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A INTRODUCTION

Map of the conservation area
The purpose of this document

A.1 Conservation areas are "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Conservation Area Appraisals are documents that define and analyse this special architectural and historic interest according to guidance published by English Heritage and justify their designation as conservation areas.

A.2 Under the same Act the Council has a duty to publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. The management strategy in Part Two of this document sets out how the Council manages the conservation area in accordance with guidance from English Heritage.

A.3 Together, the conservation area appraisal and management strategy are material considerations in the planning process and provide a sound basis for planning policies, decisions and appeals.

Public consultation

A.4 Residents and businesses in the conservation area were consulted for their views on this document in September 2010 and a public meeting was held at The Cornerstone on Alton Road on Wednesday 22nd September 2010.

Designation and adoption dates

A.5 On 22 December 1998 ten slab blocks and five point blocks as well as 40 bungalows for the elderly were listed by the Government for their special architectural or historic interest. Subsequently the Alton Conservation Area was designated on 15 March 2001 so that the landscape, setting and other positive buildings in the area could also be conserved and enhanced. The Georgian villas and their associated structures had previously been listed in the 1950s. For details of all listed buildings, see Appendix 1.

A.6 This conservation area appraisal and management strategy was approved by the Strategic Planning and Transportation Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 November 2010 and the Council’s Executive on 22 November 2010.
PART ONE: CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL
1. SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

The Alton Conservation Area was designated on the 15th March 2001. It covers 58.1 hectares and has more listed buildings, in particular Grade I and Grade II*, than any other conservation area in the Borough. The importance of buildings is emphasised by their listed status, and some of those in the Alton Conservation Area are among the finest listed buildings in the Borough - Mount Clare and Parkstead House (formerly Manresa House) are listed Grade I. Downshire House and the Temple to Mount Clare are Grade II* as are the five 'slab' residential blocks in Highcliffe Drive ((Binley, Winchfield, Charcot, Denmead and Dunbridge Houses) and the Bull statue at the foot of Downshire Field.

What gives the conservation area its special sense of place is the environment created by its atmospheric landscaping, historic layout and the architectural quality of buildings. The area's built form, while contemporary with the surrounding area, derives from the range of building scales and overall consistency and use of materials. The special character of this conservation area is derived from these unique characteristics expressed in its architectural and urban qualities.

Developments of distinct historical eras and styles of architecture (Georgian, Victorian and Post-War/Modernist) are expressed alongside the distinctive landscaping, creating areas of important open space. The Alton's setting is of substantial historical and architectural interest as an example of eighteenth century town planning. The Alton Conservation Area contains distinguished individual buildings from the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, all set within an outstanding parkland environment, largely based on the Council's Alton Housing Estate.

Examples of other impressive but unlisted individual buildings are: Ibstock Place School, Maryfield Convent, Cedars Cottages and Hartfield House. Generally, those areas that fall outside the conservation area simply do not have the same consideration, in terms of architectural or historic interest and care of detailing and landscaping that are strong and consistent with those that fall within the conservation area. There are however some buildings that do have architectural interest outside the conservation area such as Allbrook House and Roehampton Library.
2. LOCATION AND CONTEXT

2.1 The conservation area forms one of the most distinctive areas of Wandsworth - bounded to the north by Clarence Lane and the related grounds of Grove House, (listed Grade II*) the grounds of Grove House are included in English Heritage’s Register of Historic Parks and Gardens; to the south and east it is bordered by Putney Heath - the Kingston Road (A3) creates a physical separation between these two areas; on the west it borders the impressive landscape of Richmond Park. The area slopes fairly consistently, sometimes gently, sometimes quite dramatically, from north-east to south-west, with land at its highest generally around the five listed slab blocks.

2.2 The Alton conservation comprises two main parts - Alton East and Alton West (Alton East being the first phase of development 1952-55, then followed closely by Alton West, 1955-59). The conservation area lie alongside Roehampton Lane (A306) with direct links to Kingston Road, both are busy traffic routes. Danebury Avenue forms a key spinal route through the heart of Alton. The southeastern area sits in close proximity to three other significant conservation areas – Putney Heath, Dover House and Roehampton Village Conservation Areas, accessed via Roehampton Lane, with Roehampton Village offering further access to shopping facilities.

Figure 1 The location of the Alton Conservation Area
3. HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

3.1 HISTORY & TOPOGRAPHY – Georgian to Victorian Times

3.2 In eighteenth century Georgian London, Roehampton offered something uniquely desirable - a position away from the congested city centre, yet alongside the royal playground of Richmond Park. But access to the city was poor. When the first Putney Bridge opened in 1729, it so improved the journey to London that aristocratic families were tempted to acquire land to establish country estates next to the Park. Travel conditions were still far from ideal particularly in winter, so the houses they built were mostly intended for summer residence only.

3.3 Hence the Georgian buildings that survive are smart but small classical villas. Two of these, “Parkstead” (later Manresa House), built for Lord Bessborough in 1760 (and subsequently much extended), and “Mount Clare”, for George Clive in 1772, were designed by the leading architects of their day and are now Grade I listed buildings. The less distinguished Downshire House gets its name from The Marquess of Downshire, the most prestigious early owner. All three houses were sited to take advantage of the gently rising slope to obtain commanding views across Richmond Park.

3.4 All three of the estates, which contained these houses were, in the fashion of the day, extensively modelled to improve on their natural qualities. Most notably, around 1774-5, Clive, the owner of Mount Clare, employed ‘Capability’ Brown to improve his park, and over the years all the estates benefited from extensive tree planting, both native and imported species, much of it designed to focus on pleasant views and screen out unwanted ones. Small parcels of land were exchanged between the various estates, whose owners appear to have been good neighbours. In 1913, the Doric temple now to be found in the grounds of Mount Clare (and itself listed, Grade II*) was moved there from the grounds of Parkstead.

3.5 After the death of his wife, the 3rd Earl of Bessborough preferred to live in London, and Parkstead was leased out from 1827, under the name Roehampton Park House. The first major change to this Georgian aristocratic landscape came in 1858 when the 5th Earl of Bessborough, who had never lived at Roehampton, sold the house and all its grounds to the Conservative Land Society. The house was acquired by the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) who renamed it “Manresa”, in honour of their founder’s Spanish origins. They also took forty-two acres of the estate. The rest, keeping the name “Roehampton Park” was divided up into relatively small parcels to be developed for Victorian villa-dwellers. The Jesuits established a noviciate, gradually expanding over the years as they flourished. They were to occupy the house for 100 years, until the time of the next major change.

3.6 Post-War Housing – The London County Council (LCC)
3.7 In the late 1940’s, the London County Council bought Roehampton Park and the three Georgian country estates, all by then in institutional use. The LCC resolved to restore the eighteenth century houses and to develop their grounds and those of the Victorian villas with new housing. The result was a comprehensive, careful development of housing and landscape that was to be the LCC’s flagship for the 1950s. The Roehampton project coincided with the arrival of new blood at the LCC Architects Department, and so benefited from a fresh approach to housing design. The project was divided into two phases, with Manresa House in the middle. Following the compulsory purchase of two-thirds of their land, the existing Jesuit community had retained about 15 acres. Their seclusion increasingly compromised as work progressed, they decided in 1961 to move away, selling the house and remaining land to the LCC for educational use.

3.8 The first phase of new housing to be developed was Victorian Roehampton Park, which became the Portsmouth Road Estate, later Alton East. Next came the eighteenth-century landscape to the west of Parkstead originally known as the Roehampton Lane Estate, but renamed Alton West after completion.

**Alton East**

3.9 The Alton East architects team, epitomised a new approach, concerned with every detail of design, plan and landscape. Despite the need for economy, they tried to bring a touch of brightness and individuality. They were less preoccupied with monumentality and originality than the Alton West team. The fresh but friendly architectural forms they developed displayed a Scandinavian influence.

3.10 Abercrombie’s County of London Plan proposed densities for London, ranging from 200 persons per acre in the centre to 70 ppa at its limits. At Roehampton a density of 100 ppa was proposed, as the open space of Richmond Park lay alongside. The Plan also promoted ‘mixed development’ i.e. flats and houses, as a way of achieving these high densities without monotony. The retention of the existing landscape was a key concern.

3.11 The team decided that a fairly slim tower could sit neatly on the site of a Victorian villa and leave its planting undisturbed. They coined the name ‘point block’ from the Swedish ‘punkthus’. The blocks had a compact plan of four flats per floor, achieved by means of mechanically ventilated bathrooms, the first in any public housing in Britain. The point blocks were clustered near Roehampton Lane and the Portsmouth (now Kingston) road to shield the site from traffic noise. Here they could stand in the biggest of the former villa gardens, and the land was highest so the blocks exploited the natural topography. Eight point blocks were listed in 1983 with Cadnam and Dunhill Point being listed later in 1998.
**Alton West**

3.12 The Roehampton Lane site was far larger than Portsmouth Road, and its landscape more open and broader in scale. The bulk of it comprised the grounds of the late eighteenth-century estates. Many of the principal features of the eighteenth century landscape determined features of the new landscape. Danebury Avenue is essentially aligned along the line of the lane from Priory Lane, past the gatekeeper’s lodge to Mount Clare. The five dramatic slab blocks are set in Downshire Field, the principal part of the grounds of Downshire House. The team brought in to plan the new housing was also very different from that employed at Alton East. The Architect-in-Charge was Colin Lucas, an eminent modernist from the 1930s who as a member of the firm Connell, Ward and Lucas had designed many notable private houses, including the listed No 26 Bessborough Road (1939).

3.13 Design work began in 1951 with the presumption that a maximum amount of parkland should be left open for amenity and landscape values, and that as many tenants as possible should have views over Richmond Park. The group wanted high buildings, planners from elsewhere in the LCC more low houses, and the end balance was a compromise. That summer the team had been to see the just completed Unité d’Habitation by internationally famous architect Le Corbusier at Marseilles, France. It was an influential experience. They realised that a slim slab, one flat deep, would allow every unit within it a view of Richmond Park. It could house more flats or maisonettes than a point block and could be cheaper, and that it could be a way of putting more maisonettes – then popular – on to the site whilst retaining the open quality of the sloping Downshire Field. In the original design the slabs were placed parallel and overlapping as now, but side-on near the top of the slope. The Minister of Housing, Harold Macmillan, objected to this ‘continuous wall’ overlooking a royal park. So between 1952 and 1953 the orientation of the blocks was changed to give the present massing into the slope of the hill, gaining dramatically in architectural power at the expense of residents' view. The five slab blocks were listed as buildings of special architectural or historical interest in 1998. Permission to start on site was received in 1954 and the main portion of the estate was finished by late 1958.

3.14 The shopping parade in Danebury Avenue, completed in 1959-60 and the library, in 1961, are outside the conservation area. The library has architectural interest, distinguished in part by its curved walls and undulating roof form but also by the associated (though detached) Allbrook House which seems to float above - it too has an interesting form and details, including decorative block detailing to its balconies which unifies and softens the harshness of the structure. The library was one of the last buildings in the original development of Alton West. It was designed by John Partridge of the London County Council (LCC) Architect’s Department incorporating ideas from Wandsworth Council’s library service. It was opened in September 1961 by the children’s author Noel Streatfield. There was originally a mural by Bill Mitchell in resin and plastics.
3.15 Central heating was by a district heating system serving all the high buildings and the two infant schools built as part of the scheme. The system has a dramatic tall chimney at the end of one of the slab blocks (Winchfield House). It was too expensive to bring the district heating system to the old people’s bungalows, so each was given a fireplace, served by a slender, circular concrete chimney poking through the flat roof—a quirky anachronism in so modern an estate. The communal system is now abandoned and has been replaced by individual systems across the estate.

