

St Paul's & Grand Union Canal and Boston Manor Conservation Area (CA) Appraisals Analysis

BCC DRAFT for discussion

St Paul's CA Appraisal Analysis

We will begin by describing what I feel makes the current St Paul's CA both valuable and important but also incomplete. The central theme and indeed essence of the current St Paul's CA is not that the protected area is homogeneous architecturally. It is that the CA is diverse architecturally and period wise. Street widths, the epochs at which the terraces were built and indeed the general feel and character can and does vary from street to street within the current CA. From the simple late Victorian terraces of Lateward Road which is at the heart of the St Paul's CA:



To the later Edwardian Arts and Crafts Movement semi-detached residences of Hamilton Road and Somerset Road respectively:

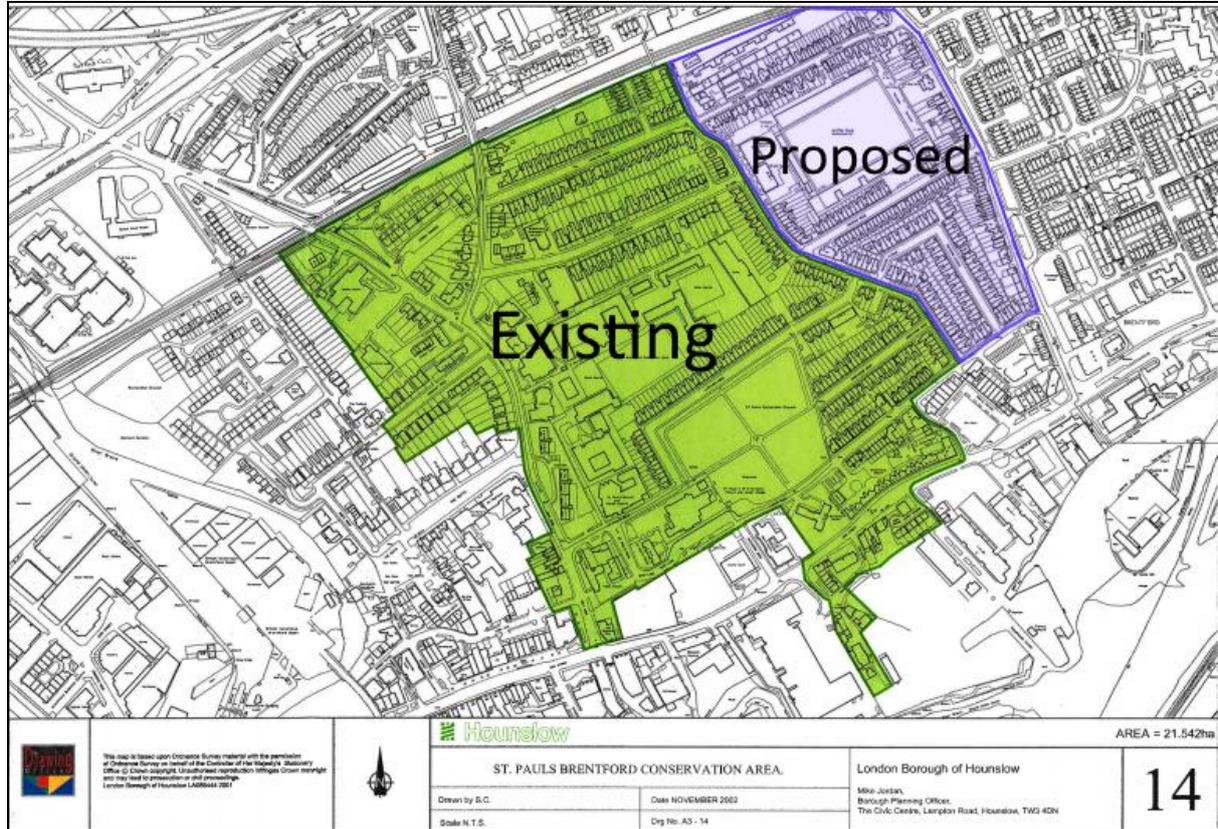


To many examples of earlier Victorian architecture, below:



So therefore the current St Paul's CA reflects many different historical periods of development and with that - many different architectural movements and planning strategies. The overwhelming theme is that of a working class to middle class Victorian area - whose beauty and sincerity lies within its demonstration of its own evolution over the 50 year time period in which the majority of the housing stock was erected.

