

WOOLWICH - The Challenges

Cllr David Gardner, October 2021

Woolwich Town Today

- Great History
- Maritime setting
- Industrial decline
- Changing High Street
- Connectivity - Woolwich as a Hub
- Patchwork of Regeneration
- Heritage
- Missing Links
- Major Challenges



Old Woolwich



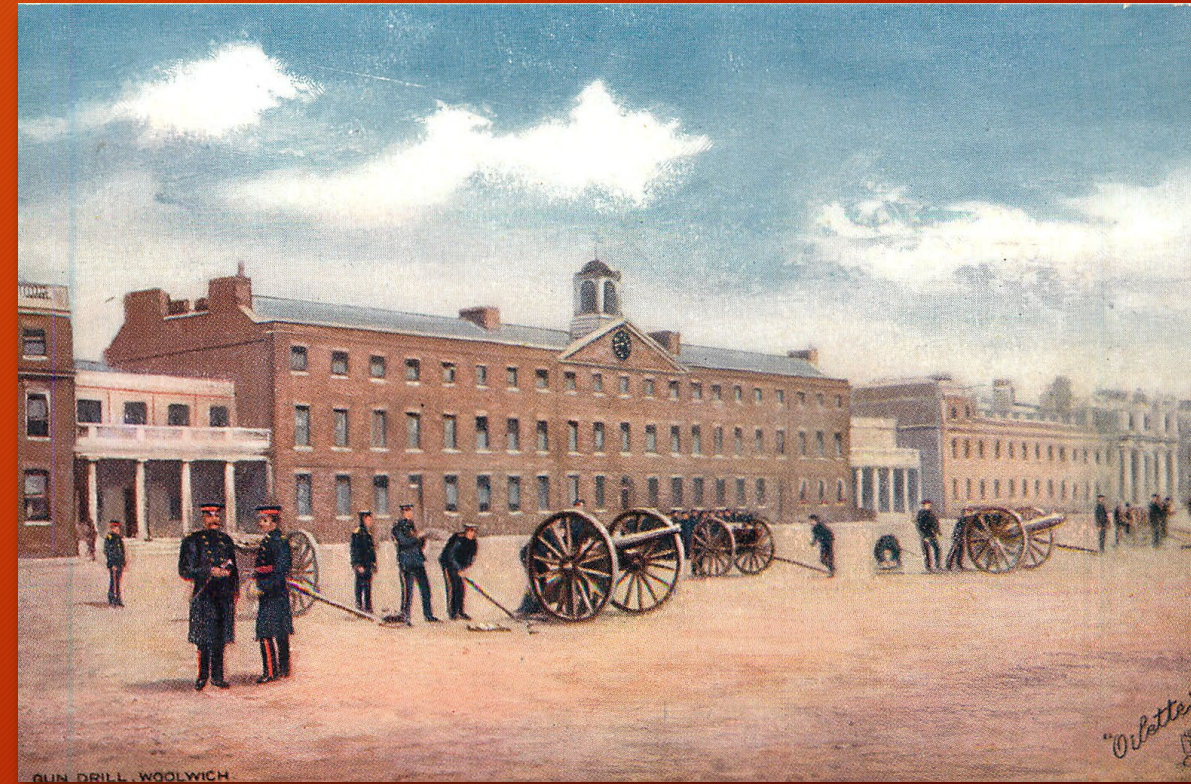
Royal Horse Artillery Review at the Royal Military Academy, 1850

Booth's Poverty Map 1889. (Black - poorest; Red - richer)



Woolwich through the Ages

- Settled in iron age, celtic fort, Saxon burials. Woolwich = Trading place for Wool (Anglo-Saxon)
- 1512 - Woolwich Dockyard; Henry VIII - “Great Harry”
- 1618 - Charter for Woolwich Market
- 1650s - Ordnance Board proving guns in The Warren leading to arms factories named Royal Arsenal in 1805
- 1716 - Royal Artillery formed establishing new Royal Military Academy in 1806 and building Royal Artillery Barracks in 1776.
- 1868 - Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society started
- 1849 - North Kent railway line opened and in 1889 the Woolwich Free Ferry established (DLR came in 2009)
- 1886 - Arsenal FC founded by workers in Royal Arsenal
- 1891 - Woolwich Polytechnic established later becoming Thames Poly then University of Greenwich
- 1900 - Metropolitan Borough of Woolwich established from parishes of Woolwich, Plumstead and Eltham. Town Hall opened in 1905.
- 1847 - Woolwich Building Society established, new HQ at Equitable House opened in 1935. Moved to Bexleyheath in 1989.



