

Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area De-designation

Consultation draft



REV 1

02012024

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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 Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area.
- 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 de-designation of the conservation area being considered?

- 1.9 The de-designation of Sudbury Cottages 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 although the small group of cottages and the road layout was important as part of the history of Sudbury, little remained of the rural setting that the original designation sought to protect.
- 1.11 Only three of the original cottages now survive. Collectively it was found that they did not really form any sort of group or have a special setting (placed around a green for example). Furthermore, they were interspersed by later

development. Much of the historic nature is archaeology and this is protected and covered by the Archaeological Priority Area heritage designation.

- 1.12 For these reasons it was recommended with the Strategy that de-designation should be considered for the Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area with protection in the form of Local Listing (and Article 4 Directions) placed on the significant cottages.

KEY

● Conservation areas

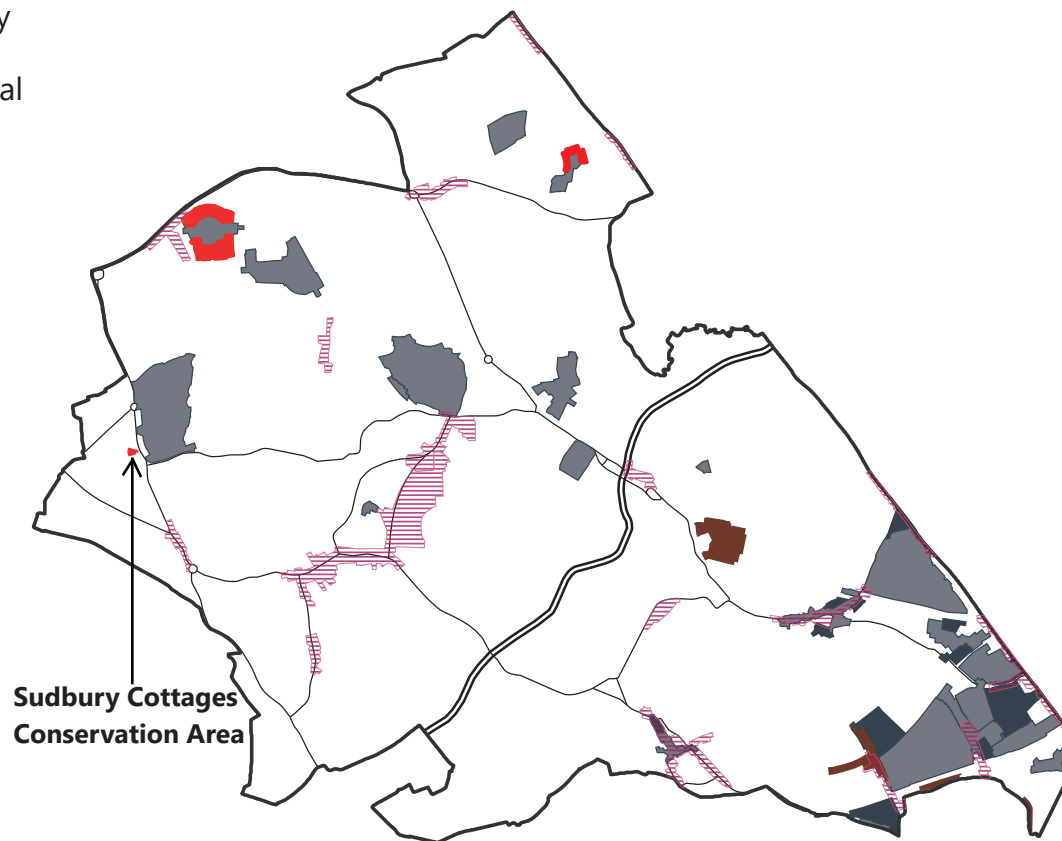


Figure 1: Conservation Area designations in borough context

Introduction

What is a conservation area?

- 1.13 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'.
- 1.14 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. Conservation area designation therefore needs to be carefully considered.
- 1.15 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.
- 1.16 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?

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

1.18 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.

1.19 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;

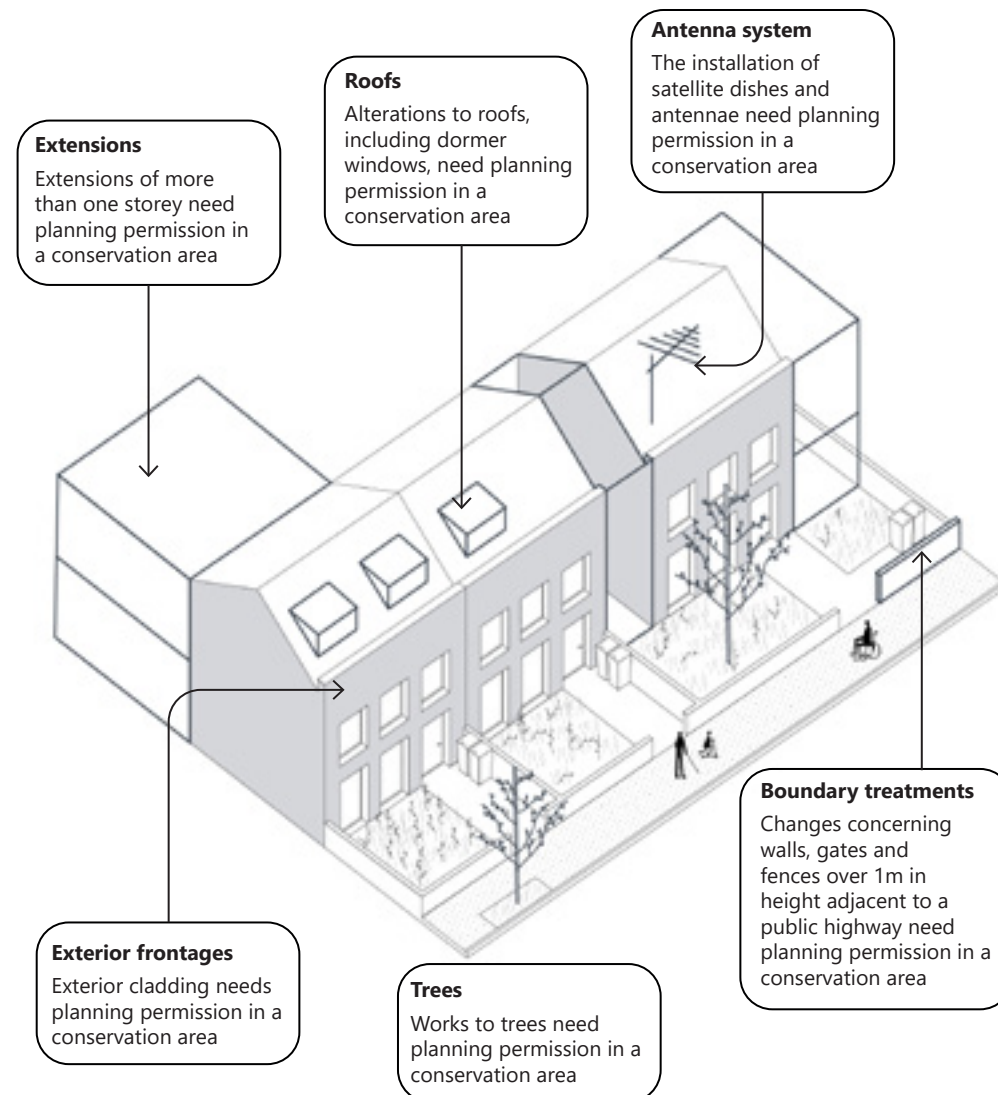


Figure 2: Conservation area designation can preserve attractive property features including the above

Introduction

Article 4 Directions

1.20 An Article 4 Direction is a special control which gives extra protection to a conservation area by removing some of the owner's planning development rights. The Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area already 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.

1.21 Should the conservation area be de-designated, some article 4 Directions will remain in place to protect buildings that are on the Council's local list.

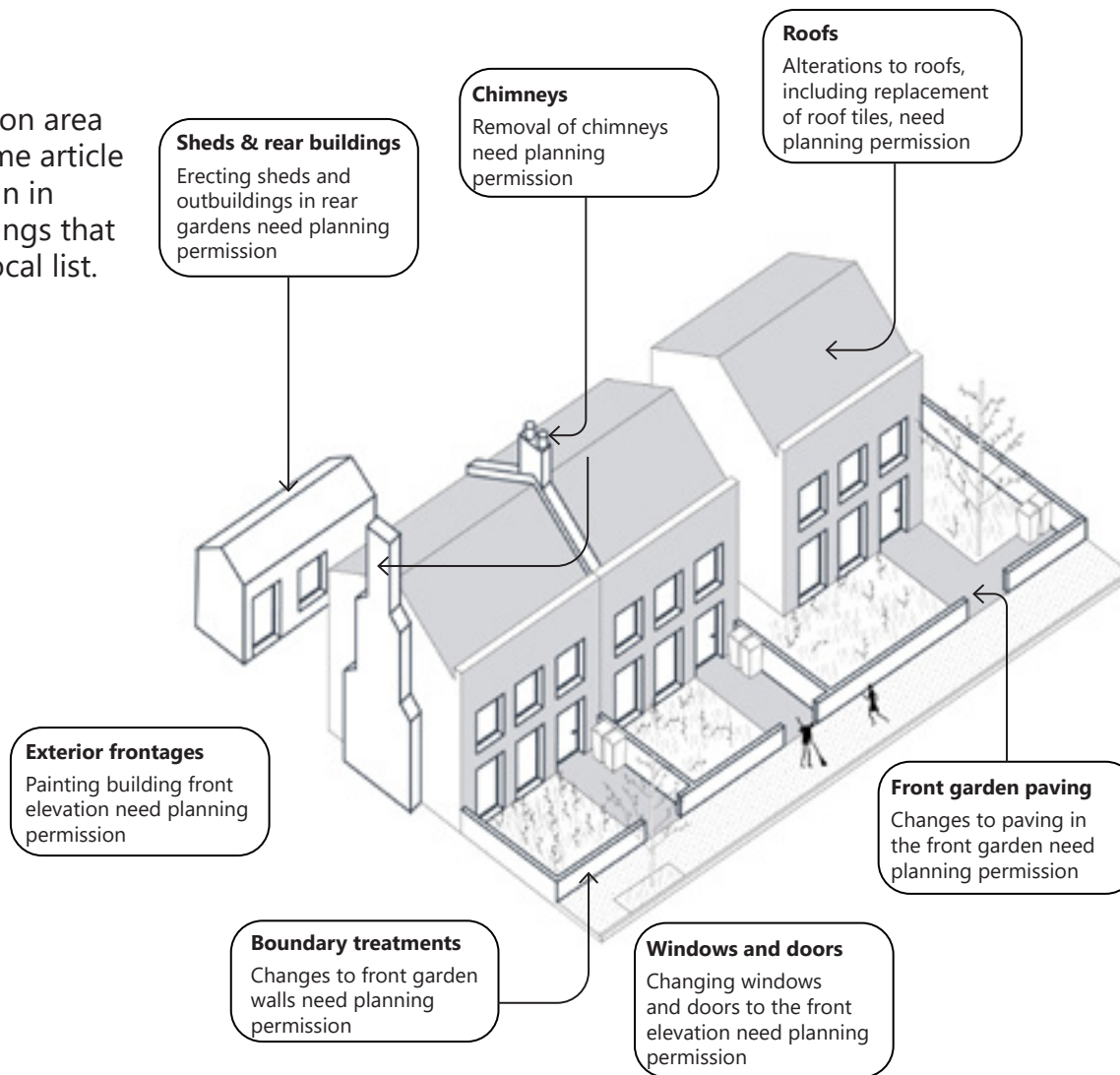


Figure 3: Property features that are included by the Article 4 Directions

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SUDBURY COTTAGES CONSERVATION AREA

Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area

Location and context

- 1.22 The existing Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area is situated to the west, parallel with Watford Road, Sudbury.
- 1.23 It contains a small number of properties on the south side and at the bottom of Sudbury Court Drive. It also takes in a few properties on the east side of Elms Lane.
- 1.24 The topography of this conservation area rises gently along Sudbury Court Road from Watford Road to the junction with Elms Lane. It rises more sharply and curves past 116 Elms Lane to reveal Rose Cottage (114 Elms Lane).

KEY

-  Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area
-  Buildings
-  Roads

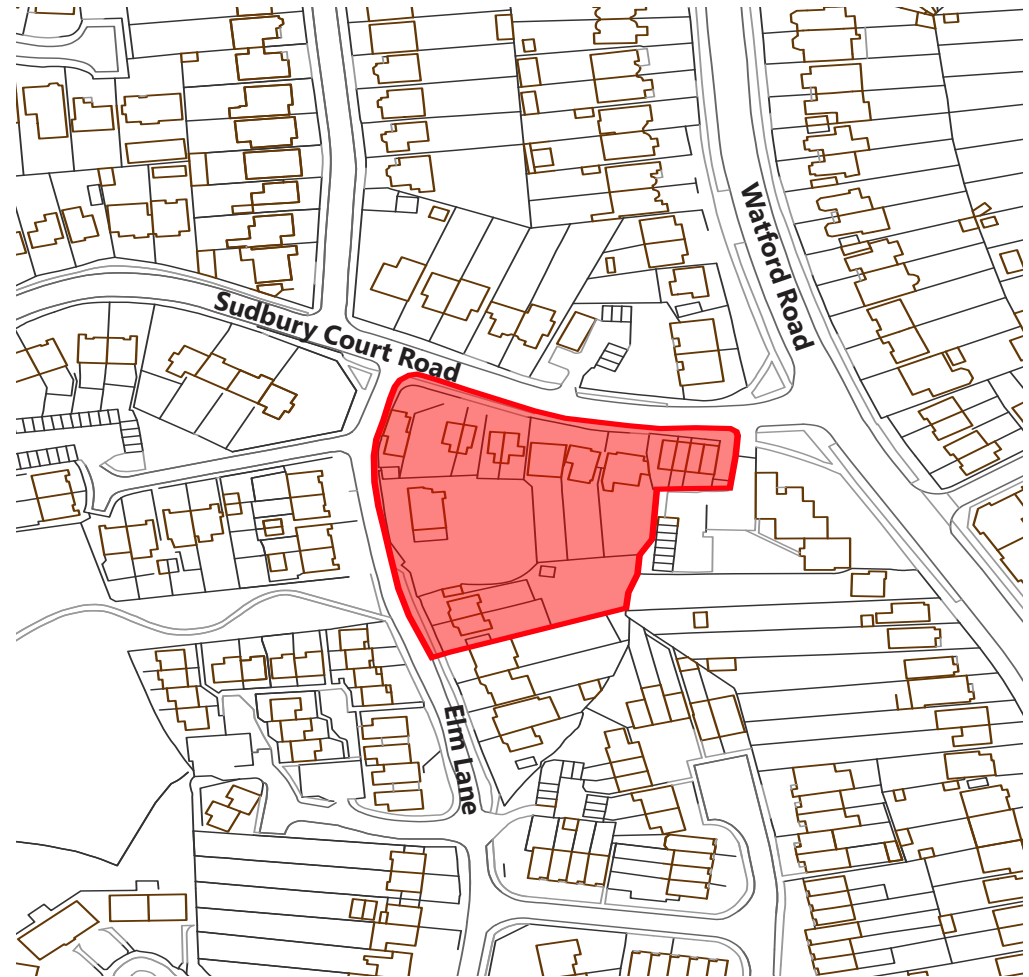
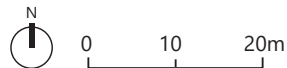


Figure 4: Location plan of current Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area

Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area

What is significant about Sudbury Cottages?

- 1.25 The special character of the Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area is defined as being the surviving part of the historic core of Sudbury.
- 1.26 Two eighteenth century cottages remain at 96 and 98 Sudbury Court Road. At the junction with Elms Lane later development provided a large late 18th century house known as Rose Cottage (114 Elms Lane) and a corner property (116 Elms Lane) of about 1810.
- 1.27 Elms Lane was considered 'a rare survival of a country lane with banks and ditches, and at that time required further policy to retain its rural character and setting of its green.'

1.28 At the time of designation, it was felt important to maintain a sense of rural character which is not utilised in modern suburban developments. The layout and position of properties created a housing enclave of particular character that is considered to be worth retaining and enhancing.


KEY
 Current Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area



Figure 5: OS Map (1864)

Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area


Historical development

- 1.29 Little is known about early Sudbury. The name first appears in 1273-4 and means 'the southern manor'. Sudbury Common once stretched from Wembley to the foot of Harrow Hill. 'Sudbury' was a much larger area than one sees today.
- 1.30 Until the enclosure of lands in the early nineteenth century, Sudbury Common lay either side of the Harrow Road from what is now Barham Park in the south to Roxeth Hill on the slopes of Harrow Hill to the north.
- 1.31 Owing to the extent of the Common, houses and cottages that had been built around its perimeter were spread over a considerable distance. Thus, with the enclosure of the Common (then measured at 95 hectares) the sprawling

hamlet of Sudbury could be subdivided into three settlement clusters: Sudbury Hill to the north, around the Swan Inn to the south and the junction of Sudbury Court Road and Elms Lane at its centre.

- 1.32 Settlement growth in the nineteenth century merged these into one continuous, though straggling settlement. Sudbury Court Farm was one of the most important of Lord Northwick's farms, consisting of over 150 hectares.

KEY

-  Current Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area

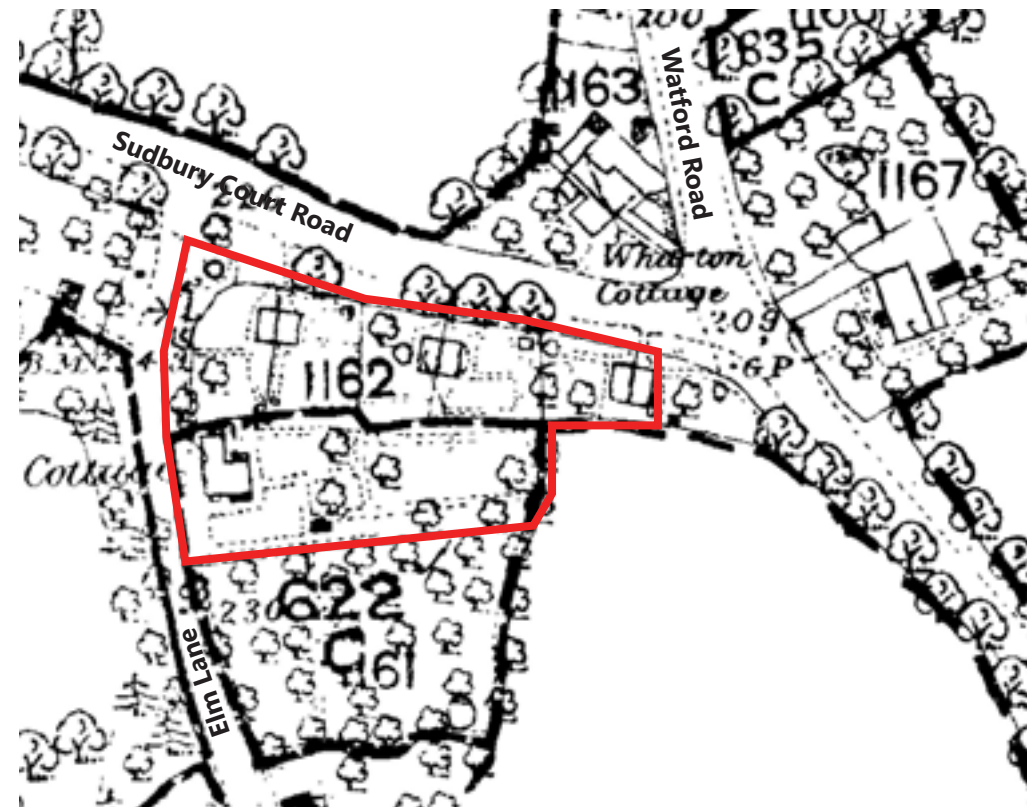


Figure 6: OS Map (1914)

Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area



Figure 7: Areal view of the area, 1946



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

Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area

Historical development

1.33 The road to London and the presence of Harrow School led prosperous people to build large houses in Sudbury. Several existed by 1819. The opening of Sudbury (now Wembley Central) station in 1842, and horse bus services from this station to the 'Swan' inn, both encouraged development.

1.34 By the 19th century, the bottom of Sudbury Court Road (where it met Watford Road) was a small hamlet of farmhouses and farm labourers cottages. These were surrounded by fields and treelined tracks.

1.35 Former Rose Cottage, 114 Elms Lane, was originally an 18th century farmhouse. Numbers 96 and 98 date from the first half of the 19th century and were probably constructed as semi-detached farm labourers' cottages.

1.36 Alongside were two more similar semi-detached cottages which were demolished to make way for 106-110 Sudbury Court Road and the post-war infill.

1.37 Numbers 106-110 Sudbury Court Road were originally built in the late 19th century along with the corner property, 116 Elms Lane.

1.38 In the middle of Sudbury Court Road, the three detached dwellings date from the post-war period. The semi-detached cottages, 98A and B, were built in 1987.

KEY

- Current Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area to be deleted

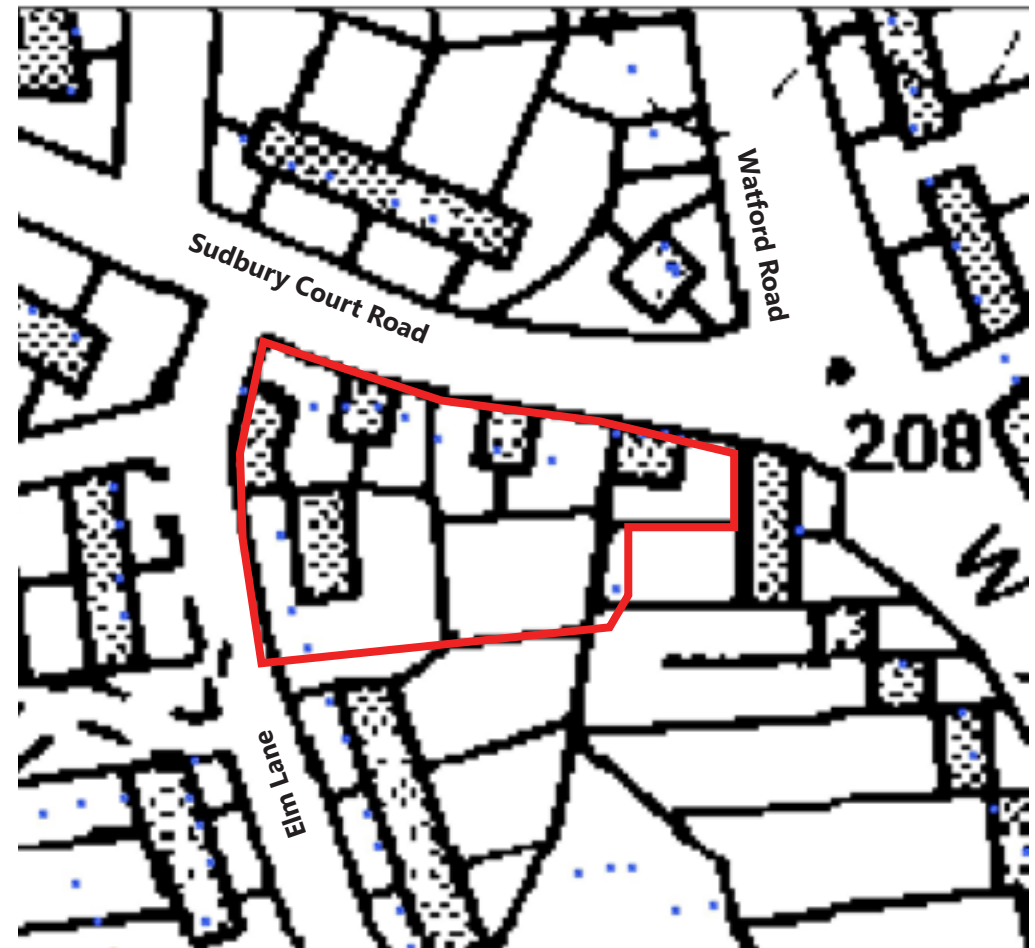


Figure 8: OS map 1967

Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area



Figure 9: Postcard of the area in 1910
Brent Council

3

REVIEWING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SADBURY COTTAGES CONSERVATION AREA

Reviewing the significance of the Sudbury Cottage Conservation Area

De-designation

Approach

1.39 Having carried out visual surveys and from research into the original designation, whilst good intentioned, the Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area never really possessed adequate special architectural or historical interest and qualities to merit conservation area status.

1.40 Demonstrable deterioration in its special architectural or historic interest has also occurred. In the case of Sudbury Court, the interests have diminished and have not increased since its designation in 1993.

1.41 Furthermore, there is no realistic possibility that lost buildings, landscaping and features can be reinstated or replaced.

1.42 Sudbury Cottages was designated as a conservation area in 1993, over 30 years ago. De-designation of the conservation area was recommended in the Historic Environment Place-making Strategy 2019.

1.43 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.

1.44 A review was undertaken using the methodology in Historic England's advice note on Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (2019). The Heritage Officer looked at the merits of Sudbury Cottages from a heritage perspective and determined that it was not of special historic and architectural significance.

1.45 The de-designation of any conservation area 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 Sudbury Cottages has been, as having special architectural and historic interest. Section 70 of the Act allows a designation to be varied or cancelled.

1.46 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

Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area: assessment of special interest and significance

Summary of special interest when designated

- 1.47 This, the smallest of Brent's conservation areas, preserves all that remains of the historic core of Sudbury Court, a settlement which in the early nineteenth century lay on the north side of Sudbury Common.
- 1.48 The special character of the conservation area derives from the historic countryside and farmland setting. The variety of different house styles along the relatively short section of road is considered to give it a distinctive character with a traditional and rural appeal.
- 1.49 When designated, the aspiration was to preserve the pleasant, bucolic area characterised by its rising road, grassed verges and hedge lined pavements. It was this as well as the mature trees that set the area apart from other parts of the Borough.



