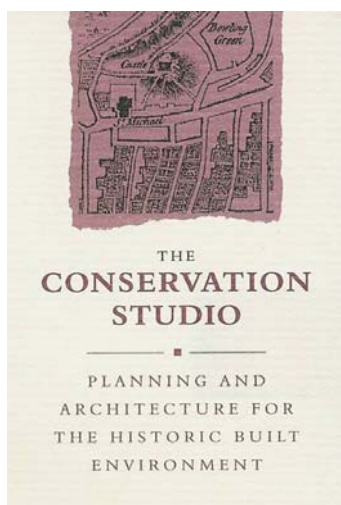


# Cuckoo Estate Conservation Area Appraisal

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This document was written and produced by The Conservation Studio on behalf of the London Borough of Ealing in 2007



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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

Cuckoo Estate Conservation Area (CA) was first designated in 1995 and this appraisal updates the 1999 Cuckoo Estate CA Appraisal.

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

1. Assess the special interest of the architectural and natural heritage of Cuckoo Estate CA highlighting elements of special merit which contribute to the character.
2. Assess the action needed to protect and enhance the special qualities of the CA.
3. Propose the revised boundaries of the CA.

The document is, however, 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 Cuckoo Estate follows the guidance provided by the Planning Policy guidelines 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994); the Guidance on Conservation 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.

### 1.3. Planning and Policy Framework

CAs often arise from a process of local interest and action. Where areas have been designated, it is the Council's statutory duty to give special consideration to the preservation or enhancement of their character or appearance in the exercise of their planning functions. To that end, special policies, relevant to the Cuckoo Estate CA, are included in the Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) to sensitively guide and manage development. The policies and the wider framework for development proposals in the London Borough of Ealing, are summarised at the back of this document.

### 1.4. Summary of Special Interest

- A surviving interwar London County Council planned estate with many of its original features and its entire original layout intact. It is a fine example of a housing estate from a period in history when modern "luxuries" such as indoor lavatories and hot water were first being introduced.
- The estate was thoughtfully designed in the local topography around an important historic building. The central road (formerly a carriageway) is a green centrepiece and counterpoint to the solid, grand Hanwell Community Centre building on the crest of the hill. This 19th century listed building was once a Poor Law school, attended for a time by Charlie Chaplin, and stands within Cuckoo Park, one of the largest open green spaces in the Hanwell area.
- The estate was planned in a very methodical manner, along the lines of a traditional garden suburb masterminded by Raymond Unwin at the beginning of the 20th century. It has distinctive features found within 3 sub-areas of character:
  - The houses are mostly arranged in small groups of terraces or semidetached houses. Often, neighbouring terraces are set back/ forward from each other to reduce any tunnel effect;
  - An unadorned, but solid architectural style, mainly in red brick with hipped clay tile roofs and arranged over 2 storeys, although some variations in brick colour, some round bays and modest door hoods;
  - A small area of grass with a tree planted at the centre and surrounded by distinctive overlapping hooped railings at almost every road junction. Open strips of grass



Distinctive, quality residential architecture



The grade II listed Cuckoo Schools



The low rise, high density estate

## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

- laid across the frontages of groups of flats, again with railings;
- Further groups of buildings are set back further in “closes” with more grassed areas, hedging and trees;
  - The plots have small front gardens but extensive hedging to screen the view into the houses and to give even more green character to the estate;
  - On corners, particularly on Cuckoo Avenue, buildings are grouped to present gateways when the visitor approaches from the foot of the hill and heads up towards the community centre;
  - Other open spaces were incorporated into the design for the enjoyment of all: Hale Walk and Hall Drive;
  - The ideal of a well-served community at its heart, with a parade of shops, schools and churches within the estate.



Large amounts of amenity space



## 2. Location and Context, Uses and Activities

### 2.1. Location and Context

The Cuckoo Estate is located in Hanwell between the towns of Ealing and Greenford in the central part of the London Borough of Ealing. It is thought that the name Hanwell is derived from a spring, which rises close to the church, slightly west of the Cuckoo Estate on the brow of the hill overlooking the River Brent. Hanwell Community Centre (listed grade II) is the focus of the area and there are a number of other significant places in the wider Hanwell area, including St Bernard's Hospital (formerly Hanwell Asylum), 2 listed cemeteries, I.K. Brunel's Wharncliffe Viaduct and Hanwell Flight of Locks to the south.

The estate sits between Ruislip Road East to the north, Greenford Avenue to the west, Homefarm Road to the south and Templeton/ Harp Roads to the east. Cuckoo Avenue, a wide road with a broad central reservation lined with mature trees, is the backbone of the estate and runs through the centre of the area up the hill to the Community Centre and Cuckoo Park.

The CA areas falls within the Hobbayne ward in the Borough of Ealing, which has a total population of approximately 13, 068. 56% of the population is recorded as White British. 16% are recorded as White Other. 11% Asian or Asian British, 10% are Black or Black British, 4% Mixed Race and 3% Chinese or Other Ethnic groups. (Source National Statistics, Ealing Census 2001).

### 2.2. Uses and Activities

This is a purpose built residential area. Before the 1930s it was mainly farmland, attached to Cuckoo Farm on the current site of Brentside High School. The remaining land, including Cuckoo Park and the Community Centre building served a 19th century poor-law school. Prior to the foundation of the school in 1856, this area had been part of an earlier Hanwell Park Estate. The main function of Cuckoo Farm became service to the needs of the school's occupants. As with most planned estates from the 1930s onwards, Cuckoo Estate has many services located within the area: shops, churches and schools. Its construction around a community centre is a happy accident, the building was abandoned and condemned at the time, but its new purpose and use soon became indicative of the community ideal on which this estate was created, and on which it flourished.



Busy west London streets surround the estate



A mainly residential area



Community facilities

## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Modern uses have been integrated with this original vision with varying success. The existence of modern supermarkets close by have meant that the local shopping parades are not overrun with the increasing amount of people who live in later residential developments adjacent to the area. However, the increased choice that has been introduced by the free market has also led to the erosion of the self-sufficiency of the planned estate.

The mass use of the car has not improved the look of these streets, which are not built to accommodate them. Unlike contemporary private development, planners did not provide for individual car ownership because at this time not many residents would have been in a position to afford them. Also, modern schooling habits mean that many parents cause congestion by using vehicles to drop off and pick up children. These factors are indicative of the change of aspirations of residents since the estate was founded in the 1930s. Residents are now less likely to rely on public transport or bicycles to commute or shop.

The Community Centre is an example of how the needs of modern society can be filled by an historic building: around 60 local groups meet there weekly.

### 2.3. Topography and Geology

The hillside location of the Cuckoo Estate CA is a key characteristic and was important to its planned layout. The land steadily drops downhill to the Brent valley in the north. The roads are laid out to accommodate this: long straight roads running south to north and shorter ones, bisected by Cuckoo Avenue running east to west. Although the hill is relatively steep in places and affords distant views over towards Harrow, it only rises 100 feet from the river below.

The soil is mainly London clay and some gravel. Outwash gravel deposits left at the end of the last Ice Age around 10,000 years ago formed the hills at this edge of the London basin.



Shopping facilities on Greenford Avenue



The Community Centre lies at the heart of the Conservation Area



The estate is built on the side of a hill



## **2.4. Relationship of the Conservation Area to its Surroundings**

The CA is a well-served, self-contained community with shops, schools, churches and community centre. Other facilities are very close by and easily accessible. A large leisure centre is within walking distance, as are other shops and further schools. A mainline train station is a few metres outside the eastern boundary and a number of bus services to Ealing and beyond go through and past the estate.

The neighbouring River Brent has always been an important landmark in the area. It describes the western and northern borders of the ancient Parish. It lies just to the north of the CA boundary and its water supply feeds the tall trees that line the road and provide a rich verdant screen that terminates northerly views out of the CA.



**The hillside location grants far reaching views towards Harrow Hill**



**Ruislip Road East abuts the River Brent**

### 3. Historic Development and Archaeology

#### 3.1. Historic Development

Settlements have existed in the Hanwell area since at least Saxon times and the manor is recorded under the ownership of Westminster Abbey from the 10th century. The Parish was in the Elthorne Hundred of the County of Middlesex and the Domesday Survey shows that Hanwell (or Hanewelle) had one of the few mills in Middlesex at the time. A church has stood in Hanwell since the 12th century although by the 13th century the manor became absorbed into neighbouring Greenford manor. As a result Hanwell was regarded as a subsidiary hamlet of Greenford until the 18th century.

