

WHITECHAPEL MARKET CONSERVATION AREA

Character appraisal and management plan

Adopted October 2021



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PREFACE

What is a conservation area?

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 enhances the specific character of these areas for everybody.

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?

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 enhanced in the context of appropriate ongoing change.

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?

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.

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?

This character appraisal and management plan has the status of 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

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.

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.

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

The Whitechapel Market Conservation Area was designated in December 1997 and the boundary was extended in 2008. The boundary was further amended in 2021, when this document was adopted, following a public consultation. One small area was removed and instead incorporated in the adjoining Myrdle Street Conservation Area to the south west.

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 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

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

The Whitechapel Market Conservation Area is located centrally within the borough, to the east of Whitechapel ward.

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.

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.

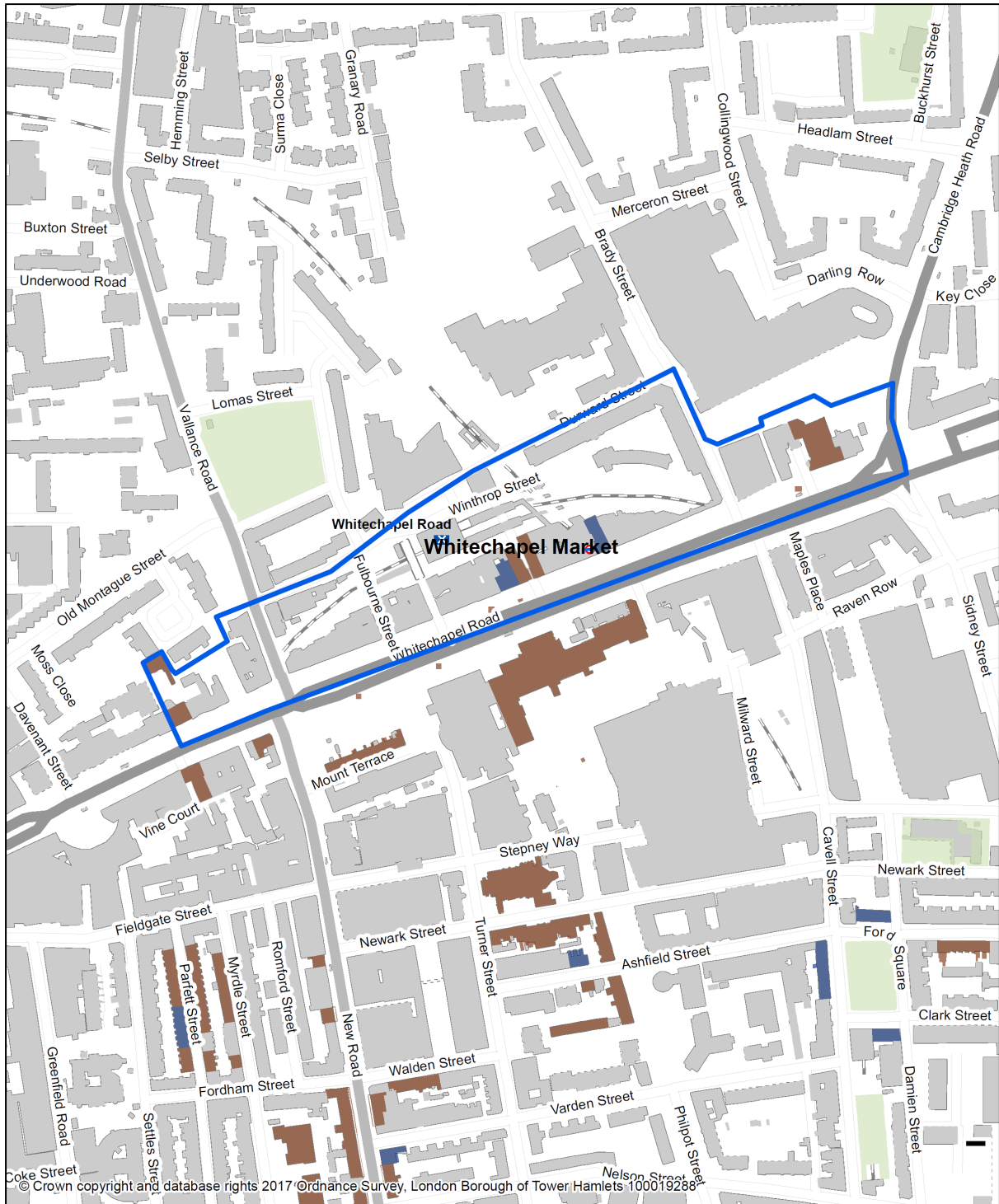
The main focus of the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area is the market itself and the row of buildings adjoining the market, between Vallance Road and Cambridge Heath Road. The market area consists of a very broad pavement, with stalls lining the Whitechapel Road roadside. The stalls occupy the pavement from Vallance Road to Cambridge Heath Road. These are permanent pitches taken up by traders.

Although there is some variety in building 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.

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.

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

Whitechapel derived its name from the 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.

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 medieaval 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.

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.

In the 1720's, the creation of 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 along with the establishment of the Royal London Hospital in 1757 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 almshouses, 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.

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.

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, 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'.

The area has become an important focus for the area's Bangladeshi community; the East End 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.

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 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.

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.

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.

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 gym (which were compulsorily 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.

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 by Russian revolutionaries Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky and Gorky in 1907.

A ragged school for 500 children was built in 1862 at 6 Durward Street called the Buck's Row School 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, 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 East London Railway in 1865-76) so is unusually tall and compact, with a covered playground in the northern part of the ground floor (arches since bricked in) and a roof playground on the railed flat roof. 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 into 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.

The arrival and subsequent extensions of the railway (three 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.

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. 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, reflecting the growing Bangladeshi population within the area. The market's street furniture was renewed as part of the High Street 2012 project.

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

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

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/>.

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)

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.

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)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 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 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

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

APAs highlight where important archaeological interest might be located based, 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'.

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.

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.

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.

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.

3.0 TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

3.1. General historic character and plan form

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.

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.

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.

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 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

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.

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 define 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

The land use character of the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area is mixed use. 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.

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

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.

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.

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

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 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

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

4.0 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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 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.

Although some shops retain incongruous modern fascia signs, many buildings retain their original features above ground level – arches, keystones, segmental pediments, dormers, and bay windows give the row of buildings fronting the market a rich character. This richness is accentuated when it forms part of long oblique views along Whitechapel Road.

Articulation of the elevations

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.

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

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 or appearance of the conservation area.

Shopfronts

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.

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. Works included the replacement of inappropriate fascia signs with signs of a scale appropriate to the host building and revealing or reinstating architectural details, such as corbels. Some shop fronts were reconstructed in timber-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

There is a distinct hierarchy of streets within the conservation area, with primary routes being Whitechapel Road, Cambridge Heath Road and Vallance Road. Whitechapel Road is a busy thoroughfare – its width reflects its status as an important historic connecting route, being a main route into and out of the City since the 12th 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.

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

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

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. 245-249 Whitechapel Road.

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).

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

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.

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

The Grade II listed, King Edward VII Jewish Memorial Drinking Fountain, located in front of 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

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 HERITAGE AUDIT

The condition of buildings in the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area varies.

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.

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.

There is a further issue of street clutter within the public realm and market space along Whitechapel Road.

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

6.1. Lack of investment and inappropriate alterations

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

In many cases surviving historic features or historic photographs offer appropriate precedents for reinstatement.

6.3. Shopfronts, fascia signs and associated features

Many shopfronts were improved as part of the High Street 2012 works, 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.

In many cases original decorative shopfront corbels have been removed along with original cladding materials from decorative pilasters dividing the shop units.

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 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 which detract from the appearance of the conservation area.

6.4. Vacant/underused properties and sites

The buildings at nos. 5-9 Vallance Road are currently empty (at the time of writing in September 2021) – the front elevation and roof are scaffolded as the building is considered to be a dangerous structure.. The buildings form a group with no. 11 Vallance Road. They 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 or enhances the conservation area.

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.

Within the tight knit building fabric of the conservation area, there is one vacant site at no. 191 Whitechapel Road.

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

The Whitechapel Market Conservation Area is situated within a densely built up part of the borough. In many 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.

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 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

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 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.

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, such as Winthrop Street and Court Street, the repair of the historic street surface or reinstatement with historically appropriate materials would enhance the character of the conservation area.

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 bins as well as other market paraphernalia, which accumulates near to street 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.

Van parking arrangements along the north carriageway and the dominance of highways related features all detract from the quality of this important public space.

There is catenary lighting along the market place which adds atmosphere to the market out of daylight hours, and 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.

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.

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

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 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

Conservation areas are as much about history, people, activities and places as they are about buildings and spaces. Preserving 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.

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 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.

Recommendations for additions to the statutory list are considered by Historic England.

7.2. Policy and legislation

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

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

There are nine listed buildings or structures 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.

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

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. 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

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.

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' 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

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

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 cannot be agreed then the trees must be protected by the council serving a TPO. The application for works to trees can be found [here](#).

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

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.

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 115m³, 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 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).

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 defined criteria, is extremely limited.

8.0 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

8.1. General approach

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 development. 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

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 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.

Planning permission is required for demolition or substantial demolition of all buildings or structures larger than 115m³ in conservation areas. What constitutes substantial demolition is considered on a casebycase basis by the Local Planning Authority. Where a building is statutorily listed, listed building consent will be required.

Where corner buildings are threatened with demolition this can cause a wider threat to the terrace as a whole, this will be resisted. 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.

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.

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

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 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

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

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. 279-281 Whitechapel Road) and the former Bucks Row School (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.

New developments should respect the fine grain character and straightforward legibility of the historic street pattern. Any replacement buildings should preserve or enhance the character or 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.

Whitechapel Station occupies a large part of the conservation area. The station is undergoing the final stages of a significant reconstruction (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.

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

The design of new buildings should be fully informed by the positive aspects of adjacent buildings and how they contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area and therefore it may not be necessarily appropriate to copy adjacent buildings.

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. 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.

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

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 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

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 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 appearance of the conservation area is preserved or enhanced.

Rear extensions

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 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 or appearance of the conservation area..

External alterations

Where external alterations are proposed to existing buildings, these must seek to preserve or enhance the character 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, 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

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.

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.

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

The council will seek the retention or reinstatement of original façade treatments of buildings that contribute positively to the special character 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.

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

The council will seek to reduce street clutter and will therefore not support unnecessary additions 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. 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

Where there are historic surface finishes such as 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.

The quality of the streetscape, the surface materials, street furniture and other features can all form an integral part of the character 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 or 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.

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.

The nature of the market space requires bespoke lighting, however as installed, the existing catenary lighting system lacks elegance.

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

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.

It should be noted that a standard corporate approach to signage may not be considered appropriate due to 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 will be supported.

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

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 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

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 or enhance the setting of the conservation area”.

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.

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.

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

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

9.2. 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 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 or by contacting:

- Tel: 020 7364 5009
- Email: 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
- Victorian Society www.victorian-society.org.uk
- 20th Century Society www.c20society.org.uk
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings www.spab.org.uk