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.
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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 Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 (Sections 69 to 78). Once designated, proposals within a conservation area become subject to local conservation policies set out in Chapter 34 of the Council’s Local Plan and national policies outlined in part 12 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 English Heritage in their document, Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2011). This appraisal will be a material consideration when assessing planning applications.

Purpose of this document

1.4 The aims of this 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

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**Kensington Court Conservation Area Boundary**

- Date of designation
- Boundary of Conservation Area
- Adjoining conservation area
Summary of Character

1.5 Kensington Court Conservation Area was designated in stages. First to be designated in 1974 were the oldest parts: Kensington High Street (late seventeenth century onwards) and the west side of Kensington Court Place (c.1802-07) with Kensington Court itself being added in 1980.

1.6 Kensington Court is the result of the extraordinary change in taste that overtook London in the 1870s and 1880s whereby regular Italianate stucco terraces were succeeded by tall gabled red brick houses and mansion flats. The Queen Anne Revival style used here can be seen in all its guises, including fanciful crow-stepped and curving Dutch gables; leaded and copper light glazing in mock-Tudor surrounds; carved, moulded and rubbed red brick; and soaring chimney stacks. Often stucco is used to contrast with the bright red brick and is moulded into elaborate swags, fruit and flowers or buff or pink terracotta is used as dressings with their equally fanciful designs locked together like jigsaw puzzle pieces.

1.7 Several well know architects worked here including R. J. Worley who also designed Sicilian Avenue in Holborn, Paul Hoffmann who did much work locally and John James Stevenson who was one of the founders of the Queen Anne Revival style.

1.8 The conservation area is of very high quality both in terms of its architectural coherence and its state of preservation. Many of the key details such as windows, ornamentation and ironwork are intact not only in a single building, but across whole blocks and terraces.

This quality along with the triangular shape of the road which mainly keeps the viewer looking inwards creates a hidden enclave with an exclusive and peaceful atmosphere.

1.9 Kensington Court is a strongly urban area which is solidly built up, but there are small scale moments of charm and delight in the area including the short alley between Kensington High Street and Kensington Court with its historic York stone slabs, original Kensington Vestry lamp posts and convivial atmosphere of summer al fresco dining. Another element of unquantifiable charm is the play of light and air through the trees which allow enticing glimpses of Dutch gables and red brick between their leaves as they move in the breeze.

1.10 The buildings in the area were built with the latest technological advances. Electric lighting was provided from a generator in the footpath to Kensington Court run by pioneer electrical engineer, R.E.B. Crompton whose home was at no. 48 Kensington Court. The houses and flats were the first in the country to be provided with hydraulic lifts powered from another building that remains today - the Old Pump House at the top of Thackeray Street. Another building type of rarity and architectural significance is the multi-storey mews building in which carriages were stored at ground floor, horses were stabled at first floor and carriage men in accommodation at second floor level. All these buildings have been converted to other uses (mainly residential) but survive largely in their original external form.
Location and Setting

1.11 The conservation area is in Queen’s Gate ward and in postcode area W8 in the centre of Kensington. Kensington Palace, Kensington Gardens and the busy commercial centre along Kensington High Street are located to the north of the area but to the south, the area is mostly housing. To the west is the very fine Kensington Square which was developed from the late seventeenth century.

1.12 Kensington Court is surrounded by other conservation areas, most of which contain earlier and smaller housing of a more suburban character than the highly urban houses and mansion flats of Kensington Court.
**Historic Development Summary**

**1600s and 1700s**
Nottingham House constructed in 1605 in the village of Kensington. Transformed into Kensington Palace by Sir Christopher Wren 1689-95 for William III and Mary II. Surrounding area included the ancient Red Lion pub, 'courts' of small workers' dwellings, market gardens and two mansions on Kensington High Street: Colby House and Kensington House were large mansions which were all demolished for the Kensington Court development.

- **c.1802-07** Nos. 6-15 Kensington Court Place built (altered in the later nineteenth century)
- **c.1806-07** The Builder's Arms built
- **1880** Goat Tavern, 3a Kensington High Street rebuilt
- **1883** Nos. 1-3 Thackeray Street and 16-19 Kensington Court Place possibly by developers W.G. Flint or H. Powys Adams
- **1883-86** Nos. 3-25 Kensington Court built. Architect J.J. Stevenson
- **1884-86** Nos. 26-29 Kensington Court built. Architect J.J. Stevenson
- **1886** Kensington Court Mews built by Henry Lovatt for J.J. Stevenson
- **1887-87** Kensington Place Gardens built 1887-89. Possibly by architect, Henry W. Peck
- **1888** Electric Lighting Company built, 46 Kensington Court. Architect, J. A. Slater
- **1888-89** Thriplands house built for R.E.B. Crompton, 48 Kensington Court. Architect, J. A. Slater
- **1890-92** Nos. 49-60 Kensington Court built by builder Oliver Cromwell
- **1891-92** No. 61 Kensington Court. Architect W.W. Gwyther
- **1894** St Alba's Mansions built. Architect, Paul Hoffmann
- **1896-98** Roxburghie Mansions built. Architect, Paul Hoffmann
- **1901-02** Durwood House built by Durwood Brown
- **1974-83** Conservation area designated and extended (see Summary of Character)

**NB.** Several buildings on Kensington High Street contain remnants of buildings dating back to the seventeenth century.
2 Townscape

Street Layout

2.1 In 1869 the street layout was almost unrecognisable from today. Kensington Road is a very old route whilst Young Street and Kensington Court Place were in existence by 1841. However, the old network of small streets such as Jennings Buildings, Shepherd’s Gardens, Coombs Gardens and Palace Place had become slums and were swept away for Carr’s late nineteenth century developments. Only the footpath leading to Kensington Court remains from this time. Kensington House and Colby House were once fine mansions but had become dilapidated and were also cleared for the development of Kensington Court.

2.2 Today, the street layout of Kensington Court has a highly distinctive and exclusive triangular form with entrances from all three corners, although one is pedestrian only. The streets link through to Kensington Square in the west via Thackeray Street but the developments on the east sides of Kensington Court Place and Kensington Court defiantly blocked all previously planned connections with the Vallotton Estate (in the De Vere Conservation Area).
**Urban Form and Gaps**

2.3 The urban form is extremely tightly packed with both terraced houses and mansion flats filling their plots with only tiny yards behind them and lightwells within them. Building plots on Kensington High Street have retained their long and thin shape from their ancient house and market garden form, but today the whole plot is developed. The only buildings to have green space around them are those in the centre of Kensington Court where mature trees, grass and shrubs relieve the dense red masonry.

2.4 Buildings in the conservation area are tall. The houses in the area range from two storeys (plus mansard and half-basement) to five storeys (plus mansard and half-basement) and the mansion flats range from four storeys to six storeys (plus mansard and half-basement).

2.5 There are few townscape gaps in this densely built up area and most buildings adjoin each other with even corner sites being completely filled by a building. In a rare exhibition of spaciousness, Kent and Kensington Houses are visually separated from each other and from Cornwall Mansions. There is more spaciousness at roof level where the variety of roof forms and the varying heights of buildings creates a pleasingly irregular finish to the buildings creating valuable spaciousness at high level.

2.6 Despite density, there is much variety in design and detail and this, combined with the twists and turns in the streets allowing enticing views around the conservation area and out towards other areas, means that the area manages to have an airy and unconfined ambience.
Land Uses

2.7 The conservation area is strongly urban in character containing some houses, but mainly flats and many shops and restaurants. There has been much change in the shops since they were first built and many are now restaurants.

