

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Leytonstone Conservation Area

INTRODUCTION

This document is an “Appraisal” document as defined by English Heritage in their guidance document “Conservation Area Appraisals”.

The purpose of the Appraisal is, to quote from the English Heritage document, to ensure that “the special interest justifying designation is clearly defined and analysed in a written appraisal of its character and appearance”. This provides “a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for development plan policies and development control decisions” and also forms the basis for further work on design guidance and enhancement proposals.

This Appraisal describes and analyses the particular character of the Leytonstone Conservation Area, which was designated by the Council in 1990. This includes the more obvious aspects such as buildings, spaces, and architectural development, as well as an attempt to portray the often less tangible qualities which make the area “special”.

PLANNING CONTEXT

(i) **National Policies** – Individual buildings “of special architectural or historic interest” have enjoyed a means of statutory protection since the 1950’s, but the concept of protecting areas of special merit, rather than individual buildings, was first brought under legislative control with the passing of the Civic Amenities Act in 1967. A crucial difference between the two is that Listed buildings are assessed against national criteria, with Lists being drawn up by English Heritage. Conservation Areas by contrast, are designated by Local Authorities on more local criteria, and are therefore very varied in character. The statutory basis for the designation of Conservation Areas is to be found in the Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which places a duty on the local authority to designate as Conservation Areas any “areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The Act also places a duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas in its area. However, general guidance on the designation of Conservation Areas is included in Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) “Planning for the Historic Environment”, which sets out the Government’s policies on the historic built environment in general. By 2005 there were eleven designated Conservation Areas in Waltham Forest.

(ii) **Local policies** – Legislation and guidance has emphasised the importance of including firm Conservation Area policies within the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), which must in turn be based on a clear definition of what constitutes that “special architectural or historic interest” which warranted designation in the first place. Policy BHE13 in the “Built and historic environment” chapter of the adopted Unitary Development Plan 2006 is the relevant Council policy concerning the designation and subsequent control of Conservation Areas within the borough. In addition Policies 4B.11, 12 & 13 of the Consolidated London Plan (2008) produced by the Greater London Authority sets out the Mayors objectives for London’s built heritage, Heritage conservation and Historic conservation-led regeneration.

DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST

(i) Location and population:

The Leytonstone Conservation Area is situated in the south east of the borough, and at its heart is the 19th century parish church of St Andrew’s. The area is located on the high ground on the eastern edge of the Lea Valley, some 100 feet above the level of the river Lea. It abuts onto substantial surviving remnants of the great forest of Waltham, now renamed Epping Forest and protected for public use by the Epping Forest Act of 1878. For centuries until the creation of Greater London in 1965 Leyton was part of south west Essex, and that part of the parish near to an old milestone at the junction of Hollybush Hill & New Wanstead became known as Leytonstone. Today it is within the London Borough of Waltham Forest, an amalgamation of the old Essex boroughs of Chingford, Walthamstow and Leyton.

The Conservation Area abuts onto the Whipps Cross Road (A114) which links Lea Bridge Road and the High Road Leytonstone (A11), the historic route into London along which the hamlet of Leytonstone developed. The old Epping & Ongar railway line (now the Central Line) was a fundamental catalyst for the 19th development of the area, and passes just three hundred metres to the southeast.

The population of modern day Leyton is estimated at just over 85,000, of which just under 300 live within the designated Conservation Area.

(ii) Origins and development of settlement:

Settlement in the Leyton area probably started in the Saxon period when subsistence farming began along the banks of the river Lea and in clearings in the great forest of Waltham. By the time of the Domesday Book in 1086 Leyton, or Leintuna, largely consisted of three Manors; Leyton, Marks and Ruckholt, the latter including the hamlet of Leytonstone, but overall it had a population of little more than 40 people.

Leyton was and remained for centuries a rural country parish in south west Essex, consisting of two hamlets, one along Leyton High Road around Leyton Green, and the other along Leytonstone High Road from the Green Man to a little beyond the Red Lion, with smaller groups of cottages elsewhere. Until the 18th century the main occupation of the area was agriculture, but gradually the scenic qualities of the area, its relatively close proximity to London, and the ease of access to the City afforded by Leytonstone High Road had made the area an increasingly attractive location for

wealthy merchants, businessmen etc to settle, like the Cottons, Buxtons &, Charringtons. Their large houses such as Wallwood, Leytonstone House, Leyspring etc, with their spacious landscaped gardens were set in an attractive landscape of forest, fields and marsh.

The Wallwood estate originally comprised some 160 acres, of which the house and grounds occupied 40 acres, the rest being farmed. A house had stood on the site since the late 17thc, and the last house was erected by William Cotton (1786 – 1866) inventor, merchant, philanthropist, and Governor of the Bank of England from 1842 – 1845. It was erected shortly after purchasing the site from the Crown in 1817 and was designed by John Walters and built by Thomas Cubitt. The house stood where the junction of Chadwick and Teesdale Road is today.

