

**Stroud Green (CA39)  
Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

**December 2007**

# STROUD GREEN CONSERVATION AREA

## CHARACTER APPRAISAL



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document is prepared by the Council to assist with the management and enhancement of the Stroud Green Conservation Area. Together with the Conservation Area Design Guidelines it provides advice and guidance, both to the owners and occupiers of buildings in the conservation area and to the Council, about the way in which the area should best be managed to preserve and enhance its character. It contains an appraisal of the features that contribute to the area's character and appearance and advice on how best change can be accommodated.

## 2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 The Stroud Green Conservation Area was first designated on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2006.
- 2.2 Conservation Areas are areas which the Council considers to be of '*special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*'. [Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990]. Once a conservation area is designated the Council has a statutory obligation to:
- from time to time, publish proposals for the preservation or enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area.
  - pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the character of the area when considering planning proposals affecting the area.
- 2.2 Conservation Area designation also brings with it some additional town planning controls to assist the Council to manage change effectively. Furthermore, the Council can use its planning powers to control normally permitted development should it feel it necessary to protect the character and appearance of the area. Planning controls therefore can vary from conservation area to area.
- 2.3 Conservation is not about stopping all change, it is about making sure that any future change preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area. To achieve this the council uses its planning powers to manage change in a careful and sensitive manner.
- 2.4 The Conservation Area Design Guidelines, which were drafted taking into consideration this character appraisal, will form supplementary planning guidance to the adopted Islington Unitary Development Plan (2002) once adopted and will be a material consideration when planning proposals are being considered.

### Additional Planning Controls

- 2.5 If uncontrolled development is having an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area, the Council can use additional planning powers in the form of an Article 4(2) Direction to better manage change. There are currently no Article 4(2) Directions in place for the Stroud Green Conservation Area. However, the Council is considering the adoption of a provisional Article 4(2) Direction to avoid unsympathetic change in the area which would include, amongst others, the removal of original features such as chimney stacks and pots, sash windows, front doors, boundary treatment, etc.

## Listed Buildings

- 2.6 **Statutory Listing** means that the building is protected by law. This protection extends to the inside; back, front, sides and roof of the building. It also extends to any object or structure fixed to the building as well as to any freestanding objects or structures, which lie within the curtilage of the building and which were erected before 1 July 1948.

The statutory listed buildings within the Stroud Green Conservation Area are as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Road</b>	<b>Grade</b>
The Old dairy	1-3	Crouch Hill	II
	127	Hanley Road	II



- 2.7 **Local listing** is a designation made by the Council. It is a list of buildings considered to be of local importance and special to the Borough. Listed building consent is not required to alter them. Normal planning regulations apply: this means that some alterations to houses and most alteration to flats and commercial premises will require Planning Permission. The Council's Conservation Officers should be informed of any proposed alterations to ensure that the materials and techniques used are not harmful to the building's historic fabric.

The locally listed buildings within the Stroud Green Conservation Area are as follows:

Name	Number	Road
Shopfront	14-16	Crouch Hill Road
	119	Stroud Green Road
	181	Stroud Green Road
	183	Stroud Green Road



### 3. APPRAISAL OF THE AREA'S CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

3.1 This section identifies what features give the Stroud Green Conservation Area its special character and appearance. It has been prepared following a detailed study into the development and form of the area. It is only by fully understanding an area that we can plan for its future management.

#### Location & General Character

3.2 The Stroud Green Conservation Area is located in the North part of the London Borough of Islington on the border with the London Borough of Haringey. The character context of the wider area is that of late Victorian development – mainly shops at ground floor and residential above (Crouch Hill and Stroud Green Road) and small scale residential terraces typically built with little front garden space (Japan Crescent); this gives a more intimate and 'urban village' character.

3.3 The character of the area is derived from harmonious diversity and slow organic development. The designs and materials employed vary throughout the area, but combine to produce a piece of townscape that is important to retain and develop. The

houses, shops, pubs, and commercial premises give vibrancy and mix to the character of the area and the community it serves.

