

1 INTRODUCTION

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 Fitzgeorge and Fitzjames 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, 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 the Hammersmith and Fulham Historic Buildings Group, Fulham Society, Hammersmith 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. 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

2.1 The Fitzgeorge and Fitzjames Conservation Area was designated in September 1982.

3 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

3.1 The Fitzgeorge and Fitzjames Conservation Area is bounded to the north by the Dorcas

Conservation Area, to the south and west by the Gunter Estate Conservation Area, and to the east by North End Road and the back face of North End Parade. It consists of Fitzgeorge Avenue and Fitzjames Avenue.

4 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA

4.1 The Fitzgeorge and Fitzjames Conservation Area occupies the former site of North End Villa (later House) and its grounds. The area of North End was, from the 17th Century up to the last quarter of the 19th Century, predominantly one of orchards and market gardens. A number of imposing houses, largely built in the 18th Century, lined the two main thoroughfares, the Great West Road and North End Road.

One of these was North End Villa built in the 1790's. It stood, set back from the main road, in nearly 7 acres of grounds, the western edge bordering that of The Cedars, a similar type and size of property. The house was substantially remodelled to the contemporary taste in 1840 and its grounds landscaped as an informal park. Ten years later the immediate area to the north of the property was being developed by the Vernon Investment Association as small scale terrace housing.

4.2 The land to the south and west remained open although by 1863 Edith Road, albeit undeveloped, had been cut across the market gardens linking Edith Villas on the east side of North End Road, with Hammersmith Road via the western edge of The Cedars. In 1882, The Cedars was demolished and the developer/builders, Gibbs and Flew, commenced the building of Auriol Road, the first phase of what would become the Gunter Estate. By the late 1880's, the estate was nearly complete and North End House, and its grounds, were entirely surrounded by building.

4.3 In 1897 the western half of North End House grounds were sold off to Henry Lovatt for

development. Fitzgeorge Avenue was laid out, as a cul-de-sac off Auriol Road, and a series of large mansion blocks built, each different in plan and design.

4.4 The architect for these buildings was Delissa Joseph (1859-1927), a prolific and thorough architect, though not one of great distinction. He built no less than seven synagogues, including the Hammersmith and West Kensington Synagogue, and a number of mansion blocks in Kensington and Chelsea. He became an expert in the provision of superstructures over the booking and lift halls of Edwardian tube stations and was a strong advocate of tall buildings for London where, up to 1945, the occupied part of buildings was restricted to a height of 100ft.

4.5 The development was obviously successful for in 1898, it was enlarged along similar lines to the original. A terrace of 5 houses on North End Road, part of the North End House Estate, was sold off to Lovatt, demolished, and Fitzgeorge Avenue extended, in a bold irregular curve, to connect with North End Road. Due to limited space, only the north side of the new road (named Fitzjames' Avenue), was developed, Delissa Joseph being retained as architect. The new buildings followed the form of the earlier mansion blocks but with additional stories and greatly increased articulation of the elevations. These were described in the contemporary press as being the "grandest of the West Kensington mansion flats, with lifts and separate servants quarters".

4.6 In 1928, following a severe fire, North End House was demolished. Three blocks (outside the conservation area) were built along North End Road in 1930 or thereabouts, and the two blocks off Fitzjames Avenue were built later in 1937/38. These two mansion blocks are eight storeys and of a cruciform plan. Delissa Joseph had died in 1927 but his practice, Joseph Architects, were responsible for the design.

4.7 Fitzgeorge and Fitzjames Avenues suffered no real damage during World War Two (although

the railings, gates and gateposts to the entrance courts were removed) and the area retains much of its original character and appearance.

5 CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

5.1 The conservation area comprises of a complete street of privately owned residential mansion flats of intricate plan and varied composition, all designed by the same firm of architects albeit over a period of 30 years. They provide a rich townscape of interest and maintain their original appearance and features. The mature tree lined street and the scale of development provides a relaxed urban atmosphere.

5.2 The conservation area can be split into sub-



Nos. 9-27 Fitzgeorge Avenue

areas for the purposes of the character assessment in order to distinguish areas of similar character and similar periods of development. A plan of the conservation area boundary and sub-areas can be seen on page 8.

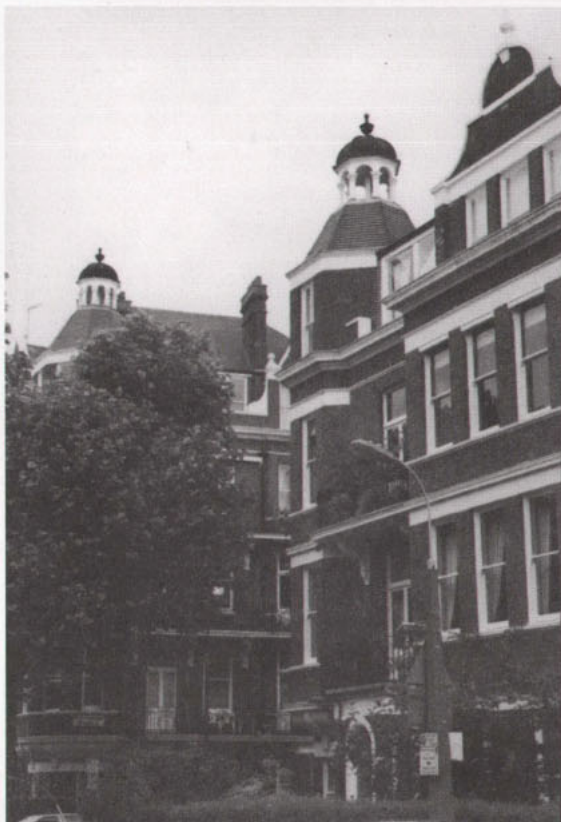
The sub-areas are :

