




REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

DOI DISTRICT HOUSING COMMITTEE

LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE

STOKE NEWINGTON RESERVOIRS, FILTER  
BEDS AND THE NEW RIVER AREA -  
~~PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA~~

Classification DECISION	Enclosure 
Ward(s) affected BROWNSWOOD NEW RIVER	

SUMMARY

1. This report recommends the designation of the Stoke Newington Reservoirs, Filter Beds and the New River, with or without adjacent residential terraces around the Filter Beds as a Conservation Area.

BACKGROUND

2. In March, 1985, the Planning and Transport Committee identified 25 potential areas and six extensions to existing Conservation Areas for study. These included the Reservoirs, Filter Beds and the New River areas, together with the Digby Crescent Area.

3. Officers feel it would be appropriate to bring forward Conservation Area designation in view of the uncertainty surrounding the future of the waterworks areas after 1989. The lack of statutory protection of this area of outstanding character (other than Listed Buildings) makes the need for Conservation Area designation even more desirable.

4. Conservation Area designation would enable the Council to exercise a greater degree of control over demolition of existing buildings and structures as well as the design and use of proposed developments. The objective is to preserve and enhance the area's contrasting characters in this densely built-up part of Inner London. Mature trees would also be protected in the proposed Conservation Area.

CONSIDERATIONS

5. The central features of this open and undeveloped area are the East and West Reservoirs and Filter Beds. The nine Filter Beds are probably the earliest unaltered examples of their type in London. The New River enters the Borough at Green Lanes and flows eastwards to the East Reservoir, from where it links the two Reservoirs and the Filter Beds.

6. There are few buildings within the curtilage of the present T.W.A. waterworks but among them are several Listed Buildings. These comprise the Listed Grade II\* Engine House ('Castle' Pumping Station) by the West Reservoir; The Railings adjoining Green Lanes are Locally Listed; the Listed Grade II Gas House by the East Reservoir; The Ivy House Sluice, Listed Grade II which straddles the New River; and beyond the northernmost point of the East Reservoir is the Listed Grade II Woodberry Down Bridge.

7. Other structures of significant historical or architectural interest include the Filter Beds, Reservoirs and the New River themselves, together with two-storey contemporary buildings adjoining the Engine House; The Filtration Plant and a two storey Waterman's House on the East Reservoir adjoining Lordship Road. Fuller descriptions of these buildings are in Appendix A.

8. Around the Filter Beds and immediately to the south of the Reservoirs the streets have been largely unaltered and reflect the grandeur of confident Victorian architecture. Fine examples of double and single-fronted two and three-storey houses in these terraces variously exhibit the original features of mid to late 19th Century dwellings that have been altered and lost in many other areas. It is the consistency of original architectural detail which sets these streets apart from others, to merit consideration for Conservation Area Declaration. More detailed descriptions of these streets are in Appendix A.

#### CONSERVATION AREA PROPOSALS

9. The terraces to the north of the Filter Beds are very prominent due to the relatively higher surrounding ground levels than the Reservoirs. These streets have greater prominence as elements which enclose the Filter Beds and therefore their relationship inextricably links the two. It is suggested that a higher priority be given to these streets as part of the initial designation due to their prominent and environmentally sensitive situation.

10. The streets to the south of the Reservoirs and Filter Beds lie at a relatively lower level in relation to the embankments than the Filter Beds. While also being of architectural merit and interest, these terraces are less important to the character of the waterworks.

11. While certain streets form important backdrops to the Waterworks they are also of intrinsic architectural value. It is considered that complete street scenes and vistas should be preserved and not just the terraces adjoining the T.W.A. boundary. The entire character of the Victorian street scene would thus be presented and not fragments of it. Areas further from the T.W.A. site may be considered in the future for independent Conservation Area designation or extensions to existing ones, as resources permit.

12. Whilst there are a number of fine streets around the Filter Beds and to the south of the Reservoirs it is not suggested that at this stage designation should extend over a wide area.

13. Whilst a tight boundary could be justified around the Reservoirs this option is less easily supportable around the Filter Beds. The houses in Gloucester Drive face onto the Filter Beds and views in and out are an important consideration. To the south the houses in Digby Crescent are particularly fine examples of late Victorian architecture which have as strong a claim to Conservation Area Designation as do the Filter Beds.

14. Corporate considerations include the cost implications of requiring conversions and improvements to higher standard specifications in the proposed Conservation Area. It is not envisaged that there will be significant cost implications as at present stock bricks, timber sashes and artificial slates are required for extensions and other alterations. The same would apply after Conservation Area designation. The Adolphus HAA includes Gloucester Drive and Princess Crescent.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

15. Designation as a Conservation Area will enable the Council to pursue a more critical approach to redevelopment proposals including demolition of any structure, by requiring developments to respect, reflect and enhance the area's special character, and will support the design and landscape policies in the Borough Plan.

16. A forthcoming Area Planning Statement to be submitted to the Committee will set out the problems and opportunities in respect of future uses for the present Thames Water Authority site when it ceases to be operational in 1989. Conservation Area designation of this area would be complementary to such recommended options.

## OBSERVATIONS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

17. The designation of Conservation Areas incurs additional costs to the Council for:

- (a) the advertising cost for planning applications - however this proposed area does not contain many properties so such costs are likely to be insubstantial;
- (b) special building materials, surface treatment and street furniture required in Conservation Areas - however a working group of the D.T.C.S. - Directorate of Planning and Development is currently trying to reduce these costs and is due to report to this Committee cycle (see Minute 11, last paragraph of Planning and Transport Committee 4th March 1986). These additional costs should be made clear in the report back to this Committee on any final ratification and formal designation of this area as a Conservation Area.

18. It is possible that Thames Water Authority would appeal against designation of this area as a Conservation Area. This would involve the Council in the substantial costs of a Planning Inquiry which could not be quantified at present.

## OBSERVATIONS OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

19. In general terms the Housing Service welcomes the proposals for applying Conservation Area status to the redundant Water Board land comprising the Filter Beds, Reservoirs and New River. However, we are concerned about the proposals to include some of the adjacent terraced housing within the proposed Conservation Area. This concern is based on:

- (a) whether Conservation Area status is likely to increase existing pressures in the local housing market and in particular whether private tenants will be subject to increased pressure from private developers;
- (b) whether Conservation Area status will result in an acceleration in the current inflation in house prices and as a consequence preclude many Hackney residents from enjoying the benefits of the area. In addition we are concerned that any increase in prices may have a serious affect on Housing Associations ability to buy and improve property in the area.

- (c) whether Conservation Area status will impose increased financial burdens on existing private owners many of whom already find the cost of repairs and improvements onerous.
- (d) whether Conservation Area status will impose increased financial burdens on the Council's own development activities in the area at a time when it is already proving difficult to meet current project control requirements. Similar concerns are evident in relation to Housing Association rehabilitation projects.
- (e) whether additional restrictions are likely to be imposed on the provision of extensions including roof extensions which are often necessary to facilitate the proper and more effective conversion of the properties in the areas and to maximise the full potential of the properties.
- (f) whether redevelopment is likely to be precluded in a situation where some of the houses may be in such poor structural condition as to make economic rehabilitation impossible.
- (g) whether the surrounding streets have sufficient special architectural merit to justify Conservation Area status.

If the Committee accepts the recommendations to approve an extended Conservation Area in principle and as a basis for local consultation we would expect further detailed consideration of our reservations about the inclusion of the surrounding streets as part of this consultation exercise. We would also suggest that the zoned Housing Association be consulted.

The report makes a specific reference to the declaration of HAA's in the surrounding streets. At the moment only Gloucester Drive is included in a declared HAA and there are currently no proposals for further declarations to cover the rest of the proposed Conservation Area.

#### OBSERVATIONS OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES

20. I would recommend that the boundary adjacent to Newton Close be moved to be along Newton Close. This would include all the open land adjoining New River and East reservoir, rather than be along a particular land owner's boundary. The Director of Leisure Services supports the designation of the reservoir as a Conservation Area to conserve the unique character of open water and adjacent buildings.

#### OBSERVATIONS OF THE RACE RELATIONS UNIT

21. The Race Relations Adviser has no objections to this proposal but will be commenting in detail on the Area Planning Statement for the Reservoirs in due course.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITIES

22. There are no specific foreseen implications for Race Relations.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR DECENTRALISATION, WOMEN, DISABLED PEOPLE, OFFICE ACCOMMODATION, AND MANAGEMENT TEAM

23. There are no specific foreseen implications for the above.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFFING

24. It is anticipated that the increase in workload can be accommodated within the existing staff resources in the Planning Division.

