



# Naval Row

## Conservation Area

### 1. Character Appraisal

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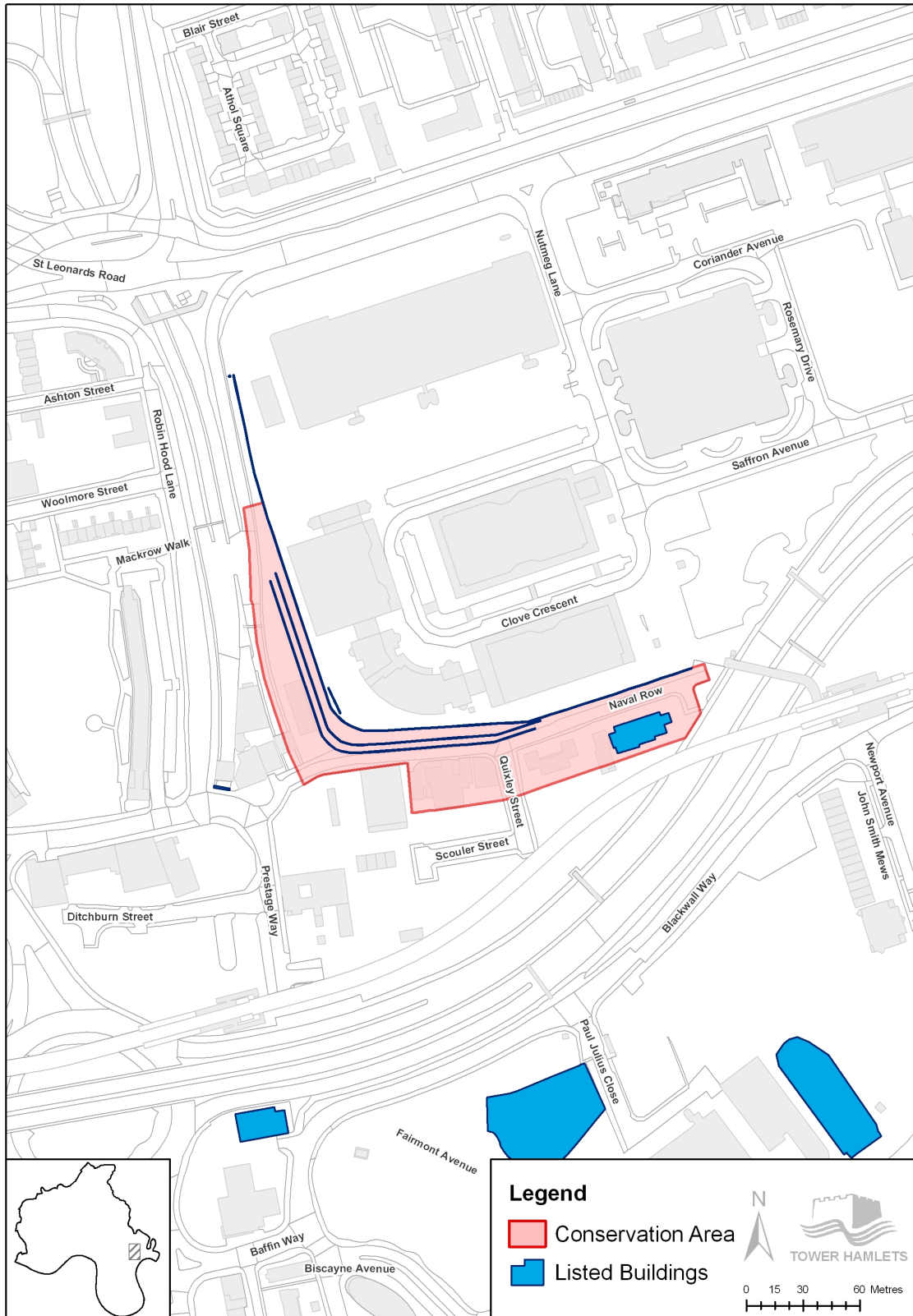
London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
Adopted by Cabinet: 7<sup>th</sup> March 2007

## 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.



### NAVAL ROW 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 Naval Row Conservation Area was designated in January 1987 by the London Docklands Development Corporation. It is defined to the north by the listed perimeter wall of the former East India Docks. Laid out in the early 19th century, Naval Row takes its name from a small terrace constructed c.1782 by John Perry, owner of Blackwall Yard. The last of the houses was demolished in 1945. The southern edge of the street is lined with historic buildings of interest including the listed hydraulic pumping station, now converted to residential use, and it is their group value which is safeguarded by the Conservation Area designation.

