



Willersley Avenue/ Braundton Avenue Conservation Area

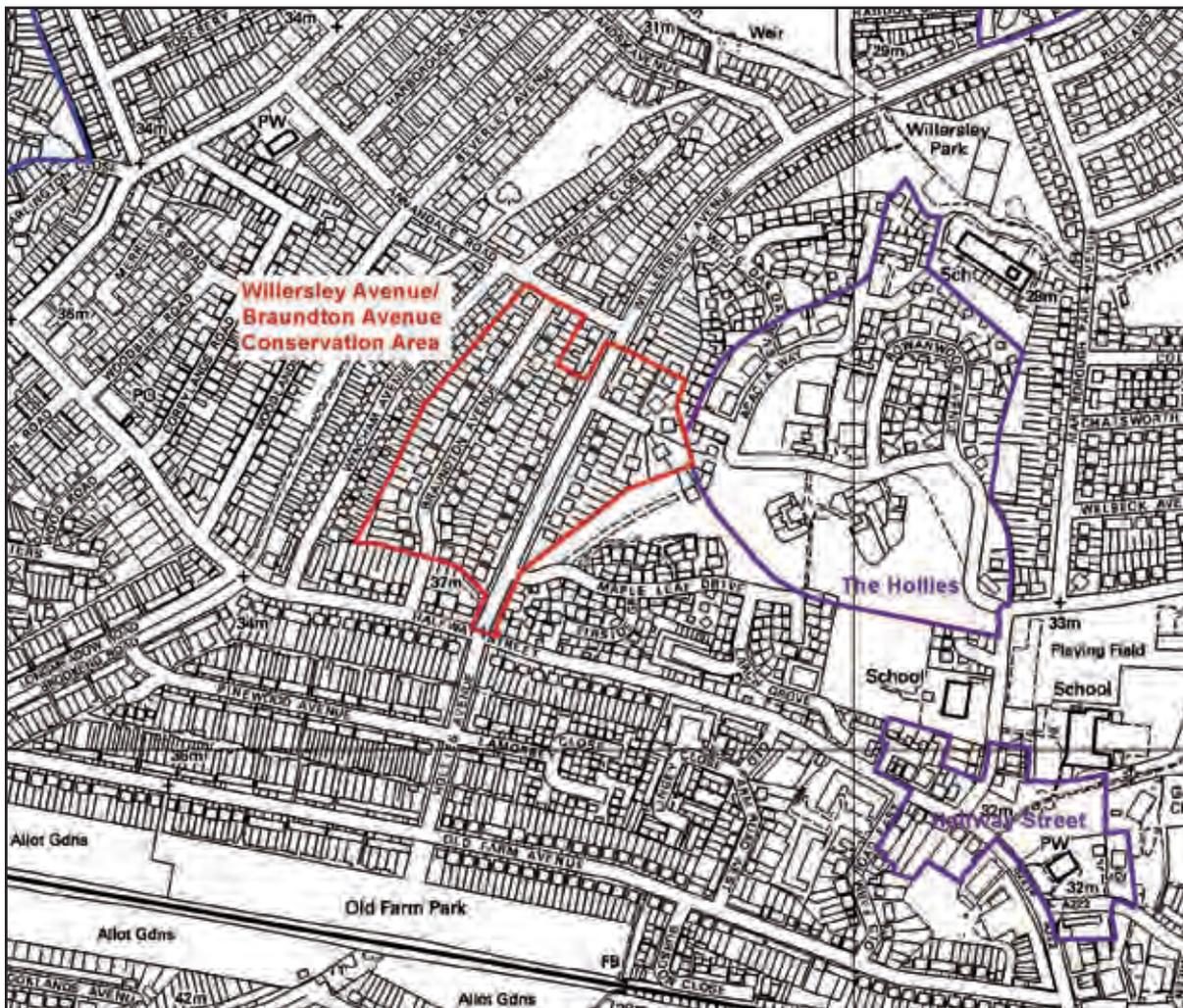
Area Appraisal and Management Plan
June 2008

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Location of Conservation Area



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- Willersley Avenue/Braundton Avenue Conservation Area
- Other conservation Areas

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Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Willersley Avenue/Braundton Avenue 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 Willersley Avenue/Braundton Avenue Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement.



This pair of chalet style semi-detached houses is relatively unaltered externally and retains original features such as symmetrical porthole windows, first floor bowed five light windows and central chimney stack. The low wall on the right is original. Front doors are on the side of the building.

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 special character and appearance of the conservation area

3.1 The special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation of the Willersley Avenue/Braundton Avenue Conservation Area derives from the following features:

- Good examples of 1930s chalet style houses.
- High survival of original period detailing.
- Long roads of houses of uniform style typifying 1930s suburbia.
- The layout forms part of a planned 1930s estate.
- Wide, tree lined grass verges.
- Feeling of spaciousness.
- Relatively small front gardens behind low front walls.

4 Location, setting and boundary description

Location and context

4.1 Willersley Avenue/Braundton Avenue Conservation Area is located on level ground in a suburban setting about 2 km from Sidcup railway station in the south-west of the London Borough of Bexley.

Street pattern and layout

4.2 The houses in this conservation area were built in the 1930s as part of a planned development that included these two parallel avenues, Willersley Avenue and Braundton Avenue. Willersley Avenue, being a major access north-south access road has been designed to be wider than Braundton Avenue. The unusual width of Willersley Avenue might be explained by a proposal to make it part of an inter-war planned London inner ring road. Willersley Close is a cul-de-sac in which four semi-detached properties fan out around a central turning circle off Willersley Avenue. No 9 Willersley Close has been located outside the formal street layout presumably to maximise use of available land.

Landscape and setting

4.3 The conservation area lies on level ground in a suburban setting where there are no panoramic views. There are no visible significant landmarks.

Designated conservation area boundary

4.4 The designated area has been defined to include the best parts of a typical 1930s chalet style suburban estate. Nos 1-64 (inclusive) Braundton Avenue are included together with Willersley Close and Nos 1-51 (odd) and Nos 2-42 (even) Willersley Avenue.

4.5 To the west, the conservation area boundary is defined by the rear boundaries of Nos 1-63 (odd) Braundton Avenue beyond which there is a marked change in the character of development. To the north, the boundary includes the best of the chalets in Willersley Avenue but excludes those, which are interspersed with other house types and have plainer facades. The southern part of the conservation area encloses the wide expanse of grass verge along Willersley Avenue as far as Halfway Street.

4.6 The Townscape Analysis Map indicates the designated boundary.

5 Historic development and archaeological potential

- 5.1 A 1909 map of the locality shows that the area was still predominantly rural but the area was soon to become part of the inter-war expansion of suburban housing.
- 5.2 After the end of the First World War, England's chronic housing problem was addressed by the Housing Acts of 1919 by which councils were actually required to build house for the first time, with a government subsidy. The subsidy measures were also extended to speculative builders and in 1923 the grants on offer to them were made more generous. This encouragement together with the money that was flowing into building societies and favourable interest rates, were important factors that paved the way for the inter-war building boom that created privately owned, semi-detached suburbia. Technologically, builders benefited from mass produced pre-fabricated fittings.
- 5.3 Local factors which led to the 1930s estates in the Sidcup area were the electrification of the railway, the proximity of central London, the building of the first Sidcup by-pass (1928) and Rochester Way, and the expansion of the local manufacturing industry giving rise to a demand for housing from skilled workers.
- 5.4 Willersley Avenue and Braundton Avenue were built by H. Smith and Company of Avery Hill Road, Eltham as part of Smith's Hollies Estate, one of the principal estates built in the Sidcup and Blackfen area in the 1930s. Although the original planning applications for most of the dwellings were submitted in March 1932 and most houses are built in a chalet style, some of the house plans were subsequently altered and there are a few exceptions to the general uniformity of house design.
- 5.5 For example, an interesting contrast in styles of 1930s housing is illustrated by Nos 62 and 64 Braundton Avenue, which date from the late 1930s and are built in a restrained moderne style. Nos 32 and 34 and Nos 45 and 47 Willersley Avenue also depart from the dominant house type.
- 5.6 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 Both avenues have a central carriageway flanked by a grass verge and footway. Willersley Avenue is about twice as wide as Braundton Avenue and, having a noticeably wider grass verge, its roadside trees are significantly larger and more prominent in the streetscene.
- 6.2 Houses throughout the conservation area are set back from the footway behind low walls and small front gardens. Building lines have been slightly stepped. Rear gardens are relatively long. Typically, there is no rear access as rear gardens directly abut each other. The houses have not been designed with integral garages and, generally speaking, the spaces between buildings remain open and uncluttered, thereby reinforcing the rhythm of buildings and spaces.
- 6.3 Regularly spaced two storey semi-detached houses in uniform plot sizes and identical building materials are the norm. Although, No 1 Willersley Avenue and No 9 Willersley Close are detached dwellings, the latter a bungalow.



Willersley Avenue. This row of relatively unaltered chalet style houses presents a characteristic saw toothed zigzag roofscape enlivened by tall, wide chimney stacks and an expanse of red clay tiles.

Braundton Avenue (right) is narrower than Willersley Avenue with a greater feeling of enclosure but still with clear open spaces between buildings and a noticeable sequence of solid and void. There is little traffic and the road is quiet and secluded from the area's main thoroughfares.



Key views and vistas

- 6.4 There is no single key building, landmark or vista. The conservation area's distinctive main feature relate to the long views which illustrate the homogeneity of houses, the uniform spaces between buildings, the rhythm of the gables and the long cat-slide roofs, the tree lined grassed roadside verges and front gardens, demonstrate the spaciousness of the suburban location. 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.
- 6.5 Significant views are marked on the attached Townscape Analysis Map.

7 Character analysis

- 7.1 The conservation area is composed of two roads of uniform 1930s housing characteristic of the period and the immediate locality, typifying inter-War suburbia. Uniformity, as opposed to diversity, is the foundation of the conservation area's distinctive character and special interest.
- 7.2 Willersley Avenue and Braundton Avenue are part of a roughly rectilinear grid of roads that makes up this part of The Hollies estate. Willersley Avenue is a main through route leading from Halfway Street directly to The Oval, a planned parade of shops built in 1933. It is therefore busier and noisier than Braundton Avenue, a minor access road leading only to private properties.

7.3 Willersley Close is a cul-de-sac backland feature, typical of the period, in which five properties are accessed from a turning circle at the end of a short road. Nos 1-4 turn their backs to the close to take advantage of the open aspect across the grounds of the former Hollies Children's Home.

7.4 Houses are brick-built and dominated by long roof slopes of plain clay tiles extending from a central ridge to first floor level, giving rise to the so-called 'chalet' style. The diagonal roofline is contrasted with strong horizontal elements comprising full width double lines of ground-and first-floor tiled canopies.

7.5 The rhythm of chalet style houses gives rise to a street scene dominated by a saw-toothed sequence of plain white gables, enlivened by a tile diamond motif. Tall rectangular central brick chimney stacks add interest to the skyline.

7.6 Window details characteristic of the period, such as diamond leaded-lights, add to the quality and charm of the houses. Typically, the first floor is characterised by bowed five light leaded windows beneath a hipped mono pitch canopy reflecting the canopy to the extended ground floors. Bevelled bays light the smaller bedrooms of the ground floor.



7.7 Interesting brickwork detailing includes 'crossed corners' below the ground floor bay window and the circular brick surrounds of the first floor 'porthole' windows. The first floor frontage is rendered, normally painted white, above a red brick ground floor. Light mortar is used to good effect.

7.8 Front gardens are typically grassed or given over to shrubs but have increasingly been hard surfaced to provide additional off-street car parking. Low front boundary walls add to the open atmosphere of the roads. Few original walls remain and new front walls, taller than the original, are beginning to appear. Walls higher than one metre require planning permission and are unlikely to be considered favourably as they spoil the characteristic spaciousness of the conservation area.

7.9 Some houses have been extended before and after conservation area designation.

7.10 There are 120 individual dwellings in the conservation area, over half of which already have some form of side extension. Of the 56 pairs of semi-detached chalet style houses, only 13 pairs have no significant side extensions and therefore retain their distinctive "A" shape roof profile.



Both halves of this pair have been extended but the strong chalet style roofline has been retained by a significant set-back; symmetry and original detail have been preserved.

7.11 The conservation area is wholly

residential. Buildings are generally in a good state of repair.

Assets of Willersley Avenue/Braundton Avenue Conservation Area (positives)

7.12 The positive physical assets of the conservation area are:

- Architectural quality of the area's buildings.
- Attractive and spacious planned residential suburb.
- Ecological and amenity value of roadside trees.
- Wide pavements with complimentary grass verges.

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

7.13 The main intrusion or negative features are:

- Loss of original character and appearance as a result of poorly designed house extensions that do not pay due regard to the special architectural interest of the host building.
- Loss of greenery in front gardens due to extension of hard surfacing for additional car parking.
- Loss of original low front walls and replacement with obtrusive boundary treatment.
- Adverse cumulative effect of minor alterations and additions such as window shutters, installation of UPVC doors and windows, painted brickwork and windows with a different glazing pattern.
- Loss of distinctive original detailing such as brick chimney stacks, brick 'porthole' windows, bonnet tiles and plain clay tiles.
- Traffic in Willersley Avenue can be noisy and intrusive.
- Roadside bollards and pedestrian 'islands' at the southern end of Willersley Avenue detract from the otherwise uncluttered appearance of the area.
- Out of scale disproportionately large garages.



The house on the right retains much original detail but the one on the left has painted brick and a different glazing pattern to the ground floor windows. Minor alterations such as these can spoil a building's distinctive 1930s appearance.

Opportunities for enhancement

- 7.14 An illustrated design guide for chalet style house extensions for use by homeowners, architects and agents, including advice on appropriate architectural detail and design of boundary walls and garages, should be produced.
- 7.15 Restoration of architectural details which are essential to the building's distinctive 1930s design and character, especially front walls and window details, should be encouraged.
- 7.16 An illustrated document identifying the characteristic elements that define the special architectural interest of the house pairs should be distributed to all homeowners in the conservation area. This document could also show ways in which reasonable minor alterations can be made without the loss of the 1930s character and appearance

Potential for new development

- 7.17 This small conservation area contains no potential development sites. The main pressure for development is from homeowners wishing to upgrade and enlarge their property.

8 Review of current policy

- 8.1 As part of the review and area appraisal, an assessment was carried out to examine the effectiveness of current planning policy and guidance, the summary is set out below.
- 8.2 The current development plan for the Borough is the adopted London Borough of Bexley Unitary Development Plan (2004). The following policies are relevant:
- Policy H8: Extensions and Alterations;
 - Policy ENV 39: Built Environment;
 - and Policy ENV 46: Conservation Areas.
- 8.3 Design and Development Control Guidelines expand the policies and proposals contained in the Development Plan. Section 2 of Guideline No. 2: 'Extensions to Houses' contains specific guidance on chalet extensions.
- 8.4 These policies were adopted in the 1996 Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and carried forward into the UDP 2004. Together with guidelines in the Willersley Avenue / Braundton Avenue Conservation Area Statement of Character, they have guided new development in the conservation area.
- 8.5 Un-extended pairs: Two appeals, one in 1992 regarding No 39 Braundton Avenue and another in 1998 regarding No 3 Willersley Close have upheld the guidance that a pair of houses that has not suffered from any extensions being added on the side roof slopes should be maintained with their original profiles. The guidance is therefore re-iterated in this appraisal and strengthened with an additional statement that: "The loss of the integrity of form of one of the few remaining un-extended pairs would adversely affect the special character and appearance of the conservation area and set a precedent for further erosion of character."
- 8.6 Half-extended pair: to date, where inappropriate first floor extensions have occurred on one half of a pair, it has been difficult to resolve two primary design guidelines requiring that, on the one hand, the simple balanced form of each pair of houses

should be retained, and, on the other hand, the characteristic diagonal roofline should be preserved. Where symmetry has been preserved the resulting pair does have a balanced appearance but it has lost its distinctive chalet form.

- 8.7 It must be noted that preservation of the distinctive “A” shape roof verge line not only helps to preserve the original appearance of the host building but also enhances the streetscene and context for the small proportion of un-extended pairs (only 13 pairs out of a total of 56 pairs of chalet style houses) and will help prevent erosion of special character and appearance.
- 8.8 In summary the revised guidelines should therefore attach prime importance to retention of the original characteristic “A” shape profile by setting back any extension and retaining at least the forward-most one metre of roof.



Two extended pairs of chalet style houses. Both are 'balanced' but where one pair retains an A shape roof profile in keeping with the building's original design the other, where the side extensions have not been set back, have a new and different appearance.



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 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.

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

- 3.1 Within the Willersley Avenue and Braundton Avenue 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.

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 Willersley/Braundton Avenue Conservation Area contains a relatively high 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 character and appearance as a result of poorly designed and unsympathetic house extensions that do not pay due regard to the special architectural interest of the host building.
 - Adverse cumulative effect of minor alterations and additions such as window shutters, installation of UPVC doors and windows, painted brickwork and windows with a different glazing pattern.
 - Loss of distinctive original detailing such as brick chimney stacks, brick 'porthole' windows, bonnet tiles and plain clay tiles.
 - Out of scale disproportionately large garages.
 - Loss of original low front walls and replacement with obtrusive boundary treatment.
 - Loss of greenery in front gardens due to extension of hard surfacing for additional car parking.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 The Council may assist with the provision of grant aid for projects, which restore or reinstate the original features of the building and will contribute to achieving higher standards of preservation and enhancement.
- 4.5 In determining planning applications, the Council will take the above factors into consideration. The Council will oppose those alterations that pose a threat to the special character of the conservation area. In this regard, and following on from the policy review set out in Section 8 of Part 1, detailed design advice is given in Section 5 below.

5 Chalet houses - maintaining design quality and townscape

General design guidance

- 5.1 With reference to PPG 15 and the Council's UDP, the defining aim in a conservation area is to preserve and enhance that special architectural character and appearance, if these objectives are to be achieved, it is essential that the quality of the houses and the streetscape is retained. Therefore the following will apply:
- Where a pair of houses has not suffered from any extensions being added on the side roof slopes, they should be maintained with their original profiles; with extensions, where appropriate, to the rear of the ground floor.
 - The loss of the integrity of form of one of the few remaining un-extended pairs would adversely affect the special character and appearance of the conservation area and set a precedent for further erosion of character.
 - Any new proposals, particularly for house extensions, should reflect the design, style, form, external appearance and original materials of individual chalet pairs.
 - Where first floor extensions have occurred on one half of a pair, there may be

potential for considering an extension on the other side provided that the design guidelines noted below are followed. It must be emphasised that the primary guideline relates to the importance of setting back any first floor side extension by at least one metre behind the line of the original chalet roof; a proposal which aims to create a balanced appearance by copying the design of an existing side extension (which may be set back less than one metre) will not be acceptable.

Detailed design guidelines

- 5.2 With regard to the chalet style properties the primary design guideline shall be that:
- Without exception, the original diagonal line of roof profile (part of the characteristic “A” shape roof) shall be maintained by setting back any extension and retaining at least the forward-most one metre of roof.
 - In addition, the characteristic symmetrical and balanced chalet form should be retained as much as possible.
 - New building materials should match existing materials in colour and texture.
 - Original roof, verge and eaves details should be replicated, using existing details of unaltered properties as a guide.
 - Original period details such as the ‘porthole’ window and diamond leaded lights should be retained.
 - The spacious feeling of the area should be preserved through careful consideration of the effect of the mass of the proposed extension on the space between houses.
- 5.3 In addition, the existing low front boundary walls add to the open atmosphere of the roads and the spaciousness of the conservation area. Few original walls remain and new front walls, taller than the original, are beginning to appear. Walls higher than one metre require planning permission and are unlikely to be considered favourably as they spoil the characteristic spaciousness of the conservation area.
- 5.4 Restoration of architectural details, which are essential to the building’s distinctive 1930s design and character, especially front walls and window details, will be encouraged. The Council may assist with the provision of grant aid for projects, which retain or reinstate these original features of the building and will contribute to achieving higher standards of preservation and enhancement.

6 Trees, landscape and space between buildings

- 6.1 On private land 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, in which case a Tree Preservation Order may be served.
- 6.2 Of particular concern is that many gardens have made way for paved forecourts and this is unfortunate. This practice incrementally erodes the character of the conservation area. The Council will resist the loss of trees to facilitate the provision of car parking areas in front gardens.
- 6.3 An important aspect in the conservation area is the gaps between the buildings. This space between buildings offers significant views to trees and greenery beyond. It is important to retain this continuity and maintain these open views as breaks in the

urban built environment. It is also essential to maintain these gaps as they contribute to the built form and streetscape rhythm when viewed from a distance. The green verges, trees and open space and make a welcome break from the urban environment and make a significant contribution to the conservation area. The Council will seek to maintain and enhance these natural features.

- 6.4 Roadside grassed verges add to the spacious character of the conservation area. Vegetation especially trees contribute significantly to the green and spacious ambience of the area. There is potential for further tree planting and soft landscaping along the roadside verges and in private gardens. In addition, it is recommended that, resources permitting, as street trees die they should be replaced with an appropriate species of tree.
- 6.5 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.

7 Setting and views

- 7.1 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. Important views are identified on the Townscape Analysis Map.

8 The public realm and enhancement

- 8.1 The conservation area has generally been resurfaced using pre-cast concrete paving slabs. Modern utilitarian columns and lamp heads provide street lighting. These items have a neutral affect in this conservation area. However, the adoption of a common surfacing material, in keeping with the historical characteristics of the area, would be beneficial and considerably improve the visual continuity of the conservation area. Similarly, the adoption of a common design and palette of materials in the construction of vehicle crossovers would further assist in this aim.
- 8.2 In general highway signage, traffic calming measures and other structures can all serve to detract from the quality of the public realm and character of the conservation area, and any redundant modern features should be removed. Roadside bollards and pedestrian 'islands' at the southern end of Willersley Avenue detract from the otherwise uncluttered appearance of the area. Subject to resources, it is recommended that a critical audit of the public realm should be undertaken to identify redundant features and opportunities for enhancement.
- 8.3 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.
- 8.4 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.

9 New buildings and building extensions

- 9.1 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.

- 9.2 In Willersley Avenue and Braundton Avenue 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. This issue is dealt with in detail in Section 5.0 above: 'Chalet houses - maintaining design quality and townscape'.
- 9.3 The setting of the houses and conservation area is frequently enhanced by the presence of large mature trees. Vegetation including especially trees, shrubs and grass, 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.

10 Solar panels and wind turbines

- 10.1 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).

11 Monitoring change

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 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.

12 Boundary definition

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 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.

13 Community engagement

- 13.1 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 Willersley Avenue and Braundton Avenue 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 – Willersley Avenue and Braundton Avenue 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 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 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:

Mr M Nicholls / Mr G Fraser
London Borough of Bexley,
Strategic Planning and Development
Civic Offices, 2 Watling Street,
Bexleyheath, Kent
DA6 7AT.

Tel: 020 8303 7777

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:

