

CHISWICK HIGH ROAD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

APRIL 2015



DEVELOPINGHOUNSLOW

Document Title: Chiswick High Road Conservation Area Appraisal Consultation Draft April 2015

Date: 13 April 2015

The object of an appraisal document is to provide an overview of the historic development of the area and to describe the key components that contribute to the special interest of the area.

This document is a consultation draft and has been prepared to support the Councils proposal to designate the Chiswick High Road Conservation Area.

Consultation on the proposed conservation area and this draft will be running between 13th April 2015 and 9th June 2015. We would appreciate any comments sent to us by 9th June 2015.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is a Conservation Area?

1.1.1 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. Conservation Areas are very much part of the familiar and cherished local scene. It is the area as a whole rather than specific buildings that is of special interest.

1.1.2 The ability to designate areas, rather than individual buildings, first came into being as a result of the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. The special character of these areas does not come from the quality of their buildings alone. The historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries; a particular mix of building uses; characteristic building or paving materials; public and private spaces such as gardens or parks and trees and street furniture can all contribute to the special interest of the area. Conservation area designation gives a much broader protection than the individual listing of buildings, all features (listed or otherwise) within the area are recognised as part of its character.

1.1.3 The first designations tended to be of very obvious groups of buildings, landscapes or small areas of strongly similar architectural design. Later it was seen that larger areas, where less obvious original features such as topography, routes or uses had produced a special character, could benefit from being designated.

1.1.4 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special interest. The Council as the local planning authority has a duty (under section 69) to consider which parts of the London Borough of Hounslow are "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" and should be designated as conservation areas.

1.2 Location and Context of the Proposed Conservation Area

1.2.1 Chiswick High Road Conservation Area is located in the east of the London Borough of Hounslow in the west London district of Chiswick. Chiswick is situated next to Brentford to the west, Acton and Ealing to the north and Hammersmith to the east, with Barnes, Sheen, Mortlake and Kew across the river to the south. Its northern edge is defined for the most part by railway lines and its southerly edge by the River Thames.

1.2.2 Chiswick High Road follows the route of a Roman Road to the West Country and remained the main highway from London to the west of England until the construction of the A4 in the 1950's. It is one of the Boroughs four town centres and designated a major centre in the London Plan 2011. It is a successful town centre with a mix of chain and independent retailers and a large number of cafes, pubs, and restaurants.

1.2.3 The area is well served with public transport. Turnham Green District Line Station is located at the northern edge of the conservation area giving access to the tube network and bus routes into central London and neighbouring areas are plentiful. The M4, M3 and M40 are all within easy driving distance and Heathrow is within close proximity. The High Road itself is an extremely busy road but the wide pavements lined with trees serve as a buffer for pedestrians.

1.2.4 The original village of Chiswick is situated on the banks of the Thames and the High Road remained fields and market gardens with sporadic development along the high road route until the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The area became much more suburban following the introduction of the railways in the 1860's, the development of the Glebe Estate (1871-1901) and the suburb of Bedford Park (1874-1900).

1.2.5 Today the well-proportioned, tree lined residential streets either side of the High Road, good access to local shops and services together with good transport links make the area a popular place to live. The area was identified as an area of special interest in the London Borough of Hounslow Urban Context and Character Study 2014.

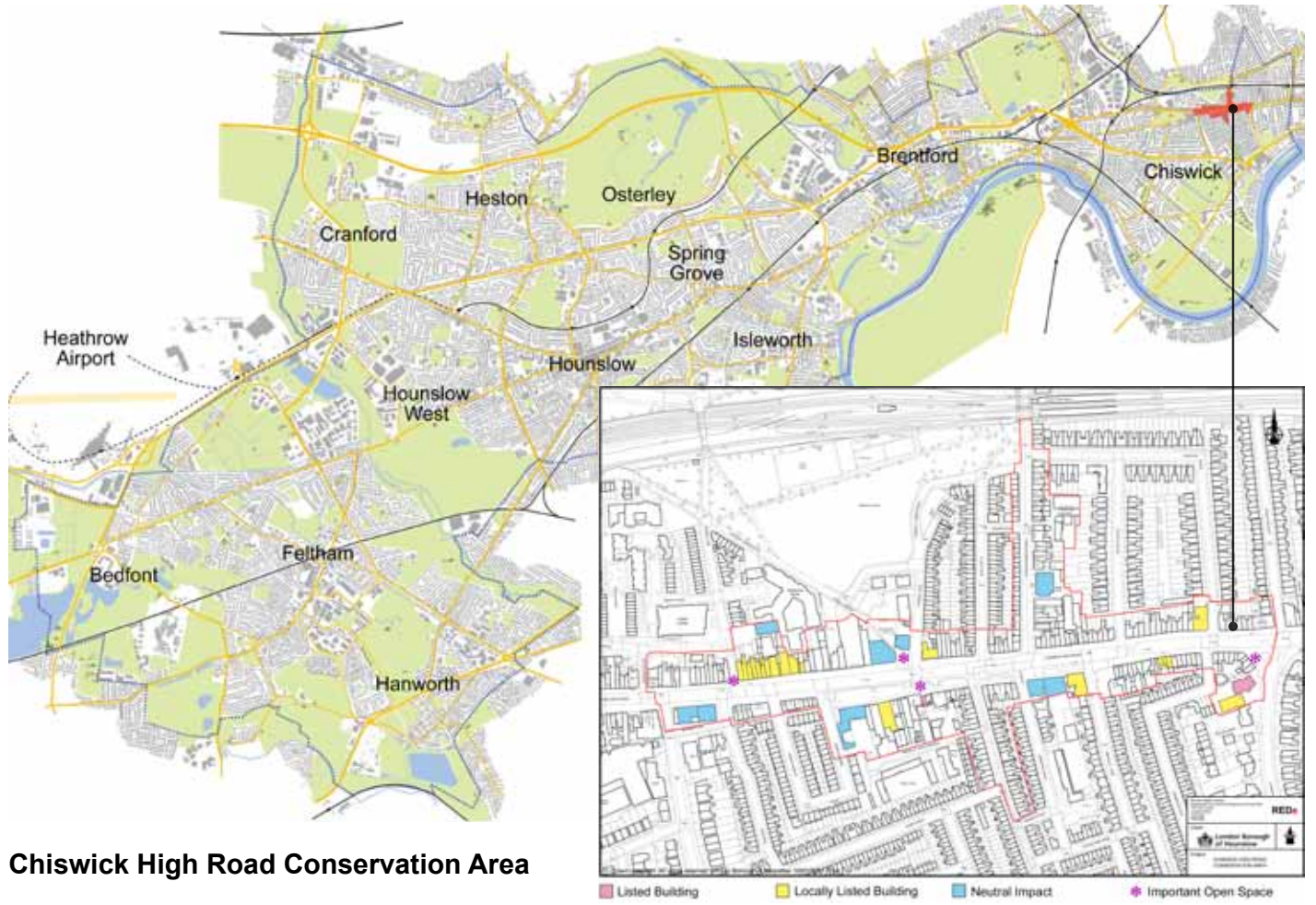
1.3 Format of the Conservation Area Appraisal

