



DRAFT

Ledmore Road Estate Conservation Area

Character Appraisal and Management Plan

Cheltenham Borough Council
Planning Policy Team
Draft - Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
February 2018



The Ledmore Road Estate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is a draft document and will not come into force until the formal consultation stage is completed and it has been adopted by Cheltenham Borough Council.

For any comments please contact localplan@cheltenham.gov.uk

[To follow] Map 1. The location of the Ledmore Road Estate Conservation Area and other conservation areas in Chetenham

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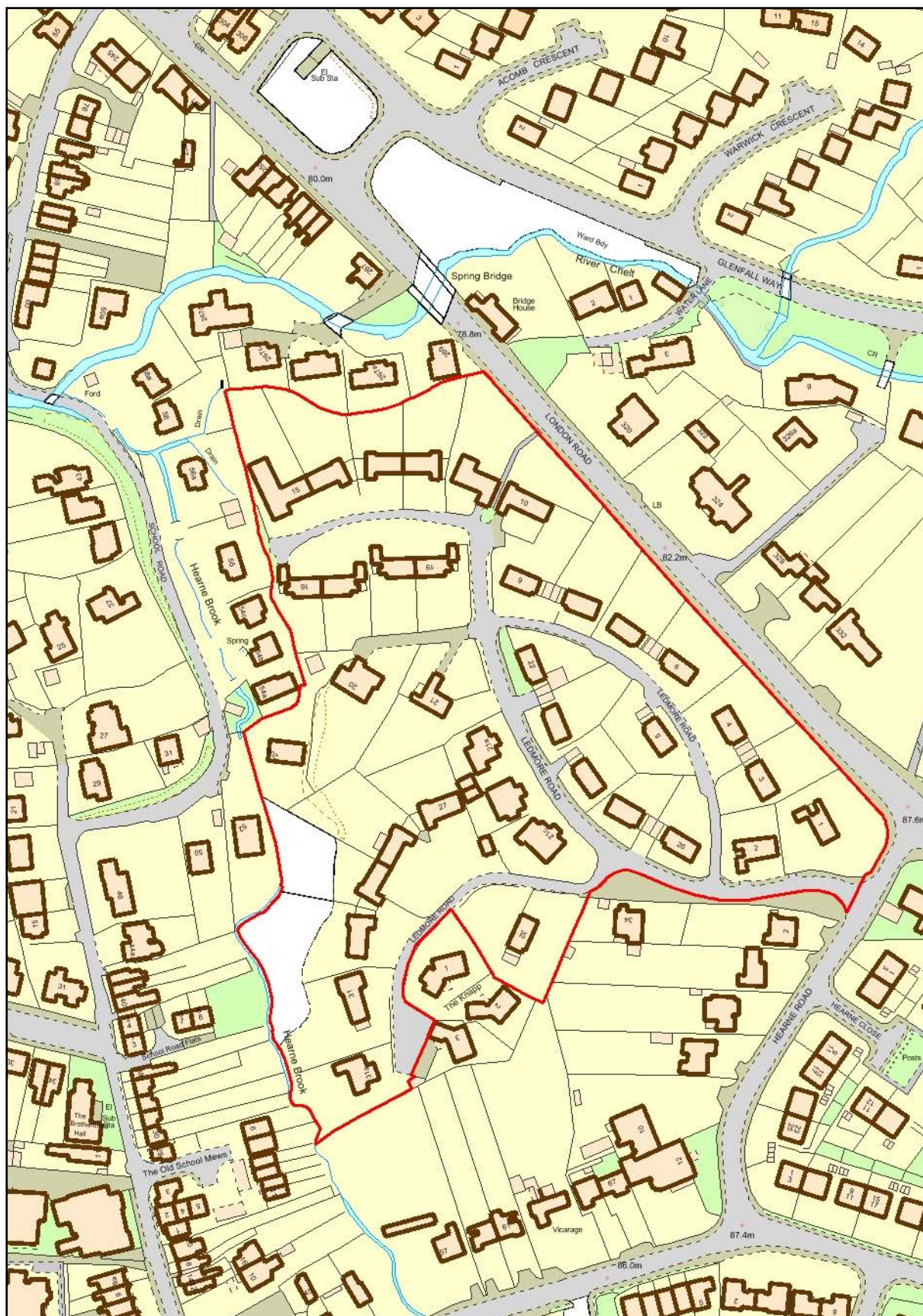
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Map 2. The boundary of the Ledmore Road Estate Conservation Area.

1.0 Introduction

What is a conservation area?

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. The power to designate is given to councils through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (Sections 69-78).

What is a conservation area appraisal and management plan?

A Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is a document which supplements Cheltenham Borough Council's Local Plan.

The appraisal aims to describe the special historic and architectural character of an area. A conservation area's character is defined by a combination of elements such as:

- Architecture
- Uses
- Materials
- Detailing
- Relationship between buildings and their setting
- Appearance and placement of buildings within their plots
- Key views and vistas
- Relationship between the street and the buildings
- Trees and green spaces
- Historic structures/artefacts

A Management Plan addresses the issues raised in the appraisal and provides area specific guidelines; in addition potential enhancement schemes are also explored.

Implications of Conservation Area Designation

Conservation Area designation introduces controls over the way owners can develop or

alter their properties. These controls include:

- The requirement in legislation and national planning policies to preserve and/or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- Local planning policies which give special attention to the desirability of enhancing or preserving the character and appearance of the area.
- Control over the demolition of unlisted buildings in the Conservation Area.
- Restriction on the forms of development which can be undertaken without the need for planning permission (permitted development rights).
- Control over works to trees in the Conservation Area.

Planning proposals for new development within a conservation area will be subject to the relevant policies of the Council's adopted Local Plan, national guidance outlined within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). Section 12 of the NPPF relates specifically to the historic environment.

National and local planning policies seek to achieve a high standard of design in development. It should respect neighbouring development and the character of the locality, prevent harm to the historic fabric, layout and setting of listed buildings and seek to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Community Involvement

(To be completed at a later date once consultations/meetings have taken place)

Designation Background

Proposals for Conservation Area designation had been explored during the previous review of conservation areas c.2007; however due to limited resources the project was not pursued.

(To be completed at a later date once consultations/meetings/adoption has taken place)

Statement of Special Character

The Ledmore Road Estate was developed in the mid-20th century as housing specifically for managerial staff from the newly relocated Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), which was the start of the significant presence of the GCHQ establishment in Cheltenham. This association provides the fundamental historic interest in the Conservation Area.

The neo-Regency architectural style presents a simple distinctive built form which reflects aspects of the prevalent historic Regency architecture of Cheltenham, providing a well-defined built character and historic value to the Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area has an architectural theme that is coherently expressed and substantially retained. Three distinct types of building give the area an evident character and appearance: detached, semi-detached and link-attached.

The architects of the Ledmore Road Estate; Smithson, Chatters and Rainger were a long established practice that worked predominantly in and around Cheltenham. Their work includes the early 20th century residential development in Cheltenham known as The Poets (St. Mark's) which is designated as a conservation area.

Generally the buildings of the conservation area are set in good sized plots which provide a sense of space around and between the houses. This reveals the intention in the original design to provide high quality living conditions for the GCHQ staff and is a component of the character of the conservation area.

The prevalent architectural features of; hipped roofs, string courses, ironwork balconies, sash and casements windows, multi-pane glazing and brick stacks, together with the common materials of red clay roofing tiles and painted render. Provide a distinct palette throughout the estate which is an important element of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal

This Appraisal defines the characteristics that make the conservation area special, including its wider context, historic development, townscape, streetscape and architectural character. It also describes the conservation area's current condition.



Map X. Aerial photograph of the Ledmore Road Estate Conservation Area

2.0 Context

Location and Setting

The Ledmore Road Estate is situated in the Charlton Kings area of Cheltenham and is approximately 1 ½ miles to the south-east of the town centre.

