

Executive summary

Highgate Conservation Area Character Appraisal

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Highgate was designated as a conservation area on 21 December 1967. The original conservation area boundary included the village core and the Bishopswood area, the Gaskell Estate, together with the area bounded by Southwood Lane, Jacksons Lane, the central part of Archway Road, Muswell Hill Road, and Wood Lane up to Queen's Wood.
- 1.1.2 The conservation area is divided between the London Boroughs of Camden and Haringey. The Camden side includes part of Highgate Village, Fitzroy Park, Waterlow Park, Highgate Cemeteries and Whittington Hospital.
- 1.1.3 The conservation area boundary was extended on the eastern side on 27 September 1990, to include the upper and lower parts of the Archway sub area, together with the Miltons and Shepherd's Hill sub-areas. The final relatively small boundary extension was on the eastern side to include part of Stanhope Road in the Shepherd's Hill sub area on 29 November 1994.

1.2 Purpose of the Appraisal

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this character appraisal is to provide a description of the significance of Highgate Village Conservation Area, in terms of its architectural and historic interest. It seeks to increase public awareness and involvement in the preservation and enhancement of the area. It also provides a framework for future planning decisions within the area and an opportunity to identify potential for its improvement.

1.3 Statement of Significance

- 1.3.1 The character of the Highgate Village conservation area is formed by the relationship of its historic pattern of development, its high percentage of buildings of architectural merit, its topography, its green open spaces and distant views.
- 1.3.2 The village itself is a fine grained traditional settlement crowning one of the twin hills to the north of London. Highgate's proximity to London, combined with the benefits of its elevated position, providing clean air, spring water and open spaces, has ensured that

from its earliest beginnings in about the fourteenth century, it has been a very popular place to live or visit.

- 1.3.3 The early village High Street is characterised by its seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century small-scale terrace houses and traditional shop frontages. Buildings here have a relatively fine grain pattern of late medieval burgage plot sizes and their Georgian frontages may conceal the existence of earlier structures behind. Pond Square, on the Camden side, remains the heart of the village. Here, large and fashionable historic houses from the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries cluster around the historic core.
- 1.3.4 Archway Road, the nineteenth century route to the north, fronted by late Victorian and Edwardian retail parades of diverse independent shops, with flats over appears more urban than the village core.
- 1.3.5 The adjacent high quality residential areas of Victorian, Edwardian and early twentieth century terrace housing off Archway Road such as the Cholmeleys, the Miltons, and Shepherd's Hill are fine examples of planned development of their period.
- 1.3.6 Further diversity is apparent in the large imposing detached houses of the Bishops Sub-Area, laid out within generous large plots, with landscaped front and rear gardens and mature trees, some of which back onto Highgate Golf Club.
- 1.3.7 The eclectic mix of earlier buildings and fine examples of 20th Century buildings by renowned architects such as the High Point 1 & 2 by Berthold Lubetkin further add to the architectural diversity of the area.
- 1.3.8 The setting of the conservation area is enhanced by a wealth of open spaces and green surroundings such as Highgate Wood, Queen's wood, Hampstead Heath and Highgate Cemetery. Within Haringey's side of the designated area, Highgate Bowl and Highgate Golf Course are major open spaces that provide a marked contrast to the fine grained development of the Village, maintaining the connection to its agricultural past.
- 1.3.9 From various parts of the conservation area, there are long distance views to Central London, the Olympic Park and Alexandra Palace forming an attractive backdrop.

1.4 Problems and Pressures

- 1.4.1 The conservation area is facing unprecedented pressure for residential development, often involving the demolition of existing single family dwellings to create luxury residences of high specification with potentially inappropriate scale and design for the character of the area.

- 1.4.2 In the Bishops area there has been intense pressure for complete demolition and re-development of houses. In recent years many original houses have been replaced with modern, contemporary, or new 'reproduction' style ones. It is now evident that some of these replacement houses are too big, too wide, and too deep, and together with their large basements are over scaled compared to the size of the original houses, leaving little opportunity for any planting or landscaping on the side boundary and the characteristic visual gaps between houses. The effect of this is eroding the special early twentieth architectural and historic interest of the conservation area.
- 1.4.3 Within the village itself, both Highgate School and Channing School are facing considerable pressure for new school buildings and facilities, as well as the refurbishment of their existing historic school buildings.
- 1.4.4 Incremental changes to the architectural features, materials and details of domestic properties have been a primary cause of change to the character and appearance of the residential streets within Highgate conservation area. In particular the removal or alteration of timber sash windows, timber panelled front doors (often with stained glass panels), decorative timber porches and brackets, chimney stacks and pots, ridge tiles and finials and decorative plasterwork are amongst the most important noticeable changes that can diminish the quality, richness and visual cohesion of the house frontages. Much of the development that has occurred does not, however, fall within the remit of planning control as single dwelling houses have permitted development rights.

1.5 Management Plan

- 1.5.1 The Appraisal includes as its final chapter, a Management Plan and Design Guide, to provide guidance to residents, developers and members of public on the type and quality of design and development considered to be appropriate in the Highgate Conservation Area. This should be read in conjunction with the previous chapters describing the various sub-areas of the Conservation Area.
- 1.5.2 It is hoped that these guidelines would provide consistency in the standard of design and development which meets the needs of the residents and ensures the conservation of the historic and architectural character of Highgate.