



The Oval Conservation Area

Area Appraisal and Management Plan

March 2009

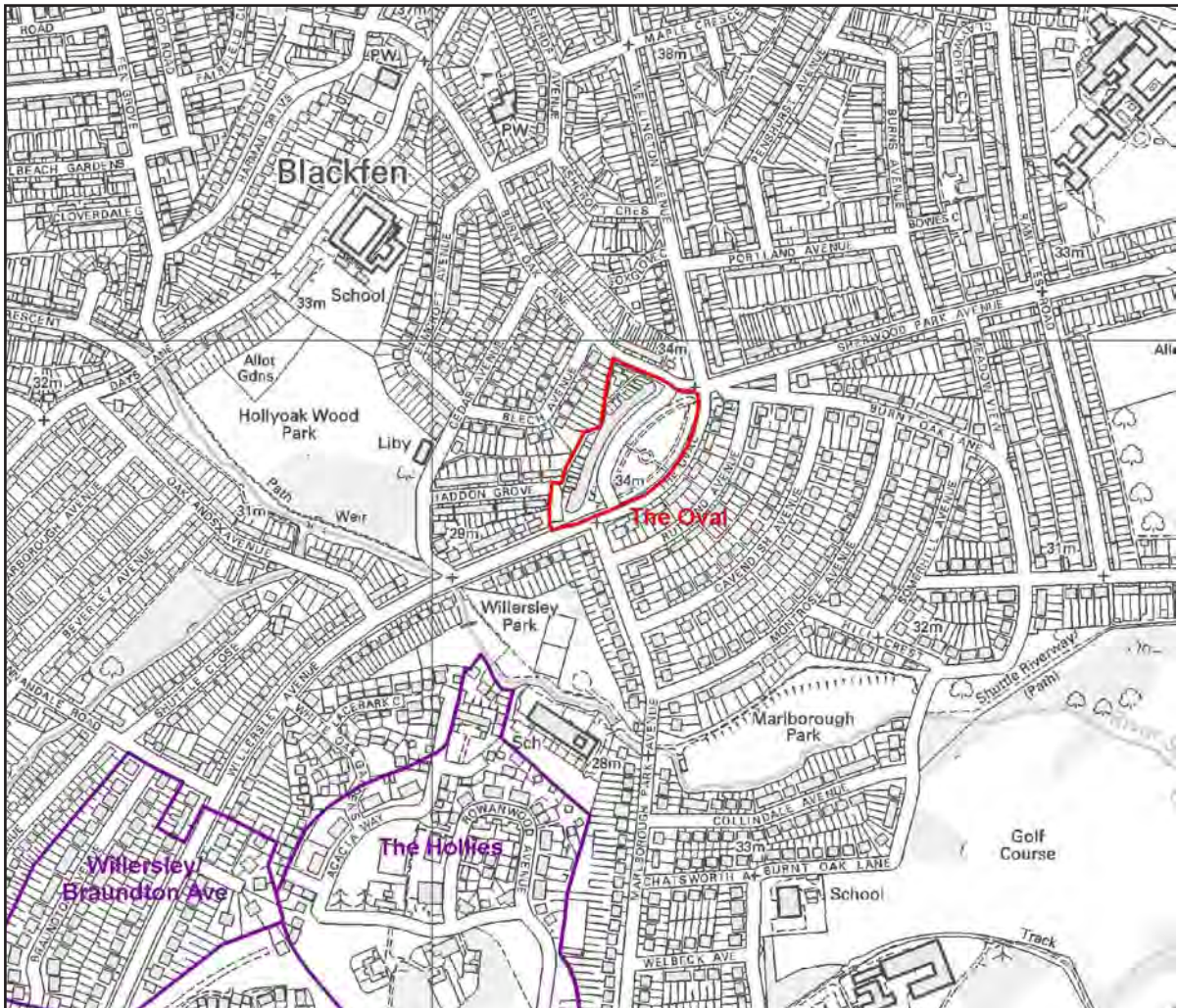
This document was produced by the

London Borough of Bexley
Strategic Planning and Regeneration Department
Wyncham House, 207 Longlands Road
Sidcup, Kent DA15 7JH


and approved by the Cabinet Member on 30th March 2009

A downloadable pdf version is available on the Council's website at bexley.gov.uk

Location of Conservation Area



Based upon Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to civil proceedings. Bexley Council 100017693 2008

-  The Oval Conservation Area
-  Other conservation areas

Contents

Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal

1	Introduction	2
2	Planning and policy context	2
3	Summary of the special character and appearance of the conservation area	2
4	Location, setting and boundary description	2
5	Historic development and archaeological potential	4
6	Spatial analysis	5
7	Character analysis	6
	Townscape Analysis Map	11

Part 2: Conservation Area Management Plan

1	Legislative background	12
2	Planning controls and the Council's Development Plan	12
3	Listed buildings, landmark buildings, buildings of local architectural or historic interest and buildings of townscape merit	13
4	Erosion of character	14
5	Trees, landscape and open space	15
6	Setting and views	15
7	The public realm and enhancement	15
8	New buildings and building extensions	15
9	Solar panels and wind turbines	16
10	Monitoring change	16
11	Boundary definition	17
12	Community engagement	17

Appendices

1	General guidance to homeowners on repairs to historic buildings in conservation areas	18
2	Bexley Heritage Fund - helping to restore your heritage	21
3	Contacts	22

Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Oval Conservation Area was designated on 19th February 1992.
- 1.2 Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, an area designated as a “conservation area” will be an “area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.
- 1.3 This document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the The Oval Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement.

