



# *Woolwich Road Conservation Area*

**Area Appraisal and Management Plan**

June 2008

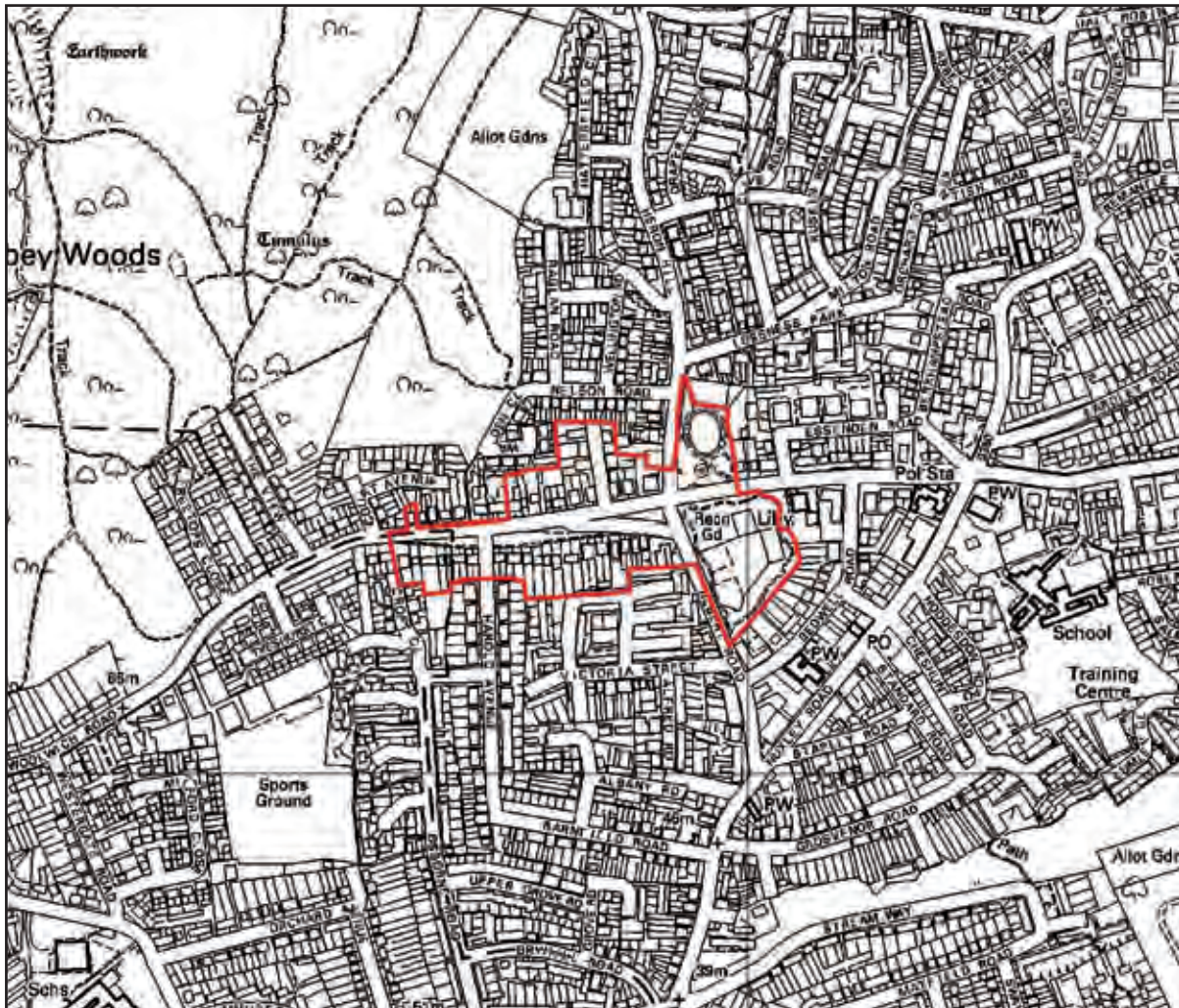
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### Location of Conservation Area



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— Woolwich Road Conservation Area

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# *Part 1: Conservation Area Appraisal*

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Woolwich 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 Woolwich Road Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement.

## **2 Planning and policy context**

- 2.1 Bexley’s Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted in April 2004 contains the Council’s planning 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 Bexley’s emerging Local Development Framework, The London Plan (February 2004), national planning policy guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG 15) - Planning and the Historic Environment. 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 special character and appearance of the conservation area**

- 3.1 The special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation of Woolwich Road Conservation Area derives from the following features:
  - Special Victorian character deriving from unique location on an elevated ridge overlooking the River Thames.
  - Area reflects historical evolution of the Erith and Belvedere locale.
  - Many historic buildings, within suburban setting with characteristic views along attractive leafy roads.
  - Good illustration of suburban development for the more affluent Victorian resident.
  - Attractive “village green” open spaces, which were laid out as recreation grounds.
  - Houses set back from the highway in spacious landscaped surroundings.
  - The properties exhibit many original Victorian characteristic and other local architectural detailing.
  - Many architecturally splendid original chimney stacks and attractive vertical emphasis of original windows and openings.



## 4 Location, setting and boundary description

### Location and context

- 4.1 The Woolwich Road Conservation Area sits on the Abbey Ridge 1.5 miles south from the River Thames. It forms part of Upper Belvedere and is south-east of central London.

### Street pattern and layout

- 4.5 The layout of the conservation area is mainly linear stretching along Woolwich Road, Heron Hill and Albert Road. These roads intersect at a former crossroads, now a min-roundabout.
- 4.3 The historic street pattern was defined to run along the top of the Abbey ridge linking the riverside settlements of Woolwich with Erith. Today this route remains and defines the layout of today's conservation area.



### Landscape and setting

- 4.4 The topography of the area is characterised by the Abbey ridge along which Woolwich Road is aligned and runs in an east - west direction.
- 4.5 Trees were always integral to the character of this area and this is seen clearly seen on the old historical maps. There are still many splendid mature trees throughout the conservation area and these do add significantly to the special qualities of the area.
- 4.6 The open and generous landscaping features of the recreation grounds and the wide highway verges add greatly to the setting and special architectural character of the area by enhancing the architectural clean lines of the buildings and creating an overall sense of spaciousness.

### Designated conservation area boundary

- 4.7 The conservation area boundary follows the eastern perimeters of the two recreation grounds and excludes properties bordering the eastern side of the Belvedere open spaces which unfortunately make little contribution to the area.
- 4.8 To the west of the mini-roundabout, the quality of the tapering "green" space is an important feature of the area. Plots retain their original proportions and are appropriate to the scale of buildings.
- 4.9 Housing layouts behind the Woolwich Road plots show no affinity to the Victorian area



and are undistinguished. For these reasons, the boundary has been drawn to the rear of properties fronting Gloucester Road and Woolwich Road. A clear change in architectural character is evident as one moves south along Albert Road or east along Woolwich Road.

4.10 The Townscape Analysis Map indicates the designated boundary.

## 5 Historic development and archaeological potential

5.1 In 1843 the area was used for arable and pastoral farming. Abbey Farm, plus on the site of the present day Eardley Arms Public House, an Inn with a forge, wheelwright and house to its rear, were the only buildings. This cluster of buildings functioned as a staging post serving travellers between the towns of Woolwich and Erith taking the high road to avoid Thames-side marshland.

5.2 Heron Hill, which runs from Woolwich Road and the top of the Abbey ridge, was a well established route to and from the marshes and gravel was extracted in this area. A past use now concealed by the northern recreation ground.

5.3 The first Ordnance Survey map of this locality prepared in 1860 shows Alexandra Terrace (Nos 13a-19 Woolwich Road, odd) erected, but no suggestion of a public house at the corner. The 1871 Census recorded a wine and beer merchant, alongside Walter Cross's bakery (No 15 Woolwich Road). Oxley's the draper was established at No 19 Woolwich Road, where a simple, but elegant, shopfront survives. A cluster of retail and other businesses still operate from this location and it is identified in the Council's UDP as a neighbourhood shopping centre.



5.4 In the 1880s a number of large villas were built, including No. 33, a purpose built police station, now a driving test centre.

5.5 Residential development began to the west of the Eardley Arms Public House with Gloucester Villas (eight homes) and Gloucester Road (six more) being built during the 1860s. These were large semi-detached villas set in good sized plots. Similarly residential development spread west along Woolwich Road from Alexandra Terrace. The houses were fine large villas and semi-detached properties. They were set back from the highway with front gardens and substantial rear gardens. These houses were for the wealthier Victorian families possibly for the professional classes or for the managers or owners of the businesses which located in Erith and Woolwich.



33 Woolwich Road

5.6 There are no Scheduled Monuments within this conservation area. Whilst this is not a known important archaeological area, it is possible that finds may occur.

## 6 Spatial analysis

Character and interrelationship of spaces

6.1 Development within the conservation area consists mainly of detached and semi-detached houses located on large plots with mature trees and vegetation along relatively wide streets. The visual impact of the private car is kept to a minimum with any hard standings in front of houses not too prominent, although any additional hard standings will be resisted.



6.2 Views from the Abbey ridge across the River Thames estuary help to explain the appeal which Woolwich Road held for wealthier households in the area throughout the Victorian age. The tapering green wedges along Woolwich Road form a linear ridge-top feature, whilst the recreational spaces, initially protected by the Enclosures Act, are laid out further east. This planned layout of the recreation grounds for promenading are central to the development and the clustering of the larger Victorian properties at this particular location. The recreational facility would be an attractive feature adding to the spaciousness of the area which would attract the more wealthy Victorian classes to Upper Belvedere. The existing grass verges make a positive contribution to the special character of the conservation area therefore any additional crossovers which will further erode this feature will be resisted.

Key views and vistas

6.3 Significant views include looking:

- south along Albert Road;
- west along Woolwich Road into the conservation area;
- east along Woolwich Road into the conservation area.



6.4 Within the conservation area there are many views of importance, including those of individual houses and streets. Because a view is not mentioned it is not because it is unimportant but rather that there are so many different views.

6.5 The geographical features of Shooters Hill, Bostall Woods and the Abbey Ridge were one of 13 areas highlighted by the London Planning Advisory Committee in its strategic advice for London presented to government in 1988. This area is an important skyline ridge affording important panoramic views.

6.6 Significant views are marked on the attached Townscape Appraisal Map.

## 7 Character analysis

Activity and prevailing or former uses within the conservation area

- 7.1 Prior to the early 19th Century the area was undeveloped and used for arable and pasture farming. Today the primary use within the conservation area is residential with some small local retail function at Alexandra Terrace. The formal areas of open space meet some of the residential communities recreational needs. The recreation ground to the north of Woolwich Road contains a modern splash park.

Architectural and historic character

- 7.2 The conservation area has a memorable historic character and appearance deriving from a varied collection of Victorian buildings built with good quality traditional local materials and set within a mature landscape.

- 7.3 Two public houses the Eardley Arms and the Prince of Wales provide distinct corner features, landmark buildings, where the tapering green meets the broader parkland. The tapering greens enclosed by substantial houses in local stock brickwork forms the centrepiece of the area.



- 7.4 The similar patterns of brick banding and lintel details shown by the villas fronting Woolwich Road and the Eardley Arms suggest that this public house was rebuilt in the 1860s. Timber brackets add distinction to window cills and cornices around hipped slate roofs. Excepting 20th century infill housing Nos 2, 4, 5 and 7 Gloucester Road, is characterised by mellow London stock brickwork. Burnt brick fragments went to make the boundary walls of the recreation grounds, a roadside feature characteristic of Victorian Erith and Belvedere, and presumably supplied by local brickworks.



- 7.5 The more modest semi detached houses at Nos 96 to 106 (even) Woolwich Road date from the 1870s. Of these, only the western-most pair retains ornate arched window surrounds and yellow stock facing brickwork. Although many timber sash windows have been lost on this side of the street (UPVC replacements are evident), window openings have not been disturbed. A rhythm of vertical openings consequently survives to add dignity, coherence and charm to the street scene.

- 7.6 Tall sash windows also characterise the older buildings on the opposite side of the landscaped green. No 75 Woolwich Road, with a slate roof and yellow stock facade was built as a dairy in 1883. More recent suburban housing, demonstrating an unusually formal layout around the access of Harold Avenue, is ranged between numbers No. 75 and No. 45. No 45 appears to be early Victorian in origin. No 33 is contemporary with Gloucester Villas which it faces across the Green.



7.7 Decorative window arches enhance the facades of Nos 25 to 31 and 35 to 45 (odd) Woolwich Road, particularly on upper floors. Ornate pilasters to porches and bay windows and terracotta chimney pots provide additional vertical elements to these mellow substantial semi detached homes. Each pair of houses retains an unblemished symmetry and the variegated building line adds to the informality of the landscaped space, which their front facades help to define. Garden boundaries are generally robust and attractive. Trees in the rear garden of No 43 Woolwich Road enhance views from Albert Road and Victoria Street.



*No. 75*

7.8 Although render and pebbledash conceal straightforward brickwork of some building facades and some concrete tiles have been used for re-roofing, tall window openings provide a unifying feature in the upper floors of the terrace which adjoins the Prince of Wales public house. The firm definition to corner provided by the three-storey terrace is counterbalanced by greenery opposite.



*Nos. 25 and 27*

Buildings of townscape merit

7.9 The Townscape Analysis Map identifies buildings of townscape merit that make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area. These buildings vary in character, but commonly are good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where the style, detailing, building materials and relationship to the street provide the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special of the conservation area.

7.10 Statutorily listed, local listed buildings and landmark buildings help create the conservation area's distinctive and interesting historic townscape. As recommended in PPG15: Planning and the Historic environment, the general presumption should be in favor of retaining buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.



*Nos. 39 and 41*

## Trees, greenery and green spaces

7.11 Important open spaces have been identified on the accompanying Townscape Analysis Map, the main areas being the recreation grounds which lie to the north and south of Woolwich Road, and the green wedges of highway land. It has not been possible to identify every important open area and lack of a specific reference does not imply that it is not of value.



*Recreation Ground*

7.12 The setting of the houses is frequently enhanced by the presence of large mature trees. Trees in the recreation grounds, particularly north of Woolwich Road, are of immense importance to visual appearance of the conservation area.

7.13 Vegetation, especially trees, adds significantly to the character of the area and any proposals for alterations or enhancement will need to be considered very carefully in terms of local and wider impact.

7.14 Important trees have been identified on the accompanying Townscape Analysis Map. It is not appropriate or practical to identify every important tree that contributes to the character of the area and lack of a specific reference does not imply that a particular tree is not of value.



*Trees fronting the Splash Park*

### Assets of Woolwich Road Conservation Area (positives)

7.15 The positive physical assets of Woolwich Road Conservation Area are listed below:

- The unique locational setting of the conservation area high up on the Abbey ridge with views over the River Thames.
- The area provides a good visual illustration of the historical development of Upper Belvedere and in particular of the wealthy Victorian suburbs of the 19th Century.
- The considerable architectural and socio-economic history of the area's buildings and environs.
- A high concentration of Victorian buildings within a small geographic area.
- A large proportion of the properties generally retain the essential features, scale and proportions, which ensure a continued contribution to the historic character of the area.

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

7.16 The main intrusion or negative features are:

- Traffic calming on Woolwich Road and an assortment of various road signs/markings and other highways furniture is very intrusive.

- The spread of uncharacteristic UPVC doors and windows throughout the area is very unfortunate. Similarly, concrete roof tiles and other unsympathetic materials have in some instances been used. These small incremental changes are threatening to destroy the special character of the conservation area.
- Visually intrusive and particularly inappropriate shopfronts and signs e.g. outside No 33 Woolwich Road.
- The installation of satellite dishes in prominent flank walls on properties along Woolwich Road.
- Loss of greenery in front gardens due to extension of hard surfacing for additional car parking.
- The existing grass verges are of high landscape quality and have a positive visual influence. Car crossovers and other breaks to these verges are eroding this key characteristic and should generally not be encouraged.



#### General condition

- 7.17 Generally the conservation area appears to be in fairly good condition with the obvious caveats mentioned previously.

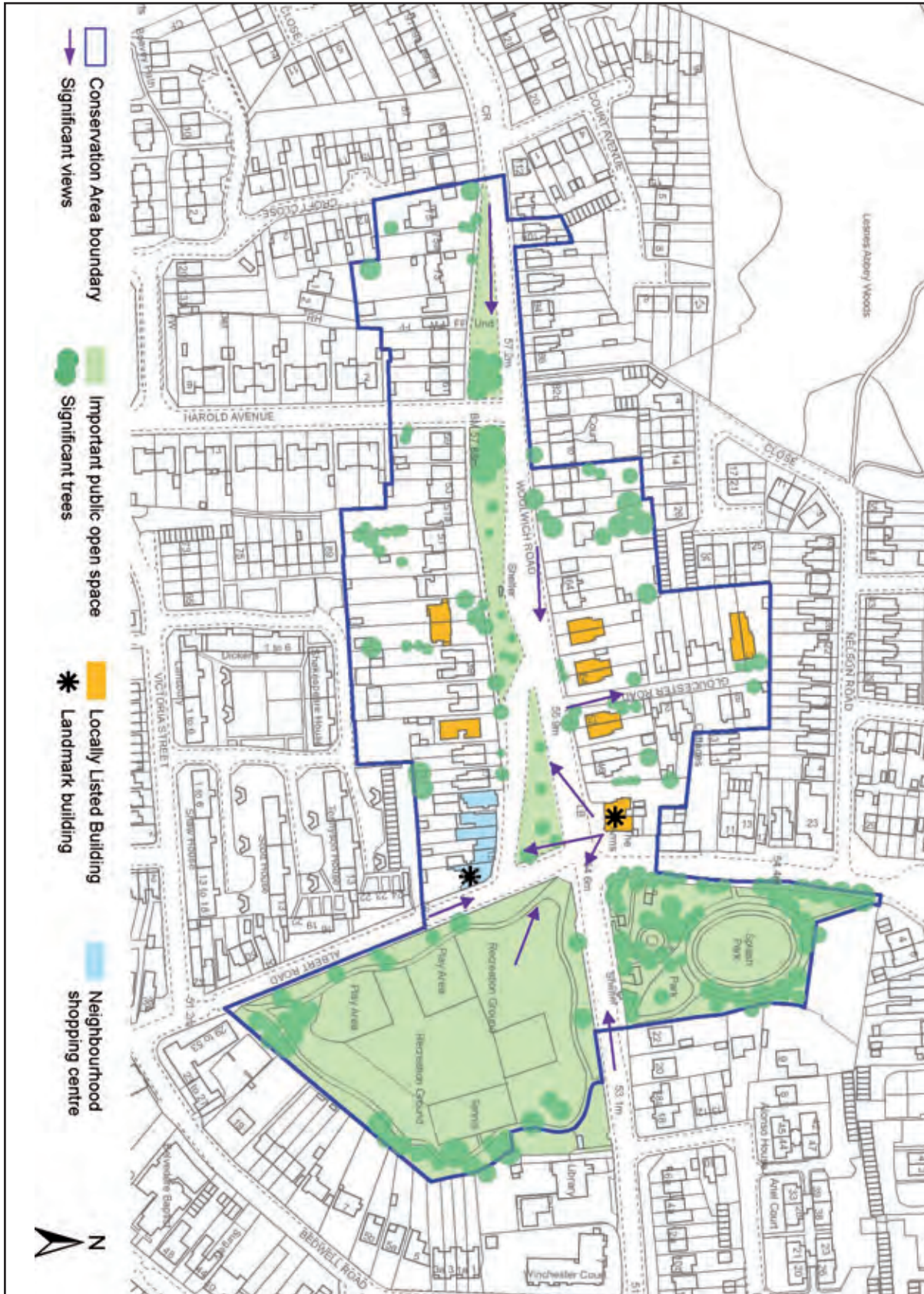
#### Opportunities for enhancement

- 7.18 There is potential for further tree planting and soft landscaping particularly round the small green opposite the Eardley Arms Public House. Similarly, as the mature trees die they must be replaced with new trees.
- 7.19 Sign de-cluttering, highway improvements and street furniture design could be enhanced as part of a project to establish and reinforcing the former Victorian identity of the area. For example, a more appropriate replica lamp column could be introduced.
- 7.20 Historic building grants should be targeted at householders who are considering replacing historic features.

#### Potential for new development

- 7.21 There are no vacant sites in the area and except for extensions there is little potential for large-scale development. However, in the current climate there is an urgent need for housing land and this poses a threat where there is potential for redevelopment of the large Victorian residential plots. The Council will strongly oppose the demolition of historic buildings or the sub-division of large plots for development.
- 7.22 Any development will be expected to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area in line with Government advice, Council planning policies and the emerging Local Development Framework.
- 7.23 Co-ordination of signs, shopfronts and colour schemes for the retail/commercial premises near the Albert Road/Woolwich Road junction might be possible when new businesses take over existing retail units.
- 7.24 Any future proposals for development will be judged for their effect on the character, appearance and special interest of the conservation area as defined in this appraisal.

# 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.
  - Propose the implementation of management procedures to co-ordinate the delivery of new works and maintenance of public spaces.
- 1.3 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 Where a property lies within a conservation area, planning control is extended so that planning permission and conservation area consent will be required, for example:
- A dwelling house enlarged by more than 50 cubic metres or over 10% of the size of the original building, whichever is greater.
  - The construction of a detached building, enclosure or pool of over 10 cubic metres in the grounds of a house.
  - Cladding any part of the exterior of a property in stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles.
  - Enlargement of a house by additions to or alteration of 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 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 Buildings and/or a 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.
  - 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 adopted planning policies, the emerging Local Development Framework, and other published 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 Woolwich Road Conservation Area there are many fine historic individual buildings of townscape merit. In addition, all properties collectively form a unique 19th Century suburban townscape composition and are worthy of conservation area status. The principal buildings of merit are shown on the Townscape Appraisal Map.
- 3.3 With all 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 The Woolwich Road Conservation Area has a substantial number of unaltered buildings and these contribute to and maintain the historic value and characteristics of the locale, make the area special, and worthy of conservation area status. In general terms, it was identified that the following alterations pose a threat to the special character of the area:
- Loss of original windows and doors.
  - Alterations to window and door openings.
  - Use of concrete roof tiles, removal of redundant chimney stacks, pots and roof features.
  - Alterations to the roofscape, including the installation of dormers.
  - Installation of satellite dishes on prominent front elevations/chimney stacks.
  - Loss of gardens, particularly to the front of a property for the provision of car parking spaces.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 The Council may assist with the provision of grant aid for projects, which restore or reinstate the original features of a building and will contribute to achieving higher standards of preservation and enhancement.

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

- 5.1 On private land within the conservation area, anyone intending to lop or fell a tree greater than 75mm in diameter at 1.5 meters 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, in which case a Tree Preservation Order may be served.
- 5.2 The Splashpark, to the north of Woolwich Road, with its mature trees make a major contribution to the setting of the conservation area. Similarly, the wide open spaces and

close mown grass of the recreation ground to the south of Woolwich Road provides a focus for the residential community and natural break from the built environment. In addition, the grass verges on Woolwich Road contribute to the spaciousness of the conservation area.

- 5.3 Mature trees in private residential gardens, front and back, contribute to the “rural” ambiance of the locale and are a significant characteristic of the area. Similarly, loss of greenery in front gardens due to extension of hard surfacing for additional car parking is further eroding the character of the conservation area. It is recommended that these “green characteristics” are protected from inappropriate development.



*Splashpark*

- 5.5 The Council will consider the use of Tree Preservation Orders in appropriate circumstances where a tree has significant amenity value and 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. The Council will also seek to maintain the open spaces and views between buildings and breaks in the built environment.



## **6 Setting and views**

- 6.1 The setting of the conservation area is very important and development that impacts in a detrimental way upon 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.

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

- 7.1 The conservation area has generally been resurfaced using a mix of paving materials. The character and identity of the conservation area could be enhanced and reinforce with a unified approach using materials in keeping with the character of the conservation area.
- 7.2 In general highway signage, traffic calming measures and other structures can all serve to detract from the quality of the public realm and character of the area, and any redundant modern features should be removed. For example along Woolwich Road there are many signs and barriers/bollards/highways furniture, etc all which detract from the setting of the conservation area at this important focal point. Resources permitting a critical audit of the public realm should be undertaken to identify redundant features and opportunities for enhancement.



7.3 In the conservation area the high volume of traffic along Woolwich Road at peak times is visually very intrusive, especially queuing at the mini-roundabout. Should opportunities arise a critical review should be undertaken to assess alternative traffic management options, which may prove to be less intrusive and enhance the conservation area.

7.4 There is potential for further tree planting and soft landscaping particularly round the small green opposite the Eardley Arms Public House. Similarly, in public areas as mature trees die they must be replaced with new trees.



7.5 The existing grass verges on Woolwich Road are of high landscape quality and have a positive visual influence. Car crossovers and other breaks to these verges are eroding this key characteristic and should generally not be encouraged.

7.6 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.

## **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 Woolwich 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, as long as 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 The setting of the houses is frequently enhanced by the presence of large mature trees. Vegetation including especially trees, adds significantly to the character of the area and any proposals for alterations or enhancement will need to be considered very carefully in terms of local and wider impact.

8.4 The roofscape is traditional in form, with heights relating mainly to the two/three-storey scale of buildings in the area. Any variations such as dormers or other extensions are likely to adversely affect this established character. In particular, rooflights and dormer windows to the front roof slope will detract from the character and appearance of the area and therefore fail to "preserve or enhance" the conservation area and will generally be unacceptable.

8.5 The retail uses at the local shopping parade adjacent to the Albert Road/Woolwich Road junction would benefit from co-ordination of signs, shopfronts and colour

schemes. It might be possible to implement when new businesses take over existing retail units.

## **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 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 identifying 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 The appraisal identified that the existing boundary was generally a good reflection of the area of greatest historic significance and special character and consequently no revisions are suggested to the existing designation.
- 11.2 The Council will maintain the defined boundary of the designated area and periodically review the boundary of the conservation area 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 Woolwich 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 to 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 - Woolwich Road Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan were subject to public consultation during February to April 2008. As part of the consultation exercise comments were sought from the Conservation Advisory Committee, local amenity/history groups, local partnerships (as appropriate), organisations such as English Heritage, etc., and individual owners/occupiers of all of the properties affected. The document was also placed on the Council's website, in local libraries and contact centre. A letter advising of these arrangements was delivered to all properties in the area. the results of the consultations were considered by the Cabinet Member, the text was revised and adopted. Copies of this document are available both as printed documents and on the Council's website.
- 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, roof lights, 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 or 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 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

Email: [customers@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:customers@english-heritage.org.uk)

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

Email: [info@spab.org.uk](mailto:info@spab.org.uk)



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:

