



# *Oak Road Conservation Area*

**Area Appraisal and Management Plan**

June 2008

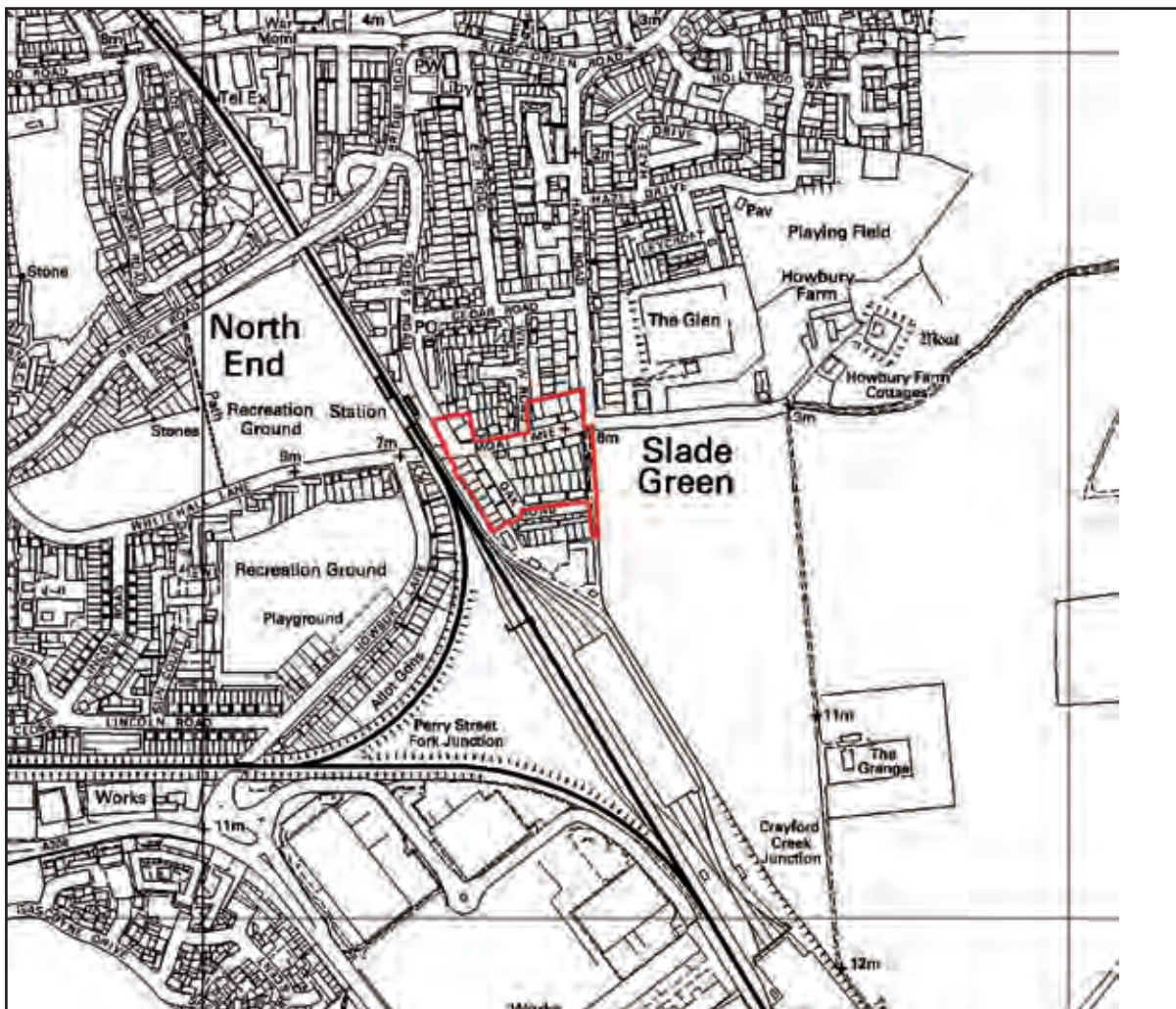
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### Location of Conservation Area



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— Oak Road Conservation Area

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# *Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal*

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Oak Road Conservation Area was designated on the 19th February 1992.
- 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 Oak Road Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement.

## **2 Planning and policy context**

- 2.1 Bexley’s Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted in April 2004 contains the Council’s planning 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 be read in conjunction with Bexley’s emerging Local Development Framework, The London Plan (February 2004), national planning policy guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG 15) - Planning and the Historic Environment. 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 Oak Road Conservation Area derives from the following features:
  - Its historic planned street pattern and layout
  - Its remote setting on the edge of the urban area juxtaposition with Thames Marshes and the Slade Green railway sheds
  - The landmark quality of the locally listed “Railway Tavern”
  - The homogeneity of building design
  - The quality of the buildings as an early example of “design for excellence” in social housing
  - A planned village of railway worker’s cottages

## **4 Location, setting and boundary description**

### Location and context

- 4.1 The Oak Road, conservation area covers part of Slade Green, a residential and industrial suburb, forming part of the London Borough of Bexley. The conservation area is on the fringe of Greater London; it abuts Crayford Marshes, which here form part of the Metropolitan Green Belt. It is located immediately to the north of the extensive train

sheds of Slade Green Depot (now used by Govia Trains) and Slade Green station.

- 4.2 The settlement was built along part of the historic track called “Whitehall Lane”, which was constructed to serve the Howbury Farm and provide access to the marshes and River Darent. The name probably comes from the white painted walls of the house and moated enclosure. The railway village was built to the east of “Whitehall Crossing”, a level crossing on the North Kent Line, immediately north of the extensive engine sheds it was built to serve.



*Moat Lane looking east*

Street pattern and layout

- 4.3 “Whitehall Lane” was renamed Moat Lane, when the railway crossing was closed. “Oak Road” was built to the south, immediately adjacent to the engine sheds. Moat Lane forms a through road, whereas Oak Road is a cul-de-sac. Roads were laid out to a planned pattern parallel to Moat Lane and the railway with rows of houses all aligned parallel to these roads creating strong building lines.

Landscape and setting

- 4.4 The conservation area abuts Crayford Marshes, a wide expansive open area of drained Thames marshes. There are few trees and most of the land is used for pasture. The River Thames and the Darent flood barrier are visible in the distance.



*View from the conservation area along Moat Lane to the marshes*

Designated conservation area boundary

- 4.5 When originally designated as a conservation area the boundary was based on those parts of the railway village along Moat Lane and Oak Road. This included the locally listed “Railway Tavern”; the housing between Oak Road and Moat Lane; and the footpath, which forms the eastern edge of the conservation area. Other, earlier much altered and later, post war development, was excluded.

- 4.6 The Townscape Analysis Map indicates the designated boundary.

## 5 Historic development and archaeological potential

- 5.1 The origins of the name give some sense of its antiquity. “Slad” is a Norse word meaning a place for the beaching of boats. In Saxon, the word “Slade” means low lying ground. “Green” refers to the verdant nature of the land. There was a Saxon manor at “Hoobury”, the current “Howbury”, located on marshy ground.
- 5.2 Before the building of the railway and the associated industrial development, this was an isolated low-lying area. When the railway was built, the area between Whitehall Lane and Slade Green Lane was used for market gardens and was known as “Cabbage Island”, a name that still survives.
- 5.3 The two streets of the conservation area form part of a more extensive land holding acquired by the South-Eastern Railway, with the intention of building 350 houses for railway workers. Only 158 were built. The housing was to accommodate the large number of people employed servicing steam locomotives, at the large engine sheds built at Slade Green in 1900. These sheds were built to reduce congestion nearer London by enabling the transfer of locomotives from Bricklayers Arms and other engine sheds in south London.
- 5.4 At the time (1900) Slade Green depot, then called Whitehall Engine shed, was a modern facility designed to service 100 steam locomotives. It was located at the “end of the line” for (then anticipated) suburban services to Dartford, Sidcup and Bexleyheath as well as serving the extensive industrial sidings at Erith.
- 5.5 As was the practise of the time it was convenient and useful to have workers living near their workplace, hence the development of the “railway village”. Railway workers moved to Slade Green from other locations nearer London. For some time passes were issued for travel to Woolwich market from Slade Green, an indication of its isolation and lack of facilities.
- 5.6 The first phase of residential development by Messer’s Perry and Co. of Bow was 91 houses on Elm Road, Cedar Road and Hazel Road. However, when the Council first considered the initial designation of the conservation area these were excluded, as they were considered to have been much altered. Although, what is thought to be the 91st house, No.4 Moat Lane, the Shed Foreman’s house, which was built to a larger, more imposing design than the other worker’s houses, was included in the designation.
- 5.7 The second phase of railway worker’s house construction was initiated in December 1898 when tenders were invited to build 54 houses. Messrs Smith & Sons of South Norwood were the successful contractors. The order was later increased to 56 houses, comprising: Moat Lane 6 to 36 (even); Moat Lane 11 to 29 (odd); and Oak Road 1-16 (all); and Oak Road 17-43 (odd).
- 5.8 They were built in terraces of four and were much larger houses with six rooms. To the rear there was a two-storey annex, shared with the neighbouring house. The kitchen and a third bedroom was in this annex, leaving the ground floor as a parlour. these were known as ‘Parlour Houses’. Each had a small front garden with a much larger rear garden. Front gardens had oak fencing. What is particularly notable is that the houses and engine sheds were illuminated by electricity from the start.
- 5.9 The Railway Hotel (Tavern) was built by Perry & Co. of Bow to provide accommodation for railway officials and commercial representatives to the new depot. In 1899 the Erith Times reported the Railway Hotel was approaching completion, and a license had been granted to the South-Eastern Railway. The license passed to the Dartford

