



High Beeches Conservation Area

Area Appraisal and Management Plan
June 2008

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and approved by the Cabinet Member on 26th June 2008.

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Location of Conservation Area



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— High Beeches Conservation Area

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Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The High Beeches Conservation Area was designated on the 30th November 2005.
- 1.2 Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, an area designated as a “conservation area” will be an “area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.
- 1.3 This document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the High Beeches Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement.

2 Planning and policy context

- 2.1 Bexley’s Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted on 28 April 2004, contains the Council’s policies and proposals for development, regeneration and land use in the borough. Policies which seek the preservation and enhancement of statutorily listed buildings, locally listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeology are also set out in the UDP and the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 2.2 This appraisal should also be read in conjunction with national planning policy guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15). It follows advice contained in “Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals” and “Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas”, published by English Heritage and the Planning Advisory Service (August 2005).

3 Summary of the special character and appearance of the Conservation area

- 3.1 The special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation of High Beeches Conservation Area derives from the following features:
 - Mature Beech trees set along avenues with attractive grass verges and a splendid backdrop of well designed 1930s “styled” properties.
 - The scale and character of these architect designed “art moderne” interwar residences.
 - The quality and preservation of these examples of housing by the Bournville architects William Harvey and Herbert Wickes.
 - The balance, harmony, rhythm of built form and the related open spaces, particularly in front and between the properties.
 - Vistas along tree lined roads and views between buildings to the green space and trees beyond.
 - Many original building characteristics e.g. hipped roofs, curved metal windows, chimney



stacks, rendered white washed walls, etc.

- The landmark quality of the Victorian Lodge House on the junction of St James' Way and High Beeches.

4 Location, setting and boundary description

Location and context

4.1 The High Beeches Conservation Area is just outside Sidcup which is situated around 15 miles south-east of central London.

4.2 The area lies just to the east of North Cray Road. It comprises part of St James Way, High Beeches, part of The Grove and part of The Spinney. It comprises 37 pairs of 2 storey and single storey houses, 5 detached houses and 1 block of 4 houses.

Street pattern and layout

4.3 The area known as High Beeches is situated on formerly open farmland and was developed as a designed residential estate in the mid-1930s. This is key to its present day character.

4.4 The existing street pattern remains and defines the layout of today's conservation area. The route of a historic path leading from the north lodge to the main house seems to have disappeared altogether.

Landscape and setting

4.5 Trees were always integral to the character of this area and this is seen clearly on the historical maps. Indeed, the avenue along St James' Way appears to be original and the trees along High Beeches itself appear to reflect those along the original field boundary.

4.6 There are many splendid mature trees throughout the Conservation area and these enhance and add positively to the special qualities of the area.

4.7 The landscape setting of the residential area add to the merits of the Conservation Area. The open and generous green features contribute to the special architectural character of the area by enhancing the clean building lines and overall sense of space.

4.8 To the north end of The Grove there are important views over the beautiful open landscape around Foots Cray Meadows. This view has a positive influence.





Designated conservation area boundary

4.9 The conservation area designated is named after High Beeches, a cul-de-sac leading west from St. James Way, Sidcup. All the semi-detached homes on the south side of this cul-de-sac, Nos.1 to 31 (odd), and their gardens are included. From the western end of this group, the boundary follows the front garden walls to Nos. 33, 35 and 37 to a point opposite the western boundary of No. 31 High Beeches. The boundary runs northwards to the NW corner of that plot, then behind the gardens of Nos. 18-30 (even) High Beeches. It then resumes a northerly course following the western plot boundary of No 3 The Spinney, before following the front garden boundaries of Nos. 5, 7 & 9 westwards to a point opposite the western boundary of No. 8 The Spinney. The boundary runs north to the NW corner of that plot, then east behind Nos. 8 and 6 The Spinney.

4.10 From a point partway along the rear garden boundary of No. 6 The Spinney the boundary runs along the north-western perimeter of the garden to No. 27 The Grove. From the northern corner of that plot it follows the front boundary of No 29 to a point opposite the northern boundary of No. 36 The Spinney. The whole plot of No. 36 is included and the boundary then runs southwards behind Nos.26-36 (even) The Grove, thence eastwards to include the entire grounds of Nos.40-68 (even) St James Way together with the footway, verge, roadway and kerbs to their east. Partway along the front boundary of No. 77 St James Way the designated boundary takes a sharp turn westwards to include the crescent shaped service road outside a parade of shops and the section of highways verge east of No. 1 High Beeches. From a point close to the NE corner of this plot, the boundary heads south and behind the gardens to the homes Nos. 1-31 (odd) High Beeches.



