

RAF HORNCHURCH
CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN
CONSULTATION DRAFT MARCH 2026



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A team of experienced consultants from Purcell jointly contributed to the completion of this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

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RAF HORNCHURCH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

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1.0 Introduction



1.0 Introduction

This section provides information about what conservation area designation means and its implications for development. It also gives an overview of the RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area; sets out the purpose of this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) and outlines the consultation process that has been undertaken to prepare it.

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP)

Understanding the character and significance of conservation areas is essential for managing change within them. It is therefore a requirement under the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* that all Local Planning Authorities ‘formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement’ of conservation areas within their jurisdiction, and that conservation areas are periodically reviewed.

These proposals are normally presented in the form of a CAAMP, which defines and documents the special interest of a conservation area (see [Section 2](#)), analyses the characteristics that make it special (see [Sections 3 and 4](#)) and the issues and opportunities that the area faces (see [Section 5](#)), and sets out a plan for managing change to ensure its ongoing protection and enhancement (see [Section 6](#)).

This CAAMP has been prepared in line with current best practice guidance published by Historic England, the government’s heritage advisor and the public body which manages the care and protection of the nation’s historic environment.

This document is intended to be comprehensive; however, the omission of any building; structure; feature or space does not imply that the element is not significant or does not positively contribute to the character and special interest of the conservation area. The protocols and guidance provided in [Section 6](#) are applicable in every instance.

The assessments which provide the baseline information for this CAAMP have been carried out using publicly available resources and thorough on-site analysis from the publicly accessible parts of the RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area.

This issue of the CAAMP is a draft for consultation.

1.2 What is a Conservation Area?

A conservation area is defined as an ‘area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.’⁰¹

Designation of a conservation area recognises the unique quality of the heritage of that area as a whole. This quality is derived not only from individual buildings but also other features, including (but not limited to) topography; grain; materials; thoroughfare; views; open spaces and landscape. These all contribute to the historic character and appearance of an area, resulting in a distinctive local identity and sense of place.

The extent to which a building, or group of buildings or structures, positively shapes the character of a conservation area is derived from its exterior – principally those elevations which are street-facing but also side and rear elevations; the integrity of its historic fabric; the overall scale and massing; detailing and materials. Open spaces, whether they are public or private; green or hard landscaped, can all contribute to the special interest of an area. Furthermore, the spaces between buildings, such as alleys; streets; paths and yards, all contribute to a conservation area’s appearance and character.

1.3 What Does Conservation Area Designation Mean?

The aim of conservation area designation is to preserve or enhance the character and appearance which makes the area special. To ensure this, changes to the external appearance of buildings in a conservation area may require planning permission from the Local Planning Authority, as certain permitted development rights are curtailed. For example, full or substantial demolition of a building will require planning permission and works to trees within conservation areas must be notified to the Local Planning Authority in advance. There are often further restrictions in place in conservation areas through Article 4 directions, which remove certain permitted development rights.

Under the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*, conservation areas are designated heritage assets and their conservation is to be given great weight when determining planning applications.⁰² Further details can be found in [Section 6](#).

The 2016-2030 *Havering Local Plan* (adopted in 2021) includes Policy 28 Heritage Assets, which sets out the Council’s approach to development impacting heritage assets, including conservation areas and their settings.

⁰¹ Section 69(1), *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*

⁰² *National Planning Policy Framework (2024)*

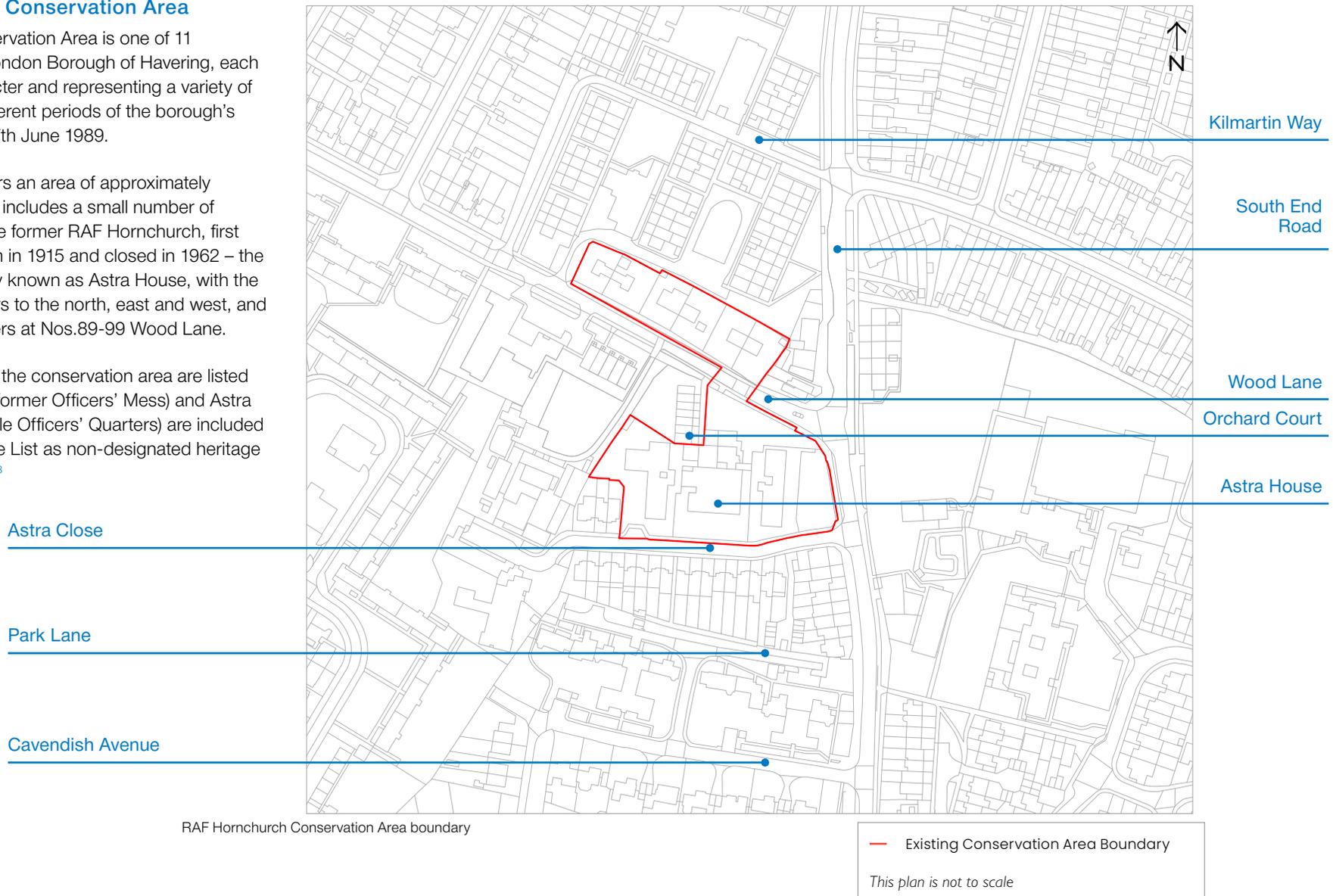
1.0 Introduction

1.4 RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area

The RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area is one of 11 conservation areas in the London Borough of Havering, each distinctly individual in character and representing a variety of the surviving areas from different periods of the borough's past. It was designated on 7th June 1989.

The conservation area covers an area of approximately 0.9 hectares (2.3 acres) and includes a small number of buildings associated with the former RAF Hornchurch, first established at Sutton's Farm in 1915 and closed in 1962 – the former Officers' Mess, today known as Astra House, with the associated Officers' Quarters to the north, east and west, and the Warrant Officers' Quarters at Nos.89-99 Wood Lane.

None of the buildings within the conservation area are listed buildings. Astra House (the former Officers' Mess) and Astra Court West (the former Single Officers' Quarters) are included on Havering's Local Heritage List as non-designated heritage assets of local importance.⁰³



RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area boundary

⁰³ London Borough of Havering, Local Heritage List, 2024

1.0 Introduction

1.5 Conservation Area Boundary

1.5.1 Possible boundary review

Understanding or appreciation of what is special about an area can change over time. Therefore, it is important to review and take stock of the boundaries and character of a conservation area at intervals to ensure that the reasons for its designation are still relevant and evident, and that the proper management of change is in place.

A review of the boundary alongside any accompanying guidance and assessments should generally take place every five to ten years or in response to a notable change (positive or negative), including changes in policy or legislation. Until the present review (2025), there had been no changes made to the boundary of the conservation area since its designation in 1989.

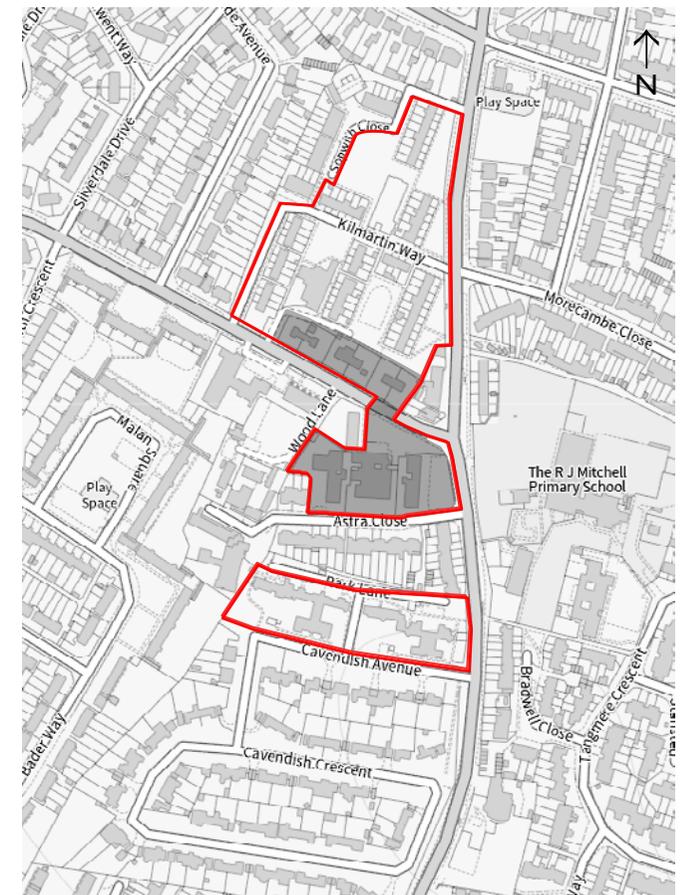
The special interest of the conservation area is drawn from its historic association with the former RAF Hornchurch, and the present boundary encompasses surviving buildings from this period.

Our site inspection and the research undertaken as part of this appraisal and management plan, including the careful study of maps and aerial photographs, have revealed that buildings along Kilmartin Way, South End Road and Park Lane are also surviving remnants from the RAF base (further detail and evidence is provided at [Section 3](#)). These buildings include:

- Nos.2-24 (even) Kilmartin Way; Nos.1-11 (uneven) Kilmartin Way; Nos.26-44 Kilmartin Way; Nos.46-52 Kilmartin Way; Nos.373-391 South End Road; Nos.393-403 South End Road and Nos.405-419 South End Road, the non-commissioned officers and airmen quarters
- Haswa Greenfields on Kilmartin Way – A large single-storey block currently used as the Havering Asian Social & Welfare Association (HASWA). The former military use of this structure has not been confirmed
- The married officers' quarters along the south side of the present Park Lane have been linked together to form two large residential blocks.

Photographs of these buildings are included on the following page.

The boundary in the adjacent plan is therefore proposed for consultation.



RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area proposed boundary for consultation

	Proposed Conservation Area Boundary
	Existing Conservation Area Boundary
<i>This plan is not to scale</i>	

1.0 Introduction



View of the Havering Asian Social & Welfare Association (HASWA) on Kilmartin Way



View of Nos. 2-24 (even) Kilmartin Way



View of Nos. 26-44 Kilmartin Way (left hand side) and Nos. 46-52 Kilmartin Way



View of Nos. 393-403 South End Road



View of the large residential block to the south of Park Lane. The difference in brick work indicates where the infills have taken place

1.0 Introduction

1.6 Consultation and Engagement

It is a statutory requirement under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that conservation area guidance produced by or on behalf of the Local Planning Authority be subject to public consultation, and for the Local Planning Authority to have regard of the views expressed by consultees.

