

The Crescent 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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Cover photo: The Crescent, LB Enfield July 2014

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THE CRESCENT CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

SUMMARY OF 2014 REVIEW

The Crescent 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 where necessary. The appraisal should be read in conjunction with the revised The Crescent Conservation Area Management Proposals (2014), which contain management recommendations that flow from the revised appraisal.

The grade II listed terrace of houses that the Conservation Area was designated to protect is undergoing a comprehensive repair and enhancement programme due for completion in 2014-15. It includes: new boundary railings to Hertford Road, landscaping of the front gardens, provision of hard-standing for parking and dustbins to the rear, and repair of the front elevations and reinstatement of lost architectural features. Outline designs are in preparation for the enhancement of the Monmouth Road Open Space

These improvements address some of the key objectives of the 2008 management proposals, with a comprehensive scheme of redecoration, although some structural repairs are still required. When the repairs are completed, the principal issue remaining is the negative impact of the petrol filling station, which it to be hoped will be replaced, when the opportunity arises, with a more sympathetic development. No new issues have arisen since 2008, but the presence of the bus shelter and enlarged traffic signs to the front of the terrace continue to cause some harm to its setting.

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 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.

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 (November 2010), DCLG

1.2.3 This appraisal of the Crescent 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 Crescent Conservation Area was designated in 2008. Its boundary has not since been altered and no proposals to do so are currently under consideration. The properties within the conservation area were listed at grade II in 1954. The listing has not been amended.