1.3.1 This document is an "appraisal" document as defined by English Heritage in their guidance document "Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management", revised June 2012.

1.3.2 An Appraisal document, to quote from the English heritage document, should provide "an understanding and articulation of an area's character which can be used to develop a robust policy framework for planning decision." It is intended to form a basis for further work on design guidance and enhancement proposals.

1.3.3 The Appraisal describes and analyses the particular character of the Chiswick High Road Conservation Area attempting to portray the unique qualities which make the area "special" and providing an analysis of the significance of the area. Once adopted the appraisal will become a material consideration when determining planning applications.

1.3.4 The document is structured as follows. This introduction is followed by an outline of the legislative and policy context (both local and national), for the Conservation Area. Then there is a description of the geographical context and historical development of the Conservation Area and a description of the buildings within it. A "SWOT" analysis is done to clarify and summarise the key issues affecting the area. A schedule of properties included in the conservation area, a Bibliography, and list of figures is provided at the end of the document for reference.



Chiswick High Road Conservation Area



2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 National Policies

2.1.1 Government Advice concerning heritage assets is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012). The conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core principle of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). As Conservation Areas are defined as “designated heritage assets” in the NPPF weight must be given to their conservation and enhancement in the planning process.

2.1.2 Any decisions relating to listed buildings and their settings and conservation areas must address the statutory considerations of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (see in particular sections 16, 66 and 72) as well as satisfying the relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan.

2.2 Local Policies

2.2.1 The Built Environment chapter of the London Borough of Hounslow Unitary Development Plan 2003 contains a number of saved policies aimed at the protection of the historic environment, policies ENV-B.2.1 and ENV-B.2. Both refer specifically to conservation areas.

http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/index/environment_and_planning/planning/planning_policy/udp.htm

2.2.2 Chapter 6, Context and Character, of the emerging Local Plan (examination held in February and March 2015) also has a number of policies aimed at conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, specifically policy CC4. A link to the plan is below.

http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/index/environment_and_planning/planning/planning_policy/localplan.htm

2.2.3 The London Borough of Hounslow have produced a Supplementary Planning Document Shop Front Design Guidelines January 2013, http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/shop_front_design_guidelines_spd.pdf which will be a material consideration in any application concerning shop fronts in the conservation area.

2.3 Implications of Designation

2.3.1 Conservation Area designation introduces a number of additional controls on development within the area, these are set out below.

2.3.2 Demolition of Buildings

Demolition of an unlisted building within a Conservation Area will require planning permission.

2.3.3 Restrictions on Permitted Development Rights

Planning permission is required for the following: -

- 1) Insertion of dormers in, or other alteration to, a roof slope.
- 2) Installation of satellite dishes on a wall fronting a highway, any chimney, or building more than 15 meters in height.
- 3) Cladding any part of the exterior of a dwelling house with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles.

This list is not exhaustive and it is recommended that you contact the planning department to check if your proposals require consent if in any doubt.

2.3.4 Garages and Outbuildings

Extensions to existing outbuildings whose cubic content is greater than 10 cubic meters would need planning permission.

2.3.5 Trees

Written notice must be given to the Borough Council 6 weeks before intending to carry out surgery to, or fell, a tree in a Conservation Area, unless it is dead or dangerous.

2.3.6 Advertisements

Stricter rules apply in Conservation Areas with regard to the type and size of adverts that can be erected without the Council's permission. Certain categories of advertisement which have "deemed consent" under the Advertisement Regulations are restricted within conservation areas. These include illuminated advertisements on business premises and advertisements on hoardings around development sites. In addition balloons with advertisements are not exempt from the need for advertisement consent in conservation areas.

2.3.7 Special Directions

The Borough Council has the power, following public consultation, to serve a direction under the Planning Regulations to bring developments where planning permission would not normally be required, under planning control. For example, the Council could control the replacement of doors and windows, the insertion of new window openings and the alteration of front gardens.

The purpose of these additional controls is to ensure that the special qualities of an area are not slowly diminished by minor but continuous alterations that cumulatively could have the same adverse effect as one large inappropriate development. This has not been implemented in this particular conservation area as the majority of the properties are commercial with residential above and do not have the same permitted development rights as single family dwellings.

3. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA

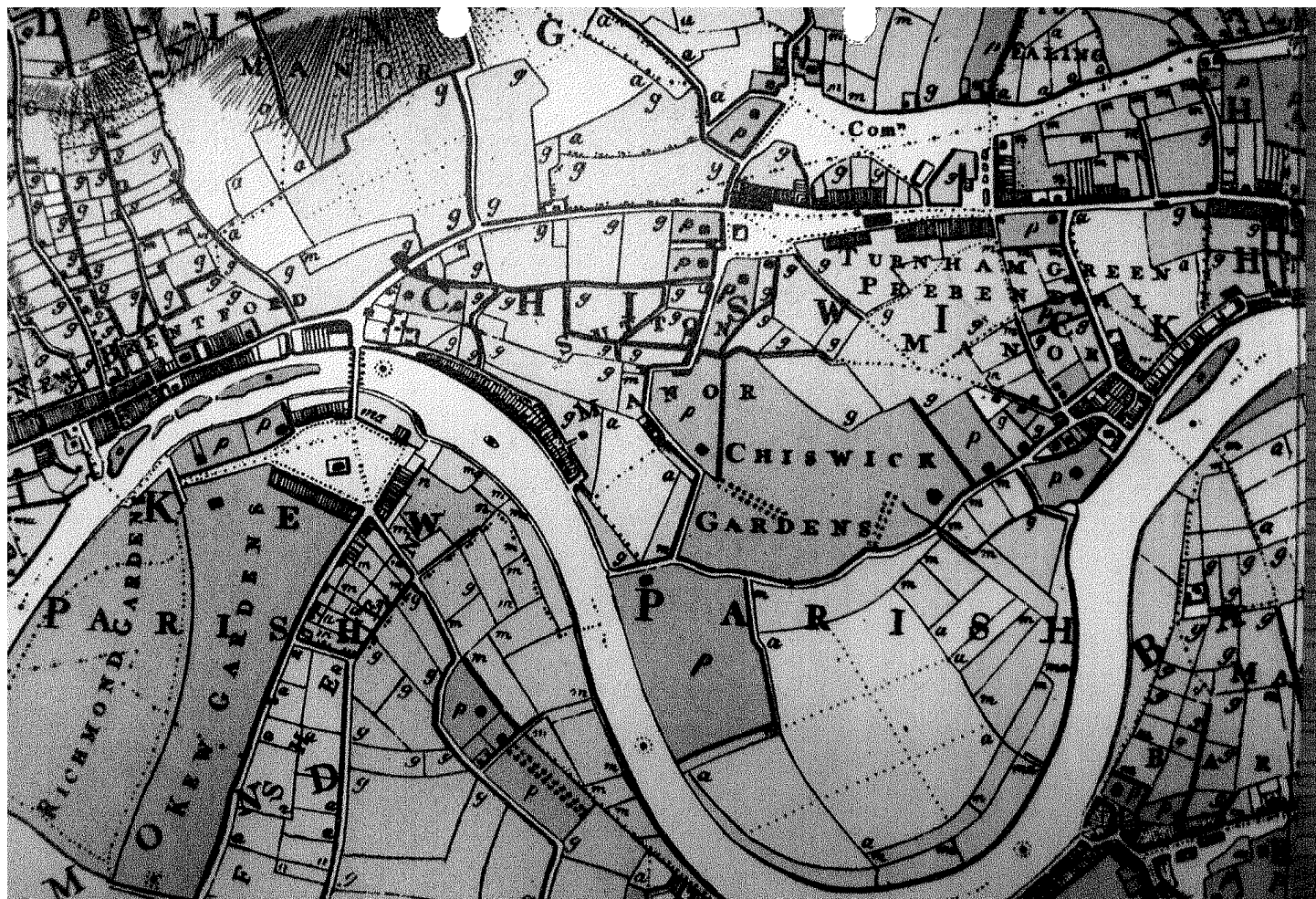


Figure 3: Thomas Milne's map of Chiswick 1799

3.1 Historic Maps

3.1.1 The following maps clearly show the evolution of the High Road from open fields with sporadic development along its route in 1799 to the built up street that it is today, little changed since 1913. The Chiswick High Road Conservation Area boundary has been superimposed on to the later maps to clearly show the area that is being discussed.



