

# Abbotshall Avenue Conservation Area

## Character Appraisal

Approved June 2015



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prepared by

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*Historic environment policy and practice*

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## **ABBOTSHALL AVENUE CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL**

### **SUMMARY OF 2014 REVIEW**

The Abbotshall Avenue Conservation Area character appraisal was originally adopted and published in 2008. It was reviewed and updated during July and August 2014 by the Drury McPherson Partnership and now contains updated text and new photographs taken in 2014. The original maps have been amended as necessary. The appraisal should be read in conjunction with the revised Abbotshall Avenue Conservation Area Management Proposals (2014), which contain management recommendations that flow from the revised appraisal.

The Conservation Area is largely in good condition and has no major problems. There have been no substantial physical changes in the Conservation Area since 2008. There are no potential development sites in the area, and no new issues have arisen during the review period. However, the issues identified in 2008, particularly the loss of architectural detail such as windows, are still problematic.

The key recommendation of the 2009 management proposals, that an Article 4 Direction should be made, has been achieved, but this has not prevented some further erosion and loss, apparently in breach of planning controls and currently subject to investigation. In this area, issuing of guidance for owners and occupiers on conservation, design, and the planning system, remains a high priority.

The Council has produced guidance on the management of trees and streetscapes, as recommended in 2009. Some erosion of the grass verges from vehicle over-run at the junction with front garden parking areas is evident.

# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Conservation areas**

- 1.1.1 Conservation areas are areas of ‘special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’<sup>1</sup> and were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967. Designation imposes a duty on the Council, in exercising its planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area<sup>2</sup>. In fulfilling this duty, the Council does not seek to stop all development, but to manage change in a sensitive way, to ensure that those qualities which warranted designation are sustained and reinforced rather than eroded.
- 1.1.2 Conservation area designation introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and the lopping or felling of trees above a certain size. However, it does not control all forms of development. Some changes to family houses (known as “permitted development”) do not normally require planning permission. These include minor alterations such as the replacement of windows and doors, or the alteration of boundary walls. Where such changes would harm local amenity or the proper planning of the area (for example, by damaging the historic environment), the Council can introduce special controls, known as Article 4 directions, that withdraw particular permitted development rights<sup>3</sup>. The result is that planning permission is required for these changes.

## **1.2 The purpose of a conservation area appraisal**

- 1.2.1 A conservation area character appraisal aims to define the qualities that make an area special. This involves understanding the history and development of the place and analysing its current appearance and character - including describing significant features in the landscape and identifying important buildings and spaces. It also involves recording, where appropriate, intangible qualities such as the sights, sounds and smells that contribute to making the area distinctive, as well as its historic associations with people and events.
- 1.2.2 An appraisal is not a complete audit of every building or feature, but rather aims to give an overall flavour of the area. It provides a benchmark of understanding against which the effects of proposals for change can be assessed, and the future of the area managed. It also identifies problems that detract from the character of the area and potential threats to this character.

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<sup>1</sup> Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 s.69

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, Section 72

<sup>3</sup> Replacement Appendix D to Department of Environment Circular 9/95 (November 2010), DCLG

This appraisal of the Abbotshall Avenue Conservation Area (hereafter referred to as the Conservation Area) supports Enfield Council's commitment in The Enfield Plan (Core Strategy adopted 2010), and its duty under section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and to consult the public about the proposals. The assessment in the appraisal of the contribution made by unlisted buildings and other elements to the character of the Conservation Area is based on the criteria suggested in English Heritage's guidance *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (2011), reproduced at the end of this document.

### **1.3 Conservation in Enfield**

- 1.3.1 Since the 1870s, Enfield has developed from a modest market town surrounded by open country and small villages to a pattern of suburbs on the edge of London. This transformation was triggered by the advent of suburban railways and took place in a piecemeal manner, with former villages being developed into local shopping centres and industries being developed along the Lea Valley. Conservation areas in Enfield reflect this pattern of development, including old town and village centres, rural areas centred on the remains of former country estates, examples of the best suburban estates and distinctive industrial sites. Some of the smaller designated areas are concentrated on particular groups of buildings of local importance.
- 1.3.2 Abbotshall Avenue Conservation Area was designated in 2008. The boundary has remained unchanged and no boundary alterations are currently proposed.

