

Ponders End Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Approved February 2015



www.enfield.gov.uk



Reviewed and updated February 2014

prepared by

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SUMMARY OF 2013 REVIEW

The Ponders End Flour Mills Conservation Area character appraisal was originally adopted and published in 2006; seven years on, it has been reviewed and updated. The review was carried out during March and April 2013 by the Drury McPherson Partnership. The appraisal now contains updated and corrected text and new photographs taken between March and June 2013. The original maps have been amended. The appraisal should be read in conjunction with the revised Ponders End Conservation Area Management Proposals (in Part 2 of this document), which contain management recommendations that flow from the revised appraisal.

Ponders End Flour Mills Conservation Area is entirely in the ownership of Wright's Flour Mills, and the site continues in industrial use for flour milling and co-existing residential use by the Wright family. Alteration to the buildings over the last seven years has been minimal - clearance has been carried out in the landscape and millstream setting around the buildings, but generally there is little change to be seen. However, repairs to older walls - which were noted as being desirable when the original appraisal was carried out - remain outstanding. The repair of the weir and adjacent structures on the River Lea, identified by Wright's as the responsibility of Thames Water, needs to be carried out as soon as possible, and the entrance approach to the complex is marked by an increasingly cracked boundary wall suffering damage from tree roots.

With the forthcoming removal of the flour-mix operation from the listed mill to a new off-site facility, there is currently no future use planned for the mill. To ensure that future change does not detract from the character of the Conservation Area, the listing of the whole curtilage should be re-examined, as recommended in the original appraisal, to ensure that later 19th century buildings and structures are protected as well as earlier survivals.

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Ponders End Flour Mills Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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’¹ 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 area². 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 rights³. 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 snapshot of the area. It provides a benchmark of understanding against which the effects of proposals

¹ Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 s.69

² *ibid*, Section 72

³ Replacement Appendix D to Department of Environment Circular 9/95 (Nov 2010), DCLG

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.

- 1.2.3 This appraisal of the Ponders End Flour Mills 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 The Ponders End Flour Mills were designated as a conservation area on 29th September 1970, with the objective of protecting "one of the last remaining 19th century industrial buildings in this part of the Lea Valley." The rôle of the water-meadows as a setting is also mentioned in the designation report, as is the importance of the group of buildings in demonstrating the changing technology of flour milling over 200 years. The Council felt that the group and its setting has a visual amenity value which should be protected in the public interest. The report also noted the inclusion of the area within the Lea Valley Regional Park, and the need to bear in mind public recreational requirements when considering the future of the mills and the meadows in planning policy.
- 1.3.3 The late 18th century buildings in the Conservation Area were already statutorily listed at grade II when the Conservation Area was designated in 1970, and the list was reviewed in 1973; the protection

afforded to the buildings by conservation area designation was therefore to some extent duplicating that already provided by listing, as all the ancillary unlisted buildings and structures can be assumed to have protection as curtilage buildings. There has been no subsequent review of the statutory list, which does not include any descriptions of interiors. The boundary of the original Conservation Area was established before the major road construction which has located an intersection of the Lea Valley Road and Meridien Way at the north-west corner of the Conservation Area⁴, but the boundary has been amended since the first appraisal to exclude this intersection.

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 45*) for all areas. This conservation area character appraisal will be used to support the conservation policies that form part of the Core Strategy.

