historical character & identity

Bethnal Green was once a quiet rural hamlet within the Manor of Stepney. In the 16th and 17th centuries, wealthy merchants or courtiers built mansions within easy reach of the City.

Many of the buildings, streets and locations within Bethnal Green echo the social circumstances and character of a particular period. Of 16th century origin, Netherswell House in Old Ford Road is a reminder of rural Bethnal Green and its elevated status during Elizabeth times. While the impressive 1839 church St John on Bethnal Green designed by Sir John Soane, was built in response to the area’s swiftly growing population.

Bethnal Green’s suburban status began to change in the 18th century through the huge immigration of Huguenot weavers, whose centre was the nearby hamlet of Spitalfields. During this century Bethnal Green changed more markedly than any other East End village and by the end of the century was a place with an extremely high mortality and overcrowding rate.

19th century industrial and commercial might is reflected in the form of the V&A Museum of Childhood with its iron frame and construction, while Bethnal Green’s social history is reflected in the 19th century Columbia Road Flower Market. The 20th century is represented in the community hub of York Hall, while Bethnal Green Station itself which used as an air raid shelter, was the site of a major disaster when on the night of the 3rd March 1943, 174 people died the largest death toll among civilians during the war.

landscape & open space

A considerable number of open spaces are located within Bethnal Green. The largest of these open spaces are Weavers Fields and Bethnal Green Gardens, which are known as district parks due to their medium size. Both these parks contain children’s play spaces and playing fields and pitches.

Bethnal Green also encompasses a number of smaller neighbourhood parks including Museum Gardens, Ion Square Gardens and Warner Green Open Space. Two churchyards in Bethnal Green also provide valuable open space and the area also contains a number of children’s play places distributed throughout the area. The northern section of Bethnal Green contains the least amount of open space, although this area is located within close proximity to Victoria Park and Hackney City Farm, of which the latter is located in the London Borough of Hackney.

Bethnal Green includes a moderate proportion of water space frontage, with the Regents Canal running to the north of the area.
heritage & townscape

The town centre in Bethnal Green is lively, with a mix of shops, restaurants and bars along Bethnal Green Road and is located within close proximity to the busy Brick Lane area. Bethnal Green Road also has a street market that operates daily. The Cambridge Heath Road area consists of a small mix of shops, restaurants and bars close to the station. Bethnal Green is also known for its art galleries, including the V&A Museum of Childhood and a collection of small independent galleries and studio space, which are concentrated around the Vyner Street area. The side streets in and around Bethnal Green are predominantly quiet residential streets, of which the housing stock consists largely of medium to low rise post-war housing estates and Victorian terrace housing.

Bethnal Green is protected by a number of Conservation Areas, including Bethnal Green Gardens, Old Bethnal Green Road, Hackney Road, Regents Canal and part of Jesus Hospital Estate. The Bethnal Green Gardens Conservation Area contains a series of significant statutory listed civic buildings, including the V&A Museum of Childhood and the Town Hall, which along with their gardens are the highlights of the area, as well as the St John's Church (which is Grade I listed).

block pattern & movement

Bethnal Green suffers from vehicular traffic, like much of Tower Hamlets. This is primarily caused by the key east-west links of Hackney Road and Bethnal Green Road and the key north-south link of Cambridge Heath Road. These three roads are classified as highways. Residents of Bethnal Green are however well connected by public transport, with two British Rail stations and one London Underground station.

The block pattern in Bethnal Green is a mix of medium and large size blocks, like much of Tower Hamlets and hence suffers from permeability. In particular north-south movement is hindered. Many of the larger post-war housing blocks also contain cul-de-sacs, in which ease of movement is often compromised for pedestrians and cyclists.

Regents Canal lies to the north of Bethnal Green. The northern side of the canal (which is located in Old Ford) is accessible via the towpath, which is a key east-west link for cyclists and pedestrians.

| Conservation Areas | Statutory Listed Buildings | Locally Listed Buildings | World Heritage Sites | Ancient Monuments | Archaeological Priority Area | Blocks | Waterways | Railways | Fen's | Highways | Strategic Walkways | TFL London Cycle Routes | Local Cycle Routes | Blocks | Waterways | Railway lines |
historical character & identity

To the east of Bethnal Green lies Globe Town. This area was established in 1800 to provide for the expanding population of weavers around Bethnal Green, attracted by improving prospects in the silk trade. The population of Bethnal Green trebled between 1801 and 1831, operating 20,000 looms in their own homes.

By 1824, with restrictions on importation of French silks relaxed, up to half these looms became idle, and prices were driven down. With many importing warehouses already established in the district, the abundance of cheap labour was turned to boot, furniture and clothing manufacture. Globe Town continued its expansion into the 1860s, long after the decline of the silk industry.

Designated as a Conservation area, historical maps of 1819 show small houses built around Globe Road. When slum clearances increased up to 1900, initiatives to produce working-class housing schemes were explored. This was attempted by Samuel Barnett's East End Dwellings Company with the red brick tenements around Globe Road in the 1880s. The majority of the residential development was constructed by this company between 1900 and 1906.

landscape & open space

Meath Gardens is the largest park in Globe Town and is classified as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). The facilities in Meath Gardens include a playing field and a small children's play space. Globe Town has few other parks within it's borders, but is located within close proximity to Victoria Park and Mile End Park (both MOL), which have a large range of recreational spaces and are known for their biodiversity. Globe Town has an even distribution of small children's play spaces spread throughout the area.

Approach Road is well known for it's tree lined vista to Victoria Park and the surrounding streets are also known for their mature street trees. The trees along Approach Road, St James's Avenue, Sewardstone Road and Old Ford Road are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's).

Globe Town includes a substantial proportion of water space frontage, as along the eastern edge lies the Regents Canal.
heritage & townscape

Globe Town is predominantly a residential area, with a small town centre located along Roman Road. Roman Road is lined with medium to large scale post-war housing developments, intermixed with smaller retail units within the town centre. Globe Town has a central square located on the corner of Roman Road and Morpeth Street, which currently contains a small number of market stalls.

A large proportion of Globe Town's housing is comprised of post-war housing estates, which are intermixed with a smaller proportion of Victorian housing and modern residential flats, located along Regents Canal. Approach Road is a well known street in the area for Victorian housing and important institutional buildings, such as the London Chest Hospital and Roman's Foundation School. This area is situated within the Victoria Park Conservation Area, which encompasses much of the northern half of Globe Town and is one of two Conservation Areas in Globe town (the other being the Globe Road Conservation Area). Victoria Park Conservation Area also includes the Victorian cast iron bridge that leads from Approach Road to Victoria Park, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, as well as the majority of the listed buildings in Globe Town.

block pattern & movement

Due to the large proportion of post-war housing estates in Globe Town, permeability and movement is often compromised for pedestrians and cyclists. The block pattern in Globe Town is generally of a coarse grain with large blocks, however exceptions to this are found around Approach Road in the north of the area, where the block pattern is of a fine grain.

Globe Town suffers from traffic as Roman Road is a vehicular dominated environment, due to the road being a key east-west link between Bethnal Green and Bow. However Roman Road is not classified as a highway and does not act as a major physical barrier.

The Regents Canal creates a significant contribution to the townscape and lies along the eastern edge of Globe Town. The eastern side of the canal is accessible via the towpath, which is widely used by cyclists and pedestrians. The Victorian cast iron bridge that leads from Approach Road to Victoria Park, is a key access link into the park, as well as the bridge on Old Ford Road. The road bridge that crosses the canal on Roman Road forms a key link from Globe Town into Mile End Park and beyond.
historical character & identity

Whitechapel is a historic part of London. The Chapel of Ease was built on the road to Essex, on the site of St. Mary's Church, some time in the 1200's. It would have been whitewashed, typically for the middle ages, and is said to have lent it's name to Whitechapel. Maps from 1666 show settlement outside of the city walls at Aldgate, clustered particularly at the beginning of what was to become the A11 to Essex, through Whitechapel.

In 1738, development extended in ribbon form along the Whitechapel Road. Land use in the area was still predominantly agricultural, with evidence of larger houses, and public activity focused on the Whitechapel Road. The London Hospital was built in 1757, and has expanded incrementally.

The success of the docks to the south of Whitechapel led to large scale urban expansion with the extensive building of middle class terraces in the area. This resulted in the development of all the surrounding agricultural land to housing, forming what is now known as the East End. The first Whitechapel Railway Station was opened below ground in 1876, followed by the Metropolitan District Railway in 1884 (calling their station Whitechapel and Mile End).

In general Whitechapel has been a transient place for at least four hundred years, where families did not stay for more than a few generations. Whitechapel has been viewed as something of a trouble spot for sedition and dissent in the 17th century. Somewhere that was relatively calm and ordered in the 18th century, until in the 19th century was a place of prevailing poverty, murders and Jewish sweat shops.

In the 20th century, new housing was built in the 1920's to replace the overcrowded slums of the East End, post-war development and re-development has seen radical changes in the urban fabric, with a shift from Victorian terraces towards 1960's housing estate block architecture.

landscape & open space

Whitechapel encompasses a limited number of parks, which are all classified as neighbourhood parks due to their small size. These neighbourhood parks include Vallance Road Gardens and St Bartholomews Gardens. No larger district parks are found in Whitechapel, however the area is located close to district parks in neighbouring areas, such as Weavers Fields, Bethnal Green Gardens and Stepney Green. These urban parks allow residents access to trees and grass, as well as encouraging wildlife. Within Whitechapel a number of children's play spaces are also found, which are largely located in the north of the area.
heritage & townscape

The popular street market, the historical Royal London Hospital and the London Underground station form a local point in the busy town centre of Whitechapel. The Royal London Hospital, which is an historical and imposing modern structure is well known and the market is a vibrant street market, popular with the local community.

Many of the buildings fronting Whitechapel Road are of architectural and historical importance and form a stretch of fine grain historic buildings, with a variety of architectural styles. Some 18th century buildings survive reflecting the commercial nature of the street, such as the Grade II-listed Woods Buildings, and the former brewery, as well as 19th century Victorian buildings. Since its foundation in 1757, the London Hospital site has undergone incremental development over time and hence has a wide range of architectural styles today.

The housing stock in Whitechapel varies in age and architectural style and includes Victorian terraced housing and post-war housing estates. Conservation Areas in Whitechapel include Whitechapel Market, Whitechapel Hospital and Stepney Green.

block pattern & movement

Whitechapel Road is an important and historically significant east-west movement route within East London. There is a high level of pedestrian activity along this road generated by the hospital, with medical staff, patients and visitors during the day. Whitechapel Market is also popular with residents and a is widely used street market. Both Whitechapel Road and Cambridge Heath Road are classified as highways due to their busy vehicular nature and the roads serve as key east-west and north-south links.

Whitechapel was historically a fine grained area, although today contains a large proportion of large blocks. These large blocks include the Royal London Hospital, the East London Mosque, post-war housing estates, as well as large office blocks (largely towards Aldgate). The large blocks often compromise movement for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly to the north of Whitechapel London Underground station and around the hospital.
historical character & identity

Aldgate has been an important gateway into and out of the City of London for centuries. In Saxon English, 'Eldeg' means 'old gate'; a reference to the Roman gate which was the focus for the area. It was one of six gates in the Roman Wall and was demolished in the 18th century.

Aldgate was also home of the Aldgate Pump, built in the 16th century over a much older well that had been used since the 13th century. The water from the pump was said to have had healing properties.

Unlike Stepney which was originally a village, Aldgate along with Whitechapel grew up as a true London suburb. In common with Whitechapel it has traditionally been a place of coming and going and really had no central point. Unfortunately very few remnants of the past still exist, only the street names such as The Minories, Houndsditch still remain. This was also where the herbalist Culpepper lived in the 1640s and grew his herbs and again this history is still evident in the names of streets such as Camomile Street and Wormwood Street.

Toynebe Hall was opened in Commercial Street in 1884 and played a pioneering role in addressing the high levels of deprivation experienced in the Victorian East End. It established a residential community that attempted to address the pressing social problems in this part of London, while trying to answer the fundamental questions about the facts and perceptions of poverty and the nature of community.

Today Aldgate remains a thriving cultural melting pot sitting side by side with other rich and colourful places like Shoreditch, Spitalfields. Wapping and the City of London. Its gateway function has been undermined in modern times, with poor quality development and disconnected public spaces.

landscape & open space

Aldgate is a densely populated commercial area close to the City of London with few residents, and typical of this density and landuse, has few parks. Only three small neighbourhood parks lie in the area and these include Malton Gardens and Altar Ali Park. Altar Ali Park is the largest of the neighbourhood parks and is also a churchyard/cemetery. Aldgate also has a limited number of children’s play spaces and all are located in the north of Aldgate. The largest of these play spaces is located in Altar Ali Park.
**heritage & townscape**

The Aldgate area is identified by the prevalence of office buildings of which many provide secondary accommodation, this type of development peaked in the late 1980's. Whilst most of the office buildings in the area are of dated and relatively undistinguished aesthetic quality, there are a few buildings of high quality, such as the RBS offices on Leman Street. The Metropolitan University is also has a couple of dominant buildings in the area.

A small portion of Aldgate is located within two Conservation Areas. These Conservation Areas are located in the north of Aldgate and are Whitechapel High Street and Wentworth Street (which is located mainly in Spitalfields). Many of the listed buildings in the area lie in and around Prescott Street, Alls Street and Leman Street. The listed buildings on Prescott Street are fine examples of Victorian commercial buildings.

**block pattern & movement**

The character of Aldgate is dominated by heavy traffic. This is especially true of the area around the Aldgate gyratory where the traffic arteries of Commercial Road, Whitechapel Road, Commercial Street and Aldgate High Street meet. As a result the street environment is unpleasant for pedestrians, which is exacerbated by the uninviting subway system in and around Aldgate.

The block pattern in the area is dominated by large office blocks. Other more fine grained blocks are spread around the area, but are generally less significant. This includes the area between Leman Street and Mansell Street, which is largely of a fine grained character.

Aldgate includes one London Underground station (Aldgate East), but is very close to Aldgate, Tower Hill and Tower Gateway stations.
TOWER OF LONDON & ST KATHARINE DOCKS

historical character & identity

The world famous Tower of London stands on the River Thames on the western boundary of the Borough. It dates from the reign of William the Conqueror in the 11th century and in the past 900 years it has been a fortress, royal palace, zoo and state prison. The iconic White Tower stands in the centre built by William the Conqueror in 1078. Although no longer a Royal residence, the Tower remains a royal palace and retains a permanent guard.

The Tower has always been an isolated place, on purpose to ensure the security and safety of the Royal Family. It stands isolated to this day, with heavy traffic laden roads wrapped around this world heritage site sadly separating this wonderful asset from the rest of Tower Hamlets.

Nearby is St Katharine Docks, one of the first of London’s docks to be restored. Historically, it was established at the end of the 18th century with warehouses importing tea, rubber, marble, ivory and sugar. It is now home to restaurants, pubs, shops and an attractive marina.

landscape & open space

The Tower of London and St Katharine Docks is bounded by the Thames, the City of London, Wapping and the railway viaduct to the north. Due to its inner city proximity the area has a limited number of parks, all of which are small in size, located outside of Tower Hill and Tower Gateway stations and close to busy roads. These parks are characterised as neighbourhood parks due to their small size and include Trinity Square Gardens. The Tower of London and St Katharine Docks only has two children’s play spaces, both of which are located in the south-east corner of the area.

The Tower of London and St Katharine Docks lies on the Thames and includes St Katharine Docks and hence has a substantial proportion of water space.
heritage & townscape

Many landmarks of national and international importance are found in the Tower of London and St Katherine Docks area, including the Tower of London, Tower Bridge and St Katherine Docks. These sites are important points of destination and major tourist attractions, each drawing large volumes of people. Other landmarks in the area include the Royal Mint Court office block and Merita House.

The St Katherine Docks area has undergone much development in the last 30 years largely in the form of medium to high density housing, a large hotel, commercial office blocks as well as the addition of bars and restaurants. However the docks still retain the original sense of enclosure and some historic buildings such as the historic Ivory House warehouse remain.

The Tower of London and St Katherine Docks is an area of exceptional architectural and historic interest, with a character and appearance worthy of protection and enhancement and hence sit within the Tower of London Conservation Area. The Tower of London is a listed building along with St Katherine Docks and the Tower of London is a world heritage site and ancient monument.

block pattern & movement

The Tower of London and St Katherine Docks is characterised by a coarse grain, which is seen throughout much of Tower Hamlets. The medium to large sized blocks are often separated by major roads which carry heavy traffic. These large blocks include, the Tower of London, St Katherine Docks, the Royal Mint Court office block and Merita House. The nature of the blocks and the heavy traffic leads to an environment that is confusing and unfriendly to pedestrians. The area also tends to have relatively high buildings and street blocks that are inward looking and that have blank walls, which creates an impression of poor linkages and permeability.

The major traffic arteries in the Tower of London and St Katherine Docks area are classified as highways and these roads are important north-south and east-west links. These roads include the Tower Bridge Approach and Manskell Street, which are significant roads as they lead to Tower Bridge as well as East Smithfield, which later becomes the Highway.

The Tower of London and St Katherine Docks area generally has good transport links, with two stations - Tower Hill Underground station and Tower Gateway DLR station.
historical character & identity

The name Wapping comes from the original Saxon settlement of “Waeppea’s people”. Since its founding this place has had a colourful history.

Located immediately east of the Tower of London, Wapping was largely marshland until drained in the 14th century. From the 16th century Wapping became infamous as a place of execution and was one of the sights of Tudor London. Execution dock as it was called was located on the site of Wapping Station. This was where the famous pirate Captain Kydd was hanged in 1701. These executions carried on late into the 19th century.

Wapping’s heyday was probably between the time of the Glorious Revolution and the early 19th century. In the 17th century its riverside community gained its own church and vestry and Wapping was called a bit of old Portsmouth sitting beside London. Sailor’s cottages sat side by side with seafaring industries such as anchor-smiths, sail makers, distilleries and timber yards, while merchandise from abroad such as rum, ivory and gold tumbled continuously up and down Wapping High Street. Wapping was also the setting for many of the Dickens’ novels.

When the docks were built at the beginning of the 19th century in many respects the heart was torn out of old Wapping. Houses and workshops were lost to the arrival of the London Dock Company and the area’s population diminished. Wapping and St Katherine Docks like the West India Docks on the Isle of Dogs, were great walled enclosures. They severed much of Wapping from the surrounding neighbourhood and forced the population into overcrowded housing around the fringes.

Post-war nearly all the dock warehouses were demolished and the surviving walls now encircle new housing. Wapping has subsequently experienced different phases of housing development from LDDC housing and social housing estates, to the converted warehouses of the 1980s-90s, which still give some impression of the former density of trading activity in the area.

landscape & open space

A considerable proportion of parks are located in Wapping, of which the majority are neighbourhood parks due to their small size. These parks include Wapping Gardens, Wapping Rose Gardens, Wapping Green, Wapping Woods and Swedenborg Gardens. The larger district park (King Edward Memorial Park) is also located in Wapping and is characterized as such due to its medium size. Wapping also has a number of children’s play places spread throughout the area, two churchyard cemeteries and playing fields and pitches in King Edward Memorial Park. The small ecological area off the highway, is classified as a semi-natural space, where the site’s primary function is wildlife habitat.

Wapping lies on the Thames and hence has a substantial proportion of water space, featuring the sizeable Shadwell Basin, as well as the smaller Hermitage Basin and an ornamental canal.

View of Wapping
**heritage & townscape**

Wapping is characterised as being primarily a residential area, interspersed with open space, community facilities and schools. Much of the building stock in Wapping comprises developments from the 1970's and 1980's, which are not architecturally distinctive. There is greater townscape interest in the southern part of Wapping, where Wapping High Street has well preserved and often listed warehouses of high density and scale. The listed News International is a large, monolithic enclosed building surrounded by high blank walls on all sides. Tobacco Dock is a Grade I listed building that currently stands empty.

Wapping has four Conservation Areas of which the largest are located in the south and are known as Wapping Pierhead and Wapping Wall. The two smaller Conservation Areas in the north of Wapping are Wotton's Music Hall and St Paul's Church.

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**block pattern & movement**

The Highway in Wapping is a busy artery for vehicles and is an important east-west link from the City to Canary Wharf. The Highway however causes a considerable physical and psychological barrier in between Wapping and Shadwell.

The blocks in the area are generally variable in size, from fine grained blocks to the south of the area along the river, to larger coarser grained blocks towards the northern parts including the News International site. The larger blocks in the north of the area are often difficult for pedestrians to navigate.

Wapping has its own London Overground station, as well as being close to the DLR and London Overground stations in Shadwell. However the London Overground stations in Wapping and Shadwell are currently closed and under construction to expand to the line.
SHADWELL

historical character & identity

The old hamlet of Shadwell literally means the "well of shadows". It lies between Wapping and Ratcliffe and was a riverside settlement which developed rapidly in the 17th century, through the expansion of shipbuilding and maritime industries. It was largely destroyed in the 19th Century by the creation of Shadwell Basin.

In the 19th century, with increasing demand for both dockworkers and sailors, the area lost its select skilled artisan and professional family character and became overcrowded. The Danish Church in Wellclose Square was replaced by schools and mission rooms. Later philanthropic enterprises helped the overcrowded Jewish immigrants living in the area further north around Commercial Road.

Radical post-war re-planning after extensive war damage disrupted old patterns. New housing was designed away from the old routes while the historic centre of Shadwell in Shadwell Docks, gravitated towards Watney Street Market in the north of the Place. Shadwell is more typical of the western side of Tower Hamlets with its mix of social housing estates and 19th century terraces.

landscape & open space

A moderate collection of small neighbourhood parks are distributed throughout Shadwell. These parks include Rope Walk Gardens, Gosling Gardens, Cavell Street Gardens and St George in the East. Many of Shadwell's neighbourhood parks are located within housing estates. Located adjacent to Shadwell in Wapping, the medium sized district park - King Edward Memorial Park is also within close proximity to Shadwell. Shadwell also contains a number of children's play spaces equally distributed throughout the area, of which many are small in size and are also located within housing estates.
heritage & townscape

Shadwell is a lively area for which the focal point is Watney Market, off Commercial Road. Watney Market is a medium sized open air market, that is widely used by residents as a shopping destination and is surrounded by a post-war housing estate. Public realm improvements have recently been implemented in and around Watney Market and Shadwell DLR station. Away from the hub of Commercial Road and Watney Market, Shadwell is predominantly a residential area. The area contains a mix of architectural styles, largely consisting of medium to high rise post-war housing estates, with pockets of low rise Victorian terraced housing.

The Conservation Areas in Shadwell are primarily located on the north side of Commercial Road, including Myrdle Street, Ford Square, Commercial Road, St George in the East and part of London Hospital. Shadwell has a small number of listed buildings of which the largest proportion are located in Myrdle Street, London Hospital and St George in the East Conservation Areas.

block pattern & movement

Shadwell is impacted by heavy traffic. The area has two primary traffic arteries, which are Commercial Road and the Highway (A1203). These roads along with the railway arches create barriers that hinder north-south pedestrian movement.

Shadwell is largely fine grained to the north of Commercial Road, with areas of terraced housing. However, to the south of Commercial Road the area is predominantly coarse grained, as much of the housing stock consists of post-war housing estates. South of Commercial Road many of the housing estates suffer from permeability, with ill defined routes through estates. This is particularly notable in the area between Cable Street and the Highway.

Shadwell is well connected by public transport with a DLR and East London Line station. As well as being a shopping destination Watney Market forms a key north-south link from Commercial Road to the station.
**STEPNEY**

**historical character & identity**

In 1085 Stepney was listed in the Domesday Book survey of England. The ancient name of this place was Stibenheide, Stebenbyth, or Stebunheth. The term is a well-known Saxon word, signifying a haven or wharf. The medieval village grew up around the church of St Dunstan's, which was founded in 952 by the Archbishop of Canterbury and is the oldest church in East London.

From the 17th Century the village, then known as Mile End Old Town, was a genteel retreat away from the crowded Thames side hamlets, favoured by those who had profited from maritime industry and trade.

The area today is a mix of post-war high density housing, Victorian mansion blocks and terraced housing that were not demolished during slum clearances. The east side of historic Stepney Green is notable for its architecture - Arbour Square and Sidney Square and the surrounding streets retain many Georgian and Victorian houses.

**landscape & open space**

A substantial proportion of open space is found in Stepney. Parks in the area include the medium sized district parks of Stepney Green Park, Belgrave Open Space, St Dunstan’s Churchyard and Whitehorse Road Park. Stepney also contains an urban farm, allotments, two churchyard cemeteries, sports centres and a number of children’s play spaces.

Smaller sized neighbourhood parks in the area include Shandy Park, Stepney Green Gardens, Trafalgar Gardens and Beaumont Square Gardens. Although not located in Stepney, Mile End Park is a large park that lies adjacent to Stepney. Mile End Park contains a range of spaces and sporting facilities including, Mile End Stadium, playing fields and pitches, children’s play spaces, an ecology park as well as open grassed spaces.

Stepney has access to water space frontage, as is located on the Regents Canal, which lies in-between Stepney and Mile End Park.
heritage & townscape

Stepney is largely a quiet residential neighbourhood off the busy main roads of Mile End Road and Commercial Street. The architectural styles vary widely in the area from terraced housing, mansion houses and pre and post-war housing estates. A large proportion of Stepney is within located within the Ocean Estate which is a mix of medium to high rise pre and post-war housing.

Conservation Areas in Stepney include Stepney Green, Albert Gardens, York Square and Regents Canal. York Square Conservation Area in the south, consists of low rise terrace houses of Regency Design many of which that are listed, as well public open space and high quality townscape around the Grade Listed Parish Church of St Dunstan and All Saints. Stepney Green Conservation Area is an area of exceptional architectural and historic interest, including grand buildings along Mile End Road, houses and mansion blocks (including Dunstan House) along Stepney Green and the picturesque quality created by the mature trees of Stepney Green Gardens.

block pattern & movement

Stepney experiences heavy traffic on its edges along Mile End Road and Commercial Road, which both create barriers to north-south movement. The railways line in the south of Stepney also creates a barrier that hinders north-south and east-west movement.

Stepney is predominantly fine-grained south of Ben Jonson Road and coarse grained to the north. To the north the Ocean Estate suffers from permeability, with ill defined routes through the estate and many dead ends, making it confusing to navigate for pedestrians.

Stepney has good transport links including the Stepney Underground Station to the north of the area and Limehouse DLR and c2c services to the south.
LIMEHOUSE

historical character & identity

Limehouse is named for its historical connections. It comes from the lime coasts or kilns established there in the 14th century and used to produce quick lime for building mortar.

In the days of the docks, the area was associated with imports. This is in contrast to the previous period when it was associated with two kinds of exports: beer and people. The beer, in the shape of Pale India Ale, went from the Limehouse Brewery in Fore Street to India. The first voluntary emigrants to Australia went from Dunbar Wharf, while the first involuntary ones went from the nearby Wapping Old Stairs by the Town of Ramsgate pub.

Limehouse was also the setting of London’s original Chinatown. Limehouse Causeway, Pennyfields and West India Dock Road made up the heart of Chinatown in the 1890s.

In the 19th century the canal system originating in Tower Hamlets was the entrance to the busy arterial route serving Britain’s commercial life. The Limehouse Basin and Cut were the main links from the Thames to the River Lea and onwards to the industrial north.

landscape & open space

Limehouse lies on the Thames has a substantial proportion of water space. Limehouse Basin is situated in the centre of Limehouse from which runs two canals - Regents Canal which runs north-west and Limehouse Cut which runs north-east.

Limehouse encompasses a number of parks, including the southern portion of Mile End Park which is classified as MOL although the majority of Mile End Park is located in Bow and Mile End. Limehouse also contains a number of smaller neighbourhood parks which include Ropemakers Fields, St James Gardens, Rector Gardens and Albert Gardens. A number of small children’s play spaces are also located in the area.

All these spaces fulfill a local function of providing local residents and workers with access to water space, open space, trees, wildlife and grass.
heritage & townscape

Limehouse is largely in residential use and is primarily characterised by historic warehouse conversions, modern developments, as well as post-war council estates. The development immediately adjacent to the River Thames forms a continuous band of development, that joins the riverside development in Wapping to the Isle of Dogs. These residential buildings along the River largely consist of medium to high density historic warehouse conversions and modern developments. Access to the River is currently blocked in many instances by a number of modern gated private developments. Development north of Commercial Road primarily consists of a number of low to medium rise housing estates, with some modern development along the Regents Canal and Limehouse Cut Canal. Commercial Road contains a mix of low to medium rise commercial and residential.

Approximately half of Limehouse sits within Conservation Areas. The largest two Conservation Area’s in Limehouse are Narrow Street and St Annes Church. Other Conservation Areas which are partially located in Limehouse include Brickfield Gardens, York Square, Albert Gardens and Wapping Wall. Limehouse also has a number of listed buildings.

block pattern & movement

Limehouse contains a mixture of fine and coarse grained areas, which contributes to an area that can be difficult to orientate and navigate for pedestrians and cyclists. A number of large blocks combined with Limehouse Basin can make it difficult to access the River Thames, which is often hidden behind development.

Limehouse has a number of congested roads such as Commercial Road and the Limehouse Link, which is partially underground and leads to the Rotherhithe Tunnel or to the City. Both Commercial Road and the Limehouse Link are important link roads from the City to Canary Wharf and are classified as highways. The DLR and the c2c service railway lines run through the area and along with the busy roads, create a physical and psychological barrier to movement. Many of the more desirable properties are located to the south of the DLR railway line and Commercial Road and many of the housing estates are located to the north. Limehouse is however well connected by public transport, with the DLR and c2c services running through the area.
**VICTORIA PARK**

**historical character & identity**

Victoria Park was created in the 19th century. An act was passed in Parliament in 1841 following an outcry about the lack of parks in the East End and fears of disease in the 400,000 slum population. The Government bought poor quality land that had been used for market gardens, grazing and gravel digging. An alternative site lay on the Thames but it was deemed too expensive at the time. James Pennethorne designed the park, which even during construction was instantly popular. The park was extended in 1872 on land originally set aside for residential development.

Over time the park has been managed by a number of organisations including: the Metropolitan Board of Works in 1887; the London County Council in 1889; the Greater London Council in 1965; Tower Hamlets in 1986 (initially with the London Borough of Hackney); then solely to Tower Hamlets in 1994.

Many of the original features of the park have been lost or have deteriorated over time. Parts of the site were bombed during WW2 and have not been restored. Today the park is Grade II listed by English Heritage on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.

The Council’s vision is that Victoria Park should be restored and improved, revealing its rich heritage to be a recreation and leisure experience for the local and wider community.

**landscape & open space**

Victoria Park is a grandiose urban park that is classified as MOL and is one of the East End's greatest assets. Victoria Park is a tremendous open space resource for the borough and for the surrounding residential areas, particularly for Bow and Globe Town, which are located adjacent to the park. Victoria Park has an array of facilities including playing fields, cricket pitches, a running track, a sports centre and children’s play spaces. The park also contains substantial areas of grassed and planted areas as well as lakes, all of which encourage wildlife and allow residents and visitors access to open space, trees, wildlife and grass.