Archaeology

3.16 The entire conservation area is within an archaeological priority area. In most cases a detailed archaeological assessment will be required in considering any development proposals.
4. THE SPECIAL INTEREST OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

4.1 The character of the conservation area is made up of the sum total of its buildings, streets, green space and views and can be harmed or improved by intrusions or alterations to any of these elements. The conservation area can be divided into two areas of separate distinctive character (Alton East and Alton West) which is largely determined by the landscaping and analysed in the following pages of this document.
4.2 Due to the vast size of the Alton Estate and in an attempt to 'humanise' the area, the Council’s Housing team has broken down the Estate into ten manageable neighbourhoods: Highcliffe, Tunworth, Danebury, Ibsley, Tangley Manresa, Amewood, Hyacinth, Wanborough and Norley neighbourhoods. This has helped to make the Estate less impersonal for the residents and also more understandable for people with different levels of familiarity to find their way around.

4.3 Special interest derives in part from the architectural contrast of buildings and their setting – both historic and modernist set at various heights within impressive (often undulating) landscaping. The relationship between landscaping and main routes is also an important feature. The main spinal route of the conservation area (in Alton West) is the long gently winding boulevard-like Danebury Avenue, which gathers in other routes at its various frequent junctions, leading to shorter, more curving access roads. This element of form provides a constantly changing focus and establishes how buildings are set within their local landscapes.

4.4 From various locations it is possible to follow each route or avenue visually up to a point - each of these avenues tends to have its own distinctive style, formality and landscaping; generally, lower scale housing tends to create formal avenues; the slab and point blocks create informal clusters (the point blocks more so, being set in almost radial groups); in many instances due to the nature of their architecture, function, generous amounts of landscaping and historic development, the education and community buildings tend to have more of a private estates feel to them. The landscaping, road layout and relationship of built form to open space together comprise the distinguishing feature of the entire conservation area.

4.5 Although in close proximity to Roehampton Conservation Area, much of the Alton Estate has a park-like atmosphere and remains undisturbed by the busy street activities associated with this area.

4.6 Each character area is accompanied by a townscape map which shows at a glance the buildings and green space that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

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**Key to the townscape maps**

- Orange: Positive buildings
- Red: Listed buildings
- Grey: Negative building that makes a negative contribution
- Blue: Locally listed buildings
- Green: Green space making a positive contribution
Building use

4.7 The Alton Estate Conservation Area has a quiet residential character and very few of its buildings are dedicated to anything other than housing. The idea of residents mixing normal life with social needs in close proximity was considered, however, developing housing to meet demographic changes was not fully addressed. Future changes in social needs was catered for to a limited extent and this aspect of estate is a little restrained in terms of the mixture of uses, which can be seen in the land use make up of the area.

4.8 Housing make up includes: twenty seven point blocks arranged in three groups (two in Alton West and a further two in Alton East); five, eleven storey slabs of maisonettes; several terraces of four storey maisonettes, two storey terraced houses and groups of old people's bungalows. Further residential building types can be seen with student accommodation where educational uses exist.

4.9 There are now two schools - Alton Primary and Ibstock Place schools (Danebury Primary was demolished to make way for housing). There are the eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings in educational use e.g Roehampton University and South Thames College. Other uses include community centres found in both Alton West and Alton East.

4.10 More community facilities, shops, a library and church can be found outside the conservation area.

4.11 Building uses also contribute considerably to the character and appearance of the conservation area. These not only have a direct influence on the building types and make-up of an area but also on the appearance, impression and use of the spaces and streets. The uses create activity at different times in the day and also provide variety in building type within an otherwise sometimes repetitive townscape. Original building use that once characterised the individual streets in the conservation area have not changed significantly. The educational facilities are important uses within the conservation area.

Landscape

4.12 The Alton Conservation Area is a rare, possibly unique combination of eighteenth century and twentieth century picturesque landscape. There are scores of magnificent mature trees, including one, a Lucombe Oak, which is on the list of Great Trees of London. There are tree preservation orders on the trees around Mount Clare, Parkstead and Downshire House and at 66 Alton Road. The area is included in the Council’s Inventory of Parks and Gardens of Local Interest.
4.13 Perhaps uniquely, Alton West also features two public sculptures, both now listed. At the corner of Danebury Avenue and Tangley Grove is a fine bronze sculpture of a bull, designed by Robert Clatworthy. First exhibited in plaster form at the LCC's sculpture exhibition in Holland Park in 1957, where it caught the attention of A. W. Cleeve Barr, one of the senior architects working on the site, who secured approval for a special casting in May 1959. Clatworthy chose the site. The LCC commissioned a casting to be made in 1961. (Grade II*). Ten feet in length, it is a shaggy expressionist figure of a bull that seems about to turn its head, in a heroic yet friendly image. A smaller version is at the Gibberd Garden in Harlow, Essex.

4.14 The area surrounding the Bull sculpture has seen some change in the form of car parking, provided to address the needs of residents of Brockbridge House. It is unfortunate that the parking area is so close to the sculpture, encroaching on its original green setting.

4.15 Two years later, another sculpture, “The Watchers”, three abstract figures in bronze by Lynn Chadwick was sited in the garden of Downshire House (Grade II), with one of the three sculptures unfortunately stolen, the remaining two removed by the university for protection and repair - these are now partially repaired and currently in safe storage awaiting a decision on reinstatement.

4.16 In Alton East there are several large surviving rocks (boulders) scattered about the grounds of the five point blocks located on Wanborough Drive (Blendworth, Hilsea, Eashing, Hindhead and Whitley Points), they are of the Scandinavian influence the architects introduced to the area.

Routes and spaces

4.17 The Alton Conservation Area has a rare and distinct layout, based on the principles of “Picturesque” landscape. Movement through the estate is varied and heavily dictated by the landscape, much of which is determined by the historic topography of the land that helped shape the area. Because of this, there is no simple, dominant street pattern such as that found in traditional Victorian or Georgian terraced housing.

4.18 Primary routes are the central spine of Danebury Avenue (Alton West) and Bessborough Road (Alton East) and those that form the conservation area’s boundary – to the north and south-eastern edges. Danebury Avenue creates an island effect in the centre and is limited to pedestrians and some traffic - the area is poorly served by transport compared with other parts of Wandsworth, impacting on the area’s ability to attract custom.

4.19 The other “streets” or avenues are secondary, lined with trees and often with parked cars, an aspect that struggles to be positively integrated within the estate. Intimate routes can be found in Alton East created by the swathes of mature trees and layouts of the point blocks to the south-east.
4.20 At times it is difficult to establish what areas are private or public, paths often lead to nowhere or loop with no clear way of moving through the estate. There are generous areas of green space forming an attractive visual setting for the larger buildings, but with no other obvious function. Some areas of the Estate are in need of rationalising; a new look at ordering networks of green spaces and paths would help make spaces relevant to people. Spaces and routes would benefit from being more multi-functional and connected, allowing residents and those with different levels of familiarity to be able to function flexibly i.e. move through or visit and in doing so, gain an immediate understanding of the estate and a sense of place.

4.21 The Council’s Transportation Team have recently linked and pedestrianised key paths, in an attempt to rationalise movement and legibility and this will continue in the programme of works set for the estate. In 2007, a study investigated how residents travel around the area, access the local transport network and integrate with the wider transport network. In September 2008, the Committee considered this study and approved a framework for improving local accessibility in Roehampton (including the Alton Estate) based on improving and increasing walking and cycling routes, promoting additional bus services, and increasing the availability of public transport information.

4.22 There are always opportunities to glimpse other green spaces or gardens as the estate is not tightly built up. Both private and public landscaping (including back gardens) are fundamental in defining the visual character of the estate and how routes and spaces are experienced. The close proximity to Richmond Park (mostly from Alton West) extends the green space of the area and reinforces its significance.

4.23 The oldest buildings are set back in generous plots, often behind high boundary walls or tucked behind layers of other housing or mature landscaping. Large-scale developments (e.g. student accommodation) and later infill have attempted to address the street more directly but in some cases they fail to respond to a specific historic pattern of development found in the area or relate to that strong articulation of form that is synonymous with modernist architecture.

Views

4.24 The topography of Wandsworth is low-lying and views across it make an important contribution to London’s character. The topography of the Alton Estate Conservation Area is unique and views from it to Richmond park are spectacular and fundamental to its special interest.

4.25 Views played an important part for the architects designing the estate. Of particular relevance are those to Richmond Park - high buildings were planned to have impressive views over the park, spanning around 10 miles - this view is the most significant of the conservation area. There are long range views towards Richmond Park from those more elevated areas within the conservation area. Shorter, curving roads often obscure views into the conservation area and some views out of the
conservation area are limited for this same reason. Two of the most breath-taking views of the Alton Estate are that of Alton East towards London on the Kingston Road and of Alton West from Richmond Park.

4.26 The streets of the conservation area vary, they are often short and curved, many of which radiate off the long curving Danebury Avenue - this combination provides a range of views to related streets/avenues and is a strong character of the area. There are long and short vistas to the ends of streets - in most cases these are long but often interrupted by curving streets.

4.27 Glimpsed views occur a great deal throughout the conservation area, especially from Roehampton Lane and Kingston Road and also from within the conservation area itself. There are also good quality short range views and glimpses through to gardens and grounds of educational buildings, seen from various gaps between building plots and also visible from streets both inside and outside the conservation area - for example from Fontley Way (outside the conservation area) and Holybourne Avenue (within the conservation area) to Parkstead House and its related grounds.

4.28 There are direct views to the slab blocks from Minstead Gardens, capturing a range of buildings and their landscapes, including the bungalows and Mount Clare and Picasso House, (former refectory building). The views between buildings are an important feature of the conservation area - these range from a mixture of mature landscapes to communal or private gardens, especially where one boundary or neighbourhood meet another. Where communal gardens or back garden boundaries meet, for example at the end of a residential block, terrace or road - there are short, long and glimpsed views across green gardens and communal landscaping. Glimpses of the elevations and roofs of buildings in other streets across the estate is also a character of the area.

4.29 Some buildings outside the conservation area have an influence on the area's character, particularly noticeable along Harbridge Avenue, just off Danebury Road, where there are shops, the library and Allbrook House (all of which fall outside the conservation area). This would also be the case if taller buildings were proposed to some of the corner or junction edge locations along Roehampton Lane and Danebury Avenue. Careful scrutiny will be given to any such proposals – including; how well the development responds to and reinforces locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture typical of its neighbourhood and also the impact the building has at street level and its immediate surroundings.
5. CHARACTER AREA 1: Alton East

5.1 Alton East was built in 1952-55, at the time it was (and still is) seen as an ambitious architectural and social achievement. It is defined by the quality of its built environment, reflected by its lush landscaping and the number of listed buildings in the character area. Groups of housing similar in style and architectural treatment successfully combine to create a picturesque but informal townscape. Harmony and building relationships is achieved through a consistency in scale and specific choice of materials. The character area is made up of: Wanborough Drive, Horndean Close, Durford Crescent, Dilton Gardens, and Norley Vale.

Figure 3 Townscape map showing the buildings and spaces making a positive contribution to the character of Alton East
Townscape

5.2 The character area is rich in local townscape details that cumulatively give interest and quality to the street scene. The urban grain is created by a mixture of housing types, but it is the ten, eleven storey, carefully placed point blocks, five along Wanborough Drive (Blendworth, Witley, Eashing, Hindhead and Hilsea), five along Norley Vale (Greyswood, Longmoor, Westmark, Dunhill and Cadnam) that provide the principal focus of its unique special characteristic.

5.3 These blocks are of a distinctive design era, clearly associated with that of the modern movement. Key concepts of both form and function are evident in the scale, construction methods, materials, architecture and choice of finishes. This aspect of the Alton has a direct relationship with Roehampton Lane - this relationship is significant as this break in townscape offers an entirely different atmosphere to this part of the character area.

5.4 This character area is informally bounded by Roehampton Lane, Bessborough Road, Alton Road and Norley Vale, all of which vary in character in terms of building type and quality of architectural detailing, only some of the housing along these roads are within the conservation area and make up this character area. Those that fall outside the conservation area tend to be piecemeal and do not reflect the same design ambition as the other parts that are included.

5.5 The area's townscape has generally retained its scale and character. To a larger extent, changes tend to be at a domestic level, some building fabric has been disturbed by insensitive alterations – changes of this kind have a cumulative impact on the character of the area but still contribute to the area's identity and legibility. There is demonstrable evidence of properties being maintained and preserved - this common attitude upholds the integrity of the conservation area. However, the erosion of original details clearly manifests itself in other instances, such as the public realm.

