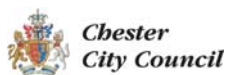




UPTON PARK

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL
JANUARY 2008



Maps can be seen on the following link: www.chester.gov.uk/conservationareareview

UPTON PARK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL - JANUARY 2008

DESIGNATIONS

Conservation Area	First designated in 1999
Listed Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Upton Mill (II), Upton Park Lane</i>
Scheduled Monuments	None
Registered Parks and Gardens	None
Archaeological Priority	None
SSSI	None
Article 4 directions	None
Regulation 7 directions	None
Any other designations	
Area of Special County Value (ASCV)	None
Site of Biological Interest (SBI)	None
Site of Nature Conservation Value (SNCV)	None
Area of Nature Conservation Value (ANCV)	None
Other	

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Upton Park is an estate laid out in the mid nineteenth century two miles north of Chester.

The earliest surviving feature is that of Upton Mill, built in 1777, at which time it would have been surrounded by fields and isolated buildings.

The rapid growth experienced by Victorian Chester in the mid 19th century combined with the demands for better housing particularly from the artisan classes and resulted in the laying out of new residential estates such as Queen's Park. Upton Park was a speculative venture undertaken by 3 Chester entrepreneurs, William Pitt, William Shone and Thomas Wood, who employed the surveyor John Hitchen (who had also been responsible for Queens Park) to draw up a plan. The dominant feature was an



Upton Park western entrance

oval road with 30 plots arranged both inside and outside the oval.

The growth of Upton Park appears to have been gradual and it took almost half a century to realise the original plan. This possibly reflected a slow-down in the property market after 1850. The location of Upton Park did not work in its favour, as there was no railway station at Upton and other estates such as Queens Park were much closer to the city and the railway network.

Throughout the twentieth century, especially after the Second World War, residential infill has taken place rapidly in accord with 1870 covenant that allowed each of the thirty properties to accommodate either one double or two single properties.

The mill ceased working when the bakery business that occupied it moved to Saltney. Minus its sails, it has been converted into a five-floor residence.

This period has also seen the estate become engulfed by the residential expansion of Chester and, instead of been surrounded by fields, Upton Park is now surrounded by modern suburban housing.

The development of Upton Park into the recognisable character of today occurred mainly between the mid 19th century and the early 1980's.

³ Burdett Map (1777), Tithe Map (1842), Ordnance Survey Map (1875, 1910, 1970), Cheshire Record Office, 9 Duke Street, Chester

KEY FEATURES OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

- General:** private residential area created in the mid 19th century with varied architectural style stretching from late Victorian to modern infills
- Topography:** flat
- Streetscape:** one central oval road with two linking lanes joining it east and west (i.e. Upton Park Lane) to the nearby local roads
- Settlement layout:** built around the oval and the two linking lanes
- Built environment re: residential units:** Detached and semi detached houses two storey high brick built, mainly pitched slated or clay roofs, dating from mid 19th century until 20th century
- Building setting:** Detached and semi detached houses of similar dimensions, with varied set backs and orientation
- Boundary treatment:** no significant boundary treatment with the exception of low sandstone walls at the western entrance along Mill Lane
- Trees and hedgerows:** Medium to high hedgerows bordering oval road, two rows of mature trees along the lane leading to Upton Park as well as group of mature trees within the plots

Historic floor surface: none

Open spaces: none

Change of conservation area boundaries: none

CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

Located on a flat land 2 miles north of Chester, Upton Park is a Victorian private residential estate, now surrounded by modern residential development. However, an almost rural feel has been maintained distinguishing it from its surroundings.

Its singular narrow oval road bordered on both sides by high hedgerows as well as its mix of architectural styles are the key features of the conservation area.

Most buildings are 2-2^{1/2} storeys high, with mainly slate or clay tile pitched roofs, detached or semi-detached with varied orientation and set-backs from the highway. Upton Park architectural styles stretch from late Victorian, though Arts and Crafts to contemporary infills. There is a considerable variation in the appearance of each building. However, many of the buildings original to the estate have common features in their design and style. This creates a strong contrast with the more recent infill buildings.

POSITIVE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA

Listed Buildings

Upton Mill, an 18th century landmark building, is a landmark at the western entrance of the conservation area, with its single tall cylinder built in brick. It has been converted in a five floor residence. It no longer carries sails.

Unlisted buildings of merit

Upton Park's unlisted buildings of merit are varied in their detailing, use of materials and overall form. They date between the mid 19th century and the late 20th century.

When special circumstances arise and for more effective built environment protection in conservation areas, it may be appropriate to consider the provision of article 4 directions and making use of a local list for Upton Park's unlisted buildings of merit.



The Mill, Upton Park

Local views

There are no significant local views

Topography, Townscape and Landscape details

The relationships between topography, local townscape and landscape details often contribute to the sense of local distinctiveness and are often unique to a particular conservation area. They can range from specific building detailing, characteristic building elements and boundary treatments, to the quality of the streetscape. Individually and collectively they contribute to the overall quality of Upton Park as well as enhancing individual areas of character within the settlement.

Topography

Upton Park conservation area is flat.

Townscape details

Local townscape details contribute to the sense of local distinctiveness and may be unique to a particular conservation area.

Upton Park's conservation area has no typical townscape details but more an eclectic mix of architectural styles. Nevertheless the following factors contribute strongly to the overall local distinctiveness:

- The prevailing walling material in the estate is brick, some houses rendered.
- All the pre-war buildings have pitched roofs covered by slate or clay tiles. Modern buildings usually have more contemporary covering such as interlocking clay tiles.

Landscape and streetscape details

Landscape and streetscape details have a significant impact upon the setting of properties, the coherence of a group and the overall character of a conservation area. Traditional and appropriate treatments will preserve or enhance the appearance of the conservation area. They range from boundary treatments, hedgerows, trees, and private driveways to historic floor surfaces.

Boundary treatments

There is no significant boundary treatment at the exception of low sandstone walls (+600 mm) at the western entrance bordering Mill Lane.



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Hedgerows and trees

Hedgerows and trees are significant features of Upton Park conservation area.

Hedgerows: One of the most distinctive features of Upton Park conservation area is its numerous tall hedgerows (2000mm to 2500mm) surrounding its oval layout on both sides, suggesting of a country lane .

Trees: The narrow lane linking Upton Park from Wealstone Lane is lined by two rows of mature trees that also appear on early OS maps. Groups of trees are also shown on these maps as having been laid out around the original plots and these largely screen the estate from its surroundings. Mill View Primary School playing fields on the eastern border of Upton Park add significantly to the surroundings, suggesting what the estate would have looked like when built and surrounded by fields.

Historic floor surface

There is no significant historic floor surface

Open Spaces

There is no significant open space.

General layout, buildings and their setting in the landscape

Built around its oval road and the contiguous western lane, most of Upton Park houses are detached or semi-detached, two storeys high with varied set-backs and orientation.

Upton Park conservation area's general character owes a lot to the balance between its particular landscape layout, with its narrow oval road and western lane bordered by often almost disproportionate tall hedgerows and the buildings lying behind this imposing screen. It imparts a rural atmosphere to the area. The variety of architectural styles also enlivens the general layout of this estate.

Any further development should seriously take into consideration these substantial key features.

Boundaries

The boundaries have been reviewed and no changes have been proposed.



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NEUTRAL OR NEGATIVE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Neutral elements represent features within the conservation area that offer no strong positive or negative influence upon the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, negative features detract from the special character of an area and present the opportunity for change, which will enhance the character and appearance of an area. Those elements considered neutral or negative features and those elements that represent enhancement opportunities within the conservation area are listed below.

Negative elements

Nos 12, 14, 24, 26, 27, 29, 86, 88, 90, 92, 94, 96, 98, 100, 102, 104 Upton Park have broken or removed the hedgerows to provide drives for newer properties. In one instance (34 Upton Park), the hedge in front of the property has been replaced by a modern fence. All those alterations seriously detract from the essential character of the area.

Enhancement opportunities

The area would benefit from the replacement/replanting of the boundary hedge at Nos. 12, 14, 24, 26, 27, 29, 86, 88, 90, 92, 94, 96, 98, 100, 102, 104 Upton Park. The character and appearance of the area would also benefit from the removal of its fence at no 34.

It is hoped that funding mechanism to achieve it may be explored within the Community.

NB: These are suggestions for improvement, but owners should note that the Planning Authority has no powers to implement those recommendations.

MANAGEMENT TOOLS

In order to maintain the character and appearance of conservation areas, Chester City Council will use the appropriate pieces of legislation relevant for this task:

- Urgent Work Notice.
This notice relates to a building which is in a very serious state of disrepair and needs basically to be water safe. It should be confirmed by the Secretary of State.
- Tidy Land Provision Notice, section 214 of the Planning Act 1990.
This notice relates to a building and its curtilage that is poorly maintained. It requires a tidy up of the property.
- Dilapidated Building Notice, section 16 of the 1984 Building Act.
This Notice refers to a building that is in a poor state. It implies either repairing the building or removal of the building. In a Conservation Area, such demolition would need a Conservation Area Consent.

THREAT

Increasing car traffic - mainly due to commuting - with its side effects such as street widening, road signs, tree cutting, poorly designed garages and drive ways, inappropriate traffic calming measures, etc. often seriously and irreversibly affects the character of a conservation area.

It is therefore important to foresee and manage very carefully the design and material impact of traffic on new developments, in order to maintain the essential features that make a conservation area special, in accordance with the latest guidance on streets published by the Department for Transport (Manual for Streets, March 2007, www.communities.gov.uk).

SURROUNDINGS OF A CONSERVATION AREA

Developments on properties located in the surroundings of a conservation area should also be considered with great care, in order to maintain the essential features that make an area special.

APPENDICES

- Map of the conservation area as existing, scale 1:2,500

FURTHER READING

Chester City Council - 1997 *Living in a Conservation Area - A Guide to Householders*
Chester City Council - November 2006 *Chester District Local Plan*

Relevant Local Plan Policies

- ENV21 Protection of trees and woodland
- ENV24 Preservation of key features within the landscape and its overall character
- ENV37 Preservation or enhancement of conservation areas
- ENV38 Protection of local views
- ENV45 Preservation of the special interest of listed buildings
- ENV46 Appropriate changes of use to listed buildings
- ENV47 Protection of unlisted buildings of merit