

2.6 Actions for Improvement

Landscape

Garden squares

2.6.1 The three garden squares in the area, St James's, Norland Square and Royal Crescent, are well landscaped, with mature trees and shrubs, and form important townscape and neighbourhood elements.

- St James Gardens – a quiet square with elegant houses



- Norland Square – a visual link between Holland Park Avenue and the heart of the area



- Royal Crescent – a major landmark along Holland Park Avenue and gateway to the western part of the area



Street tree planting

2.6.2 The charm and relative calm of Norland is much enhanced by street tree planting. This is most obvious in Addison Avenue, but also at Clarendon Cross, and at the southern end of Portland Road on the west side. Elsewhere street tree planting is spasmodic, though the Council's Arboricultural Department has replaced or newly planted trees in Penzance Street, Queensdale Road and Norland Road.

2.6.3 It is important to the character of the Conservation Area to remain vigilant in protecting and replacing street trees, as well as taking every possible opportunity to increase street tree planting – particularly with a view to screening Queensdale Road from the intrusive “permanent daylight” from LED advertising on the Westfield shopping centre. Where viable additional trees should be planted to protect views along Queensdale Road from this brash intrusion.

2.6.4 Opportunities for street tree planting are limited by underground services, which are not obvious to the casual observer. The Norland Conservation Society recently surveyed prima facie tree-planting, and proposed them to the Council's Arboricultural Department.

2.6.5 A subterranean service map would help the Norland Conservation Society to be proactive and practical in its suggestions.

Private gardens and trees

2.6.6 Many private gardens contribute to the landscape, open spaces and streetscape by virtue of their mature trees and shrubs, providing important habitats for birds and pollinating insects. It is important to the character of the conservation area that these open spaces are preserved, with no development allowed (including hard standings) other than summer houses or garden sheds.

2.6.7 Rear gardens also have a crucially important role as natural soakaways, as the only permeable surface in an otherwise impermeable urban landscape. They are also an important oasis for biodiversity.

2.6.8 It will also be important to the character of the Conservation Area to remain vigilant in protecting and replacing trees in private gardens, (by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) where warranted), and permission to remove and replace only given where trees become dangerous.

TPO's should only be removed if trees become dangerous. Replacements should be required of all trees (large enough to be subject to planning control).

2.6.9 The gardens of Addison Avenue giving onto Carson Terrace and Queensdale Walk provide valuable open space, which has already been partially eroded by 2-4 Carson Terrace, and 20 Queensdale Walk, built in the garden of Cranley Lodge. Any proposal that would result in further erosion of this attractive, almost rural, corner at the end of Addison Avenue gardens should be resisted.

Streetscape

Pavement Improvements

2.6.10 The Council's rolling programme of replacing old concrete paving slabs with York paving is of great benefit to the Conservation Area. Unfortunately, budget constraints mean this programme has been discontinued. The Council will be encouraged to reinstate the programme as soon as budgets permit.

Parking

2.6.11 Residents' parking spaces can come under pressure from outsiders during uncontrolled hours, Measures may be needed to overcome this problem.



Street Furniture

Street Lights

2.6.12 There are three main types of street lighting in the conservation area:



Type 1:

The original hexagonal lamps in Addison Avenue and St James's Gardens



Type 2:

Taller, column lamps in a modern idiom of the original lamps in Queensdale Road, Portland Road, Princedale Road, Royal Crescent.



Type 3:

Ugly, tall, modern, sodium lights in St Ann's Villas and Road, and round Royal Crescent.

2.6.13 There are also two unsuitable bracket lights at the junction of Addison Avenue and Queensdale Road. Steps will be taken to replace those at the junction of Addison Avenue and Queensdale Road, and in Royal Crescent and St Ann's Villas and St Ann's Road with lampposts of a more sympathetic design, such as the taller, column lights (Type 2) used widely elsewhere in the Conservation Area.

Parking signs

2.6.14 In most cases, parking signs are attached to lamp posts, and thus minimise street clutter. However, there are some extraordinary examples of separate parking sign posts next door to lamp posts, and even disused, completely empty sign posts.

2.6.15 Opportunities for reducing street clutter, including such unnecessary posts, will be surveyed, and action taken to remove them.



Traffic management measures and signs

2.6.16 This plan sets out the ambition to work with the Council's Highways Department to reduce the proliferation of traffic management signs.

Notices on lampposts and trees

2.6.17 A recent development has been increasing the use of lampposts and trees for fly-posting notices: "Do not dump rubbish here" "Domestic recycling and Refuse Collection - Warning", "Neighbourhood Watch", "Low Trees", "All dogs must be on lead", menu displays. These may, in some cases, be needed, but they look tatty.



Telephone wires

2.6.18 At the northern end of Portland Road, telephone wires are relayed to individual houses at second floor level from a single pole on the pavement. These could be better located; action could be pursued to channel them under the street.



Street clutter

2.6.19 The Norland Neighbourhood Forum sets out the ambition to work with the Council to reduce street clutter over time.

Recycling litter bins

2.6.20 This Neighbourhood Plan sets out the ambition to work with the Council's Refuse Department to consider an alternative siting.



Estate Agents Boards

2.6.21 The proliferation of Estate Agents Boards has long been a source of irritation to residents who see the street scene so defaced. The Council's application of a Regulation 7 should get rid of the problem. However, since Regulation 7 came into force, they still appear and these must be reported to the Council in order to get them removed. There is no real deterrent for Estate Agents' boards, and unless we continue to be vigilant, opportunist agents will continue with this practice. Residents will be encouraged to report violations, with photographic evidence if possible, to the Council as quickly as possible.



Modern Telephone boxes

2.6.22 Unfortunately a number of modern telephone boxes out of keeping with the character of area have been installed on Holland Park Avenue, plastered with advertisements.

2.6.23 Class 16(1), Part 1 of Schedule 3 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, states that no advertisement may be displayed on a telephone kiosk within a conservation area.



2.6.24 The key local policy is CR4 Streetscape in the Core Strategy:

The Council will require improvements to the visual, functional and inclusive quality of our streets, ensuring they are designed and maintained to a very high standard. To deliver this, the Council will: resist temporary or permanent advertising hoardings, or freestanding adverts on streets, forecourts or roadsides, or advertisements attached to street furniture, where these negatively impact on our high quality townscape or on public or road safety;

2.6.25 This is also relevant to (c) Traffic management signs, (d) Notices on Lamp posts, (f) Street clutter, and (g) Recycling litter bins. Action will be taken to remove them.

Streetscape Maintenance

2.6.26 Norland suffers problems relating to:

- Vandalism of bus stops, walls and railings
- Poorly maintained pillar boxes
- Graffiti
- Litter

2.6.27 Steps will be taken to ensure these problems are kept to a minimum.

2.6.28 The Council's Streetline team deals with the removal of graffiti, street cleaning and fly-tipped material. They will remove any graffiti fronting a highway not more than two metres high. Offensive material will be removed within 24h, if it is non-offensive it will be removed within seven days.

2.6.29 Queries or complaints about graffiti, street cleaning or litter should be directed to Streetline on 020 7361 3001 or email: streetline@rbkc.gov.uk.



Movement and Traffic Issues

2.6.30 Much of the area's charm lies in its relatively quiet streets. Unfortunately some streets are less fortunate.

- St Ann's Villas and Royal Crescent, which intentionally provide a major local north-south distributor road;
- Queensdale Road, west from Norland Square, which is used as a rat-run from the south heading towards the north of the Borough;
- Pottery Lane and the north (and less so, south) sides of St James's Gardens, which are used as a "rat-run" from the east, heading towards the Freston Road area.

Rat-run traffic

2.6.31 The Norland Conservation Area suffers from rat-run traffic in two places:

- traffic from the south, turning left off Holland Park Avenue into the west side of Norland Square, then left onto Queensdale Road, then right on St Ann's Villas, to head north up St Ann's Road and Bramley Road
- traffic from the east heading north, by-passing Holland Park Avenue by taking Pottery Lane or Princedale Road, and the north side of St James's Gardens, then north on St Ann's Villas, and the reverse

2.6.32 The danger here is excess speed, with vehicles taking advantage of the long straight roads east-west. Consideration needs to be given to how to control and reduce speed on both these routes.

2.6.33 Two radar-controlled illuminated speed limit warning signs were erected on the north side of St James's Gardens in a bid to inhibit speeding on that section of the rat-run, but removed as they were considered visually intrusive. Alternative means of slowing the traffic on these rat-runs will need to be found.

Improving Rat-run traffic

2.6.34 The Norland Conservation Society is concerned to slow down rat-run traffic on Queensdale Road and elsewhere in the area - possibly by replacement of the white painted circle at the intersection of Addison Avenue and Queensdale Road with a raised granite sett "hump" to inhibit excessive speeding down the Queensdale Road rat-run. This will be taken up with Highways Department.

2.6.35 The Norland Conservation Society also advocates a 20mph speed limit throughout the

conservation area, and will pursue further means of speed reduction with the Highways Department.

North-south traffic

2.6.36 These traffic problems are nothing compared to the traffic, particularly bus volumes, in St Ann's Villas and Royal Crescent. Architecturally, Royal Crescent is the grandest of all of Notting Hill and Holland Park's garden squares, one of the finest in this part of London, with finely landscaped communal gardens. Yet this prestigious Grade II* crescent of family dwellings, is suffering badly from bus and HGV traffic. It is bearing the brunt of being treated as a north-south artery serving northwest Kensington, (and even, sometimes, as a roundabout for the Oxford Tube), with associated problems of noise and pollution.

2.6.37 St Ann's Villas/Royal Crescent form part of one of the few north-south routes in the north of the Borough. With planned developments in North Kensington, this problem can only be expected to get worse. The traffic problem was covered in depth in the Conservation Area Proposals Statement (1982), but the action proposed was not followed up. Traffic volume statistics available are not strictly comparable between 1980 (3/6/1980) and 2009 (6/10/2009). However, the closest comparison of morning peak hour flows shows:

	1980 All vehicles		2009 All flows
East arm	670	South & East Bound	526
West arm	646	North bound	358

2.6.38 These figures would indicate an improvement since 1980. But the perception of residents is the opposite, possibly due to the introduction of two high-frequency bus routes (in both directions, every 8 minutes at peak hours, every 12 minutes for the rest of the 24 hours). These, together with HGV's and the Oxford Tube, have had a negative impact on flats and houses in Royal Crescent, and St Ann's Villas. In addition to noise and dirt, residents suffer loss of privacy at ground-floor and first floors.

2.6.39 The planned regeneration of North Kensington round the proposed Crossrail station, and the aim of improving north-south transportation may increase traffic volumes along this route.

2.6.40 If Royal Crescent's environment is damaged by further increases in traffic, it will not only be the sense of community that suffers, but also

the economic value of the properties. Over time, damage to building fabric, due to pollution is inevitable.

2.6.41 An essential aim of conservation policy in relation to Royal Crescent and St Ann's Villas is to find a viable solution to this traffic problem urgently.

2.6.42 The Core Strategy places great emphasis on improving north-south transport links. Equally, it emphasises the importance of protecting the high quality historic environment, and specifically listed buildings and conservation areas, in order to "pass on the legacy". In Norland these aims seem to be conflicting.

2.6.43 Furthermore, it does not contain any forecasts of the traffic flows north-south likely to be generated by the planned extensive redevelopment of North Kensington.

2.6.44 A key part of our Neighbourhood's Vision for Norland, and specifically for Royal Crescent and St Ann's Villas, will be to reduce the volume of this traffic to "liveable" proportions, so that these Grade II* and Grade II buildings are protected, and remain desirable places to live in, preserve and enhance. If north-south transportation is to be improved, the Norland Conservation Society supports an alternative route.

Parking Issues

2.6.45 Residents are mostly extremely fortunate in the ready availability of convenient residents' parking spaces. However these can come under pressure during uncontrolled hours. Measures may be needed to overcome this problem. Examples are:

- Large numbers of visitors to the Mosque (21 Penzance Place) during Ramadan and Ashura;
- Sikh temple
- Shoppers from Westfield (particularly in Royal Crescent, Royal Crescent Mews, and nearby streets).

Other Improvement Projects

North Portland Road Improvements

2.6.46 Nos 101-134 (east) and 141 – 179 (west) Portland Road are in an area susceptible by reason of the character of the area and lack of lighting to crime and to street fouling by dogs. The latter causes day to day nuisance and potential ill-health to local children and the former causes genuine fear and concern locally.

2.6.47 The local North Portland Road Neighbourhood supports the provision of CCTV and improved lighting between Nos 101-134 (east) and 141 – 179 (west) (including by use of CIL receipts) to reduce the incidence of crime and dog fouling; and supports the provision of dog keeping prohibitions in all Council leases.

2.6.48 Nos 101-134 (east) and 141 – 179 (west) are in the Norland Conservation Area. The Neighbourhood supports the prompt provision of traditional York stone paving fronting these properties (including by use of CIL receipts) so that the character and appearance of this part is improved. The Neighbourhood will look favourably upon development that provides for or materially contributes to the provision of such paving.

Buildings proposed for Listing

2.6.49 The following buildings will be proposed for statutory listing by the Norland Conservation Society:

- 12 Addison Place
- Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue, St James's Gardens
- 43 Portland Road



Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue



43 Portland Road



12 Addison Place

Community Infrastructure Levy

2.6.50 Where the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Community Infrastructure Levy becomes payable on developments within the Norland Neighbourhood Plan Area, it is the community's wish that a meaningful proportion of such funds be applied to infrastructure improvement projects within the area, includes the following for consideration:

- Traffic calming measures at Clarendon Cross, along Pottery Lane, the north side of St James's Gardens, and Queensdale Road
- Improved Heritage style lighting
- Improvement of concrete paving to York stone
- Improvement of mews' road surfaces to setts
- Further street tree planting

2.6.51 The Neighbourhood will from time to time review and update infrastructure improvements priorities.