Less prestigious villas and terraces of houses were also erected along the forest edges during the 18thc century, including a row of 12 “middle class” dwellings erected in 1767 along what is now Whipps Cross Road, originally called Assembly Row, later Forest Place. It was named after a 17thc Assembly House standing at the southern end thought to have been used by London merchants at the time of the Great Fire of 1666. Assembly Row stood on the forest edge of the Wallwood House estate.

By the beginning of the 19th century the population of Leyton parish was still only 2500, but with the construction of the Eastern Counties Railway between Stratford and Loughton in 1856 a period of rapid residential development began which saw the break up of the large estates and the transformation of the area into a Victorian suburb of London by the turn of the century. By 1911 the population had risen dramatically to just under 125,000.

The Wallwood estate itself was sold for development in 1874 for £12,500 and plans laid before the Local Board in 1883. Sir Henry Cotton, son of William Cotton, generously donated a plot of land at what is now the Colworth Rd/Forest Glade end of the estate for the erection of a new church, necessary to meet the needs of the expanding population which had rapidly outgrown the capacity of St John's. This is the site of St Andrew's church and the former St Andrew's Hall.

Building on the Wallwood estate itself was delayed until the 1890's due to a long and costly boundary dispute with the adjoining Fillebrook estate along the line of the current Colworth Road. Once finally resolved however development proceeded rapidly and by the turn of the century both the Fillebrook estate and the Wallwood Park estate as it was called were largely completed. The latter was largely built by Leytonstone builder Joseph Holland, and a condition of the sale of plots to Holland was that the prime cost of houses erected by him was to be not less than £400 for detached, £325 semi-detached, and £300 for terraced houses.

The Fillebrook Estate was actually the name given by the developer Charles Sansom to the residential development of the 119 acre Wallwood Farm site, which lay immediately to the west of the Wallwood Estate of which it had once formed a substantial part. Development had begun in 1860 with a few large and ostentatious properties backing onto the railway in Fillebrook Road (now Kingswood Road) which were demolished when the M11 Link road was constructed. This original plan for an estate of really large houses never caught on however, and accordingly less ambitious

plans were made for smaller but still substantial properties which were then considered to better suit the pockets of prospective purchasers. Plots were sold off with a Covenant which required that all front gardens should have a minimum depth of 30 feet and this was maintained throughout, with the exception of a few modest cottages in Forest Road at the very extremity of the estate.

By the early 20th century the transformation of the area was largely completed when Wallwood House itself was demolished in 1905, and the last farm in the area; Forest Farm, was demolished and replaced by Leyton High School for Girls in 1911 (now called Leytonstone School). Along Whipps Cross Road the Assembly House had survived until the late 19th when it was demolished and replaced by the red brick terraced properties originally called 1-12 Assembly Villas (now 107 – 129 Whipps Cross Rd) erected by Charles Reed in 1881/2. Several of the adjacent Georgian houses of Assembly Row were also demolished and replaced during this period, most notably the central pair of houses which were replaced in 1896 by the terrace 145 – 151 Whipps Cross Road, which now forms the Sir Alfred Hitchcock Hotel. The last property in the row, which stood on the corner of Forest Glade, became the First Church of Christ Scientist in 1906, and along with its neighbour was finally demolished and replaced by a purpose-designed church building in 1937. This survives today as the Hindu Temple.

Similar intensive development had also occurred in Walthamstow to the north and West Ham to the south during this period, and by 1934 Leyton and Leytonstone were simply part of the extensive suburban sprawl of “London over the border”. In 1965 the incorporation of the municipal borough of Leyton into the new London Borough of Waltham Forest finally severed it administratively from Essex with which it had been linked historically and geographically for over a thousand years.

The development of Leytonstone from the 1860’s onwards owed little to the early population centres, and little now survives from the former hamlets. Sitting astride the old boundary between the Wallwood Park and Fillebrook estates and including the old Assembly Row, the Leytonstone Conservation Area contains an interesting diversity of buildings spanning a period in excess of two hundred and fifty years, which echoes the transformation of the wider area from a small rural community to a suburb of modern London.

(iii) The prevailing or former uses within the area and their historic patronage, and the influence of these on the plan form and building types:

As stated above, until the mid to late 19th century Leytonstone was still largely a rural “village” community at the top end of the High Road, and the area along Whipps Cross Road contained just the Wallwood estate, the Assembly House dating from the 17th and the “middle class” Georgian houses of Assembly Row. To the north and east lay the open forest land and to the west, beyond the landscaped grounds of Wallwood Park, was the open farmland of Wallwood Farm.

Some of these early buildings survive today, whilst many others have been demolished to make way for more intensive developments over the years. The

Wallwood estate and Wallwood Farm were sold off and developed for streets of Victorian housing by the end of the century following the arrival of the railway. These adjoining “estates” contained a variety of Victorian house types, from modest cottages to large detached villas, and a similar variety of architectural styles, although a fairly standard range of materials was used, typical of most London suburbs of the period. Neither the architecture nor layout of this mass residential development however had anything to do with what had been there previously, and the house types on both the Wallwood and Fillebrook estates are largely representative examples of what the speculative developer considered most appropriate and profitable for the area in the latter half of the 19th century.

