

Brondesbury Conservation Area boundary extension

Character Appraisal
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 as well as assessing for additional new areas that might merit designation.
- 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. 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.
- 1.4 Conservation area character appraisals identify and describe features which contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of a conservation area.
- 1.5 It is intended, following consultation, that this document will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). As such it will be a material planning consideration in the determination of future planning decisions.

Introduction

Why is an extension to the conservation area being considered?

- 1.6 The Council designated the Brondesbury Conservation Area in March 1990.
- 1.7 The conservation area includes the heart of the original Brondesbury Estate, but the boundaries are quite arbitrary. Possible extensions to the boundary include both extensions to Cavendish Road and Christchurch Avenue as these houses are of a similar appearance and quality to those existing in the Brondesbury Conservation Area.
- 1.8 Chatsworth Road was a later addition to the Estate but nevertheless has quality Victorian and arts and crafts properties. Therefore, some of the properties are also being considered for inclusion.

1.9 These extensions were recommended in Brent's Historic Environment Place-making Strategy 2019.

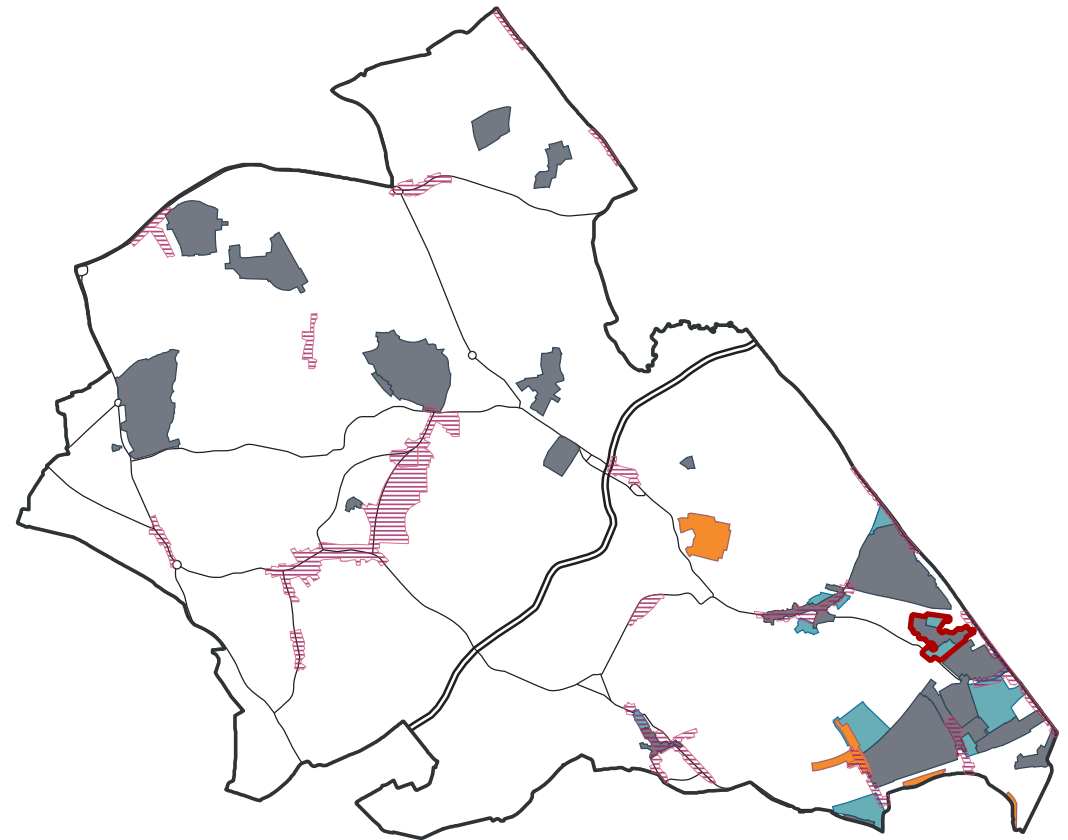
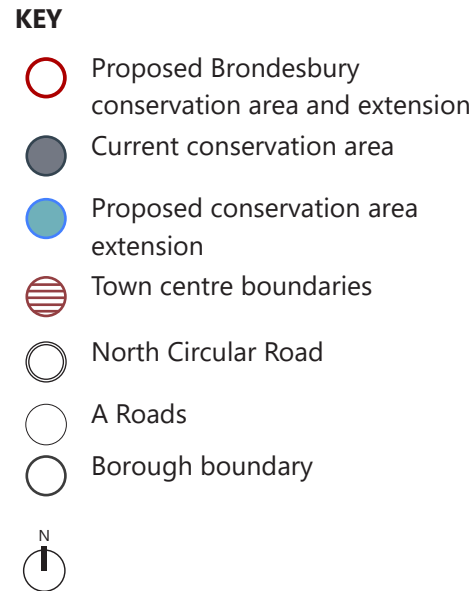


Figure 1: Conservation Area designations in borough context

Introduction

What is a conservation area?

1.10 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'.

1.11 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.

1.12 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.

1.13 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.

1.14 Conservation areas foster local identity, involve communities in their management, enable a broad view of what heritage can mean in a diverse society, and can be catalysts for social and economic regeneration. They are extensively recognised for the contribution they make

to our cultural inheritance, economic well-being and quality of life.

Introduction

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

- 1.15 Designation results in greater control over the demolition of buildings and the size and design of extensions.
- 1.16 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.
- 1.17 Therefore, the following works need planning permission in a conservation area:
- any side extensions or rear extensions of more than one storey;
 - alterations to roofs, including dormers;
 - 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;

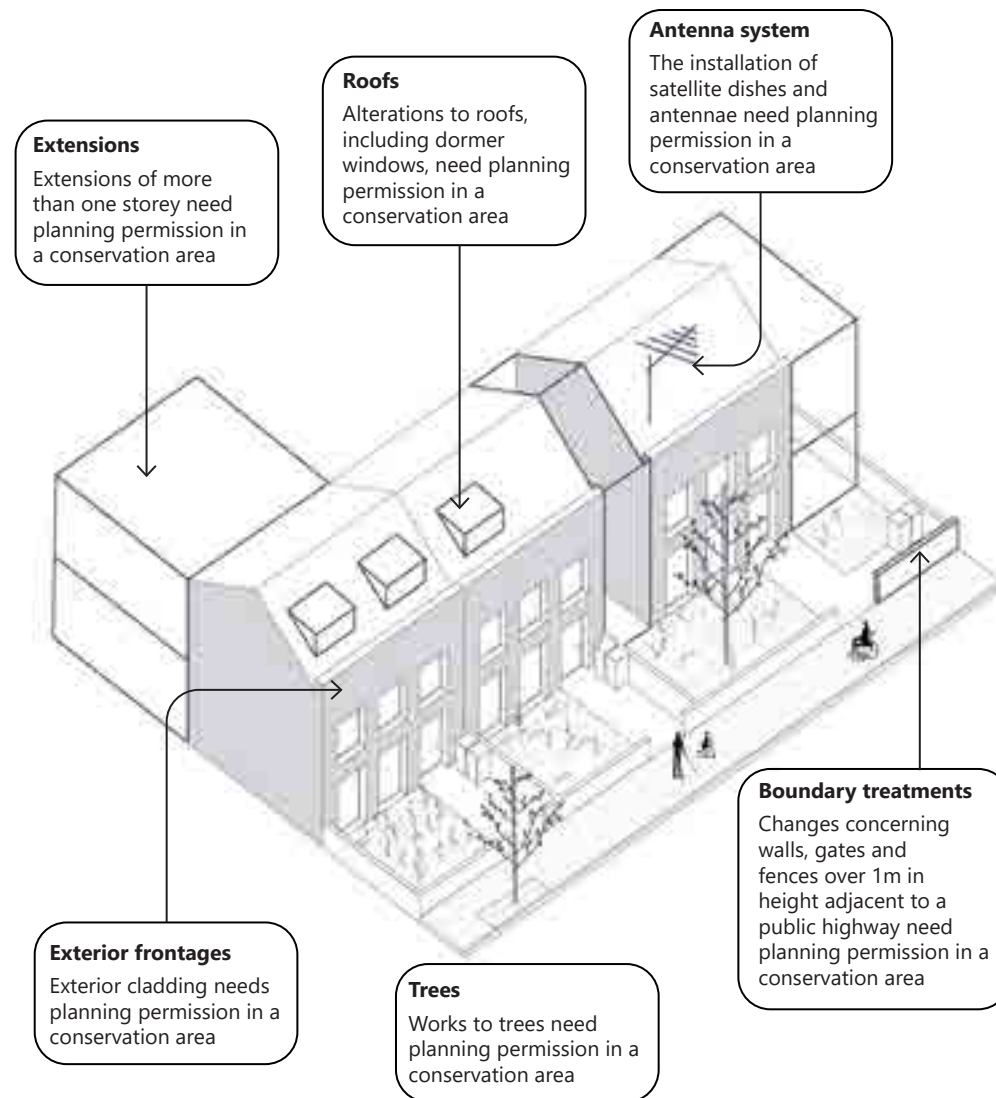


Figure 2: Conservation area designation can preserve attractive property features including the above

Introduction

Article 4 Directions

1.18 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 Brondesbury 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.

1.19 Should the boundary extension be designated, the Council will extend the use of Article 4 Directions to the new area.

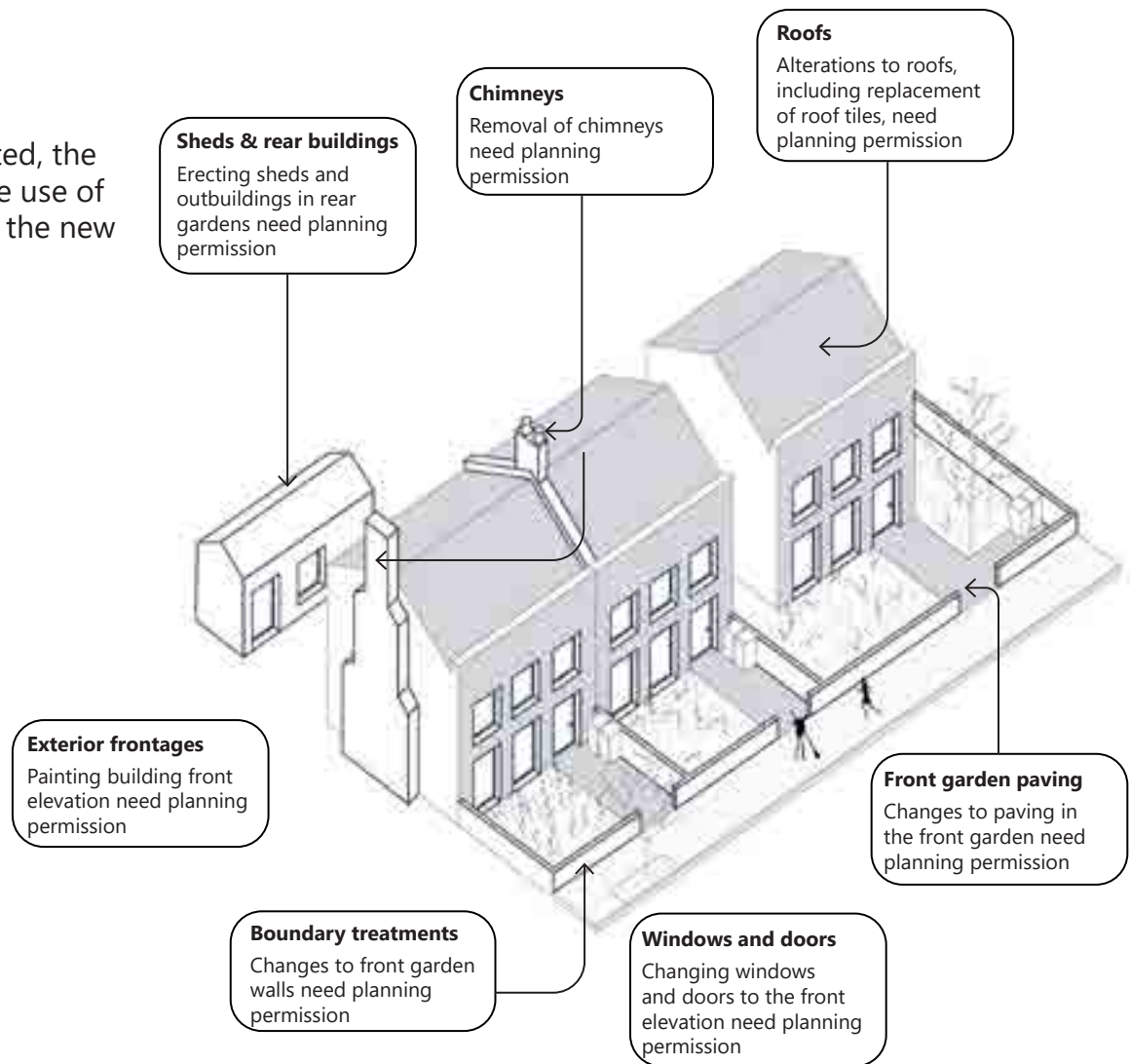


Figure 3: Property features that are included by the Article 4 Directions

2

BRONDESBURY CONSERVATION AREA

Brondesbury Conservation Area

Location and context

1.20 The existing conservation area is situated just west of the top of Kilburn High Road. It includes all of Mowbray Road, and part of Mapesbury Road, Christchurch Avenue and Cavendish Road.

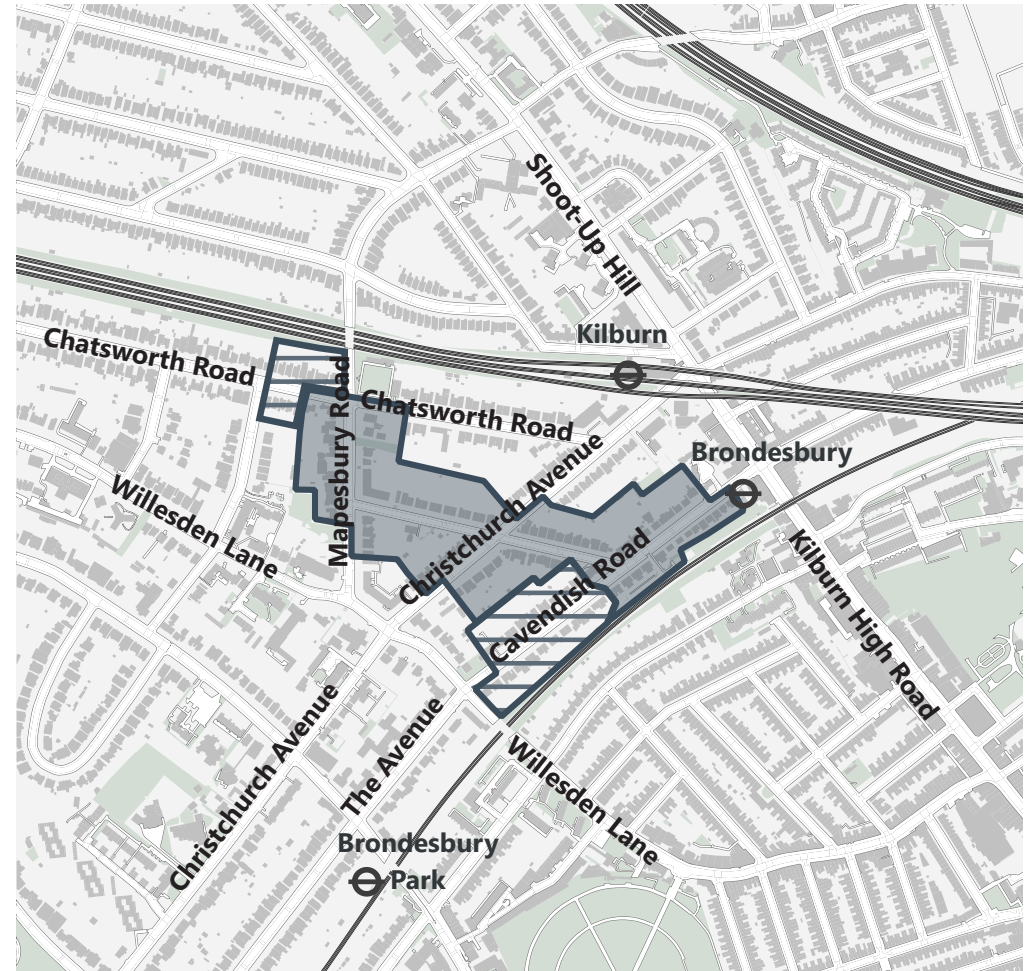
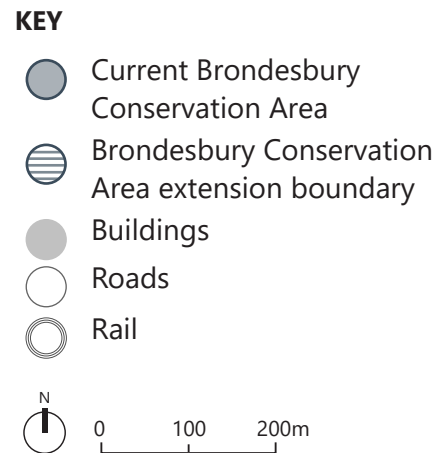


Figure 4: Location plan of current Brondesbury Conservation Area

Brondesbury Conservation Area

What is significant about Brondesbury?

1.21 The special character of the Brondesbury Conservation Area is defined as being the surviving part of the Brondesbury Estate whose mix of Victorian architecture provides a highly attractive area of domestic design worthy of protection and enhancement. The houses in the area are extremely large and the architectural designs are of Italianate and continental gothic styles. The rhythmical layout is an important part of the design as it results in a coherent and ordered street scene of attractive villas.

KEY

- Current Brondesbury Conservation Area
- Proposed extension

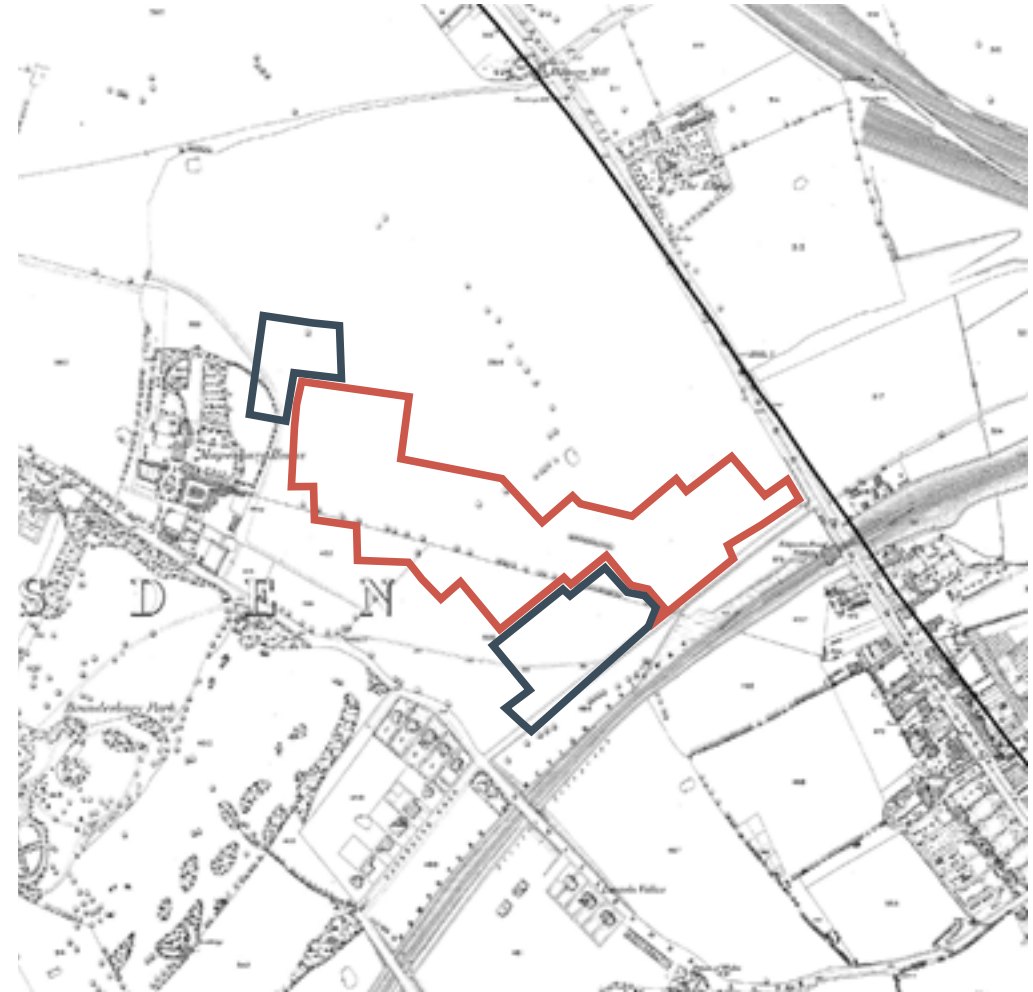


Figure 5: OS Map (1893)

Brondesbury Conservation Area

Historical development

1.22 Before Queen's Park was imagined, Brondesbury (or Brands) Manor was one of the prebendal manors created by the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's who held land, which they then farmed or leased out. Subsequently the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (now the Church Commissioners) took it over and, in the 19th Century, decided to sell the land off for development.

1.23 A railway station was established on the main line from Euston in 1851–1852. Development of land as well as the opening of Brondesbury station on the North London Railway in 1860 all brought more people to the area. The south side of the Cavendish Road was some of the earliest suburban development in North Kilburn.

1.24 In the 1850s, 'Brondesbury Ridge' as it was then known, was regarded as a highly desirable place to live, with fine views of the Surrey Hills. The former agricultural land sold by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners provided highly profitable building land.

1.25 Cavendish Road, Brondesbury Park and Willesden Lane, right on the rise of the ridge, saw large villas built in tree lined streets.

KEY

- Current Brondesbury Conservation Area
- Conservation area extension



Figure 6: OS Map (1915)

Brondesbury Conservation Area



Figure 7: Areal view of the area (mid 20th century)



Figure 8: Areal view of the area now

Brondesbury Conservation Area

Summary of defining architectural and historic interest

- 1.26 The houses in the Brondesbury Conservation Area remain well-designed Victorian properties and their construction detailing, including windows and doors, remains prevalent. The quality of the designs is defined by the nature of the natural materials employed for the elevations and roofing and these survive.
- 1.27 The houses in the area are extremely large and the architectural designs are of Italianate and gothic styles. The rhythmical layout of the villas, each using the same architectural vocabulary, but in different variations, is an important part of the design. It results in a coherent and ordered street scene, despite the occasional interruption by more modern buildings, as they have retained the original boundary lines. This special character remains throughout together with the street trees. In some cases the front gardens have been lost but on the whole the conservation area remains incredibly well-preserved.
- 1.28 Most of the houses are 3 storeys high and 2 bays wide, brick with stone or stucco detailing surrounding windows and doors. The predominant character of each street is described below:
- 1.29 Christchurch Avenue: The houses in this road are 3 storey detached and semi detached villas. They have large front gardens. The villas are built in a classical architectural style with houses on the even numbers side of the road having timber front porches, quoins, slate roofs and the use of flat arches.
- 1.30 Mowbray Road: These houses are similar to those described above. However, many are double fronted, and there is more use of centred arches, with dentil cornicing to the roofs and windows and triangular pediments over the front doors. This area is visually and architecturally rich.
- 1.31 Mapesbury Road: The houses in this street are larger, gothic style buildings, they have stunning Spandrel flowers, and this in turn makes this street appear slightly more grand and imposing and rather spectacular.
- 1.32 Cavendish Road: Most of the houses on this street are detached three bays wide in yellow stock brick with simple detailing. There is a relatively new development known as Brooklands Court at the southern end of the conservation area which works reasonably well within the context of the surrounding area as it reflects the scale, massing and style of the older houses adjacent.

Brondesbury Conservation Area



Figure 9: Historic image of junction of Christchurch Avenue and Mowbray Road



Figure 10: Modern day image of junction of Christchurch Avenue and Mowbray Road

3

REVIEWING THE CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

Reviewing the conservation area boundary

Current boundary

1.33 The conservation area boundary [Figure 4] has not changed since the Brondesbury Conservation Area was originally designated in 1990. It centres mainly on Mowbray Road and the earliest buildings constructed following the establishment of the railway.

to those existing in the Brondesbury Conservation Area. Chatsworth Road was a later addition to the Estate but nevertheless has quality Victorian and arts and crafts properties. It too should be considered for inclusion.

Areas for review

1.34 The Brondesbury Estate included all of Christchurch Road, Mowbray Road, Mapesbury Road and Willesden Lane. Chatsworth Road (where it meets Christchurch Road) was developed soon after.

1.35 Possible extensions to the boundary could include both extensions to Cavendish Road and Christchurch Avenue as these houses are of a similar appearance and quality

Approach

1.36 The boundary review was undertaken using the methodology in Historic England's advice note on Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management (2019).

1.37 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.

1.38 To ensure a consistent approach, the areas proposed for designation were identified on the basis that they shared a common character, quality and architectural significance with the existing conservation area. The objective was to understand and articulate exactly why the area is special and what elements within the

area contribute to this special quality and which do not, conveying this succinctly.