5.6 Roads are not particularly wide, therefore any on-street parking tends to create a presence; however, the mature landscaping softens this impact in many cases. Buildings tend to be expressed vertically with mostly flat roof finishes and often set within generous gardens. The care given to small details is something most usually noted at Alton East, especially where the small scale of gardens has been retained.

5.7 To this day, the arrangement of the housing remains largely untouched and its picturesque landscape striking.
Buildings

5.8 Alton East is characterised by its unique architectural quality, the high density of housing within the character area further improves this. The character area comprises about 744 dwellings. Paths and streets (avenues) are both wide and narrow and tend to be either tightly packed or grouped along: Wanborough Drive, Horndean Close, Duford Crescent, Dilton Gardens, and Norley Vale.

5.9 The housing was designed to three basic types with varying accommodation. There are randomly arranged short groups of two storey staggered terraces on pedestrian paths; four storey maisonettes and the eleven storey point blocks - namely Blendworth, Cadnam, Dunhill, Eashing, Grayswood, Hilsea, Hindhead, Longmoor, Westmark and Whitley Points (listed Grade II). So too is the private house at 26 Bessborough Road, designed by Connell, Ward and Lucas in 1938, described in the listing as “International Modern Idiom”.

5.10 The success of the Alton East point blocks lies in their relationship to the surrounding landscape. Designed in 1951 and built in 1952-5 under architect-in-charge Rosemary Stjernstedt (who had married a Swede) assisted by A.W. Cleeve Barr, Oliver Cox and the engineers Ove Arup and Partners. These blocks took their inspiration from Sweden where model welfare state housing had been built since the 1930s.

5.11 The point blocks at Alton West owe much to these earlier towers, but do not have projecting balconies. What was novel about these flats was that they had internal bathrooms, so that four flats could be fitted on to one floor, making them economical to build. Another feature is the grey ‘clinker block’ brickwork, which contrasts with the red brick of the lower blocks. The towers were built on the higher part of the site, to make them seem taller, and some stand on the site of old Victorian villas to disturb the landscape as little as possible. Each block is denoted by different patterned tile work at entrances (in fact one or two are repeats), designed by Oliver Cox using white and two varieties of black speckled tiles to give the illusion of contrasting grey and near black. Colour and the use of colour was particularly important to Cox, his research in this later led to the idea of what is known today as ‘the standard range’ a concept later used by Dulux.

5.12 Each square block contains 42 flats with four flats to each floor arranged around a central lift core, with the exception of the ground floor which has three flats - the ground floor was set back partially and contained storerooms. Key features of these blocks are the projecting balconies on two sides and the grey ‘clinker block’ brickwork, which contrasts with the red brick of the lower blocks. The towers were built on the higher part of the site, to make them seem taller, and some stand on the site of old Victorian villas to disturb the landscape as little as possible. Each block is denoted by different patterned tile work at entrance (in fact one or two are repeats), designed by
Oliver Cox using white and two varieties of black speckled tiles to give the illusion of contrasting grey and near black. Descriptions of these listed buildings can be found in Appendix 1.

5.13 Also of significance is 26 Bessborough Road, designed by Connell, Ward and Lucas in the International style - a former doctor’s surgery, later converted to a house.

5.14 The terraces are of a traditional brick construction with pitched roofs - most of the colour has been used externally and this is particularly so for the pretty group forming the junction of Norley Vale and Alton Road.

5.15 The maisonettes have brick facings for external walls, with load bearing brick cross walls, reinforced concrete floors and pitched roofs. The house at no. 33 Bessborough Road and no. 66 Alton Road adds to the vast variety of this character area. See Appendix 1 for list descriptions.

5.16 Despite the range of styles attempted in architectural character, built form tends to have a relatively consistent scale, listed buildings are the exception with a strong vertical emphasis. The charm of the estate lies in the fact that most buildings still have original details. Most are reflective groups, all share common facing materials and are linked by paths that form part of the landscaping.

5.17 The architectural presence and overall range of these distinguishing buildings is a rather good reminder of past history which lends itself to immense visual interest.

Materials

5.18 This section gives a brief overview of materials and details that are typical of this conservation area or are particularly special. All of the items in this section should be looked after and reinstated wherever possible if lost.

5.19 Leading engineers of the day, Ove Arup and Partners devised an in-situ reinforced concrete structure with a skin of light grey bricks. These pale buildings at the top of the slope were contrasted with the maisonettes and houses below them, traditionally constructed in rich red bricks with pitched roofs. End walls were often carefully patterned with fine pointing - a pre-war craft tradition. The point blocks and maisonettes were further enlivened by tile patterns at their entrance, a simple and cheap method of giving each element an individual touch. For the point blocks three colours of tiles were used to provide a variety of geometric patterns, whilst bright blues and greens survive on some of the maisonettes. The tiles by the entrances of the point blocks and maisonettes are a significant design detail and were designed by Peggy Angus (1904-1993) for Carter & Co of Poole.
5.20 Also much admired were some of the terraced houses, particularly Horndean Close, a cul-de-sac whose staggered plan and combination of brick and painted finishes is particularly charming. The soft greys, greens and creams of some of the houses is original. (The shops in Petersfield Rise and Heathmere School are outside the conservation area.)

5.21 Though a visual consistency results from the use of similar materials and architectural features throughout the character area, richness is provided by the change of detail in the facade treatment. The external treatment of the point blocks is repetitive and consists of reinforced concrete columns and beams; internally there are reinforced load bearing internal walls with brick cladding construction and at ground floor the use of strong colour and tiles by the entrances. The maisonettes are load bearing brick cross walls, with reinforced floors, brick facing for eternal walls and finished with pitched roofs. Terraces are of traditional brick construction with pitched roofs. The care given to small details is something most usually noted at Alton East, where the small scale of the former gardens is retained.

Boundary treatments

5.22 Front gardens and their boundary treatments are a part of an owner's private property that is also part of the shared public realm or townscape that is made up of street surfaces, street trees, pavements, street lighting and building frontages. Just as the houses are laid out in informal terraces or groups, so the front boundaries were designed to match this informality, this is especially the case for the point blocks, as spaces here are shared.

5.23 Although many mature trees, garden walls and other features were retained, and the point blocks carefully positioned to ensure they could benefit from the existing landscape, only one of the Victorian villas survives at no 66 Alton Road. The entrance lodge to Alton House survives at 33 Bessborough Road (named after the Earl). The house itself, a particularly grand Victorian residence has now gone.

5.24 There is little evidence of original boundaries, although there are some remnants of the historic boundary walls and paving (e.g. at the corner of Horsedean Close and Bessborough Road) that once characterised the streets, but many have been lost road or ‘home improvements’. Heights and treatments differ, e.g. the stepped spanning wall to Alton Road and Bessborough Road is original and of gault brick, so to is part of the wall to Roehampton Lane that encircles Eashing Point and Hindhead Point.

5.25 Original boundary treatments are of low timber (slatted) fences above dwarf concrete walls or in cases gardens would simply come to the end of paths with no specifically marked treatment - some are complemented by trees and planting.
5.26  Boundary treatments are not always consistent in material but add interest and a sense of scale to the streetscene, often marking the boundaries between public and private spaces and in an attempt to personalise space. The existence of original boundary walls is a vital reminder of the area’s evolution and should be protected as far as possible. Reinstating these would also enhance the streetscape and setting of the houses.

**Streetscape**

5.27  Most original street surfaces have unfortunately been removed or overlaid with modern surfaces – there are some visible evidence of historic surfaces remaining e.g. at the corner of Horsdean Close and Bessborough Road.

5.28  Although there remains some evidence of historic pavement surfaces, unsympathetic alterations to boundaries and the progressive loss of traditional paving materials and architectural details to modern materials has led to some erosion of historic character. This is considered to be a negative feature of the area.

**Trees and green space**

5.29  Generally there is no uniformly strong definition of streets from the buildings - the green open spaces flow between the buildings and the street. Instead, there are many instances of pedestrian “streets”, at right angles to the roadways, e.g. the junction created by Bessborough Road, Horndean Close and Petersfield Rise.

5.30  The landscape here is relatively tighter and more intimate than in Alton West, yet nevertheless enhanced by many fine mature specimen trees, including Cedars, Scots Pine (Pine trees represent a reflection of the acid soils that were formerly part of the heathland in the seventeenth century), Yew and Holly, all carefully retained from the Victorian villa gardens. Bessborough Road is partly bounded on both sides by long stretches of former hedgerows, comprising Holly and Yew, and tall Lime shelter planting. Alton Road features boundary planting of Lime and Beech, the typical traditional English landscape specimen tree, together with Yew hedging. Holybourne Avenue retains an intact stretch of Lime avenue, marking the entrance to Manresa House. There are also fine Oak, Beech and Lime trees on the generous greens that form the focus of many of the groups of houses.e.g. Horndean Close and Durford Crescent. The larger blocks are generally well set back from the road and set within expanses of well-treed greenery.
6. CHARACTER AREA 2: Alton West

6.1 Alton West was built in 1955-59 and has a different character to Alton East but nonetheless successful in its own way. It too was ambitious in terms of its architectural treatment and response to the landscaping and existing Georgian villas.

6.2 The character area is defined by the quality of its built environment, reflected by its beautiful landscaping and the number of listed buildings in the character area. The eighteenth century villas and groups of housing similar in style and architectural treatment successfully combine to create a picturesque but informal townscape. Building relationships and connection is achieved through a consistency in scale and specific choice of materials. The character area is made up of several streets/avenues including: Danebury Avenue, Highcliffe Drive, Ellisfield Drive, Tangley Grove, Swanwick Close, Minstead Gardens, Holybourne Avenue and part of Laverstoke Gardens.

Figure 4 Townscape map showing buildings and spaces making a positive contribution to the character of the Alton West area
6.3 The trees and winding paths between slab blocks helps to break down the otherwise monumental feel, as does the spacious sloping lawn of Downshire Fields, made of curves and beautiful landscaping, which contrasts with the slabs. Alton West also features the two public sculptures – Clatworthy's bronze sculpture of a bull and Chadwick's “The Watchers” (now temporarily removed undergoing restoration).

6.4 Local townscape details vary according to the predominant housing type and is characterised by the overall consistency of informally connected street patterns often infused by beautiful landscaping, creating in some instances an intimate feeling of scale. Buildings are informally arranged, almost scatted, with green open spaces that flow between the buildings and the street, creating instances of pedestrian “streets”, at right angles to the roadways, e.g. where Swanwick Close meets Danebury Avenue. The slab blocks are generally well set back from the road, so too are most of the earlier buildings, both building types are often set within expanses of well-treed greenery.

6.5 The character area is a large and generally well-preserved conservation area, although there are instances where insensitive alterations have been applied. The public realm of this character area is generally quiet but interesting to walk around, due to the generous amount of green space and variety of architecture and scale of buildings. Roads are not particularly wide, therefore any on street parking tends to create a presence - the mature landscape softens this impact in many cases.

6.6 Most buildings tend to be expressed with flat roof finishes, (for the exception of the eighteenth century and later developments) and often set within generous gardens. While the picturesque landscape remains striking, the arrangement of housing has been partly altered with later developments - in particular those that replaced Danebury School and the student accommodation within the gardens of Parkstead House.

6.7 There is demonstrable evidence of properties being maintained and preserved; this common attitude upholds the integrity of the conservation area. However, the erosion of original details clearly manifests itself in a number of instances such as aspects of the public realm – loss of original features, under use of original features e.g. some gardens to the maisonettes are not fully used and insensitive integration of changes such as parking.

6.8 The north-eastern edge of the conservation area has the most hectic boundary which borders busy Roehampton Lane, offering access to Barnes (north) and to Putney Heath and Wimbledon Common (south-east). Although there are shops and a library along Danebury Avenue (designed as part of the Estate, but outside the conservation area) the Estate was designed without a single focus or real town centre. Entertainment facilities and restaurants are missing from the area and this has had an impact on how the estate functions today.
6.9 Generally, those buildings that fall outside the conservation area do not have the same architectural rigour or quality of those that are within. There are however, buildings in the vicinity of this character area - Allbrook House and Roehampton Library - that are of interest in terms of their architectural presence and relationship to the Alton Estate. The presence and connection of these buildings to the north-eastern edge of the estate makes them difficult to go unnoticed - though outside the conservation area, their impact is complementary due to their applied architectural treatment and form, directly linked to the modernist principles established for Alton West, namely monumentality and originality.

