



THE PROPOSED CHESTER ROAD/FOREST ROAD CONSERVATION AREA

DRAFT REPORT



CHESTER ROAD/FORREST ROAD CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY AS PROPOSED



Chester Road / Forest Road: Description of Character

This Conservation Area lies on the eastern edge of the Branksome Park Conservation Area. It has the following, general characteristics:

- The junction of Chester Road, Eaton Road and Tower Road West forms a green framework to the entrance of the Conservation Area.
- Local topography with ridges and slopes has a strong impact on views into, within, and out of, the conservation area.
- The area has a very sylvan character that is also typical of Branksome Park.
- The area contains large, detached dwellings sitting in domestic scale plots.

Considering the area in more detail:

Urban Structure & Grain

In terms of its urban structure, this area is quite cohesive. It is characterised by large, detached Edwardian Villas on reasonably sized plots. Plots are much smaller than in the adjacent Branksome Park conservation area and this results in a much finer, regular grain. The buildings are of similar size and layout within their plots, giving the area a very uniform grain.

The properties are also quite visible from the public realm, which gives the area a better sense of enclosure than Branksome Park. However, somewhat unusually, properties often fail to back on to each other. Houses fronting the eastern side of Chester Road and the western side of Forest Road have no houses to the rear – an unusual feature of the area – resulting in back gardens and garages of these properties fronting the road to the rear. This results in a feeling of coarse grain and openness.

The area is laid out on a grid pattern that allows good permeability. However, the Chester Road, Eaton Road and Tower Road West junction is a heavily engineered space designed to cater for vehicle movements rather than the needs of pedestrians. Subsequently, this area is very open with limited enclosure and a very coarse grain. Conservation Area status would give the Council the ability to create pedestrian-friendly spaces in this area should opportunities for redesign arise in the future.

This junction is an important area as pedestrian access to Branksome Chine Gardens is available here. Improvements to pedestrian access would be beneficial to the character and appearance of the area.

Similarly, the Chester Road, Forest Road and Western Road junction at the northern edge of the conservation area is designed around the needs of vehicles, resulting in a disjointed streetscape which is detrimental to the character of the area.

On-street parking is well used throughout the area.

Gaps

The detached layout has created regular gaps in built form. These allow views through to buildings, trees and landscaping behind. The sharp changes in topography include create steep level changes that rise from west to east. As such, properties on Ormonde Road are quite visible from Eaton Road, for example.

Views

Although there are no major views in this area given the lack of landmark buildings, the tree backdrop remains an important feature which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Houses are generally viewed against a strong tree backdrop and this gives the conservation area a very rural character.

Permeability & Legibility

The area does not contain any highly visible landmarks, although the letterbox on Ormonde Road is a positive local feature. The nearby All Saints' Church is a useful orientation tool in the area. Despite the lack of landmarks, the grid layout does provide a legible street layout that aids movement through the area, and links well to the wider route network.

Pedestrian movement is enhanced by the Chine, which contains a number of footpaths with north/south and east/west connections.

Landscaping

This proposed conservation area is suburban and informal in character. Trees and soft landscaping predominate and the western edge of the area is particularly sylvan as it abuts the Chine. The skyline is punctured by treetops.

The sharp changes in topography mean that the rear gardens and garages of the houses on Chester Road are at grade with Eaton Road. Hard surfaces puncture the rear boundaries of these houses.

Tarmac is the main road surface although Pine Drive East is an un-made lane whose informal character is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area.

Density & Mix

The fine grain of the area has enabled a higher density of development than is found in Branksome Park, giving the area a distinct character. The building type in the area is solely residential, comprised of single detached dwellings on individual plots.

Height & Massing

Generally, building mass throughout the conservation area is typified by a domestic scale, two-storey square form, with bays and attic space under steeply pitched roofs. Roofs are generally hipped back, which allows further glimpses of trees and landscaping.

This 'building envelope' – height, width, massing and depth – and the ratio between buildings and open space, defines the character of the conservation area. Buildings are of a domestic scale and have a similar mass. Some recent development has exceeded the typical scale of development in the area, but this is very limited and should not prejudice conservation area designation.

Details & Materials

Boundaries & gardens

The area is characterised by detached villas with brick front boundary walls. Many of the original walls remain, and add positively to the street scene and character and appearance of the conservation area.

In some cases boundary walls have been replaced with breeze-block and other unsympathetic materials. However, these works are not permanent and brick walls can be reinstated in the future.

Street layout has resulted in the fronts and backs of some properties being prone to parking. This can have a detrimental impact on the street scene and it is important that parking does not dominate the fronts of buildings.

Roofing

Much of the original roofing material has survived, with clay tiles or slates predominating. In some cases these coverings have been replaced with concrete tiles, however, more traditional materials can easily be reinstated in the future.

Original brick chimneys and chimney pots remain and add to the character and appearance of the area.

Decorative bargeboards are also visible on many buildings and again, are considered positive elements within the conservation area.

Façades

Walls are predominantly red brick and in some cases pale render is evident.

Although UPVC can be found in the area, many original wooden casements remain. Stone mullions and decorative plaques form attractive features in some façades.

Solid to glazed ratios and window design give the buildings vertical emphasis.

Well proportioned gable and turret elements add articulation to many of the houses.

Satellite dishes have been installed on some properties. As technology advances it is anticipated that they could be removed.

The timber balustrading is another positive feature that can be found in the conservation area.

Chester Road

Houses have a brick ground floor with harling or render above. Some of the villas also have rusticated rendered quoins.

After the junction with Eaton Road the harling disappears and stone surrounds to the windows and doors is evident and timber framing appears above the two-storey bays, which are decorated with ornate under eaves struts. This northern section of Chesterfield Road has a more verdant feel with mature planting to the gardens to the east of the road.

Forest Road

The general character continues along the west of Forest Road travelling south but after N^o 4 the timber framing above the bays is replaced with tile hanging, the low brick boundary walls remain a strong feature along this road. Nos 10 and 12 have octagonal turrets. N^o 20 has another octagonal bay. The typical harling returns to the upper floor of N^o 24.

Ormonde Road

The East side of Ormonde Road is rather blank since it forms the rear boundary to the houses on Forest Road. Some positive boundary treatments remain.

The West side retains the same cohesive architectural style. There is a traditional red post-box outside N^o 18, which can be considered to be a positive feature.

A characteristic feature of both Chester Road and Forest Road is that many of the properties have both front and rear access.

Eaton Road

From N^o15 on, the character of Eaton Road Changes with the properties to the west side being elevated above the road with steep drives, Purbeck stone retaining walls and rather blank garage doors.

