

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 Parsons Green 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 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. 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 Parsons Green Conservation Area was designated in August 1975 and was extended in April 1989.

3 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

3.1 The Parsons Green Conservation Area includes the area bounded by the District Railway to the north west and New Kings Road to the south east, Harwood Road to the north east and Parsons Green Lane, including properties on the western side of the road, to the south west.

3.2 The conservation area boundary can be seen on the plan on page 21.

4 GENERAL HISTORY OF THE AREA

4.1 The area which forms the Parsons Green Conservation Area was formerly part of the Manor of Fulham ¹. Parsons Green and Eel Brook Common, two significant open spaces within the conservation area, were formerly wastes of the Manor and later thought to have been two village greens for separate communities. Both open spaces have formed centres for development in the area.

4.2 Eel Brook Common is fourteen acres, taking its name from the old Eel Brook, which has now been filled, but previously formed the western boundary of the common ². Parsons Green takes its name from the parsonage-house or rectory of the parish of Fulham, in which the rectors of the Parish of Fulham used to reside ³.

4.3 Bounding Parsons Green were dwellings, now demolished or substantially altered. Records state that Peterborough House once stood on the south-east of the green, having been built on the site of a famous mansion, formerly known as

Brightwells⁴. Near to Peterborough House stood an ancient mansion which was formerly owned by Sir Edward Saunders, Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench in 1682, and later became the residence of the famous novelist, Samuel Richardson.

4.4 On the east side of the green stood a plain white house, built at the end of the seventeenth century by Sir Francis Child, Lord Mayor of London in 1699. On the north side of the green stood the Holt Yates Memorial Home and Laundry, and records show that the adjoining property was a training home for young girls.

4.5 The 1865 ordnance survey map⁵ shows both Parsons Green and Eel Brook Common and the main road thoroughfares of Parson's Green Lane and King's Road and a number of notable buildings fronting the Green.

4.6 By the time of the publication of the 1894-96 ordnance survey map, much of the road framework was in place with the majority of the residential development having already occurred. Of major significance at this time was the development of the overground Metropolitan District Railway and Parsons Green station. Furthermore, during this time the pond on the green was filled-in and the open area extended.

4.7 The 1916 survey shows very little change to the built form of the conservation area, although infilling had occurred and Crown Street had been renamed as Novello Street.

5 CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

5.1 The character of the Parsons Green Conservation Area is determined to a large extent by the existence of two substantial open spaces, Parsons Green and Eel Brook Common, which are both of local and strategic importance.

5.2 The development between Parsons Green

and Eel Brook Common, and to the north east of Eel Brook Common is predominantly residential in character following an irregular grid street pattern. Consisting of mainly Victorian terraces which remain substantially intact, these provide the basis for identifying the character of a large part of the designated area. There have been a number of redevelopment schemes within the conservation area which respect the scale of the surrounding development.

5.3 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 development. These are shown on the plan on page 21.

The sub-areas are :

A Parsons Green

B Eel Brook Common and surrounding residential development.

A Parsons Green

5.4 Parsons Green, formerly the village green, forms the focus of this sub-area. Triangular in shape, the bisecting diagonal footpaths create a strong visual dynamic to this ancient public open space which retains much of its original village green character.

5.5 The present day character of the area is created by the rich variety and complexity of building types and architectural styles developed over the last three centuries. Properties fronting the open space have not changed significantly since their date of construction providing a coherent built edge to the open space.

5.6 Buildings surrounding the public open space are generally three storeys in height. Residential and other properties fronting New Kings Road and Parsons Green Lane are characteristically terraced, although not of a single development phase. The collection of buildings on the east side of the Green form a distinctive group of diverse styles.

5.7 Individual properties of differing ages, scale and mass happily juxtapose one another in this sub-area with a variety of textures, colours and details to the facing materials. The predominant use of stock bricks and Welsh slates adds cohesion to the townscape, as do the white painted window frames and the overall fenestration rhythm. The absence of painted brick facades should be maintained.

5.8 The building line around the green has remained relatively uniform with buildings abutting directly onto the footway or set behind shallow front gardens. The Lady Margaret School complex is an exception to this, with the adjoining Parsons Green Health Centre, set further back. This distinguishes this group of buildings from their surroundings and also visually widens the narrower end of the Green.

5.9 Archive photographic records indicate that many of the original front boundary fences and walls have been removed and replaced with modern materials. Notable exceptions include Nos. 20-36 Parsons Green Lane which retain the brick front boundary and Nos. 17-21 Parsons Green which exhibit an ornate boundary. These boundary walls and railings are important in defining the street edge, and in their relationship to the buildings which they front.

5.10 There are significant townscape views throughout Parsons Green particularly across from the apexes of the road junctions to the buildings on the opposite three sides of the triangular green. Views are generally closed out of the green furthering the sense of enclosure, though New Kings Road provides a more open setting to the south. The space within the green is captured by the mature trees.

