

Keeping the Suburb special

It is official; the Suburb is ‘one of the most well known – and well maintained – conservation areas in the country’ (English Heritage press release June 2009).

English Heritage also considers that the Trust ‘has played a crucial role in safeguarding the character and appearance of the...area’ (English Heritage letter 8 July 2009).

Most of the Trust’s success in maintaining the unique character of the Suburb is based on collaboration with property owners. Advice on maintenance of buildings and landscape and initial guidance on the design of possible alterations is provided by Trust staff free of any charge other than the Management Charge or Ground Rent. The expertise available is demonstrated by the articles on pointing and front doors elsewhere in this copy of the Gazette. Appointments for advice can be made by contacting the Trust office.

Owners wishing to change the external appearance of freehold property (gardens and buildings) are required to obtain the prior consent of the Trust under the Scheme of Management. Leaseholders must obtain consents under the terms of their leases which differ between houses. Within the application period owners will receive further advice and guidance. If initial, ‘provisional’, consent is granted for works the construction will be monitored. On completion a final inspection is made for compliance with the terms of the provisional consent. After a satisfactory final inspection a Final Consent document with stamped drawings will be issued. These documents are essential to any owner when subsequently selling the property.

The great majority of work on the Suburb is undertaken and approved on that basis.

Occasionally however owners fail to complete the work in line with the Provisional Consent. Sometimes minor work is started without consent. The Trust has a range of sanctions available to rectify matters.

If work is not in accordance with the Scheme of Management or the terms of the lease the Trust may apply to the Courts for an injunction requiring the work to be rectified to the Trust’s satisfaction. This process has recently been successful in getting owners’ agreement to remove unauthorised dormers and re-instate a chimney stack. A similar legal process is in hand to reinstate a front garden and remove an illegal hard standing. Three similar cases are with the Trust’s solicitors for referral to the Court.

Where the degree of non-compliance with the provisional consent or the lack of consent is less serious the Trust will issue a notice of infringement under the Scheme of Management or the terms of the lease. This situation



Rebuilt chimneys

constitutes a dispute which must be disclosed to any potential purchaser. Over the past year the Trust has had considerable success in getting these infringements rectified when owners were contemplating putting the property on the market. Buyers are increasingly concerned that property is fully compliant with the Scheme of Management and with other covenants. Infringements recently corrected include the removal of an unauthorised dormer, reinstatement of an illegally widened hard standing and reinstatement of three chimney stacks.

The Trust will take whatever steps are necessary to protect the Suburb and maintain its character, whether through the courts or otherwise.

A message from the Safer Neighbourhoods Team...

The Trust has been asked by the Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhoods Team to clarify the position on parking commercial vehicles on the public highway on the Suburb.

The Suburb is subject to a prohibition of overnight parking of commercial vehicles exceeding 5 tonnes gross weight. The Traffic Management Order (TMO 1988 No 2) is operated by the London Borough of Barnet’s Director of Environment and Transport.

Other commercial vehicles, provided they are correctly parked, are permitted to park on the public highway on the Suburb at any time.