

Buck Lane Conservation Area Boundary Review

Consultation draft



REV 1

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1 INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Purpose of this document

- 1.1 The London Borough of Brent is currently undertaking a review of its conservation area boundaries.
- 1.2 A statutory requirement under Section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 directs local planning authorities to review their conservation areas from time to time. A review was also recommended by Brent's Historic Environment Place-making Strategy, May 2019.
- 1.3 The conservation of the historic environment is the process of managing the changes that will take place in an area in a way which best sustains its historic value for the present and future generations as well as for regeneration and place-making.
- 1.4 Without an understanding of what are sometimes subtle qualities of an area, its local distinctiveness and character may be easily lost. The assessment and identification of Brent's heritage for conservation areas is undertaken by the use of character appraisals.
- 1.5 Historic England's good practice guidance, Advice Note 1, Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (2019) recommends that, as part of any appraisal, conservation areas are re-assessed to establish whether their boundaries are still appropriate. If the conservation area no longer reflects the special historic and architectural interest of the area as a whole, it is recommended that it be removed.
- 1.6 This conservation area appraisal report therefore re-assesses the special historic and architectural interest of the Buck Lane Conservation Area and considers whether its boundary is still appropriate.
- 1.7 The appraisal sets out whether the area really merited designation in the first place and whether the architectural and historic interests and their importance remains.
- 1.8 It considers individual properties in the area and evaluates whether they still merit designation as part of an overall ensemble. It also considers if the area has been so eroded by piecemeal development that parts or all the area has lost special interest.

Introduction

Why is the boundary of the conservation area being reviewed?

- 1.9 A review of the boundary to the Buck Lane Conservation Area was recommended in Brent's Historic Environment Place-making Strategy 2019.
- 1.10 A survey was undertaken of the area as part of the Strategy. It evidenced that the original designation included land that Trobridge did not build upon or was infilled with properties not designed by him. These comprise Hay lane and Pear Close as well as the properties West of Buck Lane.
- 1.11 Some of these non-Trobridge designed properties have little or no architectural interest and do not add to the significance of the conservation area. The Strategy determined that the boundary of the conservation area should be made more precise to reflect the significance of Trobridge's work.

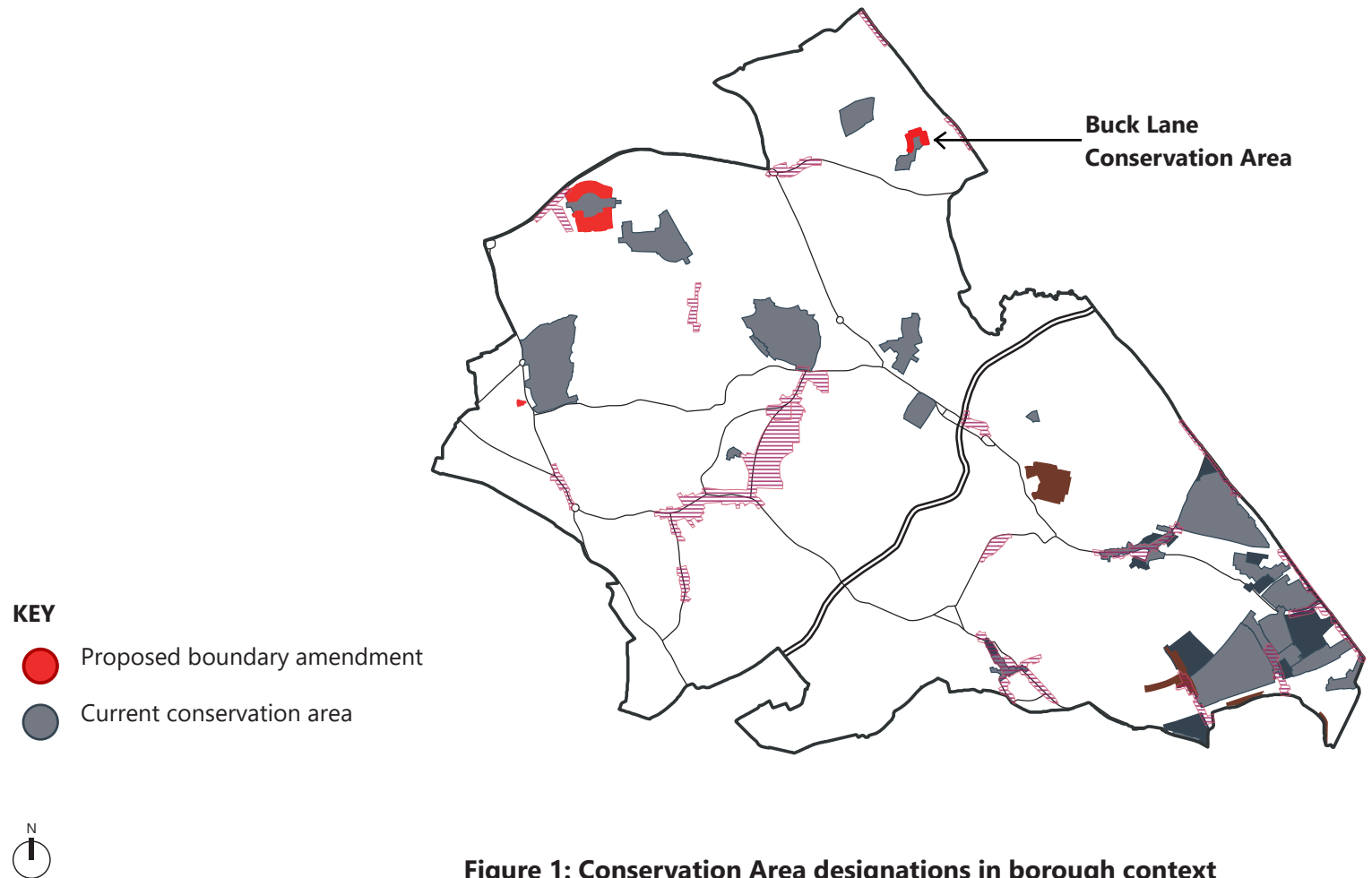


Figure 1: Conservation Area designations in borough context

Introduction

What is a conservation area?

- 1.12 Conservation areas were first introduced into legislation under the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 to protect the wider historic environment. Section 69 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines a conservation area as an: 'area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.
- 1.13 However, paragraph 191 of the NPPF explains that when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.
- 1.14 Conservation area designation therefore needs to be carefully considered. It is the protection of the intactness, quality and special interest of the neighbourhood or area as a whole that is intended, rather than specific buildings.
- 1.15 For example, the characteristic building design and materials of the area, the mix of different uses, and the design of shopfronts may all be taken into account when deciding whether an area has a particular special architectural or historic interest. It also includes the street layout, boundaries, vistas and viewpoints, trees and green features.

Introduction

What does it mean if your property is within a conservation area?

1.16 Designation results in greater control over the demolition of buildings and the size and design of extensions.

1.17 This means that the Council gains additional planning control compared with areas that are not designated which, in turn, allows for the greater retention of characteristics and features that make a place special and unique.

1.18 Therefore, the following works need planning permission in a conservation area:

- the installation of satellite dishes and antennae;
- the demolition or erection of walls, gates and fences over 1m in height adjacent to a public highway; and
- works to trees.

- cladding the exterior of a house;
- any side extensions or rear extensions of more than one storey;
- alterations to roofs, including dormers;

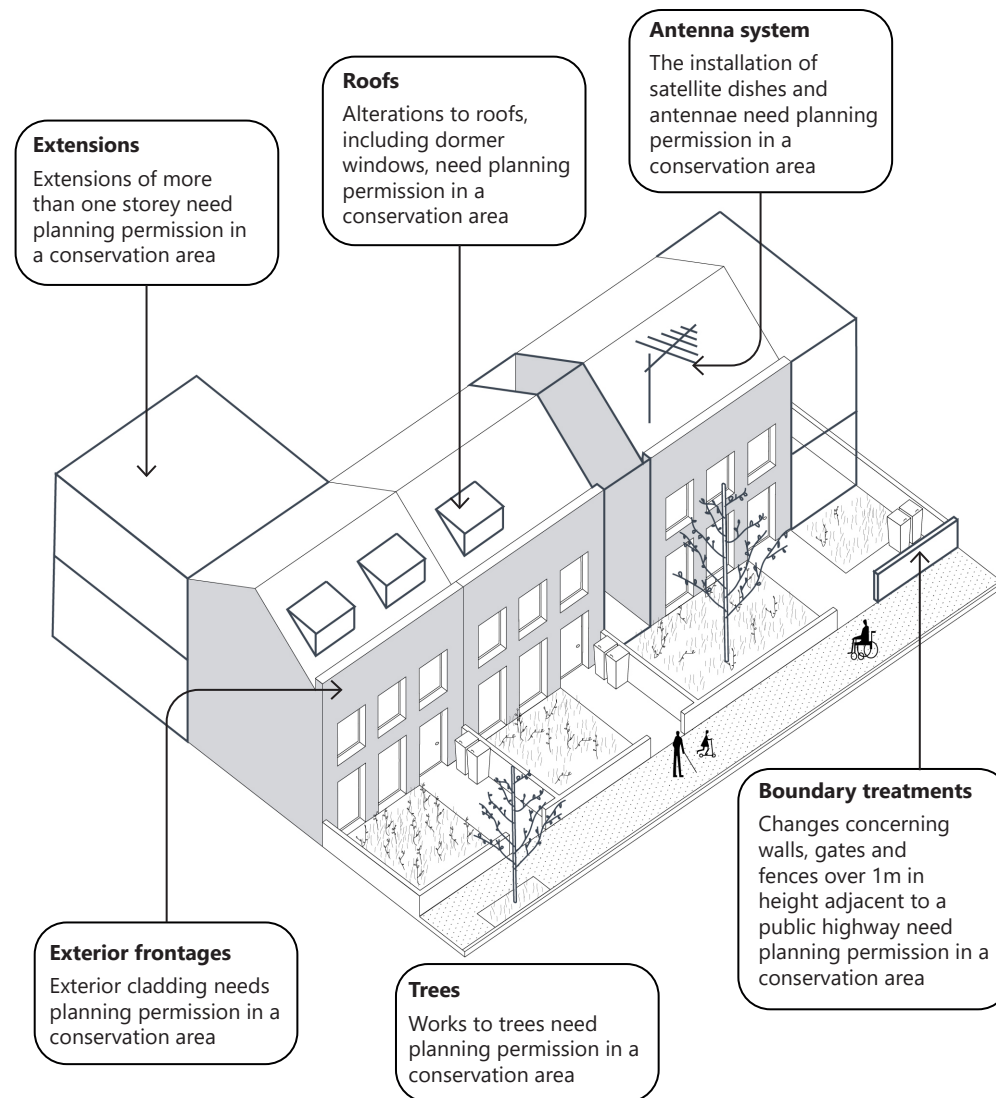


Figure 2: Conservation area designation can preserve attractive property features including the above

Introduction

Article 4 Directions

1.19 An Article 4 Direction is a special control which gives extra protection to a conservation area by removing some of the owner's permitted development rights. The Buck Lane Conservation Area has such Directions in place. These relate to works such as:

- changing windows and doors to the front elevation;
- painting the front of the house;
- paving over the front garden;
- removing or building front garden walls;
- replacement roof tiles;
- removal of chimneys; and
- erecting sheds and outbuildings in rear gardens.

1.20 Should the conservation area boundary be altered, the article 4 Directions will remain in place for the designated area.

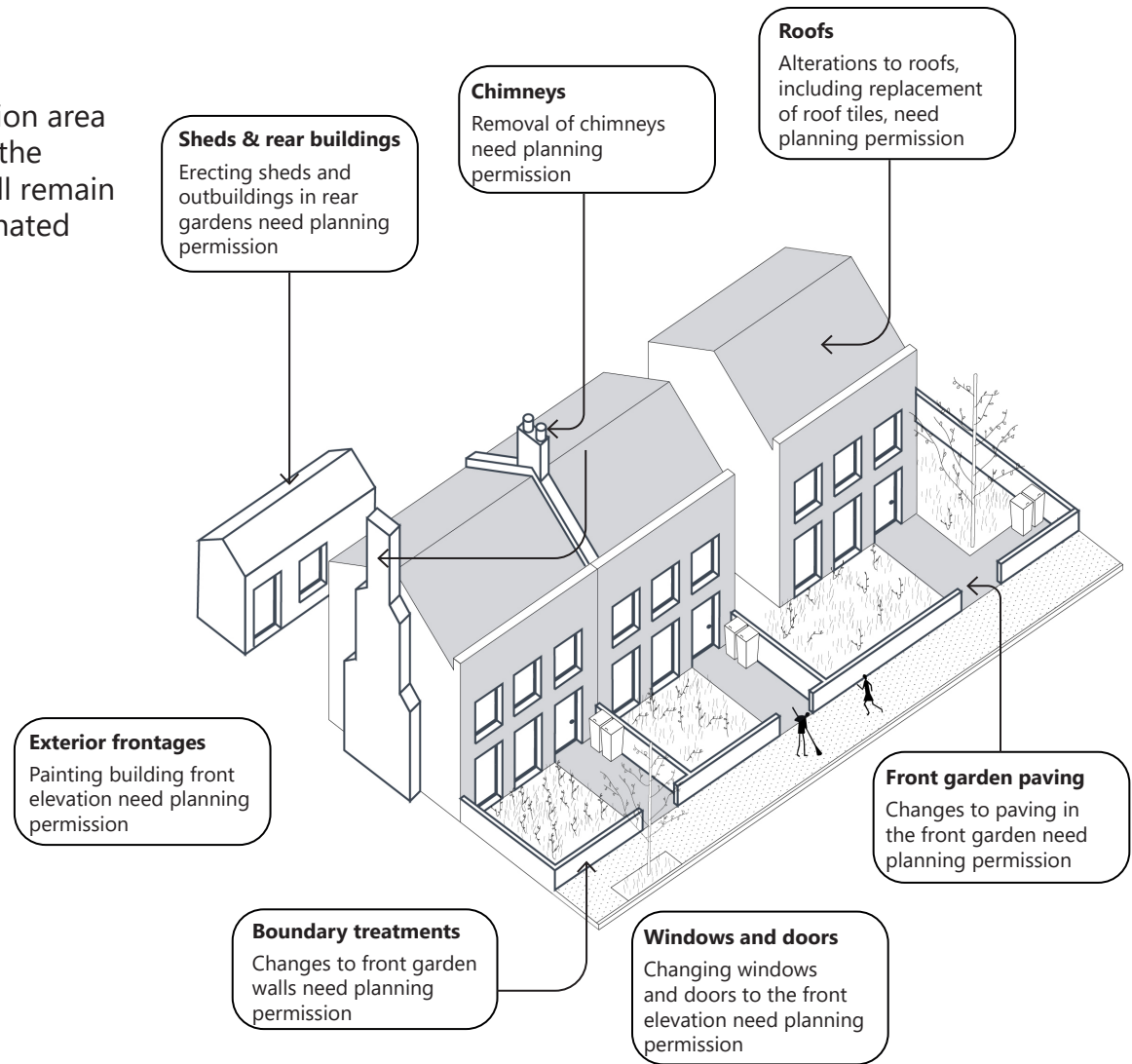


Figure 3: Property features that are included by the Article 4 Directions

2

BUCK LANE

CONSERVATION AREA

Buck Lane Conservation Area

Location and context

1.21 The Buck Lane Conservation area includes parts of seven roads in the north-east corner of Fryent ward. The area straddles Buck Lane, including culs-de-sac to the east.

1.22 The Conservation Area sits within the large suburban dormitory of northwest London and is surrounded by less flamboyant suburban developments of the inter-war period.

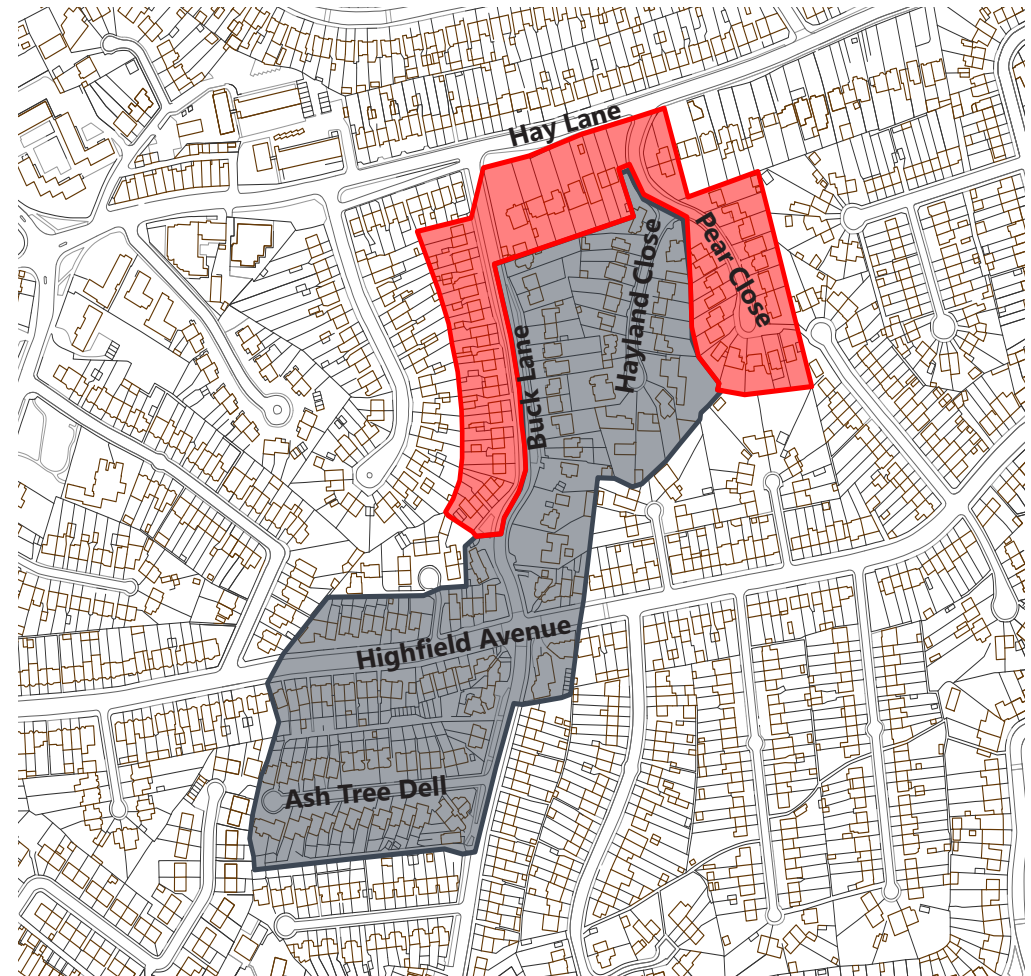
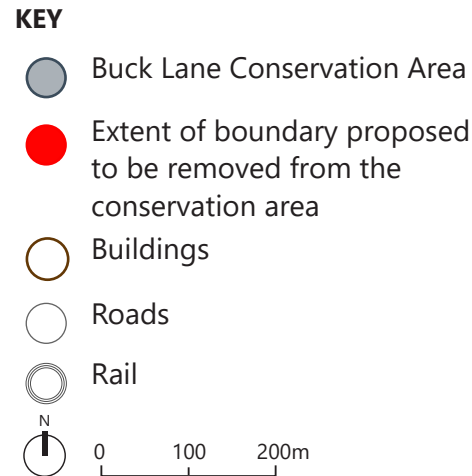


Figure 4: Location plan of Buck Lane Conservation Area

Buck Lane Conservation Area

What is significant about the Buck Lane Conservation Area?

1.23 The Buck Lane Conservation Area was originally designated in February 1979 as a result of heightened awareness of the work of the designer, Ernest Trobridge.

1.24 The designated area centres on the crossroads at the top of Wakeman's Hill and includes the remaining Trobridge properties. Many of the properties are either statutory or locally listed.



1.25 What sets it apart and makes it 'special' is the distinctive and individual character of Trobridge's buildings, their inter-relationship and setting. The area was developed in the period 1929-1937 and is largest grouping of his buildings in the UK.

1.26 Buck Lane Conservation Area is an infill residential estate, which is part of suburban Kingsbury. It formed part

of the development of agricultural land whose field boundaries determined its layout and extent.

1.27 The special character of the area is based largely on the design, grouping and setting of the Trobridge buildings. Such features together create an enclave of attractive and distinctive character within an area of otherwise everyday suburban landscape.

KEY

-  Buck Lane Conservation Area
-  Extent of boundary proposed to be removed from the conservation area

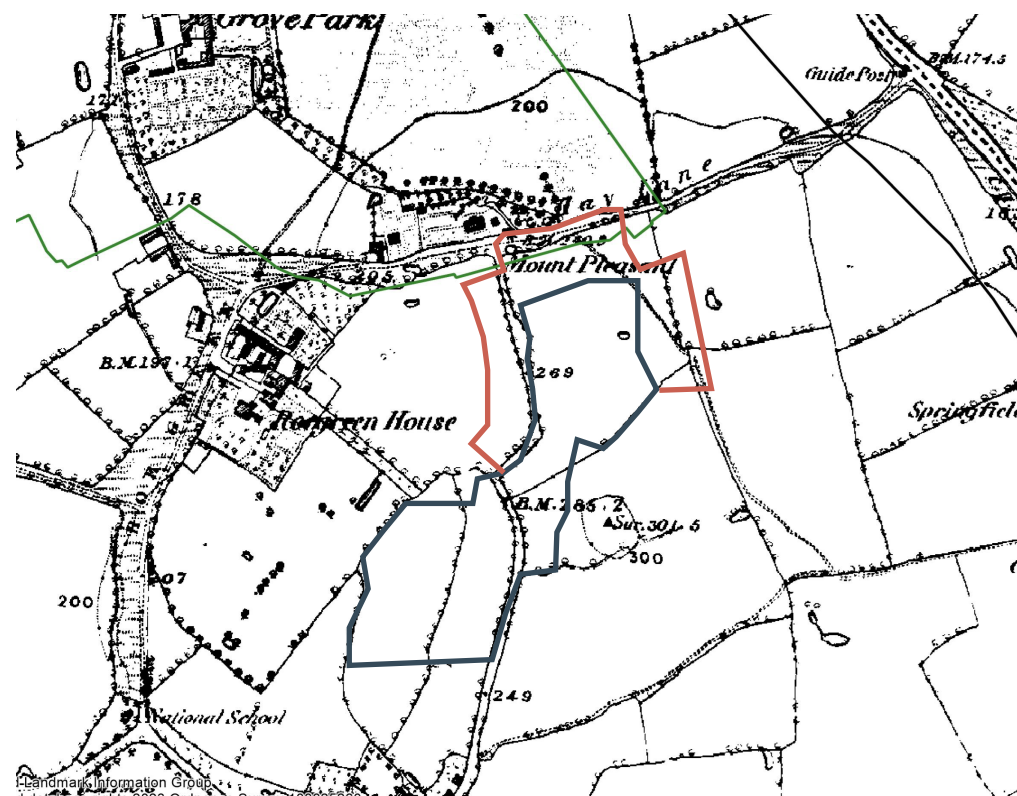


Figure 5: OS Map 1873

Buck Lane Conservation Area

Historical development

1.28 By 1911, the expanding suburbs of northwest London had attracted the Belfast-born architect, Ernest George Trobridge. He set up his practice as an estate agent, surveyor and architect at Golders Green. A shortage of funds in his own pocket and from Building Societies led him to promote property development along co-partnership lines. By this means friends, relatives and prospective clients invested in land acquisition and building construction or in property acquisition and management. In September 1915 he moved out of Golders Green and rented a property in Hay Lane, Kingsbury to escape the bombing raids.

1.29 Trobridge (1884-1942), whose ideas were influenced by the Swedenborg Church, left Hay Lane in 1922 and came to live at 'Hayland' in Kingsbury Road, a house which he had originally built for his father-in-law and where he remained until his death.

- KEY**
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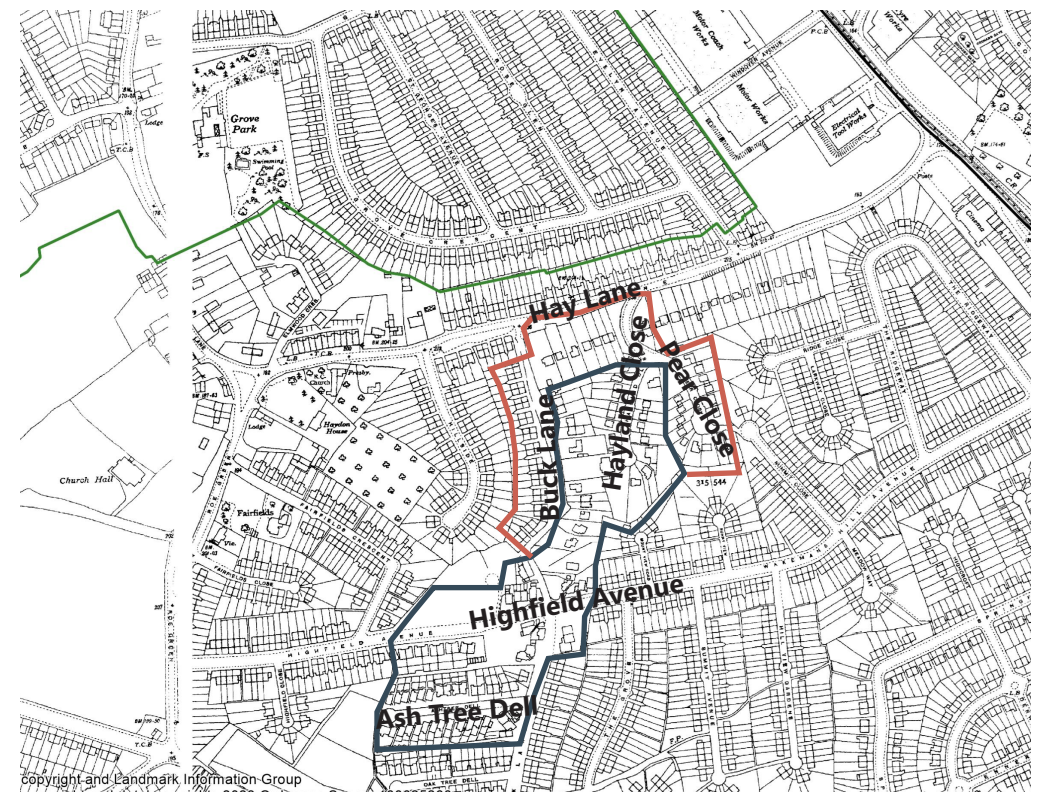


Figure 6: OS Map 1935

Buck Lane Conservation Area



Figure 7: Areal view of the area, 1947

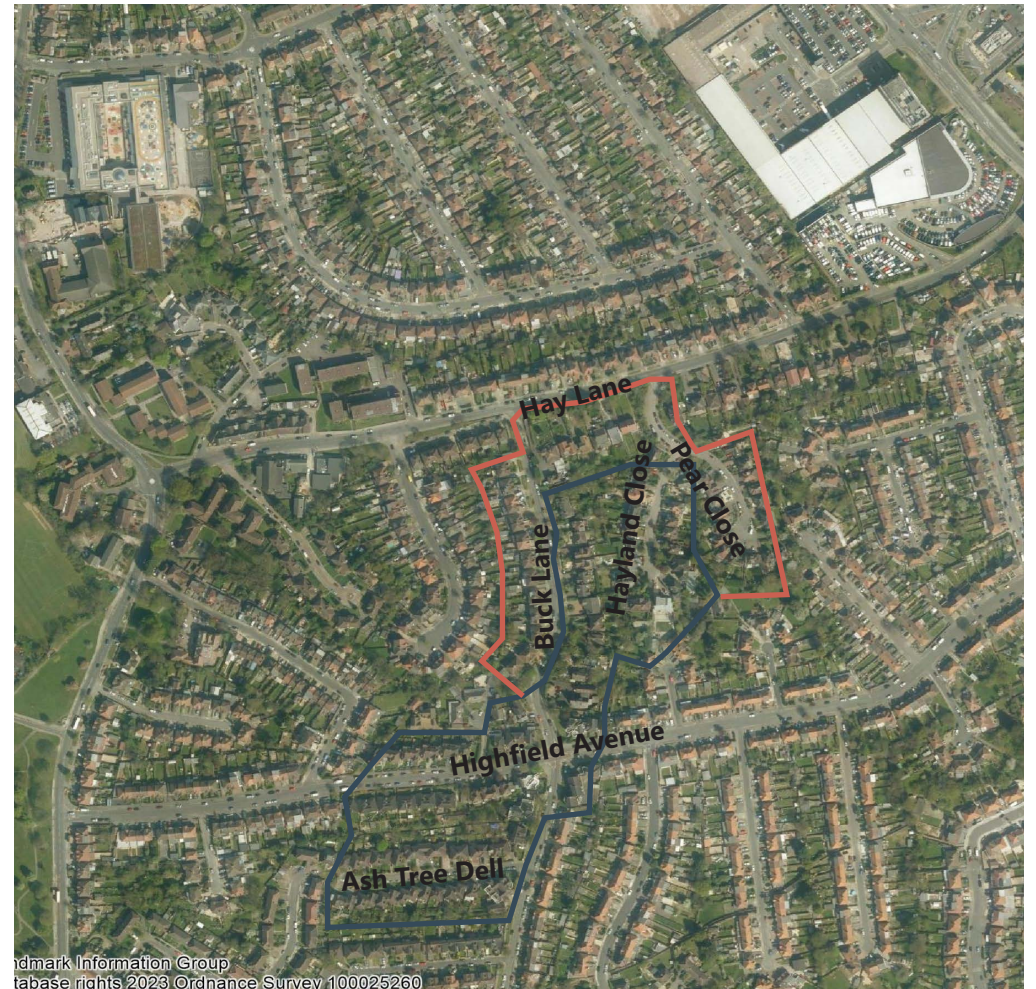


Figure 8: Areal view of the area now (2015)

Buck Lane Conservation Area

Historical development

- 1.30 With the resumption of building construction after 1918, Trobridge was ready to meet the pent-up demand having formulated plans for cheap and rapid house construction in the revival of 'ancient methods' in timber framing and cladding.
- 1.31 This was a form of structure which he considered would last long and materials which he thought would be readily available. Trobridge patented his 'Compressed Green Wood Construction' and in 1920 the Ministry of Labour agreed a scheme of employment of disabled ex-servicemen. With the prospect of Government building grants Trobridge purchased ten acres of land at Slough Lane, Kingsbury and erected a large mill. However, in 1920 the House of Lords threw out the Housing Subsidy Bill, several clients withdrew from the scheme and he was left bankrupt.
- 1.32 By mid-1921 however, his fortunes had revived and purchasers were to hand for his Ferndene Estate at Slough Lane and the Elmwood Estate in Stag Lane. By the end of September 1922 twenty houses had been completed in the areas.
- 1.33 Each house was built for a specific customer and to aid development he established co-partnership schemes. In 1925/26, a local developer, Harry J. Aldous, acquired the Colin Park estate which lay between Colindeep Lane and the Edgware Road (in the London Borough of Barnet) and the fields opposite which extended over Wakeman's Hill.
- 1.34 The latter he developed as the Summit Estate. The co-partnership scheme established for the development of the Summit Estate (Buck Lane) from about 1929 was the Kingsbury Cross
- Co-Partnership and most of this estate is now included in the Buck Lane Conservation Area. The 'cross' related to the cross roads on the hill top proposed for a shopping centre in the Kingsbury Town Planning scheme.
- 1.35 In 1932 the then Metropolitan line (now Jubilee) was opened through Kingsbury to Stanmore. The publication of the plans and the opening of the station, coupled with the improvements to the road network laid out for the British Empire Exhibition back in 1924/25 and the creeping tide of housing estates along Church Lane encouraged and facilitated the development of the area.
- 1.36 By the early 1930s increased competition among builders had seen house prices fall to such an extent that his patent system was no longer economical. Trobridge responded to the new building climate by building in more common materials. He rapidly developed a design philosophy which enabled homes to be built economically whilst having an identity which was of value to their occupants. His buildings encompassed historical types, fortification, illusion and humour.

Buck Lane Conservation Area



Figure 9: Highfort Court (1937) by Trobridge

3

REVIEWING THE BOUNDARY OF THE BUCK LANE CONSERVATION AREA

Reviewing the boundary of the Buck Lane Conservation Area

Current boundary

- 1.37 The conservation area boundary [Figure 4] has not changed since the Buck Lane Conservation Area was originally designated in 1979 as a result of heightened awareness of the work of the designer, Ernest Trobridge.
- 1.38 The designated area centres on the crossroads at the top of Wakeman's Hill and includes the remaining Trobridge properties on the hill top, giving a coherent boundary and broader context to a readily definable area whilst protecting views into and out of the area.

Areas for review

- 1.39 The Buck Lane Conservation Area was designated over 40 years ago. It includes properties that were not designed by Trobridge. They have no special architectural or historic interest and do not contribute to the character and appearance and thus to its significance. A more concise boundary was recommended in the Historic Environment Place-making Strategy 2019.
- 1.40 Roads under consideration include Buck Lane, Hay Lane and Pear Tree Close.

Approach

- 1.41 An initial site visit was undertaken in July 2021 and a further visit in January 2023. Previous visits were undertaken to assess the area throughout 2018 and 2019 in preparation for the Historic Environment Place-making Strategy.
- 1.42 A review was undertaken using the methodology in Historic England's advice note on Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (2019).
- 1.43 The Heritage Officer looked at the merits of the roads on the boundary and assessed them for their special architectural and historic significance. This determined that the west side of Buck Lane, the south side of Hay Lane and most of Pear Tree Close was not of significance.
- 1.44 The de-designation of any conservation area/or part must be read in conjunction with section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 69 requires areas to be designated as conservation areas if they are assessed, as Buck Lane has been, as having special architectural and historic interest. Section 70 of the Act allows a designation to be varied or cancelled.
- 1.45 It follows, therefore, that in order for an area to no longer be compliant with Section 69 there would either have to be something that has occurred that would lead to that area no longer having special interest and/or that it did not possess special interest when originally designated.

4 ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST AND SIGNIFICANCE

Buck Lane Conservation Area: assessment of special interest and significance

Summary of special interest when designated

1.46 The Buck Lane Conservation Area centres on the crossroads at the top of Wakeman's Hill and includes the remaining Trobridge properties. Many of the properties are either statutory or locally listed.

1.47 Trobridge used elm timber which was readily available at the time, and built inexpensive timber framed, timber clad, thatch-roofed houses in Kingsbury. These properties were technically highly innovative. The green elm timber was cut in a special way so that shrinkage could be accommodated, and the thatch contained a patent fire extinguishing sprinkler system.

1.48 In the 1930s bricks became more readily available and the pressure on land around London meant that working-class families needed flats rather than houses. Trobridge

developed blocks of flats in the form of romantic cottages, castles and baronial halls. His work often included unusual forms and references to historical building types.

1.49 What sets it apart and makes it 'special' is the distinctive and individual character of Trobridge's buildings, their inter-relationship and verdant setting.

1.50 The area was developed in the period 1929-1937 and is largest grouping of his buildings in the UK.



Figure 10: Thatched house by Trobridge (1921)

Buck Lane Conservation Area: assessment of special interest and significance

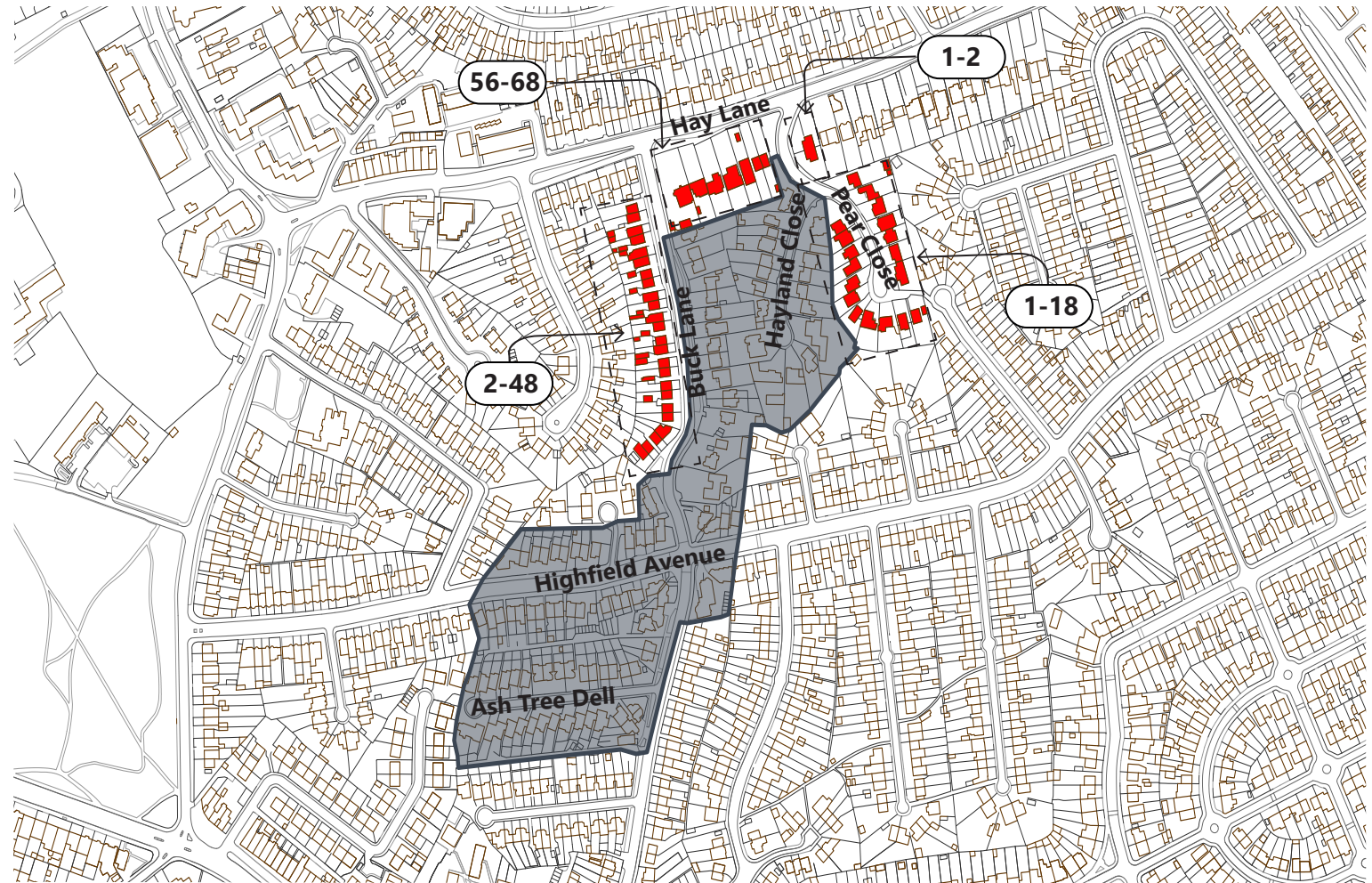


Figure 11: Map diagram locating properties that are mentioned in this appraisal

Buck Lane Conservation Area: assessment of special interest and significance

Appraisal

Buck Lane

1.51 The following assessment of the boundary only considers the roads identified in the Historic Environment Place-making Strategy as the rest of the conservation area remains well-preserved and includes groupings of Trobridge buildings.

1.52 Roads under consideration include Buck Lane, Hay Lane and Pear Tree Close. It specifically looks and considers their significance in terms of architectural and historic interest. It also considers if the historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries, landscaping and tree cover are of importance. In this way a decision can be made on whether it should remain designated and if it is desirable to preserve or enhance the area.

1.53 2-48 (even) Buck Lane are a group of interwar houses. They were designed by xx and feature double height semi-circular bay windows under a front gable. They have some attractive detailing such as brick quoins and recessed round headed porches but are otherwise moderately plain, standard, interwar housing which can be seen elsewhere in the borough.

1.54 Many have been altered to their disadvantage with additional porches, inappropriate replacement windows and doors and concrete roof tiles. Many of the front gardens have been lost and are now fully paved for car parking.

1.55 These properties were never architecturally exceptional examples of their type. They lack the quirkiness and character as seen on other



Figure 12: Houses on Buck Lane

Buck Lane Conservation Area: assessment of special interest and significance

infill houses on the east side of Buck Lane. Furthermore, they have been extended and altered. They do not contribute to the conservation area. Removal will allow a greater focus on the roads where the Trobridge properties are located.

Hay Lane

- 1.56 The properties on the south side of Hay Lane, 56-68 (even), are a group of individually designed chalets, bungalows and houses. None are architecturally unique or special. Some have had large roof extensions and others have been altered with inappropriate window and door designs. Their most unusual feature is their long front gardens containing large trees. However, even some of these gardens have been excavated and paved, devaluing their special interest.

- 1.57 They do not contribute to the conservation area. Removal will allow a greater focus on the roads where the Trobridge properties are located. Important trees could be retained through the use of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).

Pear Close

- 1.58 The road layout and building plots in Pear Close was set out by the local developer, H.J. Aldous, as part of his Summit Estate, between Hay Lane and the top of Wakeman's Hill. However, none of the properties in the road are architecturally unique or extraordinary. None have the quirkiness and sophistication seen in Trobridge's designs. They are not exceptional examples of their genre. The brick, pebble-dashed and half-timbered properties lack the elegance and stylised



Figure 13: Trobridge house on Wakemans Hill Avenue (1934)



Figure 14: Non-Trobridge house on Pear Close

Buck Lane Conservation Area:
assessment of special interest and significance



**Figure 13: Whitecastle Mansions by Trobridge (19350,
Wakemans Hill Avenue**



Figure 14: Houses on Hay Lane

Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area: assessment of special interest and significance

Arts and Crafts interpretation of medieval architecture of those on the Haymills Estate, designated within the Barn Hill Conservation Area. They don't have any group value and the road does not have any special street trees, verges or street furniture.

- 1.59 Many have been altered to their disadvantage with additional porches, inappropriate replacement windows and doors and concrete roof tiles. Many of the front gardens have been lost and are now fully paved for car parking.

Extension to Brondesbury Conservation Area: summary of special interest



42-48

Figure 15: Buck lane street elevation



41-29

Figure 16: Pear Close street elevation

Extension to Brondesbury Conservation Area: summary of special interest



/ 2-40 /

5

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

- 1.60 A statutory requirement under Section 69(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 directs local planning authorities to review their conservation areas from time to time. A review of the boundary to the Buck Lane Conservation Area was recommended in Brent's Historic Environment Placemaking Strategy 2019.
- 1.61 The conservation area boundary has not changed since the Buck Lane Conservation Area was originally designated in 1979 as a result of heightened awareness of the work of the designer, Ernest Trobridge. The designated area centres on the crossroads at the top of Wakeman's Hill and includes the remaining Trobridge properties on the hill top, giving a coherent boundary and broader context to a readily definable area whilst protecting views into and out of the area.

- 1.62 The properties on the west side of Buck Lane, the south side of Hay Lane and all in Pear Close were not designed by Trobridge. None are architecturally unique or special. Some have had large roof extensions and others have been altered with inappropriate window and door designs. Their most unusual feature is their long front gardens containing large trees. However, even some of these gardens have been excavated and paved, devaluing their special interest.
- 1.63 They do not contribute to the conservation area. Removal will allow a greater focus on the roads where the Trobridge properties are located. Important trees could be retained through the use of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).

Recommendations

- 1.64 It is recommended that consultation be undertaken on the proposed boundary changes to the Buck Lane Conservation Area as recommended in this report.
- 1.65 The consultation responses will be given the fullest consideration, and amendments made to the new boundary of the Buck Lane Conservation Area as deemed reasonable and necessary.
- 1.66 This report will form a character appraisal for the area.

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