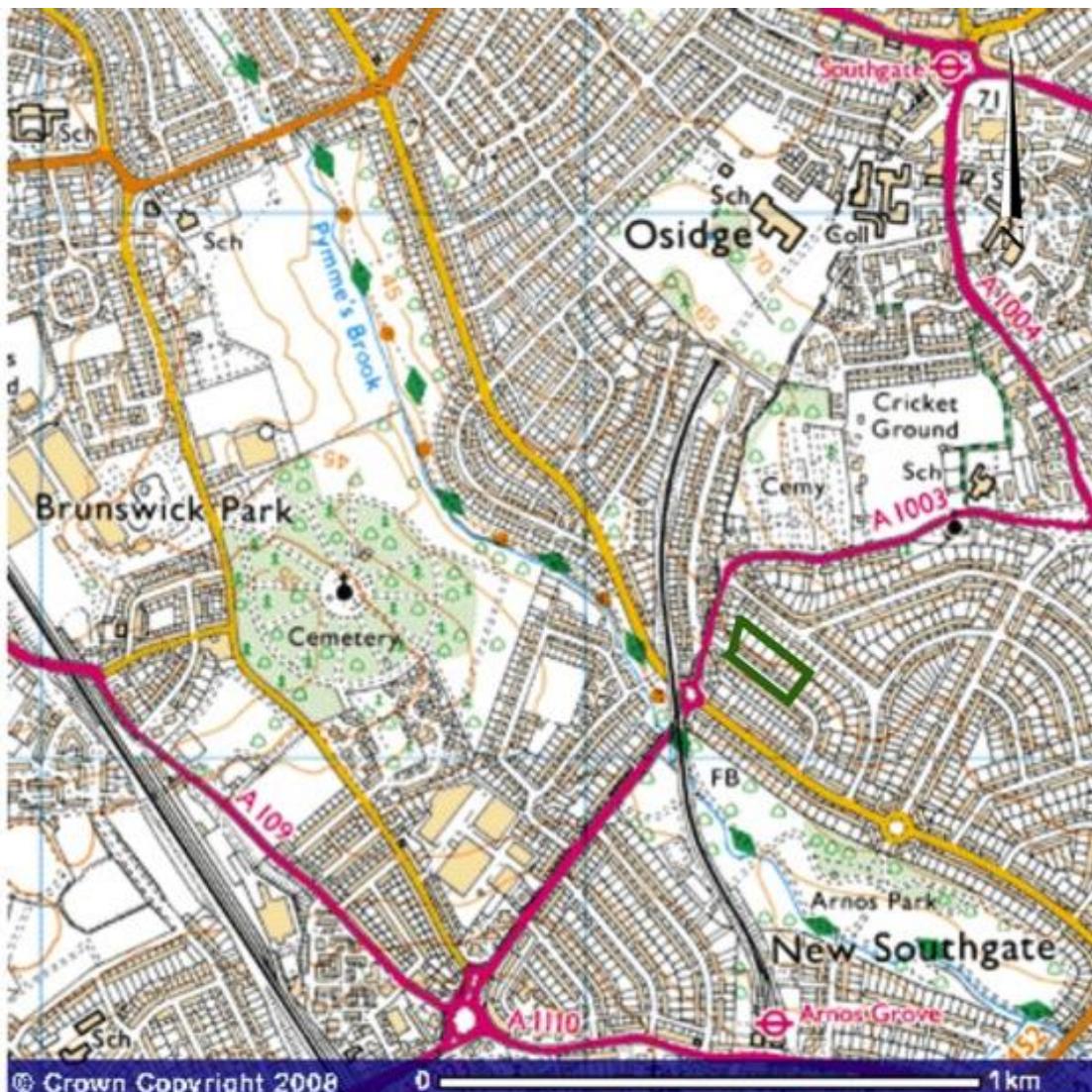
### **1.4 Planning policy framework**

- 1.4.1 The legal basis for conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. National policy guidance is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012, which *inter alia* requires local planning authorities to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. The Enfield Plan sets out a basic framework of conservation policies (Core Strategy: *Core Policy 31*, Development Management Document: *DMD 44*) for all areas. This conservation area character appraisal will be used to support the conservation policies that form part of the Core Strategy.

## **2 APPRAISAL OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

### **2.1 Location and setting**

2.1.1 The Abbotshall Avenue Conservation Area consists of numbers 1-17 (odd) Abbotshall Avenue, a group of five detached and four semi-detached 1930s “moderne” style houses. The houses are included on the local list. Abbotshall Avenue lies roughly  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile (1km) south-west of Southgate Green, to the east of Waterfall Road, on a gentle slope leading down to Pymmes Brook. The Conservation Area forms part of a larger area of suburban housing developed largely during the 1930s on the former Arnos Grove estate, bounded by Waterfall Road, Cannon Hill and Arnos Park (the latter being part of the historic parkland retained as public open space). The whole area was laid out during the late 1920s on what was then open land, to form a very rough semi-circle of streets radiating north-eastwards from Morton Crescent and the adjacent gates to Arnos Park. The pattern of tree-lined streets and predominantly semi-detached houses is consistent throughout the neighbourhood. The topography of the area comprises low hills and shallow valleys.



*Abbotshall Avenue proposed conservation area character appraisal  
map 1: location map*

— Conservation Area boundary

Figure 1: Location Map



Figure 2: Aerial photograph of the conservation area.

