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## Heritage Statement

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**1a - 5 St. John's Road  
Isleworth  
London Borough of Hounslow  
TW7 6NA**

**Network Housing Group  
March 2016**

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# 1a-5 ST. JOHN'S ROAD, ISLEWORTH, LONDON BOROUGH OF HOUNSLOW, TW7 6NA

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by RPS CgMs on behalf of Network Housing Group and considers the proposed demolition and redevelopment of 1a-5 St Johns Road, Isleworth, TW7 6NA, henceforth referred to as the study site.

The demolition and redevelopment proposals include the construction of a new part-3-part-5 storey building, designed to provide 34 residential units (14 affordable) with associated car and cycle parking, and landscaping.

The study site sits within the London Borough of Hounslow, on the western side of St Johns Road, opposite which are a small number of early-20th century terraced houses and a further mid-late-20th century detached dwelling. These form a small part of the south-eastern tip of the wider Spring Grove Conservation Area.

Importantly, the study site itself does not include any designated or non-designated heritage assets, neither is it within the setting of any statutorily listed buildings or additional conservation areas. Instead the study site is formed by a mid-late-20th century commercial building, with additional warehousing and yards to the rear. A further mid-late-20th century dwelling with garage is located within the northern section of the site.

The study site is flanked to the north by a pair of mid-late-20th century semi-detached dwellings of no architectural or historic merit. To the south there is an existing access route which links St Johns Road to the Metro light-industrial area (warehousing and yards) located behind the site. Beyond this access route is a substantial late-20th century office building and railway bridge. The office building, located immediately to the south of the study site, has also recently been granted permission (ref: P/2103/2286), which included a change of use (Hotel) and the addition of two further storeys.

These two structures will continue to obscure views to the south from the study site and St Johns Road. Consequently, the Woodlands Grove Conservation Area (designated), additional Areas of Special Character (non-designated heritage assets), and the small number of distant statutorily listed buildings located well beyond these structures share no setting or character context with the study site.

Instead, the existing street scene on St Johns Road incorporates poor quality glimpsed views west, towards the modern buildings and yards associated with the wider Metro light-industrial area behind the study site. This area is situated between London Road to the north, Sidmouth Avenue/Crawford Close to the west, and the substantial railway embankment to the south.

Fundamentally, it is evident after a site visit in February 2016, that the complex and varied architectural context surrounding the study site therefore provides a composite street scene, of which St Johns Road itself delineates a legible and definitive point of visual and physical architectural transition as one progresses east-west. The evolving architectural character on the western side of St Johns Road consequently reads separately to the semi-historic residential character to the east (formed by a limited and much later section of the Spring Grove Conservation Area).

Consequently, as described in the LB Hounslow's pre-application response (letter dated 26 February 2016), the proposed scheme would be in keeping with the context of the surrounding area, with an acceptable approach to scale and massing that responds to the immediate built environment through considered design.

As a result, the scheme represents an opportunity better utilise a site on the fringe of the conservation area. It will enhance the setting and character of the adjacent conservation area by replacing a large section of the existing incongruous, poor quality architecture that sits upon western edge of St Johns Road with high quality residential-led development.

In support of the above, this document presents a summary of the relevant legislative framework, as well as planning policy and adopted guidance at both national and local levels, with particular reference to policies that relate to Conservation Areas.

In addition, an historical and architectural appraisal of the immediate area's development, including Spring Grove Conservation Area, will seek to provide an informed assessment of the proposed works. Ensuring the underlying character, setting and significance of this designated heritage asset is highlighted, relative to the existing and proposed development at the study site.

Essentially, the document has been produced to assist those involved in considering the application, specifically with regard to aspects concerning enhancement opportunities for sites within or bordering conservation areas.

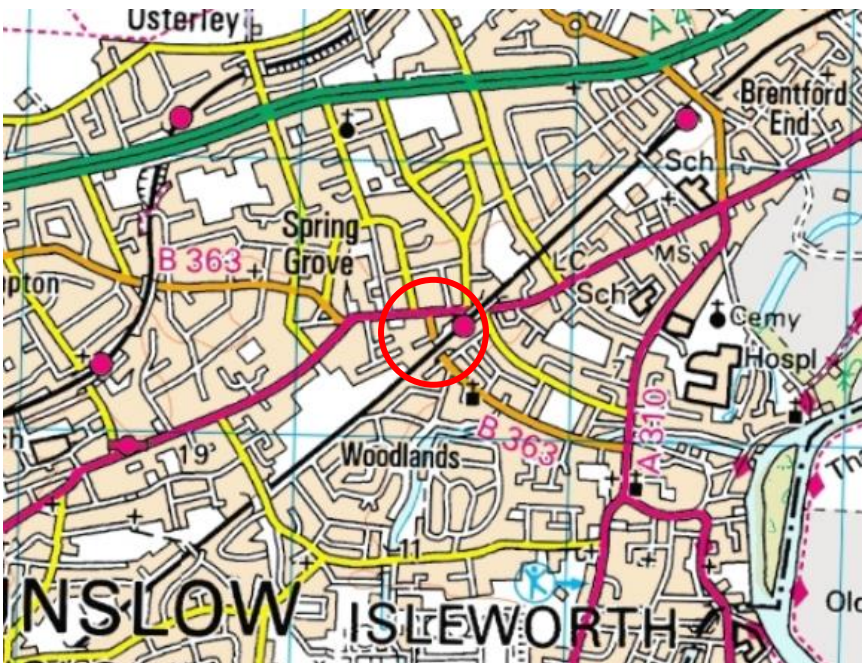


Figure 1: Site location marked in red. NTS. Source: OS Mapping (2015).

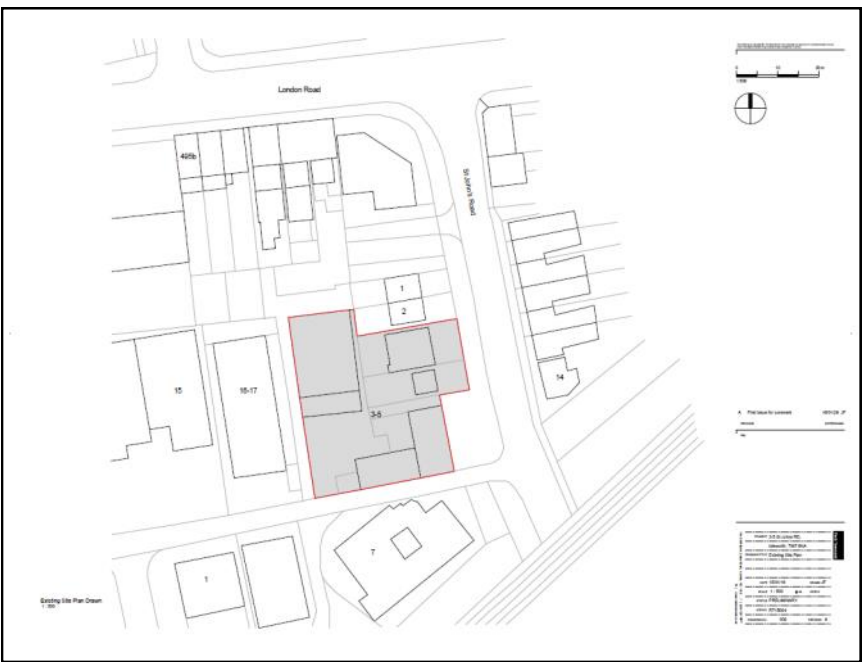


Figure 2: Existing site plan. Source: Rock Townsend (2016).

## 2.0 LEGISLATIVE AND PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 LEGISLATION, NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

The current policy regime identifies, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), that applications should consider the potential impact of development on Heritage Assets. This term includes both designated heritage assets, which possess a statutory designation (for example listed buildings, conservation areas, and registered parks and gardens), as well as undesignated heritage assets.

#### Legislation

Legislation regarding buildings and areas of special architectural and historic interest is contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The relevant legislation in this case extends from Section 16 of the 1990 Act which states that in considering applications for listed building consent, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the Listed Building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 66 further states that special regard must be given by the authority in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing Listed Buildings and their setting.

According to Section 69 of the Act a Conservation Area (CA) is an “area of special architectural or historic interest the character and the appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance”. It is the duty of Local Authorities to designate such areas and to use their legal powers to safeguard and enhance the special qualities of these areas within the framework of controlled and positive management of change.

Section 69 further states that it shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly. Adding, The Secretary of State may from time to time determine that any part of a local planning authority’s area which is not for the time being designated as 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; and, if he so determines, he may designate that part as a conservation area.

Further to this Section 72 of the 1990 Act states that in exercising all planning functions, local planning authorities must have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. Further provisions are detailed in Section 74 of the Act.