Initial consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders, including the London Borough of Havering Planning Team, at early stages of the CAAMP drafting process to raise awareness of the conservation area review and utilise local understanding of the area's special interest.

Public consultation, including a public meeting, will be carried out following a review of this draft CAAMP by the London Borough of Havering Planning Team. Comments received from this consultation will then be collated, assessed and taken into consideration in a post-consultation review of this CAAMP.

2.0 Summary of Special Interest



2.0 Summary of Special Interest

The special interest of the conservation area is drawn from its historic association with the former RAF Hornchurch, an important military complex which defended London and the Thames corridor during both World Wars and played a key role in the Second World War, notably during the Battle of Britain.

The buildings within its boundary are of interest for their former historic use – Astra House as the Officers' Mess; Astra Court East, North and West as the Officers' Quarters and Nos. 89-99 Wood Lane as the Warrant Officers' Quarters. This historic interest and former military use remain legible in the typical design, traditional architecture and materiality of the buildings. The mature trees and vegetation form an enclosure around the buildings and enhance their settings.

Despite residential development and urban changes within its setting, the conservation area illustrates the role played by the local area in an important period of national history.



View west along Wood Lane showing Nos. 97-99 in the foreground and Nos. 93-95 in the background



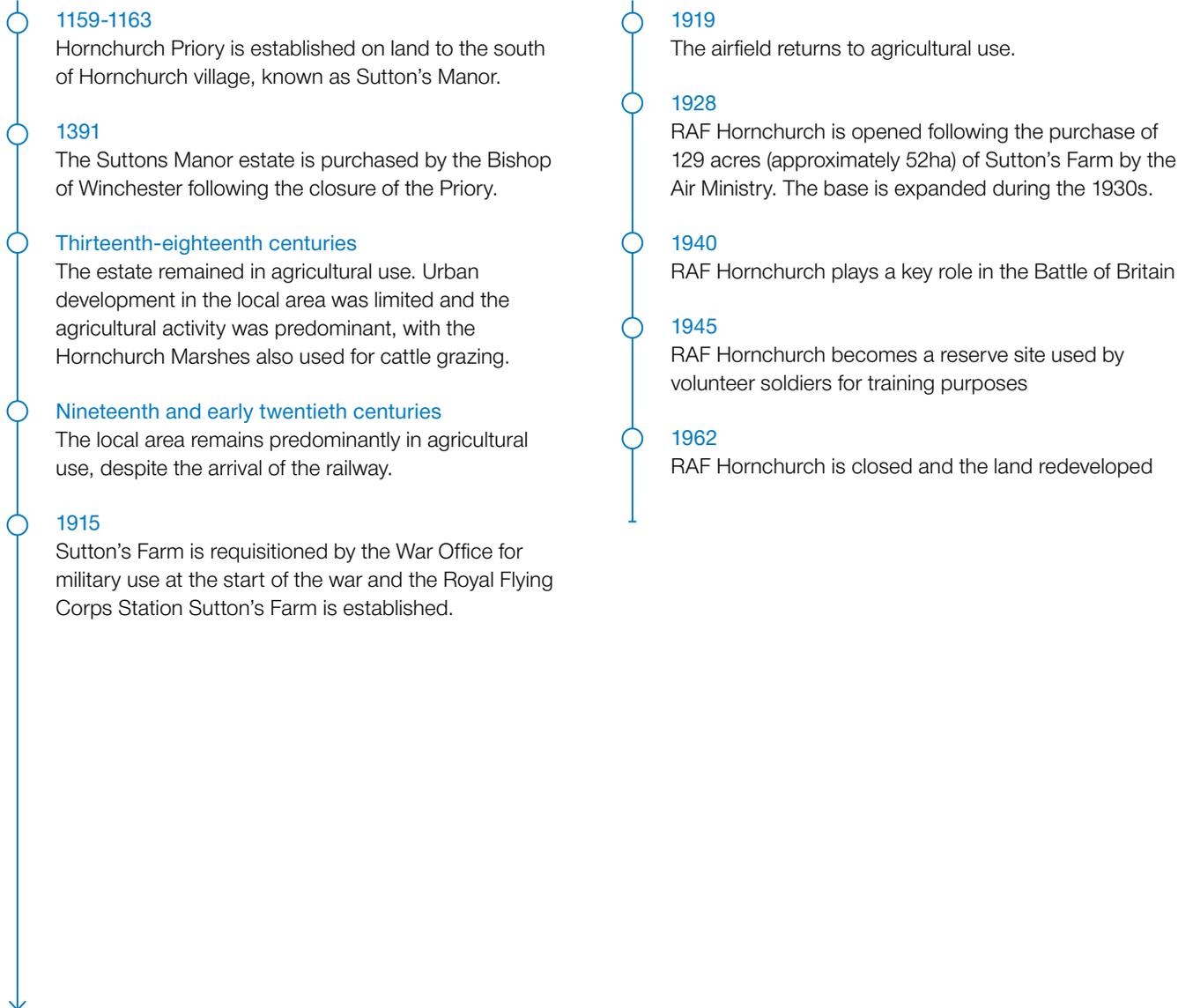
View of the frontage of Astra House from Astra Close

3.0 Summary of Historic Development



3.0 Summary of Historic Development

3.1 Timeline



3.0 Summary of Historic Development

3.2 Summary of historic development of the local area

3.2.1 Early development

Archaeological discoveries, such as flint artefacts; pottery and circular structures likely marking the location of dwellings, suggests human activity within the local area during the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. During the Roman period, the road joining London to Colchester, now the A12, passed through Romford, which is approximately 5.5km to the north-west. Finds from this period were uncovered in South Hornchurch, approximately 10km to the south, indicating the location of a settlement nearby.⁰⁴

An Anglo-Saxon settlement in the approximate location of Hornchurch developed from the fifth century onwards, with a church on the approximate site of the present St Andrew's Church. This village or settlement is however not mentioned in the Domesday Book of the late eleventh century which may indicate that it was of modest size at the time.⁰⁵

3.2.2 The Sutton's Manor estate

In the Early Medieval period, Hornchurch formed part of the royal residence of Havering Palace, located approximately 10.5km to the north, in Havering-atte-Bower. Around 1159, Henry II gave 1,500 acres (approximately 600ha) of land to the south of Hornchurch village, known as Sutton's Manor, to the monks of the hospice of St Bernard of Savoy. This land was given with the intention of the monks, located at the top of the St Bernard Pass in the Alps, establishing a priory in the area. This was in recognition of the hospitality that his envoy received during his travels. In 1163, additional land around the existing church (the present St Andrew's Church) was gifted to the same order of monks. This land included Hornchurch Hall Manor, located to the north of the church.

The Sutton's Manor estate was approximately bounded by the present Hornchurch High Street to the north, Rainham New Road (Dovers Corner) to the south, Abbs Cross Lane to the west and the River Ingrebourne to the east.

The Priory was closed as a consequence of the Great Divide of 1378, a split within the Catholic Church which opposed the bishops of Rome and the bishops of Avignon, both claiming the Papacy. The land was purchased in 1391 by William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, for the endowment of New College in Oxford.

From the thirteenth century onwards, large properties and farms were built on the estate, to the east side of South End Road. These included Hacton (or Hackton) Farm; Sutton's Gate; Sutton's Farm (covering the northern part of the present Hornchurch Country Park); Elm Farm and Sockets (today known as Albyns Farm). These farms are shown on John Chapman and Peter Andre's map of Essex from 1777.

Agricultural activity was predominant in the local area. The Hornchurch Marshes, which are located to the east and south-east within Hornchurch Country Park, were also used for cattle grazing and the area became the centre for meat production, sent to the London meat market, and the leather trade.



Map of the County of Essex by John Chapman and Peter Andre, 1777. Source: <https://map-of-essex.uk/>

⁰⁴ Cannavan, C., Secret Hornchurch, 2020

⁰⁵ London Borough of Havering, Archaeological Priority Area Appraisal Final Report, May 2024

3.0 Summary of Historic Development

3.2.3 The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

The area remained predominantly in agricultural use until the early twentieth century, with trading activities focused around Hornchurch and its high street. A low level of expansion was associated with the arrival of the railway, with stations of the London, Tilbury & Southend Railway opened at Harold Wood in 1868, approximately 7km to the north, and Hornchurch in 1885. This development was however focused near the stations.

Large scale housebuilding occurred in the early twentieth century, as part of London's suburban expansion. The population of Hornchurch significantly expanded, and the village transformed into a large commuter town.



Ordnance Survey map of 1898 showing the lack of development in the local area. Source: The Genealogist.

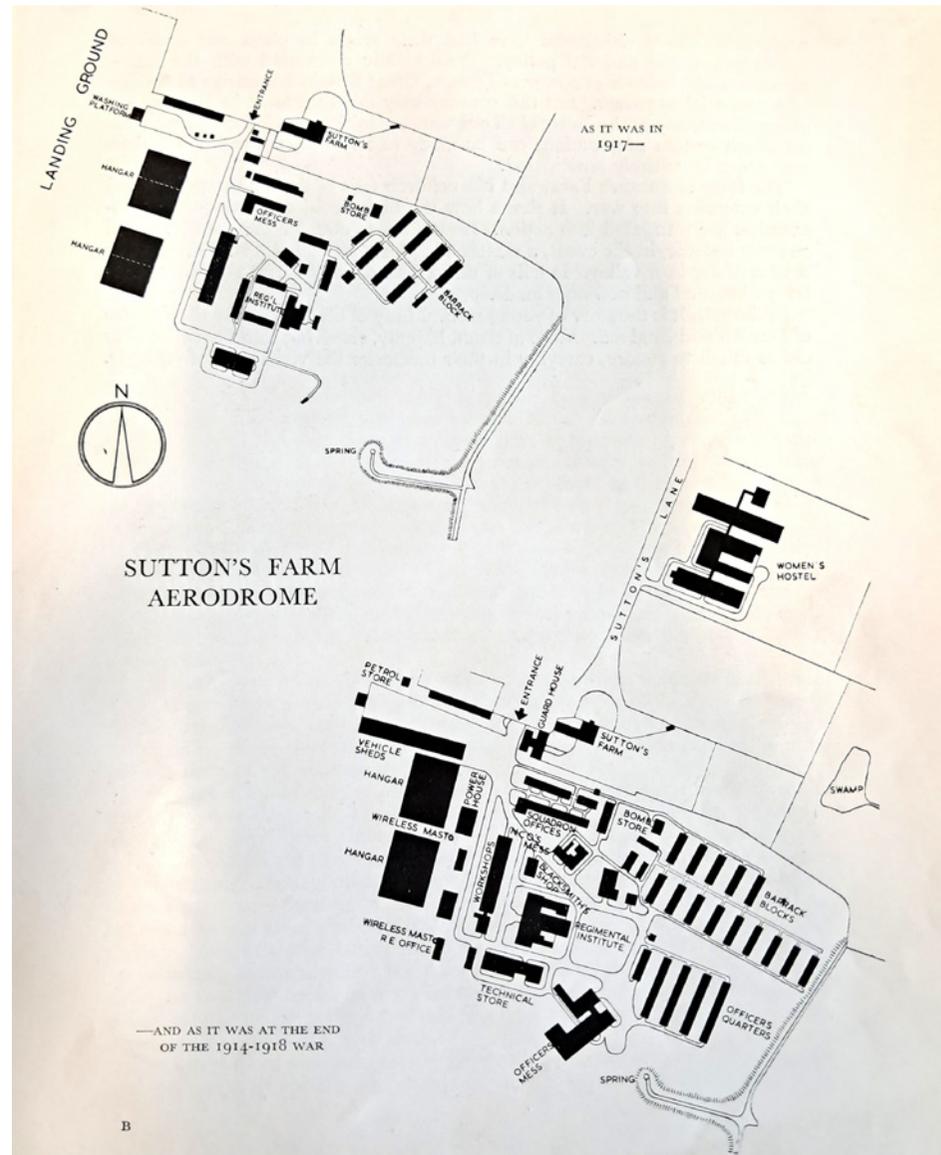
3.0 Summary of Historic Development

3.3 The Sutton's Farm airfield in the First World War

In the early twentieth century, Sutton's Farm, which originated in the fourteenth century and had been extended with new buildings during the nineteenth century, comprised 384 acres (approximately 155ha) of land. The farm was still in the ownership of New College, Oxford and was occupied by tenant farmer Thomas Crawford.

