



# *Lesney Park Road Conservation Area*

**Area Appraisal and Management Plan**

February 2009

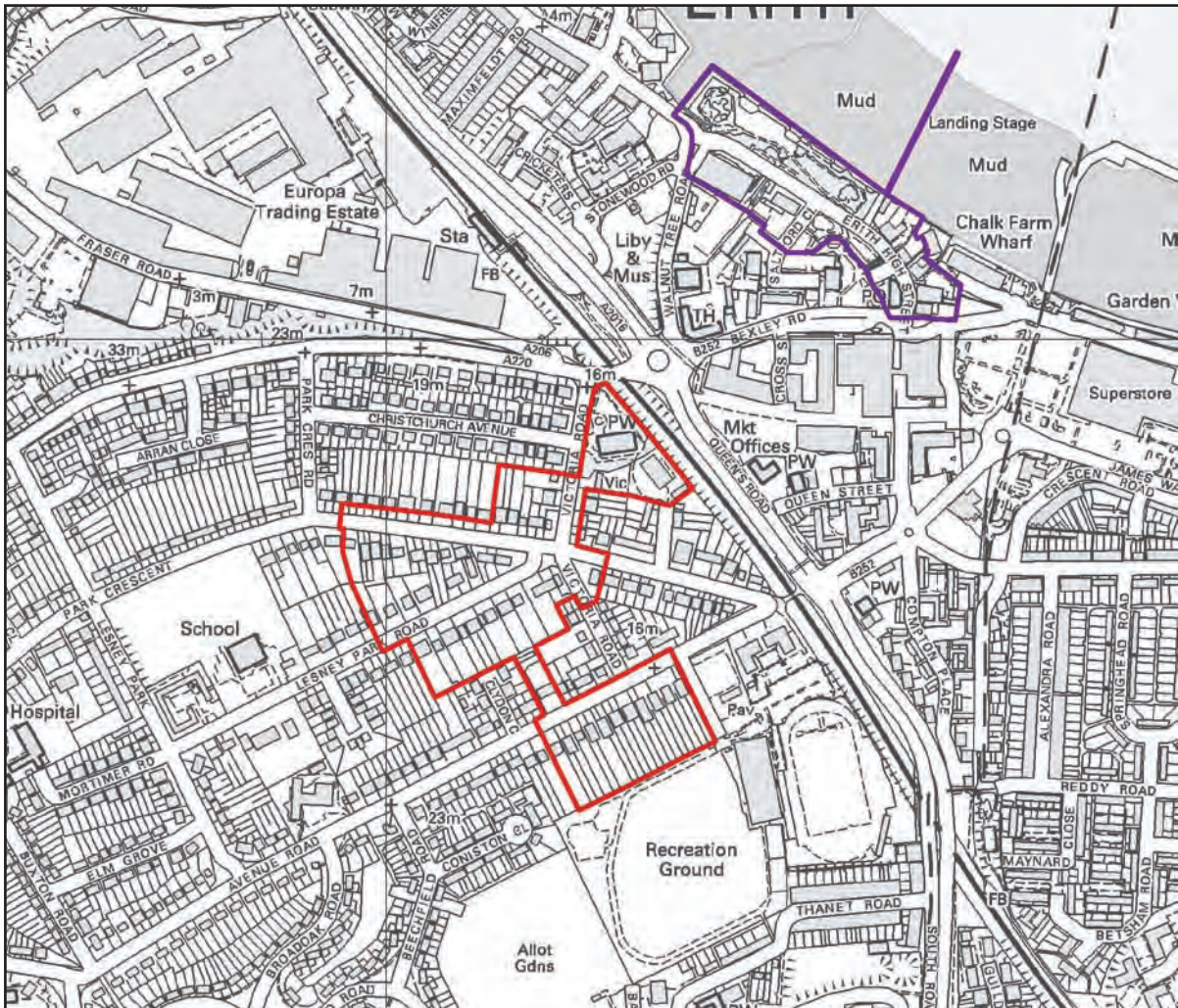
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### Location of Conservation Area



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- Lesney Park Road Conservation Area
- Erith Riverside Conservation Area

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# *Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal*

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Lesney Park Road Conservation Area was designated on the 19th February 1992.
- 1.2 Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, an area designated as a “conservation area” will be an “area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.
- 1.3 This document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the Lesney Park Road Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement.

## **2 Planning and policy context**

- 2.1 Bexley’s Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2004 contains the policies and proposals for development, regeneration and land use in the borough. Policies which seek the preservation and enhancement of statutorily listed buildings, locally listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeology are also set out in the UDP and the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 2.2 This appraisal should be read in conjunction with national planning policy guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15). It follows advice contained in “Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals” and “Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas”, published by English Heritage and the Planning Advisory Service (August 2005).

## **3 Summary of the special character and appearance of the conservation area**

- 3.1 The special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation of Lesney Park Road Conservation Area derives from the following features.
  - The surviving core of Erith’s Victorian/Edwardian suburbs, dating from between the 1860’s to the 1920’s, after the coming of the railway
  - Attractive scale, proportions and detailing typical of Victorian and Edwardian architecture
  - Careful symmetry between different parts of the buildings and spaces between buildings
  - Large, wide building plots combined with elements of the public realm, such as grass verges and street trees convey a spacious leafy character
  - Avenue Road retains much of its original character and was originally the driveway to a former Manor House, crossing parkland prior to the 19th century residential development
  - Strong visual quality of the roofline and the rhythmic architectural pattern provide a homogenous and attractive built environment.
  - Christ Church, statutorily Grade II\* Listed provides



an identifiable focal point and is a landmark building within the conservation area.

- The conservation area contains a high proportion of locally listed buildings which represents 20% of all dwellings in the area.
- Strong relationship between the buildings and trees in the foreground.



## 4 Location, setting and boundary description

### Location and context

- 4.1 Lesney Park Road Conservation Area is located in the north of the London Borough of Bexley, 13 miles to the south east of central London.
- 4.2 The area forms part of Erith, on the south bank of the River Thames. The railway line separates the conservation area from Erith town centre. Historically, the residential area of Lesney Park developed in a convenient position within easy walking distance of the railway station and a comfortable distance from the industrial areas on Erith riverside.

### Street pattern and layout

- 4.3 Lesney Park Road Conservation Area has a green and spacious suburban character, with large detached and semi-detached properties on spacious plots. The houses are, in the main, set back from the highway, which is tree lined with grass verges.

### Landscape and setting

- 4.4 The Lesney Park area was built on elevated parkland of Erith's former Manor House. Before development of the residential area, Avenue Road was the only road and this formed the driveway to the Manor House.

Designated conservation area boundary

- 4.5 The conservation area is centred on the well-defined core area around Lesney Park Road and its junction with Park Crescent and Victoria Road. The character of these roads changes quite sharply as the Victorian/Edwardian villas give way to inter-war bungalows and modern houses, providing a readily definable western boundary. To the north, the area includes the Grade II\* Listed Christ Church and its green setting. The important row of lime trees fronting Victoria Road, formerly within the Church grounds is included but not the modern houses behind. To the south, the area links to the impressive example of Edwardian semi-detached houses on Avenue Road, which, through their symmetry and stature, appear most appropriate to the avenue. The boundary is shown on the Townscape Analysis Map.

## 5 Historic development and archaeological potential

- 5.1 Originally the Lesney Park Road area formed parkland to the Manor House, Erith's main country seat, with an area of 850 acres. The Wheatley Estate included the present Erith town centre. Avenue Road was laid out circa.1769 as an approach road to the newly constructed Manor House.
- 5.2 Significant growth in Erith did not occur until the North Kent Line reached Erith in 1849 (Erith Station opened on 30th July). Until then the area was relatively isolated and relied mainly on river transport. The arrival of the railway opened up the town and provided good transport links to and from London. This new found accessibility also helped promote a rapid increase in Erith's population, which rose from 2,082 in 1841 to 8,289 in 1871. It also facilitated further industrial development in the area.
- 5.3 Lesney Park residential estate began to develop soon after the demolition of the Manor House in 1858. Some houses in the new roads were built in the early 1860's, but little development occurred until the Wheatley estate was sold in 1874 for £170,000. By 1900 most of the Lesney Park residential area was developed. Firstly, along Bexley Road, and then along new roads at Park Crescent, Lesney Park Road and Avenue Road. This area urbanised with large detached and semi-detached houses along wide roads lined with grass verges and trees. Whilst most of Bexley Road has since been redeveloped, the Lesney Park Road area has survived remarkably intact, with good examples of quality residential development dating from the 1890s to the 1920s, with only small pockets of later infill development.
- 5.4 The landmark building, at a gateway into the conservation area, on the corner Victoria Road/ Bexley Road is Christ Church a Grade II\* listed building. Christ Church was designed by James Piers St Aubyn and built in 1874. The tower and spire were added in 1915 and are by the same designer. By 1906-09, much of the interior of the church was covered in wall paintings and other decoration by Ward & Hughes. These works have now been carefully restored and the church's interior illustrates extraordinary colourful art works which belies the grand but plain exterior.



*Christ Church*

- 5.5 There are no Scheduled Monuments within the conservation area. The area is not included in the UDP within a known Area of Archaeological Search, however finds have been made in the surrounding area therefore there is a likelihood that archaeological finds may occur.

## 6 Spatial analysis

Character and interrelationship of spaces

- 6.1 The broad tree-lined streets and large open front gardens with mature trees and shrubs characterise the spaces around the large properties. The grass verges, which line the roadside, some of which still retain their open drainage ditch, are quite a unique feature. The small areas of public open spaces at road intersections, including the area at the wide junction between Park Crescent, Victoria Road and Lesney Park Road, characterise a well-defined core of Victorian houses. The bowling green, with its polite pavilion, borders and helps to define the Edwardian houses in Avenue Road.



*North side of Lesney Park Road looking west*

Key views and vistas

- 6.2 Christ Church, set within a well-treed site, relates closely to the area. It's spire acts as a distinctive landmark that can be viewed on approaches to the conservation area from Erith, Northumberland Heath and Queens Road. The remaining views are along the roads, defined by uniform building lines, trees and soft landscaping.
- 6.3 Straight roads mean that views are not unfolding, however they do reinforce the importance of disciplined building lines, heights and front gardens. Front gardens on Park Crescent, are within the conservation area, but the buildings are not, as the gardens make a valuable contribution to the continuity of the streetscape.
- 6.4 Views towards the River Thames and the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge at Dartford, from the edge of the conservation area in Park Crescent, and views towards the riverside from Avenue Road on the approach to the conservation area provide a dramatic sense of the area's and Erith's maritime history. Some significant views are marked on the attached Townscape Analysis Map.

## 7 Character analysis

Definition of character areas

- 7.1 The area focuses on the core of Victorian buildings in the area, around Lesney Park Road and its junction with Park Crescent and Victoria Road. Avenue Road has a different character with its Edwardian buildings and spacious plan, that recalls the original use of the road as a driveway to the former Manor House.



*Park Crescent*

Christ Church stands alone and imposing, acting as a focal point at an entrance to the conservation area.

Activity and prevailing or former uses within the conservation area

- 7.2 Lesney Park Road Conservation Area is predominantly a residential area with Christ Church and its church hall providing for the social needs of the community.

Architectural and historic character

- 7.3 The Lesney Park Road, Park Crescent and Victoria Road area is characterised by large Victorian detached and semi-detached houses on spacious plots, the houses being set back from the roads on generous building lines. The setting of the houses is enhanced by mature landscaping with many large trees. Roads in the area are mostly lined with grass verges and street trees which are the integral part of the area's character.

- 7.4 Within this spacious and well-treed setting, individual properties are outstanding in their own right. Houses display some fine examples of terracotta detailing and the use of contrasting coloured brickwork to emphasise features of their design. Features include gabled roofs, original with slate covering, wide eaves, decorative bargeboards, finials and ridge tiles, roof level windows, timber sash with slender detailing, parapets, bay windows, doors within recessed porches and classical detailing.



- 7.5 The houses show an individuality of style, with a few recurring features, but all have a comparable scale and character which lends homogeneity to the area; this being further enhanced by the mature landscape setting. The listed Christ Church set within a well-treed site, relates closely to the area, and its spire acts as a distinctive landmark.

- 7.6 The Edwardian houses in Avenue Road have a more uniform character, being large bay-fronted, semi-detached houses with balconies above the paired central doorways. Their symmetry and stature appear most appropriate to the avenue and their uniform character contrasts with other parts of the conservation area because they were built at the same time by a single developer. They are outstanding examples of their type, and represent the last surviving original development on that road. The road itself is unusual in having the pavements running between two grass verges, and trees planted on the inner verge along the front boundaries of the houses, thereby creating the appearance of a grand avenue.

- 7.7 The conservation area contains the Grade II\* listed Christ Church which relates closely to the historical development of the residential area. The adjacent former Sunday School, a locally listed building, is contemporary built c1892. It complements the church with similar detailing and use of building materials.

- 7.8 The grassed area outside the main entrance to the church includes a Locally Listed circa.1920's war memorial. It is a marble cross on a stepped plinth.



## Buildings of townscape merit

- 7.9 These buildings vary, but are good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provide the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the Conservation Area.
- 7.10 Locally listed buildings include No's 1-9 (odd), 13 and 17 Lesney Park Road; and No's 76-78, 82-84, and 81 Park Crescent.; the War Memorial at Christ Church and the church hall (former Sunday School building).
- 7.11 Statutorily and locally listed buildings help create the conservation area's distinctive and interesting historic townscape. As recommended in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment, the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a conservation area.

## Trees, greenery and green spaces

- 7.12 Green spaces in the area primarily comprise of front gardens, grassed road verges, mature trees that line the roads and the open land that surrounds Christ Church. These help to evoke a sense of the original parkland setting and are key characteristics of the conservation area.
- 7.13 The setting of the houses is frequently enhanced by the presence of large mature trees. Roadside grassed verges add to the spacious character of the conservation area. Trees, in particular, add significantly to the character of the area and any proposals for alterations or enhancement will need to be considered very carefully in terms of the local and wider impact.

## Assets of Lesney Park Road Conservation Area (positives)

- 7.14 The positive physical assets of Lesney Park Road Conservation Area are listed below:
- Attractive scale and proportions typical of Victorian and Edwardian architecture.
  - Architectural and historic interest of each individual building - there is an extensive range of period bay windows, gables, porches and decorative details.
  - The set back nature of the houses, located on large plots, offers wide open spaces, which in turn provides an attractive space.
  - The street scenes, landscaping and views between buildings are especially important.
  - Regular rhythm to roof tops which offers a



*Avenue Road looking west*



pleasing symmetry in the streetscene.

The extent of intrusion or damage to the conservation area (negatives)

7.15 The main intrusion or negative features is illustrated by the following.

- Loss of front boundary treatments and soft landscaping for off-street car parking. This has degraded some of the spacious character of the area.
- Later development has eroded the character and appearance of the conservation area by amalgamating plots and placing buildings within rear gardens, none of which matches the quality of earlier Victorian or Edwardian buildings, in terms of materials, scale, proportions and detailing.
- Loss of coping stones on exposed drainage channels and subsequent erosion, loss of definition to verges and loss of drainage functionality. Unfortunately original verges and drainage channels have been removed on some roads and remain on just one side of the road on others.
- Loss of porches and first floor balustrades on Avenue Road

Problems and pressures

7.16 The main problem and pressures are as follows:

- The main pressure for development generally takes the form of residential extensions, roof extensions, garages and infill or backland development, which will have an adverse affect on the unity and harmony of the existing development.
- The spread of uncharacteristic UPVC doors and windows in the area is very unfortunate. These small incremental changes are eroding the special character and appearance of the conservation area.
- Increasing pressure from owners to make changes to the fenestration of their buildings causes a minor yet cumulative impact on the appearance of the conservation area.
- As well as the changes to doors, dormers at the front elevations would erode the clean lines and simplicity of the unified street form.
- There is likely to be further demand to amalgamate/redevelop plots and to insert development into the long rear gardens. This would disrupt the grain of the area and harm its appearance and open character.



*Avenue Road*

General condition

7.17 The area is generally well maintained. However, some properties are showing signs of lack of maintenance which can lead to a deterioration of architectural detail, visual appearance and if unattended eventually lead to major structural problems.

Opportunities for enhancement

7.18 There is an opportunity to encourage the discreet restoration of architectural features and details, so that some of the unifying features, which have been lost to past development, are incorporated back into the streetscene.

- 7.19 Historic building grants should be targeted at householders who are considering reinstating original features.
- 7.20 There is potential for further tree planting and soft landscaping particularly in and around the roadside verges and public open spaces. Similarly, as any mature trees die they should be replaced with new trees.
- 7.21 There needs to be greater consistency in the treatment of front boundary enclosure and detailing.
- 7.22 Within the public realm, there may be potential to undertake environmental improvements. This might include repaving, installing period street furniture such as litter bins, lamp columns, etc and the removal of street clutter.

#### Potential for new development

- 7.23 Uncontrolled new development would harm the traditional form and character and the open spaces in the area. No new dormers or roof lights should be visible from the street either at the front or to the side elevation and careful consideration is required for rear extensions.
- 7.24 Additional developments to the side or at first floor level should not normally be permitted due to eroding and closing the space between buildings.
- 7.25 Only developments, which respect the special relationship of spaces, built form, detailing and materials of the existing buildings, are likely to be appropriate. It is possible that single storey extensions could be incorporated to the rear of properties without detriment.
- 7.26 Any alterations to buildings will be expected to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area in line with Government advice and planning policies. Any plans for alterations or extensions will need to be considered in the context of existing materials, as the external materials of the extension should be in harmony with the materials of the existing building and character of the area.
- 7.27 The design, siting and general appearance of an extension should also respect the style and character of the existing building and adjacent buildings.
- 7.28 In determining the impact of any proposal the Council will take into account the overall form, shape and proportions of the extension; massing and day lighting issues, as well as roof type, layout of doors, design and style of windows. The doors and windows of the extension should generally repeat the proportions, design, alignment and materials of the openings in the original dwelling.

# Townscape Analysis Map



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# *Part 2: Conservation Area Management Plan*

## **1 Legislative background**

- 1.1 The purpose of this Management Plan is to present proposals to achieve the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area's special character. The special qualities of the area have been identified as part of the appraisal process and this guidance draws upon that information. Both the Appraisal and the Management Plan will be subject to monitoring and review.
- 1.2 The document reflects government guidance as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) and English Heritage's, "Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas" (August 2005). It is important that the development control process ensures the preservation of the special character of the conservation area and that opportunities are taken to identify and implement enhancements. The key aims of the Management Plan, supported by the Character Appraisal, are to:
- raise awareness of the importance and value of the local heritage;
  - identify distinctive built environment character areas within the conservation area; provide guidance; and set out objectives to preserve and enhance buildings, structures and features;
  - identify distinctive public realm character areas within the conservation area, provide guidance and establish key actions to preserve and enhance the landscape, open spaces and streets;
  - provide tailored design guidance and set out actions for the enhancement of the conservation area;
  - outline the key statutory requirements in respect of development within the conservation area; provide guidance; and set out actions to secure the proper and effective application of these requirements; and
  - propose the implementation of management procedures to co-ordinate the delivery of new works and maintenance of public spaces.
- 1.4 The Management Plan encourages the Local Authority, developers, development professions (e.g. planners, architects, landscape architects, highway engineers) and the local community to engage in the preservation and enhancement of the local historic environment. This will help secure the long-term viability of the conservation area as an important heritage asset.

