

Deptford Creekside Conservation Area Appraisal

May 2012



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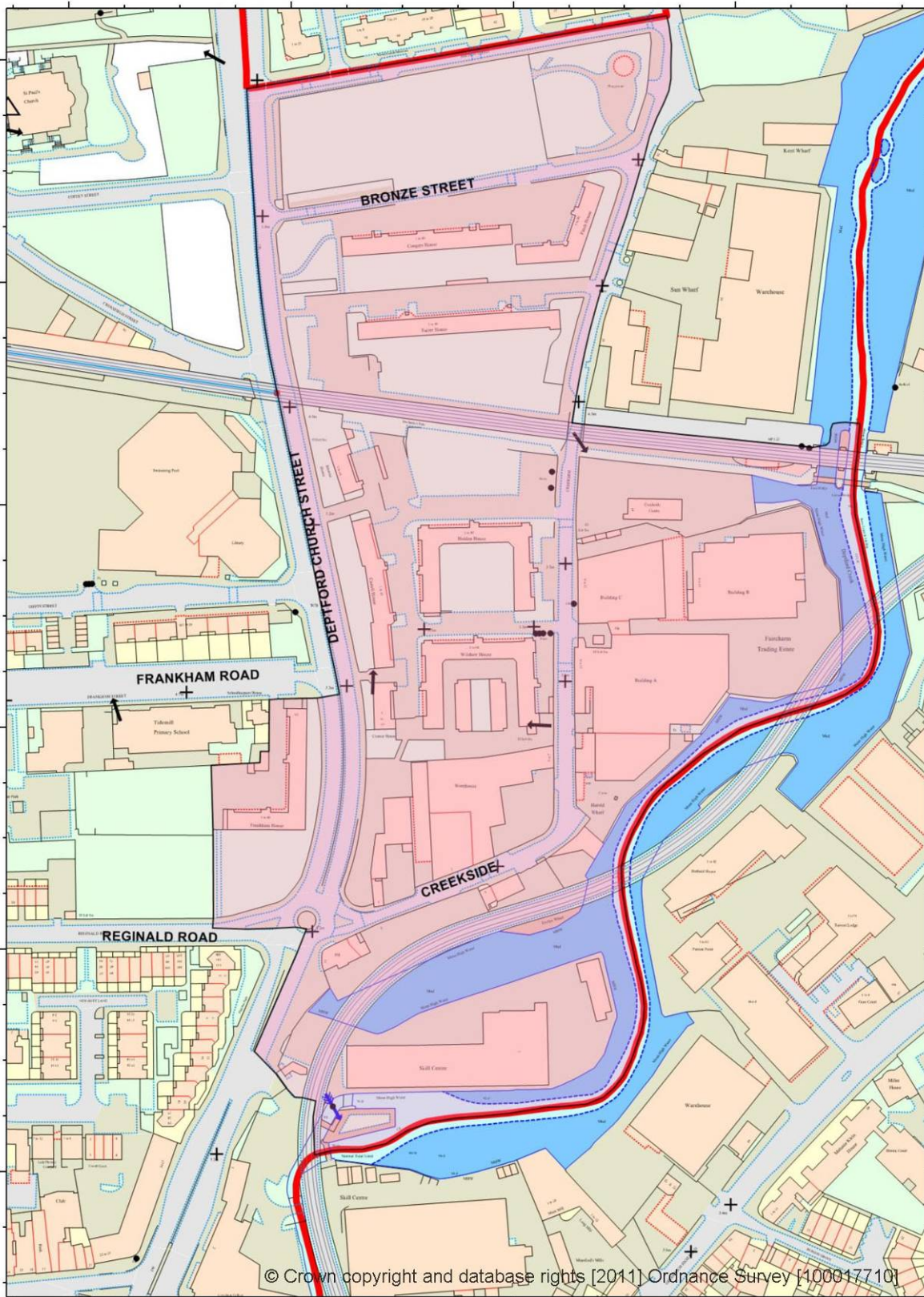
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Deptford Creekside Conservation Area



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Summary of special interest

Deptford is one of the oldest settlements in Lewisham. The town is well known as the location of the historic Royal Dockyard, whose establishment brought fame and prosperity to Deptford for many centuries. Known to a lesser extent is the significance of the Creek to the development of the area. Here, on the banks of the Creek, as well as on the Thames foreshore, lie the beginnings of settlement, industry and urban growth of the borough.

Deptford Bridge has been a historic crossing point and place of continued occupation since Roman times. It was part of Watling Street, the Roman route that linked London with Canterbury and on to Dover. A tide mill was established in the area by the time of the Norman Conquest. The street Creekside has its origins in the 16th century, as a small lane leading to the King's Slaughterhouse on the site of Harold's Wharf (today the APT Studios).

Creekside's medieval origins are still evident in the lay-out at its southern end, although the area's character and appearance today is mainly the result of its industrialisation in the 19th and 20th century and 1930s re-development with the Crossfield Estate, and the interesting juxtaposition of two entirely different character areas this creates. The area's layout, wharves, yards and buildings - combined with the spatial qualities of the Creek - create a clear and distinctive townscape, to which river-related structures and the palette of traditional materials add a high level of local identity.

The special interest of the of the Deptford Creekside Conservation Area lies primarily in its historic interest based on its evidential, historical and communal value:

The industrial part is now a rare survival of a fast disappearing heritage that illustrates the importance of the River Thames and the Creek to the economic, cultural and social self-sufficiency of Deptford. The industrial premises and wharves at the southern end of the Creek constitute today the only surviving river-related industrial quarter of integrity and coherence within the borough. The area's lay-out and fabric give evidence and illustrate the evolution, settlement pattern, town planning characteristics and land-uses in Deptford from medieval times to the 20th century. The surviving workshops, offices and warehouses illustrate the last phase of a pre-dominantly river-related industry before its decline in the 20th century.

The area contains three sites that have high archaeological potential to yield evidence of medieval occupation and early industries on the Deptford Creekside, notably the Gibbes / Skill Centre Island, where remains of the medieval tide mill and its successors may still be in situ below ground. The same applies to Harold Wharf, the site of the Tudor slaughterhouse, and the Sue Godfrey Park, the site of the early 18th century Copperas Works. Harold Wharf is of particular significance for its association with Henry VIII and as evidence of the influence Greenwich Palace once exerted on Deptford.

The Crossfield Estate has significance as part of the development history of the area and illustrates the LCC's engagement in the borough. It is a good example of its time that shows the underlying design principles of the LCC social housing types while containing locally distinctive features, such as the lay-out. Crossfield has a special social history for its role in the Deptford Music Scene of the 1970s and 80s. As a social housing estate it has a particular social character - working class – and has high social value for residents, musicians, artists and the Deptford gay community.

1 Introduction

Deptford is one of the most historic places within the Borough of Lewisham. At its Thames riverbanks and the Creek lie the beginnings of industry and urban growth of the borough.

Although a little run down today, Deptford Creekside still benefits from the proximity to the river, the survival of associated industrial yards and wharfs and a reasonable number of traditionally-built industrial buildings and warehouses. As one of the last central and largely undeveloped corridors in the Thames Gateway, there has been great pressure for re-development. Recent residential developments have already had a significant impact on the character of the area but have come at the price of seeing much of the industrial heritage around the Upper Creek obliterated.

The historic environment enhances our cultural, social and economic life and has an important role to play in the process of managed change set out in the Council's Core Strategy. As the area will continue to change and evolve there is also a need to ensure that its heritage value is recognised. Conservation Area designation can assist the careful management of change to ensure that the distinctive historic character is preserved and enhanced and used as a cue to be positively recognised in new development.

The Deptford Creekside Conservation Area was designated on 9 May 2012. This character appraisal has been written in support of the proposed designation of the Deptford Creekside Conservation Area. The designation aims to afford protection to a distinctive neighbourhood in recognition of its industrial and working class origins and spatial identity which is unique in the Borough of Lewisham. The following pages set out the special architectural and historic interest of the area and explain why it is considered worthy of designation.

Unless otherwise indicated, 'Creekside' refers within this document to Creekside the street only, i.e. not to the full extent of the historic Deptford side of the Creek. The potential for conservation area designation of parts of Creekside were first investigated in 2008 within the scope of the intended Deptford High Street Conservation Area review. Shortly after in 2009, the London Development Agency published the *Heritage Scoping Study of Deptford Creek* highlighting the heritage assets and areas of interest surrounding the Creek.¹ It provided the incentive to investigate the area further and the findings of the report are included in this appraisal.

The fieldwork, research and analysis to this document have been undertaken in stages since 2009. Whilst every attempt has been made to consider all aspects of the character of the proposed conservation area, there may be elements that have been omitted due to lack of space or inaccessibility (private land or restricted access). Any such omission does not imply that such an

¹ London Development Agency – Design for London: Heritage Scoping Study of Deptford Creek (written by Edmund Bird, London 2009)

element does not contribute to the character of the conservation area.

1.1 Location, boundaries and setting

The development and character of the Deptford Creekside Conservation Area is defined by its location at the Creek south of the River Thames. The Creek is the 1.2 kilometre long tidal stretch of the River Ravensbourne where it meets the Thames. It defines the borough boundaries and is equally shared by Deptford and Greenwich.

The conservation area lies to the north of Deptford Bridge, which is the historic crossing point of the Creek on the route of Watling Street, the Roman Road linking London to Dover, which is today the A2. It focuses on the remaining industrial estates along the Creek and the Crossfield housing estate.

The proposed conservation area boundary takes the line of the borough boundary running through the centre of the Creek and includes all the historically industrial wharves east of Creekside from the Gibbes / Skill Centre Island (part of Lewisham College Deptford Campus) in the south to the historic London-Greenwich railway viaduct in the north. The boundary includes the viaduct and follows its line to the west up to Creekside where it extends north up to borough boundary to include the Sue Godfrey Nature Reserve and Ferranti Park. The western boundary is for the most part defined by Church Street including all the buildings of the Crossfield Estate and the industrial premises in Creekside down to the entrance of the Gibbes / Skill Centre Island. At the junction with Frankham Street the boundary extends to the east of Church Street to include Frankham House of the Crossfield Estate and the associated green amenity space to the south.

The area has been the focus of settlement since the Middle Ages. The architectural legacy of mainly the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries is recognised in the Deptford High Street and St. Paul's Conservation Area on the Deptford side, both west of Church Street, and the Ashburnham Triangle Conservation Area on the Greenwich side.

The Creek's wharves and river walls on the eastern (Greenwich) side are as much part of the character as those within the conservation area. Two important listed industrial buildings are located here and form the immediate setting of the conservation area: the Mumfords Mill grain silo (1897) and the Deptford Pumping Station (1865). The recent redevelopment of the Merryweather fire engine factory and Skillions site by Galliard Homes has introduced medium to high rise residential blocks into the area, which architecturally do not relate to the distinctive character of the area, turning their back on the Creek and fencing themselves off with industrial palisade security fencing.

To the south, at the busy junction of Church Street and Deptford Broadway (A2) lies Lewisham College. The northern part of campus, the Gibbes / Skill Centre Island, has been included in the conservation area for its archaeological and historical significance to the area. The modern Sun Wharf to the north of the railway viaduct and Kent Wharf, which has recently been cleared, are not included in the conservation area. The heritage value of their wharves, however, and the contribution these make to the riverscape of the Creek is recognised and these will be addressed

in the forthcoming Supplementary Planning Guidance for the area.

1.2 Heritage Significance

English Heritage promotes a values-based approach to significance as set out in Conservation Principles. This identifies four broad groups of values through which a site or place can be interpreted: evidential, historical, communal and aesthetic. The definition of these values are set out in Appendix A to this document.

The proposed conservation area focuses on industrial Creekside south of the railways and the Crossfield Estate, each of which constitute assets of heritage significance to the borough in their own right. The Creek itself has long been recognised as a natural heritage asset to the borough.

The historic industrial premises at the Creek's southern end between the Gibbes / Skill Centre Island and the railway viaduct remain today's only surviving river-related industrial quarter of integrity and coherence within Deptford and along the Creek itself. The principal heritage significance of the area lies in its evidential and historic value. The Creek was the reason for the area's early settlement and continued to be the focus for development until well into the 20th century. River-related industrial uses within the proposed conservation area date back as far medieval times with the establishment of a tide mill north of Deptford Bridge. In the 16th century, the foundation of the King's slaughterhouse on the site of Harold Wharf established associations with the Royal Palace in Greenwich. The narrow lane that lead to the slaughterhouse was the beginnings of today's street Creekside (then called Slaughterhouse Lane). Its medieval origins are still evident in the narrowness of the street and the tight urban grain of the wharves at its southern end.

Creekside retains the industrial character that developed in the 19th Century. The mixed industry along a Thames tributary plays an important role in the development and reflects the evolution of historic Deptford and formed the basis for its economic, cultural and social self-sufficiency. The surviving workshops, office buildings and warehouses within the proposed conservation area, dating mainly from the mid 19th to the mid 20th century, illustrate the last phase of a pre-dominantly river-related industry before its decline in the late 20th century. Although many of the warehouses are utilitarian and individually of modest aesthetic value, collectively and combined with the area's layout, yards and wharves they have considerable evidential and historic value. The sum of these elements provide evidence of the historic development pattern and land-use along Creekside and combine with the spatial qualities of the Creek to create a clear and locally distinct townscape and character. To this character, the predominant use of brick as building material, Crittall-type windows, river-related structures and other details add a high level of local identity.

The physical integrity of Creekside within the proposed conservation area has been the base for small-scale industrial and creative businesses and encouraged the growing of a vibrant community and network of artists. The creative energy this has brought to Creekside is mutually appreciated from all parts of the community and visitors to the area alike. Buildings and structures are often used as 'canvasses' for artworks, as evident in many murals and graffiti works in the area, and these have now have become an established part of Creekside's appearance.

The history of social housing provision in the borough by the LCC and the local council starts in Deptford. The **Crossfield Estate** illustrates a new stage of the LCC's programme when, in response to Government incentives, the focus shifted from creating cottage garden estates outside the established borough boundaries to the clearance of the historic urban grain of inner-city areas, and their replacement with planned, single-phased housing blocks. As a public housing estate it reflects a particular social character – working class – built in a period in which local and regional Councils had accepted the responsibility of state intervention as a necessary pre-condition to create a more civilised and humane industrialised city.

The estate is in many respects a typical example of its time illustrating the underlying design principles dictated by social and economical considerations and built in the 'domestic' style that was favoured by the LCC as the appropriate one for social housing. Its lay-out is distinct due to the partial inclusion of pre-existing 19th century street pattern, which has given the southern part a sense of intimacy and surveillance not usually found in housing estates of that time. Castell House and Farrer House are notable for added individual feature, such as the rounded balconies attaching to the stair towers (Castell House) and rounded balconies to Farrer House, now individual for each flat, which add sculptural elements to its south elevation.

Added to its evidential, historical and, to a lesser extent, aesthetical value, the estate has considerable significance for its communal value. When Lewisham Council changed its housing policy for the estate in the late 1970s – giving priority to young single professionals – it gave impetus to the development of a radical arts and music scene that gained Deptford an almost legendary status in the 1970s and 80s. The estate became the base for a number of musicians including members of Dire Straits and Squeeze, who performed regularly in local venues, satisfying an increasing demand for live Pub Rock (and Punk) music that developed in reaction to mainstream British Rock music. The estate and surrounding area laid the beginnings for a number of British bands that brought it to international stardom and as such also has historical and communal significance at a national level.

