



## **Planning Committee**

16 January 2013

### **Report from the Director of Regeneration & Major Projects**

Wards affected: Barn Hill & Queens Park

### **Updated Barn Hill Conservation Area Design Guide & Queens Park Conservation Area Design Guide**

#### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 A review of Brent's Conservation Area Design Guides is being undertaken with the overall aim of producing up to date documents to give clear guidance primarily to residents on acceptable types of development. These documents have an important role in ensuring the special character of our conservation areas is preserved and where possible enhanced. New versions of Design Guides for Barn Hill Conservation Area (Northern Area) and Queens Park Conservation Area (Southern Area) have been produced and are now at a stage where they are ready for public consultation.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Planning Committee are invited to make comment on the draft Barn Hill Conservation Area Design Guide and Queens Park Conservation Area Design Guide and give their endorsement prior to public consultation scheduled to commence at the end of January 2013.
- 2.2 Following public consultation, consideration will be given to comments received with the final documents presented to the Executive Committee for formal adoption.

#### **3.0 Discussion**

##### **Barn Hill Conservation Area Design Guide**

- 3.1 The current Barn Hill Conservation Area Design Guide was adopted in September 2002. Whilst the general approach to development remains unchanged, the updated document is intended to be more 'user friendly' and provide clearer advice on interpretation of the guidance.

3.2 Prior to commencement of the work of updating the Design Guide, discussions were held with the Barn Hill Residents Association (BHRA) about changes/updates they would like to see. A copy of the draft Barn Hill Conservation Area Design Guide has been sent to BHRA.

3.3 The following are the key changes to the Design Guide:

- More detailed guidance on designing extensions which take into account the changes in ground levels characteristic of the Barn Hill Conservation Area;
- More detailed guidance on terraces and raised patios to ensure they protect the privacy of neighbouring properties but also provide an acceptable design solution;
- Guidance on basements which was not covered in the previous Design Guide;
- Further detail regarding replacement windows including examples of the plans and level of detail required as part of a planning application to assist applicants and ensure acceptable replacement windows are provided.

3.4 As well as providing more clarity for residents, it will assist the Council in defending a decision where an appeal has been lodged.

### **Queens Park Conservation Area Design Guide**

3.5 Whilst there is a Queens Park Conservation Area Design Guide, this has not been updated for many years and does not provide clear guidance for existing residents and those proposing to move into the area about the types of works that are generally accepted.

3.6 There have been on-going discussions with the Queens Park Area Residents Association (QPARA) regarding the content of the new Design Guide. A copy of the draft Queens Park Conservation Area Design Guide has been sent to QPARA and initial feedback has been supportive although there are a number of issues in the Design Guide that QPARA will wish to comment on further.

3.7 The following are the key elements included in the Design Guide:

- Detailed guidance on extensions, in particular side infill extensions, to provide clarity of the design and scale that will be accepted;
- Guidance on basements which was not covered in the previous Design Guide and is an important issue in the area;
- Detailed guidance on replacement windows including examples of the plans and level of detail required as part of a planning application to assist applicants and ensure acceptable replacement windows are provided

3.8 Given that there has not been an updated guide for many years, this document will be very important providing clear advice to residents and will assist the Council in defending a decision where an appeal has been lodged.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 The guides are intended to provide more detailed guidance for residents, giving a greater level of certainty as to whether works are likely to be acceptable. This may help reduce the expense for residents of submitting multiple applications in order to gain an approval.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 If formally adopted by the Executive Committee, the documents will replace the existing Design Guides and carry significant weight when determining planning applications.

#### **6.0 Diversity Implications**

6.1 It is not the intention to prevent people carrying out improvement works to their homes but to ensure that the works are appropriate in the context of the conservation area designation.

#### **7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications**

7.1 The updated documents are intended to be more 'user friendly' and may reduce the level of input required from officers both at pre-application stage and during the course of the application though seeking revisions.

#### **8.0 Environmental Implications**

8.1 The aim of these documents is to ensure development preserves and where possible enhances the character of the area.

#### **9.0 Draft Design Guides**

**Appendix 1:** Barn Hill Conservation Area Design Guide (Draft)

**Appendix 2:** Queens Park Conservation Area Design Guide (Draft)

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