



Carlton Square

Conservation Area

1. Character Appraisal

2. Management Guidelines

Adopted by Cabinet: 5th march 2008

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

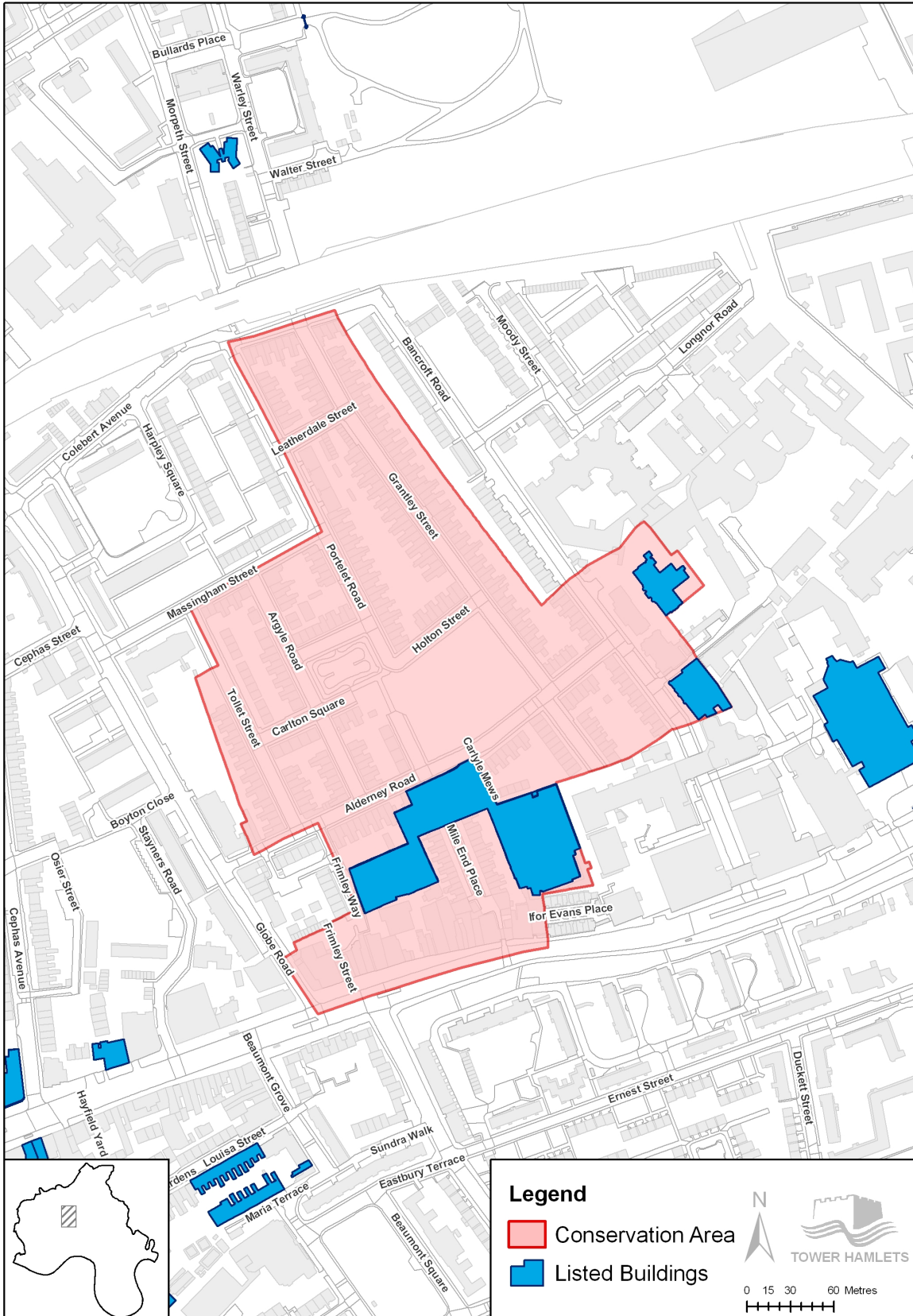
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Introduction

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.

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.



CARLTON SQUARE 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 Carlton Square Conservation Area was designated in September 1987. The Conservation Area has an irregular boundary, extending from Massingham Street and Bancroft Road to the north, through to Mile End Road to the south. It includes the western terraces of Tollet Street along its western boundary and the Grantley Street terraces to the east. The Carlton Square Conservation Area includes two Grade II listed buildings, namely the Library and Mile End Hospital, and two disused burial grounds, which are also Grade II listed.