Figure 4: 1843

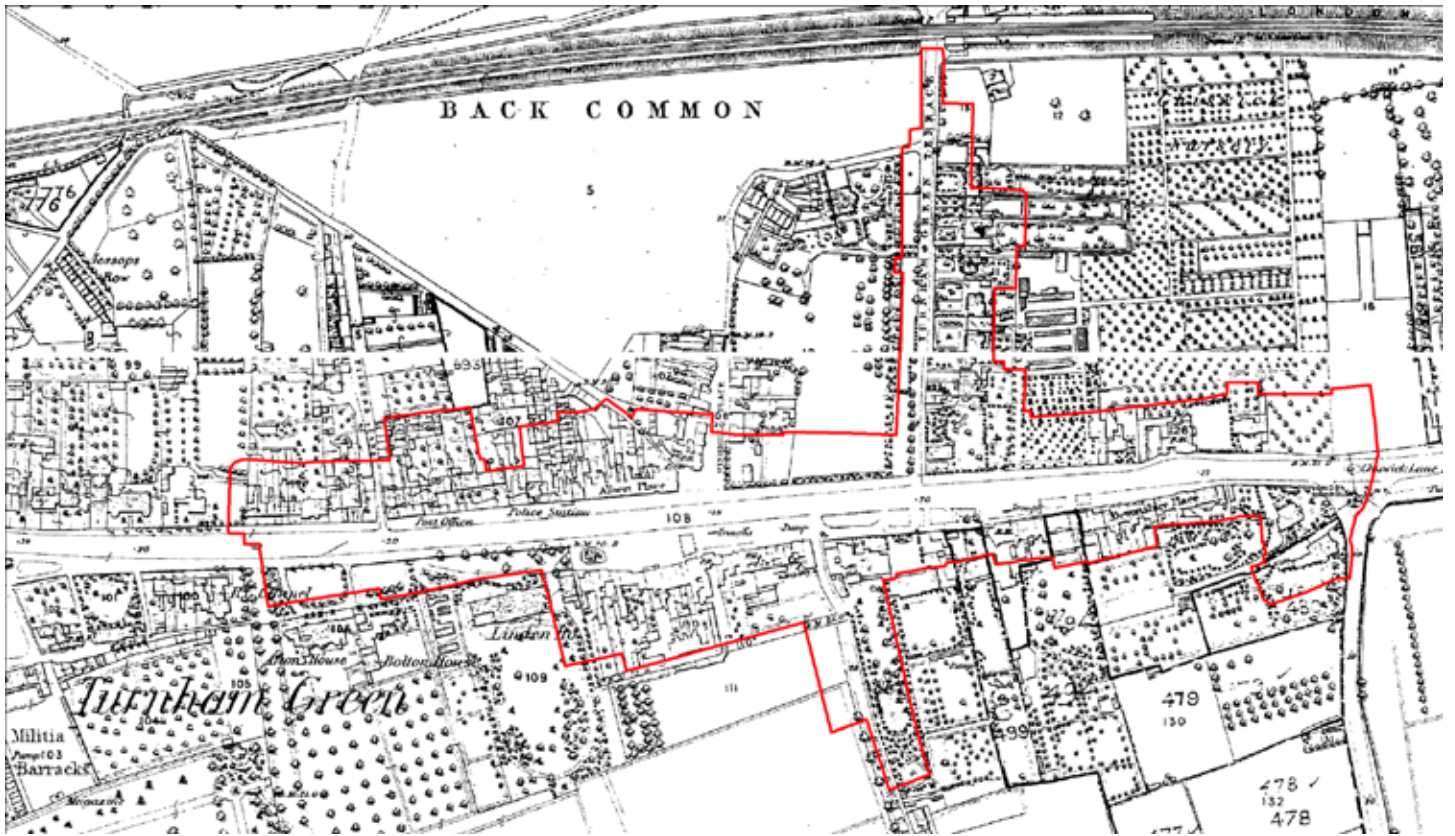


Figure 5: 1865 (© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. London Borough of Hounslow 100019263 2015.)



Figure 6: 1894 (© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. London Borough of Hounslow 100019263 2015.)



Figure 7: 1913 (© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. London Borough of Hounslow 100019263 2015.)

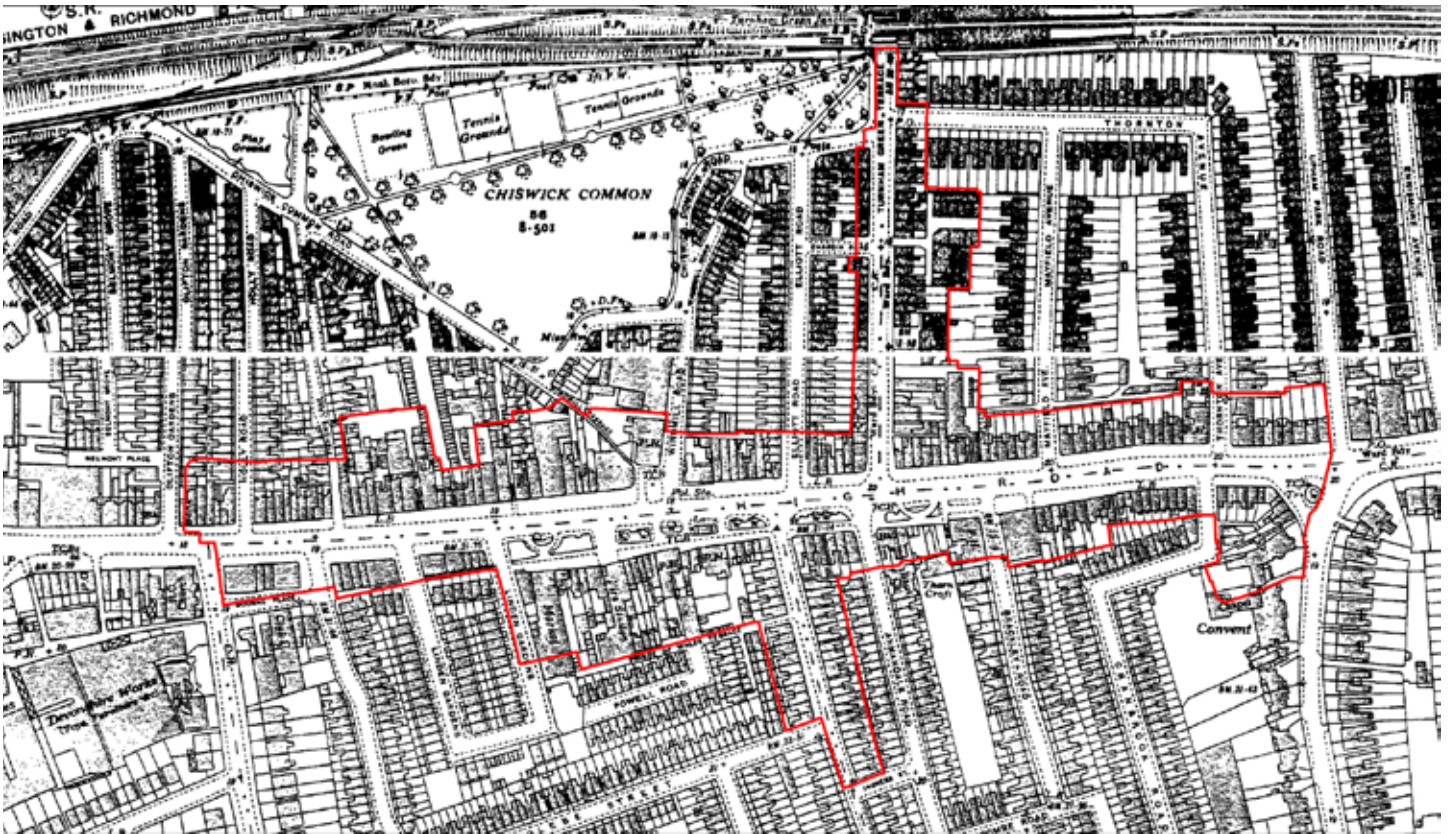


Figure 8: 1934 (© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. London Borough of Hounslow 100019263 2015.)