Ninety acres (approximately 36ha) of the Sutton's Farm were requisitioned by the War Office for military use at the start of the war. The location was attractive in terms of its proximity to London, only 15 miles (approximately 24km) flying in a straight line. The Royal Flying Corps Station Sutton's Farm was established in October 1915. This first comprised temporary canvas hangars, which were rapidly replaced by wooden sheds; workshop facilities and living quarters. The primary aim of the base was to defend the capital from German zeppelins, with fighters patrolling the Thames at night to locate enemy airships.

On 2nd September 1916, a heavy night raid was launched with sixteen zeppelins targeting London. Lieutenant William Leefe Robinson, who was part of a night-flying squadron of the Royal Flying Corps at Sutton's Farm airfield, became the first British pilot to shoot down an enemy airship over Britain that night. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions and contributed to the reputation of Sutton's Farm.⁰⁶



Maps showing the layout and buildings of the Sutton's Farm Aerodrome in 1917 and 1918. Source: *Raiders Approach! The Fighting Tradition of Royal Air Force Station, Hornchurch and Sutton's Farm* by Squadron Leader H. T. Sutton (1956).

⁰⁶ <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/lieutenant-william-robinson-vc>

3.0 Summary of Historic Development

3.4 RAF Hornchurch

3.4.1 The new airfield, 1928-1939

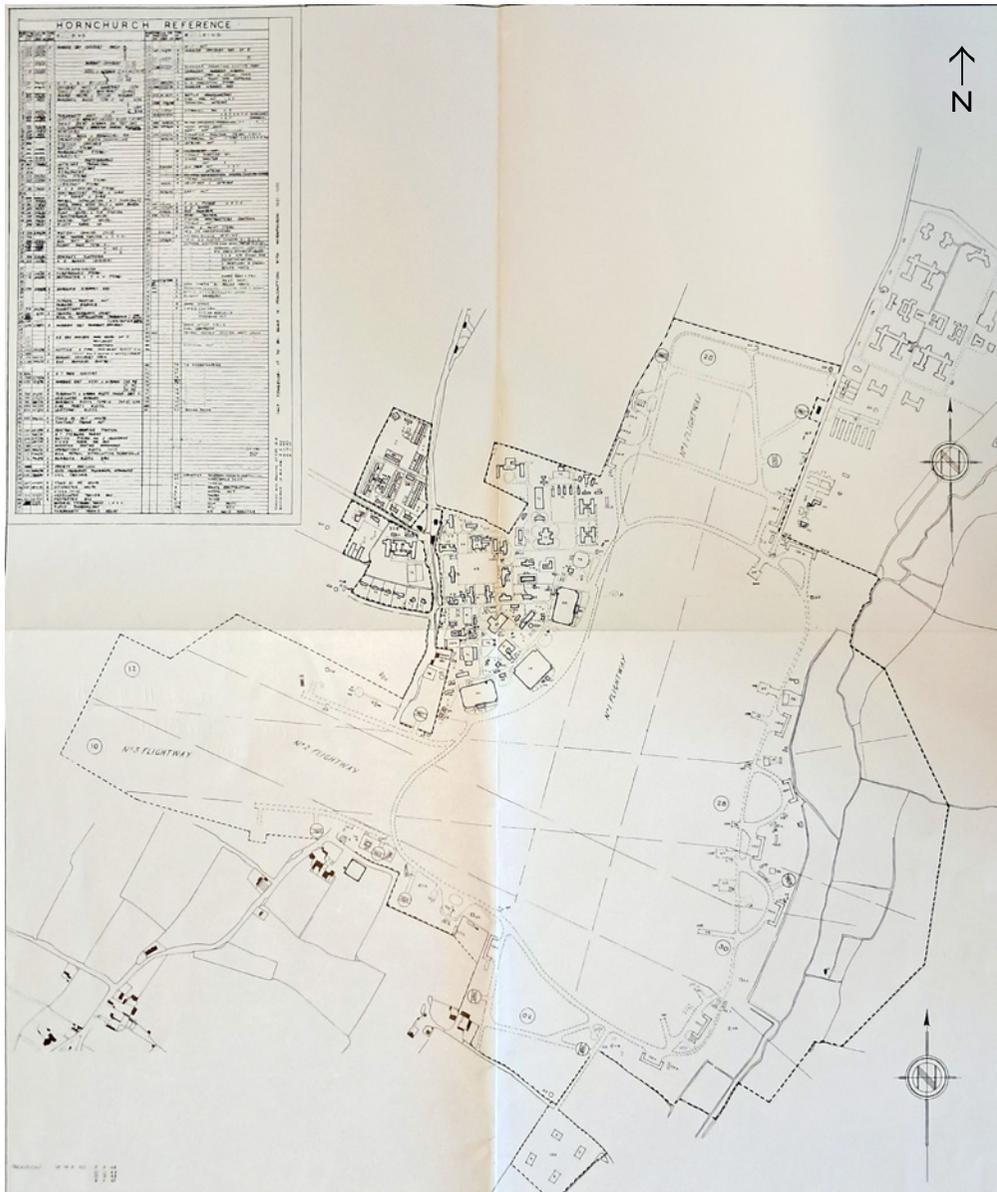
At the end of the war, the airfield was closed and Sutton's Farm returned to agricultural use in 1919. Most of the hangars and associated military buildings were demolished.

In the early 1920s, a programme for the expansion of the air force was put forward by the government, with a committee charged to establish the future defensive role of the RAF, in the event of another war. In 1922, a proposal for the reinforcement of the Home Defence squadrons with additional bomber and fighter squadrons was presented to the House of Commons and accepted. A year later in June 1923, Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin announced an increase of 52 squadrons, including 35 bomber and 17 fighters, resulting in a total of approximately 394 bomber aircraft and 204 fighters for the RAF.

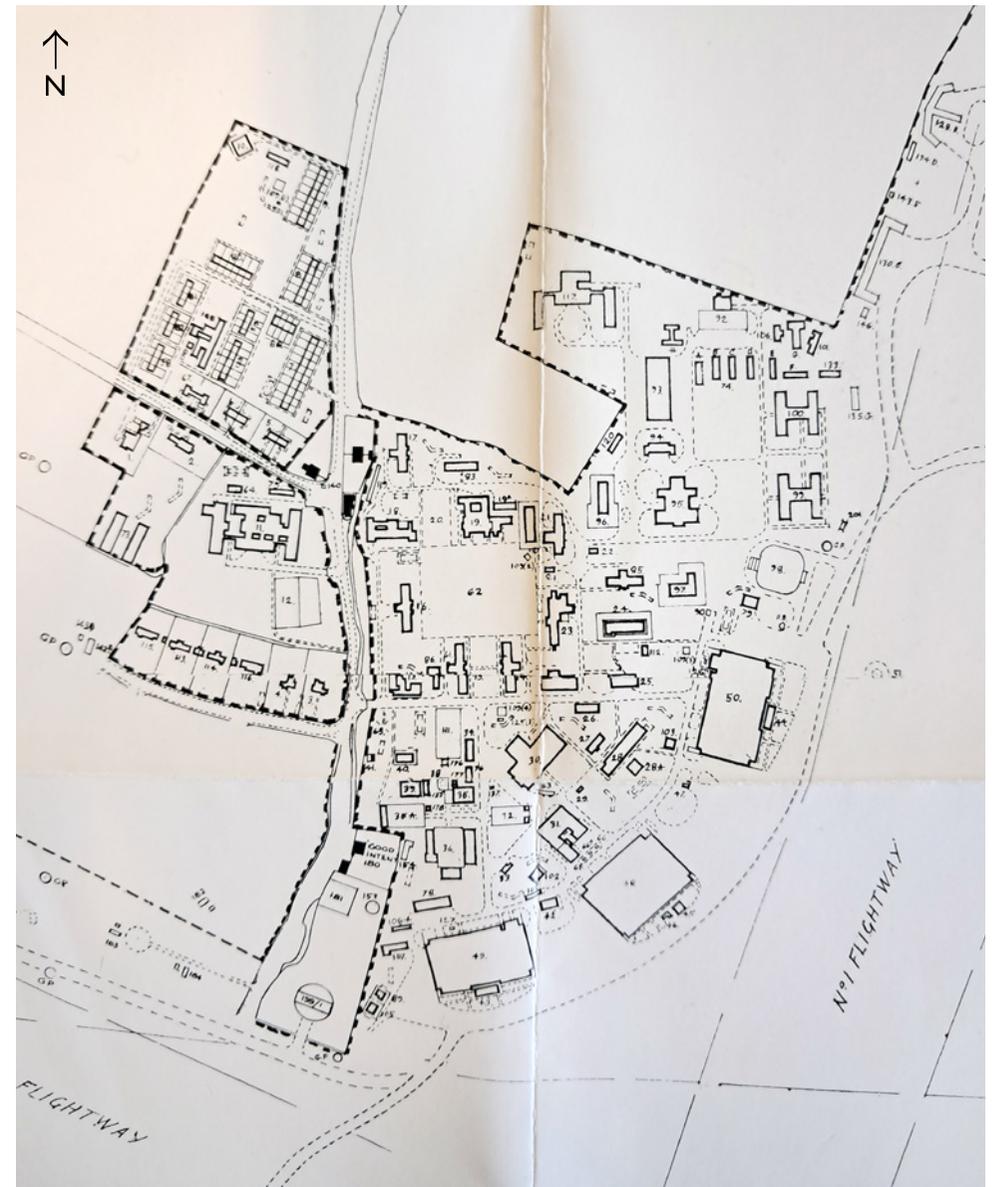
New airfields were needed to accommodate this important increase and the Air Ministry organised inspections and surveys of former First World War airfields, to assess their suitability. Although of a small size, Sutton's Farm was identified as having potential due to its proximity to London and ideal location along the Thames corridor. Between 1923 and 1924, the Air Ministry purchased 129 acres (approximately 52ha) of Sutton's Farm from New College, Oxford and redeveloped the arable land into an airfield base, which opened in April 1928 as RAF Hornchurch. Further land was purchased to the south in 1931, and the remainder of the farmland was sold in the 1930s for residential development.

The new airfield was gradually expanded during the 1930s. As an operational fighter station, the base had to accommodate pilots, aircrew, the aircraft maintenance team, the operations team, and support groups. The entrance to the RAF base was off of South End Road. The living quarters for officers, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and airmen were located to the west of South End Road, together with the Officers' Mess and sports courts. Most of the buildings, including the present Astra House and adjoining officers' quarters were completed by 1938. Operational buildings; store sheds; parade grounds and additional accommodation adjoined the flying fields to the east of South End Road. The 1942 record site plan by the Air Ministry indicates the buildings' layout within the airfield and their function.