1.3 Planning Policies

Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Council has a duty to identify areas of special historic and architectural interest and to formulate and publish proposals for the management of such areas. In determining applications for development in conservation areas, the Council has also the duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of the areas.

National planning guidance is set out in the recently-published National Planning Policy Framework (2012). It classifies conservation areas as 'designated heritage assets' and introduces a national presumption in favour of sustainable development. One of the key dimensions of sustainability is protecting and enhancing the historic environment.

The requirement to protect and enhance the historic environment is reflected in Lewisham's Core Strategy Policy 16: Conservation areas, heritage assets and the historic environment. The Core Strategy, together with the London Plan and the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan

(UDP), is the borough's statutory development plan. It states the Council's commitment to monitor, review, enhance and conserve the value and significance of its heritage assets and their setting.

Character appraisals are a material consideration in the planning process and are used when determining planning applications and appeals. However, the designation itself and the Appraisal do not constitute the end of the process. In response to the development pressure the area faces, the Council will adopt a positive and collaborative approach to conservation, one that focuses on actively managing change in the area in a way that increases confidence in using the historic place to support its regeneration.

In parallel with the designation of the area, the Council is in the process of drafting Creekside Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD) that will help to guide the form of new development on the Deptford Creekside. It will include the findings and recommendations of this appraisal to develop policies for the conservation of the area and its immediate and wider setting. The draft SPD is expected to go to public consultation in 2012 and residents' groups, amenity groups, businesses, and stakeholders will be invited to provide input on the issues facing the area and how these might be best addressed.

1.4 Public Consultation

The framework for this study follows English Heritage guidance *'Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2011)*. The Appraisal was made available for public consultation from 6 December 2011 to 27 January 2012.

Residents, businesses and stakeholders were sent details of the proposed conservation area and Character Appraisal and were invited to attend a drop-in session to discuss the proposals with officers.

The findings and issues raised during public consultation, and the Council's formal response to it, are published in the Deptford Creekside Conservation Area Consultation Report on the Council's website.

2 The conservation area today

2.1 Population

Lewisham has a number of severely deprived areas. As part of New Cross Ward, Deptford Creekside falls within one of the five most deprived wards in Lewisham and within the 15% of most deprived LSOA's in the country. At the Lower Super Output Area Level (LSOA) residents in the area have reported lower than average levels of income, health, housing services and living environment, all between the 10 to 15% lowest in the country.

Deptford Creekside residents have reported higher levels of educations, skills and training (top 30% in the country) than other parts of the borough. Institutions such as Lewisham College, Trinity Laban College and the Creekside Centre are not only key for the Deptford but for Lewisham as a whole and some of these facilities will need to be enhanced in the future. Although residents enjoy high levels of education, training and skills and the level of employment in the area have improved (ranked within 25% most deprived areas in 2010 rather than the 17% most deprived area in the country in 2004 and 2007), residents in the area have reported low levels of income (within the 15% lowest in the country).

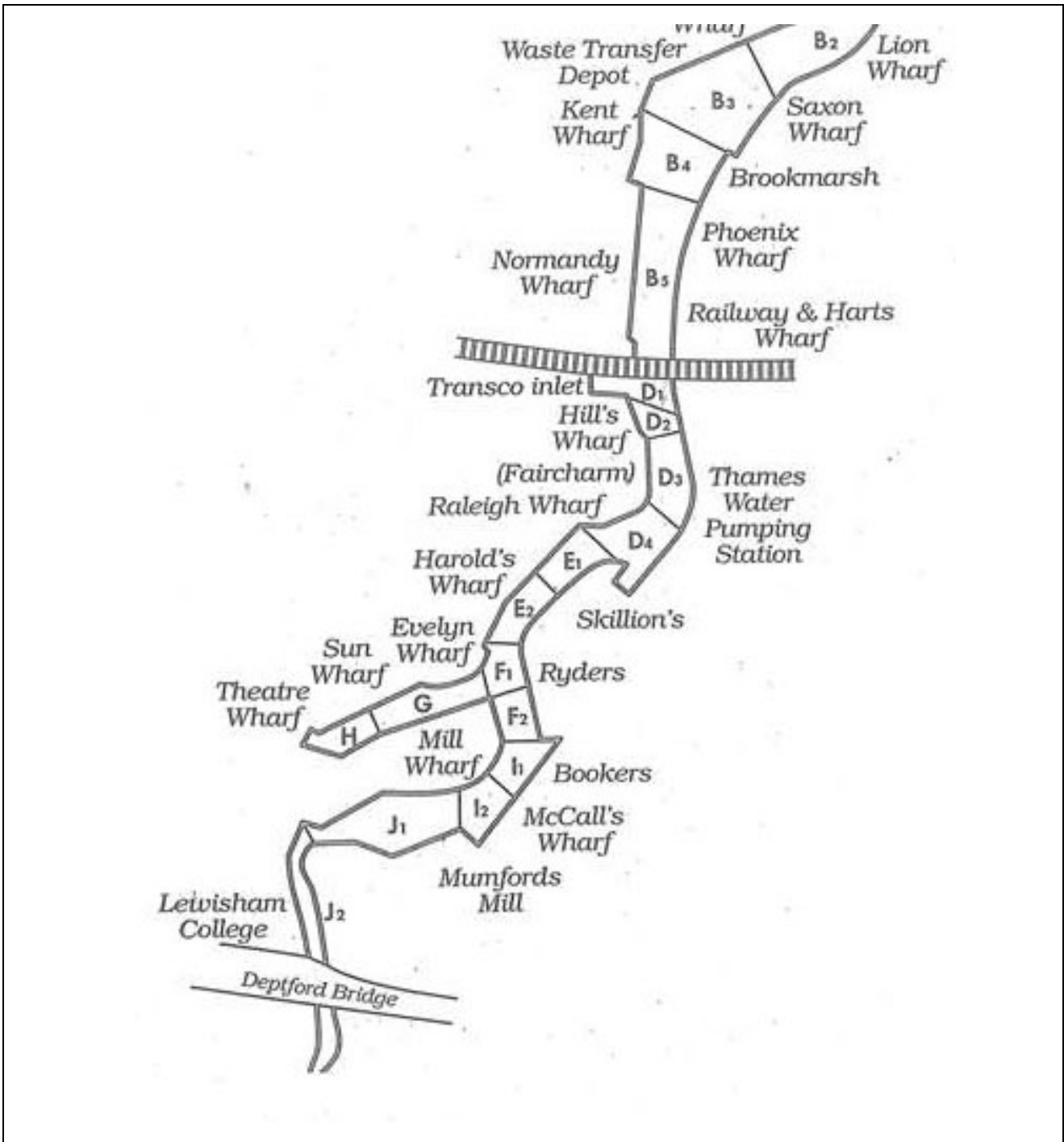
2.2 Economy and Uses

The historically predominant use of the area has been industrial inter-mixed with housing for the workers. Following the decline of the river-related industries in the 20th century and subsequent demolition of the power stations, warehouses and mills, the focus has shifted to light industry. The strongest link to the Creek's historic industrial use is today provided by Brewery Wharf on the Greenwich site south of Creek Road, used by Prior Aggregates whose barges bring sand and gravel from Colchester for the construction industry. Within the conservation area, a variety of small-scale businesses operate from the former wharfs, including garages, scaffolding businesses, and printing, which no longer require the river as a means of transport. Theatre Wharf, which incorporates what was historically Sun Wharf, has become the location of a cluster of houseboats. A number of the residents run their business from the wharf and as such it is not just a place for mooring, but forms part of boat residents' livelihood.

Over recent years, the southern end of Creekside has established itself as a hub for the creative industries. The surviving warehouses located here have proven to be crucial for providing low-cost starter units and accommodating the needs of new businesses, innovation and creative industries which were pushed out by high rentals from the inner-city areas. Creative industries are now concentrated on all the larger premises, of which Faircharm is clearly the dominant provider. The low rentals in the area have not given the incentive to owners to invest in the buildings, which is particularly noticeable at the wharfs and premises at the southern end of the street which are in

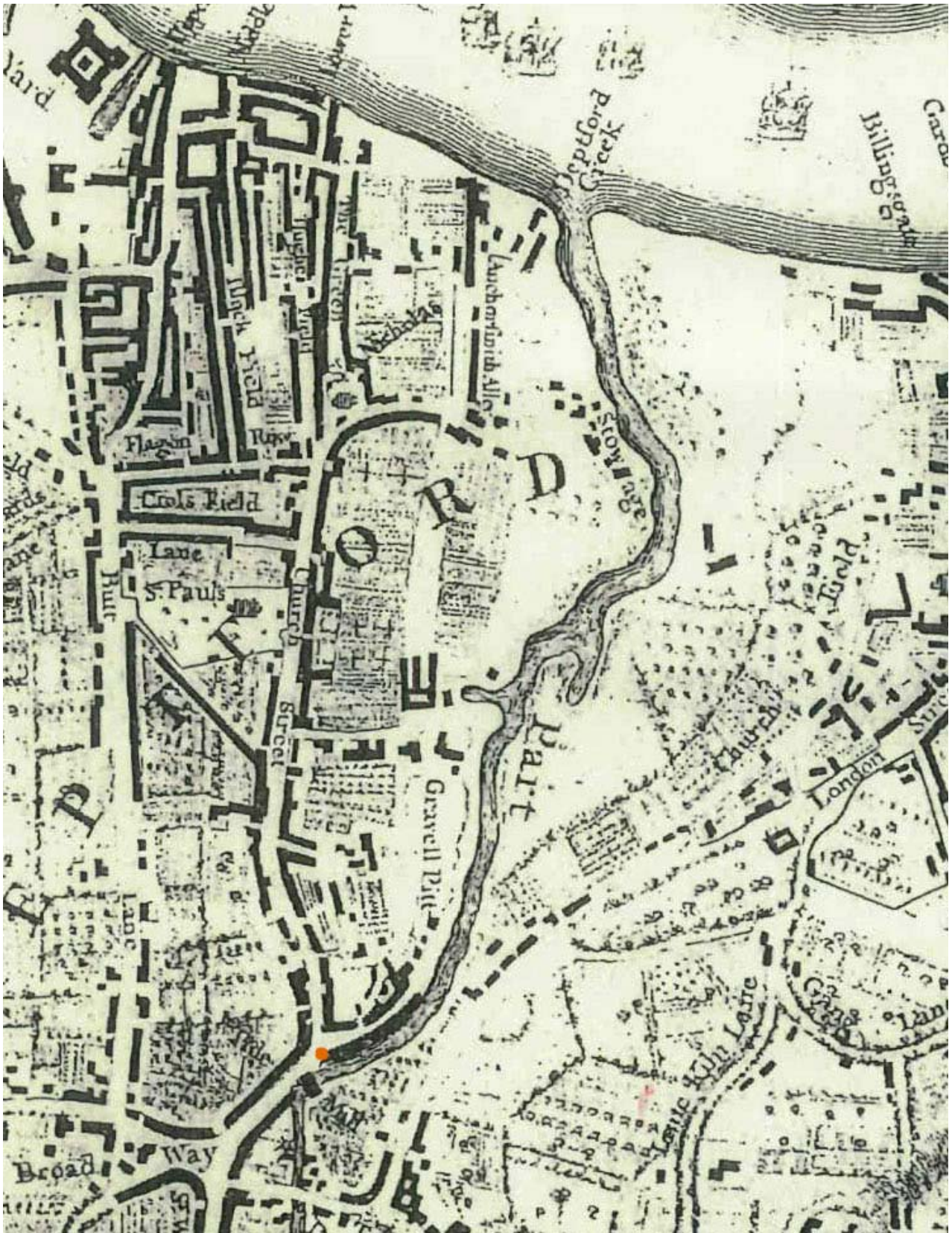
low-key industrial use.

With the Crossfield Estate housing remains the second most dominant use in the area complemented by community and commercial facilities such as the pub, a café, a gallery and the Creekside Education Centre, the latter a facility promoting the history and wildlife of the Creek. The Laban Dance Centre further north outside the conservation area boundary and Lewisham College at Deptford Broadway have also brought a focus on culture and education to the area. The Laban Centre, built on one of the Creek's former wharfs in 2003, has brought a cultural asset of London-wide importance to the area, which has helped raising the profile of the area with significant beneficial regenerative effect.



Historic wharves along the southern part of the Creek (Source: Deptford Creek. Surviving Regeneration, 1999)





Detail of Rocque's Map of London and surrounds 1745-6.

The orange dot marks the location of the Oxford Arms (today the Birds Nest Pub) at the junction of Church Street and Slaughterhouse Lane (today Creekside).

3 History of the area

3.1 Archaeology

The area lies within two archaeological priority zones – Deptford Creek, and Deptford Broadway and Tanners Hill.

The junction of the Thames with the River Ravensbourne at the Creek mouth may have attracted early settlement or ritual use. The area is therefore thought to have high archaeological potential for further finds of the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman period, including organic materials such as timber structures and artefacts, for which the alluvium and peat layers provide good survival conditions.

There has been continuous activity at the southern end of the Creek at Deptford Bridge from at least the times of the Norman Conquest. The Archaeology of the area has the potential to provide further evidence of earlier periods, from the late Iron Age to the Roman period and from the Roman period to the mid-Saxon centuries. A number of sites have high potential to yield evidence of former medieval and post-medieval industries and these are pointed out within the document.

3.2 Development History

The following pages describe the development history of Deptford with the focus on Creekside and the area of the proposed conservation area. Site specific information is also included in Chapter 5: Character Areas. The development of the Crossfield Estate is best understood within the history of social housing provision in the early 20th century, and this is set out as an introduction to the character assessment of the Estate in Chapter 5.

3.2.1 Roman (43 AD – 410 AD)

Evidence of human activity in the Deptford area can be traced back to Roman Times. A ford crossing the River Ravensbourne is thought to have been in the location of Deptford Bridge. It was part of Watling Steet, the Roman route that linked London and Canterbury and on to Dover, now the A2. A number of finds in the Deptford Broadway area indicate dense Roman occupation over a long period of time, probably being a roadside settlement based around the river crossing.

3.2.2 Early Medieval (410 AD – 1066 AD)

The place name Deptford is thought to be derived from the Anglo-Saxon for 'deep ford'. (The 't' appeared in the middle from the 15th century onwards). It is likely that the settlement at Deptford

Broadway may have had Saxon successors. Two graves thought to date from the 7th century have been found in the area and were perhaps part of a Saxon cemetery. ²

3.2.3 Medieval (1066 AD – ca. 1500 AD)

In the Domesday Book survey of 1086, neither the present Deptford nor Greenwich were mentioned by those names. Deptford was referred to as the manor of 'Grenviz' (le West Greenwich), held by Gilbert de Magminot, Bishop of Lisieux, from Bishop Odo of Bayeux, brother of William the Conqueror. The Domesday Book describes the population as '24 villeins, four bordars, and cottar and five slaves', with their families, and the land comprising arable, meadow, pasture and woodland. ³

The manor was passed on from de Magminot to his decedants the Maminots, and later the de Says who gave the manor its alternative name of Sayes Court. In 1487, the manor was confiscated by the Crown. In the early 16th century it was held for several short intervals by royal courtiers, including Cardinal Wolsey, but passed back to Henry VIII in 1535. It has been held by the Crown ever since. ⁴

The fundamental theme in medieval times was the struggle to reclaim the marshes and control the river to prevent flooding. Earth banks were built and the land behind drained by ditches. The tenants of the manor had the obligation to maintain and repair them. The river banks were often breached, leading to flooding of the fields behind, despite regular royal commissions reviewing the state of repair and ensuring that repairs were carried out.

