

# Charlton Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document



2016

## Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	3
<b>1. Definition of Special Historic Interest</b> .....	3
<b>2. Explanation of Conservation Areas and related planning policy</b> .....	3
2.1 What is a Conservation Area?.....	3
2.2 Which properties are in the Conservation Area?.....	4
2.3 What restrictions are there throughout the Conservation Area?.....	5
2.4 Policy and legislation .....	6
<b>3. Character appraisal</b> .....	9
3.1 Location and setting .....	9
3.2 Origins and historic development.....	10
3.3 Archaeological significance .....	18
3.4 Character zones, spaces and views .....	19
3.5 Townscape features .....	21
3.6 Former and prevailing uses.....	23
3.7 Architectural qualities.....	24
3.8 Contribution made by key buildings.....	33
3.9 Local materials and details.....	38
3.10 Green spaces and trees.....	40
3.11 Negative factors .....	43
3.12 Neutral areas .....	46
3.13 Problems, pressures and capacity for change.....	46
<b>4. Sources and acknowledgements</b> .....	47
<b>5. Contacts and further advice</b> .....	48
<b>Appendix I: Index of Statutory Listed Buildings</b> .....	49

## Introduction

This Conservation Area Character Appraisal has been produced by Royal Borough of Greenwich and consists of three main sections:

- an executive summary or definition of the area's special interest
- an explanation of Conservation Areas and the relevant planning policy.
- a character appraisal, which identifies the main elements that contribute towards the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area

## 1. Definition of Special Historic Interest

The Charlton Village Conservation Area was designated in order to protect and enhance the special characteristics of the old village and the surrounding green land.

Charlton village is an ancient settlement with Saxon and Roman origins referred to in the Domesday Book of 1086 and retaining a real village identity with a parish church, manor house, coaching inn and high street at its core. Despite its absorption into the London suburbs during the course of the 20th century, Charlton Village still conveys a surprisingly strong impression of its rural origins, thanks in large part to the partial survival of the ancient rural landscapes comprising deer park, woodland and former sand quarries, reinvented as public parks during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This sense of *rus in urbe* (countryside in the city) is one of the area's most significant and defining characteristics.

The topography is highly significant and ultimately defines the character of the conservation area and its division into three distinct zones: the high street ('The Village') which follows the line of the high Thames escarpment; Charlton House, Charlton and Hornfair Parks and the Cemetery which lie on the flat plateau to the south and east, and finally the northern residential streets, Charlton Church Lane and Lansdowne Lane, which descend steeply downhill into the former 'combes' or valleys.

Rich architectural detail and picturesque variety are important aspects of the area's character and appearance; there is no single unifying architectural style. The buildings fall into three main phases, comprising an exceptionally important cluster of Grade I and II\* Jacobean and Carolean structures, fine Regency and early-Victorian villas and distinctive and diverse late Victorian and early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial, civic and residential buildings.

## 2. Explanation of Conservation Areas and related 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. Royal Greenwich has 20 Conservation Areas.

The **Charlton Village Conservation Area** was designated by the Planning and Development Committee of Greenwich Council in 1971. The boundary was extended in 1973, and again in 2014 to include Charlton Cemetery and Hornfair Park/Meridian Sports and Social Club, both previously part of the Woolwich Common Conservation Area.

## 2.2 Which properties are in the Conservation Area?

Charlton Village Conservation Area includes the following properties:

Canberra Road	39-55
Cemetery Lane	Charlton Cemetery incl. lodge and chapels
	Charlton Park Lodge
Charlton Church Lane	New Testament Church*
	76‡
	78‡
	94-6 (even) ‡
	121-63 (odd) ‡
	185 (St Luke's Rectory)
Charlton Park Road	Charlton Park incl. café, play centre and riding school stables
	Charlton Park Academy
	Mulberry Close (all units)
Charlton Road	Charlton House incl. library, community centre, tea rooms
	The Garden House
Fairfield Grove	1-3 (odd)
	9-11 (odd)
	St Luke's Almshouses (13-21)
	23-39 (odd)
Fletching Road	1A (all units)
Hornfair Road	76 (The Stables)
Lansdowne Lane	26-28 (even)
	Alan Marre House (all units)
	30-34 (even) ‡
	36‡
	53-87 (odd) ‡
	95-101 (odd) ‡
Shooters Hill Road	Hornfair Park (west) incl. Charlton Lido and Old Blue Cross Pet Cemetery‡
The Village	St Luke's Church
	1-19, 25-39, 43-59 (odd)
	2, 2a-4 (Earle House)
	6 (Bugle Horn PH)
	8-20
	22 (White Swan PH)

\* These properties were included in the conservation area from 27/10/16, the date of this document's adoption. See accompanying Management Strategy for background

	26-32
	46-52
	Assembly Rooms
	58-60
Torrance Close	All units, incl. Viscount Yard

### 2.3 What restrictions are there throughout the Conservation Area?

Planning applications are judged against particularly strict criteria within Conservation Areas. All proposals must be of such a standard as to preserve or enhance the special character or appearance of the area.

Under the terms of the [Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development\) \(England\) Order 2015](#) (commonly known as the GPDO), certain forms of minor development are rendered exempt from planning permission. Some of these ‘permitted development’ (PD) rights do not, however, apply within Conservation Areas. The regulations are complex, and you should consult the GPDO and the accompanying Technical Guidance notes – and, where appropriate, seek advice from Royal Greenwich’s planning department – for further detail. Some of the main provisions are as follows:

#### **Single family dwellings**

Occupants of single family dwellings (‘dwellinghouses’) normally enjoy a wide range of PD rights, some of which are removed within Conservation Areas. For example, the following types of development will always require planning permission in a Conservation Area:

- i. Cladding to the exterior of the property with materials such as stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles.
- ii. Any single-storey extension exceeding 4 metres in height, and/or extending more than 3 metres (4 metres for a detached property) beyond the original back wall of the house.
- iii. Any two-storey addition extending beyond the original back wall.
- iv. Any addition extending beyond the original side wall.
- v. Any extension to the roof, including dormer windows.
- vi. Any building or container (e.g. a garden shed or storage tank) between the side wall of the house and the plot boundary.
- vii. Installation, alteration or replacement of a chimney, soil pipe etc. on a front or side elevation facing the street

#### **Flats and maisonettes**

Flats do not have the same PD rights as single family dwellings. Planning permission will normally be required for any external alteration that would materially affect the appearance of the building, such as the replacement of windows or doors or the installation of roof-lights or satellite dishes.

#### **Commercial premises**

Planning permission is normally required for any alterations to shop-fronts (with the exception of painting). Certain PD rights are also removed from shops and other commercial premises in Conservation Areas. For example, proposals for residential conversion will always require planning permission as will shop extensions of more than 50 square metres, or 25% of the original floor space. Analogous provisions apply to offices and industrial buildings. Check the GDPO for more details with regard specific proposals for commercial premises within Conservation Areas.

### **Telecommunications and renewable energy**

Some forms of telecoms and renewable energy installation which would normally be classed as PD are subject to planning permission in Conservation Areas. For example, planning permission is required for solar cells on any wall or roof slope fronting a highway. Analogous regulations apply to wind turbines, micro-generation systems and antennas.

### **Demolitions**

Planning permission is always required for the following:

- i. Total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building of 115 cubic metres or over.
- ii. Total or substantial demolition 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 felling of trees more than 75mm in diameter requires 6 weeks' notice in writing to the Royal Borough's planning department. During these 6 weeks the tree is protected by law. The Royal Borough'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 alterations (both internal and external) to a listed building that would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. If consent is not obtained or if the work is carried out in breach of – i.e. contrary to – the granted consent, the property may be subject to enforcement action.

If the proposed works are deemed not to affect the building's character, a Certificate of Lawfulness can be applied for, but the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that the building's character would not be affected.

## **2.4 Policy and legislation**

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 supplementary planning document, relating to, and to be read with, current national and local planning policies.

### **National planning legislation and policy**

### Designation of Conservation Areas

The [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#) defines a Conservation Area as one possessing “special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The formal designation of such areas is normally a matter for the local planning authority: under the Act, local authorities have a duty to identify and designate areas that meet the criteria, and to keep current designations under review.

Current government guidance on Conservation Areas and other heritage assets is set out in Section 12 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF), ‘Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment’.

### Listing and scheduling

Historic England (formerly 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. These designation systems all form part of the [National Heritage List for England](#) (NHLE), which can be searched via the Historic England website.

### Local and regional planning policy and guidance

#### The London Plan

The [London Plan](#) (Policy 7.8) embodies strong protection for Conservation Areas and other heritage assets, requiring that these be clearly identified and assessed in order that new development may respect and conserve their significance. Further policies (7.9-7.12) cover heritage-led regeneration, World Heritage Sites and protected views.

#### Greenwich Local Development Framework (LDF)

Unless material considerations indicate otherwise, planning applications should be determined in accordance with the NPPF, the London Plan and the [Local Development Framework](#). The latter consists of the Greenwich Core Strategy (adopted July 2014) along with the associated procedural documents, Site Specific Allocations and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

The main Core Strategy policies affecting Charlton Village Conservation Area are listed below. (Items underlined are Strategic Policies.)