The estate is situated to the south-west of the London Road (A40), a principal highway running east-west through Cheltenham. The Hearne Brook is situated to the west of the estate on a north-south axis and residential properties form the majority of the immediate surrounding area.

Historical Development

The origins of the name Charlton Kings comes from the Anglo-Saxon period. Charlton evolved from 'ceorls' tun', a 'ceorl', latterly adapted to 'churl, being the Saxon term for an independent peasant landowner, and 'tun' became 'ton', defined as an enclosure with

a dwelling. The settlement was established as part of the royal manor and Hundred of Cheltenham, hence 'Kings'.

The development of Cheltenham as a spa resort during the late 18th and early 19th centuries impacted on the village of Charlton Kings, as visitors found lodgings there. During the 20th century Charlton Kings became an established suburb of Cheltenham and today parts of it retain distinctive characters.

The Conservation Area is partly situated on the site of the former grounds of a now demolished house, known as The Knapp. The house itself was situated just south of the boundary of the conservation area, in a location now occupied by housing, and was demolished c.1976.

In 1949 it was announced that The Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) were to move from Eastcote, Middlesex to Cheltenham. In January 1949 GCHQ estimated that around 2000 staff would be



Fig.X.X House in Ledmore Road Estate built for GCHQ Managerial Staff.

transferred from Eastcote to Cheltenham and in addition that 100 staff would be recruited nationally for the re-location; around 500 would be employed locally.

It was estimated that c. 850 staff, of which approximately 160 were in the upper salary scales, would require new houses. The decision was taken that the houses should be of a type superior to normal construction, with brick walls rather than using the prefabricated construction methods which were becoming increasingly common post-war.

The Knapp was put up for sale in June 1950 and purchased by the Council. In January 1951 the Borough Surveyor reported that the land could be used for managerial housing. At the time the proposed development was referred to as Foreign Office Managerial Housing. By August 1951 it had been agreed to build 32 houses and in January of 1952 the designs of Rainger, Rogers and Smithson were accepted.

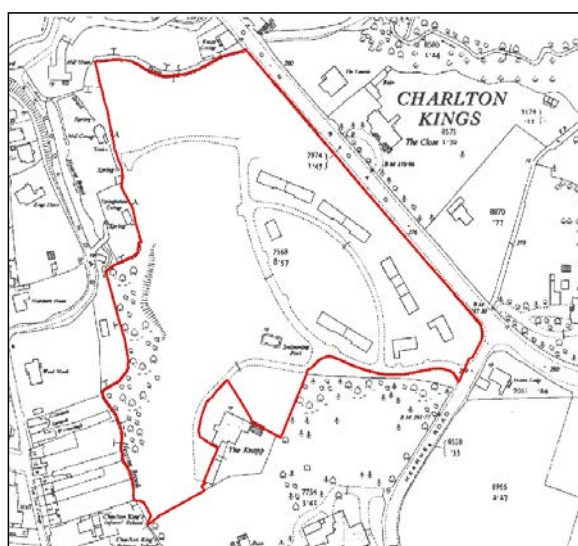
The estate was designed to offer attractive homes to managerial staff and the estate had amenities including a swimming pool and tennis court for the use of the residents. These have been lost and were replaced

with three houses. Many of the properties have been sold during the last twenty years. It is currently unclear when the properties ceased to be used by GCHQ staff.

The estate was named at the request of the Charlton Kings Urban District Council after a field identified as Ledmore to the north-east of the London Road. Today the estate is known as Ledmore Road.



