

TOTTENHAM HIGH ROAD HISTORIC CORRIDOR CAPS

ACTION PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

The Tottenham High Road Historic Corridor is a major arterial route which follows the path of Ermine Street, the Roman road which linked London with the north of Britain. The importance of the High Road was diminished by the re-routing of the A10 to take traffic into London from Cambridge and the North to the West of the line of the road, on the other side of Bruce Castle.

The High Road bisects Haringey; it runs in an almost straight line from Enfield in the North to Stamford Hill and Hackney in the south. It is almost three miles long which takes about twenty minutes to drive, fifteen minutes to bicycle and three quarters of an hour to walk. From the north, the road is almost flat until it approaches Tottenham Green which is situated on the crest of a small hill. South of the Green, the road slopes gently down to the railway bridge at South Tottenham and then rises upwards to its border with Hackney at Stamford Hill.

The High Road is still a busy through road; during most daytime hours, it is congested with traffic. There are busy cross routes at Lordship Lane/Lansdowne Road, at Bruce Grove, and around the enormous roundabout of Philip Lane/Seven Sisters Road with Ferry Lane. This predominance of vehicular movement obliterates the formal arrangement of the highway. With increasing car ownership, the need for cross routes bisecting the main road has broken the continuum of the High Road. Previously, strings of urban settlements along the high road were linked by areas of Broadway and green, in a more continuous journey along the arterial route leading to the City of London.

Throughout history, the road has supported houses and businesses as ribbon development along each side which have had the dual role of sustaining those travelling to and from the capital and also providing an outlet for the produce of the area, initially from small farms and orchards and later for the provision of small industries. In the 18th century, Tottenham was a haven for those who wanted to escape from the noise and pollution of the City of London and enjoy clean air and rural pursuits without losing contact with the buzz of the capital city and its wide reaching trade links.

Tottenham's close links with the development of public transport are very important; it was the arrival of the railway which runs parallel to the High Road which generated the initial expansion in the population of the area at the end of 19th century.

The introduction of the tram system at the turn of the century decreased the cost and made travelling easier. The area became even more popular and this generated a rich variety of public buildings and buildings for recreation and leisure.

The CAPS initiative for the Tottenham High Road Historic Corridor is a bold scheme to regenerate this major highway in Haringey. There is a further initiative along the same route in Hackney, the adjoining borough. The CAPS is not seen as a cosmetic exercise; the levels of the grants identified for the schemes and the source of funding dictates a serious and substantial overview to the proposals. A lasting regeneration of tired and failing fabric will attract interest from local and national sources to invest time and energy into the area for the long term improvement of housing, employment and business opportunities and a genuine commitment to the historical integrity and 'sense of place' of the area.

The creation of conservation areas in the recent past has been an important action to focus interest in the historic fabric and an educational exercise in the preservation of those parts of the area and building fabric which have been identified as requiring protection from the implied planning preference for change and redevelopment of the built fabric.

Recently, the emphasis for the designation of conservation areas has changed from that of protection to a more pro-active role. English Heritage's initiative of the placement and encouragement of conservation officers and their departments within local authorities seeks to manage the planning procedure of Grade II listed buildings at grass root level and the implementation of CAP schemes generated within the framework of local authority initiatives. This leads to a greater understanding of the frailty of the built fabric and the importance of repair and conservation not only in building terms but of the streetscape and environment as a whole. By this process, local authorities are encouraged to communicate within and between departments in the care and regeneration of important historical, architectural, environmental and social elements within the community which add to the value of the character of the area.

The unique method of funding jointly from national and local levels gives credence and a high profile status to the schemes.

The increasing development in the conservation process to include quite recent - even post-war - buildings, and the move away from a more purist approach, have broadened the focus for the conservation area to include townscape which may previously have not qualified. The complexity of a variety of different building types and ages as a representation of the growth and fortunes of the community history, presents an interesting quality worth conserving.

The procedure for local authorities to list buildings and artefacts 'locally' is indicative of a change from development to that of retention and repair as the preferred method of regeneration. The seven Conservation Areas identified in the Tottenham High Road Historic Corridor have a high level of local listing which represents a strong commitment to the CAPS and conservation process.

The aims of this Action Plan are pro-active. The proposed designation of the two new conservation areas and the additions and alterations to the borders of the five existing conservation areas is not obvious but is qualified by the aims of the overall scheme. The route along a highway can be compared to a score of music which has its high points of brilliance but also its calm and neutral spaces which emphasis those points of profound creativity and design brilliance.

The design briefs are an attempt to focus the aims of the CAPS scheme during the first two years of the initiative. It is necessary to concentrate effort into areas where real gain can be achieved - and be seen to have been achieved - at the start of the initiative, on selected problem buildings and areas, and so that each design brief area can be used as a promotional and educational resource to generate further work.

It is pertinent that the Design Brief Areas all fall in the northern part of the Corridor for this is the part of the scheme which presently has the greater wealth of quality historic buildings and shows most hope of regeneration.

The presence of the football club is predominant and the concentration of recent regenerative initiatives have been effective; the southern end of the High Road, which is only being designated as two Conservation Areas in 1998, has areas of neutral impact and some very depressed areas with high levels of vacancy and a poor quality of shops and other facilities.

It is considered that South Tottenham would benefit from an inventive Design Brief Area in order to show direction for the regeneration.

The buildings audit is not comprehensive. It is not possible to properly assess all the buildings of this area within the time made available for the Action Plan and Haringey Council have recently commissioned a photographic and historical survey of all the buildings in the area which is due to be completed in the summer of 1998, the first year of this initiative. The audit has concentrated on Buildings at Risk, the statutory Listed Buildings and other buildings which are considered to be of value to the area either by design or historic significance and which are in a frail condition. A trawl of recent planning applications has been carried out to further identify work which may be detrimental to the existing building stock. Additionally, some buildings either unlisted or locally listed have been identified as warranting consideration for statutory listed status and, in some cases, for inclusion on the Register of Buildings at Risk.

There has been a change in the area recently brought about by the use of previously public buildings for private and residential use. These have mainly been the grand Edwardian buildings - the symbol of Tottenham at its greatest success as an area. The greater portion of these have been transferred to housing associations, for instance, the library and two hospitals; and although this process retains the townscape form, it has diminished the provision of public amenity, which is addressed by the Action Area in Tottenham Green.

It is important to understand the development of the character of Tottenham High Road throughout history as a street which has developed from its topography along a main vehicular route.

Improved communications, the provision of facilities and workforce to other areas of the capital and the migration of visitors to the area have been very important but it has a relevance far beyond that of providing a dormitory function for cheap labour to, or a day trip resort for, central London. Tottenham has maintained a reputation in many trade skills, for example in the building industry and furniture manufacture, which should be encouraged and regenerated.

The major public open spaces of parks and greens, and the semi-public areas of the forecourts and front gardens of properties, have been compromised by the need for car parking and the roads have been choked with traffic. Cities will need a solution to this problem which will inevitably involve the introduction of improved public transport.

The critical issue is to control the speed and the intensity of vehicular transport through the area so that the effect is less detrimental on the street and so that the Historic Corridor can be enjoyed more fully for the purposes for which it was intended - the quality and availability of urban living.

Action Areas have been identified where, by a combination of repairs and enhancement, changes in perception of the areas can be achieved, which will benefit from the focused areas of work on the Design Briefs. These are not necessarily adjacent to the Design Brief Areas selected but will relate to work already in hand which should be put in place during the CAPS period. An example being Tottenham Green which has had two reports of proposals made during this last year and will be crucial to the success of the Historic Corridor Scheme.

The process of surveying the area has brought to light points of detail where it is considered necessary to reassess the material. It is apparent that, of the ten buildings which are scheduled as being "At Risk" on English Heritage's July 1997 report, some of these buildings have been repaired, are no longer of concern and could be removed from the list. However, it is considered that there are some omissions which should be re-evaluated: 810 High Road, for example, has further deteriorated in the past year - there are few other Grade II* buildings in the area and so this must be a priority for immediate action.

Clyde Road Depot, to the rear of the Swimming Baths building on Tottenham Green, is on the Register of Buildings at risk. It has no roof coverings and, although only listed as the curtilage of a Grade II listed building, it is considered that the scale of these buildings and the frailty of their condition warrants urgent re-evaluation and action.

Recommendations for the additions and exclusions from the various schedules and listings are included in the Building Audit of this report.





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**Appendix 8 of PRELIMINARY BIDDING DOCUMENT
(Approved by TESC 30.9.98, & English Heritage 10.11.98)**

**PROPOSED EXTENT OF BID AREA
TOTTENHAM HIGH ROAD HISTORIC CORRIDOR SCHEME**

Existing Conservation Area Boundary



Suggested Amendments to Conservation Area



Statutory Listed Buildings



Locally Listed Buildings



Suggested additions to Local List



Key Open Areas Requiring Enhancement



Forecourts Requiring Enhancement

