HILLINGDON TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER STUDY

Final Report
November 2013

**Allies and Morrison
Urban Practitioners**

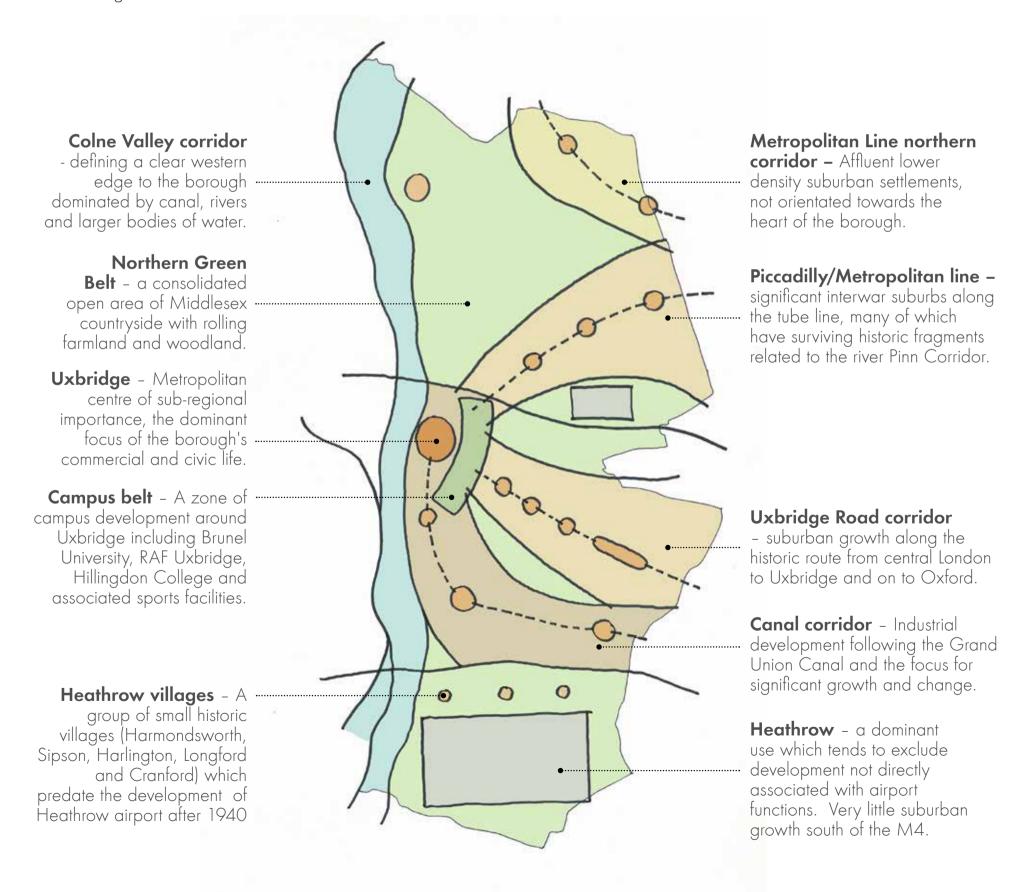Grand Union Canal, Cowley

CONTENTS

Royal Lane, Hillingdon

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the townscape of the London Borough of Hillingdon. It forms part of the suite of documents that have been prepared to inform local planning policy. It sets out the origins and development of the borough, maps its current form, describes the various places and development types which the borough contains and identifies the key issues which should be considered in the development of future planning policy.

This supports the key strategic objective (SO1) in the Local Plan to "conserve and enhance the borough's heritage and their settings".

The Borough of Hillingdon covers a wide range of different areas, each with their own particular origins and character. This range of character stretches from the Victorian development of the canal and railway corridors with their strong industrial character, through the varied development along the Uxbridge Road and into the lower density suburbs in the northern part of the borough which give way to the countryside beyond. Mingled in with this are substantial features including Heathrow airport, fragments of farmland and the hamlets which pre-existed the urban growth.

Colne Valley corridor - defining a clear western edge to the borough dominated by canal, rivers and larger bodies of water.

Northern Green Belt – a consolidated open area of Middlesex countryside with rolling farmland and woodland.

Uxbridge – Metropolitan centre of sub-regional importance, the dominant focus of the borough's commercial and civic life.

Campus belt – A zone of campus development around Uxbridge including Brunel University, RAF Uxbridge, Hillingdon College and associated sports facilities.

Heathrow villages – A group of small historic villages (Harmondsworth, Sipson, Harlington, Longford and Cranford) which predate the development of Heathrow airport after 1940

Metropolitan Line northern corridor – Affluent lower density suburban settlements, not orientated towards the heart of the borough.

Piccadilly/Metropolitan line – significant interwar suburbs along the tube line, many of which have surviving historic fragments related to the river Pinn Corridor.

Uxbridge Road corridor – suburban growth along the historic route from central London to Uxbridge and on to Oxford.

Canal corridor – Industrial development following the Grand Union Canal and the focus for significant growth and change.

Heathrow – a dominant use which tends to exclude development not directly associated with airport functions. Very little suburban growth south of the M4.
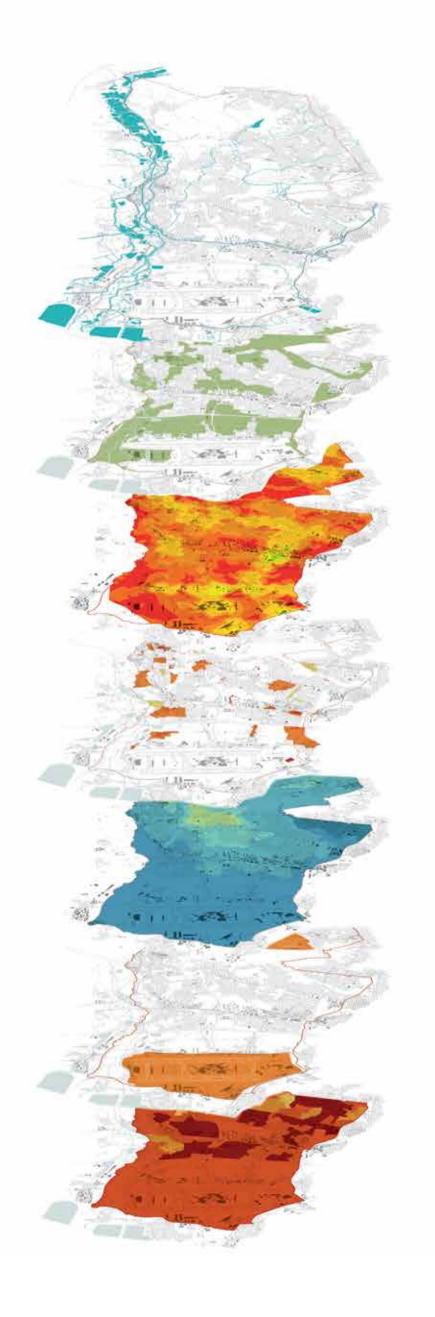
Context for change

The overall population density of the borough is relatively low by comparison with the rest of London. However, substantial population growth of 14% is envisaged between 2012 and 2026 and the London Plan identifies the need for housing growth of 425 new homes per annum between 2011/12 and 2020/21.

Much of this growth will be focussed on areas with good existing facilities but pressure for growth is also already being experienced around centres including Hayes and Yiewsley/West Drayton. In these locations Crossrail will significantly improve journey times to central London, making them much more attractive as development locations. Pressures for bulkier and taller buildings are already being felt, along with the pressure for loss of industrial land for residential development in more accessible locations.

These pressures for denser development challenge the prevailing low-rise and low density form of the existing buildings. It is therefore important that new development works closely to create places and spaces which integrate with the existing townscape.

Borough-wide analysis

Analysis of borough-wide data has been undertaken and is presented as a series of analytical mapping layers. These identify the key physical features of the borough such as topography as well as policy designations such as conservation areas and listed buildings. They also map data such as public transport accessibility and demographic data on the relative affluence of different areas, providing a broader understanding of the interplay between physical and social characteristics.
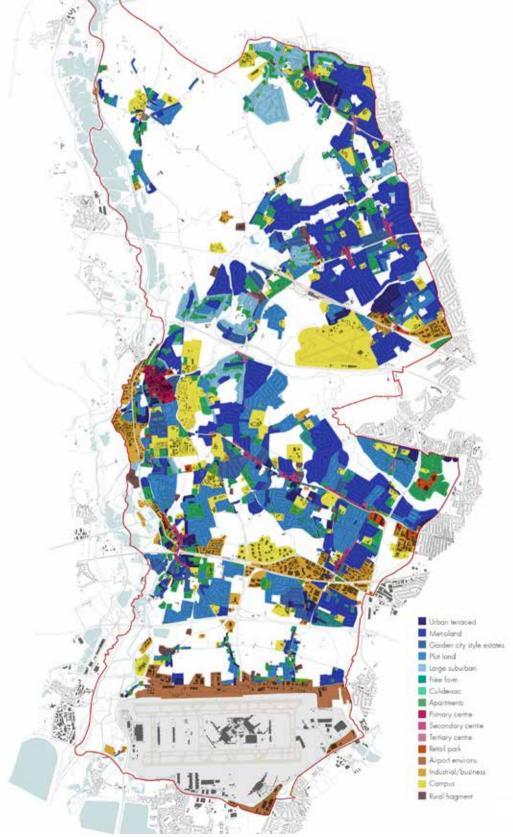
Hillingdon's townscape typology

Typology is the systematic classification of things according to their common characteristics. By identifying the various townscape characters found in Hillingdon and then identifying where they are present it is possible to describe the form of the borough in detail. It also provides a structure which helps to identify common issues that are prevalent for each townscape type and to consider the implications for future development.

Sixteen specific types have been identified in Hillingdon including a range of residential development forms, a mix of non-residential development types and a category which recognises the important role played by historic villages and towns in defining the character of the borough.

Each character type in the set is described in text and photography, accompanied by an aerial photograph and figure-ground plan to help explain the urban form. Short summaries of key characteristics and key issues and implications are provided for easy reference and the colour coding is keyed to the colours on the map.
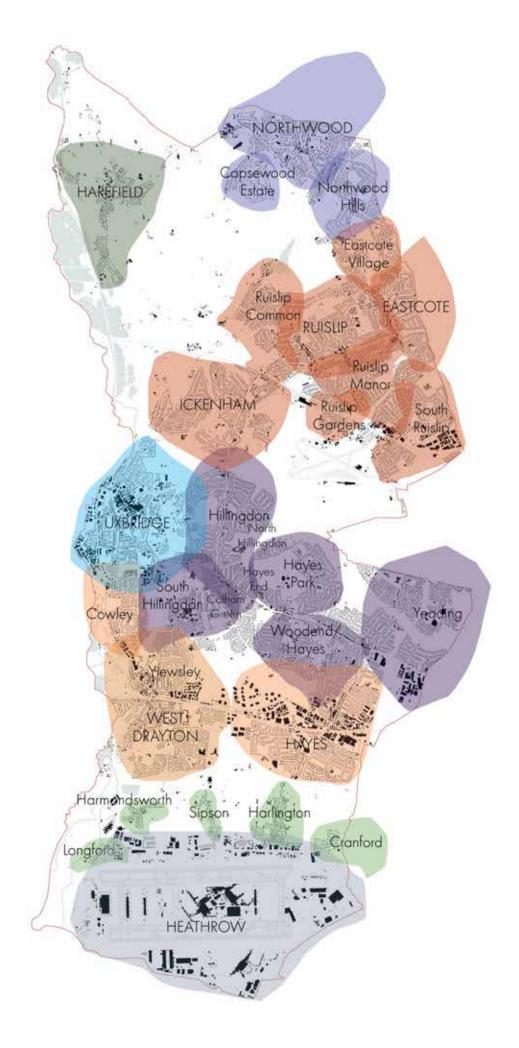

Legend:
- Urban terraced
- Metroland
- Garden city style estates
- Plot land
- Large suburban
- Free form
- Culdesac
- Apartments
- Primary centre
- Secondary centre
- Tertiary centre
- Retail park
- Airport environs
- Industrial/business
- Campus
- Rural fragment

Hillingdon's places

Hillingdon is a collection of distinct places, each with their own story, rather than one single homogenous entity.

The borough has evolved as a collection of villages and larger settlements which have grown and, in many instances, coalesced over time. Whilst the definition between places may no longer be so geographically clear, each place still retains its own character and identity. This is evident in the street pattern and architecture of the original centres and names used to describe places. The typology review also shows the extensive range of characters across the borough.

The report maps and describes the structure of the borough's places, their particular character and the issues which are of particular relevance. The various places are considered in groups which reflect similar origins, based on the development corridors identified through the key features diagram.

Key challenges

The analysis undertaken for the Townscape Character Study has identified a number of challenges which are particularly significant for Hillingdon. In some instances, these challenges arise due to the commercial and population-driven pressures for intensification. In other cases, the character of the streets, spaces and buildings takes on a broader significance, particular where the loss of street trees and verges makes areas less able to cope with the impacts of climate change.

1. The pressures for more intensive housing development across London caused partly by its dynamic population growth and smaller household sizes;
2. The need to raise the quality of urban design;
3. Interpreting local design character and composition in future development;
4. Accommodating street trees and landscaping in densely developed areas and encouraging more provision in future to help ameliorate the impact of climate change;
5. Resisting the loss of front and rear gardens in the face of growing demand for car parking off street;
6. Protecting the character of areas of larger housing where plots are under pressure for redevelopment or conversion to flats;
7. Seeking a long term comprehensive and integrated approach to design and layout in individual neighbourhoods and also large development sites/areas;
8. The need to maintain a mix of communities and therefore a mix of housing types;
9. Need to accommodate large scale infrastructure projects such as Crossrail; and
10. Improvements in the quality of streetscape.

There are a number of potential policy approaches which could contribute to meeting these challenges and to raising the standards of design and development in Hillingdon:

Borough-wide design guide SPD
A number of Boroughs have used their townscape character study work to directly inform the preparation of design guidance. This can cover a range of development types from small scale modifications of individual homes through to larger housing developments and town centre schemes. A design guide of this nature should set key parameters for good design which reflects the Borough's character and can also set out the information that is expected to be submitted as part of a planning application to demonstrate how the scheme responds to its context.

CABE reviews / Design Review Panel
The borough may wish to make use of CABE design reviews for more substantial schemes, particularly where they have an impact at a wider scale due to substantial bulk or height. A longer-term approach may also be to establish a Design Review Panel of people with appropriate expertise to comment on significant schemes before a planning application is made. This panel should comprise a range of skills, but with an emphasis on urban design and architecture. It would require a measure of support from officers in the council, but could also be undertaken in collaboration with an adjoining borough.

Area-specific guidance
A number of areas where substantial change is anticipated would benefit from area specific guidance. In many cases a Supplementary Planning Document is likely to be an appropriate vehicle but an Area Action Plan may be considered where more substantial change is projected.

Neighbourhood Planning
The National Planning Policy Framework made provision for neighbourhoods to prepare their own planning policy as a supplement to the Local Plan. This approach may be helpful in Hillingdon, particularly for areas where there is a clearly defined community.

Community Forums
Local forums may be helpful in providing feedback on proposals prior to planning applications being made. Forums may be area-based or could be theme based - such as a conservation and heritage forum.

1. INTRODUCTION

The London Borough of Hillingdon commissioned Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners to undertake a townscape characterisation study of the borough.

Hillingdon is a fascinating borough. It has seen waves of development over the last two centuries, and each has left distinctive elements within the urban landscape. As the borough's settlements continue to grow and evolve, it is timely to take stock of what the last two centuries have delivered on the ground.

Borough background

The Borough of Hillingdon was formed in 1965. Its creation combined the following former districts:

- The Municipal Borough of Uxbridge;
- Hayes and Harlington Urban District;
- Ruislip-Northwood Urban District; and
- Yiewsley and West Drayton Urban District.

The 2011 Census records Hillingdon as having a population of around 273,936 people and is growing at a rate of 1% per year (JSNA 2011 figures). This growth rate is identical to the London average of 1% per year and suggests the borough reflects the pressures being experienced London-wide. Hillingdon is the second largest of the London boroughs by area at 11,570ha, of which a significant portion is countryside or green space. This land use character is quite different to the London average and suggests that accommodating a growing population through denser development may have more impact on local character given the predominantly suburban setting. The borough is home to one of the busiest and largest international airports in the world, Heathrow, which now takes up one quarter of the borough's southern area and has a unique character.

A landscape character assessment for the borough was produced in 2012 and provides place-based evidence about the character, function and quality of the landscape in Hillingdon. The assessment also included some high level townscape characterisation to complement the more detailed landscape character descriptions.

The purpose of this urban characterisation study is to provide more detail on the character of the borough's townscape.

Aims and objectives

The Townscape Character Study maps the quality, variety and significance of the borough's 'character areas' to help assess their relative historic significance, importance and local distinctiveness. This evidence base will help to ensure that development proposals affecting each character area are assessed on their individual merits, with a clear understanding of their context.

The aims of the study are to:

- analyse the form, characteristics and special attributes of the townscape of the borough;
- identify elements that are distinctive, and define the character of each character area; and
- provide a useful tool with regard to shaping the future development of these areas.

This study will provide a piece of environmental evidence in support of the Local Plan, reflecting both the requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework which requires policies to be "based on ... an understanding and evaluation of [an area's] defining characteristics", and the Inspector's Report into Part 1 of the Hillingdon Local Plan which emphasised the commitment to carry out a borough wide character appraisal.

Methodology

This study seeks to define aspects of the urban environment which make Hillingdon unique and to provide a baseline against which future development should be judged. The main focus of the study has been to analyse and map the physical character of the borough, defining a set of unique typologies which are present in Hillingdon and their qualities.

As a result of both the townscape and the landscape characterisation studies, each part of the borough has now been assessed and its main qualities outlined. This report provides an important resource to guide future development in the borough - where applicants can identify the character area within which their site lies and use the typologies identified to inform a character and context-led approach to the design of their scheme.

Report structure

The townscape characterisation study comprises the following sections:

Section 2 summarises the evolution of the borough, identifying the key historical influences which have shaped the towns and villages in the borough.

Section 3 provides an analysis of the physical form of the borough. It sets out an overview of the planning policy context, outlines the morphology of the borough, the relationship between development and topography and highlights the designated Conservation Areas.

Section 4 documents the urban typology found in the borough, providing a definition of the various character types and its distribution around the borough.

Section 5 explores the existing tall buildings in the borough and the manner in which future large structures and blocks should be accommodated.

Section 6 focuses on the main centres and neighbourhoods within the borough, providing more detailed information on the character of these places.

Section 7 draws the findings of the study together, highlighting the key issues for future development and enhancement, and recommendations for how these issues should be addressed through policy and management.

Challenges facing the borough

The analysis undertaken as part of the townscape characterisation study has emphasised some of the challenges facing the borough over the next decades. These cover aspects such as building quality, development layout and quality streetscape design. The key challenges related to the character of the borough are summarised here.

Key challenges

1. **The pressures for more intensive housing development across London** caused partly by its dynamic population growth and smaller household sizes - and resultant demand for higher density development in suburban areas typified largely by two- and three-storey housing.

2. **The need to raise the quality of urban design** in all areas but particularly those degraded by successive insensitive developments and in the face of competing objectives and cost concerns.

3. **Interpreting local design character and composition** in future development to avoid poor pastiche development (accepting that pastiche can be acceptable if done well and located in the right place).

4. **Accommodating street trees and landscaping** in densely developed areas and encouraging more provision in future to help ameliorate the impact of climate change.

5. **Resisting the loss of front and rear gardens** in the face of growing demand for car parking off street.

6. **Protecting the character of areas of larger housing** where plots are under pressure for redevelopment or conversion to flats.

7. **Seeking a long term comprehensive and integrated approach to design and layout** in individual neighbourhoods and also large development sites/areas - where development only takes place on a piecemeal basis and where land ownership is fragmented.

8. **The need to maintain a mix of communities** and therefore a mix of housing types - providing flexibility within any particular typology format.

9. **Need to accommodate large scale infrastructure projects** Crossrail will bring its own development pressures which could affect local townscape in areas adjoining the two stations at West Drayton and Hayes.

10. **Streetscape quality improvements (public realm, street furniture, public art and signage)** are needed in many parts of the borough, but particularly the urban centres, along the Uxbridge Road and in areas of former public sector housing.

High Street, Harmondsworth

2. EVOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH

2. EVOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH

Hillingdon - a collection of places

The Borough of Hillingdon was formed in 1965. It brought together a collection of urban districts and wider rural areas, each with their own history and characteristics:

- Uxbridge grew up alongside the River Colne on the ancient route between London and Oxford. In the 18th century Uxbridge was a major corn market and flour milling centre. It was also important for business and as a civic centre for West Middlesex and Buckinghamshire.
- The areas of Hayes and Harlington were a collection of small villages until the explosion of industries around the canal and rail line in the 20th century.
- Ruislip developed as a quiet village around a former Norman castle on the site of the Manor Farm House, until it became a focus for suburban growth in the early 20th century.
- Northwood was a small hamlet set on higher open and wooded landscape until late in 19th century when Northwood station opened and the settlement developed into a vibrant town.
- Yiewsley and West Drayton are settlements which thrived as a result of the canal, with local industries including brickyards, the product of which was carried on barges into central London.

The surviving historic fragments in the borough are explored in more detail in Chapter 4, pages 62-63.
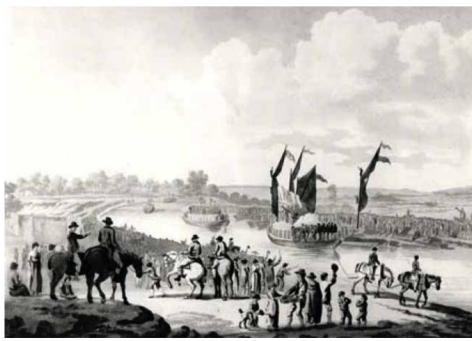
Waves of historical development

Over the past two centuries, the borough has transformed from a collection of small settlements set within productive countryside, into an urban borough with distinctly different parts.

Beginnings: Rural settlements and countryside

- Until the 18th century the area covered by the modern day borough of Hillingdon was dominated by agricultural production with small hamlets and villages.
- Ruislip was established by Saxon times. Manor Farm is one of the oldest remaining sites in the borough - the Motte and Bailey are possibly pre-Norman.
- Uxbridge Road is an important and ancient route running between London and Oxford.
- Uxbridge itself started life as a daughter settlement to the village of Hillingdon.
- West Drayton /Yiewsley was a fairly significant settlement of a more urban character by the mid 19th century

Arrival of the Grand Union Canal

- The Grand Union Canal was cut through the borough in the last decade of the eighteenth century. As with all canals it strikes a balance between a direct route and a level route, skirting the western edge of the borough until the land is sufficiently flat to head east towards the centre of London without the need for major tunnels or flights of locks.
- The canal was originally known as The Grand Junction Canal and ran from Birmingham to the Thames. It included a number of locks in Hillingdon and also the famous Hanwell Flight in Ealing. The Paddington Branch was completed in 1801 and there was also an arm built to serve Slough.
- The canal was influential in supporting the rapid growth of Georgian and Victorian London, supplying building materials and produce.
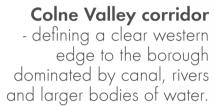

Grand procession to mark the opening of the Grand Union Canal Paddington Arm, 1801
Source: www.gerald-massey.org.uk (shown here with kind permission)

Timber yard at Hayes Bridge Wharf
Source: www.gerald-massey.org.uk (shown here with kind permission)
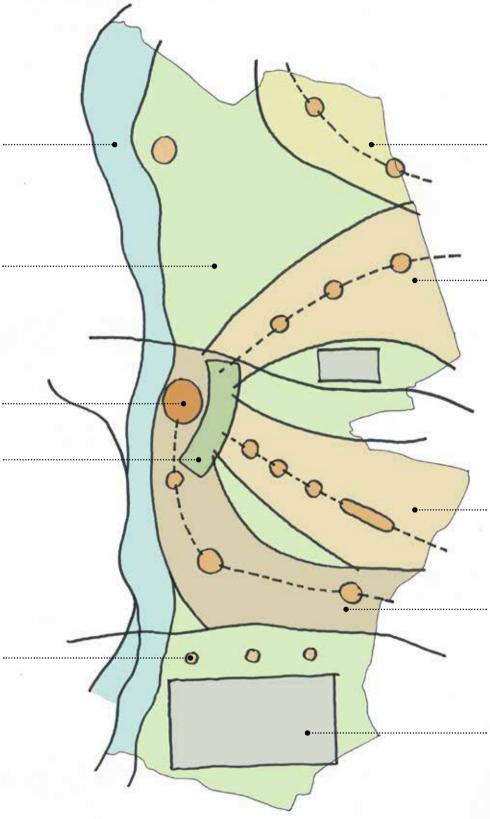
Key defining features of the borough's form

Colne Valley corridor - defining a clear western edge to the borough dominated by canal, rivers and larger bodies of water.

Northern Green Belt – a consolidated open area of Middlesex countryside with rolling farmland and woodland.

Uxbridge – Metropolitan centre of sub-regional importance, the dominant focus of the borough's commercial and civic life.

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Railways and suburban development

- The Great Western Railway opened from Paddington station in London as far as Maidenhead Bridge station in 1838, and quickly extended all the way through to Bristol. A station at West Drayton was opened at the same time, but Hayes station was not constructed until 1868.
- The Metropolitan Railway first extended into the borough and out to Rickmansworth in 1887.
- In 1904 the branch line from Harrow-on-the-Hill to Uxbridge was opened.
- A total of 8 stations on the Metropolitan Line were established in the borough, and around many of these new connections significant housing developments took place - delivering the suburban dream in the form of "Metroland".
- Established in 1919, the Metropolitan Railway Country Estates Ltd (MRCE) built a series of new residential estates around the route of the Metropolitan line in Eastcote, Rayners Lane, Ruislip and Hillingdon. Generally the estate planning and layout was organised by MRCE, which then sold the plots on to property developers who had the housing built to their own specifications.
- In 1909, Kings College held a competition to develop a plan for a Garden Suburb covering areas of Ruislip and Northwood. The Soutar plan emerged from this competition and set the layout and densities which were ultimately followed in these areas. The Soutar plan was incorporated into a much larger plan which was approved in 1914.
- Ruislip Manor was later developed as Manor Homes estate between 1933 and 1939 adjacent to the small halt established here by the Metropolitan Railway in 1912. The huge influx of new homeowners meant the small halt was no longer adequate and a new station was opened in 1938.

Airports

- Heathrow has a major impact on the southern half of the borough. It is a dominant form in terms of its land use, the infrastructure required to sustain it and the impact it has in terms of safety zones, noise and air quality. The debate continues as to its potential expansion as a key global hub airport.
- RAF Northolt dates from World War I and continues to play a significant role for the RAF as well as civilian aircraft.
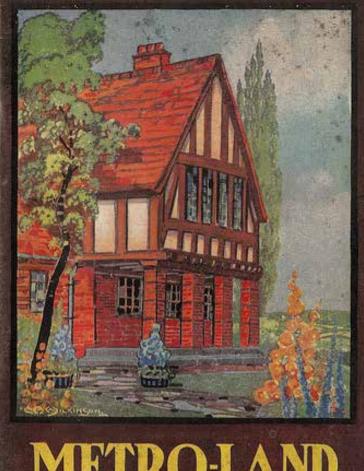
Present day

Today, Uxbridge metropolitan centre is the most sizeable of the centres in the borough. The town has historically been the most dominant in the area - in the 18th century Uxbridge was the major corn market and business and civic centre for west Middlesex and south Buckinghamshire and was a very important flour milling centre. As the importance of the agricultural market declined, Uxbridge continued to prosper through other industries but remained a relatively sleepy market town in the nineteenth century. Significant retail and residential development following the Metropolitan Railway connection heralded major change for Uxbridge, providing the basis for its status today.
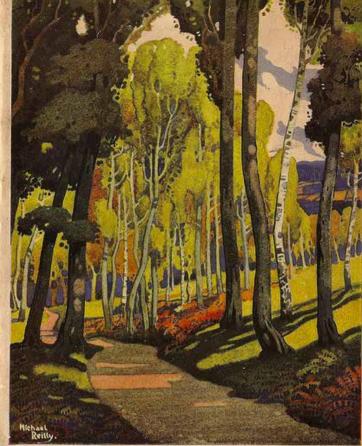
Significant post-war redevelopment had a major impact on the borough, and brought a new style of building and construction to local neighbourhoods. Traffic congestion also became problematic as car ownership grew after the second world war, with new infrastructure interventions taking place to increase the capacity of the borough's roads.

As former industries, particularly along the canal corridor have gradually been lost, the borough has seen the development and re-development of these areas. This includes major projects such as redevelopment of the former EMI site adjacent to the railway in Hayes. Other significant changes in recent decades have seen a gradual shift away from industry towards business jobs, with the growth of business parks such as Stockley Park.

*Gaily into Ruislip Gardens
Runs the red electric train,
With a thousand Ta's and Pardon's
Daintily alights Elaine;
Hurries down the concrete station
With a frown of concentration,
Out into the outskirt's edges
Where a few surviving hedges
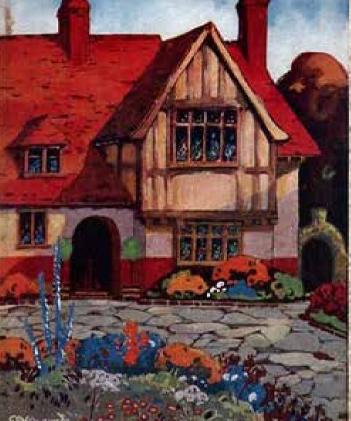Keep alive our lost Elysium
    – rural Middlesex again.*

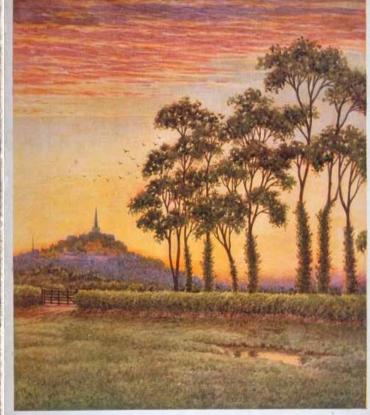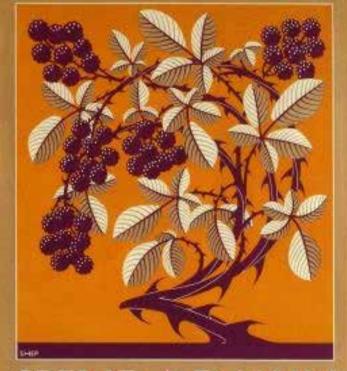*From "Middlesex" by John Betjeman, 1954*

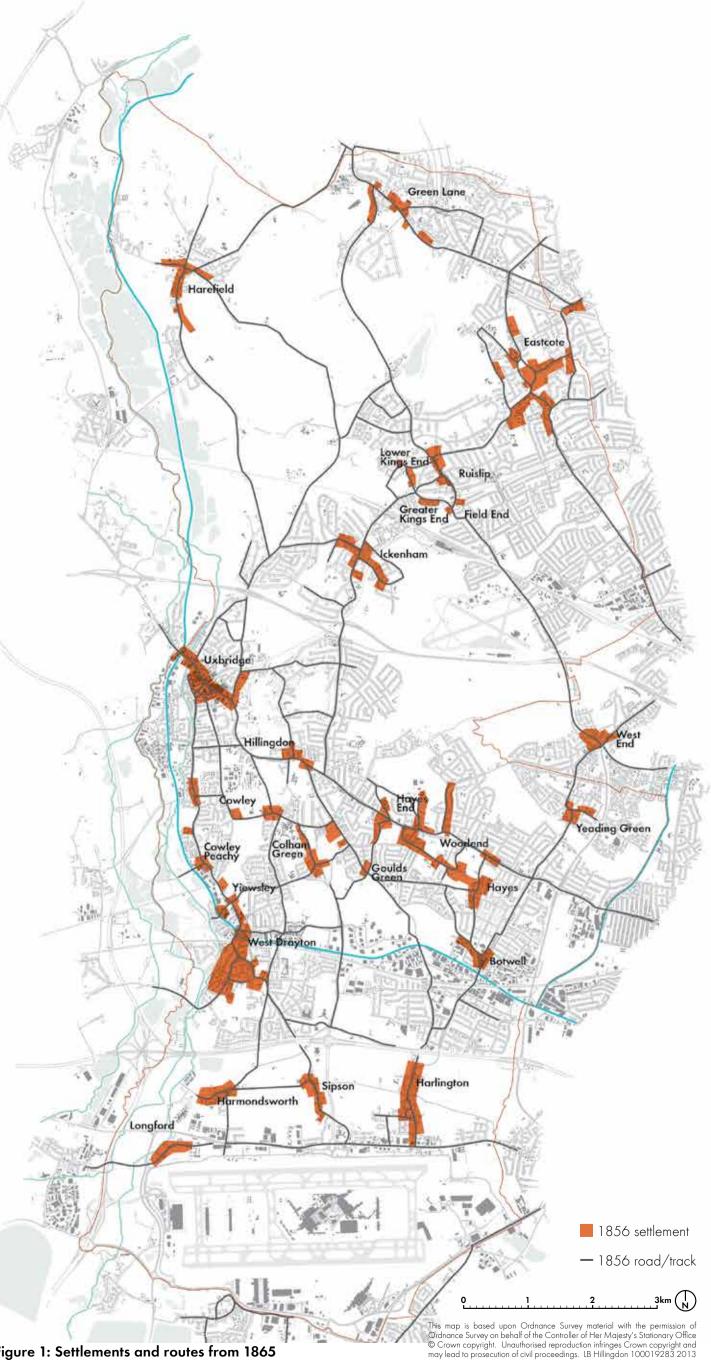## 1856 OVERLAY

Figure 1 shows the historic settlements in the borough as they were mapped in 1856 overlaid into a modern plan, using the historic names of the centres. It illustrates the scale of the transition which has taken place from a collection of small settlements through to large scale development in 150 years.

