

2 – 8 Danson Road

Bexley  
Kent  
DA6 8HB

# Architectural Management

Architecture and Heritage Consultants

## HERITAGE STATEMENT FOR A NEW CARE FACILITY



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**DRAFT 2**

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## 1.0 Introduction and Purpose

This Heritage Statement is to accompany a Planning Application for a new care home facility which will replace four dwellings on Danson Road.

The site address is 2 - 8 Danson Road, Bexley, Kent DA6 8HB.

The subject of this Heritage Statement is to consider the impact of the proposal upon the setting of the nearby heritage assets.

This report is produced by Ian Alderton of Architectural Management Ltd upon commission by Landbolt Ltd and is to be read in conjunction with the proposals produced by Ryder, scheme architects and Tyler Grange LLP, landscape architects.

The general format of this report will be;

- To briefly describe the overall application site
- To outline the character and setting of the surroundings
- To describe the impact of the proposal upon the character and setting of the environs
- Conclusion

During the assessment of the setting, no detailed historical research into the development of the site has been undertaken, as a detailed analysis of historical development on the site is not considered to be relevant. The specific aim of this report is to assess the effect of the scheme upon the setting of the heritage assets.

The format, techniques and content of this Assessment draw upon the guidance from the English Heritage Publication; Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance (dated 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2008), supported by Historic England and The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) published December 2017.

The Guidance provides a comprehensive framework for the sustainable management of the historic environment, within which 'Conservation' is defined as the process of managing change to a significant place and its setting in ways that will best sustain its heritage values, while recognising opportunities to reveal or reinforce those values for present and future generations.

## 2.0 Preamble

The NPPF Paragraph 189 states that... *In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.*

The proposals for this scheme include changes within the wider setting of heritage assets. The proposal may have an effect upon the setting of the heritage assets.

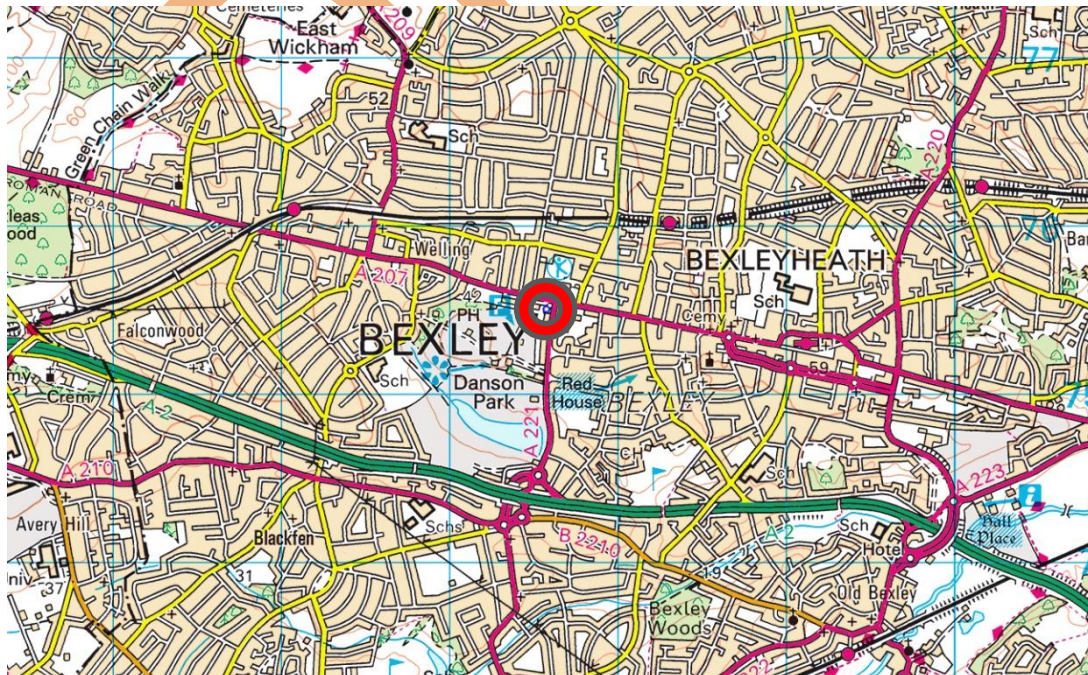
With regard to Paragraph 189 of the NPPF, the level of detail supplied within this Assessment is considered to be proportionate to the potential impact of development.

## 3.0 Location



The national location of Bexley in Kent (Greater London) is shown left.

The site is located in the centre of Bexley. The site (red circle) is shown below.



## 4.0 General Description of the Application Site and its Setting

### The environs of the application site



The application site

Danson House

Danson Park

The application site is located to the north east corner of Danson Park, a grade II listed park and garden.

It is located near to the junction of the A221 Danson Road (to its east) and the A207 Park View Road (to its north).

Within Danson Park is Danson Park Mansion, a grade I listed house and the former Stables, a grade II\* listed property.



The application site

The Stables

Danson House

The former stables are sited some 325m distant and Danson Park Mansion is sited some 400m distant, to the south west of the nearest part of the application site.

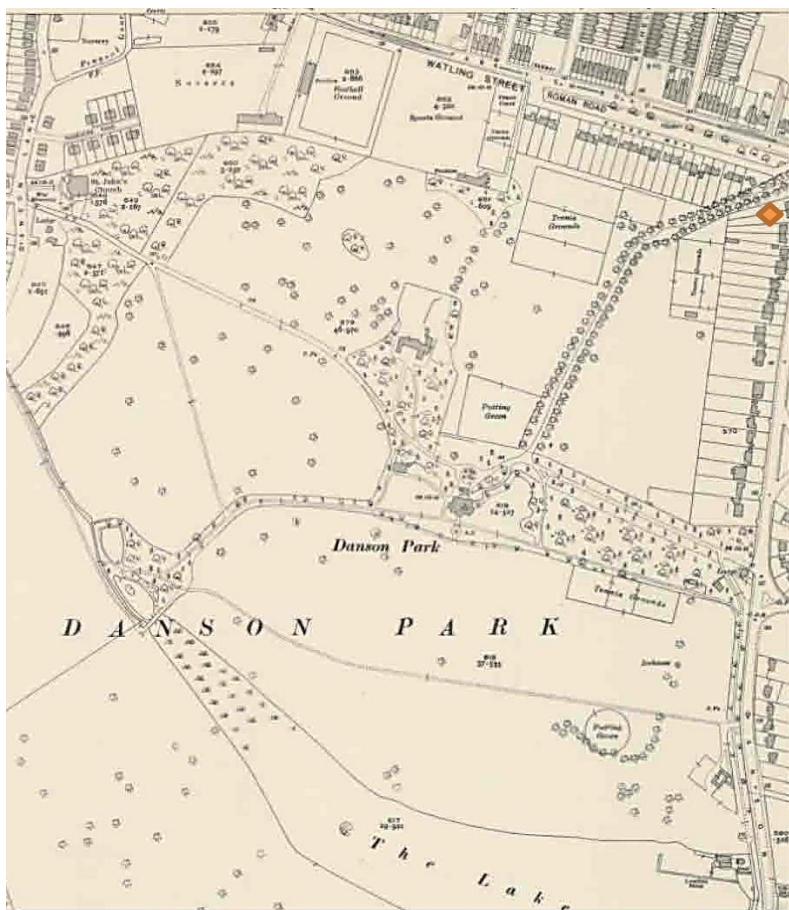
### Brief Description

An extensive public park (74 hectares) opened in 1925 on the site of a larger 18th-century landscape park originally of 240 hectares. The park has three separate garden areas: the Old English Garden, the Rock Garden and the Peace Garden. The park now supports a wide array of sporting and visitor facilities including water sports on the 7.8 hectare lake.

## History

Danson Park was the private estate lands for Danson Hill, a mansion built between 1762-67 for wealthy merchant Sir John Boyd. The grounds were laid out at the same time, designed by Nathaniel Richmond in the manner of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, with a large ornamental lake overlooked by the mansion.

The image right shows an extract of the 1931 25 inch OS map. The proposal site is marked with an orange diamond. Danson House, the Stables and the lake are shown. The layout corresponds closely to the current aerial image shown earlier, although some of the sports pitch areas have changed over time, notably where there are now fewer along the eastern boundary behind the houses on Danson Road.



## Danson Park Mansion



The image left shows the north elevation of Danson Park Mansion. It is Grade I listed and is located some 400m south west of the proposal site.

It was originally flanked by pavilions, which were demolished around 1900.

In 1881 Alfred Bean – then owner of the Danson estate – began to develop the neighbouring suburb of Welling. Bean died in 1890 and his widow survived for another 31 years, whereupon the Danson estate was divided into lots and sold.

Bexley UDC bought the mansion and 224 acres of parkland in 1924 and converted the park for public use. It was opened in 1925 by Princess Mary. The remainder of the estate was sporadically developed for housing over a period of nearly 15 years with a variety of styles and sizes ranging from semi-detached bungalows to mock-Tudor mansions, plus a handful of modernist villas.

From 1995 to 2005 Danson House was meticulously restored from a parlous state by leaseholders English Heritage. It is now the local Registry Office and is occasionally open to the public. It also has a small tea room.

It is sufficiently remote from the site and has numerous intervening trees and site features such that there is no inter-visibility. The setting of the house is not affected by the proposal.

## Danson Park Stables



The former stables building was converted into a pub and restaurant and opened in 2005.

It is Grade II\* listed and is located some 325m south west of the proposal site.

The conversion to a commercial use has undoubtedly adversely affected its setting, with the change of use, extensive pub and outside dining paraphernalia and the large car park all diminishing the setting. However, it clearly has a sustainable future as a commercial enterprise.

The image above shows the south elevation.

It is sufficiently remote from the site and has numerous intervening trees such that there is no inter-visibility. The setting of the former stables is not affected by the proposal.

## The Park adjacent to the site



The proposal site lies to the southern side of one of the entrances to Danson Park. The image left shows the park gates at the end of the drive. The site is off to the left of the image.

The images below (left) show the frontage of the existing houses when viewed from inside the park gates and (right) the view into the park along the drive. New trees have been planted to replace those lost, to recreate the earlier tree lined avenue form.



A single house exists on the opposite (northern) side of the entrance drive to the park (image right), set close to the boundary.

The hedges which line the residential boundaries on both sides are well kept and cut at a level of 2 - 2½ metres (right and below).



The images left and above show the outbuildings and fencing/brick wall which form much of the southern boundary between the proposal site and the park.



## 5.0 Brief Description of the proposal site

The proposal site encompasses four houses at the northern end of Danson Road.



The image above shows the proposal site, taken from the east of the site looking west. The site is presently occupied by two pairs of large semi-detached houses. Each has a long garden which borders, at the western end, the boundary with the park and also the northernmost plot borders the entrance route into the Park.

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## 6.0 Description of the Proposals

The scheme comprises a new care home in place of the four houses which presently exist on the site.



Details of the proposals can be read from the Ryder Architects drawings. The image above shows the proposed site layout.



## 7.0 Impact Assessment

### Criteria for Assessment

The following section assesses the significance of the setting of the heritage asset, in accordance with Section 16 of the NPPF and Historic England: Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance and The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition) (referred to henceforth as GPA3).

The assessment of how the proposed development will potentially impact upon the setting of the identified heritage assets has been undertaken using the guidance detailed GPA3. This recommends that an assessment should take into account the following factors when assessing the impact of a development:

- Location and Siting;
- Form and Appearance;
- Additional Effects; and
- Permanence.

The level of change will be assessed upon the following criteria:

| Level of Change     | Description   |
|---------------------|---|
| Major Beneficial    | The proposed changes will substantially alter key elements of the heritage asset in a positive way, better revealing and/or enhancing important characteristics. There would be a substantial improvement to the understanding of important elements of the asset's significance.   |
| Moderate Beneficial | The proposed changes will have a considerable positive effect on key elements of the heritage asset, such that they improve the overall character or significance of the heritage asset. There may be an improvement in key uses and beneficial change (e.g. the creation of coherency) to the characteristics of the asset.                    |
| Minor Beneficial    | The proposed changes may cause a minor improvement to the character of a heritage asset.  |
| Negligible          | The proposed changes will have a very minor effect upon on the heritage asset or very minor impact on the overall character of the surrounding context.   |
| Neutral             | The proposed changes will have no impact on the overall character of the surrounding context.   |
| Minor Adverse       | The proposed changes will have minor impact on key elements of the heritage asset, such that the overall character of a heritage asset is negatively affected. Change of this magnitude may be acceptable if suitable mitigation is carried out.  |
| Moderate Adverse    | The proposed changes will have a considerable negative effect on the overall character and significance of the heritage asset. It will likely disturb key features and be harmful to overall heritage significance. Change of this magnitude should be avoided where possible, but can be minimised or neutralised through positive mitigation. |
| Major Adverse       | The proposed changes will cause a substantial disruption to, or, in some cases, the complete destruction of important features of the heritage asset, such that its significance is substantially harmed. Change of this magnitude should be avoided.   |

In order to more fully understand the effect of the impact of proposals the following assessment provides a comparable analysis of the heritage value against the level of change. This assessment is based on the criteria set out by International Council on Monuments and Sites\* and is a clear way of understanding not just the impact of change but how levels of impact vary according to the value of the heritage asset.

| Overall level of impact |                          |                 |                |                  |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| Level of Change         | Sensitivity/Significance |                 |                |                  |
|                         | Neutral                  | Low             | Medium         | High             |
| Major Beneficial        | Slight                   | Slight/Moderate | Moderate/Large | Large/Very large |
| Moderate Beneficial     | Neutral/Slight           | Slight          | Moderate       | Moderate/Large   |
| Minor Beneficial        | Neutral/Slight           | Neutral/Slight  | Slight         | Slight/Moderate  |
| Negligible              | Neutral                  | Neutral/Slight  | Neutral/Slight | Slight           |
| Neutral                 | Neutral                  | Neutral         | Neutral        | Neutral          |
| Negligible              | Neutral                  | Neutral/Slight  | Neutral/Slight | Slight           |
| Minor Adverse           | Neutral/Slight           | Neutral/Slight  | Slight         | Slight/Moderate  |
| Moderate Adverse        | Neutral/Slight           | Slight          | Moderate       | Moderate/Large   |
| Major Adverse           | Slight                   | Slight/Moderate | Moderate/Large | Large/Very large |

The following levels of harm may potentially be identified:

- **Substantial harm or total loss.** Harm that would 'have such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether or very much reduced'
- **Less than substantial harm.** Harm of a lesser level than that defined above
- **No harm (preservation).** A High Court Judgement of 2014 held that with regard to preserving the setting of Listed building or preserving the character and appearance of a Conservation Area, 'preserving' means 'doing no harm'.

Preservation does not mean no change; it specifically means no harm. Historic England guidance states that .....*Change to heritage assets is inevitable but it is only harmful when significance is damaged.* Thus change is accepted in Historic England's guidance as part of the evolution of the landscape and environment. What matters is whether such change is natural, harmful or beneficial to the significance of an asset.

With regards to changes in setting, GPA 3 states that .....*protection of the setting of heritage assets need not prevent change,* with the above statement regarding the type of impact on the significance being key.

The following assessment is limited to considering the effects occasioned upon the setting of the heritage assets by the proposed scheme.

\* ICOMOS (May 2010) Draft Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties.

## Significance of the Heritage Assets

Setting is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as ..... *The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.*

It is important to understand how the setting contributes to the significance of the heritage asset.

### The wider setting of Danson Park

The park is a large expanse of open green land, with many features to encourage its use for leisure, recreation and sport. It remains very popular and is therefore an important part of the local area, providing social and physical benefits to the users. Much of its earlier essence remains, with the managed landscape features such as specimen trees and tree lined avenues placed within open areas of grass, together with the ever popular lake, still readily understandable. Some features have changed and relocated over time, such as the sports areas for tennis, bowls and putting. Other features have been introduced, such as the Old English Garden. Other changes, perhaps more significantly, have been introduced such as the change of the Stables to a pub and dining facility, the repurposing of the mansion to a local authority facility and the watersports centre. These together show both the acknowledgement of the importance of the managed landscape and acceptance of the commercial need to develop facilities to encourage the public to the area. Some changes have been discretely achieved, whilst others have undoubtedly caused a detrimental impact upon the parkland space as a result of the servicing needs of the facilities, such as roads and car parks, peripheral support buildings, equipped play areas, etc. The main entrance roadway still follows the route of what would have been the main carriage entrance originally.

What is important about the setting is that it remains understandable as the designed parkland of the mansion and nothing should interfere with the relationship of the mansion to the park.

Overall the setting of Danson Park is considered to have a **medium/high** significance.

### The immediate setting of the park adjacent to the proposal site

This area now constitutes one of the main entrance gateways when on foot. The grand iron gates are set on a corner of the major road junction, prominently placed and highly visible. The entrance route is, perhaps, deliberately narrow and long, with an avenue of trees to funnel the route down to a 'reveal' of the more open park and the mansion at the end of the avenue. Since the advent of the housing in the early C20<sup>th</sup> lining the north and eastern flanks of the park, this path is a modern engineered feature contemporary with the houses. This would have significantly changed the feel of this space, in what was originally open parkland/pasture with a border copse of trees. The route has become a pedestrian entrance, initially with manicured grass and border hedges along the depth of the domestic gardens, before resuming the 'avenue in the park' feel. As such the immediate setting of the park entrance path, although undoubtedly a pleasant and important feature and an intrinsic part of its more recent managed landscape, is a feature which is entirely alien to the original designed parkland concept.

Upon entering the gates, the houses on the left (the proposal site) are quite visible along their frontage and on the return flank wall. Similarly the single house on the right, set close to the boundary, is visible but above first floor level only due to the closeness and height of the hedge on that side. The combination of hedges and two storey buildings assists in funnelling the view inwards towards the park. However, perhaps due to the width of the entrance space (some 28m at the gates) and the presence of the hedges, the flanks of the houses do not visually intrude. The funnelling nature (the path is some 9m wide at the ends of the gardens) definitely trains the eye upon its centre line, aided by the physical positioning of the path between the grass verges.

What is important about this immediate part of the site is that it provides an appropriate and uncontested route into the park and that the grandeur of the gates is preserved. It is already flanked by buildings and as such, already experiences the built form in sites outside its boundaries, and has done so since the earlier part of the C20<sup>th</sup> when the houses were built. This happens in many of the peripheral areas of the Park, but at this point it is more acutely experienced as it is a funnel shaped access into the parklands, where the public route is more strictly controlled.

The setting of the north east corner of Danson Park is considered to have a **medium** significance.

### Impact upon the Heritage Assets

#### The setting of Danson House and the former Stables

The proliferation of trees and features, combined with the separation distance both visually and physically separates the proposal site from the two heritage assets.

| Setting      | Significance of setting | Level of change | Overall Impact |
|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Danson House | Medium/High             | Neutral         | Neutral        |

| Setting        | Significance of setting | Level of change | Overall Impact |
|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Former Stables | Medium                  | Neutral         | Neutral        |

The resulting impact on the setting of the buildings due to the proposal is considered to be **Neutral**.

#### The wider setting of Danson Park

Fundamentally the proposal site is outside the boundary of the wider Park and it is therefore physically separated. Many changes have taken place around the periphery since the early/mid part of the C20<sup>th</sup>. The Park itself is not particularly sensitive to modest change outside of its perimeter as it is such a well established and prominent feature in its own right. Very substantial change has occurred around the perimeter throughout the C20<sup>th</sup> as the roads and houses have developed and increased in size and capacity to service the local population. This peripheral change has been borne without undue detriment to the physical or historical wellbeing of the Park. The proposal does not directly impact the wider setting of the Park.

| Wider Setting | Significance of setting | Level of change | Overall Impact |
|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Danson Park   | Medium/High             | Neutral         | Neutral        |

The resulting impact on the wider setting of the Park due to the proposal is considered to be **Neutral**.

#### The immediate setting of Danson Park adjacent to the proposal site

The proposal site is currently a developed site with two substantial semi-detached houses upon it. Thus the principle of development upon the site is not changed and any impact will be as a result of a change in form or position of the new building upon the site.

The new proposal building sits largely upon the existing footprint zone where it runs parallel to the road frontage. It is a multi faceted building upon this elevation, divided into four blocks each of a domestic scale which reduces the apparent bulk. It is slightly taller than the existing buildings in some areas and has a long return wing which runs parallel to the Park boundary hedge. This return is of a two storey height with a pitched roof, echoing a traditional form, but using modern materials. It is clearly visible over the hedge however the dark colouring and the nature of the cladding material reduce the visual impact and enable it to blend well into its setting. Along the Park pathway the building serves to further frame the funnel shape but without the tendency to be visually intrusive or overpowering. Similarly along the

western boundary the end gable is further away from the boundary than the present outbuilding, although taller.

The proposal combines the opportunity to find a different beneficial use for the site with a building which offers visual interest but without intrusion. The careful design enables a larger building to be placed upon the site without actually appearing much larger, and where it is visible the design assists in settling it in.

The proposal offers a new building which has an increased visual interest and design quality over the existing buildings. There is unarguably a degree of change, but not one which causes competition or discord and therefore the change can be said to be beneficial.

| Immediate Setting    | Significance of setting | Level of change  | Overall Impact |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Danson Park entrance | Medium                  | Minor Beneficial | Slight         |

The resulting impact on the immediate setting of the Park due to the proposal is considered to be **Slight** (positive). This occasions no harm to the setting, in the NPPF paragraph 196 test.

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## 8.0 Conclusion

The proposed scheme for a new care facility will unarguably occasion a degree of change to the setting.

The proposal makes a significant contribution to local welfare needs.

However, in the management of change, the proposed design does not diminish the importance of this part of the site nor adversely affect the experience when entering the Park.

In the NPPF paragraph 196 it states that.....*Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*

Therefore, even if the test were engaged, the considerable public benefit would weigh against any slight harm which might have been identified.

In the NPPF paragraph 192 it states that, in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of;

- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

This report has analysed the factors which will be occasioned by the proposal. It has determined that overall no harm would be caused to the listed buildings or the wider setting of the Park and slight beneficial change will be occasioned to the immediate setting of the proposal site. This constitutes no harm on balance using the NPPF paragraph 196 test.

For the foregoing reasons the scheme substantiates the changes to the site.



## Appendices

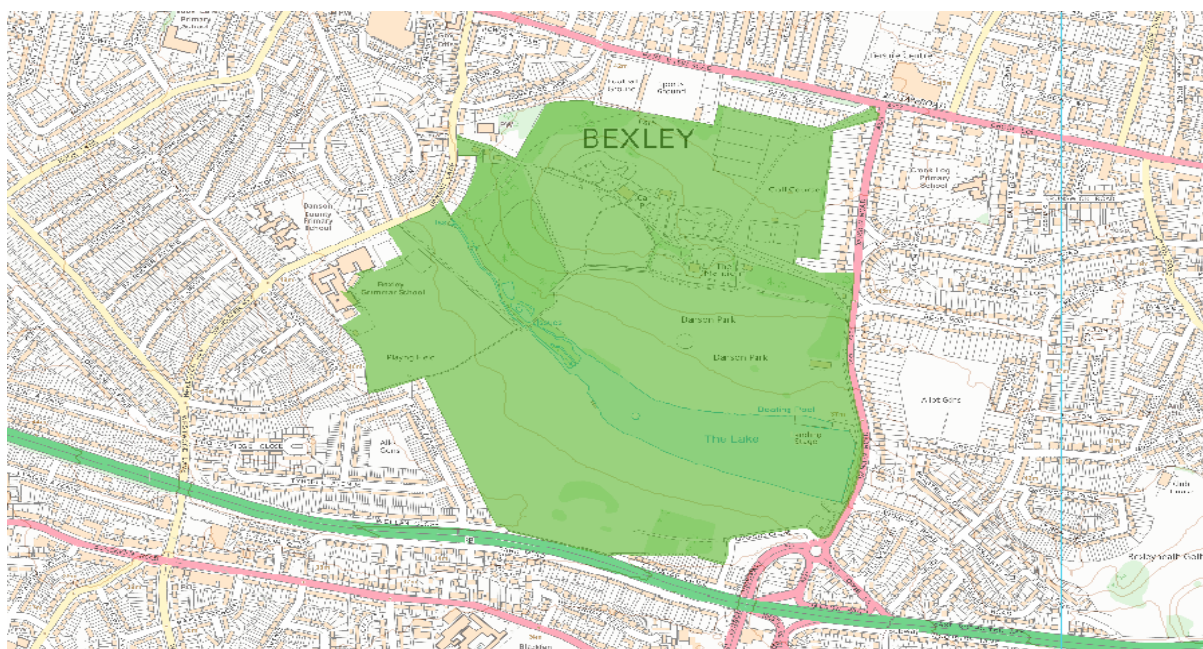
### Extract of Listing for Danson Park and Garden

**Name:** DANSON PARK AND GARDEN

| <b>County</b>  | <b>District</b> | <b>District Type</b> | <b>Parish</b>    |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Greater London | Bexley          | London Borough       | Non Civil parish |

|  |                  |                                   |
|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Date first listed:</b> 1 October 1987 | <b>Grade:</b> II | <b>List entry Number:</b> 1000211 |
|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|

Map



Remains of an C18 landscape park attributed to Nathaniel Richmond.

#### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The original Danson estate, known in C16 as Dansington, was, between 1571 and 1723, enlarged from 100 acres (c 41ha) of woodland and arable to 250 acres (c 104ha) ornamented with waterworks and fishponds (Colson Stone 1997). In 1723 the owner John Styleman leased the estate to John Selwyn, on condition that he spend at least £1000 improving the estate which he did by buying up parcels of adjoining land, ornamenting the landscape, enlarging the house, and c 1745, re-routing the public road from Danson to Blenheim. Selwyn died in 1751 and the lease of Danson was held by Styleman's widow until 1753 when John Boyd (later Sir John) took a full repairing lease on the original Danson House. By 1763 Boyd was making plans to rebuild the mansion and a plan dated 1763 which was drawn up by Rev Spence when he visited Danson shows the site of the new mansion and, like another entitled A plan for the proposed alteration at Danson Hill (1762/3), shows a mansion standing alone on its present location.

The new mansion was augmented by 1766 with two wings, one for stables and one for offices; these are shown on Andrews, Drury, and Herbert's Map of Kent (published 1769) and on a painting by George Barrett Snr (1733-1807). Landscaping of the park appears to have been undertaken at the same time as the new house was built. A plan for the proposed alterations at Danson Hill c 1762/3, once attributed to Lancelot Brown (Fisher 1776; Hasted 1797; Stroud 1975), is now believed to have been drafted by his then assistant, Nathaniel Richmond (Jacques 1983; Brown 2000).

Sir John Boyd died in 1800 and was succeeded by his son, also Sir John, who undertook a comprehensive programme of repair and enhancement between 1802 and 1804 before selling the house to cover his father's outstanding debts. During this time the wings of the house were demolished and new stables (listed grade II\*) were constructed on a separate site at a greater distance from the house, using materials from the demolished wings.

*The estate plan drawn up in connection with the sale of the property to John Johnston in 1805 shows details of the many alterations and improvements made by the Boyds. Other than ornamentation to the northern boundary, few alterations were made during Johnston's lifetime (estate plan, 1823-30) but the Johnston family, who held the estate until 1862, were probably responsible for improvements recorded on the OS 1st edition map (1865).*

*The new owner, Alfred Bean, and his descendants owned Danson between 1862 and 1922 and during that time a number of rustic lodges and a circular summerhouse were built. In 1924 Bexley Urban District Council acquired part of the estate named as Danson on the 1922 sale map; this included the house, stables, lake, and 74ha of parkland. The remainder of the estate was developed for housing and the construction of the A2 trunk road. In 1925 Danson was opened as a public park, the house, known as The Mansion, housing a museum and a cafe. Many new facilities have been created since 1925, most of them in the area of park to the north of the house.*

*The Mansion was closed in 1970 and has remained empty to the present day. It is currently (1997) undergoing restoration and the stables have been converted for use as a restaurant.*

## DESCRIPTION

*LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Danson Park lies to the north of the A2 trunk road, East Rochester Way, between Welling to the north-west and Bexleyheath to the east. Suburban housing almost entirely encloses the site, with the A221, Danson Road providing the eastern boundary, Danson Mead and Parkview Road the northern boundary, and Radnor Avenue and a footpath to the rear of houses in Merlin Road the west boundary.*

*The c 74ha site, enclosed within C20 walls and railings, is relatively flat, sloping moderately to the south with The Mansion located on a ridge of high ground that runs east/west through the site, this ridge effectively dividing the park into two halves. A valley which runs east/west across the southern part of the site was infilled by a lake behind an artificial dam. The height of the earth bank at the dam shows the significant depth of the valley. The land rises southwards in a ridge beyond the lake.*

*ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to the site is from Danson Road to the east and follows the line of the drive remodelled c 1897 (OS). The new drive is shown crossing parkland before terminating at a turning circle on the north front of The Mansion. At the same time the access drives to the north front were realigned so that they focused around the turning circle rather than as previously, on the front steps. The main entrance drive today (1997) has mown grass borders and C20 trees and shrubs planted at intervals along its length; it is screened from the C18/C19 parkland by clipped hedges. It passes c 40m to the north of The Mansion, with the Old English Garden to the north and the turning circle to the south, and continues c 500m north-west past, to the north, the C19 stable block (listed grade II\*), before terminating at the Danson Lane Gate. On the east side of the Old English Garden a drive, now a tarmac footpath, passes through former parkland and connects the C20 Crook Log entrance with the main drive. This was the main entrance to the municipal park and is marked by ornate iron railings and gates.*

*PRINCIPAL BUILDING The Mansion (listed grade I) stands on high ground with fine views out over falling ground to the south. It was built from c 1762 for John Boyd by Sir Robert Taylor and was originally called Danson Hill. The Mansion was completed by 1770 with some of the interiors having been designed by Sir William Chambers. The house is of Portland stone and has three storeys, a piano-nobile, and a half storey above a rusticated stone basement. The principal apartments are on the first floor. The walls are rendered and the roofs low and slated. The entrance is on the north side, up a grand flight of nineteen wide steps to a balcony as wide as the projected pedimented centre.*

*GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS To the north of the entrance drive, opposite The Mansion, is the Old English Garden, which was laid out on former parkland and probably dates from the earliest stages of the municipal park in the 1920s. It has a pergola, paved paths, formal plant beds, and modern seats.*

*Some 50m north-east of The Mansion, a C20 perimeter path leads c 80m south from the entrance drive across an area of lawn to the east of the house. This area, open parkland on Richmond's plan of 1762/3, had been planted with regular rows of trees by 1805 (estate plan) and subsequently (by 1830) thinned (plan of the property of John Johnson). The area immediately around the house is separated from the*

parkland by a hawthorn hedge to the east, and a beech hedge planted c 1970 to the south of the C18 ha-ha after it was filled in (mid-late C20). The line of the ha-ha, which would have divided the gardens from the parkland, is still recognisable as a distinctive step at the edge of the lawn. At about the same time (c 1860) as the beech hedge was planted, the southern perimeter path which ran between the ha-ha and The Mansion was re-routed to the south of the hedge. Today (1997) the hedge screens any view of the garden around The Mansion but three late C19 trees survive on the lawn to the east along with other C20 trees. Some 80m south east of The Mansion the C20 perimeter path turns west and continues for 160m to the south side of the beech hedge where it turns north and links up with the mid C19 west garden path which led around the western lawn to the Winter Garden. The Winter Garden, constructed by 1844, has been lost, as have the rose arches over the path. The west lawn was first shown as lawn with trees by c 1830 (Plan of the property of John Johnson) but the nature of the land before then is not clear. Mature trees including cedar of Lebanon (shown on OS 1860) and the shrubbery along the northern edge of the western garden are thought to survive from the mid C19, though contemporary paths through the shrubbery have been lost.

At its western end the southern perimeter path divides, one spur continuing north as the western perimeter path while the other runs south and leads down to the C20 formal garden and the water garden at the west end of the lake. The path is separated from the parkland by low hedges and shrubs, as well as some mature trees possibly surviving from the thin belt of trees which followed the contour down to the south-west of the house (sale plan, 1805). The C20 water garden, separated from the lake by a brick footbridge, is situated in the area where, in the C18, the Danson Brook fed into the lake. The two pieces of water that make up the water garden are recorded on the OS 1st edition map of 1865.

**PARK** The land laid out as parkland lies to the south, west, and north of The Mansion. The land to the south slopes away from the house, levelling off before the lake and then rising slightly again to the south of the lake. The level areas of land are used for football in the winter months. Tree cover is sparse compared with the clumps and blocks of woodland shown on the C18 and C19 plans, and consists largely of a scatter of C20 individuals with more concentrated planting along the banks of the lake. Occasional mature trees, possibly C18/C19, survive, notably the 'Charter Oak' to the north of the lake. The C20 planting at the west end of the lake and around the water garden contrasts with the open aspect of the late C18 and early C19 (sale plan, 1805) and screens the view of the house from the south-west parkland. C20 plantings help to screen the site from the A2 trunk road which runs along the southern boundary. There is an ice well close to the eastern edge of the park.

The lake is the most striking feature on Richmond's plan (1762/3) which shows a system of three interlocking lakes connected and divided by curving plantations and a false island. The 1805 sale plan shows a simplified design similar to the Lower and Middle Lakes on the C18 plan and similar to the piece of water at Danson today (1997). The lower (eastern) section of the lake is known to have been under construction by 1770 when Sir William Chambers was commissioned to design a temple at its eastern end and a bridge at the western end. The lake was filled in during the Second World War as it was considered an obvious landmark for enemy aircraft but was subsequently re-excavated; it is currently used for boating. There is a cafe and boathouse (C20) on the north-east shore.

Little of the original parkland survives to the north and west of The Mansion. The stable block to the north of the house is thought to have been designed by George Dance the younger; this has been converted to a restaurant and is fronted by a public car park. Much of the C18/C19 park and woodland surrounding The Mansion has been lost to sport facilities which include tennis courts and playgrounds created since 1924. The views back to the house from the west are obscured by trees on the garden boundary.

## Extract of Listing for Danson Park Mansion

**Name:** DANSON PARK MANSION

| <b>County</b>  | <b>District</b> | <b>District Type</b> | <b>Parish</b>    |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Greater London | Bexley          | London Borough       | Non Civil parish |

**Date first listed:** 1 October 1953      **Grade:** I      **List entry Number:** 1064225

*This mansion was built by Sir Robert Taylor about 1765 for Alderman, later Sir, John Boyd and originally called Banson Hill. Wings were added later, which have since been demolished. The Park was laid out by 'Capability' Brown in 1761. The house is of Portland stone; the ground floor being rusticated. It has 3 storeys; the principal apartments being on the first floor. Heavy modillion eaves cornice. Slate roof. Windows in moulded architrave surrounds, with glazing bars intact; those on the first floor having projecting cornices over and panels of balustrading below. All 4 fronts are exposed, but the north and south fronts are slightly wider than the east and west fronts. The east, west and south fronts have a canted bay of 3 windows on all floors in the centre. The north front has a square central projection, with a pediment over containing a round window in the typanum. The entrance is on this side. Nineteen wide steps, with a balustrade on each side, lead up to the front door, on the piano nobile. This has engaged Corinthian columns, a modillion cornice and a vase over it between volutes and a medallion and swags between the architrave and the moulded surround of the door. The interior has a fine central oval staircase, with a gallery of 8 Ionic columns on the second floor and an oval dome above, and some fine rooms.*

Listing NGR: TQ4727375179

## Extract of Listing for Danson Park Stables

**Name:** DANSON PARK STABLES

| <b>County</b>  | <b>District</b> | <b>District Type</b> | <b>Parish</b>    |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Greater London | Bexley          | London Borough       | Non Civil parish |

**Date first listed:** 1 October 1953      **Grade:** II\*      **List entry Number:** 1359409

*These are contemporary with Danson Park Mansion, circa 1765, and were presumably designed by Sir Robert Taylor. Half-H plan. Portland stone. Stringcourse. Slate roof. The north or main side has a slightly projecting centre, with 3 coach-houses on the ground floor, having flanking pilasters and double doors. Above on the first floor, but at ground level, are 3 large lunette windows of 22 panes each. On the roof is a small octagonal wooden cupola. On each side of the centre projection is a roundheaded doorway, with a semi-circular fanlight and a square window of 12 panes above. The inner face of each half-H wing has 3 windows on the first floor and one on the ground floor, between 2 round-headed doorways with semi-circular fanlights. Their south ends have large round-headed rusticated arches, with lunette windows, in the arches above the stringcourse.*

Listing NGR: TQ4721775348