2 Planning and policy context

- 2.1 Bexley’s Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2004 contains the policies and proposals for development, regeneration and land use in the borough. Policies which seek the preservation and enhancement of statutorily listed buildings, locally listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeology are set out in the UDP (saved policies) and the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 2.2 This appraisal should be read in conjunction with national planning policy guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15). It follows advice contained in “Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals” and “Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas”, published by English Heritage and the Planning Advisory Service (August 2005).

3 Summary of the special character and appearance of the conservation area

- 3.1 The special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation of The Oval Conservation Area derives from the following features:
 - An unusual oval street pattern with open landscaped area, in an otherwise uniform suburban street pattern
 - A good example of 1930s architecture in an “Arts and Crafts” style.
 - It represents a good example of inter-war housing boom and suburban townscape.
 - The strong visual effect of the curvilinear parade set against the openness of the landscaped park.
 - Designed amenity open space with traditional ornamental trees, lawns and municipal rose beds.
 - Local architectural detailing and features give the buildings a distinctive style and identity, such as the herringbone brickwork on upper floors, the uniform roof line and the white render and timber finish.

4 Location, setting and boundary description

Location and context

- 4.1 The Oval Conservation Area is located in the south west of the London Borough of

Bexley, which is approximately 13 miles south east of central London.

- 4.2 The underlying design principle for the Oval area was to create an attractive break in an otherwise monotonous suburban landscape, an oval of open space in front of a new shopping parade. Instead of simply lining the curve of the road with shops they were positioned in a curve in the opposite direction. This created an unusual feature of townscape within an area of otherwise quite uniform area of residential development.
- 4.3 In the Government's guidance on conservation areas, the designation of pleasant townscape, town squares, terraces and village greens is advocated where historic character is evident. The Oval fits well within such criteria, being an outstanding example of suburban townscape planning.

Street pattern and layout

- 4.4 The Oval comprises a central open space defined by two curved roads. Lining this to the north-west is a long, two storey terrace of shops at ground level with flats above, defining the curve and creating a strong sense of enclosure.
- 4.5 The curve of the terrace is terminated by a rounded corner and a return unit at the north end. Adjoining the north end is also an unusual clustered block of six two-storey flats designed by the same architect to infill a triangular plot. This fronts on to Burnt Oak Lane and is known as The Triangle. At the southern end is a slightly later unit built for Express Diaries and now occupied by Oval Cleaners.



Landscape and setting

- 4.6 The public open space to the front of the shopping parade provides an attractive landscape feature for passive recreation. The area contains a network of footpaths, seating, trees, open grass areas with spring flowering bulbs and traditional rose beds. The main streetscape feature is the curved terrace of shops which encloses the open space.
- 4.7 Street trees, seating and small shrub beds provide an attractive environment and help break up the large expanse of footway in front of the shopping parade.
- 4.8 The south western part of the Oval is less structured and more open than the northern end.





Designated conservation area boundary

- 4.9 The main townscape feature is the curved terrace, which, together with a contemporary group of flats (1-6 The Triangle), define the north-west boundary. This terrace of shops and the oval of open space that provides its setting comprise the major townscape elements in the conservation area. The south-east side of The Oval is less distinct in townscape terms and provides less sense of enclosure. This mix of bungalows and houses set within irregular gardens are not, therefore, included in the conservation area. See Townscape Analysis Map for boundary.

5 Historic development and archaeological potential

- 5.1 Bexley witnessed suburban expansion in the 1920s and 1930s and the area is renowned for its large suburban estates of row after row of semi-detached and terraced houses. The Marlborough Park Estates area of Sidcup was typical with long roads of houses in uniform styles. The shops at the Oval, which were built in 1933 as part of the Marlborough Estate, meant easier shopping for the new residents to the area.
- 5.2 The Oval was designed as part of the, “New Ideal Homesteads’, Marlborough Park Estate”, an antithesis of the suburban norm, a reaction to the rigid row upon row of houses. The shops on the terrace reflect interest in the Arts and Craft style still popular in the 1930’s when it was the prevalent influence on house design. The provision of this type of community infrastructure was typical of housing estates being built in the area at this time.
- 5.3 New Ideal Homesteads original ideas for The Oval included shops on both curves. One design, in Art Deco style, was single storey with storeroom in roof, lit by a dormer alternating with an oval window in a gable. Another design, more Arts and Crafts/Tudor, showed 2 storeys with a pair of shops sharing a gable. These proposed shops were 25ft wide but by reducing the width to 20ft, more units were built. The plan shown in

the developers sales brochure for the Marlborough Park Estate indicates that a cinema was proposed at the North end of the curve where the final ten shops were erected. A proposed garage was erected at the Southern end but this was incorporated into a large Express Dairy.

- 5.4 There are no Scheduled Monuments within the conservation area. Whilst this location is not a known important archaeological area, it is possible that finds may occur.

