

RAILWAY TERRACES CRICKLEWOOD
CONSERVATION AREA

CHARACTER APPRAISAL
STATEMENT



DESIGNATED 4 MARCH 1998

BARNET
LONDON BOROUGH

FOREWORD

What is a Conservation Area?

Conservation areas were introduced through the Civic Amenities Act 1967, and there are now more than 9,000 across the country. They are ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’ (Section 69(1)(a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

The Railway Terraces, Cricklewood Conservation Area was designated by the Council in March 1998. This Character Appraisal Statement seeks to identify the special characteristics of The Railway Terraces, Cricklewood so that they may be better preserved and enhanced in the future.

What are the implications?

Conservation Area status acknowledges the importance of an area, highlighting its real and potential attractiveness. It also means that the Council’s efforts in the area are geared to preserving and enhancing its special character.

One way of protecting conservation areas is through the planning system, which is designed to protect local amenity, whatever the area. However in conservation areas planning legislation requires local authorities to ensure in particular that development proposals do not detract from the character or appearance of the area.

In conservation areas local authorities have more say over some minor changes to buildings, trees and gardens. This does not mean owners can not change their properties but the controls allow proposals to be checked to make sure they are in keeping with the area. Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of any building within the designated area.

Grant funding from bodies such as English Heritage and the National Lottery is sometimes

available for enhancement projects in conservation areas. However the priorities for such funding often change and not all work in all conservation areas will be eligible for this type of help.

What is a Character Appraisal Statement?

Conservation areas are designated by local planning authorities after careful local assessment. This assessment forms the basis for a character appraisal statement. The format and scope of such statements are guided by English Heritage.

A character appraisal statement includes information to explain and justify the conservation area status. It therefore forms a basis for planning decisions in the area and provides the groundwork for any future policies and projects to preserve or enhance the area. The statement does not include specific projects itself.

Unitary Development Plan

The Council's Revised Deposit Draft 2001 Unitary Development Plan contains the relevant conservation area policies which apply to The Railway Terraces, Cricklewood. These are as follows: GBEnv.1, GBEnv.4, HC1, HC2, HC3, HC4. Archaeological interest will be protected through policies HC16, HC17, HC18, HC19 and HC20.

Trees

All works to trees (over 75mm in diameter) must be notified to the planning authority who have six weeks to decide whether or not to control the works.

For further information on works in conservation areas contact

The Trees Team

020 8359 4624

or

The Conservation and Design Team

020 8359 4464/4598

CHARACTER APPRAISAL

1 Location, Population and Setting

The Conservation Area (Map 1) is situated within Cricklewood in the south western corner of the borough. The cottages sit between Edgware Road to the south west, the Bedford to St Pancras railway line to the north east and the Cricklewood Curve line to Acton in the north. The railway acts as a barrier around two sides of the Conservation Area whilst industrial units and a playground abut a third, the south eastern side. The Edgware Road forms a further distinct edge to the Conservation Area.

Gratton Terrace lies at the front of the Conservation Area separated from Edgware Road by a narrow landscaped bank and the shops of Burlington Parade. Terraces of railway cottages run parallel to Gratton Terrace at the rear. Access to these cottages is only possible from Edgware Road via vehicular entrances at each end of Gratton Terrace, and pedestrian steps in the middle of the terrace.

The terraces are located within a wider area dominated by the railways and large industrial/commercial units. Prominent neighbouring users include a telephone exchange, bingo hall, and office block. The area is to the north of Cricklewood Town Centre with a number of individual shops along Edgware Road. To the south and west, in the London Borough of Brent, there are Victorian and Edwardian residential roads built after the advent of the railway.

The Conservation Area slopes from south east to north west along the line of the terraces, and upwards away from Edgware Road. The railway is raised above the surrounding land and the Conservation Area is therefore bounded to the north and north east by banks leading up towards the tracks.

The Conservation Area is almost entirely residential in nature with approximately 180 houses and flats.

