



# Oxford Gardens - St Quintin Conservation Area Appraisal

March 2020



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA



# Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>		
Conservation Area Boundary Map			
Purpose and Objectives			
Summary of Character			
Context Map			
Location and Setting of Conservation Area			
Historic Development Summary			
<b>2. TOWNSCAPE</b>	<b>7</b>		
Urban Form and Street Layout			
Gaps			
Land Uses			
Materials and Finishes			
Buildings Audit			
<b>3. ARCHITECTURE</b>	<b>13</b>		
<b>Housing</b>			
Charles Henry Blake's Developments (1860s-1890s)			
The Early St Quintin Estate (1867-c.1890)			
St Quintin Gardens and St Quintin Avenue (west)			
Bassett Road and Oxford Gardens (west)			
Other Late Victorian Terraces			
The Edwardian Estate (1905-1914)			
The Cottage Estate (1919-1926)			
Other Early Twentieth Century Housing (c.1910-c.1950)			
<b>Shared Features of Housing</b>			
Architectural Details			
Windows and doors			
Front Boundary Treatments, Front Areas and Front Gardens			
Roofs			
Rear Elevations			
Back Gardens and Trees			
		<b>Other Building Types</b>	
		Places of Worship	
		Pubs	
		Shops	
		Mews	
		Light Industrial Buildings	
		Other Significant Buildings	
		Recent Architecture	
<b>4. PUBLIC REALM</b>	<b>49</b>		
Green Space			
Street Trees			
Street Furniture			
<b>5. VIEWS</b>	<b>53</b>		
<b>6. NEGATIVE ELEMENTS</b>	<b>55</b>		
<b>7. APPENDIX 1</b>	<b>56</b>		
Historic Development			
<b>9. APPENDIX 2</b>	<b>66</b>		
Checklist used in the identification of heritage assets and their contribution to the character of the conservation area			
<b>10. APPENDIX 3</b>	<b>67</b>		
Relevant Local Plan Policies			
<b>10. APPENDIX 4</b>	<b>68</b>		
Relevant Neighbourhood Plan Policies			

Adopted: 23.03.2020

*Note: Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this document but due to the complexity of conservation areas, it would be impossible to include every facet contributing to the area's special interest. Therefore, the omission of any feature does not necessarily convey a lack of significance. The Council will continue to assess each development proposal on its own merits. As part of this process a more detailed and up to date assessment of a particular site and its context is undertaken. This may reveal additional considerations relating to character or appearance which may be of relevance to a particular case.*



# 1 Introduction

## What does a conservation area designation mean?

**1.1** The statutory definition of a conservation area is an “area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The power to designate conservation areas is given to councils through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas) Act, 1990 (Sections 69 to 78). Once designated, proposals within a conservation area become subject to local conservation policies set out in Chapter 22 of the Council’s Core Strategy and national policies outlined in part 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Our overarching duty which is set out in the Act is to preserve or enhance the historic or architectural character or appearance of the conservation area.

**1.2** A conservation area appraisal aims to describe the special historic and architectural character of an area. A conservation area’s character is defined by a combination of elements such as architecture, uses, materials and detailing as well as the relationship between buildings and their settings. Many other elements contribute to character and appearance such as the placement of buildings within their plots; views and vistas; the relationship between the street and the buildings and the presence of trees and green space.

**1.3** This document has been produced using the guidance set out by Historic England in their document, *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Historic England*

*Advice Note 1 (2019)*. This appraisal will be a material consideration when assessing planning applications.

## Purpose of this document

**1.4** The aims of the Appraisal are to:

- describe the historic and architectural character and appearance of the area which will assist applicants in making successful planning applications and decision makers in assessing planning applications
- raise public interest and awareness of the special character of their area
- identify the positive features which should be conserved, as well as negative features which indicate scope for future enhancements

**1.5** The conservation area appraisal is an evidence base rather than a planning policy document. This means that it is the principal document for establishing what is important in terms of the character and appearance of each conservation area. However, the relevant policies for decision making are contained within the borough’s Local Plan, specifically Chapter 22 ‘*Renewing the Legacy*’



Saint Charles Hospital

## Location and Setting

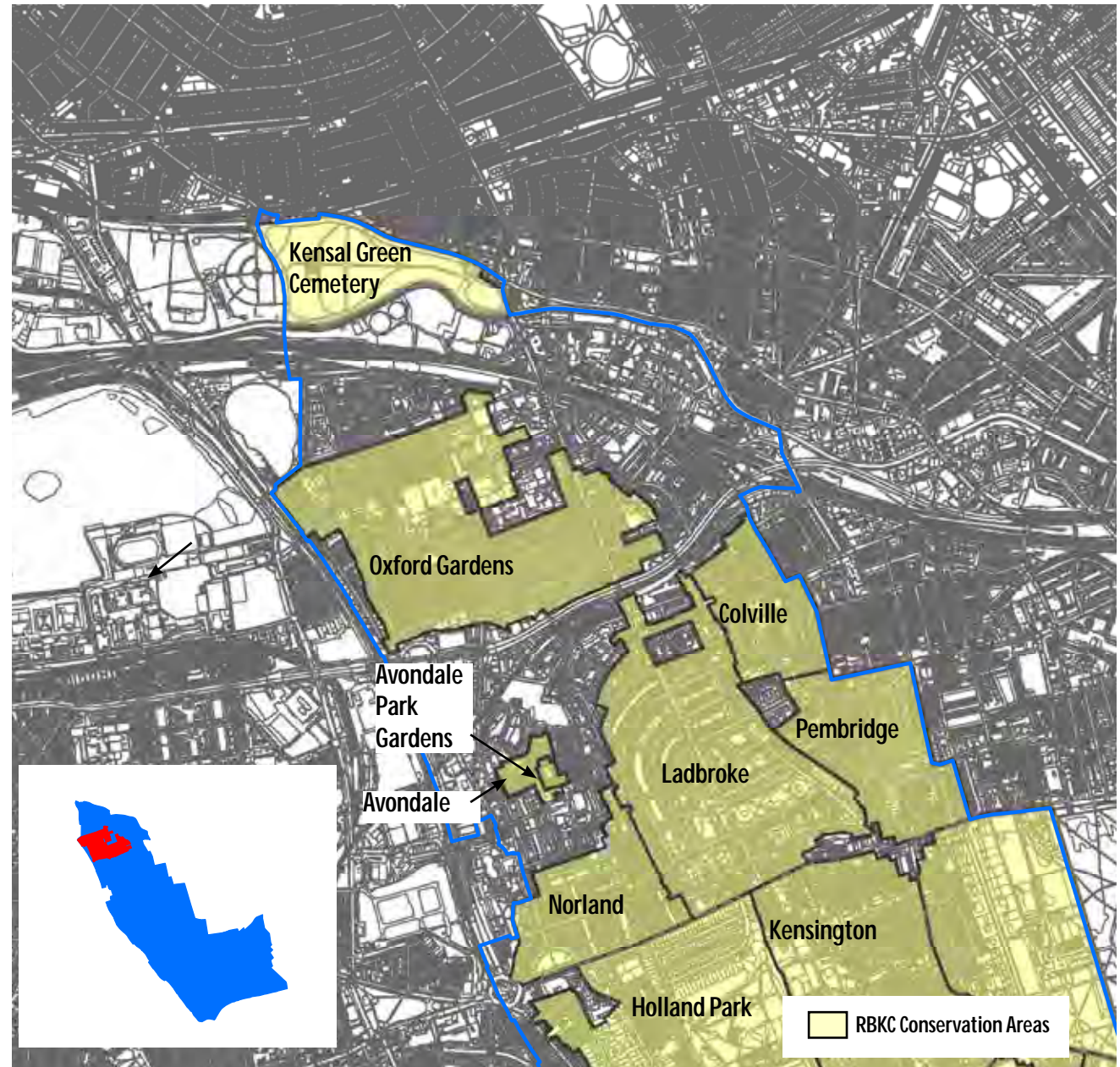
**1.6** This conservation area is located in the north of the Royal Borough in postcode area W10. The borough boundary runs between Latimer Road and the railway with the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham to the west.

