

**APPENDIX ONE: UPDATED CHARACTER APPRAISALS  
AND MANAGEMENT PLANS**

# FORD SQUARE SIDNEY SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA

## Character appraisal and management plan

October 2021



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# PREFACE

## What is a conservation area?

1. Conservation areas are parts of our local environment with special architectural or historic qualities. They are created by the council, in consultation with the local community, to ensure that change preserves ~~s~~ and ~~or~~ enhances the specific character of these areas for everybody.
2. The special character of these areas does not come only from the quality of their individual buildings, but from the value of these buildings as a group and from their setting. Elements such as the historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries and characteristic building and paving materials all contribute to the familiar and cherished local scene.

## What is the purpose of this document?

3. This document has been prepared to comply with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Section 69(1) which states that a conservation area is “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan provides a detailed description of the area’s architectural and historic character and management guidelines on how this character should be preserved ~~and~~ or enhanced in the context of appropriate ongoing change.
4. This document has also been prepared to support relevant strategic objectives contained within the council’s Conservation Strategy 2017 –2027 including objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 2.6.

## Who is this document for?

5. This is an inclusive document which is intended to engage with many different people and organisations. It will depend on the support of the community to achieve its objectives.
6. The character appraisal and management plan is aimed primarily at the residents, businesses, developers and others living and working in the area. The document has also been prepared to align conservation objectives within different parts of the council, to help to meet the objectives of the Conservation Strategy and to provide a single point of reference for the management of the area. It represents our shared commitment to conserve the special architectural and historic character, and to help manage change constructively.

### What is the status of this document?

7. This ~~Conservation Area character~~ appraisal and management plan has the status of ~~a Supplementary Planning Document~~[planning guidance](#). [It replaces the previous character appraisal and management guidelines adopted in 2007.](#) It should be read in conjunction with Tower Hamlet's Local Plan and the London Plan. All planning applications for sites within the Ford Square / Sidney Square Conservation Area should be informed by this document. It is a material consideration when planning applications affecting the conservation area are assessed.

### Equality and diversity

8. Valuing diversity is one of the council's core values, and we take pride in being one of the most culturally rich and diverse boroughs in the UK. This core value has informed the preparation of this document and will continue to inform changes to this document in the future. [These values](#), ~~it~~ will also inform changes to buildings and places and as such this document provides guidance to ensure inclusivity for all members of the community.
9. This character appraisal and management plan document will support the council's aims set out below:

- Creation of a strong spirit of community and good race relations in Tower Hamlets.
  - The removal of prejudice, discrimination and victimisation within the communities we serve and our workforce.
  - To ensure that the borough's communities and our workforce are not discriminated against or bullied for any reason, including reasons associated with their gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religious belief.
10. Please contact us if you feel that this document could do more to promote equality and further the interests of the whole community.

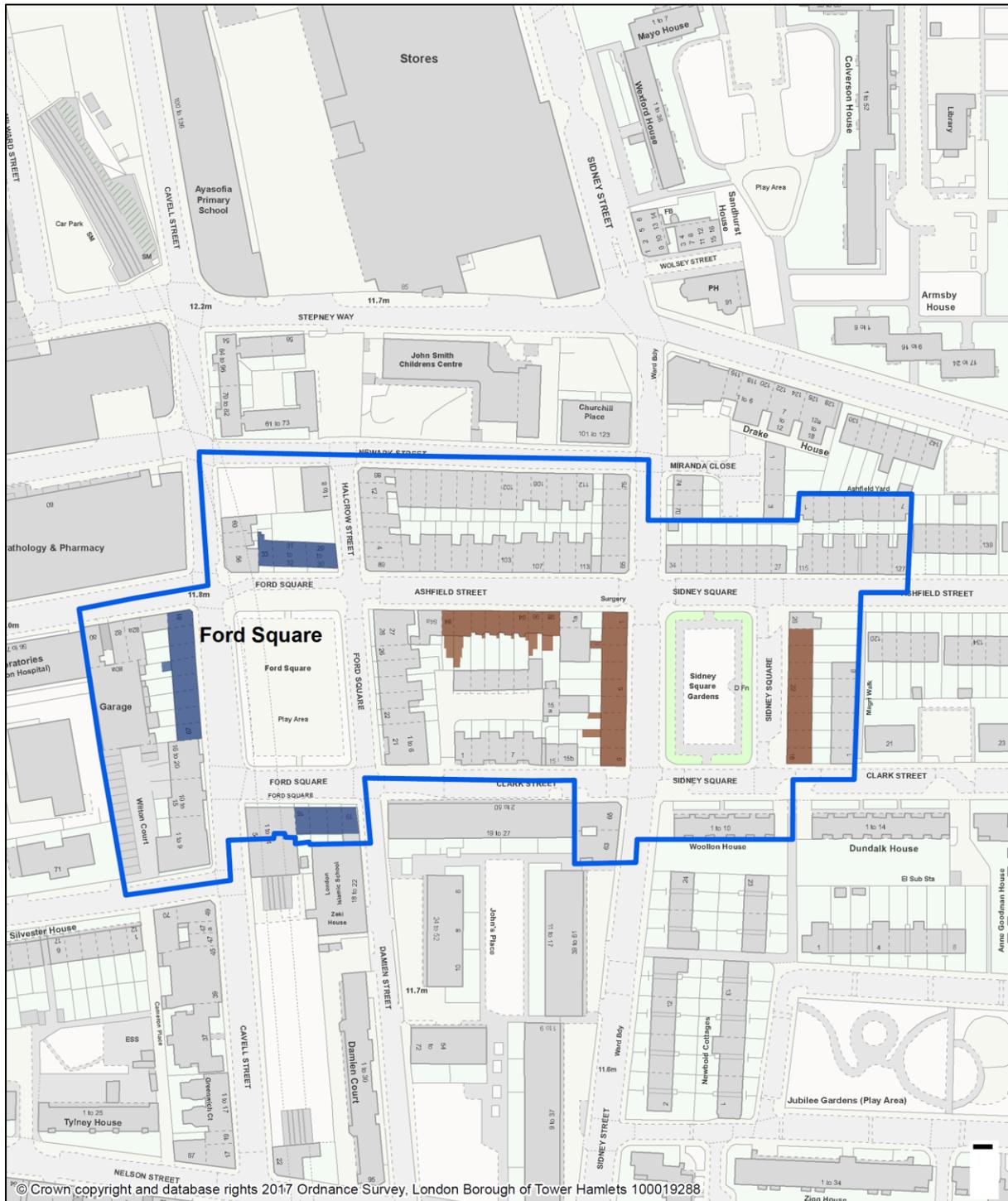
## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

11. The Ford Square Sidney Square Conservation Area was designated in December 1985. ~~The conservation area measures 31,773m<sup>2</sup> with a total of 188 buildings.~~ The boundary was amended in ~~2018~~[2021](#), with two areas removed and two areas added. ~~Full details of the recent alterations to the conservation area boundary as well as a map are included in Appendix ?~~
12. The Ford Square / Sidney Square Conservation Area sits centrally between Whitechapel Road/Mile End Road to the north and Commercial Road to the south between Whitechapel and Stepney. This is an area of particular special architectural and historic interest, illustrated by its rich history and significant architecture, dating from the ~~C19.~~[19<sup>th</sup> century](#).
13. The character and appearance of the area, as described in the appraisal in the first part of the document, define its special qualities. The second part of the document, the Management Plan, contains relevant policy and guidance as well as development guidelines intended to ensure that future change [is sensitive to the areas special character](#).

### 1.1. Location and setting

14. The Ford Square / Sidney Square Conservation Area is located centrally within Whitechapel (one of twenty four distinct 'places' identified within the Local Plan), in the west of the borough between Whitechapel Road/Mile End Road and Commercial Road. The two open squares (Ford Square and Sidney Square) provide public open space and welcome breathing space within the densely built up area, between the two key roads.
15. The area to the north is generally characterised by industrial buildings or residential buildings with much longer building frontages and larger plots. To the east and south, the area is largely characterised by large blocks of flats and housing estates, often positioned within larger sites and surrounded by open space. To the west is the Royal London Hospital site which is characterised with large hospital and institutional buildings of a much greater scale than those within the conservation area.
16. The boundaries of the conservation area are largely defined by the positioning of the two squares, extending north up to Newark Street and slightly to the east to encompass the Victorian terraced houses on Ashfield Street. Most buildings in the conservation area are terraced houses set on long, narrow plots, presenting a narrow street frontage in relation to their depth. The area is densely built-up in terms of building footprints, with some terraces having buildings to the rear, such as Nos. 86-96 Ashfield Street, Nos. 115-127 (odd) Ashfield Street and Nos. 18-23 (cons.) Sidney Square. ~~with buildings to the rear of the plots, reducing the size of rear gardens.~~ The consistent frontages allow very few gaps ~~allowing thus restricting~~ views through to the rear. The exception to this is to the rear of Nos. 1-9 and 18-26 Sidney Square, where the lack of extensions s to the rear allows views of rear gardens and through to the rear elevations of the terraces.
17. The variety in the size of plots and the varied positioning of buildings on plots within the area surrounding the conservation area provides s a strong contrast to the more regular plan form of the historic development within the conservation area. Outside the conservation area, to the south and east, residential blocks with long consistent, frontages and irregular positioning on sites are common,

with some stand-alone blocks of five storeys or more. This continues to the north where there are also some industrial buildings. To the west the Royal London Hospital buildings are of a much larger scale, with large, dominant bulk and mass.



## FORD SQUARE SIDNEY SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA

- Conservation Area
- Statutory Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Buildings

## 2.0 HISTORIC CONTEXT

### 2.1. Evolution of the area

18. When the Royal London Hospital was opened in the mid-C18 a variety of small developments began around it, but until the early C19, there were large areas of open land to the north and south of ~~Mile End Road~~[Whitechapel Road](#). ~~Stepney Way divided this land, providing a route from Whitechapel to Stepney Village.~~[A west-east footpath running through the fields to the south of the hospital and along what is now Stepney Way, provided part of a route from Whitechapel Church to Stepney Church.](#) The individual character of the area changed from the early C19 as developments spread north from Commercial Road. In the 1820s, the estate of John Sidney Hawkins was built on the narrow strip of land to the east of the ~~Royal~~ London Hospital, running from Whitechapel Road down to Ford Square (previously Bedford Square). Both Ford Square and Sidney Square were developed on former fields in the 1820s as private gardens for the residents of the terraces surrounding each square.
19. Others, including the estate of Henry Colet, Lord Mayor of London and the Mercers' Company Surveyor George Smith, began developing land around Stepney Way from the 1830s. This development took the form of two-storey terraced houses. Smaller areas of development continued at Mile End. The surviving terraces to the east and west sides of Sidney square are part of this 1820's development.
20. The two storey terrace to the southern side of Ashfield Street (Nos. 84-98 (even)) between the two squares dates from the early C19, with that to the northern side of the ~~Street~~[street](#) and the rest of that block ((Nos. 89-113 Ashfield Street (odd), 4-12 Halcrow Street (even), 86-112 Newark Street (even) and 65-75 Sidney Street (odd)) , as well as that to the north east of Sidney Square (Nos. 115- 127 Ashfield Street (odd)) built slightly later. By 1839 the area in and around ~~the now~~ [what was to become the](#) conservation area was densely built-up with terraced housing. Some houses had a retail or commercial use at ground floor and some corner buildings were public houses.

21. During ~~the~~ World War II a number of bombs were dropped in the area (in 1940/41), causing significant damage to the townscape. Two bombs were dropped on Cavell Street, one leaving the vacant site at the corner of Cavell Street and Newark Street (partly built on land fronting Halcrow Street) and the other causing damage to the 1820s terrace to the western side of Ford Square. The damage caused by the bomb dropped in 1940 is still visible to this terrace; with the end of the terrace (on the corner of Ashfield Street) ~~shown as~~ partially rebuilt, with sections of rebuilding/ newer brickwork to the rest of the terrace, ~~and~~ particularly the northern end. Another bomb was dropped on Sidney Square, with patches of brickwork showing signs of rebuilding to the upper levels of the western side of the square. The terrace to the north of Sidney Square and historic development to the north of this were also lost as a result of bomb damage.
  
22. The only side of Ford square that retains part of the 1820s development is the terrace to the west. Later stuccoed terraces exist to the north and south of the square dating from the mid-late nineteenth century, with 1990s housing to the eastern side. To Sidney Square it is only the east and west sides that survive, with 1990s imitations to the north and Woollon House, part of the 1960s estate to the south of the conservation area, to the south. The private gardens within each square were purchased by the London County Council and Stepney Borough Council in the early C20 and were opened to the public at this time.

## 2.1. Historic and architectural significance of buildings

23. [paragraph deleted]~~Historic and architectural significance of buildings~~
  
24. The majority of buildings within the conservation area contribute positively to the special character of the conservation area.
  
25. There are a number of listed buildings within the conservation area. Relevant Historic England list descriptions are available at:

## Grade II Listed Buildings

### Nos. 84-98 Ashfield Street

26. ~~2~~Nos. 84-98 Ashfield Street is a terrace built c.1826-7 with an impressive composition that is unusual in lower-class housing of the early nineteenth century. Buildings comprise of two storeys to central bays, flanked by a three storey building at either end of the terrace. The remaining buildings beyond No.84 are two storeys in height. Buildings are two rooms deep.
27. The central buildings are London Stock brick laid in Flemish bond ~~a~~ with slate roofs and brick chimney stacks. Buildings at either end of the terrace are stucco.
28. Nos. 88-96 have semi-circular arches over blocked doorways and windows, flat gauged brick arches over first floor windows, some with 12-paned ~~(6/6)~~ (six over six) timber sashes, all set in semi-circular arched reveals. An historic boot scraper survives to No. 86.
29. Nos. 84 and 98 are each of two bays and have stucco fronts with rusticated ground floors, arched doorways, flat arches over framed 12-paned ~~(6/6)~~ (six over six) sashes, moulded cornices beneath parapets and canted bays to the rear with sash windows under gauged brick heads.

### Nos. 1-9 Sidney Square

30. This three storey terrace with basements forms the western of the two sides of Sidney Square that survive. Built in the 1820s, these stock brick buildings have slate roofs behind coped parapets. All (except No. 5 where it has been lost) have entrances with fluted pilasters, within which are panelled doors with arched fanlights. Ground floor windows and doors are round headed. Above the ground floor a stone string course sits below timber sash windows with decorative iron balconettes. Windows are predominantly 4-paned ~~(2/2)~~ (two over two) timber sashes.

### Nos. 18-25 Sidney Square

31. This three storey terrace with basements, ~~On~~ on the eastern side of Sidney Square is one of the two original sides of the square to survive. Built in the 1820s, this stock brick terrace has ~~have~~ slate roofs behind coped parapets. Front doors with fluted pilasters; arched fanlights. Ground floor windows and doors are round headed. Above the ground floor a stone string course sits below timber sash windows with decorative iron balconettes. Windows are predominantly 4-paned ~~(2/2)~~ (two over two) timber sashes.

### **Locally Listed Buildings**

#### Nos. 67-81 Cavell Street

32. Nos. 67 – 81 Cavell Street are three storey early nineteenth century terraced houses. The ground floor has arched windows and doorways with quarter fluted columns. The first floor has windows set within an arched recess. ~~Built in 1900 as Ye Olde Angel Public House on a site which had been occupied by a public house since at least 1744. The building ceased to be a pub by 1910. The extremely narrow façade recalls the ancient plot widths of the area. The white rendered facade, topped by a decorative gable is rich in architectural detail.~~

### Nos. 16-19 Ford Square

33. ~~33.~~ Nos. 16-19 Ford Square are three storey Victorian townhouses with part sunken basements. These modestly designed townhouses form the southern of two groups of surviving terraced houses located to the north and south of Ford Square. These stucco buildings have rusticated ground floors and basements with plain upper floors, semi-recessed entrance doors set within plain columns with fanlights over. The roofline comprises a consistent parapet, concealing butterfly roofs. Windows are predominantly 4-paned (two over two) timber sashes at ground floor and 12-paned (six over six) to upper floors.

### Nos. 29-33 Ford Square

34. Nos. 29-33 Ford Square are three storey Victorian townhouses with part sunken basements. These modestly designed townhouses form the northern of two

groups of surviving terraces located to the north and south of Ford Square. These stucco buildings have rusticated ground floors and basements with plain upper floors, semi-recessed entrance doors set within plain columns with fanlights over. The roofline comprises a consistent parapet, concealing butterfly roofs. Windows are predominantly 4-paned (two over two) timber sashes.

## 2.2. Archaeological significance

35. Much of the Ford Square Sidney Square Conservation Area is included within a Tier 2 Archaeological Priority Area (APA) as identified in Historic England's update to APAs, completed for Tower Hamlets in October 2017. APAs highlight where important archaeological interest might be located based on the history of the area and previous archaeological investigations. APAs in Tier 2 are those that the Greater London Historic Environment Record holds specific evidence indicating the presence or likely presence of heritage assets of archaeological interest.
36. The Mile End APA focusses on the medieval and post medieval historic Mile End settlement as well as a stretch of London's Civil War defences due to the discovery of a large contemporary ditch just to the south. It runs from the eastern boundary of Whitechapel, one mile east of Aldgate and ends at the Mile End Road's junction with Cambridge Heath Road. Planning decisions are expected to make a balanced judgement for non-designated assets considered of less than national importance considering the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset.
37. For more information please see the Archaeological Priority Guidelines published in July 2016 available on the Historic England website. The website also provides a link to the Tower Hamlets Archaeological Priority Areas Appraisal produced by Historic England (2017), where [there are](#) further descriptions and maps of the APAs.
38. [paragraph deleted] ~~It should be noted that the APA review document has been published as evidence in support of an emerging development plan which has not yet been adopted.~~

## 3.0 TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

### 3.1. General historic character and plan form

39. The piecemeal development of London's East End contrasts with the planning that occurred in the west of the city. The area which forms the conservation area, however, was developed in a relatively coherent way, with two main styles of houses of a consistent scale, dating from the C19 as identified in the following section (4.0 Architectural Character). The mid-late C20 houses in place of those that were demolished are generally sympathetic in terms of scale, proportions and materials. This is particularly true of that to the northern side of Sidney Square, built in the 1990s.
40. The area is characterised by narrow roads, generally straight and in a formal grid formation, surrounding the two squares, which provide large areas of open space. The street frontages are generally consistent, with the arrangement of terraces allowing some limited views through to rear gardens and rear elevations. ~~In addition to this, there is one gap in the frontage on Halcrow Street and a larger empty site on the corner of Cavell Street and Newark Street.~~ The terraces provide a largely consistent plot width, which contributes significantly to the coherent character and appearance of the conservation area.

### 3.2. Layout and plan form

41. Buildings are laid out around two garden squares, which form the main focus of the conservation area. The historic urban fabric of the Ford Square Sidney Square Conservation Area is still present and is demonstrated by the tight perimeter block structure, historic rear yards and gardens and fine grain of narrow plots. Plots are typically rectangular in shape and building footprints generally cover between ~~1/4~~ a quarter and ~~p~~ 1/2 a half of the plot. Although there are some instances where later unsympathetic additions and extensions almost completely fill plots, this type of plot coverage is atypical and should not be used to guide future development.

42. In locations such as Ashfield Street, Sidney Square and Clark Street, the internal areas within the larger blocks contain ~~auxiliary~~ancillary structures. These internal areas can be accessed directly from the street, via alleyways or through (now gated) passageways through the terrace.
43. ~~43.~~ Streets have strongly defined edges created by continuous building lines built at the back of the pavement. In this conservation area buildings typically have narrow frontage widths of around 5m wide.
44. Corner plots on Halcrow Street, Sidney Street, Newark Street and Ashfield Street have strongly defined chamfered corners which hint at the original ground floor commercial use and shopfronts. Although these corner units are now in residential use, evidence of historic features such as their timber fascia panels and cornicing can still be seen. Very few commercial units survive within the conservation area and only one original shopfront to No. 58 Cavell Street. Most original shopfronts have been infilled or replaced by inappropriate modern design.

### 3.3. Density and land uses

45. The conservation area measures 31,773m<sup>2</sup> in area with a total of 188 buildings. This represents approximately 10 units per 1,690m<sup>2</sup>. The squares cover a large area of the conservation area, with Ford Square measuring just over 1,700m<sup>2</sup> and Sidney Square measuring just over 1,300m<sup>2</sup>.
46. The land use character of the area is predominantly residential in nature. This land use plays an essential role in reinforcing the character of the open spaces within this area. In addition to the residential uses, a few small scale commercial units can be found on Cavell Street, and on the corner of Halcrow and Ashfield Street.
47. Despite development pressure from large scale, low density development to the south and large scale, high density development to the north, the conservation area retains its historic small scale, high density form characteristic of nineteenth century residential developments.

### 3.4. Building heights and massing

48. Despite development pressure for more tall buildings and an existing group of taller buildings to the northwest of Ford Square, the conservation area still maintains its consistent historic scale, height and massing, which comprises of low-rise two, three and four storeys plus basement terraced housing. A number of houses in the conservation area have historic basements, these include the 1820s terraces to Sidney Square, the two storey listed terrace to Ashfield Street and the terraces to the north and south of Ford Square.
49. The majority of buildings in the conservation area are three storey townhouses. The townhouses to the north and south of Ford Square are also three storeys high, however these have full basements that are setback from the edge of the plot behind an upstand with railings. In the block between Ford Square and Sidney Square, on the southern side of Ashfield Street, a small group of two storey terraces interspersed between a few three storey townhouses can also be found.
50. There are also a number of red brick terraced houses of three storeys with a dominant attic storey. These are located on the northern side of Ashfield Street, the southern side of Newark Street and along the eastern side of Halcrow Street. On Sidney Street these red brick terraces also have semi-basements, with windows directly onto the pavement and small lightwells below grilles at pavement level. In addition to these, a modern four storey flatted development with mansard roof is also located on the northern side of Halcrow Street.

### 3.5. Topography and important views

51. The flat topography within the Ford Square Sidney Square Conservation Area restricts opportunities for long range views to areas outside of the conservation area. The exception to this is the north side of Ford Square near the junction with Halcrow Street, where the gentle curve of the street allows for unrestricted long-range unfolding views of the City as you progress westward toward Cavell

Street. At the junction of Cavell Street and Ashfield Street views west are terminated by the Gherkin and the Leadenhall Building within the City.

52. Most streets offer mid-range views to areas within the conservation area and local areas just outside it. Views within the conservation area are restricted by the form of the townscape. Mid-range townscape views along Newark Street, Ashfield Street and Clark Street highlight the repetition and rhythm of continuous terraces. Views looking west along Newark Street are terminated by the visual bulk and mass of the Royal London Hospital complex. From Ashfield Street serial views of some of the more modestly sized hospital buildings are progressively revealed.

53. At the eastern end of Clark Street a gap between buildings provides an opportunity for glimpses of the ancillary buildings in the centre of the block. From this location attractive layered views of stock brick London roofs belonging to the Grade II listed terrace on Ashfield Street are juxtaposed with the simple glazed lightweight form of the rear of Elektra House. Beyond the listed terraces, views of the red brick terraces, also on Ashfield Street, with their prominent dormers, chimneys and clay pots combine to form a visually rich and interesting roofscape. In this conservation area views of the historic roofscape are hard to find and are considered to make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

### 3.6. Landscape character

54. The framed views formed by the very large mature tree canopies are a key element of the conservation area's landscape character. Inside the conservation area, trees act as focal points directing views toward Ford Square and Sidney Square, and the groups of listed terraces.

55. Outside of the conservation area, slight changes in the alignment and orientation of the streets limit views from adjacent streets into the conservation area. From Stepney Way the combination of the low rise buildings and the generous spaces between buildings allows for views of the façade including the roof storey of the red brick terrace along Newark Street. Generally in this

location, the narrowness of the streets and the height of the buildings limit opportunities to view the whole façade. Varden Street's straight linear layout, orientation and the gaps between buildings allow for unfolding serial views of the mature tree canopy within Ford Square.

## 4.0 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

56. Almost all buildings within the Ford Square Sidney Square Conservation Area make a positive contribution to the special character of the conservation area. These buildings are identified as positive contributors due to their siting, building envelope and massing, appearance and materials. All buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area should be preserved and where alterations are proposed these should enhance their contribution to the conservation area. Demolition of any positive contributors will not be supported. Equally, any alteration that is not sympathetic to the special character of the conservation area will not be supported.

### 4.1 Building typology and form

57. The conservation area contains a range of architectural styles which reflect the growth of the area. Buildings along the main streets within the Ford Square Sidney Square Conservation Area consist of groups of terraced houses. Generally buildings have a consistent scale, with some minor variation in building heights and frontage widths. The relatively narrow plot widths and variation in architectural detailing give buildings within the terraces subtle vertical emphasis. In locations such as Ashfield Street, Newark Street, Sidney Street and Halcrow Street the red brick terraced houses and their visually prominent attic storey, with pitched roofs and dormers, create a strongly defined sense of verticality and rhythm.
58. The residential terraces surrounding both Ford Square and Sidney Square define the original early C19 three storey scale, generally with arched doorways and arched windows at ground floor [level](#). The terraces within the conservation area are generally modest in their scale and detailing, adapted for the workers

of the east end. Grade II listed terraces line the east and west sides of Sidney Square and also along the street to the west at Nos. 84-98 Ashfield Street. Built in 1826-7, these predominantly stock brick, with some stucco, two bayed **Victorian** houses link the formal layouts of Sidney Square with Ford Square. [This](#) terrace forms an impressive composition that is unusual in early C19 lower-class housing. The Grade II listed terraces flanking the western and eastern edges of Sidney Square at Nos.1-9 and 18-25 Sidney Square are early C19 housing of stock brick with coped parapets.

59. Locally listed terraces surround Ford Square to the north, south and west. Nos.16-19 Ford Square and Nos. 29-33 Ford Square are late C18 and Georgian in style, with rendered masonry walls and valley roofs. The Ford Square Sidney Square Conservation Area also includes Regency terraces at [Nos. 67–81 Cavell Street](#) to the west of the conservation area.

## 4.2 Key architectural features and building materials

60. The area is characterised by the use of high quality materials and finely detailed buildings. There is a prevailing use of red and yellow stock brick; however stucco exteriors can also be found on the terraces to the north and south of Ford Square.
61. Key architectural features include slate or clay roof tiles (some buildings have scallop edged roof tiles), parapet walls which hide London roofs, stone door hood moulds, string courses above ground floor, decorative ironwork balconettes at first floor, contrasting brick lintels, [relieving](#) arches, segmental arches, recessed entrances, quarter- fluted or plain columns, brick quoins, stucco and rusticated flank walls, keystones, stone cills, and prominent dormers. Windows (including tripartite windows at ground floor level to the red brick terraced houses on Ashfield Street, Newark Street, Sidney Street and Halcrow Street) are predominantly timber sash in a variety of glazing patterns. Prominent chimneys including stacks with clay pots, and terracotta ventilation hoods prevail at roof level.

## 5.0 PUBLIC REALM AND OPEN SPACE

### 5.1. Streets, roads and yards

62. The streets, roads and yards within this conservation area are focused around Ford Square, Sidney Square and the blocks which surround them. The conservation area retains its historic street pattern consisting of a network of roads running from north to south and east to west.
63. Typically, the widest streets (Cavell Street and Sidney Street) have a north to south orientation and range between ~~11-13m wide~~ 11 metres and 13 metres in width. The widths of these streets denote their importance as links to Whitechapel Road to the north and Commercial Road to the south, both of which are important historic thoroughfares to the docks and the City of London. With a width of from 9 metres to just over 12 metres. ~~At 9-just over 12m,~~ streets such as Ashfield Street, Clark Street and Newark Street with an east west orientation have slightly narrower widths.
64. Indications of the narrow alleyways and yards within the centre of the blocks that lead to historic yards at the centre of blocks are evident at Ashfield Yard behind Nos. 115 -127 Ashfield Street and to the rear of Nos. 1-9 Clark Street and Nos. 84-98 Ashfield Street.

### 5.2. Street surfaces

65. The main streets within the conservation area generally have large format concrete paving slabs on footways bounded by granite kerbs. Footways along Sidney Square have Yorkstone slabs with granite kerbs. Carriageways typically consist of asphalt and entry treatments at junctions are marked with the use of block pavements. At Halcrow Street evidence of historic granite cobbles with low granite kerbs has been preserved. In other areas cobbles can be seen below damaged areas of tarmac.

### 5.3. Street furniture

66. The conservation area has a mix of contemporary and replica historic street furniture of varying designs. The street scene is generally free from clutter however there is a proliferation of cannon and fluted Doric style bollards (including bell bollards) and posts for signage in areas surrounding junctions around Ford Square and Sidney Square. Standard lamp columns and lanterns can be seen in areas such as Cavell Street, Newark Street, Stepney Way, Stepney Street and Clark Street, whilst in areas around Ford Square and Sidney Square Victorian style decorative columns and lanterns have been installed.

#### 5.4. Ford Square and Sidney Square

67. This conservation area is defined by two open spaces - Ford Square and Sidney Square. Each square is surrounded by rows of townhouses that provide a sense of enclosure. These are considered as two important formal elements in the urban landscape and this is reflected in their protection against development above ground by the London Squares Preservation Act of 1931. The Act protected over 400 squares, gardens and enclosures, restricting their use to 'ornamental pleasure grounds or grounds for play, rest and recreation'. The Act prevents the construction of any building or structure on these open spaces that is not directly related to the use or maintenance of the open space.
68. The central gardens within Ford Square and Sidney Square were purchased by the London County Council and opened to the public in 1904. The total cost was £13,321, less a contribution of £3,000 from the vendor, with the LCC contributing £8,731 and Stepney Borough Council £1,500. The cost of adapting the two gardens was £685. Ford Square and Sidney Square have features in common such as simple metal post and rail fences, behind which a soft landscaped border around the perimeter is planted with mature London Plane and Lime trees. Despite the similarities and utilitarian railings, each square has a distinctive character. Ford square, the slightly larger of the two squares, has an informal character which is reinforced by its predominantly hard landscaped centre. Ford Square has a less intimate feel, which is reinforced by the wide streets that surround it. With the exception of the terraces along Cavell Street,

which face directly onto the street, buildings on the north, east and south of the square are setback from the edge of plots and separated from the street by a simple upstand topped with a post and rail.

69. By contrast Sidney Square has a grassed soft landscaped interior that is intersected by formally laid out paths and neatly kept hedges that give the square a sense of formality. Buildings around the square open directly onto the street. This relationship creates a strong link between the buildings and the open space. The juxtaposition between the built environment and the open space reinforces the sense of enclosure and gives the space a serene quality which makes an important, positive contribution to the character

### **5.5. Open space and greenery**

70. In addition to the two squares, there are small areas of green space to either end of Woollon House at the southern end of Sidney Square. The public footpath that runs between Woollon House and Dundalk House (not within the conservation area) leads through areas of private communal green space and gardens down to Jubilee Gardens; a post-war square surrounded on three sides by housing, making reference to Sidney and Ford Squares. There is one other notable area of public open space outside the boundary to the south west - Cavell Street Gardens on Cavell Street. This is a small green space with large mature trees and shrubs, providing an oasis within the densely built-up context in a similar way that Ford Square and Sidney Square do.

### **5.6. Street trees**

71. Street trees are a characteristic feature of this conservation area. Trees are predominantly London Planes, some of which are mature with extensive canopy spread, whilst others are more modest in size. Regardless of size, each of these trees plays an important role in greening and softening the townscape.
72. In addition to street trees, areas with the highest concentration and most mature trees can be found in Ford Square and Sidney Square. Ford Square's green character is reinforced by the large and statuesque London Planes which

surround its perimeter. The green character of Sidney Square is also created by the extensive shrub and tree planting within the square and around its perimeter. Here the combination of mature London Planes and Lime trees also provide a sense of enclosure and create a quiet and tranquil setting.

73. Although both squares can only be seen from a short distance away, the mature tree canopy creates a blanket of green which can be seen from a considerable distance along Clark Street, Cavell Street, Ashfield Street, Sidney Street, Damien Street and Newark Street.

## **6.0 ~~ISSUES AND THREATS~~ HERITAGE AUDIT**

74. Although the conservation area is generally in a good state of repair, there are areas where opportunities exist for the enhancement of the conservation area. In these areas a lack of investment, development within the setting, inappropriate alterations and the loss of historic features cumulatively threaten the special character and appearance of the conservation area. It is these same threats which, if addressed, offer the opportunity for significant enhancement.
75. The condition of the building fabric within the Ford Square Sidney Square Conservation Area is generally good, with some areas where redecoration and repointing is required. The building material is largely consistent, predominantly using brick with some areas of stucco to Ford Square. Timber windows prevail, with many historic timber sashes surviving. Most buildings immediately abut the pavement edge, but some with small front garden or lightwells are bounded with a variety of railing designs. The largely consistent material palette within the conservation area contributes significantly to its architectural and historic significance.

### **Lack of investment and inappropriate alterations**

Often a lack of investment can result in a gradual deterioration of the built fabric as maintenance is reduced and the cost of repairs minimised. The exteriors of historic buildings within the area feature rich materials and details which are a

major part of its historic and architectural character, but which are vulnerable to neglect and poorly considered change. The opportunity exists to reverse this change with carefully considered investment, which retains the surviving historic fabric and builds upon it.

76. Some buildings were built with render or stucco applied to the exterior. In several cases the render is in poor condition due to the lack of maintenance or poorly carried out repairs.
77. In several cases, original brick facades have been painted, particularly at ground floor, to the detriment of the appearance of the building.
78. Some areas of the public realm are in a poor state of repair or have been covered over using unsympathetic materials, such as asphalt.

### **6.1. Loss of historic features**

79. Window frames are key historic features. The installation of inappropriate windows has detracted from the appearance of several buildings within the conservation area.
80. The appearance of some buildings has suffered from the removal of historic architectural features, namely historic shop or pub fronts and in some cases windows and railings. This has harmed the character and appearance of the conservation area. In some instances historic photographs or surviving historic features or precedents offer the opportunity for appropriate reinstatement.

### **6.2. Shopfronts, fascia signs and associated features**

81. The buildings are predominantly in residential use, but there are currently several retail units in use within the conservation area. These are Nos. 63 and 65 Sidney Street, No. 89 Ashfield Street (on the corner of Halcrow Street and Ford Square), No. 49 Cavell Street and No. 60 Cavell Street. There is also a

shopfront surviving to no. 58 Cavell Street, but this does not appear to be in use as a shop and may be linked to the residential use above.

82. The active retail units generally feature poorly designed replacement shopfronts and fascia signs which take no account of the architectural character of the host building and thus detract from the host building and the area generally. The shop at No. 89 Ashfield Street retains the cornice over the shopfront, but otherwise very few original features survive to the shopfronts within the conservation area.

### ~~6.3. Vacant/underused properties and sites~~

83. [paragraph deleted] ~~The vast majority buildings within the conservation area are occupied (at the time of writing in 2018).~~
84. [paragraph deleted] ~~Within the tight knit building fabric of the conservation area, there is only one empty site at the corner of Cavell Street and Newark Street.~~
85. [paragraph deleted] ~~Development proposals for this gap site must be appropriate in terms of scale and form and architectural quality. The site is located within a rich historic context on a prominent corner site marking the entry into the conservation area from the north.~~

### 6.4. Development outside the conservation area boundary affecting its setting

86. The Ford Square Conservation Area displays aesthetic, historical and communal value, with the significance of the existing setting contributing greatly to the area's overall heritage value. This is derived from the ability of the viewer to comprehend and appreciate significant elements of a planned urban ensemble, without the imposition of large scale modern development.
87. Larger scale development on the edges of the conservation area does not contribute positively to its character. The increase in scale of the developments close to the boundary of the conservation area threatens to cause significant

harm to the character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area. This is particularly the case to the north-west, where the large scale buildings associated with the Royal London Hospital border the conservation area boundary and cause harm to the setting of the conservation area.

88. The overall scale of the conservation area continues beyond the boundary in most directions but the Royal London Hospital block introduces a much larger scale in some views. In most directions, the setting has a neutral impact on significance of the conservation area, but the Royal London Hospital block is harmful to the aesthetic and historical significance of parts of the conservation area. This is demonstrated by its visual impact in some views. The Royal London Hospital block well illustrates the degree of harm which could result from future proposals within the setting of the conservation area.

## 6.5. Public realm and open space

89. Both Ford Square and Sidney Square are integral features of the area and are well used. Ford Square, in particular, would benefit from some soft landscaping improvements, enhancing the green edges, while still providing for all users.
90. Public realm in the area is generally in a good state of repair; however the ~~cobbles~~stone setts ~~to~~on Halcrow Street are the only remaining exposed to view within the conservation area. This surface needs repair work and improvements in order to improve its appearance and quality. Where possible ~~cobbles~~setts or cobbles should be reinstated or uncovered to improve the appearance of the public realm within the conservation area. If setts or cobbles are covered over, they should be retained below any new surfacing. There are also areas where the variety of bollard designs and variation in signage, seating and surfacing adds to visual street clutter within the conservation area.

## 7.0 INTRODUCTION TO MANAGEMENT PLAN

### 7.1. Background

91. This Management Plan sets out the Borough's commitment to high quality management of conservation areas and their settings. The Management Plan provides guidance to residents, businesses and other stakeholders about the special elements of the area's character and how these can be preserved or ~~and~~ enhanced. The Management Plan also sets out the considerations that should be taken into account at the earliest possible stages of the design process and addressed as part of any planning application.
92. Conservation areas are as much about history, people, activities and places as they are about buildings and spaces. Preserving ~~and~~or enhancing the borough's architectural and historic built heritage is of vital importance in understanding the past and allowing it to inform our present and future.
93. Conservation areas also promote sustainability, in its widest sense, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. The re-use of historic buildings and places is environmentally responsible, as it protects the energy and resources embodied in them and combats ~~global warming~~ climate change. Demolition and rebuilding of buildings can have a big impact on the environment and can result in a large amount of waste and associated air pollution.
94. [paragraph deleted] ~~In reviewing this guidance, consideration has been given to the boundaries of the conservation area and they have been revised accordingly, as outlined in Appendix 1.~~
95. Recommendations for additions to the statutory list are considered by Historic England.

## 7.2. Policy and legislation

96. In conservation areas, planning controls are more extensive. Permitted development rights are more limited, and demolition and works to trees are controlled. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on Tower Hamlets to designate Conservation Areas in "areas of special architectural or historic interest", and to formulate and publish proposals

for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which relates to planning functions within conservation areas, includes that 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. You are strongly advised to contact the council to check if works you are proposing need permission.

97. Any new development should have regard to [relevant](#) national, regional and local planning policy [including the following](#):

- [the Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#);
- [the NPPF](#);
- [the London Plan alongside the City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework](#);
- [the Tower Hamlets Local Plan](#);
- [the Tower Hamlets Conservation Strategy](#);
- [Historic England Guidance](#); and
- [this character and appraisal and management plan](#).

Further information can be found on the council's website ~~or the National planning and building policy website~~, [on the government website and on the GLA website](#).

98. Both Ford Square and Sidney Square are designated as London Squares by the London Squares Preservation Act of 1931. This identifies them as areas that are protected and may not be used for any purpose other than as an ornamental garden, pleasure ground, or ground for play, rest or recreation. No building or structure should be created or placed on or over any London square, unless necessary or convenient for the use or maintenance of the square.

### **Statutorily listed buildings**

99. There are a large number of listed buildings within the Ford Square Sidney Square Conservation Area. If a building is statutorily listed, any alterations to

the property, either internally or externally, will require listed building consent from the council. Listed building consent is required for any works of demolition, alteration or extension to the building, which would affect its special architectural and historic interest. Works within the grounds or curtilage of a listed building can also require consent. Repairs to listed buildings may also require consent. It is always advisable to inform the council of any plans you might have to carry out repairs. Replacement of any historic fabric usually constitutes an alteration and therefore requires listed building consent.

100. The council has a duty of care to ensure owners and prospective owners of listed buildings are aware of the need for maintenance and repair of such buildings. Regular maintenance can prevent serious and expensive problems at a later date. If listed buildings are not maintained in good repair, then the council can step in to ensure that relevant repairs are carried out. In some circumstances, the council itself may undertake essential repairs and recover the cost from the owner. The council has powers of compulsory purchase in such circumstances.

### **Locally listed buildings**

101. Local listing is a protection offered by the local authority to buildings it believes are of local significance. A heritage asset is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest, locally listed buildings are included within this designation. The effect of an application on a non-designated heritage asset is a material consideration when deciding planning applications, and local listing strengthens the case for retention of a historic building. There are three locally listed buildings within the conservation area, ~~and further ones may be added in the future.~~ Although locally listed buildings do not benefit from the statutory protection outlined previously, they have been recognised as being of local townscape importance. The council expects to see their retention and evidence that any proposed alterations enhance the building's character or appearance. Full justification for any redevelopment proposals will be sought, including convincing evidence that the

building could not be retained. Economic reasons alone will not always justify redevelopment.

#### **Article 4 Directions**

102. Where evidence suggests that the exercise of permitted development would harm the special character of the conservation area, the council can serve an Article 4 Direction to withdraw specific classes of permitted development that would otherwise apply. It is important to note that an Article 4 Direction does not necessarily prevent the type of development to which it applies, but requires planning permission to be obtained for the specified types of development. There is no fee for planning applications required due to an Article 4 Direction.
103. For specific information on Article 4 Directions please see the General Permitted Development Order (1995) and 2010 amendment and accompanying Government Circular (available from the DCLG website), as well as the guidance provided in ~~Historic England Advice Note 1 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' published in February 2016 (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-designation-appraisal-management-advice-note-1/>).~~ Historic England's Advice Note 1 (Second Edition) 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' which was published in February 2019 (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/heag-268-conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management/>)

#### **Archaeological investigations**

104. Any new development that lies within the Archaeological Priority Area will be required to include an Archaeological Evaluation Report and will require any nationally important remains to be preserved permanently at the site, subject to consultation with Historic England.

#### **Trees in conservation areas**

105. A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is an order made by the council to protect specific trees or groups of trees in the interests of amenity. A TPO prohibits the

cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting or wilful damage of a protected tree without permission and is a designation which is applied selectively.

~~105. All trees in conservation areas are protected by the provisions in section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These provisions require people to notify the council, by use of an application for works to trees. A section 211 notice should be served at least six weeks before carrying out works to trees, including topping, lopping and felling. This notice period gives the council the opportunity to consider whether to make a TPO (see below). A section 211 notice must describe the work proposed and include sufficient particulars to identify the tree or trees. Where a number of trees or operations are involved, it should make clear what work is proposed to which tree. A notice must include the date it is submitted. Only one section 211 notice is needed to carry out a number of different operations on the same tree or to carry out work on a number of trees. The application for works to trees can be found here.~~

Whilst some trees in a conservation area may be protected by a TPO all trees in a conservation area are protected by the provisions of section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, These provisions require owners to notify the council if works to trees are proposed. To do this a works to trees application form should be completed. The application must describe the works proposed and include sufficient particulars to identify the tree or trees which are the subject of works. Only one section 211 notice is need to carry out a number of different operations. Notification should be made at least six weeks before the works commence to allow the council sufficient time to assess whether the works are acceptable or not. If the works are not supported and modified proposals cannot be agreed then the trees must be protected by the council serving a TPO.

106. ~~More information can be found on the Tower Hamlets website here.~~

107. Carrying out works to trees without the necessary approval can be a criminal offence, and the council welcomes early requests for advice.

108. [paragraph deleted] ~~Carrying out works to trees without the necessary approval can be a criminal offence, and the council welcomes early requests for advice.~~

### 7.3. Outline guidance for applications

109. When planning applications in a conservation area are decided, the council as the local planning authority will pay special attention to whether the character of the area is preserved or enhanced by the proposal. The special character of the Ford Square Sidney Square Conservation Area is described in detail in the Appraisal in the first part of this document.
110. In the Ford Square Sidney Square Conservation Area, as in other conservation areas, planning controls are more extensive than normal. Before carrying out any work in this area, you may need to apply for consent even for minor work such as replacing railings. These consents include planning and listed building consent, as well as others for work such as felling trees. Planning permission is required to demolish any building bigger than 115m<sup>3</sup>, and a higher standard of detail and information is required for any application. When applying for listed building consent, please note that all parts of the building, including its interior walls, ceilings and all other internal features, are protected. Some buildings are nationally (statutorily) listed, and some are locally listed by the borough. Locally listed buildings are those of townscape value which the borough wishes to protect.
111. The exact information required will vary with each application, but in general applications must include:
- A clear Design and Access Statement explaining the reasons behind the various architectural, masterplanning or other design decisions.
  - A Heritage Statement where the impacts of the application on the [significance](#) of heritage assets or the impacts of demolition within the conservation area are set out.
  - Contextual plans, sections and elevations of existing buildings (at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100).