### **Origins & Historic Development**

- 3.4 The area was formerly a long piece of common land in the manor of Highbury and by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century it had become enclosed. A road was built the whole length of the old green, extending from the Seven Sisters Road to an upright stone which used to record the fact that this length of road was kept in repair by the Parish of Islington.
- 3.5 Residential development of the neighbourhood, initially known as 'Finsbury Park' began around 1870. The park itself was laid out during the 1860s by Alexander McKenzie for the Metropolitan Board of Works on land formerly occupied by Hornsey Wood and was opened in 1869.
- 3.6 The area was developed in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> Century as part of London's suburban growth, spurred on by railway expansion. New buildings were constructed to front the historic road, thus retaining the distinctive bend at the foot of Crouch Hill.
- 3.7 With a large hinterland of residential estates, most of the new properties on Stroud Green Road and the bottom of Crouch Hill were built to include ground floor shops and business, or if not, very soon had projecting shopfronts constructed over the original front gardens. Crouch Hill Station with its booking hall and station master's house was opened in the 1870s, a few years after the Finsbury park Station had opened half a mile further south in 1861.
- 3.8 **Stroud Green Road** used to be Stroud Green Lane before 1874. A boundary road, its north east side is within Haringey. Stroud Green Lane appears in a street directory for 1870 but not in the one for 1866. The road was intensely occupied by the 1880s. The road was bombed in September 1940.
- 3.9 **Crouch Hill** is named after its ancient origin ('Crouche' which means cross). In 1400 there are references to a *Geoffrey ate Crouche of Haringey*. The Cross stood a little below old Crouch Hill and was a resting place for pilgrims. Before 1893 there was a different naming and numbering.
- 3.10 **Japan Crescent** does not appear in the directories until 1888. The 'Japan House' stood next to the former Stapleton Hall.



- 3.11 There is a small section of **Hanley Road** (on the junction with Stroud Green Road) which is included within the conservation area. The road was only completely formed by 1885. In 1877 the south side was laid out for building and from 1877 to 1885 83 houses were erected.
- 3.12 A small section of **Mount Pleasant Crescent**, also on the boundary with Haringey, is included in the Stroud Green Conservation Area. Before 1939 it used to be called Mount Pleasant Road (from 1878) and Stapleton Parade (from 1900). It is marked on a map dated 1835.

### Archaeology

- 3.13 Stroud Green Road and Crouch Hill is an ancient routeway, originally a country lane between fields and skirting the medieval manor of Stapleton Hall which stood on the north side of Stapleton Hall Road close to the junction with Stroud Green Road. This is recognised by the designation of the area which comprehends the junction of Crouch Hill, Hanley Road and Stroud Green Road as an Archaeological Priority Area (APA19) in the Unitary Development Plan covering the properties around the junction.

### Spatial Analysis

- 3.14 Stroud Green Road is a wide main road which connects the areas of Crouch Hill and Finsbury Park. It is very linear with wide pavement area and a consistent 3 storey semi-detached villas generally with commercial premises at ground floor and residential use on the upper floors. It is a very busy road with a lot of noise caused by transport.



- 3.15



Crouch Hill is also a main road but narrower than Stroud Green and with its high 3 storey terraces it is very enclosed. As on Stroud Green there is a mixed use generally with shops at street level and residential units above. There are two mews at the rear of Crouch Hill: one to the South, behind No. 17, which is a very distinctive workshop mews. Another at the rear of Nos. 4-6 with access via Mount Pleasant Crescent, which is a rundown workshop mews.

- 3.16 Japan Crescent is a narrow residential road, very quiet and enclosed by its two storey terraced houses. It is largely intact and compact and the considerable charm of its late Victorian red brick terraces is enhanced by the tight curve in the road.
- 3.17 In contrast to the public areas the **private spaces** – mostly rear gardens and courtyards are quiet and private. The largest group being the gardens to the properties on the Japan Crescent.