History

Beginning in the late 17th century, for the first time, small clusters of houses and terraces appeared along Mile End Road. Development of the Mile End area progressed rapidly, with a new suburban neighbourhood developing in the early 18th century. 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 immigrating into this area, cultural changes and activity prompted a change in the architectural setting. The increase in Jewish immigration in the 19th century added to the Spanish and Portuguese community, already established in the mid 17th century in Mile End. A collection of synagogues and religious institutions still exist in the area, reflecting the religious and cultural life at the time.

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. When the hamlet of Mile End Old Town was assumed by the Borough of Stepney by 1899, the area had its own workhouse and vestry hall (later library) on Bancroft Road. In the 1860s, large terrace houses were built on the west side of Bancroft Road and continued into Alderney Road, aligning with the long, front wall of the Jewish Cemetery. This was established by Spanish and Portuguese Jews from the

City. They also founded the hospital for Spanish and Portuguese Jews at 253 Mile End Road. Both these sites were shown on historical maps as early as 1799.

The mid 19th century saw large scale and rapid building to provide cheap and sanitary housing for the working classes. Housing in Carlton Square is a product of this urban expansion. The houses in the Carlton Square Area were developed in the 1850s, by William Pemberton Barnes on open land known as Globe Fields. The Pemberton Barnes Trust began letting the houses from 1853 and eventually sold their 200 properties to the Peabody Trust in 1974, who are now the major landowners in the area.

There are some areas of later Victorian houses built 20-30 years after the first phase, most notably those south of Alderney Road, Bancroft Road and to the southern part of Grantley Street, which originally continued to Mile End Road. Post-war redevelopment has been limited to only four sites on Tollet Street, Carlton Square, Argyle Road and Pemberton Court on Portelet Road. However, the creation of the Carlton Square Gardens has had the most significant impact on the area. It was established in the 1960s by the clearing of housing, to form a public open space.

Character

The Carlton Square Conservation Area is characterised by its cohesive group of mid to late Victorian housing, which remain largely intact despite war damage and redevelopment. The Victorian terrace houses are generally two storeys and raised on a semi-basement. To the front of earlier properties, parapets extending the length of the terrace conceal a series of uniform London roofs. Later properties have overhanging eaves. There are no original mansard roofs in the area. Originally, these houses would have been fronted by ornate-cast iron railings, protecting small front gardens, but by 1993, these had entirely disappeared, some probably removed during the Second World War. The railings afford the residents of such houses with greater privacy and security and allow the creation of small front gardens. They have a beneficial impact upon the townscape and are highly visible to the public.

It is this history of single ownership which has protected the properties from unsympathetic alterations and which has ensured cohesive examples of mid-Victorian housing, with the square itself providing an important green lung in the area.

The original development has survived largely intact. The only houses which have been lost are in the two streets north of Massingham Street, the terraces at the northern end of Bancroft Road, those in Carlton Square Gardens (Colmar Street in 1860) and the houses on Globe Road.

Two Grade II listed buildings exist along Bancroft Road, namely Mile End Hospital and the Tower Hamlets Library. The hospital was built in the mid 19th century, in Jacobean style. 3 storeys in scale, the hospital was constructed in red brick, with white stone dressings and geometric designs in blue and white brick. Its centre has balustraded bay windows over 2 storeys, surmounted by Flemish gables. Further south along Bancroft Road is the library which was built in two parts, with the northern end built in 1865 and the southern part probably built earlier. 2 storeys in scale, the library building is constructed of white stone with heavy eaves cornice. Presented with banding between storeys, the ground floor is rusticated and has central round arched windows and its door flanked by Tuscan pilasters.

Land Use

The land use character of the Conservation Area is predominantly residential, surrounding Carlton Square and the adjoining Carlton Square Gardens. Civic buildings such as the hospital and library exist along Bancroft Road. Although some of these land uses have changed, the public buildings are of historical and architectural significance. The Jewish Burial Ground opened in 1657 and is the oldest Jewish burial ground in England. The disused cemetery and its perimeter 18th century brick wall, with rendered plinth and brick capping, are Grade II listed. Mixed use properties exist along Mile End Road, with commercial uses on the ground floor along the Mile End Road frontage, with residential flats above.