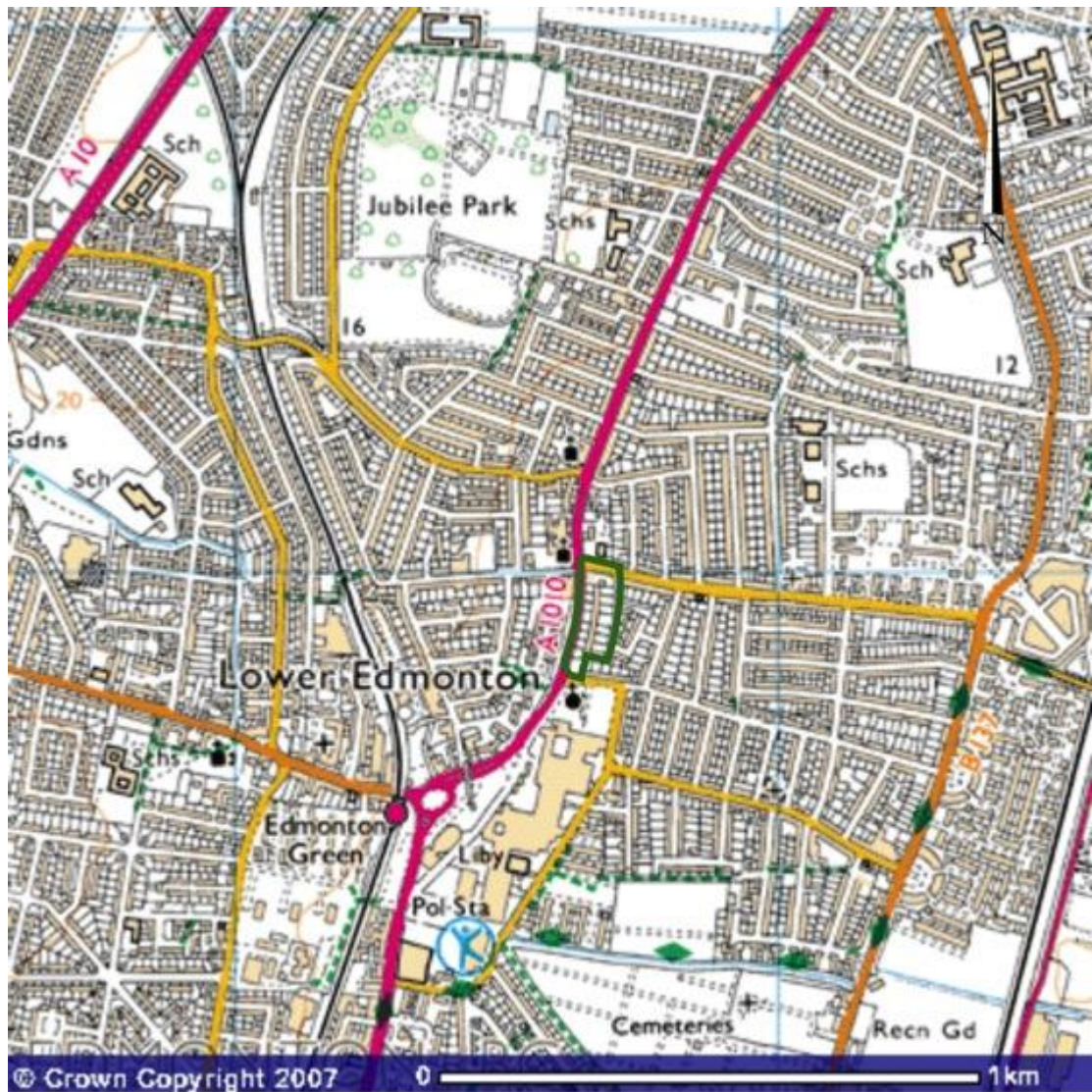
1.4 Planning policy framework

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 Crescent Conservation Area, comprises a single terrace of listed buildings, The Crescent, about 400m north of Edmonton Green: Nos. 84-132 (even) Hertford Road. The conservation area is located to the east of Hertford Road, between Bounces Road and Monmouth Road. East of The Crescent there is a narrow service road giving access to the crescent's rear gardens and yards, which forms the conservation area boundary. To the east is an area of 1930s housing and the 19th century terraces of Oxford Road. The Crescent is visible for some distance from north and south in Hertford Road, but its setting has been significantly changed since the early 19th century, as a result of the area's urbanisation and the widening of Hertford Road. On the west side of Hertford Road, long low blocks of good quality 1970s Council-built housing facing The Crescent provide a sympathetically-scaled setting.



The Crescent proposed conservation area character appraisal map 1: Location map

— Conservation area boundary

Figure 1: Location Map



Figure 2: Aerial photo showing Hertford Rd, Bounces Rd, Monmouth Rd , Oxford Rd and The Crescent

2.2 Historical development

- 2.2.1 Edmonton is derived from an Anglo-Saxon name, Adelmetone, from which period the earliest continuous settlement dates. Early settlements were probably along Fore Street in Upper Edmonton, at the junction of Silver Street, and Lower Edmonton, at the junction with Church Street, where the main concentrations of dwellings were established.
- 2.2.2 In the 16th century, the main centres of population were still Lower Edmonton, near the church, and Fore Street. From the 16th century onwards, growth was continuous. During the 18th century, the area was developed as a prosperous suburb providing clean air and space within easy reach of the city. By c1800, continuous frontage development and terraced housing was replacing single houses with large gardens, particularly along Fore Street and Edmonton Green, just to the south of the Conservation Area. Fore Street remained fashionable, but there were also many tenements and by 1800, Edmonton had lost much of its exclusivity.

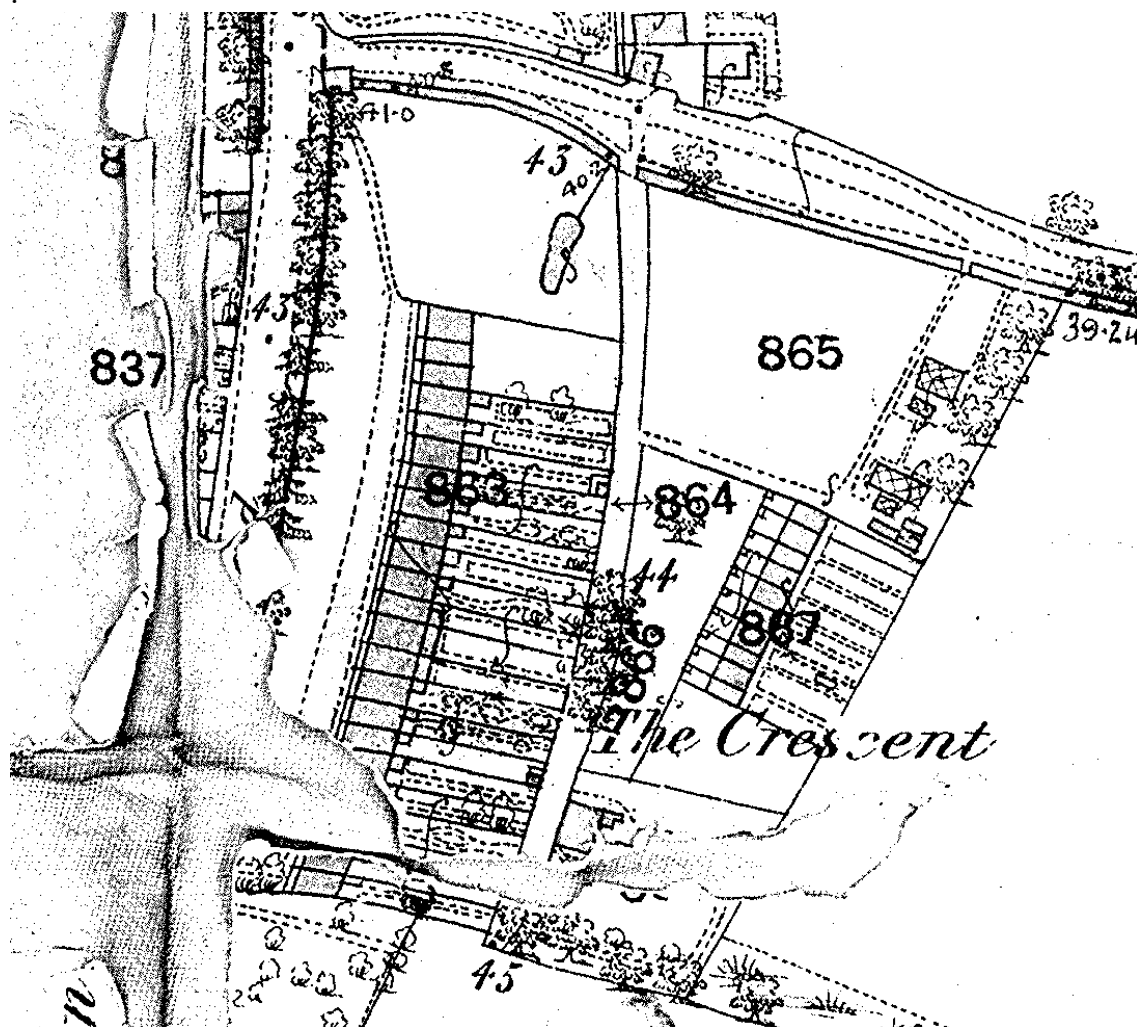


Figure 3: 1866 OS map: Carriage drive to front, and Crescent Cottages to rear

2.2.3 Development was slower in the adjoining Church Street ward, west of Edmonton Green, although this was the original centre of the settlement and the location of the parish church. In the early 19th century, the *Victoria County History*⁴ notes, "Building also spread eastward along Town Road and northward along Hertford Road. The most striking feature was the Crescent, 25 adjoining houses with lodges, erected between 1826 and 1851 as an unsuccessful speculation by a London solicitor" although his name is not recorded. The lodges are long gone, and the original extent of the terrace is slightly unclear. However, it was a wholly urban form of development in what was still generally a suburban area, and this may account for its lack of success.

2.2.4 Although broadly consistent in design, there are a number of variations in the details of the houses, suggesting that work may have stopped and started over some considerable period of time; in other words, after the carcasses of the houses were completed in the usual way, they proved hard

⁴ Baker T (ed) *Victoria County History of Middlesex, V.* (OUP 1976)

to sell, or even that the original developer failed. If, as seems likely, a single, symmetrical "palace-fronted" terrace was intended, with a central block and terminal pavilions expressed with a giant Corinthian order, it was never finished. The pedimented "central" block is not, in fact, central, and there is no terminal pavilion to the north. Six more houses to the north, including three for the terminal pavilion, would have been required to achieve symmetry. The window types, balcony railings, architraves and brick dressings such as window arches, vary between the houses, although there is no consistent pattern to these variations.