3.2 Geographic, Economic and Social Features that helped shape the area.

3.2.1 Chiswick High Road follows the route of a Roman Road from central London to the West Country and was the main highway from London to the west of England until the construction of the A4 in the 1950's. It is clear from the 1799 map that it was the only east/west route from the west into and out of London and therefore an important transport route.

3.2.2 The Battle of Turnham Green took place in this area on 13th November 1642 where the parliamentarian army managed to prevent the advance of the royalists. Although most of the battle field is now covered by urban development the area now known as Chiswick Common was part of the battlefield. Although not within the conservation area boundary it is adjacent to the conservation area on the north west of Turnham Green Terrace.

3.2.3 Today we think of this area as the centre of Chiswick, but before the later 19th century the old centre of Chiswick lay further south, around the village church of St Nicholas close to the river (Old Chiswick Conservation Area). During the 17th and 18th centuries a number of large houses were built along the road (most of which were demolished either side of the 20th century) but much of the land was given over to market gardens. The road was known as the High Road or Brentford Road in the late 18th century, and there is reference to it under the metropolitan turnpike roads commissioners in 1826 as 'the great west road' a description which was later to apply to a new route further south. It remained mainly market gardens with sporadic development including a number of coaching inns until the later part of the 19th century which was when it was renamed Chiswick High Road.

3.2.4 The road became a toll road in 1717 until 1872 when tolls were abolished and was part of the stage coach route to Bath, Exeter and beyond. There were a number of inns along its length that provided travellers with places to stop many of which remain today, at least by name as many of the public houses along the High Road were rebuilt in the later part of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Packhorse and Talbot, on the corner with Devonshire Avenue, and the Roebuck on the corner with Thornton Avenue, are amongst them and are an important part of the evolution of the conservation area. The Packhorse and Talbot 145 Chiswick High Road has existed on the same site since the 17th century, it was the meeting place of the Turnpike Trust between 1764 and 1777 and was mentioned in the 1725 trial of the Highway Man Jonathan Wild. On the following page is a picture of the pub in the late 19th century.

3.2.5 The road was lit by gas in 1841 but in the 1860s open country still separated the three settlements at Old Chiswick, Turnham Green and Hammersmith. Turnham Green Railway Station was opened in 1869. The historic maps show a huge increase in building along the high road after this date. After the First World War there was little room for building in the area, where almost all the market gardens had vanished and the existing commons had been preserved for recreation. The ribbon development became extensive and the open character became lost.

3.2.6 The Chiswick High Road Conservation Area concentrates on the retail frontage that developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries along the main road following the arrival of the railway and the development of the residential suburbs at Bedford Park and The Grove Estate. The terraces remain relatively intact with few modern infill additions and, almost without exception, have retail on the ground floor with residential above. There are a few remnants of earlier Georgian buildings and a



Figure 9: The Packhorse and Talbot c1890 copyright London borough of Hounslow

number of later infill additions but, the large majority of the buildings were built in the late 19th or early 20th century.

3.2.7 The historic maps show the development of the area really started to take off in the 1880's with the 1865 OS map showing market gardens and the 1894 map a more built up street frontage.

3.2.8 This rapid expansion of the area was fuelled by the new railway line. The Glebe estate was built 1871-1901) as simple self-contained terraced housing for artisan workers and Bedford Park (1874-1900) was deliberately aesthetic in design and mostly semidetached. The huge increase in the population of the area brought about the commercial development of the High Road.

3.2.9 The urban form of the area has changed little since the early 20th century. There is a consistency of scale throughout the conservation area with runs of three storey terraces, the majority of which retain their original detailing. The terraces are terminated with well detailed parapets or various types of gables and there is a strong consistent plot width and rhythm throughout the conservation area. Brick is the dominant building material, with stuccos dressing and detailing.