Brewery in 1901. It was not successful as a hotel and the name was changed to the Railway Tavern. Its use as a public house ceased and in 2005/6 the building was renovated and converted into flats.



*The former Railway Tavern*

5.10 The original settlement, Slades Green, as it was then called, clustered around "The Corner Pin" public house along Slades Green Road, to the north of the railway village. This was shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1890. The main "railway village" was built by 1910 and remained almost unchanged to 1938. However most recent housing took place in the 1950's and 1960's. This did not affect the historic character of the "railway village" and "filled the gaps" of the un-built parts of the original scheme.

5.11 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 of rows of short terraces, of 4 to 6 houses, located at a set distance from the roads, thus creating strong building lines. There are short gardens to the roadside frontage, with much deeper gardens to the rear. The short gardens retain their original purpose, being too small to provide car parking. There are several short alleys to the garden area, many of which have been "gated", these alleys add to the character of the area. There are however, very few trees, located in gardens and along the footpath, which forms the eastern boundary.



*Oak Road, looking east, which shows the uniform pattern of groups of terraces*

Key views and vistas

6.2 There are views from the conservation area to the Thames (Crayford) Marshes, in the east. This gives clear vistas across the marshes towards the River Thames and the Darenth flood barrier. In the distance the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge and Littlebrook (Dartford) power station can be seen. These views of the wider landscape testify to the conservation area's setting on the edge of the Metropolitan Green Belt and make a significant contribution to its character. The land immediately to the east is used for grazing.



*Crayford Marshes*

- 6.3 Within the conservation area the most significant vista is at the corner of Moat Lane and Forest Road, where the former Railway Tavern with its continuous façade of doors and windows, turns round the corner. The style and character of this locally listed building, adds a quality of townscape otherwise lacking in the vicinity.
- 6.4 Within the conservation area there are many views of importance, including those of individual houses and streets. Because a view is not mentioned it is not because it is unimportant and more views will be noted on the accompanying map. but rather that there are so many different views. Some significant views are marked on the attached Townscape Appraisal Map.

## 7 Character analysis

Activity and prevailing or former uses within the conservation area

- 7.1 Oak Road Conservation Area is an area of housing still occupied solely for residential uses. It is a planned railway worker's village largely typified by homogenous building form and grain.

Architectural and historic character

- 7.2 The distinctive architectural character and appearance of the conservation area is derived from the 1900s planned layout of the railway estate:

- Uniform scale of all houses and use of consistent materials and architectural detailing.
- Porches: side or central location of open porches, carried on wooden supports.
- Windows: (thin transoms); brick arches and quoins but no keystone; simple approach to design; cills of reconstituted stone or concrete.
- Walls: generally exposed brick to cill height, some with the upper floor rendered.
- Groupings of 4 or 6 terraced houses.



Buildings of townscape merit

- 7.3 There is only one locally listed building in the conservation area, the former Railway Tavern, which makes a significant contribution to the quality of the townscape and is considered to be a landmark building in the area. It is identified on the Townscape Analysis Map. In addition, there are a few relatively unmodified houses which provide good examples for sensitive restoration.
- 7.4 Listed, locally listed, and landmark buildings help create the conservation area's distinctive and interesting historic character. As recommended in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: "Planning and the Historic Environment", the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Trees, greenery and green spaces

- 7.5 There are few trees in this conservation area. There is a row of poplars along the path which forms the eastern edge with the green belt, but their contribution is diminished



by the broken and damaged concrete fence posts adjacent and the litter-strewn path. There are some trees in the back gardens between Moat Lane and Oak Road, which make a significant contribution to the area.