## 2.2 Historical development

- 2.2.1 Southgate has its origins in the medieval period as a small settlement by the south gate of the Royal Park known as Enfield Chase, first recorded in 1165. Little, apart from the plan form, which was probably established by the 14th century, survives from this time. The absence of a medieval church or civil administration (Southgate village formed part of Edmonton Parish and Hundred) suggests it was a small settlement. Early maps show no traces of a medieval field system and it is likely that the first inhabitants of the village were primarily woodsmen rather than farmers. At this time, much of the land around Southgate Green was held by the Augustinian nuns of the Priory of St Mary, Clerkenwell and the Charterhouse estate.
- 2.2.2 During the 16th century, the monastic lands surrounding the village centre were divided into several substantial estates, belonging to aristocratic and merchant families. The two most significant were Arnolds (later Arnos Grove)<sup>4</sup> and Minchenden<sup>5</sup>. Arnolds occupied land to the west side of Cannon Hill. Minchenden included much of the south side of Waterfall Road. A third estate in the area to the south west of the village was Beaver Hall<sup>6</sup>, formed in the eighteenth century out of land belonging to Arnolds.

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<sup>4</sup> VCH Middlesex V p159

<sup>5</sup> Shown as Minchington Hall on Roque's map of Middlesex; 1754.

<sup>6</sup> Enclosure map 1801

The present Abbotshall Avenue extends across the historic boundaries of the Minchenden and Beaver estates.

- 2.2.3 Arnolds was part of the former Charterhouse estate. It was acquired by the Colebrook family in 1719 and renamed Arnos Grove. The original house on Waterfall Road was replaced by a new mansion of c1720. A wing designed by Sir Robert Taylor was added in 1775<sup>7</sup>. The seventeenth and eighteenth century mansion survives, much altered. In 1777, the estate was sold to Isaac Walker (of the brewers Taylor Walker). Minchenden was named after the Clerkenwell nunnery that held the land before the Reformation<sup>8</sup>. By 1715 it had passed to the Brydges Dukes of Chandos, and became one of their principal seats. Beaver Hall was built c1765 for Mr. Berens, a city merchant. The house was almost certainly also designed by Sir Robert Taylor.<sup>9</sup> Both Minchenden and Beaver estates were subsequently acquired by the Walker family of Arnos Grove and their mansion houses demolished: Minchenden in 1854 and Beavers in 1870. The Walkers have been described as creating a “private green belt”<sup>10</sup> around Arnos Grove, and as a result, unlike similar parts of suburban London, there was almost no late nineteenth century development in the area.

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<sup>7</sup> Cherry B, Pevsner N; *London 4: North* 1998, p460

<sup>8</sup> VCH Middlesex V p159

<sup>9</sup> Garnier R; *Two “Crystaline” Villas of the 1760s* in Georgian Group Journal Vol. vii 1997

<sup>10</sup> Dalling, G. *Southgate and Edmonton Past* (Historical Publications, London 1996), p67