## CONCLUSIONS

25. As a consequence of the Thames Water Authority's intention to declare the waterworks at Stoke Newington surplus to operational requirements from 1989, the need for a Conservation study has assumed a higher priority than considered in the previous Conservation report. The study is now completed and suggests that the Reservoirs, Filter Beds and the New River form part of a unique water resource in Inner London. There is a need to protect these attractive local landmarks by statutory designation as a Conservation Area. The streets surrounding the waterworks are also worthy of designation in their own right, but additionally form an important backdrop, enclosing the TWA site. It is recommended that Conservation Area designation should therefore, include the waterworks and Victorian residential streets immediately adjoining the Filter Beds.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

A) That the Committee agrees in principle to the designation of EITHER:

### OPTION 1

The Stoke Newington Reservoirs, Filter Beds and the New River, together with Digby Crescent, Brownswood Road, Queen's Drive, Gloucester Drive and Princess Crescent as shown on the draft Conservation Area Map No. TP/10/17 (Appendix B).

OR:

### OPTION 2

The Stoke Newington Reservoirs, Filter Beds and the New River only as shown on the Draft Conservation Area Map No. TP/10/18 (Appendix C) under the Town and Country Planning Act 1977, Section 277 as amended subject to the views of local residents, the Leisure Services Committee and the DOI District Housing Committee.

- B) That officers be authorised to carry out public consultations on the proposed Conservation Area as agreed in Recommendation (A) and report back to a meeting of the Committee for final ratification and formal designation.
- C) That this report be referred to the Leisure Services Committee and the DOI District Housing Committee for observation.

R.J. Michael, Head of Planning

Paul Rao, Lead Originator

17th June 1986

PLAN8:PAULRAO

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

STOKE NEWINGTON RESERVOIRS, FILTER BEDS AND NEW RIVER

PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA

Architectural and Historical Descriptions

1. The New River was constructed early in the 17th Century to supply spring water from Hertfordshire to Inner North London. Its course within Hackney has largely been unaltered but elsewhere along its present 27 mile course there have been some works to straighten the channel, reducing the original length by some 13 miles. As an important feature in the social and economic development of London, it is an early example of an open water channel which is still performing its original function. The New River represents a unique part of London's industrial heritage and consequently studies are in hand by local amenity groups in North London to afford it greater statutory protection in recognition of its importance.
2. The East and West Reservoirs date from 1833, the banks of which are lined with material from the Old London Bridge. The large areas of water and surrounding land provides a habitat within this density built-up urban area that supports a variety of flora and fauna. They are also of London-wide importance for several species of wintering wild fowl due to the size, depth and quality of water in addition to the undisturbed surroundings.
3. The Filter Beds was constructed in phases between 1855 and 1883 and arose partly as a result of the 1846 Cholera epidemic. They were introduced due to the need for greater water purity and these Filter Beds were constructed as 'Lancashire' Filters using the slow sand filtration process. After the First World War the rapid filtration process was introduced to increase the output of purified water by means of pumping through the filters at a high pressure.
4. The Engine House ('Castle' Pumping Station) Listed Grade II\* was completed in 1856. The building was designed by Chadwell Mylne to resemble a medieval fortress with a keep and bailey, and is dressed in stone. Its chimneys were cleverly disguised as towers. The main Engine Hall has been unused for over 30 years although it used to contain a Beam Engine. This important local landmark is accompanied by smaller two-storey stone dressed buildings adjoining to the east, having stepped gables and external stepped buttresses.
5. The Filtration Plant on the south west edge of the West Reservoir was built in 1936 and is a fine example of Rational Moderne architecture. It comprises a central three-storey block flanked by single storey 'wings'. The interior houses some pumping machinery, and also has an unobstructed wood block floor running the whole length of the building.
6. The Gas House Listed Grade II, dates from the early to mid 19th Century. This single-storey stock brick building has had several alterations over time but still displays four bays with windows which have radial heads under round stone lintels. There is a similar lintel to the fanlight of a four panelled door.

7. The Waterman's House built in 1911, is constructed in red brick and rendered in pebble dash above the ground floor. The distinctive irregular roof and timber fronted gables were features of this popular Queen Anne Revival style of the period.
8. The Ivy House Sluice Listed Grade II, dates from the early-mid 19th Century. It is a small square building in stock brick with a pyramid roof. Blank arched recesses are on three sides and a brick arch to the door on the south elevation. The east and west sides also have segmented brick arches over the New River, which this Sluice straddles. The original machinery is still in working order.
9. Woodberry Down Bridge Listed Grade II, dates from the 18th Century. Although there have been alterations to this structure, it has a low segmented arch with no parapet, together with curved side walls. The north side retains the original light red brick.
10. Digby Crescent and 1-43 Brownswood Road are built in yellow stock brick and represent fine examples of double and single fronted three storey Victorian Houses. The striking red brick string courses reinforce the vista along Digby Crescent while the decorative stucco at ground floor level and plain stucco on upper floors has largely been unaltered throughout. These features together with the paired porches and the mirrored image of the south side of Digby Crescent with Brownswood Road makes this group of properties particularly fine, demonstrating a complete and consistently high quality of this type of Victorian architecture.
11. 80-106 Queen's Drive and Princess Crescent are also Victorian and are no less imposing, containing a more varied architectural character while retaining features described above.
12. 1-69 and 2-70 Gloucester Drive comprise three storey paired Victorian terraced properties also constructed in yellow stock brick. They display red brick string courses, decorative stucco on ground floor bays and on the imposing porches, with red brick lintels above each segment of the bays and porches. Most properties retain the original dormers at the front.
13. Lordship Park comprises a mix of large imposing three-storey paired Victorian properties built in yellow stock brick with red brick string courses with similarly coloured decoration on pillars and lintels around the windows. These large buildings also have gabled dormers at the front and distinctive colonaded porches. Further to the east are two storey double fronted properties in yellow stock brick with decorative stucco on bays and arched inset porches.
14. Allerton Road and Queen Elizabeth's Walk (adjoining the Waterworks Site) comprise a variety of double and single-fronted two-storey Victorian terraces which typify the smaller Victorian dwelling in this unaltered example. Here again, properties have decorative stucco on front bays and arched porches, together with several properties retaining the original wood panelled front doors. The double-fronted properties at 66-86 Queen Elizabeth's Walk only have one bay and arched entrances, with arched brick lintels above the second front windows.
15. Fairholt Road comprises properties with decorative eaves awnings above a small gabled window while other properties have red brick string courses and stuccoed lintels. Many properties retain original stained glass top lights on upper floors, and in hallways.

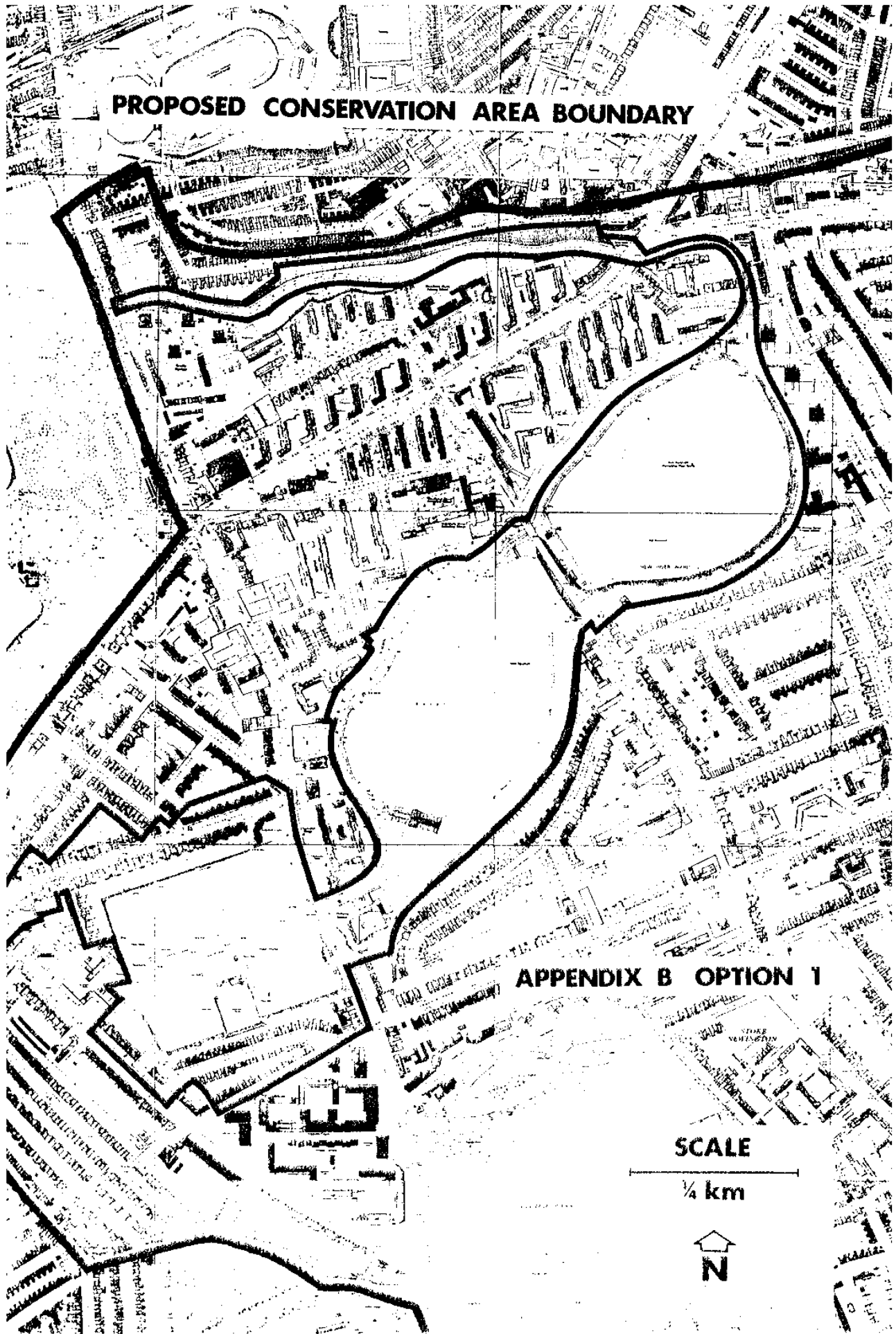
Responses to Observations of the Director of Housing

1. The observations of the Director of Housing are consistent with those views which his Directorate has made upon previous proposed Conservation Area designations. However, these earlier designation proposals were for predominantly residential areas. These concerns need to be addressed and Members have requested additional studies to be undertaken in respect of the earlier reports. There is, however, a need to balance the benefits to be derived from completing further investigations for this area with the advantage of designating the Conservation Area in view of the TWA's expressed intention to declare the waterworks surplus to operational requirements.
2. The standards of design and materials required for future development in the proposed Conservation Area would apply to private developers and Council's Own Development alike. These standards however, are encouraged throughout the Borough and not just in Conservation Areas. Similarly, any proposals for redevelopment would not necessarily be precluded but would be subject to sympathetic designs which enhance the area as well as conforming to the Council's approved Environmental Policies. Designation will also make additional grant aid potentially available.
3. Officers have carried out studies to assess the landscape and architectural qualities of the proposed Conservation Area. It is considered that because of the consistency of architectural quality and detail the streets surrounding the TWA area are worthy of Conservation Area designation in themselves. However, the strong planning and architectural relationship between the Waterworks and Digby Crescent, Brownswood Road, Queen's Drive, Gloucester Drive and Princess Crescent warrants both their inclusion in the proposed Conservation Area.
4. In view of the pressing need for the Council to give the Reservoirs, Filter Beds and New River statutory protection, only a small proportion of the residential area identified in the broader study has been included in the proposed Conservation Area.

17th June 1986

PLAN8:PAULRAO

**PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY**



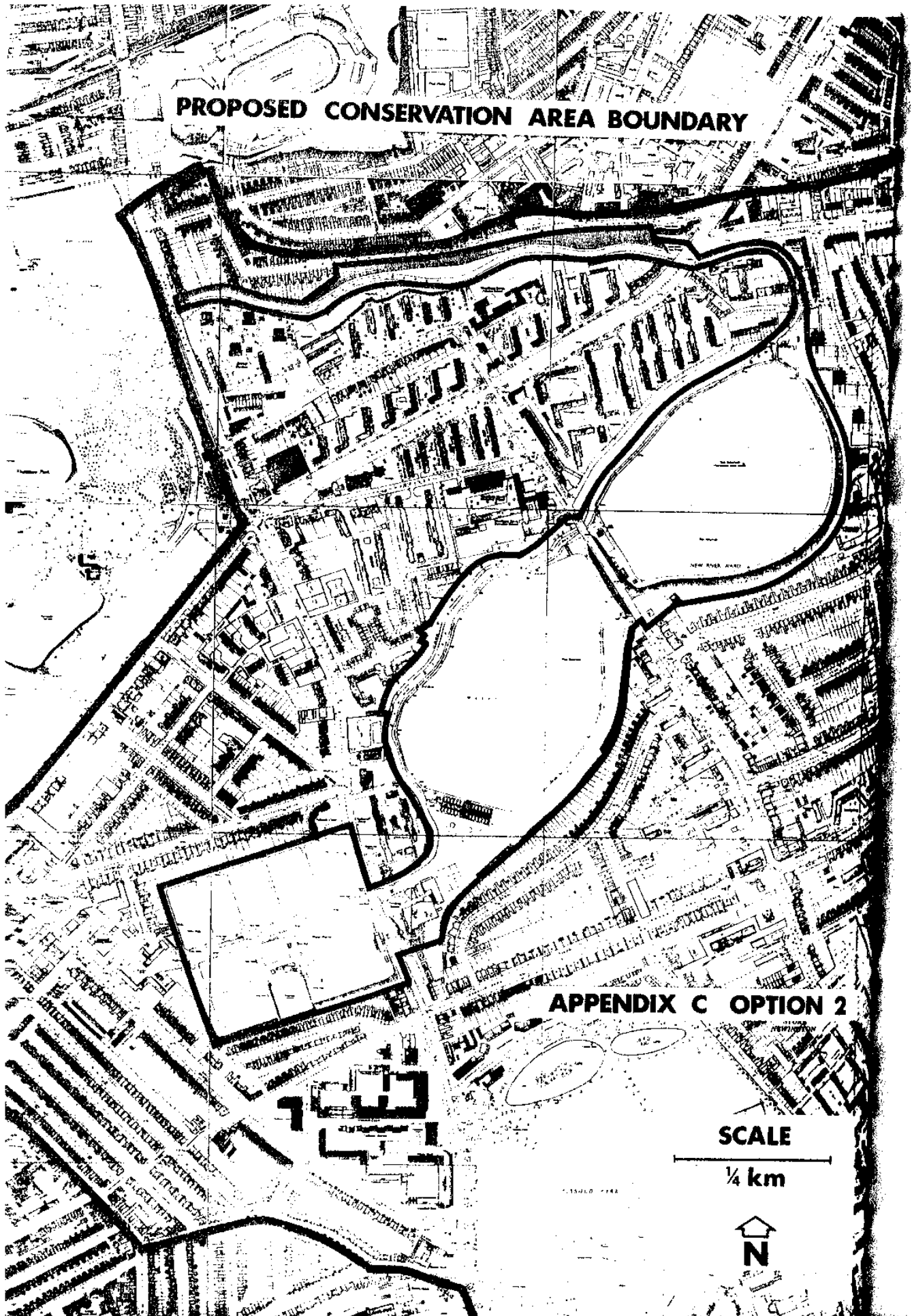
**APPENDIX B OPTION 1**

**SCALE**

1/4 km



**PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY**



**APPENDIX C OPTION 2**

**SCALE**

1/4 km



**COMMITTEE:-**

Planning and Transport Committee 1/7/86  
(Referred to Leisure Services & DO! Housing Committees)

STOKE NEWINGTON RESERVOIRS, FILTER BEDS AND  
THE NEW RIVER - PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELATING TO THIS REPORT**

NO.	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF BACKGROUND PAPER	NAME/DESIGNATION AND TELEPHONE EXTENSION OF HOLDER OF ORIGINAL COPY	LOCATION CONTACT OFFICER
1.	Conservation Programme Areas for Study P & T Committee 5/3/85	Rosemarie McQueen Historic Buildings/ Conservation Officer Ext. 357 (City Road)	L. Turner 161 City Road Ext. 261

**ADMIN5:MASTER**