5.11 Parsons Green sub-area is characterised by a mix of residential buildings with some institutional and commercial land uses surrounding the public open space of the Green. Other specific uses include the White Horse Public House, St. Dionis Church and Lady Margaret School. Since the turn

of the century buildings have undergone limited change in use.

5.12 The Green itself is relatively unaffected by vehicular intrusion, although Parsons Green Lane, a local distributor road, connects the New Kings Road with Fulham Road to the north. The current balance, in terms of scale, between the Green and the surrounding roads is important in defining the character of this sub-area, any further encroachment into the Green would have a severely detrimental affect.

5.13 The White Horse public house, a late Victorian Gothic building, occupies a prominent location at the northern apex of the Green. The original Victorian pub facade has a rich colour scheme and much gilt, with painted brickwork above, and a parapet. The tower forms a distinctive landmark to the green and has intricate red terracotta cladding with finials and niches, detailed as if solid masonry.



View of northern end of Parsons Green with the locally listed White Horse P.H. and Henniker House.

5.14 Lady Margaret School (parts of which are listed, others Buildings of Merit) which occupies a collection of eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings which have been substantially extended to accommodate the school is an elegant courtyard complex of note. The principal buildings of this very fine townscape composition include Belfield House, Elm House and Henniker House. Both Belfield House and Elm House are set back from the road to form an open courtyard, bounded by railings.

5.15 Belfield House is an elegant three storey Queen Anne style building, circa 1800, constructed in buff stock bricks with rubbed red brick voussoirs and stone keystones to flat window arches. It has a central entrance portico with classical columns flanked on either side by two projecting window bays.

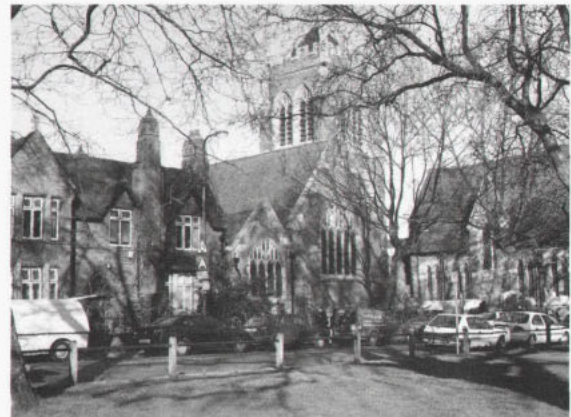
5.16 Elm House, also circa 1800, was recorded as being in use as a school as early as 1803. Elm House became part of the Lady Margaret site in 1937. It has a symmetrical five bay fenestration pattern with recessed sash windows and mask keystones/architraves and a grand tripartite doorway with rusticated surround.

5.17 Henniker House, circa 1841, is of a plain monochrome Italianate design, constructed in buff stock bricks with plain dressed stone reveals.

5.18 The Parsons Green Health Centre dates from the 1930's and Nos 23-41 are a post-war residential terrace. These are less ornate than the surrounding buildings but are sympathetic in scale and design respecting the dominant rhythm of the fenestration pattern seen around the green.

5.19 Brigade House and YMCA Ensor House are the most recent buildings to have been developed within the sub-area situated to the north of the green on the west side. Brigade House is a three storey office development, re-clad in the 1980's in Portland stone and tinted glass curtain walling. YMCA Ensor House, a three storey student hostel clad in brick with an exposed concrete frame dates from the 1970's.

5.20 St. Dionis' Church (1884-5), designed by Ewan Christian, is located on the west side of the Green. The red brick tower (added in 1896) is the principal landmark in this sub-area. It is a Perpendicular Gothic composition with belfry tower, complete with pinnacles and pyramidal roof, elevations are built of red stock brick with dressed stone window tracery and buttresses. This building is listed Grade II.



St. Dionis Church (listed Grade II) with the locally listed Vicarage and Parish Hall.

5.21 The Parish Hall (1876) is a former mission hall designed by Arthur Billing. It has a prominent steeply pitched slate roof with a tall gable facing the green. Of the same style and materials, it forms a good townscape composition with the adjacent St. Dionis' Church. This building is on the Council's Local Register of Buildings of Merit.

5.22 The Vicarage is a picturesque (late Victorian) rural composition constructed of yellow stock brick with soft red brick dressings to quoins, window heads and chimney stacks. It has arched dormer windows with gabled two storey bay windows breaking the eaves line and the original timber casement windows set between stone mullions. It still has the cast iron rainwater goods and railings. This building is on the Council's Local Register of Buildings of Merit.

5.23 Nos. 20 to 36 is an almost unspoilt, and therefore notable late Victorian terrace, with the majority of original features intact. They have ground floor bays with railings above, porch with pediment on columns, stuccoed ground floor with red brick above and decorative brick panels on the gable and between the 1st and 2nd floor windows.

5.24 The Green is bounded on the south side by the New Kings Road, which is a designated secondary road. Nos. 237-245 New Kings Road is a notable terrace of three bay houses, dated 1795 and Aragon House (No. 247) dates from 1805/6. Although within the Studdridge Street Conservation Area these contribute significantly to