4.11 The boundary includes all the original development as can be clearly seen from the

1938 plan. A large commercial block at the east end of High Beeches on the junction with St James' Way has been excluded.

4.12 The Townscape Analysis Map indicates the designated boundary.

5 Historic development and archaeological potential

5.1 High Beeches and its immediate surroundings were developed on part of the old North Cray Place Estate which was sold to 'Capital & Counties Construction Co. Ltd.' In 1934 the architect, William Alexander Harvey, and his partner, Herbert G. Wicks, were commissioned to design, houses and bungalows, to be built on the grounds of the estate.

5.2 The architects were based in Birmingham and utilising the 'Arts and Crafts' style, designed much of Richard and George Cadbury's now famous Bournville, a pioneering model worker's village community near Birmingham. Harvey and Wicks designed many of the original 315 houses, which former the residential core of Bournville. They also helped develop the Workers' Housing Co-operative which developed a further 398 houses.

5.3 Old Ordnance Survey maps clearly show that before the North Cray Place Estate was subject to development, it was open fields. High Beeches runs parallel to a field boundary and St James' Way appears to be a road or track. The block on the corner of High Beeches and St James' Way does appear to be part of the original development.

5.4 The area is bordered by two small and quite attractive Victorian lodges, although only one of these is included within the boundary of the conservation area.

5.5 There are no Scheduled Monuments within this conservation area. Whilst this is not a known important archaeological area, it is possible that finds may occur.



6 Spatial analysis

Character and interrelationship of spaces

6.1 Development within the conservation area consists mainly of detached and semi detached houses located along relatively wide tree lined streets. The visual impact of the private car is kept to a minimum with any hard standings in front of houses not too prominent, although any additional hard standings will be resisted. The existing grass verges make a positive contribution to the special character of the conservation area therefore any additional crossovers which will further erode this feature will be resisted.

Key views and vistas

6.2 Good views and vistas can be found looking:

- West and east along High Beeches.
- North and south along The Grove.
- North from the Grove towards Foots Cray Meadows.
- North and south along St James Way.



The Grove

- 6.3 Within the Conservation area there are many views of importance, including those of individual houses, streets and glimpses between buildings to green space and trees beyond. Because a view is not mentioned do not assume it is unimportant. Some significant views are marked on the attached Townscape Analysis Map.

7 Character analysis

- 7.1 It is not appropriate to divide the High Beeches Conservation Area into different character areas as High Beeches is of a similar consistent character throughout.
- 7.2 It has been mentioned above that the roads are of slightly different scales. This is important to note. High Beeches itself is quite a long straight road whereas The Grove, The Spinney and St James' Way are curved and fairly short. It is apparent from a map that the houses in High Beeches are more regularly aligned.

Activity, prevailing or former uses within the conservation area

- 7.3 This area was formerly an open area of fields and trees associated with the North Cray Estate. Today the High Beeches Conservation Area is completely residential.

Architectural and historic character

- 7.4 The conservation area has a memorable historic and architectural, character and appearance, deriving from the collection of 1930s art moderne style buildings set within a mature landscape. The properties have been constructed with good quality materials including metal windows, clay tiled mainly hipped roofs, rendered white washed walls, tile hanging and other period features. Semi-detached houses and detached bungalows are predominately the characteristic residential building form.



- 7.5 A number of houses retain the original 1930s architectural features such as metal windows, low front boundary walls, gates and central chimneys.

Buildings of townscape merit

- 7.6 Within the High Beeches Conservation Area there are no landmark buildings or historic individual buildings. However, the properties and their environs collectively form a unique suburban townscape composition and are worthy of conservation area status.

Trees, greenery and green spaces

- 7.7 As has already been mentioned, trees are of immense importance to this Conservation area. Indeed part of the name of this conservation area includes the type of tree by which it is famously known. Important trees and open spaces have been identified on the accompanying Townscape Analysis Map. It has not appropriate or practical to identify every tree and important open space but lack of a specific reference does not imply that it is not of value.