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Map X Ledmore Road area 1923

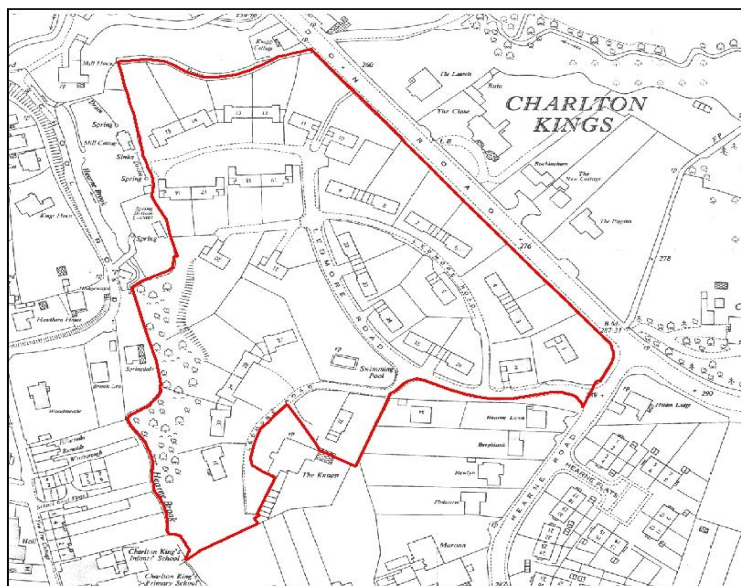


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Map X Ledmore Road 1954-1956

Archaeological Significance

Many houses within the conservation area are built on land that once exhibited the archaeological pattern of ridge and furrow; troughs and ridges created by a form of ploughing that was used during the Middle Ages.

Details of archaeological finds in the wider area, including grid references of their location, are held by Gloucestershire County Council, in the Historic Environment Record Archive.



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Map X Ledmore Road 1960-1969

3.0 Townscape

Townscape is the arrangement and appearance of buildings, spaces and other physical features in the built and natural environments.

Layout and Planform of the Conservation Area

The buildings are situated in spacious plots, with several in the north of the Conservation Area set back from the road by ample front gardens. Building lines respect the roads which on the whole meander and curve. An elliptical form in plan influences the layout of a significant proportion of the Conservation Area.



Map X. Figure ground Plan of the Ledmore Road Estate Conservation Area

Nos. 21 and 20 do not directly face the road and are set back from it, served by a shared access from the principal street. Their respective plots are large with No. 20 having another residential property situated within its original plot.

No.1, to the east of the Conservation Area is situated in a large plot, as is No. 31; the latter has a new residential building located within the original site.

Given the size of the plots and number of houses the building density is not high across the Conservation Area, reflecting the original intention to provide good quality housing.

Part of the land on which the estate is situated, falls away in a northerly direction, which significantly influences the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



Fig.X.X Low density housing

Access to the Conservation Area is via a junction with Hearne Road to the east of the estate and a footpath that links to the London Road at the north-east of the area. Ledmore Road is a no-through road, which provides a quiet aspect to the character of the Conservation Area.

Land Uses

The Ledmore Road Estate is an established residential area. More buildings have been introduced to the original development though they are all residential.

Building Height and Massing

The buildings are of two storeys and the majority are semi-detached, including houses that are linked attached by adjoining garages. Three more recently constructed buildings: 21A, 21B and 21C, have a larger footprint than the neighbouring properties, though this is only really apparent when they are viewed in plan.

Key Views

For the purpose of this character appraisal three types of views have been identified:

Linear Views – Long, straight views within the Conservation Area.

Local views – These tend to be shorter and confined to a specific locality within the conservation area. They include views of landmarks, attractive groups of buildings and views into open spaces.

Long Views – Long distance views across the wider town, to key features or landmark buildings.

Due to the prominent curving form of the roads and the sloping nature of a good proportion of the estate, there are no linear views within or long views from the Conservation Area.

Views on a north-south axis along the principal central section of Ledmore Road provide important local views. Whilst the views are short they reveal numerous characteristics of the Conservation Area: the building lines following the curve of the road; the design of the original houses and the sympathetic form of the three new houses; mature trees; and various types of boundary treatments.