#### National Planning Policy

##### ***National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), (March 2012)***

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27 March 2012 and sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It has purposefully been created to provide a framework within which local people and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) can produce their own distinctive Local and Neighbourhood Plans which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

When determining Planning Applications the NPPF directs LPAs to apply the approach of presumption in favour of sustainable development; the ‘golden thread’ which is expected to run through the plan-making and decision-taking activities. It should be noted however, that this is expected to apply except where this conflicts with other policies combined within the NPPF, inclusive of those covering the protection of designated heritage assets, as set out in paragraph 14 of the NPPF.

Within section 7 of the NPPF, ‘Requiring Good Design’, Paragraphs 56 to 68, reinforce the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development by ensuring the creation of inclusive and high quality places. This section of the NPPF affirms, in paragraph 58, the need for new design to function well and add to the quality of the area in which it is built; establish a strong sense of place; and respond to local character and history, reflecting the built identity of the surrounding area.

Section 12, ‘Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment’, Paragraphs 126-141, relate to developments that have an effect upon the historic environment. These paragraphs provide the guidance to which local authorities need to refer when setting out a strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in their Local Plans. This should be a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment and should include heritage assets which are most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. It is also noted that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. The NPPF further provides definitions of terms which relate to the historic environment in order to clarify the policy guidance given. For the purposes of this report, the following are important to note:

- Heritage asset. This is ‘a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions’. These include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority.

- Significance. The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.

The NPPF advises local authorities to take into account the following points when drawing up strategies for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. These considerations should be taken into account when determining planning applications:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and preserving them in a viable use consistent with their conservation;
- The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that the conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- The desirability of new development in making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness;
- Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

Paragraph 126 of the NPPF states that when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

In order to determine applications for development, Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that LPAs should require applicants to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution made by their setting. Adding that the level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal on this significance.

According to Paragraph 129, LPAs should also identify and assess the significance of a heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal and should take this assessment into account when considering the impact upon the heritage asset.

Paragraph 130 adds that where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.

*Continued overleaf...*



## 2.1 LEGISLATION, NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Paragraphs 132 to 136 consider the impact of a proposed development upon the significance of a heritage asset. Paragraph 132 emphasises that when a new development is proposed, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and that the more important the asset, the greater this weight should be. It is noted within this paragraph that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or by development within its setting.

Paragraph 134 advises that where a development will cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Paragraph 135 notes that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. Adding, that in weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Paragraph 136 stipulates that local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

In addition, Paragraph 137 notes that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Adding, proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

Paragraph 138 importantly clarifies that not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Adding, loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 134, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

The NPPF therefore continues the philosophy of that upheld in PPS5 in moving away from narrow or prescriptive attitudes towards development within the historic environment, towards intelligent, imaginative and sustainable approaches to managing change. English Heritage defined this new approach, now reflected in the NPPF, as 'constructive conservation'. This is defined as 'a positive and collaborative approach to conservation that focuses on actively managing change...the aim is to recognise and reinforce the historic significance of places, while accommodating the changes necessary to ensure their continued use and enjoyment.' (Constructive Conservation in Practice, English Heritage, 2009).

### National Guidance

#### ***National Planning Practice Guidance, (NPPG), (2014)***

This guidance has recently been adopted in order to support the NPPF. It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle.

It also states, conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change, requiring a flexible and thoughtful approach. Furthermore, it highlights that neglect and decay of heritage assets is best addressed through ensuring they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation.

Importantly, the guidance states that if complete, or partial loss of a heritage asset is justified, the aim should then be to capture and record the evidence of the asset's significance, and make the interpretation publically available.

Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. It states, an important consideration should be whether the proposed works adversely affect a key element of the heritage asset's special architectural or historic interest. Adding, it is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development that is to be assessed. The level of 'substantial harm' is stated to be a high bar, that may not arise in many cases. Essentially, whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the NPPF.

Importantly, it is stated harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting. Setting is defined as the surroundings in which an asset is experienced, and may be more extensive than the curtilage. A thorough assessment of the impact of proposals upon setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

### Historic England Guidance

#### **Overview**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015 Historic England (formerly English Heritage) withdrew the PPS5 Practice Guide. This document has been replaced with three Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (GPAs), 'GPA1: Local Plan Making' (Published 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015), 'GPA2: Managing significance in Decision-Taking in the historic Environment' (Published 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015) and 'GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (25<sup>th</sup> March 2015). **A further document entitled 'GPA4: Enabling Development' is yet to be adopted.**

The GPAs provide supporting guidance relating to good conservation practice. The documents particularly focus on the how good practice can be achieved through the principles included within national policy and guidance. As such, the GPAs provide information on good practice to assist LPAs, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties when implementing policy found within the NPPF and PPG relating to the historic environment.

In addition to these documents Historic England has published three core Advice Notes (HEAs) which provide detailed and practical advice on how national policy and guidance is implemented. These documents include; 'HEA1: Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' (25th February 2016), 'HEA2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets' (25th February 2016) and 'HEA3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans' (30th October 2015). In addition to these 'HEA4: Tall Buildings (10<sup>th</sup> December 2005), 'Seeing the History in the View' (31st May 2011) and 'Managing Local Authority Heritage (2nd June 2003)' provide further information and guidance in respect of managing change within the historic environment.

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## 2.1 LEGISLATION, NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

### **Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 1 (GPA1): The Historic Environment in Local Plans (March, 2015)**

This document stresses the importance of formulating Local Plans that are based on up-to-date and relevant evidence in relation to the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of an area, including the historic environment, as set out by the NPPF. The document provides advice on how information in respect of the local historic environment can be gathered, emphasising the importance of not only setting out known sites, but in understanding their value (i.e. significance). This evidence should be used to define a positive strategy for the historic environment and the formulation of a plan for the maintenance and use of heritage assets and for the delivery of development, including within their setting, that will afford appropriate protection for the asset(s) and make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Furthermore, the Local Plan can assist in ensuring that site allocations avoid harming the significance of heritage assets and their settings, whilst providing the opportunity to *‘inform the nature of allocations so development responds and reflects local character’*.

Further information is given relating to cumulative impact, 106 agreements, stating *‘to support the delivery of the Plan’s heritage strategy it may be considered appropriate to include reference to the role of Section 106 agreements in relation to heritage assets, particularly those at risk.’* It also advises on how the heritage policies within Local Plans should identify areas that are appropriate for development as well as defining specific Development Management Policies for the historic environment. It also suggests that a heritage Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in line with paragraph 153 of the NPPF can be a useful tool to amplify and elaborate on the delivery of the positive heritage strategy in the Local Plan.

### **Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 2 (GPA2): Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March, 2015)**

This document provides advice on the numerous ways in which decision-taking in the historic environment can be undertaken, emphasising that the first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and the contribution of its setting to its significance. In line with the NPPF and PPG, this document states that early engagement and expert advice in considering and assessing the significance of heritage assets is encouraged, stating that *‘development proposals that affect the historic environment are much more likely to gain the necessary permissions and create successful places if they are designed with the knowledge and understanding of the significance of the heritage assets they may affect.’*

The advice suggests a structured staged approach to the assembly and analysis of relevant information, this is as follows:

1. Understand the significance of the affected assets;
2. Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
3. Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
4. Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
5. Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change; and
6. Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

The advice reiterates that heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Assessment of the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting at an early stage can assist the planning process resulting in informed decision-taking.

This document sets out the recommended steps for assessing significance and the impact of development proposals upon a heritage asset, including examining the asset and its setting and analysing local policies and information sources. In assessing the impact of a development proposal on the significance of a heritage asset the document emphasises that the cumulative impact of incremental small-scale changes may have as great an effect on the significance of a heritage asset as a larger scale change.

Crucially, the nature and importance of the significance that is affected will dictate the proportionate response to assessing that change, its justification, mitigation and any recording which may be necessary. This document also provides guidance in respect of neglect and unauthorised works.

### **Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 3 (GPA3): The Setting of Heritage Assets (March, 2015)**

This advice note focuses on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. This document replaces ‘The Setting of Heritage Assets’ (English Heritage, March 2011) in order to aid practitioners with the implementation of national policies and guidance relating to the historic environment found within the NPPF and PPG. The guidance is largely a continuation of the philosophy and approach of the 2011 document and does not present a divergence in either the definition of setting or the way in which it should be assessed.

As with the NPPF the document defines setting as ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve’. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context. The guidance emphasises that setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, and that its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset. It also states that elements of setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of the heritage asset.

While setting is largely a visual term, with views considered to be an important consideration in any assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the significance of an asset, setting, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, can also be affected by other environmental factors including noise, vibration and odour, while setting may also incorporate perceptual and associational attributes pertaining to the asset’s surroundings.

This document provides guidance on practical and proportionate decision making with regards to the management of proposed development and the setting of heritage assets. It is stated that the protection of the setting of a heritage asset need not prevent change and that decisions relating to such issues need to be based on the nature, extent and level of the significance of a heritage asset, further weighing up the potential public benefits associated with the proposals. It is further stated that changes within the setting of a heritage asset may have positive or neutral effects.

