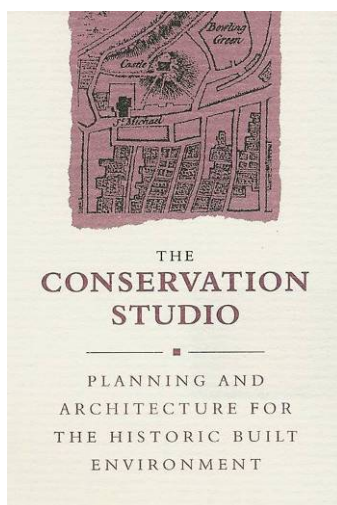


St Stephens Conservation Area Appraisal

March 2007



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



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ST STEPHEN'S CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Definition and Purpose of Conservation Areas

According to Section 69 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, a Conservation Area (CA) is an "area of special architectural or historic interest the character and the appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance". It is the duty of Local Authorities to designate such areas and to use their legal powers to safeguard and enhance the special qualities of these areas within the framework of controlled and positive management of change.

1.2. The Purpose and Status of this Appraisal

St Stephen's Conservation Area (CA) was first designated in 2004. This appraisal updates the work that contributed to its original designation and following its adoption by Ealing Council it will become the first published guidance for this CA.

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

1. Assess the special interest of the architectural and natural heritage of St Stephen's 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 St Stephen's 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).

St Stephen's Conservation Area Character Appraisal

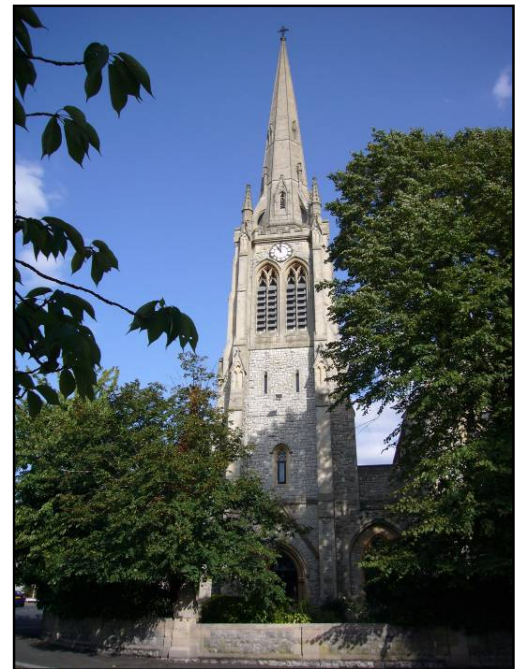
The analysis has been conducted on the basis of visits to the area, the involvement of local associations, and with consultation of primary and secondary sources on the local history and architecture.

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 St Stephen's 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

- The former Church of St Stephen building (listed) is a key local landmark on the brow of Castlebar Hill, providing a visual and physical focus for the immediate and wider area;
- A grid-like street pattern is laid around it with a central highway that has a grand processional appearance and is lined with mature trees;
- The architectural quality of the properties, which were built in small, distinctive groups, of differing styles on the same theme and rich with Edwardian details such as: oriel windows, iron balconies, timber porches, turrets and brick/ stone/ terracotta detailing.



Former Church of Stephen

2. Location and Context, Uses and Activities

2.1. Location and Context

The St Stephen's Conservation Area is centred on The Avenue and North Avenue, which are primarily residential roads in West Ealing. The area is around a half mile west of Ealing Town centre in west London.

The roads follow the same north-south orientation. Their intersection is marked by the impressive 19th century gothic-style former Church of St Stephen which stands on an island site circled by roads. North Avenue opens out onto the brow of Castlebar Hill, which looks out across Cleveland and Pitshanger parks to the Brent Valley. The wooded hills of Horsenden and Harrow lie beyond. The Avenue continues down the hill southwards towards the Great Western Railway tracks and subsequently Uxbridge Road.

The area sits between Argyle Road to the west and Cleveland Road to the north. The southern part of The Avenue is not included in the CA and includes shopping parades constructed at the end of the 19th century. The parades lead down to the "Stowell's Corner" junction with Argyle Road and West Ealing railway station. Various other residential roads lead off The Avenue, leading either west to Argyle Road and Hanwell or east towards central Ealing.

The CA falls within the Ealing Broadway ward of the Borough of Ealing, which has a total population of approximately 12,600. 59% of the population is recorded as White British. 20% are recorded as White Other. 9% are Asian, or Asian British, 4% Black, or Black British, 3% Mixed Race and 5% Chinese or Other Ethnic group. (Source National Statistics, Ealing Census 2001).

2.2. Uses and Activities

The uses and activities in the area are mainly residential, although shops and businesses are located along The Avenue and in Uxbridge road. Within the CA boundary there is also a church and church hall, two schools, a dental surgery and a doctor's surgery.

However, the 19th century church at the centre of the CA is deconsecrated and was converted into flats in the 1980s.



The spire is visible across the Borough



The CA contains busy suburban streets



Business and residential uses lay side by side

St Stephen's Conservation Area Character Appraisal

It is now known as St Stephen's Court. A modern church building (with church hall) exists for the purposes of worship and community use on the opposite corner, at the end of St Stephen's Road. There are no other recreational facilities within the area.

Residents are well served by public transport. Buses to many destinations pass within and alongside the CA, and there is a mainline station at West Ealing, which has services direct to London Paddington, and west towards Bristol.

2.3. Topography and Geology

St Stephen's was built into the side of a ridge, which runs from Hanger Hill in the east down to the Brent Valley in the north and west beyond Hanwell. The ridge was formed by outwash gravel deposits left by advancing glaciers during the last ice age (around 10,000 BC). It marks the distinct change in the geology of this part of the country, where the chalk hills of the Chiltern Hills to the west meet the clay basin of London. The formation of the land in the Ealing area has led to subsoil that provides sand, gravel and flint for building purposes. For this reason, prior to the invention of modern materials most buildings in Ealing have relied on the use of brick, made from the available clay and fired locally.

The 1865 Ordnance Survey map shows a gravel pit due south of the CA, highlighting that the natural resources of the area served the local economy. The geology could be responsible for the structural problems in some buildings in the area. Many garden walls show cracks, some houses have tied-in elevations and even the listed church was taken out of use towards the end of the 20th century when its structure was deemed unsafe.

The gentle fall of slope from the top of North Avenue adds to the character of the area, not only giving enhanced views up and down the road, but also significant views of the old church spire. The spire of the former church can be seen from around the Borough (and even from some neighbouring boroughs) due to its hillside location.