The villagers appear to have been arable farmers during the medieval period. A windmill was recorded in Hanwell in the 14th century and was probably sited close to the modern day position of the Cuckoo Estate in an area now called Elthorne Heights. The rest of the area north of Uxbridge Road consisted of a few cottages, farms and rectory scattered around the parish church. Hanwell remained a farming community and the land began to be enclosed by the 18th century.

The 1800 map (overleaf) shows that while the land is still farmed, it has been enclosed and the majority was under the ownership of the Hanwell Park Estate. One of the two remaining farms in the parish was Cuckoo Farm, which had fields running up the hill to Hanwell Park. It is called "Park Farm" on the 1800 map standing next to the River Brent. The owners of Hanwell Park had built a large house at the beginning of the century and they bought up large parts of the surrounding land.

Neighbouring areas around the Oxford (now Uxbridge) Road to the south began to be developed as traffic increased on the route and Hanwell Heath was enclosed. Further activity came to the area first with the construction of the Grand Junction Canal from the 1790s and then the Great Western Railway in the 1830s. The division between the rural north around Cuckoo Hill and Hanwell Park and the urban growth around Uxbridge Road was further accentuated when Hanwell Asylum was built in the 1830s. This brought a large influx of people to the area and was instigated by the improved transport infrastructure.

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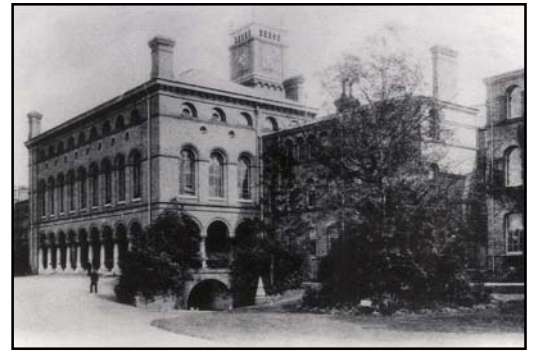
## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The expansion of the Cuckoo area came 20 years later with the foundation of the Central District Schools on Cuckoo Hill. This marked the beginning of the break up of the Hanwell Park Estate and the development of Hanwell as a residential area.

The opening of the schools (known locally as Cuckoo Schools) on 20th October 1857 doubled the population of the village overnight with around one thousand children plus many staff. The farm at the bottom of the hill, Cuckoo Farm, supplied the school with dairy products from cows grazed on the land surrounding the main driveway, which even now, as Cuckoo Avenue, has retained its tree-lined appearance.

In its early years the school was renowned for its harsh discipline, severe conditions and epidemics. Its famous pupil, Charlie Chaplin, is known to have hated his 18-month stay there. Although the schools were essentially a self-supporting community, by the end of the 19th century the children were trained in a variety of useful skills and the boys were formed into marching bands that had engagements at local social functions. The buildings were expanded and by 1900 the 140-acre site had classrooms, residential blocks, infirmary and sewage and gas works. Subsequently, a small reservoir was sited on Cuckoo Hill. The 1865 OS map shows the Cuckoo Schools Gas Works on the current site of reservoir.

In the 1870s the nearby station had been rebuilt and services became more regular. House building then began in earnest around Uxbridge Road and the Hanwell population grew from 3,766 in 1871 to 6,139 in 1891. Essential services were laid and the local government expanded. Hanwell grew from village to town and formed its own identity, separate from neighbouring Greenford and West Ealing (called Ealing Dean at the time). Hanwell Urban District was not incorporated in the Borough of Ealing until 1926.

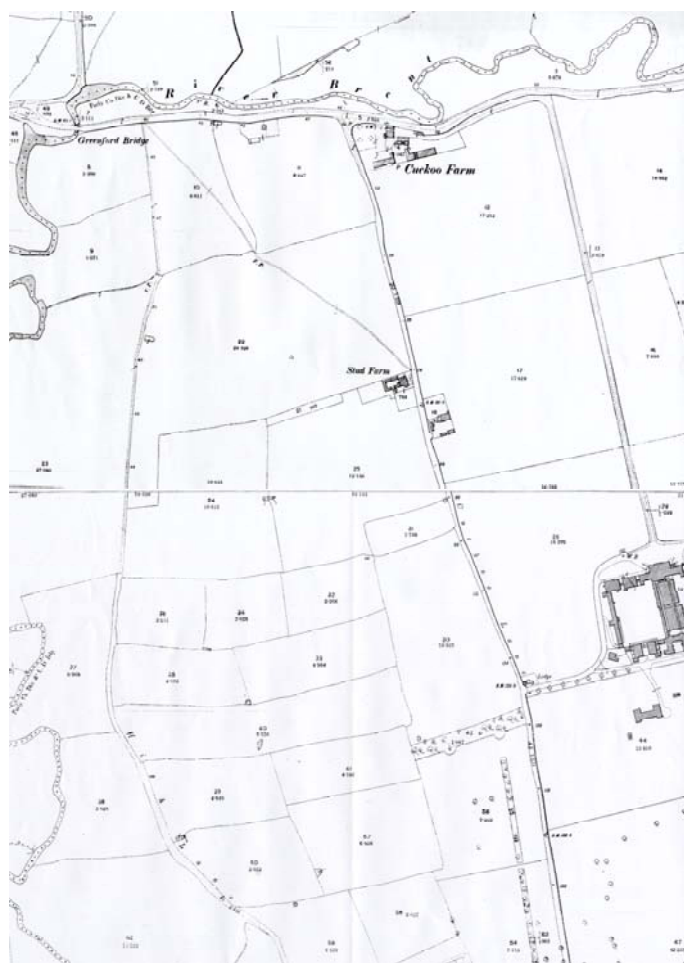


**The Central District Schools**

## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal



1865 Ordnance Survey



1896 Ordnance Survey



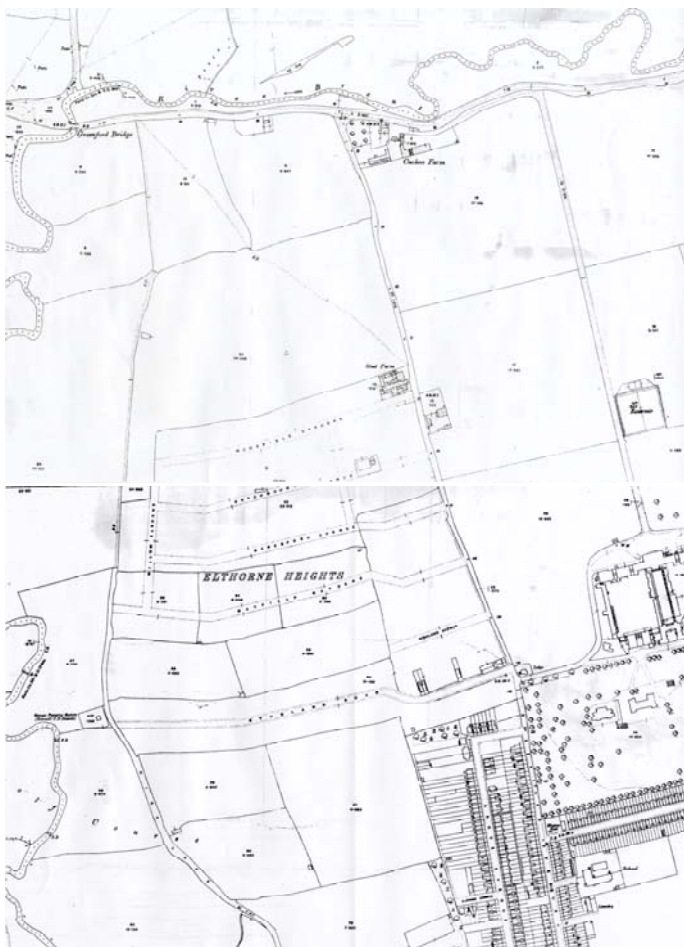
## **Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

Once the Hanwell Park Estate was formally broken up in 1886, the southern end of Greenford Avenue was cut and development spread north, eventually linking up to the Cuckoo Schools community in the north. The Greenford branch line of the GWR, which opened in 1904-5 provided better transport connections and the Castle Bar Park station would eventually serve the Cuckoo Estate on the route north to Greenford. Further provision for the new residents came in 1910 with the opening of the Brent Valley Golf Club. The Council turned the area surrounding the golf course, which is still open to the public, into the Brent Valley Park in the 1930s. Although many residents were employed in small businesses and factories locally, the majority of inhabitants worked in the capital: Hanwell was a dormitory settlement of London.