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## 2.1 LEGISLATION, NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

It is stated that the contribution made to the significance of heritage assets by their settings will vary depending on the nature of the heritage asset and its setting and that different heritage assets may have different abilities to accommodate change within their settings without harming the significance of the asset and therefore setting should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Although not prescriptive in setting out how this assessment should be carried out, noting that any approach should be demonstrably compliant with legislation, national policies and objectives, Historic England recommend using the '5-step process' in order to assess the potential affects of a proposed development on the setting and significance of a heritage asset, with this 5-step process continued from the 2011 guidance:

1. Identification of heritage assets which are likely to be affected by proposals;
2. Assessment of whether and what contribution the setting makes to the significance of a heritage asset;
3. Assessing the effects of proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset;
4. Maximising enhancement and reduction of harm on the setting of heritage assets; and
5. The final decision about the acceptability of proposals.
6. The guidance reiterates the NPPF in stating that where developments affecting the setting results in 'substantial' harm to significance, this harm can only be justified if the developments delivers substantial public benefit and that there is no other alternative (i.e. redesign or relocation).

### **Historic England Advice Note 1 (HEA1): Conservation Areas (February 2016)**

This document forms revised guidance which sets out the ways to manage change in order to ensure that historic areas are conserved. In particular information is provided relating to conservation area designation, appraisal and management. Whilst this document emphasises that '*activities to conserve or invest need to be proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets affected*,' it reiterates that the work carried out needs to provide sufficient information in order to understand the issues outlined in Paragraph 192 of the NPPF, relating to the assessment of any heritage assets that may be affected by proposals.

There are different types of special architectural and historic interest which contribute to the significance and character of a conservation area, leading to its designation. These include:

- Areas with a high number of nationally designated heritage assets and a variety of architectural styles and historic associations;
- Those linked to a particular industry or individual with a particular local interest;
- Where an earlier, historically significant, layout is visible in the modern street pattern;
- Where a particular style of architecture or traditional building materials predominate; and
- Areas designated because of the quality of the public realm or a spatial element, such as a design form or settlement pattern, green spaces which are an essential component of a wider historic area, and historic parks and gardens and other designed landscapes, including those included on the Historic England Register of parks and gardens of special historic interest.

Change is inevitable, however, this document provides guidance in respect of managing change in a way that conserves and enhances areas, through identifying potential within a conservation area. This can be achieved through historic characterisation studies, production of neighbourhood plans, confirmation of special interest and setting out of recommendations. Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states that '*when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest*,' this document reiterates that this needs to be considered throughout this process.

Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Area) Act 1990 places on LPAs the duty to produce proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. This document provides guidance for the production of management plans, which can '*channel development pressure to conserve the special quality of the conservation area*'. These plans may provide polices on the protection of views, criteria for demolition, alterations and extensions, urban design strategy and development opportunities. Furthermore, it includes information relating to Article 4 Directions, which give the LPA the power to limit permitted development rights where it is deemed necessary to protect local amenity or the well-being of an area.

### **Historic England Advice Note 2 (HEA2): Making Changes to Heritage Assets (February 2016)**

The purpose of this document is to provide information in respect of the repair, restoration and alterations to heritage assets. It promotes guidance for both LPAs, consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in order to promote well-informed and collaborative conservation.

The best way to conserve a building is to keep it in use, or to find an appropriate new use. This document states that '*an unreasonable, inflexible approach will prevent action that could give a building new life...A reasonable proportionate approach to owners' needs is therefore essential*'. Whilst this is the case, the limits imposed by the significance of individual elements are an important consideration, especially when considering an asset's compatibility with Building Regulations and the Equality Act. As such, it is good practice for LPAs to consider imaginative ways of avoiding such conflict.

This document provides information relating to proposed change to a heritage asset, which are characterised as:

- Repair;
- Restoration;
- Addition and alteration, either singly or in combination; and
- Works for research alone.

## 2.1 LEGISLATION, NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

### ***Historic England Advice Note 3 (HEA3): The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans (October, 2015)***

This document provides information for those involved in the site allocation process, particularly when implementing historic environment legislation, relevant policy within the NPPF and related guidance found within the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

The inclusion of sites within a Local Plan can provide the opportunity to ensure that new development will avoid harming the significance of both designated and non-designated heritage assets, including effects on their setting. Furthermore, this document highlights the ways in which the process of site allocation may present opportunities to better reveal the historic environment. It sets out a five-step methodology which can assist in appropriate site selection:

Step 1: Identify which heritage assets are affected by the potential site allocation;

Step 2: Understand what contribution the site (in its current form) makes to the significance of heritage asset(s);

Step 3: Identify what impacts the allocation might have on that significance;

Step 4: Consider maximising enhancements and avoiding harm; and

Step 5: Determine whether the proposed site allocation is appropriate in light of the NPPF's tests of soundness.

### ***Seeing the History in the View (Historic England, May 2011)***

This document provides guidance relating to the assessment of heritage significance within views. It gives a method that can be applied to any view that is considered significant in terms of heritage. Historic England is currently in the process of revising this document to reflect the NPPF and recent case law.

Views provide an important role in shaping our appreciation and understanding of the historic environment. Some have been deliberately designed, such as at Greenwich Palace and Stowe Landscape Garden, whilst more often a significant view is formed of a 'historical composite', as a result of a long process of piecemeal development. Such views often contain focal buildings and landmarks which enrich daily life, attract visitors and help communities prosper.

This document states that the assessment of heritage significance within a view can be divided into two phases:

- Phase A *Baseline Analysis*: the following five steps assist in defining and analysing heritage significance within a view:
  - Step 1: Establishing reasons for identifying a particular view as important;
  - Step 2: Identifying which heritage assets in a view merit considerations;
  - Step 3: Assessing the significance of individual heritage assets;
  - Step 4: Assessing the overall heritage significance in a view; and
  - Step 5: How can heritage significance be sustained?
- Phase B: *Assessment*: assesses the potential impact of a specific development proposal on heritage significance within a view, as analysed in Phase A through the following steps:
  - Development proposal;
  - Establishing magnitude of impact on heritage significance; and
  - Significance of Effect.

This document provides further information and guidance relating to feeding the Baseline Analysis into an ES Chapter if necessary.

### ***Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (English Heritage, 2008)***

Conservation Principles outlines English Heritage's approach to the sustainable management of the historic environment. While primarily intended to ensure consistency in English Heritage's own advice and guidance through the planning process, the document is commended to local authorities to ensure that all decisions about change affecting the historic environment are informed and sustainable.

This document was published in line with the philosophy of PPS5, yet remains relevant with that of the current policy regime in the emphasis placed upon the importance of understanding significance as a means to properly assess the effects of change to heritage assets. The guidance describes a range of heritage values which enable the significance of assets to be established systematically, with the four main 'heritage values' being: evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal. The Principles emphasise that '*considered change offers the potential to enhance and add value to places...it is the means by which each generation aspires to enrich the historic environment*' (paragraph 25).



## 2.2 STRATEGIC AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

### Strategic Policy

#### ***The London Plan (adopted July 2011 and revised March 2015)***

On 22 July 2011 the Mayor of London published the London Plan which replaced the amended version of 2004. However, on 10 March 2015 the Mayor of London published the Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP), which now replaces previously published versions of the London Plan. This remains as the strategic Development Plan for London, and Policy 7.8 ‘Heritage Assets and Archaeology’ seeks to record, maintain and protect the city’s heritage assets in order to utilise their potential within the community.

Further to this it provides the relevant policy with regard development in historic environments. It requires that developments which have an affect upon heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

Policy 7.4 ‘Local Character’ requires new developments to have regard to the local architectural character in terms of form, massing, function and orientation. This is supported by Policy 7.8 in its requiring local authorities in their policies, to seek to maintain and enhance the contribution of built, landscaped and buried heritage to London’s environmental quality, cultural identity and economy, as part of managing London’s ability to accommodate change and regeneration.

Policy 7.6 ‘Architecture’ stipulates that architecture should make a positive contribution to a coherent public realm, streetscape and wider cityscape. It should incorporate the highest quality materials and design appropriate to its context.

Essentially the London Plan encourages the enhancement of the historic environment and looks favourably upon developments which seek to maintain the setting of heritage assets.

### Local Policy

Many local planning policies (not only those for design and conservation) can affect development with regard to heritage assets. For instance policies on sustainable development, meeting housing needs, affordable housing, landscape, biodiversity, energy efficiency, transport, people with disabilities, employment and town centres can all have an influence on development and the quality of the environment. However, policies concerned with design quality and character generally take greater importance in areas concerning heritage assets. These policies, along with other matters, will figure in the on-going management of development in the area and form part of the documents that make up the Development Plan.

