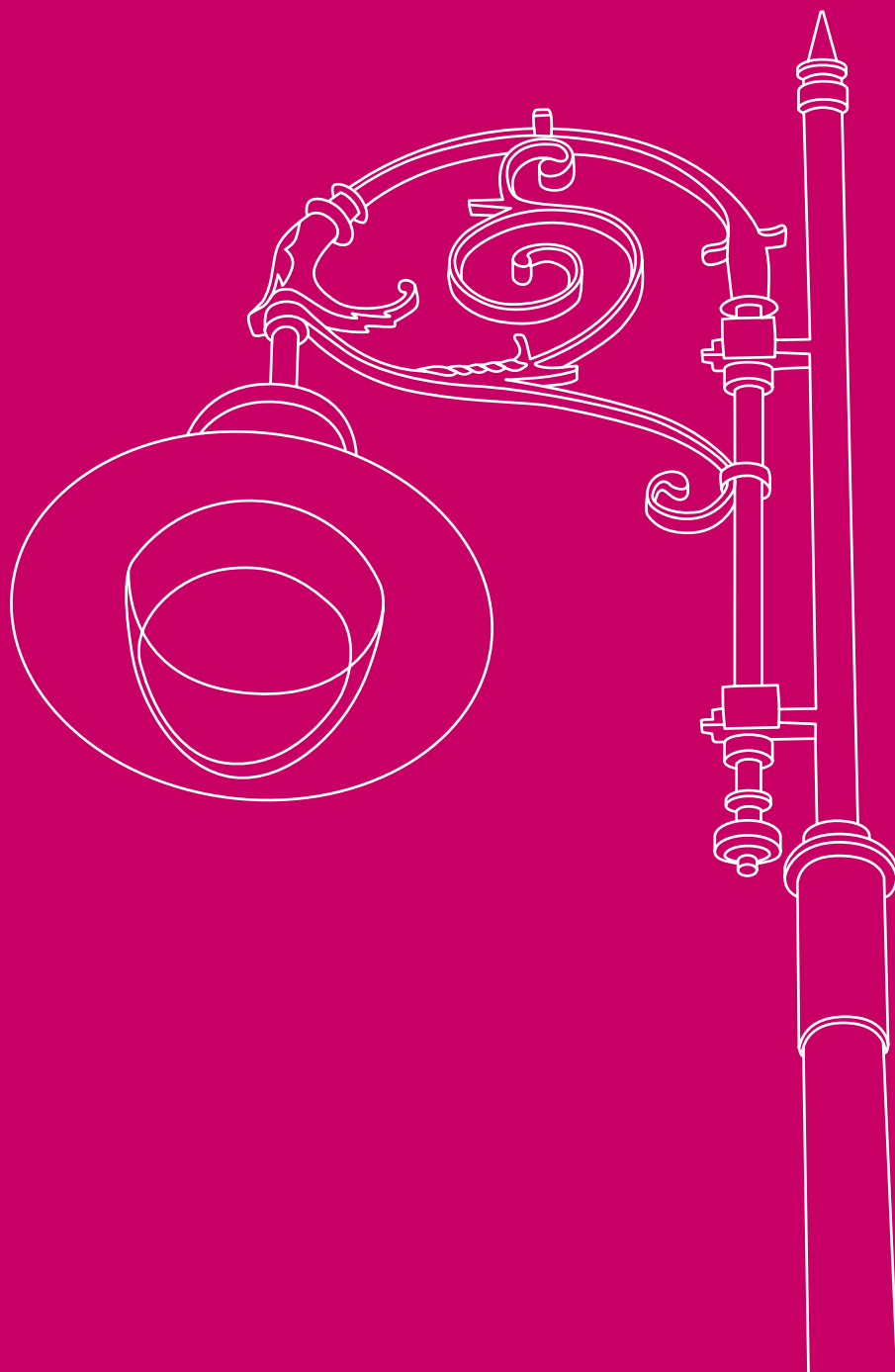


Local Character



Index

- 1.01** Local Character and Distinctiveness
- 1.02** Conservation Areas
- 1.03** Listed Structures
- 1.04** Historic Lighting
- 1.05** Historic Bollards
- 1.06** Historic Street Nameplates
- 1.07** Historic Paving
- 1.08** Ironwork
- 1.09** Trees

Local Character and Distinctiveness

- Places have their own particular character. This character comes from a combination of factors including the topography, geology and history of development and use.
- In order to preserve or enhance local character, it is necessary to recognise and understand its constituent parts and their relationship to each other.
- This includes the original layout and relationship of buildings (or other structures) and spaces, trees and other vegetation, furniture, materials and workmanship.
- The positive things that contribute to this character and make it distinctive should be preserved or enhanced.
- Local examples should be used as patterns and replicated, where necessary, to enhance local distinctiveness.
- Whether in a conservation area or not, some items or structures (as well as buildings) are 'listed' by English Heritage for their historic interest – this gives them statutory protection and they may not be moved or altered without Listed Building Consent.
- The setting of a listed building (or other listed structure) is important and should be sympathetic to its character.
- Maintenance of the existing road network does not need permission.



Colourful houses in Hartland Road



Eclectic shops in Camden High Street



Doughty Street in Bloomsbury Conservation Area

1.02

Conservation Areas

- Conservation Areas are designated (under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990) for their particular character and historic interest. All work in the street should aim to preserve or enhance that character.
- 36 areas in Camden are designated as conservation areas. Their boundaries are irregular and subject to review from time to time. They can be viewed on Camden's MaGlc digital mapping system.
- Over 70% of the borough's built-up areas are in conservation areas, with new conservation areas designated from time to time.
- Most Conservation Areas have an accompanying Conservation Area Statement. These comprehensive booklets include information on:
 - **Location and boundary:**
Area shapes tend to be very irregular; view them on MaGlc digital map system;
 - **Area history:**
Process of development;
 - **Character and appearance:**
Description at street-by-street level;
 - **Streetscape audit:**
Lists individual elements, including furniture, that contribute to local character (lists are not exhaustive – use them for examples);
 - **Guidelines for building alterations:**
Includes changes to streetscape design.

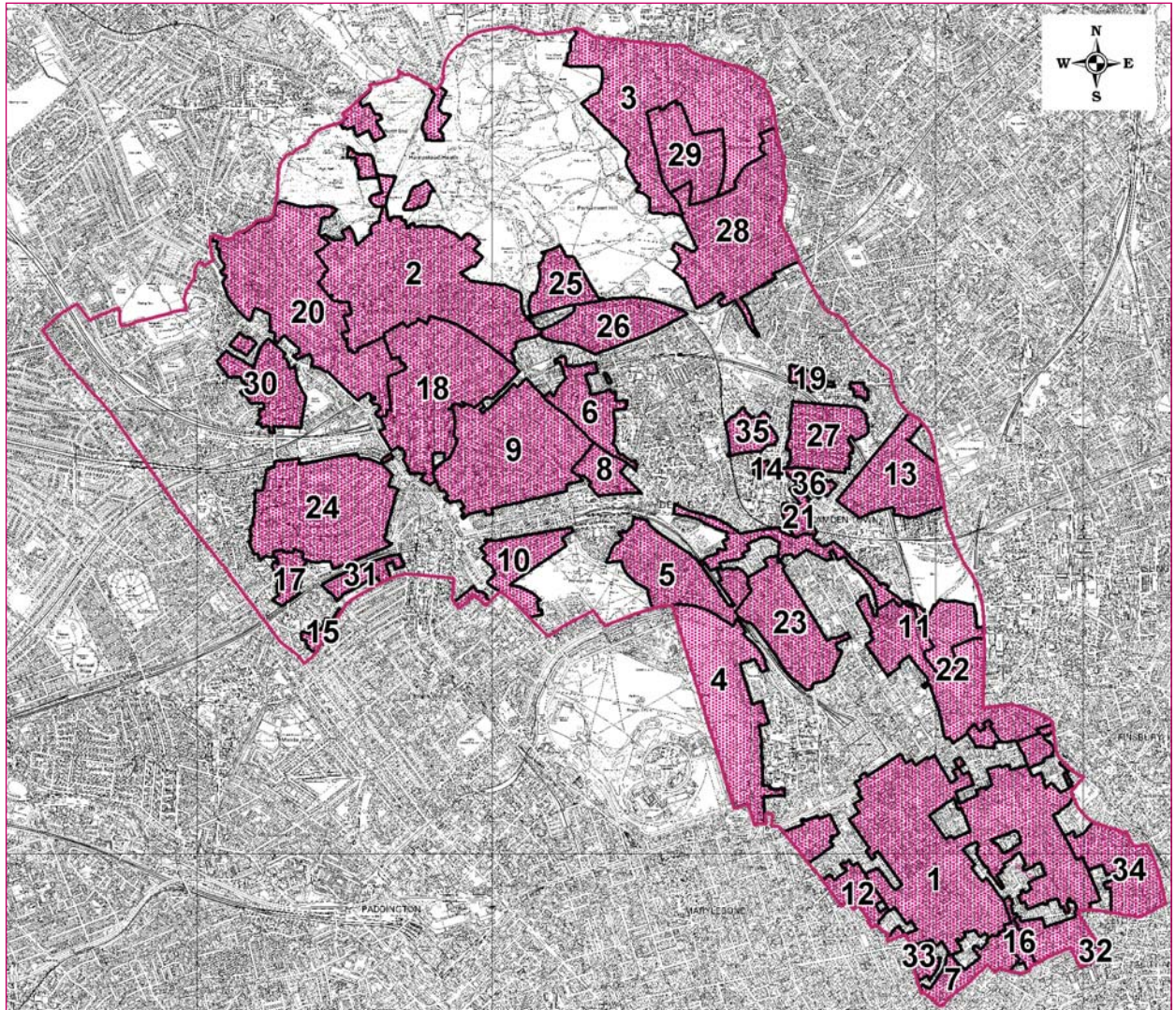
Process for Conservation Considerations

- 1 During the preliminary design stage of every scheme, check whether the location is within a Conservation Area. This can be done using the MaGlc digital maps.
- 2 Read the section on character and appearance of each street involved.
- 3 Check whether any streetscape elements are listed in the streetscape audit (lists are not exhaustive – use them for examples).
- 4 Check if any guidelines apply to the area or to the type of work proposed.
- 5 During detailed design, check each section of the Streetscape Design Manual to see if any design policies differ for conservation areas.



A narrow mews in Hampstead

- Though extra care must be taken while doing works in conservation areas, similar attention must be paid to all other areas, as the Council has proposals for new conservation areas in the next few years.

Conservation Areas of Camden

1 Bloomsbury	13 Camden Square	25 South Hill Park
2 Hampstead	14 Kelly Street	26 Mansfield
3 Highgate Village	15 St John's Wood	27 Bartholomew Estate
4 Regent's Village	16 Kingsway	28 Dartmouth Park
5 Primrose Hill	17 Prioory Road	29 Holly Lodge Estate
6 Parkhill/Upper Park	18 Fitzjohns/Netherhall	30 West End Green/Parsifal Road
7 Seven Dials	19 Kentish Town	31 Alexandra Road
8 Eton	20 Redington/Frognaal	32 Strand
9 Belsize Park	21 Jeffrey's Street	33 Denmark Street
10 Elsworthy	22 King's Cross/St Pancras	34 Hatton Garden
11 Regent's Canal	23 Camden Town	35 Inkerman
12 Charlotte Street	24 Swiss Cottage	36 Rochester

1.03

Listed Structures

- Some items of street furniture are listed, giving them statutory protection. As their location and setting are intrinsic to their value, moving or altering them without listed building consent is a criminal offence.
- The Conservation Area Statements provide excellent preliminary information on listed structures. However the Conservation & Urban Design Team must be contacted for more detailed information, including processes for gaining listed building consent for moving or altering listed structures.
- Listed street furniture and structures vary considerably. They include:
 - Cattle and horse troughs;
 - Drinking fountains;
 - Monuments and statues;
 - K2 telephone boxes;
 - Streetlights;
 - Bollards;
 - Milestones;
 - Bridges.



K2 red telephone box



Cattle trough in Gray's Inn Road



Listed lamp and fountain in Queen Square

Historic Lighting

- Camden has a wide variety of historic lighting, kept in good working order.
- Historic lighting has a crucial role in reinforcing local character and must be maintained.
- Many historic lamp columns are listed. Check the relevant Conservation Area Statements for more details, or the MaGIC geographic information system.
- Refer to Street Lighting (4.08) for more information.
- Where light levels from historic lamps do not meet current acceptable standards, consider upgrading the light source to white light.
- Additional lighting may also be needed in the area. This might be achieved through additional replica, similar-styled or complementary modern columns. Do not use 'pastiche/faux' heritage columns.
- Alternatively, consider up-lighting of nearby buildings, trees or other structures, though care must be taken to avoid light pollution. Consult Conservation & Urban Design and the Street Lighting team on any proposal.
- When choosing 'similar styled' columns, the scale, profile and level of design detail of the original lighting must be considered.
- See section 4.08 for more details on modern lighting considerations. Also refer to Camden's Lighting Policy.



Traditional lamp fixed to a house in Wesleyan Place

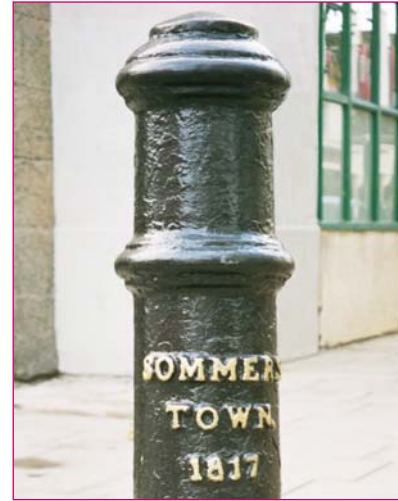


Replica lamp on Chalk Farm Road Bridge

1.05

Historic Bollards

- Several styles of bollard have been used in Camden over the years, with some types strongly associated with (and named after), different areas of the borough.
- Hampstead bollard: used within the old Hampstead Borough boundaries.
- Camden bollard: used within the Camden Town area.
- St Pancras bollard: originating from the old St Pancras Borough, but subsequently has become commonly used in many areas of London.
- St Pancras bollard with shield motif should only be re-used within the old borough of St Pancras.
- When replacing or introducing new bollards in an area, the existing prevalent bollard type should be used.
- Where Hampstead and Camden bollards are prevalent, a St Pancras bollard should only be introduced if the bollard suffers from persistent damage.
- Some bollards are of particular historic interest as they mark the old borough boundaries within the London Borough of Camden. These are usually listed within the Conservation Area Statements.
- See section 4.10 for more details on bollard types, relative strengths, colour banding and conditions for removal, retention or installation.



Somers Town 'canon' bollard



Foundling Estate bollard



Old St Pancras borough bollard

Historic Street Nameplates

- Provision of street nameplates is required by law under the Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847, and the London Building Act 1939. The signs can be fixed to walls, buildings and other boundary structures.
- Many old street nameplates have been retained for their historic interest and often display the name of one of the three Metropolitan boroughs, later combined to form Camden (Hampstead, Holborn, St Pancras).
- Street nameplates have always been used to distinguish different borough areas by adding the borough name in small lettering. Though borough boundaries have changed over the years, signs with old borough names are retained (e.g. Borough of Holborn), for historical interest.
- Old street nameplates made of ceramic tiles and cast iron should be retained and repaired wherever possible.
- Where a copy must be used, it should reproduce the visual features of the original e.g. particular typeface or font, raised letters, sign shape and thickness.
- For more information see section 4.05.



Use of ceramic tiles



Use of metal plate



Retention of old borough names



Old nameplate in Netherhall Conservation Area

1.07

Historic Paving

- York stone slabs and granite kerbs and setts were an intrinsic part of the character of many streets.
- York stone slabs were often carefully aligned with building geometry, for instance, a larger York stone slab centred on the entrance to a property. This alignment should be maintained when re-laying old York stone.
- Old setts should match original sett size and colour, as well as coursing and joint widths (select setts for each course).
- Careful attention must be paid to the workmanship when re-laying old York stone.
- Modern silver/grey setts might be unacceptable in the context of distinctively coloured old setts.
- Historic granite sett crossovers and other sett paving should be retained but may need re-laying to make them safe.
- Quadrants and radius kerbs add to the quality of the streetscene.
- Drainage channels made of rows of setts are a feature of many old roads and should not be covered or removed.
- See section 3.03 and 3.06 for more details on York paving and granite kerbs.



Setts used in traditional drainage techniques



York stone and old granite setts



Cobbles in Baynes Mews

Ironwork

- Coalhole covers can be found set into York stone paving outside many older buildings. Through them, coal was delivered direct to each property's cellar. Many coalhole covers were cast locally and display the maker's own pattern, name and address.
- Coalhole covers remain the property of the property owner.
- Coalhole covers and the surrounding York stone slab should be retained when footways are repaved.
- They should not be moved from their original setting in relation to the property, but if there is no choice, they must be repositioned as close to the original site as possible.
- Replication of broken covers and slabs is highly desirable.
- Historic grilles (for light wells or Victorian drainage channels) and other ironwork also contribute to the character of an area and should be retained and maintained wherever possible.



Railings in Bidborough Street



Locally made coalhole cover

1.09

Trees

- Trees are a valuable part of the streetscape and can perform many roles, including improving air quality, breaking up and softening the built environment and creating a traffic calming feature, as well as providing shade.
- Species selection must be made through Camden's Arboricultural Services and involves careful consideration of the historical and physical setting and potential maintenance regime.
- The following information needs to be considered when selecting an appropriate species:
 - Available pavement width (for tree pit width and mature trunk girth);
 - Existing building line (for mature canopy breadth and height);
 - Existing hard surfaces and underground services.



Tree pit in carriageway in Whidbourne Street

Carriageway Tree Pits

- Tree pits can be built into the carriageway, either protruding from the existing kerb line or freestanding.
- Carriageway pits are suitable where there is under-capacity in street parking. Trees can 'break up' the monotony of parking and can have a traffic calming effect. The footway width is also left intact.
- New kerbing should match the existing adjacent footway kerbs.
- Bollards with reflectors, should be placed on the roadside corners to protect young trees.
- Trees must not be planted where they are likely to obscure lampposts, street signs, CCTV cameras or sight lines at junctions and pedestrian crossings.

Footway Tree Pits

- Most tree pits are constructed adjacent to the kerb edge. Their design can be altered according to proposed tree species and aesthetic considerations.
- Preferred tree pit dimensions are 1000 x 1000 x 1000mm, with 600 x 600 x 600mm as an absolute minimum.
- A root deflector in the tree pit must be used to prevent roots from growing immediately below the footway. For more details contact Arboricultural Services.
- A minimum clear level footway width of 1.2m should be left between pit edge and the back of the footway, (see section 3.01).
- Where this is not possible, the use of a permeable surface infill (such as 'Sureset') can be used in the pit to provide a firm surface for pedestrians, wheelchairs etc. However, surface infill must be used sparingly due to cost, and must not be added around newly planted trees (up to 3 years).
- A water pipe for watering must be added to every new pit.
- Soil filling in the pit should be kept level with the footway, by 'topping up' after settling has occurred.
- The use of setts to 'edge' small pits is not encouraged due to maintenance problems caused by roots pushing up setts, thereby creating a trip hazard.
- Tree grilles and guards should not generally be used.

Protection and Maintenance of Existing Trees

- Where changes are being made to the footway or carriageway, the works contract must include procedures for protecting existing trees.
- Information on appropriate protection of the roots, trunk and ground around trees are outlined in NJUG Publication No. 10: Guidelines for the Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Services in proximity to trees (1995), which applies equally well to all highways works.
- Where existing paving slabs have been forced out of line or level by tree roots and cannot be lowered, the paving should either be ramped over the roots or asphalt laid to provide a safe walking surface.
- When in doubt, seek advice from Arboricultural Services on the impact of any works on nearby trees.



Tree pit in footway with water pipe

Notes and Amendments