



# ELTHAM TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN SPD

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Masterplan boundary shown in pink

## 01 INTRODUCTION

This masterplan sets out a new vision for Eltham town centre, supported by a set of objectives and a number of clear and tangible development opportunities.

This masterplan is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and forms part of the Royal Borough's Local Development Framework (LDF). The masterplan's status as an SPD means that, whilst not adopted policy, it can be used as a material consideration when assessing planning applications. The masterplan has been prepared by Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners and The Royal Borough of Greenwich.

Eltham is a town with a long and distinguished history. However, this lies rather hidden, either buried behind modern buildings in the case of the network of historic lanes, or remote from the High Street in the case of Eltham Palace.

A key aim of this document is to reveal and reclaim that history, and create a place which is characterful, rich and above all, enjoyable.

The vision for Eltham is to consolidate and prosper. The vision is to help Eltham be an excellent local town centre for people who live and work in the local area. It can achieve this through a combination of a good mix of uses, great public spaces and good access. A mix of town centre living will also help to promote vibrancy.

This masterplan is subject to assessment of its strategic impact on transport and other infrastructure, achieved as appropriate through the masterplan process. In addition, individual planning applications should, as per local and London Plan policy, be accompanied by a transport assessment.





**VISION AND MASTERPLAN**





## 02 VISION

Eltham has all the key ingredients that make up a quality and liveable neighbourhood but its town centre has much more to offer its residents as well as its visitors.

In the future Eltham town centre will feature a revitalised shopping offer with a range of high quality retailers. There will be an improved range of cafés and restaurants, supporting a stronger evening economy in the town centre.

The town centre will benefit from an enhanced High Street with an improved public realm and streetscape. The vicinity of Eltham Palace will be promoted in order to encourage tourists visiting this site to also visit the town centre.

The dominance of the car will be reduced and there will be increased space for pedestrians, leading to an improved shopping environment. This will help to encourage further investment in the town centre. Links to the train station will be improved to encourage the use of public transport, along with a possible new DLR station.

The intensity of uses in the town centre will be increased. Links to those areas directly behind the High Street will be improved and redeveloped to provide a higher intensity of usage and a more inviting street scene. Car parking will be reconfigured.

Through the enhancement of the public realm, the provision of new housing, and the consolidation of commercial and community uses, Eltham will thrive as an attractive neighbourhood in an accessible suburban location in south-east London.

## 03 OBJECTIVES

- Improved retail quality in the town centre
- Increase number of cafes and restaurants and improved evening economy
- Better public spaces and pedestrian environment including public realm improvements
- Planting of street trees where possible
- Consolidation and reconfiguration of the backland parking sites to improve their usage
- Improvements to the Orangery, using this as a cultural focal point
- Increased density on the High Street where building heights are currently lower than average that is in keeping with the existing character
- Increased amount of residential within the town centre
- Opening up those areas that are currently hidden behind the High Street
- Improved environment to alleyways which lead from the high Street
- High quality and attractive shop fronts throughout the town centre
- Improved links to Eltham Palace and the rail station and other heritage assets
- Assess the future requirement for the retention of Philipot Path, a historic right of way
- Assess the possibility of moving the primary school to the north of the High Street to an alternative location

## 04 DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

### USES

**Retail:** High quality retail and improved Shopfronts will be encouraged in the town centre, as will the intensification of retail use. Areas to the rear of the High Street should be opened up to encourage improved links, including Sainsbury's, which currently sits behind the High Street. Improvements should be made to the former Alders and Co-Op buildings on the High Street to improve the quality of the retail and to aid in opening up the areas behind these buildings. New retail is also being provided on the Grove Market place site. Independent retailers should be supported and encouraged.

**Residential:** Residential uses within the town centre will be encouraged in order to intensify its use. There should be active frontages on the ground floor. Residential uses should be considered in the area at the rear of the north High Street.

**Leisure, Culture and Community:** The offer of leisure, culture and community uses within the town centre should be widened and sites should be identified for these uses where possible.

**Evening Economy:** Uses that will help to promote the evening economy, such as restaurants and cafés, will be encouraged

within the town centre. The opportunity for these will be enhanced by improvements to the public realm and better spaces for pedestrians allowing for outdoor seating and a more lively and enjoyable environment.

**Open Spaces:** Eltham has no single space which might be used for markets, fairs or gatherings. Suitable space should be created by increasing the pedestrianisation of Passey Place. Improvements to the High Street should also be considered, including the possibility for wider pavements and improved tree planting.

**Employment:** There should be improved employment opportunities provided within the town centre, with an improved and increased range of employment on offer, including small office units to bring back into use the historic Orangery site and the promotion of small and independent businesses in general.

**Intensification:** At present, Eltham town centre is relatively low density. Where appropriate, the density should be increased, to intensify its use whilst respecting the scale and character of the historic environment. This will help provide opportunities for more residential development in the town centre, as well as increased employment opportunities.

### MOVEMENT

**Welcoming gateways:** The sense of arrival at the town centre should be reinforced through the creation of clear gateways on each of the four key approaches to the town centre. The junction of Well Hall Road and the High Street should also be enhanced to create a positive sense of arrival. The environment at the train station should also be improved, recognising its role as a gateway to Eltham.

**Strategic links:** The links to the railway station and Well Hall Pleasaunce and Tudor Barn to the north of the high street and to Eltham Palace to the south should be improved to create a safe and attractive environment with clear signage which helps to unify these destinations within the town centre. This should help to encourage more visitors and tourists to the town centre. Within the town centre, a clear wayfinding strategy should be implemented promoting existing features such as the Bob Hope Theatre. This should include new signage and be implemented alongside the proposed public realm improvements in the centre.

**Car Parking:** Car parks should be reconfigured to reduce their presence and allow for improved connections to the town centre. This should

include reconfiguration and consolidation of Sainsbury's car park and the car park adjacent to the Orangery, with the Royal Borough's depot to the north of the High Street potentially providing a multi-storey solution. A parking strategy should be prepared for the town centre to ensure the level and type of provision is appropriate.

**Sustainable transport:** New development should encourage more sustainable modes of transport, such as walking and cycling, so as to reduce the presence and impact of the car.

**Historic Alleyways:** Development should encourage historic alleyways to make a positive contribution to the town centre, with the use of active frontages where possible and the encouragement of activity and stronger visual links. This would also help to create a wider retail circuit making the town centre a more attractive destination.

### PUBLIC REALM AND URBAN DESIGN

**Streetscape:** Improved paving and street furniture along the High Street and public spaces will be encouraged to improve the appearance of the centre. Wider pavements

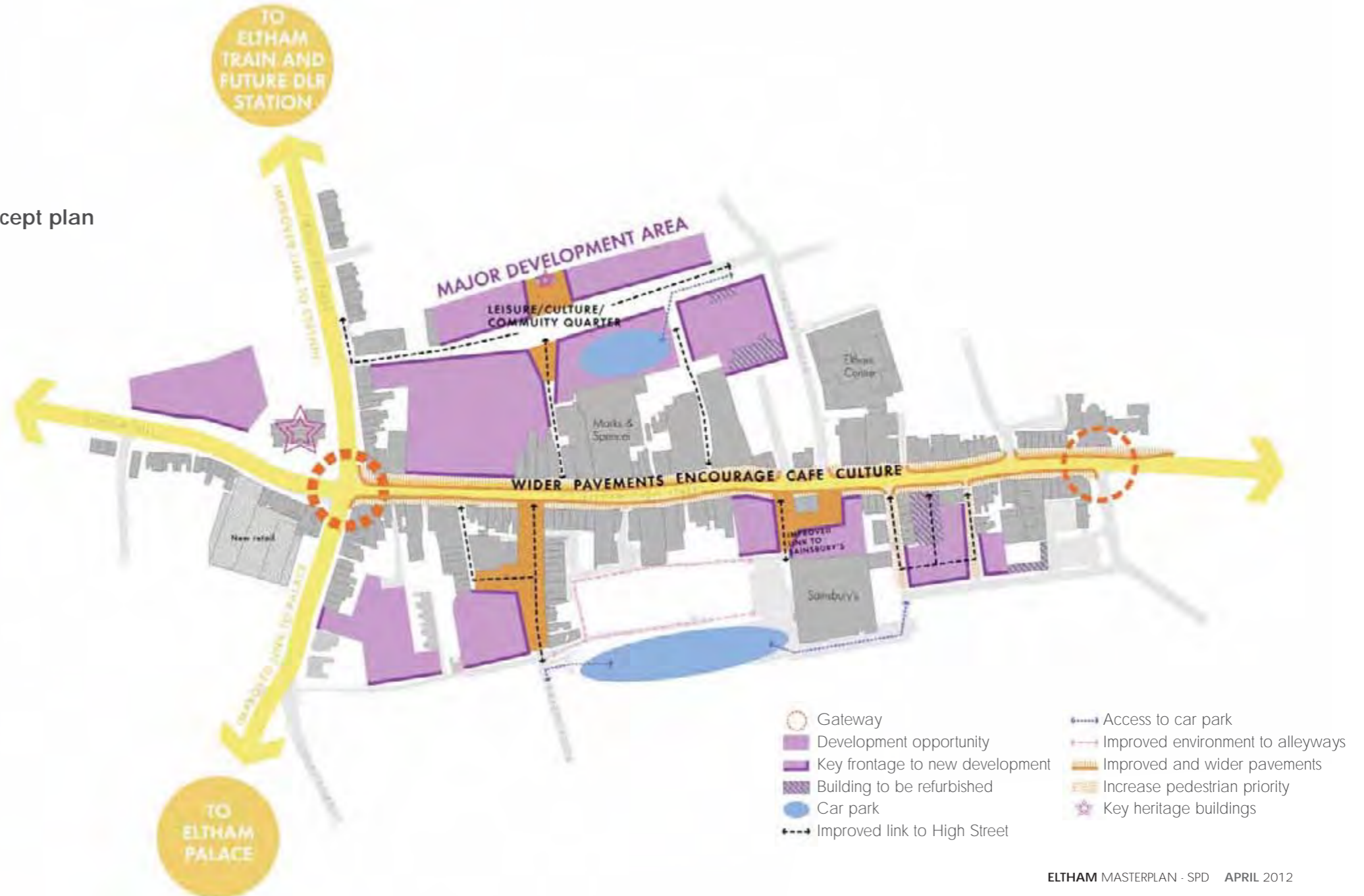
and some traffic calming measures should be introduced to improve pedestrian comfort in the town centre whilst maintaining the existing traffic capacity.

**Pedestrianisation:** Increased pedestrianisation in locations such as Passey Place and Pound Place will encourage more café and restaurant uses and an evening economy as well as offering an attractive location to rest and spend more time in the town centre.

**Tree planting:** Eltham is known for its very green setting yet little of this character pervades the town centre. There is the opportunity for new tree planting along the High Street as well as in other smaller streets and spaces which could significantly improve the enjoyment of the town.

**Buildings and shop fronts:** Eltham has an impressive stock of buildings in a wide variety of styles. Those which make a positive contribution should be identified and protected, with suitable guidance prepared to promote high quality development and shop front improvement on other sites. New buildings should be built to a scale which reflects the existing character of the town centre.

### Concept plan





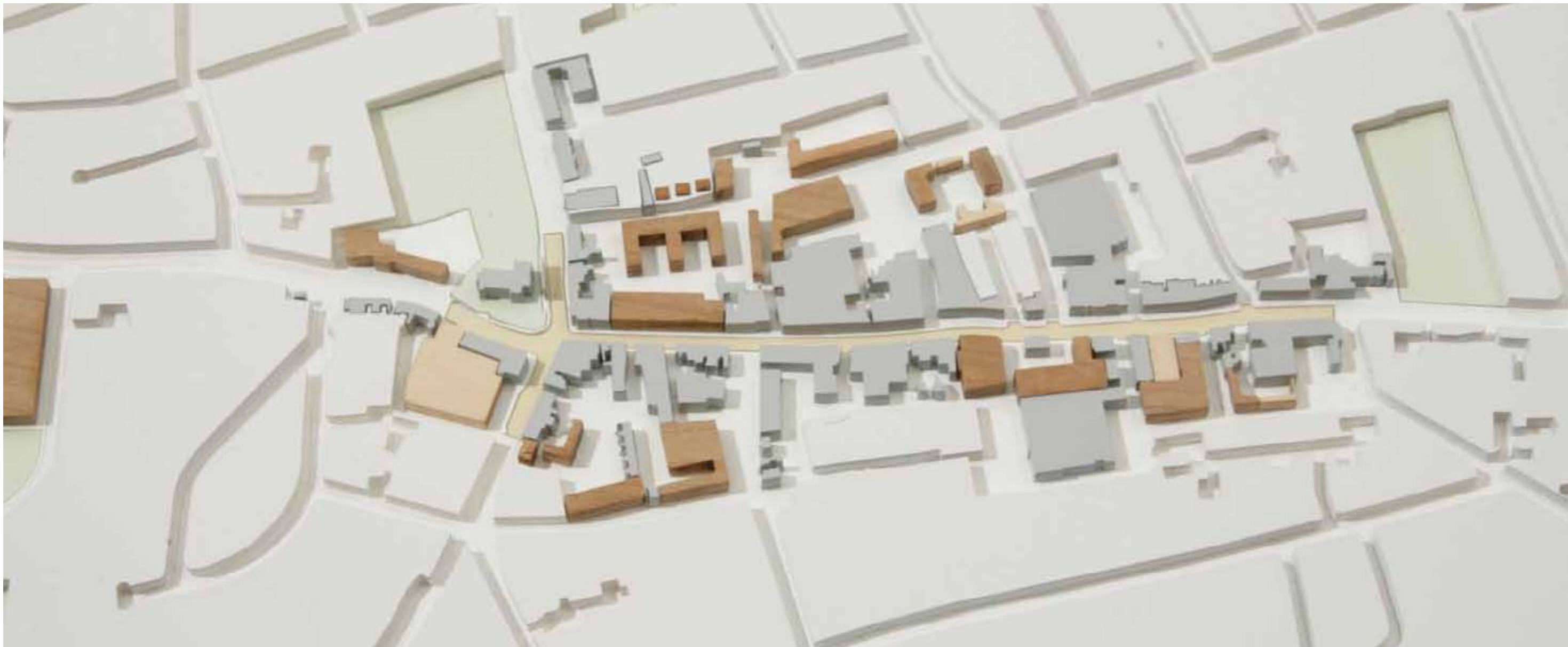
## 05 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The adjacent plan is an indicative illustration of the potential for change in Eltham. All new development should be of an appropriate scale and massing for its context and of the highest possible design quality.

There are several specific opportunities for built change and public realm improvements within the town centre, with numbering cross referenced to the plan, these are:

- 1 Mecca Bingo site
- 2 Eltham Approach
- 3 Eltham Palace and station approaches
- 4 Royal Mail sorting office
- 5 Argos Block
- 6 Passey Place
- 7 Eltham High Street
- 8 Orangery Square
- 9 The Arcade
- 10 St Mary's Place

- Existing local buildings
- Existing town centre buildings
- Buildings with planning permission
- Indicative footprint of proposed masterplan buildings
- Decked car park
- Potential opportunity site if school relocates
- Opportunity for refurbishment
- Pedestrian crossing
- New or existing trees



Model of Eltham town centre masterplan (looking north)



Mecca Bingo site

### 1. Mecca Bingo site

This site is currently in use by Mecca Bingo, but would be appropriate for residential development in the future. Any development should create a better relationship between the activity of the building and the street to make the entrance to Kingsground more appealing.

Scale and massing of any development should reflect that of the existing building in the front half of the site, but should scale down progressively to the south of the site to reflect the transition to the residential neighbourhood.



Eltham Hill site

### 2. Eltham approach

The car showroom and petrol filling station create a poor gateway to Eltham, and are a particularly poor foreground for the Parish Church when approaching from the west.

New development on this site could deliver replacement education uses for Eltham Church of England Primary School, should re-location occur.

A more appropriate setting for the church would be created if terraced development were allowed to step up the hill rather than cut into it as large scale slab blocks. The buildings should have active frontage onto the main road, but might gradually peel away from it towards the church to create a new wedge shaped green space and maintain the approach views.



Eltham Palace / station approach

### 3. Eltham Palace and station approach

The existing links from the town centre to the palace and the station are environmentally poor and visually weak, compounded by very ordinary signage. The route from the station, through the town centre to the Palace should have a more prominent feel, with clear lines of sight wherever possible, quality paving, lighting and clear signage.

The link to Eltham Palace is an important one. It signals the presence of the palace to the people of Eltham, but it also encourages visitors to the palace to extend their trip into Eltham.

The treatment of the Palace and station approach might include several key elements. New high quality paving should be used to re-unify the route from the station, through the town centre and on to the Palace.

At present the existing route is visually cluttered. In particular, a large area of planting at the corner of Court Yard and

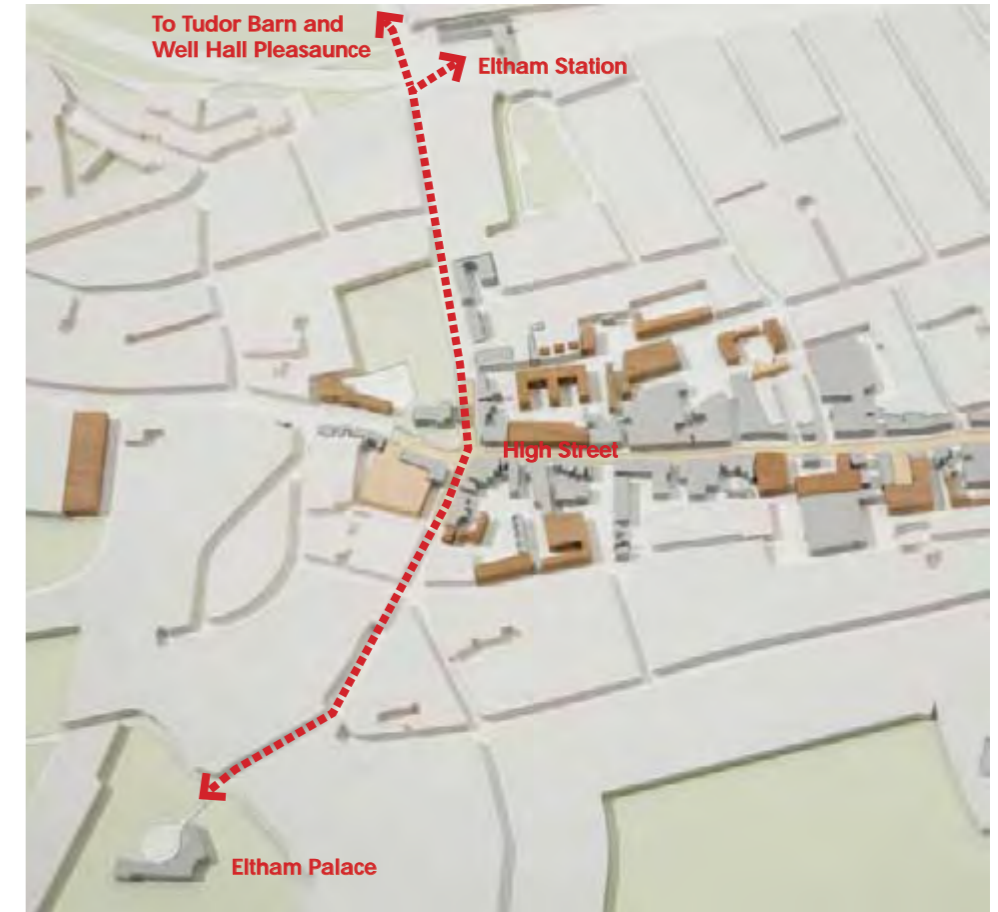
Court Road creates a visual barrier which is off-putting as it blocks views both to and from the Palace. This should be removed as part of the wider paving programme to create open vistas wherever possible. The old tramshed buildings should also be brought back into use, to add further interest on Well Hall Road.

The potential future DLR station will also help to provide the impetus for improvement of these important approaches.

Connections to Tudor Barn and Well Hall Pleasaunce to the north of the station should be included within any improvements.

Cycling connections between the train station and its catchment should be improved. This should include increased cycling facilities at the station itself.

The train station is also a key gateway to the town centre and for many the first impression of Eltham. The environment at the station should be enhanced in recognition of its gateway status.



Link between Eltham Palace and the train station highlighted on model of masterplan



Royal Mail sorting office

#### 4. Royal Mail sorting office site

Like many similar sites around London it is likely that at some point in the future the Royal Mail sorting office site will be reviewed to assess its function and development potential for Royal Mail. This site should be used to resolve one of the more complicated parts of Eltham's urban form. The site is appropriate for residential development, with elements of retail and other mixed use along the parts of street frontage relating to the High Street and Philipot Path.

Should the Royal Mail Sorting office relocate, suitable provision to collect packages should be retained within the town centre.



Argos block

#### 5. Argos block

Argos is located away from the High Street at the end of a narrow pedestrian route with some frontage onto Passey Place. The pedestrian lane runs around the back of the former post office (now a public house) and although it has shops, is generally a weak part of the town centre. Resolution of the adjoining block as described for site four would allow a clearer network of streets and spaces to be established here. The existing Chequers Parade should be widened at the rear of the High Street to create a more inviting environment for pedestrians and shoppers.



Passey Place

#### 6. Passey Place

The existing scheme for Passey Place creates a very small public area with little usable space. However, the space is currently used for entertainment and events, including a monthly farmers market and occasional speciality markets. A larger area of single surface at the northern end of Passey Place would create an effective market square, suitable for larger weekly markets. A more generous public space would also provide more opportunities for outdoor seating, both as public street furniture and associated with cafés or bars, creating more opportunities for people to meet and relax.

The new community hospital proposed on Passey Place will also add to the potential footfall in this part of town.





Existing public space on Passey Place



A larger public space at Passey Place would provide opportunity for market stalls and public events

## 7. Eltham High Street - public realm improvements

Eltham High Street is a strikingly wide thoroughfare and is the key public space for the town. It has the potential to become a much more attractive street through use of high quality paving, street furniture and tree planting.

For most of its length, Eltham High Street is over 20m wide. This makes it a very substantial street, on a par with Oxford Street. Despite this, it offers very little space to the pedestrians, preferring instead to allow a more than generous space for vehicles, both for movement and for parking. A substantial amount of this vehicular capacity could usefully be taken away and turned into paving, transforming the feel of the High Street so that it feels welcoming and relaxing.

Pavement widening should take place on both sides of the road, but predominantly on the north side of the High Street, as

this is the side of the street which benefits most from sunshine. The wider pavement should feature new tree planting, subject to the constraints of underground drains and services. It should also feature new street furniture, potentially designed to draw on the 1930s influence of the Palace.

The existing parallel parking bays on each side of the high street should be retained where appropriate as these encourage shopping trips.

Pavement widening should primarily make use of under-utilised road space caused by single lane traffic filing along the wide road. Wider pavements have the potential to greatly improve the pedestrian experience of the high street whilst maintaining existing traffic capacity.

Any public realm improvements along the high street should recognise the high number of bus movements and be designed accordingly. Wider pavements will allow for more space at bus stops removing existing pedestrian pinch points.

Similarly, the new pedestrian crossings should be simple and much shorter due to the wider pavements.

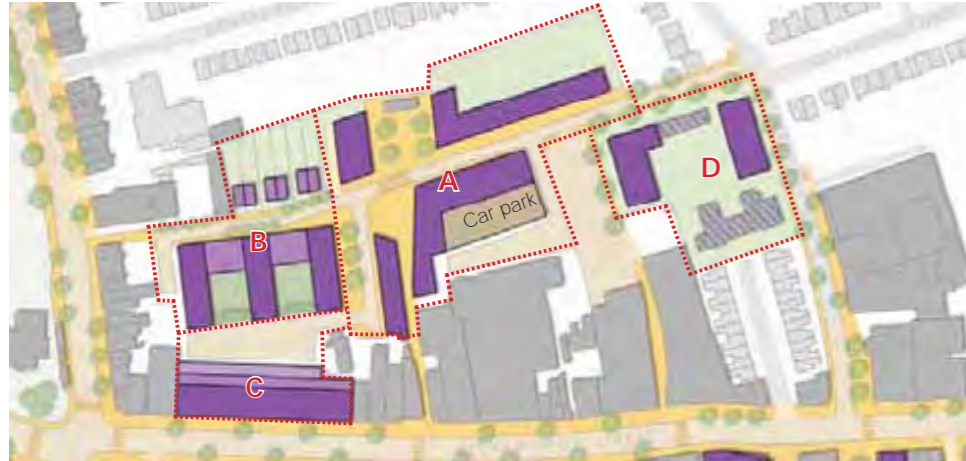
These improvements would help enhance the image of the town, attracting increased investment in the centre, a wider range of uses and a stronger evening economy. They would also make more sustainable modes of transport more inviting promoting their use.



Potential for public realm improvements to the high street



Pavement widening and development on the high street would allow for south facing cafes and restaurants



Orangery Square - illustrative masterplan



Orangery Square - existing

## 8. Orangery Square

The area leading between the Orangery and the High Street has long been a very jumbled arrangement of spaces and ownerships which provides a poor complement to the High Street. Most of the existing available development parcels are poorly configured as the alignment of the existing routes creates small and unusual sites. A further key consideration is that the Orangery, one of the key historic buildings in the town centre, lacks a direct visual connection with the High Street and as a result is under-exposed and under-valued.

The plan for Orangery Square is split into four areas, with each able to be brought forward for redevelopment individually.

Please note that the masterplan drawings are indicative and only intended to give an impression of the type of development which could be achieved and are not representative of a preferred option for the redevelopment of the area.

### Site A

Site A includes the existing car parks, the Orangery and two buildings on the passageway linking to the High Street. Parking should be rationalised into a decked car park with integrated residential or office development to provide a high level of active frontage. The redevelopment of this site would include new residential accommodation to create a more robust mix of housing types in the town centre. The Orangery will be converted to small business/starter uses by Greenwich Enterprise Board with complementary uses facing the building on a new public square. The existing path running from the High Street up towards the western side of the Orangery should open up when moving north to reveal a view of the Orangery once past the existing stores on the High Street whilst maintaining clear sightlines. Any detailed proposals should seek to maintain the residential amenity of existing neighbouring houses and be designed accordingly.

### Site B

If BT relocate, site B could be redeveloped for residential and office use and would also allow for the route of Orangery Lane to be adjusted so that it runs more parallel to Dobell Road with a pedestrian connection with Well Hall Road south of the police station rather than to the north.

### Site C

Site C, the existing terrace of single storey shops on the north side of the high street, should be redeveloped to permit several storeys of residential development above, whilst retaining retail on the ground floor. At the same time, the opportunity should be taken to reconfigure the units to provide the slightly larger format stores which modern retailing requires.

### Site D

The current Eltham Church of England Primary School at site D could be relocated to the site of the existing car showroom at the western start of Eltham High Street. The proposal would allow this space to

be opened up to provide a new mixed use development. The site could incorporate a range of uses, such as a gallery space, theatre or community centre and residential, whilst protecting the existing school frontage.

Further consultation on the potential to relocate Eltham Church of England Primary School will be required.



Artist's impression of how the area between the Orangery and the High Street could be reconfigured.



The Arcade and neighbouring streets

## 9. The Arcade

The existing arcade at the eastern end of the High Street is a two storey structure with classical detailing surmounted by an arched glazed roof. It provides an excellent opportunity to create a unified group of smaller units which could have a defined identity as a location for art, craft and vintage fashion which draws on the striking design heritage of Eltham Palace.

The fabric of the building would benefit from refurbishment, in particular removing the existing pigeon netting in favour of doors at either end which will keep birds out. The lighting should be improved, ensuring that the space feels bright even on the greyest of winter days, whilst the floor covering might draw inspiration from the palace with the addition of a new mosaic or other treatment which evokes the strong pattern and colour of the Palace.

The upper floors within the arcade should provide workshop space to the artists and

crafts people selling the products in the arcade, being well-lit with natural light. Some units would also be appropriate as 'incubator' space for students and recent graduates.

Recent improvements to The Arcade have been achieved, including the establishment of new independent businesses. These improvements form a strong basis for further intervention to realise The Arcade's full potential.

The surrounding roads Pound Place and Elm Terrace should be redesigned to prioritise pedestrians and active frontages will be encouraged on these routes, to create a small retail circuit around and within this block.



A revitalised arcade could develop a distinct arts and crafts offer





Sainsbury's site

## 10. St Mary's Place

Sainsbury's is the largest footprint store in Eltham, and has a substantial area of parking associated with it, making it a significant functional component of the town centre.

Despite this, both the store and the car park are remote from the town centre, linked only by indirect and unattractive routes which do not feel safe or welcoming. It is therefore important that the following issues are addressed:

- Achieving better integration of Sainsbury's with the High Street;
- Improving the accessibility of the parking from the High Street; and
- Consolidating the footprint of the store and car park to release valuable town centre development potential.

The scheme outlined here is based on the practical commercial assumption that the existing store will be augmented rather than replaced, but that a new element will be built to bring the front door much closer

the High Street with Philipot Path diverted through a new public space.

Relocating the arcade shops within the new units will create a unified approach which can be tied together by the addition of residential development above.

This development would mask the addition of a decked car park within the middle of the site which would in turn release development capacity on the western part of the site. The decked car park is envisaged as a standalone structure at present, but could also effectively be provided on top of the existing store subject to technical feasibility.

The creation of the new square with the existing community building as its centre-piece establishes Sainsbury's as a much more integrated part of the town centre, promoting linked trips to other shops.

The buildings to the west of Sainsbury's should be reconfigured for leisure and entertainment uses, such as a cinema, to enable the opening up of the supermarket frontage.



The existing supermarket could be extended and other new retail introduced with housing above

## 06 DELIVERY

It is important that the SPD is supported by a comprehensive framework for delivery and Implementation.

In order to deliver this SPD, there are a number of future key factors that will need to be achieved. These include:

1. Assemble key car park sites including Royal Borough of Greenwich land. This would be the 'revenue generator'. Capital receipts would be utilised to provide investment in the public realm principally to increase the pavement widths on both sides of the High Street to create a linear piazza.
2. Set out design guidelines for the link from the station to Eltham Palace.
3. Produce a development brief for the car park areas which improve connectivity and create an attractive route to Well Hall Road thus reducing the distance to the station from the town centre core area.
4. Produce simple design codes to guide development.

5. Produce a development brief for the St Mary's Place site to include, in more detail, the reconfiguration of the Sainsbury's store, decked parking and leisure or entertainment uses to support this.
6. Produce a development brief for the Eltham Church of England Primary School site and assemble sites for the relocation of the school.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has a key role to play in the implementation of the SPD as the Local Planning Authority. The Royal Borough will need to work with others to ensure that there is clear responsibility for each of the proposals identified and will need to liaise with potential funders and partners to make these projects happen.

The Eltham Regeneration Board will play an important role in the future relating to bringing these proposals forward and in their implementation. They will have a close working relationship with landowners and businesses in the area, which will be important in the plan's delivery.



## PHASING

Three phases of development are outlined. These indicate the order in which development will be encouraged with the three phases covering a 15 to 20 year period.

### Phase 1

The first phase of change within Eltham town centre will involve the realignment and opening up of the car parks to the rear of the High Street. This will allow further redevelopment to take place in these areas, once accessibility has begun to be improved and will also allow Sainsbury's to begin to reconfigure their store.

This phase will also involve the completion of the existing development projects within the town centre, which will enhance it and begin to encourage further investment to it. It will also see the bringing back into use of the Orangery for small scale businesses.

Renovation of the existing shopping arcades and improvements to the alleyways in the town centre, is also likely to begin as consumer confidence in the town centre grows and further development takes place.



Phase one

## Phase 2

Phase 2 of the plan includes the potential relocation of Eltham Church of England Primary School, therefore further opening up this currently hidden area on the northern side of the High Street. This will provide the impetus for the redevelopment of the car parks here, improving connections with the redeveloped Orangery and the High Street itself.

The single storey units on the High Street will be redeveloped and changes to the public realm will also begin to take place, using funds from previous developments.



Phase two

### Phase 3

Further improvements to the public realm will take place in phase 3, leading also to an increase in cafés and restaurants. The redevelopment of the northern side of the High Street will be completed with the redevelopment of the BT site. Additionally, the Post Office site on the southern side of the High Street will be redeveloped, along with the neighbouring Argos plot.

Further improvements to existing shopping arcades and historic alleyways will be seen.



Phase three



**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

## 07 POLICY CONTEXT



### National Policy

National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in April 2012. The NPPF states that Local Planning authorities should plan positively for new development and includes a set of core land use planning principles to underpin plan making and development management.

SPDs do not form part of the statutory development plan but provide further detail on the implementation of particular policies and proposals contained in the Development Plan. SPDs must relate to policies or proposals in the Development Plan and can not be used to set out new policies or to allocate or re-designate land for specific purposes.

### Regional Policy

The London Plan (2011) is the overall strategic plan for London and forms part of Royal Greenwich's development plan. Eltham is identified as a major centre within the London Plan. Major centres are typically found in inner and some parts of outer London with a borough-wide catchment. They generally contain over 50,000 sq.m of retail floorspace with a relatively high proportion of comparison goods relative to convenience goods. They may also have significant employment, leisure, service and civic functions.

### Local Policy

#### Core Strategy

Royal Greenwich's Core Strategy is currently in preparation, following on from a consultation at the end of 2010 and a further consultation due on a submission version at the start of 2012. Policy TC3 of this states that Eltham will grow its role as the pre-eminent town centre in the south and will be enhanced through redevelopment, including additional and improved retail floor space, improving the range of restaurants and leisure facilities, measures for bus priority to reduce traffic congestion and to improve public and pedestrian safety and comfort, and improving north/south links. The Draft Core Strategy states that the Council supports improved links between Eltham and areas in the north, in particular 'fixed links' such as light rail extensions.

With regard to design, Eltham Town Centre has not been specifically identified within the Core Strategy as having the potential for tall buildings and any proposed development should therefore aim to reflect the existing scale and character of the area.

### Site Allocations DPD

A Site Allocations document, to support the Core Strategy, is in its initial stages of preparation and will incorporate more detail on any specific sites identified within Eltham Town Centre.

### Unitary Development Plan

Royal Greenwich's UDP is the existing adopted policy for Greenwich, adopted in July 2006. Eltham is designated within this as a major centre and, as such, is the preferred location for larger scale development in retail, leisure and other town centre uses. Policies for the town centre state that the Council will support and promote Eltham as a vibrant community and cultural centre for south Greenwich and will seek to safeguard and improve the range of shopping, restaurant and leisure facilities in Eltham, encouraging the provision of facilities to take better commercial advantage of its tourism potential. It recognises, however, that scope for development in the town centre is limited due to its proximity to residential areas. It also notes that there is a need to secure a greater range of A3 seated restaurant uses.

A number of specific sites are identified for development within the UDP, and these are predominantly identified for mixed use development. More detail can be found within the site proposal schedules of the UDP.

The UDP is in the process of being replaced by the Core Strategy, to reflect the London Plan and update the aspirations for the area.

### Environment Designations

St John the Baptist Churchyard, on the western side of Well Hall Road, is designated as a site of local nature importance and features diverse grass between the graves, the gravestones support numerous lichens and there are a number of large trees.

The Green Chain Walk also runs along the southern edge of the Town Centre.

There are no other specific environmental designations within Eltham Town Centre. There is minimal risk of flooding from surface water and no risk of fluvial, tidal or ground water flooding.



## 08 HISTORICAL ANALYSIS



Eltham High Street is a broad thoroughfare, rising gently from west to east. The road has been successively widened and most of the traffic now uses the A2 to the north, but the High Street retains its busy commercial character.

The great majority of buildings in the High Street date from the 20th century, but there is physical evidence of its past, when Eltham was a village on the main highway between London and Kent. The Greyhound public house, listed Grade II, would have served travellers along the route and there are various domestic fragments which survive from the 18th century, when houses of various sizes lined both sides of the main road. Cliefden House (1720s), opposite Passey Place in the centre of the High Street, is the principal survivor but the restored Orangery that once stood at the end of the garden of Eltham House is another legacy of the area's past.

Eltham has a long history. Traces of a Roman small holding have been found in Archery Road and the manor is recorded in the 11th century

Domesday Book. Undoubtedly, however, it is Eltham's Royal connections that are best known and Eltham Palace, half a mile to the south of the High Street, remains the freehold of the Crown. The centrepiece of the Palace is the Great Hall, built for Edward IV in 1480. Later, Tudor monarchs Henry VII and Henry VIII lived at Eltham and made further additions to the medieval Palace.

To the north of Eltham High Street lies the moated manor house of Well Hall. The moat walls survive in the park, along with the Tudor Barn, restored and converted by Woolwich Council in 1931. Elsewhere, the area is believed to have been extensively wooded until the seventeenth century, when the demands for timber for shipbuilding resulted in extensive felling and the creation of open fields.

Eltham's modern growth took off after 1866 when the Dartford loop railway opened. Houses and shops were built close to Eltham and Mottingham stations, and the resulting commuter population, supplemented by workers in Woolwich and local light industries, gave a new impetus to the area.

In the town centre, the old parish church of St John was rebuilt in 1875 and fifteen years later, at the eastern end of the High Street, came the new church of St Mary's - Eltham's first Roman Catholic church since the Reformation. Well Hall Road was laid out to link the station to the town centre and over the next half century Eltham would be comprehensively rebuilt, with semi-detached houses and short terraces of shops in the town centre and along the main roads. A small covered shopping arcade was built at the east end of the High Street and some interesting public buildings were erected around this time - amongst them the Dutch-influenced public baths, at the west end of the High Street, and the modernistic Odeon Cinema (later renamed the Coronet) built in 1936 at the top of Well Hall Road. Rochester Way opened in the 1930s, relieving much of the traffic from the High Street, and further piecemeal development followed.

Eltham, in common with much of south and east London, suffered losses in the Second World War, including the damage to the spire of St John's Church, which was later rebuilt. From the 1950s to the 1970s, the town centre



continued the pattern of piecemeal redevelopment - the Chequers Parade and Grove Market Place shops were added, and backland areas on both sides of the High Street were cleared to create new car parks. Eltham's biggest building, the six storey telephone exchange, was constructed at this time and a number of plain, flatroofed blocks were added to the High Street.

In recent years the changes have been modest, with some further infilling on the High Street and a Sainsburys supermarket. The Rochester Way Relief Road (1988) has taken further through traffic and although the town centre remains busy, most of this traffic is generated by buses and local trips.

### **Building typologies**

#### **Commercial and retail buildings**

As Eltham's residential population grew after the First World War, so too did the demand for its shops and services. Ribbon development along Well Hall Road favoured short parades of shops, set back from the highway and typically constructed with two floors of flats above; this

is now the predominant building type in Eltham. Although built to a common form, the architectural styles were eclectic; solid red brick, neo-Georgian or Tudor revival were widely used, but modern movement and continental elements were also to be found; an example is the Dutch influenced block on the south side of Eltham Hill. Infilling and redevelopment on the High Street adopted similar building forms, following a common building line with a general unity of building heights, but with a wide stylistic palette providing visual interest.

At street level, most of the shops were modestly sized, rarely being more than three bays wide. Exceptions would have been the Woolworth Store at 130 High Street and the former Marks and Spencers (both neo-Georgian) and a daringly modernistic department store, Hinds, later redeveloped as Allders. One of the first of the classical revival buildings was the Edwardian block at 132 High Street, now occupied on the ground floor by Iceland, an extrovert and stylish building from 1905. An exception to the prevailing three

storey model was the row of single storey shops at 67-91 High Street. These are flatroofed with a decorative ballustrade which has been much altered.

Other inter-war commercial buildings, particularly the banks, favoured classical imitations of the 18th century houses that once predominated in the High Street and which were rapidly being replaced. Solid examples on the north side include Barclays and NatWest, the latter dating from 1922. The Old Post Office, tucked behind the High Street on Passey Place, is another noteworthy example.

Postwar commercial blocks tended to follow the prevailing form, although stripped of any decorative elements. Further variation to the range of styles and materials came with the use of exposed concrete, such as the 1960s block at 230-240 High Street.

#### **Public and institutional buildings**

St John's Parish Church overlooks the busy junction of Well Hall Road and Eltham High

Street. The present church is Victorian, a replacement built in 1875 and the latest of several Christian places of worship going back to the Saxon period. St John's presaged a period of new institutional buildings, including Eltham's library which is a stout example of Edwardian baroque, and the London County Council fire station of 1904, with an Arts and Crafts flavour in its detailing. Christ Church, Eltham's Roman Catholic Church (1890) is the principal landmark at the eastern end of the town and signals the start of the High Street on the approach from Bexley.

Eltham Police Station on Well Hall Road is a simple brick composition, set back slightly from Well Hall Road. Its modest form contrasts with the bulk of the telephone exchange and office block to the rear which, despite its recessed position, is dominant in the townscape.

#### **Domestic buildings in the town centre**

Eltham and Mottingham are characterised by the streets of inter-war houses, particularly

speculative semi-detached housing, that are spread widely across the area. Some of the estates, notably the pioneering Progress Estate (built in 1915) opposite Well Hall Pleasance, are of architectural and historic interest. In the town centre itself however, only a handful of former houses survive amongst the shops and offices that prevail today. Most of these were built square to the street on narrow plots, with long back gardens.

Starting at the west end of the town centre, 150 Eltham Hill is a former mid-Georgian house of some substance. Its symmetrical, red brick front and plain clay tile roof would have been typical of the grander houses in Eltham during the 18th century. Further up the High Street is the Da Claudio restaurant which is much altered, but recognisably a building from around 1700. The Orangery to the north of the High Street is a handsome rare survival of a garden building, which once terminated the vista at the bottom of the garden of the now demolished Eltham House.

Cliefden House is the principal Georgian house still standing in the town. Its ground floor rooms are now two shops and the garden is long gone, but the central doorcase survives.

Further west on the opposite side of the street is an early 19th century house. Like Cliefden House, it is three storeys and faced in render. The final Georgian house on the High Street adjoins Christ Church - a century or so older than the Church itself, it is now the Presbytery.

Behind the High Street are a scattering of smaller, mostly 19th century houses, including a pair on Passey Place, now offices, and the Thomas Philipot Almshouses, rebuilt in 1931 after the originals made way for a road widening.



### Eltham 1870

The east-west linear form of the former village is apparent, including a series of large detached houses with front gardens and large plots to the rear. Many plots were under cultivation, with adjoining areas including orchards.



### Eltham 1870/2011

The same plan, with the modern street pattern superimposed on it. Significant changes include the development of Well Hall Road in 1905 which provided a link to the station. It is also interesting to note the persistence of the historic patterns of lanes and courtyards, particularly to the south of the High Street. The High Street has also been significantly widened. Cliefden House, which once had a substantial front garden, now faces directly onto the pavement.



## Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

Eltham Palace is a property of national historical, architectural and archaeological significance. It is a scheduled ancient monument and a Grade I listed building. Its setting is acknowledged by the Eltham Palace conservation area, which also includes the parkland and tree-lined roads of Eltham's larger houses. To the north of Eltham Station the Progress Estate is also a conservation area

Borough of Greenwich as buildings of local interest and others marked on the adjacent plan are considered by the consultants to be of townscape merit.

Well Hall Pleasaunce and Tudor Barn to the north of the train station are also key heritage visitor attractions.

In the town centre, the Orangery is a rare Georgian garden building, listed Grade II\*; so too is Cliefden House in the middle of the High Street. Older, but substantially altered, is the restaurant da Claudio which like the majority of other listed buildings is Grade II.

Many other buildings in the town centre are too recent to be listed but make a positive contribution to the character of the High Street, either individually or in groups. Some of these have been identified by the Royal



## Building dates

Eltham's oldest buildings are the Palace and the Tudor Barn at Well Hall Pleasance, but on the High Street a scatter of 18th and 19th century buildings are a reminder of Eltham's origins, as a village on the road between London and Kent. As noted earlier, St John's Church, at the heart of the former village, is a Victorian replacement of a much earlier building. Eltham and Motttingham grew rapidly after the 1860s when the railway lines running north and south of the village improved connections with London. Well Hall Road was laid out in 1905 linking the High Street to the station and provided the impetus for much rebuilding, mostly terraces of shops with two floors of flats above.

The plan opposite shows the range and distribution of building periods, reflecting Eltham's piecemeal replacement and the infilling of the High Street plots. All of the largest buildings (and their car parks) have been built since the 1960s. Most of these are large shops like Marks and Spencer and Sainsburys, but the most dominant building is the telephone exchange block behind the north side of the High Street.

## Eltham timeline



## 09 ELTHAM PRESENT



Eltham has a long history but its present-day character comes from its sustained twentieth century growth, following improved connections to central London by road and rail. Eltham is situated to the south east of London and to the south of the Royal Borough of Greenwich. The town centre is approximately 4.8 km from Lewisham, 7.2 km from Greenwich, 10.1km from Bexleyheath and 19.3 km from Dartford.

Rail links offer fast connection into central London via London Bridge and the town centre is situated in close proximity to both the A205 (South Circular) and the A2, providing good links around south London and further to the south east. Research has identified that many people (around 40%) travelling to Eltham town centre had undertaken all or part of their journey by bus, which is very significant and important in terms of sustainable transport. This is a reflection of both low car ownership levels in the area and the good public transport service. Eltham High Street is well served by buses, with twelve routes connecting the road to the surrounding residential hinterland and nearby centres such as Woolwich, Greenwich, Catford, Lewisham, Bromley, Sidcup and Bexleyheath.



Eltham has a strong comparison retailer representation and an above average comparison goods representation, with key national multiples including Marks & Spencer, Debenhams, Next, and Boots. Alders and the Co-Op department store have both closed in the past decade and the small Debenhams is now the only department store in the centre. Greenwich's Retail Capacity Study states that there is not an over riding need for further comparison goods provision. There is however, some quantitative capacity to support additional floorspace, if infill and smaller scale developments come forward and this could widen the choice of comparison goods.

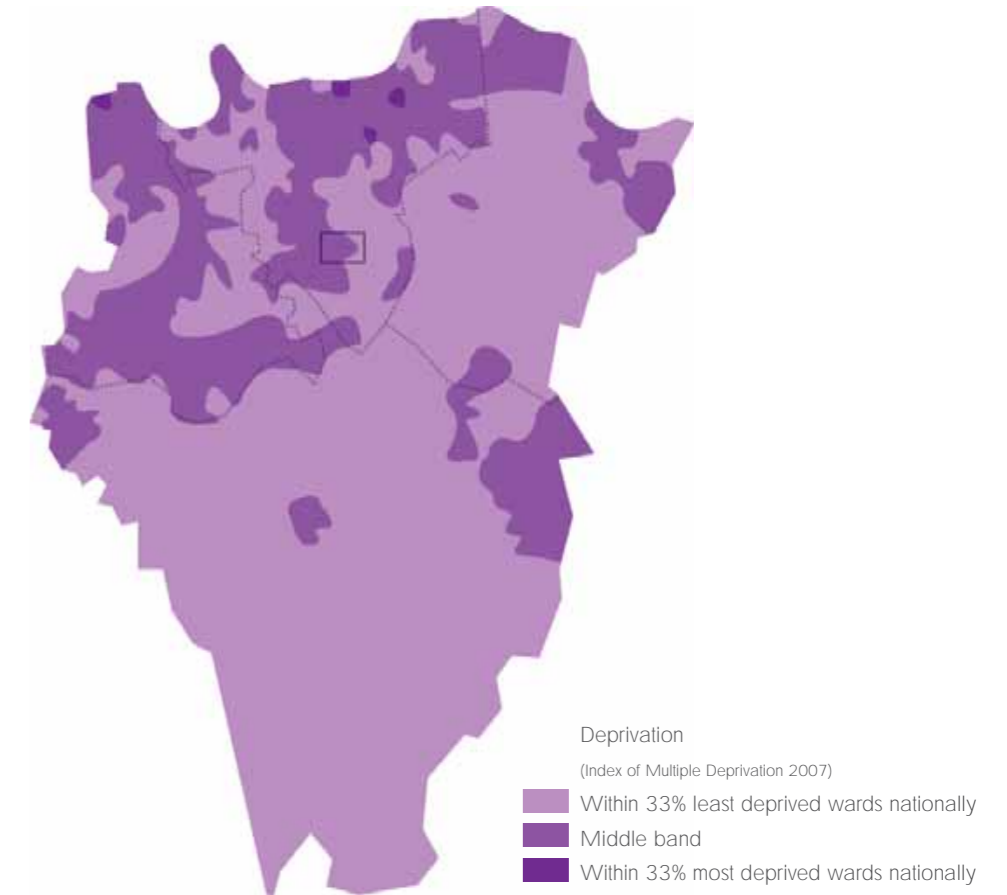
Sainsbury's is the main foodstore in the town centre and appears to be trading very well. The store is located behind the main high street but is accessible for pedestrians from the High Street via St Mary's Place and there is a car park to the rear. The 2,695 sqm net store, opened in the late 1980s. Other food stores in the town centre include Lidl, Iceland, Marks and Spencer and Tesco Express. There is, therefore, a below average convenience retailing provision,

and Eltham would benefit from a broader convenience offer.

Within the town centre there are also a number of non-retail uses including the Eltham Centre, a public service and leisure centre, on Archery Road. The Eltham Centre opened in November 2007, replacing the former Eltham Pools, providing three swimming pools, a fitness centre, dance studio, healthy living centre, and improvements to the library, a café and a new branch of the Greenwich Community College.

The Town Centre lacks a range of restaurants although there is demand from service operators, suggesting that there is potential to enhance the daytime and evening eating provision and create an evening economy. Levels of crime within Eltham are not significantly high, but safety and security have been identified as a concern. The development of good quality restaurants as well as some residential units would increase activity within the centre therefore improving the perception of safety.

Eltham has a similar age profile to the England and Wales average and a slightly older age profile than the rest of Royal Greenwich. There is also a lower percentage of black and minority ethnic groups in Eltham than in other parts of the Royal Borough, although this continues to grow. Eltham is considered one of the wealthier areas in Royal Greenwich and retail indicators reveal that it is a relatively economically healthy local high street. In the Indices of Deprivation 2004, Royal Greenwich was ranked at 41 out of 354 local authorities in England, where 1 was the most deprived area.



## 10 THE BEST OF ELTHAM

Eltham has significant strengths that need to be protected and made the most of. These are the following:

### **Attractive heritage and suburban setting**

Evidence remains of Eltham's rich history in the architecture of the town centre and the proximity of Eltham Palace is a key opportunity that should be capitalised upon. Eltham Palace advise that current average annual visitor numbers are 50,000, the majority of whom arrive by car. Connections between the Palace and the town centre are poor and the potential to capture the additional custom from these visitors for the benefit of the town centre is a key issue in Eltham.

### **Space for people and activities**

The High Street is a substantial thoroughfare with a width between the buildings on either side of over 20 metres. This allows for much flexibility as to the way the High Street can change to prioritise different street users. The town centre also has a few underused sites that provide opportunities for new development in the town centre.

### **Leisure and health facilities**

The opening of the Eltham Centre was an improvement to the provision of leisure facilities in the town centre and is an asset for Eltham. The variety of independent hair and beauty salons in the town centre create a strong health and beauty focus for Eltham.

### **Accessibility**

One of Eltham's comparative strengths to other town centres in the area is its accessibility. Unusually for London there is a substantial amount of easy-to-use and accessible car parking very close to the main shops. Bus services along the High Street are also very good which means there is great flexibility to access the town centre.





**Eltham Palace**



**Space for on-street parking**



**Good public transport links**



**Wide High Street**



**The Eltham Centre**



**Development opportunities**



**Strong natural setting**



**Family housing**



**Attractive suburban setting**



## 11 DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

### Grove Market – Court Yard

Revised application granted planning permission granted October 2011.

Redevelopment of the site to provide a building of up to 6 storeys plus basement level comprising retail shop (A1), retail/restaurant (A1/A3), an 86 bed hotel, 71 residential units.



### Eltham Baths – Eltham Hill

Planning permission granted April 2011.

The former Eltham Baths will be redeveloped with new buildings ranging from 2 to 6 storeys in height and containing 78 residential units. The proposal will be 100% affordable with 48 units for shared ownership and 30 units for social rent. Some 22 of the social rented units are designed to be occupied by residents over the age of 50.



### The Orangery – Orangery Lane

Planning permission granted October 2009.

The Orangery and its surrounds will be redeveloped with a three storey side extension to provide nine studio offices, erection of a boundary wall and railings with associated landscape work and minor repairs.





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