## **2 Planning controls and the Council's Development Plan**

- 2.1 Designation as a conservation area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the 'preservation and enhancement' of the area. The local plan policies form the basis for making development control decisions with regard to new development and extensions. Also, in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 there are a number of extra controls, which apply to existing buildings in conservation areas. Consent is needed for:
- Demolition of a building (apart from some minor exceptions).
  - Demolition of walls, gates or fences of over a metre next to a highway or over two metres in other locations.

2.2 Some works which would not need planning permission outside a Conservation Area, but do require consent when one has been designated are given below.

- Where a dwellinghouse is enlarged and would extend beyond a wall forming a side elevation of the original dwelling house or the enlarged part of the dwellinghouse would have more than one storey and extend beyond the rear wall of the original dwellinghouse.
- The construction of a building or enclosure, swimming or other pool, or a container used for domestic heating purposes within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse, if any part of the building, enclosure, pool or container would be situated on land between a wall forming a side elevation of the dwellinghouse and the boundary of the curtilage of the dwellinghouse.
- Cladding of any part of the exterior of the dwellinghouse with stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles.
- Enlargement of a dwellinghouse consisting of an addition to or an alteration to its roof.
- The installation of a satellite dish or antenna on a chimney, on a building over 15 metres in height or on a wall or roof slope, which fronts and is visible from a highway (refer Government publication “A Householder’s Planning Guide for the Installation of Antennas, including Satellite Dishes”).
- Notification must be given of felling or lopping of trees.

2.3 Conservation Area Consent is required for the full or substantial demolition of buildings within the conservation area. In accordance with the Government Guidance in PPG15 there will be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

2.4 Any application for the demolition of a Statutorily Listed, Locally Listed Building or Building of Townscape Merit will need to be accompanied by a reasoned justification stating why the building should be demolished. the Council will expect the applicant to demonstrate that:

- the building is beyond economic repair;
- the building has been offered on the open market at a realistic price; and
- if vacant, that alternative uses have been sought.

2.5 Where alterations are proposed, the reinstatement of original detailing and composition will be sought to reinforce the unity and cohesive quality of the townscape. The Council will seek to ensure that new development within the conservation area serves to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area in accordance with the adopted planning policies, the emerging Local Development Framework and other published design guidance.

2.6 Furthermore, the Council will expect all applications for extensions and alterations to be particularly carefully considered and only well detailed schemes, using the characteristic and appropriate traditional materials, will be approved.

### **3 Listed buildings, landmark buildings, buildings of local architectural or historic interest and buildings of townscape merit.**

3.1 Within the Lesney Park Road Conservation Area there are many fine historic individual buildings, including statutorily Listed and locally Listed properties. In addition, all

properties collectively form a unique townscape composition and are worthy of conservation area status. The principal buildings are shown on the Townscape Analysis Map.

- 3.2 With all Statutorily Listed, Local List, buildings of townscape merit and local landmark buildings it is important that any alterations or extensions should be of matching scale, design and/or materials.

#### **4 Erosion of character**

4.1 Where the quality of an area is being eroded by alterations the Council may make use of what is termed an Article 4 Direction. This may be used to withdraw permitted development rights for a prescribed range of development which materially affect aspects of the external appearance of dwelling houses in conservation areas. This includes the erection, alteration, or removal of a chimney; various kinds of development fronting a highway, or open space, such as the enlargement, improvement, or other alteration of a dwelling house; alterations to windows or doors; the construction of an external porch; and the painting of a dwelling house, or of a building or enclosure within its curtilage. It may also be used to withdraw the permitted development rights to demolish a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure, if it is within the curtilage of a dwelling house and fronts a highway or open space.

4.2 In a similar manner, the context of the original roofscapes is an important feature, which adds rhythm and continuity to the streetscene and the conservation area. Roof extensions, dormers or rooflights to the front or side can be particularly disruptive where visible from the street. It is critically important to protect and retain the original roofscapes.

4.3 In general terms, it was identified that the following alterations could pose a threat to the special character of the area.

- Loss of original timber windows and doors.
- Obscuring original brickwork by rendering elevations.
- Alterations to window/door openings including infilling open porches.
- Removal of redundant chimney stacks, pots and roof features.
- Loss of front gardens to hardstanding for parking
- Additions to front boundaries, including walls and fences, can erode the open character of the area.
- Alterations to the roofscape, including the installation of dormers.
- Side extensions filling the gap between buildings and closing off the space and views.



4.4 Such alterations would require planning permission in most cases. In determining planning applications the Council will take the above factors into consideration. The Council will oppose those alterations, which pose a threat to the special character of the conservation area.

4.5 In addition, as an aid to protecting the character of the area the Council will ensure that unauthorised development is subject to effective enforcement action. This is to protect the special qualities of the area generally and to ensure that detrimental unauthorised alterations throughout the area are rectified where legal powers permit.

4.6 The Council will assist with the provision of grant aid for projects, which restore or reinstate the original features of the building and will contribute to achieving higher standards of preservation and enhancement.

## **5 Trees, landscape and space between buildings**

5.1 Within the conservation areas, anyone intending to lop or fell a tree greater than 75mm in diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground must give the Council six weeks written notice before starting the work. This provides the Council with an opportunity to assess the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

5.2 It is also essential to maintain the juxtaposition of the semi-detached building types. The space between buildings offer significant views to trees and greenery beyond. It is important to retain this continuity and these open views as breaks in the urban built environment. The private front garden, green verges, trees and public open space all contribute to spaciousness of the residential area and make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The Council will seek to maintain and enhance these open spaces and natural features.

5.3 The Council will consider the use of Tree Preservation Orders in appropriate circumstances where a tree has significant amenity value or is considered to be under threat. This will include trees both within and outside the area, where these trees contribute to the setting of the area or views identified in the appraisal.

## **6 Setting and views**

6.1 The setting of the conservation area is very important and development that adversely affects the immediate setting and longer views, into and from the conservation area, will be resisted. The important views are identified on the Townscape Analysis Map. The Council will seek to ensure that all development serves to respect these important views.



## **7 The public realm and enhancement**

7.1 The conservation area has generally been resurfaced using a mixture of modern paving materials. Lighting is provided by late twentieth century, utilitarian columns. The reinstatement of traditional pavements and period lighting could significantly reinforce the identity of the area and the public realm. A critical audit of the public realm should be undertaken to identify redundant features and opportunities for enhancement, subject to resources.



- 7.2 The Council will seek to ensure that any surviving historic streetscape features are retained, and that any future highway works will bring a positive improvement to the character or appearance of the conservation area. All works should accord with the spirit of English Heritage's 'Streets For All' 2004.
- 7.3 the importance of the existing grass verges and street trees are recognised in the Appraisal. The Council will seek to retain these elements as important characteristics of the conservation area.

## **8 New buildings and building extensions**

- 8.1 New developments in conservation areas should aspire to a quality of design and execution, related to its context. This will normally involve respecting values established through assessment of the significance of the area.
- 8.2 In Lesney Park Road Conservation Area the main pressure for future development might generally take the form of residential extensions, which could have an adverse affect on the harmony of the existing development. Further development might be permissible in some instances, provided the proposals utilise current enclosed areas at ground floor level to the rear, and are designed in a way that is sensitive to scale, detail and materials.
- 8.3 Rooflights and dormer windows to the front roof slope, or a visible side slope, can be particularly disruptive and detract from the character and appearance of the area and fail to "preserve or enhance" the conservation area and will generally be unacceptable.
- 8.3 Any form of development which erodes the openness of the conservation area and the spaciousness of individual sites will be resisted.
- 8.4 Some buildings have suffered from unsympathetic alterations which have detracted from their appearance, e.g. changes of windows, doors and roofing materials. There is potential for re-instating original features on some buildings and controlling changes so as to restore a sense of unity, and this may be assisted by grant aid from the Bexley Heritage Fund.

## **9 Solar panels and wind turbines**

- 9.1 In general terms, the installation of solar panels and/or wind turbines within or adjacent to a conservation area would introduce alien features and by their inherent design they will be visually intrusive. In terms of the main conservation principle that any proposed development should "preserve or enhance" the character and appearance of the conservation area any installations may be problematic. The Council has published guidance, which provides information on the subject. Please refer "Solar Panels and Wind Turbines: A Householder Guide on the Need for Planning Permission and Building Regulations approval" (Jan. 2007).

## **10 Monitoring change**

- 10.1 It is recommended that the physical environment of the conservation area and key sites adjacent to the conservation area is monitored by carrying out detailed surveys, including a dated photographic record, on a regular basis, so as to identify any unauthorised work and consider whether enforcement action should be taken.
- 10.2 Any previously unreported unauthorised development or work identified by the detailed

survey would then be considered by the Planning Control Enforcement Team for action, resources permitting.

## **11 Boundary definition**

- 11.1 Since designation, the boundary has proven to be robust and generally a good reflection of the area of greatest historic significance and special character. The Council will maintain the defined boundary of the designated area and periodically review the boundary of the conservation area as part of future reviews in accordance with best practice and guidance on management of the historic environment.

## **12 Community engagement**

- 12.1 It is mentioned in recent urban design publications that, “people make places”. Although the Council has planning powers it can exercise over development and may, when funds are available, carry out enhancement works, ultimately the quality of any place depends on all the people who affect the area. In predominately residential areas such as Lesney Park Road Conservation Area, the owners of property play a key role in affecting how the area looks. Good communication between local residents and the Council is one way of helping owners and the Council carryout appropriate works and take informed decisions that are of benefit to the area.
- 12.2 To that end the Council will seek to maintain and promote close collaborative working with the local residents and any associations on issues relevant to the management of the area, including proposals for development and enhancement, within and adjoining the conservation area. It will also improve dialogue with the wider community. This may include the production and distribution of information leaflets, subject to resources.
- 12.3 The following actions have been taken to ensure that this appraisal and management proposals are accepted and acted upon by the local community.
- 12.4 Public consultation: The Lesney Park Road Appraisal and Management Plan were subject to public consultation during in October/December 2008. As part of the consultation comments were sought from the Conservation Advisory Committee, local amenity/history groups, local partnerships, organisations such as English Heritage, etc. and individual owners/occupiers of all of the properties affected. The draft document was also available for reference on the Council’s website, in local libraries, at the Council’s Contact Centre in Bexleyheath and at Council Offices in Sidcup. The results of consultations were considered by the Cabinet Member, the text revised and adopted. Copies of this document are available on the Council’s website and as printed copies.
- 12.5 The Council will seek to improve communication with local residents and where it can help and encourage local residents to engage and assist with pursuing conservation objectives.

# Appendices

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## **1 General guidance to homeowners on repairs to historic buildings in conservation areas**

Note: Before starting any work, property owners are advised to contact the Council.

### **Roofs**

The roof is often an important feature of a historic building and the roofscape can often make a significant contribution to the character of the area. The retention of its original structure, shape, materials and features is important. Historic roof materials and features such as chimneystacks, chimney pots, dormers, as well as details such as decorative ridge tiles and finials all form an integral part of the character of the building and the area. The loss or inappropriate alteration of historic materials and features is likely to be harmful to the appearance and character of historic buildings and areas.

The Council encourages the retention and reinstatement of traditional roofing materials. When roofing materials are replaced, it is important that as much as possible of the original material is re-used. When practical, original material should be re-used on visible areas, with matching new materials on other parts.

The addition of modern features, such as roof lights, is likely to be harmful to its character and appearance of the building and area, and should be avoided at all times. When replacement of materials and features becomes necessary, the replacement should respect the design and material of the original and the age and character of the building and/ or the area.

### **Chimneys**

Chimneystacks are both decorative and functional features of the roofscape and can be important indicators of the age of a building and its internal planning, and they should normally be retained, even when no longer required. Chimney pots can sometimes be significant decorative features in their own right and can be important as part of the roofscape, which will be damaged if they are removed or replaced with an inappropriate type.

### **Dormers**

Original dormers should be retained and carefully repaired. If beyond repair they should be reconstructed using traditional materials with all historic features reproduced. Enlargement of existing dormers on principle elevations should be avoided. Any new dormers should respect the symmetry of either an individual building or a terrace. Where new dormers would be inappropriate to the type of building or the proposed position, new, recessed 'conservation' roof lights may be acceptable, but not on prominent or generally visible roof slopes.

### **Fascias**

Features such as timber bargeboards and fascias should be preserved and, if replacement becomes necessary, it should wherever possible replicate the design and material of those original to the building. The addition of bargeboards and fascias to buildings that did not

previously have such a feature will normally be resisted, where they would detract from the character of the building or the area.

## **Walls**

Walls are the main structural fabric of any building. Alterations to the wall surfaces will have a significant impact on the overall appearance of a historic building. Every effort should be made to retain or re-use original facing brickwork and stonework. Alterations or repairs to external walls should respect the original material and endeavour to match it in appearance. Particular care should be paid to re-pointing brick or stonework. Methods should be employed to minimize damage to historic building materials: an appropriate lime mix mortar should be used and should match the appearance of the original pointing. Brick or stonework should not normally be rendered unless the surface was rendered originally. It may be necessary to remove more recently applied render if this is damaging the surface beneath.

## **Painting and stone cleaning**

Painting or re-painting involving a change of colour will affect the character of a historic building. Previously unpainted surfaces should not normally be painted over. In many cases, the colour of the paint may be less important than the first application of an unsuitable covering, which could damage the original fabric and be damaging to remove. Cleaning can have a marked effect on the character of historic buildings and affect the historic fabric. The cleaning of an individual building within a terrace would obviously affect the appearance of the terrace as a whole. All cleaning methods can cause damage if carelessly handled. Cleaning with low-pressure water and non-abrasive brushes is often the preferred method. Other methods including abrasive and chemical cleaning can damage wall surfaces and destroy detail and should generally be avoided. Consideration should be given as to whether such cleaning is either necessary or worthwhile to remove corrosive dirt or to achieve a major improvement in appearance.

## **Windows and doors**

Door and window openings establish the character of an elevation; they should not generally be altered in their proportions or details. The depth to which window frames are recessed within a wall is a varying historical feature of importance and greatly affects the character of a building - this too should be respected.

**Windows** - The size and shape of window openings, window frame details, arrangement and detail of glazing bars, and the method of opening are important characteristics of a historic building or an area. The traditional material used for windows in most historic buildings is timber, although occasionally the original windows are metal. It can often be difficult to introduce new materials without altering the appearance or character of the area.

Wherever possible, original windows should be retained and repaired. Improved heat and sound insulation can be achieved in unobtrusive ways by draft-proofing and soundproofing measures, rather than replacement of the original window. When necessary, replacement or repaired windows should accurately replicate the size and shape of original timber frames and glazing bars in all respects.

**Doors** - Doorways form an important element of historic buildings and can add to the character of conservation areas. Together with the door surround, fanlight, steps and original door furniture, doors can provide a significant and prominent feature. In recent years there has been a trend towards the replacement of historic timber front doors with modern doors

of inappropriate materials and design. To preserve the character and appearance of historic buildings and areas, it is important to retain the original front door, door surround, fanlight and other features wherever possible. When necessary, replacement or repaired doors should accurately replicate the original design in all respects.

### **Window and door materials**

In most situations timber should be used for the replacement of historic windows and doors; generally UPVC cannot satisfactorily replicate the historic detailing and character of these features. UPVC windows and doors can degrade and discolour; they are not completely maintenance free and can be difficult to repair. Developments in timber preservation, finishing materials and manufacture can produce timber windows and doors with a significantly longer life than UPVC.

### **Rainwater goods**

Original rainwater goods are an integral part of the design and character of an historic building. They will normally be cast iron, which if properly maintained should last many years longer than replacement plastic goods. Cast iron gutters, down pipes and hopper heads etc. should be retained wherever possible. Where rainwater goods are required to be renewed, the replacement should replicate the original in all respects. Suitably profiled cast aluminium may be an acceptable alternative to cast iron in certain situations. However, plastic rainwater goods should be avoided on buildings where cast iron has been previously used. Additional rainwater goods should be kept to a minimum and should not disturb or break through any decorative architectural features.

### **Boundary walls and railings**

Boundary walls and railings are important architectural and streetscape features. The loss or alteration of these features over time has been detrimental to the overall character of the Borough's historic areas and buildings. Distinctive boundary elements include brick and stone walls, gates, cast iron railings, and stone and brick plinths piers. Historic boundaries should be retained, repaired or reinstated as necessary using appropriate techniques and detailed to match the original. Particular care should be taken to repair or reinstate existing walls using appropriate techniques and materials. Stonework if appropriate should be locally sourced. Special care should be taken to use the correct lime mortar mix and method of pointing in brick and stone walls.

### **Minor additions**

Features such as aerials, satellite dishes, burglar alarms, cctv cameras, heating system flues and vents should be kept to a minimum, and where necessary should be installed in locations and in a manner that will not harm the appearance or character of the building or area.

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## **2 Bexley Heritage Fund - helping to restore your heritage**

The London Borough of Bexley is fortunate in having a fine heritage of notable old buildings and historic areas. These, besides being of importance in their own right, help make the borough a pleasant and attractive place to live and work.

The Bexley Heritage Fund can offer grants to assist with the additional costs associated with restoration works which arise from the need to preserve, enhance or restore the buildings special character.

Grant aided schemes may be for the restoration of complete buildings or alternatively small scale projects to restore original features such as timber sash windows, decorative stonework, etc. Grant aided works should normally be visible to the public. Normal building maintenance, alterations or building new extensions are not eligible.

Any applications for grant aid must be made before work commences. Detailed notes for the guidance of applicants are available on request from:

London Borough of Bexley  
The Bexley Heritage Fund  
Strategic Planning & Development  
Wyncham House  
207 Longlands Road  
Sidcup  
Kent DA15 7JH

Alternatively call 020 8308 7789 or email [gordon.fraser@bexley.gov.uk](mailto:gordon.fraser@bexley.gov.uk).

Donations to the Fund are welcome.

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### 3 Contacts

For information on listed buildings and conservation areas in the London Borough of Bexley.

Mr M Nicholls / Mr G Fraser

London Borough of Bexley,  
Strategic Planning and Development  
Civic Offices, 2 Watling Street,  
Bexleyheath, Kent  
DA6 7AT

Tel: 020 8303 7777

Email: [martyn.nicholls@bexley.gov.uk](mailto:martyn.nicholls@bexley.gov.uk) / [gordon.fraser@bexley.gov.uk](mailto:gordon.fraser@bexley.gov.uk)

For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas:

English Heritage (London Region)  
3 Bunhill Row  
London EC1 8YZ  
Tel: 020 7973 3000

For an excellent range of technical advice leaflets:

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)  
37 Spital Square  
London E1 6DY  
Tel: 020 7377 1644  
[www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)

For more information on Bexley's local history and archives:

Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre  
Townley Road  
Bexleyheath  
Kent DA6 7JH  
Tel: 020 8836 7369







If you would like to know more about the services the Council provides, or would like either a translation of this document or the information in a different format, please call our Customer Contact Centre on 020 8303 7777 and press 0, quoting reference:

