaps between cottages have been in-filled with garages, extensions and other service structures that have altered the spatial relationship between them.

5.1.2. Sub Area no 2

Sub area 2 includes the modern Beaconsfield Road Development to the north of the green. This modern residential development has replaced Victorian properties on the site. The 2/3-storey, red brick blocks of flats, are not offensive to the CA character. Despite being of very different in character, they reflect the scale and massing of neighbouring buildings. Their contribution to the CA and its townscape quality is neutral.



The Vicarage



Esmond Gardens



Victorian terraces along
Hardwicke Road



Beaconsfield Estate

5.2. Key unlisted buildings

A number of unlisted buildings in Acton Green CA contribute positively to the character of the area despite not meeting the criteria for statutory or possibly local listing. They reflect the age, style and material of a substantial number of buildings in the CA and are a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement.

The following buildings, already mentioned in the previous sections, are considered a positive contribution to the character of the CA.

- The Vicarage
- Rusthall Mansions
- Esmond Gardens
- Nos 79-81 South Parade
- Nos 12-44 Acton Lane
- Victorian Cottages Hardwicke Road

5.3. Building materials and local details

Building Materials - Acton Green CA is characteristically built with warm red masonry laid in Flemish bond. On some elevations, the warm red brickwork is broken up by rubbed mouldings and by areas of rough cast render or stucco renders, such as on projecting bay-windows, some gable ends and coved eaves. Yellow stocks laid in Flemish bond are used in the Victorian terraces in Hardwicke Road and on the rear elevations of some of the later buildings.

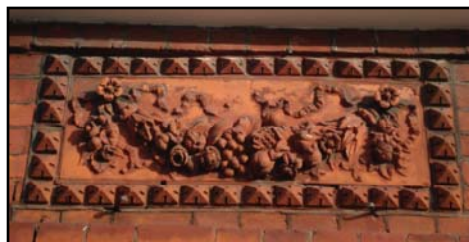
Chimneystacks – Chimneystacks in early Victorian Cottages along Hardwicke Road are simple, with clay pots.

In terraces along Acton Lane and at the Vicarage, chimneys are tall and rectangular in form with brick offset capping and moulded brick and tile stringcourses with long earthenware pots.

Gables - Dutch gables are a typical feature of the Queen Ann's style and can be found at some of the terraces along Acton Lane. Prominent pitched front gables either rendered, or with exposed brickwork are present in the CA. They stand out due to their high level and contribute to a very articulate roofscape. Some have special details, such as moulded brickwork, moulded brick cornices, or with half-timber embellishments and bargeboards. These details are integral to the architectural design, and ought to be preserved.

Doors - Entrance doors are generally broad panelled doors with raised mouldings with upper panels of one glazed panel or divided into fields. Door hoods or porches supported on shaped brackets with flat lead lined roofs or pitched tiled or slated roofs.

Roofs - A variety of roof-forms are distinguishable in the CA. Hipped roofs covered with slates in the Victorian properties along Hardwicke Road, pitched roofs covered with rosemary tiles with elaborate ridge course are common in the terraces along Acton Lane and South Parade.



Terracotta decorations



Red bricks in Flemish bond with terracotta decorations



Articulated roofscape with tall chimneystacks, prominent gables and elaborate ridge coping



Prominent front gable



Two-storey, canted bay window surmounted by a pitched gable with half-timber embellishments

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Windows – Windows are highly varied in size, shape and detailing but all of them are white painted timber. Whilst some windows have wide timber mullions and transoms and have squared glazing bars on fanlights or on the entire glazed field, there are other large windows on front bays which are broken up by the arched, centrally placed transoms.

Windowpanes tend to be small, sometimes with stained glass. Both sash and casement windows may be found, often on the same building.

Plain timber sash windows 2/2 with stucco surrounds are found in the early Victorian cottages at Nos 5 – 10 in Hardwicke Road.