Victoria Park has a sizeable proportion of water space, with the park being bordered by the Hertford Union Canal on the southern side and the Regents Canal on the eastern side. The park also contains three lakes.
heritage & townscape

Victoria Park is a fine example of English landscape park tradition, designed with sweeping lawns, informal tree plantings and irregular lakes. Roads in the area are broad and tree-lined, all reflecting the park setting. The park is well utilised by residents and visitors, is full of activity and hosts events throughout the year.

Victoria Park contains little built form, but is surrounded by buildings in Bow and Globe Town that front the Regents Canal and Hertford Union Canal. This development varies from three storey nineteenth century terraces, historic industrial buildings to housing estates containing tower blocks.

Victoria Park is within the Victoria Park Conservation Area and is Grade II listed. The three bridges leading into Victoria Park are scheduled ancient monuments. These are Bonner Hall Bridge (over Regents Canal), Three Colt Bridge and Parnell Road Bridge (both over Hertford Union Canal).

block pattern & movement

Victoria Park has limited entrances into the park, which control access and direct movement through the park. The tow paths along the Regents Canal and the Hertford Union Canal, which border the southern edge of the park, are widely used by pedestrians and cyclists.

The park is bordered by the A12 on its western edge and Grove Road runs through the park, both these roads are highways. The A12 is a huge highway that causes much physical and psychological severance between Victoria Park and Fish Island, due to the limited crossing points for pedestrians.

The linear park known as the Greenway, located in Fish Island, is accessible from Victoria Park. The Greenway provides further connections eastwards through Tower Hamlets into Newham.

Victoria Park has generally poor transport links, with no train stations being located in the area.
historical character & identity

Fish Island is bounded by the River Lea, the Hertford Union canal and the East Cross Route and is so-called because of its street names including Roach Road and Bream Street. Old Ford Road used to continue through the marshes and across the river and one large house, later known as King John’s Palace, stood here until 1863.

In 1865 the Imperial Gas Light and Coke Company bought 30 acres of land as the site for a new works, but instead decided to build these on the east bank of the Lea in Bromley-by-Bow. The company sold the site and the present network of streets was laid out, and filled with small houses and multi-storey factories. Until recently the island’s largest employer was Percy Dalton’s Famous Peanut Company, at the Old Ford Works in Dace Road.

landscape & open space

A small proportion of open space is located in Fish Island, with the only park in the area known as the Greenway. The Greenway is a linear park that is classified as MOL and an ecological area - which is semi-natural space, where the site’s primary function is wildlife habitat. Victoria Park (also MOL) is located adjacent to Fish Island, although it is separated by the A12 highway.

Fish Island contains an abundant proportion of water space, with the River Lea located to the east and the Hertford Union Canal and the Lea Navigation (Hackney Cut) running through the area.
heritage & townscape

Fish Island is largely a light industrial area, which has been the main use in the area since the post-war period. There is a mix of industrial buildings in the area ranging from two to three storey brick warehouses dating from the 19th century, to more recent post-war factory and distribution units. Several of the brick warehouses located in Fish Island Central, close to the canals are of townscape merit and help to reflect the industrial history of the area, adding to the townscape quality. The brick warehouses tend to be located close to the three canals that run through the area, with new industrial units located towards the A12 in the west.

The area is undergoing a period of change with a rising demand for residential development in the area. A number of live/work schemes have started to replace industrial units, focused on canal-side locations, particularly along the frontage of the Lea Navigation (Hackney Cut).

Fish Island contains one small Conservation Area known as Fish Island.

block pattern & movement

Fish Island suffers from extreme severance and is cut off on all sides – by the canals on the eastern edge; the London Overground railway line on the northern edge; the A12 highway on the western edge and by the DLR railway on the southern edge. The A12 is classified as a highway and is a vast road and significant north-south link. Rathbone Road/Queens Yard is also classified as a highway which runs east-west though Fish Island.

The canals that run through the centre of Fish Island also cause further severance throughout the centre of the area, as few bridges are located across the canals further reducing connectivity. At present Fish Island is only active during working hours, with traffic and movement limited to vehicles accessing and servicing the existing industries.

Hackney Wick is the nearest train to station to Fish Island which forms part of the London Overground network.
historical character & identity

The hamlet of Bow dates back almost a thousand years. The name Bow is believed to come from its arched bridge founded in 1110 by Queen Matilda, the wife of Henry I.

By Tudor times Bow was a thriving village. According to the 1548 Charitable Certificate 'it stood on a great thoroughfare with much people there inhabiting'.

Even up to the 1800's the small hamlet of Bow was surrounded by cornfields, pastures, and meadows. The 19th century however brought a massive increase in its population (about 2,000 in 1801 - to 42,000 in 1901) and the construction of a number of significant factories producing rubber, soap, and matches. The Bryant and May factory which produced matches, was the scene of the famous Match Girls Strike of 1888.

Social investment in the area seems to be a common theme running through Bow at this time. A few years later it was also the centre of the early 20th century women's Suffragette movement, their printing works being situated in Old Ford Road. In addition the famous Roman Road Market was also founded in 1843 as a general market for the poverty stricken newcomers in the middle of last century. The market always thrived on its reputation for a huge variety of goods at keen prices. In its 1960s heyday, it was one of the most fashionable and popular markets in London, offering a slice of modern fashion and culture.

landscape & open space

Bow has a substantial proportion of open space with the northern part of Mile End Park being located in Bow, which along with Victoria Park is one of Tower Hamlets' greatest assets. The northern part of Mile End Park contains a number of active spaces, including the Adidas outdoor gym and the ecology park as well as grassed open spaces and plantings. The ecology park includes a lake, an ecology building, wind turbine and a climbing wall. Bow also contains one other neighbourhood park called SELWYN Green, as well as a number of children's play spaces. Bow also lies adjacent to Victoria Park, which is classified as MOL. Victoria Park is a fine example of English Landscape Park Tradition, with lawn area, irregular lakes, informal planting and tree lined roads.

Bow has a considerable amount of water space frontage, as the Regents Canal and Herford Union Canal run adjacent to Victoria Park and Mile End Park.
heritage & townscape

Roman Road runs east-west through Bow and is important east-west link to the City. Bow has a busy town centre which along with the lively Roman Road Market, forms the heart of Bow. The partly pedestrianised market on the east end of Roman Road, sells a variety of food, clothing, crafts, books and antiques. The buildings along much of Roman Road consist of low rise two to three storey mixed use buildings, with small shops on the ground floor. Notable buildings in the area include the Grade II listed Passmore Edwards Public Library and the St Paul and St Stephens Church (Listed Ecclesiastical Grade C). Roman Road lies within the Roman Road, Medway and Driffeld Road Conservation Areas. Other Conservation Areas include Regents Canal, Fairfield Road and Victoria Park Conservation Areas.

The architectural styles in the neighbouring residential side streets off Roman Road are varied and include Victorian terrace housing, post-war housing estates, historic warehouses and modern developments. Generally much of the Victorian terrace housing is located in the west of Bow, while most of the housing estates are located in the east.

The three bridges leading into Victoria Park are scheduled ancient monuments, these are Bonner Hall Bridge (over Regents Canal), Three Colt Bridge and Parnell Road Bridge (both over Hertford Union Canal).

block pattern & movement

Roman Road narrows as it moves through Bow. The western end of Roman Road is wider than the eastern end, where the road narrows and becomes a pedestrianised street market. The market attracts a high level of pedestrian activity, which is intensified by the Idea Store.

The variation in architectural styles is seen in the block pattern structure in Bow, with generally a fine grain to the west of Bow and a coarse grain to the east of the Bow.

The area is bounded by the A12 highway on the eastern edge, which creates severance between Bow and Fish Island due to its limited crossing points.

Bow generally has poor transport links with no train stations located in the area.
historical character & identity

Dating back to the 13th century, Mile End has a long and rich history. The hamlet of Mile End was originally named because of its distance along the road from London, one mile east of the boundary to the City of London at Aldgate which to this day is connected via the continuous Whitechapel High Street, Mile End Road and Bow Road. Wat Tyler, who led the peasant’s revell of 1381 assembled his followers around the manorial common land of Mile End Green.

Urbanisation began along this important trade route during the Georgian era, through speculative development. The area’s development continued to progress rapidly in the 18th century when it became attractive for a wealthy new class of merchants and mariners. The elements of trade and shipping shaped Mile End dramatically during this period and made it a thriving centre of activity.

Much of Mile End’s historical image belongs to the intense development that took place in the 19th century. This development took place due to a significant increase in the size London’s population and Britain’s economy. Nearly all of the houses in the area were built on ground belonging to two estates: Coborn and Morgan and the housing development corresponds with economically strong period of the 19th century. Mile End’s expansion and growing importance during this period was reflected in a number of civic building projects. This was exemplified with the construction of the Queens Hall in 1887, termed the People’s Palace it provided a library, swimming pool, gymnasium and winter garden providing popular civic attractions and entertainment and a real local landmark. This building closed down in 1954.

Between the 1940’s and the 1990’s in the area around Grove Road at the junction with Mile End Road, slum clearance and war damage resulted in mutually reliant residents, industries and shopping facilities disappearing on the western side of Grove Road.

landscape & open space

A significant proportion of open space is located in Mile End, with the majority of Mile End Park being located within the area. Tower Hamlets Cemetery is also a substantial open space in Mile End and along with Mile End Park, they are both characterised as MOL. As well as being a large open space, Tower Hamlets Cemetery contains a considerable proportion of trees, essential for wildlife. Mile End also includes a number of smaller neighbourhood parks, as well as a number of children’s play spaces.

Mile End Park contains an array of facilities for locals and visitors, including an arts pavilion, Mile End Park stadium, playing fields and pitches, a large and popular children’s play space, as well as grassed and planted areas. The land bridge over Mile End Road allows for a continuous open space, which is not severed by Mile End road.

A substantial proportion of water space frontage is located in Mile End, as the Regent’s Canal runs adjacent to Mile End Park.
heritage & townscape

Mile End is essentially a residential area, with the exception of the mixed uses along Mile End/Bow Road and the university (Queen Mary's University). The mixed use along Mile End/Bow Road consists of primarily small scale shops intermixed with housing, with the shops intensifying near Mile End Underground station. The area under Mile End land bridge is well used with a number of restaurants and cafes, creating a hub of activity in the area. The University also creates a busy hub of activity, between Stepney Green and Mile End Underground stations. Off the main thoroughfare of Mile End Road/Bow Road the area is largely residential. The housing varies in age and density, from low rise Victorian terraced housing, low and medium rise Georgian townhouses, to medium to high rise post-war housing estates.

Approximately half of Mile End sits within Conservation Areas, of which the largest are Tredegar Square and Tower Hamlets Cemetery. Other Conservation Areas include Carlton Square, Ropery Street and part of Regents Canal. The majority of the listed buildings in the area are located in the Tredegar Square Conservation Area.

block pattern & movement

Mile End Road/Bow Road runs east-west through Mile End and is primarily a through route for traffic from London to Essex, but it also carries local traffic. The road forms a significant barrier to north-south pedestrian movement, along with Burdett Road which forms a barrier between residential areas and Mile End Park. Both Mile End Road and Burdett Road are classified as highways due to their busy nature.

The block pattern is varied from a fine to coarse grain throughout the area. A number of large blocks found in and around the centre of Mile End causes limited permeability, caused by the university and post-war housing estates. However areas such as around Tredegar Square contain small blocks and a historic grid pattern, which eases movement.

Mile End has excellent transport links with both Mile End Underground station and Bow Road DLR station being located on Mile End Road/Bow Road. Stepney Green Underground Station is also located on the edge of Mile End.
BROMLEY-BY-BOW

historical character & identity

In early records, this area is known as Brambley due to its meadow being full of brambles. Once a hamlet consisting of a few cottages settled around a village green and pond, this area was strongly connected to its landscape of meadows and the River Lea. In the middle ages it prospered around St Leonard’s nursery and church. At the beginning of the 19th century, Bromley-by-Bow rapidly industrialised due to its proximity to the River Lea.

As London spread, Bow and Bromley ceased to be separated by fields. The present name of Bromley-by-Bow was introduced to distinguish it from Bromley in south London. Factories sprang up along the river banks together with housing to accommodate the workers. By the mid 1800’s the area was covered by linear terraces of yellow brick houses, interspersed with factories and institutions as well as a continuous ribbon of industry along the riverfront.

During World War II, Bromley-by-Bow was extensively bombed due to its strategic industrial role. This prompted a dramatic change to the structure and fabric of the area post-war, resulting in the building of housing estates in the format still seen today.

landscape & open space

Bromley-by-Bow is comprised of a number of neighbourhood parks, which are characterised as such by their small size. These parks include Bromley Recreation Ground, Grove Hall Park and Prospect Park. The area also includes two churchyard cemeteries, an allotment and a number of children’s play spaces, of which the majority are located in housing estates. All these spaces fulfill a local function of providing local residents and workers with access to open space: trees, wildlife and grass.

Bromley-by-Bow contains a substantial quantity of water space frontage, being located on the Limehouse Cut Canal to the south and the River Lea to the east, which are two important historic trading routes in the area.
**Heritage & Townscape**

Bromley-by-Bow is largely a residential and industrial area, which is bounded by the River Lea on its eastern edge. The A12 divides the area into two and creates a large degree of psychological and physical severance. Bromley-by-Bow contains a small town centre with small scale shops located along Bow Road and Stourley Walk, of which the latter suffers from poor public realm. The industrial areas of Bromley-by-Bow are primarily low rise and are located in the south along Limehouse Cut Canal and to the east of the A12, towards the River Lea.

The residential housing stock in Bromley-by-Bow consists largely of low, medium or high density post-war housing estates, which often suffer from poor public realm. However, to the north of Bow Road some fine examples of Edwardian and Georgian houses are located within two Conservation Areas - Fairfield Road and Tolmins Grove. Fairfield Road Conservation Area includes locally listed terraces: the historic Grade II listed Bryant and May complex and Bow Garage; half the historic centre of Bromley-by-Bow and the Parish Church, St Mary Bow Church. Tolmins Grove Conservation Area includes a series of Grade II listed terraces. The majority of the listed buildings in the area are located within these two Conservation Areas.

**Block Pattern & Movement**

Bromley-by-Bow experiences a significant degree of severance, caused by roads, railways lines and waterways. The A12 is a large and fast moving road with few pedestrian crossing points, that cuts north-south through the eastern side of Bromley-by-Bow. Bow Road also runs east-west through the area and causes some severance for pedestrians, although it does not nearly divide Bromley-by-Bow to the same extent as the A12. Both the A12 and Bow Road are classified as Highways due to their busy nature. A number of railway lines, the River Lea and the Limehouse Cut Canal also cause severance in the area.

The block pattern in Bromley-by-Bow is generally of a coarse grain, due to the numerous housing estates in the area. To the north-west of Bromley-by-Bow the grain is of a finer nature within the Conservation Areas of Fairfield Road and Tolmins Grove, reflecting the historic housing in this area.

Bromley-by-Bow is reasonably well connected by public transport with two DLR stations (Bow Church and Devons Road), as well as one London Underground station (Bromley-by-Bow). However access to the stations can be difficult due to poor local connectivity.
BOW COMMON

historical character & identity

Bow Common was for much of its history a large area of marshland and meadows, which separated the Hamlets of Poplar, Bromley and Bow. Lanes ran through connecting up these Hamlets and a number of small cottages and houses sprang up along these trade routes. These routes are still evident today as being Bow Common Lane and Devons Road/St Paul’s Way.

In these fields and meadows the famous peasant’s revolt of 1381 was led by Wat Tyler where people from Essex and Kent gathered to complain about the poll tax. Richard II appeared to agree to their demands but at a second meeting Wat Tyler was killed by the Mayor of London and the revolt collapsed.

The industrial revolution brought change to Bow Common and with the Limehouse Cut Canal running through its southern edge, industries began to settle during the 19th century. The growth and spread of Poplar and Bromley during this period led to the area becoming urbanised and swallowed up by its neighbours, hungry for space to expand.

landscape & open space

Bow Common encompasses a number of neighbourhood parks, which are characterised by their small size. The parks include Furze Green Open Space, Ackroyd Drive Open Space, Fern Street Open Space, Rounton Road Open Space. The area also has a number of children’s play spaces. The Old Railway at Fairfoot Road and Ackroyd Drive Extension sites are also ecological areas, which are semi-natural spaces, where the site’s primary function is wildlife habitat. Bow Common is also located in close proximity to Mile End Park and Tower Hamlets Cemetery. Mile End Park is one of Tower Hamlet’s greatest assets and contains a large array of facilities, including a leisure centre, Mile End Stadium, the Ecology Centre, playing fields and pitches as well as open grassed and planted areas.

Bow Common has access to water space frontage, as the Limehouse Cut Canal runs the along the southern border of the area.
heritage & townscape

Bow Common's land use is largely residential and industrial. The housing stock in the area predominately consists of low, medium and high rise post-war housing estates, while much of the land running along the north side of Limehouse Cut Canal consists of low rise industrial units.

A small proportion of Bow Common is located within Conservation Areas, including Swaton Road and a portion of Brickfield Gardens Conservation Area's. Swaton Road Conservation Area includes four roads - Swaton Road, Spanby Road, Fairfoot Road and Knapp Road. This Conservation Area covers a small fragment of low rise working class Victorian terrace houses, which once covered this area. Brickfield Gardens Conservation Area comprises two fragments of the former mid-Victorian streetscape and open space which was created from cleared land after the war. Bow Common has a very small proportion of listed buildings.

block pattern & movement

There is a degree of severance in Bow Common. This is caused by the Limehouse Cut Canal to the south, the railway lines to the east and north and Burdett Road to the east. Burdett Road is classified as a highway and is a key north-south link in Tower Hamlets. Movement is further affected in the area, as Bow Common is of a course grain. The large blocks reflect the industry and number of post-war housing estates in the area.

The Limehouse Cut Canal runs to the south of Bow Common. The Towpath on the south side of the canal is used by pedestrians and cyclists as a key east-west link towards Limehouse. The Limehouse Cut Canal however does have a limited number of crossing points.

Bow Common has no train stations, although does lie within close proximity to Devons Road DLR Station.
POPLAR RIVERSIDE

historical character & identity

Low and relatively marshy, this area of Poplar was never considered particularly suitable for settlement. It remained as marshland hugging close to the River Lea for centuries and was used as a countryside retreat by the Crown. These marshlands were then owned by the East India Company and a great deal of the area remained marshland until the turn of the 20th century. Things changed when the industrial revolution took a hold and industry began to settle in the area, due to the River Lea offering great transport links.

Bromley Hall was built c1485 as one of two manors built in the area. Henry VIII used it regularly as his haunt and escape from the City. It is the oldest brick built dwelling house in London. The Hall suffered many years of neglect and was placed on the Buildings at Risk register. It has now been resurrected as a local business centre by Leaside Regeneration.

Poplar Riverside hugs the River Lea on the eastern edge of Tower Hamlets, the DLR railway line forms the western edge and the Limehouse Cut Canal forms its north eastern edge.

landscape & open space

Poplar Riverside is composed of a number of neighbourhood parks including Langdon Park, Jolly's Green, Wyvis Street Open Space and Leven Road Open Space. The largest of these parks is Langdon Park, although it is still characterised as a neighbourhood park due to its relatively small size. All these spaces help to fulfil a local function of providing local residents and workers with access to open space, trees, wildlife and grass.

Poplar Riverside has a substantial proportion of water space frontage, being located on the Limehouse Cut Canal to the north and the River Lea to the east.
heritage & townscape

Poplar Riverside is an industrial and residential area. The industrial use is predominantly located to the east of the A12, while the residential is to the east. The area also contains some vacant development sites. The industrial use is comprised of light industrial and storage uses, while the residential buildings largely consist of post-war housing estates. These estates are predominantly low to medium rise, however a small number of dense residential buildings also sit within the area, such as the well known 27 storey Balfron Tower.

A small proportion of Poplar Riverside is within two Conservation Areas, which are Balfron Tower and Langdon Park. The Balfron Tower Conservation Area protects the listed Balfron Tower, as well as Carraadale House and other buildings in the estate of low and high rise scale, of which many of the buildings were designed by the famous architect Goldfinger. The Langdon Park Conservation Area includes Langdon Park itself, its primary school, and a series of locally listed Georgian terraces to its south. The focal point of the area is the Grade II listed St Michael’s Church and war memorial in its court grounds. Poplar Riverside contains a very small amount of listed buildings of which most are located within these two Conservation Areas.

block pattern & movement

Poplar Riverside suffers from a substantial degree of severance. This is due to the area being surrounded by Limehouse Cut Canal to the north, the River Lea to the east, the DLR to the west and East India Dock Road to the south. Poplar Riverside is divided to a further extent by the large and busy road that is the A12, which along with East India Dock Road is a highway. The industrial areas to the east of the A12 comprise predominantly daytime activities which gives a further feeling of isolation.

The grain is of a course nature in this area, with many of the industrial uses enclosing medium to large size blocks, including the large gas holder site on Leven Road. The considerable number of post-war housing estates in the area also exacerbates this.

Poplar Riverside has one DLR station called Langdon Park, although access to this station can be difficult due to the poor local connectivity. The Limehouse Cut Canal is accessible to pedestrians and cyclists, via the towpath on the southern side, however access to the towpath can be difficult to navigate.
historical character & identity

The original hamlet of Poplar, and the historic docks at Blackwall, lay to the south of what is now Poplar High Street. Taking its name from the Poplar trees that once grew in the district, it is the site of the oldest surviving building in London Docklands, the 347-year-old St Matthias Old Church, built in 1654 as the chapel for the East India Company. The church which sat in Poplar Recreation Ground, was closed in 1975 and is now used as a community centre. As the population began to grow rapidly after the construction of the East India Docks at the start of the 19th century, the East India Dock Road was constructed between 1806-12 to improve communication between the area’s maritime industry and the City.

Poplar had been part of the medieval parish of Stepney. In 1813, the Improvement Act of Parliament reformed the civil administration of Poplar and Blackwall and prompted an initiative to create a separate parish of Poplar, with its own parish church. Subsequently, in 1821 construction began on All Saints Church and later the associated Montague Street and Newby Street. This area now forms the All Saints Church Conservation Area.

The buildings in the area originally consisted of several civic buildings – the town hall, the institute, the school and the fire station. These uses gave the buildings extra significance and meaning, in addition to their architectural merit. Although some of these buildings have been lost, there is a still an important cluster of public buildings in the area – the church, the health centre, the idea Store and the (now disused) Poplar Baths. To the front of Poplar Recreation Ground is a monument to 18 primary schoolchildren from a nearby school who died in a First World War air raid. The attack was the first time a fixed-wing aircraft was used in daylight bombing of a civilian target. This dominance of public housing in Poplar is a relatively recent phenomenon. Most of it was built between 1950 and 1980, and by 1981, which is evident in the changes made to the urban form which can be seen in the maps below. These changes have resulted in a fragmented network of streets and general poor connectivity.

landscape & open space

Poplar has a considerable proportion of open space and the parks in the area are all classified as neighbourhood parks and district parks, due to their small and medium sizes. The neighbourhood parks in Poplar include Alton Street Open Space and Trinity Gardens, while the district park is called Bartlett Park. Bartlett Park surrounds a group of houses and the Celestical Church of Christ. The park includes two playing fields and pitches, as well as a children’s play space and sports centre. There are also a number of other children’s play spaces spread throughout Poplar.

Poplar has access to water space frontage, as the northern edge of Poplar fronts onto the Limehouse Cut Canal.
**heritage & townscape**

Poplar is primarily a residential area, with a town centre that includes Chrisp Street and part of East India Dock Road. The daily market off Chrisp Street is a popular shopping destination for locals and along with the Idea Store and other shops, creates a vibrant heart to the area. The market does suffer however from poor public realm. Chrisp Street Market is set off Chrisp Street and East India Dock Road, although is largely not visible from either road. East India Dock Road contains a number of small shops with mixed uses above.

The residential buildings found in Poplar consist of largely low and medium rise post-war housing estates, interspersed with high rise housing estates. The majority of the industrial buildings along Limehouse Cut Canal have been redeveloped into modern housing developments in recent years.

Just under half of Poplar is located within two Conservation Areas, Lansbury is the largest Conservation Area in Poplar and a small proportion of Poplar is located within the Langdon Park Conservation Area. The Lansbury Conservation Area includes low rise post-war redevelopment, north of East India Dock Road, including the permanent buildings of the 1951 Festival of Britain.

**block pattern & movement**

Poplar experiences some serverence. The area is bounded by Burdett Road to the west, Limehouse Cut Canal to the north, the DLR railway to the east and East India Dock Road to the south. Both Burdett Road and East India Dock Road are busy highways and therefore create a barrier to Mile End Park and Blackwall and Canary Wharf in the south. However East India Dock Road is an important east-west link across Tower Hamlets from the City of London to Newham. While Burdett Road is an important north-south link from the south of Tower Hamlets and Canary Wharf to Hackney.

Chrisp Street Market and the area around the Idea Store is a well used pedestrianised area. East India Dock Road however is a major traffic through route, that acts as a barrier to pedestrian movement.

Poplar has no DLR or London Underground stations, although it's located in close proximity to Langdon Park, Westferry and Poplar DLR stations - which is located in Blackwall.
LEAMOUTH

historical character & identity

Trinity House had its headquarters in a fine building in the City designed by the great James Wyatt in 1798 and established Trinity Buoy Wharf as its Thames-side workshop in 1803. At first wooden buoys and sea marks were made and stored here and a mooring was provided for the Trinity House yacht, which was used to lay the buoys and collect them for maintenance and repair. The river wall along the Lea was rebuilt in brick in 1822, making this the oldest surviving structure on the site.

Many new buildings were constructed during the Victorian period and a number still survive of which the earliest, the Electrician’s Building, was built in 1836. It was designed by the then Chief Engineer of Trinity House, James Walker, originally for the storage of oil. He rebuilt the remainder of the river wall in 1852 and the first of two lighthouses here in 1854. On his death in 1862 he was succeeded by James Douglass, who designed many of Britain’s famous lighthouses.

landscape & open space

Leamouth contains only one open space, which is known as East India Dock Basin (MOL). East India Dock Basin is the intact entrance to the once grand East India Docks, which was famous for transporting spicas from the Far East in Victorian times, however the East India Docks now only partially remain. Surrounding the Basin is a nature reserve, that is classified as a ecological area. An ecological area is a semi-natural space, where the site’s primary function is wildlife habitat. The basin habitat includes a section of salt marsh and attracts a large variety of birds.

Leamouth has an immense amount of water space frontage, with the eastern edges facing the River Lea and the southern edges facing the River Thames. East India Dock Basin also provides water space frontage.
heritage & townscape

Leamouth is comprised of a series of low to medium rise industrial units along the Thames and cleared vacant land to the north on Leamouth Peninsula - for which large scale mixed use development is planned. The area lies adjacent to the River Lea and the River Thames and is surrounded by water. Trinity Buoy Wharf which sits on the Thames, is an area for the arts and creative industries. The unique Container City set amongst historic buildings such as the Lighthouse, Boiler Maker’s Shop and Chainstore, attracts artists, photographers and small businesses alike and often hosts exhibitions.

Leamouth does not lie within any Conservation Areas and contains a very small proportion of listed buildings.

block pattern & movement

Leamouth suffers from a large degree of physical severance. One of the contributors is the busy road the Lower Lea Crossing which divides Leamouth in two. Orchard Place is the sole road connection that runs under the raised Lower Lea Crossing, to the northern Leamouth Peninsula. The River Lea, River Thames and East India Dock Basin also contribute to severance. The industrial buildings in this area also consist of predominantly daytime activities, with a lack of evening uses, which contributes to a feeling of isolation.

Leamouth has no train stations and is cut off from Canning Town DLR and London Underground stations by the River Lea. East India DLR station is within close proximity to Leamouth, although is cut off by East India Dock Basin and the Lower Lea Crossing.
historical character & identity

On December 17th 1606, three ships carrying the first permanent British settlers to America sailed from Blackwall, signalling this area's future connection to the maritime and shipping industry.

The development of the inland docks in the 18th and 19th centuries, particularly in the Isle of Dogs and East India Docks, brought prosperity to this part of East London. Blackwall became the site of the East India Docks. The post-war decline of the upriver docks as they gave way to the downstream container terminals, resulted in an enormous loss of jobs and depopulation. By the 1970's the Blackwall area had become isolated both physically and economically.

Following the eventual closure of the docks in 1979 and several plans for regeneration, the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) was formed to bring investment to London's Docklands. The Docklands Light Railway (DLR) was concieved in 1982 and opened in 1987 with branches to the Isle of Dogs, Stratford and Tower Gateway. Plans to construct an A13 bypass also emerged and this eventually became Aspen Way.

New businesses were attracted to the Isle of Dogs and the in-filled East India Dock and employment prospects improved. The Docklands Highways were completed in 1993, providing an alternative to the A13, but at the same time creating a barrier to north-south movement.

landscape & open space

A moderate number of small parks are located in Blackwall, which are all characterised as neighbourhood parks due to their small size. These parks include Pennyfields Open Space, Poplar Recreation Ground, Poplar Parkway and Stoneyard Lane Open space.

Two churchyard cemeteries are also located in the area, including St Matthias Church Gardens and All Saints Churchyard. The open spaces and children's play spaces in the area are distributed solely throughout the western side of Blackwall, giving rise to the eastern side of Blackwall containing an inadequate provision.

Blackwall includes a large proportion of water space as the southern edge of Blackwall lies on the River Thames. The partial remains of the historic East India Dock also lie within the area.
heritage & townscape

Blackwall is predominantly a residential area that is undergoing substantial change. The housing stock is greatly varied in height and age, with low rise Victorian terraced housing, low to medium rise post-war housing estates and medium to high rise modern housing developments. These modern housing developments are largely located along the River Thames and close to Blackwall and East India DLR stations. Some retail activity lies along the north side of East India Dock Road and along Poplar High Street and medium to high rise civic and commercial office buildings lie adjacent to East India and Blackwall DLR stations.

Approximately a quarter of Blackwall is protected by two Conservation Areas, which are St Matthias Church, All Saints Church and Naval Row. The St Matthias Church Conservation Area contains the historic Grade II listed St Matthias Church and churchyard, which form a centre piece to the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area also protects other Grade II statutorily listed institutional public buildings and a small number of Victorian working class family dwellings, which once covered Blackwall. The All Saints Church Conservation Area includes a Grade II* listed church, grounds and rectory, as well as early 19th century residential streets and listed buildings. The Naval Row Conservation Area protects the surviving structures associated with the historic port and shipbuilding activities of the 19th century, including the listed perimeter wall of the former East India Docks and the listed hydraulic pumping station, now converted to residential use.

block pattern & movement

Blackwall is affected by physical severance. Much of the severance in Blackwall is due to the considerable amount of highways in the area. Blackwall is particularly disconnected to Canary Wharf in the south by Aspen Way, which is a large and fast moving highway for which there are few pedestrian crossing points. The A12/Blackwall Tunnel Approach highway also further divides the area and like Aspen Way, is unpleasant for pedestrians. East India Dock Road and Leaoumouth Road are also highways the area that are not inviting for pedestrians. Poplar Street is a secondary route in the area, although along with the raised DLR, does not divide the area to the same extent.

Blackwall is well connected by public transport and includes four DLR stations - Poplar, All Saints, Blackwall and East India.
CANARY WHARF

historical character & identity

Along with the rest of the Isle of Dogs shipbuilding and marine based industry defined this area in the 19th century. Although economically thriving at the beginning of the last century the area became increasingly poor, until in 1920 local residents declared independence by closing the two entrance roads to the Isle of Dogs. During the war years Canary Wharf residents demonstrated their resilience when it became the target for heavy bombing. The docks were closed in 1969 through the arrival of containerisation.

Following the closure of the docks and the general decline of the Isle of Dogs in 1981, the London Docklands Development Corporation was created with a clear remit to regenerate the area.

The plan that followed in 1982 was unlike a normal planning document as it showed development opportunities and was not based on precise land use proposals. This encapsulated the LDDC’s approach which was based on flexibility and the belief that conventional land use planning inhibited entrepreneurial flair.

As a result of this process present day Canary Wharf was built. The evolution of Canary Wharf into a global business hub has helped to make banking and finance the most robust economic sector in Tower Hamlets.

landscape & open space

Canary Wharf has an immense amount of water space, with a number of docks and also frontage onto the Thames on its eastern and western edges.

The large office buildings in Canary Wharf are surrounded by high quality public realm and a small number of parks, in the centre of the site. All of these spaces are largely used by office workers during the week. As all the parks are of a small size, they are known as neighbourhood parks and include Jubilee Park and Canada Square Park. Jubilee Park has a serpentine water channel, as well as grassed and planted areas. While Canada Square Park consists of a open green and sculpture (the Big Blue) and also holds the Canary Wharf Ice Rink each winter.
**heritage & townscape**

Canary Wharf is an extremely dense business area that has the look and feel of a 'Manhattan' style development. The area is one of the most significant commercial centres in Europe and provides a clear landmark for the Isle of Dogs and the wider Docklands area. Canary Wharf consists of large-scale, high-rise office blocks of up to 50 floors at 1 Canada Square, built around the listed docks. The area also has a significant amount of retailing in the Jubilee Shopping and Canada Square Centres.

A small proportion of Canary Wharf lies within Conservation Areas. In the north east of the area is the West India Dock Conservation Area, which includes the Docklands Museum which is Grade I listed and Premier Place, which is Grade II listed. While to the east of Canary Wharf lies the Caledon Harbour Conservation Area, which survives as one of the last examples of the narrow streets which once characterised the river’s perimeter. This Conservation Area includes the two entrances into the Millwall and Blackwall Dock Basins, the River entrances to the historic dry docks (now filled-in) and a number of late 18th to early 19th century listed buildings.

**block pattern & movement**

Canary Wharf is bounded to the north by the large highway Aspen Way (A13), to the east by Trafalgar Way and the eastern edge of West India and Millwall Docks, to the south by Marsh Wall and to the west by Westferry Road. In light of this and the contrast in massing and scale, Canary Wharf suffers from a degree of physical severance from Blackwall and from the rest of the Isle of Dogs, which accentuates the isolated 'island' feel of the Isle of Dogs.

The grid pattern of streets in Canary Wharf is usually straightforward for pedestrians to navigate, however the linear docks and small number of bridges hamper north-south pedestrian movement, particularly from Canary Wharf to Blackwall, Millwall and Cubitt Town.

Canary Wharf contains a number of train stations including the DLR stations of Westferry, Poplar, West India Quay, Canary Wharf and Heron Quays and well as Canary Wharf London Underground Station.
historical character & identity

Millwall got its name from the wall that bordered the Thames attempting to minimize flood damage. In the 18th century there were at least seven windmills along this stretch. On the other side of the Isle the wall was black giving rise to the name Blackwall.

Early development on the Isle of Dogs was densest in Northern Millwall, close to the West India Docks and the old established centre of shipbuilding and maritime crafts at Limehouse. By the 1860s southern Millwall had also been industrialised. Across Millwall, house building came second to industry and much of the available ground for houses remained vacant throughout the nineteenth century.

Millwall has had a distinct residential pattern of settlement which along with the perceived separation of the Isle of Dogs, created a strong sense of identity. Due to the decline of the docks, poverty and the need for post-war reconstruction, a number of public housing projects were undertaken. One of the most notable projects was the 1960's Barkantine Estate. Consisting of 634 dwellings this was mostly occupied by a white working class population. This settlement pattern mirrored the earlier development at St Johns Estate in Cubitt Town. In the 1980's the Bangladeshi community settled to the south of the St Johns and Barkantine Estates.

landscape & open space

Millwall contains a limited proportion of open space, encompassing only a small number of neighbourhood parks, which are all characterised as such due to their small size. Sir John McDougall Gardens is the largest of these neighbourhood parks and is located adjacent to the River Thames. Other Neighbourhood parks in the area include the modest parks - Lenanton Steps, Meish Street, Great Eastern Slipway, Mast House Terrace Play Area and Dockers Tanner Road. However Millwall is located within close proximity to Mudchute Farm, Millwall Park and Island Gardens (all MOL), which together form a considerably large open space resource for the Isle of Dogs.

Millwall includes an immense amount of water space, including frontage onto Millwall Outer Dock and a considerable proportion of water space frontage onto the Thames, on it's western and southern edges.
**heritage & townscape**

Millwall is largely a quiet residential neighbourhood, which lies to the south of Canary Wharf on the Isle of Dogs and is surrounded by the docks and the River Thames.

The housing stock is largely mixed in age, architectural style and density from low to high rise and includes: pre and post-war housing estates predominantly located in the centre of Millwall; a small proportion of Victorian terrace housing; as well as modern housing developments, predominantly located along the docks and the River Thames. The Barkantine Estate was built in the 1960s and is the largest housing estate in Millwall and includes four high rise towers. The estate suffers from poor public realm. The Millennium Quarter area is currently undergoing regeneration, including mixed use medium to high rise commercial, residential and retail.

Millwall is protected by a small proportion of Conservation Areas, with only one Conservation Area called Chapel House, which is also partially located in Cubitt Town. Chapel House Conservation Area encompasses three Garden City Estates, some older traditional terraces and some fine landmark buildings.

**block pattern & movement**

A strong sense of isolation exists in Millwall and the rest of the Isle of Dogs. The dense commercial district of Canary Wharf, the River Thames and the docks restrict connectivity in the area. Millwall is further disconnected by only two entrance points from Canary Wharf via Westferry Road and Marsh Wall.

Westferry Road/Manchester Road is the sole highway in Millwall and is the key peripheral road around the Isle of Dogs. The block pattern is generally of a coarse grain in the area, which is reflected by the substantial proportion of post-war housing estates. However some exceptions to this lie around the Chapel House Conservation Area, where the grain is of a finer nature.

The riverside walkway along the River Thames is well used and popular with pedestrians and cyclists, however in many instances the waterfront is not accessible, blocked by modern gated housing developments. The Greenwich Foot Tunnel lies in close proximity to Millwall in Cubitt Town and is a well used key access route from Greenwich to the Isle of Dogs.
historical character & identity

The south-eastern part of the Isle of Dogs, known as Cubitt Town, was not developed until the mid-nineteenth century. It takes its name from William Cubitt, its developer, who embarked the riverfront and laid out the principal streets during the 1840's and 1850's.

The extent of the wartime damage necessitated large-scale clearance of the pre-war buildings in Cubitt Town and were largely replaced by public housing projects such as St John’s Estate and Rugless House, which were built in a piecemeal way.

At Mudchute, so named after the chutes used to clear out mud as Millwall Dock was being dug, there now exists Europe’s largest urban farm. This 40 acre site is one of three urban farms in the Borough. The farm boasts many farm animals, as well as an approved riding school, regular summer play schemes, festivals and agricultural shows.

landscape & open space

Cubitt Town contains an extensive proportion of open space, encompassing Mudchute Farm, Millwall Park and Island Gardens (all MOL), which together form a considerably large open space resource for the Isle of Dogs. Mudchute Farm is characterised as an urban farm and includes allotments and areas of planting around it’s periphery. Millwall Park is primarily a large open grassed space, that contains playing fields and pitches and children’s play spaces. Island Gardens lies on the River Thames and includes impressive views across the River to Greenwich and it’s historical buildings. The entrance to the Greenwich foot tunnel is also in the park.

A number of neighbourhood parks also sit within Cubitt Town and these include St Johns Park, which includes a children’s play space and a small sports centre. A number of other children’s play spaces are also distributed throughout Cubitt Town.

Cubitt Town includes an immense amount of water space, including frontage onto Millwall Outer Dock, West India Docks and also a considerable proportion of water space frontage onto the Thames, on it’s eastern and southern edges.
heritage & townscape

Cubitt Town is predominantly a quiet residential neighbourhood, that lies to the south of Canary Wharf on the Isle of Dogs. The area includes a town centre (close to Crossharbour DLR Station), consisting of the Asda site and carpark, as well as a large proportion of open space - Mudchute Farm, Millwall Park and Island Gardens (all MOE).

The housing stock is largely low to medium rise post-war housing estates, with a small proportion of Victorian terrace housing and as well as modern housing developments - predominantly located along the docks and the River Thames.

Cubitt Town is protected by a small proportion of Conservation Areas, with only two Conservation Areas called Chapel House (partially located in Millwall) and Crossharbour (partially located in Canary Wharf). Chapel House Conservation Area encompasses three low rise Garden City Estates, some older traditional terraces and some fine landmark buildings. While Crossharbour Conservation Area includes the two entrances into the Millwall and Blackwall Dock Basins, the River entrances to the historic dry docks (now filled-in) and a number of late 18th to early 19th century listed buildings. The Greenwich Foot Tunnel, opened in 1902, is also a world heritage site.

block pattern & movement

A strong sense of isolation exists in Cubitt Town and the rest of the Isle of Dogs. The dense commercial district of Canary Wharf, the River Thames and the docks restrict connectivity in the area. Cubitt Town is further disconnected by only one entrance point from Canary Wharf via Westferry Road and Marsh Wall.

Manchester Road/Preston's Road is the sole highway in Cubitt Town and is the key periphery road around the Isle of Dogs. The block pattern is generally of a course grain the area, which is reflected in the large proportion of post-war housing estates. In many instances cul-de-sacs have been built, which limit permeability.

The riverside walkway along the River Thames is well used and popular with pedestrians and cyclists, however, in many instances the waterfront is not accessible blocked by modern gated housing developments. The historic pedestrian Greenwich Foot Tunnel is a well-used key access route from Greenwich to the Isle of Dogs.
THE FUTURE SPATIAL DIRECTIONS

Urban Structure as a Strategic Tool

This section presents a number of strategic options based upon the understanding and analysis of urban structure and morphology undertaken so far.

It is not meant to provide all the answers, or a comprehensive spatial vision but merely to present a number of potential spatial directions. Directions which could shape and inform a long-term spatial vision for the borough based upon the foundations of urban structure and urban design.

There are three spatial directions presented. Each one displaying an alternative urban structure approach and linking to development outcomes such as land uses. Spatial Strategy A is a direction which has proved most appropriate based on evidence, and is therefore the current preferred option. Further testing needs to be undertaken to see if this direction is viable.

There are also a number of over-arching, generic spatial structure recommendations which. Many of these flow out of the urban structure analysis and follow the general principle of needing to put the pedestrian at the heart of cities again. Only by achieving this are we going to tackle bigger ‘issues’ including social exclusion, unviable town centres, inactive lifestyles and reducing car dependency.
THREE DIFFERENT SPATIAL OPTIONS

- This option would broadly identify the existing pattern of the western part of the borough being more urbanised than the east, and promoting this approach as a future spatial direction.

  Such an approach would result in a type of gradient with higher densities, more activity, uses and intensity in the more accessible, connected places in the western half of the borough such as Spitalfields, Whitechapel, Bethnal Green.

- A spatial strategy based on refocusing on the network of centres across the borough and outside. For more detail please see opposite page.

- 'Mixed-use intensity everywhere' could be viable option given the level of growth and change that will occur across the Borough. Hence, this option explores the possibility of allowing high to medium intensity development across the borough and utilising the path network and its hierarchy as a means to organise the structure of the urban fabric. Places in the east would become as dense, intense and urban as the places in the historically more urbanised west.

  It might culminate in high intensity mixed-use urban quarters across the borough with shops and services wherever they are needed and demanded, linked to movement routes and where development can provide it. This direction would lead to key services and social infrastructure being located on a development opportunity basis, not necessarily focusing such key services within centres.
RECOMMENDED SPATIAL STRATEGY

'Refocusing on our urban centres'

Rediscovering and recovering the lost centres and places of Tower Hamlets by utilising proactive planning tools.

To generate and foster a 'sense of place', to begin the process of place-making it requires an understanding the people make places. Without people, activity, energy, movement, trade etc there would be no place, only space, empty, soulless, dead, inhospitable space.

As discussed previously, post-war Planning methodology set about moving people out of places. De-intensifying the activities that made these places unique and gave them a sense of place. This process needs to be reversed and above all the qualities that make good places reinstated.

We need to begin shaping the form and spatially of Tower Hamlets. This is not an end-state but a continuous succession of phases (each building, regeneration project etc). These small parts need to form a greater city form, a visual order, reinforcing the places that make up Tower Hamlets.

The Core Strategy needs to set down new urban connections between existing centres and where new activity nodes are formed, set about creating some new centres. E.g. at the junction of St Paul's Way and Bow Common Lane – a new centre can be developed creating a focus to Bow Common.

Need to reinstate the things that bring a city to life, mix of uses, different people, different activities, these urban qualities are valued, people go to places which have these qualities and desert places that do not.

What should be in our centres, what form should they take?
A whole range of uses should be promoted within an urban centre; this should be the primary location for social and community infrastructure such as, libraries, museums, cultural buildings, health centres as well as the range of commercial and retail uses all in close proximity to one another so as to create multiple connections and support for each other. Key Civic buildings should be placed to frame key public spaces, helping to build civic pride.

What would happen outside of the urban centres?
As you move further away from the centre the character of the area becomes more and more residential. The intensity of activity diminishes and the density decreases.
There needs to be a network of local urban centres, which are overlapped by neighbourhood urban centres, which are overlapped by district urban centres supported by a number of major centres. These centres will offer a variety of shops and services related to their position in the hierarchy.

The larger scale centres will be linked and connected by a number of linear, mixed-use streets which focus activity and key civic uses, developing and reinforcing the traditional English high street.
OVER-ARCHING SPATIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Delivering spatial planning

Through this study of analysing and characterising the urban structure and form of Tower Hamlets, a series of have been bought to light.

The following 9 recommendations begin to act as pointers for future spatial planning in Tower Hamlets. They are not exhaustive in their scope, but attempt to ensure that future planning tools within the Local Development Framework understand and embed local distinctiveness, spatiality, good urban design and support place identity.

1 Turn orange (vehicle only) routes into multi-functional main streets in a similar way to Commercial Street, Bow Road etc. Integrate and prioritise the pedestrian on these movement routes, make them as mixed-use urban streets without having to hinder their role as vehicle routes.

1 Focus and priories pedestrian and cyclist movement along our key routes, connecting our urban centres to one another via human-focused streets. (Link in with ‘legible London’ programme and cycling and walking transformation programme by the Mayor and TfL)

1 Promote a compact urban form which responds to the urban hierarchy. Promote an integrated, flexible, mixed use approach – with the levels of mix responding to access and location to centres with the ability for the mix to change over time – giving an area the freedom to evolve and change and circumstances suit without undue intervention from planning.

1 Promote access to the rest of the city via strategic routes principally by public transport, bike and foot. Promote local connectivity based on the pedestrian and cyclist.

1 Promote a highly walkable, people friendly, memorable and enjoyable public realm that offers a multitude of urban pleasures and experiences. Instil and promote high quality design of buildings and the public realm.

1 Promote a mixed-tenure approach to urban living to ensure the creation of socially balanced places.

1 Residential Space standards need to be revised and increased in order to ensure high density living is seen as an attractive option for all.

1 Acknowledging boundary blurring, rejecting outdated zoning practices.

1 Focus civic, social and community buildings onto major routes and spaces to improve access, create a civic setting and activity to public space.

1 Promotes active frontages along major routes and spaces.

1 Promotes an integrated, coherent approach to building heights and density responding to proximity of centres.

1 Parks should be integrated into the neighbourhood and integrated into the movement network that operates across the neighbourhood. Through movement should be encouraged and made clear, safe and direct.

1 To create a network of big and small public spaces across the borough to offer places for local people to meet and interact. These spaces should be located where pedestrian activity is substantial to ensure they are lively not dead urban spaces. Also clustering of shops, cafes and other uses around these spaces can help to enliven activity.

1 Need to ensure that buildings frame and address the public realm network rather than turning their backs on it as has happened in the past. The public front of buildings need to face the street and need as much as possible to have active edges. This can be achieved by front doors, windows, balconies and terraces, and ensures the public realm remains active and overlooked.

1 To connect up the key public spaces in the borough with high quality streets that enable people to move around of foot quickly, easily and with enjoyment. Some of these key connections could be pedestrian only as long as they have enough activity along them to keep them safe.

1 Use and locate strategic landmarks in urban centres, major nodes and/or along primary paths to reinforce the perception of centre and edge. Strategic landmarks should complement each other and not fight for visual dominance.

1 New small nodes need to be created, which will only occur when parts of the local level path network is repaired and reinstated as recommended in R1. These smaller nodes can act as local focal points maybe with a few local shops.

1 Ensure most green spaces are edged by buildings that offer active edges and overlookings to assist in creating lively, well used and safe parks.

1 To reinstate paths that have been cut due to post-war redevelopment. This can be done by:
  - returning to the traditional street pattern of joined up paths,
  - promoting the qualities of a permeable area which offers choices of routes for people

1 To reinforce paths based on the role in the movement hierarchy so they can be easily distinguished and understood by citizens. This can be done by:
  - adjusting the width and enclosure of the path
  - use of active frontages and edges
  - develop a sense of character for each path
  - limiting large set backs and empty spaces along the path
OVER-ARCHING SPATIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Parks should offer space for biodiversity and nature and link into the water network where possible. Green connections between green spaces should be created to a network.

Where possible attempt to integrate users not segregate them, putting the pedestrian as top priority as they are the most vulnerable user. Integrating users ensures each path has enough activity to feel safe and overlooked.

Utilise the canal network as a multipurpose route, this can be done by:
- promoting it as a movement route for pedestrians and cyclists
- enhancing biodiversity in and along its edge, promote it as a place for nature
- focus activities along its edge where appropriate, restaurants, cafes, shops etc.
- ensure buildings along its edge address the canal and promote overlooking of the space to improve safety.

Reconnect a mix of uses between the public transport nodes and the main movement routes which hold most pedestrian activity. This can be done by:
- focusing mix use, higher density activity around the public transport node and the area between where the existing mix of uses occur.

Focus new centres around good access to public transport, this could mean for a large centre located around a tube or DLR station and for a smaller centre located along a busy secondary route which has a bus service along it.

This will make sure that centres are easily accessible both by foot, bike and public transport allowing people a multitude of ways to access them.

Nodes need to be reinforced to improve their role as meeting places, this can be done by:
- using built form to highlight these nodes
- concentrating activities at these nodes
- the level of public relevance of the buildings and activities that frame the nodes

Break up some of the big blocks into smaller blocks helping to improve permeability; this can be done by reinstating the traditional street network. This will help to make places more walkable and remove the large barriers to movement that many of the housing estates create.

To assist in developing vibrant, mixed use centres promote smaller block sizes in the centre of places. This will create more development edge and will only more shops and services to operate whilst also taking advantage of the higher concentrations of pedestrian activity.

Use markers (local landmarks) at appropriate locations along paths to reinforce their legibility, to enable the user to know where they are along a path, and where they are going.

Direct buildings heights to increase gradually from edge to centre of a neighbourhood. This increase range will differ from place to place, it might mean 3 stories increasing to 7 in the centre in might be higher or lower than this.

Reconnect to the River Thames, make use of the edge it offers this can be done by:
- improving physical and visual access to the Thames
- focusing activities and uses along its edge so to encourage people to go enjoy the space
- look into the feasibility of new pedestrian footbridges across the Thames to connect north east and south east London

Make use of the railway lines and arches, this can be done by:
- overcome them as barriers by creating new connections over and under them
- make use of the arches as spaces for business and other uses
- promote their role as places of biodiversity richness thereby leaving some parts of them for nature and restrict human access.

Better define the public realm network by using buildings to frame the space instead of large swathes of under used open space. Put such space in the internal private area of blocks and locate buildings along the edge of blocks with their public fronts addressing the street.
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