6 Spatial analysis

Character and interrelationship of spaces

- 6.1 The terrace of matching shops provides a unified single townscape feature. Its unusual curved shape is an attractive visual feature, with the rhythm of the timbered apex gables and chimney stacks contrasting and enclosing the open landscaped park. The park is designed to provide ornamental lawns with rose beds, summer and winter bedding and specimen trees. The regular planting of trees along the pavement fronting the shops adds to the homogenous nature of the area.

- 6.2 The public space is central to the area. The road servicing the shops separates the terrace from the open space providing a distinct contrast between buildings and space.

Key views and vistas

- 6.3 Views out of the conservation area are limited to sites from the terrace parade to the open area, taken in a south easterly direction.
- 6.4 Views into the conservation area across the open space to the shopping parade create a sense of openness. The terrace forms a key landmark building that can be seen from the surrounding roads and open space.
- 6.5 There is a particular view from the north of the terrace, where the rounded roof gable on the end building (No 53) reflects the kiln houses of Kentish Oasts.
- 6.6 Within the Conservation area the key views are focused on the regular symmetry of the roofline and the alternate movement between the pairs of gables and alternating size chimney stacks. Another view which captures the current and traditional retail uses of the shops is from the southern and northern ends, where the uniform shape of fasciae and projecting signs at shop level create an easy rhythm and interesting visual movement.



- 6.7 Because a view is not mentioned it is not because it is unimportant but rather that there are so many different views. Some significant views are marked on the attached Townscape Analysis Map.

7 Character analysis

- 7.1 The focus of the conservation area is the terrace of shops to the north west, the group of flats to the north and the oval of open space. The predominant historic character is inter-war 'Arts and Crafts', although some modern changes have taken place, with new planting in front of the shops and the addition of new shop fronts in many cases.



The Triangle

- 7.2 The triangular plot of flats to the north offers an interesting note of comparison to the parade of shops. They were built by the same developer as a deliberate piece of infill and consequently add to the historic sequence and architectural character of the area.
- 7.3 The conservation area has a spacious, open character and provides some juxtaposition to the surrounding suburban uniformity. Indeed, the curved shape is seen to influence the surrounding pattern of streets to the south east (such as Rutland Avenue, Cavendish Avenue and Montrose Avenue) which also radiate out in a fan style. On the other sides of the conservation area this intriguing shape breaks up the rather more linear, regular streetscape.
- 7.4 Because of its retail function The Oval Conservation Area is a focus for the residential community in the area and is a classic example of town planning during the inter-war years.

Activity and prevailing or former uses within the conservation area

- 7.5 The area is a mix of retail/commercial and residential uses. Both uses are confined to the terrace of buildings to the north-west of the area. A range of shops are provided in the area such as butchers, stationers, bakers and take-aways. The open space provides for passive recreation.

Architectural and historic character

- 7.6 The conservation area has a memorable historic character and appearance deriving from the 'Arts and Crafts' style and the "oval" layout and form. The plot widths are regular and the roofline uniform. The building materials provide a unifying feature as the buildings are brick-built, with the upper floors decorated with panels of herringbone brickwork and render applied between timber framing.
- 7.7 From the late 1920s, a cottage style based on the Arts and Crafts vernacular appeared in the form of "Mock-Tudor", typified by half timbering, herringbone brickwork, leaded windows, gabled porches and red brick or pebble dashed walls. The detailing at first floor level is in vogue with this periods building style but ensures uniformity by adopting a limited pallet of materials - timber framing infilled with plaster on gables and herringbone brickwork on the sections between.
- 7.8 Red brickwork also appears on the ground floor as pillars between the shops. Other architectural features are unified as each shop front has a doorway to the flat above. Whilst most shop fronts have changed, the majority retain uniform fascia levels.



- 7.9 The roofline of the curved terrace is of uniform brown tiles, punctuated by pairs of gables decorated with white render and black timber. The chimney stacks are alternate plain and decorated. The roofscape in general offers a regular movement over the buildings and forms an impressive relationship to the skyline.
- 7.10 The regular layout of each individual unit contributes to the overall composition of the oval shape and terraced group. In this sense no one building is unique or differs in character from the others. This overall homogeneity is of key importance to the character of the area.
- 7.11 In contrast the back elevations as seen from Burnt Oak Lane are typified by a range of plant equipment erupting from the shops at first floor level. This creates a major visual inconsistency to the rhythm of the front elevations.

Buildings of townscape merit

- 7.12 There are no statutorily or locally listed buildings in The Oval Conservation Area. Buildings of Townscape Merit help create the conservation area's distinctive and interesting historic townscape. As recommended in PPG15: Planning and the Historic environment, the general presumption should be in favor of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 7.13 The shopping parade is distinguished by the homogenous nature of the building group as expressed through 28 interlinked building plots. This terraced group provides a good example of relatively unaltered historic buildings at first floor level, where the style, detailing and building materials provide the streetscape with interest and variety. The entire terrace constitutes a building group of townscape value within the conservation area.
- 7.14 While the shop fronts have undergone regular changes, the buildings themselves have not been heavily altered and still act as a reminder of an earlier phase of growth in the area, relating well to the recognisable open and built spaces.

7.15 Within the group are two buildings that deserve greater attention because of their form and function. The northern corner building (No 53) has a distinctive Kentish style and has a certain function in rounding off the parade. No 25 is a good example of architectural detail and retains a traditional type shop front in its current use as a butcher.

