



8. WESTERN AREA

8.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE WESTERN SUB-AREA - EVOLUTION AND CHARACTER

Historic evolution

- 8.1.1 Up to the 17th century, much of the area was covered by The Great North Wood which extended from Croydon in the south to Deptford in the north. It gradually became fragmented by the emergence of London's suburbs in the 18th and 19th century. The discovery of medicinal springs at Sydenham Wells supported the early growth of Sydenham.
- 8.1.2 The opening of the Croydon Canal in 1809 and the arrival of the London to Croydon Railway in 1839 led to rapid development centred around train stations. Despite the economic failure of the canal, it made areas like Sydenham less isolated and helped to inform the location of the railway lines and sidings.
- 8.1.3 Growth fanned out from the south-west following the relocation of the Crystal Palace at Upper Norwood in 1854 which made the southern area around Sydenham and Forest Hill particularly desirable.
- 8.1.4 Brockley developed later in the latter half of the 19th century following the opening of Brockley station in 1871 and Crofton Park station in 1892. It had largely remained farmland until then and brickworks were common.
- 8.1.5 Hilly Fields opened as public park in 1896, following protests from the local community to keep it as an open space.
- 8.1.6 Today, the western area is defined by a series of historic villages on a north-south spine.



Hilly Fields

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Brickmakers at work around Brockley, 1890

© Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)



Heritage and key features

- 8.1.7 The area is largely characterised by its development as a series of older villages on a north south spine which have grown around its railway stations. A strong east west link at Sydenham is a key feature.
- 8.1.8 The topography and green space are an integral part of its character, with open spaces at high ground providing impressive views towards London and Kent. The topography also allows for views up and down roads and of local landmarks like church spires.
- 8.1.9 Remnants of The Great North Wood are traced at New Cross, but also beyond the boundary at Sydenham Woods. Within the study boundary, the large mature street and garden trees give a sense of the once wooded character so integral to this area.
- 8.1.10 The railway lines, sidings, stations are both a functional and physical characteristic, cutting across from north to south. The sidings support a wide variety of plants and wildlife and contribute to the area's green character.



Heritage and character of the western area

Density - floor area ratio and population

8.1.11 Some of the neighbourhoods in this area are surprisingly dense given their low rise character. However, the housing typologies illustrated in the 3D views below show the linear terraces with small gardens and narrow street sections which contribute to their relatively high density.

8.1.12 Figure 73 illustrates that there are higher numbers of people living nearer Brockley, Forest Hill and Sydenham stations, as well as to the west of the Catford stations.



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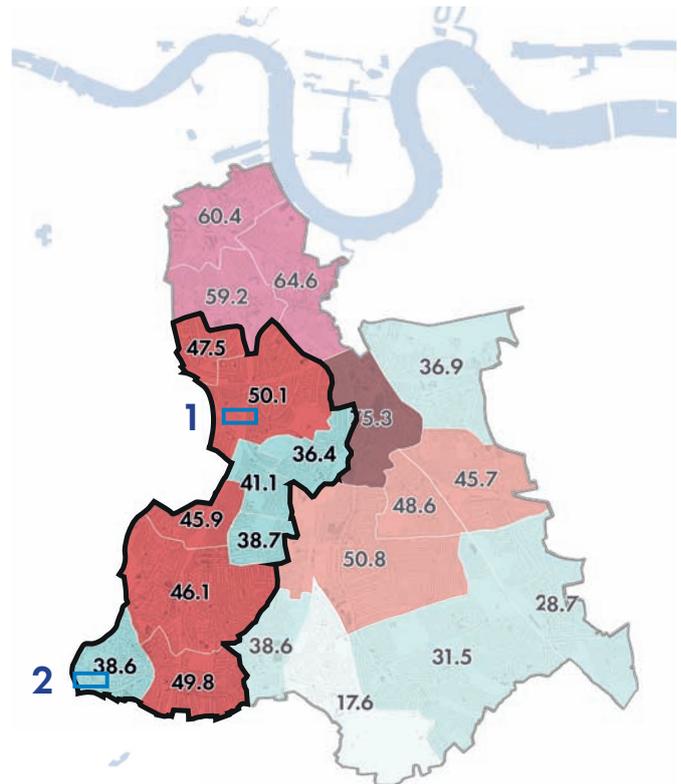


Fig 72 FAR in the western area

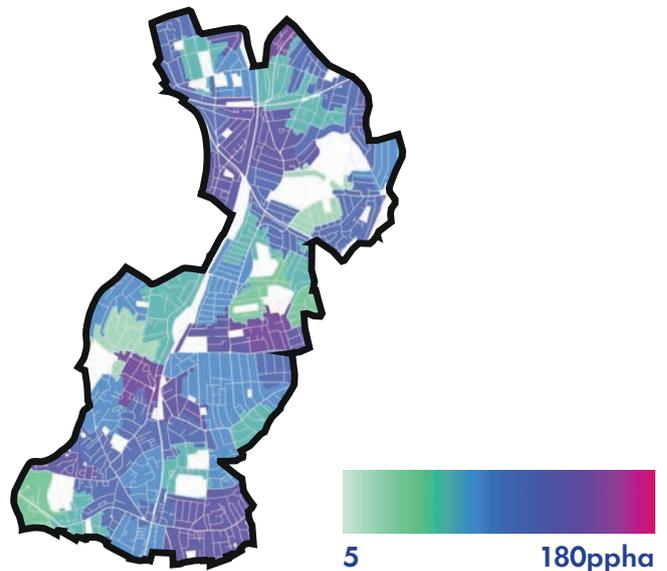


Fig 73 People per hectare in the western area



8.2 NEIGHBOURHOODS

Brockley

8.2.1 Brockley is the most northerly of the western villages and is a residential area centred around its train station. The neighbourhood includes Hilly Fields which provide valuable green space and views into the centre of London. Brockley village was once centred further south, around the Brockley Jack and where Crofton Park railway station is located today. The area now known as Brockley was largely farmland until it developed speculatively after the opening of Brockley Station in 1871. Crofton Park opened later in 1892.

8.2.2 The area is characterised by large Victorian villas along wide tree-lined roads and grids of Victorian terraces with pockets of 20th century infill. The centre has a varied character with newer development and creative industry alongside Victorian shopping parades. Brockley Road, Wickham Road and Adelaide Avenue are the principal streets through the neighbourhood.

Issues

- Risk of losing street trees and verges due to the pressure for parking.
- Lack of entrance/gateway from the north.

Opportunities

- Reinforce the existing character of the local centre by protecting its diverse land use mix and enhancing its historic built environment.
- Strengthen the creative employment sector and links to Goldsmiths College.
- Opportunity to further intensify around the station.

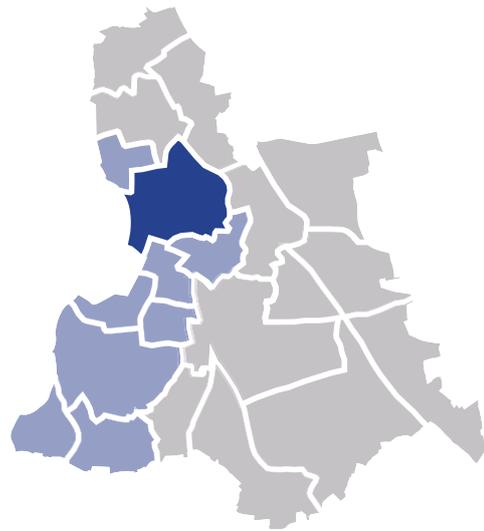


Fig 74 Typologies in Brockley

- Opportunities for corridor intensification along Brockley Road as well as improvements to pedestrian and cycling routes. Wide streets elsewhere further present great opportunities for improved cycle lanes.
- Protect and enhance views towards local landmarks and from Hilly Fields towards the city.



Enhance local character



Brockley train station



Brockley street art



Reinforce the existing historic environment



Opportunity to strengthen the creative sector in Brockley



Improve pedestrian and cycling routes



Protect and enhance views from Hilly Fields towards the city



Reinforce the existing character of the local centre



Perimeter villas are a common typology in Brockley

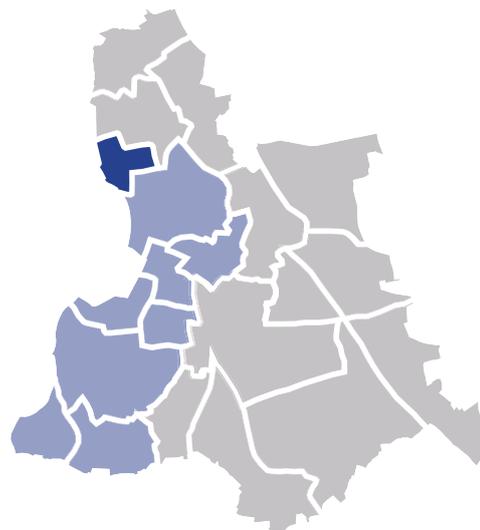


Opportunities to intensify further around the station like the recently developed Dragonfly Place, which offers creative workspace and townhouses.

Telegraph Hill

8.2.3 Telegraph Hill is located in the northern most part of the Western area. It is centred upon Telegraph Hill Park, which is in two halves on either side of Kitto Road. There are extensive views from here towards the city.

8.2.4 Much of Telegraph Hill is designated as a conservation area, special for its highly consistent townscape and spacious streets, which afford long views up and down the hill. The area is mostly laid out on a grid aligned with New Cross Road, its most southern and eastern edges defined by the railway lines.



Issues

- Risk of loss of street trees and verges due to pressures for parking.
- Some free form slab blocks and housing estates break the coherency of the urban fabric.

Opportunities

- Protect and enhance views along streets and from Telegraph Hill Park to the city.
- Wide streets present opportunities for improved cycle lanes.
- Improve the setting and layout of New Cross Bus garage in the context of the special local character of this area.
- Explore opportunities at local estates to improve integration.



Fig 75 Typologies in Telegraph Hill



Wide streets provide opportunities for cycle lanes



St. Catherine's Church is an important historic asset



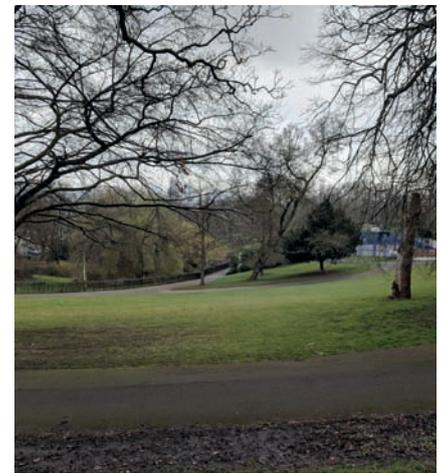
The topography offers extensive views down streets towards the city



Haberdasher's Aske's Hatcham College



The Hill Station at Telegraph Hill Park is a hub for the local community



Telegraph Hill Park



Protect and enhance views from Telegraph Hill Park to the city

Ladywell

- 8.2.1 Ladywell is a varied neighbourhood centred around its railway station. It has a generally Victorian character of perimeter urban and suburban terrace typology with some smaller estates. Samuel J. Jerrard was an influential local builder who developed many of the roads to the east of Hilly Fields in the 1880s, providing a high quality and consistent character which distinguishes the area today.
- 8.2.2 There is a mix of layouts and architecture around the river valley and commercial development is focused along Ladywell Road, one of the main routes into Lewisham. The western part is defined by a strong grid of Victorian streets.
- 8.2.3 Ladywell includes Brockley & Ladywell Cemetery to the west. Ladywell Fields and the railway lines form its eastern and southern boundaries. The boundary runs along the southern edge of Hilly Fields Park with Ellerdale Street forming its boundary with Lewisham to the north.

Issues

- Some vacant buildings and disused sites along Ladywell Road.
- The railway lines act as physical barriers, limiting access to open spaces, residential areas and the village centre.

Opportunities

- Encourage the redevelopment of vacant sites and reuse of vacant buildings along Ladywell Road including the refurbishment of Ladywell Playtower.
- Improve pedestrian and cycling connections across the rail line and Ladywell Road.

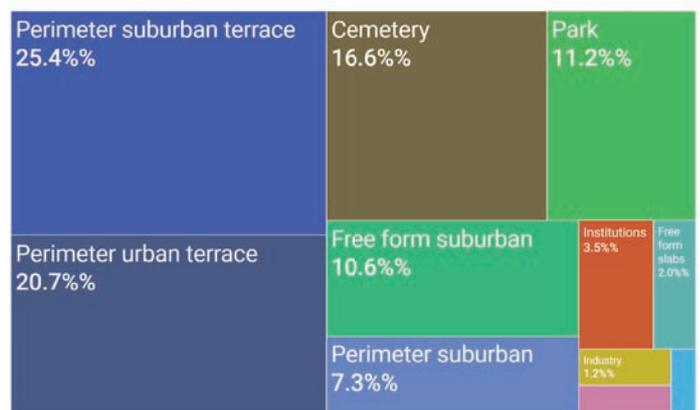
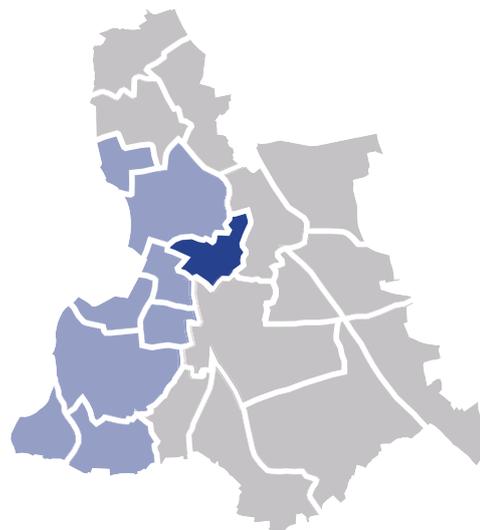


Fig 76 Typologies in Ladywell

- Reveal the Ravensbourne and river valley as much as possible.
- Protect and enhance views of local landmarks, for example St. Mary's Church and Ladywell Water Tower.
- Enhance the quality of the conservation area.
- Some public realm improvements including greening along main routes e.g. Ladywell Road, street decluttering and shopfront improvements.



Urban and suburban terraces are a common typology



Urban and suburban terraces are a common typology



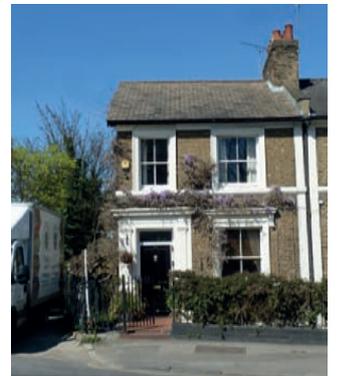
Railway lines can act as a barrier



Ladywell Village



Ladywell Cemetery



Opportunity to enhance the quality of the conservation area



Views towards St Mary the Virgin, a key historic asset, should be protected and enhanced.



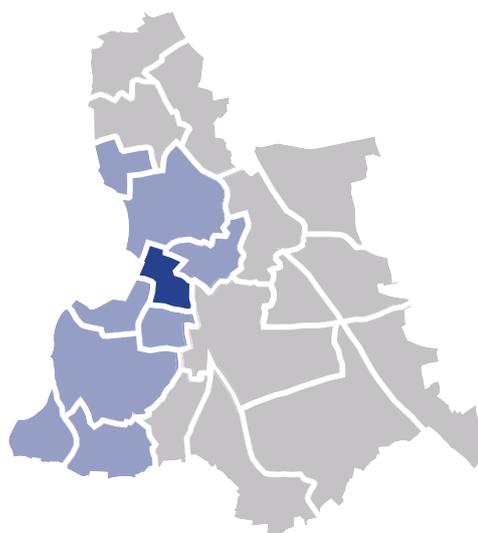
Reveal the Ravensbourne and river valley

Crofton Park

- 8.2.5 The area now known as Crofton Park was once the historic heart of Brockley, centred around the Brockley Jack. The area was built up in the late 19th century and takes its name from the train station which opened in 1892.
- 8.2.6 Crofton Park is bound by the railway lines to the west, Stillness Road to the south and Manwood Road to the east. It is predominantly low rise late Victorian / Edwardian urban terraces interspersed with interwar 'garden city' style housing and post-war flats. Its layout has been influenced by the topography and the rail line.
- 8.2.7 The B218 Brockley Road is a key north-south route characterised by large Victorian housing and shopping parades which are local centres of activity. The northern part of Crofton Park north looks towards Ladywell and Brockley.

Issues

- Poor quality, cluttered public realm overly dominated by cars along the Brockley Road.
- Poor connections and lack of green routes between green spaces.
- Loss of street trees and verges due to pressures for parking.
- South circular end of Brockley Road has a number of closed shops and poor public realm.
- Loss of front gardens in favour of car parking.



St Hilda's Crofton Park is a local landmark



Recent development at Hayward Mews



Fig 77 Typologies in Crofton Park



The sports grounds offer an important green space



Encourage front garden planting to promote greening of streets



Interwar 'garden city' style housing

Opportunities

- Reinforce the existing character of the local centre by protecting its diverse land use mix and enhancing its historic built environment.
- Improve pedestrian and cycling connections across and along the B218 Brockley Road.
- Promote greening of area including street tree planting as well as front and rear garden planting.
- Revitalise vacant properties on Brockley Road by looking at alternative uses such as small work units or shared work space.
- Opportunity to improve pockets of green space and under utilised space on wedge-shaped sites located at points where the B218 meets surrounding roads.



Enhance the historic environment



Street art adds to local character



Reinforce the existing character of the local centre

Blythe Hill

- 8.2.8 Blythe Hill takes in Blythe Hill Fields and the residential roads that lead up to it from Stanstead Road (the South Circular) and Brockley Road (the B218). These major routes are vehicle and traffic dominated. Blythe Hill shares its eastern boundary with Catford which runs along Ravensbourne Park.
- 8.2.9 The topography is a key characteristic of the area, with the majority of roads laid out on an incline. The area is largely comprised of low rise late Victorian / Edwardian urban and suburban terraces. Interwar houses are laid out on larger and less regimented blocks closer to the fields.
- 8.2.10 The Fields are a valued recreational asset and offer extensive views towards the city and surrounding hinterland.

Issues

- Car dominated environment along the south circular.
- Loss of front gardens and architectural features and details in earlier streets, for example along Winterbourne Road and Blythe Hill.

Opportunities

- Improve pedestrian and cycling connections along and across the south circular.
- Protect and enhance views from Blythe Hill towards the city and surrounding hinterland.
- Promote greening of area including street tree planting as well as front and rear garden planting.

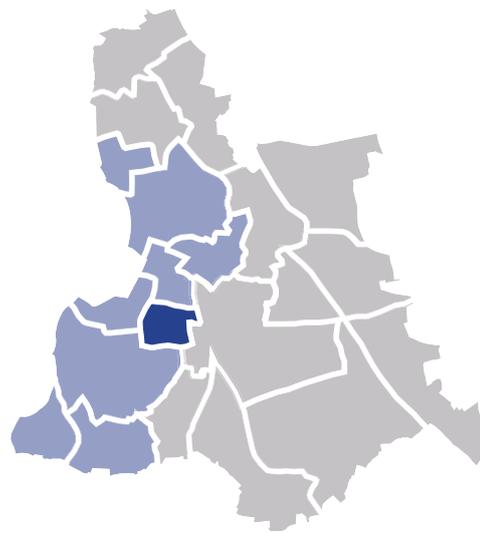


Fig 78 Typologies in Blythe Hill



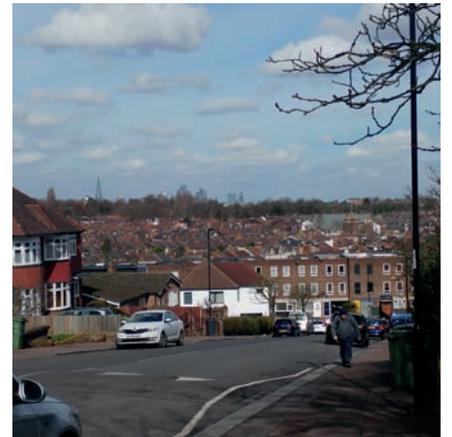
The Honor Oak pub



Opportunity to protect and enhance views from Blythe Hill towards the city



Terraces responding to the topography are a common characteristic



Views across Lewisham towards the city



The corner of Lowther Hill



Predominantly residential character

Honor Oak

- 8.2.11 Honor Oak borders the Borough boundary to the north of Forest Hill, and takes in the residential roads from Canonbie Road and Dalmain Road to the south. Honor Oak is divided into two halves by the railway lines which are hemmed in by nature reserves on either side. Honor Oak Park Station opened in 1886 and is located to the north of the area.
- 8.2.12 The east of the railway lines is generally characterised by interwar terraces on a strong grid layout, intermixed with Victorian and Edwardian streets and free form suburban blocks further south towards Forest Hill. To the west, the area has a far less rigid form with curving and spacious streets with larger houses. The topography is a distinctive feature here with views down roads towards the city centre.
- 8.2.13 The neighbourhood has a vibrant Victorian shopping parade at Honor Oak Park, centred around its rail station.

Issues

- Parking around Honor Oak Station
- Poor connections and lack of green routes between green spaces.
- Absence of sense of arrival to a residential area, especially from the South Circular road.

Opportunities

- Protect and enhance the sweeping views down roads towards the city centre.
- Build on the area's woodland legacy by protecting and increasing the number and type of trees and seeking opportunities to link parks and for new greenways.

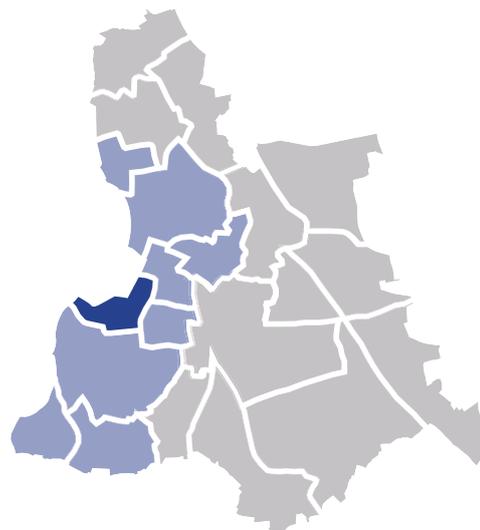
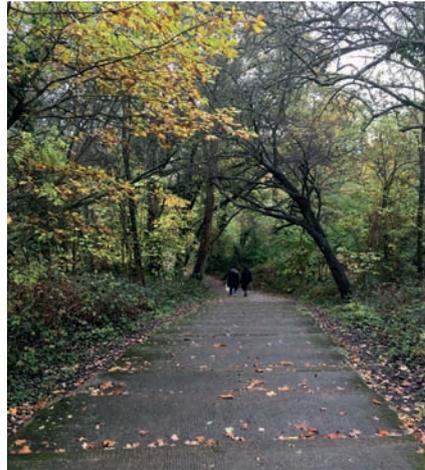


Fig 79 Typologies in Honor Oak

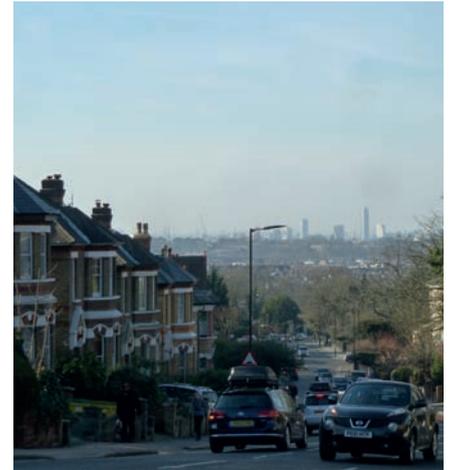
- Improve the arrival point to Honor Oak around the station with enhancements to the public realm and improved crossings.
- Reinforce the existing character of the local centre by protecting its diverse land use mix and enhancing its historic built environment.
- Improve pedestrian and cycling connections across and along the B218 Brockley Road.
- Promote greening of area including street tree planting as well as front and rear garden planting



Larger villas along sweeping roads to the west



Build on the area's woodland legacy



Protect and enhance views of the city skyline



Reinforce the existing character of the local centre



Honor Oak shopping parade



Honor Oak has a predominantly residential character



The urban terrace typology is a dominant type

Forest Hill

8.2.14 Forest Hill was one of the earliest parts of the Borough to grow. The area developed speculatively from 1800, with more rapid development following the arrival of the railways in the 1840s. The renaming of the station from Dartmouth Arms to Forest Hill gave the area its name. Its extent has increased from beyond the station's immediate vicinity to incorporate residential roads as far as Perry Hill to the east and Dacres Road to the south. It has a mixed character around the district centre, contrasting with a predominantly residential character elsewhere, from large villas on wide tree-lined roads to grids of Edwardian terraces further east. Interwar or post-war blocks are set within communal landscaped gardens.

8.2.15 Forest Hill is the sixth largest of the nine major and district centres in the Borough. Its role and function is as a local centre catering for the immediate population needs. The dominance of the busy roads, South Circular A205 and Dartmouth Road A2216, creates a difficult pedestrian environment and have a negative impact on the shopping and leisure environment in the centre.

Issues

- Vacant and underutilised sites within the town centre.
- The train station is the focus of the centre but offers a poor arrival point.
- Poor quality, inaccessible existing pedestrian underpass connecting the east to the west.
- Poor quality station environment.
- Car dominated south circular.

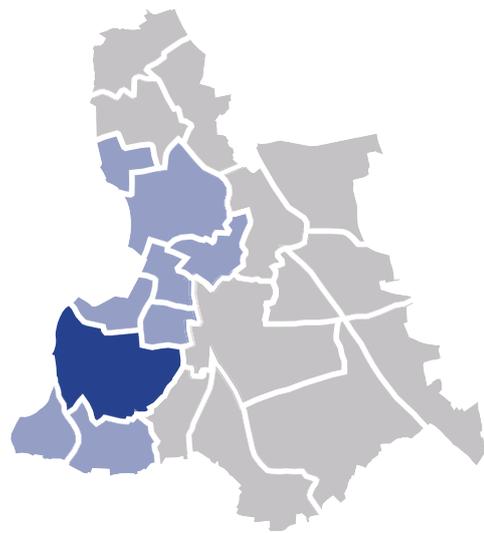


Fig 80 Typologies in Forest Hill



Horniman Museum and Gardens is a key local landmark with views towards the city centre



Opportunity for public realm improvements around Forest Hill station



Small sites offer an opportunity for development that positively contributes to the character of Forest Hill



Refurbishment of buildings can enhance local character



Celebrate the strong sense of woodland character



Opportunity to support existing creative clusters like at Havelock Walk



The existing character of the district centre should be reinforced

Opportunities

- Reinforce the existing character of the local centre by protecting its diverse land use mix and enhancing its historic built environment.
- Public realm improvements around the station e.g. better crossings, more planting, suitable lighting.
- Improve the safety and experience for pedestrians and cyclists along and across the south circular.
- Protect and grow the number of creative industries in the neighbourhood by enhancing and providing workspaces within the mix of uses on, and one block back from the high street - supporting existing clusters such as Havelock Walk.
- Celebrate the strong sense of woodland character through further tree planting.
- Opportunity to develop underutilized and vacant sites to positively contribute to the public realm and activity of the town centre.
- Improve wayfinding and connections to Horniman Museum.



Forest Hill is dominated by the south circular - there is an opportunity to improve the safety and experience for pedestrians and cyclists along and across the road

Sydenham

8.2.16 Sydenham is located in the southern part of the Borough. It shares its western boundary with Sydenham Hill along Kirkdale Road (A2216) and Champion Road forms its eastern boundary with Bell Green. The area includes Mayow Park which is an important green space.

8.2.17 The area has a mixed character around its centre and a predominantly residential character elsewhere, with a range of typologies from large villas on wide tree-lined streets to grids of Edwardian and Victorian terraces. The relocation of Crystal Palace in the 1850s made this area particularly fashionable among the wealthy which saw the emergence of large villas on spacious streets. Sydenham Road is a strong east-west route and forms the commercial heart of the area with strong links with Sydenham station. The road is a busy and traffic dominated thorough-fare. Residential streets lie perpendicular to it. Sydenham is the fourth largest of the nine town centres and has a predominantly local function.

Issues

- The train station is the focus of the centre but offers a poor arrival point. The station railings are an eyesore.
- Sydenham Road is car dominated.

Opportunities

- Sensitive infill development along the High Street on underused sites and above single storey buildings. 'Future-proofing' the High Street to ensure it keeps its vitality.
- Public realm improvements around the station e.g. better crossings, more planting, suitable

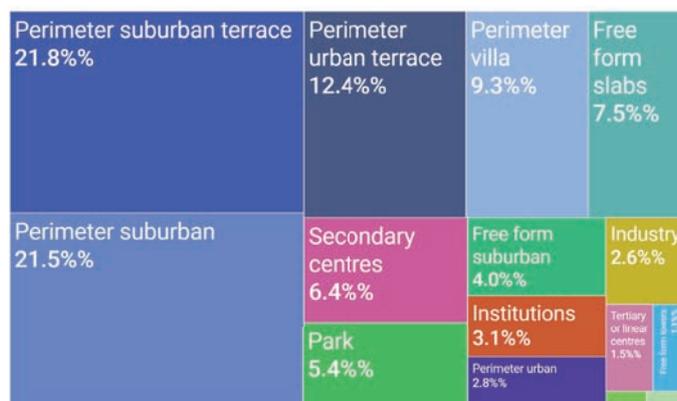
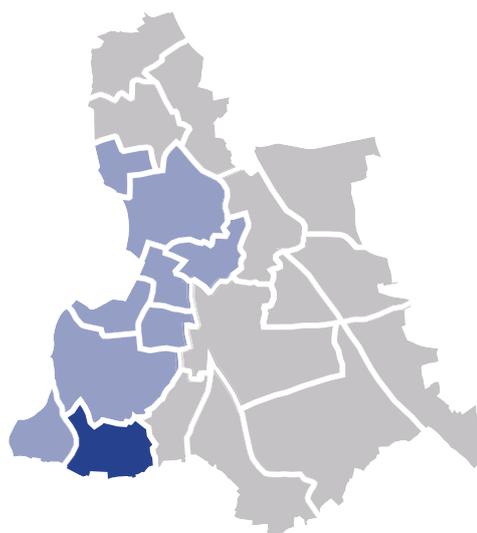


Fig81 Typologies in Sydenham

lighting and celebrating the woodland legacy of the area.

- Improve the safety and experience for pedestrians and cyclists along Sydenham Road.
- Protect and enhance views of local landmarks which are important contributors of character.



Residential character with a mix of terrace and suburban typologies



Opportunities for sensitive infill development along the High Street to enhance the character of the High Street



Victorian shopping parade is a key feature of the area's character



St. Bartholomew's is a key local landmark, views to which should be protected and enhanced



Consistent terrace typology



Free form slabs set within ample green space also contribute to Sydenham's character

Sydenham Hill

8.2.18 The Sydenham Hill neighbourhood is focussed on Sydenham Wells Park. The area is characterised by its free form suburban blocks set within communal landscaped gardens on spacious and tree-lined streets. The hilly topography is a key feature and many of the streets offer panoramas towards the city and the West End. The area has a more spacious and leafier feel to Sydenham to the east, of which Kirkdale Road (A2216) forms its boundary. The area is enclosed by the Borough boundary to the south, east and north.

Issues

- Protect the diversity of landscape and woodland that characterises the areas streets and verges from use as car parking.
- Protect and unify the diverse character and development typologies in this area.

Opportunities

- Further promote the very strong sense of woodland character in this area.
- Explore opportunities for street trees, SUDs and new greenways to enhance this character.
- As an Area of Special Character its architectural and townscape merit and local distinctiveness can be better protected.
- Views of landmarks, up / down roads and panoramas are an important contributor to its character and could be enhanced.

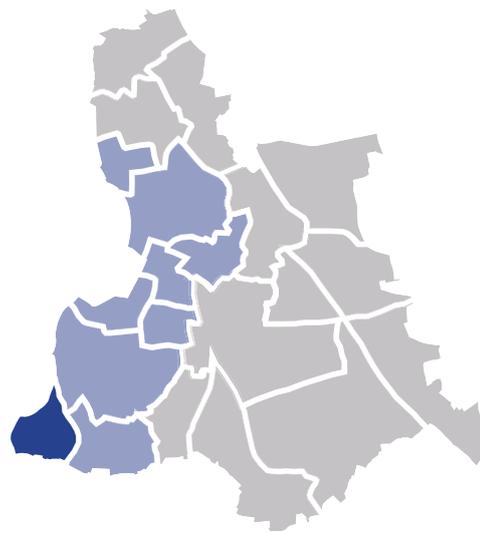


Fig 82 Typologies in Sydenham Hill



Free form suburban is the most common typology in Sydenham Hill



Protect and promote the area's wooded character



Trees contribute to the area's special character



Perimeter villa typology on Westwood Hill



Houses have generous front gardens with trees and planting



Westwood Hill



Sydenham Wells Park



Suburban character

8.3 CHARACTER BASED GROWTH THEMES

8.3.1 For each of the sub-areas a summary plan has been created that sets out the framework priorities and character based growth opportunities (please see figure 83). Three priorities have been identified for the western area:

Theme 1: Re-examine the character and historic fabric of Sydenham and Forest Hill

8.3.2 The western area is characterised by a series of historic centres on a north-south spine, focused around their train stations. Forest Hill and Sydenham are the largest of these, designated as district centres in the borough's Core Strategy. They are vibrant and resilient hubs of activity supported by good public transport, where a wide mix of uses, such as shopping, services and other retail uses are concentrated. The history, existing scale, grain and massing of each centre should inform a tailored and place-based strategy for growth.

8.3.3 The built character of the centres are greatly defined by their Victorian shopping parades alongside post-war infill development where the original fabric has been lost. Some of these later buildings have a neutral or negative impact on the prevailing character of the High Street and are of lower density. There is an opportunity to repair the structure and fabric of the centres through sensitive redevelopment at an appropriate scale and character, which is informed by the historic grain that is still evident. This could be through the redevelopment of a small block or small parade along the high road which appropriately reinterprets the typical vertical rhythm and scale of buildings to strengthen the frontage and contribution to the street. Other opportunities include the redevelopment of larger sites one block back from the high road to provide new homes and workspace. Designs must incorporate safe access and legible routes.

8.3.4 Intensification of sites within district centres should be complemented by improvements to arrival points into Forest Hill and Sydenham, including around train stations, key road junctions and public transport interchanges. Cycling and walking should be made safer and a more enjoyable experience within and between the district centres and residential streets.

Theme 2: Intensification along key road corridors - Brockley Road and Stanstead Road

8.3.5 Corridors are areas that are defined by the major historic routes through the borough. In the western area, the main corridors are Brockley Road (B218) and Stanstead Road (the South Circular). Lewisham Way is a key corridor which forms the area's boundary with New Cross to the north.

8.3.6 The diversity of uses, as well as the changing scale and width, historic fabric and accessibility, are key strengths that give these corridors a varied character and which provide a string of opportunities that make them appropriate for potential intensification. The historic routes have evolved as varied and robust places which are used to, and can adapt to change. Corridors are often seen as through routes and 'between places', yet they are important places for strengthening the local character by adopting a place-based approach to growth.

8.3.7 Opportunities along key corridors include:

- Infill opportunities between local centres to increase densities along connected corridors, for example on wedge-shaped under-utilised sites where Brockley Road meets surrounding streets.
- Reinforce the character and condition of local centres along these routes. Brockley, Crofton



Intensification and infill opportunities in Sydenham and Forest Hill

Park and Honor Oak are local hubs centred on a shopping parade and at train stations. There are also a number of smaller shopping parades between these. There is an opportunity to reinforce the current character and condition of these centres through sensitive and smaller-scale interventions, for example shop-front improvements and extensions to single-storey buildings.

- Enhancements to the transport network for pedestrians and cyclists, including improved crossings for pedestrians, measures to improve air-quality, traffic-calming measures, improved cycling routes, cycle parking and storage.
- Public realm improvements to enhance safety and experience, for example street greening, de-cluttering, lighting and pavement repairs.

Theme 3: Celebrating historic landscape character - woodland and topography



The wooded character of the western edge

8.3.8 The western area was once covered by the Great North Wood, which extended from New Cross to Croydon south of the Borough. Much of the woodland was lost by the 18th century, but a strong woodland character prevails with the abundance of large mature street and garden trees, nature reserves along the railway lines, and allotments and other green spaces. Similarly, the undulating topography is a key feature of the area and provides expansive views towards the city from parks and along streets.

8.3.9 This special historic landscape character should be celebrated by protecting and enhancing important views, promoting tree planting and stitching green spaces together through the creation of a network of green infrastructure. A public realm framework and tree planting plan would be beneficial to develop this.

Sub-area views:



Sub-area landmarks:



the focal point of a framed view north along Lawrie Park Avenue and features in Pissarro's "The Avenue, Sydenham" painting, dating to 1871. The church was built in 1832 and is Grade II* Listed.

- J Ladywell Water Tower, Dressington Avenue - A unique local landmark, marked by its distinctive brick tower which is in stark contrast with the low-lying housing that surrounds it. It has historical significance as part of the only new workhouse to be built specifically for the elderly in 1898-1900. It is Grade II Listed.

A number of neighbourhood views and landmarks have been identified that contribute to the distinct character and sense of place of each sub-area. Views already identified in the Core Strategy have also been included. These views and landmarks were identified in conjunction with local residents and stakeholders at a series of workshops undertaken as part of this study. These views and landmarks are located on figure 83.

Sub-area views:

1. Telegraph Hill – panoramic views northeast and northwest from Upper Park towards the city skyline which encompass landmark buildings such as the Houses of Parliament, Battersea Power Station, the BT Tower and the London Eye.
2. Hilly Fields Park – its elevated position gives extensive long distance views northwest and southwest from various points towards the city centre and south of London.
3. Horniman Gardens – the Gardens are located on the highest ridge of Forest Hill, offering panoramic views northwest towards the city skyline. Identifiable features include Wembley Stadium, St. Paul's Cathedral and the Gherkin. There are also panoramas southwest towards London's suburbs and Kent.
4. Blythe Hill Fields – extensive views in all directions from towards surrounding areas. Panoramas towards London's city cluster are perhaps the most significant.

Sub-area landmarks:

- A. St. Andrew's URC Church, Wickham Road - The 170-foot spire is highly visible, seen clearly against the sky along Wickham Road, Brockley Road and Friendly Street. Built in 1882, the church is a distinctive landmark which aids wayfinding.
- B. Brockley Jack, Brockley Road - A large and ornate public house, dating back to 1898. There has been an inn on this site since at least the 18th century, reflecting the evolution of the borough. The gabled tower is prominent when travelling north along Brockley Road. It is locally listed and highly valued by locals.
- C. St. Catherine's, Hatcham, Pepys Road - A locally listed landmark of historical significance, built as an integral part of the Haberdashers' estate in 1894. It sits at the highest point of Pepys Road, providing a useful wayfinding point.
- D. Horniman Museum, London Road - Sits atop of London Road and which makes a significant contribution in views looking up the hill westwards along London Road with the museum clock tower rising up above. The building is Grade II* Listed and contributes to a strong sense of place.
- E. Christ Church Chapel-on-the-Hill, South Road - A large building with a prominent spire which has a clear vertical form in contrast with the residential character that surrounds it. It sits at the top of a gentle incline at the junction of Church Rise and South Road. It is a key reference point in this area.
- F. Forest Hill Pools and Library - their red brick Victorian facades provide a prominent focal point along Dartmouth Road. The buildings reflect an important part of the area's social history and are of architectural quality.
- I. St. Bartholomew's, Westwood Hill in Sydenham - easily recognisable when travelling southeast along Westwood Hill, its tower seen clearly against the skyline. It provides

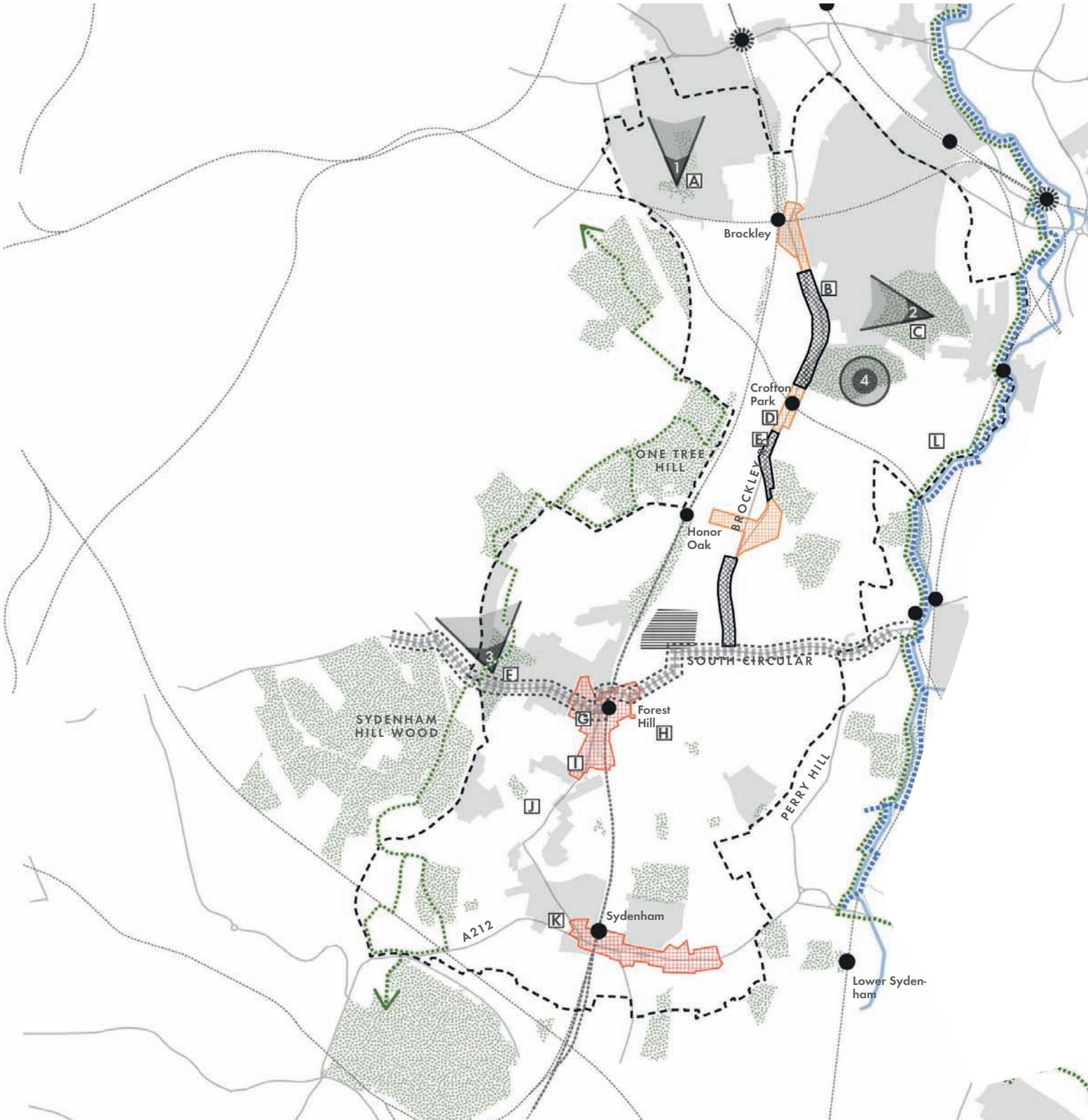
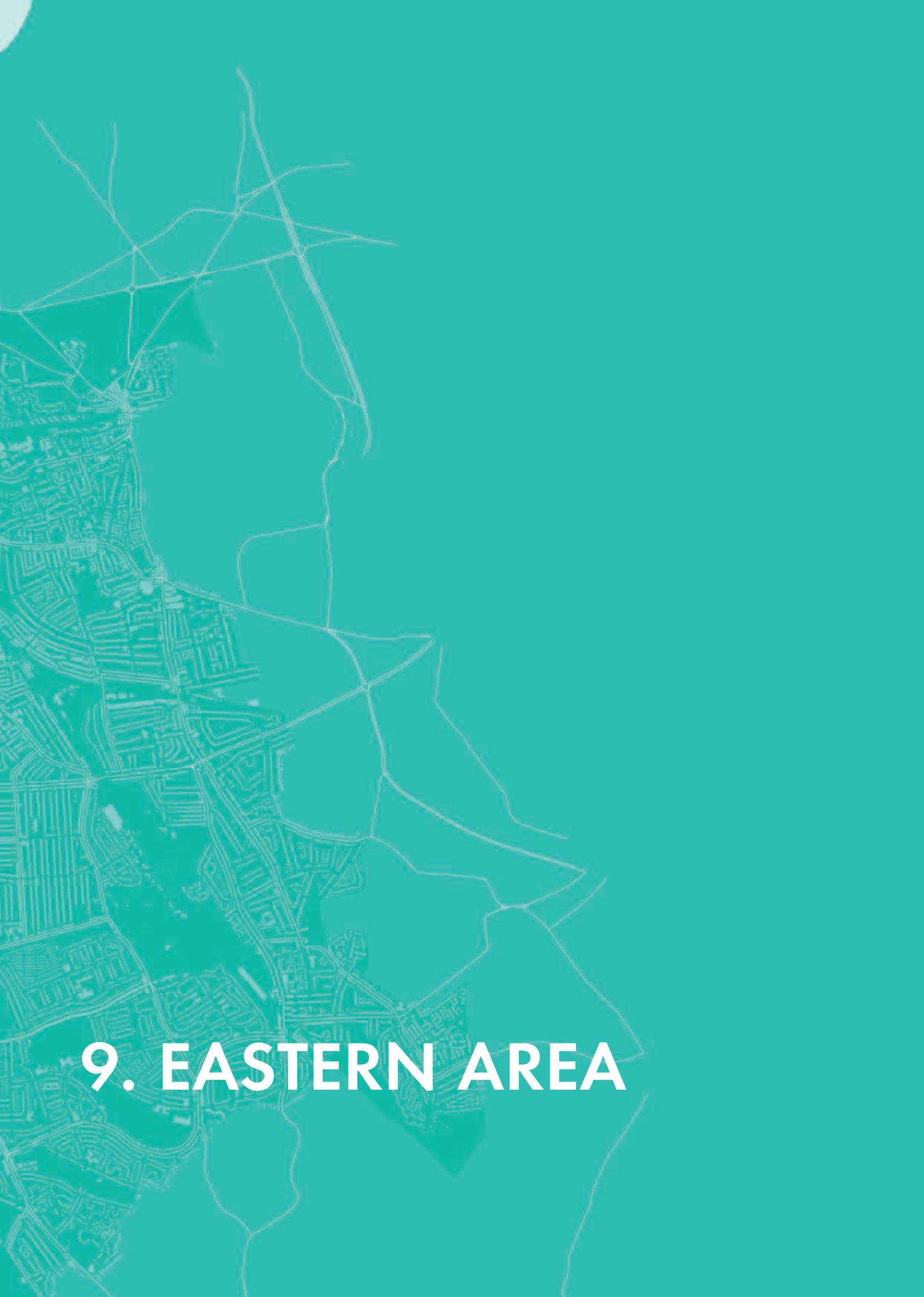


Fig 83 Western area summary framework plan





9. EASTERN AREA

9.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE EASTERN SUB-AREA - EVOLUTION AND CHARACTER

Historic evolution

- 9.1.1 The eastern side of the borough transitions from a still discernible village at Blackheath to the Victorian urban centre of the borough; beyond, to the 20th century suburbs in parts of Grove Park in south. The area is defined by the borough boundary and the railway lines from Lewisham towards Orpington.
- 9.1.2 Blackheath is one of the oldest parts of the borough, recorded in 1166 but known as a gathering point since Roman times. The heath marked an important point on the Roman Road from London to Dover and has been the site of rebel gatherings, military encampments, festivals and sporting events. Today it is one of the largest areas of common land in Greater London. Development of the village took place on the edge of the heath, from the late 17th century and accelerated in the 19th century. Further south, Lee had developed as three centres with large houses built for wealthy London merchants around the church in Belmont Hill, in the Old Road area of Lee High Road, and at Lee Green.
- 9.1.3 Burnt Ash Hill is an important historic north-south route that connects from Blackheath to Lee whose development was influenced by the proximity to the heath. This area emerged as intensive middle class housing from 1830s onwards. Lee New Town was built from 1825 to house those working for wealthy residents in the area and neighbouring Blackheath.
- 9.1.4 The arrival of the railways unlocked the southern area of the borough with Lee station opening in 1866 and Grove Park in 1871. The opening of Lee station shifted the central focus of Lee to Burnt Ash Road around the station. Rapid growth in the early 20th century has resulted in a consistent form of development in the southern part of the borough and large areas of green space have been retained giving the area a more suburban feel. The Grove Park Estate was built by Lewisham Council in 1920s which altered the hitherto consistent character of Grove Park.



Blackheath to Lewisham, 1823

© Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)



Lee Green, c.1905

© Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)



Durham Farm in Grove Park area, date unknown

© Lewisham Local History Archives Centre (with permission)



Heritage and key features

- 9.1.5 The three centres of Blackheath, Lee and Grove Park were historically three villages on the road to Greenwich. All three expanded dramatically with the development of the railways. Blackheath is the oldest of the three settlements and has a much higher concentration of historic assets and listed buildings than the other two.
- 9.1.6 This sub-area forms the eastern edge of the borough, a perception reinforced by the almost continuous run of green open spaces that stretch from the riverside and Blackheath in the north along a green finger of sports grounds and open spaces to Elmstead Wood to the south of the borough.
- 9.1.7 Generally development is of a low scale with a suburban feel, made up of Victorian terraces and 20th century housing. Key assets include;
- The grand and formal edge of Blackheath village forming a built and consistently historic edge to the natural heath.
 - The Georgian and Regency villas in Lee and Blackheath
 - A consistency in character of Victorian terraces and 20th century housing
 - Landmarks including church spires and public houses at the centres of villages



Heritage and character of the eastern area

Density - floor area ratio and population

- 9.1.8 This is one of the lowest density areas in the borough, due to the 20th century and villa house types illustrated in the 3D views below. These homes typically have wide plots, large gardens and generous street sections.
- 9.1.9 Figure 85 suggests that the highest densities of people per hectare in the sub-area are in Blackheath while the FAR of the tightly terraced streets of Lee are higher than the varied built character of Blackheath.

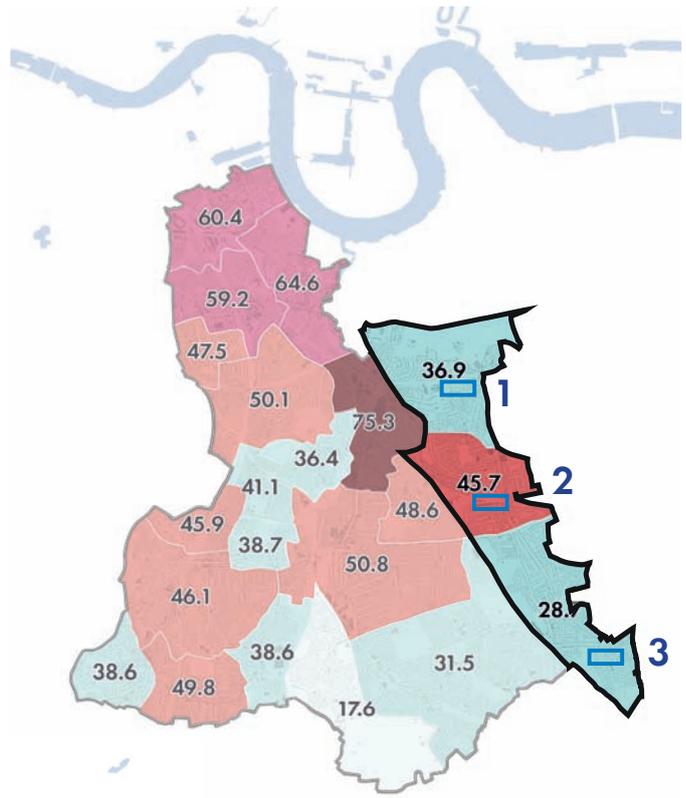


Fig 84 FAR in the eastern area

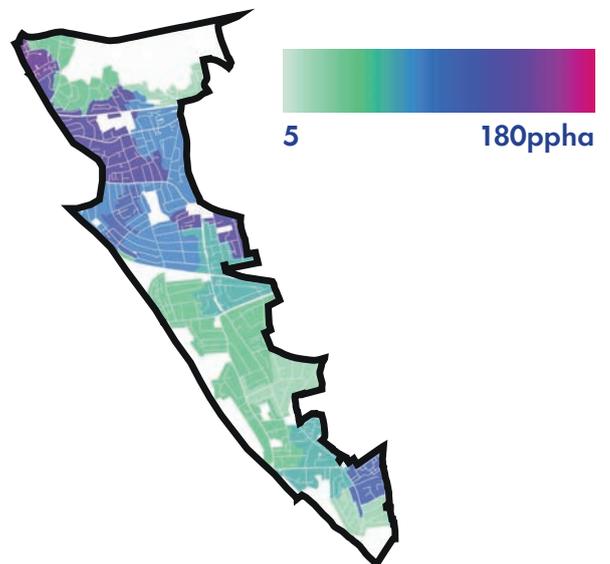


Fig 85 People per hectare in the eastern area



9.2 NEIGHBOURHOODS

Blackheath

Location and context

9.2.1 Blackheath is one of the borough's smaller district town centres. It serves a local function but also given the quality of services, historic character and comparison shopping it draws visitors and tourists from a wider area. A range of bars, restaurants and venues such as Blackheath Halls means that the centre has an active evening economy.

9.2.2 The heath and the topography of the centre has a strong impact on its character, with a strong village identity. The heath itself is open, grassy, higher ground that is uncultivated which has an open character with few trees, affording longer views. The centre has an intimate quality, largely developed after the railway opened. The homes surrounding the village have a more varied character including development from the Georgian, Victorian and 20th century periods, although the houses fronting the heath are a significant historic set-piece.

Issues

- Traffic management and parking issues in the centre of the village.
- Ensure the historic centre is protected from the pressure which is placed on it from the large number of visitors and tourists.
- Impact of change in shopping patterns on high street retail.
- Issues with refuse collection need further investigation.

Opportunities

- Reduce street clutter and refuse
- Give greater consideration to the measures introduced to protect town centre visitors and users from traffic.



Fig 86 Typologies in Blackheath



Large villas



The Clarendon Hotel



The heath has a strong impact on the area's character



High numbers of visitors can place pressure on the historic centre



Perimeter villas are a dominant typology



Free form buildings contribute to local character



Shopping parade on Tranquil Vale



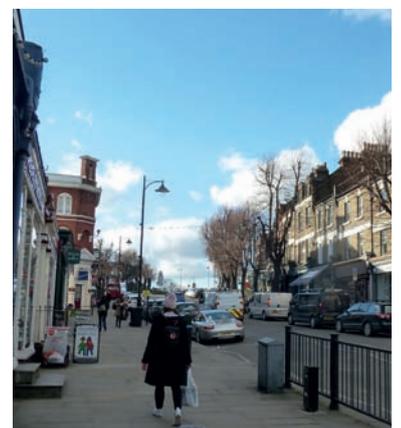
Reduce street clutter



Blackheath Halls



All Saints, Blackheath



Tranquil Vale

Lee

Location and context

- 9.2.3 This area includes both the area known as Lee Green and the area of Lee nearer the station around the High Road and Belmont Hill. The boundary of this neighbourhood includes the area between the borough boundary on the eastern side to the railway tracks at the west where Hither Green begins. The area is denser than Blackheath with more tightly developed terraces of Victorian properties and a number of estates from the 1960s and 70s.
- 9.2.4 Lee Green is designated as one of the smaller district centres and serves the needs of its immediate population with convenience shops including a large Sainsbury's. A significant amount of office space is located within the town centre.

Issues

- The centre has the challenge of being split between two boroughs as the borough boundary with the London Borough of Greenwich runs through the centre of Lee Green.
- The triangle of land associated with Hither Green depot is an obstacle to movement.
- Few connections to the river.
- Main routes through the area are car dominated and difficult to cross.
- Relatively low levels of public open space within the neighbourhood (other than Manor House Gardens).



Fig 87 Typologies in Lee



Shopping parade on Burnt Ash Hill



Trinity School



Post-war development on Taunton Road



Opportunity for intensification



Public realm opportunities on Burnt Ash Road, currently traffic dominated



Urban terrace typology



Terraced streets are a dominant characteristic



Lee train station



Larger houses have generous front gardens

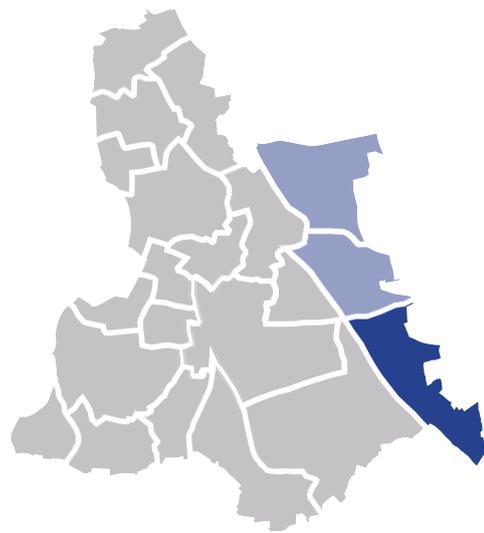
Opportunities

- Smaller infill development sites to improve the integrity of the conservation area.
- Opportunities for more tree planting on roads and public spaces.
- Reduce the dominance of traffic to improve the centre.
- Improve connections with the Quaggy and to open space.
- Increase tree planting and improve the public realm.
- Develop a strategy to bring a number of key sites into more intensive use.

Grove Park

Location and context

- 9.2.5 The density drops into the neighbourhood of Grove Park. Homes in this area are a mix of speculative interwar houses – mostly semis – and Council estates built in the interwar and postwar periods.
- 9.2.6 The neighbourhood is defined by the edge of the borough to the east and the railway tracks to the west, with the south circular currently forming a natural boundary with this area and Lee to the north. Streets are connected into a wider network with the Baring Road running from the north to the south of the area.



Issues

- The area feels quite disconnected from the rest of the borough, with few connections over the railway line.
- Improve the environment along Baring Road.
- Streets around the station lack street trees, are in need of repair and upgrading.
- The area is dominated by two main roads with a very busy junction close to station.

Opportunities

- Provide better links to open space and improve residents' access to nature and green spaces.
- Protect the character of the Chinbrook Estate designed by the GLC – an estate of mixed form and tenure, built with extensive community facilities, which has a fine-grained intimate character.
- Improve the area around Grove Park Station and the bus garage.
- Sites close to the station which could be better used.

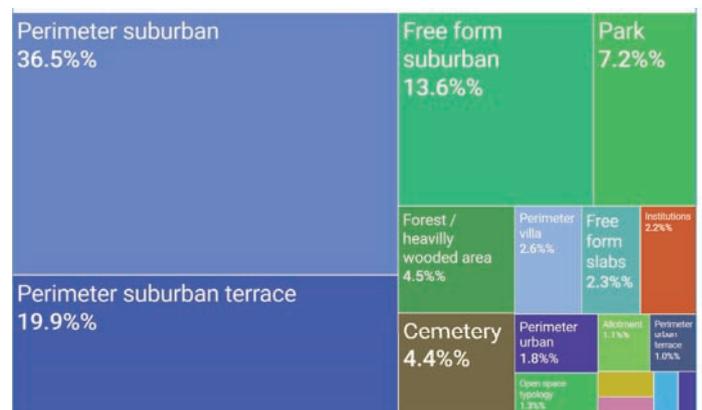


Fig 88 Typologies in Grove Park



Grove Park shops



Chinbrook Meadows



Perimeter suburban character of residential streets



Amblecote Close



Photos of the Chinbrook Estate designed by the GLC – an estate of mixed form and tenure, built with extensive community facilities, which has a fine-grained intimate character.

9.3 CHARACTER BASED GROWTH THEMES

9.3.1 For each of the sub-areas a summary plan has been created that sets out the framework priorities and character based growth opportunities (figure 90). Five priorities have been identified for the eastern area:

Theme 1: Transform Lee Green from a crossroads to a meeting place

9.3.2 There are significant opportunities at Lee Green to help enhance this district centre. Currently two busy roads form a junction that dominates the centre and the high street has suffered as a result. There has been some investment in improving pedestrian crossings at the junction but further improvements such as cycle infrastructure, lane narrowing and shop front improvements would help to enhance the environment. These improvements could be delivered alongside the redevelopment of key sites including the Leegate Centre, the Sainsbury's and other former car garage sites. Opportunities for meanwhile uses prior to the redevelopment of the Leegate Centre should be investigated to avoid the centre stagnating and declining further whilst permission is obtained.

9.3.3 The corner site to the north of Lee High Road and to the west of Lee Road provides an opportunity to open up the Quaggy River and create a riverside space in the town centre.

Theme 2: Opportunities at Grove Park

9.3.4 Grove Park is an important centre in the south of the borough and there are significant opportunities to improve the quality and first impression of the centre as you exit the station. A comprehensive plan for the area on the west side of Baring Road including the bus stand could deliver new homes, shops and improved public realm.



- Potential opportunity site
- A20 improvement
- Reveal the Quaggy
- Borough boundary



Fig 89 The opportunity at Lee Green

Theme 3: A connected series of green spaces from the north to the south of the borough

- 9.3.5 Green spaces and streets characterise the eastern area. There are opportunities to further enhance these by improving the connectivity between, and access to, existing designated Metropolitan Open Land and sites of nature conservation. The Green Chain walk connects some of the green spaces in the south of the borough and this route could be enhanced through improved tree planting and signage. Similarly a route along Lee Park Road and Manor Lane could have focused landscaping and tree planting to enhance the connectivity between the green spaces in the north and the south of the area. The Neighbourhood Plan for Grove Park includes a proposal for an Urban National Park as part of the Mayor of London's plan to make the capital the first National Park City. These proposals suggest improvements to the continuity of spaces from Elmstead Wood through the network of green spaces along the railway line to Northbrook Park. More could be made of these spaces to improve them in terms of their amenity and there may also be opportunities for development around their edges to improve the sense of safety, activity and overlooking.

Theme 4: Transform the South Circular from a barrier to a boulevard

- 9.3.6 Parts of the South Circular have a poor quality street environment, encourage faster moving traffic at the expense of street activity or a good pedestrian environment. However, the route is an important east west corridor across the borough. Improvements could be made through tree planting, cycle infrastructure and the removal of guard railings to encourage a more normal street environment. Improvements to public transport provision should also be explored. The development of infill sites may help to improve frontage and activity along the street.

Theme 5: Continue to enhance and celebrate the special character of Blackheath - a borough gem

- 9.3.7 The architectural and historic qualities of this area are protected by a conservation area and new development must be of an exceptional standard in order to contribute to its special character. The centre needs careful management and joint working with the London Borough of Greenwich to manage the visitor demand and development pressure of this popular area.



The south circular - Top - a barrier for pedestrian movement and activity at Burnt Ash Hill junction, but a tree lined boulevard near Manor Lane? Lanes could still be narrowed to improve cycle infrastructure



Potential opportunity sites to enhance the character of the centre of Grove Park

Sub-area views:



Sub-area landmarks:



A number of neighbourhood views and landmarks have been identified that contribute to the distinct character and sense of place of each sub-area. Views already identified in the Core Strategy have also been included. These views and landmarks were identified in conjunction with local residents and stakeholders at a series of workshops undertaken as part of this study. These views and landmarks are located on figure 90.

Sub-area views:

1. Northwest from Shooters Hill, Blackheath, towards central London. A view from a publicly accessible space towards central London. Distinctive given the sense that Canary Wharf feels so close.
2. South from Blackheath towards Blackheath village and All Saints' Church. A view towards a local landmark and a significant cluster of highly graded heritage assets. From slightly higher ground back down to the centre of the village
3. View to Library north from within Manor House Gardens. A short range view towards a significant building, across an attractive, gently sloping green space.

Sub-area landmarks:

- A. All Saints Blackheath. Stands on open ground on the Heath. Its Gothic spire is a defining characteristic of Blackheath.
- B. St Margaret's Lee. One of South London's most notable early Victorian churches. The west tower and spire is the main landmark on Belmont Hill.
- C. Manor House Library Classical mansion. Grade II* listed and prominent from the north and south of the park.
- D. Boone's Chapel, Lee High Road. One of the Borough's earliest and best-known historic buildings. Grade I listed. The building is on a prominent position on Lee High Road.

- Station
- Landmark
- ▲ View
- ⋯⋯⋯ Railway line
- - - Sub-area boundary
- ▨ Open space
- ⋯⋯⋯ Riverside connectivity
- ⋯⋯⋯ Strategic green corridors
- ▨ Conservation area
- ▨ Place intensification - re-examine character
- ▨ Place intensification - reinforce character
- ▨ Corridor intensification
- ▨ Urban regeneration
- ▨ Employment intensification
- ⋯⋯⋯ South Circular intensification



Fig 90 Eastern area summary framework plan