The proposed expansion to this CA to the following is vital in binding the original CA to the other half of the area that it should have never been separated from it the first place:



The character and historical story of this quarter does not end at Brook Road South as the current CA suggests. It continues to the other side of the road - through to the west side of Ealing Road as depicted above. The late Victorian terraces of Braemar Road (outside the CA) perfectly mirror that of Lateward Road. The east end of Albany Road and all of Mafeking Avenue (outside the current CA) are almost identical to many of the terraces in Clifden Road as shown below:

Mafeking Avenue (outside the current CA):





Round the corner in Clifden Road (inside the current CA):

New Road - which contains the impressive late Victorian Primitive Methodist Chapel (all outside the current CA) - contains earlier Victorian domiciles - again fitting the trend of simple two story housing found across the quarter that is of the same period as the houses in Windmill Road, Half Acre and Hamilton Road - all 3 being protected the St Paul's CA).



New Road mid 19th Century terrace (outside St Paul's CA):



Half Acre mid 19th Century terrace (within the St Paul's CA):

At this point I will address the current Brentford Football Stadium which is soon to be demolished barring any unforeseen hiccups. The Griffin Park housing scheme which already has a council approval can either be included in the enhanced St Paul's CA or left out for possible future inclusion. The plans for this project depict housing that is fairly harmonious with the area that sits around it and is in no way a hindrance to the proposed CA extension.

The conclusion is therefore an uncomplicated one. With the almost total destruction of Brentford's once impressive high street last century, an epic thoroughfare that included excellent Edwardian, Victorian, Regency and earlier buildings - we now have the rare opportunity to have an area contained within the heart of Brentford that is the last example of the true character of Brentford itself - protected as a whole. This enhanced CA will do much to undo the mistakes of the past that Brentford is not unique in partaking in. The character of the buildings west of Half Acre and west of Windmill Road - and indeed the aesthetic emotionality of that area - do not reflect those east of these borders. The brutalist housing that emerged from the total destruction of the housing east of Ealing Road have a completely different nature also. It makes sense for the St Paul's CA to be extended (as is being proposed by the council concerning the Grand Union & Boston Manor CA to include The Ham). I believe this enclave which the St Paul's CA dissects in half was historically called Old Brentford and indeed this may be a more suitable title. This Old Brentford quarter reflects a story and urban poetry remarkably well preserved to this day but in urgent need of a more formal appreciation and protection. Its essence is one of the plurality two story Victorian terraces designed essentially for the working classes - evolving throughout each architectural movement of Victorian epoch. The area is a type of living museum as a result - however it is an area that needs recognition as unified entity.

We would also like to ask the Council to consider including the Morrisons site within the St Paul's CA. Finally we believe Somerset Road (split in half by two CAs) in its entirety should be included within the Butts' CA as cutting streets in half when both CA's contain examples of the architecture within Somerset Road makes little sense. Further to this point - the small mid Victorian terrace on the west side of Half Acre should also switch to the Butts CA from the St Paul's CA to further tidy the boundaries.

Grand Union Canal & Boston Manor Appraisal Analysis

This somewhat strangely shaped CA is nonetheless important and valuable and we support its extension into The Ham. We believe the case for enlarging the St Paul's CA eastwards far outweigh the need to expand the Grand Union Canal and Boston Manor CA to include an area with around 2 to 3 Victorian structures left remaining. Having said this, we support this enlargement.