2.8 Pubs used to be a feature of Kensington High Street but today only one remains (The Goat Tavern) with the other two (the Green Man and Red Lion) being lost to restaurant use and demolition respectively. Another pub, The Builder’s Arms, also remains, but his relates more to the Vallotton Estate in the neighbouring conservation area than to Kensington Court.

2.9 Restaurants are now a modern, but welcome feature of the footpath leading to Kensington Court. The two grand houses at nos. 1 and 2 Kensington Court were converted to hotel use many years ago.
2.10 Materials used to construct the buildings in the conservation area are either traditionally manufactured ones such as brick, stucco and glass or natural materials such as slate and stone. Their original method of manufacture or natural variation results in a finish that is typical of traditional building materials. The imperfections and ripples in cylinder glass, the folds in hand made brick or the lines of fissure on the surface of slate, along with the softening of colours and edges that is part of the natural processes of ageing and weathering, give the buildings their authentic historic character and charm that makes the conservation area so special.

2.11 Traditional materials used in Kensington Court Conservation Area are:

- Red brick, moulded and carved brick, clay tiles, stock brick
- Unglazed pink and buff coloured terracotta
- Stone and stucco (an imitation stone)
- Slate and lead
- Timber
- Cast and wrought iron
- Crown or cylinder glass, leaded glass
- Mosaic tiles and terrazzo
- Granite setts and kerbs
- York stone
Buildings Audit

2.12 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

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

Positive Buildings

2.14 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

2.15 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

2.16 Negative buildings are those which are out of keeping with the prevailing character of the conservation area.
3 Architecture

3.1 Kensington Court consists mainly of two building types: the mansion block and the terraced house with other building types playing supporting roles around the edges of the area. The style used was overarchingly the Queen Anne Revival style which had been evolving since the 1860s and 70s, particularly around Cadogan Gardens and Pont Street.

3.2 The earliest development in the conservation area began in the 1800s along Kensington Court Place with Kensington Court itself being developed between 1883 and 1902 with houses on the east and north sides and mansion flats on the west.

3.3 Features of the Queen Anne style can all be found in this conservation area and include asymmetry of design, fanciful Flemish and Dutch inspired gables, wrought ironwork and the widespread use of bright red brick. The buildings all feature a wealth of decoration in carved/moulded brick, unglazed terracotta or stucco, with the most elaborate terracotta being seen at nos. 1-29 Kensington Court and the simplest detailing being white stucco bands giving a striped effect in St Alban’s Mansions.

3.4 The mansion flats are often located on street corners and therefore have two elevations which are elegantly finished by a canted turret feature topped with a conical slate roof. There are no blank elevations and all frontages have windows (usually timber sashes) and often the entrance is on the long ‘side’ elevation.
Houses and Mansion Flats

Kensington Court Place

3.5 Nos. 6-15 were built c.1802-07 as part of a larger development that has since been lost, with the exception of the Builder’s Arms. The Survey of London says they appear to have had alterations to their fronts and railings in the later nineteenth century.

3.6 Today the whole terrace is extremely well conserved with most houses having matching features. The altered ground floor is rendered and lined with pairs of shallow entrance porches, most of which contain six panel doors (two have unusual doors containing a round window). Windows to ground and first floors have an elegant eight-over-two pane configuration with the second floor windows being casements in a two-over-one pattern.

3.7 Railings were also a later addition, but the front gardens are disappointingly all hard surfaces and devoid of the planting that usually softens the streetscape in gardens of this size.

3.8 Hamston House was built between 1905-06 and designed by architect, G. L. Elwell. This is a tall three storey mansion block over a high half basement and with pedimented dormer windows. It is almost symmetrical save for the off-centre entrance door and windows sitting next to the building’s main point of focus: a narrow central stone window section that is topped with a curved gable. The windows are shallowly canted and set back from the brickwork. They have thick transoms and mullions and the top lights are divided into four and six panes with the lower pane plain. The four dormers have moulded stucco decoration in their pediments.

3.9 Two mansion blocks take up the east side of Kensington Court Place. St Alban’s Mansions was designed by Paul Hoffmann and built in 1894 with frontages onto St Alban’s Grove and Kensington Court Place. These two elevations both feature slenderly projecting sections defined by a broken decorated pediment over and courses of stucco to the sides to give a striped effect. The corner is turned with a simulated canted turret, again with the brick and stucco stripes. The main entrance and a
matching window on the same elevation have elliptical arches with brick columns and highly decorated stucco plaques above.

3.10 Kensington Place Gardens was built between 1887-89 by Moir, Wallis and Company and possibly designed by architect, Henry W. Peck. This is a well considered composition of 10 bays, four of which project forward, rising to full height and topped with Dutch gables, with the central two only rising three storeys. Most windows are six-over-one paned sashes with rubbed brick lintels and some having rubbed brick aprons. The whole building is lined with brick string courses and the two entrances have carved / moulded brick spandrels containing sunflowers, pomegranates and leaves.

3.11 Between this building and the mews is no. 35, now called The Old Pump House as it was built in 1884 as the supply station to the London Hydraulic Power Company which was used to power lifts in the mansion flats. This building therefore has great significance to the area.

3.12 It is a simple stock brick five storey building with Georgian paned sashes and red brick dressings. The ground floor elevation has been added and contains an out of character garage door and Classical entrance. There is a small gap to the south which allows light to pass and this, along with the diminutive size of the building, forms a refreshing link between the mews and mansion blocks.

Nos. 1 and 2 Kensington Court

3.13 No. 1 Kensington Court (grade II), built 1883-84, fronts Kensington Road and was designed in a particularly ornate Queen Anne Revival style by John James Stevenson who was inspired by late seventeenth houses in central Europe. It was originally called Chenesiton House, the name given for Kensington in the Domesday Book, and has been part of the Milestone Hotel (due to the milestone on its boundary) since c.1925.

3.14 This was a large red brick house that had stables to the rear accessed through the wide entrance on the left side of the building, under a distinctive turret feature with heavy mouldings.
to the top windows and lead onion dome on top. The main entrance is through a characteristically off-centre porch with a Gibb's style surround and an open oval cartouche above. The decoratively gabled roofline, tall chimneys, sash windows and the buff terracotta decoration are key features of this Queen Anne design.

3.15 No. 2 Kensington Court (grade II) was designed by T. G. Jackson and built in 1883 and was Jackson’s only town house in London. It is now also part of the Milestone Hotel. Again, this is a large red brick house but this time having pink terracotta decoration and its main entrance on the long west side. The Kensington Road frontage has the most Tudor/Gothic detailing with pointed arches to the first, third and fourth floor windows and all of them having thick terracotta Mullions and transoms. The second floor windows have a stylised trefoil pattern in moulded brick. All windows have metal frames containing small square leaded lights. Much of the terracotta decoration displays the initials “AR” (for its first owner, John Athelstan Laurie Riley) and, as with no. 1, the elaborately gabled roofline is one of the building’s most distinctive features.

3.16 The long west elevation is relieved by a highly articulated roofline with gables (the southern one was probably added in 1890) and chimneys as well as three differently designed bays, one of which is surmounted by mythical sea monsters inspired by the spire of the Exchange in Copenhagen. Rather than the usual projecting porch, the entrance is set within a gated, double height recess with a balcony above. English Heritage’s list description describes the style as “Franco-Flemish Gothic with fine early Renaissance-style decoration” but the Survey of London says Jackson was more likely to have taken inspiration from Tudor houses in England. The result is, in either case, a very fine individualistic building.
Kensington Court (east side)

3.17 Nos. 3-25 Kensington Court were built between 1883-86 by Henry Lovatt for architect John James Stevenson. They are all grade II listed. Nos. 3-15 were the first to be built and have a symmetrical design along the terrace with the end sections and two sections towards the middle projecting forward of the others and having elaborate crow-stepped gables. The design is both elegant and elaborate with a wrought iron balcony running the length of the terrace and supported on ornate terracotta brackets. This horizontality is further emphasised by the terracotta plat-band decorated with anthemion and fruit below second floor windows and the bracketed parapet.