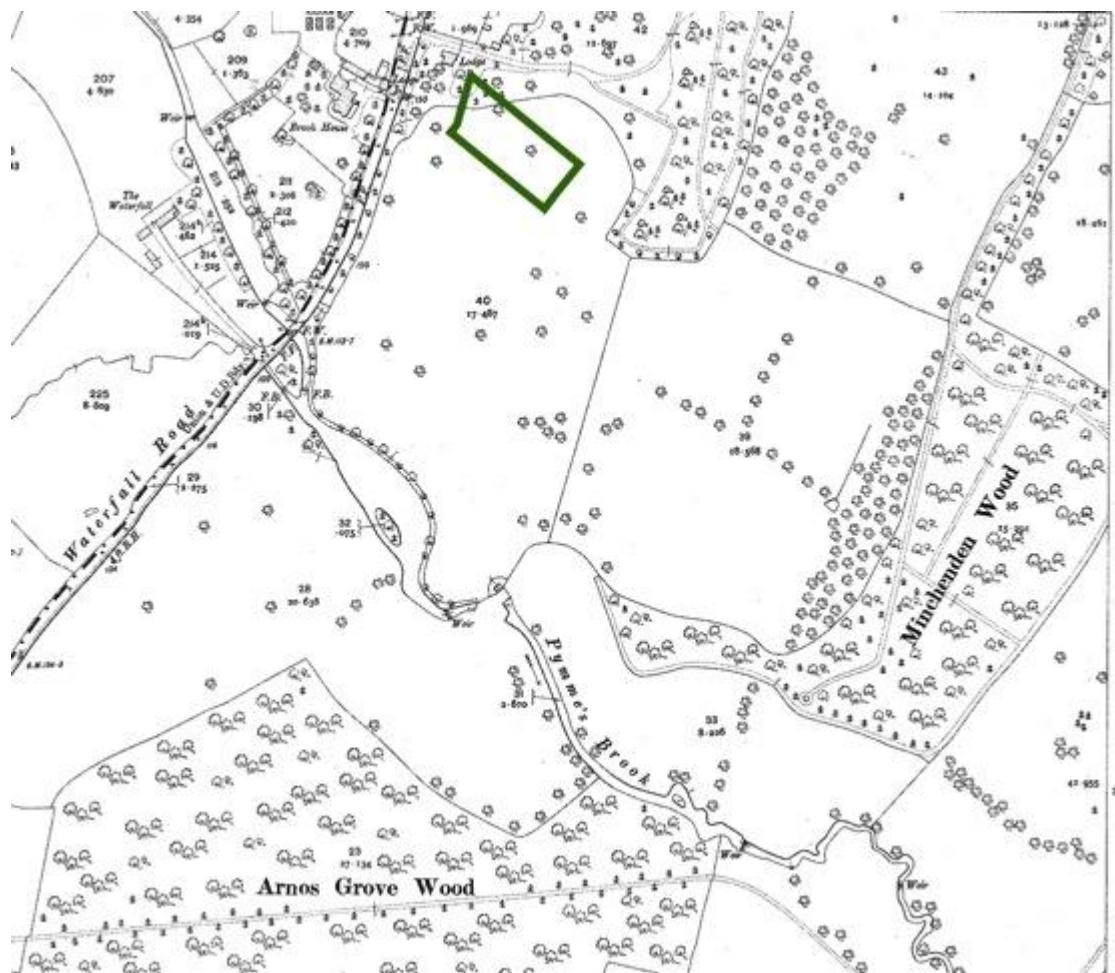


Figure 3: Extract from Ordnance Survey, 1914

2.2.4 The Walkers retained the Arnos Grove estate until 1918, when it was sold to Andrew Weir, later Lord Inverforth, a ship owner, and the land remained undeveloped until he sold it in 1928, when the estate was broken up. The mansion was bought by Northmet Electric Co. (later the Eastern Electricity Board); 44 acres of parkland were bought by Southgate Council to create Arnos Park, and the remainder was sold piecemeal for residential development<sup>11</sup>.

2.2.5 A street layout submitted to Southgate Urban District Council by Lord Inverforth's agent had been approved in 1927.<sup>12</sup> By February 1929, the Council's Surveyor was able to report that the construction of sewers on the new streets, including Abbotshall Avenue, was "in hand". However, development was slow to commence. Extension of the underground to Enfield had been under discussion since as early as 1923, and residential development of the Arnos Grove area was clearly anticipated when the

<sup>11</sup>Mason, T. *The Story of Southgate*. 1948, p63; Dumayne, A; *Southgate: a Glimpse into the Past*, 1987, p132

<sup>12</sup> Southgate UDC, (hereafter SUDC). *Minutes of the Council and Reports of Committees*, Works and Highways Committee, May 1927

estate was sold, but, without the underground, it was relatively remote from public transport<sup>13</sup>. The Piccadilly line extension was finally begun in 1930, and Arnos Grove station opened in September 1932<sup>14</sup>. This was the necessary catalyst for building, and houses were soon under construction on much of the former Arnos Grove land, but the south-western corner of the estate – Chandos Avenue, Abbotshall Avenue and the western end of Morton Way - was still largely undeveloped in 1936.

- 2.2.6 The first application for permission to build in Abbotshall Avenue appears to have been made in November 1933<sup>15</sup>. Unfortunately, the plans themselves are lost and only the Council Minutes survive for this period. Messrs. F. and R. Woodward applied to Southgate Council for permission to build six houses in Abbotshall Avenue. The application was refused. They applied again, successfully this time, in December of the same year<sup>16</sup>. In July 1934, they applied for permission for one detached house and received an approval<sup>17</sup>. The reference number indicates that this was for the same site as the previous applications. In September 1934, they submitted a revised plan for the first floor of no.9 Abbotshall Avenue under the same application number<sup>18</sup>, evidence that the applications refer to the Conservation Area site.
- 2.2.7 In April 1935, F.G. (*sic*) and R. Woodward - now giving their address as Abbotshall Avenue - submitted drainage plans for nos. 11-17 Abbotshall Avenue<sup>19</sup> and 1-9 Abbotshall Avenue<sup>20</sup>, the latter being described as an amendment to the original application of November 1933. This suggests that the original application was for nos.1-11 and that the single house approved in July 1934 was no.13. A planning application for two more detached houses, nos.15 and 17 Abbotshall Avenue, was approved in May 1935<sup>21</sup>.
- 2.2.8 In August 1935, photographs of the newly built nos.1 -7 and a detached house (probably no. 9) were published in *Design for To-day*<sup>22</sup> in an article on modern housing estates in London. The text does not refer to the houses specifically and no architect is named: the photographs are simply captioned, as three- and four-bedroomed houses in Arnos Grove, "...constructed throughout with fireproof materials". This is unrevealing: Mitchell's 1936 building manual<sup>23</sup> devotes a full chapter to fire-proof construction, which, by this date in London, meant little more than

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<sup>13</sup> Pam D, *A History of Enfield* Vol 3, 1994, p112

<sup>14</sup> Pam, *op cit*, p198

<sup>15</sup> SUDC, Works and Highways Committee, November 1933, ref. 7063

<sup>16</sup> SUDC, Works and Highway Committee, December 1933, ref. 7063a

<sup>17</sup> SUDC, Works and Highway Committee, July 1934, ref. 7063b

<sup>18</sup> SUDC, Works and Highway Committee, September 1934, ref. 7063c

<sup>19</sup> SUDC, Town Planning Committee, April 1935, ref. 8183

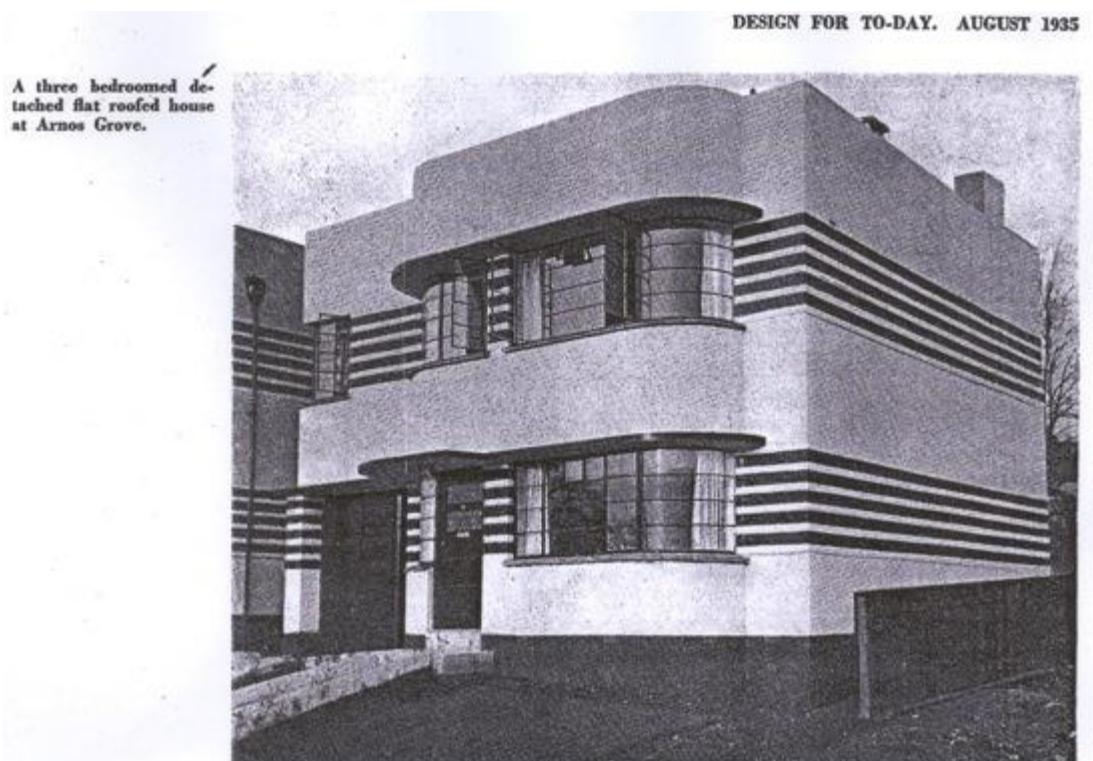
<sup>20</sup> SUDC, Town Planning Committee, April 1935, ref. 8196

<sup>21</sup> SUDC, Town Planning Committee, May 1935, ref. 8278

<sup>22</sup> Ashcroft E. *Modern Housing Estates in the vicinity of London* in *Design for To-day*, August 1935, pp342-329

<sup>23</sup> Mitchell A: *Building Construction : Part 2*, Batsford, 1936, 12th ed,

ensuring conformity with the building regulations by whatever method the builder preferred. The photographs show the render bands of nos.1-3 as pale and of number 5 –7 as dark. (For comparison, Oliver Hill's modern houses of 1934-5 at Frinton-on-Sea had pale pastel paintwork.)



*Photograph from Design for To-day August 1935*

2.2.9 By 1936, nos. 1-17 Abbotshall Avenue are shown on the Ordnance Survey map of that date, and listed as fully occupied in Kelly's 1936 Directory for Southgate, with Woodward, Chas., at no.5 and Woodward, Frank, at no.7. It seems likely that these were Frank Woodward (1883-1958) and Charles Woodward (c.1877-1960), who, with their father William, practised as architects in central and north London throughout the period. Little is known of their architectural work although both men served as RIBA Council members. The family lived in north London and Frank was architect to nearby Wood Green Borough Council 1940-45<sup>24</sup>. It seems probable, therefore, that Frank Woodward was both the architect and developer of the Abbotshall Avenue scheme, a fact that he may not have wished to advertise, because, at this time, membership of the Royal Institute of British Architects constrained architects from acting as developers.

<sup>24</sup> R.I.B.A. Biographical files: Woodward F. N005743; Woodward C. N005742.



Figure 4: Extract from Ordnance Survey 1936

2.2.10 The north side of Abbotshall Avenue was largely built up by 1939, but the south side, along with the adjacent plots in Chandos Avenue and Morton Way, remained undeveloped until post-war building restrictions had ended in the early 1950s<sup>25</sup>. The post-war houses maintain the scale and typology of the “traditional” brick and tile 1930s houses.

### 2.3 Archaeology

2.3.1 There are no known features of archaeological significance within the Conservation Area.

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<sup>25</sup> SUDC, Council Engineers Department map, 1947, Enfield Local History Library.

## 2.4 Character analysis

### *Spatial analysis*

- 2.4.1 The Conservation Area is very small and, while it is architecturally distinctive, its scale and layout are those of the extensive suburban development of which it is a part. The white walls and flat roofs of the houses are in contrast to their brick and tile neighbours, but not dramatically so. The spatial characteristics of the Conservation Area are common to the rest of the street and the neighbourhood as a whole - two storey houses on a consistent building line, regular plot sizes and a pattern of street trees, grass verges and front gardens. The narrow gaps between the houses reveal typically suburban greenery in the rear gardens. The Conservation Area is on the uphill side of the street, exaggerating the negative visual impact of the large areas of hard-standing in front gardens that have been wholly turned over to car-parking, at the expense of their original green, suburban character.

### *Views*

- 2.4.2 The Conservation Area is experienced in the context of the surrounding houses and streetscape. There is a slight rise from Waterfall Road into Abbotshall Avenue, which then falls away to the east (nos. 1 - 3 being at the crest), but this topography does not have a significant impact on views. The houses can be seen from east and west along Abbotshall Avenue, and glimpsed through the foliage of the mature trees on the small green opposite the junction with Waterfall Road. Views from directly across the road are framed by the street trees, verges and front garden planting. The rear gardens cannot be seen from the public realm and there are no distant views of the Conservation Area: the whole neighbourhood was developed to a similar density and there are no nearby vantage points.



Figure 5: Conservation area from west



Figure 6: Conservation area from east

#### *Activity and uses*

- 2.4.3 All the houses within the Conservation Area appear to be occupied as single dwellings.

#### *Qualities of buildings*

- 2.4.4 The nine houses within the Conservation Area, arranged as four semi-detached houses (nos.1-7) and five detached houses (nos.9-17) are locally listed. Their “moderne” architectural style employs the elements of International Modernism such as flat roofs, simple massing and rendered external walls, along with streamlined Art Deco details and decorations. Internal planning and construction are conventional, compared to the industrial construction methods and rational planning dogma of the Bauhaus and its adherents. Flat-roofed Modernist style suburban housing was briefly in vogue during the mid-1930s, but the fashion was short-lived and such houses proved hard to sell. The style was most popular for seaside holiday homes such as those at Frinton-on-Sea, but even this success was limited. Modernist details such as curved *Crittall* steel windows are often to be found in 1930s suburbia, but the houses themselves are almost invariably traditional in other respects, with red-brick walls and pitched clay-tiled roofs. Such houses can be seen throughout the Arnos Grove neighbourhood.
- 2.4.5 All nine houses are of two storeys with flat roofs and integral garages. They appear to be constructed of rendered brickwork (the brickwork is evident in the wall-head parapets) with concrete floor slabs extended to form prominent canopies over windows and doors. The smooth external render has bold horizontal bands that continue around the side elevations.



Figure 7: 9 Abbotshall Avenue

- 2.4.6 Numbers 9, 13 and 15 and 17 retain their *Crittall* steel windows to the front elevation, all except no.13 to ‘Sun-trap’ patterns, with curved frames to the glass to the curved projecting bays; the windows next to the front doors having unusual patterned glazing. No. 17 retains most of its *Crittall* windows, but some, including two to the front elevation, have been replaced with uPVC without the benefit of planning permission and are subject to review at the time of writing in 2014. All of the houses in the Conservation Area originally had *Crittall* windows, but, with the exception of these four, the windows to the other houses have been replaced with uPVC of several different designs. The panelled and part-glazed timber front and (folding) garage doors to nos. 9 and 15 also appear to be original. The doors to the other houses have been replaced in various materials.
- 2.4.7 Two of the houses have names incorporated in the render on the front wall below the parapet. No. 1 is “Solsana” and no.15 “Lagoona”. The origins of the names - modish perhaps for Alpine sanatoria and “exclusive” resort hotels - is obscure, but their evocation of sun and sea epitomises the international ocean-liner chic to which the 1930s “moderne” style aspired. As such, they are worthy of retention.
- 2.4.8 The two pairs of semi-detached houses (nos.1-7) appear to have been built to the same design. The basic plan is conventional for its date and suburban type. Each pair is of six bays. The street elevation comprises a central entrance to each house, flanked by a small cloakroom window and garage at the detached end, with a shared projecting bay to the attached

side. The projecting bays have curved ends and a deep concrete canopy extending over the entrance.

- 2.4.9 These houses have been somewhat altered. No. 1 has a two-storey rear extension, visible from the street where it projects into the side passage and at roof level, where there is a large glazed roof-light. No. 3 has been re-rendered with an inappropriate rough finish and the original horizontal render bands are no longer visible. The wall head parapet appears to have been raised, so that it is higher than that of its pair. All four houses have unsympathetic modern windows and doors. No. 7 has had a uPVC porch inserted under the original concrete canopy.
- 2.4.10 Of the detached houses, nos. 9, 15 and 17 are similar to each other. The planning history indicates that nos. 15 and 17 followed the design of no.9. Modernistic architectural devices are used to create idiosyncratic and unified front elevations with the nautical feeling redolent of their date. Their plan is essentially of the conventional suburban type: the foot-print of each house is roughly square, but notably compact, with the garage wholly integrated into the house. The street frontage has a large off-centre bay, curved at each end, incorporating the front door, above which the projecting concrete canopy has a subtle step-back. Above the garage door a first floor window turns the corner without a supporting pier, a modernist device that emphasises the presence of concrete floor slabs. There are corbelled chimneys on the flank walls.
- 2.4.11 Nos. 9 and 15 are exceptionally well preserved, retaining their original *Crittall* windows and timber doors. No 17 has some original windows, but an unsympathetic modern roof extension is visible, obliquely, from the street, despite being set well back from the front of the house.



Figure 8: Detail of front door and garage, 9 Abbotshall Avenue



Figure 9: House name and corner window, 15 Abbotshall Avenue

2.4.12 No. 11 apparently has almost the same plan as no. 9, but, instead of central front bay, all but a small set-back has been brought forward to the line of the front door. This front elevation is less successful than those of nos. 9, 15 and 17. The house has been altered: it has been crudely re-fenestrated, and may originally have had a first floor canopy like the rest of the group. An unsympathetic modern roof extension is visible from the street, similar to that at no. 17.

2.4.13 No. 13 is anomalous. It is a detached house consistent in scale and siting with the others in the group, but its design is quite different. It is geometric and undecorated: an uncompromisingly Modern building. It has a square projecting bay, with corner windows to ground and first floors. The ground floor window is long and narrow, with a high sill. There is no curved glazing and only a very small concrete canopy over the front door. The garage is of a single storey, and it is surmounted by an external stair with a solid balustrade leading to the flat roof from a first floor doorway, indicating explicitly that the roof was intended to be used as a terrace, or sun-trap, in keeping with the romantic house names. The exposed brickwork to the wall-head parapet is of white brick, unlike the London stocks elsewhere in the group. The house has original *Crittall* windows, but a modern steel garage door.



Figure 10: 13 Abbotshall Avenue

2.4.14 Several of the houses have rear extensions, but, apart from those to no.1 and no.17, they are not visible from the street.

2.4.15 The unusual, progressive and varied designs of the houses, and the likelihood that they were designed by a professional architect rather than a speculative builder, gives the Conservation Area importance in terms of

both architectural history and the development of London's suburbs. Although Modernism did not take root in the 1930s British suburb, its subsequent influence on mass housing was enormous. The Abbotshall Avenue houses are of considerable significance and rarity as a showpiece of new design of the 1930s.

#### *The public realm*

- 2.4.16 The public realm immediately adjacent to the conservation area boundary consists of the footway and grass verges to Abbotshall Avenue. The verge is broken up into short sections by the vehicle access to each house. The footway is paved in weathered rectangular concrete slabs, appropriate to the character of the area.



Figure 11: Abbotshall Avenue footway and grass verge



Figure 12: Front garden boundary wall, 9 Abbotshall Avenue

#### *Green spaces and trees*

2.4.17 Front gardens make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the suburban scene. The original treatment of the front gardens of the houses in the Conservation Area cannot be now be ascertained, and they were almost certainly laid out by individual occupiers, rather than the original developer, although the 1935 photograph of the detached house appears to show a small lawn. It seems likely that there was hard standing outside each garage, and planting - probably in informal beds - elsewhere. There are few mature trees or shrubs in evidence. None of the houses has an obviously intact garden wall, but the low rustic brickwork of nos. 9 and 17 is typical of the 1930s and may well be original. There are two semi-mature maple trees in the grass verge. It seems likely that there were originally regularly spaced trees here, as elsewhere in the neighbourhood, but some appear to have been removed in order to widen the vehicle cross-overs, and others replaced with smaller species. There are no trees subject to Tree Protection Orders in the Conservation Area.

#### *Loss, intrusion and damage*

2.4.18 The most significant harm to the architectural character of the houses has been caused by the replacement of steel *Crittall* windows with uPVC units. The original windows are a key feature in the elevations. Their fine proportions and narrow glazing bars provide an important complement to the simple lines and solid forms of the architecture that is lacking in the crude proportions and heavy frames of the modern windows. Similarly, the original doors reflected the proportions and horizontal emphasis of the facades and their replacement with standard modern designs is damaging. The distinctive character of the houses has also suffered from careless repairs such as rendering over the decorative horizontal banding and, in one case, the addition of an insensitive new porch. The replacement of front gardens with hard-standing for cars has diminished both the setting of the houses themselves and the suburban character of the wider context.

The associated widening of vehicle crossovers has caused severe erosion of the grass verges.



*Abbotsball Avenue proposed conservation area character appraisal map 2: townscape analysis*

- █ Conservation area boundary
- Locally listed building
- █ Green space
- Private open space
- Key view
- Tree of townscape importance

*Note: unlisted buildings were assessed using criteria set out in Appendix 1 of the English Heritage guidance document 'Conservation Area Appraisals' (1997)*

Figure 13: Spatial Analysis

#### *General condition*

- 2.4.19 All of the houses in the group appear to be in fair structural condition and, despite the loss of architectural detail, they form a coherent group with a strong and distinctive character. The street elevations have suffered little

major structural change: all the original openings survive. Four houses, including those of the greatest architectural interest, have survived unusually intact.

#### *Problems and pressures*

- 2.4.20 Prior to designation, the most visible problem was the loss of original *Crittall* windows and their replacement with uPVC (which is perceived as cheap and convenient in comparison with authentic historic designs). Since the area was designated and an Article 4 direction issued, this problem has been substantially reduced. However, some windows have still been replaced without the benefit of planning permission (at no. 17), and are the subject of review at the time of writing in 2014. The relatively recent date of most of the uPVC windows means that there have not, to date, been any authentic reinstatements. Similarly, original timber garage and house doors have been removed and some mass-produced “low-maintenance” replacements installed.
- 2.4.21 Other changes, to the detriment of the architectural character of the houses include: careless render repairs that have obscured the distinctive “moderne” detailing of the elevations and the removal, reduction in height or capping of obsolete chimneys and several have been reduced in height, capped and/or removed.
- 2.4.22 Externally, increased off-street car parking has led to the replacement of front garden planting with hard-standing; erosion of the verges and the loss of street trees to facilitate widened vehicle cross-overs have damaged the setting of the houses. Many of the front boundary walls are neglected. Front gardens are increasingly treated as functional car parking space, rather than gardens to be enjoyed, and perhaps for this reason they tend to be poorly maintained.
- 2.4.23 Other unsatisfactory alterations include unsympathetic and over-large extensions, including roof structures and rear extensions, which have interrupted the visual and architectural coherence of the group, and minor additions, such as porches. However, there are no examples of such work since designation.
- 2.4.24 The small size of most of the houses means that there has been relatively little pressure to subdivide them. However, the original garage to No. 5 appears to have been altered to form a separate dwelling or annexe without the benefit of planning permission, with a door and window within the original garage opening. At the time of writing this is subject to review.

### **3 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

3.1.1 The key factors that give Abbotshall Avenue Conservation Area its special interest can be summarised as follows:

- The survival of this cohesive group of suburban 1930s “moderne” houses, which are unique in Enfield and rare in London.
- The original flat roofs and largely unaltered elevations of the properties
- The extensive survival of original architectural and decorative features, particularly *Crittall* steel windows, timber doors, concrete canopies, decorative banded render and name-plates.
- The unusual and varied designs of the individual houses.
- The green suburban setting, including gardens and gaps between the houses.

### **4 SUMMARY OF ISSUES**

4.1.1 The area is in good condition and is not subject to great pressure for change. However, there is some evidence of ongoing pressure from the piecemeal erosion of architectural character. The small size and uniform architectural character of the area mean that relatively small changes can have a significant impact.

4.1.2 Issues facing the Conservation Area at present can be summarised as follows:

- *Loss of original windows, doors and architectural details*
- *Unsympathetic extensions, particularly to roofs.*
- *Loss of front gardens to provide hard-standing for cars.*
- *Poor quality front boundary treatments.*
- *Erosion of grass verges to the roadway and loss of street trees.*

### **5 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND CONTACT DETAILS**

#### **5.1 Bibliography**

The following reference works were used in the preparation of this appraisal:  
Baker T. Pugh R. (eds) *Victoria County History of Middlesex V.* (OUP 1976)  
Dalling, G. *Southgate and Edmonton Past* (Historical Publications, London 1996), Dumayne, A; *Southgate: a Glimpse into the Past*, (Southgate, 1987)

Jackson A, *Semi-Detached London*; (Didcot, Wild Swan Publications, 2edn. 1991.)

Mason, T. *The Story of Southgate*. (London, Meyers Brooks & Co, 1948)

Pam, D. *A History of Enfield, vol III*. (Enfield Preservation Society 1992)

Pevsner N and Cherry B *The Buildings of England, London 4: North*, (Penguin, London 1998)

Reference is also made to the following legislation and national and local policy guidance:

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Replacement Appendix D to Department of Environment Circular 9/95 (November 2010)

English Heritage PPS 5 Practice Guide (2010)

English Heritage *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation Appraisal and Management* (2011)

The Enfield Plan: Core Strategy (adopted 2010)

The Enfield Plan: Draft Development Management Document (2012)

The Enfield Plan (Evidence Base): *Areas of Archaeological Importance Review*, English Heritage/GLAAS, 2012

Enfield Development Management Document (2014)

## 5.2 Contact details:

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## 6 APPENDICES

### 6.1 Criteria for assessing unlisted elements

(From English Heritage's guidance *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (2011))

'Check list to identify elements in a conservation area which may contribute to the special interest.'

A positive response to one or more of the following may indicate that a particular element within a conservation area makes a positive contribution provided that its historic form and values have not been eroded.

- Is it the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note?
- Does it have landmark quality?
- Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?
- Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?
- Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?
- Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?
- Is it associated with a designed landscape eg a significant wall, terracing or a garden building?
- Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?
- Does it have significant historic association with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?
- Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?
- Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area?
- Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area?

*Appraisal review undertaken by Michael Copeman; maps prepared by Richard Peats*

August 2014

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