



HRH the Duke of Gloucester with delegates Tracey Harvey, Jane Blackburn and Jon Finney at the TCPA conference

How the Trust works to conserve the character and amenities of the Suburb

1. The Trust is a small, locally based, locally funded, organisation focused on a single purpose, the preservation of the Suburb

The Trust as freeholder can control changes to its leasehold properties through the restrictive clauses in the leases.

The Scheme of Management allows the Trust to be ‘treated as the Landlord for the time being’ and to control what freeholders may do to their property. The idea is not adversely to limit resident’s freedom on their own land, but to preserve the unique environment as it was intended and in a way that all future residents will value and enjoy. The Trust is also empowered by the Scheme of Management to levy a charge to meet reasonable expenses in ‘operating the Scheme in an economical, efficient and consistent manner’. The annual cost to each freeholder is of the order of £100. There has been much recent

debate about this, but outsiders – and most residents - consider it a modest investment in the future of the Suburb.

The Trust has the merit of being relatively small, local and based within the Suburb; it focuses on the character and amenity of the Suburb and nothing else – in contrast to Barnet Council which has to balance many competing demands, including transport, employment and housing shortage, across the whole Borough.

2. The Trust staff have specialised knowledge

The Trust staff are very knowledgeable about the architecture, planning and landscape of the Suburb. Their expertise is tailored exactly to the needs of the area and they are (for example) able to advise on the sort of detail, such as the pointing of brickwork and the design of dormer windows, required to ensure consistency in the architecture of the Suburb. The green environment is a vital element of the Suburb, so the Trust employs an arboricultural expert who is able to provide free advice to residents on how to care for trees and hedges.

3. Residents can easily communicate with the Trust

The staff and residents build up strong personal contacts. Residents are welcome to call into the office and Trust staff are recognised as they move around the Suburb, ensuring quick, discreet communication of residents’ concerns. Local volunteers are an invaluable source of help to the Trust (see p. 4-5 for information on the Suburb Character Appraisal), their understanding of the history of the Suburb and its architectural character is key to ensuring that as many residents as possible appreciate the full significance of the area they live in.

4. The Trust’s constitution provides for balance and independence

There are eight volunteer Trustees (directors) of the Trust, who constitute a variety of opinions and priorities. Four of the eight must live outside the Suburb, and are independent experts in architecture, law and planning who provide professional advice. The remaining four are elected. They are Suburb residents who are aware of local issues and may make a less technical but more personal input and provide a democratic element. This provides a balance between professional conservation opinions and the views of the inhabitants.

I have come to believe very strongly that the Trust performs a vital role in ensuring that the Suburb’s unique culture is maintained and that not only present but future residents will continue to enjoy the buildings, landscape and vistas as the founders intended.

Jane Blackburn