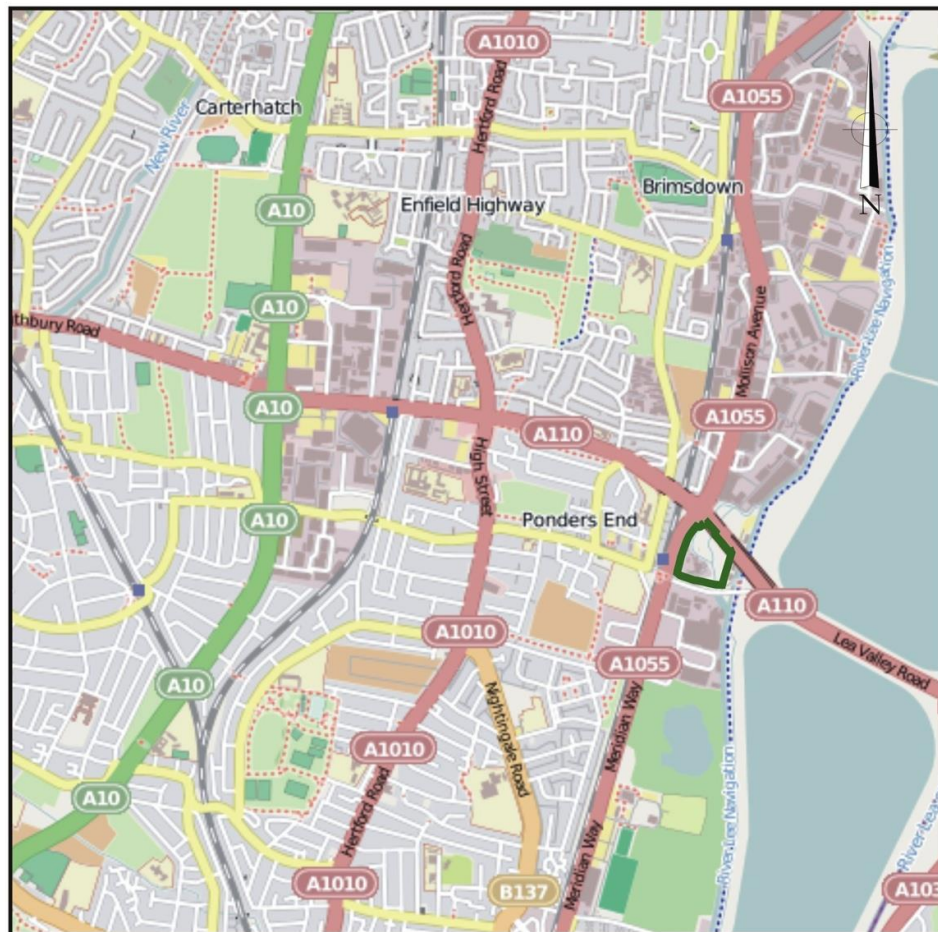
2 APPRAISAL OF SPECIAL INTEREST

2.1 Location and setting

- 2.1.1 The Conservation Area covers the land and buildings that comprise Wright's Mill, a flour mill which has been in the ownership of the Wright family since 1863. The family has undertaken extension and modernisation, while retaining the older buildings and continuing to live on the site. The mill is a rare survival in this area of once-numerous 19th century industries powered by the water of the River Lea.
- 2.1.2 It is located at the eastern edge of the Borough, to the west of the Lea Navigation and the reservoirs that form the boundary between the London boroughs of Enfield and Waltham Forest. The Lea Valley Walk, a recreational path along the Lea Navigation, passes the Conservation Area as it follows the eastern bank of the Lea Navigation. The A110 (Lea Valley Road) runs east/west to the north of the Conservation Area and continues eastwards to pass between

⁴ The Conservation Area boundary was amended in 2008 to take account of this, so that it now runs to the south east of the intersection rather than including it.

King George’s reservoir and William Girling reservoir, and the A1055 (Meridian Way) north/south intersects with this at a junction just outside the north west corner of the Conservation Area. The main rail line to Stansted and Cambridge lies immediately to the west of the Conservation Area and Ponders End station overlooks the site. The site is therefore bounded on four sides by roads and a railway line, and is crossed diagonally by the River Lea. The Conservation Area is at the south end of the Brimsdown industrial area between the reservoirs and the A1055 which stretches from Enfield Lock to the A110.



Ponders End flour mills
Conservation Area Character Appraisal: location map
 — Conservation Area boundary

Figure 1: Location Map

2.1.3 Approximately half the area of the site, to the south-west, is occupied by the mill and its ancillary buildings, with the remainder as water-meadow. The context is almost entirely industrial to the north, south and east, with residential tower blocks to the west on the other side of the railway.

2.2 Historical development

2.2.1 Fulling mills and corn mills have been on the site since the late 13th century, when they were held by Richard de Plessis and later descended with Durants manor.⁵ Durants had come into the ownership of the powerful Wroth family at the beginning of the 15th century; the family dominated the parish throughout the 16th century. One of two water-mills recorded as belonging to Sir Robert Wroth in 1614 was probably the predecessor of Wright's mill. A new mill on the site, known as Flanders Mill, was built in 1650. In 1754, the mill (now known as Enfield Mill) was described in manuscripts of the Trinity College Cambridge estate as a corn mill. This mill was replaced in 1789 by a new building, much of which is retained within the present complex. By the early 19th century, the Durants estate had grown to 1226 acres, and was finally broken up in 1818. Durants manor house, to the north of Ponders End on the road between Ponders End and Green Street, burned down in the 17th century⁶ and the last remains of the structure were demolished in 1910. A bill of sale of 1851 mentions that the mill (by now known as Ponders End Mill) had two tenants; one tenant operated three pairs of stones on one side of the mill, the other had four pairs of stones, each driven by its own undershot water wheel. The division inside the mill can still be seen⁷. In 1854, the land and mill was sold to the East London Water Works company for improvements to the Lea Navigation.⁸