2.4. Relationship of the Conservation Area to its Surroundings

The Avenue and North Avenue, extending from the heart of the CA, is the spine of the local streetscene. Most of the neighbouring residential roads were laid out after The Avenue and reacted to its path and orientation. This historic influence is not obvious today as Argyle Road,



The modern church



The CA gently slopes downhill



The circular road around the former church's island site

St Stephen's Conservation Area Character Appraisal

which runs almost parallel, is much busier, connecting Uxbridge Road with the Western Avenue. This bypass of The Avenue has given the CA a more sedate quality with less through traffic. Despite this, drivers avoiding the busy Uxbridge Road often use the road, particularly at its southern end. The neighbouring area to the east is residential and quiet, although the roads are narrower than The Avenue. The broad and straight characteristics of The Avenue, accentuated by the mature trees that line it, give a processional appearance to the road, which is grandly terminated by the former Church of St Stephen.

This is not reflected in any of the other roads in the area. Argyle Road meanders, and Uxbridge Road, while straight, is much more commercial and urban in appearance and use, and suffers from a lack of healthy mature trees. Other residential roads are generally shorter than The Avenue and most lack the established trees.

The “circus”, formed by the island on which the old church stands, represents an early example of the modern highway feature: the roundabout. However, its original design was not to marshal traffic, but as a setting for the church which itself was the centrepiece for an ambitious speculative venture: a new estate of lavish detached villas and pleasure-gardens. The broad area surrounding the building reflects the aims of this never-completed scheme, which were to provide substantial open spaces around the large houses. The generous space given to front gardens along The Avenue, unusual in an area where there is little amenity space, is perhaps another remnant of this ideal.

North Avenue shares some similar landscape characteristics with the surrounding area. The other parallel roads, Hollingbourne, Ravensbourne, Sherborne and Wimborne Gardens are of comparable length and also have far-reaching views out to the north.



Narrower residential streets feed into the CA



A busy commercial centre lies at the south end of The Avenue

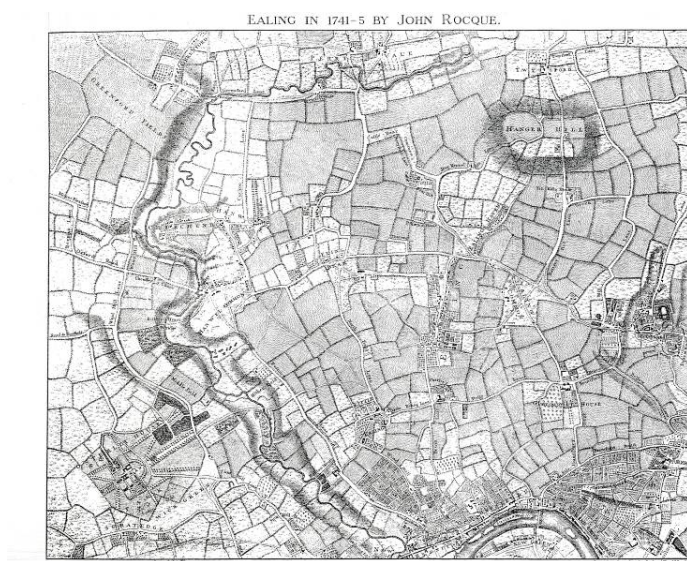
3. Historic Development and Archaeology

3.1. Historic Development

The West Ealing area was formed by the combination of at least 4 ancient hamlets: Ealing Dean (or Dene), Drayton Green, Castle Bar (or Bear) and Little Ealing (or Eling). St Stephen's lies to the north of this area in what was known as "Castle Bar" by the 19th century, due to its proximity to Castle Bar (or Bear) Hill.

From at least Saxon times there has been a small settlement called Ealing, surrounded by a number of hamlets in what was a rural area to the west of London. The spelling of Ealing has changed throughout the centuries: Gillingas, Yllinges, Yilling, Zelling, Tealing, Elyng and Eling. The name is derived from followers of Gilla, an Old English personal name.

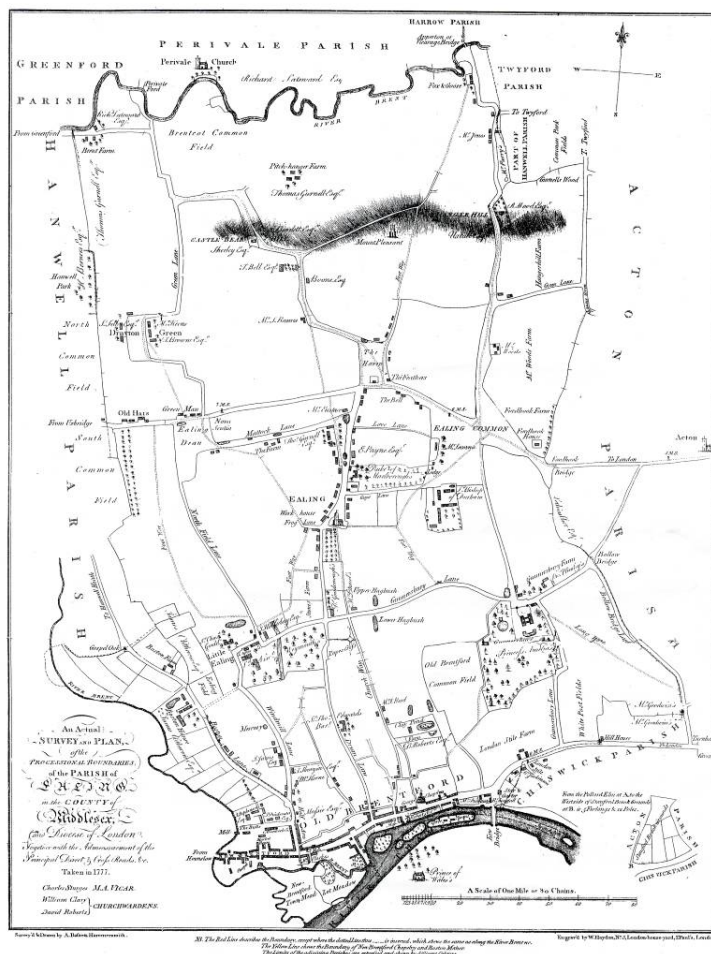
In 1086, Ealing was in the Parish of Fulham in the Hundred of Ossulstone, County of Middlesex. Its small size and wealth meant it did not have its own entry in The Domesday Book, unlike neighbouring Greenford, Hanwell, Perivale and Twyford. Under the Bishop of London and subsequent owners, the Manor of Ealing was split up and leased out to various tenants, who employed local people to farm the land. "Eling Dene" is shown to be a distinct settlement in the 1741 Rocque map, with a scattering of buildings lining the Oxford (now Uxbridge) Road, orchards and farmland.



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To the north stood the hamlet of Drayton Green with its manor house and farm buildings. The future St Stephen's area lies to the east of Drayton Green, with The Avenue lying roughly where a field boundary is shown on the Rocque map.