### **Key Views & Vistas**

- 3.18 Views into the conservation area from all the main routes are all important. Views up and down Stroud Green Road and Crouch Hill are perhaps the most significant.
- 3.19 When entering Stroud Green from Hanley Road there is a very prominent view of the rear elevations of the commercial properties at Stroud Green Road.
- 3.20 181 Stroud Green Road, on the corner with Hanley Road, is a landmark for the area.



### **Building Materials**

- 3.21 The basic construction material for most of the (mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> Century) buildings is yellow stock brick. Some of these Victorian properties have, unfortunately, suffered unsympathetic interventions such as inappropriate repointing or rendering. Where there is scope, these should be reinstated to match the original adjoining properties so that



the character of the group of properties can be improved. On Japan Crescent the houses have been built in red brick.

3.22 **Windows** are typically painted timber, single glazed, sliding sashes. In Japan Crescent most of the properties retain the original windows to the front elevation. On Stroud Green Roads there is a brick course detail around the windows on the upper floors. These traditional elements make a strong contribution towards the historic appearance of the buildings. Modern windows, where they exist, have failed in this respect and detract from the character of the area.

3.23 The historic **doors** on Japan Crescent, panelled with glazed top, survive in its majority. Enclosed porches are not a feature of the area and should be resisted.



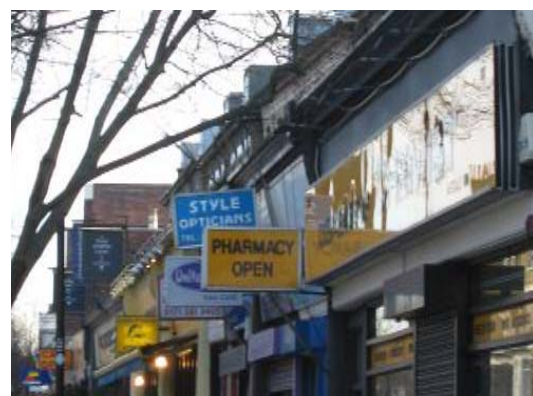
3.24 The majority of the **roofs** in the Conservation Area are in slate. However, a series of properties have undergone unsympathetic re-roofing which vary from clay tiles to extremely harmful concrete tiles. The traditional finishes, along with any existing cast iron gutters, chimney stacks and ridge tiles give the area its intimate skyline and traditional appearance. Most of the properties still retain the chimney stacks and pots.

3.25



**Shopfront** surrounds (cornices, pilasters, corbels) survive on a number of properties, especially on Stroud Green Road, and contribute a great deal to the character of the area. Most of them need maintenance work. A few historic shopfronts, such as 14-16 Crouch Hill (locally listed) and 147 Stroud Green Road (pictured right), survive. Timber frame or decorative iron work, recessed doorway, panelled stallriser, tiled thresholds and glazed entrance doors are some of the historic features which exist in the surviving shopfronts and should be reinstated where possible.

3.26 There are now many internally illuminated fascia and projecting signs which are deemed extremely harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Originally the signs would have been painted timber and externally illuminated. The reinstatement of this type of signage should be encouraged. External roller shutters are not a traditional feature, however, unsympathetic solid shutters have proliferated in the area. These are highly detrimental to the character of the area, as well as being



contrary to the Council's planning policies, and their removal should be encouraged.

### **The Buildings**

3.27 The majority of buildings within the conservation area make a positive contribution to its character and appearance whether they are grand 'landmarks' or humble houses. Some of them are in need of repair. However, there are a few buildings within the designated area, which are deemed to have a neutral or negative impact. For the purposes of this assessment the buildings have been categorised according to their contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area under: positive, neutral or negative.

3.28 Buildings that make a **positive contribution** are therefore worthy of retention although some may require restoration or refurbishment. There is a presumption in favour of their sympathetic retention. Demolition or unsympathetic alteration will be resisted. All of the buildings within the Stroud Green Conservation Area are deemed to make a positive contribution to the character of the area with exception of the buildings listed below under neutral or negative contribution. Some of the finest buildings within the area are the following:

- No. 181 Stroud Green Road: locally listed late Victorian bank building in fine red brick with horizontal rendered string courses and dressings which forms a splendid corner to the junction with Hanley Road.
- Properties on Stroud Green Road: pairs of substantial linked semi-detached villas, each three bays wide with gentle sloping and pitched hipped roofs, well set back from the road, probably originally conceived as grand family houses, but almost immediately extended with projecting single storey shops over the front gardens. This was clearly done as a piece with a consistent pattern of pilasters, corbels, fascia and cornice unifying the group but separating each shop unit.
- No. 2 Crouch Hill (The Larrick) and No. 29 Crouch Hill (The Noble): purpose-built Victorian public houses in eclectic styles with large ground floor bar areas.



- Nos. 4-36 and 5-27 Crouch Hill: late Victorian shops with residential above with some decent surviving details, notably the locally listed shopfront of Nos. 14-16.

- No. 17 Crouch Hill: rear mews workshop with a very distinctive character accessed through an arch and cobbled carriageway.



- Station House, Crouch Hill: typical robust Victorian railway architecture, functional but well detailed and well constructed, comprising a single storey booking office to the street and a two storey house behind.



- The former Friern Manor Farm Dairy, comprising Nos. 1-3 Crouch Hill and No. 127 Hanley Road: remarkable complex of statutorily listed buildings now converted into a bar. The octagonal cupolas with louvred lanterns are an important feature, but the graffiti street panels depicting rustic scenes of grazing, milking, cooling, making butter and country delivery are very rare examples and a well-known landmark.

- Properties on Japan Crescent: largely intact and compact street of late Victorian red brick terraced houses which retain most of the original features to the front elevation.

3.26 Buildings that make a **neutral contribution** are those that neither enhance nor harm the character or appearance of the area. Demolition or alterations of these buildings will only be supported if the replacement building will make a better contribution on the

character or appearance of the conservation area. In the Stroud Green Conservation Area the following buildings are deemed to make a neutral contribution:

16	Japan Crescent
18	Japan crescent
25	Japan Crescent

- 3.27 There are currently no buildings which are considered particularly harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

### **Land uses**

- 3.28 On Stroud Green and Crouch Hill there is a predominant mixed use with commercial use at ground floor and residential at upper floors. There is a variety of businesses which contribute to the character of the area. The shops on Stroud Green Road are a protected shopping centre. The Council wishes to preserve this character and will operate policies set out in the UDP to support this.
- 3.29 Japan Crescent is a residential street and there is no scope for different uses. The houses are small and the best use is as single dwellings.
- 3.30 The workshop mews at the rear of 17 Crouch Hill has a very particular character and this should be preserved. Mount Pleasant Mews at the rear of 4-6 Crouch Hill, on the other hand, has not had its character preserved in such a successful way. The buildings are in bad condition or vacant. Here, there is scope for change of use where it would enhance the character and appearance of the mews but still retaining the workshop character. There is currently an application for residential units at this location.
- 3.31 Often the best use for a building is that which it was designated for and retaining the variety of uses is very important to the area. Public houses, shops and workshops should be kept in appropriate uses which will not diminish their special interest.

### **Public Realm**

- 3.32 The street surfaces and finishes within the conservation area provide a setting for all the buildings and contribute to the quality of public spaces and the wider street scene. Both Stroud Green Road and Crouch Hill carry heavy traffic, Japan Crescent, on the other hand, is quieter and there is a pleasant sense of enclosure and tranquillity, the value of which is emphasised by the proximity to the other busy roads within the conservation area.
- 3.33 There is an inconsistency in terms of street furniture. This is not a particularly attractive feature of the conservation area. There are several unused posts which add clutter to the area, especially on Stroud Green Road.