3.18 The windows have highly decorative surrounds which include terracotta architraves with egg and dart mouldings and key stones to the canted ground floor bays. Windows to the first floor or ‘piano nobile’ are tripartite sashes with cambered heads and top lights but two-over-two sashes with simple surrounds to the second floor. The windows have unusual thick, moulded glazing bars. The mansards contain groups of three sash windows with cresting to each outer one and the end and central pavilions have crow stepped gables with swags above the windows.

3.19 Nos. 18-25 follow the same pattern, but no. 16 is a smaller corner house. This has only two storeys with attic and half-basement accommodation. Its date is shown between the main door and window which sit beneath an arched Diocletian window and its decoration is in carved brick rather than terracotta.

3.20 No 17, next to it, is also of different design to the others in the group. It has a higher roofline with taller windows and two rows of casements in its crow-stepped gable. The elevation is decorated with brick arches and tracery but no terracotta and the windows are multi-paned in contrast to the others in this group.

3.21 This is an extremely fine group of houses, but many have had their terracotta, one of their key features, painted white which has altered their appearance.
Kensington Court (north side)

3.22 The Electric Lighting Station, no. 46 was established under the auspices of R. E. B. Crompton. It is grade II listed. This was the second electricity generating structure on the site and was built in 1888 to the designs of J. A. Slater. This unassuming red brick building sits discreetly in the lane leading from Kensington Road to Kensington Court and is three storeys of red brick with sash windows, stone dressings and restrained detail in the form of triangular section brick pilasters and moulded brick plaques. The building’s name is carved into the stone sign over the wide entrance way. This was one of the earliest electricity generating stations in the country. Demand for electricity increased rapidly and no 46 was converted to a sub-station to the company’s main supply in Shepherd’s Bush in 1900. The contents were stripped out in 1985.

3.23 No. 48 (grade II listed) was originally called “Thriplands” and built as a home with laboratories on the third and fourth floors for R. E. B. Crompton. It too was designed by J. A. Slater and built between 1888-89. Its pared back Tudor style belies its great historical significance as, not only was it lit by electricity and the location of pioneering electrical experiments, but it was an early house to be built around a steel frame as well as using gas for heating and cooking.

3.24 Nos. 49-60 are uniform red brick Queen Anne houses erected by builder Oliver Cromwell of Chislehurst between 1890-92. They are four storeys over half basements with accommodation in dormers and gables. They have shallow canted bays up to second floor with rubbed red brick dressings (keystones, curved lintels and aprons) and generally, French doors to the first floor and four-over-one paned sashes above. Entrances are arched with long stucco brackets supporting a narrow continuous balcony with wrought iron railings. There are carved / moulded brick plaques above the curve-headed windows and to the parapets. The pointed gables contain sash windows and possibly some of the gables have been lost.

3.25 No. 61, at the east corner, is an individual Former Electric Lighting Station

*Thriplands*, 48 Kensington Court

Kensington Court (north side)
A house in a Classical design in dark red brick by W.W. Gwyther which was built between 1891-92. The grand entrance on the east elevation has half fluted engaged columns, curved pediment and highly individual mouldings and sits between a bay of eight windows and a blank one. This is an unusual solution to a corner site which has an elevation to the south with sash windows, balcony and canted bay.

Both elevations are divided horizontally by stucco bands with highly individualistic pediment details. The roofline is finished with a bottle balustrade that should be painted white rather than the present red.

Much of the decoration on this house has a round form: some windows have circular upper panes, the unusual pediment detail is topped with roundels and the channels between the rusticated brick quoins contains rows of discs.

**Kensington Court (west side)**

3.28 Palace Place Mansions (no. 36) was built between 1890 (date over door) and designed by Alfred Burnell Burnell in red brick with stone and stucco dressings. The block is symmetrically designed with two full height canted bays to each side topped with curved gables. The central section contains a wide arched entrance with beautiful original double doors flanked by huge brackets with acanthus leaf and shell motifs. The French doors above the entrance have round sandstone arches over whereas the other windows are square headed with a shallowly carved ogee arch. The end bays are topped with small stucco gables with curved pediments. Each floor has balconies with iron railings.

Kensington House and Kent House (nos. 34 and 35) were built between 1896-97 to designs of architect R. J. Worley (who also designed Cumberland House on Kensington High Street and Sicilian Avenue in Hoborn). These two impressive castellated Tudor style blocks were meant to be completed by a third block to the south that was sadly never built.

Both blocks are four storeys tall without a basement and are built in a deep red brick with black mortar and salmon coloured terracotta dressings. Kent House has a symmetrical design.
consisting of a central section with curved corners and square end towers which contain shallowly canted oriel windows. Kensington House has an asymmetrical design that no doubt would have been reflected in the missing block. This block has a central full height curved oriel window. The projecting sections of both blocks are topped with crenellated terracotta parapets and the quoins to the end section of Kensington House terminate in slender turrets. The entrances are surprisingly small for such a grandiose building. They contain original front doors of polished oak doors with 25 small bulls eye panes over two solid panels with a window adjacent. The terracotta chimney pots each have different mouldings.

**3.31** Cornwall Mansions (no. 33) was designed by Paul Hoffmann and built 1902. This red brick block is almost symmetrical and built to four storeys over a half basement. Typical mansion block features are repeated here: the balcony railings, the full height bays with white painted stucco dressings and a large central entranceway with a polished hardwood pair of doors (these have particularly fine decorative brass kick plates). This block is crowned with two fine lead clad domes over the bays.

**3.32** Roxburghe Mansions (no. 32) is again by Paul Hoffman and built before Cornwall Mansions, between 1896-98, in a much more adventurous style. These mansions have a half basement and two rows of dormers in the mansard roof. Again the building has two tall canted bays and a projecting porch with its name prominently marked, but there is much more decoration on this building that Hoffmann’s later block. All the windows are long casements (or French windows) with multi-paned top lights and moulded detailing above them in a pleasant pale caramel colour. The wrought iron railings to the balconies are highly decorative and the front door is flanked by Jacobean style pilasters.

**3.33** Durward House (no. 31) was built between 1901-2 by Durward Brown with the entrance to its flats on Kensington Court and shops to its side elevation on Thackeray Street. The two elevations are joined on the corner with a turret feature terminating in a simple parapet that is
swept up at the corners. This is a tall building with an elaborate roofscape containing two storeys of triple dormer windows, a number of gables containing windows of different designs and a further turret feature to the east end on Kensington Court. Both elevations follow a pattern. The main entrance to the flats has an exaggerated Renaissance design with delicate swagged capitals, low relief mouldings of urns and ribbons with the whole porch being topped with a scrolled broken pediment containing further decoration in its tympanum. In contrast to this elaborate design, the sash windows are of the plain two-over-two type.

**Kensington Court (island sites)**

3.34 Nos. 26-29 are four houses attributed to J. J. Stevenson and built on the eastern island site 1884-86. This was a clever design for four houses that avoided the exposure of rear elevations on this small site. Each house has a different design that can be glimpsed tantalisingly through a green veil of leaves to reveal a combination of Dutch gables, lead covered turrets, swags and pale terracotta.

