

County: Greater London **Site Name:** Gilbert's Pit (Charlton)

District: Greenwich

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Local Planning Authority: London Borough of Greenwich

National Grid Reference: TQ 418786 **Area:** 5.2 (ha) 12.8 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1: 50 000: 177 **1: 10 000:** TQ 47 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1953 **Date of Last Revision:** 1975

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985 **Date of Last Revision:** -

Other Information:

A Geological Conservation Review site. There are several minor boundary amendments from the former site known as Charlton Sand Pit.

Reasons for Notification:

Gilbert's Pit provides one of the most complete sections through the Lower Tertiary beds in the Greater London area. It forms a key Tertiary site for stratigraphic studies and is particularly important for a palaeogeographic reconstruction of the Woolwich and Reading Beds.

The site covers a disused pit cut into a sequence of Lower Tertiary sediments dating from approximately 55 million years ago. Faces are present on the eastern and southern sides and rise to over 20 metres above the pit floor. A narrow causeway separates the eastern exposures from an abutting face of a second pit at Maryon Park.

The faces provide a sequence from the Chalk, through overlying Thanet Sands and Woolwich Beds, to a capping of Oldhaven (Blackheath) Beds on the highest parts. Some of the beds are highly fossiliferous yielding plant, sponge, mollusc, fish and reptile remains. The Woolwich Beds, in particular, are noted for an abundant but very low-diversity brackish water molluscan fauna. These Beds also contain a number of named subdivisions which include the Woolwich Shell Bed and Striped Loams (Leaf-bed of Lewisham).

The site has attracted scientific study for over 120 years and a substantial amount of literature has been published on the various geological features present. The fossil fauna has been described in particular detail.