The curving road to the east of the principal part of Ledmore Road allows views on an approximate north-west – south-east axis of the line of the houses, boundary treatments and the dominant architectural style of the Conservation Area.

Local views of the northern most part of Ledmore Road further reveal the architectural types and the space between opposing buildings.



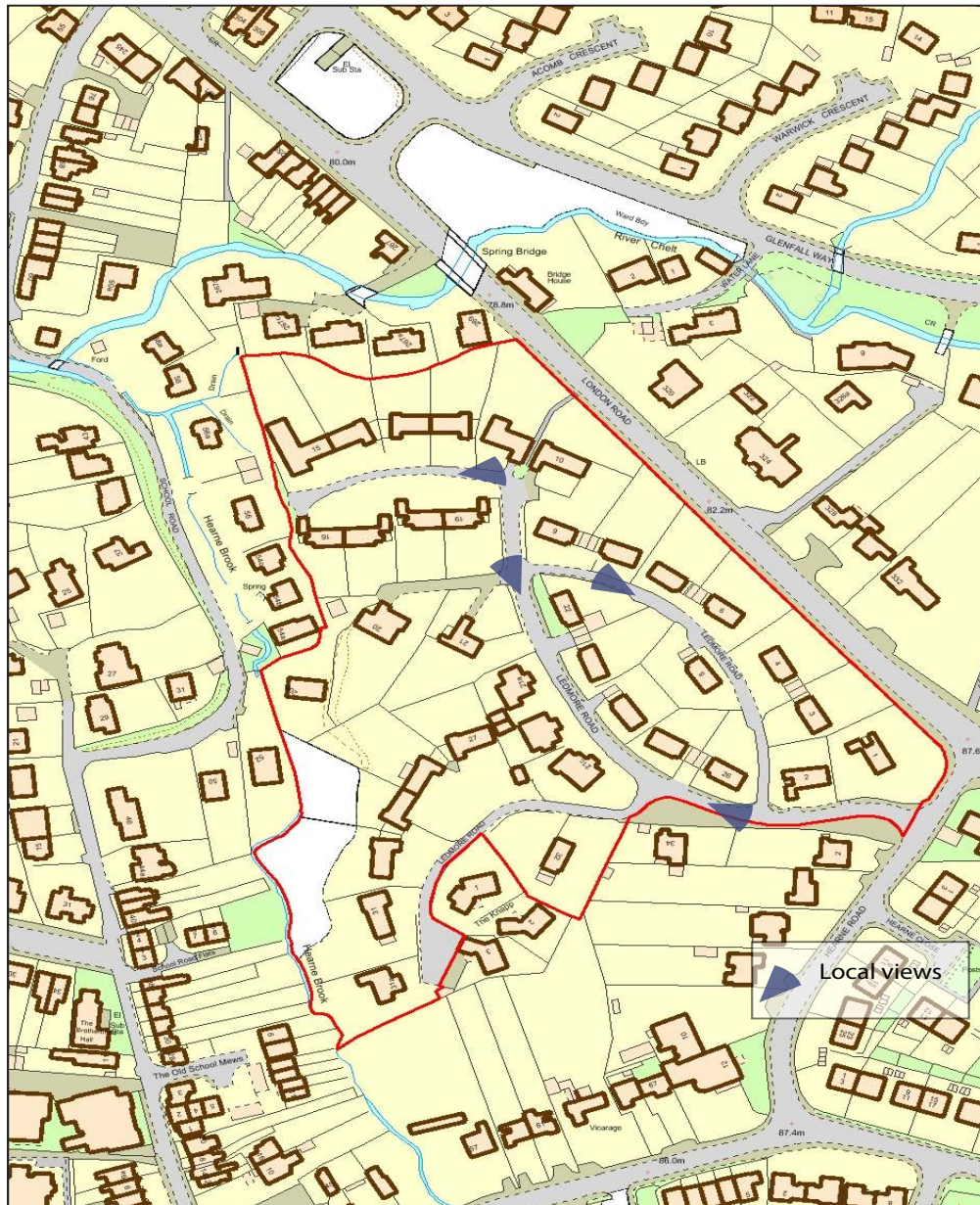
Fig.X.X View south along the principal section of Ledmore Road



Fig.X.X View along a curving road in the north of the Conservation Area.