## History

The East India Company was formed when, in 1600, the 'Governor and Company of London Merchants trading into the East Indies' were granted a license to trade by Elizabeth I. Blackwall Yard, established at Poplar by the East India Dock Company in 1614, was the first on the Isle of Dogs and developed into the nation's most productive shipbuilding yard by the late 18th century. The main facilities for the yard included slipways for new ship-building, dry docks for repair and basins for fitting-out and refitting.

The East India Docks (1803-1806) were the third set of wet docks constructed on the Thames after the West India Docks in 1800-6 and the London Docks in 1802. Designed by John Rennie and Ralph Walker, they were constructed adjacent to the existing Brunswick Wharf. The docks comprised the Import and Export Docks, and the Entrance Basin, linked to the Thames by an entrance lock. Earth excavated in the construction of the Import Dock was used to make bricks for the perimeter walls to the dock enclosures.

The trade of the East Indies was higher value and lower bulk than the trade of the West India Company, and involved fewer ships serviced by smaller docks. Large warehouses were not required as the valuable goods were transported along the East

India Dock Road and Commercial Road to the security of the East India Company's City Warehouses as soon as they were unloaded. A 21-year monopoly on the loading, unloading and re-fitting of all vessels trading to the East Indies ensured the early success of the docks. This agreement between the East India Company and the dock company was extended by a further 6 years in 1827.

In 1833, the Government ended the East India Company's trading function and the shipping trade plummeted. It was eventually resurrected in 1838 with the amalgamation of the East India and West India Dock Companies, and both dock systems began servicing all trades. The larger locks and deeper entrance basin of the East India Docks were better able to accommodate larger ships than the West India Docks. Increased demand required the construction of a number of warehouses along the north quay (1865-6), and a railway link from Poplar Station (1860).

In 1909, the East India Docks passed into the control of the Port of London Authority (PLA), after which they were linked with the West India and Millwall Docks for administrative purposes. An extensive renovation scheme undertaken by the PLA between 1912-16 included the reconstruction of the north quay of the Import Dock.

The Docks were transformed in the Second World War when the Import Dock was drained for the construction of the Mulberry floating harbours used in the 1944 D-Day landings in Normandy. The Export Dock, having suffered severe bomb damage, was sold in 1946 to form part of the site for the construction of the Brunswick Power Station. In the 1960s the shipping facilities were eventually rendered obsolete by changes in cargo handling practices, and the docks eventually closed in 1967. The Import Dock was gradually filled-in and the sale of the East India Dock concluded by the PLA in 1971.

## **Character**

The character of the Naval Row Conservation Area is defined by the surviving structures associated with the historic port and shipbuilding activities of the 19th century.

The southern and western sections of the perimeter wall to the Import Dock enclosure have survived as the most substantial remains of the East India Dock System. A large stretch of the southern wall, including the curved south-western corner, was rebuilt in 1833-4 to accommodate the new road to Brunswick Wharf between the dock wall and Naval Row. A section of the eastern perimeter wall divides the carriageways of Leamouth Road. The northern perimeter wall and the imposing main gate into the docks constructed at the north-western corner of the enclosure, were demolished in 1912 when East India Dock Road was widened. Of the three original entrances, only the eastern gateway into Leamouth Road survives and the dock walls have been listed in recognition of their importance as engineering structures. Although now dwarfed by the office development behind, the remodelled dock wall forms the defining northern boundary of the Naval Row Conservation Area, marginally softened by a landscaped pedestrian path.

The southern edge is lined with a mix of new development and historic buildings, most of them appropriately redeveloped to maintain the urban, maritime character of the area.

The Italianate former hydraulic pumping station sits at the eastern end of the Conservation Area and was constructed in 1857 to supply power to the East India Docks. Designed by dock company engineer Henry Martin, it was extended by A. Manning (1877-8) in a similar style, accommodating a new engine room to power the hydraulically operated gates to the new entrance lock. The hydraulic equipment was replaced by electrical machinery in 1925.

The neo-Georgian Naval House (No.36 Naval Row) was erected in 1928-9 by the Borough of Poplar, replacing stables which had occupied the site since 1834. Sold by Council in the mid-1980s, the flats have been privately refurbished and the block re-named Naval House. No.26 Naval Row stands on the site of an early 19<sup>th</sup> century lead manufactory and comprises a number of single-storey workshops. It also includes an art-deco inspired building, originally accommodating ground floor offices with warehousing above.

The Steamship Public House, constructed in two stages in 1842 and 1845, occupies the site of the two easternmost houses of the original Naval Row Terrace. Designed by Edward Brown of Spitalfields, the main building sits back from the road and its original front is aligned with the older houses of Naval Row. The single storey street addition was added in 1885, and the building now forms the eastern gateway into Naval Row. It is still in use and makes a positive contribution to the character of the area.

### **Land Use**

The area immediately adjacent to the Naval Row Conservation Area was once defined by worker's housing and supporting industry associated with the dock activities. The construction of the Blackwall Tunnel approach roads in 1892-7 required the acquisition and demolition of much of the working-class terraced housing to the west of the docks. The tunnel approach road, and the public housing erected on adjacent sites, substantially changed the character of the surrounding area.

Many of the original 19th century buildings (stables, coach houses, workshops etc.) have since been redeveloped or renovated with more recent structures and converted for residential use. There is little scope for further development in the Naval Row Conservation Area. The Steamship survives as an operating public house and remains as a valuable living part of the area's historic character.

### **Open Space**

The northern part of the Naval Row area is bounded to the west by a low retaining wall running in line with the former East India Dock Wall Road (1822-4). The road was closed and the area planted as part of Tunnel Gardens in 1902. Although this tree-lined strip of raised land provides an attractive forecourt to the historic dock wall, and despite the optimistic provision of park benches, its role is consigned to little more than a green buffer between the Blackwall Tunnel Approach and the western boundary wall of the old docks. The trees add a great deal of character to the remaining dock walls.

## **Scale**

The scale of the Conservation Area is defined by the buildings lining the southern edge of Naval Row, and the street still retains an intimate feel. The dock wall along the northern boundary of the Conservation Area is now overshadowed by the large commercial office development occupying the former footprint of East India Docks, marginally obscured by a row of trees lining the upper pedestrian path. The remainder of the buildings vary in scale from single-storey workshops to the more imposing residential buildings located at the eastern end of Naval Row.

## **Views**

The most significant views are those along Naval Row itself from east and west, and the view north along the old perimeter wall of the East India Dock. The Italianate accumulator tower of the former Hydraulic Pumping Station forms a vertical focus at the eastern boundary of the Conservation Area, visible from Aspen Way, the Docklands Light Railway and the pedestrian bridge linking the East India DLR Station with the office development to the north.

## **Summary**

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



## 2. Management Guidelines

### Overview

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

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

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

In Naval Row, 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.

- The London Cycle Network passes through the Conservation Area from west to east along Naval Row.
- The northern part of the Conservation Area also adjoins the northern approach to the Blackwall Tunnel, which is designated as a strategic route.
- The south-western corner of the Conservation Area overlaps with an area at Blackwall Reach identified in the Leaside Area Action Plan for mixed use development.

## Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area

### Grade II

- East India Dock Pumping Station, East India Dock Wall Road
- East India Dock Boundary Wall, East India Dock Wall Road
- Embankment Wall, Railings and Steps, Naval Row

## 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.

Naval Row includes an area of historic floorscape at the turning head at the east end of the road. East India Dock Wall Road is now a high quality raised pedestrian route which turns north alongside the Blackwall Tunnel Approach Road, with high quality surface materials, railings and other street furniture.

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

## **Opportunities and Potential for Enhancement**

The site at 1 Prestige Way is identified for future development. Proposals for this site's frontage on to Naval Row should respect the character of the street, as defined in the appraisal, and should enhance its coherence, definition and identity.

In a wider sense, the character of the Conservation Area has been severely damaged by the Blackwall Tunnel Approach ramps to the west, and the Aspen Way urban motorway to the south. Investigations should be made as to how to reconnect the Conservation Area meaningfully and spatially to the historic fabric of Poplar to the west, and restore its historic connections with the river to the south.

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

There are no significant parks or open spaces in the area, although there are small areas of greenery adjacent to the Blackwall Tunnel entrance.

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 Survey of London, Volume 44: Poplar, Blackwall and the Isle of Dogs.
- The Buildings of England (London 5: East). Cherry, O'Brien and Pevsner.
- Docklands Heritage. LDDC 1989.

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**

- Large scale development affecting the setting of the Conservation Area.

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

1. Produce Stakeholder Guide.
2. Protection of historic pub.
3. Reinstatement of historic street surfaces.
4. Improve connectivity out of Conservation Area.
5. Produce detailed analysis of the setting of the Conservation Area.