(iv) The archaeological significance and potential of the area including identification of any scheduled ancient buildings:

The Conservation Area contains no scheduled ancient monuments, and is not identified as an Archaeological Priority Zone (APZ) within the Council’s Unitary Development Plan (first review) 2006.

The Council however recognises that archaeology is an important way in which greater knowledge about the history of the borough can be discovered, and recognises that opportunities to carry out archaeological excavations usually only arise during the course of new development.

The Council therefore seeks to encourage the conservation, protection and enhancement of the archaeological heritage of the borough, and for any site identified by a recognised archaeological authority, the archaeological significance of the site will be considered. The Council may require a preliminary archaeological site evaluation before development proposals are considered.

The Council will seek to ensure that the most important archaeological remains and their settings are permanently preserved in situ, and if necessary are made available for public viewing.

(v) The architectural and historic qualities of the buildings and the contribution they make to the special interest of the Conservation Area:

The Conservation Area contains an interesting and eclectic mix of buildings including a Grade II Listed 19thc church, a locally listed neo-Tudor style school, six Listed Georgian houses, a pub/hotel in a converted terrace of late Victorian houses, a 1930’s neo-Georgian style “temple” and numerous Victorian houses and cottages of varied architectural styles and scale.

The oldest surviving buildings within the Conservation Area, and some of the most important, are the six **Georgian houses** from the original Assembly Row, now **Nos 133, 135, 143, 153, 155 and 157 Whipps Cross Road**. Leytonstone contained fewer larger residences than Leyton in the 18th century but numerous more modest houses were erected along the forest edge including these “middle class” dwellings. They

were originally two and three storey houses of brown brick with red dressings, some terraced and some detached, with mansard roofs, sash windows, pedimented timber doorcases, and in a few cases two-storey projecting bays. Six survive today in reasonably original condition, and in recognition of their special architectural or historic interest they are Grade II Listed buildings. A seventh, No137, was extensively altered in the 19thc and subsequently converted to flats in the 1970's, effectively concealing its 18thc origins.

St Andrew's Church originated in 1882 when an iron building was first erected on a site which had been donated by Sir Henry Cotton of Wallwood House. It was built as a chapel of ease to the parish church of St John the Baptist, situated on the High Road/Church Lane junction, which had become increasingly overcrowded as a result of the vast increases in the local population at the time. A new parish was subsequently formed in 1887, and in the same year the first part of the permanent new church of St Andrew was opened, comprising the chancel and part of the aisled nave. The foundation stone had been laid by Prince Arthur the Duke of Connaught in June the previous year. The remainder of the nave and the pinnacled west front was not completed until 1893. St Andrew's church was designed by the eminent and prolific church architect Sir Arthur Blomfield in the Early English style and constructed of Kentish Ragstone with freestone dressings and extensive use of knapped flint. It was part funded by the Cotton family in memory of local philanthropist and church builder William Cotton of Wallwood House. In recognition of its special architectural or historic interest the church was Grade II Listed in 2006, and along with the adjacent Leytonstone School is a key feature of the Conservation Area.

Leytonstone School originated in 1910 when Essex County Council and Leyton Higher Education Committee decided to build a County High School for Girls on a three acre site at the edge of the forest in Colworth Road, until then the site of Forest Farm. The school was designed by William Jacques ARIBA, architect to the Leyton Urban District Council, in a simple form of Tudor-style architecture long associated with Grammar School education in England, and it opened in 1911. Of red brick construction with stone dressings, clay roof tiles, and mullioned, leaded windows, the school provided accommodation for three hundred girls in buildings arranged on three sides of a quadrangle fronting the Forest Rd/Colworth Rd junction. A Hall complete with timber panelling and hammerbeam roof forms part of this layout and completes the Tudor illusion internally. The building was extended in the 1950's with the construction of a new Gym at the rear which is reasonably sympathetic in style and materials to the original work albeit not of the same quality. To the rear and side of the school are numerous later free-standing additions, but with the exception of the modern Sports Hall fronting Forest Road they are generally of a much poorer quality architecturally. Externally the quadrangle elevation has survived largely intact and still presents a surprising and attractive elevation to the Forest Rd and Colworth Rd junction. Together with the adjacent St Andrew's church the school buildings form a distinctive and attractive focal point in the local streetscene.