- Drawings of proposed works, including construction details, produced at larger scale (e.g. 1:250 or 1:120) clearly indicating the nature of the work proposed.
- Existing and proposed townscape views where relevant.
- Additional detail regarding materials and construction.
- Photos of the condition of existing building (including details where appropriate).

112. More details are available on the Tower Hamlets website where a validation list can be found. If in any doubt, the council welcomes and encourages early requests for advice or information. More information is available on pre-application advice on the council's website. When alterations are proposed to listed buildings, complying with the building regulations can be particularly complex, and early consideration of building control issues can help identify potential problems early in the process.

#### 7.4. Resources needed to conserve the historic environment

113. The most effective way to secure the historic environment is to ensure that buildings can continue to contribute to the life of the local community, preferably funding their own maintenance and refurbishment. Commercial value can be generated directly from the building, through its use as a dwelling or office, or through its role in increasing the attractiveness of the area to tourists and visitors. However, it should be noted that economic reasons alone will not in themselves justify the demolition or alteration of a building in a conservation area. The council will consider grant aid to ~~publicly visible~~ historic buildings and places, but grant funding, even for cases that meet the defined criteria is extremely limited.

## 8.0 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

### 8.1. General approach

114. Development in the conservation area should enhance the unique characteristics of the Ford Square / Sidney Square Conservation Area, reinforcing its distinctive identity and contributing to its historic sense of place. New buildings should be of a high design standard, reflecting the scale and variation typical of the historic townscape. Individual buildings should display their own identity within the historically-set parameters (scale, grain, building line). These parameters are responsible for the creation of a coherent streetscape and locally distinctive character derived from an otherwise diverse collection of different designs, styles and materials. Retention and restoration of existing buildings which contribute to the character of the area provides the foundation for the area's redevelopment. The council encourages the sympathetic re-use of existing buildings in conservation areas. [Where development has harmed the conservation area it is possible, under certain circumstances, that further development may help to mitigate this harm.](#)

## 8.2. Demolition

### Demolition of buildings within the conservation area

115. The Ford Square Sidney Square Conservation Area has a well-established and distinguished character distinctive from its surroundings in terms of its grain and scale. The council will resist [unjustified](#) demolition ~~as this would be considered to constitute substantial harm to~~ [where this is considered to be harmful to the special character or appearance of](#) the conservation area. Any applications including demolition will be assessed in line with national, regional and local policy and guidance including the National Planning Policy Framework.

116. Planning permission is required for demolition or substantial demolition of all buildings or structures larger than 115m<sup>3</sup> in conservation areas. What constitutes substantial demolition is considered on a ~~case-by-case~~ basis by the Local Planning Authority. Where a building is statutorily listed, listed building consent would be required.

[117.](#) Where corner buildings are threatened with demolition this can cause a wider threat to the terrace as a whole, this will be resisted. ~~Similarly, a small terrace~~

~~where a central building is threatened with demolition and replacement will be resisted as this can result in further proposals and cumulative impacts.~~ The demolition and replacement of a central building forming part of a small terrace will also be resisted as this can result in further proposals and cumulative impacts.

~~417.~~

118. If demolition work occurs without the necessary consent the council is likely to pursue planning enforcement action that may result in prosecution and a substantial fine. The demolished structure may be required to be rebuilt. It should be noted that the council will not normally grant planning permission for demolition without relevant permissions having been obtained for an acceptable scheme for the redevelopment of the site.
119. With regard to vacant sites, or those in poor condition, it should not be assumed that any development is automatically better than the current situation.

### **Partial demolition**

120. In most cases, the council would expect to see buildings retained but in some exceptional cases it may only be possible to retain a building in part; either by retaining elements of a building or through façade retention. Partial demolition will only be considered acceptable when it can be demonstrated ~~how~~ that the proposed demolition can be carried out without unacceptable risk to the parts of the building to be retained and that any new development integrates with and respects the remaining historic fabric. This should be outlined as part of a Heritage Statement. A report of any structural implications ~~may~~ will also need to be submitted. In many cases it may be possible to salvage and re-use elements of the historic fabric for example bricks, slates or window frames or external features. Any partial rebuilding will require materials to match and will be controlled by condition. It may be necessary to record the existing building prior to alteration.

### **Demolition of buildings adjacent to the conservation area**

121. Demolition of unlisted buildings outside a conservation area does not always require planning permission. However, proposals to demolish and re-develop sites adjacent to a conservation area boundary should preserve, and where possible enhance, the setting of the conservation area to ensure that the significance of the Conservation Area is not harmed.

### 8.3. New development

122. New developments should respect the fine grain character and straightforward legibility of the historic street pattern. Any replacement buildings should preserve **and/or** enhance the character **and/or** appearance of the conservation area and ensure that its significance is not harmed. Any new development on potential infill sites (as highlighted in the section 6.0 of the Appraisal) should sit comfortably with the existing character **and/or** appearance of the conservation area.
123. Where existing buildings have a negative impact on the character **and/or** appearance of the conservation area, it may be possible to alter the exterior of the building so that it enhances the character **and/or** appearance of the area. The council would only encourage replacement of these buildings if the replacement is of high quality and has a positive impact on the character **and/or** appearance of the conservation area.
124. All new developments should be sympathetic to the character **and/or** appearance of the conservation area in terms of scale, materials and design.
125. The overall conservation area is characterised by a prevailing building height of two to four storeys (~~see xxx map~~). Most streets have a consistent cornice/eaves height, with some slight variation on Ashfield Street. New development should aim to fit into and complement this context.
126. The design of new buildings should be fully informed by the positive aspects of adjacent buildings and how they contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area. A degree of architectural variety is an important attribute of much of the conservation area, however there is consistency in the scale and

~~proportions of buildings as well as their positioning adjacent buildings and how they contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area. A degree of architectural variety is an important attribute of much of the conservation area, however there is consistency in the scale and proportions of buildings as well as their positioning.~~

127. The overall quality of architectural detailing will be key to producing a successful scheme which builds on the qualities already present within the area. In order to ensure necessary architectural quality, detailed design should be explored and agreed early in the planning process.
128. The quality of external materials will also be key to producing a successful scheme. The conservation area features a wide range of high quality, natural and naturally derived materials including stone, bricks, slate and terracotta. It is expected that the choice of new materials will be informed by the local context and build on this richness. ~~expected that the choice of new materials will be informed by the local context and build on this richness.~~
129. There are very few shopfronts within the Ford Square Sidney Square Conservation Area. Where these do exist, inappropriate alterations have caused harm to the overall proportions of the buildings and unsympathetic materials cause harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Any alterations to existing shopfronts should enhance their current appearance and should preserve ~~and/or~~ enhance the overall character ~~and/or~~ appearance of the conservation area.
130. The design of shopfronts and fascia signs should not be considered in isolation and, along with security measures, should be considered at an early stage in any proposal. It is essential that the scale and proportions of all elements of any new shopfronts and fascia signs relate to the overall proportions of the host building and to neighbouring properties where appropriate. Older shopfronts were characterised by high quality, long lasting materials as can be seen to the surviving historic shopfront at No. 58 Cavell Street. Standard aluminium shopfronts are unlikely to be considered appropriate within the conservation

area. It might be necessary to adopt a flexible approach to corporate logos, if these are considered to be harmful to the character of the conservation area.

## 8.4. Property conversion

131. The residential character of the conservation area forms a key part of its significance. ~~Any conversion of properties to a different use is likely to require planning permission for change of use and is unlikely to be supported. In rare cases where property conversion or change of use is permissible, external changes are also likely to require planning permission.~~ The permitted development rights for this area of the borough have been removed in relation to the conversion of offices (Use Class B1(a)) to residential (Use Class C3). Where property conversion or change of use is permissible, external changes are likely to require planning permission. Any external changes should ~~seek to establish a better relationship with~~ relate well to the public realm, should respect the character of the host building, and should be in keeping with the character ~~and/or~~ and appearance of the conservation area.

## 8.5. Extensions and alterations

### Roof extensions

132. The consistency of building heights, with very limited variation, forms an integral part of the character of the Ford Square Sidney Square Conservation Area. Roof additions which will be visible from the street or which will interrupt a consistent roofline are likely to be resisted. In many cases the importance of the historic roof structure and relationship to other building within the conservation area will either preclude roof extensions or make it very difficult to achieve an acceptable design. Consistent rooflines and parapets characterise the Ford Square Sidney Square Conservation Area and, as such no roof additions will be supported where these exist. Where roof extensions are accepted, the design must relate well to the design and proportions of the host building and must use high quality materials that respect the character ~~and/or~~ and appearance of the conservation area. The impact of any roof extensions on the public realm and views from within the conservation area should be carefully

considered in order to ensure the character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area is preserved and enhanced..

### **Rear extensions**

133. Where the opportunity exists, extensions should remain subservient to the host building both in terms of scale and proportions. Only high quality materials, such as brick, stone or, in some cases, reconstituted stone, that respect the character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area will be accepted. The visibility of proposed rear extensions from the public realm must also be carefully considered to ensure that, not only the impact on the host building, but also on the wider conservation area, is acceptable and preserves and enhances the character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area.

### **Side extensions**

134. There are very few opportunities for side extensions within the conservation area. Where gaps exist between properties, in most cases these gaps should be retained as they form an importance part of the character and appearance of the conservation area; allowing views through to rear elevations and rear gardens and providing visual relief from the consistent frontages. The visibility of proposed side extensions from the public realm must also be carefully considered to ensure that, not only the impact on the host building, but also on the wider conservation area, is acceptable and preserves and enhances the character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area.

### **External alterations**

135. Where external alterations are proposed to existing buildings, these must seek to preserve ~~and~~or enhance the character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area. Piecemeal alterations can be harmful to the special architectural and historic character of a building. Any alterations to historic fabric should be on a like-for-like basis in terms of materials and design. Where inappropriate or unsympathetic alterations have occurred in the past, these should be rectified in accordance with the historic materials and appearance. In cases where the alterations are to a building which is not historic, ~~In cases where the alterations are not proposed to an historic building,~~ the design and materials used should

be in keeping with the character of the conservation area. Any external alterations to individual buildings will have an impact on the wider conservation area and so must be considered within the wider context.

136. Alterations such as loft conversions or new rooflights will only be supported where they are not visible from the public realm and do not impact on a consistent roofline or roof form.
137. The conservation area is generally characterised by buildings that directly front the pavement. However, in areas where consistent boundary treatments exist, these should be maintained.

## 8.6. Energy efficiency improvements

### Window replacement and alteration

138. Window replacement and alterations to existing windows are often successful ways of improving the energy efficiency of a building. A careful study of the existing building should be carried out in order to identify the original window design and materials. This should form a good template for the kind of windows that will be acceptable in terms of materials, design, glazing bar details, window opening patterns and type of glass. In most cases historic or original windows should be retained and repaired, draught proofing added and if necessary internal secondary glazing installed. Where it is acceptable to replace the existing windows with double glazing care must be taken to ensure that the double glazing is of an appropriate design, that it is possible to replicate the dimensions and opening arrangements of the existing historic windows, that the double glazing is of a slim profile and that spacer bars are white and are unperforated, rather than perforated metal. Top-hung or outward opening windows will not be supported on historic buildings, unless this reflects the original glazing pattern.
139. It may be necessary to apply for planning permission to fit new windows (such as double-glazing) in a flat or maisonette. Planning permission will not be required to add internal secondary glazing. It is also unlikely to be necessary

where you are fitting windows which are identical to those which are being removed ~~i.e. (like-for-like replacements)~~. However, if the new windows differ in appearance or size to those you are replacing (for instance, different glazing patterns or opening methods) you may need to apply for planning permission. The detailed design, materials, dimensions, glazing bar pattern, glazing thickness, and opening methods are all important considerations when new or replacement windows are proposed.

140. The replacement of historic windows to listed buildings will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that they are beyond reasonable repair. If this can be demonstrated, then any replacement of windows should be on a like-for-like basis, matching the original design exactly. This will require listed building consent and, if any changes are proposed in terms of design, materials or thickness, planning permission may also be required. Energy efficiency can be improved through draught proofing windows or through the installation of internal secondary glazing. These works will not require listed building consent, unless they obscure important historic features or cause harm to the historic fabric.

### **Cladding, rendering or painting of external walls**

141. The Council will seek the retention or reinstatement of original façade treatments which contribute positively to the ~~of~~ character ~~and/or~~ appearance ~~of~~ the conservation area. Unless it can be demonstrated that existing exposed brickwork had originally been rendered or painted, the rendering or painting over of brickwork will not be supported.
142. External insulation through rendering or other methods will not be supported. Any additional insulation should be installed internally where appropriate so as not to inappropriately alter the external appearance of the building. In a listed building, internal insulation would need listed building consent. In most cases it is unlikely to be acceptable.

## **8.7. Other external changes**

143. Alterations which change the appearance of buildings within the conservation area should be carefully considered. The council will not support the addition of satellite dishes, banners or antennae or other fixtures on elevations that front the street. The addition of grilles and louvres to the front of buildings is also unlikely to be supported. These should be placed on rear or side elevations if required and carefully designed so that they are incorporated into the overall building design. The council welcomes the removal of unwanted and unnecessary clutter from the exterior of buildings within the conservation area.. Development proposals that involve the re-use and/or conversion of existing buildings will be expected to address this issue where appropriate.

## 8.8. Public realm improvements

### Surface finishes and street furniture

144. Where there are historic surface finishes such as ~~cobbles~~cobblestones, setts or paving, the Council will seek their retention, as these form an important part of the character of the conservation area. Any major investment in buildings should also include public realm improvements where appropriate. New schemes should aim to retain historic surfaces and any new surfaces should be sympathetic to the conservation area. Junctions between different surface treatments should also be carefully considered.
145. The quality of the streetscape, the surface materials, street furniture and other features can all form an integral part of the character ~~or~~and appearance of the conservation area. Any work carried out should respect this historic character, using natural materials and colours that are in keeping with the character and/or appearance of the conservation area. On narrow side streets setts should be reinstated where possible and, historic kerb stones retained. Any paving works should be sympathetic to the historic character of the conservation area. Larger rectangular paving slabs ideally in natural stone or high quality composite stone, are more sympathetic to the character of the conservation area than smaller modular paving.~~using natural materials and colours that are in keeping with the character and appearance of the conservation area. On narrow side streets setts should be reinstated where possible and, historic kerb stones~~

~~retained. Any paving works should be sympathetic to the historic character of the conservation area. Larger rectangular paving slabs ideally in natural stone or high quality composite stone, are more sympathetic to the character of the conservation area than smaller modular paving~~

146. [In addition to the TFL guidance](#), ~~F~~for developments which impact on public spaces, the council's Street Design Guide and Historic England's Streets for All: London document should be referred to. An important aim should be to reduce street clutter, such as obsolete signage and modern phone boxes and to seek consistency in bollard designs, seating and surfacing.

### **Refuse storage and collection**

147. There is little scope for bin storage to properties within the conservation area and as such refuse collection must be carefully managed in order to avoid refuse sacks on the narrow pavements. This causes visual clutter [and](#) obstructions, detracts from the character ~~and~~[or](#) appearance of the conservation area and could lead to issues with vermin.

### **Open space and trees**

148. Both Ford Square and Sidney Square form a vital part of the character and historic development of the area. Ongoing management of these public open spaces should be sensitive to their significance as London Squares. The ongoing maintenance of both squares and potential improvement, particularly to Ford Square, is imperative. Ford Square is largely hard landscaped and would benefit from additional soft landscaping to reinforce the character and appearance of the Square. This should, however, retain the current leisure uses in the square.
149. All trees in conservation areas are protected, and some trees are also covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Additional information on trees can be found in the Policy and Legislation section of this document and on the council website.

## 8.9 Shopfronts and signage

150. The richness in the variety of details to shopfronts and buildings is integral to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Existing timber fascias, pilasters and corbels should be retained or restored where they have been lost. In cases where shopfront corbels do not survive, careful study should be made of adjacent shops to see if any appropriate examples remain – these should form the template for re-instatement.
151. It should be noted that a standard corporate approach to signage may not be considered appropriate due to ~~the~~ size, colour or ~~and~~ illumination. As such, proposed designs and/or materials may have to be amended to suit the historic context. Any hanging or projecting signs should be well designed, bespoke timber hanging signs of an appropriate size for the shopfront or building. Traditional materials should be used and plastic signage will not be supported. No upper level signage, projecting signs or banners will be supported.
152. Hand painted timber fascia signs or fascias with individually applied lettering are encouraged throughout the conservation area. Internally illuminated plastic fascia signs are not appropriate and will not be supported.

## 8.10. Vacant sites and hoardings

153. Vacant sites must be carefully managed to ensure that they cause minimal harm to the conservation area. These sites must be maintained and should not be allowed to fall into disrepair. Where hoardings are used around vacant sites or on sites that are currently undergoing building works, these must be consistent in terms of height, materials and appearance. Hoardings should be maintained in a good state of repair so as to not detract from the character ~~and~~ or appearance of the conservation area. Where possible, hoardings should be used positively to inform the public of the history of the site or wider area.

## 8.11. Development affecting the setting of the conservation area

154. The overall scale of the conservation area continues beyond the boundary in most directions but the Royal London Hospital block introduces a much larger scale in some views. The predominant setting of the conservation area should be preserved, with any new development within its setting considered carefully ~~so as to~~ to ensure that it does not exacerbate the harm caused by the hospital buildings to the north-west.
155. Views from outside the conservation area are limited due to the alignments and orientation of the streets. However, several important views exist, such as the view from Stepney Way, where the combination of the low rise buildings and the generous spaces between buildings allows for views of the façade (including the roof storey) of the mansion blocks along Newark Street and also views between buildings on Varden Street allow for unfolding serial views of the mature tree canopy within Ford Square. Development which interferes with the viewers' ability to fully appreciate the significance of the heritage assets and green areas concerned will be resisted.
156. The increase in scale of the developments outside but close to the boundary of the conservation area threatens to cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area. This is particularly the case to the north-west, as identified in section 6.0 of the Appraisal. The large scale buildings associated with the Royal London Hospital border the conservation area boundary and cause harm to the setting of the conservation area, having a significant impact on the views from within the conservation area looking north-west and also on views into the conservation area from surrounding areas.
157. It is important that development proposals on the edge of the conservation area and in surrounding areas include a fully detailed assessment of any impact on the historic significance of the conservation area.
- ~~157.~~ To enable the Council to assess relevant applications, the Council will expect applicants:

- i. to identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected by a proposal;
- ii. assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the [significance of the](#) heritage asset(s);
- iii. assess the effects of the proposed development whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance [of the heritage assets](#);
- iv. demonstrate that they have explored ways to maximise enhancement or minimise harm.

## 9.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

### 9.1. Ongoing management and monitoring change

158. The council recognises the contribution of the local community in managing conservation ~~areas, and~~ [areas and](#) will welcome proposals to work collaboratively to monitor and manage change in the area. Public meetings will be held to maintain communications between all stakeholders and identify new opportunities and threats to the conservation area as they arise.

159. In addition, the borough's Annual Monitoring Report, prepared with the new ~~Local Development Framework~~ [Local Plan](#), will assess progress on the implementation of the whole Local Development Scheme, including policies relevant to conservation.

### 9.2. Enforcement strategy

160. Appropriate enforcement, with the support of the community, is essential to protect the area's character. The council will take prompt action against those who carry out unauthorised works to listed buildings, or substantial or complete demolition of buildings within a conservation area. Unauthorised work to a listed building is a criminal offence and could result in a fine and/or imprisonment. Likewise, unauthorised substantial or complete demolition of a building within a conservation area is illegal. It is therefore essential to obtain planning permission and/or listed building consent before works begin.

161. An enforcement notice, served by the council may require works to rectify unauthorised alterations. This notice is entered on the Local Land Charges records which could make the future sale or financing of the property more difficult.
162. If listed buildings are not maintained in good repair, then the council can step in to ensure that relevant repairs are carried out. In some circumstances, the council itself may undertake essential repairs and recover the cost from the owner. The council has powers of compulsory purchase, if necessary to protect listed buildings.
163. The council will enforce conservation law wherever necessary, and will consider the introduction of Article 4 Directions to remove permitted development rights where appropriate.

## 10.0 USEFUL CONTACTS AND REFERENCES

The council encourages and welcomes discussions with the community about the historic environment and the contents of this document. Further guidance on all aspects of this document can be obtained on our website at [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk) or by contacting:

- Tel: 020 7364 5009
- Email: [planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

This document is also available in Libraries, Council Offices and Idea Stores in the Borough. For a translation, or large print, audio or braille version of this document, please telephone 0800 376 5454. Also, if you require any further help with this document, please telephone 020 7364 5372. Also, you may wish to contact the following organisations for further information:

- Historic England <https://www.historicengland.org.uk>
- The Georgian Group [www.georgiangroup.org.uk](http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk)

- Victorian Society [www.victorian-society.org.uk](http://www.victorian-society.org.uk)
- 20th Century Society [www.c20society.org.uk](http://www.c20society.org.uk)
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)
- East London Postcards [www.eastlondonpostcard.co.uk](http://www.eastlondonpostcard.co.uk)



# MYRDLE STREET CONSERVATION AREA

## Character appraisal and management plan

October 2021



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# PREFACE

## What is a conservation area?

1. Conservation areas are parts of our local environment with special architectural or historic qualities. They are created by the council, in consultation with the local community, to ensure that change preserves or ~~and~~ enhances the specific character of these areas for everybody.
2. The special character of these areas does not come only from the quality of their individual buildings, but from the value of these buildings as a group and from their setting. Elements such as the historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries and characteristic building and paving materials all contribute to the familiar and cherished local scene.

## What is the purpose of this document?

3. This document has been prepared to comply with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Section 69(1) which states that a conservation area is “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan provides a detailed description of the area’s architectural and historic character and management guidelines on how this character should be preserved ~~and~~ or enhanced in the context of appropriate ongoing change.
4. This document has also been prepared to support relevant strategic objectives contained within the council’s Conservation Strategy 2017 –2027 including objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 2.6.

## Who is this document for?

5. This is an inclusive document which is intended to engage with many different people and organisations. It will depend on the support of the community to achieve its objectives.
6. The character appraisal and management plan is aimed primarily at the residents, businesses, developers and others living and working in the area. The document has also been prepared to align conservation objectives within different parts of the council, to help to meet the objectives of the Conservation Strategy and to provide a single point of reference for the management of the area. It represents our shared commitment to conserve the special architectural and historic character, and to help manage change constructively.

### What is the status of this document?

7. This ~~Conservation Area character~~ appraisal and management plan has the status of ~~a Supplementary Planning Document~~[planning guidance](#). It replaces the previous character appraisal and management guidelines, adopted in 2007. It should be read in conjunction with Tower Hamlet's Local Plan and the London Plan. All planning applications for sites within the Myrdle Street Conservation Area should be informed by this document. It is a material consideration when planning applications affecting the conservation area are assessed.

### Equality and diversity

8. Valuing diversity is one of the council's core values, and we take pride in being one of the most culturally rich and diverse boroughs in the UK. This core value has informed the preparation of this document and will continue to inform changes to this document in the future. [These values](#) will also inform changes to buildings and places and as such this document provides guidance to ensure inclusivity for all members of the community.
9. This character appraisal and management plan document will support the council's aims set out below:

- Creation of a strong spirit of community and good race relations in Tower Hamlets.
  - The removal of prejudice, discrimination and victimisation within the communities we serve and our workforce.
  - To ensure that the borough's communities and our workforce are not discriminated against or bullied for any reason, including reasons associated with their gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religious belief.
10. Please contact us if you feel that this document could do more to promote equality and further the interests of the whole community.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

11. The Myrdle Street Conservation Area was designated in November 1996. ~~This document replaces the Appraisal adopted in 2007. The conservation area measures 81,910 m<sup>2</sup> with a total of 449 buildings.~~ The boundary ~~will be~~was amended in 2021, with one area added to the north (transferred from Whitechapel Market Conservation Area) and one small area removed. ~~when the document is adopted, following the public consultation. Full details of the recent alterations to the conservation area boundary as well as a map are included in Appendix 1.~~
12. Myrdle Street and Parfett Street and the surrounding area provide a good illustration of the way in which areas develop over time, and how new development and redevelopment of sites occur simultaneously. Following the opening of the Royal London Hospital, the open land that surrounded it was gradually developed by the Hospital in order to help with running costs. As such it includes a rich mix of different residential typologies associated with the development of 'affordable' housing. The development dates from the late eighteenth century onwards and was nearly always built as ~~modest~~affordable housing. Despite the variety of building types and ages, the area retains some degree of homogeneity as a result of the terraced form and the hard urban landscape. There is a hierarchy of larger houses on the main routes and

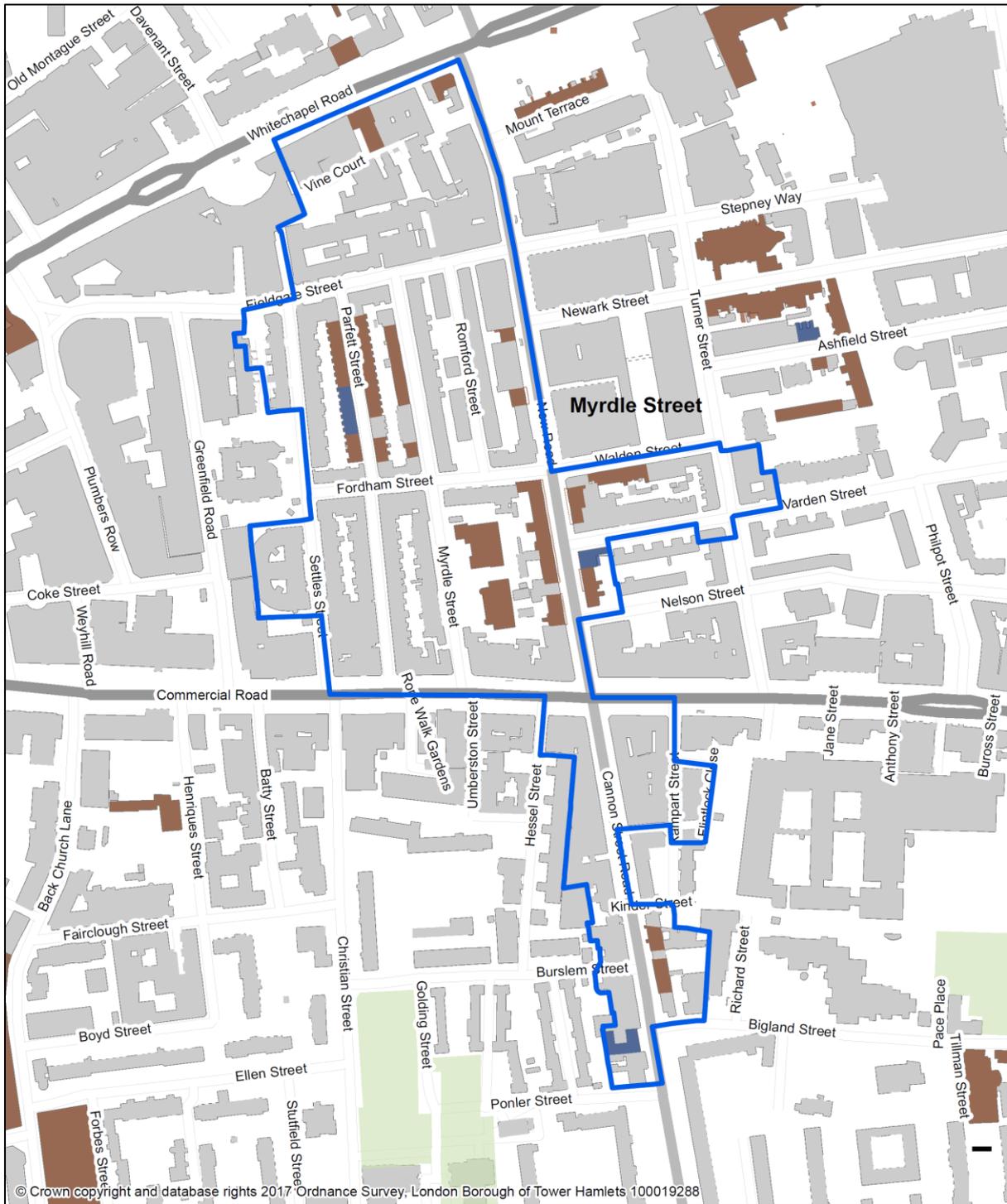
smaller on the grids of side streets. ~~Houses~~Housing within the area include includes the initial development built to support the hospital, the philanthropic housing built to address the chronic poverty and overcrowding of the nineteenth century, ~~to~~ and 1930s flats. A significant proportion of the housing is managed by Housing Associations.

13. The character and appearance of the area, as described in the appraisal in the first part of the document, define its special qualities. The second part of the document, the Management Plan, contains relevant policy and guidance as well as development guidelines intended to ensure that future change is sensitive to the area's special character.

### 1.1. Location and setting

14. The Myrdle Street Conservation Area is located to the west of The Royal London Hospital and extends southwards from Whitechapel Road. The heart of the conservation area is found to the west of New Road. This is an area of particular special architectural and historic interest, illustrated by its rich history and significant architecture, dating from the eighteenth, nineteenth and ~~to the nineteenth~~ and early twentieth centuries.
15. Although there is a range of building heights within the conservation area, original buildings within the conservation area do not exceed six storeys and most buildings do not exceed four storeys. The boundaries of the conservation area are largely defined by a contrast in architectural articulation, scale, plot size and positioning on sites.
16. The area to the north-east and north-west of the conservation area is generally characterised by a mixture of commercial and industrial buildings. To the north fronting Whitechapel Road, buildings are more varied in their design approach with building heights ranging from three to five storeys and a range of frontage widths. To the east is the Royal London Hospital site which is characterised with large hospital and institutional buildings. The area to the west of the conservation area is characterised by large blocks of buildings in residential and commercial use. To the south of the conservation area, residential blocks

with long consistent, frontages and irregular positioning on sites are common, with a wide range of building heights.



## MYRDLE STREET CONSERVATION AREA

- Conservation Area
- Statutory Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Buildings

## 2.0 HISTORIC CONTEXT

### 2.1. Evolution of the area

17. In Roque's Map of 1746, the land encompassed by the conservation area was largely shown as open fields. Some development existed to the north of the boundaries along Whitechapel Road, and to the east are the remains of Whitechapel Mount earthworks, built by Parliament to protect London during the Civil War in the seventeenth century. Beyond this there was little but open fields, cut through by one trackway connecting Whitechapel with St Dunstan's Church, part of which later became Fieldgate Street.
18. The development of the London Hospital from 1752 on its site on Whitechapel Road, whilst not within the conservation area, provided the initial impetus for the development of the surrounding fields, and prompted the cutting through of New Road in 1754-56. It was the roads laid out at this time and the buildings which later developed alongside them that now form the focus of the conservation area. The alignment of New Road generally followed the line of the civil war defences, providing a link from Whitechapel towards Ratcliffe and Wapping. Interestingly the road predates the development of the docks, with which the road ultimately formed an important connection.
19. Once established, the hospital, which was situated in a semi-rural location, was keen to protect the fresh air and open fields which it enjoyed and consequently bought Red Lyon Farm, to the west. This meant that the hospital owned a wide swathe of fields on either side of New Road, extending as far south as Commercial Road, and it was this land that became the focus for the development of an estate by the Hospital to help fund its running costs.
20. From the late 1780s the Hospital began to develop housing for rental within the area. Accessibility was key to this process and those plots adjoining New Road were among the first to be developed. Plots were leased on a 99 year basis, and Thomas Barnes a local bricklayer having secured the leases began work on a group of 40 properties, Nos. 11-95 New Road, known as Gloucester

Terrace. Plots were almost 5m wide, and Barnes worked from the north towards the south. This was not a continuous terrace and there were always industrial premises in the area, for example a soap factory was built at Nos. 69-75 New Road in 1806, where premises backed on to Essex Street.

21. Today, many of these early properties have now been replaced or re-fronted. However, Nos. 77-79 and Nos. 83-91 New Road are examples of properties which date from this earliest phase of development. Nos. 83-91 have had shopfronts inserted since their original development.
22. Further development began to take place with the layout in the 1790s of a grid of new streets to the west of New Road, including Charlotte Street (named in honour of the Queen at the time and now renamed Fieldgate Street), Gloucester Street (now Settle Street) and York Street (now Myrdle Street), and to the south of the hospital including Nelson Street. This was in accordance with plans drawn up by the hospital's surveyor John Robinson. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, the development of these roads was not completed until 1824. Street names were changed in the early twentieth century, likely due to repetition of [road names throughout London](#). ~~Beginning in the late eighteenth century, the development of these roads was not completed until 1824. Street names were changed in the early twentieth century, likely due to repetition of road names throughout London.~~
23. Horwood's Map of 1799 shows that only part of the conservation area was built up at this time. Development had commenced in Charlotte Street, Gloucester Street and on the eastern side of York Street. The westernmost houses on Charlotte Street were apparently only 2.7m wide. Charlotte Court occupied the site which was later to become Tower House, and again the houses were extremely small.
24. At this time there was also development, within a number of what appear to be narrow alleys/courts in the east and south of the grid to the west of New Road. New Road itself was partially built up on the western side, but to the east of it, the area was still a series of open fields.

25. New Road extended to the south of what became Commercial Road, this southern part was later re-named Cannon Street Road. Some modest development appears to have taken place particularly at the southern end, where a terrace called Beaumont Buildings can be seen, together with a terrace simply called Terrace. However, the area south of Commercial Road has been subject to much change over the years and street layouts and names, together with the buildings to be found on the street, have altered considerably. Whilst some of the early buildings survive on Cannon Street Road (Nos. 126-130 and 116-122), Rampart Street and Sly Street have changed considerably and are now occupied by some interesting turn of the century workshop buildings.
26. York Street and Nottingham Place appear to date from the turn of the eighteenth century, Nottingham Place having been inserted by Charles Wilmott in 1803 and having only footway access from Charlotte Street. The surviving houses in these roads date from the early years of the nineteenth century.
27. By 1819, Horwood's Map shows that in the intervening 10 years the area had been entirely built up, and gaps in the townscape evident in 1799 have been infilled. The expansion of the Hospital estate to the east of New Road had taken place, prompted by the London Dock Company's attempt to purchase the land. Suffolk Street (now Walden Street) Norfolk Street (now Varden Street) and Nelson Street were all built up in a similar fashion to the roads to the west of New Road, with modest housing, some of which still survives.
28. Commercial Road, which was laid out to connect the city and the docks, is also indicated on Horwood's Map from 1810, although it is still known at its western end as White Horse Lane.
29. South of Commercial Road the area had also been substantially built up with a number of narrow streets. To the west of New Road (now Cannon Street Road) the rope works, evident in 1799, had been replaced by terraced housing. [To the east of New Road](#)~~To the east of New Road, for much of its length, a~~ number of narrow streets and perimeter blocks were evident on Turner Street

([the blocks are](#) no longer in existence) and Kinder Street (now [renamed](#) Rampart Street).

30. Although the conservation area was almost entirely developed by this time, its character was not fixed at this point; instead, there were layers of development, redevelopment and renewal to come. These have resulted, not only in alterations to the original properties such as the insertion/addition of shopfronts, but in pockets of Victorian, Edwardian and later development, which overlay the Georgian terraces and contribute to the more complex urban character evident within the area today.
31. Buildings dating from the earliest (mid [to](#) late eighteenth century) phase of development include some of the terraces on New Road, ~~and~~ Cannon Street Road together with those remaining Georgian terraces in Parfett Street and Myrdle Street, and these buildings together form the central focus of the conservation area. On Settle Street however, the original Georgian terraces have been replaced by higher tenement buildings housing higher numbers of people. Nos. 58-72 Settle Street (~~the~~ [Davis Terrace](#)), was the first of these built by Israel and Hyman Davis of Bishopsgate in 1890-1 in yellow stock brick. Nos. 39-55 and [Nos.](#) 10-28 Settle Street followed a similar pattern, although in red brick.
32. Elsewhere within the area, alleys and courts were swept away and replaced by model dwellings (improved housing for the working classes) [- an example is](#) ~~such as~~ Fieldgate Mansions in Romford Street (previously Essex Street, a very narrow access way). Turn of the nineteenth/twentieth century properties mark the entrances to Myrdle Street and Parfett Street from Fieldgate Street, and similarly from Fordham Street (formerly William Street), where two storey turn of the century shop houses with red brick detailing and steep pitched roofs can be seen, opposite to red brick tenement buildings similar in character and date to those in Settle Street.
33. Similarly, Parfett Street south of Fordham Street is lined by three story blocks of flats ~~of~~ [dating from](#) the late nineteenth century. Of yellow stock brick with red brick and stone details, with entrances picked out by segmental and pointed

pediments, these model dwellings were by Newman and Jacques, the hospitals surveyors.

34. Tower House, formerly Rowton House Hostel dates from a similar time, but is a very different form of building. Built in 1899-1901, it was intended to provide accommodation for low paid or down and out single men to rent by the night or by the week. It is an imposing red brick building whose plentiful narrow windows reflect the small bedroom cubicles within. ~~816~~[Eight hundred and sixteen](#) men were to be accommodated within the hostel. Adjoining this is the former late nineteenth century pub the Queen's Head, now part of Tayyabs Restaurant.
35. Other key buildings in the conservation area from this date include Nos. 111-125 Commercial Road, and Grenfell School. The Red House Coffee Palace (Nos. 115-119 Commercial Road) which was built around the turn of the century, in red brick with Terracotta details, has a tall distinguishing gable reminiscent of that on Tower House and Grenfell School. Land to the south of Fordham Street was purchased by the London County Council and Grenfell School (1905) was built [on the site](#) to a design by TJ Bailey.
36. The extent to which the area ~~is~~[was](#) built up by the beginning of the twentieth century meant [that change often involved](#)~~s~~—redevelopment, and the intensification of uses.
37. In the late nineteenth century the population increased with many people moving to the area, including many Jewish people. This population increase accompanied a large expansion of the clothing industry, focussed in Whitechapel, and [together](#) these changes saw the development of an increasingly mixed character within the area, with houses doubling as workshops and shops. Use of ~~the~~ houses for storage and sales rooms was still prevalent at the time of the conservation area's designation in 1996, although this is less evident today. In addition to the mixed uses within houses there was also the development on New Road of large clothing factories, such as [Servis](#)~~Shiv~~ House [\(now the New Road Hotel\) dating from](#) ~~(1930)~~—and Empire House [dating from](#) ~~(1934)~~, both by ~~e~~ Victor Kerr in a characterful Moderne style.

38. More modern forms of housing can also be seen in Feather Mews on Fieldgate Street which dates from 1926 and, unusually, incorporates garages. Similarly Myrdle Court is an art deco/Moderne block of flats dating from 1936 by GG Wimborne. This building makes an important contribution to the street scene, where the building's curved lines and geometric modelling can be appreciated in oblique views, from the north and south. The building also retains interesting decorative ironwork details.
39. The changing economic fortunes of the area are reflected in the existence of the Stepney Employment Exchange, now the Job Centre in Settle Street, built in a Neo Georgian style in a purple/red brick by the Office of Works in 1934-36.
40. One of the most recent redevelopments within the conservation area is Duru House, a 1970-3 clothing warehouse by Batir Associates, on the site of the former church of St Augustine. Unusually large for the conservation area, this building faces on to both Settle Street and Parfett Street and has an access from Commercial Road. In contrast with the broader conservation area, this building is not of brick but has steeply raked curtain walling on its lower floors.
41. More recently, the degree of change has slowed down; resident action, the statutory listing of certain properties and the designation of the conservation area have protected the special character and appearance of the area.
42. The model dwellings in Fieldgate Street were scheduled for demolition in 1972 and it was local residents who ultimately occupied the dwellings and ensured their retention when they were taken over and modernised in the 1980s by a community housing trust. Meanwhile properties in Myrdle Street and Parfett Street were to be rebuilt, until their statutory listing forced a reassessment of proposals and resulted in the decision to refurbish the properties instead. Similarly properties in Walden Street and Turner Street were in a very poor condition until they were refurbished by the Spitalfields Trust.
43. Today it is this grid of roads to the east and west of New Road and the historic properties within them, together with remaining historic buildings in Cannon Street Road and to the east of this in Rampart Street, which form the focus of

the conservation area, and which contribute to the special character of the conservation area.

## 2.2. Historic and architectural significance of buildings

44. The majority of buildings within the conservation area contribute positively to the special character of the conservation area.
45. There are a number of listed buildings within the conservation area. Relevant Historic England list descriptions are available at:

[https:// www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list](https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list)

### **Grade II Listed Buildings**

#### Nos. 8-28 Myrdle Street

46. A terrace of early nineteenth century houses, these houses are two bays wide and of three storeys [withover](#) -basements. Constructed in yellow stock brick, the facades are simply detailed with six over six pane sash windows set beneath gauged brick arches. Entrance doors are round headed, many with the original entrance door. Some retain interesting fanlights..

#### Nos. 40 and 42 Myrdle Street

47. Two early nineteenth century terraced houses, these houses are of three storeys [withover](#) -semi basements evident beneath pavement grills to the front. Each has two windows on each of the upper floors. Originally built in yellow stock brick, No.42 has been more recently painted. No. 40 has a round-arched entrance, whilst [the entrance to](#) No. 42 has a straight top beneath a gauged brick arch.

#### Whitechapel Centre (former Myrdle Street Higher Grade School), Myrdle Street

48. Designed by TJ Bailey and built in 1905 this London Board Schools is three storeys in height. Two corner towers with copper domes bookend the main façade and provide staircase access to the generously proportioned main floors. The elevation features five large windows per floor set beneath recessed

brick arches, finished by a parapet. Schools of this time on dense sites often had roof top playgrounds as was the case at this school. The school is built in a mixture of red and stock brick and features stone bands and stucco panels. The building bears a stone ~~pane~~plaque which notes that this is a Higher Grade School and reflects the fact that schooling on this site was for both primary level and older children. The primary school pupils were taught in the northern block now known as Madani School.

#### Madani School (former Myrdle Street School), Myrdle Street

49. This block, part of the original Myrdle Street School, sits on the north of the site built in 1905. Whilst of a similar scale, it is three storeys in height; with generous floor to ceilings heights; it is architecturally much more subdued in character than its neighbour. Staircases are located at the northern side of the school. Although built of similar materials, red and yellow stock bricks and with stucco banding and timber windows, it lacks the flourish of the other building. It was originally topped with a rooftop playground, and evidence of the separate entrances for boys and girls remains in the ~~labels~~plaques over entrances.

#### Nos. 15-21 Parfett Street, 37-53 Parfett Street, 22 and 26 Parfett Street, 34-60 Parfett Street

50. Modest terraced housing from the turn of the ~~eighteenth~~nineteenth century. These houses are two bays wide, and of three storeys ~~and~~over basements. Built in yellow stock brick they are simply detailed with six over six pane sash windows set beneath gauged brick arches and in most cases arch topped entrance doors. Historically these arches would have contained a fanlight, offering light to the hall beyond and being one of the few decorative elements of the facade. Traditional fanlights can still be seen at Nos. 54 and 58.

#### Pair of bollards outside Tower House Fieldgate Street

51. A pair of mid to late nineteenth century cast iron gothic style bollards with octagonal shaft and conical top surrounded by gables each with a rosette.

#### Nos. 77-79 New Road

52. An asymmetric pair of residential terraced properties from the 1790s. Of three stories over basements ~~in~~ and built of yellow stock brick, the raised ground floor is rendered and the elevations show a distinct Georgian hierarchy between floors. No. 77 has an interesting pedimented door case. The window to the side of the entrance to No. 79 is a later Victorian tripartite sash.

Nos. 63 and 65 New Road

53. Circa 1795, these two Georgian houses are of three storeys over and basements. Built in yellow stock brick, with red segmental flat ~~gauged~~-brick arches above the sash windows, a clear hierarchy can be seen in the elevations of these houses. The front doors have decorative surrounds, including a ~~Coade~~ Coade stone masked keystone and vermiculated stone quoins.

