

# **College Conservation Area Character Statement**

## **1. Purpose of the Designation of this Conservation Area and this Character Statement**

### **1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the character statement is to provide both an account of the College Conservation Area and a clear indication of the City Council's approach to its preservation and enhancement. It is intended to assist and guide all those involved in development and change in the conservation area and will be used by the Council in assessing the design of development in future planning proposals.

1.2 The character statement should assist members of the public, investors and the planning authorities to consider the significance of the contributing elements of the historic environment and to understand how future development should best protect that significance. Planning legislation requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. In doing this the emphasis will be on control rather than prevention, to allow the area to remain alive and prosperous but at the same time to ensure that any new development accords with its special architectural and historic character.

1.3 Conservation Areas are designated by the local authority or occasionally by Historic England in consultation with local interested parties and relevant amenity groups to protect areas of historic townscape, architectural and landscape significance. Note Appendix B for further information.

## **2. The Conservation Area**

### **2.1 Location and context**

The College Conservation Area was designated on 28 April 1988 and has not been extended since. It is centred around the buildings and grounds of Brighton College, a school first built in the mid-nineteenth century, and comprises these original school building at the centre of the site with other later building added to the school up until the present day. The conservation area has an approximately rectangular plan, bounded on the southwest by Eastern Road and the northwest by Sutherland Road and most of College Terrace and extending to Canning Street to the northeast and includes all of Walpole Road and Walpole Terrace to the southeast, as well as including the western end of Belle Vue Gardens.

The earliest development of the college was completed between 1848 and 1866 and designed by George Gilbert Scott. Most of the surrounding housing was built in the late-nineteenth century with some additional buildings at the beginning of the twentieth century.

### **2.2 Summary of the area's Special Interest and Character**

Though there is a significant amount of residential terraces in the conservation area its character is not predominantly residential as the area is primarily dominated by the outward appearance of the

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Brighton College buildings and its grounds. However, the residential buildings that surround much of the college do contribute an urban character that is a significant feature of the environment. Much of the college buildings are inward facing except at the southern end where the main frontage and entrance to the college faces Eastern Road with a red brick and limestone façade centred on a gateway clocktower with a lantern above. Other college frontages onto Sutherland Road and Walpole Road are mostly mid to late twentieth century or early twenty first century and with their main frontages facing inward to the school campus with a plainer street frontage, often behind a high masonry or blank rendered walls. Because of the inward-looking nature of much of the college architecture the terraced housing, with its most significant features built around the highway frontages has a very significant and positive impact on the streetscape, especially onto the north and east views within the conservation area.

Of the residential terraces within the conservation area the most significant are mainly those which are facing onto the school and its grounds. To the east on Walpole Road and Walpole Terrace there are west facing terraced nineteenth century town houses and at the southeast junction with Eastern Road where there is the College Preparatory School. To the North the school extends to College Terrace and is faced by late nineteenth century terraced houses and to the north of that is Canning Street with 2 storey late nineteenth century houses on both sides. All of these properties are terraced and behind narrow front gardens or steps down to lower ground floors.

The character of the area is a balance between the centrally Gothic campus with its later twentieth century and contemporary additions and that of the surrounding nineteenth century terraced housing. To the south the townscape is dominated by the substantial school buildings, including the listed façade of the central gateway and dormitory buildings to the east and west of it. Towards the north of the conservation area the residential developments predominate in Canning Street and in the streets that overlook the playing grounds of the school.

The geography of the conservation area rises to the north away from the sea as it approaches the South Downs and with Canning Street at the highest level. This would have originally resulted in a clear view to the coast from the college when most of the surrounding area was still dominated by agricultural land and before the development on the south side of Eastern Road.

