

St Mary's conservation area

character appraisal



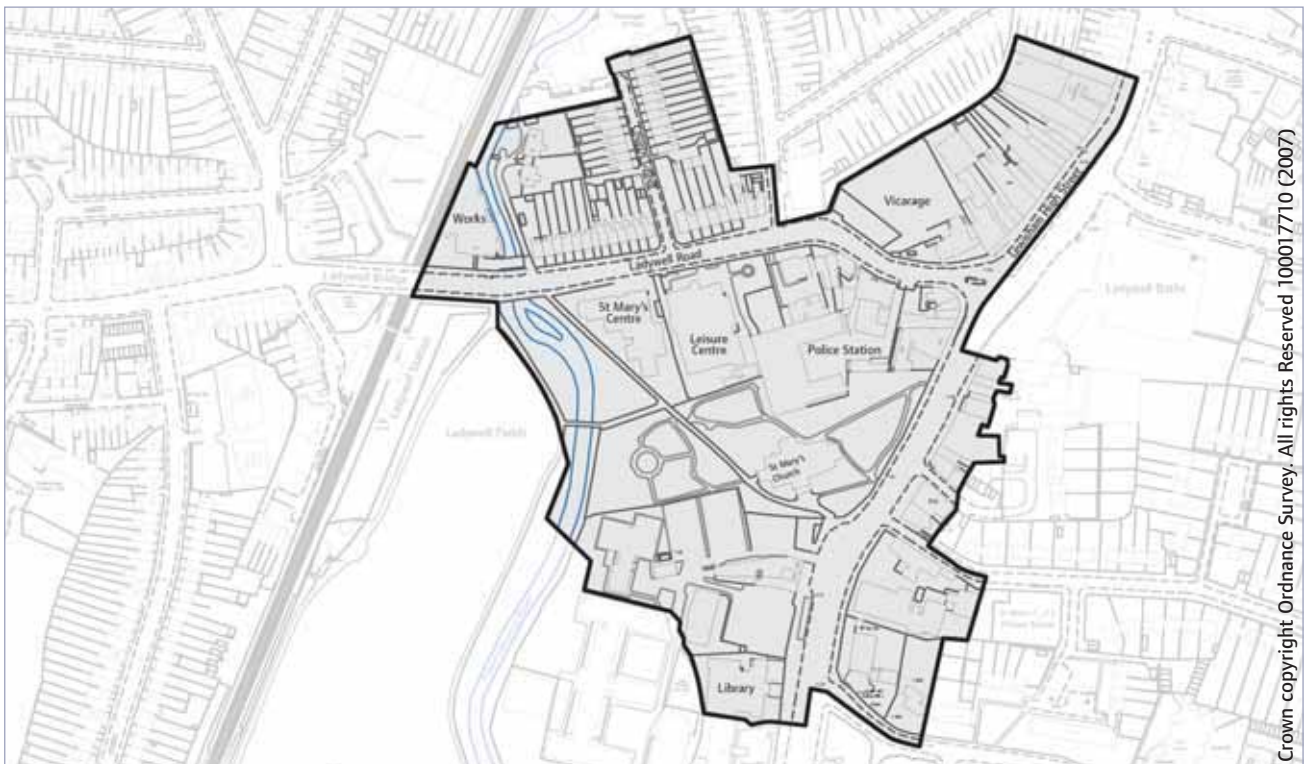
St Mary's conservation area

Summary of special interest

St Mary's conservation area centres around St Mary's church, and was the birthplace of Lewisham town (whose development has since shifted northwards). Buildings such as the church and the small 18th-century houses in Lewisham High Street are rare reminders of old Lewisham.

The conservation area is characterised in particular by St Mary's Church, its churchyard setting and the strong group of Edwardian civic buildings which stretch almost uninterrupted from St Mary's School and the former library in Lewisham High Street to the former Ladywell Baths (Playtower) and St Mary's Centre in Ladywell Road. These buildings are of high quality individually, but particularly special as a group.

Other buildings of importance in the conservation area include the mid-Victorian terraces along Ladywell Road and the turn-of-the-century terraces along Lewisham High Street, which continue the historic development of the area.



Boundary of St Mary's conservation area.

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Introduction

St Mary's conservation area was designated in 1976 around St Mary's church on the old road from Kent to London, and extended in 2006. Conservation areas are designated by the Council for their special architectural or historic character and appearance. Character appraisals are written to provide information on this special character. However, they are not comprehensive studies and any omissions do not therefore imply that an element does not contribute to the character of the area.

The conservation area today

St Mary's conservation area is situated in the centre of the borough of Lewisham on flat land next to the Ravensbourne River. It is one of the borough's smaller conservation areas and straddles the busy A21 which runs from Bromley in the south to Lewisham town centre in the north.

The conservation area is in Lewisham Central ward which is the fourth smallest ward in the borough. Being so small, statistics are not available for the exact conservation area boundaries. Statistics roughly corresponding to the boundary of the conservation area show that 70% of occupants are of working age and 52% are economically active. Residents are better educated than the borough as a whole with 34% educated to degree level compared to 29% borough-wide. There is a fairly even split between those owning their homes and those renting. Black and ethnic minorities account for 38% of the local population.

Shops are found at Ladywell village and along Lewisham High Street, where there is also a primary school. The civic buildings that are particularly

characteristic of this conservation area have generally been converted to other uses. The former fire station is now mainly flats and the former public library is used by the National Health Service. At the time of writing, there are plans to convert the redundant police station to flats, but the former Ladywell Baths (Playtower) has been unoccupied for a number of years.

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. Character appraisals are a material consideration in the planning process and are used when determining planning applications and appeals. A supplementary planning document is available from the planning information desk and provides guidance on alterations to buildings in the conservation area. Other planning policies may also be taken into consideration when we consider planning applications and these are available in our Unitary Development Plan and our emerging Local Development Framework.

Public consultation and adoption

This document was made available for public consultation in September and October 2006 in accordance with the Planning (Local Development) Regulations 2004 and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. The proposals to extend the conservation area, make an Article 4(2) direction and publish this character appraisal and a supplementary planning document received support from local residents. This character appraisal, the supplementary planning document, management plan (available separately) and boundary extensions were adopted by Lewisham's Mayor and Cabinet on 12 December 2006. An Article 4(2) direction was made on 10 January 2007 to protect the terrace houses on Ladywell Road and Church Grove from inappropriate alterations.

1 History of the area

The area around St Mary's church was the focus of early Lewisham.

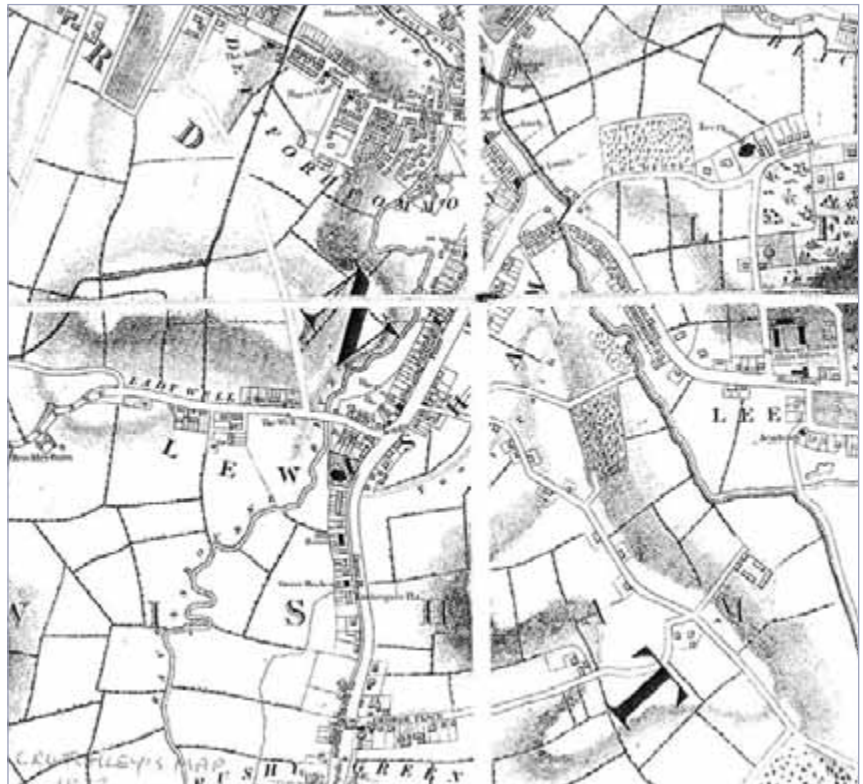
The town of Lewisham grew over centuries in a linear manner along the coaching route from Kent to London (now Lewisham High Street).

Lewisham was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as held by the Abbot of Ghent, and its first known Prior was Arnold, around 1167. It is not known where Lewisham Priory stood exactly, but it could have been close to where the church stands today.

At this time, the area around St Mary's was forested and much more sparsely inhabited than today. The land along the Ravensbourne River was water meadow. When parliament tried to limit wages in 1381, peasants gathered at nearby Blackheath before marching to London to revolt, which suggests that the area was populated mainly, if not exclusively, by very small-scale peasant farmers. During the 1600s much woodland was cleared by timber merchants and used for pasture.



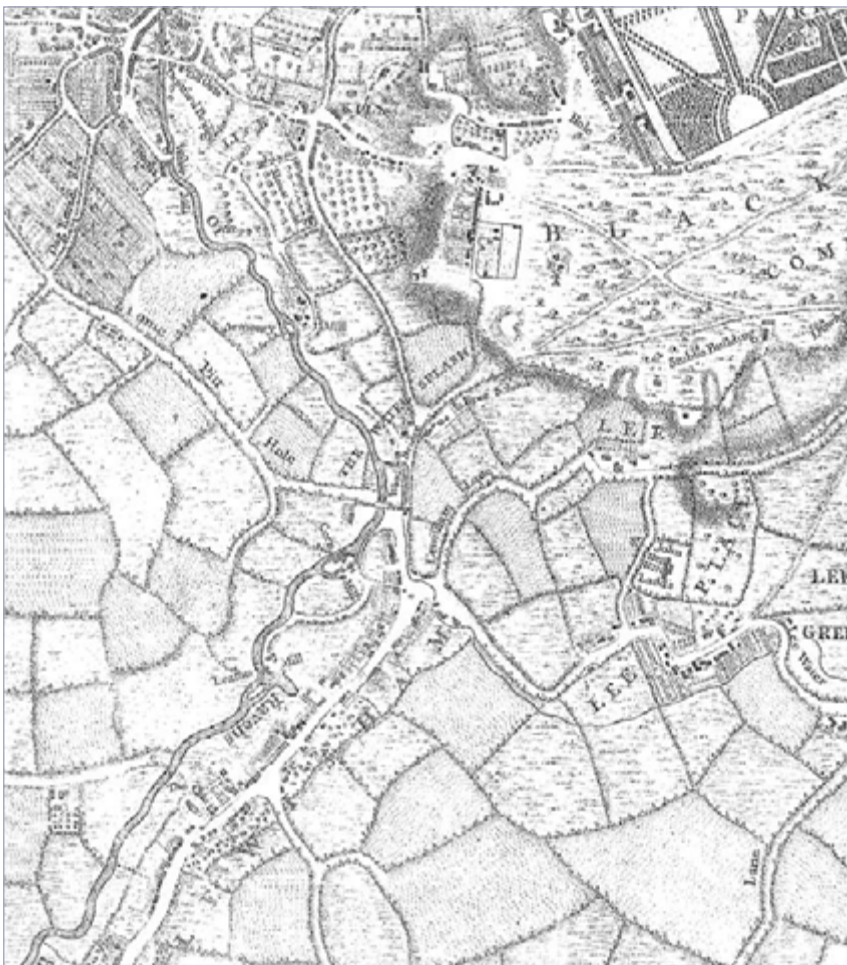
Lewisham High Street as painted in 1835



Crutcheley's Map 1733



View from Ladywell Fields to St Mary's Church. The rear of the St Mary's Centre can just be seen to the left of the picture (date unknown).



John Rocque's map 1744

The conservation area is named after the Church of St Mary the Virgin, and ranks as one of the oldest structures in the borough, as parts of the tower date back to 1498 and 1512, and the existence of a place of worship on this site almost certainly dates back yet further. Between 1471 and 1529 nearly every Lewisham will contained a bequest to help fund the church tower, windows or bells. St Mary's was rebuilt between 1774 and 1777 by George Gibson, an architect who also built the Stone House on Lewisham Way for himself.

In the late 18th century there was a huge growth in luxury housing along Lewisham High Street. One such house was Lewisham House, situated opposite the vicarage, which was built around the same time. Both can be seen (along with others) on the tithe map in outline and more clearly on the map of 1863-72. In the years either side of 1800 Lewisham became much improved with the building of similar new large houses and ornamental gardens, but the hovels of the poor also remained. Some, known as Brockley Place, can be seen on the map of 1863-72, clinging to the wall of Lewisham House with their long plots of land for vegetable-growing or grazing to the front.

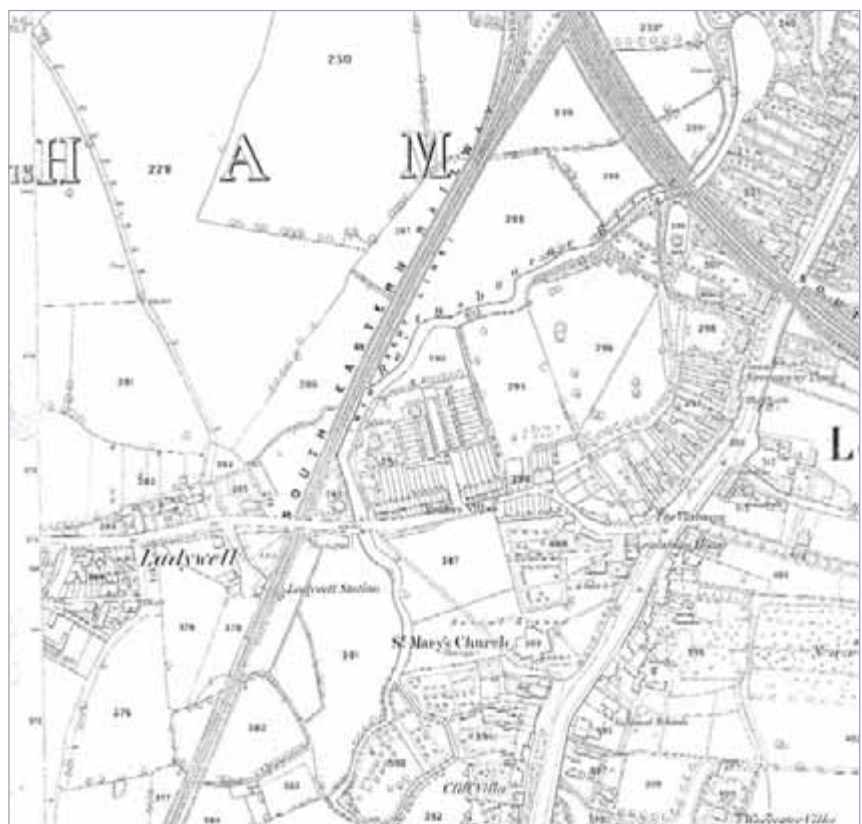
In 1810 the Enclosure Act led to small pieces of common land being enclosed and divided up among the wealthy local landowners. This meant the commoners no could no longer use the land to gather wood or graze freely. Partly due to this, the pauper population was rising, and in 1817 a workhouse was built on Lewisham High Street and still survives as part of Lewisham Hospital, although it is outside the conservation area.

In 1833 St Mary's National School was built on land given by the Earl of Dartmouth on the request of his brother, the vicar. Until this time, Lewisham High Street was a wide, leafy street with buildings dotted all the way from Catford to Lewisham, a number of which were smart Georgian villas with neat gardens to the front.

A change came when Grove House (located where the Lewisham Centre now stands) was demolished in the 1830s to make way for a street of new houses. It was possibly the first large house in Lewisham to make way for homes in this way. This speculative development of housing was to continue across the borough, changing the landscape completely.



Tithe map 1836-1891



1863-72



Lewisham House is seen at the centre of the picture and the Black Bull before alteration (picture taken late 1800s)

In 1855 gas street lighting was installed in the high street and a sewer was constructed from St Mary's to Bell Green. However, this was not wholly an improvement as it cut through the clay and made the Ravensbourne run dry. Owners of two large houses tried to sue the Metropolitan and Lewisham Board when their ponds and trout streams dried up, but lost. Many trees died and the area's rural charm was lost.



1894-96

In 1857 Ladywell station was opened on the Mid Kent Line. This made transport easier and – along with the abolition of the Turnpike Trusts in the 1860s and their charges to use the roads – cheaper.

The terrace houses on Ladywell Road were built in 1857 for middle-class people. The materials used were typical of the time, with yellow stock bricks being made locally as clay was readily available, stucco dressings and sash windows with delicate glazing bars. Two detached houses were built by the same builders down a lane (now part of Ladywell Road) which was originally called The Avenue. Being detached and larger, these houses were built for slightly better off families who could afford servants.

By 1900 nearly all the large houses had been demolished to make way for speculative housing. The map of 1894-96 shows that Lewisham House has gone, but the land not yet redeveloped. In 1881 the population was 53,065 and in 1901 it had more than doubled to 108,846. Many terraces in Lewisham were built with the lower-middle classes in mind, but those in St Mary's conservation area were built for those who were more comfortably off.

By the end of the 19th century, the focus of Lewisham was still around St Mary's, with a number of buildings for municipal use and leisure activities being built. Lewisham Vestry (the local administration at that time) was progressive in 1882 in appointing seven commissioners to build two swimming pools ahead of other authorities. Ladywell Baths were built in 1884 and are one of the earliest surviving public baths in London. The coroner's court was built between 1895-98 and the fire station on Lewisham High Street and police station on Ladywell Road in 1898 and 1899 respectively. The public library was built in 1901 and St Mary's parish hall was built around 1905.

Shops had previously been added on to existing houses but around 1900 purpose-built shops were built along Lewisham High Street, such as those at 318-328 Lewisham High Street (1904). The Fox and Firkin existed previously as the Black Bull and was rebuilt to its present appearance in 1907.



Ladywell Road showing the coroner's court, former baths and terrace houses (date unknown)



Lewisham High Street, showing the fire station and 318–328 Lewisham High Street in the 1930s



1913

2 Form and character of the area

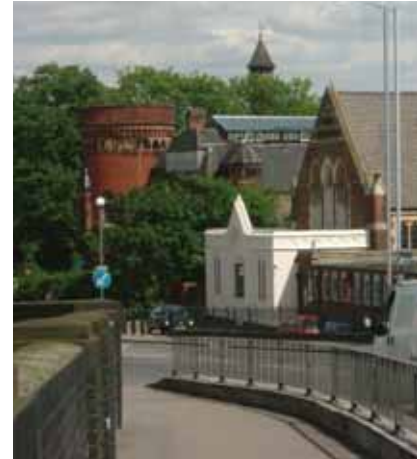
A conservation area's character derives from all the elements that combine together to create its unique appearance and atmosphere. These elements include not only buildings but spaces between and around buildings, density of development, open space, vegetation, roads and paths, among others; and these aspects are outlined in this section.

Spatial character

St Mary's is a compact conservation area. The focus centres on St Mary's Church and along a short stretch of Ladywell Road, where most of the key civic buildings are situated opposite neat terrace houses. On entering Ladywell Road from Lewisham High Street, the first view is of the former police station and the white Acre Lifts building to the left, and the long garden wall to the former vicarage, culminating at the single-storey carpet shop to the right.

Moving along Ladywell Road a pair of Edwardian houses, the coroner's court and former Ladywell Baths (Playtower) are revealed one by one with the tower of the baths very much a focus. From this point the eye is drawn to the former Adhesives Specialities building and Ladywell Bridge, which gives excellent views over Ladywell rooftops and to Hilly Fields.

Returning back along Ladywell Road, the small terrace houses and their cottagey front gardens give the conservation area a village feel. Again, the tower of the former baths is a key focal point imposing on the streetscape and leading the eye to other red brick buildings and the fire station tower further on. A green space between the former baths and the coroner's court provides a soft foil to the bright red brick of the buildings as well as adding spaciousness and visual relief. This space is enclosed by a continuation of the wall from the baths. Moving towards the end of Ladywell Road the vista is blocked by the large blue wall of the Ladywell Leisure centre.



View from the bridge



332–336 Lewisham High Street, forming the entrance to Ladywell Road

Lewisham High Street is still a wide main road as it has been for centuries. Traffic stops at traffic lights just outside the former fire station and, travelling northwards, the eye naturally focuses on the former vicarage, or travelling southwards, the curved red brick frontages of 332–336 Lewisham High Street; these buildings frame the entrance to Ladywell Road and the heart of the conservation area. The view is enhanced by the large ailanthus tree in the front garden of the former vicarage.



The rear of St Mary's Centre and former Ladywell Baths (Playtower) seen from the churchyard

Approaching the conservation area from the south the church and its churchyard provide an immediately recognisable presence. At this point a footpath leads off the High Street through the churchyard behind the coroner's court, former Ladywell Baths (Playtower) and St Mary's Centre to Ladywell Fields and Ladywell Road. The churchyard provides the setting for the church as well as the rear elevations of these buildings.

The grain of development alters subtly through the conservation area with tightly packed three- and four-storey terraces to the west side of Lewisham High Street, reducing to tightly packed two-storey terrace houses in Ladywell Road. The eastern side of Lewisham High Street is more varied in height and grain than the west with a number of buildings of different periods having been fitted together without space between them.

Here small, two-storey 18th-century houses about the large three-storey HE Olby building, but the Coach and Horses is detached and two and a half storeys. The southern side of Ladywell Road shows a pattern in its seeming irregularity, where large detached buildings of similar periods and styles vary gently in height according to their function, and are set in their own plots leaving space between them.

Key to map

- green space
- landmark building
- direction of view
- River Ravensbourne
- main route through conservation area
- trees



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Townscape analysis of St Mary's conservation area.



A rare old lamppost in the churchyard

Streetscape

Old lamp posts exist only along the path from St Mary's church to Ladywell Road and these particularly enhance this lane, both in terms of lighting and historic character. Most of the pavements are either Tarmac or concrete paving slabs, with the original granite kerb stones and street name signs taking a variety of forms. At the time of writing, the Council's Transport Division is revising and reissuing a streetscape design guide, which will be a guide to appropriate alterations in conservation areas, including the use of appropriate materials, minimisation of clutter and black-painted street furniture.

The natural environment

The most important public open space in the conservation area is St Mary's churchyard, which contains many mature and small trees. From the Lewisham High Street north entrance, an avenue of yews line the path to the churchyard behind the church. A number of hornbeams grow in their natural form and an Indian bean tree is perhaps the most exotic species present. Other trees include sycamores, cherries, silver birch, holly and oak, which contribute to the setting of the church and its graves, giving the space a rural and informal appearance.



Avenue of yew trees



St Mary's with churchyard



Lime tree in Ladywell Road garden

The only street trees in the conservation area are the row of horse chestnuts in front of the former public library in Lewisham High Street, although there are a very small number in front gardens which are valuable for their softening effect. The small green area between the coroner's court and the baths contains a number of small trees and three mature sycamores. This space has a slightly wild appearance and at first appears an odd gap in the streetscape. However, the trees soften the hard outline of the neighbouring buildings and provide natural relief in an otherwise tightly packed streetscape.

The old vicarage garden is also a significant green space, although not publicly accessible. The garden contains, among others, a variety of trees including an old mulberry, yews, horse chestnut and limes.

Outside the conservation area Ladywell Fields is visually cut off from the streetscape to a certain extent due to dense vegetation, and therefore the park itself does not form part of the character of the conservation area. However, the green space is linked to the conservation area and at the time of writing, the Council's Greenscene service is proposing improvements to the park that include the naturalisation of the Ravensbourne River and tree thinning, which will open views from the park to the conservation area and Ladywell Road.



Horse chestnuts in Lewisham High Street






The trees in Ladywell Fields visible from Ladywell Road

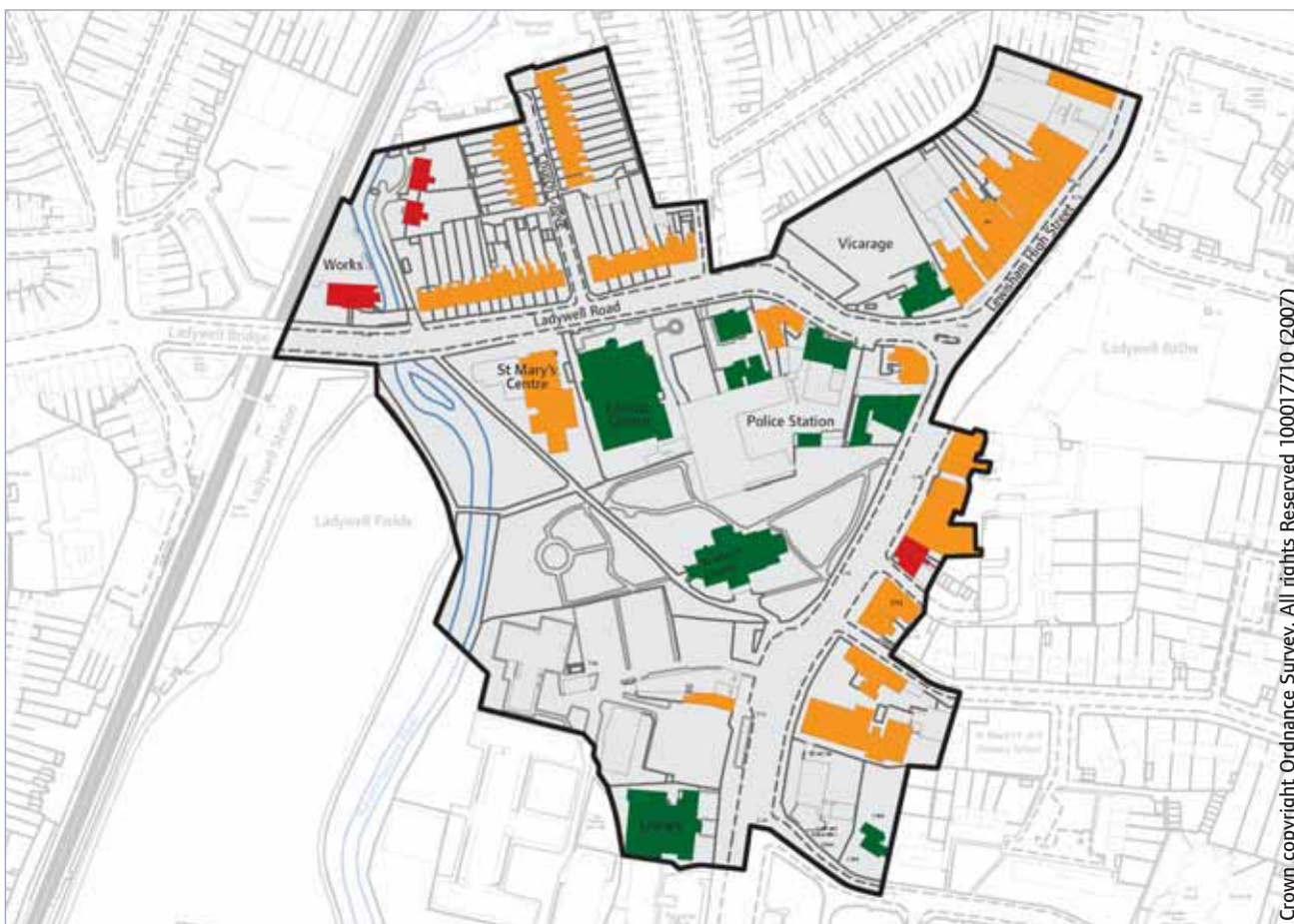
3 Buildings of interest and character areas

Buildings mentioned in this section are of historic and/or architectural interest and make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. It is the Council's policy to seek to preserve and enhance such buildings in conservation areas.

Some of these buildings are statutorily listed, which confers statutory protection to them; some are locally listed, which means that the Council will seek to encourage their preservation; and others are simply buildings with some architectural merit and historical links that help give St Mary's its special character and appearance. These buildings are shown on the map below and some of the buildings are described in the following pages.

Key to map

-  listed building
-  locally listed building
-  other buildings making a positive contribution



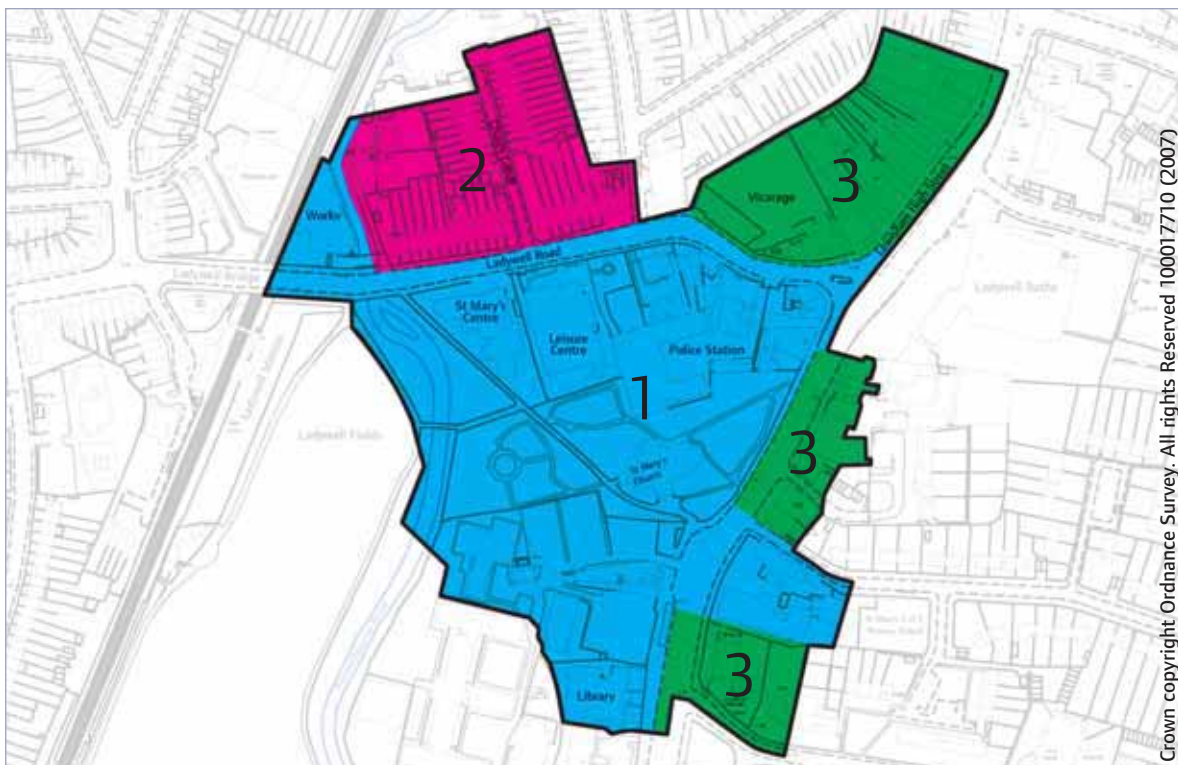
Buildings making a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

Character area 1: the civic centre

This is the dominant part of the conservation area with Victorian and Edwardian buildings neighbouring each other from the former public library on Lewisham High Street to the former Ladywell Baths (Playtower) on Ladywell Road. These are fine civic buildings, which are all the more important as a group. The predominant building material is red brick with stone dressings, with the building height varying slightly according to need. The importance of these buildings is shown not only in their design, but in their spacious layout and detached settings.

There are few negative elements in this area, but nonetheless some improvements could be made, such as removing the paint from the Acre Lifts building, refurbishing Ladywell Playtower and tidying up the front elevation of the St Mary's Centre.

A new design for the extension to the St Mary's Centre would be particularly welcome as would the re-use and restoration of the Playtower. At the time of writing, the Council is considering proposals to convert the police station to flats.



Character areas within St Mary's conservation area.



Former public library, Lewisham High Street

Former public library, Lewisham High Street (1901). Grade II. Designed by Alexander Hennell. This charming small building on a busy road has a symmetrical façade of red brick with terracotta dressings. The single storey sections have lanterns to allow light into the reading rooms. The central feature is a two and a half storey entrance with arched terracotta door surround, beneath a group of three multipaned sash windows and broken pediment, topped by the modillioned terracotta pediment.



St Mary's C of E Primary School, built 1860

St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Lewisham High Street (southern building: 1833; northern building: 1860). Proposed for local listing. The southern building was the original church school, built before education became compulsory. It is a single-storey double-span stock brick building with clay-tile roof and iron-lattice windows set in stone mullions and transoms. The later building is more Gothic in style, having an asymmetrical façade of two unequal steeply pitched gables and a short central square tower. Windows are mullioned and transomed and the main gable contains a small trefoil.



St Mary's C of E Primary School, built 1833

Church of St Mary the Virgin, Lewisham High Street (low parts of tower: 1498 & 1512; main parts: 1774-7). Grade II*. The walls surrounding the church are also separately listed Grade II. This is probably the oldest surviving structure in the borough with the lower stages of the tower dating back to 1498. The church as seen today was rebuilt by architect George Gibson between 1774-77 in coursed Kentish rag rubble stone with ashlar dressings. A new chancel and other internal alterations were made in 1881 by Sir Arthur Blomfield. The church has a simple design with elegance apparent in the garland frieze to the tower and classical tetrastyle portico with columns and plain pediment. The churchyard was extended in 1791 and 1850 and contains graves in an informal setting, including notable burials such as the Irish poet Thomas Dermody, and notable tombs such as the Desvignes family vault, designed with marble columns by the architect in the family. Some graves are sadly being damaged by tree growth.



St Mary's Church



Graves including that of Captain Weller which is surrounded by an iron rope

Former fire station, Lewisham High Street (1898). Grade II. This was built by the London County Council in a Queen Anne/ Arts and Crafts style. It is built of red brick with yellow brick bands and stone dressings, and has a hipped tiled roof with a deep wooden modillion cornice and tall brick chimneystacks. It comprises two linked buildings and a 90ft round practice tower with a conical roof, which is visible throughout the conservation area. There are distinctive wide arched windows to ground floor. This was among the three last fire stations in Lewisham to incorporate tied housing for firemen and stabling for horses. It is now used as offices and flats.



Former Fire Station



The tomb of the Devigne family



Ladywell House, formerly St Mary's Vicarage



Vicarage door

Ladywell House, formerly St Mary's Vicarage, Lewisham High Street (1693). Grade II*. The low walls to the front and high walls around the garden are also separately listed Grade II. An imposing double-span formal house built in 1693 by Rev. George Stanhope, vicar of Lewisham, with the side extension being added in 1895. It is of two storeys in brown brick with red brick dressings and a clay tiled 'M' shaped roof with three dormer windows. The windows are painted timber casements with timber transoms. Decorative elements are the double entrance doors set in a classical timber doorcase with modillioned broken pediment and a deep modillioned eaves cornice.



Coroner's court



Former Lewisham Police Station

Former Lewisham Police Station, Ladywell Road (1899). Grade II. The former police station is seen immediately on turning into Ladywell Road. The red brick building is of two stories with attic in an asymmetrical design. It has stone dressings and banding and a variety of window types, but predominantly Queen Anne style (multi-paned top sash and plain below). The round turret to the eastern corner and decorative chimney stack address the street.

Coroner's court, Ladywell Road (1895–1899). Grade II. This includes the mortuary building to the rear. This is an asymmetrical Gothic building in red brick with white ashlar dressings. The court's chapel to the right has a large, double-height traceried window. The main entrance is through a stone porch with a traceried fanlight above a Tudor arched oak door.

Former Ladywell Baths ('The Playtower'), Ladywell Road (1884). Grade II. This is one of the earliest public swimming-pools in London. The architects were Wilson, Son and Aldwinckle, who also built Forest Hill Baths (which opened one week later). This red brick Gothic building is one of the most prominent buildings in the conservation area due to its size and imposing tower. It can be seen from many points in the conservation area including Ladywell Bridge, as well creating a vista from Church Grove.



Former Ladywell Baths ('The Playtower')



The Playtower



St Mary's parish hall

The building has an unusual entrance, which is to the left of the tower, and has two low, pointed arches with stiff leaf capitals below eye level. The tower originally had a conical slate roof, which was removed in 1907. The round tower with its pierced red sandstone clerestory and Gothic oriel window sits between two unsymmetrical bays. The left hand section is of two storeys with sash windows and a slate roof. This part of the building contained offices, changing-rooms and perhaps slipper baths. The right hand section contains the former first-class swimming pool. This pool hall is double height with a long, hipped lantern running the length of the slate roof to light the pool. Inside, the viewing gallery with iron balustrading remains intact and the pool is floored over.

The rear pool hall (originally the second-class pool) was lost in a fire in Spring 2006; however, the rest of the building can clearly be seen from the churchyard. The original brick and stone boundary wall remains to the front of the building up to the coroner's court, although the railings have gone.

St Mary's parish hall, Ladywell Road (1891). This was built by Albert L Guy, who also designed Crofton Park and Sydenham libraries. It is a single-storey ecclesiastical building in red brick with stone Gothic windows. The building can also be seen clearly from the path behind. The front section has unfortunately been painted white and the original entrance filled in.



Former Adhesives Specialities

Former Adhesives Specialities Ltd, 59 Ladywell Road (1938).

Locally listed 25 September 2002. This building was built in the 1930s as a laundry on the site of a Victorian villa. It was built in a simple 'Moderne' style by a local builder, Mr Howkins. At this time the building consisted of the central bay with two-storey bay projecting slightly and two flanking bays. In 1988-9 another local firm, Rainey and Rainey, refurbished the building, adding the metal windows, the clock and heightening the parapets. The building was rejected statutory list status in 2002 because it was not of sufficient quality to be added to the list of buildings of national architectural and historic importance. However, in a planning appeal decision in January 2006, an inspector commented that the building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Character area 2: Victorian terrace housing

The houses in Ladywell Road and Church Grove form attractive stock brick terraces with medium-size front gardens. They form part of the view into the conservation area from the railway bridge and they are the only residential houses in the conservation area.

Although the terraces retain their charm and cohesive appearance in general, enhancements to the houses could include the reinstatement of original features, such as sash windows and front doors, over time.

4-6 Ladywell Road are a distinctive Edwardian pair squeezed in between the coroner's court and Acre Lifts. They are remarkably well preserved with Queen Anne-style sash windows and front doors with 12 glazed panes and nine paned fanlights intact. Materials used are stock brick and red brick with a stucco band at first floor level, with scroll detailing over the windows and a typical Queen Anne revival-style half doorcase over the doors. The handed double-height square bays are finished by gables, decorated with false timber framing.



4-6 Ladywell Road

17–27 Ladywell Road are two-storey stock brick terrace houses plus basements and steps up to the front doors. Much detail has been lost from this terrace. However, one house does retain its original front door with two long moulded panels and the door furniture in between. Windows for this terrace are sashes without horns, having margin lights. Windows to the 'piano nobile' (main floor) are framed in a moulded stucco surround with a bracketed cornice over. The first floor windows have the surround, but not the cornice. Basement windows tend to be six over six panes.

29–39 Ladywell Road is a smaller terrace, having only two storeys and no basements. This terrace and the previous are interrupted by a side road, Church Grove. Their detailing is simpler. The sash windows have horns and only a central dividing glazing bar, but the stucco surrounds remain as in 17–27. The original plain slate roofs can still be seen on some of the houses. Without basements, the front gardens are flat and extend to the pavement, allowing a long path to the front door. In contrast to the window surrounds, front doors have only a brick arch.

41–53 Ladywell Road are two storeys plus basement and steps to the front door. The roofs are plain sloping slate roofs with tall plain chimney stacks and pots. Stucco window and door surrounds are the same as in 17–27 and photographic evidence suggests that the original windows were sashes with margin lights. As with the other houses on this side of the road, a stucco string course runs at first-floor level. The boundary treatments of this terrace, finishing at 29, have a stone coping to match the wall to the bridge and plain railings.



17–27 Ladywell Road



41–53 Ladywell Road



Church Grove



Church Grove



Church Grove

Church Grove is a small cul-de-sac with particular charm, due mainly to the well-planted front gardens, smartly painted houses and survival of distinctive sash windows. The house type here is the same as 29–39 Ladywell Road, except that most of the houses have been rendered or painted and the windows are horned sashes with margin lights and a central, horizontally placed glazing bar.

Rear elevations

Rear elevations are seen collectively by residents living in the area, as well as those rear elevations that can be clearly seen from the street. Elements of interest on rear elevations are similar to front elevations in many ways. Original slate roofs, chimney stacks, sash windows, original extensions and stock brick walls all contribute to the character of the area. In particular 17–27 Ladywell Road have multi-paned sash windows and small dormers to the rear elevations.



Rear elevations (Ladywell Road)

Character area 3: Lewisham High Street

Lewisham High Street is a wide main road with heavy vehicle use and a busy junction at the point where the road passes through the conservation area. The buildings on the west side of Lewisham High Street are predominantly turn-of-the-century buildings, such as the former library, the former fire station, 318–328, the Fox and Firkin and Stonewalls. The buildings between Ladywell Road and Stonewalls have a notably similar building height and a regularity in plot widths. The eastern side of the road however, contains much greater variety in building styles and periods including St Mary's School, the Coach and Horses, HE. Olby and small Georgian houses. Many shopfronts have been altered, but looking to the upper storeys, the quality of the buildings can be seen.



Stonewalls



Plaque from 300 Lewisham High Street

West side:

Stonewalls, 286 Lewisham High Street (c1900). This turn-of-the-century building was originally the Castle Inn and still has a carving of a castle in low relief at the top of its gable. The building is three storeys plus an attic storey, and is built in red brick with a balustraded stone gable in front of a pitched slate roof. Most of the sash windows have been lost, although the shopfront is of good quality.

300–314 Lewisham High Street (18th century, altered in 1840). This simple terrace was 'modernised' in the 19th century – a plaque on number 300 reads 'St Dunstons in the East 1840'. The buildings still appear as a stock brick terrace and although most have lost their timber-framed sash windows, they still display a continuous moulded stucco parapet, slate roofs and their unity.



300-314 Lewisham High Street



Detail at 318-320 Lewisham High Street

The Fox and Firkin, formerly the Black Bull (1907). This is an old pub that was rebuilt in 1907 in a mock Tudor style in red brick with black and cream casement windows. The building is three storeys with a pair of gables with mock timber framing to the clay-tile roof.



295-305 Lewisham High Street



West side of Lewisham High Street

318–328 Lewisham High Street (1904). These are built in the Queen Anne revival-style in red brick with stone dressings. The interest in these buildings lies largely in their in the upper storeys with the two pairs of buildings complementing each other with similar detailing. Numbers 318–320 have a pair of shallow canted bays with their original six-over-one sash windows to the second floor and a pair of stylised Dutch gables. Numbers 322–324 have a pair of plainer shallow bays surmounted by a single Neo-Baroque gable with broken pediment.

East side:

293–297 Lewisham High Street now the Hire Shop. This was built in the 18th century and called Streete House after the man who gave a property on this site to the parish in the previous century. This formal house was built with three storeys, including a 'piano nobile' (a main raised ground floor) with steps up to a central front door, now lost to the shop development. Also lost is the gambrel roof with three small dormer windows and the stone or brick quoins to the corners.

299–301 Lewisham High Street (1791). Originally a pair of houses, this is now part of the Hire Shop. It is a two-storey pair of brick houses with a gambrel roof and attic windows. There is a central shared chimney stack. The lower elevation is now obscured by the shopfront.

305 Lewisham High Street.

This is a late Victorian Italianate house with rendered front elevation, moulded parapet roof and sash windows. It has an asymmetrical design with one double-height bay window and a central front door recessed behind a simple arched porch.

HE Olby, 307–313 Lewisham High Street (c1930). This is a three-storey stone-fronted Art Deco-style building, which is nine window bays wide, rising to a strong plain parapet to conceal the roof. This is a well-balanced and proportioned building with small paned metal windows, decorative brackets and a central flagpole.



HE Olby



315-319 Lewisham High Street

315–319 Lewisham High Street

(mid-18th century). Proposed for local listing. This mirrored pair of small houses is now much altered. The houses are built of brown brick in Flemish bond with a steep 'M' shaped roof covering the double pile plan with shared central chimney stacks. The building is important as there are only a few examples in the borough of small mid-18th-century pairs of houses. They also represent old rural Lewisham, of which little now survives.

Coach and Horses public house, 323 Lewisham High Street

(c1930s). A brown brick Edwardian building with multi-paned sash windows and steeply pitched clay-tile roof with dormer windows. The pub is rather garishly decorated, but retains original details and sits comfortably in its setting between the single-storey school and small 18th-century buildings at 315–319 Lewisham High Street.

78 Lewisham Park

(mid-19th-century). Grade II. This is a stucco-fronted two-storey house with attic and basement. It has a rusticated ground floor, sash windows with side margins and slate roof with round headed dormer windows. It is occupied, at the time of writing, by the National Health Service.



Coach and Horses



78 Lewisham Park

4 Materials and details

Materials and details are an important part of the character of the conservation area, giving the area its special identity and quality. Some of those details are outlined in this section.

Red brick, terracotta and red sandstone

Red brick is the predominant material used in many buildings in the area, and particularly for the front elevations of the former civic buildings in Ladywell Road. The library, fire station, police station, coroner's court and baths are all built in red brick. The library displays high quality terracotta detailing, whereas on the baths building, red sandstone is used.



Red brick and limestone at the former fire station



Stonework at St Mary's church

Stock brick and stucco

Stock brick and stucco are mainly used on the residential terraces, which contrast with the large civic buildings. Stucco was meant to imitate stone, but much more cheaply. It is often painted white today, but should really be painted a stone colour, such as white with a hint of grey or cream.



Yellow stock brick with stucco dressings on terrace houses

Limestone and rubblestone

Stone has always been expensive and is therefore used on high-status buildings or sparingly for detailing. It is fitting, therefore, that the church displays the most stone, both rubble and ashlar (worked to a smooth finish). It can also be seen in the detailing in a number of buildings including the windows of the coroner's court and detailing at the former fire station and police station.



Terracotta door surround at former library

Gothic and 'medieval' detailing

A Gothic Revival flourished at the end of the 19th century and was used not only in ecclesiastic buildings, but also many civic and domestic buildings. It can be seen here at the Coroner's Court and the former baths.



Windows

Windows are always key features in buildings. St Mary's conservation area contains a number of historic window types, including the medieval/Gothic style mullioned and transomed windows and sash windows with a variety of glazing patterns.



Doors

Historic doors have a great deal of character and are usually designed to complement the style of the building. In Ladywell Road, although many doors have been changed, some historic types remain and include Queen Anne-style doors at 4-6 Ladywell Road and two- or four-panel timber doors further along. Gothic revival doors can be seen at the church and the Coroner's Court.



5 The condition of the conservation area

As part of the assessment of the character of St Mary's conservation area in 2007, a visual condition survey of some of the properties was carried out.

The conservation area has undergone a certain amount of change, not all of which is good quality. Observations on negative alterations to buildings and improvements that could be made have been made in the body of this appraisal.

In the terrace houses original sash windows have often been replaced by upvc windows or windows in a different style; 53% of windows in residential properties have been altered under permitted development rights. Similarly, 63% of doors have been replaced with unsympathetic styles and 21% of houses have lost their characteristic slate roofs. Some houses (26%) have porches which are modern additions and are not compatible with the harmonious style of the Victorian terraces. Front gardens have been lost in 11% of properties to hard surfaces.

These alterations have previously been carried out lawfully under permitted development rights.

Permitted development rights to make such alterations only exist in 'single family dwelling houses' and are not enjoyed by commercial properties or flats. However, even in these buildings, unsympathetic alterations have taken place. These include aluminium and upvc shopfronts and fascias; upvc windows to upper storeys; and sometimes painting whole brick elevations. In Lewisham High Street, the 18th-century houses in particular have been altered quite severely, sometimes quite a long time ago.

Opportunities for enhancement have been given in a supplementary planning document where advice is given not only on maintaining existing character, but making improvements over time to enhance the area's appearance. The supplementary planning document is available from the planning information desk.

Useful contacts

London Borough of Lewisham

Website: www.lewisham.gov.uk

Planning Service

Laurence House
Fifth floor, 1 Catford Road
Catford, London, SE6 4SW

Planning information desk:
020 8314 7400

Conservation and Urban

Design team:

020 8314 6071/8533

Tree officers:

020 8314 8719/8533

Planning Enforcement team:

020 8314 8092

Building Control

Laurence House
Second floor
Address as above
Tel: 020 8314 8233

Lewisham Local Studies and Archives Centre

Lewisham Library
199–201 Lewisham High Street
Lewisham, London, SE13 6LG
Tel: 020 8297 0682

Envirocall

Report fly-tipping, graffiti,
potholes etc on the following
phone number or websites:

Tel: 020 8314 7171

[www.lewisham-
visibledifference.org.uk](http://www.lewisham-
visibledifference.org.uk)

www.lovelewisham.org

Housing Needs Grants

Capital House
47 Rushey Green
Catford, London, SE6 4AS
Tel: 020 8314 6622

Highways

Wearside Service Centre
Wearside Road
Ladywell, London, SE13 7EZ
Tel: 020 8314 2181

Street trees

Wearside Service Centre
(as above)
Tel: 020 8314 7171

Conservation contacts

The Building Conservation Directory
01747 871717
www.buildingconservation.com

English Heritage
020 7973 3000 or 0870 333 1181
www.english-heritage.org.uk
www.helm.org.uk
(EH Guidance Library)

Register of Architects Accredited in Building Conservation
01625 523784
www.aabc-register.co.uk

Royal Institute of British Architects
020 7307 3700 (ask for specialist conservation architects)
www.architecture.com

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
020 7222 7000
(ask for specialist conservation surveyors)
www.rics.org

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
020 7377 1644
SPAB also operates an advice line – please phone for details.
www.spab.org.uk

The Victorian Society
020 8994 1019
www.victorian-society.org.uk

Bibliography

A Walk Down the High Street published by **Lewisham** Life

Lewisham by John Coulter. Published by Alan Sutton Publishing

The Streets of London by Charles Booth. Published by Deptford Forum Publishing

Images of London: Lewisham by John Coulter & Barry Olley. Published by Tempus

St Mary's Church, Lewisham by Julian Watson

Maps and old photographs from Lewisham Local Studies and Archive Centre

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