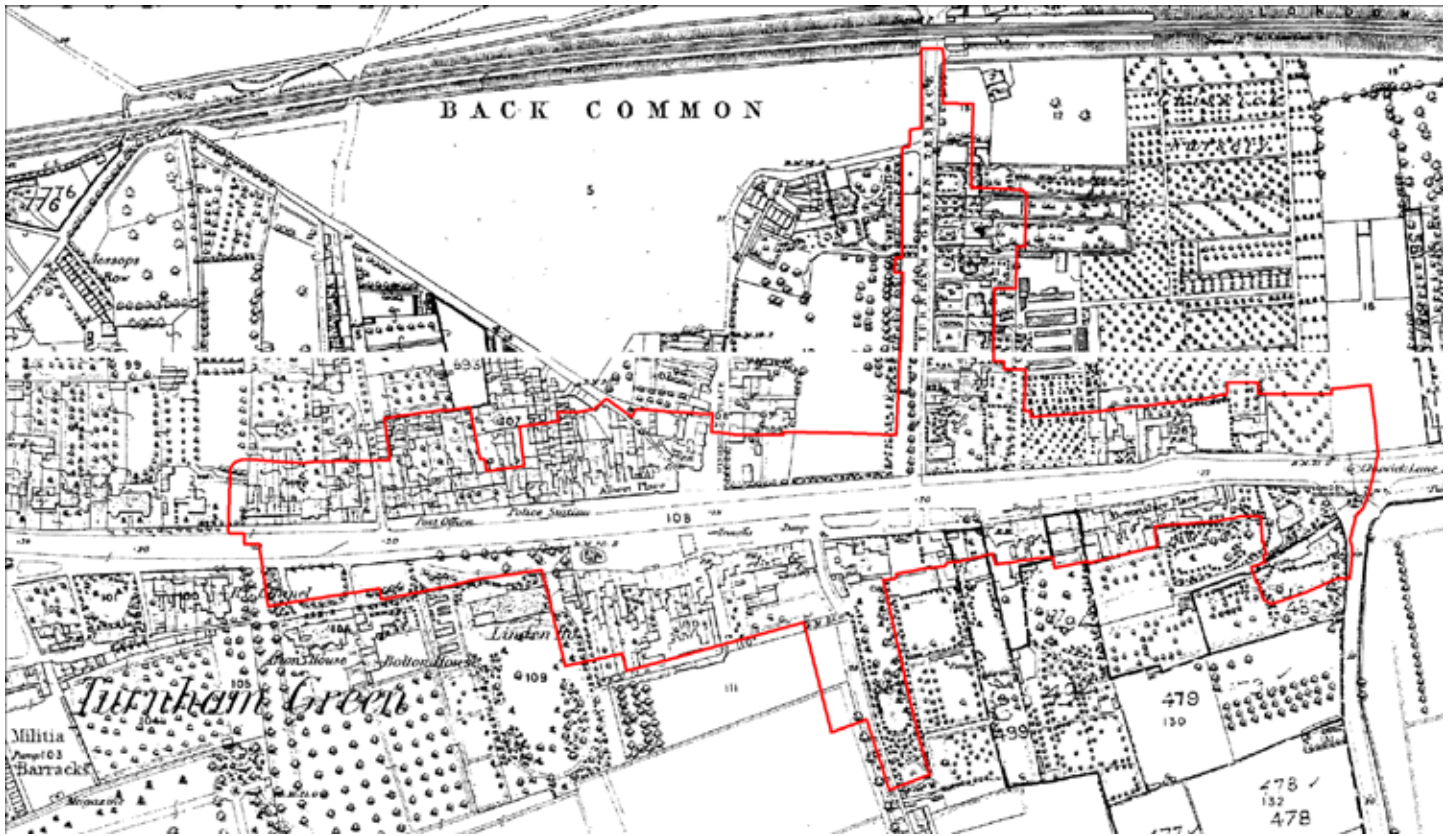


Figure 10: 1865 (© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. London Borough of Hounslow 100019263 2015.)



Figure 11: 148-178 Chiswick High Road, strong parapet line and regular fenestration pattern. January 2015

4. THE CONSERVATION AREA AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

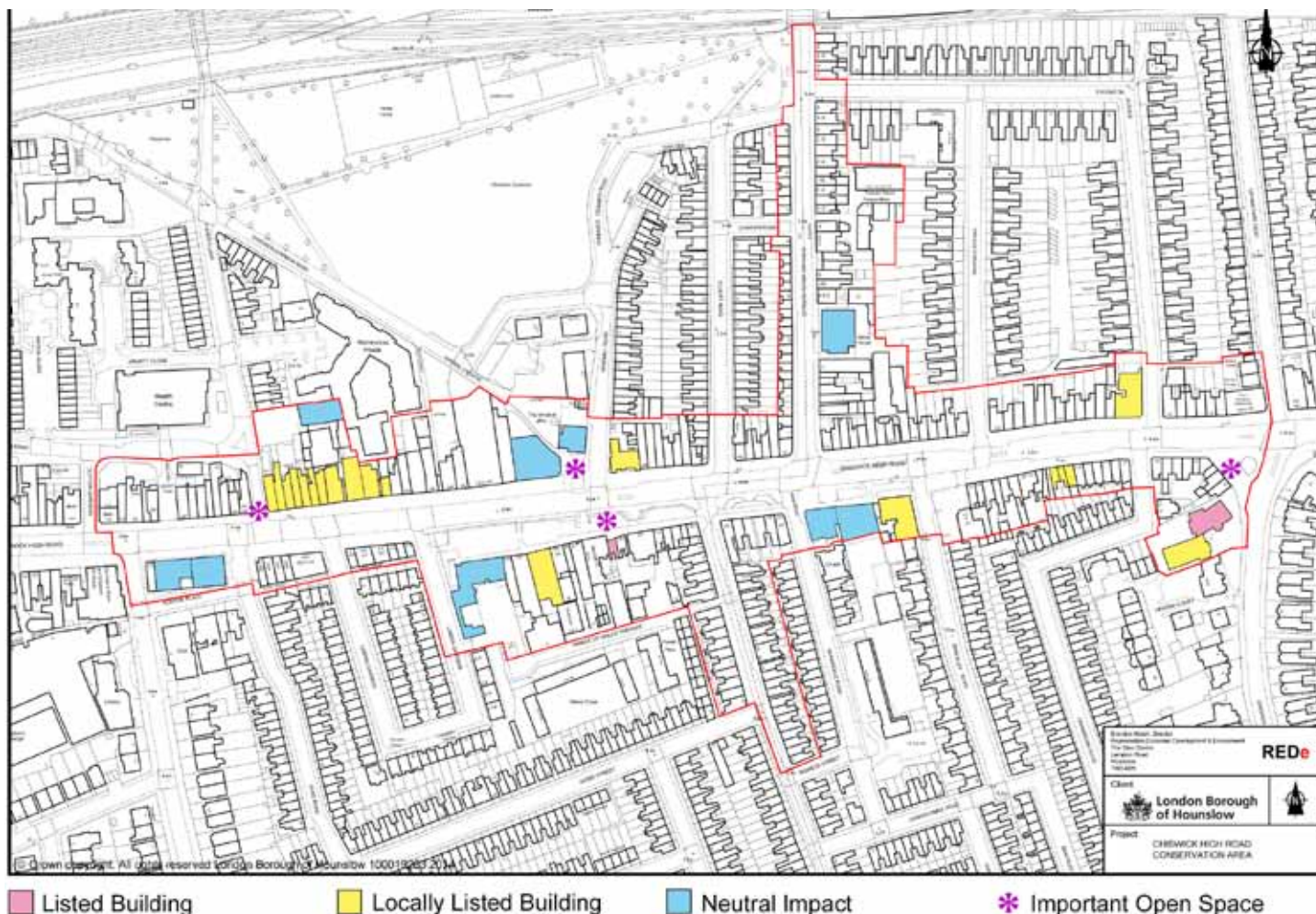


Figure 12: Chiswick High Road Conservation Area Location Plan

4.1 The Surrounding Area and the Setting of the Conservation Area

4.1.1 The proposed Chiswick High Road would be one of a number of conservation areas designated in Chiswick, each have their own distinct character and amalgamate to form the historic area of Chiswick that is well known. Turnham Green Conservation Area is immediately adjacent to the east and concentrates on the historic village of Turnham Green, one of three settlements on this part of the road out of London and the original village of Chiswick situated on the banks of the river to the south of the High Road is also designated as a conservation area. Bedford Park, to the north, is probably the best known and best preserved later Victorian suburb in outer London and the old village of Chiswick centred around St Nicholas Church lies to the south of the High Road on the banks of the river.