By the late medieval period, two distinct centres of settlement had emerged in the area. One comprised Deptford Strand along the Thames river front and Deptford Green around the parish church of St. Nicholas, later called 'Lower Deptford'. The other settlement, separated by an expanse of fields to the south, was the Broadway at Deptford Bridge, later called 'Upper Deptford'. The two settlements were linked by Butts Lane (now Deptford High Street) and Church Lane and only merged during the course of the 19th century gradually together to become what we know today as Deptford.

Deptford Strand is thought to have started initially as a small fishing village. In 1420, it became a focus for shipbuilding industry with the rebuilding and refitting of royal ships. Other late medieval industry included tile and brick making for the London market, for which a Dutch craftsman was hired to test the qualities of the local clay. ⁵

Distinct from the settlement at the Strand, the hamlet at Deptford Broadway clustered around the river crossing at Deptford Bridge. It was named 'Depeforde vill' and is known to have included shops and inns, and more substantial buildings of two-storey height with cellars. A wooden bridge is known to have existed here from about the 1230s. It was rebuilt in stone in 1570. To the north of

² Phillpotts, p. 16

³ Phillpotts, p. 19

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid, p. 28

the bridge, in the area that forms today the entrance to the Gibbes / Skill Centre Island, stood a tide mill dating back to at least the 12th century. It became the starting point for a small concentration of wharves and industries at the southern end of the Creek. There are references to wooden wharves, limekilns and gravel pits at the Creek to the north of the bridge from the late 15th century. Gravel was probably being dug to provide ballast for ships.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, Deptford increasingly felt the influence of Greenwich Palace on its economy. The site had passed into the Crown's ownership in 1447. It was previously owned by Humphrey Duke of Gloucester who built his residence 'Bella Court' there in ca 1427 and laid out Greenwich Park in 1437. The residence was expanded from c1500 onwards by Henry VII and renamed Greenwich Palace by Henry VIII. With the establishment of the court's household, the pastures of Deptford came to be used for the maintenance of cattle to supply the royal household. Its proximity to Greenwich Palace probably also explains Henry VIII's decision to use Deptford's shipbuilding tradition and establish the Royal Dockyards in 1513 on a site west of Deptford Strand.⁶ A year later in 1514, the Corporation of Trinity House, responsible for the pilotage and navigation lights on the Thames and British coasts, established its first headquarters at Deptford Strand.

Along the Creek, on the site of **Harold Wharf (APT studios)**, the King's Slaughterhouse was built in the 16th century to supply the Royal Palace at Greenwich with meat from cattle grazed locally. The exact date of its foundation is unknown.⁷ The building measured 160 feet (48.8 metres) from east to west and was 50 feet (15.2 metres wide), with a wharf and a pond at its west end. It also occasionally worked for the Navy in the 17th century, at times when the demand on Navy's own slaughterhouse was too great. From 1649 the property was leased out to various owners, and in 1663 it was sold to John Evelyn. The site still appears on late 18th century maps when it was a pottery.⁸

The small lane leading off Church Street to the slaughterhouse, with the distinctive bend in northerly direction, was called Slaughterhouse Lane. It became Creek Road in the late 19th century and was renamed **Creekside** in ca. mid 20th century. On the 1867 OS map the stretch between Church Street and Harold Wharf still appears as Slaughterhouse Lane, but by the end of the 19th century had been re-named into Creek Street.

3.2.4 16th to 18th century Deptford

Following the establishment of the Naval Dockyard, Deptford developed during the 16th century into a town of some prominence. Royal Dockyards were some of the most considerable industrial units in the country. By the 17th century, the town also became a centre for victualling the Fleet and in 1742, the official victualling depot was established by the Navy Board. It was re-named the Royal Victoria Victualling Yard in the 19th century. The surviving 18th century buildings of the Victualling Yard have been incorporated in the Pepys Estate.

⁶ Phillpotts, p. 28.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid, p. 29.

Closer to the Creek itself, the newly formed East India Company began fitting out its fleet of merchant ships in 1601. By 1614, the Company had a shipyard, ironworks and extensive storage facilities around the area that on the maps appear as the 'Stowage'.

Dockyard and victualling brought prosperity and fame to Deptford, created employment and a steep rise in population as shipbuilders, carpenters, sailers, rope-makers and many others settled here. By the 18th century Deptford was a prosperous and bustling town, and as important as Greenwich and Woolwich, boasting a population of 12,000 by 1700, rising to 18,000 by 1800. One of London's finest baroque churches, St Paul's (1713-30) and one of London's earliest Georgian Terraces at Albury Street (1707-17) are physical remainders of Deptford's past wealth and grandeur.

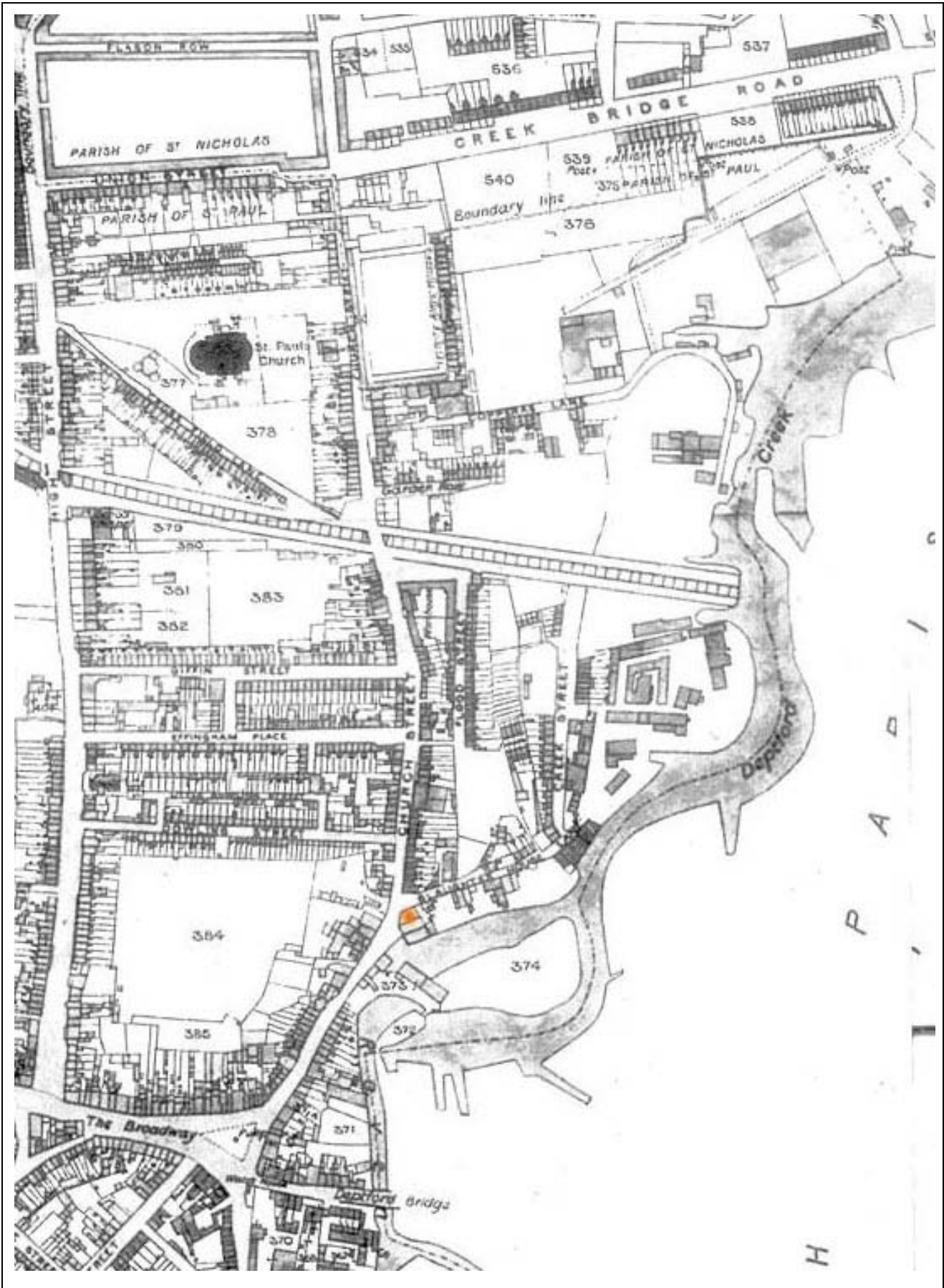
3.2.5 Pre 19th century Creek and Creekside

Up until the early 19th century the land to both sides of the Creek was mainly in use as meadows and market gardening. The area today covered by the **Faircharm Estate and the Crossfield Housing Estate** was common pasture for Deptford in 1608. This land was bought by John Addey's charity and became known as the Gravel Pits Estate. On the 1745 Rocque Map it is marked as a 'Gravel Pit' with a few scattered buildings and market gardens around it.

By the mid 18th century, Church Street was fully enclosed by buildings on both sides. In 1672, the Corporation of Trinity had constructed the Trinity Hospital and Almshouses here, in an area today covered by the Sue Godefroy Nature Reserve **north of Bronze Street**. Initially, the accommodation was for 24 seamen's widows, but the building was later extended to 38 houses containing 56 apartments. The almshouses were demolished in 1877 and replaced by terraced housing.

Between the gravel pits and Church Street in the area of today's **Browne House of the Crossfield Estate**, a house of correction, the Deptford Bridewell, was constructed in 1707. The Bridewell was an early form of prison, focussing on vagrants and idle paupers. It closed in 1721 and was soon afterwards converted into a workhouse known as St. Paul's Workhouse. It was enlarged in the late 18th and early 19th century but closed in the late 1830s. It is still shown on the 1844 Deptford Tithe map as a large complex south of the railway viaduct but by 1867, the site had been re-developed with housing.

To the north of the Gravel Pits Estate, lay the Copperas lands, where early dye and chemical manufacture was established by the mid 17th century. Here, copperas stones of iron pyrites from Kent and Essex were processed in copperas beds to produce red and black dyes. The works continued until the 1830s. Other industries in this area included potteries producing the Deptford Ware.

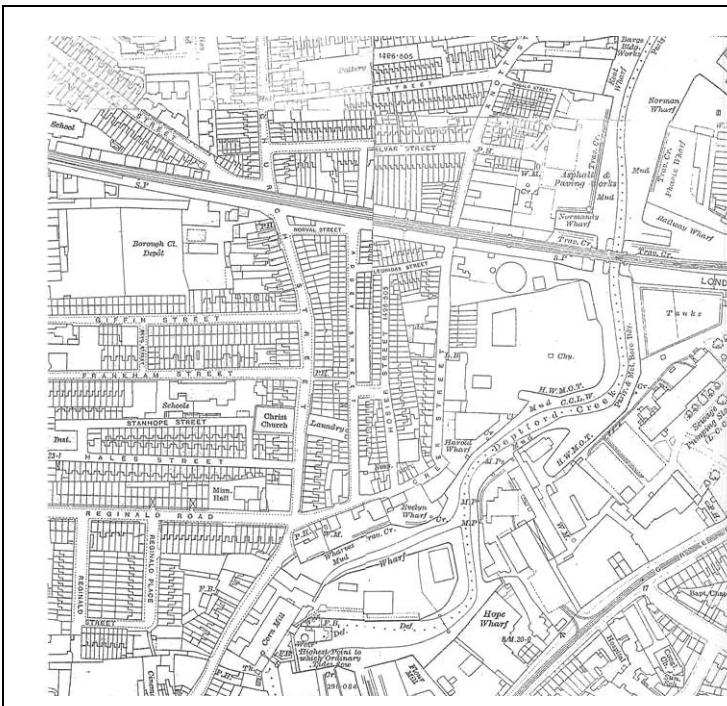


Detail from the Deptford Tithe Map of 1844. The former Oxford Arms Public House (The Birds Nest Pub) is highlighted in Orange as a reference point.



Detail of the 1868 OS Map

The former Oxford Arms Public House (The Birds Nest Pub) is highlighted in Orange as a reference point



Detail of the 1914-16 OS Map

3.2.6 19th century industrialisation of Deptford and the Creek

The 19th century saw the industrialisation of the river banks of Deptford and the Creek. New privately owned shipyards and boilerworks appeared on the Thames waterfront and a variety of new industries along the Creek, many of which were unpleasant and 'dirty' industries: As early as 1852 The Kentish Mercury listed chemical works, breweries, bleach, dye and glue works, tar distilleries and manure manufacture, making the Creek area 'one great stinking abomination'.⁹ 'Deptford became a synonym for industry. A Guide to Greenwich and Deptford published in 1893 described the area occupied by 'almost every industry of importance (...) and the admirable facilities it offers for manufacturing purposes causes the rents in the neighbourhood to stand abnormally height.'¹⁰ In 1836, London's first railway, the London to Greenwich Railway, reached Deptford. Much of its four mile route was elevated on a continuous 878-arch brick viaduct bridged over the Creek by a drawbridge.

On the Deptford Creekside, one of the first notable areas of intensification was in the area south of the railway line on the site of today's **Faircharm Estate**. The Beneke family founded its verdigris works for the manufacture of copper sulphate here in 1814. This became the Deptford Chemical Works and passed to Frank Hills in c1840 who operated a vitriol distillery here. The Chemical Works continued in his family until the early 20th century.

On the land of today's Creekside Education Centre operated the London and Greenwich Railway Gas Company from 1836. The works were closed in 1857, but the land still belongs to British Gas.

In parallel with the increase of industry on the Creek's bank is the development of the area behind with housing for the workforce. On the former market gardens and gravel pits between Creek Road and Church Street, and west of Church Street up to Butt Lane (Deptford High Street) dense terraced housing for the workers began to emerge. By 1867, the area was nearly fully developed, and at the turn of the century it is one dense conurbation of industry, housing, and complementing facilities and businesses that serve the rapidly growing population.

The southern end of the Creek became the focus for a number of flour and corn mills and warehouses. The historic tide mill at Mill Wharf (**Gibbes / Skill Centre Island**) was joined in the late 18th century by the Mumford's Flour Mill. Its tall former grain silo, dating from 1897, still stands today and is one of the most important landmarks in the area, exerting a grand presence over the Creek. The tide mill continued to operate on the same site until it was destroyed by flooding in 1824. It was re-built and taken over by J H Robinson, who turned it into a steam-powered flour mill. Later the mill buildings expanded towards Deptford Bridge and also covered the ground on its east side (Skill Centre site). The mill closed in the 1960s, and was demolished after a fire in 1970.

On the opposite side of the Creek, south of the railway viaduct, the Deptford Pumping Station was opened in 1865. It was a key part of Sir Joseph Bazalgette's great scheme to pipe London's sewage via the new Southern Outfall Sewer to the treatment plant at Crossness. Until then, much

⁹ Steele, p. 96

¹⁰ Steele, p. 98

of the city's sewage had run untreated into the Thames and by 1850, had been proving a major health threat for the capital. The new sewers carried their flow to Deptford by gravity where the pumping station raised the contents by 18 feet from where it made its foul way nearly eight miles to Crossness.

Just north of the Stowage, built on the former site of the Trinity House Headquarters, Deptford Power Station opened in 1889. It was the world's first high tension central generating station, designed by Sebastian de Ferranti to supply electricity to London. It dominated the landscape at the entrance to the Creek and was joined by a second power station (Deptford West) in 1929.

By the mid Victorian era, the Royal Dockyards had become outdated and unsuitable to launch ships. It eventually closed in 1869 and between 1871 and 1913, the dockyard site operated as the Foreign Cattle Market. It became notorious for its 'gutting sheds' in which girls and women worked in squalor, gutting animals.

The cattle market and the other heavy unpleasant industries which began to dominate Deptford attracted great numbers of unskilled or semi-skilled workers, most of them living in poverty and deprived conditions. By the end of the 19th century, new industries, such as the power stations and the railways, provided new opportunities for many, but unemployment remained high and living conditions low. As part of his *Inquiry into the Life and Labour of the People of London* in 1899, Charles Booth identified the streets east and west of Church Street as amongst the poorest in the area. Addey Street between Church Street and Creek Street (Creekside), later incorporated into the **Crossfield Estate**, was considered the worst in all Deptford, an area of criminals and prostitutes.¹¹

Gradually, the town began to lose its more prosperous and respected inhabitants and was generally considered a 'low neighbourhood'. On the other hand, Deptford avoided becoming a London suburb but remained a separate and self-sufficient community with its own social make-up, own industries and own version of urban life. It also remained also quite clearly divided from its nearest neighbour, Greenwich.

3.2.7 20th and 21st century

In 1900, Deptford became a Metropolitan Borough of the County of London. This lasted until the local government reorganisation of 1965, when it was amalgamated with the Metropolitan Borough of Lewisham to become the London Borough of Lewisham. Its history in the 20th century is mainly one of economic decline. The town suffered during the depression of the 1930s, with pockets of severe unemployment, and was badly hit during the bomb raids in World War II, resulting in widespread destruction and the death of some 650 people.¹² The industries recovered briefly in the 1950s and 1960s, although this proved to be short-lived. By the mid 1960s, a phase of inexorable decline of the riverside industries started. Many of the large firms in Deptford closed down in the

¹¹ Steel, p. 86.

¹² LDA, p. 29.

late 1960s and 1970s leading to widespread unemployment and physical decline of the area.¹³

As a result of economical decline and redundancy, the Creek and Thames waterfront saw much of their industrial heritage demolished to make way for new development, notably the clearance of the Royal Dockyards (to make way for Convoys Wharf – in use until 2002), the Naval Victualling Yard (remainders incorporated in the Pepys Estate), the demolition of the Robinson Mill and other mills at the southern end of the Creek, and the clearance of the Deptford West power station (re-developed for housing by Fairview New Homes). A few sites have remained in industrial use, notably within the proposed conservation area.

In the late 1990s the area benefitted from the 'Creekside Renewal Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)' which, for the first time in its history since industrialisation, helped to raise the profile of the Creek as a natural heritage asset. The scheme funded the Creekside Greening and Cleaning Project for Deptford Creek, which aimed to protect and enhance wildlife habitats, enhance and repair floodwalls, remove rubbish, improve local access, and facilitated the establishment of the Creekside Education Centre.

More recently, the process of regeneration and re-development for other uses in the area has continued and gained new impetus with the construction of the Laban Dance Centre and large residential developments in Greenwich High Road and Creek Road. A number of other sites hold outline planning permission for mixed uses.

Within the proposed conservation area, there were at first two important additions to the townscape the beginning of the 20th century. In 1911, J & A Dandridge Ltd established their wholesale rag and metal merchants business on the site of Harold Wharf (today the **APT studios**) for which they built an attractive manufacturing building designed by local architect Alfred Roberts. When the 19th century workers' houses west of Creek Street (Creekside) were cleared in the late 1930s by the London County Council (LCC), the company leased further land to expand their business on to the other side of the street, today known as the **Framework Studios**. The site is shown on the 1952 OS map as 'Rag and Metal Warehouse'.

The **historic Sun Wharf** (between Theatre Wharf and Evelyn Wharf) was by the 1920s in use as an oil refinery, the Medina Works, which produced edible oils and fats. Their tanks and part of the refinery were located on the waterfront, while the company built their Art Deco office and factory building on the opposite site of the street, where it still stands today.

The use of the Chemical Works on the site today occupied by **Faircharm** ceased some time around 1945, possibly as a result of war damage. The site was subsequently cleared and re-developed between the late 1940s and late 1950s. Contrary to most other premises along the Creek, the area has avoided the physical decline and dereliction, partly because the buildings themselves have proven to be capable of adaptation and conversion allowing a range of businesses, light industrial uses and a growing community of artists to operate side by side.

¹³ Ibid, p. 31.



Detail of the 1952 OS map. The former Oxford Arms Public House (The Birds Nest Pub) is highlighted in Orange as a reference point



The Creek as seen from the Ha’Penny Bridge looking north (above) and south (below)

4 Spatial character of the area

4.1 Topography and Geology

The topography of the area is fairly flat and has been shaped by centuries-long intervention by man. The surface consists of man-made ground, which conceals the lie of the original strata below.

The solid geology is Upper Chalk overlain by Thanet Sand. The overlying drift geology is gravel and alluvium. The gravel comprises former flood plain terraces of the River Thames laid down and left behind during the last continental glacial period when the Thames lowered its course.

The Alluvium (= soil or sediments deposited by rivers) has been deposited by the tidal flooding action of the Thames and the River Ravensbourne, and by rising sea levels during periods of marine transgressions.

Alluvium deposits tend to be fertile, and prior to the Creek's industrialisation in the 19th century much of the area was used as market gardens supplying the markets of London with vegetable produce.

4.2 The Creek

The Creek forms the northern part of the River Ravensbourne where it meets the River Thames. It runs in a winding course from Deptford Bridge in the south to the Thames in the north and, in contrast to the Ravensbourne further south, it is deep and tidal. The frontages are revetted throughout with a variety of materials, but principally with timber fendering, brick and steel piles.

Most of the course of the Creek is screened by buildings and walls and thus has little presence in the public realm in Creekside. The occasional glimpse can be gained via the yards of Theatre Wharf and Evelyn Wharf, usually only during daytime when the gates are open. More unexpected is the experience from the Ha'Penny footbridge, the Creek's central crossing point, which reveals the extent and dramatic nature of the river - an oasis of water, mud and greenery amongst an intense urban landscape.

Since the docks and wharfs are no longer in use, the Creek has become an area of tranquillity to which the service yards adjacent to the river embankment add a sense of openness and light.

4.3 Street pattern and townscape

Creekside is the main access route and spine to this proposed small conservation area. From Church Street it follows the course of the Creek in north-easterly direction and at Harold Wharf turns in a sharp bend into a straight line towards the north.

Church Street, which bounds the area to the west, is the historic link between Upper and Lower Deptford. Its present appearance is the result of a 1970s highways 'improvement' scheme which saw the road widened and straightened.

A network of pedestrian routes in east-west direction provide linkages between Creekside and Church Street, including the Mechanic's Path to both sides of the railway. South of the railway, the footpath continues over the Ha-Penny Bridge to Greenwich, providing an important central east-west link and currently the only unlimited public access to the Creek in the area.

The industrial premises and wharves along Creekside are of varying plot shapes and sizes which reflect the development history of the area. The historic wharves lining the edge of the Creek have open service yards to the river to allow for loading and unloading of goods – a reminder that the Creek was once a busy working river and main means of transport. The plot sizes of the oldest wharfs south of Creekside up to Harold Wharf are noticeably smaller and so narrow that the footprint of the building at Evelyn Wharf and that of the APT studios nearly cover the full depth between street and water edge. Office buildings are either facing the street or located next to the entrance, as was traditionally the case.

Despite differences in style there is some consistency maintained in the continuous low scale – buildings are generally not taller than two to three storeys - and use of traditional materials. Building forms are typically simple. At the larger premises, such as the Art Hub studios and the Faircharm Estate, a number of warehouses of different age are conjoined creating a more complex and interesting townscape. The group of the buildings A, C and D on the Faircharm Estate provide the most coherent piece of industrial townscape within the area.

The buildings are located right at the back of the pavement, creating a clearly defined street frontage and sense of enclosure. High brick walls with gated entrances separate service yards from the street/footpath and maintain a continuous built frontage and firm boundary between public and private space.

The change to 20th century housing at the Crossfield Estate is immediately obvious in its lay-out as a series of five-storey apartment blocks surrounded by defined semi-public and private spaces. The building line is set back from the street to allow for the provision of amenity spaces and (towards Creekside) for car parking with low front boundaries behind. These areas now benefit from mature tree cover and hedges that add a rather soft, green edge to the street.

The Crossfield Estate incorporates a number of 19th century residential streets laid out in straight lines to the north and south of the railway viaduct. These are still legible though only Bronze Street has remained identifiable by name.

Two large open spaces north and south of the railways are laid out as recreational space to the estate. They help to reduce the impact of the railways and greatly contribute to the visual amenity of the area.



Creekside looking towards the east



Creekside at the bend looking towards the north-east

4.4 Railway Viaducts

The historic viaduct of the London-Greenwich railway line crosses the area in an east-west direction. It is an attractive brick structure of monumental quality comprising 32 arches from the Creek to Church Street, most of them open and topped with parapets that enclose the railtracks to both sides. The viaduct constitutes a significant physical and visual barrier between the southern and northern part of the area and also effectively splits the Crossfield Estate into two entities.

In 1996 the Dockland Light Railway (DLR) was extended across the Thames to Lewisham. The line took advantage of the clear space above the southern part of the Creek, with one station located to the south at Deptford Bridge. An elegant concrete structure in itself, the DLR has changed the character of the southern part of the Creek, terminating views and affecting the legibility of the area. The line criss-crosses the southern part of the Creek four times, mirroring the route of the river in opposite direction and creating an interesting juxtaposition between these two features.

4.5 Open Space and Trees

Public open spaces and trees are not a traditional feature within this historic industrial urban landscapes, but are an integral part of the 20th century housing estate. As such, Creekside features two significant open spaces within the Crossfield Estate, one each side of the railway. These are the lawn and car park north of Holden house and the large green south of Farrer House. Both contain playgrounds and many informally placed deciduous trees, many of them London Planes. Other, smaller open spaces within or surrounding the estate have been turned into wildlife gardens and allotments. Another large public open green space, the Sue Godefrey Nature Reserve, borders the estate north of Bronze Street.

The Creekside Education Centre south of the railways, built on the former Transco Inlet, is the only open space directly abutting the Creek. The former dock was converted in 2002 into a beach for natural colonisation as innovative flood defence.

Spaces and trees alike greatly add to the visual amenity and environmental quality of the area and have value as corridors for wildlife.



A section of the listed 1838 railway viaduct



Farrer House as seen from Mechanic's Path

4.6 Landmarks and views

Landmark buildings provide focal points within the conservation area through their position as individual or corner buildings. The principal landmark buildings within the proposed conservation area are:

- The Birds Nest Public House,
- the Art in Perpetuity Trust (APT) studios,
- the railway lifting bridge,
- the railway viaducts.

A number of local landmarks that terminate views or constitute important focal points in long views are just outside the proposed conservation area. These are:

- The Laban Centre
- The former Mumford's Mill grain silo
- The Deptford Pumping Station
- St. Paul's Church

Despite the limited access to the Creek, there are a number of comprehensive views down into and across it from both within and outside the conservation area. The DLR in particular enables views of the Creek and surrounding area never seen before and has contributed significantly to bringing the area back into the public conscience. The line allows good sequential views even into the private service yards of the businesses situated along the river which are well screened towards the street. From within the conservation area, the Ha-Penny Bridge offers long distance views towards the south and, through the arch of the lifting bridge, towards the north where the view is terminated by the Laban Centre and the multi-storey blocks that have recently gone up behind it. The elevated position of the footbridge also allows for good views into the conservation area from the east down the Mechanic's Path along the viaduct, onto the Creekside Education Centre and to the Crossfield Estate beyond.

At the Church Street, roundabout the Birds Nest Pub constitutes an important landmark at the entrance to Creekside in views from all approaches. Turning into Creekside, the view down the road is terminated by the sharp bend in the road where the APT building occupies a prominent position. In views from the north down Creekside, the towering grain silo of Mumford's Mill (now flats) is the defining feature in the distance.

The occasional glimpse can be gained of the Creek via the service yards, although these views are dominated by the DLR viaduct, which obstructs long views to the riverbanks at the east side. An unexpected and very attractive view of the lifting bridge can be gained across the yard of the Creekside Education Centre through its gate and railings. Just north of the conservation boundary, the café and terrace at the Laban Centre offer unlimited views of the Creek and adjoining industrial estates to both sides of the river, as far as the railway viaduct where the lifting bridge creates a key

focal point.

The flat topography means that within the Crossfield Estate, views are generally contained by buildings and greenery and the railway viaduct that cuts across.

4.7 Natural environment – nature conservation

The Creek is the only tributary south of the Thames in inner London which has remained relatively intact. Following its decline as transport river and abandonment by the industries, and the general improvement in the water quality of the Thames, the Creek is in a better condition than it has been for more than a hundred years.

In ecological terms the Creek can best be described as a watery wasteland, with a diverse range of habitats that are species rich and locally distinctive. The Creek has an exceptional but often unseen biodiversity value that is a result of this unique ecosystem. The variations in surface topography combined with the variety of artificial and natural substrates and the tidal nature of Deptford Creek has led to the development of a bewildering array of habitat types and specific niches.

At low tide the tidal waters retreat to reveal a shallow trickle of freshwater that meanders down the middle of the creek, flanked by the rich mud and shingle banks of the foreshore. The intertidal foreshore provides fish spawning grounds, and it is here that the most abundant algal and invertebrate communities occur. The vertical sea walls lining the Creek support over 120 plant species that exploit a range of opportunities in nooks and crannies, cracks in concrete and wood, the rotten tops of fenders and ledges of wood or concrete, inundated or not.

This combination of wet and fully aquatic habitats that are exposed to different regimes of fresh and salty water along with the infinite variety of substrates is the key why the Creeks is so important as a biological resource and why it supports such a variety of organisms. This is illustrated by the millions of tubifex worms found in a single square metre of mud which each day poke their heads up through the mud when the tide returns to be grazed by birds, other invertebrates and fish.

The Thames and its tidal tributaries including Deptford Creek contain vital ecosystems, habitats and species that represent a regionally important ecological resource. This has been recognised in their designation as a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation in 1986.

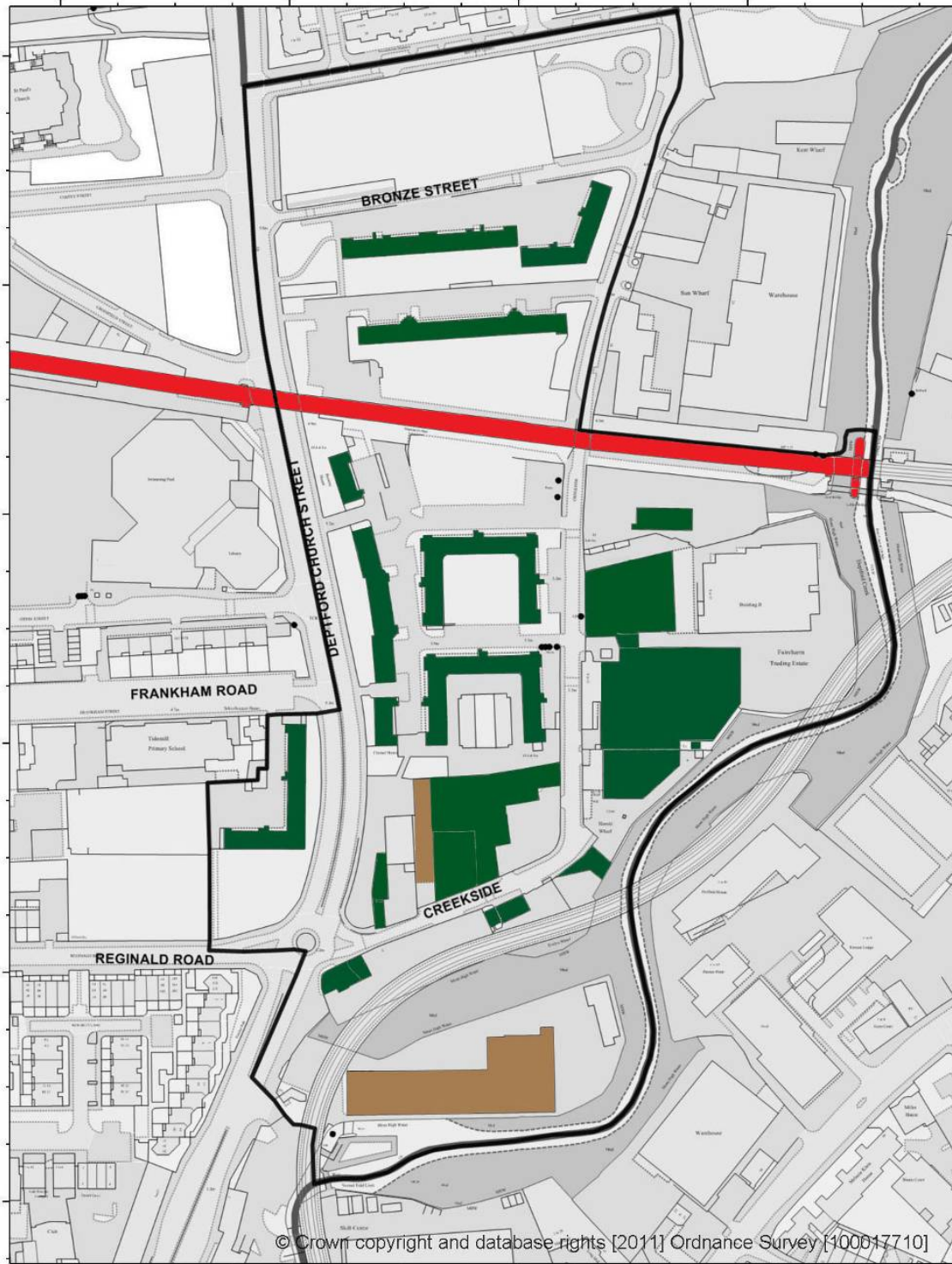


Mumford's Mill as seen from the wharf at No. 2 Creekside











The beach at the Creekside Centre, formerly a small dock to the Transco Inlet. The beach was created in 2002 and left for natural colonisation as innovative flood defence.

Deptford Creekside Conservation Area Townscape Appraisal Map*



Key

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
|  Positive building |  Listed building |  Important open green space |
|  Neutral building |  Landmark building |  Conservation area boundary |
|  Negative building |  Important view | |



* For landmark buildings, important views and important open green space see next page

***Additions to the Deptford Creekside Townscape Appraisal Map as adopted May 2012:**

- Landmark Buildings:**
- The Birds Nest Public House
 - The APT studios, 6 Harold Wharf
 - The railway lifting bridge
 - The London-Greenwich Railway viaduct (1936)
 - The Mumford's Mill grain silo
 - The Deptford Pumping
 - St. Paul's Church
- Important Views:**
- View from DLR into the conservation area
 - View from Ha'Penny Bridge towards the north and South
 - View from Church Street on to the Birds Nest Pub
 - View from the footbridge along the Mechanic's Path to the Creekside Education Centre and Crossfield Estate
 - View down Creekside towards the Mumford's Mill
 - View from Creekside on to the north gables of Building C
 - View from Creekside on to the APT building
 - View from Ferranti Park to St. Paul's Church
- Positive Open Space:**
- Amenity spaces to Crossfield Estate
 - Green space to Creekside Education Centre
 - Sue Godfrey Nature Reserve and Ferranti Park

5 Character areas and buildings of interest

The conservation area can be separated into two character areas that reflect the different uses, spaces and building forms: the first comprises the industrial premises and historic wharves along Creekside, the second is the Crossfield Estate, which was implanted into the area in the 1930s as part of the slum clearance programme by the London County Council.

5.1 Character Area 1: The Creek, Creekside road and adjoining wharves

The medieval origins of Creekside are still evident in the narrowness of the street and the small urban grain of its wharves lining the Creek at its southern end. A place of considerable historic significance and archaeological potential is the **Gibbes / Skill Centre Island**, historically known as **Mill Wharf**), which forms today part of the Lewisham College Deptford Campus. The Island is the location of the historic Deptford Tide Mill, the remains of which and its successors may still be in situ and may reveal further evidence of medieval occupation at Deptford Creekside. The Island is an integral and distinctive landscape feature of the Creek may have encouraged the construction of the mill in this location, allowing the creation of a mill pond to the south.

The historic mill building was located in the area of today's entrance to the campus south of Theatre Wharf. It could take advantage of the flow of the high tide and the flow of the Ravensbourne itself to fill the mill pond, which was created in the bend where the Ravensbourne turned into the Creek. The sluices and weir that regulated the flow area still in place.

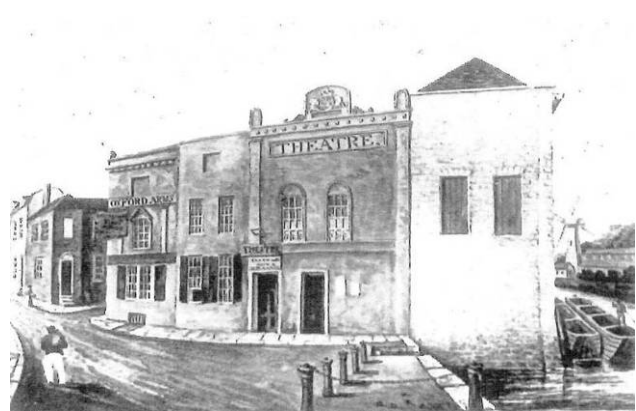
The current brick and metal-clad Asquith Gibbes Building and sports hall that cover the Island today date from 1979 and are of no architectural interest. Before the industrialisation of the Creek, the island was used as Osier grounds. For most part of the 19th and 20th century its northern and eastern part were an open coal and timber wharf with no significant structure on it. Only in the later part of the 20th century the Robinson Mill extended over the area similar to the footprint of the present building.

The **Birds Nest Pub** at the entrance to Creekside is a key building within the area. Its currently rather isolated position is the result of the widening of Church Street which saw the remaining surrounding 19th century houses, which until then had survived, demolished. It is an elegant Victorian building with a canted bay turning the corner. The pub frontage on the ground floor is rendered and has large modern timber windows subdivided into small panes. The upper floors have timber sash windows and red brick dressings and pediments.

A pub existed in this location by the early 19th century, known as the 'Oxford Arms'. Next to it was the old Deptford Theatre which run successfully from the mid 18th century to 1840. After a period of

decline, it closed in 1860 and became a coal depot. It was demolished in the early 20th century and in its place Theatre Wharf created. Today's pub keeps up the tradition by having a small theatre space.

The **area between the pub and the entrance to the Gibbes / Skill Centre Island** is one of the few areas allowing direct views, and historically also access, into the Creek although the effect is today compromised by the current boundary treatment.



Clockwise from top left: The Gibbes / Skill Centre Island as seen from the wharf at No. 2 Creekside; The Oxford Arms and Deptford Theatre to the right in 1840; The Birds Nest as seen today; The Oxford Arms with the Robinson Mill behind, picture taken in the 1960s.

The first four wharves – **Theatre Wharf, Sun Wharf (No. 2 Creekside), Evelyn Wharf and Harold Wharf** – are the oldest along the Creek, lining the small stretch of river between the historic tide mill and the Tudor slaughterhouse.

No. 2 Creekside appears on 19th century OS map as ‘Sun Wharf’ or ‘Sun Coal Wharf’, not to be mixed up with the modern Sun Wharf north of the railway. From the 1920s it was in use by an oil refinery, the Medina Works, producing edible oils and fats. Their tanks and part of the refinery were located at the waterfront while the company built their elegant office and factory building on the opposite site of the road where it still stands today.

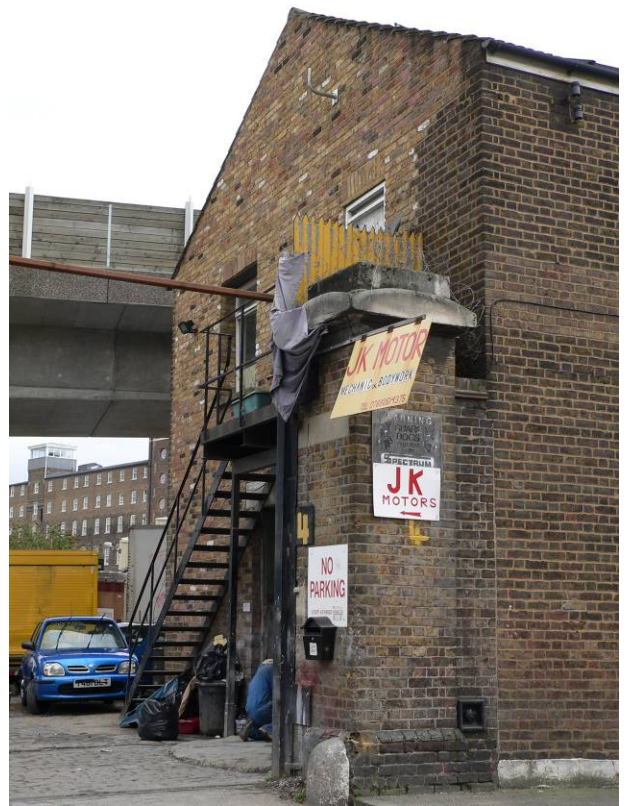
The associated tanks and structures have since been demolished although the former entrance to the yard is still in place; it is now permanently shut, with a metal gate and stacked containers behind. The front elevations of the former adjoining buildings have remained at ground floor level with blocked windows to serve as boundary walls. The site is today used by a number of small-scale businesses, while the wharf has become a permanent mooring place for boat residents.

Although the boats in the Creek are today primarily used as dwellings, they have helped to retain the function and ‘flair’ of the historic wharves, which were historically lined with barges, and as such they make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

The Medina Works (No. 3 Creekside) opposite, built in ca. 1922, comprises an Art Deco style office and factory building and a warehouse behind. The street facing office block is now occupied by an evangelical church. It comprises a two storey range of wire cut red brick and rendered upper floors with modern brick detailing. The central stepped entrance bay has a classic art-deco fin with the Medina name inscribed and surmounted by a flagpole. To the right is the loading bay and vehicle entrance into the former factory and warehouse behind. The building is a good example of its time and positively contributes to the interest of the area. The red brick warehouse behind with a hipped roof is largely hidden from street views and its contribution thus limited to group value and addition to the variety of roofscape of the area.

No. 4 Creekside is one of the earliest surviving buildings on Creekside. It is a charming early Victorian house with raised ground floor, projecting front entrance and slated mansard. It is notable as the one and only residential building on Creekside’s river-facing side and for much of its history has been in this isolated position. On Charles Booth’s 1899 map, its owners are identified as being socially in a better position than any other of the residential properties east of Church Street.

The historic **Evelyn Wharf** next to it is now a working yard. It has a 19th century two storey workshop building facing the street, though much of it appears to have been rebuilt. The yard is notable for the good survival of historic granite setts and the historic brick boundary wall with substantial gates framing the entrance, all of which make an important contribution to the character of the street.



Clockwise from top left: Moorings at the Theatre and former Sun Wharf, the former Medina Works office building, entrance to Evelyn Wharf, and No. 4 Creekside.

Between Evelyn and **Harold Wharf (No. 6 Creekside)** is an interesting industrial building dating from the late 19th century with a gently curving frontage, crenellated roof line and cast-iron windows. The building is today used as a workshop building and might be the remainder of a formerly two storey building, perhaps reduced in size by bomb damage. Its rather unusual curved frontage, age and detailing add interest and positively contribute to the streetscene.

Harold Wharf is occupying the site which is thought to be the location of Henry VIII's abattoir. Remains of the building may still be in situ below ground. The existing prominent building was built in 1911 for J & A Dandridge Ltd. In the 1970s it changed hands to the Stewart & Dennis Engineering Ltd whose diverse projects included the hovercraft which took test trips on the Creek.¹⁴ The building is today known as the **APT Studios**, owned by the Art in Perpetuity Trust. The Trust has created an important art facility for the area which provides both studios and gallery space for exhibitions.

The front elevation of the building is richly decorated with rusticated red-brick pilasters and classical detailing in terracotta, topped by an imposing curving pediment within a high parapet. The side returns and rear elevation are plain and industrial in character, with tall windows and loading bays. The modern sheet pile extension to the front has been built to accommodate a gallery and studios. Until 2009, the small yard to the side contained one of the two last remaining cranes at the Deptford Creek – once a landscape dotted with cranes. Its demolition is the most regrettable loss in the area in recent years.



Left: Industrial building between Evelyn and Harold Wharf. Right: The former Dandridge manufacturing building, today the APT studios

The first premises on the northern side as one enters Creekside from Church Street is **the Greenwich MOT Centre (No. 1 Creekside)**. The small strip of vacant land at the street's corner is a left over of the former terraces that were cleared for the widening of Church Street. The

¹⁴ LDA, p. 36

Greenwich MOT Centre comprises a 19th century yard surrounded to the west and north by workshops. At the entrance at the back of the street stands a small Victorian two storey house of three bays with a hipped roof. Behind is an early 20th century workshop range of two storeys with metal windows and a loading bay. The large workshop building enclosing the yard to the north is of 20th century date (pre-1950s). The building appears to have been built as a warehouse but has had some unsympathetic alterations been made following its conversion into a garage.



Clockwise from the top: Early 20th century workshop building at Greenwich MOT, office building at the Art Hub studios, boundary to 5 – 9 Creekside.

The strip of land between the Greenwich MOT Centre and Medina Works comprises the remainder of the former Addey Street where it met Creekside. It is now partly covered and enclosed by metal sheeting. The structure is of no significance to the area.

The Art Hub, also known as Framework Studios, occupies the large corner plot **No. 5-9 Creekside** where the street turns sharply into a northerly direction. Part of the site has been industrial use since at least of the beginning of the 19th century when it formed part of Dandridge Ltd, a rag and metal business that operated from Harold Wharf opposite. When the surrounding area of working-class housing was cleared by the LCC in the 1930s, Dandridge took the opportunity to expand their businesses in exchange for other properties they owned, which were allocated to the Crossfield Estate. The buildings enclosing the service yard are built in stock brick with flat roofs containing large lanterns, Crittal windows and loading bays. The simple, but attractive office building located at the entrance to Creekside is embellished with an Art Deco fin. Within the service yard, the blank white-painted frontages containing the loading bays for 'Eurowines' are the result of the previous

19th century warehouse in this location having been demolished. The two warehouses behind of are of red brick with pitched roofs. Their two west facing gables with parapets and copings feature prominently in views from Church Street and in long views from the DLR.

The site today occupied by the **Faircharm Estate** was one of the first areas of spreading industrialisation along the Creek in the early part of the 19th century. The 1844 Deptford Tithe map shows a significant cluster of buildings here and by the time of the publication of the first OS map of 1867, the site is fully occupied by the 'Deptford Chemical Works'. The architectural legacy of the Works has disappeared and the site has been fully re-developed during the first decades after the war, mainly in the 1950s. The site consisted formerly of two wharves – Raleigh Wharf and Hill Wharf – which were amalgamated to create a larger plot. Only a few pre-20th century features remain: The central spine and access route that divides the area into a northern and southern half was established in the early 19th century, and the open yard associated with the wharf has been retained over the centuries and is used today for car parking.

The existing buildings date from the late 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s (Building B) and include a variety of workshop and warehouse buildings that illustrate the spread of development from the street into the depth of the property towards the waterfront, seeking maximum coverage whilst respecting the historic yard/wharf. The warehouses were once occupied by the Lewisham based company Zenith Carburettors whose name still appears at the front.

The buildings are built in red brick with large metal windows and pitched roofs, except for Building B which is flat roofed. The heights vary between two and three and a half storeys. The Faircharm Estate provides an interesting and today the most coherent group of industrial buildings to the area.

Building A consists of two parts, built in two stages. The older part at Creekside dates from the 1950s and comprises three conjoined warehouses whose gables feature prominently in the streetscene. The most northern warehouse has a gable end chimney stack. The range was later extended in the 1950s (also called **Building D**) right up to the edge of Creek, possibly as the result of Zenith occupying the site, creating the large unobstructed warehouses type for assembly favoured by the car manufacturing industry. The three warehouses present wide gables with functional but effective detailing towards the Creek. Notable is the strong horizontal emphasis of windows and the curving of the central warehouse to adjust to bend of the Creek. The buildings positively contribute in character, form and roofscape to the townscape towards both the street and the Creek.

Building B occupies the north-eastern part of the site and was the last building to be added to the site in the late 1950s or early 60s. By virtue of its location and scale, it exerts a great presence towards the Creek. Built in the modern functional style of its period, it is in massing and height a notable deviation from the other industrial buildings in the area. Although it reflects the traditional palette of materials, due to its large footprint and boxy appearance the building lacks the townscape interest created by the more traditional conjoined warehouses on the site and elsewhere in the area.

Building C consists of three conjoined traditional 2-storey warehouses standing parallel to the road. Their gables feature prominently in views from the road across the Creekside Education Centre. The warehouse fronting the street is the oldest part, dating from the late 1940s. It has tall metal workshop windows with white painted lintels and first floor banding. The red brick is laid in a traditional English bond. The two warehouses behind project slightly, with slanted elevations to take account of the route of the northern access. The second, narrower warehouse is linked to Building A by a bridge which provides an focal point in the view from the street into the site, currently enhanced by the art work to the structure. Between the building and the boundary to the Creekside Education Centre a section of a substantial stock brick and masonry boundary wall dating from the 19th century has survived.



Left: Faircharm Estate Building A fronting Creekside, and right:: Access into the estate from Creekside looking east.



Extension of Building A towards the Creek (also called Building D)



Clockwise from the top: Faircharm Estate Building B as seen from the Ha'Penny Bridge, Building C as seen from Creekside, and looking into the estate from Creekside towards the east.

The **Creekside Education Centre** was opened in 2002 on the site of former gasworks producing town gas, later known as Transco Inlet. Active gas mains run underneath making the site immune from re-development, which helped to secure it as a permanent site for the education centre. A pleasingly designed building incorporating the principles of modern sustainable construction, it has already become an important local landmark and community resource.

The character area is bounded to the north by the monumental **viaduct of the London – Greenwich railway line** which is the only listed structure (Grade II) within the proposed conservation area. The viaduct consists of a sequence of 22 feet high brick arches that carry the railway bed, enclosed by parapets. Construction was authorised by Act of Parliament in 1833 and the first section from London Bridge to Deptford opened in February 1836. The section between Deptford Creek and Church Street comprising 32 arches is usually considered the most attractive part of the viaduct. Most of the arches have remained open and allow attractive north-south views in both directions.

A Mechanic's Path runs along the southern side of the viaduct, leading to the Ha'penny footbridge that links Deptford with Greenwich. The present Ha'penny footbridge was built in 2002 to re-instate the historic pedestrian and carriage link between the two boroughs in this location. Historically, it was a toll bridge costing half an old penny (ha'penny) to cross. The previous wooden bridge was demolished some time in the 1930s.

The **vertical lifting bridge** next to it is one of the most imposing structures within the area, notably in long views from the DLR or from the Laban Centre. It was opened in December 1963 replacing a late 19th century draw bridge. The modern bridge is the third bridge in this location - like its predecessors it had to open to maintain the right of navigation on the Creek for masted boats. The lifting structure consists of four ca. 20 metres high square steel columns that contain the lifting hoists and counterweights, one pair on either side of the channel. Unfortunately, the bridge was welded shut in the late 1970s. The monumental Portland Stone pilasters underneath are the footings of the original bridge. Vertical lifting bridges are an extremely rare type of bridge and as part of this assessment, it is proposed to locally list the structure on grounds of its rarity,

engineering ingenuity and landmark character to the area.

5.2 Character Area 2: The Crossfield Estate

5.2.1 Social Housing in Deptford

Most of the pre-1945 housing stock in London was built by the LCC, created in 1889, not by the boroughs themselves, with generally smaller schemes undertaken by the metropolitan boroughs themselves. From the turn of the century, the LCC embarked on an extensive programme of slum clearance and tackling overcrowding. Soon after it undertook its first social housing project in 1896 in Bethnal Green in the East End, the LCC extended its programme to Deptford, which was then a separate Metropolitan Borough from Lewisham.

The first council housing to be built just after 1900 was off Macmillan Street. It was later absorbed in the Hughes Field Estate (today within the borders of Greenwich). The second project was Carrington House in Brookmill Road, built as a working men's hostel to accommodate 800 residents. The building is today Grade II listed on grounds of its innovative architecture.

In the 1920s, national housing policies aimed at rectifying the general housing shortage were introduced. It often involved moving people out of the congested inner city areas to the suburbs, where the County Council built cottage estates of terraced and semi-detached houses. The Downham Estate (1924-1930) on the Lewisham-Bromley border, for example, was built by the LCC to re-house working class families from Deptford and other inner parts of London as there were no suitable vacant sites available within the confined borders of Deptford.

By the 1930s, the focus shifted to the state of older housing and this decade saw a massive effort of clearance and rebuilding, primarily with multi-storey blocks of flats.

The Housing Act of 1930 (known as the Greenwood Act after Arthur Greenwood, the Labour Minister of Health) introduced a state subsidy specifically for slum clearance for the first time, including specific subsidies for the building of flats. As a result, the LCC and other local authorities proceeded in the 1930s to built apartment blocks of flats rather than cottage garden estates.¹⁵

In Lewisham and Deptford, the LCC constructed the Honor Oak Estate in Brockley spanning the Deptford-Lewisham border, the Speedwell Estate (demolished), and the Deptford Park Estate, all built in the early 1930s. In 1936 it completed the last phase of the Hughes Field Estate and after that started the construction of the Crossfield Estate.

The planning for the blocks begun as early as 1932 and focussed on the areas which the 1899 survey by Charles Booth had highlighted as the poorest with Deptford: Addey Street and Hosier Street between Church Street and Creekside south of the railways, Alvar Street and Bronze Street

¹⁵ Housing in Poplar: The Inter-war Years', Survey of London: volumes 43 and 44: Poplar, Blackwall and Isle of Dogs (1994), pp. 23-37. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=46467> Date accessed: 08 November 2010

to the north of the viaduct, and Crossfield Street, Frankham and Reginald Road west of Church Street. In the LCC minutes of 1933 the streets are described as *'very narrow and the houses, which are badly congested, are of a poor type, old and worn-out.'*¹⁶

The Crossfield Estate originally consisted of twelve blocks of flats. Two of them, Owen House (west of Congers House) and Bates House on the opposite side of Church Street appear to have been demolished in the 1970s as a result of the Church Street widening. Bevil House, which stood rather isolated at the western end of Frankham Road, has also been demolished for unknown reasons.

The development did not follow one masterplan for the area but the estate was planned as four different entities, generally referred to by the pre-existing street names ie. 'Addey Street area' and 'Bronze street area'. The name 'Crossfield' appears in minutes of 1938 when it was decided to add Frankham House to the estate for administrative purposes. The underlying design principle however for all parts was the same: to create better living and health conditions for the residents by providing adequate, well-lit and well-ventilated living space to modern standards, surrounded by ample amenity space. Each flat was provided with its own bathroom, and refuse chutes were standard provision to each block. The open green spaces to the north and south of the viaduct, arranged in these locations to create a distance to the noise and pollution caused by the trains, were a novelty to the area - unheard of in working class housing development of the 19th century - and re-shaped the character of the area.



The LCC crest and name of the estate as displayed on Castell House towards Deptford Church Street

¹⁶ LCC Housing Committee Report, dated 14 February 1933.



As part of his Inquiry into the *Life and Labour of the People of London*, Charles Booth conducted a survey of Deptford, published in 1899. It is a fascinating record of the socio-economic conditions of the area at that time. The three shades of blue indicate levels of poverty, notably in the areas that were later cleared by the LCC and re-developed with the Crossfield Estate. South of the railways, Addey Street and Hosier Street are marked as 'poor', and north of the railways residents in Alvar Street were poor, but in Bronze Street '*Very poor, casual, chronic wanted*'. West of Church Street, Reginald Street and Frankham Street were hardest hit with poverty and named as '*Lowest class. Vicious, semi-criminal*'.

5.2.2 Description

The Crossfield Estate consists today of a total of nine apartment blocks separated by Church Street and the Railway Viaduct into three separate entities.

The first group of buildings to be constructed between 1937 and 1939 were the five blocks south of the railway line east of Church Street. They consist of two U-shaped blocks, Wilshaw and Holden House west of Creekside, and three linear blocks along Church Street ie. Cremer, Castell and Brown House which at the time of their completion provided 195 units for the accommodation of

941 residents.

Although a radical change to the houses they replaced, the lay-out of the Estate incorporated remnants of the historic street pattern. The narrow cul-de-sac running north-south between Cremer, Castell and Brown House at the western side, and the east wings of Holden House and Wilshaw House on the opposite side, is the remainder of the historic Addey Street which ran through to Creekside. The slight kink towards the north-west in the arrangement of Castell and Brown House is also a reflection of the historic line of Church Street before its straightening and widening in the early 1970s.

The main vehicular access is from Creekside via two lanes north and south of Holden House leading to the central cul-de-sac. The change from industrial to housing is immediately obvious in the change in building line, with parking to the front and low front boundaries behind that create amenity space to the ground floor flats.

The three blocks east of Church Street all have the entrances arranged towards the cul-de-sac (the former Addey Street), as a result of which the Estate appears inward looking in relation to Church Street. The cul-de-sac (former Addey Street) however forms a true centre to the blocks and is one of the most distinctive features of this estate. The frontage-to-frontage arrangement of the blocks combined with the comparative narrowness of the street – a remnant of its 19th century origin – create a sense of intimacy and surveillance not usually found in housing estates of that period.



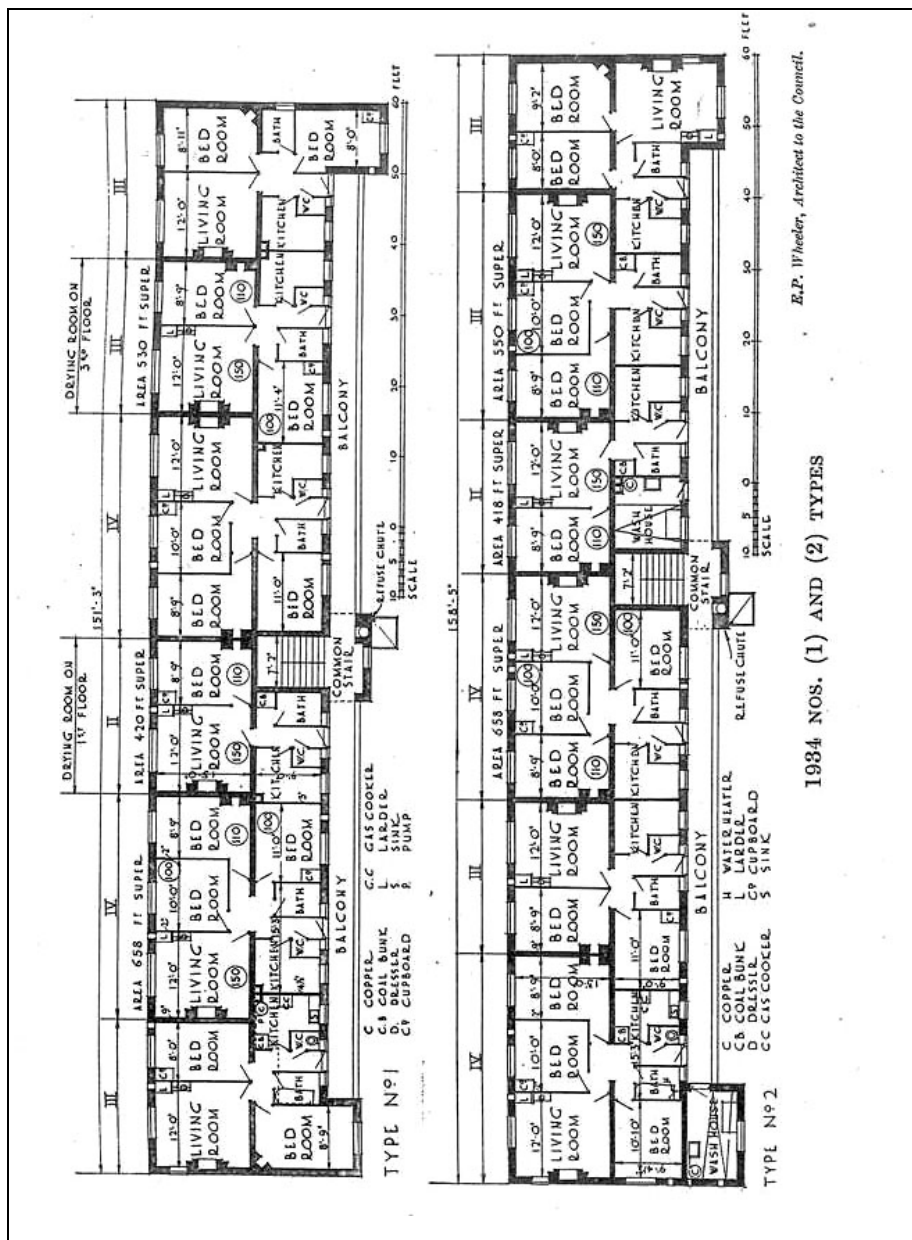
The central cul-de-sac, formerly Addey Street, which was laid out in the mid 19th century.

In other aspects, the estate followed the by then established standards of the LCC's architectural department, notably the preference for traditional solid brick buildings with open balcony access to all flats. The lay-out of the flats followed a standardised pattern of the so-called 1934 (1 and 2) type. The prevailing height of five storeys was mainly dictated by the wish to avoid the cost of installing lifts, and was supported by the widely-held belief that people could walk up as far as the fifth storey, but no higher.

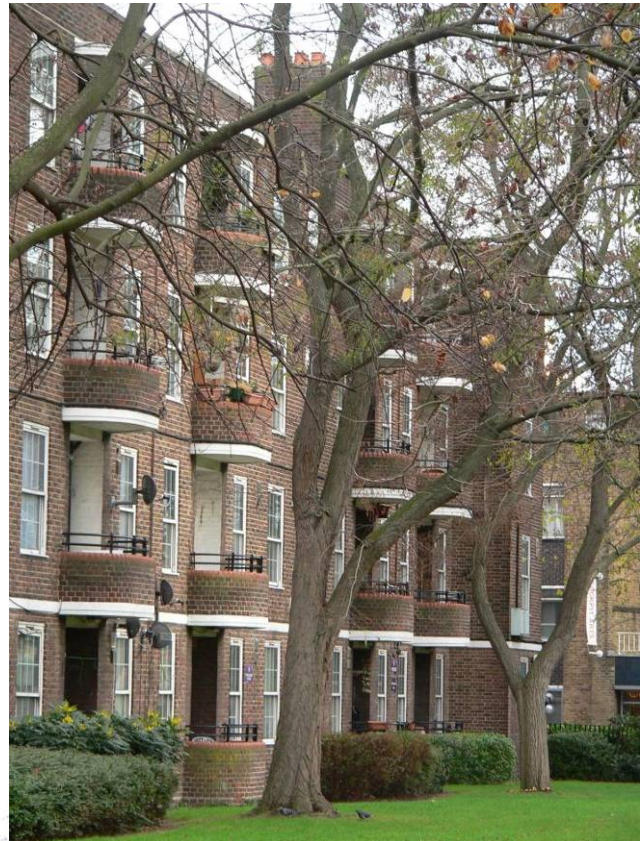
Each block has a centrally placed external stair case tower and two-bay end projections that give

the elevations a sense of 'classicism'. Red brick, hipped roof with deep overhanging eaves and Georgian-style Sash windows all add to the overall traditional appearance and solidity of the buildings.

The open access balconies are a 20th century invention and became a distinctive feature of LCC housing, adding a modern streamlined horizontal emphasis to the buildings – here highlighted by the exposed white-painted concrete floors. The curved balconies attaching to the staircase towers at Castell House were also a modest, but effective reference to the modern style. Of note are also the solid parapet walls to the balconies with purpose made triangular copings which add to the attractiveness and solidity of the buildings.



Only a great deal of standardisation enabled the LCC to undertake its extensive inter-war housing programme within a comparatively short time frame. The blocks of the Crossfield Estate were built to the so-called 1934 Type (1) and (2).



The three different types of blocks at the Crossfield Estate. Clockwise from top left: Castell House of the group of inter-war houses south of the railways; Farrer House, the last of the blocks to be built in 1949, and Congers House at Bronze Street built in the late 1940s.

Frankham House west of Church Street is stylistically similar to the above group of buildings and appears to have been built during the same period. It is an L-shaped block at the corner of Frankham Street and Church Street and had originally a counterpart at the western end of Frankham Street i.e. Bevil House.

The Second World War interrupted the construction of the Bronze Street area of the estate but resumed soon after with even greater urgency to address the acute housing shortage in the area. Congers and Finch House date from the late 1940s, though evidently built to the original plans drawn up in the early 1930s, but with more sparing detailing. The buildings still included balcony access, which by that time the LCC had increasingly avoided in favour of staircase access, but the attractive solid brick balcony walls that were used for the earlier buildings have been replaced with railings.

Farrer House was the last block to be built in 1949 and distinguishes itself from the other blocks by its more modern streamlined appearance, with curved access balconies and stair houses, and a parapet that hides the roof. Contrary to the other blocks each flat is provided with a balcony of an elegant elliptical shape that creates a strong rhythm to the south elevation.

The character area also includes the **Sue Godfrey Nature Reserve and Ferranti Park** at the northern side of Bronze Street. The area is today perceived within the context of the generous green spaces surrounding the Crossfield Estate, although historically, this site has been the location of the Trinity Almshouses (1672-1877) and some significant early industries such as the innovative Copperas Works, an early dye and chemical manufacture (from 1650-1830), which started the long history of the chemical industry in the area. By 1720, a pottery was established next to the Almshouses, producing the Deptford Ware for which the town became noted. After the 20th century slum clearances of the area and the closure of the last pottery on site in the 1960s, the site became a wasteland until it was turned into a nature park in 1984 after lengthy campaigning by local residents. A section of the north wall of the pottery survives, consisting largely of 19th century flower pots fragments, stoneware and crucibles embedded in mortar.

Next to the Sue Godfrey Nature Reserve is the modern landscaped Ferranti Park, named after Sebastian de Ferranti, the designer of the world's first high tension central generating station, once located at Creekside. The award-winning project was jointly funded by the Council and the London Development Agency and opened in 2004.

The nature reserve and park make some contribution to the character and appearance of the Crossfield Estate as recreational spaces and habitat for wildlife. The site has holds potentially some significant archaeological deposits that could contribute to the understanding of the development of settlement and land-uses of Creekside. An excavation here uncovered late 17th century or early 18th century brick walls and mortar surfaces, later 18th century brick walls, and a 19th century kiln area.

5.2.3 Crossfield and the Deptford Music Scene

The story of the Crossfield Estate does not finish with its original construction. Over the 74 years of

its existence, it has had its own eventful social history involving local activism, the ‘almost demolition’ of the Estate, and the development of a radical community art and music scene in the late 1970s and 80s that produced some of the most successful British bands in music history.

The Estate remained under GLC (the successor of the LCC) management until April 1971 when it was handed over to Lewisham Council. The condition of the buildings was by that time appalling – the day-to-day experience of its residents included blocked drains, rats, damp and fungus on the walls. One resident said ‘I have lived on this estate for 22 years. I have spent 21 of them trying to get out.’¹⁷ Following decades of lack of maintenance, the estate failed to live up to its promise to improve living conditions for the most vulnerable. Crossfield referrals to Social Services for material poverty were four times the local average.¹⁸

The plans for the Church Street widening in the early 1970s, on which they were not consulted, became the tipping point for residents to vent their pent-up anger and actively campaign for the complete demolition of the estate. Their demands found the support of Councillors and the then Chair of the Lewisham Planning Committee. Within two months of the first meeting the Council agreed to re-house all the tenants of the estate who wanted to leave. Having proved ‘unfit’ for the accommodation of families, the Council decided to offer the flats to single professional people without children. After making some minimum improvements, places at Crossfield were offered to ILEA, the Goldsmiths College and the Thames Polytechnic. A new community grew up in the estate - a constantly shifting population of students, artists, musicians, teachers and social workers who brought a new middle class segment to Deptford without the gentrification of the area and displacement of the working class community that was characteristic of the rest of the docklands. Here, key workers lived in the same conditions, or sometimes worse, than their clients and pupils.¹⁹

It also gave the momentum to the development of a radical arts and music scene that gained Deptford an almost legendary status in the 1970s and 80s. Local groups included Dire Straights, Squeeze, the Fabulous Poodles, The Realists, Electric Bluebirds and Mark Perry and his punk rock band Alternative TV. Members of the band Dire Straits lived on the estate and the band had its first gig here in 1977 on the lawn behind Farrer House. A member of the group Squeeze also lived here for a short time. Local venue was the pub The Duke (opposite the junction of Creekside and Creek Road) which hosted regular Sunday evening concerts under the management of much loved landlord Erich Höfer (1977 to 2000). He has been immortalised in the mural painted in 1982 on the side of Cremer House. Dire Straits, Squeeze and The Flying Pickets were the ones that made it beyond Deptford.

5.2.4 The Crossfield Community

Residents emphasise that the artist community that developed in the 1980s on the Estate has been more diverse than for its role in Popular and Punk Music. Establishing the full diversity could

¹⁷ Steel, p. 202

¹⁸ Ibid, p.203.

¹⁹ Ibid.

be the subject of further research and a community project. A number of residents have pointed out in discussions that the community which developed at that time laid the foundation for the Estate's interesting mix of residents and inclusiveness in terms of age, lifestyle, occupations, ethnicity, cultural and social background, for which Crossfield is much appreciated. The gay community has also laid claims on the Estate as a focus for the Deptford gay community in the 1980s, particularly Frankham House (hence the name Pink Palace for the local venue located in the building), and its role in forging an urban gay identity.

Many residents of that time have moved on now, although the Crossfield Estate is still the centre of an engaged community taking ownership and actively representing the interests of the estate and the area. The high number of right-to-buy leaseholder flats (with nearly 50 per cent significantly higher than on any of the other estates in the area) also shows that Creekside and the Crossfield have become places for living by choice, not because of the lack of it.

The Deptford Music Scene in the 1970s and 1980s

The Bluebirds existed between 1979 and 1984. Their story is told in Bobby Valentino's own words with the sleeve notes he wrote for the release of a "best of" CD in 1996. Bobby, violinist, singer, songwriter and actor born in 1954, was a founder member of the Fabulous Poodles in the 1970s and later a member of the Bluebirds in the early 1980s:

The Bluebirds (the Electric bit came later) started as a Sunday night acoustic band in a pub called The Duke on Creek Road in Deptford.

At that time Deptford enjoyed an almost legendary status, especially the 1930's council-run Crossfields estate. Due to the ominous presence of a dual carriageway running through the middle, the council had a policy of only letting to young single people and couples without children. This duly attracted students and artists of all sorts to run -down Deptford. I was lucky - I lived in Brockley!

In those days we had many local bands: Dire Straights, Squeeze, the Fab Poo's, The Realists and Mark Perry & ATV. In fact the line-up for the Crossfields Free Festival - back in '78 or '79 - was all of the above and more, performing on a makeshift stage on a perfect Sunday afternoon, with long extension leads coming from Mark Knopfler's ground floor flat powering a makeshift PA - and the beverages supplied by the Oxford Arms, another infamous local hostelry.

(Extract from The Electric Bluebirds SleeveNotes)Source:<http://www.bobbyvalentino.co.uk/electric-bluebirds-sleevenotes.html>



The mural at Cremer House of 1982 depicting a scene at the pub The Duke at Creek Road. The pub was an important venue for live music at that time and the development of Pub Rock in reaction to the

mainstream rock industry.

Dire Straits at Crossfield Estate

The members of the band lived at No. 1 Farrer House. They are representative in many aspects of the social make-up of the estate at that time: Mark Knopfler, a part time teacher and pub rock player and songwriter, his brother David Knopfler, a social worker and guitarist, and sociology undergraduate John Illsley.

The band's first gig took place in 1977 on the green behind Farrer House at the first Crossfields Free Festival – the electricity for which was provided via long extension leads from their flat, thanks to the meter having been tripped (Knopfler: by a previous tenant). At that time, they were called the Cafe Racers, the name of Mark Knopfler's previous band, and became Dire Straits soon after, for their first gig at The Albany Empire (with Squeeze)

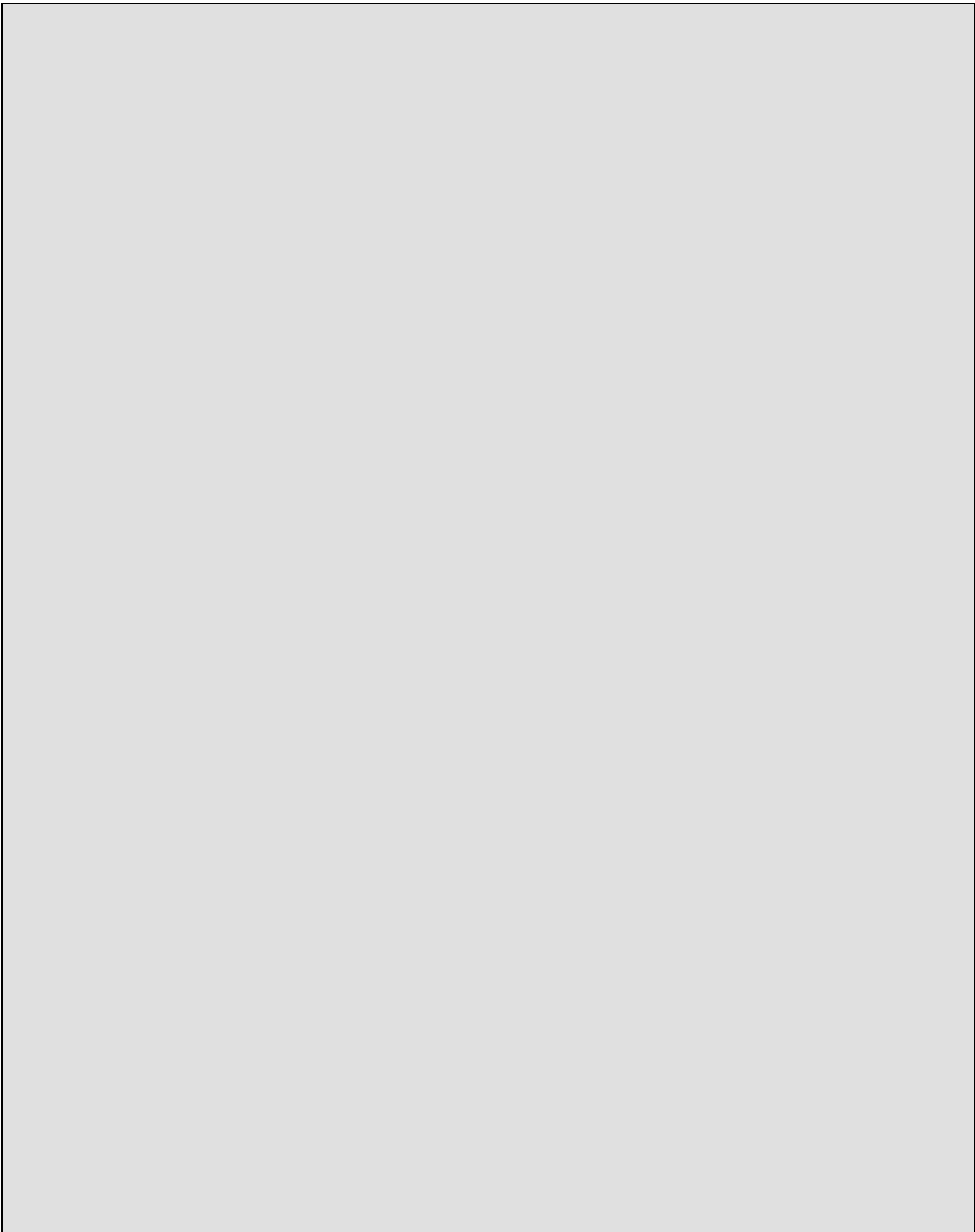
The band was propelled to stardom with their first hit 'Sultans of Swing', which was inspired by their day-to-day observations of Deptford ('*downsouth London town*').

The band's link to the estate is commemorated in the mural at the Cockpit Arts which is inspired by the band's Love Over Gold song. It was designed in 1989 by Gary Drostle in collaboration with local primary school children, and was commissioned by Lewisham Leisure, Dire Straits, the ILEA and Outset UK – the disability project which occupied the building before Cockpit Arts.



Above: Dire Straits at their first gig on the Crossfield Estate 1977. The building behind is today's Cockpit Arts. Right: On 3rd December 2009, the Performing Rights Society put up a plaque on the wall of the band's former flat as part of their programme to commemorate the places where music bands had their origins.





Lesbian and Gay Identity in Deptford's Crossfield Estate

'Deptford was very gay in the late 80's and through the 90's and the centre was Crossfield Estate, mostly concentrated on Frankham House.'

The Lewisham scheme to house single people in hard to let flats was known locally as DFRS "dykes and faggots residents scheme". This must have been the unofficial title! It was rumored that there was a very helpful Housing Officer at the time who would look favourably on applications from lesbian and gays. The scheme led to there being a community of lesbians that were known as the Deptford Dykes and if I remember correctly this was a very radical feminist group. They had the Fountain and the Dover Castle pubs on Deptford Broadway as their social spaces. When I lived in Frankham House in 1990, I knew of at least 10 flats that were still lived in by lesbians and gays creating a strong sense of community identity which was very important as this was the time of the heart of the Aids crisis.

In the 1980's and early 90's the gay community faced an onslaught by the Thatcher government through Section 28. Gay urban identity was very political. Along with our Enemy Within badges left over from the Miners' Strike, we wore pink triangles, read the Pink Paper (available at the Albany along with Capital Gay), and met in the Pink Palace. Whether Lesbian or gay, we wore Levis 501's, Doc Marten shoes, MA1 air force jackets and lived in gritty council blocks such as Frankham House. There was a strange correspondence between us as marginal people and the buildings, one of found values and mutual recognition, nobody wanted the flats and nobody wanted gay people. It was love at first sight.

At that time the Albany ran a very successful gay night called OutDance where we danced in safe spaces to Jimmy Sommerville/The Communards -You are my World. One of Jimmy Sommerville's videos showed him getting off the East London Line at Surrey Docks, we all knew he was heading for the Pepys Estate, another haven for gay people where the high rise views over the city afforded their own sense of freedom.

An early gay play on BBC Radio 3 or 4 about a gay pub in Rotherhithe The Only One South of the River and the club night, Tattooed Lover Boy in Brixton further bolstered Deptford's gay scene meaning that South Londoners forged their own identity with 'high' and 'low' culture apart from the more commercial West End. These South London venues were possible because of the concentration of lesbian and gays in places such as Crossfield and Pepys Estates. Getting home was easier and hopefully safer.'

Excerpt from: 1985-1995 A decade of Lesbian and Gay Identity in Deptford's Crossfield Estate by C. Mazeika

6 Building materials and details

6.1 Building materials

The predominant building material in the area is yellow stock and red brick of various types, which in places have been painted. The traditional brick type of the area is yellow London stock brick, evident without exception in all surviving 19th century and early 20th century structures. It is also the most consistently-used, and hence the visually most dominant, material for the boundaries in the southern part of Creekside, sometimes in combination with engineering brick.

Architectural details are often highlighted in different materials, traditionally in stone and stucco (e.g. No. 4 Creekside) or in red brick, which has been used to great effect at The Birds Nest Public House and the Edwardian APT building for structuring the elevations. The APT building also has attractive terracotta detailing, which was a popular material for embellishments in Edwardian times. The detailing of most warehouses and workshops in the area is simple, in line with their industrial-utilitarian character, and usually restricted to window arches, sills or banding.

The office building of the Medina Works was the first to use mass-produced wire-cut bricks in combination with white render not elsewhere found in the area. Wire-cut bricks and Flettons have also been used for the post-war Faircharm Estate Buildings, at the earlier buildings fronting Creekside (Building A and C) laid in a traditional English and Flemish bond.

The red brick used at the Crossfield Estate is the most commonly used for LCC housing estates of that time, displaying wide colour variations that add more to the aesthetic appeal of these buildings than is normally appreciated.

The use of stone copings for the piers at the entrance to Evelyn Wharf is notable, indicating that this once constituted an entrance for a much more substantial industrial premises. Stone cladding is used for the magnificent piers to the bridge and form part of the listed railway viaduct.

The DLR railway, the Creekside Education Centre and the recent extension to the APT building are bold additions to the area, not just as feat of modern engineering but in their use of distinctively modern materials such as concrete, cedar cladding and galvanised steel.

6.2 Windows and Doors

The simple detailing of most of the industrial buildings and of the Crossfield Estate makes the windows and doors naturally the most dominant features of the elevations. Traditionally these are timber joinery for the non-industrial buildings, usually sash or casement windows, and timber-panelled doors. The original sash windows have been retained at the Birds Nest Pub and No. 4 Creekside, while the Georgian-type windows of the Crossfield Estate have all been replaced with uPVC windows that at least reflect the original glazing pattern.

Industrial buildings have predominantly metal or Crittall windows, sometimes also metal doors, although these are usually modern replacements. The building between Evelyn Wharf and Harold Wharf, which pre-dates most of the other industrial buildings, has cast-iron windows. Windows tend to be large, either of horizontal or vertical emphasis, and subdivided into small-scale panes by slim glazing bars. They are distinctive to the industrial character of the area.

6.3 Metal Features

The use of metal is of note and associated with past and present industrial uses of the area. It is most noticeable in the traditional industrial-type windows and as roofing material, where it has been used for its cheapness. There are a number of other features, many of which have no aesthetic pretensions but are nonetheless true to the character of the area. They include the metal gates to most of the industrial premises, external metal stairs or individual features such as the loading bay constructed of steel beams to the rear of the APT building, or the water tank on the Faircharm Estate. Metal in form of galvanised steel has recently been given greater prominence with the extension to the APT building and the railings to the Creekside Education Centre, although the galvanised finish has no historic tradition.



Metal structures such as the water tank, loading bay and the crane are characteristic features in historic industrial area. Regrettably, [in 2009 the crane had to be taken down for safety reasons despite efforts by the owners to find funding for its retention.](#)



Building materials and details of the area I: Clockwise from the top: Yellow London stock brick, red brick and Terracotta have been combined at the APT Building, 6 Harold Wharf; Victorian cast-iron windows at the ancillary industrial building at 6 Harold Wharf; The impressive stone faced pilaster at the railway bridge, a remainder of the Victorian predecessor of the present bridge.



Building materials and details of the area II: Combined yellow London Stock brick and engineering brick at the railway viaduct; wire-cut brick with the old Zenith sign at the Faircharm Industrial Estate; Brick Creek wall with timber fenders

6.4 Roofscape

The roofscape of the area can be fully appreciated in long views from the DLR. As a single-phase development, the Crossfield Estate stands out in scale and common roofline to all buildings with pantile hipped roofs. The roofscape and finishes of the industrial part are much more varied and reflect the organic growth of the area. The most common shape is the pitched or hipped roof, accounting for most buildings on the Faircharm Estate and the historic industrial buildings at the southern end of Creekside. Most of the remaining roofs are flat roofed. There is a wide variety of roofing materials, many of which are of a rather poor quality, such as asphalt, metal sheeting, concrete pantiles and asbestos. Perhaps common to all is the predominant matt finish of the materials. The flat roofs at the Art Hub studios have been provided with lantern lights while most warehouses of a deeper footprint have bands of rooflights to provide natural lighting.

6.5 Boundaries

High brick boundaries enclosing the industrial premises towards the street shape much of the way Creekside is experienced as a pedestrian and greatly contribute to the character of the area. Access drives and entrances are often marked by piers with copings, a particular good example of which is the entrance to Evelyn Wharf. Most of the walls have simple brick on edge copings or use engineering bricks with rounded edges.

At the residential premises, boundaries are generally low and tend to be built in brick or railings, or a combination of the two. They are an integral feature to the Crossfield Estate used to separate public spaces from semi-public spaces.

The modern railings to the Creekside Education Centre with the beautifully designed gate have become a key feature to the area, introducing a greater sense of permeability to the area as has historically been the case while making references to the local tradition in the reclaimed stock brick for the piers.

6.6 Historic paving

The area possesses valuable survivals of elements of historic streetscape. Creekside has retained long stretches of historic granite kerbs while many of the smaller premises and wharfs are noticeable for the survival of granite setts, usually at the crossovers. Evelyn Wharf has had granite setts preserved that cover nearly the entire service yard. Other yards have mainly modern floor treatments, although granite setts may still be in existence underneath. These elements make an important contribution to the character of the area and should be uncovered and retained wherever possible.

6.7 River-related structures and furniture

The Creek is embanked throughout, traditionally with timber or brick walls with wooden fenders that protected ship and barges against damage as they pulled into the dock. Many of the traditional walls were replaced in the 20th century with steel pile sheeting, although some large sections have now been re-instated in timber under previous regeneration schemes. Some of the most historic and unchanged parts around Theatre Wharf, Evelyn Wharf, Harold Wharf and the wharf at the Faircharm Estate have large sections lined in stock brick dating from the 19th century, one part of it, at the Faircharm Estate with masonry footings). Stone copings within the walls indicate the historic height of the walls which was raised in the 20th century for flood protection. A number of features relating to previous uses, such as mooring rings and hooks, also survive, some of which are kept in continued use by the present river users.

The visually most prominent river-related structure is no doubt the railway lifting bridge, a key feature and local landmark of the area. The section of the river bed underneath has been lined with masonry, which is not found elsewhere within the Creek. The stones are not keyed into the neater masonry finish of the present bridge structure and in some cases stones appear to have been smashed at the junction with the abutments, which could indicate that the bed pre-dates the present bridge piles and was probably related to the first railway bridge of 1838.



Left: Historic granite setts and kerb at Greenwich MOT

Right: The fading sign of Evelyn Wharf and the historic street sign of 'Creek Street' painted on the wall of the workshop building at Evelyn Wharf



6.8 Murals and Graffiti

Since the 1980s the area has had a tradition of buildings and structures being embellished with artworks, usually in form of murals and graffiti. Early examples are mainly in or around the Crossfield Estate e. g. the elevation of the 'Pink Palace' at Frankham House, the murals at Cremer House or the 'Love over Gold' mural at the Cockpit Arts building. Since the transformation of Creekside into an art hub, graffiti that advertises the creative spirit of the area now covers significant parts of the Faircharm Industrial Estate's front elevation and extends to other structures in the area, and has become an established part of the appearance of the area.



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7 Condition of the conservation area and opportunities for enhancement

The character area appraisal focuses mainly on the positive aspects of the conservation area, although the area contains a number of key sites and features whose enhancement could significantly contribute to strengthening the character and appearance of the area.

The Gibbes / Skill Centre Island in its present form makes a negative contribution to the area and the sympathetic and sustainable re-development of this historically so important site has the potential to significantly enhance the appearance of the southern end of the Creek.

Next to it at **Theatre Wharf**, to the right of the 'Big Red' bus, historic maps show that there was once open access and views onto the Creek from Church Street. An improvement to the present boundary and better accessibility to the water edge could re-instate this historic viewpoint onto the Creek.

At the entrance to Creekside, the **green strip of land east of Church Street** is the remainder of the 19th century properties that were cleared in the 1970s for the widening of the street. It's unkempt appearance and lack of context detracts from the area and the sensitive landscaping or re-development that would re-create a proper enclosure to Church Street could bring about a great enhancement to the streetscene.

The metal sheet structure that partly encloses and covers the **remainder of the former Addey Street between Greenwich MOT and the Medina Works** is of no significance to the area and makes a neutral contribution. The site presents an opportunity for creating a north-south link from the Crossfield Estate to Creekside, thus re-instating the historic street pattern, or sensitive re-development.

The widening of **Deptford Church Street** in the 1970s and change into a dual carriageway has isolated Creekside (the area) from the rest of Deptford ever since. Any landscaping measures that could mitigate this effect would be of benefit to the appearance of the conservation area as to the wider area.

Some **street surfaces** are in need of sympathetic repair and renewal. Where historic materials such as granite kerbstones and granite setts survive in situ, great care should be taken that these are retained and appropriately repaired. At a number of service yards, granite setts appear to survive underneath modern surface treatments. Their uncovering is actively encouraged. Granite kerbs should be restored where they have been replaced in concrete. Some pedestrian areas have been laid in concrete block paving, and these should be replaced with paving of a more appropriate design and material when the opportunity arises.

Lack of maintenance is evident in the wharfs and premises at the southern end of Creekside, notably the lack of pointing. Many of the historic metal windows are also in need of repair. Poor quality windows, such as those inserted at residential building at Greenwich MOT, detract from the character of the area. The character of No. 2 Creekside (former Sun Wharf) is affected by the stacked containers behind the former entrance to the wharf and the area could be much enhanced by a sympathetic infill that could provide a permanent space to accommodate the present uses on the site.

Restoration of historic painted signs (e.g. Evelyn Wharf) or the re-instatement of lost key features, such as the crane at Harold Wharf, could help to strengthen the character and distinctiveness of the area.

The Crossfield Estate offers the opportunities for a number of improvements, notably the rationalisation of recent signage, restoration of original features such as the metal and ceramic estate signage, better management of refuse and car parking arrangements, more appropriate lighting/paving and provision of secure cycle parking. The elegant LCC crest and name of the estate pictured on page 50 is a key feature and should be restored with its original paint colours, which have long faded.

The natural environment of the Creek has been suffering over the last decade due a lack of strategic overview and commitment to environmental responsibilities, putting even the Creek's most famous protected species, the Black Redstart, at risk. Future management proposals for the area should seek to ensure that the protection and enhancement of the conservation area and economic and social improvements are sought jointly with improvements to the natural environment, and appropriate mitigation measures are put in place in new development.

8 Sources and References

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<http://www.bobbyvalentino.co.uk/electric-bluebirds-sleevenotes.html>, accessed 13.10.11

8.3 Guidance Documents

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English Heritage, 2011, *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*;

English Heritage, 2011, *Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments – Principles and Practice*

9 Useful Contacts

The Building Conservation Directory

01747 871717

www.buildingconservation.com

English Heritage

020 7973 3000 or 0870 333 1181

www.english-heritage.org.uk

www.helm.org.uk (EH Guidance Library)

Register of Architects Accredited in Building Conservation

01625 523784

www.aabc-register.co.uk

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors

020 7222 7000

www.rics.org

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)

020 7377 1644

www.spab.org.uk

The Twentieth Century Society

020 7250 3857

www.c20society.org.uk

The Victorian Society

020 8994 1019

www.victorian-society.org.uk