

# REVIEW OF CONSERVATION AREAS IN NORTHWOOD

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Keith Burrows
<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	Planning and Transportation
<b>Officer Contact</b>	Sarah Harper/ Nairita Chakraborty, Planning and Community Services
<b>Papers with report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appendix 1 - Northwood- Frithwood Conservation Area: Proposed extension</li> <li>• Appendix 2 - Green Lane, Northwood: Proposed Conservation Area</li> <li>• Appendix 3 - Northwood-Frithwood Conservation Area: Information Leaflet (Large Print version to be available)</li> <li>• Appendix 4 – Northwood Town Centre, Green Lane Conservation Area: Information Leaflet (Large Print version to be available)</li> </ul>

## HEADLINE INFORMATION

<b>Purpose of report</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To inform the Cabinet of the outcome of the recent consultations on the proposed extensions to the Northwood Frithwood Conservation Area, and the designation of a new Conservation Area within Northwood town centre.</li> <li>2. To seek approval for extending the Northwood Frithwood Conservation Area and the formal designation of the Northwood Town Centre, Green Lane Conservation Area.</li> </ol>
<b>Contribution to our plans and strategies</b>	Hillingdon's Emerging Local Development Framework Hillingdon Design & Access Statements Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan (Saved Polices 2007) Sustainable Community Strategy
<b>Financial Cost</b>	The production of the information leaflets and notification of residents and associated publicity will be approximately £1,700, which will be met from the budget for Planning and Community Services in 2009/10.
<b>Relevant Policy Overview Committee</b>	Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	Northwood

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **That Cabinet:-**

- 1. Approves the extension of the Northwood-Frithwood Conservation Area as shown on the map in Appendix 1.**
- 2. Approves the formal designation of Northwood Town Centre, Green Lane Conservation Area, as shown on the map in Appendix 2.**
- 3. Instructs officers to undertake the appropriate notification of residents and associated publicity within the extended and designated areas, as in recommendations 1 and 2 above.**
- 4. Agrees the leaflets included in Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 for distribution to the residents, shopkeepers and other interested parties within the extended and designated areas, as in recommendations 1 and 2 above.**

## **INFORMATION**

### **Reasons for recommendation**

During the period between July and August 2009, a public consultation exercise was carried out in the two proposed areas, the results of which have determined the above recommendations.

### **Alternative options considered**

- Not to designate the Conservation Area: this would leave areas worthy of designation unprotected and Members and residents questions and concerns unaddressed.
- Not agree the proposed extension of the area, or the partial designation: this would leave areas identified as being of heritage significance unrecognised and unprotected.

### **Supporting Information**

1. As part of the Council's ongoing programme of review of Conservation Areas in the Borough, a survey of the Northwood-Frithwood Conservation Area and the area around Northwood Town Centre, Green Lane, was undertaken during February-March 2009.
2. On 25<sup>th</sup> June 2009 Cabinet approved in principle the extension of the Northwood-Frithwood Conservation Area and the designation of Northwood Town Centre, Green Lane as a new Conservation Area. Public consultation within the two areas, as appropriate, was also approved.
3. Consultation with local residents, amenity groups and other interested parties was undertaken for the proposed areas during July and August of this year and this report sets out the responses to this exercise. The respective Ward Councillors were also

advised of the consultation. Cabinet approval is being sought for the extension of the Northwood-Frithwood Conservation Area and the designation of Northwood Town Centre, Green Lane as a new Conservation Area.

4. The consultation was carried out by way of a letter and information sheet. The latter included a map illustrating the boundaries of the proposed areas and an explanation of the implications of the designation. These were sent to every property within the proposed extension to the Northwood-Frithwood Conservation Area and also those within the proposed Northwood Town Centre, Green Lane Conservation Area. These documents were sent through the post and addressed to the individual properties to ensure that there would be minimal errors in delivery.

5. The results of the consultation are detailed below. The consultation response rate has been graded as low (0-5%), moderate (6-15%) or high (16% and over).

### **Northwood-Frithwood Conservation Area**

#### Summary of Responses

6. There was positive support for the extension of the Conservation Area. In total 82 consultation letters were sent out and there was a relatively high response rate of approximately 27%. Of these, most supported the designation. The results are detailed in the table below:

Northwood-Frithwood	YES	YES with Comments	Total Yes	NO	NO with comments	Total NO	Other Comments	Total Response
Total letters sent: 82	11	6	17	1	4	5		22
			20.73%			6.09%		26.8%

7. A summary of the main comments and queries arising from the consultation are listed below:

- a) The majority of the respondents were very supportive of the proposal and commented that the area had a unique character that was worthy of preservation.
- b) Some residents commented that designation would prevent the loss of large houses and their subsequent development into flats.
- c) Whilst agreeing with the proposal, one resident commented that since modern properties like Viceroy Court had been included, Sentis Court, being older, should also be included within the area.
- d) Three residents disagreed with the inclusion of Cullera Close, and commented that the area was more modern compared to the rest of the Conservation Area, and as such, had no historic value.
- e) One of the residents objected strongly to the inclusion of Carew Road, commenting that the proposal would lead to reduced property prices and increased planning controls over alterations and extensions.
- f) Concerns were raised regarding “over grown” and “unmanaged” trees along Carew Road, which were considered to be affecting the foundations of properties, roads and underground services.

8. St Helen's School objected to the proposed inclusion of its school buildings and grounds within the Conservation Area. The School expressed concerns that the designation would impede its future development and that of its grounds. The School advised that in its view, the buildings form part of a larger institutional campus that does not relate to the residential character of the Conservation Area. The School disagreed that its grounds were the only open space within the Conservation Area, and indicated that the tennis courts and recreational grounds adjacent to Frithwood Primary School should also be considered. They also commented that the School's playing fields are largely screened by high hedges, and apart from the street frontage, they make little contribution to the Conservation Area. The School also indicated that, although not a planning matter, views into the playing fields should be restricted as this could lead to potential Child Protection issues.

### Consideration of responses

9. Having considered the response from St Helen's School, and following meetings with the School's representatives, it is felt that the proposed extension should include Claremont, Little St Helen's School, The Gables on Green Lane, and Nos 4 and 6 Carew Road, as originally proposed. These are all fine examples of late Victorian and Arts and Crafts style buildings. Whilst now in use for educational purposes, these buildings, together with their historic plot layouts, are original to the early development of the area and are integral to its special interest. These have, therefore, been included within the proposed extension.

10. The comments made by the School regarding the inclusion of the playing fields and their contribution to the Conservation Area have been considered. The boundary has been revised to include only the street frontage to the playing fields and the original garden areas of the larger individual properties within the School campus.

11. The inclusion of some of the school buildings and grounds within the Conservation Area would not prohibit future developments or alterations. The Council, however, would require any proposals to contribute to the character and appearance of the area. Whilst there would be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings that made a positive contribution to the area, applications for replacement buildings and new development should take the area's special architectural and historic interest into account. Comments made by the School regarding a lack of detailed assessment of the site will be covered in more detail in a Conservation Area Appraisal.

12. Following the School's response regarding consideration of other open spaces within and adjacent to the Conservation Area, the boundary has been revised to include the tennis courts to the rear of Carew Road and Frithwood Avenue. Having studied the historic OS map regression in greater detail, it is felt that the grounds were developed during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and formed part of the historic landscape and layout of the area.

13. Along Carew Road, nos 5 to 15 are the only remaining Arts and Crafts properties and are contemporary with those within the existing Conservation Area. These individual buildings merit protection, and should, therefore, be included within the extension. Although modern, Viceroy Court is a well designed development that reflects the architectural quality of the individual properties in the wider Conservation Area, and

contributes positively to its character. The replacement properties on Carew Road (Nos 1 and 3), provide continuity to the street scene and boundary of the Conservation Area and have, therefore, been included within the extension. Sentis Court, on the other hand, has little architectural value and forms a natural stop to the boundary of the proposed extension.

14. Whilst Cullera Close is a modern estate developed in the 1980s, it is considered that the unusual architectural style of the houses contribute positively to the overall quality of the area. It, therefore, warrants inclusion within the extended Conservation Area.

15. During consultation with other service groups, Highways and Green Spaces commented on the part inclusion of some of the Council owned recreation grounds at the rear of Carew Road. They also queried the exclusion of the open space opposite the embankments on Eastbury Road. The boundary has been revised to exclude the section of Council owned grounds to the rear of Carew Road. The open space at the entrance of Eastbury Road does not relate to the historic layout and suburban development of the area. It has, therefore, not been included within the Conservation Area.

### Conclusion

16. Given the high level of support from the residents and the Residents Association, it is recommended that this extension is endorsed by the Cabinet. Considering the above, the proposed boundary has been revised as shown on the map contained in Appendix 1.