Figure 1 demonstrates the role which the historic centres have played in acting as the seed for this substantial growth, although some areas of suburban expansion are notable for their lack of historic origins.

Figure 1: Settlements and routes from 1865

■ 1856 settlement

— 1856 road/track

This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution of civil proceedings. LB Hillingdon 100019283 2013

1944 AERIAL

This aerial photograph taken at the end of the Second World War captures a significant period in the life of Hillingdon.

RAF Northolt in the centre of the borough served as the main London airport between 1942 and 1952.

The result of the rapid expansion of Heathrow during the war can be seen in the southern part of the borough, whilst the carefully composed patterns of streets can still be clearly seen in the central belt - as yet without mature landscape.

Other parts of the borough such as Barnhill Estate are still clearly under construction, with streets laid out awaiting new housing.
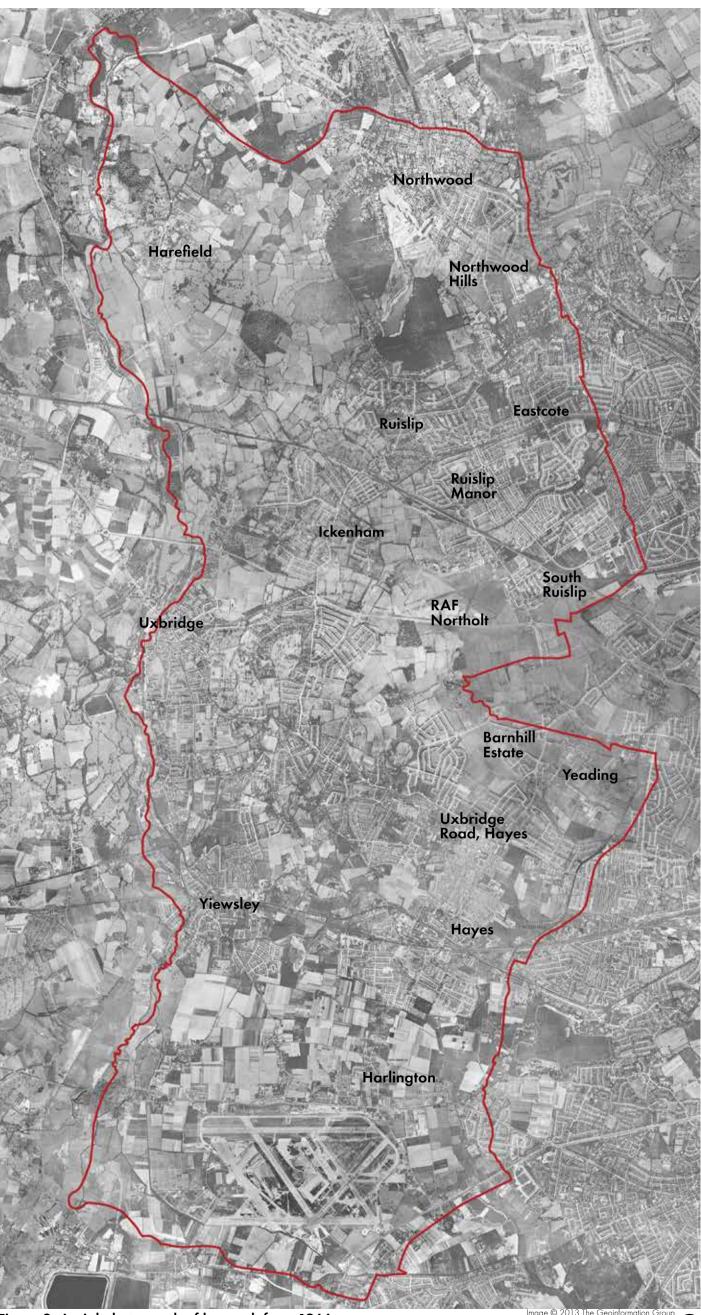

Image © 2013 The Geoinformation Group

Figure 2: Aerial photograph of borough from 1944

0   1   2   3km

Metroland style housing next to Uxbridge Road

3. HILLINGDON TODAY

Metroland style housing next to Uxbridge Road
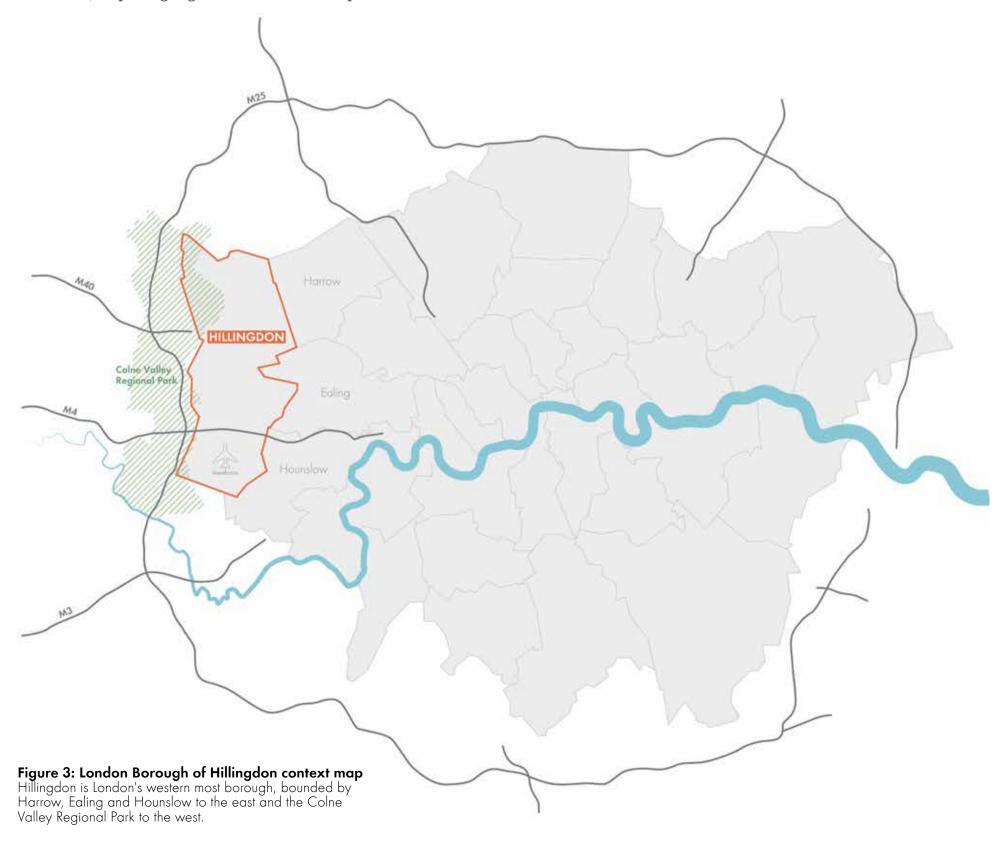
3. HILLINGDON TODAY

Context

The borough of Hillingdon occupies the western edge of Greater London. It marks the transition between urban and rural character, and has extensive areas of built form within its boundaries. To the east the borough is bordered by Harrow and Ealing, and to the south east by Hounslow. To the north is Three Rivers District in Hertfordshire, to the west is South Bucks District in Buckinghamshire and to the south is Spelthorne District in Surrey.

The borough is home to approximately 275,000 residents, and covers an area of 116 square kilometres, making it one of the larger boroughs in London. The population of the borough is projected to rise by around 14% between 2012 and 2026, requiring significant new development.

Hillingdon's population has been steadily increasing over the past two decades. The borough has a significantly larger proportion of young people (5-19 year olds) when compared to the national and London average. There is also a higher proportion of older (50+ years) people in the borough. The more densely populated south-east, in particular, is home to a diverse range of communities, with significantly greater concentrations of people from minority ethnic backgrounds resident in wards around Hayes. However, the proportion of the population from non-white British ethnic groups in the borough, as a whole, is below the London average for outer London.

Uxbridge is now the borough's principal town with strategic status as a Metropolitan Centre.

Figure 3: London Borough of Hillingdon context map
Hillingdon is London's western most borough, bounded by Harrow, Ealing and Hounslow to the east and the Colne Valley Regional Park to the west.

Over half of the borough comprises countryside and open space. Indeed much of the north of the borough is semi-rural with a significant land area protected by Green Belt designation.

Overall, Hillingdon is considered one of the more affluent boroughs in London, however there are significant differences between the north and south of the borough. A number of areas within the south of the borough fall within the top 20% most deprived areas nationally.

Planning Policy Context

The London Plan places Hillingdon within the Western sub-region, along with the boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow and Hounslow. As an "Outer London" borough the emphasis should be to:

"enhance the quality of life in outer London for present and future residents as one of its key contributions to London as a whole. The significant differences in the nature and quality of outer London's neighbourhoods must be recognised and improvement initiatives should address these sensitively in light of local circumstances, drawing on strategic support where necessary."

In terms of growth, the London Plan identifies the following targets for the borough of Hillingdon:

- Employment is to grow by 7% between 2007 and 2031.
- Housing growth of 425 new homes per annum between 2011/12 and 2020/21.

Heathrow in the London Plan:

"The Mayor supports an integrated approach to the distinct environmental and growth issues facing the area around Heathrow both within and beyond London in the three corridors covered by the 'Western Wedge' (see para 2.17) and recognises the importance of the airport as a driver for economic growth within the opportunity area and beyond. He recognises the importance of maintaining its attractiveness to business, while enhancing its environmental performance in line with Policy 6.6 Aviation. It contains a range of locations with potential to contribute to economic development without a third runway, together with new housing and environmental improvement. Any new development and infrastructure brought forward in this area must avoid adverse affects on any European site of nature conservation importance (to include SACs, SPAs, Ramsar, proposed and candidate sites) either alone or in combination with other plans and projects."

"In Hillingdon, Heathrow 'north' (including the A4 corridor) will continue to benefit from airport related growth, particularly with regard to transport and logistics, business and hotels and leisure/tourism. Stockley Park has a particular draw for a diverse range of offices including marketing and R&D, and for prestigious national and European headquarters. Uxbridge is set to grow significantly with the redevelopment of the RAF Uxbridge site, together with potential in the bio-science sectors and creative/media support services in the Uxbridge Business Park. The Hayes-West Drayton corridor contains redevelopment opportunities for a range of potential uses, including small business parks, logistics and mixed-uses. Hayes town centre offers considerable scope for the creative/media sector and for SME workspace. In Hounslow, there is capacity to continue the rejuvenation of Feltham as a town centre and to develop the borough's strategically important industrial offer. The capacity estimates indicate the broad potential of the Opportunity Area and are subject to more detailed testing."
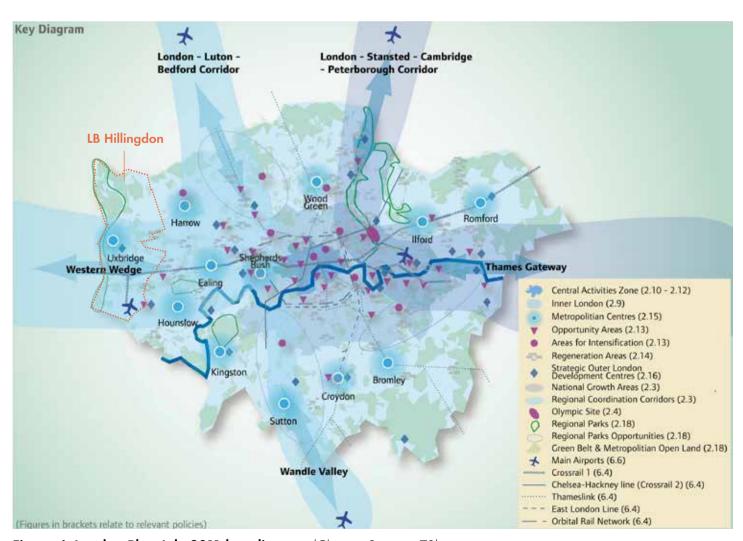

Figure 4: London Plan July 2011 key diagram (Chapter 2, page 73)
The approximate boundary of Hillingdon has been added for reference and does not form part of the key diagram

Uxbridge in the London Plan:

Uxbridge is identified as a Metropolitan Centre and should develop in the following directions:

- Medium growth: includes town centres with moderate levels of demand for retail, leisure or office floorspace and with physical and public transport capacity to accommodate it.
- Office development: speculative office development could be promoted on the most efficient and accessible sites in the context of wider schemes to enhance the environment and offer of the centre as a commercial location. This might entail some long-term net loss of overall office stock through change of use of provision on less attractive sites.
- Evening economy: the town should provide a regional/sub-regional evening economy cluster.

All district centres in the borough are proposed for medium growth.

A number of important employment areas are identified within the borough:

- Hayes Industrial Area is identified in the London Plan as a Strategic Industrial Location SIL), and within that definition as a Preferred Industrial Location (PIL).
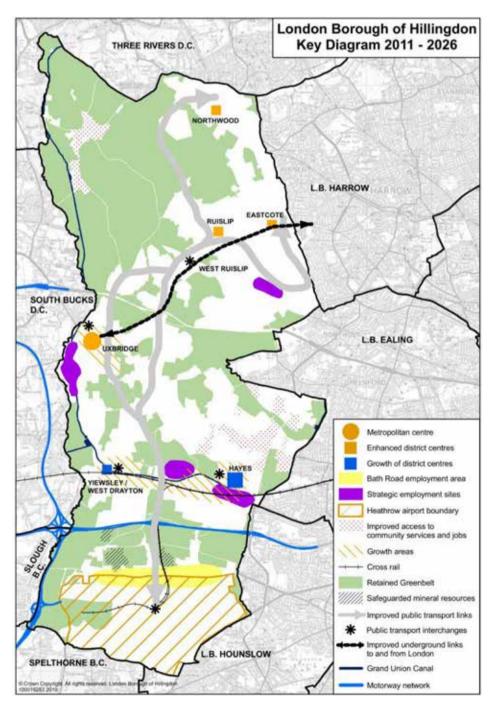- North Uxbridge Industrial Estate is also identified as a SIL and a Industrial Business Park (IBP).

- Stonefield Way/Victoria Road is identified as a Preferred Industrial Location (PIL).
- Uxbridge Industrial Estate is also a PIL.

Hillingdon Local Plan

The vision for Hillingdon 2026 as set out in the Local Plan includes the following aspects:

- Hillingdon is taking full advantage of its distinctive strengths with regard to its places, communities and heritage;
- The social and economic inequality gaps in Hillingdon are being closed;
- Improved environment and infrastructure is supporting healthier living and helping the borough to mitigate and adapt to climate change;
- Economic growth has been concentrated in Uxbridge, Heathrow and the Hayes/West Drayton Corridor, without ignoring local centres;
- Improved accessibility to local jobs, housing and facilities is improving the quality of life of residents;
- Hillingdon has a reliable network of north/south public transport routes and improved public transport interchanges; and
- Hillingdon has continued to prosper from the presence of Heathrow.

A key strategic objective (SO1) in the Local Plan is to "conserve and enhance the borough's heritage and their settings".

Figure 5: London Borough of Hillingdon Key Diagram
A Vision for 2026 Local Plan Part 1 Strategic Policies,
Adopted November 2012, p29

Landscape Character Assessment

As part of the evidence base for planning policy in the borough, Hillingdon commissioned Land Use Consultants to prepare a study of the landscape character. Details of this can be viewed on the council's website and an extract plan showing the overall characterisation is shown below. The study included a preliminary assessment of the townscape typology of the borough. This work has been expanded through this new study.

Hillingdon Boundary

Landscape Character Type (LCT)

- A. Floodplain
- B. Open Valley Sides
- C. Undulating Farmland
- D. Wooded Undulating Farmland
- E. Clay Golf
- F. Wooded Valley
- G. River Corridor
- H. Clay Plateau Aerodrome
- I. Encapsulated Farmland
- J. Gravel Terrace Recreation
- K. Open Gravel Terrace
- L. Gravel Terrace Infrastructure

Townscape Character Types

- Historic Core
- Retail Centre
- Inter-war Suburb/Metroland
- Commercial Airport
- Industrial
- Industrial and Commercial Canal Side
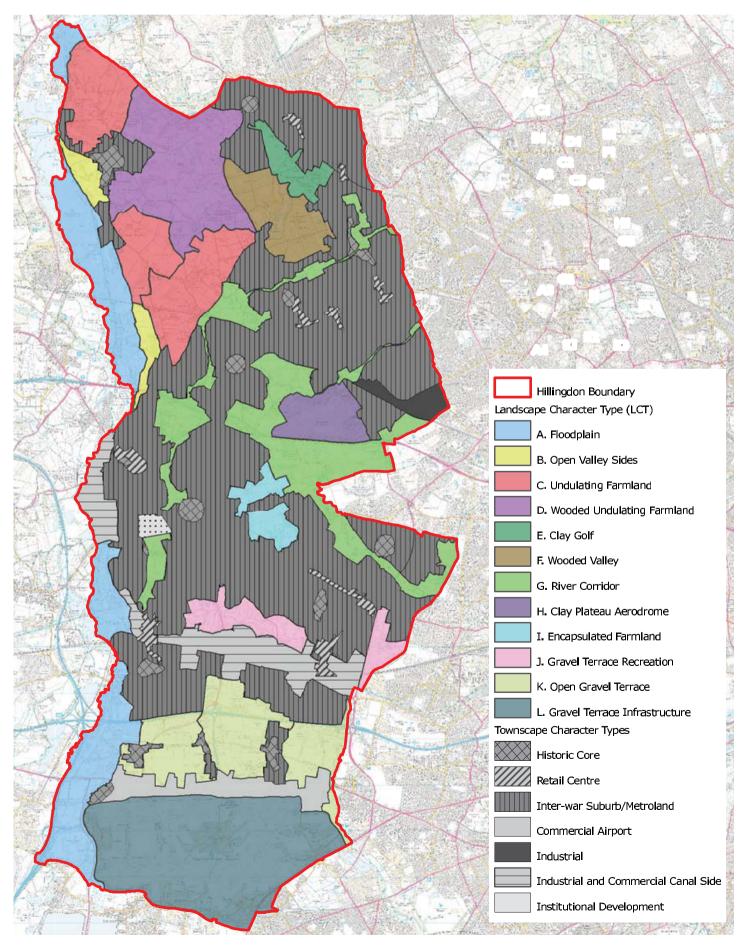- Institutional Development

Figure 6: Hillingdon Landscape Character Assessment plan
prepared by Land Use Consultants

Built Environment Designations

Hillingdon Council has a range of historic assets in the borough. The Council has designated a number of Conservation Areas across the borough to protect and enhance historic elements of the built environment. In addition, a number of Areas of Special Local Character have also been identified and protected through policy. The borough also includes a large number of Listed and Locally Listed Buildings, a Registered Historic Garden (Church Gardens in Harefield), and five Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Conservation Areas

Currently, Hillingdon has thirty one Conservation Areas, designated over the last 35 years, the first being in 1970 and the most recent in 2012. They range from old village centres and planned residential estates, to canal side buildings and historic industrial areas. Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans have been prepared for a number of the Conservation Areas including Eastcote Park Estate and The Glen, Northwood.

Areas of Special Local Character

Areas considered to be of special local character have also been designated by the borough. These areas have townscape, architectural and/or historical significance. Development and changes in these areas must harmonise with the character of the area.

Archaeological Priority Areas / Zones

Hillingdon is rich in archaeology and its archaeological remains are a valuable resource. An archaeological assessment is being undertaken concurrently with this character study and will provide a very useful picture of the archaeological assets of the borough.

Within the borough, significant areas are designated as Archaeological Priority Areas. These cover significant areas of Ruislip linked to the Ruislip Motte and Bailey site, as well as smaller areas covering parts of Harlington, Harmondsworth and Harefield.

In addition a number of proposed Archaeological Priority Zones have been suggested, but yet to be adopted, and these cover the Colne Valley and most of the area south of the M4.
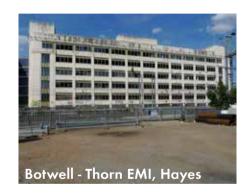
Design guidance

The Mayor of London's guidance on design applies across the borough, with the London Housing Design Guide providing a strong steer on how development proposals should respond to local character. Hillingdon's design and accessibility statements provide guidance on residential layouts, residential extensions, shop fronts and accessibility.

The Glen, Northwood

Hunters Grove (GWR housing), Hayes

Cowley Lock, Uxbridge

Botwell - Thorn EMI, Hayes

Ruislip

Harmondsworth Village

CONSERVATION

There are a total of 31 designated Conservation Areas in the borough, and a further 15 Areas of Special Local Character.

A significant number of individual buildings and structures have been recognised by designation:
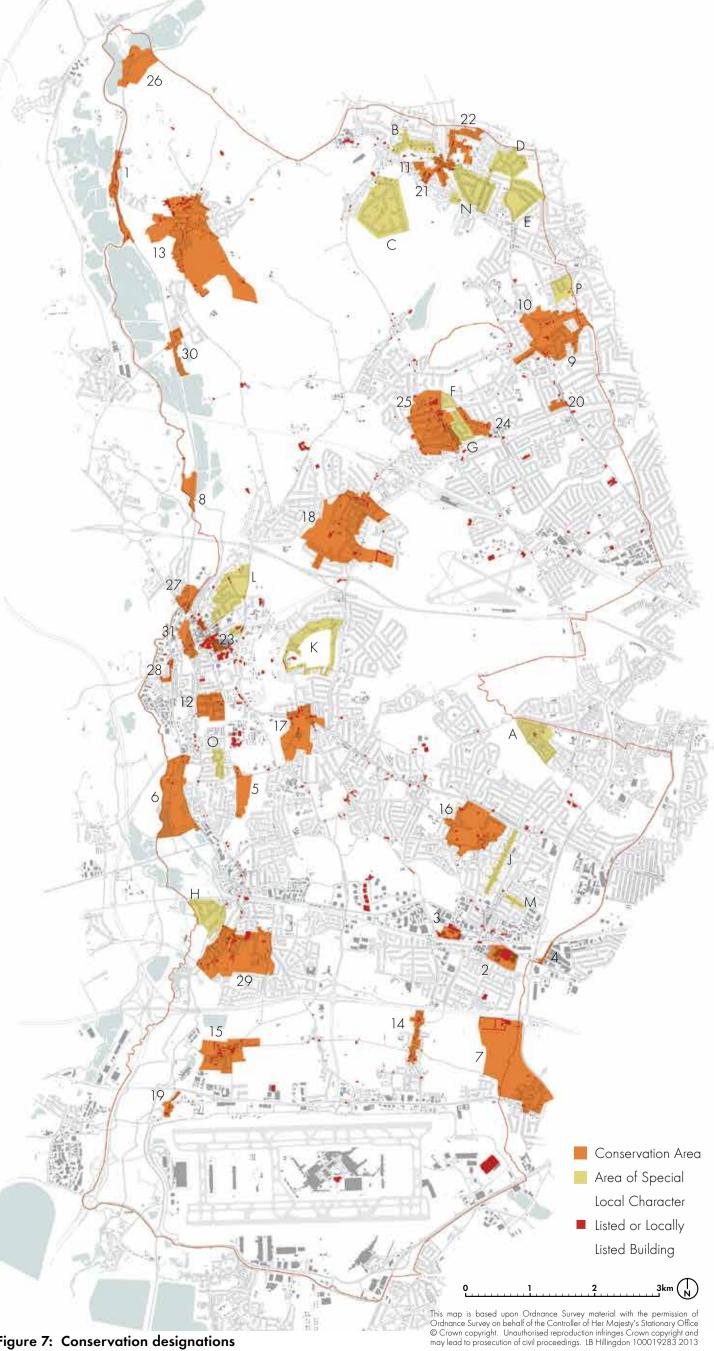
- 406 listed buildings;
- 302 locally listed buildings; and
- 5 scheduled ancient monuments.

Harmondsworth Great Barn
(Grade 1 listed)

Harefield Village Conservation Area

Conservation Area

Area of Special Local Character

Listed or Locally Listed Building

0 1 2 3km N

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Figure 7: Conservation designations

	Conservation Area	Character
1	Black Jacks and Copper Mill Lock, Harefield	Canalside
2	Botwell: Nestles, Hayes	Industrial
3	Botwell: Thorn EMI, Hayes	Industrial
4	Bulls Bridge, Hayes	Canalside
5	Cowley Church (St. Lawrence), Uxbridge	Ancient remains
6	Cowley Lock, Uxbridge	Canalside
7	Cranford Park	Estate, park and riverside environment
8	Denham Lock, Uxbridge	Canalside
9	Eastcote Park Estate	Residential estate
10	Eastcote Village	Historic centre and environment
11	The Glen, Northwood	Residential estate
12	The Greenway, Uxbridge	Residential area
13	Harefield Village	Historic village and setting
14	Harlington Village	Historic village
15	Harmondsworth Village	Historic village
16	Hayes Village	Historic village and environment
17	Hillingdon Village	Historic village and school
18	Ickenham Village	Historic village, residential streets and historic manor
19	Longford Village	Historic village core and 1930s development
20	Morford Way, Eastcote	Residential estate
21	Northwood Town Centre	Commercial centre
22	Northwood, Frithwood	Large residential houses in Arts and Crafts style
23	Old Uxbridge / Windsor Street	Historic high street
24	Ruislip Manor Way	Residential area
25	Ruislip Village	Historic village core
26	Springwell Lock	Canalside environment
27	Uxbridge Lock	River/canalside
28	Uxbridge Moor	Canalside
29	West Drayton	Historic village and setting
30	Widewater Lock	Canalside
31	Rockingham Bridge	Historic settlement, residential and park environment

	Area of Special Local Character	Character
A	Barnhill Estate, Yeading	Residential estate
B	Dene Road, Northwood	Residential street
C	Copsewood Estate, Northwood	Residential estate
D	Gatehill Farm Estate, Northwood	Residential estate
E	Hillside, Northwood Hills	Residential area
F	Moat Drive, Ruislip	Residential area
G	Midcroft, Ruislip	Residential area
H	Garden City, West Drayton	Residential area
J	Central Avenue, Hayes	Residential estate
K	Hillingdon Court Park	Residential area surrounding parkland
L	North Uxbridge	Residential area and common
M	East and West Walk, Hayes	Residential area
N	Old Northwood	Residential area
O	Orchard View/Clayton Road, Cowley	Residential area
P	Raisins Hill Estate, Eastcote	Residential estate and parkland

MORPHOLOGY

The borough exhibits extremes in terms of morphology (its 'bone-structure') - from fine grain Victorian terraced streets and historic village centres, through to very large industrial and airport buildings, some over 300 metres in width.

In general, the south of the borough has seen the introduction of coarser grain development on a much more substantial scale. Particular zones within the borough which have this characteristic are Uxbridge town centre, industrial and new mixed use developments around the canal and rail corridors, and office and hotel developments along the Bath Road.

The finest grain in the borough is found in the historic centres and rural fragments dotted across the area. Some fine grain examples include the Victorian terraced neighbourhoods adjacent to Uxbridge town centre and Harefield village centre.

The plan also shows the carefully formed streets of the planned estates which characterise the southern central area of the borough.
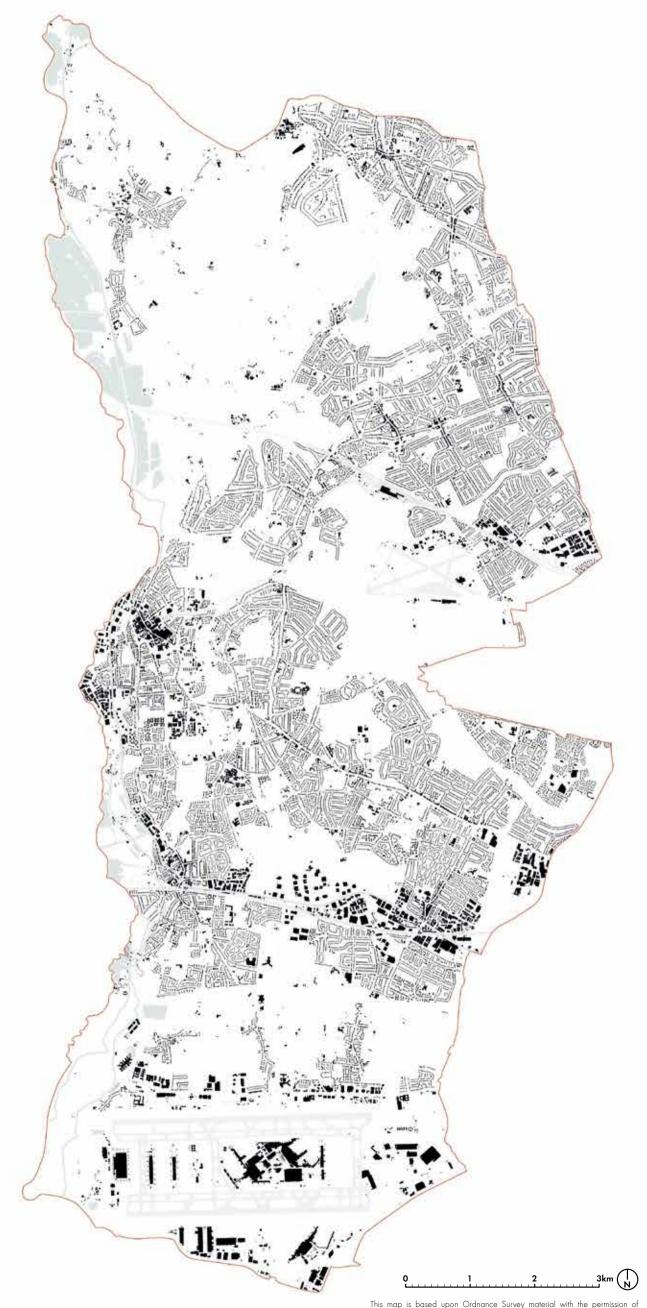

0   1   2   3km

Figure 8: Morphology plan

2013 AERIAL

This aerial photograph of the borough is effective in demonstrating the extremely green character of Hillingdon, both in terms of the large area of open land but also in the way which the low density suburban areas allow for generous gardens and tree planting. Other outstanding features are the large roofs of the industrial buildings north of the M4 in Hayes, the dramatic footprint of Heathrow and the belt of flooded gravel pits along the Colne Valley along the western edge of the top half of the borough.

Figure 9: Aerial photograph

0   1   2   3km

CENTRES

Uxbridge metropolitan centre is the most sizeable of the centres in the borough. It retains key elements of its history as a market town, but significant retail development followed the Metropolitan Railway connection and the town has continued to expand as a location for both retail and business.

District centres such as Ruislip and Hayes provide important access to shops and services for the rest of the borough.