Assets of High Beeches Conservation Area (positives)

- 7.8 The positive physical assets of High Beeches Conservation Area are:

- Architectural and historic interest of area's buildings and spacious landscape setting;
- The high concentration of 1930s "art moderne" residential buildings;
- Suburban estate designed by renowned architects; and
- A large proportion of the properties generally retain the essential features, scale and proportions, which ensure a continued contribution to the character of the area.



The extent of intrusion or damage to the conservation area (negatives)

- 7.9 The main intrusion or negative features are:

- Some roads (notably High Beeches) are made up of concrete slab construction, it was noted that other roads have untidy surfacing and pavements;
- Some bungalows along High Beeches have large flat roofed dormers;
- The existing grass verges are of high landscape value and have a positive visual influence. New crossovers or other breaks to these verges should generally not be encouraged;
- It should be noted that street furniture does not reflect the 1930s architecture of this conservation area;
- The installation of uncharacteristic plastic doors and windows throughout the area is inappropriate. In some cases plastic windows were noted with curved plastic members in an attempt to copy the curves of the original 1930s metal windows. This spread of UPVC is threatening to destroy the special character of this area.

General condition

- 7.10 Generally High Beeches appears to be in fairly good condition with the obvious caveats mentioned previously.

Opportunities for enhancement

- 7.11 There is potential for further tree planting and soft landscaping particularly round the east end of High Beeches at the junction with St James' Way.
- 7.12 Some roads could be surfaced in more appropriate materials, similarly existing street furniture could be replaced with 1930s replica designs.
- 7.13 As the old beeches die they must be replaced with new trees.
- 7.14 To assist in the protection and retention of integral architectural features historic building grants should be targeted at householders considering replacing original features such as metal windows.

Potential for new development

- 7.15 There are no vacant sites in the conservation area and except for residential extensions there is little potential for large-scale development.
- 7.16 Schemes will be expected to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area in line with Government advice and policies within the current Bexley Unitary Development Plan.
- 7.17 Any future proposals for development shall be judged for their effect on the character, appearance and special interest of the conservation area as defined in this appraisal.



Townscape Analysis Map



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Part 2: Conservation Area Management Plan

1 Legislative background

- 1.1 The purpose of this Management Plan is to present proposals to achieve the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area's special character. The special qualities of the area have been identified as part of the appraisal process and this guidance draws upon that information. Both the Appraisal and the Management Plan will be subject to monitoring and review.
- 1.2 The document reflects government guidance as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) and English Heritage's, "Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas" (August 2005). It is important that the development control process ensures the preservation of the special character of the conservation area and that opportunities are taken to identify and implement enhancements. The key aims of the Management Plan, supported by the Character Appraisal, are to:
- Raise awareness of the importance and value of the local heritage.
 - Identify distinctive built environment character areas within the conservation area; provide guidance; and set out objectives to preserve and enhance buildings, structures and features.
 - Identify distinctive public realm character areas within the conservation area; provide guidance; and establish key actions to preserve and enhance the landscape, open spaces and streets.
 - Provide tailored design guidance and set out actions for the enhancement of the conservation area.
 - Outline the key statutory requirements in respect of development within the conservation area; provide guidance; and set out actions to secure the proper and effective application of these requirements.
 - Propose the implementation of management procedures to co-ordinate the delivery of new works and maintenance of public spaces.
- 1.3 The Management Plan encourages the Local Authority, developers, development professions (e.g. planners, architects, landscape architects, highway engineers) and the local community to engage in the preservation and enhancement of the local historic environment. This will help secure the long-term viability of the conservation area as an important heritage asset.

2 Planning controls and the Council's Development Plan

- 2.1 Designation as a conservation area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the 'preservation and enhancement' of the area. The local plan policies form the basis for making development control decisions with regard to new development and extensions. Also, in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 there are a number of extra controls, which apply to existing buildings in conservation areas. Consent is needed for:
- Demolition of a building (apart from some minor exceptions).
 - Demolition of walls, gates or fences of over a metre next to a highway or over two metres in other locations.

