CHORLEYWOOD COMMON CONSERVATION AREA
APPRAISAL

(ADOPTED 1 FEBRUARY 2010)
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 Policies which seek the preservation and enhancement of Listed Buildings, Locally Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and archaeology are set out in the Three Rivers District Council’s Local Plan 1996-2011 (and will be carried forward into the Local Development Framework).

1.3 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.

Special Interest

1.4 Chorleywood Common was designated a Conservation Area in 1976, with a minor boundary amendment in 1991. Chorleywood Common Conservation Area is of both historic and architectural interest. The open rural nature of the Common and the integration of the built form surrounding the Common creates an area of architectural interest. The variation in character of the buildings located around the Common, ranging from 16th and 17th Century to 19th Century buildings demonstrates the growth of the area throughout history. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies both the historic and architectural features of the Common. The Common is also a Local Nature Reserve.

1.5 Historically the Common has been used for grazing land used by the commoners for the exercise of their common rights of pasture and estovers (the right to harvest wood). The existence of trees and scrub land contrasts strongly with the appearance of the Common in past centuries when the area would have been free of such greenery. The built form located along the fringes of the Common is considered to be subservient to the vast expanse of the Common, thus, maintaining the open and rural character of the Conservation Area.

1.6 The special interest of the Conservation Area relates to the types of buildings and how the built form surrounding the Conservation Area has developed and grown throughout history. The original buildings consist of the farm cottages. These buildings reflect the historical agricultural use of the Common. These buildings are generally Grade II Listed and are dispersed sporadically throughout the Conservation Area. The original timber windows and architectural features, such as the chimneys, play an important role in maintaining the historic architectural features of the Conservation Area. Chorleywood Bottom reflects the early village settlements of the Conservation Area. The arrival of the Metropolitan Railway line resulted in a change in the urban form particularly around Station Approach. The north eastern part of the Conservation Area has an urban character created by the development of Rickmansworth Road (A404). The Conservation Area also contains Art and Crafts style buildings. The architectural features of these buildings are considered to be of a benefit to the amenities of the Conservation Area. The juxtaposition of low density home and gardens with more intensive terraces or rows of houses does impart a special character to the area.

1.7 The open and rural integrity of the Common has been maintained by the informal drives and the minimal front boundary treatments which generally consist of low brick walls, picket fencing or soft vegetation boundaries. The extensive road networks and boundary treatments along Rickmansworth Road provides evidence of how inappropriate forms of development can detract from the open and rural nature of the Conservation Area.
Purpose of the Appraisal

1.8 Government Guidance, provided in Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG 15; 1994) 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. This appraisal has been undertaken in accordance with English Heritage’s ‘Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals’ (2006).

1.9 Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1, 2005) states the importance of protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural and historic environment, in both rural and urban areas.

1.10 Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15, 1994) sets out a presumption in favour of preserving buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. In addition, the guidance recognises the contribution that traditional surfacing and street furniture can add to the character of an area.

1.11 The aims of this appraisal are to:

• Set out the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area and to describe the special character and appearance that it is desirable to preserve or enhance;

• 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

• Identify areas subject to pressure for change that would be adverse to the character and 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.