Fig.X.X View of new and historic housing



Map X. Key views map of the Ledmore Road Estate Conservation Area

4.0 Streetscape

Streetscape is the outward facing visual appearance and character of a street or locality.

Public Realm and Open Space

Due to the residential nature of the Conservation Area the public realm is limited. No public open spaces are located in the Conservation Area.

The grass verges of various depths near the entrance to Ledmore Road and in the setting of the conservation area are fairly utilitarian; however they are in keeping with the lawns of the designated area and are more softening when compared to hard surfaces.

The roads and pavements are of asphalt and are generally in a good condition. In places construction or utilities work has damaged the surfaces.

Street Furniture

Street furniture is generally limited within the Conservation Area to a few traffic signs and modern street lighting columns. One traffic sign appears to be contemporary with the time of the construction of the Ledmore Road Estate and provides a tangible link to the period.

Boundary Treatments

There are various forms of boundary treatment employed across the Conservation Area which include dry stone walling, block with painted render, metal railings, hedging/planting and timber fencing. The boundary treatments occur singly or in combination and the quality is generally good.

Established boundary hedges throughout the Conservation Area are a characteristic which emphasises the suburban nature of the estate. A number of the hedges are significantly high, which curtails sight of the respective houses and disrupts the spatial relationship of buildings in the street-scene. In places front boundaries are absent or at least partially due to the

formation of accesses to areas of hard-standing for off street parking.

In parts of the Conservation Area the front boundaries do not have a physical boundary or the treatment is negligible. A number of properties have low retaining dry stone walls to the front of lawns with little or nothing more acting as a boundary. This type of treatment may have been the original form when the development was constructed to allow an open nature to the estate.

Trees

Trees make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Given the maturity of a number of the trees, they may be remnants of the garden of The Knapp on which the development was built, providing a tangible link with the historic significance of the Conservation Area.