Buildings

6.10 Part of the original concept for the LCC housing was to provide a mixture of housing types, not just high-rise flats, but also low-rise flats, family houses and bungalows for old people.

6.11 Alton West is characterised by its impressive landscaping and range of architecture as well as its connection with Richmond Park. The high density housing was planned to accommodate about 1,867 dwellings but this has increased due to further development. Paths and streets (avenues) are both wide and narrow and tend to be set within 'islands' (eighteenth century buildings), tightly packed or grouped along most of the area.

6.12 The post war housing was designed to five basic types, with varying accommodation: four storey maisonettes; two and three storey terraces; twelve storey point blocks with six located along Tangle Grove (Egbury, Brockbridge, Holmsley, Hurstbourne, Finchdean and Overton) and a further six along Turnworth Crescent (Warnford, Tatchbury, Allenford, Swaythling, Penwood and Shalden House). Five striking eleven storey slab blocks, angled into Downshire Field above Danebury Avenue (Binley, Winchfield, Charcot, Denmead and Dunbridge Houses), are also distinguished by being listed at Grade II*. Two groups of one storey old people's bungalows, one on Minstead Gardens, the other on Danebury Avenue, were listed Grade II in 1998.

6.13 The architect in charge, Colin Lucas, had a distinguished career designing private houses in the 1930s (including 26 Bessborough Road), but the building of Alton West owes most to a fiery team of young assistants, J R Galley and R Stout; W G Howell, J A W Killick, John Partridge and S F Amis, (who went on to form their own private practice). They worked extensively at Oxford, Cambridge, Birmingham and Reading Universities, and Howell was briefly Professor of Architecture at Cambridge.

6.14 Whereas Alton East had been inspired by Sweden, the Alton West team under Colin Lucas was inspired by France and Le Corbusier's Unite d'Habitation in Marseilles and also the latest developments in concrete technology. Howell and others visited this development in 1951 and then designed maisonettes (accommodation over two floors) in wide slab blocks in 1952-3. The blocks were built in 1955-8. The maisonettes are
entered from the west and have balconies set within the structure to the east meaning
the blocks are only one flat deep. Externally, each dwelling is visually separated by
concrete columns and the ends of the blocks are clad in concrete with horizontal bands
that correspond to the internal floor heights.

6.15 The five slab blocks are bigger than anything attempted elsewhere at
Roehampton, though their bulk is masked by the slope of the hill and the scale of the
setting. The setting of the slab blocks into the side of Downshire Field proved critical
to the buildings’ success, since it justified their base of Corbusian-inspired stilts or pilotis.
The existing rolling slope of Downshire Field was remoulded to enhance this architectural
describe them as ‘most effective from a distance when their impact is off set by the
undulating greenery’.

6.16 This character area contains three Georgian villas with two of them (Mount
Clare and Parkstead) being among the finest in the country (Grade I). Mount Clare (by
Robert Taylor, built between 1770 and 1773, Grade I) is a Palladian villa with a rusticated
ground floor and stucco upper floors and a half-octagonal centre projection, a
characteristic piece of Taylor’s ingenuity. The Doric portico is a later addition by
Columbani. The grounds were landscaped by Capability Brown around 1774-75. Mount
Clare sits close to the boundary with Richmond Park but retains a visual presence
amongst the post war and recent university development. When the university took on
the villa, a principal's house was built in a modernist style next to the classical doric
temple (a Georgian garden folly, listed Grade II*) which together form an interesting
group of periods, styles and uses that reflects the conservation area's characteristic
diversity. The temple was moved here from the grounds of Parkstead and is now on
the Heritage At Risk Register due to some damage caused by vandalism following
unauthorised access.

6.17 Parkstead (1760-68), also Grade I and by Sir William Chambers (who also
designed Somerset House and the Chinese Pagoda at Kew Gardens), was built as a
place for the 2nd Earl of Bessborough to entertain and display his sculpture collection.
The house is still set within grounds and concealed behind recent university development.
The original villa was acquired by the Society of Jesus in 1860 who renamed the building
'Manresa' and added wings and a chapel. The grounds contain a circular Garden Temple
which was restored in March 2009.

6.18 The third former villa, Downshire House was erected in the 1770s for Marques
of Downshire (probably by R.F. Brettingham) and is Grade II* listed. The existing brick
house fronts Roehampton Lane with three stories divided into 6 bays and a north wing.
A parapet conceals the roof and the multi-paned sash windows are surrounded by red
brick dressings. Only part of the extensive formal gardens, built by Oswald P. Milne
between 1912-20, remain. They consist of brick walls, stone balustrades and a summer
house.
6.19  Mount Clare, Parkstead and Downshire are all now owned by Roehampton University. Mount Clare was restored and extended as residential accommodation for a teacher-training complex based at Downshire House. It is now used as university offices. This educational use, in particular the student accommodation in the grounds of Mount Clare (Mount Clare Halls of Residence), though produced by other teams within the LCC, added yet another dimension to the mix of development.

6.20  The tiny one-room bungalows for old-age pensioners, also designed by Lucas's team, are set in rows staggered to fit round the existing trees and to afford Mount Clare its traditional precedence in the view. Special bungalows for pensioners were not built by local authorities before 1945, and these are attractive examples, their flat roofs counterbalanced by high concrete stacks that give the group great character. The rectangle of each single storey unit incorporates recessed porches to front and back. The small scale of these bungalows is a deliberate counterpoise to the great slabs and point blocks around.

6.21  The four storey maisonettes are flat roofed and have load bearing brick cross walls with timber and glass infill panels - the floors and roofs are of reinforced concrete. Bricks are expressed mostly to the sides and in neat repetitive bands to front elevations. The horizontal treatment of windows and grey panels unifies the facades.

6.22  While there have been examples of recent developments for housing and student accommodation these are considered to be neutral in appearance, however, on a smaller scale poor quality alterations are compromising the quality of the area just as severely e.g. an increasing pressure for change regarding additional parking. The stilts or pilotis and understoreys to the slab and point blocks have been subject to much debate in terms of functionality, however their design and presence are considered to be integral historic and architectural features of the blocks.

6.23  The range of styles and built forms are vast but not inhuman due to the variety of architecture and scales attempted. The mixture of high and low - from the slab and point blocks to the maisonettes and bungalows can all be appreciated as you move from one area to the next. The design and placing of the buildings into the landscape has left a strong historic reference point.

Materials

6.24  The team at Alton West was keen to give it strong unifying image that would bind together the different housing types. They developed a standardised full-height concrete cladding panel, pre-cast on site, that was another British first and enabled construction by modern tower crane.

6.25  The care given to small details is something most usually noted at Alton East, where the small scale of the former gardens is retained. Yet at Alton West, too, attention is paid to paving surfaces, with use of cobbles (e.g. in Harbridge Avenue) as well as
paviours and concrete; the low concrete walls are carefully poured and often curved. Nothing is too small not to merit thoughtful design. And though the use of a high proportion of concrete rather than brick gives an initial impression of toughness, the cleaning and restoration of the blocks over recent years has revealed the high quality of the finish, now weathering to a pleasant shade of buff.

6.26 The ingredients of Alton East reappear at Alton West on a more dramatic scale and to a more consciously modern design. The point blocks, faced with concrete aggregate, are of similar height and essential plan, though regularised into perfect rectangles without even the projecting balconies that characterise those at Alton East. The four-storey maisonettes and two- and three-storey terraces of houses, though still brick-faced, have flat roofs.

**Boundary treatments**

6.27 Front gardens and their boundary treatments are a part of an owner's private property that is also part of the shared public realm or townscape that is made up of street surfaces, street trees, pavements, street lighting and building frontages. Just as the houses are laid out in informal terraces or groups, so the front boundaries were designed to match this informality, this is especially the case for the point blocks, as spaces here are shared.

6.28 Although many mature trees, garden walls and other features were retained, and the point blocks carefully positioned to ensure they could benefit from the existing landscape, many original boundaries have been lost. Boundary treatments are not always consistent in material but add interest and a sense of scale to the streetscene, often marking the boundaries between public and private spaces and in an attempt to personalise space.

6.29 There are however, parts of remaining boundary walls and paving of pebbles and granite setts e.g. Hersham Close which contribute significantly to the character of the conservation area. Original boundary treatments are of low of timber (slatted) fences above dwarf concrete walls or in cases gardens would simply come to end of paths with no specifically marked treatment, some are complimented by trees and planting.

**Streetscape**

6.30 Most original street surfaces have unfortunately been removed or overlaid with modern surfaces – there are some visible evidence of historic surfaces remaining mostly along junctions e.g. Hersham Close, Danebury Avenue and Mount Angelus Road (near the old people's bungalows).
6.31 Although there remains some evidence of historic pavement surfaces, unsympathetic alterations to boundaries and the progressive loss of traditional paving materials and architectural details to modern materials has led to some erosion of historic character. This is considered to be a negative feature of the area.

Trees and green space

6.32 For the Alton West architects, it was acknowledged from the start that the quality and scale of landscaping was a major factor in setting any approach to the layout and design of the area, this design principle made it different from that used in more typically urban sites. Downshire Field was planned to be remodelled so that there was a slight valley rising against the hill towards the north and a new copse planted in the centre of gravity of the space aiming at the feeling of aimlessness to the grass carpet, this intended spatial device has been weakened by insensitive planting, resulting in the area being peppered with trees (Housing the Twentieth Century Nation, Twentieth Century Architecture 9, p118).

6.33 By far and away the most distinctive defining characteristic of Alton West is the sheer scale and openness of the green landscape. A good place to appreciate this is the small green near the bus turning area at the junction of Danebury Avenue and Minstead Gardens. To the north side, the broad sloping sweep of Downshire Field easily balances the dramatic scale of the five slab blocks on the appropriately named Highcliffe Drive. To the south side, the seven point blocks and Mount Clare sit within generous, gently sloping greens. Holybourne Avenue retains an intact stretch of Lime avenue, marking the entrance to Parkstead House (formerly Manresa House).

6.34 Even without knowing the history of the area, it is still clear that Mount Clare is an important building, set at the top of a large unbroken green area. Functionally the green is now public and available to all; visually it still appears as the setting for this splendid Georgian masterpiece. There are many fine mature trees, legacies of the Georgian estate planting that originally defined boundaries, screened or framed views and sheltered secluded walks. Harbridge Avenue is included within the conservation area in recognition of the mature Lime trees that line the street, and the granite setts in which they stand.
7. CONCLUSION AND ASSESSMENT OF CONDITION

7.1 The area as a whole is generally well maintained and remains unchanged partly due to the conservation area designation. However, there are some aspects that detract from the area’s appearance and could benefit from improvement. This issue is largely at a domestic scale, mainly to do with insensitive alterations, such as inappropriate windows, changes to doors and alterations to boundaries. The integration of car parking is also an issue.

The removal and replacement of original features

7.2 Loss of significant architectural and local details can severely harm the character of the conservation area. Replacement of traditional features such as windows and doors are in some cases executed in poor quality materials or designs. The loss of traditional street surfaces also erodes the quality of the public realm. Granite setts and paving have been overlain with tarmac and small blocks used to repair broken paving slabs which creates an inconsistent mixture of materials and erodes the local distinctiveness of the public realm. The Council’s Transportation Team is working to reverse such changes and rationalise routes and the treatment of paving to create a greater sense of legibility to the entire Estate.

7.3 Buildings and townscape features that make a positive contribution to the character of the area should be preserved as far as possible in order to maintain the special character of the conservation area. Where possible original details should be preserved and restored and the reinstatement of lost features sought where possible. Grant aid may be available for this (see Management Strategy for details).

Small-scale accretions

7.4 Small-scale additions to a building’s façade, such as satellite dishes, roof mounted antennas, telephone wires, external gas and electricity boxes, boiler flues etc. have a significant cumulative impact on a building and on the wider street scene. Careful siting and choice of materials and colours should be considered as well as their removal when no longer needed.

