

# St Stephens Conservation Area Management Plan

March 2007



## ST STEPHEN'S CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. POLICY .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1. CHARACTER APPRAISALS .....	4
3.2. ARCHIVES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PAST .....	4
<b>4. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL.....</b>	<b>5</b>
4.1. PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT CONTROL .....	5
<b>5. PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT.....</b>	<b>7</b>
5.1. UNDERSTANDING THE ASSET .....	7
5.2. MAINTAINING QUALITY .....	7
5.3. PRESERVE OR ENHANCE .....	9
5.4. ELEMENTS AT RISK .....	9
5.5. MONITORING AND REVIEW .....	13
5.6. CONSERVATION STRATEGY AND PRACTICE .....	14
5.7. A4 CONSIDERATIONS FOR ST STEPHEN'S CA .....	145
<b>6. CONSULTATION .....</b>	<b>15</b>

## **1. Introduction**

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

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

## **2. Policy**

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

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

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

## **St Stephen's Conservation Area Management Plan**

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

### 3. Conservation Area designation

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

#### 3.1. Character appraisals

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

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

The CA contains a good deal of historic fabric and evidence of this has been included in the Appraisal to demonstrate the evolution of the area.

The Appraisal deals especially with the period from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century house construction intensified and St Stephen's changed from a rural area into a suburban settlement. Archival material, taken from historic material provided by Ealing Local History Centre has been included in the Appraisal to provide a sense of historical depth and to illustrate St Stephen's development. Elements of this past may still be felt and understood, thus posing questions about protection and enhancement of the CA.

## 4. Development control

As a result of the demand for development, the character of the CA is under constant threat posed by unsympathetic, poorly designed and executed new buildings, extensions and alterations. The situation therefore highlights the role of development control in managing the future changes to the CA.

### 4.1. Principles for development control

St Stephen's and its immediate surroundings are under strong development pressure. Sensitive and responsive management is required in order to cope with this pressure and the following principles will be adopted to guide the Council in its control of development:

- 1) The Council will apply the principles, guidance and regulations outlined in the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* and the broader guidance of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15)* and any subsequent revisions or additions.
- 2) The Council will apply the policies outlined in its *Plan for the Environment, the Unitary Development Plan (UDP)* as adopted in October 2004, until such time as these policies are replaced by policies in the emerging *Local Development Framework*.
- 3) The Council will require all planning applications to be supported by a Design and Access Statement. This should be a brief but thorough guide to the reasons for the development and how the design fulfils these, together with a statement concerning any access issues that may exist. Officers of the Council can provide assistance to applicants with more information and with examples on file of successful Design and Access Statements.
- 4) A major requirement for any development proposal in a CA is quality, covering the design, materials, workmanship and execution.
- 5) The Council will not dictate on the choice of architectural styles of any proposed new buildings, extensions or alterations but the position may be simply put as follows:
  - Contemporary and Modernist styles are acceptable if they are high in quality and

## **St Stephen's Conservation Area Management Plan**

provided that they remain sympathetic in the context and towards the host building and/or other neighbouring buildings

OR

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

## **5. Preservation and enhancement**

### **5.1. *Understanding the asset***

The Character Appraisal of which this Management Plan forms a part is central to understanding St Stephen's CA and its future needs. As a result of the appraisal process, the aspects of the area that are under the most threat have been identified. The threats include the removal of boundary walls, hedges or fences; the replacement of boundaries by unsympathetic modern gates and brick and metal enclosures; unsuitable and out-of-scale extensions including dormer windows and garish front porches; the conversion of green-space front or side gardens to hard-standings; unsuitable window and door replacements or other features that affect the parts of houses fronting a highway.

Bulky extensions to the rear of properties erode the traditional spatial relationship between buildings in the CA. Additions to this list are buildings of poor design and/or poor presentation. Negative contributions to St Stephen's are also made with litter and graffiti, excessive and speeding traffic, a lack of public amenity space and the general poor quality of the public realm in the CA.

### **5.2. *Maintaining quality***

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

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

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



## **2) Quality of materials**

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

## **3) Details**

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

## **4) Experienced persons**

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

## **5) Windows and doors**

The Council has a well-founded preference for traditional, renewable materials and will therefore exercise its powers to advise and to insist, in cases where appropriate, against the use of architectural elements and fenestration details in PVC-U or other manufactured substitutes.

