

Tredegar Square Conservation Area

# Character appraisal and management plan

June 2025

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## INTRODUCTION

Conservation areas are parts of our local environment with special architectural or historic qualities. They are created by the council, in consultation with the local community, to preserve and enhance the specific character of these areas for everybody. The Tredegar Square Conservation Area was designated in 1971.

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 help those who have an interest in the area to understand the quality of the built environment and how they can protect, contribute to, and enhance it.
- 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.

The character appraisal in section two defines the qualities and features that make the conservation area special. This includes an understanding of the historical development of the place and its buildings, as well as an analysis of its current appearance and character — including description of the architectural characteristics, details and materials. It also records qualities such as important open spaces and views into and within the conservation area. Any damage or pressures to the conservation area is also recorded.

Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) places a duty on local planning authorities to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in their districts. Therefore, the management guidelines in section three set out ways to conserve the special architectural and historic character of the conservation area, as well as help to manage sensitive new development and refurbishment. It takes into account planning policy context and responds to the problems and pressures identified in section two.

This document replaces earlier the character appraisal and management guidelines adopted for the Tredegar Square Conservation Area in March 2008 and the addendum adopted in July 2016.

## 2.0 CHARACTER APPRAISAL

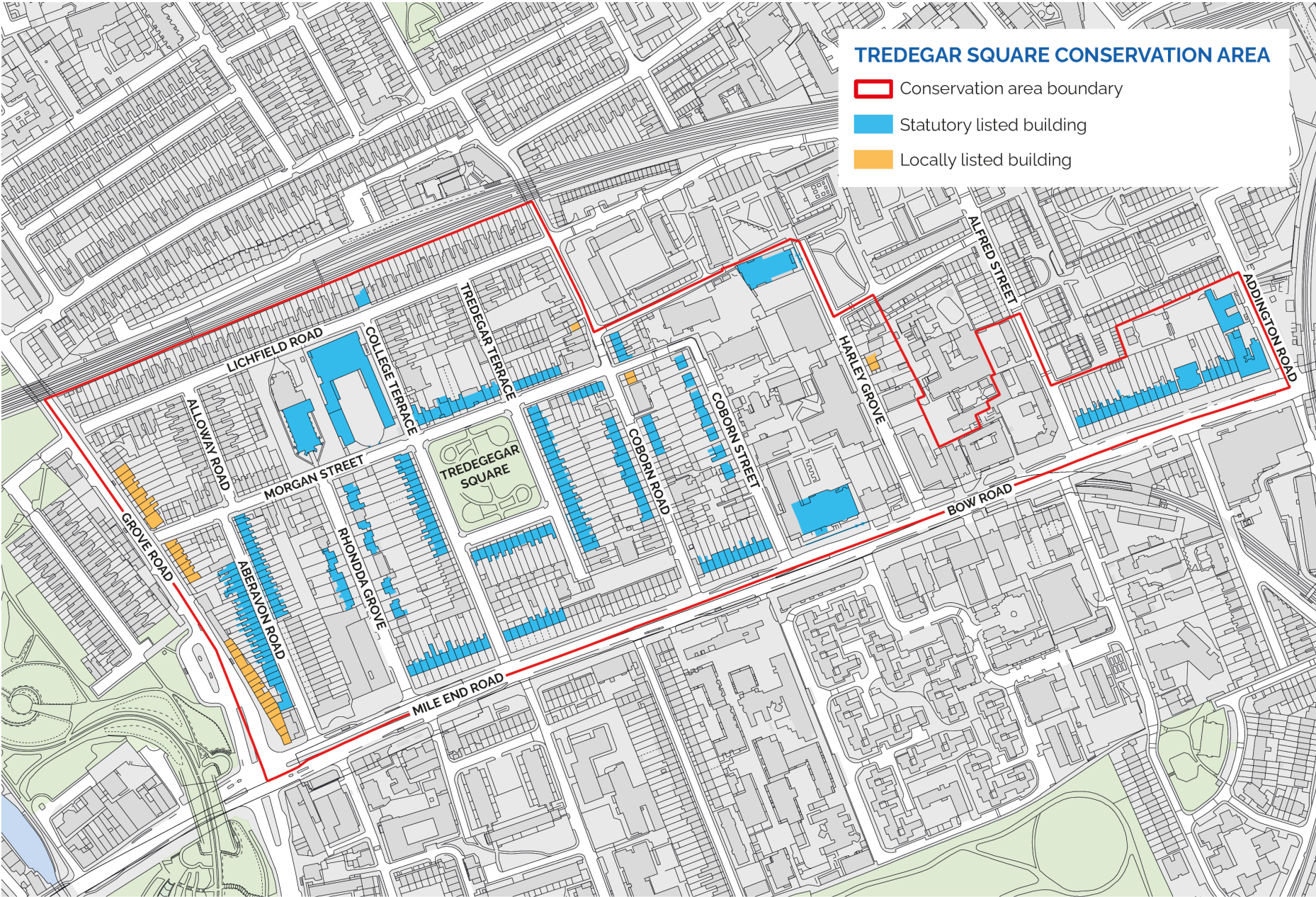
### 2.1 Location and setting

The Tredegar Square Conservation Area straddles Mile End and Bow [two of twenty-four distinct 'places' identified within the Local Plan], in the northeast of the central sub-area which sits in the heart of the borough. Located between Grove Road, which defines its boundary to the west and Addington Road, Bow Road provides the southern edge of the conservation area boundary. The northern edge of the conservation area extends to the railway line at the rear of Lichfield Road, and gradually steps down Coborn Road into Harley Grove, taking in a small section of Alfred Street and concludes with the row of listed properties ending at Addington Road in the east.

The setting of the Tredegar Square Conservation Area is defined by the surrounding townscape and physical features that contribute to its overall character and significance. It is an area of historical and architectural interest, characterized by the elegant Georgian terraced houses and the formal layout of the Tredegar Estate. The square itself is surrounded by three-storey terraced houses with basements, with the north side being the grandest, featuring stuccoed and classical decoration, while the remaining three sides are plain stock brick.

The conservation area is located within a dense urban environment, and its boundaries are defined by the surrounding streets, including Bow Road, Grove Road, Addington Road, and Alfred Street and the Great Eastern Railway line which runs east-west along the northern edge of the conservation area. The historic townscape of the area is well-preserved, with a range of buildings and 19th and 20th century architectural styles, including civic buildings, churches, schools, and residential properties.

The area's setting is also defined by the open green space of the Tredegar Square Gardens, which provides a peaceful and picturesque contrast to the surrounding urban environment. The gardens have been designated as a protected London Square under the 1931 Preservation Act, ensuring that their character and significance are preserved for future generations.



## 2.2 Historical development

From about 1000 AD, Bow was a settlement by River Lea that was part of the larger Stepney Parish. Following the dissolution of the Monasteries in the sixteenth century, the manor passed into private ownership, with various landowners dividing the land over the next few centuries. Bow became independent from Stepney in 1719, inheriting Stepney's original boundaries with Stratford across River Lea to the east and what is now Victoria Park and Hackney to the north.

Mile end became part of the London Metropolitan area in 1855 whilst Bow became part of the Poplar Metropolitan District at the same. Bow remained part of Poplar when boroughs were created in 1900 until 1965, when Poplar, Stepney and Bethnal Green were merged to create Tower Hamlets.

The land was in the hands of the Stepney Manor until 1926, the remaining copyholds were converted into freeholds under the Law of Property Act, 1922. They remained subject to such manorial incidents as quitrents, fines on change of ownership, and the lord's right to timber, until 1 January 1936.

Development of the Mile End and Bow areas began during the twelfth century when a bridge was built across the river Lea from the south of Old Ford and Bow. The Bow bridge, shaped in bows, is how Bow gained its name. Mile End is recorded in 1288 as La Mile ende. It is formed from the Middle English 'mile' and 'ende' and means 'the hamlet a mile away', the mile distance was in relation to Aldgate in the City of London. For most of the medieval period, despite being a vital route in and out of London the Mile End and Bow Road route to Essex was surrounded by open fields with a population focussed on scattered farms and small hamlets. Historic documents record the area as 'mainly open field and farmland providing a variety of goods for the City of London, including crops such as grain and hay, livestock and building materials.'

The industrial expansion of London led to huge demands for industry and housing growth with the urbanisation of the area being driven by the maritime trades along the River Lea, industries including a scarlet dye works in the mid-seventeenth century and later a China factory producing Bow Porcelain between 1747 and the 1770s, as well as ribbon development along the Mile End Road. Mile End Old Town, which was originally built on land close to Whitechapel expanded eastward as the urban population grew. Some of the tablets marking the boundaries of the area can still be seen today. A stone inscribed with the letters MEOT is embedded in the wall of number 20 Morgan Street on the corner of Coborn Road. Similarly, territorial signs for the adjoining borough [St Mary's Stratford,

Bow] can be found on the eastern pier of the railway bridge and the wall of Coborn Terrace, at the junction with Bow Road.

In the seventeenth century, the Tredegar family, a prominent Welsh family who had amassed a considerable fortune from their interests in coal mining, iron works, and other industrial enterprises acquired land in the area. The family's wealth allowed them to become major landowners in various parts of Wales and England, including the Mile End area of east London. The Coborn family, who were wealthy brewers acquired parcels of land in the Mile End area in the late eighteenth century, they owned and developed a significant portion of the land that is included within the conservation area.

By the eighteenth century the land north of Bow Road is recorded as predominantly controlled by landowner Sir Charles Morgan of Tredegar, Monmouthshire and the Coborn Estate initially owned by wealthy Bow brewer Thomas Coborn; left to his widow Prisca Coborn, and later a board of Trustees, in order to, through the terms of her will, establish the Coborn School for Girls after she died in 1701. As per the terms of her will the Coborn School was founded in the early eighteenth century as a charity school for local children, a later site to the west of Old Ford Road is recorded as 1813, and by 1898 the Coborn School had evolved into a public grammar that is located at 29-37 Mile End Road; the building is now a Grade II listed structure and continues to serve as a school today.

As development of housing along Mile End Road quickly expanded along Bow Road the Coborn Estate faced some financial difficulties affecting the building of the new school in 1813, therefore the Coborn Trustees had to seek parliamentary powers to sell and lease land from the Coborn Estate resulting in the fields and market gardens being exploited for building purposes.

As development of Coborn Road and the surrounding area marked a significant expansion of the Mile End neighbourhood and contributed to its growth and development the Coborn family proposed to rename a lane known as 'Cut-throat Lane' in honour of their family name, and it was subsequently changed to Coborn Road around 1800. The road is significant in that it had previously marked the division between the Coborn and Morgan estates and later delineated the parish and borough boundaries. The Tredegar Estate area was still predominantly comprised of farmland with very few buildings until 1820's however following an act of parliament in 1824, Sir Charles Morgan was also permitted to put up dwellings on his fields.

With both the Tredegar and Coborn estates owners having leased plots to developers and builders to erected houses that they could then sub lease for their own profit, the area was developed in earnest between 1817 and 1860.

Construction began to the east of Coborn Road in 1817 and by 1830 Coborn Street and Coborn Road had been developed as superior middle-class housing, as had the villas in Rhondda Grove, the houses at the eastern end of Morgan Street, the main western terrace of Aberavon Road and much of Tredegar Square.

The new development on Morgan ground had its own church, Holy Trinity, and a grammar school by 1847 and a few new properties began to be erected to the north of Morgan Street around that time.

Alloway and Lichfield Roads, College and Tredegar Terraces, and the taller houses situated at the western end of Morgan Street and Grove Road were completed from 1862 to 1889. The consequential outcome of this expansion was a significant increase in the area's population and its accompanying urbanization, as more housing and infrastructure were built to support the growth. Due to the volume of Jewish settlers in the east-end the streets around Tredegar Square were lined with kosher shops and by 1927 the Chapel on Harley Street was converted into a synagogue.

However, although the area was relatively prosperous, job creation was needed here, as elsewhere in the metropolis. Home-based industries such as dressmaking, umbrella furnishing, and walking stick manufacture were pursued. Industrial concerns included a waterproof clothing factory on the east side of Coborn Street where the primary school is today and other clothing manufacturers in Tredegar Square, Coborn Road and Tredegar Terrace. In 1891 C. R. Ashbee, architect and founder of the Survey of London, set up the workshops of the Guild of Handicraft in Essex House, it was demolished in 1937 to make way for an art deco Odeon Cinema that opened on the 17 of October 1938, closed in 1978 and demolished in 1984.

The Coborn Estate was eventually sold to the Metropolitan Borough of Stepney in 1901 and throughout the twentieth century, the area underwent significant changes, with many of the grand houses in Tredegar Square being converted into flats and apartments. Along with physical changes to the area there were also cultural changes amongst the East End population throughout the twentieth century, reflecting those changes in 1977 the Synagogue, previously a chapel, became a Sikh Gurdwara.

Additionally, areas near Tredegar Square suffered bomb damage during the Second World War resulting in significant redevelopment in the post-war period, with the construction of new housing and the modernization of the local infrastructure; Tredegar Square however survived largely unscathed retaining its architectural and historical character and benefiting from the protection of its conservation area status.

## 2.3 Spatial analysis

### 2.3.1 Land use

Land use refers to the activities and purposes for which land is utilized within a particular area, in the case of Tredegar Square Conservation Area, the land use is primarily residential. The majority of the buildings within the conservation area are terraced houses that were designed for middle-class families during the nineteenth century. These houses are still predominantly used for residential purposes today albeit having been split into flats in many cases.

There are also a number of non-residential buildings in the conservation area, such as schools, shops, public houses and community civic facilities most of which are located on Grove Road and the main frontage of the conservation area- Bow Road.

Additionally, the Tredegar Square Garden is a key feature of the conservation area, whilst the garden is not used for any specific purpose or activity, it does serve as a residential amenity and a focal point for the surrounding buildings. Its primary use is for enjoyment and relaxation, and it contributes to the overall quality of life in the neighbourhood.

### 2.3.2 Scale

The buildings within the conservation area are quite consistent in height and massing, reflecting the age and style of buildings throughout the area. From the early nineteenth century to the late Victorian era four-storeys was typical of the maximum height for residential buildings with only churches or other grand public buildings standing taller.

The residential buildings are two to three storeys high, or four including a basement or mansard roof; taller buildings within the conservation area tend to be located on the Bow Road and west of Coborn Road, however the Holy Trinity Church and the former Central Foundation School on Morgan Street are exceptions.

The tallest buildings in the conservation area rarely exceed five storeys with the rare exceptions being the gable of Holy Trinity Church and the cupola that rests on the steep pitched roof of the former Central Foundation School on Morgan Street. On the main Bow

Road, the Central Foundation and Phoenix Schools, and the cupola atop the stair tower of the former Coborn School along with its prominent chimney stacks, Tredegar House and Electric House all are at least or exceed five storeys in height and contribute to the distinctive character of the area.

The residential buildings are mostly terraced houses, creating a consistent density with few gaps along most of the streets. There are also several larger detached and semi-detached buildings, mostly at the edges of the conservation area which provide a relief in the otherwise dense townscape.

Overall, the building heights and massing in Tredegar Square Conservation Area are relatively uniform, with a consistent scale and rhythm of development that creates a cohesive and harmonious townscape.

### 2.3.3

#### Green spaces

The Tredegar Square Gardens are set out in a formal style at the centre of tree-lined square. The setting of the square and its central gardens are a significant factor in its character and historical importance contributing to the area's overall sense of place and value.

A fine early Georgian garden square, accessible to the public, which contains lawns, seating and mature trees it provides a peaceful and picturesque contrast to the surrounding urban environment. The gardens have been designated as a protected London Square under the 1931 Preservation Act, ensuring that their character and significance are preserved for future generations.

When the square was first built its central patch where the gardens lie today, was initially private land until the council intervened. The day the square became public, Prime Minister Clement Atlee opened the space on 25 April 1931. In 1940, air-raid trenches were built under the gardens, uprooting its greenery with the aim of sheltering 10% of the local population. After the war was over, the council received a grant in 1953 from the King George's Fields Foundations to build the children's playground in the square, along with a netball court. There are plaques commemorating this in the gardens to this day.

In addition, the grounds of the Holy Trinity Church and Former Central Foundation School are landscaped green spaces. However, these are not accessible to the public.

## 2.4

### Views

The clear definition of the streets and the character of the architecture create many high-quality views throughout the conservation area.

Within Tredegar Square itself each terrace facade contains a central focus which gives a distinct and memorable character to views within the square. Elsewhere, longer views along some streets are closed by feature buildings. For example, Rhondda Grove is closed by the view of Holy Trinity, College Terrace by the Lord Tredegar public house, and Aberavon Road by the corner shop at number nine Morgan Street.

## 2.5 Architectural characteristics

The buildings within the Tredegar Square Conservation Area are mainly two to three storey terraced houses with attics, built between 1830 and 1860. The predominant architectural style is late Georgian, with some early Victorian features. The buildings are generally constructed of stock brick with stuccoed or painted ground floors, and some feature decorative ironwork. The roofs are mostly slated or tiled.

Tredegar Square itself is a grand, formal square surrounded by four-storey terraced houses with Corinthian pilasters and pediments, built between 1830 and 1833. The square is enclosed by cast-iron railings and gates and features a central garden with mature trees and shrubs.

Tredegar Terrace is a grand, uniform row of 12 three-storey houses, built in 1833-4 for wealthy residents. The houses are constructed of stock brick with stuccoed or painted ground floors, and feature balconies, cornices and some decorative ironwork.

Aberavon Road, Rhondda Grove and Grove Road feature a mix of two-storey and three-storey terraced houses, built between 1840 and 1860. Many of the houses have original sash windows, shutters and iron railings.

College Terrace, Alloway Road, and Lichfield Road feature a mix of three-storey and four-storey terraced houses, built between 1862 and 1889. The buildings are generally constructed of stock brick with stuccoed or painted ground floors, and many feature original sash windows, cornices, and iron railings.

Overall, the buildings within the Tredegar Square Conservation Area are well-preserved examples of late Georgian and early Victorian architecture and contribute to the area's distinctive townscape character.

### 2.5.1 Roofs

The significance of the historic roof-scape within the conservation area is derived from a number of factors including its shape or form, structure, covering materials, and associated features.

The terraces making up many of the streets in the conservation area feature London [or butterfly] roofs; these are an inverted 'V' in form with a central valley and ridges on the party walls between the individual houses of the terrace. These roofs are of low pitch and are concealed from the street [at the front] behind parapets producing a hard, straight edged appearance to the house, with a strong silhouette. This lack of visible roof is an important architectural characteristic. The continuity of the parapet line and moulded cornice line is another significant feature in the conservation area streetscene and ties groups of terraces together. At the rear of these terraces with London roofs, the row of gently pitched gables with the valleys and party walls between is clearly evident. Chimney stacks are located along the party walls between houses [often in pairs]; they are often the only feature visible above the cornice line, forming part of the silhouette of the roofscape. They also form part of the special character of the area.

Several groups of houses were built with mansard roofs, for example those on Mile End Road where the roof has a steeper lower pitched section and a less steep upper pitch. Other roofs within the conservation area include the straightforward pitched roof. Although common across London [on later nineteenth and twentieth century houses], this type of roof is relatively rare in the Tredegar Square Conservation Area. which is found far less often in this area than is the case in most areas of the Capital, because it is generally associated with more recent houses.

Roof top features such as chimney stacks, chimney pots and party walls are important elements of the conservation areas character. The design and detail of features such as chimney stacks varies and was the subject of changing architectural styles. Slate is the dominant roofing material within the Conservation Area.

### 2.5.2 Rear extensions

Most of the houses within the conservation area were built with rear extensions [the addition or projection to the rear of the main body of the house sometimes referred to as the 'back addition', 'outrigger' or 'closet wing'] as part of the original building.

In the Georgian era, often there were no extensions to a house but where they existed, they were purely functional and were not of a standard form. Generally, service rooms were accommodated in the basement with the ground and first floor being reserved for the more important public rooms, and it is this arrangement which can be seen in

Tredegar Square. The rear extension to the Victorian terrace house had its origins in the grander houses of an earlier era, similar to those in Tredegar Square itself. Space was ordered according to a structural hierarchy, with the more public spaces such as the parlour located at the front of the house, whilst the more private spaces were located to the rear of the house in the back extension.

The provision of a basement was costly, and as the Victorian era progressed the need for cheap housing saw a move away from the provision of a basement and the services originally housed here were increasingly accommodated within the back extension at ground level. Economy continued to play a role in the evolution of the back extension with the early single storey single unit extensions with three independent walls housing a scullery being replaced by paired extensions under one roof. Overtime the very small single storey extension which was generally a scullery increased in size to include a kitchen with a bedroom above, and the scullery was pushed into a smaller lean-to section beyond this. Extensions varied in width, height, and length according to the builder but tended to increase in scale as the century progressed. However, there is usually a degree of consistency within a terrace. The original picture may be blurred in some parts of the conservation area by later alterations.

A number of different types of extension can be seen within Tredegar Square. The earlier properties are built without back extensions but some of the later terraces adjoining the square, illustrate the variety which can occur in the treatment of the back extension. On the west side of Aberavon, the extensions are independent, rather than paired, and include lean to sculleries beyond. On the north side of Lichfield Road, the properties have two storey paired extensions with a further paired single storey addition beyond this to accommodate a scullery.

### 2.5.3 Details and materials

The area is characterised by high-quality materials and richly detailed buildings. There is a prevailing use of yellow stock brick and stucco on the elevations, timber sash windows and slate roofs on the residential properties. Most of the civic buildings are notably red in character, with Portland stone accents, however the Trinity Chapel is of stock yellow brick with stone accents.

The character of the residential terraces is enhanced by the original mouldings, and these vary between terraces. The variation in architectural detail is characteristic where terraces are built up of grouped buildings by different builders, but the consistency of approach in each terrace or group of houses provides coherence. The following features are positive attributes of the conservation area:

- Continuous line of parapet wall to conceal London roofs.
- Cornice [decorative moulding on parapet].
- Curved stucco arches over first floor windows.
- Timber sash windows with delicate glazing bars.
- Embellished door surrounds with recessed front doors.
- Decorative mouldings or bay window to ground floor.
- Cast iron railings on stone plinth.
- The London stock brickwork, chimneys and roof forms are characteristic of the conservation area.

The use of stucco as a building material was popular during the period of development and contributes to the uniformity of the area's appearance. It was chosen for its durability and low maintenance, as well as its ability to create a smooth, decorative surface.

In some cases, the decorative stucco elements have been damaged or removed which detracts from the character and integrity of the conservation area but overall the terraces are in good condition.

Whilst many of the buildings within the conservation area boast London 'butterfly' roofs, styles vary, with some buildings featuring mansard roofs while others have flat or pitched roofs. Chimneys are also a key feature of the area, with many being made of brick and featuring decorative pots or capping.

Another feature of the conservation area is decorative iron railings and balconies, adding to the elegance of the streetscape, again the removal of these, or replacing with brick walls, detracts from the character and integrity of the conservation area. Other notable features of the conservation area include the use of bay windows, often with decorative ironwork. Some buildings also feature ornamental cast iron columns or pilasters, again highlighting the use of iron as a decorative element during the period of construction.

## 2.6 Landscaping features

Pavements in the conservation areas are typically surfaced with large format concrete slabs, bounded by granite kerbs. Carriageways are typically covered with asphalt.

The streets in the conservation area feature Victorian style streetlamps, whereas Mile End Road and Bow Road there are taller contemporary stepped steel lighting columns. Many of the streets have trees planted along the pavement, which provide an important softening of what would otherwise be a rather hard urban environment. The trees make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Tredegar Square Gardens features a number of large mature trees set with a grassed area enclosed by railings. Shrubs and footpaths are arranged in semi-circular patterns, with occasional benches.

## 2.7 Problems and pressures

Although the character and appearance of the conservation area is appreciably consistent, changes have been made to some properties which eroded this consistency. Further uncontrolled change could cause additional harm to the special character of the conservation area.

### 2.7.1 Façade treatment

The terraced residential streets that make up the conservation area are designed to be uniform and regular in appearance, relying on the repetition of simple elements and a consistency of materials and details for the overall effect. Much of the terracing remains little altered, but in some cases brickwork has been unsympathetically painted, rendered or poorly maintained. The result has created discord and fragmentation to the entire elevation of the terrace, to the detriment of the character of the conservation area.

### 2.7.2 Damage and loss of decorative mouldings

Many properties in the conservation area suffer from damaged or missing decorative mouldings, especially the projecting cornices and ornate stucco brackets to doors and bay windows. These features are importance characteristics of the conservation area and their loss is detrimental to its overall character and appearance.

### 2.7.3 Boundary treatments

Many of the properties in this conservation area have lost their original iron railings, and many have been replaced with unsympathetically designed walls or fencing. This can detract from the overall design and consistency of the terrace, especially apparent in long views.

### 2.7.4 Security gates

Metal security gates have been introduced to the front of some terraced residential properties in the conservation area. Historically, entrance doors were recessed, giving some shelter from the weather, and adding depth to the façade. The new security gates have been introduced front of the door, on the same plane as the front wall. They are not traditional, and their introduction detracts from the character and appearance of the terraces.

### 2.7.5 Rear extensions

Rear elevations can suffer badly from inappropriate design and large rear extensions. Where visible, these inappropriately designed extensions harm the character and appearance of the conservation area. There are isolated incidents of overdevelopment to the rear of properties in the conservation area, an increase in this would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. End of terrace plots, in which the rear of properties are more visible, are particularly sensitive.

## 2.8 Summary of special interest

This is an area of special architectural and historic interest, illustrated by its rich history and significant architecture dating from the nineteenth century and earlier, in summary the specific features of special interest are:

- surviving terraces of nineteenth century houses;
- high level of consistency across the terraces;
- uniformity both of form and materials; and
- high rate of survival of architectural features and enrichments which make positive contributions to the character and appearance of the conservation area, these include:
  - chimney pots;
  - continuous line of parapet wall to conceal London roof behind;
  - party walls with brick-on-edge detailing and stepped lead flashings;
  - stucco cornices to the parapet on the front elevation;
  - decorative mouldings or brick borders to first-floor windows;
  - tripartite round-headed windows at first-floor level;
  - canted bay windows with decorative cornice and console;
  - round-headed paired windows with stucco surrounds and foliate embellishments;
  - timber sash windows with delicate glazing bars; and
  - embellished architrave, often featuring vermiculated or reticulated stucco, to recessed front doors.

All the above elements make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Overall, the terraces are collectively regarded as having significant townscape merit and are worthy of designation as a conservation area.

## 3.0 MANAGEMENT PLAN

### 3.1 Introduction

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 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, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. The re-use of historic buildings and places is environmentally responsible, as it protects the energy and resources embodied in them and combats global warming. Demolition and rebuilding of buildings can have a significant impact on the environment and can result in a large amount of waste and associated air pollution.

### 3.2 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 National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF].
- the London Plan
- 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.

### 3.3 Opportunities for enhancement

It is the character of the area, rather than individual buildings, which the conservation area designation seeks to preserve and enhance. However, there are minor improvements that could be made to the existing terraces within the residential part of this conservation area. While the structures themselves are intact, the terraces require some attention and renovation. The council supports the retention and reinstatement of architectural features of the area.

This section provides guidance on opportunities for enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area which residents may consider.

#### 3.3.1 Façade brickwork

Measures should be taken to ensure that further damage to the façade brickwork is avoided and to ensure that further application of render is not allowed [see section 2.7.1]. Although cladding and rendering may seem quick solutions to maintenance and structural problems, they can create new problems, disguising what could later emerge to be major building defects. These are all irreversible steps. By hiding original details, such as window arches and string courses, a house can be completely altered, losing its traditional appearance.

The original pointing and mortar would have been lime putty based without cement. Modern cementitious mortars are not appropriate because this mortar is harder than the brickwork, whereas mortar should be softer than the brickwork. Projecting 'weather struck' pointing would not be original and should be avoided; the pointing should be flush with or slightly indented from the brickwork. It is important to use mortar to match the original and not any later replacements.

#### 3.3.2 Railings

During the war metal was in short supply and railings were removed. Some properties have had railings reinstated but they do not all follow the traditional details. Reinstatement of traditional railings is encouraged by the council. Railings should be of cast iron, painted black and leaded into a stone plinth. Low railings are appropriate: higher than two metres would detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area.

#### 3.3.3 Cornices

Where parapet level cornices are damaged or have had to be removed, efforts should be made to restore them. This would improve the rhythm and character of the terrace and therefore be considered a positive intervention to the conservation area.

### 3.3.4 Streets and open spaces

There are opportunities to improve quality of the street environment in the conservation area and its setting. The existing street trees make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and there may be scope for further planting of trees or the improvement of existing tree pits. There may also be opportunities for other types of greening to support and improve the character of the streetscene, as well as providing linkages and wayfinding to the Green Grid, which runs through and adjacent to the conservation area. Other opportunities for enhancement exist in the rationalisation of the street clutter, the improvement of pavement surfaces and street lighting, and the improvement of Tredegar Square Gardens. Care to ensure the appropriate maintenance will need to be considered.

## 3.4 Potential development

The council recognises that residents may wish to extend their houses to provide more accommodation; this section provides guidance on how best to manage the potential change. It is important that any development is carried out with due regard for preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Historic England in their guidance regarding alterations to the London terraced house 1660– 1860 note the need to retain the structure, character and appearance of a building, and that proposals should not impair or destroy the overall shape and proportion of a house or detract from its historic character.

### 3.4.1 Roof extensions

Historic England's advice summarised above relates to a number of features but is particularly relevant when considering alterations to the roof form.

When assessing an application for a roof extension the following matters are taken into account:

- visibility and impact on the public realm;
- historic integrity (degree of change);
- the historic and architectural interest of the buildings concerned;
- the completeness of the group or terrace of houses concerned;
- the consistency and uniformity of the existing roofscape and its contribution to the character of the conservation area; and

- significance in terms of the conservation area.

[Mansard roofs](#) are recognised as a traditional way of extending Georgian and Victorian houses. They can be used to replace existing London roofs with a new roof structure comprised of a steep pitched roof, with a shallower secondary pitch above, creating an additional storey of accommodation.

The council has prepared [design guidance document](#) to assist residents apply for planning permission for mansard roof extensions. The guidance only applies to certain properties on in the conservation area. Many of the streets in the conservation area have a consistency of architectural form, with a consistent rhythm and scale to the terraces. The uniform parapet line to the front elevation, concealing a series of uniform London roofs, creates a strong silhouette and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The introduction of mansard roof extensions can disrupt and cause harm to this element of the areas special interest. To help mitigate this potential harm to the conservation area, the guidance requires proposals for mansard roof extensions to be accompanied by façade enhancement works. The document sets out the types of enhancement work that are appropriate for the Tredegar Square Conservation Area.

### 3.4.2 Rear extensions

The scope for rear extensions to be altered is often greater than for roof extensions. There are large parts of the conservation area where rear elevations have less impact to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Where new extensions are not visible from the public realm their impact on the overall character and appearance of the conservation area is reduced.

However, the variety of rear extensions means that there is no standard solution and when putting an application together it will be important to consider the consistency and rhythm of neighbouring properties, the existing rear building line and the particular character of the house.

When assessing an application for a rear extension the following matters are taken into account:

- visibility from street and impact on the public realm;
- historic integrity (degree of change);
- the historic and architectural interest of the buildings concerned;
- the consistency and uniformity of the existing group or terrace of houses concerned;

- significance in terms of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The impact of the proposals upon the amenity of neighbouring properties, the design, scale and materials are always important considerations when assessing proposals for a rear extension. An extension should always be subordinate to the main building.

Generally, an extension to infill the side return will be acceptable. Ideally this should be a lighter weight structure, its features should respect the scale of those features on the existing building and ideally it will be set back from the rear wall of the existing extension so that the prominence of the historic building envelope is preserved.

A common form of extension requested is a wraparound extension. This might also be acceptable, where the garden is of a suitable size, and where it is not visible from the public realm.

It is very important to note that all general planning policies apply as elsewhere in the borough.

### 3.4.3 Shopfronts

The commercial properties on Grove Road and Mile End Road are an important component of the conservation area and there is an opportunity to refurbish and upgrade their shopfronts. Insensitively designed shopfronts can harm the character and appearance of the conservation area. Whereas a well-designed shopfront has the potential to increase the attractiveness of the building to which it is attached and the area as a whole, and potentially increase the commercial success of the shop and the area by increasing the appeal to shoppers. Alterations to original shopfronts should respect the design, detailing, material and architectural features of the existing, and also the building itself.

## 3.5 Highways and public realm

The quality of the highway and public realm, including surface materials, street furniture and other features, makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Any work carried out should respect this historic character, and this will include retaining and restoring any historic surfaces or features. Any new surfaces should be sympathetic to the historic character of the area. It will also include the removal of any superfluous or redundant street furniture, and ensuring a co-ordinated approach to the introduction of new features using equipment that is simple, elegant and appropriate to context.

### 3.6

#### Trees

All trees in conservation areas are protected by the provisions of section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These provisions require people to notify the council before carrying out certain works to trees. This is known as a 'section 211 notice', and it must be made six weeks before the work. The work may go ahead before the end of the six-week period if council gives consent. The notice period gives the council the opportunity to consider whether to make a Tree Preservation Order [TPO].

Details of how to make a section 211 notice can be found on the council's website. People are not required to submit a section 211 notice to the local planning authority for:

- the cutting down, topping or lopping or uprooting of a tree whose diameter does not exceed 75 millimetres; or
- the cutting down or uprooting of a tree, whose diameter does not exceed 100 millimetres, for the sole purpose of improving the growth of other trees (eg thinning as part of forestry operations).
- In either case, the diameter of the tree is to be measured over the bark of the tree at 1.5 metres above ground level. These exemptions do not apply in circumstances where a tree has more than one stem at a point 1.5 metres above the natural ground level if any stem when measured over its bark at that point exceeds the relevant minimum.

Further details can be found on the council's website: [tree management and preservation orders \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/tree-management-and-preservation-orders).

### 3.7

#### Energy efficiency improvements

#### 3.7.1

##### 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 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, for example 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.

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

Original façade treatments of buildings which contribute positively to the special character or appearance of the conservation area should be retained or reinstated. 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.

## 3.8 Making a planning application

In Tredegar Square Conservation Area, as in other conservation areas, planning controls are more extensive than normal. Before carrying out any work in this area, you may need to apply for planning permission even for minor work such as replacing railings. Consent

is required to demolish any building larger than 115m<sup>2</sup>, and a higher standard of detail and information is required for any application.

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. To assist with this, more detailed information is often required to support a planning application. 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 design decisions.
- A heritage statement that sets out the significance of relevant heritage assets and what the impact of the development will be on them,
- 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 proposed work.
- Where mansard roof extensions are proposed, detailed drawings showing accompanying façade enhancement works.
- Additional detail regarding materials and construction.
- Photos of the condition of existing building [including details where appropriate].
- Where relevant, existing and proposed townscape views.

More information about making a planning application can be found on the councils website: [making a planning application \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://towerhamlets.gov.uk/making-a-planning-application). Applicants are encouraged to make use of the council's pre-application advice service to help improve the quality of planning applications and their likelihood of success.

Planning applications that do not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area will normally be recommended for refusal.

### 3.9 Enforcement strategy

The council has power to act where there has been a breach of planning regulations. This includes carrying out development without consent, or not in accordance with conditions attached to a consent. It also includes displaying a sign or an advert without, advertisement consent, making a material and unlawful change to the use of a property, carrying out works to a listed building without consent, demolishing a building within a conservation area without consent, felling or carrying out works to a tree in a conservation area or a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order [TPO].

If we find that there is a breach of planning regulations, we may request that a retrospective application be made for the works. If a retrospective application is not submitted, or if permission is refused, we may ask for the structure to be changed or removed or for the use to cease. In some cases, we may issue a planning enforcement notice to ensure compliance.

An enforcement notice is served on all freeholders, lessees, mortgagees and other persons having a material interest in the property. Failure to comply with an enforcement notice is an offence that may result in an unlimited fine if convicted. Continued non-compliance can result in further prosecutions for further offences, incurring additional fines. An enforcement notice is also entered on the local land charges records which could make the future sale or financing of the property more difficult.

Further details about planning enforcement can be found on the council's website: [breaches of planning regulations \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/breaches-of-planning-regulations)

## 4.0 CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

### **Tower Hamlets Planning & Building Control Service**

Tower Hamlets Town Hall

160 Whitechapel Road

London

E1 1BJ

Tel: 020 7364 5009

[planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:planning@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

[www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/planning\\_and\\_building\\_control/](https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/planning_and_building_control/)

### **Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives**

277 Bancroft Road

London

E1 4DQ

Tel: 020 7364 1290

[localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

[www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history](https://www.ideastore.co.uk/local-history)

### **Historic England**

A public body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's historic environment.

[www.historicengland.org.uk/](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/)

### **Georgian Group**

A national charity for the preservation and promotion of Georgian architecture and planning.

[www.georgiangroup.org.uk](http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk)

### **Victorian Society**

A national charity championing Victorian and Edwardian buildings.

[www.victoriansociety.org.uk](http://www.victoriansociety.org.uk)

### **Twentieth Century Society**

A national charity helping to protect and celebrate outstanding buildings from the 20th and 21st centuries.

[www.c20society.org.uk](http://www.c20society.org.uk)

### **Planning Portal**

A website that helps people to apply for planning permission and building control in the UK.

[www.planningportal.co.uk](http://www.planningportal.co.uk)