

## **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 historical 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 Ravenscourt and Starch 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, 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:

- origins and development of the street patterns, the lie of the land;
- archaeological significance and potential of the area, including any scheduled monuments;
- 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;
- character and hierarchy of spaces, and townscape quality;
- prevalent and traditional building materials for buildings, walls and surfaces;- contribution made to the character of the area by greens or green spaces, trees, hedges and other natural or cultivated elements;- prevailing (or former) uses within the area and their historic patronage, and the influence of these on the plan form and building types;
- relationship of the built environment to landscape/townscape including definition of significant landmarks, vistas and panoramas, where appropriate;
- extent of any loss, intrusion, or damage that has occurred since designation;- 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** Ravenscourt Park and Starch Green Conservation Area was designated on 20 February 1974 and was extended in September 1982, January 1990 and March 1991.

## **3. CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY**

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**3.1** The conservation area covers a considerable part of the Borough upto its western boundary south west of Shepherds Bush and west of the centre of Hammersmith. Its southern boundary is formed by the District Line and by King Street.

**3.2** Much of the boundary on the east is effectively formed by larger scale developments such as Flora Gardens and Odiham House, but is elsewhere less clearly defined within residential streets including Askew Road, Ashchurch Grove, Wingate Road, Dalling Road and Ravenscourt Road. On its northern side the Conservation Area includes the Cobbold Road School sites, St Saviour's and Wendell Park but otherwise takes a relatively straight line to include housing developments considered as of architectural interest along Wendell Road.

**3.3** The conservation area boundary can be seen on the plans on pages 16 to 19.

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

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**4.1** By the end of the 18th century, Hammersmith was a small but important settlement on the Great West Road (King Street) running from London to Bath. To the north, another former Roman road passed through what is now Notting Hill and forked at Shepherd's Bush, one arm continuing to Uxbridge while the other, now Goldhawk Road, continued west before turning south at Stamford Green to join King Street. These roads were further interconnected by country lanes serving houses and cottages clustered around Paddenswick Green and Starch Green <sup>1</sup>.



**4.2** Many of the houses were built with some style and pretension. The area had long had a reputation as a healthy place to live <sup>2</sup>. The area south of Ravenscourt Park Station is designated as an archaeological priority area as is the site of Paddenswick and its surroundings, later Ravenscourt, one of the most significant houses after Fulham Palace situated in the huge ecclesiastical manor owned by the Bishop of London. This house, as it stood in 1939, was an early Georgian brick building retaining some detailing from earlier periods <sup>3</sup>. Its grounds became a public park in 1888 but the manor was too badly damaged by incendiary bombs in 1941 to be refurbished and was demolished. George Scott employed Repton to improve the Park and the serpentine paths which survive bear witness to this.

**4.3** During the early 19th century King Street and Goldhawk Road continued to provide the locations for houses for the well-to-do. George Scott, the owner of Ravenscourt House and Park encouraged the development of a considerable number of houses on the sides of the Park though he retained strong control over their style and appearance. A plan dating from 1830 shows 78 houses within the Park; by 1845 there were 330 <sup>4</sup>. Ravenscourt House and Park remained in the Scott family hands until 1884 <sup>5</sup>. The remainder of the conservation area consisted of pasture, arable fields, orchards and nurseries.

**4.4** The London and South Western Railway opened its line from Waterloo to Richmond in 1869 with stations at Shaftesbury Road (now Ravenscourt Park) and Turnham Green <sup>6</sup>. The fields and nurseries began to be filled with houses in the prevailing styles of the time. The providers of churches and schools were on the lookout for plots of appropriate size and in suitable locations. Often this meant, as at St Saviour's, Cobbold Road, that churches were constructed in open fields before the houses arrived. Holy Innocents, Paddenswick Road was built by James Brooks in 1890-98 <sup>7</sup> and occupies the site of Paddenswick Green itself.

**4.5** In 1887 Ravenscourt Park estate, including the house, was bought for municipal use. The house became the first free public library in Hammersmith. The road layout and buildings to the east of Shaftesbury Road were complete and a significant amount of development had occurred to the north of Goldhawk Road, with the majority of the streets laid down, as far as Fortesque Road (later renamed Rylett Crescent) <sup>8</sup>.

**4.6** By the turn of the century the road pattern in the area was generally complete <sup>9</sup> and the area to the west of Ravenscourt Park has not been altered to any significant degree since <sup>10</sup>. The most significant developments this century were the establishment between the wars of the Royal Masonic Hospital in 1933 <sup>11</sup> and Queen Charlotte's Hospital in 1940 on the sites of the substantial houses which encroached into Ravenscourt Park a century earlier. Only one, 'Oakbrook' in stuccoed Neo-Gothic style, survives within the hospital precincts as hospital offices to add a surprisingly fantastic note to Goldhawk Road.

**4.7** Since 1964, the most noticeable development has been within the site of the Royal Masonic Hospital. The main block is listed Grade II.

## **5. CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE**

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**5.1** Ravenscourt Park forms the heart of this Conservation Area and is a significant open space creating a mature and spacious setting for many of the area's most attractive streets and building groups. The park is designated a nature conservation site in the Unitary Development Plan and has an Archeological Priority Area in the north eastern corner. The area south of the District Railway line is also an Archeological Priority Area.