1.39 A visual survey has been undertaken by the Heritage Officer. Undertaking a visual survey of the conservation area is a fundamental part of understanding those elements of character or appearance that are desirable to preserve or enhance.

1.40 This has determined what contributes positively to its character or appearance (and in particular how these features are connected with the area's special interest) and what detracts from it or presents an opportunity for enhancement.

4

EXTENSION TO BRONDESBURY
CONSERVATION AREA: SUMMARY OF
SPECIAL INTEREST

Extension to Brondesbury Conservation Area: summary of special interest

Background

1.41 This section summarises the 'special historic interest' of the proposed conservation area extension as defined by Historic England's Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management guidance document (2019).

1.42 When originally designated in 1990, the conservation area centred on the surviving part of the Brondesbury estate whose mix of Victorian architecture provided a highly attractive area of domestic design-worthy of protection and enhancement.

1.43 The dwellings in the area possess rich decorative and impressive architecture incorporating detailing such as window mouldings and ornate terracotta brick panels, whereas the adjoining streets

are less striking, intricate decoration giving way to more standard brick frontages.

1.44 It is considered that some of the surrounding streets have equally impressive architecture and should be included to provide a larger slice through this Victorian suburban estate.







Figure 11: 41-43 Cavendish Road

Extension to Brondesbury Conservation Area: summary of special interest

1.45 The adjacent map identifies buildings and roads that are being considered for inclusion within the Brondesbury Conservation Area. The map should aid the reader in locating individual properties and should be read in conjunction with the appraisal text.

KEY

-  Properties mentioned in this appraisal
-  Buildings
-  Roads
-  Rail

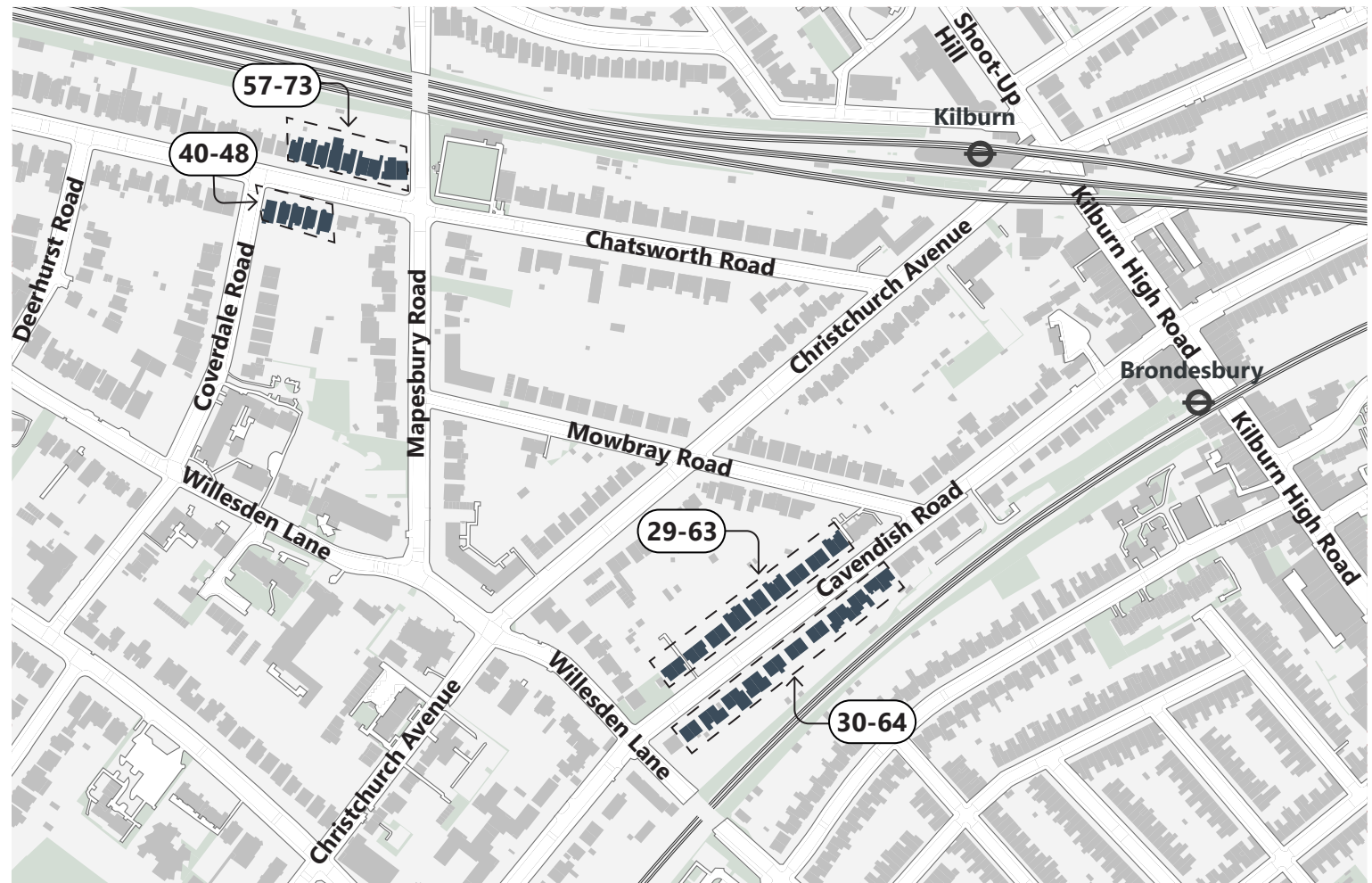
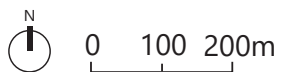


Figure 12: Map diagram locating properties that are mentioned in this appraisal

Extension to Brondesbury Conservation Area: summary of special interest

Appraisal

Cavendish Road

1.46 The south side of the Cavendish Road backs onto the North London Railway and it was here that some of the earliest suburban development in this area of the Borough commenced. The street contains highly attractive two storey villas with basements.

1.47 The pair of double fronted villas, 26 and 28 Cavendish Road, are identical to those seen alongside, 22 and 24 (already in the conservation area). They are similarly well preserved, number 28 especially. They are equally as attractive, featuring London stock brick and red stone dressings. They retain their attractive bay windows and slate roofs and have not been extended to their detriment at the rear. The pair, 30&34, are not double fronted but

are of identical design. They are especially well preserved and both have maintained their timber sash windows and timber front doors featuring highly elaborate stained glass. They also retain their front gardens and have not been extended adversely to the rear. This group is very attractive and would be a worthy addition to the existing conservation area.

1.48 Numbers 34-64 Cavendish Road are 8 pairs of highly attractive villas that formed part of the original estate and were built by W.A. Pryor. They are of a similar design and quality to the villas at the top of the road already in the conservation area and are as well preserved as those seen elsewhere in the conservation area.



Figure 13: 34-36 Cavendish Road

Extension to Brondesbury Conservation Area: summary of special interest

- 1.49 The pairs of properties feature an upper ground floor with a double height canted bay window that extends down to the lower ground within a small lightwell. They were constructed in London stock brick with stuccoed dressings to the windows and doors. Wide stone steps with stucco balustrade and piers ascend to the main entrances.
- 1.50 At first floor, the windows are tripartite, and some of the stuccoed surrounds feature decorative scrolled incised carving and small brackets to the window cills. More ornamental brackets feature at the deep eaves cornice.
- 1.51 The front entrances are either a projecting portico or a simple pilastered surround and plain cornice. A vast majority still retain their four panelled front door, some with round headed glazing.
- 1.52 Each pair varies slightly in their overall composition but all on the same theme and plan form. For example, some have triple height bays or are decorated with robust ribbed consoles.
- 1.53 The roofscape is very well preserved, most having sensitively designed front and rear dormers and have retained their slate roofs and tall chimneys. Likewise, the properties have not been extended to their detriment at the rear. Long rear gardens with ample tree planting add to the significance of the properties. Nearly all have retained their original front boundary and verdant courtyard gardens behind.
- 1.54 Numbers 29-63 Cavendish Road, opposite, are 9 pairs of highly attractive villas that formed part of the original estate and were also built



Figure 14: 41-43 Cavendish Road

Extension to Brondesbury Conservation Area: summary of special interest

by W.A. Pryor. They are of a similar scale and quality to those opposite but their design is slightly different.

1.55 29-51 Cavendish Road were constructed in London stock brick with flat red brick arches to the ground floor and stone lintels to those at first floor level. As opposite, double height canted bay windows with slate roofs are a feature, extending down to the lower ground level.

1.56 The front entrance bold brick porticos feature stylised Corinthian capitals which are repeated on the bay windows. Tripartite timber sash windows at first floor have chamfered stone lintels and dividing supports. To the eaves, projecting bricks form an attractive dentiled cornice.

1.57 The double pairs of timber four panelled front doors are especially striking. As opposite, wide stone entrance steps with brick balustrades and piers.

1.58 53-63 Cavendish Road were constructed in London stock brick with redbrick arches, red brick string courses and stone dressings. These have triple height canted bay windows. Again with a lower ground level set within a small lightwell.

1.59 The front entrance brick porticos feature stylised Corinthian capitals. The sash windows have arched heads and the buildings are topped with a projecting concave eaves cornice in stucco. The double timber four panelled front doors are especially attractive. As opposite, wide stone entrance steps with brick balustrades and piers.



Figure 15: 61-63 Cavendish Road

Extension to Brondesbury Conservation Area: summary of special interest

1.60 The roofscape is very well preserved across all the properties on this side of the road. Most having sensitively designed front and rear dormers and have retained their slate roofs. Likewise, the properties have not been extended to their detriment at the rear. Long rear gardens with ample tree planting add to the significance of the properties. Sadly, some of the original front boundaries have been lost and the courtyards paved over. However, this has not totally detracted from the significance of these properties which are otherwise exceptionally well preserved.

Cavendish Road/Willesden Lane

1.61 The properties at the bottom of the road, 66 Cavendish Road, as well as 162-170 and 161-169 Willesden Lane were part of the early estate. However, they are not being

considered for addition to the conservation area for the following reasons.

1.62 66 Cavendish Road and 162 Willesden Lane are to be demolished and redeveloped. The other properties on Willesden Lane are isolated from the rest of the conservation area. In any case, the best of these properties, including Christ Church, are already protected through local and statutory listing.

1.63 The properties to the north end of Christchurch Avenue, 8-32 and 11-3, formed part of the original estate development. They were equally as grand as the villas seen in the rest of Christchurch Avenue and were of equal architectural quality. However, they have since nearly all been extended heavily at roof level to the extent that has harmed their original design and as a

consequence would devalue the existing conservation area should they be designated.

Chatsworth Road

1.64 The estate developed along Chatsworth Road, firstly at its eastern end, with substantial semi-detached houses with huge attractive front gables. However, these have also been too altered to merit inclusion within the conservation area.

1.65 Nevertheless, a small number of properties on Chatsworth Road between Mapesbury and Coverdale Road are of superb architectural interest as they were designed by G. A. Sexton who worked on the Mapesbury estate. The large detached houses are generally well preserved and date from the turn of the century.

1.66 40-46 and 61-73 Chatsworth Road are of a similar

asymmetrical design in russet red bricks and stone cills with moulded rubbed red bricks to the window arches and aprons. Other features include projecting key stones to the central windows and dentiled string courses. The properties are double fronted with flanking asymmetrical bay windows with gables over between which the front door is placed. This has a decorative timber bracketed filigree canopy over.

1.67 The general design of the properties include huge projecting double-height canted bay windows with decorative half timbering to the gables. Windows were originally timber casements and timber sliding sash. The front doors are especially attractive with panels and bevelled lights. Tall chimneys also feature with stepped corbelling. The roofs were finished in plain clay tiles.

Extension to Brondesbury Conservation Area: summary of special interest

- 1.68 Like the rest of the Brondesbury Conservation Area there are deep front gardens which are well planted behind a boundary wall. The original clinker design remains in some places. To the rear, long rear verdant gardens. Double height bay windows and single storey outriggers were also part of the original plan at the rear.
- 1.69 The properties generally remain intact with their original features including timber windows, doors and front garden curtilage.
- 1.70 Other properties that formed part of the original estate and considered worthy of being in the conservation area are 48, 57 and 59 Chatsworth Road. 48 was designed by Tapley but has an unusual gambrel roof. 57 and Chatsworth Road was designed by Alex Philips & Johns in 1903. The

semi-detached property is a landmark in the area with a huge gable end featuring half-timbering. To the front, a pair of half-timbered gables above the projecting eaves. Semi-circular double height leaded windows also are a feature.



Figure 16: 57 Chatsworth Road

Extension to Brondesbury Conservation Area: summary of special interest



40-48

Figure 17 Panorama of 40-48 Chatsworth Road



57-73

Figure 18: Panorama of 57-73 Chatsworth Road

Extension to Brondesbury Conservation Area: summary of special interest

Cavendish Road



22-44

Figure 19: Panorama of 22-64 Cavendish Road



63-45

Figure 20: Panorama of 29-63 Cavendish Road

Extension to Brondesbury Conservation Area: summary of special interest



46-64



43-29

5

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

- 1.71 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. Extensions to the Brondesbury Conservation Area were recommended in Brent's Historic Environment Placemaking Strategy 2019.
- 1.72 The existing conservation area includes the heart of the original Brondesbury Estate, but the boundaries are quite arbitrary. Possible extensions have been identified to the boundary including to Cavendish Road and Chatsworth Road.
- 1.73 Cavendish Road has grand villas with architectural designs of Italianate and continental gothic styles. They were designed by W A Pryor. The intactness and quality of the properties

match that of those already in the conservation area and therefore it is recommended that they be included within the designation.

- 1.74 Chatsworth Road has a small number of properties between Mapesbury and Coverdale Road which are of superb architectural interest as they were designed by G A Sexton who worked on the Mapesbury estate. The properties are double fronted with flanking asymmetrical bay windows with gables over between which the front door is placed. The large detached houses are generally well preserved and date from the turn of the century. They merit designation within the conservation area.
- 1.75 Other properties on the conservation area boundary have been considered but have been dismissed. Properties to the north end

of Christchurch Avenue were equally of architectural quality as seen elsewhere on Christchurch Avenue. However, they have nearly all been extended heavily at roof level to the extent that has harmed their original design. The eastern end of Chatsworth Road, with its substantial semi-detached houses with huge front gables, are also deemed too altered to merit inclusion.

- 1.76 The property, 66 Cavendish Road as well as 162-170 and 161-169 Willesden Lane were part of the early estate. However, they are not being considered for addition to the conservation area because they are rather isolated from the existing conservation area or have been given permission for redevelopment. The best of the remaining properties are protected through statutory and local listing.

Recommendations

- 1.77 It is recommended that consultation be undertaken on the proposed boundary changes to the Brondesbury Conservation Area as recommended in this report.
- 1.78 The consultation responses will be given the fullest consideration, and amendments made to the new boundary of the Brondesbury Conservation Area as deemed reasonable and necessary.
- 1.79 On designation of the new boundary for the Brondesbury Conservation Area, this report will form a character appraisal for the area.

Image credits

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Figure 7: Merge of Historic England Archive (RAF photography)

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

