

## OONA AREA 2 THE RAILWAY COTTAGES

5.1 This area includes the Old Oak Conservation Area, made up of around 194 late-Victorian terraced workers' cottages near Willesden Junction, built in 1889 by the London and North Western Railway for its employees. These have been known since as 'The Railway Cottages'. Stephenson and Goodhall Streets run north south parallel to Old Oak Lane, on the western side. On the eastern side two mews streets run east west.



5.2 The housing was laid out as 'through terraces' with neat, regular street fronts contrasting with narrower and more informal back alleys. A railway institute and mission church and school were also originally provided but these buildings were subsequently converted to residential use. (current use of the 'clubhouse'?)

5.3 These streets make up what is now a rare surviving example in London of late 19<sup>th</sup> century planned workers housing. Post war development of social housing has left few such areas, which are more typical of northern industrial cities. As a result, the streets are frequently used for filming.

5.4 The area was designated by LB Ealing as the Old Oak Conservation Area in 1982 and extended in 1990 and 1994. A Character Appraisal and a Management Plan were published in 2007, with input from the Island Triangle Residents Association (TITRA) and Ealing Civic Society. As stated in the Conservation Area Appraisal (paragraph 26) *The character of the CA is largely if not wholly reliant on maintaining the outward appearance of the estate as little unaltered as possible*

5.5 This community in Old Oak Lane has a strong identity, with many residents having moved into the streets because of their historic and unusual character. This chapter of the neighbourhood plan, and the draft policies within it, has been drawn up in close consultation with TITRA as the local residents association.

## **Current planning policy context**

5.6 This is the only conservation area within the OONA. In conservation areas, there is a presumption in favour of retention of buildings and structures that contribute to their special character. Designated CAs are subject to additional planning controls, including resistance to demolition of buildings, restriction of 'permitted development' rights and automatic tree protection.

5.7 The 2007 Old Oak Conservation Area Appraisal continues to be a material consideration in deciding planning applications but does not set 'policy' as such. Ealing Core Strategy Policy 7B requires that:

*New development must achieve a high standard of amenity for users and for adjacent uses by ensuring;*

- a) high quality architecture*
- b) good levels of daylight and sunlight*
- c) good levels of privacy*
- d) coherent development of the site*
- e) appropriate levels of development on site*
- f) positive visual impact*
- g) legibility and accessibility*

5.8 Additional justification to this policy states at E.7 B.6 *Development proposals should identify the positive aspects of the site and its surroundings from the outset, using existing evidence such as character appraisals and conservation documents where these exist.*

5.9 Ealing Policy 7C on Heritage states at B(a) *Development within or affecting the setting of Conservation Areas should; a) retain and enhance characteristic features and detailing and avoid the introduction of design and materials that undermine the significance of the conservation area.* There are further sub-paragraphs A, C and D.

5.10 Were the Draft OPDC Local Plan be in place prior to the examination of this neighbourhood plan, 'general conformity' with OPDC policies and heritage and conservation would be required for any policies introduced via the neighbourhood Plan.

5.11 The relevant Draft OPDC Policy is D8 on Heritage which states (in part):

- a) Proposals should conserve and enhance the historic environment;*
- b) OPDC will give great weight to the conservation and enhancement of the significance of designated heritage assets, including their settings. Proposals harming the significance of a designated heritage asset should be justified having regard to their heritage interest, reasonable alternatives to avoid or mitigate harm and delivery of public benefits;*

A Conservation Area is, in OPDC terms, a designated heritage asset

5.12 The National Planning Policy Framework and the London Plan also include policies on the protection of heritage assets, with which the draft policies in this neighbourhood plan will need to be found to 'generally conform' when the Draft Plan is examined.

5.13 The Draft OPDC Local Plan also includes a series of 'Place' chapters. One of these (Place P8) covers the area defined by OPDC as Old Oak Lane and Old Oak. The sections of Policy relevant to Heritage and Character read:

#### ***Heritage and character***

*i) Strengthening local identity and character by:*

*i) conserving and enhancing heritage assets including the Old Oak Lane Conservation Area, Grand Union Canal Conservation Area and their settings;*

*ii) ensuring future local character is informed by the area's existing heritage including the railways, Grand Union Canal, residential and industrial heritage*

#### ***Building heights***

*j) Contributing to a variety of building heights that respond to public transport access and sensitive locations including delivering:*

*iii) generally lower heights directly adjacent to sensitive locations including the Grand Union Canal, Wormwood Scrubs and existing residential neighbourhoods of the Island Triangle, Shaftesbury Gardens, Midland Terrace, Wells House Road, Harley Road and East Acton.*

5.14 The draft neighbourhood plan policies proposed in this chapter of the neighbourhood plan seek to achieve 'general conformity' with both Ealing and OPDC strategic policies, and welcome the emphasis placed by both planning authorities on protection of heritage assets.

#### **De-designation of Strategic Industrial Land**

5.15 In the current LB Ealing Core Strategy, the area to the immediate north of Goodhall Street is designated as an industrial location and as Strategic Industrial Land. This same designation was included in early versions of the OPDC Local Plan, but in the Regulation 19.2 version this area is proposed for redesignation as a 'mixed use' area.

5.16 The new area proposed for mixed use currently includes two separate sites occupied by light industrial premises. These are the triangular site owned by BTM International UK, and the New Business Centre site (Units 1-5). The former site is the subject of pre-application consultation on a proposed mixed use development of 40 new homes and flexible commercial/community space.

5.17 This neighbourhood plan supports the principle of eventual mixed use development on both these sites. OONF has long argued the case for a mixed use buffer between intensive housing development at Old Oak North and the Strategic Industrial Land of Park Royal. However, this draft neighbourhood plan argues that in the light of SIL de-designation the next obvious step would be to incorporate this relatively small area of land within the Old Oak Conservation area. The railway lines to the north of site would then form a natural boundary to a CA which integrates new housing development with existing 19<sup>th</sup> century housing.

#### **Open spaces**

5.18 The wide alleyways running between Goodhall Street and Old Oak Lane are a distinctive feature of the Old Oak Conservation Area. So too is the strip of land to the west of Stephenson Street, which

is maintained by local residents as a community garden. This neighbourhood plan seeks designation of these small areas as Local Green Space (2018 NPPF paragraphs 99 and 100).

### **Proposed neighbourhood plan policies for OONA Area 2 (Railway Cottages)**

5.19 The draft policies below reflect objectives 1,4, 6 and 9 of this neighbourhood plan, as well as contributing to other objectives.

***OONA Policy 2A – to seek OPDC action to extend the boundary of the Old Oak Lane Conservation Area to include the land to the north of Goodhall Street and east of Old Oak Lane, as shown in Figure ( ) below.***



***OONA POLICY 2B – pending statutory implementation of Policy OONA 2A, to designate the land to the north of Goodhall Street and east of Old Oak Lane as an ‘area of special character’ within which new development that causes harm to views into and from the adjacent conservation area will be resisted.***

***Reasoned justification: this small area of land has hitherto been designated as Strategic Industrial Land but is due (subject to adoption of the OPDC Local Plan) to be re-designated for mixed use. Any mixed use development on the site needs to meet the requirements of LB Ealing Policy on Heritage 7B and 7C and (potentially) OPDC Policy D8 on Heritage. The two sites at this location offer future potential to add additional housing within the neighbourhood area, in a manner which respects neighbouring buildings and enhances rather than harms a conservation area with an unusually fine and homogenous example of 19<sup>th</sup> century worker housing.***

***OONA Policy 2C – to allocate the land north of Goodhall Street primarily for housing use within mixed use developments that may also combine B class and social/community uses.***

***Reasoned justification: as a potential mixed use area, new housing is seen OONF as the first priority for redevelopment of this proposed addition to the Old Oak Conservation area. As a means of maximising viability B class (office, light industrial) uses would also be acceptable.***



**OONA Policy 2D – to designate certain areas within the Old Oak Conservation area as Local Green Space, as shown on the map at Figure ( ).**

**Reasoned justification: these small green spaces are recognised as making a contribution to the heritage of the area, and LGS designation will provide a strong protection against development.**



Figure ( ) Map of OONA Area 2 Railway Cottages showing proposed areas for Local Green Space designation and photo of Stephenson Street communal garden