



Langdon Park

Conservation Area

1. Character Appraisal

2. Management Guidelines

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

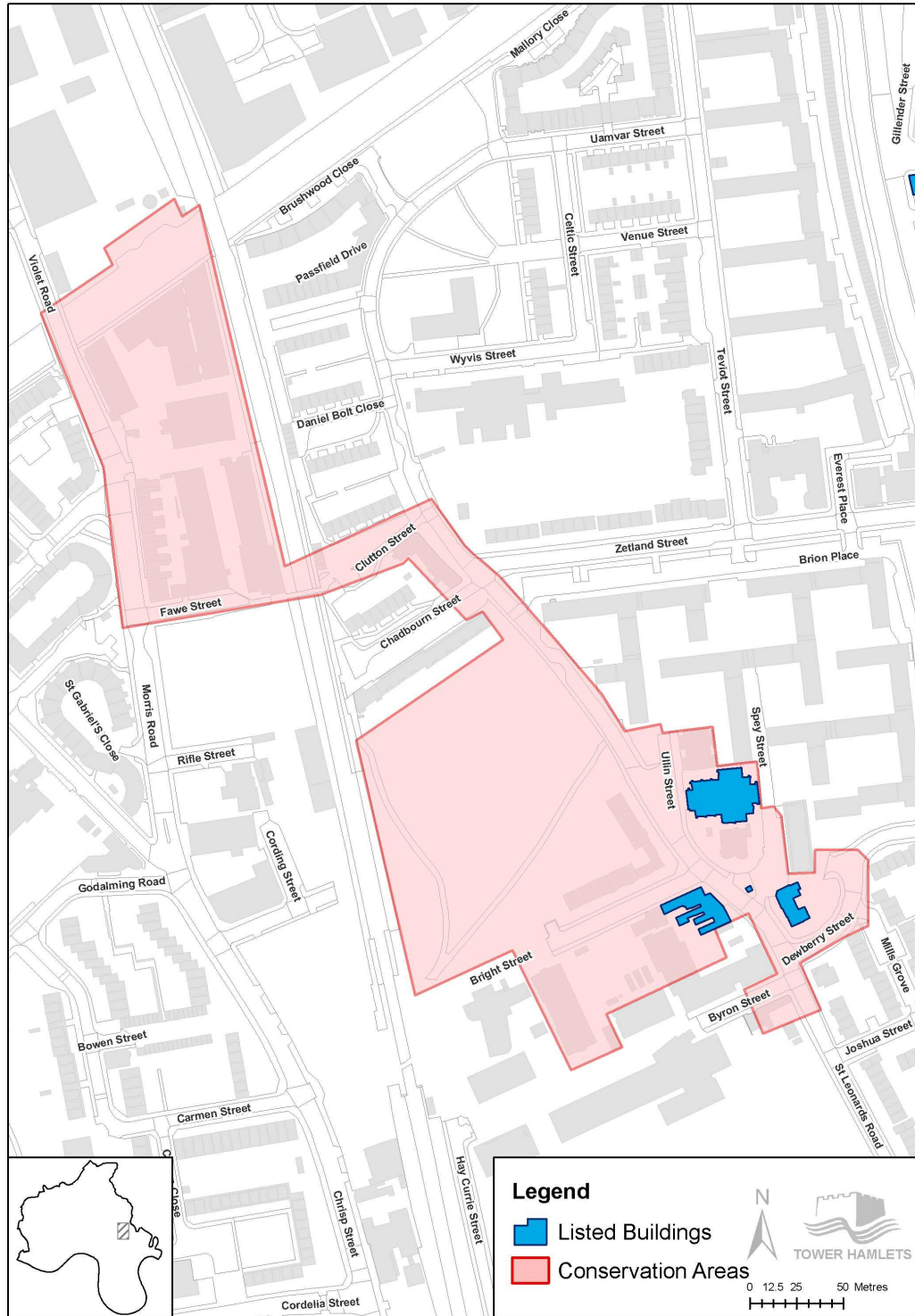
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Introduction

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 preserve and enhance the specific character of these areas for everybody.

This guide has been prepared for the following purposes:

- To comply with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 69(1) 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”
- To provide a detailed appraisal of the area’s architectural and historic character.
- To provide an overview of planning policy and propose management guidelines on how this character should be preserved and enhanced in the context of appropriate ongoing change.



LANGDON PARK CONSERVATION AREA

This map is indicative only and is not a planning document. For further information please contact the Council.

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1. Character Appraisal

Overview

The Langdon Park Conservation Area was designated in December 1990, extended to the north west in October 2008. Langdon Park Docklands Light Railway Station is sited towards the middle of this Conservation Area, with the railway line traversing it north to south. The south eastern half includes Langdon Park itself, its primary school, and a series of locally listed Georgian terraces to its south. The focal point of the area is the Grade II listed St Michael's Church and war memorial in its court grounds, located on St Leonard's Road. The north west half comprises the former Spratt's Biscuit Factory Complex, which sits upon the Limehouse Cut Canal.

History

Langdon Park is located in the old borough of Poplar, centred upon the Docklands Light Railway Station. Violet Road runs along the western boundary of the site across the Limehouse Cut of 1770. The canal retains historic fabric and the road bridge across is 1880 by Poplar Board of Works. Spratt's Biscuit Factory manufactured pet food, pet cages, kennels etc. Barges would deliver fish heads for processing into pet food. Before 1914 the factory also made food for human consumption under the "Poplar" brand. In the Boer War 4 million biscuits a week were made for the British Army.

St Leonard's Road runs through the south eastern half of the Conservation Area. It is the main local road to St Leonard's Church in Bromley. Historical maps indicate that in 1869, the area now occupied by Langdon Park west of St Leonard's Road was developed with residential terraced streets – among them Arthur Street, Wellington Street and Cobden Street. At this time there was a significant Irish community living in the area. The land east of St Leonard's Road was covered by rural farmland, and St Michael and All Angel's Church was situated on its own in open space. By the end of the 19th century it was surrounded by new terraced housing.

In the 20th century, the area experienced considerable change. In 1959, Poplar was divided by the large Blackwall Tunnel Approach Road, which was created parallel to

St Leonard's Road. This road cut off Langdon Park from the River Lea and large areas of the neighbourhood were cleared. Langdon Park itself was originally occupied by terraced housing, and was created as open recreational space, surrounded by suburban housing.

Character

No buildings remain from early canal history and Spratt's Biscuit factory complex of 1899 stands alone as a reminder of the area's historic industrial past in contrast to extensive new lower level housing to the west. Spratt's is a major landmark and the complex as a whole presents a stately group of four and five storey orange brick with stone cornices and a little early c20 free classical details. 45 and 48 have curly volutes to their gable ends.

The south eastern half of Langdon Park Conservation Area has a distinct village-like quality, despite the metropolitan architecture of the terraces and presence of the former Board School. The area lacks period buildings and so this concentration of Victorian buildings takes on a greater local importance.

The subtle widening and bending of St Leonards Road, the asymmetrical composition of buildings, the focal point of the church, the characterful frontages of Hega House and the terraces, the trees and the small areas of green space all contribute to this character.

At the centre of the area is the Victorian church and grounds - the former St Michael and All Angels Church, built by R.W Morris in 1864-5. Grade II listed and of coloured brickwork with Gothic detailing, the church (built to replace a mission chapel in 1861) has been converted to residential use. Its asymmetrically placed clock tower is a prominent focal point in the vicinity. Adjacent to the church is a former vicarage, enclosed by a brick wall, which forms an integral part of the church site. To its south is the Grade II war memorial made of white marble.

North of the park, the Conservation Area encloses Radford House, built in 1921, a 3-storey residential building constructed of red and yellow brick. Around the southern

periphery of Langdon Park are a series of locally listed terraces, at 159-167 St Leonard's Road. Designed in the late Georgian style and of the 1850s, the terraces are decorated with stucco dressings and the first floor windows are set in recessed round arches.

The St Leonard's Arms Public House complements this composition of terraces. It is also locally listed and of the 1950s, and has pedimented window architraves at first floor level.

The Langdon Park School was built in 1907 in the attractive Board School style. It is 3 storeys high with copper domed turrets, and contributes to the suburban quality of the area.

Land Use

The Langdon Park Conservation Area is mixed use but predominantly residential. The Conservation Area includes the church, school, low scale housing, Langdon Park and the occasional 19th century pub, all representative of its suburban character.

Scale

The scale of the north west half of the area is primarily four and five storey, with a single two storey terrace. The south east half of the area is predominantly low-rise, the terraces of St Leonard's Road being 2-3 stories high and the Langdon Park Secondary School and Radford House not more than 3 stories.

Open Spaces

The position of the former church and vicarage, the bend in St Leonards Road, and the alignment of Ullin Street create two natural enclosures of public space.

The northern one, at the fork of St Leonards Road and Ullin St, is defined by the new terraced housing to the west, and by Hega House and the former church to the east. Further south along St Leonards Road, the locally listed buildings, vicarage and the former church create a distinct area of public space, focused around the war memorial.

Langdon Park provides a public green space for local residents. Although not a historic park, it makes a valuable contribution to the low-rise, open suburban character of the area.

Views

The views towards St Michael's Church from both north and south along St Leonards Road are significant, where the church spire plays an important role as a local landmark. Significant long views towards Spratt's factory complex along the canal and Violet Road make the group a stately landmark.

Summary

This is an area of particular special architectural and historic interest, illustrated by its rich history and significant architecture, dating from the 19th century. The character and appearance of the area, as described in this appraisal, define its special qualities. There are a few gap sites and some minor inappropriate buildings in the Conservation Area, but overall these have little impact on the qualities that led to its designation.

2. Management Guidelines

Overview

This Management Plan has been prepared in consultation with the community, to set out the Borough's commitment to high quality management of Conservation Areas and their settings. The Development Design and Conservation Team operates within the context of the Development and Renewal Directorate of the Council, alongside Major Projects, Development Control, Strategy and Building Control.

Areas are as much about history, people, activities and places as they are about buildings and spaces. Preserving and enhancing the Borough's architectural and historic built heritage over the next decades is of vital importance in understanding the past and allowing it to inform our present and future.

Conservation Areas also promote sustainability in its widest sense. The Council is committed to this in the Core Strategy its Local Development Framework (LDF). 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.

Consideration of appropriate amendments to the boundary of the Conservation Area, and recommendations for additions to the register of listed buildings, either the statutory or local list, will be considered by the Council.

Who is this document for?

This is an inclusive document which will engage with many different people and organisations. It will depend on the support of the community to achieve its objectives. It is aimed primarily at the residents, businesses, developers and others living and working in the area. The Conservation Area belongs to its residents, as well as the whole community, and their priorities are reflected in this document.

The document has also been prepared to align conservation objectives within different parts of the council, and 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 sensitive new development and refurbishment where appropriate to successfully preserve and enhance the quality and character of the area.

Outline Guidance on Applications

Before carrying out any work in this area, you will need to apply for consent even for minor work such as replacing railings. These consents include planning, listed building and Conservation Area consent, as well as others for work such as felling trees.

When planning applications in a Conservation Area are decided, the planning authority will pay special attention to whether the character of the area is preserved or enhanced. The character of Langdon Park is described in detail in the Appraisal in the first part of this document.

In Langdon Park, as in other Conservation Areas, planning controls are more extensive than normal. Consent is required to demolish any building, 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 to indicate buildings that the Borough wishes to protect.

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

- A clear design statement explaining the reasons behind the various architectural, masterplanning or other design decisions.
- Contextual plans, sections and elevations of existing buildings
- Drawings, including construction details, produced at larger scale (eg. 1:50 or 1:20) clearly indicating the nature of the work proposed.
- Additional detail regarding materials and construction.

- Photos of the condition of existing building (including details where appropriate).

More details are available on the Tower Hamlets website. If in any doubt, the Council welcomes and encourages early requests for advice or information.

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.

Policies Relevant to the Conservation Area and how they are Implemented:

Any new development should have regard to national, regional and local planning policy.

- At the national level, 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. National policy for planning and the historic environment is set out in Planning Policy Guidance 15 (PPG15).
- At the regional level, policy 4B.1 of the London Spatial Development Strategy (or London Plan) states that ‘The Mayor will seek to ensure that developments ... respect London’s built heritage.’
- At the local level, the new Local Development Framework (LDF) of Tower Hamlets states that ‘the Council will protect and enhance the historic environment of the borough’. The Core Strategy states as an objective that we will ‘Protect and celebrate our history and heritage by placing these at the heart of reinventing the Hamlets to enhance local distinctiveness, character and townscape.
- The Conservation Area lies within the Leaside Area Action Plan.
- Langdon Park itself is designated as public open space.
- Just outside the Conservation Area to the west there is a designated development site with current consent for a 17-storey mixed use development.

- The LDF includes a plan for a new Docklands Light Railway station at Langdon Park on the western edge of the area.

Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area

Grade II

- St Michaels Court, St Leonards Road
- War Memorial, St Leonards Road

Locally Listed Buildings

- 162 St Leonards Road
- 159-167 St Leonards Road (odd)

Highways and Transportation Issues

The quality of the streetscape, the surface materials, street furniture and other features can all be integral parts of the character of Conservation Areas. Any work carried out should respect this historic character. Anyone involved in development which impacts on public spaces should refer to the Council's Street Design Guide, TfL's own Streetscape Guidance and English Heritage's 'Streets for All' document. The ongoing cost of maintenance should also be considered carefully.

St Leonards Road is the main route running north-south through the Conservation Area, and the two bus stops are important local places.

Works by statutory services (gas, electricity, water etc) have the potential to damage historic ground surfaces or ancient underground structures. Early consultation with the conservation team is encouraged for any works.

Opportunities and Potential for Enhancement

The two natural enclosures of public space along St Leonards Road are identified in the appraisal. Options should be explored for preparing a public realm strategy for this stretch of the road, which coordinates and improves car parking, landscaping, refuse, utilities, street furniture and lighting. Options for limited mixed-use at ground floor level should also be explored, with a view to enhancing the quality and identity of this place. Any public realm strategy should recognise the rarity of this surviving piece of historic townscape.

More specifically, a few buildings in the area are in need of maintenance. The clock on the church is also not working. If restored, this would enhance its status as a local landmark. The chain-link fencing around the vicarage could be replaced with an enclosure, such as railings, more appropriate to the Conservation Area.

The school frontage along Bright Street is quite blank, and consideration should be given to improving this frontage where possible. In addition, the chain-link fence and timber boarding fixed to the Vicarage wall detracts from the quality of the streetscape, and alternatives should be explored.

Trees, Parks and Open Spaces

Langdon Park itself is the most significant public open space in the Conservation Area. Although it has limited historic value, it makes a significant contribution to the village-like-feel of St Leonards Road, and should be preserved and enhanced as a public open space. New landscaping work should consider the relationship between the park and St Leonards Road, and linkages to the proposed new DLR station. The Conservation Area should not inhibit the development of community facilities in the park.

All trees in Conservation Areas are protected, and some trees are also covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's). Notice must be given to the authority before works are carried out to any tree in the Conservation Area, and some works require specific permission. More information can be found in the Council's Guide to Trees, and on the Tower Hamlets website. Carrying out works to trees without the necessary approval can be a criminal offence, and the Council welcomes early requests for advice.

Equalities:

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 driven 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 where this document provides guidance to ensure inclusivity for all sections of the community.

This Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines will support the Council's aims:

- a strong spirit of community and good race relations in Tower Hamlets.
- to get rid of prejudice, discrimination and victimisation within the communities we serve and our workforce
- to make sure 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.

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

Publicity

The existence of the Conservation Area will be promoted locally to raise awareness of current conservation issues and to invite contributions from the community.

Consideration of 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.

In order to meet today's needs without damaging the historic or architectural value of a building, a degree of flexibility, innovation and creative estate management may be required.

Ongoing Management and Monitoring Change:

To keep a record of changes within the area, dated photographic surveys of street frontages and significant buildings and views will be made every 5 years. Also, public meetings will be held every 5 years to maintain communications between all stakeholders and identify new opportunities and threats to the Conservation Area as they arise.

The Council recognises the contribution of the local community in managing Conservation Areas, and will welcome proposals to work collaboratively to monitor and manage the area.

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

Enforcement Strategy:

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 also illegal. It is therefore essential to obtain Conservation Area or Listed Building Consent before works begin.

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.

Further Reading and Contacts

- The Buildings of England (London 5: East). Cherry, O'Brien and Pevsner.

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 or by contacting:

Tel: 020 7364 5009

Email: dr.majorprojects@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 organizations for further information:

English Heritage	www.english-heritage.org.uk
The Georgian Group	www.georgiangroup.org.uk
Victorian Society	www.victorian-society.org.uk
20 th Century Society	www.c20society.org.uk
Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings	www.spab.org.uk

Listed Buildings at Risk:

At this time we are not aware of any listed buildings at risk in the Conservation Area.

Any other threats to the Conservation Area

At this time, we are not aware of any other threats to the Conservation Area.

Priorities for Action (1-5)

1. Improve routes to new Langdon Park DLR station.
2. Reinstate historic street surfaces.
3. Protect historic war memorial.
4. Introduce street trees.
5. Produce Stakeholder's Guide.