

SNARESBROOK CONSERVATION AREA ENHANCEMENT SCHEME

Adopted 22.09.1993

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In this report the character of the Conservation Area as it exists today is analysed and measures are described which have as their aim the Conservation and enhancement of this character.
- 1.2 The Snaresbrook Conservation Area was designated in 1970. The area, shown on the attached Drawing No. 1 extends for about 1 mile from the southern end of Hollybush Hill where it abuts Wanstead Flats (part of Epping Forest), to Bedford Road near the northern end of Woodford Road.
- 1.3 The statutory definition of a Conservation Area is 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. From this definition it is clear that the most important constituent parts of a Conservation Area will be those parts which contribute most towards the 'character and appearance' of the area. Changes will occur, mainly in the form of new developments, in a Conservation Area and one of the main purposes of designation is to ensure that changes will not have an adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas. This means that the 'character and appearance; must be carefully defined and described for a Conservation Area. Any measures proposed for the Conservation Area should have as their aim the preservation and enhancement of the character.
- 1.4 The Council has prepared a general set of policies in the Deposited Unitary Development plan for the preservation and enhancement of many conservation areas of the borough. The proposals for preservation and enhancement are set out in section 2: Proposals. Policies relevant to the Snaresbrook Conservation Area are set out in section 3 of this report: Policies. Appraisal of those townscape features, buildings and spaces which characterise the Conservation Area is provided in section 4: Appraisal.
- 1.5 The conclusion derived from the appraisal of the Conservation Area is that the object of preservation and enhancement will be to retain the open character of the Conservation Area provided by the greens and parklands, to maintain and improve the existing tree cover and more specifically to safeguard the character of The Drive and residential areas.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 For brevity and convenience the main proposals are described below. A number of smaller measures have been delineated on attached Drawing No.1.
- 2.2 The way in which building owners care for and alter their houses in the Conservation Areas has a major impact on the architectural and environmental quality of the area. Snaresbrook for example has its fair share of development pressure – 11 % of the total number of applications for development received in 1991 for all the Borough's Conservation Areas were for the Snaresbrook Conservation Area. Insensitive changes to property, including boundary treatments and front garden landscaping, along with maintenance and repair work could have a significant adverse impact on the character of the Conservation Area. The most effective means of promoting good design standards in the Conservation Areas, reducing the need for special controls such as Article 4 Direction, is by measures aimed at informing the public about the benefits of good design practice. A draft leaflet 'Conservation begins at home' has been prepared to inform householders of the conservation legislation and guidance on repairs and maintenance, and additions and alteration to the property. The leaflet (Appendix 1) is based on a public information article recently produced by English Heritage for publication in the borough's newspapers.
- 2.3 Street Paving and Furniture: inappropriate street paving, street furniture and road signage can have a severely detrimental impact on the character of a Conservation Area. Any alterations or additions should be carefully designed and sited with particular regard for preserving the character of the Conservation Area,
- 2.4 Trees form a significant townscape element in the entire Conservation Area. Some investigation would be required to determine the best management policy in order to maintain and continue the consistency of the treescape of the Conservation Area.
- 2.5 The current economic situation imposes a severe restriction on what the Council and other bodies are able to do. The Council has strictly limited amounts of money at its disposal and itself will not be able to meet all desirable enhancement measures for the Conservation Area. The draft proposals will therefore suggest small improvements. The emphasis will be on pursuing proposals which can be implemented in the short term.
- 2.6 The Council will pay full regard to the draft enhancement and conservation proposals in the exercise of their various powers and duties, especially under the Planning Acts. But a successful policy of conservation also depends, in large measure, on the participation and support of all owners and occupiers of properties in the Conservation

Area, of all other authorities who have statutory responsibilities within the Area, and of the public generally. The Council hopes, therefore, that the publication of the draft proposals will help to awaken and kindle interest and support which are so necessary if an area is to be successfully conserved.

3. Policies

3.1 Snaresbrook Conservation Area is included in a number of policies in the Deposited Unitary Development Plan. When adopted by the Council, the Plan will constitute the statutory planning basis for the area. It also represents a summary and end – product of an extended period of study and consultation on the part of the Council.

3.2 Within the boundaries of the Conservation Area policies SP.EN.18, LP.EN. 19,20,21 & 22 of the Plan apply.

3.3 The extent of forest land and tree cover is a significant feature of the Conservation Area. This and landscaping of individual sites are referred to in Policies LP.EN. 6,7,8 & 9.

3.4 In the Conservation Area there are a number of Statutory and Locally listed Buildings which are referred to in Policies SP.EN.23, LP.EN.24, 25 & 26.

3.5 Snaresbrook Conservation area is in an area where Policy SP.EN.31 (high buildings) applies.

3.6 The ‘Eagle Pond’ (Epping Forest) south of Snaresbrook Road is designated as an area of Nature Conservation Importance where Policy SP.EN.10 applies.

3.7 The above policies provide a general set of criteria for the preservation and enhancement of many Conservation Areas of the borough. The draft proposals set out in paragraphs 2.1 – 2.5 of this report are designed to give a more detailed approach to the preservation and enhancement of the Snaresbrook Conservation Area.

4. Appraisal

4.1 Snaresbrook Conservation Area comprises two identifiable areas having its own character. The overall impression is that the Conservation Area is well endowed with trees and greenery and has a variety of buildings both old and new. The open and spacious character of the Conservation Area is due to the parklands, the large pond to the south of the area and the strip of greenery ‘Woodford Slips’ in the heart of the Conservation Area.

4.2 Large tracts of wood and parklands with historic buildings form the southern part of the area and provide it with the greatest historical and

visual significance. The area contains Snaresbrook Crown Court (1841 – 1843 (Grade II), Eagle Pond – a large lake- within the wooded grounds of the Crown Court, Eagle Hotel (early c18: grade II), Snaresbrook House (late c18: Grade II), White Lodge (early c19: Grade II) and two late c18 Grade II buildings to the rear of White Lodge.

No major changes are expected in this area and only small scale improvements as and when they arise. Restoration and re-use of Snaresbrook House is a priority.

4.3 The narrow strip of green 'Woodford Slips' with some fine trees along Woodford Road' is significant to the open character and appearance' providing a contrast with the built-up nature of The Drive and the East side of Woodford Road.. Both The Drive and Woodford Road are lined with detached properties, albeit of varied architectural merit and size.

No major changes are expected. Small scale improvement and care of trees, landscaping and verges will arise from time to time.

4.4 The Drive: The special character of this part of the Conservation Area is derived from, in addition to the green strip, a row of individually designed late Victorian/Edwardian and interwar detached residences, each different in design and scale' with substantial front and rear gardens, the majority being well wooded. Each residence making accomplished use of turrets, tile hanging, half timbering, terracotta elements, decorative ridge tiles, etc.

A few properties have been altered with unsympathetic additions and materials. There is a need to preserve both spaces between the buildings and their setting from the road by minimising side extensions infill buildings and the further introduction of car parking within the front gardens. It is important to adopt a design guide to provide advice to the residents on any improvements or alterations they wish to make to the exterior of their properties in sympathy with the appearance of the area. It is also equally important to provide a guide on tree care, maintenance, and the legislation on trees in Conservation Areas.

4.5 The remaining part of the Conservation Area consists of houses and flats of various periods and styles – from the 'thirties' style of Hermitage Court with its attractive contemporary walls and gates, to the 1980s Eagle Lodge sheltered flats. Many of these also make a very positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

Generally no significant changes or development are envisaged but small scale development in the form of extensions, changes of use or individual buildings may arise. Design briefs will need to be produced in some cases in order to guide development in sympathy with the appearance of the area.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The object of conservation and enhancement will be to retain the open character of the area provided by the parklands and the green strip, to maintain and improve the existing tree cover and more specifically, to safeguard the character of The Drive. Priority should be given to the preparation of a design guide for the properties in The Drive. Priority in repairs, restoration and re-use of Snaresbrook House will remain.

APPENDIX 1

CONSERVATION BEGINS AT HOME

This leaflet is for information of owners and occupiers of properties in Conservation Areas.

If this leaflet has been delivered to your address, then your property is in one of the 13 Conservation Areas in Redbridge. If you have recently acquired the property, your Official Search of the Local Land Charges Register will reveal the Conservation Area status of your property. If you are a tenant please consult with your landlord or contact the Council's Borough Planning Officer.

Please read this leaflet carefully and retain it for future reference when you may consider proposals for change to your property.

This leaflet contains general advice on alterations and additions to buildings in the Conservation Areas. It also explains additional restrictions which apply within Conservation areas.

The restrictions are:-

1) Demolition of buildings

It is illegal to demolish any buildings or structure, or remove any significant part of the building (e.g. a roof or a chimney stack) without the permission of the Council. There are only minor exceptions to this restriction. It is always a good idea to discuss with the Borough Planning Officer or his staff your proposal for demolition of a building or a structure or part of it, and whether you should apply for a 'Conservation Area Consent' before carrying out the demolition work. Please note that a planning permission for redevelopment in a conservation area does not give consent for demolition, unless the planning permission states that a consent is included.