### 2.3 Building Materials

The majority of the townscape in the conservation area is finished in brick – mostly red brick, but with a significant amount of painted render used on the residential terraced houses. Though within the school quadrangle flint walls predominate with Carn stone window and door surrounds, quoins and other features including some copings where the pitch roofs have no eaves. At the northern end of Sutherland Road is Science and Sports block which is the most dramatically different in its material finish being in dark grey panelized cladding and Reglit glass. Most of the other buildings in the conservation area are finished in materials that complement the various architectural characteristics of the nineteenth century buildings that dominate the conservation area including the Gothic of the Brighton College Buildings, the Arts and Crafts of Canning Street and the occasional Regency style such as the buildings on the corner of Walpole Road and Walpole Terrace.

### 2.4 Appearance and Views

The most significant view within the conservation is that along Eastern Road, with dominant views from the east and west along Eastern Road and looking north along College Road. The initial view of the College is the first section of the Jackson dormitory block to be completed in 1884. This is

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the most decorated part of the gothic building with its two gables, mullioned paired and tripart traceried windows, its quoins, inset flint chequer patterns, a brick and stone buttresses and much of the quoins and lintels are in decorative terracotta. At the junction with Eastern Road the full vista opens up and the full width of the Jackson building can be seen as well as the now completed gate and tower. This is the most complete and impressive view of the school from the streets around it.

The nineteenth century origins of development in the conservation area is the primary influence on the appearance of both the residential areas and of the college. The long views along the terraced houses, especially those on College Terrace and Walpole Terrace both have a strong regular rhythm and unity that is contributed to by a significant amount of historic and original features that still survive in the frontages. Though each has a very different material finish – painted stucco on Walpole Terrace and red brick and terracotta details on College Terrace, both have three canted bays to the second floor and steps and heavy balustraded rising to the front doors. These regular features contribute positively to the regular pattern of these three storey terraces.

Views along Canning Street also have a distinct nineteenth century character and appearance, the views along it are symmetrical with each side mirroring the terrace of the other side. Again, there are canted bays to each house providing a regular rhythm to the street pattern.

Views of the school along its Sutherland Road frontage are more piecemeal with an eclectic mix of twentieth century and early twenty first century building ranging from College Hall built in 1914 to the latest college building completed in 2022. This view is also affected by being in the setting of Freshfield Business Park & car park. This has a negative impact on street views and future development of that side of Sutherland Road going ahead in the future should consider its impact on the setting of the conservation area.

### **2.5 Buildings and Archaeology**

There are no archaeological designations in place within or adjacent to the conservation area and none of the surviving buildings predate the school. All of the statutorily listed buildings are within the school grounds. There are no locally listed buildings in the conservation area.

## **3. History**

### **3.1 Origins and historic development**

Prior to the development of the school the area consisted of enclosed pastoral land leased out as “furlongs” or “laines”, The conservation area now occupies land shown on the 1792 map as Bakers Bottom Furlong. There appears to have been no development on the land until the middle of the nineteenth century when Brighton College took out a lease on it. The school had been founded in the 1840s and originally based in Portland House where the University Hospital Sussex building now stands at the top of Portland Place.

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This image shows the Parish of Brighton map 1792

The extent of the conservation area is now broadly that of Bakers Bottom Furlong, which was part of the field system of the rural landscape that existed prior to the nineteenth century. The outline of the plot is now more defined by the roads which were subsequently developed in and around it, which determined the approximate boundary of the present conservation area. All of this land south of what is now College Terrace and with the exception of the most south eastern corner was purchased by Brighton College.

Building on the present site began in 1848 and all of the school's first buildings were designed by George Gilbert Scott. The main school building near the centre of the site was completed in 1849 and is oldest of the college buildings on the site today. Though limited funding reduced some of the architectural features of this building it retained many Gothic characteristics of the time. The Chapel was completed by 1854 and Principles House and the dining hall by 1866, and were also constructed to designs by Scott. All of the original Scott buildings still survive and all are listed grade II.

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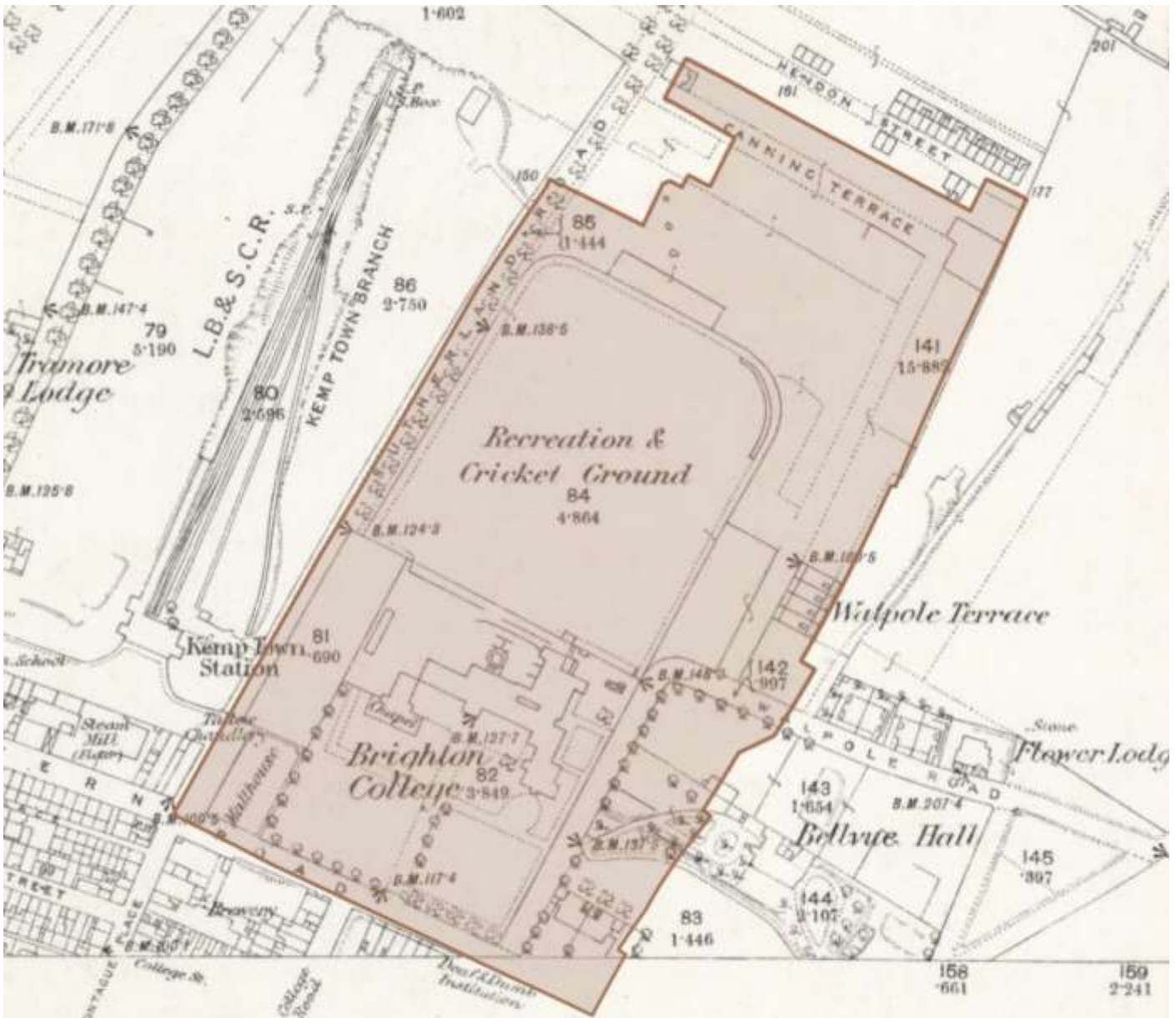
The 1851 maps (above) shows the school but the chapel has yet to be added and no other residential development had been built anywhere else in the conservation area.