### **Northwood Town Centre, Green Lane**

#### Summary of Responses

17. In December 2004 the Green Lane area of Northwood was recommended for designation as a Conservation Area. Following a poor response to the public consultation in 2005, Cabinet declined to endorse the area's designation. During the recent consultation, however, there was substantial support for the designation and most of those residents that responded welcomed the proposal. A total of 295 letters were sent to residents and shopkeepers. The level of response was relatively moderate at approximately 15% and the majority of these were in support of the designation. The results are detailed in the table below:

Northwood Town Centre, Green Lane	YES	YES with Comments	Total YES	NO	NO with comments	Total NO	Other	Total Response
Total letters sent: 295	21	13	34	5	7	12		46
			11.52%			4.06%		15.59%

18. A summary of the main comments and queries arising from the consultation are listed below:

- a. There was significant support for protecting the character of the area and in particular, certain buildings on High Street (Green Lane).
- b. One resident requested the inclusion of Dene Road within the Conservation Area as it included a number of listed buildings.

- c. Whilst agreeing with the proposal, one resident raised concerns over parking, street cleaning and litter problems on Maxwell Road, which he considered adversely affected the character of the area.
- d. Another resident suggested that the Green Lane car park, just outside the proposed Conservation Area, had a well landscaped street frontage and should also be included within the area.
- e. Some shop owners thought that the designation would adversely affect property prices and one of them commented that the designation would lead to “prohibitive planning permission”.
- f. Another business strongly disagreed with the proposal, and felt that the buildings did not have enough architectural or historic merit to warrant designation of a Conservation Area.
- g. One of the respondents thought that designation would lead to the limitation of internal and external illumination for advertisements.

19. Waitrose, located adjacent to Northwood Station, objected to the proposal. They commented that the building is modern, constructed in 1987, and ‘makes only a limited contribution to the quality and interest of the proposed conservation area as a whole’. They added that the associated car park does not make any contribution to the Conservation Area, and should be excluded. They also expressed concerns over the commercial viability of the store if designation resulted in added planning restrictions.

20. Northwood College agreed with the proposed designation and requested that the entire campus be included within the area. They commented that although the original building was purpose built in 1893, the campus included many other individual properties, some of which were houses converted to provide for the expanding institution, or much later purpose built structures. The school also explained that there were long term plans for its future development and inclusion of the entire site would recognise the importance of the campus as a whole. It would also provide consistency in conservation and design terms, when considering alteration or redevelopment proposals within the campus.

### Consideration of responses

21. Some shop owners were concerned about restrictions on advertisements and shop front alterations. Whilst designation itself would not prohibit development, the Council would require the nature of advertising material, and the design and quality of shop fronts to harmonise with the architectural composition of individual buildings and contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement on Shop Fronts, adopted July 2006, provides detailed guidance to shop owners, traders and businesses on alterations to shop fronts and advice on choice of materials, illumination and advertisements. Paragraph 7.3 of this document states that ‘In Conservation Areas, the Council will want to make sure that materials, as well as style and detailed design (of shop fronts), are carefully chosen to retain the special character of the area’.

22. The proposed area includes only the Telephone Exchange on Dene Road, as this relates to the character of the proposed Conservation Area. On Green Lane, the existing car park, although well landscaped, does not link with the streetscape of the town centre. It has a strong identity of its own and lies beyond the proposed area. The boundary of this part of the proposed Conservation Area should, therefore, remain unchanged.

23. Subsequent to the response by Waitrose, the boundary in this part of the Conservation Area has been reconsidered. Whilst the building itself is modern and makes a limited contribution to the quality of architecture, it is felt that it fits well in the street scene and reflects the design and scale of the adjacent station building. Located on a prominent corner, the building follows the slope and curve of the street. Whilst the elevation fronting Green Lane is two storeys, the scale of the building is reduced considerably by the sweeping tiled roof. The building defines the boundary of the Conservation Area and is an important element in the street scene. It should, therefore, remain within the proposed boundary of the Conservation Area.

24. Waitrose car park is an integral part of the street scene of Murray Road. Any development, including public realm improvements, would have a considerable impact on the character and appearance of the area. It is, therefore felt that the boundary should include a section of the parking area fronting the street. The proposed boundary to this part of the Conservation Area has, therefore, been revised.

25. Following the response received from Northwood College, it is felt that the individual School buildings and associated grounds contribute positively to the architectural quality and character of the area. The boundary has, therefore, been revised to include the entire college campus.

### Conclusion

26. Although there were a few respondents who opposed the proposal, the majority were in support of the designation. It is, therefore, recommended that this designation is endorsed by the Cabinet. The amended boundary is shown on the map contained in Appendix 2.