3.35 Kensington Court Mansions (nos. 62-97) are three mansion blocks on the western island site built between 1886-90 to the designs of J. T. Perry and F. H. Reed. The whole block is divided into three groups with a projecting entrance each. The front and rear elevations are both built to a symmetrical pattern of canted full height bays and recessive and projecting sections with stone banding at the upper floors and roof level. The mansard roof is particularly well detailed with brick and stone gabled dormers topped with pediments, balls and finials and dotted with tall chimney stacks and pots.

3.36 The main entrances on the east side are formed of projecting porches with white painted voussoirs around arched openings and broken pediments and ball finials above. The front doors are modern replacements. The windows are plain sashes and French windows to the front and two-over-two panes sashes to the rear.

3.37 The north and south elevations have
asymmetrical designs that make use of Dutch gables and bays that are canted or triangular in section. The south elevation makes the most of its prominent situation by having a tower feature topped with an open cupola on one side.

**Footpath Leading to Kensington Court**

3.38 This charming alley is made up of the side elevations of nos. 33 and 37 Kensington High Street, the former Electric Lighting Company building, Palace Place Mansions and four other smaller red brick buildings. Today restaurants occupy all the ground floors and outside tables in the summer bring life to the area.

3.39 The outrigger to no. 33 Kensington High Street on the east side is plain in design with arched ground floor openings, painted stucco string courses and a curved corner wall, which is a particularly charming feature.

3.40 In between this and the former Electric Lighting Company are two three storey houses (plus attic) that step back to fill the space in an informal manner that is a feature that makes this footpath so attractive.

3.41 Opposite, no. 35 was designed by architect, R. H. Kerr and built in 1910. This is a fine Baroque style building with a stone ground floor frontage that features an imposing arched entrance with coat of arms above. The upper storeys are in red brick with quoins expressed as flush stone blocks with brick in between and the bracketed eaves overhang in a way that is typical of this style. The roof has been extended with two rows of dormers (with visually intrusive railings) and the right hand side has a different pitch to the left which is awkward and ungainly.

3.42 Between no. 35 and Palace Place Mansions is a quiet Queen Anne style building that links these two more elaborate buildings in a perfectly understated way that leaves a gap above it at high level and exposes the flanks of the neighbouring buildings. This variation in height (and set back, seen opposite) contributes greatly to the character of this small alley.
Kensington High Street

3.43 Cumberland House was designed by R. J. Worley (who also designed Kent and Kensington Houses) and built between 1892-93. At six storeys plus an ungainly modern roof addition, this is the tallest building in the conservation area and even at the outset its height was controversial. The block is unusual in the area for having stone bottle balustrades to its boundary and balconies.

For the rest of Kensington High Street, see other sections.

Thackeray Street

3.44 Esmond Court is a tall interwar block of flats of much less character and quality than its Queen Anne neighbours and has been refenestrated rather poorly. However, it has a low impact on the street scene, having been built in similar materials to the wider area.

For other buildings in this street, see Shops section.

Ansdell Street

3.45 This street contains only one building of any merit which is no. 10, an interesting Art Deco inspired frontage that uses tiling, render ‘strapwork’ and circular cut-outs to the parapet for its decoration. The windows are multi-paned steel factory-style windows with only small side or centre hung openings. On this unobtrusive side street, this modern building has little impact on the Queen Anne character of the wider area.
Shared Features of Houses

Architectural Details

3.46 Architectural decoration is specific to each building or terrace and makes an important contribution to the character of the conservation area.

3.47 The Queen Anne style relies on its detailing as an important part of its design. Pink or buff coloured unglazed terracotta is most often used as decoration and is particularly fine at no. 1 and 2 Kensington Road and nos. 3-25 Kensington Court where the terracotta has been moulded into various Classical and Gothic designs.

3.48 The Queen Anne style was inspired by Tudor architecture in England and designs of seventeenth century buildings in central Europe. Turrets feature prominently at corners of some mansion flats and otherwise at roof level. Kent and Kensington Houses have curved edges, turrets and castellated rooflines whereas several buildings in the area have crow-stepped gables.

3.49 Many mansion blocks make use of stone or white painted stucco (both plain and carved/moulded) to contrast against the bright red brick whilst others display moulded or carved brick that relies solely on the carved elements to provide a contrast. Fine carved/moulded brick can be seen on many buildings such as Kensington Court Mansions, the former Electric Lighting Company building, nos. 1-3 Thackeray Street and nos. 16-19 Kensington Court Place, whilst stucco and stone can be seen widely around the area.

3.50 Rubbed bricks with fine lime pointing can be seen on many buildings often in the form of flat arches to windows, but can also be seen to the curved corners of nos. 59-61 Kensington High Street in addition to its unusual mosaic and terracotta detailing.

3.51 Cast iron balconies are an important feature of the mansion flats and houses with their designs different from the front area railings. Both houses and mansion flats tend to have a low landing or path leading over the area to the front door whereas the houses on the north side of Kensington Court have steps up to their main entrances. Paths and steps were originally surfaced with black and white tiles or polished terrazzo or sometimes small mosaic tiles, but today, the original consistency has often been lost.

3.52 Date and name plaques are also common features of the late Victorian period and the mansion flats usually have their name in carved brick or stone and date plaques can often be seen at roof level, particularly in Kensington High Street.
**Windows and Doors**

3.53 Original windows and doors make a vital contribution to the designs of buildings and therefore contribute to the area’s appearance, integrity and historic character. The most widespread type of window in Kensington Court Conservation Area is the sliding timber framed sash window which was an important British invention that allowed air to enter a room by the top and/or bottom sash without breaking the carefully designed building line.

3.54 The typical Queen Anne style sash window has a plain lower pane with smaller panes above divided by glazing bars. The glazing bars and horns are usually slender in proportions. Windows of this description can be seen at nos. 49-60 Kensington Court (where the number of panes reduces according to floor level) Kensington Court Gardens and Roxburgh Mansions. This pattern is also used at nos. 6-15 Kensington Court Place although these windows were added.

3.55 Houses on the east side of Kensington Court have a particularly unusual design. The external joinery, including the unusually wide glazing single bars, are grooved and shaped in a highly distinctive way that was designed especially for these houses by the architect and is of great heritage value.

3.56 The windows to Kent and Kensington Houses are also a distinctive design being small casements with small leaded lights set within deep terracotta mullions and transoms. The reflections from these individually set panes creates a shimmer that is particularly special and to be treasured in the conservation area.

3.57 There are other types of window in the conservation area and all designs original to a building are of value to the conservation area. Other types include the simple one-over-one sashes seen in several mansion blocks, the six-over-six pattern seen at nos. 1-3 Thackeray Street and 16-19 Kensington Court Place as well as occasionally casement windows.

3.58 There are an even greater number of designs for entrance doors in the area. All original doors are timber and some are double leaved whilst others are single. Some doors are painted whereas those to the mansion flats tend to be polished hardwood. They are usually set in porches or another purpose designed surround, often with over lights and side lights and their glazing often ties in with that of the rest of the building.

3.59 Particularly good doors can been seen at Kent and Kensington House (polished oak door with 25 bulls eye panes over two solid panels) and Palace Place Mansions (polished oak with copper light glazing over chequer board panels). The loss of such doors is a great loss to the conservation area and some mansion flats have regretfully had inferior modern designs installed, usually with a higher level of glazing and branding that is inappropriate to the design of these buildings.
Front Boundaries and Front Areas

3.60 Boundaries in the conservation area are all black painted cast or wrought iron railings with the exception of Cumberland House which has a bottle balustrade. The railings are planted onto a low moulded coping stone or moulded cast iron coping in the case of nos. 6-15 Kensington Court Place. Each pattern is replicated along the whole frontage of a particular terrace of houses or mansion blocks and this gives a great impression of quality and regularity. Ironwork to balconies usually differs in design from the area railings.

3.61 The designs in Kensington Court usually consist of rows of uprights with repeated sections of detailing such as the higher curving panels projecting at regular intervals in the railings to nos. 3-25 Kensington Court or the anthemion decoration use in the railings at Hamston House. No. 48 Kensington Court has elegant wrought iron railings without any uprights and this was perhaps due to the owner (R.E.B. Crompton’s) interest in the historic decorative ironwork of Vienna.

3.62 The steps leading down into the front areas are closed with gates that match the railings so that their pattern is uninterrupted, but steps leading to the paired main entrances are open to the pavement.

3.63 The front areas (or lightwells) to the houses are accessed by stone steps leading down from the opposite side to the main entrance, with the basement entrance being located under the main front door. The steps down were originally made of stone and many survive with a simple D-section handrail on slender square section iron posts.

3.64 Most front areas, including those to the mansion flats, are narrow with no space for any planting. The only houses with wider front gardens are those on Kensington Court Place but these are all regrettably covered in hard surfacing, some with highly out of character asphalt. A few contain pots of plants but they would be greatly improved by much more substantial planting.
Roofs

3.65 Rooflines are one of the most exciting parts of Queen Anne Revival design. Most of the houses and mansion flats in Kensington Court Conservation Area are terminated by highly decorated rooflines that include curving Dutch gables, crow-stepped gables and mansards with decorative dormers, all of which are punctuated by tall chimney stacks and terracotta pots.

3.66 Decoration is expressed in terracotta, stone or stucco to contrast with the red brick and the designs can be inspired by Classical architecture (in the case of the stucco pediments) or medieval design (as in the castellated roofline to Kent and Kensington Houses) or Flemish architecture (the curving and crow stepped gables).

3.67 Roof coverings are divided between clay tile, which accords well with the Queen Anne style, and slate. Generally these are used uniformly across a group of houses or mansion blocks, for example, the houses by Stevenson in Kensington Court, Hamston House and Kensington Court Place all have clay tiled roofs as do the neighbouring mews.

3.68 Other buildings have Welsh grey slate with Durwood House having a fine roof of green Westmorland slates with patinated copper flashings. Esmond Court is roofed in red pantiles which is consistent with its inter-war design.

3.69 It is important that roofs match across a group of houses or mansion flats and for most of the conservation area, they do.

Note:
Most roofs in the conservation area also have decoration such as gables, dormers, or other ornamentation.
This map shows original roof form unless stated otherwise.
3.70 Several blocks have small domes at roof level. Durwood House has a patinated green copper dome to its corner turret. Cornwall Mansions has two elegant lead clad domes and nos. 26-29 Kensington Court have leaded polygonal cupolas. The asymmetrical side elevations of Kensington Court Mansions have a single open timber lantern each.

3.71 Chimney stacks punctuate the roofs at regular intervals and should exhibit the same type of chimney pot (usually red terracotta). The castellated houses are the exception to this having deliberately used pots of different designs to display exquisite Tudor moulded designs.

3.72 Original roof form, materials, details and chimneys are important characteristics of these buildings and make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

1 Mansard with crowstep and pedimented gable, 24-25 Kensington Court
2 Clay tiled mansard, Hamston House
3 Medieval castellated roof design, Kensington House
4 Westmorland slate roof, Durward House
5 Gables and chimney stacks, 2 Kensington Court
6 Leaded polygonal cupola, 26-29 Kensington Court
**Rear Elevations**

3.73 Rear elevations form part of the character of the conservation area as they are part of the original building design and can be seen from many windows. Some rear elevations in this area are also exposed to public views from the smaller streets to the east. The rear and side elevation (regrettably painted white) of Roxburghe Mansions is visible from Thackeray Street.

3.74 The mansion flats have regular rear elevations with evenly spaced sash windows of matching design. Their rears are usually built in what was at the time a cheaper yellow stock brick, saving the more expensive bricks for the public frontages only. Rear elevations of mansion blocks can be flat or have projections. For example, Kent and Kensington House have two storey closet wings, Palace Place Mansions has full height canted bays and Kensington Place Gardens has wide full height closet wings leaving only narrow gaps between them. The uniformity of these elevations is important to the integrity of the buildings and the character of the conservation area.

3.75 Houses on the east side of Kensington Court have original rear outriggers that run the full width of each house at ground floor level, but are only two windows wide at first and second floors, leaving a recess. These have hipped roofs. As the stairs are in the centre of each house, all the windows are at the same level on each floor.

3.76 The original design of rear elevations, their uniformity, matching windows, regularly spaced chimney stacks and historic materials contribute to the overall character of the conservation area.
Other Building Types

Pubs

3.77 Pubs have great significance in the historic environment. They were usually the first building to be constructed in a street and often built at road junctions with different entrances to the various bars. Their function as a place of social gathering and community focus continues to this day.

The Builders Arms, 1 Kensington Court Place

3.78 This stucco fronted three storey pub was built c.1806-07 by Jonathan Hamston who was also responsible for other early nineteenth century development nearby. It is now one of the oldest buildings in this area which used to be known as South End.

3.79 The building has two main frontages with entrance doors on both sides and one on the splay to address both St Alban’s Grove and Kensington Court Place. The building is built in the Classical style with prominent quoins, sash windows surmounted by bracketed pediments; and a simple parapet at roof level which conceals a shallow pitched roof. The pub frontage is stuccoed with pairs of pilasters topped with stylised Composite capitals flanking each wide window.

3.80 Other fixtures typical of historic pubs include two large lanterns and a hanging pub sign. Low outbuildings on its western side create a visual break in the solid townscape between the pub and St Thomas’s School. The Survey of London says that this pub was enlarged, stuccoed and embellished, principally in 1861 and 1878.

The Goat, 3a Kensington Road

3.81 This pub was largely rebuilt in 1880 to the designs of architects, Isaacs and Florence. Its frontage is curved and framed by two pedimented console brackets and converted copper gas lanterns. A timber sign hangs from first floor level. These are important features of historic pubs.

3.82 The red brick has regrettably been painted which makes the building look tatty and has obscured the detail of the brick. A carved goat looks back from a central pediment at roof level.

The former Green Man, 17 Kensington High Street

3.83 The Green Man occupied this site from at least 1697 and became the Marquis of Granby by 1771 until 1873. The building has undergone many later additions and today the upper floors are canted and the first floor has large display windows. Now a restaurant.

The Survey of London volume 42 lists other lost pubs in Kensington High Street.
Shops

3.84 Shops, restaurants and other commercial buildings make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area as well as the vitality and daytime economy of the area. There are several commercial streets in the area with Kensington High Street being the most substantial.

3.85 A few historic timber shopfronts survive and these have great heritage value but others only retain their historic surrounds. Restaurants are later uses, but make a particularly pleasant contribution to the footpath leading to Kensington Court. Cast iron and glass pavement lights are a feature of the forecourts to shops in the area.

Kensington High Street

3.86 Kensington High Street is the oldest part of the conservation area and a few buildings on the south side contain elements dating back to c.1695 with the plot widths being set even earlier. The buildings present today were built with shops to their ground floors from the outset but these are all now modern shop or restaurant frontages and retain only surrounding historic elements that are of interest. This busy main road carries a lot of traffic as well as shoppers which means the upper floors of the buildings are not as easy to appreciate as the lower levels, but these have become the parts of the buildings that make the strongest contribution to the character of the conservation area.

3.87 Next to the former bank (see Other Significant Buildings), no. 3 sits an older building refronted in the prevailing red brick Queen Anne style in 1881 by builder George Hunt. The building features a stone arched entrance and elegant Classical pilasters, pediments, swags and sunflowers in carved/moulded brick.

3.88 Nos. 7-13 were built by different builders between 1891-1906. They are all built in red brick and three of them have Queen Anne gables, but they all vary in width and height and have different detailing which makes them an extremely pleasing group united by their variety.

3.89 No. 15 was built by builder, James Carmichael in 1909 and although the masonry would benefit from careful and gentle cleaning, it is a fine frontage faced in limestone in a Moderne style using Classical motifs and odd roundels under the second floor windows.

3.90 Nos. 19-21 were built c. 1695 and have both been painted. No. 21 has been refronted whereas no. 19 probably retains more historic masonry. Nos. 23-25 date from 1782 but are much altered. All four have regrettably had their fair faced brick frontages painted and no.25 has also been rendered. The paint conceals the beauty of the brick and has become dirty which further worsens its appearance.

3.91 No. 27 is by architects, Bannister Fletcher and Son 1896-97 and no. 29 is by architects, Thomas and Frank Verity 1891. Both are slim red brick Queen Anne buildings, the former with a stone Tudor oriel window, topped with a Venetian window painted white; and the latter is simpler with a recessed balcony behind a
cambered brick arch at second floor level.

3.92 No. 31 was built c.1773 has been refronted in stock brick which contributes to the rich variety of the high street.

3.93 No. 33 is another red brick and stucco building that turns the corner in the Footpath leading to Kensington Court and was built in 1896 for the London and North Western Railway Estate Office. The building is topped with a double pitched mansard on the high street side and prominent chimneys and a tall crow stepped gable on the footpath side. The sash windows are divided unequally and the top sashes are divided into three in an aesthetic manner popular at this period. The blank chimney breasts divide the front from the back sections of the building.

3.94 Nos. 37-47 was designed by R. H. Kerr (as no. 35) and built between 1909-10 in a regular red brick and stone Queen Anne style with three Dutch gables and pilasters with Renaissance style Ionic capitals with garlands of fruit or flowers hanging below. The first floor is taken up by disused display windows with small transom panes and Ionic pilasters to the sides and middle.

3.95 Nos. 49-53 was built in 1968-69 to the designs of surveyors Goodman and Mann. It matches the verticality seen in the other buildings in this part of the conservation area, but has employed modern contrasting materials and a form that creates a visual link to the former department stores of the 1930s beyond Young Street.

Thackeray Street

3.96 The shops on the north side of Thackeray Street were built as part of Durward House which has the entrance to its flats on Kensington Court (no. 31) and was built between 1901-2 by Durward Brown. All the shop frontages appear to be original except for those to nos. 14 and 16 which are both out of character. The others reflect the proportions of the building above and have either paired or single recessed entrances. Each frontage (or pair) is separated by a polished red granite pilaster and large fluted console bracket.

3.97 The fascias are narrow and the timber shopfronts below them have a wide transom window with cast iron ventilation grille above. The doors are glazed with only a small panel at the bottom which matches the stallriser in depth.
One stucco swag detail remains to the stallriser of no. 6. A restaurant occupies several of the shops and although these are well maintained, the frontages have been painted entirely black which is discordant with the repeated elements (such as console brackets, cornice and fascias) of the mansion block that are painted a uniform white in the rest of the group.

Kensington Court Place

3.98 Nos. 1-3 Thackeray Street and 16-19 Kensington Court Place were built in 1883 possibly by developers W.G. Flint or H. Powys Adams who also owned the whole east side of Kensington Court Place. This curving red brick building contains shops, flats and artists’ studios, each of which can be clearly understood from their window type and size.

3.99 The shopfronts are traditional painted timber examples with matching fascias. No. 17 has late nineteenth century arches to the transom light and wrought iron over the doors whilst no. 16 has a recessed shop entrance and they are both fronted by an attractive pavement of Victorian mosaic tiles in red, blue and white. It is disappointing that the rusticated brick pilasters and console brackets dividing the shops have been painted green to nos. 1-3 Thackeray Street and this harms the composition as a whole.

3.100 The second and third floors have six-over-six (Georgian paned) sash windows of equal size. Above them is a moulded brick parapet-like feature that is topped with the large multi-paned dormer windows of the studios, each surmounted by a brick pediment.

Artists’ Studios

3.101 Nos. 18-19 Kensington Court Place and nos. 1-3 Thackeray Street have artists’ studios at roof level. See Shops section for further details on this building.

Kensington Court Mews

3.102 These were built in 1886 by builder, Henry Lovatt for the architect of nos. 3-25 Kensington Court, J. J. Stevenson. They are multi-storey mews, a rare building type in which carriages were kept at ground floor, horses stabled at first floor (with access via a ramp) and the coachmen living in the top floors.
3.103 The mews are built of stock brick with red brick dressings and their flanks have been designed almost to match and create an attractive entrance into the mews with arched windows and Queen Anne style Dutch gables with buff terracotta and red brick dressings. Inside the mews the upper floors have external galleried access, large openings and ‘Georgian paned’ sash windows painted white. The mews have sadly lost their original cobbled flooring to tarmac.

Other Significant Buildings

3.104 No. 1 Kensington High Street (grade II listed) was built in 1885 as the London and County Bank and designed by architect Alfred Williams in a late Gothic revival design in red brick with red sandstone dressings. It is now a restaurant.

3.105 Nos. 59-61 Kensington High Street were constructed by builders Leslie and Company between 1893-94 and the London Light and Coke Company were an early occupant although the building was not built for them. It is now occupied by a bank. The building has two equally extravagant elevations of red brick with bands of pink terracotta with the upper floors being separated by mosaic, then moulded terracotta, and finally a carved red brick frieze to the curved parapets. A terracotta clock tower with four slender turrets and an open arcade regrettably no longer contains a clock. Much of building has been altered including the arches and shop windows on the ground and first floors (only one remains on the corner) and original mosaic panels with cherubs, lush foliage and coats of arms. Modern signage and cash points associated with the use of the building by a bank are also out of character.

Recent Architecture

3.106 There are only three modern buildings in Kensington Court Conservation Area. No. 5 Kensington High Street has an unobtrusive design and nos. 59-61 Kensington High Street adds variety to the street scene. However, the Richmond University building on Ansdell Street fails to relate to the surrounding architecture in quality, form, materials or size and is out of character.
4 Public Realm

Trees and Green Space

4.1 There is very little green space in the conservation area and there are only a few trees which are on private land. There are no street trees.

4.2 There are two small communal areas around the island sites in Kensington Court, both of which have mature trees but are of quite a different character. The eastern side has mature Plane trees around the periphery whilst the garden on the Western side has a mixture of tree species. The dominant trees here are Red Horse Chestnuts (*Aesculus x carnea*) with some smaller ornamental species such as Birch, Cherry and Maple interplanted between the chestnuts.

4.3 To the south end of this space there is an attractive mature Mulberry tree which in common with many trees of this age and species has begun to lean and has been propped on its southern side.

4.4 The trees create a different and softer character to this enclave and bring a welcome foil to the solid red brick buildings.

Street Furniture

4.5 Historic items of street furniture make an important contribution to the historic character of the conservation area.

Letter boxes

- Red pillar box outside Kensington Court Mews. GR
- Red pillar at top of Kensington Court. VR

Street lamps

4.6 The ‘Chelsea Coronet’, a tall but unobtrusive modern interpretation of a Victorian style lamp is used across the conservation area which has a neutral impact on the historic character of the area.

4.7 There are historic Kensington Vestry lamps in the footpath leading to Kensington Court.
Other

4.8 There is a historic cast iron milestone next to the brick pier in between nos. 1 and 2 Kensington Court. It reads “Kensington Parish. Hounslow 8 ½ London 1 ½”.

4.9 There are four traditional cannon shaped bollards in the footpath leading to Kensington Court.

Street Surfaces

4.10 The surfacing used for pavements helps to provide an appropriate setting for the historic buildings in any conservation area. Originally pavements would have been surfaced with riven York stone and where this survives, such as around the Builder’s Arms and in the footpath leading to Kensington Court, it is of the highest heritage value.

4.11 Kensington Court and Kensington Court Place are paved in modern sawn York stone paving which is a suitable surface to these fine streets. Elsewhere there are concrete paving slabs of similar proportions which are less historically appropriate, but preferable to other less traditional options.

4.12 There are historic red granite setts in the footpath leading to Kensington Court.

Coal hole covers

4.13 Original cast iron coal hole covers remain in many streets and their variety and design contributes to the authenticity of the area.
4.14 In Kensington Court, the combination of an enclosed triangular street pattern and unbroken rows of historic buildings means that every street is completed by an attractive view. The island sites contribute greatly to this effect and their trees in particular enhance the views and glimpses of red brick houses behind. One of the best views is from the south end of Kensington Court to the fine side elevation of nos. 86-97 Kensington Court Mansions.

4.15 The turret features seen on many mansion flats sometimes create a frame for a view. A good example of this can be seen from the west end of Thackeray Street looking east towards Kensington Mews which appears framed between the corner turrets of Durwood House and Thackeray House.

4.16 Views to other areas such as that past Abbot’s Court and onwards to houses, the garden and trees in Kensington Square is a very pleasant view. Similarly, Cornwall House and Garden House in Cornwall Gardens can just be seen south from Kensington Court Place. Another good view is towards the fine Edwardian Baroque building at nos. 26-40 Kensington High Street from the narrow footpath leading from Kensington Court.

4.17 Due to its inward-looking design, there are fewer views into the conservation area from elsewhere although buildings on Kensington High Street provide the end points for vistas from Palace Avenue and Kensington Palace Gardens.
Arriving in Thackeray Street from Kensington Gardens the eye is led along the attractive curving parade of historic shopfronts and given an introduction to the red brick mansion flats to be discovered beyond.

1 View towards Kensington Gardens
2 View south towards 16-17 Kensington Court
3 View of Kensington Court Mews, looking north from Kensington Court Place
4 View towards Kensington High Street, looking through the footpath to Kensington Court
5 View looking west along the north side of Kensington Court (nos. 48-60)
6 View from Kensington Court Place towards 86-97 Kensington Court Mansions
5 Negative Elements

5.1 The conservation area is generally extremely well conserved, however, there are some interventions that have had a negative impact on the area’s historic and architectural character and these are itemised below. The list is not comprehensive.

5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework and the Council’s policies require opportunities to be taken to enhance the character of conservation areas and listed buildings when opportunities arise and this includes the removal of the negative elements given in this section or others that may arise.

All building types

- Non original window designs and materials
- Non traditional materials such as aluminium or uPVC (such as shopfront elements, windows, etc)
- Painted brickwork or detailing (east side of Kensington Court, the Goat pub, the flank of Roxburgh Mansions)
- Pipework and ventilation grilles on street facing elevations (Kensington Court and Thackeray Street)

Shops and commercial buildings

- The blocking out of transom lights in shopfronts (Thackeray Street)
- Painting shop surrounds (such as console brackets, pilasters, cornices) to match the shopfront rather than to match the building as was the original intent (Thackeray Street and Kensington High Street)
- Over sized fascias

Houses and Flats

- Dormer roofs converted to balconies (east side of Kensington Court)
- Non original style entrance doors
- Hard landscaping and lack of planting to front gardens (Kensington Court Place)

Other

- The Richmond University building in Ansdell Street is a low quality building that has a poor relationship with the late Victorian architecture.
Appendix 1: History

The Manor of Kensington dates from Saxon times and was granted to Aubrey de Vere by William the Conqueror for services to the Crown. By 1260, the Abbot of Abingdon Abbey had founded the church of St. Mary Abbot’s at the heart of the parish by the junction of the High Street and Church Street.

That part of the parish south of Kensington Road was renowned as rich market gardens and nurseries for hundreds of years. Kensington Road was an important east/west route, and had been developed from at least later medieval times.

Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Such attractive and clean country surroundings within easy reach of central London soon attracted aristocratic development. Sir Heneage Finch, Lord Chancellor and Earl of Nottingham built Nottingham House on a site north of Kensington Road in 1681. By 1685, Kensington Square was being laid out as noble town houses. Royal favour in 1689 confirmed the attractions of the area when William III bought Nottingham House and commissioned Sir Christopher Wren to transform it into Kensington Palace, a refuge from the dirt and damp of Whitehall.

The presence of the Court and its officials engendered development on Kensington Road such as the noble Kensington House (just south of the present no. 2 Kensington Court) and Colby House (located approximately where nos. 9-11 Kensington High Street now stand). The narrow irregular sites of the south side of Kensington Road preserve ancient plot sizes which still contain some elements of seventeenth century buildings, particularly at nos. 19-25.

Despite the fact that the Court left Kensington Palace in 1760, development continued apace. Between 1773 – 85, William Jennings, a harness maker and saddler, built 23-33 (odd) Kensington Road, of which 23 and 25 survive in a mutilated state. Behind William Jennings houses were 30 cottages forming Jennings Court and New Court. These mean dwellings were reached via New Tavern Yard which is now the Footpath.
to Kensington Court. Similar cramped working class courts stretched back to Kensington Square and became notorious slums.

Taverns and Inns were a feature of Kensington Road. The frontage between the present Kensington Court and Young Street was the site of the ancient Red Lion Inn which survived until 1760. Others remaining may contain remains of early buildings.

By the end of the eighteenth century the area south of Kensington Road was still in use as market gardens and nurseries. Development was confined to the fringes of Kensington Road with its crowded inns and noble houses now clearly in decline. The next century was to see the whole transformed beyond recognition.

The Nineteenth Century

The Great Exhibition (1851) the Metropolitan & District Railway (1866) and the Metropolitan Board of Works Scheme of road improvements and slum clearance had all contributed to making Kensington High Street a thriving shopping street towards the end of the nineteenth century. Many of the old buildings were altered, extended, refronted or simply redeveloped. Today, the street has a fine selection of late nineteenth century buildings with shops to the ground floors as well as some shop windows at first floor level.

The later nineteenth century development of the area south of Kensington Road had increasingly left Kensington House looking more and more forlorn. In 1873 a business man of the classic Victorian mould took an interest in the site. Albert Grant (1830-99) known as Baron Grant from an Italian title granted to him by Victor Emmanuel, was a wealthy man due to a mixture of skill and luck in many nefarious undertakings. He acquired a large plot during 1872 by combining the sites of Kensington House, Colby House, the slums including Jennings’ buildings and other properties right through to Kensington Square. On this generous plot he conceived the plan to build edifices suitable for his pretensions in life. It was a matter of comment at the time how
Grant dealt with the teeming slum of Jennings’ buildings. Similar courts stretched back to Kensington Square and had long been notorious, especially since a cholera outbreak in 1849. The Metropolitan Commission of Sewers complained bitterly of a “worse than useless sewer” and the ramshackle buildings frequently housed one family per room. By 1851 almost half the inhabitants were Irish construction workers, probably refugees from the ravages of the Great Famine. They may have worked on the Great Exhibition site.

Grant’s ingenious solution to clearing these slums was to offer £2 per room to quit, plus all the materials the tenant wanted from the building and the opportunity of new improved dwellings in Notting Hill.

By May 1872, Grant had assembled and cleared the plots he needed and appointed James Knowles Junior as his architect. The result was a mammoth house, built in Bath stone in a somewhat ponderous French classical style but with a hugely expensive and elaborate interior. The external landscaping was equally lavish to the designs of John Gibson. The whole scheme cost £300,000 and took four years to build.

Grant was fated never to live in the house. Even before building work finished the vast fabric of his questionable financial empire was unravelling. In 1877 he was forced to sell the house’s pictures, but the house failed to find a buyer. Repeatedly the house failed to sell, so that by 1882, the mansion was razed to the ground and the rich materials and fittings sold for £10,000. Madam Tussards took the great marble stair and the iron railings were installed around Sandown Park. The last memory of this fantastic mansion are the Italianate fronts of 3 and 4 Kensington Square, originally built as fronts to Grant’s stables.

**Queen Anne Revival**

The Land Securities Company had foreclosed on Grant and taken possession of the site and in May 1882 they agreed to sell to Jonathan T. Carr, already an accomplished developer.
Carr bought 7 acres in a triangular formation, becoming narrower to the south. A layout, perhaps by surveyor T.M. Rickman, showed a cramped development of 77 plots with a small central area.

Carr was expected to make something even of this uninspired plot having been the developer of Bedford Park in West London, that aesthetic suburb for artistic people in the vanguard of public taste. Carr’s success was based on carrying out a good idea with an imaginative architect. In the case of Bedford Park, Norman Shaw was used, but now Carr turned to his contemporary, John James Stevenson.

Just as surely as the early Victorians reacted against rows of formal Georgian terraces by building more homely stucco semi-detached villas, this period coincided with another reaction in taste, this time against Victorian Classical design. Between 1871 and 1873 Stevenson had built the Red House on Bayswater Hill (named after the house that Philip Webb designed for William Morris) which was cheaper, simpler and more urban than Webb’s. The house was widely imitated and cited by contemporaries as the prototype for the Queen Anne Revival. Stevenson had undertaken recent commission in the borough, most closely at no. 8 Palace Gate (1873) and Lowther Gardens (1877-78, now nos. 1-2 Prince Consort Road) but more extensively in Pont Street (1876-78) and Cadogan Square (1881-86).

Work started in 1883 with the construction of two large Queen Anne houses built to front Kensington Road. Stevenson was employed to design no. 1 Kensington Court or “Chenesiton House” for Mrs Anne Marie Lucena whilst T.G. Jackson, his ex-colleague from Gilbert Scott’s office, designed a handsome corner house at no. 2 for John Athelstan Laurie Riley.

Stevenson continued the red brick development with nos. 3-15 and 22-25 on the eastern side of the site. Spacious ducts were provided under the street to take gas, electric and water services, already pioneering, but Carr had allowed for another novel innovation in his development: lifts. Service lifts were provided in Stevenson’s houses and others that ran on hydraulic power.
Kensington Court was designed by Stevenson to provide stabling to service his houses and was built in 1886. The mews was planned like other multi-storey mews in the De Vere Conservation Area with storage for carriages at ground floor, stabling for horses at first floor level, reached by a ramp; and carriage men’s accommodation at second floor.

electrical supply was also in its infancy and was brought to Kensington Court by R.E.B. Crompton, an early pioneer whose name is still associated with the electrical industry today. Since 1883 he had been involved in providing electric lighting at the Ring and Burg Theatres in Vienna, where his lead engineer had been Hew Stevenson, nephew of J. J. Stevenson, and through this connection the company came to do the electrical installation for Kensington Court.

The Kensington Court Electric Lighting Company erected a temporary generating station in New Tavern Yard in 1886 (now the Footpath to Kensington Court) and in 1888 a permanent building was designed by J.A. Slater. Slater also designed a house for Crompton, “Thriplands”, at 48 Kensington Court, built between 1888-89. The house was one of the earliest in England to be built with a load-bearing steel frame faced in brickwork. Crompton carried out many of his most important experiments in the laboratory on the upper floors.

By 1888, Carr was in trouble financially and seems to have disappeared from the scene leaving his shared to his creditors. The Land Securities Company were left with the remaining sites which were subsequently developed by a variety of local builders and developers.

By this time, the mansion block was emerging as a new way of living in response to changing social habits and rising land prices. These were a new type of residential development that had originated on the continent and were considered avant-garde by many people at the time

The Queen Anne style was naturally used for this new type of development. Its name comes from Queen Anne’s reign in the early eighteenth century and took inspiration from the nineteenth century Arts and Crafts movement which sought to provide Britain with a style of its own rather than continuing to ape the ancient Classical styles of Italy and Greece. The style allowed for a great measure of individuality and free play of decorative ironwork, red brickwork and terracotta combined with asymmetrical frontages, curving, Flemish-style rooflines and contrasting white painted windows.

Despite its name, the style perhaps owes more to Flemish and Dutch design from the seventeenth century as it does to the English Baroque of Queen Anne’s reign. The multiplicity of decoration was applied to buildings of a height and scale even larger than the stucco terraces of twenty years earlier, demonstrating the ever increasing value of land and development in Kensington.

The remaining west side of Kensington Court between Palace Place Mansions and Thackeray Street was developed as mansion flats between 1896-1902. The most unusual flats take on a medieval castle style at Kent and Kensington House (by R.J. Worley, 1896-97). Roxburgh Mansions (1896-98), St Alban’s Mansions (1894) and Cornwall Mansions (1902) were built to the designs of Paul Hoffman. The last block to be built was Durward House by Durward Brown dating from 1901-2.
Appendix 2

This checklist has been taken from English Heritage’s publication, Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2011). The checklist has helped to identify the buildings that make a positive contribution to the historic and architectural character of the conservation area.

• Is the building the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note?
• Does it have landmark quality?
• Does it reflect a substantial number of other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials, form or other characteristics?
• Does it relate to adjacent designated heritage assets in age, materials or in any other historically significant way?
• Does it contribute positively to the setting of adjacent designated heritage assets?
• Does it contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces including exteriors or open spaces with a complex of public buildings?
• Is it associated with a designed landscape eg a significant wall, terracing or a garden building?
• Does it individually, or as part of a group, illustrate the development of the settlement in which it stands?
• Does it have significant historic association with features such as the historic road layout, burgage plots, a town park or a landscape feature?
• Does it have historic associations with local people or past events?
• Does it reflect the traditional functional character or former uses in the area?
• Does its use contribute to the character or appearance of the area?

Additional criteria set by the Council:

• Does the building have architectural, historical, archaeological, evidential, artistic or communal significance that contributes to the character or appearance of the conservation area?
• Has the building retained its original design, materials, features and setting or ones that are appropriate to its style and period?
• Does it contribute to the evolution and diversity of the conservation area?
• Was it built by an important local builder or one who also built other significant buildings in the area?
Appendix 3: Relevant Local Plan Policies

The table opposite indicates those policies in the Royal Borough's Local Plan, which have particular relevance to the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.

These policies are the primary means through which the Council ensures that proposed development within designated conservation areas preserve or enhance the area's character and appearance.

This list is not comprehensive and any development proposals will have to take account of the whole suite of policies contained within the Council's Local Plan. Please consult the Council's website.

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