Outside the college more buildings rapidly developed south of Eastern Road and down to the coast. Much of the land between it and the College had been built on, and by the 1870s all of the south side of Eastern Road was developed. During the 1870s Walpole Terrace was constructed and by the 1890s College Terrace and Canning Street were also built. Walpole Road was developed in the 1890s and a convent was built near the corner of Eastern Road with chapel added in the 1920s. The chapel and convent are now owned by Brighton College and function as a Preparatory School.

The original school buildings as intended by Scott were not designed as a quad but as south facing buildings with the chapel and principle's house to the west and eastern wings facing over the still open land and towards Eastern Road and the sea. However, by the end of the 1870s with the South side of Eastern Road built up a new range of buildings for the school was developed south of the Scott buildings. They are much closer to Eastern Road and start the process of enclosing the quad which continues to become a more completely enclosed landscape in the next century. However, at that time the frontage only extended from an industrial building to the west (The Malthouse) to the central gates, and the rest of the frontage was never completed in the twentieth century though much of the frontage was finished in 1929.

Since the 1960's period the school has developed rapidly, first with functional buildings of limited architectural ambition then at the end of the century when the college's building budget increased dramatically some more positive contemporary buildings have added to the architectural interest and variety of the conservation area. Over the last 20 years all of its biggest and most ambitious construction projects have been completed by some prominent architects including KFM, Hopkins Architects, Allies and Morrison and Richard Griffiths.

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1873 Ordnance Survey Map (above) showing the college when the first main buildings by Scott were complete but before the later college frontage onto Eastern Road was developed. It also shows the first residential buildings beginning to be developed around the site with first four houses on Walpole Terrace and houses along both sides of Eastern Road outside the conservation area. In the western corner of the conservation area is the Malthouse.

## 3.2 Historic and current uses and social context

The area was first developed for Brighton College with some residential development growing up around the college in the 1870s to 1890s and these residential buildings have not changed their use since then. However, other development, not associated with the either the college or housing has now gone. The Malthouse was destroyed after a fire was then acquired by the college. On the site of the malthouse the college's art school now stands. And the convent has been adapted by the college for its use as a preparatory school.

## 3.3 The development of the site context

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South of Eastern Road is the East Cliff Conservation Area. None of the listed buildings in that conservation area affect the setting of College Conservation Area, however there are three nineteenth century three storey stucco houses on the south side of Eastern Road, which though they are not listed contribute to the historic character of the setting of the college.

From 1869, on the west of the conservation area the school buildings faced the Kemp Town Railway Station on the opposite side of Sutherland Road. This was a branch line connecting the area with Brighton Station. The line closed in 1971 and the west side of Sutherland Road is now dominated by the Freshfield Business Park, which is a large modern estate of industrial buildings.

### 4. Appraisal

#### 4.1 Brighton College

All of the earliest listed buildings were at the centre of the school grounds designed by George Gilbert Scott to be set back from the from Eastern Road, though these now all face onto what is now an enclosed quadrangle. These earliest buildings do not have the greatest impact on the conservation area's character as most are no longer visible from the public highway and were originally designed to face the open grounds of the school to the south and the undeveloped land to the south of the Eastern Road.

George Gilbert Scott's design for the buildings were described as "joyless" by Pevsner and certainly the severe budgetary constraints of the early buildings have held back the gothic exuberance of the early buildings compared to other comparable education establishments of the time, including some of Scott's own elsewhere. The lack of students and therefore, money in the early years of the school resulted in a paired down complex of buildings with only the central block being built by 1850. During the next ten years the chapel and then the School Masters house were added as funds became available. The Chapel was built in 1859 at a time when Scott was one of the most prolific architects designing chapels, churches and cathedrals including chapels for colleges and schools such as Wellington College, Exeter College, Oxford and Harrow School College. By comparison Brighton College Chapel was a much more modest building. All the Scott buildings are constructed in a familiar Gothic revival language of the period though the principal's house is perhaps more articulated with more interest to its facades, this building was paid for by the principle himself. The chapel appears to be the most minimal of the complex by comparison on the other wing of this first facade.