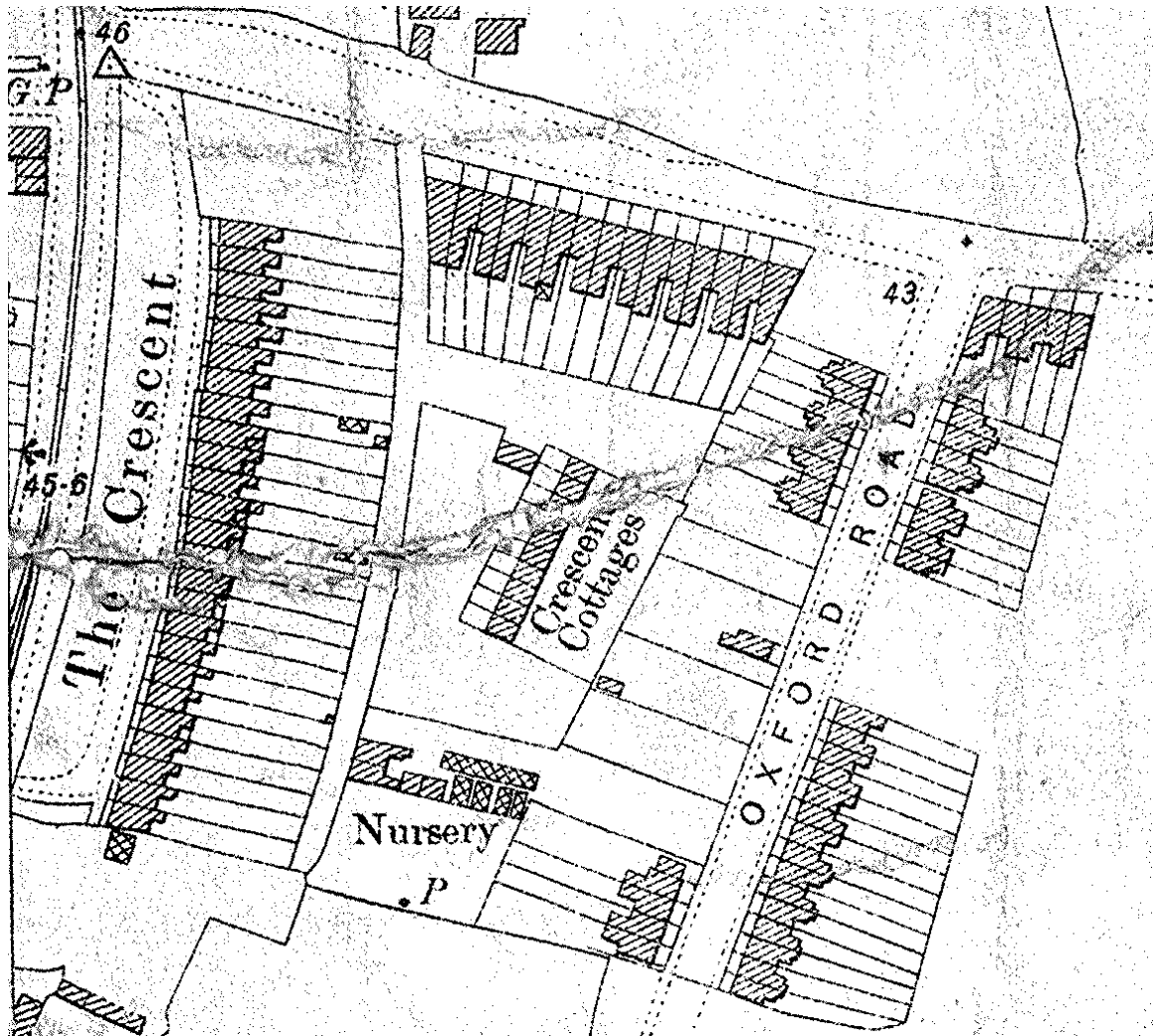


Figure 4: 1894 OS map: Oxford Road developed

2.2.5 The original site, as shown on the 1866 OS map, would have had room for the additional six houses at the north end, needed to complete the architectural composition of the terrace and the list description of 1954 refers to three houses on the left (i.e. at the northern end) as "now demolished". However, there is no evidence that they were ever built, only 25 houses being recorded on the 1866, 1894 and 1934 Ordnance Survey maps.

- 2.2.6 Originally, The Crescent faced an enclosed, communal front garden, with a carriageway serving the houses, entered past the lodges at the north and south ends of the site. Sometime between 1898 and 1934, the communal garden was replaced with long front gardens running from each house to the road. A pavement, running the length of the terrace immediately in front of the houses, survives; a few sections retaining York stone slabs that may be primary, but each garden is now separately fenced down to Hertford Road.
- 2.2.7 To the rear of The Crescent, there was a short row of smaller properties, called Crescent Cottages, with access from the lane at the bottom of The Crescent's rear gardens. By 1894, as the OS map shows, Oxford Road and the south side of Bounces Road to the north had been developed with by-law housing.
- 2.2.8 By 1934, Crescent Cottages had been re-built and re-named as Oxford Close, with a separate access from Oxford Road, and the former nursery gardens to the rear of The Crescent had become allotments. Subsequently, the housing at the corner of Hertford Road and Monmouth Road was demolished (presumably for road widening and sightline purposes) and this site remains vacant and grassed. The site at the other end appears to have remained undeveloped until the building of the present petrol station.