**5.2** The conservation area includes several buildings and groups of particular architectural interest both statutorily listed and buildings of



local merit and extends to take in varied and attractive Victorian and Edwardian housing in the Starch Green area to the north of Goldhawk Road.

**5.3** In contrast with many areas of the Borough with regular road layouts derived from relatively short periods of development, mostly in the last century, Ravenscourt and Starch Green Conservation Area exhibits a much more varied and diffuse layout as a result of its more gradual development from the end of the medieval period.

**5.4** 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 as shown on the plans on pages 16 to 19.

The sub-areas are :

- A Ravenscourt Park and surrounding streets**
- B Victorian housing north of Goldhawk Road**
- C Edwardian housing and Wendell Park**

## **A RAVENSCOURT PARK AND SURROUNDING STREETS**

**5.5** Ravenscourt Park, the main feature in the conservation area, forms the focus of this sub-area. This area contains the older built fabric and the park, which is a remnant of the former grounds of the manor of Palingswick, surrounded by a street layout which has evolved from the 18th century. This is reflected in the number of Listed Buildings and Buildings of Local Merit(BOM'S) to be found here.

**5.6** There is a mix of uses within the conservation area. The recreational use of the Park is a particularly dominant element, as is the hospital use directly to its west. There are also commercial uses along Goldhawk Road and King Street providing variety and hierarchy within the primarily residential built fabric surrounding the park and hospital.



*Ravenscourt Park*

**5.7** The Park is an important remnant of the open space which once covered the whole conservation area and contains many mature trees. With a relatively informal layout it provides a variety of recreational facilities including children's play areas, tennis courts, bowling green, pitch and putt and areas for informal activities. Views into the open space of the park are important particularly due to the many mature trees.

**5.8** The Park contains numerous listed buildings including the walls and wrought iron gates of the Shakespeare Garden on the north east side which are early 18th century, the lodge at Paddenswick Road Gate which is early to mid 19th century and the former stable block to Ravenscourt Mansion which is early 18th century. Of note is the cherry tree lined avenue following the route of the driveway to the former Ravenscourt House.

**5.9** In general, the Park has strong visual boundaries which are provided on the west by the sensitive massing of the Hospital frontages and by the domestic scale of the housing developments of Ravenscourt Square and Ravenscourt Park(Road) and on the south by the elevated District Underground Line.

**5.10** The bridge structure for this railway line is a dominant feature of note in the southern part of the park. It forms a strong edge effectively cutting off the part of the park which fronts King Street though there are views through the arches. Built of stock brick it has simple detailing.





*Locally listed gates to Ravenscourt Park in memory of Sir Richard Bull.*

**5.11** The fine gates to the park on the corner of King Street and Ravenscourt Park(Road) were erected on 3rd April 1933 in the memory of Sir Richard Bull. These gates together with the railings form a good boundary to the park and define the street edge well.

**5.12** The north side of the park is more diffuse, the varied backs of Goldhawk Road properties being screened in places by mature planting. Residential properties fronting Ravenscourt Road form the boundary to the east and their rear elevations have considerable prominence when viewed from the Park. Views to the rear of properties in both these roads are important in defining the quality of the park.

**5.13** The surrounding streets have a relaxed atmosphere derived from the character of the Park which is reinforced by occasional glimpses through to it. Each of these areas is now considered starting in Ravenscourt Square and moving anticlockwise through the sub-area.

### **Ravenscourt Square**

**5.14** Ravenscourt Square is built on three sides, the east side opens directly into Ravenscourt Park. The surrounding houses are attractive having a varied appearance which forms a picturesque group. The majority are built of stock brick. The view south is disappointing with the bulky modern buildings which form part of the Royal Masonic Hospital being prominent.

**5.15** The majority of the properties are BOM's apart from No. 8 which is relatively new. Of particular interest is the ornate early Victorian cottage at No. 17. Built around 1840 in the Gothic tradition it has an interesting corner tower. No. 11 is listed Grade II as it was the home of the novelist Ouida from 1857-67. Dating from the mid 19th century it forms a good pair with the adjoining No.9. They are three-storey, built of yellow stock brick and have stucco detailing. No. 15 is early 19th century and has been extended. All have had their gardens truncated by the Masonic Hospital. Nos. 3A, 5 & 7 are good mid 19th century houses though altered and divided.

### **The Hospitals**

**5.16** The main hospital blocks range from the power and elegance of the original Royal Masonic Hospital (RMH) to the plain, almost banal main block of Queen Charlotte's Hospital. Other major structures such as Ashlar Court and the substantial building to the west of the main RMH block use the style or the materials of the original building to reinforce the visual unity of the group.

**5.17** The Royal Masonic Hospital (by Sir John Burnett, Tait and Lorne, 1931-3) is a particularly convincing design of its period, and with associated buildings picking up many of the characteristics of its design and materials it makes a strong contribution to the character and appearance of Ravenscourt Park (see inside front cover).

**5.18** The Queen Charlotte's hospital administration block on Goldhawk Road, formerly Oakbrook is now very much isolated.



*Queen Charlotte's Hospital listed Grade II*