2) Alterations and additions to buildings

Building works of additions and alterations which can be carried out without the Council's consent are known as "permitted development". The size limited for extending your house without a planning permission is 50 cubic metres or 10% of the house's original volume, up to a maximum of 115 cubic metre. (the cubic limit for an extension to a semi-detached or detached house, but not a terraced house, is slightly less than what is permitted outside the Conservation Areas). Whilst a wide variety of developments including extensions, porches, fences, walls, garages etc., may in certain circumstances, be carried out as permitted developments, their cumulative effect over time, if carried out in an unsympathetic manner, could prejudice the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. This leaflet sets out ten golden rules to bear in mind when considering changes to your property.

Please bear in mind that in Conservation Areas, cladding of any part of the exterior of a property with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles requires consent.

3) Trees in Conservation Areas

Trees make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area and their alteration or removal is controlled. It becomes an offence to undertake works on or fell trees with a trunk diameter of more than 75mm (3") at a height of 1.5 metres (4' .10") without first having given six weeks notice to the Council. When the notice is received (forms are available from the Borough Planning Officer) the Council will send an officer to inspect the tree(s) and if necessary discuss the works you intend to carry out. If complete removal of a tree is found to be necessary, replacement, with a new tree of a species and size to be agreed, will be an automatic requirement in most cases. There are heavy penalties for those who fail to comply with these requirements:

Tree Preservation orders can be made where the Council does not agree with what is proposed.

4) Satellite 'dishes'

In a number of circumstances the Council's consent will be required to install a satellite dish. Legislation concerning satellite dishes is very complex. You are therefore well advised to consult with the Borough Planning Officer before installing a satellite dish (or dishes). A free information leaflet on this subject has been produced by the Council which is available from the Borough Planning Officer.

Listed below are ten golden rules to bear in mind when thinking about carrying out home improvements. You are however well advised to consult with the Borough Planning Officer or his staff to ascertain whether the work you intend to carry out will require the Council's consent.

- 1) Wherever possible, repair rather than replace. It is almost always a better investment to repair original windows, doors and other architectural features than to replace them. In so doing you will not only be preserving the character and appearance of your house, but also its value. If replacement is unavoidable, then the original details should be matched exactly using the correct materials and finished.
- 2) Materials. Original materials such as roof tiles and bricks should be retained and-reused and matching materials used where necessary. This helps to keep the traditional character of the building. Usually they last much longer than modern alternatives.
- 3) Details. Ornamental details add to the value and character of your house. Original design features such as chimney stacks, moulded bricks, porches and tiles are often the most attractive and distinctive

elements, and they help to interest potential purchasers. If removed, they can be difficult or expensive to replace, so they should always be retained and repaired. Internally, cornices, panelled doors and chimney pieces are important domestic features which enrich the house and help to sustain its value.

- 4) Windows and Doors. Nothing detracts from the appearance and value of a house more than the loss of its original windows and doors. Any replacement should copy the original designs for the house exactly using traditional materials and finishes. Avoid unpainted hardwood and UPVC windows and doors as they always look phoney. Keep the original size and proportions of openings, as un-considered changes can destroy the design of a whole frontage.
- 5) Roughcast and render. Do not cover the walls of your house with render, pebbledash or paint unless it was part of the original design. They can detract considerably from its character and appearance and, if incorrectly applied, they can trap dampness and lead to serious problems in the future.
- 6) Boundary treatments, walls and gardens. Often gardens, fences, walls and hedges are part of the co-ordinated design of older streets and houses and they provide a pleasant domestic setting. Avoid removing original fences, walls and hedges and always think twice before paving over gardens for car parking. If you decide to proceed, reinstate an original boundary treatment to mitigate the visual impact. The Council has already published a leaflet 'Parking in Front Gardens' to give advice on how to lessen the effects of car parking in the front garden. The leaflet gives detailed suggestions on the layout, use of the planting, hard surface finishes, and the location of refuse bins.
- 7) Brickwork. Poor repointing ruins many houses and can cause dampness. Pointing should always be done by a skilled specialist. The original mortar probably included lime; the style of the pointing should match the original; 'weatherstruck' is almost always inconsistent with the traditional appearance of older houses.
- 8) Extensions. Extensions should generally reflect the style, proportions, materials and details of the house itself and should not be so large or prominent as to dominate or complete with the house. In a street of individual houses side extensions should not cause a 'terrace' effect.
- 9) Loft conversions. Care should be taken to ensure that the overall roof space remains unaltered. Generally dormers should not be built on the front of the house, particularly in a group of uniform design, unless they are hardly visible as a whole. Dormers should be placed away from the eaves, flank and party walls and below the ridge. Traditional flush fitting roof lights may often be less obtrusive and cheaper than dormers on side and rear elevations. More modern roof lights are not so discreet.

10) Minor additions. New additions always require careful thought. Porches and garages should be designed to blend in with the original house.

Regular maintenance can dramatically cut the cost of repairing your house. Gutters and roofs should be checked frequently and small leaks mended as soon as possible.

Drawing No. 1