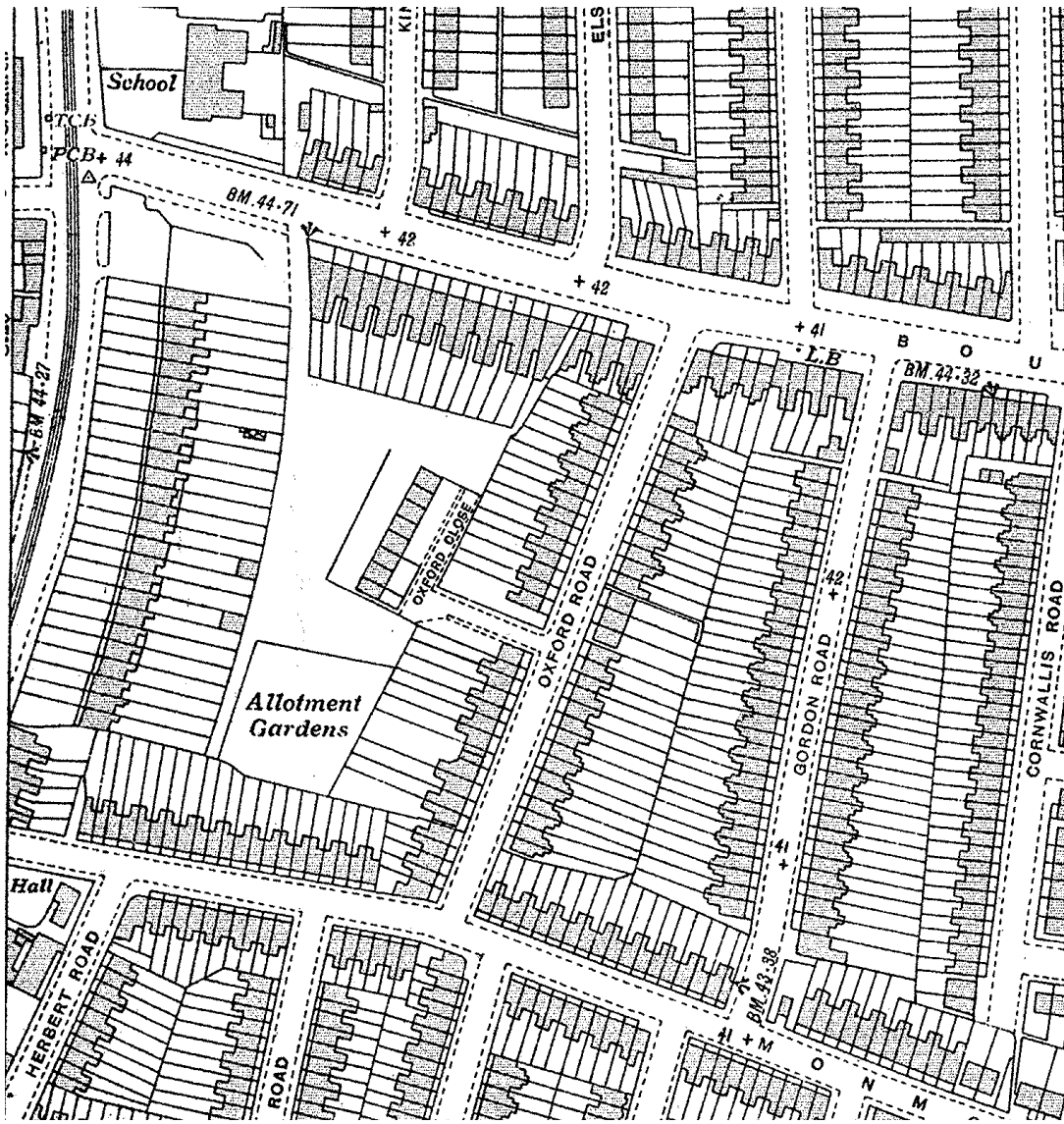
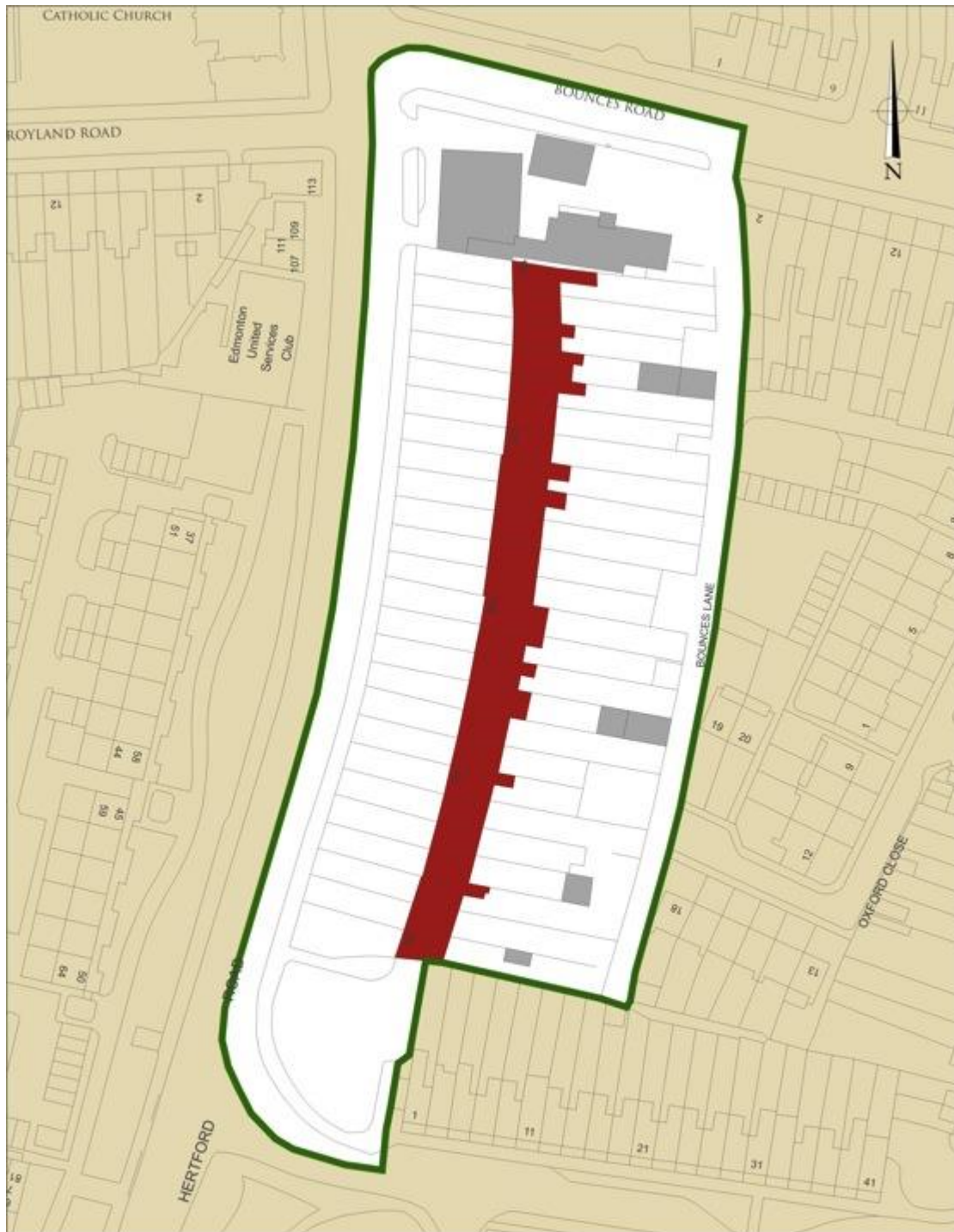


Figure 5: 1934 OS map: Showing front gardens replacing carriage drive

2.3 Archaeology

2.3.1 The Crescent Conservation Area falls within an Area of Archaeological Importance as identified in the Core Strategy (2010) and Draft Development Management Document (2013). The long history of occupation in the area makes it potentially of interest in archaeological terms, as traces of early settlement may survive under gardens and cellars. While there are no finds or features recorded in the Greater London Sites and Monuments record, this is probably due to the lack of systematic recording.