#### DH1 Design

#### DH2 Tall Buildings

#### DH3 Heritage Assets

- DH(a) Residential Extensions
- DH(c) Telecommunications Development
- DH(d) Satellite Antennae
- DH(e) Shopfronts and Signs
- DH(f) Advertisements
- DH(g) Local Views
- DH(h) Conservation Areas

- i) Character and setting
  - iii) Protection of Buildings
- DH(i) Statutory Listed Buildings
  - i) Protection of Listed Buildings
  - ii) External or Internal Alterations
  - iii) Changes of use
  - iv) Setting and Proportion
- DH(j) Locally Listed Buildings
- DH(l) Areas of Special Character
- DH(m) Archaeology
- EA1 Economic Development
- EA2 Charlton Riverside
  - EA(b) Pubs
- H5 Housing Design
- OS1 Open Space
- OS2 Metropolitan Open Land
- OS3 South East London Green Chain
- OS4 Biodiversity
  - OS(a) Development in Metropolitan Open Land
  - OS(d) Sportsgrounds and Playing Fields
  - OS(f) Ecological Factors
  - OS(g) Green and River Corridors
- TC1 Town Centres
- TC7 Local Centres and Neighbourhood Parades
  - TC(a) Primary, Secondary and Local Shopping Frontages
  - TC(b) Non-Retail Uses in Protected Shopping Frontages

These policies can be found in the Core Strategy document on the [Royal Borough's website](#).

### Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

In addition to Development Plan policies, decisions on planning applications should take into account relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents (SPGs/SPDs), which can be found on the [Royal Borough's website](#). The SPD on *Residential Extensions, Conversions and Basements* (2016) will be relevant for residential properties. The advice note entitled *Design Guidance for Shopfronts* (2005) will be relevant to commercial premises in The Village.

The identification of conservation areas and listed buildings is a process necessary to protect buildings and places of particular historical importance for both the community and the nation. The Royal Borough recognises that the attraction of Charlton as a whole also resides in its large number of other characterful buildings, streets, places and parks, new and old, all of which are very much worthy in their own right of interest, respect and care.

### Status of the Character Appraisal & Management Strategy Documents

This Charlton Village Character Appraisal and accompanying Management Strategy have the status of a supplementary planning document (SPD) and as such, are a material consideration in the planning process.



### 3. Character appraisal

#### 3.1 Location and setting

*“I went to visit my worthy neighbour, Sir Henry Newton [at Charlton], and consider the prospect, which is doubtless for city, river, ships, meadows, hill, woods, and all other amenities, one of the most noble in the world; so as, had the house running water, it were a princely seat.”*

Praise on Charlton’s princely prospect by famous 17<sup>th</sup> century diarist John Evelyn in 1653.

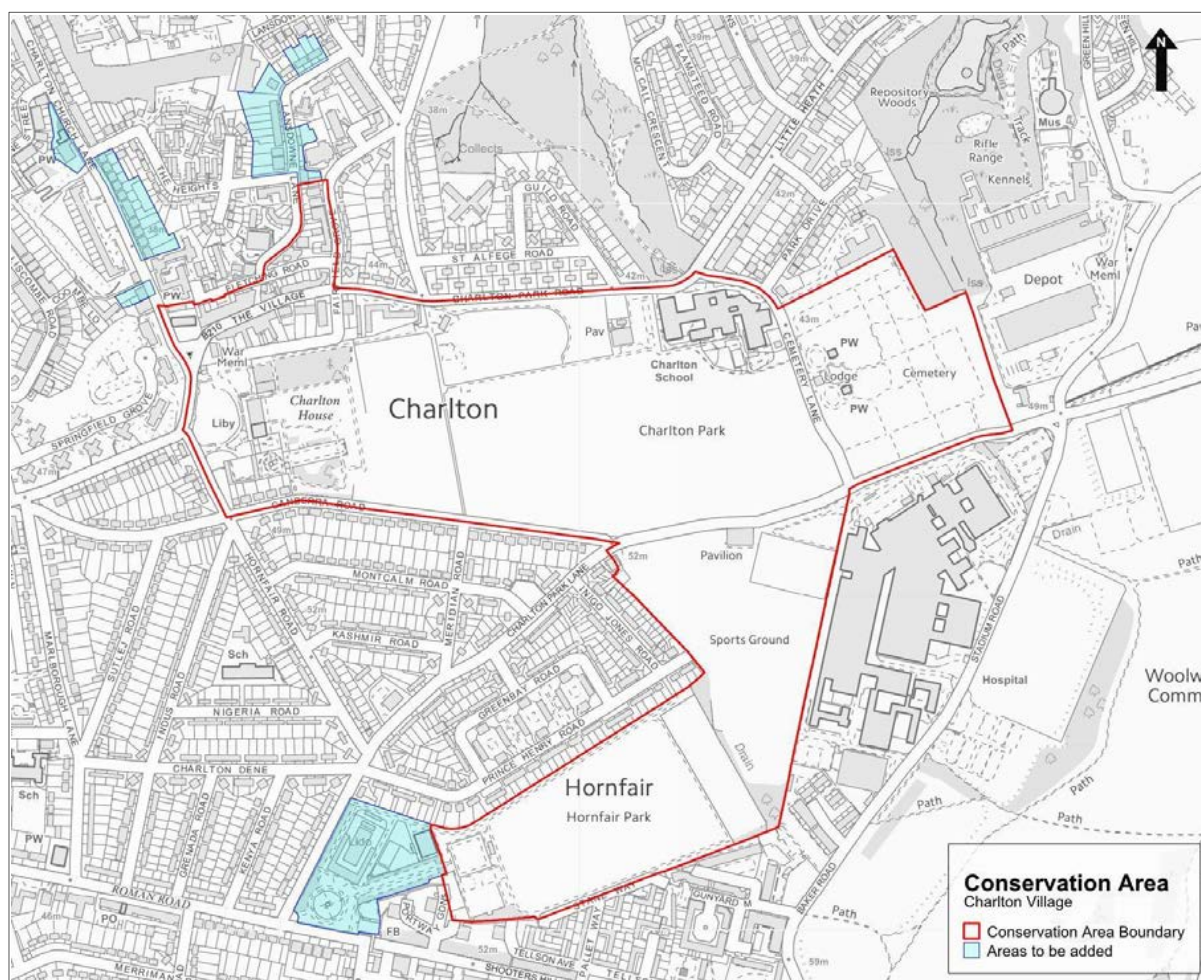


Figure 1: Conservation area boundary (areas in blue are included in the conservation area from 27/10/16)

Charlton Village is situated mid-way between Greenwich and Woolwich and, until the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was part of rural Kent. The old village stood atop the Thames escarpment, where the high ground of the Blackheath plateau dropped away towards the riverside marshes in a series of narrow wooded combs or valleys. Though now urbanised, the form of the ancient landscape is still evident. The high street (known as The Village) follows the line of the escarpment, with large areas of green space (Charlton Park, Hornfair Park, Charlton Cemetery) remaining on the plateau to the south and east, while the streets to the north (Charlton Lane, Fairfield Grove, Charlton Church Lane) descend steeply towards the Thames-side industrial zone known since the mid-1800s as New Charlton, and in more recent years, as Charlton Riverside.



Figure 2: Postcard of c.1910 showing Charlton church with wooded combe (now Springfield Grove) in front [Greenwich Heritage Centre]

The local geology comprises a layer of pebbly strata (the Blackheath Beds) forming the plateau surface, beneath which are the clays and sands of the Lambeth Group, then several metres of the fine grey Thanet Sand resting on a base of chalk. The whole of this formation is exposed in the escarpment, and both the sand and the chalk have been extensively quarried, greatly modifying the topography; the Charlton Athletic football ground sits within one former sand pit, while another, Gilbert's Pit, is now a nature reserve and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). One of the former combes, now known as Maryon Wilson Park, still survives in its original state. The wider urban environment includes 1930s suburban developments to the south-west and north-east and large post-war estates interspersed with Victorian housing to the west.

### 3.2 Origins and historic development

The area has been settled at least since the early Roman period; a Romano-British fort on Cox's Mount (now part of Maryon Park) was excavated in 1913, revealing finds dating from 60 AD through to the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The name Charlton is of Saxon origin, compounded of *ceorl* (=churl), referring to a small peasant farmer, and *tūn*, a settlement or farmstead. After 1066 the manor of Charlton was granted by William I to his half-brother Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, passing into the ownership of Bermondsey Abbey in 1093. The first record of a church at Charlton comes in 1077, while the Domesday survey of 1086 records a medium-sized village of 15 households with farmland amounting to 1 *sulung* (notionally equivalent to 240 acres) and valued at 7 pounds. The medieval parish of Charlton, part of the ancient hundred of Blackheath in the county of Kent, stretched all the way from Woolwich Common in the east to what is now Blackheath Village in the west; it was formerly known as Charlton-next-Woolwich to distinguish it from its east Kent namesake Charlton-by-Dover.

Market rights were granted by Henry III in 1268, as well as an annual fair. The latter had mutated by the 17<sup>th</sup> century into the institution of the 'Horn Fair', a popular spree held on

the village green each St Luke's Day (October 18<sup>th</sup>), preceding which large crowds of celebrants – elaborately costumed, often in drag – would process from Rotherhithe to Charlton, wearing horned head-dresses and playing upon ram's-horn trumpets. Like others of its kind around the country, the Horn Fair – associated in local legend with a supposed sexual encounter between King John and the wife of a Charlton miller – was notoriously unruly; Daniel Defoe, writing in the 1720s in his *Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, decried 'the yearly collected rabble of mad-people at Horn-Fair, the rudeness of which, I cannot but think, is such as ought to be suppressed'. Daniel Lysons (*The Environs of London*, vol. 4, 1796) reports that the procession was discontinued in 1768, though the fair itself apparently survived for another hundred years, eventually being suppressed under the terms of the 1871 Fairs Act. A version of the Horn Fair was revived in the 1970s and continues today.

The manor, having reverted to the Crown at the Reformation, was acquired in 1606 by Sir Adam Newton, tutor and secretary to Henry, Prince of Wales. Newton was responsible for building the present Charlton House – the finest Jacobean mansion now surviving in London – between 1607 and 1612. St Luke, 'a most attractive church in its humble, pre-classical character' (as Pevsner and Cherry state in the volume on South London) also dates mainly from this period, since the provisions of Newton's will allowed for the complete rebuilding of the Church in 1630-40. Other buildings remaining from this era include the stables, park wall and garden house – the latter a very early example of English Palladianism, traditionally (though without written evidence) attributed to Inigo Jones.



*Figure 3: Lithograph of 1858 by James Holland, showing the west front of Charlton House*

The 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries witnessed comparatively little change. John Rocque's map of 1746 clearly shows the nucleus of the village, with Charlton House (called 'Charlton Place') and its park to the south, a scattering of houses further west along Charlton Road, and Hanging Wood, still at its full 150-acre extent, to the north-east. Twenty years later, in 1767, the Charlton estate passed into the ownership of the Maryon Wilson family, who would remain lords of the manor until the 1920s.



Figure 4: John Rocque's Exact Survey of 1746 [Greenwich Heritage Centre]

A series of drawings dating from the 1820s show Charlton still in its post-medieval aspect, with timber-framed buildings clustered along the muddy village street against a background of fields and woods. The village green, still visible in these drawings, was incorporated into the grounds of Charlton House in 1829.



Figure 5: Drawing of c.1820 showing the north side of The Village, with timber-framed houses

This period did witness the first phase of 'suburban' development, with several large detached villas built for members of the 'carriage classes', for whom Charlton, with its fresh air, panoramic views and good road connections, made a pleasant commuting base or

weekend retreat. (The house formerly known as The Warren, now 78 Charlton Church Lane, is probably an example.)

The major impetus for suburbanisation came in 1849, however, when the South-Eastern Railway extended its North Kent Line from Gravesend through to London Bridge, with a station at the bottom of Charlton Church Lane. This had the double effect of stimulating rapid industrial growth in the riverside area – henceforth known as New Charlton – and encouraging suburban development around the old village. Residential growth was slow at first: groups of large villas were built in Charlton Church Lane and Victoria Way, with smaller cottages in Charlton Lane, Lansdowne Lane and Fairfield Grove.

A series of drawings made by the artist Falcon Hildred in the 1960s record a row of terraced cottages in Lansdowne Lane prior to their demolition in 1968 to make way for flats (now 1a Fletching Road). The detailed plans, elevations and elevated perspectives show that Nos. 2-18 comprised typical ‘two-up-two-down’ terraced houses with narrow street frontages, built on narrow tapering plots, with no bathrooms, only toilets housed in outbuildings to the rear. These drawings are an important record of humble, high-density workers housing, once so prevalent in mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century London, but which has rarely survived post-war redevelopment.

A remnant of this housing does in fact survive a little further to the north on Lansdowne Lane: Nos. 26-28, a pair of cottages, curiously set back some distance from the lane so that they are easily overlooked.



**Figure 6: Nos. 2-18 Lansdowne Lane built 1862-3, drawn by Falcon Hildred in 1967 prior to their demolition in 1968**  
© Crown copyright: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales



Figure 7: Nos. 26 & 28 Lansdowne Lane, contemporary with Nos. 2-18 (demolished)

The increase in population prompted the laying-out of Charlton Cemetery in 1855, and the building of two new parish churches: St Thomas, Maryon Road (1849-50) and St Paul, Fairfield Grove (1867, now demolished). The Metropolitan Board of Works, whose sphere of authority stretched as far out as Woolwich, built imposing new premises (now demolished) on the south side of The Village. Nevertheless, as late as 1878 Edward Walford's *Old and New London* could describe Charlton as 'a pretty little village...still green and pleasant' despite 'the gradual extension of buildings'.

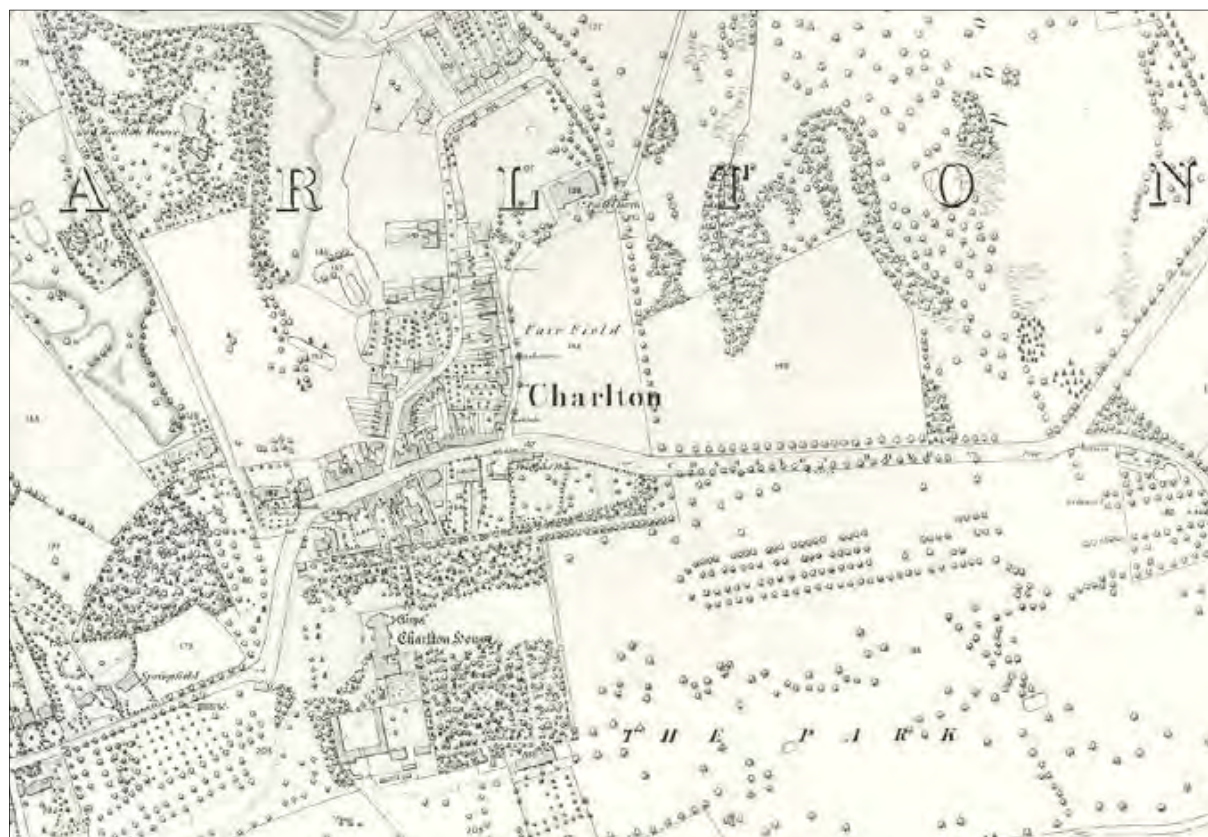


Figure 8: Ordnance Survey map of 1867 showing Charlton village and park, with early residential development on Lansdowne Lane and Fairfield Grove



*Figure 9: Postcard of c.1890 showing the eastern end of The Village, with the Metropolitan Board of Works*

Large-scale expansion, joining Charlton up with Woolwich in the east and Blackheath in the west, came around the turn of the century, when Heathwood and (later) Kinveachy Gardens were built over part of Hanging Wood, and Elliscombe Road and its neighbours were laid out in the combs and sand-pits to the west. The core of the medieval village was largely rebuilt at this period, with the old timber-framed houses (of which the Bugle Horn Inn is now the only – much altered – survivor) giving way to brick-built Victorian commercial premises, comprising more than 20 shops including a fruiterer, a fishmonger, a bootmaker, a watchmaker, two drapers and two bakers, according to the 1881 census.



*Figure 10: Postcard of 1915 showing the south side of The Village, including the White Swan PH*

This new-found urbanity was reflected in the building of the Assembly Rooms (under Maryon Wilson patronage) in 1881, and in the growth of Charlton Athletic Football Club, which moved to its present ground, in a former sand-pit known as the Valley, in 1919.

Charlton's transformation from village to suburb was confirmed by its inclusion, after the local government reforms of the 1880s and 90s, within the purview of the newly-formed London County Council (LCC) and Metropolitan Borough of Greenwich. In 1890 Sir Maryon Wilson donated an area of redundant sand quarries to the LCC for public recreational use. Maryon Park opened later that year. From 1920, under the auspices of the Guild of Master Builders, Greenwich built council housing on the old Fair Field on the north side of Charlton Park Road (the Charlton Guild Estate). During World War I, Charlton House and its grounds had been used as a Red Cross hospital and army camp, and in 1925 the Maryon Wilsons finally decided to sell the remainder of the estate, including Charlton House with its gardens and park, to the Borough Council.



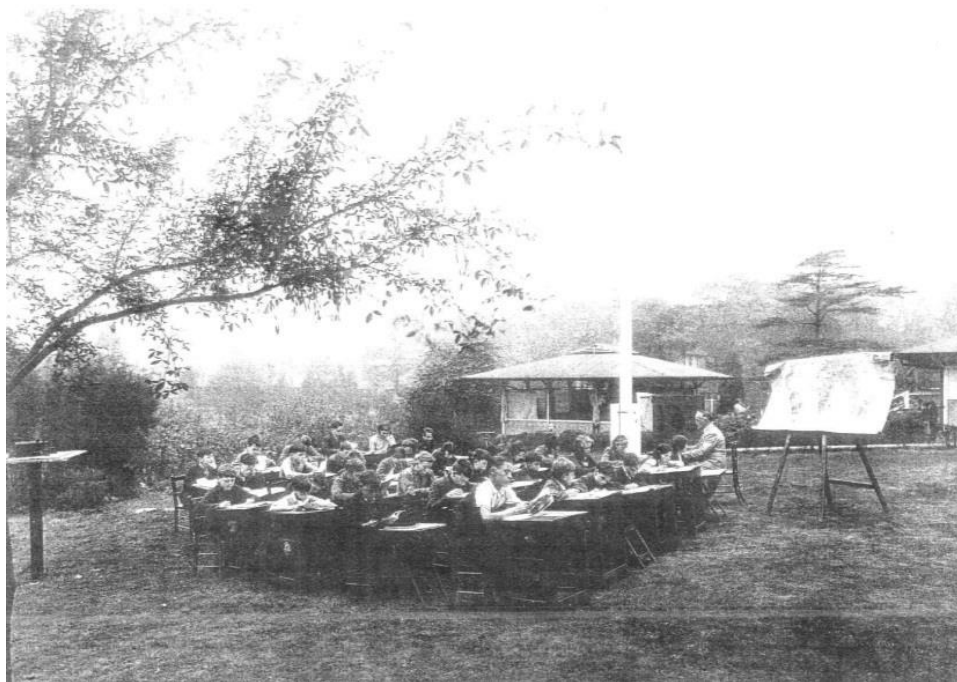
**Figure 11: Ordnance Survey map of 1914 showing residential development in Charlton Church Lane and Elliscombe Road to the north-west, and in Little Heath and Kinveachy Gardens to the north-east**

The House was initially proposed as a replacement town hall, but eventually became a museum and library; the grounds were opened to the public in 1926 as Charlton Park. An LCC-run open-air school (first established in 1907 to cater for children whose poor health prevented them from attending mainstream schools) occupied the north-east corner; this is now the site of the Charlton Park Academy. In 1924 Sir Spencer Maryon Wilson donated 32 acres of Hanging Wood to the LCC for the use and enjoyment of the public. The LCC agreed to retain the woodland character within the park layout and Maryon Wilson Park opened in 1926. As suburban development engulfed the remaining fields, part of the Maryon-Wilson Estate, purchased by the LCC in 1926, was laid out as another public park,



this time with tennis courts, bowling green, pavilion and paddling pool. This opened as Charlton Playing Fields in 1936 and was renamed as Hornfair Park in 1948. Charlton Lido was opened in the park in 1939.

Although urbanisation of the rural landscape of Charlton was proceeding rapidly, the foresight and generosity of Sir Maryon Wilson and the LCC has ensured that parts of this ancient landscape have survived to this day and will survive in perpetuity.



*Figure 12: Photograph of c.1930 showing Charlton Park Open Air School [Greenwich Heritage Centre]*

Although it suffered less than the riverside industrial belt, old Charlton saw sporadic bomb damage during the London Blitz and its aftermath. St Paul's Church was destroyed by a high explosive bomb on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1940 – the first church in London to suffer this fate – and Charlton House itself narrowly escaped destruction by a V-2 rocket in January 1945; the north wing and garden house suffered some damage. The post-war period saw New Charlton (now Charlton Riverside) comprehensively redeveloped as a series of large housing estates and industrial/retail parks. Up the hill, redevelopment focused on the Charlton Road area to the west of the old village: the Fairlawn/Cherry Gardens estate to the south, built by the Borough from 1947, and the LCC's Thornhill/Springfield Grove estate on the slopes to the north. Subsequent development has been restricted to infill schemes, mostly in the old sand quarries, e.g. Fletching Road and Joyce Page Close.

Early 21<sup>st</sup>-century Charlton again faces major change. The industries that flourished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century are now largely defunct, and the Charlton Riverside area is once more subject to sweeping redevelopment that aims to create 3,500 new housing units along with extensive retail and employment uses. Charlton station is set to be upgraded as a 'transport hub', further increasing development pressure at the lower end of Charlton Church Lane. The old village centre, meanwhile, struggles to maintain its commercial viability. The longer-term impact of these pressures remains to be seen.

### 3.3 Archaeological significance

Charlton House is designated as an Area of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP) by Historic England. This area also includes the grounds of the House, St Luke's Church and churchyard, The Village and part of Fairfield Grove. Outside the conservation area, Maryon Park is also designated as an AHAP.

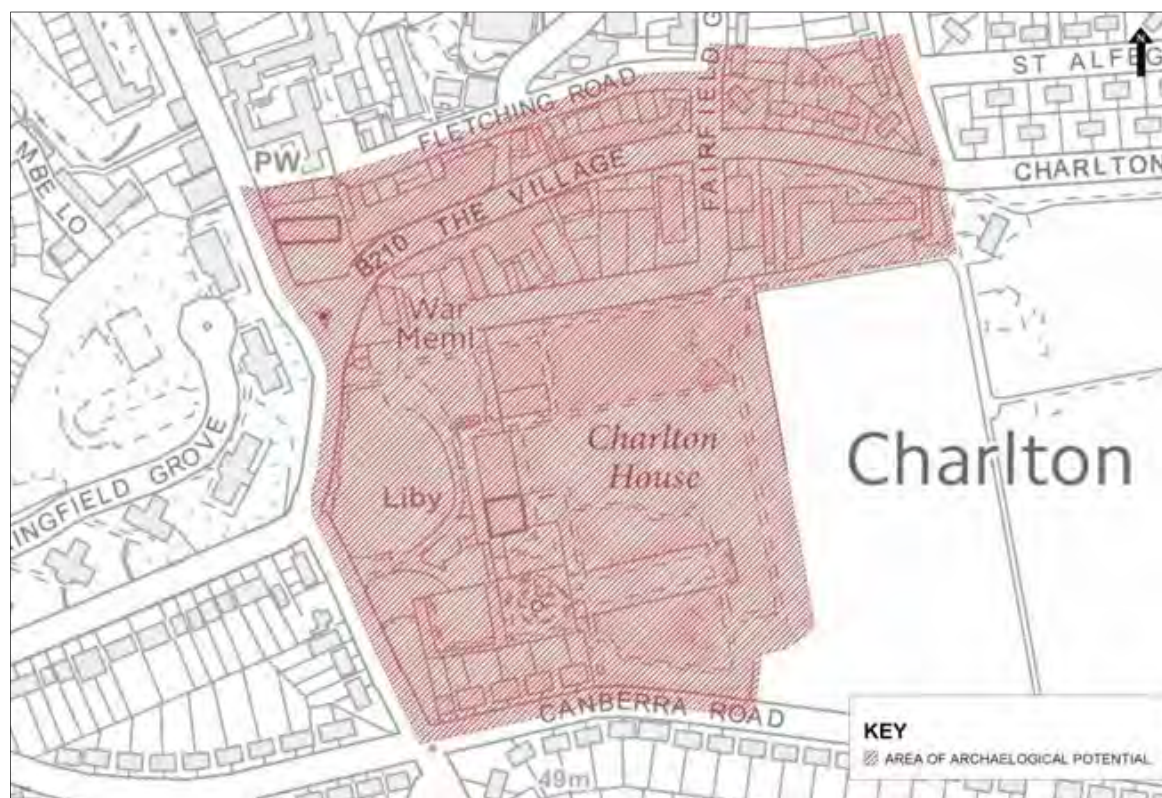


Figure 13: Charlton House Area of High Archaeological Potential

Charlton's long history of settlement, since early Roman times, gives it high archaeological potential. The grounds of Charlton House, never developed, may well yield information about the history of the estate, perhaps including the medieval manor house or earlier structures which pre-dated Charlton House. The village itself has been continuously occupied since at least the medieval period, and there may be buried remains here relating to previous buildings and their occupants. Charlton church is first mentioned in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century; the present St Luke's is undoubtedly built on the foundations of its medieval predecessor, and the churchyard (including the site of the modern rectory) may contain fabric from the earlier building as well as many centuries of burials. The Romano-British site found on Cox's Mount (now in Maryon Park) in 1913 suggests that the combes to the north of the village – especially Maryon Wilson Park, which has never been quarried – may contain vestiges of early settlement, as well as evidence of later industrial use.

An AHAP is a zone where there is a high level of expectation that archaeology will be encountered. Archaeology is a material consideration in the planning process; proposed developments that fall within AHAPS (or any development outside over 0.4 hectares in size) should state whether archaeology will be affected by the proposal and if so, a desk-based assessment should be undertaken indicating whether archaeological fieldwork is required, prior to consideration of the proposals by the Royal Borough's planning department.

### 3.4 Character zones, spaces and views

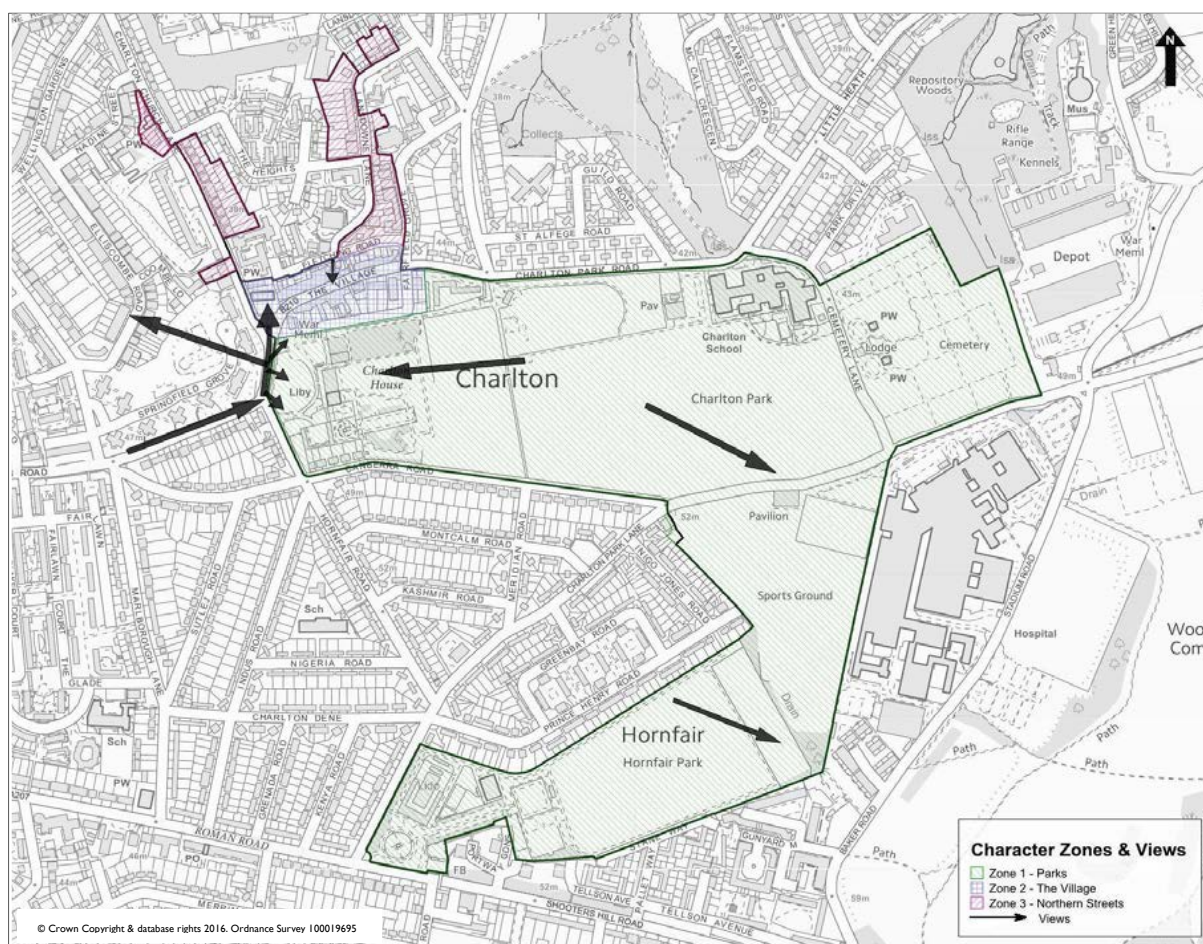


Figure 14: Character Zone and Views

The area's chief spatial characteristics derive from the topographical contrast between three distinct zones: the open, level green spaces to the south and east on the plateau; the narrow, tightly enclosed high street in the centre on the escarpment; and the residential streets running down from the escarpment to the north.

- i. **Zone 1**, comprising Charlton Park, Charlton Cemetery, Hornfair Park and the Meridian Sports and Social Club, accounts for the great majority of the Conservation Area. It is dominated by Charlton Park, with the great House, its outbuildings and formal gardens at the western end and a large expanse of grass to the east. The highly-decorated west façade of the House dominates the long fixed vista down Charlton Road, while its quieter east façade terminates the park's central axis. Both Charlton Park and Hornfair Park give good panoramic views south-eastward towards the high ground of Shooters Hill.

There are also highly significant kinetic views along the last section of Charlton Road as it approaches The Village, where all the 17th-century structures of outstanding importance can be glimpsed, appreciated and connected. Views along this stretch visually reinforce the historical link between Sir Adam Newton's final residence whilst living (Charlton House) and final resting place *post mortem* (St Luke's).



*Figure 14: Charlton Park looking west towards Charlton House*

**Zone 2** comprises The Village, the two back lanes (Fletching Road and Torrance Close), and the eastern end of Charlton Road. Despite much rebuilding, this area still yields strong intimations of its medieval origins – in the sudden curve at the western end, where St Luke’s stands sentinel amid its cluster of trees, and in the narrowness of the main shopping street with its varied assortment of buildings. There are no long views, though the approach to St Luke from the south is an important dynamic view and there are intriguing glimpses into back-yards through the carriage entrances on the south side. From the corner of Fletching Road and Lansdowne Lane there is also a short framed view uphill to 12-18 The Village.



*Figure 15: View of The Village from St Luke's churchyard*

- ii. **Zone 3** comprises the three residential streets, notably Charlton Church Lane, Lansdowne Lane and Fairfield Grove, that run northward from the village centre. These drop steeply downhill as they cross the edge of the escarpment, and the hilly topography allows for a number of good panoramic vistas. The most dramatic is from the top of Charlton Church Lane, looking west between the towers of the Springfield Grove estate towards the Thames and central London.

The aforementioned views identified on the map above play a significant role in defining the distinctive character of Charlton Village. Therefore it is important to be mindful that development within or beyond the boundary of the conservation area may have an impact on the significance of the Conservation Area and its setting and the setting of the listed buildings within the boundary. Historic England have produced a useful guidance note on managing change within the setting of Heritage Assets (for further details see Section 9 of the accompanying Management Strategy).



*Figure 16: Charlton Church Lane, looking north*

### 3.5 Townscape features

The townscape of the **village centre** is defined, as described above, by the shape of the medieval village street and its varied building stock. At the western end, where it is continuous with Charlton Road, the street runs north, passing the gates of the great House before curving sharply to the right in front of the church, whose tower – along with the garden house opposite – forms an important visual ‘pivot’. The open area between the two buildings, including the churchyard, the traffic island with the war memorial and drinking



*Figure 17: Area in front of St Luke's Church, with drinking fountain and war memorial*

fountain, and the paved area in front of Earle House (Nos. 2, 2a & 4 The Village), has the character of a village square.

Past the corner, the main shopping street runs due east and is densely built up. The buildings here, though mainly late Victorian, are varied in style and scale, and the irregularity of the plot widths, building line and roofscape still conveys a village-like impression.



*Figure 18: varied plot widths and rooflines in The Village*

At the eastern end the street opens out again, its character becoming residential, with older Regency and early Victorian houses surviving on the north side, such as Nos. 43-45 (see figure 40), and with the Assembly Rooms to the south marking the end of the village proper. The street continues east as Charlton Park Road, between the 17<sup>th</sup>-century park wall and the inter-war council semis of the Charlton Guild Estate, their front garden walls (just outside the Conservation Area) made of a 'rustic' coagulation of burnt brick clinker.



*Figure 19: front garden walls to houses on the Charlton Guild Estate*

Some of these houses with their distinctive front walls are proposed for local listing in the accompanying Management Strategy.

The **northern streets** – Charlton Church Lane, Lansdowne Lane, Fairfield Grove – have, as previously described a quite different character. The townscape here is much less dense and more suburban, with a mixture of Victorian cottages/villas and inter-war semis, all set back within gardens. The steep slope, the undulating topography and the presence of mature trees yield a picturesque, even Arcadian effect in places.



*Figure 20: Grade II listed buildings on Fairfield Grove*

The picturesque roofscapes throughout the conservation area contribute strongly to its character, and therefore it is important that any roof alterations and additions are sensitively designed and scaled so as to avoid having a detrimental impact on the significance of the conservation area.

### **3.6 Former and prevailing uses**

The basic layout of Charlton Village has been determined by the early pattern of land use. The presence of the great House and its grounds ruled out development to the south, constricting the old village within its narrow main street, and forcing later expansion down the escarpment to the north. Within the grounds, evidence of several specialised uses is still apparent, e.g. in the stable yard, the walled gardens and the deer park. The village street once accommodated a mixture of residential and commercial uses, though the latter now predominate at ground level; the service yards behind, accessed via back-alleys (Torrance Close and Fletching Road), follow a typical pattern. To the north, the marks of extractive industry – mostly sand and chalk quarrying – remain evident in the over-steepened slopes and in bowl-like formations such as the Heights and the Warren, overlain by residential development of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.



*Figure 21: Photograph of c.1900 showing Gilbert's Pit sand quarry ~  
[Greenwich Heritage Centre]*

### 3.7 Architectural qualities

The buildings of Charlton Village belong to three main phases: the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, early/mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century and late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

#### **17<sup>th</sup> century: Charlton House and associated structures**

To this first phase belongs the exceptionally important cluster of Jacobean and Carolean structures at the western end of the village. The principal building is Charlton House (1607-12), erected on behalf of Sir Adam Newton, tutor to the eldest son of James I. Charlton is the finest surviving Jacobean house in London and one of the best in the country. Built of red brick with a profusion of stone dressings, its long H-plan, bay-windowed elevations, three-storey entrance porch encrusted with elaborate Renaissance ornament, and romantic skyline of strapwork balustrades, tall chimneys and ogee-roofed turrets make it the very archetype of the Jacobean 'prodigy house'; the term for English Tudor and Jacobean houses built as extravaganza by wealthy families. The design at Charlton is sometimes attributed to the architect John Thorpe, who also worked at Holland House in Kensington and Audley End in Essex. The chimneys and mullioned windows were restored in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the north wing and tower were rebuilt in a slightly contrasting brick following severe damage during WWII. To the south is Norman Shaw's modest two-storey extension of 1877 (The Old Library). The Charlton House estate is now owned and managed by Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust, on a 125 year lease from July 2014.





Figure 23: Charlton House, west front



Figure 24: Former entrance archway

The former entrance gateway stands marooned amid the front lawn, following the enclosure of the village green in 1829 to enlarge the grounds of the House. The arch is flanked by Corinthian columns in moulded stucco and is surmounted by a bizarre crest. It is usually thought to be contemporary with the House; however this seems unlikely given the materials - brick faced with stucco to simulate stone - the architectural style of the capitals and mouldings and the diminutive scale of the grotesque masks, all of which indicate a later, possibly 18<sup>th</sup> century, date.

The three-storied west porch and frontispiece, unreservedly lauded by Pevsner/Cherry (1983), is rightly celebrated for its extravagant whimsy of Flemish and German derived Mannerist ornamentation: the whole a profusion of masks, arabesques, scrolls and strapwork.



Figure 22: West frontispiece



*Figure 23: Stables: west wing*

The red-brick stables to the south-west are contemporary with the house, albeit with later alterations and with only two of the three original ranges surviving; they have big shaped gables and iron reinforcing straps with wall anchors forming the initials A N (for Adam Newton, the first owner of the House). Parts of the walled gardens to the south of the House are also of early-17<sup>th</sup> century date, as is much of the north boundary wall to the park.



*Figure 24: Garden house attributed to Inigo Jones*

The garden house is slightly later in date, belonging to the 1630s. Though built of the same red brick as the great House, this building presents a marked stylistic contrast. The garden house is a pioneering essay in the Palladian manner, traditionally but tenuously attributed to Inigo Jones, with carefully proportioned Classical elevations and a high pyramidal swept roof. Now vacant, the building features on the Heritage at Risk register. Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust is intending to undertake repair and refurbishment works to bring the building back into beneficial use.

**17<sup>th</sup> century: Church of St Luke**



*Figure 25: Church of St Luke*

The present Church of St Luke is the product of the same wealth and patronage as Charlton House: the provisions of Adam Newton's will allowed for its rebuilding following his death in 1630. Most of the building fabric dates from this period (1630-1639). The church's rather elongated appearance is the result of an eastern enlargement in 1840 for a new chancel; the original 17<sup>th</sup> century chancel now forms an extension of the nave.

It was customary in early 17<sup>th</sup> century church building for Gothic conservatism to dictate building design but for interior fittings to be more progressive and to reflect domestic architectural fashions of the time. Indeed, St Luke's appears nominally Gothic, with pointed windows and a battlemented tower but contains some handsome pieces of fashionable 17<sup>th</sup> century furnishings such as the pulpit, south door and font, embellished with scrolls and cherubs. However closer inspection reveals greater architectural innovation: the internal arcades assume Classical form and the south porch forms a complementary counterpart to the garden house with its contemporary Classical proportions and graceful Flemish gable.



*Figure 26: St Luke: interior arcades (left) and detail of the south porch (right)*

The church contains an exceptional ensemble of funerary monuments, commemorating many notable individuals including the “fair monument in black marble of Sir Adam Newton” as recorded by diarist John Evelyn in 1652. [Further information is given in the Management Strategy, where the church is recommended for upgrading from Grade II\* to I, on the grounds of its historic, architectural and artistic interest.]

**Other 17<sup>th</sup> century:** The Bugle Horn Inn is the sole survivor of Charlton's rural vernacular building stock. Formerly three separate properties, its exact date is uncertain, but the western parts with their steep roofs and big end stacks look to be the earliest, perhaps of 17<sup>th</sup> century origin, while the more regular three-storey east range probably belongs to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. At some point, presumably in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was given a unified front of painted stucco with multi-pane sash windows.



*Figure 27: The Bugle Horn Inn*

**Early/mid-19<sup>th</sup> century:** The second major phase is represented by Regency and early Victorian houses, ranging from small cottages to substantial villas. These are built of brown stock brick and stucco in the polite Italianate style of the day. Some, like 45 The Village and 23-39 Fairfield Grove, have all-over stucco facades, while others, like 9-11 Fairfield Grove and 59-61 Lansdowne Lane, merely have stuccoed window and door surrounds, cornices etc. The humblest, e.g. 26-8 Lansdowne Lane, are wholly without ornament. Most retain their timber glazing-bar sash windows, and some original panelled doors survive.



*Figure 28: Early 19th-century cottages in Fairfield Grove*



Figure 29: 43 The Village (right)

43 The Village (formerly Park Cottage) still has its ornamental cast-iron porch, the doorway behind now blocked. The little brick almshouses on Fairfield Grove have early 18<sup>th</sup> century origins but were greatly extended c.1839, with an overhanging upper storey resting on bizarrely rustic tree-trunk columns.

**Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries:** The third phase accounts for most of the commercial buildings in the village, though some may retain older fabric behind later facades. Red brick is again the dominant material, now machine-made and offset with banded dressings, cast stonework or tile-hanging. Bay windows, gables and prominent chimney stacks give further variety. Stylistically, these buildings reflect the eclecticism of the period, with ‘Ruskinian’ polychromy (No. 1, built c.1880) vying with Queen Anne Revival (Nos. 12-18, dated 1879) and florid neo-Jacobean (the Assembly Rooms). At ground level the shop-fronts are nearly all modern, though the intervening scroll-brackets survive. The White Swan (1889) retains its decorative pub-front, though it has lost its gabled upper storey (see historic image on page 14).



Figure 30: Pub-front at the White Swan PH



*Figure 31: Charlton Assembly Rooms (left), the rear of I The Village (right)*

The Assembly Rooms (1881), designed by the architect J Rowland, has a fine gabled façade of soft red brick carved with a profusion of pilasters, scrolls and strapwork, and with the Maryon Wilson crest displayed in a terracotta plaque over the entrance. The archway to the former drill hall (1897) has simpler ornament. The Assembly Rooms is recommended for statutory listing in the accompanying Management Strategy.

The inter-war period is represented by the LCC's Charlton Lido (1939), whose flat concrete canopies and stepped aerator fountains show the modernistic edge of 1930s design.



*Figure 32: Charlton Lido*



More traditional are the semi-detached houses of the Charlton Guild Estate (a typical local authority ‘cottage estate’) and Canberra Road, both just outside the Conservation Area. There was some post-war rebuilding in The Village, e.g. the Coop supermarket, Earle House and Nos. 26-32 (a four-storey block that replaced the imposing Board of Works offices of 1855). Post-war housing, apart from the big estates to the west along Charlton Road, is mostly small infill developments such as IA Fletching Road.

### 3.8 Contribution made by key buildings

In what follows, items marked with an asterisk (\*) are recommended for addition to the Local List. See map in section 5 of the accompanying Management Strategy.

There are seventeen listed buildings within the Conservation Area, four at Grade I, one at Grade II\* and twelve at Grade II (see Appendix I for full index):

- **Charlton House**, plus the **stables, gateway** and **garden house** (all Grade I) and the **north wall to Charlton Park** (Grade II)
- **St Luke’s Church** (Grade II\*) and its **churchyard walls, gate piers** (Grade II)
- **War memorial outside St Luke’s Church** (Grade II)
- The **Bugle Horn Inn** (Grade II)
- **Nos. 25-29, 31-33, 35-37 & No.39 Fairfield Grove** (Grade II)

Eight buildings appear on Royal Greenwich’s Local List:

- The **Assembly Rooms and adjoining archway**<sup>†</sup>
- The **drinking fountain and cattle trough** in front of St Luke’s Church
- **St Luke’s Almshouses** in Fairfield Grove
- **Nos. 9-11 and 23 Fairfield Grove**
- **Nos. 26-8 Lansdowne Lane**

Additional buildings of merit in the conservation area, some of which are proposed for local within the accompanying Management Strategy, include the following:



**94-6 Charlton Church Lane\*** – a pair of small mid-19<sup>th</sup> century villas with stucco decoration including a fine bracket cornice.

*Figure 33: 94-6 Charlton Church Lane*



**121-163 Charlton Church Lane** – a sequence of large mid-19<sup>th</sup> century villa pairs, of three storeys with twin-columned porches, canted bay windows and bracketed eaves

*Figure 34: Mid-19th century paired villas*

**78 Charlton Church Lane\*** - a large detached house, formerly with extensive grounds, mid-19<sup>th</sup> century in external appearance though perhaps with older fabric behind; a rare survival of the substantial farmhouses and 'gentlemen's houses' that once ringed the old village.



*Figure 35: Side view of 78 Charlton Church Lane, formerly known as The Warren*



**1A Fletching Road\*** – a small cluster of flats of c.1970, quirkily detailed and with complex staggered elevations and terraced sections making imaginative use of the sloping site.

*Figure 36: 1A Fletching Road*

**1 The Village** – a substantial double-fronted house with shops below, built c.1880 for the prosperous local toolmaker Robert Martin, in a ‘Ruskinian’ style with polychrome brick arches and a tall belvedere tower behind to exploit the view down the Thames (see image on p.32).



Figure 37: 12-18 The Village; the inscription is over the central carriage arch

**12-18 The Village\*** – a row of four houses and shops built in 1879 under Maryon Wilson patronage; designed in a Norman Shaw-influenced Queen Anne Revival style, with small-paned casement windows, tile-hung gables and prominent roof stacks, these form a very pleasing incident in the street scene and are inscribed with the date of construction and the initials of Spencer Maryon Wilson.

**The White Swan PH, The Village** – a public house of 1889 with a well-preserved pub-front and an attractive return elevation to the left; early photographs show it with tall shaped gables to the outer wings, now lost (see image on p. 31 and historic image on p. 14).



Figure 38: 43-5 The Village

**43-5 The Village\*** – a pair of stuccoed early 19<sup>th</sup> century houses – No. 45 of three storeys with giant pilasters, No. 43 smaller and more modest, but retaining its original ‘Gothick’ ironwork porch

**46-52 The Village** – an imposing three-storey terrace, built c.1890 but with an almost Georgian plainness to the upper storeys; good panelled doors and ornamental railings.

**58-60 The Village** – a pair of big Dutch-gabled villas inscribed with the Maryon Wilson crest.



*Figure 42: 36 Lansdowne Lane*

**36 Lansdowne Lane\*** – a substantial Italianate villa of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century date, of painted stucco with two artfully asymmetrical gabled wings.



*Figure 43: 95-97, 101 Lansdowne Lane*

**95-7, 101 Lansdowne Lane\*** – pairs of stuccoed mid-19<sup>th</sup> century villas sharing a central pediment.



*Figure 44: 59-61 Lansdowne Lane*

**59-61 Lansdowne Lane** – a well-preserved pair of small mid-19<sup>th</sup> century houses with stuccoed window and door surrounds and margin-glazed timber sash windows.

**87 Lansdowne Lane** – another large Italianate villa, much mutilated but still imposing, with a belvedere tower to exploit the fine views to the north-west (see image on p. 44).



**63-85 Lansdowne Lane\***  
– a late-19<sup>th</sup> century terrace stepping picturesquely down the hill, with a well-preserved array of panelled front doors and decorative tilework.

*Figure 45: 63-85 Lansdowne Lane*

**East lodge at Charlton Park\*** – an attractive tile-hung building of c.1880.



*Figure 46: East lodge at Charlton Park*



*Figure 47: Charlton Lido: one of the original cascaded aerator fountains*

**Charlton Lido\*** – a typical LCC lido of 1939, similar to others built at Parliament Hill and Brockwell Park, with a 165-foot main pool, a smaller children's pool, curvilinear cascaded aerator fountains and Moderne-style shelters and changing blocks. The last and smallest of the four lidos built for the LCC in the 1930s

**Charlton Cemetery chapels\*** – a typical pair of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century mortuary chapels, built of squared ragstone; the south (Anglican) chapel early Gothic, with lancet windows and a small bell-turret, the north (Nonconformist) chapel with Decorated Gothic tracery. There are also a gabled lodge, ornamental railings and gates with pyramid-capped brick piers, and another ‘Cross of Sacrifice’ war memorial.



*Figure 48: Charlton Cemetery: early Gothic-style Anglican chapel*

### 3.9 Local materials and details



*Figure 49: Clockwise from top left: Jacobean carved stonework; Jacobean red brickwork; mid-Victorian squared ragstone; mid-17th century moulded red brickwork; early-Victorian yellow stock brickwork and stucco window detailing; late-Victorian hanging tile*

These are described in sections 3.7 and 3.8 above. General themes include:

- The **17<sup>th</sup>-century buildings**, built of hand-made red bricks, rougher in texture and longer and thinner in shape than their 19<sup>th</sup>-century equivalents, with lively detailing in carved stone and cut and moulded brickwork. The pattern-book Renaissance carving on the Charlton House centrepiece is of exceptional importance.
- The Italianate stucco details of the **early/mid-19<sup>th</sup> century houses**, including moulded and pedimented window architraves, scrolled and columned doorcases and porches, and projecting eaves cornices with modillions or brackets.
- The squared ragstone construction and scholarly Gothic Revival detail of the two **cemetery chapels**.
- The eclectic detailing of the **later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century buildings**, including polychromatic brickwork, cast stone ornament and ornamental tile-hanging.
- Timber **sash windows**, often square-paned or with margin glazing, in 19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> century buildings.
- **Doors** with sunken or fielded panels, sometimes part-glazed.
- **Shop-fronts** (where these survive), traditionally proportioned with panelled stall-risers, timber fascias and glazing subdivided by slender moulded uprights and transomes
- Occasional survivals of **historic ironwork**, e.g. the porch at 43 The Village, the railings at 46-52 The Village and at Charlton Cemetery and the lamp holder at the entrance to St Luke's churchyard. A small number of surviving 19<sup>th</sup>-century **shop- and pub-fronts**, the best being that of the White Swan PH.
- Small areas of surviving **Yorkstone paving** and **granite setts** outside the Bugle Horn inn and St Luke's churchyard.



Figure 50: Examples of 19<sup>th</sup> century panelled doors, decorative ironwork, sash and casement windows

### 3.10 Green spaces and trees

The majority of the Conservation Area consists of green space, and there are further large tracts of open land just beyond its boundaries. This established sense of *rus in urbe* ('countryside within the town') is one of the area's most significant and defining characteristics.

The four main green spaces within the boundaries of the Conservation Area are Charlton Park, St Luke's churchyard, Charlton Cemetery and Hornfair Park/Meridian Sports and Social Club.

- i. **Charlton Park** is by far the largest of these. Its origins go back at least to the building of the present Charlton House in the early 1600s, and possibly further. Over 50 acres in extent, it comprises an area of semi-formal gardens surrounding the House and a much larger area of open land to the east. John Rocque's plan of 1746 shows a typical late-17<sup>th</sup> century layout, with tight geometrical planting in enclosed squares around the House, and radial avenues forming vistas across the park.



Figure 51: Detail from Rocque's map of 1746

This arrangement was altered later in the century, with most of the formal gardens removed, and with a serpentine walk (a fashionable feature in later 18<sup>th</sup> century gardens) running along the northern boundary of the park. In 1829 the old village green was enclosed into the west lawn of the House, leaving the entrance archway in its present isolated position. Further changes came in from the 1840s, with a new ha-ha creating a firm separation between the pleasure grounds surrounding the House – which now included a densely-planted 'wilderness' area – and the open parkland to the east, where informal clumps of trees now took the place of the old radial avenues.



Figure 52: Detail from Ordnance Survey map of 1893



During and after the Great War the park was used as an army camp and training ground. Part of the park was built over, and the remainder laid out as public sports grounds including tennis courts, a running track, a putting green and several football and cricket pitches. More recently, landscaping work by Fisher Tomlin and Bowyer in 2004-5 saw the revival of the old walled gardens and the re-planting of the herbaceous borders surrounding the House.

The front lawn to the west of the House – incorporating the former village green – displays typical ‘municipal’ plantings: raised beds, shrubberies, specimen trees etc. Near the garden house is an ancient mulberry tree, said to have been planted in 1609. (The leaves of the white mulberry tree are the preferred diet of the domesticated silkworm, and a 1608 edict of James I encouraged planting with a view to the establishment of a British silk industry. The Charlton House specimen may have been an early response to this policy, which is supposed to have failed because black mulberries were mostly planted in mistake for white.)

More of the earlier landscape survives in the former pleasure grounds on the eastern side of the House. To the south is a series of walled gardens of 17<sup>th</sup>-century origin, presumably once kitchen and flower gardens but recast in 2005 as a ‘herbaceous garden’, ‘sensory garden’ and ‘peace garden’ – the last with a central sculpture by the artist Margaret Higginson entitled ‘Portage’. To the south-east is the ‘pond garden’, a hedged enclosure originally created in 1953, with lawns and lavender beds now replacing an earlier oblong pool – and a densely-planted shrubbery or ‘wilderness’. The north-eastern area comprises a small arboretum, with formal walks lined with limes and evergreen oaks and some contemporary additions (changing rooms and an outdoor gym). The former deer park to the east is now mostly playing fields, with lines of trees marking the paths and perimeter. The southern half of the 1847 ha-ha has been backfilled, but the northern stretch remains.



*Figure 53: Clockwise from top left: ancient mulberry tree; ‘Peace Garden’ within walled gardens with central sculpture ‘Portage’ by Margaret Higginson; east lawn; surviving section of 1847 ha-ha*

- ii. **St Luke's churchyard**, at less than half an acre in extent, is by far the smallest of the principal green spaces. It is also the oldest, with origins possibly going back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. A cluster of trees, mainly yews and hornbeams, screen the church from the main thoroughfare; most of the gravestones have been cleared, but a few remain, including a number of chest tombs in the paved area immediately in front of the church door.



*Figure 54: Early-19th century tombs in St Luke's churchyard*

- iii. **Charlton Cemetery** is a typical municipal burial ground of the 1850s, one of scores of such landscapes created in the wake of the 1852 Burial Act. Its 14 acres are laid out on a simple grid plan. The main focus is on the eastern entrance and the area around the chapels, where a number of specimen evergreens create an almost elegiac atmosphere.



*Figure 55: Engraving from the Illustrated London News of 1857, showing the newly-opened cemetery*

- iv. **Hornfair Park** and **Meridian Sports and Social Club** comprise another fragment of the Charlton House estate. The park was laid out by the LCC in 1936; it comprises a large expanse of playing fields to the east and a small area of formal gardens to the west, with the Charlton Lido (opened 1939) in between. The sports ground forms another expanse of playing fields, with a club-house facing Charlton Park Lane; it was originally opened in 1933 by the staff club associated with the Siemens cable factory in lower Charlton, and was revived in its present incarnation in 1977.



*Figure 56: Hornfair Park, western formal gardens*

Trees and other greenery also make a significant contribution to the street scene. The Village is lined with London plane trees at its western end which continue along Charlton Road and on to Little Heath, and there are prominent trees (ash and willow) outside the Assembly Rooms further east. The northern streets take much of their character from mature trees in private gardens and in the grounds of public housing estates. Beyond the boundaries of the Conservation Area, wooded areas like Maryon Wilson Park and the fragments of woodland around the Valley help to frame longer views, adding to the sense of an older rural landscape surviving in the gaps left by the modern city.

### 3.11 Negative factors

These include the following:

- **Replacement shop-fronts** – the original 19<sup>th</sup>-century shop-fronts in The Village have nearly all been replaced, many with poor-quality units employing flimsy synthetic materials, over-scaled fascia signage, garish colours and badly-proportioned glazing.
- **Replacement windows and doors** – replacement of original timber sashes with UPVC double-glazed units and original two- or four-panelled front doors with poor-quality materials, mainly in The Village (and the proposed Charlton Church Lane extension), damaging the architectural proportions of the houses and their sense of detail and depth.



Figure 57: Replacement of shop-fronts, doors and windows in The Village

- **Loss of architectural detail** – especially stucco and cast-iron elements on early/mid-19<sup>th</sup> century houses when these large buildings have been converted into blocks of flats.



Figure 58: 87 Lansdowne Lane, a mid-19th century detached villa now divided into flats and largely stripped of its stucco ornament

- **Loss of front gardens and boundaries** – A number of front gardens have been converted to hardstandings for off-road parking in Fairfield grove and in Charlton Church Lane. Some of these have been carried out in impermeable materials such as concrete and have also resulted in the loss of the front garden with all its soft landscaping. This markedly detracts from the quality of the streetscape and is eroding the character of the conservation area which, in the northern streets, is for the large part defined by trees and other greenery in private gardens. This also contributes to flood risk.

- **Overscaled and badly detailed extensions** – not (yet) a widespread problem, but beginning to be apparent, for example at 99 Lansdowne Lane (see figure 59 below) where half of a semi-detached pair has been drastically remodelled from a 3-bay, 3 storey Regency villa into a 4-bay, 4 storey block of flats and all original proportions and architectural detail such as window and door cases, sash windows etc. have been lost.



*Figure 59: 99-101 Lansdowne Lane: two halves of the same semi-detached pair*

- **Poor quality of infill buildings** – especially in The Village, where later 20<sup>th</sup>-century replacements for earlier buildings (especially Nos. 26-32 and the Cooperative supermarket) are poorly designed, crudely detailed and insensitively scaled.



*Figure 60: 26-32 The Village, infill of c.1960*

- **Poor public realm and traffic management** – particularly affecting the two service lanes (Fletching Road and Torrance Close) on either side of The Village, which are dominated by car parking, untidy back lots and dilapidated boundary structures. These service lanes are also under-used with service vehicles habitually preferring to load/unload on The Village, causing traffic obstructions and delays.

- **Inappropriate street furniture and paving** - Large areas of natural stone paving have been replaced with concrete paving; small areas have also been replaced with mismatched concrete paving or grey tarmac; the area of public realm which forms the setting to Grade I Listed Charlton House is an expanse of pink tarmac. Lighting columns are inappropriate in terms of scale and design; they are oversized in proportion to the village scale of the buildings and are more suited to a high density urban setting.
- **Lack of village signage** – there are no signs marking the entrances to the village or giving directions to Charlton House or the Church of St Luke, sites which certainly merit heritage signposting. The absence of any village or heritage signage means that Charlton Village is unlikely to be perceived as a visitor destination but as a through road – the B210 – between Woolwich and Greenwich. Village/heritage signage would help to highlight and reinforce local distinctiveness and assist with way-finding and place-making.

### 3.12 Neutral areas

Buildings which neither positively contribute to, nor markedly detract from, the character of the Conservation Area include the following:

- **47-59 The Village and 1-3 Fairfield Grove** – a row of brick houses built c.1980 to replace an earlier terrace.
- **Mulberry Close, Charlton Park Road** – a small development of 1930s flats set within the old boundary wall of Charlton Park.
- **Charlton Park Academy** – a large complex of secondary-school buildings at the north-east corner of Charlton Park, on the site of the open-air school established in the 1920s.

### 3.13 Problems, pressures and capacity for change

Significant factors include the following:

- **Loss of retail uses** – Charlton Village has served as a local shopping centre since the later 1800s, but in recent years it has been struggling to compete with larger centres such as Woolwich and Blackheath, as well as with the out-of-town retail parks of Charlton Riverside. This is a factor that may have led to the closure of several shops in The Village in recent years. However, retail frontage surveys undertaken in 2011 and 2016 show that vacant premises do not remain empty for long. Of more concern is the potential loss of retail to non-retail uses. The 2011 retail frontage survey shows that the number of A1 retail premises<sup>†</sup> in the village falls 6% below the 50% stipulated in the Local Plan under Policy TC(a) and this still remains the case in 2016.
- **Extensions** – as noted above, this is not yet a major issue, but demand for enlargement of the existing housing stock is likely to increase. The low-density character of the northern streets, with detached and semi-detached houses set in small gardens, may come under pressure as a result of this.

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<sup>†</sup> Use Class 'A1' comprises shops, post offices, ticket & travel agencies, hairdressers, cold food sales, funeral directors, hire shops, dry cleaners, and internet cafes etc.

- **Redevelopment** – again, this has yet to arise as a significant issue, but the forthcoming regeneration of Charlton Riverside, and the upgrading of transport links, are likely to mean increased pressure, especially in the northern part of the Conservation Area. Large villa sites like those on Charlton Church Lane and Lansdowne Lane will be especially vulnerable.
- **Infill** – the later 20<sup>th</sup>-century history of Charlton Village was largely one of infill development, and the process is continuing e.g. with the 10 storey block called Cityview on Lansdowne Lane, just outside the Conservation Area. The latter's large bulk and markedly non-contextual design illustrate the impact such developments can have on the older urban fabric.
- **Loss and replacement of features** – the loss of original features such as windows and doors, and the substitution of crude modern replacements, has already had a negative impact on the character of the area, and is likely to be a continuing problem.

The extent to which Charlton Village can accommodate further major development – at least without significant compromise to its historic character – is probably limited. Some of the later 20<sup>th</sup> Century infill in The Village and the northern streets could beneficially be replaced with more imaginative work, and sensitive redevelopment might be acceptable in some of the neutral areas identified above. But large-scale development potential is likely to be restricted to the riverside area rather than the hilltop village – though this will put further pressure on the latter's viability as a place of trading and community life.

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## 5. Contacts and further advice

For conservation and design advice, please contact:

Planning Policy Team  
Royal Borough of Greenwich  
The Woolwich Centre  
Wellington Street  
London SE18 6HQ  
Tel: 020 8854 5355/5034  
Email: [building-conservation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:building-conservation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

For advice on planning issues such as planning permission, please contact:

Development Planning Team (West)  
Royal Borough of Greenwich  
The Woolwich Centre  
Wellington Street  
London SE18 6HQ  
Tel: 020 8921 5019/5782  
Email: [planningapps@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:planningapps@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)



## Appendix I

### Index of Statutory Listed Buildings

1	<b>Charlton Church Lane</b>	Church of St Luke	Grade II*
2		Churchyard walls, gate piers and gate to St Luke's Church	Grade II
3		Charlton Village War Memorial	Grade II
4	<b>Charlton Park Road</b>	Walls of Charlton Park	Grade II
5	<b>Charlton Road</b>	Charlton House	Grade I
6		Stable Buildings to southwest of Charlton House	Grade I
7		Gateway on axis to west of Charlton House	Grade I
8		Garden House to northwest of Charlton House	Grade I
9	<b>Fairfield Grove</b>	Nos. 25, 27, 29	Grade II
10		Nos. 31 & 33	Grade II
11		Nos. 35 & 37	Grade II
12		No. 39	Grade II
13	<b>Village, The</b>	Bugle Horn Inn	Grade II

***A selection of consultation comments on the draft SPD:***

*“well-researched, detailed and exceptionally illustrated”* (Historic England)

*“...will make an excellent basis for continuing and improving the safeguarding of the Charlton Village Conservation Area and Charlton’s listed buildings together with their associated environments”* (The Charlton Society)

*“...applaud the new Character Appraisal and Management Strategy...an excellent publication”* (The Greenwich Conservation Group)

*“the pictures really showcase the Village to its best effect”* (respondent)

*“excellent documentation”* (respondent)

*“fascinating and historically interesting”* (respondent)

*“exceedingly pleased that the Council propose to protect our heritage for future generations”* (respondent)