Woolwich on Thames

Where Woolwich began

From the Thames Barrier to Thamesmead,
Woolwich has 3Km of Thames riverfront

The Royal Arsenal, Waterfront/Ferry and
Woolwich Dockyard

Thames Clipper terminus on Royal Arsenal
Pier, Woolwich Ferry, Thames Path/Q14

Royal Arsenal Conservation Area

Woolwich Works Creative District

Charlton Riverside - Art Hub



Decline

Royal Arsenal closed 1994; Ordnance factory in 1967.
Employed 80,000 people in WW1! 32500 in WW2.

Morgan Grampian publishers moved, became Vista

Woolwich Building Society moved to Bexleyheath

Greenwich University moved to Old Royal Naval College

RACS merged and closed Department stores

Army Presence downsized and Royal Artillery moved

Questionable redevelopments of Woolwich Common,
Connaught, Woolwich New Road (photo) etc.



Woolwich New Road by Chris Mansfield

Changing High Street

Powis Street c1900

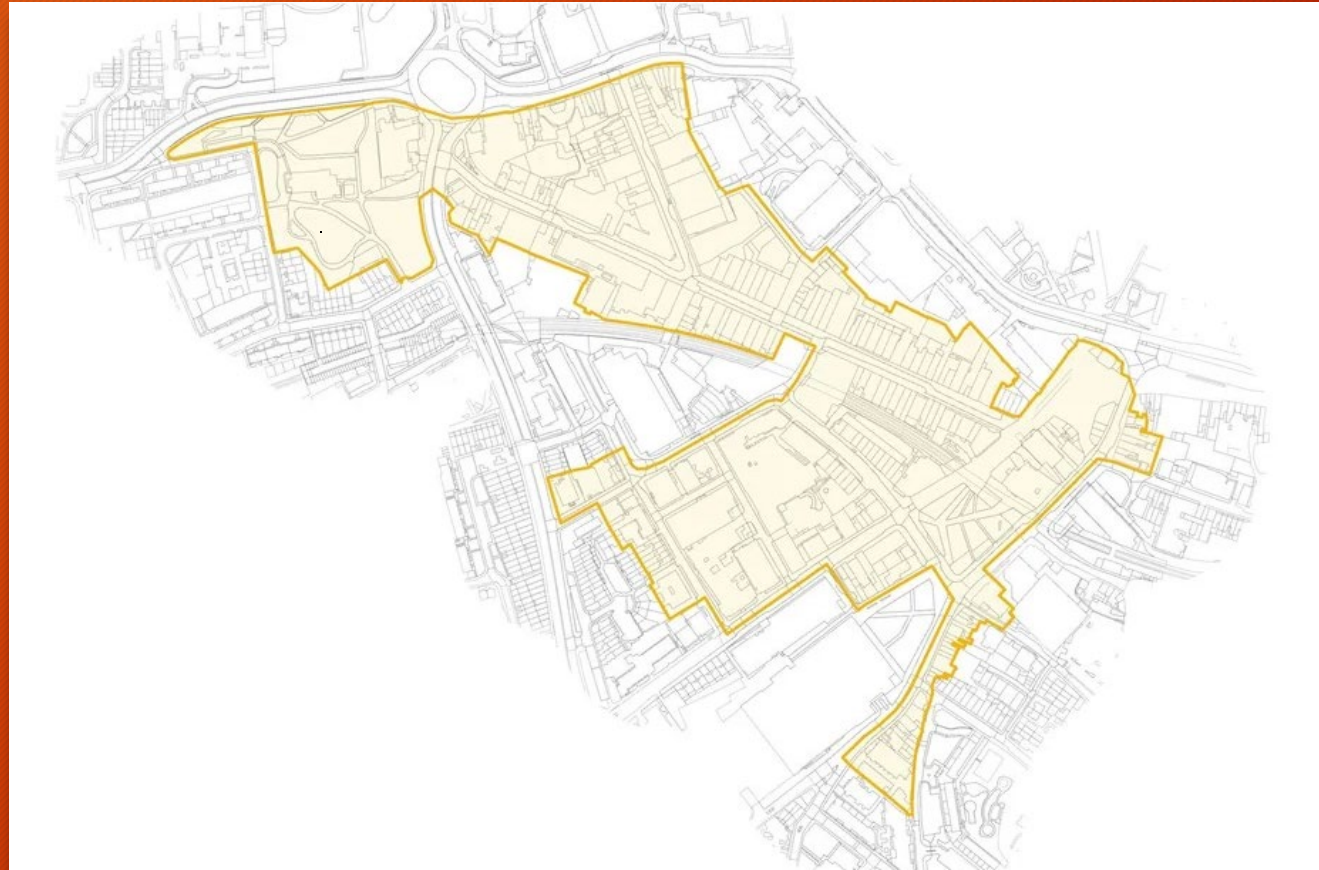


c.2020



Changing High Street

- Named after the Powis brothers (brewers)
- Most shops built in 1890s
- 1974 First UK McDonalds opened
- 1980s refresh now looking tired - closure of Garrets; Cuffs and RACS
- Challenges to all High Streets - out of town followed by movement online
- Stratford Westfield + Charlton Riverside
- Heritage Action Zone - Historic England Funding (shopfronts etc.)
- £17.15m from Future High Streets Fund
- Desperate need for a Business Improvement District (BID) to develop Woolwich as a Destination



Connected Woolwich Hub

Woolwich will be very well connected - Kent, East London, Central London, Heathrow, Luton etc.

PTAL rating of 6A (passenger transport accessibility level) = High density + car-free development

19 bus routes

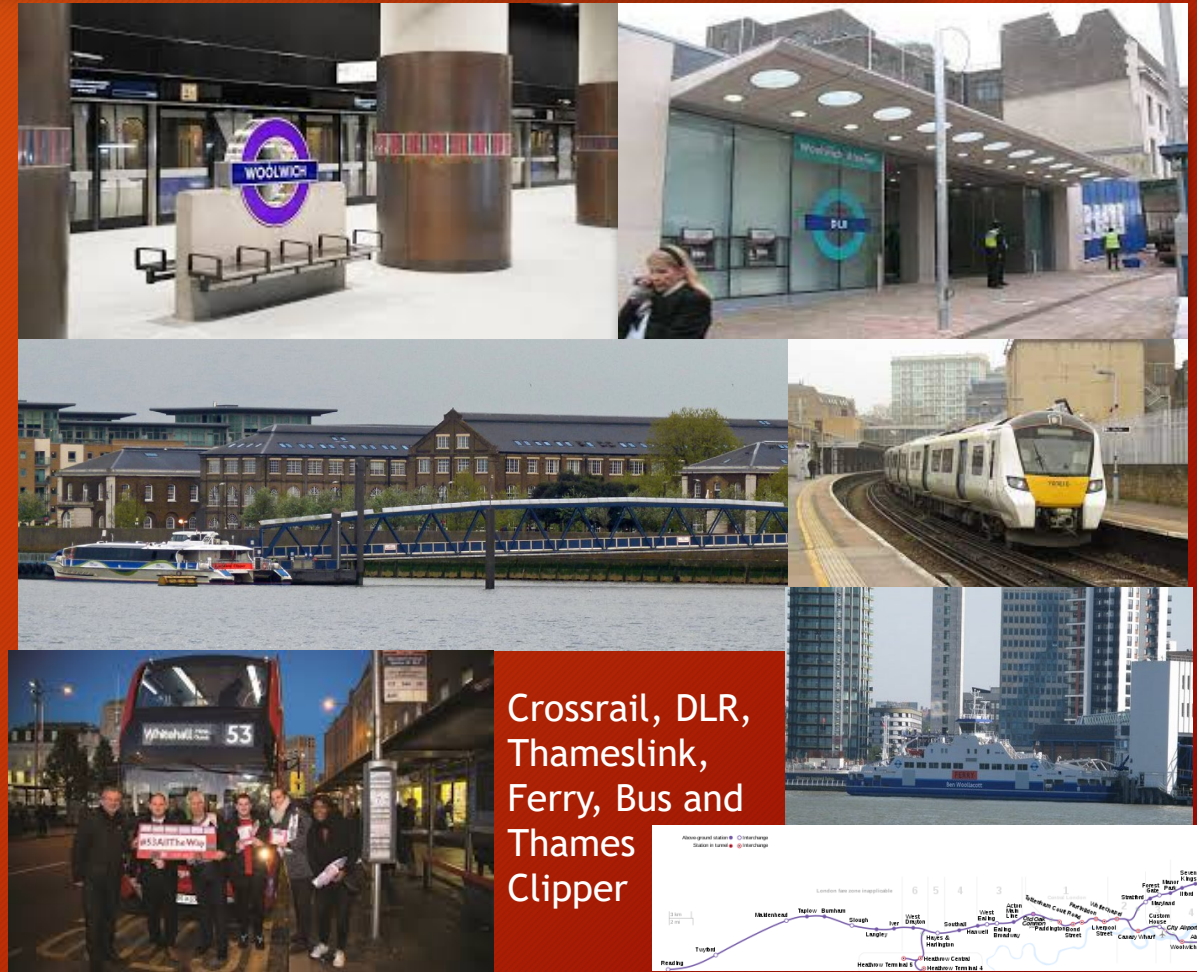
Cycle - C4 from central London; Q1; Q14 (Thames) and new Woolwich Quietway QE - River.

DLR in 2009; Thameslink in 2019 and Crossrail 2022

Campaign for Woolwich Crossrail station funded locally - 20m to Bond Street; 45m to Heathrow

Safeguarded extension to Ebbsfleet

South Circular and ULEZ



Crossrail, DLR,
Thameslink,
Ferry, Bus and
Thames
Clipper

Patchwork of Regeneration

Restoration of Royal Arsenal

Restoration of Royal Military Academy

Woolwich Central (Tesco, “Carbuncle”?) + tower?

Woolwich Exchange

“Woolwich Estates” - Connaught (now Trinity Walk),
Morris Walk and Charlton’s Maryon Grove

Woolwich Leisure Centre + allied residential

Revamping of General Gordon Square

Height, density and low provision for family housing



Woolwich Heritage



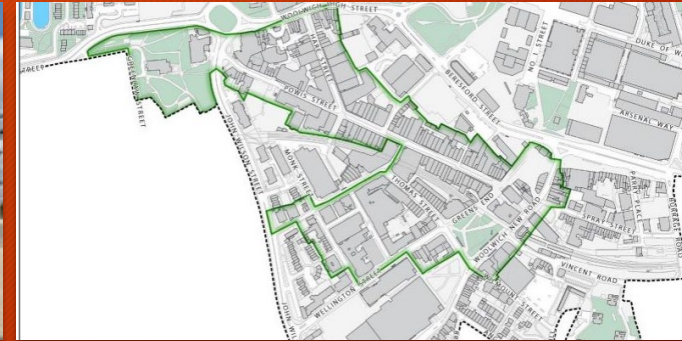
Woolwich Common CA

Includes Barracks, Royal Military Academy, Connaught Mews, Woolwich Common, Royal Herbert Pavilion, Rotunda, Woodhill, Mulgrave Pond etc.



Royal Arsenal CA

Includes No.1 Street and all the historic buildings in the Royal Arsenal



Woolwich CA (New)

Includes Bathway/Civic Quarter; St.Peter's Church; General Gordon and Beresford Squares; Powis and Hare Streets; St.Mary's Church

79 statutorily listed buildings in Woolwich on Historic England register

The Missing Links

An Updated Masterplan - Strategic Planning Document
(last one 2012 - ambition of Metropolitan Centre)

An overarching vision - some work done in 2018/9

The divide between Royal Arsenal and Town Centre

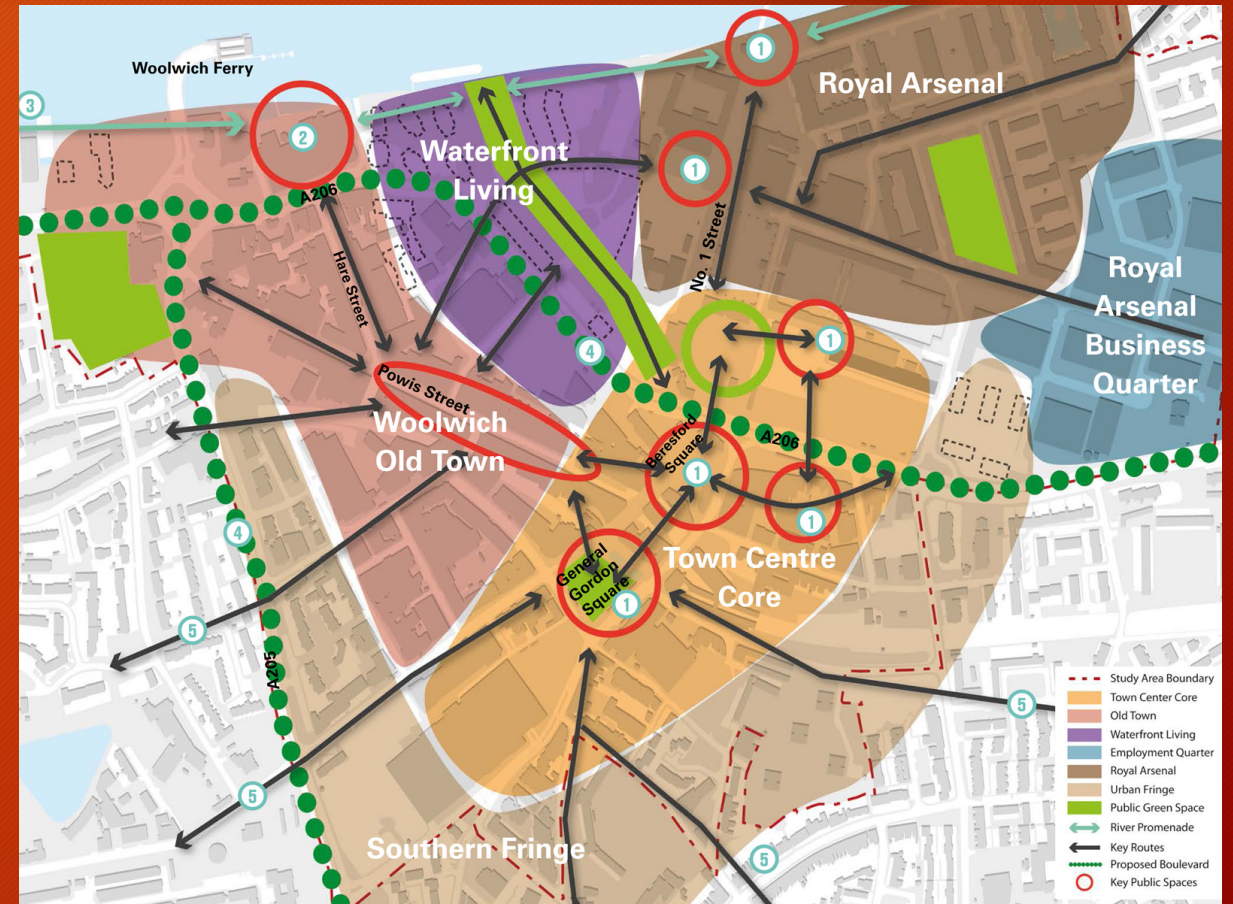
Good pedestrian and cycling links across Woolwich

Better and more Green spaces

Local ownership - Civic Capacity; Community-led

Night-time economy (new cinema coming)

Meantime uses



Challenges and Opportunities

- A Woolwich Business Improvement District
 - Provide impetus for marketing Woolwich as a destination
 - Incorporate British Land (Powis St), Berkely Homes (RA), Tesco and independents
- A Visionary Masterplan
 - Woolwich Boulevard (Wellington St. to RA Pier)
 - Rethinking the Divide
 - Genuine mix of housing - height?
 - Sustainable Development - avoiding dormitory communities
 - Great design reflecting the heritage
 - Night-time economy, café culture and animation
- Community Leadership
 - A Woolwich Society or Woolwich Together?
 - Speak Out Woolwich
 - Woolwich & District Antiquarians (WADAS)
 - Resident Groups and Faith groups



And Coming Soon

- Crossrail 2022, new DLR trains as well
- Woolwich Exchange and Picturehouse
- New Woolwich Leisure Centre 2025
- Refurbished and extended Tramshed
- Woolwich Works and Punchdrunk
 - But what about Heritage Centre?
- Future High Street Fund and Heritage Action Zone investment
- Another Woolwich Central (Meyer Homes) application
- Government plans to sell Barracks and MoD land by 2028
- *New Masterplan/ SPD*