Figure 10: Comparison photos, 2003 (top) 2020 (bottom)



- KEY**
- Properties mentioned in this appraisal
 - Buildings
 - Roads

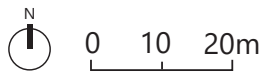


Figure 11: Map locating properties that are mentioned in this appraisal

Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area: assessment of special interest and significance

Appraisal

- 1.50 It is clear from streetscape photos taken in 2003 that there was never any historic countryside or farmland setting.
- 1.51 It is particularly noticeable comparing the early images of the area in Figures 9, 13 and 14. These show just how rural the area was at the turn of the century.
- 1.52 The reasoning's behind preserving the early settlement are undisputed but the remaining evidence of the hamlet, even in 1993, was absent. For example, the 19th century farmhouses and farm labourers cottages at bottom of Sudbury Court Road (as seen in Figure 13) had been demolished. The fields and treelined tracks had also gone.
- 1.53 In addition, when considering the special character of Elms Lane, it is hard to see how it was considered 'a rare survival of a country lane with banks and ditches' which supposedly existed at the time of designation. If they did then they have all subsequently been removed. What remains is a few grassed verges along the pavement.
- 1.54 Sudbury Cottages has not had significant improvements made to it. In particular, off-street parking in front gardens, which was identified as detrimental in the Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area Character (2006), has not been improved. No improvements have been made to the public realm. At 114 Elms Lane, the new parking arrangements have severely affected the verdant front garden setting including the loss of the front hedge (Figure 12).



Figure 12: 114 Elms Lane

Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area: assessment of special interest and significance

- 1.55 The following assessment considers each road in the Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area and examines the properties in the area. It specifically 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.
- 1.56 Starting at the bottom of Sudbury Court Road, the only discernible streetscape factor in terms of views and vistas is the fact the road is still on an incline and curves towards the top. There is nothing historic about the paving materials, street furniture or front boundaries. There is no longer a rural setting and no street trees remain.
- 1.57 106-110 (even) Sudbury Court Road is a Victorian terrace of four houses and has been altered. All the windows and doors have been replaced in UPVc and this has diluted its original appearance and character. The slate roof has also been replaced in concrete.
- 1.58 100-104 (even) are three houses dating from the post-War period. None are significant as an example of modern architecture and all have been altered with different window and door designs. They do not form an attractive or historical group.
- 1.59 98 A& B were built in 1987. They imitate the design of the neighbouring cottages. The properties have been altered with replacement windows and doors in PVCu. This has diluted the quality of their original design.

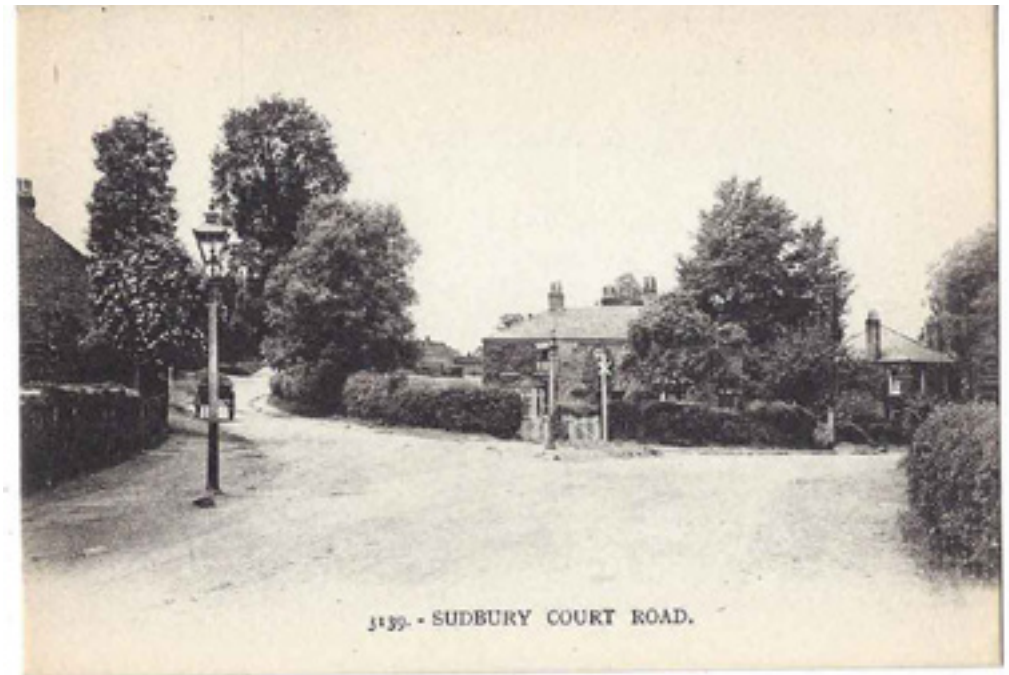


Figure 13: Postcard of Sudbury Court Road c1900

Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area: assessment of special interest and significance



Figure 14: Comparison images 1910 (left) 2023 (right)

Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area: assessment of special interest and significance

1.60 Numbers 98 and 96 Sudbury Court Road are semi-detached 18th century cottages which are statutory listed Grade II. The cottages are generally well preserved and contribute significantly to the conservation area. They retain their 18th century character. However, both properties have large front gardens, which, unfortunately have been paved over to create driveways. Plastic canopies have also been added over the front doors.