Trees, greenery and green spaces

7.16 There is one significant area of green open space in the conservation area. The green oval functions as a suburban area of formal relaxation and tranquillity. It contains a number of designed paths and footways, tress, floral bedding and seats.

7.17 Trees make a positive contribution to the setting of the conservation area, especially those that have been placed on the wide pavement fronting the shops. These trees, when in leaf, become a prominent feature and make a positive contribution to the conservation area.



Traditional shop front (No.25)

Assets of The Oval Conservation Area (positives)

7.18 The positive physical assets of The Oval Conservation Area are:

- Architectural and historic interest of the buildings as a good example of inter-war “Arts and Crafts” style.
- The landscaped, oval open space to the eastern part of the area is a defining characteristic.
- Strong unity of townscape composition with significant street trees.
- Long views from Marlborough Park Avenue and Burnt Oak Lane place the distinctive building group at the back of the oval green space.



- Public open spaces, wide pavements and seating areas offer an attractive environment away from the busy road traffic.
- Consistent pattern of shop fronts, fasciae and projecting signs with remaining examples of traditional shop fronts, including sun canopies and surviving iron brackets at first floor level.

The extent of intrusion or damage to the conservation area (negatives)

7.19 The main intrusion or negative features is illustrated by:

- The condition and boundary treatment of rear service yards is very poor. In addition, there are many large ventilation and plant extractor units at the back of buildings.
- A majority of shop fronts have had large top to bottom glazing installed.
- The introduction of solid security shutters to shop fronts is detracting from the form and style of the buildings and the character of the conservation area.
- The loss of stall risers and erosion of traditional proportions is leading to a loss of unity.
- A number of detailed factors relating to the condition of several individual buildings have an overall impact on the appearance and character of the conservation area.
- On the residential units on the upper floors traditional windows are being replaced with UPVC.



Problems and pressures

7.20 The conservation area has to accommodate large numbers of vehicles parking at certain times of day. This slightly mars the views from the green open space to the architecture of the shopping parade.

7.21 Commercial pressure for development or change by shopkeepers seeking to install new shop fronts with features such as roller shutters, new signs, night security and advertising.

7.22 The cumulative effect of relatively minor individual changes to the front of the shopping parade is weakening the unity and undermining the historic character and appearance of the area.

7.23 Increasing change of use to A3/A5 takeaway/café, creates the need for obtrusive extraction equipment.

General condition

7.24 The public realm is well maintained, with bench seats, litter bins and safe paving and



road surfaces. Traffic bollards ensure cars do not infringe on to the public footpaths. In the private realm some architectural detail is at risk because of neglect and poor maintenance. There are isolated cases of rotting timber frames and scaling/cracks in the panels on the first floor.

- 7.25 In some instances fascias and signs are very intrusive, unattractive and completely out of style and character with the rest of the shops and the individual unit.

Opportunities for enhancement

- 7.26 To enhance the overall character of the shopping parade any proposed redesign of shop fronts should be made within existing openings and of correct scale and character. Other opportunities for enhancement are:
- The uniform 1930's window style on the upper floors should be retained.
 - In the private domain there is scope for increased maintenance to the brickwork which at several locations needs re-pointing. There is also potential to repair the panels on the first floor, this would assist in maintaining the unity of the group character.
 - Owners should be encouraged to use the Bexley Heritage Fund to financially support restoration works and ensure companies with the necessary craft skills are engaged.
 - Ensure that security shutters are of the highest quality and that installation of internal shutter box and steel roller shutters (portcullis) are preferred.
 - The Council needs to ensure that a number of the key views within the conservation area are enhanced; for example, the long views taken from Burnt Oak Lane and Marlborough Park Avenue could be framed by planting two or three hornbeam trees near the junction of these roads with The Oval.

Potential for new development

- 7.27 The Oval comprises a curved terrace of matching shops, providing a single townscape feature. Any redevelopment within the curve would probably spoil the impact and special character of the terrace. Therefore, no redevelopment of the buildings is foreseen.
- 7.28 New occupiers of the retail units may prompt new or revised shopfronts, but these should be within original openings, and of correct scale and character, so as not to spoil the parade's overall character.
- 7.29 In a similar manner, the uniform window style on the upper floors should be retained. As the buildings are shops and flats, there are no permitted development rights for changes to these elements, and all fall within normal planning control.
- 7.30 The area has already been extensively improved. On the paved area in front of the shops, new planting areas have been created, incorporating the pollarded trees. Other trees have been planted on the oval of open space. There is probably little potential for further enhancement of the public environment. The condition and boundary treatment of rear yards could be much improved; these are in private ownership.
- 7.31 Any development or alterations to buildings will be expected to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area in line with Government advice and planning policies. Any plans for alterations or extensions will need to be considered in the context of existing materials, as the external materials of the extension should be in harmony with the materials of the existing building and character of the area.

