

**GLA 73 Greenwich Park, Candidate LIGS**

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Royal Borough of Greenwich, TQ 390 774  
Ownership: The Royal Parks

Greenwich Park is designated a LIGS because of the many different geological strata that under lie it. It is situated on the southern limb of the London Basin syncline, with the Greenwich Fault adjacent to the north, just outside the park perimeter. The Greenwich Fault is one of the three main en-echelon faults in the southern part of the Basin. The north-west facing escarpment of the park provides fine views of the city skyline, and beyond.

West of Greenwich, the chalk of the London Basin makes a rare appearance near the surface (in the Ravensbourne Valley) and is then overlain by Paleocene and Eocene strata, the oldest being Thanet Sands which form a relatively narrow band running across the lawns on the lower plain in the north, beneath the Head, and lying just beneath the surface at the northeast tip of the park. Overlying these to the south is the Lambeth Group which outcrops along the lower slopes of the escarpment. These beds are composed of a variable series of impermeable clays, loams, sands and pebble beds. The most extensive deposits capping the whole of the southern plateau of the park are the Blackheath beds of the Harwich Formation, which are composed of pebble beds and sand which can contain fossils although none are recorded from Greenwich Park. The beds have been worked extensively for gravel both on Blackheath Common and the southern part of Greenwich Park and the workings are manifest in the landscape as small hollows some of which have been utilised as ponds. The permeable Blackheath beds are more resistant to erosion and form the high ground and top of the steep scarp slopes within Greenwich Park. The youngest strata, just beyond the northern edge of the park, are the flood plain gravels, a Pleistocene drift deposit which sits on the Thames flood plain terrace. The gravels extend from the edge of the River under the Royal Naval College and the Queen's House, and form a narrow band just outside, and parallel with, the northern boundary of the park. Head (mixed material derived from the slope) covers the artificially levelled former parade ground to the south of the National Maritime Museum. Chalk would have appeared in the valley of the Thames in the northern limits of the park but a fault line that runs northeast/southwest beneath the National Maritime Museum takes the Chalk to greater depths to the north. Within the park it is covered by Head. On the plateau in the southern part of the park, Blackheath pebbles can be found on eroded paths from the sand and gravel of the Harwich Formation.

There are springs between the Harwich and Lambeth Group, which have been used, historically, via a conduit system and reservoir, to supply water to Greenwich Palace and the Royal Military Hospital. (One conduit was used as an air raid shelter during WW2.) The 'Standard Reservoir' storage building still stands in the park (TQ 3863 7727). Several quarries were once excavated for gravel, at least one of which can be identified in the Dell near to the Ranger's House (TQ 3905 7672). Another has been used to create the Lake. A dry valley – East Coombe – can be identified in the park (TQ 3898 7746), a few yards to the north east of the One Tree Hill viewpoint (TQ 3891 7739)

**Access:**

There are some designated cycle routes within the park, and many tarmac paths. Blackheath Avenue is often busy with cars and coaches. There are several flights of stairs and steeply-sloped paths. Grass slopes can become slippery when wet.

Access is available during park opening hours. (Some areas have restricted access.)

The park is open every day from 06.00. Closing times vary from 18.00 Nov-Feb to 21.30 Jun-Jul. Buses 129, 177, 180, 188, 199, 202, 286, 386 all pass close to the park. Nearest rail stations are Greenwich to the west, Maze Hill to the north-east, Blackheath to the south and Cutty Sark (DLR), all a short walk from the park. The park can be reached by riverboat to Greenwich Pier from Westminster, Embankment or Tower Piers, and on foot from the opposite Thames bank via the Woolwich foot tunnel.

Greenwich Park is one of eight Royal Parks in London, within UNESCO World Heritage Site, Historic England Grade 1 listed park. The Green Chain Walk runs close by on Blackheath.

**Geotrail** is free to download from LGP website: [www.londongeopartnership.org.uk/geotrails/#greenwich](http://www.londongeopartnership.org.uk/geotrails/#greenwich)



**Site of possible quarry face exposure at The Dell  
(also beneficial for bees if cleared) TQ3903 7671**



**View across London from One Tree Hill**



**Indicating one of several springs near to 'Standard  
Reservoir' building TQ 3863 7727**



**Indicating break of slope above parade ground**

Site Map

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