

Blackheath Conservation Area character appraisal and supplementary planning document

March 2007



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Foreword

“Blackheath is a residential suburb in south east London, within two London boroughs, Greenwich and Lewisham. Its name comes from the wide treeless plain – the Heath – which is the first high ground out of London. Development took place initially on the edge of this Heath, from the late 17th century onwards but accelerating in the 19th century and continuing well into the 20th. Lewisham’s part of Blackheath is largely contained within its conservation area of which local people are rightly proud and defensive.

So what makes this area special? The architectural quality of many of its buildings, certainly; also a relatively low density of development and a green, well-treed and generally wellmaintained environment. But it is not just the architectural set-pieces, listed buildings or formal uniform terraces that set Blackheath’s overall character. It is the juxtaposition of these with a rich and varied mixture of buildings of different periods; unexpected corners, strange historic survivals, and stylish new additions – all these give Blackheath its distinctive and pleasing character.

The Heath still dominates, its edges made the more attractive by wayward past encroachments. Local people generally see it as a whole, ignoring borough boundaries and we trust our two local authorities will also view their respective conservation areas as part of the greater whole.”

Neil Rhind

Vice President, Blackheath Society and Director and Secretary of the Blackheath Preservation Trust 1972-2002

Tony Aldous

Vice-President, Blackheath Society

1 Introduction

Blackheath conservation area was one of the first conservation areas to be designated in the country in March 1968 and has been extended a number of times since. Blackheath sits in two London boroughs: Lewisham and Greenwich. The borough boundaries are shown on the maps in this document and the character appraisal relates to the conservation area which lies within the borough of Lewisham, although it has regard to the parts within the borough of Greenwich where appropriate. Character appraisals are also being drafted for the Greenwich parts of Blackheath by Greenwich Council.

The fieldwork, research and analysis for this document were undertaken from January to July 2006. Whilst every attempt has been made to consider all aspects of the character of the conservation area there may be elements that have been omitted due to lack of space or inaccessibility (private land or restricted access). Any such omission does not imply that an element does not contribute to the character of the conservation area.

1.1 Public Consultation

The framework for this study follows English Heritage guidance: *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals* and its companion: *Guidance on the Management Of Conservation Areas*, both published February 2006. The character appraisal, management plan and the supplementary planning document were made available for public consultation in October and November 2006 and adopted by the Council, having taking into consideration local representations, in March 2007.

1.2 Planning policy

The Council has a duty to formulate and publish proposals for conservation areas and to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of such areas. The importance of conservation area appraisals and management plans is now expressed in government Best Value Performance Indicators.

Character appraisals are a material consideration in the planning process and are used when determining planning applications and appeals. Other planning policies may also be taken into consideration when considering planning applications and these are available in the Unitary Development Plan and emerging Local Development Framework. This appraisal contains a supplementary planning document which aims to ensure that the tradition of well designed new development in the conservation area is continued when suitable sites exist. A management plan has also been produced for the conservation area.

1.3 Archaeological potential

An area of archaeological potential has been identified in the Council's Unitary Development Plan which covers the whole of the Heath and many of the areas of housing around it. Although the Heath has long been quarried for its minerals, the area has a considerable history of human exploitation and activity, evidence of which may survive.

At Lee a smaller Area of Archaeological Potential covers the two small sites of settlement probably dating from the medieval period and shown on the mid-18th century map.

1.4 Location

The Blackheath Conservation Area lies at the north-east boundary of the London Borough of Lewisham. The boundary of the conservation area to the north takes the line of the A2. To the east, the conservation area follows the edge of the Heath and then runs south to the railway and into the valley, again on the borough boundary. The southern-most limit of the conservation area abuts Lee High Road whilst to the west, south of the railway line, it extends to include Belmont Grove where it adjoins the Belmont Conservation Area. The north-west extremity of the conservation area reaches the junction of Dartmouth Hill and Blackheath Hill.

Topographically, the conservation area extends to the north and south of the Kid Brook valley (formerly known as Wricklemarsh Brook) which is aligned east – west and now the line of the railway. To the north the land rises from the valley at approximately 20m OD onto Blackheath at a maximum height of around 45m OD. Close to the northern edge of the Heath the land falls away again into the valley of the River Thames. South of the Kid Brook valley the land also rises, but less so than to the north. Lee Terrace occupies the highest ground south of valley, reaching a little under 35m OD before the land gently falls away again to the south to approximately 15m OD at Lee High Road.

1.5 Population

The 2001 Census shows that some 8,000 people live in the Lewisham part of the conservation area and they make up the majority of the population of the Blackheath Ward. They live in approximately 3,800 different households with an average household size of 2.1 people, slightly smaller than for the rest of the borough. Overcrowding is lower than average.

While the age structure of conservation area residents is similar to the borough as a whole, there are a lower proportion of people from ethnic minority groups. The proportion of people with higher education and professional qualifications is much higher than for the borough as a whole and levels of unemployment are also lower. Levels of car ownership are similar to the rest of the borough.

2 History of the area

The story charting the landscape and development of the area of the Blackheath Conservation Area falls into two quite distinct parts: that of the open Heath land and its fringes at the north of the railway line and the area to the south. The railway lies in the valley of the Kid Brook and this landscape feature has formed a boundary between manors and parishes since the medieval period, possibly even from Saxon times.

Blackheath has been known by this name since the 12th century at least. Its position to the southeast of the City of London and close to the roads to the channel ports meant that it served as the place where the dignitaries and citizens of London could turn out to greet kings returning from war or visiting foreign monarchs and nobility. This was especially true after the creation of The Duke of Gloucester's palace at Greenwich on the northern slopes on what was then part of the Heath. The duke's land was extended in 1432 to form what is now known as Greenwich Park.¹

However, when not being used for such celebrations, the Heath was inhabited by grazing animals, gypsy camps and vagrants and exploited for its turf, sand and gravel and chalk with small pits particularly in the eighteenth century when there was a building boom in London. The Heath was also a place of recreation with a golf course and a cricket pitch as well as being the site of fairs and holiday celebrations.

Encroachment was underway on the western edge of Blackheath from the seventeenth century – the Green Man Hotel, which stood on the site of Allison Close, existed by 1629. The Heath was not common land but manorial waste and as such nothing was built on it without the consent of the Lord of the Manor. In this respect, encroachment south of the Green Man was not being carried out by poor landless squatters building small cottages, but by the 2nd Earl of Dartmouth who transformed market stalls associated with a twice yearly fair, granted to his family in 1683, into a development of fine suburban houses along Dartmouth Row and a grand house for himself.

The main focus of historic settlement today is the Village of Blackheath but this is an area of relatively late development. Development at Blackheath Village began with the relocation of a public house called the Three Tuns (now O'Neills) close to a public well; the Queen Elizabeth Well. Other than the Crown opposite there were only two or three cottages in the Village until the 1790's.

The nineteenth century saw the development of this funnel shaped area of land into the block of properties now bounded by Tranquil Vale and Montpelier Vale. Further small 'islands' of buildings, such as the block including the Hare and Billet pushed out

¹ Rhind (2002, P. 11)

onto the Heath in the early 18th century. The construction of buildings around the Heath such as the Paragon in 1794 to the northeast and Eliot Place stimulated the growth of the Village into becoming a local service centre. Within the open Heath, houses were even built within an abandoned quarry at Blackheath Vale. All Saints church, built in 1857 is also an encroachment onto the Heath.

South of the railway the landscape, even into the 18th century, was one of small irregular fields and narrowing twisting lanes linking small groups of houses within the manor of Lee. The place-name is often regarded as meaning 'a woodland clearing' but an alternative suggestion is 'meadow' – a name that might well have described the area around the settlement alongside the Kid Brook. The northern-most cluster included the Church of St Margaret. The original mediaeval church was to the north of Belmont Hill. This was replaced with a building of 1813 which incorporated the original tower. The ruinous tower (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) is all that remains of this church set in its churchyard with the present church of St Margaret's dating from 1839-40 by John Brown being located on the south side of Belmont Hill.

The construction of the railway, arriving in Blackheath in 1849, was a major factor in the development of the layout of streets and roads in the area despite it being relatively hidden from most public viewpoints. A station at Blackheath could take advantage of the already developed fashionable suburbs on the hills to the east of Lewisham and the edges of the Heath. The railway was carefully laid in the valley formed by the Kid Brook so as to minimise the impact on the established community.

During the second half of the nineteenth century there was further extensive development of the areas immediately north of the tracks which were defined by the railway's east-west alignment. For example: Collins Street, Southvale Road and Blackheath Grove as well as streets south of the railway erased the former rural character of the landscape and replaced it with Victorian villas and terraced houses.

3 Spatial character of the conservation area

Blackheath was one of the earliest conservation areas to be designated and presently covers one of the largest areas of designation in South London. Its continued relevance to London and Londoners is reflected in its year round use as a recreation space of metropolitan importance, general amenity space and venue for major events such as the London Marathon.

Statutory protections extend to continuous conservation area designation to the entire north and eastern borders and the buffer zone of the Greenwich World Heritage site extending to the southern edge just short of the terraces and gardens that enclose the Heath on this edge.

Movement to and from the Heath into and out of the urban envelope exemplified by 'the Village' has a profound effect on the observer. Defining this essential quality is an important part of understanding the character of the conservation area.

The potentially divisive effect of the railway's arrival in 1849 was minimised by its positioning low in the former Kid Brook valley with bridges constructed at strategic locations across it. The area to the south of the valley was always in the separate manor of Lee. This area is still considered part of Blackheath although it has very different characteristics given the Heath has very little visual influence on this part of the conservation area. It should be noted however that extended views of St Margaret's spire can be had from the Heath.

4 Activity: Prevailing and former uses

The conservation area is well defined in terms of prevailing uses. The historic rural hinterland of Lewisham and Greenwich have gone; replaced with houses although the Heath itself is perhaps one of the most 'preserved' pieces of open space in London, although its 'use' in the broadest sense has been mixed and multi-layered through its history.

In broad terms, the Blackheath conservation area comprises a commercial core of a diverse character and the residential suburbs that feed it. The busy and bustling core to the Village is a very attractive part of its character. It is made up of an important balance of specialist shops, convenience shops, restaurants, cafes and financial and other services. This mix of uses ensures an active frontage throughout the day and through to the evening throughout the Village. A small library, post office and the train station ensure the Village maintains its self-sufficient sustainable character.

It is this mix of uses combined with the proximity of the Heath and Greenwich Park and village and short train ride into central London, which make Blackheath such an attractive place to live. The commercial core is defined as an important district centre in the Unitary Development Plan and is very distinctive and defined in area terms. This is largely to do with topography, the railway and development control decisions. The commercial core has crept up across the Heath to some extent with the presence of the Clarendon Hotel.

There are five schools in or close to the Village. In Wemyss Road, the Grade II listed Blackheath High School (E R Robson 1879-80) and a preparatory school occupies the attractive and distinctive old village school building in Tranquil Passage. These contribute to the sense of a sustainable district of Blackheath although the two major school complexes are south of the railway line. For the most part (with the exception of some individual buildings) the remaining schools are not architecturally inspiring but do have valuable open spaces providing good amenity for school users. The Territorial Army has occupied the site of the former Holly Hedge House since 1888 and still uses this complex on evenings and weekends being a volunteer battalion.

The remaining dominant use through the conservation area is residential. Within this category there are three important building types: the single-family dwelling house, the converted house and the flat block. Blackheath has retained many of its grand houses in single occupancy whereas in many other areas of London, similarly large houses have been converted into flats.

This can lead to pressure of another sort; the need for additional parking and the desire to have this parking within the curtilage of the house.. This type of development can damage the setting of the house and often entails the removal of boundary walls and planting to necessitate access. These elements will in almost all cases make an

important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The flat blocks within the conservation area are varied in quality with some successfully integrated groups. Selwyn Court is a building, that although controversial at its inception, has shown over time to be of some quality and townscape importance on the southern entrance to the Village. The flat blocks immediately to the north of the railway are well grouped and take good advantage of the sloping wooded sites. Variations in height of the blocks and the interspersal of houses add to the quality of this group.

The Heath itself hosts a range of recreational uses and is of such scale that many outdoor sports such as football, jogging, walking, kite flying, cycling are easily accommodated without any impact on the amenity of others or the character of the Heath. These activities contribute to the vibrancy and local, national and even international identity of Blackheath.

5 Relationship to surrounding areas

The Heath is shared between two boroughs of which roughly three quarters is in Lewisham and one quarter in Greenwich. The Heath is a large landscape feature that forms an important part of both councils' environments. The edges of the Heath are defining parts of the character of over half of the conservation area and their variety and scale combined with the surprising topographical changes across the Heath provide the visitor with constantly changing views, way-finding landmarks and points of reference.

In addition, the height of Blackheath compared with its surroundings is revealed and rewards the visitor with dynamic and breath-taking far reaching views to London-wide reference points such as Canary Wharf, Crystal Palace radio masts, the wooded slopes of Shooters Hill and a number of church spires piercing the low skylines for miles around.

Its relationship and juxtaposition with Greenwich Park once part of the Heath is a key defining characteristic. The formality of the Park with its regimental tree lined vistas and considered plan enclosed by high brick walls and mature trees behind juts into the Heath, an informal space of multi phased encroachment, carefully managed semi-natural habitats and open vistas. This transition between two very different spaces and the importance that both have to the context of each other forms part of the dynamic of the Heath and makes a very positive contribution towards the character of both.

To the south, east and west there is enclosure and visual interest and punctuation (in the form of the spire of All Saints Church) and on travelling further into the Heath the promise of something more intimate and urban; the Village tucked down the slope but forcefully signposted by the presence of All Saints Church, itself an encroachment onto the Heath.

6 Public spaces, trees and natural boundaries

The subtle changes in level across the Heath give rise to many different areas with both informal and formal management processes which affect the character of these spaces (please refer to Blackheath; A Landscape Strategy, Kim Wilkie Associates August 2002).

The trees which flourish on the Heath are those close to the settlements where the top soils have been nourished. The Act of Parliament governing the management of the Heath; the Metropolitan Commons (Supplemental) Act 1871 precludes the planting of trees so as to maintain the Heath's open character. The lack of trees is largely due to the lack of a water table and rapidly draining gravel which results in its poor quality soil.

In very general terms, the presence of groups of trees placed around edges and nodes of the Heath complemented by ponds provide very attractive and interesting punctuations in the open landscape. Trees form the foreground and setting in many cases to listed buildings and buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Trees in particular make an important contribution to the character of Blackheath Vale. This group of very exposed buildings towards the centre of the Heath are always seen with mature trees either framing or in front of houses helping them integrate with the Heath. This is also true to a lesser extent of the Territorial Army base at Holly Hedge House. The latter, however is not as well screened and views into garages and service areas have a negative impact on the open character of this part of the Heath.

Trees form a particularly important role in structuring views north across to Greenwich Park from the Heath and continue round to the west and the east so that almost all views north are characterised by a natural dense tree cover providing an interesting and varied skyline through the seasons and contrasting dramatically with the solidity and uncompromising character of the group of office blocks at Canary Wharf which can be seen emerging from this tree line from much of the Heath.

There is a small paved park to the west boundary of Dartmouth Row which due to its elevated position has superb views of the city but is both a threatening (due to the lack of overlooking and natural surveillance) and poorly maintained space.

Set to the south of the Heath but intending to form an extension of its open character, Ryculff Square is a pleasant space and setting for the groups of flat blocks laid in squares. The trees lining some access roads tend to accentuate the roads rather than the spaces where the roads do not deserve such status. However, the mature trees help soften these spaces and relieve what can be the monotony of the stripped neo-classical architecture.

A surprisingly large open public space in the conservation area is the car park to Blackheath station. Its contribution to the character of the conservation area relates to the space with which an area like this allows for the appreciation of other buildings. Views of Collins Street, the station, across to Winchester House and importantly the rear of the listed buildings to the bottom of Tranquil Vale all add to the character of this open space. The fact that it is a publicly accessible space notably used for a weekly farmer's market forms part of its positive character.

Trees generally within the conservation area are seen in large informal groups, such as the slopes around Heath Lane and as formal tree lined boulevards, such as Tranquil Vale. They are particularly attractive when seen framing the good groups of listed and unlisted villas particularly south of the railway as well as the individual surviving large houses which derive much of their compositional quality from the semi wooded gardens within which they stand. Trees also form an important part of the western 'gateway' to the conservation area on Belmont Hill and help frame very attractive local views of the church of St Margaret at the top of the hill.

7 Views, vistas and panoramas

The character of views into, within, through and out of the conservation area can be divided into three broad types; local, strategic and London wide. South of the railway line, views within, into and out of the conservation area are stopped or closed by the configuration of roads and the presence of mature trees lining these roads. There are no planned vistas or panoramas in contrast to the north of the railway. St Margaret's church is seen from a number of viewpoints, though due to its heavily treed setting and being set well back from the road it is only fully appreciated in relatively short views. It is perhaps best seen either from Belmont Hill or in glimpsed framed views between the handsome double fronted villas of Church Terrace. These views contribute to the real sense of a formal space in Church Terrace despite the houses seemingly in part turning their back on the church. Closed views with built form are with a few exceptions (for example Church Terrace is closed to the east by No.17 &18 incidental rather than planned.

To the north of the railway, there are good examples of the three types. Many local views are had of individual buildings (particularly All Saints Church) and are also defined by key transitional buildings (such as the distinctive 'side elevation of the Hare and Billet) which often performs a subtle but important way finding role in particular views. The extent of the Heath means that views are constantly changing, developing and diminishing. This adds to the interest and variety of the Heath, which forms part of its positive character.

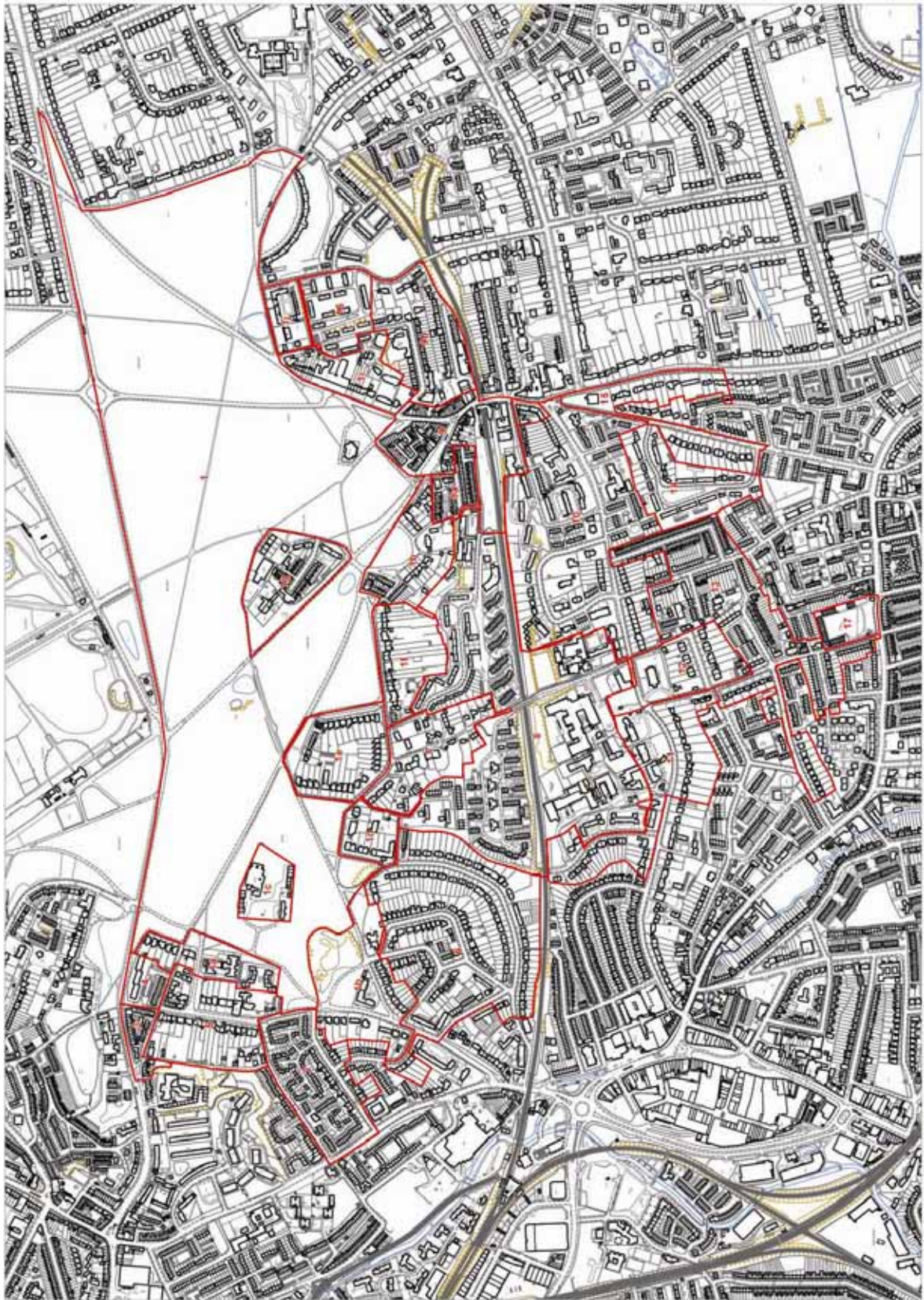
Strategic views include those gained from key points on the Heath into the conservation area (for example the important axis from Blackheath Gate (Greenwich Park) to the spire of All Saints church and views towards the Rangers House). The importance of these views form a key part of the sensitivity of the World Heritage Site buffer zone designation which includes virtually the whole Heath.