Townscape Analysis Map



Based upon Ordnance Survey mapping with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to civil proceedings. Bexley Council 100017693 2007

Part 2: Conservation Area Management Plan

1 Legislative background

- 1.1 The purpose of this Management Plan is to present proposals to achieve the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area's special character. The special qualities of the area have been identified as part of the appraisal process and this guidance draws upon that information. Both the Appraisal and the Management Plan will be subject to monitoring and review.
- 1.2 The document reflects government guidance as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) and English Heritage's, "Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas" (August 2005). It is important that the development control process ensures the preservation of the special character of the conservation area and that opportunities are taken to identify and implement enhancements. The key aims of the Management Plan, supported by the Character Appraisal, are to:
- raise awareness of the importance and value of the local heritage;
 - identify distinctive built environment character areas within the conservation area; provide guidance; and set out objectives to preserve and enhance buildings, structures and features;
 - identify distinctive public realm character areas within the conservation area, provide guidance and establish key actions to preserve and enhance the landscape, open spaces and streets;
 - provide tailored design guidance and set out actions for the enhancement of the conservation area;
 - outline the key statutory requirements in respect of development within the conservation area; provide guidance; and set out actions to secure the proper and effective application of these requirements; and
 - propose the implementation of management procedures to co-ordinate the delivery of new works and maintenance of public spaces.
- 1.3 The Management Plan encourages the Local Authority, developers, development professions (e.g. planners, architects, landscape architects, highway engineers) and the local community to engage in the preservation and enhancement of the local historic environment. This will help secure the long-term viability of the conservation area as an important heritage asset.

2 Planning controls and the Council's Development Plan

- 2.1 Designation as a conservation area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the 'preservation and enhancement' of the area. The local plan policies form the basis for making development control decisions with regard to new development and extensions. Also, in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 there are a number of extra controls, which apply to existing buildings in conservation areas. Consent is needed for:
- Demolition of a building (apart from some minor exceptions).
 - Demolition of walls, gates or fences of over a metre next to a highway or over two metres in other locations.

- 2.2 Some works which would not need planning permission outside a Conservation Area, but do require consent when one has been designated are given below.
- Where a dwellinghouse is enlarged and would extend beyond a wall forming a side elevation of the original dwelling house or the enlarged part of the dwellinghouse would have more than one storey and extend beyond the rear wall of the original dwellinghouse.
 - The construction of a building or enclosure, swimming or other pool, or a container used for domestic heating purposes within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse, if any part of the building, enclosure, pool or container would be situated on land between a wall forming a side elevation of the dwellinghouse and the boundary of the curtilage of the dwellinghouse.
 - Cladding of any part of the exterior of the dwellinghouse with stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles.
 - Enlargement of a dwellinghouse consisting of an addition to or an alteration to its roof.
 - The installation of a satellite dish or antenna on a chimney, on a building over 15 metres in height or on a wall or roof slope, which fronts and is visible from a highway (refer Government publication “A Householder’s Planning Guide for the Installation of Antennas, including Satellite Dishes”).
 - Notification must be given of felling or lopping of trees.
- 2.3 Conservation Area Consent is required for the full or substantial demolition of buildings within the conservation area. In accordance with the Government Guidance in PPG15 there will be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 2.4 Any application for the demolition of a Statutorily Listed, Locally Listed Building or Building of Townscape Merit will need to be accompanied by a reasoned justification stating why the building should be demolished. The Council will expect the applicant to demonstrate that:
- the building is beyond economic repair;
 - the building has been offered on the open market at a realistic price; and
 - if vacant, that alternative uses have been sought.
- 2.5 Where alterations are proposed, the reinstatement of original detailing and composition will be sought to reinforce the unity and cohesive quality of the townscape. The Council will seek to ensure that new development within the conservation area serves to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area in accordance with adopted planning policies, the emerging Local Development Framework and other published guidance.
- 2.6 The Council will expect all applications for extensions and alterations to be particularly carefully considered and only well detailed schemes, using the characteristic and appropriate traditional materials, will be approved.

3 Listed buildings, landmark buildings, buildings of local architectural or historic interest and buildings of townscape merit

- 3.1 Within The Oval Conservation Area the imposing curved parade of shops with flats above forms a substantial building of considerable townscape merit. There are no

Statutorily Listed or Local List properties. The principal building is shown on the Townscape Analysis Map.

- 3.2 With all buildings of townscape merit it is important that any alterations or extensions should be of matching scale, design and materials.

4 Erosion of character

- 4.1 Where the quality of an area is being eroded by alterations the Council may make use of what is termed an Article 4 Direction. This may be used to withdraw permitted development rights for a prescribed range of development which materially affect aspects of the external appearance of dwelling houses in conservation areas. This includes the erection, alteration, or removal of a chimney; various kinds of development fronting a highway or open space, such as the enlargement, improvement, or other alteration of a dwelling house; alterations to windows or doors; the construction of an external porch; and the painting of a dwelling house, or of a building or enclosure within its curtilage. It may also be used to withdraw the permitted development rights to demolish a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure, if it is within the curtilage of a dwelling house and fronts a highway or open space.
- 4.2 In a similar manner, the context of the original roofscape is an important feature, which adds rhythm and continuity to the streetscene and the conservation area. Roof extensions, dormers or rooflights to the front or side can be particularly disruptive where visible from the street. It is critically important to protect and retain the original roofscape.
- 4.3 In general terms, it was identified that the following alterations could pose a threat to the special character of the area:
- The condition and boundary treatment of rear service yards is very poor.
 - There are many large ventilation and plant extractor units at the back of buildings.
 - A majority of shop fronts have had large top to bottom glazing installed.
 - The loss of stall risers and erosion of traditional proportions is leading to a loss of unity.
 - The introduction of solid security shutters to shop fronts is especially detracting from the form and style of the buildings and the character of the conservation area.
 - Signs, illumination of signs, advertisement boards, and conflicting coloured fascia signs add to a general visual clutter in the area.
 - On the residential units on the upper floors traditional windows are being replaced with UPVC.
 - The loss of architectural details, such as first floor level lighting brackets.
- 4.4 Such alterations would require planning permission in most cases. In determining planning applications the Council will take the above factors into consideration. The Council will oppose those alterations, which pose a threat to the special character of the conservation area.
- 4.5 In addition, as an aid to protecting the character of the area the Council will ensure that unauthorised development is subject to effective enforcement action. This is to protect the special qualities of the area generally and to ensure that detrimental unauthorised alterations throughout the area are rectified where legal powers permit.

- 4.6 The Council may assist with the provision of grant aid for projects, which restore or reinstate the original features of a building and will contribute to achieving higher standards of preservation and enhancement.

5 Trees, landscape and open space

- 5.1 Within the conservation areas, anyone intending to lop or fell a tree greater than 75mm in diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground must give the Council six weeks written notice before starting the work. This provides the Council with an opportunity to assess the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 5.2 Trees and public open space all contribute to spaciousness of the suburban area and make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of The Oval conservation area. The Council will seek to maintain and enhance these open spaces and natural features.
- 5.3 The Council will consider the use of Tree Preservation Orders in appropriate circumstances where a tree has significant amenity value and is considered to be under threat. This will include trees both within and outside the area, where these trees contribute to the setting of the area or views identified in the appraisal.

6 Setting and views

- 6.1 The setting of the conservation area is very important and development that adversely affects the immediate setting and longer views, into and from the conservation area, will be resisted. Some significant views are identified on the Townscape Analysis Map. Because a view is not mentioned it is not because it is unimportant but rather that there are so many different views. The Council will seek to ensure that all development serves to respect these important views

7 The public realm and enhancement

- 7.1 The area has already been extensively improved. On the paved area in front of the shops, new planting boxes have been created, incorporating the existing pollarded trees. Other trees have been planted on the oval of open space. There is probably little potential for further enhancement of the public environment. The condition and boundary treatment of rear yards could be much improved; these are in private ownership.
- 7.2 In visual terms on street parking to the front of the parade seems to be particularly intrusive in the streetscene. With regard to highway signs and other street furniture a critical audit of the public realm should be undertaken to identify redundant features and opportunities for enhancement, subject to resources.
- 7.3 The Council will seek to ensure that any surviving historic streetscape features are retained, and that any future highway works will bring a positive improvement to the character or appearance of the conservation area. All works should accord with the spirit of English Heritage's 'Streets For All' 2004.

8 New buildings and building extensions

- 8.1 New developments in conservation areas should aspire to a quality of design

and execution, related to its context. This will normally involve respecting values established through assessment of the significance of the area.

- 8.2 The Oval comprises a curved terrace of matching shops, providing a single townscape feature. Any redevelopment within the curve would probably spoil the impact and special character of the terrace. Therefore, no redevelopment of the buildings is foreseen.
- 8.3 New occupiers of the shops may prompt new or revised shop fronts, but these should be within existing openings, and of correct scale and character, so as not to spoil the parade's overall character. Separate guidance has been issued on shop fronts and signs building on guidance within the Unitary Development Plan.
- 8.4 Likewise, the uniform window style on the upper floors should be retained. As the buildings are shops and flats, there are no permitted development rights for changes to these elements, and all fall within normal planning control. Architectural details, such as the original lighting brackets at first floor level, should be retained.
- 8.5 The main pressure for future development might generally take the form of change of use from retail to A3/A5, which could have an adverse affect on the vitality and viability of the parade as a shopping destination for local people. In design terms the impact can disrupt the visual quality and continuity of the shop front of the property and the parade. In addition the need for ventilation extraction equipment to the rear of the building can be visually disruptive.
- 8.6 Rooflights and dormer windows to the front roof slope, or a visible side slope, can be particularly disruptive and detract from the character and appearance of the area and fail to "preserve or enhance" the conservation area and will generally be unacceptable.
- 8.7 Any form of development which erodes the openness of the green open space of the conservation area will be resisted.
- 8.8 Some buildings have suffered from unsympathetic alterations which have detracted from their appearance, e.g. changes of shop fronts, windows, doors and roofing materials. There is potential for re-instating original features on some buildings and controlling changes so as to restore a sense of unity, and this may be assisted by grant aid from the Bexley Heritage Fund.

9 Solar panels and wind turbines

- 9.1 In general terms, the installation of solar panels and/or wind turbines within or adjacent to a conservation area would introduce alien features and by their inherent design they will be visually intrusive. In terms of the main conservation principle that any proposed development should "preserve or enhance" the character and appearance of the conservation area any installations may be problematic. The Council has published guidance, which provides information on the subject. Please refer "Solar Panels and Wind Turbines: A Householder Guide on the Need for Planning Permission and Building Regulations approval" (Jan. 2007).

10 Monitoring change

- 10.1 It is recommended that the physical environment of the conservation area and key sites adjacent to the conservation area is monitored by carrying out detailed surveys, including a dated photographic record, on a regular basis, so as to identify any

unauthorised work and consider whether enforcement action should be taken.

