



# Clinton Road

## Conservation Area

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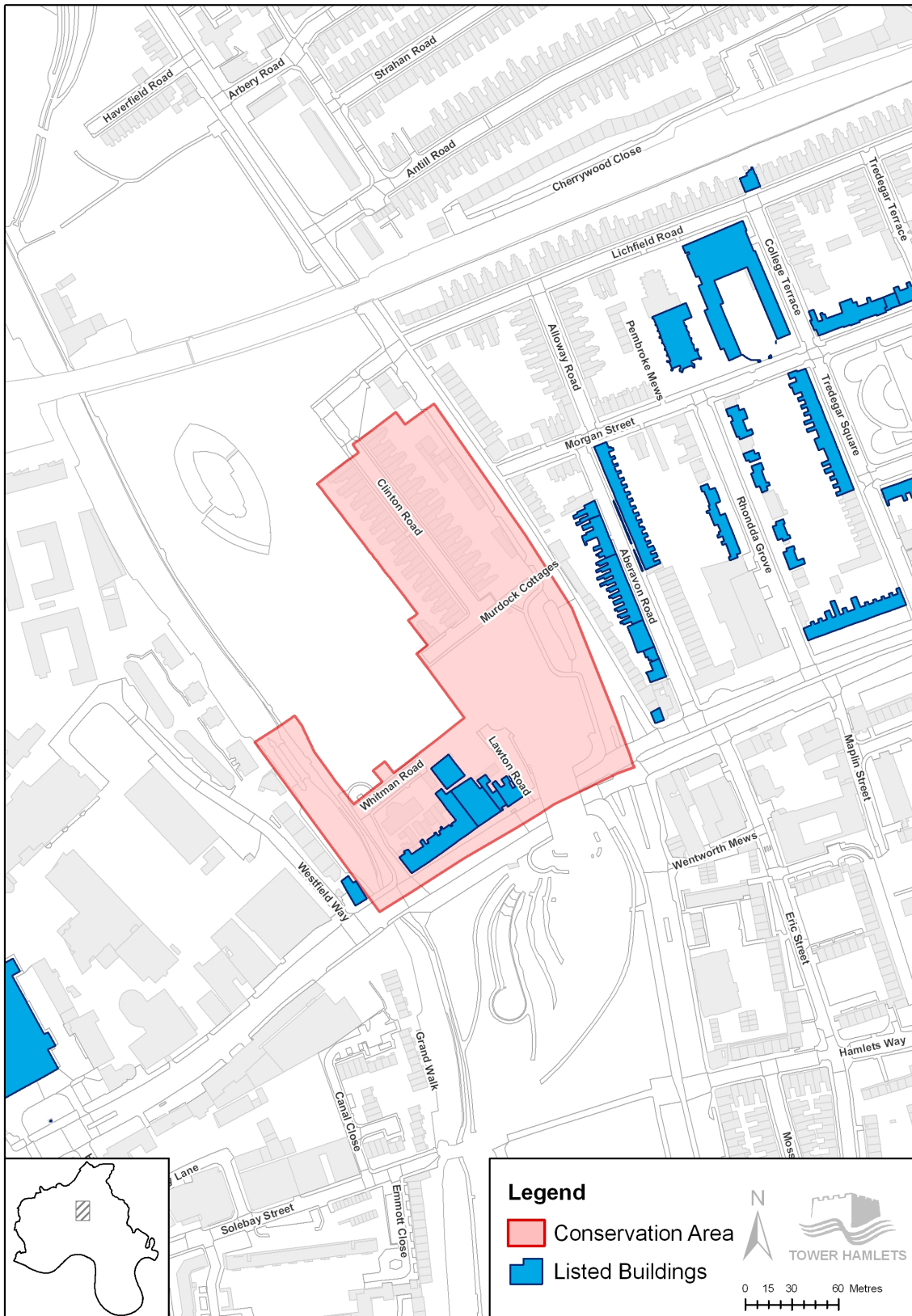
London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
Adopted by Cabinet: 7<sup>th</sup> March 2007

## 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.



### CLINTON 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 Clinton Road Conservation Area was designated in September 1989. Bounded by Mile End Road and Grove Road, much of the early terrace housing was cleared for the provision of open space, now occupied by Mile End parkland. The remaining townscapes within the Conservation Area include the residential terrace housing along Clinton Road and the commercial edge to Mile End Road.