On the corner of Whipps Cross Rd/Forest Glade stands the Shree Nathji Sanatan Hindu Mandir Temple, originally erected in 1937 as **the First Church of Christ Scientist**. The Church was built on the site of two of the original Georgian properties in Assembly Row, where services had originally commenced around 1906. Designed by T E Davidson, Son & Sherwood of Newcastle upon Tyne the main church building

adjacent to 157 Whipps Cross Road was designed in a simplified 1930's Georgian style, and was extended in similar style in 1956 when a Sunday School was added, designed by Kenneth Saunders RIBA. Constructed of red brick with Crittall windows the building is a modest but good example of the neo-Georgian style of architecture popular in the inter-war years. Later extensions to the side and rear, window grilles, and the galvanised railings erected on the frontage are all inferior quality work which unfortunately detract from the original design.

Wallwood estate/Fillebrook estate houses – The Fillebrook estate was developed from 1860 onwards and in a much more ad hoc way than the later Wallwood estate. The new roads were laid out across the former fields and plots sold off for new houses to a variety of different developers, with the result that there is considerable diversity in the design and scale of the resultant houses. The thirteen properties included within the Conservation Area are clear evidence of this pattern and diversity of development. Albeit all of brick construction with Welsh slate roofs, they vary considerably in design, scale and social pretensions, from modest artisan cottages to spacious detached villas.

The Wallwood Park estate by contrast being only a third of the size of the Fillebrook estate was largely developed by one builder and has a much more limited range of designs. The houses are therefore more uniform, but being slightly later they are also more elaborate and decorative, but still fairly typical designs for good quality middle class houses of the period.

A few residential properties exist within the area that were built as part of neither estate, essentially being late 19thc infill in Forest Place, *the name once used to describe the area behind and to the south of the Georgian houses in Whipps Cross Road*. These include the short terrace of three grand 2 ½ storey double-fronted houses 1-3 Forest Glade built in 1882, and the even grander 4 ½ storey red brick terrace facing the forest at the southern end of Assembly Row. The former features the most extensive use of elaborate stucco decoration found within the area.

(vi) Prevalent and traditional building materials, textures and colours:

The variety in the age and style of buildings that exist within the Conservation Area is reflected in the similar diversity in the building materials and finishes to be found. The most common and almost prevalent building material however is brick; a brown multi-stock with red dressings for the 18th century properties, a mix of yellow London stocks, Gault clay facing bricks and soft red rubbers for the Victorian/Edwardian housing, and plain soft reds for Leytonstone School and the Hindu Temple. St Andrew's church is unique in the area in being constructed of Kentish rag with freestone dressings and extensive use of knapped flint, a feature peculiar to a number of ecclesiastical buildings in the wider area. Stucco decoration in imitation of natural stone can be found extensively on Wallwood Park estate properties along Forest Glade and Nos 1-3 as previously mentioned, and a few other properties have had painted or rendered finishes applied to the original facing brickwork, including 143 Whipps Cross Road, but these are later additions.

Roofing materials were traditionally hand-made plain clay tiles or Welsh slates for the Georgian properties, grey Welsh slate for most Victorian properties, and machine-made plain clay tiles for most Edwardian and inter War buildings including St

Andrew's and Leytonstone School. These finishes generally still predominate within the area, although machine-made clay tiles introduced from the mid 19thc have replaced the original hand-made examples on some of the 18thc properties, and there are a number of instances on later Victorian properties where inappropriate concrete tiles & artificial slates have replaced the original natural slate finish.

All original roofs have lead flashings/soakers etc and painted cast-iron rainwater goods as original/traditional features. Much of the latter still survives today, although plastic replacements are now a common feature of the area. Black is the most common finish, although historically there would have been a greater diversity, reflecting the colour schemes of the various houses themselves.

Chimney stacks, typically topped with either yellow clay or terracotta chimney pots, were and remain characteristic and important features of the roofscape, although many have regrettably been lost over the years.

Painted timber doors in a variety of styles, and timber windows, whether box sashes or casements, were the original features for all domestic buildings within the area, with metal Crittall-type windows being used on St Andrew's church, Leytonstone School, and the 1930's Hindu Temple. A white or off-white painted finish for domestic windows now tends to predominate, although in most cases this is simply a modern trend rather than a traditional finish.

(vii) Local Details:

The numerous properties within the area are generally representative examples of their particular building type and style, and whilst many fine examples survive of original joinery, leaded-glass, tessellated tiled paths etc, few features of special note are exclusive to this particular area, being on the whole generic in style. The Church and the School are particular exceptions however, and exhibit a variety of the most elaborate and fascinating details.

St Andrews is particularly noteworthy for its well crafted Early English style, the use of knapped flint flushwork, the fine stone carving in the tracery of the windows and the quality of its timberwork, both internal and external. Internally the Chancel is the grandest space, ashlar-faced and with moulded arched window openings, purbeck marble colonnettes, stiff-leaf carving to the chancel arch corbels, and glass of 1892. A number of stained glass windows by Margaret Isobel Chitton (1875-1963) date between 1919 and 1957 in an Arts & Crafts tradition but with some expressionist influences. The earliest window is the c.1919 Petzsche memorial in the south aisle of the main church, and War memorial windows in the north and south aisles of the main church to the west end.