#### ***Hounslow Local Plan (adopted, September 2015)***

The Local Plan was adopted on the 15 September 2015. It forms part of the development plan for the London Borough of Hounslow and provides the planning framework for the Borough until 2030. It includes a suite of planning policies and strategic site allocations and supersedes the Employment Development Plan Document (adopted November 2008), the Brentford Area Action Plan (adopted January 2009) and the Unitary Development Plan “saved” policies in 2007. The relevant policies within the Local Plan are as follows:

**POLICY CC1 ‘CONTEXT AND CHARACTER’** states that Hounslow Borough Council will recognise the context and varied character of the borough’s places, and seek to ensure that all new development conserves and takes opportunities to enhance their special qualities and heritage by:

- (a) Improving and promoting the appreciation of the character and qualities of the distinctive areas of the borough, by securing development that sensitively and creatively responds to an area’s character and by refusing poor quality design;
- (b) Sustaining and conserving those areas which have a high quality, well established and coherent character that is sensitive to change;
- (c) Enhancing those areas which have a medium quality, mixed character and which would benefit from sensitive improvement and intervention;
- (d) Transforming those areas which have a low quality, poorly defined character and/or where an opportunity exists to establish a new coherent character, enhancing positive elements where they exist; and

- (e) Monitoring and updating the Urban Context and Character Study and ensuring the study informs any supplementary planning documents.

The Borough Council also state they will expect development proposals to:

- (f) Have due regard to the Urban Context and Character Study and demonstrate how the proposal:
  - i. Responds to the design recommendations for each character area and urban type within which their development proposal is located.
  - ii. Responds to the wider context and history of the area, its communities, its natural landscape and its urban structure, form and function.
  - iii. Conserves and takes opportunities to enhance particular features or qualities that contribute to an area’s character, e.g. mature trees.
  - iv. Provides opportunities to help form a new character or improve the poor aspects of an existing character that could benefit from enhancement; and
  - v. Responds to any local architectural vernacular that contributes to an area’s character, for example bay windows.

**POLICY CC2 ‘URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE’** states that Hounslow Borough Council will retain, promote and support high quality urban design and architecture to create attractive, distinctive, and liveable places by:

- a) Ensuring proactive urban design forms an integral part of council development plans, programmes and processes, and prioritising design guidance for areas of change and intensification;
- b) Working with applicants at an early stage (pre-application) to guide and shape the design of development proposals;
- c) Reviewing built and proposed developments, decisions and advice to help raise design standards and awareness of the value of good design;
- d) Working with housing providers to improve the design of estates as part of wider regeneration programmes;
- e) Working with local communities to understand and improve the urban design of their areas through, for example neighbourhood plans; and

## 2.2 STRATEGIC AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

- f) Using good practice guidance such as By Design, the Urban Design Compendium, the Mayor's Housing Design Guide, Mayor's Housing SPG, and Building for Life assessments.

The Borough Council also state they will expect development proposals to:

- g) Understand, integrate and where possible add to the natural landscape; including the topography, geology, existing features, landscape context, local flora and fauna and wider ecological setting of an area. Schemes should ensure that trees are suitably sited, protected during detailed design and construction, and provide amenity for the long term through effective maintenance arrangements;
- h) Deliver the right land use mix, amount and density in the right places to support the rejuvenation of our town centres and the creation of healthy, diverse and varied places;
- i) Create places that are easy to get to and through, foster active lifestyles, are easy to understand and navigate and feel safe during the day and night, with a particular focus on pedestrians and cyclists;
- j) Function well in themselves and in their effect on surrounding areas, have a positive impact on the amenity of current and future residents, visitors and passers-by and help create Lifetime Neighbourhoods that foster social interaction and capital;
- k) Respond meaningfully and sensitively to the site, its characteristics and constraints, and the layout, grain, massing and height of surrounding buildings. The orientation of buildings and uses on sites to make best use of opportunities for passive design and access to daylight/sunlight should be considered;
- l) Provide a clear distinction between private, semi-private and public space, through an understanding of fronts and backs of buildings, ground floor uses, and continuity of street frontages and enclosure of space to help foster comfortable, usable and safe places;
- m) Provide a high quality, comfortable, safe and attractive public realm, well-integrated into its surroundings through using clear, well defined boundary and building lines to address and animate the public realm;
- n) Ensure buildings and spaces are designed to stand the test of time and are easily adaptable and resilient to social, economic and technological change, and can accommodate movement and car parking in a safe and useable way;

- o) Promote and support contemporary architecture that responds intelligently to current and future lifestyles, needs and technology, whilst ensuring it's rooted in local context, at all scales;
- p) Promote low carbon design and incorporate energy efficiency measures that are themselves well integrated into the design and appearance of the development;
- q) Carefully consider external appearance, its composition and arrangement, through the use of high quality, durable materials and finishes and careful, considered detailing for building facades which add visual interest and richness to the street scene. A clear indication of how buildings are used and occupied should be presented, seizing opportunities for passive design wherever possible;
- r) Be designed to mitigate noise and air quality issues which significantly affect parts of the borough;
- s) Be designed so it is fully accessible to people with disabilities or impaired mobility;
- t) Provide adequate outlook, minimise overbearingness and overshadowing, and ensure sufficient sunlight and daylight to proposed and adjoining/adjacent dwellings; reduce reliance on single aspect dwellings, particularly if north facing, within noise bands C and D (as defined in the Noise Supplementary Planning Document) or containing 3 bedrooms or more; provide adequate levels of privacy and minimise direct overlooking through the careful layout, design and orientation of buildings and spaces; and
- u) Make well-designed provision for bicycles, and the acceptable storage of refuse, materials for recycling and composting and for convenient access for its deposit and collection in consultation with the council's waste services. Enclosures should be robust, well ventilated and attractively integrated with the building and screened for privacy and security.

**POLICY CC5 'HERITAGE'** states that Hounslow Borough Council will identify, conserve and take opportunities to enhance the significance of the borough's heritage assets as a positive means of supporting an area's distinctive character and sense of history by:

- a) Collating a borough-wide Heritage Strategy to guide a long-term, ambitious strategy for the continued conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the significance of the borough's heritage assets, in consultation with the borough's local history societies and residents;
- b) Conserving and taking opportunities to enhance the significance of the borough's network of designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings, identifying new assets where appropriate and recognising the cumulative positive impact of heritage assets in a given area in consultation with the borough's local history societies and residents. We will use Article 4 directions where appropriate to enhance conservation of character or fabric;
- c) Promoting heritage-led regeneration, particularly where this brings long term value and sense of place to development, such as in our town centres and along the Golden Mile. We will aim to secure the regeneration of heritage assets at risk, including those within Gunnersbury Park, Hanworth Park, Boston Manor House and the former Hounslow Powder Mills sites;
- d) Working with Royal Botanic Gardens Kew World Heritage Site, London Borough of Richmond and Historic England to conserve and enhance the outstanding universal values of The Royal Botanical Gardens Kew World Heritage Site, its buffer zone and its setting, including views to and from this asset. This includes assisting in the implementation of the World Heritage Site Management Plan;
- e) Promoting the appropriate re-use of historic buildings and supporting schemes that conserve the significance of, and provide the heritage asset with a sustainable, long-term use;
- f) Working with our network of partners to ensure the borough's heritage is accessible, appreciated, valued and enjoyed by residents, workers and visitors;
- g) Conserving and enhancing the strategic and local views identified in the Urban Context and Character Study that give the borough its character, visual richness and coherence; and by maintaining and updating a schedule of views; and

## 2.2 STRATEGIC AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

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- h) Conserving and enhancing the borough's beneficial and historic landmarks identified in the Urban Context and Character Study, which provide a strong visual and physical presence in the townscape.

The Borough Council also state they will expect development proposals to:

- i) Conserve and take opportunities to enhance any heritage asset and its setting in a manner appropriate to its significance;
- j) Retain, conserve and reuse a heritage asset in a manner appropriate to its value and significance;
- k) Demonstrate that substantial harm to or loss of a heritage asset is avoided, unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, consistent with the NPPF;
- l) Demonstrate that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset (see Glossary), this harm will be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use; or
- m) Have regard to any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, including from both direct and indirect effects. Non-designated heritage assets include locally listed buildings, Archaeological Priority Areas and areas of special local character.

### Buildings and structures

- n) In the case of alterations, extensions or changes of use of a heritage asset a proposal should demonstrate that:
- i. It is in keeping with the character of the building and harmonious with its surroundings and the wider character of the area; and, with particular respect to listed buildings or identified aspects of locally listed buildings, it preserves their special architectural or historic character and any features they may possess;
  - ii. It is of a high quality design and sympathetic in terms of scale and form to the original building and in the use of materials and other details to the period and style of the original building;
  - iii. Opportunities to mitigate or adapt to climate change through the re-use or adaptation are maximised as long as this is not to the detriment of important aspects of character;

- iv. That it maintains the character of interiors and retain internal features of interest including layouts, methods and means of construction where these are important;

- v. That the original use is no longer viable and the benefits of the proposed use are demonstrated and would be in keeping with the character of the area; and

- vi. That a record is made and submitted of features of interest found, to be maintained and extended during works. Sustainability and salvage aspects should be factored into proposals.

### Conservation areas

- o) Any development within or affecting a Conservation Area must conserve and take opportunities to enhance the character of the area, and respect the grain, scale, form, proportions and materials of the surrounding area and existing architecture; and
- p) Retain and reuse any building in a conservation area which makes or can be adapted to make a positive contribution to the character of the area. Where a building makes little contribution to the area, consent for demolition will not be given unless there are approved plans for redevelopment or reuse of the land which will conserve and enhance the character of the area. Sustainability and salvage aspects should be factored into proposals.

### Strategic and local views

- v) Conserve and enhance any strategic or local views identified in the Urban Context and Character Study and undertake a visual impact assessment to demonstrate no adverse impacts on the designated view or on views from Royal Botanic Gardens Kew World Heritage Site.

## 2.3 LOCAL PLANNING GUIDANCE

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### Local Guidance

#### ***The Urban Context and Character Study (The London Borough of Hounslow, 2014)***

The Urban Context and Character Study seeks to provide an understanding of the existing context and character of the distinct places of the borough. It looks to inform planning decisions that will affect the future of the borough.

The context and character approach seeks to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, the London Plan, and the best practice advice from English Heritage and CABE. The approach has informed the preparation of the Local Plan Submission document and the council's new planning policies.

Ten study areas and one linear study area have been identified in the borough within which character areas have been identified. The studies for each area and type have been prepared following engagement and consultation with local amenity and resident groups and others.

The sensitivity to change or need for regeneration and transformation is assessed. Seven broad urban types have been found across the whole of the borough. Taken together this study seeks to provide:

- a good body of analysis to which the design of all new development proposals should respond
- an evidence base against which those appraising new development proposals and planning applications can assess the suitability and quality of design, with reference to the distinctive character of the local area and its urban types, and
- a basis on which to prepare design recommendations for each broad urban type and for the character areas.



## 3.0 ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC APPRAISAL

### 3.1 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPRING GROVE AREA

The following section charts the development of the study site and immediate surroundings. This includes detailed historic map progression from the mid-late-19th century through to the early-21st century, although an earlier less detailed map has been included (Figure 3). The red circle indicates the location of the study site on all mapping.

#### Development of Spring Grove Area

The name given to the Conservation Area which the study site flanks “Spring Grove” originates from the name of a house built by Sir John Offley in 1645. It was located just north of the Great Western Road (now the London Road), which was at the time, the main Turnpike from London to Bath and also flanked the area of Smallbury Green.

In 1754 Sir John Offley’s 1645 house and estate were sold to Elisha Biscoe, who demolished the property and built a new house on the site (see Figure 4). Following the death of Biscoe in 1776 the house and estate changed hands and was heavily altered several times until being purchased by Henry Davies in 1850. It was at this point that the district around Spring Grove House began to develop as a residential area.

During the 17th and 18th centuries Isleworth had been a favorite place of residence for the aristocracy, it being only one stage out of London by horse carriage, but by 1850 most of the aristocracy had disappeared. At that time a network of railways were beginning to spread over the country, and the Windsor, Staines & South Western Railway opened a loop line from Barnes to Feltham as far as Smallbury Green (now Isleworth Station) and following this the loop was completed through Hounslow Station, thus the district was accessible from all parts by railway. This made it possible for a new class of people to reside outside the city in what was then pleasant open country.

Davies was a property developer and laid out plans for an impressive estate of roads and large houses surrounding Spring Grove House. This was seen to be one of the most ambitious middle-class projects, and was chiefly designed for retired army officers, London merchants and professional men of a wealthy class, consequently the houses and gardens were on a fairly large scale. A scheme was laid out in the early 1850’s and a number of large houses on Osterley Road, Thornbury Road, The Grove and Eversley Crescent were built in addition to St. Mary’s Church in 1856. On a map made a few years before the sale of the land to Davies in 1850 (not available) only Spring Grove estate is visible, none of these roads or the study site have been established. Nevertheless, this positive beginning was soon over. After a few years of prosperity, expansion ceased for lack of money and a number of houses also became vacant.

By 1865 only a few villas stood along the roads round the church, though there were a larger number in The Grove this did not equate to the original vision of the project. Very few houses of the original type were added to the estate later and the failure of the project was implicitly acknowledged in late 1880’s.

A second stage in the development of Spring Grove followed the further development of the railway lines in the late-19th century (specifically the extension of the District Railway line from Acton to Hounslow Town in 1883). This gave some impetus to building and may have promoted the returning prosperity attributed to Spring Grove. It was during this second stage of late-19th century development that a number of semidetached and terraced houses also began to populate the area. These were much smaller than those built in the first period of development set out by Davies and were intended for a different class of resident. In conjunction with this, although slightly later on, the growth of the Spring Grove area began to reach a new pace with the introduction of the trams in 1901 and the electrification of the District Line in 1905. This encouraged the erection of further small terraced houses in the area and these began to surround the original estate. These two transport related developments created a broader secondary phase of housing, some of which can be seen opposite the study site and to the south east of the railway embankment (Newton, Nottingham and Castle Road).

An additional third phase of development came into full swing after WWI (1914-18), when many semi-detached houses were built. Many of the older and larger houses were turned into flats, and in some cases large houses were pulled down to make way for the erection of flats. It was in the period between 1920 and 1930 that the building boom covered most of the remaining open spaces in Spring Grove and this has continued since.

As noted in *The Urban Context and Character Study: Isleworth* (The London Borough of Hounslow, 2014) a further pocket of commercial/retail or ‘big box’ type development known as ‘Metro Industrial Centre’ has redefined the area in which the study site now resides. In conjunction with a number of mid-20th century residential properties these buildings form a definitive edge and clear juxtaposition with the late-19th and early-20th century terraced residential development that fringes it on St John’s Road (see Figures 11-13).

N.B. Spring Grove House (see Figure 5) now exists within the grounds of West Thames College in an entirely different form. The property built by Biscoe in the mid 18th century was demolished, expanded and rebuilt as a large Victorian building in the late 19th century (c.1894) for the Pears family. This building has subsequently been Grade II Listed.



**Figure 3:** Map of 1856 showing Spring Grove House and ensuing Davies development located to the northwest of the study site circled. Pre-railway. Source: Vision of Britain (2013).



**Figure 4:** The house built in 1754 by Elisha Biscoe. Source: Old Spring Grovians History (2005).



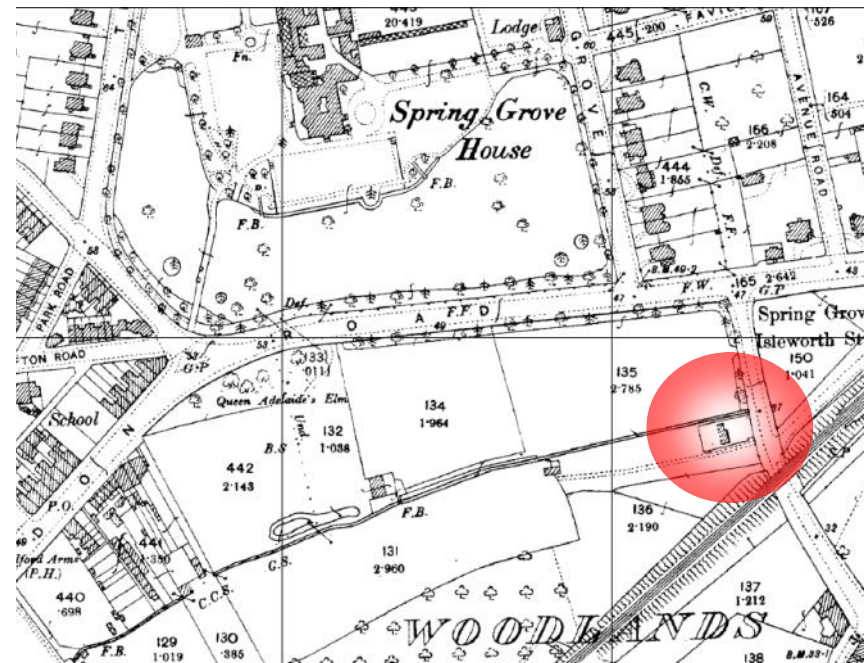
**Figure 5:** The house built in 1894 by Andrew Pears (now part of West Thames College). Source: Old Spring Grovians History (2005).



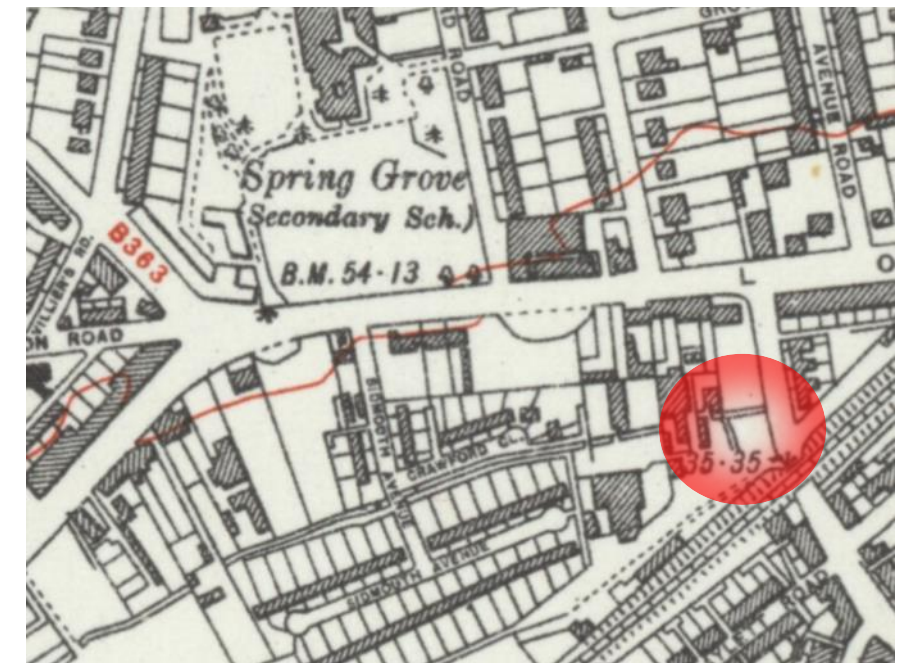
## 3.2 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF STUDY SITE



**Figure 6:** OS map of 1864-5. This provides the first clear depiction of the immediate area, again showing Spring Grove House and Davies development located to the northwest of the study site circled. Save for the addition of the railway line, the study site (straddling the upper and lower tree-lined field boundary) and immediate environs remain undeveloped. Source: Landmark/Promap (2016).



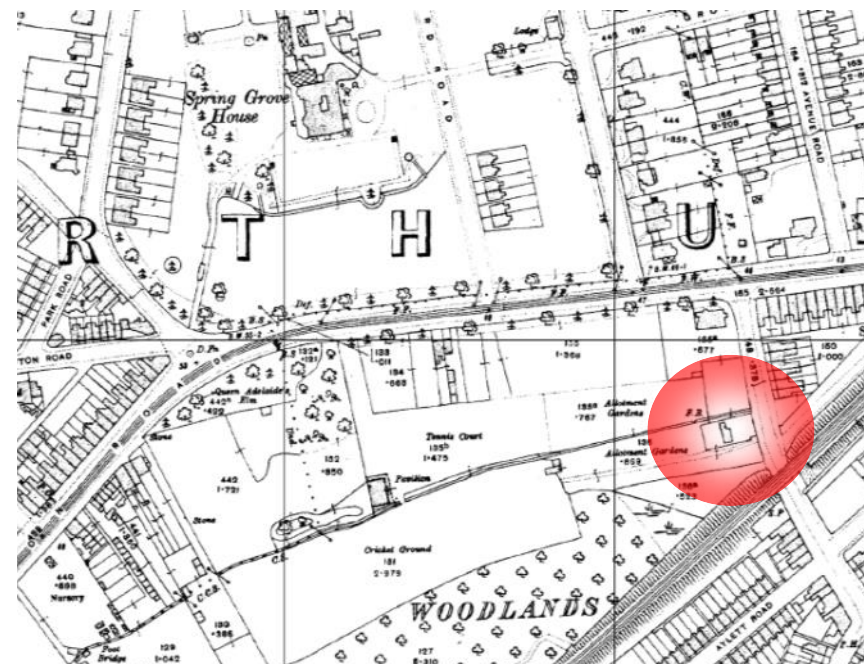
**Figure 8:** OS map of 1896. This shows the plot is occupied. It features a small structure and garden located within a larger paddock with an east-west track. Source: Landmark/Promap (2016).



**Figure 10:** Extract from map of 1938. To the north significant residential development has occurred. In addition, both residential and light industrial development can be seen to the west and north west of the site. The previous building on site has now been demolished, and a small warehouse occupies the north western corner of the site. Source: Landmark/Promap (2013).



**Figure 7:** OS map of 1880-2. Source: Landmark/Promap (2013).



**Figure 9:** OS map of 1913-15. This shows the plot remains occupied. The surrounding area is defined by orchards and allotments, one of which abuts the plot and forms part of the aforementioned paddock. The immediate area has become edified. The street scene on the London Road and to the eastern side of St. John's Road now includes turn of the century terraced development. Source: Landmark/Promap (2013).



**Figure 11:** Extract from map of 1963. The current buildings on site are now visible, including further residential infill development in the northern end of the site. Similarly, some residential infill is evident opposite the site. All of these mid-20th century buildings are present today. Source: Landmark/Promap (2013).



## 3.2 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF STUDY SITE



**Figure 12:** Extract from map of 1974-5. A further pocket of infill development (forming semidetached houses) is visible directly to the north of the study site. Source: Landmark/Promap (2013).



**Figure 13:** Extract from map of 1977-86. The plot to the south of the study site has been developed to include the existing building today. Similarly, the previous warehouse in the north west of the study site has been replaced by the larger rectangular building visible today. Source: Landmark/Promap (2013).

### 3.3 SITE ASSESSMENT

#### Overview

The study site sits within the London Borough of Hounslow, on the western side of St Johns Road, opposite which are a small number of early-20th century terraced houses and a further mid-late-20th century detached dwelling. These form a small part of the south-eastern tip of the wider Spring Grove Conservation Area.

Importantly, the study site itself does not include any designated or non-designated heritage assets, neither is it within the setting of any statutorily listed buildings or additional conservation areas. Instead the study site is formed by a mid-late-20th century commercial building, with additional warehousing and yards to the rear. A further mid-late-20th century dwelling with garage is located within the northern section of the site.

Consequently, the buildings that make up the site are of no architectural or historic interest in their own right, and provide no appreciable contribution to the special interest of the Spring Grove Conservation Area, located to the east.

Furthermore, the study site is flanked to the north by a pair of mid-late-20th century semi-detached dwellings of no architectural or historic merit. To the south there is an existing access route which links St Johns Road to the Metro light-industrial area (warehousing and yards) located behind the site. Beyond this access route is a substantial late-20th century office building and railway bridge. The office building, located immediately to the south of the study site, also has recently had planning permission (ref: P/2103/2286) approved, which included a change of use (Hotel) and the addition of two further storeys.

These two structures obscure views to the south from the study site and St Johns Road. Consequently, the Woodlands Grove Conservation Area (designated), additional Areas of Special Character (non-designated heritage assets), and the small number of distant statutorily listed buildings located well beyond these structures share no setting or character context with the study site.

Instead, the existing street scene on St Johns Road incorporates poor quality glimpsed views west, towards the modern buildings and yards associated with the wider Metro light-industrial area behind the study site. This area is situated between the London Road to the north, Sidmouth Avenue/Crawford Close to the west, and the substantial railway embankment to the south.

#### Summary

Fundamentally, it is evident after a site visit in February 2016 that the complex and varied architectural context surrounding the study site provides a composite street scene, of which St Johns Road itself delineates a legible and definitive point of visual and physical architectural transition as one progresses east-west from the conservation area.

The evolving architectural character on the western side of St Johns Road consequently reads separately to the poorly preserved, semi-historic residential character to the east (formed by the terrace of buildings erected within a limited and much later addition to the Spring Grove Conservation Area).

Therefore the study site remains appreciable as a poorly utilised plot that includes a large section of incongruous, low quality architecture that sits upon western edge of St Johns Road, located on the fringe of the conservation area. The study site and wider existing architecture on the western side of St Johns Road therefore detracts from the character and setting of the conservation area. This coupled with the existing views to the light-industrial sheds beyond the study site compounds this uneasy juxtaposition.

In addition, it is important to note that the terraced section of the conservation area to the east is not tied to the history or significance of Spring Grove House, or the original significant phase of Davies planned development surrounding Spring Grove House itself in the mid-19th century, as described in section 3.1. Instead, it forms part of a later development at the turn of the 20th century and now includes a number of heavily altered and architecturally incomplete buildings within the terrace and a mid-20th century building to the south.

Consequently, and relative to the charted history and special interest of the conservation area identified in section 3.1, this terraced section is of lesser significance when analysed within the comparable historic and architectural context of the conservation area as a whole. It is later in date and is also observed as being poorly preserved. Fundamentally, it provides a somewhat eroded representation of a later phase of turn of the century development that took place in the conservation area, albeit offering a very limited contribution to the identified special interest of the conservation area, both architecturally and historically for the aforementioned reasons.



**Figure 14:** Heavily altered terrace to the east, with a series of remodelled bay windows circled. Source: Site visit (February 2016).



**Figure 15:** Heavily altered terrace to the east, with a series of remodelled bay windows circled. Source: Site visit (February 2016).



### 3.3 SITE ASSESSMENT



**Figure 16:** Altered terrace to the east of the study site and detached mid-20th century building to the south. Source: Site visit (February 2016)



**Figure 18:** View of frontage buildings at study site. Office building to south, which will be altered to include an additional two floors. Source: Site visit (February 2016)



**Figure 20:** Substantial railway bridge and associated embankment removes all inter-visibility with the existing built environment located to the south. Source: Site visit (February 2016)



**Figure 17:** View north towards London Road from St Johns Road. Source: Site visit (February 2016)



**Figure 19:** Buildings of no architectural and historic interest within the northern end of the site and beyond. All create the existing poor quality western frontage of St Johns Road. Source: Site visit (February 2016)



**Figure 21:** Existing built context to the rear of the study site formed by warehousing and light-industrial yards. Source: Site visit (February 2016)



### 3.4 ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE ASSETS: SPRING GROVE CONSERVATION AREA

This section of the report deals with the value placed upon the Spring Grove Conservation Area, which the study site borders. It includes the identification of key features that contribute to the area’s valued special architectural and historic interest, including its character, appearance, significance and setting.

#### Special Architectural and Historic Interest

Although based on an historic house, the special interest of Spring Grove Conservation Area derives from an estate planned to be a grand Victorian suburb. The Davies original estate planning still remains in much of its splendour, albeit in an evolved form, with the prevailing pattern of development mostly being respectful. Tall classical-style villas standing in spacious gardens, the grandiose Italianate stuccoed mansion of Campion House, the characteristic Gothic structure of Lancaster House, and more subtle Arts and Crafts styled semi-detached properties, along with others from the late-19th and early-20th century, amalgamate into the whole.

The classical element was emphasised by the use of “Bath-stone” as the prevailing material. Davies used large, lipped terracotta facing tiles bedded onto a backing block; this enhances the apparent quality of the buildings. The “limestone” was set as ashlar with a fine joint, with genuine stone surroundings and detail. A very smooth surface and the regular pattern gives them away, but the large numbers of remaining properties in this, or a similar form of construction give a further harmony of material, colour and form.

The conservation area has many other components, in terms of its built form, that were not envisaged in the original Davies scheme, but these still form part of the area, whilst other elements make the area cohesive and contribute to the quality environment, such as the greenery afforded by tree-lined roads and front garden settings. Similarly, the second phase of transport-led residential development and a small number of Arts & Crafts properties (third phase) have added to the composite character of the conservation area. Whilst these do not form the core of the area, or form the reason for designation, they do offer a limited amount of architectural and historic interest, albeit only where well preserved.

Conversely, a number of mid-late-20th century residential developments (both the introduction of flat blocks and infill housing) have had a negative impact on the architectural character, quality and significance of the core components of special interest within the conservation area (noted above). These are not of a collective or individual quality that contributes to the established special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area, instead they detract from this.

#### Progressive Development

When the Davies estate was conceived, London Road was known as Great Western Road. Development on the northern side was confined to the areas on either side of Spring Grove House, at the two entrances to The Grove.

Spring Grove House continues to dominate the whole area, mainly through the road patterns made to form around it and its lodges, which are more visible than the house. Of particular note is the junction of Osterley Road and The Grove, where despite the open streetscape and attractive green space, the design has not changed since its conception in the 1850s.

The Grove was the first road planned, and followed the boundary fence of Spring Grove House. By 1853, following the purchase of the larger estate Davies had planned the roads and allocated various building plots after which building commenced. Davies had laid out Osterley Road, Thornbury Road and Eversley Crescent by 1855 and nearly 100 houses had been constructed by 1877.

Spring Grove went into decline when many residents, including Davies, lost money in the 1870s. Yet, in 1888 the Middlesex Independent reported that many large houses in Spring Grove had been let and there was an indication of a return to prosperity. One factor that added to revival was the extension of the District Railway line from Acton to Hounslow Town in 1883. It was at this point in the late-19th century that the smaller villas in Thornbury Road and smaller terraced houses on other roads in the area were built and the population increased steadily to World War One.

The final stage of development was defined by the building of the Great West Road in 1925, consequently industries developed and traffic increased in the Isleworth area. The road also severed Thornbury Road and St. Mary’s Crescent and in doing so divided Osterley and Spring Grove. The resultant 1920s and 30s building boom covered most of the remaining spaces in Spring Grove, although it must also be stated that much of the post war infill has taken place on sites previously occupied by original Davies houses. This infill development has continued to occur throughout the 20th century and the development experienced within the latter half of the 20th century appears to have compounded this, with a number of roads now featuring poor quality architecture.

Fundamentally, it is evident that the core significance, both architectural and historic, stems from Spring Grove House and the mid-19th century Davies development that defined the areas initial development. The additional phases of later architectural development largely add to this, albeit only where well preserved, of high quality and appropriately designed.

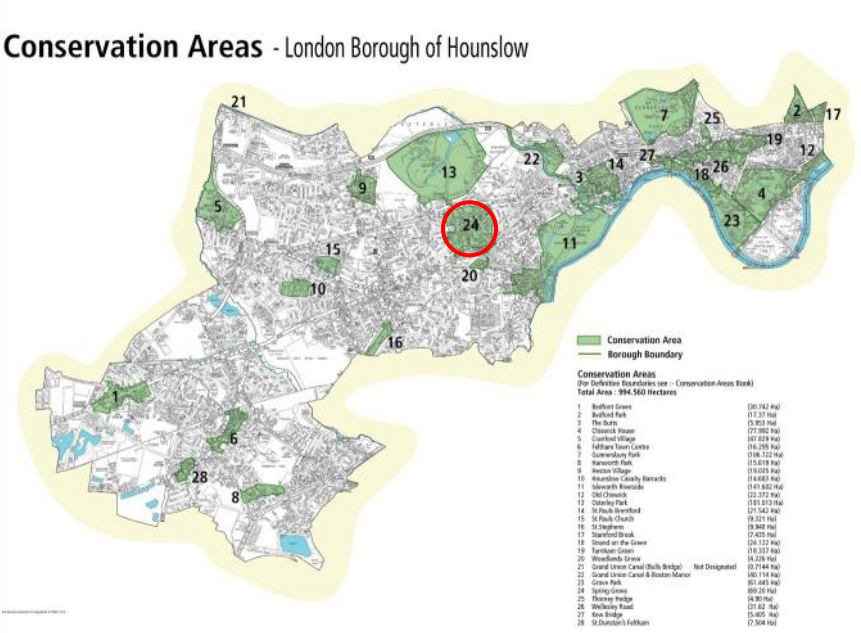


Figure 22: Map of the London Borough of Hounslow’s Conservation Areas. Red ring locates Spring Grove Conservation Area. NTS. Source: Hounslow Borough Council (2013).

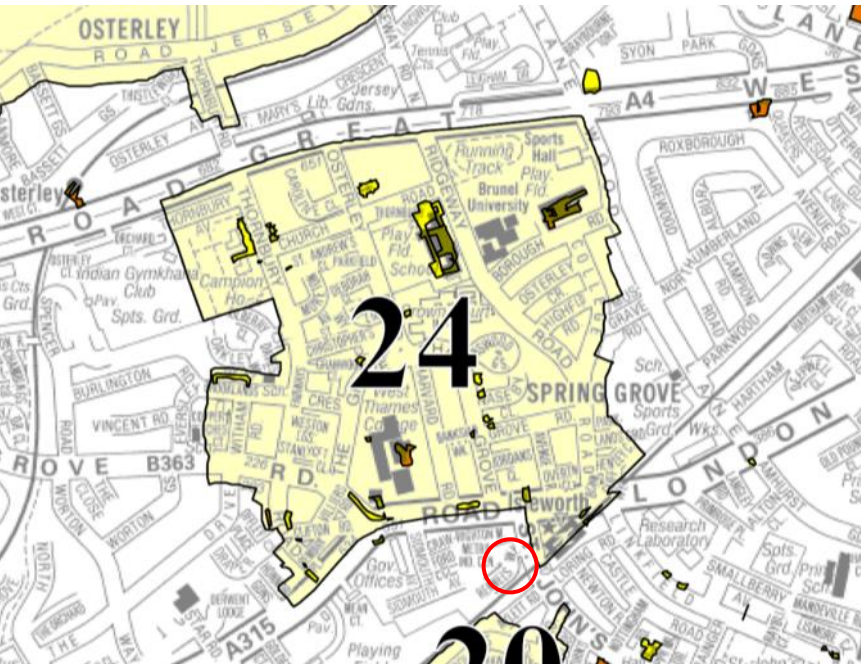


Figure 23: Map of the Spring Grove Conservation Area. The red ring locates study site. The various designated and non-designated heritage assets are identified with yellow. NTS. Source: Hounslow Borough Council (2013).

## 4.0 ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1 ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS

#### Overview

This report has been prepared by RPS CgMs on behalf of Network Housing Group and considers the proposed demolition and of redevelopment of 1a-5 St Johns Road, Isleworth, TW7 6NA, referred to as the study site.

The demolition and redevelopment proposals include the removal of the existing poor quality, modern buildings and structures on site and the construction of a new part-3-part-5 storey building, designed to provide 34 residential units (14 affordable) with associated car and cycle parking and landscaping.

As the study site sits adjacent to south eastern tip of the Spring Grove Conservation Area, the applicant has sought the advice of built heritage specialists, as well requesting pre-application consultation with the Council in order to discuss an acceptable scheme.

Consequently, RPS CgMs Built Heritage were appointed to complete in-depth research into the morphology of the immediate area and an assessment of the proposals. This has been completed in conjunction with research into the history, growth, setting, character and significance of Spring Grove Conservation Area.

Therefore, the aim of this report is to define the role and evolution of the study site relative to the appreciable historic and architectural significance, character and setting of Spring Grove Conservation Area. In turn, analysing any potential impact upon the conservation area and creating the basis for an acceptable scheme to be presented to the Council.

It is important to note that proposed drawings and further detailed analysis is available in both the Planning and Design and Access Statements, as well as within the drawings supplied by the appointed Architects.

#### Assessment

##### Existing Site and Buildings

By charting the evolution of the immediate area, and following a detailed site visit, it has become evident that the existing buildings on site and those further buildings on the western side of St Johns Road (flanking the site) are of no architectural, or historic interest. They are at odds with the prevailing character and the architectural quality of the original built environment within the conservation area. In addition, although beyond the confines of the conservation area, their poor quality and character detracts from that of the conservation area itself.

As a direct result, the principal of the demolition of the buildings on site does not harm the character, setting or special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area. Instead it represents a significant opportunity to better utilise a poor quality site situated on the fringes of the conservation area by introducing new, high quality architecture.

#### Extended Built Heritage Context

As noted within section 3.3 of this report, the railway embankment and bridge, coupled with the proposed and existing building to the south of the study site, obscure views to the south from the study site and St Johns Road. Consequently, the Woodlands Grove Conservation Area (designated), additional Areas of Special Character (non-designated heritage assets), and the small number of distant statutorily listed buildings located well beyond these structures to the south share no setting or character (context) with the study site.

Consequently, there will be no alteration in the setting, character or significance of the wider, extended built heritage context as a result of the proposals.

*Continued overleaf...*



Figure 24: Proposed site plan. Source: Rock Townsend 2016).

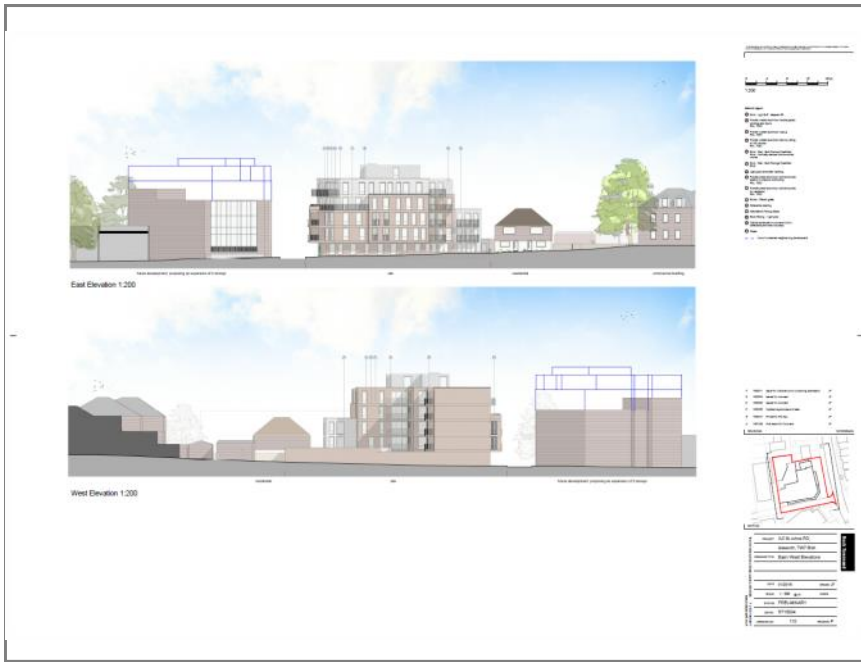


Figure 25: Proposed eastern and western elevations. Source: Rock Townsend 2016).



Figure 26: Proposed northern and southern elevations. Source: Rock Townsend 2016).



## 4.1 ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS

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### **Adjacent Built Heritage Context: Spring Grove Conservation Area**

As noted within sections 3.3. and 3.4 of this report, the site sits on the opposite side of St Johns Road to a selection of poorly preserved terraced buildings and an additional mid-20th century detached property, all of which are located within the south eastern tip of the St Johns Road Conservation Area.

When assessed relative to the core phase of Davies' development (that associated with the established special interest of the conservation area) it is evident that these buildings are of a later date, do not form part of the planned Davies' development, and a number have been altered, remaining as poorly preserved examples of their type. This both erodes and somewhat dilutes the group value of the terrace, as well as the individual significance of these buildings - especially when assessed relative to the special interest of the conservation area as a whole. Consequently, their contribution to the character and significance of conservation area is minor when compared to a number of the elements described in sections 3.3 and 3.4 of the report.

In addition, the existing street scene on St Johns Road currently incorporates poor quality glimpsed views west from the conservation area, towards the modern buildings and yards associated with the site itself and the wider Metro light-industrial area behind the study site. This is not reflective of the established character context or setting that remains readily appreciable within the core sections of the conservation area.

The evolving architectural character and views to the western side of St Johns Road consequently read separately to the poorly preserved, semi-historic residential character to the east (formed by the terrace of buildings erected within a limited and much later addition to the Spring Grove Conservation Area).

The complex and varied architectural context surrounding the study site therefore provides a composite street scene on the fringe of the conservation area, of which St Johns Road itself delineates a legible and definitive point of visual and physical architectural transition - ultimately as one progresses east-west out of the conservation area.

As a result, the scheme represents an opportunity to better utilise a site on the fringe of the conservation area. It will enhance the setting and character of the adjacent conservation area by replacing a large section of the existing incongruous, poor quality architecture that sits upon the western edge of St Johns Road with high quality residential-led development.

The proposed building will reflect the palette of materials visible within the surrounding built environment, as well as offer the transitional scale required on this site.

It incorporates a carefully chosen variety of materials, principally brick, designed to respond to the aforementioned architectural context and LB Hounslow's pre-application response (letter dated 26 February 2016). The materials and their breakdown will allow the building to sit comfortably within the street-scene, by both softening the elevational treatment of the building and by providing a transition between the two storey buildings to the north and the larger building located directly to the south.

Consequently, as described in the LB Hounslow's pre-application response (letter dated 26 February 2016), the proposed scheme will be in keeping with the context of the surrounding area, with an acceptable approach to scale and massing that responds to the immediate built environment through considered design.

The proposed scheme therefore represents a substantial opportunity to better utilise a poor quality series of buildings and spaces on the fringe of the conservation area. It will not harm the identified architectural and historic special interest of Spring Grove Conservation Area, including its setting, views or character. Instead it will respond appropriately to this context through the high quality scheme presented.



## 4.2 CONCLUSIONS

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### Conclusions

This Heritage Statement has presented a summary of the relevant national, strategic and local policy with regard to developments and works which have the potential to impact upon designated heritage assets. Particular consideration has been paid to those policies which concern the management of works which have the potential to impact upon Conservation Areas. Specific reference has been paid to special architectural and historic interest, including the: significance; setting; character; and appearance of built heritage assets, most notably conservation areas.

Following the analysis of the site and surroundings, and whilst the proposals sit at edge of the Spring Grove Conservation Area, the implementation of the scheme proposed represents a significant opportunity to appropriately reuse the study site. It offers the ability to enhance the existing poor quality street-scene and architectural context on the edge of the Spring Grove Conservation Area through carefully considered, contextual design. Ultimately, it also preserves the identified special interest of the conservation area.

In conclusion, an informed assessment of the proposals has been undertaken. This has demonstrated that 1a-5 St Johns Road will successfully accommodate the proposals whilst preserving and enhancing the ability to appreciate the special interest and significance of the Spring Grove Conservation Area.

The overall scheme is viewed as presenting a significant opportunity to enhance both the character and appearance of the existing street-scene and by association the opportunity to provide a definitive high quality architectural edge to the existing conservation area, which is not the case at present.

In all respects the proposals provide the opportunity to respectfully redevelop the site and improve the immediate built environment within the area. As such, it has been found that the proposals accord with the relevant local and national planning policy and guidance, therefore indicating that they should be welcomed LB Hounslow Council.

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