Scale

The residential streets surrounding Carlton Square and the gardens, such as Argyle Road, Tollet Street, Holton Street, Portelet Road and Grantley Street generally consist of mid 19th century, 2 storey terraces. Higher 3 storey properties with basements exist along Bancroft Road and Alderney Road. On the southern edge of the Conservation Area, along this part of Mile End Road, the scale ranges between 2-3 storeys.

Open Spaces

The Conservation Area is defined by its open spaces, namely Carlton Square and the accompanying Carlton Square gardens. The centralised open spaces are enclosed with rows of terraces surrounding the open land. These are considered as two important formal elements in the urban landscape and this is reflected in their protection against development above ground, by the London Squares Preservation Act of 1931. South of Carlton Square Gardens, the Jewish Cemeteries form a group of open space elements, located between Mile End Road and Alderney Road. Opened in 1657, burials took place up until 1758.

Views

Views in the area are framed along existing axes and local residential streets. Long views exist through Mile End Road, Bancroft Road and Grantley Street, where the clear definition of the streets and the character of the 19th century terrace housing create many high quality views. Other views exist towards the open spaces of Carlton Square and Carlton Square Gardens, with the continuous terrace housing as its backdrop.

Summary

This is an area of particular special architectural and historic interest, illustrated by its rich history and significant architecture dating from the 19th century. The character and appearance of the area, as described in this appraisal, define its special qualities. There are minor improvements that could be made to buildings in the Conservation Area, but overall this has 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 Carlton Square is described in detail in the Appraisal in the first part of this document.

In Carlton Square, 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.

Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area

Grade II

- Velho Cemetery of the Spanish and the Portuguese Jewish Congregation of London, between Mile End Road and Alderney Road
- Walls to Jewish Burial Ground
- Mile End Hospital, 273 Bancroft Road
- Tower Hamlets Library, 277 Bancroft 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. Beyond Mile End Road, to the north, the residential streets are much quieter, although parked cars have become a dominant feature on the streetscene.

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 on other

streets within the area should be investigated. This would help to improve the setting of Mile End Road and give a greater sense of quality in the area.

There is very little scope for new development in the Conservation Area, as the undeveloped areas are designated as public open spaces, namely Carlton Square and Carlton Square Gardens. More detailed guidance should be produced on the management of small scale refurbishment works to individual flats, in order to protect the original fabric. While the structures themselves are intact, the terraces require some minor attention and renovation. Distinctive front area railings have disappeared or may have been removed during the war. Where railings are missing, it is worth considering reinstating them, even if only for improved security.

Parapet level cornices have also often decayed or cracked. Terraces such as these 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. Some houses have been altered by stone cladding, which completely destroys the careful balance and continuity of the terrace façade. The result has created discord and fragmentation to the entire elevation of the terrace, to the detriment of the character of the Conservation Area. Measures must be made to ensure that further damage to the façade brickwork is avoided.

It is the character of the area rather than individual buildings which the Conservation Area seeks to preserve and enhance. There are no listed residential buildings within the Carlton Square Conservation Area, but these are very pleasant streets of Victorian terraces, whose overall character has already been eroded by over-enthusiastic modernisation of houses. The designation of the Conservation Area is taken as an opportunity to resist any further erosion of the character of the buildings.

Trees, Parks and Open Spaces

Carlton Square and the adjoining Carlton Square Gardens themselves, are the two main public spaces in the area. Any improvements to the two open spaces should respect the character of the area, while still meeting today's needs. The Carlton

Square Gardens are enclosed by perimeter railings and mature trees, where its large green parklands are uninterrupted and hence, can be used for outdoor activities. The smaller Carlton Square is an important example of London's residential squares, and features mature tree plantings in its symmetrical arrangement. It is enclosed by hedges, tree plantings and perimeter railings, which should be strictly protected. The square should be maintained to ensure that trees and plantings are of the appropriate scale, size and species. This will enhance the square as a more desirable space to use.

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

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

Tel: 020 7364 5009

Email: dr.majorprojects@towerhamlets.gov.uk

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

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

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

Mile End Old Town Residents Association

English Heritage

www.english-heritage.org.uk

The Georgian Group

www.georgiangroup.org.uk

Victorian Society

www.victorian-society.org.uk

20th Century Society

www.c20society.org.uk

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings www.spab.org.uk

Listed Buildings at Risk:

At this time we are not aware of any listed buildings at risk in the Conservation Area.
<check against Register>

Any other threats to the Conservation Area

(to be written at public consultation stage)

Priorities for Action (1-5)

(to be written at public consultation stage)