Leytonstone School is in the Tudor Revival style of the early 20thc also called Mock Tudor or Tudorbethan. It is described by Pevsner in his Essex guide as "a very pretty red brick building with two asymmetrical projecting wings and one asymmetrical turret in one of the two re-entrant angles. Several gables with black and white chequer pattern". All the architectural interest is external with the notable exception of the great hall; wood-panelled and with a hammerbeam roof.

Most of the residential buildings within the Conservation Area reflect the style and design conventions of the time in which they were built, and few features of special note are exclusive to this particular area. The original timber porches of the larger late Victorian houses along Forest Glade and the terracotta ridge tiles and drooping timber finials are all attractive contemporary features that reflect the high aspirations of the developers, who were seeking to attract more wealthy residents to the area. At the lower end of the social scale the modest terrace of cottages along Forest Road, on what was the Fillebrook Estate, are devoid of embellishment and built hard up to the back edge of footpath but nevertheless have an attractive simplicity.

Very little early or original hard surfacing or street furniture survives within the area, although the retro-style street lighting, and the gravelled footpath at the top end of Forest Glade are nevertheless distinctive and attractive local features of relatively recent origin. The lighting is in retro Victorian-style, reflecting the design of the first street lights in the area, and they are finished in black for ease of redecoration. Whilst not original features, by general consensus they nevertheless add to the character and appearance of the area. On the main Whipps Cross Road taller contemporary lamp columns are used, which again are not original features but are a distinct improvement over the standard streetlights commonly used.

Three early cast iron bollards do however survive within the area, two in the footpath leading to the forest from the Forest Rd/Colworth Rd junction, and a single cannon-head bollard in the grass verge at the Whipps Cross Rd entrance into Forest Glade.

The latter is by far the earliest and most convincing and a valuable local feature.

Footpaths generally within the area are finished in a mixture of blacktop and concrete paving flags. Flags are the more traditional finish and their reintroduction where they have been replaced would add to the special interest of the area. Following recent repaving works by the Council the footpaths within the Conservation Area are now in a generally good state of repair.

(viii) The contribution made by green spaces, hedges and other natural or cultivated elements to the character of the area:

By far the most important green spaces within and adjacent to the Conservation Area are the surviving remnants of forest land, now part of Epping Forest. The large area of forest land to the east whilst not within the Conservation Area itself was nevertheless instrumental in attracting development to the area in the 18thc, and the relationship between the open space and the buildings along Whipps Cross Road is one of the most enduring features of the area. To the north the later Victorian houses of Forest Glade were clearly laid out to take full advantage of the attractive sylvan quality of another large section of forest land opposite. Today these surviving areas of forest are owned and managed by the Corporation of the City of London as Conservators of Epping Forest and are an irreplaceable asset to the area.

Substantially smaller in scale but also of considerable importance are the mature trees and well-maintained landscaped grounds of Leytonstone School. The row of Plane trees and Norway Maples in front of the Sports Hall on the Forest Road frontage are particularly important in the local streetscape both in their own right and for their partial screening/ softening of the bulk of the new Sports Hall behind. It is disappointing that the school has yet to establish suitable evergreen underplanting as

required by the planning permission for the recent boundary railings. The quadrangle at the front of the school with its trees, shrubs and lawn provides a more intimate and delightful setting for the building, itself attractively bedecked with Ivy and Virginia Creeper, just yards from the Forest Rd/Colworth Rd junction.

A traditional feature of the larger Victorian houses in the area was a private front garden with assorted planting, traditionally privet hedging, and normally enclosed by timber fencing or in a few cases low brick walls, creating an attractive soft green edge between public and private land. Substantial fragments of front garden planting still survive today but generally these spaces are much more open to public view and more likely to have higher levels of hard-paving and the occasional incongruous off street parking space. Where planting does survive, most commonly in the form of Privet hedging, the original character is better preserved, but it no longer provides the original unifying green link that it once did and its reintroduction would have considerable beneficial effects. The large front gardens of the corner properties 329 and 244 Hainault Road are particularly noteworthy as they contain large numbers of trees and shrubs which along with the adjacent street trees in the footpath creates a lush and attractive green environment at this road junction.

In the footpaths themselves the Council continues to plant street trees where space permits, although the size and close proximity of the Epping forest land with its high number of mature “forest-type” trees tends to make this less important than in other more urban areas, forming as it does a green boundary to most of the north and east of the Conservation Area.

Trees on private land do however make a valuable contribution to the streetscene, particularly those on the Leytonstone School site, in the front gardens of the Whipps Cross Road properties, and as mentioned above in the gardens of 329 and 244 Hainault Road.

(ix) The setting of the Conservation Area and its relationship with the landscape or open countryside, including definition of significant landmarks, vistas and panoramas, where appropriate:

The Conservation Area is located on the high ground at the eastern edge of the Lea Valley and immediately adjoining open forest land. This forest-side position is an enduring characteristic of the area, and extensive long views of all the Whipps Cross buildings are available from the sparsely tree'd forest land to the north east. The tree cover on the forest land to the north between Forest Glade and James Lane is however extensive right up to Forest Glade itself, and views are as a result very limited both into and out of the area.

The key landmark buildings within the area, viewed north along Colworth Road and east along Forest Road are undoubtedly St Andrew's church and Leytonstone school.

(x) The extent of loss, intrusion or damage, i.e. the negative factors:

The Conservation Area has almost inevitably suffered to some extent from misinformed and unsympathetic alterations to numerous buildings both before and after designation in 1990. Since 2004 however external changes to dwelling houses

have been controlled by an Article 4(2) Direction, so to a large extent the gradual erosion of the special character of the area has been arrested, and in many cases original features are now being reinstated, often with a financial contribution from the council.

Two of the most common and harmful changes carried out over the years have been to original roofs and windows, with inappropriate concrete tiles or artificial slates replacing the original natural slate or clay tile coverings in several instances, and crudely detailed picture windows or casements in UPVC, timber or aluminium being used to replace original timber sash or casement windows. To a lesser extent, unsympathetic front doors, usually mass-produced hardwood examples of dubious & unconvincing style, have also replaced the original Victorian & Edwardian examples in a small number of cases and detract from the originality and special interest of the properties concerned.

Unightly satellite dishes are thankfully only a minor problem in the area, as enforcement action has generally kept pace with the limited number of transgressions. Whilst not so visibly prominent plastic gas meter boxes are a similarly unattractive and inappropriate modern intrusion into the area, and whilst now controlled by the Article 4 Direction a number have already been installed.

Increased levels of traffic along Whipps Cross Road has inevitably had an adverse impact on the special character or appearance of this part of the area, and has inevitably eroded the historic physical connection with the forest land opposite. Associated highway signage and a prominently sited and incongruous Speed Camera on the edge of the forest land has also had a detrimental effect on the visual appearance of the area. As with traffic generally, on-street parking by commuters and residents in the nearby Controlled Parking Zone has also increased over the years and is a particular problem along Colworth Rd, St Andrews Rd, Poppleton Rd and to a lesser extent along Forest Glade. The area outside Leytonstone School itself is thankfully already a controlled parking area so the attractive setting of the Church and School is largely unaffected by this problem.

The gradual loss of front garden walls, fencing and planting, and the paving over of some of the larger front gardens for off-street parking has inevitably contributed to the loss of front garden greenery and the erosion of the traditional division between private gardens and the public street. Although such works are now controlled under the Article 4 Direction considerable visual harm had already been done before the Direction came into effect. A concerted targeted effort to undo these unsympathetic alterations, potentially with financial assistance from the Council, would have considerable public benefits .

Beyond the scope of planning powers to control but nevertheless also a visual problem are the large and ungainly plastic Wheely bins and Eurobins which clutter up the front gardens of a number of properties within the area. The harmful visual impact of these plastic refuse containers is more pronounced in the front gardens of the smaller properties and properties in multiple occupation where they are harder to conceal and where their use is particularly inappropriate.

Properties within the Conservation Area are on the whole well maintained, particularly the street frontages. However the physical condition & appearance of a number of prominent and important buildings within the area is a continuing source of concern. In particular the Sir Alfred Hitchcock Hotel and the Grade II Listed 133 Whipps Cross Road are both very poorly maintained and currently present a very run-down & neglected appearance in urgent need of upgrading. 122 Colworth Road, an attractive three storey Victorian house is also an on-going source of concern due to unresolved structural problems and the resultant unattractive but essential scaffolding that currently encases it. At a lesser level the crude and unattractive works at the rear of the Hindu Temple and at 126/128 Colworth Road are also a concern, particularly given that they are openly visible from the public realm.

Also in the public realm there appears to be a recurring problems of vandalism and graffiti. Vandalism is largely confined to the pedestrian safety barrier outside Leytonstone school, whilst graffiti has been a recurring problem on the forest-side boundary wall of Leytonstone School, detracting from the appearance of the wall itself, the setting of the School, and the attractive sylvan quality of the forest itself. The Council has made repeated efforts to remove or conceal the graffiti in the past, but a more permanent solution is needed.

(xi) The existence of any neutral areas (those areas which neither enhance nor detract but where there might be potential for enhancement):

The Conservation Area is almost totally developed, and there are few buildings or spaces within it that could be considered to neither enhance nor detract from the special character or appearance of the area. The James Lane entrance to Leytonstone School and the two pedestrian accessways to the Forest from Poppleton Rd and the Colworth Rd/Forest Rd junction could all benefit from enhancement works and as such could be considered as neutral.