2.4 Character analysis



The Crescent proposed conservation area character appraisal map 2: historic development



Figure 6: Spatial Analysis

2.4.1 The Conservation Area is small, so the spatial experience is limited to long views of The Crescent from the northern and southern approaches along

Hertford Road. From the south, the group is clearly seen in views from Hertford Road near the bus interchange at Edmonton Green Shopping Centre, but from the north (Fig. 8) its impact is severely diminished by the intrusive canopy of the petrol station on the corner of Bounces Road. On the approach from the south (Fig. 7), the gardens and greenery and the domestic scale and detail of The Crescent are a welcome contrast to the dominance and the scale of transport-related infrastructure for vehicles, buses and trains around the road junction and bus station.



Figure 7: The Crescent from the south



Figure 8: The Crescent from the north



Figure 9: The Crescent from Hertford Road, showing bus shelter

2.4.2 Despite the change to the character of the setting with the loss of the original private carriage drive to The Crescent, and its replacement with

long private front gardens, the set-back from the road allows a good appreciation of The Crescent's scale and composition from the footway immediately in front of it. The recent improvements to the front gardens and their boundaries has restored a sympathetic setting to the terrace, across which there is a good view of the houses from the public realm, following the layout that dates from the late 19th or early 20th century. (The present day ownership of the terrace meant that it would have been very difficult to recreate the original communal garden setting.)

Activity and uses

2.4.3 The Crescent in residential use as houses or flats, with car parking off the access lane to the rear. The only commercial use in the Conservation Area is the petrol station on the corner of Bounces Road and Hertford Road. Half of the properties are in private ownership and the other half are owned by Newlon Housing Trust. The corner plot to the south of the group is now an unused open space, although, at the time of writing (2014), plans to improve it are being developed by the Council.

Qualities of buildings

2.4.4 The statutory list description is as follows:

“Early C19 segmental crescent. Brown brick. Stucco ground floor, entablature and blocking course. 3 storeys and basement. Central and terminal features of giant stucco Corinthian pilasters rising from 1st floor level. Central pediment with octagonal brick dummy lunette in tympanum. Each house 2 windows wide with round arched doorway and ground floor window, 1st floor French windows, with flat arches in round arched panels, leading on to balconies with cast iron railings. 3 end houses on left now demolished. Most windows are sashes with glazing bars. A few long first floor casements remain. Some cornices missing and replaced by plain cemented parapets. Nos. 84-132 (even) form a group.”



Figure 10: The Crescent, front gardens and central block (Photo LB Enfield July 2014)

- 2.4.5 The Crescent is notable for the quality of its design and construction in an area dominated by modern, less refined buildings, or buildings dating from the 19th and early 20th century which have been extensively degraded by neglect and careless alterations, as with much of Hertford Road to the north. Although it is not symmetrical, the scale and curve of the group, with its central pediment and giant pilasters, the long setback from Hertford Road, and the survival of much original fabric, including window and door joinery design, ensures that The Crescent remains impressive.
- 2.4.6 Modelling of The Crescent is achieved principally by the use of the giant pilasters in the centre and at the south end, and a three-unit wide pediment over what would have been the central block, if the terrace had been completed to a symmetrical design. The south end of the elevation is entirely plain. The north elevation has partly been rebuilt in Fletton brick and the chimney-breasts project from the party wall (behind which is the unheated entrance hall of the final house) revealing the unfinished construction.
- 2.4.7 On the front elevation, unity is maintained by the consistent window proportions to each storey, even though the window design and detail varies along the length. All of the details are consistent with a date in the second quarter of the 19th century, most likely 1830-40. The southern part, up to No 110, has small-pane glazing to all floors (the first floor having tall

sashes to balcony floor level), whereas towards the northern end there are sashes with a single horizontal or vertical glazing bar, and the first floor has full length opening casements with an overlight. The door and ground floor window design also changes along the length of The Crescent, with moulded surrounds appearing from No. 112 northwards. The balconies at the south end are separate for each house, linking the first floor windows, whereas within and northwards of the central group, they are mainly continuous and of a different design. However, there is, for example, a single balcony of the type used in the southern part of the terrace, at no 122, in the northern section, and Nos. 120 and 122 have six-over-six sashes to the first floor windows, whereas the neighbouring houses in both directions have casements. It seems unlikely therefore that the variations reflect the simple progression of the development from south to north, but rather, piecemeal completion of the houses, which were perhaps finished only as carcasses by the original builder.



Figure 11: Early 19th century wrought iron balcony, No. 84

2.4.8 The rear elevations are very plain. Many of the openings have been altered and the slightly unusual full-height parapet walls have been rebuilt in many places, suggesting a weakness in this design feature. Most of the windows retain their original openings and design with small-pane double-hung sashes. The 1866 OS map suggests that each house had a rear closet extension, but these must have been at basement level as few are visible from the rear lane. There are now numerous larger rear extensions, some

of which may be nearly contemporary with the terrace; others are clearly much later and of very poor quality.



Figure 12: North end of terrace, Nos. 132-126



Figure 13: Central block



Figure 14: Southern pavilion block



Figure 15: No. 98, with small pane glazing

The public realm

2.4.9 The rear access road, Bounces Lane, is an adopted public highway to which there is unrestricted access. It has been reconstructed and the rear gardens of some properties have been recently improved with fencing and bin enclosures as part of the regeneration scheme. The empty plot at the southern end of the terrace, where buildings were demolished for road improvements, is in local authority ownership. Following the improvement of the front gardens and the installation of new railings to Hertford Road, the most valuable public realm enhancements (in addition to the planned improvement of the corner plot with better landscaping and boundary treatments) would be the relocation of the bus shelter to improve views of The Crescent and its setting. In this context, the internally illuminated traffic sign erected on the footway outside the northern end of the listed terrace is also unfortunate.

Green spaces and trees

2.4.10 The front gardens are mainly grassed, and they make a valuable contribution to the setting of the listed buildings. There are a few semi-mature trees to the front of the houses and several younger trees. There are a number of mature trees to the rear.

Loss, intrusion and damage

2.4.11 The loss of the original carriage drive altered the setting of The Crescent, but the present, simply grassed and railed front gardens are appropriate and sympathetic to the listed buildings. The very intrusive and crudely inappropriate design of the petrol station adjoining its north end severely affects all views of The Crescent, while the southern corner has represented a missed opportunity to create a positive setting on the approach from the south. Unsympathetic alterations (mainly rear extensions) have a limited impact on the appearance of the terrace, which is seen, as was always intended, principally from Hertford Road. The poor quality 1930s terraced housing on Oxford Close is a sadly unprepossessing neighbour.



Figure 16: Petrol filling station, corner Bounces Road and Hertford Road



Figure 17: Railings and plinth wall, 2013-14



The Crescent proposed conservation area character appraisal map 3: character analysis

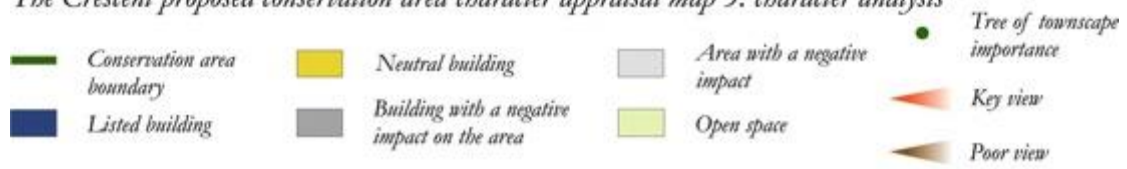


Figure 18: Character analysis



Figure 19: Rear elevation showing later extensions and altered fenestration



Figure 20: Improved rear parking area and mature tree (Photo: LB Enfield Dec 2013)

General condition

2.4.12 The external features of the most of the houses are in good condition following the Council-funded enhancement programme in 2012-13. The remaining houses will be renovated by Newlon Housing Association in 2014-15. Many of the houses retain their 19th century railings with foliate heads to their front steps and areas, and a few have features, such as boot scrapers, of the same date. The front gardens are now divided by plain modern steel railings, and the boundary with Hertford Road has spear-topped railings of traditional design.

