

LEE MANOR SOCIETY



105 Burnt Ash Road
Lee
London SE12 8RA
March 25 2010

Planning Service
London Borough of Lewisham
Laurence House
1 Catford Road
London SE6 4RU

Dear Sirs,

Lee Manor Society's response to Lewisham's Core Strategy Development Plan – Proposed
Submission Version of February 2010

We commented on the first version of the core strategy in quite wide-ranging terms. We have fewer and slightly more specific comment on the current document. First though, we welcome the commitment to maintaining the borough's historic fabric, conservation areas and good design. We can only hope that the quality of decisions taken in planning committee and by officers acting under delegated powers matches up these high ideals. Often they do; sometimes they don't.

Specifically:

1. Under 4C. Protect and enhance Lewisham's character, para 6.105 (page 62)
This section refers to the District Hub conservation areas of Blackheath, Forest Hill and Sydenham that "will be managed in accordance with its management plan and the Council will prepare a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to provide detailed design guidance."

Lee Green hub is also very close to a conservation area, the Lee Manor CA, the character of which would also be affected by any redevelopment of Leegate and developments generally at the cross roads. The recent review of the CA led to its extension closer to the crossroads. In fact, in 2007, so concerned were we at the neglect of the crossroads that we drew up a draft design brief to outline what we felt should be done. Our hope was that this would prompt the council into drawing up its own design brief for the area but we were told no funds were available. Our design brief is available on our website, www.leemanorsociety.org. Since drawing up this document we have installed an interpretation panel at the crossroads and applied for the listing of the two Tigers' Heads pubs.

We therefore urge the council to include Lee Green in its design guidance programme and to prepare an SPD for the Lee Green district hub in order to ensure that high quality design standards are applied in any redevelopment. This would ensure that Lee Green receives equal treatment with the three CAs already so covered.

2. Open space and biodiversity. Para 6.90 (page 62)

This section states that “The emphasis within the District Town Centres will be to protect the existing open spaces from development ... Publicly accessible open or civic space will need to be provided where major development is proposed.”

And later under Core Strategy Policy 15 District Hubs 4d (page 115)

“Developments ... [should] ensure new development at: Lee Green improves the civic space and connections between sites with mixed use development.”

We welcome this commitment to high quality civic space in general and at Lee Green in particular.

Early indications for the proposed development at Leegate suggest options involving removal of a public passageway and reduction in the size of the square at the centre. The society would oppose this and regards the wording of the core document is very useful in supporting our case.

3. Core Strategy Policy 12 Open space and environmental assets (page 102)

This section makes reference to the fact that “in recognising the strategic importance of the natural environment and to help mitigate against (sic) climate change the Council will: ..b. green the public realm.” Later section 2f states that this will be achieved by “protecting trees and preventing the loss of trees of amenity value.”

We welcome this commitment to the borough’s trees. Lee and Lee Manor CA are characterised by large numbers of street trees and several impressive avenues of mature trees on streets or neighbouring strips of grassland. They are however under constant threat from pollution, vehicle damage and simple old age. There needs therefore to be a coherent programme of replacing ailing trees and planting new ones to increase the density of tree cover. We hope that this will be furthered by the statements in this document.



Charles Batchelor
Chairman