- A Fitzgeorge and Fitzjames Avenue**
- B North End House**

A Fitzgeorge and Fitzjames Avenue

5.3 The earliest of the blocks are at the western end in Fitzgeorge Avenue. The lowest, No. 1-7 is four stories with tiled mansard roof. They are red brick with simple sash windows and have flat bays surmounted by Dutch gables and octagonal corner towers with cupolas which give a broken and

interesting skyline. Variety is maintained in the surface by elements such as balconies and entrance porticos, the former either being recessed, as an arcaded loggia, or projecting, on large corbel brackets.



Blocks at entrance to Fitzgeorge Avenue from Auriol Road

5.4 The entrances to the early blocks are directly off the street and each portico differs: a simple classical entablature with coupled tuscan columns, for example, contrasting with a baroque, scrolled, open segmental pediment. Despite such flourishes, decorative features generally are restrained and restricted to simple string courses, window aprons and blind arcading to chimney stacks.

5.5 There is a commemorative stone affixed just over one meter from ground level to the front elevation of block No 52-70 Fitzgeorge Avenue. This is inscribed "This Avenue designed by Delissa Joseph - constructed by Henry Lovatt - was opened by the Rt Hon Frank Green - Lord Mayor of the City of London - January 16 1901".

5.6 As the development progresses eastwards into Fitzjames Avenue, the blocks, although

retaining the nucleus of the original design, increase in size, up to six stories, and their plan form becomes more complex creating large entrance courts of irregular shape. These later blocks are made more striking by a greater proportion of rooms having balconies, more elaborate treatment of bays and a marked increase in decorative detail, particularly a richer use of stonework. They appear to owe a debt to the vernacular classicism of Norman Shaw.



Corner block on Fitzjames Avenue

5.7 The blocks in Fitzjames Avenue have a wealth of detail which is important in providing interest and defining their character. The facades facing the courtyards have more detail and articulation of elements drawing attention inwards. These include Dutch style gables with scroll details, turrets, decorative hoods to balconies, decorative panels to bay windows and gables and ornate treatment of the porches.

5.8 Turrets, gables, substantial chimneys, domes and cupolas all combine to provide a varied skyline of great interest. The curve of the street and the stepping of blocks through their plan form provide

variety in views as you walk through the conservation area. The result is a picturesque set-piece with a strong sense of coherence achieved throughout the conservation area.

5.9 The courtyards are paved in York stone which is important in defining their character and providing a quality finish. The hardness of these spaces is softened by planting in small beds or planters. Smaller spaces formed between the blocks and the street are finished with loose gravel which provides a softer feel to these areas.

5.10 The boundaries are varied as the original railings were removed during World War II. The plinths remain in situ and there is a small section of the original railings between block Nos 1-7 and block Nos. 9-27 Fitzgeorge Avenue and in North end Road immediately north of Fitzjames Avenue. To the east there have been replacement railings but to the west there are mainly concrete posts (which would have had chains hung between them). There are hedges along the boundaries in places which soften the street space.



Courtyard of 32-70 Fitzgeorge Avenue

5.11 Consideration should be given to views of the rear of the blocks. These are particularly evident from Vernon Street to the north. Though the rear elevations retain their uniform appearance there have been some additions, such as water tanks.

5.12 The traditional pillar box, inscribed ER VII, located outside No. 32-50 Fitzgeorge Avenue is a welcome addition to the street scene in keeping with the character and appearance of the blocks.



Nos. 123 to 154 North End House

B North End House

5.13 To the south east there are two eight storey residential blocks built in 1937-8 on part of the site of North End House which was demolished in 1928. Although outwardly appearing cruciform, each block comprises four independent buildings set around an open court only linked at ground level, by the entrancelobby, and at high level by a false screen wall surmounting a brick arch. The "internal" rooms off the courts are accordingly well lit.

5.14 The blocks are of the maximum height for their time, eight storeys, and built in a reddish brown brick with contrasting soldier courses over most openings. The top storey is rendered and painted white and helps visually to reduce the bulk of the building. The windows are multi-paned sashes, those to the top floor having semi-circular heads. The second floor is given emphasis by having a string course and deeper windows with shallow metal balconies. Despite their modernity these blocks, in terms of materials, scale and their orientation, co-exist well with their more traditional neighbours. Interest is gained from the plan form of the blocks and the resultant stepping back of the facades.

5.15 The boundaries of these blocks are defined by railings. There is a grassed open space and gardens to the south with many mature trees and there are also parking spaces for residents in a service road separated from the garden by a brick wall. It is approached through a gateway with good brick piers. This space is important in relieving the mass of the blocks to the north and east.