The dining hall to the north of the principle's house is the last of the Scott buildings and was completed by the 1870s. The rest of the school building facing out into the streets of the conservation area were developed at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century.

The Eastern Road frontage is a more Jacobian expression of the gothic designs than the Scott buildings. The central and last to be completed gateway to the quad is the focal point of this Eastern Road streetscape. The changing pattern of gables, eaves, dormers, varied stack sizes, single and paired fenestration with its varied building line provide the interest along its full length. Designed by Thomas Graham Jackson the work was partly complete in 1884 but was stopped when only the western end of the building was finished. The eastern parts of this listed frontage were not completed until 1929. The clock tower was not completed until 2014 when it was built to a design by Richard Griffiths Architects 130 years after this phase of the school was begun, based on elements from a number of unrealised designs by Jackson originally produced for this structure.

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The eastern most end was left incomplete until the remaining corner site was developed with a sympathetic, but contemporary addition to the accommodation block by Allies and Morrison. Built on the corner of Eastern Road and Walpole Road, it has a redbrick gabled frontage, reflecting the rest of the Jackson frontage and faces into the quad finished with flint elevations responding to the flintwork of many of the historic buildings within the school complex itself.





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The gateway and clocktower before and after the work to complete the original design of the building was completed in 2014.

Further north along Walpole Road is the Leach Building, a late twentieth century or early twenty-first century building which provides less positive contribution to the conservation area and the above head height concrete wall in front of it further contributes to the negative impact of this streetfront view.

On Sutherland Road at the corner with Eastern Road is another late twentieth century building: the Woolton Building which has a bleak brick buttressed frontage built in 1971 with no windows and a later contrasting two storey arts school extension in panelling and fenestrated. This sits uncomfortably on top the original building and appears even more anachronistic in the conservation area and has a negative impact on its character.

North of Woolton Building is the grade II listed school hall designed by F T Crawthorne and built in 1914. Simple gothic red brick basilica form with a range of 7 Tudor traceried windows and steeply pitched tiled roof.

North of this building is the Kai Yong Yeoh larger teaching block by Hopkins Architects built in 2017. A five storey, nine bay frontage onto the street, it does have a quite dominant presence there. In red brick with Portland cement window surrounds, like the Allies and Morrison building it has a contemporary reflection of the gothic buildings of the school. Connected to the Hopkins building is the Skidelsky building in black bricks and timber elevation by KFM providing more

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classrooms. It is a more industrial character and a distinctive break from much of the rest of the street. Its design won an RIBA award in 2012.

North of the KFM building is a mid-twentieth century boy's day house with rather more Georgian character reminiscent of LCC housing, but its materials and scale and pitched roof relate to other historic buildings in the college campus.

At the northwest corner of the school facing Sutherland Road is the latest block and one of the largest. It contains the science classrooms, sports halls and swimming pool. It faces onto the street with a façade primarily in black cladding and opaque Reglit glazing.

### 4.2 Buildings on Walpole Road, Walpole Terrace, Belle Vue Gardens, Canning Street, College Terrace and Hendon Street

The residential buildings in the conservation area consists of close grain urban terraced houses, all of which began to be developed after the College after was established. The first of these, which still survives is Nos. 1-22 Walpole Terrace which are unlisted three storey, plus lower ground floor stucco houses built in the 1870s. All have canted tripartite bay windows on the lower ground, upper ground and first floors. The roof is pitched with eaves. Most have surviving railings in a Byzantine "flowing foliage" design with rendered low wall and heavy piers.

Further houses developed along Walpole Terrace, College Terrace, Canning Street and Walpole Road, over the next 20 years. 1-16 College Road is a uniform terrace of red brick with terracotta details of 3 storeys with a lower ground floor and original mansard roof, canted bay windows up to the first floor with terracotta decorative features including the cobbled portico entrance and the balustrades of the boundary wall.