Between 1919 and 1938 nearly three quarters of a million new houses and flats were built in Greater London – some populations were doubling every 10 years. Local authorities built the one fifth of new properties and the London County Council built the Cuckoo Estate around the defunct school, which it had acquired some years before. The estate was begun in 1933, just after the Great Depression, and was finished by the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. The scale and vision was similar in to St Helier in the London Borough of Sutton. Families from all over London were housed here, attracted by the increasing amounts of work available on the industrial estates that were growing in Perivale and Greenford, as well as the ample transport services to London and Uxbridge.

The estate marked the next phase in the LCC quest to provide low cost housing for the poorer classes. From its creation in 1888, LCC built high density, but good quality, sanitary blocks in Inner London. However, at the outset of the 20th century land prices in London rose sharply. LCC budgets meant that they looked to the areas on the outskirts of London, which were now better connected with the capital by a newly-electrified transport network. In these locations there was the space to build lower density estates and the designs of these new cottage estates, such as Old Oak in Hammersmith, (now in LB Ealing) and Roehampton in Putney, were strongly influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement. Residents were re-housed from slums that were continuing to be cleared into pleasant, sanitary houses with plenty of communal open space and trees. Many brave families were uprooted from their communities with the promise of the opportunity to live in well-built new homes close to good employment, but in unfamiliar surroundings. The offer of a better quality of life was very appealing.

## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal



1914 Ordnance Survey



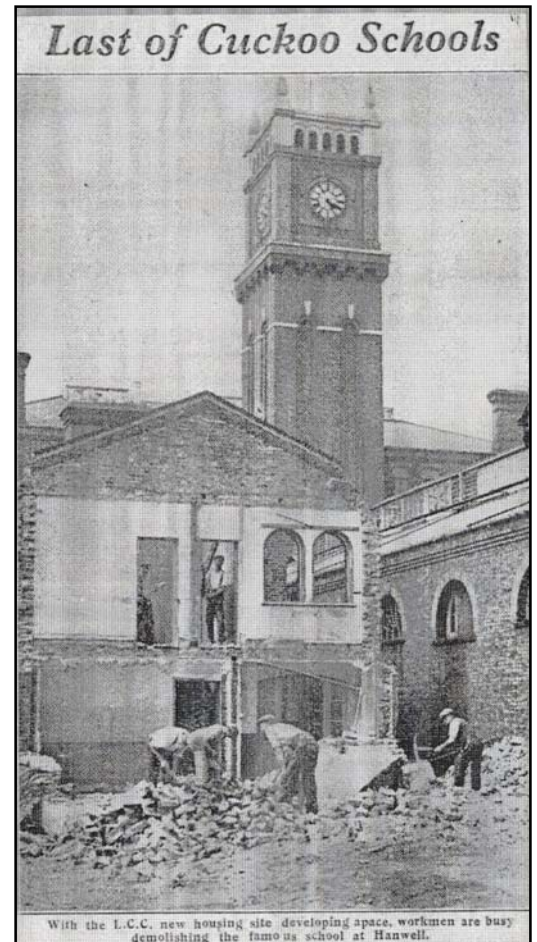
1935 Ordnance Survey

## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

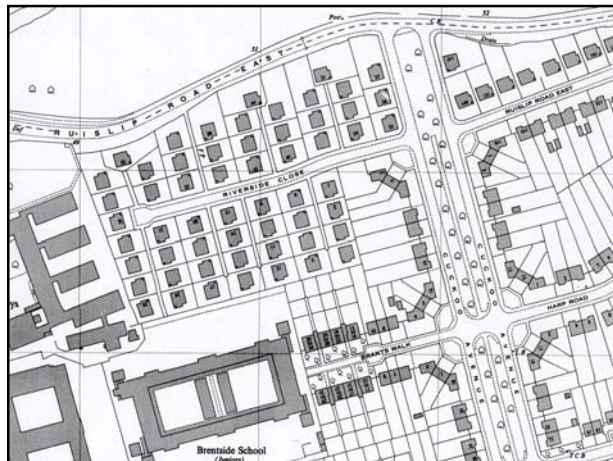
Building ceased during the First World War, after which The Housing Act of 1919 pledged to provide new homes for the growing number of people that lived close to the new industrial hubs around London. Between 1919 and 1929 the LCC constructed 8 cottage-style estates and 7 further estates in the late 1930s. Between 1918 and 1938 the amount of LCC properties rose from under 10,000 to over 86,000. Reduced land values after the economic slump resulted in renewed high density building in Inner London, which slowed down the development of greenfield sites in the suburbs. The Cuckoo Estate is one of the last LCC estates to be built before the Second World War and one of the last cottage estates to be built by LCC at all.

The LCC created a self sufficient community in the area, with shops and the spaces for schools and churches in the original plan.

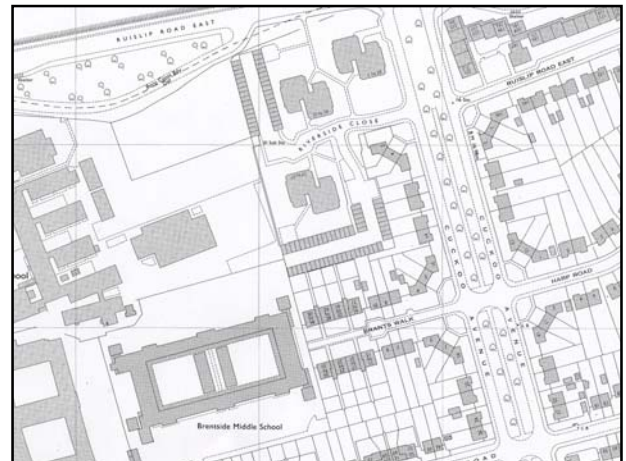
Since then, the Cuckoo Estate has adapted with the times. Some houses on the estate even had to be rebuilt after a flying bomb attack in the Second World War. During the war the school was used for storage and, at the request of the new estate residents, as a community centre. The latter use remains to this day. To meet the needs of an ever increasing population, various corners of the remaining pasture and the railway embankment have been developed.



Newspaper article recording the partial demolition of Cuckoo Schools in 1936



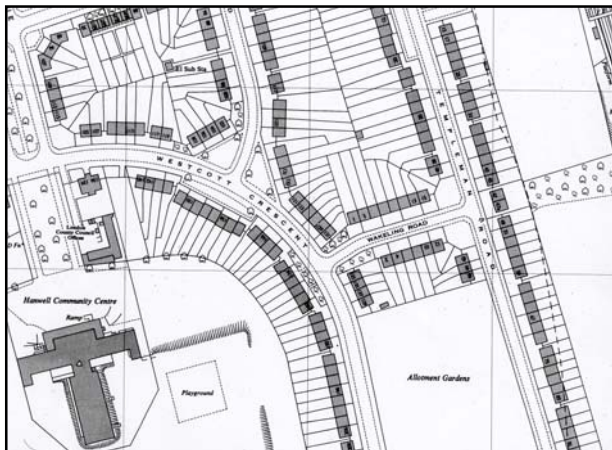
1957 Ordnance Survey - the LCC estate abuts the post-war housing and school that replaced Cuckoo Farm



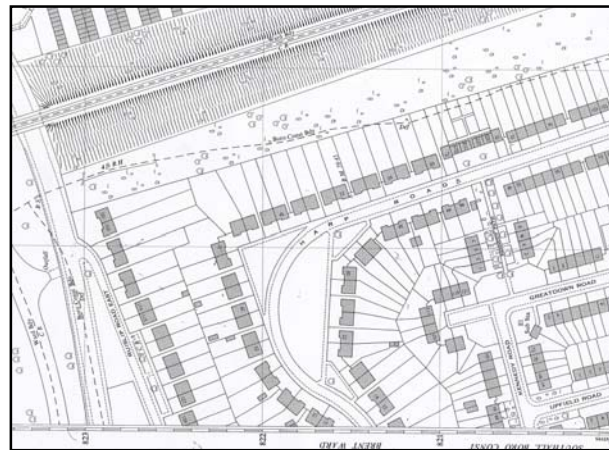
1978 Ordnance Survey – post-war housing was replaced with blocks of flats



## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal



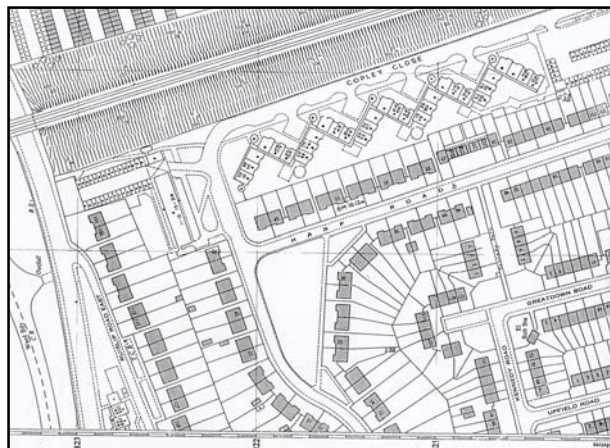
1957 Ordnance Survey - allotments were incorporated into the planned estate



1968 Ordnance Survey – the estate was planned with open space, such as the railway embankment, along its boundaries



1981 Ordnance Survey - further council housing filled in many open areas within and around the Cuckoo Estate, including the allotments and the railway embankment



The view of Cuckoo Hill from the roof of the Schools, before and after the construction of the LCC estate (Source: Greenford Heritage Centre)

### 3.2. Archaeology

Significant archaeological finds were made in the Hanwell area in the 19th and 20th centuries, although there are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The handaxes that were found in Hanwell gravel pits could be up to 500,000 years old as the technique used belongs to the Lower Palaeolithic age. The sites are located to the south of the CA beyond Uxbridge Road. Other small finds from later eras have been found in the area, including Saxon graves, which were found on the site of Oaklands School in 1886.

The position of Cuckoo Hill would have been a good vantage point in many directions and early settlers found this type of location attractive. The Saxon finds are the first evidence of settlement in Hanwell although Roman coins and pottery were found on Cuckoo Hill, Hanwell Park in 1850.



## 4. Spatial Analysis

### 4.1. Plan, Form and Layout

The Cuckoo Estate is an excellent example of the 1930s planned estate. Other examples can be found in other London Boroughs, such as St Helier in Sutton, and Bellingham in Lewisham.

Some of its features and ideals can be traced back to the design and aesthetic thinking of the late 19th and early 20th century Arts and Crafts and Garden City movements. Other characteristics of the estate are attributable to an evolved town planning concept and the different social needs of the later interwar years. An interest in attractive as well as functional properties with a traditional appearance was by now tempered by a need to find space for more of them in any given area. This was one of the last LCC estates to be built before the outbreak of the Second World War and represents a point at which their architects had refined the planning of such developments. Their experience building estates elsewhere across London informed this development, although there were financial restrictions due to the economic slump from which the country was still recovering.

The earlier Garden City schemes were a reaction to the harsh environment of the industrial cities which evolved during the 19th century and tried to retain what they saw as the best elements of the rural styles and ways of life seen as lost in the new age. Town planners such as Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin used a vernacular architectural style adapted to suit the needs of a large, low cost housing estate. One of their most famous, and successful schemes is also in the Borough of Ealing, Brentham Garden Suburb.

Some aspects of the layout of the Cuckoo Estate are borrowed from this movement, which was based on two fundamental principles: that beauty was indispensable at all levels, and that planning could play a role in the creation of communities and profoundly affect people's lives. This ethos, created by Raymond Unwin, formed the basis of modern town planning and the means for achieving these goals were engaged with by the LCC architects of the Cuckoo Estate.

One of the fundamental characteristics of the Cuckoo Estate is based on an Unwin set piece: a grassed area was left at corners of road junctions with buildings turned, angled or staggered around the corner.



Rows of flats



Corner properties facing three directions



Small enclaves located off the longer roads

## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

This opens up views down side streets and allows glimpsed views behind buildings or deflected views around corners.

However, the Cuckoo Estate differs because of another population explosion in London. There was increasing pressure to build larger estates with mass-produced materials. The quaint garden suburbs of turn of the century were not now achievable on ever-tightening Council budgets and the agreeable clusters of small groups of buildings were replaced with long roads of semidetached houses and terraced flats rigidly flanking the roads. At Cuckoo, the grid system is typically rather inflexible compared to earlier schemes. However, the rigidity does follow the manner of the straight 19th century field boundaries that previously existed on the land. Also, the small cul-de-sacs that are attached to the longer roads not only break up these lines and provide pleasant clusters of buildings, they also resulted in the need for less highways, which cut costs further.

Despite being the result of a response to the severe housing shortage after the First World War the LCC estates, including Cuckoo were not merely designed to cram as many people in as possible, they followed the example of the Garden City Movement, which championed low density development. The aim was to alleviate overcrowding while still providing a quality of life to residents that would be luxurious compared to the standards seen in Victorian and Edwardian times: with hot and cold running water, gas or electricity, a cooker or range, large gardens and indoor lavatories.

The houses lost many of the “rustic” details that were so typical of earlier planned estates. The similarity of most of the houses on this large estate, and the long building lines on which they stand, leads to a rather amorphous character. However, by putting Unwinian principles into the scheme, such as the grassed corners and angled corner buildings, it was guaranteed that the Cuckoo Estate had a special character that would not be replicated in post-war estates that dispensed with these principles altogether. So, the layout, and the green space it affords, is vital to the special character of this CA.

The layout was planned around the historic layout of the schools and the two driveways. Westcott Drive was created from a peripheral road that ran around the northern half of the school buildings, Cuckoo Avenue was the main carriageway and Hall Drive was another entry point, this time from Cuckoo Lane/ Greenford Avenue. The original layout is shown clearly on the 1865 OS map.



The estate was laid around a 19<sup>th</sup> century carriageway



Tightly packed rows of terraces and semi-detached houses are separated by gaps



Terraces fronted by grassed areas



Long straight roads are set out in a grid pattern



## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Roads have defined hierarchy demonstrated in their width, detailing and configuration. The curves and straight lines in the roads work with the topography and introduce interesting views and layout. Enclosed green areas usually mark road junctions.

Various arrangements include:

- Buildings fronting a central green e.g. semis on Harp Road and terraces on Hale Walk;
- Small “closes” surrounding a central grassed courtyard running off the major roads e.g. Browning Avenue;
- Buildings fronting Cuckoo Avenue, with its broad central grassed reservation flanked by roads;
- Runs of long terraces of different lengths (from six houses to ten), some slightly set back one from another, some fronting small strips of grassed area e.g. east side of Upfield Road;
- Straight rows of long terraces flanked by shorter terraces on same building line e.g. west side of Upfield Road;
- Smaller terraces (4 to 6 houses) on smaller blocks with more substantial corner treatments to give a greater feeling of community e.g. Laurie Road;
- Small and large rows of terraces intermingled with pairs of semis fronting the deep long curve of Westcott Crescent;
- Smaller rows and semis fronting the road and greens on short bending roads that connect the curve of Westcott Crescent with Bordars Road and the straight lines of the rest of the estate;
- Short rows of terraces with long front gardens fronting a public path e.g. Kennedy Path.

Buildings are predominantly set behind modest frontages but a common theme is buildings strategically set behind grass verges, greens and other grassed areas with distinctive perimeter railings. Buildings are also modest in size and although they were all built with downstairs bathrooms, many have had new ones inserted at first floor level. Changes such as these often have an impact on the appearance of the houses from the street.

Public buildings are found in various locations. The pre-estate Hanwell Community Centre is on higher land, emphasising its importance. Other buildings such as churches are also on the roadside giving them some prominence, but the school on Laurie Road (now Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle : L'École de André Malraux) is to be found in the middle of a block, on an island site surrounded by houses and with access paths through.



The grid layout is replaced by the sweep of the carriageway that curves around the Community Centre



Cuckoo Park abuts the residential streets



The 1930s estate is self contained, with both earlier and later developments beyond its perimeter roads

## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The layout of the core of the area has remained relatively unchanged since the estate's completion in 1939. However, all of the adjoining land has seen development that has taken a very different form. After the Second World War the former site of Cuckoo Farm was redeveloped with a school (now Brentside High School) and post-war housing, which stretched along Ruislip Road East and the new Riverside Close. These houses were pulled down by the 1970s and replaced with sheltered accommodation, garages and tower blocks that sit incongruously next to the CA.

The estate was significantly encroached upon from the 1970s and 1980s when Copley Close, a later local authority housing estate, was built next to the railway cuttings and on parts of the back gardens of Harp/Templeman Roads. The steady growth of both low and high density development in this area has stolen some of the more generous back gardens of estate houses, part of the corset of open space that was an element of the original design. Other original layout features that have been lost include the allotments gardens between Templeman Road and Westcott Crescent, which have also been infilled with flats and houses.

On the western perimeter of the estate, the old gas works site is now filled with a tower block. The area between it and the backs of the Hillyard Road gardens is filled with single storey, concrete built domestic garages and the bins/ storage/ loading areas of the shops on Greenford Avenue.

### 4.2. Corner Treatments

Green spaces of various shapes mark the corners of streets or the junction with another street. Buildings enclose these spaces in different ways:

- Angled corner block framing shaped green spaces. The buildings are arranged in sets of three. The central house is oriented diagonally across the road, while those either side of it are presented to each road either side. This layout allows for optimum use of the land without houses directly overlooking each other or neighbouring gardens. The setup also gives a sense of a gateway to the CA and neighbouring roads e.g. junction of Cuckoo Avenue with Ruislip Road East;
- Houses at right angles behind a grassed corner. This arrangement allows tapering views between the two houses, sometimes across the countryside beyond the hillside e.g. junction of Westcott Crescent and Greatdown Road;



Riverside Close



Some corner treatments have been altered



Most hooped railings remain on corner treatments, although some areas are misused



## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

- Turned buildings at a corner to provide interest and balance. This also enables the building fronts to accommodate changes in topography e.g. southern corners of Westcott Crescent and Templeman Road.

### 4.3. Landmarks, Focal Points and Views

The hillside topography and presence of the Community Centre has been used to deliberately create a distinctive and memorable layout and to capture a number of interesting views, giving some attention to both long and short-range views. Because of the range of hills to the north, at Harrow and Sudbury, the elevated position of Cuckoo Estate allows for long-range views across the green valley and hillside, although there is some suburban development dotted around.

The notable landmark and focal point is unquestioningly Hanwell Community Centre, the remnants of a large mid-Victorian set of school buildings set in a large park. The building is visible from many parts of the CA and beyond and its presence has resulted in some aspects of the estate's layout.

Another manner in which it is a focal point of the area is its function. The busy comings and goings of its users, as well as the users of the park, contribute to its status as the hub of the community. Its position, set back from the residential roads with its own large car park means that this activity does not have an adverse impact on the surrounding amenity of non-users. This contrasts with the use of other focal points such as the schools, which result in some congestion twice a day in term time.

Among the most notable long-range views and vistas are:

- Long dipping/ rising views along the old carriageway to the school, now Cuckoo Avenue. Created by the building line being set back to give width and mature trees along its extent. The view up Cuckoo Avenue to the Community Centre has been one of the notable vistas in the area for the last 150 years;
- Various other views of the Community Centre. Its clock tower is visible (and audible) from many vantage points including Castle Bar Park train station (just outside the CA) and Hall Drive. The tower is often seen rising above the roofline of houses, or glimpsed between buildings at the junction of roads;
- Long tunnel views along spinal roads such as Templeman Road, Harp Road and Greatfield Road created by a strong building line and boundaries.



The Community Centre is the principal landmark in the Conservation Area



There are many views of the Community Centre clock tower from both within and outside of the Conservation Area



## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

- These are relieved by glimpsed views into side streets, cul-de-sacs and open spaces. The hills to the north give a rural backdrop;
- Views terminated at various points by curves in the road e.g. Westcott Crescent;
- Across Cuckoo Park northwards to Harrow from Littlejohn Road.
- Northerly and southerly views across the hilltop from Greenford Avenue are very distinctive.

Also, some short-range views are created by a thoughtful layout:

- Into narrow streets, courtyards and spaces off principle roads e.g. Browning Avenue into its courtyard;
- Glimpsed views between buildings terminated by trees or other planting;
- Buildings and planting deliberately framing views;
- Relief and order created by the deliberate positioning of buildings for example, setting terraces back from their neighbours in the street e.g. Greatdown Road;
- Lively but clutter free roofline views created by clear roofs and prominent chimneys stacks;

### 4.4. Open Spaces, Trees and Landscape

The principal open space in the Cuckoo Estate is Cuckoo Park, which surrounds the Community Centre. It is located on the brow of the hill and extends down each side, featuring large open grass spaces, tennis courts and a children's playground. It is designated as a Village Green, although historically it has never had this status. It was previously parkland the private Hanwell Park Estate, as was the Central District Schools site before it was bought in the 1850s. The school structures are now cleared away, although a ridge remains in the park, which as a result forms a terrace by the tennis courts.

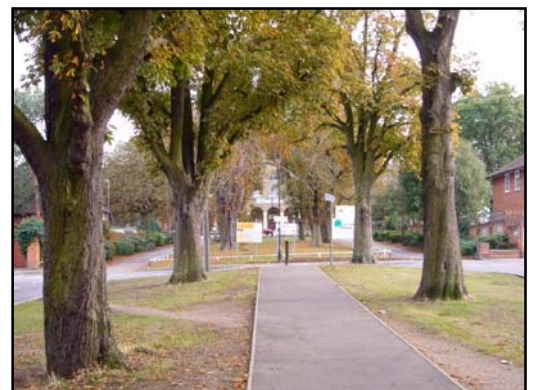
Dense groups of trees are arranged throughout the park, while some mature specimens are located on the periphery by the rear boundaries of Westcott Crescent. Trees are also clustered around the entrance to the Community Centre and around the "Garden of Rest" next to it. The group combine to form a thick canopy that crowns the avenues of horse chestnut trees that proceed down Cuckoo Avenue in a carefully planted manner. These avenues are the principal natural feature of the CA and their current threat from disease has a potentially enormous implication for the character of the Cuckoo Estate.



As well as long range views, some are short range and full of green features



Looking south across Cuckoo Park



Mature trees are prominent features along Cuckoo Avenue

## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Some mature trees are dotted around, primarily on corner greens and other communal green spaces such as the strips along Hall Drive and Hale Walk. There are also many trees in front and rear gardens although some roads such as Homefarm Road suffer from a lack of established specimens. Private front gardens are set back behind low brick walls or hedges.

Informal greens, grass verges, street corners and the central reservation on Cuckoo Avenue all work to create a green and open feel to the area. All green areas were given distinctive overlapping hooped railings that not only provide clean visual boundaries to the areas, but also confer a consolidated Cuckoo Estate “look”. The public green spaces and street trees are generally well maintained, although it appears some spaces have either been sold off to private owners by the Council or claimed and paved over illegally.

Private gardens and other open areas are far less cohesively maintained. Removal of original boundary treatments and surfaces and, in a few cases, indiscriminate planting has led to a lack of continuity in the streetscene.

### 4.5. Public realm

Many of the original estate features associated with the pavements and streets have been replaced over the years although there are important survivors:

- The overlapping hooped railings on street corners and around grass strips in front of flats and terraces were installed by the LCC and continue to be maintained by the Borough Council as landlord. These attractive features are almost as important as the open space which they contain: they complete the set piece. A remarkable amount of railings remain although some are damaged or lost completely. In some areas unsuitable concrete bollards have been used as replacements e.g. Stephenson Road;
- Original paving materials are largely replaced although some narrow granite kerbing remains in parts of Cuckoo Avenue;
- Slabs are all to a Borough standard and size: concrete that does not withstand the weight of vehicles that are often parked on them, resulting in widespread shattering and cracking;
- Some pavements are tarmaced, often with a network of bumps and joins displaying periodical repair work. This material does, however, prove more resistant to damage from vehicles and



Open spaces are often complemented by established trees and hedging



Much hooped railing remains in situ



Some original granite kerbing



## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

provides a blank canvas against which the buildings can stand out;

- A recent relighting scheme has seen the wholesale replacement of street lamps. The lamp standards are very tall, slender and black with Victorian style lamps overhanging the road. The style does not sit well with the 1930s character of the Estate, although the lamp design if not the standard height, would be suitable for the central area of Cuckoo Avenue which was a Victorian carriageway. However, the scheme did not include any in this location due to issues with the existing trees;
- Black cast iron bollards line the centre of the path that runs down the middle of Cuckoo Avenue. They have a suitably traditional appearance for this former Victorian carriageway and enhance the character of the area;
- Street furniture includes pedestrian guardrails, telephone boxes, bus stops, litter bins, seats, post boxes, electricity boxes, gas and telephone supply housings. There are generally add nothing to the character of the area, being modern, of a standard design and often poorly sited. Many cabinets have attracted graffiti;
- Some original road signs are still attached to buildings in some streets e.g. Homefarm Road, although many have been replaced with standard Ealing style street names. The loss of the original street names is detrimental to the character of the area;
- Additional signs, reminding residents of the restrictions on ball games in the area, although of a later vintage, have some character and reinforce the fact that the origins of this area are as a local authority housing scheme;
- Speed humps are on most of the roads with the usual thick white arrow markings painted on them. The narrowness of the roads, especially with parked cars along them should be enough deterrent to the speeding motorist, although traffic studies have presumably already shown this not to be the case;
- A speed limit of 20 miles per hour is also in force in the estate, which requires further painted signs on the road surface and on metal signs on posts at the gateways to the area, which is an additional detrimental element.



