

Forest School Conservation Area

- Appraisal & Management Plan



March 2007

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Forest School Conservation Area

INTRODUCTION

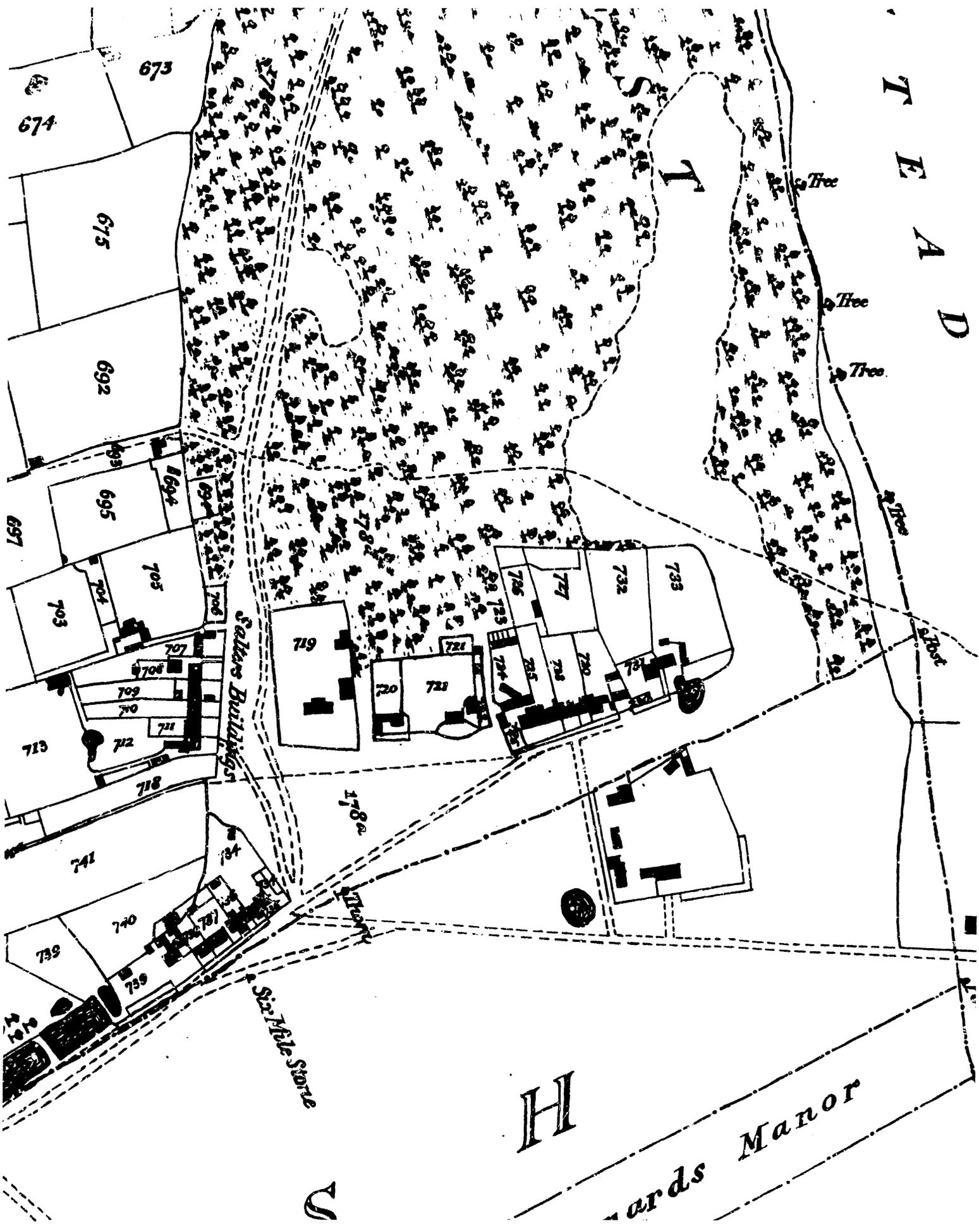
This document is an “Appraisal” document as defined by English Heritage in their guidance document “Conservation Area Appraisals”.

The purpose of the document 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 Forest School Conservation Area, which was designated by the Council in 1972. 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 POLICY 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 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. However, general guidance on the designation of Conservation Areas is included in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15), 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



The Forest School area as shown on John Coe's map of Walthamstow in 1822. Plots 725 & 726 are the extent of the school at that time, and the rural character of the surrounding area is clearly visible.

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 Policy 4B.7 of The London Plan produced by the Greater London Authority emphasises the need for boroughs to work with local communities to recognise and manage local distinctiveness, ensuring proposed developments preserve or enhance local social, physical, cultural, historical, environmental and economic characteristics.

DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST

(i) Location and population:

The Forest School Conservation Area straddles the boundary between Walthamstow and Leyton, two early Boroughs that since 1965 have been within the London Borough of Waltham Forest. It lies on the high ground that runs along the eastern boundary of the Borough between the Lea Valley to the west and the Roding valley to the east. It is on the very edge of Epping Forest, near the junction of the Woodford New Road and Snaresbrook Road.

The Conservation Area has a permanent population of approximately 380 persons, although during normal schooldays this number swells by over 1200 pupils and staff who attend Forest School.

(ii) Origins and development of settlement:

Up until the early 18th century the Essex parishes of Walthamstow and Leyton were rural in character, with a landscape dominated by marshland, farmland and forest. By the mid 18th century the scenic attractions of the area combined with easy access to London afforded by Francis Wragg’s stagecoach service, led to increased building and settlement by wealthy city bankers, merchants and businessmen.

In the east, on the high ground at the forest edge a number of Georgian houses were erected, including three rows by Sir John Salter who was Lord Mayor of London in 1740 and Chairman of the East India Company in 1743.

A number of Georgian properties from this early phase of building have survived in Forest Place, and these now form the nucleus of the Forest School complex. Nearby, just over the boundary in Leyton parish in what are now known as “The Forest” and Buxton Road, a number of other 18th century houses were erected; most notably Forest Edge or Buxton House, one of several Buxton family houses in the area. Unfortunately the house was demolished in the 1930’s and the Buxton House flats and Forest Court now occupy most of the site.

On “The Forest” however Gwydr Lodge (an altered mid 18thC property) and No’s 1 & 2 Ivy Cottages (a pair of early 19thC Georgian semi-detached houses) have survived from this early development.



AREA MAP

Site of 'Oakburst' former home of Reverend Tullie Cornthwaite, vicar of St. Peter's in the Forest and local benefactor.

WOODFORD NEW ROAD

Forest School Chapel

Memorial Dining Hall

The surviving 18th century buildings which comprise the historic heart of Forest School.

Site of the original Buxton House (demolished 1939) one of the Buxton family residences in SW Essex which included Leytonstone House, Knighton at Buckhurst Hill and Wartles near Epping.

1 & 2 Oxley House and 1 & 2 Evesden.

Guydr Lodge and 1 & 2 Ivy Cottages

SNARESBROOK ROAD



Georgian Walthamstow was a far cry from modern Waltham Forest, and a contemporary writer described it as “one of the largest and handsomest suburban villages near the Metropolis”. Not surprisingly the large families of the wealthy inhabitants led to an increased demand for good schools in the area, particularly for boys. In 1820 there were about 5 private schools in Walthamstow and less in Leyton. The most famous was probably Dr Cogan’s “school for the sons of gentlemen” at Essex Hall Walthamstow. It was here that Benjamin Disraeli was educated. By 1828 however Dr Cogan had retired and the school had closed.

In 1830 Archibald Du Boulay established a school in a house in Forest Place, which was named Exeter College. The “College” only survived for 3 years, but this initial brief flirtation with education is still remembered in the naming of College Place, which has outlived Hogs Corner, Forest Place & Paradise Row.

Apparently undeterred Du Boulay and a group of local gentry, which included William Morris’s father, established Forest Proprietary Grammar School in October 1834, which has proved a more permanent and worthy feature in the history of Walthamstow. Under its first headmaster, Reverend Thomas Dry, the school was intended for the children of the gentry of Walthamstow, Wanstead, Woodford, Leyton, Leytonstone and Snaresbrook, and was to feed King’s College with which it was closely associated until 1900. From its modest beginning the school grew to absorb many of the nearby 18thC properties, and the main frontage block is now a largely complete terrace of Georgian houses interconnected internally.

During the latter half of the 19th C the school, now simply called Forest School, expanded considerably with the notable additions of the Chapel (1857) and the Memorial Dining Hall (1887). By this time the character and appearance of Walthamstow and Leyton was undergoing fundamental change. The arrival of the railway had heralded the rapid Victorian urbanisation of the wider area, and the fields and commons rapidly gave way to terraces of yellow brick houses. The wealthier classes gradually moved away, and most of their large and handsome villas and parks were redeveloped for high density housing.

The Forest School area however survived this turbulent period largely intact, although Oakhurst, Buxton House, Marryatts Lodge and Buxted Lodge were subsequently lost to redevelopment in the 20thC. The detached and semi detached houses of Oakhurst Gardens & Oakhurst Close, which were erected in the early 1930’s now mark the site of Oakhurst, whilst blocks of flats occupy the sites of the other three large houses, albeit retaining the original names. The forest land which still largely surrounds the area was preserved after a long struggle when the Epping Forest Act was passed in 1878. This prevented further enclosure of forest land, and Epping Forest as it was called was subsequently “open and dedicated to the delectation of the public forever” by Queen Victoria in 1882. This has ensured that the forest setting, which makes such a significant contribution to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area, is permanently protected.

- (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:**



(Above) **Forest School** in an engraving circa 1830 when it was called Exeter College.
(Below) A view of the school buildings in 1875, now largely obscured by the Theatre building of the 1960's. In the foreground can be seen the "Dragon Well" erected by the Reverend Tullie Cornthwaite of Oakhurst.



As outlined above the area was originally a small forest-side development of separate Georgian houses. One surviving terrace of these original houses and a further two detached properties now form the heart of Forest School, and over the years the school has developed extensively around them. The numerous later extensions and additions to the school were built at different dates and in a variety of architectural styles with no obvious masterplan. The layout of the school is therefore organic rather than planned.

To the south along the east side of “The Forest” is a mixture of 18th, 19th and 20th century houses and a late 20th century block of flats, all still in residential use.

Two other much larger old properties; Oakhurst and Elm Cottage were demolished and the sites redeveloped for housing in the 1930’s. The former was laid out with substantial but fairly typical two storey detached and semi-detached properties clustered around a short cul de sac (Oakhurst Gardens & Oakhurst Close), and the latter with an estate of 2 & 3 storey flats (Forest Court).

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

There are no scheduled ancient monuments within the Conservation Area, and it does not fall within an Archaeological Priority Zone (APZ) as identified in the Council’s Unitary Development Plan. There is therefore no reason to suspect that the site would yield anything of archaeological interest.

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

The key buildings within the Conservation Area are undoubtedly the surviving 18th and 19th century properties, most of which are now Listed buildings in recognition of their special architectural or historic interest.

To the front of Forest School on College Place, are original early 19th century cast iron gates, gatepiers & railings which form an attractive and secure front boundary, and in view of their special interest they are Grade II Listed independently of the school buildings themselves. Behind the railings and the landscaped frontage stands the original terrace of Georgian houses that form the heart of Forest School. Externally they are largely as-built, featuring brown/plum brickwork, painted timber sash windows, clay tile and slate roofs, small dormer windows etc. The main entrance to the school is through one of the original front doors via a projecting pedimented Doric porch, which forms an attractive centrepiece to the whole range. At the eastern end of this terrace is the impressive three storey Listed Memorial Hall of 1886 by Richard Creed FRIBA in brick and stone, also still largely original in appearance and a dominating feature of the school.

To the east of the Memorial Hall and the main entrance gates is another, detached Listed Georgian house, formerly the Junior School boarding house. Alterations to the



Two views across the open Epping Forest land that provides the setting for the Conservation Area. **(Above)** The Grade II Listed **Gwydr Lodge and Ivy Cottages** form the historic centrepiece to the eclectic mix of buildings along The Forest. **(Below)** **The Memorial Hall** of 1886 dominates the school skyline and dramatically terminates the northern vista along The Forest.



windows and the surfacing over of the original front garden with tarmac have however reduced both its special interest and setting somewhat.

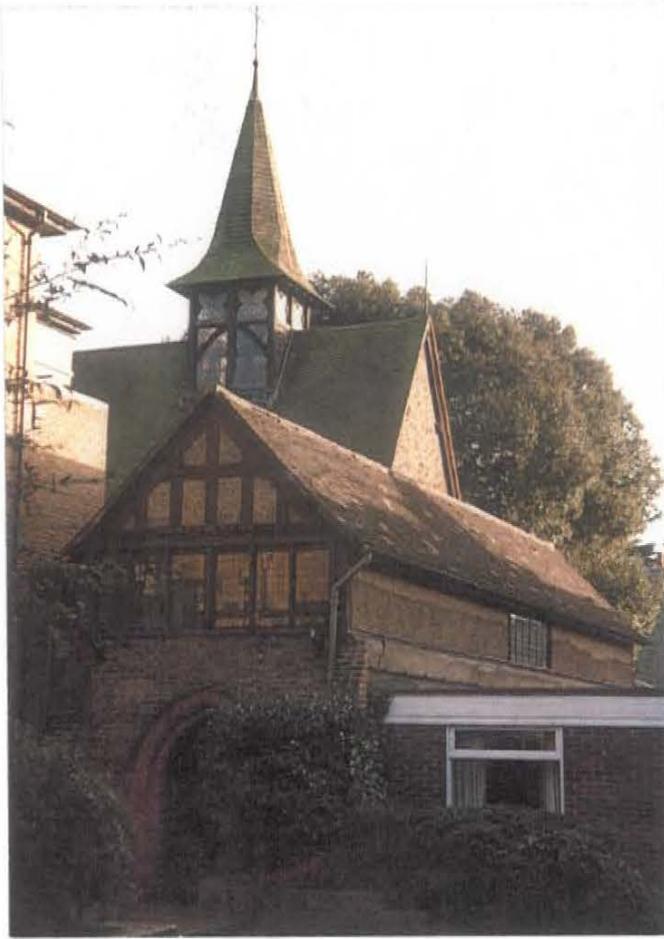
Other buildings of particular importance within the school complex are the Listed Chapel of 1857 and the “Sick Cottage” of 1859, now the Senior Common Room. The Chapel was designed and later extended by William White, in Early English/Geometrical Gothic style. Constructed of stock brick with steeply pitched clay tiled roof and shingled spire, the Chapel is largely obscured from view other than from within the school complex or from the forest land and playing fields to the east. Together with the Memorial Hall however it is one of the most original and important buildings within the Conservation Area. Similarly concealed from view except from within the school is the former Sick Cottage, a simple stock brick and Welsh slate mid 19th century building fronting an open grassed quadrangle. Now dominated on all sides by later developments it nevertheless retains some of the early character of the school.

Along The Forest stands Gwydr Lodge an altered early 18th century stuccoed house, and 1 & 2 Ivy Cottages, a pair of largely original early 19th century “cottages” in stock brick with tiled mansard roof and dormers. Together these three Listed properties form the key historic component of the range of buildings that front the open forest land along The Forest.

(vi) The contribution made by key unlisted buildings:

Whilst not included on the statutory List of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, there are a number of properties along “The Forest” that nevertheless contribute significantly to the character and appearance of the area as a whole. 1&2 Oxley House, and 1&2 Evesden are two pairs of Victorian semi detached houses designed by Richard Creed FRIBA for the school in 1901; Creed also being responsible for the Grade II Listed Memorial dining hall at the school itself. These modest red brick houses, the only domestic Victorian properties in the Conservation Area, have been well maintained and remain largely as-built, with all their original external features surviving; slate roofs, facing brickwork, timber sash windows etc. Further along The Forest, adjacent to the Grade II Listed 1 Ivy Cottages, is Wistaria Cottage. This property is in fact the former stable & coach house of the original Marryatts Lodge, converted into residential use. With the redevelopment of the main house in the early 1990’s it is now the only surviving structure from that original 18th century development and is included on the Council’s Local List. Immediately adjacent to Wistaria Cottage is Clyptos, a two storey rendered and painted house of the early 20th century, which is also Locally Listed. It was built in the grounds of Marryatts Lodge, between the original house itself and the stable/coach house, so is in all likelihood contemporary with the residential conversion of the latter. Gable fronted and with its timber sash windows recently restored the building adds further diversity and interest to the range of buildings that look out over the forest land.

College Place, along the side of the school, is dominated by developments from the latter half of the 20th century, but at No1 stands a modest slightly extended property of 1907 originally called Gardeners Cottage. This picturesque brick cottage with its clay



Examples of the diverse special architectural interest of Forest School : (Above Left) The Gothic style Chapel of 1837 with shingled spire, (Above Right) The decorative early 19th century cast iron gatepiers, (Below Left) A mid 18th century doorcase from the original terrace of houses that make up the school, (Below Right) The Memorial Hall of 1886 by Richard Creed FRIBA.



tiled roof and leaded casement windows was originally within the grounds of “Oakhurst” and still provides a tangible link with the old house.

On a more negative note, the prominently sited school Theatre, despite its relatively recent clay tile hanging, is not considered to be of high architectural quality externally. Internally the building is in fact of considerable interest, containing one of the few purpose-built Elizabethan style auditoriums in London. Externally however, by virtue of its uncompromising style, bulk, and prominence, it makes a poor contribution to the built environment of the area.

(vii) The character and relationship of spaces within the area:

Most of the open space that give the Conservation Area its special character is Epping Forest land; mature woodland to the north and east, and more open grassland bounded by trees to the west and south. To the north-east of the Forest School buildings is the school playing field, a well tended greensward running up to the forest boundary, and separated from it by a low visibility colour-coated weldmesh fence.

Between Forest Court and the school is an open area of grassed forest land called “Jonians” where historically school sports activities were held. Today it is just an open area of rough grass bounded by unattractive timber posts, roughly hewn from felled trees, installed by the Corporation to prevent vehicular access onto the forest land. This area of open space links the wooded land to the east with the main area of open forest land bounded by Oakhurst Gardens & The Forest to the southwest. At the eastern extremity is a natural pond and a “gateway” to the woodland.

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

The Conservation Area contains buildings from the 18th century to the present day, and therefore a variety of materials are in evidence. The majority of 18th and 19th century buildings still feature their original facing brickwork, with either plain terracotta clay tiles or natural slate for the roofs. Of these earlier buildings only the Listed Gwydr Lodge and Wistaria Cottage have been altered externally, and are now finished in painted stucco. The adjacent “Clyptos” is similarly finished in a smooth painted stucco, and all are in either white or shades of off white.

The Forest Court estate of 2 and 3 storey flats built in the 1930’s, similarly features a mixture of white-painted stucco, clay tile hanging and facing brickwork, all beneath traditional hipped roofs of plain clay tiles. With the exception of a few surviving examples on stairwells, the original 1930’s metal windows have however sadly been replaced over time, but otherwise the estate is largely original in appearance.

The Oakhurst Close and Oakhurst Gardens properties are fairly typical of the better quality suburban housing typical of the 1930’s. Terracotta plain clay tiles dominate the hipped roofs of both the detached and semi detached houses, and red brickwork on the ground floor is replaced by white painted stucco to the first on the street elevations with some decorative mock timber framing. Painted timber casements and front doors were original features, but have over time been replaced in many instances by UPVC.



(Above) Externally **Oxley House and Evesden** are largely as built in 1901 to designs by Richard Creed FRIBA, architect of the Memorial Hall. (Below) Immediately adjacent fronting onto the open forest land called "Jonians" is **Forest Court**, an attractive early 1930's development again largely as built but for the replacement of the majority of the original Crittall windows.



The roads within the area are largely finished in tarmac, with the notable exception of the section of roadway at the eastern end of Jonians which being owned by the Corporation of London who are responsible for the adjacent forest, is left unmade.

The footway along The Forest is similarly unmade, being finished in gravel, which lends a more rural appearance and texture to the streetscene at this point.

(ix) Local details:

Most properties within the Conservation Area reflect the style and design conventions of the time in which they were built, ranging from the 18th century to late 20th century, and few features of note are exclusive to this particular area. There are however a few external features worthy of mention that have especial local interest. The early 19th century ironwork on the Forest School frontage is particularly noteworthy both for its decorative design and for the fact that it is a rare survival that escaped the scrap metal drives of World War II. Behind the entrance gates is the imposing 3 storey block of the Memorial Dining Hall by Richard Creed, featuring four giant full height stone pilasters and entablature. To the side of the hall huge brick buttresses and leaded windows in the Perpendicular style are further distinctive features of Creed's original design.

On a significantly lesser scale but nevertheless a distinctive local feature are the white painted timber bollards along The Forest, installed to protect the soft verges from damage by vehicles.

Other than a few timber bollards there is little in the way of street furniture in the area. Street lighting is provided by retro Victorian style lamp columns which whilst not original features nevertheless add to the character and appearance of the area.

Historically water was supplied from a hand pump called the Dragon's Well located on the grass verge on the corner of Oakhurst Gardens and College Place. Whilst the iron pump has long since been removed, the stone base survives as an intriguing relic.

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

As already described the external environment of the Conservation Area is dominated by the Epping Forest land within which it is set. Whether dense woodland, open grassland, free-standing trees or formal rows of trees along the narrow roadways, the forest is the key feature of the whole area. In recognition of its importance the forest land is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and a Principal Site of Nature Conservation Importance in the Council's Unitary Development Plan.

In contrast with this semi-natural woodland, within both Forest Court and the Forest school curtilage are well tended landscaped grounds planted with exotic and more ornamental species.

The properties along The Forest, whilst disparate architecturally, nevertheless share a common building line of some 4 -5 metres, and the space provided on the frontage is largely used as traditional front gardens. A variety of walls, railings, and timber fencing forms a clear boundary between these private gardens and the public footpath beyond, and in several cases this boundary is reinforced by planting. In the case of the Marryatts Lodge flats by hedging. This very variety and the lack of formality is a characteristic feature of the streetscene.

The Oakhurst Gardens properties have substantial front gardens of some 10 metres depth, originally laid to lawn and with decorative flower beds. This original suburban character has been eroded over the years by the introduction of increased hard surfacing for off street parking but is still a recognisable characteristic.

(xi) 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 scenic forest setting that attracted 18th century development to the area still survives today, and since the Epping Forest Act of 1878 the forest land which dominates the Conservation Area has been permanently protected against further development. Despite its elevated position the forest trees to the north, east, and south, whilst providing an attractive rural backcloth, does effectively prevent any long views into or out of the area. However views into the Conservation Area from the Woodford New Road, across the open grassed forest land, see the area at its best, with the trees of Epping Forest as a backcloth.

The view from Snaresbrook Road up “The Forest”, which terminates in the gates of Forest School and Richard Creed’s Memorial Dining Hall beyond is particularly fine, as is the set-piece view of the original terrace of school buildings themselves.

Seen across the forest land to the west, the mixed array of buildings along The Forest, centred on Gwydr Lodge and Ivy Cottages, is another set-piece view of note within the Conservation Area.

Where longer views are possible through the surrounding trees, the bulk of the Memorial Hall and the shingle spire of the Chapel are the two most significant landmarks within the area, and are instantly recognisable on the skyline.

(xii) The extent of loss, intrusion or damage. ie the negative factors:

Whilst the external appearance and setting of the majority of the Listed buildings within the area have largely survived intact, the detached Junior School Boarding House, a Grade II Listed Georgian house within the Forest School complex, has unfortunately completely lost its front garden & setting, which is now beneath a tarmac playground. The building has in addition lost its original multi-paned timber sash windows at some time, which further detracts from its special architectural or historic interest.

The loss of original features such as timber windows, front doors & door furniture, the hard surfacing of front gardens for off street parking, the unsympathetic installation of

satellite dishes etc have all contributed to the erosion of the original character and appearance of the Oakhurst Gardens/Oakhurst Close properties over the years. An Article 4(2) Direction was however made by the Council on the Conservation Area in September 2004, and further unsympathetic external changes to dwelling houses within the area has now been brought under planning control.

As described earlier, the Deaton Theatre, an uncompromisingly brutal concrete structure of the 1960's, prominently sited on the corner of College Place and Oakhurst Gardens, is sadly out of keeping with its surroundings and compromises the setting of the Listed buildings that make up the Forest school frontage. Recently clad in clay tiles to mask the original bare concrete finish, it remains an incongruous feature at the centre of the Conservation Area.

Overall the area is very heavily parked by residents and pupils of the school most weekdays during term time, and traffic levels through the narrow roads of the area are particularly heavy at peak times, all of which detracts considerably from the special character and appearance of the area. This has been an increasing problem over the years and now seems to have reached saturation level. Damage to soft verges and a plethora of bollards of varying quality to keep vehicles off both highway verges and forest land has been a direct result, with a resultant negative impact on the appearance of the area.

(xiii) **The existence of any neutral areas:**

Within the Forest School Conservation Area the Buxted Lodge and Buxton House flats can be viewed as neutral areas, ie. buildings or spaces which neither enhance nor detract from its special character or appearance. Their remote location, the pastiche design of the former and somewhat bland design of the latter ensure that they do not make a positive contribution to the special character or appearance of the area, but at the same time they are not visually intrusive. Similarly the more modern buildings along College Place, both on the school site and opposite, could be said to fulfil the same role, merely providing a backdrop for the key elements within the area already identified.

Guy Osborne
CONSERVATION OFFICER

MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

Forest School Conservation Area

(i) Legislative background

The designation of a Conservation Area and 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 Guidance 15 “Planning and 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 guidance contained in the published Conservation Area leaflet for the Forest School 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 September 2004 an Article 4(2) Direction was made on the area which

removed certain additional “permitted development rights”, and as a result planning permission is also now required for nearly all works which affect the external appearance of properties in the area. These restrictions are outlined in more detail in the Council’s guidance leaflet “Forest School Conservation Area” and the relevant Article 4(2) 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 and other published guidance.

(iii) Erosion of character and additional planning control

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

- The replacement of original windows, doors, and door furniture with inappropriate modern alternatives.
- The installation of satellite dishes on street elevations or in other prominent positions.
- The loss of front gardens and their increased use for off-street car parking.
- The high levels of car parking and through traffic within the area associated with the school.
- The crude “bollards” erected around the edges of Epping Forest land to prevent trespass by vehicles.

Regrettably there are numerous examples of unauthorised works having been carried out, which both individually and cumulatively detract from the special character or appearance of the area. If left unchecked such works will gradually erode the special qualities that justified the original designation. The Council will therefore take appropriate enforcement action, where it is expedient, to remove unauthorised works.

On a positive note, the Council has produced a Conservation Area Guidance leaflet for residents and businesses within the Forest School 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. It has also made an Article 4(2) Direction on the area to ensure that all future alterations to street elevations and frontages are brought under planning control.

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

(iv) Advertisements and signage

The Forest School is the only non-residential use in the Conservation Area, and the only use likely to require a degree of signage/advertisement. It is important that strict controls are maintained over the design and size of signage and advertising in order to

preserve the setting of the Listed school buildings and the special character or appearance of the wider Conservation Area.

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 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

If not already protected by a Tree Preservation Order, anyone intending to lop or fell a tree within the Conservation Area greater than 100mm in diameter at 1.5 metres above ground level, is required to give the Council 6 weeks written notice before starting work. 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. Free professional advice on all tree issues, whether the pruning of existing trees or advice on suitable species for planting, is always available from Council Tree Officers.

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

(vi) Setting and views

The largely rural 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 tarmac. Lighting within the Conservation Area is provided by replica “Victorian pattern” streetlights installed by the Council, which are attractive and make a positive contribution to the special character of the street. The taller more contemporary fittings on Woodford New Road and Snaresbrook Road relate to the function of these roads as a major traffic routes,

and as such have little in common with the domestic scale street lighting within the Conservation Area itself. They are however of reasonable quality, and are considered to be a neutral feature in the context of the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

The high levels of car parking and through traffic within the Conservation Area associated with the school was identified in the Appraisal as an issue which detracts from its character & appearance.

The reinstatement of traditional paving flags in Oakhurst Close, and a bonded gravel dressing for the footpath along The Forest would enhance the character and appearance of the area and reinforce its special identity.

The removal of the crude “bollards” along the boundaries of the Epping Forest land and replacement with a more visually attractive solution to the problem of vehicular trespass would also enhance the character & appearance of the area.

An audit of the public realm should be undertaken to identify 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 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 negotiate with the Corporation of the City of London to see if an improved boundary to the forest land can be achieved.

(viii) Monitoring and review

The following actions need to be taken to ensure that this appraisal and management plan are accepted and acted upon:

- **Public Consultation:** The appraisal and management plan will be subject to a period of public consultation and views expressed as part of that process will be considered when preparing the final draft for Council adoption. Consultation will include placing the documents on the Council website, in libraries and council offices, consultation with local amenity groups and residents associations where they exist, and providing hard copies on request. A letter advising of these arrangements will be delivered to all properties in the area by mail shot.
- **Boundary review:** The Council will maintain the current boundary of the Conservation Area and continue to review it over time in accordance with Best Practice and guidance on the management of the historic environment produced by English Heritage.
- **Document review:** This document should be reviewed every five years in the light of the Local Development Framework and emerging government policy. A review should include the following:
 - (i) A survey 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