

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 Shepherds Bush 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 its 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 Shepherds Bush Conservation Area was designated in October 1984. This initial designation included the residential area to the north of the Green, on the eastern side, which contained the cottages in Shepherds Bush Place.

2.2 The conservation area was extended significantly in July 1986 to include the entertainment facilities on the west side of the Common and the residential area on the south-

west side, as well as the Common itself.

2.3 In April 1991 the conservation area was further extended to include an area to the north including Sterne Street, Tadmor Street, Bulwer Street, Aldine Street and Caxton Road.

3 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARIES

3.1 The Shepherds Bush Conservation Area, although centred on the Common, includes areas to the north, west and south. Its boundaries are formed by Bulwer and Tadmor Streets to the north, Shepherds Bush Place and the arch to the former White City Exhibition to the east and by Pennard Road to the west. The southern boundary includes Shepherds Bush Green and takes in areas around the junction of Shepherds Bush and Goldhawk Roads.

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

4 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA

4.1 By the Mid 15th Century there was little development in the area beyond a few houses, and an inn, on the north side of the Common and Syndercombe Cottage, on the corner of Gold Lock Lane¹. From the 17th Century the North High Way (Uxbridge Road), the main route from London to Oxford, ran along the north side of the triangular green known as Shepherds Bush, an area of waste land owned by Fulham Manor. The other two sides of the triangle led to Brook Green Lane (Shepherds Bush Road) and Gold Lock Lane (Goldhawk Road).

4.2 By the Early 19th Century the roads were much improved and the north side of the Common and the beginning of Wood Lane, up to Wood House, were lined with terraces. A development of semi detached houses, known as

Lawn Place, lined the west side of the Green but the southern side remained open ².

4.3 By the Mid 19th Century the Common had been acquired by the Metropolitan Board of Works from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, (the Lords of Fulham Manor), and drained and the ground level raised. Around this time areas to the north and west of the Common were almost totally built up, with a particular density of building around the eastern end of the Common which included Providence Place (Shepherds Bush Place) ³.

4.4 By the Late 19th Century the area had changed dramatically. The Common and the surrounding areas had been built up, although less so on the west side, and the character of the area was now distinctly suburban. This development was greatly facilitated by the opening of two new railways in the area ⁴. Market gardens were replaced by row upon row of terraced houses built speculatively for occupation by the lower middle class white collar workers who commuted to the City.

4.5 Shepherds Bush Common was at this time the centre of a growing and prosperous Late Victorian suburb. Whilst the south and west sides remained residential the houses on the north side gave way to shops, providing the everyday services required by the local populace. The Common itself had been laid out with pathways, a drinking fountain was installed at its west end and trees planted around its perimeter.

4.6 By the time of the First World War, not only was the whole of the area around the Common built up, but a considerable amount of rebuilding had taken place ⁵. The commercial and retail heart of the area, Uxbridge Road facing the Common, was largely redeveloped ⁶. The Common had also become an entertainment centre for west London, amusement arcades and two new cinemas adding to the existing theatres on the west side ⁷.

4.7 Perhaps the most important development in the area was the creation, for the Franco-British

Exhibition of 1908, of the "White City" which attracted a significant amount of visitors to the area⁸. However by the 1930's there is evidence of slow decline in the area's prosperity, reflected in a reduction of local facilities, most certainly linked with the burgeoning development of suburbia to the west. The Common suffered from enemy action during WWII with extensive damage to its south and west sides and to Uxbridge Road station, which never reopened.

4.8 Of Post-War developments the most important have been the relocation of the BBC at Wood Lane, in the early 1950's, and the construction, in the late 1960's, of the Westway flyover which reduced the Green's historic role as a main western route out of London.

4.9 In the recent past much of the south side of Shepherds Bush Green, outside the conservation area, has been demolished and replaced by a shopping centre, tower blocks and a service station. A large traffic roundabout has been built at its eastern end to serve the link road (M41) to the Westway flyover.

5 CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

5.1 Shepherds Bush Common provides an important area of open space for residents, employees and shoppers. It is the main feature in the conservation area which draws together the surrounding uses and forms a pleasant setting for the surrounding built form. The Common is designated a Nature Conservation Area in the Unitary Development Plan.

5.2 Most of the conservation area (with the exception of the area to the north of the Uxbridge Road) is located within Shepherds Bush Town Centre. The town centre comprises a mixture of employment, shopping, leisure and residential uses lying around Shepherds Bush Common and provides the major shopping centre in the north of the Borough.

5.3 There are areas of residential development surrounding the Green. These consist primarily of Late 19th Century terraced development, but include mansion blocks, and the larger landmark 1930's building of The Grampians to the south of the Common.

5.4 The area is a focus for public transport and the roads around the Common are congested by heavy traffic flows. This adversely affects the environment of the conservation area and can isolate the Common from the surrounding uses. This problem of traffic congestion is not a new one as historical research has shown and photographic evidence will support.