Oxford Road, a major historic route out of London, was a busy thoroughfare between the 16th and 18th century as the coaching trade increased in popularity. Coaching inns sprang up around Ealing, Old Hats and Green Man being established at Ealing Dean by 1777 and are shown on the Parish Map of that year.



Improvements in travel led to the Middlesex countryside becoming a fashionable place for the wealthy to establish modest county retreats. By the end of the 18th century there were 250 market gardens in the district of Ealing, set up by the wealthy landowning class. Edward Duke of Kent, subsequently father of Queen Victoria, became a famous local resident in 1801 when he moved into Castle Hill Lodge on Castle Bear Hill (very close to the St

St Stephen's Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Stephen's area). This and other royal connections enhanced the credentials of the area and high-class associations persisted throughout Victoria's long reign. Eventually Ealing was known as the "Queen of the Suburbs".

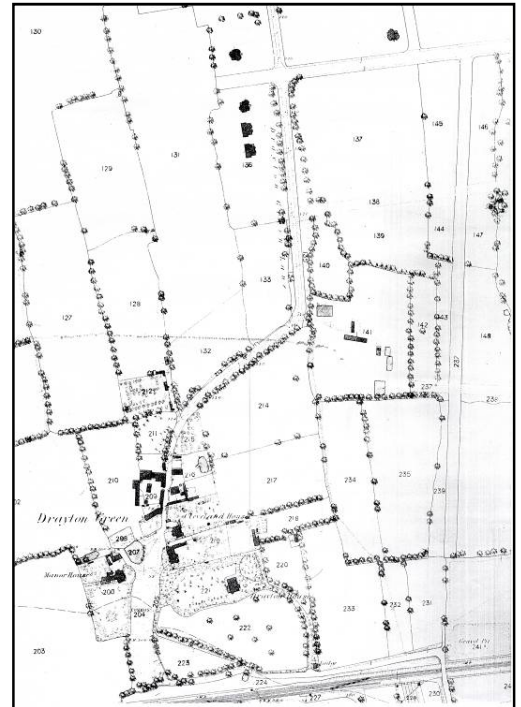
Despite its grand associations, Ealing was still only a village in the 19th century. It was not until the Grand Junction Canal was cut at the turn of the 19th century that the rural character of the area began to change. Development accelerated when the Great Western Railway was constructed in 1838. The country seats and fields were sold, divided up and replaced with a suburban network of rows of brick built buildings, supplied with mains water and gas. During London's housing boom of the 1860s, the number of houses in Ealing rose from 1,007 to 1,885. The majority were built in new roads created in fields around Ealing Broadway station.

Slightly to the north and west, Henry de Bruno Austin, a member of the Ealing Board of Health, had a grand vision to transform the Castle Bar area into an exclusive estate. His plan was to build a large estate of fine detached villas across the hillside in a grid pattern with grand rectangular pleasure-gardens.

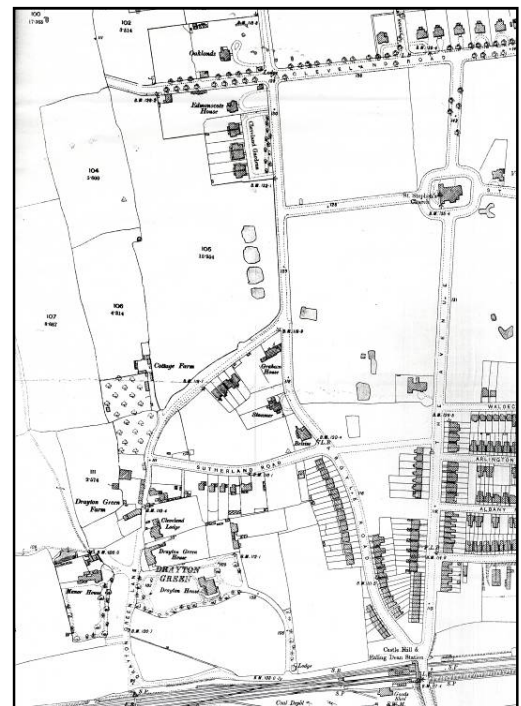
This ambitious scheme relied on the associations of the area with the Queen's father and involved leasing 190 acres of land from two owners of farms and parkland. At the centre of this vision was the Church of St Stephen, standing on its island site at the brow of the hill.

New roads, water and gas were laid. The Avenue and Cleveland Road were cut and are shown on the 1865 map, but with no houses (or church) yet built on The Avenue. The scheme soon foundered when Austin had problems attracting tenants to the properties, which had very high rents, poor transport connections and no mains drainage. Delays improving the transport links meant that Austin's estate was being administered under the Bankruptcy Act by 1867 (the year the Church of St Stephen was dedicated) and he was finally declared bankrupt in 1872. This led to a delay of the development of the St Stephen's area for many years.

The land was sold off to various builders and developed in different stages. Cleveland Park stayed as parkland, a situation still enjoyed today. However, the original plan for a church came to fruition in 1876. Houses of relatively modest proportions followed in the 1880s and 1890s, although the 1896 map shows that the majority of The



1865 Ordnance Survey Map



1896 Ordnance Survey Map

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Avenue and all of North Avenue were not built on until the turn of the century. The subsequent developers did not favour the extravagant pleasure-gardens of Austin's vision. Instead, houses were built closer together and with long, private rear gardens. The Castle Hill and Ealing Dean Station, clearly shown on the map, provided the transport links necessary to attract purchasers to the new houses.

Argyle Road had been cut in 1870, finally allowing a direct route to the north. Previously, the only road was Drayton Green Lane, which deviated around the fields and through the ancient hamlet of Drayton. The current arrangement was not complete until the early 20th century and is shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1915.

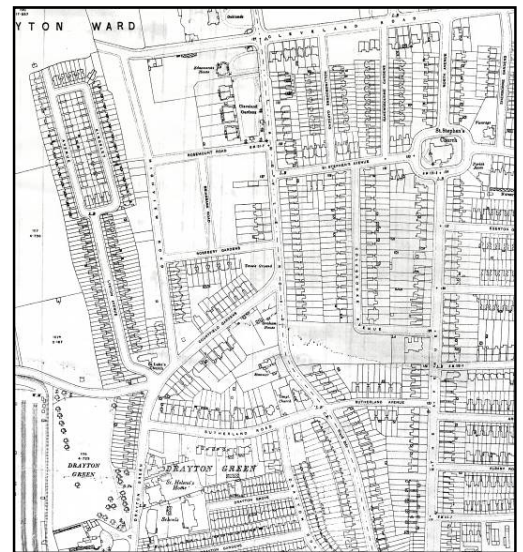
Photographs from the early 1900s show the "Castle Hill" shopping parades at the southern end of The Avenue looking newly finished. Young saplings lead up the road towards the church. To the north, much of Austin's planned estate was left as open fields, eventually being developed in the interwar and post war years.

The new century was prosperous for the area, culminating in the incorporation of Ealing as a municipal borough in 1901. In the same year electric trams began to operate along Uxbridge Road and the town finally achieved a sense of cohesion. Ealing Dean was rechristened as West Ealing and the parades on the Avenue included specialist shops to rival Ealing Town itself.

3.2. Archaeology

Parts of Ealing Borough have been inhabited since Lower Palaeolithic times (up to 150,000 years), which means that it is one of the oldest inhabited parts of the country.

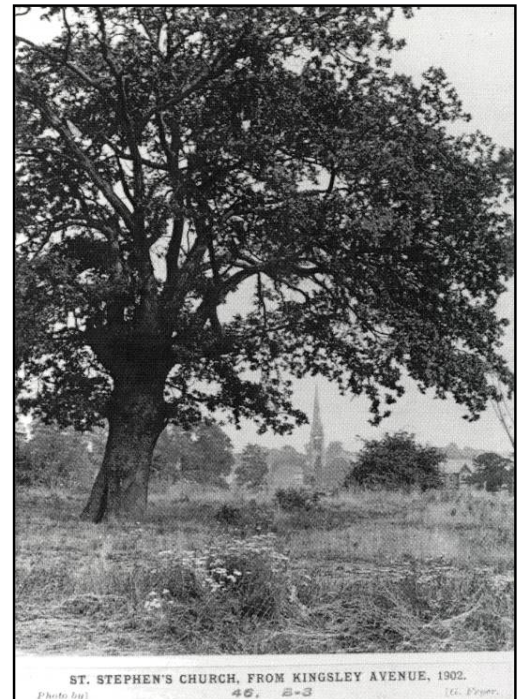
No specific archaeological sites are noted in the CA and the location away from a natural source of water could account for this. However, at one time a stream did pass down Castlebar Hill into the "Ealing ponds". Numerous archaeological finds have been made in the wider Ealing area and it is likely that prehistoric hunter-gatherers would have at least passed through the area.



1915 Ordnance Survey Map



The Avenue in Edwardian times



The church was built long before most houses in the CA

4. Spatial Analysis

4.1. Plan, Form and Layout

While the construction of the area took place over a relatively protracted period, there is continuity throughout the CA. The arrangement of semi-detached or detached houses fronting the highway behind generous front gardens is carried through. However, surrounding roads are more tightly packed with houses and constructed on narrower roads, the layout of roads within the CA was based on the width determined by the church, which had previously been established on its island site.

The wide roads encouraged the construction of larger houses, even if they were not to be the large villas originally envisaged for the area. The less roomy plots were seen as a necessity of the time. Demand for housing was great and there was less need for the stabling of horses now that the railway and tram were running. Tighter rows of houses were balanced by gardens at the front and back. This building form was to continue to spread across Ealing until the boom in the motorcar in the 1930s, necessitating the construction of houses with garages.

This has left a much less intensive layout of houses than in other parts of the Borough. At St Stephen's the close proximity of neighbouring houses has not imposed a cramped feeling on the area due to the generous width of the road and the front gardens. Also, visual breaks are offered by the spaces at the mouths of roads leading off The Avenue both east and west. Furthermore, the broad curve of the road around the former church grants a spacious quality, rare but not unique, in a London suburb.

4.2. Landmarks, Focal Points and Views

The listed former Church of St Stephen is the landmark dominating the skyline and streetscape, the focal point along all the roads in and around the CA, and visible from outside the CA.

The former church not only gives its name to the CA, but also is the key point around which the area has developed and streets have been oriented. The importance of the building in the landscape was even more apparent one hundred years ago when the trees were saplings and the views down the roads were less inhibited.



Distinctive sets of semi-detached houses



Generous front gardens



Broad streets



The Avenue, lined with mature trees

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At the start of the 21st century, the views are cut short by the maturing trees, particularly in the summer months, and the former church is almost hidden from the southern approach. A good view of the spire is still possible from the western edge of the CA on College Road, across the back gardens of houses on The Avenue. On the eastern side, the pinnacle of the spire can be seen from similar positions on Waldeck Road and Albany Road although large rear extensions and high fences minimise the sightlines.

North Avenue and St Stephen's Avenue have the clearest views of the former church. In North Avenue the characteristics of the area change, as the road reaches the summit of the ridge and begins to peer over the crest towards the land lying to the north.

4.3. Open Spaces, Trees and Landscape

Due to the fairly intensive layout of the area there are relatively few open spaces, and none that could be called public amenity space. Recreational areas are instead provided outside the boundaries of the residential roads in large parks found mainly to the north of the area.

Trees, however, are in abundance throughout the CA. London Plane and horse chestnut trees line The Avenue and trees of various species are dotted around front and rear gardens. The roadside trees were planted at around the turn of the 20th century and have reached a considerable size. The avenues down either side of the road confer a processional character, which accentuates the straight course of the highway.

The crowns of the trees create a tunnel along The Avenue, masking the view of the former church but also giving a lush green appearance in the summer. During the winter months, after the leaves are shed, the tree canopy is less dominant although the mature branches still form a "roof" for the area. There is, therefore, a tussle between the competing special characteristics of the area: the uninterrupted view of the key landmark of the area and the green setting.

The tunnel effect is heightened by the steady rise of the landscape towards the former church and beyond. The view from the southern end of The Avenue northwards is enveloped in the trees, the houses and bushes surrounding the church at the far end, with little sky visible.



The former church - key landmark and focal point of the CA



Far-reaching view within the CA

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However, the severe lopping and loss of trees on North Avenue has resulted in a different appearance. At the top of the CA the gradient levels off, about to plunge down to the Brent valley. A wide panorama of sky and wooded hillside is visible through the northern gateway of the CA, unhindered by tree coverage.

4.4. Public realm

Lamp posts

Along all the roads the lamp standards are of 1960s vintage, the "hockey stick" design: tall and slender with rectangular lamps leaning over the road. The exception to this is North Avenue, where earlier models stand with the lamp hanging in a semi-circular cradle. Both styles of lamp are due to be replaced in the current Borough-wide Public Finance Initiative.

Post boxes

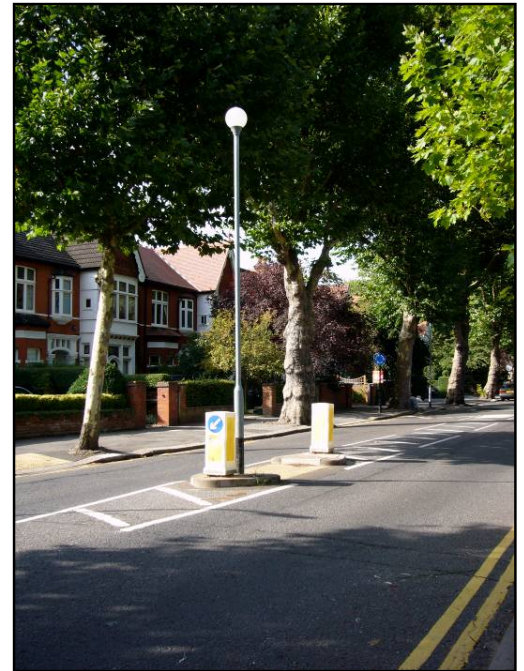
There are two traditional post boxes in the CA, cast iron and painted bright red. A Victorian box stands outside No.118 The Avenue facing the former church. Another, bearing the GR insignia, is on the corner of The Avenue and Waldeck Road.

Benches

A solitary bench faces the mini-roundabout opposite Bradley Gardens. This accounts for the only public amenity space in the CA.



The only amenity space within the CA



Street lighting, traffic management street furniture and road markings



Traditional postbox on The Avenue

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Kerbs

Wide granite slabs (approximately 300mm) have been used to form the kerbs throughout the CA, and across much of the Borough. The stone is a traditional material and its riven appearance is appropriate in this CA.

Mini roundabouts

These have recently been inserted into the streetscene and are unwelcome in conservation terms. The large areas of road encased in cement-like white paint detract from the vistas along The Avenue and the other, more attractive aspects of the CA. The scheme has also resulted in further street signs which add to the general visual clutter of the area. Furthermore, this management scheme seems to neither slow down traffic, nor manage it effectively.



Mini-roundabout

Traffic islands

The unattractive, internally illuminated plastic boxes on concrete plinths mark the entrances and exits to St Stephen's Court.

Electricity cabinets

All the electricity cabinets in the CA are modern, dark green boxes. They are mostly set well back from the kerb and, therefore, do not detract from the character of the CA to a large degree.

5. The Buildings of the Conservation Area

5.1. Buildings Types

The core buildings in the CA are late 19th century/ early 20th century detached and semi-detached private houses. Most are of a similar style and scale, with a number of lavish architectural features that vary between groups of houses.

The houses are all two storey, some with original attics and some with attics and dormers which have been inserted later. The buildings were all sited in the classic suburban style with brick boundary walls and front gardens, although alterations have eroded this important relationship on many of the roads. All have red brick front elevations with gables facing the road and two bays

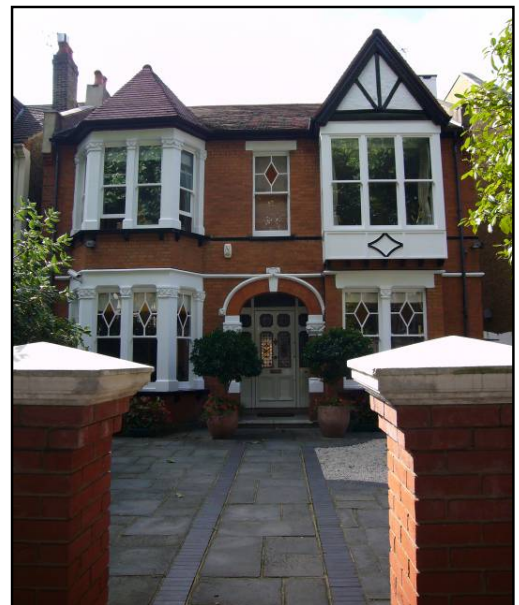


Distinctive architectural details such as decorative eaves and bargeboards

The Avenue

Nos. 42-68 (oldest in the CA)

- Pairs of semi-detached houses;
- Mixture of soft toned brown stock and red brick;
- Nos. 42 and 44 have the most elaborate detailing in the CA:
 - Substantial dentil cornice above the front door and a stone ball finial breaking through the storey band above;
 - Further terracotta, stone and brick details surround the windows including a grand broken pediment design and floral roundels;
 - Exposed parts of the chimneybreasts down the side elevation;
 - Square ground floor bay windows, topped by urn-shaped finials at each corner and a small central pediment;
 - Canted bay above with stone cills and lintels painted white;
 - The front bay has a plain clay tile roof leading into attic sash windows, which lie flat in the gable end, four lights wide.
- **Nos. 46-68** have less detail and a fundamentally different design:
 - "Halls adjoining" with projecting wings either side of the central pitched roof;



Handsome features such as diamond window panes and turret

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- Full height square bays and tripartite windows with chunky timber mullions and transoms;
- Terracotta roundels on the bay panels and on the lower portion of the gable end;
- Tile hung gables with one large casement in each;
- elaborate ridge tile finials;
- Shared porches with pilasters and a central column, all with Corinthian capitals;
- Steeply pitched gables.

No. 70

- Detached and slightly squat in stature: no attic floor and a wider footprint;
- Sparse detailing: a few roundels and plain stone dressings;
- Operates as a preparatory school and has a poorly executed rear extension with a mansard roof, not a traditional roofstyle.

Nos. 72-88

- Detached;
- No. 72:
 - Stock brick elevations;
 - Rubbed red brick arches and stone details;
 - Unusual corner bay, which probably once held a turret;
- Nos. 74-88 :
 - Red brick on the front elevations;
 - Alternating canted and square bays over two storeys (except no.74, which only has a single protruding bay);
 - Some canted bays have turrets, most square bays have pitched roofs to create a gable end;
 - Gables are all tile hung with decorated bargeboards, terminating with distinctive circular features;
 - Roundels on the bay panels;
 - Stone architraves set around recessed porches and ball finials or pediments topping the cornice.

Nos. 90-102

- These seven detached houses have the characteristics of Nos. 72-88, across the entrance to Bradley Gardens, as well as the following:
 - on the thick stone mullions in the square bays;
 - round arch window above the front door;



No. 42 The Avenue



East side of The Avenue

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- most have also been rendered and painted;
- Nos. 100 and 102 have less detailing than the others;
- many have a hole punched through the gable end to provide a single light window for living accommodation in the attic.

Nos. 104-118

- Six semi-detached and one detached house;
- Semi-detached are a plainer style, with no roundel terracotta work but two have turrets extended to the ridge of the main roof;
- Dragons at the corner of some of the roof ridges;
- No.116 stands on its own opposite the church:
 - Locally listed;
 - Fine turret and roof detailing.



No. 116 The Avenue

Nos. 71-81

- Two storey semi-detached houses;
- Smaller stature than those opposite;
- Hipped roofs;
- Elaborate detailing:
 - Timber fret cut porches;
 - Some have intricately decorated bargeboards;
 - Square bays have grooved pilasters serving as mullions and contain double hung sash windows;
 - Bays sit on plain console brackets;
 - Roundel detail is again present on the bay panels;
 - Attractive diamond light details on the top panes of the windows on both storeys.



No. 81 The Avenue

No.83

- No. 83 of the older buildings in the area and arranged over two floors with attic;
- The main, historic part of the building is red brick with stock brick patterns;
- Modest brick detailing in a round arch above the main first floor window and some work in the lintel above the ground floor bay;
- Windows panes with lead work splitting them into a distinctive diamond arrangement;
- Great scale and has less domestic features than the other buildings.
- Unsympathetic additions sandwich it on either side, the design not looking to the attached original building for inspiration.



Extension to No. 83 The Avenue

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Nos. 85- 93

- The row starts jarringly, with a vast rendered side elevation, unpainted and dotted with small, ill-conceived windows;
- The front elevations of the five detached houses are smart and have a variety of fine features, which somewhat overdress these single fronted houses:
- Wrought iron balconies;
- Elaborate stone dressings;
- More living space inserted in the attic level.

Nos. 95-121

- Double fronted;
- Oriel window above the centrally placed front door;
- No.95 signals the beginning of a more affluent stretch of houses with a castellated bay;
- Many in this group are relatively plain with few dressings;
- Some front facing dormers and “hip-to-gable” conversions interrupt the original continuous flow of the roofscape;
- Some diamond window panes.
- No. 105 is a new build detached house built in a similar style, but exhibiting key features which depart from the original architecture, notably:
 - Large paved forecourt;
 - Basement garage;
 - Plate glass lobby;
- Some original features remain on other properties:
 - Turrets on Nos. 107 and 121;
 - No. 121 is lavishly finished with stone banding, porch and chimney details. A datestone on the side elevation shows it was built in 1899.

St Stephen's Avenue

Nos. 1&3

- Uncharacteristic side extension on no.1:
 - Stepped back at its midpoint and does not sit easily in the CA;
 - Red brick clashes with the stock side elevation of no.3 and extending beyond it;
 - Lack of any of the details to the windows or roof or brickwork;
- Front elevations have retained the more usual St Stephen's look, if slightly less adorned.



No.87 The Avenue



No.107 The Avenue



No. 121 The Avenue

St Stephen's Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Nos. 2, 4 & 6

- Detached house and pair of semi-detached houses;
- Locally listed but simpler style with:
 - Square bays;
 - Tile hung bay panels;
 - Generally solid appearance;
 - Bays have a row or two of fishscale tiles;

North Avenue

Nos. 2 & 4

- Style is closer to those in St Stephen's Avenue than The Avenue.
- Squat, two storey houses;
- Pyramidal roofs over the bays;
- Fishscale tiles on the bay panels;
- Left hand bay windows are not full height;
- Upper windows are plain, rendered and painted;
- Exposed stone dressings on the ground floor windows.

Nos. 6 –18 & 1 – 17

- More in common with The Avenue;
- Two storey with alternate square and canted bays to both storeys;
- Central round arched window at the first floor;
- Arch repeats the arc of the fine door arches directly below;
- Nos. 6-18 have roundels on the bay panels;
- Nos. 1-17 have more lavishly designed bay details;
- Decorated bargeboards and turrets alternating with gable ends.

St Stephen's Road

St Stephen's Church Centre

- 1980s red brick structure, locally listed;
- Low rise, contrasting with the dominant landmark of the 19th century former church opposite;
- Roof is deep, hipped and rises to a narrow range of windows, on which sits a small pyramidal roof;
- Floats on block-paving covering the surrounding car park.

Nos. 1 & 3



Nos. 4 and 6 St Stephen's Avenue



Nos. 2 and 4 North Avenue



No.16 North Avenue



St Stephen's Church Centre

St Stephen's Conservation Area Character Appraisal

- Part of a row of late 19th century semi-detached houses;
- Single full height square bays;
- Distinctive bargeboarding found elsewhere in the CA;
- Painted woodwork is a striking shade of green;
- Upper windows and the apron of the gable end have timber dentil coricing;
- Elaborate timber porches around the front doors;
- Windows are split into twelve lights with the windows above the transom split further into nine squares;
- Lack of decoration on the mullions and architraves;
- A general lack of fuss with no decoration on the bay panels;
- Handsome Flemish bond brickwork.

The Old Rectory

- Large red brick rectory, fine example of its type;
- Perhaps too recent and too altered to be nationally listed, but is locally listed building;
- Resolutely unadorned with plain stone lintel and bay details, plain porch and bargeboards;
- Roofscape has an interesting delineation of heights:
- awkward single storey extension at the front connected at its rear to the main two storey building, over which peers a three storey structure;
- Main building has two fine large (if modestly detailed) chimneystacks.

Boundary Treatments

The original boundary treatments on The Avenue have largely disappeared. A photograph from the early 20th century shows gate piers of around two metres in height with walls rising to around 300mm below the capstones. This red or yellow brick walling has generally been cut down and is now sometimes topped by wrought iron railings. However, many of the gate piers with plain or decorated pointed capstones remain. The photograph also shows that at least one property had a lower wall, around 500mm high, and hedging to the height of neighbouring walls.

The survey for this document found that many walls had been:



No.1 St Stephen's Road



The Old Rectory



Rendered boundary wall

St Stephen's Conservation Area Character Appraisal

- Removed altogether to make way for vehicle access;
- Lost in part or rebuilt with the introduction of other materials;
- Rendered or painted or both. Some concrete coping stones have been laid on original walls and swoop up to meet the pier, creating a grander entranceway effect;
- Replaced with modern walls or fencing.

New walls have been built using different bricks and bonds and with different heights. Where these abut a traditional piece of wall this has brought about a further erosion of character. This lack of continuity creates a jarring mismatch of styles.

North Avenue appears to have no original walling left although a few piers with capstones emulate The Avenue style. The majority of walling is from 50cm to 100 cm high and of modern construction.

In St Stephen's Avenue, no.2 has retained original walling and piers, the others being removed or replaced with modern equivalents.

St Stephen's Road walling needs restoration from previous rendering and neglect outside nos. 1 & 3. The Old Rectory's walling has mostly been cut down or removed altogether.

5.2. Buildings Materials and Local Details

The majority of the buildings in the CA are built using traditional materials. They tend to be finished in red brick in Flemish bond, although the side elevations often show that London stock brick was also used in the construction. Some properties have stock brick in their front elevations, usually as detailing, such as on Ealing College Upper School. Roofs are generally of clay tile with terracotta ridge tiles, often decorated. Some replacement roofs are of imitation slate.

Exposed structural materials such as lintels are of stone, which would have been imported from outside the area due to the lack of suitable deposits in the London area. Bricks and clay tiles would have been fired locally or were brought in from outside London. Original pointing uses lime mortar although repair work has sometimes (detrimentally) used cement mortar. There is some existing tuck-pointing in, and on the edge of, the CA. Detailing around the doors and windows is generally



Former Church of St Stephen



Boundary wall with distinctive pier



Brick and tile detail

St Stephen's Conservation Area Character Appraisal

made from plaster although some of the older properties use terracotta.

Original windows were all constructed in timber and some uPVC replacements now exist, to the detriment of the area. Boundary treatments are usually constructed of yellow stock or red brick. The piers originally had stone capstones, some of which are still to be found in the area.

The church is built of ragstone, which was fashionable around the late 19th century. It can be found in other parts of Ealing, notably on Ealing Town Hall, which is roughly contemporaneous with this building. The church has a traditional pitched slate roof. Slate also covers the spire and would originally have been shipped in from the West Country or Wales, probably using the Grand Junction Canal. The window tracery, typical of the decorated style, is of stone. Other, modern materials have been inserted as part of the conversion to flats. Most apparent from the exterior are the aluminium windows.



Regular roofscape with terracotta ridge details

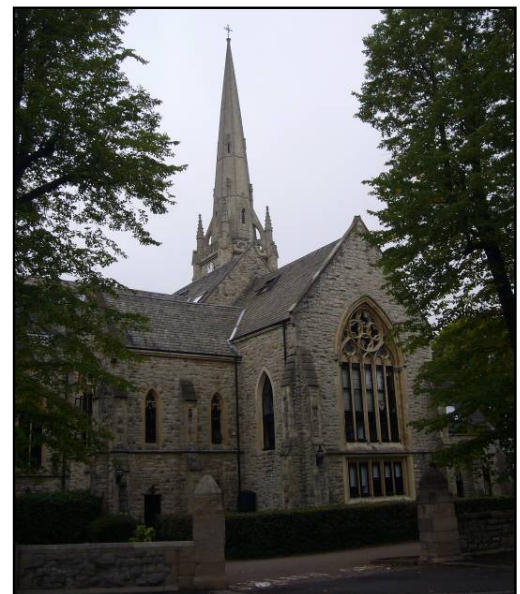
5.3. Statutory Listed Buildings

Former Church of St Stephen, The Avenue (grade II)

A church on this site is included in the surviving sketch for the proposed grand Austin estate. This building was to be one of the only structures built, and is the only one to survive in any form. The conversion of the church to 22 flats was carried out in the 1980s, resulting in the loss of some original character (particularly the windows), but also the successful retention of the church's general appearance and plan. Its original purpose and use is obvious to even a casual observer with a spire rising as a grand centrepiece to this smart suburb.

The church was built over a number years beginning in 1875 to the designs of Ashdown and Rovedino. Blomfield was responsible for the addition of the impressive spire in 1891, which helped secure the eventual listing of the building. A churchyard, now largely given over to car parking for residents, surrounds the church. The land has some tall mature trees that inhibit views of the building in some directions, but also add to the green character of the area.

The design of the former church is in the Decorated Gothic style, built of ragstone with ashlar dressings.



Former Church of St Stephen from southeast

St Stephen's Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The ragstone is also used on the wall surrounding the churchyard. The tower has two belfry openings and there are pinnacles on the spire, with buttresses to the base.

5.4. Locally Listed Buildings

There are 21 Locally Listed Buildings in the CA and, for the most part, these form the key unlisted buildings in the CA. However, some other key buildings, often neighbouring those on the local list, are not included on the list themselves, namely, the excluded houses in North Avenue and 121 The Avenue. It is hard to see the justification for the inclusion of the three properties on St Stephen's Avenue on the list at the expense of some of the others in the area. These have fewer architectural features and are more commonly found elsewhere in the Borough.

It should also be noted that a number of other locally listed buildings exist on the fringes of the CA. This may help determine any future extensions that may take place, particularly with regard to a southern extension to include the locally listed shopping parades.

The buildings included in the current Local List of Buildings of Special Historic or Architectural Interest:

North Avenue

Nos. 1,3,5,7,11,15,2,4,6,12,14,16 & 18

St Stephen's Avenue

Nos. 2, 4 & 6

St Stephen's Road

Nos. 1 & 3

The Old Rectory

St Stephen's Church Centre

The Avenue

No. 116



No.121 The Avenue



No.7 North Avenue

6. The Character of the Conservation Area

The Avenue

This road forms the core of the CA and includes the longest stretch of road. It also includes most of the residential properties and leads to the listed former Church of St Stephen. The appearance of The Avenue creates most of the character in the area, while the other properties and roads included in the designation contribute to that character to a lesser, but still significant, degree. The scale of the former church, with its fine tall spire, fits the tall grand houses that surround it.

The Avenue is the best example of the original intentions of Henry de Bruno Austin's ambitious scheme of the 1860s. This road and the church were to be the focal points of the area. The St Stephen's Church island site is not unique in London, and a number of other churches were built to this gothic style at this time and situated in a similar way. They provided a focus for newly developed areas. Today, the best view of the spire is not from The Avenue, but from the far end of St Stephen's Avenue. This is due to the spire being offset from the end of The Avenue, although those approaching from this direction would have still been able to see the nave of the church.

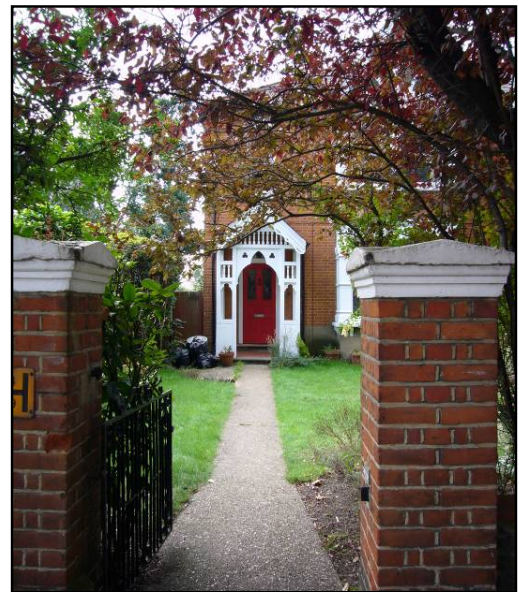
The way in which the houses form a long line, presenting themselves to the road along a similar building line, accentuates the processional approach to the former church and contributes an enormous amount to the area's character. While they do not have the large plots envisaged by Austin, they still have substantial front and rear gardens. The front gardens, often full of shrubs and trees, lead onto a pavement lined with mature street trees, which confer a special character on this road.

North Avenue

While this road does not have the same tree coverage, the space around the buildings and the lavish detailing is still present. These are fine late 19th century houses, which form part of an area that was middle class and prosperous. The views of the spire grant a superiority over some other surrounding roads. Historically, the church was the centre of the community and therefore a desirable location. The special character of the CA is bolstered by the remaining early electricity lamps, which for the time being stand on the pavement in North Avenue.



Vista north along The Avenue



Timber fret-cut porch framed by gate piers



North Avenue

St Stephen's Conservation Area Character Appraisal

St Stephen's Avenue and St Stephen's Road

The properties on the mouths of these roads may well have been included because of their relationship to the old church and the road which encircles it. While their architecture is not necessarily any better than that found in other neighbouring roads, the placement of the buildings is important to the setting of the church. Its tall spire dwarfs the houses around it and stands as a beacon at the centre of the area. The houses on these roads stand subservient to it, but basking its reflected glory.

The trees surrounding the buildings on all of these roads confer a rich suburban character that is not always present in other roads in the surrounding area.



St Stephen's Avenue

7. Issues and Recommendations

7.1. Key Issues

- Due to the relatively few spaces between buildings on The Avenue, and the listed status of the church beyond, there is no particular threat from infill development between plots, the exception being no. 105 which has a garage attached to its southern elevation. The current arrangement creates one of the few clear views out of the CA, which is not along a connecting street.
- The character of the CA can, and has been, affected in other ways:
 - Many original boundary treatments have been unsympathetically replaced or lost completely. The quality of design and construction of the remaining original examples emphasizes how bad some of them are. The loss of this continuity at the edge of properties has eroded the processional character of St Stephen's CA;
 - Hardstandings have led to the loss of many historic boundary treatments as well as part of the important green backdrop to the area;
 - Dormers and rooflights. A few of these on The Avenue are not in keeping with the traditional character of the area;
 - Some timber sash windows have been replaced with uPVC;
 - The modern additions on either side of the 19th century Ealing College building have little architectural merit and a plan for the improvement of the appearance of this building would be welcome in conservation terms;
 - Some other modern additions, such as the mansard roof on the rear extension of the Avenue School are notably out of keeping with the character of the area;
- The historic suburban character is affected by the volume of frequent traffic, which speeds up and down The Avenue, regardless of the mini-roundabouts;
- Graffiti is prevalent in the area, particularly on the Victorian post boxes and low garden walls;
- Cracking in garden walls, the tying-in of elevations and dropped window arches indicate that



Modern boundary treatment



New build with basement garage, lobby and large paved forecourt.



Modern style extension

St Stephen's Conservation Area Character Appraisal

subsidence has been a problem in the area. This is confirmed by the fact that the church had to close in the 1980s due to the risk of collapse, and the underpinning of the Old Rectory;

- There is a general lack of amenity space in the CA.

7.2. Recommendations

- The boundaries of the area could be reviewed. Changes might improve the degree to which the CA celebrates the special character around the former Church of St. Stephen. Houses and shops further south on the Avenue have a good case for inclusion. Some traditional shopfronts remain on the locally listed buildings at the south of The Avenue. It is worth considering their inclusion in the area as historic photographs show the link between the two ends of the road. Other parts of St Stephen's Road and Avenue may also be considered. A review should be mindful of the historic development of the area rather than just the present day appearance;
- The formation of a local Conservation Area Advisory Panel to scrutinise individual planning applications and make comments on the proposals should take place as soon as possible. This would give an important local community input into planning decisions in the CA;
- Traffic and traffic-calming measures do not appear to be well thought through, either in terms of the general need for them, their subsequent effect, or the fact that they are in a CA and, therefore, require a sensitive handling. Mini-roundabouts and paraphernalia have harmed the character of the area. Thick, bold white road markings and the multitude of road signs, further alerting the driver to their presence, clutter the vista and stunt its processional effect;
- The justification for the inclusion of certain buildings on the local list, and not other, is not clear. A comprehensive review of the local list would ensure that all important buildings are suitably recognised by the designation;
- Future management proposals are needed to improve or eradicate:
- Graffiti on walls and post boxes. Graffiti should be removed quickly before it becomes commonplace and accepted as part of the streetscene;
- Lack of amenity space – further areas could be provided around the new church;



Non-traditional mansard roof



Locally listed parade of shops



Historic Drayton Court Hotel



Fine traditional shop front

St Stephen's Conservation Area Character Appraisal

- Tree maintenance. Heavy, unseasonable lopping of trees is a threat to the character of the area (as carried out in Hollingbourne Gardens). Treework should be properly planned in all of the Borough's CAs;
- Public realm improvements covering:
 - Street signs;
 - Landscaping improvements;
 - Public seating;
 - Other improvements to enhance the street scene where applicable;
 - Provide advice to owners on the best conservation methods for repairing damage to properties caused by subsidence.



Overzealous lopping of trees



An effective tree maintenance programme could improve the appearance of the trees as well as restoring Edwardian views of the former church

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 consultation¹, 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.

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

9. Summary

While St Stephen's is not the grand vision of Henry de Bruno Austin, its special character is all the more charming for it. The houses are large, without being out of scale or overblown and are versatile living spaces for the modern age. Uses include single family dwelling houses, schools, surgeries, businesses and flats. Historically, these were practical and functional houses and were built with attractive details and materials to ensure their desirability. They also relate well, in scale and style, to the former church which represents that sole surviving building from Austin's vision.

The orientation of the buildings towards the road, along the straight wide The Avenue alludes to the original grand vision but the scale and quality of the buildings is more about providing a quality way of life to the new suburbanites of Ealing, professionals who would use the transport links nearby but could afford more space than those crammed into the small terraces in nearby West Ealing. St Stephen's is where the town met the countryside and the residents benefit from the positive aspects of both: green open space and plenty of amenities close by. It has the qualities of an aspirational middle class area rising from the ashes of a failed venture, but still living up to the original vision of living in style and comfort.

10. Planning and Policy Framework

In CAs, there is a presumption in favor 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 Norwood Green CA is set out below:

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the process of assessment, definition or revision of boundaries and formulation of proposals for CAs as well as the identification and protection of listed buildings. Authorities are required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of 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 favor 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.

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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.

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

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

St Stephen's Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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 curtilage, (often front garden space) of a house

Hipped roof – a shallowish pitch with sloping at the vertical ends

Keystone – central wedge-shaped stone at the crown of an arch

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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

St Stephen's Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Recess – space set back in a wall, often the setting for an entrance porch

Render – plaster or stucco applied to a wall

Rooflight – a window set flush into the slope of a roof

Rusticated – masonry cut in huge blocks, often in its original hewn state, that is normally found on the lower half of buildings

Sash window – a window that is double hung with wooden frames (sashes) that slide up and down with pulleys

Sepulchre – a recess with Tombchest designed to receive an effigy of Christ

Sett – small granite paving block

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

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13. Appendices

13.1. Stakeholder Contact List

Ealing Civic Society

N.B. There is currently no residents association or Conservation Area Advisory Panel representing the St Stephen's Conservation Area.

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www.ealing.gov.uk