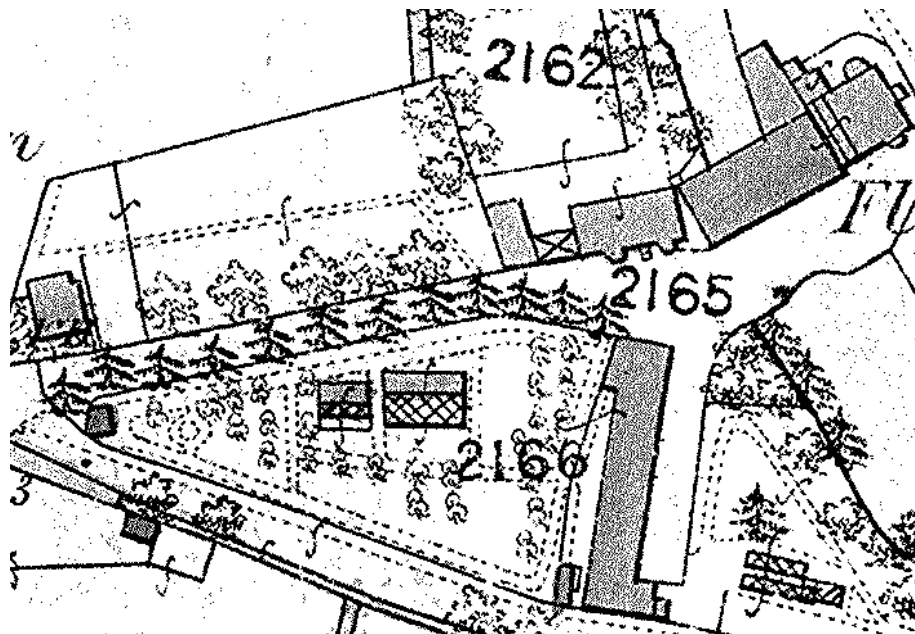


Figure 2: The mill group in 1866

⁵ Victoria County History Volume V Middlesex, p236

⁶ Robinson, W: History and antiquities of Enfield Vol 1

⁷ Wright, Lindy: The History of G.R.Wright & Sons,

⁸ *ibid*

2.2.2 Until the mid 19th century, the flat swampy land of the Lea Valley had contained only isolated hamlets⁹ - Ponders End, Enfield Wash, Enfield Highway – but, throughout the later 19th century, industrial expansion was rapid and extensive along the Lea Navigation. The railway came to Ponders End in 1840, and density continued to increase through the 20th century as industry and workers moved out of London and the old hamlets became a continuous suburb. By 1853, Ponders End mill contained seven pairs of millstones and could grind 500 sacks a week; barges of 60 tons could be drawn up beside it. The mill's connection with the Wright family began in 1867, when George Reynolds Wright entered the business belonging to James Young as a partner, and took over the firm in 1870 on Young's death. Wright was an innovator; the mill was extended in the 1880s¹⁰ with the installation of new roller mills, and Wright's Mill was one of the first industries in the area to switch to electricity as a power source, following the removal of water power with the King George V reservoir construction in 1909. It was also one of the first in the country to adopt the continental roller-mill system (although millstones were retained for a while for speciality products), and an early user of steam-powered horseless commercial vehicles from 1906.



Figure 3: The mill in 1913

⁹ Pevsner & Cherry, London North 4 p434

¹⁰ Wright's history: http://www.wrightsfLOUR.co.uk/our_history.aspx



Figure 4: The mill in 2013

2.2.3 The mill as a business survived both the de-regulation of the industry in 1920 and the subsequent Great Depression, and responded by extensive investment. New building at this time included a grain silo in 1925, which was 80' high, reputedly the tallest building in the district until exceeded by the Civic Centre tower in Enfield town centre. During World War II, production continued seven days a week to compensate for the bombing of many mills in the Blitz. After the war the plant's capacity was greatly extended; the firm's records show that the mill was completely re-modelled in 1950, then new silos, warehouses or mills were constructed at frequent intervals, in 1957, 1961, 1964, 1966, 1969 (when another major re-modelling took place), 1976, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1985, 1989, 1990, 1993, and 1996. Production has grown from 1000 tonnes a year in 1867 to 1000 tonnes a week in 2005.

2.2.4 In the first decades of the 20th century, a series of massive reservoirs transformed the character of the riverside along the Middlesex and Essex border; during the later 20th century, much of the earlier industry in the area disappeared to be replaced by warehousing and retail sheds. Despite these changes to its setting, and the addition of modern silos and production facilities from the 1960s to transform the business into a modern food factory, Wright's mill remains as a rare survival of an 18th and 19th century industrial complex still in use and owned by the same family for nearly 150 years. The older buildings have been pragmatically adapted; East Mill House is now the offices, and the old mill is a warehouse with its top floors converted for mixing and testing bread and cake mixes for the domestic market. In the present generation, David Wright is the managing director, and the family still lives at the Mill House and maintains the walled garden

opposite. The firm's web-site emphasises tradition, but enthusiastically promotes new technology in home baking, as it has in its processing facilities; photographic images of stern ancestral Wrights gaze down upon pages devoted to use of the firm's speciality bread-mixes in bread-machines.

2.3 Archaeology

2.3.1 In the Council's Areas of Archaeological Importance Review Evidence Base (April 2012), for inclusion in the Development Management DPD, the Conservation Area is included in the Lea Valley West Bank Archaeological Priority Area (Area of Archaeological Interest). This area is described as having 'river valley deposits with high prehistoric and palaeo-environmental potential'.

2.4 Identification of character areas

2.4.1 This Conservation Area is considered as a single entity.

2.5 Spatial analysis

2.5.1 The Conservation Area is entirely on private land belonging to G.W Wright and Sons. There is no access to the site other than by arrangement, so the public appreciation of the Conservation Area is limited to what can be seen from outside the boundary. But the area is well defined and its extent easily comprehended and, because it is bounded by a footpath (the access to the River Lea Walk), a railway line and by major roads that have to cross the River Lea, River Lea Navigation and meadows, there are several high vantage points from bridges giving good views of the Conservation Area.

2.5.2 These views emphasise its 'island' form (and the division of the River Lea into two streams within the site provides the effect of a real island within). The best vantage point is from the pedestrian bridge over the rail line and Meridien Way; this gives a panoramic overview of the walled garden and the mill group in its setting of water meadows, and an awareness of the cat's cradle of interlacing and over-sailing transport routes – footpath over rail and road, roads over water, roads over railway, major roads over minor roads – that contains the mill complex. There are also good views from the eastern boundary along Wharf Road, especially where it bridges the River Lea; this is the route from Ponder's End station towards the Lea Valley Walk along the Lea navigation. Although the site can also be seen by driving along the Lea Valley Road and Meridien Road, the speed of traffic reduces the opportunity for detailed observation.

- 2.5.3 Historic and visual interest are concentrated in the southern sector of the site, within a triangle bounded by the River Lea and the western access route and yard for the modern mill buildings. Entering the site at its south-west corner, a single route for all vehicle and foot traffic brings the visitor along the north boundary of the walled garden, lined with pollarded trees, past the car park (with a distant view of the most recent production plant and silo additions), to the yard which combines the functions of forecourt to the Mill House, weighbridge and container storage area. This adjoins a branch of the Lea forming a tree-fringed pond, and is the hub of the Conservation Area, closely enclosed on its north and west sides and more open to the south and east. Looking north-west from the yard and meadow beyond, taller late 19th century additions accumulate in a dense pile behind the listed Mill House, mill office and white painted weather-boarded mill.
- 2.5.4 Looking north, east and south, there is a tranquil setting of river and water-meadow, its willows and wildlife co-existing with high intensity transport infrastructure and the marginal non-spaces of random industrial development beyond. A listed former barn to the south, part of the core 18th century group of mill buildings, forms one side of the walled garden. Looking west, the Mill House façade is strangely juxtaposed with a group of three differently pastel-coloured tower blocks on the west side of the railway line and road, emphasising the containment of this 19th century industrial survivor within a modern urban context.



Figure 5: The mill group from Wharf Rd

- 2.5.5 Past the front of the mill's offices, a concrete road follows the river and weir, and is enclosed on its west side by heavily overbearing 4 storey production buildings from the later 19th and earlier 20th

centuries. To the east side, the weir and former wharves provide a picturesque setting to massive grain silos, with the remains of what was originally a stable block (seen on the 1866 map) and wooden sheds that replaced it. To the north of the core group, a further yard opens out, bounded by silos and a free-standing warehouse. The site loses its definition and enclosure from this point, with an amorphous car park and grassed area lacking the traces of historic use and organisation that are unassertively abundant in the rest of the site.