4.1.2 The conservation area boundary is drawn at the junction of Chiswick High Road with Chiswick Lane, the three storey Edwardian buildings finish around here and the commercial gives way to smaller residential terraces set back from the high road. Chiswick High Road Conservation Area centres on the commercial and shopping buildings developed in the late 19th early 20th century.



Figure 13: Looking west down Chiswick High Road c1901 copyright London borough of Hounslow

4.2 Character Areas

Despite covering a small space the conservation area can be split into three distinct character areas.

4.2.1 Chiswick High Road

As already discussed there was sporadic development and market gardens along the High Road outside the main settlements of Turnham Green and Hammersmith until the later 19th century. Today the buildings that line the High Road are predominantly three storey with commercial on the ground floor and residential above, largely brick built with stucco dressings or stone detailing. The tree lined street and wide pavements give a pleasant pedestrian environment despite the busy road which gets congested at peak hours.

Although the majority of the buildings date from the late 19th century there are pockets of earlier development still visible. The conservation area includes 2 grade II listed buildings and 18 locally listed buildings on the High Road which is testament to the high quality detailing and survival of original features. A number of former civic buildings are located along this stretch of the High Road, including the former fire station (1891) and former police station (1874), both buildings have now been converted. There is a long history of coaching inns along the road and today Chiswick High Road is well known for its bars and restaurants, a number of the public houses have stood on the same spot since the 17th century albeit now rebuilt.



Figure 14: Looking south down Devonshire Road January 2015

The scale and height of the buildings along the High Road are consistent with a principal route into and out of London. Chiswick High Road has long been an important transport corridor, trams were first introduced along the high road in 1901 but the tracks are shown on the 1894 map and today it is a busy bus route with many services running its length.

4.2.2 Devonshire Road

The 1865 map shows a road leading off Chiswick High Road to Market Gardens and fields, Devonshire Road itself does not appear as a road name until the 1894 map as part of the grid laid out as the Glebe Estate. The area that has been included in the conservation area all have commercial frontages with shops on the ground floor and residential accommodation above.

It is secondary street to the High Road with two storey buildings and smaller plot widths but has been included in the conservation area as an important part of the economic growth of this part of the High Road. The original high quality detailing remains as do the original pilasters and corbels separating the shops, although the original shop front have all disappeared. The shopping street has a consistent character with good quality shop fronts and signage.



Figure 15: Looking North down Turnham Green Terrace c1930 copyright London Borough of Hounslow

4.2.3 Turnham Green Terrace

Turnham Green Terrace leads from the High Road to Turnham Green Railway Station and it is an important route that acts as a gateway to Chiswick. Its character differs from that of both the High Road and Devonshire Road as it is not of a consistent scale on both sides of the road. On the east side there are mainly three storey buildings with retail units on the ground floor and residential accommodation above but on the west there is an interesting terrace of single storey shops. Buildings along the west side of Turnham Green Terrace do not appear until the 1915 OS map so they are amongst the latest in the conservation area.

4.2.4 The high quality of the buildings and the retention of original detail is common with the rest of the conservation area.

4.3 Urban Structure, Plan Form and Streetscape

4.3.1 Study of the urban structure reveals that the area has changed little since its expansion in the late 19th century. In fact the main roads in the area, Chiswick High Road, Chiswick Lane and Turnham Green Terrace are all early routes and marked on Thomas Milne's map of Chiswick from 1799. By 1843 what would become Devonshire Road appears and the railway running parallel with the High Road is shown by 1865 although the areas surrounding the High Road are still fields and market gardens.



Example of pilaster and cornice detail on Chiswick High Road



Example of original detailing Chiswick High Road

The railway fuelled expansion of the suburbs with the Glebe Estate (1871-1901) and Bedford Park (1877-1900) springing up on the edges of the conservation area. By 1884 the urban structure is fairly similar to what we see today with only a few empty plots fronting the High Road. Turn of the century photographs show the wide pavements and tree lined streets that exist today.

4.3.2 The London Borough of Hounslow Urban Context and Character Study (2014) describes the “general uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type use and period” as defining characteristics of the area and states that “building quality and consistency are generally high”. The buildings within the conservation area are predominantly late 19th or early 20th century, three storey brick buildings with stucco or stone dressings. There are many similarities to the buildings in the conservation area including consistent building materials, height and plot width but there is a great variety in the detail of particular terraces which overall produce a high quality cohesive late 19th century development.

4.3.3 The proportion of the buildings is important in streetscape terms, the consistent three storey height, regular fenestration pattern, strong parapet line and plot widths work together to provide a regular rhythm and buildings that do not overbear the pedestrian. Devonshire Road is two storey indicating its secondary shopping street position but all the above characteristics are also displayed in its terraces. The existing building heights works well with the width of the streets with the taller



Figure 16: 110-122 Chiswick High Road c1950 copyright London Borough of Hounslow

building on Chiswick High Road and lesser building on adjoining roads. Proposals for new development within the area should respect this established scale.

4.3.4 Turnham Green Terrace has a slight different character again, with a larger variety in height of buildings but a regular rhythm is set by the plot width and regular fenestration pattern of the upper stories.

4.3.5 Nearly all of the buildings in the conservation area have retail units on their ground floors. Shop fronts, canopies and signs play an important role in the streetscape of the conservation area. Whilst the majority of original shop fronts have been replaced there is high survival of the pilasters and corbels separating units and contributing to the appearance of a fine grain, dense shopping street. Care should be taken when replacing shop fronts to ensure that proportions of the fascia boards are correct and that replacement shop fronts and signage are appropriate. There are a number of original late 19th century shop fronts which should be preserved as far as possible.



Figure 17: Original shop front at 194 Chiswick High Road January 2015

4.4 Views, Focal Points and Focal buildings

4.4.1 The conservation area contains 18 locally listed buildings and two grade II listed buildings, although the majority of the building within it are of townscape merit and make a positive contribution to the area.

4.4.2 Most of the buildings included within the conservation area have retail/commercial at ground floor level with residential accommodation above but there are a number of former civic buildings (former police station and former fire station) clearly differentiated from the majority by their facades and attention to details. Both have been converted to public houses now but their former uses are still able to be read.

4.4.3 As previously mentioned, the area was originally the main route from London to the West Country and a number of coaching inns were recorded along its length. These were re built as part of the late 19th early 20th century expansion of the area and are now prominent focal buildings within the conservation areas. The Roebuck, the Packhorse and Talbot, and the George V the most prominent.



Figure 18: Opening of Chiswick Fire Station 1891(now All Bar One) copyright London Borough of Hounslow



Figure 19: The Packhorse and Talbot Public House January 2015



Figure 20: The Roebuck Public House January 2015

4.4.4 Long views east/west along the High Road are significant and the key characteristics of the conservation area can be seen. The photo above illustrates the consistent height, strong parapet line and continuous shop frontage.

4.4.5 There are a number of modern infill buildings which make either a neutral or a negative contribution to the area, shown on the map (need to include the annotated map) the most prominent of these if on Turnham Green Terrace where it is out of scale and the antennae on the roof exacerbate this issue.

4.4.6 The 1960's Police Station is also a building that it out of scale with its surroundings as is the five storey block on the corner with Windmill Lane, which is not only out of scale but also breaks the building line.

4.5 Open Spaces, Landscape and Trees

4.5.1 Chiswick High Road is characterised by its wide, tree lined pavements. The trees that line the road are an essential part of the character of the conservation area and help to buffer pedestrians from the busy traffic on the main road.

4.5.2 The open space created by the splayed corner with Chiswick Lane at the eastern entrance to the conservation area is important in framing views into the conservation area and also acts as a place for people to sit and rest in the busy high street environment. This area could be improved by improved seating and planting.



Figure 21: Looking west down Chiswick High Road from Mayfield Terrace January 2015



Figure 22: Looking north down Turnham Green Terrace January 2015



Figure 23: The corner of Windmill Lane and Chiswick High Road January 2015

4.5.3 In the middle of the conservation area the High Road steps back and what was once a market area is now a car park. Historically this area was an important open space and the area could be improved greatly with the removal of the bins which seem to attract large amounts of rubbish

4.5.4 Chiswick Common sits at the edge of the conservation area on the western side of Turnham Green Terrace, whilst not within the conservation area it is an important open space and provides a green lung for those that live and work on or nearby to Chiswick High Road.

4.6 Activities and Uses

4.6.1 Chiswick High Road is now the commercial heart of Chiswick, it is well known in west London for its independent shops and pleasant cafes, bars and restaurants. The proposed conservation area is a lively and vibrant place. It is hoped that the inclusion of these streets within a conservation area it will help to ensure that new shop fronts and signs are of a high quality design that will contribute to the fabric of the area.



Figure 24: Chiswick High Road Market 1925 copyright London Borough of Hounslow



Figure 25: The market place January 2015

5. S.W.O.T ANALYSIS

The Chiswick High Road Conservation Area is notable for its core of later 19th century buildings, the majority of the buildings included within the conservation areas boundary make a positive contribution to it and together form an interesting and historic streetscape. However a number of negative features have impacted on the quality of the historic environment, many of which would be reversible given the right advice. The S.W.O.T analysis below briefly summarises the main issues within the conservation area and could provide the basis of a management plan in the future.

5.1 Strengths

- Busy vibrant high street not many vacant premises
- Wide tree lined pavements
- Survival of high quality original detailing
- Strong parapet line

5.2 Weaknesses

- Traffic and congestion
- Poor advertisements and some poor shop fronts

5.3 Opportunities

- Improvement of public realm
- Creation of public open space in the former market area.

5.4 Threats

- Inappropriate shop front replacement
- Advertisement banners
- Empty shop units
- Roof extensions
- Removal of original details
- Demolition of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the area

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Special Interest

The special interest of the Chiswick High Road Conservation Area lies primarily in its development as a shopping street in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the survival of the buildings from this age. It is distinct from the two adjacent conservation areas as Turnham Green focuses on the earlier settlement in around the green and Bedford Park which concentrates on the comprehensive development of the residential suburb. The conservation area also encompasses the commercial premises on Devonshire Road and Turnham Green Terrace. Important characteristics of the conservation area include a strong and consistent parapet line, high quality detailing and use of materials.

6.2 Recommendations for further work

This appraisal should be used as the starting point for further guidance for development in the area, it could be expanded in the future to include a management plan which would give more specific policies and include information about maintenance of the historic buildings in the area.

APPENDIX 1- SCHEDULE OF PROPERTIES IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

- 104-310 (even) Chiswick High Road
- 79-249 (odd) Chiswick High Road
- 2 Chiswick Lane
- 2-46 (even) Devonshire Road
- 1-19 (odd) Devonshire Road
- 2A Holly Road
- Swan Business Centre Fishers Lane
- 2-90 (even) Turnham Green Terrace
- 1-63 (odd) Turnham Green Terrace

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**London Borough
of Hounslow**