### **Gardens & Trees**

- 3.34 There is no public open or 'green' space and the conservation area has a lack of soft landscaping and garden planting. Stroud Green Road and Japan Crescent benefit from street trees but the biggest concentration of trees in the conservation area is around the station on Crouch Hill. The properties on Japan Crescent have small front gardens and most of them have been totally or partially paved. However, a great part of the houses

have some sort of planting in the form of hedges or bushes. The reinstatement of softlandscaping and planting should be encouraged.

### **Fences, Hedges & Walls**

- 3.35 The properties on Stroud Green Road and Crouch Hill do not have front gardens and, therefore, no front boundary treatment. On Japan Crescent, there is a variety of boundary treatments mostly low brick walls with hedges or railings. It is believed that these properties would have had low boundary walls with a picket fence or hedge.

### **Negative factors**

- 3.36 The greatest harm to the character of the area has been the removal and inappropriate replacement of traditional features – windows, roofing materials, shopfronts etc. Similarly the removal of front garden boundary treatment and the laying of hardstanding has also affected the setting of the houses by effectively harming their front gardens.

Especially on Stroud Green Road and Crouch Hill plastic, uPVC and other non-traditional materials have, incrementally and over many years, eroded the character and appearance of the area. The provisional Article 4(2) Direction is meant to avoid any further damage to the character and appearance of the area.

### **Capacity for Change**

- 3.37 There is almost no scope for alteration to properties other than, perhaps, modest rear extensions. Authentic restoration of lost architectural details and finishes will, in numerous locations, provide an opportunity to restore buildings. The importance of soft landscaping and the spacious character of the street scene means there is little scope for structures such as garages in front of the established building line.

## **4. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 This document is the product of a detailed process that commenced with a site appraisal of the Conservation Area by the Council's Conservation Officers in February and March 2007. Conservation Area Design Guidelines were subsequently drafted and will be subjected to a public consultation. This character appraisal was made available as an introduction for the understanding of these guidelines.

## **5. BOUNDARY**

- 5.1 The boundary of the conservation area has been considered in detail. No further changes are seen necessary at present. However, the boundary will be reconsidered when this document is updated in future.

## **6. CONSERVATION AREA DESIGN GUIDELINES**

- 6.1 Together with general advice and guidance about conservation area law and policy that is available in separate pamphlets, the Council has prepared draft design guidelines which, when adopted, should be used in the determination of planning applications and

reflect how the area should be managed. These have been prepared in line with national good practice guidance set out in *'Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas'* by English Heritage.

## **7. MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**

- 7.1 In order to reduce street clutter signage and other furniture will be removed as and when they are no longer required. The Council will endeavour, when new works are required, to choose replacement products that will also enhance the character and appearance of the area in keeping with good practice guidance in the English Heritage *'Streets for All'* document. The Council will also seek to use its powers to remove any unauthorised advertising hoardings within the conservation area, especially the very large billboards attached to the sides of properties on Crouch Hill.
- 7.2 The Council is considering the adoption of a provisional Article 4(2) Direction in order to control changes that would affect the character and appearance of the area.
- 7.3 The Council is currently running building improvement grant schemes in conservation areas within the borough in partnership with English Heritage. The aim of the schemes is to encourage economic regeneration by contributing funds for the repair and improvement of historic buildings and the public realm. The Stroud Green Conservation Area is a prime candidate for such a grant scheme as it fits the English Heritage criteria. The Council would, therefore, aim to prepare a bid to English Heritage and, if successful, the grant would be available to business and property owners within the scheme areas who wish to repair or improve the frontages of their buildings. Typical work that can be funded includes restoration of historic shop fronts; installation of new high quality shop fronts designed to complement the character of the area; replacing modern uPVC windows with historically accurate ones; removing render and cleaning brickwork to the upper parts of a property. Grant funded improvements to the public realm also help to reinforce the local distinctiveness and commercial attractiveness of the area.