Guy Osborne
CONSERVATION OFFICER

May 2011

MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

Leytonstone Conservation Area

(i) Legislative background

The designation of a Conservation Area and the production of an Appraisal document is not an end in itself. The Appraisal provides the basis for developing management proposals for the Conservation Area that fulfil the general duty placed on the local authority under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, now formalised in BV 219c, to draw up and publish such proposals. The purpose of this document is to present draft proposals which seek to achieve the preservation and enhancement of the special character of the Conservation Area, informed by the Appraisal, for consultation. The special qualities of the Conservation Area have been identified as part of the appraisal process in the first part of this document, and both will be subject to monitoring and review. This guidance draws on the themes identified in the Appraisal, and satisfies the statutory requirement of section 71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, namely:

“It shall be the duty of the local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are Conservation Areas”.

This document reflects Government guidance set out in Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) “Planning for the Historic Environment”, English Heritage guidance set out in “Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas”, policies within the Waltham Forest Unitary Development Plan 2006 and the consolidated London Plan 2008, and guidance contained in the published Conservation Area leaflet for the Leytonstone Conservation Area.

(ii) Statutory controls

Designation as a Conservation Area brings with it a degree of additional statutory protection under planning legislation aimed at assisting the “preservation or enhancement” of the area. These controls include the need for Conservation Area consent for the demolition of any unlisted buildings, the need for Listed Building consent for most works to Listed buildings in the area, planning consent for the installation of satellite dishes visible from the street, significantly reduced “permitted development rights” for alterations or extensions of dwelling houses, and the need for 6 weeks written notice of works to trees not already protected by Tree Preservation Orders. In addition an Article 4(2) Direction was made on the area in 2004 which removed certain additional “permitted development rights” normally enjoyed by

householders, and as a result planning permission is also now required for nearly all works which affect the external appearance of dwellinghouses within the area where they front onto a highway or open space. These restrictions are outlined in more detail in the Council's guidance leaflet "Leytonstone Conservation Area" and the relevant Article 4 Direction. It should be noted that flats do not enjoy "permitted development rights", and nearly all external works which would materially affect the appearance of flats within the area require planning permission.

Action: The Council will ensure that new development within the Conservation Area preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area in accordance with policy BHE13 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan 2006, the Leytonstone Conservation Area leaflet, and other published guidance.

Action: The Council will not agree to the demolition of any Listed Building in the area, nor will it permit uses, alterations or extensions that would be detrimental to the fabric, appearance, historic interest or setting of these buildings. It will encourage their restoration, maintenance and repair.

(iii) Erosion of character and additional planning control

The Conservation Area Appraisal identified the following as issues which pose a threat to, or detract from, the special character of the Conservation Area:

- The poor condition of a number of important buildings: 133 Whipps Cross Road, the Sir Alfred Hitchcock Hotel, and 122 Colworth Road.
- The replacement of traditional timber front doors, sash and casement windows with inappropriate modern designs in upvc/aluminium/hardwood etc.
- The replacement of traditional natural slate or clay tiled roof coverings with inappropriate artificial slates or concrete tiles.
- The loss of original front garden walls/fences and planting in favour of hard surfacing and/or off-street car parking provision.
- The unsightly plastic Wheely bins left outside some properties within the area

Fortunately there are relatively few examples of unauthorised works having been carried out which could detract from the special character or appearance of the area since additional controls were introduced. Where such works do occur however the Council will continue to take appropriate enforcement action to remove them or seek a retrospective application where appropriate.

The Council has a published Conservation Area Guidance leaflet for residents and businesses within the Leytonstone Conservation Area, and subject to resources provides financial assistance towards the cost of repair or restoration of original features to buildings in the area by means of Historic Buildings Grants. The Council also made an Article 4(2) Direction on the area in 2004 to ensure that all future external alterations to dwelling houses within the area were brought under planning control where they front onto a highway or open space.

Action: The Council will ensure that unauthorised development is subject to effective enforcement action to protect the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Action: The Council will refuse permission for any proposed development in the area which does not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area

Action: The Council will not agree to the replacement of original doors/windows/roof coverings other than on a “like for like” basis using traditional materials.

Action: Within budgetary limits the Council will continue to offer Historic Buildings Grants for the repair or restoration of buildings of architectural or historic interest within the Conservation Area, and will target those properties that have been unsympathetically altered to try to secure the desired improvements raised in the Appraisal.

Action: The Council should consider reviewing the refuse collection arrangements for some buildings within the area to minimise the visual harm caused by Wheely bins.

(iv) Advertisements and signage

There are four non residential uses within the Conservation Area that have or require various degrees of signage & advertisement to promote their activities; Leytonstone School, St Andrew’s Church. The Sir Alfred Hitchcock Hotel, and the Hindu Temple. It is important that strict controls are maintained over the design, size and siting of signage and advertising in order to ensure that the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area is not adversely affected.

Action: The Council will ensure that all advertising and signage proposals that require planning consent will respect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in terms of siting, size, number, materials, colours, illumination etc in accordance with UDP policy BHE8 and other best practice guidance. Wherever possible the Council will take enforcement action against unauthorised advertising and signage which does not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.

(v) Trees

Trees have been identified in the Appraisal as a major contributory factor to the special character & appearance of the Conservation Area. Fortunately most of these are situated on forest land and are therefore protected by the Conservators of Epping Forest. Others are on the public highway and maintained by the Council. For those within private ownership, if not already protected by a Tree Preservation Order, 6 weeks written notice is required to the Council before any works of pruning or felling can commence if the trees are greater than 100mm in diameter at 1.5 metres above ground level. This provides the Council with an opportunity of assessing the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, in which case a Tree Preservation Order may

be served to ensure its protection. Free professional advice on all tree issues, whether the pruning of existing trees or advice on suitable species for planting, is always available from the Council's Trees and Nature Conservation Officer who can be contacted on 0208 496 2819.

Action: The Council will consider serving a Tree Preservation Order in appropriate cases where a tree of high amenity value is considered to be under threat. These will include trees both within and outside the area where they contribute to the setting of the Conservation Area or views identified in the Appraisal.

Action: The Council will maintain and replace as necessary the street trees within the Conservation Area, and continue to provide free professional advice on all tree matters as and when required.

Action: The Council will continue to preserve trees on land within its ownership and ensure that they are maintained to the highest standards during their lifespan.

(vi) *Setting and views*

The largely sylvan context of the Conservation Area; its "setting", is very important, and development which would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area or its setting, or which would impact detrimentally on views into and out of the area will be resisted. The important views are identified in the Character Appraisal, and the Council will seek to ensure that all new development respects these views.

Action: The Council will seek to ensure that all development respects the setting of the Conservation Area and important views within, into, and out of the area identified in the Appraisal. These will be protected from inappropriate forms of development.

(vii) *The public realm and enhancement*

The Appraisal has identified little in the way of surviving original floorscape within the Conservation Area, and most of the roads within the area and some of the footpaths have generally been surfaced using either tarmac or modern concrete flags. The repair of existing flags and the reinstatement of traditional paving flags to other footpaths within the area would enhance the character and appearance of the area and reinforce its special identity. Reference will be made to the Council's Streetscape Manual, English Heritage guidance "Street improvements in historic areas", and the Department for Transport "Manual for Streets" before any proposals are finalised.

Lighting within the Conservation Area is provided by replica "Victorian pattern" streetlights and taller more contemporary fittings on the main roads, all installed and maintained by the Council. These are considered to be attractive and generally held to make a positive contribution to the special character of the area.

The Appraisal did however raise a number of issues relating to the public realm which pose a threat to, or detract from, the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area:

- *The high levels of traffic along Whipps Cross Rd, associated road markings, signage & noise, and the high levels of commuter parking within parts of the area.*
- *The poor condition of the footpaths within the area.*
- *The graffiti and vandalism that regularly affects features of the area, particularly the forest-side walls of Leytonstone School.*
- *The plastic refuse bins left outside some properties within the area.*

An audit of the public realm will be undertaken to identify any redundant features, opportunities for enhancement etc, subject to resources.

Action: The Council will seek to ensure that any surviving historic streetscape features are retained and maintained, and that any future highway works will bring a positive improvement to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with the spirit of the English Heritage “Streets for all” campaign.

Action: The Council will review the traffic management scheme currently in place within and around the Conservation Area and the extent of associated road markings and signage etc, to see whether improvements can be made to address the issues raised in the Appraisal.

Action: Subject to resources the Council will continue to deal with unsightly graffiti along the school boundary wall, but will try to achieve a more permanent solution through discussions with the School and the Epping Forest Conservators.

Action: The Council will review refuse collection arrangements for some commercial properties within the area to ensure wheeled bins are not left in the public environment.

(viii) *Monitoring and review*

The following actions are taken to ensure that the Appraisal and Management plan are accepted and acted upon:

- *Public Consultation: The Appraisal and Management plan is the subject of a period of public consultation and views expressed as part of the process are considered and may be included when preparing the final draft for Council adoption. Consultation includes placing the documents on the Council’s website and in Council offices, consultation with local residents, residents associations and amenity groups, and providing hard copies on request. A letter advising of these arrangements is delivered to all properties within the Conservation Area by mail shot.*

- ***Boundary review: Subject to the results of the public consultation the Council will maintain the current boundary of the Conservation Area and continue to review it over time in accordance with current Best Practice and guidance on the management of the historic environment produced by English Heritage.***
- ***Document review: This document will be reviewed every five years in the light of the Local Development Framework and emerging government policy. The review will include the following:***
 - (i) ***A resurvey of the Conservation Area and its boundaries***
 - (ii) ***An updated “heritage count” comprising a comprehensive photographic record.***
 - (iii) ***An assessment of whether the Management Proposals detailed in this document have been acted upon, including proposed enhancements.***
 - (iv) ***The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and proposed actions and amendments.***
 - (v) ***Public consultation on the review findings, any proposed changes, and input into the final review.***

Guy Osborne
CONSERVATION OFFICER

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