Nos. 25-47 New Road

54. Part of Gloucester Terrace. These houses are of three storeys ~~and~~ over basements. Most of the properties are two bays wide, with windows sitting beneath red brick segmental gauged brick arches. However, although there is a broad uniformity between the houses there is some variation within the terrace, No. 43 being a storey taller than its neighbours and No. 33 having a wider plot. The front doors have ~~a~~ decorative surrounds, including a ~~Coade~~ Coade stone masked keystone and vermiculated stone quoins, similar to those at Nos. 63-65 New Road. Some properties retain decorative fanlights.

No. 1 Nelson Street

55. An early nineteenth century terraced house of three stories over a ~~and~~-semi basement at the junction of New Road and Nelson Street. Built in stock brick and of two bays wide, it retains traditional sash windows, and illustrates a Georgian hierarchy between floors. It has been subject to some changes since construction and now incorporates a shopfront at ground floor facing New Road. It is set back slightly from the road behind historic railings on the frontage. Access to the upper floors is from Nelson Street. It forms part of the adjoining terrace at Nos. 10-16 New Road.

#### Nos. 10 – 16 New Road

56. Four early nineteenth century terraced houses, of three storeys ~~and~~over -semi basements, these terraces are grander than those in Myrdle and Parfett Street being set back from the road behind railings and entered up steps. No. 16 appears the least altered retaining the stock brick with which it was built and the original openings, with an arch topped door and window on the ground floor. No. 12, meanwhile was refaced towards the end of the nineteenth century with stucco. The basement and ground floor have been given a channelled appearance whilst the entrance has been given a cornice hood supported on enriched brackets, and the windows on the floor above have been given rounded corners and enriched surrounds. Beneath the stucco, the original proportions and hierarchy of the elevation can still be appreciated. A dormer window suggests a floor has been added at some time in the history of the building.

#### Nos. 15 – 21 New Road

57. Four early nineteenth century terraced houses with a Georgian hierarchy evident in their elevations. Of three storeys ~~and~~over -semi basements, these terraces are grander than those in Myrdle and Parfett Street, being set back from the road behind railings and with front entrance steps. Nos. 15 and 17 have slate mansard roofs with dormers and stucco bands at first floor sill height. With the exception of No. 15, these houses have round headed doorcases, which are rusticated, with vermiculated stone quoins and mask keystones, similar to the details seen elsewhere on New Road at Nos. 63-65 and 25-47. Fanlights have been lost, and many are now plain glazed.

#### Nos. 24 – 32 New Road

58. Five early nineteenth century houses of three storeys over ~~and~~ basements with two six over six sashes on each floor. Built in yellow stock brick, they have a stuccoed ground floor with the exception of No. 28. Some have later shops at ground floor. Cast iron railings with urn finial surround the front areas.

59. Nos. 28-32 have recessed square headed entrances with overlights and part glazed panelled-doors; No. 30 has an architraved surround with panelled jambs; whilst No. 32 retains the original patterned fanlight. No. 28's ground floor sash has been converted to a shop window; whilst Nos. 20 and 32 have segmental arched sashes in shallow segmental arched recesses. Windows on the upper floors have gauged red brick arches above recessed sashes.

#### Nos. 2-16 Walden Street

60. A terrace of modest early nineteenth century houses, simply and elegantly detailed with two storeys and basements. Sash windows are set beneath cambered arches and feature external shutters. A couple of steps lead up to ~~give access to~~ the panelled front doors. Doors retain some historic door furniture. Some houses retain historic boot scrapers.

#### Nos. 126-130 Cannon Street Road

61. Some of the earliest and grandest houses within the conservation area are these late eighteenth century houses of three storeys plus, basement and attic. Built of yellow stock brick with a raised ground floor, these houses feature a channelled stucco ground floor. On the floors above, recessed sash windows have gauged brick arches. A feature of particular interest within these houses is ~~are~~ the interesting door cases with carved brackets and pediments ~~over~~. No. 126 retains interesting railings.

#### Nos. 116-122 Cannon Street Road

62. These late eighteenth century houses are of three storeys plus a, ~~with a~~ basement and attic. Sash windows articulate the elevations, which are built in brickwork. They have steps up to the front door, and have a raised ground floor with channelled stucco work. A couple of them retain interesting doorcases with panelled reveals to either side and carved brackets and pediments over. The other two have interesting fanlights.

#### Royal Oak Public House, Nos. 118-120 Whitechapel Road

63. Mid-late nineteenth century public house built of red brick with white stone dressings. The pub comprises three storeys with the central bay at four storeys with a decorative entablature supported by a pair of caryatids and a window of five lights set in a semi-circular head. The frontage is divided into three with pilasters at first and second floor levels and these two floors are divided horizontally with a decorative string course. Windows at second floor level have decorative iron window boxes. At ground floor level the historic shopfront remains with its pilasters and dog tooth cornice over. The right hand bay is open at ground floor level with a carriage entrance to Vine Court.

Nos. 138-142 Whitechapel Road

64. ~~Mid-late~~Mid to late eighteenth century building with a façade altered in the early nineteenth century. Originally two buildings, but now combined. The corner building was historically a pub, but is now a shop at ground floor. The façade ~~has~~ is stuccoed. The original shopfront does not survive. The building comprises is of three storeys with a mansard roof. All windows are sashes, with varying moulded architraves. At first floor level the windows are alternately set in arches and under consoles.

**Locally Listed Buildings**

Nos. 119-123 Cannon Street Road

65. Raine's Boys' School moved here from Wapping in 1883, before moving to Arbour Square in 1913. The front façade is asymmetrical with a large gable at the southern end and is gothic in character with mullioned first floor windows and diaper blue brick decorations. The name of the school is boldly displayed in glazed tiles at high level. The ground floor façade has been subject to some change to accommodate shop units.

Nos. 18-20 New Road

66. Adjoining a terrace of listed buildings these two properties consolidate and provide a setting for the adjoining statutorily listed terrace. No. 20 is very similar in character to the listed terrace, being of three storeys in scale, built in a stock

brick, and with recessed sashes set beneath gauged brick arches. No. 18 is of a similar scale, but incorporates red brick details, with a simple row of double headers above windows. Both properties have had later shopfronts inserted. No. 18, although it has previously lost its historic shopfront, retains a pair of historic corbel brackets.

#### Nos. 23-35 Parfett Street

67. Originally early nineteenth century terraces similar to the statutorily listed properties further along the road, these terraced houses were rebuilt in the 1980's before the other properties in Parfett Street were listed. ~~Today,~~ ~~although~~ Although obviously modern, they are the same scale as the ~~existing~~ older terrace and visually complete it.

## **2.2. Archaeological significance**

68. The north and south east areas of the Myrdle Street Conservation Area are included in two Tier 2 Archaeological Priority Areas (APA), as identified in Historic England's update to APAs, completed for Tower Hamlets in October 2017. APAs highlight where important archaeological interest might be located based on the history of the area and previous archaeological investigations. APAs in Tier 2 are described as those on which the Greater London Historic Environment Record '*holds specific evidence indicating the presence or likely presence of heritage assets of archaeological interest*'.
69. The Mile End APA covers the areas to the east of New Road and Cannon Street Road. It focusses on the medieval and post medieval historic Mile End settlement as well as a stretch of London's Civil War defences, due to the discovery of a large contemporary ditch just to the south. The APA runs from the eastern boundary of Whitechapel, one mile east of Aldgate and ends at ~~the~~ Mile End Road's junction with Cambridge Heath Road.
70. The Whitechapel APA covers the north western end of the conservation area. This runs along the Whitechapel Road corridor from its junction with Osborn Street near Aldgate as far as Whitechapel Tube station and the Mile End APA.

It is a Tier 2 APA for its potential to contain remains of Roman and later activity including settlement along a historic routeway.

71. Full descriptions and maps for both Whitechapel APA and Mile End APA are available in Appendix X. For more information please see the Greater London Archaeological Priority Area Guidelines published in July 2016, available on the Historic England website:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/our-planning-services/greater-london-archaeology-advisory-service/greater-london-archaeological-priority-areas>

The website also provides a link to the Tower Hamlets Archaeological Priority Areas Appraisal produced by Historic England (2017), where further descriptions and maps of the APA's are provided.

72. [paragraph deleted] ~~It should be noted that the APA review document has been published as evidence in support of an emerging development plan which has not yet been adopted.~~

## 3.0 TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

### 3.1. General historic character and plan form

73. Myrdle Street and Parfett Street and the surrounding roads provide a good illustration of the way in which areas develop over time, and how development and redevelopment occurs as time passes, resulting in a built environment which is a composite of ~~the~~ various layers.

74. Early development of the area took place around a grid of roads established at the end of the eighteenth century by the London Hospital, as it developed an estate to fund its running. Within this grid there were a number of smaller properties on alleys and courts, which have now been lost. The modest houses

of the early nineteenth century remain at the heart of the conservation area in Myrdle Street and Parfett Street to the west of New Road and in Walden Street and Varden Street to the east. Earlier houses dating from the 1790s survive in New Road and on the eastern side of Cannon Street Road. [Vine Court is a rare survival of this pattern.](#)

75. Around this focus, layers of later development have taken place. In New Road, some properties have been re-fronted and had shopfronts inserted, whilst within the heart of the conservation area redevelopment in the later nineteenth century and early twentieth century largely resulted in the introduction of consistent terraces. As uses within the area have intensified, this has largely been with the development of flats rather than houses such as those in the tenements of Davis Terrace on Settle Street, or the slightly later, model dwellings of Romford Street. However, whilst these buildings result in a slightly higher density, being slightly taller (on Romford Street at three storeys plus attic) than the original housing and slightly deeper in plan, they preserve the apparent small grain character of the earliest development.
76. The early twentieth century, however, saw the introduction of a small number of larger institutional buildings, such as Tower House, and Myrdle School (now Madani School and the Whitechapel Centre). These larger free standing buildings were positioned on larger sites, located between the earlier consistent terraces. Unlike the terraces which generally sit at the back edge of the pavement or behind small front areas, these buildings are often set back from the boundaries of their sites allowing a little more breathing space around them.
77. The twentieth century also saw the redevelopment of larger sites, such as the factory premises at Nos. 67-75 New Road, which was redeveloped as Empire House in 1934. On the more major roads, the introduction of a wider range of uses can also be seen, with the terraces being broken up with the introduction of larger factories or commercial premises such as the Red House Coffee Palace. Nonetheless the small grain terraced form of development is predominant within the conservation area.

### 3.2. Layout and plan form

78. The area is of predominantly fine grain, with properties being arranged around a perimeter block structure. Scale and plan form are repeated to form continuous consistent terraces. In the northern half of the conservation area, amongst the areas of earliest development there is a considerable consistency in the plan form within terraces, and consolidated continuous frontages strongly define street edges. In general, buildings in the heart of the conservation area are located at the back edge of the pavement, with private spaces being to the rear. Houses to both the east and west of New Road follow this pattern.
79. The scale of properties on primary roads within the conservation area is greater than at the core of the conservation area; for example, properties on New Road, Cannon Street Road and Commercial Road are of a greater scale, both in terms of their height and plot width, than those in Parfett Street and Myrdle Street. On New Road and Cannon Street Road buildings are set behind a small front area, offering some respite from the busy road which they adjoin. This represents a hierarchy of built form within the conservation area.
80. Where the earliest development has been replaced by tenements and model dwellings, the scale is marginally greater than that of the houses, at four storeys. Plot sizes are also larger.
81. Larger buildings within the conservation area, tend to be either institutional buildings, such as the schools on Myrdle Street, and Tower House (built as a hostel for the working poor), or are later redevelopments such as Enterprise House or Myrdle Court.

### **3.3. Density and land uses**

In its early years Myrdle Street was essentially a residential suburb, although not exclusively residential with many people working and selling from their homes. Initially developed with terraced housing, which was the Hospitals preference, it was increasingly redeveloped as tenements and model dwellings. With a consequent increase in the density of development, and the

intensification of the use, the plot coverage increased, and heights increased from three to four storeys.

82. The primary routes had probably always supported some commercial/industrial use, but the early years of the twentieth century saw a diversification in the land use with the encroachment of industry particularly on the major roads which bisected the conservation area: New Road and Commercial Road. The introduction of purpose built commercial buildings generally resulted in an increase in plot coverage, with sites on New Road and Commercial Road often having complete plot coverage.

### 3.4. Building heights and massing

83. Generally building heights across the area retain the historic scale of the area, with nothing historically exceeding the height of Tower House which is of six storeys plus accommodation in the roof and actually very little exceeding four storeys. Height in the conservation area is largely determined by two factors, the era of a building's development and its location on a primary or secondary road.
84. The houses at the heart of the conservation area in Myrdle Street and Parfett Street, and to the [west](#)[east](#) of New Road in Walden Street, Varden Street and Nelson Row, are part of the earliest development of the area and are of a very modest scale. Their simple form and restrained details reflect the location, away from the fashionable areas of the West End within a developing area. The properties on Myrdle Street and Parfett Street, appear as three storeys to the front, but are have a mansard type roof to the rear which reduces their overall scale from the rear through the angled, set back elevation and contrast in materials.
85. Heights increase away from the central, quieter roads of the conservation area towards the primary through routes such as New Road, Cannon Street Road, Commercial Road and Whitechapel Road on the perimeter of the conservation area. Here, even though the number of storeys may be no greater, each storey

is of an increased height, and in many instances the ground floor level is raised from street level by approximately half a storey. This can result in the same number of storeys feeling slightly greater in height and scale.

86. The quieter secondary roads of the conservation area demonstrate a more consistent roof line than the primary through routes. The roof line on New Road, where buildings have more frequently been the subject of redevelopment have a more varied roofline, with groups of buildings of a consistent height being interrupted by properties which are slightly higher or lower. Similarly a variation of roofline is evident in Commercial Road, Cannon Street Road and Whitechapel Road.

### 3.5. Topography and important views

87. The area, like much of London, is essentially flat with little relief. Views within are largely general streetscape views ~~and rely much upon~~ which are typically characterised by the consistency of the streetscape and the uniformity of scale.
88. The notable exceptions are the views towards Tower House, which is a landmark building within the conservation area. Tower House dominates views looking north in Parfett Street, where it forms the focal point at the end of the street. The full scale of the building is evident with the gable ~~,~~ and the current entrance to the ~~flats,~~ which is being positioned immediately opposite the end of Parfett Street. Views towards Tower House are also important down Settle Street, where the corner turret and western flank of the building are visible in longer views. Views of the building are also evident looking west down Fieldgate street where the turrets add interest to the skyline. Also clearly evident in this view are the substantial chimneys which articulate the flank elevations of Fieldgate Mansions on Romford Street and Myrdle Street and the distinctive turrets of the former Myrdle Street School. In a limited number of views some tall buildings are visible from the conservation area.

### 3.6. Landscape character

89. The Myrdle Street Conservation Area has a distinctly urban character, with hard surfaces, and very little open space. Buildings are generally located at the back edge of pavement or behind a small front area offering little opportunity for greenery or landscaping. Even the open spaces around buildings, such as the schools on Myrdle Street, or the small open space on Romford Street, introduced to offer respite to the densely built residential buildings which surround it, are hard landscapes.
90. There are street trees throughout the conservation area, which offer a little relief from the hard surfaces and landscape the area.

## 4.0 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

91. Almost all buildings within the Myrdle Street Conservation Area make a positive contribution to the special character of the conservation area. These buildings are identified as positive contributors due to their siting, building envelope and massing, appearance and materials. All buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area should be preserved and where alterations are proposed these should [preserve or](#) enhance their contribution to the conservation area. Demolition of any positive contributors will not be supported. Equally, any alteration that is not sympathetic to the special character of the conservation area will not be supported.

### 4.1 Building typology and form

92. The character of the conservation [area](#) is predominantly residential. Buildings are largely domestic in appearance. They are mostly grouped in terraces, this is the case regardless of whether the building is a single family house or a tenement or block of mansion flats. On the quieter roads within the interior of the conservation area, such as Walden Street or Myrdle Street, these terraces are often long, and largely uniform with a consistency of scale, and a repetition of the details within the terrace, for example on Myrdle Street, Romford Street, and Parfett Street.

93. Even on the principal routes through the area, New Road, Cannon Street Road and Commercial Road, where there is more variation in building heights and frontage widths, and where there has been development and alteration, the scale has a broad consistency.
94. As indicated by the groupings of the statutory listing, properties can be grouped by consistency of details. For example the Coade stone vermiculated quoins and masked key stones of Nos. 15-21, 63 and 65, and 25-47 New Road. However, whilst there are features typical of the conservation area as a whole including: timber sash windows, parapet lines and elegant brickwork details (in particular gauged brick arches), ~~parapet lines~~, there is less uniformity between elevations on these more commercial streets, because of the various alterations carried out over the years.
95. The narrow plot widths in comparison to the height of the buildings, together with the architectural details of the elevations create a strong vertical emphasis within individual facades. The elements creating this vertical rhythm vary; in Romford Street the staircase access to flats typically cuts through any horizontal detailing and gives the elevations a very strong vertical rhythm. Elsewhere within the conservation area it is the windows which are proportionally long and are drawn into bays that provide the vertical emphasis. However, the repetition of elevations which occurs when they are grouped in long terraces tends to highlight the horizontal elements and when looking down a terrace, buildings are often tied together by the parapet line, the lines created by windows and cills or string courses.

## 4.2 Key architectural features and building materials

96. The area is characterised by the use of brick, earlier buildings being predominantly of yellow brick, later ones of red brick and some such as the flats at the south end of Myrdle and Parfett Street, reflecting their late Victorian date being a mix of both yellow and red brick
97. Brickwork on the earlier houses is generally simply detailed with the key features of the façade being the arches over doors and windows. The details of

these vary across the conservation area, while many are flat gauged brick arches, there are others which are true arches. These demonstrate the skill of the bricklayers and are aesthetically pleasing. Brickwork more broadly, is largely in Flemish bond, and the joints are generally finer in dimension than those commonly used in bricklaying today. The fine joints to many buildings in the conservation area are remarkable. On the later red brick buildings, there ~~is~~are a variety of moulded brickwork details, ~~these can~~which include ~~over~~ window arches with key stones, as well as string courses and moulded eaves details.

98. The brick, whatever the colour is typically paired with timber doors and windows. Six ~~over~~six pane sash windows can be seen in earlier properties, tripartite sashes and other windows in the later nineteenth century buildings with panelled entrance doors. The elevations of many of the earlier terraces are deceptively simple, doors and windows being the principale elements of any facade, with decoration being limited to the gauged brick arches over the windows, the round heads of doors and decorative fanlights above. These are very simple elevations and the interest lies in their proportions, elegance and the quality of the architectural details including:-

#### Articulation of the elevations

99. The recessing of doors and windows, together with the use of projecting cills, or mouldings is characteristic of the area and creates architectural depth. Elsewhere features such as moulded brickwork, terracotta panels, or banded brickwork are employed as architectural decoration. Visual interest is added to the flank elevations of Fieldgate Mansions, which front the street, through the prominent chimney stacks and brick banding.

#### Windows

100. Windows form a key part of the architecture within the conservation area and original or historic windows that are in keeping with the host building and wider character of the conservation area should always be retained where possible. Consistent terraces with matching details, including glazing bar profiles, glazing

patterns, proportions and window reveal depths and treatment characterise the conservation area.

#### Decorative door surrounds

101. In the smaller houses the doors are just simple openings in the brickwork, often with an arched top or gauged brick arch, however, elsewhere in the conservation area grander and more interesting door cases and surrounds can be seen. For example on Cannon Street Road [the](#) doors to Nos. 116-130 have a number of pedimented door cases with decorative brackets and panelled surrounds [s](#) dating from the 1790s. Other decorative door treatments can be seen in New Road where a number of the properties have vermiculated stone quoins with a Coade stone keystone.

#### Fanlights

102. Fanlights are also part of the celebration of the entrance doors. Fanlights are windows positioned directly above the door to allow light into the hall. Often the fanlights are semi-circular with small panes radiating out from the centre in a fan shaped pattern but some are rectangular. Early timber examples can be seen from the early eighteenth century but it was not until the 1740s that a composite glazing bar of metal and lead allowed a more decorative, [d](#) delicate tracery to be created, and only in the 1770s that Robert Adams decorative ideas made them fashionable. Many of the Georgian properties within the conservation area have fanlights over the entrance doors.

#### Other historic and traditional features

103. Other historic and traditional features within the area cumulatively contribute to the special character and appearance of the area. These features include:
- Coade stone details, masques and quoins;
  - Decorative iron work, for example cast iron railings in New Road, decorative balustrades at Myrdle Court, decorative balustrades to front areas in Settle Street;
  - Historic boot scrapers in Walden Street;

- Door furniture including door knockers;
- Stone paving, for example on Walden Street and at the east end of Vine Court
- Original steps to front areas such as those on 33 New Road
- Coal Hole covers and basement grills.

## 5.0 PUBLIC REALM AND OPEN SPACE

### 5.1. Streets roads and yards

104. The streets within the conservation area show a distinct hierarchy. ~~\_, with the~~The primary routes through the conservation area ~~\_, being (~~Commercial Road, New Road, Cannon Street Road and Whitechapel Road) ~~running along the northern boundary. These roads~~ are busy thoroughfares and their width reflects their status as important connecting routes, typically New Road is over 15m wide, and Commercial Road 24m wide. They have a generosity of scale, not evident within the secondary residential streets beyond. Roads in the hinterland are narrower and quieter; Romford Street at its narrowest is 8.5m between buildings. Rampart Street is narrower still at only just over 7m wide. These secondary roads have significantly less traffic and sometimes traffic calming measures, such as kerb build outs have been introduced, examples can be seen on Parfett Street, Myrdle Street and Romford Street.

### 5.2. Street surfaces

105. Generally the street surfaces are tarmac, however, some of the narrower streets, with less traffic access retain their historic setts or cobblestones, although sometimes these are partially obscured by a fragmentary overlaid surface. Rampart Street and Sly Street are examples of where historic setts ~~ebbles~~ can be seen. Some of the roads have modern setts or brick surfaces, for example Romford Street and the southern section of Parfett Street.

106. Pavements vary in character; some with modern concrete flags, and some with York stone flags as on ~~for example~~ Walden Street. In many instances ~~Many~~

pavements retain their granite curbskerbs. In some instances granite ~~curbskerbs~~ mark former entrances (eg Cannon Street Road).

### 5.3. Street furniture

107. Most of the lamp columns within the area are modern. ~~In some instances these~~Some have been chosen with the historic character of the area in mind, but in the main they are of a relatively standard design, to address the requirements of the roads themselves. At the corner of Varden Street and Turner Street ~~(-on the chamfered corner of No. 33 Turner Street)~~ there, is an appropriate wall mounted lantern.

108. The area contains few historic bollards, however the pair of listed bollards in Fieldgate Street and those either side of Sly Street at the junction with Rampart Street remain. Elsewhere within the conservation area there is a wide proliferation of modern bollards. These vary in style and detail, from fluted Doric bollards, to bell shaped bollards.

### 5.4. Open Space and greenery

109. This is a particularly densely built up area, with buildings sited at the immediate rear edge of pavements and very limited garden space to the rear of properties. ~~at a minimum.~~ There is very little open space, with the exception of the paved area halfway down Romford Street, which offers some relief from the narrowness of the road and the sense of enclosure which the buildings hard up to the street create.

### 5.5. Street trees

110. There are quite a number of trees introduced as part of traffic calming measures carried out in the area. Trees can be seen on many of the streets. In Myrdle Street itself and Parfett Street they are set on kerb build outs. The trees offer some respite from the hard urban landscape of the conservation area.

## 6.0 HERITAGE AUDIT ~~ISSUES AND THREATS~~

111. The condition of buildings and the public realm within the Myrdle Street Conservation Area varies markedly, with some buildings being in a poor condition. A lack of investment, inappropriate alterations and the loss of historic features cumulatively threaten the special character and appearance of parts of the conservation area. It is these same threats which, if addressed, offer the opportunity for significant enhancement.
112. There are some areas in the conservation area where redecoration, repointing and repair are required. The building material is largely consistent, predominantly brick built, with the earlier buildings in yellow brick and later ones in red brick. Some buildings are stuccoed or have elements of stucco. Timber windows prevail, with many historic timber sashes surviving, but there are also a number of buildings with Crittal windows in the conservation area. Most buildings immediately abut the pavement edge, but some with small front gardens or lightwells are bounded with a variety of railing designs.

### **6.1. Lack of investment and inappropriate alterations**

113. Often a lack of investment can result in a gradual deterioration of the built fabric as maintenance is reduced and the cost of repairs minimised. The exteriors of historic buildings within the area feature rich materials and details which are a major part of its historic and architectural character, but which are vulnerable to neglect and poorly considered change. The opportunity exists to reverse this change with carefully considered investment, which retains the surviving historic fabric and builds upon it.
114. Some brick buildings were built with render or stucco applied to the exterior. In several cases the render is in poor condition due to the lack of maintenance or poorly carried out repairs.
115. Timber window frames, particularly sash windows are a key feature of the conservation area. Some window frames are in poor condition and require repainting/renovation.

116. In several cases, original brick facades have been painted, particularly at ground floor, to the detriment of the appearance of the building.
117. Some areas of the public realm are in a poor state of repair or have been covered overusing unsympathetic materials, such as asphalt and concrete.

## **6.2. Loss of historic features**

118. The appearance of some buildings has suffered from the removal of historic architectural features such as windows, railings and the ground floor frontages of shops and pubs. This has harmed the character and appearance of the conservation area. In some instances historic photographs or surviving historic features or precedents offer the opportunity for appropriate reinstatement.
119. Window frames, in particular are key historic features. The removal of historic windows and the installation of inappropriate replacements has detracted from the appearance of a number of buildings within the conservation area.

## **6.3. Shopfronts, fascia signs and associated features**

120. There are a large number of retail units within the conservation area, with many featuring poorly designed replacement shopfronts and fascia signs which take no account of the architectural character of the host building and thus detract from the host building and the area generally. In many cases original decorative shopfront corbels have been removed along with original cladding materials from decorative pilasters dividing the shop units. No. 11 Parfett Street is a good example of a historic shopfront, other shopfronts at No. 34 Settles Street, Nos. 83-89 Fieldgate Street, Nos. 97, 103 and 105 Commercial Road and No. 19 Rampart Street retain various historic features such as pilasters and corbels.
121. There are also a number of high level signs in the conservation area, which add visual clutter to the frontage and detract from architectural features.

## **6.4. Vacant/underused properties and sites**

122. The vast majority of buildings within the conservation area are occupied (at the time of writing in 2018).
123. Within the tight knit building fabric of the conservation area, potential vacant sites do not exist. There is a car park site between Nos. 121 and 129 New Road and Nos. 132 and 136 Whitechapel Road. This wraps around the rear of these properties on the corner of ~~North~~New Road and Whitechapel Road.

### 6.5. Development outside the conservation area boundary affecting its setting

124. The Myrdle Street Conservation Area is situated within a densely built up part of the borough. In many existing views within the conservation area the historic skylines of the buildings lining the streets are uninterrupted by development outside the conservation area, creating a relatively self-contained, visual environment. The surviving unobstructed skylines are an important element of the character and appearance of the conservation area, with larger scale buildings beyond the boundary not generally visible from within. The configuration of the street pattern does, however, mean that some linear views along the streets terminate beyond the conservation area boundary.
125. The overall scale of the conservation area continues beyond the boundary in most directions, with height gradually increasing to the west. To the north-east and south the scale of blocks increases, with larger stand-alone buildings. In most directions, the setting has a neutral impact on the significance of the conservation area, but the Royal London Hospital block to the east is harmful to the aesthetic and historical significance of parts of the conservation area. This is demonstrated by its visual impact in some views. The Royal London Hospital block well illustrates the degree of harm which could result from the scale and bulk of inappropriate proposals within the setting of the conservation area. Increasing scale on the east side of New Road is a particular threat, and care needs to be taken to ensure that new development sits comfortably with the scale of the conservation area.

### 6.6. Public realm and open space

126. This is a particularly densely built up area, with buildings sited at the back edge of pavement and garden space to the rear of properties at a minimum. There is very little open space, with only the paved area created halfway down Romford Street offering some relief from the narrowness of the road and the sense of enclosure which the buildings hard up to the pavement edge create.
127. Public realm in the area is generally in a good state of repair; with many side streets, such as Rampart Street and Sly Street, retaining their [historic setts](#) ~~ebbled surfaces~~, although some are partially tarmacked over. Elsewhere streets are generally tarmacked, but some such as Romford Street and the southern section of Parfett Street have modern setts. Where possible [setts](#) ~~ebbles~~ should be reinstated or uncovered to improve the appearance of the public realm within the conservation area. If ~~setts~~[cobble](#)s are covered over, they should be retained below any new surfacing.
128. There are also areas where the variety of bollard designs and variation in signage adds to visual street clutter within the conservation area.

## 7.0 INTRODUCTION TO MANAGEMENT PLAN

### 7.1. Background

129. This Management Plan sets out the borough's commitment to high quality management of conservation areas and their settings. The Management Plan provides guidance to residents, businesses and other stakeholders about the special elements of the areas character and how these can be preserved [or](#) ~~and~~ enhanced. The Management Plan also sets out the considerations that should be taken into account at the earliest possible stages of the design process and addressed as part of any planning application.
130. Conservation areas are as much about history, people, activities and places as they are about buildings and spaces. Preserving ~~and~~[or](#) enhancing the

borough's architectural and historic built heritage is of vital importance in understanding the past and allowing it to inform our present and future.

131. Conservation areas also promote sustainability, in its widest sense, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. The re-use of historic buildings and places is environmentally responsible, as it protects the energy and resources embodied in them and ~~can combat~~ [climate change](#). ~~global warming~~. Demolition and rebuilding of buildings can have a big impact on the environment and can result in a large amount of waste and associated air pollution.
132. ~~In reviewing this guidance, consideration has been given to the boundaries of the conservation area and they have been revised accordingly, as outlined in Appendix 1.~~
133. Recommendations for additions to the statutory list are considered by Historic England.

## 7.2. Policy and legislation

134. [In conservation areas, planning controls are more extensive. Permitted development rights are more limited, and demolition and works to trees are controlled. The Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990 places a duty on Tower Hamlets to designate Conservation Areas in "areas of special architectural or historic interest", and to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas. Section 72 of the Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990 which relates to planning functions within conservation areas, includes that 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. You are strongly advised to contact the council to check if works you are proposing need permission.](#) ~~In conservation areas, planning controls are more extensive. Permitted development rights are more limited, and demolition and works to trees are controlled. You are strongly advised to contact the council to check if works you are proposing need permission.~~

135. Any new development should have regard to [relevant](#) national, regional and local planning policy [including the following](#)

- [The Planning \[Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\] Act \(1990\);](#)
- [the NPPF;](#)
- [the London Plan alongside the City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework;](#)
- [the Tower Hamlets Local Plan;](#)
- [the Tower Hamlets Conservation Strategy;](#)
- [Historic England Guidance; and](#)
- [this character appraisal and management plan.](#)

Further information can be found on the council's website, on the government website and on the GLA website (see full list of useful links under Useful Links and Documents).

136. Two Archaeological Priority Areas cover the northern part of the conservation area and the area to the east of New Road and Cannon Street Road.

137. ~~Almost the whole~~ [The](#) conservation area is within the [City Fringe Activity Opportunity Area](#).

138. Commercial Road and Whitechapel Road are strategic roads.

#### Statutorily listed buildings

139. There are nineteen listed buildings or structures in the Myrdle Street Conservation Area as set out in section 2.2 of the Appraisal. Many of the list entries refer to a terrace or part of a terrace and include several addresses. If a building is statutorily listed, any alterations to the property, either internally or externally, will require listed building consent from the council. Listed building consent is required for any works of demolition, alteration or extension to the building, which would affect its special architectural and historic interest. Works within the grounds or curtilage of a listed building may also require consent. Repairs to listed buildings may also require consent. It is always advisable to inform the council of any plans you might have to carry out repairs.

Replacement of any historic fabric usually constitutes an alteration and therefore requires listed building consent.

140. The council has a duty of care to ensure owners and prospective owners of listed buildings are aware of the need for maintenance and repair of such buildings. Regular maintenance can prevent serious and expensive problems at a later date. If listed buildings are not maintained in good repair, then the council can step in to ensure that relevant repairs are carried out. In some circumstances, the council itself may undertake essential repairs and recover the cost from the owner. The council has powers of compulsory purchase in such circumstances.

#### Locally listed buildings

141. [Local listing is a protection offered by the local authority to buildings it believes are of local significance. A heritage asset is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest, locally listed buildings are included within this designation. The effect of an application on a non-designated heritage asset is a material consideration when deciding planning applications, and local listing strengthens the case for retention of a historic building.](#) There are three groups of locally listed buildings within the conservation area, ~~and further ones may be added in the future~~. Although locally listed buildings do not benefit from the statutory protection outlined previously, they have been recognised as being of local townscape importance. The council expects to see their retention and evidence that any proposed alterations enhance the building's character or appearance. Full justification for any redevelopment proposals will be sought, including convincing evidence that the building could not be retained. Economic reasons alone will not always justify redevelopment.

#### Article 4 Directions

142. ~~There are no Article 4 Directions within the Myrdle Street Conservation Area at the time of writing (2018).~~ Where evidence suggests that the exercise of

permitted development would harm the special character of the conservation area, the council can serve an Article 4 Direction to withdraw specific classes of permitted development that would otherwise apply. It is important to note that an Article 4 Direction does not necessarily prevent the type of development to which it applies, but requires planning permission to be obtained for the specified types of development. There is no fee for planning applications required due to an Article 4 Direction.

143. For specific information on Article 4 Directions please see the General Permitted Development Order (1995) and 2010 amendment and accompanying Government Circular (available from the DCLG website), as well as the guidance provided in [Historic England's Advice Note 1 \(Second Edition\) 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management'](https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/heag-268-conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management/) which was published in February 2019 (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/heag-268-conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management/>)

~~143. Historic England Advice Note 1 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' published in February 2016 (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-designationappraisal-management-advice-note-1/>).~~

#### Archaeological investigations

144. Any new development that lies within the Archaeological Priority Area will be required to include an Archaeological Evaluation Report and will require any nationally important remains to be preserved permanently at the site, subject to consultation with Historic England.

#### Trees in conservation areas

145. [A Tree Preservation Order \(TPO\) is an order made by the council to protect specific trees or groups of trees in the interests of amenity. A TPO prohibits the cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting or wilful damage of a protected tree without permission and is a designation which is applied selectively.](#) There are

two trees in Myrdle Street which are covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO), these are behind the rear garden of Grade II listed No. 33 New Road. Whilst some trees in a conservation area may be protected by a TPO all trees in a conservation area are protected by the provisions of section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, These provisions require owners to notify the council if works to trees are proposed. To do this a works to trees application form should be completed. The application must describe the works proposed and include sufficient particulars to identify the tree or trees which are the subject of works. Only one section 211 notice is need to carry out a number of different operations. Notification should be made at least six weeks before the works commence to allow the council sufficient time to assess whether the works are acceptable or not. If the works are not supported and modified proposals can not be agreed then the trees must be protected by the council serving a TPO. ~~.All trees in conservation areas are protected by the provisions in section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These provisions require people to notify the council, by way of an application for works to trees. A section 211 notice should be served at least six weeks before carrying out works to trees, including topping, lopping and felling. This notice period gives the council the opportunity to consider whether to make a TPO (see below). A section 211 notice must describe the work proposed and include sufficient particulars to identify the tree or trees. Where a number of trees or operations are involved, it should make clear what work is proposed to which tree. A notice must include the date it is submitted. Only one section 211 notice is needed to carry out a number of different operations on the same tree or to carry out work on a number of trees. The application for works to trees can be found here.~~

146. [paragraph deleted] ~~A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is an order made by the council to protect specific trees, or groups of trees in the interests of amenity. A TPO prohibits the:~~

~~\*—cutting down~~

- ~~▪ topping~~
- ~~▪ topping~~
- ~~▪ uprooting~~
- ~~▪ willful damage~~
- ~~▪ willful destruction of trees without the local planning authority's written consent.~~

~~If consent is given, it can be subject to conditions which must be followed.~~

147. Carrying out works to trees without the necessary approval can be a criminal offence, and the council welcomes early requests for advice.

### 7.3. Outline guidance for applications

148. When planning applications in a conservation area are decided, the council as the local planning authority will pay special attention to whether the character of the area is preserved or enhanced by the proposal. The special character of the Myrdle Street Conservation Area is described in detail in the Appraisal in the first part of this document.

149. In the Myrdle Street Conservation Area, as in other conservation areas, planning controls are more extensive than normal. Before carrying out any work in this area, you may need to apply for consent even for ~~relatively~~ minor work such as replacing railings. These consents include planning and listed building consent, as well as others for work such as felling trees. Planning permission is required to demolish any building bigger than 115m<sup>3</sup>, and a higher standard of detail and information is required for any application. When applying for listed building consent, please note that all parts of the building, including its interior walls, ceilings and all other internal features, are protected. Some buildings are nationally (statutorily) listed, and some are locally listed by the borough. Locally listed buildings are those of townscape value which the borough wishes to protect. Listed building consent is only required for works to statutorily listed buildings.

150. The exact information required will vary with each application, but in general applications must include:

- A clear design and access statement explaining the reasons behind the various architectural, masterplanning or other design decisions.
- A heritage statement where the impacts of the application on the ~~setting~~[significance](#) of heritage assets or the impacts of demolition within the conservation area are set out.
- Contextual plans, sections and elevations of existing buildings (at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100).
- Drawings, including construction details, produced at larger scale (for example 1:~~2050~~ or 1:~~1020~~) clearly indicating the nature of the work proposed.
- Existing and proposed townscape views where relevant.
- Additional detail regarding materials and construction.
- Photos of the condition of existing building (including details where appropriate).

151. More details are available on the Tower Hamlets website [where a validation list can be found](#).~~—~~If in any doubt, the council welcomes and encourages early requests for advice or information. More information is available on pre-application advice on the council's website ~~—~~[here](#). When alterations are proposed to listed buildings, complying with the building regulations can be particularly complex, and early consideration of building control issues can help identify potential problems early in the process. ~~Further information can be found on the council's building control website here.~~

#### Resources needed to conserve the historic environment

152. The most effective way to secure the historic environment is to ensure that buildings can continue to contribute to the life of the local community, preferably funding their own maintenance and refurbishment. Commercial value can be generated directly from the building, through its use as a dwelling or office, or through its role in increasing the attractiveness of the area to tourists and visitors. However, it should be noted that economic reasons alone will not in

themselves justify the demolition or alteration of a building in a conservation area. The council will consider grant aid to historic buildings and places, but grant funding, even for cases that meet the defined criteria, is extremely limited.

## 8.0 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

### 8.1. General approach

153. Development in the conservation area should enhance the unique characteristics of the Myrdle Street Conservation Area, reinforcing its distinctive identity and contributing to its historic sense of place. New buildings should be of a high design standard, reflecting the scale and variation typical of the historic townscape. Individual buildings should display their own identity within the historically-set parameters (scale, grain, building line). These parameters are responsible for the creation of a coherent streetscape and locally distinctive character derived from an otherwise diverse collection of different designs, styles and materials. Retention and restoration of existing buildings which contribute to the character of the area provides the foundation for the area's redevelopment. The council encourages the sympathetic re-use of existing buildings in conservation areas. Where development has harmed the conservation area it is possible, under certain circumstances, that further development may help to mitigate this harm.

### 8.2. Demolition

#### Demolition of buildings within the conservation area

154. The Myrdle Street Conservation Area has a well-established and distinguished character distinctive from its surroundings in terms of its grain and scale. The council will resist unjustified demolition where this is ~~as this would be~~ considered to be harmful to the special character or appearance of ~~the constitute substantial harm to the~~ conservation area ~~through loss of historic fabric and/or damage to the historic street scene~~. Any applications including demolition will be assessed in line with national, regional and local policy and guidance including the National Planning Policy Framework. ~~\_unacceptable risk~~

~~to the parts of the building to be retained and that any new development integrates with and respects the remaining historic fabric. This should be outlined as part of a heritage statement. It is likely that a detailed report regarding structural implications will also be required to be submitted with the application. In many cases it may be possible to salvage and re-use elements of the historic fabric for example bricks, slates or window frames or external features. Any partial rebuilding will require materials to match and will be controlled by condition. It may be necessary to record the existing building prior to alteration.~~

155. Planning permission is required for demolition or substantial demolition of all buildings or structures larger than 115m<sup>3</sup> in conservation areas. What constitutes substantial demolition is considered on a case-by-case basis by the local planning authority. Where a building is statutorily listed, listed building consent will be required.
156. Where corner buildings are threatened with demolition this can cause a wider threat to the terrace as a whole, this will be resisted. ~~Similarly, the council will resist applications which propose demolition and replacement of a central building within a small terrace~~ [The demolition and replacement of a central building forming part of a small terrace will also be resisted](#) as this can result in further proposals and cumulative impacts.
157. If demolition work occurs without the necessary consent the council is likely to pursue planning enforcement action that may result in prosecution and a substantial fine. The demolished structure may be required to be rebuilt. It should be noted that the council will not normally grant planning permission for demolition without [relevant permission having been obtained for](#) an acceptable scheme for the redevelopment of the site.
158. With regard to vacant sites, or those in poor condition, it should not be assumed that any development is automatically better than the current situation.

#### Partial demolition

159. In most cases, the council would expect to see buildings retained but in some exceptional cases it may only be possible to retain a building in part; either by retaining elements of a building or through façade retention. Partial demolition will only be considered acceptable when it can be demonstrated ~~within the application how~~that the proposed demolition can be carried out without unacceptable risk to the parts of the building to be retained and that any new development integrates with and respects the remaining historic fabric. This should be outlined as part of a heritage statement. ~~It is a likely that a detailed~~A report ~~regarding of any~~ structural implications will also ~~need be required~~ to be submitted ~~with the application~~. In many cases it may be possible to salvage and re-use elements of the historic fabric for example bricks, slates or window frames or external features. Any partial rebuilding will require materials to match and will be controlled by condition. It may be necessary to record the existing building prior to alteration.

#### Demolition of buildings adjacent to the conservation area

160. Demolition of unlisted buildings outside a conservation area does not always require planning permission. However, proposals to demolish and re-develop sites adjacent to a conservation area boundary should preserve, and where possible enhance, the setting of the conservation area to ensure that the significance of the conservation area is not harmed.

### **8.3. New development**

161. The conservation area is characterised by a prevailing building height of four to five storeys on New Road, Whitechapel Road and Commercial Road and two to three storeys on the minor streets (~~see xxx map~~). The consistent parapet line of streets such as Myrdle Street and Parfett Street is an important characteristic. On main thoroughfares such as Commercial Road, more subject to rebuilding and alteration, the cornice/eaves height varies across terraces and this variety is a characteristic and an attractive feature. It is important that proposals are informed by careful historic analysis and aim to fit into and complement the relevant context.

162. New developments should respect the fine grain character and straightforward legibility of the historic street pattern. Any replacement buildings should preserve ~~and~~ or enhance the character ~~or~~ and appearance of the conservation area and ensure that its significance is not harmed. Any new development on potential infill sites (as highlighted in Section 6.0 of the Appraisal) should sit comfortably with the existing character or appearance of the conservation area.
163. Where existing buildings have a negative impact on the character ~~and~~ or appearance of the conservation area, it may be possible to alter the exterior of the building so that it enhances the character ~~or~~ and appearance of the area. ~~v~~The council would only encourage replacement of these buildings if the replacement is of high quality and has a positive impact on the character ~~or~~ and appearance of the conservation area.
164. All new developments should be sympathetic to the character ~~and~~ or appearance of the conservation area in terms of scale, materials and design.
165. The design of new buildings should be fully informed by the positive aspects of adjacent buildings and how they contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
166. The overall quality of architectural detailing will be key to producing a successful scheme which builds on the qualities already present within the area. In order to ensure necessary architectural quality, detailed design should be explored and agreed early in the planning process.
167. The quality of external materials will also be key to producing a successful scheme. The conservation area features a wide range of high quality materials including stone, brick, slate and terracotta. It is expected that the choice of new materials will be informed by the local context and build on this richness.

168. The design of shopfronts and fascia signs should not be considered in isolation and, along with security measures, should be considered at an early stage. It is essential that the scale and proportions of all elements of any new shopfronts and fascia signs relate to the overall proportions of the host building and to neighbouring properties where appropriate. Given the age of the buildings within the conservation area, this is likely to involve the design of taller shopfronts (and shallower fascia signs) than are considered standard in other areas. Older shopfronts were characterised by high quality, long lasting materials. Standard aluminium shopfronts are unlikely to be considered appropriate within the conservation area. It might be necessary to adopt a flexible approach to corporate logos, if these are considered to be harmful to the character of the conservation area.

