5.8 Hampstead Heath / Belsize Park

Brief description

This area is defined by Hampstead Heath to the north by Malden Road / Southampton Road to the east and extends southwards and westwards to the west of Haverstock Road. It borders Gospel Oak to the east and Hampstead to the north.

Haverstock Road is an important north south route through the Borough linking Hampstead to the north with Chalk Farm and Camden Town and onwards to Euston Station to the south. Local shops are clustered in a parade at Belsize Park along this route. Dropping downhill to the east, Pond Street leads to South End Green where further local facilities are clustered around South End Green. For many this is the entry point onto Hampstead Heath and Hampstead Heath station opens onto the green. The rail line disappears into tunnel to the west of the station but to the east it severs easy movement northwards.

The area is predominantly residential with a mix of historic streets and later interventions however the campus of the Royal Free Hospital is also a significant feature in the area. The hospital is a substantial structure and associated accommodation blocks together with the access and service routes ensure that this is both a barrier to movement and a dominant element in the areas character. The hospital also brings with it significant employment and further visitors to the area.
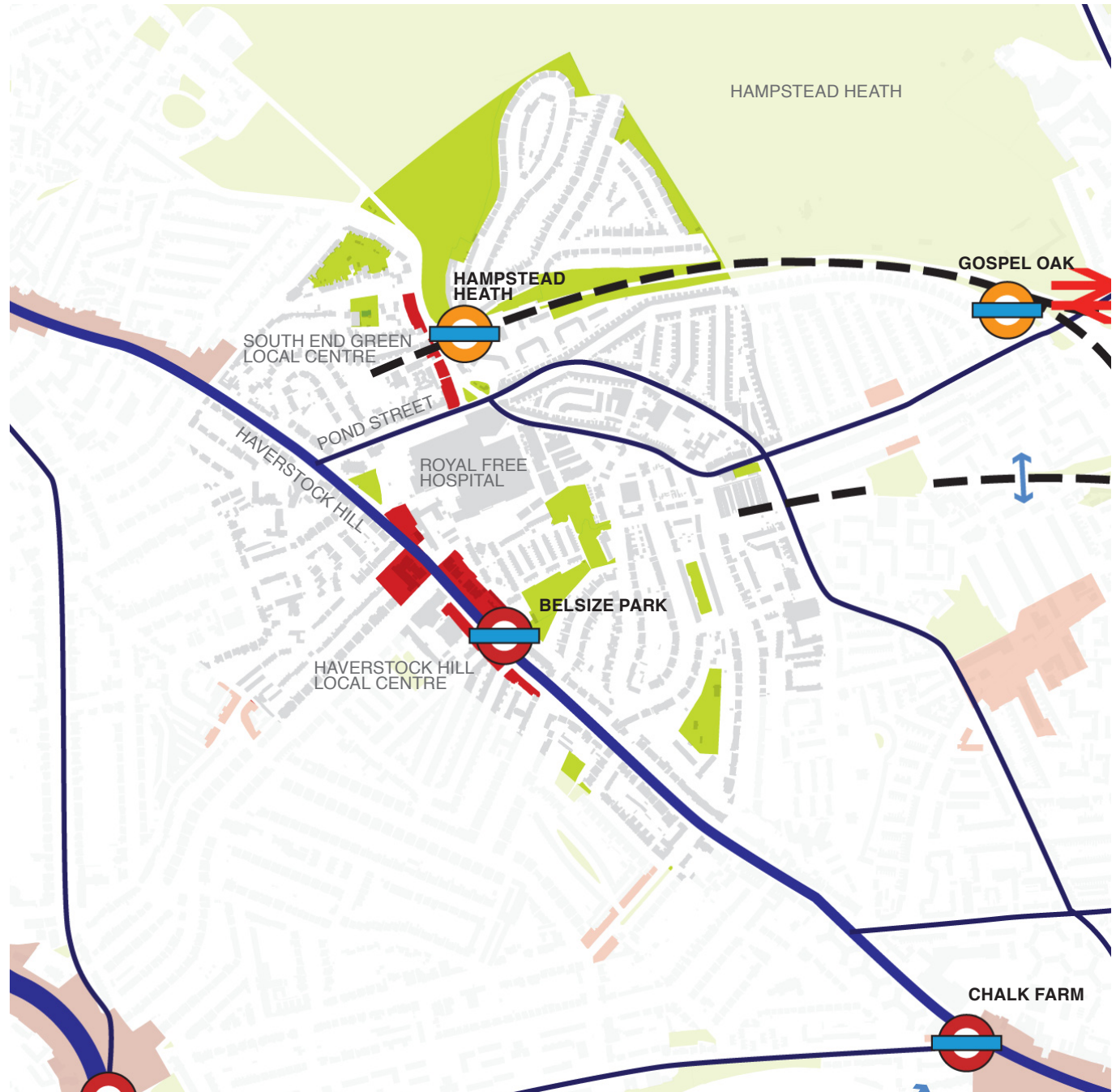

Figure 5.30: Hampstead Heath / Belsize Park Context Analysis

Figure 5.31: Hampstead Heath / Belsize Park Historic Plan 1862

Figure 5.32: Hampstead Heath / Belsize Park Historic Plan 1890

Historical development

Haverstock Road is a historic route and predates the planned Finchley Road to the west. Historic plans from 1862 indicate properties strung along Haverstock Road together with a cluster of properties at South End Green around the newly opened Hampstead Heath station. Through the 19th century the Heath became increasingly popular with visitors and the village grew around the station. Plans from 1890 indicate that whilst Gospel Oak to the east had been developed, open land still existed to the south of South End Green.

In the early part of the 20th Century some of this land was developed with flatted accommodation and these blocks are evident in the 1930's plans of the area. Some have survived to today. In 1975 the Royal Free Hospital was built on the site of the former Hampstead Hospital.

Public transport accessibility

The area has a PTAL of 4 to 5 reflecting the access to Belsize Park and Hampstead Heath stations and the bus routes both along the Haverstock Road corridor and through South End Green local centre.

Socio-economic issues

The area ranks as:

- Within the 10-20% most deprived in respect of health and disability deprivation; and

- Within the 20-30% most deprived in respect of income deprivation and this impacts strongly on children and older people across the area.

Existing character

The wider area is an attractive leafy Victorian suburb with large homes set on tree lined streets. The two centres at South End Green and Haverstock Road create focii but the fabric around these centres is mixed. The collection of buildings that form the Royal Free Hospital loom over South End Green and the area to the east is fragmented and lacking a clear identity or character.

Post war interventions have severed connections and there is no clear pattern or form to development in the area
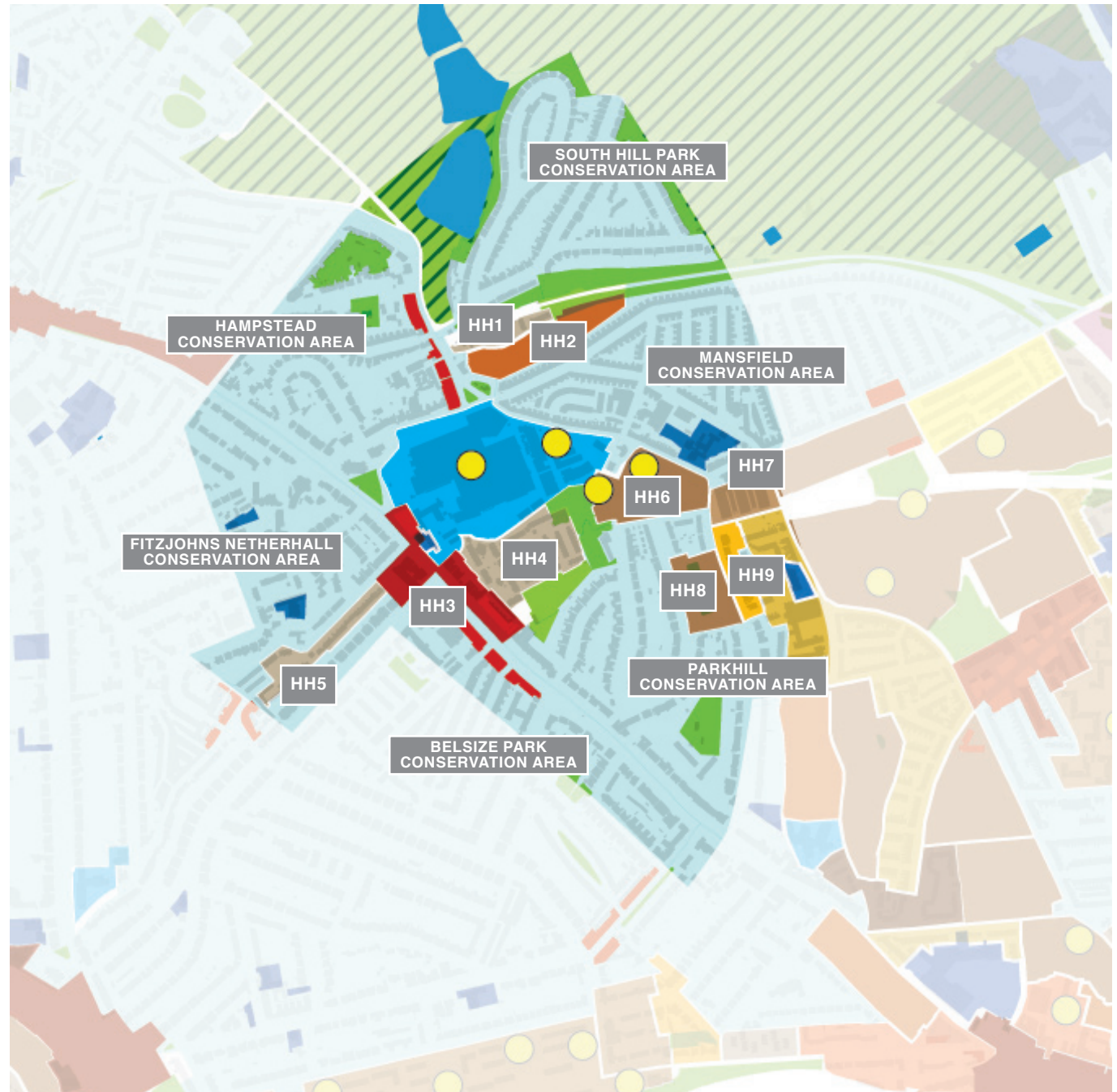

Figure 5.33: Hampstead Heath / Belsize Park Character Areas

Identity

The Royal Free Hospital is an imposing building that is highly visible from the surrounding area. It is of significant mass and detracts from the wider appearance and character of the area.

To the east of the hospital are a number of tall post-war residential towers and these combine with the hospital to create a cluster.

The notable modernist Dunboyne Estate is adjacent but of a modest scale.

Retaining character

The hospital and post-war development areas are surrounded by areas designated as Conservation Area. Their setting is impacted by the scale and appearance of buildings on the hospital lands and in the area to its immediate east.

The lack of investment in public realm in some places detracts from character and improvements would improve and enhance the setting of buildings of all periods.

Opportunities for change

The area is mixed and the biggest opportunity remains around the Royal Free Hospital and land immediately to the east on Fleet Road. Residential estates in this area could be restructured to contribute better to the wider area.

From top left, clockwise:

Cayford House on Lawn Road; view of the Royal Free Hospital from Fleet Road; the centre on Haverstock Hill; private homes on Ornan Road and housing at Aspern Grove

HH1 - St Crispins Close

Typology: LATE 20TH CENTURY ESTATES

Building type / age	Late 20th Century houses and apartments
Scale and massing	2-3 storey
Street character / building interface	Quiet cul de sac alongside railway line
Interface with surrounding area	Single point of access from South End Road and South End Green Local Centre
Public realm character	Properties front onto semi-private courtyard spaces that incorporate car parking. Trees and planting are important to the areas character
Opportunity for improvements	**LOW**

HH2 - South End Close

Typology: EARLY 20TH CENTURY APARTMENT BLOCKS

Building type / age	Early 20th Century substantial brick built apartment blocks with pitched roofs
Scale and massing	4 storey U-shaped blocks with additional floor set-back
Street character / building interface	Blocks front onto an estate road and onto semi-private courtyard gardens to the south side
Interface with surrounding area	Single point of access from South End Road and South End Green Local Centre
Public realm character	Blocks are set within a green environment with blocks wrapping around courtyard spaces. There are few trees to break up the substantial car parking areas
Opportunity for improvements	**LOW: The area could be enhanced through tree planting to break up the substantial car parking areas**

HH3 - Haverstock Hill

Typology: LOCAL CENTRES

Building type / age	Victorian shops with residential or other use above
Scale and massing	2-4 storey
Street character / building interface	Busy high street with active uses at ground floor and buildings fronting directly onto the street
Interface with surrounding area	Well connected with wider street network
Public realm character	Whilst footways are wide they are cluttered and paving is tired. Street trees add to the areas quality
Opportunity for improvements	**LOW: Public realm improvements could reduce impact of side turnings, unify the area and add street trees**

HH4 - Aspern Grove

Typology: LATE 20TH CENTURY ESTATES

Building type / age	Late 20th Century residential estate composed of town houses and apartments
Scale and massing	2-3 storey terraces of town houses together with 4 storey apartments also laid out as terraced block
Street character / building interface	Quiet semi-private streets with buildings fronting directly onto them
Interface with surrounding area	Single point of vehicular access off Haverstock Hill to the west. Pedestrian access through Belsize Wood eastwards
Public realm character	Public realm has been carefully designed but is a little tired. Further trees would enhance the character.
Opportunity for improvements	**LOW**

HH5 - Ornan Road | Typology: LATE 20TH CENTURY ESTATES

Building type / age	Late 20th Century houses
Scale and massing	2 storey houses with front and rear gardens
Street character / building interface	Properties front the street with space for car parking within garden to the front
Interface with surrounding area	Connected network of streets and good access to Belsize Park and local centres but poor connections southwards
Public realm character	Properties are set behind front gardens with low walls or hedging providing the plot boundary. Street trees and planting in front gardens are important to the character of the streets
Opportunity for improvements	**LOW: Resist loss of front gardens and retain street tree planting**

HH6 - Garnett Road | Typology: POST-WAR ESTATES - MEDIUM/HIGH RISE

Building type / age	Post war residential blocks
Scale and massing	Typically 4-5 storey; 14 storey tower
Street character / building interface	Buildings set within landscaped estate but provide frontage to Garnett Road to south
Interface with surrounding area	Built form contrasts with surrounding area and north-south movement along Upper Park Road disrupted by layout
Public realm character	Public realm disjointed and lacking identity. Mature trees are an asset but open green spaces offer limited amenity value
Opportunity for improvements	**HIGH: Car park structure is vacant and offers development opportunity. There may be potential to address urban design weaknesses elsewhere**

HH7 - Dunboyne Road Estate

Typology: POST-WAR ESTATES - LOW RISE

Building type / age	Modernist estate built in concrete in 1970's providing maisonettes and flats. Grade II listed
Scale and massing	2-3 storey linear blocks orientated north-south
Street character / building interface	Internalised layout with poor interface with surrounding streets. Access gated
Interface with surrounding area	Well connected with wider street network
Public realm character	Network of walkways and paths integrated into the bespoke estate design Mature trees enhance the estates setting
Opportunity for improvements	**LOW: Estate has recently been refurbished and is Grade II listed**

HH8 - Woodfield / Barnfield

Typology: POST-WAR ESTATES - MEDIUM/HIGH RISE

Building type / age	Substantial brick built flatted residential estate, built in 1949. Blocks are Grade II listed
Scale and massing	4/5 storey linear blocks orientated north-south
Street character / building interface	Blocks set back from streets behind a landscaped strip with front door access. Central communal garden
Interface with surrounding area	Well connected with wider street network
Public realm character	Blocks look over a significant green courtyard space and mature trees add to the quality of the area
Opportunity for improvements	**LOW: Blocks are Grade II listed but courtyards could be enhanced through more planting**

Building type / age	Large Victorian semi-detached houses
Scale and massing	3 storey with additional accommodation within roofspace
Street character / building interface	Properties front directly onto the street with gardens to front and rear
Interface with surrounding area	Well connected with wider street network
Public realm character	Properties are set behind front gardens with brick walls providing the boundary treatment. Street trees and planting in front gardens are important to the character of the streets
Opportunity for improvements	**LOW: Resist loss of front gardens and retain street tree planting**