Assets of oak Road Conservation Area (positives)

- 7.6 The main assets of the Oak Road Conservation Area are given below:
- Architectural and historic quality of the area's buildings
  - Homogeneity of housing design in the area
  - Proximity to open marsh countryside
  - Social historic significance as a planned railway estate



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

- 7.7 The extent of intrusion is illustrated by:
- Replacement doors and windows have resulted in erosion of the historic appearance of the conservation area, many of the alterations had taken place before its designation as a conservation area.
  - The appearance of the footpath at the eastern edge of the conservation area is a cause of concern.
  - The necessary installation of replacement of larger street lighting columns on Moat Lane
  - The loss of a unified front road boundary treatment

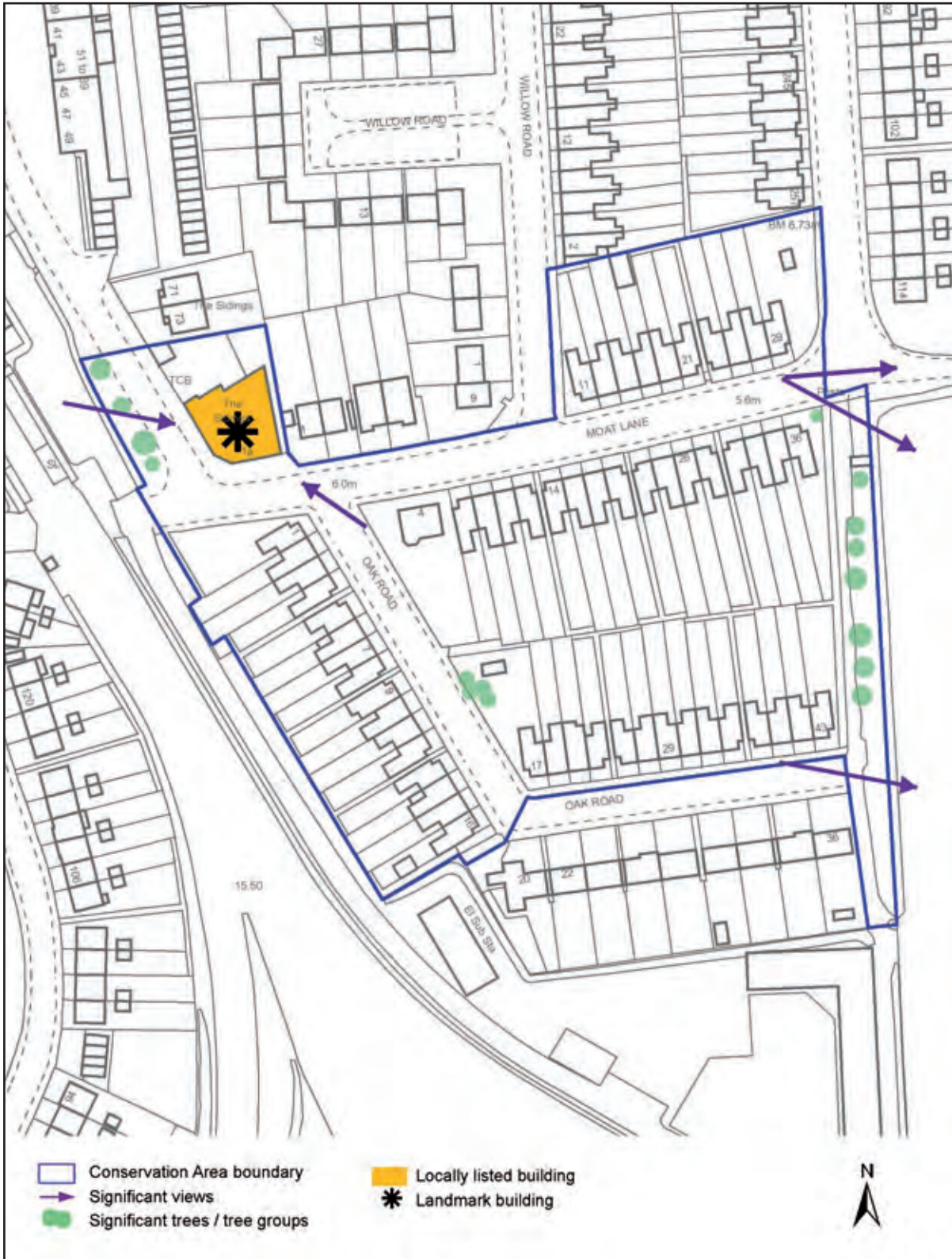
Opportunities for enhancement

- 7.8 The Management Plan identifies some areas appropriate for enhancement. This includes, landscaping, tidying up boundaries and litter picking footpaths, more appropriate street furniture, lessening the visual impact of traffic, and traffic management, etc. Historic building grants should be targeted at householders to restore or reinstate historic features.

Potential for new development

- 7.9 There are no vacant sites in this area and except for possible minor extensions, there is no potential for large-scale development.
- 7.10 Any development will be expected to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area in line with Government advice and policies.
- 7.11 All future proposals for development will 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 dwelling house 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 Any application for the demolition of a Statutorily Listed, Locally Listed Building or Building of Townscape Merit will need to be accompanied by a reasoned justification stating why the building should be demolished. The Council will expect the applicant to demonstrate that:
- the building is beyond economic repair;
  - the building has been offered on the open market at a realistic price; and
  - if vacant, that alternative uses have been sought.
- 2.5 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 design guidance.
- 2.6 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 conservation area, there is only one locally listed building, the former Railway Tavern, it makes a significant contribution to the quality of the townscape and is considered to be a landmark building in the area. It is identified on the Townscape Analysis Map.

## **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 Oak Road Conservation Area the main issues affecting the character and appearance of the area relate to small scale incremental changes such as: the removal of chimney stacks; the enclosure of porches; the installation of inappropriate style UPVC doors and windows .
- 4.3 The Council may assist with the provision of grant aid for projects, which restore or reinstate the original features of historic buildings and will contribute to achieving higher standards of preservation and enhancement.

## **5 Trees, landscape and space between buildings**

- 5.1 Within the conservation area, anyone intending to lop or fell a tree greater than 75mm in diameter at 1.5 meters 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 Although there is little scope for street tree planting in Oak Road Conservation Area, there are some limited opportunities for tree planting on the south side of Moat Lane and along the eastern boundary of the conservation area. The contribution made by trees in private gardens to the character of the area should not be under-estimated. The Council will seek to protect this characteristic using the necessary planning powers.
- 5.3 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 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.
- 6.2 Recent proposals for a road/rail freight interchange on the marshes adjacent to the

conservation area, if developed, will impact on some of the important key views. This conservation area assessment records the significance of maintaining these views from the conservation area and these will need to be taken into account in the preparation of any mitigation measures and landscape proposals.

## **7 The public realm and enhancement**

- 7.1 The footpaths in the conservation area have been resurfaced using modern surfacing materials and original lamp columns have been replaced with modern alternatives. In general traffic calming measures and other structures can all serve to detract from the quality of the public realm and character of the area. A critical audit of the public realm should be undertaken to identify redundant features and opportunities for enhancement, subject to resources.
- 7.2 To enhance the street's appearance, the Council will encourage property owners to restore their front boundary walls using traditional materials and a design in keeping with the period style. This would help to strengthen the homogeneous character of the area.
- 7.3 There seems to be a general problem with litter, neglect and dereliction along the eastern boundary path. Regular litter picks and grass cutting; and the removal of disused concrete fence posts along the eastern path would serve to enhance this corner of the conservation area.
- 7.4 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 the highest 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 Oak Road Conservation Area the main pressure for future development is likely to take the form of residential extensions, which could have an adverse effect 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. Rooflights and dormer windows to the front roof slope detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area and would fail to "preserve or enhance" the conservation area, and will therefore 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 greatest historic significance and special character, and consequently no revisions are suggested to the existing designation.
- 11.2 The Council will maintain the existing boundary of the designated area and will 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 Oak Road 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 carryout 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 - Oak Road 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

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## **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 endeavor 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 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 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 and 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.

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## 2 Contacts

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

Mr M Nicholls / Mr G Fraser  
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Bexleyheath, Kent  
DA6 7AT  
Tel: 020 8303 7777  
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[gordon.fraser@bexley.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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:

