

# Ponders End Conservation Area Management Proposals

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# **PONDERS END FLOUR MILLS CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**

## **THE MANAGEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS IN ENFIELD**

### **The Purpose of Conservation Area Management Proposals**

The management proposals set out a framework for managing change in, and the conservation and enhancement of, Enfield's conservation areas, to ensure that they retain the special qualities that led to their designation. It helps to fulfil the Council's 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. These proposals are particularly relevant where there is pressure for development and where cumulative minor changes may be affecting the character or appearance of the conservation area.

### **English Heritage Guidance on Management Proposals**

English Heritage's guidance on the management of conservation areas is contained in *Understanding Place: Designation, Appraisal and Management of Conservation Areas* (2011)<sup>1</sup>. Although this predates the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), it is the most up-to-date guidance available. There is no reason to think that its advice on conservation area management (which is largely carried over from earlier guidance published in 2006<sup>2</sup>) is likely to change substantially.

### **Enfield's Planning Policies**

The key national and local planning and development management policies affecting conservation areas are set out in section 1.4 of the conservation area character appraisals. The conservation area appraisals and management proposals have been approved by Enfield Council. The appraisals form part of the "evidence base" for the conservation policies in Enfield's Local Plan. They support the planning policy framework of the Core Strategy and the Development Management Document. The management proposals will be incorporated in the Enfield Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in due course and as such they will be given considerable weight in the determination of planning applications affecting the conservation areas.

### **Planning policy delivery**

Since the conservation area character appraisals were published in 2006, the Council's Core Strategy has been adopted (2010), which includes over-arching policies for the protection of the Borough's historic built environment (Core

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<sup>1</sup> Available from English Heritage's website, [www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> English Heritage *Guidance on the management of conservation areas* (2006).

Policy 31). A submission draft Development Management Document, containing detailed policies for the determination of planning applications, is awaiting final adoption in November 2014.

Annual monitoring of conservation areas has been undertaken by the Enfield Conservation Advisory Group and local societies and reported to the Council. The outcomes of this monitoring have been incorporated in the revised character appraisals and management proposals as appropriate.

## **Grants**

Subject to available resources, the Council will work with partners to provide carefully targeted grant-aid to historic buildings and conservation areas, including, where appropriate, English Heritage and Heritage Lottery Fund grants.

## **Design and other Guidance**

The Council's forthcoming Enfield Design Guide will provide advice on alterations to residential properties, including extensions, roof alterations, architectural detailing and appropriate materials. The Design Guide will also include area-specific design advice and it will incorporate these conservation area management proposals. The Council will help owners and their agents to achieve acceptable proposals within conservation areas through the pre-application advice service<sup>3</sup>. In some cases, applicants for major developments will be required to support their applications with a master plan.

### Planning Decisions

Planning applications affecting conservation areas will be determined with regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Enfield's Local Plan, the approved conservation area management proposals and the emerging Enfield Design Guide, and having regard to advice from the Council's Conservation Advisory Group

In line with the NPPF and Enfield's Policy Draft DMD 44 and supporting Appendix 6 applicants for development affecting a heritage asset or its setting should provide a Heritage Statement, describing the significance of any heritage assets affected by development proposals, and the contribution made by their setting, as part of any application affecting a property within a conservation area. The Council will not validate applications where the extent of the impact of the proposal on the significance of any heritage assets affected cannot adequately be understood from the application and supporting documents. The Heritage Statement should contain the information required to assess the impact of the proposals. Detailed requirements are set out in the Appendix on Heritage Statements. (Draft DMD 6.5.7)

## **Enforcement**

The Council will continue to ensure that the planning system is not abused. Planning enforcement by the Council's Planning Enforcement Team will prioritise unauthorised works to listed buildings, protected trees and within conservation areas. The Council will always seek to persuade owners to restore and put right any offending works, but will, where necessary, take enforcement action to achieve those aims. Where there is a demonstrable public interest in so doing, offenders may be subject to criminal prosecution.

Unauthorised works requiring planning permission undertaken four years or more before discovery by the authorities are deemed approved (there is no such limitation on unauthorised works requiring listed building consent).

Dated photographic records of buildings within conservation areas will be used, where available, to provide evidence for enforcement action.

Where appropriate the Council will also use its powers under S215 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 to address properties that adversely affect the amenity of a neighbourhood.

## **Section 106 Agreements**

The Council will continue to use Section 106 Agreements to assist in conserving and enhancing its conservation areas. These are agreements between the Council and a developer, whereby the developer undertakes works or makes a contribution (financial or in kind), to the Council to offset or mitigate any adverse impact of the development on the surrounding social or physical infrastructure. Where a development has an impact on a conservation area, the Council will require the developer to enter into a s.106 Agreement where, on balance, adverse impacts cannot be completely mitigated through the development itself. Receipts from such agreements may be used, as appropriate, to help deliver the management proposals set down in this document

In the future, once adopted (anticipated 2014) where appropriate the Council will also make use of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), to help fund the provision of infrastructure necessary as a result of development. CIL can contribute to the provision of community infrastructure, including cultural facilities, which could be developed within an historic building or other heritage asset.

## **Highways and the Public Realm**

The Council will respect the special character of conservation areas when undertaking environment improvements to highways and the public realm, including new facilities such as cycle paths, having regard to conservation area character appraisals and these management proposals. Excessive street furniture and standard traffic management features such as railings, coloured surfaces and carriageway markings can be particularly harmful in conservation areas. Wherever possible, the Council will remove unnecessary street clutter in conservation areas. Street patterns that contribute to the special character of conservation areas and historic street and footway surfacing will be retained where possible.

The Council will, wherever possible, use its planning powers and agreements with developers (such as s106, s207 and s.38 Agreements) to secure additional funding to ensure a high standard of works to the public realm within conservation areas. The Council has approved Streetscape Policy and Guidance<sup>4</sup> for the management and maintenance of the public realm, including that within conservation areas.

Street lighting throughout the Borough has been renewed since 2006 under a PFI contract. Where street lighting in a conservation area has been replaced to a non-standard specification, reflecting the special character or appearance of the area, this standard will be maintained in any future replacement scheme.

## **Open Spaces**

In line with the Core Strategy, the Council will protect and enhance existing open spaces in the Borough. Open spaces play a key role in the character of many conservation areas and where they are heritage assets (such as many open spaces in conservation areas), they will be preserved and enhanced.

## **Trees in Conservation Areas**

The Council will continue to recognise the importance of and protect trees in conservation areas, whether in streets and parks, or on private land.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires owners to give six weeks notification of any intended works to trees on private land within conservation areas. This is to allow councils to make an assessment of whether the tree in question has sufficient amenity value to be worthy of protection through the serving of a Tree Preservation Order. The Council will ensure that all such trees reported will be carefully assessed and any that are deemed worthy will be so protected.

The Council will ensure that any future necessary replanting will be with species that accord with the prevailing character of the street or area. The Council will continue to manage the growth potential of certain pollarded species.

In conservation areas, trees will be replaced on a like-for-like basis wherever possible, particularly where the replacement is one of a group or avenue of identical species. If possible, modern improved varieties of the species will be chosen where that will reduce the risk to adjacent properties. However, where replanting with the same species is impractical for sound arboricultural reasons, appropriate alternative species will be chosen.

The Council has adopted a Corporate Tree Management Strategy, which provide the basis for works to trees in streets, public parks and elsewhere in the public realm, including those within conservation areas.<sup>5</sup>

### **Monitoring Change**

The Council will monitor change in the Borough's conservation areas, with reference to the conservation area character appraisals and management proposals and in partnership with the Conservation Advisory Group

### **Monitoring the Effectiveness of this Document**

The Council will aim to ensure that the management proposals are kept up-to-date and relevant through five-yearly reviews of the conservation area character appraisals and management proposals.

### **Summary of special interest**

The key factors that give the Ponders End Conservation Area (hereafter the Conservation Area) its special interest are summarised in **Section 3.0 (p.29) of the Character Appraisal**. These are the things that make up the character and appearance of the area which it is desirable to "preserve or enhance" through management action.

### **Conservation Area boundaries**

The current boundaries are confirmed. Following the original appraisal, the boundary was amended in 2008 to exclude the road intersection formerly within the north west corner of the Conservation Area.

### **Summary of issues**

The particular issues affecting the Conservation Area at present, which need to be addressed, are summarised in **Section 4.0 (p.29) of the Character Appraisal**, as follows:

- *There is an evident need to record the historic and architectural interest of the site and to update the list entries.*
- *Some historic infrastructure urgently needs repair*
- *The water-meadows and water-courses may need enhanced management measures to improve them visually and as habitats.*
- *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.*
- *Trees make a strong contribution to the character of the conservation area, for their intrinsic value and in softening the impact of the modern structures*

### **Priorities for action**

Based on the detailed assessment provided by the Ponders End Flour Mills Conservation Area Character Appraisal, and the problems and pressures identified by it, the following management actions are proposed in the Conservation Area in order to preserve and/or enhance its special interest:

### **Buildings at Risk**

English Heritage's Register of Buildings at Risk in London contains no entries within the Ponders End Flour Mills Conservation Area. Some of the walls (garden walls and those at the weir) are, however, at risk.

- The roots of the tree immediately inside the south angle of the walled garden are causing serious cracking to the boundary retaining wall (for which some remedial action, insertion of iron straps, has been taken in the past), but a more permanent solution needs to be found as the future prospects of the tree and the wall appear to be incompatible, and the wall is next to a public footpath and road.
- The walls at the weir are in need of re-pointing and repair. It is understood from Wright's management that this is the responsibility of Thames Water, who have so far failed to respond to request to repair them. Wright's would



welcome support in getting this work done and a letter from the Council emphasising the Conservation Area status and historic importance of the site could be helpful.

### **Development pressures/opportunities**

The site continues in the ownership of the Wright family, who also live there, and there appear to be no current development pressures. The flour-mixing and packaging operation in the listed mill will shortly be moved to another unrelated site, but there are no current proposals to make changes to the building, or to establish a new use.

### **Architectural detail**

Development affecting listed and locally listed buildings and buildings identified as making a positive contribution to the character of the area, and buildings affecting their setting, should normally use matching traditional historic materials and detailing. Mass produced modern materials such as uPVC and concrete roof tiles, will not normally be appropriate within the conservation area.

In the Wright's Flour Mill site, the materials of the modern industrial units contrast strongly with the listed buildings, and are appropriate for their purpose, but alterations and repairs to the 18th and 19th century buildings themselves should be made using traditional materials.

### **Street furniture, signage and traffic management**

There are no public roads or rights of way within the site, and street furniture is mostly limited to that required for traffic management (including HGVs and private cars), directions, the safety of pedestrians, and lighting.

- The appearance of the Conservation Area would be improved by using more sympathetic designs and materials, particularly for barriers along the entrance road.
- The entrance area, the lodge, security barrier and hut area, and car park would greatly benefit from re-design of the signage, ground surfaces, fences, and traffic management measures in order to achieve an overall quality sympathetic to that of the listed buildings on the main publicly-visible approach to the site, and thus acknowledge the historic value and rarity of the site.

### **Cycle paths**

The route and detailed design of new routes such as the "Greenway" cycle path should have particular regard for the conservation of heritage assets including listed buildings, their settings, and registered parks and gardens; and for the protection of landscapes and views of heritage merit. Surfacing materials and colours should be in keeping with the character and appearance of the conservation area, and new signage and street furniture kept to a minimum.

## **Boundaries**

The northern boundary has been revised since the first appraisal to exclude the traffic intersection. No further boundary changes are recommended.

## **Parking**

There are no parking areas for the public; visitor parking is controlled by on-site staff.

- HGVs are usually parked between the Mill House and Mill, and the open area around the river; this detracts from the character of the area, viewed from the mill and (where visible to the public) from the north east, but this is an active industrial site and it is unlikely that alternative arrangements can be made.

## **Open spaces**

A major part of the site is open, and consists of rough grass and water-meadow - recently cleared of scrub - bounding the two streams of the River Lea around which the mill complex is arranged.

- It may be possible for the area to be improved as a wildlife habitat through advice from relevant agencies. Vermin control is important on this site (with regard to hygiene) and this appears to be the major concern in management of the surrounding land. The Council may be able to provide advice on habitat management to ensure reasonable diversity while restricting vermin.

## **Trees and planting**

- There is a valuable old Mulberry tree within the southern boundary of the walled garden, next to the tree causing damage to the boundary wall, and the two trees should receive specialist attention to ensure the survival of the Mulberry and the structural safety of the wall.
- All trees on the site make a major contribution to its character, but the protection of those on the perimeter of the entrance road, in the car park, and to the north of the complex is particularly important for their softening effect on the larger industrial buildings, as well as their intrinsic value.

## **Proposals for listing/local listing**

- 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 in Greater London as a surviving industrial and domestic group, it would be desirable for the listing of the whole of the Wright's site to be reviewed with a view to adding the early 19th century buildings (the lodge, the garden buildings and the kitchen garden walls) to the statutory list. The locally listed structures – the garden wall to the east of the access drive, and the weir walls – should be protected by statutory listing in their own right.
- For the time being, unlisted C19th buildings on the site should be added to the local list; currently, they have no individual recognition or protection, although

they are statutorily protected by virtue of being within the curtilage of the listed group.

- The walled kitchen garden could be considered for inclusion in English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest; even if it is not considered suitable for inclusion, the London Parks and Gardens Trust or the Garden History Society could be asked to record the walled garden and suggest possible sources of grant aid, volunteer labour, or design advice if the owners would be interested in this.

### **Monitoring change**

During the lifetime of this appraisal, the Council will work in partnership with the Conservation Advisory Group to monitor and record the management of the Conservation Area (within available resources), to:

- Survey, review and monitor works and development, with regard to the heritage significance of the area as set out in the appraisal (a programme for undertaking these tasks will be agreed annually with the Council's Heritage Officer).
- Review and monitor the design quality of proposals for which planning permission is sought
- Review appeal decisions
- Review the maintenance and safeguarding of highways, trees and greenery

### **Article 4(2) Direction**

There is no Article 4(2) direction within the Conservation Area.