Modern paving treatments



Victorian style lamp standards



Modern bus stop

## 5. The Buildings of the Conservation Area

### 5.1. Buildings Types, Materials and Local Details

Although there are a number of variations on the theme, the CA has a cohesive character, having mostly been built at the same time as an integrated composition. The buildings on the estate are two storey and laid along residential roads in rows. There are around 1,600 residential units on the estate with a mixture of flats, maisonettes and houses. The houses are either arranged in terraces, blocks of three on road junctions or as pairs of semis.

The buildings contain a variety of materials used in an assortment of ways. These give the Cuckoo Estate a distinctive character. Listed below are the principal examples of materials and detailing.

#### Roofs:

- Machine made clay tiles;
- Steep hipped roofs;
- Over sailing eaves;
- Prominent and regularly spaced chimney stacks.
- Gable ends open towards the road on certain Arts and Crafts style terraces on the curved parts of Westcott Crescent and Greenford Avenue.

#### Walls:

- Red clay brick;
- Some dark brown stock brick on corner sited buildings in Cuckoo Avenue
- Stretcher bond with light coloured mortar;
- Early use of double skin walls with cavity;
- Red brick soldier courses;
- Storey bands on gateway corner properties;
- Round or canted bays single or two storey, sometimes tilehung e.g. Homefarm Road;
- Square curved bays with detail of three horizontal lines in bay panel. Mainly found in the north of the CA on Harp Road and Ruislip Road West, although a few are also on Greenford Avenue.

#### Windows:

- White painted timber casements;
- White painted timber sashes;
- White painted metal windows;
- Variety of glazing divisions;
- Mixture of sashes and casements on some properties.



Rows of two storey residential properties



Red brick walls and clay tile roofs



**Doors:**

- Painted timber in bright tones;
- Variety of neat door canopies including pitched, curved or flat versions;
- Some flats have steps up to the front door

**Boundaries:**

- Hedging;
- Overlapping hooped railings;
- Low-level brick walls.

Some residential buildings do not share these features and utilise different scale, form and materials:

- Modern blocks of flats
- Other modern infill

**Non-Residential Buildings**

- **Hanwell Community Centre** was built 80 years before the estate and is set apart in style and use.
- **Churches & schools** in the area have been constructed post-war and use modern materials in a manner that did not look to the surviving LCC design for architectural cues.

**5.2. Listed Buildings**

**Hanwell Community Centre** was designed by Tress & Chambers and built in 1856. The main block, which is all that survives today, is of Italianate appearance. The front elevation features plump Corinthian columns in a nine bay arcade across the entrance. Round arched windows stand on the first floor with bull's eye windows above the intersection of each arch. The second floor has nine semicircular windows and some banding before a bracketed cornice rises to a modest parapet. The form and design features continue on side and rear elevations although the remaining attached wings are more modest in scale and design. A clock tower rises from the attached wing at the rear and it rises above the parapet to crown the appearance of the buildings from the front and side views.

The façade features band courses in the yellow stock brick, segmental window headers, stucco dressings, and a bracketed cornice. The southern elevation nestles in a pleasing collection of one and two storey buildings, which have round arched windows, divided into sunburst motifs. The mellow yellow stock brick contrasts with the warm red of the brick details on the round arches of the tall blank windows that run up the clock tower.



**Hanwell Community Centre**

## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The bricks also contrast with the white stone detailing of the columns, keystones, banding below the cornice and the towers parapet with pinnacles. The white clock face completes the effect.

The fairly lavish façade contrasts with the miserly conditions that were contained within the building during its life as a poor-law school. It steadily expanded in the 19th century with additional blocks and outbuildings, but the majority was demolished in 1936 after the school's closure.

Once the estate was built and the first houses inhabited, the building was reclaimed for community use. It has always struggled for enough funds to maintain the structure and facilities although there has never been a lack of interest from the community in filling its space with activities.

Many specialist courses, including those in traditional crafts such as furniture making, are run in the Community Centre. This is made possible by its large internal spaces, which also mean that it is possible to accommodate various sporting activities in the centre. The educative role is in keeping with the building's original use as a school.

The visually pleasing arrangement of arcades and windows cascading up to the fine clock tower on top of the building helps make it a local landmark. The hourly toll of the bells can be heard across the parish and beyond. The tower is handsomely detailed with blind arches and obelisk finials.

The building was listed in 1981 on its architectural special interest alone and its list description notes the prominence of its site but not the historic link to Charlie Chaplin.

Its most recent claim to cinematic fame was as a location for a number of scenes in the award winning film "Billy Elliot".

### 5.3. Key Unlisted Buildings

The most visually successful buildings in the CA are the groups of three houses that welcome the visitor to the estate from select corners of Cuckoo Avenue.

Their unusual footprint addresses the approaches from three directions and also results in an even more unusual roofline. The darker brick and lighter pointing sets these apart from other residential houses in the CA.



The clock tower from Hall Drive



The façade of the Community Centre



Cuckoo Avenue corner buildings

## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The pleasingly proportioned glazing bars, timber casements, modest canted bays and storey band all contribute to their appearance of quality and friendly communality on these corner locations. The lush hedging and front gardens that encase them, as well as the small greens in front, show off the green characteristics of the area.

The snug fit of the three attached buildings, the two wings solidly supporting the main body represent the communal spirit of the ethos of the LCC homebuilding schemes. This set up is carried through to the design of the shopping parade corner on Greenford Avenue/ Bordars Road.



**Key unlisted buildings complemented by grassed areas**

## 6. The Character of the Conservation Area

### 6.1. Character Areas

The Cuckoo Estate CA divides into three sub-areas of character: the main residential areas, shops along Greenford Avenue and Hanwell Community Centre.

### 6.2. Sub-Area no.1 - Main residential areas

The principal positive features are:

- Designed and built in one building phase as an integrated composition working with the existing road layout where present, and otherwise with respect for field boundary and railways tracks;
- The natural landscape was also considered to enhance the construction of a new community;
- Cohesive and deliberate layout and designs that effectively utilise space;
- Clever groupings of buildings reinforce a sense of community e.g. cul-de-sacs, and small intimate groupings;
- Buildings are all of a similar scale, form and height being approximately as deep as they are high (small houses by today's standards), with steeply pitched roofs;
- Two storey terraces and semi-detached houses interspersed with community buildings;
- Houses set back behind private front gardens and hedged boundaries either at back edge of pavement or behind greens and verges bounded by overlapping hooped railings;
- Terraces of limited length. These terraces are usually between four and eight units in length. They are always balanced and often symmetrical. They are set on varying building lines to neighbouring blocks, particularly on the longer roads that run north to south. This reduces the "tunnel effect" and encourages a less harsh appearance for the frontages.
- The gaps between the blocks and semis are important, affording views of sky and trees in the abutting areas. Use of gaps is a widespread technique used to soften the appearance of urban high density developments. The opposite effect is apparent in Homefarm Road where the gaps are filled by the rear of properties in Framfield Road and gives a cluttered, hemmed in impression.



Later houses in the scheme feature decorated bay panels



Open spaces confer a residential suburban character



## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

### Building type and block design:

- Small terraces of limited length, often symmetrical and balanced. These are seen in groups such as cul-de-sacs, around greens, recessed blocks and turned corners, conferring a sense of community;
- Semi detached houses often larger than the terraces. They can be seen angled at corners to frame green space;
- Groups of larger semi detached houses are to be found. Some on Cuckoo Avenue, which were rebuilt after bomb damage in WWII, and some on Ruislip Road East and Greenford Avenue. These are two storey with full height curved bays and steeply pitched roofs. They are slightly more grand than the rest of the estate with features such as metal windows and decorated bay panels;
- Community buildings such as churches and schools have been strategically positioned to serve the community but add little architectural interest to the streets. Most were built post-war. One church and YMCA block is recently completed on Bordars Road.

### Materials and detailing:

- Generally plain 1930s style construction in red brick stretcher bond and clay tile roofs, but some terraces have Arts and Crafts detailing;
- Roofs mostly plain and clutter free. Some buildings have the upper storey windows breaking through the eaves into the roof.
- Timber sashes, casements and metal windows remain on a number of buildings;
- Door hoods of a variety of styles are a common feature, although many roads have no such features;
- While removing, replacing or altering traditional features has altered many houses, some houses with much of the original detailing can be found. The best examples are on Cuckoo Avenue.



Quality materials cover the roofs and form the walls in the busy London suburb

### Landscape and trees:

- Green and open feel granted by the hillside location and views through to neighbouring hillsides. Quality landscape conceived as part of the original design in public open space, greens, verges and private gardens.
- Good tree specimens in the park and street mark former uses of the land and roads, particularly the horse chestnuts lining Cuckoo Avenue.
- Paving would have originally been large scale paving slabs with granite kerbs.

## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

- This combination tends to work well as a neutral backdrop to the buildings and green spaces and can still be seen in selective parts of the CA. Tarmac is also used which again works well in this context.
- Most green areas are generally well maintained.

### The principal negative features are:

#### Unsympathetic alterations to buildings.

There are few examples of unaltered, original buildings in the CA, and many of the houses have been altered in some way that detracts from their special character. The most notable of these alterations are as follows:

- Replacement windows and doors (usually carried out by the Council as part of their renovation scheme);
- Addition of porches;
- Car parking on frontages and hard standings along with vehicle crossovers;
- Inappropriate planting on frontages and removal of boundaries (hedges);
- Replacement walls, railings and other boundaries;
- Poor quality repointing;
- Changes of colour to windows, doors and elevation;
- Cladding/rendering of buildings;
- Addition of satellite dishes;
- Replacement roofs, dormers and roof extensions;
- Additions and extensions to the rear of properties and to roofs.

#### New development:

There are a number of examples of poor or mediocre modern development in the CA:

- 147-223 Ruislip Road East
- Riverside Close
- 11-34 Brant Walk
- Charles de Gaulle Lycee
- Rolland House, Greenford Avenue
- Garages, Bordars Walk
- Church/ YMCA, Bordars Road
- Sharpe, Chadwick and Cotts Closes, Westcott Crescent
- Ditchley Court, Templeman Road
- Club building, Templeman Road
- Ellis Court, Greatdown Road
- North Hanwell Baptist Church, Cuckoo Avenue;

There are no new developments that could be held as exemplars of good infill development in this CA.



A grassed area converted for car parking



Uncharacteristic porch and satellite dishes



Club building in Templeman Road

### **Landscape:**

- Maintenance of trees is poor, particularly along Cuckoo Avenue where replacement planting and lopping has been less than sensitive. The horse chestnuts have been affected by a disease caused by the leaf minor pest but with careful management this can be eradicated;
- A few green areas and verges require maintenance and deterioration has resulted from the prior loss of original railings;
- Greens have been removed to accommodate car parking, and illegal car parking takes place near greens;
- Public areas, street furniture and private property suffer from graffiti although the use of hedges in the area reduces the amount of suitable surfaces for this antisocial behaviour. The few fences that there are prove to be tempting targets, as are electricity and telecoms cabinets;
- Public spaces have few seating areas.

### **Traffic/ Car parking**

- The intrusion of traffic and accommodating the car generally is a major issue within the CA. On-street car parking is provided in most roads and a scheme to provide permitted parking on pavements has cluttered the streetscene further;
- Traffic calming measures (speed humps) and a 20mph speed limit are less clumsy and intrusive than they might otherwise be;
- Road markings and signage are, however, obtrusive;
- Due to the self-contained nature of the estate and the lack of major highways on its borders, it is not blighted with a great deal of through traffic.

### **6.3. Sub-Area no.2 - The Greenford Avenue Shopping Parade**

This is the principal shopping area and has around 20 units serving the Cuckoo Estate, although a few of these are vacant. Further shops are easily accessible by foot or bus in the centres of Hanwell, Greenford and Ealing.

The area maintains a steady level of business. Traffic steadily passes through, as Greenford Avenue is a major local route between Ealing and Greenford, as well as between Uxbridge road and the Western Avenue.

The division in character between the two sides of the road is marked, both here at the shops at the bottom of



**Poorly maintained corner treatment in Browning Avenue**



**The shopping parade features prominently in the local streetscene**



## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

the hill as well as at the top, where the Cuckoo houses face Edwardian terraces on the west side. The eastern side is included in the CA and the road marks the limits of the estate. The western parade is lower, rising to only two storeys.

This character area has an entirely different scale to the domestic houses of the Cuckoo Estate although there is a clear architectural link between the two. Despite the use of similar brick and a sparing use of detailing, the shopping parades dominate the streetscene unlike any of the residential neighbours. The building (and really it is only one enormous building) rises to three storeys with an uncharacteristically irregular and asymmetrical roofline.

The building has 42 bays in total facing Greenford Avenue, 4 facing diagonally and 14 facing Bordars Road. The building line is staggered with a prominent central block of ten bays standing forwards of those either side. There is also a prominent corner block with two towers and a canted corner elevation that emulates the style of certain corner blocks in the residential area. The shops continue around the corner into Bordars Road.

The building rises to a parapet and a steeply pitched roof (not complemented by the 3 lonely rooflights on the front slope to the far left) and evenly spaced plain chimney stacks, which evoke the Cuckoo Estate style. However, the scale of the structure gives this area an easily recognisable separation. The ground floor shops have individual shopfronts of varying heights and bulk. The overall effect is rather messy and contrasts to the neater arrangements of windows in the flats on the two storeys above.

### The principal positive features are:

- Designed and built in one building phase as an integrated composition;
- Building is of a single scale, form and height, with steeply pitched roofs, granting a distinct presence on the streetscene and a group value;
- The corner bays provide a distinguished gateway to the Cuckoo Estate. The plan directly corresponds to the residential houses that cluster around the corners of Cuckoo Avenue;
- The parade is set back behind a driveway, giving the large block a roomier setting and provision for the shops customers;
- "Hanwell Fruiterers" has retained much 1930s charm, with a traditional green and white striped canopy/ awning
- Generally plain, unfussy 1930s style construction in red brick stretcher bond and clay tile roofs,



A modern commercial hub



An impressive gateway to the Cuckoo Estate



Satellite dishes and graffiti do not enhance the parade



The rears of the shops are poorly maintained



## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

while the central block has some brick detailing around the parapet;

- Integrity of the roofscape: original chimneys still in place and only a few rooflights;
- Lack of clutter on the front of buildings such as satellite dishes.

### The principal negative features are:

- Unsympathetic alterations to buildings, notably clashing styles of replacement windows in flats and disparate styles of garish shopfronts;
- Lack of trees or green space;
- The bright blue recycling bins and other waste bins that are parked on the corner of Greenford Avenue and Bordars Road;
- The appearance of the rear of the parade with unsightly bin storage, fire escapes and neighbouring garages. Also, more rooflights have been inserted on the rear;
- Graffiti is common in a number of locations.

The area is vibrant, busy during the day; quieter at night although traffic continues to pass through.

### 6.4. Sub-Area no.3 - Hanwell Community Centre

This character area is distinct in both its geography and its built form. The structure sits on the top of the hill surrounded by a park: removed from the residential and commercial parts of the estate. Its character is largely determined by these characteristics and relationship.

### The principal positive features are:

- The quality and appearance of the listed building;
- The expanse and quality of the park surrounding the centre;
- The opportunities the centre and the park provide to residents and other local people to learn, entertain and exercise;

### The principal negative features are:

- The loss of some details on the building and piecemeal repair work that is necessitated by under funding;
- An untidy collection of signage is situated near the entrance to the centre. Also the main sign on the façade of the building is plastic;
- Unsuitable changes within the curtilage have been made such as chrome bicycle rails;
- The statue of Charlie Chaplin in the park has lost its head;



The rear of the shops is poorly maintained



The Community Centre in its parkland setting



The statue of Charlie Chaplin

## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

- The Garden of Rest is unkempt and requires revitalising;
- The uncertain future of the community centre is noticeable in the general untidy appearance of the area.

## 7. Issues and Recommendations

### 7.1. Key Issues

- Some original character details have been eroded, often for the benefit of car users:
  - A number of green areas in front of terraces have been replaced with hardstandings for vehicles;
  - Some corner greens and distinctive hooped railings have been altered, badly maintained or damaged. In a couple of cases, private owners appear to have appropriated the corner lots into their own property boundary;
  - Many hedges have been removed and replaced with walls or left open and hardstandings inserted. Many of these hardstandings are not suitably deep to fit a standard car length;
  - Some trees have been lost on corner greens and along the centre of Cuckoo Avenue. Many of the horse chestnuts on Cuckoo Avenue are under threat from disease. Their recovery or replacement will have a direct effect of the character of this area;
  - A few houses have been clad in modern materials;
  - Some extensions to the rear are overlarge and reduce the size of the rear garden considerably;
  - The majority of windows have been replaced with uPVC.
- The lack of control over these architectural details;
- There is relatively little alteration to rooflines;
- The maintenance and future of the Hanwell Community Centre;
- There are many satellite dishes in unsuitable locations for a CA;
- The narrow roads have resulted in cars being parked on pavements. This practice is encouraged by road markings;
- Traffic and parking issues, although the traffic is well moderated by the narrowness of the roads, the speed humps and the 20mph limit;



The accommodation of modern car use often results in the loss of original details



Bathroom conversions can affect the character of the Conservation Area



Loft conversions are not widespread but could present a threat to the character of the Conservation Area

## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

- There is a degree of graffiti in the area. However, it is minimised by the lack of hard surfaces on which to apply paint. The problem is accentuated in areas where hedging has been replaced by fencing;
- The area is bounded by modern council estates, particularly on Copley Close, which have little architectural interest and higher density occupation;
- Some new development has not shown any attempt to use scale, form or the design cues from the estate in their style:
  - Evergreen Court, Ruislip Road East: reminiscent of seaside holiday camp chalets, encased in perspex screens on their frontages, with dollhouse front doors and bright red railings. Of doubtful architectural special interest. They have not tried to emulate the distinctive Cuckoo design in their boundary railings;
  - Church/ YMCA, Bordars Road: The only remote relation this has to Cuckoo design is the front door canopy which is similar to some of the door hoods. Its scale, relationship to the street, fabric and finishing details are all foreign to the CA;
  - The garages on Bordars Walk resemble concrete bunkers and are covered with rubbish and graffiti.



Some corner treatments have been incorporated into private gardens

### 7.2. Recommendations

- The special character of the CA is under increasing threat from the loss of further open spaces and their boundary treatments, which to a great extent justify its conservation area designation. To uphold the traditional ethos, design and character, pressures to provide more car parking spaces must be resisted. The designation of an Article 4 Direction would secure the future of these features.
- This CA is in need of a review of its boundaries. Many buildings of no architectural interest are currently included in the designation, devaluing the whole. One local amenity group (see Appendix) has even suggested that the loss of special interest is so great that the area no longer merits the designation;
- The key unlisted buildings, as identified in this document should be considered for local listing as exemplars of LCC architecture in the Cuckoo Estate;
- A long term solution for the future of the Hanwell Community Centre to ensure the integrity of the



Some additions to properties may not have the necessary planning consents



## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

listed building and its continued function as a crucial resource to the local community. A Conservation Management Plan would give a direction to the future of the whole character area and could become a tool for attracting funding to realise the great financial and social potential of the building and grounds;

- Tree loss has not been well managed and remedial work/ replanting should be undertaken. This issue needs to be addressed urgently considering the current threat to existing trees.
- The formulation of future management proposals to preserve and enhance the character of the CA is encouraged to bring about the above recommendations.



**Some modern development may not merit inclusion in the Conservation Area**



## 8. Community involvement

In accordance with English Heritage guidance, the Council has involved key stakeholders during the appraisal process, a list of which is appended. The initial consultation process comprised of a number of on-site meetings with representatives of local amenity groups and the preparation and sending of a questionnaire to key stakeholders based in and around the CA. The questionnaire asked for detailed responses based on the consultees' knowledge of the area concerned. The questionnaire responses have been taken fully into account in the documents produced.

Before the submission of the Draft appraisal for Planning Committee approval for public consultation<sup>1</sup>, the document has undergone consultation externally with English Heritage and internally within Ealing Council.

After the approval of the Draft document by the Planning Committee, the appraisal has undergone public consultation with residents. All the responses received have been taken into account in this final document and changes made where appropriate. The final document has now been approved by the Planning Committee and has been adopted by Ealing Council.

## 9. Summary

The Cuckoo Estate is unique in the Borough of Ealing: a 1930s planned estate that remains virtually intact. Many original features survive as well as the original layout, which is centred on the principles of providing quality housing in a community that requires all the modern conveniences in a suburban setting.

Open space has been finely crafted into almost every corner of the estate and remains resistant to the ever rising demands of the modern motor car user. This green quality is also found in Cuckoo Park, which provides a large green core to the CA. The park surrounds the Hanwell Community Centre, which is the hub of social activity in the estate and the wider area.

The CA retains an important role as provider of quality affordable housing, which is attractive and also has all necessary amenities within easy reach. The details such as grassed areas with hooped railings and the handsome stocky chimneystacks running along the steep roofslopes combine to achieve a friendly 1930s suburban character that was to be lost in the later, postwar planned estates of the LCC and beyond.

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<sup>1</sup> Public consultation details and a summary of responses are included in the Appendices to Ealing Planning Committee Report for the meeting of the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 2007

## 10. Planning and Policy Framework

In CAs, there is a presumption in favour of retention of buildings and structures that contribute to their special character. They are subject to additional planning controls, including demolition of buildings, restriction of 'permitted development' rights and automatic tree protection. Within a CA, it is an offence to demolish an unlisted building, fell or lop a tree without planning permission. A brief summary of the principal legislation and policy guidance applicable to Cuckoo Estate 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 a 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 the public, sets out Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas and other elements of the historic environment. Ealing Council's *Unitary Development Plan (UDP)*, and emerging replacement *Local Development Framework (LDF)* includes development control policies which apply these principles and statutory requirements. This Appraisal should be taken into account when considering, applying for, or determining planning or listed building applications within the CA. It will be treated as a 'material consideration' in assessing these applications.

The underlying objective of the relevant legislation and guidance is the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of conservation areas. Any proposed development which conflicts with that objective should normally expect to be refused. PPG 15 and local policy also support a presumption in favour of preservation of any building or object which is considered to make a positive contribution to the character of a CA. At the same time, the need to accommodate change which respects or reinforces the character of the area in order to maintain its vitality is recognized.

## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Many local planning policies, not just design and conservation, can affect what happens in a CA.

For example, policies on sustainable development, meeting housing needs, affordable housing, landscape, biodiversity, energy efficiency, sustainable construction, transport, people with disabilities, employment, town centres and many others can all influence development and the quality of the environment in CAs. However, policies concerned with design quality and character generally take on greater importance in CAs. The adopted Unitary Development Plan's chapter on Urban Design includes policies dealing with:

- Design of Development (4.1)
- Mixed Use (4.2)
- Landscaping, Tree Protection and Planting (4.5)
- Statutory Listed Buildings (4.6)
- Locally 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 Chapter, references are made after each policy to other relevant documents and policies, including:

- *SPG 5: How to prepare an Urban Design Statement*
- *SPG 12: Greening Your Home;*
- *Ealing LA21 'Keeping Your Front Garden Alive'*
- *PPS 1 Delivering Sustainable Development*
- *PPG 15 Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas*
- *PPG 16 Archaeology and Planning*
- *PPG 19 Outdoor Advertisement Control*
- *By Design: Urban Design in the planning system: towards better practice* (CABE & DETR, 2000);
- *'Better Places to Live: By Design'. A companion guide to PPG 3* (CABE, 2001)
- *The London Plan, Policy 4B.5, 4B10, 4B11, 4B12, 4B14*

The Council has also published a Supplementary Planning Document '*Residential Extensions*', which was adopted in June 2006.

In general it is applicable to residential properties in CAs. A draft Conservation Areas SPD is currently being prepared and will be subject to formal consultation in the Spring of 2007.



Further advice on policies in the UDP, restrictions on residential and commercial properties and how to apply for permission may be obtained from London Borough of Ealing, Planning and Surveying Services, 14-16 Uxbridge Road, London, W5 2HL Tel (020) 8825 6600 (General Planning Enquiries), (020) 8825 9357 (Conservation & Urban Design) and the Council's website [www.ealing.gov.uk](http://www.ealing.gov.uk) or email [planning@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:planning@ealing.gov.uk).

## **11. Glossary**

**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

**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

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**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**

**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 throw 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

## Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal

**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** – small granite paving blocks

**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

## **12. Bibliography and Further Reading**

Baker et al. *A History of the County of Middlesex: Vol.1 and Vol.3*, Victoria County History 1982

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

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

GLC. *Home sweet home: housing designed by the LCC and GLC architects 1888 - 1975*, 1976

Hounsell, P. *The Ealing Book*, Historical Publications, 2005

## **Cuckoo Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

Jackson, F. *Sir Raymond Unwin : architect, planner and visionary*, Zwemmer, c1985

Pevsner, N. & Cherry, C. *The Buildings of England, London 3: North-West*, Penguin 1983

Swenarton, M. *Homes fit for heroes*, 1981

## **13. Appendix**

### **13.1. Stakeholder Contact List**

**Ealing Civic Society**

**Cuckoo Estate Residents Association**

**Hanwell and Canals Conservation Panel**

Ealing Council  
Perceval House  
14-16 Uxbridge Road  
London W5 2HL  
[www.ealing.gov.uk](http://www.ealing.gov.uk)