Dormer windows either set in sloped roofs or set between elevations and the pitch are very common along Acton Lane terraces.

Bay-windows on the front elevation are a typical characteristic of terrace houses along Acton Lane, projecting bays are also a main feature of Fairlawn Court and Nos 79-81 South Parade.

Boundary Treatments - The variety in architectural styles and types in the CA is reflected in the variety of boundary treatments to properties. Very little remains of original boundary treatments and only a few properties retain boundary treatments that are of the appropriate materials and size. Amongst the best examples are the well-trimmed privet hedges of Fairlawn Court, the palisade of Rusthall Mansions, and around the Vicarage, the red brick boundary wall along the northern side of St Albans Church and the brick wall and piers surmounted by railings at Esmond Gardens. Boundary treatments of Victorian terraces must have been low brick walls with brick piers surmounted by privet hedges or railing, yet currently it is difficult to distinguish any remains as later replacements have obscured any trace of original boundary treatments. Only on the east side of the early Victorian Terraces in Hardwicke Road there is section of an early stock brick boundary wall.



Examples of early entrance paths with interlocking tiles



Types of sash windows



Types of doors



Early boundary treatment



Door hood with sloping roof covered with tiles, supported by timber brackets

5.4. Contribution of open spaces, trees and landscape

Acton Green is the “green lung” of the CA. The triangular green surrounded by mature trees provides the setting for the residential properties in the CA and the only formal recreational space for residents. Acton Green is listed as one of Ealing Borough’s Public Open Spaces, this status recognises the value of the open space also for cultural and social activities.²

The presence of healthy mature broadleaved trees along all streets is critical to the character of the suburb. Trees and green hedges and privet complement the architecture and frame views within the CA.

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

Recent developments or later replacements of earlier buildings have had a detrimental impact on the CA. Poor architectural quality of recent building works that have come to replace high quality Victorian and Edwardian buildings, ignore the character and quality of the earlier grain, thus creating fractures and visual gaps in the continuity of the streetscape. This results in a fragmented townscape in sections where fine Victorian and Edwardian remains have lost their original context and are embedded in later developments that are completely alien to their quality, architectural expression, scale, massing, façade rhythm and proportions.

The Electricity sub-station along Hardwicke Road is a fracture within the grain of the early Victorian properties. It disrupts the continuity of the streetscape and creates an area of back land.

The development at No 11 Hardwicke Road is most inappropriate in its design, material, roof-form and façade pattern. It’s an alien intrusion within the pattern of Victorian properties in the street.

The presence of numerous gap sites within the boundary of the CA, e.g. large spans of back land, service spaces, and garages, results not only in a very fragmented townscape, but also in a very poor urban grain where means of pedestrian connection between places are unpleasant to use.

The garage opposite to the Duke of Sussex is a major gap site and an eyesore for views within the CA



Mature trees surrounding Acton Green



Electricity sub-station along Hardwicke Road



No 12 Hardwicke road once part of a semi-detached property, now truncated by the sub-station



Property in the CA displaying inadequate design, with a visually disturbing front roof extension

² UDP, Vol 1 p. 45, policy 3.4 and, Vol 2, p.12

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The part of the Green at the South Parade / Beaconsfield Road junction suffers from excessive street clutter and on the common itself the yellow brick shelter, covered with graffiti, is poorly located and of the wrong materials. Special attention should be given to the look of shopfronts. A few good examples remain but they are placed in an uncoordinated and un-cohesive context.

The Church Hall and annex structures to the south side of St Albans Church are most inappropriate. The green painted, corrugated iron outbuildings spoil the appearance of the historic building and – due to their central location within the Green - detract from the overall appearance and quality of the CA.

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.

The loss of front garden trees and fences together with loss of garden walls constitutes a threat to the area's character. Boundary walls between properties were an important element of the character of the 19th Century. However, large portions of original boundary walls and fences have been demolished and replaced inappropriately. This has resulted in a significant loss in definition of the streetscape and a loss of the original spatial hierarchy between public and private spaces within the CA. This is particularly evident in the properties along South Parade at Nos 54 to 65.

Later boundary walls especially along Acton Lane have been executed with materials, design or technologies that are inappropriate with respect to their context and create a rather uncoordinated ensemble with a streetline that lacks visual cohesion. The thinning of trees and hedges along properties' boundary also contributes to create an undistinguished and neglected feel.



Garage opposite to the Duke of Sussex



Later corrugated iron structures at the rear of St Albans Church



Example of demolition of boundary treatment and conversion of front-yard into hardstanding to provide for car-parking

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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 (e.g. side extensions and garages to detached cottages along the western end of Hardwicke Road)
- 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.
- 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 are 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.



Bulky flat roof extensions spoil the appearance of the roofscape



Excessive number of rooflights on a front slope in Hardwicke Road



Inappropriate window replacements which spoil the character of the elevation



Uncoordinated shopfronts along South Parade



An example of inappropriate replacement of a sash window with inadequate material and glazing pattern (early sash on the right, later replacement on the left)

5.6. Public realm and street furniture

Modern, simple metal lampposts illuminate the CA and the common. They do not have any merit but are not offensive to the character of the area. There are two traditional post-boxes in the CA, cast iron and painted bright red. There are two traditional red painted telephone boxes at the junction of Acton Lane with Beaconsfield Road (**Listed, Grade II**).

More well-designed litter bins would assist in keeping the area tidy.

5.7. General condition

The overall condition of most of the fabric in the CA is sound, although the state of neglect of some properties front yards cluttered with fly-tipping, and the state of neglect of some shopfronts along South Parade is a concern for the CA. Pavements in concrete slabs or asphalt could be improved through repaving with high quality stone.

Some of the original cast-iron railing around the Common should be better maintained to secure its survival.

5.8. Problems, pressures and capacity for change

There is little capacity for major change within the CA. Over the course of the years all plots have been developed in a reasonably sensitive manner. Further intensification could detract from the traditional layout of properties, which has been identified as one of the elements of special interest. The proliferation of inappropriate roof developments should be stopped as it creates severe disturbance to the architectural and townscape quality of the CA. Further control of replacements in historic properties should be exerted as the latter are a harsh threat to the character of the area.



Traditional post-box



Early telephone boxes (Listed, Grade II)



Gap area with fly-tipping

6. Suggested boundary changes

The Appraisal of Acton Green CA and of its immediate surrounds has shown no need to revise the extension of its boundary.

7. 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 were given the opportunity to comment on the Appraisal during January 2008.

8. Summary of issues

- Loss of front garden trees and fences
- Loss of front yard walls to create parking for cars
- The poor condition of some of the buildings in the CA
- Gap site and later development not reflecting the character and quality of the buildings in the CA
- The general inappropriate design of recent developments:
 1. New boundary walls with inappropriate material and design
 2. Changes to the fenestration
 3. Continuous porches
 4. Bulky dormers that disrupt the roofscape

9. Planning and Policy framework

A summary of the principal legislation and policy guidance applicable to Acton Green 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 Frontage 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 CA 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 adhere 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.

10. 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 window 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 cartilage, (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

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 roofspace open or partly enclosed

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

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

11. Bibliography

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

English Heritage, *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*, 2005

Ealing Council, *Adopted 2004 Plan for the Environment*, 2004

Pevsner, N., *The Buildings of England. London 3: North West*, 2002

Jonathan Oats, *Acton – A History*, 2003

Historic images are from: Acton Green Residents' Association Website and from Ealing Local Studies Centre.

12. Appendix - Stakeholder consultation

12.1. List of stakeholders consulted

Ealing Civic Society

Acton Green CA Advisory Panel

Acton Green Residents' Association

Ward Councillors: Elisabeth Reilly, Gary Malcolm and Harvey Rose

12.2. Acton Green 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 feature – 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.
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

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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 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.