3.0 Summary of Historic Development



RAF Hornchurch Record Site Plan by the Air Ministry dated July 1942. Source: Havering Local Studies Library Archives

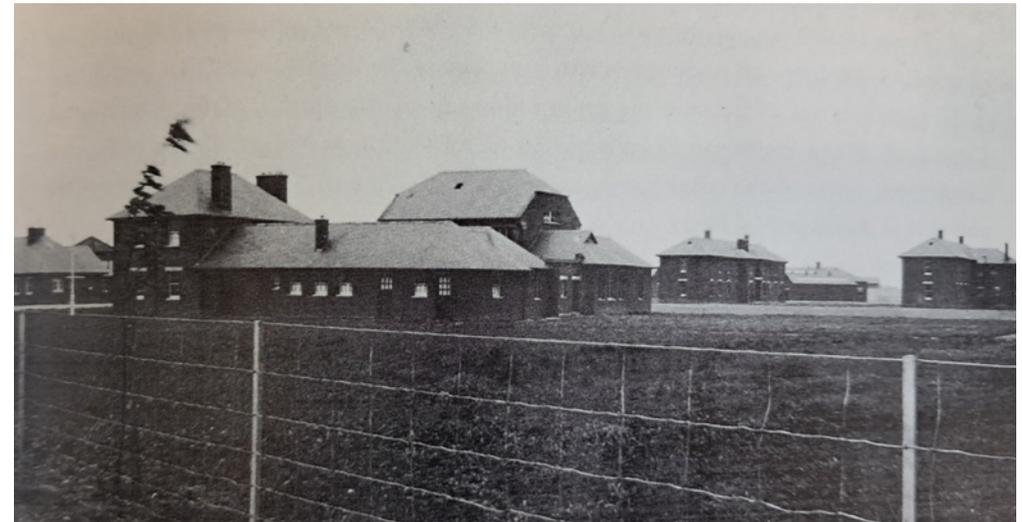


RAF Hornchurch Record Site Plan by the Air Ministry dated July 1942. Source: Havering Local Studies Library Archives

3.0 Summary of Historic Development



The entrance to the newly built RAF Hornchurch on South End Road, taken in 1928 (RAF Hornchurch Association) Source: *Second to None: A Pictorial History of Hornchurch Aerodrome Through Two World Wars and Beyond, 1915-1962* by Richard C. Smith (2004)



View of RAF Hornchurch from South End Road, 1928 (RAF Hornchurch Association) Source: *The Changing Face of Hornchurch* by Tony Benton (1999)



View of the Officers' Mess with the quarters on either side. Source: RAF Hornchurch Association website <https://rafhornchurch.com/history/>



A view of the Officers' Mess with its front lawn, 1937. Source: *Hornchurch Streets of Heroes: A Lasting Tribute to Those Who Flew from Hornchurch Aerodrome* by Richard C. Smith (2013)

3.0 Summary of Historic Development

3.4.2 The Second World War

At the outbreak of the war in September 1939, the fighter squadrons at RAF Hornchurch were equipped with spitfires and rapidly became vital in the defence of London and south-east England against enemy bombers. The airfield was a major target for the enemy forces, being raided on at least twenty occasions.

The RAF played a key role in significant events which determined the course of the war. A number of Hornchurch-based aircraft protected the beaches of Dunkirk while over 300,000 men embarked on the ships which will bring them home. During the Battle of Britain, pilots from RAF Hornchurch spitfire squadrons engaged in front-line combat for 16 weeks between July and October 1940. A young volunteer reserve pilot serving at RAF Hornchurch was the top scorer in shooting down enemy aircraft.

Following the Battle of Britain, RAF Hornchurch primarily served as a base for cross-channel fighter operations, suffering high casualties. In 1944, the fighter squadrons left Hornchurch to take part in the invasion and liberation of Europe.

3.4.3 The reserve base, 1945-1962

Aerial imagery dated from 1947 shows the airfield at the end of the war. The former RAF buildings, erected in the 1930s, which survive today are:

- Astra House, the Officers' Mess, now in use as a medical centre.
- Astra Court West, East and North, the single officers' quarters. Astra Court North has since been altered with infills joining the separate blocks. The connecting blocks between Astra Court North and Astra Court East have also been demolished. The large garden and tennis court fronting Astra House is now occupied by Astra Close.

- Nos. 89-91 Wood Lane, the married warrant officers' quarters.
- Nos. 93-95 and Nos. 97-99 Wood Lane, the warrant officers' quarters.
- Nos. 2-24 (even) Kilmartin Way; Nos. 1-11 (uneven) Kilmartin Way; Nos. 26-44 Kilmartin Way; Nos. 46-52 Kilmartin Way; Nos. 373-391 South End Road; Nos. 393-403 South End Road and Nos. 405-419 South End Road, the non-commissioned officers and airmen quarters.
- Haswa Greenfields on Kilmartin Way – A large single-storey block currently used as the Havering Asian Social & Welfare Association (HASWA). The former military use of this structure has not been confirmed.
- The married officers' quarters along the south side of the present Park Lane have been linked together to form two large residential blocks.

The buildings at the northern corner of South End Road and Wood Lane and along the present Cavendish Avenue lie outside of the boundary of the RAF base, as shown on the 1942 record site plan.



View of Nos. 2-24 (even) Kilmartin Way

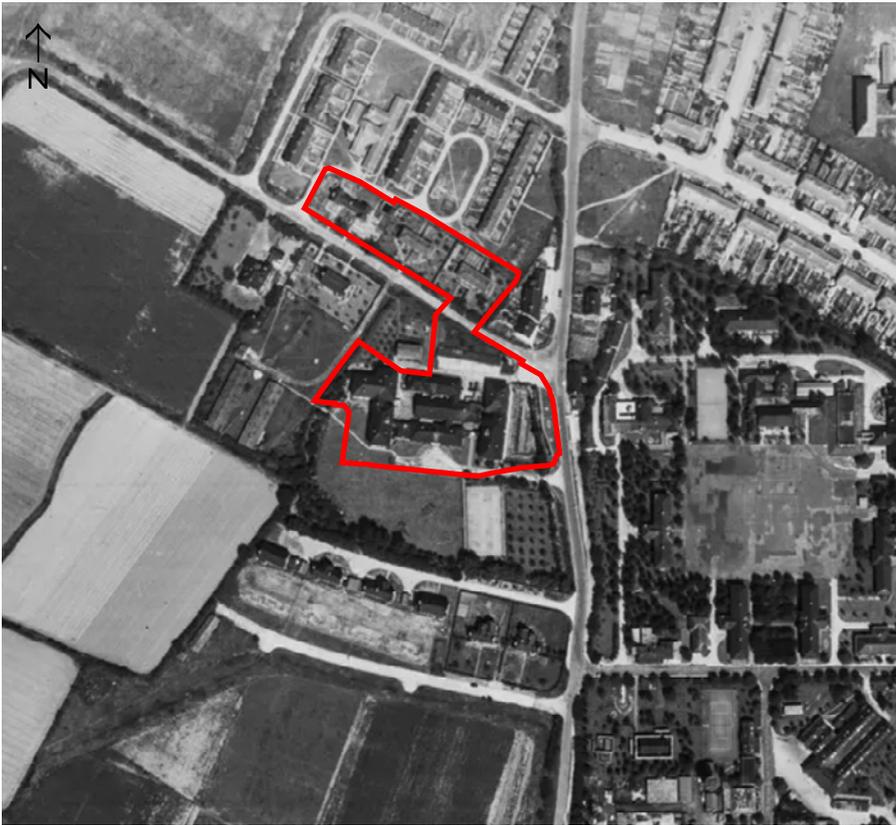


View of the Havering Asian Social & Welfare Association (HASWA) on Kilmartin Way



View of the large residential block to the south of Park Lane. The difference in brick work indicates where the infills have taken place

3.0 Summary of Historic Development



Aerial view of RAF Hornchurch taken in July 1947. Source: Historic England Aerial Photography Reference raf_cpe_uk_2189_vp3_5210



2025 Aerial view. Source: Google Earth

3.0 Summary of Historic Development

Following the end of the war, RAF Hornchurch became a reserve site, used by volunteer soldiers for training purposes, and the home of the No.17 Reserve Flying School. It was also used for parachute training, notably for the Parachute Regiment.

The buildings to the east of the present Suttons Lane, first built between 1936 and 1938 as the Sutton's Institution elderly home by Essex County Council, had been used to accommodate airmen stationed at RAF Hornchurch until 1946. The site became used by the NHS as the St George's Hospital. It was ultimately closed in 2012 and converted into a housing estate and health and wellbeing hub. In 2021, the Hornchurch Aerodrome Historical Trust opened the RAF Hornchurch Heritage Centre at Nos. 119-121 Suttons Lane, within two of the surviving 1930s staff cottages.

RAF Hornchurch closed in July 1962. At the time, the aerodrome was used by the Ford Motor Company at Dagenham as a storage overflow capacity. This explains the substantial number of cars parked around the three hangars on the aerial view from 1962.



1962 aerial view showing the layout of the aerodrome prior to the auction sale. Source: *Hornchurch Offensive: The Definitive Account of the Raf Fighter Airfield, Its Pilots, Groundcrew and Staff, 1941 to the Airfield's Final Closure: v. 2* by Richard C. Smith (2001)

3.0 Summary of Historic Development

3.5 The former airfield post 1963

Following closure, most of the former administrative and operational buildings were demolished in the 1960s, including the two hangars. The area was redeveloped as a housing estate, named the Airfield Estate. Airfield Way was laid out and many of the roads bear the names of pilots, airfields or aircrafts. The RJ Mitchell School was named after the designer of the Supermarine Spitfire.

In 1963, the RAF sold the Astra House complex to the west of South End Road to a developer for its conversion into offices and flats. In 1989, a planning application was received for the demolition of Astra House, to be replaced by a block of flats. This proposal was the incentive for the preservation of the buildings formerly associated with RAF Hornchurch and the subsequent designation of the conservation area.

Also in 1963, the remaining two thirds of the airfield to the east of the new housing estate were sold to the Hoveringham Gravel Company and the site was used for gravel extraction during the 1960s. The quarry was then used as a refuse tip in the 1970s. In 1980, Hornchurch County Park was created following large-scale landscaping conducted by the London Borough of Havering. A number of structures associated with the airfield, including pillboxes; gun emplacements and tette turrets (a pillbox with a rotating turrett) were preserved within the park, aiding the legibility of its former use.

4.0 Character Assessment



4.0 Character Assessment

4.1 Location, Topography and Geology

The RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area is at the centre of the London Borough of Havering and falls within the area of the London Basin. It is approximately 16 miles (26km) east of London city centre, and 5 miles (8km) northeast of the River Thames. The town of Hornchurch lies approximately 2 miles (3km) to the north.

The conservation area is located in South Hornchurch, to the west of Hornchurch Country Park. This large open space includes a portion of the River Ingrebourne and the Hornchurch Marshes.

The country park and the residential area to the west are approximately 10m above sea-level and the RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area is level throughout.



Aerial image of RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area location in its wider context. The conservation area boundary is indicated in red (© Google Earth)

— RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area boundary

This plan is not to scale

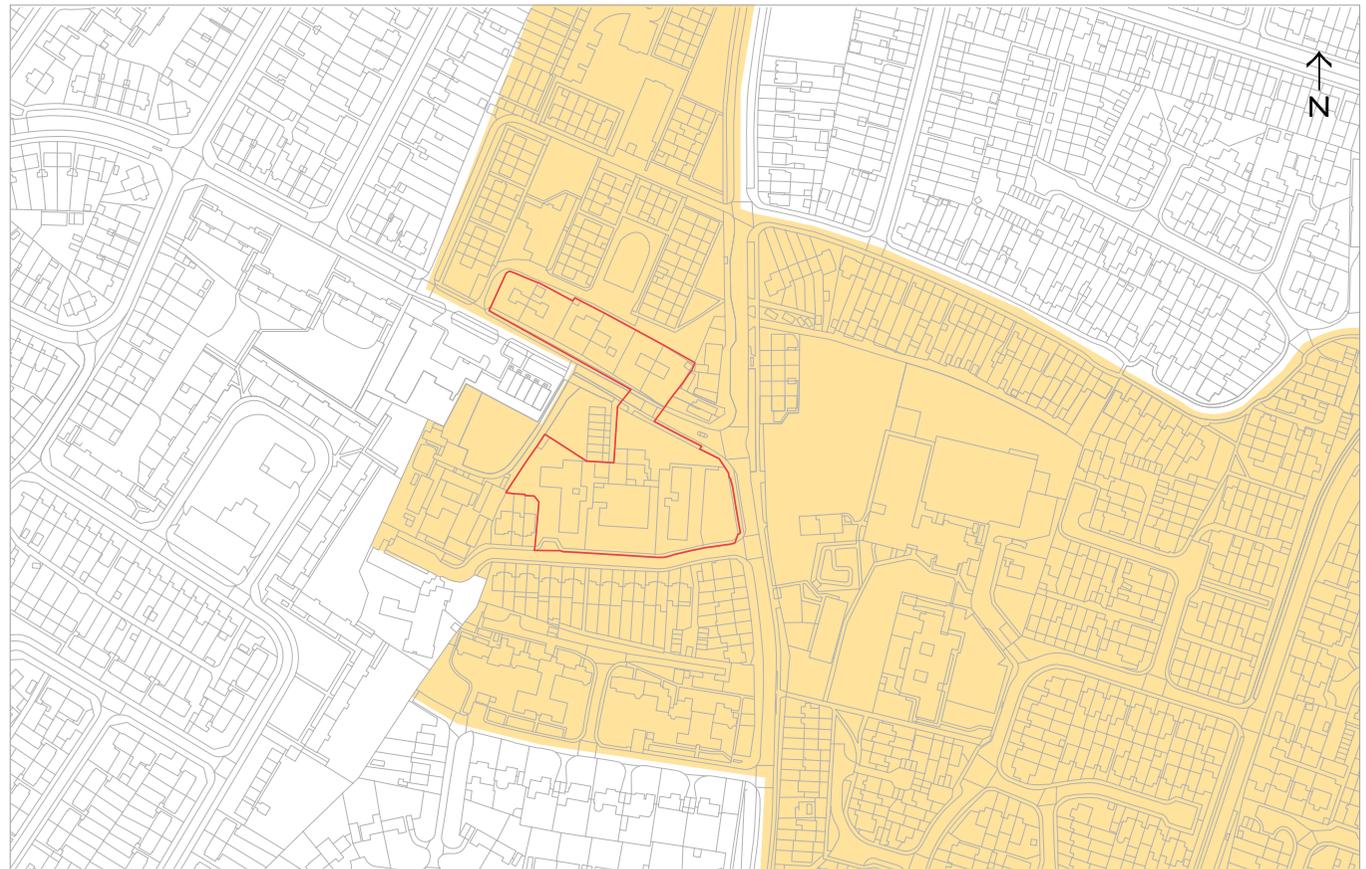
4.0 Character Assessment

4.2 Archaeology

The conservation area is covered by Havering Archaeological Priority Area 2.21, which covers the former RAF Hornchurch site, including buildings and remnant military elements close to and within the Hornchurch Country Park. The APA is designated principally for its potential to contain post-medieval archaeological remains associated with the military presence on the site and its successive phases of its development.⁰⁷

There are no scheduled monuments within the conservation area or its immediate setting.

Further information can be found by consulting the Archaeological Priority Area Appraisal written by Oxford Archaeology in 2024 for the London Borough of Havering, available online.



Map indicating extent of Havering APA 2.21. The conservation area boundary is indicated in red

- RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area Boundary
- Havering Archaeological Priority Area 2.21

This plan is not to scale

⁰⁷ <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/planning/apa-havering-pdf/>

4.0 Character Assessment

4.3 The setting of the conservation area

The immediate and wider setting of the conservation area is dominated by densely built-up suburban development dating from the twentieth and twenty-first century. There are no listed buildings or other designated heritage assets within the setting of the conservation area. The Good Intent Public House (the closest public house to the Officers' Mess and quarters) are included on Havering's Local Heritage List of non-designated heritage assets.⁰⁸

South End Road extends north-south, from the junction with the railway to Rainham. The railway forms a separation between the suburban development of South Hornchurch and the town to the north. Development is denser to the north, with residential streets running parallel to South End Road. The street layout is less regular to the south of Coronation Drive and Maybank Avenue, with blocks of flats set within large plots and houses arranged around crescents. Several primary schools, including the RJ Mitchell Primary School, Saint Alban's Catholic Primary School and Scotts Primary School occupy large plots.

The Hornchurch Country Park extends to the east and south-east of the conservation area. There is no intervisibility of between the park and the conservation area due to distance and dense intervening built form. Hornchurch Country Park is however an important feature within the wider setting of the conservation area, which remains legible as the location of a nationally important airfield during the First and Second World Wars. This open space provides important historic context to the special interest of the conservation area.

The immediate setting of the conservation area mainly comprises residential built form of the mid to late twentieth century, predominantly of two storeys with simple unadorned facades of brown brick or rendering. This built form makes a neutral contribution to the special interest and character of the conservation area. The common date range of these contemporary streets of housing however provide context to the conservation area.

Orchard Court, the four-storey residential block to the northwest of Astra Court, is of later construction and does not demonstrate the architectural style or features which characterise the buildings within the boundary of the conservation area and contribute to its special character.

4.0 Character Assessment



View north along Ambleside Avenue showing the residential development around the conservation area



The Good Intent Public House on the east side of South End Road



View along the south side of Wood Lane through the carpark to the north of Astra House, showing the four-storey residential block which negatively contributes to the conservation area



View north from within the Hornchurch Country Park. The residential properties along Dewey Path are visible in the background

4.0 Character Assessment

4.4 Important Views

All views which take in heritage assets, whether or not they are designated, are considered important and contribute to the understanding and experience of the conservation area. Consequently, the views considered in this section are only an indicative selection and are not intended to be a comprehensive set.

The small size of the conservation area and the density of the residential development within its setting impedes long-range views into and out of the conservation area. This limits important views within the conservation area to those along Wood Lane and Astra Close.

Otherwise, the conservation area is experienced via mid to close range kinetic views along South End Road which provides views of the rear elevation of Nos. 97-99 Wood Lane through the small green to the east side of the road and Astra Court East across the junction with Wood Lane.

The rear of the properties at Nos. 89-99 Wood Lane can be partially appreciated behind their boundary walls from the square to the east and south of Kilmartin Way.

These views are illustrated in adjacent photographs and the map in [Section 4.5](#).



View 01: View west along Wood Lane, at the entrance to the conservation area



View 02: View east along Wood Lane near the junction with Kilmartin Way. Nos. 89-91 Wood Lane is visible in the foreground



View 03: View south from the square to the south of Kilmartin Way showing the rear elevation of Nos. 93-95 Wood Lane



View 04: View south-west from the small green to the east side of South End Road, showing the rear elevation of Nos. 97-99 Wood Lane

4.0 Character Assessment



View 05: View south-west from the junction between Wood Lane and South End Road. Astra Court East is screened by vegetation in the background of the view.



View 06: View north from Astra Close, opposite the entrance to Astra House (Rosewood Medical Centre)



View 07: View west from the eastern end of Astra Close. Astra Court East is partially screened by vegetation

4.0 Character Assessment

4.5 Key Buildings and Spaces

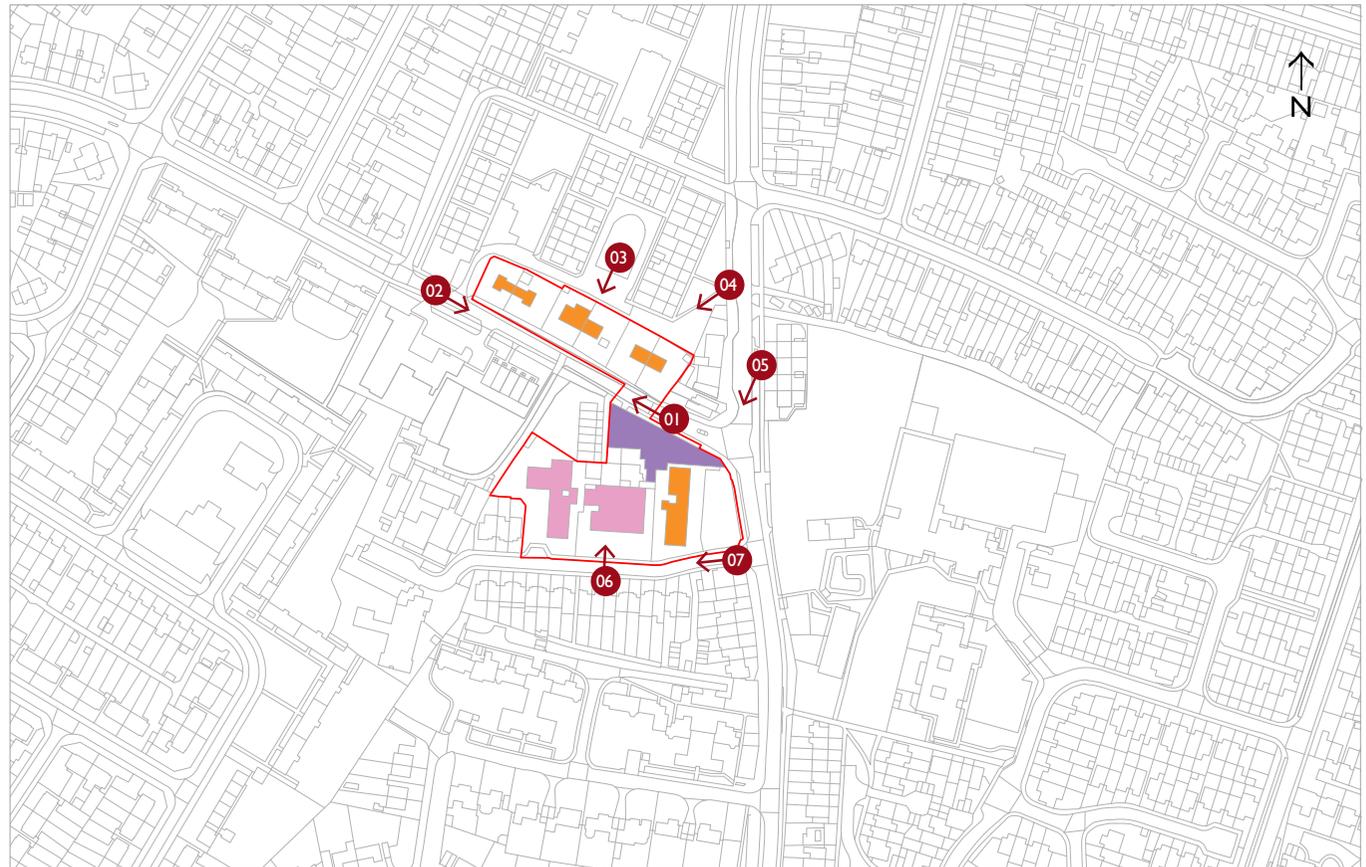
A conservation area is often best experienced by taking in its historic buildings and spaces, as the majority of these contribute to the understanding of its special interest. However, there are individual buildings and spaces which play a more important role in establishing the character of the area and are considered to be landmarks.

Astra House is the principal building within the conservation area due to its scale; architectural quality and important former historic use as the Officers' Mess. It is also locally listed.

Astra Court West (locally listed); Astra Court East and the properties along Wood Lane make a positive contribution to the area's historic and architectural character.

The carpark to the north of Astra House considerably detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area and is identified as an area with opportunity for enhancement.

These are identified on the plan opposite, as well as the conservation area's important views identified in [Section 4.4](#).



- Key Views
- RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area Boundary
- Positive Contributor
- Opportunity for Enhancement
- Locally Listed Asset

This plan is not to scale

4.0 Character Assessment

4.6 Townscape and Spatial Analysis

The conservation area is centred on two residential streets to the west of South End Road, Wood Lane and Astra Close. The buildings are located to the north and south of Wood Lane. The centring of the conservation area on Astra House, formerly the Officers' Mess and an important formal building within the RAF base, conveys an air of hierarchy and formality which is appropriate to the historic use of the conservation area.

To the north of Wood Lane, the residential buildings are set within generous plots and set at a comfortable distance from the street behind low boundary fences, dense vegetation and large planted front gardens. To the south of the lane, the rear elevations of Astra Court North, East and West can be seen through tree cover which bounds a carpark.

Astra Court East is set back from the west side of South End Road, behind dense vegetation and a carpark. Astra Close is a narrow cul de sac. The courtyard to the front of Astra House however allows for a full appreciation of its south elevation. Astra Court West stands within a large plot with open green space to the south and west. Mature trees conceal much of the west elevation from the street.

The large plots, spacious front gardens and vegetation within the conservation area contribute to its spacious feel, despite the dense residential development surrounding the area.



View east along Wood Lane



View east along Astra Close

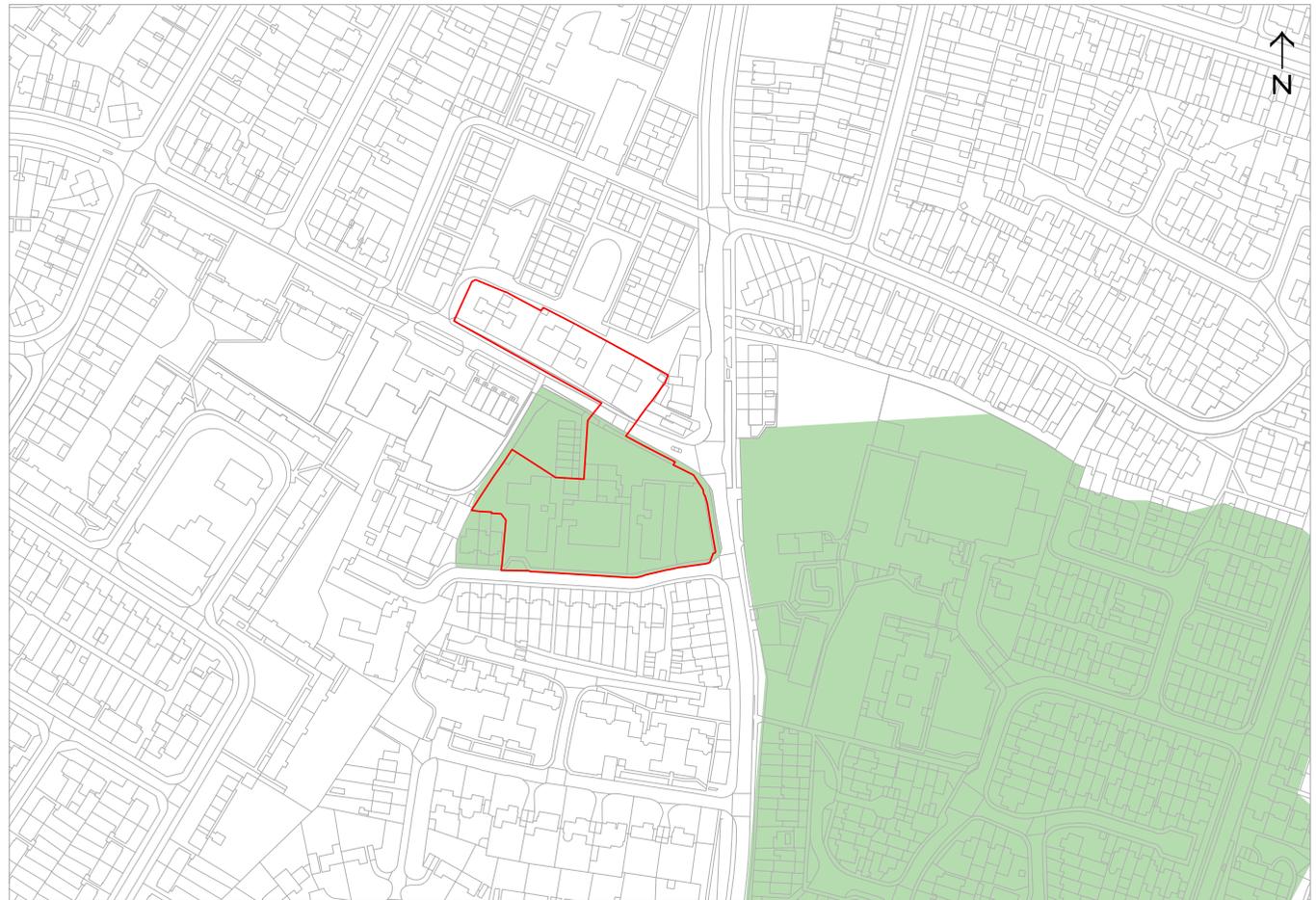
4.0 Character Assessment

4.7 Open Space and Trees

The mature cypresses, prunus trees and beeches along Astra Close and Wood Lane and around the Astra Court complex make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area. Trees and vegetation within the private gardens of Nos. 89-99 Wood Lane are also important features, providing a verdant backdrop to key views of the buildings within the conservation area. The abundance of planting leads to a softer suburban character, in comparison to the strong urban character within the immediate setting of the conservation area.

Outside of the green open space immediately to the south and west of Astra Court West, there are no public open spaces within the conservation area.

A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is designated across much of the conservation area boundary, as indicated on the adjacent map.



-  RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area Boundary
-  TPOs

This plan is not to scale

4.0 Character Assessment

4.8 Public Realm

Street surfaces across the conservation area are in tarmac with concrete kerbs. The poor condition of the tarmac within the carpark to the north of Astra House detracts from the character of the townscape.

There is no public realm provision within the conservation area to encourage dwell time, such as seating, planters or cycle bays. Street lighting consists of modern lampposts of utilitarian appearance on Wood Lane and Astra Close. Street signage principally relates to traffic control and wayfinding.



Views along the south side of Wood Lane through the carpark to the north of Astra House



4.0 Character Assessment

4.9 Architecture

4.9.1 Building Uses

The primary building use within the conservation area is residential, in keeping with their historic use as residential quarters for officers. Astra House is in use as a medical centre and offices.

4.9.2 Boundary Treatment

Boundary treatments throughout the conservation area are generally limited. The boundary treatment to the residential properties along the north side of Wood Lane include low wooden fences, mature vegetation and hedges, which partially screen the houses beyond. These have a positive impact on the appearance of the townscape as soft boundaries, appropriate to the character of the houses to which they belong.

There is a lack of boundary treatment to the carpark to the north of Astra House, with mature trees providing partial screening near the junction to the eastern end of the lane. Astra Court East and its carpark are surrounded by a low wooden fence and mature vegetation, forming a permeable boundary in views approaching the conservation area.

The courtyard to the front of Astra House is delimited by a low brick wall along Astra Close. Dense vegetation to the east and a wooden fence to the west form a visual separation between the medical centre and the residential courts. There is no boundary around the south and west sides of Astra Court West with the gardens fronting directly onto the pavement creating a blending between public and private spaces.

4.9.3 Scale and Massing

Buildings within the conservation area are generally two-storeys in height beneath pitched roofs, with the exception of Astra House of only one storey.

4.9.4 Materials

The use of red and brown brick characterises the conservation area. Light-coloured render is intermixed with brick to the properties along the north side of Wood Lane. Stone is used sparingly as decorative detailing to Astra House. Roofs are consistent across the conservation area, being finished in slate. Chimneys form an important part of the roofscape, and are of dark red brick, in keeping with the facades.

The consistent material palette contributes to a cohesive feel within the conservation area.

4.9.5 Architectural Types & Details

The buildings within the conservation area are typical of military buildings of the interwar period intended to house military personal. They are generally modest, with minimal architectural detailing and an overall restrained appearance. Astra House stands out with its attractive portico with ornate Tuscan columns and cupola.

Nos. 93-95 and Nos. 97-99 Wood Lane are of a similar rectangular footprint and appearance with red brick at ground floor and render at first floor, a pitched slate roof and four red brick chimneys. Each building is divided in two two-bay wide properties with entrance doors at either end. No. 93 comprises a single-storey extension of red brick to the northern elevation.

Nos. 89-91 Wood Lane is of red brick construction with a slate pitched roof and red brick chimneys. The planform is distinctive with projecting bays with intersecting pitched roofs at either end.

The design of the Astra House and the adjoining courts is distinctive for the predominant use of red brick and focus on symmetry, inspired by classical architecture. The buildings are of dark red bricks with hipped roofs. The tall mullion and transom casement windows have mainly been replaced with modern uPVC counterparts. Although they are broadly reflective of the historic design in their use of glazing bars, this material is inappropriate to the historic character of the buildings and the design, profile and character of appropriate windows cannot be replicated in uPVC. Astra House has retained its original steel windows within timber frames. Notable features on the single-storey central wing, the former Officers' Mess, are the symmetrical façade; the recessed porch with rusticated brick pilasters and stone Tuscan columns and the tall cupola with a copper dome. Astra Court East and West are of similar design, although Astra Court West is in a L shaped plan. The buildings are of traditional construction and minimal detailing, reflecting their historic use as accommodation for single officers at RAF Hornchurch.

4.0 Character Assessment



View west from South End Road showing the boundary treatment around Astra Court East



View of the east elevation of Astra Court East



View north from Astra Close showing the front elevation of Astra House and its courtyard



View west from the Astra House courtyard showing the west elevation of Astra Court West



View east showing the west and north elevations of Astra Court West and the lack of boundary treatment



View south from Wood Lane showing the rear elevations of Astra Court North

4.0 Character Assessment



View of the frontage of Nos. 97-99 Wood Lane



View of the rear of Nos. 97-99 Wood Lane from Kilmartin Way



View of the frontage of Nos. 93-95 Wood Lane



View of the rear of Nos. 93-95 Wood Lane from Kilmartin Way



View of the frontage of Nos. 89-91 Wood Lane



View of the rear of Nos. 89-91 Wood Lane from Kilmartin Way

5.0 Issues and Opportunities



5.0 Issues and Opportunities

5.1 Introduction

This section of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan provides analysis of the current issues and opportunities facing the RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area and reflects the findings of a detailed site survey and initial stakeholder consultation. It will be reviewed and updated following public consultation to ensure holistic coverage.

The analysis is set out around the below themes:

- 5.2 Development Opportunity
- 5.3 Detracting Buildings, Elements and Additions
- 5.4 Boundary Treatment
- 5.5 Maintenance and Repair of Buildings
- 5.6 Public Realm
- 5.7 Sustainable Development and Climate Change
- 5.8 Interpretation and Raising Awareness

5.2 Development opportunity

Due to the small size and tight boundary of the conservation area and the density of the surrounding built form, there are only very limited opportunities new development within the area.

Any proposals for new development both within the conservation area and within its setting should be carefully considered and well designed to ensure that the special interest and character of the conservation area as a designated heritage asset are preserved. Particular attention should be paid to the placement, height, massing and materiality of any proposed development within the conservation area or its setting, also taking important views and the potential impacts of accompanying infrastructure changes into account.

5.3 Detracting Buildings, Elements and Additions

5.3.1 Unsympathetic Additions and Accretions

The overall quality and appearance of buildings and the street scene of the conservation area is generally good. The historic frontages along Wood Lane and Astra Close contribute positively to the appearance and character of the area, though Astra Court East and West have suffered from the unsympathetic modern accretions, notably the replacement of historic windows with uPVC units, which are not in keeping with the age and architectural character of the buildings and detract from the appearance of historic elevations. Plastic rain goods have also replaced original and traditional versions in places.

All plastic features are modern, alien additions to the historic environment and have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Their installation often constitutes the loss of the original or historic features and profiles, which incrementally reduces the special interest of the area. In addition, the use of plastic windows reduces the breathability of traditionally constructed buildings, by preventing moisture from egressing the building; this can cause wider damage to building fabric. There are opportunities to return windows to traditional materials and appearance where they have been altered.



uPVC window to Astra Court East



Replacement gutter to Astra Court West

5.0 Issues and Opportunities

5.3.2 Detracting elements

There are no detracting buildings within the conservation area.

The carpark to the north of Astra House is currently poorly surfaced and detracts from our appreciation of the rear elevations of this group, in views along Wood Lane. This area has been identified for enhancement. Orchard Court, the four-storey residential block to the northwest of Astra Court, does not demonstrate the architectural style or features which characterise the buildings within the boundary of the conservation area.

5.4 Boundary Treatments

Boundary treatments within the conservation area are generally of appropriate profile and materiality, including low wooden fencing along Wood Lane and Astra Court East and a low brick low fronting Astra House.

There is an opportunity to improve the appearance of the carpark to the north of Astra House and enhance its rear setting through appropriate low wooden fencing and additional planting along the northern boundary of the carpark.



Views along the south side of Wood Lane through the carpark to the north of Astra House

5.0 Issues and Opportunities

5.5 Maintenance and Repair of Buildings

From a brief visual inspection, buildings within the conservation area appear to be in good condition overall. Some buildings are in need of repair with issues including water damage and staining to brickwork; deteriorating render and peeling paint to rainwater goods, doors and windows.

As well as having an impact on physical building fabric, maintenance and repair issues harm the appearance of both individual buildings and the wider conservation area. There is guidance on good practice maintenance and repair methods in [Section 6.4](#) and additional sources of guidance in [Further Information and Resources](#).

5.6 Public Realm

There is currently no public realm provision within the conservation area.

The introduction of planters within the three carparks would enhance both the setting of the Astra House group and the public realm within the conservation area.

The provision of cycle bays would encourage cycling and reduce vehicle movement within the conservation area, in line with the London Borough of Havering's goal to be carbon neutral by 2040.

5.7 Sustainable Development and Climate Change

The London Borough of Havering intends to be carbon neutral by 2040, and in March 2023 declared a climate and ecological emergency recognising the threats of climate change to the borough. This issue interacts with the conservation area in a number of ways, including changes to buildings and the way people move around the area.

Havering Council have embedded climate change mitigation and minimising carbon emissions throughout the Local Plan, including within its Strategic Objectives and in Policy 12, Healthy communities and Policy 36, Low carbon design and renewable energy.

5.7.1 Energy Efficiency Upgrades

Whilst the maintenance and continued use of historic buildings is inherently sustainable, there is likely to be both a desire amongst residents and tenants and pressure from government over coming decades to improve the energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of the historic building stock within the conservation area. Reducing heating requirements combined with using more sustainable sources of heat and power are the two main aspects to consider.

There are many opportunities to improve the energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of historic buildings which will have no impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. These include improving the thermal performance of the building stock through insulating roofs and suspended ground floors, draught exclusion and introducing secondary glazing. Historic and traditionally constructed buildings were designed to be breathable, allowing moisture to naturally exit building fabric. Care needs to be taken to make sure buildings of this type remain breathable, rather than air-tight, through choosing appropriate materials as retaining moisture will harm the fabric of the building.

Care also needs to be taken if external changes are proposed, to ensure they remain sensitive to their historic context. This could include the addition of solar photovoltaic panels on south or east/west facing roofs as an additional heating or hot water source. However, these must not detract from the historic character of the building and are likely to be only acceptable when positioned on rear roof slopes not visible from the public realm. Where solar panels would be on a wall or roof slopes facing the public highway, or on a flat roof, planning permission is required.

5.7.2 Upgrades of the Public Realm

Reducing petrol and diesel car use is critical to reducing carbon emissions and there is government commitment to phasing out their sale over the next decade. Petrol and diesel car use will be replaced by a combination of electric (or other carbon-free) vehicles and active, car less travel. Both will require infrastructure changes that will need to be considered in the context of the special interest of the conservation area to ensure they are implemented appropriately.

Electric vehicles require charging points which can be installed within existing car parks and adjacent to street parking bays. Although these are relatively unobtrusive, they are likely to increase visual street clutter to a degree and should therefore be considered alongside other reductions in street furniture clutter. However, lamppost charging points and wireless charging may become viable in the future which and are likely to be compatible with a conservation area environment.

Encouraging active travel, cycling and walking is also key to reducing carbon emissions. Reducing vehicle movement in the conservation area will improve air quality and make active travel more pleasant and safer. Improved signposting for cycling and walking routes could be introduced whilst taking care not to add to visual clutter through excessive increased signage.

5.0 Issues and Opportunities

5.7.3 Trees and Open Spaces

Maintaining existing trees and replacing lost or dying trees are an important part of the strategy to tackle climate change and trees also contribute considerably to the special interest of the conservation area. Street trees help to soften the area's urban grain and contribute to its sense of place. There is opportunity to provide trees in planters within the carparks around Astra House, which could help soften the otherwise hard finishes.

Permission is needed for any works to trees above a certain size in the conservation area (see [Section 6.3](#)) and justification is required for the loss of any street trees, which should also be replaced with new trees. A succession planting strategy would be beneficial to ensure existing tree coverage is maintained into the future and opportunities for new trees should also be considered.

5.8 Interpretation and Raising Awareness

Due to the dense residential built form, dating from the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries, surrounding the conservation area and the lack of intervisibility with the former airfield, now Hornchurch Country Park, it is difficult to appreciate the historic significance of the buildings within the conservation area and their association with the former RAF Hornchurch. There is an opportunity to increase awareness of the special interest of the conservation area through the installation of interpretive signage to encourage increased historic awareness. Interpretive signage would also strengthen the cohesion between the residential properties along the north side of Wood Lane and the Astra House building group.

It is beneficial to provide area residents and tenants with clear information on the responsibilities and benefits of owning a building in the conservation area and the implications of proposing changes to buildings. There are also opportunities to raise awareness of the importance of building maintenance to prevent degradation amongst local owners and occupiers.

6.0 Managing Change



6.0: Managing Change

6.1 Introduction

Section 6 provides a framework to guide change within the RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area, based on the understanding of its special interest set out in earlier sections of this document. The overarching ambition for the conservation area is to preserve and enhance what is special about it, and thus this is the statutory duty of the Council. This is achieved by ensuring that change and development take place in a considered and sympathetic way, and by raising awareness of and promoting shared responsibility for looking after the conservation area.

The long-term objectives of conservation area management are to phase out past ill-considered changes and additions, and to ensure that new development is of high quality and responds to the conservation area's special character. This applies to very small changes, such as reinstating lost historic features, to proposals for new development both within the conservation area and its setting. In addition, the regular maintenance of buildings is a vital part of preserving both their special interest and physical fabric. Repairs can often be necessary, ensuring that these are undertaken sensitively is an important part of looking after historic buildings and the conservation area as a whole.

The following sections set out how and why change within the conservation area is controlled; good practice advice on maintenance and repair and specific guidance on alterations; extension and new development. Specific recommendations can be found in **Section 6.8**.

6.2 Planning Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Planning legislation, policy and guidance is used when determining applications for development or other changes within the conservation area. This is to ensure that proposals seek to preserve or enhance the area's special interest, including the contribution made by its setting.

The primary legislation governing conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This sets out statutory duties for local planning authorities in managing change within conservation areas. Regional and local planning policy reflect this legislation in the protection and enhancement of conservation areas. See the London Borough of Havering's website for details regarding current national policy regarding the historic environment and the relevant policies set out within the Havering Local Plan.

In addition to legislative and policy requirements, there is a wealth of best practice guidance and advice available from Historic England and other heritage organisations. When changes are being considered to buildings within and in the setting of the conservation area, it is often helpful to first seek pre-application advice from the Council to gain early guidance on proposals and discuss any constraints or opportunities; details for this can be found on the London Borough of Havering's website.

Links and details of all the relevant policy, guidance and advice can be found in **Further Information and Resources**.

6.3 Control Measures Brought About by Conservation Area Designation

6.3.1 Restrictions on Permitted Development

In order to protect and enhance the RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area, any changes that take place must preserve, respect or contribute to the character and appearance which makes the conservation area of special interest. Permitted Development Rights, as defined by The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, are works which can be undertaken without the need to gain planning permission. Permitted Development Rights are different in a conservation area, meaning that planning permission is needed for some works which materially affect the external appearance of a building.

This includes, but is not restricted to:

- The total or substantial demolition of buildings or structures (including walls of over one metre in height, gate piers and chimneys);
- Other partial demolition including new openings in external elevations;
- Works to trees with a diameter of 75 mm or greater, measured at 1.5 metres from soil level;
- Some changes to the external finish of a building (including rendering, pebble dash or other cladding);
- Some changes to the roof shape including installation of new dormer windows and chimneys;
- Any extension other than a single-storey rear extension of 4 metres or less (3 metres or less if the house is detached or semi-detached);
- Extensions to the side of buildings;
- Any two-storey extensions;
- Erection of an outbuilding to the side of a property;
- Aerials and satellite dishes on chimneys or elevations visible from the street;
- Putting up advertisements and other commercial signage (advertising consent may also be required);
- Changing the use of a building (e.g. from residential to commercial); and
- Installing solar panels that are wall-mounted on a wall or roof facing the highway.

For further information and advice about when planning permission is required within a conservation area, see the guidance on the Government's Planning Portal or contact the London Borough of Havering Planning Department.

6.0: Managing Change

6.3.2 Article 4 Directions

The Council can develop bespoke controls to ensure that specific elements of a conservation area are protected from harmful change. This is done through the application of an Article 4 Direction. These provide additional control by specifically revoking certain permitted development rights, meaning that planning permission needs to be sought before work can be undertaken.

Should the Council wish to do so, the process of implementing any new Article 4 Directions will be undertaken at a future date, separate from the adoption of this CAAMP.

There is currently no Article 4 Direction in place for RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area.

6.4 Conservation and the Repair of Buildings

All buildings require maintenance and repair regardless of their age; designation (or lack thereof) or significance. In conservation areas, it is important that such works are carried out sensitively to protect the historic fabric of buildings and preserve the established character of the wider area. The following sections provide a summary of best practice advice on maintenance and repair. Historic England and other heritage bodies, including the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), provide a wide range of advice and guidance on how to care for and protect historic places, including advice on their maintenance and repair. See [Further Information and Resources for information](#).

6.4.1 Maintenance

Maintenance is defined as routine work necessary to keep the fabric of a place in good order. It differs from repair in that it is a pre-planned, regular activity intended to reduce the instances where remedial or unforeseen work is needed. Regular maintenance ensures that small problems do not escalate into larger issues, lessening the need for repairs,

and is therefore cost effective in the long-term. In general maintenance work does not require consent from the Council, however some maintenance works may require consent.

Regular inspection of building fabric and services will help identify specific maintenance tasks relevant to each building. These could include but are not limited to:

- Regularly clearing gutters and drain grilles of debris, particularly leaves;
- Clearing any blockages in downpipes;
- Sweeping of chimneys;
- Removal of vegetation growth on or abutting a building; and
- Repainting or treating timber or metal windows and other external timberwork.

6.4.2 Repair

Repair is defined as work that is beyond the scope of maintenance undertaken to remedy defects caused by decay, damage or use, including minor adaptation to achieve a sustainable outcome, but not involving alteration or restoration. Identification of repairs may arise during regular inspection of buildings or following extreme weather events and could include repairing damage to roof coverings, repointing of brickwork or repairs to windows.

It is important to understand the cause of any damage or defects both to ensure that the repair is successful and to minimise the work that is required. It is also important to understand the significance of the built fabric affected in order to minimise harm when enacting a repair. As with maintenance, consent may be required for some types of repair work; it is advisable to discuss with the Council before any work is undertaken.

The following should be considered when planning repair works:

- Repairs should always be considered on a case-by-case basis. A method of repair which is suitable for one building may not be suitable for another.
- Only undertaking the minimum intervention required for any given repair.
- Use materials and construction techniques which match the existing fabric to maintain the appearance and character of the building. The exception to this is when existing materials or techniques are detrimental to the built fabric – for example, cement pointing on a historic brick building.
- Repair is always preferable over the wholesale replacement of a historic feature.
- If replacement of a historic feature is required – for example, if it has degraded beyond repair – the replacement should be carried out on a like-for-like basis using the same materials and construction techniques. The replaced element should be the same as the original in terms of material, dimensions, method of construction and finish (condition notwithstanding) in order to be classed as like-for-like.
- Like-for-like replacement should not be applied in cases where a historic feature has previously been repaired using inappropriate materials or techniques. When seeking to improve failing modern features or past unsuitable repairs, a traditionally-designed alternative using appropriate materials is preferable, such as breathable lime-based renders and paints. In such cases, planning permission may be required.

6.0: Managing Change

- Repairs should, where possible, be reversible, as better alternatives may become available in the future.
- Repointing should always be carried out using a lime-based mortar. Within historic and traditionally constructed buildings, cement-based pointing is damaging to brickwork and stonework as it is an impermeable material. Periodic renewal of pointing will extend the lifetime of building fabric

6.5 Proposing Change to Buildings

6.5.1 Alteration, Extension and Demolition

The appropriateness of demolition, alteration or extension will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as what is appropriate in one location will not necessarily be acceptable in another. In all cases it is vital to consider the impact of the proposed change on the special interest of the conservation area ensuring that this is preserved or enhanced.

Demolition of buildings that detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area may be beneficial. However, gap sites can also detract from the character of the conservation area, and therefore demolition of whole buildings may only be permitted in instances when rebuilding is proposed, when the site was historically open and this remains appropriate, or when an alternative suitable future use for the site is planned.

Alterations should preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area, and changes should be sensitive to its prevailing architectural and visual character. Alterations may comprise of the removal of detracting features such as uPVC windows, and where appropriate, their replacement with more historically appropriate versions. Alterations should therefore use appropriate materials for their context, and ideally those that are typically found within the conservation area. This may include timber for windows and doors and brickwork for structural elements. New materials may be appropriate as long as they are complementary to the appearance of the area.

Extensions should be subordinate to the existing buildings in their scale, massing and design, and should ensure that any existing historic features remain legible. Extension to the side and front of buildings is unlikely to be appropriate as this would change the visual appearance of the streetscape, whereas extension to the rear, where space allows, is likely to be more acceptable. All extensions which are characteristic to the conservation area, there may be scope for use of a wider, less traditional material palette where these are part of a high quality, sensitively-designed extension that complements or enhances the appearance of the original building and the conservation area setting.

6.5.2 Alterations Proposed in Response to Climate Change

There are many opportunities to make changes to historic buildings in the conservation area which will assist in improving their thermal performance and, as a result, tackle climate change. Internal works in unlisted buildings will not require planning permission; however, for any works which affect the exterior of a building it will be required.

Internally, adding insulation to roofs or lofts and below suspended ground floors will improve thermal efficiency, and draft exclusion around windows, doors and vents will also be beneficial. Installing secondary glazing will also improve thermal performance, though it is noted that double or triple glazing may be considered appropriate in some conservation area buildings, pending impacts to the character of the building and wider setting. Care should be taken to ensure that traditionally constructed buildings remain sufficiently breathable to avoid causing harm to the fabric of the building.

Externally, solar panels could be installed on rear roof slopes not visible from the public realm. Other renewable energy sources could be considered, such as ground, air or water-sourced heat pumps, so long as they do not detract from the character or appearance of the conservation area.

When planning the installation of electric vehicle charging points (EVCPs) care should be taken when installing any outlets, conduit, etc. in historic building fabric to avoid unnecessary fabric loss and minimise the visual impact of the EVCP in views from the street. EVCPs often require vehicles to be parked at close range; the impact of this on the character and appearance of the street and wider conservation area should be carefully considered. The installation of an EVCP does not require planning permission, the areas in question must be lawfully used for off street parking.

6.5.3 Modern Additions to Historic Buildings

Proposed modern additions to buildings should be carefully considered to ensure they are both necessary and appropriate to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The removal of unsympathetic features such as redundant external wiring, satellite dishes and television aerials should be undertaken proactively, as this will remove visual clutter and thus enhance the appearance of the conservation area. The installation of new television aerials and satellite dishes on a wall, chimney or roof slope that faces onto and is visible from the conservation area public realm (generally to front and side elevations) requires planning permission and is discouraged. The visibility of such features detracts from the appearance of the conservation area; therefore care should be taken to locate these items discreetly, ideally to the rear of buildings.

6.5.4 Windows, Doors and Drainage Goods

There have been instances in which uPVC units have been used to replace historic windows. Plastic gutters and drainpipes are found on the buildings to the Astra House group. Plastic or uPVC elements are not in keeping with the appearance or character of a historic building, and thus detract from the special interest of the conservation area. Therefore, replacement of historic or traditional windows; doors and drainage goods is discouraged unless they are damaged beyond repair. Where such replacement is necessary, this should be in materials and styles appropriate

6.0: Managing Change

to the building. Where inappropriate replacement has already been undertaken, returning these features back to their traditional appearance is encouraged. The proportions and type of window will be dependent upon the age and style of an individual building.

Doors and window frames should be painted in appropriate colours. Changes in colour beyond a shade lighter or darker of the existing colours will likely require planning permission, with decisions based on surrounding context and appropriate historic precedent. Drainage goods would have historically been painted cast iron or lead; however other metals may be appropriate subject to their detailed design.

6.5.5 Boundary Treatments

Inappropriate or low-quality existing boundary treatments should be replaced when opportunities arise. When new boundary treatments are proposed, these should remain sensitive to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area and avoid introducing clutter to the street scene.

6.6 New Development

6.6.1 New Development within the Conservation Area

There are currently very few opportunities for new development within the conservation area. Any new or replacement development needs to take account of, and remain sensitive to, the following:

- The significance of any building proposed for demolition;
- The significance of the relationship between any building to be removed and adjacent structures and spaces;
- The potential to draw inspiration from the historic use and character of a site;

- The significance or contribution of any gap site; subject to whether it is a historic gap within the street frontage or detracting;
- The potential impact of proposals on known or potential archaeological remains;
- The materials and architectural detailing characteristic of the area - these should be a key point of reference in the choice of materials and detailing for proposed new development;
- The scale and grain of the surrounding area, including historic plot boundaries;
- The proposed height of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the surrounding context; and
- The potential impact of proposals on important views and the prominence of the landmark building of Astra House within the conservation area.

The above list is not exhaustive; each location will present its own unique requirements for sensitive and appropriate proposed development. In all cases, new development must be of high-quality design, construction and detailing. The principal aim of new development should be to preserve or enhance the character of its immediate setting and the conservation area as a whole.

6.6.2 New Development in the Setting of the Conservation Area

New development should remain sensitive to its location within the setting of the designated heritage asset and enhance or preserve, rather than harm, its special interest. Proposed new development should be of the highest quality design and execution, regardless of scale, in order to achieve this and, where relevant, help phase out ill-considered and unsympathetic interventions from the past.

6.7 Public Realm

The public realm, namely publicly accessible streets and open spaces, is the area from which the majority of people will experience the conservation area. Preserving and enhancing its character and appearance is therefore of considerable importance for maintaining the special interest of the area. The public realm consists not only of street surfaces, but the street furniture, street signs and interpretation.

A sensitive and holistic approach to change and improvement to the public realm within an overarching strategy is needed, including changes to road infrastructure to encourage cycling and walking. Any additions or amendments to the public realm will also need to take account of highways and other relevant regulations.

There are areas where surface finishes could benefit from replacement with rationalised, high quality surface treatments. Care should be taken to ensure future public realm works are considered for the longer term and materials both for street furniture and surface treatments are durable and of high quality, and remain sensitive to the character of the conservation area.

In addition to street furniture, road signage, freestanding signage and broadband cabinets can collectively cause excessive clutter within the public realm and detract physically and visually from the pedestrian experience of the conservation area. Applications associated with features within the public realm should be carefully considered to make certain that public streets remain pleasant and attractive places to be whilst ensuring that commercial activities can continue successfully.

Installation of vehicle e-charging points are likely to become a feature of the street scene in the near future. Although these are relatively unobtrusive, they are likely to increase visual street clutter to a degree and should therefore be considered alongside other elements of street furniture.

6.0: Managing Change

6.8 Specific Recommendations

The following recommendations have been developed in response to the issues and opportunities within the conservation area identified in [Section 5](#), and in light of the guidance on managing change provided in [Section 6](#) over previous pages. These recommendations are designed to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the special interest of the RAF Hornchurch Conservation Area

- 01 The surviving historic environment of the former RAF Hornchurch, in particular that which contributes to the character and appearance of the conservation area, should be maintained to ensure the area remains a desirable place to live, work and visit.
- 02 Proposals for extension, alteration and new development should preserve or enhance the special interest of the conservation area, or where the public benefits would outweigh any harm. To achieve this, new development should adopt a sensitive context-led approach, which is vital to celebrate and create a sense of place within the conservation area.
- 03 The design, construction and materials of any new development, extension, alteration or repair should be of the highest quality and respect their local context.
- 04 Development within the setting of the conservation area should be sympathetic to its special interest in terms of its scale, massing, proportions, materials and detailing. Applicants proposing new development in the setting of the conservation area should assess and describe the likely impact of their proposals on the significance and character of the conservation area and its setting.
- 05 Development within the wider setting of the conservation area should ensure that Hornchurch Country Park, which is of importance in providing historic context to the conservation area, is maintained.
- 06 Trees contribute to the character of the conservation area and should be retained wherever possible. If trees are lost, they should be replaced with trees that will maintain or enhance the character of the conservation area.
- 07 Enhancement of the public realm is encouraged, including appropriate surface treatments, with potential for integration with heritage interpretation.
- 08 Changes to buildings in response to climate change are encouraged but should take into consideration the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 09 Careful removal of inappropriate and unsympathetic additions to buildings and the street scene is encouraged.
- 10 Reinstatement of lost historic features, such as windows and rain goods is encouraged, where appropriate.
- 11 The condition of the conservation area should be monitored and reviewed periodically.



Further Information and Resources

Further Information and Resources

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Consulted Archives

Havering Library and Local Studies

Further Sources of Information

For further study, the following archives hold material that may be of relevance to the history and significance of the RAF Hornchurch:

- London Metropolitan Archive
- Essex Record Office
- The National Archives
- Historic England Archive
- National Trust Heritage Records database

Further Information and Resources

Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Legislation, Planning Policy and Best Practice Guidance

The following legislation, policy documents and guidance have been utilised in undertaking the conservation area review and preparing this report.

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (specifically Section 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment)
- London Borough of Havering, Havering Local Plan (2016-2031)
- London Borough of Havering, Havering Character Study (August 2024)
- London Borough of Havering Archaeological Priority Area Appraisal (May 2024)
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Planning Practice Guidance
- Historic England, Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management: Advice Note 1 (Second Edition, 2019)
- Historic England, Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (2008)
- Historic England, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition, 2017)
- Historic England Advice Note 18. Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy Carbon Efficiency (July 2024)

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Listed buildings and conservation areas are designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for their special architectural or historic interest. Designation gives conservation areas protection as alterations, additions or demolitions are controlled by the need for planning permission, which is required by local planning authorities when change is proposed. Section 69 of the Act details the protection of conservation areas and is reproduced below, of specific reference is section (1):

‘Section 69 Designation of Conservation Areas

(1) Every local planning authority:

(a) shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and

(b) shall designate those areas as Conservation Areas.

(2) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as Conservation Areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly.

(3) The Secretary of State may from time to time determine that any part of a local planning authority’s area which is not for the time being designated as a Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance; and, if he so determines, he may designate that part as a Conservation Area.

(4) The designation of any area as a Conservation Area shall be a local land charge.’

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in March 2012 and most recently revised in February 2025, sets out the government’s planning policies for new development within England and how these should be applied. The NPPF is a material consideration for local planning authorities in determining planning and listed building consent applications.

Section 16 considers conserving and enhancing the historic environment. The policies emphasise the need for assessing the significance of heritage assets and their setting in order to fully understand the historic environment and to inform suitable proposals for change.

The following paragraphs are of relevance:

Section 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Paragraph 202 - Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

Further Information and Resources

Paragraph 203 - Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

d) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

e) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

f) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and

g) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

Paragraph 204 - When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

Paragraph 206 - Local planning authorities should make information about the historic environment, gathered as part of policy-making or development management, publicly accessible

Paragraph 219 - Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

Paragraph 220 - Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 214 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 215, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

Planning Practice Guidance

In 2014 the government launched the Planning Practice Guidance website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>). The guidance is a live document intended to provide further detailed information with regard to the implementation of the NPPF. It includes the section 'Historic environment', which advises on enhancing and conserving the historic environment.

Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management Historic England Advice Note 1 (Second Edition)

This Historic England advice note, published in 2019, supports the management of change in a way that conserves and enhances the character and appearance of historic areas through conservation area appraisal, designation and management. Of great relevance to the review of the Rainham Conservation Area are the following paragraphs:

'10 Conservation area designation is undertaken to recognise the historic character of an area and/or in answer to the impact of development, neglect and other threats, on areas which are considered to have special architectural or historic interest. The appraisal is the vehicle for understanding both the significance of an area and the effect of those impacts

bearing negatively on its significance. It will form part of the local planning authority's Historic Environment Record and will be part of the evidence base for the local plan and a material consideration in planning decisions.'

'77 Under section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local planning authorities have a statutory duty to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas in their districts from time to time. Regularly reviewed appraisals, or shorter condition surveys, identifying threats and opportunities can be developed into a management plan that is specific to the area's needs. In turn, this can channel development to conserve the Conservation Area's special qualities. Both areas in relative economic decline and those under pressure for development can benefit from management proposals that promote positive change.'

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance

Conservation Principles was published by English Heritage (now Historic England) in 2008. It provides a comprehensive framework for the sustainable management of the historic environment, wherein 'Conservation is defined as the process of managing change to a significant place in its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations'. The guidance also provides a set of four heritage values, which are used to assess significance. The values are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal.

Further Information and Resources

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition)

The significance of a heritage asset is not only derived from its physical presence but also from its setting and the surroundings in which it is experienced. The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Edition) published in 2017 by Historic England provides guidance on managing change within the setting of a heritage asset. It recommends the following staged approach to the assessment of proposals during design evolution under Part 2: Setting and Views:

Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected.

Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated.

Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it.

Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

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