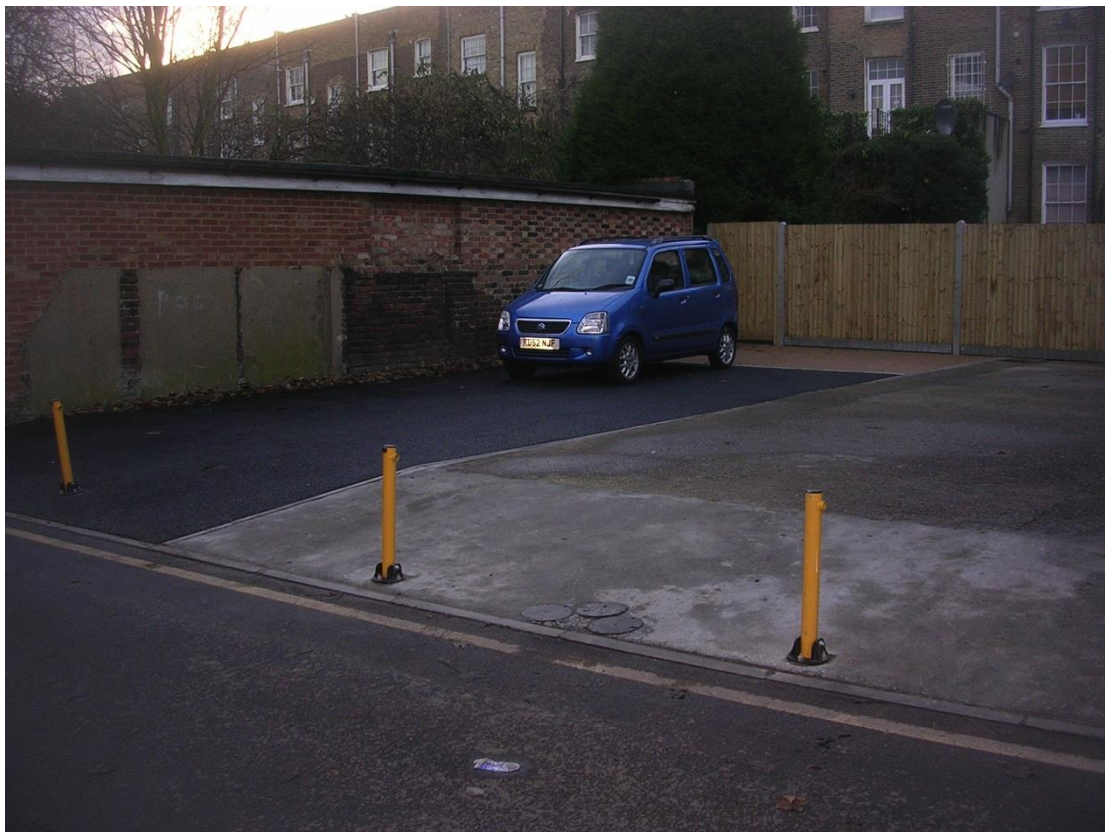


Figure 21: 19th century garden wall with 20th century brickwork above improved parking area and recent fencing to dustbin compound (Photo: LB Enfield Dec 2013)

2.4.13 To the rear, some of the gardens have been tidied up, with new fencing enclosing dustbin compounds and parking areas. The improvements are ongoing, as part of the Newlon Housing Trust works. Only fragments of the original brick boundary walls remain, almost all incorporated in later walling or much altered.

2.4.14 *Problems and pressures*

- The petrol station seriously detracts from views of The Crescent and constitutes an inappropriate use and design in such close proximity to listed buildings.

- The plot at the corner of Monmouth Road remains to be properly landscaped and managed as part the regeneration scheme.
- The setting of The Crescent at the rear remains to be comprehensively improved with the completion of the Newlon Housing Trust works to properties in their ownership.



Figure 22: 19th century railings and boot-scraper

3 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

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

- The focus of the Conservation Area is a grade II listed early 19th century crescent of terraced 4-storey houses of a form and quality rare in this borough, and unique in this area at the time of building;
- The Crescent is an interesting survival representing an era in the early 19th century when Edmonton was a fashionable semi-rural suburb of London attractive to wealthy businessmen. This followed its popularity with the gentry in the 18th century, when the larger houses in Fore Street were built.
- The probable pattern of development of The Crescent in two or more phases over quite a long period between the 1820s and 1840s is evident from the changes in design between the houses. This is most noticeable in the differences in fenestration, the architraves to the ground floor openings, and the balcony railings, and demonstrates the variety of architectural fashion within a standard London house type over the period of building.

4 SUMMARY OF ISSUES

4.1.1 Following the building repairs and enhancement works during 2013-14, the street elevation and many of the buildings are now in an improved condition; some remain to be improved, but it is anticipated that this will take place during 2014-15. The setting of the Conservation Area, particularly the wider urban context, and the negative impact of the petrol station, remain as issues. The regeneration scheme has been a key contributor to the Council's planned investment in the regeneration of the wider Edmonton area surrounding The Crescent, as well as its immediate setting.

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

- *Negative impact of petrol station:* Re-development of the petrol station site with a more appropriate building to complement The Crescent is needed. This could possibly take the form of extending (or "completing") The Crescent with further matching terrace houses to improve its visual balance and make more sense of the existing design

and proportions. A development brief for the site should be prepared by the Council in line with its current policies.

- *Open space on corner of Hertford Road and Monmouth Road:* The open space at the southern end needs to be properly landscaped and managed. It is understood that proposals to do so are in hand at the time of writing.
- *Poorly sited street signage and bus shelter:* prominent signage has been added in front of the terrace since 2008 and the bus shelter remains. It would be desirable to relocate these to less intrusive positions or minimise the size of any new signage.
- *Rear Gardens:* Where they have not already taken place, improvements are needed to re-instate and improve boundaries to distinguish garden and parking areas, provide better dustbin storage and provide better planting where appropriate.
- *Rear Boundary walls:* Many remaining sections of original brick boundary wall at the rear are in very poor condition and need urgent repair.

5 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND CONTACT DETAILS

5.1 Bibliography

The following reference works were used in the preparation of this appraisal:

Baker T (ed) *Victoria County History of Middlesex V*. (OUP 1976)

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

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

Whitaker, CW *Account of the Urban District of Enfield* (London, George Bell, 1911)

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

Development Management Document 2014

5.2 Contact details:

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EN1 3XE

6 APPENDICES

6.1 Listed buildings

Nos. 84-132 (even)(The Crescent) Hertford Road, Edmonton, N9 (grade II)

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 e.g. 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 and review by MC, maps by Richard Peat and photographs by DMP [unless otherwise indicated]

August 2014

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