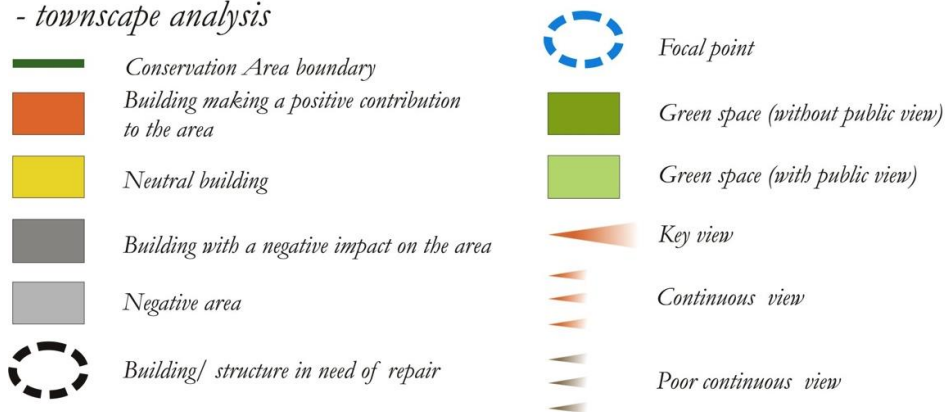
- 2.5.6 Back in the historic core, there is one further and very dramatic spatial element: the walled kitchen garden. (*Figure 6*). This occupies the south-west corner of the site, contained to the east by the weather-boarded former barn, to the north by a high brick wall, and to the south by a lower brick wall along Wharf Road. The garden is just visible from Wharf Road (albeit through the aggressive fringe of razor wire topping the boundary), but, from the entrance drive, it is a sudden revelation, hidden behind a high south facing wall and giving no hint of its existence until the small doorway is passed.



Figure 6: The walled garden



*Ponders End Flour Mills Conservation Area Character Appraisal map 2:
- townscape analysis*



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

Figure 7: Spatial Analysis

2.6 Character Analysis

Uses

2.6.1 The site has been in continuous use as a flour-mill since the first records in the 13th century. The 18th century mill buildings have been partly enclosed by later additions, and it is likely that an earlier mill house stood on or near the site of the present Mill House, which, with its attached garden and walled kitchen garden on the other side of the road, dates from the late 18th century. This visibly close conjunction of related uses, family house and extensive modernised industrial processing plant (an extreme version of ‘living over the shop’), makes a major contribution to the distinctive character of the Conservation Area.

Architectural and historic qualities of the buildings, and their contribution

2.6.2 The core group of late 18th century buildings comprises Mill House, the mill offices, the mill itself and the former barn to the south. All are included at grade II, with group value, in the 1973 statutory list, and are described in the list entry as forming “a working group, a very rare survival in London.



Figure 8: Mill House, south elevation

2.6.3 Mill House and the mill itself compete for attention in the core group. The mill is larger, but its impact is modified by the large modern loading bay across its frontage, and, at close range, Mill House attracts more attention with its finely detailed porch and generous canted two-storey bays. Adjoining the Mill House, the three-and-a-half-storey weather-boarded mill is the magnificent centrepiece and dominant

element of the group. The loading bay and the rear additions of the later 19th century conceal most of the mill's lower storeys and its rear elevation, but its overall form and structure can still be appreciated, and its white weatherboarding contrasts well with the darker brick of the two houses to emphasise the change of scale and function.

- 2.6.4 The mill has been used for some time for the mixing, packing and testing of ready-made flour mixes for home baking, but it is difficult to maintain necessary health and safety standards in the old building due to the age and nature of the structure and finishes. This operation will therefore move to a new off-site facility shortly, leaving the mill empty and with no current plans for an alternative use.



Figure 9: The listed mill, now partly concealed by a modern loading bay

- 2.6.5 Next to the mill, the listed house now used as the company's offices is similar to the Mill House in its proportion and detailing, with an open-pediment porch similar to that at the Mill House on the principal elevation to the east. But this house suffers rather more than the Mill House from the overbearing proximity of more recent mill buildings.
- 2.6.6 Across the yard to the south of the Mill House, the listed former barn has a recent three bay shallow pitched roof addition to its south-east end, and this, with an extension on the garden side, has detracted from its simple shape and design. The barn is weather-boarded and the roof has a slated pitch to the east and clay tiles to the west. It provides shelter and enclosure and a pleasantly rural setting for the walled garden (see Figure 6). All the 18th century buildings make an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

Early 19th century buildings

2.6.7 In the early 19th century, there were additions in the form of a westward extension and cottage to the Mill House, a large greenhouse and a potting shed in the walled kitchen garden, and a small single storey lodge at the entrance, all with similar detailing. The northern half of the greenhouse is brick, the southern half is glazed. A stock brick elevation faces the north boundary wall, with a central panelled door and flanking gothic windows, which also feature in the gable ends. These and the greenhouse gable ends to the glazed south part have good surviving intersecting tracery, and the latter also have coloured glazed roundels. A smaller potting shed to the west has similar windows, but its glazed south section has simple vertical glazed panels. These fine little buildings are protected on the north by a long, high brick wall, now planted with espaliered fruit trees.



Figure 10: The main greenhouse

2.6.8 At the entrance to the site, a small square lodge (Figure 11) repeats the window detail of the garden buildings, although the glazing bars are cruder and have been altered, and the elevations rendered. The building now has an unsympathetic setting (Figure 12) flanked by a security hut and barrier, their accompanying functional hardware and signs, and the car park, but all the early 19th century buildings make an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.



Figure 11: The 'Gothic' cottage



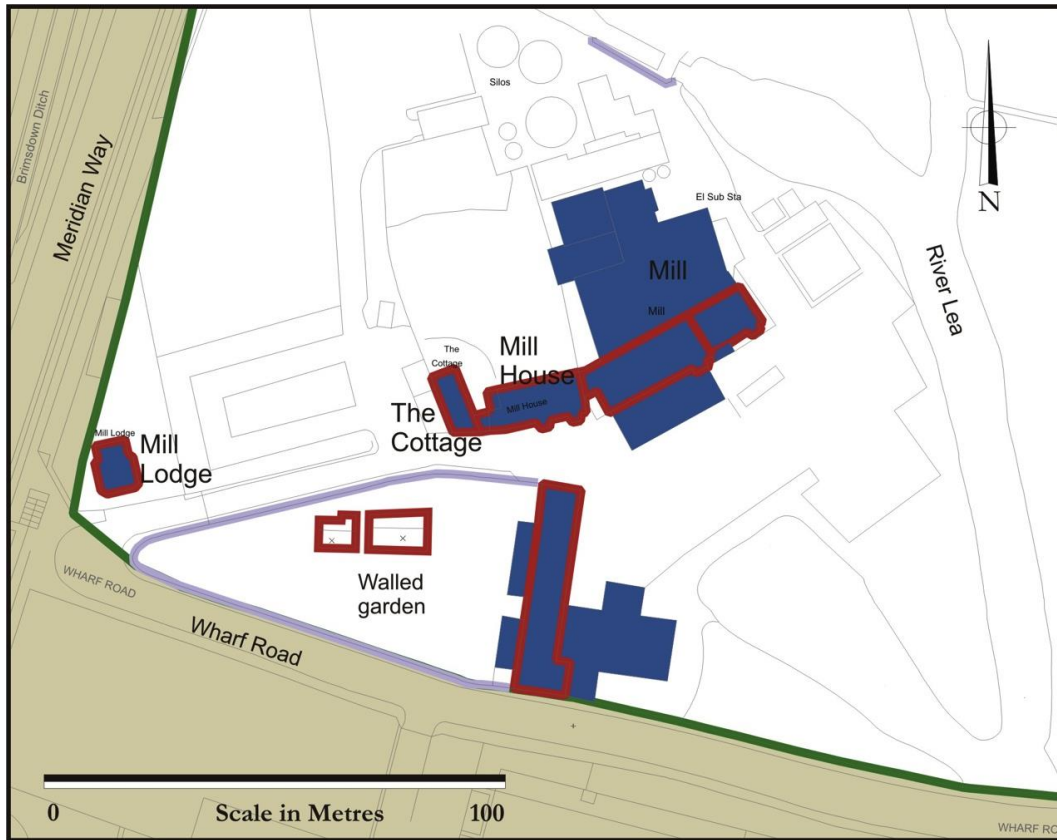
Figure 12: The main approach to the mill

2.6.9 The later 19th century also saw additions to the rear of the original mill building in the core group. The listed buildings retain their relationship to each other and the water meadow setting, but, from many viewpoints the scale of these later buildings dominates the

earlier group (Figures 5 and 14), and makes few concessions to historic character. Overall, their impact is neutral – while not making a positive contribution in architectural or visual terms, they are part of the history of the family firm and the development of milling technology.



Figure 13: The mill complex from the walled garden



*Ponders End Flour Mills Conservation Area Character Appraisal:
- listed buildings*

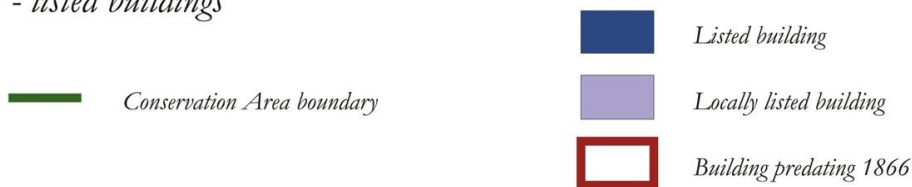


Figure 14: Map 3: Listed Buildings

Statutory listing

2.6.10 Given the age of the existing statutory list and in view of the long-term evolution of development on the site, the group value of the 18th and 19th century buildings, the integration of the older and more recent buildings, and above all the site's rarity as a surviving industrial and domestic group, the listing of the whole of the Wright's site seemingly needs to be reviewed, with a view to adding the early 19th century buildings to the statutory list.