Fig.X.X Historic street sign



Fig.X.X Boundary hedge

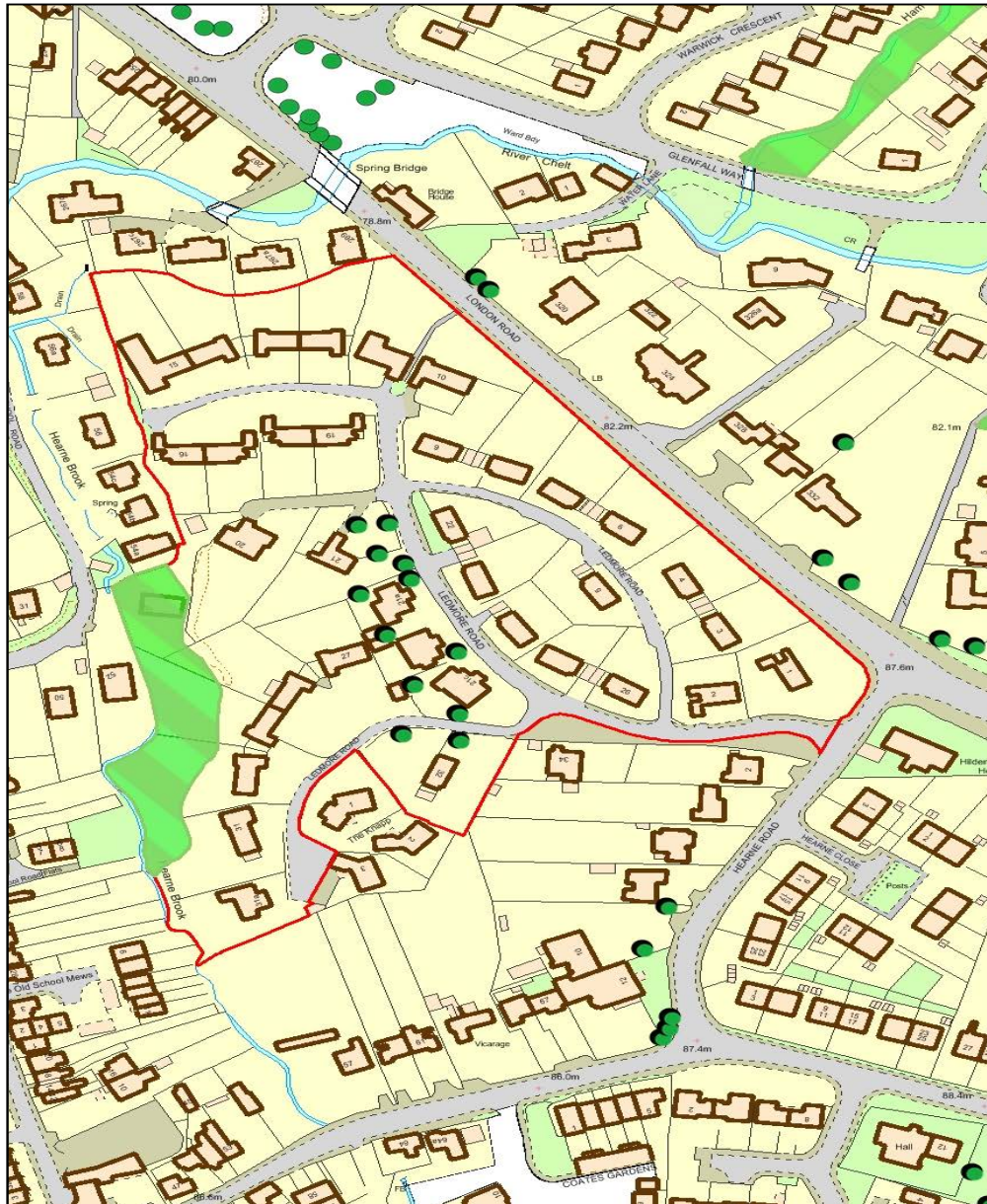


Fig.X.X Dry stone wall



Fig.X.X Rendered block wall and metal railings

Trees that contribute to the significance of the conservation area are shown on map X.



Map X. Significant trees in the Ledmore Road Estate Conservation Area



Fig.X.X Metal railings and
hardstanding



Fig.X.X Open boundary



Fig.X.X Stone walling and
planting

5.0 Architectural Character

General Architectural Character

The architectural character of the Ledmore Road Estate Conservation Area is reasonably coherent, with few buildings which deviate from the prevalent type. The later houses 21A, 21B and 21C reflect aspects of the design of the original development and are suitable additions to the estate. The houses from the historic development have common materials, architectural features and massing which make a vital contribution to the character of the area.

Several buildings have been subject to alterations, the majority of which are sympathetic to the primary architectural style. There are a few examples of adaptations which have failed to respect the original building type

and are detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area.

The majority of the houses in the estate make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Building Contribution

This section explains the contribution buildings make to the special architectural or historic interest of the area as depicted in map (X) [map to follow].

Positive Unlisted Buildings:

Buildings that positively contribute to the Conservation Area's overall character and appearance. Demolition of these buildings

is considered to be undesirable and would constitute substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Special attention should be paid to preserving important historical features present on these buildings.

Neutral Buildings:

A number of buildings in the area do not positively contribute nor actively detract from the conservation area's special character. In principle, redevelopment of these sites would not be resisted, provided the proposed replacement buildings adhere to the relevant planning policy and are of high quality design consistent with the conservation area's special character.

There are no statutorily nationally listed or locally listed buildings in the Ledmore Road Estate Conservation Area.

Key Architectural Features and Materials

The table opposite lists the general key features and building materials found in the Ledmore Road Estate.



