

DESIGNATION OF GATEHILL FARM ESTATE, NORTHWOOD AS A CONSERVATION AREA

Cabinet Member	Councillor Keith Burrows
Cabinet Portfolio	Planning, Transportation and Recycling
Officer Contact	Nairita Chakraborty and Sarah Harper Planning, Environment and Community Services
Papers with report	Appendix 1: Character Assessment: Gatehill Farm Estate Appendix 2: Proposed boundary of Gatehill Farm Estate Conservation Area. Appendix 3: Agreed criteria for eligibility as a Conservation Area or Area of Special Local Character

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Purpose of report	As part of the ongoing programme of review of the Borough's Conservation Areas, the Gatehill Farm Estate Area of Special Local Character (ASLC) is proposed for designation as a Conservation Area. The results of this work are being reported to Cabinet and officers are seeking approval in principle for designation and a period of consultation with the residents (to consider their views on the proposal).
Contribution to our plans and strategies	Hillingdon's Emerging Local Development Framework Hillingdon Design & Access Statements Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan 1998 (Saved Policies 2007) Community Strategy
Financial Cost	The cost of the initial consultation would be approximately £300 while the costs of designation, including publicity and the production of a leaflet for residents in the area, would be approximately £1000. This would be met from within the Planning, Environment and Community Services budget for 2010/11.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee
Ward(s) affected	Northwood Hills

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approves, in principle, the proposed designation of the Gatehill Farm Estate Conservation Area, as illustrated in the map included in Appendix 2.**

- 2. Notes that if and when the Gatehill Farm Estate Conservation Area is formally designated, this will supersede and replace the current Area of Special Local Character designation.**
- 3. Instructs officers to undertake a period of consultation for 8 weeks with all ward Councillors, local residents, owners and other interested groups within the proposed area and to report the outcome of the consultation to the Cabinet meeting in February 2011.**
- 4. Instructs officers to assess 23 and 25 Wieland Road for inclusion in the Local List and approves the necessary consultation with owners.**

INFORMATION

Reasons for recommendation

As part of the Council's rolling review of the Borough's Conservation Areas, and following a request for designation by members of the Gatehill (Northwood) Residents Association, officers have now assessed the Gatehill Farm Estate and propose its designation as a Conservation Area. A period of eight weeks for public consultation is recommended in accordance with Hillingdon's Statement of Community Involvement, and having regard to the Christmas period.

Alternative options considered

- Not to undertake a rolling review of the Borough's Conservation Areas, which would leave areas worthy of designation unprotected, Members' and residents' questions and concerns unaddressed and would not comply with the objectives set out in the Council and Service Plans.
- Not to consult on the proposed extension of the area: this would be against guidance given in PPS 5 and by English Heritage and would not comply with the Hillingdon's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

Comments of Policy Overview Committee

None at this stage

Supporting Information

1. Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 all local planning authorities have a responsibility to review and, where appropriate, designate those areas that are of "special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" as Conservation Areas. There are currently 30 Conservation Areas in the Borough, the most recent designations being in December 2009.
2. Gatehill Farm Estate, currently designated as an Area of Special Local Character, was previously considered for designation as a Conservation Area in February 1974. At that time, however, it was resolved not to designate it as the buildings were deemed to be of insufficient intrinsic interest, being of 1930's date, with some later development. Over the last decade, interest in 1920-30s architecture has

increased, together with a greater appreciation of townscape quality and planned suburban estates. Due to their large plot sizes, areas such as the Gatehill Estate are becoming vulnerable to development pressure, the cumulative effect of which will have a negative impact on the special character and appearance of the area. It has been, therefore, re-assessed against the new criteria and found to be eligible for designation as a Conservation Area.

Proposed designation of Gatehill Farm Estate Conservation Area

3. A detailed analysis of this area, with photographs and a map of the proposed boundary, is set out in Appendix 1. The area under consideration lies to the north-east of the Borough and its character is largely derived from its planned layout, spacious streetscape, homogeneity of plot sizes and number of large, attractive and well detailed detached houses. The tall boundary hedges, mature planting in front gardens and the gently undulating topography and curving streets combine to form an attractive townscape.

4. Most of the roads on the estate are private, being owned and managed by the Trustees of the Gatehill Residents Association, whilst the remainder have been adopted by the Council. About sixty per cent of properties are located in the private roads, and another twelve per cent of properties are located in Council maintained roads only accessible from the private roads. The private roads are characterised by distinctive, deep grass verges, which are protected and maintained by the Trustees.