### **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

27. Advice from PPG15 (Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, 1994) states that “The greater public support that can be enlisted, the more likely it is that policies for the area will be implemented voluntarily and without the need for additional statutory controls.” The purpose of consulting the residents is to determine if there is sufficient support for the designation, and this has been demonstrated in this case.

28. Overall, the public consultation was successful and the Council received a number of positive responses. Whilst most supported the designation, a few residents and businesses expressed their concerns over added planning restrictions. Some residents also complained about parking problems, refuse collection, waste disposal and street scene improvements. These are not planning matters and have been forwarded to the relevant Departments within the Council. Following the consultation, it is recommended that:-

- a. The Northwood-Frithwood Conservation Area is extended as shown on the Map in Appendix 1.
- b. Northwood Town Centre, Green Lane is designated as a Conservation Area, as shown on the Map in Appendix 2.

## **Financial Implications**

29. The advertisement cost in the local paper will be approx £700 and in the London Gazette will be £180. The cost of informing the residents of the decision will be approx £500 and cost of the production of the leaflets for occupiers within the areas concerned will be approx £300. The total cost will be £1,700 and it will be met from the 2009/10 budget for the group.

## **EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES**

### **What will be the effect of the recommendation?**

30. The aims of the recommendations are to extend the Northwood-Frithwood Conservation Area and to designate a new Conservation Area within Northwood Town Centre, Green Lane. The residents and stakeholders within the area will be informed of the outcome of the consultation, and if agreed, the date of designation. They will also be advised of the increased planning controls resulting from designation, which include greater control over development, demolition and works to trees. A high quality of design, materials and workmanship will also be required for replacement structures and associated works. These are summarized in the information leaflets attached as Appendices 3 and 4.

### **Consultation carried out or required**

31. The report includes the details of consultation.

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Corporate Finance**

32. A Corporate Finance Officer has reviewed the report and the financial implications within it, and is satisfied that the financial implications properly reflect the direct resource implications on the planning service and any wider implications for the Council's resources as a whole.

### **Legal**

33. The designation of Conservation Areas is governed by the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 69 of the Act gives the Local Authority power to 'designate areas of special, architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, as conservation areas'. The Act does not prescribe a statutory requirement to consult prior to designation of a Conservation Area. Section 70 of the Act, however, sets out notification requirements once the Conservation Area has been designated. Under section 70 (5) of the act, the Local Authority must give notice of any designation of any part of their area as a Conservation Area (and of any variation or cancellation of such designation) to the Secretary of State and to the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England. Section 70(8) prescribes that any designation, variation or cancellation must be published in the London Gazette and at least one newspaper circulating in the area of the Local Authority.

34. The designation of an area as a Conservation Area has several formal consequences:
- a. The demolition of most buildings requires the consent of the Local Authority (Section 74 of the Act).
  - b. Prior notification must be given to the Local Authority before works can be undertaken to most trees within the Conservation Area (section 211 of the town and country planning act 1990).
  - c. The Local Authority has a duty under Section 71 of the Act to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the area.
  - d. The local authority has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area in the exercise of their powers under the Planning Acts and Part 1 of the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 (Section 72).
  - e. Planning applications for development which would in the opinion of the Local Authority, affect the character or appearance of the Conservation Area must be given publicity under Section 67 of the Act and representations received must be taken into account in determining the application (Section 67 (7)).
  - f. Permitted Development Rights under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, as amended, are more restricted than in other areas.
  - g. The right to display certain types of illuminated advertisement without express consent under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 is excluded.
35. The leading case on consultation is the High Court decision in R v Brent London Borough Council ex Parte Gunning (1985) 84 LGR 188. In **Gunning**, Hodgson J drew attention to four elements that should exist in the proper performance of a statutory duty to consult. The Council must be satisfied that:
- a. consultation took place at a time when proposals were still at a formative stage;
  - b. sufficient time was allowed for consideration and response; and,
  - c. that responses from the public were conscientiously taken into account in finalising the statutory proposal.

### **Relevant Service Groups**

36. Relevant service groups have been consulted as part of the consultation process, and any comments have been taken into consideration. Comments from Highways and Green Spaces have been discussed in paragraph 15 of this report.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Cabinet report dated 25<sup>th</sup> June 2009
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment 1994
- London Borough of Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2007

# Appendix 1 - Northwood- Frithwood Conservation Area: Proposed extension



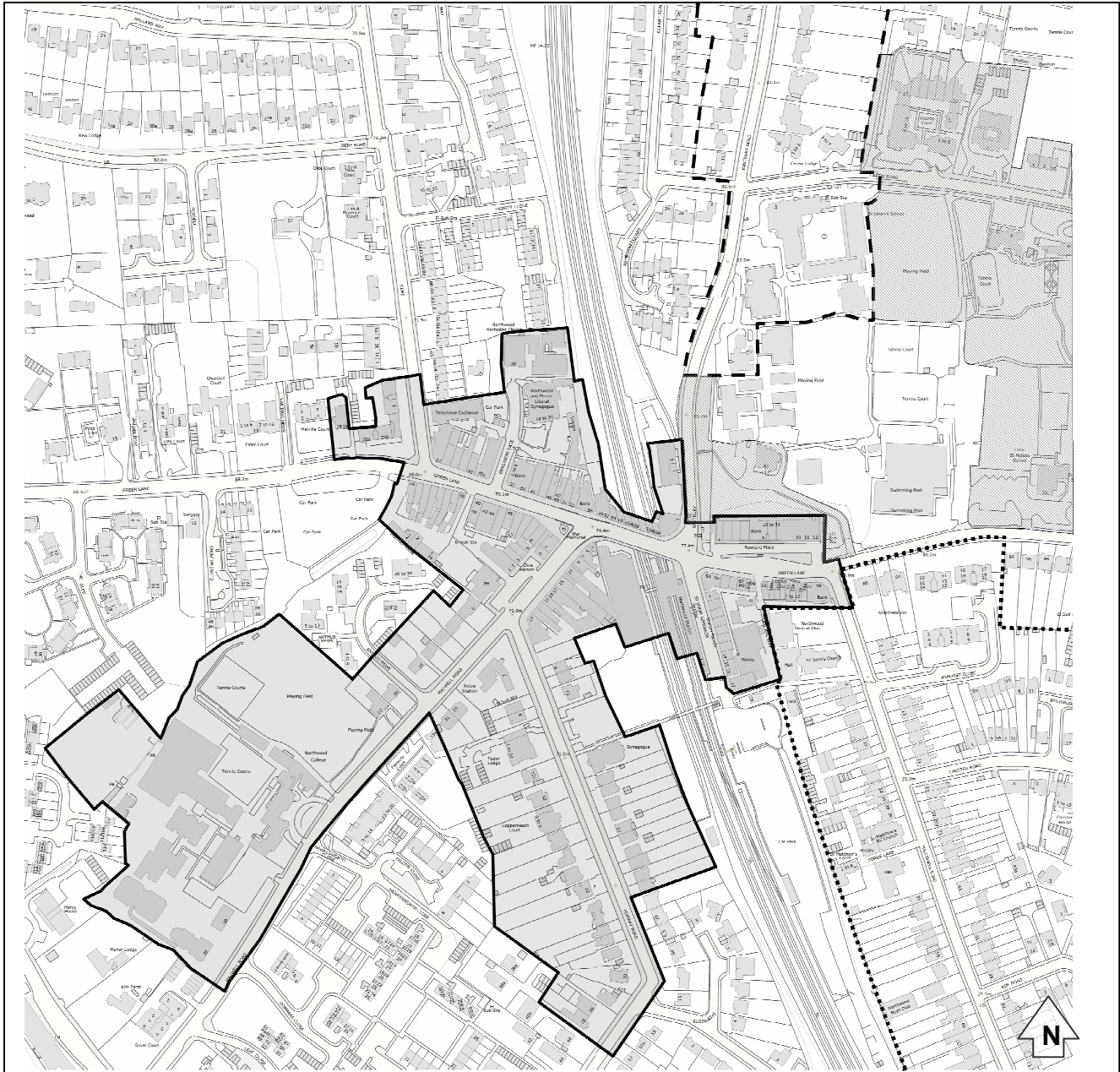
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- Existing Conservation Area boundary
- Proposed additions
- Borough Boundary

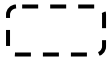
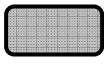




## Proposed Extension: Northwood Frithwood Conservation Area

## Appendix 2 - Northwood Town Centre, Green Lane: Proposed Conservation Area



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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <b>Existing Northwood Frithwood Conservation Area boundary</b>              |  | <b>Proposed Northwood Town Centre, Green Lane Conservation Area</b> |  | <b>Old Northwood Area of Special Local Character</b> |
|  | <b>Proposed extension to Northwood-Frithwood Conservation Area boundary</b> |                                                                                     |                                                                     |                                                                                       |                                                      |



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### Northwood Town Centre, Green Lane Proposed Conservation Area