From the Heath it is also possible to gain a sense of the relative height of Blackheath in relation to the rest of the city. This is particularly apparent in the views west from Blackheath Hill and the rear of Dartmouth Row and the views north towards Canary wharf (which gives a real sense of scale to both the Heath and Canary Wharf) and the views east which give a sense of the edge of Greater London stretching out to the wider Kent countryside beyond. The view east is also characterised by some fine church spires (St Johns, St John's Park and St James's, Kidbrooke Park Road in particular and St Michael's (Blackheath Park) distinctive spire which nestles behind All Saints defining the skyline when looking towards the Village. To the south distant views of Crystal Palace radio beacon can be had.

The views out from the Heath are notable in terms of built form for the importance that scale plays in terms of enclosing the Heath at key points and making robust architectural statements. This is more successful to the western (Dartmouth Terrace

and adjacent listed pair) and southern edges (Aberdeen Terrace, Eliot Place, Montpelier Row, Grottes Buildings and Lloyds Place) than on the eastern borders which, with the exception of 15-16 St Germans Place, are not on as grand a scale or as architecturally accomplished.

To the north, though not in the borough, Nos 1-37 Shooters Hill, Vanburgh Terrace and Vanburgh Park have a similar role of enclosure on a grand scale and are clearly seen as a defining part of the Heath enclosure in views out of the conservation area



Blackheath Conservation Area - Character Area Map

8 Areas of distinct character

Being such a large conservation area, Blackheath must be divided into 'sub areas' to provide a clear understanding of the defining elements, which make up the character of a particular part of the conservation area. It should be noted that whilst sub areas have been identified there remains a cohesion to the whole conservation area and between each sub area.

Each character area makes reference to the following key factors; street layout, building types/periods, scale and building line, local details and relative quality and degree of heritage assets intact.

8.1 Character Area 1: The Heath and its edges

This is the largest character area of the conservation area and the most complex. It shares its northern boundary with the London Borough of Greenwich and is dominated by the juxtaposition of the walls and mature tree backdrop of Greenwich Park and the office blocks of Canary Wharf which form such a prominent and dynamic part of the skyline to the north.

The Heath is breath-taking simply because of its scale and changing character as one travels through it. The key to understanding its character is in the acceptance of the Heath as an amorphous collection of building groups most of which have come about from encroachment onto the open Heath. This organic growth, which manifests itself as significant but very separate groups of terraced houses (Montpelier Row, mostly 1796, Grottes Buildings (1774) and Grottes Place mostly 1857 but No.1 is 1810 and No.2 is a truncated part of Canister House dating from 1790, and nos. 3 & 4 are 1835), and semi-detached and detached houses (Aberdeen Terrace c1853-4, Eliot Place, (Nos. 1 & 6 of 1796, Nos. 9a & 9b – 1911 and the remainder 1800-01 and Dartmouth Terrace 1855) means that from different vantage points different groups become dominant and help enclose the Heath on this massive scale. This creates an ever-changing character of significant quality, subtlety and variation.

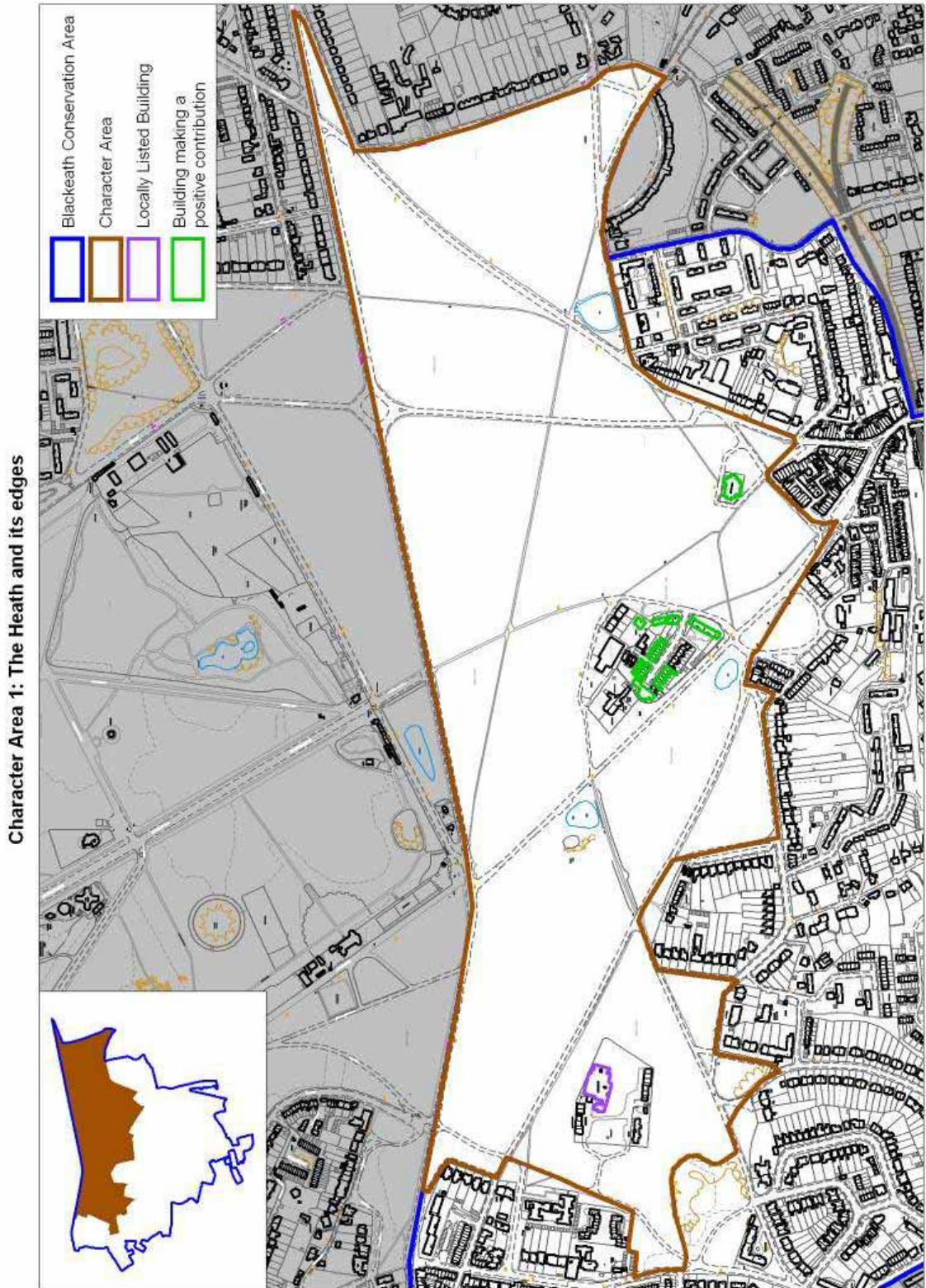
Groups are, with the exception of Eliot Place and Grottes Buildings, of a consistent scale and building line. They are set off the Heath with various forms of enclosure to, in most cases, relatively small front garden areas (with the exception of The Orchard – which are large and have subsequently been in parts taken up with the parking of cars). Enclosures can vary from brick boundary walls to railings and natural hedge boundaries.

Houses range in date from the late eighteenth century (Grottes Place, Eliot Place) through to the Edwardian period (The Orchard and Orchard Drive) and with important groups from the twentieth century (North Several 1969 and South Row 1963).

The grand scale of the terraces; particularly Eliot Place and Grote's Buildings are a distinctive and unique part of the character of the Heath enclosure.

Roofscape is an important part of the character area and given the extended views of all built form, it is particularly sensitive to even modest changes. Chimneys, chimney pots, eaves lines, parapets, traditional materials, decorative finials, dormers, traditional mansard forms all contribute to the richness of the skyline and the quality of the roofscape.

The Heath is enclosed almost entirely on all sides by listed buildings. This reflects the exceptionally high quality of the historic townscape in this character area. Three surprising pockets of development survive on the Heath itself: Holly Hedge House (now part of the Territorial Army base), Blackheath Vale (built in a former gravel pit), Duke Humphrey Road and Talbot Place, with the most prominent encroachment being All Saint's Church.



8.1.1 Character Area 1a: Dartmouth Terrace and Wat Tyler Road

Dartmouth Terrace is one of the most striking architectural compositions which enclose the Heath. It comprises five large raised three storey villas arranged such that the modulation of the bays are symmetrical within the group, with the central villa having double bays arranged around a central entrance. This composition is very effective in long distance views and the houses are clearly seen in views west from much of the Heath.

They were constructed on the Bowling Green of the Green Man public house in 1854 and originally known as Nos. 1-5 Lansdowne Place. It should be noted that the yellow stock brick (some of which had been cleaned) the low slate roofs taken over the bays and the eaves chimney stacks all make a very positive contribution towards the group and characteristically varied skyline as seen from the Heath.

Next to Dartmouth Terrace, Lydia House and Sherwell (No.1 Dartmouth Grove and Dartmouth Hill respectively) is also a symmetrical composition in a style associated with Michael Searles and differs from the latter as it presents a large shared pediment to the Heath and is white stucco with paired ground floor bays and side extensions. The symmetrical nature of the shared façade is an important part of the character of this building. The contrast between the brick of Dartmouth Terrace and the white painted stucco of Lydia House and Sherwell is striking and defines both as local landmarks.

The adjacent three storey flat block also contributes to the enclosure of the Heath at this edge but is architecturally undistinguished.

8.1.2 Character Area 1b: Lewisham Hill and Eliot Hill

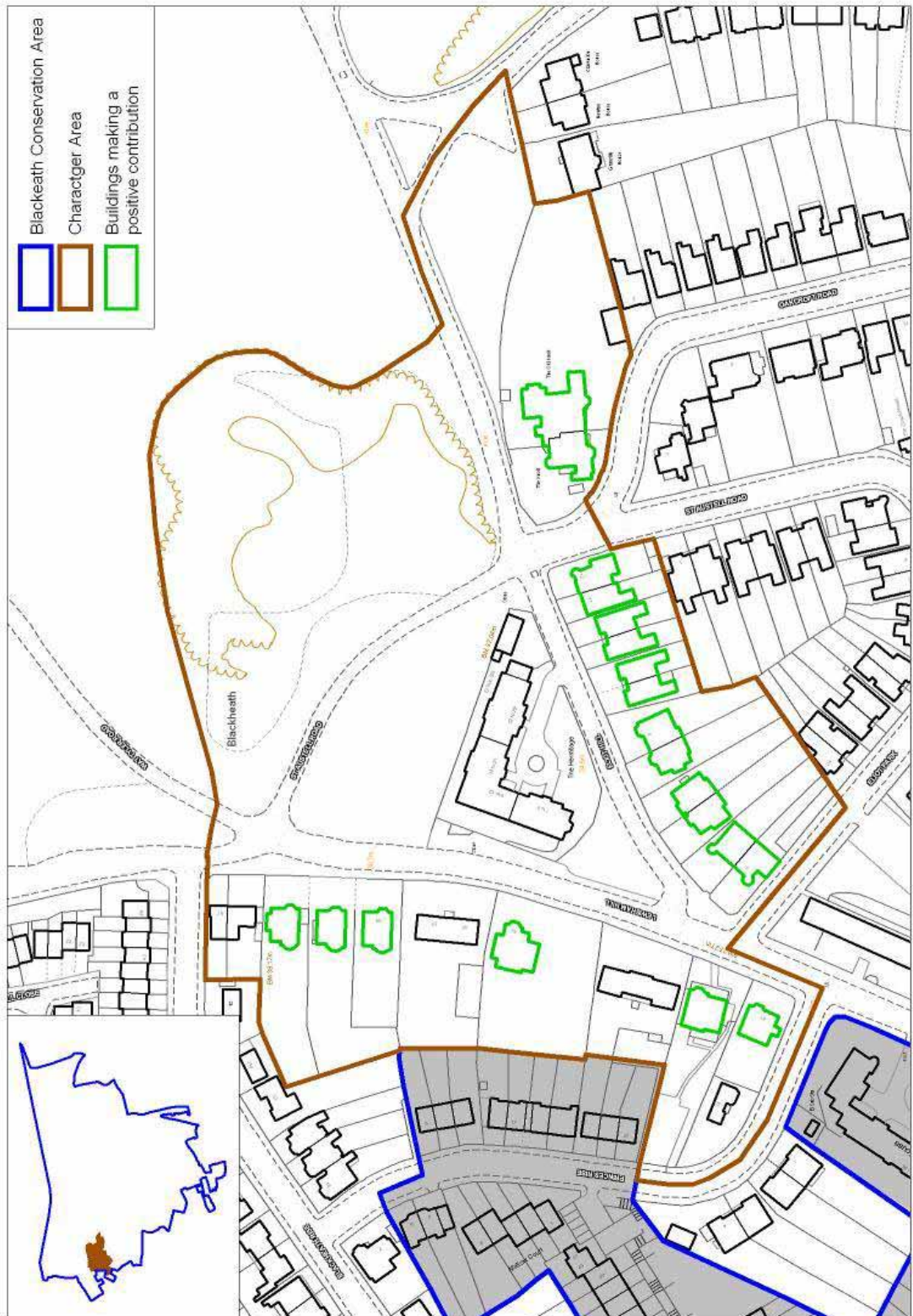
The two roads run steeply down from the Heath and converge behind the four storey 1930's block of flats; 'The Hermitage'. This part of the Heath is largely obscured from long views due to it sitting in remains of old gravel pits which have created a man made bowl lined with trees. The Heath falls away sharply at this point to reveal view towards Lewisham.

Bomb damage and redevelopment resulted in what was once a large development of three to four storey Victorian Villas reduced to a handful which are seen to the lower sections of Lewisham Hill. These villas are three storey with low slate roofs, bracketed eaves and distinctive three light arched windows with stuccoed surrounds.

A number of street trees add to the sylvan quality of this part of the Heath although it does not read as part of the much wider open Heath because of the topography.

A notable building in the character area is The Knoll (now split into two houses). The house has long lost its gardens to development through the 1850's (Granville Park) and the turn of the last century (Oakcroft Road), and as a result appears odd with its back to the open Heath and front to the now developed Oakcroft Road. It is nonetheless a fine house of 1798 by George Gibson (extended in the 1840s and again in the 1860s) and curiously not listed.

Character Area 1b: Lewisham Hill and Eliot Hill



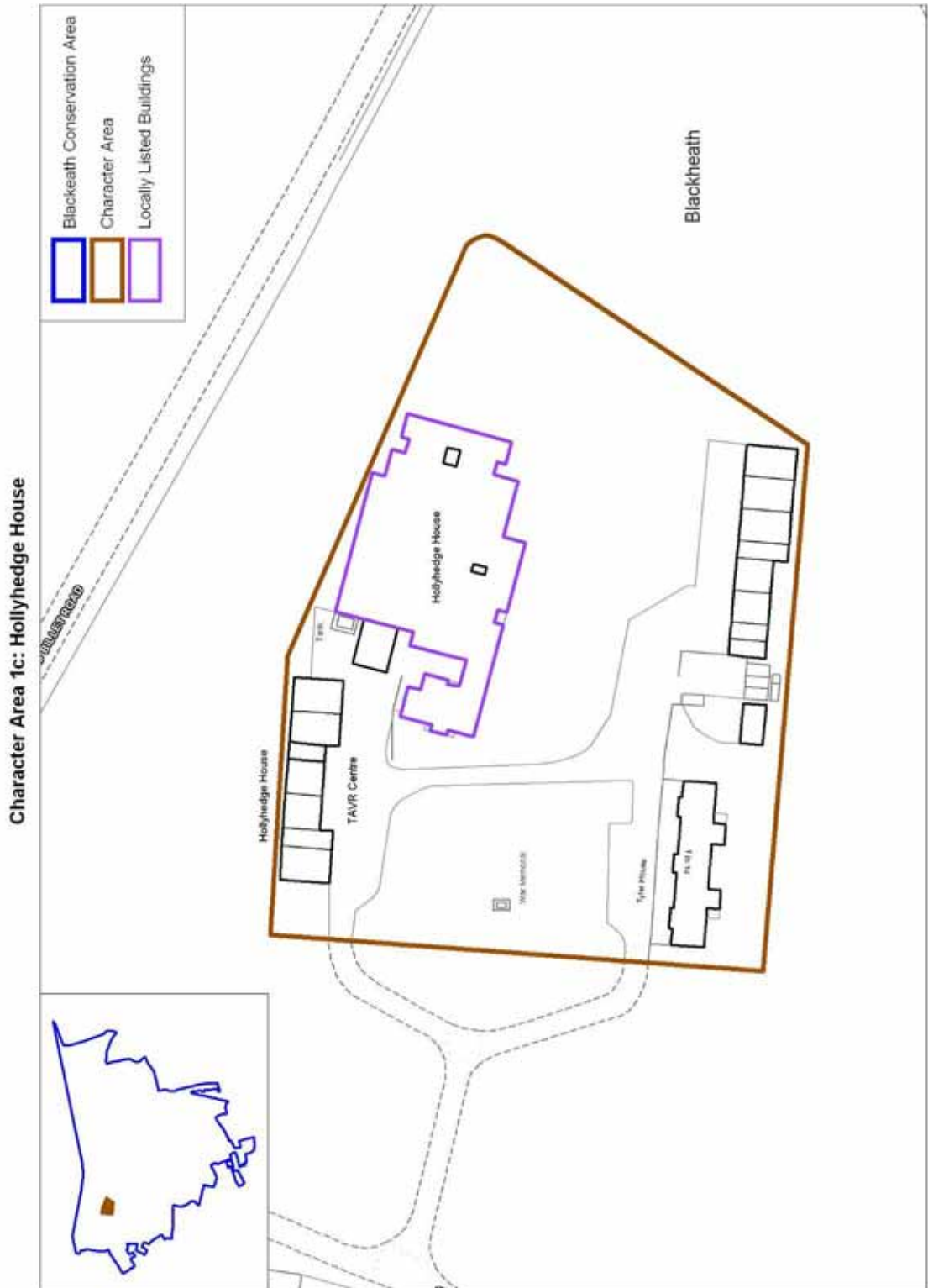
8.1.3 Character Area 1c: Holly Hedge House

The remains of Holly Hedge House (now part of the Territorial Army base) set out in such a prominent and visually sensitive section of the Heath land is one of a number of significant historically developed encroachments which visually break up the open views and contribute to the ever changing spatial character of the Heath.

The house was formerly the residence of the Vicar of Lewisham and bombed damaged during the Second World War and demolished in 1946. The military still have a presence on the site.

The area is enclosed by fencing and hedges have grown up behind to largely obscure the internal layout and massing of buildings. Most of the buildings are utilitarian in character with an unassuming row of dormitory type buildings to the southern boundary.

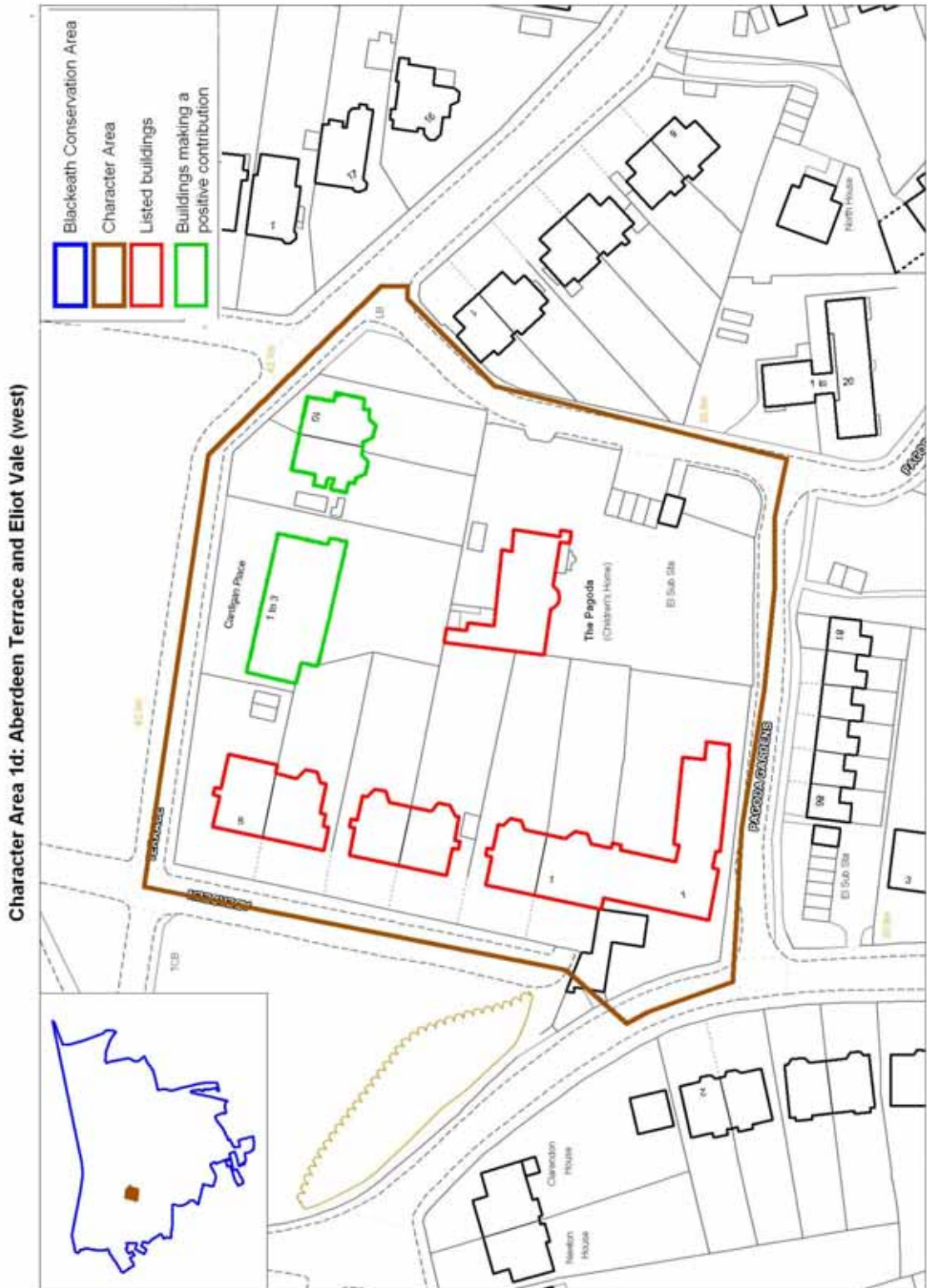
This area is limited in historic quality but is very sensitive to change given its prominent location on the Heath.



8.1.4 Character Area 1d: Aberdeen Terrace and Eliot Vale (west)

Aberdeen Terrace comprising paired villas on a huge scale form one of the groups of formal architectural compositions defining the edge of the Heath. Built c1856 to the designs of John Whichcord Jnr. This group is also symmetrically arranged so as to work as one large architectural composition from the Heath (similar to Dartmouth Terrace in this respect). The combination of paired entrances set slightly forward and finished in stucco work is then fanned out as a series of bays and pilasters. This is broken only by an extension to the east side of the central pair which has unbalanced the intended effect. The open balustrading to the roof with the roof largely being hidden from view is a distinctive element of the character of these pairs.

These groups are very sensitive to change, due to their symmetrical compositions, and form such an important part of the architectural quality of the groups fronting the Heath.



8.1.5 Character Area 1e: The Orchard, Orchard Drive, North Several and Eliot Vale (part)

This area of encroachment onto the Heath was first taken in 1781. This was extended and the existing house on the site; The Orchard was largely rebuilt or substantially altered. This house was subsequently converted to flats in the 1920s and demolished in 1965 to be replaced by the block of flats known as Lynn Court.

Orchard Drive is particularly notable for its roofscape presented to the Heath. This comprises a varied group of gables which form a pleasing rhythm which attracts the eye and gently encloses the Heath at this point. This is accentuated by the trees which partially line the Heath side of Orchard Drive so that some houses are seen through or behind the large canopies of the trees.

The houses of Orchard Drive, The Orchard and the north side of Eliot Vale loosely represent the Arts and Crafts period; with the use of prominent gables, timber casement windows as well as large sashes, oriel bays, stained glass and half timbered facades and bays. These are in a combination of brick and painted render facades but all with clay tile roofs. Some roofs have particularly attractive cast terracotta finials and decorated ridges.

North Several is a development of seven houses dating from 1969 by the architect Royston Summers. The development wraps round the north east corner of Orchard Drive and unashamedly addresses the Heath. It is a very modern development and very distinctive on this part of the Heath. This is because of the very strong vertical emphasis placed on the façade by the use of closely spaced mullions and projecting party walls to produce strong vertical rhythm. A plain low open timber paling fence is the only division between the Heath and the private communal space of the houses. In long views this gives the effect of the buildings being right on the edge of the Heath and strengthens their projection into the Heath.

The houses to the north side of Eliot Vale are set well back from the road and some have the remains of early timber fences and posts. The posts have carved heads and are attractive features in the street scene.

The open nature of the front gardens with domestic hedges and mature trees and timber fenced boundaries make for very attractive suburban settings in all three roads, but particularly Eliot Vale.

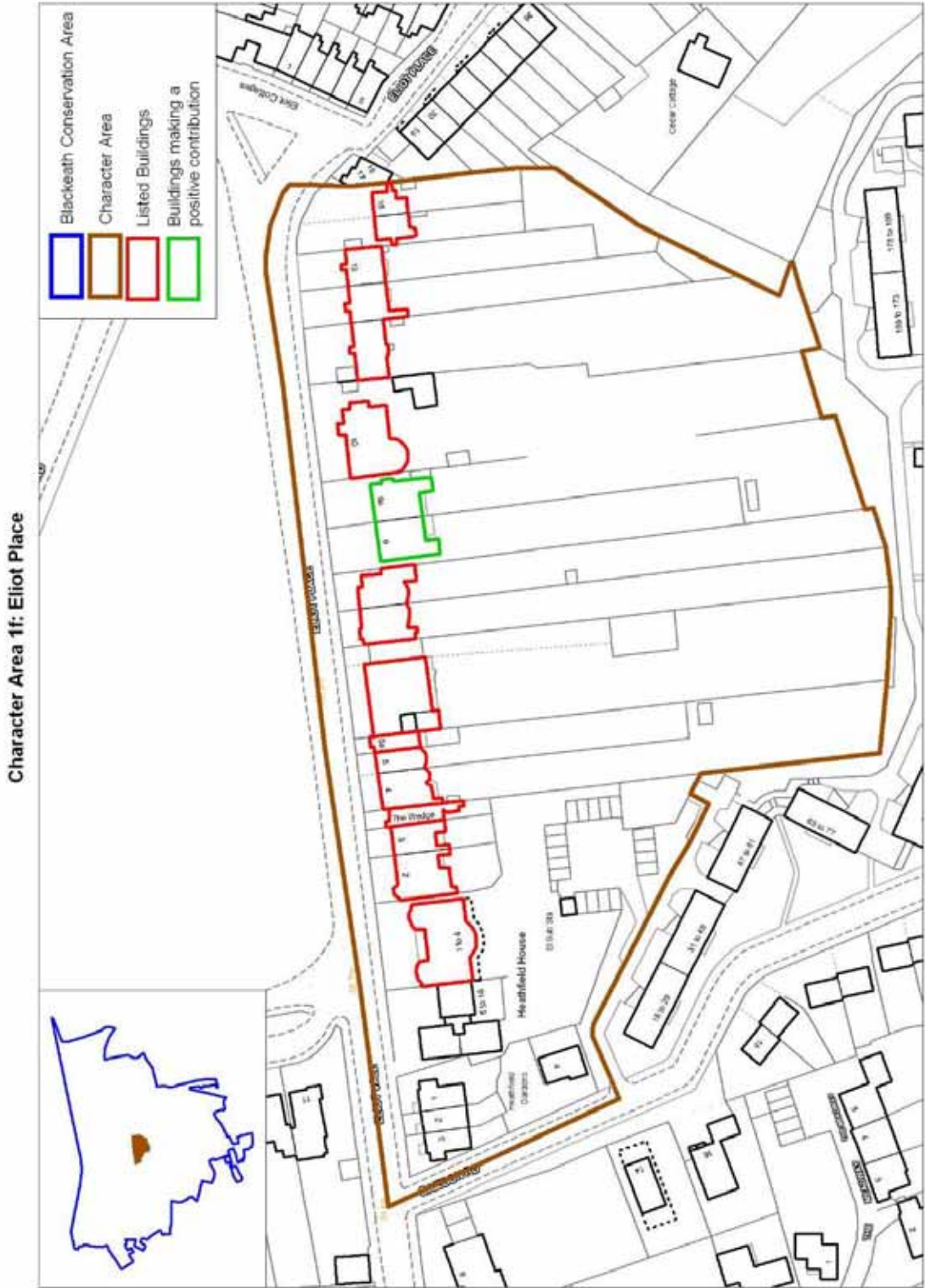


8.1.6 Character Area 1f: Eliot Place

Eliot Vale rises onto the Heath to become Eliot Place. This long group of individual houses is on a grand scale (up to three and four storeys) and forms part of the distinctive and unique part of the character of the Heath enclosure. The houses cover a date range of 1796-1911 and many of them are Grade II listed.

The predominant materials are London stock bricks which from a distance are a deep beige/ brown and contrasted on earlier buildings with orange brickwork (some rubbed bricks) for dressings and gauged brick arches. Natural slate roofs are almost ubiquitous in this group. The unity of the group comes in the use of materials rather than architectural style as whilst many of the buildings are classical there are later groups and distinctive individual buildings. Variation comes in the roofline with some gables facing the Heath as well as the strong horizontal emphasis of the parapet. A particular characteristic of this group is the presence and prominence of full mansards with central shared chimneybreasts. The full height and form of these roofs make a very significant impact on the skyline profile of this group and these particular houses can be seen for some distance in views from the Heath.

This is a very high quality group forming part of the wider group of historic built form which enclose the Heath. These houses are very sensitive to change but their individuality provides interest and richness to the character of this part of the conservation area.



8.1.7 Character Area 1g: Blackheath Vale, Duke Humphrey Road (part) and Talbot Place

This character area is the largest independent encroachment onto the Heath and was a feature of the Heath by at least 1775. One of the sites for windmills is recorded by the name Mill House given to the one of the pair set on the north west and most prominent section of this area. The area originated as sand and gravel workings but the presence of clean water at the base of the workings encouraged a small settlement which included stabling, a stonemason and Blackheath Brewery.

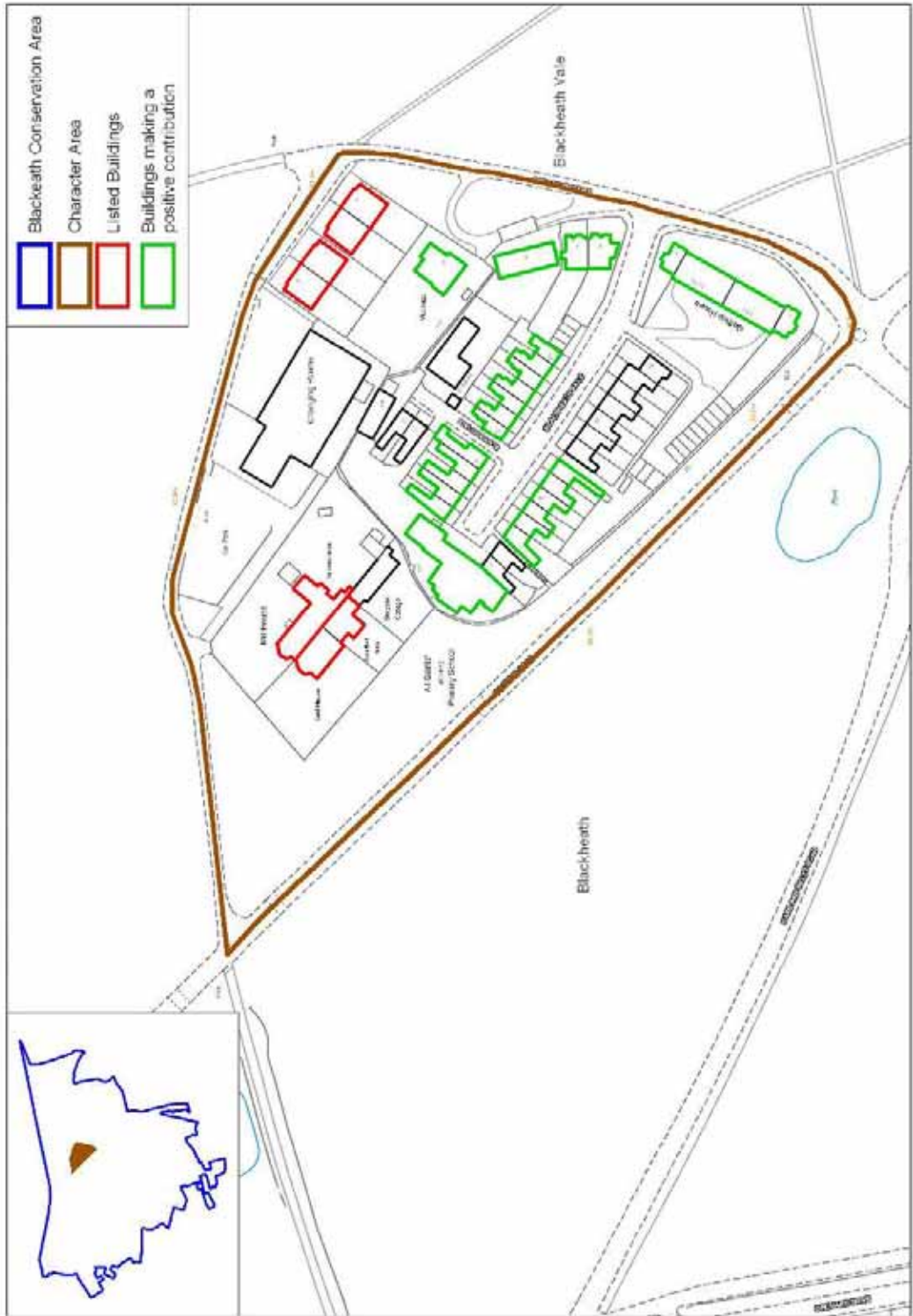
The area is now characterised by the fairly diverse nature of the development around the periphery of the former opening workings. There are a number of fine groups (Talbot Place Nos.) and individual houses and pairs lining Duke Humphrey Road. Blackheath Vale itself is set down into the dip and not seen in local or extended views. It comprises a group of modest, well detailed terraced houses, many, although not all, retaining their original features. Due to the topography of this character area it is possible to look down onto the roofs of these houses from the Heath. In this respect, alterations to roofs need to be sensitively considered.

Buildings are a combination of brick, some with contrasting dressings for windows and doors and stucco dressings including string courses (Talbot Place).

The houses facing the Heath in this part of the conservation area are with one modern exception two and half to three storey. They are generally set onto the roadside with only very small private front areas.

Of particular note is the way in which the Talbot Place group form such a robust edge to the Heath and produce a deceptive foreshortening of depth of vision across the Heath, especially when seen from Greenwich Park, whereby the Heath appears smaller than its true extent. This is also true of a number of views around the Heath whereby strong edges of development provide enclosure for certain parts giving the impression of a series of smaller more defined areas.

Character Area 1g: Blackheath Vale, Duke Humphrey Road (part) and Talbot Place



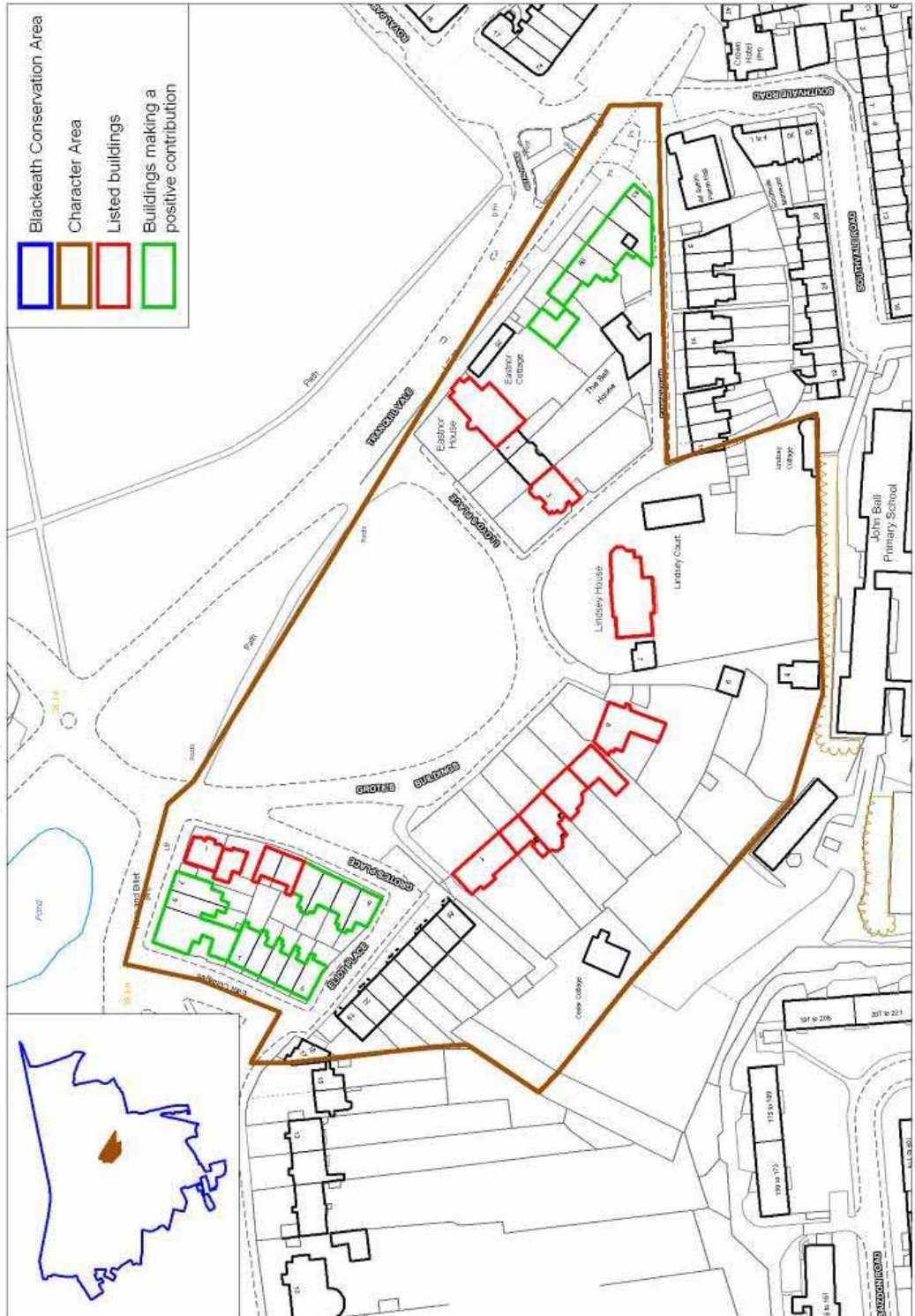
8.1.8 Character Area 1h: Grote's Place, Grotes Buildings, Lloyds Place, Eliot Cottages, Hare & Billet Public House and Camden Road

This group is perceived as a crescent due to the access road taking a curved sweep round in front of the houses which are in fact set in three straight terraces. Nos. 3-5 Grote's Buildings sit to the centre of this varied group and is a near symmetrical composition on a grand scale with its central four bays of four storeys plus low roof. These three houses are unified by continuous string courses at ground and first floor level and consistent use of a sliding sash with exposed frames. The remaining sections are generally three storey with the exception of No.1 Grote's Place with its distinctive double bow front and low pitch natural slate roof. The strongly defined articulation of the façade of this building helps define the corner despite the reduction in scale to two storeys.

Beyond No.1 Grote's Place, the Hare and Billet public house is a key building in this group and a notable landmark. The prominent chimneystacks and the stuccoed surrounds to the blank windows on its western façade are visible for some distance and form an important part of the Blackheath skyline.

There is a mix of stucco rendered painted facades and brick. The latter is generally multicoloured stock brick giving a very deep brown finish to the early houses from a distance. The stucco is also seen in very faint pastel colours as well as white. This subtle colour adds to the character and complexity of this character area.

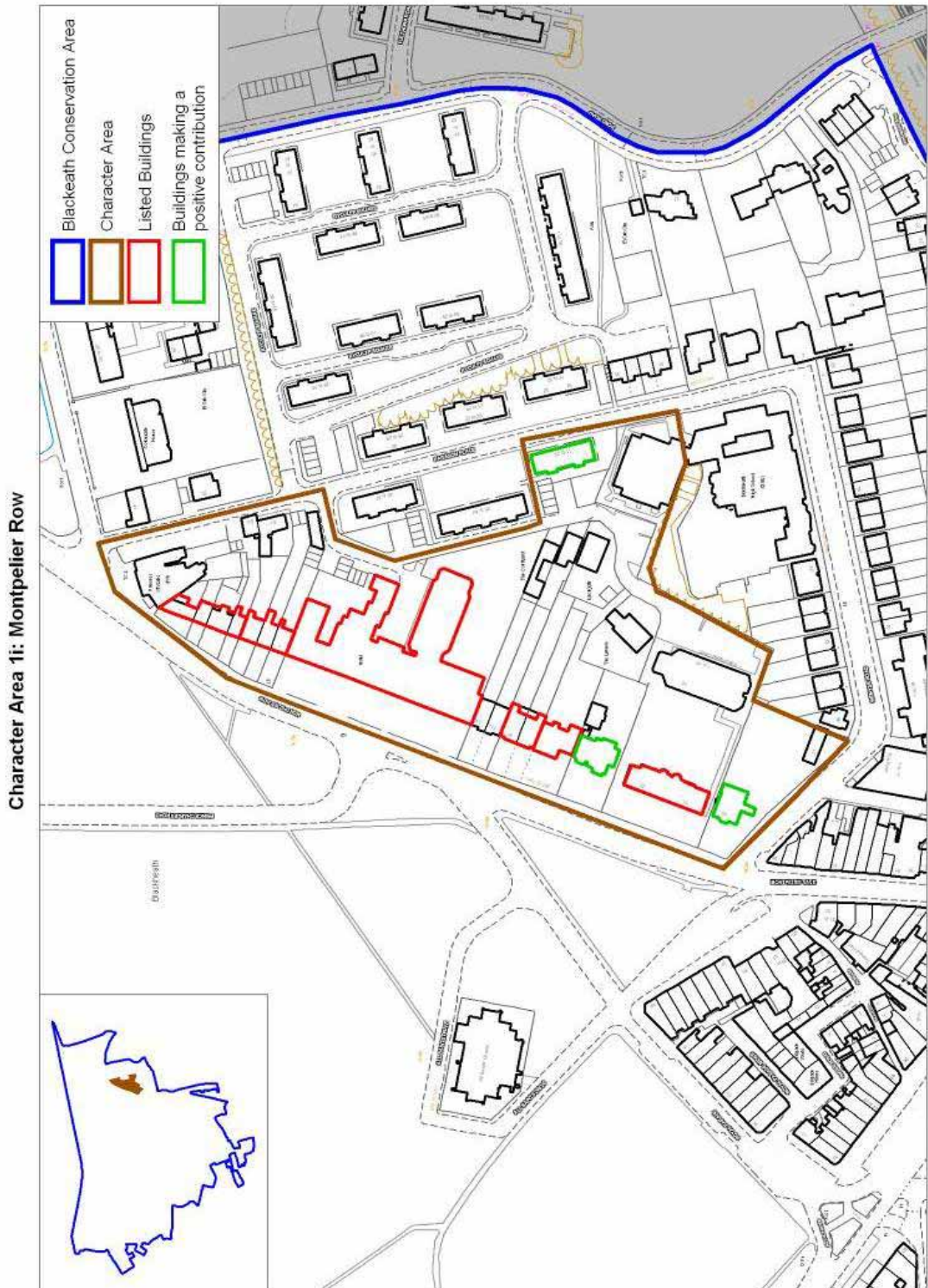
Character Area 1h: Grote's Place, Grote's Buildings, Lloyds Place, Eliot Cottages, Hare & Billet Public House and Camden Road



8.1.9 Character Area 1i. Montpelier Row

This long group of similar three and four storey houses is made up of terraced houses, pairs and individual buildings but reads as a consistent terrace from a distance. This group originated in the late eighteenth century. On closer inspection it is revealed that it has natural slate mansards in part and parapets and hidden roofs to other parts. The signage of the Clarendon Hotel is now a prominent and established landmark on the Heath.

The houses are generally built of multicoloured stock brick with natural slate roofs. String courses to some help the observer to make the distinction between the groups of houses. The street's scale is important in terms of enclosing the Heath and funnelling traffic and pedestrians into the commercial heart of the Village.

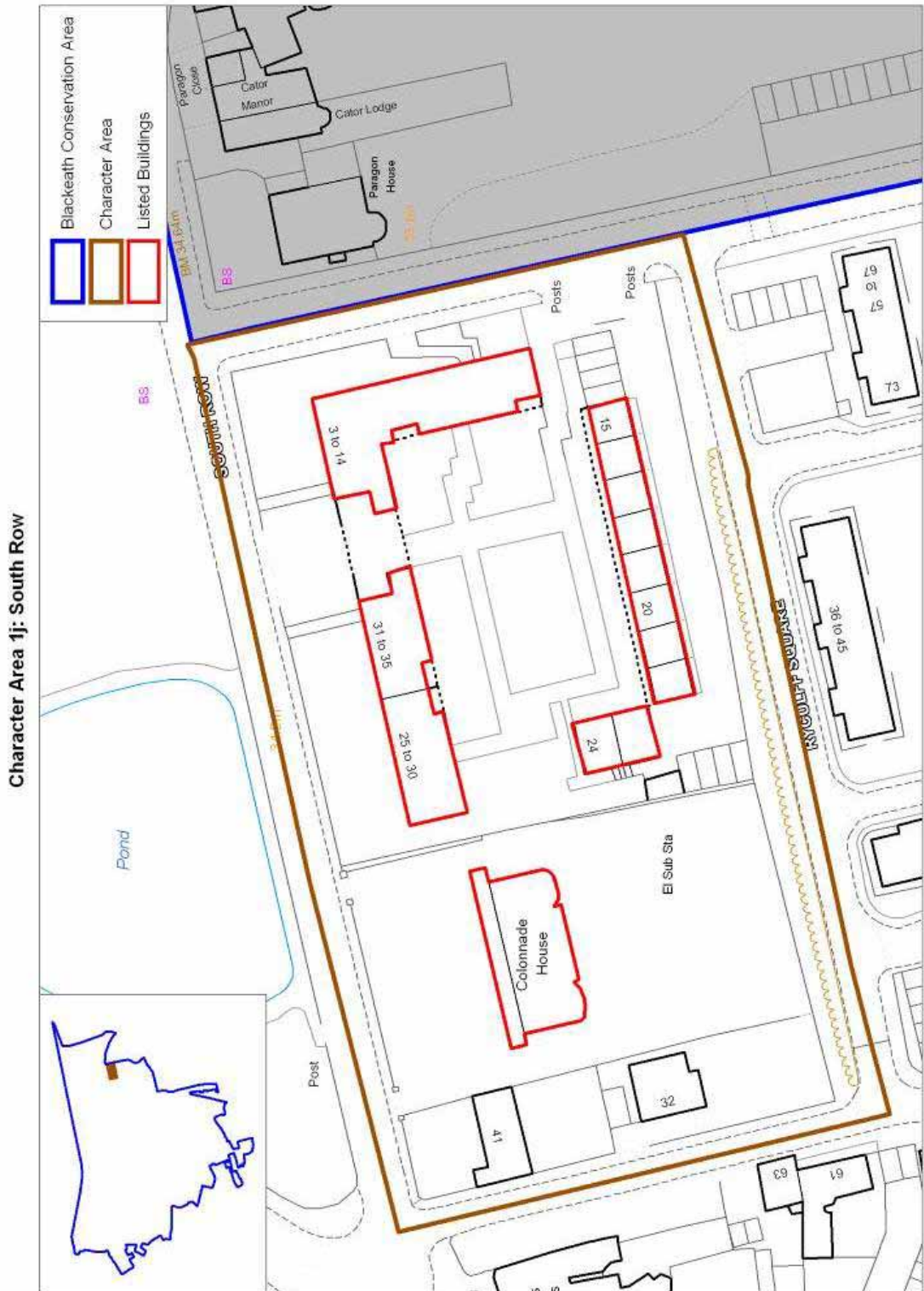


8.1.10 Character Area 1j: South Row

The Grade II listed South Row complex of flats and houses was designed by Eric Lyons and built by Span Developments Ltd in 1963. The following is an extract from the list description:

‘Span Developments Ltd. were England's most important private developers in the post-war period. Their best work is in the Blackheath area, and this group of houses and flats is a prominent and richly modelled example that is amongst their strongest compositions. The group makes a careful, well-landscaped but nevertheless powerful contribution to a sensitive historic setting.’

The flat blocks form part of the very rich architectural legacy of built form which lines the edge of the Heath. Its setting is particularly attractive with the tree lined Prince of Wales Pond in its foreground and a fine mature (type) tree to its eastern corner. The flats have an overwhelmingly strong horizontal emphasis with the expressed reinforced concrete frame replacing the stucco rendered string courses of the late Georgian houses which are so prominent in other views across the Heath. It is because of this strong emphasis and its wider setting adjacent to The Paragon that this development is such a landmark and a modern icon. The development has had its critics but it is undoubtedly a bold and uncompromising addition to the Heath and as such in the tradition of the Heath in embracing contemporary architecture.



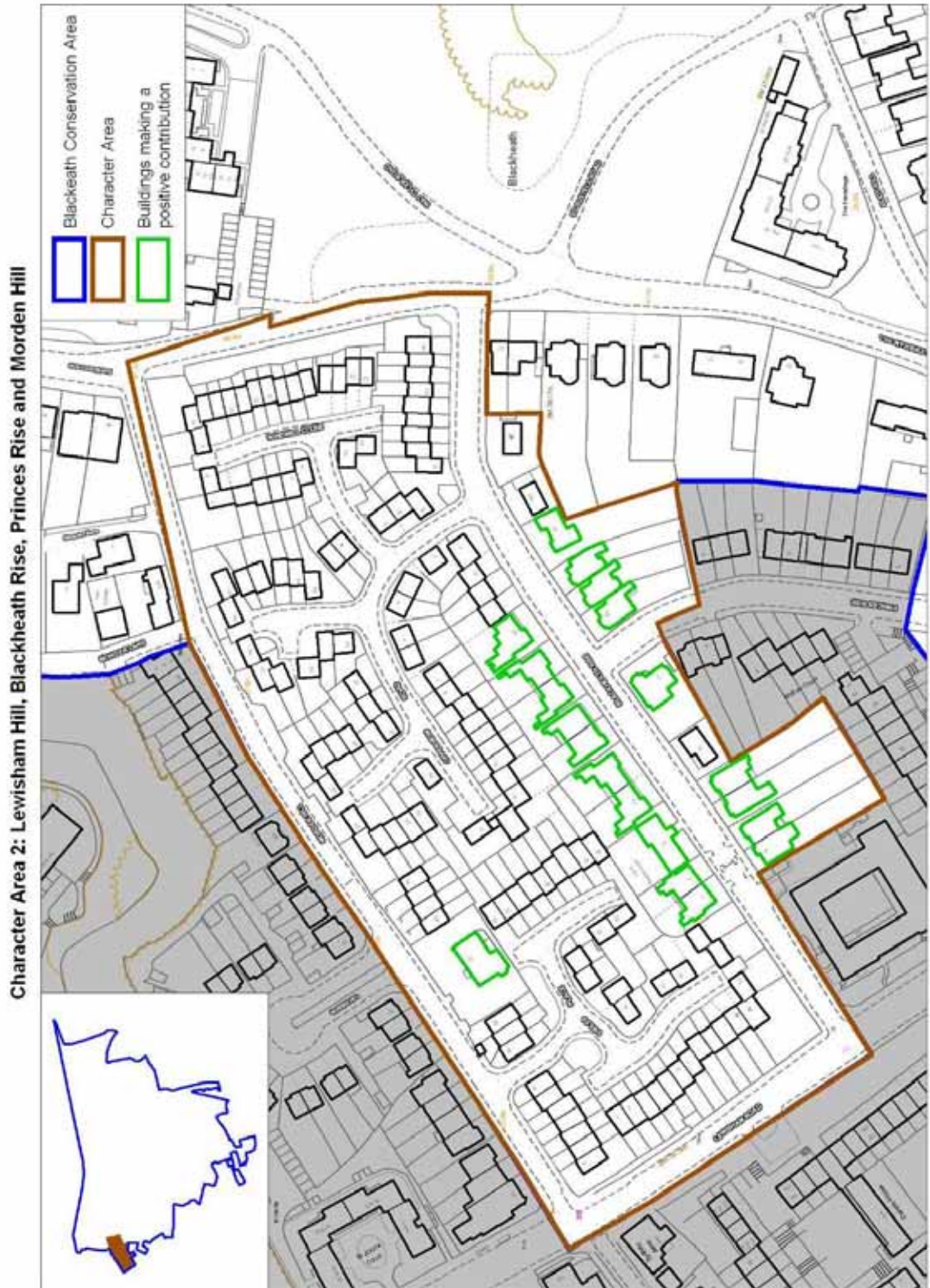
8.2 Character Area 2: Lewisham Hill, Blackheath Rise, Prince's Rise and Morden Hill

This character area comprises the redevelopment of the St John's Hospital site bounded by Blackheath Rise and Morden Hill. The former hospital site had a number of important historic buildings including a 1938 Nurses Home by Bertram Carter of some architectural merit and Pevsner described as 'progressive for its time'. Unfortunately the only building of historic merit that remains on the site is Brandon House a building also mentioned by Pevsner. The surrounding housing development was built in and misses the opportunity to front and enclose the Heath as is so characteristic in other areas in this section.

Blackheath Rise climbs steadily and steeply up to the Heath and this tree lined approach is characterised by handsome late brick Victorian villas. There is good enclosure to Blackheath Rise with houses set in small front gardens at two and a half storey with bays and gables creating a positive architectural rhythm as they step down the hill. Views out to the Lewisham suburban fringe are focused on the spire of St John, Lewisham Way.

Materials are brick with stucco dressings and natural slate roofs. The sash window is particularly prevalent along Blackheath Rise and is used effectively in the double bays which many of the houses possess. The house to the corner of Blackheath Rise and Princes Rise turns to face up the hill and forms an attractive punctuation in the street with its prominent eaves chimney stack on the skyline.

This character area is notable for the very pleasant approach to the Heath via Blackheath Rise and the survival of Brandon House, a building that despite its setting makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



8.3 Character Area 3: Dartmouth Hill, north end of Dartmouth Row, Blackheath Hill

Dartmouth Hill divides this character area into two with the most northern part of Dartmouth Row (Nos. 2-10 are of 1860 and Nos. 12 to 16, 1874) along with part of Dartmouth Hill (1883) and Blackheath Hill (late 1880's) comprising good quality mid to late Victorian terraced housing on the very tight triangular site created by these three roads. Within this group houses are 2½ storey with dormers and relatively recent mansard additions which disrupt the original scale of the terraces. The houses have restrained detailing and are well considered and form a distinct group in contrast to the grand scale of Dartmouth Row to the south.

This character area displays a very high degree of quality in its built form and survival of original features and materials. There is some noticeable pressure for roof extensions to the northern part of Dartmouth Row and these have in places compromised the original scale of the houses.

A number of houses on Blackheath Hill are in a very poor state of repair with one boarded up on the ground floor at time of survey (No.122). This has generally diminished the appearance of the group which is an important entrance to the conservation area and further diminished by heavy traffic.

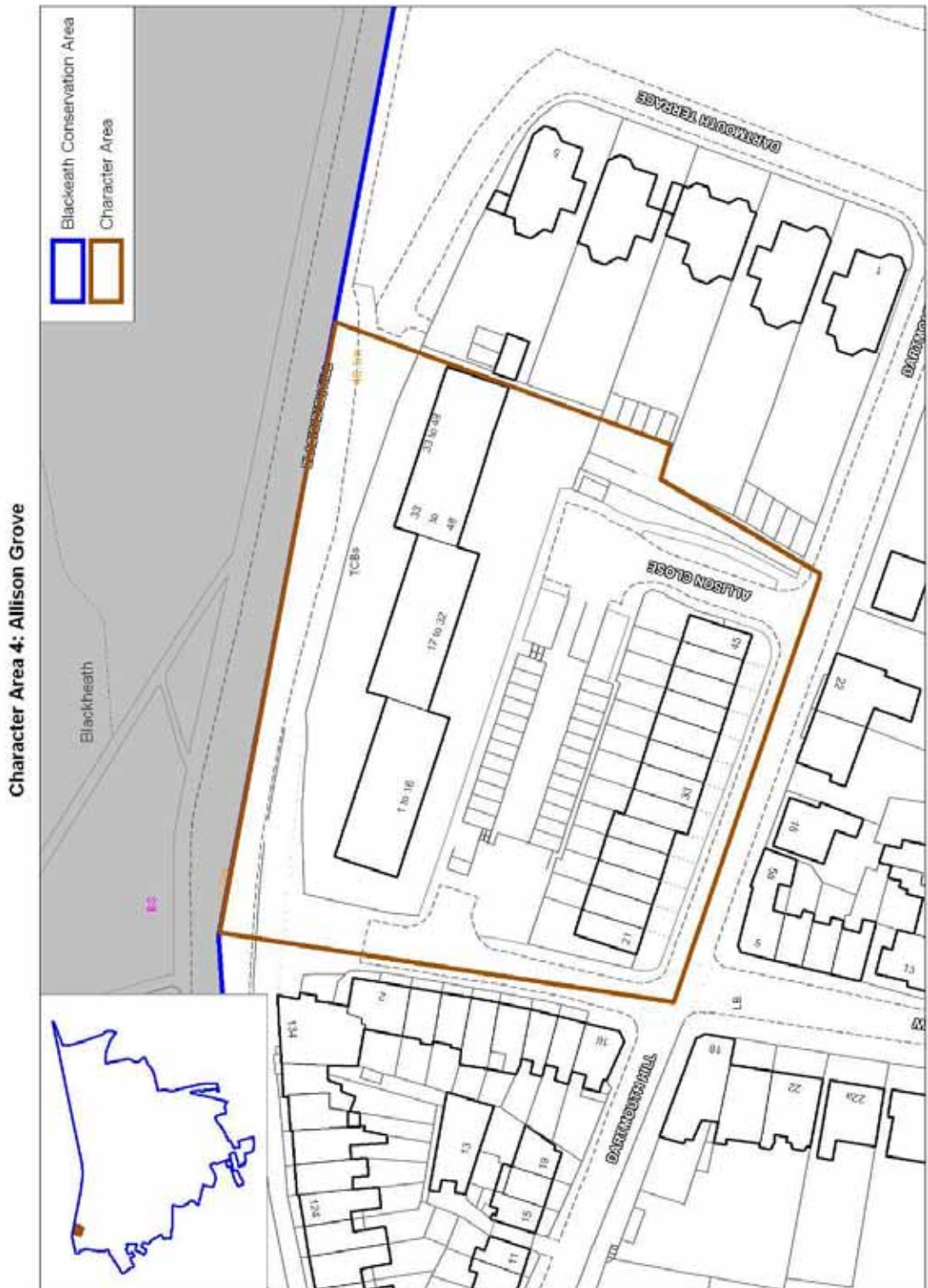


8.4 Character Area 4: Allison Close

This character area covers the historic site of the seventeenth century Green Man public house, an important watering hole and staging post for coach traffic on the edge of the Heath and the top of Blackheath Hill. The present buildings on the site date from c1970 when the Victorian villas which replaced the Green Man's assembly rooms were demolished.

The flat blocks to Blackheath Hill are architecturally uninspiring but their building line and scale maintain the enclosure to this secondary open space to the Heath (West Grove in Greenwich) and heighten the sense of a gateway to the Heath at this point.

The terrace of townhouses at the back of the site fronting onto Dartmouth Hill are more accomplished and their repetition of large oriel bays, appropriate restrained use of brick and render pick up on some of the historic design cues of the much older southern side of Dartmouth Hill which sees double canted oriel bays to two fine Georgian houses (nos. 20 22) of the late eighteenth century (c1776). The scale of the street section at three storeys either side is very comfortable and views both east and west along this street are open to panoramas of equal import and depth.



8.5 Character Area 5: Dartmouth Row & Dartmouth Grove

This wide street runs north-south and is bisected by Dartmouth Hill where the street section becomes narrower to the north. It comprises an exceptional group of listed buildings and unlisted historic buildings. All frontage buildings within this character area make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

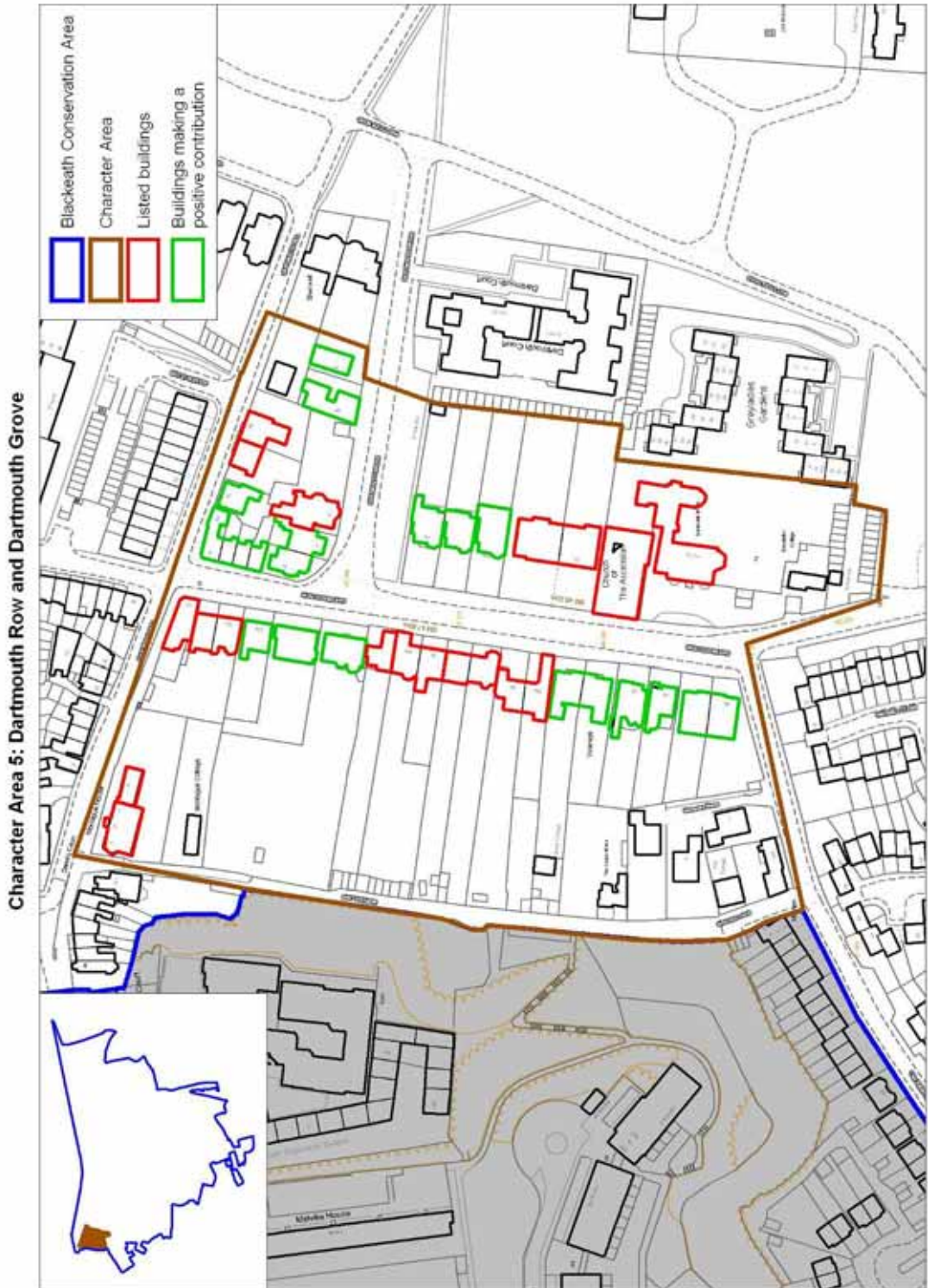
Initially these houses would have enjoyed wide semi rural prospects; the Heath and Kent countryside to the east and the distant views of the capital to the west. Subsequent development has isolated these early houses from the Heath but emphasised their role as an attractive varied row of houses spanning over 300 years of development.

Houses range from the 1690's but display mostly early-mid Georgian characteristics through to domestic revival and Arts and Crafts. The former are rows of very large individual houses and the latter are large detached houses. Houses front relatively narrow, deep plots.

The building line varies to the west side with bays and paired houses projecting forward providing some incident and variation in the street scene. The east is more regimented but is dynamically 'book ended' by the Church of Ascension to the south. The church projects right up to the pavement line and punctuates the street scene, successfully making a transition in the scale of the street with its modest pediment and small cupola. It was originally built in 1699, then rebuilt to the present street line in 1750. This building was then demolished in 1834 but this time, the apsidal eastern end was incorporated and the building finally restored in 1950². Houses on this side are three storey or two storey with attics; dormers and mansards have been added with varying degrees of success.

Some particularly fine early eighteenth century brickwork can be seen to the houses and fragment survivals of boundary walls. These early materials make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

² Courtesy of Neil Rhind



8.6 Character Area 6: Granville Park, Oakcroft Road, St Austell Road, Walerand Road and The Knoll

The wide formally laid out streets with generous pavements in this character area run down across the contours of Lewisham Hill to varying degrees; from the grand gentle sweep of Granville Park to the relative steepness of Lewisham Hill.

Buildings almost without exception date from the mid to late Victorian through to the Edwardian period and found on a grand scale (2½ - 3 storey). Houses are grouped in pairs (Granville Park 1858-59 by Henry William Spratt, Eliot Hill (Victorian section - 1864 and the Edwardian houses - 1911) and St Austell Road c1910-11, detached (Oakcroft Road 1902-08 some later) and in very limited numbers; in terraces (Walerand Road c1859 south side and 1870 north side though much was destroyed through bomb damage). However most houses are tightly built to their plot width and are articulated as individual houses through the use of gables or bays rather than being set in generous grounds to distinguish them. In this respect, streets often read as cohesive groups; Granville Park is a good example of this.

Granville Park is a set piece in townscape terms with very large three storey paired villas which vary the treatment of entrances but continue a rhythm of two storey projecting bays and sweeping rooflines. The shared central spine wall chimneystacks with up to 16 chimney pots are a distinctive feature of this terrace and form important elements of the roofscape.

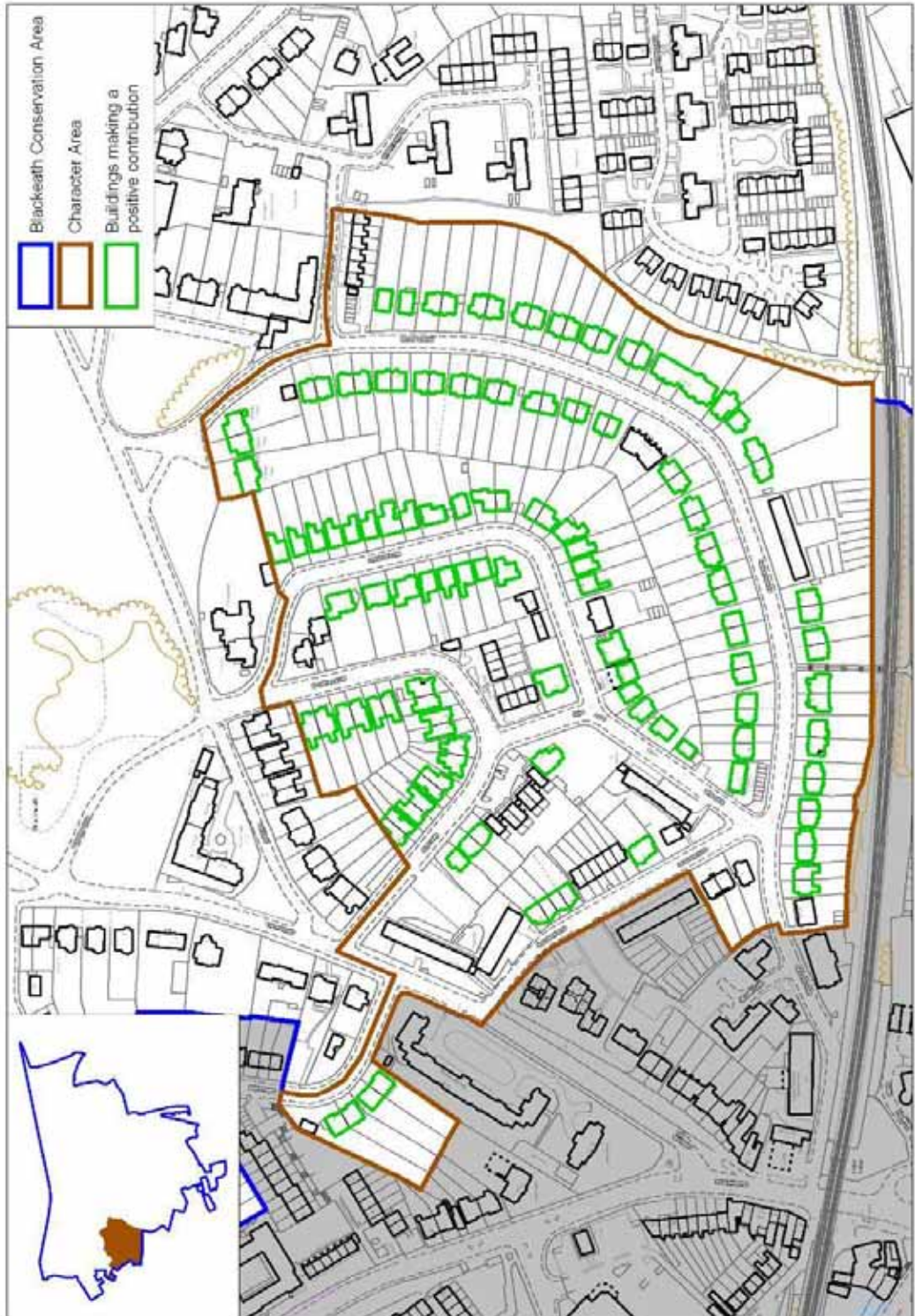
Rigid building lines with houses set back off the street with boundary walls formalises the townscape of this character area and also contributes to tying the groups of houses together along streets. The collective character of these houses is as important as the individual design of units to the overall character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. Of particular note are the corner bays to houses which are a particular characteristic of this part of the conservation area.

Boundary walls generally define a key part of the character of the street. Granville park's important boundary walls are under particular pressure given the conversion of these large houses to flats, their relatively large front gardens and the limited car parking on roadside.

There has been some unfortunate infill to this part of the conservation area; 4-10a Walerand Road and 4-6a Eliot Park are poorly detailed, inappropriately scaled and break the important building line of the street and the flats to the corner of Lewisham Hill and Walerand Road create a poor frontage and are not of sufficient quality to be considered as making a positive contribution to the conservation area. Despite these,

the townscape quality of the roads is high and the grouping of buildings and their setting in mature gardens (some with good quality mature trees) give parts of this area a high degree of quality and status.

Character Area 6: Granville Park, Oakcroft Road, St. Austell Road, Waterland Road and The Knoll



8.7 Character Area 7: Heath Lane

The Lane is an early crossing point to the railway but retains a semi rural character with mature trees forming the backdrop to and framing houses set in generous plots. The character area also includes the top of the lane where it meets Eliot Vale, which is also characterised by mature trees and large houses set in generous gardens. There is a far more suburban/ semi-rural character to this small part of the conservation area with a genuine feeling of quiet and calm away from the busy roads of the Village and the dramatic open spaces of the Heath.

The houses in this character area date from the early, mid and late nineteenth century and turn of the century and take on a much more suburban form with listed villas; Eliot Vale Lodge and House both 1805 in distinctive yellow London stock brick and large Arts and Crafts influenced houses with Domestic Revival motifs and detailing. A 'cottage style' (albeit on a grander scale) can best describe the buildings in this small but important character area, best illustrated by No.1 Heath Lane (c1895- 1900) and No.6, The Cottage (c1877), Heath Lane). Both these houses are of considerable quality and make very positive contributions to the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area despite their unlisted status.

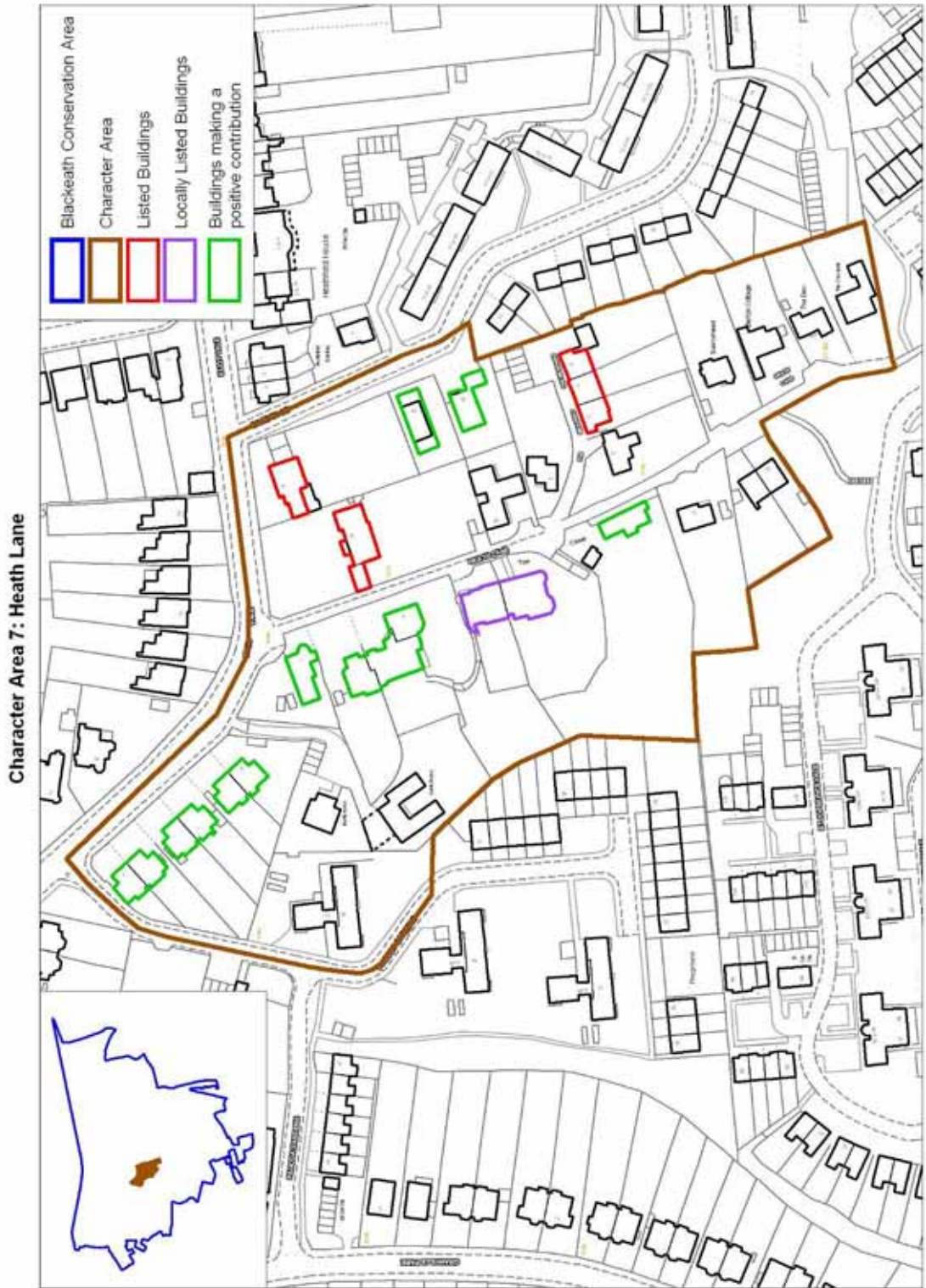
Buildings are mostly two storey, however this is seen on a grand scale in much of the 'Domestic Revival' influenced examples (No.2 Heath Lane with its prominent sham timber framed gable is a good example of this. Building lines are consistent to Eliot Vale and set relatively well back from the road. Heath Lane has a more informal building line and buildings which address the slope rather than the road contributing to its informal semi-rural character.

Chimneys form a particularly notable part of the character of the area with the huge red brick stacks of No.2 Heath Lane and the decorated terracotta 'neo-Jacobean' chimney pots of The Cottage (No.6) Heath Lane) and the slender brick eaves stacks of the houses to the north side of Eliot Vale all forming important parts of the roofscape and the subject of local views across and up the slopes.

This area is notable for its eclectic mix of architectural styles and periods; from the Pagoda (1763 by William Chambers with extensions of 1840 to the west end and to the east corner and north elevation in 1857³) a garden Pavilion (from the lost Montague House which stood near Rangers House) through the nineteenth century villas and grand houses of the Edwardian period to various modern houses from the 1960's and 70's. These are set low into their wooded sites and provide tantalising glimpses of large areas of glazing and private courtyards. A key element of all the built

³ Courtesy of Neil Rhind.

form in this character area is its heavily treed setting forming glimpsed views of chimneys, gables and framing and enclosing lanes and roads alike.



8.8 Character Area 8: Railway Environs

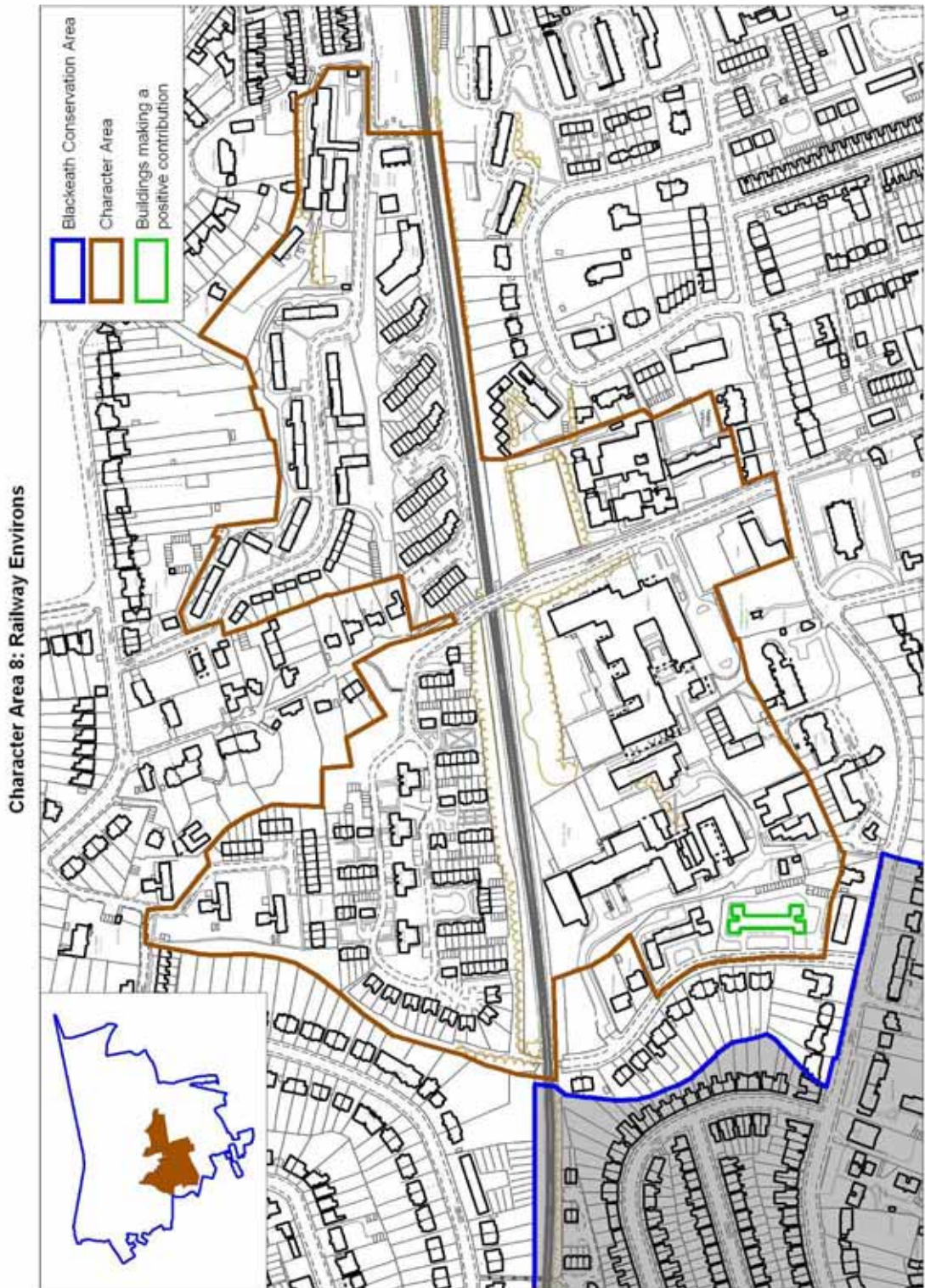
This part of the conservation area has derived its character from the impact of the railway on the landscape and resulting land parcels and ensuing development patterns. It includes reasonable groups of 1950's flat blocks (Baizdon Road) two schools and modern housing (Hurren Close and St Josephs Vale) lining the railway, Hurren Close noticeably breaking the grain of development being set diagonal to the railway line.

The remaining area is a diverse mix of building types, uses, scale and building line. Groups are mixed. Flat blocks vary their set back to provide some interest and movement in the streets. They range from two storey to the cohesive group of flats to Baizdon Road which vary from two to five storey but use the change in levels at this point to set the larger blocks down into the wooded slopes.

This area contains some of the most notable pieces of open space (both private and public or semi public) in the conservation area other than the Heath itself. These vary in quality but include the playing fields to the RC Primary School.

The general quality of this character area is of an indifferent to poor quality in terms of townscape and quality of building design. The flat blocks on Baizdon Road are well articulated and carefully placed so as to reduce their impact and provide individual amenity, although the loss of original windows has somewhat diminished their architectural integrity.

This sub area has relatively few historic buildings of merit and has the feel of an area that was 'left over' from the truncation of the Heath from Belmont Hill and environs. Subsequent land use decisions and disjointed development of the difficult parcels of land (a good example being development south of Baizdon Road) has resulted in a disparate and illegible section of the conservation area not helped by the railway line and the segregated mix of residential and sensitive non-residential uses. These parcels of development have little to do with the established character of the conservation area in terms of their architectural references, spatial distribution, density and massing.



8.9 Character Area 9: The Village

The Village comprises two converging streets of varying section which once merged go on to cross the railway and curve up the south side of the valley. The topography of this character area and tight urban grain make this a memorable part of the conservation area with a strong sense of place.

In contrast to the main thoroughfares, a network of mews, tight streets and alleyways interconnect Tranquil Vale, Royal Parade and Montpelier Vale and are unique to the Blackheath Conservation area. They have an authenticity and simplicity and intimate human scale which is particularly pleasing and sensitive to change.

The majority of built form dates from a period c.1790 to 1880. This has created a degree of consistency of architectural style, particularly within the shop terraces of the 1840s which were usually developed in groups rather than on an individual piecemeal basis. However, terraces do vary in detailed execution and it is this subtle variation in the use of string courses, window emphasis, parapet cornices and console brackets between shopfronts which emphasises and reflects the various periods of construction and adds to the strong cohesive character of the Village as a whole.

The scale of building varies dramatically from the apparent single storey of the railway station to the Village (actually a two storey building set at track level) to the four storeys of Royal Parade and Montpelier Vale. It is this variation in scale, which contributes to the significant visual interest of the townscape. The building line is consistent to streets but is seen to carefully enclose Montpelier Vale with a comfortable consistent street section which is then contrasted with Tranquil Vale which widens on rising up the hill, out towards the Heath breaking back at the Crown Hotel, which opens its façade towards the Heath and creates an informal square to the side of the thoroughfare.

The curve in the road at the valley floor means that all views are closed by buildings at this point. This adds to the strong urban feel to the Village which contrasts so dramatically with the openness of the Heath a short distance away.

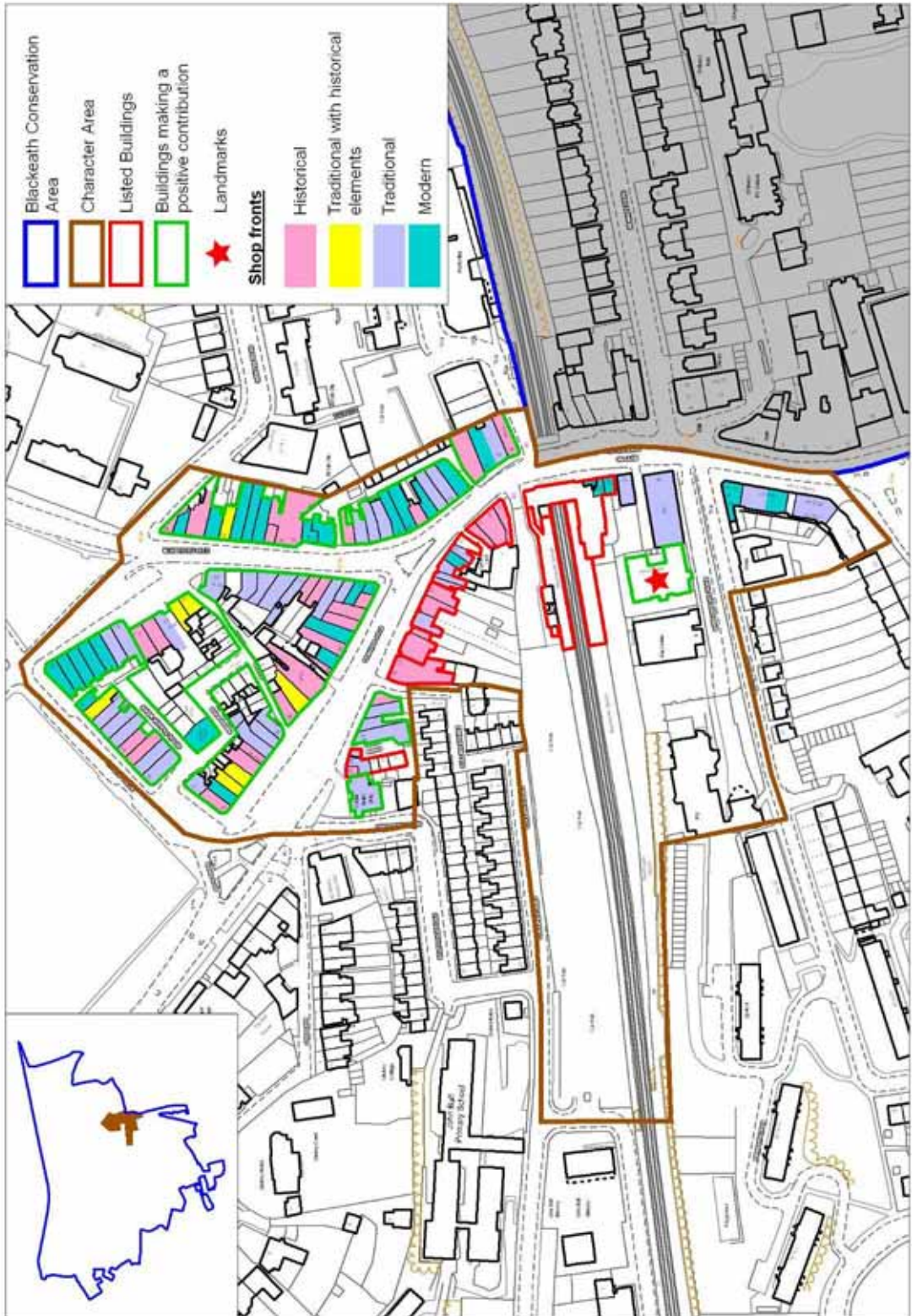
The survival in numbers of good quality traditional shopfronts and replica shopfronts (see shopfronts survey) contributes to the real sense of an historic village. This is combined with the relatively high number of consistently well-detailed groups of late eighteenth century and nineteenth century buildings retaining much of their features.

The gateway qualities of the townscape to this part of the conservation area also extend to the southern approach to the Village which is framed by the well detailed, articulated and appropriately scaled Selwyn Court and row of shops and late

nineteenth century buildings lining the London Borough of Greenwich boundary. These culminate in a very thoughtfully detailed single storey building which turns the corner and forms a very prominent feature in the townscape.

This character area has surprisingly few listed buildings but almost all buildings make a positive contribution towards the character and appearance of the conservation area. Buildings are generally in good repair and have a high degree of historic detailing remaining.

Character Area 9: The Village



8.9.1 Character Area 9a: Collins Street and South Vale Road

This sub area of the Village is closely related to the rapid increase in popularity of Blackheath as a commuter satellite settlement to nineteenth century London. The roads are laid out parallel to the railway with Collins Street (laid out in 1869) fronting onto what was formerly goods yards and sidings, now Blackheath Station car park and Southvale Road (1870-71) further up the hill.

The houses are modest two storey terraced houses some with bays; brick with natural slate roofs and some stucco dressings; keystones and door surrounds (South Vale Road) and contrasting coloured brick and dentil eaves courses (Collins Street).

The present relationship of Collins Street to the station car park is uncomfortable with a high timber boarded fence between the latter and the opposite edge of the narrow Collins Street.

The roovescape of Collins Street and the parallel terraces above is a strong defining image to the train traveller to Blackheath, this being one of the first views of the Village on looking north from the train track.

Character Area 9a: Collins Street and South Vale Road



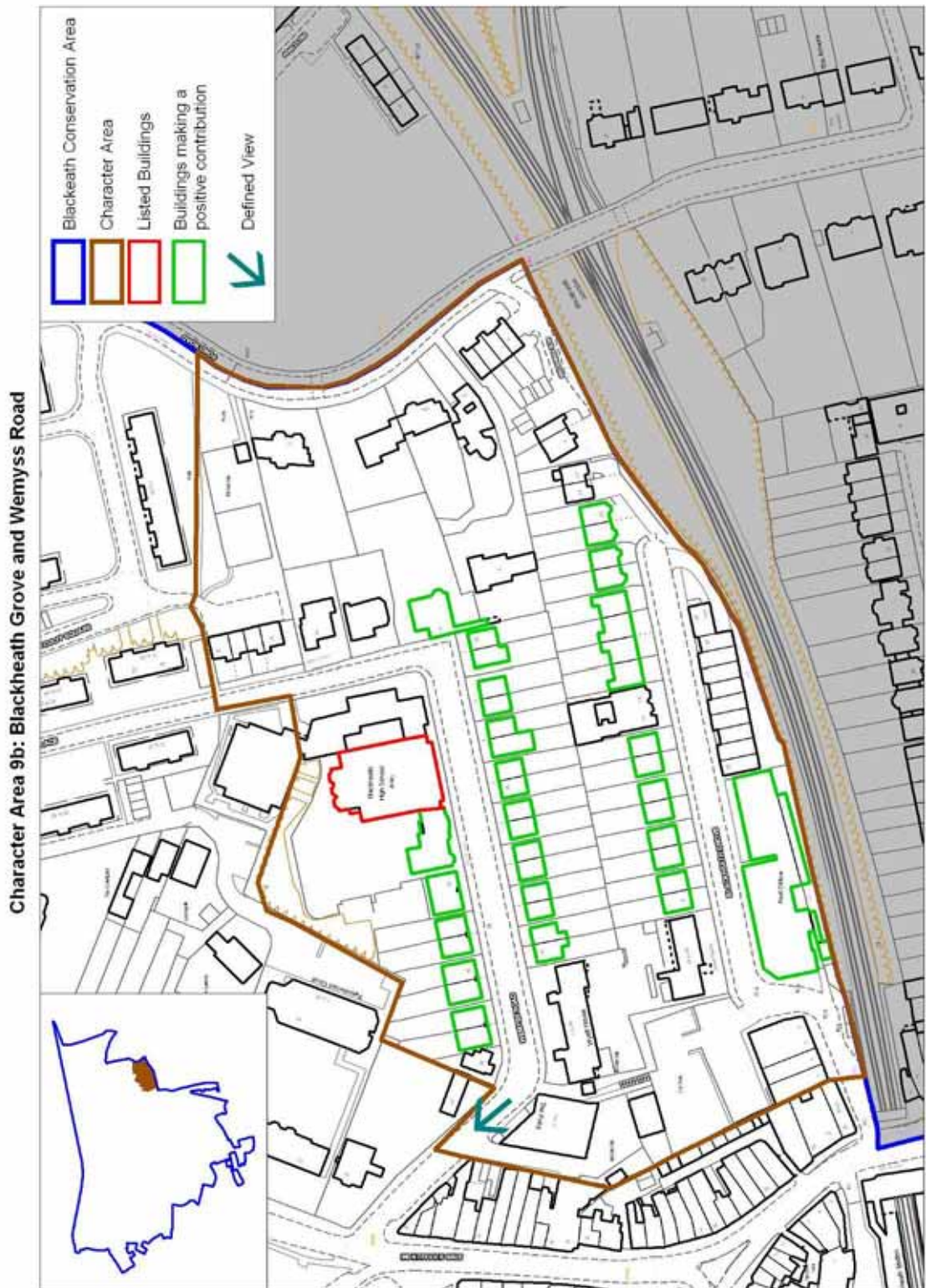
8.9.2 Character Area 9b: Blackheath Grove and Wemyss Road

These two parallel roads form the eastern section of the Village character area and are closely related to Blackheath's increasing popularity as a place to live. These houses are on a grander scale to those of Collins Street and South Vale Road. Terraces are three storey and raised with large area basements (Wemyss Road) and Blackheath Grove.

A well designed addition to the road at the west end is four storeys but well handled and understated with good materials. This new building turns the corner well.

Wemyss road is notable for the presence of cast iron railings (some reproduction) to both north and south sides. These railings largely enclose the lower basement areas and make a very positive contribution towards the street scene.

A strongly defined closed view looking along the western end section of Wemyss Street can be had of the spire of All Saints Church, marred only by the street lighting to Montpellier Vale.



8.10 Character Area 10: Lee Terrace and The Glebe

This character area takes the form of the long linear Lee Terrace and the sloping curved crescent forming The Glebe. Both these areas are characterised by mature trees, which line much of the roads. Groups of villas of varying architectural detail and quality set behind hedges and mature trees characterises much of Lee Terrace. The houses are on a grand scale and set into complementary groups. Houses make a positive contribution both individually through proportion, ornamentation and use of distinctive materials and as complete architectural compositions. This is particularly true of Nos. 22-32 (1847) and Nos. 47-61 Lee Terrace (1833- 34).

A strong defining part of this road is the boundary walls. These brick walls, of varying height, and the trees and hedges are an important part of the quality of this road. The walled front gardens provide an important setting to these large houses. As such their retention is essential in maintaining the strongly defined public and private spaces to both Lee Terrace and The Glebe.

The Glebe comprises a small group of high quality Italianate and Gothic villas of c1849-50 built around a horse shoe shaped street, open at both ends. Some of the villas survive intact and are set in their large generous treed plots although the historic set piece is somewhat diminished by later infill building. Scale and building lines are however consistent in this small group and this forms an important part of the character of this road.

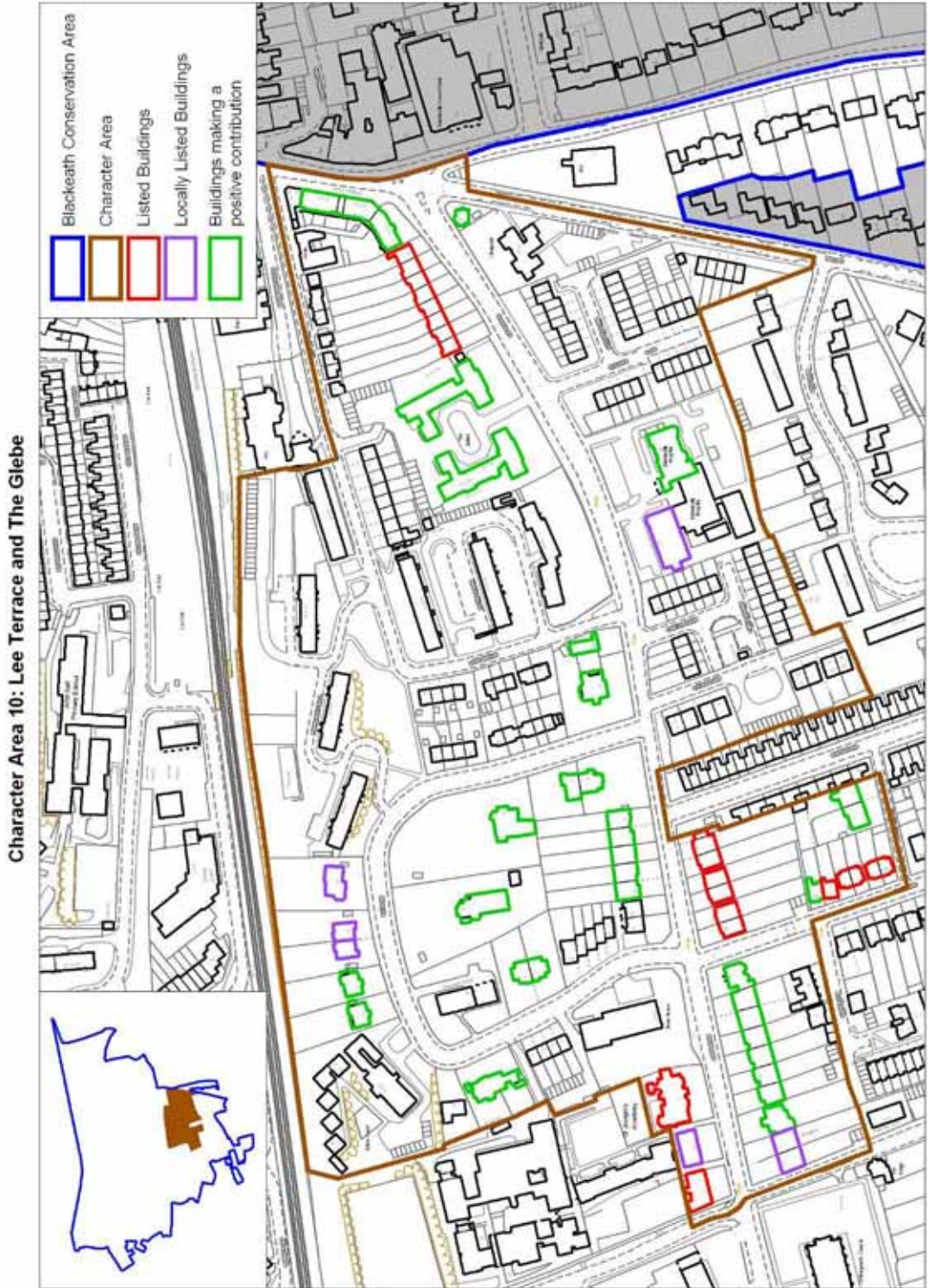
Houses are predominantly two storey but on a grand scale and often utilize the roofspace for additional accommodation. This is best executed in Nos. 47-61 Lee Terrace (present on the Tithe map of 1839) with the half lunettes to each pair lighting the additional storey. Building lines in groups are important throughout the character area and are consistent in groups; for example 22-32 and Nos. 47-61 which are set forward and dominate the streetscene with their imposing scale and use of the characteristic shared pediment.

The shared pediment is seen in various guises in this sub area but is characteristic of many of the villa groups in and around the Blackheath Conservation Area. It is a powerful and dynamic architectural device which effectively gives two houses the perceived grandeur and status of one large villa. This effect would have been a very attractive attribute to the original occupiers of these houses.

The quality of built form and townscape is varied in this character area but is complemented by the presence of mature trees throughout to front and back gardens. This contributes to what has been referred to as an Arcadian quality to this part of the

conservation area.⁴ In addition, the eye is led along the road by the extended boundary walls, which perhaps more than in any other character area makes a considerable contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area.

⁴ A Character Assessment of 52 to 74 Belmont Hill within the Blackheath Conservation Area (November 2004) A report by David Warren on behalf of Belmont Hill Conservation Group (BHCG)



8.11 Character Area 11. Belmont Hill and Belmont Grove

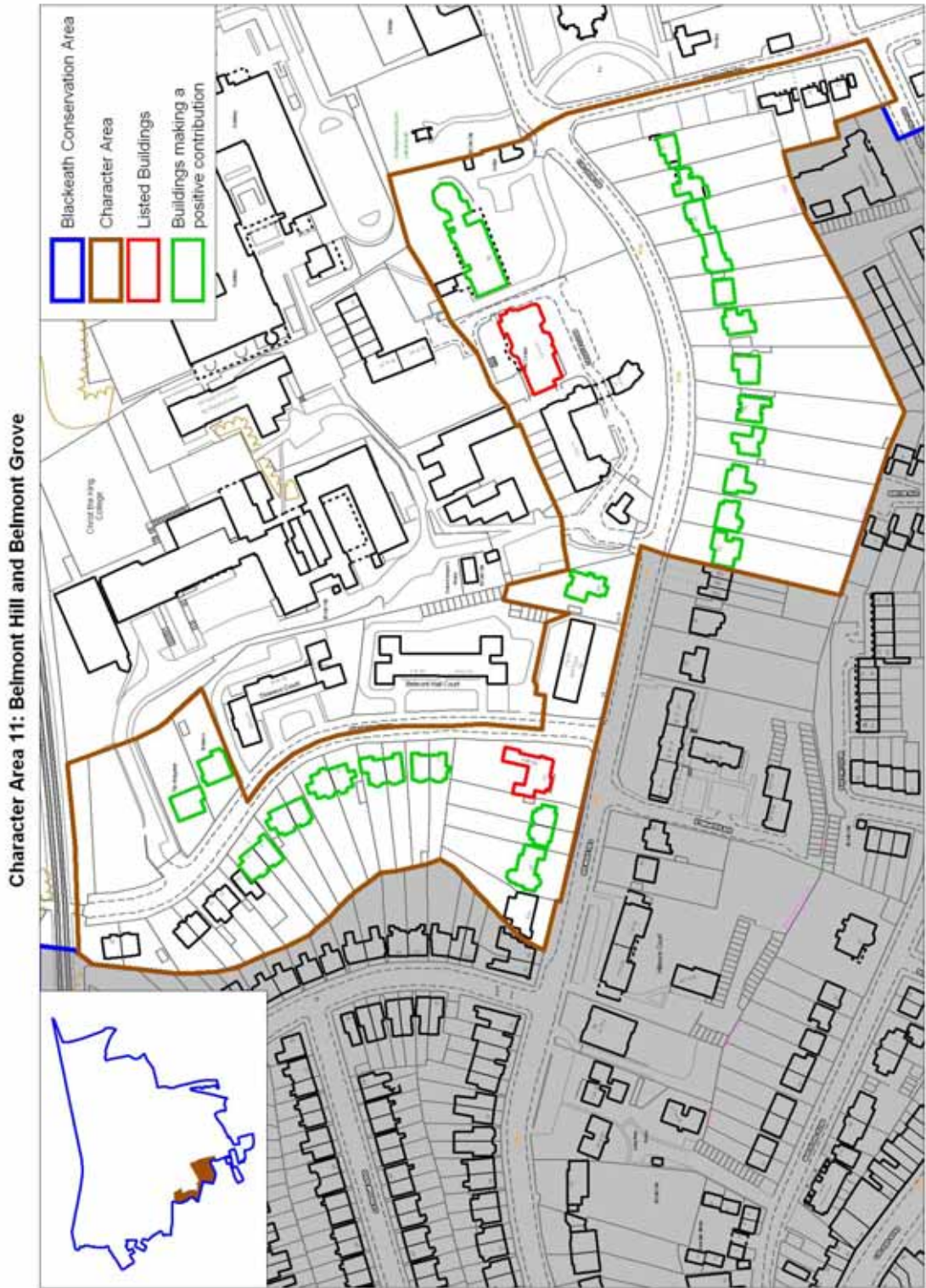
This character area comprises the very large individual mid-Victorian villas (for example the Cedars; remodelling of 1855) set well back on the north side of Belmont Hill and the restrained suburban, loosely Arts and crafts, early twentieth century houses to the south side of the road. It also takes in Belmont Grove to the edge of the conservation area.

This area is characterised by large houses set in generous plots. There are good sized gardens to the front and long gardens to the rear with houses set towards the front of plots and tight to side boundaries. In the case of the houses to the south side of Belmont Hill, the gardens contain some very high quality specimen trees (formerly part of the extensive grounds of the Cedars on the north side). The presence of mature street trees adds to this sylvan suburban quality.

There is a wide variation of materials in this character area due to the mix of nineteenth century villas and semi detached houses and the group of detached Arts and Crafts influenced houses to the south of Belmont Hill. These include; stock bricks, red brick, render, painted render, natural slate and clay tiles.

Boundary walls are important in defining the street scene to this sub area and large trees and shrubs are often seen set behind these forming a softened edge to the townscape with buildings seen beyond.

The gradually revealed views of St Margaret's Church and spire on travelling north up Belmont Hill are very rewarding. Due to extensive tree cover to front gardens these views are seasonal. In the summer months the church is happened upon much closer to the apex of the hill as the road bends to the north and opens to Brandram Road, whereas in the winter the church and spire are much more apparent from further west along Belmont Hill.



8.12 Character Area 12: St Margaret's Church and churchyard opposite and Church Terrace

St Margaret's church (1839-41), with its ornate, picturesque west tower set back but running parallel with the road acts as a transition between subareas 10 and 11.. It also presents, with Church Terrace, a high quality set piece of considerable townscape value and integrity.

At the top of this character area, north of Belmont Hill, the ruins of the original medieval church can be seen.

Church Terrace runs parallel with Lee Terrace / Belmont Hill. The houses are on a grand scale and paired to form a symmetrical composition. The stuccoed fronts rise up to the very deep bracketed eaves of the natural slate roofs with, unusually, the third floor window cutting the line of the eaves although the gutter continues across in front of the window. The carefully executed Venetian windows to inset arched bays are particularly striking and reflect the overall quality and refinement of the group. What is particularly ingenious is the houses that back onto the churchyard have been provided with a formal façade so that the houses to the north side of Church Terrace effectively have two main façades: one to the street and one to the Church and churchyard. This has the effect from Lee Terrace of placing the church in what appears to be one side of a square with back façade of the houses forming the appropriate grand backdrop to this church.

Of particular note are the views of the church from Church Terrace between the paired villas. These have been marred in places by the addition of external stairs, garages and some extensions but their essential incidental qualities have been retained).

This entire character area is a set piece of place-making and high quality historic townscape. It is very sensitive to change and in development control terms it must be considered holistically as a whole as well as individually on a case by case basis.



8.13 Character Area 13: Quentin Road, Belmont Park, Dacre Park, Eton Grove, Kingswood Place, St Margaret's Passage, Brandram Road and Glenton Road

Land falls away from Lee Terrace and Belmont Hill towards Lee High Road and in this respect this character area has a very limited (if any) relationship with Blackheath. Streets are laid out in speculative parcels of different periods and as such tend to crash into one another terminating in dead ends (Eton Grove and Dacre Place) and turning corners at abrupt right angles (Quentin Terrace).

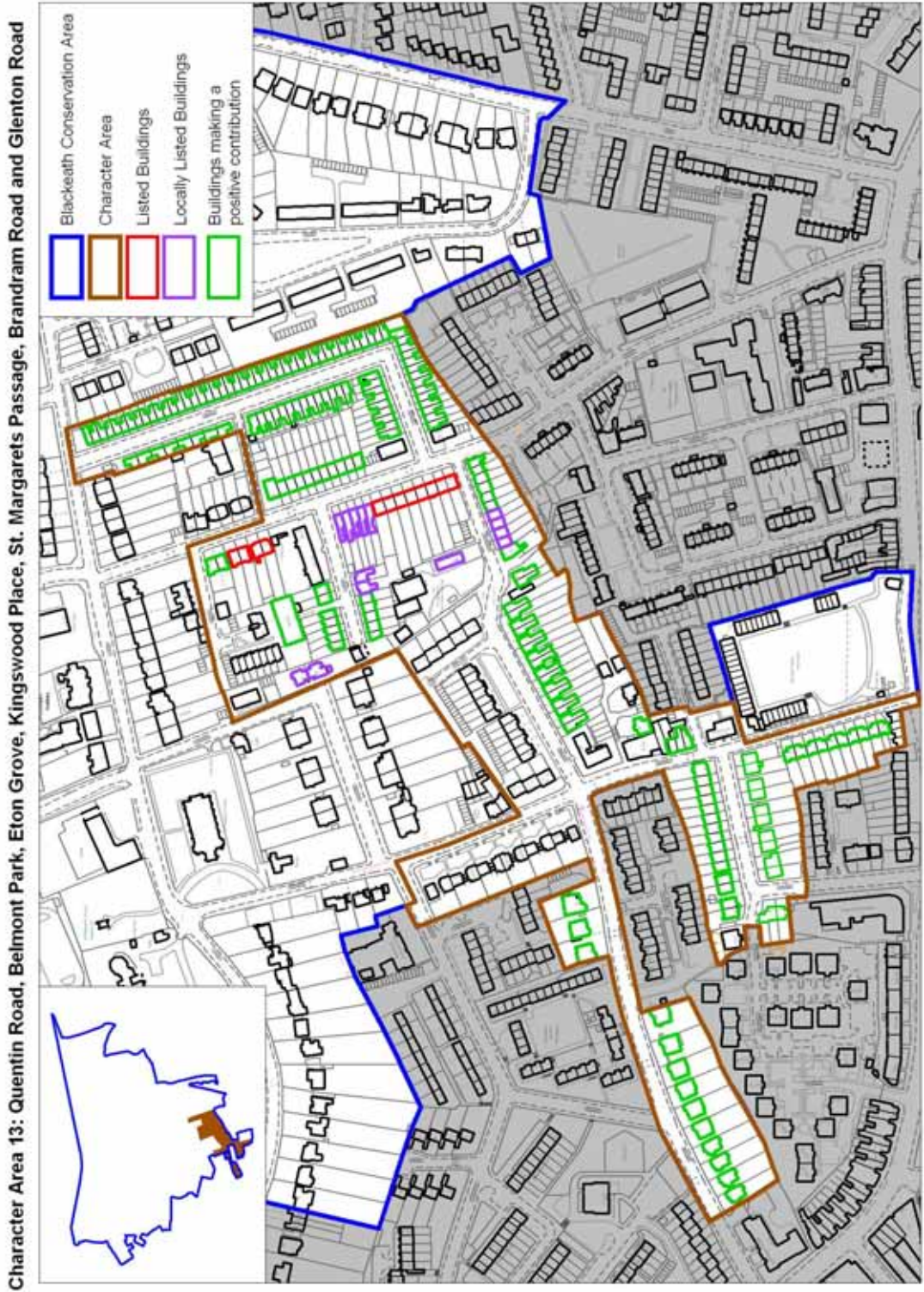
Nonetheless, the area is characterised by very good quality early, mid and late Victorian terraces, occasionally on a grand scale (for example Quentin Road – c.1880 and in set piece groups of high townscape value; for example Glenton Road.

Houses range from two to three storeys with semi-basements, often utilizing the roofspace for accommodation. Building lines are consistent in groups producing a very strong sense of enclosure, particularly in the regular terraces of houses. The terrace is the dominant building form. These are often well articulated and detailed. The articulation and the architectural detail to window surrounds, door cases, stringcourses, cornices and chimneys contribute to the group character of the terraces. Houses and flats should be viewed very much as part of collective groups, often having a very well defined character within a given street. The Grade II listed group in Dacre Park, for example, is very different in materials and execution to others in the same road.

Materials vary within groups but are generally a mix of yellow stock brick and natural slate or stucco and natural slate. Stucco tends to be employed in the earlier terraces in this sub area. There are degrees of embellishment to windows and doors ranging from simple variations in brick colour; Quentin Road to bottle balustrading to bays and paired and triple windows with moulded architraves; southern end of Brandram Road.

This sub area has a very urban feel. Front gardens are small but there is a good survival of historic boundary wall treatments, including railings, steps and front paths.

There is a consistent quality to the buildings of this sub area. Most are very well maintained and there is a very high proportion of traditional single glazed windows, original doors, natural slate roofs and traditional boundary treatments – railings and low rendered walls or brick walls to match the host building.



8.14 Character Area 14: Lock Chase

This small development has a unique character in terms of the conservation area and is a set piece of single-phase development which warrants separate study as a character area. It comprises a simple upside down 'L' shape layout with a widening to the stem to form a green.

The buildings date from 1959 and comprise a mix of attractive houses and flats laid out in short blocks around a green to appear as semi-detached houses. The breaking up of the blocks with semi detached houses of a similar design at the edges of the development and on a principle corner add to the sense of a suburban street of houses rather than flats.

There is a consistent two-storey scale and building line which help define and comfortably enclose the open grassed space to the centre of the development. Rooflines are well articulated with gables and chimneys.

The trees to this sub-area make a very positive contribution to the quality of this well-defined space, giving the feel of a village green. In this respect, it shares some similarities with the Grade II listed Lammas Green complex in Sydenham (also in the London Borough of Lewisham).

The quality of the blocks has been let down in places by the replacement of steel framed cruttall windows with Upvc examples. These are of a much wider section and somewhat compromise the attractive finer Arts and Crafts style detailing of the overall composition. The small hexagonal oculus windows to some of the gables have particularly suffered from this type of alteration.



8.15 Character Area 15: Lee Park and Lee Road

Lee Park and Lee Road are both long, gently sloping, tree-lined roads which link Blackheath Village with Lee High Road. The centre of Lee Road forms the boundary between the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Greenwich. The eastern Greenwich side is included in the Blackheath Park conservation area. In addition, most of the houses on the east side (excluding Nos. 59-67 odd) are grade II listed.

Lee Road is lined with semi-detached and detached Victorian villas (with some later replacements to the west side) dating from the early to mid nineteenth century. They are set relatively close together and well back from the road and enjoy garden settings in deep plots. Those to the Lewisham side have been truncated and developed with later housing. Unlike the east Greenwich side, the character of the road radically changes after No. 38 with modern houses of a much higher density and no particular architectural or historic merit.

Nos. 119-143 Lee Park (mid nineteenth century) is an exceptional group arranged in a crescent and contemporaneous with the houses of Lee Road. This small group to Lee Park shares many of the common characteristics of the wider area (shared with Greenwich) The houses are made all the better for their mature tree setting.

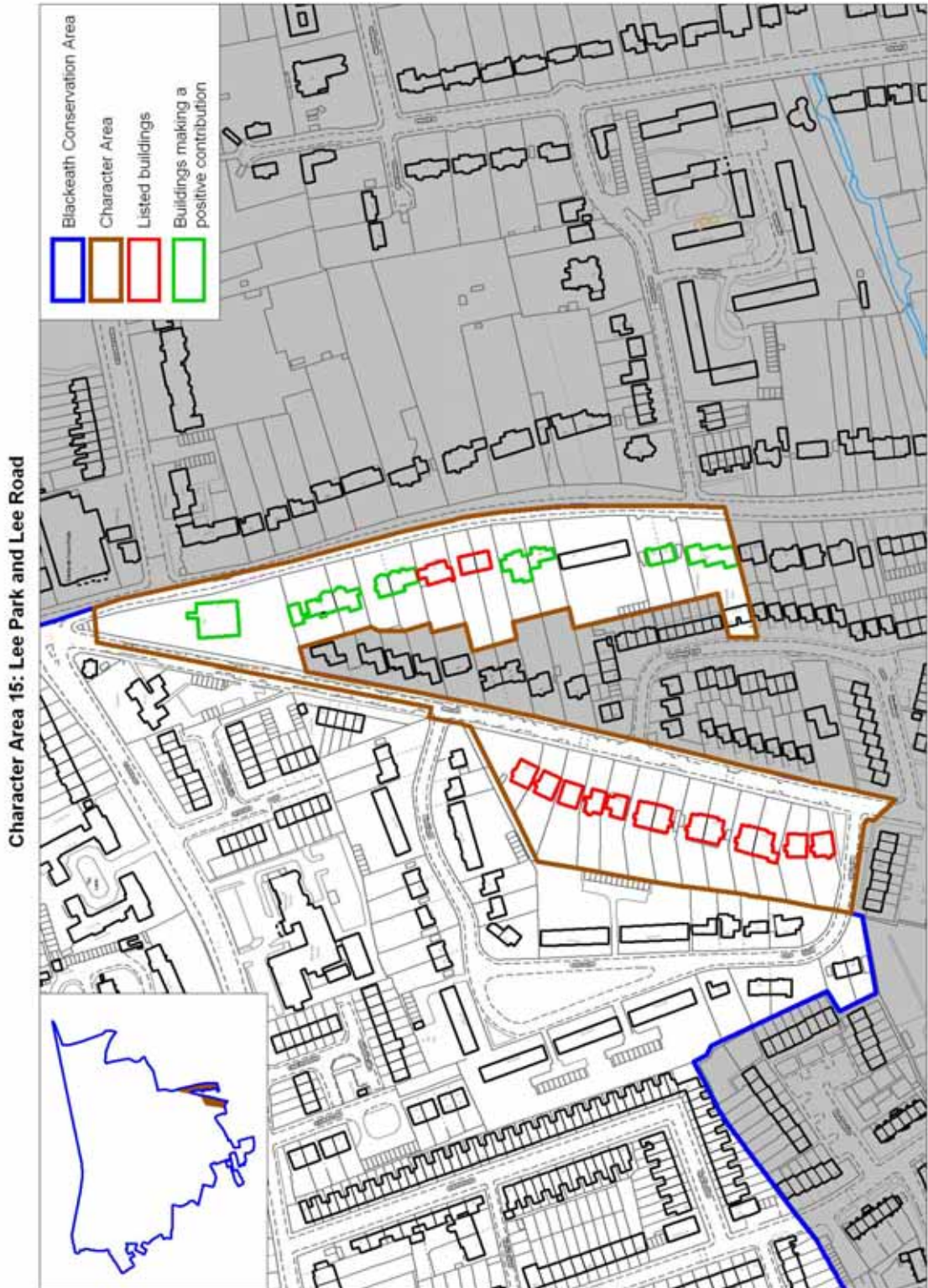
Down to the southern boundary of the conservation area (Presently to the south of No.32a) and arguably to No.38 the character of the Lewisham side is inextricably linked to the Greenwich side. Houses to both sides of the road share a common character and should be read as one character area despite the administrative boundary issues.

Houses are 2½ storey, with characteristic shared pediments and half lunettes to the attic storey. They are on the grand villa scale and are set back and framed by tree-lined boundaries. There are exceptions to this and breaks in the road include modern interventions such as the 'Span' housing to the south of Manor Way and the large Gothic estate cottage at No.36 which is rather at odds with its classical neighbours but nonetheless contributes at present to the setting of the conservation area.

The boundary treatments are an important part of this character area and the presence of a Grade II listed 'K2' telephone kiosk also adds to the high quality suburban feel of this part of the conservation area.

The east (Greenwich) side of Lee Road is of higher quality and is more cohesive and consistent than the west (Lewisham) side. This is reflected in the statutory listings on the east side. However, the character area taken as a whole and straddling the border as it does, has an sylvan suburban quality complemented by the deep tree lined plots

and strong boundary treatments.



8.16 Character Area 16: Ryculff Square

The area comprises formal blocks of flats described by Pevsner as ‘discreetly genteel’ (p 424. 1983 Buildings of England London 2:South). They are laid out in a series open and semi-open squares. The square has a limited visual relationship with the Heath and is divided by the boundary with the London Borough of Greenwich.

The flat blocks were designed by Sir Albert Richardson and were completed in 1954 and are three storey with very low pitch concrete tile roofs and deep eaves. They are the most restrained of Neo-Georgian style, stripped of almost all architectural embellishment save for a stringcourse between first and second floor. The facades and massing of the blocks are broken up by projecting porches and chimneys defining regular two window bays. The style is intended to reflect the Georgian terraces seen fronting the Heath.

The design of these blocks are interesting for the spatial qualities of the layout of the blocks rather than individual architectural distinction. The attention to hard and soft landscaping and in particular the presence of mature trees which line some of the roads create a ‘boulevard’ effect which breaks up what are in some cases large spaces.



8.17 Character Area 17: Merchant Taylors Almshouses

The group of almshouses by T. Bulcock Burbidge (1826) largely present an anonymous front to their public elevations on Brandram Road (seen as a long high brick wall) and Lee High Road. The exception to this is the Grade I listed Boone's Chapel (c1683) which makes such an unexpected and dramatic impact on this section of Lee High Road.

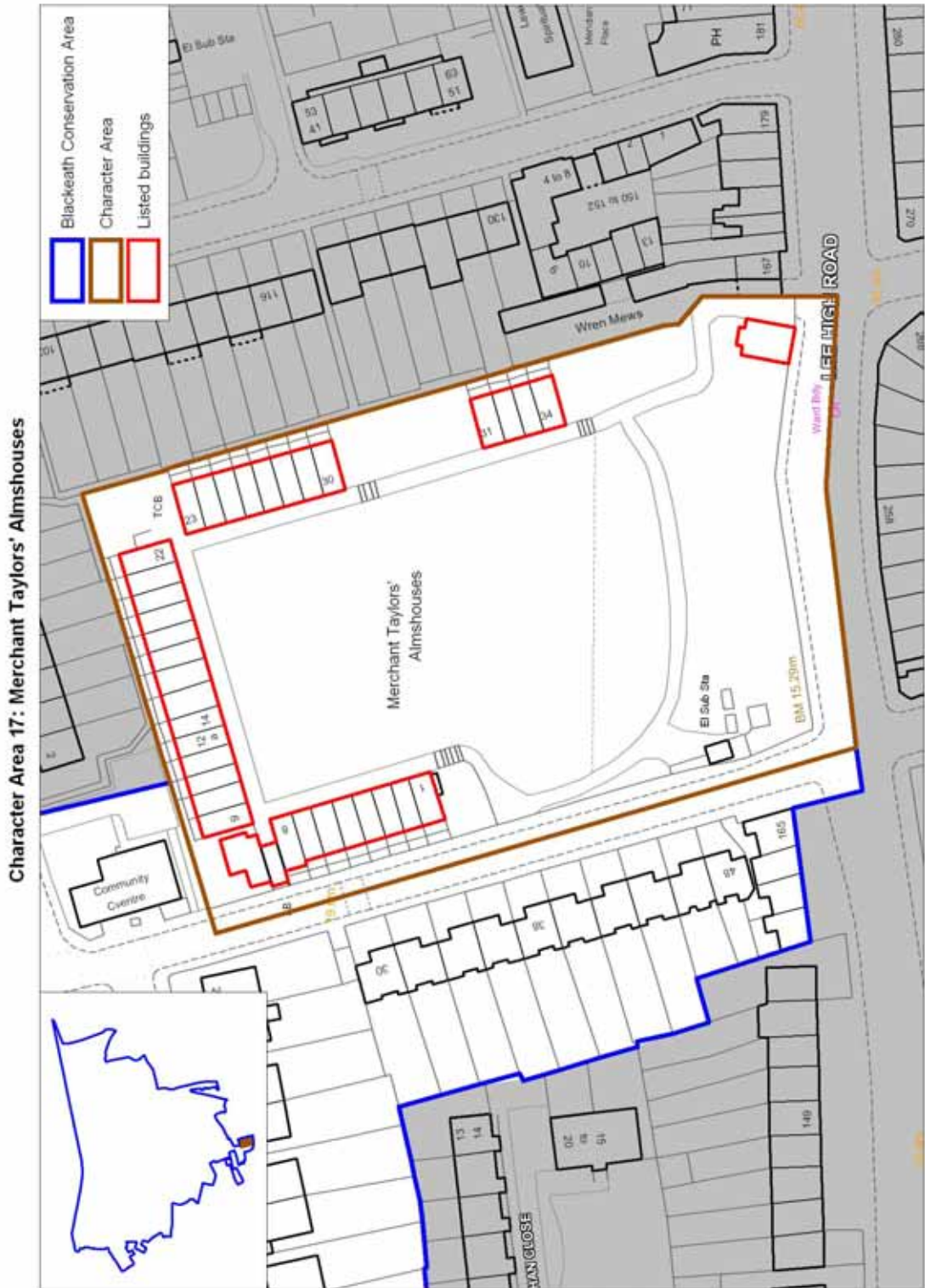
The houses are arranged in a palatial composition of three terraces, grouped to the west, north and east sides of the site in an upside down Ushape. The houses are built of pale stock brick in two storeys and all with iron casement windows, slate roofs and tall chimneys. The northern terrace faces the garden and has a pedimented three bay treatment to the centre (with cupola) and end of the block.

The combination of boundary treatments including railings to a low brick wall with stone capping and the high brick wall to the east side of Brandram Road form an important part of the character of this part of the conservation area. In addition, the trees lining Lee High Road within the grounds of the almshouses also provide both an attractive setting and some screening from the busy road.

4. The exceptionally high architectural and historic quality of this group is reflected in the complex being listed grade II and Boone's Chapel being listed Grade I. As such the setting of these buildings as well as their conservation area status will form an important part of considering any proposals for change.

The eighteenth century brickwork, projecting stone quoins and dentilled cornice and pediment to the elevations of Boone's Chapel provide an interesting juxtaposition with buildings on Lee High Road which is part of the positive character of this site.

The entrance to the almshouses on Brandram Road is a very pleasant symmetrical composition which, similar to Boone's Chapel, is unexpected but very welcome. It forms a very positive part of the street scene made all the more unusual by the use of a distinctive greyish-yellow brick. The addition of a Victorian posting box adjacent to the entrance is a very positive element in the street scene.



9 Architectural character

The extensive survival of high quality historic architecture in Blackheath is a rewarding part of the quality of the conservation area. Early suburbs and individual houses of the eighteenth and nineteenth century are interspersed with later development, albeit some of varying quality. However, the delight is generally in the survival of important townscape defining groups which have retained their architectural integrity and settings.

9.1 Listed buildings

There are a considerable number of very high quality groups of houses as well as individual houses and buildings which are listed on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest (see Designation Map, Appendix 1).

The Designations Map illustrates their distribution across the conservation area. Much of the built form enclosing the Heath is listed as well as early terracing to the Village. These divide reasonably logically into two groups: north and south of the railway.

9.1.1 Listed buildings north of the railway

Listed buildings in this area generally reflect the earlier development of Blackheath, with many of the buildings dating from the eighteenth century (with some remodelled seventeenth century houses). There are notable exceptions, for example All Saints Church of 1857-67 by Benjamin Ferrey, remarkable more for its setting on the Heath rather than its architectural accomplishments. And the Span housing development South Row (1959-61).

The typical London Georgian townhouse is a key building type in Blackheath built of brown-red bricks, timber framed vertical sliding sash windows (usually six over six panes), parapets, good decorative doorcases and hidden or mansard roofs. The latter can be quite dominant and in some ways overpowering when seen in paired houses (Eliot Place). In the Village these houses have been converted to shops at the ground floor with varying degrees of success. Many have been remodelled and altered to disguise their early date. A walk around the back of Tranquil Vale however, reveals a complexity of plan and early forms of extension and alteration. The roofscape to this part of this village makes a very interesting and valuable contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The Georgian villa is also present, seen at its best on Eliot Vale where two such villas sit adjacent to each other and quietly address the street with their subtle proportions

and restrained classical idiom. These are very attractive houses which define the streetscene helped by their generous tree lined garden settings.

Of individual houses, Spencer House c1690 (Grade II*) and Dartmouth House (1750), both in Dartmouth Row are important survivals on a very grand scale and also provide good essays in the evolution of the Georgian townhouse.

The Victorian townhouse is represented (in listed buildings) in Aberdeen Terrace c1855-60; three pairs of houses on a vast scale and more exuberant than their Georgian equivalents.

9.1.2 Listed Building south of the railway

Listed buildings south of the railway date, with two exceptions (Boone's Chapel, and remains of the old church of St Margaret), from the Victorian period. They are either churches, almshouses (Merchant Taylor's), large detached villas or detached, semi-detached or terraced villas. The sub groups within this broad category are diverse and vary in quality. However, they have shared characteristics which make them a cohesive group in contrast to the diversity found on the north side of the railway.

The listed villas often have shared pediments, which although also seen on Shooters Hill Road on the edge of the Heath, are prevalent in this part of the conservation area. They are invariably stucco fronted with low pitch natural Welsh slate roofs and deep eaves, often bracketed. They make good use of the roof space and this is accentuated by windows, half lunettes and sashes paired in the centre of the pediments. The entrance is raised and also often paired symmetrically, the 'piano nobile', or main floor, is clearly defined by a decorative hood mould or architrave to the windows.

A shared characteristic between listed buildings across the conservation area is the importance of the buildings as groups as well as individually. This is perhaps more evident south of the railway where listed groups are far more cohesive and were built and intended to be seen as compositions in their own right. Perhaps the best examples of this are the shallow crescent formed by Nos. 119-143 Lee Park an ensemble which varies the architectural handling of the individual buildings to create a hierarchy within the crescent with the grandest buildings to the centre stepping out to the edges with subtle changes to the window details and door surrounds. Church Terrace (c1840-50) also shows superior handling of a group of large villas where the formal façades fronting the street as well as the church form a distinguished group which gives the feel of a formal square.

Particular mention should be made to the Merchant Taylor's Almshouses , a fine

group of late nineteenth century almshouses built in 1825 with the quadrangle finally completed in 1878. The complex also contains the survival of an earlier chapel, Boone's Chapel of c1683, which related to an earlier group of almshouses, now demolished. The chapel is a grade I listed building and attributed to Sir Christopher Wren, however, subsequent study has identified his contemporary Robert Hooke as the more likely designer.⁵ This ensemble is a well considered group of houses which have the luxury of a large enclosed private garden running down to Lee High Road. The garden and almshouses also form a valuable setting for Boone's Chapel which is set on the roadside. This is a distinctive group and due to the subsequent late commercial development of Lee High Road is an interesting feature 'happened upon' whilst travelling along the Lee High Road.

9.2 Significant groups of unlisted buildings

The Designations Map identifies the buildings that are considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. There are a considerable number which are not locally listed. The following is a list of significant groups of buildings within the conservation area, but is not exhaustive.

- Quentin Road: A fine late nineteenth century terrace (c1880) on a large scale, prominent bays and decorated door cases form a pleasing rhythm and significantly contribute to the townscape.
- Collins Street and Southvale Road: Good late Victorian stock terraces (1869 and 1870-71 respectively) in good condition with a good survival of original features.
- All buildings comprising the Blackheath Village (see character area 9). In particular, excellent groups of houses and other buildings that form part of Brigade Mews, Brigade Street and Tranquil Passage are an untouched group of great townscape value which is very different to anything else in the conservation area.
- Blackheath Vale: Simple late Victorian terraces (1875) built by local builder Henry Joyce⁶, tucked down into the Heath in a former quarry, good detailing and survival of original features.
- The Orchard (1893/94), Orchard Drive and 10-15 (consecutive) (1893-94), 17-18 Eliot Vale (1896-98): Good groups, within roads of large well detailed Arts and Crafts influenced houses. High degree of survival of original features.

⁵ Supporting documentation for a successful planning application for the restoration of Boone's Chapel undertaken by Research Design Architecture Ltd (Feb 2005).

⁶ Courtesy of Neil Rhind.

- Granville Park (commenced 1853, completed by 1860): Many of the houses were designed by Henry William Spratt (1829-1910). A superb set piece of very high townscape quality with individual houses of merit forming a very cohesive group emphasised by the views of the sweep of the road down the hill towards Lewisham.
- North end of Dartmouth Row, Dartmouth Hill and Blackheath Hill: Tight triangular site of terraced mid and late Victorian housing of good quality. Variation between the three terraces in such close proximity provides real interest and strong character and a good survival of original features has maintained the quality of these groups.

9.3 Historic shops

There are a significant number of historic and traditionally designed shopfronts in Blackheath Village (see Shopfront Survey). The variation in materials is particularly striking and ranges from timber to cast and wrought iron, bronze and faience tiles. Particularly important survivals of early shops in the Village include the mosaic thresholds to the shops advertising early uses.

The date range is also broad with good examples from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The historic and traditional shopfronts make a very significant positive contribution to the character of the Village. For most visitors they are part of the memorable distinct village atmosphere and quality of experience as well as being important historic records in their own right.

Historic and traditional shopfronts are particularly sensitive to minor changes particularly in relation to advertisements; lettering and material finishes and even in some cases colour changes. Many shopfronts display an attention to detail and quality of material finish which make both individual shopfronts and the relatively large grouping stand out for their consistent high quality.

9.4 Modern buildings

The conservation area has a positive history of the patronage and embracing of modern buildings perhaps best exemplified by South Row (1959-61) by Eric Lyons. This grade II listed building forms part of the important enclosure to the Heath and takes its place beside eighteenth century houses of equal grade: Paragon House (1791) to the east and Colonnade House (1806) to the west.

In addition to this, there are a number of good groups of modern houses and some individual one-off houses of note. The following list is representative,

although not exhaustive:

- North Several: Good group of houses by Royston Summers (1969). Three storeys of glass walling with a strong vertical emphasis due to the close setting of mullions to the facades.
- 14-16 Baizdon Road by Stephen Gardiner (c1970's): Individual houses set low into the hillside and around internal courtyards.
- 3 Dartmouth Grove (c1970-75): Set between terraces in the garden. Entrance in wall reads as garden wall. The house is kept low and opens onto a private courtyard. The architect has taken considerable care to respect the historic setting and the house almost loses itself in the townscape.
- 8 Duke Humphrey Road: New house (c1980 & 2005). Uncompromisingly modern house in extremely prominent position overlooking the Heath. Simple execution, good detailing and finishes and acts as a foil to the traditional buildings around it. Let down by the retention of an earlier garage on the site which is at odds with the rest of the design.
- The Courtyard, Paragon Place: Two contemporary houses maximise a tight urban site to the rear of Montpelier Row and make a positive contribution to the quality of modern design seen in the Blackheath Conservation Area (let down by the mock timber horizontal detailing of the garage entrance).

10 Materials and details

10.1 Windows

The ubiquitous Georgian terrace and townhouse of London was the choice of the mass speculative builder of the cities. Its classical proportions, uniform character and shared component pattern book styling meant terraces could be put up quickly and efficiently. The Victorian period of suburb building utilized a style of architecture dictated very much by the wealthier classes of the day who saw the classical idiom as reflecting much of their ideals and aspirations of the time. The emergence of the villa in its various forms and guises was the result. Both these styles share a common characteristic which ties together houses across the conservation area and indeed across much of London and that is the timber framed vertical sliding sash window.

The sash window is seen in many varying forms and configurations of glazing bar, but is invariably single glazed, recessed back from the façade with the sash box built into the wall and in almost all cases painted white. This window type is crucial to understanding the principles of the classical language and maintaining a hierarchy and sense of proportion to buildings. Even relatively minor alterations to windows, particularly in a terrace or pair of houses can be very disruptive to the character of both the individual building and the terrace/pair as a whole.

Other window types are to be found in the conservation area and they usually mark the transition from the Victorian to Edwardian townhouse and villa. Casement windows are often interspersed with sashes in early Edwardian properties with upper storeys and attic rooms having casements rather than sashes seen on the lower, principal floors. In addition, the Arts and Crafts movement encouraged the move back towards the use of what were considered 'traditional forms' of the cottage and an honesty in materials. This sees the presence of leaded lights, cast iron casements and stained glass. The latter can be very attractive when seen in traditional front doors and porches.

10.2 Doors

Timber panelled doors in a large number of configurations are seen in traditional buildings throughout the conservation area. Georgian doors usually have solid raised and fielded panels with a fanlight above. The late nineteenth century saw a trend in upper panels being replaced with glass, which was often patterned and coloured or had leaded decorative stained glass lights. This developed with elaborate detailing and more decorative motifs being employed onto the front door such as carved panels, scrolls and the use of brass or cast iron door furniture (depending on the status of the building).

The conservation area has a number of very high quality doors, particularly relating to historic door surrounds; architraves, bracketed hoods, pilasters and pediments. Where these are carefully considered alterations, have been restored or reinstated they make very positive contributions to the character and appearance of the conservation area. In addition, the conservation area has some fine examples of early porches, canopies and verandas (Granville Park has some excellent examples). Where these survive they make a very positive contribution to the character of that particular environment.

Doors are painted various colours. Colours which relate well to the overall architectural finish of the building or terrace make the most successful contribution to the character of the conservation area. They are often the most distinctive element of the façade and they should not compete with other colours or architectural detailing on the building.

10.3 Paths

Front paths do not survive in large numbers. Where they are found they vary from herringbone brick (Blackheath Vale) to clay tiles (Blackheath Hill) to decorative terracotta tiles (Quentin Road).

10.4 Boundary walls & gardens

Historic and traditional front boundary walls and garden walls make a very important contribution to the character of the conservation area.

Boundary walls provide enclosure to the road, demarcation of public/private space, a processional route to the house by defining the entrance and path, a human scale to the street and a continuation of the frontage by visually tying together terraces of houses. They often utilise the same brick type (or render/stucco) of the house, making a further architectural link between front boundary wall and house.

The Heath in particular has some excellent examples of early boundary walls for example Greyladies Gardens, Wat Tyler Road. Very early walls can be seen to the rear of Dartmouth Row in Morden Lane. These are valuable survivals and should be carefully maintained and preserved.

In addition to garden walls and boundary walls, some railings are still in situ. (for example Dartmouth Hill) Where these survive they make a very valuable contribution to the character of the houses they front and can provide an important record of

original details which could in the future be copied and reinstated on adjacent properties. It should be noted that early and original boundary walls will also often provide important clues as to the type, style and character of the railings which may have sat atop them.

Of equal importance to the survival of boundary treatments is the retention of garden spaces. This is particularly important where large villas and houses still retain the spatial quality of their original Arcadian settings. These spaces are vital to retaining the essential historic character of the 'high status suburb' that these early parts of the suburbanisation of the conservation area enjoyed. They also provide an appropriately scaled setting to large houses which were intended to be seen within a spacious setting often offset by carefully considered planting; mature trees, hedges and shrubs.

10.5 Roofs & chimneys

Roofs and chimneys are particularly important elements of the built form particularly on houses fronting the Heath. The architectural period and styles of building mean that every effort was made to play down the actual roof covering although in the case of the villa the roof form is often accentuated through the use of deep eaves, often bracketed and with cornices. However, there was always the emphasis on quality, longevity and uniformity. In this respect, the natural Welsh slate is the most used component material for traditional roofs in the conservation area. This is often seen (and correctly so) with lead rolls to hips and dormer detailing.

Clay tiles are also seen and are a particularly strong part of the palette of materials which forms the Arts and Crafts Domestic Revival style. As a consequence clay tiles are seen on the more sweeping roofs of the Edwardian house and are also seen as tile hanging in places. This has nothing to do with a Blackheath vernacular (although relates to a Kent vernacular) but has everything to do with the Arts and Crafts Movement. As such it forms a legitimate part of the character of some sub areas within the conservation area and shares a commonality with the Movement throughout the suburbs of London and way beyond.

Chimneys also play an important part in finishing the buildings of the conservation area and are also a particularly strong part of the character of the Edwardian houses. The Victorian terraces use them as strong transitional elements, sat on the party walls of semi-detached houses and sometimes making strong statements in their own right as part of an architectural composition. The best and contrasting examples of this are Granville Park (with their rows of 16 chimney pots running front to back of the centre of the mirrored plan) and 'The Cottage', Heath Lane with its excellent decorative, Tudor Revival decorative chimney pots which bring this building to life and make a real statement in terms of roofscape.

Roofscape is a vital element of the character of the built form in Blackheath. The roof form is very sensitive to change and can be easily upset with incorrect detailing or specification of ridge tile, bonnet detailing, dormer detailing, guttering or hip joins. Finials, decorative rooflines, cast iron guttering, hopper heads and downpipes all make subtle but important contributions to the quality of a roof and the subsequent character of the building and the conservation area as a whole.

10.6 Brickwork

The most common walling material in the conservation area is brick as there is no local stone. Regionally, the Kentish Rag stone which is seen, for example at All Saints Church, is not local and is very much the exception to what is otherwise brickwork or stuccoed brick or painted brick.

The London stock brick is seen in various shades from strong yellows to greys and reddish browns. The older the brickwork the darker and deeper the colour tends to be with the smoke and smog or London playing its part in adding a patina of age to brickwork which is impossible to recreate. In addition, traditional brickwork shows a refinement to the joints and understanding of traditional materials which is also almost impossible to recreate successfully today. This is particularly the case with regard to rubbed and gauged brick arches which have very fine joints and tuck pointing, where fine lines of lime imitate fine pointing.

Much brickwork has been spoilt or damaged by aggressive repointing in cement mortars with heavy weather-struck joints which is sadly a common sight. Original tuck pointing, early lime mortars and discreet pointing, even in patchy pieces, make a very positive contribution to the character of the buildings in the conservation area.

10.7 Stucco

The use of stucco is particularly prevalent to the south of Belmont Hill rather than around the Heath. It sits well with the grand style of the villa and is used with the intention of giving the impression of a stone fronted building. This aspiration has been eroded in places by paint finishes in brighter colours (the original finish would have reflected a stone colour – shades of grey or cream). However, the overall intended effect is still clear.

10.8 Architectural detailing

Many of the buildings in the conservation area are all the more visually rewarding for their use of ornament and detailing. Architraves, string courses, cornices, hood mouldings, console brackets, pilasters, keystones, carved keystones, gauged brickwork, arches all contribute to the strong individual character of buildings and often the cohesiveness of pairs, groups or terraces. Where they have been used they make a very strong contribution to the character of the individual house, pair, group or terrace. Good examples can be found throughout the conservation area but are perhaps best illustrated by Brigade Street, Dartmouth Row (group at north end), Blackheath Hill and Dartmouth Hill. Good detailing can be seen on a grand scale in Granville Park as well as in Quentin Road, Kingswood Place, Church Terrace, Lee Terrace and Glenton Road.

10.9 Public realm

The conservation area has valuable survivals of elements of historic streetscape throughout. There is a particularly important and meaningful survival in the Village – cobbles (defining historic roads), granite setts (village entrance to the station car park) and crossovers, central drains and gulleys to mews (Brigade Mews), bollards, boundary stones, listed telephone boxes (particularly K2's) all contribute to the positive character of the conservation area. In places, historic floor treatments have been very poorly repaired or covered over.

11 Conclusion

It is perhaps the diversity of character and retention of the spatial qualities in the conservation area which, in the London context, makes Blackheath such a valuable and worthy area for protection.

This appraisal has emphasised the distinct character of parts of the conservation area as well as the Heath, which has been the subject of further protection as part of the buffer zone to the Greenwich World Heritage Site thus emphasising its value and importance in the South East London townscape. But it has also highlighted the distinction between areas north and south of the railway. These areas are not of greater or lesser importance but are very different in terms of their character. The appraisal provides comprehensive analysis of each character area which make up this very large conservation area.

The conservation area is generally well preserved and there is a remarkably high degree of retention of original fabric, even in buildings which do not enjoy the protection of listing. However, there is significant pressure to remove boundary walls to create parking areas which not only destroys historic fabric and the composition of streets but removes valuable green spaces and original settings for the characteristic grand villas of the area.

Another key area of sensitivity is the Village. The commercially driven development pressures on this very tight plan of historic buildings are immense. Small incremental changes such as poor signage, the inappropriate alteration or painting of shopfronts or facades and the lack of care taken in the placing of street furniture, highway signage and maintenance of traditional street surfaces could have a collectively devastating effect on the character of this part of the conservation area.

As part of the review of Blackheath Conservation Area, a management plan has been adopted and Article 4 directions made to prevent harmful small scale alterations to residential houses in the conservation area. Details of these are available from the planning information desk or www.lewisham.gov.uk.

12 Bibliography

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13 Supplementary Planning Document

Blackheath supplementary planning document

One of the qualities of Blackheath conservation area is the limited amount of well designed and successfully integrated modern development. Where suitable sites exist, this supplementary planning document provides advice on how good quality small scale new development can continue to enhance the character of the conservation area.

New buildings will only be considered on sites which can be developed without damage to the traditional layout and pattern of development in the area, which is an integral part of the area's character, or to redevelop some of the buildings in the area which currently make a negative contribution to the area's character.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Council's urban design policies, guidance on design and access statements as well as the character appraisal. Pre-application advice can be given by the Conservation and Urban Design Team.

Appraisal of the surrounding built form

The setting of the site is critical to any new development and will vary in virtually every case, but as a guide it should be taken as the area from which the site can be seen and the surroundings seen from the site. The setting can also be defined as the general pattern of uses in the vicinity. These may vary on each side of the site. The character appraisal should be used for reference. The following elements should all be analysed and their implications understood:

- Surrounding skylines, rooflines and landmarks. Will the development have an impact on cherished views or "signature" skylines?
- What are the typical sizes and shapes of building plots: Are these uniform or varied? If varied, consider largest and smallest types?
- How do buildings relate to the back edge of the footpath or carriageway? This factor alone can help to assimilate new buildings into the streetscene.
- Are the buildings in the street freestanding, or are they in small informal groups or more regular terraces?
- Are buildings linked in a particular way, for example with boundary walls?
- Do the buildings generally have their main ridgeline parallel to the street or at right angles?

- Are the buildings generally “grand” or modestly proportioned and styled
- Is there a typical or historic boundary treatment? Historic walls and hedging are an integral part of the character of the area.
- What are the predominant materials and colour of material in the area and are any unique?

Appraisal of the site

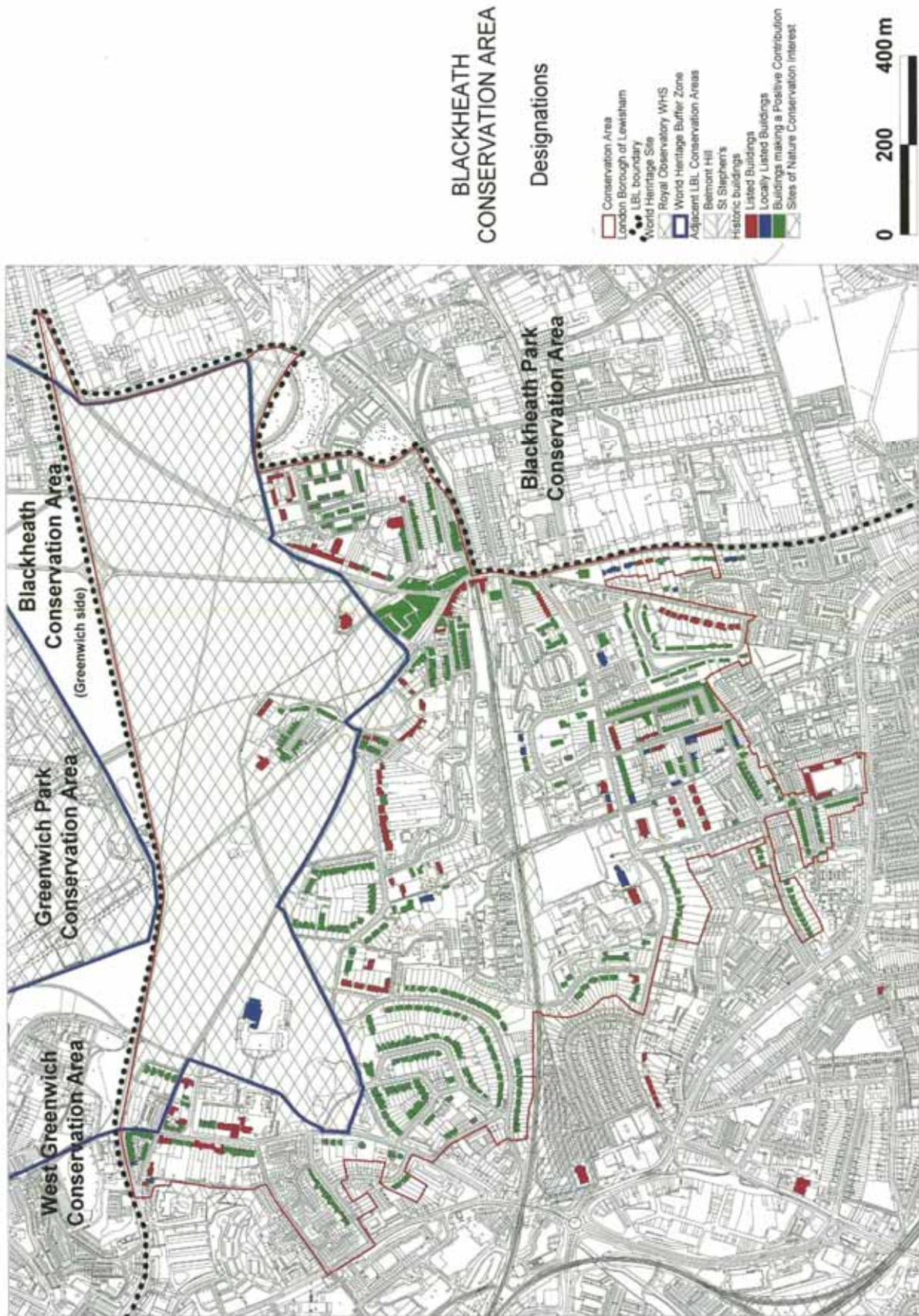
First consider the features and function of the possible site. Development will only be considered if development would preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area. Undeveloped sites may still have a function that it is desirable to retain such as a garden or simply a green breathing space in the urban environment.

- What is the current character of the site?
- What trees are present What species are they and what size are they?
- Are there any features or buildings present?
- What is the current use of the site?
- What type of boundary is present?
- Where would the access to the new building be located?

Design solution

The design concept should be developed from the above information. This information should be set out in a design and access statement which will underpin the evolving design process and should be shown to the Council when seeking pre-application advice. It is also a requirement of all planning applications for new development. The design solution should be a building that sits well within its setting as well as preserving and enhancing the character of Blackheath conservation area

Appendix I: Designations Map



Appendix II: Townscape Appraisal Map