#### 8.4. Property conversion

169. The permitted development rights for ~~some parts of~~ this area of the borough have been removed in relation to the conversion of offices (Use Class B1(a)) to residential (Use Class C3). Where property conversion or change of use is permissible, external changes are likely to require planning permission. Any external changes should ~~seek to establish a better relationship with~~ relate well to the public realm, should respect the character of the host building and should be in keeping with the character ~~or~~ appearance of the conservation area.

#### 8.5. Extensions and alterations

##### Roof extensions

170. The general consistency of building heights on individual streets and hierarchy of heights based on their location is an important characteristic of this conservation area. Secondary roads have a more consistent roof line, which should be maintained and as such roof additions which will be visible from the street or which will interrupt a consistent roofline are likely to be resisted. On the larger roads, such as New Road, Cannon Street Road and Commercial Road, there is more variation in the roofline as buildings have been more frequently the subject of redevelopment. Here buildings of consistent height are

interrupted with buildings of a different height. On these streets variations in the width, height and style of buildings have developed gradually within plots over time, allowing a variety of buildings to exist as a harmonious and cohesive group in a dense urban context. This subtle variety in height, accentuated by architectural treatment, creates a charming organic character and is an important attribute. As such roof additions which seek to introduce a consistency in height where none exists are likely to be resisted.

171. In many cases the historic roof structure and relationship to other buildings within the conservation area will either preclude roof extensions or make it very difficult to achieve an acceptable design. Where roof extensions are considered appropriate, the design must relate well to the design and proportions of the host building and must use high quality materials that respect the character and appearance of the conservation area. The impact of any roof extensions on public realm and views from within the conservation area should be carefully considered in order to ensure the character and appearance of the conservation area is preserved and enhanced.

#### Rear extensions

172. Where the opportunity exists for a rear extension, they should remain subservient to the host building both in terms of scale and proportion. Only high quality materials, such as brick, stone or, in some cases, reconstituted stone, [and timber](#) that respect the character and appearance of the conservation area will be accepted. The visibility of proposed rear extensions from the public realm must also be carefully considered to ensure that, not only the impact on the host building, but also on the wider conservation area, is acceptable and preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area.

#### External alterations

173. Where external alterations are proposed to existing buildings, these must seek to preserve [or](#) enhance the character [and/or](#) appearance of the conservation area. Piecemeal alterations can be harmful to the special architectural and

historic character of a building. Any alterations to historic fabric should be on a like-for-like basis in terms of materials and design. Where inappropriate or unsympathetic alterations have occurred in the past, these should be rectified in accordance with the historic materials and appearance. [In cases where the alterations are to a building which is not historic](#), ~~In cases where alterations are proposed to a non-historic building~~ the design and materials used should be in keeping with the character of the conservation area. Any external alterations to individual buildings will have an impact on the wider conservation area and so must be considered within the wider context.

## 8.6. Energy efficiency improvements

### Window replacement and alteration

174. Window replacement and alterations to existing windows are often a successful way of improving the energy efficiency of a building. A careful study of the existing building should be carried out in order to identify the original window design and materials. This should form a good template for the kind of windows that will be acceptable in terms of materials, design, glazing bar details, window opening patterns and type of glass. In most cases historic or original windows should be retained and repaired, draught proofing added and if necessary internal secondary glazing installed. Where it is acceptable to replace the existing windows with double glazing care must be taken to ensure that the double glazing is of an appropriate design, that it is possible to replicate the dimensions and opening arrangements of the existing historic windows, that the double glazing is of a slim profile and that spacer bars are white, and are unperforated rather than perforated metal. Top-hung or outward opening windows will not be supported on historic buildings, unless this reflects the original glazing pattern.
175. It may be necessary to apply for planning permission to fit new windows (such as double-glazing) in a flat or maisonette. Planning permission will not be required to add internal secondary glazing. It is also unlikely to be necessary where you are fitting windows which are identical to those which are being removed [i.e. \(like-for-like replacements\)](#). However, if the new windows differ

in appearance or size to those you are replacing (for instance, different glazing patterns or opening methods) you may need to apply for planning permission. The detailed design, materials, dimensions, glazing bar pattern, glazing thickness, and opening methods are all important considerations when new or replacement windows are proposed.

176. The replacement of historic windows to listed buildings will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that they are beyond reasonable repair. If this can be demonstrated, then any replacement of windows should be on a like-for-like basis, matching the original design exactly. This will ~~usually~~ require listed building consent and, if any changes are proposed in terms of design, materials or thickness, planning permission may also be required. Energy efficiency can be improved through draught proofing windows or through the installation of internal secondary glazing. These works ~~are unlikely to~~ will not require listed building consent, unless they obscure important historic features or cause harm to historic fabric.

#### Cladding, rendering or painting of external walls

177. The council will seek the retention or reinstatement of original façade treatments of buildings ~~that~~ which contribute positively to the special character and appearance of the conservation area. Unless it can be demonstrated that existing exposed brickwork had originally been rendered or painted, the rendering or painting over of external brickwork will not be supported.
178. External insulation through rendering or other methods will not be supported. Any additional insulation should be installed internally where appropriate so as not to inappropriately alter the external appearance of the building. In a listed building, internal insulation would need listed building consent, but in most cases it is unlikely to be acceptable.

#### Other external changes

179. Alterations which change the appearance of buildings within the conservation area should be carefully considered. The council will not support the addition of

satellite dishes, banners or antennae or other fixtures on elevations that front the street. The addition of grilles and louvres to the front of buildings is also unlikely to be supported. These should be placed on rear or side elevations if required and carefully designed so that they are incorporated into the overall building design. [The council welcomes the removal of unwanted and unnecessary clutter from the exterior of buildings within the conservation area..](#) [Development proposals that involve the re-use and/or conversion of existing buildings will be expected to address this issue where appropriate.](#)

## 8.7. Public realm improvements

### Surface finishes and street furniture

180. Where there are historic surface finishes such as cobbles [tones, setts](#) or paving, the council will seek their retention, as these form an important part of the character of the conservation area. Any major investment in buildings should also include public realm improvements [where appropriate](#). New schemes should aim to retain historic surfaces and any new surfaces should be sympathetic to the conservation area. Junctions between different surface treatments should also be carefully considered.
  
181. The quality of the streetscape, the surface materials, street furniture and other features can all form an integral part of the character and appearance of the conservation area. Any work carried out should respect this historic character, using natural materials and colours that are in keeping with the character [or](#) [and](#) appearance of the conservation area. Consistent colours and materials should be used where possible, except where variation is required. Tactiles for pedestrian crossings should be grey where possible. For works to Whitechapel Road and Commercial Road, TfL's Streetscape Guidance should be consulted. On narrow side streets, setts [and cobblestones](#) should be reinstated where possible and, historic kerb stones retained. [Any paving works should be sympathetic to the historic character of the conservation area.](#) Larger rectangular paving slabs ideally in natural stone or high quality composite

stone, are more sympathetic to the character of the conservation area than smaller modular paving.

182. In addition to the TfL guidance, for developments which impact on public spaces, the Council's Street Design Guide and Historic England's Streets for All: London document should be referred to. An important aim should be to reduce street clutter, such as obsolete signage and modern phone boxes.
183. All trees in conservation areas are protected, and some trees are also covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Additional information on trees can be found in the Policy and Legislation section of this document and on the council website.

## 8.8. Shopfronts and signage

184. The richness in the variety of details to shopfronts and buildings is integral to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Existing timber ~~shopfront~~ fascias, pilasters and corbels should be retained or restored where they have been lost. In cases where shopfront corbels do not survive, careful study should be made of adjacent shops to see if any appropriate examples remain – these should form the template for re-instatement.
185. It should be noted that a standard corporate approach to signage may not be considered appropriate due to ~~the~~ size, colour or illumination. As such, proposed designs and/or materials may have to be amended to suit the historic context. Any hanging or projecting signs should be well designed, bespoke timber hanging signs of an appropriate size for the shopfront or building. Traditional materials should be used and plastic signage will not be supported. No upper level signage, projecting signs or banners ~~Above fascia level,~~ will ~~not~~ be supported .
186. Hand painted timber fascia signs or fascias with individually applied lettering are encouraged throughout the conservation area. Internally illuminated plastic fascia signs are not appropriate and will not be supported.

## 8.9. Vacant sites and hoardings

187. Vacant sites must be carefully managed to ensure that they cause minimal harm to the conservation area. These sites must be maintained and should not be allowed to fall in-to disrepair. Where hoardings are used around vacant sites or on sites that are currently undergoing building works, these must be consistent in terms of height, materials and appearance. Hoardings should be maintained in a good state of repair so as to not detract from the character **and/or** appearance of the conservation area. Where possible, hoardings should be used positively to inform the public of the history of the site or wider area.

## 8.10. Development affecting the setting of the conservation area

188. The increase in scale of the development outside but close to the boundary of the conservation area threatens to cause significant harm to the character, appearance of the conservation area. This is particularly the case to the east, as identified in section 6.0 of the Appraisal, but also to the west where the step up in height is gradual. The large scale buildings associated with the Royal London Hospital have a significant impact on views from within the conservation area looking east and also on views into the conservation area from the surrounding area causing harm to its significance.
189. The overall scale of the conservation area continues beyond the boundary in most directions but the Royal London Hospital block introduces a much larger scale in some views. The predominant setting of the conservation area should be preserved, with any new developments within its setting considered carefully so as to not exacerbate the harm caused by the hospital buildings to the east. The gradual stepping up of buildings heights to the west of the conservation area should also be maintained, with increases in height kept away from the conservation area boundary, in all directions.
190. Views from outside the conservation area are limited due to the alignments and orientation of the streets and important views of buildings within the conservation area are largely contained within the conservation area.

191. It is important that development proposals on the edge of the conservation area and in surrounding areas include a fully detailed assessment of any impact on the historic significance of the conservation area.
192. To enable the council to assess relevant applications, the council will expect applicants:
- to identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected by a proposal;
  - assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
  - ~~assess~~ assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance of the heritage assets; ~~and~~
  - demonstrate that they have explored ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

## 9.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

### 9.1. Ongoing management and monitoring change

193. The council recognises the contribution of the local community in managing conservation areas, and will welcome proposals to work collaboratively to monitor and manage change in the area. Public meetings will be held to maintain communications between all stakeholders and identify new opportunities and threats to the conservation area as they arise. In addition, the Boroughs's Annual Monitoring Report, prepared with the new Local Plan ~~Development Framework~~ will assess progress on the implementation of the whole Local Development Scheme, including policies relevant to conservation.

### 9.2. Planning Enforcement

194. Appropriate enforcement, with the support of the community, is essential to protect the area's character. The council will take prompt action against those who carry out unauthorised works to listed buildings, or substantial or complete demolition of buildings within a conservation area. Unauthorised work to a listed building is a criminal offence and could result in a fine and/or imprisonment. Likewise, unauthorised substantial or complete demolition of a building within a conservation area is illegal. It is therefore essential to obtain planning permission and/or listed building consent before works begin.
195. An enforcement notice, served by the council may require works to rectify unauthorised alterations. This notice is entered on the Local Land Charges records which could make the future sale or financing of the property more difficult.
196. If listed buildings are not maintained in good repair, then the council can step in to ensure that relevant repairs are carried out. In some circumstances, the council itself may undertake essential repairs and recover the cost from the owner. The council has powers of compulsory purchase, if necessary to protect listed buildings.
197. The council will enforce conservation law wherever necessary, and will consider the introduction of Article 4 Directions to remove permitted development rights where appropriate.

## **10.0 USEFUL CONTACTS AND REFERENCES**

The council encourages and welcomes discussions with the community about the historic environment and the contents of this document. Further guidance on all aspects of this document can be obtained on our website at [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk) or by contacting:

- Tel: 020 7364 5009
- Email: [planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

This document is also available in libraries, council offices and Idea Stores in the borough. For a translation, or large print, audio or braille version of this document, please telephone 0800 376 5454. Also, if you require any further help with this document, please telephone 020 7364 5372 Also, you may wish to contact the following organisations for further information:

- Historic England <https://www.historicengland.org.uk>
- The Georgian Group [www.georgiangroup.org.uk](http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk)
- Victorian Society [www.victorian-society.org.uk](http://www.victorian-society.org.uk)
- 20th Century Society [www.c20society.org.uk](http://www.c20society.org.uk)
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)
- East London Postcards [www.eastlondonpostcard.co.uk](http://www.eastlondonpostcard.co.uk)

~~LONDON HOSPITAL CONSERVATION~~  
~~AREA~~ FORMER LONDON HOSPITAL  
CONSERVATION AREA

Character appraisal and management plan

October 2021



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# PREFACE

## What is a conservation area?

1. Conservation areas are parts of our local environment with special architectural or historic qualities. They are created by the council, in consultation with the local community, to ensure that change preserves or ~~and~~ enhances the specific character of these areas for everybody.
2. The special character of these areas does not come only from the quality of their individual buildings, but from the value of these buildings as a group and from their setting. Elements such as the historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries and characteristic building and paving materials all contribute to the familiar and cherished local scene.

## What is the purpose of this document?

3. This document has been prepared to comply with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Section 69(1) which states that a conservation area is “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan provides a detailed description of the area’s architectural and historic character and management guidelines on how this character should be preserved or ~~and~~ enhanced in the context of appropriate ongoing change.
4. This document has also been prepared to support relevant strategic objectives contained within the council’s Conservation Strategy 2017 –2027 including objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 2.6.

## Who is this document for?

5. This is an inclusive document which is intended to engage with many different people and organisations. It will depend on the support of the community to achieve its objectives.
6. The character appraisal and management plan is aimed primarily at the residents, businesses, developers and others living and working in the area. The document has also been prepared to align conservation objectives within different parts of the council, to help to meet the objectives of the Conservation Strategy and to provide a single point of reference for the management of the area. It represents our shared commitment to conserve the special architectural and historic character, and to help manage change constructively.

### What is the status of this document?

7. This ~~Conservation Area~~ character appraisal and management plan has the status of ~~a Supplementary Planning Document~~ planning guidance. It replaces the previous character appraisal and management guidelines adopted in 2007. It should be read in conjunction with Tower Hamlet's Local Plan and the London Plan. All planning applications for sites within the ~~London Hospital Conservation Area~~ Former London Hospital Conservation Area should be informed by this document. It is a material consideration when planning applications affecting the conservation area are assessed.

### Equality and diversity

8. Valuing diversity is one of the council's core values, and we take pride in being one of the most culturally rich and diverse boroughs in the UK. This core value has informed the preparation of this document and will continue to inform changes to this document in the future. These values will also inform changes to buildings and places and as such this document provides guidance to ensure inclusivity for all members of the community.
9. This character appraisal and management plan document will support the council's aims set out below:

- Creation of a strong spirit of community and good race relations in Tower Hamlets.
  - The removal of prejudice, discrimination and victimisation within the communities we serve and our workforce.
  - To ensure that the borough's communities and our workforce are not discriminated against or bullied for any reason, including reasons associated with their gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religious belief.
10. Please contact us if you feel that this document could do more to promote equality and further the interests of the whole community.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

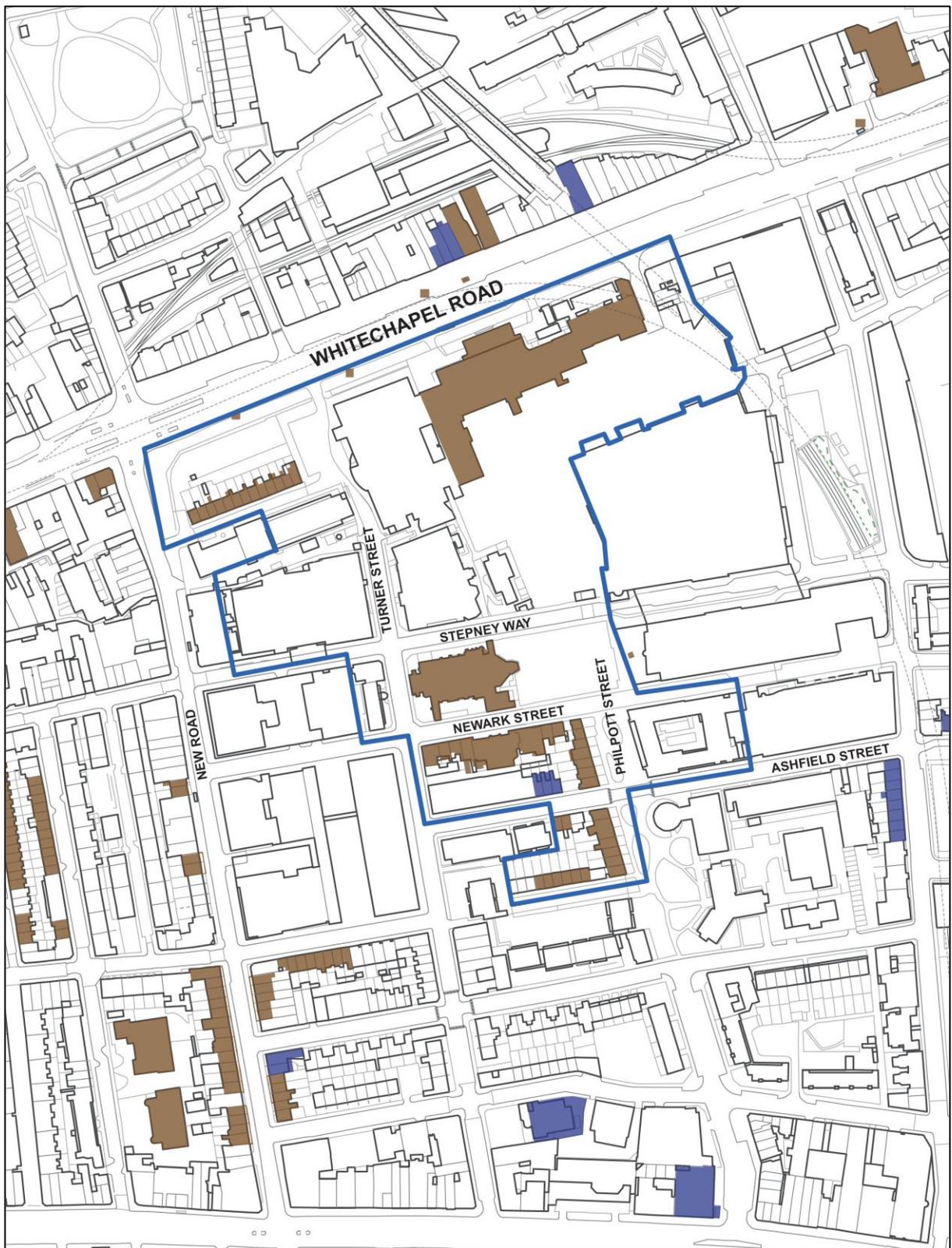
1. The ~~London Hospital Conservation Area~~[Former London Hospital Conservation Area](#) was designated in April 1990. ~~This document replaces the Appraisal adopted in 2007.~~ The boundary was amended in ~~2019~~[2021](#), with one area to the east removed, ~~and a small area to the west added.~~ ~~Full details of the recent alterations to the conservation area boundary as well as a map are included in Appendix 1.~~
2. The former hospital and surrounding buildings have a strong historical link with the community and city life of the East End of London. The importance of the site itself is derived from the quality of the principal buildings, their historical associations and the relationship of those hospital facilities with their surroundings. The London Hospital site has been the scene of a series of changes in response to evolving healthcare needs and provision of services [and is presently being refurbished to provide a new civic centre. New medical research facilities have also been constructed within the setting of the conservation area.](#)
3. The character ~~and~~[and](#) appearance of the area, as described in the appraisal in the first part of the document, define its special qualities. The second part of

the document, the Management Plan, contains relevant policy and guidance as well as development guidelines intended to ensure that future change is sensitive to the area's special character.

## 1.1. Location and setting

4. The ~~London Hospital Conservation Area~~[Former London Hospital Conservation Area](#) runs along Whitechapel Road to its north, with New Road to the west and Ashfield Street and Walden Street to the south. This is an area of particular special architectural and historic interest, illustrated by its rich history and significant architecture, dating from the 18th century ~~and earlier~~ [onwards with notable buildings from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.](#)
5. The historic buildings associated with the Royal London Hospital are at the heart of the conservation area. Since its foundation in 1757, the London Hospital site has undergone incremental development over time, experiencing change and alteration not only to the hospital building, but also to surrounding buildings and facilities. The establishment and reorganisation of the hospital site has resulted in a wide range of historical and architectural styles in the area. [The changes that have taken place in the conservation area have contributed to its character.](#)
6. Adjoining to the north west of the conservation area is the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area. The scale of buildings within the adjoining conservation area is quite different, with most buildings terraced, not exceeding three or four storeys and relatively narrow individual plot widths clearly defined. Although there are some terraces within the London Hospital Conservation Area, namely those on Mount Terrace, Philpott Street and Walden Street, the conservation area is largely characterised by detached or stand-alone institutional buildings mostly associated with the hospital use. To the south of the conservation area boundary the buildings are largely mid-late twentieth century housing blocks and some hospital/office buildings from the same period. To the east is the Ford Square Sidney Square Conservation Area and to the west the Myrdle Street Conservation Area. Both are largely characterised by residential built terraces of three or four storeys, with some areas of commercial use. As such the

differences between the conservation area and the surrounding areas clearly define the ~~London Hospital Conservation Area~~Former London Hospital Conservation Area boundaries.



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## FORMER LONDON HOSPITAL CONSERVATION AREA

- Conservation Area
- Statutory Listed Buildings
- Locally Listed Buildings

## 2.0 HISTORIC CONTEXT

### 2.1. Evolution of the area

7. Whitechapel Road has great significance in the development of east London, having been a major thoroughfare since the 12th century. When Bow Bridge was constructed in the early 12th century the present ~~the~~ alignment of Whitechapel Road and Mile End Road became the main route to London from Essex.
8. The medieval settlement of Whitechapel was focussed on the church of St Mary Matfelon, which stood at the eastern end of Whitechapel High Street until its destruction by bombing during World War II. The name Whitechapel is said to come from the whitewashed walls of the chapel. St Mary's was a chapel-of-ease (one built within the bounds of a parish for the attendance of those who cannot reach the parish church conveniently) to St Dunstan's Stepney, until 1329 when it became a parish church in its own right.
9. Ribbon development along the Whitechapel Road existed as early as the 16th century, with pasture and market gardens stretching away behind the buildings.
10. During the Civil War there was a fort located just west of where the former London Hospital now stands and there were defensive banks and ditches to the north and south, to protect London from Royalist attack. An artificial mound, known as the Mount, was created with the spoil from the excavations of these trenches. The name of this is recalled in the present day Mount Terrace and East Mount Street.
11. Until the early years of the eighteenth century Whitechapel was the limit of London's suburban development. By the mid eighteenth century continuous ribbon development had extended east, beyond what was then called Dog Row (now known as Cambridge Heath Road), and streets were beginning to be laid out on either side of Whitechapel Road. [At this time Whitechapel lay beyond the official controls of the City and was the location of industries such as](#)

[foundries, tanneries and armament manufacturers. Many of London's arms makers kept workshops in Whitechapel to be close to armouries of the Tower and Proof House of the Gunmakers Company. As a result, by the end of the eighteenth century it had already become part of the City hinterland and home to vibrant working class communities. The expansion of the docklands and overseas trade meant London was also a global city.](#)

12. The London Hospital moved to Whitechapel in 1748, eight years after its foundation, having been previously located at Featherstone Street in Moorfields and Prescott Street in Aldgate. Construction began on the hospital's first purpose built accommodation in 1751, but it was not until 1757 that staff and patients moved into the new building, which had space for 300 beds. The east and west wings of the main hospital building were extended in the 1830s by H.R. Mason.
13. In 1807-08 the Mount was taken down and the material was used in the construction of roads across the marshy land linked to the development of the East and West India Docks. The Mount was replaced by terraced housing and by the mid nineteenth century the urbanisation of the area was complete and was moving towards the poverty and overcrowding that became synonymous with the East End at that time.
14. As London expanded, the hospital began to take on increasing numbers of patients. Since the expansion of the hospital wings in the 1830s and 1840s, the volume of patients had more than doubled. By 1862, overcrowding had become unmanageable and the hospital asked its surveyor Charles Barry Jr to prepare plans for extensions. The agreed solution was to build a five-storey wing with a basement and attic, extending west from the original building parallel to Whitechapel Road. The new wing was constructed in 1864 to 1866 by locally based contractors Hill and Kendall.
15. Despite the expansion to the west, the hospital struggled to keep pace with demand for beds. Further expansion to the east of the main hospital building took place in the form of the Grocers' Company Wing, named in recognition of a donation from the livery company. The new wing was designed by Charles

Barry Jr and was constructed in 1874 to 1876 by Perry & Co. It was formally opened by Queen Victoria in a grand celebration.

16. The London Hospital had been associated with teaching since the 1740s. Early plans to extend teaching at the hospital were inhibited by the lack of rooms for lectures. The construction of a purpose built lecture theatre in 1783 to 1785 enabled the expansion of teaching at the hospital and elevated its status to that of a medical school. The medical school was housed in a single storey block at the east end of the front block of the hospital. The school moved in 1854 to a new site at the junction of Turner Street and Stepney Way. Initial designs for the new college by Alfred Richardson Mason were rejected as being too costly, and it was built to an amended design by George Myers. However, the new building could not accommodate the increasing volume of students attracted to the college by its growing reputation. Between 1886 and 1887 the college was extensively enlarged and remodelled to designs by Rowland Plumbe.
17. By 1897 the hospital's outpatients department had outgrown its basement accommodation and, following a donation from the shipbuilding magnate Alfred Yarrow, a new purpose built building was constructed on a site occupied by thirty-five early nineteenth century terraced houses on the north side of Stepney Way (then known as Oxford Street), between Turner Street and New Road. The new building, designed by Rowland Plumbe, was completed in 1903.
18. By the end of the nineteenth century the London Hospital was the largest charitably funded hospital in the United Kingdom, with over 1,000 beds.
19. The expansion of the hospital gave rise to increased numbers of staff. This precipitated the construction of a series of nurse's homes. The first, which overlooked the hospital garden, was designed by Charles Barry Jr. It was constructed in 1886 to 1887 and became known as Old Home. This was followed by Alexandra House in 1894, which was located on the north side of Stepney Way, at the junction with East Mount Street. Further accommodation was named after wellknown nurses that worked at the hospital. Eva Luckes Home, built in 1905 to 1906 was named after the hospital matron and Edith

Cavell Home was named after the nurse who started her career at the hospital and was celebrated for saving the lives of soldiers from both sides during the First World War. She was executed in Belgium by the German occupiers.

20. Further additions to the hospital complex were made throughout the twentieth century. These include the construction of a laundry in 1904 and an estates department in 1909, both located between Stepney Way and Newark Street, to the west and north of Eva Luckes Home respectively. Further extensions to the main hospital building were also introduced, such as the addition of the Holland Wing to the rear of the Grocers Wing and the addition of a single storey buildings to its front. A link was also constructed between the east and west wings and single storey buildings were built in the rear courtyard. Other additions include a building known as Knutsford House, which was built on East Mount Street, to the north of Edith Cavell House; the Garden House that contained the children's unit located to the rear of the main building; a pathology department and swimming pool located between Stepney Way and Newark Street, to the east of Philpot Street and Fielden House on the west of Philpot Street. [The majority of these buildings have since been demolished as the hospital has evolved.](#)
21. The London Hospital was granted Royal title by HM Queen Elizabeth II in 1990 to celebrate the 250th anniversary of its opening on the Whitechapel site, allowing it to be known as The Royal London Hospital. In 1994, The Royal London, London Chest Hospital (in Bethnal Green) and St Bartholomew's (in West Smithfield) joined to become The Royal Hospitals Trust, with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children (in Bethnal Green) joining the Trust in 1998. In 1999 the Trust was renamed as Barts and The London NHS Trust.
22. The piecemeal development of the hospital over the previous two hundred and fifty years, and the lack of adaptability in some of the older buildings, meant that it was increasingly difficult to practice modern medicine effectively and efficiently. In addition, the disparate and unconsolidated nature of the various hospital departments meant that patient journeys were often unnecessarily long and uncomfortable.

23. A review of United Kingdom healthcare provision in 1997 found that a new hospital in Whitechapel was sorely needed and that it should include about 900 beds for secondary and tertiary care. The same review recommended St Bartholomew's should be redeveloped to provide specialist cancer and cardiac services meaning that some of its other services needed to be incorporated into the Royal London site.
24. Given the substantial community benefits arising from the construction of the new hospital, [which include](#) the strategic role that it would play in the healthcare ~~of in~~ east London, ~~set alongside the benefits the scheme would provide to the hospital and Whitechapel through the creation of through identifiable~~ [as well as the creation of](#) new public open space ~~including the harm arising from~~ the loss of some significant historic buildings, and their replacement with a much larger hospital building was considered on balance acceptable.
25. Planning permission for the redevelopment and expansion of the hospital was granted in 2005. The new hospital building, designed by HOK and constructed by Skanska, was opened in 2012. It is formed of two seventeen storey, and one ten storey towers, all of which are connected.
26. The new hospital is a leading, internationally renowned teaching hospital, providing a wide range of local and specialist medical services. It is one of the largest children's hospitals in the UK with one of the busiest paediatric accident and emergency departments. The hospital is home to London's Air Ambulance and is also one of the capital's leading trauma and emergency care centres and hyper-acute stroke centres. [The new hospital building is not included within the conservation area as it is not representative of its special character and appearance.](#)
27. The former main hospital building facing Whitechapel Road was to be renovated to continue to be part of the hospital complex. However, after standing empty for some years, the building was sold to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets in 2015, and in 2018 planning permission was granted to

renovate and extend the building to form a new civic centre. As part of the planning permission, some parts of the listed structure ~~are to be~~were demolished to enable the building to be converted to its new use.

## 2.2. Historic architectural significance of buildings

### Grade II Listed Buildings

#### Former Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel Road

28. The former hospital building is a fine example of Georgian and Victorian classical architecture, and is an imposing feature along Whitechapel Road. Construction of the hospital started in 1751 to designs by Boulton Mainwaring. It was initially a large and rather austere Georgian building of three storeys with a pedimented centrepiece. The building has been altered and extended many times including in 1781, 1839, 1849, 1876 and later. These changes include the addition of wings to the east and west, the addition of extra storeys and the erection of a chapel and porte cochere at the centre of the Whitechapel Road façade.
29. The significance of the building is predominantly derived from its aesthetic, historic and communal values. The aesthetic value relates primarily to the impressive façade on Whitechapel Road, with the historic value stemming from survival of historic fabric from many periods. The building's strong communal value comes from the role that it has played as the home of a renowned institution, which has been hugely significant to the East End for over two hundred years.

#### 22-34 Mount Terrace

30. This Georgian terrace of three storey houses with basements was constructed in 1810 by the Corporation of London. The houses are in stock brick and feature round headed doors with fanlights. The terrace was originally part of a more extensive development of two rows of 17 houses built after the clearance of the Mount, an artificial mound initially constructed as part of the Civil War defences.

### 26 to 34 (evens) Newark Street

31. This group of early nineteenth century three storey terraced houses are some of the most substantial in the area. The buildings feature a stone cill band to the first floor and the first floor windows have flat arches set within semi-circular headed recesses. The significance of these buildings is predominantly derived from their historical and aesthetic values. The historical value relates [to](#) the survival of historic fabric from the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the aesthetic values relates to their elegant proportions and high quality detailing.

### 36 Newark Street

32. This former school building, dating from 1842, is in the gothic style with grey brick and white stone dressings. The significance of this building is predominantly derived from its historical and aesthetic value. The historical value relates to the survival of historic fabric from the mid nineteenth century, and the aesthetic values relates to its elegant proportions and high quality detailing.

### 38 Newark Street

33. This former vicarage dates from the late nineteenth century. It is of yellow brick with red stone dressings and incorporates distinctive gothic details. The significance of this building is predominantly derived from its historical and aesthetic value. The historical value relates to the survival of historic fabric from the late nineteenth century, and the aesthetic values relates to its elegant proportions and distinctive detailing.

### 420 to 42 (evens) Newark Street

34. These three storey houses date from the early nineteenth century. The significance of these buildings is predominantly derived from their historical and aesthetic values. The historical value relates the survival of historic fabric from the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the aesthetic values relates to their elegant proportions and high quality detailing.

#### 43 to 69 (odds) Philpot Street

35. These two terraces date from the early nineteenth century. The three storey buildings with basements are of yellow stock brick with a stone cill band to the first floor. The ground floor has semi-circular headed openings, while the first floor windows have flat arches set within semi-circular headed recesses.
36. The significance of the two terraces is predominantly derived from their historical and aesthetic values. The historical value relates to the way that the buildings enable the recollection of the lost wider architectural ensemble, which included terraces opposite and the important part these grander terraces played at the centre of the residential development to the south of the London Hospital. The aesthetic value derives from the proportions, details and craftsmanship evidenced particularly in the street facing facades of these grand terraces.

#### 42-46 to 48 (evens) Ashfield Street

37. These two stock brick houses of the mid- 1820s once formed the eastern end of a terrace of similar houses. They are two storeys in height with basements and attics. Tall six panel doors have decorative semi-circular fanlights. The significance of the pair of houses is derived from their historical and aesthetic value. The historical value relates to their importance as surviving elements of a lost part of the London Hospital estate. This is illustrative of the fragility of the surviving heritage assets within the area and emphasises the value of the surviving fabric. The aesthetic value derives from the classic proportions, elegant details and craftsmanship associated with the architecture of the period, which is well demonstrated in this surviving part of the terrace.

#### 39 to 49 (odds) Walden Street

38. This is an early nineteenth century stock brick terrace of two storeys with basements, and the slate covered mansard roof incorporates dormers. Each house has a round headed doorway and a sash window with two windows above. The significance of the terrace is derived from its historical and aesthetic value. The historical value relates to the survival of original fabric as the

surviving part of a much changed streetscape. The aesthetic value is derived from the proportions, details and craftsmanship, which is well illustrated by the exterior of the houses. Numbers 31 to 37 (odds) are part of the same terrace but are not listed.

Statue opposite the south entrance of the new main building of the Royal London Hospital

39. This is a bronze statue of Queen Alexandra dating from 1908, located just outside the conservation area. It is a full sized figure mounted on a white stone plinth, which bears a pictorial plaque in low relief, commemorating the Queen's visits to the sick. The statue was erected in recognition of the Queen's Presidency of the London Hospital in 1904, and her work in introducing the Tilsen Lamp to combat Lupus. The statue was moved to its current location in 2013, having previously been ~~long located and historically~~ located within the conservation area, in the rear courtyard of the former Royal London Hospital building. Although the statue is now located just outside of the conservation area it remains an important part of its setting.
40. The significance of the statue is derived from its historical and aesthetic value. The historical value relates to the commemoration of important historical events. The aesthetic value is derived from the fine craftsmanship exhibited by this statue.

Pillar Box previously located in the rear courtyard of the former Royal London Hospital building.

41. This is a mid-to-late nineteenth century pillar box of the Victorian 'penfold' type, which was rescued when the Post Office were updating pillar boxes and given a new home within the grounds of the hospital. Made of cast iron, it is hexagonal with cap bearing leaf designs, resting on ball mouldings and with a centre finial. The significance of the pillar box is derived from its historical and aesthetic value. The historical value relates to the survival of this rare type of pillar box. The aesthetic value is derived from the fine craftsmanship exhibited by this pillar

box. It is intended that the pillar box will be relocated as part of the landscape works associated with the creation of the new civic centre.

#### K2 telephone kiosks opposite 209 Whitechapel Road and outside of the former Royal London Hospital building

42. These are two K2 type telephone kiosks dating from 1927. Designed by Giles Gilbert Scott, they are in red painted cast iron with domed roofs, with perforated crowns to top panels and glazing bars to the windows and doors. The significance of these telephone kiosks is derived from their historical and aesthetic value. The historical value relates to the survival of this rare type of telephone kiosk. The aesthetic value is derived from the fine craftsmanship and elegant proportions exhibited by these telephone kiosks.

#### **Grade II\* listed buildings**

##### Former church of St Augustine with St Philip, Newark Street

43. This late Victorian Gothic church, of orange coloured brick with stone dressings was designed by Arthur Cawston to replace an early nineteenth century church. It is one of the borough's largest and most impressive ecclesiastical buildings.
44. The building ceased to operate as a church in 1979 but was subsequently converted to ~~the London Hospital's~~ a medical and dental ~~school~~ library. The crypt houses the hospital museum.
45. The significance of the building is predominantly derived from its aesthetic, historical and communal values. The aesthetic value relates to the high quality architecture, including the skilfully massed exterior and superb craftsmanship exhibited throughout the building. The survival of this magnificent building and its adaptation to a new use give the building historical value. Communal value is derived from the important role the church played in the local community. The building also derives significance from its setting, including the fine terrace of buildings immediately to its south on Newark Street and from the area of open space to its east, which allows clear views of the building.

## Locally listed buildings

### 39 to 43 (odds) Ashfield Street

46. This is the surviving part of an early nineteenth century terrace. The buildings are stock brick laid in a Flemish bond. Entrances have grey glazed brick surrounds with gauged brick arches. A string course divides the ground and first floors. The terrace displays the attributes of listed terraces within the conservation area, including fine architectural details and carefully considered proportions. The significance of the terrace is derived from its historical and aesthetic value. The historical value relates to the survival of original fabric as the surviving part of a much changed streetscape. The aesthetic value is derived from the proportions, details and craftsmanship.

## Other buildings that make a positive contribution to the conservation area

### Former Outpatients Department, Stepney Way

47. This is a large and formidable block in banded brick with four prominent corner turrets, large stone transom windows and a central shaped gable with a decorative terracotta frieze. It was built to designs by Rowland Plumbe in 1900 to 1902 and forms part of a central group of historic buildings in the conservation area, including the grade II\* listed former St. Augustine with St. Philip's Church to the south east and the late Victorian School of Medicine and Dentistry building directly to the east. Although not statutorily listed, this building is integral to the significance of the conservation area due to its prominence, position in the group and handsome Edwardian elevations, which are still recognisable despite some later additions such as the large entrance canopy and external pipework. Although not statutorily listed, the former Outpatients Department is one of the principal historic hospital buildings that underpin the reason for the conservation area designation.

### Former Outpatients Department Annex, Stepney Way

48. [paragraph deleted] ~~This building was built as an annex to the former Outpatients Department in 1936. It was designed by Adams, Holden & Pearson to provide a centre for the hospital's Department of Physical Medicine and a newly established School of Physiotherapy. It features original Critall type windows and has a distinctive striped exterior.~~

#### The Garrod Building, Turner Street

49. This is a four storey building with a robust exterior composed of yellow bricks with red dressings. The buildings principal elevation faces Turner Street with a Doric porch, topped with a balustrade. The facades feature Doric pilasters and are punctuated by large windows on the lower floors, with smaller ones on the upper floors. The building, designed by Rowland Plumbe and built between 1886 and 1887, is an extensive enlargement and remodelling of an earlier college building built in 1854 to a design by George Myers. [Some changes have occurred over time. There is potential to reinstate some missing features.](#)

#### Ambrose King Centre, Turner Street

50. This is a robust three storey plus basement neo-Georgian building dating from 1926. It is in stock brick with prominent stone quoins.

#### Good Samaritan public house, Turner Street

51. This is a ~~two~~ [three](#) storey building in the neo- Georgian style, with touches of art deco detail, including geometric patterns on the door lanterns and fanlights and bright stained-glass windows. The building's north elevation features a roundel bearing the Trumans Brewery's distinctive eagle. The Good Samaritan was rebuilt in 1937 to 1938 to designs by the chief architect to Trumans, A.E. Sewell.

#### Floyer House, Philpot Street

52. This is a five storey building in brick with a ground floor loggia and projecting window frames. The arched fanlights of the doors and windows echo the interlaced tracery of the listed terrace on the opposite side of Philpot Street. It

was designed by Edward Maufe as a student's hostel and dates from the 1930s. [The building has more recent additions facing onto Newark Street and Ashfield Street, which are of less architectural and historical interest.](#)

### 2.3. Archaeological significance

53. The majority of the ~~London Hospital Conservation Area~~ [Former London Hospital Conservation Area](#) is included within the Mile End Archaeological Priority Area (APA). Only a small section of the conservation area, south of Ashfield Street and west of Philpot Street, is not covered by the APA.
  
54. APAs highlight where important archaeological interest might be located based on the history of the area and previous archaeological investigations. Mile End is a Tier 2 APA due to the potential for significant postmediaeval remains that are attested in historical records. The APA was designated because the area was historically important as its location on the edge of London attracted vital urban activity that was unacceptable in the city itself. It also served as the capital's de facto frontier with the rest of the country at historically important points. As London developed, so did the scope and nature of the activities carried out in Mile End, mirroring the development of the city. The area has potential to contain nationally significant remains relating to the Red Lion playhouse as well as medieval and post medieval remains of regional importance. Of particular relevance to the ~~London Hospital Conservation Area~~ [Former London Hospital Conservation Area](#) is the presence of the former hospital's burial grounds and the possible survival of Civil War defences and a fort. A possible contemporary ditch was identified in modern investigations at the London Hospital Medical College.
  
55. For more information please see the Greater London Archaeological Priority Area Guidelines published in July 2016, available on the Historic England website. The website also provides a link to the Tower Hamlets Archaeological Priority Areas Appraisal produced by Historic England (2017), where further descriptions and maps of the APAs are provided.

56. [paragraph deleted] ~~It should be noted that the APA review document has been published as evidence in support of an emerging development plan which has not yet been adopted.~~

57. [BLANK PARAGRAPH ADDED IN ERROR]

## 3.0 TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

### 3.1. General historic character and plan form

58. The present day character of the ~~London Hospital Conservation Area~~[Former London Hospital Conservation Area](#) is principally determined by the eighteenth century plan of the area. This consists of a grid of streets behind the main Whitechapel Road frontage. Within this grid, the conservation area has developed in a piecemeal fashion over the last two hundred and fifty years and contains eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century buildings.

59. The former Royal London Hospital building and the other surviving hospital complex buildings give much of the conservation area an imposing institutional character. This is complemented by the quieter, more domestic appearance of surviving residential terraces.

60. Overall the conservation area has strong historical value, as it incorporates valuable elements of built form that illustrate the ~~development~~ [evolution](#) of the hospital and the residential estate to the south. ~~It also has~~ [Although some of the buildings have been altered for functional reasons, they retain an](#) -aesthetic value derived from the elegant proportions, fine detailing and high quality craftsmanship, ~~which is evidenced in many of its buildings~~. The conservation area also has considerable communal value given that its focus is the former Royal London Hospital that played a very significant role in the East End for over two hundred and fifty years.

### 3.2. Layout and plan form

61. The original nineteenth century street pattern is still largely apparent today, although in places the historic streets have been pedestrianised or built over. The street pattern is a non-uniform grid, which gives rise to irregular block sizes. Within these blocks there is a variety of plot widths and depths, which is a result of the different building types found in the conservation area.
62. Large footprint Institutional buildings, such as the former Royal London Hospital and the former Outpatients Department, sit within significant plots. In contrast, the plots on Mount Terrace, Philpot Street and Walden Street have greater regularity and a finer grain compared to the rest of the conservation area.

### 3.3. ~~Density and~~ Land uses

63. The conservation area ~~was once~~ is dominated by medical ~~and~~ institutional, and other associated land uses. Some of the conservation area buildings still form part of the overall hospital complex, such as the Alexandra Wing which houses the dental hospital, the Ambrose King Centre which accommodates a sexual health clinic, the Garrod Building which contains the medical college and the former church of St Augustine with St Philip which is home to the medical college library. With the redevelopment of the Royal London Hospital and the changes to the way it provides medical care, a number of buildings, such as the outpatients department ~~and annex~~, are not currently in use.
64. The conservation area also features a number of residential terraces. Some of these buildings have been converted from private houses to uses associated with the hospital. Planning permission has recently been granted to refurbish buildings on Philpot Street and return them to residential use.

### 3.4. Building heights and massing

65. The piecemeal development of the conservation area, and the variety of buildings types within it, creates variety in the heights of buildings and their massing.

