

RESIDENTIAL - FREE FORM - SLABS

Introduction

Slab block development is largely associated with post-war buildings which occur across the borough. However, it also relates to inter-war LCC development of low and medium rise flats.

Urban Form

Slab blocks are a low to medium rise form of development, typically between four and eight storeys high. Many feature flats, but it is also common to see duplex development in four storey or six storey blocks with deck access walkways.

This form of development is particularly prevalent in the northern part of the borough where it features strongly in areas which were bomb-damaged in World War Two. In these locations it is very typical to see the blocks laid out to a rectilinear form as part of an overall composition containing houses and towers as well as areas of green space. However, what they notably fail to do is establish a clear structure of routes and private spaces and so although they provide a high degree of pedestrian permeability they also create a place which can be very illegible and which may lack a sense of ownership and surveillance necessary for a safe street.

In some parts of the borough, including Blackheath and Forest Hill, slab blocks are set within mature landscape on sloping sites. Here the emphasis is more on adapting to the landscape and so curved and faceted block plans and irregular layouts are often adopted.

Buildings

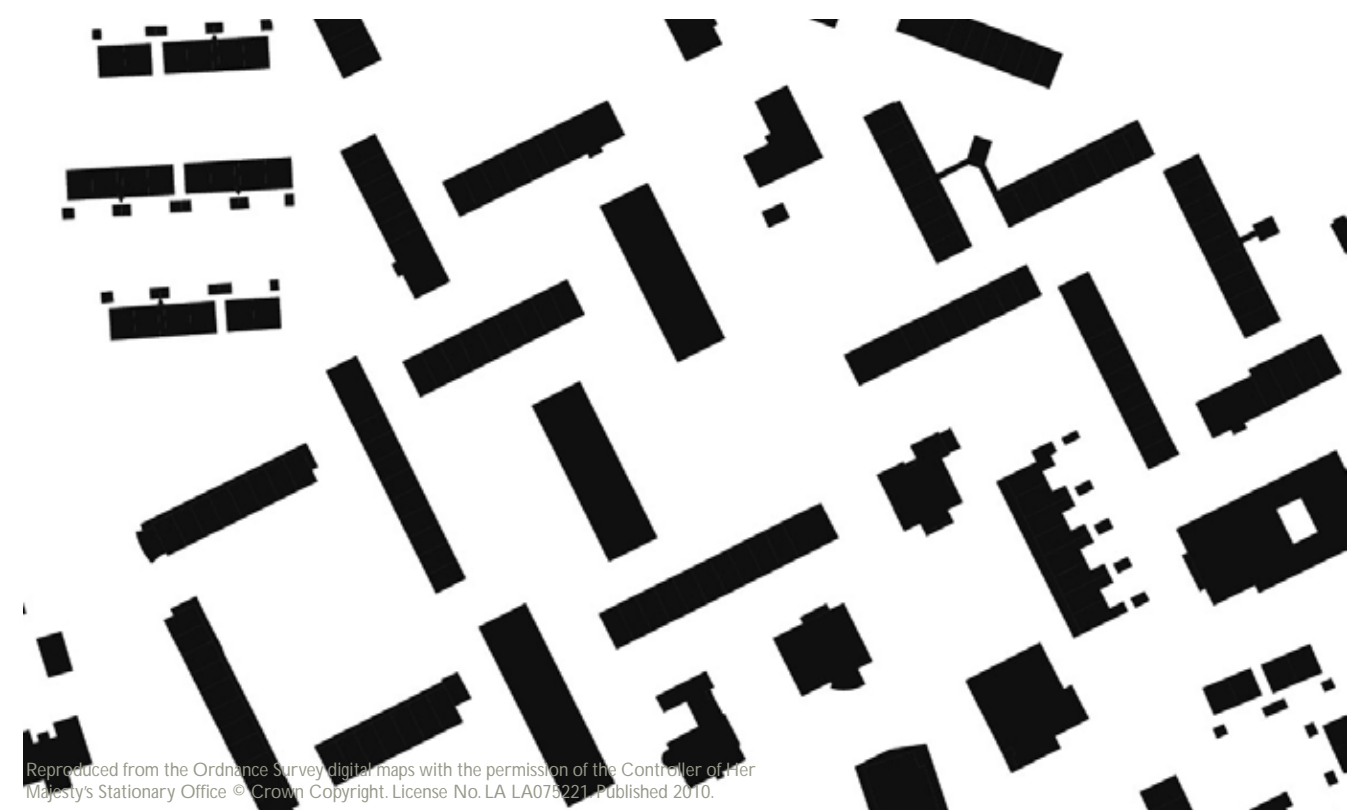
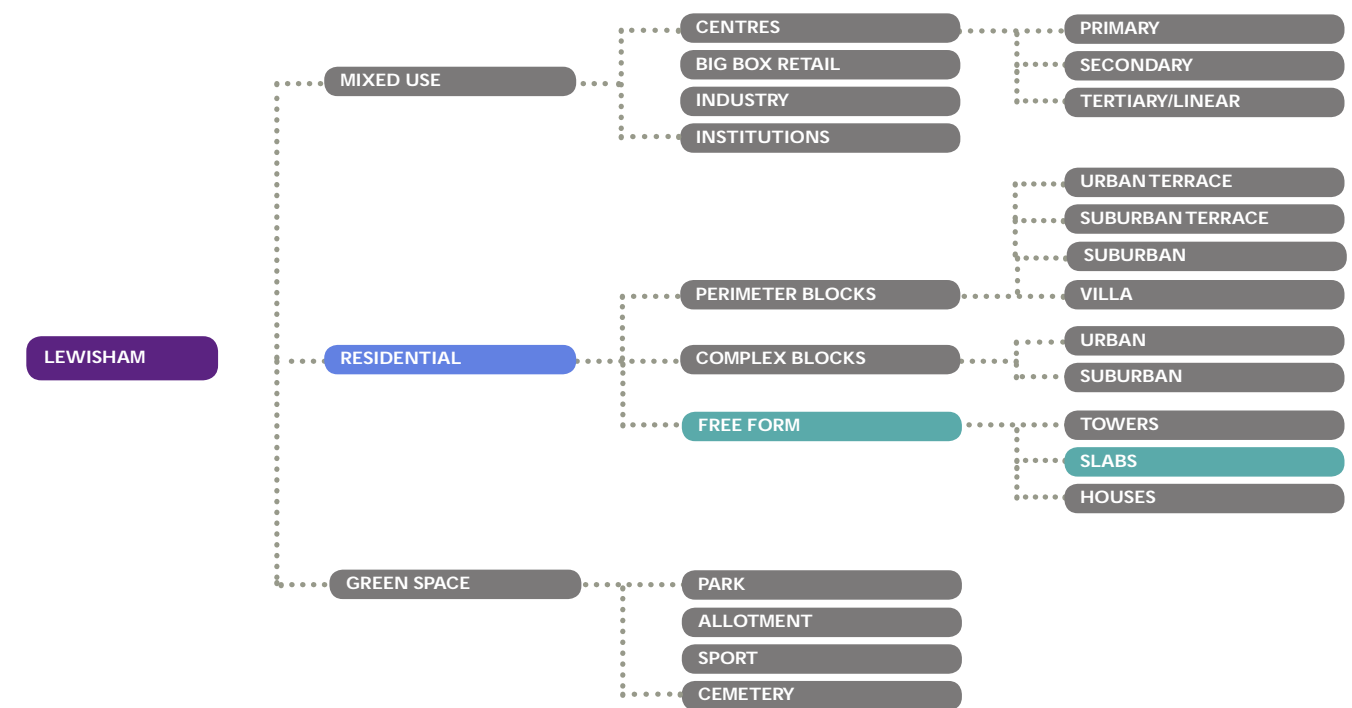
As with domestic buildings of the postwar period, slab blocks vary enormously in the mix of materials, details and styles. They include significant elements of yellow stock brick alongside rendered elements and panel systems. Many feature external balconies although in some instances it is clear that these have been added as a new element during refurbishment.

Slab blocks of flats and duplex units are now generally recognised as a poor form of housing. The stairwell, corridors or decks which give access to a large number of units create an ambiguous area of semi-public space which is hard to police.

Streetscape

Slab blocks in the north of the borough typically relate to pedestrian areas rather than conventional streets. Ground floor units often feature small enclosed gardens, but as can be seen with examples such as the Pepys Estate buildings these back onto public routes and open spaces and so become vulnerable areas. Examples such as the estate to the south of Dragoon Road also show how buildings sometimes relate directly to green space. This creates an attractive visual amenity but leaves an element of ambiguity at ground floor level where flats open directly into public space.

Parking frequently accounts for a significant land take in large slab block estates, and in some it is clear that this is a later addition, sacrificing what had been open space.



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RESIDENTIAL - FREE FORM - HOUSES

Introduction

Free-form low rise development in Lewisham is typically a product of the early post-war period. It features low rise terraces and detached buildings which have a fragmented urban layout. This typically offers a poor relationship between building frontages and public spaces but does feature a relatively high degree of pedestrian permeability.

Urban Form

The urban form of the open plan areas is quite unlike more conventional layouts based on urban blocks and streets. Typically the product of post war public sector development, the open plan layouts provide a fragmented structure in which car movement and pedestrian movement are separated out to a significant degree; parking is typically provided in parking courts; and the primary access to a front door may be along a pedestrian-only route.

The key intent behind this approach is to offer a pedestrian friendly environment which is away from cars and therefore feels inherently safer. However, in doing this, it creates routes which lack the clarity and safety of a more conventional block structure whilst also creating parking courts which typically expose the rear boundaries of gardens to the public realm, creating large areas of dead frontage.

Buildings

In the low rise areas, buildings are typically two storeys although some three storey types occur where flats are included. One of the key distinguishing features of this form is that unlike

the cul-de-sac layouts, buildings here are likely to be grouped as terraces to a common design. This perhaps reflects the origins of the buildings in the public sector, with a greater emphasis on the communal identity and form as compared to the more individualistic emphasis found in private sector development.