5. The estate was developed within the grounds of Gatehill Farm by Messrs Harry Neal Ltd, in the years after the First World War. The architect commissioned was Archibald Soutar, known for his work in Hampstead Garden Suburb. Soutar used some of the principles of layout and architecture established in the Suburb and sought to control issues such as density, fencing and the maintenance of private roads by means of covenants. Development started in the 1930's and, by the late 1960's, most of the plots had been developed.

6. Within the area, Gatehill Farm is the only listed building and is listed Grade II. It is in part 16th century and timber framed, part 18th century of red brick, and was later re-fronted with yellow stock brick. Nos 23 and 25 Wieland Road were formed from the original gatehouse to Potter Hill House, now part of St John's School. It is an attractive building, in white render and hipped tile roof, with a central archway. It is felt that the building should be considered for inclusion in the Local List.

7. The 1930's buildings on the estate were built in red/brown brick or rendered with half timbered details, and have dark red/brown clay roof tiles. Their gables, tall chimneys, tile hanging, porches and dormers with barge boards contribute to the "Arts and Crafts" appearance of the area.

8. Some of the plots were developed during the 1950s-60s and the buildings are of simpler design and lesser architectural interest. These have been included in the Conservation Area, as their hilltop positions give them dominance within the townscape. A number of undeveloped plots were later developed as smaller estates during the 1970s-80s, such as Woodgate Crescent and Shefton Rise. These houses have much smaller curtilages and, again, are of less architectural interest. These, however, have been included in the Conservation Area as they form part of the

original layout of Gatehill Estate. These developments are also included in the current designation of 'Area of Special Local Character'.

9. Whilst the boundary of the Conservation Area is based on the current boundary of the 'Area of Special Local Character', it has been rationalised to take into account current plot boundaries. No 107 Green Lane is a well detailed detached house which makes a positive contribution to the townscape at the entrance of Gatehill Road, and has been, therefore, included in the proposed Conservation Area.

10. It should be noted, that if and when the Conservation Area is formally designated, this will supersede and replace the current Area of Special Local Character designation.

Consultation carried out or required

11. The consultation of all residents within the proposed Conservation Area will be required, to seek their views on, and confirm their support for, designation. It is proposed that the usual six week period is extended to an eight week period from late November 2010 until mid January, having regard to the Christmas period. A letter and supporting information will be sent to each property. The views of the ward councillors, the Gatehill Residents Association, Northwood Hills Residents Association, Conservation Panel, and amenity groups, including English Heritage will also be sought. The results of the consultation will be collated and reported to Cabinet for consideration in February 2010.

Financial Implications

12. The designation of Gatehill Farm Estate Conservation Area would have the following cost implications. The public consultation would cost approximately £300 and, if designation were agreed, the necessary advertisements, the notification of residents and the publication of Conservation Area leaflets for the guidance of residents, would result in an overall cost of approximately £1000. This would be provided from the budget for Planning, Environment and Community Services in 2010/11.

EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

The aim of the recommendation is to consult local people and stakeholders on the proposed Conservation Area in order to ensure that their comments are considered and incorporated where appropriate. The designation of the Conservation Area would provide an increased level of protection, particularly with regard to the demolition of buildings, which would require conservation area consent. A high quality of design, materials and workmanship would be required for replacement structures and associated works. Under the notification procedure there would also be some protection for trees on the estate, although most of the trees have in fact already been included within Tree Preservation Orders.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance have reviewed the report and confirm their agreement to the financial implications as stated.

Legal

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 gives local authorities power to designate areas of special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, as Conservation Areas. Section 70 of the Act 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.

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 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 are more restricted than in other areas; and
- g. the right to display certain types of illuminated advertisement without express consent under the Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 is excluded.

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;
- c. and that responses from the public were conscientiously taken into account in finalising the statutory proposal.

Corporate Landlord

At this stage the report is seeking to go out to public consultation and as the Council may be a landowner affected by the proposals there will be an opportunity to comment formally on the proposals through this process. There are no other comments to make at this time.

Relevant Service Groups

Highways and Green Spaces

The Street-scene Maintenance Section will need to be consulted on any changes, or additions to conservation and other designated areas, to advise on appropriate materials, specifications for kerbs, street trees, carriageway and footway surfaces, when major highway reconstruction or renewal schemes are required. The Green Spaces Section will be able to advise on appropriate specifications for soft landscaping.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Minutes of Town Planning and Redevelopment Committee, 5th February 1974
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS 5): Planning for the Historic Environment, 23rd March 2010
- PPS 5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide- 23rd March 2010
- London Borough of Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan (adopted 1998) Saved Policies 27th September 2007
- London Borough of Hillingdon Core Strategy (Draft for consultation June 2010)
- Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas, English Heritage, February 2006
- Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals, English Heritage, February 2006