5.5 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 of the conservation area on page 13.

The sub-areas are:

- A** **Shepherds Bush Green**
- B** **Caxton Road and Environs**
- C** **Pennard Road**

A **Shepherds Bush Green**

5.6 Shepherds Bush Common forms the hub of the conservation area and is an important open space within it. It is surrounded on its edges by mature trees and shrub planting but otherwise it consists mainly of grass with bench seating and provisions for passive and active recreational activities. Surrounding the Green are numerous groups of terraces which are important in terms of their scale and the backcloth they provide, as well as key buildings which are important features in the street scene. These buildings follow a uniform building line, abutting the street and forming a strong edge around the Common.

5.7 On the eastern end of the Common is the Grade II listed War Memorial (1922) by the sculptor H C Fehr⁹. This is a figurative bronze sculpture of a "Winged Victory" on a Portland



View west of Shepherds Bush Common

stone mausoleum shaft with bronze Roll of Honour plaques standing on a three tiered plinth set in a railed grass and paved enclosure.

5.8 The adjoining former subterranean Public Conveniences (BOM) dating from around 1910 have wrought iron railings and gates with overthrows and light boxes. The underground rooms have now been converted into a snooker club

5.9 The main leisure uses are located on the western side of Shepherds Bush Green and include the former Empire Theatre and the two former Odeon cinemas. The original cinema is now a public house and the larger cinema is now used as a bingo hall.

5.10 The Empire Theatre (1903), No. 56 Shepherd's Bush Green is listed Grade II and is by the architect Frank Matcham¹⁰. This is one of the few surviving variety theatres by Matcham in the early suburbs of London. It is designed in a free and inventive Arts and Crafts style in brick and terracotta, with roughcast panels. The dominant corner tower with cupola has baroque overtones. The theatre was sold to the BBC in 1953 and was used as a studio for many years. It has since been sold again and is currently a live music venue.

5.11 The Odeon II Cinema (BOM), No. 58 Shepherd's Bush Green, was built in 1911. As "Pyke's Cinematograph Theatre" this was the first cinema in Shepherds Bush. The fascia, which for many years was hidden behind a corrugated metal "Classic Cinema" front is stuccoed and based upon



The locally listed Bush Hotel and Grade II listed Empire Theatre

a Roman Triumphal Arch, with stylized lion head metopes. On the south flank wall there is a historic price list in plasterwork stating "Cinematograph Theatre Continuous Performances seats 1/- 6d & 3d". It has recently been painted rather brash colours.

5.12 Odeon I Cinema (1923), No. 60 Shepherd's Bush Green, is listed Grade II. It is by the architect Frank T Verity ¹¹ and is one of the first cinemas to be treated as "serious" architecture. The frontage is very much in the "Roman" manner with wide expanses of plain brickwork and thermal windows under a barrel vaulted roof. The entrance projects forward in the form of an astylar Triumphal Arch, with a large arched window set in severe plain brickwork under a strong stone entablature. The cinema was badly damaged during WWII and reopened in 1955 stripped of its Twenties interior. However, it has not operated as a cinema for many years, and is now only partially occupied by a Bingo Hall.

5.13 To the north of these buildings there are office developments which are of a significant scale and reach the same height as the former Empire Theatre and Odeon II. The northern block is a typical 1980's block and the other a typical block

from the 1950's, both of a rather anonymous and bland design which do not pick out the essential rhythm of the typical terraced development around the remainder of the Common.

5.14 To the south at 54 Shepherd's Bush Green and 2 Goldhawk Road is the Bush Hotel(BOM). The present building dates from 1890/91 and was built on the site of the Brewery Tavern dating from the early 1860's (It was not built on the site of Sydercombe's Cottage as was previously thought). It is a red brick pub in a design influenced by the Flemish style with bays, gables, cantilevered pilasters, corner turrets with cupolas and highly decorative brick friezes. Other restaurants and public houses intermingle around the town centre with shops and other leisure uses.

5.15 The area around the junction of Shepherds Bush Green and Goldhawk Road largely comprises three and four storey Late 19th and Early 20th Century terraces, many with their original windows. Ground floors project forward and are given over to commercial/retail uses, shopfronts being varied in their design. The majority of the original shopfronts have been altered and replaced and have modern fascias.

5.16 Banborough Gardens is a short street leading off Goldhawk Road. It contains three-storey Victorian terraced properties retaining many of their original features, including windows and good porch details can be seen on some. The majority have good boundary treatments forming a definite edge to the street and there are good mature street trees.

5.17 Granville Mansions (BOM) is located on the corner of Shepherds Bush Green and Shepherds Bush Road. It dates from 1895 and is a five storey plus mansard, rather austere, red brick mansion block with shops to the ground floor. First and second floors are emphasised by stone string courses and decorative brick panels above windows. The entrance is signalled by a pediment, at second floor level, and is flanked to one side by a three storey bay window. The