



Swaton Road

Conservation Area

1. Character Appraisal

2. Management Guidelines

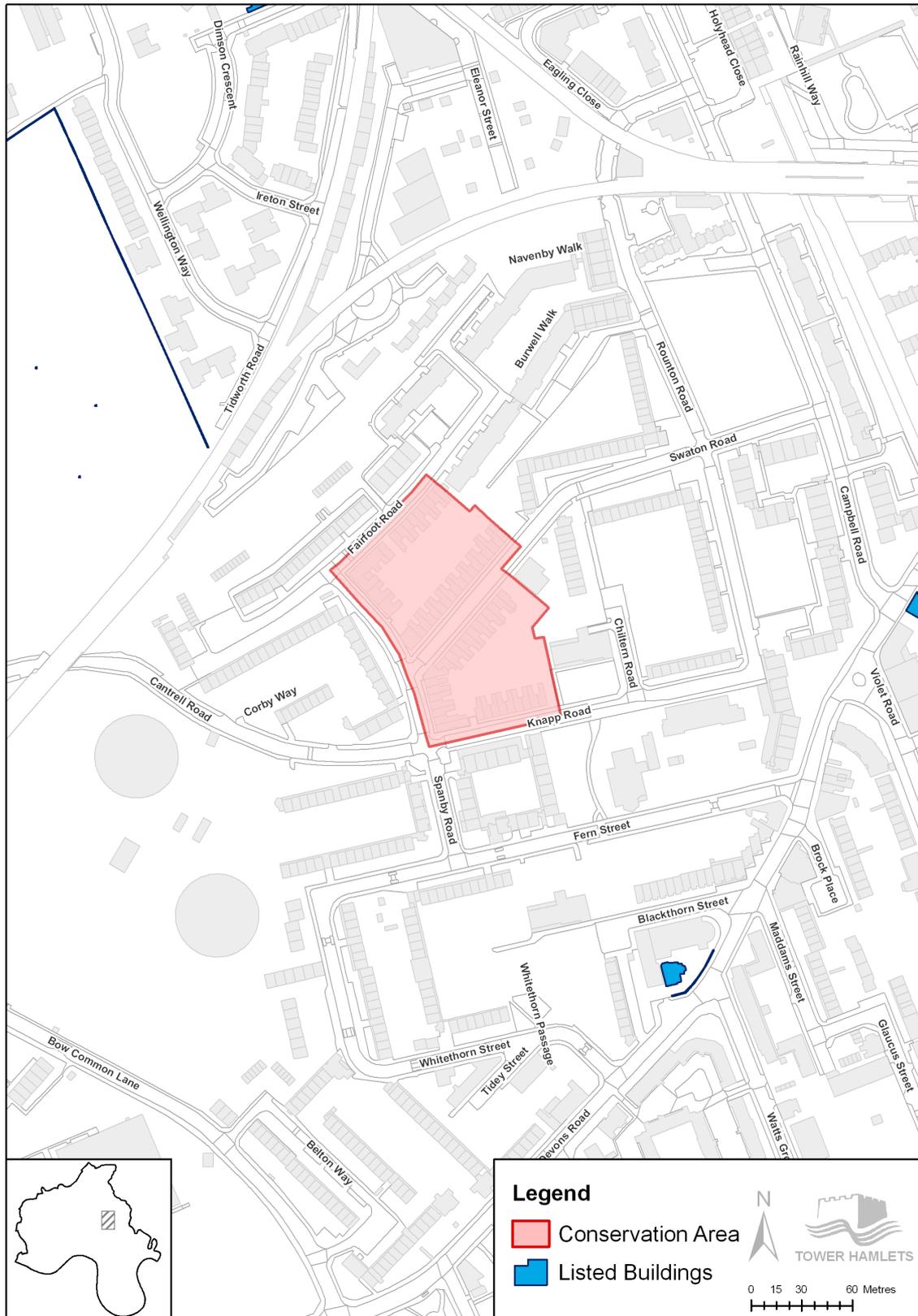
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Adopted by Cabinet: 7th March 2007

Introduction

Conservation Areas are parts of our local environment with special architectural or historic qualities. They are created by the Council, in consultation with the local community, to preserve and enhance the specific character of these areas for everybody.

This guide has been prepared for the following purposes:

- To comply with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 69(1) states that a conservation area is “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”
- To provide a detailed appraisal of the area’s architectural and historic character.
- To provide an overview of planning policy and propose management guidelines on how this character should be preserved and enhanced in the context of appropriate ongoing change.



SWATON ROAD CONSERVATION AREA

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

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1. Character Appraisal

Overview

The Swaton Road Conservation Area was designated in January 1988. Also known as the Four Roads Conservation Area, it is comprised of four roads in Poplar, namely Swaton Road, Spanby Road, Fairfoot Road and Knapp Road. The Conservation Area covers a small fragment of terraces in an area once dominated by terraced housing. Swaton Road is the only one of the four roads which retains the original housing on both sides of the street.

History

The residential developments which characterise the Swaton Road Conservation Area date back to the 19th century. The area developed in the late 1860s in response to industrial expansion within Poplar and Bow, creating a need to house the workforce. The flourishing industries, in particular the North London Carriage Works, located in Bow, attracted a large workforce to the East End.

Historical maps indicate that in 1862, the area was once utilised as a market garden. This was bounded by the Tower Hamlets Cemetery, gas works and the London and Blackwall Extension, East and West India Docks and Birmingham Junction Railway lines. By 1875, the area had developed with perimeter block terraces fronting onto small front strips and railings. Swaton Road is now the only original streetscape in the Conservation Area with terraces aligned on both sides of the street.

Character

Set amongst modern local authority housing, these four roads are an isolated remnant of the Victorian working class family dwellings which once covered the Poplar area. The prevailing character of the Conservation Area is defined by its rows of double storey terraces with canted bay windows at ground floor level and Victorian sash windows. The characteristic London roof is concealed behind a corniced parapet. The uniformity of the cornice line and the roofscape behind is an important feature of these

buildings. Stucco details decorate the doorway and bay window. Properties in these four roads were originally set behind railings with a small York Stone paved frontage. During the war, the railings were removed and melted down for the manufacturing of arms. Remnants of the York Stone paving remain and contribute to the Victorian character of this Conservation Area. Whilst there are no statutorily listed buildings in the Swaton Road Conservation Area, the rows of terrace housing are collectively regarded as being of townscape merit.

Land Use

The land use character of the Swaton Road Conservation Area is entirely residential in nature.

Scale

The existing building scale in the area is a uniform two storeys along all four of the individual streetscapes. The scale of the properties is modest in comparison to the surrounding local authority estates.

Open Spaces

The Swaton Road Conservation Area is defined by its terraced and tree-aligned streetscapes, but does not contain any significant open space.

Views

Views in the area include long views along street axes, with local authority housing in view as a backdrop to the terrace typology.

Summary

This is an area of particular special architectural and historic interest, illustrated by its rich history and significant architecture, dating from the 19th century. The character and appearance of the area, as described in this appraisal, define its special qualities.

There are a few gap sites and some inappropriate buildings surrounding the Conservation Area, but overall these have little impact on the qualities that led to its designation.

2. Management Guidelines

Overview

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

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

Conservation Areas also promote sustainability in its widest sense. The Council is committed to this in Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy its Local Development Framework (LDF). The re-use of historic buildings and places is environmentally responsible as it protects the energy and resources embodied in them and combats global warming.

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

Who is this document for?

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

The document has also been prepared to align conservation objectives within different parts of the council, and provide a single point of reference for the management of the area. It represents our shared commitment to conserve the special architectural and historic character, and to help manage sensitive new development and refurbishment where appropriate to successfully preserve and enhance the quality and character of the area.

Outline Guidance on Applications

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

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

In Swaton Road, as in other Conservation Areas, planning controls are more extensive than normal. Consent is required to demolish any building, and a higher standard of detail and information is required for any application. When applying for listed building consent, please note that all parts of the building, including its interior walls, ceilings and all other internal features, are protected. Some buildings are nationally (statutorily) listed, and some are locally listed by the Borough to indicate buildings that the Borough wishes to protect.

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

- A clear design statement explaining the reasons behind the various architectural, masterplanning or other design decisions.
- Contextual plans, sections and elevations of existing buildings

- Drawings, including construction details, produced at larger scale (eg. 1:50 or 1:20) clearly indicating the nature of the work proposed.
- Additional detail regarding materials and construction.
- Photos of the condition of existing building (including details where appropriate).

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

When alterations are proposed to listed buildings, complying with the building regulations can be particularly complex, and early consideration of building control issues can help identify potential problems early in the process.

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

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

- At the national level, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on Tower Hamlets to designate Conservation Areas in “areas of special architectural or historic interest”, and to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas. National policy for planning and the historic environment is set out in Planning Policy Guidance 15 (PPG15).
- At the regional level, policy 4B.1 of the London Spatial Development Strategy (or London Plan) states that ‘The Mayor will seek to ensure that developments ... respect London’s built heritage.’
- At the local level, the new Local Development Framework (LDF) of Tower Hamlets states that ‘the Council will protect and enhance the historic environment of the borough’. This is described in detail in policy CP49 of the Core Strategy of the LDF. In addition, applicants should note policy CP46 to ensure that access issues are properly addressed in work carried out in a Conservation Area.

- A small park just outside the area to the south is designated as public open space.

Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area

No listed buildings

Highways and Transportation Issues

The quality of the space between the buildings is essential to the character of the Conservation Area, and is important as it is a surviving fragment of a much larger area. The trees, the scale of the two-storey residential buildings, railings, walls, lighting and other street furniture all contribute to this character.

The speed pads on the road detract from the character of the area, and alternative forms of traffic calming, such as careful, judicious road narrowing, should be considered.

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

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

Opportunities and Potential for Enhancement

There are many opportunities for enhancement, both in terms of repairing and maintaining buildings and also enhancing the streetscape.

On some houses, the stucco render or the front garden has fallen into disrepair, and front walls and railings have been damaged or removed. Low front walls are part of the character of the area which give coherence to the street and also conceal refuse bins from general view. Some windows in the area are boarded up, which detracts from the quality of the area. Any original front doors and railings should be retained and where possible original features matched.

The boarded-up corner of Spanby Road and Swaton Road is a negative feature of the area, and the refurbishment or redevelopment of this site as a garden wall or building should be a priority.

The street lighting posts are poor for a Conservation Area, and their replacement could improve the sense of quality of the street.

Trees, Parks and Open Spaces

There are no major parks or open spaces in the Conservation Area, although there is a small park adjacent to the area to the south.

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

Equalities:

Valuing diversity is one of the Council's core values, and we take pride in being one of the most culturally rich and diverse boroughs in the UK. This core value has driven the preparation of this document and will continue to inform changes to this document in the future. These values will also inform changes to buildings and places where this document provides guidance to ensure inclusivity for all sections of the community.

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

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

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

Publicity

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

Consideration of Resources Needed to Conserve the Historic Environment:

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

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

Ongoing Management and Monitoring Change:

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

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

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

Enforcement Strategy:

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

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

The Council will enforce conservation law wherever necessary, and will consider the introduction of Article 4 Directions to remove Permitted Development Rights where appropriate.

Further Reading and Contacts

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

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

Tel: 020 7364 5009

Email: dr.majorprojects@towerhamlets.gov.uk

This document is also available in Libraries, Council Offices and Idea Stores in the Borough.

For a translation, or large print, audio or braille version of this document, please telephone 0800 376 5454. Also, if you require any further help with this document, please telephone 020 7364 5372.

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

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

Listed Buildings at Risk:

There are no listed buildings in this Conservation Area at the present time.

Any other threats to the Conservation Area

- Where changes are taking place, these must not dilute the Victorian character of the area.

Priorities for Action (1-5)

1. Produce Stakeholder's Guide.
2. Introduce Article 4 Directions to remove Permitted Development rights.
3. Prepare and implement plan to green the environment.
4. Implement grant aid to restore missing architectural features.
5. Protect historic street surfaces and reinstate where needed.