- 2.2 Where a property lies within a conservation area, planning control is extended so that planning permission and conservation area consent will be required, for example:
- A dwellinghouse enlarged by more than 50 cubic metres or over 10% of the size of the original building, whichever is greater.
 - The construction of a detached building, enclosure or pool of over 10 cubic metres in the grounds of a house.
 - Cladding any part of the exterior of a property in stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles.
 - Enlargement of a house by additions to or alteration of its roof.
 - The installation of a satellite dish or antenna on a chimney, on a building over 15 metres in height or on a wall or roof slope, which fronts a highway (refer Government publication “A Householder’s Planning Guide for the Installation of Antennas, including Satellite Dishes”).
 - Notification must be given of felling or lopping of trees.
- 2.3 Conservation Area Consent is required for the full or substantial demolition of buildings within the conservation area. In accordance with the Government Guidance in PPG15 there will be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 2.4 Where alterations are proposed, the reinstatement of original detailing and composition will be sought to reinforce the unity and cohesive quality of the townscape. The Council will seek to ensure that new development within the conservation area serves to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area in accordance with the adopted planning policies, the emerging Local Development Framework, and other published guidance.
- 2.5 Furthermore, the Council will expect all applications for extensions and alterations to be particularly carefully considered and only well detailed schemes, using the characteristic and appropriate traditional materials, will be approved.

3 Listed buildings, landmark buildings, buildings of local architectural or historic interest and buildings of townscape merit.

- 3.1 Within the High Beeches Conservation Area there are no distinctive landmark or listed buildings. However, the properties and their environs collectively form a unique suburban townscape composition and are worthy of conservation area status.

4 Erosion of character

- 4.1 Where the quality of an area is being eroded by alterations the Council may make use of what is termed an Article 4 Direction. This may be used to withdraw permitted development rights for a prescribed range of development which materially affect aspects of the external appearance of dwelling houses in conservation areas. This includes the erection, alteration, or removal of a chimney; various kinds of development fronting a highway, or open space, such as the enlargement, improvement, or other alteration of a dwelling house; alterations to windows or doors; the construction of an external porch; and the painting of a dwelling house, or of a building or enclosure within its curtilage. It may also be used to withdraw the permitted development rights to demolish a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure, if it is within the curtilage of a dwelling house and fronts a highway or open space.*

4.2 In general terms, the High Beeches Conservation Area has a substantial number of unaltered buildings and these contribute to and maintain the architectural and historic value and characteristics of the locale, make the area special, and worthy of conservation area status. However, it was identified that the following alterations pose a threat to the special character of the area

- Loss of original windows and doors.
- Alterations to window and door openings.
- Removal of redundant chimney stacks, pots and roof features.
- Alterations to the roofscape, including the installation of dormers.
- Installation of satellite dishes on prominent front elevations/chimney stacks.
- Loss of gardens, particularly to the front of a property for the provision of car parking spaces.

4.3 In determining planning applications the Council will take the above factors into consideration. The Council will oppose those alterations, which pose a threat to the special character of the conservation area.

4.4 In addition, as an aid to protecting the character of the area the Council will ensure that unauthorised development is subject to effective enforcement action. This is to protect the special qualities of the area generally and to ensure that detrimental unauthorised alterations throughout the area are rectified where legal powers permit.

4.5 The Council may assist with the provision of grant aid for projects, which restore or reinstate the original features of a building and will contribute to achieving higher standards of preservation and enhancement.

5 Trees, landscape and space between buildings

5.1 On private land within the conservation area, anyone intending to lop or fell a tree greater than 75mm in diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground must give the Council six weeks written notice before starting the work. This provides the Council with an opportunity to assess the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

5.2 The mature street trees which line the highway make a major contribution to the setting of the conservation area. Similarly, the grass verges which abut between the footpath and the highway contribute to the green leafy suburb and in general the spaciousness of the conservation area.

5.3 In addition, mature trees in private residential gardens, front and back, also contribute to the “rural” ambiance of the locale and are a significant characteristic of the area. Loss of greenery in front gardens due to conversion to hard surfacing for additional car parking is further eroding the character of the conservation area. It is recommended that these “green characteristics” are protected from inappropriate development.