Fig.X.X String course & multi-pane glazing



Fig.X.X Hipped roof

Common Architectural Features:

- Hipped roof
- String course
- Ironwork balcony
- Sash and casement windows
- Multi-pane glazing
- Brick stacks

Common Building Materials:

- Red clay roof tiles
- Painted render
- Red brick

Architectural Analysis

The purpose of this section is to expand on the statement of special interest in section (X.X) and to assess and analyse individual characteristics and prominent features found in individual buildings that particularly contribute towards the special character of the area.

The Conservation Area contains three distinct types of building that are fundamental to the significant character of the area, all of which share common building materials and architectural elements:

Detached
Semi-detached
Link attached

All the building types are of a neo-Regency architectural style, influenced by Regency architecture but not a direct copy. The rectangular plan form, the symmetrical positioning of windows flanking a central located door and upper storey window, the unfussy architectural features of string coursing, ironwork, hipped roof and generous overhanging eaves provide a simple yet distinctive style of building.

There are few detached buildings in the Conservation Area. The houses are generally in the prevalent architectural style, though some have a projecting single storey garage to the side, a feature of the original design of the estate.

Generally the pairs of semi-detached houses present well-proportioned buildings, which clearly demonstrate the established typology. As with the detached houses some of the pairs retain projecting flanking garages which are a significant feature of the building type.

The link attached buildings reflect the architecture that is the basis for the special built character and appearance of the Conservation Area. A significant feature of this type of house is the part-stepped parapets of the garages.



Fig.X.X Semi-detached houses



Fig.X.X Stepped parapets



Fig.X.X Typical proportions



Fig.X.X Projecting garage

Images to follow

6.0 Assessment of Condition

General Condition

The overall condition of the Ledmore Road Estate Conservation Area is generally good and the majority of buildings are maintained to a high standard. There are a number of factors which have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area and are in need of careful consideration.

Whilst the majority of the houses are in good condition a few require some external maintenance and unsympathetic alterations have undermined the simple design of the buildings. The scale of negative development is not great; however continued alterations which do not respect the special architectural character of the Conservation Area will harm the significant attributes and appearance of the area.

Key Threats

Whilst insensitive development can instantly harm the special character of the Conservation Area, detriment can often occur incrementally through alterations that do not require planning permission or that occurred prior to the area's designation. The quality of the public realm can also have an impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Existing and potential future threats are categorised as to whether they impact directly on buildings or wider streetscape in the table opposite.

Threats to Buildings Analysis

New development or alterations of a poor quality, design, materials or inappropriate siting, scale and massing:

Given the strong architectural style prevalent in the Ledmore Road Estate Conservation Area, any new development or alterations that do

Threats to Buildings:

- New development of poor quality design or materials, or of inappropriate siting, scale and massing
- Loss of architectural features
- Poor maintenance of buildings
- Poorly-sited buildings services, including ventilation pipes, flues, wires, alarm boxes and satellite dishes
- Loss of multi-paned window glazing
- The replacement of timber windows with uPVC windows

Threats to Streetscape:

- Poorly-maintained street signs
- Loss of historic street signage
- Poorly-maintained road and pavement surfaces
- An increase in on-street parking
- Loss of gardens to hard-standing/parking areas
- Boundary treatments of excessive height

not respect the existing design, quality, scale, siting and massing of the historic buildings will harm the fundamental aspect of the character of the conservation area.

Loss of architectural details

The loss of architectural detailing can harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Of particular note would be the loss of ironwork balconies, string courses, stepped-parapets and multi-pane windows. Changes to these details are not currently prevalent; however these seemingly minor alterations would have a significant impact on the character of the Conservation Area and should therefore be resisted.

Threats to Streetscape Analysis

Boundary treatments of excessive height

Boundary treatments of heights that obscure views of buildings harm not only the built character of the Conservation Area but also the open aspect of the original development, a vital attribute of the streetscape.

Managment Plan

(To be completed after public consultation on draft appraisal)

