

# Old Oak Lane Conservation Area Management Plan

March 2007



# OLD OAK LANE CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

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## 1. Introduction

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

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

## 2. Policy

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

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

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

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

### 3. Conservation Area designation

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

#### 3.1. Character appraisals

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

#### 3.2. Archives and the importance of the past

The CA contains a good deal of historic fabric and evidence of this has been included in the Appraisal to demonstrate the evolution of the area over the past 120 years or so.

The Appraisal deals especially with the period from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. Properties in the Old Oak Lane were principally constructed for their employees by the LNWR around 1889 and the name "Railway Cottages", noted on street corners in several parts of the conservation area, refer back to this period. The map of 1915 confirms that the houses stood close to railway sidings, an engine shed, and, of course, the major railway interchange at Willesden Junction. Other archival material, taken chiefly from the local sources maintained by L.B. Ealing, has been included in the Appraisal to provide a sense of historical depth and to illustrate the reality of Old Oak Lane's development. Elements of this past may still be felt and understood, informing decisions about the protection and enhancement of various sites as proposals for change are considered.

## 4. Development control

As a result of the demand for development, the character of the CA is under threat from unsympathetic alterations including poorly designed extensions, additional outbuildings, and changes to the principal elevations. Most of these are controlled by existing legislation, administered by the Council's professional officers. High quality development control plays an important part in managing future changes to the CA.

### 4.1. Principles for development control

The terraced houses within the CA and the surrounding more open sites on the edge of the CA are under strong development pressure. Some new housing has already been provided at the eastern end of Stoke Place and south of Webb Place, within the CA boundary, and largely in keeping with the existing late 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings. The nature of the CA, with closely packed terraced houses, means that further infill is unlikely, given that all of the existing terraced houses are worthy of retention and should not be demolished (although some demolition has already taken place to create the new Channel Gate Road). However, sensitive and responsive management is required in order to cope with future pressures, particularly on the edge of the CA, and the following principles will be adopted to guide the Council in its control of development:

- 1) The Council will apply the principles, guidance and regulations outlined in the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* and the broader guidance of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15)* and any subsequent revisions or additions.
- 2) The Council will apply the policies outlined in its *Plan for the Environment, the Unitary Development Plan (UDP)* as adopted in October 2004, until such time as these policies are replaced by policies in the emerging *Local Development Framework*.
- 3) The Council will require all planning applications to be supported by a Design and Access Statement. This should be a brief but thorough guide to the reasons for the development and how the design fulfils these, together with a statement concerning any access issues that may exist. Officers of the Council can provide assistance to applicants with more information

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and with examples on file of successful Design and Access Statements.

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

OR

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

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Experience has demonstrated that advance work of this sort is the most effective and efficient way of preparing applications.

### 5. Preservation and enhancement

#### 5.1. *Understanding the asset*

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

Spatial:

- Dominant and unattractive development around the edges of the CA;
- Alterations to the preservation of the original layout and street plan (e.g. Channel Gate Road);
- Poorly designed back extensions and additional new buildings facing the back alleys;
- Badly maintained back alleys between Stephenson Street and Goodhall Street, and Goodhall Street and Old Oak Lane;
- Goodhall Street would be suitable for an enhancement scheme to provide designated car parking areas, street trees, and a generally safer environment for children to play;
- Improvements to the car parking/green areas to the west of Stephenson Street are needed;
- The need to identify and protect the existing historic blue brick paving in Stoke Place, with its curved bull nose kerbing;
- Badly maintained public realm (paving, trees, street furniture);
- Lighting columns are well detailed but too tall;
- Little “green” space, either private or public;
- Illegal fly-tipping and untidy and rubbish-strewn car parking areas;



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- A general feeling of neglect which adversely affects the streets, pavements and open spaces;
- More frequent litter and rubbish collections are needed.

### Buildings:

- The loss of original features to the terraced houses, particularly the roof materials, windows and front doors;
- The loss of the original brick facades due to pebble-dashing, rendering and painting;
- A plethora of satellite dishes on the front elevations of the houses (despite existing control over such changes);
- The future of the former Institute – no. 78 Goodhall Street – a scheme has been rejected by the Council after pressure from residents and has now gone to appeal;
- The future of the derelict adjoining cottage – no. 73 Stephenson Street (part of the above scheme);
- The need for a number of buildings (Stoke Place, the Fisherman's Arms PH, the former Institute and the adjoining cottage) to be added to the Local List.

### General:

- Busy traffic along Old Oak Lane and into the adjoining freight depot, causing fumes and noise, with only one zebra crossing;
- New Business Centre in Goodhall Street generates additional traffic;
- Day time parking by commuters, including commercial vehicles, is a major issue;
- The effect of the freight depot on the adjoining residential area in terms of noise and general activity;
- Poor quality commercial signage in Channel Gate Road;
- The need to maintain and promote the existing strong sense of local identity and community spirit;
- A lack of information and guidance to local residents about the CA.

## **5.2. Maintaining quality**

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

### **1) Quality of applications**

In line with PPG15 the Council will not accept outline applications for proposals in CAs. Full applications will be required to be supported by properly drafted, accurate, scale drawings with plans, sections and elevations. In many cases for large schemes the Council will also expect analytical drawings, showing proposals in context, either through streetscape sections or three-dimensional images.

### **2) Quality of materials**

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

### **3) Details**

Where appropriate to aid in the assessment of an application, the Council may require the submission of large-scale construction detail drawings. This enables officers to check the quality of what is proposed and ensure that on site design is not left to the builder.

### **4) Experienced persons**

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

### **5) Windows and doors**

The Council has a well-founded preference for traditional, renewable materials and will therefore exercise its powers to advise and to insist in cases where appropriate (see 5.7 – Article 4 Direction for Old Oak Lane CA), against the use of architectural elements and fenestration details in PVC-U or other manufactured substitutes.

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

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Depending on the individual circumstances, aluminium may not be considered an acceptable replacement for steel in window frames.

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

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

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

#### **• Dormer windows**

Inset dormer windows will usually be accepted on the rear roof slopes but only rarely on the front or the side. They should not dominate the roof slope.

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

There should be no tiling on the front elevation

#### **• Roof extensions**

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

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

#### **• Rooflights**

Rooflights will usually be acceptable on the rear roof slopes and on occasion on the sides. Any rooflight should be "conservation rooflight" which lie flat in the roof.

- **Tiles**

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

- **Chimneys**

Chimneys are a particularly important element of the character of the Borough's CAs and in Old Oak Lane CA existing chimneys should be retained where they contribute positively to local character. New proposals that include chimneys must be high in the quality of their design, materials and execution.

### **7) Extensions**

The proliferation of unsightly and over-scale rear, side or roof extensions are regarded as detrimental to the historic environment of Hanwell Clock Tower. For this reason, applications for extensions of this sort will be carefully considered and, where necessary for the preservation of local character, will be resisted.

### **8) Brickwork**

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

### **9) Outbuildings in rear gardens**

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

### **10) Shopfronts and signage**

The Old Oak Lane CA contains only two purpose built commercial buildings (the Fisherman's Arms P H and the former Railway Institute) and there is only one shop in the CA, "The Breeze", a general store on the east side of Old Oak Lane. This has a very poor quality modern shopfront, painted green and red and covered in graffiti. Former shopfronts can be seen on some of the houses immediately adjacent. Signage in connection with the freight depot is obtrusive in Channel Gate Road.

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Any future application to change the existing shopfront in Old Oak lane, or to erect signage within the CA will be scrutinised carefully for their impact on the area's special character.

### **11) Satellite Dishes and Telecommunication Installations.**

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

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

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

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

If any of these does not apply, a specific planning application will this be required, and it is unlikely that permission will be granted. It is accepted that because recent changes have resulted in poor reception on conventional aerials, many residents in the CA have installed satellite dishes which clearly do not conform to these constraints and therefore could be subject to enforcement action by the Council. This is an issue which the Council needs to address, in collaboration with local residents, as soon as possible.

Telecommunication installations are regarded as causing great potential harm to the historic character of Old Oak Lane CA, although regrettably a large mast has already been erected on the eastern boundary of the CA. The law governing the erection of masts and antennae is complex and whilst some companies have licences which allow some structures to be put up in CAs without planning permission, the legislation does allow for consultation with the local authority concerned before the work is put in hand.<sup>1</sup>

### **5.3. *Preserve or enhance***

As outlined in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) proposals for work with the historic environment and, in particular, within CAs must, as a minimum, preserve the character of the CA. The Council supports this standard as a basic requirement but will always encourage applicants and their agents to develop schemes that will actively enhance the character of the CA. In meeting these fundamental requirements the Council will require that proposals are demonstrably a faithful replication of the local historical precedent or a high quality contemporary building as described above in 3.1.

### **5.4. *Elements at risk***

As described in the Appraisal, and summarised in section 5.1 of this document, the quality of the Old Oak Lane CA has been damaged to a significant degree by a variety of factors including:

- The impact of the surrounding environment;
- Changes to the original street pattern and plan form;
- The threat of inappropriate modern development within the CA;
- The effects of poor traffic control and a lack of emphasis on safe pedestrian movement;
- The cumulative effect of incremental changes to the buildings over the years including poor quality extensions and the loss of original architectural details;

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<sup>1</sup> Further information can be found in the second edition of PPG8 *Telecommunications*

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- Poor quality public realm - lighting, street and pavement surfaces, and street furniture;
- A need for further additions to the Council's Local List of significant buildings;
- A need to promote the area's special qualities and to engage the local community in the future preservation and enhancement of the area.

The Council regards it as important to improve these negative features and to ensure that actions are taken to positively preserve or enhance the Old Oak Lane CA in the following ways:

### *Issue 1: The impact of the surrounding environment*

It has already been noted how the neighbouring industrial sites have had a detrimental impact on the residential streets in the conservation area, including the impact of noise from large machinery and the traffic generated by the depot.

The Council already has policies to control future development, which must clearly take the impact on the setting of the Old Oak Lane CA into consideration. The owners of Channel Gate Road should be encouraged to remove unnecessary signage, reduce the impact of the existing signage as far as possible, maintain the highway and pavements to a high standard, and generally consider the impact of their business on the adjoining residential streets.

### *Issue 2: Changes to the original street pattern and plan form*

Alterations have already been made to the original street layout to accommodate the new Channel Gate Road which involved the demolition of eight houses in Stephenson Street and Goodhall Street, and the former school facing Old Oak Lane. The original Mission Church has also gone. It should be assumed that no further demolitions within the CA of original buildings should be allowed where they make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA. This would include, for instance, the former Railway Institute in Goodhall Street and the adjoining cottage.

By contrast, the creation of dead-end roads to limit through traffic is considered to be a success although the various details (bollards, raised planters etc) now require repair and improvement.

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### *Issue 3: The threat of inappropriate modern development within the CA*

The greatest current threat to the special historic and architectural interest of the CA is the potential loss of the former Railway Institute. This was built by LNWR, along with a school and church, soon after the first terraces of houses were completed in c1889. A recent application for its demolition and redevelopment was refused by the Council following protests from the local community, and the applicants have now appealed.

### *Issue 3: The effects of poor traffic control and a lack of emphasis on safe pedestrian movement*

Busy traffic along Old Oak Lane splits the CA in two despite a zebra crossing close to the Fisherman's Arms PH. Traffic into and out of the new Business Centre off Goodhall Street is another source of conflict between car users and pedestrians.

The Council will continue to monitor the situation and will, funds permitting, consider schemes for traffic calming and improvements to pedestrian movement across the CA.

### *Issue 4: The cumulative effect of incremental changes to the buildings over the years including poor quality extensions and the loss of original architectural details*

This is considered in greater detail in section 5.7 *Article 4 Direction for the Old Oak Lane CA*.

### *Issue 5: Poor quality public realm - lighting, street and pavement surfaces, and street furniture*

A comprehensive and initially well detailed improvement scheme of the CA was undertaken some years ago. This involved the blocking off Goodhall Street and Stephenson Street, which became dead-end streets; the creation of car parking bays; and the installation of planting beds and street trees.

This scheme is now in urgent need of improvement and repair due to poor maintenance, and the Council will consider enhancement schemes, funds permitting, in collaboration with local residents and the various statutory undertakers. This could include gating the back alleys between Stephenson and Goodhall Street, and between Goodhall Street and Old Oak Lane, as has been done very successfully between Crewe Place and Stoke Place.



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Improved litter collection is also needed, including public spaces which are currently suffering the accumulation of rubbish and other debris.

*Issue 6: A need for further additions to the Council's Local List of significant buildings*

The Appraisal identified three groups of buildings for addition to the Local List, the criteria for which is also detailed. These buildings are:

- The former Railway Institute, no. 78 Goodhall Street – a three storey brick structure dating to c.1890;
- No. 73 Stephenson Street – a two storey brick house of c1890;
- All of the terraced houses in Stoke Place, notable for the fine quality detailing;
- The Fisherman's Arms PH, dating to the 1930s.

To this could be added:

- The surviving blue brick pavement in Stoke Place;
- The Parish boundary stone on the east side of Old Oak Lane, at the entrance to Stoke Place;
- Nos. 15-71 Stephenson Street (c.1890), well detailed houses some of which survive in their original form.

These possible additions to the Local List will be considered by the Council as soon as resources permit a thorough assessment of their significance.

*Issue 7: A need to promote the area's special qualities and to engage the local community in the future preservation and enhancement of the area*

It was notable that many of the local residents complained that not enough information was available to residents about what was permitted in the CA and what could be done to improve their properties. The Appraisal particularly noted that there were no publications which would raise the public's appreciation of the history, architecture and planning background of the CA.

The Council could, therefore, consider the production of an advisory leaflet, to be distributed to all houses in the CA. The leaflet could cover the following matters:

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- A short history;
- An assessment of the buildings and their architectural features;
- Advice about extensions and alterations;
- Advice about the repairs and restoration of traditional details and materials;
- Advise about other issues pertinent to the CA, such as the maintenance of back gardens and outbuildings, and, where relevant, front gardens and boundaries.

Proposals for a new Article 4 Direction (see section 5.7) to bring in additional controls over alterations to the front elevations of the houses. The Council could also, resources permitting, establish a small Working Party of local residents to help formulate this leaflet and to provide an early input into any proposals for new planning controls or environmental enhancements in the CA. Alternatively, the Council could establish a CA Advisory Group to help monitor change in the CA, made up from local residents.

### **5.5. Monitoring and Review**

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

### **5.6. Conservation Strategy and Practice**

Ealing Council is in the process of reviewing its 29 designated Conservation Areas, some of which already have Article 4 Directions (A4D) in place. A4D means that the usual rights of individual property owners to make Permitted Developments are suspended and therefore all significant changes or developments would require planning permission. An A4D could be considered for the Old Oak Lane CA, subject to public consultation (see section 5.7) but to maintain all aspects of the “special character and appearance” of the 29 CAs, the Council will need to retain technical advisors specializing in the preservation and conservation of historic buildings, landscapes etc. A regular five-year cycle of study and review will also need to be maintained to assess and monitor the CAs in the long term.

## 5.7 A 4D Considerations for Old Oak Lane Conservation Area

Designation as a CA means that the Council can consider whether serving an Article 4 Direction is appropriate. This brings under planning control a number of changes to unlisted family houses which would normally be considered “permitted development” including the insertion of plastic windows, new front doors, adding porches and other small extensions, and changing roof materials.

It has already been noted that many of the original buildings in the Old Oak Lane CA have to a degree already been adversely affected by such unsympathetic changes. In this case, serving an Article 4 Direction is unlikely to achieve a meaningful improvement in these buildings as the legislation cannot be enforced retrospectively. However, many of the local residents who responded to the stakeholder consultation at the start of the appraisal process supported the idea of more rigorous controls and the Council might consider, subject to the provision of sufficient staff resources to monitor and enforce an Article 4 Direction, to serve one on the CA.

## 6. Consultation

The strength of the Old Oak Lane CA Appraisal and Management Plan relies on the knowledge and commitment of residents and other key stakeholders.

Both documents have been produced in partnership with members of the Old Oak Lane community who have provided the authors of this work with the expert views and knowledge to help positively shape the future of the conservation area. Wider views will be sought in the lead up to adoption of both the Appraisal and Management Plan, and thereafter in every five-year period of review. The establishment of a CA Advisory Group, to monitor applications in the CA, would be a welcome addition to the existing controls.

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