2

Origins and Development

The Growth of Cricklewood

Edgware Road is within the pre-Roman part of Watling Street which crossed the Thames around Lambeth and by Roman times ran on to St Albans. Such long distance roads did not necessarily generate settlements except where there was some local reason for growth such as a market, not the case in Cricklewood. However the Place-Name Society record 'le Crickelwode' as existing in 1294 and by 1860 Cricklewood was a small rural settlement.

In 1866 Midland Railways built the Bedford to St Pancras line with the then named "Childs Hill and Cricklewood Station" opening for passengers in 1870. The arrival of the railway heralded an era of intense expansion for Cricklewood with both housing and factories being built. In 1892 George Furness opened the first factory in the area, the Imperial Dry Plate Company works which dealt with photographic material. The legacy of the railway and the development it facilitated can clearly be seen in Cricklewood today. There are many industrial sites and early suburban housing estates all bounded and crossed by major transport routes.

Archaeological Significance and Potential of the Area

Although Cricklewood lies along the probable line of Watling Street, the Roman Road, there are no records of significant archaeological finds in the vicinity of the Conservation Area. The possibility remains however that important archaeological finds whether relating to Roman Britain or to later phases of development in the area, may be unearthed and require assessment and recording in the course of development schemes.

The Building of the Railway Terraces

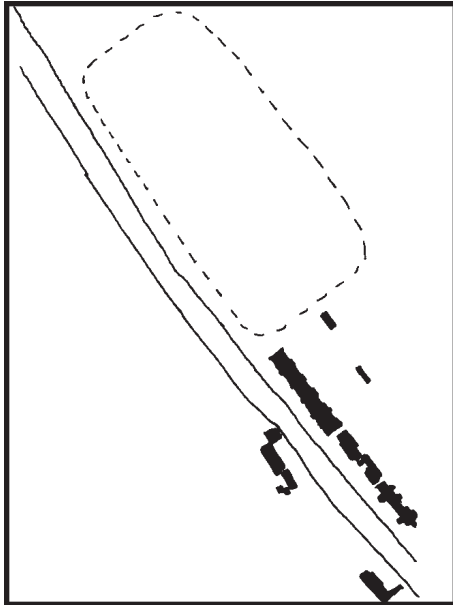
When the Midland Railway built the St Pancras to Bedford line in the 1860s, it purchased 150 acres of former agricultural land in Cricklewood. Part of this land was used to build an extensive depot and marshalling yard to service the London end of the line. The depot sat by the junction of the main line and the Cricklewood Curve, a line which ran from Cricklewood to Acton where, by 1884, it connected with the Great Western and London and South Western lines. Work started on the depot with the building of a large engine shed in 1882 followed by sidings and dispatching sites for coal and other goods.

Directly south of what was the depot, construction of the Railway Terraces as housing for rail workers commenced in the late 1860s. There are five terraces in all; Gratton Terrace, facing Edgware Road, and Midland, Johnston, Needham and Campion Terraces behind. An institute for the education of workers was built at the end of Gratton Terrace but has since been demolished. There is also a former railway hostel at the end of Gratton Terrace which was built after 1894.

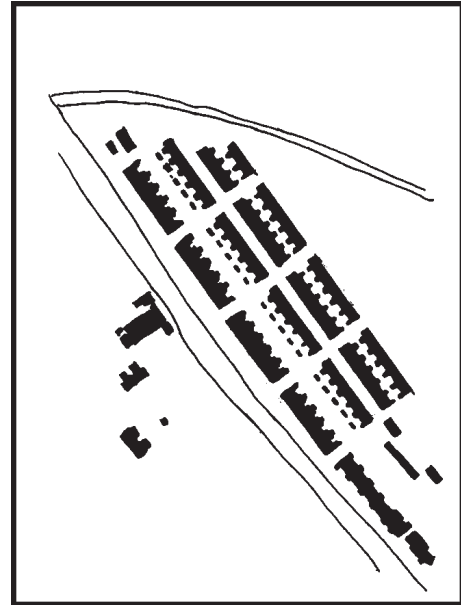
It would appear that Gratton, Midland and Needham Terraces were the first to be built with Johnston Terrace being added between Midland and Needham Terraces by the 1890s and Campian Terrace being built at a later date. A row of six shops with flats above was built in front of Gratton Terrace in 1908.

Originally Gratton Terrace was divided into four blocks of ten houses and the access roads which divide the back terraces, passed between these blocks to reach the grass bank running along Edgware Road. At some point between 1915 and 1936 however, houses were built as infill development on two of these access roads linking three of the earlier blocks to create a continuous block of 34 houses on Gratton Terrace.

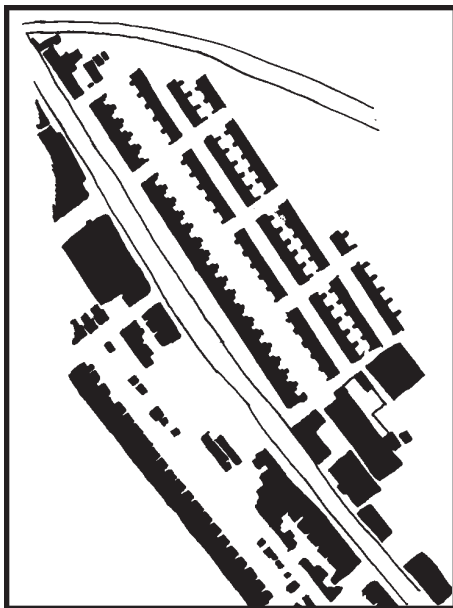
Sequence of building in and around the Conservation Area



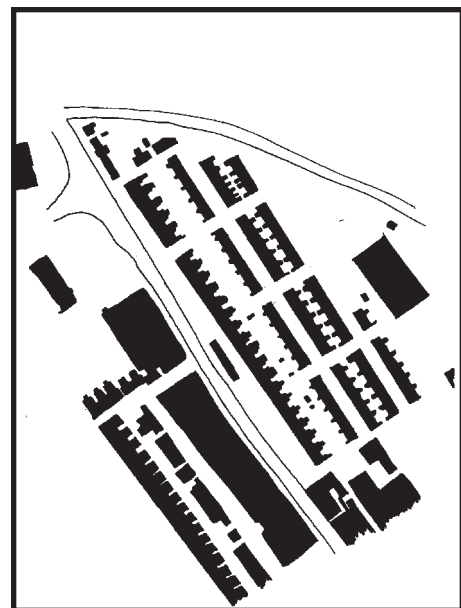
1863



1894



1936



1991

Two main sizes and styles of house were originally constructed within the Conservation Area.

Gratton Terrace consists entirely of larger houses built for higher grade railway workers. These houses face onto Edgware Road, are built on a grander scale and feature large back gardens and more ornate architectural detailing.

The terraces to the rear of Gratton Terrace are smaller more humble dwellings, featuring a minimum of architectural detailing and small back yards facing onto narrow service roads. There is currently an open green swath between Midland and Johnston Terrace and individual garden plots between Needham and Campian Terraces. In 1894 the green swath was in existence but Campion Terrace was not built and the houses in Needham Terrace did not appear to have front gardens. At some time before 1962 the green swath between Midland and Johnston Terrace was divided into individual garden plots, possibly during the Second World War as part of the war effort to grow food. In 1969 the Terraces were sold to Bradford Property Trust and residents voted on whether to keep the individual garden spaces. As a result the area between Midland and Johnston Terraces was re-established as open grass whilst the other gardens were retained. At this time cherry trees were planted and brick walls and railings were put up at the end of the grass swaths to create semi private amenity space.

**Building Costs of
Houses in Midland
and Johnston Terraces**

One Cottage	£197
Coal place and WC	£18
Total	£215
Total for 40 cottages	£8,600
Earthworks, Roads	
Drainage and Waste	£3,020
Total	£11,620

Source: Original house design drawings.
Archivist Ref ACC.20430

When the terraces were first built the influence of the railway pervaded every aspect of the area. All but Midland Terrace were named after prominent railway officials of the time and there is evidence that each row was allocated to workers doing a specific job, for example drivers or firemen. The Railway Company could control many aspects of its workers lives, for example there were 'knockers up' who made sure workers

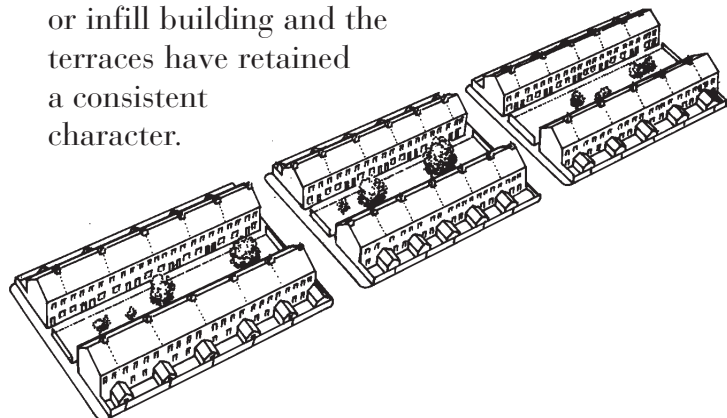
were not late for their shifts. Until 1952 all the roads were private and once a year a gate at the junction of Gratton Terrace and Edgware Road was closed to legally ensure their private status. In October 1952 the roads and footpaths were adopted as public highway.

Campion Terrace, the last to be built, is approximately a third of the length of the other terraces. The space now left at the end of Campion Terrace appears to have originally formed part of the railway yard. This area appears to have been used as allotments before 1939, later becoming redundant and was used as an informal dump until it was converted to allotments in 1982. There are now ten allotments of approximately 25 metres by eight metres each although some have been subdivided. The allotments are very well used by local residents and act as a buffer between the terraces and the industrial units and railway beyond.

3

General Character and Appearance of the Area

The Terraces form an individual and unusual area with clearly defined boundaries and a uniform character. There is a great sense of place within the Conservation Area and there appears to be a vibrant and cohesive community. The formal, regular street scape and building layout, together with the unusual relationship between buildings, private and public open space all help to give the area a distinctive, intimate but ordered feel. The area is characterised by small scale, dense development with regular building rhythms and designs. As such there has been little opportunity for house alterations or infill building and the terraces have retained a consistent character.



The limited amenity space available in the terraces is intimate, quiet and hence well used. The lack of cars, communal green swaths and allotments help residents keep in close contact with each other.

There are very few parking spaces and, because of its isolated position, no through traffic within the area, although there is on street parking in Gratton Terrace and the access roads running between the terraces. This lack of cars is a very important characteristic. Not only is the relationship of buildings to open spaces uninterrupted, but the area is exceptionally quiet and peaceful. This unusual characteristic is especially evident compared with the noise, traffic and clutter of surrounding roads and the railway. The Railway Terraces are a peaceful, tranquil island within a busy urban setting.

The Conservation Area has few access points and is therefore isolated and self contained. There are however some important views in and out of the area. These views contrast the relative calm of the Conservation Area and the bustle of Edgware Road; views from surrounding industrial and retail sites such as Food Giant into the area; views from the Conservation Area to intrusive features such as the mast to the north east across the railway line and the new industrial building on Kara Way and glimpsed views of the ends of Gratton Road from Edgware Road.

There are also a number of important internal views, including long views along the terraces, service roads and pathways, views of the green spaces from the houses, and views of the back of Gratton Road from the internal access roads. There is a great sense of perspective within the area created through a combination of strong horizontal building lines, uninterrupted views through open areas and the gentle drop in levels towards the north west.

Although there have been many minor alterations to the Terraces over the years they have retained much of their original character. The lack of space around buildings means there

has been little opportunity for major change such as large extensions or in-fill developments. In addition the fact that the houses were built for a particular type of inhabitant, and have been corporately owned for most of their history, has perhaps helped preserve their integrated and self contained character.

4

Building Design, Materials and Detailing

The Conservation Area features three principle building designs as described below:

A

Midland, Johnston, Needham and Campion Terraces

Consist of blocks of up to eleven two storey houses each. These houses are of red brick with Welsh slate roofs although a number of properties have been rendered and original roof materials replaced. Whilst of simple elevational design, these houses display distinctive features including exposed rafter ends under eaves and a combination of timber casement windows at front and sash windows at rear. The front of the houses feature simple panelled timber doors next to triple width, small paned timber casement windows with brick arches over. At first floor there are one double and one single width timber casement windows. The houses have unusually large chimney stacks with ten pots per pair of houses, adding greatly to the formal, regimented appearance of the terraces. A number of original terracotta chimney pots remain. The houses have small back yards which originally housed a brick WC and coal place many of which still remain.

*Original
Window and
Door Details*



B

Gratton Terrace A row of two storey houses with projecting bays and recessed doors. The houses are of red brick with decorative work in yellow brick although a number have been painted or rendered. Where original windows remain these are timber framed sashes with masonry cills and segmented masonry arches and key stones over. Ground floor bay windows feature decorative timber mouldings around ground floor bays and doors. The roofs are of grey slate with crested ridge tiles. A number of original terracotta chimney pots remain. Corner properties have gabled roof ends and project slightly forward of those adjoining, marking the end of a terrace. The later houses built on the access roads are of the same design, materials and detailing.

C

Burlington Parade Consists of a block of six shops with flats above. The building is red brick with undressed stone window details. The shops are serviced from Gratton Terrace and most of the original low level delivery hatches have been retained. The building is three stories high but only approximately six metres deep as it fits within the landscaped bank in front of Gratton Terrace.

Roads within the Conservation Area are of grey tarmac with pavements of concrete paviours. There are a number of different style street lights along the terraces although none date back to the time the terraces were built. Most of the original metal road name signs are still attached to the upper front and rear walls of the end of terrace houses. New flat aluminium road name signs have also been erected on grey plastic coated metal poles on the pavements.

5
Character Analysis
by Sub-Area
Area 1
Midland and
Johnston Terraces

These roads comprise two perfectly straight lines of 40 and 44 two storey houses facing each other across a communal grassed swath. The terraces are divided into four equal blocks by access roads running from south west to north east. Each line of houses is backed by a service road. As such there is a very strong uninterrupted building line with long linear views and a great sense of perspective.

*A Strong Sense of
Perspective*



The green swath between the houses is very unusual and adds greatly to the tranquillity and human scale of the area. As with the houses it is divided into four equal lengths by the access roads. The ends of the greens are marked by more recently constructed boundary walls with metal railings over. These walls allow for pedestrian level views from surrounding access roads whilst giving the enclosed spaces a semi private character. The four spaces are approximately as wide as the buildings are high which helps to make them intimate in scale and draw together facing pairs of terraces. There are a number of small cherry trees on the greens which again help to draw together the terraces

and add individuality and interest. There are some recent shallow projecting bay window additions facing the grass. These are not in keeping with the original house design and are often of inappropriate materials.

At the south eastern end of the terrace a recent industrial building overshadows that end of the terrace. The building pays no regard to the building pattern of the terraces and as first built is a visual intrusion on the edge of the Conservation Area. At the other end of the terrace the last row of houses on the north eastern side is truncated and there are three single storey garages at the end breaking the building line. The sense of enclosure is lost at this end and the space leaks towards a row of car parking spaces along the north eastern boundary of the Conservation Area. There is also a new block of flats at this end of the terraces built on the site of the original institute. Although this is of a similar scale to the original houses, its detailing, materials and proportions are not in keeping. The railway line, on its bank, runs very close to this end of the terraces and when trains pass they overlook and dominate the buildings.

Some roofs have been reclad with tiles instead of slates, and although chimney stacks remain a number of terracotta pots have been replaced. There are no dormer windows or visible roof lights to disrupt the terraces' roof line and the combination of low, linear terraces and large chimney stacks makes for a prominent and interesting roof line.

Area 2 Needham Terrace and Campion Terrace

There are 52 houses along these terraces all of similar design to those in Midland and Johnston Terraces. The houses in Campion Terrace were built after the others and do not have as distinctive eave details as the other terraces. They also have raised brick party wall parapets running from the eaves to the roof ridge (a feature missing from the other railway cottages). To the east of the area there are allotments and along the edge of the Conservation Area a steep

bank and fence leading to an industrial site and railway track behind.

There is only one pair of facing blocks at the southern end of the terraces as the allotments cut into the regular building pattern. The subdivision of the central green means these houses do not relate as strongly to each other as those in Midland Terrace.

Campion Terrace faces onto a retail and industrial park. There are partly broken metal railings along the boundary strengthened by planting. The rest of the north eastern boundary is marked by the edge of the allotments and a bank leading to the industrial site and railway. Here the boundary is generally well planted with largely deciduous growth which helps to preserve the tranquillity of the area.

Houses in these roads have been altered in similar ways to those in Midland and Johnston Terraces as described earlier in this document.

Area 3

Gratton Terrace The terrace was originally divided in three places by access roads. Today two of these gaps have been infilled with houses and there is now only one break in the terrace aligning with the wide steps leading from Cricklewood Lane to the back terraces. This pedestrian entrance allows for important views in and out of the Conservation Area. The houses at the end of each original block project slightly and have prominent front gables. Although four of these houses now sit within a continuous block they still add interest and help to break the formal building line.

The houses of Gratton Terrace face away from the other terraces and look out across Edgware Road. Whilst more finely detailed and designed to give an imposing frontage to the development, they do not share the intimate and isolated character of the terraces behind. However the buildings are of good quality and the road is historically an important and prestigious part of the Railway Terraces. The plane trees in front of the terrace have recently been pollarded and are in a good state. These trees act as an important

barrier adding to the seclusion of the Conservation Area.

At the north western end of the terrace there is a red brick building facing Edgware Road. The building is approximately 40 metres long by ten metres deep and was built at some time between 1896 and 1915 by the railway company to complement the existing institute which was behind it. The building was used as a railway hostel but is now run by a religious organisation. The side of the building sits directly opposite Gratton Terrace and is a highly visible key building providing a visual block at that end of the terrace.

There is a narrow earth landscaped bank in front of Gratton Terrace along Edgware Road. Burlington Parade sits in the middle of this bank, flanked by mature plane trees above hedge planting. There are red brick boundary walls and some original railings above and around the ends of the bank which also help define entrances to the Conservation Area.

Almost all the houses have been altered in some way. Typical alterations include rendering, brick painting, double glazed UPVC/metal windows and doors, new tiled roofs, dormer and back extensions and infilling of door recesses. Many of these alterations use inappropriate materials and designs and detrimentally affect the character of the Conservation Area.

When the terraces were built the larger houses of Gratton Terrace represented the public face of the development. Today the terrace has lost much of its imposing character, partly because it is lost behind trees, and partly because of unsympathetic alterations which have diluted its formal design.

The former railway hostel and Burlington Parade are now the built edge of the Conservation Area along Edgware Road and combine with the plane trees to suggest the quality buildings and tranquillity behind.

Gratton Terrace acts as a break between the terraces behind and the noise, movement and buildings along Edgware Road. It provides a link between the humbler railway dwellings at the rear and grander developments and commercial frontages along Edgware Road.

*For further information
on the contents of this
document contact the
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Larger scale Conservation Area maps can be purchased at Barnet House, Planning Reception

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