

Rectory Field Conservation Area Management Strategy

March 2010



Reynolds Place – the cool restraint of early Victorian building survives little altered

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)

Executive Summary

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**. This proposed Management Strategy makes eight recommendations. The strategy

1. Reviews the Conservation Area's boundaries and recommends an additions,
2. Reviews the Article 4 Direction and recommends no change
3. Reviews the schedules of Listed Buildings and Locally Listed Buildings and recommends additions to both;
4. Reviews use of planning control in the area and recommends conservative repair principles, continued use of the Article 4 Direction, and careful planning control to ensure development avoids disturbing local character
5. Recommends adoption by the Council of conservative repair guidance and design standards for minor changes
6. Recommends design guidance for more substantial changes
7. Recommends maintaining and enhancing the tree cover of the area by protecting street and other trees and by encouraging new and replacement planting
8. Recommends preservation and enhancement of the character of the street scene
9. Recommends monitoring and review after five years.

I. Review of the Conservation Area Boundary

Local residents and amenity societies have both suggested the following small additions to the Conservation Area:

- Charlton Road – 32 & 36, 117-121 (old Fire Station), large brick gatepost in front of former Eastcombe House, 64-78
- Couthurst Road 60
- Wyndcliffe Road - 1-9a and K2 phone box opposite Fire Station
- 121-123 Old Dover Road

32 & 36 Charlton Road are two large Victorian houses in large gardens. These are of similar date to the Conservation Area and of a similar type and date to houses designated in other Conservation Areas such as the large houses on Shooters Hill Road in the Sun in the Sands Conservation Area (see red buildings at bottom of extensions map below). The **old gate-post** on Charlton Road formerly supported the old lodge gate in front of the now demolished Eastcombe House. **64-78**

Charlton Road is an old parade of shops incorporating the former Royal Arsenal Co-Op Society shop and off-licence. **No 60 Couthurst Road**, immediately behind the Royal Arsenal Co-Op Society off-licence is its former liquor store. **117-121**

Charlton Road & 1-9a Wyndcliffe Road is the former LCC Fire Station. **1-9a Wyndcliffe Road** at the rear of the Fire Station was the former firemen's residential accommodation. The **K2 phone box** in Wyndcliffe Road opposite the Fire Station is Listed and is of the type designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, it acknowledges the design of Sir John Soane's

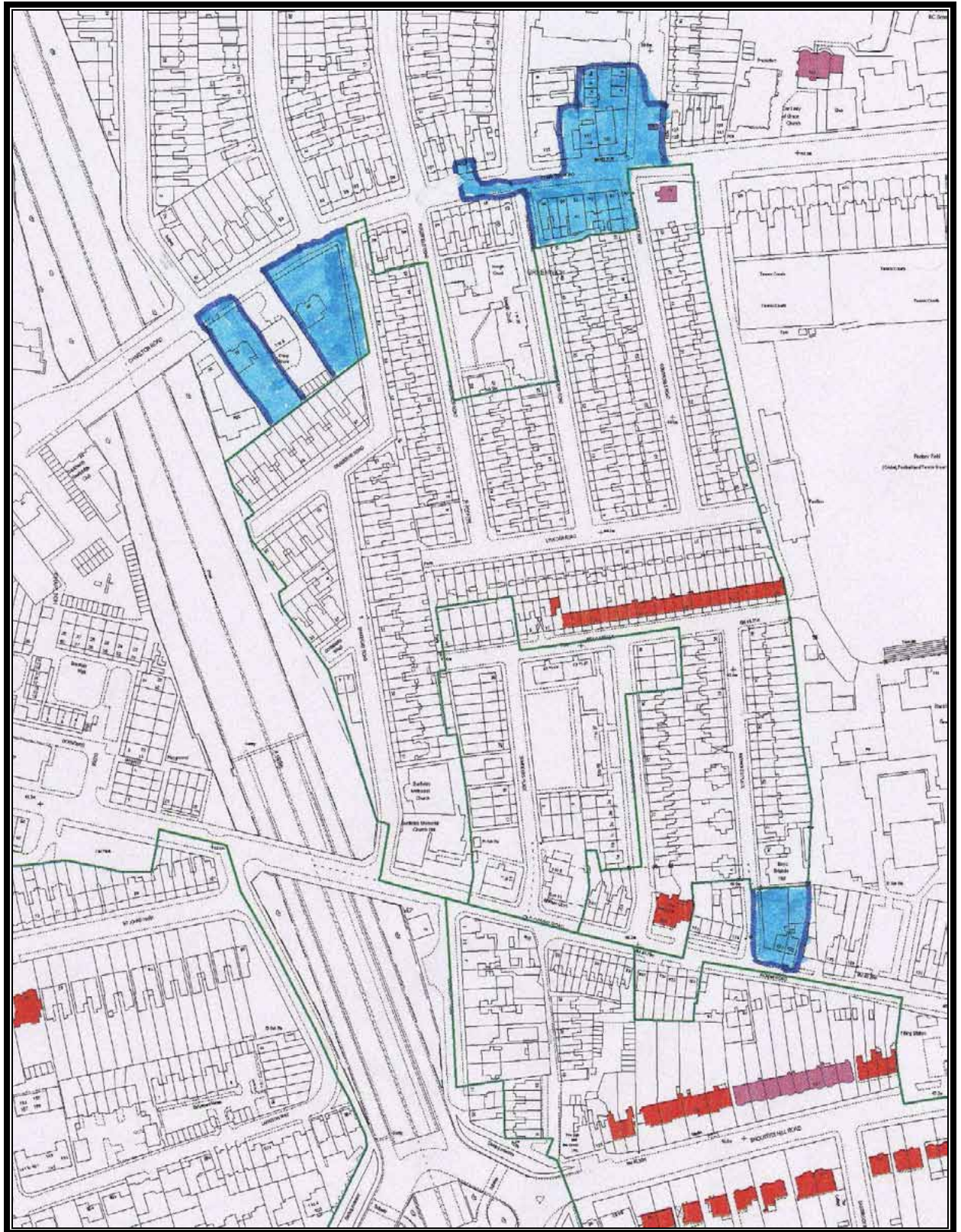


Figure 1: Proposed extensions - Rectory Field Conservation Area: Green Line = existing Conservation Area boundaries (Blackheath CA to west, Sun-in-the-Sands to the South), Blue shading = Rectory Field CA proposed extensions, Magenta = Listed Buildings, Red = Local List,

memorial tomb in the grounds of Dulwich Picture Gallery. There were two types of phone box in production of which this is an example of the first more Georgian type – identifiable by its rows of three rectangular Georgian style small pane windows.
121-123 Old Dover Road are two surviving but altered 1840's style houses on Old Dover Road. These buildings are illustrated below



Figure 2: former LCC Charlton Fire Station

Figure 3: Firemen's accommodation 1-9a Wyndcliffe Road at rear of Fire Station



Figure 4: Fire Station - Wyndcliffe Road elevation



Figure 5: Wyndcliffe Road K2 phone box opposite Fire Station. Note 3-pane Georgian style windows and Soanian canopy, Poplar Cottage behind,



Figure 6 & Figure 7: shopping parade at 64-78 Charlton Road



Figure 8: Close up of surviving Royal Arsenal Co-Op Society fascia board

Figure 9: former liquor store for RACS off-licence



Figure 10 & Figure 11: large Victorian houses in Charlton Road



Figure 12: Charlton Road - gate post to demolished Eastcombe House - near corner of Sherington Road Figure 13: early Victorian 1840s style houses in 121-123 Old Dover Road

Conclusion: It is recommended that changes to the boundaries of the Conservation Area be made adding the properties at the addresses indicated above.

2. Review of the Article 4 Direction

The Article 4 Direction for the Rectory Field Conservation Area was not applied to all buildings. A survey was made and the Direction was not applied to groups of properties where substantial changes to the external appearance had already been carried out. Predictably, this has led to the Article 4 controlled areas being protected, but further detrimental changes eroding character to houses not covered by the Article 4. It is acknowledged that this situation is not ideal. But the option of extending the Article 4 Direction to the more altered houses is hard to justify as the changes have resulted in substantial loss of character.

Conclusion: It is recommended that no changes to the Article 4 Direction be made.

3. Listed Buildings and Locally Listed Buildings review

Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest:

One building is identified for adding to the Statutory List: the **1847 'British Oak' Public House** (109 Old Dover Road). Under the Listing criteria all buildings before 1840 will be in principle 'Listable' if they survive in anything like their original condition. The British Oak has been altered by the addition of the late 19th century large front balcony and canopy – which is interesting aesthetically and has established historic value. It misses the cut off date by seven years and is altered both internally and externally. This would be a marginal case. Nevertheless this is a good building of genuine character and its Listing would be helpful to the preservation of the character of the Conservation area and it considered worthy of submitting to English Heritage with a request for Listing.

The Local List Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest

includes a parade of houses in Lizban Street. It is considered that the best houses in the Conservation Area are 101-7 Old Dover Road. In addition the best houses in Reynolds Place are the equal of those in Lizban Street. The following should be added to the Local List:

- 101-7 Old Dover Road - these are 1840s villas of near-Listable quality
- 2 & 2a Reynolds Place - the Gothic Revival former St John's Schools school buildings
- 1-11 Reynolds Place – these are the semi detached properties

4. Review of Planning Control

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 contrary to, i.e. in breach of the granted permission, may be subject to enforcement action. NB: In parts of the Conservation Area where there is no Article 4 Direction (see map 1); occupiers of single family houses may make specified minor changes without Consent.

Generally, where the Council has control over minor changes (i.e. where the Article 4 Direction applies); planning control in this area has largely succeeded in conforming to the guidance published in the May 1996 Article 4 Direction leaflet. To protect historic building fabric, conservation oriented detailed repair advice is needed which gives clearer emphasis on the importance of, and methods of preservation of the original building materials – rather than their replacement.



Figure 14: aluminium and UPVC windows, pebble dash and render, disfiguring changes all of which would require permission in the area controlled by the Article 4 Direction.

Published guidance on conservative repair and on alterations and changes: In May 1996 the Council produced and published a leaflet giving advice on works which require Consent under the Article 4 Direction. This has formed Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). This now needs to be updated to respond to this appraisal. It is therefore the intention that new Guidance be prepared for adoption when resources permit. This is proposed to include

- A conservation guidance leaflet for residents and occupiers giving advice on repairs and minor alterations and covering all the Borough's Conservation Areas. In particular revisions are needed to respond to improved understanding of the

character of the buildings and area, specifically roofs, ridge tiles, roof vents chimneystacks and pots, external walls doors, windows, fences, garden walls, gates, hedges, and hard standings in front gardens. The guidelines will explain the best way to carry out repair works. In some cases the guidance recommends a way of repairing which is advisory rather than subject to planning control. For example, although paint colour is not subject to control, a poor choice of colour will be detrimental to the house and the area. The guidance will clarify what works will require planning permission.

- An updated Article 4 leaflet on replacements and minor alterations to buildings within the conservation area, brought under control by the Article 4 Direction. This will be prepared as SPD.

4.5 Conservation Repair Principles

The houses in the Rectory Field Conservation Area have period traditional character, which should be retained by conservative repair (this means retention of original building fabric), or reinstatement where 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.



Figure 15: Reynolds Place – the cool restraint of mid Victorian building survives little altered

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 case 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 estate 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 cills and the gaps around window and door openings should also be viewed as priority works.

Slight structural movements in a building are normal, particularly in London where many houses are built upon shrinkable clay or other soils, which are susceptible to minimal movement. But sudden evidence of movement in a building, which has been stable for many years in the past, should be investigated. This is likely to be covered by insurance and should be investigated and monitored by specialist contractors (normally 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. But the Council cannot recommend individual commercial builders. The Building Conservation Directory (available from Cathedral Communications Ltd - 01747 871717), commended by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport 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.

6. Conservation Repair and Design Guidance

In May 1996 the Council produced a free published supplementary planning guidance leaflet giving advice on works which require Consent under the Article 4 Direction. This good leaflet is now dated, and its guidance needs to be updated to respond to this appraisal.

It is therefore the intention that new Guidance be prepared, be subject to consultation, adopted and issued to complement the Character Appraisal. This will update and replace the existing Article 4 leaflet on repair methods, replacements and on minor alterations to buildings within the conservation area controlled under the Article 4 Direction. In particular revisions are needed to respond to improved understanding of the character of the buildings and area, specifically regarding external walls, porches, doors, windows, roofs (including ridge tiles, roof vents, chimneystacks and pots), fences, gates and boundary walls, hard standings in front gardens, and satellite dishes.

The new guidance is intended to apply throughout the Rectory Field Conservation Area and should clarify how works should be carried out to best preserve the special character of the Area. Where the changes concerned require Planning Permission, the guidance should be a key factor to which the decision maker should have regard when determining what minor changes may receive Planning Permission.

The core material affecting the determination of planning applications will need to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).



Figure 16: Lizban Street, traditional front boundary fence

7. Guidance on more substantial alterations and changes

It is recommended that the new guidance document should also include advice on more substantial development requiring planning permission to the extent that it affects the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. This Guidance should be drafted to apply throughout the Conservation Area, not just in the Article 4 Area, and should cover

- New development and redevelopment
- Roof extensions and dormers
- Roof lights
- Rear extensions and L shaped conservatory style infill extensions

8. Trees within the Conservation Area

The Management Strategy proposes maintaining and enhancing the tree cover of the area by protecting street and other trees and by encouraging new and replacement planting

If you wish to prune, lop or cut down a tree within the conservation area you must notify the Council of your intentions at least six weeks before the work is carried out stating the location, species, size of tree and work proposed.

There are a number of street trees in the area. 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 policy is that trees will not be removed unless they are

- in the way of development where there is no alternative for access for traffic and 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 character of the area.

Street Trees: Consideration should be given to additional planting of street trees and on altering pruning schedules – see streetscape and highways section below.

9. Monitoring and Review

9.1 This guidance will be reviewed and updated after five years. It will be based on the following criteria:

- Development pressures (numbers of planning applications and their spatial distribution)
- Annual English Heritage survey of Buildings at Risk
- The effectiveness of the Article 4 Direction in the conservation area