

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 Melrose 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, 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. 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

2.1 Melrose conservation area was designated in April 1989

3 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARIES

3.1 The Melrose Conservation Area is bounded by the northern side of Poplar Grove, the western side of Melrose Terrace and the southern side of Melrose Gardens. Its eastern boundary takes in Nos. 48-104 & Nos. 55a-65 Shepherd's Bush Road, Nos. 228-240 & 177-183 Blythe Road, 108 Lakeside Road and Nos. 1-4 & 5-15 Netherwood Road. It includes Poplar Grove, Melrose Terrace and Gardens and Cromwell Grove.

3.2 The conservation area boundary can be seen on the plan on page 13.

4 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AREA

4.1 The Melrose area remained undeveloped until the Late 19th Century. Before then there was the village of Hammersmith, the hamlets of Shepherds Bush and Brook Green, and a property named Shepherds Bush House and associated buildings along Brook Green Lane, just south of Shepherds Bush. Otherwise the land was totally rural, a landscape of open fields, pastures and market gardens.

4.2 Slater's map of 1830 indicates relatively little development in the area. A small group of buildings known as the Poplars replaced Shepherds Bush House. Blythe Lane, formerly Blind Lane and now Blythe Road, wound its way south-eastwards through fields past the odd isolated building. The presence of flooded pits in the immediate area indicates brickfields, in association with the increasing amount of development being carried out to the south at that time.

4.3 The 1853 Roberts map shows that Martin's Market Garden occupied the site between Melrose Terrace and Shepherds Bush Road, at that time, and some of the later property boundaries in the conservation area still follow its boundary.

4.4 By 1870 the immediate area was still rural, though terrace development had begun on a pathway known as Netherwood Road leading to Richmond Road (later Way) at the east end of Shepherds Bush. The London & South Western railway, opened in 1869, followed a sweeping arc to the north-west of the site and the Hammersmith and City Railway ran due north, on its western flank.

4.5 Easy transportation into London, by railway or horse drawn tram, encouraged urban development and by 1890 the whole area between Shepherd's Bush and Hammersmith was developed by row upon row of terrace housing speculatively built and largely for occupation by lower middle class white collar workers who worked in the city. The Poplars, caught in the midst of this development, was probably demolished in the early 1870s and the street pattern, as it basically exists today, was laid out soon afterwards. Poplar Grove now lies on what was its northern boundary.

4.6 Throughout the early years of the 20th century the area prospered, although the unprofitable London and South Western Railway closed during the First World War. However, from the 1930s onwards there was a slow decline in the area's prosperity, linked to the burgeoning development of suburbia to the west.

4.7 During WWII the Melrose area suffered some damage from enemy action. In 1940 and '44 bombs destroyed Nos. 25-29 Cromwell Grove, Nos. 2-6 Melrose Terrace and 1-5 Melrose Gardens, which were subsequently rebuilt in the 1950/60s. Front garden railings were removed for "National salvage". The western part of the area has largely survived in its original form, in single family occupation, reasonably prosperous and well maintained. The eastern part is entirely in multiple occupation.

5 CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

5.1 The core of the conservation area consists predominantly of residential terraces dating from around 1880 with the exception of the Jehovah Witness's Hall (the former Poplar Grove Synagogue). The terrace properties along Shepherd's Bush Road with retail at ground floor are of a similar date. There is a public house and Methodist Church complex to the east side of this street.

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. These are shown on the plan of the conservation area on page 13.

The sub-areas are:

A Melrose Gardens

B Shepherds Bush Road

A Melrose Gardens

5.3 This sub-area consists of relatively homogenous terraced development forming a grid layout between Shepherds Bush Road and Melrose Terrace. The many mature street trees are important features in the townscape of the area particularly the London planes in Melrose Gardens and the rows of cherries each side of Poplar Grove.



View west along Cromwell Grove

5.4 The properties are three storey terraces with two storey bay windows and paired recessed porches. The majority are built of yellow London

stock brick; Melrose Terrace and Poplar Grove are fronted with red brick. Built with slate roofs many have long paired chimneys to the main buildings which are important features.

5.5 They have timber frame sash windows which have unfortunately been replaced with inappropriate modern windows in some properties. There is a variety of decorative string course detailing, decorative lintels and surrounds to the bay windows. Of particular note is the moulding to the eaves line with its floral pattern which can be seen on nearly all the terraces, broken only by the corbels at the party wall divisions. Some terraces, especially in Melrose Gardens, have columned porticoes with a variety of carved capitals.

