

East Greenwich

Conservation Area Appraisal



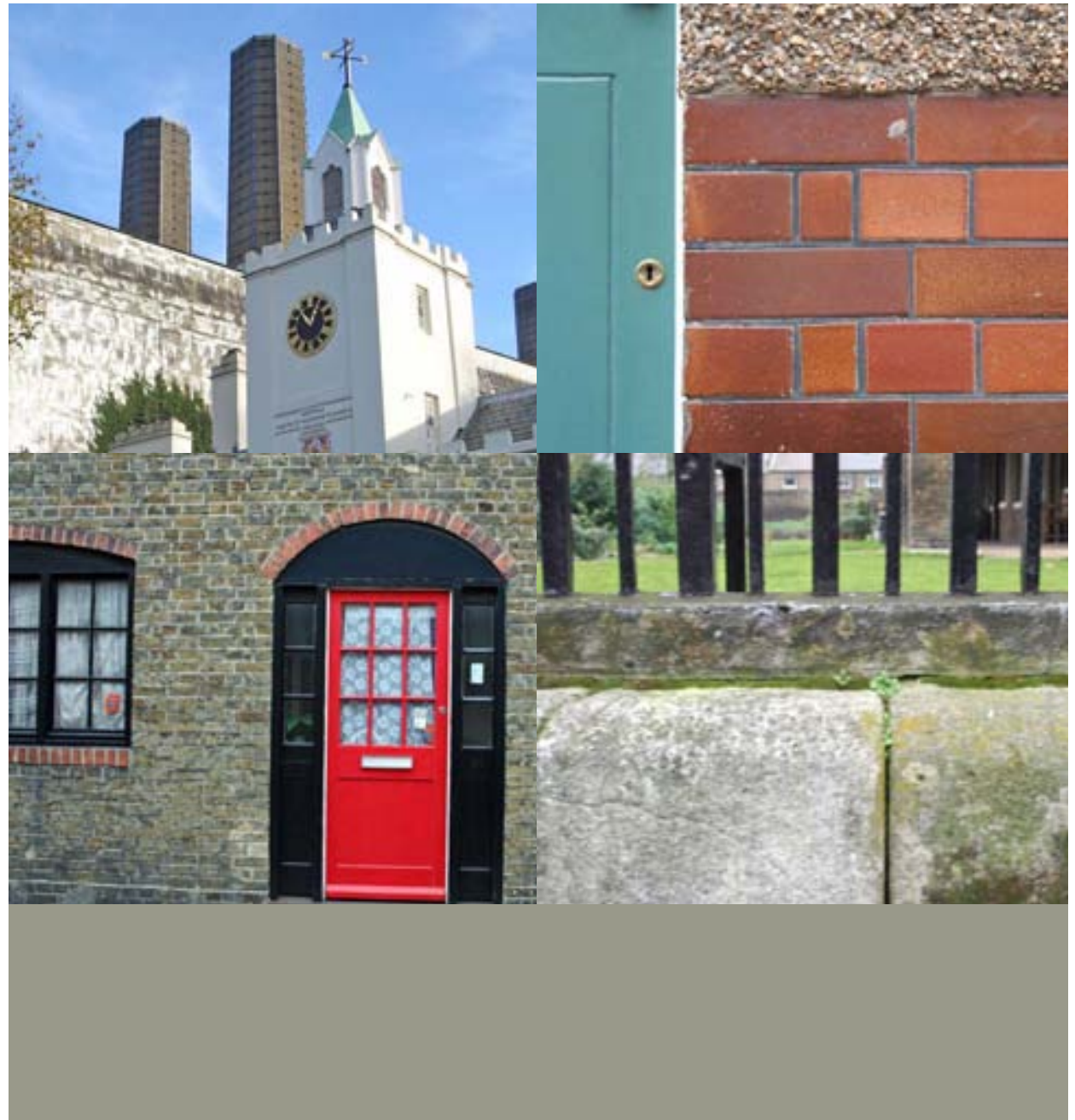
2013

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I. Introduction

East Greenwich was designated as a conservation area in 1992 and is one of five conservation areas in the western part of the London Borough of Greenwich that are currently being re-examined.

This report was produced by Urban Practitioners for the London Borough of Greenwich and English Heritage. A companion report, Greenwich and Blackheath Conservation Areas Management Strategy and Conservation Guidance, complements this study.



East Greenwich: Definition of special interest

East Greenwich is a low-lying, mainly residential area that occupies a wedge of land between the Royal Naval College, the Maze Hill railway cutting and the Thames. The irregular layout of the streets is shaped by the bend of the river and the routes of the principal roads, especially the Old Woolwich Road and its successor, Trafalgar Road. The dominant landmark is Greenwich Power Station which, although altered, remains an impressive monument that contrasts forcefully with the domestic scale and character of the streets around it. There are key views westward towards the Royal Naval College and, at the far end of Romney Road, the tower of the Church of St Alfege. Panoramas of the Thames from Ballast Quay and the foot of Park Row are also significant. Other landmarks in the conservation area include the former Christ Church, the Meridian School and the Italianate Arches Leisure Centre on Trafalgar Road. Trinity Hospital, lying in the shadow of the power station, is the oldest surviving building.

The area is notable for its variety of housing types, including late Georgian terraces at the foot of Maze Hill, the planned development of the Morden College Estate (from the 1830s onward), Arts and Crafts houses on Trenchard Street, and various social housing developments by the London County Council and Greater London Council, including an individualistic development by Stirling and Gowan (1968). Most recently, some distinctive housing and flats have been built close to the river at High Bridge Wharf.

Trafalgar Road is the main artery through East Greenwich and is of historic interest, but most of it is outside the present conservation area. Contrasting with this busy commercial route, the streets leading down to the river are quiet, intimate and largely unexplored by Greenwich's many visitors.



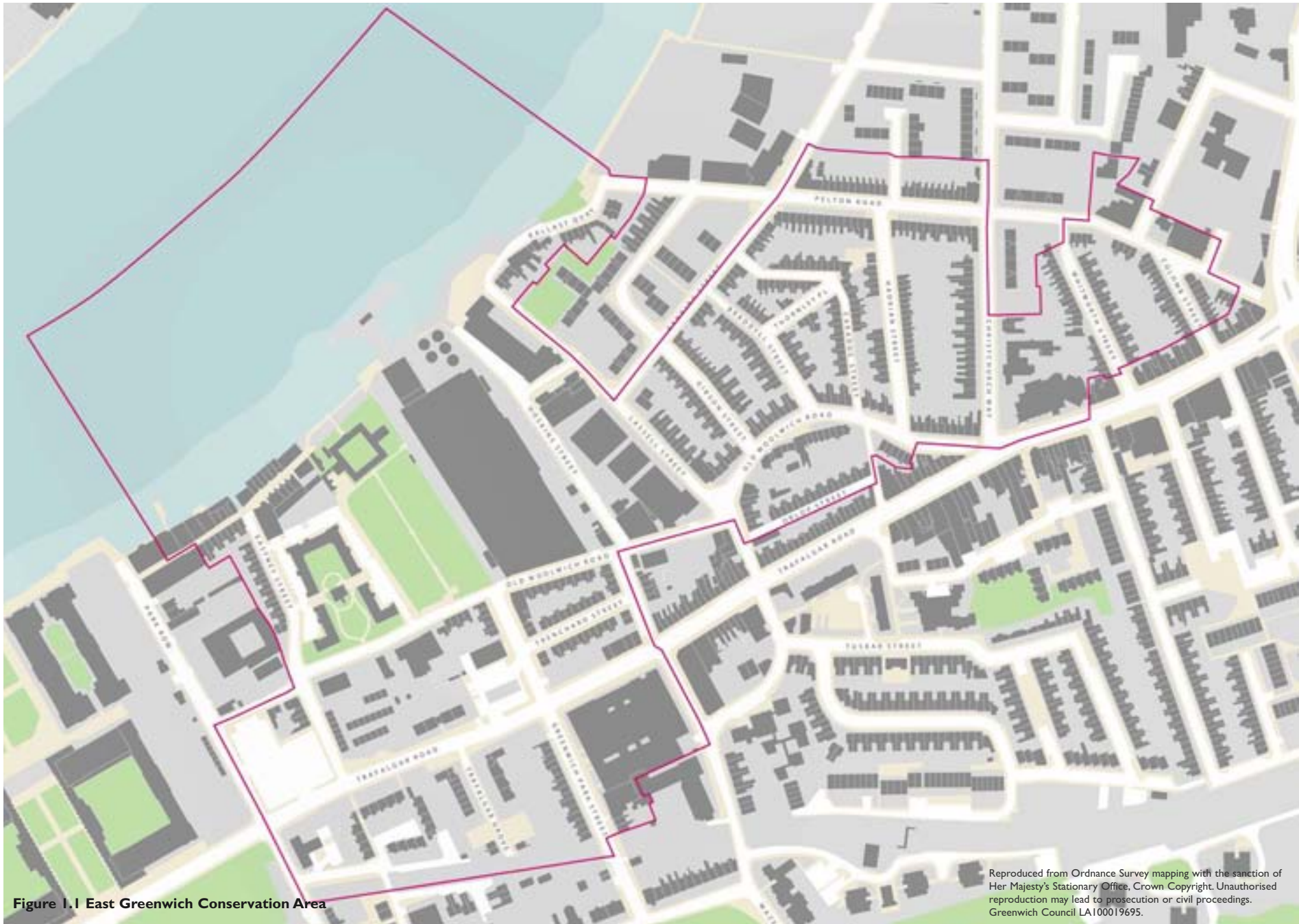


Figure 1.1 East Greenwich Conservation Area

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2. Planning policy context

This appraisal is a non-statutory planning document but it relates to, and should be read with, current national, regional and local planning policy.

The key documents are referred to below.

National planning policy

Since 1967 there has been a legal duty for all local authorities to designate as conservation areas those parts of its area that are of "special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". There are currently twenty conservation areas in the London Borough of Greenwich.

Many conservation areas, but not all, are centred on listed buildings. 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.

Planning Policy Statement PPS5, Planning for the Historic Environment, sets out current national policy on conservation.

UNESCO inscribed Maritime Greenwich as a World Heritage Site in 1997. Part of the East Greenwich Conservation Area falls within the 'buffer zone' around the inscribed area and the impact of new development on the setting of the World Heritage Site is a material consideration when planning permission is being sought. An updated Management Plan for the World Heritage Site was issued in 2004.

Circular 07/2009 gives advice on the consideration of Outstanding Universal Values in relation to the protection of World Heritage Sites. In particular, Outstanding Universal Values are highlighted as material

considerations in determining planning applications and appeals. In this context the advice emphasises the need for appropriate policies in local core strategies and the management plans for each site. Such policies should be concerned with promoting change that will preserve and enhance the Outstanding Universal Values of the Site. World Heritage Site status is a key material consideration in the determination of these policies.

English Heritage has produced guidance for the protection and management of the World Heritage Sites in England which accompanies Circular 07/09. The guidance has been endorsed by Communities and Local Government (CLG) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

Circular 01/06: Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System includes the requirement for Design and Access Statements to accompany planning applications including those within a conservation area or World Heritage Site. The Circular also sets out what should be included within a Design and Access Statement.

Regional policy

The principal regional policy is contained within the Mayor of London's London Plan (the Spatial Development Strategy). 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 Plan also includes a commitment to protecting World Heritage Sites and safeguarding or enhancing their settings (Policy 4B.13). The London Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance also contains proposals for protecting and managing strategic views, including those of central London from Greenwich Park and Blackheath Point.

The Mayor has produced a draft replacement London Plan, which was open for public consultation between October 2009 and January 2010. The policies addressing the historic environment in the draft replacement London Plan are broadly in line with those contained in the consolidated London Plan (2008). The draft replacement London Plan will undergo an Examination in Public in the summer and autumn of 2010, with the Mayor looking to publish the replacement London Plan towards the end of 2011.

Local policy

Greenwich Council has started work on a new statutory plan, the Local Development Framework (LDF). This will comprise a suite of documents that will eventually replace the current Greenwich Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

The Greenwich UDP was adopted in 2006 and in July 2009 the Government Office for London (GOL) issued a direction to extend the life of most of the UDP policies and site proposals.

The UDP contains detailed policies for the period to 2011 and in some instances to 2016.

The following policies are of particular relevance to development in and around conservation areas.

TC7 The Council will protect and enhance the site and setting of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site, as defined on the Proposals Map. Development within it should preserve and enhance its essential and unique character and appearance. Views and vistas to and from the World Heritage Site will also be protected by ensuring that developments in the buffer zone of the site or directly visible from it are visually sympathetic.

DI6 Planning permission will only be granted for proposals which preserve or enhance the character or

appearance of conservation areas, taking into account local scale, the established pattern of development and landscape, building form and materials. Where the character of a conservation area is threatened by inappropriate development, the Council will seek to control these through the use of Article 4 Directions. Development on sites in the vicinity of a conservation area and which would have a visual effect on its character or appearance should respect the setting of that area.

The UDP also contains specific policies for siting telecommunications equipment and satellite dishes, as well as for the design of shopfronts, signs, street furniture and advertisements.

D17 Demolition of buildings and structures which positively contribute to the character or appearance of a conservation area will be resisted. Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of buildings will normally be given only when planning permission has been granted for redevelopment which complies with the requirements of Policy D16. When demolition is permitted it will be subject to the building remaining until a contract for redevelopment is let.

D18 There will be a presumption in favour of the preservation of listed buildings. Listed Building Consent will only be granted for demolition or partial demolition in exceptional circumstances and will be assessed against the following criteria:

- i. the condition of the building and the cost of repairs relative to its importance.
- ii. the adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use.
- iii. the merits of alternative proposals for the site.

D21 Proposals for changes of use of listed buildings will only be granted planning permission if it is no longer in its original or other established historic use and the new

use is beneficial to the building and is compatible with its character and features of historic interest. Such a change of use should not conflict with other policies in the Plan.

D22 The Council will assist English Heritage to maintain and revise regularly a Register of Listed Buildings at Risk from neglect and decay. The Council will promote action, including the use of building repair notices and urgent works notices where appropriate, to bring about the reuse and repair of buildings on the register.

D23 The Council will give substantial weight to protecting and conserving the special character of buildings on the Local List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest, with every effort made to secure their long-term retention, maintenance and use.

Article 4 Directions

There are two Article 4 directions in operation in the East Greenwich Conservation Area. These are on the Morden College Estate cottages and at Trenchard Street, controlling and managing small scale alterations to houses.

3. Historical development

There have been few prehistoric finds in Greenwich but archaeological discoveries in the Park confirm a Roman presence in the area. The main Roman road from London to Dover, Watling Street, crossed Shooters Hill and although there is no conclusive evidence of a settlement, there is likely to have been some Roman traffic on the river front towards Deptford. From the medieval period much of the Greenwich area was heavily quarried, extracting chalk for the formation of barge beds on the river shore, as well as for lime burning. Gravel was extracted for ships' ballast and clay brickearth was taken for brick and tiling.

Burial mounds in Greenwich Park, once thought to be Bronze Age, are now believed to be Saxon and the Church of St Alfege in the town centre marks the site of the martyrdom of the Saxon saint. At East Greenwich, excavations in 1997 on the river front at Highbridge Wharf revealed pit and stake holes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries along with a well, which suggested a higher status settlement in the vicinity. (Journal of the Greenwich Historical Society Vol I No 6, p180)

King Edgar granted lands at Greenwich in 964 AD to the Abbey of St Peter in Ghent. The Flemish connection lasted until 1414 when the estate was repossessed by Henry V. By this time Eltham Palace was already occupied and a second royal seat was established on the Greenwich waterfront, namely the brick palace of Placentia. The Woolwich Road ran to the south of the palace, and was the main route between London and Dover.

Despite its royal connections Greenwich, like Deptford and Woolwich, was little more than a modest Thameside fishing port and until the seventeenth century the land at East Greenwich was mostly under cultivation.

Charles II granted lands at East Greenwich to Sir William Boreman in 1676, whose widow subsequently sold the

property in 1699 to Sir John Morden, founder of Morden College.

East Greenwich waterfront was the site of Crowley House, a Jacobean mansion built in 1647 and demolished in 1854. It took its name from a Newcastle ironmaster, Sir Ambrose Crowley, who had purchased the house in 1704.

Trafalgar Road was laid out in 1825, bypassing the Old Woolwich Road which had followed a serpentine route to the north. The new road slightly predated the improvements in Greenwich town centre by Joseph Kay for the Greenwich Hospital. Once Trafalgar Road was open the development of East Greenwich quickly followed, with the houses of the Morden College Estate and the terraces at the foot of Maze Hill being the principal contribution. Trafalgar Road itself was built up speculatively with ribbons of houses and shops stretched out along its length.

In the twentieth century there has been a degree of rebuilding and consolidation of mainly residential development, starting with the London County Council's Hardy Estate and the Trenchard Street houses built by Greenwich Hospital.

There are no scheduled ancient monuments in the East Greenwich Conservation Area but the Thames riverfront is identified in the Greenwich Unitary Development Plan (Second Review) as an area of high archaeological potential. This extends to the low water mark of the tidal river. At Lovell's Wharf, just outside the conservation area, the remains of a medieval tide mill have recently been discovered.

Greenwich Power Station c.1910 © National Maritime Museum, London



Figure 3.1 shows the present-day East Greenwich overlaid with Edward Weller's plan of 1866.

1. Trafalgar Road had been driven through the area as an extension of Romney Road in 1825, but the railway line from West Greenwich had not yet reached Maze Hill.
2. The tramway depot, on the site of the power station, had not yet been built but a public house, The Anchor, stood at the waterfront on the corner of Bennett Street (now Hoskins Street).
3. The car park opposite the Royal Naval College contained a police station on Park Row.
4. Behind it, on East Street (now Eastney Street), was a warren of buildings later cleared for the Meridian School and Hardy Cottages.
5. The Morden College Estate was substantially complete but St Joseph's RC church was to follow and terraces such as Orlop Street and the west side of Whitworth Street would eventually fill out the vacant plots.
6. The Arches Leisure Centre replaced houses on Trafalgar Road, Greenwich Park Street and Creed Place (Maze Hill); a chapel and school stood at the top of Park Street until the creation of the railway cutting.

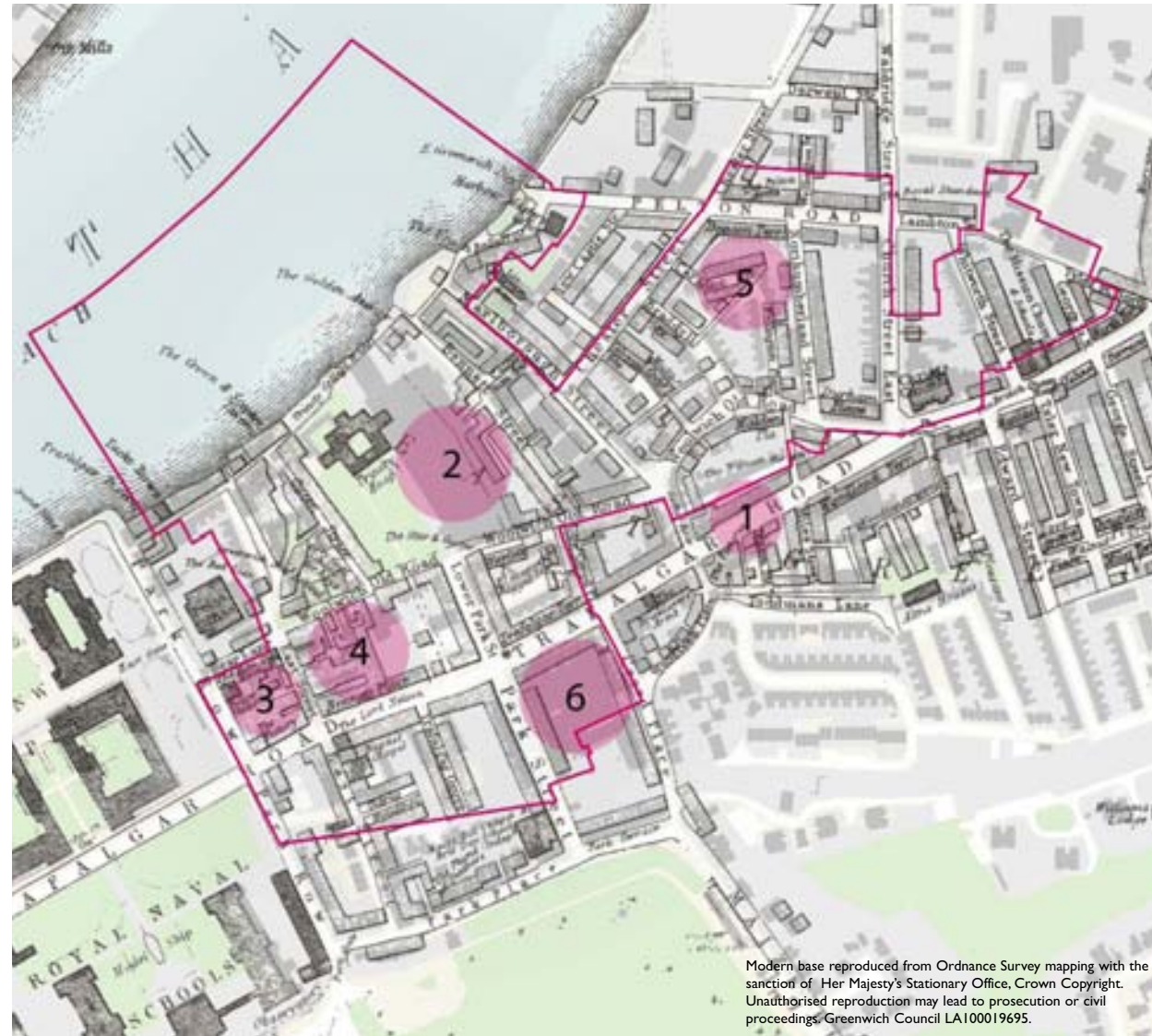


Figure 3.1 East Greenwich historical development: 1866-present day overlay

4. Special interest and character assessment

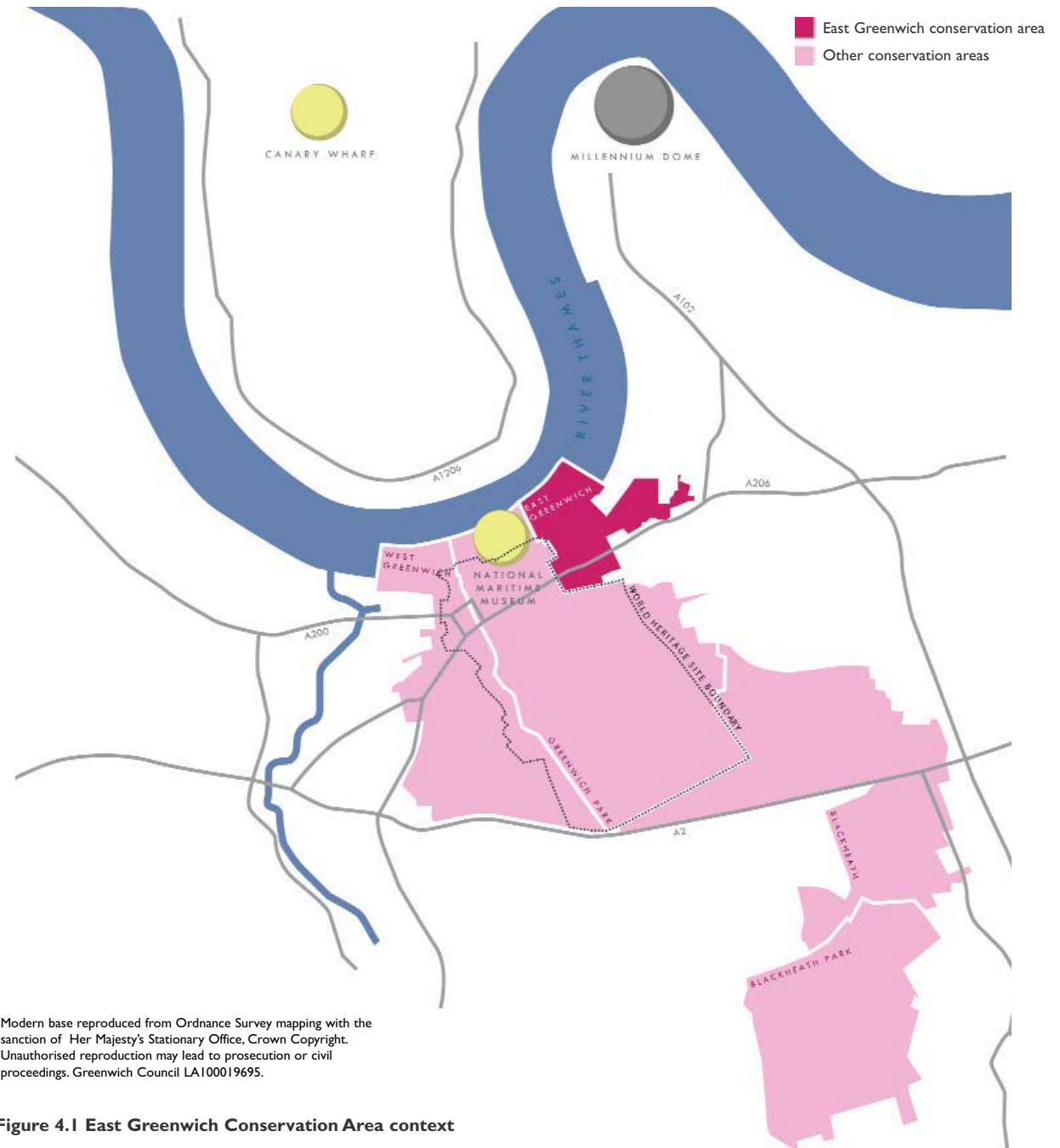
Greenwich is situated on the southern bend of a deep loop of the Thames, which is tidal at this reach, facing the Isle of Dogs. In common with the town centre and the Royal Naval College, East Greenwich lies on gravel terraces that rise gently from the river and more noticeably so in the streets to the south of Trafalgar Road. The area is overlooked by Greenwich Park and is conspicuous from many points on both sides of the river. Its tallest building, Greenwich Power Station, is a distinguishing landmark on the skyline.

The concave sweep of the Thames ensures good views from Ballast Quay and the tidal foreshore exerts an important influence on the character of the area.

East Greenwich Conservation Area is half a mile to the east of the town centre and separated from it by the spacious and formal composition of the Old Royal Naval College. The area is straddled by Trafalgar Road, an extension of Romney Road, the main route between Greenwich, Woolwich and Plumstead.

A significant contribution to the character of the conservation area are the terraces of the Morden College Estate laid out in the early nineteenth century.

The conservation area abuts the Thames and faces the Isle of Dogs. The curve of the river and the eastern boundary of the medieval palace of Placentia have determined the early plan form of the area, upon which Trafalgar Road was superimposed.



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Figure 4.1 East Greenwich Conservation Area context

General character and urban form

The shape and layout of East Greenwich's streets is derived from five routes and edges:

- The Thames foreshore, concave at this point;
- Park Row, tracing the wall of the medieval Royal Palace of Placentia that ran perpendicular to the river;
- the meandering line of the Old Woolwich Road;
- the long axis of Trafalgar Road, cut through East Greenwich in 1825; and
- the cutting of the railway line, constructed by the South Eastern Railway.

East Greenwich is quite flat but its low-lying position means that the area is markedly visible from the Blackheath escarpment and especially in the panorama from the Wolfe statue in Greenwich Park. The rooftops of East Greenwich are clearly seen in the distance. The view from Island Gardens, the park on the Isle of Dogs opened by the London County Council in 1895, also offers good views of the East Greenwich waterfront.



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Figure 4.2 Urban form

Key landmarks and views

East Greenwich is flat and low-lying so it does not yield the sequence of views to be found in the hillier places around Greenwich and Blackheath. The area is however overlooked from the Royal Observatory and the Isle of Dogs, as part of panoramas of the whole of Greenwich.

The biggest buildings are important landmarks:

- The domes of the Old Royal Naval College, conspicuous in long views from Anchor Wharf and Old Woolwich Road. The flank of the Queen Anne building closes the vista from Crane Street and provides an impressive contrast in scale and character.
- The tower of the former Christ Church, seen from the top of Hadrian Street and in the eastward view along Trafalgar Road. Looking west along Trafalgar Road, the tower of the Church of St Alfege can be seen in the distance.
- The power station, by virtue of its sheer size, can be seen from many places but it is most dominant from the river, Banning Street and from Greenwich Park Street.
- The concave Thames foreshore at East Greenwich is best seen from the end of Park Row, looking past the Trafalgar Tavern, or from the north side of the river.
- Notable landmarks in the street scene include the Arches Leisure Centre, Trinity Hospital, St Joseph's RC Church and the Meridian School.

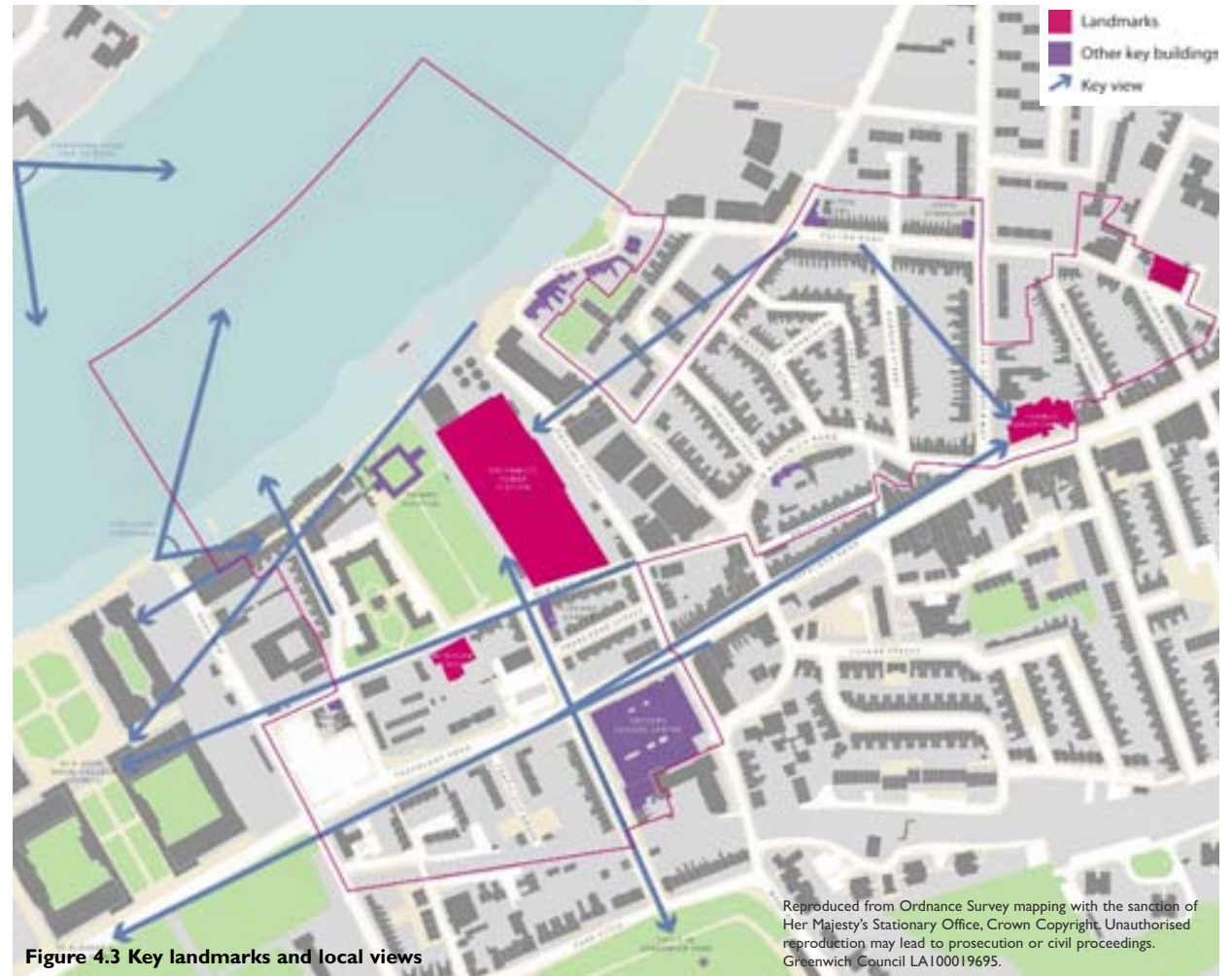


Figure 4.3 Key landmarks and local views



View of Power Station from Isle of Dogs

View of Old Naval College from Crane St.

View of Power Station from Pelton Road

Character analysis

For the purposes of this study, East Greenwich can be divided into three broad character areas. The areas overlap, particularly in views from one to another, but they are sufficiently distinctive to be examined separately.

They are as follows:

1. The Thames path from the Trafalgar Tavern to Ballast Quay, including the power station

Crane Street is a narrow, stone-paved passageway running parallel to the Thames that provides entrances to the buildings facing the river. The street is a physical reminder of the former tight-knit, cramped alleys and yards of this part of Greenwich, before their replacement by flats and houses in the early twentieth century. At the foot of Eastney Street there is a slipway between the waterfront buildings that affords a view across to the Isle of Dogs.

Highbridge and Highbridge Wharf is now fronted by new residential development, with entrances at an unusual sawtooth angle but built as a continuous frontage that keeps the intimacy of Crane Street. On reaching the river, the bulk of the power station becomes apparent and up against the blank expanse of its western wall, the delicate Gothic Revival outline of Trinity Hospital is a striking contrast.

Greenwich Power Station, built in 1902-10 and described in greater detail below, casts long shadows across the area. The twin gabled elevation in yellow brick is impressive, albeit partly concealed by oil storage tanks and other accretions. The substantial columned jetty is a reminder of the immense quantities of coal required to fuel the power station's boilers before its conversion to other fuels in the 1960s.



Figure 4.4 Character areas



Crane Street

Highbridge Wharf

Greenwich Power Station, columned jetty

The Thames path winds round to **Anchor Iron Wharf** and **Ballast Quay**. Ballast Quay was, as its name suggests, a wharf for ships that had discharged their cargoes in London to take on gravel from Maze Hill and Blackheath as ballast for the return voyage. It is an enclave of particular architectural and historic distinction that includes a handsome bowfronted public house, the Cutty Sark, which may conceal earlier cores. The sequence of mainly late Georgian houses is terminated by the former harbourmaster's office, built in 1855 to control the collier traffic between Limehouse Stairs and Bugsby's Reach, now the location of the Thames Barrier. The architectural effect of the group is complemented by a traditional ground surface of granite setts.

2. The Morden College Estate

The development by Morden College in and around **Pelton Road** took place over a twenty year period and although there are variations in the architectural detail, the houses conform to a common scale and consistency of materials. The houses on the south side of Pelton Road, built in 1842-45 by the Morden College Estate to the designs of their architect George Smith, are simple two storey houses, embellished by stucco architraves and fronted by front gardens. Painted wooden fences have replaced railings but the unity of the terrace is preserved. On the north side, the terrace includes the contemporary Pelton Arms (1844), whose bullnosed corner entrance makes an effective stop to the group.

Hadrian Street is also formed of two storey cottages, plainer than those in Pelton Street but with their unity preserved. A breach on the east side has been filled with a garage court but this gap is compensated by a view of the ragstone tower of Christ Church on Trafalgar Road. The end of the street is terminated by a three storey Victorian block on the Old Woolwich Road and beyond it, the trees of Maze Hill and Blackheath. Old Woolwich Road at this point is a loose assembly of



Top left: Ballast Quay
 Top right: Ballast Quay
 Bottom left: Cutty Sark public house
 Bottom right: Harbourmaster's Office

Victorian villas and short terraces fronting the loop of the former main road.

Whitworth Street is of the same date and character as other streets developed by architect and Surveyor George Smith for Morden College. Although the houses are well preserved, the strident façade of the Co-op store on Trafalgar Road compromises the view to the end of the street.

Christchurch Way runs due north from Trafalgar Road and in the distance the gasholder on the Greenwich Peninsula can be seen. The west side is a unified terrace akin to Pelton Road with similar stone dressings. The terrace faces the Victorian church hall, a pair of villas and a postwar block of flats.

The houses in **Bradyll Street** were all designed by George Smith, Surveyor to Morden College in the 1850s. The two-storey brick cottages remain relatively unaltered.

Carradoc Street was built between 1834 and 1839, and the two-storey brick cottages with some stucco facing are mostly unaltered. These cottages represent a simple vernacular that was once common in Greenwich.

3. Trafalgar Road and the housing developments on each side

Trafalgar Road was laid out in 1825 as an extension of Romney Road to provide a wider and more direct route to Woolwich. With the exception of the landmark Christ Church (now the Greenwich Forum), the conservation area boundary begins at the Arches Leisure Centre and the stucco terrace opposite (Nos 71-77). A pair of Dutch gables on the block provides an effective accent to the corner with Hoskins Street. The foursquare form of the Arches Leisure Centre acknowledges the lines and heights of Trafalgar Road and the massing also respects



Top left: Pelton Road, south side
Top right: The Royal Standard public house
Bottom left: The Pelton Arms public house

the character of the minor roads on its flanks. The conservation area stops short of the 1947 telephone exchange on Maze Hill. The long, straight line of the street offers views through to Greenwich town centre and the tower of St Alfege; looking in the opposite direction, Christ Church is the principal landmark.

Trafalgar Road meets the **Old Woolwich Road** obliquely, the angle expressed by the daringly tapered form of the three storey Victorian block at its apex. It is outside the conservation area, but has group value in the sequence of nineteenth century buildings in the Old Woolwich Road. The curve of the road is a historic remnant, with old maps indicating that it skirted a ballast pit, but its visual significance today is in the progressive sequence of the houses in its midst, including the lofty three storey brick terrace on the north side, distinguished by two entrances beneath paired segmental pediments in moulded brick.

Some of the Victorian houses in this sequence are charmingly ornamented with scalloped stone lintels, dogtooth brick cornices and round bay window columns with shaft-rings. The sequence of houses ends with Marlborough Hall, a gable-fronted assembly hall of 1895. Opposite, two early shopfronts are a notable survival. **Orlop Street** is a quiet paved passageway behind Trafalgar Road. Its single terrace faces southwards and the Victorian houses, with their sash windows and paired, round-headed entrances, have an understated dignity. The cupola of the Meridian school can be seen in the distance.

Greenwich Park Street contains a terrace of two and three storey late Georgian houses, contemporary with Trafalgar Road. Characteristic detailing includes slender timber sashes in reveals, with round headed or flat brick arches, sandstone steps and iron railings. The Edwardian red brick building opposite, dated 1907, has a central round headed, tripartite window, reminiscent of those in the Power Station, its exact contemporary.

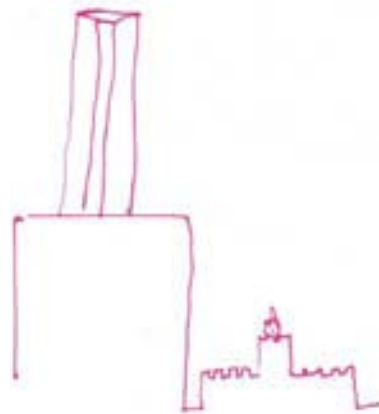


Top left: Trafalgar Road
Top right: Late Georgian terrace, Old Woolwich
Bottom left: Victorian terrace, Orlop Street
Bottom right: Greenwich Primary Care Trust (1907), Greenwich Park Street

The Greenwich Hospital Estate built the houses in **Trenchard Street** along with the terrace on Old Woolwich Road that backs onto it around 1913. They are a characteristic response to the Arts and Crafts movement, freely deploying a range of textures, shapes and rustic irregularity to picturesque effect. The houses are well preserved and their quiet domesticity is a striking contrast with the might of their neighbour, the Power Station. Looking eastwards along Old Woolwich Road, there is a good view of the twin domes of the Old Royal Naval College. From the corner, the trees in Greenwich Park are conspicuous on the skyline.

Hardy Cottages, in the lee of the Meridian Primary School, are the remains of a London County Council estate built between 1900 and 1902 as an early slum-clearance scheme. It was one of the first public housing schemes to have cottages rather than tenements. Built in London stock brick, with red brick arches and cills, the chimney stacks and pots are a notable architectural element. The space in the centre of the cottages is blandly surfaced in tarmac, undivided by kerbs or footpaths, spoiling an otherwise intact appearance. The diminutive form of the cottages is an unexpected contrast with its substantial municipal neighbours.

Corvette Square, Trafalgar Road is an unusual four storey quadrangle of maisonettes, designed and built from 1965-8 by Stirling and Gowan for the Greater London Council. They have been described as "elegantly brusque" (Cherry and Pevsner, 1983). The patch of grass in the middle only partially softens the hard urban character of the internal space, but there are compensating glimpses outwards towards the Old Royal Naval College and Maze Hill.



Cross section to show scale of Greenwich Power Station in relation to its hinterland



Cross section to show the intimate scale of Crane Street

Architectural and historical building quality

The conservation area contains a number of buildings of individual intrinsic merit, and many others that are important collectively. The following buildings may be singled out for their historic, architectural or landmark value:

Trinity Hospital was founded in 1614 for 21 "retired Gentlemen of Greenwich" and still stands, albeit dwarfed by the flanking mass of Greenwich Power Station. The plan of the Hospital is a quadrangle, like those of the other two almshouses founded by the Earl of Northampton at Clun, Shropshire and Castle Rising, Norfolk. The exterior was substantially remodelled in 1812 when the present chapel was built, adopting the then fashionable 'Gothick' style.

The **Greenwich Power Station**, Old Woolwich Road, which was designed and built by the London County Council between 1902-10 to power the Council's electric tramways. The station replaced a former horse tram depot that had in turn been built on the site of a Jacobean mansion, Crowley House, which was demolished in 1854. The four tapering octagonal chimneys for Phase I (1906) of the Power Station were 250 ft high but in response to objections by the Royal Observatory, the height of the southernmost pair for Phase II was limited to 182 ft. The chimneys were later truncated, destroying their original slender proportions and Italianate caps. The coal fired, steam powered plant was replaced by gas turbine generators in the 1960s and the station now operates on mixed-fuel sources. The Power Station provides peak load power to the London Underground.

The Power Station and its massive iron columned coal jetty is prominent in views across the river and also from Greenwich Park, where in certain views the chimneys compete with the height of the Royal Observatory. The



Left: Greenwich Power Station
Right: Christ Church, Trafalgar Road

chimneys also terminate the vista in the tranverse route across the Royal Naval College from College Approach.

Christ Church, Trafalgar Road was built during 1846-8 to serve the growing population on the Morden Estate, is by John Brown of Norwich and Robert Kerr. The church is built in a soft Kentish ragstone with yellow stock brick used for the detailing. The tower is a prominent landmark at the end of Trafalgar Road, but the spire on the tower was never built (Source: Cherry/Pevsner).

The cluster of buildings at **Ballast Quay** is the oldest surviving group in the conservation area and are of individual distinction.

Land uses and activity

East Greenwich is principally a residential area and was developed as such, but it has also accommodated a mixture of manufacturing, industrial and commercial uses that took advantage of the river location and the through route to Woolwich. The most obvious survivor of its industrial past is Greenwich Power Station, but also the commercial ribbon of shops and businesses that grew up along the fronts of Trafalgar Road that were supported by passing trade on the road to Woolwich.

Residential growth took place around six phases:

- Isolated pockets of buildings on the waterfront and around the Old Woolwich Road, probably from the seventeenth century onwards;
- 1825 Trafalgar Road;
- 1838-1865 Development of the Morden College Estate, and terraces to the south of Trafalgar Road;
- 1902 Hardy Estate, by the London County Council;
- 1920-1940 Inter-war housing; and
- Postwar development and recent infilling.



East Greenwich: Local details

Local distinctiveness

There are few buildings in the conservation area constructed before 1800 that survive in anything like their original form and there is no standing evidence of the vernacular buildings or farmsteads that are likely to have existed in the area. All of the construction materials date from the industrial era and the widespread importing of materials by barge, road or rail. Nonetheless there is a surprisingly broad palette of building materials to be found in East Greenwich, which contributes to local character and reinforces visual interest.

Local details

There are some local details of note such as the estate plaques in Pelton Road and some surprisingly delicate mouldings on the Power Station's rainwater hopper heads. There are numerous examples of skillful moulded and cut brickwork, including the carved inscriptions on the Meridian School and the various embellishments to the Victorian houses in Old Woolwich Road.

Prevalent local and traditional building materials and the public realm

Brick is the predominant building material in East Greenwich, as it is throughout London. Stone was generally reserved for churches and other prestigious buildings, although it has been widely used for architectural details such as cornices and architraves.

A considerable variety of brick types and textures are evident, with yellow London stock bricks being the most common. Nineteenth century examples in the area include the former Man in the Moon public house on the Old Woolwich Road (1834), the late Georgian houses in Greenwich Park Street, the terraces of the Morden College Estate and Hardy Cottages off Trafalgar Road. Where the brickwork has been cleaned, the decorative use of contrasting bricks or stonework has sometimes been revealed. Stock bricks were used for Greenwich

Power Station and emphasise the immense scale of the building. Many houses are plain and unpretentious, but their unity of scale and form across the area is frequently enlivened by variations in the pattern of window shapes, entrance details and brickwork colours.

Smooth, rich red bricks were in use by the end of the nineteenth century, in the Meridian School (1888) and for the Edwardian building in Greenwich Park Street (1907), now occupied by Greenwich Primary Care Trust.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, cement render and stucco were fashionable substitutes for stone, and examples in East Greenwich include the remodelled Trinity Hospital (1812) and the short terrace of shops at 71-77 Trafalgar Road, opposite the Arches Leisure Centre. By the start of the twentieth century pebbledash was in favour and was used for the upper storeys of the Trenchard Street houses, as well as others in Old Woolwich Road.

Stone setts were favoured for streets and landing quays, offering a hardwearing surface that coped with heavy industrial traffic. Restored granite setts around Ballast Quay are a reminder of the area's industrial and mercantile past. Tracks from the early trams into the former tram depot can still be seen at Greenwich Power Station. Highways markings and road signs disfigure the area but include a 20mph traffic restriction, which no doubt helps the safety and tranquillity of the neighbourhood. Granite kerbs still survive in several streets, even where the original sandstone paving has been replaced.

In common with most urban areas, cast iron railings in Greenwich were removed in large numbers during the Second World War and surviving originals are now rare. Modern replacements have often been made in mild steel to more slender profiles, but accurate copies can also be found.

Christ Church is built in Kentish ragstone, a common choice for Victorian churches in London and south east England but prone to erosion from air pollutants.

Roofs and chimneys

Slate, much of it brought by canal to London from North Wales, is the predominant roofing material. Clay and interlocking concrete tiles are also to be found and the Arches Leisure Centre is in pantiles, befitting its Mediterranean influence. The tile roofs of the Eastney Street flats are visible from Greenwich Park.

Brick chimney stacks and pots are important in the silhouettes of buildings and mark the domestic scale.

Listed buildings

Figure 4.5 identifies the buildings within the East Greenwich Conservation Area that have been awarded listed building status. The Greenwich Unitary Development Plan contains policies that directly attach a greater importance to the preservation and conservation of listed buildings. The listed buildings within the East Greenwich Conservation Area are:

- Trinity Hospital, Highbridge;
- Curlew Rowing Club, Crane Street;
- 122, 124, 126, 126A, 140 and 142 Old Woolwich Road;
- 4-16 Ballast Quay;
- 20-21 Ballast Quay; and
- Setted road surfaces in Pelton Road, Ballast Quay and Lassell Street.

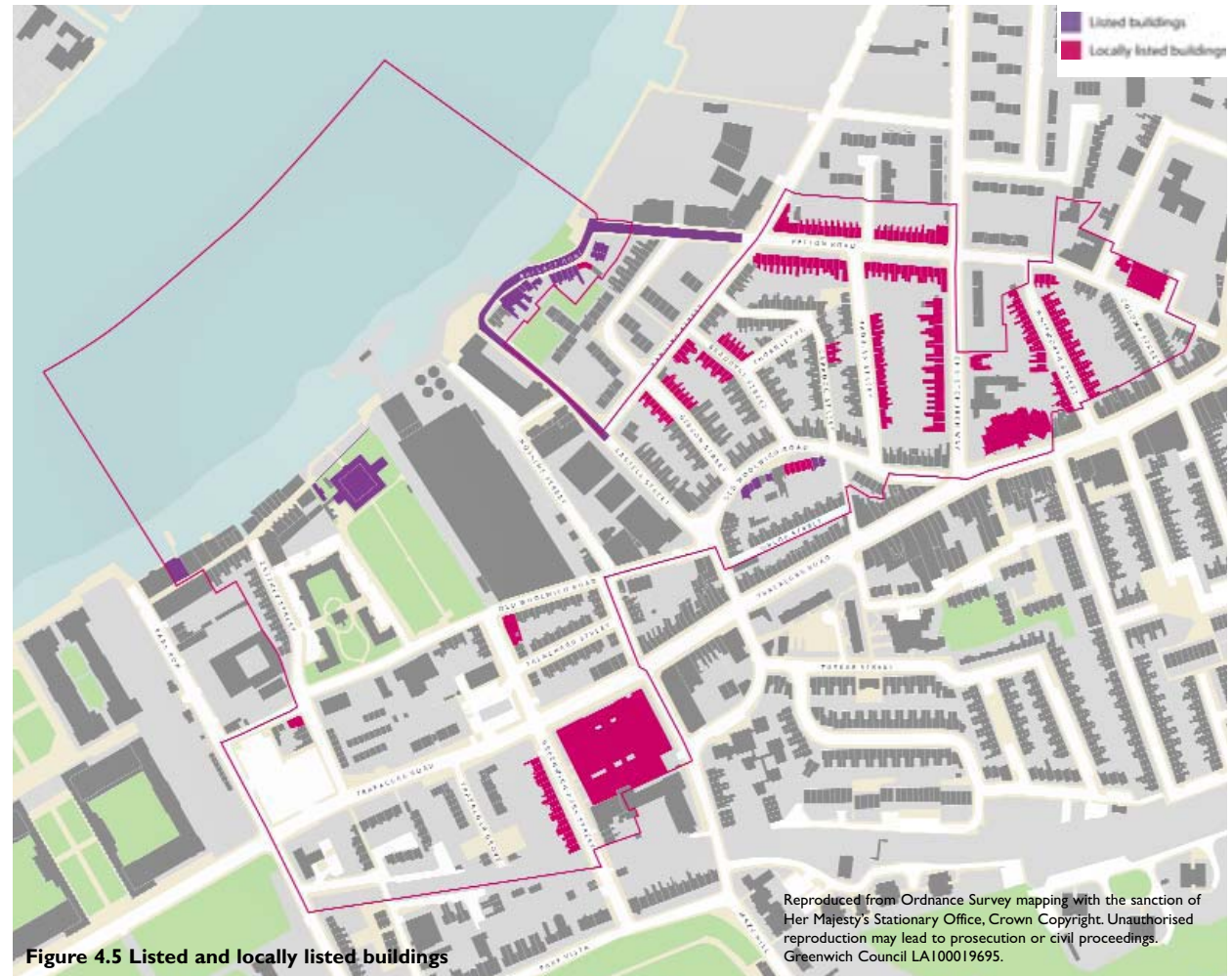


Figure 4.5 Listed and locally listed buildings



Trinity Hospital



122-124 Old Woolwich Road



20-21 Ballast Quay

Key unlisted buildings

Key unlisted buildings in the East Greenwich Conservation Area include:

St Joseph (RC) Church, Pelton Road, was built in 1881 by H. J. Hanson. The simple brick mass of the church is impressive, hard up against the pavement, and the steeply pitched slate roof has a powerful effect when approached from the neighbouring streets. It forms a group with the neighbouring Priests House.

Morden College Estate An early Victorian planned layout designed by George Smith (1782-1869) the architect for Morden College. Building started in 1838 and was completed around 1865. Some of the houses have small painted metal plaques, inscribed with the date of the founding of Morden College (MC 1695).

Meridian Primary School is a lofty red brick building, signalled by its carved cupola and pargetted gable. The school opened in 1888, four years after the date when the zero meridian, which passes through the school, was adopted as the international longitude reference.

The former **Municipal Baths** on Trafalgar Road, now the Arches Leisure Centre is a confident and well modelled Italianate building from the interwar period, noteworthy for its careful detailing.



Top left: St Joseph's Church, Pelton Road
Top right: Caradoc Street, Morden Estate
Bottom left: Meridian Primary School, Old Woolwich Road

Loss, intrusion or damage

The Morden Estate is well preserved and there are few awkward gaps, but the termination to some of the vistas leaves something to be desired. The view of the Cooperative store at the head of Whitworth Street is a forceful contrast that gives no hint of the historic significance of Trafalgar Road.

The car park on the corner of Trafalgar Road and Park Row is a negative factor, providing a weak approach to the Old Royal Naval College, although the trees provide some containment. Buildings on this block, perhaps containing or screening a car park, would provide a more confident entry into Trafalgar Road.

Next to the filling station along Trafalgar Road, there is a vacant site opposite the Arches Leisure Centre that would be better developed with buildings of a comparable scale and rhythm to those found elsewhere in the road. Appropriate development here would help to restore the line of the street and would enhance the conservation area.

Warehouses and former industrial units occupy a tapering block between Hoskins Street and Lassell Street. They are buildings of little distinction and do not contribute to the special interest of the area.

Neutral areas

Greenwich Power Station is historically significant as the supplier of power to London's tramways, and subsequently to London Underground. Its necessarily monumental form is impressive and the chimneys, even in their truncated form, are a beacon in the wider area. There are some interesting architectural details and the brickwork is generally of high quality. It is undeniable, however, that a building of such a scale or industrial function would not be contemplated today in such a tight-knit residential area or so close to the Old Royal

Naval College. Its replacement would offer development at a more human scale. If however an imaginative new use could be found within the shell of the power station, this too should be carefully considered.

The block of flats on Trafalgar Road next to Hardy Cottages do not contribute to the architectural or historic interest of the conservation area. The Eastney Street flats are also neutral in this context.

General condition and Buildings at Risk

Most of the buildings in the conservation area are occupied and in good repair. The long term future of the Power Station is perhaps the biggest challenge facing the future of the area and any conversion to a compatible new use will require considerable imagination.

The 1960s flats on Trafalgar Grove to the east of Corvette Square are currently vacant and boarded up. Their redevelopment would offer the chance for new buildings that are more compatible with the prevailing grain and character of the conservation area, including the adjacent Georgian houses on Greenwich Park Street.

Conservation area boundary review

There is a good case for extending the conservation area to include the whole of Trafalgar Road from Christ Church to the Royal Naval College. This would bring in the whole of the Old Woolwich Road and acknowledge the historic development of the area, as well as recognising the potential for enhancement.

Problems, pressures and capacity for change

The long term future of Greenwich Power Station is the key challenge to the area. If the building is decommissioned it will be important to find a compatible new use or, in the event of its demolition, ensuring that the site is redeveloped to the highest standard to reflect the historic and architectural character of the area.

With the exception of Trafalgar Road, East Greenwich is a quiet area and there is no through traffic. The chain link fences around the open space at Meridian School and the yard diagonally opposite have a drab presence on the street. An alternative boundary treatment, perhaps introducing shrubs or trees, would be beneficial.

Pavements generally are patched and worn, with no consistent treatment.

5. Appendix: useful information and contact details

Urban Practitioners wishes to acknowledge all those who, in print or in person, have contributed to the historical and architectural content of these reports. They include staff of Greenwich Council, English Heritage and the London Metropolitan Archives. Particular thanks are due to the Greenwich Heritage Centre and to Neil Rhind, historian of Blackheath, who has generously shared more than forty years' research for these volumes.

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Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site Management Plan (revised 2004)

Available online at:
www.greenwichwhs.org.uk

Archives and libraries

Greater London Sites and Monuments Record, English Heritage, 1 Waterhouse Square, 138-142 Holborn, London, EC1N 2ST

Greenwich Heritage Centre, Artillery Square, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich SE18 4DX

London Metropolitan Archives, 40 Northampton Road, Clerkenwell, London EC1R 0HB