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Dear Vicki

Proposed new Conservation Areas at Brickfield Gardens, Hackney Road, Old Bethnal Green Road, Regents Canal, Regents Canal Northern, Fish Island, Wilton Music Hall and Redchurch Street

Proposed alterations to Conservation Area boundaries at Albert Gardens (Limehouse), Coldharbour (Isle of Dogs), Fournier Street & Brick Lane, Jesus Hospital Estate (Bethnal Green), Narrow Street (Wapping), St George's Town Hall, York Square (Limehouse), Wapping Pier Head, Whitechapel Market, Bethnal Green Gardens, Driffield Road (Bow), Globe Road (Bethnal Green), Langdon Park Poplar, St Anne's Church, Stepney Green, Roman Road, Wapping Wall and Victoria Park

Thank you for consulting English Heritage with the regard to the proposed designation of the above conservation areas and also the proposed extension of existing conservation areas as outlined above. We apologise for the delay in responding.

English Heritage welcomes the comprehensive review of conservation areas undertaken by the Borough and fully acknowledges the efforts that have been put into the work which is particularly welcome at a time when many parts of Tower Hamlets are subject to ongoing, intense development pressure.

At this stage we have not been consulted with regard to any Appraisals or Management Guidelines and understand that these will be undertaken in due course. We would welcome further consultation as the process moves forward.

We wish to make the following specific points with regard to the proposed new conservation areas:

Brickfield Gardens

We welcome the proposed conservation area which will protect a valuable area of older properties which have survived amidst much post war development.

Old Bethnal Green Road

This is an area which contains Lasdun's, grade II* Keeling House, as well as a particularly interesting group of late nineteenth century residential properties. It well deserves conservation area status.

Fish Island

English Heritage particularly welcomes the proposal to designate a conservation area at Fish Island which was identified as a significant historic asset by English Heritage as part of its review of areas in and around the wider Olympic site. We look forward to continuing to work with the Borough and other partners with regard to the evolving masterplan for a wider area, of which the proposed conservation area, with its significant remnants of London's industrial heritage, will form a key part.

Hackney Road

The decision to put forward the parts of the Hackney Road within your Borough as a conservation area is very welcome. This, coupled with the proposed designation across the boundary in the London Borough of Hackney, will give a coherent level of protection to this important historic route. It is important that you liaise with the Hackney with regard to the future management guidelines to ensure that both sides of the road receive a unified approach. The decision to change the boundaries of other conservation areas to ensure a continuous run of properties within the Hackney Road Conservation Areas appears sensible.

Redchurch Street

We particularly welcome this conservation area which helps to preserve a group of particularly vulnerable buildings, including those surviving relics of the historic weaving industry. We note that the London Borough of Hackney is currently consulting on proposed boundary extensions to the South Shoreditch Conservation Area. This will include an area to the east of Shoreditch High Street and north of Bethnal Green Road

which follow the Borough boundary and adjoin the proposed Redchurch Street Conservation Area. We suggest that in preparing an appraisal for Redchurch Street in the future, that you may wish to refer to Hackney's appraisal for South Shoreditch. The proposed Redchurch Conservation Area would include the group of Bethnal Green Road properties which are to be the subject of a forthcoming Partnership Scheme (123 to 161 [odd] Bethnal Green Road).

Regent's Canal and Regent's Canal (Northern Section)

We welcome these proposed conservation areas which would help to preserve the historic canal fabric and, coupled with carefully considered Appraisals and Management Guideline Documents, serve as a useful tool in helping to guide new development along the edges of the canal. The London Borough of Hackney recently designated their stretch of the canal as conservation area. We suggest that in preparing an appraisal for the Regent's Canal, in the future, you may wish to refer to Hackney's appraisal for their stretch of the canal which was designated as a conservation area in October 2007.

Wilton's Music Hall

We welcome this new conservation area which has Wilton's Music Hall, one of London's cultural gems at its heart, along with nearby historic Wellclose Square.

The English Heritage document 'Guidance on the management of Conservation Areas' states that 'A district-wide re-assessment of existing conservation areas is desirable from time to time, especially where there is increasing pressure for change' With regard to the proposed conservation area extensions we would make the following specific comments:

Bethnal Green Gardens

The proposed extension which helps to protect the wider setting of the Church of St John on Bethnal Green is welcome.

Fournier Street & Brick Lane

We welcome the various proposed extensions of the conservation area including the Grade II* St Matthews Church and also the Fruit & Wool Exchange and Grade II listed Spitalfields Market which together protect the setting of the magnificent listed Christchurch Spitalfields.

Jesus Hospital Estate

We welcome the proposed inclusion of St Peter's with St Thomas Church along with its related structures within the conservation area boundary.

St Anne's Church

We welcome the proposed extensions to the conservation area boundary which includes the landmark Mission Building at the junction of Salmon Lane.

Stepney Green

The proposed extension increases the extent of protected properties fronting the Mile End Road. This forms a key part of the High Street 2012 masterplan area.

Wapping Wall

We welcome the proposed extensions which include the historic dock and historic King Edward Memorial Park.

Whitechapel Market

We welcome the proposed extension of the conservation area. The market is likely to form the focus of a jointed funded enhancement scheme involving both Tower Hamlets and English Heritage.

Whilst we have no specific comments with regard to the extensions to Albert Gardens, Coldharbour, Driffield Road, Globe Road, Langdon Park, Narrow Street, Roman Road, Roman Road Market, St Georges Town Hall, Wapping Pierhead and York Square Conservation Areas, they are nonetheless welcome as a means of further helping to protect the Borough's built heritage.

We understand that the proposed changes to the Victoria Park Conservation Area boundary involve no additions to the protected area.

A survey of the borough with a view to identifying additions to Tower Hamlets local list may well be a useful means of affording some protection to those more isolated structures which it has not been feasibly possible to incorporate within extended Conservation Area boundaries.

We have been separately consulted with regard to the Local Development Core Strategy and its mechanisms for ensuring that conservation is at the heart of the planning process and will be responding in due course.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hargreaves

Historic Buildings and Areas Adviser

cc Susie Barson English Heritage