Centre	Status
Main centres of retail floorspace	
Uxbridge	Metropolitan centre
Eastcote	District centre
Hayes	District centre
Northwood	District centre
Ruislip	District centre
Yiewsley / West Drayton	District centre
Ickenham	Local centre
Smaller centres	
Northwood Hills	Minor centre
Ruislip Manor	Minor centre
Uxbridge Road, Hayes	Minor centre
Harefield	Local centre
Harlington	Local centre
Hillingdon Heath	Local centre
North Hillingdon	Local centre
South Ruislip	Local centre
Willow Tree Lane	Local centre

Figure 10: Centres
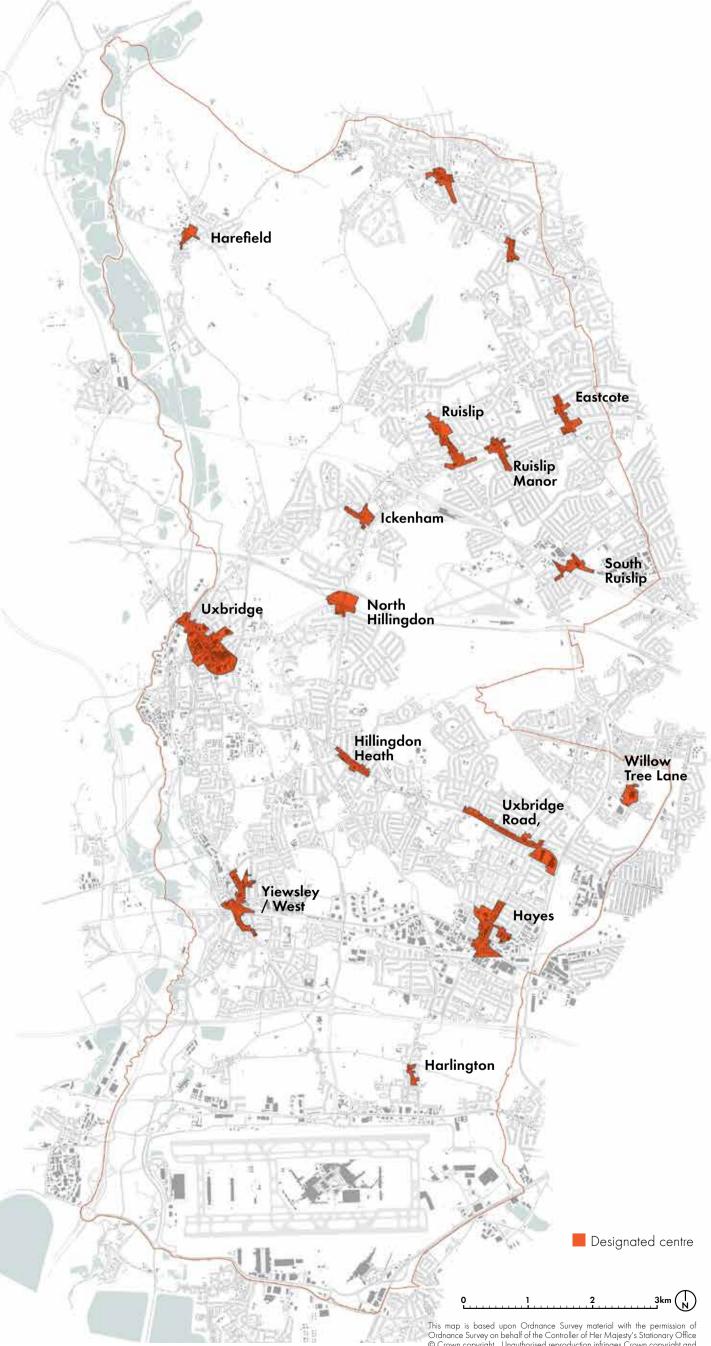
AIRPORTS

Aviation is part of the history of the borough and has had a significant impact on its character and appearance. The flat terrain in the centre of the borough around Ruislip was exploited by a number of early aviation pioneers including Claude Grahame-White, with aircraft construction developing in Hayes through the Fairey Aviation Company. Since these early beginnings the borough has been home to a number of airports, two of which survive today.

Today, Heathrow is one of the busiest and largest international airports in the world. It covers an area of 1,227ha and manages an average of 1,305 air transport movements per day (2011 figures). Having such a substantial airport within the borough naturally has a significant impact on the character. Indeed the southern quarter of the borough has been wholly dominated by airport infrastructure since the 1940s when Heathrow was significantly expanded. This is a significant departure from the suburban housing, town centres and semi-rural areas that characterise the townscape of the rest of the borough.

RAF Northolt is an older airfield (opened in 1915), but of much smaller scale. The airfield was an active base during the Second World War, and more recently has become the RAF's focus for its London-based operations. During Heathrow's construction RAF Northolt was London's main airport.
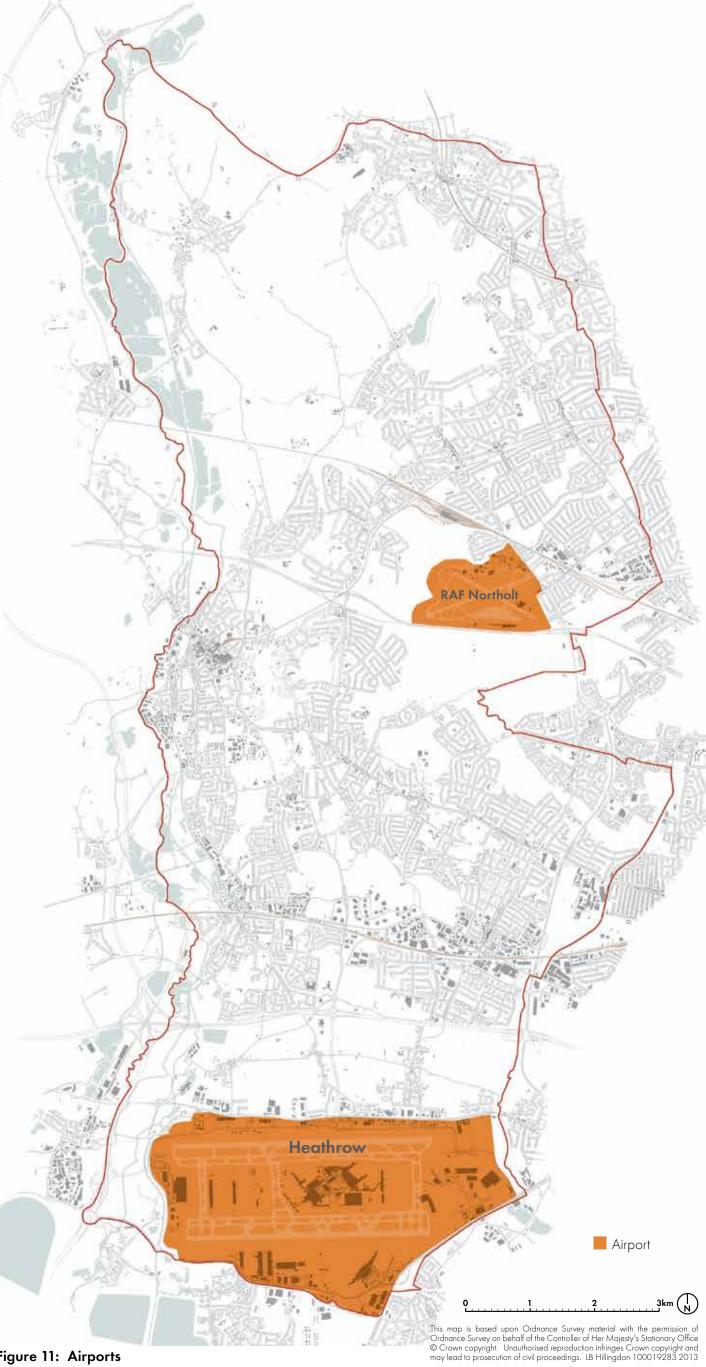

Figure 11: Airports

WATERWAYS

The western side of the borough is heavily influenced by the presence of water. The River Colne, the Grand Union Canal and a number of flooded former gravel pits combine to dominate the landscape character, and in many locations their routes through built up areas create a strong and attractive townscape character.

The Grand Union Canal has had a great impact on the townscape character in the borough as it weaves its way through Uxbridge, Yiewsley/ West Drayton and Hayes. The canal follows the terrain, running south along the Colne Valley and then south to Yiewsley.

Elsewhere in the borough, smaller watercourses and tributaries to the River Colne create attractive juxtapositions between urban and more rural characters. The Yeading Brook flows south from the area around RAF Northolt, along a green corridor which is followed by the Hillingdon Trail. Further west the River Pinn links historic settlements at Ruislip and Ickenham before flowing through RAF Uxbridge and the Brunel University campus.

Grand Union Canal at Packet Boat

Figure 12: Watercourses and water bodies

Water

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GREEN BELT

The borough has 4,790 ha of Green Belt, with much covering the northern third of the borough. The Green Belt has successfully protected against the coalescence of settlements in the borough.

In the north of the borough much of the Green Belt is characterised as gently undulating farmland with relatively open views towards the Colne Valley. Significant areas of ancient woodland also exist between Northwood and Ruislip.

In the south of the borough the Green Belt is a little more fragmented, but does provide a useful buffer between the main residential areas and Heathrow airport.

A key feature of the Green Belt in Hillingdon is the inclusion of working farmland within the urban area. As such, not all of these landscape remnants are publicly accessible.

Green Belt land to the north west of Cranford

Figure 13: Greenbelt

Green belt

0   1   2   3km   N

TOPOGRAPHY

Hillingdon is a predominantly flat and relatively low lying landscape. The main changes in topography are found in the northern part of the borough as the land rises towards Harefield and Northwood as the landscape approaches the Chilterns further to the north and west.

Along the western boundary of the borough is the River Colne Valley. As such the north west of the borough supports some attractive views westwards out across the Colne Valley.

The topography has had a major impact on the defining features of the borough such as the canal, whose alignment was largely governed by the desire to follow the contour line around the hills rather than require major engineering works.

As well as showing the elevation, this plan also demonstrates the relative lack of undulation in the southern part of the borough, making it ideal terrain for a large airport.
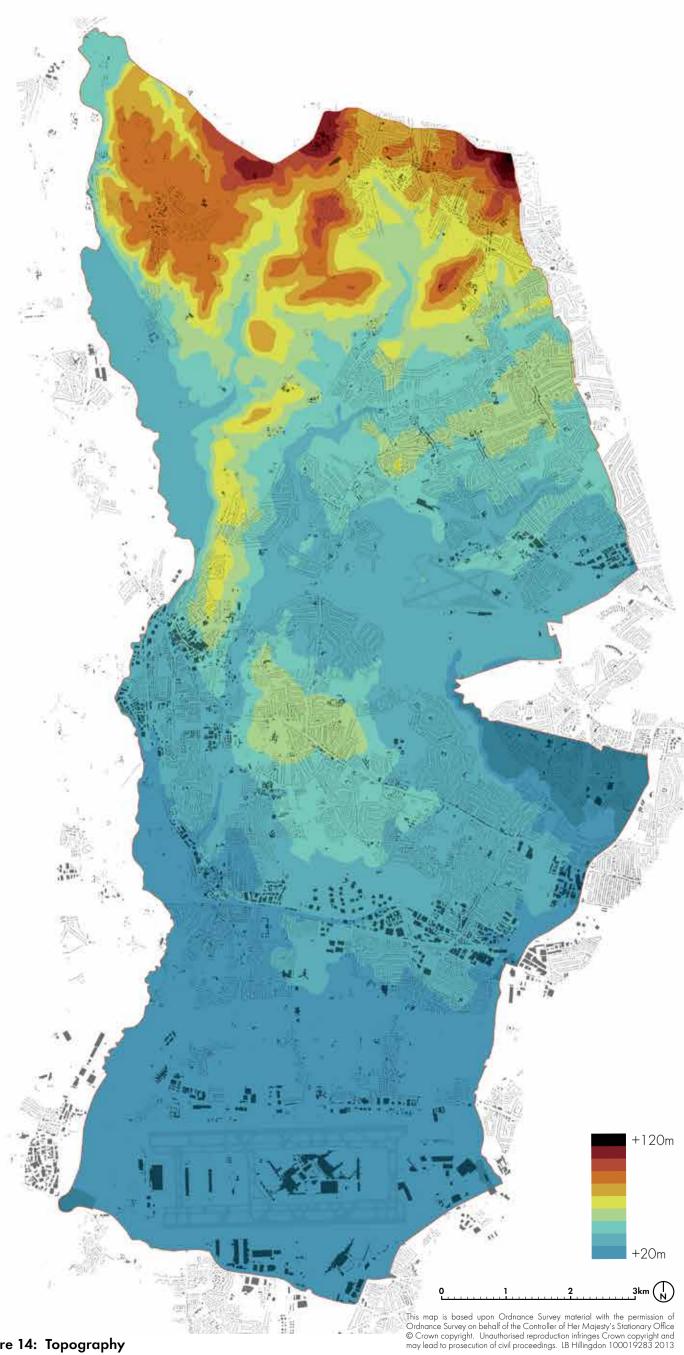

+120m

+20m

0   1   2   3km

Figure 14: Topography

RAIL CONNECTIONS

The rail and tube connections have been instrumental in steering the growth and evolution of the borough's urban areas over the last century.

The first line to run through the borough was the Great Western Railway, providing access into Paddington via West Drayton and Hayes. Taking a similar route to the Grand Union Canal, this route provided an additional barrier for local north-south movement in the southern part of the borough. A spur originally ran from this line up to Uxbridge via Cowley, although this was closed to passengers in 1962.

The most significant rail development was the Metropolitan Railway, which opened through the borough to Rickmansworth in 1887. The line to Uxbridge was subsequently opened in 1904. These two lines brought with them major suburban development and the dawn of commuting in the borough. More recently Heathrow has been connected to the underground system, with Heathrow Central (Terminals 1, 2 and 3) station opening in 1977 on the Piccadilly line.

Today, these connections help to enable up to 60,000 residents to commute into central London (Hillingdon Local Implementation Plan 2011-2014).

Northwood

Northwood Hills

Denham

Eastcote

Ruislip Manor

West Ruislip

Ruislip

Ruislip Gardens

South Ruislip

Ickenham

Hillingdon

Uxbridge

West Drayton

Hayes & Harlington

Crossrail route under construction

Heathrow Terminal 5

Heathrow Terminals 1,2 & 3

Hatton Cross

Heathrow Terminal 4

— Train/tube line (surface level)

--- Train/tube line (below surface)

0   1   2   3km

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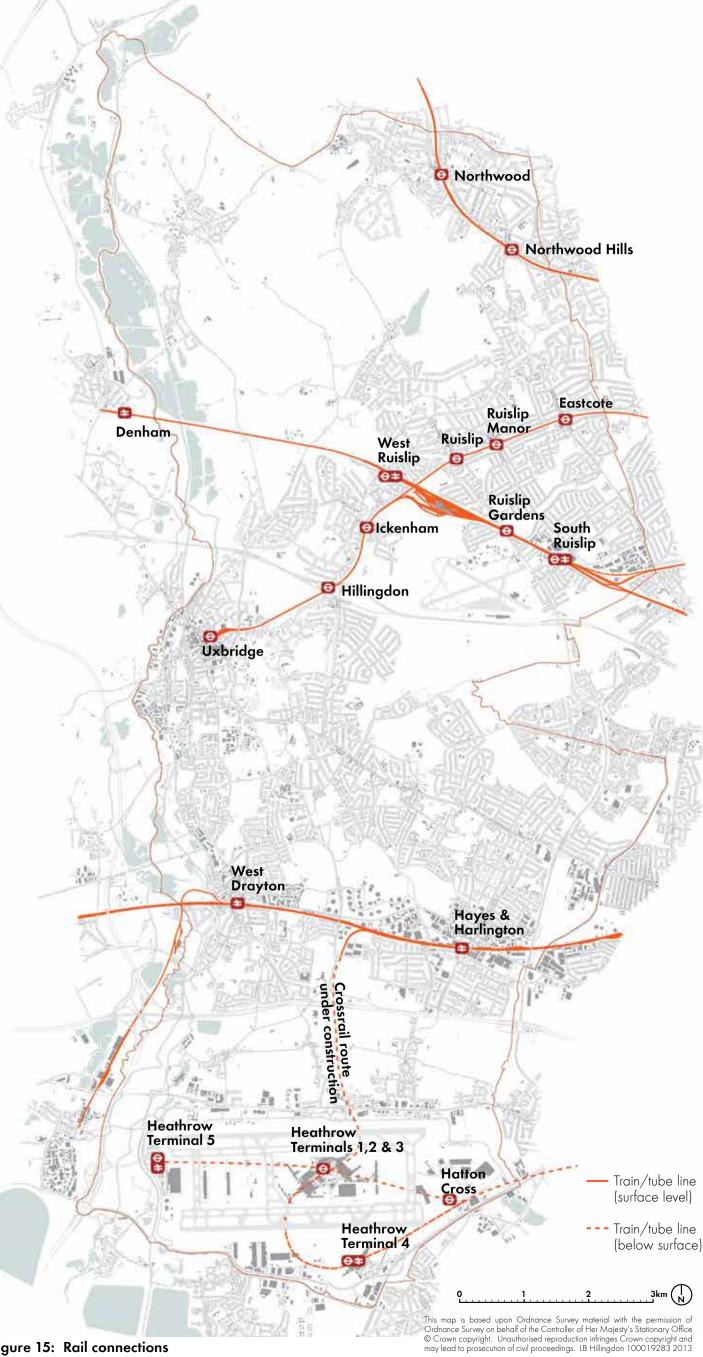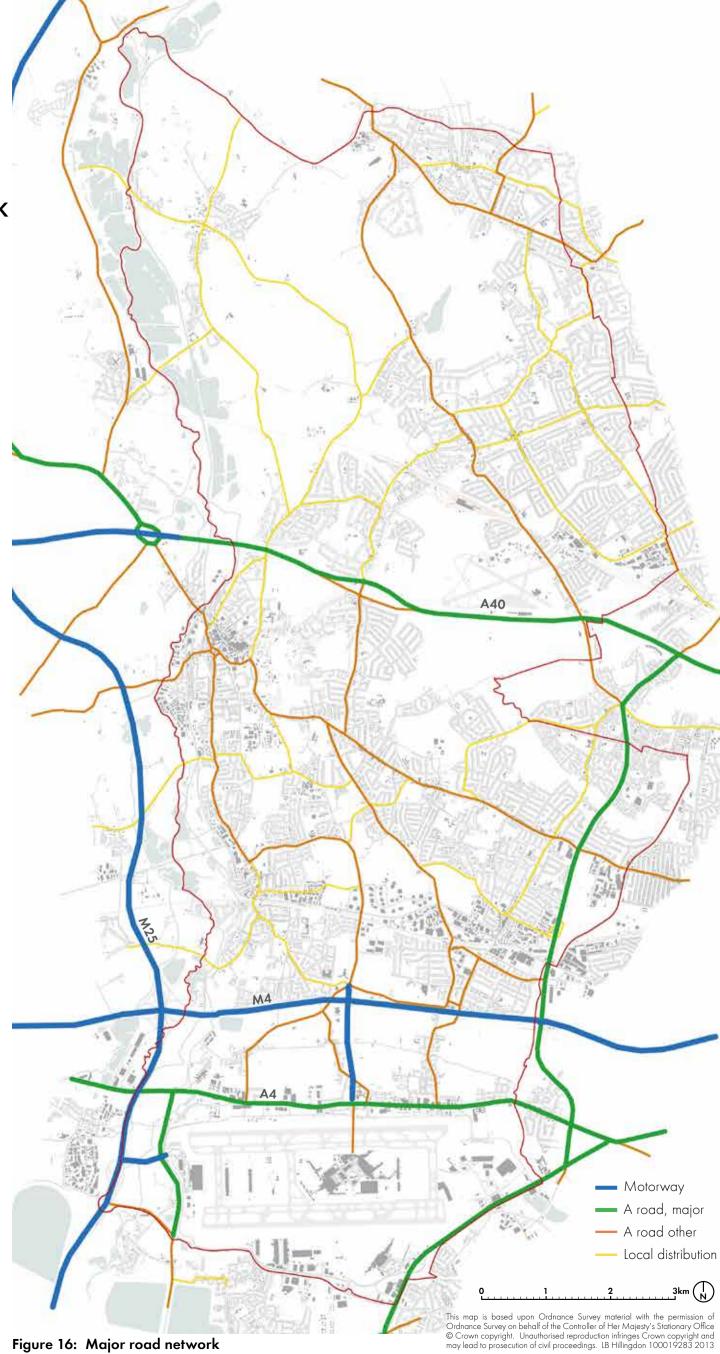
Figure 15: Rail connections

PRINCIPAL ROAD NETWORK

The borough benefits from very good access to the principal road network. Access to the M25 is facilitated by a number of junctions along the western edge of the borough. The M40/A40 dissects the borough in half, and together with the M4/A4 further south enables very good east-west connections across and out of the borough. These connections have helped support economic growth in the borough.

Whilst there are strong east-west public transport links to and from the borough, north-south journeys are usually slow and often indirect. Road traffic pressures across the A40 create a major barrier, severing the north from the south.

A40/M40 corridor
(viewed from Long Lane)

Figure 16: Major road network

A40

M25

M4

A4

— Motorway
— A road, major
— A road other
— Local distribution

0   1   2   3km N

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PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY LEVEL (PTAL)

Hillingdon's urban centres generally enjoy relatively good access to public transport. Most centres have at least one rail connection linking them to central London.
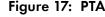
Uxbridge has the highest level of accessibility given its role as a public transport hub for underground rail and bus services.

Most residential areas have some access to the public transport network, aided by the strong bus corridor along Uxbridge Road. The village of Harefield stands out as having the lowest access to public transport among the populated areas of the borough.

Hayes centre - a growing public transport hub

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6b	
6a	
5	
4	
3	
2	
1b	
1a	

Figure 17: PTAL

HIGH SPEED 2 AND CROSSRAIL

Two of the most significant infrastructure projects of the next decade affect the borough - High Speed Rail 2 and Crossrail.

The HS2 route is proposed to run through the northern half of the borough, albeit underground for much of this section. The main impacts will be felt at the point the route breaks from underground to above ground, west of Ruislip, and then when it crosses the Colne River Valley. Although the borough is likely to be affected by this new route, there are no stations planned other than a potential link to Heathrow airport.

Crossrail is a very different prospect as the enhanced connections via West Drayton, Hayes and potentially Heathrow will have significant economic benefits for the borough. The pressure for development around Hayes is mounting with a large number of major new schemes coming forward. The development which is permitted has the potential to radically change the face of this part of the borough, but will need careful management to ensure the character shift is wholly positive.
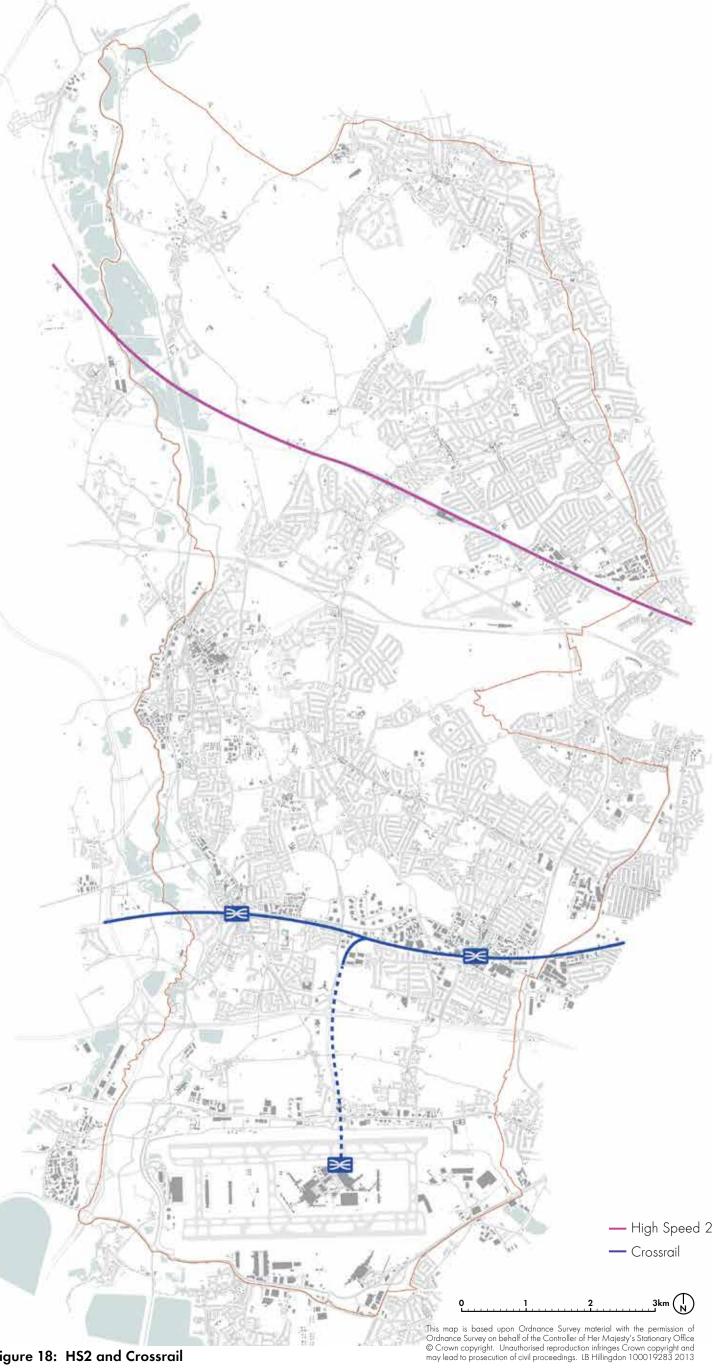

— High Speed 2
— Crossrail
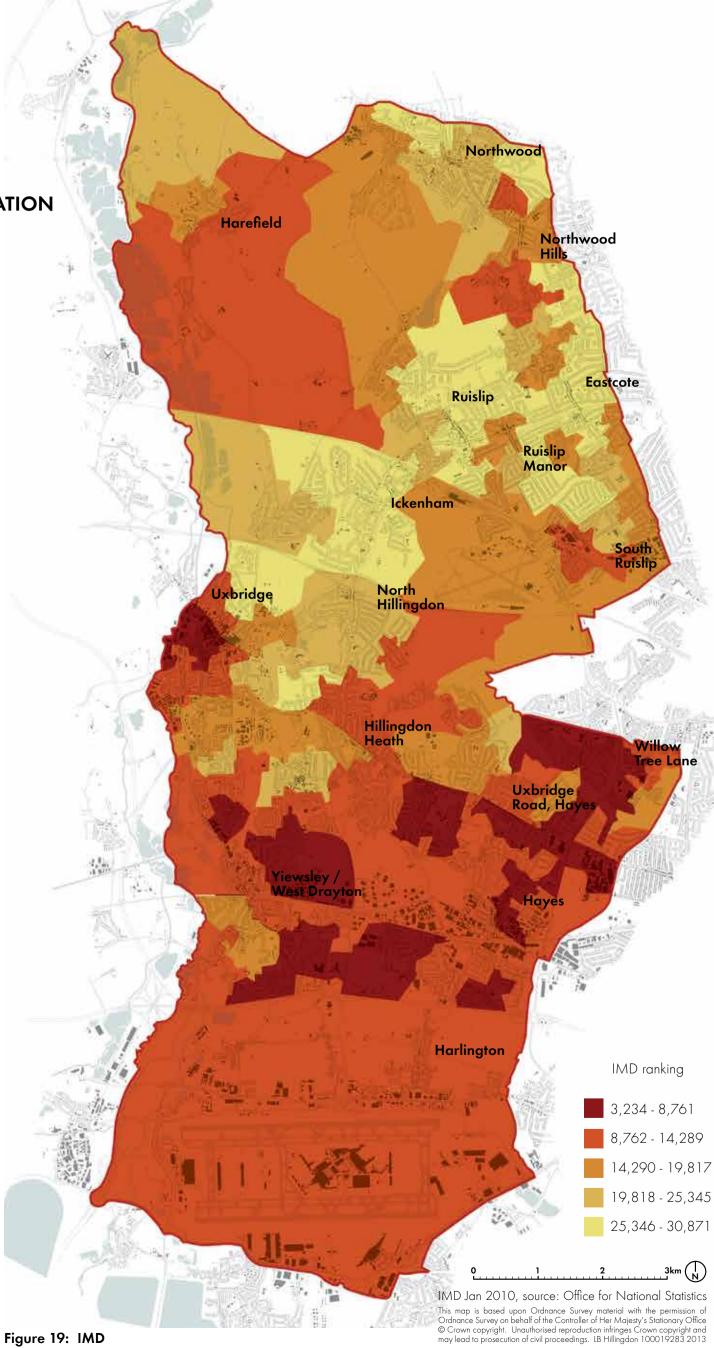
Figure 18: HS2 and Crossrail

INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION
National ranking, January 2010

At a borough-wide level, Hillingdon is a relatively affluent place. However, this masks significant local differences from north to south as can be seen in this presentation of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation data which shows the relative affluence of areas and provides an overall national ranking.

In general, areas in the southern half of the borough are significantly more deprived than neighbourhoods in the north. Neighbourhoods around Hayes and West Drayton are most deprived with several areas falling into the 20% most deprived areas in the country.

The borough has seen improvement between the 2007 and 2010 figures, although this has mostly increased the number of neighbourhoods in the north of the borough which are in the least deprived category.

IMD ranking

- 3,234 - 8,761
- 8,762 - 14,289
- 14,290 - 19,817
- 19,818 - 25,345
- 25,346 - 30,871

IMD Jan 2010, source: Office for National Statistics

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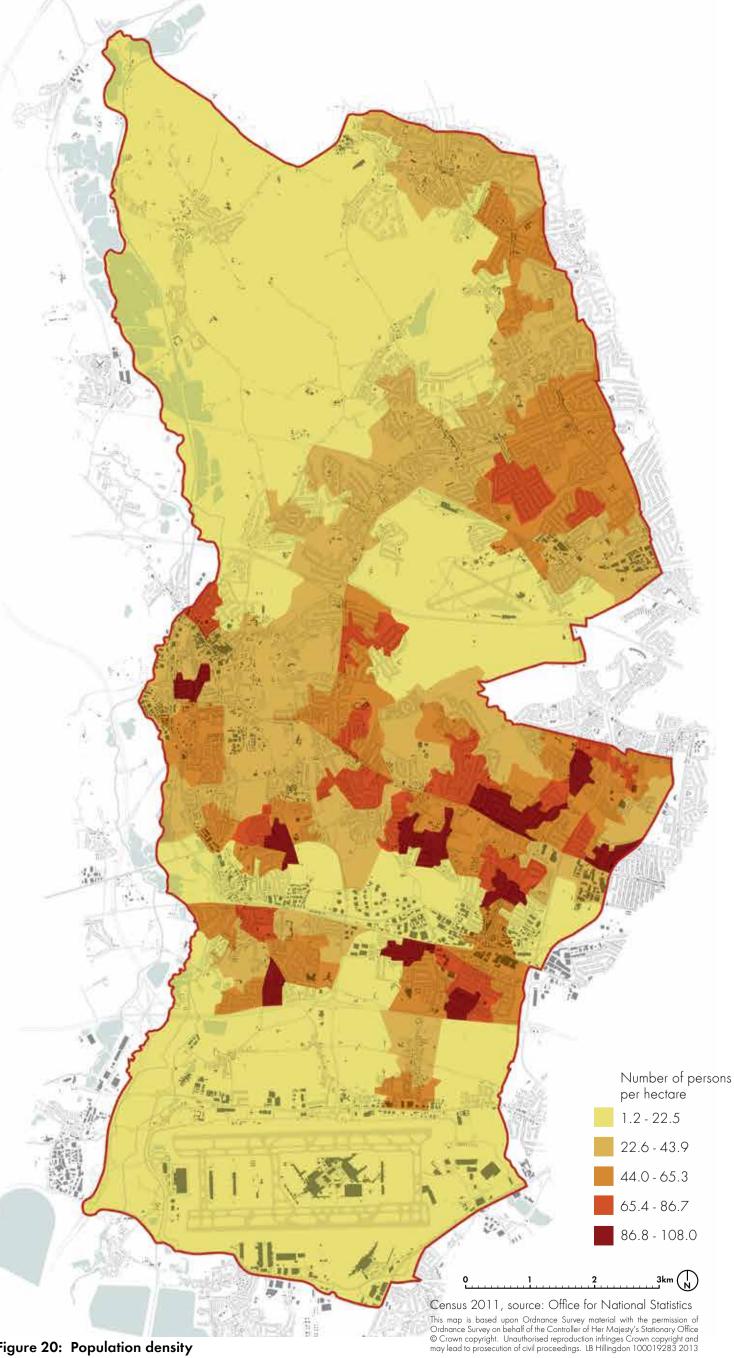
Figure 19: IMD

DENSITY
Number of persons per hectare

The average residential population density across Hillingdon is significantly lower than the London average, as would be expected given its Outer London context and the extensive areas of Green Belt. The 2011 Census figures record that there was an average of 2.37 people per hectare in the borough, compared to a London average of 52.0. This relatively low figure is somewhat misleading given that at least a third of the borough's land is open countryside or undeveloped. However, even adjusting the density calculation to omit large areas of open space it is noted that the density is still extremely low.

The highest densities are found in urban centres in the southern half of the borough. Neighbourhoods and developments around Hayes and the lower sections of Uxbridge Road have the highest densities. In most cases it is the Garden City style estates which achieve the highest densities, as do most of the surviving Victorian terraced streets.
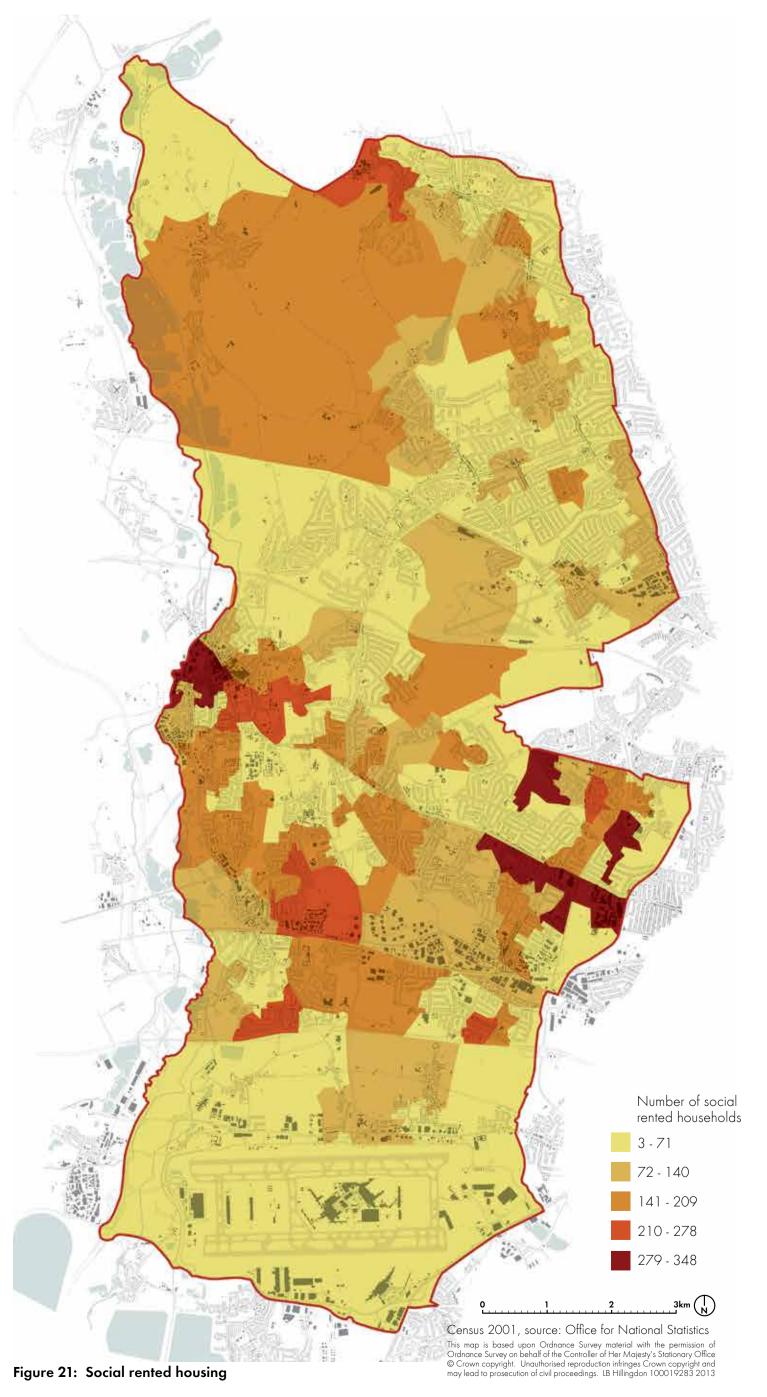
Redevelopment and residential growth around transport nodes such as Hayes is resulting in these areas accommodating a greater number of people per hectare. Many new developments around Hayes station mark a shift in building forms and densities with higher rise flatted development.

Number of persons per hectare

- 1.2 - 22.5
- 22.6 - 43.9
- 44.0 - 65.3
- 65.4 - 86.7
- 86.8 - 108.0

Census 2011, source: Office for National Statistics

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Figure 20: Population density

SOCIAL RENTED HOMES
Count of households

The number of households
in Hillingdon is set to rise by
nearly 7% to 103,320 in 2021
(Hillingdon Housing Strategy
2007-2010). Currently just over
71% of households are owner
occupied, and nearly 13% are
rented from private landlords.
The remaining 16% are social
housing, with the council as
Hillingdon's largest landlord
with over 10% of homes.

High proportions of social rented
households (over 279 households
per super output area) are found
along the southern side of
Uxbridge Road where a number
of high rise blocks are located,
and around Willow Tree Lane
and Attlee Road near Yeading.

Census 2001, source: Office for National Statistics

Number of social
rented households

3 - 71
72 - 140
141 - 209
210 - 278
279 - 348

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Figure 21: Social rented housing

Thorn EMI building, Hayes
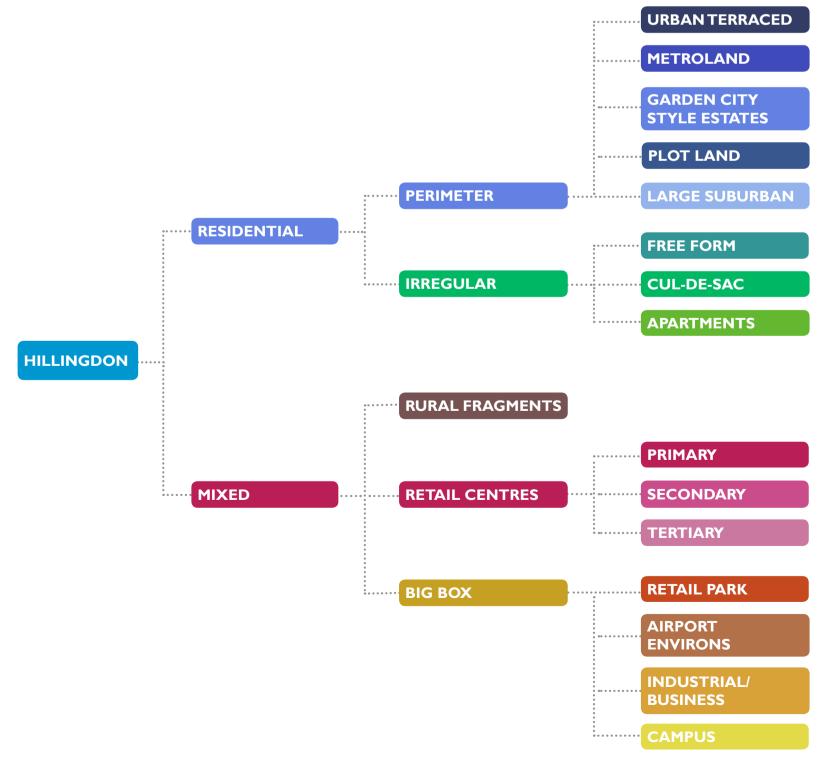
4. URBAN TYPOLOGY
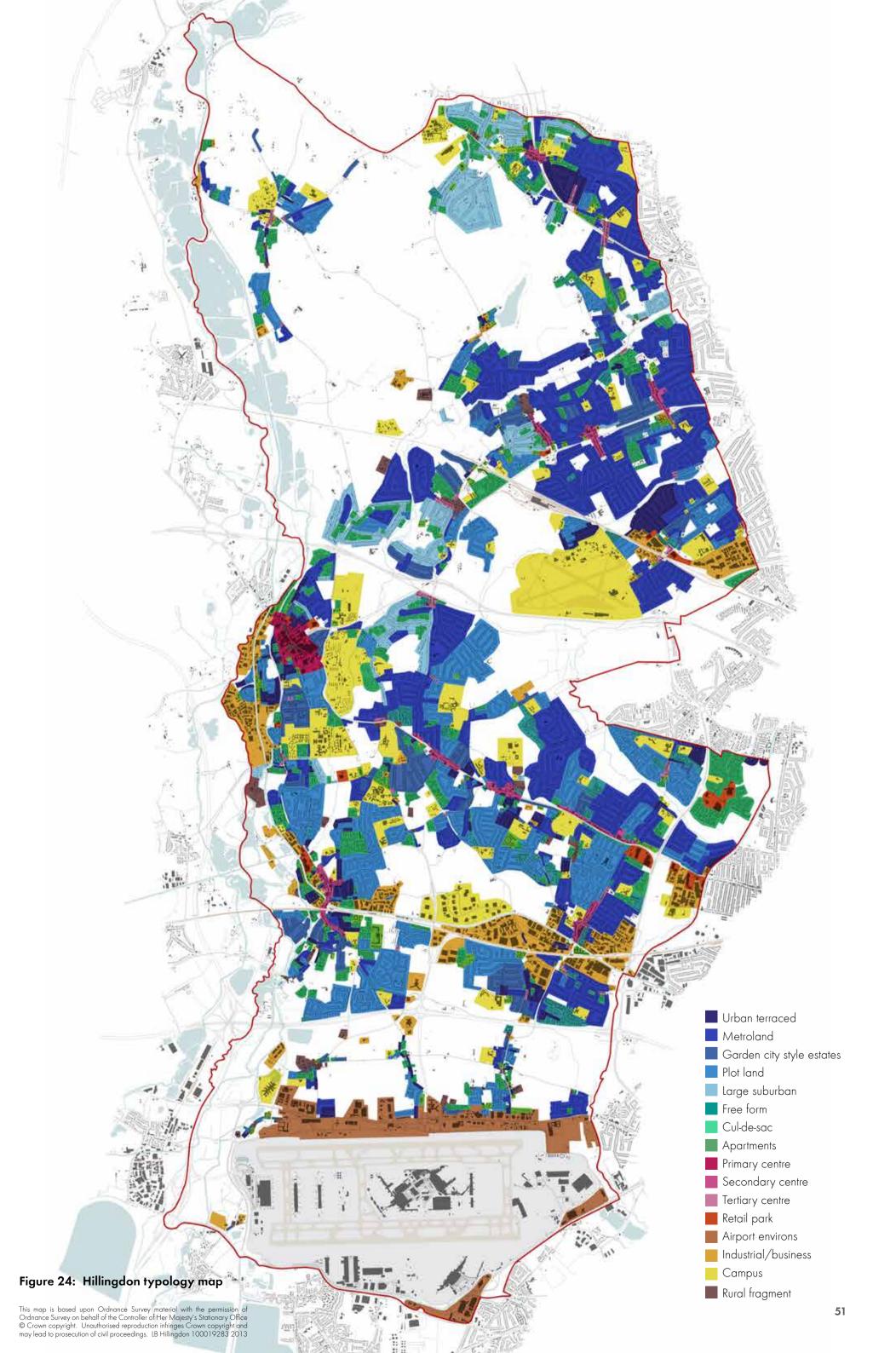
4. URBAN TYPOLOGY

HILLINGDON TYPOLOGY

Typology is the systematic classification of things according to their common characteristics. By identifying the various townscape characters found in Hillingdon and then identifying where they are present it is possible to describe the form of the borough in detail. It also provides a structure which helps to identify common issues that are prevalent for each townscape type and to consider the implications for future development.

16 specific types have been identified in Hillingdon including a range of residential development forms, a mix of non-residential development types and a category which recognises the important role played by historic villages and towns in defining the character of the borough.

Each character type in the set is described in text and photography, accompanied by an aerial photograph and figure-ground plan to help explain the urban form. Short summaries of key characteristics and key issues and implications are provided for easy reference and the colour coding is keyed to the colours on the map.

This typology classification has been devised to reflect the particular character and form of Hillingdon's townscape. It should be noted that the examples given and description presented relate to typical characteristics of buildings. There are a great many subtle variations in style and form of the buildings and in some cases the distinction between one category and another is not clear cut.

HILLINGDON

RESIDENTIAL

PERIMETER
- URBAN TERRACED
- METROLAND
- GARDEN CITY STYLE ESTATES
- PLOT LAND
- LARGE SUBURBAN

IRREGULAR
- FREE FORM
- CUL-DE-SAC
- APARTMENTS

MIXED

RURAL FRAGMENTS

RETAIL CENTRES
- PRIMARY
- SECONDARY
- TERTIARY

BIG BOX
- RETAIL PARK
- AIRPORT ENVIRONS
- INDUSTRIAL/ BUSINESS
- CAMPUS

Figure 24: Hillingdon typology map

Legend:
- Urban terraced
- Metroland
- Garden city style estates
- Plot land
- Large suburban
- Free form
- Cul-de-sac
- Apartments
- Primary centre
- Secondary centre
- Tertiary centre
- Retail park
- Airport environs
- Industrial/business
- Campus
- Rural fragment

URBAN TERRACED

The urban terraced form describes area of development which are predominantly terraced housing, most commonly associated with Victorian or Edwardian periods of development.

The typical block form for this kind of housing is a regular grid of rectangular blocks, typically around 80-90m deep with gardens in the centre of the block backing onto one-another. Whilst a regular grid is the optimal form of development, there are also many examples of irregular perimeter blocks.

Buildings in this type are predominantly two storey and terraced. In some instances they are constructed as semi-detached or even detached houses, but grouped together with narrow passages between houses and closely spaced gable ends to give the effective appearance of being terraced. Plots are generally narrow, in the order of 5-6m which creates a strong rhythm along the street. The pitch of the roof runs parallel to the road and the buildings are deep in plan, with the characteristic L-shape of Victorian houses.

This type of development is most commonly associated with Victorian and Edwardian development. These buildings normally have characteristic architectural features such as bay windows with sash windows and fan-lights over the front door-indicative of a generous floor-ceiling height. Front gardens are typically short, up to 5m. In some instances this can lead to loss of front boundaries and an increase in hard standing as gardens have been adapted to provide parking space. However, parking for this type is typically on-street. The relatively high density of this form of development coupled with close proximity to transport and services makes urban terraces relatively sustainable.

Key characteristics

- Terraced buildings defining perimeter blocks and providing a good degree of active frontage to streets.
- Narrow plot width, typically 5-6m with a distinctive L-shaped plan.
- Vertically proportioned two-storey brick buildings with sash windows and often bay windows.
- Strong consistency of materials and details within a group of buildings.
- Symmetry and grouping of features such as doors and bay windows.
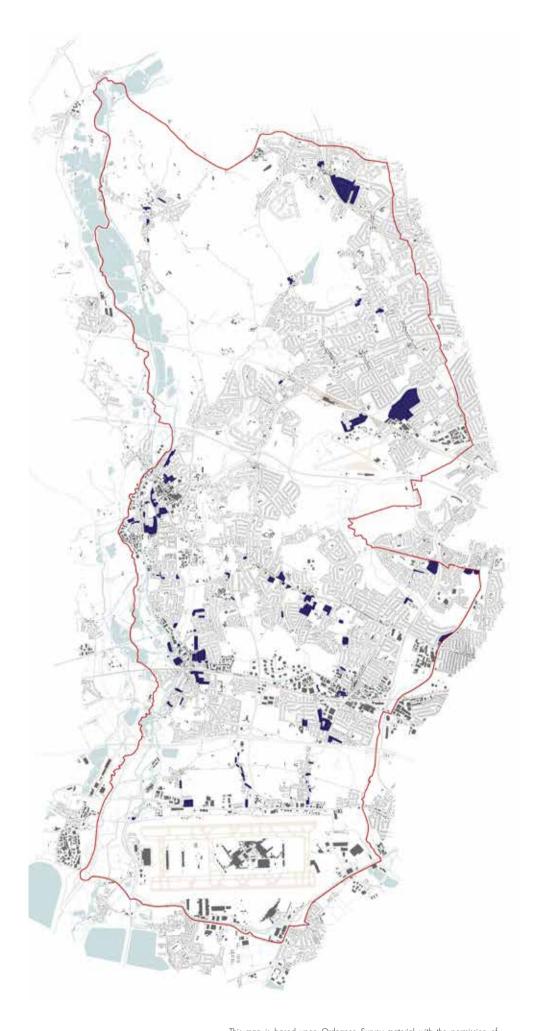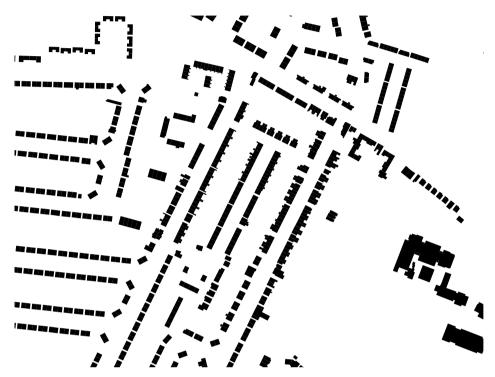- Typical density range for this typology is 40-50 dph.

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Figure 25: Urban terraced map

Issues and implications for these areas

- The strong group identity of terraced buildings means that the consistent character of the group is vulnerable to incremental change. Alterations, such as the cladding, painting or rendering of a property, loss of original windows, doors or bay structures and the installation of satellite dishes can have a significant impact on the appearance of the group as a whole.

- In some instances where gardens are sufficiently large, the original boundary, surface and garden greenery can be lost to provide parking, breaking up the quality of the street frontage.

- The loss of original roofing materials and chimneys is an issue for this typology, both of which can have a significant impact on streetscape character.

METROLAND

Metroland is the term used to describe the classic inter-war suburban housing which is found in many parts of Hillingdon. The term was coined by the marketing department of the Metropolitan Railway company but has since come to be associated with the large swathes of inter-war housing in north-west London and further afield.

In Hillingdon, for the purposes of this characterisation, the typology Metroland refers to privately built inter-war suburban housing.

Metroland development displays a number of influences. Whilst the early buildings display the gradual transition from Edwardian housing, the proportions are generally less vertical with wider plot widths. Buildings tend to be detached or semi-detached with a hipped roof and more generous spacing between buildings which gives a more open feel to the street. Architectural elements tend to shed the more formal urban character of the earlier building and adopt a more relaxed feel, with asymmetrical compositions and use of materials and details that evoke a rural character.

It was very common for areas of suburban housing to be built as large developments. As a result, many areas have a consistent pattern of buildings with a similar scale and form which can give an attractive, unified character. The streets are wider and the front gardens are typically between 5 and 10m deep. This means that street trees and other soft landscaping play a particular role in softening and unifying character. Some areas of metroland development were built out as consistently single storey development.

Key characteristics

- Perimeter block development, often with an informal rather than a regular structure. Some layouts feature "islands of planting" and extensive grass verges (as in Eastcote Park estate) while others include a small cul-de-sac in the centre of the block.
- Architectural form which evokes a rural character, although with repetition of designs and features which provide a cohesive character.
- Street trees and garden planting play a significant role in the character of the street scene.
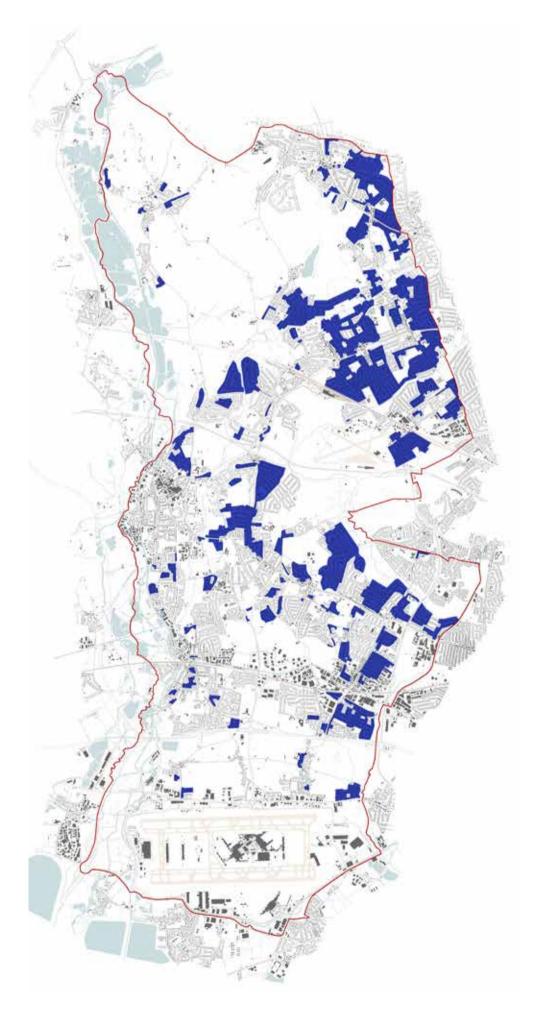- Typical density range for this typology is 15-20 dph.

Figure 26: Metroland map

Issues and implications for these areas

- Whilst group identity for metroland streets tends to be strong there is often sufficient variation which helps to make modest changes acceptable. However, where buildings are part of a symmetrical pair substantial change such as loss of a hipped roof to a gable can have a significant detrimental impact.
- Side extensions, including development over garages can reduce the open feel of some streets, reducing the gaps between buildings.
- Loss of front gardens and front boundaries to accommodate parking is a common issue for the overall quality of the streetscene.

GARDEN CITY STYLE ESTATES

Garden city style development shares many common characteristics with Metroland development. However, there are a number of distinctive features which reflect the different social basis for the development. Whilst the classic metroland areas were the product of private developers and sold to private purchasers, garden city style development was more likely to have been developed by the public sector, although in Hillingdon there are a number of examples of this style built by private interests.

Buildings are commonly grouped into terraces which often display an overall composition and symmetry, emphasising their collective identity. The style of buildings is generally solid but plain, with simple detailing and flat fronts in place of the elaborate gables and bays associated with Metroland development. It is common to find buildings arranged around a shared green space, a form of layout which is less likely with Metroland development. A number of estates also include allotment space that form an important part of their layout.

The block form of garden city estate development follows a conventional perimeter block approach. However, this tends to be flexible rather than regular with plan forms often displaying an overall composition of different shapes. Buildings are generally two storeys with either a square or wide plan form. Combined with the fact that buildings tend to be grouped in short terraces, this results in a building form with more horizontal proportions. Some strong examples in the borough include the Great Western Railway estates around Coldharbour Lane.

Whilst Metroland housing frequently made allowances for car ownership, garden city estate housing rarely did in the original design. Although the streets are often sufficiently generous to provide on-street parking, there are a high proportion where the gardens and verges have been lost to provide parking.

Key characteristics

- Buildings composed as unified groups, often with an overall symmetry or composition.
- Square or wide plans to the buildings with generally horizontal proportions.
- Consistent use of a very limited palette of materials and few elaborate details to give a plain and simple appearance.
- Overall urban plan composition, often featuring areas of shared green space.
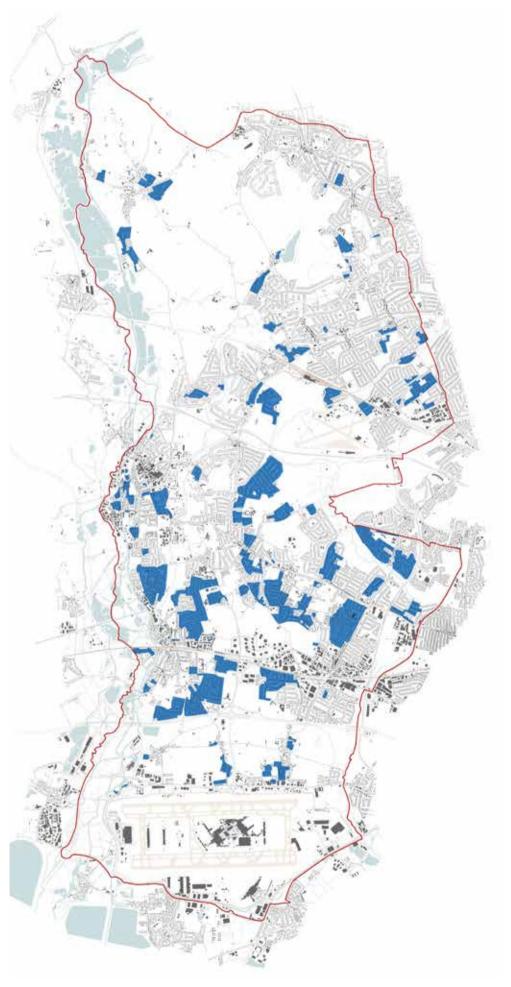- Typical density range for this typology is 20-30 dph.

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Figure 27: Garden city style estate map

Issues and implications for these areas

- The fact that groups of buildings were designed as overall compositions means that the character of the group is particularly vulnerable to modifications or additions such as cladding or extensions. Proposals to add new buildings to the end of rows should be resisted.
- Parking can have a significant impact on this type of development, either through impact on gardens and front boundaries or through loss of verges to create parking spaces
- The loss of original roofing materials and changes to front gardens have a significant impact on the quality of these neighbourhoods, as does the infilling of green spaces.

PLOTLAND

Plotland development shares many features with the Metroland character type. It usually features a simple perimeter block form, is built to a similar overall density and many of the buildings incorporate similar use of materials and details.

However, plotland development differs significantly in that, unlike the large estates which were built to a relatively high degree of conformity by major public or private developers, these areas of development were built piecemeal. Streets were laid out and individual plots constructed to the wishes of a builder working speculatively on one or two plots or by a purchaser commissioning a house to suit their wishes.

As a result, plotland development has a number of distinctive features. The buildings are almost all detached, despite the relative compactness of the plots. They tend to be relatively simple volumes and many of the houses present a gable to the public realm with the ridge running perpendicular to the street. In some areas bungalows predominate, although variations and adaptations over time mean that some have accommodation in the roof space.

As with other areas of development, gradual modifications to properties by successive owners has continued to change the character of these buildings from their original design. However, whereas planned estates could be said to have a clear identity or collective design which is worthy of protection, plotland development has always enjoyed a more diverse and fragmented character.

Key characteristics

- Similar density and urban form to Metroland development.
- Typically built by small building firms or individual owners and incorporating a range of designs.
- Unified by simple parameters such as building line and broad scale.
- Detached properties despite the small scale, often with a gable to the street and a simple rectangular plan form.
- Original varied architectural style further fragmented by modifications over time.
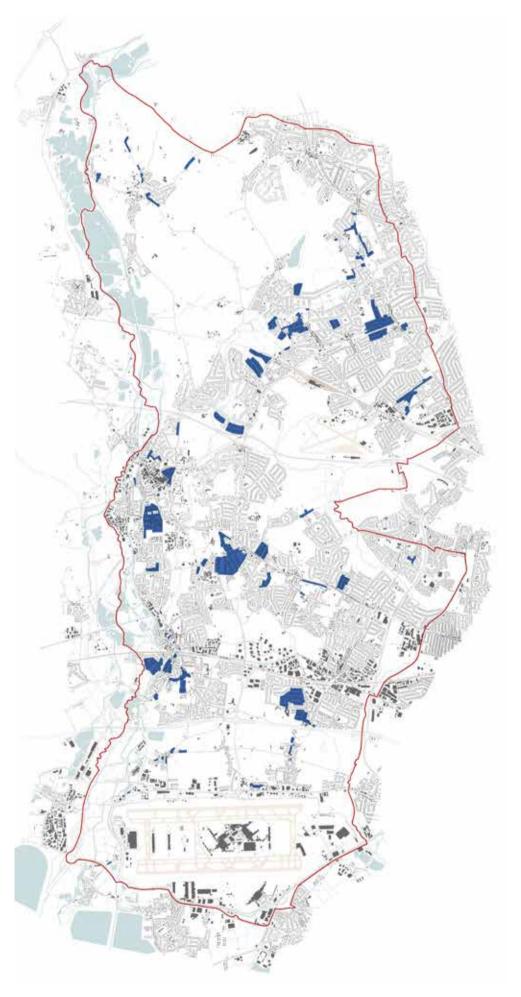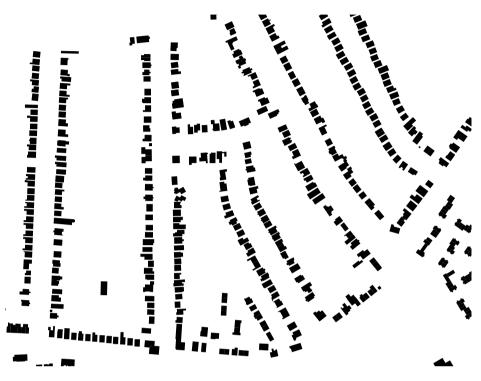- Typical density range for this typology is 15-20 dph.

Figure 28: plotland map

Issues and implications for these areas

- Plotland areas are more likely to be able to accommodate gradual change over time as variation between plots is an essential feature of the type. However, they are regarded as vulnerable to significant changes in scale, particularly where bungalows are proposed to be replaced with more substantial houses.
- As with other forms of suburban development, the impact of cars on the front gardens and boundary treatments can have a detrimental impact.
- Large roof additions and extensions can be a particular issue for this typology, particularly where a uniformity of scale has been established.

LARGE SUBURBAN

Some suburban areas of the borough are built to very low densities. These areas have a very different character to the more regimented plots of the classic Metroland suburbs. There tends to be a large degree of individuality of building style and most buildings will have been built to suit the brief of a private homeowner or a speculative developer.

Whilst the design approach can vary significantly, there are common themes. These evoke a rural rather than urban character, often through informal overall composition, wide proportions and incorporation of features such as dormer windows, substantial gables and chimney stacks.

With large plots forming a key feature of the type, the landscape of the gardens plays a significant role in defining the character of the streets. Front boundaries often screen houses from the street, whilst hedges and trees contribute to a strong overall impression of green space. It is typical to find properties with drive-way space for several cars.

Whilst this type of development can be sensitive to inappropriate changes given the generally high quality of design, the variations between plots means that new buildings need not be obtrusive if well designed. However, large plots in locations with better transport links are at risk of demolition and replacement with a number of smaller units or flatted blocks, or having their gardens sold off for development. Although there are sensitive design solutions for new flatted interventions, there can be impacts in terms of scale and bulk of new buildings and also the impact on green space if gardens are lost to car parking or the street frontage is lost.

The low density and car-based approach of this form of development makes it relatively unsustainable.

Key characteristics

- Large individual plots with substantial houses. The style of the houses varies, but many have a strong arts and crafts influence.
- Houses tend to be built as one-off designs and vary substantially between plots.
- Houses are typically set well back from the road. The landscaping of the front gardens with hedges and mature trees means that the green infrastructure can play a more significant role in the character of the street than any individual building.
- Plots often have driveways allowing multiple cars to be parked off-street.
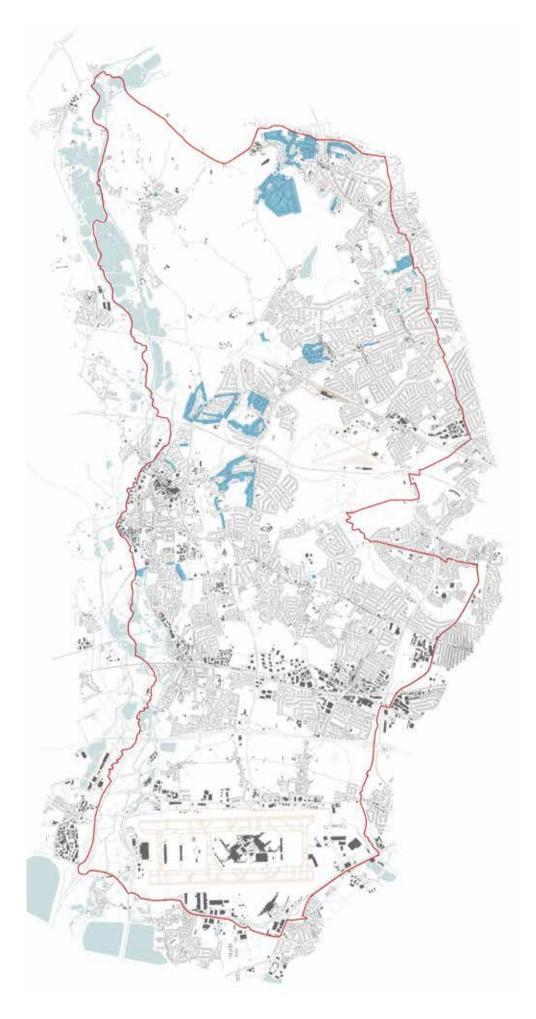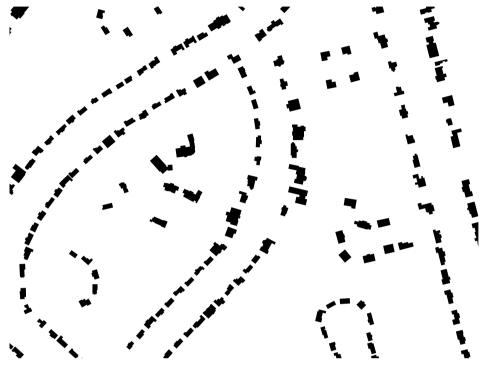- Typical density range for this typology is 1-10 dph.

Figure 29: Large suburban map

Issues and implications for these areas

- Loss or adaptation of existing buildings to flats or their replacement with smaller dwellings resulting in more intensive use of site and loss of gardens to parking.
- Back-land development is a particular threat for this typology, and can have a significant adverse impact on character.

FREE FORM

Free form development is a product of post-war housing development. Unlike conventional development which follows a perimeter block form and establishes a clear network of streets this type of development fragments the normal urban structure.

The ethos of free form development was that pedestrians would benefit from being separated from the car. Estates were therefore designed to provide pedestrian circulation separate from vehicles. This often results in areas where the buildings have their main front door onto a pedestrian path whilst car parking is separated out into yards or courts elsewhere.

This creates a layout which is very permeable, offering many routes for pedestrians. However, this is often not matched by good legibility and such areas can be very confusing and unsafe, as the traditional relationship of buildings facing onto the street, with defensible private space to the rear, is abandoned. The lack of conventional streets with buildings overlooking them and a mix of traffic and pedestrians can mean some pedestrian routes do not feel as safe as a conventional street.

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Key characteristics

- Pedestrian network separate from vehicular streets creating a high degree of permeability for pedestrians.
- Relatively weak legibility - these areas can be hard to navigate.
- Experimental architectural forms often go hand-in-hand with experimental layouts - predominantly a product of postwar development.
- Typical density range for this typology is 40-70 dph, heavily dependent on the height of the structures.
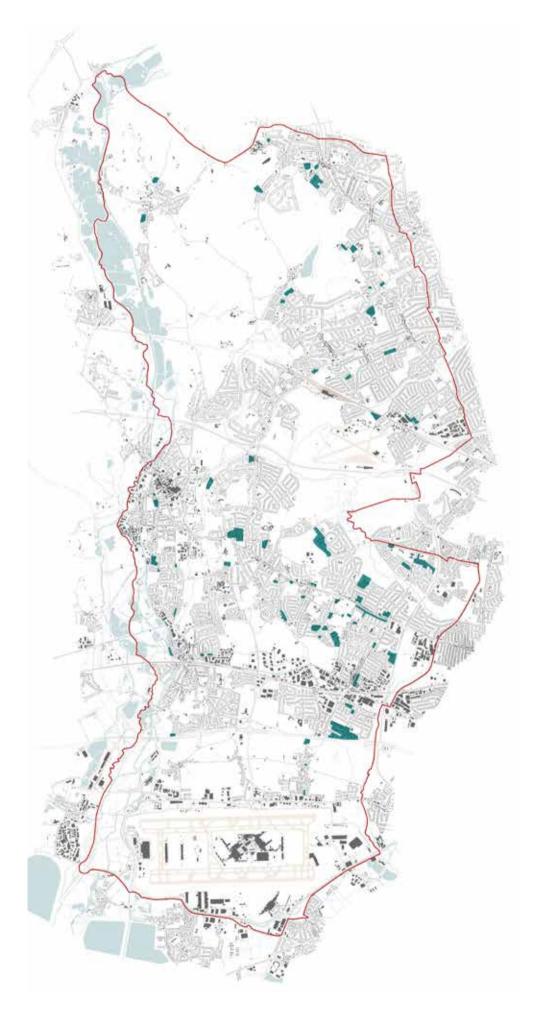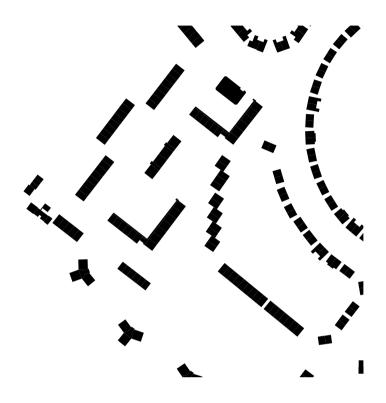
Figure 30: Free form map

Issues and implications for these areas

- Areas of free form development are very challenging to improve without wholesale change - a fundamental shift would be needed in order to restore a more conventional urban block structure.
- Where there is flexibility to redefine the space around buildings this could present an opportunity to clarify distinctions between public and private space and improve safety.

CUL-DE-SAC

Cul-de-sacs have over a century of history in planned urban areas, first established as a permissible form in Unwin and Parker's proposals enshrined in the Hampstead Garden Suburb Act of 1906 which overturned earlier 1875 legislation which banned their use. Whilst some examples are found in the low density garden suburbs within the low density perimeter block typology, the cul-de-sac in this category is principally found in postwar suburban developments.

These post war developments usually feature a very clear hierarchy of a main distributor road from which flow a series of cul-de-sacs, some as small as a dozen houses and others which include a branching layout with housing. The distributor road provides the main, and sometimes only, route around an estate, carrying all car and bus traffic. This is often designed to a generous standard and in some examples will be devoid of building frontages as they all turn inwards to face into cul-de-sacs. These cul-de-sacs are then designed to a smaller and more intimate scale, with narrower carriageways and a turning head at the end. The overall effect has been strongly influenced by the highway design manuals of the post war period.

Cul-de-sac areas are frequently criticised both for their lack of legibility and permeability. The use of consistent building types repeated throughout an amorphous layout can make it difficult to distinguish easily between different streets. The nature of the layout is also to funnel movement on to the main spine road, making walking and cycling around the area much less efficient than it could be - there are few other choices and the routes are often far less direct than necessary. This reliance on car-based journeys and way in which the form limits the potential for long term regeneration makes the cul-de-sac a less sustainable form of development than more conventional perimeter blocks.

Key characteristics

- Winding network of roads based on main distributor roads with residential tributaries.
- Building design tends to be relatively homogenous, but without any unifying order or plan.
- Cars and parking are a dominant form of the layout.
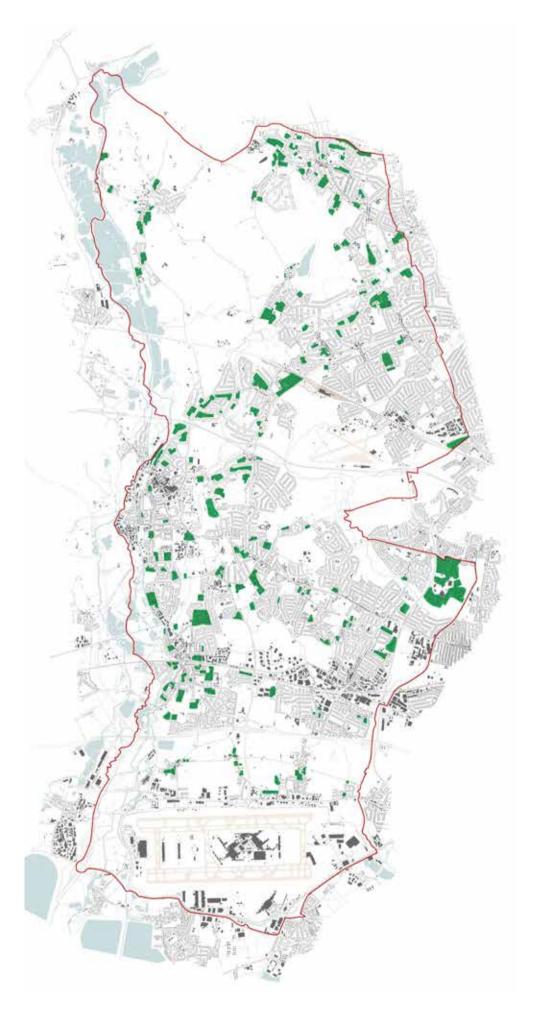- Typical density range for this typology is 25-35 dph.

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Figure 31: Cul-de-sac map

Issues and implications for these areas

- The free-form layout of cul-de-sac development, without a conventional block structure, means that they are less able to adapt over time.
- The form of development accommodates car use but is also reliant on it. Given the relative lack of clear, direct and safe pedestrian routes this is hard to address.
- In many schemes, the standard designs can be affected by additions and extensions, and without careful detailing of interventions they can quickly deteriorate the character of the neighbourhood.

APARTMENTS

Although Hillingdon is known for low density suburban housing there are a growing number of apartment buildings, particularly in urban centres in locations with strong transport connections. This can have positive aspects in terms of increasing the intensity of population in certain areas and hence improving the potential to maintain sustainable shops and services. However, the design and scale of these buildings need to be carefully considered in relation to the context.

Pressure for larger buildings is most notable in established centres and areas around key stations like West Drayton and Hayes and Harlington where large development sites are coming forward that are suitable for apartment schemes. These sites will benefit from the arrival of Crossrail, which will significantly improve travel times into central London from these areas and so provide significant opportunity for intensification. However, this is leading to pressure to switch industrial sites to residential use, particularly where they relate to the canal.

Other apartment development is occurring at lower densities in less central locations, usually as part of a wider housing scheme or as replacement for previous buildings. The issues typically relate to the areas of parking required to service the blocks and the potential for parking areas to have a weak relationship with the street. In some examples, street activity is lost due to poor front to back relationships and a lack of public and private space definition.

A further issue is the loss or conversion of large suburban houses to flats, resulting in increasingly bulky buildings in suburban streets and loss of gardens to parking.

Key characteristics

- Predominantly medium-rise development between 3 and 7 storeys with a few taller examples.
- Many buildings have a weak relationship with the public realm.
- Architectural forms vary, but development in growth areas in the southern part of the borough is more likely to take a modern/urban form whilst elsewhere buildings tend to follow a more conventional model.
- Away from urban centres the provision of parking becomes a key issue in terms of external space.
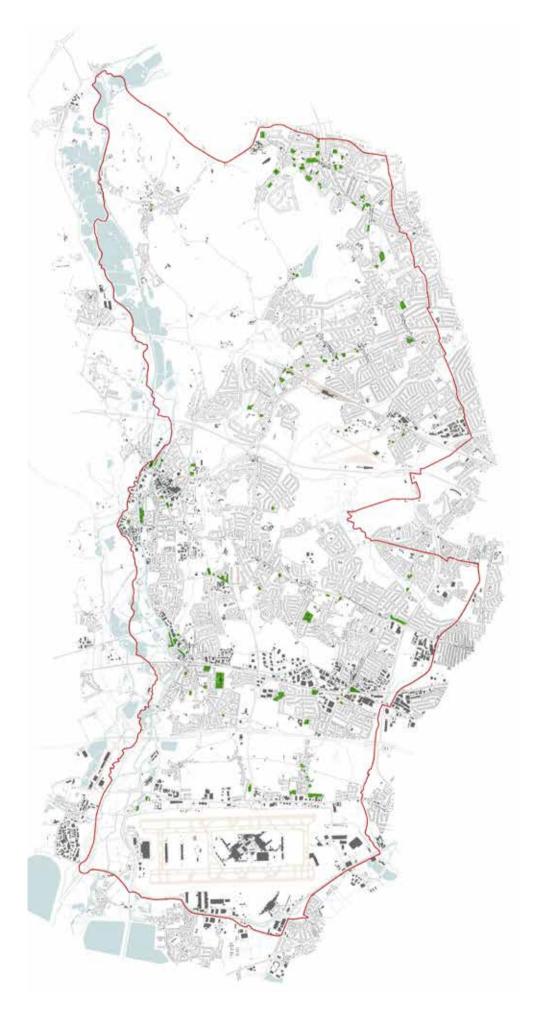- Typical density range for this typology is 60-120 dph.

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Figure 32: Apartments map

Issues and implications for these areas

- Although these buildings are not tall by central London standards they can have a bulk and form which is dominant given the generally low-rise context.
- Apartment buildings have a diminished relationship with the street compared to individual houses, and can have poor front/back relationships or public/private space definition.
- More intense development should be focussed towards areas which can provide good sustainable transport links and a mix of services.
- Some larger footprints can disturb the existing urban grain and character of an area.

HISTORIC FRAGMENTS

The remaining historic villages are one of the most striking features of Hillingdon. In some cases, these remain in open land, but in many cases these fragments have been absorbed into larger, later developments. The historic townscape is important to the borough in providing a sense of identity and history to the more modern suburbs.

The impact that these historic fragments have on the modern settlement is more than just the impact of their presence. Although large areas of the borough have been built to carefully designed street layouts, the pre-existing routes remain as key connections. The historic rural architecture has also had a substantial impact on the architecture of the suburbs, where the designs can be seen to attempt to recapture the arcadian dream and repeat it plot by plot.

The historic fabric is very evident, given that a significant proportion of development in the borough is postwar. However, historic fragments are vulnerable to changes in context, particularly when these buildings are located in a town centre. In these instances, development pressures may gradually denude their setting and potentially dilute their value. As many buildings are located on historic routes that continue to play an important transport role, they can be at risk from the impact of increased traffic, and changes to road and pavement layouts. Their setting can also be affected by the design and location of street furniture, including road signage.

Key characteristics

- Historic development which pre-dates the suburban growth of Hillingdon.
- Frequently seen as elements retained within a wider modern townscape.
- Fine grain fabric with individual characters.
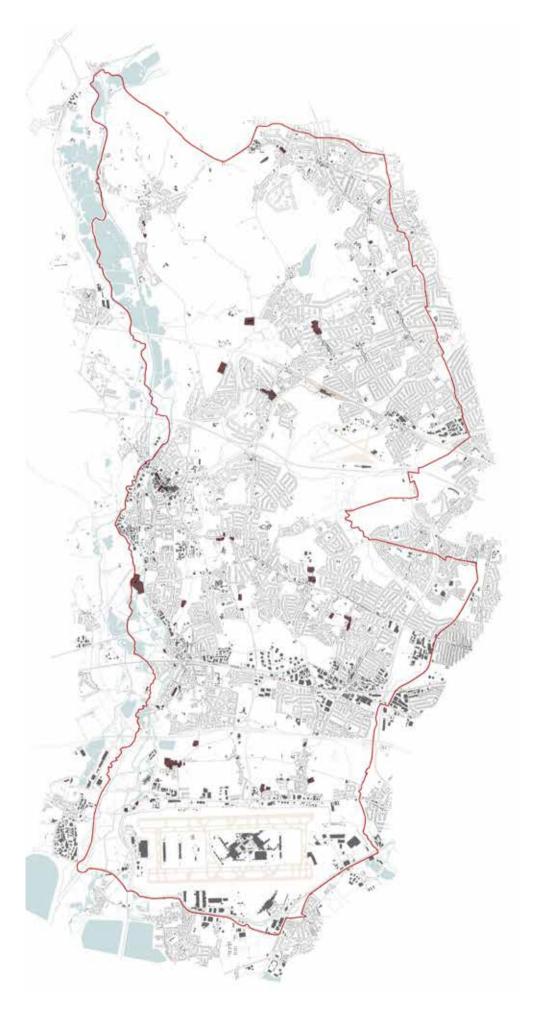- Often imitated, particularly by inter-war suburban development.

Figure 33: Historic fragments map

Issues and implications for these areas

- Generally protected from inappropriate change through listing and conservation area designations.
- At risk of change to setting, particularly through nearby bulky development or the impact of highways.

PRIMARY CENTRE

Uxbridge Town Centre is Hillingdon's only Metropolitan centre, and offers a mix of shopping and services on a scale not found elsewhere in the borough. It also plays an important role as an employment location, with a number of significant office buildings in the centre, including the Council's own premises.

The centre of the town is a combination of a number of influences, including some consolidated areas of historic buildings such as Windsor Street while parts of the High Street retain an historic scale and grain. Other areas of the town centre have been developed to a substantial scale, including two large shopping centres, the Mall Pavilions and Intu Uxbridge. There are also a number of other large office buildings some of which are home to major national and international companies, such as Coca Cola and Xerox.

The Council's own offices are located in Hillingdon Town Centre and were built between 1973 and 1976 to a design by architects RMJM. Its use of materials and forms appears to be strongly influenced by the interwar suburbs in the borough.

Although the original historic urban form of the High Street still survives, this is now a pedestrianised route with traffic looping round the south and western side of the town centre. The road acts as a barrier to connections with the town centre, which is reinforced by the buildings. The centre is growing and will extend to include the RAF Uxbridge site once redeveloped. It is therefore important to note that the definition for the purposes of this study is with regard to urban character rather than the planning policy designation of the Local Plan.

Key characteristics

- Some good areas of historic building fabric and elements of the historic street pattern.
- Pedestrianised town centre with large shopping malls which internalise a large proportion of the commercial and leisure activity.
- Predominant character beyond the traditional High Street area of large commercial buildings from the post war period.
- Concentration of bulkier buildings up to ten storeys although these tend not to be point blocks.
- Dominance of vehicle movements and parking on the southern and western sides of the town centre which creates a barrier to connections.
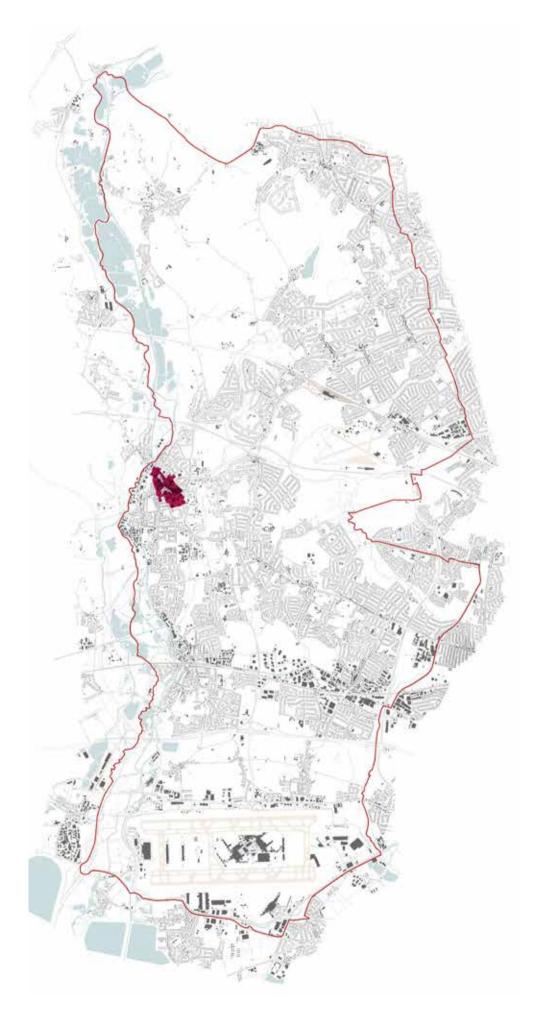
Figure 34: Primary centres map

Substantial changes have taken place in Uxbridge in the post-war period. This is evident in the high proportion of late twentieth century buildings around the centre. A key trigger for change was the re-routing of the main road (now the A4020) away from the High Street by the creation of a new bypass road. This change from the early 1970s had a profound impact on the form of the town centre and particularly the connections from outlying areas to the High Street.

The Oxford Road/Hillingdon Road now acts as a significant barrier to pedestrians approaching the town centre from the south and west, a barrier further compounded by the character of new buildings which rose out of large-scale redevelopment.

The nature of the new road means that most of the buildings that have been developed in subsequent years present inactive or even completely blank facades to the public realm. In many cases these are lower levels of parking associated with office development above, but in the case of The Pavilions Shopping Centre the facade facing Oxford Road is entirely given over to decked parking.

Many of these buildings are also built to a substantial scale, being bulky on plan as well as being relatively tall. This delivers large areas of office accommodation or retail space, but it has established a belt of 'island' buildings between the Oxford Road/Hillingdon Road and the High Street which creates a strong barrier effect.

The areas to the north and east of the High Street are under similar pressures for bulky building forms, as can be seen with the development of the Intu shopping centre and its associated decked car park on Chippendale Way as well as developments around the station. These are similar in scale and bulk to the developments on the south and western side of the High Street. Whilst they provide an element of barrier effect to surrounding residential areas, the character of the roads is more moderate, making them less hostile and easier to cross.

The town centre itself has a remaining core of historic buildings, most notably in the conservation areas focussed around the High Street/Windsor Street area and the stretch of the High Street between Belmont Road and Harefield Road.
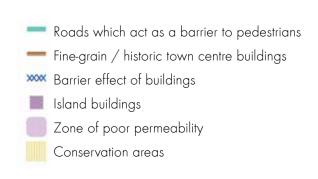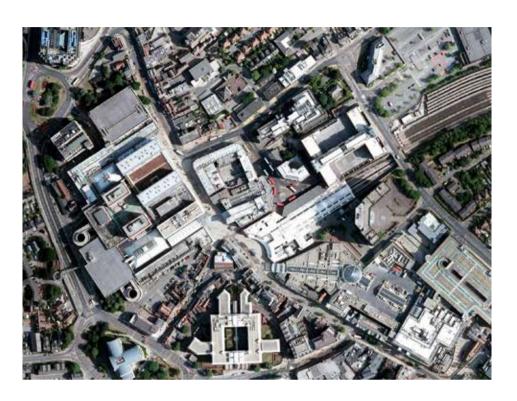

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- Roads which act as a barrier to pedestrians
- Fine-grain / historic town centre buildings
- xxx Barrier effect of buildings
- Island buildings
- Zone of poor permeability
- Conservation areas

Figure 35: Primary centres map

Issues and implications for these areas

- The impact of major roads on the town centre should be addressed in order to create better continuity with the surrounding context and better linkages.
- The pressure for tall and bulky commercial buildings should be balanced carefully against the setting of remaining historic buildings and the Old Uxbridge / Windsor Street Conservation Area.
- Parts of the centre are sensitive to major change and need careful masterplanning to manage the impacts on the settings of heritage assets.
- The historically small scale of shop frontages needs to be maintained.
- The quality of the streetscape and public realm is critical to the overall character of the centre.

SECONDARY CENTRES

There are several town centres in the borough which are categorised as secondary centres. This broadly equates to the planning designation of District centre and includes locations such as Eastcote, Hayes, Northwood, Ruislip and Yiewsley/West Drayton.

The common features of these centres is that they provide a good mix of shops and services at a local level, enabling people to meet their regular weekly needs. They are sufficiently large to support banks and other services but one would not normally expect to see any significant comparison (i.e. non-food) shopping.

Centres such as Ruislip, Eastcote and Northwood and, to a lesser extent, Hayes benefitted from the urban expansion which took place around rail stations. In some cases, fragments of historic development are embedded in the later development, a particularly good example of which can be seen at the northern end of Ruislip Town Centre. These centres tend to have a relatively cohesive architectural identity, much like the wider suburbs.

By contrast, Yiewsley/West Drayton has mixed, more organic origins relating to both the canal and the railway with a relatively rich mix of buildings.

Although classified as a Minor Centre in planning terms, the long stretch of the Uxbridge Road has been categorised as a secondary centre in terms of townscape character. Although this is essentially a centre on a single side of the road, the sheer scale of the development and provision of public transport makes it significant in the borough-wide context. Building heights along this section vary and are explored further in Section 5.

Key characteristics

- Range of shops and services which allow many people to meet their regular weekly needs. Mix of some high street brands and independent shops.
- Principally associated with suburban expansion of the borough.
- Centres generally comprise ground floor commercial use with 2-3 storeys of residential over – with deck access in some cases.
- Sometimes containing elements of historic fabric and with an overall character which makes reference to the historic buildings.
- Inclusion of employment space usually limited to a few small offices.

Figure 36: Secondary centres map

Uxbridge Road, Hayes

Hayes

Ruislip

Issues and implications for these areas

- Hayes and West Drayton are likely to undergo significant change due to the construction of Crossrail. This will lead to pressure for more intense development and taller buildings (see Section 5 on tall buildings).

- To a lesser extent the centres along the Piccadilly Line face pressure for taller buildings and intensification of development - this needs to be balanced against the much more suburban character and access to facilities.

- As high streets in many areas are diminishing, the secondary centres in the borough may need to be reduced in a careful way to maintain a thriving, vibrant but more compact centre.

- The quality of shop fronts and street furniture are issues.

TERTIARY CENTRES

Tertiary centres are the smallest mixed-use centres in the borough, typically covering those which are referred to as minor centres, local centres and parades in planning policy. They are typically parades of shops which meet the day-to-day needs of the local population and are mainly focussed around convenience retail and everyday services. The fact that they also tend to be in locations not favoured by larger retailers means that they can also act as good locations for very specialist uses which people will seek out when needed rather than relying on passing trade.

Many of the tertiary centres in Hillingdon have their origins in older settlements. Examples such as Cowley, Ickenham and Harlington retain historic buildings and street form and are more likely to have the traditional components of a village centre such as a parish church or public house associated with them. Other examples, such as the parade on Dawley Road in the south of the borough, were built at the same time as the surrounding properties.

The varied origins of these centres means that they display a range of built form. However, as with the secondary centres it is common for them to be slightly more urban in character than any surrounding suburbs. Buildings are likely to be terraced and may also be taller than the context, indicating a subtle focus of activity in otherwise low-density areas.

Most of the tertiary centres are not associated with tube or train stations.

Key characteristics

- Small scale retail and local service provision, typically based in small premises in older buildings.
- Slightly more urban character than surrounding suburbs with terraced buildings, often taller than their context.
- Many tertiary centres have their origins in historic settlements rather than in later planned developments and retain elements of historic fabric.
- Most tertiary centres are located away from major transport nodes.

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Figure 37: Tertiary centres map

Issues and implications for these areas

- Where there is a gradual loss of local retailers, the nature and extent of tertiary centres should be considered. Any reduction in retail and service provision should be managed to consolidate rather than fragment the centre's retail and service offer.

- Standards of shop front design and maintenance are most likely to be low in tertiary centres where business margins are small. Given that these centres often relate to historic fabric, guidance should be given and controls enforced where they exist.

- The impact of shop fronts is considerable in these smaller scale settings, and therefore a disciplined approach is needed, avoiding high level box signs and garish fascias.

RETAIL PARK

Large format retail and leisure units located in out-of-town retail parks are found in a number of locations around Hillingdon. Big box retail has become an almost inevitable aspect of modern life, both a consequence of and a catalyst for our continuing reliance on cars for everyday shopping. Large supermarkets and DIY stores have been a feature of this type of building, and this retail format has also been adopted by chains which were previously considered to be high-street based, including clothing, footwear, sports and furniture stores.

A further component of these areas is the growing trend to see leisure uses included within established out of town retail areas, perhaps reflecting the increasing importance of retail as one of our principal leisure activities and hence its natural integration with more conventional leisure uses such as restaurants and cinemas.

The defining features of big box development are as follows. Firstly, the buildings are very large, far out of scale with the town centre stores they compete with and usually with generous services areas to the rear. They tend to be simple in design terms, mainly conforming to the description of a "decorated shed".

Secondly, they are typically arranged around a large shared car park, reducing the attractiveness of access on foot. Finally, to work commercially, the whole enterprise needs to be highly visible. This places a great premium on the external branding and signage of the buildings, but also in finding high visibility locations on main roads.
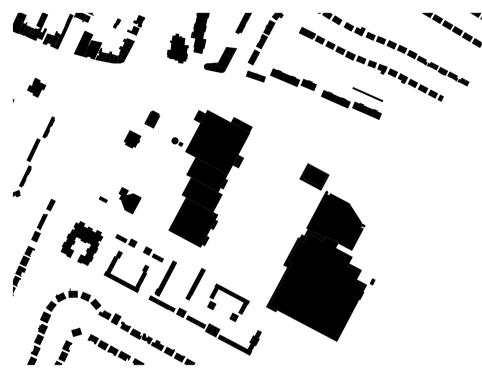
Key characteristics

- Large format buildings, typically relating to car parking rather than a conventional street layout.
- With the exception of the front entrance the external envelope of large format retail buildings tends to be very plain and utilitarian.
- Signage and branding play a big part in the visual identity of retail parks.
- Buildings tend to have a relatively short lifespan as retail trends change.
- Large format retail has steadily encroached into industrial areas through trade counter retail.

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Figure 38: Retail park map

Issues and implications for these areas

- This form of development rarely makes much concession to the townscape character of the surrounding area.
- Big box retail and leisure is seen as a threat to industrial areas which can offer large sites.
- The form is inherently unsustainable - with short building life-spans and a development model based on access by car.
- The lack of landscape can be a real issue for this typology.
- The quality of architecture under this typology tends to be poor.

AIRPORT ENVIRONS

The area around Heathrow, primarily along the A4 corridor, is almost completely removed from its context. Most of the development services the airport.

The architectural styles vary widely, drawing on a range of international themes and relating primarily to vehicular movement rather than pedestrians. Hotels are the dominant land use with people arriving and departing by car to connect with flights.

The scale of the large hotels and business buildings is typically around four to five storeys. However, given the very generous space in between and the large areas of parking, they do little to define coherent public space.

It is recognised that this situation is atypical, is particular to the context of a major airport such as Heathrow and that the nature of the existing place meets very specific needs. There is no current consolidated urban design approach to the airport fringe development along the Bath Road and there is a need to raise the design quality seen in this location.
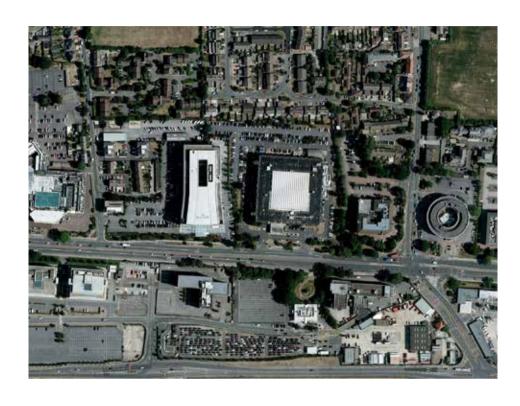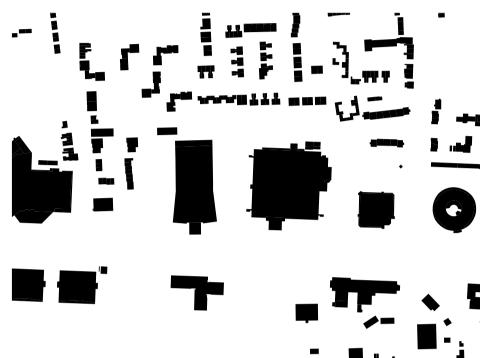
Key characteristics

- Large format buildings on big plots.
- Varied architectural influences including a range of international styles.
- Strongly car-based environment with relatively little focus on the public realm.
- Relates primarily to the airport with little impetus to engage with the surrounding area.

Figure 39: Airport environs map

Issues and implications for these areas
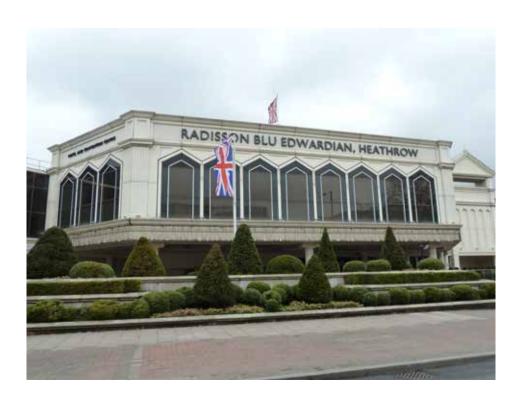
- Proximity to the airport is a significant constraint on development - any new residential use is likely to be limited due to noise levels and the pressure for airport-related uses will rise as flight numbers increase.
- Development is likely to continue to be primarily car-based. Consideration needs to be given as to how this can be planned in a managed way whilst also improving the overall public realm.
- At present the existing buildings do not conform to any overall structure or urban design framework, the only notable restraint being building heights due to airport related obstacles.
- Design quality needs to be raised and landscape given greater consideration.

INDUSTRIAL / BUSINESS

Hillingdon's industrial legacy is a key defining factor in the character of the borough which leaves a strong mark on its present form. As has been previously noted, the route of the Grand Union Canal through Hillingdon became the focus for a multitude of industries supporting the capital. Whilst the use of the canal dwindled, the presence of the railway in the same part of the borough ensured that industry was still supported, and the areas defined through this evolution still exist today.
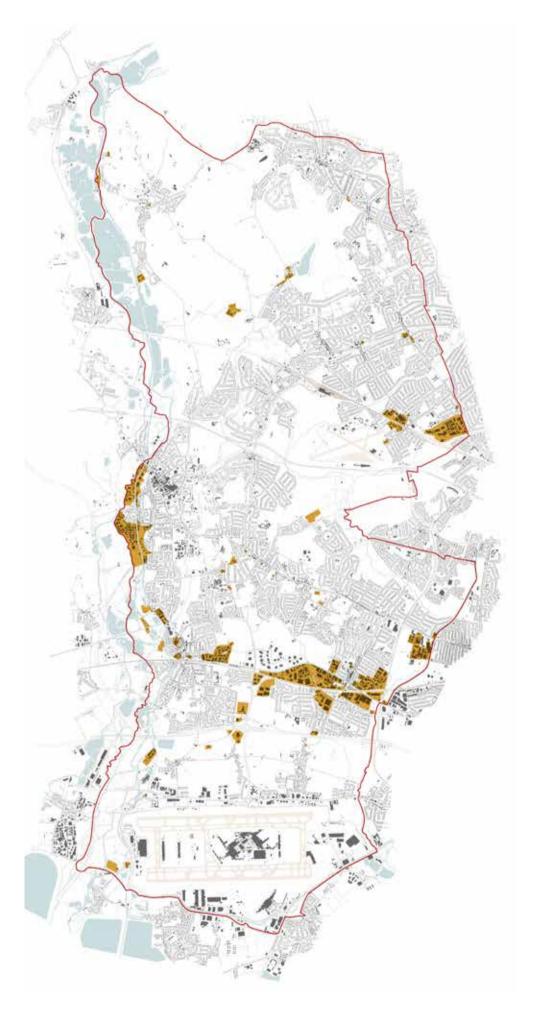
As the industrial areas are often the result of a long and gradual process of development, they display a range of forms. However, most tend towards low, wide buildings in relatively plain designs with simple boundary treatments which prioritise security requirements more than any other consideration. Some of the older areas have more densely developed building footprint. Where redevelopment has occurred this has tended to create simpler and more open layouts which are better able to accommodate vehicles.

A number of significant historic industrial areas and buildings are located along the canal corridor such as Benlow Works, the Nestles factory and Enterprise House. This is reflected through the designation of two predominantly industrial Conservation Areas in Hayes. The former EMI site in Hayes is unusual with striking and substantial buildings. However, this site is no longer in industrial use and is in the process of being regenerated through residential led mixed use redevelopment. Other industrial areas which have a canal frontage are also under pressure for change to residential use.

In addition to the older industrial buildings, Hillingdon also has a stock of modern business buildings. These tend to be low to medium rise and car-based in nature. Some have more considered landscaping treatment which starts to blur the boundary between this character type and campus development.

Key characteristics

- Predominantly plain low-rise buildings in older industrial areas with some examples of more modern office buildings elsewhere.
- Development has a focus on car-based development with a high volume of larger vehicle movements in some areas.
- Utilitarian approach to public realm, with practicality and security tending to be the primary concerns.

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Figure 40: Industrial/business map

Issues and implications for these areas

- Industrial areas, particularly those in close proximity to transport connections or overlooking the canal are vulnerable to pressure for change to residential use.
- There is pressure for big box retail and leisure uses in industrial areas.
- Access to the canal needs to be improved.
- Improving the quality and quantity of frontages on to the canal is also important, and redevelopment and refurbishment opportunities along the canal corridor offer significant scope.
- Good quality early industrial buildings need protecting.

CAMPUS

Campus development is normally associated with business or institutional uses such as colleges, hospitals or civic buildings. They are typically characterised by "collections" of buildings, often set within the middle of a site, and areas of open space which may include playing fields or formal landscape.

In Hillingdon, there are a number of large sites such as Brunel University, Mount Vernon Hospital, Stockley Park and RAF Northolt which follow this form. In each case the campus is composed of a number of buildings, often set in landscape rather than on a conventional street, but the area has its own network of routes.
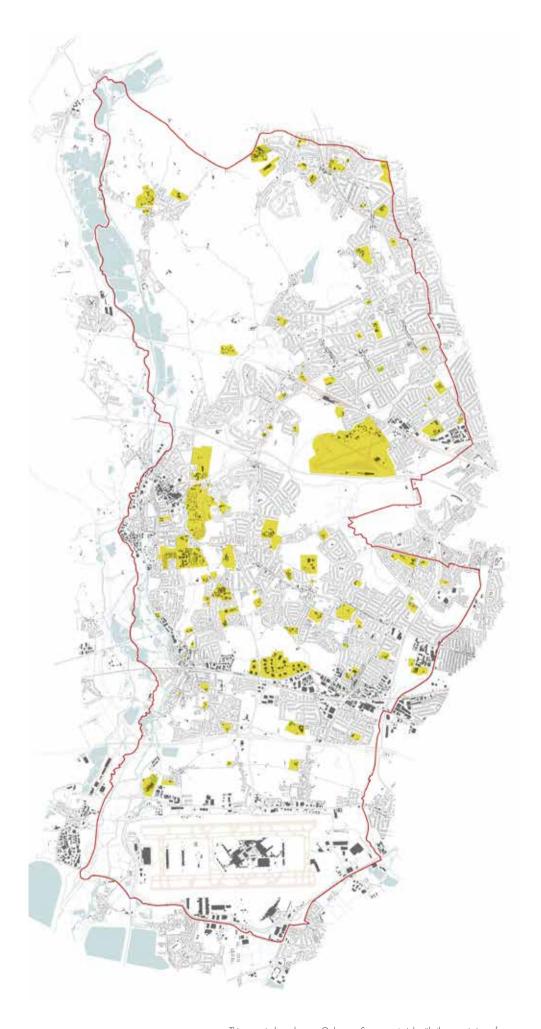
Given that for many buildings such as schools and hospitals security is a significant issue it is quite typical to find that a campus has a defined boundary with security which either discourages or prevents general access. This can act as a barrier in the wider area and have an effect on pedestrian connections due to lack of through routes.

The architectural form varies significantly. Some examples such as Stockley Park or RAF Uxbridge (pre-redevelopment) feature consistent areas of buildings due to the nature and origins of their development. Other campuses show a much more gradual accretion of development over time.

While RAF Northolt has been included within the campus typology, Heathrow airport is not considered to be campus style development. Heathrow has developed in a very different manner and at a very different scale. Its character is unique and the management of development within its boundaries is very different to elsewhere in the borough. Heathrow has therefore been excluded from the characterisation.
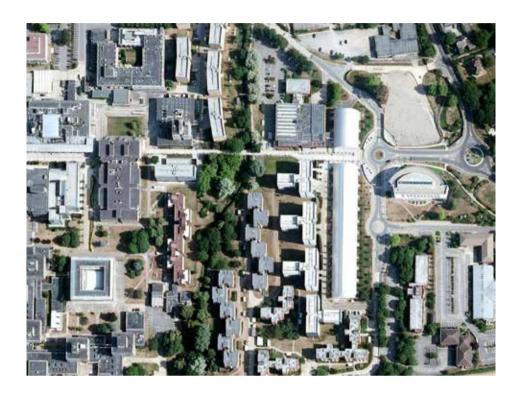
Key characteristics

- Groups of buildings isolated from their surrounding context, often with security or monitoring to discourage or prevent casual access.
- Internal network of streets and spaces.
- Strong landscape character.
- Range of architectural character - its is quite common to see a gradual accretion of buildings over time with a varied style and design.

Figure 41: Campus map

Issues and implications for these areas

- Due to the lack of integration with their surrounding context, campus areas can act as a barrier to movement in the wider urban area
- Campus areas often gradually intensify over time to meet growing needs. Where this happens within a fixed boundary it can lead to pressure for taller or larger buildings which may not be in a suitable location relative to other issues

Hayes town centre

5. TALL BUILDINGS IN HILLINGDON

5. TALL BUILDINGS IN HILLINGDON

Context

The growth agenda outlined in the London Plan forms an important part of the rationale for identifying locations for new tall buildings. A plan-led approach across the borough is needed in responding to this agenda to ensure higher density development is accommodated in a sensitive and context-appropriate manner.

The current local policy position on tall buildings is outlined in the Hillingdon Local Plan, and indicates that tall buildings may be appropriate in some locations within Uxbridge and Hayes town centres. These are still considered to be the most appropriate locations for any future tall or taller buildings due to their high accessibility and because there may be locations within these areas where new tall buildings could be constructed without compromising the local character. However, any future proposal would need detailed masterplanning to ensure that future tall / taller buildings are carefully sited and designed to avoid harm to historic fragments and settings of heritage assets and present opportunities to deliver positive urban design enhancements.

Tall / taller buildings outside these areas (and possibly in the commercial areas along the Bath Road) are not appropriate, given the general two-storey, domestic character of the borough.

Character-led approach

The characterisation of the borough highlights both the common qualities across the settlements, as well as the unique features. As such, the borough characterisation provides an evidence base to deliver a positive, plan-led approach to tall buildings across the borough.

Over recent decades a trend towards taller and larger buildings has been evident across the country, and particularly in London. As an Outer London borough, Hillingdon is not immune from this pressure. It is therefore important to use the characterisation findings to better steer how different parts of the borough respond to this pressure.

Some important factors influence how suitable a location is for taller buildings. CABE and English Heritage set out the following factors which should be considered:

- historic context of the wider area;
- natural topography;
- urban grain;
- significant views of skylines;
- scale and height;
- streetscape;

- landmark buildings and areas and their settings, including backdrops, and important local views, prospects and panoramas;
- identification of opportunities where tall buildings might enhance the overall townscape; and
- identification of sites where the removal of past mistakes might achieve a similar outcome.

This section considers the above factors with a view to identifying appropriate locations and design guidelines for tall buildings in the borough.

Existing building heights

Across London the definition of what constitutes a tall building varies significantly due to the range of character areas. Within the borough itself, there are also significant shifts in the context and settings for existing and potential tall buildings.

The CABE and English Heritage guidance suggests

"It is not considered useful or necessary to define rigorously what is and what is not a tall building. It is clearly the case that a 10-storey building in a mainly two-storey neighbourhood will be thought of as a tall building by those affected, whereas in the centre of a large city it may not. The criteria [for assessing taller buildings]...are relevant to buildings which are substantially taller than their neighbours and/or which significantly change the skyline."

The borough is dominated by two and three storey buildings and there are relatively few locations where building heights exceed these levels. In this respect, it can be suggested that any building greater than four storeys in height would be considered a tall building in the borough. There are, however, some exceptions, where the existing built form includes isolated and also clusters of buildings that are taller than four storeys. A number of these buildings are point towers, but some of the more recent structures also have large foot prints, which can make them bulky and in some cases intrusive within the local townscape.

In Uxbridge, for example, adjacent to the historic High Street and Windsor Street, which contain buildings of predominantly two to four storeys in height, and towards the south western fringes of the town centre (off Oxford Road) are a number of tall buildings of up to eight storeys in height. These vary in design quality, some such as Charter Square successfully integrate with the townscape of the town centre, others such as Harman House, are set pieces that nevertheless contribute to the variety and interest of
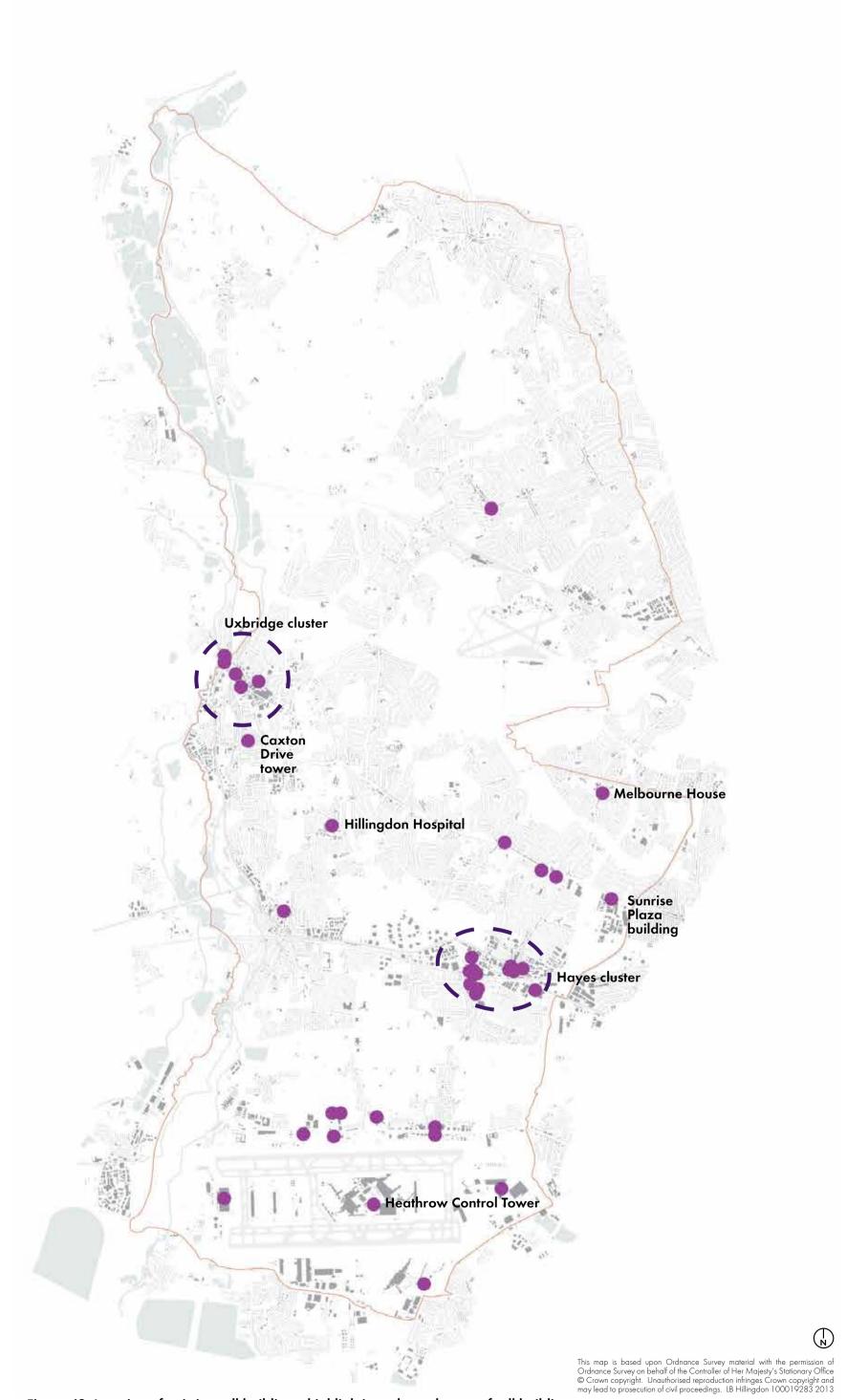
Figure 42: Location of existing tall buildings, highlighting where clusters of tall buildings

Uxbridge cluster

Caxton Drive tower

Melbourne House

Hillingdon Hospital

Sunrise Plaza building

Hayes cluster

Heathrow Control Tower

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the architecture of the town centre. Others, such as the older multi-storey car parks, do little to enhance the setting of the town and create an unattractive wall like edge to the centre.

Uxbridge has a very distinctive and quite urban skyline of tall buildings, particularly when viewed from the open land to the west of the town. Whilst there may be limited potential for additional tall buildings of a similar height to those that already exist, it is unlikely that buildings of any greater height could be successfully included without a negative impact on the character of the historic town centre and wider views of Uxbridge from the Green Belt.

Hayes, as a result of its industrial past, has historically included a number of larger buildings and structures, particularly off Blyth Road and Pump Lane. These have mainly comprised simple low rise structures with large footprints, although the former EMI site contains a number of historic buildings, including Enterprise House (grade II listed) of up to six storeys in height. These are considered to be tall buildings locally and have informed the scale of new development on and adjacent to this area. Whilst there may be potential for the further development of sites within this immediate locality, its proximity to existing two storey housing and a number of historic assets, limits the potential for buildings over five floors.

The Hayes Station area already includes a diverse range of buildings of up to nine floors in height. These have been developed in an ad hoc manner and include older point blocks, which are likely to be considered for future redevelopment and also the recent Hayes Goods Yard development, which has an extensive footprint and dominates the townscape of the town centre. The new Crossrail Station will make this area attractive to further development and there is potential for tall buildings of between eight and eleven storeys (as has been agreed at 20 Blyth Road) within this limited location. Taller buildings should, however, only be considered where they integrate well with the existing townscape and contribute positively to the creation of an improved local environment.

There are other tall buildings across the borough, some are isolated blocks such as the Caxton Drive Tower and there also a few groups of tower blocks, such as those on the Uxbridge Road at Hayes. These striking buildings are very much a product of their time and would not be considered appropriate today, although they have over time become accepted local landmarks. Their future redevelopment would not, therefore, provide an opportunity for new tall buildings of similar or greater height.

Relationship with topography and views

The borough is predominantly flat across its southern and central sections, with relatively limited opportunities for long views. In the north of the borough the topography changes significantly with relatively steep rises to hill tops and higher land.

Some notable local views include:

• From the western side of Harefield over the Colne Valley.
• From Northwood Hills over lower lying land to the south and west.
• From Mount Vernon Hospital at one of the highest points in the north of the borough.
• From the A40/M40 route across the low lying land, in particular looking over Uxbridge from the route on the western side of the borough.
• From created high points including Stockley Park and Harmondsworth Moor in the south of the borough and Northala Fields just outside the borough to the east.

Almost all the taller buildings in the borough are located on the lower lying flat land of the southern and central sections. The cluster of tall buildings in Uxbridge can be viewed from a number of vantage points, in particular from the A40/M40 route to the north west of the town.

In addition, the nature of Heathrow Airport, means that relatively long views are possible across the landscape of the south of the borough, within the boundary of the airport. Whilst there are some taller buildings within the airport itself these are located within clusters of large scale buildings and within the airport perimeter which reduces their impact on views from the rest of the borough.

Reviewing the topography patterns highlights some areas which would be particularly sensitive to tall buildings. These include the Colne Valley along the western boundary of the borough, particularly north of Uxbridge, and the lower lying land at the base of the hills in the north of the borough.
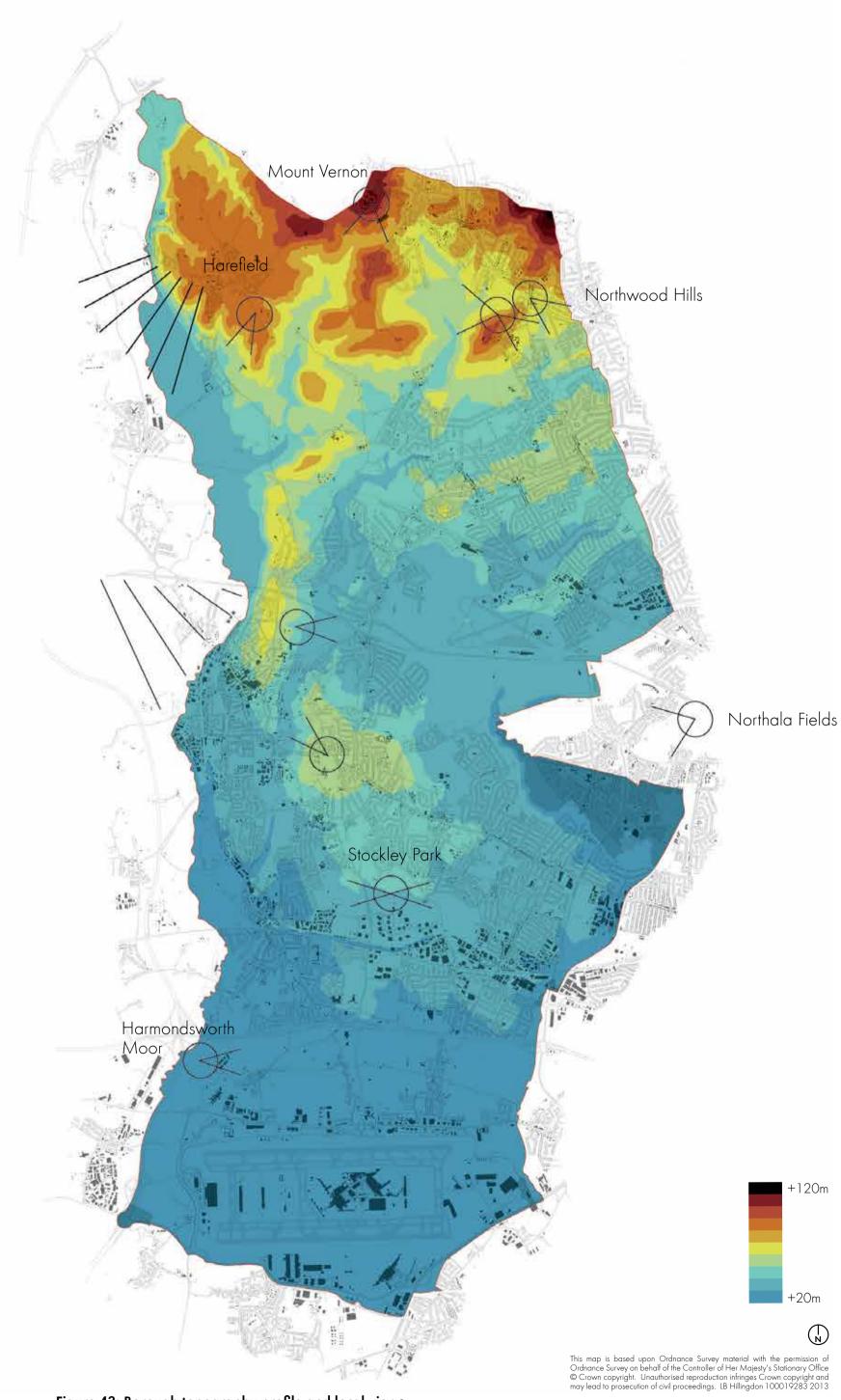
Figure 43: Borough topography profile and local views

Labels on map:
- Mount Vernon
- Harefield
- Northwood Hills
- Northala Fields
- Stockley Park
- Harmondsworth Moor

Legend: +120m ... +20m

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Built heritage

Hillingdon has a wealth of built heritage, with a number of historic centres. In some of these centres, tall buildings now sit almost adjacent to historic fine grain streets.

In considering sustainable locations for tall buildings in the future it is important to identify those areas which would be most sensitive to taller elements, and protect these areas against taller developments.

Figure 44 illustrates the locations of listed buildings, conservation areas and areas of special character. Together these provide a clear picture of where the most significant historic environments are located. In addition, existing tall buildings have been added to the plan.

The plan highlights the relative sensitivity of the built environment within settlements on higher ground in the north of the borough. The sensitivity of the Colne Valley is also further emphasised with the high number of conservation areas along the watercourses in the valley.

The surviving historic streets and buildings in Uxbridge are also important to note. Historically, taller buildings in the borough might have been restricted to Uxbridge. As an important town on the Uxbridge Road there was a good basis for the construction of landmarks here. Today this case is still clear and the town has become a focus for a number of taller buildings, particularly on the western side of the town centre. The juxtaposition of modern tall buildings and the historic high street is a condition that needs careful monitoring to ensure a harmonious relationship is encouraged in the future.

The historic parts of Uxbridge town centre exhibit a fine grain which is particularly attractive. Large floorplate buildings have been introduced in the town centre, some within close proximity of this historic grain. There is a need guard against excessive floorplates, and the coalescence of existing large buildings, in the future.

Lone tall building stands out in Yeading

Medium rise buildings are more the norm in Uxbridge

Contrast between low rise Rockingham Bridge Conservation Area and taller buildings in Uxbridge town centre

Hillingdon Hospital tower

New and old landmarks sit alongside one another in Uxbridge

Intensification of Hayes town centre

Taller canalside buildings in Hayes

Tall building on Uxbridge Road, Hayes

Figure 44: Features of the historic environment, with existing tall buildings shown and clusters highlighted

Conservation Area

Area of Special Local Character

Listed and Locally Listed buildings

Existing buildings over 5 storeys
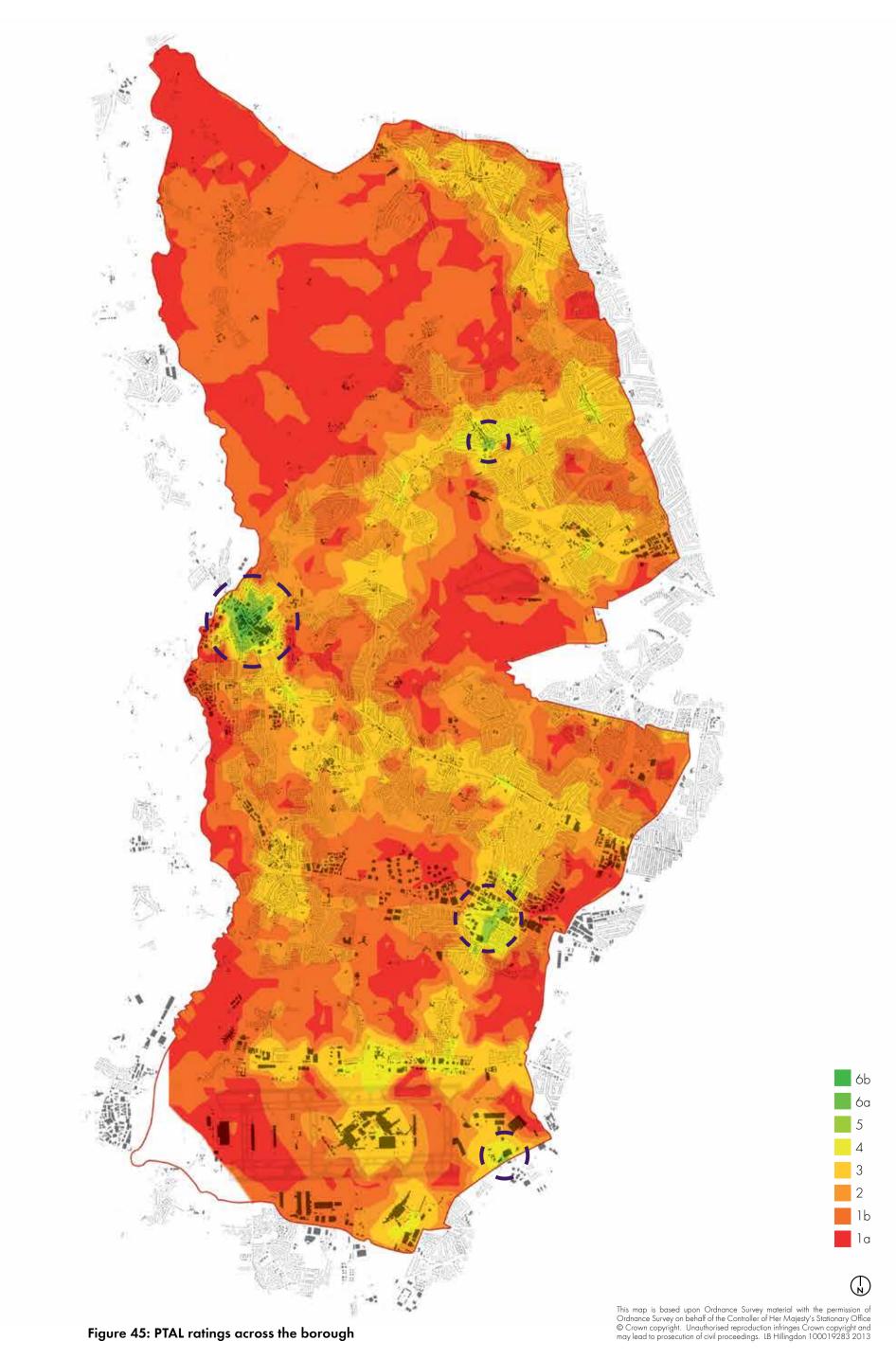
Clusters of tall buildings

Accessibility

Tall buildings are capable of delivering a high population density which is best associated with good easy access to shops and services and good quality public transport links in order to provide sustainable forms of development. When considering the public transport accessibility level (PTAL) of a location the use of a building is largely immaterial. People living in a residential tower need good transport provision for commuting and access to shops and services whilst tall buildings used for business, academic or service use need to be accessible for staff and visitors.

The presence of existing tall buildings in a particular location is sometimes used to establish precedent for future tall buildings as part of a cluster. In an area where there is a low PTAL rating it should be considered whether or not this is appropriate.

Where existing tall buildings are to be redeveloped the PTAL rating of the site should be reviewed. In the event that the PTAL rating is low it should be considered whether this is genuinely a location for a tall building. Alternatively, if tall buildings are regarded as essential and otherwise acceptable, a clear need should be identified to improve public transport.

Two primary areas of high public transport accessibility in the borough exist - Uxbridge town centre and Hayes town centre/station. These two areas have become the main focus for taller buildings, partly as a function of their good accessibility. Outside these two areas, only two other places register a PTAL rating of Level 5. These are Hatton Cross to the south east of Heathrow Airport and Ruislip station/high street.

Figure 45: PTAL ratings across the borough

Legend:
- 6b
- 6a
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1b
- 1a

Height restrictions

The presence of Heathrow airport and RAF Northolt within the borough has wide ranging impacts and influences on the area. In the context of tall buildings, the airports necessitate a range of height restrictions which extend beyond the borough boundary.

Figure 46 illustrates the full extent and range of height restrictions steered by both Heathrow airport and RAF Northolt as well as smaller airports outside the borough.

Immediately around Heathrow airport, an exclusion zone requires any proposed development, of any height, to be referred to the airport operators and the National Air Traffic Service. A number of buildings over 5 storeys have been developed in the last few decades within this zone which illustrates that this restriction does not necessarily exclude development of high density. The same applies to a smaller area related to RAF Northolt's landing and take-off flight paths.

An extensive area of the borough is covered by a 15-15.2 metres height restriction. In theory, this would mean developments over five or six storeys should not occur within this zone.

All developments across the borough must be mindful of the height restrictions outlined here, and any proposals for taller buildings must be guided by the needs of the airport operations.
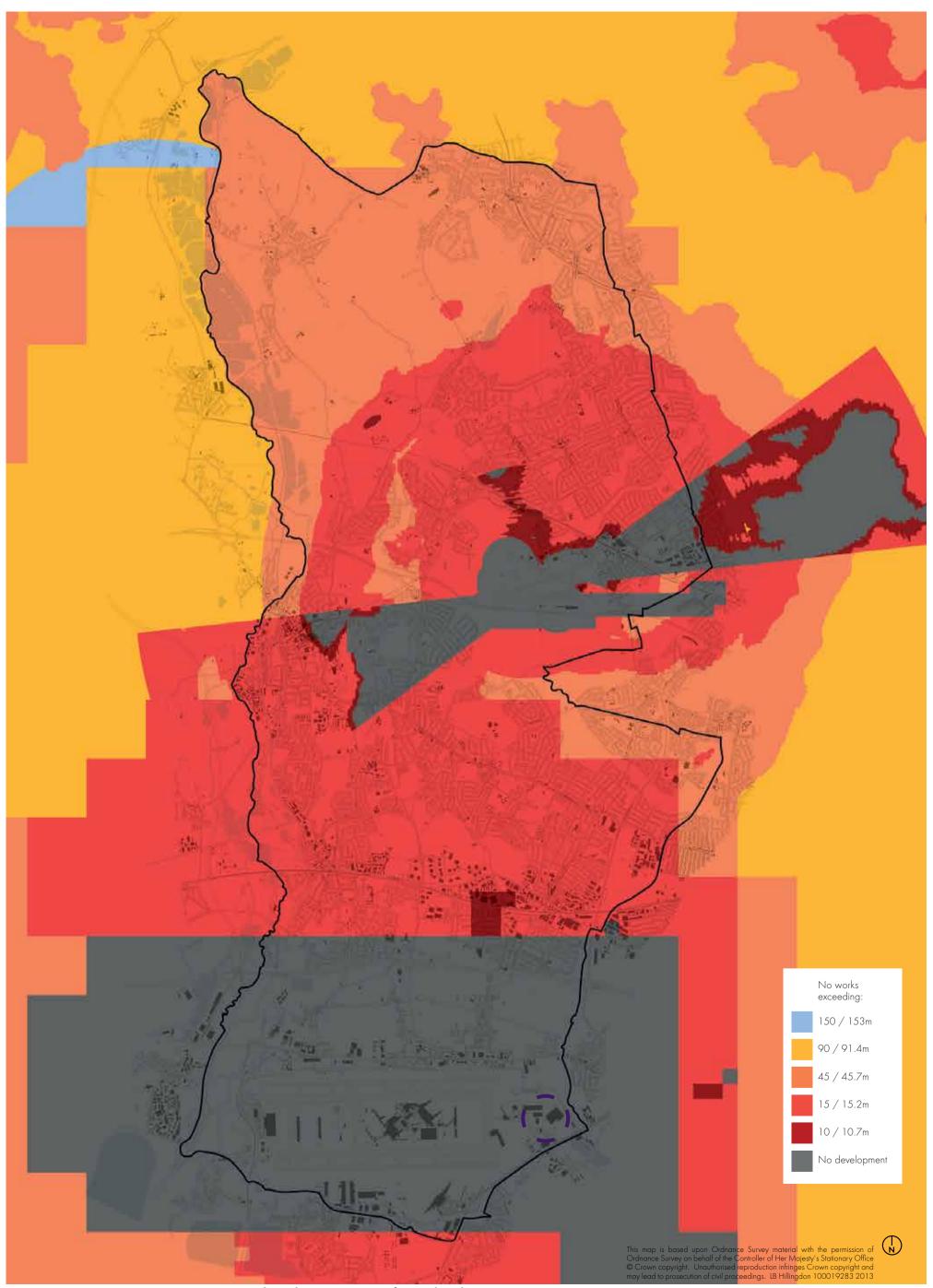
Figure 46: Airport Obstacle Limitation Surfaces - height restrictions

Legend:

No works exceeding:

- 150 / 153m
- 90 / 91.4m
- 45 / 45.7m
- 15 / 15.2m
- 10 / 10.7m
- No development

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Conclusions

This study provides an evidence-based opportunity to consider the role of tall buildings in the future enhancement of the borough. The conclusions set out here do not reflect adopted policy, but instead provide the background to any future policy decisions.

Before looking at those locations which could be considered for future tall buildings, it is important to review those tall buildings which already exist in the borough and understand whether these were built in appropriate or inappropriate locations. It is essential that any past mistakes are learned and not compounded by attracting future tall buildings to the same locations.

The following are tall buildings in the borough which are in inappropriate locations:

• Hillingdon Hospital - this site is some distance from a recognised centre and away from key transport routes. Whilst it performs a useful role as a landmark for the hospital itself, it does not support the wider legibility of the area.
• Caxton Drive tower - this site is surrounded by suburban residential two-storey streets and this tower is a significant departure from local character. At around 0.5km from Uxbridge town centre it is too far from existing nodes or transport connections to support wider legibility in the area.

In addition to the above buildings, there are a series of taller buildings along the eastern end of Uxbridge Road in the borough. Two of these towers are matching residential buildings of 12 storeys set within green landscape on the south side of the road. The other two buildings are commercial office buildings. Whilst all four are located within the Uxbridge Road (Hayes) designated centre, they are not clustered or located so as to emphasise a particular node or heart of the centre. Instead they highlight the lack of definition along this part of the Uxbridge Road.
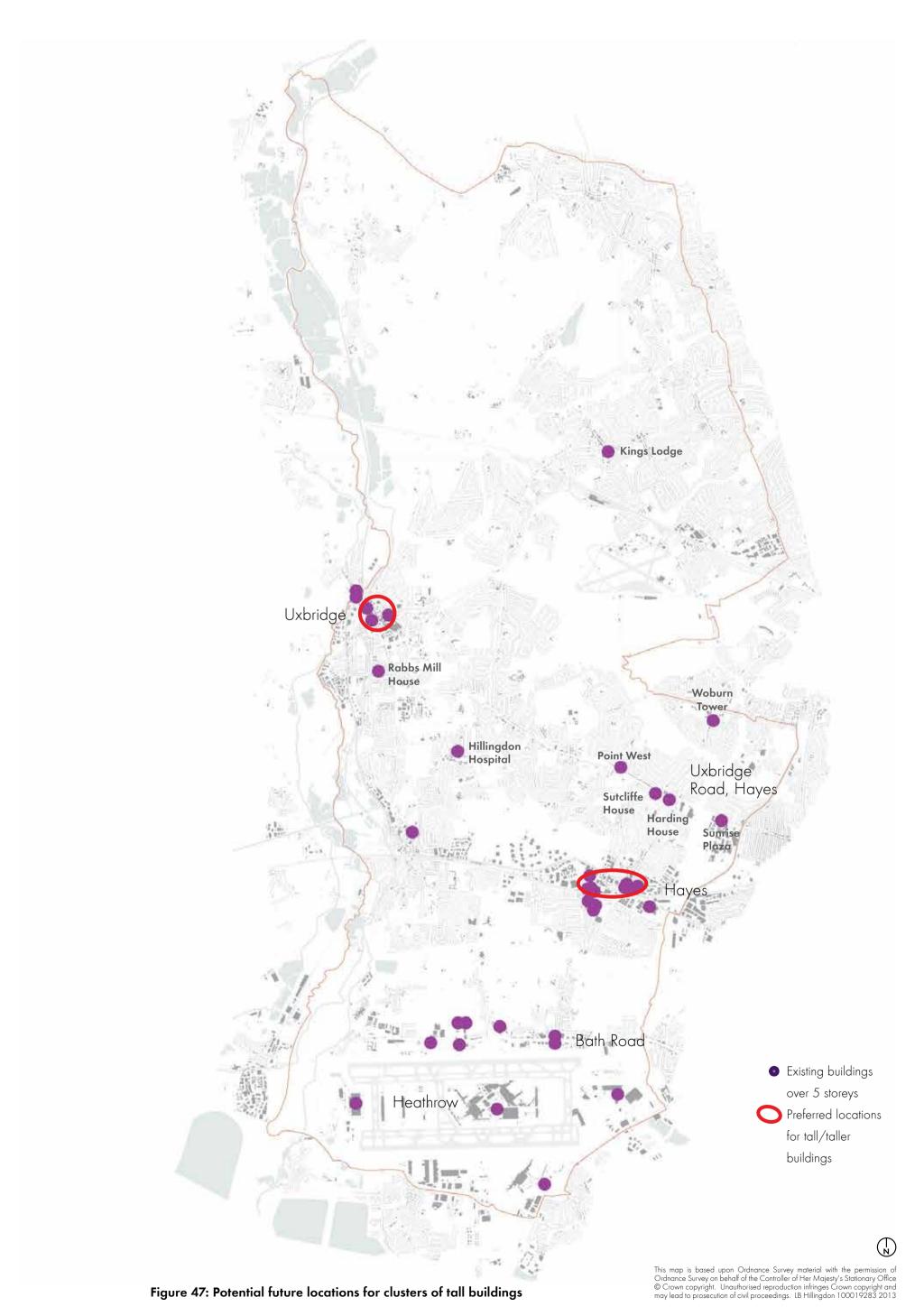
The analysis suggests that buildings of more than seven or eight storeys should be limited to Uxbridge town centre and Hayes town centre. These two locations are appropriate in terms of accessibility and already have a number of taller buildings. However, there is a real need to manage the introduction of further tall buildings in these two locations to ensure that they continue to make a positive contribution to the character of these town centres. In particular, the historic fine grain areas of Uxbridge need to be protected and their settings carefully considered. Any further additions to the tall buildings cluster must be of the highest design quality to support the definition of the metropolitan centre. In the same vein, the settings of the conservation areas around Hayes need sensitive consideration, as does the transition zone between taller buildings around the town centre and the lower rise residential hinterland.

Two other potential locations for tall buildings could be considered:

• Bath Road - a cluster of medium to tall buildings already exists. Airport restrictions will naturally restrict the height and quantum of future new buildings here.
• Uxbridge Road, Hayes - the junction of Uxbridge Road and The Parkway has become a natural focus for retail and non-residential uses. Emphasising this node could help bring stronger definition to this part of Uxbridge Road.

Any potential locations must be considered in light of existing planning constraints, these include:

• Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan Areas Sensitive to High Buildings map; and
• Heathrow Obstacle limitation surfaces - Heathrow has a series of "obstacle limitation surfaces" which define, relative to the runways, maximum acceptable heights for buildings and other structures, such as telecommunications masts and wind turbines. These areas cover a substantial part of the borough, but will act as a greater constraint in the south of the borough.

Kings Lodge

Uxbridge

Rabbs Mill House

Woburn Tower

Hillingdon Hospital

Point West

Uxbridge Road, Hayes

Sutcliffe House

Harding House

Sunrise Plaza

Hayes

Bath Road

Heathrow

● Existing buildings over 5 storeys

⭕ Preferred locations for tall/taller buildings

Figure 47: Potential future locations for clusters of tall buildings

Windsor Street, Uxbridge

6. HILLINGDON'S PLACES

6. HILLINGDON'S PLACES

Hillingdon is a collection of places rather than one single homogenous entity. The typology review has shown the extensive range of characters across the borough.

The borough has evolved as a collection of villages and larger settlements which have grown and, in many instances, coalesced over time. Whilst the definition between places may no longer be so geographically clear, each place still retains its own character and identity. This is evident in the street pattern and architecture of the original centres and names used to describe places.

This section of the report looks at some of the main places and neighbourhoods which have distinctive characteristics and whose place names mean something to local people.

The places and neighbourhoods have been divided into the following zones which reflect the evolution and structure of the borough:

- Northern Metropolitan neighbourhoods
  - Northwood
  - Copsewood Estate
  - Northwood Hills
- Northern countryside
  - Harefield
- Ruislip Metropolitan neighbourhoods
  - Eastcote
  - Ruislip Manor
  - Ruislip Common
  - Ruislip Gardens
  - Ickenham
- Uxbridge
- Uxbridge Road
  - Woodend/Hayes
  - Hayes Park
  - Yeading
  - Hillingdon
  - South Hillingdon
- Canalside towns
  - Hayes
  - West Drayton
  - Cowley
- Southern villages
  - Harmondsworth
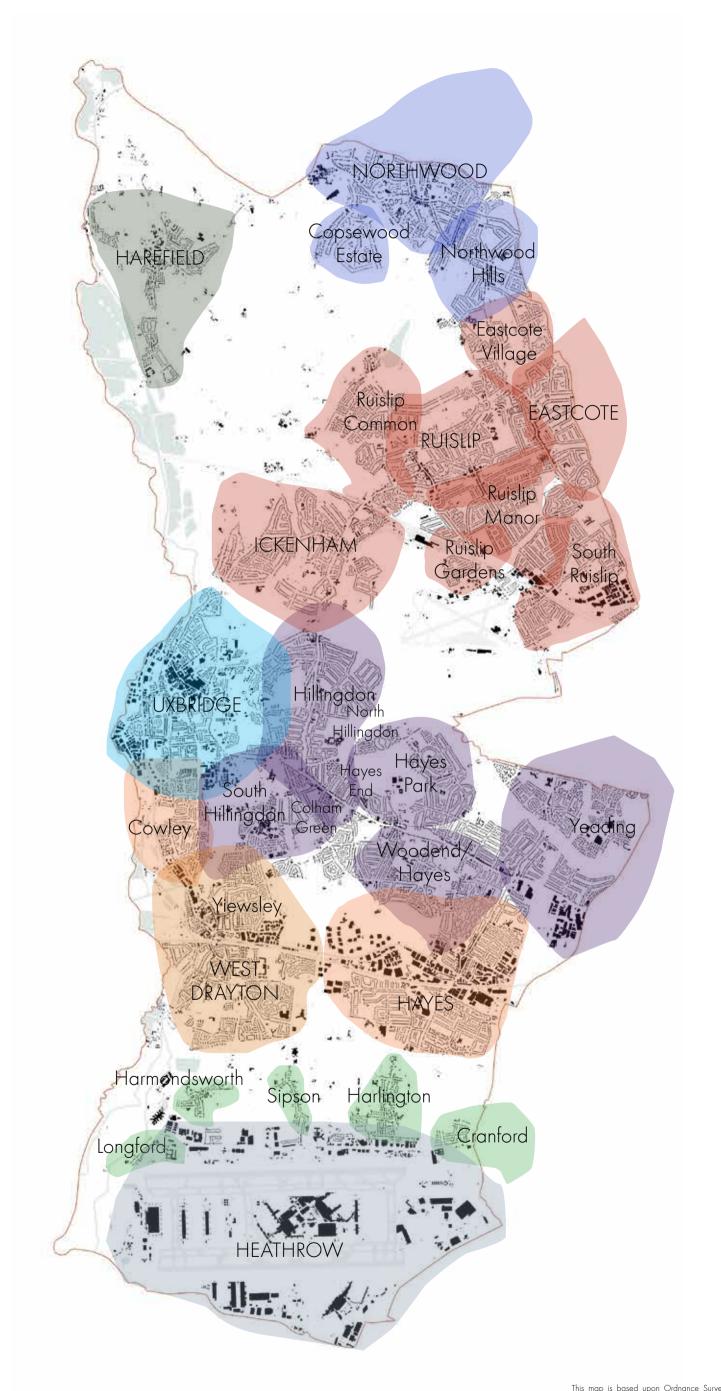 - Sipson
  - Harlington
  - Longford
- Heathrow

Figure 48: Hillingdon's Places

NORTHWOOD

Copsewood Estate

Northwood Hills

HAREFIELD

Eastcote Village

Ruislip Common

EASTCOTE

RUISLIP

Ruislip Manor

ICKENHAM

Ruislip Gardens

South Ruislip

UXBRIDGE

Hillingdon

North Hillingdon

Hayes Park

South Hillingdon

Hayes End

Yeading

Colham Green

Cowley

Woodend/ Hayes

Yiewsley

WEST DRAYTON

HAYES

Harmondsworth

Sipson

Harlington

Longford

Cranford

HEATHROW

NORTHERN METROPOLITAN NEIGHBOURHOODS

The Rickmansworth branch of the Metropolitan line opened up the most northern parts of the borough to suburban development. Formerly this area had been primarily rural farmsteads and estates. Eastbury Hall and Kirby Hall were the main estates in this area, with a series of farmsteads stretching out along the rural roads.

From the end of the 19th century, this part of the borough was transformed. The town centre of Northwood was developed around Northwood station and took on a distinct identity. The early "Metroland" suburban developments which came forward around Northwood Hills were of a lower density and a higher quality than some of the later developments further south in the borough.

Northwood

Until the late 19th century the land on which the town centre is now located was Green Lane Farm. Today, Northwood is the principal centre in this northern part of the borough and has evolved into an attractive and vibrant centre. The hillside topography gives the town centre a particular character and routes running into the centre from the surrounding residential areas provide attractive views and visual connections.
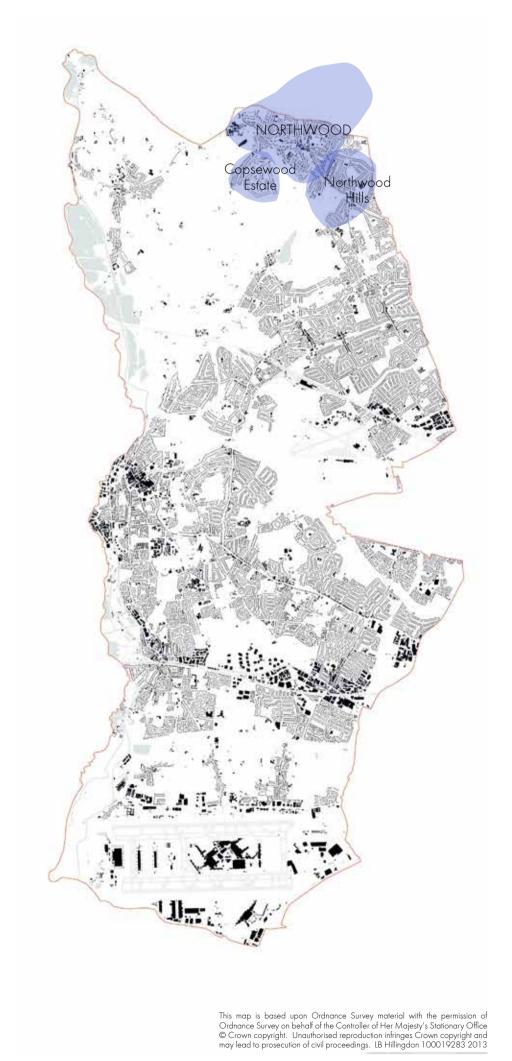
The residential areas include a significant range of styles and accommodation types, from the maisonettes of The Glen (1950s) to the large suburban terraced style streets of Chester Road (late 19th/early 20th century). Overall it predominantly comprises late Victorian and Edwardian properties.

Northwood Hills

Northwood Hills was developed in the 1930s. The neighbourhood was developed primarily by Belton Estates under the stewardship of Harry Ernest Peachey. Some distinct estates were brought forward under his leadership, including the Hillside area of bungalows (now an Area of Special Character), and the Gatehill Estate (also now an Area of Special Character).

Copsewood Estate

A leafy green estate of large suburban residencies are found on Duck's Hill Road, Copsewood Way and Linksway.

Figure 49: Hillingdon's Places - northern metropolitan neighbourhoods

1945 aerial image

2013 aerial image

Large suburban housing in Northwood

Northwood town centre

NORTHERN COUNTRYSIDE

Much of the north western corner of the borough remains the open and wooded countryside it has been for centuries. Rural farms remain, albeit much rationalised.

Harefield is the only settlement and centre in this part of the borough, and it has a long history - recorded as *Herefelle* in the Domesday Book (1086).

Harefield is home to a number of key buildings including Harefield House (built in mid 18th century) and Harefield Hospital (opened in 1937). The historic village centre remains largely in tact. Growth of the village has been drawn out along the settlement's approach routes, with significant Garden City style development at South Harefield in the mid 20th century.

This area also has some significant industrial areas, which are concentrated along the canal.

HAREFIELD

Figure 50: Hillingdon's Places - northern countryside

1945 aerial image

2013 aerial image

Harefield village centre

Harefield village green

RUISLIP METROPOLITAN NEIGHBOURHOODS

The villages of Ruislip and Ickenham and the hamlet of Eastcote were the only settlements in this part of the borough until the 20th century. The arrival of the Uxbridge branch of the Metropolitan line and the 1914 Soutar plan completely transformed the area.

Over a relatively short period of time, suburban development took over the hinterlands of these villages and brought with them significant extensions to the service centres. Ruislip became the dominant centre and the focus for retail and non-residential development.

Ruislip

Ruislip as a name now covers a significant area, although to most local residents Ruislip itself is focused around Ruislip High Street and the residential areas to the immediate west and east. Separate suburban residential estates were developed to the west and south of the heart of Ruislip. The significant Metroland neighbourhood around Bury Street is known by some as Ruislip Common, given its proximity to the extensive wooded common land to the north.

Ruislip Manor forms the central belt of Metroland development set within a formal grid structure and centred on the spine of Victoria Road. Ruislip Gardens was developed to the south west linked to the main line and Central line station, and took on a similar, but less dense, style to Ruislip Manor.

Residential development in South Ruislip took place from 1914 onwards, but occurred in earnest once the mainline station opened in 1932. The Dean Estate followed after the war, and South Ruislip became a focus for post-war housing development. Without the historic village centre or new centre, South Ruislip has traditionally lacked the full local services of the other Ruislip neighbourhoods.

Eastcote

At the beginning of the 20th century, Eastcote was a small village of around 120 cottages. Eastcote House and estate dominated the village and it was the estate land that housing developers Comben and Wakeling bought and developed to the north east of the new Eastcote station. The main developers of Eastcote were Telling Brothers, Rotherham and Nash Estates, all influenced by the Soutar Plan and the later more wide ranging Ruislip and Northwood UDC 1910 Plan.

Today Eastcote as a neighbourhood focuses on the tube station and extends eastwards to the north and south of the rail line. The original Eastcote village, however, is further north and has a very different and much more rural character.
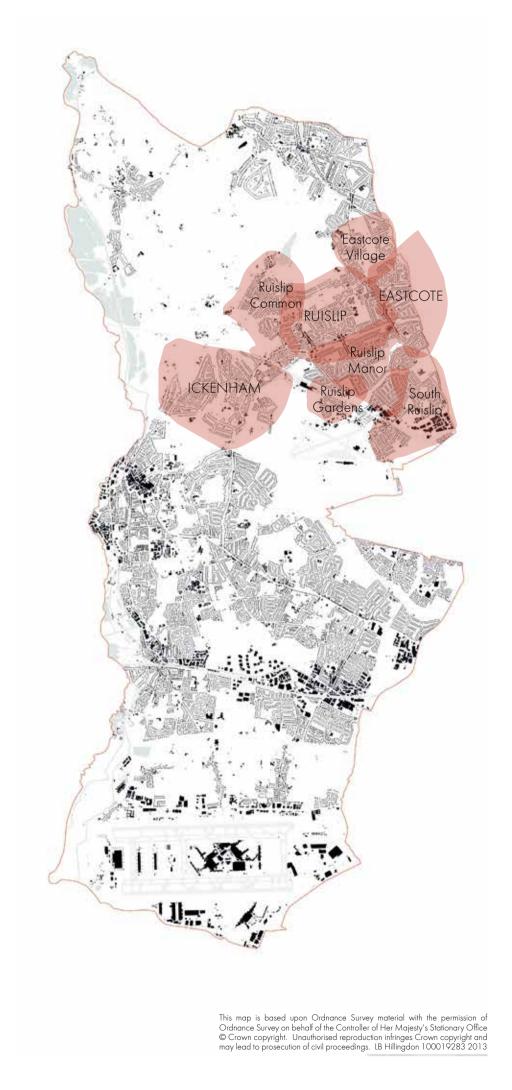
Figure 51: Hillingdon's Places - Ruislip's metropolitan neighbourhoods

1945 aerial image

2013 aerial image

Eastcote village

Ruislip town centre

Ickenham

In the village of Ickenham, it was the sale of Swakeleys House that heralded the arrival of Metroland suburbia. The estate land was developed into the large suburban residential streets of Swakeleys Drive, Court Road and Ivy House Road. Further developments followed in the 1930s such as "Ickenham Garden City" on the site of Milton Farm.

UXBRIDGE

Uxbridge is a significant town centre in West London and designated as a Metropolitan Centre. Historically, it has always been an important economic centre on the trade route between London and Oxford. As well as being on the Oxford-London route, the town also benefitted from the arrival of the Grand Union Canal which stimulated a whole corridor of industrial growth to the south.

Much of the historic fabric of the town centre core is still in tact. The High Street and Windsor Street contain a good number of important historic buildings and these streets are designated as a Conservation Area. These historic areas are of significant importance to the character of the centre and are sensitive to change.

The Metropolitan Railway reached the town in 1904 along with the tram connection. In the 1920s and 1930s the town grew significantly with new residential neighbourhoods alongside new schools, churches and cinemas.
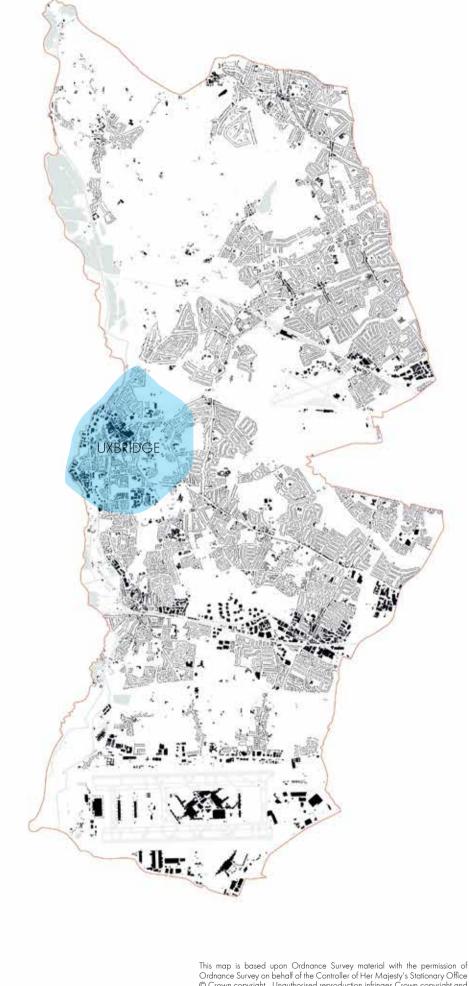
An extensive plant nursery to the south of RAF Uxbridge existed until 1958 when the business folded. This site was to become Brunel University, for which construction commenced in 1962.

Uxbridge town centre is bordered by a bypass to the south west of the town centre. This significant vehicular thoroughfare cuts the town centre away from its residential hinterland to the south. This same route also limits the town centre's connection to the Grand Union Canal and Colne River which run to the west of the town.

In the 1960s plans were put forward to modernise the historic town centre. These plans resulted in the opening of a major new shopping centre in 1973, subsequently refurbished as the Pavilions Shopping Centre. The town centre has seen further retail development in the form of the Intu Uxbridge Shopping Centre, built in 2001.

Significant industrial areas continue in Uxbridge, largely focused around the canal to the west and south of the town.

A range of residential typologies exist around the town, from Victorian urban terraces to modern cul-de-sac developments.

Figure 52: Hillingdon's Places - Uxbridge

1945 aerial image

2013 aerial image

High Street, Uxbridge

Windsor Street, Uxbridge

UXBRIDGE ROAD

A central band of neighbourhoods exists in the borough, broadly arranged either side of the Uxbridge Road. Most of the neighbourhoods have grown from historic settlements and villages, but each have been influenced by the importance of the Uxbridge Road.

Yeading
Yeading is an historic settlement which grew as a result of the Grand Union Canal and associated industries. Yeading remained a predominantly rural area until the Second World War. After the war a series of large Council housing estates were developed. These were supplemented by privately developed cul-de-sac style residential areas in the 1980/90s.

Woodend/Hayes and Hayes Park
To the south of Uxbridge Road are the extensive residential estates of Woodend/Hayes. The Garden City style estate around Central Avenue dominates the area, and this is located adjacent to the historic village centre on Church Road. Hayes retains an attractive core, good open spaces and large estates.

To the north of Uxbridge Road are similarly sized estates around the edge of Hayes Park. These estates have more of a Metroland character to them and consequently are built to a lower density.

Hillingdon
Hillingdon is a difficult neighbourhood to define, as it has stretched the full length of Long Lane up from Uxbridge Road, with areas of very different character. The historic heart is found on the Uxbridge Road at the intersection with Royal Lane. Hillingdon Heath is further east and forms a local centre on Uxbridge Road. The larger residential estates to the north are a mix of Metroland and Garden City styles, some benefitting from Hillingdon Court Park.

South Hillingdon
To the south of Uxbridge, on either side of the river Pinn and open space, are a series of estates, many in Garden City style and of higher densities than those found elsewhere in the area.
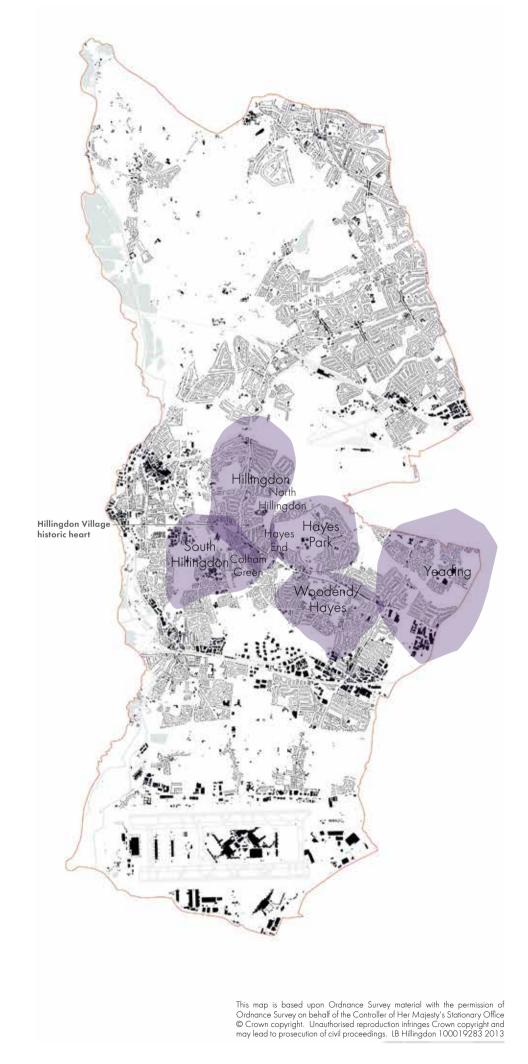
Figure 53: Hillingdon's Places - Uxbridge Road

1945 aerial image

2013 aerial image

Hillingdon village

Regents Close, off Uxbridge Road

UXBRIDGE ROAD - A ROUTE STUDY

Centre

Open space

Strong green and tree-lined section

Some street tree presence

Shift in character

Uxbridge Road is an ancient road between London and Oxford. Today it has been superseded by the M40 but the route between Shepherd's Bush Green and Uxbridge remains important. A significant section between Southall and Uxbridge passes through the borough and provides a principal east-west connection.

Over its history many hamlets, villages and shopping parades have grown up along its route. It continues to be a focus for thousands of residents living to the north and south of it - primarily as a transport connection, but also as a location for shops and services.

The centres and villages along the Uxbridge Road have coalesced to the point that the entire route is now fully urbanised. There are limited breaks on the road frontages,

but the route has a somewhat varied character when travelling through commercial and non-commercial areas.

Two key variables which affect the character of the route are:

- Intensity of development - at either end of the route are two zones of higher density development around Hayes and Uxbridge where building heights get higher and building footprints more bulky.
- Landscape character and street trees - the degree of green infrastructure varies along the route, with some sections having a strong central green reservation as well as street trees either side of the street, whilst other sections running through local centres have very little or no greenery.

THE WESTERN ROAD goes streaming out to seek the cleanly wild,
It pours the city's dim desires towards the undefiled,
It sweeps betwixt the huddled homes about its eddies grown
To smear the little space between the city and the sown:
The torments of that seething tide who is there that can see?
There's one who walked with starry feet the western road by me!

From "Uxbridge Road" by Evelyn Underhill in 1875

Uxbridge

Pinn Valley / Hillingdon Hill

Hillingdon village

Hillingdon Heath

Hayes End

Woodend/Hayes Town

CANALSIDE TOWNS

The Grand Union Canal has had a lasting impact on the borough. Whilst it has often been hidden behind relatively large scale industrial areas, the canal is increasingly taking centre stage in the southern parts of the borough.

The neighbourhoods of Hayes, Yiewsley and Cowley all owe their existence to the canal and the significant economic purpose this gave each of the settlements. In latter years, when the canal's role diminished, the towns were further boosted by the arrival of the Great Western Railway which supported their continued economic growth. In these areas, the residential neighbourhoods have quite a different form to those further north in the borough. Many areas were developed as housing for workers and frequently took on a denser (urban terrace) format.

Hayes / Hayes Town

Hayes Town has a much longer history than the Grand Union Canal. However it was canal-related industries that gave the settlement real purpose in the 18th and 19th century and led to substantial growth. The arrival of the railway further supported Hayes as a major industrial location - encouraging EMI and Nestlé to locate here. Victorian terraced streets and later Garden City style estates developed as part of the town.

Today the name Hayes is applied to a wide area, sometimes extending up to Yeading and Hillingdon. For the purposes of the characterisation the core area of Hayes / Hayes Town around the canal and railway has been drawn.

Yiewsley/West Drayton

West Drayton is historically the more dominant settlement, with Yiewsley remaining very small until the railway came. The development of West Drayton station and the industrial and residential growth that followed had a significant impact. Significant areas of Garden City style suburban housing areas were developed to the south and north of the centre and station, supporting the smaller areas of urban terraces that preceded them. West Drayton has a historic green to the south of the centre.

Cowley

This neighbourhood developed around Cowley Lock on the Grand Union Canal. Significant residential development took place in the 1930s, principally by Uxbridge Council. Today, the gap between Cowley and Uxbridge has been lost, but the area retains a distinct character with small scale industries including a traditional boat repair yard.

Planning guidance, potentially taking the form of a Supplementary Planning Document may be a helpful approach to managing change in these areas.

Figure 54: Hillingdon's Places - Canalside towns
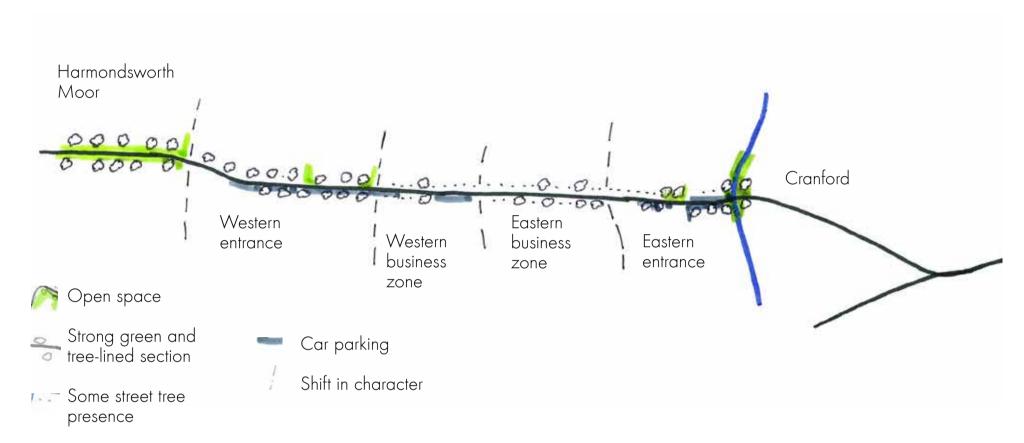
1945 aerial image

2013 aerial image

The Old Vinyl Factory, Hayes

Grand Union Canal through Cowley

BATH ROAD - A ROUTE STUDY

Harmondsworth Moor

Cranford

Western entrance

Western business zone

Eastern business zone

Eastern entrance

Open space

Strong green and tree-lined section

Some street tree presence

Car parking

Shift in character

The Bath Road runs through the southern part of the borough, along the northern edge of Heathrow. Historically, a key route, the road today bears little resemblance to its historic form as a trade and coaching road.

Today, the section through the borough has very little remaining character linked to the surrounding communities and centres, and is much more about supportive infrastructure to Heathrow. As a result of the large single uses which have developed adjacent to the route, often set some way back from the street edge, the character has become more international, and in many ways is similar to some of the major arterials leading out of North American cities.

Whilst there are common features to the character of the route throughout this section, there are distinct zones where landscape and activity shift to create different environments.

The common features are:

- Significant building set backs from the road edge - much more exaggerated than is found elsewhere in the borough - and much more akin to the campus typology as seen at Stockley Park; and
- Wide roadway with limited enclosure to the street - this

is particularly pronounced on the south side of the route where large areas of car parking and airport infrastructure create a very open feel.

The changes in activity, landscape and format create a number of distinct zones along the route:

- Eastern entrance - strong green character with relatively consistent street trees on both sides and stronger planting in some sections, with quite a comfortable mix of residential and business uses.
- Eastern business zone - business and hotel uses dominate in this section, creating a rhythm of large single use buildings set within varying levels of landscape setting. Street trees and planting reduce in consistency and impact.
- Western business zone - wider setbacks and larger building footprints set within larger areas of landscape, has a noticeably more spacious feel with less street definition. Car parking in sections along the south of the route contribute to the more open feel.
- Western entrance - greener, almost boulevard style planting, with street trees providing the definition and enclosure to the street with open views behind. Residential influence on north side with street trees and planting increasing as one moves westwards.
- Harmondsworth Moor - strong countryside influence with heavy planting along road edge, and very few buildings on either side.

Edge of Cranford

Eastern entrance

Eastern edge of business zone

Heathrow airport and supporting infrastructure dominates the southern side of the road

Western business zone

Colnbrook by-pass / Harmondsworth Moor

SOUTHERN VILLAGES

In the south of the borough a series of historic villages sit within open land to the north of Heathrow. The open land is designated as Green Belt and, combined with the impact of the airport, the villages have seen relatively little growth over the last fifty years.

Longford

Longford is a historic settlement based around a ford on the River Colne. Development is focused around the Bath Road and a small number of connecting streets. The village is now home to a number of hotels linked to Heathrow Airport, but otherwise has seen no substantial redevelopment.

Harmondsworth

Harmondsworth has significant built heritage including a 12th century church and a 14th century Great Barn. The centre is based around the historic high street with some of the post-war residential development extending to the south.

Sipson

The village of Sipson is focused around Sipson Road immediately to the west of the M4 connection to Heathrow. The homes in the village are predominantly suburban, and there is no significant centre to the village.

Harlington

The village of Harlington has developed along the High Street, with residential estates added to the west of the high street off West End Lane. A mix of housing styles and sizes exist. The village centre stretches along the High Street with the historic church forming an important landmark, at the northern end.

Cranford

A small area of Cranford is contained within the borough of Hillingdon. The residential streets of Eton Road and Langley Crescent were developed in the Metroland style, albeit in a different architectural style to that found in the heart of the borough.
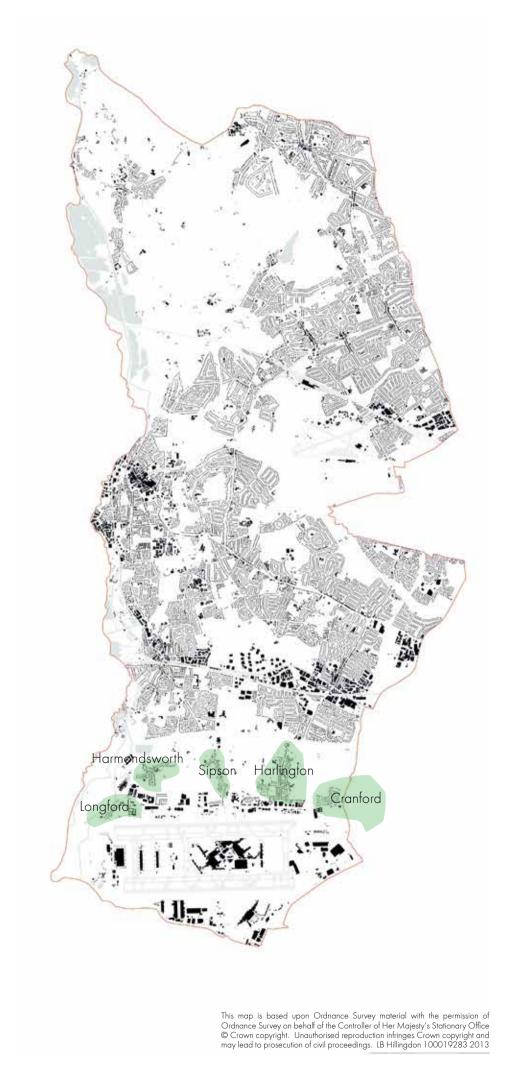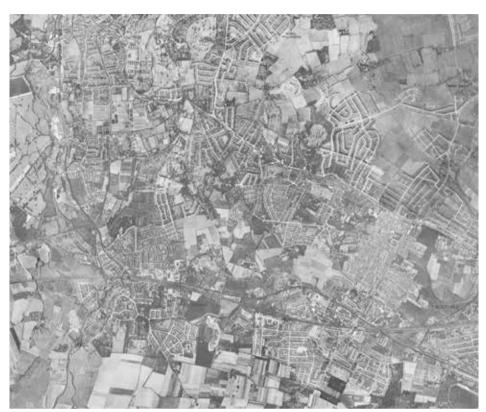
Figure 55: Hillingdon's Places - Southern villages

1945 aerial image

2013 aerial image

Harmondsworth Great Barn

The White Hart, Harlington

Harmondsworth Great Barn

7. CONCLUSIONS

7. CONCLUSIONS

Significant qualities and features

The borough of Hillingdon is a place of contrasts in character, as Pevsner noted (Cherry and Pevsner, *Buildings of England London 3: North West*, 1991). From idyllic rural waterside through to the dense hustle and bustle of Uxbridge town centre in less than a mile.

Having seen most of its growth in the first half of the 20th century in the form of suburban estates, the borough is now poised for the next wave of development through the redevelopment of its more urban areas. Undertaking a characterisation of the borough at this juncture will prove an invaluable resource to ensuring this new growth has a wholly positive impact on local character.

Despite its contrasts, a number of common features and qualities have been identified that ring true across the borough – north and south, urban, suburban and rural. These qualities provide a set of basic principles with which all new development should be designed in the borough. These include:

- Perimeter block format – almost all of the areas with strong positive characters exhibit a clear block structure with building fronts on to the street and backs hidden within the blocks. Such a format supports strong definition of space and creates safe and active streets.
- Building lines – throughout the borough clear building lines along streets have been established and respected by more recent developments, and this has helped to ensure a good sense of cohesion despite significant shifts in building scale and architectural style. A consistent building line helps to frame and enclose the street, making it a comfortable, safe environment for users.
- Front gardens – in residential areas front gardens provide the main source of greenery to the streetscape, and help to define public and private space. Such greenery raises the quality of the environment, helps to manage the impacts of climate change and provides further enclosure to the street space.
- Street trees and landscape – those parts of the borough with the strongest character tend to have allowed greater space for trees and landscape within their urban structure. More recent developments have reduced the space allocated for landscape to the detriment of local character. Across the borough the contribution made by street trees and landscape is very clear and needs to be reinforced through future interventions.

The borough is home to some areas of strong character – both historic and recent – and it is important to recognise and celebrate the contribution of these areas to the wider impression of the borough. The key examples are:

- Historic waterside environments – the Grand Union Canal and the River Colne provide some of the most attractive environments in the borough, with many sections displaying strong contrasts between industrial activities and natural landscape.
- Strong suburban residential estates – the borough is home to good examples of both private sector led (Metroland) and public sector led (Garden City style) suburban housing.
- Significant historic features – the Great Barn at Harmondsworth is one of the finest surviving examples of a medieval tithe barn in Great Britain, Manor Farm at the north end of Ruislip High Street is a flagship heritage site centre on the remains of a possibly pre-Norrman Motte and Bailey fort, and Uxbridge Road is significant historic route which now joins the central communities of the borough together.
- Historic village centres – much of the fabric of the old rural villages survive in Hillingdon, albeit now subsumed within larger centres and neighbourhoods – Eastcote and Harefield are two particularly attractive examples.
- Rural fragments – there are a number of instances across the borough where areas of rural landscape and activities have become trapped within the urban area, and these pockets provide an attractive contrast and relief within the urban areas.
- Well-planned local centres – some of the centres which grew significantly on the back of the suburban development exhibit a strong cohesive character, having been largely developed in one era – Northwood is one such example.
- Open countryside – in the north of the borough large expanses of open countryside still exist and provide a strong rural character to this part of the borough, as well as a positive setting for suburban centres and villages.

Key lessons and recommendations

The following table summarises the headline findings from the characterisation study. Overleaf, these issues are explored in more detail under the headings of:

- Core design principles
- Strengthening neighbourhoods
- Celebrating history
- Infrastructure

Summary of headline lessons and recommendations

1. **Predominant character**: the borough is characterised by large areas of two-storey suburban housing (with relatively limited other uses). Tall / taller buildings must be managed sensitively against this backdrop. Storey heights can be increased where appropriate along main road routes and in some town centre locations where existing building heights may be generally higher.

2. **Loss of character through redevelopment:** The existing character of the borough is under threat from a number of changes which impact on existing areas. Firstly, the redevelopment of large suburban houses or the addition of back-land infill development threatens the character of some of the boroughs best suburbs. Secondly, public houses across the borough are being closed and converted to flats. Thirdly, former industrial areas are being lost to residential accommodation, particularly in areas with good transport access. Whilst the changes may be regarded as appropriate in terms of the land use, guidance is needed to help manage the impact on the prevailing townscape character.

3. **Loss of front gardens and boundaries**: the loss of front gardens to parking results in weakening of the townscape character of particular housing typologies. Multiple car ownership per property has resulted in the conversion of front gardens where they are large enough to accommodate vehicles. In some cases this is acceptable in amenity terms, but in many it is more questionable, for example in the Metroland or Garden City style estates the conversion to parking completely disrupts the intended streetscape balance. The loss of front gardens to parking in Plotland housing development is particularly detrimental visually. Consistent boundary treatment is important in helping to give a clear definition of the public realm and help to unify the street scene.

4. **Street clutter**: As well as the potential for clutter caused by street furniture such as signage, utilities and advertising, the presence of houses in multiple occupation and conversions of housing to flats in some areas is leading to additional street clutter and parking demands. One of the impacts of flat conversions has been the increase in the necessary utility facilities (wheelie bins; electricity, water and gas meters). The design process should consider the provision of such supporting infrastructure to avoid clutter in the local street scene.

5. **Some main roads act as barriers to movement**: for example both the A312 Hayes by pass and Falling Lane/Stockley Road A408 route have led to the existence of dead ends and disrupted street networks, whilst others such as the A40/M40 lead to congestion on feeder routes and again affect movement between areas.

6. **Legibility and townscape context:** - a clear block structure and urban grain are characteristics of most of the residential perimeter typologies found in the borough. Any new development needs to maintain these and the scale of a development should have regard to how it fits into the overall composition of the neighbourhood - for example a street corner redevelopment of one / two housing plots for a multi-flatted scheme can significantly affect the character of an otherwise lower density housing area.

7. **Street trees**: as a major element of the borough's character, street trees should be considered an essential element of the public realm associated with development. Developers should liaise with the Council on appropriate tree species and design requirements - for example to ensure positioning helps to frame views and not obscure key local buildings.

8. **Green network**: the borough has significant areas of green space and linking green chains. Developments should support the borough's objectives of providing a high quality network of green spaces and provide a good level of access to it.

9. **Design guidance**: a greater recognition of local character and local context is needed in the design of new development. Developments should be designed as bespoke elements which respond to the immediate surroundings, and use the established character as a direct cue for aspects such as building line, set backs, storey heights and landscape treatment.

Conclusions and implications

A. CORE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Based on the common features and qualities identified through the characterisation, there are some central principles which can be applied to the design of most future interventions in the borough to ensure they positively support local character.

Perimeter block format

Throughout the borough, by far the most dominant form of development is a clear perimeter block form, where development fronts on to the streets and the backs of buildings are hidden within blocks. Examples range from the dense, regular Victorian terraced streets to the south of West Drayton station to the Garden City style housing to the south of Windsor Avenue in Hillingdon.

This format offers the best opportunities to integrate new and old areas and establish a strong street network, which has been lost in some of the later schemes in the borough. A perimeter block can accommodate a wide range of uses and building types and is much more flexible to change over time than typologies such as cul de sacs. Within the blocks further forms can be accommodated such as mews developments. The perimeter block has also proved to be the best format in creating safe and legible street networks. These benefits are seen across the borough where a perimeter block format has been established, and new developments should follow this strong lead.
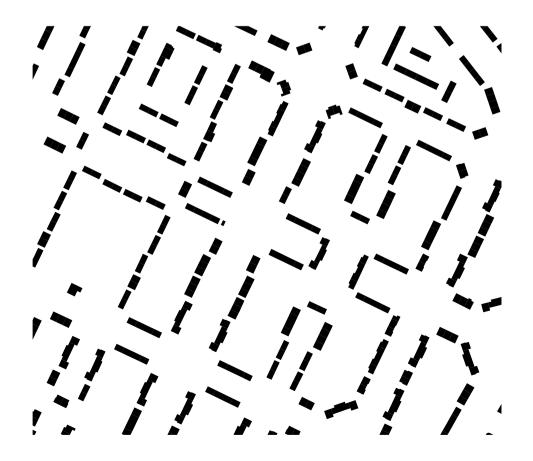
Building lines

The building line and relative set back of buildings from the street has a significant impact on the character of areas in the borough. In the vast majority of developed areas of the borough, streets have a clear building line, where buildings are set back at a consistent distance from the pavement or street edge. It will be important to respect these lines as any redevelopment changing the set back could degrade the structure of the streetscape.

Typical set back distances observed in the borough show that terraced housing tends to be set back 2.5-3.0 metres from the pavement edge, whilst large suburban housing is 10-15 metres.

Front gardens

Green front gardens have been a common feature across the borough since its significant residential growth. These front gardens contribute a huge amount to local character and street enclosure, as well as having a crucial role in managing local micro-climates and the impacts of climate change through supporting drainage, providing wildlife habitat and acting as a heat sink or shade resource.

However, the quality of many of the residential streets is being eroded by the loss of front gardens and changing boundary treatments. Many gardens in typical suburban areas have been converted to provide parking, resulting in the loss of boundary definition and planting. This weakens the quality of the public realm, changing the relationship between the buildings and the street for the worse. The important contribution these spaces play in providing green infrastructure to the street character must be respected.

Street trees and landscape

The areas with strong character in the borough are all distinguishable by the significant green infrastructure designed into the layout. The contrast can be illustrated through two areas of similar housing style and densities, but of markedly different qualities.

Acre Way and Addison Way in Northwood – where very strong hedge treatments and street trees dominate the character of the street.
To:
Wentworth Crescent in Hayes – where there is an almost complete lack of street trees, and only limited street greenery is provided by the front gardens that have not yet been paved.

And:
Reginald Road and Roy Road in Northwood – where many street trees remain and are supported by very green front gardens containing mature shrubs, hedges and trees.
To:
Tudor Way and North Road in Hayes – where a more limited building set back means there are no street trees and the only landscape contribution is from the few remaining hedge treatments.

Street trees play an important role in alleviating the impact of dense urban layout, particularly in the context of continuous urban terraces and tall buildings. As well as visual amenity, deciduous trees also play an important role in supporting adaptation to the effects of climate change. They provide shade in summer, reducing the radiant heat stored in buildings and roads, and by shedding their leaves in winter allow maximum solar gain.

Many of the main roads in the borough are also notable for their extensive street trees and landscape. Indeed many routes have regular street trees on both sides of the road and in some sections along the central reservation as well.

Scale

Outside of the main centres, the borough is dominated by two-storey domestic scale buildings. This scale of development creates comfortable and attractive streets. Alterations and new developments need to respect the scale, massing and arrangement of buildings along a street.

Bungalows are comparatively common in the borough in contrast to some of the more densely developed London boroughs. Managing these streets and neighbourhoods of predominantly single storey residences needs a sensitive approach.

Implications

The prevailing positive qualities found across the borough should be the starting point for consideration in any new development or alteration to an existing building in the borough. As such, the following suggestions to steer planning policy in the borough should be considered:

- New developments should observe a perimeter block format wherever possible. Opportunities to complete urban blocks to support clear relationships of frontages on to streets, and backs enclosed within the blocks, should be maximised. A wide range of uses can be adapted to fit into the structure based on perimeter blocks, making it the most flexible urban form.

- The definition of public and private space should be clear and simple and will flow well from the perimeter block format adopted. The perimeter block form is adaptable to very high densities, including high density apartment developments which create good street frontage and public space around the perimeter and communal / private amenity space in the centre of the block.

- Where streets have a clear existing building line this should be respected to ensure any interventions support the overall street structure and character.

- The important role of front gardens within the street structure should not be lost. Any conversion of front gardens to paving or parking spaces should be resisted, as should any loss of a clear boundary treatment to define the break between public street and private space.

- Any removal of valuable existing green infrastructure and street trees will be resisted. New developments and alterations should make every effort to incorporate existing trees and to enhance the existing street character with further tree planting and landscape.

- Applications for new developments and alterations to existing buildings should observe the prevailing scale and massing of the area. Outside the main centres, this will predominantly be two storey developments. The local pattern of scale, massing and spacing of buildings should be carefully assessed and respected through any interventions.

Applicants will be required to demonstrate how new development integrates with the existing urban structure. Where any of the above principles are considered inappropriate, the applicant will be required to illustrate why such a format has been dismissed and the benefits an alternative approach brings to the character of the area and the local streetscape quality.

Alterations to existing properties will be required to ensure the designs respect the prevailing characteristics outlined above. Crucially, the predominant street building line should be observed and maintained, front gardens should be protected to positively contribute to the character of the street, and the prevailing scale and massing of development along a street should not be unduly disrupted.

B. STRENGTHENING NEIGHBOURHOODS

Both the urban and suburban neighbourhoods in the borough could be strengthened through future interventions. Enhancing their identity and definition through small-scale interventions, context-led development guidance and streetscape enhancement works would have a significant impact on local character. The protection of the more attractive and historic parts of these areas will continue to be important, not least given the pressure for higher density and taller developments in centres such as Uxbridge.

Neighbourhood definition and identity

Whilst developed areas in the north of the borough are relatively contained with clear centres and hinterland neighbourhoods, many of the neighbourhoods in the central and southern parts of the borough "bleed" into one another and lack definition. A key issue is that many of the suburban housing areas have no single strong relationship to a centre, often as a result of a lack of connections or proximity. The neighbourhoods of Hillingdon are an example of this tendency.

Opportunities to strengthen the roles of local centres and their connections to the residential areas they serve should be explored. Hayes and Hillingdon are examples of where improvements could greatly improve the character and definition of these places.

Some examples of possible interventions include:

- Improve the connection between Hillingdon underground station and the shopping/services to the south of Western Avenue, through streetscape improvements such as tree planting that raise the quality of the environment for pedestrians
- Maximise any opportunities to secure new pedestrian/cycle links between cul-de-sacs and closes, to bring more of the population within a 10 minutes walk of their local centre

Sustainability of the suburbs

Alongside the definition and identity of neighbourhoods, an important factor contributing to local character is how neighbourhoods operate and function for those living, working and visiting them. In an ideal world, every neighbourhood would be related to a local centre or shopping parade and offer some space for local employment opportunities.

Many of the suburban neighbourhoods in the borough are relatively low density and have limited or no non-residential uses within them. As such, they limit the opportunities for encouraging more sustainable lifestyle patterns. Opportunities to gradually improve how the residential

suburbs operate to support more sustainable lifestyle patterns should be explored.

Tall buildings

Outside of the main centres, the borough predominantly comprises two storey residential neighbourhoods. This prevailing character needs to be carefully observed when considering new developments.

Tall buildings should be limited to where they can bring real positive benefit – the topography and built character of the borough means much of the area is sensitive to taller buildings. Opportunities exist to cluster tall buildings in a small number of sustainable locations where they can support the role of these centres and wider legibility. As indicated in section five, sustainable locations are those which have good accessibility to the public transport network and are well connected generally to surrounding areas.

The town centres of Hayes and Uxbridge are proposed as preferred locations for tall/taller buildings. However, the sensitivities of the townscape in both centres will be an important constraint on ultimate locations and heights. Outside these two centres, the character of the borough makes it generally inappropriate for further tall/taller buildings.

When considering the location, positioning and design of tall buildings their impact on the surrounding area must be thoroughly assessed. Consideration must be given to the probable overshadowing and wind generation which would result as well as the impact on local character and identity, the setting and environment of historic buildings and areas, and the effect on local views and the skyline.

Implications

Strengthening the character of neighbourhoods and centres across the borough will help to reinforce and celebrate the diversity of local character areas found in the borough. The following opportunities should be considered:

- Local resident input into the definition of neighbourhoods would help to build a clear picture of how local character and functionality of areas combine to define neighbourhood identity.

- Highlighting those neighbourhoods which suffer from poor definition or where character has been degraded over time would provide a list of priority actions for intervention.

- Opportunities to improve the overall sustainability of the borough's suburbs need to be identified. This will likely cover aspects relating to individual buildings as well as the structure of local neighbourhoods to ensure that people are offered the best possible chance to shop and work locally.

- The identification of specific areas where taller buildings may be appropriate or could help support local character through future plan making and policy will ensure such interventions are limited and steered in a positive manner within the borough.

C. CELEBRATING HISTORY

Protect historic fragments
The nature of the borough's evolution means some rural or historic fragments have been subsumed within urban areas or trapped between them. These fragments provide attractive glimpses into the historic character of the area and important respite to the suburban extent.

Many of these features are protected through planning policy. 31 Conservation Area designations across the borough help to prevent change in the most sensitive areas which would be inconsistent with the character. A further 15 Areas of Special Character have been designated. These are predominantly residential neighbourhoods which exhibit strong character and where any change must harmonise with the prevailing materials, architectural style and building scale.

In addition to these areas, there are a number of historic landscape fragments which are now surrounded by urban development which are important features of local character. All of these areas are protected by Green Belt designation and therefore there is not the need for further policy designation.
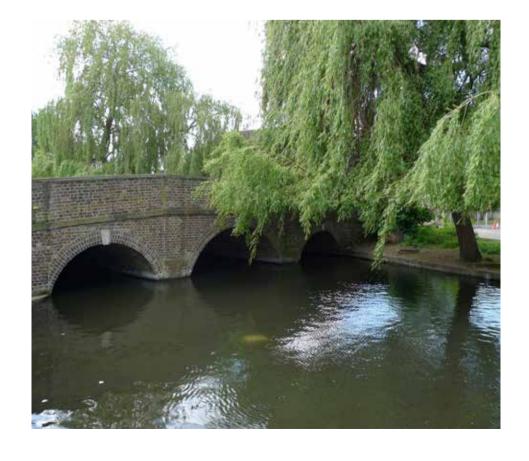
Celebrate the suburbs
Many of the residential areas in the borough are formed of planned estates, either privately or publicly developed. Many of these had a strong architectural continuity which created a clear sense of cohesion to streets and neighbourhoods.

Successive alterations by homeowners have reduced this sense of cohesion, but at the same time have proved how flexible and robust these design formats are. Homeowners should be encouraged to appreciate the role of their home and boundary treatment in the wider streetscape when considering alterations.

Open up the waterways
The Grand Union Canal and River Colne have been instrumental in the history and development of the borough, but many sections are largely hidden today. Significant scope exists to open up further pedestrian/cycle routes along these waterways and to ensure any redevelopment adjacent to the waterways, particularly the canal, actively addresses the waterside context and improves the relationship.

A key move would be transforming the current predominant relationship, where buildings turn their backs on to the canal. Re-orientating buildings through the sensitive redevelopment of sites to a position where buildings front on to the canal and engage in a very positive relationship with the waterside environment would be a major achievement for the borough's character.

Implications

The borough of Hillingdon has much to be proud of in its urban environment. Generating greater awareness and appreciation of these features is important in building community pride and, in turn, stable communities. The following opportunities should be considered:

- Opportunities to raise the profile of the historic fragments found across the borough could be explored. For example, where historic fragments now form part of larger town centres, they could form the focus for future town centre regeneration initiatives or public realm enhancement projects.
- Opportunities to actively celebrate local areas could be considered. This could include initiatives such as the production of design guide leaflets to inform sensitive alterations to homes, front gardens and boundaries.
- Improving wayfinding, signposting and interpretation along and around the borough's waterways would raise their profile and use.
- Partnership working could facilitate better access and use of the waterways, for example with British Waterways, local history groups and major waterside landowners.
- Working with landowners to secure high quality redevelopments and refurbishments of key opportunity sites along the canal could be instrumental in shifting the environment and visibility of the canal.

D. INFRASTRUCTURE

Redevelopment of large sites

Across the borough, there are a number of large sites which offer opportunities for large scale redevelopment. Interventions on this scale have a significant impact on the character of the local areas within which they sit. In many cases, the opportunity exists to enhance the relationship to the local area and setting of the site through a context-led masterplan. The design of new development on large sites in the borough needs to be informed by a thorough analysis of the wider local area and immediate setting - in particular taking a cue from the scale and character of the context.

Larger projects will benefit from the preparation of design codes. These will provide measures which establish a clear character and design quality across a number of phases or between several design teams and developers. It can also be a helpful process to demonstrate how the character of the surrounding context has been understood and reflected in the proposals.

The redevelopment of former industrial areas, particularly in the south of the borough, offers significant scope to use the historic legacy of the areas to inform the character of future developments. Opportunities to retain the mix of uses through any development should be maximised to maintain these sustainable locations as hubs for future employment.

Green infrastructure

The streetscape of the borough plays a significant role in establishing the character of the place, particularly in those areas where street trees and verges exist. As well as having a visual and biodiversity impact, green infrastructure in the public realm also helps to improve the resilience of areas to the effects of climate change. The provision of shade in the summer has a particularly notable benefit, whilst the soakaway effect provided by verges can help to manage rapid rainwater run-off. Whilst many areas still retain street trees it is noticeable that, in relative terms, street trees are less prevalent in the southern half of the borough and particularly in garden city style estates.

Major infrastructure

The borough both benefits and suffers from major pieces of infrastructure such as motorways and airports. These structures are obstacles to movement and connections in the borough, and opportunities to introduce environmental enhancements to neighbourhoods adjacent to them could support local character.

The rail infrastructure in the borough has historically brought real benefits to local areas and generally has a less divisive impact spatially than the major roads. The arrival of Crossrail in the south of the borough will be a further layer to the borough's rail infrastructure, enhancing the level of accessibility into central London further. Its arrival brings with it challenges and pressure for redevelopment around the stations which will need to be carefully managed over the next few years.

In relation to the infrastructure which has a more negative impact on the borough, Uxbridge Road and the A4 Bath Road are particular examples where environmental enhancements could support an improvement in character and functionality.

Uxbridge Road corridor

Uxbridge Road is a very important route through the borough, providing strategic connection and a focus for the communities living either side. There is a need for clearer definition of the individual character areas which make up the route, as indicated in section 6. Whilst maintaining the existing rhythm of the street character, targeted improvements can be introduced to better articulate the distinct neighbourhood characters, for example through environmental improvements, planting schemes, or shopfront improvements.

A4 corridor

The Bath Road corridor will always be unusual when compared to the rest of the borough's character. The route features very different qualities to the other key routes in the borough, with much bigger setbacks, street widths and open views. The corridor displays many of the features of the campus typology, albeit alongside one single major thoroughfare, with very large single buildings set back from the street and within large areas of landscape.

Opportunities to consider how the character of this route should evolve over time should be explored, considering consistency, integration and landscape. There is a huge diversity in the building forms and architectural styles of existing buildings along this route, and it will be important to control the future design character of any new buildings. However the greatest opportunities are to support some elements of existing streetscape character by improving the landscape and public realm to create a more consistent level of quality with distinct character zones. Environmental enhancements could also help ease the transition between the Bath Road activities and the more "normal" areas such as residential neighbourhoods adjacent to it.

Larger format development

Many parts of the borough have seen the introduction of large scale buildings, often as part of retail parks, which mark a significant departure from local character. There is a need to carefully manage any future developments of this type, and to ensure that the evolution of existing areas does not further threaten the prevailing local character.

As the predominant character of the borough is of two-storey domestic buildings, these larger format buildings do not sit comfortably with the pre-dominant local character. There is a need to ensure that any such format of development is much more sympathetic to the finer grain local character. The incorporation of these schemes through their design and detailing needs to be considered very carefully so as to not further threaten the underlying local character.

Campuses

Significant areas of the borough are privately managed and relatively inward looking in the form of campus-style developments. Opportunities to improve the contribution that these areas make to the wider environment could be explored, especially where they are being redeveloped. Unlike the other active hospital sites and Brunel University, RAF Uxbridge is no longer a campus – it is now a large development site. RAF Uxbridge offers a good opportunity to move a formerly fenced and inward-looking site into a fully integrated piece of urban development.

Other opportunities to better integrate other campus-style sites should be explored. Good practice examples where large campus sites have been successfully re-integrated into their local area should be used to help inform emerging masterplans.

Implications

The following opportunities exist to improve the relationship between infrastructure and local character in the borough:

- The redevelopment of large sites or campus-style developments should be informed by area-wide masterplans in the first instance, and these should involve the local authority planning and design team from an early stage.
- Reducing the divisive impact of major infrastructure such as primary roads can have in the borough through local public realm and landscape enhancements should be explored.
- Uxbridge Road is a key area where the local identity and definition of neighbourhoods could be improved along the route. Public realm, planting and streetscape enhancements could help improve both the visual appearance of different areas as well as their functionality. Producing guidance on shopfront design could also help define the character and improve the quality of local centres along the road.
- Campus redevelopment is again an area where this section might look to encourage owners & developers to seek the early involvement of the Council in preparing masterplans for future development.

GLOSSARY

Archaeological Priority Areas

The boundaries of Archaeological Priority Zones are designated on the Policies Map. These are areas where there is potential for significant archaeological remains, Archaeological Priority Zones (APZs) and planning applications within these areas must be accompanied by an archaeological assessment and evaluation of the site, including the impact of the proposed development.

Areas of Special Character

A term relating to the appearance of any rural or urban location in terms of its landscape or the layout of streets and open spaces, often giving places their own distinct identity.

Character area

An area displaying a predominant character underpinned by the overriding urban form, structure, massing, landscape, public realm and architectural style.

Conservation Areas

An area declared by a local planning authority in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), as being of special architectural, historical or landscape interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Consent is required for the demolition or partial substantial demolition of unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas.

Density

A measure of the intensity of development. Residential density is usually expressed as the number of habitable rooms per hectare (hrha).

Enclosure

The manner or degree to which buildings and/or planting define public spaces through proportions between height and width.

Figure-ground plan

A plan which shows the relationship between built and unbuilt space.

Garden city (estate style)

High quality suburban housing delivered by the public sector during the inter-war period with a strong collective identity, expressed through the compositional form and emphasis on green environments.

Grain

The pattern of streets, buildings and spaces within an urban area. Fine grain refers generally to more historic areas where streets are populated by a high number of small buildings, whereas a coarse grain reflects an area with large building footprints.

Green Belt

Green belt is the national policy designation that helps to contain development, protect the countryside and promote brownfield development, and assists in the urban renaissance. There is a general presumption against inappropriate development in the green belt.

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

The English indices of deprivation identify the most deprived areas across the country. The IMD combines a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area in England.

Landmark (buildings)

A building or feature of notable character which stands out and acts as a point of reference.

Landscape character

The description of an area of landscape - a product of its pattern, historical evolution, use, topography and planting.

Legibility

The degree to which an area is easy to understand and navigate due to its urban form and structure.

Listed buildings

Buildings which have been placed on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.

Local distinctiveness

The positive features of a place and its communities which contribute to its special character and sense of place.

Locally listed buildings

A locally listed building is a building, structure or feature which, whilst not listed by the Secretary of State, is considered by the local planning authority to be important due to its architectural, historic or archaeological significance.

Metroland

The name given to the suburban areas that were built to the north west of London in the early part of the 20th century, served by the Metropolitan Railway. The name gradually became more widely used for suburbs of similar character, particularly north west of London.

Metropolitan centre

Metropolitan centres serve wide catchment areas covering several boroughs and offer a high level and range of comparison shopping. They typically have over 100,000 square metres of retail floorspace, including multiple retailers and department stores. They also have significant employment, service and leisure functions (London Plan 2008 definition).

Morphology
The study of urban form - the physical form of a city or urban area.

Perimeter block
An urban block where the fronts of buildings face directly on to the street and the backs are contained within the centre of the street block.

Public Transport Accessibility (PTAL)
Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTALS) are a detailed and accurate measure of the accessibility of a point to the public transport network, taking into account walk access time and service availability (Greater London Authority definition).

Public realm
This is the space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible, including streets, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces.

Skyline
The outline of buildings or features seen against the sky.

Streetscape
The visual elements of a street, including the road, adjacent buildings, street furniture, trees and open spaces that combine to form a street's character.

Scheduled ancient monuments
A scheduled monument is an historic building or site that is included in the Schedule of Monuments kept by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. The regime is set out in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Once a monument is scheduled any works to it, and flooding and tipping operations that might affect it, with few exceptions require scheduled monument consent from the Secretary of State.

Topography
The recording of relief or terrain and the identification of specific landforms.

Townscape
The general appearance of a built-up area, for example a street a town.

Townscape character
The description of an area's townscape - the combination of buildings and the spaces between them and how they relate to one another.

Typology
The study or systematic classification of types that have characteristics or traits in common.

Urban form
The physical layout and design of a city or urban area.

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