Negative features / Opportunities for enhancement

7.5 Negative features are elements that generally detract from the special character of a conservation area, therefore presenting an opportunity for improvement. This can include both small and large features relating to the street scape or individual buildings. It may be that simple maintenance works can resolve the situation, reinstate original design or lost architectural features. Some properties have lost features, which affect the integrity of individual elevations. Alteration of original windows and changes to front boundary treatments are particular issues in the conservation area.
7.6 Opportunities for enhancement to some extent are limited but may lie within the grounds of university buildings e.g. future development for student accommodation or those buildings identified by their plain architectural presence and in need of modernisation. Generally the scale and massing of later or 'dated' buildings fit into the street scape, however, their lack of quality and detailing means they provide nowhere near as much interest and character in comparison to the strong modernist designed and historic buildings of the Estate.
8 APPENDICES

Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are buildings that are listed by English Heritage or the Government for their special architectural or historic interest. These buildings are important not just to the local area but to the nation as a whole and represent buildings that make the most important contribution to England's architectural history. They are therefore protected and listed building consent is required for any alteration to any part of a listed building, either externally or internally or to a curtilage structure associated with it. These consents are dealt with by the Council, who may consult English Heritage if required.

The following buildings in this conservation area are listed:

**BUNGALOWS FOR THE ELDERLY**

245 - 255 Danebury Avenue  
257 - 261 Danebury Avenue  
1 - 13 Minstead Gardens  
2 - 26 Minstead Gardens  
15 - 33 Minstead Gardens

**Grade II**  
**Date listed: 22 December 1998**

Bungalows for old-age pensioners [including retaining walls]. Designed 1952-3; built 1957-8 by the LCC's Architect's Department Housing Division, Colin Lucas: Architect in Charge; J A Partridge, W G Howell, J A W Killick, S F Amis, J R Galley and R Stout: job architects. Brick and concrete cross-wall construction with roughcast infill panels; flat roofs counterbalanced by high concrete stacks that give the group great character. The rectangle of each single-storey unit incorporates recessed porches to front and back. The glazing and panels under windows renewed in UPVC, to a pattern resembling the original. Flush timber doors retain the original pattern. Storage area, formerly a fuel store, incorporated in the front wall. Retaining walls enclose a small garden area to front, at rear the opened grassed area is part of the group's composition. Interiors comprise large single room with fireplace, linen cupboard and bed recess; kitchen and bathroom not of special interest. The groups of old people's dwellings are a charming feature of the Alton West development. Their small scale is a deliberate counterpoise to the great slabs and point blocks around, a contrast further exploited in the quirky, unexpected chimneys. This combination of very large and very tiny buildings exemplifies the concept of 'mixed development', with houses and flats to suit all ages and needs, of which Alton West is the ultimate expression. These bungalows also form a strong group with the C18 listed Mount Clare behind. "Their informal tight grouping and open roadways achieve almost the character of the original parklands, yet these tiny units take their place exceedingly well with the tall blocks across the spine road and on the

POINT BLOCKS

Blendworth Point, Wanborough Drive
Eashing Point, Wanborough Drive
Hindhead Point, Wanborough Drive
Hilsea, Wanborough Drive
Witley Point, Wanborough Drive
Westmark Point, Norley Vale
Cadnam Point, Dilton Gardens
Dunhill Point, Dilton Gardens
Longmoor Point, Norley Vale
Grayswood Point, Norley Vale

Grade II
Date listed: 22 December 1998

Point block of 42 flats. Designed 1951, built 1952-5 by London County Council Architect’s Department Housing Division; Rosemary Stjernstedt Architect in Charge, AW Cleeve Barr and Oliver Cox principle job architects. Ove Arup and Partners, engineers. In-situ reinforced concrete frame, clad in grey ‘clinker block’ brickwork, with some expression of the concrete floors as bands in the composition. Flat roof with projecting service tower expressed as rounded sculptural form. Three flats on ground floor; four on each upper floor (one 1-bedroom and three 2-bedroom units) set in corners of picturesquely asymmetrical plan, with partially projecting balconies at corners. Lift lobby runs through centre of building, with pair of lifts serving alternate floors and two escape staircases, once brightly coloured. Ground floor partly set back and painted, with storerooms (initially also laundry) which retain their original galvanised steel fenestration, as do the staircases. Windows to flats renewed in UPVC-coated aluminium with original openings and to similar pattern (some mullions eliminated). Balconies with original panelled fronts. Each block denoted by different patterned tilework at entrance formed of white and two varieties of black and white speckled tiles to give illusion of contrasting grey and near-black; the pattern at Blendworth Point with cross-shape of white outlined with large areas of near-black. Original sign made of tiles.

The point blocks at Alton East were the first public housing in Britain to have mechanically ventilated lavatories and bathrooms, the first high housing to have central heating. The interiors of the flats not of special interest save for their plan.

The LCC’s earlier experiments with point block design had been expensive, later variants were more mechanical; these are included as a pioneering design and the first cluster in Britain. The name ‘point block’ was coined by the Alton East team from the Swedish
‘punkthus’, a source of their inspiration. Another was the English housing tradition, which led to their use of brick, respect for earlier LCC work nearby and an interest in what prospective tenants wanted. Alton East is remarkable for its picturesque massing, which maximises its sloping site and the retention and enhancement of Victorian planting from the gardens to villas previously there, by grouping the points at the top of the rise (where they also shield traffic noise) and setting the contrasting red-brick houses and maisonettes around them. It epitomises the humanist tradition in post-war British architecture.


SLAB BLOCKS

Dunbridge House, Highcliffe Drive
Denmead House, Highcliffe Drive
Charcot House, Highcliffe Drive
Winchfield House and abutting chimney, Highcliffe Drive
Binley House, Highcliffe Drive

Grade II*
Date listed: 22 December 1998


The plan consists of five tiers each of fifteen maisonettes each a 12’ bay, raised on alternating lines of two and three piloti at bay intervals along the ground floor. The nine bays south of the lift shaft left open. Top of lift shaft and services expressed on roof as geometric shapes. Double-height lift landings paved. Each maisonette has private balcony facing east, and gallery access from west; the upper three tiers of flats additionally with steel emergency access balconies at bedroom level. Timber windows (original) with opening casements and flush timber doors. Each maisonette with kitchen and living room on lower level, two bedrooms and internal, mechanically ventilated bathroom and toilet (a new departure in planning) on upper level; internal fittings not of special interest. Ramp of board-marked concrete in front of lifts incorporates Corbusian drip-mould, much imitated in the most progressive architecture at the time.
The slab blocks devised by this team are inspired by Le Corbusier’s Unite d’Habitation in Marseilles, which Howell and others had visited in 1951. The proportions are based on his ‘Modulor’ and the Fibonacci number sequence. The expression of each maisonette as an individual element in the façade marked a new rigour and sophistication in slab design. The placing of the slabs into the side of the hill, a revision made in September 1953, is a powerful and skillful response to their setting in Downshire Field, a C18 landscape much remodelled and enhanced by the team; the steep slope gave purpose to the pilotis; the relationship of the blocks to each other and the landscape is a ‘majestic’ piece of town planning (Ian Nairn). They are the centrepiece of the Alton West Estate, the LCC’s most ambitious post-war development scheme and considered ‘probably the finest low-cost housing development in the world’ (G E Kidder Smith). (Bruckmann H and Lewis D L: New Housing in Great Britain: Stuttgart: 1960-: 60-99 Kidder Smith G E: The New Architecture of Europe: New York: 1961-: 44-45; Nairn, I: Modern Buildings in London: London: 1964-: 62-63; The Cambridge Guide to the Arts in Britain, vol IX: Simon Pepper: Housing at Roehampton: Cambridge: 1988-: 279-287; Day N M: The Role of the Architect in Post-War State Housing: PhD, Warwick University: 1989-: 283-286).

HOUSES

Downshire House, Roehampton Lane

Grade II*
Date listed: 14 July 1955

[Former villa]. Circa 1770 for Marquess of Downshire. Three-storeys, 6 windows with 2-storey, 3 window splayed bay extension to north. Brown brick. Red segmental arches to recessed windows and red dressings at jambs and angles. Rusticated wood door case with fluted Doric pilasters, triglyph frieze, segmental pediment broken over pilasters and panelled reveals. Garden front has stone bands at first floor and first floor sills, brick band second floor and stone bracketed cornice below parapet; brick rusticated quoins and 3 window splayed bay at ground floor. R w Furze Brettingham did work at Downshire House for second Marquess of Downshire presumably circa 1795 (APSD and Colvin).

Garden gates to Downshire House, Roehampton Lane

Grade II
Date listed: 7 April 1983

Late 18th Century. Wrought iron, with scroll overthrow between piers.

Mount Clare, Minstead Gardens

Grade I
Date listed: 14 July 1955
[Former villa]. 1772 probably by Sir Robert Taylor, enlarged with portico and other enrichments. 1780 by Columbani, 2-storeys and basement. Five-bays. Stucco, with rusticated stone basement. Three-bay projecting centre with pediment and wood Doric tetrastyle balustraded portico with modelled plaster ceiling and WI railings raised above arched basement and approached by 2 curved flights of stone steps with WI railings. Dentil cornice. Rear elevation of 2-storeys with semi-octagonal projection in centre. Entrance hall has vaulted and shallow coffered ceiling. Geometrical stone staircase with WI balustrade. Octagon drawing room with good delicately-modelled ceiling and niches. Marble fireplaces and other good interior features. In the grounds are the dismantled remains of a circular Composite temple, the columns of which are stored in the basement. The marble capitals of 2 columns are Roman. Built by George Clive, cousin to Lord Clive. The gardens were laid out by Capability Brown.

Temple in grounds of Mount Clare, Minstead Gardens

Grade II*
Date listed: 14 June 1955

Stone. Circa 1762-69 Greek Doric style, modelled on illustration from Stuart and Revett: 'The Antiquities of Athens'. Sculptured panels in portico and interior and coved frescoed ceiling. Brought here from Bessborough House in 1913 and thus was possibly designed by Sir William Chambers the architect of that building.

Parkstead House, Holybourne Avenue

Grade I
Date listed: 14 July 1955

[Former villa]. 1760 to 1768. Sir William Chambers for second Earl of Bessborough. Name originally Parkstead then Bessborough House [then Manresa House]. 1860 and later additions and alterations. West front (to garden overlooking Richmond Park) - 3-storeys, 5-bays. Stone, rusticated ground storey and quoins. moulded string at first floor sills. Dentil cornice second floor and attic cornice and blocking course. Pedimented hexastyle Ionic portico (to centre) raised on balustrade at first floor above rusticated podium with twin curved flights of steps with wrought iron railings. South front in Amber brick with stone dressings, cornice bands and balustraded terrace first floor and arched entrance: 1860 buildings form wings flanking front forecourt. Good interior features including ornamental plaster ceilings, carved over doors, and wrought iron balustrades to staircase.

26 Bessborough Road

Grade II
Date listed: 16 July 1986

**SCULPTURE**

**The Bull Sculpture, Downshire Field Recreation Ground, Danebury Avenue**

*Grade II*

*Date listed: 15 April 1998*

Sculpture. 1961 by Robert Clatworthy, a version of a plaster figure from 1959, commissioned by the London County Council at the behest of A W Cleeve Barr, one of the principle architects working on the Alton Estate. Bronze, ten feet in length. A shaggy expressionistic figure of a bull that seems about to turn it's head; a heroic yet friendly image which is much-loved centrepiece of the LCC's flagship Alton West development. Clatworthy specialised in animal subjects and had exhibited a series of smaller equine and bull pieces at the Hanover Gallery in 1957. The shaggy expressionism of the Bull works as a study in movement arrested. Clatworthy wrote that 'in most of my sculpture you will find a series of super-imposed images - as the light changes or the viewer moves around the sculpture so different images of the same figure emerge.'

