

**HERONSGATE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL
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HERONSGATE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1.0 Introduction and Executive Summary

- 1.1 Three Rivers District Council has a duty under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (The Act) to designate as Conservation Areas any “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The designation of a Conservation Area brings additional protection of trees, control over demolition and development as well as a requirement for a decision maker, in exercising planning powers, to pay “special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area”.
- 1.2 The Council is additionally required by the 1990 Act to keep Conservation Areas under review and to formulate and publish, from time to time, proposals for their preservation and enhancement. Government Guidance, provided in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPS 5; 2010) expresses the need for local authorities to assess the special interest, character and appearance of Conservation Areas to assist in setting out planning policy and to inform Development Management.
- 1.3 Three Rivers District Council (the Council) designated Heronsgate as a Conservation Area on 11 February 1993. It covers 59 hectares and contains some 70 detached houses and 16 semi-detached houses. Most of the houses have large gardens within which there may be garages, gazebos, summerhouses, garden sheds and occasionally an outdoor swimming pool or tennis court.
- 1.4 There are also a small Anglican Church, a public house, a community hall, a riding establishment, many fine trees and several small meadows. The overall density of development is less than two dwellings per hectare, a very low density for a housing area. [Appendix 1](#) details the boundary of the Conservation Area. Until 1973 there was a preparatory school called Beaumont House at the south-western end of Nottingham Road South.
- 1.5 The aims of this appraisal are to:
 - (a) Set out the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area and to describe the special character and appearance that it is desirable to preserve or enhance
 - (b) Examine the existing boundaries of the Conservation Area and consider the potential for other areas to be included and, if appropriate, where existing areas should be excluded and
 - (c) Identify areas subject to pressure for change that would be adverse to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area as a result of permitted development and identify any areas where the removal of permitted development rights would safeguard the essential character and appearance of the area.

Please note: *The Conservation Area Appraisal does not represent an exhaustive record of every building, feature or space within the Conservation Area and an omission should not be taken to imply that an element is of no interest.*

2.0 History and Development

2.1 Location

2.2 The Conservation Area is located to the south-west of Long Lane, an ancient road that leads up to the group of buildings at The Swillett. This is a rural area, within the Green Belt, to the south of Chorleywood and its Common. To the south-east is the intrusive M25, and Junction 17 (which links with Long Lane).

2.3 The boundaries of the Conservation Area are, essentially, those of Heronsgate Farm, first mentioned as Herringsgate Farm in the 16th century, Heryngarste in the 17th century and Herring Gate in the 18th/19th century.

2.4 The farm was a traditional mix of arable and pasture with good clay soil on chalk strata; the ground sloping gently from the north down to the south, and across the area from Long Lane down towards the valley to the south-west. The farm was bought in 1846 by the Chartist, Feargus O'Conner.

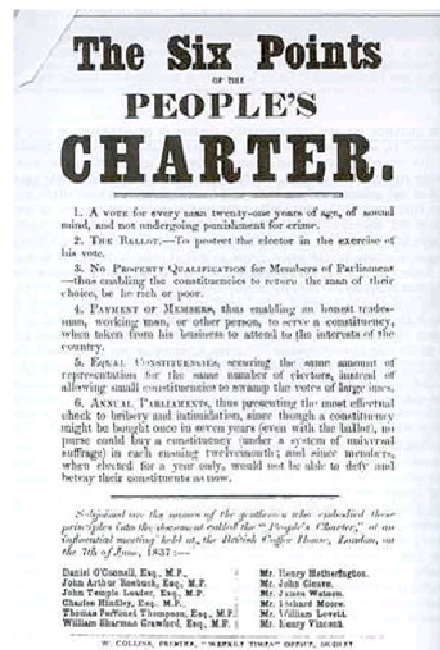
2.5 Chartists

2.6 The Chartists were a working class organisation that arose after the 1832 Reform Bill. The Chartists' aims were to tackle the inequalities and corruption that remained in 19th century England. The reforms that they proposed were published in the Charter of 1838 (pictured) and contained the following six reforms:

- (a) one man, one vote
- (b) secret ballots
- (c) MPs need not be landed gentry
- (d) payments to MPs allowing poorer people to stand
- (e) equal size constituencies, and
- (f) annual parliaments

2.7 Many felt that the reforms were not radical enough but it was received with wide popularity and a petition was presented to Parliament in 1839 but was rejected. There followed a period of turmoil, arrests, riots and strikes.

2.8 In 1842 Feargus O'Connor, a leader of the Chartist movement, submitted a further petition of over 3 million signatures, but this was again rejected by Parliament. Later that year public meetings were banned by Parliament and whilst Chartism remained a popular cause, the organisation waned and the Chartist convention of 1858 was its last.



Charter of 1838

2.9 While Chartism as a radical political movement of the mid 19th century failed, it is interesting to note that all of its aims are now accepted as part of our normal life, save only for the proposal for annual parliament.

2.10 Heronsgate

- 2.11 The story of the original Heronsgate settlement concerns one Chartist particularly, Feargus O'Connor. O'Connor was a man of contradictions. A brilliant man, Irish MP and Barrister, an intellectual who genuinely empathised with the plight of working class people; a thinker who was also a man of action. He became one of the leading and most famous members of the Chartist movement and, controversially, set up the Chartist Co-operative Land Society (or Company).
- 2.12 The Company had two main aims, the first was to liberate the working man and transport him and his family from the grim conditions of the mill, mine and factory to a life of self-sufficiency, subservient to no master and a healthy life in the country-side away from the polluted industrial cities. The second aim was to realise one of the main Chartist principles, that of universal suffrage – one man, one vote. By providing families with their own plot of land and their own house they would become landowners with the right to vote.
- 2.13 The way in which O'Connor set about this was to create a lottery; working men from all over the north and the midlands bought tickets (or shares) and there were great draws to see who had won the chance of a new life. The draws were very dramatic and highly charged events with the prize offering not wealth but health and freedom from the factory floor.
- 2.14 The glimpse of such an idyll was irresistible and thousands of working people saved 3d a week to purchase a £2.10s.0d share. One share gave you a chance of a 2 acre plot, 1½ shares a 3 acre plot, with 2 shares for the larger 4 acre plots. The financial plan was that £5,000 would be raised from 2,000 shares allowing the purchase of 120 acres (at £18.15s.0d/acre) with £2,250 to build cottage and buy stock.
- 2.15 Heronsgate Farm (103 acres) was bought by O'Connor for £1,860 (at a time when the Land Company had £8,081), and he personally supervised the laying out of the plots, the construction of the roads and of the houses. This was a major achievement as nothing in his life or upbringing gave him the practical skills needed to plan and construct the infrastructure and to design houses and employ builders to construct them. [Appendix 2](#) Historic Map 1872-1891 depicts Heronsgate otherwise referred to as O'Connorville.
- 2.16 The roads were to be nine feet wide, wide enough for a horse and cart. All the roads were named after industrial towns to give the new residents a sense of familiarity in these strange surroundings. A short access road (Stockport Road) left Long Lane following the line of the former farm access track. At right angles to this, a long road (Nottingham Road) bisected the site allowing space for the larger 4-5 acre plots to the south-west.
- 2.17 The area to the north-east was itself bisected by another long road (Halifax Road) which had the smaller 2 and 3 acre plots along it. It was not the most efficient layout as Nottingham Road had houses on both sides of it but Halifax Road had cottages only on the north-east side. The determining factor though was the variety of plot sizes with access to each plot. At the north-west end of Nottingham Road it turns sharp left and becomes Bradford Road.
- 2.18 The houses were built so that each related directly to its plot. O'Connor could have saved money by grouping the dwellings together but the relationship with the land was of over-arching importance. He did however save some money by building 18 of the houses as semi-detached pairs. The remainder were single storey dwellings and a variety of some individual houses making up the total of 35, the remaining plot being occupied by the school.
- 2.19 The plans were relatively simple. The semi-detached pairs had an entrance into a parlour in the side wing with the living room in the main part and a staircase up to the bedrooms. The cottages had a central entrance into the living room with the kitchen off to one side and a bedroom on the other.
- 2.20 Externally all were simply rendered and had slate roofs. The semi-detached houses and cottages had a central pedimented gable with a stylised version of the Charter – a tablet with two tabs. Some properties were provided with outbuildings for animals and crops, others were left for the first settlers to build what they required.

2.21 Following the development of Heronsgate, O'Connor proceeded quickly with the development of four other Chartist settlements at Dodford (Worcestershire), at Minster Lovell (Oxfordshire), at Snig's End (Gloucestershire) and at Lowbands (Gloucestershire). The design of each of these settlements was different but the architectural styles (although not the materials used) were common to each settlement, as were the narrow lanes. There are close bonds between these five settlements although they are located many miles from each other.

2.22 A New Era

2.23 Things started to go wrong quickly. Many of the new settlers found coping with subsistence farming very difficult. Many abandoned the struggle. In 1847 when there was a very hard winter, rents were not being paid and contributions to the Company were falling. The main problem was that Feargus remained the owner of the land. He failed to get the Company registered either as Friendly Society with Charitable status or as a Land Bank company.

2.24 In both cases the problem was the same. The scheme was a Lottery and most contributors did not benefit at all, either by way of charitable relief or as a return on investment. In fairness to O'Connor, a Parliamentary Commission made it clear that, while the enterprise was illegal, it was not operating for the benefit of Feargus; quite the opposite, the Company in fact owed him money.

2.25 The Company had though to be wound up, despite the fact that Feargus, in receipt of no rents, went on building, went on juggling finances – while slowly going mad. He died in 1855 and had a hero's funeral with tens of thousands following the funeral procession to Kensall Green Cemetery. It was said to be the last great Chartist demonstration. A statue was later erected in Nottingham, paid for by public subscription.



Picture 1: Feargus O'Connor

2.26 Meanwhile, the Estates were administered by the Court of Chancery and tenants made agreements to pay rent to seek entitlement to ownership, or properties were sold on at auction; a gradual process not fully complete until the 20th century as evidenced by the continuing payment of "Farm Rents".

2.27 During this time, the concept of subsistence farming was superseded but Heronsgate did not decline. Those settlers who remained were people who had skills to offer the local communities, for instance cobblers, blacksmiths and carpenters. Small work-shops developed at each of the Chartist settlements.

2.28 But, there was a change of character as some people came to realise that it was possible to live in a pleasant environment at Heronsgate and, as transport improved, travel to work in local towns and London. As part of this process most of the original buildings were altered, many of the plots were sub-divided and new dwellings were erected. This growth was largely unplanned and mainly took place in the first half of the twentieth century.

2.29 The only alteration in the road layout has been the introduction of the cul-de-sac known as Cherry Tree Road, this and the houses were built in the inter-war years. Otherwise the layout of roads remains as set out by Feargus O'Connor in 1846.

2.30 Not only does the pattern of roads survive, but they are of the same (horse and cart) width, and now have well established hedgerows giving an even narrower feel to the road. They are very much country lanes despite their straightness. The hedgerows and the lanes are of importance to the character of the area. [Appendix 3](#) details the original hedgerow boundaries.

3.0 Character and Appearance

- 3.1 The original roads and many homes may survive but the nature of the settlement has changed completely. Residents no longer toil to feed their families from the produce of their own smallholdings. Self-sufficiency, always somewhat problematic on the small plots, is now a distant memory. Nor do present day residents celebrate their escape from the misery and drudgery of northern mills and factories. By contrast the proximity of Heronsgate to London has made it a very pleasant and desirable place to live and, while the plots may have been small for self-sufficiency, they are large in terms of garden and paddock areas, giving low densities and much valued privacy.
- 3.2 Heronsgate is still one of the most recognisable of all the Chartist settlements. It has been said that it is the only one of O'Connor's estates that an original resident would still be able to find his way around, though he might be a little surprised by some of the changes. The similarities are, however, startling and arise partly because the unchanged road layout, partly because the original houses were built fronting directly on to the roads and are therefore still prominent and partly because the hedgerows have now grown tall emphasising the narrow rural character of the roads and leaving the original houses more prominent than later additions, extensions and alterations.
- 3.3 The Conservation Area is relatively small and compact and therefore has not been split into character areas. The individual roads do, for historic reasons, have different characters and are described below.
- 3.4 Stockport Road
- 3.5 St John's Church is a simple red brick building with a slate roof. It has gothic style windows with stone dressings and there is a stone war memorial cross by the road side. The interior is lit from the plain glass south windows and stained glass east window. The walls are white with vivid Victorian floor tiles



St John's Church



Interior of St John's Church

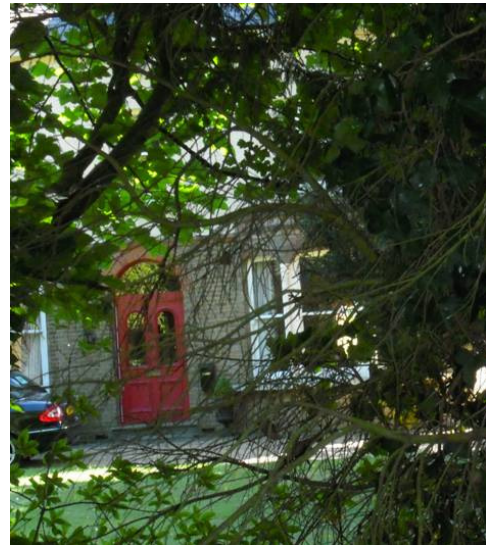
- 3.6 It is an important building in terms of the present community although, in historic terms, O'Connor wanted no church on the site considering organised religion a divisive distraction. The Church dates from 1864 and, while a positive contributor to the character of the area, it is not associated with the historic Chartist settlement.

3.7 Nottingham Road

3.8 This road retains the character of the old O'Connorville settlement best because the original house are on both sides standing like sentinel milestones marking the original plot boundaries. At the south-west end, nearest the M25, is Bircham Cottage one of the original Chartist semi-detached houses, now one house. From there, on the left, are Chartist Cottage/Woodway. Further down are Long Meadow/Woodene and Craven Cottage/Rosemary, all of which are original Chartist houses standing at the corners of the large plots and are now Listed, (See Listed Buildings in Section 4).

3.9 Between Bircham Cottage and Chartist Cottage are a number of later buildings. These subdivide the original plot more than is found elsewhere. The newer buildings, Four Acres, Woodside Lodge and Midfield House, are set back and do not intrude on the character. In addition, two of the buildings, Beaumont House and School House dating from c1905, have an architectural quality that makes them positive contributors.

3.10 They were formerly the Preparatory School, now divided into two separate houses. The building is brick to the Ground floor with rendered 1st floor and slate roof. The left hand side (School House) is lower, and more altered particularly the Ground floor door and windows which now stop oddly short of the red brick arch lintels. The right hand side (Beaumont House) has original canted bay windows to the Ground floor and a central arched door with arched fanlight and arched glazed panels. On the other side of the lane are open fields.



School House and Beaumont House
(The former Preparatory School)

3.11 Between Woodway and Woodene (Grade II) are two newer properties, Wood Way (Grade II) and Fairfield, both again unobtrusive. Opposite Fairfield is a stable block, single storey and of open courtyard plan. In the grounds of Long Meadow (Grade II) is Stanmore Lodge a more substantial property and opposite is Sunnyside one of the original Chartist cottages and, again, a Listed Building. This stretch of the road retains much of the rural character of the original settlement.



Plaque by drive of Wood Way



Stable Block opposite Fairfield

- 3.12 Next to Stanmore Lodge is the open paddock and opposite is Ladywalk Cottage. A mid 20thC property which has been extended to west and east and up to the 19thC barn adjoining it. The present property is situated on the site of a previous property built in 1882, the likely date of the Barn. Ladywalk Cottage has an uninterrupted outlook over paddocks to the East, South and West which, apart from providing a superb setting and amenity to the cottage, provide important open spaces that make significant contribution to the Conservation Area.



Paddock adjacent to Stanmore Lodge



Ladywalk Cottage

- 3.13 The next two Chartist houses on the left are Craven Cottage and Rosemary. The latter has three later houses on its plot; Homeland, a pleasant Edwardian style house with 1st floor balcony, Silver Birches set well back down a drive and the modern Cypress Lodge.
- 3.14 Craven Cottage's plot is the most sub-divided having the cul-de-sac Cherry Tree Lane with six properties, mainly on the north-east side of the road. As noted, this lane is the only alteration to the original road layout although the houses, all of which date from the inter-war period, are of a restrained style, mainly rendered with tiled roofs.
- 3.15 Directly opposite the lane are Laurel Cottage and Crowthorne another original Chartist house and a Listed Building. Alongside Crowthorne is an attractive meadow with a path leading through to Halifax Road. This meadow is known locally as Birdwood Field and was licensed to the Herongate Residents Association for the use of the community. This space is used for recreation, dog walking and for many community events such as fetes and balls. The field is also used as an overflow parking area for events at St John's and as an alternative route for vehicles for when the lanes are closed for repairs. The views in and out of the field from Halifax Road and Nottingham Road are important as they add to the character and appearance of the area. Facing on to this open space is Field Cottage, a low modern building screened by high hedges (see Appendix 1). Adjoining, and opposite Homeland, is Whitegates with two storey bay windows framing the central door.



Whitegates



Pixie House

- 3.16 The next Chartist houses face each other across the narrow lane, Daphnes on the left and Pinhaye and Rosecot are on the right. They are much altered although still recognisably O'Connorville properties. Various newer houses have been built on the plots. Daphnes has the Pixie House to the south and Woodcroft and Rowan adjoining the Cherry Tree Lane development. Opposite is Rowandene with blue rendered walls between Laurel Cottage and Rosecot. There are three other properties behind Pinhaye and Rosecot but these front on to Halifax Road (see below).

- 3.17 The next group of Chartist buildings are at the junction with Stockport Road. Here, on the left is The Hop Garden and Laburnums. Again there are newer houses, Rusper and The Orchard on the plots but these are set back discretely. Opposite the Chartist houses, on the corner of Stockport Road are two original cottages, Heron Cottage and Cherry Tree Corner. The latter has been extended but still retains the scale of the original but Heron Cottage has become a large two storey house, the original single storey cottage just glimpsed at the corner. The new house while of a different scale is an attractive addition to the Conservation Area.



Heron Cottage

- 3.18 The road, from the junction, dips down slightly before rising steadily towards the north-east end. On the left is Heronsgate Hall, a former chapel. It dates from the late 19th century, being later than the O'Connorville settlement. However, it is important to the community and is a positive contributor despite being a very simple brick building with slate roof with the white painted gable end and projecting porch facing onto the road. There are simple windows and buttresses and a slate roof with crested roof tiles.



Heronsgate Hall



Plaque on Heronsgate Hall

- 3.19 As the road rises between the tall hedges, there is a glimpse of Myrtle Cottage on the right, an original single storey Chartist cottage now much enlarged. Further up on the left, are Croft house and Glenthorne another Chartist pair of semi-detached houses though much altered. Behind them are new houses; La Castilla, a Spanish style villa and Glenthorne a modern house more visible from round the side road.
- 3.20 At the top of the slope is the Grange the former Chartist school, now a private house. It is difficult to imagine now that this building dominated the view down Nottingham Road and closed the vista from the south-east. The driveway to the Grange now leads off Long Lane and, apart from a small pedestrian gate, there is little of the former relationship between the only original community building and the rest of O'Connorville. Views of the building are now blocked by landscaping but it is of brick and a larger, grander version of the standard pair of houses.

3.21 Bradford Road

3.22 At the pedestrian gate, Nottingham Road turns through 90° and becomes Bradford Road. Apart from the view of the modern Glenthorne on the left, there are just three houses on the higher ground to the right. The Limes is a brick building with an arched entrance and 1st floor balcony while Hope Cottage (known locally as Hope Lodge) is a much altered Chartist house. The last house, Endlands, was rebuilt about 30 years ago and is a two storey brick house with a tiled 1st floor and roof.



Hope Cottage (known locally as Hope Lodge)

3.23 This short stretch of road retains the rural character that epitomises O'Connorville's layout of individual houses on large plots, connected by narrow lanes and surrounded by open countryside.

3.24 Halifax Road

3.25 Running parallel to, and between Nottingham Road and Long Lane, O'Connor laid out Halifax Road. This had the smaller plots where cottages rather than houses were built and these were on one side of the road only. Everything on the south-east side is therefore modern with houses built mainly at the rear of the Nottingham Road properties. The new houses include Linden, Pinecroft, St Joseph, The Birches, Penny Firs and High Holly. At the bottom south-west end of the road are the grounds of Ladywalk, a large house separate from and later than the Chartist settlement. It has been since extended and now has the appearance of a mansion in extensive grounds.

3.26 From here, Halifax Road rises gently to the north-west with original Chartist houses and cottages on the right. First there is the group around Herons Lodge opposite which is the meadow and footpath back to Nottingham Road. The main house and outbuildings form a distinctive group and, along with the adjoining Sherwood, are described later in this appraisal. There is another plaque at the entrance to Sherwood.



Group of buildings around Herons Lodge



Plaque at entrance to Sherwood

- 3.27 Choheron, to the north, is a single storey house with large dormers to the roof. It has been so rebuilt that it no longer resembles the original Chartist cottage on the site. The Grey Cottage on the other hand has been extended but retains its character. Home Close, to the rear, is a substantial neo-Georgian style building facing onto Long Lane. Wiverton, which is currently being rebuilt, has Heron's Court behind with access from Long Lane.
- 3.28 At the junction with Stockport Road is St John's Church and then, on the right Little Aymers, an original though extended Chartist cottage hidden behind the high hedges lining the road. To the rear is Oaklands with its stable block facing onto Long Lane. At the end of Halifax Road is The Bower House another extended Chartist Cottage with a driveway leading to Long Lane

3.29 Long Lane

- 3.30 The group of houses on Long Lane to the north of the original Chartist settlement, include Long Lane House. The building is set well back from the road and appears to be a 20th century brick building although there may be older work inside possibly associated with an early forge or ancillary farm buildings. This historic connection makes the building a positive contributor.



Long Lane House



Oak Hill

- 3.31 To the east, White Lodge fronts onto Long Lane, with Oak Hill the next door property, again being a positive contributor because of its architectural merit. Finally, Grange Cottage is a small lodge building at the entrance to the driveway leading back to The Grange.
- 3.32 On the other side is the Land of Liberty Peace and Plenty Public House which existed before O'Connorville so that, while Feergus would not allow a tavern on the estate for fear of corrupting or distracting those who should be labouring on the land, there was still refreshment nearby. The Pub is c1820, a pleasant Georgian style property with bays to the Ground floor and sash windows above. To the north is Flint Cottage a Locally Listed, 19th century building with sash windows, the front painted white, the sides showing flint with brick banding. It is built right onto the road and gives this small stretch of rural lane a more built up feel and is just outside the Conservation Area Boundary. Both buildings make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.



Flint Cottage



Land of Liberty Peace & Plenty

4.0 BUILDINGS

4.1 Grade II Listed Buildings

Several of the original Chartist houses are relatively unchanged and nine are Grade II Listed Buildings. All of these are noted as being of 1846-47 for Chartist Co-operative Land Company, having rectangular panels with sides extended downwards, a sign that was used throughout O'Connorville. They are amongst the best surviving examples of the houses founded by the Chartist Leader, Feargus O'Connor.



Wood Way and Chartist Cottage, Nottingham Road.



Sunnyside, Nottingham Road.



Long Meadow and Woodene, Nottingham Road.



Laurel Cottage and Crowthorne, Nottingham Road.



Bircham and Little Whaddon, Nottingham Road. (Now one house)



Craven Cottage and Rosemary, Nottingham Road.

4.2 Buildings added to the Council's List of Locally Important Buildings

During the audit of the Conservation Area properties were identified for inclusion on the List of Locally Important Buildings because of their historic interest. These are detailed in [Appendix 4](#) and pictured below. (The map in [Appendix 1](#) shows Listed and Locally Listed Buildings).



Daphnes



The Hop Garden and Laburnums,



Croft House



Hope Cottage (known locally as Hope Lodge)



The Grange



Myrtle Cottage



Heron Cottage



Cherry Tree Corner



Pinhaye and Rosecot



Heron's Lodge and Cherry Cottage



Sherwood



The Grey Cottage



Little Aymers



The Bower House

4.3 Other Buildings Making a Positive Contribution

4.4 None of the buildings are considered detrimental to the overall character of the Conservation Area. There are also buildings which, whilst not historically part of the O'Connorville development, are important to the character of the area and are also identified as buildings which make a positive contribution to the designated area. These include:

- Heronsgate Hall
- Ladywalk Cottage
- Beaumont House/School House
- Long Lane House
- Oak Hill
- Flint Cottage and garage
- Land of Liberty Peace and Plenty Public House

4.5 Negative Features

4.6 The main negative feature in terms of impact on the character of the Conservation Area is of course the M25 which cuts through the southern edge of the land O'Connor bought and severs the Chartist settlement from the paths and open space of Ladywalk Wood.

4.7 The impact of the motorway is felt in terms of noise, light pollution and visual impact although this is limited to close-up views as the motorway is in a cutting; a factor that also reduces noise. The M25 is however intrusive and detrimental, especially in the lower south-east part of the designated area.

4.8 Other negative features are much smaller scale and include the electricity sub-stations dotted about, though some of these are now carefully disguised by landscaping. The desire for wider driveways is also eroding the character and removing important hedgerows.

5.0 Considerations for Development

5.1 Development within the Heronsgate Conservation Area is controlled by National and Local Planning Policy covering the Green Belt, Conservation Areas and the Historic Environment. The Three Rivers Local Plan and Core Strategy currently set out the planning policies for the District and it is recommended that anyone wishing to carry out any alterations should refer to these documents which are available on the Council's web site at: <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/PlanningPolicy>

5.2 Green Belt

5.3 The whole of the Conservation Area lies within the Green Belt and there are therefore strict controls over new dwellings, new buildings and extensions to existing structures. It is likely that Green Belt policies rather than Conservation Area policies will limit the size of extensions or new structures.

5.4 Conservation Areas and Permitted Development

5.5 'Permitted Development' rights normally mean that some domestic alterations may be carried out without requiring planning permission. However, these rights are more restricted in Conservation Areas. For example, permission is required for satellite dishes, dormer windows and other alterations to a roof as well as external cladding and works to trees.

5.6 No work is automatically ruled out by Conservation Area designation. However, it does impose an additional requirement on residents to apply to the Council for consent and permission for certain works, and in some cases a specific Conservation Area Consent is needed.

5.7 All applications for planning permission in a Conservation Area are considered from the conservation point of view and can be refused on conservation grounds alone. This also applies to development proposals in the vicinity of a Conservation Area. As with a planning application, an applicant has a right to appeal against a refusal or against any conditions attached to a permission or consent.

5.8 Where new development is proposed it is important that it is guided by sound principles of historic conservation and urban design, as well as sympathetic detailing in relation to its historic context. All forms of new development in the Conservation Area should:

- Preserve and reinforce the distinctive pattern of historical development including road patterns, open spaces, plot sizes and boundaries and boundary treatments
- Maintain key views and vistas within, into and out of the Conservation Area
- Reinforce the distinctive architectural character of the Conservation Area through an informed understanding of distinctive building forms and types, features and materials. The superficial echoing of historic features in new buildings should be avoided
- Reinforce the scale and massing of surrounding buildings. It is essential that new development is not out of scale with existing building typical of the Conservation Area by way of its height, floor levels, size of windows and doors and overall massing
- Reinforce existing building lines and orientation of existing development

5.9 Historic Buildings

5.10 There are nine Nationally Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area (see Section 4) and any alterations to these buildings (external or internal) requires Consent from the Council.

5.11 In addition to these buildings there are three Locally Listed Buildings (see Section 4) and the Council has identified a further twenty properties for inclusion on the List of Locally Important Buildings as they represent the original 1846 houses built by the Chartist Land Company (see Section 4 and [Appendix 4](#)). Although many have been much altered and extended, the original houses are of importance to the character of the area. Although not protected in the same way as Nationally Listed Buildings the Council will resist the demolition of such buildings in the Conservation Area.

5.12 Other significant buildings, though not associated with the Chartist buildings erected under the direction of Feargus O'Connor, make a positive contribution to the character of the area and these have been identified throughout this appraisal. Demolition of these building will not normally be allowed.

5.13 Applicants proposing development are advised to discuss their proposals with Council Officers before submitting a formal application particularly where the proposed development:

- affects the character or appearance of the area
- affects the original plot boundaries established in 1846-1847
- proposes alterations to the identified historic buildings

5.14 Trees

5.15 The Conservation Area has many mature and notable trees which contribute greatly to the character of the area. Many of these trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) as shown in [Appendix 5](#).

5.16 In addition to these TPOs permission is also needed to lop, top or fell any of the remaining substantial trees (defined as having a trunk diameter of 75mm or more at 1.5m above ground level) in the Conservation Area. The Council must be informed, in writing, of any proposals to lop, top or fell trees. No such work can be undertaken until at least six weeks notice has been given to the Council which provides an opportunity for the making of a TPO should it be considered appropriate. If a tree is dead, dying or dangerous emergency works may be carried out but as the onus is on the landowner to prove that the work was necessary, the owner is advised to consult the Council in advance in such cases.

5.17 Plot Boundaries and Hedgerows

5.18 As noted previously the original boundaries and the hedgerows demarking the plot boundaries are of historic importance and contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as do the hedges along the road frontages. Because the layout of the roads and plots is of such importance to the character – along with the surviving Chartist buildings – original plot boundaries should be retained. Ancient hedgerows can be protected (see Hedgerow Regulations 1997) but so can other hedgerows of local amenity or nature conservation value. The original Chartist boundaries are of local amenity value and development will not be permitted if it involves their removal.

5.19 Landscape & Archaeology

5.20 There is some evidence of pre-historic activity in the area. Specifically there have been spot finds in the fields and woods to the south-west of the Conservation Area including a paleolithic flint hand axe and Mesolithic flint axe and blade core. To the north a post mediaeval gravel pit is noted alongside the footpath/track leading to the Swillet

5.21 The Historic Environment register (HER) for the designated area itself is somewhat confusing. There are three entries but it is thought that all three are meant to refer to the Listed Buildings. As much of the land within the Conservation Area is undisturbed, there is the however potential for further finds and any Planning Permissions granted for development may be subject to a Condition requiring an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI).

6.0 Review of the Conservation Area Boundary

6.1 As part of this appraisal the existing boundaries of the Conservation Area have been examined to consider the potential for other areas to be included and, if appropriate, excluded. The boundaries of the Conservation Area were considered carefully prior to its designation and included the original Chartist settlement and the following land outside the settlement:

- A strip of lane one kilometre long and ten metres wide on the north-eastern side of Long Lane to protect the character and nature of the historic sunken lane
- Long Lane House
- Ladywalk House and garden
- The Land of Liberty Peace and Plenty Public House

6.2 The appraisal has identified Flint Cottage, Long Lane (see Sections 3 & 4) on the north-east boundary as making a positive contribution to the Conservation area and as such it is recommended that the conservation area boundary is changed to incorporate the Locally Listed Building. In addition it is also considered that the inclusion of Hillside, Athelstan and Fern Hill will result in a more defined boundary. [Appendix 6](#) details the suggested boundary change. No other changes to the boundary have been identified.

7.0 Management Strategy

7.1 The Council is required to draw up and publish proposals for addressing and implementing recommendations for action contained in the Appraisal. In line with the guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas published by English Heritage in conjunction with the Planning Advisory Service, it is considered that the development of the Management Strategy should be based on the character appraisal that is provided by this document. As such it is not proposed that any detailed work should be undertaken on this Strategy until there has been a full consultation undertaken on the Conservation Area Appraisal and a finalised document has been approved by the Executive Committee.

8.0 BIBIOGRAPHY

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