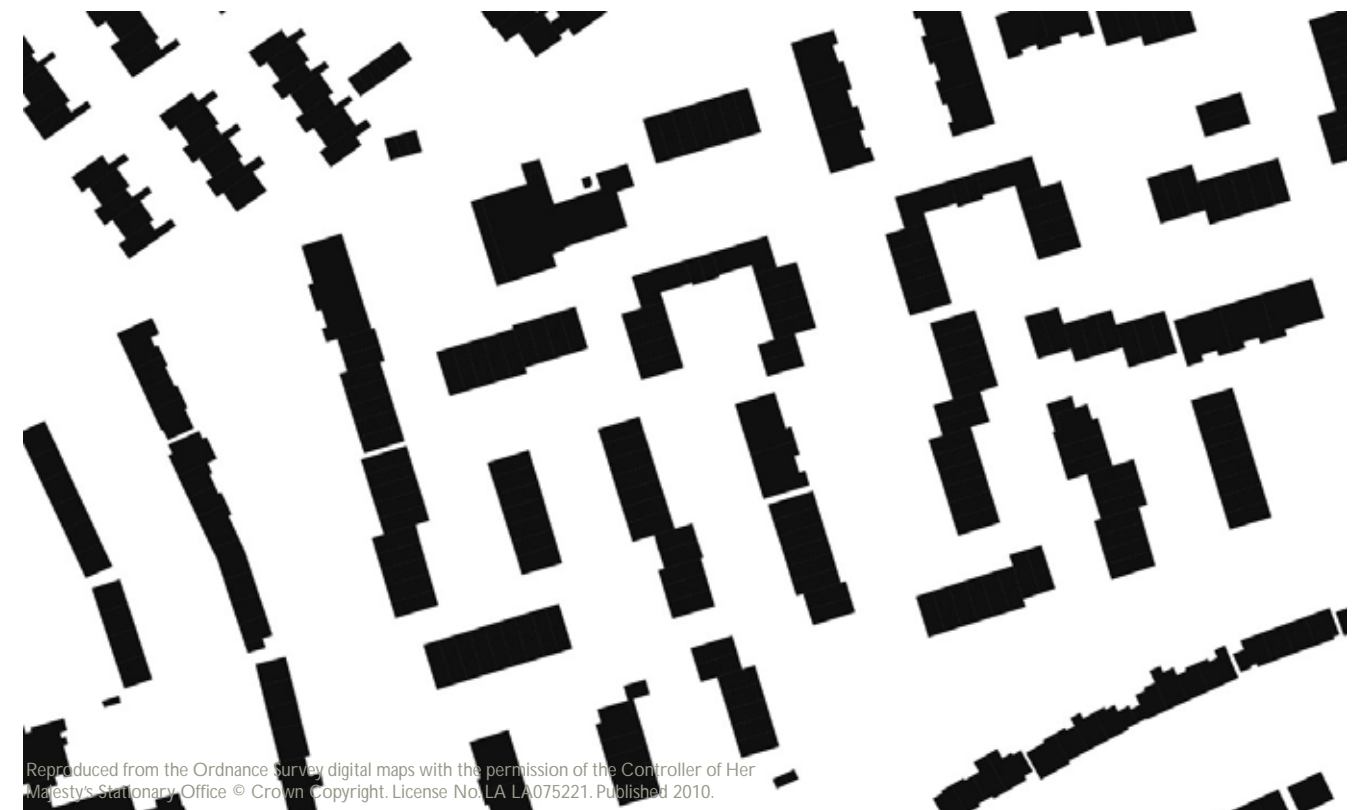
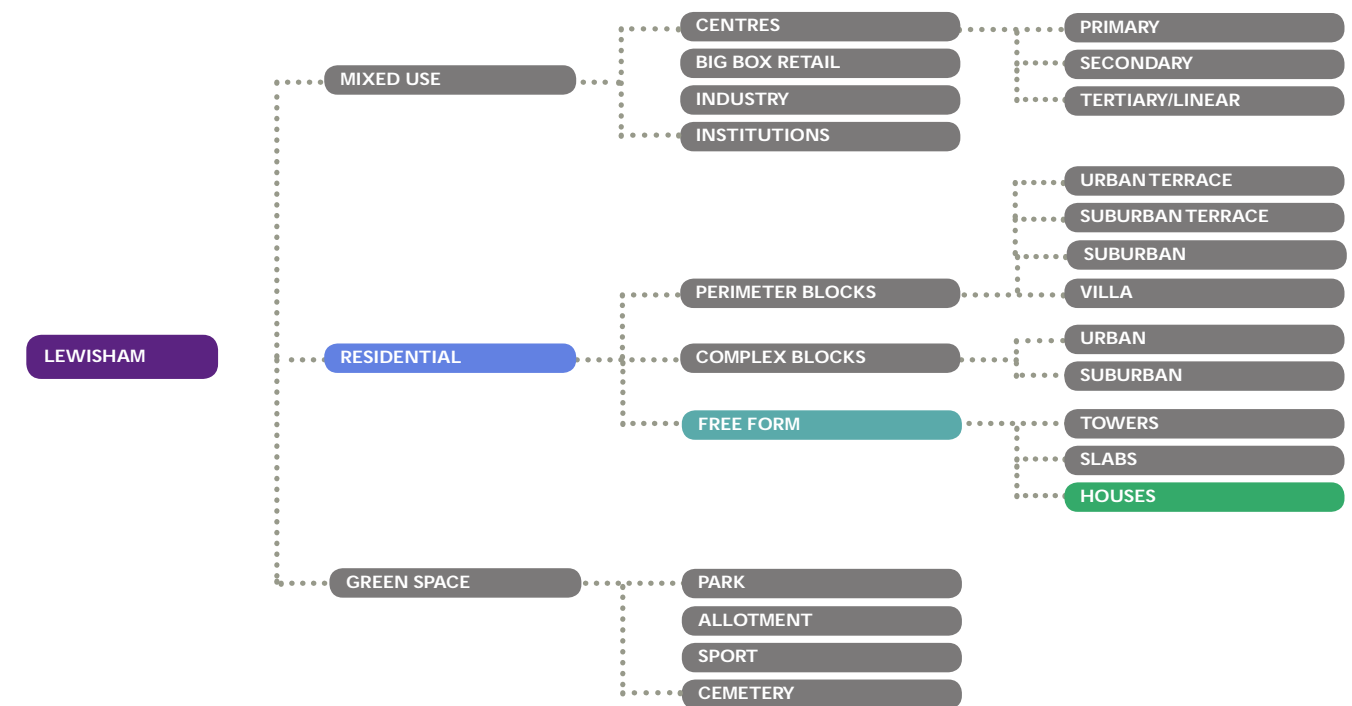
Buildings are likely to feature a very limited palette of materials in any given area and often include features such as timber infill panels set between windows in brick elevations. Windows are also most likely to have a strong horizontal proportion with generally very flat-fronted buildings.

Individual plots in these areas are some of the shallowest found, often being less than 20 metres deep overall giving an equivalent block depth of 40 metres. On the other hand the plots are generally more square, being between 7.5 and 10 metres wide.

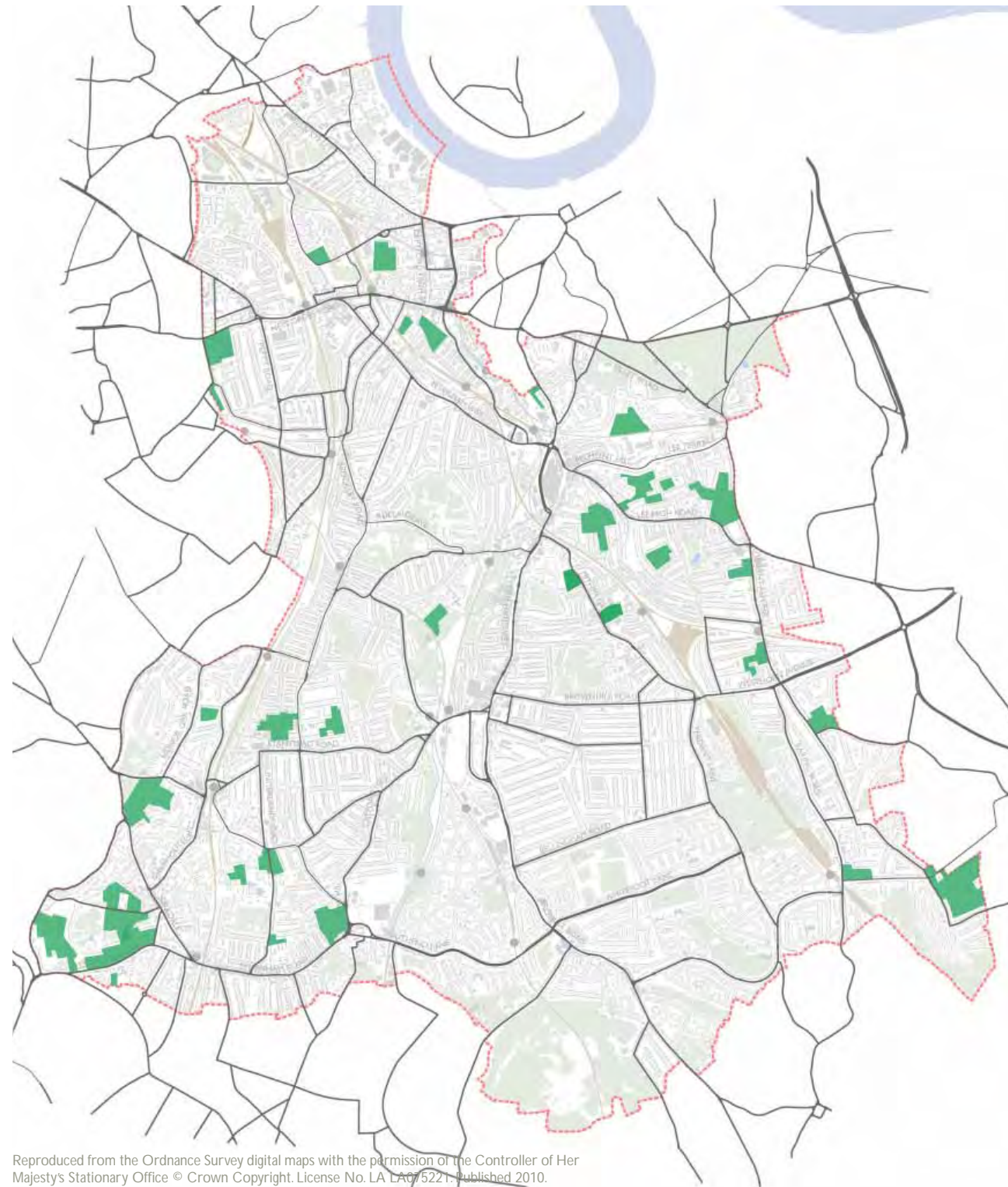
Streetscape

The street profile in this typology is variable. In some cases profiles are narrow with properties facing onto pedestrian walkways and shallow front gardens (often as little as 1 – 1.5m deep). In other examples, street profiles are wider with generous mown grass verges or front gardens separating properties from the road. The boundary between public highway and private garden and between the front gardens of adjacent properties is rarely marked with a wall or fence resulting in an open plan character to the streetscape.

Typically, there is little vegetation in the streetscape with few street trees and little tree or shrub planting in front gardens. The % tree



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cover in these areas is normally very low. Open spaces between residential units are common, particularly around road junctions. These tend to be areas of closely mown amenity grass sometimes with a margin or island beds of amenity shrub planting.

Roads are typically concrete or tarmac with concrete road kerbs and standard highway lighting. Pavements are tarmac and are often set back from the road edge behind a wide grass area. Car parking is typically dispersed with some on road, others in front gardens and some in private garages. Parking is rarely on both sides of the road and cars do not generally dominate the streetscape.

The streetscape character is typically quiet with low pedestrian, cycle and car movements and little activity on the streets or in front gardens.



GREEN SPACE - PARK

Introduction

Parks vary in size across the borough and are often of a formal design. These include the areas of heath as well as the neighbourhood parks throughout the borough. The buildings around the edge of these parks have a strong relationship with the space.

Form

The larger parks across the borough take a number of forms including heaths, formal parks and former estate gardens. Each of these forms have some common characteristics. All have some element of formal design to them and most are edged by buildings, most often homes, facing on to them.

Heath areas such as the Heath at Blackheath are sizeable and edged by strong urban frontages, often encompassing large and ornate buildings such as villas. The green space is dissected by a series of routes, dividing the green areas up into triangular forms.

Formal parks include Brookmill Park, Chinbrook Meadows, Forster Memorial Park, Lewisham Park, Telegraph Hill and Sydenham Wells Park. Generally these spaces form important community foci in their local neighbourhoods and are edged by streets with front facing residential properties.

A number of the formal parks in the borough are former estate gardens. Beckenham Place Park is the largest surviving example, and as a result of its size forms a different type of resource for local people. Manor House Gardens is a smaller example which is surrounded by residential neighbourhoods which have adopted the space as their local park.

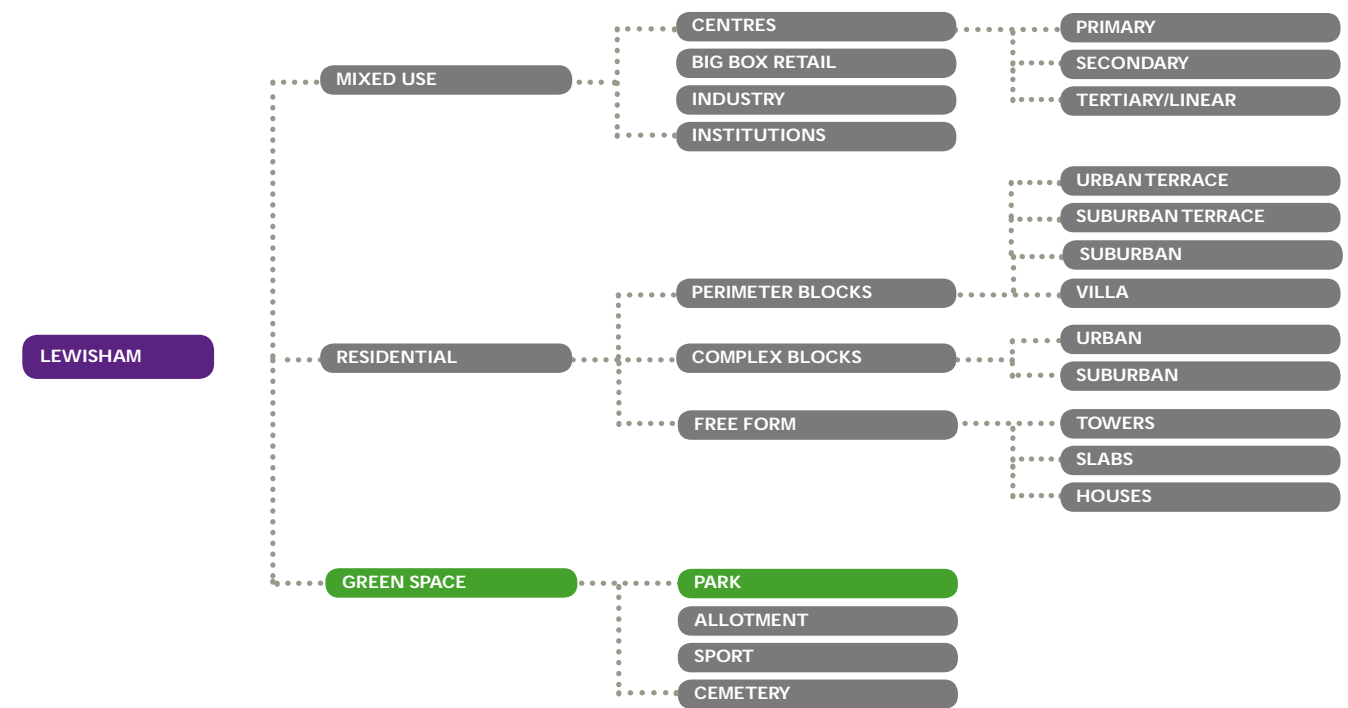
Streetscape

The parks are well distributed across the borough and have an important impact on the character of local neighbourhoods.

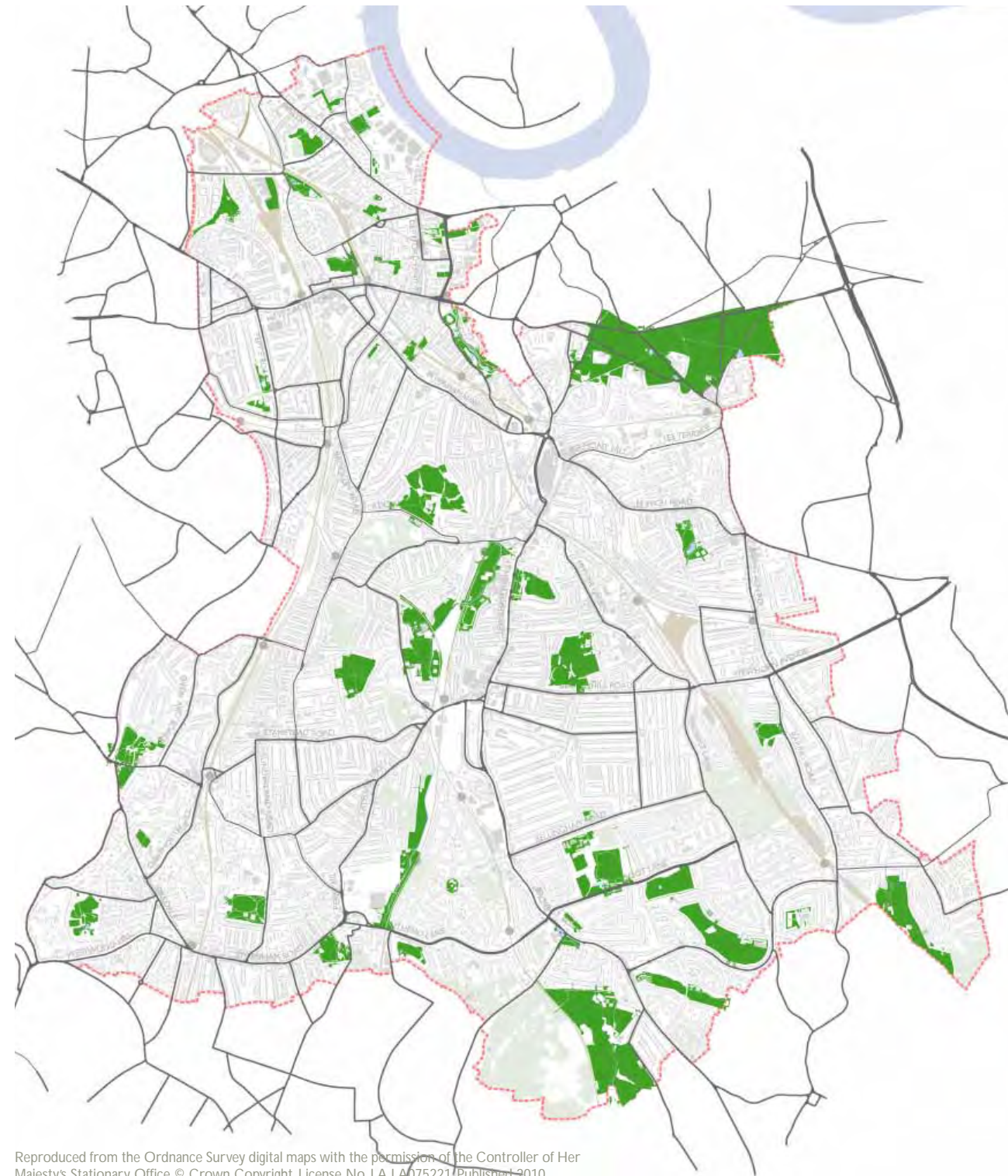
The large spaces of Beckenham Place Park and the Heath at Blackheath dominate their local area and form important high points for view across the borough, as well as providing a landscaped horizon from views from the valley floor. These spaces are very different in character and content. Beckenham Place Park is the largest green space in the borough, covering 96 hectares, with large areas of ancient woodland. It is an important wildlife site and is located on the South East London Green Chain Walk and the regional Capital Ring. A central wooded area gives over to more open large scale landscape which is now home to a golf course and other formal sport provision.

The Heath at Blackheath was originally covered with gorse and heathland, which has changed over time due to intensive management. Some areas of the original acid grassland are managed to grow long, giving wild flowers a chance to set seed and providing habitat for butterflies, grasshoppers and other invertebrates. The site is a World Heritage Site buffer zone due to its situation adjacent to Greenwich Park World Heritage Site.

Smaller spaces in the borough frequently take a classic form of local parks. Lewisham Park, for example, is a town garden with trees, shrubs and floral borders, and includes a children's playground. Older spaces, such as Manor House Gardens, represent restored former estate gardens. Manor House Gardens was restored in 2000 and includes a walled flower garden, a restored lake and a fountain.



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GREEN SPACE - ALLOTMENT

Introduction

Allotments are frequently located along rail lines and hidden within large perimeter blocks. They have a strong internal structure due to plot division. Due to their hidden nature often have limited impact on the wider character of an area.

Form

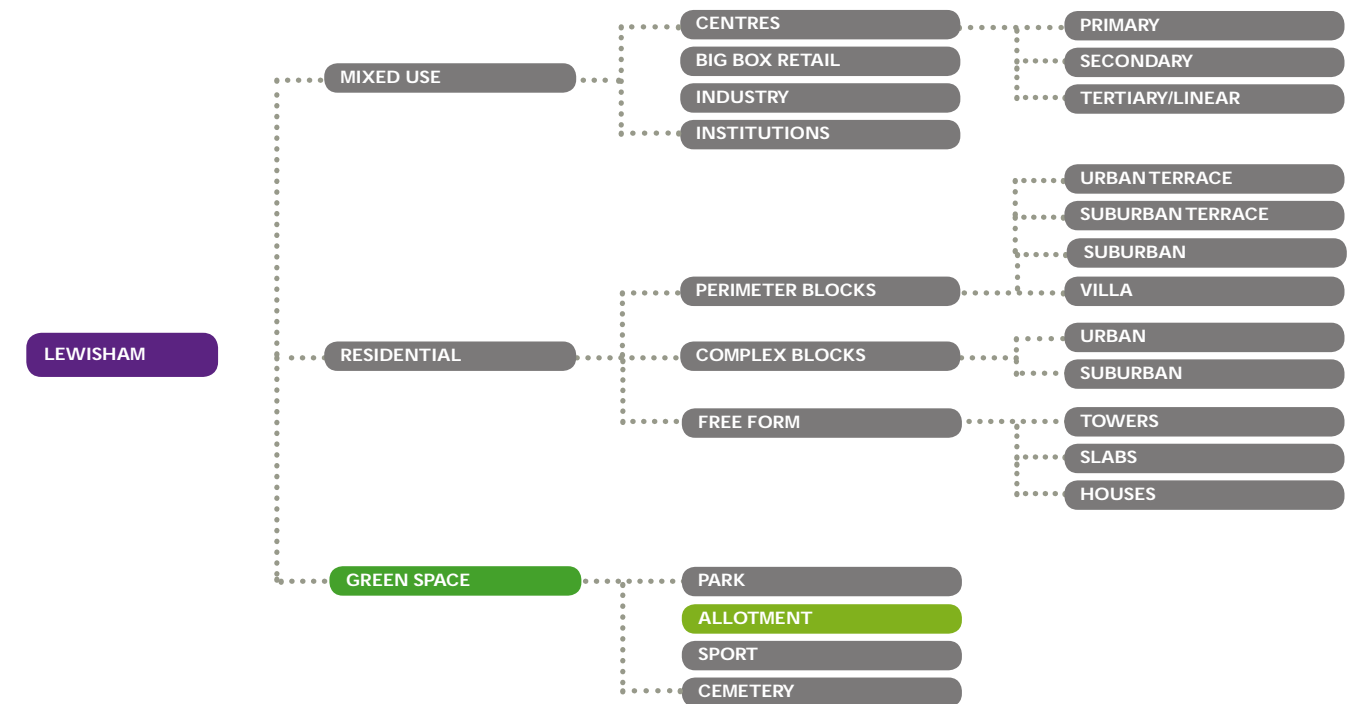
Allotments throughout the borough occupy space which has traditionally been awkward to develop. For example, many of the allotment areas form strips along the sides of rail corridors, providing a buffer between the rail lines and the backs of houses. Other locations, include allotment areas within the centre of large perimeter blocks.

The allotments in the borough are rarely obvious from routes running through neighbourhoods, and often accessed between small gaps in the urban form.

Streetscape

Allotments have a very distinctive landscape character. The spaces are divided into regular rectangular plots which forms a strong grid within the space. The planting of each plot creates varying degrees of vertical form with the occasional shed emphasising the plot divisions.

The allotment spaces provide an interesting element within the wider landscape, with an urban style imprint on the landscape.





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GREEN SPACE - SPORT

Introduction

Sport areas are green spaces primarily used and laid out as sport pitches and formal recreational space. These facilities vary in size from large scale professional sports centre provision, to simple areas of grassland laid out with football pitches.

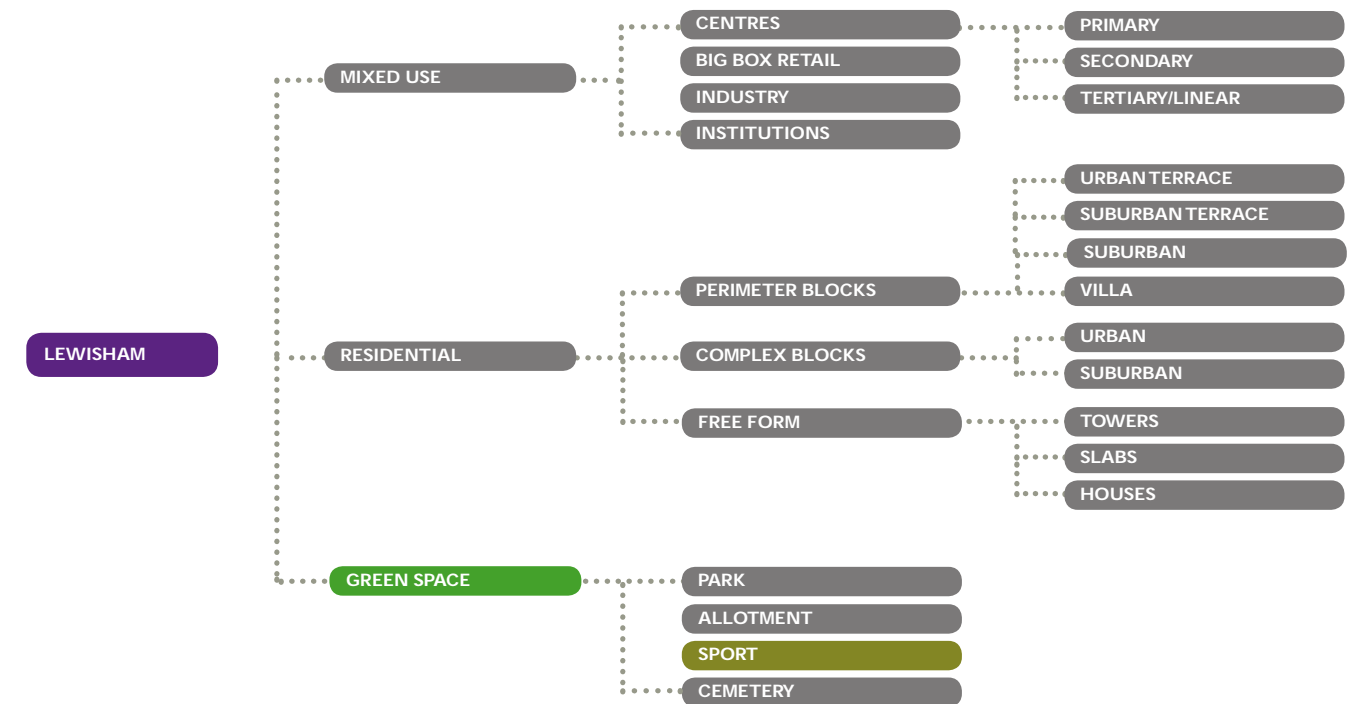
Urban Form

There are a number of standalone outdoor sports facilities in the borough. In general these take the form either of dedicated athletics tracks or football pitches. The location of these facilities varies. In some cases the sports areas are located on former neighbourhood parks and are therefore edged on some sides by streets and residential fronts. In other cases the facilities are more hidden and located alongside rail lines in river valley.

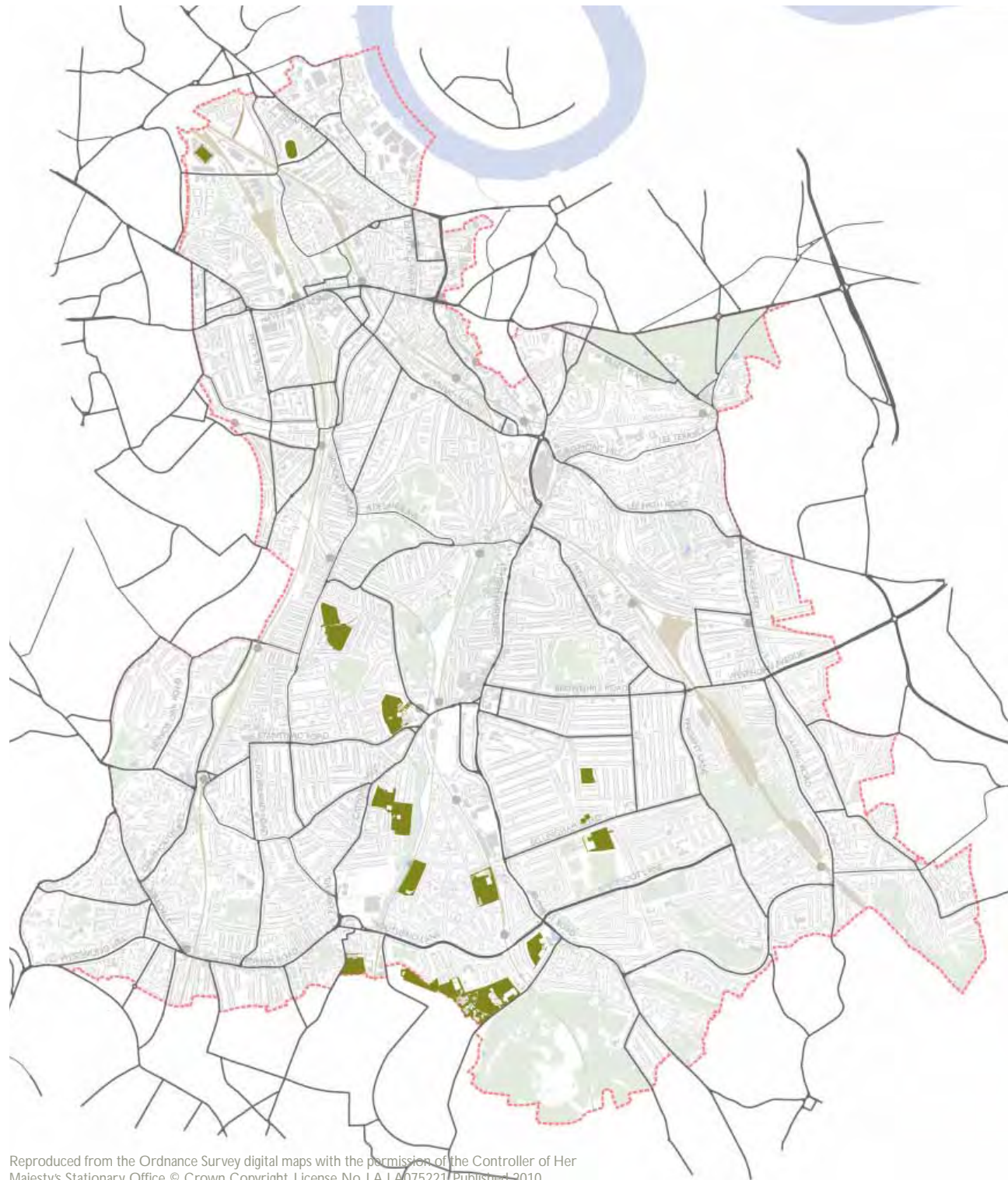
The spaces are often quite sizeable - determined by the type of sports they encompass. The largest spaces are those with running tracks.

Streetscape

The landscape character of the sports spaces is highly functional. The landscape features are usually limited to large expanses of mown grass edged by trees.



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GREEN SPACE - CEMETERY

Introduction

A selection of cemetery spaces are found in key places in the borough and have a very distinct character and atmosphere given their specific function.

Urban Form

The borough has four cemeteries - Hither Green, Grove Park, Ladywell and Brockley, as well as a crematorium at Hither Green. The spaces vary in size and nature.

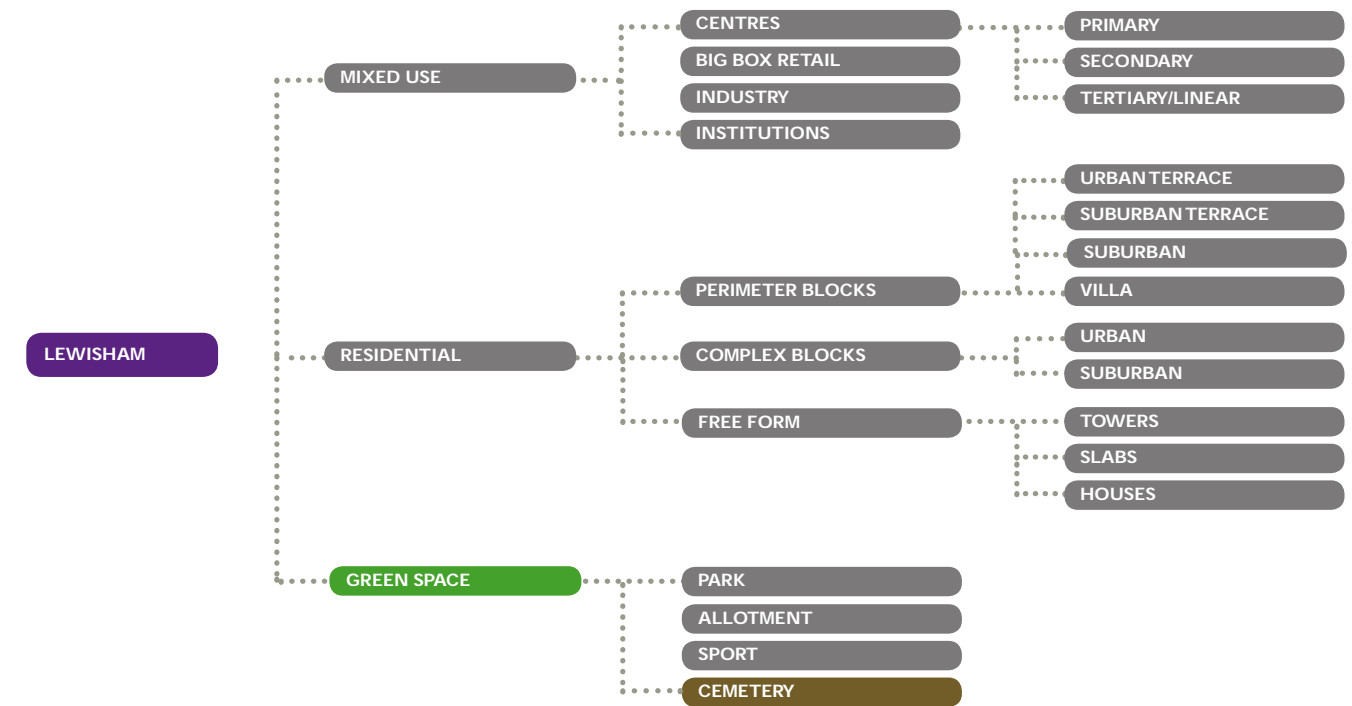
The cemeteries are grouped into two main areas and therefore form significant tracts of landscape in the areas of Hither Green / Grove Park and Brockley / Ladywell.

In general the cemeteries are historic features in the landscape linked to churchyards. They are edged by streets and adjacent to primarily residential areas.

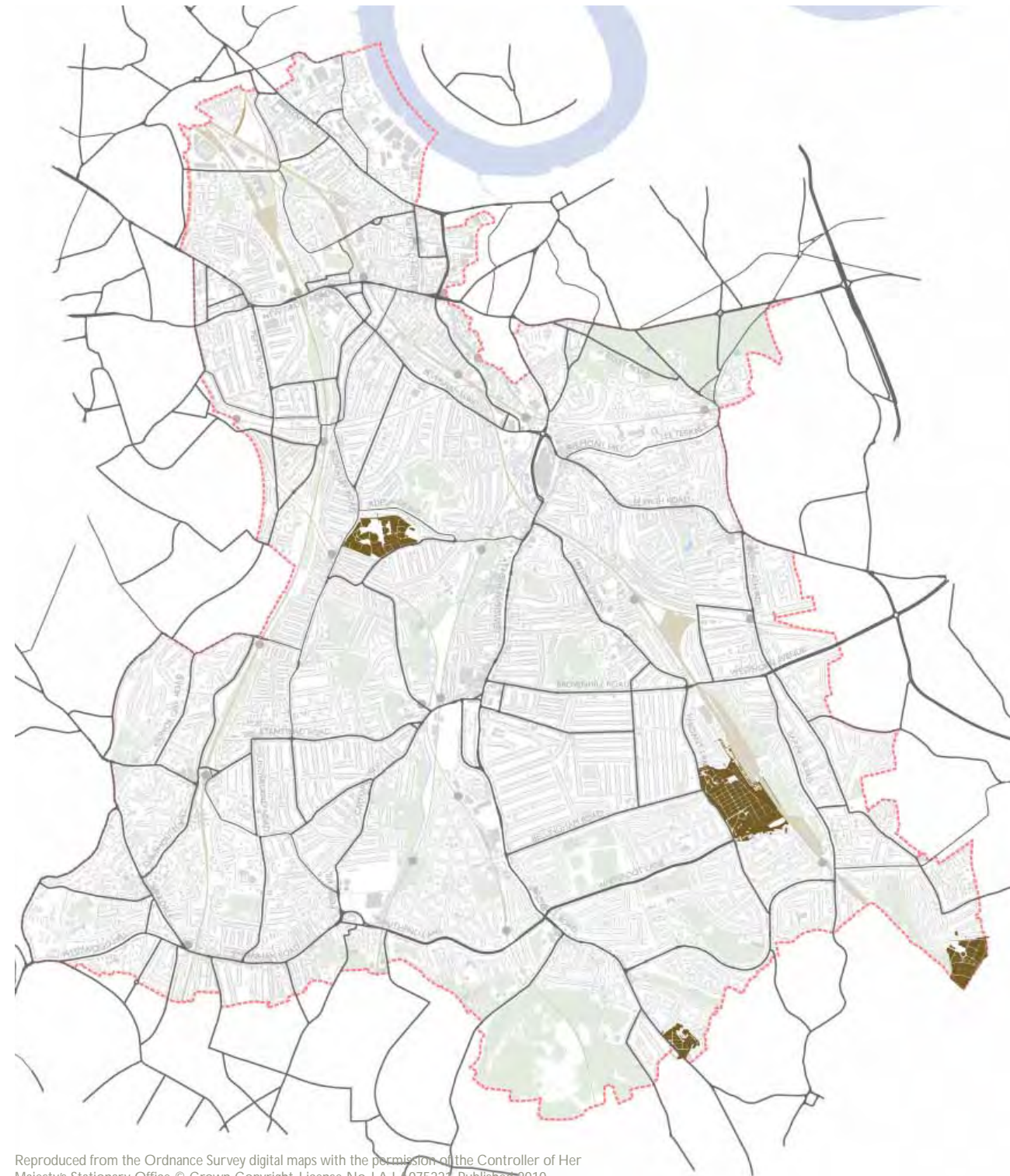
Streetscape

The landscape character of the cemeteries is very specific, but frequently determined by the age of the burial ground. The older spaces often have a church at the centre, with burial areas set around the building. In these spaces there are a high incidence of trees which create a very atmospheric space.

The newer cemeteries are much more open and ordered, with lines of burial plots and trees around the edge rather than intermixed within the space.



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LEWISHAM



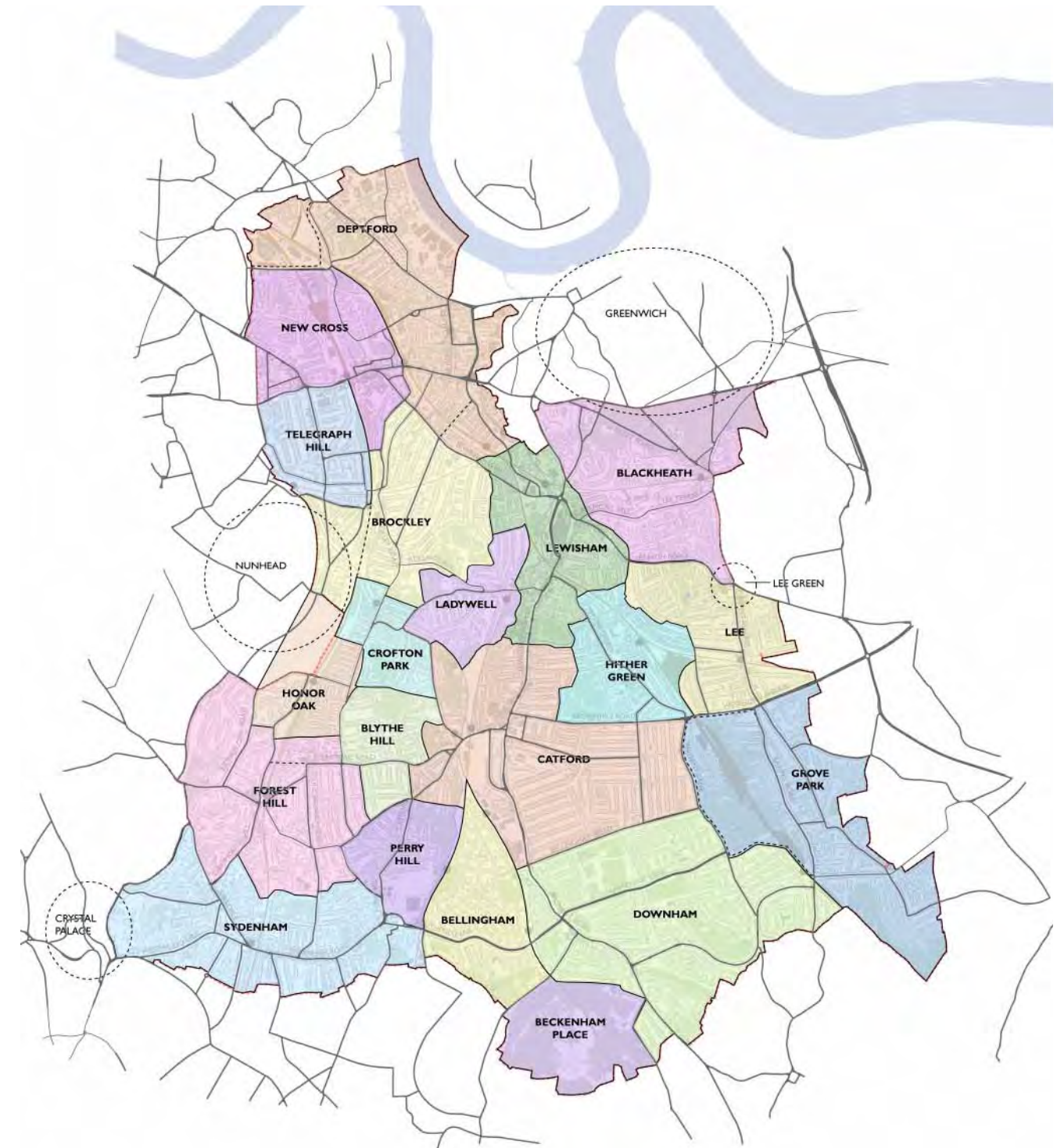
SPLACES

LEWISHAM'S PLACES

Introduction

The way in which the borough is understood and navigated by local people is greatly informed by physical character. In order to understand the special and defining qualities at the neighbourhood scale, the borough has been divided into a series of places of neighbourhoods. These areas have been delimited in consultation with local officers and informed by a range physical, social and cultural factors.

It is recognised that opinions will differ on the names and boundaries given to the neighbourhoods within the borough. This reflects the range of ways in which people relate to their environment from residential areas through to commercial or administrative zones. This plan is provided as a way of defining areas which are felt to have a reasonably cohesive character to facilitate their description at a place-by-place level. It should therefore be taken as a guide rather than a definitive statement.



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DEPTFORD

Key characteristics

Deptford is identifiably a town with its own heart and historic legacy, not simply a suburb of London. It is a complex, multilayered place – the product of its long history and social, physical and economic change. Over the centuries the town's centre of gravity has steadily moved southwards from the river. As an area Deptford includes the only river frontage onto the Thames within Lewisham, however there is limited access or activity along this stretch of river front. The eastern edge is clearly defined by Deptford Creek.

Deptford began as a fishing village before the establishment of the dockyard in the 17th century and its history of shipbuilding and naval supplies, close to the Naval centre of Greenwich. The heart of Deptford remains the High Street, with its lively open stalls and shops.

Post-war redevelopment is also evident, often the consequence of wartime bombardment – in place of the dense terraces that once clustered round the dockyard, open plan estates stretching towards the old Surrey Docks (LB Southwark). The pattern of development is conditioned by three corridors – New Cross Road, Evelyn Street and the railway line.

Deptford High Street is relieved of heavy traffic by Deptford Church Street to the east New Cross Road (A2) runs into Deptford Broadway - by contrast a busy thoroughfare, with traffic often at a standstill.

Cultural activity in Deptford is marked by the Laban Centre, an asset of London-wide importance.

Deptford's character changes south of New Cross Road with the Brookmill conservation

area (laid out as Deptford New Town) and St John's, coherent and well preserved 19th century terraces.

Historic assets

- St Paul's Church – nationally important and a landmark in the area
- Deptford High Street - the core of the town and the Deptford conservation area
- Lower Creekside industrial buildings which retain some of the older and wharf character of Creekside
- Deptford Park
- History of the dockyard
- Railway arches
- Brookmill Road conservation area



- St John's conservation area
- Deptford High Street conservation area
- St Paul's conservation area
- Deptford Town Hall conservation area
- Albury Street (older houses all listed Grade II*)
- Convoys Wharf
- Surrey Canal

Key issues

- Sustaining the market
- Quality of the public realm
- Integrating development with the existing
- Upgrading the older estates
- Managing car parking



NEW CROSS

Key characteristics

New Cross at the north-western corner of the Borough has developed around a lively junction of two main roads and was formerly the site of a toll booth, at New Cross Gate. The Hatcham area to the north of New Cross Road is a well preserved enclave of mid 19th century houses; further north the area has been substantially redeveloped.

New Cross Road is a ribbon of shops and houses between Peckham and Deptford, with Telegraph Hill rising to the south.

Two railway lines and two stations serve the area (New Cross and New Cross Gate). The New Cross Gate gyratory - a large triangular one-way loop has recently been returned to more conventional two-way traffic to create a more attractive environment.

Supermarket and other 'big box' development on former industrial land contrasts with the domesticity of much of the area.

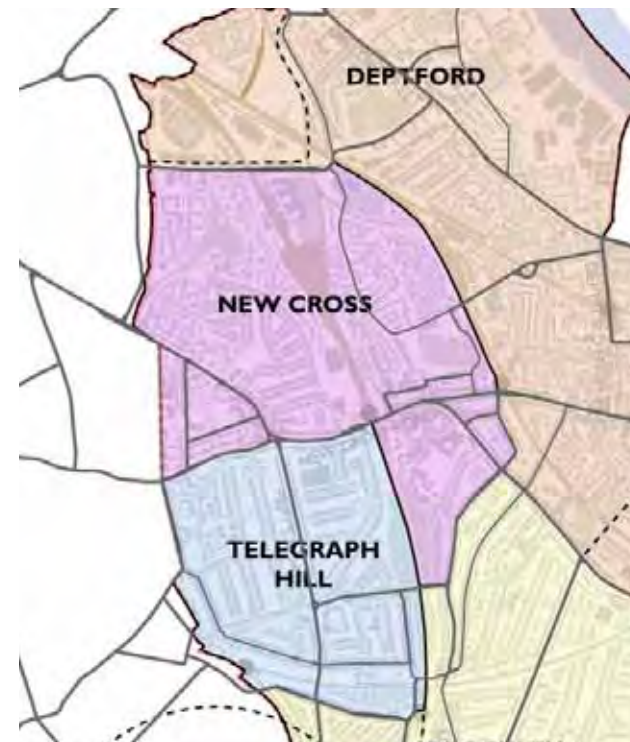
The principal cultural asset is Goldsmiths College.

Historic assets

- Hatcham conservation area
- Listed terraces on New Cross Road
- Town Hall
- Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College

Key issues

- East-west movement restricted by the almost parallel railway lines
- Heavy through traffic inhibits pedestrian movement



TELEGRAPH HILL

Key characteristics

The Telegraph Hill area has a highly consistent townscape, reflecting its rapid development after the 1860s.

The spacious streets, with long views up and down the hill also offer views across central London. The area enjoys a calm, airy character, largely untroubled by through traffic.

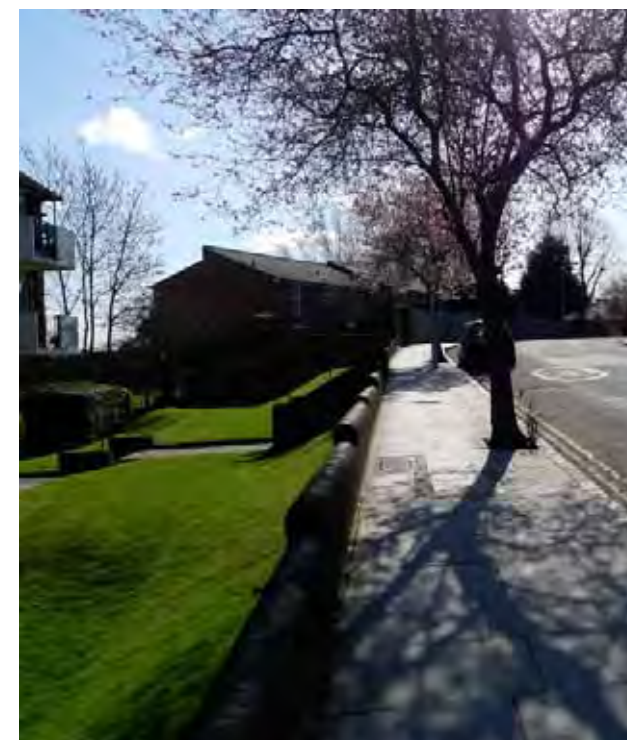
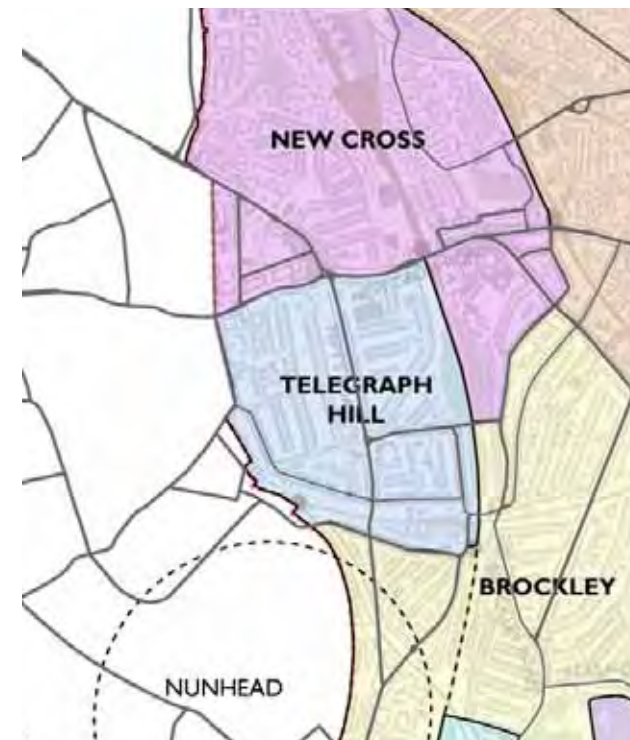
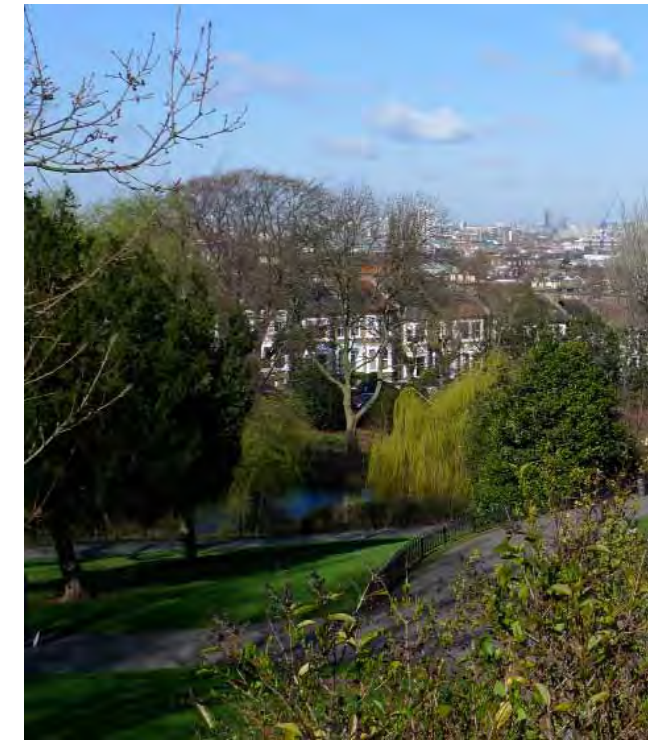
Telegraph Hill Park is the centrepiece of the conservation area, which is mostly laid out on a grid aligned with New Cross Road. The eastern edge of the area is contained and defined by the railway line.

Heritage Assets

Telegraph Hill conservation area covers almost all of the area and long views from the streets and park.

Key Issues

Preservation of architectural detail and care of public realm, including street trees, to maintain the consistency of the area's special character.



BROCKLEY

Key characteristics

Brockley was one of the first areas in Lewisham to be developed speculatively after the railway boom, starting in the 1930s and continuing up to 1900. The first phases were made up of the large Victorian villas, often Italianate in style, but sometimes Gothic. The spacious streets that characterise the area today are often tree-lined, and the large houses interspersed with more recent blocks of flats.

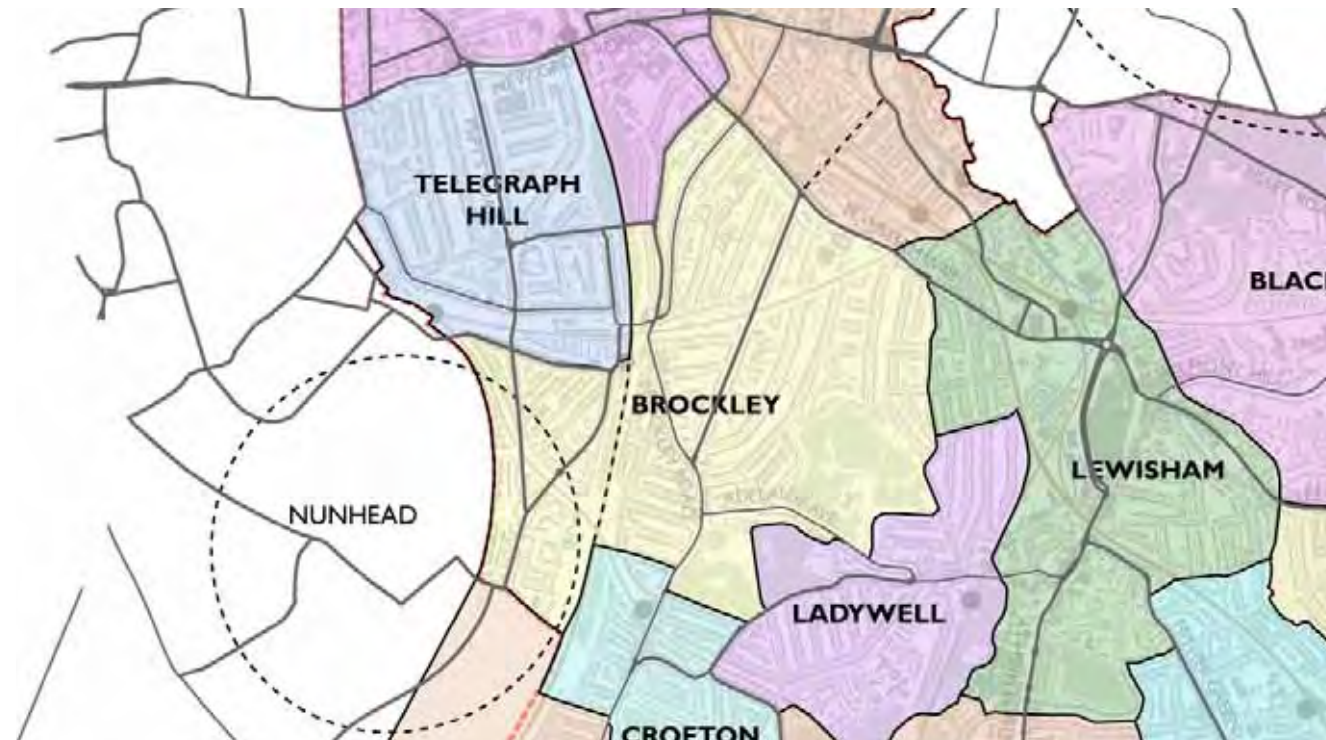
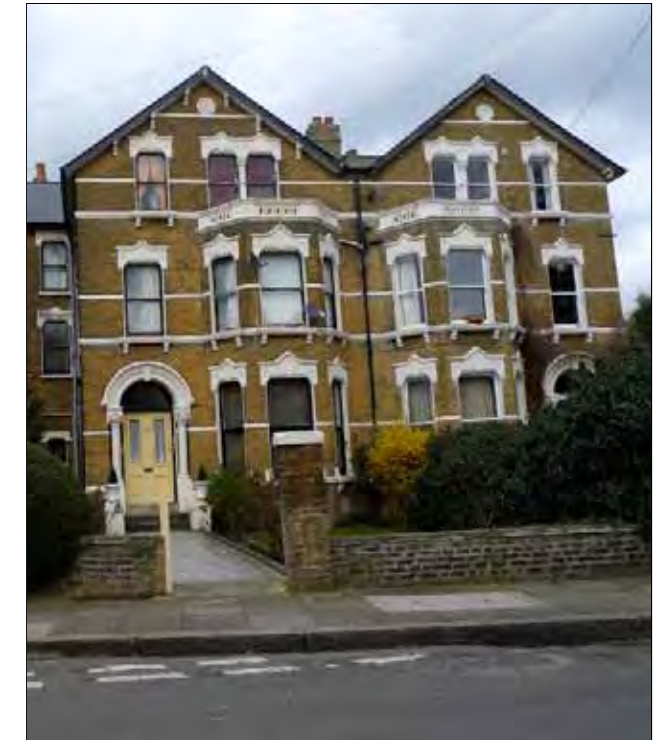
The layout of Brockley takes the shape of a deformed grid, twisting at the south as it rises to wrap around the park (Hilly Fields, Brockley Road and Adelaide Avenue are the principal streets through the neighbourhood).

Heritage Assets

- Brockley conservation area
- Lewisham Cemetery (1858)
- Landmarks includes St Peter's Church, St Andrews Church and the listed houses of the 1840s on Lewisham Way

Key Issues

- Traffic management
- Subdivision of properties
- Minor alterations and erosion of architectural detail
- Sustaining local businesses



LEWISHAM

Key characteristics

Lewisham is the commercial heart of the Borough and its principal shopping centre. It has grown up at the confluence of the Borough's two rivers, the Quaggy and the Ravensbourne, as well as the junctions of busy roads, railway lines and the Docklands Light Railway. The 1970s shopping centre is the dominant element with the associated office tower block being the major landmark in the town centre. Lewisham Way, one of the principal thoroughfares, effectively functions as the threshold between Lewisham and Brockley.

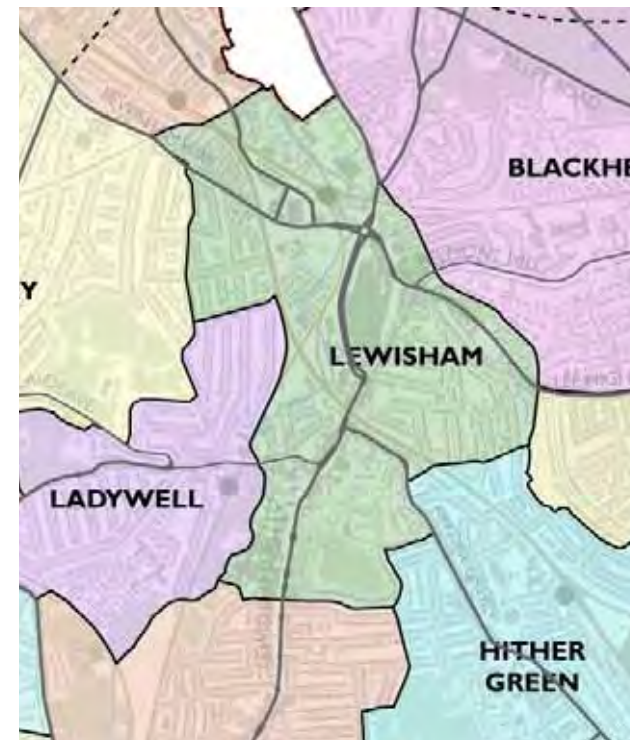
Lewisham High Street runs from north to south with a mix of houses, flats, shops and commercial development stretching as far as Catford Broadway. Its varied piecemeal character is partly the result of postwar reconstruction.

Heritage Assets

- St Mary's conservation area – interesting buildings on Ladywell Road and clustered round the old church, once the heart of Lewisham village.
- Mercia Grove conservation area – an interesting if fragile survival from Lewisham's past.
- Church of St Mary the Virgin – a major landmark and containing the oldest building in the Borough. Listed Grade II*
- Somerset Gardens conservation area – an enclave of mid-19th century houses

Key Issues

- Quality of the public realm
- Vitality and vibrancy of the town centre
- Architectural distinctiveness
- Impact of traffic and movement on the public realm



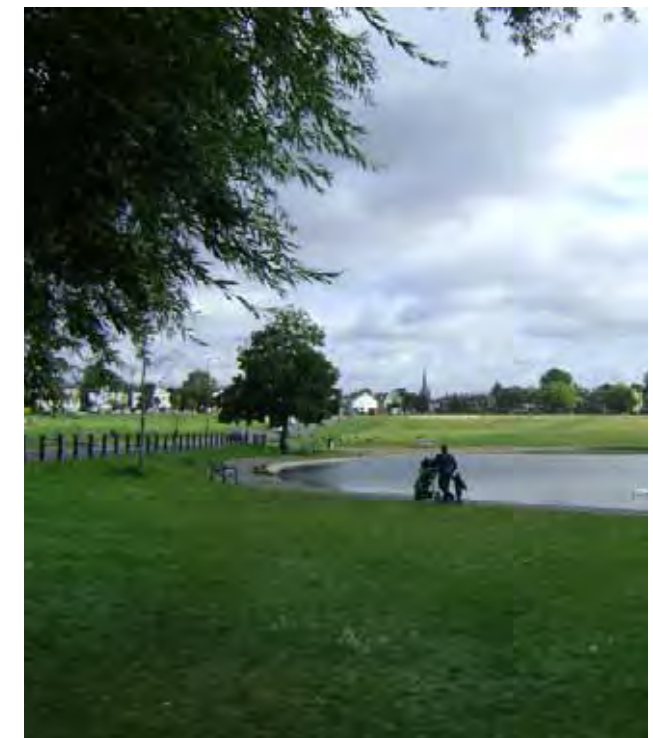
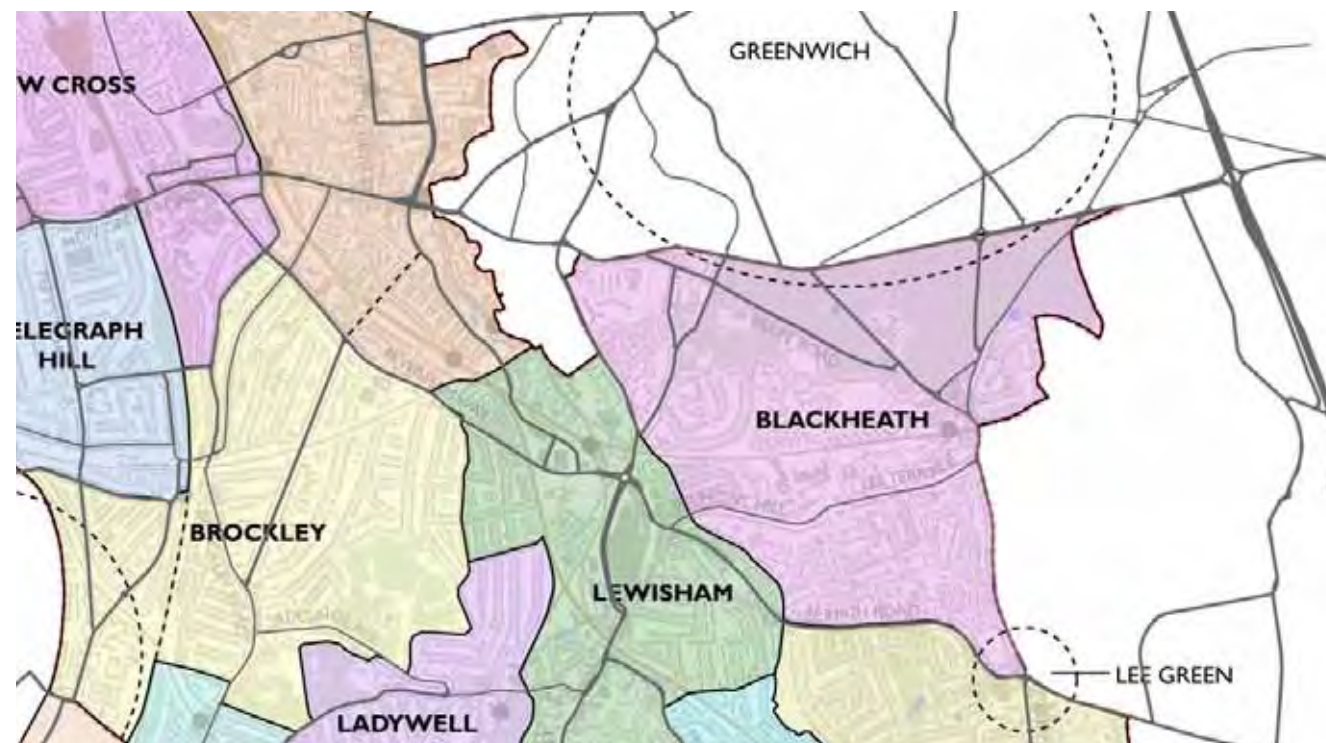
BLACKHEATH

Key characteristics

Blackheath is a complex area with a highly diverse character much of which is historically and architecturally significant. The topography of the neighbourhood has a strong influence on its character and image. This is particularly seen where the openness of the heath dips towards the intimate scale of the village centre.

There is a significant mix of houses of different periods including Georgian, Victorian and 20th century, and although there is a significant jumble of periods and styles across the area there are some significant set-pieces such as areas of frontage onto the heath. By contrast there is a very intimate scale in the town centre which largely developed after the railway station opened in 1849. There is a very strong verdant character to many streets.

There are strong connections to Greenwich, especially in the continuity of the heath and Greenwich Park. This is reflected in the fact that the conservation area boundary straddles the two boroughs.



Heritage Assets

- Most of Blackheath is in a conservation area and extends from Greenwich to Lewisham; from the Heath to Lee High Road.
- Many listed buildings across Blackheath including The Pagoda (Grade II*), Spencer House and Church of the Ascension, Dartmouth Row (both Grade II*)
- Heath itself of historic, archaeological and landscape significance and part of the buffer zone of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site
- St Margarets Lee is a major landmark.
- Belmont conservation area

Key Issues

- Traffic management in the village and on Lee Road
- Parking