Plastic window frames and doors are not felt to be able to replicate the quality and appearance of original timber windows in CAs. Materials such as PVC-U are non-renewable and contribute to pollution. When used elsewhere on buildings, such as porches, barge-boards and conservatories it can have a negative effect upon visual appearance that should not be permitted in CAs. Depending on the individual circumstances, aluminium may not be considered an acceptable replacement for steel in window frames.

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

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

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

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

As previously described, the quality of any CA can be damaged to a significant degree by the loss of historic details whether 20<sup>th</sup> century in origin or earlier and the nature of this threat has led to the CA designation of St Stephen's and other parts of the Borough. The Council regards it as important to preserve certain details for the sake of the contribution they make to local architectural character.

Therefore, the protection of the following elements of the historic environment in St Stephen's CA will be of high priority:

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

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

- Dormer windows**

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

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

## **St Stephen's Conservation Area Management Plan**

Where possible the window(s) of the dormer should align with the windows of the main house.

There should be no tiling on the front elevation

- **Roof extensions**

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

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

- **Rooflights**

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

- **Tiles**

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

- **Chimneys**

Chimneys are a particularly important element of the character of the Borough's Conservation Areas and the Management Plan for CA incorporates clear preferences for the retention of existing chimneys where they contribute positively to local character and for ensuring that new proposals that include chimneys are high in quality of design, materials and execution.

### **2) Window frames and doors**

Guidance will be given as part of the St Stephen's Management Plan for the retention of existing traditional windows and doors and will be specifically concerned to avoid and to advise against pollutants and non-renewable materials as replacements.

### **3) Brickwork**

The management of brickwork and the pointing of walls is a critical issue in preserving detail in St Stephen's CA. Traditional finishes such as tuck-pointing should be respected and considered before works are carried out to buildings.

#### **4) Front and side plots**

Due to their impact on the visual amenity of St Stephen's, front plots are regarded as important for the preservation of the CA and this is particularly the case at sites that directly front The Avenue, the former Church of St Stephen and the other principal thoroughfares in the designated area. For these reasons, the Council will ensure that in these parts of the designated area the removal of existing traditional boundaries and gardens will be resisted and that proposals to replace or develop boundaries or front or side gardens will be appropriate in their materials and of high quality design that is compatible with the historic character of the CA. This is also consistent with Table 5H of the UDP, which encourages against the creation of hardstandings also in the interests of flood prevention.

The removal of mature trees, unless dead, should not be permitted in order to create hardstandings.

#### **5) Open spaces**

There is no public open space in the CA and very little opportunity to create any due to the close positioning of buildings in this densely packed suburb. The nearby Cleveland Park provides amenity space for the community.

#### **6) Extensions and porches.**

The proliferation of unsightly and over-scale rear, side or roof extensions and the addition of porches to dwelling houses including a few non-traditional porches are all regarded as detrimental to the historic environment of St Stephen's. For this reason, applications for extensions of this sort will be carefully considered and, where necessary for the preservation of local character, will be resisted.

In a CA it is highly desirable that buildings constructed separately retain their separateness rather than morph together in an unsightly jumble. Single storey rear extensions should not extend further back than 2 meters from the original building or further than either of the extended rear walls of the neighbouring houses.

#### **7) Outbuildings**

Garden buildings should be small-scale and sited discretely, taking care not to locate them too near trees. They should be for ancillary garden use and comprise a single, modest-sized room.

Timber is the most appropriate material to ensure that they blend with the landscape.

### **8) Urban density**

The open quality of St Stephen's is considered to be one of its outstanding characteristics and all aspects of this openness will be protected. This characteristic is mainly manifest in the breadth of the roads, particularly along The Avenue and around the former Church of St Stephen, rather than in the spaces between buildings.

All forms of over-development will be resisted; existing open spaces and gardens will preferably be maintained and their improvement will be sought. The future of existing gap-sites in St Stephen's CA will be given the most careful consideration in determining planning applications.

### **9) Shop fronts and signage**

The St Stephen's CA contains no purpose built commercial buildings and has no shop fronts or signage within the designated area. However, some houses within the CA are used as schools and commercial premises and have associated exterior signage. Any future application to erect signage on existing residential properties in the CA will be scrutinised carefully for its impact on the special character.

Also, should the southern section of The Avenue, which includes the shopping parades around The Drayton (Court Hotel) further scrutiny will be given to the maintenance of the special character here. The Council will pay special attention to applications to alter or develop these commercial frontages and will ensure that proposals are high in overall quality and make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.

### **10) Traffic**

Excessive volumes of traffic and associated problems of speeding are described as detrimental in the St Stephen's CA Appraisal. Measures to address these problems will be sought and will be incorporated as the Management Plan develops. Existing traffic management measures will also be reconsidered.

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

Satellite dishes are a common problem in many CAs. They disfigure the fronts of historic buildings and also cause a loss of historic character when fixed in inappropriate locations.

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

Telecommunication installations could potentially harm the historic character of St Stephen's. They would be unacceptable near the former Church of St Stephen for their detrimental effect on the setting of the listed building and they will also be resisted in any other part of the designated area where their presence is deemed to cause harm to historic character.

### **12) Public Realm.**

The character appraisal for St Stephen's has identified that there are a number of improvements that could be made to improve the quality and coherent appearance of the public realm:

- Street signs;
- Landscaping improvements;
- Public seating;
- Street lighting

### **13) Trees.**

The mature street trees in the CA, particularly along The Avenue, provide an important part of St Stephen's special character. Their maintenance and any necessary replacement works are to be approached with sensitivity to this special character.

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

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

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

Ealing Council is in the process of reviewing its 29 designated CAs, some of which have in place Article 4 Directions (A4D) where these are appropriate. A4D means that some of the usual rights of individual property owners to make Permitted Developments under the General Permitted Development Order (1995) are withdrawn. Therefore, further significant changes or developments that would affect the special character of a certain CA would require planning permission. Although St Stephen's is not currently being proposed for widespread A4D measures, the Council will consider if it is appropriate to propose the application of A4D in parts of the CA. Works that may deserve an A4D in this CA are changes to the fabric of windows and doors and the insertion of hardstandings.

To maintain all aspects of the "special character and appearance" of the 29 CAs, the Council will need to retain technical advisors specializing in the preservation and conservation of historic buildings, landscapes etc. A regular five-year cycle of study and review will need to be maintained to assess and monitor the CAs with the aim of the preservation of the areas in the long term. Overall, St Stephen's must be protected: firstly for its residents but also for the many non-residents who pass through this remarkable urban oasis on a daily basis.

## **5.7. A4D Considerations for St Stephen's CA**

The CA appraisal of St Stephen's has shown the ongoing deterioration of the special character of the area due to a number of threats that include:

- bulky dormer windows disrupting the roofscape
- loss of traditional fenestration patterns together with later doorways that offer material, design and decoration patterns which are not in keeping with the character of the CA
- insertion of porches, disrupting the continuity and openness of the streetscape
- loss of front garden trees and fences together with loss of garden walls to create parking for cars.

The adoption of an Article 4 direction could result in the requirement for planning permission to be obtained for all extensions, porches, vehicle access and hardstandings,

## **St Stephen's Conservation Area Management Plan**

changes to wall surfaces and roof tiles, and removal of chimney stacks. Such controls would ensure a greater ability to manage changes to these elements that contribute to the character and if eroded will constitute a threat for the significance of the CA and for its setting. For this reason the Council will consider the application of A4 directions to parts of the CA. Any proposal would, of course, be subject to public consultation.

### **6. Consultation**

The strength of the St Stephen's CA Appraisal and Management Plan relies on the knowledge and commitment of residents and other key stakeholders.

Both documents have been produced in partnership with members of interest groups across the wider Borough of Ealing community who have provided the authors of this work with the expert views and knowledge to help positively shape the future of the CA. At present St Stephen's CA has no CA Panel and the creation of such a group of local individuals would be invaluable to the consultation process as well as the longer term implementation of management proposals. Wider views will be sought in the lead up to adoption of both the Appraisal and Management Plan, and thereafter in every five-year period of review.



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