

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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**1.1** Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that every local authority shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and shall designate them as conservation areas. The Borough has 43 such areas designated over 22 years, of which Crabtree Conservation Area is one.

**1.2** Once an area has been designated, certain duties fall on the local authority; in particular under section 71 of that Act whereby the local authority must from time to time formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of those conservation areas.

**1.3** The Council is doing this in stages. The first stage is this document which is called a Conservation Area Character Profile. The “profile” aims to give a clear definition of what constitutes the special architectural or historic interest which warranted the designation of the area as a Conservation Area. It also includes some broad design guidelines which will aid all concerned in their efforts to preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area.

**1.4** Each profile document is intended to form a sound basis, justifiable on appeal, and for development control decisions and for the guidance of residents and developers

**1.5** The next stage will be the production of more detailed design guidelines where necessary in consultation with Councillors, the Hammersmith and Fulham Historic Buildings Group, Fulham Society and other local groups. Policy documents for the preservation and enhancement of individual conservation areas may be prepared and will be the subject of local consultation.

**1.6** The profiles and subsequent design guidelines will be supplementary planning guidance and will support the Council’s statutory Unitary Development Plan which sets out the planning policy framework for the development of the borough and development control decisions. Policy EN1 relates to conservation areas and makes specific reference to the Character Profiles. They will constitute material planning considerations in the determination of planning applications.

**1.7** The Government has given guidance to local authorities on how to operate the legislation in their Planning Policy Guidance document (PPG15), entitled “Planning and the Historic Environment”. Here we are reminded that the prime consideration in identifying conservation areas is the quality and interest of areas rather than that of individual buildings. There has been increasing recognition in recent years that our experience of a historic area depends on much more than the quality of individual buildings. This would include the historic layout of property boundaries and thoroughfares; a particular ‘mix’ of uses; characteristic materials; appropriate scaling and detailing of contemporary buildings; the quality of advertisements, shopfronts, street furniture and hard and soft surfaces; vistas along streets and between buildings and the extent to which traffic intrudes and limits pedestrian use of spaces between buildings. The Secretary of State therefore intends that conservation area legislation should be seen as the means of recognising the importance of all these factors and of ensuring that conservation area policy addresses the quality of townscape in its broadest sense as well as the protection of individual buildings.

**1.8** This intention is reinforced by English Heritage in their document “Conservation Area Practice” which recognises that as the number of conservation areas being designated continues to grow their designation is increasingly being looked at more critically. It is therefore even more important than before that there should be a clear

definition, recorded in some detail, of what constitutes the special architectural or historic interest which warranted the designation of every conservation area.

**1.9** In line with the guidance given by both the Government and English Heritage, therefore, this conservation area profile will aim to define the character of the conservation area on the basis of an analysis of all or some of the following criteria:-

- the origins and development of the street patterns, the lie of the land;
- archaeological significance and potential of the area, including any scheduled monuments;
- the architectural and historic quality, character and coherence of the buildings, both listed and unlisted, and the contribution which they make to the special interest of the area;
- the character and hierarchy of spaces, and townscape quality;
- prevalent and traditional building materials for buildings, walls and surfaces;
- the contribution made to the character of the area by greens or green spaces, trees, hedges and other natural or cultivated elements;
- the prevailing (or former) uses within the area and their historic patronage, and the influence of these on the plan form and building types;
- the relationship of the built environment to landscape/townscape including definition of significant landmarks, vistas and panoramas, where appropriate;
- the extent of any loss, intrusion, or damage that has occurred since designation;
- the existence of any opportunity sites;
- unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the conservation area according to English Heritage's criteria.

## **2 DESIGNATION**

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**2.1** The Crabtree Conservation Area was designated in April 1989.

## **3 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY**

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**3.1** The conservation area is defined by Winslow Road to the north, Fulham Palace Road and Fulham Cemetery to the east and the rear of the properties in Finlay Street to the south. The western boundary is formed by Manbre Road, Rainville Road, Holyport Road and Stevenage Road.

**3.2** The conservation area also includes the riverside area around the former Jacksons Plaster Works, Crabtree Public House and Crabtree Hall at the junction of Rainville Road and Crabtree Lane.

**3.3** The conservation area boundary can be seen on the plan on pages 14 and 15.

## **4 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AREA**

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**4.1** From the 11th Century up to the Late 19th Century, the whole of the conservation area underwent "a high state of cultivation". In the Mid 18th Century, the area extending from the northern boundary of the orchards (in the vicinity of Craven Cottage) up to Crabtree Lane, was in open fields. The area north of Crabtree Lane up to the present day Winslow Road was under systematic market gardening <sup>1</sup>. By the Mid 19th Century, Crabtree had developed into a well established settlement with productive fields <sup>2</sup>. By the end of the 19th Century, the conservation area was still predominantly in open country with orchards of apples and pears as well as market gardens <sup>3</sup>.

**4.2** Brick-making was a subsidiary industry practised in the locality of Crabtree, dating back to the 17th Century. This industry was promoted by Sir Nicholas Crispe and was extensively practised in Fulham <sup>4</sup>.

**4.3** The crab tree (*pyrus malus*), a wild apple tree, used to be quite prolific in Fulham. Not



only does this area owe its place name to this tree, but other places in Fulham do as well. For example, at Sands End was Crabtree Close and the ancient message of Crabstocks at North End was also reminiscent of the *pyrus malus*. The name is of far greater antiquity than has generally been imagined. In the minutes of a Court General held in 1492, it was recorded: "John Shonks surrenders Southcrofte at the Crabtree in the Lordship of Fulham to the use of Thomas Hoberd and heirs" <sup>5</sup>.

**4.4** The little cluster of cottages near the river at Crabtree probably owed its origin to the existence nearby of Sir Nicholas Crispe's Great House, which was located in the extreme north western corner of the parish. The Assessment books, in which the population was classified according to localities, do not show any subdivision for Crabtree as a separate locality of population until 1666. By this time "Crabtree fielde" recorded nine inhabitants. In 1674, "Crab tree Field" recorded 23 inhabitants. There appeared to be no increase in population until 1739 when only 14 inhabitants were recorded at "Crabb Tree" <sup>6</sup>. The field which was specifically designated "Crabtree" lay between Crabtree Lane on the south and Crabtree Alley on the north. By the Mid 18th Century, there were approximately half a dozen cottages in this field <sup>7</sup>.

**4.5** Through the Redcross Field, an ancient right of way existed extending from the Fulham Fields to Cockbush (Coppesbush) on the river (near Belle Vue House and Mears Wharf). This way was the existing Crabtree Lane which appears on Rocque's map. In 1656 Sir Nicholas Crispe closed this way but provided another one in lieu. This right of way was most probably the lane known as Crabtree Alley, which appears on Rocque's map <sup>8</sup>.

**4.6** Crabtree Lane was a picturesque spot with some noteworthy old cottages on its north side. At the top adjacent to Fulham Palace Road were two houses, Crabtree Cottages, built in 1838. Next to St Clement's Church on the south side of

Crabtree Lane was St Clement's Vicarage, built in 1886 (now demolished). Facing the river there was the Crabtree Inn which was the last of Fulham's riverside inns. It used to be known as the "Pot House" and later on as "The Three Jolly Gardeners". In 1763 it was known as the "Pot House at Crab Tree". <sup>9</sup>

**4.7** Maltings existed on the river front at Crabtree, were established by Joseph Attersoll circa 1790. There were also lime kilns, a chalk wharf and a vitriol manufacturer. Millshot Farm existed on the east side of the present day Stevenage Road opposite Rowberry Mead on the river. St James' Home "Female Penitentiary" and its grounds used to exist on the site of the present day Robert Owen House and its grounds.

**4.8** The "urbanization" of Fulham had hardly begun by 1853. There had been an influx of people from the country and from London. However, by 1851 the census implied that the social structure of Fulham still remained that of a country district on the fringe of London which had yet to be amalgamated into the "urban sprawl". Fulham's layout and land-use with large areas under cultivation and very few residential roads <sup>10</sup> was to remain largely unchanged until the railway extensions of the 1880s brought the area within easy access of the City of London. After that, new development proceeded rapidly. Around 1900, the long stretch of the Fulham Palace Road was developed with low, genteel residential terraces consisting of a mixture of houses and two-storey flats.

**4.9** Crabtree Farm was Fulham's last farm. It lay between Fulham Palace Road and Rannoch Road bounded on the north by Colwith Road and on the south by Crabtree Lane. The farmhouse used to exist at the junction of Larnach Road and Rannoch Road. This area had been farmed since the Early 19th Century and produced vegetables and strawberries for sale at Covent Garden Market. In 1910 this farm was sold to Allen and Norris, local estate agents, who built several streets of houses upon it.





*Crabtree Farm circa 1880*

This development signified the end of an era in Fulham, because farming had come to an end.

**4.10** Though only a small part of this conservation area is located on the riverside the history of this area is of some significance. The riverside has been occupied since pre-historic times and archeological work in the 1970's uncovered Neolithic flint implements and pottery (circa 3,000 BC), Late Iron Age pottery and an isolated Roman coin of the 4th Century AD.

**4.11** There was a pottery next to the Crabtree hotel operating in the 18th Century and referred to in contemporary documents as the pot-house. Some green-glazed waste pottery fragments, possibly from this site, were found on the Crabtree Wharf opposite, during the redevelopment of Adam's Walk in the 1970's. A fuller history of the riverside and river use in this area can be found in the Fulham Reach Conservation Area Character Profile.

## 5 CHARACTER & APPEARANCE

**5.1** The Crabtree Conservation Area is characterised by its essentially residential use and rectilinear street pattern and the mixed use frontage to Fulham Palace Road including retail and commercial uses. It includes part of the historic riverside at Crabtree Wharf and the green open space of Fulham Cemetery. Other land uses

in the conservation area include educational, ecclesiastical and office/light industrial.

**5.2** The conservation area can be split into sub-areas for the purposes of the character assessment in order to distinguish areas of similar character and similar periods of historic development . These are shown on the plan on pages 14 and 15.

The sub-areas are:

- A** The Main Body of the Conservation Area
- B** The Crabtree Riverside
- C** Fulham Palace Road
- D** Fulham Cemetery

### **A The Main Body of the Conservation Area**

#### **General Characteristics**

**5.3** The main body of the conservation area is characterised by speculative Victorian and Edwardian residential development. These properties are laid out in a rectilinear street pattern with numerous streets running at right angles to the river along the length of the conservation area. Bisected by streets running parallel to the river to form a cohesive grid pattern.



*Niton Street circa 1905-10*

**5.4** The overall fabric consists of two storey terraced houses built in a continuous row or in groups of six or twelve properties. These are similar in character and appearance throughout the sub-area but the detail of the terraces varies