In the corner of Canning Street and Walpole Terrace at number 55 Canning Street is a small late nineteenth century or early twentieth century 2 storey workshop accessed through from Canning street, now used by Metway Studios. The studios include a 3 storey, 6 bay building to the rear, adjacent to Hendon Street and the Conservation Area extends to a short frontage onto Hendon Street with one service entrance onto it from that side, though there is no address number onto Hendon Street.

1-22 Walpole Terrace and 1-16 College Terrace, though unlisted are all of significance, retaining most of their important historic character features and they contribute positively to the historic character of the conservation area including boundary railings stuccoed facades, canted bays and original timber sash windows.

Canning Street consists of more modest 2 storey late nineteenth century houses, though a minority of properties have had some harmful alterations, the historic character survives and further inappropriate changes should be avoided.

### 4.3 Boundaries, green Landscaping and trees

The main Eastern Road frontage of the Brighton College is planted with sycamore trees behind iron railings above a low flint wall with limestone coping. The boundary opens up at the centre in front of the gateway with a wide entrance between two heavy piers, surmounted by lamps on iron barley sugar columns.

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On the western boundary of the College campus and the conservation area the boundary wall that fronts onto Eastern Road was extended into Sutherland Road and north along the frontage of the art school at the same time as clock tower was completed. Hedges and trees have also been planted at this corner, substantially improving the corner views and partly softening this otherwise less inspiring building in the colleges' campus.

North along Sutherland Road there is a stretch of 2m high, course flint wall in front of the Hall, a line of tall modern railings in front of the further education building, more flint and then brick walls of similar height up to the boundary with the new science and sports building, which has a low hedge in front of it.

From the northwest corner along on the College Terrace boundary and on the east boundary onto Walpole Terrace the playing fields are contained within a grade II low flint wall, with regular piers and wrought iron railings between. The railings are spear headed with fleur-de-lys heads on spaced supporting posts. Many of the railings are now damaged or lost and many have been replaced with simple steel railings. Behind the railings both to the north and east are some substantial trees as well as shrubs and saplings.

By contrast the eastern boundary onto Walpole Road is a bleak rendered wall mostly 2m high. While it gives privacy to the Allies and Morrison's Boarders block, it also undermines any contribution the building's architectural qualities might contribute to the streetscape. This wall obscures pedestrian views of the only parts of the original school, (the principles house and the dining hall) that would otherwise be visible from the public highway and would enhance views within the conservation area, especially along Belle Vue Gardens.

### 5. Pressures for Change and Opportunities for Enhancement

#### 5.1 Pressures for Change

The main pressure for change is likely to arise from the wish of Brighton College to further develop within its own grounds. Many additions have been made to the school building in the last twenty years and the school is likely to further develop their campus in future years.

The contribution the school makes to the conservation area with its sympathetic architectural developments and the landscape and boundaries are likely to have a significant impact of the historic significance of the environment. Therefore, it will be important that further development be assessed in the context of the conservation area's character and successful new developments such as the new accommodation block on the junction of Eastern Road and Walpole Road put forward rather than buildings which are out of character such as the arts building on the junction of Eastern Road with Southerland Road.

#### 5.2 Negative Development within the Conservation Area

In the residential streets there is little scope for substantial development. However, the historic character of these streets can be eroded by progressive, unsympathetic alterations and the removal of original architectural features. A minority of the houses on Walpole Road have had front dormers or rooflights added to them. These should not be permitted on the front elevation. This is also true of College Terrace and Canning Street. There is very little evidence of the installation of uPVC windows, but these do appear in some places, especially in Canning Street and should not be approved in future. In order to limit development that has a harmful impact on the character of the conservation area an Article directive should be considered for the conservation area.

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Most of the buildings within the conservation area and outside its boundaries have a neutral or positive impact on the setting of the College Conservation Area. However, the Freshfield Business Estate is dominated by low rise mostly metal clad buildings and the majority of the landscape, including the roads is dominated by car parking. This negative landscape impact has been recognized at the boundary to the south onto Eastern Road towards the rather bleak housing developments, where the boundary is softened by the planting of a broad area of planting including trees. By contrast the boundary of Sutherland Road and the conservation area has only a low hedge. Further development on this commercial estate should take more account of its impact on the conservation area.

### 5.2 Opportunities for Enhancement

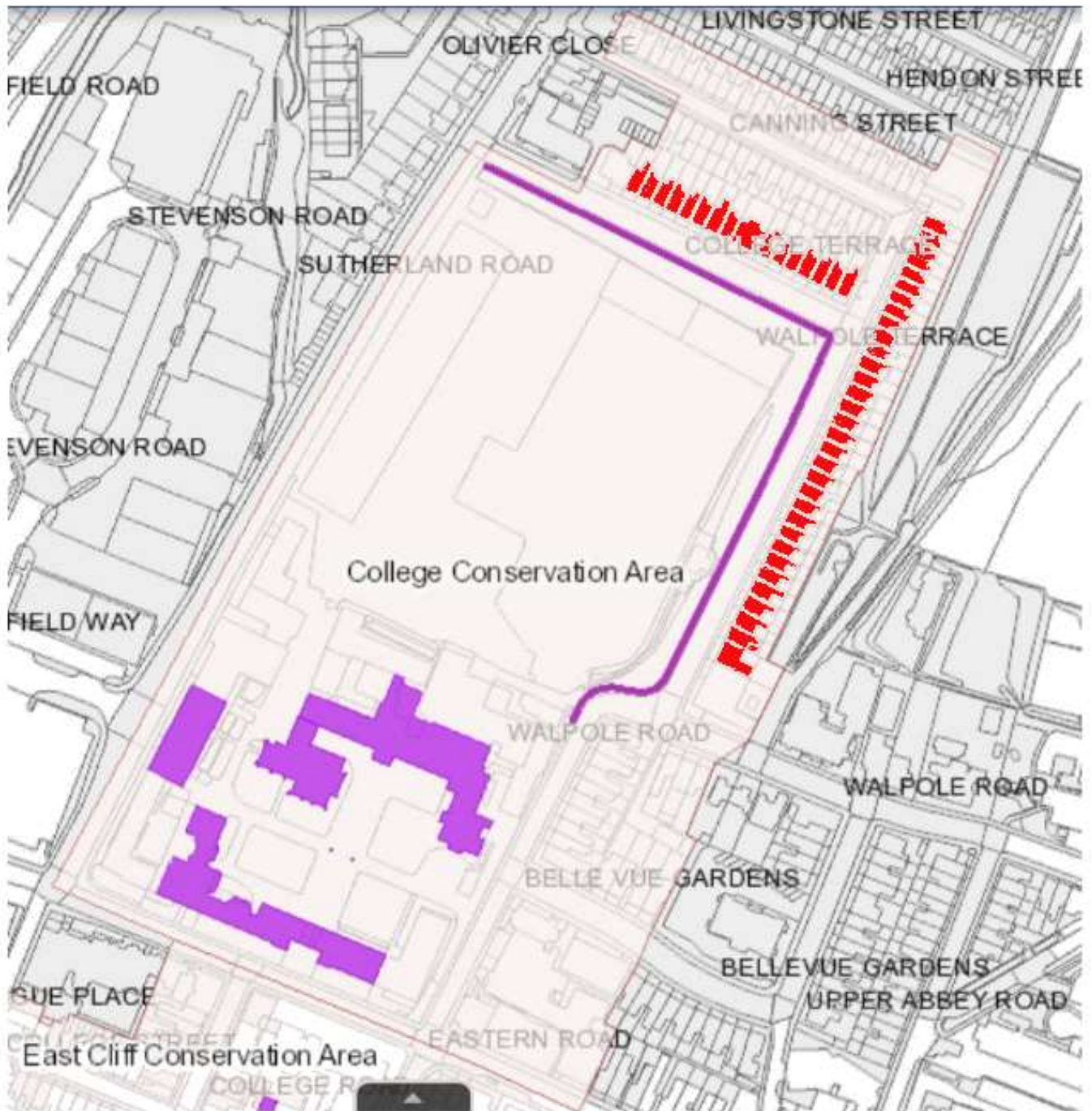
The green space of the playing field with its trees, shrubs and listed railings contributes to the quality of the environment of the residential streets facing onto the school ground. This boundary could be improved by the repair and replacement of missing railings and the associated dwarf wall. The benefits of such changes can be seen on the Eastern Road Frontage where the tree planting, removal of a damaged green wooden fence and the reinstating of railings has significantly improved the appearance of this part of the footway.

At the south end of Walpole Road, the boundary with the college provides an especially brutal pedestrian street view. Its high wall and harsh painted render provides little relief to the least positive frontage of the college's campus and this also contrasts with the more generous boundary onto Eastern Road.

Future development by Brighton College to revisit architecture of the Woolton building to resolve its negative and discordant impact would be encouraged with more positive contemporary development.

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## College Conservation Area Map



Grade II Listed buildings



Key buildings of historic or architectural significance



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### **Appendix A – Schedule of properties within the Conservation Area**

Belle Vue Gardens:

1-9 odd.

Canning Street:

1-55 odd, 2-38 even.

College Terrace:

1-17 consecutive

Eastern Road:

North side from junction with Sutherland Road to 154 odd.

Sutherland Road:

East side from junction with Eastern Road to junction with College Terrace.

Walpole Road:

1-3 odd and 4-28 even, together with the Brighton College Prep School (number 2).

Walpole Terrace:

1-31 odd.

Hendon Street:

Unnumbered (south side on extreme southeast elevation)

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## Appendix B – Relevant planning policies and national guidance

### Policy context

1.1 Conservation areas are found throughout the country and have become a popular and accepted way of preserving the country's best examples of historic townscapes, with the type of area designated varying enormously.

1.2 While the listing of individual historic buildings began in 1944, the power to designate 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'<sup>1</sup> was first set out in the Civic Amenities Act 1967 and since then some 10,000 conservation areas have been designated in England and Wales.

1.3 The original definition remains the same in current legislation – Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The main consequences of designation are that:

- Planning permission is required for the demolition of buildings
- Notice must be served on the council where works to trees are proposed
- The council must pay special attention to the character and appearance of the conservation area when considering planning applications; and
- Permitted development rights are reduced.

1.4 These points are explained in more detail in the council's Conservation Strategy (2015)<sup>2</sup>. The aim in exercising these controls is to ensure that what makes the area special is not harmed by proposed changes.

1.5 Local authorities are encouraged to support their conservation areas with a clear statement of the special architectural and historic interest that justifies their designation. The production of this appraisal satisfies the requirements of the legislation and provides a firm basis for assessing applications for development.

1.6 Section 72 of the 1990 Act requires local authorities, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing conservation areas when considering planning matters. This does not necessarily stifle the scope for creative design provided the objectives of legislation and policy are met without harming the character and appearance of the conservation area.

1.7 Conservation areas may include a range of heritage assets, such as listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, registered parks and locally listed

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<sup>1</sup> Section 69 - Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

<sup>2</sup> Strategy for conserving Brighton & Hove's historic built environment (2015) available on the council's website.

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buildings. In the case of listed buildings, Section 66 of the 1990 Act places a statutory duty on Local Planning Authorities to have special regard to preserving the special architectural and historic interest of both the listed building and its setting.

1.8 Designation also raises awareness of an area's special attributes that will help to foster local pride in the locality. While conservation area status does not prevent change, designation does ensure that the character of the area must be taken into account in the interest of the community as well as addressing the interests of the developer.

[National Planning Policy Framework: Paragraphs 189 to 208](#)

[Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#)

[Adopted City Plan Part 2](#)

**Policy DM26 Conservation Areas** for example, Supporting paragraph 2.196 states that opportunities for enhancement of a conservation area, including beneficial change, may be set out in a character statement or management plan for the area. **Policy DM27 Listed Buildings** seeks to protect and enhance the setting of listed buildings.