



The Paragon

Land use

- Residential.

Building quality

- Four storey, paired villas, which are linked with colonnades.

Building materials

- London stock brick, stone, coade stone, stucco colonnade, timber joinery and cast iron railings.

Listed buildings

- Forms a group of listed buildings with Paragon House (No 1 South Row).

Local distinctiveness

- Highly distinctive architectural form - the work of a local architect Michael Searles.



Heritage assets

- One of London's finest Georgian set pieces: outstanding townscape and architectural quality.
- Well positioned on the Heath.
- Successfully restored after wartime damage (1948-50).

The Paragon
South side



1



2



2-3



3-4



4-5



5-9



6-7



8-7



8-9



9-10



10-11



11-12



12-13



14-15



Kidbrooke Gardens

Land use

- Residential.

Building quality

- Two storeys with attics, mainly detached buildings.
- No 22a is a three storey house in the Queen Anne style (1905).

Building materials

- Red plain tile roofs, render, rough cast and timber joinery.
- No 22a is in red brick with stone dressings and has projecting gables.

Listed buildings

- Morden College is the principal landmark (Grade I) in the vicinity.

Heritage assets

- Mainly neutral contribution to the conservation area but No 22a is an appealing Edwardian house.
- Nos 31-33, 38-40 are of quality.

Local distinctiveness

- No local characteristics recorded, but there are strong local historical associations with Morden College.



Kidbrooke Gardens
North side



17 St Germans Place



Side of 17 St Germans Place



3



5



7



9



11



13





LET BY
Winkworth
020 8822 0099



13-19



19



21



23



25-27



29



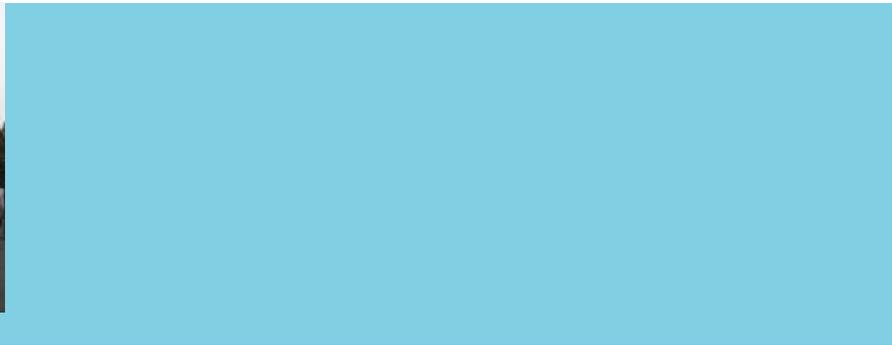
31



33



33



Kidbrooke Gardens
South side



42



Rear of 42



40



40-38



38-36



36-34



34-32



30-28



26



22a



Morden College



Morden College



Morden College



Morden College



Regents Place



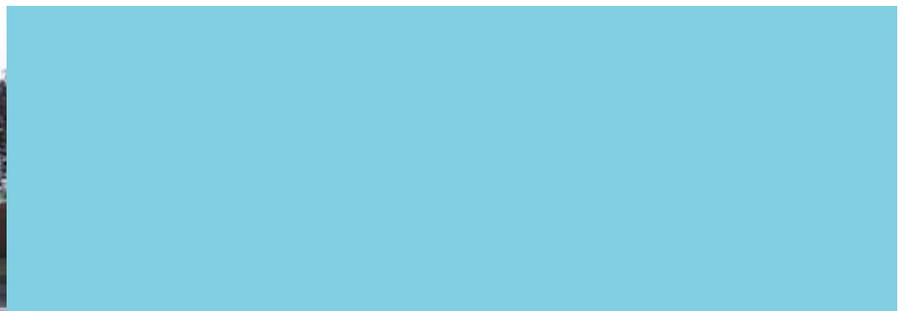
Regents Place



Regents Place



Regents Place





Westbrook Road

Land use

- Residential.

Building quality

- Three storey neo-Georgian flats built to the rear of No 26 Kidbrooke Grove.
- Semi-detached houses c.1932.

Building materials

- Westbrook Court: Yellow stock brick, dark tile roofs, timber joinery and short chimney stacks.

Listed buildings

- None.

Heritage assets

- Neutral contribution to the conservation area.

Local distinctiveness

- No local characteristics recorded.

Westbrook Road
North side



Side of Kidbrooke Grove



Westbrook Court



Westbrook Court



Side of 30 Kidbrooke Park Road

Westbrook Road
South side



Side of 32 Kidbrooke Park Road



12-10



8-6



4-2



2a-2b



2a-2b



2c



3



Fulthorp Road, Field Road, Merryfield

Land use

- Residential.

Building quality

- Three and four storey neo-Georgian flats built by the London County Council for Greenwich Council in the 1950s.
- Shallow pitched roofs with overhanging eaves and plain detailing.

Building materials

- Purplish brick with rendered string courses, tiled roofs and lightweight entrances.

Heritage assets

- Stylistically very conservative but the buildings are well executed. Neutral contribution to the conservation area.

Local distinctiveness

- Style chosen in response to local public opinion, but no local architectural distinctiveness was recorded



Fulthorp Road
South side



1-3



1-3



5-9



5-9



5-9



21-43



21-43



45-59

Field Road
East side



45-59



71-85



53-59 rear



71-85



83-85



71-82



63-65



69



Garages



40-39



63-34



32-30



28-26



24-22



24-22

Fulthorp Road
South side



8-20



6



4



2



20-18



16-14



12-10



9-11 13-15



15-17



17-19



1



11



3



5



19



19-21

Pond Close
East side



23



23



1-3



5-11

Pond Close
East side



13-15



16-10



8-2



2

Pond Close
East side



Entrance to estate



18



20



22



Land uses and activity

Blackheath is primarily a residential area with dwellings ranging from modern, purpose-built flats to substantial mansions, although many of the latter have been subdivided. Shooters Hill Road is heavily trafficked and so to a lesser extent are Stratheden Road and Westcombe Park Road, but the remainder of the area is a quiet suburb.

There are some institutional uses in the area, of which the buildings of John Roan School are most evident, as well as the churches described elsewhere in this report. Just inside the conservation area is a small cluster of shops, Stratheden Parade.



Blackheath: Local details

Local distinctiveness

The Paragon is a highly distinctive architectural composition, and is well known in London and beyond. With its neighbours at St Germans and Shooters Hill Road, it provides a memorable and well defined edge to the southeast side of the Heath.

Local details and associations

This part of Blackheath is most strongly associated with the landowners and lessees who built it, especially Morden, Angerstein and Searles. Neil Rhind's Blackheath Village and Environs Vol 2 includes a comprehensive survey of individual properties and their ownership history.

Building materials

There is no local building stone in the area and the stone there has generally been used for prestige buildings such as churches, which have employed Kentish ragstone, sandstone or Bath stone imported for architectural dressings, wall cappings and classical ornament.

The brick most commonly used is the yellow London stock brick, popular from the eighteenth century until the end of the nineteenth, then revived in the 1960s after a relatively brief dalliance with modern materials such as precast concrete and painted blockwork. Red brick of varying quality is also to be found throughout the conservation area and from almost every period, from Morden College in 1695 to the mid-twentieth century.

In the early nineteenth century stucco was fashionable, applied to brick in imitation of stone and with classical pediments, doorcases and pilasters. Good examples are to be seen on St Germans Place and Shooters Hill Road.

The prevailing roofing material is Welsh slate, imported into London in quantity after 1750, although there have also been widespread replacements in concrete tiles and artificial slate.

Listed buildings

The area includes a range of listed buildings, such as:

St James Church Kidbrooke Park Road, designed by architects Newman and Billing 1866-67 in the Decorated Gothic style. The church was extensively rebuilt after Second World War bomb damage. The church features a distinctive narrow spire of the Hertfordshire spike model and large copper roof.

Morden College founded in 1695 by Sir John Morden as almshouses for decayed Turkey merchants, emulating Bromley College.

Paragon House 1794, built by Michael Searles, which is three storeys with an arcaded ground floor. The doorway in Pond Road was installed in the postwar repairs, and comes from the Adelphi (Adam). Restoration was by Charles Bernard Brown.

The Paragon, restored post war between 1948-50 and converted to flats by Charles Brown. Built 1794-1807, a few years after Searles' smaller Paragon on Old Kent Road. Coade stone colonnades. The lodges are largely post-war constructions in an authentic style.

St John Church, St Johns Park built in 1852-53 by Arthur Ashpitel. Perp, Kentish rag with a good spire. Situated on a prominent island site within a formally planned residential development.

I-37 Shooters Hill Road including Nos 7-33 Blackheath Terrace (1839-40). Shared pediments are characteristic of many houses in the Blackheath area.

St Germans Place, early nineteenth century houses and pairs restored after war damage, which are of strong group value.

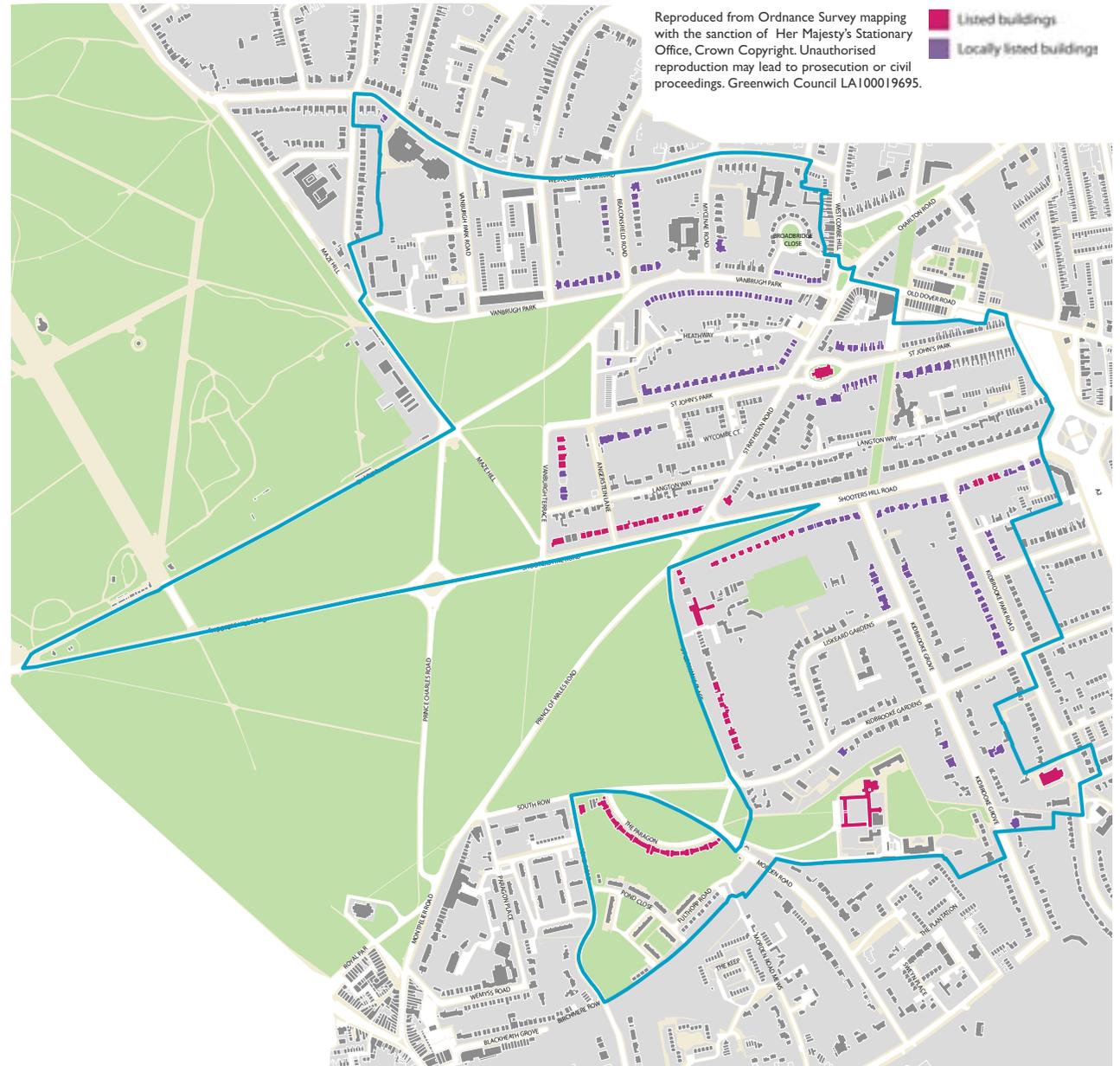


Figure 4.5 Listed and locally listed buildings

Key unlisted buildings

Key unlisted buildings include the Victorian villas and houses lining the principal streets, including:

- St John's Park;
- Vanbrugh Park;
- Shooters Hill Road;
- Kidbrooke Grove; and
- Kidbrooke Park Road.

Most of these houses are well preserved externally and have group value with their neighbours, forming important sequences of buildings.

From the twentieth century, the developments by the Morden College Estate are conservative architecturally but are well crafted and of interest. They include the annexes to the College (Banister Fletcher and others) and the Vanbrugh Park estate.



Top left: St John's Park
Top right: Kidbrooke Park Road
Bottom left: Vanbrugh Park
Bottom right: The Lodge, Morden College

Natural features

The open spaces within Blackheath Conservation Area are characterised by the wide, open spaces of the Heath and the dense garden vegetation amongst the streets and avenues. This gives the impression that the conservation area is leafy and green despite there being little formal open space other than inner estate amenity areas and a few private parks and courtyards.

The Heath areas are classified Metropolitan Open Land of Nature Conservation Importance, largely due to the areas of relict acid grassland. They offer open expanses of green space that are severed by the roads that cross it. This carving up of the Heath has allowed segments to develop their own character. The furze in Vanbrugh Pits and Field are particularly distinctive with its changing levels, informal pathways and naturalised vegetation. A good proportion (over half) of the Vanbrugh Pits area contain some of the best areas of relict acid grassland on the Heath and therefore is of noteworthy ecological value. Some lower quality but nevertheless ecologically valuable areas exist within the triangle to the north of the Paragon (adjacent to South Row).

Circus Field (or Crown Pits) is the wedge of Blackheath immediately south of the Greenwich Park boundary, and is largely featureless with flat expanses of mown grass. Activities on this section of the Heath, such as the donkey rides from Blackheath Avenue or the circus, enlivens the area. The traffic has a high impact on these open areas both visually and aurally. Folly Pond and several significant trees add visual interest to the Heath.

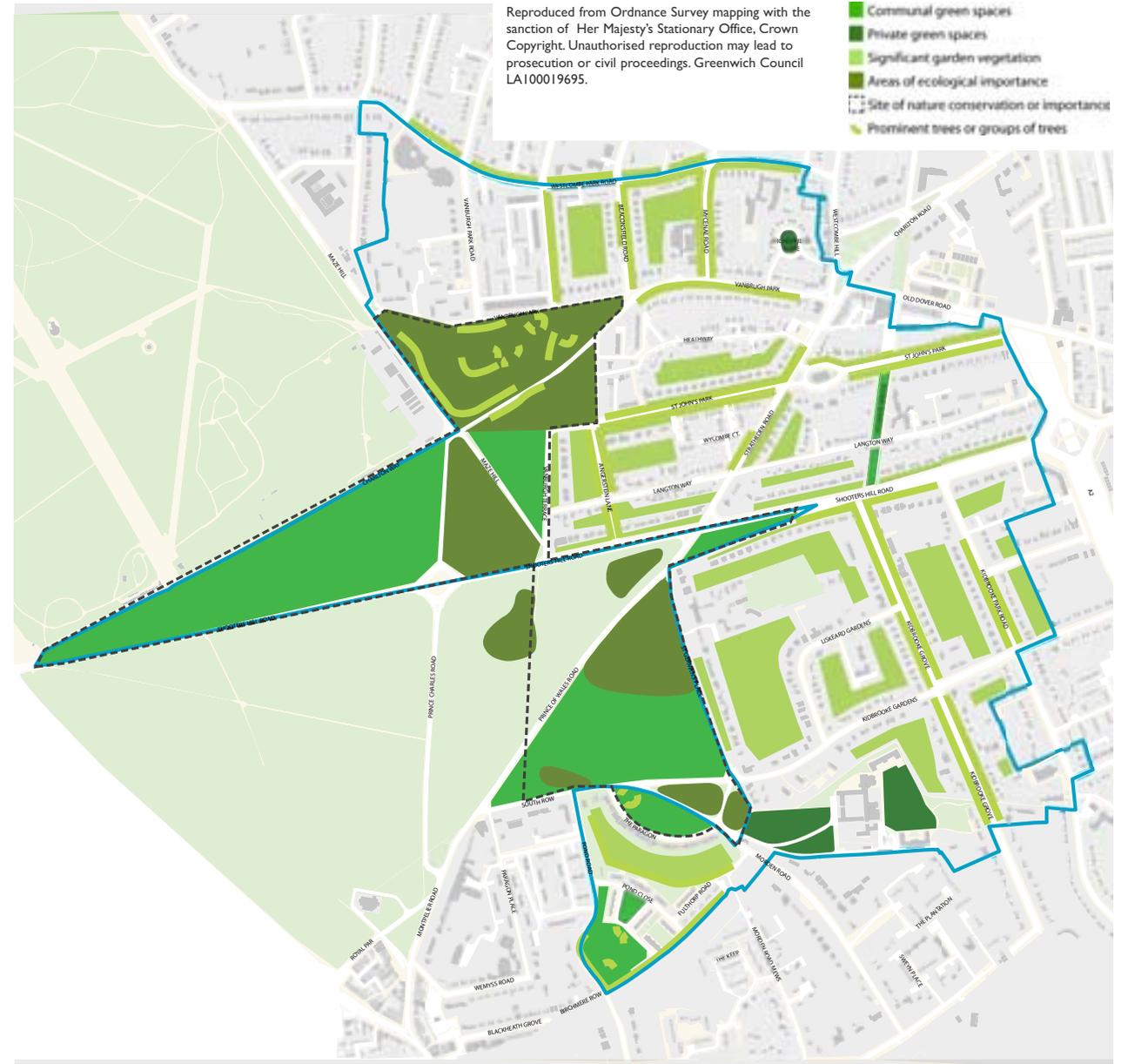


Figure 4.6 Trees and open spaces

Within the conservation area, there are many mature trees which are both ornamental and native. Of particular note are the mature cedars and pines that are scattered amongst the gardens around Westcombe Park Road, Vanbrugh Park and Kidbrooke Grove. The conservation area contains a small number of open spaces that contribute significantly to its character, which are at Morden College, the Paragon and the pedestrian lanes in the northern part of the area. These are described in more detail below.

The grand eighteenth century gardens of Morden College features a sweeping lawn that leads the eye towards the building and a varied collection of trees. The rose beds communicate the age of the gardens and are well maintained.

The leaf shaped lawn (which is of designated Nature Conservation Importance) of the Paragon serves as a buffer separating the buildings from the South Row. The mown lawn and mature oak and horse chestnut trees create a parkland feel to the space, despite its small size. The high hedgerow reinforces this buffer effect and separates the development spatially from the Heath while effectively communicating a sense of a semi-private ownership.

There are two significant pedestrian greenways that contribute to the character of the conservation area. These are Vicarage Avenue and Angerstein Lane. Vicarage Avenue is the more formal space of the two and follows the line of the Blackheath to Charlton railway tunnel. It is a wide space (approximately 16 metres) and contains a series of central lawns with young and informal shrub and tree planting, including whitebeam, rowan and ash. There are perimeter pathways and seats facing towards the centre. It is well used and an important through route for pedestrians. However, the space is poorly maintained and has considerable potential for improvement. Angerstein Lane has a smaller scale than Vicarage Lane and is developed from a back lane. The



Top: The Paragon
Bottom left: Liskeard Garden

adjacent garden vegetation overhangs the through route which, together with spontaneous vegetation along its edges, creates an informal and rural character. It is a popular route for dog walkers but is dark in places and is likely to be mainly used in daytime hours.



Top: Vanbrugh Pits
Bottom: Pond Road Estate

Loss, intrusion or damage

The greatest intrusion into the character of Blackheath Conservation Area occurs along the most heavily trafficked roads. Shooters Hill Road has the greatest impact and severs the conservation area into two parts. Its width reaches 30 metres in parts which, together with poor crossings and fast traffic, is a substantial interruption in the continuous flow of the character of this conservation area experienced elsewhere. Further investigations will be required to investigate how problems on Shooters Hill Road could be resolved.

A similar impact of traffic is felt on Kidbrooke Park Road that runs near the eastern boundary of the conservation area. The boundary of the conservation area itself zig zags along the road suggesting that the quality of the omitted area could be raised.

As mentioned above, the junction between Stratheden Road and Charlton Road to the north of the conservation area is currently one that is cluttered and acts as a poor gateway to the local shops. Small improvements could lift the quality of this junction considerably. Improvements should focus on safe pedestrian crossings with a sensitive and coherent approach to street furniture and materials.

Vanbrugh Fields and Pits together make up a valuable portion of the Heath that reflects its historic character. The provision of concrete paved pathways across this area is not in keeping with its character as recommended in Wilkie (2003), *Blackheath: The Next 50 Years*. The concrete slabs should be replaced with bound gravel or similar. Additional recommendations included the substitution of sycamores and cedars with birch and pine, the

thickening of the furze along the northern edge of the dips, the simplification of the Vanbrugh Park and Beaconsfield Road junction, and the possible narrowing of the one-way section near Maze Hill.

Neutral areas

As described previously, the Pond Road Estate includes wide open greens between its housing blocks with a woodland backdrop that follows the boundaries of the Paragon and the railway to the south-east. The open space currently provides a tranquil setting for residents and does not detract from the character of the conservation area. However, there are few visual features or facilities of an amenity nature, the inclusion of which could substantially increase the value of the open space for residents. Suggestions include the provision of garden spaces, more tree planting, informal (and sensitively realised) play opportunities and the provision of more places to sit.

Problems, pressures and capacity for change

Changes to the conservation area must be in line with key planning and nature conservation areas as discussed above. Policies regarding changes to the buffer zones of the World Heritage Site and the extent of change feasible in Areas of Significant Nature Conservation are of particular note.

5. Appendix: useful information and contact details

Urban Practitioners wishes to acknowledge all those who, in print or in person, have contributed to the historical and architectural content of these reports. They include staff of Greenwich Council, English Heritage and the London Metropolitan Archives. Particular thanks are due to the Greenwich Heritage Centre and to Neil Rhind, historian of Blackheath, who has generously shared more than forty years' research for these volumes.

Publications

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John Bold **Greenwich - An architectural history of the Royal Hospital for Seamen and the Queen's House** (London: Yale University Press 2000)

Julian C Bowsher **Recent Archaeological Work in Greenwich** (Greenwich Historical Society Vol 2 No 2, 1999)

Julian C Bowsher **Archaeological Work in Greenwich 1997-2001** (Greenwich Historical Society Vol 2 No 5, 2002)

Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner **Buildings of England** London 2: South (Penguin, 1983)

Neil Rhind **Blackheath Centenary 1971-1971 A Short History of Blackheath from Earliest Times** (Greater London Council, 1971)

Neil Rhind **The Heath: a Companion Volume to Blackheath Village & Environs** (Bookshop Blackheath Ltd, 2002)

Neil Rhind **Blackheath Village & Environs: Volume I The Village and Blackheath Vale** (Bookshop Blackheath Ltd, 1976)

Neil Rhind **Blackheath Village & Environs: Volume 2 Wricklemarsh and the Cator Estate, Kidbrooke and St Johns Park** (Bookshop Blackheath Ltd, 1987)

Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site Management Plan (revised 2004)

Available online at:
www.greenwichwhs.org.uk

Archives and libraries

Greater London Sites and Monuments Record, English Heritage, 1 Waterhouse Square, 138-142 Holborn, London, EC1N 2ST

Greenwich Heritage Centre, Artillery Square, Royal Arsenal, Woolwich SE18 4DX

Lewisham Local History and Archives Centre, Lewisham Library, 199-201 Lewisham High Street, London SE13 6LG

London Metropolitan Archives, 40 Northampton Road, Clerkenwell, London EC1R 0HB