5.6 The red brick properties on the north side of Poplar Grove have blind window details on the front elevation at the party walls of every other pair corresponding with the paired bays. This simple detailing gives this terrace a more refined rhythm.



Detail of terraced properties in Poplar Grove

5.7 There have been very few roof extensions and the area as a whole retains a strong uniform character defined by the rhythm of the bays and the strong eaves line with the receding pitched roof behind. This is compromised in places where the facades of properties have been painted, the windows or doors replaced or porches filled in.

5.8 Numerous properties have dug out basement areas. Where this results in the loss of the front garden it has a negative impact on the character of the conservation area due to the

resultant loss of garden greenery and the visual increase in height of the properties.

5.9 Boundary walls are important features in the sub area defining the street space and contributing to the uniform appearance and setting of the terraces. Archive photographs show that the original boundary treatment was a low brick wall with decorative railings above with brick gate piers, some of which remain, especially in Poplar Grove.

5.10 Views to the rear of terraces within and outside the conservation area are important. The rhythm created by the rear additions and the chimneys to these and the main building is of particular note. The gaps between the rear of terraces where terraces meet at right angles are characteristic of the area and an important element in defining its character. The majority of the terraces are split into blocks of six properties and the views to the rear in the gap between these blocks are an important feature.



Terraced properties in Melrose Gardens

5.11 There is a good view of the two storey Railway Cottages in Sulgrave Road at the western end of Poplar Grove. Built in c. 1870's of brick they have pitched slate roofs and simple cottage detailing which includes hung tiles to the gables. These are not within the conservation area.

5.12 There are three infill developments, built in the 1950/60's, following bomb damage which follow the general form of the area, providing a regular building line and a uniform rhythm within each development. They are at Nos. 1 to 5

Melrose Gardens, Nos. 2 to 6 Melrose Terrace and Nos. 25 to 29 Cromwell Grove.

5.13 No 1a Melrose Gardens is an Early 20th Century double fronted property with two storey bays with the entrance to the side. Built of red brick it has a strong presence in the street scene and is bold and simple in its detailing. It retains its timber windows with sashes to the ground floor and casements to the first floor.

5.14 In Poplar Grove, No. 1a, the Synagogue (Building of Merit), dates from 1890 and is now the "Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses". It is of interest as a Victorian synagogue, but has been altered by the rebuilding of the roof as a mansard with round headed dormers, and the painting of the facade.

B Shepherds Bush Road

5.15 The terraced development continues along the western frontage of Shepherds Bush Road, with lintel and decorative band detail below the eaves seen on the properties in sub area A emphasising the development of the area as one whole. The main difference is the continuous commercial frontage at ground floor level, extending beyond the main building line of the terrace, and the wider, busier character of the street.

5.16 The shopfronts are of varying quality and there have been numerous modern replacements which fail to respect the form and appearance of the traditional shopfronts. A particular problem is the increasingly large fascia signs of modern materials. In some instances the shopfronts continue around the return of terraced properties, which is important in addressing the balance between the commercial and residential nature of the respective streets. No. 62 Shepherds Bush Road retains its original shopfront and No 98, the Cafe Rouge, retains some of the original tiles of the previous butcher/grocer both inside and outside the premises.

5.17 The conservation area also includes some



Good shopfront on Shepherds Bush Road

development on the eastern side of Shepherds Bush Road. The Richmond public house on the corner of Netherwood Road has a single storey linking into the terraces in Netherwood Road and Shepherds Bush Road with a small addition set back against the flank walls of the terrace. The public house was established in the late 1860's and the original building was modernised in 1897 and 1947. It is thought it was named after the Richmond and Kensington Railway Line which was opened in 1869 and built by the London and South West Railway.

5.18 The terraced properties, No 5 - 15 Netherwood Road, are three storeys and built of stock brick. They have rendered parapets and architrave details to the windows in the upper floors. There is a decorative corbelled string course between the first and second floors. This remains mostly intact above the ground floor though some shopfronts have been increased in height with the resultant shortening of the first floor windows. The terrace has unfortunately all been replaced with modern shopfronts of varying materials.

5.19 On the south corner there is a new residential block of flats which follows the building line of the adjoining Netherwood Road terraces. This is followed by a Late 19th Century terraced development, Nos 232-240 Blythe Road, which defines the corner well. Built of red brick it has a parapet detail and there are shopfronts to the ground floor. Numerous units retain their original sash windows with lintel details and bracketed sills to the second floor, and some of the surrounds of the shopfronts remain intact.