66. The current and former medical and institutional buildings in the conservation area are relatively modest in scale, but their large footprints mean that they are of a greater mass than much of the other fine grained historic development in the area. With the exception of the Alexandra Wing, the mass of these buildings is offset by their elegant proportions and fine detailing.
67. Generally the residential buildings, such as the Grade II listed terraces on Mount Terrace and Walden Street, are two to three storeys in height. This scale is consistent with residential properties in neighbouring conservation areas such as Myrdle Street and Ford and Sidney Square.
68. The new Royal London Hospital building is an imposing structure that dominates many views both into and out of the conservation area, causing significant harm to its setting. Although harmful to the historic character of the area, the scale and mass of this building was considered acceptable due to the significant public benefits associated with the new hospital, the additional public open space it promised to deliver (including a new public square to provide views and a positive setting to the former church) and the strategic role that it plays in delivering healthcare in the East End.

### 3.5. Topography and important views

69. The ~~London Hospital Conservation Area~~[Former London Hospital Conservation Area](#) is generally flat and as such important views are shaped by the form of the built environment. As well as static views, kinetic views are of importance throughout the conservation area.
70. Typically, views in the area run along street axes. Long views along Whitechapel ~~building which is the main visual landmark in the conservation area.~~ ~~Long axial~~ Road are of particular importance, taking in the former Royal London Hospital [which is the main visual landmark in the conservation area.](#) ~~Long axial~~ east to west street views are also important as many of the buildings that contribute positively to the conservation area, ~~as the surrounding~~

~~conservation areas~~, are visible without the intrusion of the new Royal London Hospital.

71. The former Church of St Augustine with St Philip (converted to the London Hospital's medical school library) is also an important conservation area landmark, being a distinctive building that is the focus of views along Turner Street, Stepney Way and Newark Street

## 4.0 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

72. All buildings within the ~~London Hospital Conservation Area~~ [Former London Hospital Conservation Area, with the exception of the Royal London Dental Hospital](#), contribute positively to the special character of the conservation area. These buildings are identified as positive contributors due to their siting, building envelope and massing, appearance and materials. All buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area should be preserved and where alterations are proposed these should enhance their contribution to the conservation area. Demolition of any positive contributors will not be supported. Equally, any alteration that is not sympathetic to the special character of the conservation area will not be supported.

### 4.1 Building typology and form

73. The conservation area features a range of architectural styles, reflecting the organic and piecemeal growth of the area. However, the character of the conservation area is principally derived from later Victorian and Edwardian hospital buildings that occupy large blocks of the previous Georgian residential street layout.
74. The area also contains early Victorian terraced buildings, which stylistically relate back to Georgian architecture and form a homogenous and cohesive group.

### 4.2 Key architectural features and building materials

75. Buildings in the conservation area are typically characterised by elegant proportions, fine detailing and high quality craftsmanship. Whilst it is recognised that some alterations have taken place, in general these do not detract from the character and/or appearance of the conservation area.
76. All buildings, with the exception of Gwynne House, incorporate brick as a facing material in some way, making it the predominant building material in the conservation area. A variety of brick colours are used; some buildings such as the former Royal London Hospital feature yellow stock bricks, while other such as the former Outpatients Department and the former church of St Augustine with St Philip use different tones of red brick. Some buildings, such as the Garrod Building, successfully combine different brick colours for a polychromatic effect.
77. Many of the medical and institutional buildings are adorned with decorative features, such as stone dressings, string courses, pilasters and balustrades.
78. In many cases, roofs are hidden behind parapets, although in some cases visible pitched roofs, such as that on the former church of St Augustine with St Philip and the Good Samaritan Public House, make a positive contribution to the streetscene. The former Outpatients Department features distinctive corner towers with pyramidal roofs, which are a typical motif of architect Rowland Plumbe.

## 5.0 PUBLIC REALM AND OPEN SPACE

### 5.1. Streets

79. Whitechapel Road (A11) forms the northern boundary of the conservation area. It is one of the main east / west routes that pass through the borough, connecting the city to outer London. Whitechapel Road is the focus of much activity and today is characterised by the competing demands of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, motorists and market traders. This spacious and busy

road provides a good setting for the former Royal London Hospital building, which will become the new Civic Centre.

80. New Road defines the westernmost boundary of the conservation area. This is also a busy thoroughfare, and links Whitechapel Road to Commercial Road. Like Whitechapel Road, the northern part of New Road has a commercial character with shops, cafes and restaurants located primarily on the western side of the street.
81. Other streets within the conservation area have less of a commercial character, although [they](#) remain relatively busy with significant numbers of people visiting the new Royal London Hospital, medical college and other associated buildings. In particular, Stepney Way is a busy thoroughfare that provides access to the new hospital building immediately to the east of the conservation area.
82. In places, the historic street pattern is disrupted. A large section of Philpot Street has been pedestrianised and a post war building currently blocks the path of Walden Street between Philpot Street and Turner Street. The alignment of the northernmost part of Turner Street has been slightly changed by the location of the modern Alexandra Wing and vehicular access has been restricted. Vehicular access to the western part of Newark Street has also been restricted. At one time, Ashfield Street (then known as Rutland Street) led directly from the conservation area to New Road. Its path is now blocked by the Blizzard Building and Bio Innovation Centre (both outside of the conservation area just to its west).

## 5.2. Street surfaces

83. The street surfaces within the conservation area have contemporary surfacing, including dark grey asphalt on the carriage way and large concrete paving slabs on the footways. Some of the street surfaces, such as the one on Mount Terrace, are in a poor condition.

84. The pedestrianised section of Philpot Street is surfaced with red paving stone, arranged in a herringbone pattern. This emphasises its difference from the other streets, but is not particularly sympathetic to the historic character of the area.

### 5.3. Street furniture

85. The two listed K6 telephone boxes and a further un-listed red telephone box, on Whitechapel Road are an attractive complement to the streetscene. However, they would benefit from some maintenance to address some instances of graffiti and missing glass.
86. The remaining street furniture in the conservation does not make a positive contribution to its character and appearance. For example, the southern side of the stretch of Whitechapel Road between East Mount Street and New Road features a variety of items on the pavement that clutter the streetscene and detract from the setting of the Grade II listed former hospital building. These items include cycle hoops, cycle hire station, telecommunications poles, security cameras and cabinets. There is also a free standing advertising board located toward the western end of this section of Whitechapel Road. This advertising board is detrimental to the appearance of the streetscene and obscures views of the listed K6 telephone box, harming its setting
87. Elsewhere in the conservation area there are some items of modern street furniture associated with the operation of the new hospital. located along Stepney Way to prevent vehicles from mounting and parking on the pavement, and there is also a vehicle gate on Newark Street. Whilst these items of furniture may be necessary for the effective operation of the hospital, their design and execution is detrimental to the appearance of the conservation area.

### 5.4. Open space and greenery

88. At present, parts of the pedestrianised section of Philpot Street, between Newark Street and Walden Street, form the only area of open space in the

conservation area. The space is laid out informally with meandering paths, grassed areas, raised beds, hedges and trees. Whilst the space would benefit from some improvement, it is nonetheless an important amenity for the area and provides respite from the otherwise hard and urbanised appearance of this part of Whitechapel. Other notable greenery is provided by the large mature tree within the grounds of the former church of St Augustine with St Philip that makes a positive contribution to the streetscene.

89. The redevelopment of the Royal London Hospital site was intended to provide a number of new open spaces. These included a new civic space to be located at the rear of the former hospital building, which would measure 140 metres from east to west and 34 metres from north to south, making it comparable in scale to the forecourt of the British Museum. In addition, the demolition of buildings adjacent to the former church of St Augustine with St Philip, was intended to provide a public square measuring 37 metres from north to south and 80 metres east to west at its widest point. A further area of landscaped open space was to be provided between Mount Terrace and Whitechapel Road.
90. Unfortunately, these new spaces have not been delivered, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the conservation area. The former hospital building has been purchased by the council and planning permission has been granted to refurbish and extend it to form a new civic centre. There is an intention to provide a new civic square to the rear of the building. Buildings adjacent to the former church of St Augustine with St Philip have been demolished, but the landscaping works have yet to take place. The space is being used as a temporary garden. The space between Mount Terrace and Whitechapel Road is currently being used for car parking.

## 5.5. Public art

91. The bronze statue of Queen Alexandra was previously located in the area to the rear of the former Royal London Hospital building. As part of the redevelopment of the hospital complex, the statue was relocated to the area

opposite the south entrance of the new hospital building, just outside the conservation area.

## 5.6. Street trees

92. There are a number of large street trees along Whitechapel Road, these help to screen the Alexandra Wing of the former hospital and generally make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. ~~For example, there are rows of concrete bollards.~~

## 6.0 HERITAGE AUDIT

93. At the time of writing, the conservation area is identified by Historic England as being 'at risk', with its current condition considered to be 'very bad', (the worst of four ratings).
94. Much of the conservation area is in a poor state of repair, with many opportunities for the enhancement of the conservation area. In these areas a lack of investment, development within the setting, inappropriate alterations and the loss of historic features cumulatively threaten the special character and appearance of the conservation area. It is these same threats which, if addressed, offer the opportunity for significant enhancement.
95. The condition of the building fabric within the ~~London Hospital Conservation Area~~ [Former London Hospital Conservation Area](#) varies, but many buildings are in a poor state of repair with maintenance and repair works required, including redecoration and repointing. The building material is largely consistent, predominantly using yellow stock and red brick with some smaller areas of stucco, stone or glazed bricks. Timber windows prevail, with many historic timber sashes surviving along with some interwar Crittal windows. Most buildings immediately abut the pavement edge, but some of the historic houses have small front gardens or lightwells, for example on Philpot Street. The largely consistent material palette within the conservation area is an important aspect of its architectural and historic significance.

## **6.1. Lack of investment and inappropriate alterations**

96. Often a lack of investment can result in a gradual deterioration of the built fabric as maintenance is reduced and the cost of repairs minimised. The exteriors of historic buildings within the area feature rich materials and details which are a major part of its historic and architectural character, but which are vulnerable to neglect and poorly considered change. The opportunity exists to reverse this change with carefully considered investment, which retains the surviving historic fabric and builds upon it.
97. In several cases, original brick facades are in need of repointing or brickwork has been damaged by cleaning. There are also areas of graffiti.
98. Much of the public realm within this conservation area is in a poor state of repair, with a variety of surface treatments and very little consistency. Many pavements are covered in asphalt, as are all the road surfaces in the conservation area.

## **6.2. Loss of historic features**

99. Window frames are key historic features. The installation of inappropriate windows has detracted from the appearance of several buildings within the conservation area.
100. The appearance of some buildings has suffered from the removal of historic architectural features such as windows and railings. This has harmed the character and appearance of the conservation area. In some instances historic photographs or surviving historic features or precedents offer the opportunity for appropriate reinstatement.

## **6.3. External changes**

101. The appearance of some buildings has also suffered from incremental additions, often associated with their use as hospital buildings. Such features

include entrance canopies, signage, pipework and flues, which have often been added to help historic buildings meet the modern operational needs of the hospital. In many cases, features have been added with little consideration for the significance of the host building, disrupting elevations and obscuring historic features.

#### 6.4. Vacant/underused properties and sites

102. ~~As of early 2019~~At the time this document was adopted, a number of the historic hospital buildings within the conservation area are underused or largely vacant. This is a contributing factor to the neglect of building fabric.
103. There are a number of sites within the conservation area that appear vacant, such as the land to the rear of the former hospital building and the area to the east of the former church. These spaces were cleared with the intention of creating new open spaces but landscaping works have yet to take place.

#### 6.5. Development outside the conservation area boundary affecting its setting

104. To the immediate north and west, the conservation area is bounded by the Whitechapel Market and Myrdle Street conservation areas. These areas have a neutral impact on the setting of the conservation area. Although buildings do not all necessarily follow the scale, proportions or plot coverage of those within the conservation area, they are generally of a smaller scale than the larger hospital buildings within the conservation area and are mostly in keeping with the scale and appearance of the smaller, residential buildings within the conservation area
105. To the east of the conservation area there are a number of larger scale developments that do not contribute positively to its character. In particular, the new Royal London Hospital, which was developed inside what was once the conservation area boundary is a significant structure, formed of several large volumes reaching to around 100 metres in height. The conservation area

boundary has been amended to exclude the new hospital building and limit the harm to the conservation area itself, but it does cause significant harm to the setting of the conservation area. The Royal Mail building on Whitechapel Road also causes some degree of harm to the setting of the conservation area. [The appropriate redevelopment of this building offers the potential to preserve or enhance the setting of the conservation area.](#)

106. To the south the larger scale mid-late twentieth century housing blocks and hospital/ office buildings are not generally in keeping with the form or style of buildings within the conservation area, but do not generally have a detrimental impact on the setting of the conservation area. The exception to this is John Harrison House on Philpot Street, which causes some harm as a result of its scale, massing and appearance.

## 6.6. Public realm and open space

107. The absence of good quality open space is detrimental to the character of the conservation area. The area is the location of a ~~a~~-number of grand institutional buildings that would benefit from ~~from~~ more generous, well designed settings including green space. The area attracts a high number of visitors, including many thousands of visitors to the Royal London Hospital, who would benefit from the improved amenity the open spaces would provide.
108. There is a large area of underused public open space to the northern end of Philpot Street. This provides a welcome break in this densely built up area for local residents, hospital patients, staff and visitors and others visiting the area. It is, however, poorly maintained and would benefit from some soft landscaping improvements. The draft Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031 envisages the creation of a 'green spine' that connects Philpot Street to the rear [of](#) the new civic centre in the former hospital building. This linear space would help create a sense of place and increase recreational opportunities. It would also contribute to a legible, permeable and well-defined movement network with a direct visual link along its length.

109. Much of the public realm in the area is in a poor state of repair with various surface treatments to the road and pavements that are not sympathetic to the character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area. Many street surfaces in the area have been covered with asphalt, with cracks and patches of repair clearly visible. Brick paving is used for the public space on Philpot Street. Traditional granite ~~curbs~~kerbs, located throughout the conservation area, are an attractive feature
110. Surfaces throughout the conservation area need repair work and improvements in order to improve the area's appearance and quality. If any historic ~~setts~~cobbles survive and are covered over, they should be retained below any new surfacing.
111. Features within the public realm are generally very varied with very little consistency. There are a wide variety of bollard designs, much variation in signage, a range of cycle storage designs, varied railing designs and hoardings which, together with the inconsistent surface treatments, add to visual street clutter to streetscenes within the conservation area.

## 7.0 INTRODUCTION TO MANAGEMENT PLAN

### 7.1. Background

112. This Management Plan sets out the borough's commitment to high quality management of conservation areas and their settings. The Management Plan provides guidance to residents, businesses and other stakeholders about the special elements of the areas character and how these can be preserved ~~and~~or enhanced. The management plan also sets out the considerations that should be taken into account at the earliest possible stages of the design process and addressed as part of any planning application.
113. Conservation areas are as much about history, people, activities and places as they are about buildings and spaces. Preserving ~~and~~or enhancing the

borough's architectural and historic built heritage is of vital importance in understanding the past and allowing it to inform our present and future.

114. Conservation areas also promote sustainability, in its widest sense, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. The re-use of historic buildings and places is environmentally responsible, as it protects the energy and resources embodied in them and combats global warming. [Demolition and rebuilding of buildings can have a big impact on the environment and can result in a large amount of waste and associated air pollution.](#)
115. [paragraph deleted] ~~In reviewing this guidance, consideration has been given to the boundaries of the conservation area and they have been revised accordingly, as outlined in Appendix 1.~~
116. Recommendations for additions to the statutory list are considered by Historic England.

## 7.2. Policy and legislation

117. In conservation areas, planning controls are more extensive. Permitted development rights are more limited, and demolition and works to trees are controlled. [The Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990 places a duty on Tower Hamlets to designate Conservation Areas in "areas of special architectural or historic interest" and to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas. Section 72 of the Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990 which relates to planning functions within conservation areas, includes that 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.](#) You are strongly advised to contact the council to check if works you are proposing need permission.
118. Any new development should have regard to [relevant](#) national, regional and local planning policy, [including the following:](#)

- [The Planning \[Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\] Act \(1990\);](#)
- [the NPPF;](#)
- [the London Plan alongside the City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework; ~~including the City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework;~~](#)
- [the Tower Hamlets Local Plan;](#)
- [the Tower Hamlets Conservation Strategy;](#)
- [Historic England Guidance; and](#)
- [this character appraisal and management plan.](#)

Further information can be found on the council's website, on the government website and on the GLA website.

### **Statutorily listed buildings**

119. There are fourteen listed buildings of structures (entries) in the ~~London Hospital Conservation Area~~ [Former London Hospital Conservation Area](#). If a building is statutorily listed, any alterations to the property, either internally or externally, will require listed building consent from the council. Listed building consent is required for any works of demolition, alteration or extension to the building, which would affect its special architectural and historic interest. Works within the grounds or curtilage of a listed building can also require consent. Repairs to listed buildings may also require consent. It is always advisable to inform the council of any plans you might have to carry out repairs. Replacement of any historic fabric usually constitutes an alteration and therefore requires listed building consent.
120. The council has a duty of care to ensure owners and prospective owners of listed buildings are aware of the need for maintenance and repair of such buildings. Regular maintenance can prevent serious and expensive problems at a later date. If listed buildings are not maintained in good repair, then the council can step in to ensure that relevant repairs are carried out. In some circumstances, the council itself may undertake essential repairs and recover the cost from the owner. The council has powers of compulsory purchase in such circumstances.

### **Locally listed buildings**

121. [Local listing is a protection offered by the local authority to buildings it believes are of local significance. A heritage asset is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest, locally listed buildings are included within this designation. The effect of an application on a non-designated heritage asset is a material consideration when deciding planning applications, and local listing strengthens the case for retention of a historic building.](#) There is one group of locally listed buildings within the conservation area, ~~and further ones may be added in the future~~. Although locally listed buildings do not benefit from the statutory protection outlined previously, they have been recognised as being of local townscape importance. The council expects to see their retention and evidence that any proposed alterations enhance the building's character or appearance. Full justification for any redevelopment proposals will be sought, including convincing evidence that the building could not be retained. Economic reasons alone will not always justify redevelopment.

#### **Article 4 Directions**

122. Where evidence suggests that the exercise of permitted development would harm the special character of the conservation area, the council can serve an Article 4 Direction to withdraw specific classes of permitted development that would otherwise apply. It is important to note that an Article 4 Direction does not necessarily prevent the type of development to which it applies, but requires planning permission to be obtained for the specified types of development. There is no fee for planning applications required due to an Article 4 Direction. [There are currently three confirmed Article 4 Directions that affect the Former London Hospital Conservation Area. One removes the permitted development right for changes of use from offices \(B1\(a\) use class\) to residential \(C3 use class\). Another removes the permitted development right for changes of use from residential dwellings \(C3 use class\) to small houses in multiple occupation \(C4 use class\). The third removes the permitted development right for changes of use from shops \(A1 use class\), financial and professional services \(A2 use class\), betting offices or pay day loan shops \(including buildings where these uses are combined with residential\) to a residential dwelling \(C3 use class<sup>\[AH1\]</sup>\).](#)

123. For specific information on Article 4 Directions please see the General Permitted Development Order (1995) and 2010 amendment and accompanying Government Circular (available from the DCLG website), as well as the guidance provided in [Historic England's Advice Note 1 \(Second Edition\) 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management'](https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/heag-268-conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management/) which was published in February 2019 (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/heag-268-conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management/>)

~~123. Historic England Advice Note 1 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' published in February 2016 (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-designation-appraisal-management-advice-note-1/>).~~

### **Archaeological investigations**

124. Any new development that lies within the Archaeological Priority Area will be required to include an Archaeological Evaluation Report and will require any nationally important remains to be preserved permanently at the site, subject to consultation with Historic England.

### **Trees in conservation areas**

125. [A Tree Preservation Order \(TPO\) is an order made by the council to protect specific trees or groups of trees in the interests of amenity. A TPO prohibits the cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting or wilful damage of a protected tree without permission and is a designation which is applied selectively. Whilst some trees in a conservation area may be protected by a TPO all trees in a conservation area are protected by the provisions of section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These provisions require owners to notify the council if works to trees are proposed. To do this a works to trees application form should be completed. The application must describe the works proposed and include sufficient particulars to identify the tree or trees which are the subject of works. Only one section 211 notice is need to carry out a number of different operations. Notification should be made at least six weeks before the works commence to allow the council sufficient time to assess whether the](#)

[works are acceptable or not. If the works are not supported and modified proposals can not be agreed then the trees must be protected by the council serving a TPO. The application for works to trees can be found here.](#)

126. [paragraph deleted] ~~All trees in conservation areas are protected by the provisions in section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These provisions require people to notify the council, by use of an application for works to trees. A section 211 notice should be served at least six weeks before carrying out works to trees, including topping, lopping and felling. This notice period gives the council the opportunity to consider whether to make a TPO (see below). A section 211 notice must describe the work proposed and include sufficient particulars to identify the tree or trees. Where a number of trees or operations are involved, it should make clear what work is proposed to which tree. A notice must include the date it is submitted. Only one section 211 notice is needed to carry out a number of different operations on the same tree or to carry out work on a number of trees. The application for works to trees can be found here.~~

127. [paragraph deleted] ~~There are many trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO), these are spread across the conservation area. A TPO is an order made by the council to protect specific trees, or groups of trees in the interests of amenity. A TPO prohibits the:~~

- ~~\*—cutting down~~
- ~~\*—topping~~
- ~~\*—lopping~~
- ~~\*—uprooting~~
- ~~\*—wilful damage~~
- ~~\*—wilful destruction~~

~~of trees without the local planning authority's written consent. If consent is given, it can be subject to conditions which must be followed.~~

128. [paragraph deleted] ~~More information can be found on the Tower Hamlets website: here.~~

~~[https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ignl/planning\\_and\\_building\\_control/conservation\\_and\\_urban\\_design/tree\\_management.aspx](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/ignl/planning_and_building_control/conservation_and_urban_design/tree_management.aspx)~~

129. Carrying out works to trees without the necessary approval can be a criminal offence, and the council welcomes early requests for advice.

### 7.3. Outline guidance for applications

130. When planning applications in a conservation area are decided, the council as the local planning authority will pay special attention to whether the character of the area is preserved or enhanced by the proposal. The special character of the ~~London Hospital Conservation Area~~[Former London Hospital Conservation Area](#) is described in detail in the Appraisal in the first part of this document.

131. In the ~~London Hospital Conservation Area~~[Former London Hospital Conservation Area](#), as in other conservation areas, planning controls are more extensive than normal. Before carrying out any work in this area, you may need to apply for consent even for minor work such as replacing railings. These consents include planning and listed building consent, as well as others for work such as felling trees. Planning permission is required to demolish any building bigger than 115m<sup>3</sup>, and a higher standard of detail and information is required for any application. When applying for listed building consent, please note that all parts of the building, including its interior walls, ceilings and all other internal features, are protected. Some buildings are nationally (statutorily) listed, and some are locally listed by the borough. Locally listed buildings are those of townscape value which the borough wishes to protect. The exact information required will vary with each application, but in general applications must include:

- A clear Design and Access Statement explaining the reasons behind the various architectural, masterplanning or other design decisions.

- A Heritage Statement where the impacts of the application on the [setting significance](#) of heritage assets or the impacts of demolition within the conservation area are set out.
  - Contextual plans, sections and elevations of existing buildings (at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100).
  - Drawings of proposed works, including construction details, produced at larger scale (e.g. 1:[5200](#) or 1:[210](#)) clearly indicating the nature of the work proposed.
  - Existing and proposed townscape views where relevant.
  - Additional detail regarding materials and construction.
  - Photos of the condition of existing building (including details where appropriate).
132. More details are available on the Tower Hamlets website where a validation list can be found. If in any doubt, the council welcomes and encourages early requests for advice or information. More information is available on pre-application advice on the council's website. When alterations are proposed to listed buildings, complying with the building regulations can be particularly complex, and early consideration of building control issues can help identify potential problems early in the process.

#### 7.4. Resources needed to conserve the historic environment

133. The most effective way to secure the historic environment is to ensure that buildings can continue to contribute to the life of the local community, preferably funding their own maintenance and refurbishment. Commercial value can be generated directly from the building, through its use as a dwelling or office, or through its role in increasing the attractiveness of the area to tourists and visitors. However, it should be noted that economic reasons alone will not in themselves justify the demolition or alteration of a building in a conservation area. The council will consider grant aid to historic buildings and places, but grant funding, [even](#) for cases that meet [the](#) defined criteria, is extremely limited.

## 8.0 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

## 8.1. General approach

134. Development in the conservation area should enhance the unique characteristics of the ~~London Hospital Conservation Area~~[Former London Hospital Conservation Area](#), reinforcing its distinctive identity and contributing to its historic sense of place. New buildings should be of a high design standard, reflecting the scale and variation typical of the historic townscape. Individual buildings should display their own identity within the historically-set parameters (scale, grain, building line). These parameters are responsible for the creation of a coherent streetscape and locally distinctive character derived from an otherwise diverse collection of different designs, styles and materials. Retention and restoration of existing buildings which contribute to the character of the area provides the foundation for the area's redevelopment. The council encourages the sympathetic re-use of existing buildings in conservation areas. [Where development has harmed a conservation area it is possible, under certain circumstances, that further development may help to mitigate this harm.](#)

## 8.2. Demolition

### Demolition of buildings within the conservation area

135. [Although](#) the ~~London Hospital Conservation Area~~[Former London Hospital Conservation Area](#) has [undergone some change, it has](#) a well-established and distinguished character distinctive from its surroundings in terms of its grain and scale. The council will resist [unjustified](#) demolition ~~as this would be considered to constitute substantial harm to the conservation area~~ [where this is considered to be harmful to the special character or appearance of the conservation area.](#) Any applications including demolition will be assessed in line with national, regional and local policy and guidance including the National Planning Policy Framework.
136. ~~The conservation area has lost~~ A substantial amount of historic fabric [has been lost](#) as a result of the development of the new Royal London Hospital [and the boundary has been revised to reflect this.](#) The buildings that remain are,

however, integral to the significance of the conservation area designation, particularly those which are associated with the hospital, such as the former hospital building, former outpatients department ~~and annex~~, the Garrod building, the Ambrose King Centre and the former church. The loss of one or more of these buildings would mean the loss of historic fabric that is integral to the significance of the conservation area, and would call into question the justification for its continued designation.

137. Planning permission is required for demolition or substantial demolition of all buildings or structures larger than 115m<sup>3</sup> in conservation areas. What constitutes substantial demolition is considered on a ~~case-by-case~~ case-by-case basis by the Local Planning Authority. Where a building is statutorily listed, listed building consent will be required.
138. Where corner buildings are threatened with demolition this can cause a wider threat to the terrace as a whole, this will be resisted. ~~Similarly~~ The demolition and replacement of a central building forming part of a small terrace will also be resisted ~~where a central building is threatened with demolition and replacement will be resisted~~ as this can result in further proposals and cumulative impacts.
139. If demolition work occurs without the necessary consent the council is likely to pursue planning enforcement action that may result in prosecution and a substantial fine. The demolished structure may be required to be rebuilt. It should be noted that the council will not normally grant planning permission for demolition without relevant permissions having been obtained for an acceptable scheme for the redevelopment of the site.
140. With regard to vacant sites, or those in poor condition, it should not be assumed that any development is automatically better than the current situation.

## **Partial demolition**

141. In most cases, the council would expect to see buildings retained but in some exceptional cases it may only be possible to retain a building in part; either by retaining elements of a building or through façade retention. Partial demolition will only be considered acceptable when it can be demonstrated ~~how~~that the proposed demolition can be carried out without unacceptable risk to the parts of the building to be retained and that any new development integrates with and respects the remaining historic fabric. This should be outlined as part of a Heritage Statement. A report of any structural implications ~~may~~will also need to be submitted. In many cases it may be possible to salvage and re-use elements of the historic fabric for example bricks, slates or window frames or external features. Any partial rebuilding will require materials to match and will be controlled by condition. It may be necessary to record the existing building prior to alteration.

### **Demolition of buildings adjacent to the conservation area**

142. Demolition of unlisted buildings outside a conservation area does not always require planning permission. However, proposals to demolish and re-develop sites adjacent to a conservation area boundary should preserve, and where possible enhance, the setting of the conservation area ~~to ensure that the~~ significance of the conservation area is not harmed.

### **8.3. New development**

143. New developments should respect the fine grain character and straightforward legibility of the historic street pattern. Any replacement buildings should preserve ~~and~~or enhance the character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area and ensure that its significance is not harmed. Any new development on potential infill sites (as highlighted in ~~the~~ section 6.0 of the Appraisal) should sit comfortably with the existing character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area.

144. Where existing buildings have a negative impact on the character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area, it may be possible to alter the exterior of the building so that it enhances the character ~~and~~or appearance of the area.

The council would only encourage replacement of these buildings if the replacement is of high quality and has a positive impact on the character ~~and~~ or appearance of the conservation area.

145. All new developments should be sympathetic to the character ~~and~~ or appearance of the conservation area in terms of scale, materials and design. The overall quality of architectural detailing will be key to producing a successful scheme which builds on the qualities already present within the area. In order to ensure necessary architectural quality, detailed design should be explored and agreed early in the planning process. The quality of external materials will also be key to producing a successful scheme.

#### 8.4. Property conversion

146. The permitted development rights for this area of the borough have been removed in relation to the conversion of offices (Use Class B1(a)) to residential (Use Class C3). Where property conversion or change of use is permissible, external changes are likely to require planning permission. Any external changes should ~~seek to establish a better relationship~~ relate well ~~with~~ to the public realm, should respect the character of the host building and should be in keeping with the character ~~and~~ or appearance of the conservation area.

#### 8.5. Extensions and alterations

147. A number of historic buildings in the conservation area were designed to meet specific operational requirements of the hospital. As the practice ~~e~~ of medicine evolved, so did these operational requirements meaning that older buildings are no longer ideally suited to ongoing medical use. Nonetheless, historic buildings associated with the hospital are integral to the significance of the conservation area and are an important part of the history of the East End. As such, the council will strongly support appropriate proposals to bring these buildings back into active use.

148. The council will take a flexible approach to the consideration of extension and alteration of former hospital and current institutional buildings where this would not result in undue harm to ~~their~~ any significance they may have or the significance of the conservation area, and would ensure the long-term survival of these important conservation area buildings.

### **Roof extensions**

149. The impact of any roof extensions on the public realm and views from within the conservation area should be carefully considered in order to ensure the character ~~and~~ or appearance of the conservation area is preserved ~~and~~ or enhanced.

### **Rear extensions**

150. The visibility of proposed rear extensions from the public realm must also be carefully considered to ensure that, not only the impact on the host building, but also on the wider conservation area, is acceptable and preserves ~~and~~ or enhances the character ~~and~~ or appearance of the conservation area.

### **External alterations**

151. Where external alterations are proposed to existing buildings, these must seek to preserve ~~and~~ or enhance the character ~~and~~ or appearance of the conservation area. Piecemeal alterations can be harmful to the special architectural and historic character of a building. Any alterations to historic fabric should be on a like-for-like basis in terms of materials and design. Where inappropriate or unsympathetic alterations have occurred in the past, these should be rectified in accordance with the historic materials and appearance. In cases where the alterations are ~~not proposed to an historic building~~ to a building which is not historic, the design and materials used should be in keeping with the character of the conservation area. Any external alterations to individual buildings will have an impact on the wider conservation area and so must be considered within the wider context.

## **8.6. Energy efficiency improvements**

## Window replacement and alteration

152. Window replacement and alterations to existing windows are often successful ways of improving the energy efficiency of a building. A careful study of the existing building should be carried out in order to identify the original window design and materials. This should form a good template for the kind of windows that will be acceptable in terms of materials, design, glazing bar details, window opening patterns and type of glass. In most cases historic or original windows should be retained and repaired, draught proofing added and if necessary internal secondary glazing installed. Where it is acceptable to replace the existing windows with double glazing care must be taken to ensure that the double glazing is of an appropriate design, that it is possible to replicate the dimensions and opening arrangements of the existing historic windows, that the double glazing is of a slim profile and that spacer bars are white and are unperforated, rather than perforated metal. Top-hung or outward opening windows will not be supported on historic buildings, unless this reflects the original glazing pattern.
153. It may be necessary to apply for planning permission to fit new windows (such as double-glazing) in a flat or maisonette. Planning permission will not be required to add internal secondary glazing. It is also unlikely to be necessary where you are fitting windows which are identical to those which are being removed i.e. (like ~~for~~-like replacements). However, if the new windows differ in appearance or size to those you are replacing (for instance, different glazing patterns or opening methods) you may need to apply for planning permission. The detailed design, materials, dimensions, glazing bar pattern, glazing thickness, and opening methods are all important considerations when new or replacement windows are proposed.
154. The replacement of historic windows to listed buildings will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that they are beyond reasonable repair. If this can be demonstrated, then any replacement of windows should be on a like-for-like basis, matching the original design exactly. This will require listed building consent and, if any changes are proposed in terms of design, materials or thickness, planning permission may also be required. Energy efficiency can

be improved through draught proofing windows or through the installation of internal secondary glazing. These works will not require listed building consent, unless they obscure important historic features or cause harm to the historic fabric.

### **Cladding, rendering or painting of external walls**

155. The Council will seek the retention or reinstatement of original façade treatments of buildings which contribute positively to the special character ~~and~~ or appearance of the conservation area. Unless it can be demonstrated that existing exposed brickwork had originally been rendered or painted, the rendering or painting over of brickwork will not be supported.
156. External insulation through rendering or other methods will not be supported. Any additional insulation should be installed internally where appropriate so as not to inappropriately alter the external appearance of the building. In a listed building, internal insulation would need listed building consent. In most cases it is unlikely to be acceptable.

### **8.7. Other external changes**

157. The Council will seek to reduce street clutter and will therefore not support ~~the~~ unnecessary additions ~~extraneous features~~ to building frontages or elevations that front the street. Items such as, but not limited to, satellite dishes, antennae, flags and banners will not be supported. Grilles and louvres to the front of new or existing buildings are also unlikely to be supported. These should be placed on rear or side elevations if required and carefully designed so that they are incorporated into the overall building design.
158. ~~As noted in section 6.3 above, the presence of numerous extraneous features is considered to be a threat to the significance of the conservation area.~~ The council welcomes the removal of unwanted and unnecessary clutter ~~features~~ from the exterior of buildings within the conservation area ~~buildings~~. Development proposals that involve the re-use and/or conversion of existing buildings will be expected to address this issue where appropriate.

## 8.8. Public realm improvements

159. Where there are historic surface finishes such as ~~cobbles~~cobblestones, setts or paving, the council will seek their retention, as these form an important part of the character of the conservation area. Any major investment in buildings should also include public realm improvements where appropriate. New schemes should aim to retain historic surfaces and any new surfaces should be sympathetic to the conservation area. Junctions between different surface treatments should also be carefully considered.
160. The quality of the streetscape, the surface materials, street furniture and other features can all form an integral part of the character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area. Any work carried out should respect this historic character, using natural materials and colours that are in keeping with the character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area. For works to Whitechapel Road, ~~;~~  
Transport for London's [TfL]'s Streetscape Guidance should be consulted. On narrow side streets, setts and cobblestones should be reinstated where possible and, ~~;~~ historic kerb stones retained. Any paving works should be sympathetic to the historic character of the conservation area. Larger rectangular paving slabs ideally in natural stone or high quality composite stone, are more sympathetic to the character of the conservation area than smaller modular paving. Each case will be assessed on its own merits.
161. In addition to the TfL guidance, for developments which impact on public spaces, the council's Street Design Guide and Historic England's Streets for All: London document should be referred to. An important aim should be to reduce street clutter, such as obsolete signage and modern phone boxes.
162. ~~The open space located toward the end of the norther part of Philpot Street is an important amenity for the area and contributes positively to the setting of the surrounding historic buildings. It is important that this space is properly maintained, it would also benefit from some landscaping improvements. Other open spaces that were planned as part of the redevelopment of the Royal~~

~~London Hospital, but have not been delivered, should also be landscaped to provide important amenity for the area and to contribute positively to the setting of the surrounding historic buildings. In particular, the space to the east of the former Church of St Augustine with St Philip will make an important contribution to the setting of the Grade II\* listed building, allowing clear views of its fine architecture and is an important part of the green spine that links Philpot Street to the rear of the new civic centre. Likewise, the public square at the rear of the new civic centre would provide an important point of arrival at the northern end of the green spine and provide an appropriate setting for this institutional building. The design and management of these spaces should be of a suitably high standard to reflect their importance to the significance of the conservation area.~~

163. The open space located towards the northern part of Philpot Street is an important amenity for the area and contributes positively to the setting of the surrounding historic buildings. It is important that this space is properly maintained, it would also benefit from some landscaping improvements. Other open spaces that were planned as part of the redevelopment of the Royal London Hospital, but have not been delivered, should also be landscaped to provide important amenity for the area and to contribute positively to the setting of the surrounding historic buildings. In particular, the space to the east of the former Church of St Augustine with St Philip will make an important contribution to the setting of the Grade II\* listed building. This important contribution was recognised and provided justification for the loss of listed nurse's quarter buildings at the time of the redevelopment of the Royal London, not only in providing valuable and much needed new open space to serve the hospital and the area more generally but specifically for allowing clear unimpeded views of the church's fine architecture. This space is an important part of the green spine that links Philpot Street to the rear of the new civic centre. Likewise, the public square at the rear of the new civic centre would provide an important point of arrival at the northern end of the green spine and provide an appropriate setting for this institutional building. The design and management of these spaces should be of a suitably high standard to reflect their importance to the significance of the conservation area.

164. All trees in conservation areas are protected, and some trees are also covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Additional information on trees can be found in the Policy and Legislation section of this document and on the council website.

## 8.9 Signage

165. [The richness](#) in the variety of details to shopfronts and buildings is integral to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Existing timber fascias, pilasters and corbels should be retained or restored where they have been lost. In cases where shopfront corbels do not survive, careful study should be made of adjacent shops to see if any appropriate examples remain – these should form the template for re-instatement.
166. It should be noted that a standard corporate approach to signage may not be considered appropriate due to ~~the~~ size, colour ~~and~~[or](#) illumination. As such, proposed designs and/or materials may have to be amended to suit the historic context. Any hanging or projecting signs should be well designed, bespoke timber hanging signs of an appropriate size for the shopfront or building. Traditional materials should be used and plastic signage will not be supported. No upper level signage, projecting signs or banners will be supported.
167. Hand painted timber fascia signs or fascias with individually applied lettering are encouraged throughout the conservation area. Internally illuminated plastic fascia signs are not appropriate and will not be supported.

## 8.9. Vacant sites and hoardings

168. Vacant sites must be carefully managed to ensure that they cause minimal harm to the conservation area. These sites must be maintained and should not be allowed to fall ~~in to~~[into](#) disrepair. Where hoardings are used around vacant sites or on sites that are currently undergoing building works, these must be consistent in terms of height, materials and appearance. Hoardings should be

maintained in a good state of repair so as to not detract from the character ~~and~~ or appearance of the conservation area. Where possible, hoardings should be used positively to inform the public of the history of the site or wider area.

## 8.10. Development affecting the setting of the conservation area

169. The setting of the conservation area has been harmed, to some degree, by the introduction of buildings of a significantly greater scale, most notably the new Royal London Hospital building. However, much of the conservation area's setting remains at a relatively modest scale and the presence of nearby tall buildings does not automatically justify further development at this scale.
170. It is important that development proposals on the edge of the conservation area and in surrounding areas include a fully detailed assessment of any impact on the historic significance of the conservation area.
171. To enable the council to assess relevant applications, the council will expect applicants:
- to identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected by a proposal;
  - assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
  - assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance of the heritage assets; and
  - demonstrate that they have explored ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

## 9.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

### 9.1. Ongoing management and monitoring change

172. The council recognises the contribution of the local community in managing conservation areas, and will welcome proposals to work collaboratively to

monitor and manage change in the area. Public meetings will be held to maintain communications between all stakeholders and identify new opportunities and threats to the conservation area as they arise.

173. In addition, the borough's Annual Monitoring Report, prepared with the new Local ~~Development—Framework~~[Plan](#), will assess progress on the implementation of the whole Local Development Scheme, including policies relevant to conservation.

## 9.2. Enforcement strategy

174. Appropriate enforcement, with the support of the community, is essential to protect the area's character. The council will take prompt action against those who carry out unauthorised works to listed buildings, or substantial or complete demolition of buildings within a conservation area. Unauthorised work to a listed building is a criminal offence and could result in a fine and/or imprisonment. Likewise, unauthorised substantial or complete demolition of a building within a conservation area is illegal. It is therefore essential to obtain planning permission and/or listed building consent before works begin.
175. An enforcement notice, served by the council may require works to rectify unauthorised alterations. This notice is entered on the Local Land Charges records which could make the future sale or financing of the property more difficult.
176. If listed buildings are not maintained in good repair, then the council can step in to ensure that relevant repairs are carried out. In some circumstances, the council itself may undertake essential repairs and recover the cost from the owner. The council has powers of compulsory purchase, if necessary to protect listed buildings.
177. The council will enforce conservation law wherever necessary, and will consider the introduction of Article 4 Directions to remove permitted development rights where appropriate.

## 10.0 USEFUL CONTACTS AND REFERENCES

The council encourages and welcomes discussions with the community about the historic environment and the contents of this document. Further guidance on all aspects of this document can be obtained on our website at [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk) or by contacting:

- Tel: 020 7364 5009
- Email: [planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

This document is also available in libraries, council offices and Idea Stores in the borough. For a translation, or large print, audio or braille version of this document, please telephone 0800 376 5454. Also, if you require any further help with this document, please telephone 020 7364 5372. Also, you may wish to contact the following organisations for further information:

- Historic England <https://www.historicengland.org.uk>
- The Georgian Group [www.georgiangroup.org.uk](http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk)
- Victorian Society [www.victorian-society.org.uk](http://www.victorian-society.org.uk)
- 20th Century Society [www.c20society.org.uk](http://www.c20society.org.uk)
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)
- East London Postcards [www.eastlondonpostcard.co.uk](http://www.eastlondonpostcard.co.uk)

WHITECHAPEL HIGH STREET CONSERVATION AREA

# WHITECHAPEL HIGH STREET CONSERVATION AREA

## Character appraisal and management plan

October 2021

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## PREFACE

### What is a conservation area?

1. Conservation areas are parts of our local environment with special architectural or historic qualities. They are created by the council, in consultation with the local community, to ensure that change preserves ~~or~~ and enhances the specific character of these areas for everybody.
2. The special character of these areas does not come only from the quality of their individual buildings, but from the value of these buildings as a group and from their setting. Elements such as the historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries and characteristic building and paving materials all contribute to the familiar and cherished local scene.

### What is the purpose of this document?

3. This document has been prepared to comply with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Section 69(1) which states that a conservation area is “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan provides a detailed description of the area’s architectural and historic character and management guidelines on how this character should be preserved ~~or~~ and enhanced in the context of appropriate ongoing change.
4. This document has also been prepared to support relevant strategic objectives contained within the council’s Conservation Strategy 2017 – 2027 including objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 2.6

### Who is this document for?

5. This is an inclusive document which is intended to engage with many different people and organisations. It will depend on the support of the community to achieve its objectives.
6. The character appraisal and management plan is aimed primarily at the residents, businesses, developers and others living and working in the area. The document has also been prepared to align conservation objectives within different parts of the council, to help to meet the objectives of the Conservation Strategy and to provide a single point of reference for the management of the area. It represents our shared commitment to conserve the special architectural and historic character, and to help manage change constructively.

### What is the status of this document?

7. This ~~Conservation Area character~~ appraisal and management plan has the status of ~~a Supplementary Planning Document~~[planning guidance](#). [It replaces the previous character appraisal and management guidelines, adopted in 2007.](#) It should be read in conjunction with Tower Hamlet's Local Plan and the London Plan. All planning applications for sites within the Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area should be informed by this document. It is a material consideration when planning applications affecting the conservation area are assessed.

### Equality and diversity

8. Valuing diversity is one of the council's core values, and we take pride in being one of the most culturally rich and diverse boroughs in the UK. This core value has informed the preparation of this document and will continue to inform changes to this document in the future. These values will also inform changes to buildings and places and as such this document provides guidance to ensure inclusivity for all members of the community.
9. This character appraisal and management plan will support the council's aims set out below:

- Creation of a strong spirit of community and good race relations in Tower Hamlets.
- The removal of prejudice, discrimination and victimisation within the communities we serve and our workforce.
- To ensure that the Borough's communities and our workforce are not discriminated against or bullied for any reason, including reasons associated with their gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religious belief.

10. Please contact us if you feel that this document could do more to promote equality and further the interests of the whole community.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

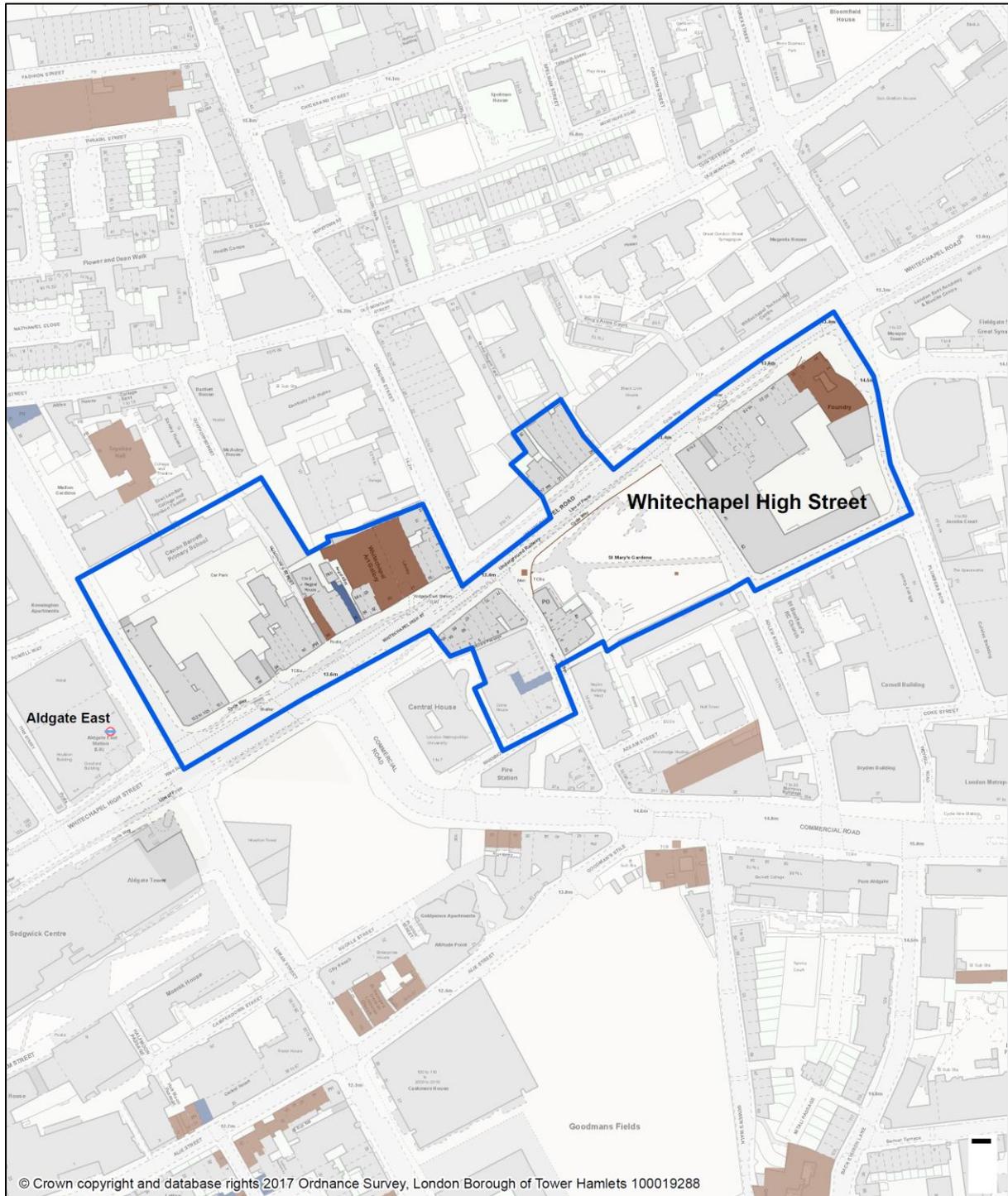
1. The Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area was designated in September 1998. The boundary was amended in ~~2018~~[2021](#), with two small areas added and one area removed. ~~Full details of the recent alterations to the conservation area boundary as well as a map are included in Appendix 1.~~
2. The Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area marks the western end of the A11, an ancient route linking the City with Essex and Continental Europe via Harwich. The new parish of Whitechapel, originally part of Stepney, developed as a suburb of London around this ancient route, taking its name from the whitewashed walls of the 13th century chapel (the parish church of St Mary). The form and variety of the properties fronting Whitechapel High Street reflect the street's consistently intensive use throughout the Borough's history.
3. This is an area of particular special architectural and historic interest, illustrated by its rich history and significant architecture, dating from as long ago as the 16th century and including much of interest from the 19th century and early 20th century.
4. The character and appearance of the area, as described in the appraisal in the first part of the document, define its special qualities. The second part of the

document, the Management Plan, contains relevant policy and guidance as well as development guidelines intended to ensure that future change is sensitive to the area's special character

### 1.1. Location and setting

5. The Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area is located in the north-eastern section of Aldgate, in the west of the Borough.
6. The boundaries of the conservation area follow the historic footprints of buildings set on long, narrow plots, some amalgamated in twos and threes, but always presenting a narrow street frontage in relation to their depth. The area contains individually significant buildings and, collectively, the surviving pre-war townscape is of historic and architectural importance, worthy of preservation and enhancement.
7. The setting of the Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area, and especially the areas surrounding it to the south, east and west, contrast in scale and architectural articulation with the development within the conservation area. Aldgate Place, the new mixed use development in and around the south western corner of the conservation area, dominates the eastern edge of the Commercial Road / Whitechapel High Street intersection. Central House (outside the boundary of the conservation area) provides a transition in scale between the very large scale City development to the west and the more intimate historic scale of the buildings lining Whitechapel High Street.

# WHITECHAPEL HIGH STREET CONSERVATION AREA



## WHITECHAPEL HIGH STREET CONSERVATION AREA

-  Conservation Area
-  Statutory Listed Buildings
-  Locally Listed Buildings

## 2.0 HISTORIC CONTEXT

### 2.1. Evolution of the area

8. ~~The old Roman Road to Colchester left the city walls at Aldgate, one of the historic gateways into the City of London. In the medieval period, when it was known as 'Alegatestrete', the road was moved to its present-day alignment, following the building of Bow Bridge (several miles to the east) in 1110.~~ Whitechapel High Street and Whitechapel Road are probably on the same route as part of the old Roman road from Aldgate to Colchester. In the medieval period, Whitechapel High Street was known as 'Algatestrete'. From the eastern end of Whitechapel Road, the Roman road probably ran in a north-north-easterly direction to cross the River Lea by the ford at Old Ford. Following the building of Bow Bridge across the River Lea at Stratford, the old Roman road (from the eastern end of Whitechapel Road to Old Ford) was replaced by what is now Mile End Road and Bow Road as the main ~~amin~~ section of the main road from the City of London to Essex. Archaeological evidence has revealed that a thriving suburb had been established by the end of the Saxon Period and continued to grow as ribbon development along the north side of the highway, catering for travellers and accommodating the 'nuisance' trades which had been refused permission in the congested City. Fields to the south of the road were quarried during the 13th century and 14th century for gravel and brickearth and used by local industries for making pots and casting bells. At the same time, green areas to the east were rapidly covered by streets and housing. The village or suburb of Whitechapel expanded to the point where it required its own chapel.
9. Constructed in 1250-1286, the first chapel of ease to St Dunstan of Stepney, built of clunch or white chalk rubble, gave Whitechapel its name. Rebuilt in the 14th century as St Mary Matfelon to accommodate the steadily growing population, it became the parish church of St Mary Whitechapel when the area became a separate parish in 1338.
10. Fuelled by the river trade, the suburbs of Whitechapel, Spitalfields, Wapping, Ratcliffe and Limehouse were largely built up by the end of the 1500s. By the 17th century, Whitechapel High Street was lined with coaching inns and the

impressive houses of rich merchants. The courtyards of many coaching inns still survive today, for example Green Dragon Yard, Angel Alley and Gunthorpe Street which are all located on the north side of Whitechapel High Street/ Road. Gunthorpe Street was formerly known as George Yard, but was eventually renamed in October 1912 after John Gunthorpe, a former rector of St Mary's Whitechapel.

11. The increasing size and affluence of the City drew people from Essex, Suffolk and beyond. However, the sudden increase in number of those moving to London from these areas resulted in properties being subdivided and becoming overcrowded. This marked the first emergence of the East End slums. Ogilvy and Morgan's map recorded by 1677 that the area was densely developed with long narrow yards leading off 'White Chapel' which was very wide and dominated the area. Several of the yards remain and the legacy of elongated, narrow plots survives as a characteristic of the conservation area. The church of St Mary Whitechapel was rebuilt again in 1672-3 in a form which reflected evolving forms of worship and changing architectural fashions. The new church re-used some of the old foundations and the lower parts of the tower.
12. The construction of the enclosed docks in the 19th century meant that new roads were necessary to handle massively increased traffic through the area, by-passing the narrow streets of the congested City. Commercial Road was created in 1802-4 in an effort to link the docks and the City but its westernmost section (within the conservation area) was not completed until 1865 thus linking it directly with Commercial Street, to the north which had been laid out by 1845.
13. An important new junction, Whitechapel High Street, Commercial Street, Drum Street/ Commercial Road and Leman Street had thus been created. Whitechapel High Street and Commercial Road/Drum Street marked the start of the two most important thoroughfares in the East End and thus the junction became the effective gateway to the area.
14. The links with the docks encouraged the establishment of new industries within the area. By 1864 Whitechapel (and East Smithfield) had become home to the capital's sugar refineries, employing German migrants and processing the raw

material imported through the West India Docks. The refineries survived in Whitechapel until the 1870s when the business went into decline, making way for warehousing after the construction of railway links to the docks.

15. The Victorian East End accommodated a range of industries and crafts which needed to be close to the City. The location of industrial sites in amongst commercial and residential uses was a characteristic of the area, which helped to set it apart from the City. Industries were as likely to be home based or located within small workshops as they were within larger purpose-built factories. Some continued the traditions of earlier centuries – many of London’s arms makers, for example, kept workshops in Whitechapel to be close to the armouries of the Tower of London and the Proof House of the Gunmaker’s Co.
16. Other industries, including tobacco, brewing and engineering were also located in the area. The silk-weaving industry, in decline since the late 18th century, evolved into a massive clothing industry employing large numbers of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe in the 1870s. Overcrowded slums housed the working class in appalling conditions and Whitechapel became synonymous with poverty and destitution. The back streets were a maze of disreputable yards and courts, forming the backdrop to the infamous Whitechapel murders. The obvious deprivation within the area, meant that eventually it became the focus for Victorian philanthropic endeavour, galvanised by Samuel Barnett of St Jude’s Whitechapel [who founded](#), ~~and founder of~~ Toynbee Hall (just to the north of the conservation area boundary), an organisation which acted as a catalyst for social reform and [also](#) the Whitechapel Art Gallery.
17. In 1875-78 the Church of St Mary Whitechapel was rebuilt and yet again in 1880 after it suffered serious fire damage. The church had a commanding tower and spire located hard against the pavement on the southern edge of the street.
18. From 1870 until 1972, the acute angle formed by the junction of Whitechapel High Street and Commercial Road (Drum Street) was dominated by Gardener’s department store, an impressive building with a clock tower. This major road junction, which was often called ‘Gardener’s Corner’, became a focus for commercial activity. The late 19th century and early 20th century saw rebuilding

of some older properties, reflecting the continuing commercial importance of the area's major thoroughfares, such as the impressive No.102 – 105 Whitechapel High Street and No.2 Commercial Street (at the junction of Whitechapel High Street and Commercial Street) for T Venables and Son (Drapers and Furnishers). Early 20th century photographs recall a very busy, urban junction with trams threading through heavy horse traffic.

19. The area around Whitechapel suffered much bomb damage during the Second World War. The chief loss within the conservation area was the Victorian church of St Mary of Whitechapel, which was largely destroyed by air raids in 1940 and completely demolished some time later. By the mid 20th century the character of the area was beginning to change. As the area was designated for commercial use, post-war redevelopment had a lower priority than the much more urgent need for new housing further east.
  
20. In the 1970s, the area became predominantly Bangladeshi, with people moving to the area seeking work. The Bangladeshi community make up over half the ward's population and [make a major contribution to the area's very rich and distinctive character.](#)~~contribute to the existing character of this area.~~
  
21. In the early 1970s Gardener's store was destroyed by fire and in 1976 'Gardener's Corner' was replaced by a traffic gyratory system which severely compromised pedestrian movement through the area, creating a poorly defined, illegible, car-dominated environment. The later 20th century was a period of relative decline. The area's role as a shopping centre was very much reduced and the condition of many older buildings noticeably deteriorated making the area less attractive. As part of efforts to improve the area, the damaging gyratory was removed several years ago and the street layout simplified in a pattern which reduced the previous vehicular dominance and better connected the historic thoroughfares.
  
22. In the early years of the 21st century, the conservation area, situated next to Spitalfields and the City started to benefit from substantial increased investment. Recent years have seen an increase in the amount of residential development within former commercial areas such as this and the area is now viewed, once

again, as a highly desirable area for retail premises. Despite the level of change and reconstruction, much older fabric remains and it is this which informs the special character of the area. The information and guidance provided in this document is intended to ensure that change is sensitive to that special character.

## 2.2 Historic and architectural buildings of significance

23. ~~All~~ The majority of buildings within the conservation area positively contribute to its special character and appearance.
24. There are a number of listed buildings within the Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area. Relevant Historic England list descriptions are available at <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>

### Grade II\* Listed Buildings

#### Whitechapel Art Gallery, Whitechapel High Street

25. Built in 1897–99, The Whitechapel Art Gallery opened to the public as the East End Art Gallery in 1901, founded by the social reformer and missionary Canon Samuel Augustus Barnett and his wife Henrietta. The gallery was designed by Arts and Crafts architect Charles Harrison Townsend who also designed the nearby Bishopsgate Institute in the City. The Art Gallery is one the few examples of Art Nouveau architecture in London. The rendered panel, between the turrets on the front elevation was originally intended to support a mosaic by Walter Crane, but this was never executed, the space intended for the mosaic is now occupied by an artwork by Rachel Whiteread which was fixed to the upper part of the gallery façade as part of the London 2012 Festival. The artwork chiefly consists of gold leaf covered, bronze leaves (cast from the architectural details of the front façade).

#### Church Bell Foundry, Nos. 32-34 Whitechapel Road (railings and gate to no. 32)

26. The Whitechapel Bell Foundry, established in 1570, was reputed to be the oldest manufacturing company in the UK, and had been casting bells in Whitechapel for over 400 years before its recent relocation to Dartford. Some of the more

notable of these bells included Big Ben, Philadelphia's Liberty Bell and those for Westminster Abbey. The foundry, house and shop had moved across Whitechapel Road to the most recent site on the south side of Whitechapel Road in 1738, and formed one of the most significant building groups of its kind in London. The foundry recently ceased operation. [Permission has been granted to convert the historic building to new uses including workshops and a café whilst retaining partial foundry use.](#)

## Grade II Listed Buildings

### Whitechapel Public Library, No. 77 Whitechapel High Street

27. Whitechapel Library was established in 1891-2 as one of three free libraries in the East End founded by Passmore Edwards, and was acquired in 2003 by the adjacent Whitechapel Gallery. The building was skilfully converted and now forms an important part of the Gallery. The front facade includes much terracotta decoration. A weather vane had originally been intended ~~to~~[for](#) the top of the library building, but was never realised. However, as part of the conversion a weather vane was designed by Rodney Graham, Canadian artist, sculptor and musician and now adorns the cupola.

### Tomb in south east corner of former St Mary's Churchyard, Whitechapel Road

28. The 18th century Maddox tomb is located in the south east corner of Altab Ali Park.

### Drinking Fountain set in wall of former St Mary's Churchyard, Whitechapel Road

29. Drinking fountain with pink marble basin and plaque set in Norman style arch. Erected 1860 but moved to present position 1879.

### Wall of former St Mary's Churchyard, Whitechapel Road

30. Wall of former St Mary's Churchyard dating from 19th century. Red brick wall with deep white stone capping. Red brick gate piers with white stone bands and carved stone caps.

No. 30 Whitechapel Road

31. Three storey building dating from the early 19th century, located next to the Whitechapel Foundry. The shopfront dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

No. 88 Whitechapel High Street

32. No.88 is an early 19th century building with a 1950's shop on the ground floor. The special interest of the building (with regard to its listed status) is limited to the two Arthur Szyk signs dating from 1934-5; one of the signs is fixed to the front of the building and the other is located above the first floor lift shaft.

**Locally Listed Buildings**

No. 85 Whitechapel High Street

33. Built in 1900 as Ye Olde Angel Public House on a site which had been occupied by a public house since at least 1744. The building ceased to be a pub by 1910. The extremely narrow façade recalls the ancient plot widths of the area. The white rendered facade, topped by a decorative gable is rich in architectural detail.

No. 17 Whitechurch Lane

34. Three storey building with accommodation within the roof. The building dates from around 1840. The ground floor was originally an open carriageway leading to stables at the rear. The first floor incorporates blind arcading. The roof appears as a mansard from the street but incorporates a central valley in the upper part.

The Bar Locks PH, No. 21 Whitechurch Lane

35. Three storey corner pub with mansard, gable to corner and prominent chimney at parapet level fronting Manningtree Street. There has been a pub on this site, at the corner of Whitechurch Lane and Manningtree Street, since the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, but the existing building appears to date from the late 19th century. The pub was called the Horse and Groom until 2006.

**2.3. Archaeological significance**

36. The Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area is located within a Tier 2 Archaeological Priority Area (APA), as identified by Historic England in its update of APAs, completed for Tower Hamlets in October 2017. This APA is identified for its potential to contain remains of Roman and later activity including settlement along a historic routeway.
37. APAs highlight where important archaeological interest might be located, including potential for new discoveries, based on the history of the area and previous archaeological investigations. APAs in Tier 2 are described as those on which the Greater London Historic Environment Record 'holds specific evidence indicating the presence or likely presence of heritage assets of archaeological interest'.
38. For more information please see the Greater London Archaeological Priority Area Guidelines published in July 2016, available on the Historic England website. The website also provides a link to the Tower Hamlets Archaeological Priority Areas Appraisal [\(2017\)](#) produced by Historic England. ~~(2017the APAs are provided.~~
39. [paragraph deleted] ~~It should be noted that the APA review document has been published as evidence in support of an emerging development plan which has not yet been adopted.~~

## 3.0 TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

### 3.1. General historic character and plan form

40. The piecemeal development of much of London's East End contrasts with the planning that occurred in the west of the city. Victorian East London was characterised by densely built urban communities, with houses crowded into rambling narrow streets, courts and winding alleys, mixed in with the industry that provided employment. Whitechapel developed around brickyards and tenter grounds, a townscape character which survives to this day in the small streets and narrow passages of the conservation area. Elongated plots with narrow

frontages to streets relate directly back to medieval burgage plots (a medieval term for a town rental property owned by a king or lord).

41. The townscape is further typified by small-scale, single and double-fronted properties lining Whitechapel Road and Commercial Road. Rebuilding and partial rebuilding has taken place many times over the same sites, resulting in overlays of building forms and styles. Often buildings were given a facelift to bring the main street frontage up to date whilst leaving much of the rear parts of the building relatively unaltered. The resulting stylistic variety of architecture contributes to the historic interest and cultural significance of the area and makes a positive contribution to the area's townscape. Whilst the style and form of buildings vary, there is a consistent, relatively small scale to most of the historic buildings within the area; this scale is an important characteristic

### 3.2. Layout and plan form

42. The fine grain of the conservation area is expressed by its relatively narrow plots and building frontages. The widths of buildings along Whitechapel High Street vary from 3.5m to 16m, but are on average around 9m. Most buildings fill the full plot and are generally on rectangular footprints.
43. The urban fabric of the Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area retains much of its historic form, based on a tight perimeter block structure. Consolidated continuous frontages, strongly define street edges and buildings are located right at the edge of footways. Commercial units activate main frontages. Internal areas of urban blocks often contain auxiliary structures which are accessible by tight alleyways through street-front properties. The historic church yard with remains of the foundations of St Mary of Whitechapel was transformed into a public open space (Altab Ali Park) bounded by streets on three sides, with a pedestrian route along the southern side.

### 3.3. Density and land uses

44. The area's traditional 'High Street' role, serving the retail needs of the local neighbourhood, declined in recent years, partly due to the spread of office

development on the city fringe and partly due to changing retail patterns. Nevertheless, largely driven by the area's proximity to the City, Whitechapel has retained its commercial/retail land uses and is now thriving in a different form, with the area characterised by small-scale retail and industrial enterprises. The Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area remains distinct from the large scale corporate and commercial operators present in the surrounding areas. Small businesses and retailers dominate the conservation area, which is also reflected in lower land use densities than those in the wider Aldgate area.

### **3.4. Building heights and massing**

45. The buildings of the Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area reflect the historic scale of inner London.
46. The Whitechapel High Street frontage is typified by narrow plot widths with terraces punctuated by alleys leading to a jumble of infill buildings, some of which front onto narrow passages and backland courts. Solutions adopted historically to maximize usage of limited and restrictive sites included the construction of tall buildings relative to their plot width. The buildings are therefore between three and five storeys, sometimes adopting mansard roofs to further maximize internal space. Variations in the width, height and style of buildings have developed gradually within plots over time, allowing a variety of buildings to exist as a harmonious and cohesive group in a dense urban context. This subtle variety in height, accentuated by architectural treatment, creates a charming organic character and is an important attribute.

### **3.5. Topography and important views**

47. The Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area is generally flat and therefore all important views are shaped by the form of the built environment.
48. Tall buildings form part of the backdrop of the conservation area in several views, particularly in views east towards the City but there are still many views from within and outside the area in which the rich skyline of the historic conservation

area buildings can be appreciated against an unobstructed sky. Such views are important. A good example is the view from the west of Central House looking north towards the long row of properties on the north side of Whitechapel High Street.

49. Altab Ali Park provides a spatial opening out of the enclosed street scene. The modest scale of surrounding buildings combined with generous distances between the edge of the park and buildings creates a sense of openness within and around this very urban park.
50. The view along narrow Gunthorpe Street, terminates directly on the spire of the Grade I listed Christ Church Spitalfields. This visual relationship is important in understanding the historic narrative of the wider area and the physical relationship between Whitechapel, Aldgate and Spitalfields.

## 4.0 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

51. ~~All~~The majority of buildings within the Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area, contribute positively to the special character of the conservation area. These buildings are identified as positive contributors due to their siting, building envelope and massing, appearance and materials. All buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area should be preserved and where alterations are proposed these should preserve or enhance their contribution to the conservation area. Demolition of any positive contributors will not be supported. Equally, any alteration that is not sympathetic to the special character of the conservation area will not be supported

### 4.1 Building typology and form

52. The varied buildings fronting the main streets within the Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area are predominantly grouped in terraces. There is a broadly consistent scale, with relatively minor variations in building heights and frontage widths. The relatively narrow plot widths and variety of architectural treatments

give a subtle vertical emphasis even where buildings are joined together in long rows.

53. The conservation area includes a wide range of architectural styles reflecting the organic growth of the area. Three of the most significant buildings in the area, the Whitechapel Gallery, the Bell Foundry and Cannon Barnett Primary School highlight the contrast in architectural style and materials. They form key heritage landmarks in the area.
54. The Jacobean inspired architecture of the facades of No. 65 Whitechapel High Street, No. 2 Whitechurch Lane and the former Whitechapel Library at No.77 Whitechapel High Street, stand out in terms of their ornamental richness. Red brick walls form the background to white stone window dressings and mullions, decorative cornices, string courses and in some instances even quoins on bay windows. Decorative gables and low parapets expose high roofs covered with clay roof tiles.
55. Other buildings consistently reflect on this materiality in more modest and simplified ways. In general, pitched roof slopes or flat roofs are concealed behind high parapets or gables. Ornamentation is usually limited to lintels and cornices. Modern infills such as Nos. 82-83, 84 and 87 Whitechapel High Street, successfully interpret the language of brick walls and stone frames to openings in a more consolidated and geometric way.
56. The few former industrial buildings, such as No. 3 Gunthorpe Street and the Bell Foundry, are located away from the major frontage of Whitechapel High Street. They have footprints much larger than average in the area but are of moderate scale of up to two industrial height storeys.

## 4.2 Key architectural features and building materials

57. The area is characterised by a number of building materials. There is a prevailing use of red and yellow stock brick on many buildings, which is often decorated with architectural ornament in other materials including stone, stucco, render and

terracotta. Facades are predominantly flat with architectural features adding depth and texture. Stone window framing, sometimes including projecting sills, mullions and transoms appears on historic and modern buildings. Decorative stone or stucco cornices emphasize the horizontal composition of many of the façades. Original shopfronts were made mostly of timber, but many have been replaced by inappropriate later metal shopfronts. Despite the loss of historic shopfronts many historic pilasters and corbels survive.

58. Roof slopes are predominantly hidden behind high parapets or gable ends. Gables, often inspired by Baroque or Classical precedents accentuate several of the historic narrow facades. A wide variety of historic window frames have survived within the area. There are many timber framed sash windows, some divided into small panes by Georgian/early Victorian type glazing bars, others featuring the larger single panes of the later Victorian era and early C20. Metal window frames are a characteristic feature of inter-war and mid C20 buildings within the area, the glazing bar arrangement of these windows varies greatly.

## 5.0 PUBLIC REALM AND OPEN SPACE

### 5.1. Streets roads and yards

59. The public realm within the Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area is focused on historic Whitechapel High Street and Whitechapel Road (A11) which runs southwest – northeast through the centre of the conservation area.
60. There is a distinct hierarchy of streets within the conservation area, recalling its historic development. The wide Whitechapel High Street/Whitechapel Road with its relatively wide footways (3-7m) and cycle routes, have been a main route into and out of the City for centuries; Commercial Road and Commercial Street have a width commensurate with important, planned C19 thoroughfares—streets, but side streets (Whitechurch Lane, Adler Street and Plumbers Row) are narrow and the historic alleyways (Gunthorpe Street and Angel Alley) are tighter still, recalling the historic street pattern.

## 5.2. Street surfaces

61. The main streets within the conservation area have contemporary surfacing, including large concrete paving slabs on footways, blue asphalt on the cycle path and dark grey asphalt on the carriageway, bounded by narrow concrete kerbs. Some side streets and historic alleyways, such as Gunthorpe Street and Manningtree Street, have preserved granite cobbles with low granite kerbs.

## 5.3. Street furniture

62. All street furniture in the conservation area, apart from the Grade II listed drinking fountain on Whitechurch Lane (set within the boundary wall of Altab Ali Park), is contemporary. The street scene is generally free from clutter and furnishings are limited to standard lamp columns, road signs, Sheffield cycle stands and litter bins.
63. Seating and play spaces in the park are predominantly built into the landscape in the form of contemporary art features.

## 5.4. Altab Ali Park

64. In 1989 St Mary's Gardens (the former White Chapel Churchyard) was renamed Altab Ali Park, in memory of a young Bengali man who was murdered nearby in a racist attack on 4th May 1978. The contemporary iron gateway erected directly behind the C19 gothic gate piers (part of the historic boundary which is the only surviving element of the C19 church) was commissioned by the Borough to commemorate the 'turning point in the struggle against racism that his death marked'. The park contains a replica of the Shaheed Minar ([Martyrs' Martyr's Monument](#)), unveiled in 1999, which holds [very strong](#) local community value [as the focus of the annual Martyrs' Day commemorations](#). The park was re-landscaped as part of the High Street 2012 [project](#). The partially redesigned landscape was intended to highlight the rich history of the area. The main public space in the area, the park is located within a highly visible location and is a popular destination during the summer months.

65. The conservation area is relatively rich in greenery, given its location in the heart of a tight knit urban environment. The large mature London Planes around the street boundary of Altab Ali Park enhance views along Whitechapel Road and Adler Street. Additional smaller scale trees to the south of the park insulate residential properties along St Mary's Path from visual intrusion.

### 5.5. Public art

66. There are a number of pieces of public art within the conservation area [which reflect the rich cultural diversity of the area](#), these include:
67. The Shaheed Minar (Martyr's Monument) in Altab Ali Park. This is a smaller version of Dhaka's Shaheed Minar, originally designed by Hamidur Rahman in 1963, which commemorates activists of the Bengali language movement, killed in 1952.
68. The decorative metal overthrow attached to the historic gateposts to the entrance of Altab Ali Park, at the corner of Whitechapel Road and Whitechurch Lane [was commissioned by the Borough to remember Altab Ali and the 'turning point in the struggle against racism that his death marked'](#).
69. The Grade II Listed Arthur Szyk signs, dating from 1934-5, attached to No.88 Whitechapel Road.
70. Rachel Whiteread's Tree of Life sculpture added to the front façade of Whitechapel Art Gallery in 2012.

### 5.6. Street trees

71. Whilst the street scene of Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area is dominated by hard landscaping, trees play an important role in marking special points, from a townscape perspective. As well as the trees within Altab Ali Park there are two small areas of greenery marking significant places within the street

scene. The first is on the northern side of Whitechapel High Street, where the mature London Plane terminates the vista from Commercial Road.

72. The second is in front of the Bell Foundry, at the corner of Whitechapel Road and Fieldgate Street. Here three mature trees define a pocket square at the front of the Grade II\* Listed Bell Foundry building at 32-34 Whitechapel Road. The trees provide a visual end to views along Whitechapel Road, Plumbers Row and Fieldgate Street. Their canopies provide a sense of enclosure to the square and create a quieter setting around the historic building at the edge of busy A11 transport corridor.

## **6.0 ~~ISSUES AND THREATS~~ HERITAGE AUDIT**

73. The condition of buildings and the public realm within the Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area varies markedly, with some buildings being in a poor condition. A lack of investment, inappropriate alterations and the loss of historic features cumulatively threaten the special character and appearance of the conservation area. It is these same threats which, if addressed, offer the opportunity for significant enhancement.

### **6.1. Lack of investment and inappropriate alterations**

74. Often a lack of investment can result in a gradual deterioration of the built fabric as maintenance is reduced and the cost of repairs minimised. The exteriors of historic buildings within the area feature a rich variety of materials and details which are a major part of its historic and architectural character, but which are vulnerable to neglect and poorly considered change. The opportunity exists to reverse this change with carefully considered investment, which retains the surviving historic fabric and builds upon it.
75. Some buildings were built with render or stucco applied to the exterior. In several cases the render is in poor condition due to the lack of maintenance or poorly carried out repairs.

76. In several cases, original brick facades have been painted to the detriment of the appearance of the building.
77. The rear parts of many buildings are in poor condition due to lack of maintenance, poorly undertaken repairs and the erection of poor quality extensions. On its western edge, Altab Ali Park is overlooked by the rear of a group of historic properties which front on to Whitechurch Lane. Several of these properties are in poor repair which detracts from their character and appearance and harms the setting of the park.

## 6.2. Loss of historic features

78. The appearance of some buildings has suffered from the removal of historic architectural features including chimney stacks, original windows frames and decorative architectural features including cornices and decorative window surrounds. This has harmed the character and appearance of the conservation area.
79. Window frames are key historic features. The installation of inappropriate upper floor windows has detracted from the appearance of several buildings within the conservation area.
80. In some instances historic photographs or surviving historic features ~~or precedents offer the opportunity~~ offer precedents for appropriate reinstatement of lost features.

## 6.3. Shopfronts, fascia signs and associated features

81. A large number of retail units feature poorly designed replacement shopfronts and fascia signs which take no account of the architectural character of the host building and thus detract from the host building and the area generally. In many cases original decorative corbels have been removed along with original cladding materials and decorative pilasters dividing the shop units.

## 6.4. Vacant/underused properties and sites

82. The vast majority of ground floor shops and ground floor commercial units are occupied (at the time of writing in 2018) but there appears to be some underused/vacant floor space on upper floors of buildings within the conservation area. This is a contributing factor to the neglect of building fabric.

83. The Bell Foundry recently ceased operation. [Permission has been granted to convert the historic building to new uses including workshops and a café whilst retaining partial foundry use.](#)

84. Within the tight knit building fabric of the conservation area, there are several empty sites.

- The car park site to the south of the Cannon Barnett Primary School
- The vacant plot at the north side of the junction of Whitechurch Lane and St Mary's Path
- The vacant plot between 96 and 101 Whitechapel High Street
- The empty north west corner of Mulberry Street and Plumbers Row

85. Development proposals for these gap sites within the conservation area must be appropriate in terms of scale and form and architectural quality. All of the above sites are located within a rich historic context but each represents a unique challenge ranging from the carpark site to the south of Cannon Barnett Primary School, which is located at the heart of an urban block, to the vacant plot between Nos. 96 and 101 Whitechapel High Street which is a gap located in a significant row of buildings fronting on to one of the Borough's most important thoroughfares.

### **6.5. Development outside the conservation area boundary affecting its setting**

86. The conservation area is located at the extreme west of the Borough, close to the City of London. Very large developments outside the boundary of the conservation area have caused harm to its setting and further large

developments within the conservation area's setting could further compromise the character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area and its setting.

## 6.6. Public realm and open space

87. Altab Ali Park ~~is~~ a much loved feature of the area, is very well used and would benefit from some soft landscaping improvements. The western boundary of the park, formed by the rear fences of properties fronting on to Whitechurch Lane, is in poor condition and detracts from the setting of the park.

## 7.0 INTRODUCTION TO MANAGEMENT PLAN

### 7.1. Background

88. This management plan sets out the borough's commitment to high quality management of conservation areas and their settings. The management plan provides guidance to residents, businesses and other stakeholders about the special elements of the area's character and how these can be preserved ~~and~~and enhanced. The management plan also sets out the considerations that should be taken into account at the earliest possible stages of the design process and addressed as part of any planning application.

89. Conservation areas are as much about history, people, activities and places as they are about buildings and spaces. Preserving ~~and~~and enhancing the borough's architectural and historic built heritage is of vital importance in understanding the past and allowing it to inform our present and future.

90. Conservation areas also promote sustainability, in its widest sense, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. The re-use of historic buildings and places is environmentally responsible, as it protects the energy and resources embodied in them and combats ~~global warming~~climate change. Demolition and rebuilding of buildings can have a big impact on the environment and can result in a large amount of waste and associated air pollution.

91. [paragraph deleted] ~~In reviewing this guidance, consideration has been given to the boundaries of the conservation area and they have been revised accordingly, as outlined in Appendix 1.~~
92. Recommendations for additions to the statutory list are considered by Historic England.

## 7.2. Policy and legislation

93. In conservation areas, planning controls are more extensive. Permitted development rights are more limited, and demolition and works to trees are controlled. [The Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#) places a duty on Tower Hamlets to designate Conservation Areas in “areas of special architectural or historic interest”, and to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas. Section 72 of the [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#) which relates to planning functions within conservation areas, includes that ‘special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’. You are strongly advised to contact the council to check if works you are proposing need permission.

94. Any new development should have regard to [relevant](#) national, regional and local planning policy [including the following](#):

- [the Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#);
- [the NPPF](#);
- [the London Plan including the City Fringe OAPF alongside the City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework](#);
- [the Local Plan](#);
- [the Tower Hamlets Conservation Strategy](#)
- [Historic England guidance](#); and
- [this character appraisal and management plan](#).

Further information can be found on the council’s website, on the government website and on the GLA website.

95. Altab Ali Park (formerly St Mary’s Gardens) is designated as public open space.

96. The conservation area is included within an Archaeological Priority Area.
97. Whitechapel Road, Commercial Road and Commercial Street are all strategic roads.

### **Statutorily listed buildings**

98. If a building is statutorily listed, any alterations to the property, either internally or externally, will require listed building consent from the Council. Listed building consent is required for any works of demolition, alteration or extension to the building, which would affect its special architectural and historic interest. Works within the grounds or curtilage of a listed building can also require consent. Repairs to listed buildings may also require consent. It is always advisable to inform the council of any plans you might have to carry out repairs. Replacement of any historic fabric usually constitutes an alteration and therefore requires listed building consent.
99. The council has a duty of care to ensure owners and prospective owners of listed buildings are aware of the need for maintenance and repair of such buildings. Regular maintenance can prevent serious and expensive problems at a later date. If listed buildings are not maintained in good repair, then the council can step in to ensure that relevant repairs are carried out. In some circumstances, the council itself may undertake essential repairs and recover the cost from the owner. The council has powers of compulsory purchase in such circumstances.

### **Locally listed buildings**

100. [Local listing is a protection offered by the local authority to buildings it believes are of local significance. A heritage asset is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest, locally listed buildings are included within this designation. The effect of an application on a non-designated heritage asset is a material consideration when deciding planning applications, and local listing strengthens the case for retention of a historic building.](#) There are three [groups](#) locally listed building within the

conservation area, ~~and further ones may be added in the future~~. Although locally listed buildings do not benefit from the statutory protection outlined previously, they have been recognised as being of local townscape importance. The council expects to see their retention and evidence that any proposed alterations enhance the building's character or appearance. Full justification for any redevelopment proposals will be sought, including convincing evidence that the building could not be retained. Economic reasons alone will not always justify redevelopment.

#### **Article 4 Directions**

101. Where evidence suggests that the exercise of permitted development would harm the special character of the conservation area, the council can serve an Article 4 Direction to withdraw specific classes of permitted development that would otherwise apply. It is important to note that an Article 4 Direction does not necessarily prevent the type of development to which it applies but requires planning permission to be obtained for the specified types of development. There is no fee for planning applications required due to an Article 4 Direction.
  
102. For specific information on Article 4 Directions please see the General Permitted Development Order (1995) and 2010 amendment and accompanying Government Circular (available from the DCLG website), as well as the guidance provided in ~~Historic England Advice Note 1 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' published in February 2016~~ (~~<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-designationappraisal-management-advice-note-1/>~~). Historic England's Advice Note 1 (Second Edition) 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' which was published in February 2019 (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/heag-268-conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management/>)

#### **Archaeological investigations**

103. Any new development that lies within the Archaeological Priority Area will be required to include an Archaeological Evaluation Report and will require any

nationally important remains to be preserved permanently at the site, subject to consultation with Historic England.

### Trees in conservation areas

104. [A Tree Preservation Order \(TPO\) is an order made by the council to protect specific trees or groups of trees in the interests of amenity. A TPO prohibits the cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting or wilful damage of a protected tree without permission and is a designation which is applied selectively.](#)

~~All trees in conservation areas are protected by the provisions in section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These provisions require people to notify the council, by use of an application for works to trees. A section 211 notice should be served at least six weeks before carrying out works to trees, including topping, lopping and felling. This notice period gives the council the opportunity to consider whether to make a Tree Preservation Order (see below). A section 211 notice must describe the work proposed and include sufficient particulars to identify the tree or trees. Where a number of trees or operations are involved, it should make clear what work is proposed to which tree. A notice must include the date it is submitted. Only one section 211 notice is needed to carry out a number of different operations on the same tree or to carry out work on a number of trees. The application for works to trees can be found here.~~

~~A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is an order made by the council to protect specific trees, or groups of trees in the interests of amenity. A TPO prohibits the:~~

- ~~▪ cutting down~~
- ~~▪ topping~~
- ~~▪ lopping~~
- ~~▪ uprooting~~
- ~~▪ willful damage~~
- ~~willful destruction~~

~~of trees without the local planning authority's written consent. If consent is given, it can be subject to conditions which must be followed.~~

105. Whilst some trees in a conservation area may be protected by a TPO all trees in a conservation area are protected by the provisions of section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These provisions require owners to notify the council if works to trees are proposed. To do this a works to trees application form should be completed. The application must describe the works proposed and include sufficient particulars to identify the tree or trees which are the subject of works. Only one section 211 notice is need to carry out a number of different operations. Notification should be made at least six weeks before the works commence to allow the council sufficient time to assess whether the works are acceptable or not. If the works are not supported and modified proposals can not be agreed then the trees must be protected by the council serving a TPO.

106. Carrying out works to trees without the necessary approval can be a criminal offence, and the council welcomes early requests for advice.

### **7.3. Outline guidance for applications**

107. When planning applications in a conservation area are decided, the Council, as the local planning authority, will pay special attention to whether the character of the area is preserved or enhanced by the proposal. The special character of Whitechapel High Street is described in detail in the Appraisal in the first part of this document.

108. In the Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area, as in other conservation areas, planning controls are more extensive than normal. Before carrying out any work in this area, you may need to apply for consent even for minor work such as replacing railings. These consents include planning and listed building consent, as well as others for work such as felling trees. Planning permission is required to demolish any building bigger than 115m<sup>3</sup>, and a higher standard of detail and information is required for any application. When applying for listed

building consent, please note that all parts of the building, including its interior walls, ceilings and all other internal features, are protected. Some buildings are nationally (statutorily) listed, and some are locally listed by the Borough. Locally listed buildings are those of townscape value which the Borough wishes to protect.

109. The exact information required will vary with each application, but in general applications must include:

- A clear Design and Access Statement explaining the reasons behind the various architectural, masterplanning or other design decisions
- A Heritage Statement where the impacts of the application on the significance of heritage assets or the impacts of demolition within the conservation area are set out
- Contextual plans, sections and elevations of existing buildings (at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100)
- Drawings of proposed works, including construction details, produced at larger scale (e.g. 1:20 or 1:10) clearly indicating the nature of the work proposed
- Existing and proposed townscape views where relevant
- Additional detail regarding materials and construction
- Photos of the condition of existing building (including details where appropriate).

110. More details are available on the Tower Hamlets website where a validation list can be found. If in any doubt, the council welcomes and encourages early requests for advice or information. More information is available on pre-application advice on the Council's website. When alterations are proposed to listed buildings, complying with the building regulations can be particularly complex, and early consideration of building control issues can help identify potential problems early in the process.

#### **7.4. Resources needed to conserve the historic environment**

The most effective way to secure the historic environment is to ensure that buildings can continue to contribute to the life of the local community, preferably funding their own maintenance and refurbishment. Commercial value can be generated directly from the building, through its use as a dwelling or office, or through its role in increasing the attractiveness of the area to tourists and visitors. However, it should be noted that economic reasons alone will not in themselves justify the demolition or alteration of a building in a conservation area. The council will consider grant aid to historic buildings and places, but grant funding [even](#) for cases that meet the defined criteria, is extremely limited.

## 8.0 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

### 8.1. General approach

111. Development in the conservation area should enhance the unique characteristics of Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area, reinforcing its distinctive identity and contributing to its historic sense of place. New buildings should be of a high design standard, reflecting the scale and variation typical of the historic townscape. Individual buildings should display their own identity within the historically-set parameters (scale, grain, building line). These parameters are responsible for the creation of a coherent streetscape and locally distinctive character derived from an otherwise diverse collection of different designs, styles and materials. Retention and restoration of existing buildings which contribute to the character of the area provides the foundation for the area's redevelopment. The council encourages the sympathetic re-use of existing buildings in conservation areas. [Where development has harmed a conservation area it is possible, under certain circumstances, that further development may help to mitigate this harm.](#)

### 8.2. Demolition

#### Demolition of buildings within the conservation area

112. The Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area has a well-established and distinguished character distinctive from its surroundings in terms of its grain and scale. The council will resist [unjustified](#) demolition ~~as this would be considered~~

~~to constitute substantial harm~~ where this is considered to be harmful to the special character or appearance of ~~to~~ the conservation area. Any applications including demolition will be assessed in line with national, regional and local policy and guidance including the National Planning Policy Framework.

113. Planning permission is required for demolition or substantial demolition of all buildings or structures larger than 115m<sup>3</sup> in conservation areas. What constitutes substantial demolition is considered on a case-by-case basis by the Local Planning Authority. Where a building is statutorily listed, listed building consent will be required.

114. Where corner buildings are threatened with demolition this can cause a wider threat to the terrace as a whole, this will be resisted. ~~Similarly, the council will resist applications which propose~~The demolition and replacement of a central building ~~within~~forming part of a small terrace will also be resisted as this can result in further proposals and cumulative impacts.

115. If demolition work occurs without the necessary consent the council is likely to pursue planning enforcement action that may result in prosecution and a substantial fine. The demolished structure may be required to be rebuilt. It should be noted that the council will not normally grant planning permission for demolition without relevant permissions having been obtained for an acceptable scheme for the redevelopment of the site.

116. With regard to vacant sites, or those in poor condition, it should not be assumed that any development is automatically better than the current situation.

### **Partial demolition**

117. In most cases, the council would expect to see buildings retained but in some exceptional cases it may only be possible to retain a building in part; either by retaining elements of a building or through façade retention. Partial demolition will only be considered acceptable when it can be demonstrated ~~that~~within the application how the proposed demolition can be carried out without unacceptable risk to the parts of the building to be retained and that any new development integrates with and respects the remaining historic fabric. This should be outlined

as part of a Heritage Statement. A report of any structural implications will also need to be submitted. In many cases it may be possible to salvage and re-use elements of the historic fabric for example bricks, slates or window frames or external features. Any partial rebuilding will require materials to match and will be controlled by condition. It may be necessary to record the existing building, prior to alteration.

### **Demolition of buildings adjacent to the conservation area**

118. Demolition of unlisted buildings outside a conservation area does not always require planning permission. However, proposals to demolish and re-develop sites adjacent to a conservation area boundary should preserve, and where possible enhance, the setting of the conservation area to ensure that the significance of the conservation area is not harmed

### **8.3. New development**

119. New developments should respect the fine grain character and straightforward legibility of the historic street pattern. Any replacement buildings should preserve ~~or~~and enhance the character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area and ensure that its significance is not harmed. Any new development on potential infil sites (as highlighted in Section 6.0 in the Appraisal) should sit comfortably with the existing character or appearance of the conservation area.

120. Where existing buildings have a negative impact on the character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area, it may be possible to alter the exterior of the building so that it enhances the character ~~and~~or appearance of the area. The council would only encourage replacement of these buildings if the replacement is of high quality and has a positive impact on the character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area.

121. All new developments should be sympathetic to the character ~~and~~or appearance of the conservation area in terms of scale, materials and design.

122. The overall conservation area is characterised by a prevailing building height of four to five storeys ~~(see xxx map)~~. In many cases, given the complex history of development in the area, cornice/eaves heights vary across a terrace and this characteristic is an attractive feature of the area. New development should aim to fit into and complement this context.
123. The design of new buildings should be fully informed by the positive aspects of adjacent buildings and how they contribute to the character ~~and~~ or appearance of the conservation area. A degree of architectural variety is an important attribute of much of the conservation area and therefore it may not necessarily be appropriate to copy adjacent buildings.
124. The overall quality of architectural detailing will be key to producing a successful scheme which builds on the qualities already present within the area. In order to ensure necessary architectural quality, detailed design should be explored and agreed early in the planning process.
125. The quality of external materials will also be key to producing a successful scheme. The conservation area features a wide range of high quality, natural and naturally derived materials including stone, bricks, slate and terracotta. It is expected that the choice of new materials will be informed by the local context and build on this richness.
126. The design of shopfronts and fascia signs should not be considered in isolation and, along with security measures, should be considered at an early stage. It is essential that the scale and proportions of all elements of any new shopfronts and fascia signs relate to the overall proportions of the host building and to neighbouring properties where appropriate. Given the age of the buildings within the conservation area, this is likely to involve the design of taller shopfronts (and shallower fascia signs) than are considered standard in other areas. Older shopfronts were characterised by high quality, long lasting materials. Standard aluminium shopfronts are unlikely to be considered appropriate within the conservation area. It might be necessary to adopt a flexible approach to

corporate logos, if these are considered to be harmful to the character of the conservation area.

## 8.4. Property conversion

127. The permitted development rights for this area of the Borough have been removed in relation to the conversion of offices (Use Class B1(a)) to residential (Use Class C3). Where property conversion or change of use is permissible, external changes are likely to require planning permission. Any external changes should relate well ~~seek to establish a better relationship with~~ the public realm, should respect the character of the host building and should be in keeping with the character ~~and~~ or appearance of the conservation area.

## 8.5. Extensions and alterations

### Roof extensions

128. The variety of building heights, particularly along Whitechapel High Street, forms an integral part of the character of the Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area. Roof additions which seek to introduce a consistency in height are likely to be resisted. In many cases the historic roof structure and relationship to other buildings within the conservation area will either preclude roof extensions or make it very difficult to achieve an acceptable design. Where roof extensions are considered appropriate, the design must relate well to the design and proportions of the host building and must use high quality materials that respect the character ~~and~~ or appearance of the conservation area. The impact of any roof extensions on the public realm and views from within the conservation area should be carefully considered in order to ensure the character ~~and~~ or appearance of the conservation area is preserved and enhanced.

### Rear extensions

129. There are very few opportunities for rear extensions within the conservation area. Where the opportunity exists, extensions should remain subservient to the host building both in terms of scale and proportions. Only high quality materials, such as brick, stone or, in some cases, reconstituted stone, that respect the character

~~and or~~ appearance of the conservation area will be accepted. The visibility of proposed rear extensions from the public realm must also be carefully considered to ensure that, not only the impact on the host building, but also on the wider conservation area, is acceptable and preserves and enhances the character ~~and or~~ appearance of the conservation area.

### **External alterations**

130. Where external alterations are proposed to existing buildings, these must seek to preserve ~~or and~~ enhance the character ~~and or~~ appearance of the conservation area. Piecemeal alterations can be harmful to the special architectural and historic character of a building. Any alterations to historic fabric should be on a like-for-like basis in terms of materials and design. Where inappropriate or unsympathetic alterations have occurred in the past, these should be rectified in accordance with the historic materials and appearance. In cases where the alterations are to a building which is not historic, ~~In cases where alterations are proposed to a non-historic building,~~ the design and materials used should be in keeping with the character of the conservation area. Any external alterations to individual buildings will have an impact on the wider conservation area and so must be considered within the wider context.

## **8.6. Energy efficiency improvements**

### **Window replacement and alteration**

131. Window replacement and alterations to existing windows are often successful ways of improving the energy efficiency of a building. A careful study of the existing building should be carried out in order to identify the original window design and materials. This should form a good template for the kind of windows that will be acceptable in terms of materials, design, glazing bar details, window opening patterns and type of glass. In most cases historic or original windows should be retained and repaired, draught proofing added and if necessary internal secondary glazing installed. Where it is acceptable to replace the existing windows with double glazing care must be taken to ensure that the double glazing is of an appropriate design, that it is possible to replicate the dimensions and opening arrangements of the existing historic windows, that the double

glazing is of a slim profile and that spacer bars are white and are unperforated, rather than perforated metal. Top-hung or outward opening windows will not be supported on historic buildings, unless this reflects the original glazing pattern.

132. It may be necessary to apply for planning permission to fit new windows (such as double ~~glazing~~) in a flat or maisonette. Planning permission will not be required to add internal secondary glazing. It is also unlikely to be necessary where you are fitting windows which are identical to those which are being removed i.e. ~~(like-for-like replacements)~~. However, if the new windows differ in appearance or size to those you are replacing (for instance, different glazing patterns or opening methods) you may need to apply for planning permission. The detailed design, materials, dimensions, glazing bar pattern, glazing thickness, and opening methods are all important considerations when new or replacement windows are proposed.

133. The replacement of historic windows to listed buildings will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that they are beyond reasonable repair. If this can be demonstrated, then any replacement of windows should be on a like-for-like basis, matching the original design exactly. This will ~~usually~~ require listed building consent and, if any changes are proposed in terms of design, materials or thickness, planning permission may also be required. Energy efficiency can be improved through draught proofing windows or through the installation of internal secondary glazing. These works ~~are unlikely~~ will not ~~to~~ require listed building consent, unless they obscure important historic features or cause harm to historic fabric.

### **Cladding, rendering or painting of external walls**

134. The council will seek the retention or reinstatement of original façade treatments of buildings which ~~that~~ contribute positively to the special character ~~and~~ or appearance of the conservation area. Unless it can be demonstrated that existing exposed brickwork had originally been rendered or painted, the rendering or painting over of external brickwork will not be supported.

135. External insulation through rendering or other methods will not be supported. Any additional insulation should be installed internally where appropriate so as not to inappropriately alter the external appearance of the building. In a listed building, internal insulation would need listed building consent. In most cases it is unlikely to be acceptable.

## 8.7. Other external changes

136. Alterations which change the appearance of buildings within the conservation area should be carefully considered. The council will not support the addition of satellite dishes, banners or antennae or other fixtures on elevations that front the street. The addition of grilles and louvres to the front of buildings is also unlikely to be supported. These should be placed on rear or side elevations if required and carefully designed so that they are incorporated into the overall building design. [The council welcomes the removal of unwanted and unnecessary clutter from the exterior of buildings within the conservation area.. Development proposals that involve the re-use and/or conversion of existing buildings will be expected to address this issue where appropriate.](#)

## 8.8. Public realm improvements

137. Where there are historic surface finishes such as [cobbles](#)[stone setts](#) or paving, the council will seek their retention, as these form an important part of the character of the conservation area. Any major investment in buildings should also include public realm improvements where appropriate. New schemes should aim to retain historic surfaces and any new surfaces should be sympathetic to the conservation area. Junctions between different surface treatments should also be carefully considered.

The quality of the streetscape, the surface materials, street furniture and other features can all form an integral part of the character [and-or](#) appearance of the conservation area. Any work carried out should respect this historic character, using natural materials and colours that are in keeping with the character [and-or](#) appearance of the conservation area. For works to Whitechapel High Street and Whitechapel Road, TfL's Streetscape Guidance should be consulted. On narrow

side streets, setts [and cobblestones](#) should be reinstated where possible and, historic kerb stones retained. Any paving works should be sympathetic to the historic character of the conservation area. Larger rectangular paving slabs ideally in natural stone or high quality composite stone, are more sympathetic to the character of the conservation area than smaller modular paving. [Each case will be assessed on its own merits.](#)

In addition to the TfL guidance, for developments which impact on public spaces, the council's Street Design Guide and Historic England's Streets for All: London document should be referred to. An important aim should be to reduce street clutter, such as obsolete signage and modern phone boxes. ~~developments which impact on public spaces, the council's Street Design Guide and Historic England's Streets for All: London document should be referred to. An important aim should be to reduce street clutter, such as obsolete signage and modern phone boxes.~~

138. Altab Ali Park (formerly St Mary's Gardens) forms a vital part of the history of the area. Ongoing management of the park should be sensitive to its historic importance including its archaeological importance as the site of the original White Chapel, and its more recent significance as a memorial to Altab Ali, ~~and~~ a symbol of the community's resilience against racism [and a focus for Martyrs' Day commemorations](#). Regular maintenance of this heavily used public space is essential. It is considered that there is scope for future improvements to the park. Any new furniture or play equipment within the park should be integrated into the landscape.

139. All trees in conservation areas are protected, and some trees are also covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Additional information on trees can be found in the policy and legislation section of this document and on the council website.

## 8.9. Shopfronts and signage

140. The richness in the variety of details to shopfronts and buildings is integral to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Existing timber fascias, pilasters and corbels should be retained or restored where they have been lost. In cases where shopfront corbels do not survive, careful study should be made of adjacent shops to see if any appropriate examples remain – these should form the template for re-instatement.
141. It should be noted that a standard corporate approach to signage may not be considered appropriate due to ~~the~~ size, colour ~~and/or~~ illumination. As such, proposed designs and/or materials may have to be amended to suit the historic context. Any hanging or projecting signs should be well designed, bespoke timber hanging signs of an appropriate size for the shopfront or building. Traditional materials should be used and plastic signage will not be supported. No upper level signage. ~~Above fascia level, signage including~~ projecting signs or banners, will ~~not~~ be supported.
142. Hand painted timber fascia signs or fascias with individually applied lettering are encouraged throughout the conservation area. Internally illuminated plastic fascia signs are not appropriate and will not be supported.

### 8.10. Vacant sites and hoardings

143. Vacant sites must be carefully managed to ensure that they cause minimal harm to the conservation area. These sites must be maintained and should not be allowed to fall ~~in to~~ into disrepair. Where hoardings are used around vacant sites or on sites that are currently undergoing building works, these must be consistent in terms of height, materials and appearance. Hoardings should be maintained in a good state of repair so as to not detract from the character ~~and/or~~ appearance of the conservation area. Where possible, hoardings should be used positively to inform the public of the history of the site or wider area.

### 8.11. Development affecting the setting of the conservation area

144. The conservation area is situated in a densely built up part of the borough close to the boundary with the City. It includes several important views, such as the

view from the west of Central House looking towards the long row of properties on the north side of Whitechapel High Street, feature groups of historic buildings with an unobstructed historic skyline. This forms their setting. Development which interferes with the viewers' ability to fully appreciate the significance of the heritage assets concerned will be resisted.

145. The openness of Altab Ali Park contributes significantly to the character and appearance of the conservation area and provides a welcome visual break in the street frontage and relief from the busy Whitechapel Road and Whitechapel High Street. It is important that development on sites surrounding the park (both within and outside the boundary of the conservation area) is sensitive to this context, conforms to the overall scale of the conservation area and protects views of open sky from the park.

146. It is important that development proposals on the edge of the conservation area and in surrounding areas include a fully detailed assessment of any impact on the historic significance of the conservation area.

147. To enable the council to assess relevant applications, the council will expect applicants:

- i. to identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected by a proposal;
- ~~ii.~~ assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution [to the significance of the heritage asset\(s\)](#)
- ~~iii.~~~~ii.~~ ~~to the significance of the heritage asset(s);~~
- ~~iv.~~~~iii.~~ assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance [of the heritage assets](#);
- ~~v.~~~~iv.~~ demonstrate that they have explored ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

## 9.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

### 9.1. Ongoing management and monitoring change

The council recognises the contribution of the local community in managing conservation ~~areas~~~~areas, and~~ ~~and~~ will welcome proposals to work collaboratively to monitor and manage change in the area. Public meetings will be held to maintain communications between all stakeholders and identify new opportunities and threats to the conservation area as they arise.

In addition, the Borough's Annual Monitoring Report, prepared with the new Local ~~Plan~~~~Development Framework~~, will assess progress on the implementation of the whole Local Development Scheme, including policies relevant to conservation.

## 9.2. Planning enforcement

Appropriate enforcement, with the support of the community, is essential to protect the area's character. The council will take prompt action against those who carry out unauthorised works to listed buildings, or substantial or complete demolition of buildings within a conservation area. Unauthorised work to a listed building is a criminal offence and could result in a fine and/or imprisonment. Likewise, unauthorised substantial or complete demolition of a building within a conservation area is illegal. It is therefore essential to obtain planning permission and/or listed building consent before works begin.

An enforcement notice, served by the council may require works to rectify unauthorised alterations. This notice is entered on the Local Land Charges records which could make the future sale or financing of the property more difficult.

If listed buildings are not maintained in good repair, then the council can step in to ensure that relevant repairs are carried out. In some circumstances, the council itself may undertake essential repairs and recover the cost from the owner. The council has powers of compulsory purchase, if necessary to protect listed buildings.

The Council will enforce conservation law wherever necessary, and will consider the introduction of Article 4 Directions to remove permitted development rights where appropriate.

## 10.0 USEFUL CONTACTS AND REFERENCES

The council encourages and welcomes discussions with the community about the historic environment and the contents of this document. Further guidance on all aspects of this document can be obtained on our website at [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk) or by contacting:

- Tel: 020 7364 5009
- Email: [planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

This document is also available in libraries, council offices and Idea Stores in the borough. For a translation, or large print, audio or braille version of this document, please telephone 0800 376 5454.

Also, if you require any further help with this document, please telephone 020 7364 5372.

Also, you may wish to contact the following organisations for further information:

- Historic England <https://www.historicengland.org.uk>
- The Georgian Group [www.georgiangroup.org.uk](http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk)
- Victorian Society [www.victorian-society.org.uk](http://www.victorian-society.org.uk)
- 20th Century Society [www.c20society.org.uk](http://www.c20society.org.uk)
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)
- East London Postcards [www.eastlondonpostcard.co.uk](http://www.eastlondonpostcard.co.uk)



# WHITECHAPEL MARKET CONSERVATION AREA

## Character appraisal and management plan

October 2021



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## PREFACE

### What is a conservation area?

1. Conservation areas are parts of our local environment with special architectural or historic qualities. They are created by the council, in consultation with the local community, to ensure that change preserves or ~~and or~~ enhances the specific character of these areas for everybody.
2. The special character of these areas does not come only from the quality of their individual buildings, but from the value of these buildings as a group and from their setting. Elements such as the historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries and characteristic building and paving materials all contribute to the familiar and cherished local scene.

### What is the purpose of this document?

3. This document has been prepared to comply with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Section 69(1) which states that a conservation area is “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan provides a detailed description of the area’s architectural and historic character and management guidelines on how this character should be preserved ~~and or~~ enhanced in the context of appropriate ongoing change.
4. This document has also been prepared to support relevant strategic objectives contained within the council’s Conservation Strategy 2017 – 2027 including objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 2.6.

### Who is this document for?

5. This is an inclusive document which is intended to engage with many different people and organisations. It will depend on the support of the community to achieve its objectives.

6. The character appraisal and management plan is aimed primarily at the residents, businesses, developers and others living and working in the area. The document has also been prepared to align conservation objectives within different parts of the council, to help to meet the objectives of the Conservation Strategy and to provide a single point of reference for the management of the area. It represents our shared commitment to conserve the special architectural and historic character, and to help manage change constructively.

### What is the status of this document?

7. This ~~Conservation Area character~~ appraisal and management plan has the status of ~~a Supplementary Planning Document~~[planning guidance](#). [It replaces the previous character appraisal and management guidelines, adopted in 2009](#). It should be read in conjunction with Tower Hamlet's Local Plan and the London Plan. All planning applications for sites within the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area should be informed by this document. It is a material consideration when planning applications affecting the conservation area are assessed.

### Equality and diversity

8. Valuing diversity is one of the council's core values, and we take pride in being one of the most culturally rich and diverse boroughs in the UK. This core value has informed the preparation of this document and will continue to inform changes to this document in the future. These values will also inform changes to buildings and places and as such this document provides guidance to ensure inclusivity for all members of the community.
9. This character appraisal and management plan will support the council's aims set out below:
  - Creation of a strong spirit of community and good race relations in Tower Hamlets

- The removal of prejudice, discrimination and victimisation within the communities we serve and our workforce
  - To ensure that the Borough's communities and our workforce are not discriminated against or bullied for any reason, including reasons associated with their gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religious belief.
10. Please contact us if you feel that this document could do more to promote equality and further the interests of the whole community.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

11. The Whitechapel Market Conservation Area was designated in December 1997 and [the boundary was last](#) extended in 2008. ~~This document replaces the appraisal adopted in 2009. The conservation area measures 58,724m<sup>2</sup> with a total of 145 buildings.~~ The boundary ~~will be~~ [was further](#) amended [in 2021](#), when this document was adopted, following ~~the a~~ public consultation. One small area ~~will~~ [was](#) be removed and instead incorporated in the adjoining Myrdle Street Conservation Area to the south west. ~~Full details of the proposed alterations to the conservation area boundary, as well as a map, are included in Appendix 1.~~
12. The conservation area lies between Cambridge Heath Road to the east and the Davenant Centre to the west, Whitechapel Road to the south and Durward Street to the north. The area is of particular special architectural and historic interest, illustrated by its rich history and significant architecture fronting Whitechapel Road, much of which dates from the eighteenth and nineteenth ~~century~~ [centuries](#). Whitechapel Road itself is an important and historically significant movement route within East London. The street market, which runs along the Whitechapel Road frontage, brings character and vitality to the area

13. The character and appearance of the area, as described in the appraisal in the first part of the document, define its special qualities. The second part of the document, the Management Plan, contains relevant policy and guidance as well as development guidelines intended to ensure that future change is sensitive to the area's special character.

## 1.1. Location and Setting

14. The Whitechapel Market Conservation Area is located centrally within the borough, to the east of Whitechapel ward.
15. The conservation area is towards the western end of the A11, an ancient route linking the City with Essex and Continental Europe via Harwich. The new parish of Whitechapel, originally part of the parish of Stepney, developed as a suburb of London around this ancient route, taking its name from the white-washed walls of the thirteenth century chapel (the parish church of St Mary). The railway occupies much of the northern section of the conservation area. The form and variety of the properties fronting Whitechapel Road reflect the street's consistently intensive use throughout the borough's history.
16. The Whitechapel Road frontage is significant because it is a sustained stretch of fine grain historic buildings, with a variety of architectural design approaches. Some eighteenth century buildings still survive, reflecting the older framework of the original market place and commercial architecture of the time. Whitechapel Underground and Crossrail Station is centrally located in the shopping frontage, serving as a focal point for pedestrian movement.
17. The main focus of the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area is the market itself and the row of buildings adjoining the market, between Vallance Road and Cambridge Heath Road. The market area consists of a very broad pavement, with stalls lining the Whitechapel Road roadside. The stalls occupying the pavement ~~present a virtually unbroken line~~ from Vallance

Road to Cambridge Heath Road. These are permanent pitches taken up by traders.

18. Although there is some variety in buildings heights within the conservation area, buildings do not generally exceed four storeys. The boundaries of the conservation area are largely defined by the extent of the market and the historic terrace which fronts it along the northern side of Whitechapel Road. There is also generally a clear contrast in architectural articulation, scale and plot size outside the conservation area boundary. The Grade II listed former Royal London Hospital building opposite on the southern side of Whitechapel Road provides a fantastic setting for the conservation area.
19. Towards the northern end of the conservation area the siting of buildings and plot widths become more varied and less ordered. ~~This continues beyond the northern boundary of the conservation area, with most buildings dating from the twentieth century. To the south are the London Hospital and Myrdle Street Conservation Areas which each have their own special character.~~
20. This continues beyond the northern boundary of the conservation area, with most buildings dating from the twentieth century. To the south are the London Hospital and Myrdle Street Conservation Areas which each have their own special character.

# WHITECHAPEL MARKET CONSERVATION AREA



## WHITECHAPEL MARKET CONSERVATION AREA

-  Conservation Area
-  Statutory Listed Buildings
-  Locally Listed Buildings

## 2.0 HISTORIC CONTEXT

### 2.1. Evolution of the area

21. Whitechapel derived its name from the ~~white-washed~~ whitewashed walls of the medieval church of St Mary Matfelon, which stood at the eastern end of Whitechapel High Street until its destruction by bombing during World War II. The historic parish of Whitechapel stretched from Aldgate eastwards towards Brady Street in the conservation area. Whitechapel Road has great significance in the development of East London; its origin is Roman and it was one of the major routes into the City of London, connecting Aldgate to Colchester in Essex. The road was moved south to its current alignment in the 12th century when Bow Bridge was built over the River Lea.
  
22. The eastern end of Whitechapel parish (including the area now covered by this conservation area) was once known as the Towns End and in Saxon and ~~Medieval~~ medieval times, the area had a distinctly country feel. Gascoyne's map of 1703 demonstrates that the stretch along the Whitechapel Road was comparatively open compared to its western end, which was fairly built up by this time, with pasture and market gardens lying to the north and south. Whitechapel Green was located behind what is now Whitechapel underground station, with a village pond (on Ducking Pond Lane), manor's dog pound (on Dog Row), a blacksmith, a 'music house', surrounded by shops and drinking establishments.
  
23. The first Davenant School, at nos. 179-181 Whitechapel Road, was built in the 1680s; part funded by Ralph Davenant, a former rector of St Mary's Church in Whitechapel, to clothe and educate up to 70 children. It was rebuilt in 1818 to accommodate up to 200 children thanks to donations from local benefactors. The school was extended in 1896 with the construction of a second building to the rear, renamed the Davenant Foundation School. The buildings are still in educational use, now run by the YMCA as George Williams College, and represent a significant part of the educational history

in the area. The private courtyard garden behind Whitechapel Road provides a distinctively quiet and reflective contrast to the busy main road.

24. In the 1720's, the creation of ~~Mile-End turnpike~~ [the Middlesex and Essex Turnpike with a toll gate known as Mile End Gate between Whitechapel Road and Mile End Road \(slightly to the west of the junction between Mile End Road and Dog Row on Whitechapel Road at the junction with Dog Row \(now Cambridge Heath Road\)](#) along with the establishment of the Royal London Hospital in 1757 ~~initiated~~ [contributed to](#) the growth of commercial and residential uses in the area which started to attract migrants from Essex, Suffolk and beyond into the area, being close to the affluent City. By the end of the century, the Town's End had become an area that contained a busy and noisy coach road and turnpike, along with a large distillery, brewery, slaughterhouse and small scale industry (manufacturing tallow, glue, rubber, soap, [and](#) tar). The area also had alms houses, a debtors' prison, a courthouse, a charity school, a cemetery, hospital, a house for stray dogs, stables and farriers. Whilst modest suburban development sprang up around the hospital, along the north side of Whitechapel Road, Horwood's map of 1813 shows narrow building frontages and the emergence of a pattern of narrow lanes and yards between them, e.g. Court Street and Woods Buildings, names which still exist today.
  
25. There had been a brewery on the Albion Brewery site fronting Whitechapel Road and to the rear, the current Sainsbury site on Cambridge Heath Road since 1808, rebuilt in 1863. It was considered one of the most advanced breweries of the time, producing 250,000 barrels a year and containing a stable for 150 horses. The brewery site closed in 1980; the buildings on Whitechapel Road converted to flats and the rear for Sainsbury supermarket. The area historically had a large number of public houses – at least ten between Vallance Road and Cambridge Heath Road in the late 18th century. The only public house left is the Blind Beggar, reflecting the change in the demographics of the area; however some of the public house names remain on buildings as a reminder of a former era, e.g. the Lord Napier and the Grave Maurice.

26. Other entertainment could be found at the Pavilion Theatre at nos. 191-193 Whitechapel Road, which stretched far behind the main road (since demolished, now a vacant site), in business from 1827 to 1934, and attracted every type of resident, but from 1900 became known for staging Jewish plays. The street front had a three-bay stuccoed classical edifice, ~~of adding~~ some grandeur to the local context, it had capacity for over 1800 ~~people~~ by 1908 and was dubbed 'the Drury Lane of the East'.
27. The area has become an important focus for the area's Bangladeshi community; the ~~The~~ East End ~~has historically~~ has always been an area for immigration, as new arrivals came to London via its docks and settled close-by. In the 1860s, many people arrived from Ireland, fleeing famine and looking for work in the docks. In the 1870-80s, Jewish refugees from Russia and Eastern Europe arrived, escaping persecution, and set up clothing sweatshops in Whitechapel and Bethnal Green. By 1901, a third of the East End population was of foreign origin.
28. The Victorian East End accommodated a range of industries and crafts which needed to be close to the City. Industries were as likely to be home based or located within small workshops as they were within larger ~~purpose built~~ purpose-built factories. Occupations in the premises along the Whitechapel Road included linen draper, haberdasher, mercer, furniture dealer, dealer in china, glass and earthenware, oil and colour man, hosier and glover, dressmaker, milliner, wholesale tobacconist. Behind Whitechapel Road were warehouses and factories, e.g. a rag warehouse, a colour making factory and a glass warehouse.
29. Overcrowded terraced cottage slums housed the working class often in appalling conditions and so the eastern end of Whitechapel, like the western end, became synonymous with poverty and destitution. The back streets were a maze of disreputable yards, courts and narrow streets, forming the backdrop to the infamous Whitechapel murders. Much of this was cleared for the railway. Slum clearance in the 1970s removed the terraces on

Winthrop Street, Durward Street and Brady Street, the open space was used as a second hand market until it was replaced in 1996 with the Kempton Court development, included within the conservation area.

30. The obvious deprivation within the area, meant that eventually it became the focus for Victorian philanthropic endeavour, galvanised by William and Catherine Booth, who set up the Salvation Army. A Methodist, William Booth was known to preach in front of the Blind Beggar public house and on the Mile End waste, immediately to the east of the conservation area, where a statue of him stands. A Salvation Army 'Lifehouse' (hostel) was in operation until 2018 at Booth House at 153- 175 Whitechapel Road, immediately to the west of the conservation area.
31. An example is the former Working Lads' Institute at 279-281 Whitechapel Road, [which](#) was founded in 1878 by a city merchant called Henry Hill. Originally it contained a library and classrooms, as well as a lecture hall, a swimming bath, a ~~fully-equipped~~[fully equipped](#) gym (which were compulsory purchased and demolished to make way for the Whitechapel and Bow Railway in 1900). In 1897 the premises became a Methodist mission and hostel for friendless and homeless boys. It was sold in 1971 and the upper storeys were converted to flats in 1997.
32. In the 1880s, a working men's club was founded in a building behind the warehouse on nos. 223-225 Whitechapel Road; it was a popular Jewish socialist club that sold coffee, had notices in Russian and Yiddish [and](#) was visited ~~once~~ by Russian revolutionaries Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky and Gorky ~~visited~~ in 1907.
33. A ragged school for 500 children was built in 1862 at 6 Durward Street called the Buck's Row School ~~Street~~ on land donated to the parish of Whitechapel by George Torr, a proprietor of manure works to the north of the conservation area. It was later transferred to the School Board for London, ~~who~~[which](#) replaced the school with a larger school to accommodate 828 children in 1876-7. It was built on a tight square plan, limited in space ([partly](#) due to the arrival of the ~~railway~~[East London Railway in 1865-76](#)) so is

unusually tall and compact, with a covered playground ~~on~~<sup>in</sup> the [northern part of the](#) ground floor (arches since bricked in) and [a roof playground](#) on ~~at~~<sup>the</sup> railed [flat roof](#) ~~area~~. The school closed in 1911 and the building was used for a variety of light industrial uses such as a clothing factory, manufacture of wireless cabinets and coffee warehouse. Like much of the immediate local area, there was a period of dereliction following the Second World War, before it was converted [in](#)to flats in 1996-97 and renamed Trinity Hall. The building is undesignated but makes a significant positive contribution to Durward Street. The building will form an impressive backdrop to the proposed open space immediately to the west of the building on Durward Street, providing a valuable contrast to the busy market area on Whitechapel Road.

34. The arrival and subsequent extensions of the railway (~~3~~<sup>three</sup> times over a period of nearly 40 years from 1865 to 1904) had a major impact on the area. The former shophouse at nos. 275- 277 was acquired by the East London Railway Company, whose railway linked north and south London, [and they](#) opened a station in 1876. This is the station building used today. The Metropolitan Railway constructed a line from Aldgate to Whitechapel and added a second station called 'Whitechapel and Mile End' with a single storey booking hall (now a coffee shop) next to the existing station. This line was further extended to Bromley-by-Bow at the end of the century and the stations were unified into nos. 275-277 in 1904. The result was substantial demolition, underpinning and reconstruction behind 297-317 Whitechapel Road. Some properties were truncated or completely demolished. The five shallow lock-up shops at nos. 303-317 built over what is effectively a bridge over the railway line, date from this time.
  
35. The market on the north side of Whitechapel Road has existed for some two hundred years. [It has continually evolved to serve the surrounding population and over recent decades has become a particularly important focus for the Borough's thriving Bangladeshi community, and it is an integral part of the area.](#) [It is a unique place with a rich and distinctive street life which continues to flourish.](#) The exceptionally wide pavement on the north

side of Whitechapel and Mile End Road (either side of the Mile End tollgate) was historically known as the 'waste', or common manorial land. In the 1850s there were stalls and costermongers' barrows along the north of Whitechapel Road from St. Mary (Davenant Street) to Charrington's Brewery in Mile End Old Town. After the Whitechapel District Board of Works paved several sections between the road and the footways with small granite setts in 1863, the market blossomed. Temporary stalls made with canvas sheeting and framing-rod uprights, with naphtha lamps on rods to light the space, were erected along the waste, which provided a colourful scene. Over the years the authorities tried to restrict the market, but finally in 1910 it became regulated. The market changed over the years; by the 1970s, it was known for clothing, jewellery, flowers, second-hand records and hi-fi equipment and by the 1980s the market was again changing, ~~as it reflects~~ [reflecting](#) the growing Bangladeshi population within the area. The market's street furniture was renewed as part of the High Street 2012 project.

36. The area was extensively damaged by bombing in World War II; several buildings lay derelict or were cleared after the war as the construction of new housing outside of London took priority over the reconstruction in the East End. By the mid twentieth century, the Jewish community was dispersing towards the suburbs. In the 1970s, the area became predominantly Bangladeshi as refugees moved to the area seeking work. The Bangladeshi community make up over half the ward's population and contribute to the existing character of this area. Today, the market is an important local centre and borders [the](#) major redevelopment of the [Royal London Hospital](#) to the south.

## 2.2. Historic architectural significance of buildings

37. The majority of buildings within the conservation area contribute positively to the special character of the conservation area and together form a cohesive group.

38. An extensive study of buildings in the Whitechapel area can be found in the Survey of London Whitechapel project, produced by the Bartlett School of Architecture, available at <https://surveyoflondon.org/>.
39. There are a number of listed buildings within the conservation area. Relevant Historic England list descriptions are available at <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>

### **Grade II Listed Buildings**

#### The Davenant Centre, No. 179 Whitechapel Road (former Davenant Foundation School)

40. Former Davenant Foundation School built in c. 1818 of yellow brick with stone coping and cornice. Stone band above first floor with central engraved name plate. The building comprises two storeys over semi-basement. Originally there would have been steps up to the raised ground floor entrance, but the floor level was lowered in order to provide level access.
41. The original school was built on the site in the 1680s, but the building was rebuilt in 1818 to accommodate more students. In 1895 two additional blocks were built to the rear of the site. These were intended to accommodate boys, with the front building accommodating girls.

#### The Davenant Centre (rear block) (former Davenant Foundation School)

42. This block formed part of an extension to the Davenant Foundation School in 1895 and was intended to accommodate the boys, while the front building accommodated the girls. Designed by Frank Ponler Telfer in the Jacobean style and built of red brick with terracotta dressings, mullion and transom windows with some leaded lights. The building comprises two storeys, with two prominent gables to the north and south elevations. At ground floor level the building is entirely arcaded, designed to retain the play space on which it was built. The first floor is accessed via an external brick staircase.

#### K2 Telephone Kiosk opposite London Hospital, Whitechapel Road

43. Telephone Kiosk on the north side of Whitechapel Road opposite the Royal London Hospital dating from 1927 and designed by Giles Gilbert Scott. Cast iron square kiosk of K2 type with domed roof, perforated crowns to top panel and glazing bars to windows and door.

K2 Telephone Kiosk outside Albion Brewery, Whitechapel Road

44. Telephone Kiosk outside the Albion Brewery on the north side of Whitechapel Road dating from 1927 and designed by Giles Gilbert Scott. Cast iron square kiosk of K2 type with domed roof, perforated crowns to top panel and glazing bars to windows and door.

Albion Brewery (entrance block), Whitechapel Road

45. The entrance block to the former Albion Brewery was built in the early nineteenth century. The eastern block comprises four storeys with a central entrance at ground floor. It is built of yellow stock brick with stone coping and a string course between each floor. There is a wrought iron overthrow over the entrance gate piers in front of the main entrance building which is set back from the road. This block comprises two storeys and is also of yellow stock brick, with stone dressings. There is a carriage entrance beneath a broken pediment with decorated tympanum with the name 'Albion Brewery'. Above first floor there is a large stone decorative gable with pediment and centrally positioned clock face with flag pole above. Two storey entrance lodge of white stone to the east of the gate piers.

King Edward VII Jewish Memorial Drinking Fountain opposite main entrance to London Hospital, Whitechapel Road

46. King Edward VII Jewish Memorial Drinking Fountain opposite the main entrance to the London Hospital built in 1911. White stone drinking fountain with tapered central square pillar surmounted by a bronze angel. The faces bear bronze figures of angels and cherubs and a portrait head of King Edward VII in low relief. A plaque records that the fountain was erected in memory of the King by the Jewish inhabitants of East London.

Nos. 261 and 263 Whitechapel Road

47. Nos. 261 and 263, originally built as two houses in c.1767-72, now combined. The houses were at one stage rendered, but this was removed when they were restored as part of the High Street 2012 project. These, together with nos. 265 and 267, are the oldest surviving building on this section of Whitechapel Road (north side). Original m-shaped mansard roofs survive. Yellow stock brickwork restored/rebuilt following the removal of render in 2012. Timber sash windows installed at first and second floor levels as part of the 2012 restoration.

Nos. 265 and 267 Whitechapel Road

48. Nos. 265 and 267, originally built as two houses in c.1767-72, now combined. The houses were at one stage rendered, but this was removed when they were restored as part of the High Street 2012 project. These, together with nos. 261 and 263, are the oldest surviving buildings on this section of Whitechapel Road (north side). Original m-shaped mansard roofs survive. Yellow stock brickwork restored in 2012, rendered string course between first and second floor levels. Timber sash windows at first and second floor levels, with casements to dormers. Arched entrance through to Wood's Buildings under no 265.

Parish Boundary Marker at corner of Fulbourne Street and Durward Street

49. Boundary marker for the parish of Christ Church, Spitalfields. Iron, cast with the date 1818 and the legend CHt CH - MIDD. Circular, cannon type, of unusually large size and early date.

**Locally Listed Buildings**

Nos. 255-259 (odd) Whitechapel Road

50. Group of three, three storey properties. Ground floor retail with residential above. Originally developed around 1675, No. 255 was rebuilt in 1873, whilst No. 257 was rebuilt following a fire in c.1881. It was extended in 1936

and then further rebuilt in c.1975. Each property has two windows on each of the upper floors. No. 253 has modern replacement window, whilst Nos. 257 and 259 have two over two sash windows. Nos. 253 and 259 retain a brickwork façade, No. 257 has a rendered facade. The properties are notable for their humble scale which is a reminder of an earlier era. Nos. 257 and 259 Whitechapel Road were restored as part of the High Street 2012 project.

#### Nos. 279-281 (odd) Whitechapel Road, former Working Lads' Institute

51. Built of red brick with Portland stone dressings, including window dressings, brackets to the gables and other features this building was funded by contributions from the ~~corporation~~ [Corporation](#) of London livery companies city vestries and wealthy individuals. It was intended to promote the education and welfare of working boys. With a faintly Flemish feeling, this tall five storey building is a landmark within the local area. It incorporates a wealth of detail arranged in a hierarchical fashion. The three ~~bays~~ [bay](#) windows on the front lit a reading room for 150 boys. Originally accommodating facilities including a swimming pool, the rear section of the building was demolished in 1899-1900 to make way for the Whitechapel and Bow Railway. The façade (above the shopfront) was restored in 2012 as part of the High Street 2012 project.

### 2.3. Archaeological significance

52. The Whitechapel Market Conservation Area straddles three Tier 2 Archaeological Priority Areas (APA), as identified by Historic England in its update of APAs, completed for Tower Hamlets in October 2017:
  - Whitechapel APA
  - Mile End APA
  - London to Colchester Roman Road APA
53. APAs highlight where important archaeological interest might be located based, including potential for new discoveries, based ~~one~~ [on](#) the history of

the area and previous archaeological investigations. APAs in Tier 2 are described as those on which the Greater London Historic Environment Record 'holds specific evidence indicating the presence or likely presence of heritage assets of archaeological interest'.

54. The Whitechapel APA covers the western end of the conservation area, which runs along the Whitechapel Road corridor from its junction with Osborn Street near Aldgate as far as Court Street, just west of Whitechapel underground station. It is a Tier 2 APA for its potential to contain remains of Roman and later activity including settlement along a historic routeway.
55. The Mile End APA runs from Court Street, next to the boundary of the Whitechapel APA to Cambridge Health Road. It also includes the London Hospital Conservation Area. It is a Tier 2 APA due to its potential for medieval and post medieval remains from the historic Mile End New Town settlement and possible Civil War defences.
56. The London to Colchester Road APA follows the line of a Roman Road from Aldgate to Colchester, which was diverted southwards to its current alignment via Mile End and Bow in the 12th century. It is categorised as a Tier 2 APA for its potential to contain Roman remains and roadside activity.
57. For more information please see the Greater London Archaeological Priority Area Guidelines published in July 2016, available on the Historic England website. The website also provides a link to the Tower Hamlets Archaeological Priority Areas Appraisal produced by Historic England (2017), where further descriptions and maps of the APAs are provided.
58. [paragraph deleted] ~~It should be noted that the APA review document has been published as evidence in support of an emerging development plan which has not yet been adopted.~~

## 3.0 TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

### 3.1. General historic character and plan form

59. The piecemeal development of much of London's East End contrasts with the planning that occurred in the west of the city. Victorian East London was characterised by densely built urban communities, with houses crowded into rambling narrow streets and courts, mixed in with the industry that provided employment. The arrival of the railway in the late 19th century, running west to east and north to south, had a significant impact on the area, e.g. the truncation of the rear of plots along the Whitechapel Road and the widening of Bakers Row (now Vallance Road). The railway continues to be a dominant feature within the conservation area today.
60. The Whitechapel Road frontage is significant because it is a sustained stretch of fine grain historic buildings, with a variety of architectural design approaches. Rebuilding and partial rebuilding has taken place many times over the same sites, resulting in overlays of building forms and styles. Some eighteenth century buildings still survive, reflecting the original market place and commercial architecture of the time. There are also 19th century buildings, and the frontage includes a range of Victorian architectural styles. The resulting variety of architecture contributes to the historic interest and cultural significance of the area and makes a positive contribution to the area's townscape. Whilst the style and form of buildings vary, there is a consistent, relatively small scale to most of the historic buildings within the area; this scale is an important characteristic.
61. The main focus of the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area is the market itself, which has existed for over 200 years, and the row of buildings adjoining the market, between Vallance Road and Brady Street. The market area consists of a very broad pavement, with stalls lining the Whitechapel Road roadside. The stalls occupying the pavement present a virtually unbroken line from Vallance Road to Cambridge Heath Road. These are permanent pitches taken up by traders.
62. The District and Hammersmith & City platforms of Whitechapel Station are located in open, low-level cuttings running parallel to the market frontage. A

branch of the London Overground (running north – south) passes beneath them with the Elizabeth Line platforms at a lower level. To the north-east of the site is an area of new residential development on Durward Street, having provision for commercial use ~~on~~at ground floor level with residential above. The open space in front of the former school on Durward Street provides a quiet contrast to the vibrant street market on Whitechapel Road.

### 3.2. Layout and plan form

63. The fine grain of the conservation area is expressed by its relatively narrow plots and building frontages. The widths of buildings along Whitechapel Road vary quite considerably, but are generally between 4m and 11m. Most buildings fill the full plot and are generally on rectangular footprints. The railway, forming a significant footprint within the conservation area, has limited the depth of the plots along Whitechapel Road, with single storey shops at nos. 303-317 not exceeding 3m deep. Elsewhere along Whitechapel Road they are deeper, but generally have very limited rear yards or external rear areas.
  
64. The urban fabric of the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area retains much of its historic form, based on a tight perimeter block structure. Narrow streets on bridges over the railway connect Whitechapel Road to Durward Street. The only yard to remain is Woods Buildings, but it is closed off to public access. Consolidated continuous frontages, strongly defined ~~red~~ street edges and buildings are located right at the edge of footways. Commercial units activate main frontages, with the market lining the wide pavement on the northern side of Whitechapel Road for much of the length of the conservation area. The only areas of public open space are the market itself on a broad pavement, running along the north side of Whitechapel Road and a small area behind the station on Durward Street.

### 3.3. Density and land uses

65. The land use character of the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area is mixed use.
66. Small-scale, mostly independent retail and commercial enterprises, including cafes and restaurants, typify the land use along [the Whitechapel](#) Road frontage, with offices and residential flats on upper floors. Retail units and the market serve the distinct retail needs of the local neighbourhood, such as Bangladeshi fruit and vegetables, often unavailable in other parts of the city. The Whitechapel Market Conservation Area remains distinctive from surrounding areas due to the cohesive and fine grain nature of the built form, which provides a backdrop to the hustle and bustle surrounding the market, retail shops and station.
67. ~~Beyond retain, the~~ [The](#) area continues the historical precedence of providing health and educational services to the community, such as the Whitechapel Idea Store, a health centre, a children's services provider, a drug and alcohol support service and the YMCA George William's College.

### 3.4. Building heights and massing

68. The buildings of the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area reflect the historic scale of inner London. The Whitechapel Road frontage is typified by relatively narrow plot widths with terraces punctuated by narrow streets over the railway to Durward Street. Solutions adopted historically to maximize usage of limited and restrictive sites included the construction of tall buildings relative to their plot width. The buildings are therefore generally between three and five storeys (with some at one or two storeys), sometimes adopting mansard roofs to further maximize internal space. Similarly buildings to the rear of the railway have had to adapt to limited plot size, such as the former Bucks Street School (now Trinity Hall) and Kempton Court.

69. The location of the railway has limited development to the rear of the buildings fronting Whitechapel Road, resulting in a medley of uncoordinated extensions and haphazard development occupying the space.
70. Variations in the width, height and style of buildings have developed gradually within plots over time, allowing a variety of buildings to exist as a harmonious and cohesive group in a dense urban context. This subtle variety in height, accentuated by architectural treatment, creates a charming organic character and is an important attribute.

### 3.5. Topography and important views

71. The Whitechapel Market Conservation Area is generally flat and therefore all important views are shaped by the form of the built environment. Views in the area run along street axes, including the long views east and west ~~through~~ along Whitechapel Road, highlighting the historic street frontages along the north side of Whitechapel Road and exposing the colourful open space market activity, with the former Royal London Hospital building a distinctive visual landmark to the south. As well as static views, kinetic views are important throughout the conservation area. Moving along Whitechapel Road, there are very few elements that project up above the roof lines of the eighteenth and nineteenth century terraces, giving the distinctive varied roofline and chimneys prominence along the northern side of the street. The roofline is expressive of the architectural and historic variety of the properties which make up the long and varied terraces on the important sites facing the market.

### 3.6. Landscape character

72. Whitechapel Market Conservation Area has a distinctly urban character, with hard surfaces, and very little open space. The Whitechapel Market Conservation Area is defined by a hard building edge along Whitechapel Road, and the largest open space is the market itself, stretching along a broad area of pavement. There are very few trees within the conservation area and no areas of public green space. The open spaces of the market

erand that on Durward Street offer some respite from the densely built-up area, but these areas are also hard landscaped.

## 4.0 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

73. Almost all buildings within the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area make a positive contribution to the special character of the conservation area and together they form a cohesive group. These buildings are identified as positive contributors due to their siting, building envelope and massing, appearance and materials. All buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area should be preserved and where alterations are proposed these should enhance their contribution to the conservation area. Demolition of any positive contributors will not be supported. Equally, any alteration that is not sympathetic to the special character of the conservation area will not be supported.

### 4.1 Building typology and form

74. The varied buildings fronting the main streets within the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area are largely individual buildings interspersed between short terraces. There is a broadly consistent scale, with relatively minor variations in building heights and frontage widths. The relatively narrow plot widths and variety of architectural treatments give a subtle vertical emphasis even where buildings are joined together in long rows.

75. The conservation area includes a range of architectural styles reflecting the organic growth of the area. Three of the most significant groups of buildings in the area, the former Albion Brewery buildings, the former Davenant Foundation School buildings and Nos. 261-267 Whitechapel Road highlight the contrast in architectural style and materials within the conservation area.

76. In addition to these buildings, many of the facades along Whitechapel Road stand out in terms of their ornamental richness. Some examples include Nos. 189, 279-283, 285, 317 and 337 Whitechapel Road. Red or yellow

brick walls form the background to white stone or contrasting brick window dressings and mullions, decorative cornices, string courses and in some instances even quoins on bay windows. Decorative gables and parapets either expose or conceal roofs behind, some with dormer windows. Prominent chimneys characterise the varied roof scape.

77. Other buildings reflect this materiality in more modest and simplified ways with pitched roof slopes or flat roofs concealed behind high parapets or gables. Ornamentation is usually limited to lintels and cornices on these buildings.
78. Away from Whitechapel Road, buildings vary more in terms of their siting on their plots, scale and massing. The Kempton Court development at [No. 2](#) Durward Street comprises long consistent blocks that are of a height that is generally in keeping with the character and appearance of the conservation area.

## 4.2 Key architectural features and building materials

79. The area is characterised by a number of building materials. There is a prevailing use of red and yellow stock brick on many buildings, which is often decorated with architectural ornament in other materials including stone, stucco, render and terracotta. Facades are largely flat with architectural features adding depth and texture. Roof slopes are predominantly hidden behind high parapets or gable ends. Windows are mostly timber sashes, with some examples of metal framed windows.
80. Stone window surrounds, sometimes including projecting sills, mullions and transoms or contrasting brickwork surrounds appear on historic buildings. Decorative stone or stucco cornices emphasise the horizontal composition of some façades. Original shopfronts were made mostly of timber, and although many of the inappropriate modern shopfronts were replaced with timber framed shopfronts as part of the High Street 2012 project, a number

of later metal shopfronts remain. Despite the loss of historic shopfronts many historic shopfront pilasters and corbels survive.

81. The entrance to Whitechapel Underground Station is centrally located in the shopping frontage, serving as a focal point for pedestrian movement. One of the older Underground stations in London, the station was built in 1876. The attractive facade to Whitechapel Road remains but ~~and is an attractive building constructed of white glazed brickwork on ground floor and Suffolk white brick on the upper floors.~~ much of the station, behind the façade was demolished in connection with construction of the Elizabeth Line. The former 'Whitechapel and Mile End' station, connecting Whitechapel to Aldgate, is located in the building next door at No. 275 Whitechapel Road and is now a coffee shop.
82. Although some shops retain incongruous modern ~~fascias~~ fascia signs, many buildings retain their original features above ground level – arches, keystones, segmental pediments, dormers, and bay windows give ~~this row of buildings~~ the row of buildings fronting the market a rich character. This richness is accentuated when it forms part of long oblique views along ~~the road~~ Whitechapel Road.

### Articulation of the elevations

83. Facades are predominantly flat with architectural features adding depth and texture. Stone window framing, sometimes including projecting sills, mullions and transoms appears on historic and modern buildings. The recessing of windows, together with the use of projecting cills, or mouldings is characteristic of the area and creates architectural depth. Elsewhere features such as contrasting brickwork, moulded brickwork, terracotta or stone detailing, or banded brickwork are employed as architectural decoration.
84. A number of buildings include architectural inscriptions relating to their former use such as the Lord Napier public house, Rose House, and Working Lads' Institute. These should be retained or revealed where hidden.

## Windows

85. Windows form a key part of the architecture within the conservation area and original or historic windows that are in keeping with the host building and wider character of the conservation area should always be retained where possible. A wide variety of historic window frames survive or have been replicated within the area, the windows are predominantly timber sash in a variety of glazing patterns. It is important that windows are in keeping with the age and style of the individual host building in order to reinforce the character ~~and or~~ appearance of the conservation area.

## Shopfronts

86. Old photographs show a wide variety of high quality shopfronts along Whitechapel Road reflecting the commercial importance of the area. Over time many of these shopfronts were replaced by inappropriate metal framed shopfronts without stallrisers along with large, garish, internally illuminated fascia signs.
87. The High Street 2012 initiative, part funded by the council, included the installation of a number of new shopfronts, which were designed to be appropriate to the relevant host building. ~~This~~Works included the replacement of inappropriate fascia signs with signs ~~in~~of a scale appropriate relative to the ~~rest of the~~host building; ~~and~~ and revealing or reinstating architectural details, such as corbels. Some shop fronts were reconstructed in timber-~~including~~ with pilasters, corbels, cornices and stall risers. This initiative has resulted in a noticeable improvement to the appearance of the area. It is essential that future replacement shopfronts maintain the quality established by the 2012 scheme.

## 5.0 PUBLIC REALM AND OPEN SPACE

### 5.1. Streets roads and yards

88. There is a distinct hierarchy of streets within the conservation area, with primary routes being Whitechapel Road, Cambridge Heath Road and

Vallance Road. ~~The road~~[Whitechapel Road](#) is a busy thoroughfare – ~~the width of Whitechapel Road~~ ~~its width~~ reflects its status as [an](#) important historic connecting route, being a main route into and out of the City since the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Historic streets remain although they have undergone name changes over the years, e.g. Cambridge Heath Road was Dog Row and Derwent Street was Ducking Pond Row. Smaller historic streets/ alleys connect Whitechapel Road and Derwent Street, such as Fulbourne Street, Court Street (with bridges over the railway track) and Brady Street; most of the historic yards have long since disappeared.

89. The focal point of the conservation areas is the frontage, wide pavement and market along Whitechapel Road. The road itself has is a high volume of car, van and bus traffic, segregated blue cycle lanes and a wide pavement. Important junctions and traffic lights can be found at the junction with Vallance Road/ New Road and Cambridge Heath Road/ Sidney Street. The dominance of traffic, parking and highway related features can detract from the quality of the space and the conservation area.

## 5.2. Street surfaces

90. The main streets within the conservation area have contemporary surfacing, including grey asphalt or concrete paving slabs on footways, blue asphalt on the cycle lanes and dark grey asphalt on carriageways, bounded by narrow concrete kerbs. Some historic surfacing still exists, e.g. granite setts, kerb and stone flags in Court Street, Winthrop Street and the entrance to the former Albion Brewery; elsewhere it may be hidden with a surface covering of asphalt.

## 5.3. Street furniture

91. Most street furniture is modern except for two grade II listed K2 phone boxes, located on Whitechapel Road in front of the former Albion Brewery and ~~nos~~[Nos.](#) 245-249 Whitechapel Road.

92. Street furniture includes telephone boxes, bollards, litter bins, bus shelters, benches and lamp columns. Unfortunately street furniture along Whitechapel Road is often poorly maintained and has a tendency to attract rubbish and market paraphernalia, which can have a negative impact on the conservation area (see section 6.0 below).
93. Most of the lamp columns within the area are modern and functional, although in some instance these have been chosen with the historic character of the area in mind, e.g. Brady Street. Further lighting is provided along the length of the market, adding atmosphere to the market out of daylight hours.

#### 5.4. Whitechapel Market

94. There are pitches provided for market stall holders, operating along the northern side of Whitechapel Road from Monday to Saturday daytimes. The stalls are de-mountable and when not in use, are stored within nos. 5-9 Vallance Road. Goods are brought to market by vans which are parked along the Whitechapel Road behind the market stalls themselves.
95. The run of market stalls provides a secluded space along the pavement away from the busy Whitechapel Road, which improves the experience of visitors. However the large number van parking arrangements and the dominance of highways related features all detract from the quality of this important public space. The quietness of Durward Street and the open space in front of the former school provides a contrast to the vibrant street market on Whitechapel Road.

#### 5.5. Public art

96. The Grade II listed, King Edward VII Jewish Memorial Drinking Fountain, located in front of ~~no.~~No. 259 Whitechapel Road (opposite the main entrance of the former Royal London Hospital) is the only public monument within the Conservation Area. It is an attractive stone monument with fine

decorative bronze sculpture but its setting is often spoiled by the large amount of rubbish and market related paraphernalia located around it.

## 5.6. Street trees

97. The street scene of Whitechapel Market Conservation Area is dominated by buildings and hard landscaping, this makes the few trees within the area all the more important. Street trees on the south side of Whitechapel Road (within the London Hospital Conservation Area) contribute to the setting of the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area. A further five trees are planned on the south side of the road with the new civic centre development. There are also trees within the Kempton Court estate, but this area is [private amenity space and is](#) not publicly accessible.

## 6.0 ~~ISSUES AND THREATS~~ HERITAGE AUDIT

98. The condition of buildings in the Whitechapel Market Conservation [Area](#) varies.
99. The facades of many of the properties along the Whitechapel Road frontage were recently restored as part of the High Street 2012 improvements but the roofs and rear parts of many of these properties remain in noticeably poor repair and many have been subject to inappropriate alterations. Many of these properties are leasehold and subject to much sub-letting and historically there appears to be an issue establishing who is responsible for carrying out much needed repairs.
100. Some of the buildings away from the market are also in a poor condition. The small group of buildings at nos. 5-9 Valance Road have been derelict for many years. Cumulatively, lack of investment, inappropriate alteration and the loss of historic features, threaten the special character and appearance of this important conservation area.
101. There is [a](#) further issue of street clutter within the public realm and market space along Whitechapel Road.

102. It is these same threats which, if addressed, offer the opportunity for significant enhancement.

### 6.1. Lack of investment and inappropriate alterations

103. The exteriors of historic buildings within the area feature a rich variety of materials and details which are a major part of its historic and architectural character. Front elevations of Whitechapel Road were sensitively repaired in 2012 and provide a good example of how sensitive repair has enabled the enhancement of the conservation area.
104. Some elevations of buildings remain in a poor condition due to inappropriate alterations or a lack of investment which can result in a gradual deterioration of the built fabric as maintenance is reduced and the financial contribution towards repairs minimised. This is especially evident on the side streets between Whitechapel Road and Durward Street. ~~repairs minimised. This is especially evident on the side streets between Whitechapel Road and Durward Street.~~
105. Some brick buildings were built with render or stucco applied to the exterior. In several cases the render is in poor condition due to the lack of maintenance or poorly carried out repairs.
106. The rears of properties are often in a poor condition with poorly built, haphazard extensions and alterations. In several cases, original brick facades have been painted to the detriment of the appearance and breathability of the building.
107. The rear parts of many buildings are in poor condition due to lack of maintenance, poorly undertaken repairs and the erection of poor quality extensions and flues, some of which may be visible from the public realm.

### 6.2. Loss of historic features

108. The appearance of some buildings has suffered from the removal of historic architectural features including chimney stacks, original windows and decorative architectural features including cornices and decorative window surrounds. This has harmed the character and appearance of the conservation area.
109. Windows are key historic features. Some inappropriate windows were replaced for the High Street 2012 works, but some inappropriate upper floor windows remain and detract from the appearance of several buildings within the conservation area.
110. In many cases surviving historic features or historic photographs offer appropriate precedents for reinstatement.

### 6.3. Shopfronts, fascia signs and associated features

111. Many shopfronts were improved as part of the High Street 2012 works, but ~~a number but~~ there remain a large number of retail units with poorly designed replacement shopfronts, roller blinds and fascia signs which take no account of the architectural character of the host building and thus detract from the host building and the area generally. ~~the architectural character of the host building and thus detract from the host building and the area generally.~~
112. In many cases original decorative shopfront corbels have been removed along with original cladding materials from decorative pilasters dividing the shop units.
113. Hanging, tripartite signs have been installed at higher level as an appropriate approach for advertising the presence of the large numbers of businesses on upper floors. There are still some inappropriate billboard adverts in the conservation area, e.g. on Vallance Road and on the flank wall of ~~nos.~~ No. 279 Whitechapel Road. There is also some high level graffiti and some extraneous features such as aerials and satellite dishes visible

from the Whitechapel Road frontage ~~and~~ which detract from the appearance of the conservation area.

#### 6.4. Vacant/underused properties and sites

114. The buildings at nos. 5-9 Vallance Road are currently empty (at the time of writing in ~~January 2019~~ September 2021) – the front elevation and roof are scaffolded as the building is considered to be a dangerous structure. ~~and to protect the public.~~ The buildings s forms a group with no. 11 Vallance Road. They, ~~which~~ are a set of fine grain historic buildings with decorative window surrounds, built at shophouses between 1873-6, and are typical of the area. A sensitive refurbishment of the buildings with a façade retention scheme is encouraged. Any development should demonstrate it adequately preserves and or enhances the conservation area. ~~between 1873-6, and are typical of the area. A sensitive refurbishment of the buildings with a façade retention scheme is encouraged. Any development should demonstrate it adequately preserves and enhances the conservation area~~
115. The vast majority of ground floor shops and ground floor commercial units within the conservation area are occupied (at the time of writing in 2019) but there appears to be some underused/vacant floor space on upper floors of buildings within the conservation area. This is a contributing factor to the neglect of building fabric.
116. Within the tight knit building fabric of the conservation area, there is one vacant site at no. 191 Whitechapel Road.
117. The vacant site is located in a significant row of buildings fronting onto one of the borough's most important thoroughfares. Development on the vacant sites within conservation areas must be appropriate in terms of scale and form and architectural quality.

#### 6.5. Development outside the conservation area boundary affecting its setting

118. The Whitechapel Market ~~Street~~ Conservation Area is situated within a densely built up part of the borough. In many ~~existing~~ views within the conservation area the historic skylines of buildings lining the streets are uninterrupted by development beyond the boundary of the conservation area. Surviving unobstructed skylines are a particularly important aspect of the character and appearance of the conservation area.
119. The overall historic scale of the conservation area continues beyond the boundary in most directions so that in many views the setting has a neutral impact on the significance of the conservation area but in some views the scale, bulk and height of the new Royal London Hospital block causes harm to the aesthetic and historical significance of parts of the conservation area. The former Sorting Office at 206 Whitechapel Road and Pauline House on Old Montague Street also cause harm to the setting of the conservation area. Further large developments within the conservation area's setting ~~would cause additional~~ have the potential to cause harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The impact of large developments on the significance of the conservation area, through change in part of its setting, requires careful consideration to ensure that they give great weight to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance, with measures taken to minimise and mitigate unavoidable heritage harm that may be caused.

## 6.6. Public realm and market space

120. This is a particularly densely built up area, with buildings sited at the back edge of pavement and open space to the rear of properties ~~at a minimum is~~ very limited. There is very little open space in the conservation area, but Whitechapel Road is broad, with wide pavements and relatively low rise buildings, so gives the impression of open space in an urban context.
121. The existing modern street surfaces are considered harmful to the character of the conservation area. Where there is the possibility of historic granite

setts surviving below modern finishes, e.g. Winthrop Street and Court Street. ~~The, the~~ repair of the historic street surface or reinstatement with historically appropriate materials would enhance the character of the conservation area.

122. Whitechapel Market is busy and successful. It forms the main public open space in the conservation area, but at times there are large amounts of rubbish on the pavement or in ~~wheelie-weelie~~ bins as well as other market paraphernalia, which accumulates near to street ~~furnishing~~furniture and public monuments, such as the King Edward VII drinking fountain. These factors are considered to have a negative impact on the conservation area.
123. Van parking arrangements along the north carriageway and the dominance of highways related features all detract from the quality of this important public space.
124. There is catenary lighting along the market place which adds atmosphere to the market out of daylight hours, and ~~have historical~~has historic precedence, but lamps are mounted on wires on unattractive plain steel columns which interrupt the sustained stretch of fine grain historic buildings along Whitechapel Road.
125. Of particular concern in terms of street clutter are advertisements attached to street furniture, such as telephone boxes and illuminated free standing posters. These have a degrading effect on the character of conservation areas and the setting of listed buildings with damaging impacts exacerbated when digital screens and internally illuminated signs are used.
126. There are also areas where the variety of bollard designs and variation in signage adds to visual street clutter within the conservation area

## 7.0 INTRODUCTION TO MANAGEMENT PLAN

### 7.1. Background

127. This Management Plan sets out the borough's commitment to high quality management of conservation areas and their settings. The Management Plan provides guidance to residents, businesses and other stakeholders about the special elements of the areas character and how these can be preserved ~~and~~or enhanced. [The management plan also sets out the considerations that should be taken into account at the earliest possible stages of the design process and addressed as part of any planning application](#)
128. Conservation areas are as much about history, people, activities and places as they are about buildings and spaces. Preserving ~~and~~or enhancing the borough's architectural and historic built heritage is of vital importance in understanding the past and allowing it to inform our present and future.
129. Conservation areas also promote sustainability, in its widest sense, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. The re-use of historic buildings and places is environmentally responsible, as it protects the energy and resources embodied in them and combats ~~global warming~~climate change. [Demolition and rebuilding of buildings can have a big impact on the environment and can result in a large amount of waste and associated air pollution.](#)
130. [paragraph deleted] ~~In reviewing this guidance, consideration has been given to the boundaries of the conservation area and they have been revised accordingly, as outlined in Appendix 1.~~
131. Recommendations for additions to the statutory list are considered by Historic England.

## 7.2. Policy and legislation

132. In conservation areas, planning controls are more extensive. Permitted development rights are more limited, and demolition and works to trees are

controlled. [The Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#) places a duty on Tower Hamlets to designate Conservation Areas in “[areas of special architectural or historic interest](#)”, and to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas. [Section 72 of the Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#) which relates to planning functions within conservation areas, includes that ‘[special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area](#)’. You are strongly advised to contact the council to check if works you are proposing need permission

133. Any new development should have regard to [relevant](#) national, regional and local planning policy [including the following](#)

- [the Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990;](#)
- [the NPPF;](#)
- [the London Plan alongside the City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework;](#)
- [the Tower Hamlets Local Plan;](#)
- [the Tower Hamlets Conservation Strategy;](#)
- [Historic England Guidance; and](#)
- [this character appraisal and management plan.](#)

Further information can be found on the council’s website, on the government website and on the GLA website.

### **Statutorily listed buildings**

134. There are nine listed buildings ~~or~~ structures (~~entries~~) in the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area. If a building is statutorily listed, any alterations to the property, either internally or externally, will require listed building consent from the council. Listed building consent is required for any works of demolition, alteration or extension to the building, which would affect its special architectural and historic interest. Works within the grounds or

curtilage of a listed building can also require consent. Repairs to listed buildings may also require consent. It is always advisable to inform the council of any plans you might have to carry out repairs. Replacement of any historic fabric usually constitutes an alteration and therefore requires listed building consent.

135. The council has a duty of care to ensure owners and prospective owners of listed buildings are aware of the need for maintenance and repair of such buildings. Regular maintenance can prevent serious and expensive problems at a later date. If listed buildings are not maintained in good repair, then the council can step in to ensure that relevant repairs are carried out. In some circumstances, the council itself may undertake essential repairs and recover the cost from the owner. The council has powers of compulsory purchase in such circumstances.

### Locally listed buildings

136. Local listing is a protection offered by the local authority to buildings it believes are of local significance. A heritage asset is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest, locally listed buildings are included within this designation. The effect of an application on a non-designated heritage asset is a material consideration when deciding planning applications, and local listing strengthens the case for retention of a historic building. There are currently two locally listed buildings within the conservation area, ~~and further ones may be added in the future.~~ Although locally listed buildings do not benefit from the statutory protection outlined previously, they have been recognised as being of local townscape importance. The council expects to see their retention and evidence that any proposed alterations enhance the building's character or appearance. Full justification for any redevelopment proposals will be sought, including convincing evidence that the building could not be retained. Economic reasons alone will not always justify redevelopment

## Article 4 Directions

137. Where evidence suggests that the exercise of permitted development would harm the special character of the conservation area, the council can serve an Article 4 Direction to withdraw specific classes of permitted development that would otherwise apply. It is important to note that an Article 4 Direction does not necessarily prevent the type of development to which it applies, but requires planning permission to be obtained for the specified types of development. There is no fee for planning applications required due to an Article 4 Direction.

138. For specific information on Article 4 Directions please see the General Permitted Development Order (1995) and 2010 amendment and accompanying Government Circular (available from the DCLG website), as well as the guidance provided in ~~Historic England Advice Note 1 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' published in February 2016~~ (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-designation-appraisal-management-advice-note-1/>). Historic England's Advice Note 1 (Second Edition) 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' which was published in February 2019 (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/heag-268-conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management/>).

## Archaeological investigations

139. Any new development that lies within the Archaeological Priority Area will be required to include an Archaeological Evaluation Report and will require any nationally important remains to be preserved permanently at the site, subject to consultation with Historic England.

## Trees in conservation areas

140. [A Tree Preservation Order \(TPO\) is an order made by the council to protect specific trees or groups of trees in the interests of amenity. A TPO prohibits](#)

the cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting or wilful damage of a protected tree without permission and is a designation which is applied selectively.

~~There are currently no trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders [TPO] (TPO) in the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area. All trees in conservation areas are protected by the provisions in section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These provisions require people to notify the council, by use of an application for works to trees. A section 211 notice should be served at least six weeks before carrying out works to trees, including topping, lopping and felling. This notice period gives the council the opportunity to consider whether to make a TPO (see below). A section 211 notice must describe the work proposed and include sufficient particulars to identify the tree or trees. Where a number of trees or operations are involved, it should make clear what work is proposed to which tree. A notice must include the date it is submitted. Only one section 211 notice is needed to carry out a number of different operations on the same tree or to carry out work on a number of trees. The application for works to trees can be found here.~~

141. ~~There are many trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO), these are spread across the conservation area. A TPO is an order made by the council to protect specific trees, or groups of trees in the interests of amenity. A TPO prohibits the:~~

- ~~▪ cutting down~~
  - ~~▪ topping~~
  - ~~▪ lopping~~
  - ~~▪ uprooting~~
  - ~~▪ wilful damage~~
- wilful destruction
  - ~~of trees without the local planning authority's written consent. If consent is given, it can be subject to conditions which must be followed.~~

142. Whilst some trees in a conservation area may be protected by a TPO all trees in a conservation area are protected by the provisions of section 211

[of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, These provisions require owners to notify the council if works to trees are proposed. To do this a works to trees application form should be completed. The application must describe the works proposed and include sufficient particulars to identify the tree or trees which are the subject of works. Only one section 211 notice is need to carry out a number of different operations. Notification should be made at least six weeks before the works commence to allow the council sufficient time to assess whether the works are acceptable or not. If the works are not supported and modified proposals can not be agreed then the trees must be protected by the council serving a TPO. The application for works to trees can be found here.](#)

143. ~~More information can be found on the Tower Hamlets website here.~~

144. Carrying out works to trees without the necessary approval can be a criminal offence, and the council welcomes early requests for advice.

### 7.3. Outline guidance for applications

145. When planning applications in a conservation area are decided, the council as the local planning authority will pay special attention to whether the character of the area is preserved or enhanced by the proposal. The special character of the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area is described in detail in the Appraisal in the first part of this document.

146. In the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area, as in other conservation areas, planning controls are more extensive than normal. Before carrying out any work in this area, you may need to apply for consent even for minor work such as replacing railings. These consents include planning and listed building consent, as well as others for work such as felling trees. Planning permission is required to demolish any building bigger than 115m<sup>3</sup>, and a higher standard of detail and information is required for any application. When applying for listed building consent, please note that all parts of the building, including its interior walls, ceilings and all other internal features,

are protected. Some buildings are nationally (statutorily) listed, and some are locally listed by the borough. Locally listed buildings are those of townscape value which the borough wishes to protect.

147. The exact information required will vary with each application, but in general applications must include:

- A clear Design and Access Statement explaining the reasons behind the various architectural, masterplanning or other design decisions.
- A Heritage Statement where the impacts of the application on the significance of heritage assets or the impacts of demolition within the conservation area are set out.
- Contextual plans, sections and elevations of existing buildings (at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100).
- Drawings of proposed works, including construction details, produced at larger scale (e.g. 1: 250 or 1: 120) clearly indicating the nature of the work proposed.
- Existing and proposed townscape views where relevant.
- Additional detail regarding materials and construction.
- Photos of the condition of existing building (including details where appropriate).

148. More details are available on the Tower Hamlets website where a validation list can be found. If in any doubt, the council welcomes and encourages early requests for advice or information. More information is available on pre-application advice on the council's website. When alterations are proposed to listed buildings, complying with the building regulations can be particularly complex, and early consideration of building control issues can help identify potential problems early in the process.

#### **7.4. Resources needed to conserve the historic environment**

149. The most effective way to secure the historic environment is to ensure that buildings can continue to contribute to the life of the local community,

preferably funding their own maintenance and refurbishment. Commercial value can be generated directly from the building, through its use as a dwelling or office, or through its role in increasing the attractiveness of the area to tourists and visitors. However, it should be noted that economic reasons alone will not in themselves justify the demolition or alteration of a building in a conservation area.

150. The council will consider grant aid to historic buildings and places, but grant funding [even](#) for cases that meet defined criteria, is extremely limited.

## 8.0 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

### 8.1. General approach

151. Development in the conservation area should enhance the unique characteristics of the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area, reinforcing its distinctive identity and contributing to its historic sense of place. New buildings should be of a high design standard, reflecting the scale and variation typical of the historic townscape. Individual buildings should display their own identity within the historically-set parameters (scale, grain, building line). These parameters are responsible for the creation of a coherent streetscape and locally distinctive character derived from an otherwise diverse collection of different designs, styles and materials. Retention and restoration of existing buildings which contribute to the character of the area provides the foundation for the area's redevelopment. The council encourages the sympathetic re-use of existing buildings in conservation areas. [Where development has harmed a conservation area it is possible, under certain circumstances, that further development may help to mitigate this harm.](#)

### 8.2. Demolition

#### Demolition of buildings within the conservation area

152. The Whitechapel Market Conservation Area has a well-established and distinguished character distinctive from its surroundings in terms of its grain and scale. The council will resist unjustified demolition ~~as this would be considered to constitute substantial harm~~ where this is considered to be harmful to the special character or appearance of the conservation area. Any applications including demolition will be assessed in line with national, regional and local policy and guidance including the National Planning Policy Framework.
153. Planning permission is required for demolition or substantial demolition of all buildings or structures larger than 115m<sup>3</sup> in conservation areas. What constitutes substantial demolition is considered on a case-by-case basis by the Local Planning Authority. Where a building is statutorily listed, listed building consent will be required.
154. Where corner buildings are threatened with demolition this can cause a wider threat to the terrace as a whole, this will be resisted. ~~Similarly a small terrace where a~~ The demolition and replacement of a central building forming part of a small terrace ~~is threatened with demolition and replacement~~ will also be resisted as this can result in further proposals and cumulative impacts.
155. If demolition work occurs without the necessary consent the council is likely to pursue planning enforcement action that may result in prosecution and a substantial fine. The demolished structure may be required to be rebuilt. It should be noted that the council will not normally grant planning permission for demolition without relevant permissions having been obtained for an acceptable scheme for the redevelopment of the site.
156. With regard to vacant sites, or those in poor condition, it should not be assumed that any development is automatically better than the current situation.

### Partial demolition

157. In most cases, the council would expect to see buildings retained but in some exceptional cases it may only be possible to retain a building in part; either by retaining elements of a building or through façade retention. Partial demolition will only be considered acceptable when it can be demonstrated ~~how~~that the proposed demolition can be carried out without unacceptable risk to the parts of the building to be retained and that any new development integrates with and respects the remaining historic fabric. This should be outlined as part of a Heritage Statement. A report of any structural implications ~~may~~will also need to be submitted. In many cases it may be possible to salvage and re-use elements of the historic fabric for example bricks, slates or window frames or external features. Any partial rebuilding will require materials to match and will be controlled by condition. It may be necessary to record the existing building prior to alteration.

### Demolition of buildings adjacent to the conservation area

158. Demolition of unlisted buildings outside a conservation area does not always require planning permission. However, proposals to demolish and re-develop sites adjacent to a conservation area boundary should preserve, and where possible enhance, the setting of the conservation area to ensure that the significance of the conservation area is not harmed.

## 8.3. New development

159. The conservation area is characterised by a prevailing building height of two to four storeys. In the context of this conservation area, buildings such as the former Working Lads Institute (~~nos.~~Nos. 279-281 Whitechapel Road) and the former Bucks Row School (~~no.~~No. 6 Durward Street) are tall buildings. In many cases, given the complex history of development in the area, cornice/eaves heights vary across a terrace and this characteristic is an attractive feature of the area. New development should aim to fit into and complement this context..

160. New developments should respect the fine grain character and straightforward legibility of the historic street pattern. Any replacement buildings should preserve orand enhance the character orand appearance of the conservation area and ensure that its significance is not harmed. Any new development on potential infill sites (as highlighted in section 6.0 of the Appraisal) should sit comfortably with the existing character orand appearance of the conservation area.
161. Whitechapel Station occupies a large part of the conservation area. The station is undergoing the final stages of a significant reconstruction (~~2019~~) (2021) to accommodate the new Elizabeth Line. Most of the development is at low level or underground and consequently there has been relatively little impact on the setting of heritage assets. Any potential future development associated with the station such as over-station development must respect the historic, scale, grain and character of the conservation area in which it is located.
162. Where existing buildings have a negative impact on the character andor appearance of the conservation area, it may be possible to alter the exterior of the building so that it enhances the character andor appearance of the area. The council would only encourage replacement of these buildings if the replacement is of high quality and has a positive impact on the character andor appearance of the conservation area.
163. The design of new buildings should be fully informed by the positive aspects of adjacent buildings and how they contribute to the character andor appearance of the conservation area and therefore it may not be necessarily appropriate to copy adjacent buildings.
164. The overall quality of architectural detailing will be key to producing a successful scheme which builds on the qualities already present within the area. In order to ensure necessary architectural quality, detailed design should be explored and agreed early in the planning process.

165. The quality of external materials will also be key to producing a successful scheme. The conservation area features a wide range of high quality, natural and naturally derived materials including stone, bricks, slate and terracotta. It is expected that the choice of new materials will be informed by the local context and build on this richness.
166. The design of shopfronts and fascia signs should not be considered in isolation and, along with security measures, should be considered at an early stage. It is essential that the scale and proportions of all elements of any new shopfronts and fascia signs relate to the overall proportions of the host building and to neighbouring properties where appropriate. Given the age of the buildings within the conservation area, this is likely to involve the design of taller shopfronts (and shallower fascia signs) than are considered standard in other areas. Older shopfronts were characterised by high quality, long lasting materials. Standard aluminium shopfronts are unlikely to be considered appropriate within the conservation area. It might be necessary to adopt a flexible approach to corporate logos, if these are considered to be harmful to the character of the conservation area. There are many good recent shopfronts within the conservation area, installed as part of the High Street 2012 project; these illustrate the quality that the Council will expect new shopfronts to achieve.

#### 8.4. Property conversion

167. The permitted development rights for this area of the borough have been removed in relation to the conversion of offices (Use Class B1(a)) to residential (Use Class C3). Where property conversion or change of use is permissible, external changes are likely to require planning permission. Any external changes should relate well ~~seek to establish a better relationship~~ with the public realm, should respect the character of the host building and should be in keeping with the character and appearance of the conservation area.

## 8.5. Extensions and alterations

### Roof extensions

168. The variety of building heights, particularly along Whitechapel Road, forms an integral part of the character of the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area. Roof additions which seek to introduce a consistency in height are likely to be resisted. In many cases the historic roof structure and relationship to other buildings within the conservation area will either preclude roof extensions or make it very difficult to achieve an acceptable design. Where roof extensions are considered appropriate, the design must relate well to the design and proportions of the host building and must use high quality materials that respect the character ~~or and~~ appearance of the conservation area. The impact of any roof extensions on ~~the~~ public realm and views from within the conservation area should be carefully considered in order to ensure the character ~~or and~~ appearance of the conservation area is preserved ~~and or~~ enhanced.

### Rear extensions

169. There are very few opportunities for rear extensions within the conservation area. Where the opportunity exists, extensions should remain subservient to the host building both in terms of scale and proportions. Only high quality materials, such as brick, stone or, in some cases, reconstituted stone, that respect the character ~~or and~~ appearance of the conservation area will be accepted. The visibility of proposed rear extensions from the public realm must also be carefully considered to ensure that, not only the impact on the host building, but also on the wider conservation area, is acceptable and preserves and enhances the character ~~and or~~ appearance of the conservation area..

### External alterations

170. Where external alterations are proposed to existing buildings, these must seek to preserve ~~or and~~ enhance the character ~~or and~~ appearance of the conservation area. Piecemeal alterations can be harmful to the special

architectural and historic character of a building. Any alterations to historic fabric should be on a like-for-like basis in terms of materials and design. Where inappropriate or unsympathetic alterations have occurred in the past, these should be rectified in accordance with the historic materials and appearance. In cases where the alterations are to a building which is not historic, ~~In cases where the alterations are not proposed to an historic building,~~ the design and materials used should be in keeping with the character of the conservation area. Any external alterations to individual buildings will have an impact on the wider conservation area and so must be considered within the wider context.

## 8.6. Energy efficiency improvements

### Window replacement and alteration

171. Window replacement and alterations to existing windows are often successful ways of improving the energy efficiency of a building. A careful study of the existing building should be carried out in order to identify the original window design and materials. This should form a good template for the kind of windows that will be acceptable in terms of materials, design, glazing bar details, window opening patterns and type of glass. In most cases historic or original windows should be retained and repaired, draught proofing added and if necessary internal secondary glazing installed. Where it is acceptable to replace the existing windows with double glazing care must be taken to ensure that the double glazing is of an appropriate design, that it is possible to replicate the dimensions and opening arrangements of the existing historic windows, that the double glazing is of a slim profile and that spacer bars are white and are unperforated, rather than perforated metal. Top-hung or outward opening windows will not be supported on historic buildings, unless this reflects the original glazing pattern.
  
172. It may be necessary to apply for planning permission to fit new windows (such as double-glazing) in a flat or maisonette. Planning permission will not be required to add internal secondary glazing. It is also unlikely to be necessary where you are fitting windows which are identical to those which

are being removed i.e. (like-for-like replacements). However, if the new windows differ in appearance or size to those you are replacing (for instance, different glazing patterns or opening methods) you may need to apply for planning permission. The detailed design, materials, dimensions, glazing bar pattern, glazing thickness, and opening methods are all important considerations when new or replacement windows are proposed.

173. The replacement of historic windows to listed buildings will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that they are beyond reasonable repair. If this can be demonstrated, then any replacement of windows should be on a like-for-like basis, matching the original design exactly. This will require listed building consent and, if any changes are proposed in terms of design, materials or thickness, planning permission may also be required. Energy efficiency can be improved through draught proofing windows or through the installation of internal secondary glazing. These works will not require listed building consent, unless they obscure important historic features or cause harm to the historic fabric.

### **Cladding, rendering or painting of external walls**

174. The council will seek the retention or reinstatement of original façade treatments of buildings that contribute positively to the special character ~~and~~ appearance of the conservation area. Unless it can be demonstrated that existing exposed brickwork had originally been rendered or painted, the rendering or painting over of brickwork will not be supported.
175. External insulation through rendering or other methods will not be supported. Any additional insulation should be installed internally where appropriate so as not to inappropriately alter the external appearance of the building. In a listed building, internal insulation would need listed building consent. In most cases it is unlikely to be acceptable.

## **8.7. Other external changes**

~~176.~~—The council will seek to reduce street clutter and will therefore not support ~~the addition of~~ unnecessary additions ~~extraneous features~~ to building frontages or elevations that front the street. Items such as, but not limited to, satellite dishes, antennae, flags and banners will not be supported. Grilles and louvres to the front of new or existing buildings are also unlikely to be supported. These should be placed on rear or side elevations if required and carefully designed so that they are incorporated into the overall building design. ~~Development proposals that involve the re-use and/or conversion of existing buildings will be expected to address this issue where appropriate.~~

176. The council welcomes the removal of unwanted and unnecessary clutter from the exterior of buildings within the conservation area.. Development proposals that involve the re-use and/or conversion of existing buildings will be expected to address this issue where appropriate.

## 8.8. Public realm improvements

177. Where there are historic surface finishes such as ~~cobbles~~cobblestone setts or paving, the Council will seek their retention, as these form an important part of the character of the conservation area. Any major investment in buildings should also include public realm improvements where appropriate. New schemes should aim to retain historic surfaces and any new surfaces should be sympathetic to the conservation area. Junctions between different surface treatments should also be carefully considered.

178. The quality of the streetscape, the surface materials, street furniture and other features can all form an integral part of the character ~~or~~and appearance of the conservation area. Any work carried out should respect this historic character, using natural materials and colours that are in keeping with the character ~~or~~and appearance of the conservation area. For works to Whitechapel Road, TfL's Streetscape Guidance should be consulted. On narrow side streets, setts should be reinstated where possible and, historic kerb stones retained. Any paving works should be sympathetic to the historic character of the conservation area. Larger rectangular paving slabs ideally in natural stone or high quality composite

stone, are more sympathetic to the character of the conservation area than smaller modular paving. [Each case will be assessed on its own merits.](#)

179. In addition to the TfL guidance, for developments which impact on public spaces, the council's Street Design Guide and Historic England's Streets for All: London document should be referred to. An important aim should be to reduce street clutter, such as obsolete signage and modern phone boxes.
180. The nature of the market space requires bespoke lighting, however as installed, the existing catenary lighting system lacks elegance.
181. All trees in conservation areas are protected, and some trees are also covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Additional information on trees can be found in the Policy and Legislation section of this document and on the council website.

## 8.9 Shopfronts and signage

182. The richness in the variety of details to shopfronts and buildings is integral to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Existing timber fascias, pilasters and corbels should be retained or restored where they have been lost. In cases where shopfront corbels do not survive, careful study should be made of adjacent shops to see if any appropriate examples remain – these should form the template for re-instatement.
183. It should be noted that a standard corporate approach to signage may not be considered appropriate due to ~~the~~ size, colour ~~and~~or illumination. As such, proposed designs and/or materials may have to be amended to suit the historic context. Any hanging or projecting signs should be well designed, bespoke timber hanging signs of an appropriate size for the shopfront or building. Traditional materials should be used and plastic signage will not be supported. No upper level signage, projecting signs or banners will be supported.

184. Hand painted timber fascia signs or fascias with individually applied lettering are encouraged throughout the conservation area. Internally illuminated plastic fascia signs are not appropriate and will not be supported.

### 8.10 Vacant sites and hoardings

185. Vacant sites must be carefully managed to ensure that they cause minimal harm to the conservation area. These sites must be maintained and should not be allowed to fall ~~in-te~~[into](#) disrepair. Where hoardings are used around vacant sites or on sites that are currently undergoing building works, these must be consistent in terms of height, materials and appearance. Hoardings should be maintained in a good state of repair so as to not detract from the character ~~or~~[and](#) appearance of the conservation area. Where possible, hoardings should be used positively to inform the public of the history of the site or wider area.

### 8.11 Development affecting the setting of the conservation area

186. The overall scale of the conservation area continues beyond the boundary in most directions but the new Royal London Hospital block has a significant impact on views from within the conservation area looking east and also on views into the conservation area from the surrounding area causing harm to its significance as identified in section 6.0 of the Appraisal. The former sorting office at 206 Whitechapel Road and Pauline House on Old Montague Street also cause harm to the setting of the conservation area. [“The appropriate redevelopment of the former Sorting Office offers the potential to preserve ~~and~~ or enhance the setting of the conservation area”](#).
187. The predominant historic setting of the conservation area should be preserved, with any new developments within its setting considered carefully so as to not exacerbate the harm caused by the hospital buildings to the south.

188. It is important that development proposals on the edge of the conservation area and in surrounding areas include a fully detailed assessment of any impact on the historic significance of the conservation area.
189. To enable the council to assess relevant applications, the council will expect applicants:
- i. to identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected by a proposal
  - ii. assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
  - iii. assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance [of the heritage assets](#);
  - iv. demonstrate that they have explored ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

## 9.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

### 9.1. Ongoing management and monitoring change

190. The council recognises the contribution of the local community in managing conservation areas, and will welcome proposals to work collaboratively to monitor and manage change in the area. Public meetings will be held to maintain communications between all stakeholders and identify new opportunities and threats to the conservation area as they arise.
191. In addition, the borough's Annual Monitoring Report, prepared with the new Local ~~Development Framework~~[Plan](#), will assess progress on the implementation of the whole Local Development Scheme, including policies relevant to conservation.

### 9.2. Enforcement strategy

192. Appropriate enforcement, with the support of the community, is essential to protect the area's character. The council will take prompt action against those who carry out unauthorised works to listed buildings, or substantial or complete demolition of buildings within a conservation area. Unauthorised work to a listed building is a criminal offence and could result in a fine and/or imprisonment. Likewise, unauthorised substantial or complete demolition of a building within a conservation area is illegal. It is therefore essential to obtain planning permission and/or listed building consent before works begin.
193. An enforcement notice, served by the council may require works to rectify unauthorised alterations. This notice is entered on the Local Land Charges records which could make the future sale or financing of the property more difficult.
194. If listed buildings are not maintained in good repair, then the council can step in to ensure that relevant repairs are carried out. In some circumstances, the council itself may undertake essential repairs and recover the cost from the owner. The council has powers of compulsory purchase, if necessary to protect listed buildings.
195. The council will enforce conservation law wherever necessary, and will consider the introduction of Article 4 Directions to remove permitted development rights where appropriate.

## 10.0 USEFUL CONTACTS AND REFERENCES

The council encourages and welcomes discussions with the community about the historic environment and the contents of this document. Further guidance on all aspects of this document can be obtained on our website at [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk) or by contacting:

- Tel: 020 7364 5009
- Email: [planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

This document is also available in libraries, council offices and Ideas Stores in the Borough.

For a translation, or large print, audio or braille version of this document, please telephone 0800 376 5454.

Also, if you require any further help with this document, please telephone 020 7364 5372 Also, you may wish to contact the following organisations for further information:

- Historic England <https://www.historicengland.org.uk>
- The Georgian Group [www.georgiangroup.org.uk](http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk)
- Victorian Society [www.victorian-society.org.uk](http://www.victorian-society.org.uk)
- 20th Century Society [www.c20society.org.uk](http://www.c20society.org.uk)
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)