- 10.2 Any previously unreported unauthorised development or work identified by the detailed survey would then be considered by the Planning Control Enforcement Team for action, resources permitting.

11 Boundary definition

- 11.1 Since designation, the boundary has proven to be robust and generally a good reflection of the area of greatest historic significance and special character. The Council will maintain the defined boundary of the designated area and periodically review the boundary of the conservation area as part of future reviews in accordance with best practice and guidance on management of the historic environment.

12 Community engagement

- 12.1 It is mentioned in recent urban design publications that, “people make places”. Although the Council has planning powers it can exercise over development and may, when funds are available, carry out enhancement works, ultimately the quality of any place depends on all the people who affect the area. In mixed use areas such as The Oval Conservation Area, retailers, residents and the owners of property play a key role in affecting how the area looks. Good communication between local people and the Council is one way of helping owners and the Council carryout appropriate works and take informed decisions that are of benefit to the area.
- 12.2 To that end the Council will seek to maintain and promote close collaborative working with the local retailers, residents and any local associations on issues relevant to the management of the area, including proposals for development and enhancement, within and adjoining the conservation area. It will also improve dialogue with the wider community. This may include the production and distribution of information leaflets, subject to resources.
- 12.3 The following actions have been taken to ensure that this appraisal and management proposals are accepted and acted upon by the local community.
- 12.4 Public consultation: The Oval Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan were subject to public consultation from December 2008 to February 2009. As part of the consultation, comments were sought from the Conservation Advisory Committee, local amenity/history groups, local partnerships, organisations such as English Heritage, etc. and individual owners/occupiers of all of the properties affected. The draft document was also available for reference on the Council’s website, in local libraries, at the Council’s Contact Centre in Bexleyheath and at Council Offices in Sidcup. The results of these consultations were considered by the Cabinet Member, the text revised and adopted. Copies of this document are available on the Council’s website and as printed copies.
- 12.5 The Council will seek to improve communication with local retailers and residents and, where it can, help and encourage local retailers and residents to engage and assist with pursuing conservation objectives.

Appendices

1 General guidance to homeowners on repairs to historic buildings in conservation areas

Note: Before starting any work, property owners are advised to contact the Council.

Roofs

The roof is often an important feature of a historic building and the roofscape can often make a significant contribution to the character of the area. The retention of its original structure, shape, materials and features is important. Historic roof materials and features such as chimneystacks, chimney pots, and dormers, as well as details such as decorative ridge tiles and finials, all form an integral part of the character of the building and the area. The loss or inappropriate alteration of historic materials and features is likely to be harmful to the appearance and character of historic buildings and areas.

The Council encourages the retention and reinstatement of traditional roofing materials. When roofing materials are replaced, it is important that as much as possible of the original material is re-used. When practical, original material should be re-used on visible areas, with matching new materials on other parts.

The addition of modern features, such as roof lights, is likely to be harmful to its character and appearance of the building and area, and should be avoided at all times. When replacement of materials and features becomes necessary, the replacement should respect the design and material of the original and the age and character of the building and/ or the area.

Chimneys

Chimneystacks are both decorative and functional features of the roofscape and can be important indicators of the age of a building and its internal planning, and they should normally be retained, even when no longer required. Chimney pots can sometimes be significant decorative features in their own right and can be important as part of the roofscape, which will be damaged if they are removed or replaced with an inappropriate type.

Dormers

Original dormers should be retained and carefully repaired. If beyond repair they should be reconstructed using traditional materials with all historic features reproduced. Enlargement of existing dormers on principle elevations should be avoided. Any new dormers should respect the symmetry of either an individual building or a terrace. Where new dormers would be inappropriate to the type of building or the proposed position, new, recessed 'conservation' roof lights may be acceptable, but not on prominent or generally visible roof slopes.

Fascias

Features such as timber bargeboards and fascias should be preserved and, if replacement becomes necessary, it should wherever possible replicate the design and material of those original to the building. The addition of bargeboards and fascias to buildings that did not

previously have such a feature will normally be resisted, where they would detract from the character of the building or the area.

Walls

Walls are the main structural fabric of any building. Alterations to the wall surfaces will have a significant impact on the overall appearance of a historic building. Every effort should be made to retain or re-use original facing brickwork and stonework. Alterations or repairs to external walls should respect the original material and endeavour to match it in appearance. Particular care should be paid to re-pointing brick or stonework. Methods should be employed to minimize damage to historic building materials: an appropriate lime mortar mix should be used and should match the appearance of the original pointing. Brick or stonework should not normally be rendered unless the surface was rendered originally. It may be necessary to remove more recently applied render if this is damaging the surface beneath.

Painting and stone cleaning

Painting or re-painting involving a change of colour will affect the character of a historic building. Previously unpainted surfaces should not normally be painted over. In many cases, the colour of the paint may be less important than the first application of an unsuitable covering, which could damage the original fabric and be damaging to remove. Cleaning can have a marked effect on the character of historic buildings and affect the historic fabric. The cleaning of an individual building within a terrace would obviously affect the appearance of the terrace as a whole. All cleaning methods can cause damage if carelessly handled. Cleaning with low-pressure water and non-abrasive brushes is often the preferred method. Other methods including abrasive and chemical cleaning can damage wall surfaces and destroy detail and should generally be avoided. Consideration should be given as to whether such cleaning is either necessary or worthwhile to remove corrosive dirt or to achieve a major improvement in appearance.