20th century changes

2.6.11 Further additions in the form of production plant and storage silos have extended the built complex on its northwest side throughout the 20th century, including a detached warehouse unit with a pitched roof which is designed as a simplified version of an 18th century mill building. Since an important aspect of the character of the Conservation Area is the clear chronological development of the

industrial process, tracking changes in technology and production methods (from millstones to rollers, from water power to electricity), it would be unreasonable to argue that the modern silos have a negative impact on the Conservation Area. Their simple geometric shapes and smooth sheer surfaces are a foil to the complex pile of materials and construction methods accrued in the core group that includes the listed house and mill. The new warehouse has an attractive simplicity achieved by adapting traditional forms to modern materials, and is a good, but less dramatic, complement to the core group. This building therefore can be said to make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

Materials and details

2.6.12 The materials cover a wide range, reflecting the mix of dates and uses on the site. The listed barn and mill are timber construction, with white painted or dark stained timber weatherboarding. The house and office are in stock brick, with the office having a grey brick façade and the house cement rendered bays; the garden walls and buildings are also in stock brick. Slate roofs prevail for the earlier buildings. The more recent plant uses aluminium and steel construction and cladding. Boundary walls are brick, with some concrete and timber fences too. Surface treatments are utilitarian tarmac and concrete, dictated by the heavy lorry traffic, which also dictates the choice of barriers and signs. There is a quirky ad hoc intermixing of isolated details, some centuries old, with modern mass-produced elements - like the pretty, low 19th century metal rail which flirts with a brash hunk of steel motorway crash barrier on the opposite side of the access road, and has a steel mesh security gate as its neighbour. Newer buildings have often used similar-looking materials in a conscious attempt to match the older buildings, even where the forms are modern, as in the new warehouse. The smooth and shiny silos make a good contrast to the traditional materials of the listed buildings.



Figure 15: Open land to the south east of the mill complex

Green space and trees

2.6.13 A major part of the site is open and consists of rough grass and water-meadow, (Figure 15) bounding the two streams of the River Lea around which the mill complex is arranged. This area and the contrast it forms with the surrounding industry and transport infrastructure is an essential constituent of the character of the Conservation Area, not only because of its historic associations with the mill as the original source of power, but also for the opportunities it provides for views in and out of the built-up area within the site.

The field and water meadow have recently been cleared of some scrub in order to discourage vermin in the environs of the mill. Ponies graze the area near the road; it is a wonderfully traditional setting for the older mill buildings, seen through the trees lining the river. Within the built area, the mill stream to the south provides a setting for the forecourt, barn and Mill House; clearance of scrub growth and some tree cutting has taken place here too, and the mill-stream now has a more open setting.



Figure 16: Recently cleared open land beyond the mill, looking north

- 2.6.14 The western branch of the Lea, with the weir to the north of the main group, runs directly adjacent to the relatively unattractive later buildings backing on to the listed group and the contrast is strong between this and the view across the stream to meadows, and the open land alongside the Lea. The latter (recently cleared), shown in Figure 16, provides a balance to the densely packed mill complex. The kitchen garden provides the final major green element within the site. The garden was formerly for vegetable growing and served the mill-owners; now there is a tennis court and a rough lawn, with an extensive herbaceous border along the length of the northern boundary wall against which fruit trees are espaliered and vegetables grown. The greenhouse and potting shed are the focus of the area, and, although in poor condition, are well used, and the garden is dotted with fruit trees. On its southern boundary, the garden wall is lower and is topped with razor wire, (Figure 5), unfortunate but probably necessary to prevent vandalism. The area of open land at the entrance to the site next to the car park makes no contribution to the Conservation Area other than as a 'spacer' between the silo group and the entrance.
- 2.6.15 Trees make a strong contribution in softening the impact of the modern silos, in locations such as just within the entrance to the site, lining the road and overseeing the vehicle parking areas, and to the north of the complex. (Figures 17, 18 and 12)



Figure 17: The important role of trees in softening modern silos

Loss, intrusion and damage

2.6.16 The historic fabric generally suffers not so much from the intrusion of modern machinery and industrial buildings and equipment - the continuous industrial process is part of the character of the area - but from lack of investment in, and awareness of, the need for street furniture, signage, traffic management and finishes to acknowledge historic character in the circulation areas and peripheral parts such as the car parks (Figure 20). Some of the alterations to the older buildings do not complement their character (Figure 19); the loading bay extension to the south of the old mill affects its character and appearance by its inappropriate form, and by concealing the lower part from view.

2.6.17 The windows in the hoist bulkhead to the mill's front elevation have been removed, and the effect of these alterations is to make the south prospect of the group much more bland. The cottage adjoining Mill House has unsympathetic 20th century windows which detract from the cohesiveness of the south elevation of the listed group. The yard in front of the Mill House is a functional part of the site including the weighbridge, but, nevertheless, the tarmac surface extending up to the front door is not an ideal setting and appears harsh. The sluggish section of the mill stream below the weir to the south of the old mill is neglected, and could provide a much better setting for the listed group, despite the adjoining container storage area.



Figure 18: Additions to mill frontage



Figure 19: Clumsy barriers

2.6.18 The weir itself and its adjacent former wharf areas on the western branch of the millstream are also suffering from some neglect. The wharf edges have been repaired, but the weir walls have extensive loss of pointing (Figure 20).



Figure 20: Weir walls in disrepair



Figure 21: Cracks in boundary wall

2.6.19 It is understood that discussions are underway with Thames Water regarding their responsibility for repairs. The garden wall at the southern end of the walled garden (Figure 22) has serious cracking which appears to be caused by the roots of the tree inside the garden, and urgently needs repair and an assessment of the tree's future.

Problems and pressures

2.6.20 These can be summarised as follows:

- The listed buildings are in reasonable repair and are in use for their original purpose or a similar one, but the non-listed historic buildings – the walled garden buildings, the garden walls, the weir and wharves – are in a poorer state of repair with repair to pointing on the south end of the garden wall, and at the weir, well overdue..
- The listed mill will shortly cease to be used for flour mixing and packing, and it is intended to leave it empty.
- Some of the smaller extensions built in the later 20th century are unsympathetic to the historic buildings, and have been designed with limited sensitivity to their context.
- The statutory list was compiled in 1973 and needs revision to take account of the value of the site as a whole and recognise the integration of industrial and domestic elements, preferably by listing the lodge and greenhouse and garden walls, and by updating the descriptions to include interiors.
- The continuous traffic of container lorries demands functional solutions for circulation and traffic management, but these (barriers, turning areas, signs, surfaces) are often in conflict with the character of a site retaining a layout from the era of horse drawn transport and relatively small lorries.
- The periphery of the site suffers from its urban industrial context; anti-vandal measures and warning signs detract from the views into the site.
- Although some clearance has been carried out, more imaginative landscape management is needed to improve appearance and optimise habitats.

2.7 The public realm

2.7.1 The Conservation Area is entirely privately owned and there is no area accessible to the public beyond the entrance gates, other than by arrangement with the site-owners.

3 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

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

- *A rare survival of an 18th and 19th century flour mill, with earlier origins, retaining its original buildings within a modern processing plant; there has been continuity of use on the site since the 16th century and possibly earlier.*
- *The history of the site is easily comprehensible from the continuous development of buildings through three centuries.*
- *Ownership by the same family for 140 years has reinforced continuity and enabled the mill owner's house and walled garden to continue alongside the industrial complex in their original use. There is a tradition of keeping the best of the old, while adopting innovatory methods and adding modern plant.*
- *The survival of the water-meadows and fields ensures a fine, picturesque setting for the listed buildings and an opportunity for a diverse wildlife habitat within a secure area.*
- *The site has clearly defined boundaries, and, although it is private land, it is easily visible from many viewpoints, including major transport routes; the railway footbridge is an extremely good viewing platform for the listed buildings and walled garden.*
- *The Mill House and walled garden are integral with the mill buildings, but provide a contrast in use and design which greatly adds to the architectural, historic and visual interest of the Conservation Area.*

4 SUMMARY OF ISSUES

4.1.1 Issues currently affecting the area can be summarised as follows:

- *There is an evident need to record the historic and architectural interest of the site and to update the list entries. The statutory list needs to be reviewed and should include the early 19th century buildings and the walled garden, so that the site as a whole is recognised for its quality, its integrity and its rarity value in Greater London.*
- *Some historic infrastructure urgently needs repair, particularly the south west corner of the garden wall and the weir and wharf walls.*
- *The water-meadows and water-courses may need enhanced management measures to improve them visually and as habitats.*
- *It would be desirable for a better balance to be struck between the need for safe and efficient traffic management on site, and securing a more sympathetic treatment of the setting of the listed buildings in terms of hard landscaping and signage.*
- *The design of new extensions and alterations needs to be of a high standard.*

- *A new use is needed for the listed mill, as the former use (preparing and packaging flour mixes) is being relocated to another site and it is no longer in active use.*

5 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND CONTACT DETAILS

5.1 Bibliography

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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)

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Enfield Unitary Development Plan (1994) (saved policies)

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5.2 Contact details:

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6 APPENDICES

6.1 Listed buildings

Listed buildings (reviewed 1973)

| | |
|---|--------|
| Old mill | II(GV) |
| Mill owner's house | II(GV) |
| House to east of mill building, used as offices | II(GV) |
| Barn to south of mill owner's house | II(GV) |

Locally listed buildings

Walls of basin and sluice for old mill
Lodge Cottage at entrance to flour mills
Garden walls to south west of flour mills

6.2 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?

Original appraisal and 2013 review undertaken by Jenny Pearce; maps prepared by Richard Peats