5.4 The Council will consider the use of Tree Preservation Orders in appropriate circumstances where a tree has significant amenity value and is considered to be under threat. This will include trees both within and outside the area, where these trees contribute to the setting of the area or views identified in the appraisal. The Council will also seek to maintain the open spaces and views between buildings and breaks in the built environment.

6 Setting and views

- 6.1 The setting of the conservation area is very important and development that adversely affects the immediate setting and longer views, into and from the conservation area, will be resisted. The important views are identified on the Townscape Analysis Map. The Council will seek to ensure that all development serves to respect these important views.

7 The public realm and enhancement

- 7.1 The conservation area has generally been resurfaced using a mix of paving materials. The character and identity of the conservation area could be enhanced and reinforced with a unified approach using materials in keeping with the character of the area.

- 7.2 In general highway signage, traffic calming measures and other structures have the primary aim of maintaining and improving highway safety, however they can all serve to detract from the quality of the public realm and character of the area, and any redundant modern features should be removed. Resources permitting a critical audit of the public realm should be undertaken to identify redundant features and opportunities for enhancement.



- 7.3 There is potential for further tree planting and soft landscaping particularly round the small green areas and grass verges. Similarly, in public areas, as mature street trees die they must be replaced with new trees.
- 7.4 As highlighted, the existing grass verges which line the carriageway are of high landscape quality and have a positive visual influence. Car cross-overs and other breaks to these verges are eroding this key characteristic and should generally not be encouraged.
- 7.5 To enhance the street's appearance, the Council will encourage property owners to retain their front gardens rather than paving them over to provide additional vehicle parking.
- 7.6 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 or appearance of the conservation area. All works should accord with the spirit of English Heritage's 'Streets For All' 2004.

8 New buildings and building extensions

- 8.1 New developments in conservation areas should aspire to a quality of design

and execution, related to its context. This will normally involve respecting values established through assessment of the significance of the area.

- 8.2 In High Beeches Conservation Area the main pressure for future development might generally take the form of residential extensions, which could have an adverse affect on the harmony of the existing development. Further development might be permissible in some instances, as long as the proposals utilise current enclosed areas at ground floor level to the rear and are designed in a way that is sensitive to scale, detail and materials.
- 8.3 The setting of the houses is frequently enhanced by the presence of large mature trees. Vegetation including especially trees, adds significantly to the character of the area and any proposals for alterations or enhancement will need to be considered very carefully in terms of local and wider impact.
- 8.4 The roofscape is traditional in form, with heights relating mainly to the two-storey scale of buildings in the area. Any variations such as dormers or other extensions are likely to adversely affect this established character. In particular, rooflights and dormer windows to the front roof slope will detract from the character and appearance of the host building and the area, they therefore fail to “preserve or enhance” the conservation area and will generally be unacceptable.

9 Solar panels and wind turbines

- 9.1 In general terms, the installation of solar panels and/or wind turbines within or adjacent to a conservation area would introduce alien features and by their inherent design they will be visually intrusive. In terms of the main conservation principle that any proposed development should “preserve or enhance” the character of the conservation area, any installations may be problematic. The Council has published guidance, which provides information on the subject. Please refer “Solar Panels and Wind Turbines: A Householder Guide on the Need for Planning Permission and Building Regulations approval” (Jan. 2007).

10 Monitoring change

- 10.1 It is recommended that the physical environment of the conservation area and key sites adjacent to the conservation area is monitored by carrying out detailed surveys, including a dated photographic record, on a regular basis, so as to identifying any unauthorised work and consider whether enforcement action should be taken.
- 10.2 Any previously unreported unauthorised development or work identified by the detailed survey would then be considered by the Planning Control Enforcement Team for action, resources permitting.

11 Boundary definition

- 11.1 The appraisal identified that the existing boundary was generally a good reflection of the area of special character and consequently no revisions are suggested to the existing designation.
- 11.2 The Council will maintain the defined boundary of the designated area and periodically review the boundary of the conservation area in accordance with best practice and guidance on management of the historic environment.

