

<b>Mayor and Cabinet</b>		
<b>Report Title</b>	Gasholders 7 and 8, Bell Green Gas Works, Bell Green, Sydenham, London	
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes	Item No.
<b>Ward</b>	Bellingham	
<b>Contributors</b>	Head of Planning and Head of Law	
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	Date: 25 October 2017

## **1. Reason for Urgency**

- 1.1 This matter has not been included in the Council's Key Decision Plan. However, the decision must be taken by such a date that it is impracticable to defer it until after it has been included in the next Key Decision Plan on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and until the start of the period to which the next Forward Plan relates on November 15 2017. The reason the report needs to go to Mayor and Cabinet on 25 October 2017 is because it concerns the need to give consideration to the local listing of buildings (Gasholders 7 and 8) so that they can be treated as a material consideration as part of the planning process before it is due to be considered before the Strategic Committee on November 14 2017.
- 1.2 In accordance with the provisions of Regulation 15 Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2000, written notice has been given to the Chair of the Business Panel in writing and made publicly available by posting at the Town Hall for 5 clear days.

## **2. Summary**

- 2.1 The surviving Victorian Bell Green gasholders at the Bell Green Gas Works, Bell Green, Sydenham were designed by the distinguished gas engineer Charles Gandon and built in 1882 and 1890. The structures have been considered by Historic England but were ultimately decided on April 11, 2017 not to be included on Historic England's statutory list. The gasholders are also the subject of an extensive campaign for their preservation, supported by the Victorian Society, prominent industrial Engineering Historians, some local Councillors, amenity societies and local residents. As a result the Council's Conservation team have assessed the historic significance in line with adopted the Local List criteria.

2.2 This report considers whether the buildings should be locally listed. The report concludes that the structures are significant heritage assets to the borough and that they do merit local listing.

### **3. Purpose**

3.1 To provide the information needed to enable Mayor and Cabinet to decide whether to locally list No.7 & 8 Bell Green gasholders.

### **4. Recommendations**

4.1 The Mayor is recommended to approve the addition of No.7 & 8 Bell Green gasholders to the Local List.

### **5. Policy Context**

5.1 The contents of this report are consistent with the Council's policy framework. The Local List programme will contribute to the 'Clean, green and liveable' objective in the Sustainable Community Strategy (i.e. improving environmental management and promoting a sustainable environment), and the corresponding clean green and liveable priority, notably improving environmental management and promoting a sustainable environment. Consistency with Council Local Development Framework Documents is explained below.

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (para 14) gives a presumption in favour of sustainable development. However, conservation of heritage assets is one of the 12 core principles of the NPPF which is what planning decisions should be based upon and which is considered sustainable development.

5.3 The NPPF also identifies three dimensions to sustainable development, of which two, social and economic, are relevant;

- A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities...by creating a high quality built environment,
- An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment

5.4 Section 12 of the NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment. The following paragraphs are relevant;

- NPPF 129: Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

- NPPF 136: Local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.
- 5.5 The following policies from the London Plan are relevant:
- London Plan policy 3.16 Protection and enhancement of social infrastructure.
  - London Plan policy 4.6 Support for and enhancement of arts, culture, sport and entertainment provision.
  - London Plan policy 7.4 Local character.
  - London Plan policy 7.8 Heritage and assets and archaeology.
- 5.6 Lewisham’s Core Strategy Policy 15, states that “For all development, the Council will apply national and regional policy and guidance to ensure highest quality design and the protection or enhancement of the historic and natural environment, which is sustainable, accessible to all, optimises the potential of sites and is sensitive to the local context and responds to local character
- 5.7 Lewisham’s Core Strategy Policy 16, states that, “The Council will ensure that the value and significance of the borough’s heritage assets...such as locally listed buildings...will continue to be monitored, reviewed, enhanced and conserved according to the requirements of government planning policy guidance, the London Plan policies, local policy and English Heritage best practice. Throughout the Core Strategy the importance of the historic environment is recognised. See the following pages;
- p. 26 the complex historical development of the borough has left a legacy of distinctive neighbourhoods which needs to be understood and used to inform future developments, in order to ensure the positive contributions of the historic and local character are appropriately protected and enhanced
  - p. 27 protect and enhance vulnerable heritage assets for their intrinsic heritage value, and to ensure that locations and designs of new development are informed by an understanding of the borough’s historic character
  - p. 59 the historic environment is another vital part of creating a sense of place. Heritage assets are a valuable resource contributing to regeneration objectives by attracting business investment, preserving a sense of place and history, and reinforcing civic pride. New development will need to ensure that conservation areas and other heritage assets will continue to be preserved and enhanced
- 5.8 Lewisham’s Development Management Policy 37 – Non- designated Heritage Assets states that:
- A. General Principles; 1. The Council will protect the local distinctiveness of the borough by sustaining and enhancing the significance of non-designated heritage assets
  - B. Locally listed buildings; 1. The Council will seek to retain and enhance LLB and structures and may use its powers to protect their character, significance and contribution made by their setting

- B. Locally listed buildings; 2. The Council will resist demolition of locally listed buildings and expect applicants to give due consideration to retaining and incorporating them in any new development

## 6. Background

6.1 It is understood that the gasworks were formally decommissioned in the late 1980's and its remediation in the 1990's enabled the development of much of the west part of the site for redevelopment. The gasholders were formally decommissioned in 2012.

6.2 The site which currently accommodates the two gas holders did not form part of the phased planning consents for the wider Gas Works site, being the final plot to come forward for redevelopment. The Bell Green works were divided into three phases as part of an Outline Planning application which was approved in 1994.

The **Phase I'** has been developed to provide a Savacentre hypermarket (now trading as Sainsbury). The existing retail unit is located close to the eastern boundary of the site adjacent to the River Pool.

The **Phase II'** land is the area between the gas holders and the linear park/river, to the north of Spine Road and the Sainsbury store. This is the largest phase of the Bell Green site with a site area of approximately 6.3ha and provides retail and employment floorspace. The eastern section of the site is allocated to business units.

The **Phase III'** site is located to the west of the Sainsbury car park, fronting Bell Green, and has been redeveloped for mixed use residential and retail provision.

6.3 The current planning application (with the reference of: DC/17/100680) before the Council is for:

*The removal of existing gasholder's and associated equipment and redevelopment of land to the east of Perry Hill, SE6 to provide:-*

- 1,855 sq m (A1 Use Class) Food Store and 100 car parking spaces, and cycle stores;
- 168 sq m (Use Class A1) Coffee Shop & 325 sq m (Use Class A3) Restaurant, fronting Alan Pegg Place, including outdoor seating and cycle stores;
- 1,104 sq m (B1(a) and B8 Use Class) Depot for Southern Gas Networks consisting of a two-storey building and service yard, together with associated car parking and cycle stores;
- Boundary treatment, and hard/ soft landscaping works including the provision of a new garden area.

6.4 Separate to the determination of the Planning application, the developer has applied to Historic England for a 'Certificate of Immunity', which will mean that Historic England cannot decide to list the two gas holders over the next five

years if new information comes to light. The Council's Conservation team are objecting to this application which will be determined by Historic England on behalf of the Secretary of State in November 2017.

## **7. Local Listing**

- 7.1 Numbers 7&8 Bell Green gasholders are late nineteenth century wrought-iron lattice guide framed structures used for the storage of gas. They are located in the land to the east of Perry Hill SE6 north of the junction with Alan Pegg place, within the Bellingham Ward of Sydenham. The immediate land and setting of the structures include the Grade II listed Livesey Memorial Hall dated from 1911, and its grounds which include a bowling lawn, a separately listed boundary wall, and the grade II listed War memorial constructed in 1920 dedicated to workers who lost their lives in WW1. To the west is the land used as a retail park and ancillary car parking.
- 7.2 The entire site collectively formerly supported a gasworks built by the South Suburban Gas Company. No.7 is thought to be the first gasholder built on site between 1881 and 1882, and No.8 being built in 1890 as demand in the area increased. Later, as further demand increased more gasholders were built, five more in total. Nos. 7&8 are the last surviving holders on the site, and within the borough.

It is understood that the Crystal Palace & District Gas Company first opened the gas works in 1853. George Livesey, a major figure in the history of gas production who is credited as initiating significant technical advances in the design and technology of gasholders and storage, including those that survive in Bell Green, was appointed in 1885 as the chairman of the company, and is responsible for the expansion of the gasworks in Bell Green. The two surviving gasholders were designed by Charles Gandon, manager of the Bell Green gas works from 1877 until 1897, although there is evidence that Livesey had a major hand in parts of the design. Gandon lived at Abergaldie Lodge, next to gasholder no.7 where the spine road, now called Alan Pegg Place enters the site.

- 7.3 The structures are prominently positioned within the setting of three grade II listed buildings, the Livesey Memorial Hall, the War Memorial and the wall surrounding the hall. All of these structures together with the gasholders have intrinsic group value, and are an integral part of the history of Sydenham and are of special social, cultural and economic interest to the borough of Lewisham and this part of south London. George Livesey was knighted in 1902. He died on 4th October 1908 and was buried in Nunhead Cemetery. It was decided that a community hall should be built in his memory. The bricks and tiles for the hall were made on site by the employees, who also built the hall. The hall was opened on 19th August 1911, and at the opening ceremony Charles Hunt, Chairman of the company, said the hall "has been erected by loving hands in memory of one who's great services... to the whole gas industry can never be forgotten". The Dictionary of National Biography

describes him as "the outstanding gas industry engineer of his generation". The hall was listed Grade II in 1995.

- 7.4 The manufacture and distribution of gas was an entirely new industry of the nineteenth century which brought somewhat of a revolution in lighting indoors and outdoors as well as the convenience of cooking. The growth of the industry mirrored the improving standard of living in urban areas as well as their fast-rising populations. The gasholder therefore, symbolised both demographic and technological progress towards the nineteenth century and the interaction between those two strands of history. In the nineteenth century, storage had to be approximately equal to the maximum consumption on a winter's day, and as this increased, so did the number and size of gasholders, like we can see in Bell Green. The location of the gasworks not only led to the development of Lower Sydenham, with its terraced housing replacing the area's fields and watercress meadows, but also led to the expansion of the railway – in 1857 the Mid Kent Line opened their station at Beckenham Junction and in 1878 a connection was added a quarter of a mile north of Bell Green serving the Crystal Palace & District Gas Company.
- 7.5 Gasholders are used for storing gas so as to meet variations in the rate of consumption on a daily cycle. Some general functional components of the gasholders include the "tank"; the open-topped vessel into which the bell descends when empty of gas, and is constructed of cast-iron (later tanks are constructed from steel). The "bell"; the sheet-metal cylinder with a closed top that contains the gas, it is the moveable part of the gasholder, rising and falling according to the volume of gas contained within it. When in use, the weight of the bell is supported by the pressure of the gas inside it. The "guide frame"; the circular iron structure of vertical columns linked by horizontal girders and diagonal bracing built around the perimeter of the tank, designed to resist the wind forces on the gasholder. In wrought-iron structures, good appearance was best achieved by exploiting the natural form of material. Limited decorations were added such as rosettes and finials to compensate for the harshness of machine rolled component parts, but with increasing confidence and the practical need to avoid rust traps, led to their omission. Better mathematics was another feature in making guide frames more efficient, so that they could be built larger in size and more economical. George Livesey led in the way of this, which can be seen in the Bell Green holders. Finally, both gasholders have "flying lifts", that allow the central tank, or lift, to rise above the supporting framework. The "flying lift" was pioneered by George Livesey and this suggests he was also involved with the design of these gasholders.
- 7.6 Malcolm Tucker, one of the country's leading industrial Engineering Historians and author of the substantial report for English Heritage (now Historic England) "The London Gasholders Survey", commonly referred to by heritage bodies has stated that the gasholders in Bell Green are of significant historic interest due to their construction, design and architecture. His study included a study of wrought-iron lattice guide frames, and explains that this type of construction was a major break-through when first used in a gasholder at Hove in 1876. Tucker explains that there are early examples in Poplar and

Kennington, and although the Bell Green holders were built a little bit later than those pioneers, they are very good examples of the early form of lattice guide frames, having standards strongly tapered from bottom to top and a three-legged, T-shaped cross-section. Tucker goes on to explain that the panels of their latticework are particularly light and well proportioned, giving them an airy appearance that is admired by many people, and that they are the nicest of their type in his opinion. Finally Tucker explains that soon after, the T-shape gave way to a plainer, I-shaped cross-section, constructed of settle, and that the Bell Green gasholders are very fine examples, of which there are very few remaining nationally of this earliest form of lattice guide frame with all except the altered example at Kennington are due to disappear.

- 7.7 Historic England were asked to statutorily list the building but in April 2017 considered that given the large numbers of gasholders and the increasing standardisation in design, the threshold for special interest on a national level is necessarily high, with only 16 designated examples in the country. It was considered that the Bell Green examples were not more exemplar than other listed examples found in London and the rest of the country.
- 7.8 On a local level however, the structures are considered to be of significant historic, social and architectural value. The structures are architecturally significant which have, for a long period of Lewisham's history been part of the local and wider townscape and skyline. They represent the tangible rich industrial heritage and a period of the boroughs social and working history. They are considered to be landmark buildings which were designed to be significant proud additions to the skyline as symbols of achievement in technology, structural engineering design and construction. The setting and context of the gasholders and surrounding listed buildings are intrinsically linked to one another which provide a valuable sense of place within an immediate area nearly void of its historic morphology and development due to large-scale retail development and ancillary parking and road networks. Without the gasholders the setting and significance of the nationally listed buildings will undoubtedly be significantly affected. They are the only remaining structures within the borough, and are a valuable and distinctive local asset to Lewisham.
- 7.9 For the purposes of development control, when a building has been "locally listed" it then becomes a material consideration in the determination of subsequent planning applications involving the building.
- 7.10 To conclude, the gasholders, by way of their historic, townscape and architectural qualities set out above, they are considered to meet the criteria adopted by Mayor and Cabinet and reproduced at Appendix 1 for locally listed buildings. Officers therefore advise that they should be locally listed.

## **8 Consultation**

- 8.1 It is the Council's normal practice to notify the building owners of the Officers intention to report to the Mayor on local listing. The land owner has been notified, any response received will be reported verbally at the meeting.

## **9 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 There will be some administrative costs in advertising, mailings and printing the final documents associated with locally listing the No.7 & 8 Bell Green gasholders. These costs can be contained within the existing 2017/18 Planning service budget.

## **10 Legal Implications**

- 10.1 The local list is a non-statutory list of buildings compiled by the Council. The local list is intended to recognise buildings which are not statutorily protected so that they can be properly considered when development proposals are submitted to the Council for determination. The Local List reinforces the Council's efforts to preserve the character and appearance of the buildings that are included on it. In adding a building to the list the Council is able to rely upon the well being powers contained within S2 of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended).
- 10.2 Unlike statutorily listed buildings or buildings located in a conservation area, there are no controls over the demolition of a local listed building outside of a conservation area. Demolition in certain circumstances is permitted development by reason of Part 11 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015. However, for development to be "permitted" under Part 11, an applicant must apply to the Local Planning Authority for a determination as to whether Prior Approval of the authority will be required to the method of demolition and any proposed restoration of the site. This prior approval relates only to demolition methods and re-instatement of the ground. It does not stretch to the principle demolition which is permitted by the Order if the Council is satisfied as to methods.
- 10.3 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 provides that every local authority has the power to do anything which they consider is likely to achieve any one or more of the following objects:
- (a) the promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of their area,
  - (b) the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of their area, and
  - (c) the promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of their area
- 10.4 In determining whether or how to exercise the power set out above the Council is required by Section 2(3) to have regard to the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy. Such considerations are included in the body of this report.

- 10.5 There are no significant human rights implications associated with local listing given the limited effect of local listing and that it does not confer legal protection for buildings so listed.
- 10.6 Under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Council must not act in a way which is incompatible with the rights referred to in the Act. There is an exception to this, in that the Council will not be acting unlawfully if Acts of Parliament mean that it can not act in any other way.

The relevant human rights in this instance are the:

- right to respect for the home, under Article 8; and
- Right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions, under Article 1 of Protocol 1.

However, these rights are not absolute, and may lawfully be infringed in certain defined circumstances. Where infringement is permissible, it must occur in accordance with, or subject to the conditions provided for by the law. It must also be proportionate; ie, it must achieve a fair balance between competing interests and not go beyond what is strictly necessary to achieve the purpose involved.

- 10.7 On balance, it is considered the interference with the owners human rights described in paragraph 10.6 are proportionate.

## **11. Crime and Disorder Implications**

- 11.1 There are no direct crime and disorder implications.

## **12. Equalities Implications**

- 12.1 Equal opportunities will be achieved by making the documents available equally to all and providing other formats when necessary. Documents will be available on the Council's website, in local libraries and displayed in planning reception.

## **13. Environmental Implications**

- 13.1 The principle implicit in conservation management is to repair and maintain existing building elements rather than requiring the replacement and disposal of serviceable items to landfill. This reduces environmental impacts by retaining items and their embodied energy and not causing carbon dioxide emissions necessary for the manufacture and transportation of new items.

## **14. Conclusion**

14.1 It has been argued in s7 above that the building meets the Council's criteria for Local List designation, and are intrinsic in the history of the development of Lewisham. The Mayor is recommended to add No.7 and 8 Bell Green gasholders to the Local list.

## 15. Background documents and originator

Short Document	Title	Date	File Location	File Reference	Contact Officer	Exempt
The National Planning Framework		27 March, 2012	Laurence House	Urban Design and Conservation	Natasha Peach	No
The London Plan		March 2016	Laurence House	Urban Design and Conservation	Natasha Peach	No
The Core Strategy		June 2011	Laurence House	Urban Design and Conservation	Natasha Peach	No
Lewisham Development Management Plan		November 2014	Laurence House	Urban Design and Conservation	Natasha Peach	No

## Appendix 1 - Criteria for local listing, as adopted January 2009

**Historic Interest:** buildings that are of special social, economic or cultural interest to Lewisham, and/or have proven affiliation with locally important people and events, or other community associations (particularly important local architects);

**Architectural Interest:** buildings that are of special architectural interest to Lewisham for reasons of their vernacular, aesthetic, type (*i.e. form and function*), style, plan, technology, townscape, unity, or association with important local architects;

**Age or Rarity:** buildings that are:

- a) Legibly pre-1700 in interest
- b) Of appreciable interest from between 1700 to 1840
- c) Of a high level of interest following 1840
- d) Of an outstanding interest and less than 30 years old

## Appendix 2 – Photographs

1. Red line plan of application under review within the Planning department – DC/17/100680
2. Western elevation of the Livesey Memorial Hall taken from Perry Hill
3. 20th century photograph showing the Livesey Memorial Hall fronting Perry Hill, with a tennis court to the south and bowling-green to the north
4. Livesey Memorial Hall viewed from Perry Hill
5. Livesey Hall War Memorial
6. Close- up view of the architecture of the gasholders
7. Close- up view of the architecture of the gasholders



1



2



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4



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### **Appendix 3 – Listing Description links for the adjacent listed buildings**

1. Livesey Memorial Hall, Listed building number: 1253110  
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1253110>
2. Livesey Hall War Memorial, Listed building number: 1253111  
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1253111>
3. Livesey Hall Boundary Wall, Listed building number: 253121  
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1253121>

### **Appendix 4 – Existing Local list**

Lewisham's existing local list, last updated in February 2014:

<https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/myserVICES/planning/conservation/Documents/LewishamLocalList2014.pdf>