



ELTHAM PALACE CONSERVATION AREA
Character Appraisal



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Introduction

This Conservation Area Appraisal has been produced by Greenwich Council and consists of three sections:

1. **Definition of the Area's Special Historic Interest**
2. **Explanation** of Conservation Areas and the scope of planning policy.
3. **Character Appraisal** identifying the main elements that contribute towards the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area.

1. Definition of Special Historic Interest

The basis for designating the Eltham Palace Conservation Area in 1971 was to protect the surviving ancient landscapes together with the historic buildings and structures which contribute to its setting.

Eltham Palace is a unique area of considerable historic and environmental importance. It comprises historic landscapes of great archaeological, architectural and ecological value including the remains of successive medieval royal palaces; a group of 16th century timber framed buildings; a large 17th century mansion with an associated 18th century Ice House and an Art Deco country house. There are four nature conservation sites of Metropolitan, Borough and Local Importance and five Tree Preservation Orders which encompass over 50 trees.

The Conservation Area possesses a non-urban and predominantly rural character since it mainly comprises agricultural grazing land, public and private open space, playing fields and allotment gardens. Residential development is concentrated principally along Court Road which bisects the Conservation Area from north to south, and along Court Yard which is the route to Eltham Palace. The built environment therefore comprises only a small proportion of the Conservation Area; the greater part of the Conservation Area is open space. The area was once part of the royal parkland associated with the royal palace; the western zone was converted to farmland in the 17th century, the majority of which has remained to this day as open fields with horse grazing. The eastern zone was enclosed in the 18th century and re-landscaped into a golf course in the 19th century, but retains much of its parkland character. The landscape has changed very little since the 17th century because the Crown has been the principal landowner since 1305.

Despite some dense urban development on the periphery, the elevated position of the Conservation Area provides a number of splendid panoramic views towards central London to the northwest. There are other significant and interesting vistas into and across the open fields and meadows in the western zone, and around the wooded lake to the south. Some of these views have been damaged by intrusive development in the form of housing blocks.

The architectural significance of this Conservation Area is reinforced by the fact that although there are relatively few buildings and built structures in the area, 24 of

these are statutory Listed Buildings which include no less than 6 Grade I and 9 Grade II*. The Palace and its environs is also a scheduled ancient monument and a Grade II* historic garden. In addition, 22 of the residential buildings, dating from the Victorian and Edwardian development of the area, are on the Councils Local List of Buildings of special architectural interest.

The buildings in the Conservation Area display a varied series of architectural styles and periods which reflect the historical development of the area. The structures on the statutory list comprise the medieval, 16th and 17th century walls, lodgings and structures associated with the historic sites of Eltham Palace and Eltham Lodge. Subsequent development within the Conservation Area was purely residential and commenced along Court Road around 1870. The main building phases were during the late 19th century, the early 20th century and the 1930s. The detached houses along Court Road are distinguished by their rich diversity of design and detailing and lack of uniformity as well as their large scale, generous plot size, variety of materials and colours, and abundance of trees and greenery. Although smaller in scale, the detached 1930s dwellings on Court Road maintain this architectural variety. Due to the large gaps and wide spacing between the houses, views of the mature rear gardens and the tree canopy beyond are visible. These green vistas soften the built environment and provide relief and visual interest. Court Road therefore has significant townscape value and makes an important contribution to the green and spacious character of the Conservation Area.

Eltham Palace is an area with a distinctive local identity and strong links with the past. This identity therefore needs careful maintenance and protection from insensitive and inappropriate forms of development.

2. Explanation of Conservation Areas and the relevant Planning Policy

2.1 What is a Conservation Area?

Conservation Areas were first designated in England following the 1967 Civic Amenities Act. Local planning authorities are obliged to designate and review conservation areas under the provisions of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act. These are defined as '*Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*'. There are now more than 10, 000 throughout England. The Borough of Greenwich has 20 Conservation Areas.

The **Eltham Palace Conservation Area** was designated by the Planning and Development Committee of Greenwich Council in 1971.

2.2 Which properties are in the Conservation Area?

The Conservation Area covers 114.62 hectares and includes the following properties:

Chaundrye Close 1-6

Court Yard	28, 32a, 32-38, Eltham Palace, Bramber House, Orchard House
Court Road	20-28, 30-38, 46-50, 56-58, 62, 66, 92, 96, 100, 110-116, 21, 35-43, 47, 57-65, 79-87, 93-95, 99, 103-107, 133, Eltham Lodge and associated buildings
Foots Cray Road	144
King John's Walk	1-3 & The Cottage, Charter House
Tilt Yard Approach	The Gate House, The Tilt Yard

Modern housing developments within the Conservation Area:

Court Road	130-140
Court Yard	Little Court
Middle Park Avenue	401-639
Moat Court	1-27
Tarnwood Park	1-140
Woodmere	1-39
Wythfield Road	1-8 Palace Court, 1-4 Hadlow Court

2.3 What restrictions are there throughout the Conservation Area?

Planning applications are judged against stricter criteria within conservation areas where all proposals must be of a high standard in order to preserve or enhance the special character or appearance of the area.

Single Family Dwellings

Planning permission is currently necessary for the following:

- Extensions (including conservatories) 50 cubic metres or over in volume.
- Freestanding garden structures such as sheds, greenhouses or garages 10 cubic metres or over in volume.
- Roof extensions or additions which would alter the shape of the roof.
- Satellite dishes on front facing walls, roofslopes or chimneys.
- Cladding to the exterior of the property with materials such as stone, tiles, plastic or timber.
- Fences or walls over 1 metre high next to a highway, or 2 metres high elsewhere.
- Porches over 3 metres square, or over 3 metres high or less than 2 metres away from the boundary with a highway.

Flats and Maisonettes

Flats do not have the same permitted development rights as single family dwellings. Planning permission is required for all of the above as well as any other external alteration which would materially affect the appearance of the building, such as the replacement of windows or doors or the installation of rooflights or satellite dishes.

Demolitions

Conservation Area Consent is required for the following:

- Total or substantial demotion of an unlisted building.

- Total or substantial demotion of a wall or fence 1 metre high or over which is adjacent to a highway, or 2 metres high or over elsewhere.

Trees

Work to or the felling of trees more than 75mm in diameter requires 6 weeks notice in writing to the Council. During those 6 weeks the tree is protected by law. The Council's Tree Officer should be contacted for further information, including whether the tree is already protected by a tree preservation order (TPO).

Listed Buildings

Listed Building Consent is required for any alterations (internal or external) to Listed Buildings or structures, in addition to planning permission.

If planning permission is not obtained or if the work is carried out in breach of - i.e. contrary to - the granted permission, the property may be subject to enforcement action.

2.4 The Planning Policy Context

Planning applications must be decided in accordance with development plan policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In policy terms, this Conservation Area Character appraisal is a supporting document, relating to, and to be read with, current national and local planning policies.

National Planning Policy

Designation of Conservation Areas

There is a legal duty for all local authorities to keep under review and designate as conservation areas those parts of its borough that are of "special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG 15, Planning and the Historic Environment, sets out current government guidance on Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.

Listing and Scheduling

English Heritage lists buildings of special architectural or historic interest on behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. The Secretary of State is also responsible for the scheduling of ancient monuments and the registering of historic parks and gardens. Eltham Palace and its immediate environs is also a designated Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM).

Local and Regional Planning Policy

The Mayor of London's London Plan

The Mayor undertakes to work with strategic partners to protect and enhance London's historic environment (Policy 4B.10) and expects Boroughs to ensure that the protection and enhancement of historic assets in London are based on their special character (Policy 4B.11). The London Plan also contains proposals for protecting and managing strategic views, including those of central London from Greenwich Park and Blackheath Point.

Greenwich Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

Planning applications should be determined in accordance with the local development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan comprises the London Plan and the Greenwich UDP (adopted July 2006). It is supported by Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), which in time will be replaced by Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD).

Greenwich Council has also begun work on a new type of statutory plan, the Local Development Framework (LDF). This will eventually replace the current Greenwich UDP.

The relevant UDP development planning policies affecting Eltham Palace Conservation Area are:

- Urban Design (D1, D2 & D3)
- Trees (D8)
- Residential Extensions (D9 & D10)
- Telecommunications Development (D11)
- Satellite Antennae (D12)
- Conservation Areas (D16 & D17)
- Listed Buildings (D18-22)
- Local List of Buildings of Architectural and Historic Interest (D23)
- Historic Landscapes (D24) - Eltham Palace designated as a Grade II* site within the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.
- Local views (D27. categories c. Castlewood towards SE London and j. Eltham Palace to Central London)
- High Buildings (D28)
- Areas of Special Character (D29) - Eltham Palace Conservation Area
- Archaeology (D30-31) – Eltham Palace and environs and Eltham Lodge and environs designated as Areas of High Archaeological Potential
- Metropolitan Open Land (O1-4)
- Green Chain (O5)
- Protection of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (O18-O19) – Royal Blackheath Golf Course (site of Metropolitan Importance), Eltham Palace Fields (site of Borough Importance, Grade I), Royal Blackheath Golf Course South (site of Borough Importance, Grade II), The Tarn (site of Local Importance).

These policies can be found in the UDP on the Council's website.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

In addition to Development Plan policies, decisions on planning applications should take into account relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and any Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) produced under the new LDF regime. The most relevant are Supplementary Planning Guidance on Residential Extensions and Conversions.

3. Character Appraisal

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG 15) emphasises the need for local planning authorities to assess the special interest, character and appearance of conservation areas. In order to define these issues it is desirable to prepare an appraisal of each conservation area. The following appraisal uses the criteria recommended in English Heritage's advice note: "Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals" (August 2005).

3.1 Location and Setting



The Eltham Palace Conservation Area boundary (current OS Map)

Eltham Palace Conservation Area is a large area of green open space totalling almost 115 hectares (284 acres) and situated to the south of Eltham town centre. It is located in the southern tip of the Borough, within the historic hundred of Blackheath, between Shooters Hill and Mottingham further south. It lies within the parish of Eltham, 3.5km to the southeast of Greenwich and 8m from central London. It spans the zone between Eltham High Street (the A210) to the north and Sidcup Road (the A20) to the south, with Footscray Road (the A211) and the Avery Hill sports grounds to the east, and Eltham Middle Park Estate to the west. Court Road (the A208) bisects the Conservation Area from north to south and the London to Dartford railway line runs along the south of the Conservation Area.

Although situated within the large conurbation of south east London, and surrounded by dense 20th century residential development, the character of the Conservation Area is distinctly rural and open, since it is primarily a landscape of open spaces and mature trees and has retained most of its historic field boundaries.

The essential form of the landscape has changed very little since the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Conservation Area comprises two large green spaces which are bisected by the linear residential development along Court Road. To the east lies the Blackheath Golf Course which includes Eltham Lodge (the Clubhouse) as well as sports grounds, and a small area of public open space with a lake, and a bird sanctuary, known as The Tarn. To the west lie Eltham Palace and its gardens, a number of open fields, a public footpath, public open space including former playing fields (now a nature conservation area) and allotments.

In geological terms, the western half of the Conservation Area lies solely on the Woolwich sand bed, whilst the eastern portion lies on the Woolwich, Blackheath and Thanet sand beds.

The highest point within the Borough is Shooters Hill to the north, which at 130m above sea level is also the second highest hill within Greater London. From Shooters Hill the next highest point in the borough is at Eltham Park South (70m above sea level), which is just to the northeast of Eltham High Street/Town Centre. From this ridge the land slopes gently downwards across the Conservation Area to the south and to the west, with the Palace and Eltham Lodge both lying on a natural prominence overlooking the southern slopes. From Eltham Palace and the western facing slopes splendid panoramas of central London can be observed.

Due to this particular topography and the built up nature of the environs to the north, views of the Conservation Area are not discernible on the northern approach from Well Hall or indeed from Eltham town centre itself. Only from elevated points to the north, such as Castlewood, is the landscape revealed. The open character of the area can be better appreciated from the south, with fine vistas of Eltham Lodge and its encircling belt of trees and distant views of the palace ruins across open meadows.

3.2 Origins and Historic Development



Eltham Palace Conservation Area boundary superimposed on 1869 OS Map



Eltham Palace Conservation Area boundary superimposed on 1894 OS Map

Eltham Village

Until the late 19th century Eltham was a small village surrounded by farmland. Documentary evidence from historic maps shows that the only dwellings in the area were isolated farmsteads and houses within the village itself, concentrated around the parish church – to the east and west along Eltham High Street and to the south at the beginning of Court Yard. The only structures within the area now defined as the Conservation Area were the buildings and gardens associated with Eltham Palace and Eltham Lodge. These two sites were surrounded by large areas of agricultural land to the west and parkland and woodland to the east.

In the 1860s the railway arrived in Eltham. Eltham station (now Mottingham Station) was constructed in 1866 just to the south of the lake at the Tarn.¹ The station was probably located so far south of the village centre due to the topography and to avoid crossing the parkland and woodland belonging to Eltham Lodge.

From the 1870s onwards large houses appeared along Court Road and the remaining southern section of Court Yard was infilled with inter and post-war dwellings. During the 1960's several suburban housing estates were built, two to the north of the Tarn open space, and one in the triangular area of land between Court Road and Court Yard.

Historic Buildings and Monuments

Eltham Palace

Eltham Palace is a medieval moated site surrounding the remains of a Royal palace, which Pevsner describes as “one of the best preserved of the pre-Tudor Royal Palaces not only in London but in the whole of England”.² The main survivals are Edward IV's Great Hall, which dates from 1475-79 and the 15th century stone arched bridge which crosses the north side of the moat, and which replaced Richard II's stone bridge of 1396.



The Great Hall, from the south



The North Bridge

¹ Darrell Spurgeon, *Discover Eltham and its Environs*, 2000. p.13

² Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 2, South*, 1984 p. 239

Bishop Bek of Durham owned the Manor in 1295, and in 1305 he bequeathed it to Edward II prior to his accession. The estate included a moated manor house and a deer park. During the late 14th and 15th centuries three deer parks, totalling almost 1300 acres (526 hectares), were created by successive monarchs.³ Between 1367 and 1368 Edward III enclosed Middle Park to the west of the Palace; towards the end of the century Richard II enclosed the Great Park to the south and east of the Palace and between 1475-1480 Edward IV enclosed Home or Lee Park, which was further to the west of Middle Park. The existing open spaces to the south and east of the Palace which constitute the Conservation Area are a surviving portion of Richard II's Great Park.

Many royal buildings were erected in the 14th century, most traces of which have disappeared although the foundations of the chapel, which was rebuilt by Henry VIII in the 15th century, survive.⁴ Henry VIII also erected lodgings and laid out gardens to the south and the east of the moat.

Eltham's eminence as a Royal Palace dwindled in the latter part of the 16th century, when it was surpassed by Greenwich Palace. During the Civil War in 1648 the Palace and the Parks were plundered.⁵ Parliament inherited the estate in 1649, and undertook a survey of its assets. One of Cromwell's Colonels, a Nathaniel Rich, was assigned to guard the estate and in 1649 or 51 he purchased the land and demolished most of the buildings except the Great Hall and chapel. The deer were also killed and the parkland trees felled.⁶ Almost 4000 trees were set aside as timber for the navy whilst another 4000 were destroyed as they were old and decayed. And so the three Royal Parks were no longer.



Extract from Rocque's map of 1741-5, showing that very few buildings remained on the site

For the next two centuries the Palace was in ruins: the site was occupied by tenant farmers and the Great Hall was in use as a barn. Between 1933-35 the Palace underwent extensive restoration by its new tenant, Stephen Courtauld, who also

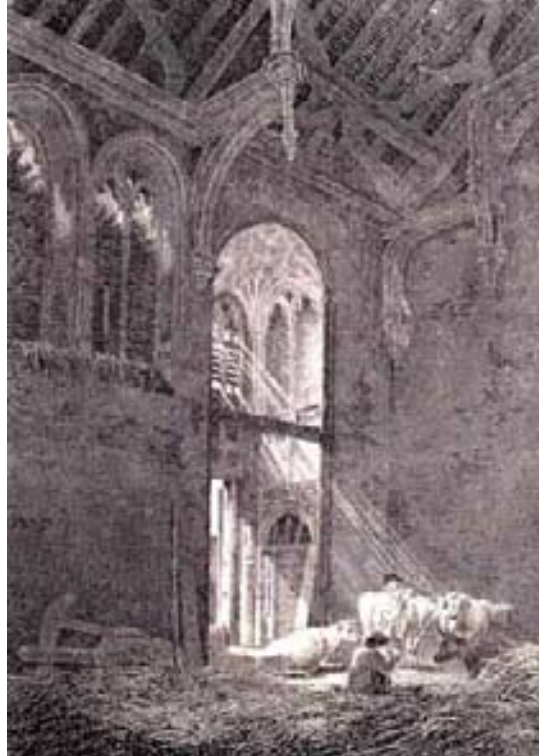
³ English Heritage, Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest

⁴ Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 2, South*, 1984 p. 239

⁵ Roy Brook, *The Story of Eltham Palace*, London, 1960, p. 48

⁶ English Heritage, Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest

commissioned a new house, Eltham Court, (by architects Seely and Paget). This was built to a butterfly plan in English Renaissance style and was linked directly to the medieval Great Hall. The moat was partially reinstated and extensive pleasure gardens were laid out. The Courtaulds' surrendered the Crown lease in 1944 to the Royal Army Education Corps, until the site passed into the guardianship of English Heritage in 1995.⁷



1819 engraving of the Great Hall (from a drawing by Baynes)

Eltham Lodge and the Great Park

During the 16th and early 17th centuries the Great Park was in use as a hunting ground. According to a survey of Eltham made in 1605 a lodge stood in the centre of the Park, which was known as the Chief Rangers House.⁸

During the 17th century Sir John Shaw, an influential banker and favourite of both Charles I and Charles II, leased the Eltham Palace Estate from the Crown, and commissioned a house for his own use in the Great Park, leaving the palace site as a farm.⁹ The original lease between John Shaw and Queen Henrietta is still in existence and is dated 6 April 1663.¹⁰ Eltham Lodge was built between 1663-65 by one of the Royal Court's foremost architects - Hugh May - and is lauded by Pevsner as "an outstanding example of early Restoration domestic design".¹¹ It is a Grade I Listed mansion of red brick designed in a restrained classical style with heavy Dutch influence.

⁷ English Heritage, Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest

⁸ The Eltham '1605 Map' in Greenwich Heritage Centre is a modern reconstruction, compiled from a Survey of Eltham in 1605 and the Holm Map of 1749 (both in the PRO).

⁹ English Heritage, Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest

¹⁰ The lease is displayed in the Royal Blackheath Golf Club Museum at Eltham Lodge.

¹¹ Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 2, South*, 1984 p. 302

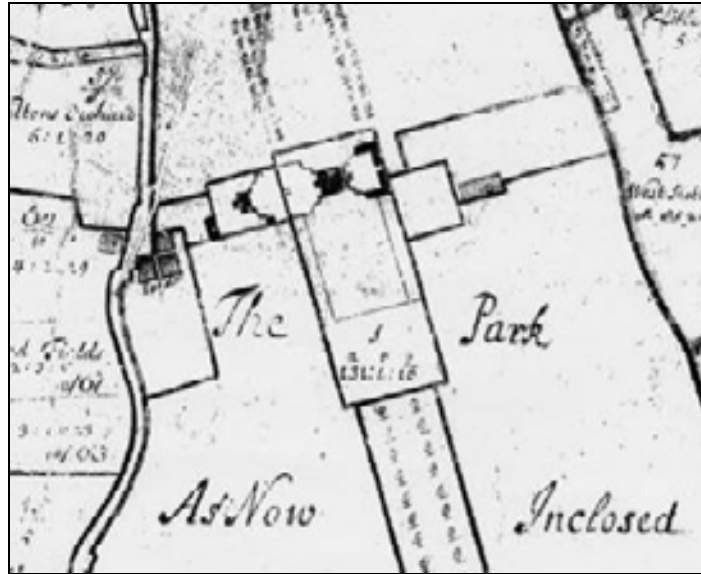


The Lodge was surrounded by ancillary buildings and gardens and extensive pleasure grounds. Rocque's map of the 1740s shows a very formalised layout with an ornamental parterre immediately below the house, a bosquet beyond leading to a wide and long tree-lined avenue aligned on the southern axis of the Lodge. The line of the avenue can still be partially seen on the 19th century OS maps.

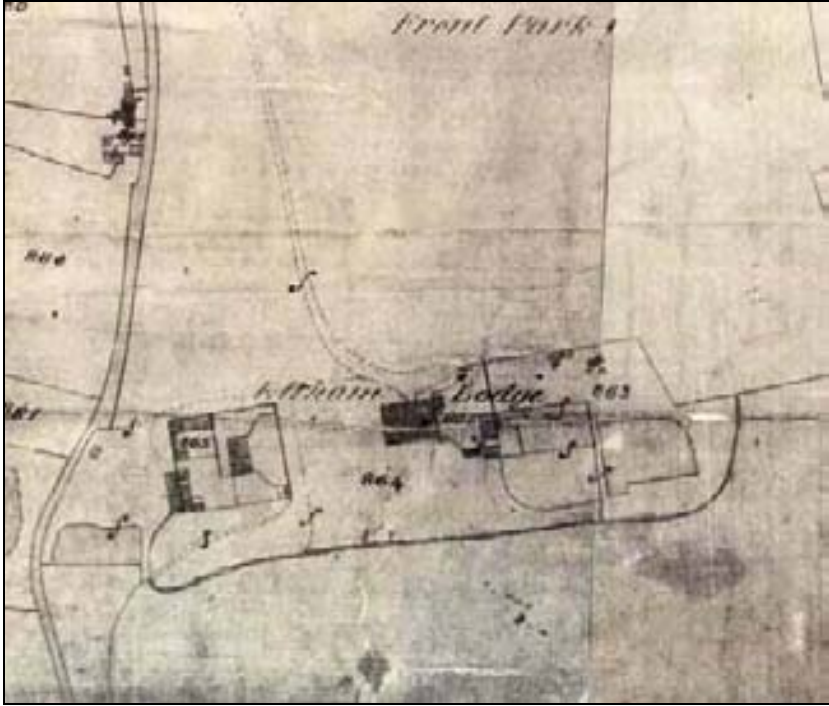


Eltham Lodge, extract from John Rocque's survey of London in 1741-5

There are a number of surviving structures from the 17th century layout (all Grade II listed). A small red brick cottage with an adjoining walled garden stands to the east of the house and two concave sections of brick wall survive nearby, one immediately to the east of the Lodge and one further to the west. The section to the west can be seen on the 1749 Holm map and the 1839 Tithe map and was one of a symmetrical pair of curved walls leading up to a coach house. The latter was amongst a small complex of buildings which also included stable buildings and yard, and which were listed in the tithe apportionment.



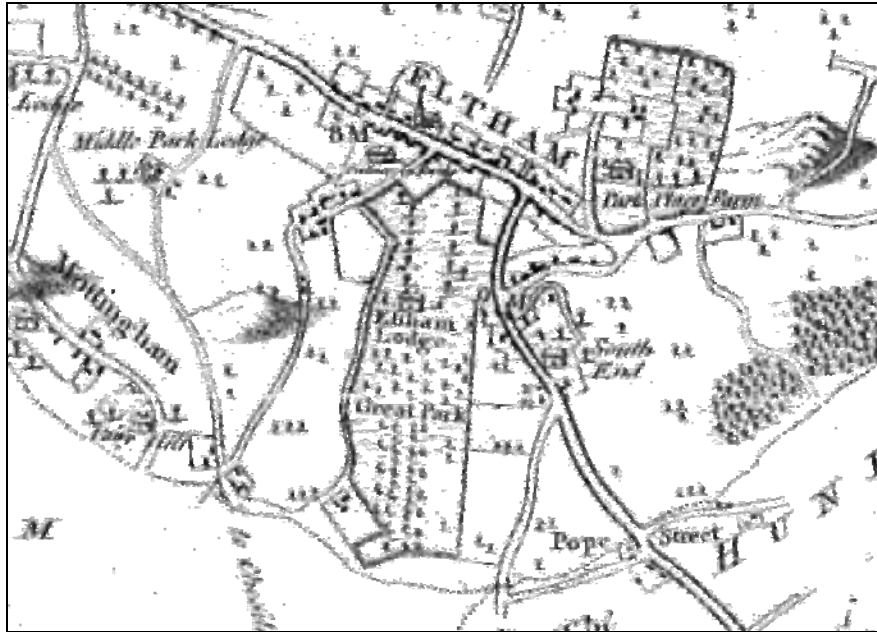
Eltham Lodge, extract from Holm Map of Eltham, Lee, Mottingham and Bexley (1749)



Eltham Lodge, extract from Eltham Tithe Map (1839)

In 1755 Eltham Lodge underwent some modernisation: mullioned windows were replaced with sashes and the pleasure grounds were redesigned.¹² This probably marked the transition from formal to informal landscape garden, when a small pond to the south was transformed into a large pleasure lake (see 'The Tarn' below, p. 15). The romantic 'Brownian' style had become established during the mid-18th century. A c.1778 map illustrates a less formal arrangement of trees immediately below the house to the south.

¹² Margaret Evans, *Life in 18th Century Eltham* (Portsmouth University dissertation 1985-6).



Extract from Map of the Hundred of Blackheath, 1778

It seems that in the 19th century the pleasure gardens to the south reverted to parkland. According to the tithe map and apportionment of 1839 the walled gardens were located immediately to the east of the house, and the pleasure grounds were limited to a comparatively small area to the south of the house, enclosed by a ditch or ha-ha, sections of which still survive. The area to the south of this ha-ha was now known as the South Park and the area to the north as Front or North Park. The entrance to Eltham Lodge was originally off Court Yard via a small lodge building in the north west corner. This would have disappeared with the laying out of North Park in c.1900.

The medieval parkland survived intact well into the 19th century until it was landscaped to form the Eltham Golf Course in 1892. The Lodge is now the Clubhouse for the Royal Blackheath Golf Course which replaced the Eltham Golf Course in 1923.

The Tarn and the Ice House



The Tarn comprises a large irregularly shaped lake surrounded by a small area of dense woodland. This is a survival from the medieval landscape, Richard II's Great

Park. 'Tarn' is probably a recent name and a misnomer.¹³ 18th and 19th century maps refer to the lake as 'Starbucks Pond'. The Starbuck family, according to the parish registers, resided in Eltham during the 16th and 17th centuries. In the early 20th century locals were still referring to the lake as 'the long pond' although it had apparently been renamed 'Eltham Tarn' by that time.¹⁴



'Starbucks Pond', Extract from Eltham Tithe Map (1839)

The Tithe map and apportionment refers to the Tarn as a dense belt of woodland with a 'keepers house and garden' in the centre, and a large and irregularly shaped pond to the south. At this time the wood and the pond formed part of the parcel of land leased to the tenant at Eltham Lodge along with the North and South Parks.¹⁵ The pond had in fact been substantially enlarged in the mid-18th century, when the Lodge was modernised and the gardens and pleasure grounds remodelled.

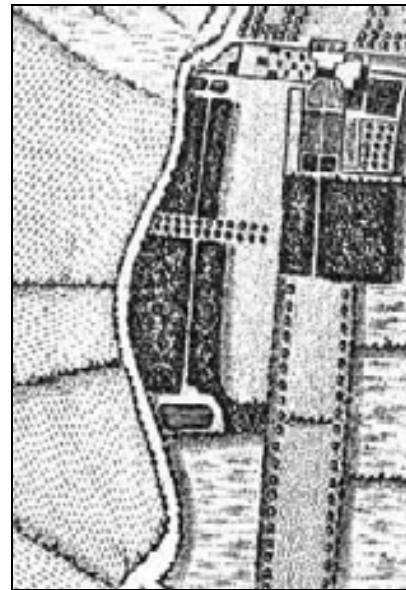
¹³ The correct definition of a 'tarn' is a mountain lake, formed in the valley of a glacier, and tarns in England are commonly found in the Lake District and the Pennines.

¹⁴ Alfred Smith, *Eltham's Village Days*, Eltham, (undated).

¹⁵ *Eltham Tithe Apportionment*, 1839



'Starbucks Pond', extract from Holm Map of Eltham, 1749



Extract from John Rocque's survey of London in 1741-5

According to Rocque's map of the 1740s and the Holm map of 1749, the lake was originally a small, lozenge-shaped pool which formed the focal point at the end of a long and straight wooded walk. The creation of a larger serpentine lake during the second half of the 18th century in the style of Capability Brown would have fulfilled the romantic ideals which were prevalent in landscape gardening at that time.

The enlargement was perhaps not just for aesthetic reasons but also for practical reasons since during the 18th Century the pond was utilised as a source of ice for Eltham Lodge, and an **Ice House** was built for its storage, which still survives. This is a Grade II listed structure, probably dating from the expansion works of 1755, and consists of an ovoid cavity-walled brick chamber with a domed roof, partially sunk into the ground.



The Ice House

By the 18th century it was *de rigueur* for wealthy country houses to have their own ice houses, exclusively for the cooling of drinks and preparation of cooled confectionery in the summer months. The ice would have been collected from the lake during the winter. The success and efficiency of an ice house was determined by its design and location. Eltham Lodge's ice house was sited in a wooded location

which would have provided cool and shade, close to the source of ice – the lake – but a good distance away from the house, which indicates this is an early example, before ice became available from commercial suppliers in the 19th century and the introduction of refrigeration technology. Ice houses were designed specifically to exclude the heat and insulate the cold. A circular chamber with a domed roof was the most common form, and insulation would have been increased by partially burying the structure below ground and filling the cavity walls with straw, charcoal or stone.¹⁶ The 1871 OS map shows a circular structure with an entrance passage to the east. This would have allowed access to the chamber for ice removal and may have had two or more doors to create an air lock to maintain the temperature. The roof structure is not original, since the roof collapsed due to the removal of ivy during the 1960s, and was rebuilt with a large section cut away for visitors to see inside.¹⁷ However it is likely that there was also another entrance in the roof, since it was customary to have a trapdoor located on the domed roof as a means of filling the chamber with ice, which was then compressed into one large block.

The Tarn today is smaller than the area of woodland shown on the 1839 tithe map, since several large villas were built on the northern part of the wood during the late 19th century as part of the development of Court Road. During the 1960s these were demolished and a residential estate built, known as Tarnwood Park. The Tarn was acquired by Woolwich Borough Council in 1935 and opened as a public open space in 1938. The Tarn is still a public park and bird sanctuary and is also a protected local nature conservation site.

Streets and Housing Development

Court Road

According to the historic maps, during the earlier part of the 19th century Court Road was a wide tree-lined road which led from Eltham Palace southwards to Chapel Farm, and was known then as 'Chappel Farm Road'. This was not an ancient route from Eltham to Mottingham, (although a lane did lead across the fields from Chapel Farm to Mottingham) but was simply the route from the Palace to the Farm. The winding and twisting nature of Court Road betrays its humble origins as a farm lane through the countryside.

By 1894 24 grand Victorian villas with extensive grounds, sweeping front drives and some with adjoining coach houses had been built along the length of the west side of the newly named Court Road, and the lower portion of the east side. There was also now a direct route from Eltham to Mottingham, since a new section of road had been constructed between Eltham Station and Mottingham Road.

By this time two extensive properties had also been built on the triangular field to the east of Courtyard, but with their facades orientated towards the east, since the pre-existing footpath which originally connected the top of Court Road with Court Yard had been widened to become an extension of Court Road. (These two houses were subsequently demolished to make way for the Moat Court housing development in the 1960s.)

¹⁶ English Heritage Monuments Classification Database

¹⁷ J Chandley & M Taylor, *The Tarn*, The Eltham Society, 1987.

By 1914 several more large houses had been built along the east side of Court Road along the upper part, encroaching onto the western part of the Great Park. Piecemeal development continued in the gaps along Court Road during the interwar period and later in the 20th century.

Court Yard

Court Yard was and still is the main approach to the Palace from the centre of the village and the parish church. Like the High Street, it is part of the surviving medieval street pattern. The Palace was originally the site of Bishop Bek's manor house. The manor and the church would have been closely linked since the seat of royal and secular power and religious authority were invariably connected in medieval times.

The name originates from the rectangular courtyard that was built in the late 15C to house the service buildings of the outer Court of the Palace. The Outer Court is thought to have begun in the 14C as a range of lodgings and service buildings.¹⁸

Nos. 32-38 Courtyard are a late medieval survival from the Outer Court of the Palace: a range of 16th century timber framed buildings which are listed Grade II*. Nos. 34-38 were known as the Chancellor's Lodging in the 16th century and consist of a substantial timber framed buildings with a stone chimney.¹⁹ No. 32 was modernised with a new Georgian sash windowed facade in the 18th century. "They represent the western end of a range of buildings which formerly extended over 106m to the north west and included a spicery, pastry and coal house."²⁰ The row of houses was completely sheathed in Kentish weatherboarding in the 19th century in accordance with prevailing fashions. This was not removed until 1952.²¹

Until the late 19th century, with the exception of the buildings at the north end clustering around the High Street, the only other property on Courtyard was a substantial 17th century house known as The Chaundrye and which survived until 1936 at least.

By 1894 six properties set well back from the road had been erected on the west side and a further two semi-detached on the east side (along with another 7 on the newly constructed Wellington Road – now **Wythfield Road**) at the northern end of Court Yard. Although smaller, these houses were contemporary with the first houses on Court Road and North Park.

In the 20th century the street became more urbanized with the building of Bramber House (next to no. 32a) in 1940s, Orchard House next door in 1955, and 6 houses on the site of The Chaundrye in Chaundrye Close in 1959.²²

Tilt Yard Approach

¹⁸ English Heritage, Scheduled Ancient Monument description, p. 4

¹⁹ Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: London 2, South*, 1984 p. 302

²⁰ English Heritage, Scheduled Ancient Monument description, p. 4

²¹ J. Kennett, *Eltham in Old Photographs*, Stroud, 1991, p. 26

²² Darrell Spurgeon, *Discover Eltham and its Environs*, 2000. p.23

Originally the site of the Tudor Tilt Yard (a jousting ground)²³, this has a surviving 16th century gateway and sections of brick walling which are Grade I listed. The Edwardian property known as The Gate House was built near the site of the original medieval gatehouse to the Outer Court of the Palace. The dwelling known as The Tilt Yard is an inter-war building erected in c.1930.

King John's Walk

This has its origins in an ancient lane from Eltham to Mottingham, which now forms part of the Green Chain Walk. It skirts the northern and western boundaries of the Palace, then heads south through open fields with majestic views towards central London across Vista Field until reaching Middle Park Avenue and then the railway.



View towards central London from St John's Walk

Rocque's map of 1741-5 shows clearly that it was a direct route to Mottingham from the Palace.



Extract from John Rocque's survey of London in 1741-5

According to the 1839 tithe map it was formerly known as Mottingham Lane, although by 1894 it had become King John's Lane. It is assumed that the name

²³ English Heritage, Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest

originates from the time when King John of France was held captive at Eltham Palace in 1364. This however does not explain why the Palace became known as King John's Court in the 18th century since Edward II, III and IV, Richard II and Henry VIII would have had far stronger associations with the Palace.

Nos. 1-3 and The Cottage were originally built as a single property in the 1930s by Seely and Paget as a service block for the Courtaulds.²⁴

Kings Orchard

Kings Orchard was laid out in the mid-1930s on a 'teardrop' style plan incorporating Wellington Road – by then renamed Wythfield Road – on the east. This was a greenfield site comprising pasture land and a large orchard, hence the name. The 1936 OS map shows that houses were under construction on the south side.

North Park

North Park was so-called since it was laid out along the northern part of the Great Park, which was known during the 19th century as Front park or North Park.²⁵ Between 1869 and 1894 12 large properties with sweeping front drives were constructed along the eastern section on fields in the north eastern portion of the Park. These were probably contemporary with the earliest houses on Court Road but were subsequently demolished and replaced by apartment blocks known as Green Acres and Woodington Close in the 1960s.

The road was then extended westwards across the Park to connect with Court Road, and construction of houses began at the west end on the northern side. Five large houses, equivalent in scale and plot size to those on Court Road, were built by 1914. These were contemporary with the early 20th century houses built on the east side of Court Road. There was then a building hiatus, no doubt due to the First World War, until North road was completed by the 1930s. Whilst noticeably smaller than the earlier houses at the east and west ends of North Park and on Court Road, the later properties were still endowed with long and generous gardens.

Middle Park Estate

The Middle Park Estate to the west of the Conservation Area was built on the site of Edward III's 14th century deer park known as Middle Park. In the 19th century the area was the location for the renowned Middle Park Stud, founded by wealthy hosier and haberdasher William Blenkiron in 1866. The association with horse racing is commemorated in the name Newmarket Green, an open space at the centre of the Estate. The Middle Park Stakes are still held at Newmarket racecourse every year.

²⁴ Darrell Spurgeon, Discover Eltham and its Environs, 2000. p.23

²⁵ Tithe Map for Eltham, 1839

2.3 Archaeological Significance



Areas of high archaeological potential

The area surrounding Eltham Palace and northwards to the High Street and the immediate area around Eltham Lodge have been designated by the Council as sites of High Archaeological Potential. When proposed development falls within these areas the Council will expect applicants to fully assess the potential impact on the archaeological remains. Archaeological investigation may also be required by the Council before proposals are considered/and or development takes places.

Eltham Palace

The Palace also has statutory protection since it is a scheduled ancient monument (SAM) and is especially rich in archaeological remains. The scheduling not only includes a number of standing structures which are also Listed Buildings (the Great Hall, the medieval parts of the north and south bridges, the perimeter wall and the foundations of the royal apartments) but also extensive buried remains and earthworks.²⁶ Eltham Court, Stephen Courtauld's 1930s residence, is excluded from the scheduling as are nos. 32a-38 Court Yard, although the ground beneath is included.

Bishop's Palace c.1300

The majority of Bishop Bek's Palace lies below ground level. Excavations on the north side of the Great hall in 1975-79 revealed the remains of the **Bishop's Hall**, a rectangular stone building 18.8m x 22m with a tiled floor dating from 1300-1305, with kitchens further to the south, as well as a **cellar** with **Bishop's Chapel** over,

²⁶ English Heritage, Scheduled Ancient Monument description, p. 2. *The remains that are covered by the scheduling are buried manor houses, the earthworks of the bishop's palace and successive royal palaces, the moat the remains of the outer court and parts of gardens outside the moat.*

4m to the north. This continued in use as the **Royal Chapel** until it was rebuilt and enlarged in the 16th century. These remains were mostly reburied after the excavations.

The only visible features of Bishop Bek's Palace are portions of the brick and stone **perimeter wall** up to 2m in height in places and the octagonal **corner towers** which survive in the northeast and northwest corners, and the **moat**, thought to have been in existence at least by end of 13C by the time the retaining wall was constructed. The wall formed a defensive enclosure around the Bishop's Palace at the end of 13th century, but was substantially rebuilt in the early 14th century for the Royal Palace with square corner towers. These towers survive today.

Pre-1300 Manor House(s)

Further buried deposits lie beneath the Bishop's Palace: a succession of timber structures dating from the 11th, 12th and early 13th centuries, which have been interpreted as the **manor houses** which preceded the Bishop's Palace.

The Royal Palace

The main standing survival from the late medieval Royal Palace is the **Great Hall** with its hammer beam roof and east screen, which replaced the Bishop's Hall c.1480. The foundations of the contemporary **Royal Apartments**, which were excavated in the 1950s and 1970s, are still visible on western side of island. They comprised the King's and Queen's lodgings and a gallery, and formed the inner courtyard to Palace. These walls are Grade I Listed along with the Great Hall.

The surviving north and south bridges, Listed Grade I, also date from this period, although it is known that earlier bridges existed. The north bridge formed the principal entrance to the **Inner Court** of the Palace. The south bridge led to the Palace gardens, south and east of the Moat, a number of features survive as earthworks.

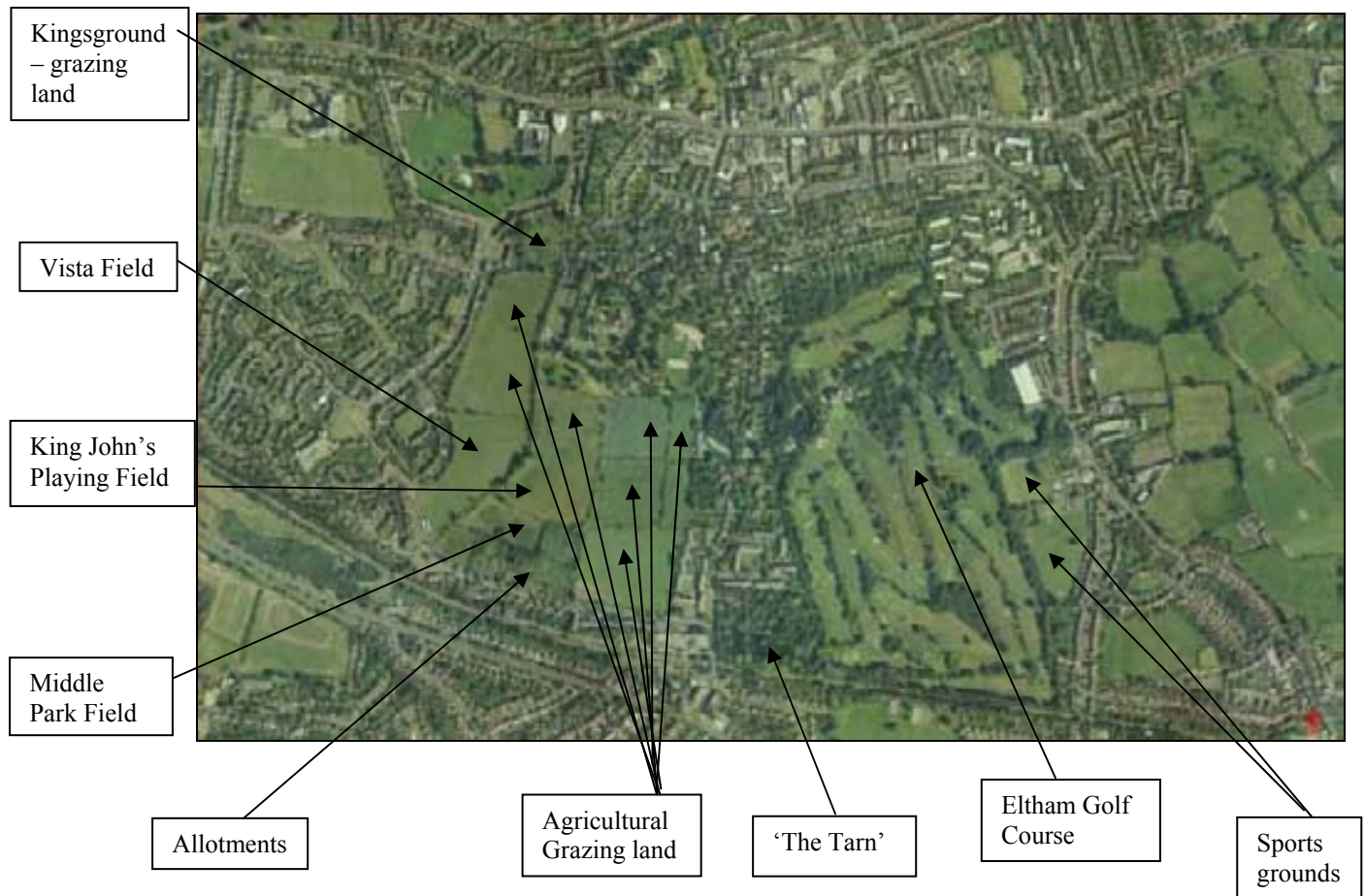
The ground beneath nos. 32a-38 Court Yard is included in the scheduling, since this area comprised the **Outer Court** to the Palace and this area undoubtedly contains buried remains of the extensive range of service buildings and lodgings which originated in the 14th century and which were rebuilt around a large rectangular courtyard in the 15th century.

Thus it is evident that the area designated as the SAM is extremely archaeological sensitive, and probably contains additional highly significant archaeological deposits which would further increase our knowledge of the medieval Palaces at Eltham.

Eltham Lodge

No excavations have taken place in the immediate environs of **Eltham Lodge** to date. There are a number of standing structures surviving from the 17th century designed landscape including various walls, cottage garden wall and a cottage. Although they are Listed structures, none of these are scheduled ancient monuments.

3.4 Character and relationship of spaces and key views and vistas



Aerial view of the Eltham Palace Conservation Area

The Conservation Area can be classified into public and private open space, agricultural grazing land, playing fields, allotment gardens and some residential development. The principal landowner is the Crown; Greenwich Council owns small areas.

Open Character

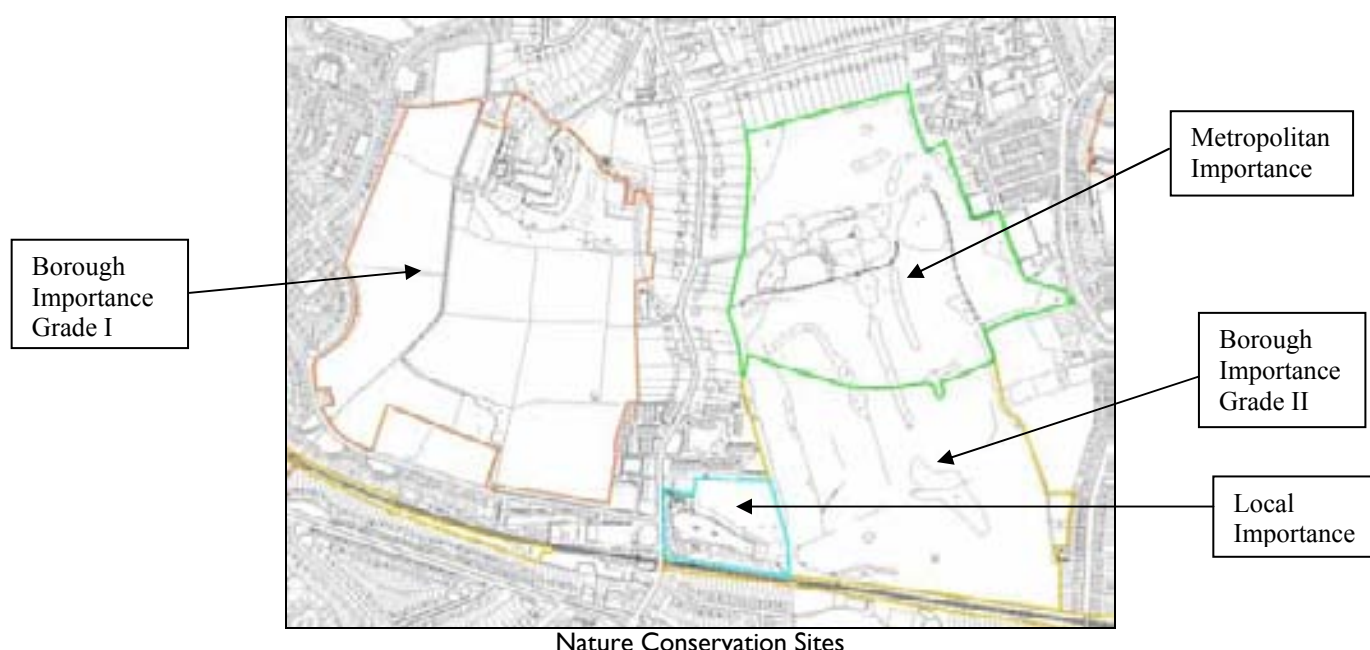
The predominant character of the Conservation Area is of open space. Almost all the Conservation Area, with the exception of the residential development along Court Road, Tilt Yard and Court Yard, is designated in the UDP as 'Green Chain' and Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). The Green Chain is a network of open spaces across South East London providing recreational facilities and visual amenity. The non-residential areas of the Conservation Area are also designated in the UDP as four Nature Conservation Sites ranging from Metropolitan to Local importance. The open spaces of the Conservation Area therefore benefit from the highest level of statutory protection by the Council.

The open nature of the area is not immediately apparent to drivers since the only vehicular route through the Conservation Area is along Court road, which is the main area of residential development within the Conservation Area. The highest

density of housing is concentrated at the southern end in the 1960s developments known as Tarnwood Park and Woodmere. The open character of the area can be better appreciated by walkers who can use public footpaths through the western half of the Conservation Area, which are part of the Green Chain Walk and the Capital Ring Walk, or by golfers on the Royal Golf Course. The boundary of the Conservation Area demarcates the edge of the open land from the surrounding urban and suburban development.

Relationship between Public and Private Space

The character of the public and private open space contrasts greatly between the eastern and western halves of the Conservation Area.



Western Zone

The whole zone to the west of Court Road is designated as a Nature Conservation site of Borough Importance (Grade I) since it is a large area of grassland with fine old hedgerows and a variety of grasses and wild flowers. In the south eastern corner there is a large area of public open space (owned by Greenwich Council). This comprises a group of fields known as The Vista, Middle Park Field and King John Playing Fields. The latter were formerly playing fields but are now being treated as a nature conservation area. Middle Park Field surrounds a rectangular area of private allotments. A public footpath runs across the northern boundary, and then drops down through a small copse towards Middle Park Avenue. Vista Field is at present a large grassed area, with a replacement community centre currently being constructed at the south eastern extremity. These fields are in need of maintenance and enhancement.

The public grasslands are bordered by privately owned meadows, belonging to the Crown Estate. The three fields to the east are leased to an agricultural tenant for the grazing of horses, whilst the six to the north surrounding Eltham Palace including the area known as Kingsground (the former allotments) are leased by English Heritage to a tenant for grazing in association with a livery business. Eltham Palace

itself is owned by the Crown but is currently in the guardianship of English Heritage, and so is open to the public for most of the year. (See section 3.6 on page 30 for a map indicating current land use and ownership.)

- The public and privately owned spaces are contiguous and closely connected; there is not a clear separation between the two, nor physical barriers.
- Although a greater proportion of the land is privately owned, since this is crossed by a public footpath - King John's Walk – the entire landscape has an open and accessible character.
- Walkers can enjoy long distance views from the Palace and King John's Walk, contributing to the feeling of openness.
- Since the Palace is administered by EH, the buildings and the extensive grounds are accessible to the public.
- The grazing of the land by horses and livestock creates a rural impression of '*rus in urbe*' (the countryside in the city)

Eastern Zone

The area to the east of Court Road consists of a mixture of grassland with ponds and ditches, woodland and scrub and is also designated as three Nature Conservation Sites: the southern third as a site of Borough Importance (Grade II) and the northern two-thirds as a site of Metropolitan Importance since it is a habitat for great crested newt. The small area of public space to the south owned by the Council - the heavily wooded 'Tarn' with its large pond and bird sanctuary - is designated as a Nature Conservation Site of Local Importance. This area is clearly separated from the golf course which adjoins it.

Unlike the western zone which was converted to farmland probably during the 17th century, the eastern zone retains much of its parkland character, although it has been successively re-landscaped both formally and informally, for the gardens of Eltham Lodge and later for the golf course.

Eltham Lodge and the former parkland is still owned by the Crown, but leased to the Royal Blackheath Golf Club, and hence is very much a private open space and inaccessible to the public. It is only visible from the rears of the gardens backing onto it, the railway line to the south and from higher ground. A small zone on the eastern perimeter is a private sports ground.

- The small area of public space is self-contained and restricted to a small Zone in the south, clearly separated from the golf course
- The golf course is not generally accessible to the public
- There are no public footpaths crossing the golf course
- Views into and across the golf course are mainly from private spaces such as back gardens surrounding it, and the railway to the south
- Extensive number of mature trees in large groups give a historic Parkland character

Views and Vistas

Of the 11 important local views identified within the Borough in the UDP and protected by planning policy there are two concerning Eltham Palace:

1. Castlewood to SE London

comprises an expansive vista of south east London, including Eltham Palace, from Castlewood, one of the highest points in the Borough close to Shooters Hill.

2. Eltham Palace to Central London

encompasses long distance vistas across open fields towards central London.

Other Key Vistas within the Conservation Area

- King John's Walk (north) views across the open fields to the west
- Green Chain footpath (where it branches off from King John's Walk) views southwards towards Mottingham views of Eltham Palace to the north
- Middle Park Avenue (east end) views uphill to the north across open fields
- Golf Course (north) views to southeast of Eltham Lodge and beyond
- Eltham Lodge views to the south along the line of the former avenue
- Golf Course (south) and railway views to north of Eltham Lodge through the former parkland

3.5 Townscape features

The townscape character of this area is defined by its *lack* of uniformity and consistency. It is rare to find two buildings which are alike. Nos. 37-41 Court Road for example were all constructed during the same period in the 1930s and have similar architectural features and yet all vary in layout and plan form.

Factors which characterise the townscape in this area include:

- **Lack of uniformity and repetition**
- **Diversity of design and detailing**
- **Variety of materials, colours and textures:** red, grey and yellow stock brick, tile and slate, stucco and pebbledash, faux-timber framing etc.
- **Detached Villas:** all Victorian, Edwardian and 1930s properties are detached
- **Substantial plot size:** houses set within very generous plots, set back from the road with substantial front gardens and very generous rear gardens
- **Large scale and height:** Victorian and Edwardian houses are large two and a half storey high villas, 1930s are 2-storeys

- **Abundance of trees and greenery:** most of the houses in Court Rd are screened by mature trees, hedges and shrubs (67 trees on Court Road are protected by Tree Preservation Orders)
- **Green vistas between the houses:** views of mature rear gardens and the tree canopy beyond are visible through generous gaps between properties. Gaps in the built environment contribute significantly to the fabric of the townscape.
- **Wide and winding nature of Court Road:** gives the impression of a country road, and adds the elements of mystery and surprise. Distinctive character derives from origins as farm lane through countryside
- **Long stretches of high red brick Tudor walling**
- **Surviving medieval streets and lanes:** Court yard, Tilt Yard and St John's Walk
- **Undulating topography:** the gradual fall of the ground to the south adds interest and variety to local views and the street scene.



Court Road, general view looking north

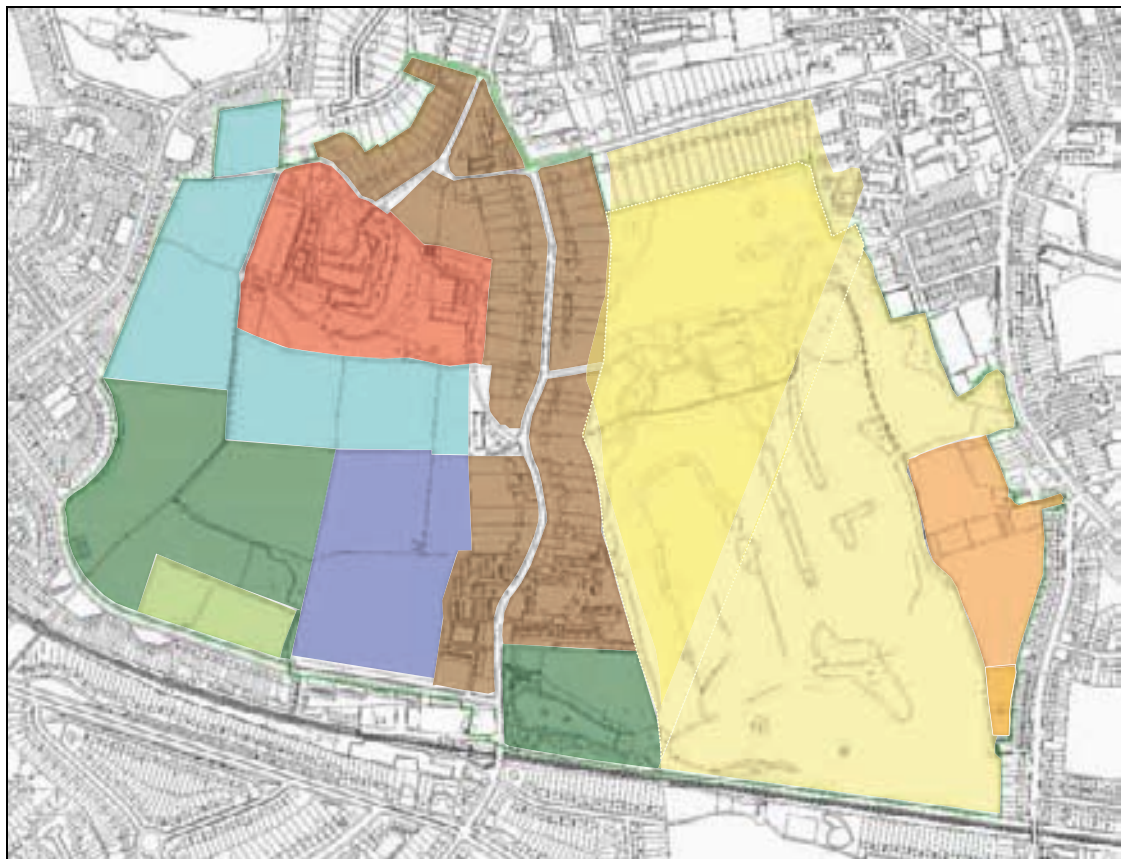
3.6 Former and prevailing uses

The 1839 tithe apportionment is very useful for determining the prevailing land use at that time. It not only lists all the premises and parcels of land illustrated on the tithe map with their landowners and tenants, but also describes their state of cultivation. The fields surrounding Eltham Palace were a mixture of arable and meadow, with one paddock. This land has therefore served continuously as farmland and pasture from at least the early part of the 19th century, and so has evolved as a working landscape. It is currently characterised by a series of manageable sized paddocks enclosed by dense-hedged field boundaries with timber post and rail fencing and some Victorian hawthorn hedging. The land to the east of Court Road is referred to on the Tithe map as The Front (or North) Park and The South Park and is illustrated as open land with no field enclosures.

Therefore, the former land use as open parkland to the east of Court Road and open farmland to the west influenced the plot and building size of the Victorian and Edwardian villas: since there were no constraints on space, and no pre-existing development, plot sizes could be very generous. The rear gardens on Court Road and North Park are therefore extremely long.

The continued ownership of the majority of the Conservation Area by the Crown has been an influential factor in ensuring that the landscape has not been developed or urbanised and is still predominantly open space.

Current land use can best be illustrated by a map. All the buildings within the Conservation Area are purely residential (with the exception of those on the sites of Eltham Palace and Eltham Court); there are no commercial, industrial, religious or public buildings.



Current land uses and ownership

Key

-  Residential
-  Agricultural Grazing Land (Crown Estate)
-  Agricultural Grazing Land (English Heritage on lease from Crown Estate)
-  Historic Monument – Eltham Palace (English Heritage/Crown Estate)
-  Private Golf Course (Crown Estate)
-  Private Land including Sports Grounds
-  Public Open Space (Greenwich Council)
-  Allotments (Greenwich Council)

3.7 Architectural and Historic Qualities of Buildings

Building periods

The built environment of the Conservation Area is very diverse and falls into distinct chronological groups:

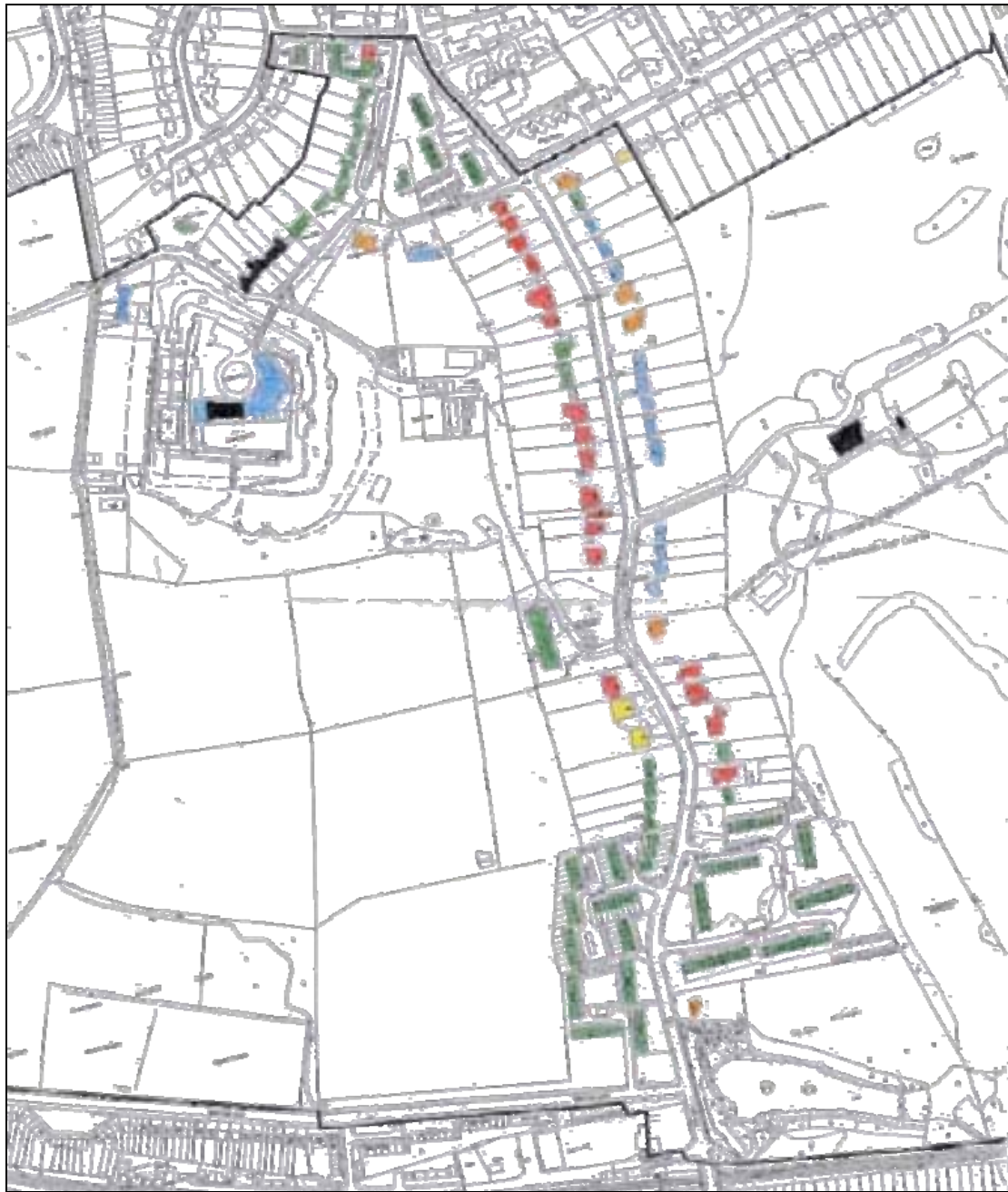
- Medieval core of Eltham Palace
- 16C timber framed terrace of houses forming outer Court in Court Yard
- 16C gateways and walling along Tilt Yard
- 17C Eltham Court and surviving garden, walls and buildings
- 18C ice well and serpentine lake
- Late 19C and early 20C residential development along Court Road
- 1930s residential development along Court Road and large house attached to Eltham Palace
- Post war infill houses on Court Road and Court Yard
- 1960s housing estates at Moat Court and Tarnwood Park and Woodmere
- 1990s redevelopment of two plots following demolition of two Victorian villas

With the exception of the 1960s housing estates, the majority of housing in Court Road and Court Yard developed in a piecemeal and organic fashion on large, individual and irregular sized plots, rather than as planned development schemes.

Building types

All the buildings within the Conservation Area are purely residential, with the exception of those on the sites of Eltham Palace and Eltham Court; there are no commercial, industrial, religious or public buildings. The building types therefore fall into the following categories:

- 13-15C medieval palace
- 16C timber-framed lodging and service buildings serving the palace
- 17C country house within formal landscaped setting
- Detached Late Victorian villas (the largest group)
- Detached Edwardian villas
- Detached 1930s houses
- Art Deco country house within informal landscaped setting and remains of medieval palace; associated 1930s lodging and service building
- Post war individual houses, blocks of flats



Major building phases illustrated

-  Pre 1700
-  1869-1894 Late Victorian
-  1895-1914 Edwardian
-  1915-1936 Interwar
-  Post war
-  1990s

Listed Buildings



Listed (pink) and Locally Listed (red) Buildings

There are 24 'Listed buildings' and these are the surviving medieval, 16th and 17th century walls and structures associated exclusively with the historic sites of Eltham Palace and Eltham Lodge. The only residential dwellings which are Listed are the 5 terraced timber-framed buildings in Court Yard which formed the Outer Court of the Palace. Six of the Listed Buildings are Grade I, ten are Grade II*. Eltham Palace is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) and designated as Grade II* on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens. A full list of the Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area is given in Appendix A.

14 of the listed structures are stretches of historic brick walling. The substantial sections along the west side of Court Yard, south side of Tilt Yard Approach and the boundary wall between nos. 32 and 34 Court Road are mainly early 16th century (Tudor). These walls are very high (up to 3m) in places, and composed of the typically long, flat and soft Tudor bricks laid in English Bond, which are a very bright orange/red. These tall red walls therefore impart a sense of enclosure to these narrow streets and also give this part of the Conservation Area a very distinctive historic character. The west-facing section of garden boundary wall between The Gate House and The Tilt Yard on Tilt yard Approach contains 18 (originally 20) small triangular-headed recesses. These are known as Bee Boles, the medieval type of beehive in use before the introduction of freestanding wooden beehives in the late 19th century. The recesses were often positioned in a south facing wall, and would have contained 'skeps', the traditional coiled straw hive basket for the bees. The large quantity of bee boles in the 16th century wall at Eltham indicates that this was a

substantial cottage industry, and most probably served as the apiary for Eltham Palace.²⁷



Tilt yard Approach, red brick Tudor archway

The medieval character is intensified by nos. 32a, 32, 34, 36 & 38 Court Yard which (although very much restored) represent a rare survival of a range of late medieval timber framed buildings. High pitched roofs, projecting gabled bays, jettied first floors and close-studded timbers with diagonal arched braces are all features of medieval box frame construction and as authentic vernacular buildings are a unique heritage asset within the Conservation Area.



No. 36 Court Yard

Locally Listed Buildings

In 1979 24 buildings were placed on the Council's list of "Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest". At the time of this appraisal 22 remain. The criteria for Local Listing are:

1. Architectural interest – dating from before 1840 unless particularly distinctive
2. Historical interest – association with persons or events
3. Environmental significance – characterful, part of a planned layout or group value

²⁷ See: Bee Boles in Kent, in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 106 (1988), pp. 107-127, and the national register of bee boles at <http://www.ibra.org.uk/>. There are 15 bee boles surviving in an east facing garden wall at nearby Well Hall Pleasaunce. These also date from the early 1500s. Thanks to John Kennett of The Eltham Society for drawing our attention to the Eltham bee boles.

The locally listed buildings fall into the third category since they comprise groups of late Victorian villas with significant townscape value on Court Road, with the exception of an 18th century cottage in Footscray Road.

A full list of the locally listed buildings within the Conservation Area is given in Appendix B. As mentioned above these buildings are distinguished by their rich variety of architectural styles and their lack of uniformity. Characteristic features can be summarised as follows:

- **Good building quality** using fine materials
- **Large scale:** typically 3-storeyed detached villas
- **Variety of design** in plan form, layout and elevational treatment
- **Diverse and attractive roofscapes:** combination of hipped, pitched or gabled with dormers or side towers
- **Decorative roof treatment:** ornamental barge-boards, ridge tiles, tile and slate patterns, elaborate brick chimneys etc.
- **Variety of architectural features:** projecting bays often 2-storied/full height, gables, sash windows, projecting porches, panelled doors, stone or stucco mouldings.
- **Range of materials and colours:** red, grey and yellow stock brick, tile and slate, stucco and pebbledash, hanging tile, faux-timber framing etc.

Development of Court Road

West side

The villas on the west side were built during the 1870s and are less flamboyant than those on the east side, indicating an earlier date.²⁸ The majority are classical style villas built in stock brick with stucco dressings. They were built in groups of 6, 7, 4 and 2, evidently where land was available for purchase. Most are variants of the Italianate villa style, fashionable from the 1840s onwards and characterised by asymmetrical plans, low pitched roofs (nos. 20, 22, 24, 50) with bracketed eaves (nos. 30, 56, 66) square towers (no. 50) round-headed windows (nos. 20, 22, 24, 30, 56, 58, 62, 66) and projecting classical porches with pilasters (nos. 22, 24, 30, 62, 66). There are some deviations from the standard forms: no. 32 has a gothic style projecting porch with a pointed arch; nos. 46, 48, 56 have segmental arched porches and windows.

²⁸ Three properties appear in the 1871 census (nos. 20, 24 and 66).



No. 24



No. 50



No. 62



No. 56

East side

There is even greater architectural variety to the Locally Listed buildings on the east side of Court Road. Development on this side began later during the 1890s with a group of 4 at the southern end. Stylistically the buildings are more diverse, and the range and use of materials is more extravagant

Nos. 93, 95 and 99 aptly illustrate the great architectural variety of the 1890s. Although they are adjoining buildings dating from around the same period, they are built in highly contrasting styles.



No. 93



No. 95



No. 99

No. 93 is in a late Victorian style in yellow stock brick with red brick dressings, with a large canted red brick bay to the ground floor. The sash windows have a 6-over-1 glazing configuration. The steeply curving hipped roof is unusual since the ridge line projects forward of the hip to form a large gabled dormer. No. 95 is in elaborate faux-Tudor style with traditional elements such as mullions and transoms, timber-framed gables, barge-boards and tall chimneys. The gables are deliberately asymmetrical to emulate traditional English vernacular architecture. No. 99 is in neo-Restoration (17th century) style, with a classical symmetrical facade, hipped roof with dormer and dentilated eaves cornice. The style is fairly austere with minimal ornamentation. It was probably deliberately modelled on the genuine 17th century mansion nearby: Eltham Court.

The early 20th century properties are not grouped together, but randomly located on the east side of Court Road. They are characterised by their variety of extremely colourful materials: no. 43 is constructed of a luminous orange brick, no. 21 has a lower storey of red brick and an upper storey clad with red hanging tile. Nos. 47 and 87 probably demonstrate the early application of pebbledashing to the upper storeys. No. 87 has very innovative fenestration, with jettied mullioned and transomed windows on the first floor with a glazed lunette for the middle toplight, and lozenge shaped glazing in the toplights of the ground floor windows. No. 47, which is of a similar date, has a porthole window on the ground floor and a blind semicircular headed feature on the first floor.



No. 43



No. 21



No. 47



No. 87

3.8 Contribution made by Key Unlisted Buildings

Three of the 1930s houses - nos. 37-41 - are a homogenous group with low pitched hipped roofs and Crittall windows with horizontal glazing bars in the 'Moderne' style. Whilst simple in style they are nevertheless well-detailed and well-constructed houses which make their own architectural contribution to the area.



No. 41

The remaining nine 1930s houses on the east side contribute to the architectural variety of the area, since each one is different. Original and attractive features include half-timbered gables, steeply pitched roofs and tall chimneys. No. 83 has a flat roof and an interesting stepped plan form. However, some have suffered from unfortunate modern alterations to the fenestration or to the roofscapes which detract from the appearance of the Conservation Area.



No. 85

The post war houses on Court Road are of limited architectural merit and contribute little to the conservation area although the trees and vegetation in some of the front gardens add to the townscape value. The 4 and 5-storey housing blocks fronting Court Road and Middle Park Avenue and the apartment blocks at Tarnwood Park are an unfortunate intrusion in the Conservation Area, since they have introduced an unattractive suburban character into what was an almost complete pastoral landscape.



Middle Park Avenue nos. 553-639, built 1958-9 by Woolwich Borough Council

One of the exceptions to the post war architectural development is Moat Court, built in the triangle of land between Court Yard and Court Road. These are low-rise, low-density blocks which are minimally visible from the road since many of the existing trees and shrubs were retained and have since matured. The buildings exemplify the plain and modular style of the 1960s with projecting transparent stair blocks and make a positive contribution to the area since they do not dominate their environment but harmonise with it. Moat Court was given a Civic Trust Award in 1961.



Moat Court

Chaundrye Close is a pleasant development of 6 detached properties built in 1959 behind the historic wall on Court Yard. The properties are thus discreetly located and are well-proportioned and constructed of good quality materials.

Recommendations for additions to the Local List are detailed within the Management Strategy for the Eltham Palace Conservation Area.

3.9 Local Details

Architectural features on Court Road include:

- projecting porches with semicircular, pointed or segmental arches
- ornamental barge-boards
- decorative ridge tiles, tile and slate patterns
- elaborate corbelled brick chimneys
- timber sash windows, flat or round-headed with a variety of glazing configurations: 1-over-1, 6-over-1, 6-over-6, 2-over-2
- blind circular windows
- mullion and transome windows with unusual glazing configuration
- projecting keystones over window heads
- wide panelled doors
- stone or stucco dressings and decorative mouldings



Porches at nos. 24 and 62



Pointed arch no. 32

Round headed arch at no. 30



Decorative barge-board and blind circular window at no. 46 Projecting keystones at no. 50



No. 105 has highly ornamental stone dressings: the two-storied bay has elaborately moulded architraves and is surmounted by a gable filled with decorative scrollwork and a cartouche, below which is a frieze with reeded mouldings and scrolled consoles. The property also has wide corbelled brick chimneys



Unusual glazing at nos. 87 and 95

3.10 Prevalent and traditional building materials

There is a great variety of materials and colours within the Conservation Area:

- Yellow and multi-coloured stock brick with stucco or red brick dressings
- Red brick with stone dressings (nos. 30 and 105)
- Long flat orange/red Tudor bricks (the Tilt Yard) and red/orange 17C bricks laid in English bond (walls along Court yard etc.)
- Grey and cream Gault brick facings (nos. 46-48)
- Red hanging tile (Nos. 21 and 26)
- Pebbledashed upper storeys (nos. 47 and 87)
- Natural grey-blue roof slates
- Red and brown roof tiles
- decorative red ridge tiles
- softwood sash/mullion and transome windows and doors
- metal Crittal windows (nos. 37-41)
- medieval timber framing (nos. 34-38 Court Yard)
- faux timber-framing on gables (Nos. 95 and 43, Tarn Lodge + inter-war houses)

3.11 Contribution made by green spaces, trees and hedges

The contribution made by green spaces and greenery within this Conservation Area cannot be underestimated. It is the green and open spaces which essentially define the unique character of this area. This is why the open spaces of the Conservation Area are safeguarded under the highest level of protection as Green Chain, Metropolitan Open Land and nature conservation sites.

Green spaces and greenery

- Domestic front gardens with mature trees and shrubbery along Court Road make a highly significant contribution to the character of the area. These include a great variety of individual species and a large number are protected by Tree Preservation Orders.
- Due to the wide spacing of the houses along Court Road and Court yard views of the mature rear gardens and the tree canopy beyond are visible. These green vistas soften the built environment and provide relief and visual interest. Gaps and green spaces in the environment are very important and contribute significantly to the fabric of the townscape.
- The grounds at Eltham Palace are designated as a Grade II* garden within the 'English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest' and are open to the public for most of the year.
- King John's Walk forms part of the Green Chain and provides walks through open fields with extensive vistas towards central London. The adjoining Council owned fields also offer opportunities for recreation.
- The Tarn comprises a lake with waterfowl within an attractive woodland setting, and a bird sanctuary which is open to the public.

Ecology

- The Conservation Area has great ecological and environmental value since it contains 4 designated sites of nature conservation, one of which includes a nationally protected species - the Great Crested Newt - and its habitat. All the green space within the Conservation Area is protected by designation: the golf course, Eltham Palace and surrounding fields as well as the Tarn. The biodiversity value of the area has also been recognised, since the varied grassland and woodland supports a wide range of flora and fauna. Full details of these conservation designations can be found in Appendix D.

3.12 Extent of loss, intrusion and damage

Considering its suburban location the Conservation Area has retained much of its historic character and since its designation in 1971 it has suffered very little from intrusive new development.

However there are some aspects which detract from the area's overall character. There have been a number of inferior building alterations, as well as inappropriate developments prior to designation. These include:

- **Replacement of original windows**

A large number of the Victorian and Edwardian buildings have retained their original timber sash and mullioned windows. Among the exceptions are nos. 26 and 105 Court Road, and no. 28 Court Yard, which have been replaced with unsympathetic and crude uPVC frames. A number of the original steel and timber windows in the 1930s houses on the east side of Court Road have also been replaced with inappropriate aluminium or uPVC frames, or incongruous timber frames which do not complement the style of the property.

- **Replacement of original front doors**

Although a large number of the original timber front doors survive, a few have been replaced with inappropriate designs and materials. Old doors should be repaired rather than replaced. Detailed examination reveals that replacements are usually manufactured 'off-the-shelf' doors rather than good quality joinery designed specifically for the building.

- **Replacement of natural slate roof coverings**

In some cases natural slates have been replaced with synthetic slates or with garish tiles which are inappropriate and do not complement the brickwork. Re-covering with natural slates is preferable.

- **Plastic rainwater goods:** these were originally in cast iron on the pre-1930 properties. Some have been replaced with plastic, which is not durable. Cast or extruded aluminium is preferable.

- **Loss of boundary walls and front gardens to hard standings**

Many properties have retained their front boundary walls, and the front gardens are so capacious that there is sufficient room for both car parking and shrubbery.

However a small number of properties have excessively large areas of hard standing which are visually intrusive and in some cases most of the front boundary wall has been removed (e.g. nos. 36-38 Court Road) The loss of the traditional front boundary treatment is detrimental to the townscape.

- **Large and dominating extensions**

There are a few examples of side, rear and roof extensions in the conservation area which are excessively large and detract from the character of the host building. No. 28 Court Yard, for example, has an enormous side extension which dominates the front of the property and which is unsympathetic in terms of design and materials. No. 83 Court Road has an unfortunate and dominating mansard-style extension which has irreparably damaged the horizontal character of this 'Moderne' style property. These types of extensions would not be permitted today given the comprehensive policies in the UDP restricting the scale, bulk and design of residential extensions.

Guidance on the location, size, design and materials of new extensions is given below in Part 2 of this guide.

- **Poorly designed and located housing developments**

The large blocks of flats at the southern end of Court Road (on Middle Park Avenue and at Tarnwood Park), which were built during the 1950s and 1960s, have had an extremely detrimental visual impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

At 4 and 5 storeys high and in most cases at least 12 bays wide, the blocks are totally out-of-scale and out-of-keeping with their surroundings. They detract substantially from the area due to their bland and undistinguished design, lack of detailing, and poor quality materials. They also fail to respect the established building frontages and setbacks in the area. The traditional development pattern is of detached properties, generously spaced but with a consistent building line facing the road. However, the post war developments introduced large and dominating blocks set at right angles to the road, and blocks arranged in high density groups away from the road. The blocks fronting Middle Park Avenue and the west side of Court Road are especially visually dominant and in a poor state of repair.

- **Demolitions**

The south end of Court Road has suffered the most damage architecturally. Seven large, late-19th century villas have been demolished since the second half of the 20th century. Five villas were removed to make way for Tarnwood Park and the local authority housing blocks opposite during the 1960s and 1970s, and more recently two villas were knocked down in the 1990s and the site redeveloped as the result of an appeal lost by Greenwich Council.

3.13 Neutral areas

There are a few parts of the Conservation Area where the architectural style is bland. These include the post war infill houses in Court Road (nos. 103, 107, 110-116) and Court Yard (Little Court, Orchard House) and the small developments at

Wythfield Road (Hadlow and Palace Court). These buildings neither complement nor detract from the overall character of the area.

3.14 Problems, pressures and capacity for change

There is continuous pressure on land and existing buildings in Court Road for large scale extensions, redevelopment and infill development.

Extensions

Due to the generous plot sizes and gaps between the houses there is great demand for enlarging and extending properties. Whilst rear extensions do not have a visual impact on the character of the streetscape, two storey side extensions block or diminish the gaps between properties, resulting in the loss of views through the gaps of mature rear gardens or the trees and landscape beyond. Several large side extensions have already been erected along Court Road. Further approvals would result in the gradual erosion of the rural character of the Conservation Area and the build up of a dense and more urbanised character.

Redevelopment

Seven of the large, late-19th century villas at the southern end of Court Road have been demolished within the last 50 years for redevelopment. Nos. 96 and 100 were locally listed and although a number of applications for their redevelopment were refused by Greenwich Council, in 1991 an appeal was allowed. The properties were demolished and two large blocks of 4-storey flats were erected in their place, which are of limited architectural merit and which detract from the character of the area. Large blocks of flats are inappropriate building forms within this Conservation Area and any future proposals for large scale redevelopment should be resisted.

Infill Development

There are a few remaining properties on Court Road which have extensive gaps at the side. An application for a new detached dwelling house adjacent to an existing property, which has been successively refused by Greenwich Council since 1983, has recently been granted at appeal. The most recent application was refused in 2005 partly on the grounds that the special woodland character of this part of the Conservation Area would be compromised and partly due to the excessive height, bulk, scale and design of the proposed dwelling. The latter highlights a particular problem in this area – the large plots are viewed as potential sites for large buildings which do not harmonise with the neighbouring properties. Gaps and green spaces in the environment are very important, especially within the context of Eltham Palace and its predominantly rural character. Therefore any future proposals for infill development should be considered very carefully.

Threats to the Conservation Area character in the form of inappropriate replacement windows and doors mainly occur within the smaller 1930s dwellings on the east side of Court Road as well as within the properties which have been converted to flats or commercial buildings (e.g. doctors surgery / hotel) and which are either on the perimeter or just outside the Conservation Area boundary, such as nos. 18-28 Court Yard.

The Conservation Area boundary is reviewed with recommendations in the Management Strategy document.

4. *Contacts and further advice:*

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Peggy Middleton House (First Floor)
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Fax: 020 8921 5442

For further details of the proposed open space management frameworks (the *East London Green Grid Sub Area Framework* and the *Eltham Palace Landscape Analysis and Management Framework*) see below:

Greenwich Council:
Culture & Community Services
Riverside House
Woolwich High Street
London SE18 6DN
Tel: 020 8854 8888
Fax: 020 8921 5442

English Heritage
London Region
1 Waterhouse Square
138 - 142 Holborn
London, EC1 2ST
Tel: 020 7973 3000

5. Glossary

Barge-boards – timber boards which project from the bottom of a gable, often carved into an ornamental pattern

Bay and bow windows – these are windows projecting out from the wall. A bay window is canted and has an elongated hexagonal plan form. A bow window is semi-circular in plan form.

Caseament window – a window that opens on hinges.

Corbelled chimney – stepped brickwork

Bosquet - a block of trees and shrubs pierced by paths.

Brownian - in the style of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, meaning the romantic serpentine style of the mid-eighteenth century.

Dado – a moulded section, which runs around the wall at approximately waist height.

Dentilation – a row of rectangular shaped projecting ornaments on a cornice

Dormer – a projecting window inserted vertically into a sloping roof with its own roof and sides, known as cheeks.

Dressings – the finishes and decoration that surrounds doors windows and other openings

English bond – bond refers to the pattern in which the bricks of a wall are laid. English bond is where bricks are laid with alternate rows of headers (where the brick is laid with the short end visible) and rows of stretchers (laid lengthwise).

Flemish bond – the pattern created where a brick wall is laid with alternate headers and stretchers (see above), which are aligned, in each alternate row.

Gable – The end wall of a building where the roof reaches its peak. A pointed gable follows the slope of the roof against it. A Dutch gable is one with curved or scrolled sides. triangular-shaped end wall of a building beneath a pitched roof

Gault Brick – a pale creamy yellow coloured brick, fired from gault clays which contain quantities of chalk

Glazing bars – a light piece of timber, which divides a sash window into smaller compartments. Glazing bars have different designed profiles according to the curvature – some of the most common being called ovolo, ogee and cyma.

Ha-ha - a sunken wall with a ditch outside so that the boundary was not visible from the house and garden, used so that livestock could not enter the garden

Half-timbering – a timber framed element infilled with brickwork or plaster

Hanging tile – tiles which are hung vertically as wall cladding

Hipped roof – a roof which slopes upwards on all four sides meeting at a ridge, rather than with gable ends

Ice House – an insulated chamber built in the grounds of large country estates and used for the preservation of ice during the summer months

Jetty – the upper floor(s) of a timber framed building which overhang the wall below

Keystone – the wedge shaped central stone at the top of an arch, or window head

Leaded lights – window where the glass is held in place by strips of lead usually arranged in a grid or diamond pattern.

Lunette – a semicircular opening framed by an arch

Mullion and transome window – a 17th century style of window divided into lights by vertical (mullions) and horizontal (transome) moulded sections

Organic development – a building or group of buildings whose present appearance is the result of additions to its original form in different periods rather than being built as a designed architectural composition. Examples of organic form include medieval farmhouses or churches with additions built on at various times. An example on a larger scale might be an unplanned village that has grown piecemeal over a long period.

Oversailing brick courses – a decorative technique where each ascending layer of bricks protrudes slightly above the previous layer.

Parterre - usually a square or rectangular terrace adjacent to a house, laid out in decorative pattern using plants and gravels

Pebbledash – an external finish to a building which consists of small pebbles sprayed onto render before it is dry

Permitted Development – development that can be undertaken without planning permission as defined in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.

Pitched roof – a roof which has two sloping sides meeting at a ridge, and two gabled ends

Pointed Arch – an arch with a pointed head, characteristic of Gothic architecture

PVCu – refers to the material which mass produced modern window units are constructed from. The plastic used is subjected to a chemical process, which hardens it to make it rigid. PVC stands for Polyvinylchloride.

Raised and fielded – a timber panel sunk into the body of a door whose raised centre portion is reached by tapered edges.

Restoration style – the style current in England from the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 until the Revolution of 1688.

Roughcast – a render coating containing coarse aggregate.

Rustic brick – facing brick with surfaces improved by a sand covering, or with a scratched texture applied before firing, often with variegated colouring

Sash window – timber windows with vertically sliding frames called sashes, which are suspended on cords over pulleys and counterbalanced by weights held in the surrounding frames.

Segmental arch – an arch that is less than a semicircle, with its centre below the springing line

Soffit – visible underside of an arch, or underside of any architectural element such as a door or window architrave

Spalling – decay process whereby layers of stone flake away from the surface.

Stock brick – the term 'stock' refers to the name of the mould in which these bricks were originally handmade. The term now refers to the traditional bricks made from London clays, which were produced in a range of yellow and brown tones.

Stucco – plaster applied to the exterior of a building, often incised with lines or moulded to resemble ashlar masonry or carved stonework

Tudor Arch – a pointed arch with a flattened appearance, also known as the four-centred arch.

Vernacular buildings – vernacular buildings used traditional construction techniques, local materials and forms. Vernacular buildings were not designed by architects, and were often built for the owner rather than for sale.

Vousoir – a wedge shaped stone or brick forming part of an arch

Appendix A

List of Buildings of Architectural and Historic Interest

1	Court Road (off east side)	Eltham Lodge	Grade I
2		Wall running northeast from northeast corner of Eltham Lodge	Grade II
3		Cottage to east of Eltham Lodge	Grade II
4		Walls of Old Garden to east of Cottage, east of Eltham Lodge	Grade II
5		Garden Pavilion to southeast of Eltham Lodge	Grade II
6		Wall along drive to west of Eltham Lodge	Grade II
7		Ice Well to right of path near entrance of 'The Tarn'	Grade II
8	Court Road (west side)	North boundary wall of no. 20	Grade II*
9		North boundary wall of no. 34	Grade II
10	Court Yard (east side)	Walls surrounding garden of The Gate House	Grade II*
11		Wall running east from southeast angle of The Gate House garden	Grade II*
12	Court Yard (west side)	Wall running 187 yards along west side from northeast corner of no.1 to northeast corner of Bramber House; with small spur running west at north end	Grade II*
13		Walls to north of front garden of Bramber House and along road front	Grade II*
14		Wall along frontage of nos. 32 and 32a, and along north boundary of garden from front to rear	Grade II*
15		Nos. 32 and 32a	Grade II*
16		Nos. 34, 36, 38	Grade II*
17		Old brick wall between gardens in front of nos. 34 and 36; and along road frontage	Grade II*
18	Court Yard (south end)	Great Hall of Eltham Palace	Grade I
19		Walls of Inner Courtyard to Eltham Palace, with chambers adjoining	Grade I
20		Eltham Court (Eltham Palace)	Grade II*
21		Remains of South Bridge across Eltham Palace Moat	Grade I
22		North Bridge across Eltham Palace Moat	Grade I
23		Piece of wall to east of north end of north bridge over Eltham Palace Moat	Grade II
24	Tilt Yard Approach (south side)	North boundary wall, entrance gateway and spur wall with gateway in grounds to north of house called 'The Tilt Yard'	Grade I

Appendix B

List of Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest

1	Court Road (west side)	Nos. 20, 22, 24
2		No. 30
3		No. 32
4		No. 46
5		No. 48
6		No. 50
7		No. 56
8		No. 58
9		No. 62
10		No. 66
11		No. 92
12		No. 96
13		No. 100
(nos. 96 & 100 both demolished and site redeveloped in 1990s on appeal)		
14	Court Road (east side)	No. 21
15		No. 43
16		No. 47
17		No. 87
18		No. 93
19		No. 95
20		No. 99
21		No. 105
22	Footscray Road (west side)	No. 144

Appendix C

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

Court Road	TPO 14	Moat Court, Wolsey Court, nos. 11, 35, 39, 43, 47, 61, 81, 85, 87, 93, 99, 105, 107, 20, 24, 26, 30, 32, 46, 50, 56, 62, 66, 92, 96, 100, 110	48 trees
	TPO 178	65	
	TPO 145	20	
	TPO 358	48	
Court Yard	TPO 23	18-20	

Appendix D

Nature Conservation Sites

1	Royal Blackheath Golf course (north)	Nature Conservation Site of Metropolitan Importance	habitat for great crested newt, bordered by woodland, scrub and acidic grassland
2	Eltham Palace and surrounding fields to south and west	Nature Conservation site of Borough importance (Grade I)	large area of grassland with fine old hedgerows and a variety of grasses and wild flowers, with ponds and a moat adding to the habitat diversity
3	Royal Blackheath Golf course (south)	Nature Conservation Site of Borough Importance (Grade II)	variety of grassland areas of developing woodland, ponds and ditches, supporting a range of common birds and animals
4	The Tarn	Nature Conservation Site of Local Importance	secondary woodland set aside as bird sanctuary; large pond with good marginal vegetation