Windows and doors

Door and window openings establish the character of an elevation; they should not generally be altered in their proportions or details. The depth to which window frames are recessed within a wall is a varying historical feature of importance and greatly affects the character of a building - this too should be respected.

Windows - The size and shape of window openings, window frame details, arrangement and detail of glazing bars, and the method of opening are important characteristics of a historic building or an area. The traditional material used for windows in most historic buildings is timber, although occasionally the original windows are metal. It can often be difficult to introduce new materials without altering the appearance or character of the area.

Wherever possible, original windows should be retained and repaired. Improved heat and sound insulation can be achieved in unobtrusive ways by draft-proofing and soundproofing measures, rather than replacement of the original window. When necessary, replacement or repaired windows should accurately replicate the size and shape of original timber frames and glazing bars in all respects.

Doors - Doorways form an important element of historic buildings and can add to the character of conservation areas. Together with the door surround, fanlight, steps and original door furniture, doors can provide a significant and prominent feature. In recent years there

has been a trend towards the replacement of historic timber front doors with modern doors of inappropriate materials and design. To preserve the character and appearance of historic buildings and areas, it is important to retain the original front door, door surround, fanlight and other features wherever possible. When necessary, replacement or repaired doors should accurately replicate the original design in all respects.

Window and door materials

In most situations timber should be used for the replacement of historic windows and doors; generally UPVC cannot satisfactorily replicate the historic detailing and character of these features. UPVC windows and doors can degrade and discolour; they are not completely maintenance free and can be difficult to repair. Developments in timber preservation, finishing materials and manufacture can produce timber windows and doors with a significantly longer life than UPVC.

Rainwater goods

Original rainwater goods are an integral part of the design and character of an historic building. They will normally be cast iron, which if properly maintained should last many years longer than replacement plastic goods. Cast iron gutters, down pipes and hopper heads etc. should be retained wherever possible. Where rainwater goods are required to be renewed, the replacement should replicate the original in all respects. Suitably profiled cast aluminium may be an acceptable alternative to cast iron in certain situations. However, plastic rainwater goods should be avoided on buildings where cast iron has been previously used. Additional rainwater goods should be kept to a minimum and should not disturb or break through any decorative architectural features.

Boundary walls and railings

Boundary walls and railings are important architectural and streetscape features. The loss or alteration of these features over time has been detrimental to the overall character of the Borough's historic areas and buildings. Distinctive boundary elements include brick and stone walls, gates, cast iron railings, and stone and brick plinths piers. Historic boundaries should be retained, repaired or reinstated as necessary using appropriate techniques and detailed to match the original. Particular care should be taken to repair or reinstate existing walls using appropriate techniques and materials. Stonework if appropriate should be locally sourced. Special care should be taken to use the correct lime mortar mix and method of pointing in brick and stone walls.

Minor additions

Features such as aerials, satellite dishes, burglar alarms, CCTV cameras, heating system flues and vents should be kept to a minimum, and where necessary should be installed in locations and in a manner that will not harm the appearance or character of the building or area.

2 Bexley Heritage Fund - helping to restore your heritage

The London Borough of Bexley is fortunate in having a fine heritage of notable old buildings and historic areas. These, besides being of importance in their own right, help make the borough a pleasant and attractive place to live and work.

The Bexley Heritage Fund can offer grants to assist with the additional costs associated with restoration works which arise from the need to preserve, enhance or restore the buildings special character.

Grant aided schemes may be for the restoration of complete buildings or alternatively small scale projects to restore original features such as timber sash windows, decorative stonework, etc. Grant aided works should normally be visible to the public. Normal building maintenance, alterations or building new extensions are not eligible.

Any applications for grant aid must be made before work commences. Detailed notes for the guidance of applicants are available on request from:

London Borough of Bexley
The Bexley Heritage Fund
Strategic Planning & Development
Wyncham House
207 Longlands Road
Sidcup
Kent DA15 7JH

Alternatively call 020 8308 7789 or email gordon.fraser@bexley.gov.uk.

Donations to the Fund are welcome.

3 Contacts

For information on listed buildings and conservation areas in the London Borough of Bexley.

Mr M Nicholls / Mr G Fraser
London Borough of Bexley,
Strategic Planning and Development
Civic Offices, 2 Watling Street,
Bexleyheath, Kent
DA6 7AT.

Tel: 020 8303 7777

Email: martyn.nicholls@bexley.gov.uk / gordon.fraser@bexley.gov.uk

For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas:

English Heritage (London Region)
3 Bunhill Row
London EC1 8YZ

Tel: 020 7973 3000

www.english-heritage.org.uk

For an excellent range of technical advice leaflets:

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
37 Spital Square
London E1 6DY

Tel: 020 7377 1644

www.spab.org.uk

For more information on Bexley's local history and archives:

Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre
Townley Road
Bexleyheath
Kent DA6 7JH

Tel: 020 8836 7369

If you would like to know more about the services the Council provides, or would like either a translation of this document or the information in a different format, please call our Customer Contact Centre on 020 8303 7777 and press 0, quoting reference:

