



**ELTHAM PALACE CONSERVATION AREA**  
Management Strategy



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# Management Strategy & Conservation Guidance

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990, places a general duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish 'proposals' for the preservation or enhancement of conservation areas. Further guidance is given in Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas (English Heritage, August 2005). The aim of the Conservation Area Management Strategy policies for this area is the **protection of the period character of the area focusing on the area's buildings and townscape.**

## 1.1 Recommendations

The Management Strategy makes the following recommendations:

- Three small extensions to the Conservation Area boundary to include parts of North Park, Court Yard, Wythfield Road and Kings Orchard, and a small reduction to exclude the builders yard on Middle Park Avenue; See appendix D.
- An Article 4 Direction to cover the following parts of the existing Conservation Area: Court Road, King John's Walk and Tilt Yard Approach as well as properties on Wythfield Road and Court Yard within the proposed extensions. This will be subject to a separate consultation process at a future date and the responses will be reported back to Members in due course.
- No additions to the schedule of Listed Buildings.
- A number of additions to the schedule of Locally Listed Buildings which meet the Council's criteria, namely: The Gate House on Tilt Yard Approach, 133 Court Road and nos. 1, 2 & 3 Wythfield Road.
- Continued use of Planning Control - to ensure careful design of alterations and extensions avoiding disturbing local character and in keeping with and enhancing the distinctive character and style of the building and/or area.
- Promotion of conservative repair principles to be published on the Council Website.
- Preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) specific to this Conservation Area giving Conservation and Design Guidance on alterations and extensions, back land and infill development, trees, alternative energy technologies and local views.
- A proposed Management Framework for the open space surrounding Eltham Palace. This is a joint initiative between Greenwich Council (Directorate of Culture and Community Services), English Heritage and the Crown Estates.
- Maintenance and enhancement of the tree cover of the area by protecting Street, Garden and Open Space Trees, and by encouraging new and replacement planting.
- Preservation and enhancement of the character of the street scene by encouraging highways works to be sensitive to and prioritise the conservation and repair of features contributing to local character.

## **1.2 Extensions to the Conservation Area Boundary**

There is a lack of protection for historic buildings outside the designated Conservation Area, although these buildings are within the setting of the Conservation Area. A few are locally listed which does not offer any statutory protection, and so they are vulnerable to both insensitive alteration and to demolition. Outside a Conservation Area complete demolition is not subject to planning control.

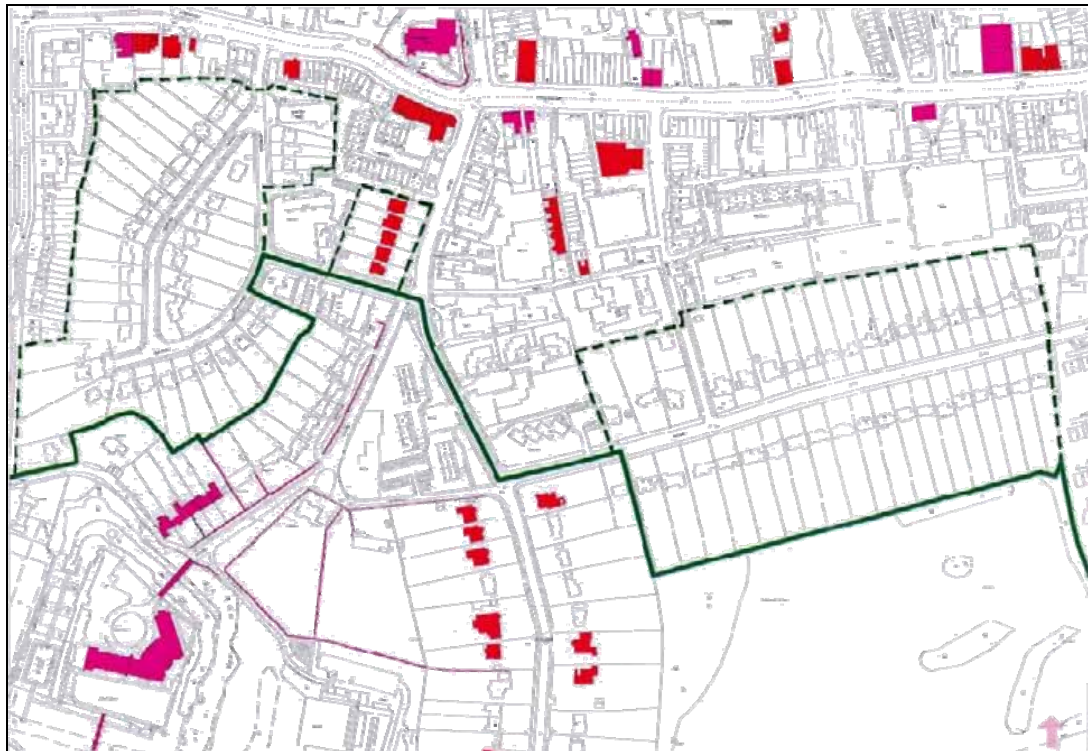
Three small extensions are proposed to the north part of the Conservation Area: one to include Kings Orchard and Wythfield Road, one to include an additional section of Court Yard and another to include a large part of North Park. It is considered that these areas are an important part of the development of late 19th and early 20th century Eltham and are contemporary with the different building phases on Court Road. The buildings have significant townscape value and are consistent with the character of the buildings on Court Road in terms of the great variety of design and building materials, generous plot size and abundance of surrounding trees and greenery.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that these boundary changes be approved and that the following buildings are added to the Conservation Area:

- |           |                       |                       |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Court Yard</b>     | 18-26                 |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Wythfield Road</b> | 1-3, Bob Hope Theatre |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Kings Orchard</b>  | 1-11, 15, 2-52        |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>North Park</b>     | 5-43, 6-42            |

Changes to the Conservation Area boundary are to be carried out under the statutory designation procedures.



Proposed extensions to the Conservation Area (dashed green line) Listed and locally listed buildings also indicated (pink and red shading respectively)

**Group 1: nos. 18-26 Court Yard**

The extension to Court Yard comprises five detached yellow stock brick Victorian villas built during the 1870s, at the same time as the earliest properties on the west side of Court Road. These are all locally listed buildings. Nos. 18-24 have the same design and are similar (but simpler) to nos. 20-24 Court Road with a two-story canted bays to one side of the entrance and a three-storey projecting gable to the other, as well as round-headed windows with keystones. No. 26 is a larger corner property with its principal elevation facing south, but it also has Italianate features analogous to the Court Road houses including deep overhanging eaves with ornate brackets.



Nos. 18-20 Court yard



no. 26 Court Yard

**Group 2: nos. 1-3 Wythfield Road and the Bob Hope Theatre**

The extension to Wythfield Road comprises three fine quality Italianate style detached villas, again contemporary with the earliest properties on the west side of



Court Road. There were originally four, but one was demolished to make way for Ruskin Court in the 1960s. They have low pitched hipped roofs with tall chimneys, deep eaves, round headed windows on the first floor with keystones, projecting porches and canted bays on the ground floor. All three houses retain their original timber sash windows and paneled doors.



1 Wythfield Road



3 Wythfield Road



3 Wythfield Road: entrance door



Bob Hope theatre, Wythfield Road

The Bob Hope Theatre was originally the Parish Hall and was built in 1910 according to the foundation stone. A columnar entrance frontage appears to have been added in the 1930s, presumably to make it more in keeping with an entertainment venue. Although not of significant architectural quality the theatre makes a positive and historical contribution to the character of the area.

### **Group 3: Kings Orchard**

Kings Orchard was laid out in c.1936 and relates to the buildings dating from the 1930s on the east side of Court Road. Like the latter, each property is detached and set within a generous plot. There is a great variety of architectural styles: each house is designed to be individual; no two neighboring properties are alike. Some embrace the 'Moderne' style with metal windows with horizontal glazing bars, flat roofs and clean lines. Others are in neo-Georgian or vernacular cottage style. A high proportion of the windows have been replaced in PVCu; however some do

replicate the original glazing pattern. In general, alterations to these houses have been fairly minor, and they have retained much of their original character.





#### **Group 4: North Park**

The area of North Park to be included comprises two building phases which both equate to the two building phases on the upper east side of Court Road.

##### The Edwardian houses

At the west end of North Park there is a group of five large houses built c1900-1910. These properties display less architectural variety than their equivalents on Court Road, although they utilise similar materials - red brick, red roof tiles, pebbledash and render on the upper storeys - and possess similar features including elaborate roofscapes with gabled dormers, turreted bays and timber framed gables, 6-over-1 pane sash windows, and multi-paned doors.

These houses retain most of their original features with the exception of one which has been unsympathetically converted into flats.





### The 1930s houses

The rest of the houses were laid out in the 1930s. Although they possess the same basic rectangular plan form and steeply pitched and hipped roofs, each one is given a different facade treatment, in terms of materials and articulation, so as not to appear alike. Some have projecting pitched or hipped gables which contain timber framing or rustic weather-boarding, either centrally placed or to one side. The first floors were given a huge variety of surface treatments including pebbledashing, faux timber framing, hanging tile, or rendering. In general these houses have not suffered from many unsympathetic alterations, with the exception of the windows, which have in many cases been renewed inappropriately (as at Kings Orchard).



### Southern Boundary

It is also proposed to modify the southern boundary of the conservation area to exclude the builder's yard on Middle Park Avenue. This site does not make a positive contribution to the appearance of the Conservation Area, and for this reason its inclusion is considered to be unnecessary.



Proposed modification to southern part of Conservation Area Boundary

### 1.3 Recommendation for an Article 4 Direction

It is considered that an Article 4 Direction should be introduced to the Eltham Palace Conservation Area to prevent further losses and disfiguring changes to the surviving historic fabric. It is proposed that the direction be applied to all 19th and early 20th century buildings in single family occupancy on Court Road, Tilt Yard Approach and Court Yard. All the pre-19th century buildings and walls are Listed Buildings in their own right and therefore have sufficient statutory protection.

The Article 4 Direction would withdraw the following permitted development rights to enable full control over material alterations which would affect the external appearance of the buildings:

- *the installation or alteration of windows and doors*
- *a change to roofing materials*
- *the installation of dormer roof extensions*
- *the alteration or removal of walls, fences, gates and other boundary treatments*
- *the painting, cladding or pebbledashing of the exterior of a building*
- *the construction of a porch outside any external door*

The Direction would apply to the following properties within the Conservation Area:

- **Court Road** 20-26/8, 30, 32, 46-50, 56-58, 62, 66, 92, 21, 37-43, 47, 57-65, 79-87, 93-95, 99, 105, 133
- **King John's Walk** 1-3 & The Cottage
- **Tilt Yard Approach** The Gate House, The Tilt Yard

And the following properties within the proposed extensions to the Conservation Area:

- **Court Yard** 20-26
- **Wythfield Road** 1-3, Bob Hope Theatre

A householder wishing to make a change controlled by virtue of the Article 4 Direction (for example, the replacement of windows) must first make an application for Planning Permission. There is no fee associated with this type of application.

The implementation of an Article 4 Direction is a separate process from this document to be carried out accordingly under statutory Article 4 procedures.

#### **1.4 Listed Buildings review**

No recommendations for additions to the schedule of Listed Buildings.

#### **1.5 Local list review**

The majority of the pre-1914 buildings within the Conservation Area are locally listed. The following omissions should be added to the Local List of Buildings:

- **‘The Gate House’, Tilt Yard Approach**  
1914 detached house in Vernacular Revival style with Tudor doorway



A large and attractive detached 3-storey property located near the site of the medieval palace gatehouse, at the junction of Court Yard with Tilt Yard Approach. It was designed and built in 1914 for the author Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler, with her involvement, by local builder Henry Whistler.<sup>1</sup> It was built in the Vernacular Revival style, with half-timbered gables, mullioned and transomed windows and a steep tiled roof with gabled dormers. It is an early example of a completely pebbledashed building. The porch spandrels contain Tudor Rose and Portcullis motifs, a reference to the Tudor context of the adjoining Tilt Yard. It has a significant presence within the street scene, and

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<sup>1</sup> John Kennett, Rex Whistler in Eltham, The Eltham Society, 2005. The artist Rex Whistler was the son of Henry (Harry) Whistler who established the building firm Whistler & Worge in Eltham.



since it faces the oncoming traffic on Court Yard, it punctuates the approach to the palace.

- **'Tarn Lodge', 133 Court Road**  
c.1900-1910 red brick keeper's cottage



A small and charming cottage, of red brick with half-timbered gables and playful architectural forms such as the Tuscan columns and demi-columns which support the porch and the gable on the ground floor. Dating from c1900-1910, this would have served as a small keeper's cottage for the Tarn, and probably replaced the 'Keepers House' illustrated on the 1839 tithe map. It was surrounded by woodland until the building of the Tarnwood Park estate. The house has now been substantially extended at the rear.

Properties to be added to the Local List within the proposed extensions to the Conservation Area boundary (nos. 18-26 Court Yard are already locally listed):

- **Wythfield Road, nos. 1, 2 & 3** (originally Wellington road)



Three fine quality Italianate style detached villas dating from the late 1860s, also to be included within the proposed extension to the Conservation Area boundary and within the proposed Article 4 Direction.

## 1.6 Planning control review

This review draws on the character appraisal and a number of points are evident. Generally, planning control in this area seems to have succeeded in conforming to the policies set out within the UDP. However, there is a need for:

- The protection of historic building fabric, conservation oriented detailed repair advice is needed which clearly emphasizes the importance of, and methods of preservation of the original building materials – rather than their replacement;
- The variation between buildings means that some of the more general advice on minor changes needs to be carefully tailored to the specific character of the building concerned;
- Guidance and/or policy needs to be adopted in respect of development affecting the **views** within and into the Conservation Area.

## 1.7 Conservation and repair principles

The residential buildings in the Eltham Palace Conservation Area have a traditional period character which should be retained by conservative repair (this means retention of original building fabric), or reinstatement where original fabric already lost. For owners and residents this will be money well spent, as, in addition to helping retain the special character of the area, sympathetic good repair and maintenance of period features and finishes also retains and enhances property values.

The following principles are recommended for repairs or alterations to the fabric of a period building:

**Conservation** of a period building is essentially a matter of slowing down the natural process of aging and decay and of minimising replacement in repair. This is particularly important for windows, doors and roof slates or tiles – replacement is often unnecessary, and not as desirable as the salesman promoting synthetic new products (e.g. PVCu or aluminium framed double glazing, or artificial slates) may suggest.

- Regular maintenance and small scale repairs prevent decay
- Repair rather than replace – retaining the maximum amount of original fabric and only replacing it where absolutely necessary.
- Take special care to conserve original features which have been largely lost through past changes
- Carefully match repairs and replacements to the original
- Where possible reinstate missing architectural features
- Reverse damaging repairs and unsympathetic alterations
- Ask for expert advice and use traditional builders and craftsmen (or specialist conservation contractors) wherever possible
- Carefully consider the impact of changes to both the individual house and the streetscape as a whole.

- Details such as window and door patterns, roofing materials and decorative elements make a considerable contribution to the special character of the conservation area. Even minor changes can detract from the character, and value of a building.

**Maintenance:** It is important that essential structural work and steps to make a property 'wind and weather tight' are a priority before any other structural adaptations or the repair of architectural features is considered. Water ingress is the source of many maintenance problems such as timber rot, spalling masonry, dampness and condensation. Roofing, guttering, downpipes and flashing should be inspected regularly and repaired as a priority in order to avoid large scale problems and intervention into the fabric of the building in the future. The repair of seriously damaged pointing, decayed and cracked brickwork, broken sills and the gaps around window and door openings should also be viewed as priority works.

**Structural movement** in a building is often quite normal, particularly in London where many houses are built upon shrinkable clay or other soils, which are susceptible to minimal movement. Any sudden evidence of movement in a building, which has been stable for many years in the past, is likely to be covered by insurance and should be investigated and monitored by specialist contractors (preferably insurance company appointed) to ascertain the nature, direction and rate of movement.

**Guidance** may be obtained from the Greenwich Conservation Team on repairs, alterations and maintenance issues. The Council cannot recommend individual commercial builders. The Building Conservation Directory (available from Cathedral Communications Ltd – tel: 01747 871717), commended by the Department for Culture and issued annually, has a comprehensive listing of specialist craftsmen and contractors who have experience of working with historic buildings. In sourcing reliable and reputable firms it is advisable to seek recommendations from neighbours or friends. Ask to see previous examples of a contractor's work, or speak to previous clients, before commissioning work.

### **Is Planning Permission always needed?**

Any material alteration that changes the external appearance of building generally requires planning permission. Well-executed repairs, which retain the original materials as far as possible or introduce closely matching replacement finishes, may be considered as not making material changes. For example, if the work is carried out well and to standard, re-pointing to the original specification, or roof repairs which re-use the original slates, or repairs to windows (which piece in timber as opposed to replacement) will not require consent unless the work is part of a broader development scheme.

Both significant changes such as extensions and less well considered repairs would generally require planning permission. If this 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.



## **1.8 Conservation and Design Guidance on Alterations & Extensions**

It is proposed that specific guidance relating to Design and Alterations should be prepared which would have a bearing on planning applications which would affect buildings or sites within the Conservation Area or within the setting of the Conservation Area. This should be carried forward as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) within the Council's UDP in due course. This will contain specific guidance for the buildings which will be covered by the proposed Article 4 Direction.

The Appraisal has highlighted that within this Conservation Area there is a need for detailed design advice to inform planning applications which involve replacement windows and doors, new boundary treatments, the creation of hardstandings, side extensions, roof alterations/extensions, back-land and infill development as well as energy saving technologies such as solar panels and wind turbines.

The proposed document will give detailed guidance on how enlargement, refurbishment and upgrading of properties can be achieved whilst minimising losses to the architectural and townscape character. Advice will be given on the general principles of conservation, as well as the advantages of repair versus replacement; how repairs and upgrading (to improve security and draught proofing) can be achieved, and when replacement is absolutely necessary, the design, proportions and materials which would be acceptable.

The document will also advise on the feasibility of infill and backland development, and on the size, design, and location of roof extensions which would not compromise the character of the building and of the Conservation Area.

Guidance will also be given on the types of energy saving technologies available, and the locations within the Conservation Area which would be less obtrusive and therefore more likely to gain planning approval.

## **1.9 Management Frameworks for green open space**

The landscape character of the western side of the Conservation Area has evolved as and largely retains the form of a working landscape. In addition to the field structure, ranges of small ad-hoc structures connected with animal husbandry such as shelters and loose boxes complement rather than detract from this character. This open and natural character could potentially be detrimentally affected by intrusive structures. At present structures are largely limited to fencing.

### **New structures**

Any new structures proposed for the area which can be justified under UDP Metropolitan Open Land policy will need to demonstrate in terms of design, scale, location, construction and materials that they are an integral part of a working landscape and not an alien intrusion. The recently constructed replacement community centre is an example of a structure successfully integrated with its environment. It is located in a natural depression at the southern edge of the

Conservation Area and is single storey in height, so it does not encroach onto the open space.

It would be preferable in principle to limit or avoid all built structures, new paths, or lighting. However, local conditions and safety requirements may indicate limited modification of this approach.

### **Fencing and hedgerows**

The field boundaries are generally defined by timber post and rail fencing. However, repairs and replacements have been carried out in non-traditional and unsympathetic design and materials. In some cases fencing from the MoD's tenure still exists. For example, along the footpath bordering Kingsground which branches off King John's Walk towards the west there is a stretch of chain link fencing with concrete posts and barbed wire. This type of fence creates a hostile and unattractive appearance and is detrimental to the rural character of the area. English Heritage recognises that the fence needs upgrading but has no plans to replace it at present.

When resources are available, non-conforming boundary treatments should be replaced. Surviving historic fencing even if dilapidated, should be repaired and sympathetically restored, if possible. English Heritage has adopted a standard wooden post and rail fencing style which is gradually being introduced around the estate to replace existing non-historic fencing, as budget allows. They have also developed a standard hedgerow mix when planting new hedges. It would be useful if these standard specifications for fencing and hedgerows could be agreed on by all landowners to help create consistency throughout the Conservation Area.

### **Footpaths**

These should be surfaced in natural traditional materials such as Hoggin. Harsh manmade bituminous materials or concrete should be avoided.

### **Proposed Management Framework**

A joint *Landscape Analysis and Management Framework* for the Eltham Palace Estate and the surrounding land is proposed by the landowners: Greenwich Council (Culture & Community Services) the Crown Estate Commissioners and English Heritage. The working title is *The Eltham Palace Middle Park Management Plan*. The aims of the framework are to foster understanding and support for the natural landscape around Eltham Palace and to enhance the landscape to reflect its heritage, biodiversity, recreation and amenity value. The proposals will also target improvements to access and community cohesion.

## **1.10 Guidance on protection of views**

UDP Policy D27 identifies local views which are significant and worthy of protection, two of which are relevant to Eltham Palace. This management strategy recommends the appropriate protective use of these UDP policies – having regard to the character appraisal and the statutory duty to have regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It is considered that there are other local views, identified within section 3.4 above, which also need adequate protection and therefore preparation and adoption of more detailed guidance on the protection of views is recommended.

## **1.11 Trees within the Conservation Area**

The Conservation Area Management Strategy proposes maintaining and enhancing the tree cover of the area by protecting and maintaining trees in open spaces, street trees and other trees and by encouraging new and replacement planting. In particular the Council wish to encourage more high quality specimens of native species of trees in appropriate locations. The Council would also encourage new planting in replacement of poorer specimens where it would assist in achieving this aim.

### Trees in private gardens

A person wishing to prune, lop or cut down a tree within the conservation area must notify the Council of the proposal allowing at least six weeks before the work is carried out and stating the location, species, size of tree and work proposed. A large number of trees in Court Road and Court Yard are protected by Tree Preservation Orders, and consent is required from the Council for any works to these. Any queries regarding trees in private gardens should be addressed to the Tree Officer within the Council's Planning Department.

### Trees in public open space

The management of trees within public open spaces is carried out by the Council's arboricultural section within the Parks and Open Spaces Department. All park trees are routinely inspected on a rolling programme, mainly to ensure there are no risks to health and safety. Trees are not pruned so as to avoid the introduction of disease.

### Street Trees

The planting and management of street trees is carried out by the Council's Highways Department, to whom any queries should be addressed. The aim is to maintain a healthy tree stock for future generations, which will be achieved by selective removal and replacement of trees that have become "old and large enough to cause significant problems". The Council's revised Street Tree Policy (1997) stipulates that trees will not be removed unless they are:

- in the way of a development where there is no alternative for access for traffic or services
- causing damage to a property and pruning is unlikely to halt the damage
- causing a hazard to highway users

The interpretation of this policy should take into account conservation area designation and the contribution the existing tree makes to the appearance and character of the area.

## **1.12 Streetscape character and works**

The Conservation Area Management Strategy proposes preservation and enhancement of the character of the street scene by encouraging highways works to be sensitive to and prioritise the conservation and repair of features contributing to local character.