## History

Beginning in the late 17th century, for the first time, small clusters of houses and terraces appeared along Mile End Road. These were inhabited by a wealthy class of merchants and mariners until the early 19th century when the character of the area began to change due to the development of open land. With the wealthier inhabitants leaving Mile End, and a large Jewish community moving into this area, cultural changes and activity prompted a change in the architectural setting. Mile End Road was no longer considered a desirable place of residence, but instead a commercial hub. This formed the basis for the mix of uses and tenure along Mile End Road.

In an attempt to reclaim Mile End's refined character, 17th and 18th century houses were restored, and the provision of open space became an aspiration. Appearing in the County of London Plan 1943 was a concept to provide 90 acres of green space spanning from Victoria Park to the Thames, along the Regents Canal. In order for this open space to be instigated, a stretch of Victorian styled terraces spanning from Victoria Park was cleared. The surviving Clinton Road streetscape is an important remnant of Victorian Mile End.

With an emphasis on sustainability, the masterplan for a continuous park by Tibbalds Munro came to fruition in 1992. The Green Bridge (by CWZG's Piers Gough) provides a connection over Mile End Park with commercial shops underneath the bridge.

The Clinton Road Conservation Area includes the surviving Clinton Road townscape, St Rhystyd's Welsh Church (1914 – since demolished) at 9 Whitman Road, the Mile End Lock (dated early 19th century) and the listed terraces of Mile End Road.

### **Character**

The character of the Clinton Road Conservation Area is defined by two distinct townscapes. First, Clinton Road is lined by residential terraces of two storeys. Built around the 1870s, the Victorian style terraces of London stock brick, stucco dressing and bay windows, were spared from slum clearance and remain intact. Much of the character of the terrace is gained from its overall uniformity and rhythm, its height, bay width, arched window heads, consistent setback, matching materials and details. The terraced houses have subtle variations in their colour, and the streetscape is significant as a group of buildings forming a coherent whole.

In contrast, the Mile End Road frontage is varied, consisting of early 19th century Georgian style terraces between 359 and 373 Mile End Road. The locally listed terrace, constructed of stock brick was originally houses. The ground level shop fronts were later integrated, with residential floors remaining above. Within the locally listed terrace is an Italianate building of the mid-late 19th century at 373 Mile End Road. Built of yellow stock brick with stucco dressings, it has a slate roof with heavy bracketed eaves cornice and blocking course. It retains an interesting shop front behind unsympathetic later adverts and alterations. A particularly fine and original shopfront survives at 373 Mile End Road.

The Grade II listed Guardian Angels Roman Catholic Church (1901-1902) was built in red brick with perpendicular details and is entirely unique in this part of the Mile End Road streetscape. In terms of views and silhouettes, the church has the most significant presence in the Conservation Area.

## **Land Use**

The land use character of the Clinton Road Conservation Area is a mixture of residential, commercial and open space, and this mix of uses is essential to the character of this part of Mile End Road. Similarly, the residential uses of Clinton Road itself are essential to its character.

## **Scale**

The existing building scale in the area is generally two to three stories, with smaller domestic-scale two storey dwellings along Clinton Road. The scale along Mile End Road is principally three storeys in height, with the notable Italianate building (373 Mile End Road) higher at four storeys. Next to it is the Guardian Angels Roman Catholic Church, a higher, more prominent building with associated tower and spire.

## **Open Spaces**

The Clinton Road Conservation Area includes part of Mile End Park as open space. The park is not of any architectural importance to the Conservation Area, however it is culturally and historically significant to Tower Hamlets as an initiative of the County of London Plan 1943 to provide open space in London. In 2002, a masterplan by Tibbalds Munro was realised including landscaping, earth-covered buildings and the Green bridge, which provides a link over Mile End Road. The Green bridge is quickly becoming a defining characteristic and landmark of this part of London.

## **Views**

Long views exist along both Mile End Road and Burdett Road, with the Green Bridge and associated parklands the notable features. Vistas down Clinton Road show remnants of the Victorian terrace development, which survived the slum clearance. Panoramic views from the Green Bridge (which lies on the same linear axis as Clinton Road) highlight views towards the Canary Wharf towers to the southwest and to the Westfield Student Village to the northwest, as a backdrop to the Mile End Park grounds. The most important visual landmark in the area is the Guardian Angels

Roman Catholic Church and spire which is visible from numerous viewpoints within the Clinton Road Conservation area, and extensively from surrounding streets beyond.

### **Summary**

This is an area of particular special architectural and historic interest, illustrated by its rich history and significant architecture, dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and earlier. The character and appearance of the area, as described in this appraisal, define its special qualities. There are some minor inappropriate frontages in the Conservation Area, but overall these have little impact on the qualities that led to its designation.

## 2. Management Guidelines

### Overview

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

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

Conservation Areas also promote sustainability in its widest sense. The Council is committed to this in 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 Clinton Road is described in detail in the Appraisal in the first part of this document.**

In Clinton 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.

- Several local policies apply to this Conservation Area. It is adjacent to two development sites – one on Burdett Road and one at Mile End underground station.
- The London Cycle Network runs west-east along Mile End Road, and also north-south along Burdett Road.
- A strategic cycle route runs north-south through the area over the Green Bridge, following the park.
- The Regents Canal to the west is part of the Blue Ribbon and Green Chain networks.
- The park to the north and south is an area of importance for nature conservation, and also designated as Metropolitan Open Land.

## **Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area**

### **Grade II**

- The Guardian Angels RC Church, Mile End Road
- 377 Mile End Road
- Guardian Angels School, Whitman Road

### **Locally Listed Building**

- 359-373 Mile End Road
- 379-381 Mile End Road

## **Highways and Transportation Issues**

The quality of the streetscape, the surface materials, street furniture and other features can all be integral parts of the character of Conservation Areas. Any work carried out should respect this historic character. Anyone involved in development which impacts on public spaces should refer to the Council's Street Design Guide,

TfL's own Streetscape Guidance and English Heritage's 'Streets for All' document. The ongoing cost of maintenance should also be considered carefully.

Mile End Road is the main thoroughfare through the area, and the volume of traffic dominates the street scene. Clinton Road is much quieter, although again parked cars have become a dominant feature of the street scene.

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 is potential to improve the Mile End Road frontage by coordinating signage, reducing the number of plastic framed windows and trying to ensure that roller shutters and other security measures do not harm the character of the buildings. Ways of calming the traffic on Mile End Road, and reducing the dominance of cars in the other streets within the area should be investigated. This would help to improve the setting of the listed buildings on Mile End Road and give a greater sense of quality in the area.

Clinton Road itself is a very coherent residential street. The streetscape could be enhanced if cornices, dressings, front walls and railings were coordinated during repairs and refurbishments.

There is very little scope for new development in the Conservation Area, as the undeveloped areas are designated as public open spaces and form part of Mile End Park.

## **Trees, Parks and Open Spaces**

The Conservation Area encloses a portion of Mile End Park, including the northern approach to the landmark parklands. The Conservation Area is not an inhibition to improving community facilities in the park.

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

## **Equalities:**

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

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

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

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

## **Publicity**

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

## **Consideration of Resources Needed to Conserve the Historic Environment:**

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

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

## **Ongoing Management and Monitoring Change:**

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

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

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

### **Enforcement Strategy:**

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

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

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

### **Further Reading and Contacts**

- The Survey of London, volume 27: Spitalfields and Mile End New Town.
- 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](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk) or by contacting:

Tel: 020 7364 5009

Email: [dr.majorprojects@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto: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	<a href="http://www.english-heritage.org.uk">www.english-heritage.org.uk</a>
The Georgian Group	<a href="http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk">www.georgiangroup.org.uk</a>
Victorian Society	<a href="http://www.victorian-society.org.uk">www.victorian-society.org.uk</a>
20 <sup>th</sup> Century Society	<a href="http://www.c20society.org.uk">www.c20society.org.uk</a>
Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings	<a href="http://www.spab.org.uk">www.spab.org.uk</a>

### **Listed Buildings at Risk:**

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

### **Any other threats to the Conservation Area**

- Loft extensions in Clinton Road threaten the consistent character of Clinton Road.
- Inappropriate changes to shopfronts on the commercial frontage of Mile End Road have taken place.

### **Priorities for Action (1-5)**

1. Secure the restoration of the original shopfront at 373 Mile End Road.
2. Produce a Stakeholder's Guide.
3. Promote the continuing active use of Mile End Park.
4. Reinstate original features to houses, including fronts.
5. Introduce Article 4 Directions to remove Permitted Development Rights.