**The Watchers Sculpture (behind Downshire House), Roehampton Lane**

*Grade II*

*Date listed: 15 April 1998*

Sculpture. 1960 by Lynn Chadwick, sited at Roehampton in 1963 by the London County Council. Bronze, cast from a frame of iron and spoilt (gypsum and iron filings); over seven feet high on low plinth. Three abstract figures, of menacing and predatory character; that sum up Chadwick's fear of 'big brother', an Orwellian theme in tune with popular politics of the time. A fine example of his work, brilliantly sited where the figures can survey the whole Alton West estate, one of the LCC's greatest architectural achievements, across Downshire field. It forms a stark contrast to the agrarian 'Bull' by Robert Clatworthy at the bottom of the slope.

**Locally Listed Buildings**

The Council holds a list of buildings that are of special architectural or historical interest at a local level. The list is a record of some of the historic buildings that are of particular interest, not just to this conservation area, but to the borough as a whole. These are
different from buildings that are listed by English Heritage and the Government for which consent is required for alteration. There are no additional planning controls over locally listed buildings other than those that already apply to the building.

The following buildings in this conservation area were locally listed on 22 November 2010:

**Cedars Cottages - 1 Cedars Cottages, Roehampton Lane SW15 4HS**

Cedars Cottages is historically important - the cottages were originally the ‘brewhouse, washhouse and other offices’ of The Cedars; a large house constructed in brick and built in three stages, starting in about 1705. Records show that Joseph Bagnall built the structure some time before 1729. It formed a detached wing of the main house, it was balanced by a wing to the south – both wings framed the east elevation forming an open court. (The famous architect John Soane added large extensions to the house). It formed a detached service wing of the main house, a wing to the south balanced it – both wings framed the east elevation forming an open court. The western elevation of 1 Cedars Cottages, which originally faced on to a driveway leading from Clarence Lane to the forecourt, is particularly attractive with a fine blocked central doorway. The elaborate doorcase includes a striking curved pediment supported by decorative consoles, in the centre of the lintel is an emphasised key stone.

**Ibstock Place School (remaining historic part) and Lodge, Clarence Lane, SW15 5PY**

The main school is a Georgian style design with contrasting London stock red and yellow brick - similarly detailed chimneys define the roofs. It is a two storey building (plus roof accommodation). Red brick quoining across the entire front elevation gives great character. There is a clear relationship with the Lodge in terms of style and design, the Lodge is one storey (plus generous roof accommodation), expressed in contrasting brick to elevations, though both horizontally and vertically, emphasising design and scale. Large decorative brick pier boundary wall to side of interest. Both the School and the Lodge have similar brick contrasting qualities to Downshire House.

**Maryfield Convent and Chapel - Mount Angelus Road, SW154JA**

A two storey plus roof storey red brick building by Scoles and Raymond in an early nineteenth century style. It was built in 1939. Timber sash windows with Georgian lights. Substantial brick pilasters and door cases. Hipped dormers to parapet roof and massive brick chimneys.

**170 Hartfield House, Roehampton Lane, SW15 4EU**

This two storey (plus generous roof accommodation) house stands within well landscaped grounds, mostly appreciated from the extensive rear gardens. It is a large house constructed in red brick and built in 1900 - lighter red brick carefully used to form
quoining details around windows and bays. The house was later extended - this part locally known as Hartfield House Annex. Three dramatic hipped dormers form a strong detail at roof level. The rear of the building is well detailed - as it was not unusual at the time for houses like these to have two proud entrances; of particular interest is the combination of the dentil cornice at the eaves, similarly decorative projecting window hoods and surviving cast iron rain water goods. There are pleasant open views to the slab blocks along Highcliffe Drive and the point blocks on Ellisfield Drive.

**66 Alton Road, SW15 4NJ**

This part of Alton East sees one of the last surviving (smaller) Victorian villas at no. 66 Alton Road. Built in yellow stock brick, with a range of co-ordinated window styles, some are detailed with a Gothic reference. Three storeys in height. Decorative timber fascias and two chimneys on the same side define the roof - all these details gives the building great character and presence on this street. Some poor alterations carried out but not to the detriment of the building's strong character. The entrance lodge to Alton House survives at no 33 Bessborough Road (named after the Earl). The house itself, a particularly grand Victorian residence has now gone.

**33 Bessborough Road, SW15 4BN**

Similarly styled to no 66 Alton Road, though smaller in scale (two storeys), with decorative fascias and roof brackets featured throughout - there is a clear relationship between these two buildings. The entrance lodge to Alton House survives here at no 33 Bessborough Road (named after the Earl). The house itself, a particularly grand Victorian residence has now gone.

**68-78 and 80-86 Minstead Gardens, SW15 4EW**

Terrace of six (68-78) and four (80-86) staggered bungalows for old age pensioners, believed to have been built slightly later (1 or 2 years) than the listed bungalows. Appear to be of same detail and design to listed bungalows - flat roofs with high concrete chimney stacks. Unsure of construction, although it is likely to the similar to that of those listed. Large glazing panel profile for windows, though this had been upgraded with UPVC to a pattern resembling the original. The rectangle of each single-storey unit incorporates recessed porches to front and back. The small scale of these bungalows and its landscape also creates a significant balance of scale against other surrounding buildings.

**Historic Parks & Gardens**

The Council holds an Inventory of Historic Parks and Gardens in the borough. The Alton Estate is on this inventory as a designed landscape of historic importance.

English Heritage maintains a statutory Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. The grounds of Grove House are included on this register.
PART TWO: MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
1. Introduction

1.1 The Council has a duty under section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. This section therefore outlines both what the Council does to preserve or enhance the character of the Alton Estate Conservation Area and what residents and businesses can do.

1.2 The pressure for change within the Alton Estate is becoming greater as private ownership is increasing and more and more residents wish to alter, adapt and extend their homes. This Management Strategy is mindful of the need to preserve what gives the Estate its character and conservation area status without making it unworkable for today’s living.

Boundary Review

1.3 As part of the appraisal process, the boundaries of the Alton Estate Conservation Area were reviewed and considered to be acceptable. However, during the public consultation people strongly urged the Council to extend the conservation area to include areas including Allbrook House and its green space, Roehampton Library and buildings along Danebury Avenue. At its Strategic Planning and Transportation Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 18 November 2010, the Council undertook to consider further research on this matter.

The planning process

1.4 Planning is an inclusive process where any interested party is entitled to give an opinion. All planning applications in conservation areas are advertised in the local press so that anyone can make a comment.

1.5 In determining planning applications, the Council must take into consideration all material considerations as well as the views of the public and other consultees. For large developments in conservation areas or alterations to listed buildings, those consultees may include English Heritage or a number of national amenity societies, such as the Georgian Group, Victorian Society or Twentieth Century Society. You can see how the Council consults people in its Statement of Community Involvement which is available on the website or from the Planning Policy Group (see contacts).

1.6 We must also consider national policies set out by Government. For conservation areas the guidance is set out in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment.

1.7 The Council’s policies are set out our our Development Management Policies Document which is available on our website or from the Planning Policy Group. Where planning permission is required, it is Council policy to grant permission where alterations
or development would sustain, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance, appearance, character and setting of the heritage asset itself and the surrounding historic environment. If an application has been refused permission, the applicant has the right to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate who will reconsider the application.

1.8 Planning authorities may control small scale alterations to family houses by making an Article 4 direction. This serves to control alterations which are harmful to the historic character of conservation areas such as installing uPVC windows and front doors, concrete roof tiles, laying hard surfaces across front gardens, and other unsympathetic alterations.

1.9 See the sections on what works require planning permission and conservation area guidance for information that is specific to this conservation area.

Heritage assets and positive buildings

1.10 The Government's guidance, Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, defines heritage assets as follows: "A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are valued components of the historic environment."

1.11 Significance is "the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic" which can be further divided into aesthetic, evidential and communal values.

1.12 Positive buildings are those considered to have significance and contribute to the special character and appearance of the conservation area. All positive buildings, listed buildings and locally listed buildings in the conservation area are shown on the townscape map in the appraisal along with green space that is also considered of importance.

1.13 The Government's overarching aim is that the historic environment and its heritage assets should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations. Conservation is the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and where appropriate enhances its significance.

Communication with residents

1.14 Conservation area status is registered as a local land charge. When a person or a solicitor carries out a land charge search when a someone buys a property, this information will be given.
1.15 When the boundaries of a conservation area are changed, the Council will inform those affected by writing to them directly and placing an advert in the local press.

1.16 Before carrying out any works affecting the external appearance of a building, owners are advised to check with the Planning Service if they are in a conservation area. The onus is on the owner to find out this information and ignorance is no defence should any matter be the subject of legal action.

1.17 From time to time the Council may distribute leaflets to the conservation area to give information to residents. The Council will consult residents of conservation areas on possible changes to the conservation area or when reviewing character appraisals in accordance with English Heritage’s guidelines and our Statement of Community Involvement.

1.18 All conservation area maps, appraisals, management strategies and guidance are published on the Council’s website. Officers can print copies of these documents for those who do not have access to the internet or have other difficulties downloading them. These documents can be downloaded from the following web page:

www.wandsworth.gov.uk/planning/conservation

Grants

1.19 The Council operates a Conservation & Enhancement Grant Scheme to offer financial incentives to owners of historic buildings to reinstate lost features or remove unsightly later additions. Anyone is eligible for these grants, but the key criterion is that the work will make a significant impact in conserving and enhancing the heritage significance of an important area or building. Examples of possible grant aided works include:

- removal of paint, render or pebbledash from a brick elevation;
- replacement of boundary walls, railings, gates and fences to the original design;
- reinstatement of original style windows or original roof material;
- reinstatement of shopfront elements.

1.20 Grants offered are normally between 25% to 50% of the 'eligible costs'. Eligible costs are for the actual conservation or enhancement work - not routine maintenance, conversion, alteration or modernisation which may be going on at the same time. More information can be found on our website:

www.wandsworth.gov.uk/
Home/EnvironmentandTransport/PlanningService/Conservation/grants.htm
1.21 Grants are also available for commercial premises and are dealt with by Council's Economic Development team. See contact details at the end. Other grants for renovation or improvement of houses are dealt with by the council's Environmental Services team. Ring the Grants Helpline on 020 8871 6127.

1.22 Outside the Council, grants may be available from English Heritage, the Heritage of London Trust and other similar bodies, mainly for listed building projects. See their websites for details or look at the Funds for Historic Buildings website for other grant aiding bodies: www.ffhb.org.uk

Guidance on Alterations to Buildings

1.23 Officers in the Conservation and Design Group can give informal advice on carrying out sensitive works to historic buildings. If you are considering works you are advised to contact them to discuss your proposals, particularly before making a planning application.

1.24 To give you advice, officers will normally need to see a photograph of your building and a sketch of the works proposed, unless the works are very simple and easy to explain, when a telephone conversation may suffice.

1.25 Due to the significant number of listed buildings within the Estate, it would be desirable to develop a management strategy which specifically deals with listed buildings. Subject to the service's work programme, a specific document could be developed to provide guidance on how best to approach works and repairs, including the management of future change to listed buildings. This could become an agreement between several parties including the Council's Planning and Housing sections, residents, English Heritage, Twentieth Century Society and other users.

1.26 Basic guidance on works that are appropriate to listed and unlisted buildings in the conservation area are given in the section "Conservation Guidance".

Enforcement

1.27 In carrying out its planning function, the Council may take enforcement action against unauthorised developments or alterations that harm the character of the conservation area where planning permission would be required.

1.28 Anyone can report breaches of planning control or officers may see these whilst carrying out their daily work. If you wish to report a breach, contact the Planning Enforcement Group using the address and telephone numbers given at the end of this document or the following webpage:

http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/faqs/1003/planning_enforcement/answer/158/how_can_i_report_a_breach_of_planning_control#a158
Listed buildings

1.29 Listed buildings are buildings of special historic or architectural interest that have been listed by English Heritage or the Government. English Heritage is responsible for adding new buildings to the statutory list, whereas the Council is responsible for dealing with listed building consent which is required for alterations.

1.30 Any works of alteration or demolition that affect the special architectural or historic interest of any listed building must first be granted listed building consent by the local planning authority. This requirement applies to all parts of a listed building including internal and external fixtures and fittings and any structures within the curtilage of the listed building.

1.31 If you think a building should be listed, you may write to English Heritage. Their website (see Contacts) gives details of what information they need and what factors they will take into consideration when dealing with the application.

1.32 Listed buildings are shown in Appendix 1 to the conservation area appraisal.

1.33 The bungalows for old age pensioners at nos. 68-78 and 80-86 Minstead Gardens are identical to those listed elsewhere in Minstead Gardens. It therefore appears to be an oversight that these were not listed at the same time and we will contact English Heritage’s Heritage Protection team to clarify this. Meanwhile the bungalows have been added the Council’s Local List.

1.34 Basic guidance for alterations to the listed buildings in Alton is given in the Conservation Guidance section.

Locally listed buildings

1.35 The Council holds a list of buildings that are of special architectural or historical interest at a local level and therefore important to the borough. These buildings may (or may not) be of sufficient heritage significance to be added to the statutory list by the Government and English Heritage and are therefore different to statutorily listed buildings. There are no additional planning controls over locally listed buildings other than those that already apply to the building.

1.36 Locally listed buildings in this conservation area are shown in Appendix 2 and on the townscape map in the conservation area appraisal.

1.37 The full Local List can be seen on our website:

www.wandsworth.gov.uk/downloads/200129/locally_listed_buildings
1.38 As part of the conservation area appraisal process a number of buildings were added to the Council's Local List. Further details are given in Appendix 2 to the appraisal.

- Cedars cottages, 1 Cedars Cottages, Roehampton Lane SW154HS
- Ibstock Place School (remaining historic part), Clarence Lane, SW15 5PY
- Maryfield Convent and Chapel - Mount Angelus Road, SW154JA
- 170 Hartfield House, Roehampton Lane, SW15 4EU
- 66 Alton Road, SW15 4NJ
- 33 Bessborough Road, SW15 4BN
- 68-78 and 80-86 Minstead Gardens, SW15 4EW

**Archaeology**

1.39 Where a development falls within an Archaeological Priority Area as set out in the Council's Local Development Framework, a detailed archaeological assessment will be required before applications are determined. In some cases, excavation or preservation of finds may also be required.

**Trees**

1.40 Trees are an essential part of the character of the conservation area and it is important that all trees and particularly the mature trees are retained and managed.

1.41 All trees in conservation areas are given protection by the conservation area designation. Trees may also be protected by Tree Preservation Orders, both in or outside a conservation area. The Council must be notified of any works to any tree in a private garden in the conservation area and can make a Tree Preservation Order in response to these notifications if it is necessary to prevent the loss of an attractive healthy tree.

1.42 The following guides are available on the web page below

- Trees and the Law
- Tree Care
- Tree Planting
- Tree Surgeon's contact details
- Our Tree Strategy


1.43 The Conservation & Design Group can give advice on trees on privately owned land in conservation areas (tel 020 8871 6631) and Leisure & Amenity Service's tree officers can advise on trees on Council owned land (tel 020 8871 6370).
Streetscape

1.44 The conservation and highways teams in the Council are working together to prepare a streetscape manual which will set out how the Council carries out works to streets across the borough. This will include the preservation of original features such as paving slabs, granite kerbs and granite setts or the reinstatement of these where possible. It will also cover how new works such as traffic calming, new signage, etc, could be carried out sensitively and by using traditional style materials and appropriate colours and finishes.

1.45 The Highways Engineering Group are working on reinstating and rationalising a path network throughout the Estate as well as creating a new walking and cycling route from Danebury Avenue to Richmond Park.

New development

1.46 It is against Council and Government policy to allow the demolition of heritage assets which contribute to the significance of the conservation area unless there are exceptional circumstances.

1.47 The townscape map in the conservation area appraisal shows buildings and spaces (such as gardens and other green space) which are important to the character of the conservation area and should therefore be retained and looked after.

1.48 Development may be possible where buildings or spaces are not considered to be positive contributors and in these cases the Conservation and Design Group will be able to offer advice on suitable design options if contacted at an early stage.

1.49 Basic principles for new development are given in the guidance section later in this document.

Section 106 contributions

1.50 Section 106 Agreements are legal agreements between the Council and a developer that form part of a planning permission. These agreements often include a payment by a developer that the Council may use for local improvements which will benefit the public. There are no large developments foreseen in this area, but future section 106 contributions in neighbouring areas could be made to the Council’s Conservation & Enhancement grant fund for use in this conservation area.

1.51 Contributions will be welcomed from any development towards the reinstatement of lost windows, shopfronts or landscaping improvements in the conservation area.
2. CONSERVATION GUIDANCE

2.1 Looking after the special character of the Alton Estate Conservation Area is a partnership between all those who live, work and use the area and various departments of the Council. There are many things you can do, such as looking after original features where they have survived, reinstating lost features or removing unsightly intrusions to improve not only your property but the value and appearance of the overall area.

2.2 Historic buildings are all sensitive to change and even a minor change can have a detrimental effect on the overall character of the building and even the wider conservation area. We recommend that alterations should differ as little as possible from the original style and fabric of the building. The guiding principle for all buildings in conservation areas is to repair and maintain rather than replace. If replacement is unavoidable, then an exact replica of the original is always best. This section aims to give some basic guidance on the building elements that are important in this conservation area and can often be controlled by the Council's Planning Service.

Maintenance and repairs

2.3 Some routine maintenance and repairs carried out using matching methods and materials, such as repairing a window or repainting a door, do not generally require planning permission or listed building consent. However, there are some instances where listed building consent may be required e.g. to remove surviving original features. In general all repairs should match the original building fabric or feature. All alterations should attempt to protect that special architectural interest and character of the building. Please contact the Conservation and Design Group for informal advice on carrying out sensitive works to historic buildings and to check if consent is needed.

Reinstatement of missing features

2.4 Throughout this section and the character appraisal you will find items in your conservation area that are important to the character of the area, but may be missing from your property. Wherever possible, try to reinstate missing features. Grants may be available to help you do this. See the Grants paragraph in the previous section.

Windows

2.5 There were various types of windows used on the Estate. It is important that the correct type of window is retained in the conservation area to maintain the unity of the houses and blocks. Where lost, owners are advised to reinstate the correct type of window taking care to faithfully replicate the details and dimensions.
2.6 The installation of windows of a different pattern, design and construction material, such as aluminium should be avoided. Upvc windows usually fail to replicate original detail sufficiently and are also not recommended. Installing new airtight windows can cause damp and therefore the correct ventilation is essential.

2.7 Old windows lose heat through the glass and through gaps between the frames, however they can be overhauled and draught proofed. Installing secondary glazing matches the regulatory requirements for new windows whilst retaining the original windows. Even the use of shutters, blinds or curtains has been proved to reduce heat loss by between 41-58%.

Front doors

2.8 There were various types of doors used on the Estate and again these are an important feature that contributes to the historic character and unity of the buildings. Retain all original doors and reinstate recent doors to original designs and finishes.

Roofs

2.9 The terraces have shallow pitched roofs whereas the blocks have flat roofs. Roof extensions would not normally be allowed to those buildings identified as positive or having historical interest within the Alton Estate, as their character and site layout are so specific that such change is likely to harm the character and appearance of these buildings and the conservation area.

Chimneys

2.10 The old people’s bungalows have slender circular concrete chimneys which are an important feature of their design and should be retained.

Interiors

2.11 The key conservation principle to consider when carrying out works to a listed building is that repair is better than replacement. Original interior features should only be replaced when they are no longer repairable. If renewal is essential listed building consent will be necessary and will only normally be granted if components are of an identical design and materials to the original. Original fittings and fixtures such as skirtings, fitted cupboards, internal doors and walls are important parts of the design and should be retained. It is appreciated that some elements will be subject to wear and tear – where this occurs, a ‘like for like’ replacement should be considered as a first option, although sensitive alternatives may be granted consent if suitably detailed. Routine maintenance, repairs and redecoration do not usually require consent and owners are therefore free to redecorate and furnish their interiors as they wish as long as no original features removed. When replacing fixtures and fittings you are advised to contact the Conservation & Design Group for advice and to check if consent is required.
Gardens and green space

2.12 The landscaping and green space around the buildings forms an intrinsic part of the special character of the Alton Estate. When the Estate was designed, most of the green space was to be shared by all the residents, but in recent years, some parts of the landscape - particularly next to ground floor windows to the blocks - have been fenced off for private use which has changed this character.

2.13 Front gardens to houses and their boundary treatments represent a small area of open space that is part private and part public. The planting in gardens is important in creating a softening effect on the surrounding hard architecture and therefore planting should be retained. Boundary treatments to maisonettes were originally in the form of low feather edged fences. It is inappropriate to replace a fence with a brick wall or railings and height should be restricted or at least uniform to protect the appearance of the street.

Extensions

2.14 Again, rear or side extensions would not normally be allowed to those buildings identified as positive or having historical interest within the Alton Estate, as their character and site layout are so specific that such change is likely to harm the character and appearance of these buildings and the conservation area.

Shopfronts

2.15 Any part of original shopfronts of historic value should be retained and looked after or original examples copied and reinstated. Shopfronts are often altered individually without regard to others in the parade, but this results in a muddled and chaotic appearance that isn’t necessarily inviting to shoppers. Care should be taken to keep fascias located in their original positions and size rather than installing large ones.

New buildings

2.16 It is Council policy to protect listed buildings and unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area and these are shown on the townscape map in the conservation area appraisal.

2.17 Where there are opportunities for new buildings that do not involve the loss of a positive building or a space that is of value to the character and appearance of the conservation area, a new building may be acceptable. The appraisal gives details of the characteristics that are special to the conservation area and these characteristics, such as landscape, scale, mass, height, quality and visual interest should be echoed in a new building.
2.18 Only buildings of the highest quality that will enhance the character of the conservation will be recommended for approval and all proposals for new buildings should benefit from discussions with the Conservation and Design Group before submission.

**Sustainability and energy efficiency**

2.19 Looking after existing buildings is an inherently sustainable act as old buildings embody the energy that was used to create the materials and build them in the first place.

2.20 However, old buildings can be unnecessarily draughty and it is sensible to prevent excessive heat loss before considering installing micro generators such as solar panels and wind turbines. It is also wise to carry out all energy saving measures possible to avoid generating energy needlessly. When thinking about where to locate such equipment it remains crucial to conserve the appearance and character of the conservation area, the listed buildings and street as a whole. Discreet and unobjectionable locations only should be found.

2.21 The need to conserve energy does not have to conflict with the need to conserve the character of the conservation area. If both requirements are considered in a balanced manner, it should be possible to achieve both objectives without harm to either.

2.22 Finally, it is useful to remember not to focus all your efforts on reducing energy loss in the home and forget about other areas of your family's life. Plane journeys, car use, food and commodity miles are all equally important. Work out your carbon footprint at [http://carboncalculator.direct.gov.uk](http://carboncalculator.direct.gov.uk) and find more advice on energy saving at [www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk](http://www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk) and [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk).

**Planning permission and listed building consent**

2.23 Many of the works mentioned in this section will require planning permission or listed building consent. Please contact the Conservation and Design Group to discuss your proposal before carrying out works and check whether planning permission is required. Enforcement action will be taken against unauthorised and harmful works. See the section "What works require consent" for further information.

**Council tenants**

2.24 If you are a Council tenant, you should also not carry out works unless they are allowed in your lease. For further information contact your area Housing office.
3. WHAT WORKS REQUIRE CONSENT?

3.1 Additional planning controls exist within conservation areas and for listed buildings. This section explains what works will require consent. However, the items listed in this section are given as examples and may not be comprehensive. Contact us using the details below to check before you start any works.

WORKS TO LISTED BUILDINGS:

3.2 Listed building consent is needed for any alteration, removal of historic fabric or fixtures, or demolition of any part of a listed building either externally or internally. In addition to this, the same applies to curtilage structures such as outbuildings or boundary walls. Examples of works requiring consent include the removal of internal walls, changing doors and windows, painting elevations in a different colour or removing original features.

3.3 New works to listed buildings should:

- Be based on a thorough understanding of the building's importance and the features and spaces that contribute to its importance;
- Retain all original features or reinstate these where lost;
- Respect the quality of the original features. Fit new to old and not the other way around; match the quality and fabric of the original materials;
- Be reversible or removable at a future date without permanent harm to the building;
- Enhance the listed building and not detract from it;

3.4 Permission may also be needed from the landlord, management company or owner of the property.

3.5 Additional guidance can be found in PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, in particular Section 6 of the accompanying Practice Guide.

3.6 All applications for listed building consent should include a Design & Access Statement and for extensive works, a Heritage Statement or Conservation Plan may be required.

WORKS TO UNLISTED BUILDINGS IN THE CONSERVATION AREA:

Works to maisonettes, flat blocks and houses converted to flats:

3.7 These buildings do not benefit from permitted development rights and therefore most external alterations will require planning permission, including:

- Changing windows and front doors
- Reroofing and altering chimneys
• Cladding or rendering external walls
• Laying out a hard surface in the front garden
• Altering boundary treatments

**Works to houses:**

3.8 This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive. Works not mentioned here may nonetheless require planning permission and you are therefore advised to check with the planning service at an early stage to avoid delays to your project or even enforcement action.

3.9 You may also apply to the Council for a Certificate of Lawful Development which will confirm that planning permission is not required.

3.10 The following works require planning permission:

• Any roof extension
• Any side extension
• Any extension to the front of a house
• All rear extensions over one storey and beyond the rear wall of the original house
• Cladding a house in stone, artificial stone, pebbledash, render, timber, plastic or tiles
• Installation, alteration or replacement of a chimney, flue, soil or vent pipe to an elevation fronting a highway or to a side elevation
• Installation, alteration or replacement of an antennae or satellite dish on a part of the house that is visible from a highway
• Garden buildings, enclosures or pools built in the front garden or within 2 metres of a boundary or over 2.5 metres high or takes up over 50% of the curtilage
• Hard surfaces in front gardens, unless they are less than 5 square metres or are porous or water runs off into a porous area
• Boundary treatments (fence, wall, railings, etc) over 1 metre adjacent to a highway or 2 metre elsewhere.
• Air source heat pumps
• Wind turbines

**Works to commercial buildings**

3.11 Buildings that are not houses do not benefit from householder permitted development rights. This means that most external alterations will require planning permission. As an example, some common alterations requiring planning permission are given below:

• Any alteration or extension to a building including roof extensions and windows, where a material alteration is involved.
All changes to shopfronts require planning permission. This includes any external security shutters.
Advertisements to shopfronts may require planning permission depending on size. All illuminated advertisements will require consent.

**Conservation area consent is required to:**

- Demolish a building or substantial part of a building in a conservation area as well as to demolish boundary treatment (eg fence, wall, railings, etc) that is over 1m adjacent to a highway or over 2m elsewhere. Where a building is listed, only listed building consent is required for demolition.

**Works to trees**

- All trees in conservation areas are protected and the Council must be given six weeks notice of any works, including pruning and felling.
- An application must be made to do any works to trees which are subject to tree preservation orders.
- Forms for both are available on our website.

Further information can be found at

- [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)
- [www.wandsworth.gov.uk/planning](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/planning)
- [www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.1368](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.1368)

or contact Wandsworth's Planning Service on 020 8871 6636

or the Conservation & Design Group on 020 8871 6646 or 6612
4. HOW TO MAKE A PLANNING APPLICATION

4.1 This is a brief guide to applying for planning permission. Planning officers are available to answer simple queries between 9.00 - 5.00 at the One-Stop counter on the 5th floor of the Town Hall Annexe on Wandsworth High Street. If you have a more complicated query or you wish to discuss development at your property you may need to make an appointment to see a planning officer and a conservation and design officer. Such a meeting will only be granted when you have submitted initial sketches for discussion and the matter cannot be adequately discussed over the telephone.

Application forms

4.2 You should make your application through the Planning Portal (see web address below) which has all the relevant forms and guidance. If you don't have access to the internet please come in to the One Stop counter (as above) to collect a form or telephone us (see Contacts).

www.planningportal.gov.uk

4.3 Forms are also available to print from our website:

www.wandsworth.gov.uk/Home/EnvironmentandTransport/PlanningService/Planningapplications/plappforms.htm

Making your application

4.4 For all but the simplest alterations, you are advised to appoint a qualified architect or other competent person with experience and understanding of conservation issues.

4.5 To apply for planning permission you must submit the correct application form (often the householder application form alone) and submit scale drawings showing the existing and proposed plans and elevations. Each application form gives guidance on what plans are required. For applications to replace doors or windows, it is usually sufficient to include a photograph to show the existing, but the drawing for the proposed must be to scale of 1:50. It must show how the window will open and close. This is best shown in a cross section.

Design & access statements

4.6 All applications for planning permission in conservation areas must be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement which should set out the design concept for your proposal. Thinking about what is important about the building before you actually decide on the design should help you to choose a scheme that will conserve or possibly even enhance its appearance.
4.7 The statement should include a description of the building as well as an assessment of the impact of your proposal on its character and appearance. We welcome photographs or sketches that will help to illustrate your proposals. If it involves a lot of change to an important building (especially a listed one), a detailed Statement of Heritage Significance may be necessary.

4.8 The Design and Access Statement does not need to be long. Often a few short paragraphs will do. Your statement could start by answering the following questions:

- Is the building listed, locally listed or shown as a positive building in the conservation area character appraisal?
- Why is the building considered to be of heritage value? Hopefully the conservation area appraisal will tell you the answer to this question
- What are its main important features and does it have any interesting details?
- What original materials were used? e.g. brick, stone, timber
- Has it already been altered or extended?
- Are there any original features missing that could be reinstated? Restoring them could count as enhancement.

4.9 The Design and Access Statement should then go on to explain how you think the alteration or extension that you want permission for has been designed sympathetically to suit the building and preserve (or enhance) its appearance.

Planning policy

4.10 All applications are determined in accordance with Council policy as set out in our Development Management Policies document which is available on our website. The conservation area appraisal and guidance given in this document will also be taken into consideration when determining applications. Further policy guidance is given in Planning Policy Guidance Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment and the practice guide associated with it, available from English Heritage's website (see Further Information).

Pre-application advice

4.11 You are welcome to ask for advice on your proposed development before making your application.

How long does it take?

4.12 It takes eight weeks to process most planning applications. If the correct information is not provided the application cannot be validated and your agent or you, the applicant, will be notified of this within 10 days. The 8 week period only starts when the application has been validated.
4.13 When the application is received it is allocated to a planning officer who will be your case officer and main contact. You, the applicant, or your agent can contact your case officer at any time. If you have an agent, correspondence will be automatically conducted with the agent unless otherwise requested. The case officer will be responsible for consultation on the application which includes consulting neighbours and liaising with the Conservation and Design Group.

**Building control**

4.14 Approval under the Building Regulations is a separate requirement and you should check this with the Building Control Service as well as the Planning Service before carrying out your works. See Contacts.
FURTHER INFORMATION & CONTACTS
**Further Information**

**Council publications**

The Council publishes a number of useful guidance documents which can be found on the following web page:

[www.wandsworth.gov.uk/downloads/200074/planning](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/downloads/200074/planning)

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<td>Trees and the Law</td>
<td>What tree works require permission</td>
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**Government & English Heritage publications**

Many of the following documents are available from the Planning Portal (see "Useful Websites").

- **Planning: A Guide for Householders**
- **Planning Policy Guidance Note 15:** Planning and the Historic Environment. 1994
- **Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals,** English Heritage (Product code 51185) 2006
- **Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas,** English Heritage (Product code 51184) 2006
- **Conservation Principles: policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment** by English Heritage (Product code 51393) 2008
- **Energy Conservation in Traditional Buildings** by English Heritage (Product code 51367) 2007
- **Climate Change and the Historic Environment** by English Heritage (Product code 51392) 2008
- **Building Regulations and Historic Buildings** by English Heritage (Product code 50900) 2004
**Something Worth Keeping.** Post War Architecture in England by English Heritage (out of print, but text may be available on their website)

**Other publications**

**Alton Estate, Roehampton SW15** by Nikolaus Pevsner (London County Council Housing), Reprinted from the Architectural Review, July 1959  
**Modern Matters - Principles & Practice in Conserving Recent Architecture:** by English Heritage (Donhead)  
**Connell, Ward and Lucas:** A Modernist Architecture in England by Dennis Sharp and Sally Rendel (Frances Lincoln Publishers)  
**Modern Architecture Since 1900** by William Curtis (Phaidon Press)  
**The Buildings of England: London South** by Cherry and Pevsner (Penguin)  
**A Stitch in Time:** Maintaining your Property, available from The SPAB  
**Building Conservation Directory.** Available from Cathedral Communications 01747 871717 or www.buildingconservation.com  
**The Elements of Style,** An Encyclopaedia of English Architectural Detail, edited by Stephen Calloway (Mitchell Beazley)  
**Informed Conservation** by Kate Clark. Available from English Heritage

**Public Archives**

**Wandsworth Heritage Service**  
Battersea Library  
265 Lavender Hill  
SW11 1JB  
Tel: 020 8871 7753  
Email: heritage@wandsworth.gov.uk  
See the Council's website for opening times.

**London Metropolitan Archive**  
40 Northampton Road  
Clerkenwell  
London  
EC1R 0HB  
Website: [http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation/LGNL_Services/Leisure_and_culture/Records_and_archives/](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation/LGNL_Services/Leisure_and_culture/Records_and_archives/)

**Useful Websites**

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Wandsworth Conservation & Design Group
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<td>Funds for Historic Buildings</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ffhb.org.uk">www.ffhb.org.uk</a></td>
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<td>HELM: Guidance on the historic environment from across the country compiled by English Heritage</td>
<td><a href="http://www.helm.org.uk">www.helm.org.uk</a></td>
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<td>English Heritage</td>
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<td>Twentieth Century Society</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.savebritainsheritage.org">www.savebritainsheritage.org</a></td>
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<td>Images of England: Details and pictures of listed buildings nationwide</td>
<td><a href="http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk">www.imagesofengland.org.uk</a></td>
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<td>Pastscape: information on archaeological and architectural heritage</td>
<td><a href="http://pastscape.english-heritage.org.uk/">http://pastscape.english-heritage.org.uk/</a></td>
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<td>Climate Change and Your Home: information about energy efficiency in old buildings</td>
<td><a href="http://www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk/live/homepage.aspx">www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk/live/homepage.aspx</a></td>
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<td>Building Conservation Directory: Articles and specialist craftsmen</td>
<td><a href="http://www.buildingconservation.com">www.buildingconservation.com</a></td>
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<td>Work out your carbon footprint</td>
<td><a href="http://carboncalculator.direct.gov.uk">http://carboncalculator.direct.gov.uk</a></td>
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**Wandsworth History Society**

www.wandsworthhistory.org.uk

**Putney Society**

www.putneysociety.org.uk
Contacts

**Wandsworth Council**
**Borough Planner**
**Town Hall,**  
**Wandsworth High Street,**  
**London, SW18 2PU**

**Tel:** 020 8871 6000  
**Email:** boroughplanner@wandsworth.gov.uk

**Council Contacts**
- Planning Service: General enquiries 020 8871 6636  
- Conservation & Design 020 8871 6646 or 6612  
- Planning Enforcement Group 020 8871 6643  
- Building Control 020 8871 7620  
- Area Housing Office 020 8871 5530  
- Economic Development Office (shopfront grants) 020 8871 6203  
- Environmental Services (grants) 020 8871 6127  
- Wandsworth’s Local Studies Centre 020 8871 7753  
- Parks Service 020 8871 6347  
- Arboricultural Service (trees on Council land) 020 8871 6370

**External Contacts**
- English Heritage (London Region) 020 7973 3000  
- English Heritage (Customer Services, publication requests, etc) 0870 333 1181  
- The Twentieth Century Society 020 7250 3857  
- SAVE Britain’s Heritage 020 7253 3500  
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) 020 7377 1644  
- Local Residents Association Contact Conservation & Design

**Planning Aid for London**
**Unit 2, 11-29 Fashion Street**  
**London, E1 6PX**  
**Tel:** 020 7247 4900