12 Community engagement

- 12.1 It is mentioned in recent urban design publications that, “people make places”. Although the Council has planning powers it can exercise over development and may, when funds are available, carry out enhancement works, ultimately the quality of any place depends on all the people who affect the area. In predominately residential areas such as High Beeches Conservation Area, the owners of property play a key role in affecting how the area looks. Good communication between local residents and the Council is one way of helping owners and the Council to carry out appropriate works and take informed decisions that are of benefit to the area.
- 12.2 To that end the Council will seek to maintain and promote close collaborative working with the local residents and any associations on issues relevant to the management of the area, including proposals for development and enhancement, within and adjoining the conservation area. It will also improve dialogue with the wider community. This may include the production and distribution of information leaflets subject to resources.
- 12.3 The following actions have been taken to ensure that this appraisal and management proposals are accepted and acted upon by the local community.
- 12.4 Public consultation - High Beeches Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan were subject to public consultation during February to April 2008. As part of the consultation exercise comments were sought from the Conservation Advisory Committee, local amenity/history groups, local partnerships (as appropriate), organisations such as English Heritage, etc., and individual owners/occupiers of all of the properties affected. The document was also placed on the Council's website, in local libraries and contact centre. A letter advising of these arrangements was delivered to all properties in the area. The results of the consultations were considered by the Cabinet Member, the text was revised and adopted. Copies of this document are available both as printed documents and on the Council's website.
- 12.5 The Council will seek to improve communication with local residents and where it can help and encourage local residents to engage and assist with pursuing conservation objectives

Appendices

1 General guidance to homeowners on repairs to historic buildings in conservation areas

Note: Before starting any work, property owners are advised to contact the Council.

Roofs

The roof is often an important feature of a historic building and the roofscape can often make a significant contribution to the character of the area. The retention of its original structure, shape, materials and features is important. Historic roof materials and features such as chimneystacks, chimney pots, dormers, roof lights, as well as details such as decorative ridge tiles and finials all form an integral part of the character of the building and the area. The loss or inappropriate alteration of historic materials and features is likely to be harmful to the appearance and character of historic buildings and areas.

The Council encourages the retention and reinstatement of traditional roofing materials. When roofing materials are replaced, it is important that as much as possible of the original material is re-used. When practical, original material should be re-used on visible areas, with matching new materials on other parts.

The addition of modern features, such as roof lights, is likely to be harmful to its character and appearance of the building and area, and should be avoided at all times. When replacement of materials and features becomes necessary, the replacement should respect the design and material of the original and the age and character of the building and/ or the area.

Chimneys

Chimneystacks are both decorative and functional features of the roofscape and can be important indicators of the age of a building and its internal planning, and they should normally be retained, even when no longer required. Chimney pots can sometimes be significant decorative features in their own right and can be important as part of the roofscape, which will be damaged if they are removed or replaced with an inappropriate type.

Dormers

Original dormers should be retained and carefully repaired. If beyond repair they should be reconstructed using traditional materials with all historic features reproduced. Enlargement of existing dormers on principle elevations should be avoided. Any new dormers should respect the symmetry of either an individual building or a terrace. Where new dormers would be inappropriate to the type of building or the proposed position, new recessed 'conservation' roof lights may be acceptable, but not on prominent or generally visible roof slopes.

Fascias

Features such as timber bargeboards and fascias should be preserved and, if replacement becomes necessary, it should wherever possible replicate the design and material of those original to the building. The addition of bargeboards and fascias to buildings that did not

previously have such a feature will normally be resisted, where they would detract from the character of the building or the area.

Walls

Walls are the main structural fabric of any building. Alterations to the wall surfaces will have a significant impact on the overall appearance of a historic building. Every effort should be made to retain or re-use original facing brickwork and stonework. Alterations or repairs to external walls should respect the original material and endeavour to match it in appearance. Particular care should be paid to re-pointing brick or stonework. Methods should be employed to minimize damage to historic building materials: an appropriate lime mix mortar should be used and should match the appearance of the original pointing. Brick or stonework should not normally be rendered unless the surface was rendered originally. It may be necessary to remove more recently applied render if this is damaging the surface beneath.

Painting and stone cleaning

Painting or re-painting involving a change of colour will affect the character of a historic building. Previously unpainted surfaces should not normally be painted over. In many cases, the colour of the paint may be less important than the first application of an unsuitable covering, which could damage the original fabric and be damaging to remove. Cleaning can have a marked effect on the character of historic buildings and affect the historic fabric. The cleaning of an individual building within a terrace would obviously affect the appearance of the terrace as a whole. All cleaning methods can cause damage if carelessly handled. Cleaning with low-pressure water and non-abrasive brushes is often the preferred method. Other methods including abrasive and chemical cleaning can damage wall surfaces and destroy detail and should generally be avoided. Consideration should be given as to whether such cleaning is either necessary or worthwhile to remove corrosive dirt or to achieve a major improvement in appearance.

