

<p><b>Woolwich &amp; Thamesmead Area Planning Committee</b></p> <p><b>28 September 2021</b></p>	<p><b>Agenda Item: 6</b></p> <p><b>Reference No: A/A</b></p>
<p><b>Title:</b>          Consultation on draft Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines supplementary planning document (SPD) for Woolwich Conservation Area</p>	<p><b>Wards:</b>          Woolwich Riverside          Woolwich Common</p>

**1. Proposal**

- 1.1 On 22/07/21 the Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration approved the draft Woolwich Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines supplementary planning document (the “Appraisal”) for public consultation and agreed to refer the draft document to the Woolwich & Thamesmead Area Planning Committee for comment.
- 1.2 Royal Greenwich’s Constitution states that agreeing proposals to preserve and enhance conservation areas is reserved to Cabinet, following consultation with the relevant Area Planning Committee. This report is therefore consulting the Woolwich & Thamesmead Area Committee on the draft document.
- 1.3 The draft Appraisal can be found at appendix 1.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The Woolwich Conservation Area was designated in 2019. Under section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (“LBCA 1990”), local authorities have a legal duty to publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas once they are designated. Historic England advises that these are in the form of character appraisals and management guidance. In planning terms these have the status of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).
- 2.2 The LBCA 1990 also requires proposed appraisals to be considered at a public meeting in the area to which they relate, and the local authority to take account of views expressed. The Constitution ensures this will happen by requiring consideration at the relevant area planning committee meeting, which is a public meeting, thereby fulfilling this requirement.

### 3. **Summary**

#### 3.1 What is the purpose of the document & how will it benefit the area?

- The draft Appraisal explains how the conservation area merits designation by defining Woolwich's historic and architectural significance and its townscape character
- It provides an analysis of the area's character (character zones, positive and negative contributors and characteristic building materials) and identifies key views (sections 2.0 & 3.0). This will inform assessment of the impact of development on character and significance and will assist the Royal Borough in determining planning applications within or in the setting of the conservation area
- The condition of the built environment and public realm is assessed, and negative features identified (section 5.0)
- The Guidelines identify untapped heritage potential for placemaking to address negative factors previously identified and give a clear steer to stakeholders in terms of priority interventions to preserve and enhance the area (section 6.4)
- Management guidelines set out appropriate parameters for redevelopment within and in the setting of the conservation area (section 6.1-6.2)
- Buildings identified as positive contributors are recommended for addition to the Local Heritage List (section 6.5)
- An interactive layered map within the document enables a rapid understanding of the sensitivity of buildings, views and spaces in the conservation area (section 1.0)
- The document provides an informative resource for decision-making in planning, for neighbourhood planning and for educational use.

#### 3.2 What is its status in the planning system?

As a supplementary planning document, the appraisal will be a material consideration in planning decisions. It will also form part of the Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER).

#### 3.3 What is special about the Woolwich Conservation Area?

- Woolwich evolved from a historic market town into a thriving civic and commercial centre and is characterised by fine historic buildings spanning the 18th to 20th centuries

- Woolwich was influential in the growth of the national co-operative movement and the conservation area boasts two of London's most significant monuments to cooperativism on Powis Street
- The conservation area is distinguished by high quality examples of the work of leading Victorian, Edwardian and inter-war architects
- The area has one of the most concentrated civic complexes in London
- The commercial zone comprises characterful Victorian architecture interspersed with exceptional landmark buildings and exponents of 20th century modernism, including the former Odeon and Granada cinemas and Equitable House

#### 3.4 What are the main issues in Woolwich Conservation Area?

- Lack of quality shop fronts
- Lack of repair and maintenance and inappropriate alterations, including bird nets
- Vacant commercial units/buildings
- Lack of destination/active frontage
- Lack of heritage interpretation and wayfinding signage
- Poor quality public realm
- Superfluous street clutter
- Car dominance/heavy bus traffic
- Lost relationship with river Thames

#### 3.5 What buildings are recommended for local heritage listing?

In January 2019 Members of the Woolwich & Thamesmead Area Planning Committee recommended that a review of the Royal Borough's Policy on Local Listing be undertaken to allow buildings subject to planning applications for demolition or substantial alteration to be added to the Local Heritage List (see Appendix 2).

3.6 The Committee also recommended that, once the procedure had been revised, several buildings identified as positive contributors in the Woolwich Heritage Study (2017), but precluded from local listing in 2019, should be added to the List.

3.7 The Local Heritage Listing procedure was revised and adopted in March 2021, in line with the Committee's recommendations, and the buildings identified as positive contributors in the Woolwich Heritage Study have now been assessed for local heritage listing as part of this Appraisal. The following are considered to meet the selection criteria and are proposed for inclusion on the Local Heritage List:

- 170-172 Powis Street
- Furlongs Motoring Complex: 160-162 Powis Street/Mortgramit Square/125 Woolwich High Street
- 1 Thomas Street
- 7-9 Woolwich New Road

#### 4. **Consultation**

- 4.1 Public consultation is a key step in ensuring local community engagement and involvement in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Royal Greenwich's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 4.2 Authorisation to undertake public consultation on the draft Character Appraisals was agreed by Cllr Scott-Macdonald, Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Good Growth on 22/07/21.
- 4.3 The consultation is taking place for 6 weeks between **19 August - 30 September 2020** and comprises the following:
- The draft documents were published on the Council's website on the consultations page and were advertised via its social media channels
  - Notifications were sent via email to ward members, statutory bodies, community groups and all other stakeholders registered on the Planning Policy Consultation Database

#### 5. **Next Steps: Communication and Implementation of the Decision**

- 5.1 The views of members of the planning committee, the consultation responses and any views expressed by persons attending the public committee meeting, with any resulting key changes to the draft documents, will be reported to Cabinet for agreement and adoption in December 2021/January 2022.

#### 6. **Report Appendices**

- 6.1 The following documents are to be published with and form part of this report:
- Appendix 1: draft *Woolwich Conservation Area* Character Appraisal
  - Appendix 2: Record of Woolwich & Thamesmead Area Planning Committee Decision 29 January 2019

## 7. **Background Papers**

[Request to commence public consultation on draft Character Appraisal supplementary planning document \(SPD\) for Woolwich Conservation Area \(22/07/21\)](#)

[Woolwich Town Centre Heritage Study \(2017\)](#)

[Royal Greenwich Local Heritage Listing Procedure Note \(2021\)](#)

[Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies \(2014\)](#)

[Royal Greenwich Statement of Community Involvement \(2020\)](#)

[National Planning Policy Framework \(2019\)](#)

[Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation, and Management \(2019\)](#)

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