**1.7** With the exception of Ladbrooke Grove, this is a quiet suburb. However, the area is surrounded by major transportation routes including the Westway and its confusion of 'A' roads and slip roads; and three railway lines which form a roughly triangular border around the area.

**1.8** To the north are rare remnants of the area's industrial past at Kensal. The former Clement-Talbot car factory remains (grade II listed) but behind it is now housing. All around are social housing blocks and industrial areas creating a clear difference in scale and bulk compared with the smaller scale character of the houses of the conservation area.

**1.9** South of the Westway is the mid-late Victorian housing of the Ladbrooke Estate which is more akin to that built to the east of the conservation area and in fact one of the builders, Charles Henry Blake, did work there too.

**1.10** Other elements of the area's setting are the bustling market stalls under the Westway and long-established independent shops further east. These parts may look untidy but they are lively and not only make use of Victorian houses but contribute to the social diversity and activity in the area.



**Fig 1.1 Conservation Area Context Map**

## Summary of Character

**1.11** The Oxford Gardens-St Quintin Conservation Area was designated on 30 April 1975 and extended in 2002 to cover an area comprising mainly residential houses from the mid Victorian period to the present day. Before this the area was largely devoted to agriculture and then industry associated with the Grand Union Canal to the north; this and the fact that it was far from the centre of London meant the land was cheaper and was developed more slowly. Today the west side of the conservation area has a leafy suburban character whilst east of St Mark's Road has a more heavily built up urban form and atmosphere.

**1.12** In the Victorian period the area was in the ownership of two historic estates, the Portobello Estate to the east of Ladbrooke Grove and the St Quintin Estate to the west. Development of these estates began in the east with three-four storey stock brick terraced houses (1860s-1890s, partly by developer Charles Henry Blake) and moved westwards with contemporaneous detached and semi detached houses (architect Henry Currey), then red brick Edwardian houses (1905-1914 built by building firm, E.T. Daley and A. S. Franklin) and ultimately an interwar Council owned cottage estate (1919-1926, by LCC architect A. S. Soutar).

**1.13** The housing is good quality and much of it is in very good condition with original windows, doors and details. Some of the housing in the area has lost its architectural detailing over the years and suffered because of multi-occupancy in the case of the large Victorian houses, or lack of appreciation in the case of the pebbledashed early twentieth century houses. The red-brick terraces of the St Quintin Estate are homogenous in character with limited number of



Finstock Road

design patterns.

**1.14** The area is unusual in having two convents and a former work house (now the St Charles Hospital) which occupy the largest plots of land in the conservation area. Other large buildings include Oxford Gardens School and the Pall Mall Depository, itself an unusual building type (furniture storage). Other historic building types include the usual necessities of residential areas which include shops, pubs and

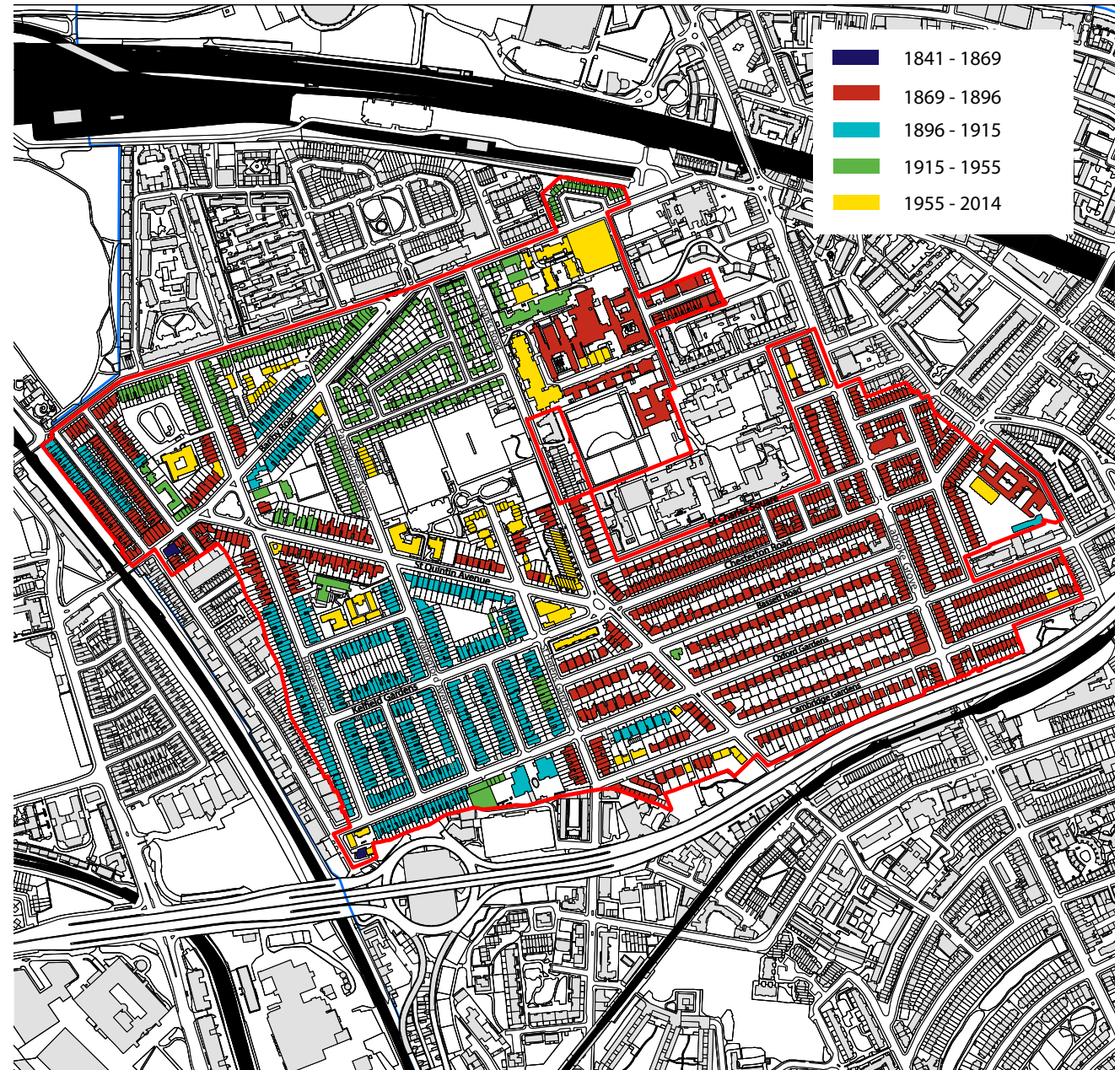
two churches.

**1.15** The area as a whole displays the evolution of housing from the mid Victorian period to the present day. This evolution began with large homes built by private speculative developers for wealthy families with servants, through good Edwardian houses for the middle classes to early low rent Council housing for families. Each of these phases is special and has its own form, materials and design.



## Historic Development Summary

- 1769 The Manor of Notting Barns Farm is conveyed to William St Quintin.
- 1862 Convent on Portobello Road built.
- 1864 Ladbroke Grove station opened.
- 1864-8 Developer, Charles Henry Blake leases land from St Quintin and purchases 130 acres of the Portobello Estate.
- 1867-90 St Quintin leases land west of Ladbroke Grove for development.
- 1871 Church of St. Michael and All Angels consecrated.
- 1877-78 Carmelite Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity built.
- 1879-81 Infirmary to St Marylebone workhouse built.
- 1884 Oxford Gardens Primary School built.
- 1905-1914 Red brick houses in west section of conservation area are constructed.
- 1911 Pall Mall Deposit built at 124-128 Barlby Road.
- 1919-1926 The Hill Farm Road Cottage Estate built.
- 1923 Kensington Memorial Recreation Ground laid out.
- 1956 Church of St Helen completed following destruction of its predecessor in WWII.
- 1960s Westway built.
- 30 April 1975 Conservation area designated.
- 1984 St Lawrence General Improvement Area project set up to improve conditions on Victorian housing east of Ladbroke Grove.
- 2018 St. Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Plan adopted.



**Fig 1.2 Historic Development Map**

# 2 Townscape

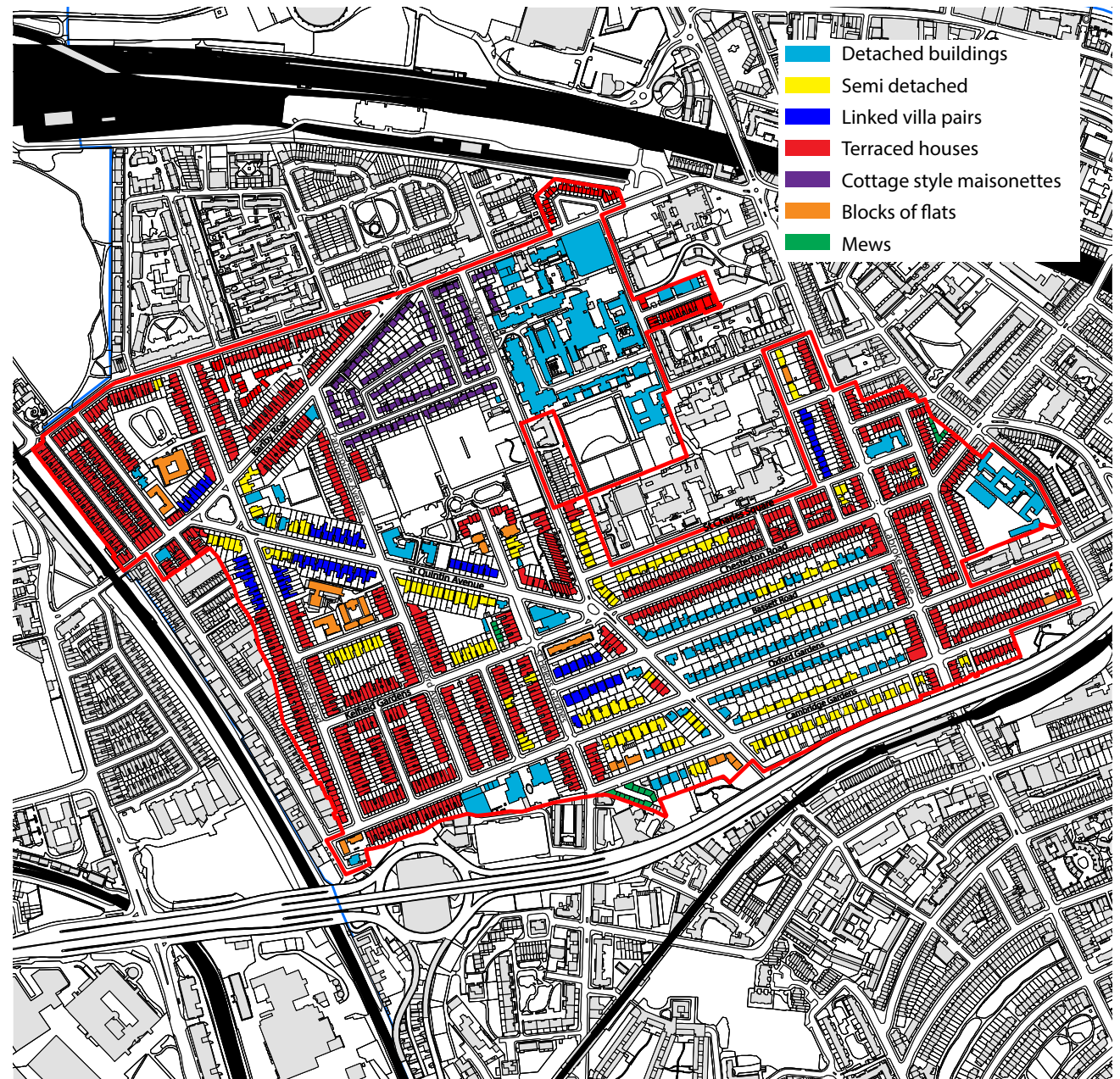
## Urban Form and Street Layout

**2.1** The oldest road through the conservation area is Portobello Road. It originally ran from Holland Park Avenue, through Porto Bello Farm to Kensal Green. St Mark's Road may lie on the old road to Notting Barns. Otherwise other streets were built along and parallel to old field boundaries.

**2.2** The historic use of space has produced a pleasant suburban enclave within a busy, high density part of the capital. The area has a grid pattern of wide streets with three roads cutting diagonally through them. These roads have created junctions on St Quintin Avenue at the St Mark's Road end and more prominently at the St Quintin Gardens end with a large triangular island. The St Quintin Estate has particularly wide streets and pavements lined with street trees.

**2.3** The grid pattern has also been interrupted in places by large developments (such as St Charles Hospital, the Carmelite Monastery and the former Dominican Convent), green spaces (including the Kensington Memorial Park and the nursery school garden on Kelfield Mews) and new development (such as Blake Close and St Helen's Gardens).

**2.4** With these exceptions the urban form is tightly knit, but low rise and with spacious garden settings to the houses.



**Fig 2.1 Urban Form Map**

## Gaps

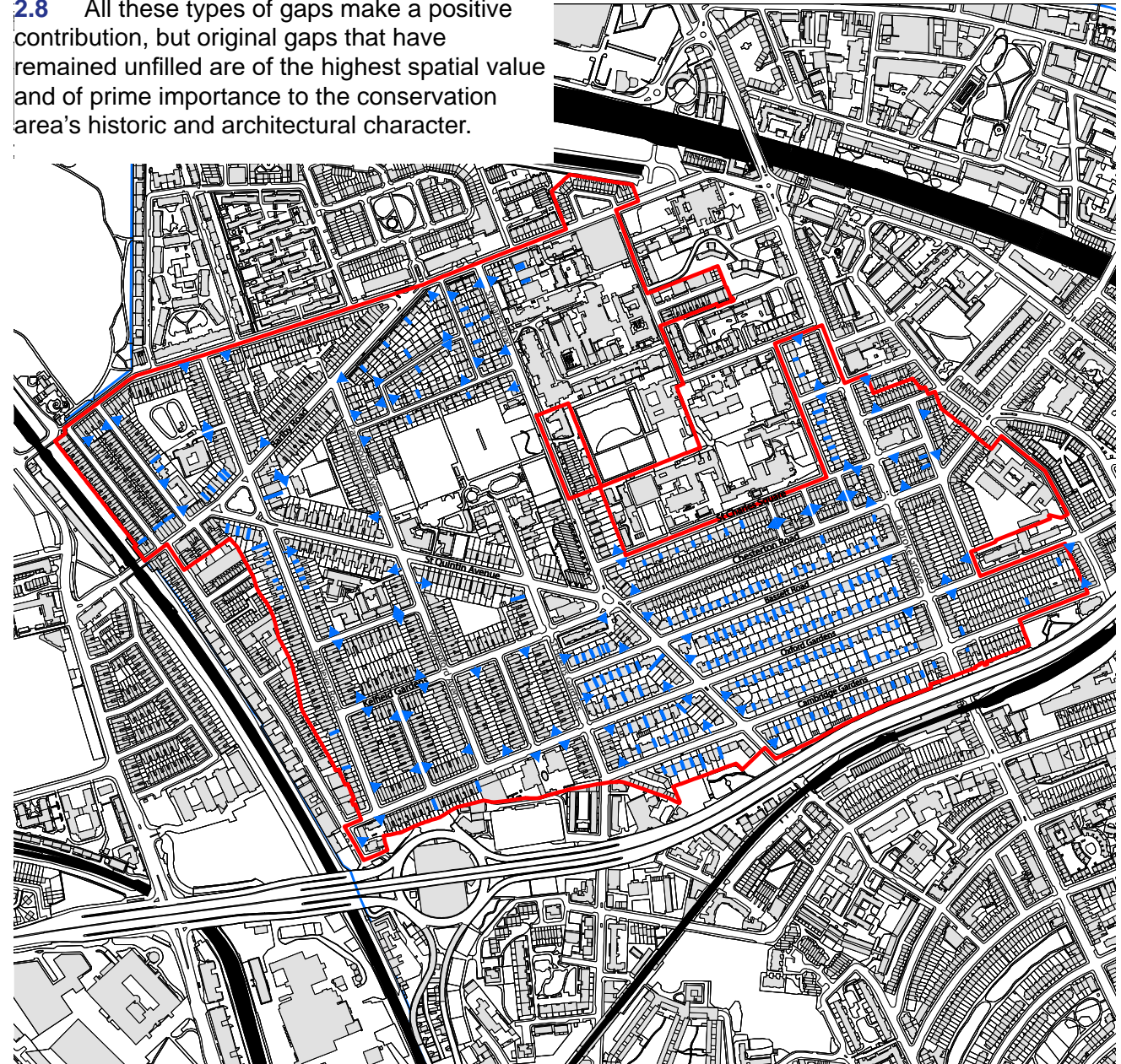
**2.5** The combination of buildings and the space around them combine to give the conservation area its characteristic form. Gaps between houses soften the sharp, rigid lines of the buildings and provide views through gardens to trees and neighbouring terraces enhancing the spatial qualities of the streetscape. The grid pattern streets also leave gaps at the end of each terrace offering softening glimpses of garden greenery and roof forms. The detached houses and villa pairs were built with space between each building even though this is often very narrow.

**2.6** Important gaps include:

- Space around detached buildings
- Gaps between semi-detached villa pairs
- Space between groups of terraced houses
- Space that is created where a back garden meets a street

**2.7** In some places gaps have been infilled at ground floor level and some houses, such as those in St Charles Square, were built with connections between each pair. These afford space above ground floor level allowing views of garden planting and sky and are shown on the map as positive gaps. In rare cases the gap between a pair was originally infilled by the rear additions at the back of the house. This leaves a deep and important gap that visually divides the villa pairs, but does not allow views through. Such houses can be seen on the St Quintin Gardens triangle and nos. 46-60 and 37-59 St Quintin Avenue.

**2.8** All these types of gaps make a positive contribution, but original gaps that have remained unfilled are of the highest spatial value and of prime importance to the conservation area's historic and architectural character.



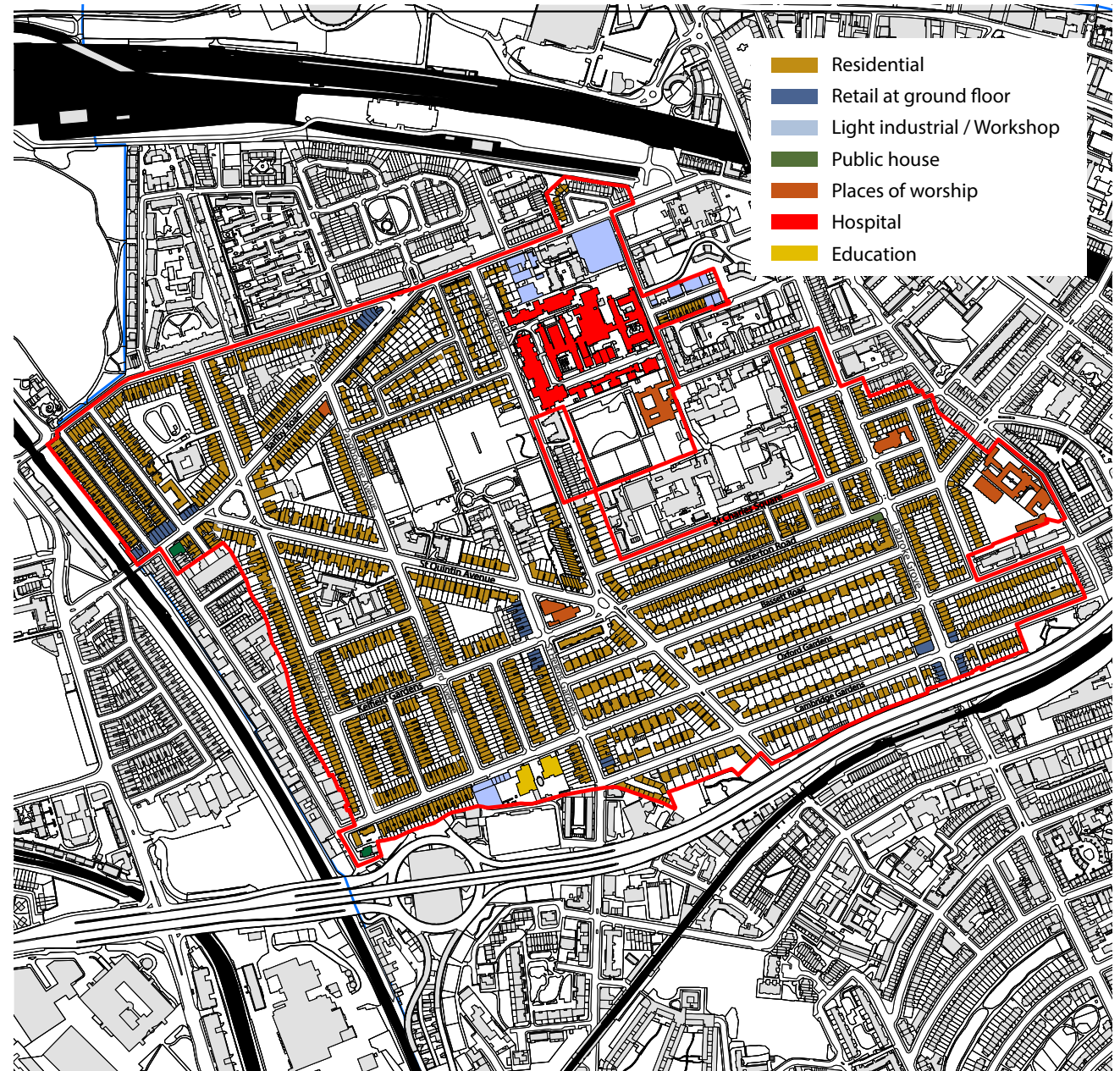
**Fig 2.2 Important Townscape Gaps Map**

## Land Uses

**2.9** Historic uses make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area both in terms of the vitality they bring to the area and the features specific to their buildings. Buildings were usually designed to make their use clear and were given features that set them apart from other building types. For example, churches were built with towers; pubs were built with hanging signs, lights and a wealth of decoration; whilst shops were designed with display windows. Where changes of use have taken place, these historic features continue to provide reminders of the building's past and bring its character to bear on the present day conservation area.

**2.10** The conservation area is predominantly residential with a few other uses including parades of shops at ground floor level, three pubs (albeit only one functioning at the time of writing), and churches that are common to such suburban areas. Oxford Gardens Primary School is an important example of a London Board School that retains its original function.

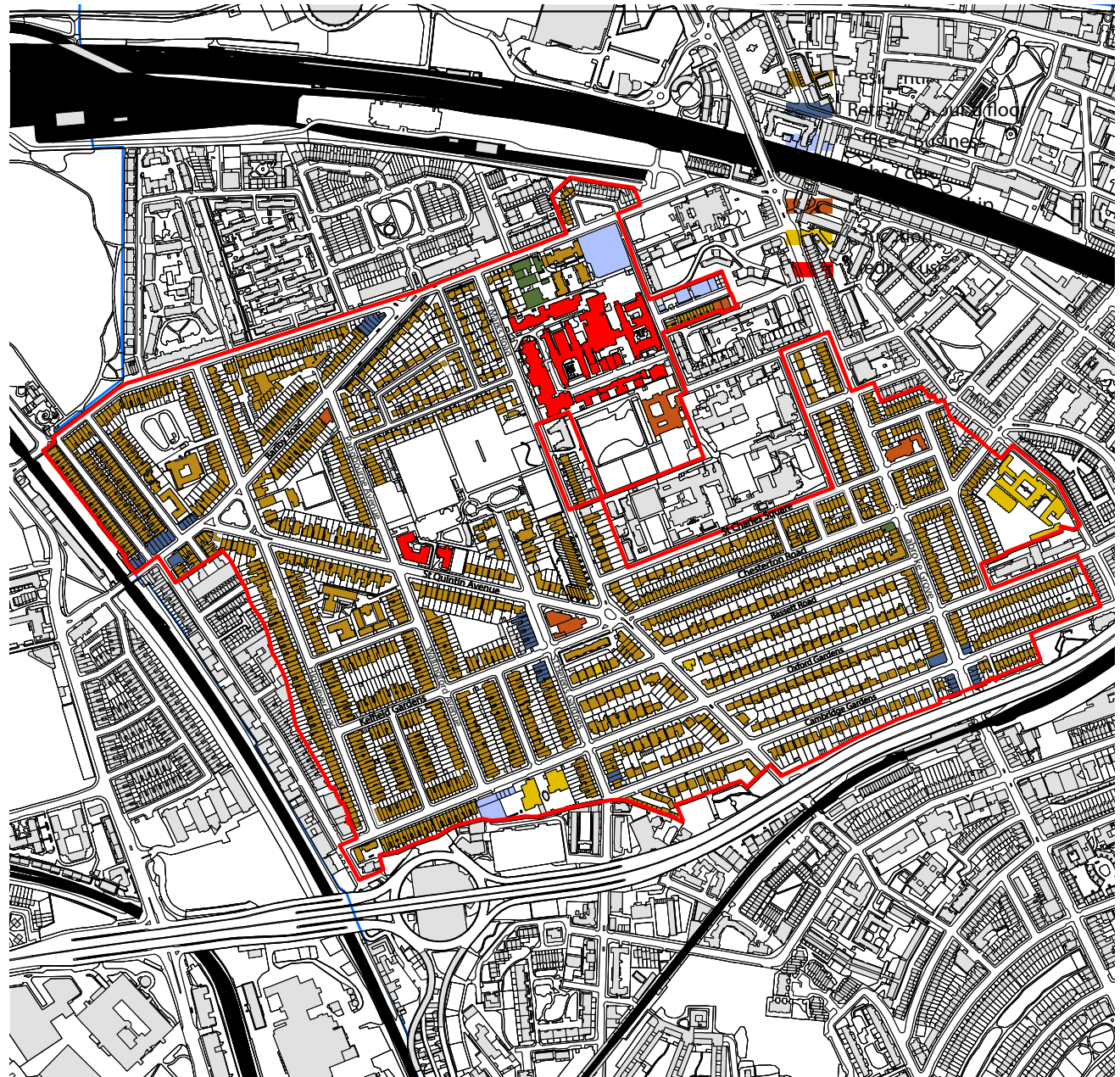
**2.11** When assessing historic land uses, what sets this conservation area apart from others is the existence of two convents and a large Victorian hospital. These demonstrate that at the end of the nineteenth century, the land was still considered far from the centre of London and therefore both cheaper and more desirable for these land-hungry uses.



**Fig 2.3** Historic Land Uses Map

**2.12** Another important feature of this conservation area is the enclave of light industrial buildings on Hewer Street, Exmoor Street and Barlby Road whose buildings are well designed and add interest to the area.

**2.13** The area is unusual for central London in having retained several pieces of land lying behind terraced housing that have not been developed. These were used originally for local sporting clubs and recreation. Three are now designated as Local Green Spaces including the West London Bowling Club, the Methodist owned site used by a pre-school playgroup, and the garden nursery site on land behind Highlever Road. The Kensington Memorial Park (St Marks Park) provides an important area of public open space.



**Fig 2.4 Present Day Land Uses Map**

## Materials and Finishes

**2.14** Houses in the conservation area were mainly built from locally sourced materials such as brick, timber, iron, glass and stucco. Only slate for the roofs came from further afield (Wales).

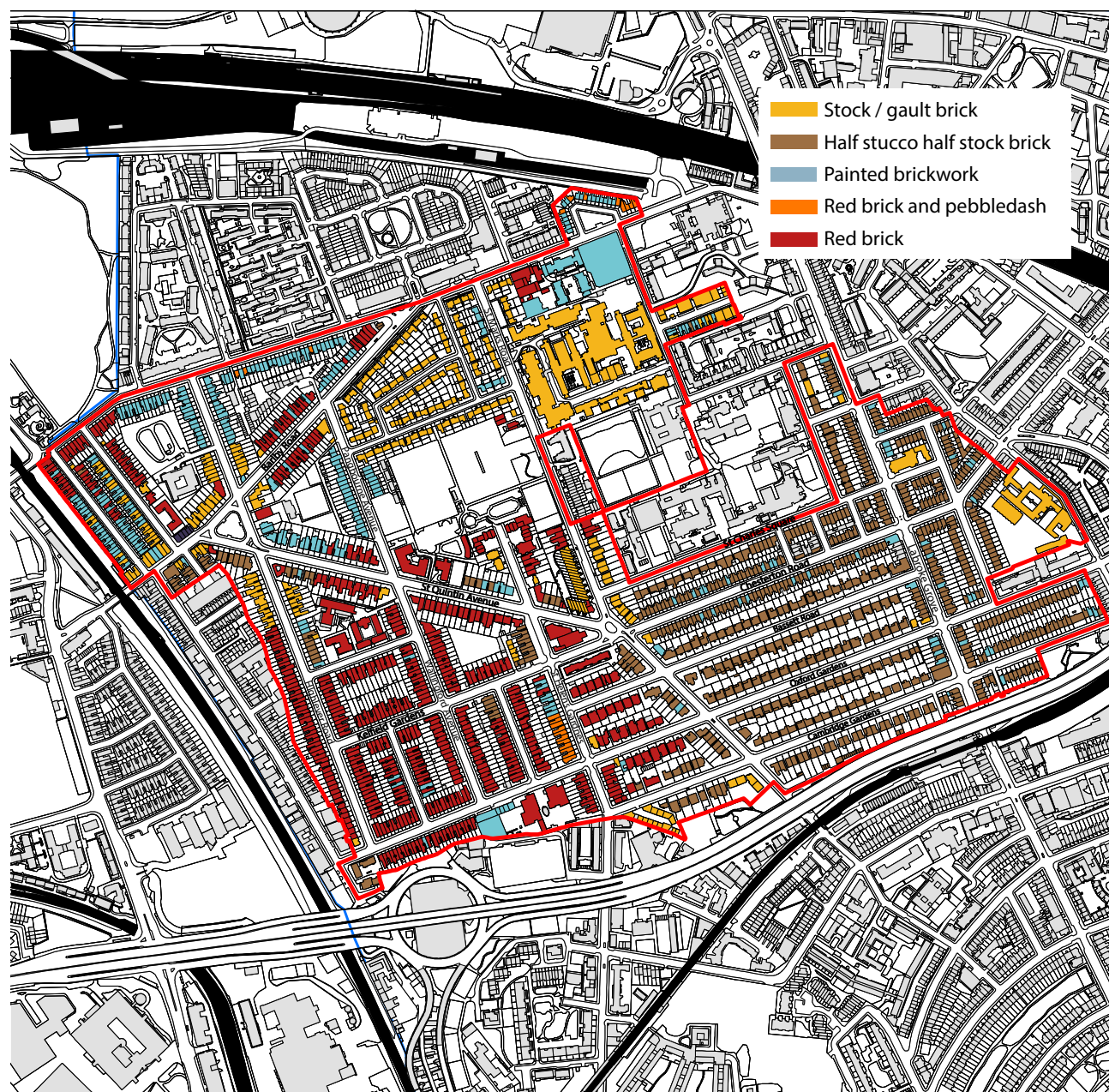
**2.15** The buildings in the conservation area derive much of their historic character from old weathered materials that bear the attractive patina of age. Whole streets can be characterised by one principal material such as stock brick or red brick and where this is broken, the street's attractiveness is impacted upon.

**2.16** Many of the Victorian houses were built with channelled stucco to the lower storeys and gault brick to the upper storeys giving the appearance of a solid base. These houses were given decorative details in stucco which was designed to imitate stone.

**2.17** The Edwardian houses are built in beautiful handmade red bricks that are contrasted by white painted detailing in either timber or stucco. Glazed tiles are found to the entrances of some of these houses as well as unglazed tile paths.

**2.18** Smaller houses from the early twentieth century in the north of the conservation area were built with their upper floors pebbledashed (or roughcast). This created a contrast between the brick ground floor and sandy coloured upper floors.

**2.19** Some houses have been painted and this is harmful to both the original design of the house and the regularity and attractiveness of the street.



**Fig 2.5 Materials Map (front elevations)**

## Buildings Audit

**2.20** The Buildings Audit Map shows the contribution made by buildings to the historic and architectural character of the area. For all buildings identified here as positive buildings, change must be managed to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance their significance in accordance with national and local planning policies. Where particular sites, buildings or additions to buildings are harmful or out of keeping with the broader character of the conservation area as outlined in this appraisal, the Council will support proposals and where possible, take opportunities to make improvements and enhancements in line with Policies CL1, CL2 and CL3 of the Local Plan.

### Listed Buildings

**2.21** A listed building is a building designated by the Government on the advice of English Heritage as a building of special architectural or historic interest, which local authorities have a statutory duty to preserve or enhance.

### Positive Buildings

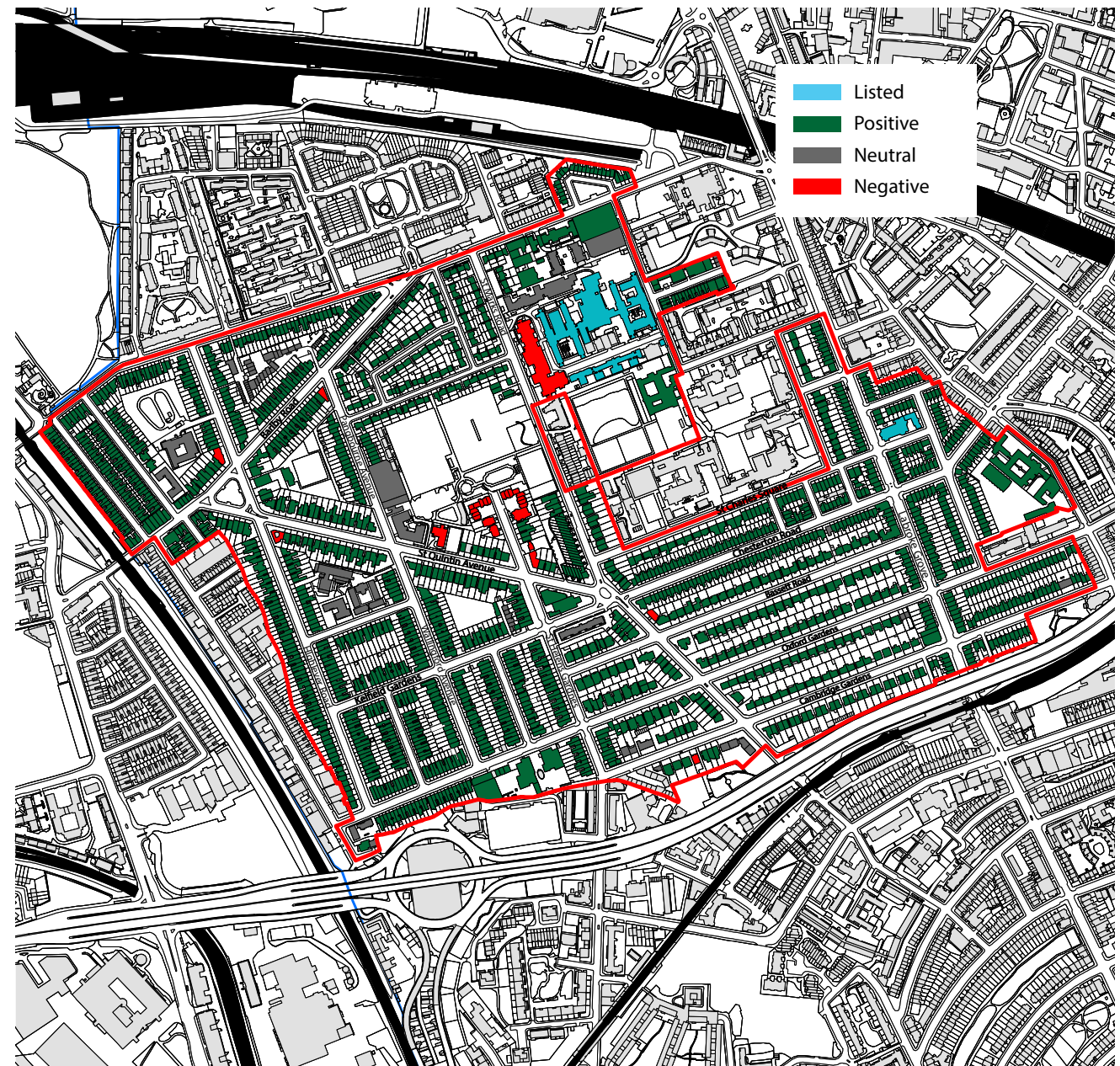
**2.22** These buildings make a positive contribution to the historic and architectural character and appearance of the conservation area. They are a key reason for the designation and significance of the conservation area.

### Neutral Buildings

**2.23** These buildings may blend into the townscape by virtue of their form, scale or materials, but due to their level of design quality, fail to make a positive contribution.

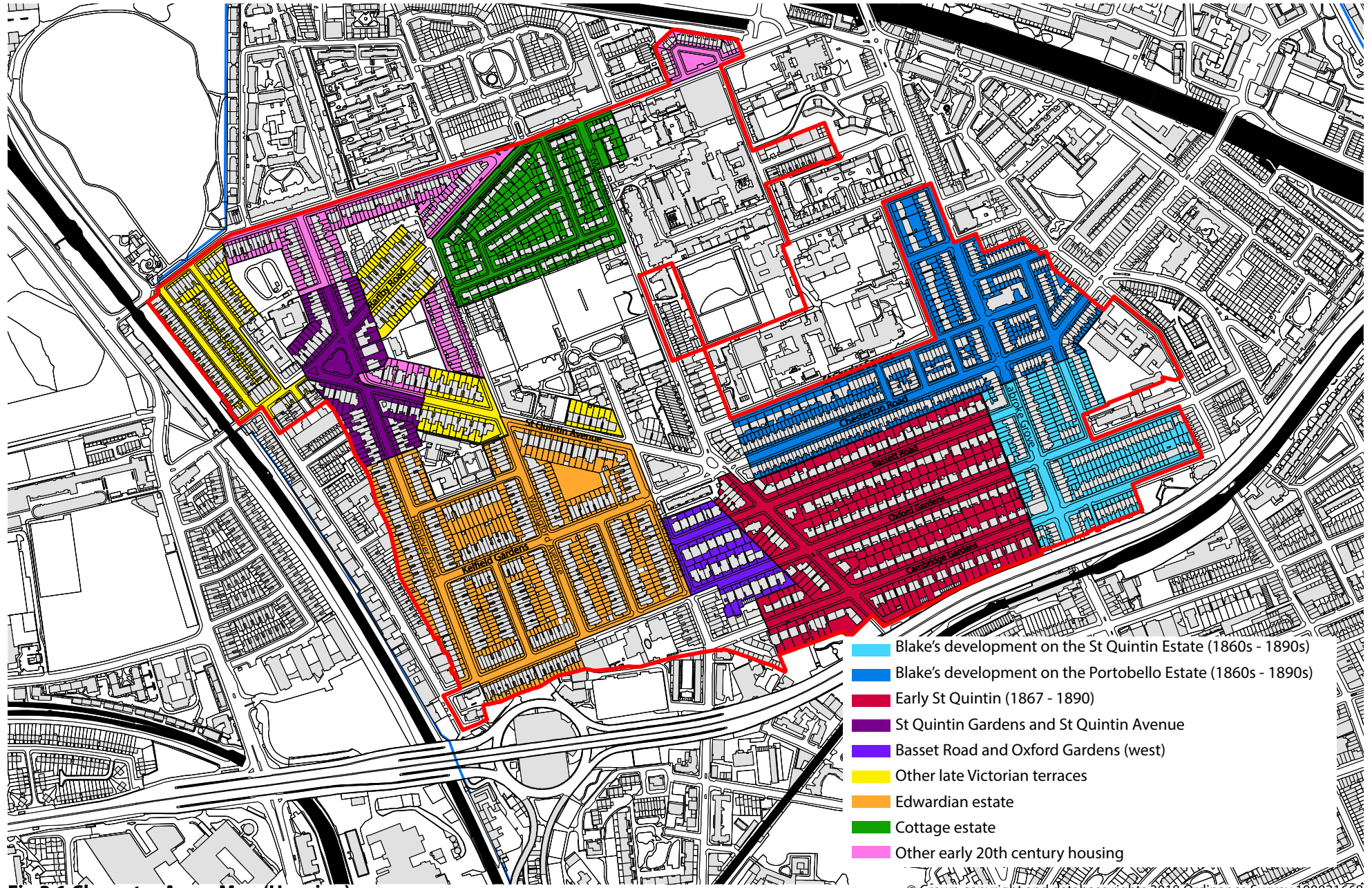
### Negative Buildings

**2.24** Negative buildings are those which are out of keeping with the prevailing character of the conservation area.



**Fig 2.6 Buildings Audit Map**

# 3 Architecture



**Fig 3.1 Character Areas Map (Housing)**

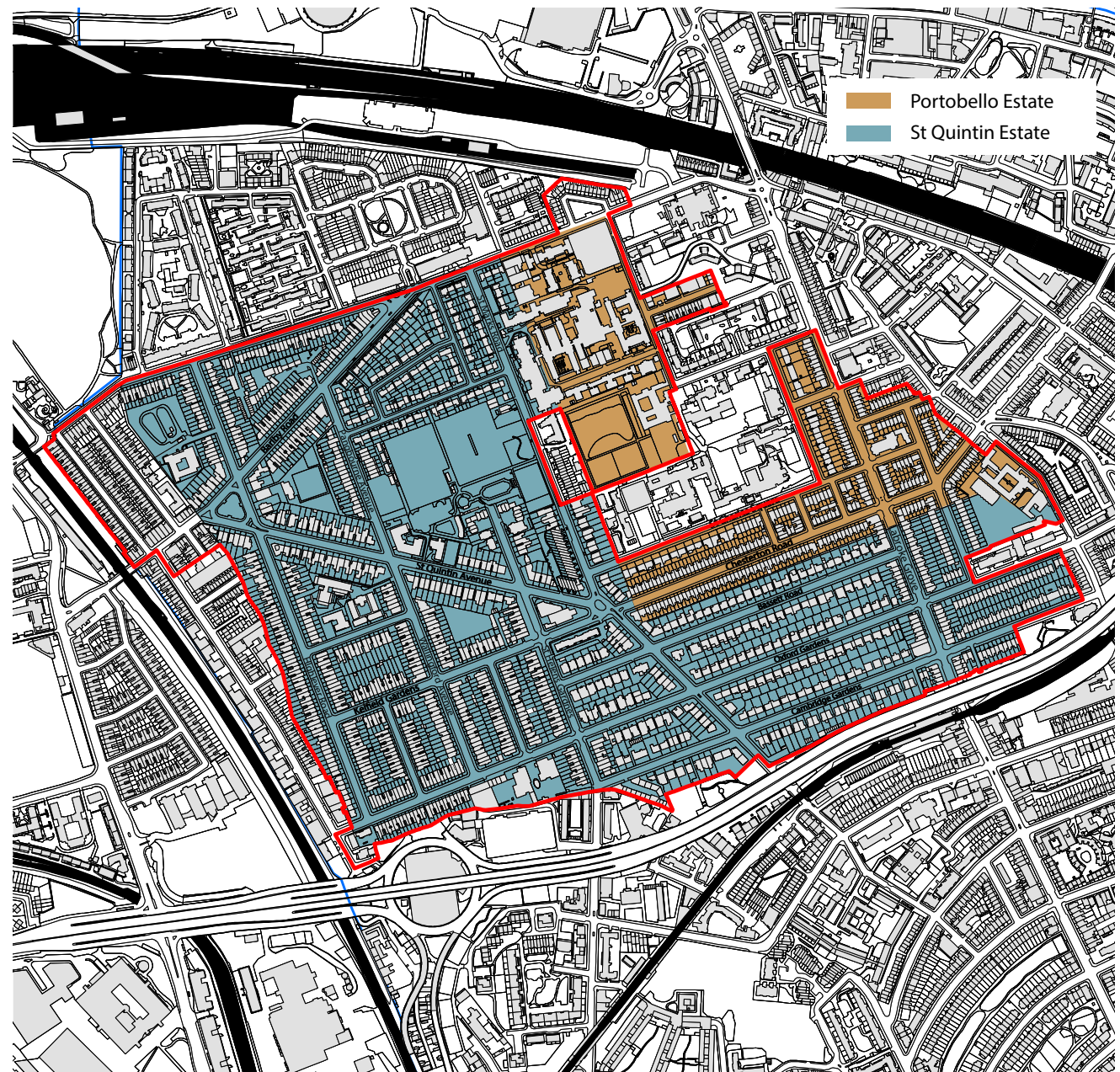


## Housing

**3.1** The Victorian housing in this conservation area was built in response to the arrival of the railway in which one of the developers, Charles Henry Blake, had a key interest. Development began on the Portobello Estate in the 1860s and progressed westwards over the next 30 years. Houses on the St Quintin Estate were an attempt to provide accommodation that responded more closely to the needs of families in the mid Victorian period onwards. The surrounding area was poor and even in the 1880s large houses in the area were failing to attract wealthy owners and starting to be subdivided.

**3.2** The Saint Quintin Estate began to be developed at a similar time but with better quality houses and ultimately over a much longer period. First, detached and semi detached Victorian houses were built along Bassett Road, Oxford Gardens and Cambridge Gardens (west of Ladbrooke Grove) under the auspices of architect, Henry Currey.

**3.3** Thereafter, red brick terraces forming the core of the area were built by building firm E.T. Daley and A.S. Franklin between 1905-1914. After the First World War, a cottage estate in the Hill Farm Road area was built by the Royal Borough of Kensington between 1919-1926 with a very different character. There is also an early twentieth century light industrial area to the north east of the conservation area and a number of important non-residential buildings including St Charles Hospital, Oxford Gardens School and two convents.



**Fig 3.2 Historic Estates Map**

## Charles Henry Blake's Developments (1860s-c.1890s)

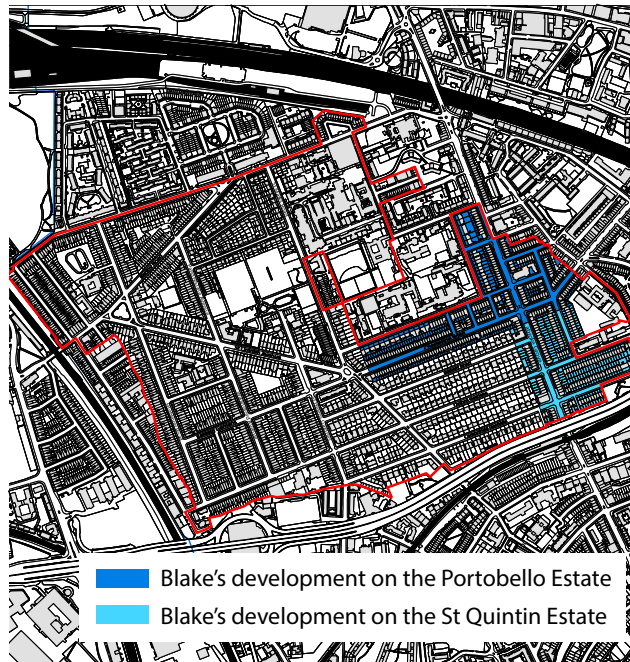


Fig 3.3 Charles Henry Blake's developments

**3.4** This map shows land that was bought by developer Charles Henry Blake from the Portobello Estate and land that he leased from the St Quintin Estate. Blake developed this area between 1863 and the 1890s both by having houses built for himself and leasing or selling land to others (see history section for details).

**3.5** All the houses in this part of the conservation area are in the Italianate style so typical of the mid-late Victorian period. They are all terraced and built in gault or stock brick to predominantly three or four storeys plus basement with parapet rooflines. The ground floors are all stuccoed, some being deeply channelled and others left plain. The steep



Ladbrooke Grove

steps leading up over the front area to the entrance door are key features of this type of Victorian terrace. Most of the houses have canted bays to first floor level although some bays in Ladbrooke Grove and St Michael's Gardens rise to first floor level. The doors are usually four panelled that are either set within porches which either project away from the building line or sit flush with it. The entrances can be either paired or single.

### Ladbrooke Grove

**3.6** The houses in Ladbrooke Grove were the largest and finest in the conservation area (see history section for details of interiors). Some terraces rise to four storeys over basement.



Oxford Gardens

Originally, many had either decorative cast iron railings or stucco balustrades running along the terraces at first floor level, but many have been lost.

**3.7** The first terraces (between the station and Cambridge Gardens) and part of the next are flat fronted four storey terraces with shopfronts to the ground floors. Blake was required to include shops by Colonel St Quintin and these are therefore original features of these buildings. They are built in the same plane as the main building and located directly next to the pavement without any front areas leading to the basements as in the residential houses.

**3.8** Nos. 152-168 and 177-193 Ladbroke Grove were built in the late 1860s by Blake, again following strict specifications from St Quintin. They have flat frontages, but their first floors are emphasised by decorative window surrounds and a stucco balustrade in a strapwork design. The feature windows are a particular characteristic of this fine street, some of which are French windows with flanking side windows topped with a bracketed cornice and pediment. The flat frontages are not broken by projecting porches but entrances are set back from a stucco doorcase with ionic capitals and swags. These two terraces have stucco quoins to emphasise the terrace ends as well as some central sections.

**3.9** Some of the Ladbroke Grove terraces are better preserved than others producing an effect of inconsistency and lost grandeur in the street.

### Oxford Gardens and Cambridge Gardens (east)

**3.10** These two streets contain grand four storey houses over basement with larger front gardens containing mature trees and only small lightwells around the basement windows. Sadly much decorative detail has been lost from these streets including most of the stucco window surrounds and many original cast iron railings. The terraces on Cambridge Gardens are articulated from time to time by more detailed sections with stucco quoins, decorative brackets and larger windows. The single stucco dormer windows that project above the parapet are a feature of particular interest in this street that is also seen on some Ladbroke Grove terraces.



Cambridge Gardens

### St Lawrence Terrace (north), Bonchurch Road, St Michael's Gardens, and Chesterton Road (east)

**3.11** These side streets contain three storey terraced housing that is smaller in scale than the grander roads. They display a variety of porch and window designs but all share corniced parapets. Several terraces in these streets have unusual curved stucco pediments with swags beneath. Chesterton Road also has distinctive projecting square porches and an unusual zig zag string course beneath the top floor windows. There is an unusual detached house flanked by single storey shops at the junction between St Lawrence Terrace and Chesterton Road. The house is built in red brick with a gabled symmetrical frontage and is completely different



St Lawrence Terrace

from all other houses in the area. The pointed features over the windows and out of character thick mortar serve to accentuate its eccentricity.

### St Lawrence Terrace (south)

**3.12** The south end of St Lawrence Terrace contains houses that are unusual for this period in having bands of white stucco and contrasting stock brick to their ground floor bays. At the upper levels, the windows are paired with a shared arch over those to the first floor and two arches to those to the second floor. Their porches are formed by the entrance being recessed with square striped columns with foliate capitals forming an informal arcade within the group.



Chesterton Road

### Chesterton Road (west)

**3.13** This is a well conserved street of terraces in the style described at the start of this section. The north side is characterised by pairs of engaged ionic porches and curved pediments over the first floor windows with an incised Greek key pattern running along the heads of the bays and entrances (this is also seen in Ladbroke Grove). The houses on the south side are of the same design but have the more common straight cornices with scrolled brackets and a central keystone on the architrave of the first floor windows. The parapets are particularly distinctive with mouldings giving a panelled effect to the frieze, interspersed with pairs of scrolled brackets supporting a continuous moulded cornice.



St Charles Square

### St Charles Square

**3.14** St Charles Square never had four sides, but out of its original three sides, two remain and both are mixed in character with smaller pairs of houses as well as three terraces.

**3.15** The terraces are palace fronted and of similar design. They are built in gault brick with end pavilions that are accentuated by stucco quoins, tripartite feature windows and small stucco dormer windows. The canted bays rise only to upper ground floor level and are in lined stucco. Doric porches project outwards.

**3.16** The double fronted pairs are set further back from the pavement as well as being lower in height (three storeys over half basements).



Chesterton Road

Each pair is symmetrically designed with the broad entrances (with engaged Doric columns and sidelights) being flanked by a canted bay on each side. These features combined with their lower height give them a very wide appearance. Most of the pairs are true pairs with space between each building but nos. 2-26 are joined at ground floor level by a set-back section containing blind arched windows and a doorway. The attached pairs have higher flights of steps to the front door. Only the pairs on the south side of St Charles Square are built entirely in stock brick whereas those on the east side are faced in gault brick.