

<b>MAYOR &amp; CABINET</b>		
<b>Report Title</b>	Blackheath Conservation Area Review	
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes	Item No. 10
<b>Wards</b>	Blackheath	
<b>Contributors</b>	Head of Planning and Head of Law	
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	Date: 14 March 2007

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report seeks to adopt a management plan, character appraisal, supplementary planning document and Article 4(2) direction relating to Blackheath Conservation Area. A review of the area has been undertaken and a public consultation exercise carried out to seek local people's views. The results of the consultation are reported here and the documents have been amended in the light of these comments. Adopting these documents is a statutory duty as well as a best value performance indicator.

## **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 To adopt the management plan; character appraisal; supplementary planning document and approve the making of an Article 4(2) direction for Blackheath Vale and Blackheath Hill in Blackheath Conservation Area.

## **3. Recommendations**

The Mayor and Cabinet are recommended to approve the following items:

- 3.1 Adopt the management plan at Appendix 1;
- 3.2 Adopt the text of the character appraisal at Appendix 2;
- 3.3 Adopt the supplementary planning document at the end of the character appraisal (Appendix 2);
- 3.4 Approve the making of Article 4(2) directions to nos. 1 to 27 (odd); 2 to 16 (even); and 18 to 28 (even) Blackheath Vale and 98 to 104; 110; and 114 to 132 (even) Blackheath Hill.

## **4. Policy Context**

- 4.1 PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment (paragraphs 4.1-4.8) advises local authorities to review their conservation areas and to publish character appraisals. Character appraisals foster better understanding of the character of the area which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. English Heritage has recently issued revised guidance on undertaking character appraisals and managing conservation areas and that has been used in compiling this appraisal.

- 4.2 The London Plan (policy 4B.10) says that boroughs should "...ensure that the protection and enhancement of historic assets in London are based on an understanding of their special character ..."
- 4.3 The Council has a Best Value Performance Indicator target (BVPI 219b) to increase character appraisals for conservation areas to 44% and to increase the number of management plans for conservation areas to 52% in 2006/7 (BVPI 219c). To achieve this target, two character appraisals and management plans must be adopted before March 2007. A character appraisal and management plan for St Mary's Conservation Area was adopted in December 2006. The adoption of the Blackheath documents will therefore achieve this target.
- 4.4 When adopted the Blackheath supplementary planning document will become part of the Council's Local Development Framework and provide guidance which will be supplementary to our emerging core policies.

## **5. Background**

- 5.1 A review of Blackheath Conservation Area was carried out between January and July 2006 by historic buildings consultancy, Forum Heritage Services. This included drafting a character appraisal, reviewing the boundaries of the conservation area and developing management proposals. The management proposals, which include the adoption of the character appraisal, making an Article 4(2) direction and adopting a supplementary planning document, were made available for public consultation this autumn.

## **6. Public Consultation Method**

- 6.1 Consultation was carried out in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. It ran from 4 October to 10 November 2006. It involved sending the draft management plan and questionnaire to all households in the conservation area, making the draft character appraisal available for reference on the Council's website, at Lewisham Planning Information Desk, Blackheath and Lewisham libraries. Copies were also sent to the Blackheath Society and other individuals with a specialist interest. In addition a consultation meeting was held with the Blackheath Society, and an open house event for local residents and businesses was held in the Old Bakehouse where officers were available to explain and discuss proposals and answer questions. 17 people attended the open house event and 65 returned the questionnaire, sometimes including extensive supplementary material.

## **7. Consultation Responses**

- 7.1 The consultation leaflet contained questions on all the items the Mayor and Cabinet are being asked to approve.
- 7.2 The single largest issue was the potential removal of the former St John's Hospital site from the conservation area. 26 respondents were in favour and 28 against. The proposal proved controversial to many and generated fervent arguments against removal, some of which were made on valid planning and conservation grounds, while others concerned different matters particularly the quality of maintenance of the estate and its environment. Comments were also received that the proposals would leave Brandram House, a historic building, unprotected from demolition. Having considered the comments received, on balance it is concluded that this area should remain part of the Blackheath Conservation Area.
- 7.3 Comments received on the matters for adoption are outlined below.

## **Management plan**

- 7.4 The management plan is the document that sets out the Council's proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area. During the public meeting, the proposals were generally very well received.

## **Public realm improvements**

- 7.5 Respondents were asked to list public realm improvements they would like to see in Blackheath, if finance were to be available. Response covered a variety of topics, the principal ones being; a desire to have less through traffic in the village, excessive street clutter, and to extend the recently completed paving works in the village centre. There is little scope to reduce traffic through the village, but other suggestions can be picked up by the appropriate programmes as and when resources are available

## **Character appraisal**

- 7.6 This describes and analyses the character of the conservation area and its different component parts, in a format prescribed by English Heritage good practice advice. It will also be used to guide decisions on planning applications.
- 7.7 Approximately 20 people commented on the conservation area appraisal. Some in particular took the trouble to make extensive, detailed and very useful comments. A particular area of concern was the number and boundaries of the various different character areas that make up the overall conservation area. As a result the appraisal has been revised to take these comments into account and increase the number of character areas. Those who had made extensive comments have been re-consulted, and further minor amendments made.
- 7.8 The text of the amended appraisal is attached as Appendix 2. When approved it will be designed to the Council's communications standards and will include maps and photos

## **Supplementary planning document**

- 7.9 The supplementary planning document (SPD) is included at the end of the character appraisal and gives guidance on how small scale development in suitable locations can preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area. It has undergone a sustainability appraisal which concludes that the document conforms to environmental, social and economic sustainability objectives. About 25 comments were received on the draft SPD. They ranged between extremes (from "excellent" to "a waste of public money") although the majority were generally supportive. As a result the format of the document and its layout have been amended to make it easier to use.

## **Article 4(2) direction**

- 7.10 Article 4(2) directions are made to bring small scale householder developments such as window replacement under planning control. The houses in Blackheath are generally very well maintained and this is partly due to many of them being listed, but also a high level of appreciation of the historic environment amongst owners. There are however, two streets which would benefit from an Article 4(2) direction and these are Blackheath Vale and Blackheath Hill. 42 respondents were in favour of the direction being made and 7 against.
- 7.11 One representation received commented that nos. 18-28 Blackheath Vale should not be affected by an Article 4(2) direction as these houses are relatively modern. However, it is considered that this is a simple terrace of plain buff brickwork and timber fretwork

porches which could easily be harmed by unsympathetic alterations. However, a number of these houses have upvc windows and as the windows are not of particular interest, it is considered that windows could be replaced without harm to the character of the street. It is therefore proposed that an Article 4(2) direction be made, but without reference to windows.

- 7.12 Therefore the Mayor and Cabinet are recommended to approve the making of two Article 4(2) directions as follows:

**Blackheath Vale Article 4(2) Direction**

1 to 27 (odd) and 2 to 16 (even) Blackheath Vale: full range of permitted development rights to be withdrawn.

18 to 28 Blackheath Vale: only permitted development rights relating to roofs, porches, painting / rendering, hard standings and front boundary treatments to be withdrawn.

**Blackheath Hill Article 4(2) Direction**

98 to 104; 110; and 114 to 132 Blackheath Hill: full range of permitted development rights to be withdrawn.

- 7.13 Works that currently constitute permitted development under the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, Classes A to H of Part 1 (Schedule 2) and Classes A to C of Part 2 (Schedule 2) will require planning permission from the Council where visible from the public realm following the making of the Article 4(2) direction. This means that planning permission will be required for replacement windows, replacement front doors, retiling roofs, roof lights, alterations to chimneys, demolition of garden walls, pebbledashing or painting elevations and other minor alterations. This enables the planning service to approve sensitive alterations and refuse alterations which would harm the historic character and appearance of the conservation area. Planning permission will not be required to change windows at 18-28 Blackheath Vale.

**8. Conclusion & Next Steps**

- 8.1 Conclusions to the various issues considered are contained within the body of the report. Following approval of these items, the documents will be published and made available to all in the conservation area. Letters will be sent specifically to those affected by the Article 4(2) directions.

**9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1 The cost of printing, publishing and mailing where necessary will be met from a combination of the planning budget and the central communications budget. The Planning budget is currently facing a 2006/7 budget overspend of £40k and any costs falling in 2006/7 will be contained within that existing level of overspend.

**10. Legal Implications**

- 10.1 S69(1) and (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 contains a continuing duty requiring the local planning authority from time to time to determine which parts of its area should be designated as conservation areas and from time to time to review the past exercise of the power and to determine whether any further parts should be designated.
- 10.2 SPDs can be used to expand on policies in the development plan document, or explain in greater detail how those policies will be applied. PPS12 explains that SPDs must be

consistent with national, GLA and the Council's own planning policies, and clearly cross-refer to (and be regularly reviewed alongside) the parts of the development plan which they relate to. As well as meeting the test of sustainability (outlined in paragraph 7.11), the Council must also comply with its Statement of Community Involvement in producing the SPDs.

## 11. Crime and Disorder Implications

- 11.1 There are no direct crime and disorder implications relating to any of the report items, although improving the appearance of areas helps to increase natural surveillance and assist self policing. It could also help foster pride and public spiritedness and better relationships in the area, thus helping to decrease anti-social behaviour.

## 12. Equalities Implications

- 12.1 There are no equalities implications from this report.

## 13. Environmental Implications

- 13.1 The principle implicit in conservation area management - of repairing and re-using buildings instead of redevelopment - minimises the damaging environmental effects of producing new building materials. These report items will have a positive effect on Blackheath's historic environment and not harm its ecological environment.

## 14. Background documents and originator

Short Title Document	Date	File Location	File Reference	Contact Officer	Exempt
Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004	2004	Laurence House	Planning Policy	Brian Regan	No
PPG15	1994	Laurence House	Urban Design and Conservation	Phil Ashford	No
The London Plan	2004	Laurence House	Urban Design and Conservation	Phil Ashford	No
Sustainability Appraisal	2005	Laurence House	Urban Design and Conservation	Phil Ashford	No
Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals	2006	Laurence House	Urban Design and Conservation	Justine Page	No
Guidance on Management of Conservation Areas	2006	Laurence House	Urban Design and Conservation	Justine Page	No

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