1.61 Looking down Elms Lane, the only discernible streetscape factor in terms of views and vistas is the fact the road rises to reveal green banks and street trees. However, the trees and grassy banks are not within the conservation area. Like Sudbury Court Road, there is nothing historic about the paving materials or street furniture. There is no longer a rural setting and no street trees remain.

1.62 The front garden setting to 116 Elms Lane is verdant and lush and the large tree important to streetscape. This provides an attractive gateway to Elms Lane. Number 116 Elms Lane is locally listed and still retains its Late 19th century character and appearance.

1.63 Rose Cottage, 114 Elms Lane, has recently been redeveloped. The cottage itself has been renovated. However, the extensive ivy coverage, trees, hedges and soft landscaping which was identified in the Character Appraisal as important as it 'enhanced perceptions of a rural location' has been removed and not replaced. Furthermore, although the new cottages constructed alongside are in keeping with the area, the street trees have been felled and there is limited soft landscaping. This has diminished the special interest and rural character of

the conservation area. What is more, it is difficult to see how additional landscaping and tree cover could be provided in a meaningful way to recreate the rural local scene.

Extension to Brondesbury Conservation Area: summary of special interest

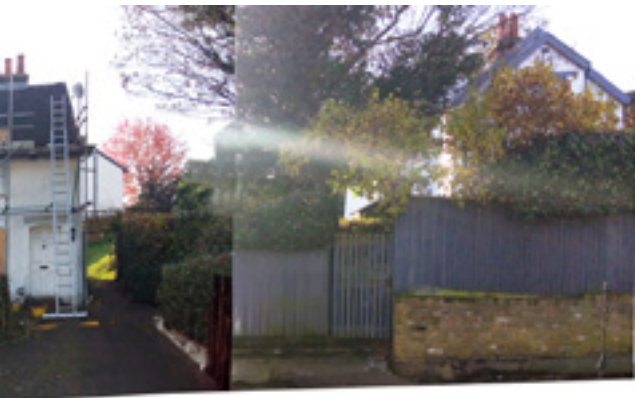
Sudbury Court Road



96-110 Sudbury
Court Road

Figure 15: Sudbury Court Road street elevation

Extension to Brondesbury Conservation Area: summary of special interest



116 Elm Lane



110-114 Elm Lane

5

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

- 1.64 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. The de-designation of Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area was recommended in Brent's Historic Environment Place-making Strategy 2019.
- 1.65 The special character of the Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area is defined as being the surviving part of the historic core of Sudbury. At the time of designation, it was felt important to maintain a sense of rural character which is not utilised in modern suburban developments. The layout and position of properties created a housing enclave of particular character that was considered to be worth retaining and enhancing.

- 1.66 However, it is clear that there was never any historic countryside or farmland setting. Indeed, it is hard to see how it was considered a 'rare survival of country lanes with banks and ditches' which supposedly existed at the time of designation.
- 1.67 Moreover, it has not had significant improvements made to it. Only three of the original cottages now survive. Collectively the cottages do not really form any sort of group or have a special setting (placed around a green for example). Furthermore, they are interspersed by later development. Much of the historic nature is archaeology and this is protected and covered by the Archaeological Priority Area heritage designation.

- 1.68 For these reasons it is recommended that de-designation should be considered for the Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area. Protection in the form of Local Listing (and Article 4 Directions) should be placed on the significant cottages and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) for any important trees.

Recommendations

- 1.69 It is recommended that consultation be undertaken on the proposed de-designation of the Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area as recommended in this report.
- 1.70 The consultation responses will be given the fullest consideration and any representations taken into account.
- 1.71 If de-designation of the Sudbury Cottages Conservation Area is supported, protection in the form of Local Listing (and Article 4 Directions) will be placed on the significant cottages and Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) for any important trees.

Image credits

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Figure 9: Mark Price

Figure 11: ©Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group

Figure 13: Mark Price

Figure 14: Mark Price

Figure 15: Brent Council/ Google Maps imagery

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Special thank you to Alison Harman of the Willesden Green Library Archive team for the research support.

