

# ACTON PARK CONSERVATION AREA Character Appraisal



**APRIL 2009**

## ACTON PARK 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 and extended in 1992, 1997 and 2004 to include the Shaa Road and part of Perryn Road.

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

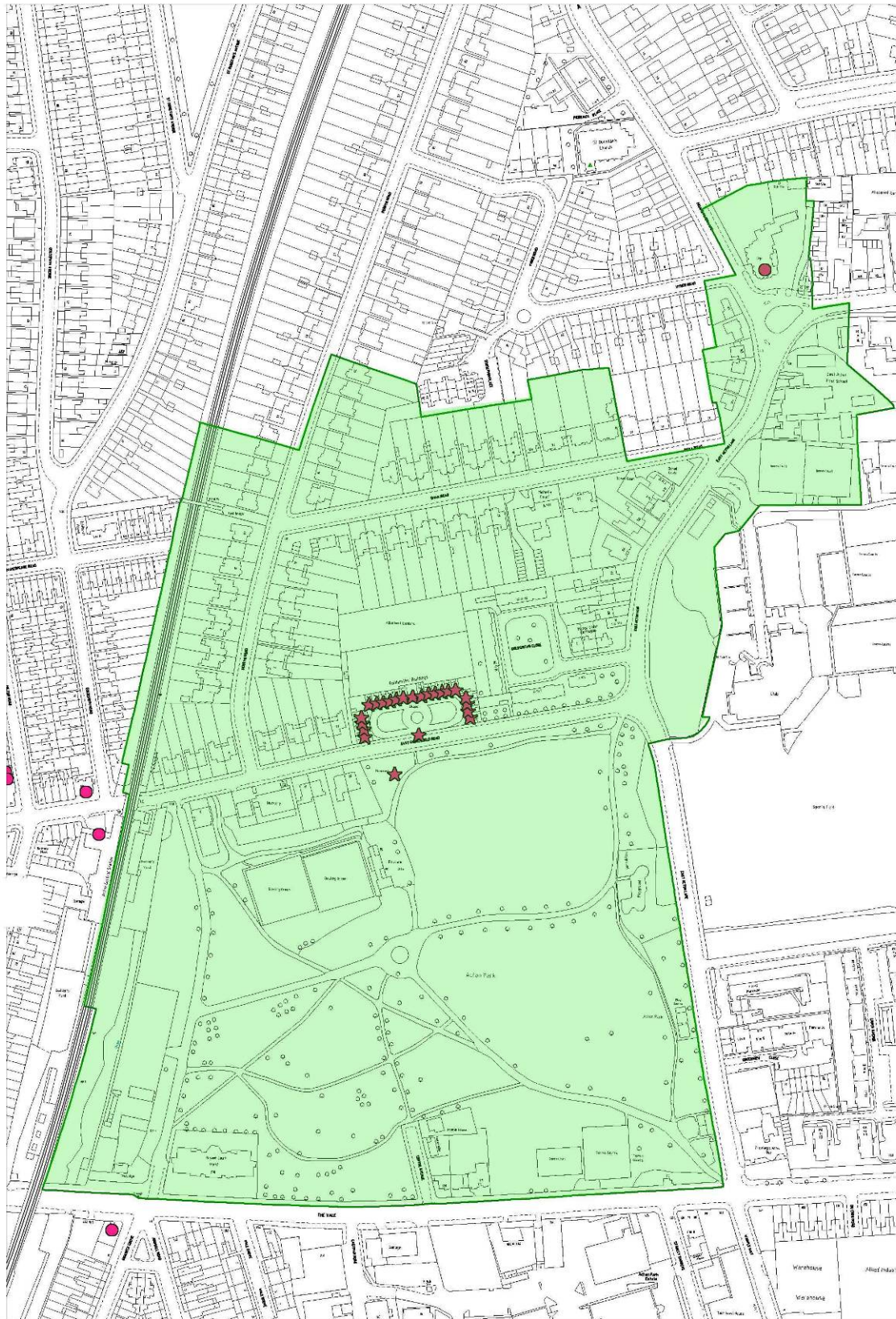
1. Assessment of the special interest of the architectural heritage of Acton Park CA highlighting elements of special merit, which contribute to the character.
2. Assessment of the actions needed to protect and enhance the special qualities of the CA.
3. Assessment of the need to revise the boundaries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





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### Acton Park Conservation Area and Listed Buildings

Scale: do not scale  
By: W&S Team  
Information Management  
Plot date:

- ★ Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Buildings

### ***1.3. Summary of special interest***

- Acton Park CA is situated in the former historic County of Middlesex, in the eastern part of today's London Borough of Ealing. Acton Park is part of East Acton Ward.
- The land-form is strongly defined by the presence of Acton Park and by the residential roads branching from it: The Vale to the south, East Acton Lane to the east, East Churchfield Road to the north and the rail tracks to the west side.
- The park was only opened in 1888 following the Local Board's purchase of about 24 acres of land from the Goldsmith's Company, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and a private owner.
- Two main "Areas of Character" can be distinguished within Acton Park CA: **Sub Area 1)** Acton Park **Sub Area 2)** The residential area to the north – Shaa Road and Perryn Road. **Sub Area 1** can be further divided into areas **1a (Acton Park)**, **1b (East Churchfield Road)** and **1c (East Acton Lane)**.
- The CA has mainly a Victorian and Edwardian character with some of the buildings going back to the time when Ealing started to expand and flourish as one of London's more desirable suburbs. Building types are residential, transport, educational buildings and public houses. The Goldsmith's Almshouses along East Churchfield Road are the main architectural landmark of the CA.
- Acton Park is the core of the CA and is the main formal recreational space of the CA. Trees along the streetline as well as green hedges around properties are an important part of the suburban and leafy character of the CA. The addition of a café within the park in the 1930s, and other park lodges are in keeping with the character of the wider CA.
- A variety of construction materials can be detected: stock and red bricks laid in Flemish bond, stucco trimming, high pitch roofs covered with slates or tiles make the predominant materials and finish within the CA. The fenestration consists mainly of white painted timber sashes. Cast-iron railings still remain. Typical 1930s tile hanging and half-timber embellishments are found in some houses along East Acton Lane.



## 2. Location and setting

### 2.1. Location and context

Acton Park CA is situated in the former historic County of Middlesex. The CA is within the Ward of East Acton in the London Borough of Ealing.

Acton Park CA is 2.28 Km<sup>2</sup> in area and it is in the eastern part of the modern borough. It evolves on the north side of the Uxbridge Road that in this section takes the name The Vale. The CA is centred around the open space of Acton Park; the CA extends to the west to include some properties along East Acton Lane, to the north to include the Shaa Road, to the west to include properties along Perryn Road, the railtracks and Acton Central Station. The CA also includes the Goldsmith's building and other properties along East Churchfield Road.

Acton Park CA is bounded to the east by Acton Town Centre CA that influenced its historical development and still provides its immediate setting to the west.

Most common approaches to Acton Park CA are:

- Along Uxbridge Road from Ealing
- Along Uxbridge Road from Shepherd Bush
- Along Gunnersbury Lane from the south – this approach is particularly common when getting into Acton by underground and alighting at Acton Town Station Tube Station
- Along Churchfield Road from Acton Central Station
- Along East Acton lane from Western Avenue



The Vale, looking west towards Acton High Street



Acton Central Station



## 2.2. General character and plan form

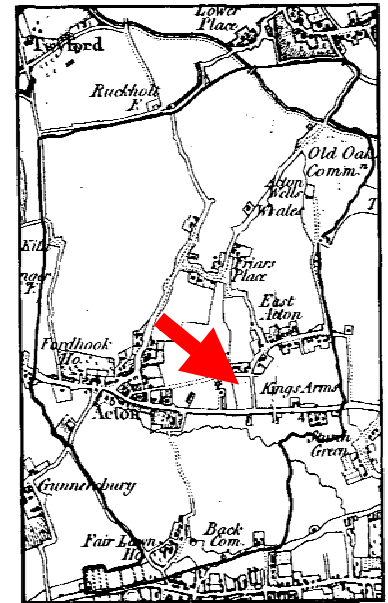
The plan-form of the central part of the CA is determined by the presence of Acton Park. This provides a welcome and peaceful episode, in contrast with the busy and traffic-led environment of East Acton Lane and The Vale. It acts as the focus for the residential sections of the CA that have evolved on the northern and western side of the park. The residential sections of the CA display a rather homogeneous suburban character and include large Victorian properties tightly arranged along Shaa Road and Perryn Road. Properties are of generous size and yet have modest interspaces between them. The architectural landmark of the locality and the geographical core of the CA is the Goldsmith's building. With its imposing and classical presence the building visually interacts with the park which provides its ideal setting.

## 2.3. Landscape setting

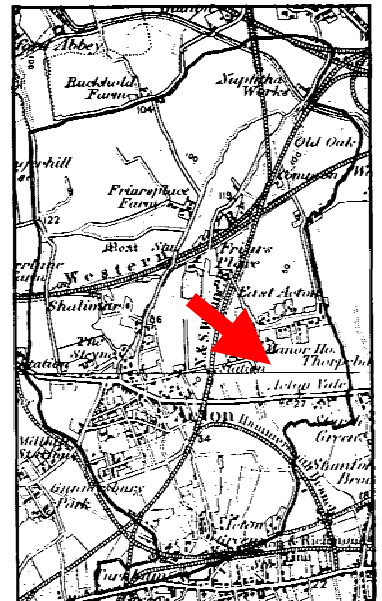
The landscape setting of Acton is determined by its varied topography. The land slopes from 50 m above sea-level in the north-west corner of the parish to 6 m in the south-east, and it is drained by two main streams. The Bollo Brook, which rises near Fordhook and flows south-eastward to Acton Green, passing into Chiswick. And Stamford Brook's western branch, apparently rising near Acton Farm west of Horn Lane, which flows south to meet another tributary from Springfield, near the Ealing boundary, at a point north of the Steyne and continues down the west side of the Steyne to cross Oxford Road at the foot of Acton Hill. From there it flows south-eastward south of Berrymead and across Southfield into Hammersmith, where it joins the eastern branch of Stamford Brook from Old Oak common.

London Clay covers the northern part of the parish as far south as Masons Green, Acacia Avenue, East Acton village and the site of Manor House, and Acton Park. Brickearth covers the rest of East Acton and the parish south of Uxbridge Road, except around Mill Hill and Heathfield, where Taplow Gravel lies along the south-western and western sides.

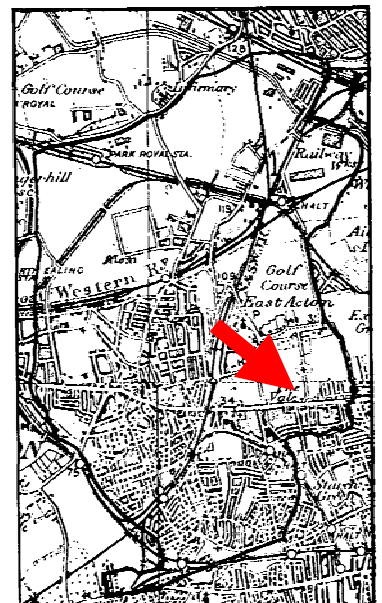
Acton Park provides the formal recreational space to the CA and contributes to the open character of the CA. However, the railway tracks act as a barrier and the physical relationship between the properties west of the CA and this important green space is limited.



1822



1876-7



1914

### 3. Historic development and archaeology

#### 3.1. Historic development

Acton Park was opened in 1888, following the Local Board's purchase of about 24 acres of land from the Goldsmiths Company, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and a private owner. Churchfield Road follows the line of an ancient track across the Church Field, from Acton to East Acton Lane. East Churchfield Road (that part to the east of the level crossing at Acton Central station) was made into a paved road in 1860.

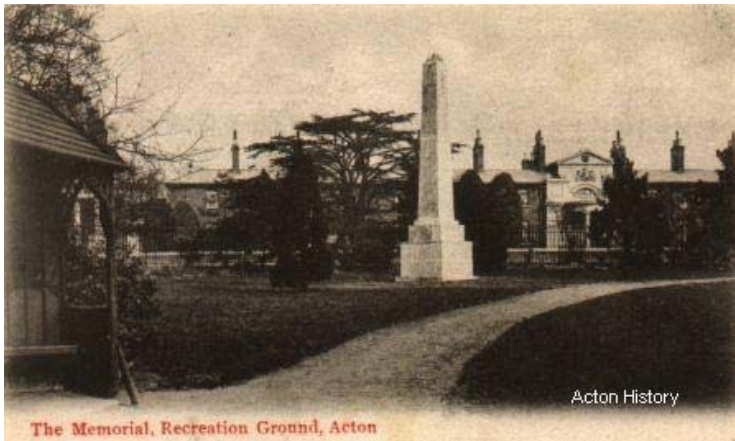
The Goldsmiths Company's estate in Acton dates from the mid seventeenth century when John Perryn, a London goldsmith and alderman, left freehold properties to the company and copyholds to individual goldsmiths to be held in trust for the company. The Goldsmiths' Almshouses of 1811 were a benefaction of the Perryn Trust.



East Acton Lane looking north, early 20<sup>th</sup> Century



Looking east from outside the (old) Goldsmith's Arms (to the left). Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century



The Memorial, Recreational Ground (Acton Park) with the Goldsmith's building in the background, early 20<sup>th</sup> Century



In this view the pub has been rebuilt, but the scene is still recognisable, and the old cottages in the centre are still there (nos 120-122)



### **1865 OS Map**

Although Acton Park has only been opened in 1888, the first OS Map already marks this large green area as “Acton Park”. The general configuration and layout of the CA were already defined. The park seems already traversed by several of the paths and avenues of today. The Goldsmith’s Almshouses (Grade II\*) appears in its final configuration. East Churchfield Road is already lined by most of the properties still surviving today. Acton Central Station is marked as “Acton Station” and is represented in its present location. East of the Goldsmith’s Almshouses is the Manor Farm, later demolished and replaced in 1956 by the Goldsmith’s Close. Shaa Road and Perryn Road appear in their present configuration and all the houses today included in the CA are represented. Along East Acton Lane, East Acton First school is recorded as well as some of the Victorian villas along the western side of the road. A Public House was marked on the site of today’s Goldsmiths’ Arms (Locally Listed); also nos 120-122 East Acton Lane are clearly recorded.

### **1890 OS Map**

With its network of avenues and paths, the layout and the structure of the park seem a lot more defined in the 1890 OS Map. Also there is the addition of some villas along the southern edge of the park. No other relevant changes can be recorded on the 1890 OS Map.

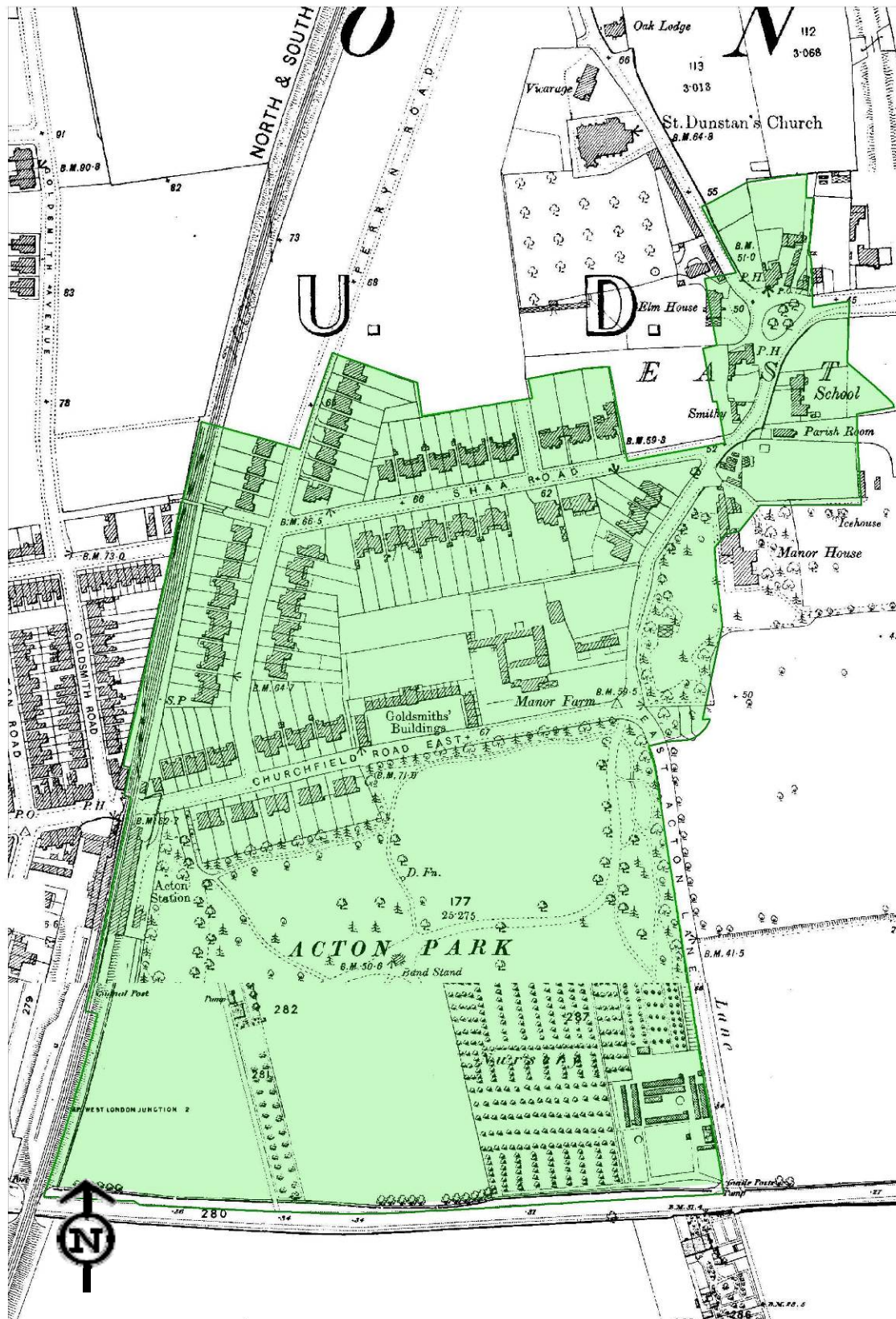
### **1910 OS Map**

The north-eastern section of the Perryn Road appears now lined by houses (not included in the CA as they are later than the first pre-1970s batch which are in the southern section of the road and are included in the CA). No relevant other changes appear on the 1910 OS Map.

### **1930 OS Map**

The intensification of recreational service structures in the park is noticeable, like the Pavilion, the Bowling Green and several Tennis Courts. Also the areas around the CA are a lot more densely edified. No other relevant changes appear on the 1930 OS Map

# Acton Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal



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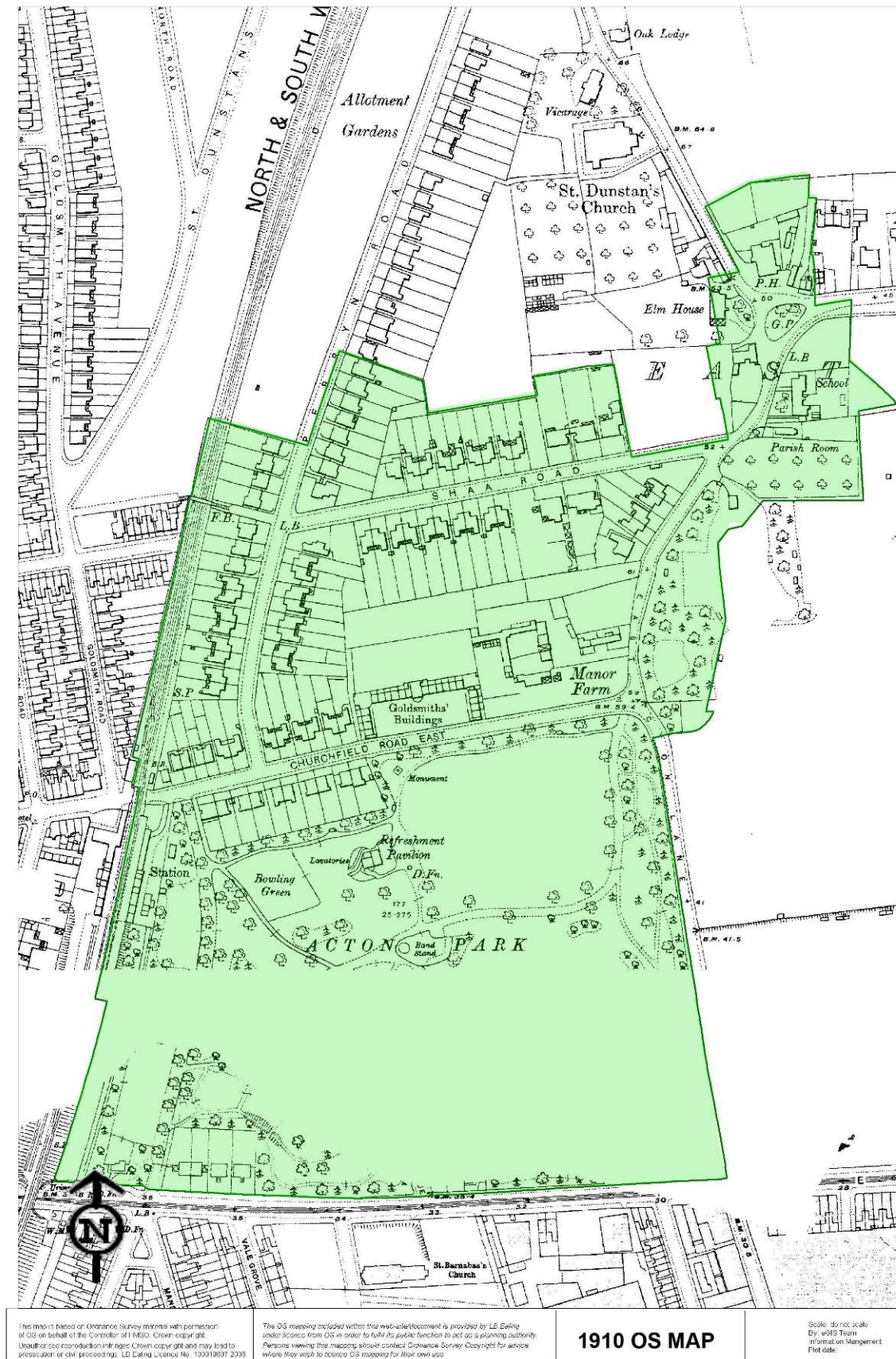
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**1890 OS MAP**

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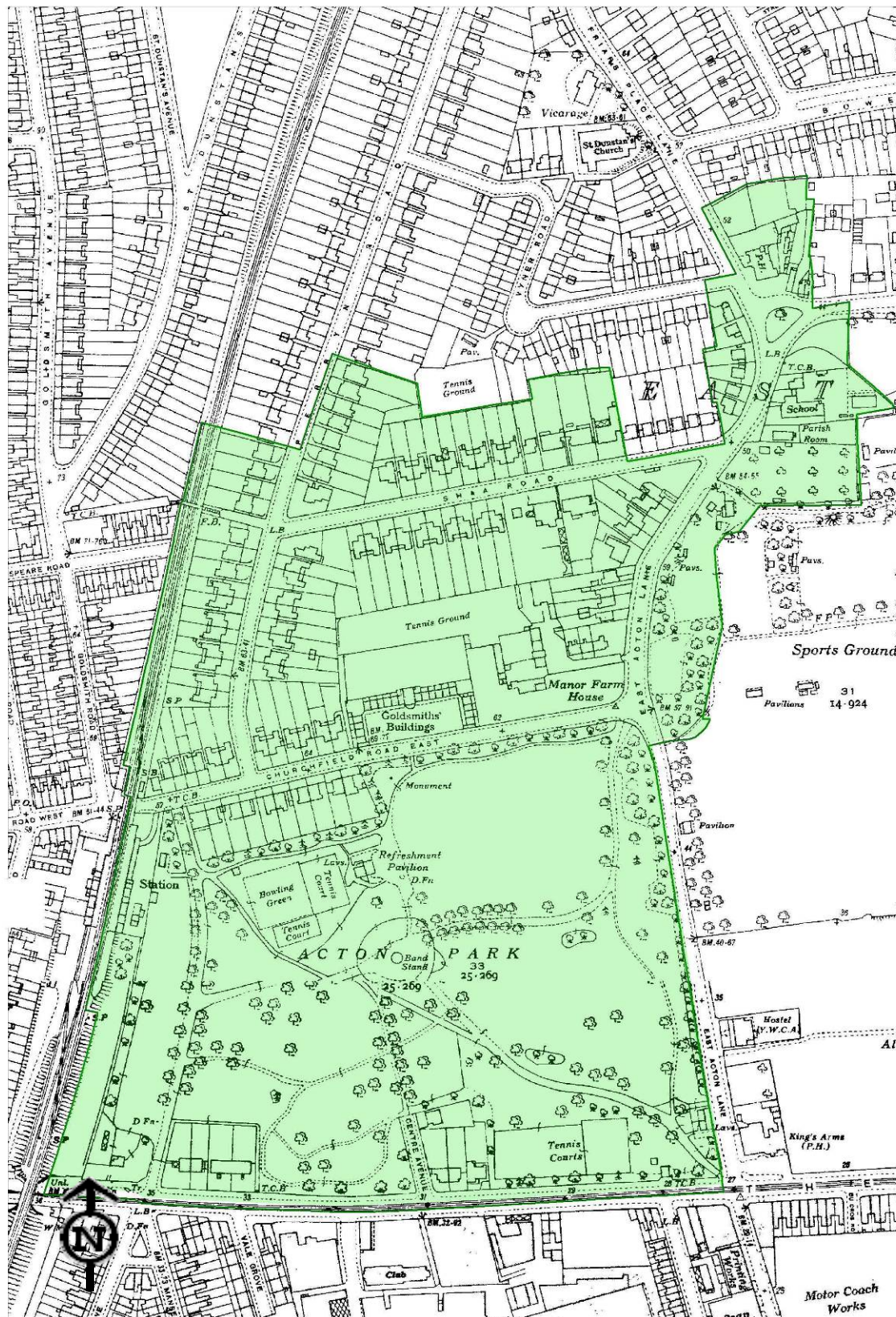


# Acton Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal





# Acton Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal

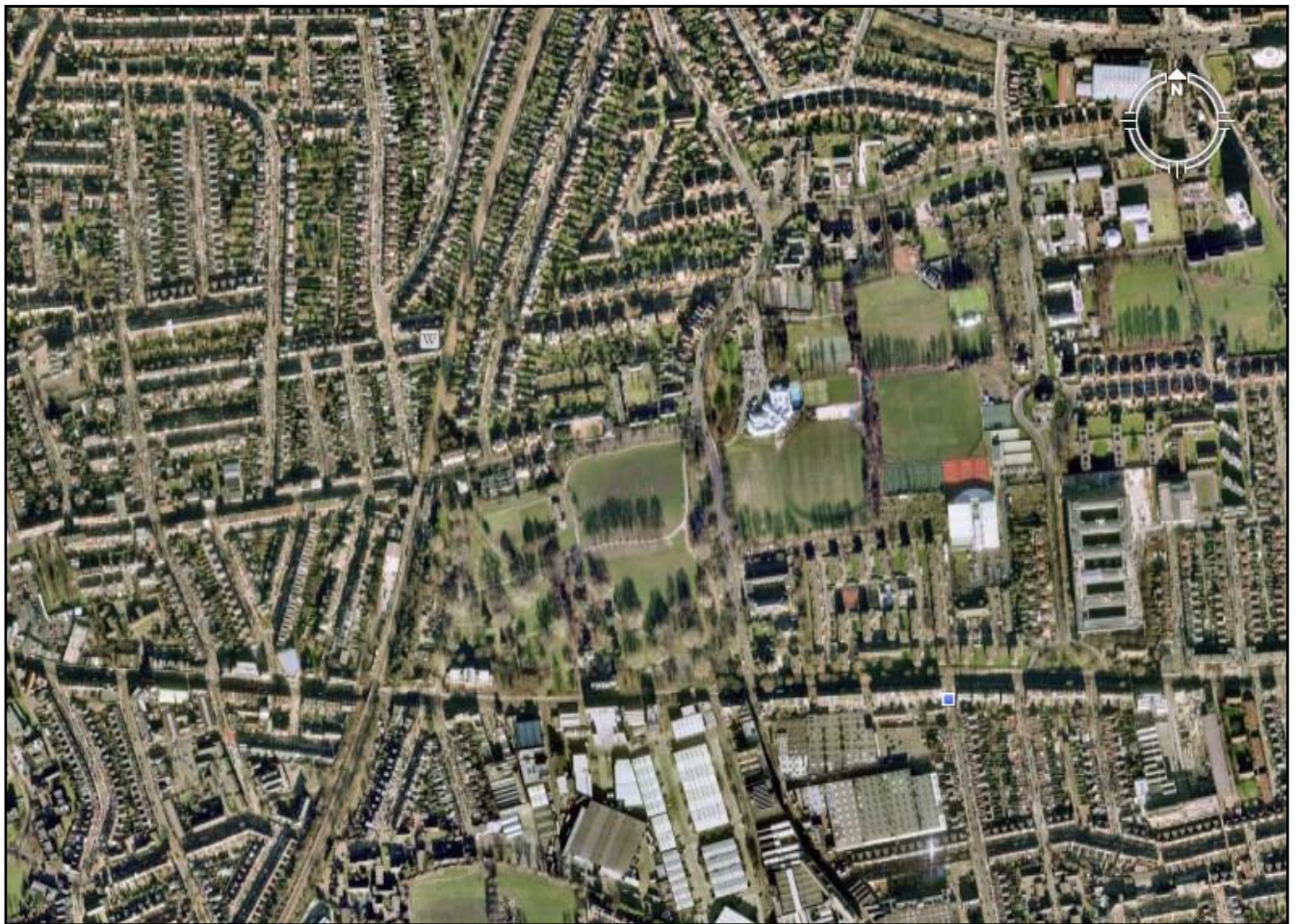


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### 3.2. Archaeology

The area around Acton Park has a very strong archaeological significance. The Ealing Plan for the Environment (UDP) identifies the area west and east of the park in particular as “Area of Archaeological Interest”. In East Acton Lane, a Medieval hamlet existed in 1294 with occupation north and south of the lane. South-west of the hamlet was a Manor House in 1532. To the north is an undated earthwork and prehistoric finds. Also an area of prehistoric and Roman finds is centred on Shakespeare Road, west of the CA, with further prehistoric finds south of the Acton High Street.





## 4. Spatial analysis

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

The layout of the CA has remained largely unchanged since the 1860's and still consists of the park and the residential roads, surrounding it and branching out of it: East Acton Lane to the east, East Churchfield Road and Shaa Road to the north and the railtracks and Perryn Road to the west. Two main nodal points in the CA layout are: the crossing of East Churchfield Road with Perryn Road at the Acton Central Station on the west side, and the visual interaction of the Goldsmith's Building, East Churchfield Road and the park in the geographical centre of the CA. East Acton Lane and The Vale almost contain the CA to the east and south respectively. They carry heavy traffic which creates a visual and a physical barrier between the CA and wider area. Similarly the rail tracks to the west act as a barrier and prevent visual and physical interaction of the CA with its surroundings to the west. The northern section of the CA - consisting of Shaa Road and the southern section of Perryn Road - offers a more permeable grain.

The CA has two well distinguished areas of character: Acton Park, and the residential area formed by Shaa Road and Perryn Road. The two roads, East Acton Lane (only partially included in the CA) and The Vale, display yet again a different quality that has less cohesiveness and reflects their function as major distributor roads. Also the area immediately east of the rail tracks, between the station and the park – the so called Builder's Yard – increases the sense of separation between the park and its surroundings to the west.

The central part of the park still maintains its peaceful and tranquil character, whilst toward the edges, in the proximity of the surrounding roads, the peaceful aspect gives way to the noise and traffic of a very busy environment.

The northern side of the park (East Churchfield Road) has a rather loose grain, buildings are of generous proportions and offer some diversity especially thanks to the great architectural episode of the Goldsmith's Building. On the east side, the properties included in the CA along East Acton Lane are also an assorted mix, with detached, semidetached and small blocks of flats. Still the height is rather modest, with 3-storey being the top height.



Acton Park



East Churchfield Road looking west  
The level crossing of the railtracks  
between Churchfield Road and East  
Churchfield Road



The Vale looking east



East Acton Lane

## Acton Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The residential section offers a more homogeneous and cohesive character in terms of architectural language and spatial arrangement. Along the Shaa Road semidetached houses sit on generous plots with deep front yards. Yet the interspaces between properties are narrow, so to allow the perceptions of a continuous front. Along Perryn Road the grain is slightly tighter. Also here the road is linked by semidetached but also smaller detached houses. The streetfront reads as continuous and this is augmented by the presence of boundary treatments.

### 4.2. Key views and vistas

The absence of any natural high vantage points within the CA mean it is not possible to obtain a comprehensive view of the Acton Park CA.

However, Acton Park slopes gently southwards from East Churchfield Road, allowing views towards central London to the east.

There are a number of significant long vistas along the residential streets and close views that include prominent landmarks; there are also a number of wide views that contain Acton Park

The view of the imposing complex of the Goldsmith building seen from Acton Park is certainly one of the most significant view within the CA

Views across the park are a welcome and restful episode that balances the traffic and noise of the many activities taking place around the station and along The Vale and East Acton Lane. The view of the ample expanse of the Park constitutes the unique setting for this part of the CA. The park provides a filter and a means of transition between this dense traffic-led quality, and the domestic and calm character of the residential sections of the CA north and east of Acton Park.

The rhythmic and consistent succession of architectural elements of the properties along the residential streets in the CA is an intrinsic part of the visual merit of the CA. This is particularly evident when the aspect of the road is curvaceous at the southern end of Perryn Road.



Shaa Road looking west



View along one of the avenues of Acton Park



View along Perryn Road



View of the Goldsmith's Almshouses from Acton Park



## 5. The character of the conservation area

### ***5.1. 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 Acton Park 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 two main sub-areas of character: With **Sub Area 1** sub-divided into three additional Areas **1a**, **1b** and **1c**.

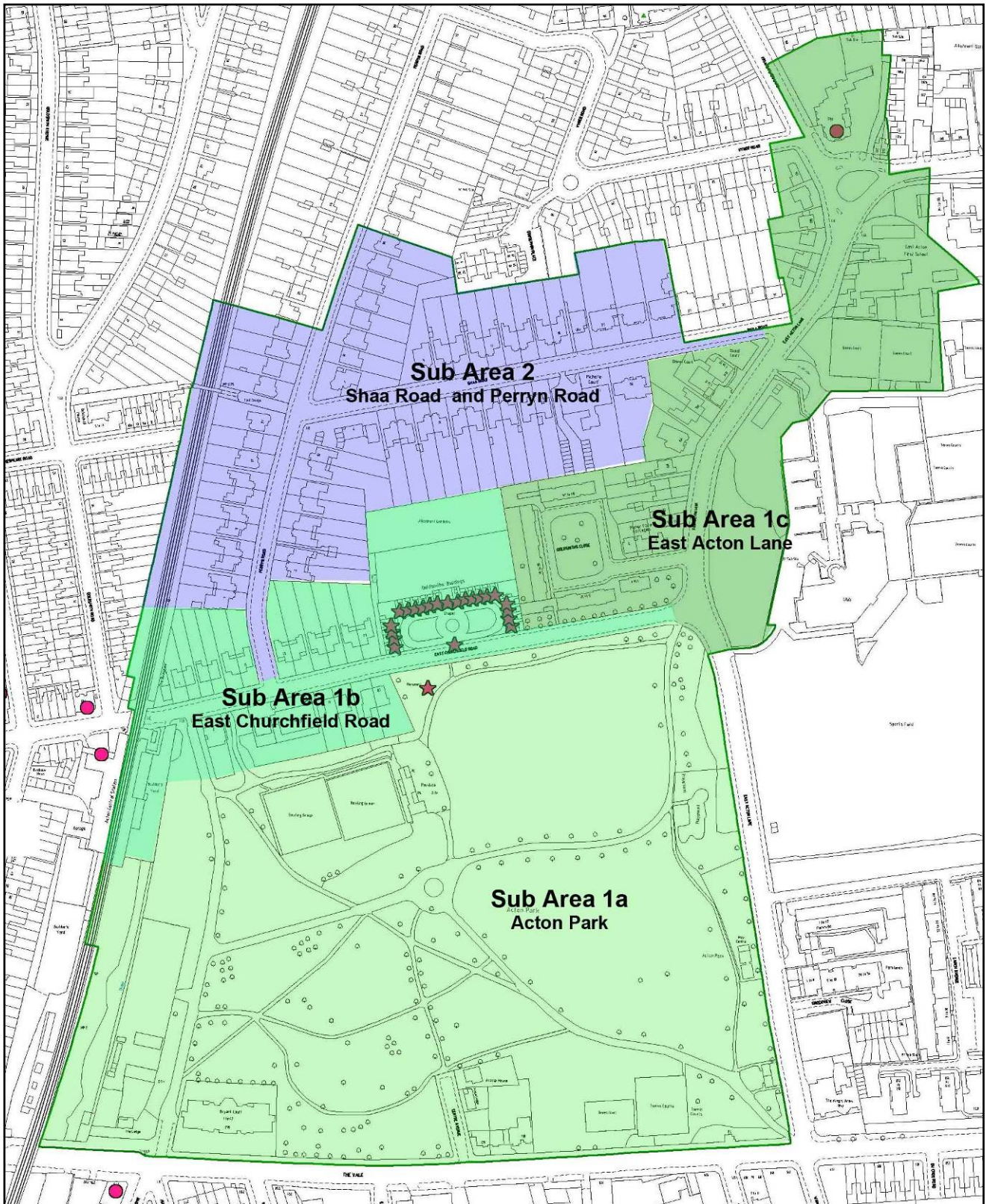
**Sub Area 1:** Acton Park (Sub Area 1a) , East Churchfield Road (Sub Area 1b), East Acton Lane (Sub Area 1c)

**Sub Area 2:** Shaa Road and Perryn Road

*(See Sub Areas map on the following page)*



# Acton Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal



- ★ Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Buildings



### 5.1.1. Sub Area no 1: Acton Park, East Churchfield Road, East Acton Lane

#### Sub Area 1a: Acton Park

Acton Park is an excellent example of a Victorian urban park, laid out with radiating avenues of mature trees enclosing large grassed open spaces for informal recreation. On the east side the park is bounded by the railtracks and on the east side by the busy East Acton Lane. The eastern northern side of the Park is enclosed by the Victorian Houses along East Churchfield Street and by the Goldsmith's Building. The park slopes gently southwards from East Churchfield Road, giving distant views towards central London to the east. Opposite the Almshouses, within the park, is an obelisk in memory of the Earl of Derwentwater (**Grade II, Listed**), executed as one of the leaders of the Jacobite Rising of 1715. The intact bowls pavilion and cafe dates from the mid-1930s, as do the distinctive ironwork gates and railings at the park entrances on East Churchfield Road and The Vale. The Victorian lodge at The Vale entrance has been rescued and refurbished as a park ranger centre. There are two incursions into the park on the southern boundary, consisting of large Victorian houses several of which still have ornately shaped and decorated barge boards on the main road frontage.

The park is not only the geographical centre of the CA, but also the bonding element of the surrounding residential areas.

#### Sub Area 1b: East Churchfield Road

The road is lined by red-brick, pleasant, semi-detached Victorian villas which are part of the Perryn Road/Shaa Road development of the late nineteenth century, yet the Goldsmiths' Almshouses (**Listed, Grade II\***) are the main feature of interest on East Churchfield Road. Built in 1811 by Charles Beazley, it is a 2-storey yellow brick building with two wings coming forward towards the street. At their ends and at the centre are modest Ionic stuccoed features. The centre has a semicircular porch and pediment. In 1966, the architectural critic Ian Nairn said about the building: 'the stucco centre is as tricky as Soane; the stucco ends to the wings are as deft as Nash, and really beautifully done.' Only one of the two original cedar trees in the forecourt remains. The road frontage is formed by a fine set of railings with spear finials on a low brick wall with a central pair of gates. To the rear of the Almshouses is a walled garden and allotment gardens.

Acton Central station (**Locally Listed**) (within Acton Town Centre CA, but still making a gateway to the



Acton Park



The obelisk in memory of the



Acton Park Lodge



Victorian Villas along the northern side of East Churchfield Road

## Acton Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal

approach to the CA from Churchfield Road<sup>1</sup>) was the first in Acton, opening in 1853. The current station dates from 1876 and is one of the few nineteenth century examples left on the North London line. The ironwork brackets and fretwork platform canopies have been restored. To the west of the level crossing the conservation area has been extended to include the two matching blocks of shops, that at 1-9 Churchfield Road being particularly well preserved with good nineteenth century shopfronts. Together with the station and the adjoining central buffet (now a bar) this group is an attractive example of late Victorian townscape.

### Sub Area 1b: East Acton Lane

Goldsmiths Close, a Peabody estate development (John Grey and Partners 1956) off East Acton Road, marks the site of Manor Farm which gives its name to Manor Farm cottages (single storey with a long, low overhanging slate roof). The gateway to the sports ground, nearly opposite Shaa Road, is the former entrance to the so-called manor house (rebuilt in the eighteenth century, demolished in 1911). Just to the north, on the east side of East Acton Lane, is the East Acton First School (1870). The road turns eastward at the small triangular shaped green (a fragment of the former East Acton village green) in front of the Goldsmiths Arms public house, rebuilt in 1910 (note the painted pub sign on the green). Next to the pub is a pair of nineteenth century cottages but with the windows much altered. The tall, broach spire of St Dunstan's (1878-9) just to the north provides a good landmark. This part of East Acton Lane retains some of its original character as a winding rural lane, despite the ordinary inter-war and post-war development on the west side, mainly because of the open aspect to the playing fields, the small green closing the view where the road changes direction and the mature trees.

### 5.1.2. Sub Area no 2: Shaa Road and Perryn Road

The **Shaa Road** runs parallel to East Churchfield Road and connects Perryn Road to the west with East Acton Lane to the east. The Road is lined by imposing 3-storey semidetached villas. This uniform and tight rhythm of the frontage is interrupted by the larger footprint of blocks of flats like Michele Court and Daniel Court.

The red brick properties have a steep roof forming a double front pitch with central chimneystack. The main house is flanked by 2-storey small wings with side entrance. The overall decorative repertoire is fairly simple

<sup>1</sup> Acton central Station was originally within Acton Park CA. In 2004 boundaries of the two CAs (Acton Park and Acton Town Centre) were revised and Acton Central was included within Acton Town Centre CA.



Goldsmith's Almshouses (Grade II)



East Acton First School



Goldsmith's Arms (Locally Listed)



Typical house along Shaa Road



## Acton Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal

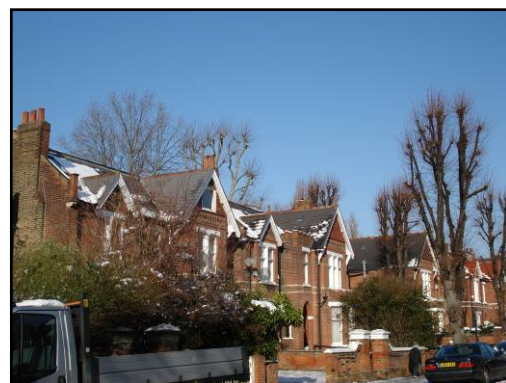
only consisting of some stock brick courses or herringbone brick patterns across the front elevations, thus creating just subtle contrasts and adding texture to the simple red-brick surface. The red-brick surface is also broken by stuccoed window lintels and mullions. Windows are mainly white painted sashes; they are grouped in pairs at first and second floor and are divided by a thick central mullion. At ground floor level the elevation is articulated thanks to a projecting squared bay with stucco decorations and by the side entrance porch which is either flush with the wall or made of a projecting, light timber structure and covered by a single-slope hood. The front gables are decorated with timber bargeboards and finials.

**Perryn Road** branches north ways from East Churchfield Road at a point just east of the railtracks. The tree-lined road runs parallel to the railtracks up to Western Avenue, yet only the southern section - lined by the earliest properties - is included in the CA.

The overall state of preservation of the semidetached properties in the southern section of the road is not as good as along the Shaa Road. Here properties, although very similar in their architectural and stylistic expression, to those along the Shaa Road, have suffered many alterations that somehow have harmed the cohesiveness of the ambience. The southern-most section of the road is occupied (from no 1-15 odds and from no 2-18 even) by 3-storey, red-brick, properties offering the same configuration as the ones along the Shaa Road.

From no 17-29 (odds) and from 1-30 (even) properties along Perryn Road are detached. The 2-storey villas are built in red brick (main elevation) with details and side elevations in stock bricks. The elevations are articulated thanks to side bays, one larger than the other. The main side bay slightly projects and is terminated by a front, pitched gable finished with timber bargeboards and decorative brackets. The elevation is also embellished by terracotta courses with floral motifs or, in some cases, by tile hanging. The entrance porch is recessed and is centrally positioned. The entrance is marked by a gothic arch supported by columns with stuccoed acanthus capitals. The pitched roofs are mainly covered with slates with terracotta ridge tiles. The roof is punctuated by end chimneystacks with clay pots.

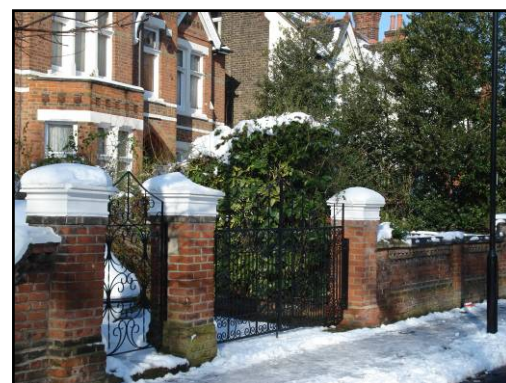
Boundary walls are made of 10-course red-brick wall with stone coping and brick piers with stone capping.



Roofscape along Perryn Road



Typical detached house along Perryn Road



Typical boundary treatment along Perryn Road



Curvaceous aspect of the southern section of Perryn Road

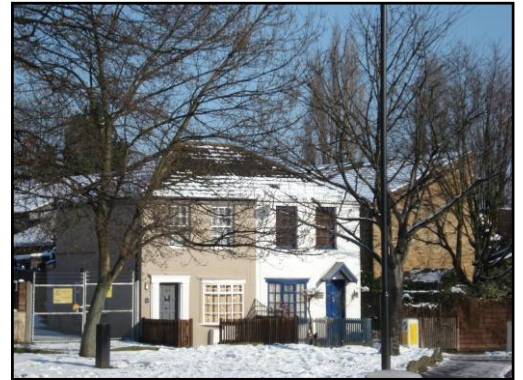
### ***5.2. Key unlisted buildings***

A number of unlisted buildings in Acton Park 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 Victorian Park Lodge  
The 1930's Pavilion  
The Victorian properties along the Shaa Road, Perryn Road, East Churchfield Street  
Nos 120-122 East Acton Lane  
East Acton First School along East Acton Lane



**The 1930's Pavilion**



**120-122 East Acton Lane**



### 5.3. Summary of Building materials and local details

Most of the later Victorian Villas along East Churchfield Road (north side), the Shaa Road and Perryn Road display very similar architectural configuration with similarities in their construction materials and details.

**Walls** - Red brick with stock brick courses, stucco mouldings, tile-hanging and terracotta details. Most semidetached properties have single-storey squared bay-window articulating the main elevation. The projecting bays display classical motifs like stuccoed pilasters and capitals and a flat roof with moulded eaves. Detached properties have full-height bays with front gable embellished with tile-hanging and terracotta courses.

**Windows** - white painted timber 1/1 sashes. White stucco surrounds frame most windows. At first floor level windows are often paired and divided by a thick mullion.

**Doors and entrance porches** - Doors are timber 4-panel doors with glazed upper panels and decorated with leaded lights. Some doors have side lights and fanlight on the top. Porches are of various types: recessed with pointed arch with stucco moulding, or a projecting timber, white painted structure made of slim, beaded pillars supporting a pitched roof with timber bargeboards.

**Roofs** - Roofs are mainly pitched and are covered with tiles or slates with terracotta ridge tiles. Roofs are intercepted by front gables. The line of the roof is embellished by white painted bargeboards.

Cast Iron water pipes still remain

**Boundary walls** - are made of about 10 courses of red-brick in stretcher bond topped with one course of diagonal bricks and one brick on edge course, finished with stone coping. Walls terminate with brick piers with stone capping with iron gates and were originally mainly surmounted by private hedges.

In some of the earlier properties like the Goldsmith's building and East Acton First School the use of the stock brick in Flemish bond and slate roofs is the norm. In the case of the Goldsmith's building, the exposed brick work alternates with large areas of stucco render.



Two porch types of the Victorian villas along Shaa Road and Perryn Road



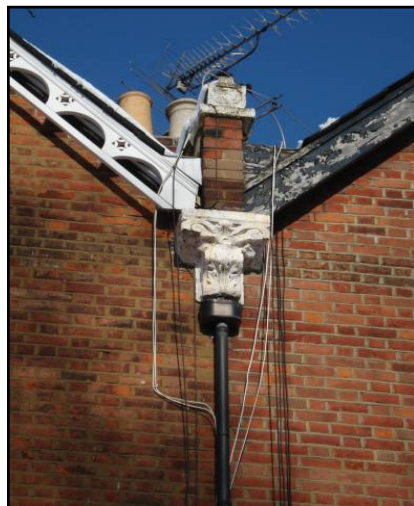
Stock brick boundary wall and cast-iron railing of the Goldsmith's Building



Typical stuccoed bay-window of the semidetached Victorian Villas in the CA



Front gable with herringbone motif, timber bargeboards and paired sash windows with stuccoed top lintel and central mullion



Original cast-iron water pipe



#### **5.4. Contribution of open spaces, trees and landscape**

The green spaces of Acton Park in the core of the CA, provides the Acton Park CA with formal recreational space for residents and visitors to the CA. Acton Park is listed as Ealing Borough's Public Open Spaces; this status recognises the value of the open space also for cultural and social activities.<sup>2</sup>

The presence of healthy and mature broadleaved trees along the streets – both in **Sub Area 1** and **2** – is critical to the character of the CA and is intrinsic to the very historical image of Ealing as a green suburb. Trees along Shaa Road, Perryn Road and in the front yard of the Goldsmith's building are particularly significant. In the residential areas, mature trees and green hedges complement the architecture and frame views within the CA.



**Acton Park – Public Open Space**

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<sup>2</sup> UDP, Vol 1, p. 45, policy 3.4, Vol 2, p. 12

### **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 and/or undistinguished design acts as intrusion within the CA's townscape and creates visual disturbance in views within the CA.

The service structures along Builder's Yard on the western side of the park are an eyesore and disrupt views from the park westwards. The large residential block – Bryant Court – along the southern edge of the park is much too large and does not respect the grain of traditional buildings, also obstructing views from the park southwards. Michele Court and Daniel Court along Shaa Road, on the northern side of the CA, display a rather undistinguished design that does not reflect the scale, massing, materials and patterns of the CA. The nursery buildings along the northern edge of the park, although not offensive in terms of scale, are of a very undistinguished design that contributes very little to the CA augmenting a sense of discontinuity along the streetfront.

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. In some cases, 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 contributes to the creation of an undistinguished and neglected feel.

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

- Extensions that are disrupting the traditional spatial relationship between buildings. In particular most Victorian Villas within the CA have original, 2-storey side flanks that have been extended at roof level, in some cases also changing the shape of the roof. This changes the hierarchic relationship between the side extension and the main house, it changes the overall



**The Builder's Yard from Acton Park**



**View of the Builder's Yard from East Churchfield Street**



**Michele Court along Shaa Road**



**The Nursery along East Churchfield Road**

## Acton Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal

architectural proportions and concept of the house as semidetached and disrupts the rhythm of the streetscape.

- 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.
- There are several examples of painting and rendering of originally exposed brick surfaces (Villas along the southern side of East Churchfield Road). This is detrimental to the character of the houses as the elevation patterns made by brick courses and stucco mouldings are flattened underneath the uniform coat of the render.
- Satellite dishes placed across the front elevation are a detrimental intrusion, create visual clutter and harm the architectural expression of historic properties.

### 5.6. Public realm and street furniture

Pavements in the CA are mostly covered with tarmac or concrete slabs and finished with granite kerbs. The tarmac coating or concrete slabs are not always in very good condition and do not visually contribute to the quality of the streetscape as they do not create enough distinction between the central section of the street, open with vehicular traffic, and the pedestrian sections. A more suitable paving material should be sought.

Tall, modern lampposts illuminate the CA. They make a neutral contribution to its character. Yet along the residential sections of the CA, their height is considered excessive compared to the scale of the architecture and the width of the road.

There are a few traditional post-boxes in the CA, cast iron and painted bright red. They should be preserved.

Cast-iron bollards line East Acton Lane, they provide some separation between the pedestrian and the vehicular traffic areas, and thus they should be maintained.



Single-storey garages along Shaa Road creating gaps and disrupting the continuity of the streetscape



Detrimental extension of one of the side flanks at roof level



Front dormer window disrupting the roof-form of the house. Also inappropriate re-roofing material with bright red pentiles, instead of slates



Inappropriate window replacement with UPVC



### 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 is a concern for the CA. Pavements are in poor condition and could be improved through repaving with high quality materials.

### 5.8. Problems, pressures and capacity for change

In the residential areas within the CA there is little capacity for major change. 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 they are a harsh threat to the character of the area.

## 6. Suggested boundary changes

The Appraisal of Acton Park CA and of its immediate surrounds has shown no need to revise the extent of its boundary. Significant areas in the surroundings are already protected by the CA status (i.e. Acton Town Centre CA). The residential area west of the CA and north of Churchfield Road, the so called Poets' Corner, will be assessed and considered as a potential new, independent CA in the next year of review (2009-2010).

## 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.



Cast-iron post box



Cast-iron bollards along East Acton Lane



Obsolete service cabinet create street clutter and visual disturbance

## 8. Summary of issues

- Loss of front garden trees and fences
- Loss of front yard walls to create parking for cars
- Gap site that disrupt the urban grain and the townscape quality and cohesion.
- 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
  2. Changes to the fenestration
  3. Continuous porches
  4. Bulky dormers that disrupt the roofscape
  5. Rooflights on front slopes
  6. Satellite dishes across front elevations
  7. Rendering of originally exposed brick surfaces



## 9. Planning and Policy framework

A summary of the principal legislation and policy guidance applicable to Acton Park 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.



## Acton Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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](mailto:planning@ealing.gov.uk), or, alternatively, from the Council's website at [www.ealing.gov.uk](http://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** 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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**



## Acton Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal

**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

## Acton Park 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



## Acton Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal

**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

Jonathan Oats, *Acton – A History*, 2003

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Ealing Library Service and Rowland, R.N.G., *Acton as it was*, 1993

## **12. Appendix - Stakeholder consultation**

### ***12.1. List of stakeholders consulted***

Ealing Civic Society

Acton Park CA Planning Advisory Panel

Ward Councillors

### ***12.2. Acton Park 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.
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?



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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.