Windows and doors

Door and window openings establish the character of an elevation; they should not generally be altered in their proportions or details. The depth to which window frames are recessed within a wall is a varying historical feature of importance and greatly affects the character of a building – this too should be respected.

Windows - The size and shape of window openings, window frame details, arrangement and detail of glazing bars, and the method of opening are important characteristics of a historic building or an area. The traditional material used for windows in most historic buildings is timber, although occasionally the original windows are metal. It can often be difficult to introduce new materials without altering the appearance or character of the area.

Wherever possible, original windows should be retained and repaired. Improved heat and sound insulation can be achieved in unobtrusive ways by draft-proofing and soundproofing measures, rather than replacement of the original window. When necessary, replacement or repaired windows should accurately replicate the size and shape of original timber frames and glazing bars in all respects.

Doors - Doorways form an important element of historic buildings and can add to the character of conservation areas. Together with the door surround, fanlight, steps and original door furniture, doors can provide a significant and prominent feature. In recent years there has been a trend towards the replacement of historic timber front doors with modern doors

of inappropriate materials and design. To preserve the character and appearance of historic buildings and areas, it is important to retain the original front door, door surround, fanlight and other features wherever possible. When necessary, replacement or repaired doors should accurately replicate the original design in all respects.

Window and door materials

In most situations timber should be used for the replacement of historic windows and doors; generally UPVC cannot satisfactorily replicate the historic detailing and character of these features. UPVC windows and doors can degrade and discolour; they are not completely maintenance free and can be difficult to repair. Developments in timber preservation, finishing materials and manufacture can produce timber windows and doors with a significantly longer life than UPVC.

Rainwater goods

Original rainwater goods are an integral part of the design and character of an historic building. They will normally be cast iron, which if properly maintained should last many years longer than replacement plastic goods. Cast iron gutters, down pipes and hopper heads etc. should be retained wherever possible. Where rainwater goods are required to be renewed, the replacement should replicate the original in all respects. Suitably profiled cast aluminium may be an acceptable alternative to cast iron in certain situations. However, plastic rainwater goods should be avoided on buildings where cast iron has been previously been used. Additional rainwater goods should be kept to a minimum and should not disturb or break through any decorative architectural features. Boundary walls and railings

Boundary Walls and Railings

Boundary walls and railings are important architectural and streetscape features. The loss or alteration of these features over time has been detrimental to the overall character of the Borough's historic areas and buildings. Distinctive boundary elements include brick and stone walls, gates, cast iron railings, and stone and brick plinths piers. Historic boundaries should be retained, repaired or reinstated as necessary using appropriate techniques and detailed to match the original. Particular care should be taken to repair or reinstate existing walls using appropriate techniques and materials. Stonework if appropriate should be locally sourced. Special care should be taken to use the correct lime mortar mix and method of pointing in brick or stone walls.

Minor additions

Features such as aerials, satellite dishes, burglar alarms, CCTV cameras, heating system flues and vents should be kept to a minimum, and where necessary should be installed in locations and in a manner that will not harm the appearance or character of the building or area.

2 Contacts

For information on listed buildings and conservation areas in the London Borough of Bexley.

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Strategic Planning and Development
Wyncham House, 207 Longlands Road,
Sidcup, Kent
DA15 7JH.

Tel: 020 8308 7785 / 020 8308 7789

Email: martyn.nicholls@bexley.gov.uk / gordon.fraser@bexley.gov.uk

For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas:

English Heritage (London Region)
3 Bunhill Row
London EC1 8YZ

Tel: 020 7973 3000

Email: customers@english-heritage.org.uk

For an excellent range of technical advice leaflets:

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
37 Spital Square
London E1 6DY

Tel: 020 7377 1644

Email: info@spab.org.uk

If you would like to know more about the services the Council provides, or would like either a translation of this document or the information in a different format, please call our Customer Contact Centre on 020 8303 7777 and press 0, quoting reference:

