



MYRDLE STREET CONSERVATION AREA

Character appraisal and management plan

Adopted October 2021



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PREFACE

What is a conservation area?

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 ensure that change preserves or enhances the specific character of these areas for everybody.

The special character of these areas does not come only from the quality of their individual buildings, but from the value of these buildings as a group and from their setting. Elements such as the historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries and characteristic building and paving materials all contribute to the familiar and cherished local scene.

What is the purpose of this document?

This document has been prepared to comply with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Section 69(1) which 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”. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan provides a detailed description of the area’s architectural and historic character and management guidelines on how this character should be preserved or enhanced in the context of appropriate ongoing change.

This document has also been prepared to support relevant strategic objectives contained within the council’s Conservation Strategy 2017 –2027 including objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 2.6.

Who is this document for?

This is an inclusive document which is intended to engage with many different people and organisations. It will depend on the support of the community to achieve its objectives.

The character appraisal and management plan is aimed primarily at the residents, businesses, developers and others living and working in the area. The document has also been prepared to align conservation objectives within different parts of the council, to help to meet the objectives of the Conservation Strategy and to 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 change constructively.

What is the status of this document?

This character appraisal and management plan has the status of planning guidance. It replaces the previous character appraisal and management guidelines, adopted in 2007. It should be read in conjunction with Tower Hamlet's Local Plan and the London Plan. All planning applications for sites within the Myrdle Street Conservation Area should be informed by this document. It is a material consideration when planning applications affecting the conservation area are assessed.

Equality and diversity

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 informed 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 and as such this document provides guidance to ensure inclusivity for all members of the community.

This character appraisal and management plan document will support the council's aims set out below:

- Creation of a strong spirit of community and good race relations in Tower Hamlets.
- The removal of prejudice, discrimination and victimisation within the communities we serve and our workforce.
- To ensure 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.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Myrdle Street Conservation Area was designated in November 1996... The boundary was amended in 2021, with one area added to the north (transferred from Whitechapel Market Conservation Area) and one small area removed.

Myrdle Street and Parfett Street and the surrounding area provide a good illustration of the way in which areas develop over time, and how new development and redevelopment of sites occur simultaneously. Following the opening of the Royal London Hospital, the open land that surrounded it was gradually developed by the Hospital in order to help with running costs. As such it includes a rich mix of different residential typologies associated with the development of 'affordable' housing. The development dates from the late eighteenth century onwards and was nearly always built as modest housing. Despite the variety of building types and ages, the area retains some degree of homogeneity as a result of the terraced form and the hard urban landscape. There is a hierarchy of larger houses on the main routes and smaller on the grids of side streets. Housing within the area includes the initial development built to support the hospital, the philanthropic housing built to address the chronic poverty and overcrowding of the nineteenth century and 1930s flats. A significant proportion of the housing is managed by Housing Associations.

The character and appearance of the area, as described in the appraisal in the first part of the document, define its special qualities. The second part of the document, the Management Plan, contains relevant policy and guidance as well as development guidelines intended to ensure that future change is sensitive to the area's special character.

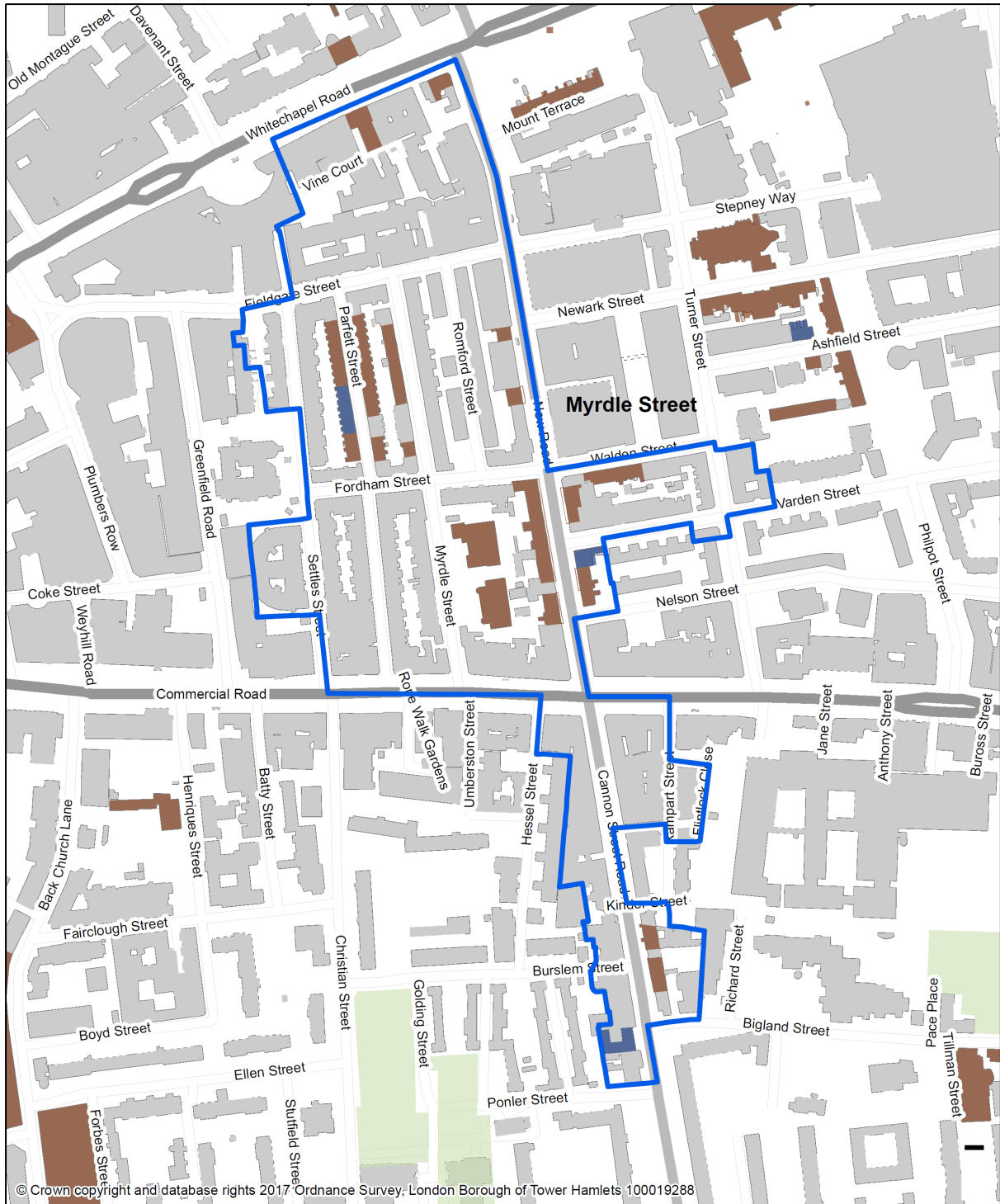
1.1. Location and setting

The Myrdle Street Conservation Area is located to the west of The Royal London Hospital and extends southwards from Whitechapel Road. The heart of the conservation area is found to the west of New Road. This is an area of particular special architectural and historic interest, illustrated by its rich history and significant architecture, dating from the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.




Although there is a range of building heights within the conservation area, original buildings within the conservation area do not exceed six storeys and most buildings do not exceed four storeys. The boundaries of the conservation area are largely defined by a contrast in architectural articulation, scale, plot size and positioning on sites.

The area to the north-east and north-west of the conservation area is generally characterised by a mixture of commercial and industrial buildings. To the north fronting Whitechapel Road, buildings are more varied in their design approach with building heights ranging from three to five storeys and a range of frontage widths. To the east is the Royal London Hospital site which is characterised with large hospital and institutional buildings. The area to the west of the conservation area is characterised by large blocks of buildings in residential and commercial use. To the south of the conservation area, residential blocks with long consistent, frontages and irregular positioning on sites are common, with a wide range of building heights.

MYRDLE STREET CONSERVATION AREA



MYRDLE STREET CONSERVATION AREA

-  Conservation Area
-  Statutory Listed Buildings
-  Locally Listed Buildings

2.0 HISTORIC CONTEXT

2.1. Evolution of the area

In Roque's Map of 1746, the land encompassed by the conservation area was largely shown as open fields. Some development existed to the north of the boundaries along Whitechapel Road, and to the east are the remains of Whitechapel Mount earthworks, built by Parliament to protect London during the Civil War in the seventeenth century. Beyond this there was little but open fields, cut through by one trackway connecting Whitechapel with St Dunstan's Church, part of which later became Fieldgate Street.

The development of the London Hospital from 1752 on its site on Whitechapel Road, whilst not within the conservation area, provided the initial impetus for the development of the surrounding fields, and prompted the cutting through of New Road in 1754-56. It was the roads laid out at this time and the buildings which later developed alongside them that now form the focus of the conservation area. The alignment of New Road generally followed the line of the civil war defences, providing a link from Whitechapel towards Ratcliffe and Wapping. Interestingly the road predates the development of the docks, with which the road ultimately formed an important connection.

Once established, the hospital, which was situated in a semi-rural location, was keen to protect the fresh air and open fields which it enjoyed and consequently bought Red Lyon Farm, to the west. This meant that the hospital owned a wide swathe of fields on either side of New Road, extending as far south as Commercial Road, and it was this land that became the focus for the development of an estate by the Hospital to help fund its running costs.

From the late 1780s the Hospital began to develop housing for rental within the area. Accessibility was key to this process and those plots adjoining New Road were among the first to be developed. Plots were leased on a 99 year basis, and Thomas Barnes a local bricklayer having secured the leases began work on a group of 40 properties, Nos. 11-95 New Road, known as Gloucester Terrace. Plots were almost 5m wide, and Barnes worked from the north towards the south. This was not a continuous terrace and there were always industrial premises in the area, for example a soap factory was built at Nos. 69-75 New Road in 1806, where premises backed on to Essex Street.

Today, many of these early properties have now been replaced or re-fronted. However, Nos. 77-79 and Nos. 83-91 New Road are examples of properties which date from this earliest phase of development. Nos. 83-91 have had shopfronts inserted since their original development.

Further development began to take place, with the layout in the 1790s of a grid of new streets to the west of New Road, including Charlotte Street (named in honour of the Queen at the time and now renamed Fieldgate Street), Gloucester Street (now Settle Street) and York Street (now Myrdle Street), and to the south of the hospital including Nelson Street. This was in accordance with plans drawn up by the hospital's surveyor John Robinson. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, the development of these roads was not completed until 1824. Street names were changed in the early twentieth century, likely due to repetition of road names throughout London.

Horwood's Map of 1799 shows that only part of the conservation area was built up at this time. Development had commenced in Charlotte Street, Gloucester Street and on the eastern side of York Street. The westernmost houses on Charlotte Street were apparently only 2.7m wide. Charlotte Court occupied the site which was later to become Tower House, and again the houses were extremely small.

At this time there was also development, within a number of what appear to be narrow alleys/courts in the east and south of the grid to the west of New Road. New Road itself was partially built up on the western side, but to the east of it, the area was still a series of open fields.

New Road extended to the south of what became Commercial Road, this southern part was later re-named Cannon Street Road. Some modest development appears to have taken place particularly at the southern end, where a terrace called Beaumont Buildings can be seen, together with a terrace simply called Terrace. However, the area south of Commercial Road has been subject to much change over the years and street layouts and names, together with the buildings to be found on the street, have altered considerably. Whilst some of the early buildings survive on Cannon Street Road (Nos. 126-130 and 116-122), Rampart Street and Sly Street have changed

considerably and are now occupied by some interesting turn of the century workshop buildings.

York Street and Nottingham Place appear to date from the turn of the eighteenth century, Nottingham Place having been inserted by Charles Wilmott in 1803 and having only footway access from Charlotte Street. The surviving houses in these roads date from the early years of the nineteenth century.

By 1819, Horwood's Map shows that in the intervening 10 years the area had been entirely built up, and gaps in the townscape evident in 1799 have been infilled. The expansion of the Hospital estate to the east of New Road had taken place, prompted by the London Dock Company's attempt to purchase the land. Suffolk Street (now Walden Street) Norfolk Street (now Varden Street) and Nelson Street were all built up in a similar fashion to the roads to the west of New Road, with modest housing, some of which still survives.

Commercial Road, which was laid out to connect the city and the docks, is also indicated on Horwood's Map from 1810, although it is still known at its western end as White Horse Lane.

South of Commercial Road the area had also been substantially built up with a number of narrow streets. To the west of New Road (now Cannon Street Road) the rope works, evident in 1799, had been replaced by terraced housing. To the east of New Road a number of narrow streets and perimeter blocks were evident on Turner Street (the blocks are no longer in existence) and Kinder Street (now renamed Rampart Street).

Although the conservation area was almost entirely developed by this time, its character was not fixed at this point; instead, there were layers of development, redevelopment and renewal to come. These have resulted, not only in alterations to the original properties such as the insertion/addition of shopfronts, but in pockets of Victorian, Edwardian and later development, which overlay the Georgian terraces and contribute to the more complex urban character evident within the area today.

Buildings dating from the earliest (mid to late eighteenth century) phase of development include some of the terraces on New Road and Cannon Street Road together with those remaining Georgian terraces in Parfett Street and Myrdle Street,

and these buildings together form the central focus of the conservation area. On Settle Street however, the original Georgian terraces have been replaced by higher tenement buildings housing higher numbers of people. Nos. 58-72 Settle Street (Davis Terrace), was the first of these built by Israel and Hyman Davis of Bishopsgate in 1890-1 in yellow stock brick. Nos. 39-55 and Nos. 10-28 Settle Street followed a similar pattern, although in red brick.

Elsewhere within the area, alleys and courts were swept away and replaced by model dwellings (improved housing for the working classes) - an example is Fieldgate Mansions in Romford Street (previously Essex Street, a very narrow access way). Turn of the nineteenth/twentieth century properties mark the entrances to Myrdle Street and Parfett Street from Fieldgate Street, and similarly from Fordham Street (formerly William Street), where two storey turn of the century shop houses with red brick detailing and steep pitched roofs can be seen, opposite to red brick tenement buildings similar in character and date to those in Settle Street.

Similarly, Parfett Street south of Fordham Street is lined by three story blocks of flats dating from the late nineteenth century. Of yellow stock brick with red brick and stone details, with entrances picked out by segmental and pointed pediments, these model dwellings were by Newman and Jacques, the hospitals surveyors.

Tower House, formerly Rowton House Hostel dates from a similar time, but is a very different form of building. Built in 1899-1901, it was intended to provide accommodation for low paid or down and out single men to rent by the night or by the week. It is an imposing red brick building whose plentiful narrow windows reflect the small bedroom cubicles within. Eight hundred and sixteen men were to be accommodated within the hostel. Adjoining this is the former late nineteenth century pub the Queen's Head, now part of Tayyabs Restaurant.

Other key buildings in the conservation area from this date include Nos. 111-125 Commercial Road, and Grenfell School. The Red House Coffee Palace (Nos. 115-119 Commercial Road) which was built around the turn of the century, in red brick with Terracotta details, has a tall distinguishing gable reminiscent of that on Tower House and Grenfell School. Land to the south of Fordham Street was purchased by the

London County Council and Grenfell School (1905) was built on the site to a design by TJ Bailey.

The extent to which the area was built up by the beginning of the twentieth century meant that change often involved redevelopment, and the intensification of uses.

In the late nineteenth century the population increased with many people moving to the area, including many Jewish people. This population increase accompanied a large expansion of the clothing industry, focussed in Whitechapel, and together these changes saw the development of an increasingly mixed character within the area, with houses doubling as workshops and shops. Use of houses for storage and sales rooms was still prevalent at the time of the conservation area's designation in 1996, although this is less evident today. In addition to the mixed uses within houses there was also the development on New Road of large clothing factories, such as Servis House (now the New Road Hotel) dating from 1930) and Empire House dating from 1934, both by Victor Kerr in a characterful Moderne style.

More modern forms of housing can also be seen in Feather Mews on Fieldgate Street which dates from 1926 and, unusually, incorporates garages. Similarly Myrdle Court is an art deco/Moderne block of flats dating from 1936 by GG Wimborne. This building makes an important contribution to the street scene, where the building's curved lines and geometric modelling can be appreciated in oblique views, from the north and south. The building also retains interesting decorative ironwork details.

The changing economic fortunes of the area are reflected in the existence of the Stepney Employment Exchange, now the Job Centre in Settle Street, built in a Neo Georgian style in a purple/red brick by the Office of Works in 1934-36.

One of the most recent redevelopments within the conservation area is Duru House, a 1970-3 clothing warehouse by Batir Associates, on the site of the former church of St Augustine. Unusually large for the conservation area, this building faces on to both Settle Street and Parfett Street and has an access from Commercial Road. In contrast with the broader conservation area, this building is not of brick but has steeply raked curtain walling on its lower floors.

More recently, the degree of change has slowed down; resident action, the statutory listing of certain properties and the designation of the conservation area have protected the special character and appearance of the area.

The model dwellings in Fieldgate Street were scheduled for demolition in 1972 and it was local residents who ultimately occupied the dwellings and ensured their retention when they were taken over and modernised in the 1980s by a community housing trust. Meanwhile properties in Myrdle Street and Parfett Street were to be rebuilt, until their statutory listing forced a reassessment of proposals and resulted in the decision to refurbish the properties instead. Similarly properties in Walden Street and Turner Street were in a very poor condition until they were refurbished by the Spitalfields Trust.

Today it is this grid of roads to the east and west of New Road and the historic properties within them, together with remaining historic buildings in Cannon Street Road and to the east of this in Rampart Street, which form the focus of the conservation area, and which contribute to the special character of the conservation area.

2.2. Historic and architectural significance of buildings

The majority of buildings within the conservation area contribute positively to the special character of the conservation area.

There are a number of listed buildings within the conservation area. Relevant Historic England list descriptions are available at:

[https:// www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list](https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list)

Grade II Listed Buildings

Nos. 8-28 Myrdle Street

A terrace of early nineteenth century houses, these houses are two bays wide and of three storeys over basements. Constructed in yellow stock brick, the facades are simply detailed with six over six pane sash windows set beneath gauged brick arches.

Entrance doors are round headed, many with the original entrance door. Some retain interesting fanlights.

Nos. 40 and 42 Myrdle Street

Two early nineteenth century terraced houses, these houses are of three storeys over semi basements evident beneath pavement grills to the front. Each has two windows on each of the upper floors. Originally built in yellow stock brick, No.42 has been more recently painted. No. 40 has a round-arched entrance, whilst the entrance to No. 42 has a straight top beneath a gauged brick arch.

Whitechapel Centre (former Myrdle Street Higher Grade School), Myrdle Street

Designed by TJ Bailey and built in 1905 this London Board Schools is three storeys in height. Two corner towers with copper domes bookend the main façade and provide staircase access to the generously proportioned main floors. The elevation features five large windows per floor set beneath recessed brick arches, finished by a parapet. Schools of this time on dense sites often had roof top playgrounds as was the case at this school. The school is built in a mixture of red and stock brick and features stone bands and stucco panels. The building bears a stone plaque which notes that this is a Higher Grade School and reflects the fact that schooling on this site was for both primary level and older children. The primary school pupils were taught in the northern block now known as Madani School.

Madani School (former Myrdle Street School), Myrdle Street

This block, part of the original Myrdle Street School, sits on the north of the site built in 1905. Whilst of a similar scale, it is three storeys in height; with generous floor to ceilings heights; it is architecturally much more subdued in character than its neighbour. Staircases are located at the northern side of the school. Although built of similar materials, red and yellow stock bricks and with stucco banding and timber windows, it lacks the flourish of the other building. It was originally topped with a rooftop playground, and evidence of the separate entrances for boys and girls remains in the plaques over entrances.

Nos. 15-21 Parfett Street, 37-53 Parfett Street, 22 and 26 Parfett Street, 34-60 Parfett Street

Modest terraced housing from the turn of the nineteenth century. These houses are two bays wide, and of three storeys over basements. Built in yellow stock brick they are simply detailed with six over six pane sash windows set beneath gauged brick arches and in most cases arch topped entrance doors. Historically these arches would have contained a fanlight, offering light to the hall beyond and being one of the few decorative elements of the facade. Traditional fanlights can still be seen at Nos. 54 and 58.

Pair of bollards outside Tower House Fieldgate Street

A pair of mid to late nineteenth century cast iron gothic style bollards with octagonal shaft and conical top surrounded by gables each with a rosette.

Nos. 77-79 New Road

An asymmetric pair of residential terraced properties from the 1790s. Of three stories over basements and built of yellow stock brick, the raised ground floor is rendered and the elevations show a distinct Georgian hierarchy between floors. No. 77 has an interesting pedimented door case. The window to the side of the entrance to No. 79 is a later Victorian tripartite sash.

Nos. 63 and 65 New Road

Circa 1795, these two Georgian houses are of three storeys over basements. Built in yellow stock brick, with red segmental flat brick arches above the sash windows, a clear hierarchy can be seen in the elevations of these houses. The front doors have decorative surrounds, including a Coade stone masked keystone and vermiculated stone quoins.

Nos. 25-47 New Road

Part of Gloucester Terrace. These houses are of three storeys over basements. Most of the properties are two bays wide, with windows sitting beneath red brick segmental gauged brick arches. However, although there is a broad uniformity between the

houses there is some variation within the terrace, No. 43 being a storey taller than its neighbours and No. 33 having a wider plot. The front doors have decorative surrounds, including a Coade stone masked keystone and vermiculated stone quoins, similar to those at Nos. 63-65 New Road. Some properties retain decorative fanlights.

No. 1 Nelson Street

An early nineteenth century terraced house of three stories over a semi basement at the junction of New Road and Nelson Street. Built in stock brick and of two bays wide, it retains traditional sash windows, and illustrates a Georgian hierarchy between floors. It has been subject to some changes since construction and now incorporates a shopfront at ground floor facing New Road. It is set back slightly from the road behind historic railings on the frontage. Access to the upper floors is from Nelson Street. It forms part of the adjoining terrace at Nos. 10-16 New Road.

Nos. 10 – 16 New Road

Four early nineteenth century terraced houses, of three storeys over semi basements, these terraces are grander than those in Myrdle and Parfett Street being set back from the road behind railings and entered up steps. No. 16 appears the least altered retaining the stock brick with which it was built and the original openings, with an arch topped door and window on the ground floor. No. 12, meanwhile was refaced towards the end of the nineteenth century with stucco. The basement and ground floor have been given a channelled appearance whilst the entrance has been given a cornice hood supported on enriched brackets, and the windows on the floor above have been given rounded corners and enriched surrounds. Beneath the stucco, the original proportions and hierarchy of the elevation can still be appreciated. A dormer window suggests a floor has been added at some time in the history of the building.

Nos. 15 – 21 New Road

Four early nineteenth century terraced houses with a Georgian hierarchy evident in their elevations. Of three storeys over semi basements, these terraces are grander than those in Myrdle and Parfett Street, being set back from the road behind railings and with front entrance steps. Nos. 15 and 17 have slate mansard roofs with dormers and stucco bands at first floor sill height. With the exception of No. 15, these houses

have round headed doorcases, which are rusticated, with vermiculated stone quoins and mask keystones, similar to the details seen elsewhere on New Road at Nos. 63-65 and 25-47. Fanlights have been lost, and many are now plain glazed.

Nos. 24 – 32 New Road

Five early nineteenth century houses of three storeys over basements with two six over six sashes on each floor. Built in yellow stock brick, they have a stuccoed ground floor with the exception of No. 28. Some have later shops at ground floor. Cast iron railings with urn finial surround the front areas.

Nos. 28-32 have recessed square headed entrances with overlights and part glazed panelled-doors; No. 30 has an architraved surround with panelled jambs; whilst No. 32 retains the original patterned fanlight. No. 28's ground floor sash has been converted to a shop window; whilst Nos. 20 and 32 have segmental arched sashes in shallow segmental arched recesses. Windows on the upper floors have gauged red brick arches above recessed sashes.

Nos. 2-16 Walden Street

A terrace of modest early nineteenth century houses, simply and elegantly detailed with two storeys and basements. Sash windows are set beneath cambered arches and feature external shutters. A couple of steps lead up to the panelled front doors. Doors retain some historic door furniture. Some houses retain historic boot scrapers.

Nos. 126-130 Cannon Street Road

Some of the earliest and grandest houses within the conservation area are these late eighteenth century houses of three storeys plus basement and attic. Built of yellow stock brick with a raised ground floor, these houses feature a channelled stucco ground floor. On the floors above, recessed sash windows have gauged brick arches. A feature of particular interest within these houses are the interesting door cases with carved brackets and pediments. No. 126 retains interesting railings.

Nos. 116-122 Cannon Street Road

These late eighteenth century houses are of three storeys plus a basement and attic. Sash windows articulate the elevations, which are built in brickwork. They have steps up to the front door, and have a raised ground floor with channelled stucco work. A couple of them retain interesting doorcases with panelled reveals to either side and carved brackets and pediments over. The other two have interesting fanlights.

Royal Oak Public House, Nos. 118-120 Whitechapel Road

Mid-late nineteenth century public house built of red brick with white stone dressings. The pub comprises three storeys with the central bay at four storeys with a decorative entablature supported by a pair of caryatids and a window of five lights set in a semi-circular head. The frontage is divided into three with pilasters at first and second floor levels and these two floors are divided horizontally with a decorative string course. Windows at second floor level have decorative iron window boxes. At ground floor level the historic shopfront remains with its pilasters and dog tooth cornice over. The right hand bay is open at ground floor level with a carriage entrance to Vine Court.

Nos. 138-142 Whitechapel Road

Mid to late eighteenth century building with a façade altered in the early nineteenth century. Originally two buildings, but now combined. The corner building was historically a pub, but is now a shop at ground floor. The façade is stuccoed. The original shopfront does not survive. The building comprises is of three storeys with a mansard roof. All windows are sashes, with varying moulded architraves. At first floor level the windows are alternately set in arches and under consoles.

Locally Listed Buildings

Nos. 119-123 Cannon Street Road

Raine's Boys' School moved here from Wapping in 1883, before moving to Arbour Square in 1913. The front façade is asymmetrical with a large gable at the southern end and is gothic in character with mullioned first floor windows and diaper blue brick decorations. The name of the school is boldly displayed in glazed tiles at high level. The ground floor façade has been subject to some change to accommodate shop units.

Nos. 18-20 New Road

Adjoining a terrace of listed buildings these two properties consolidate and provide a setting for the adjoining statutorily listed terrace. No. 20 is very similar in character to the listed terrace, being of three storeys in scale, built in a stock brick, and with recessed sashes set beneath gauged brick arches. No. 18 is of a similar scale, but incorporates red brick details, with a simple row of double headers above windows. Both properties have had later shopfronts inserted. No. 18, although it has previously lost its historic shopfront, retains a pair of historic corbel brackets.

Nos. 23-35 Parfett Street

Originally early nineteenth century terraces similar to the statutorily listed properties further along the road, these terraced houses were rebuilt in the 1980's before the other properties in Parfett Street were listed. Although obviously modern, they are the same scale as the older terrace and visually complete it.

2.2. Archaeological significance

The north and south east areas of the Myrdle Street Conservation Area are included in two Tier 2 Archaeological Priority Areas (APA), as identified in Historic England's update to APAs, completed for Tower Hamlets in October 2017. APAs highlight where important archaeological interest might be located based on the history of the area and previous archaeological investigations. APAs in Tier 2 are described as those on which the Greater London Historic Environment Record '*holds specific evidence indicating the presence or likely presence of heritage assets of archaeological interest*'.

The Mile End APA covers the areas to the east of New Road and Cannon Street Road. It focusses on the medieval and post medieval historic Mile End settlement as well as a stretch of London's Civil War defences, due to the discovery of a large contemporary ditch just to the south. The APA runs from the eastern boundary of Whitechapel, one mile east of Aldgate and ends at Mile End Road's junction with Cambridge Heath Road.

The Whitechapel APA covers the north western end of the conservation area. This runs along the Whitechapel Road corridor from its junction with Osborn Street near Aldgate as far as Whitechapel Tube station and the Mile End APA. It is a Tier 2 APA for its potential to contain remains of Roman and later activity including settlement along a historic routeway.

For more information please see the Greater London Archaeological Priority Area Guidelines published in July 2016, available on the Historic England website:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/our-planning-services/greater-london-archaeology-advisory-service/greater-london-archaeological-priority-areas>

The website also provides a link to the Tower Hamlets Archaeological Priority Areas Appraisal produced by Historic England (2017), where further descriptions and maps of the APA's are provided.

3.0 TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

3.1. General historic character and plan form

Myrdle Street and Parfett Street and the surrounding roads provide a good illustration of the way in which areas develop over time, and how development and redevelopment occurs as time passes, resulting in a built environment which is a composite of various layers.

Early development of the area took place around a grid of roads established at the end of the eighteenth century by the London Hospital, as it developed an estate to fund its running. Within this grid there were a number of smaller properties on alleys and courts, which have now been lost. The modest houses of the early nineteenth century remain at the heart of the conservation area in Myrdle Street and Parfett Street to the west of New Road and in Walden Street and Varden Street to the east. Earlier houses dating from the 1790s survive in New Road and on the eastern side of Cannon Street Road. Vine Court is a rare survival of this pattern.

Around this focus, layers of later development have taken place. In New Road, some properties have been re-fronted and had shopfronts inserted, whilst within the heart of the conservation area redevelopment in the later nineteenth century and early twentieth century largely resulted in the introduction of consistent terraces. As uses within the area have intensified, this has largely been with the development of flats rather than houses such as those in the tenements of Davis Terrace on Settle Street, or the slightly later, model dwellings of Romford Street. However, whilst these buildings result in a slightly higher density, being slightly taller (on Romford Street at three storeys plus attic) than the original housing and slightly deeper in plan, they preserve the apparent small grain character of the earliest development.

The early twentieth century, however, saw the introduction of a small number of larger institutional buildings, such as Tower House, and Myrdle School (now Madani School and the Whitechapel Centre). These larger free standing buildings were positioned on larger sites, located between the earlier consistent terraces. Unlike the terraces which generally sit at the back edge of the pavement or behind small front areas, these buildings are often set back from the boundaries of their sites allowing a little more breathing space around them.

The twentieth century also saw the redevelopment of larger sites, such as the factory premises at Nos. 67-75 New Road, which was redeveloped as Empire House in 1934. On the more major roads, the introduction of a wider range of uses can also be seen, with the terraces being broken up with the introduction of larger factories or commercial premises such as the Red House Coffee Palace. Nonetheless the small grain terraced form of development is predominant within the conservation area.

3.2. Layout and plan form

The area is of predominantly fine grain, with properties being arranged around a perimeter block structure. Scale and plan form are repeated to form continuous consistent terraces. In the northern half of the conservation area, amongst the areas of earliest development there is a considerable consistency in the plan form within terraces, and consolidated continuous frontages strongly define street edges. In general, buildings in the heart of the conservation area are located at the back edge

of the pavement, with private spaces being to the rear. Houses to both the east and west of New Road follow this pattern.

The scale of properties on primary roads within the conservation area is greater than at the core of the conservation area; for example, properties on New Road, Cannon Street Road and Commercial Road are of a greater scale, both in terms of their height and plot width, than those in Parfett Street and Myrdle Street. On New Road and Cannon Street Road buildings are set behind a small front area, offering some respite from the busy road which they adjoin. This represents a hierarchy of built form within the conservation area.

Where the earliest development has been replaced by tenements and model dwellings, the scale is marginally greater than that of the houses, at four storeys. Plot sizes are also larger.

Larger buildings within the conservation area, tend to be either institutional buildings, such as the schools on Myrdle Street, and Tower House (built as a hostel for the working poor), or are later redevelopments such as Enterprise House or Myrdle Court.

3.3. Density and land uses

In its early years Myrdle Street was essentially a residential suburb, although not exclusively residential with many people working and selling from their homes. Initially developed with terraced housing, which was the Hospitals preference, it was increasingly redeveloped as tenements and model dwellings. With a consequent increase in the density of development, and the intensification of the use, the plot coverage increased, and heights increased from three to four storeys.

The primary routes had probably always supported some commercial/industrial use, but the early years of the twentieth century saw a diversification in the land use with the encroachment of industry particularly on the major roads which bisected the conservation area: New Road and Commercial Road. The introduction of purpose built commercial buildings generally resulted in an increase in plot coverage, with sites on New Road and Commercial Road often having complete plot coverage.

3.4. Building heights and massing

Generally building heights across the area retain the historic scale of the area, with nothing historically exceeding the height of Tower House which is of six storeys plus accommodation in the roof and actually very little exceeding four storeys. Height in the conservation area is largely determined by two factors, the era of a building's development and its location on a primary or secondary road.

The houses at the heart of the conservation area in Myrdle Street and Parfett Street, and to the east of New Road in Walden Street, Varden Street and Nelson Row, are part of the earliest development of the area and are of a very modest scale. Their simple form and restrained details reflect the location, away from the fashionable areas of the West End within a developing area. The properties on Myrdle Street and Parfett Street, appear as three storeys to the front, but are have a mansard type roof to the rear which reduces their overall scale from the rear through the angled, set back elevation and contrast in materials.

Heights increase away from the central, quieter roads of the conservation area towards the primary through routes such as New Road, Cannon Street Road, Commercial Road and Whitechapel Road on the perimeter of the conservation area. Here, even though the number of storeys may be no greater, each storey is of an increased height, and in many instances the ground floor level is raised from street level by approximately half a storey. This can result in the same number of storeys feeling slightly greater in height and scale.

The quieter secondary roads of the conservation area demonstrate a more consistent roof line than the primary through routes. The roof line on New Road, where buildings have more frequently been the subject of redevelopment have a more varied roofline, with groups of buildings of a consistent height being interrupted by properties which are slightly higher or lower. Similarly a variation of roofline is evident in Commercial Road, Cannon Street Road and Whitechapel Road.

3.5. Topography and important views

The area, like much of London, is essentially flat with little relief. Views within are largely general streetscape views which are typically characterised by the consistency of the streetscape and the uniformity of scale.

The notable exceptions are the views towards Tower House, which is a landmark building within the conservation area. Tower House dominates views looking north in Parfett Street, where it forms the focal point at the end of the street. The full scale of the building is evident with the gable and the current entrance to the flats being positioned immediately opposite the end of Parfett Street. Views towards Tower House are also important down Settle Street, where the corner turret and western flank of the building are visible in longer views. Views of the building are also evident looking west down Fieldgate Street where the turrets add interest to the skyline. Also clearly evident in this view are the substantial chimneys which articulate the flank elevations of Fieldgate Mansions on Romford Street and Myrdle Street and the distinctive turrets of the former Myrdle Street School. In a limited number of views some tall buildings are visible from the conservation area.

3.6. Landscape character

The Myrdle Street Conservation Area has a distinctly urban character, with hard surfaces, and very little open space. Buildings are generally located at the back edge of pavement or behind a small front area offering little opportunity for greenery or landscaping. Even the open spaces around buildings, such as the schools on Myrdle Street, or the small open space on Romford Street, introduced to offer respite to the densely built residential buildings which surround it, are hard landscapes.

There are street trees throughout the conservation area, which offer a little relief from the hard surfaces and landscape the area.

4.0 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

Almost all buildings within the Myrdle Street Conservation Area make a positive contribution to the special character of the conservation area. These buildings are identified as positive contributors due to their siting, building envelope and massing,

appearance and materials. All buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area should be preserved and where alterations are proposed these should preserve or enhance their contribution to the conservation area. Demolition of any positive contributors will not be supported. Equally, any alteration that is not sympathetic to the special character of the conservation area will not be supported.

4.1 Building typology and form

The character of the conservation area is predominantly residential. Buildings are largely domestic in appearance. They are mostly grouped in terraces, this is the case regardless of whether the building is a single family house or a tenement or block of mansion flats. On the quieter roads within the interior of the conservation area, such as Walden Street or Myrdle Street, these terraces are often long, and largely uniform with a consistency of scale, and a repetition of the details within the terrace, for example on Myrdle Street, Romford Street, and Parfett Street.

Even on the principal routes through the area, New Road, Cannon Street Road and Commercial Road, where there is more variation in building heights and frontage widths, and where there has been development and alteration, the scale has a broad consistency.

As indicated by the groupings of the statutory listing, properties can be grouped by consistency of details. For example the Coade stone vermiculated quoins and masked key stones of Nos. 15-21, 63 and 65, and 25-47 New Road. However, whilst there are features typical of the conservation area as a whole including timber sash windows, parapet lines and elegant brickwork details (in particular gauged brick arches), there is less uniformity between elevations on these more commercial streets, because of the various alterations carried out over the years.

The narrow plot widths in comparison to the height of the buildings, together with the architectural details of the elevations create a strong vertical emphasis within individual facades. The elements creating this vertical rhythm vary; in Romford Street the staircase access to flats typically cuts through any horizontal detailing and gives the elevations a very strong vertical rhythm. Elsewhere within the conservation area it is the windows which are proportionally long and are drawn into bays that provide the

vertical emphasis. However, the repetition of elevations which occurs when they are grouped in long terraces tends to highlight the horizontal elements and when looking down a terrace, buildings are often tied together by the parapet line, the lines created by windows and cills or string courses.

4.2 Key architectural features and building materials

The area is characterised by the use of brick, earlier buildings being predominantly of yellow brick, later ones of red brick and some such as the flats at the south end of Myrdle and Parfett Street, reflecting their late Victorian date being a mix of both yellow and red brick.

Brickwork on the earlier houses is generally simply detailed with the key features of the façade being the arches over doors and windows. The details of these vary across the conservation area, while many are flat gauged brick arches, there are others which are true arches. These demonstrate the skill of the bricklayers and are aesthetically pleasing. Brickwork more broadly, is largely in Flemish bond, and the joints are generally finer in dimension than those commonly used in bricklaying today. The fine joints to many buildings in the conservation area are remarkable. On the later red brick buildings, there are a variety of moulded brickwork details which include window arches with key stones, as well as string courses and moulded eaves details.

The brick, whatever the colour is typically paired with timber doors and windows. Six over six pane sash windows can be seen in earlier properties, tripartite sashes and other windows in the later nineteenth century buildings with panelled entrance doors. The elevations of many of the earlier terraces are deceptively simple, doors and windows being the principal elements of any facade, with decoration being limited to the gauged brick arches over the windows, the round heads of doors and decorative fanlights above. These are very simple elevations and the interest lies in their proportions, elegance and the quality of the architectural details including:-

Articulation of the elevations

The recessing of doors and windows, together with the use of projecting cills, or mouldings is characteristic of the area and creates architectural depth. Elsewhere features such as moulded brickwork, terracotta panels, or banded brickwork are

employed as architectural decoration. Visual interest is added to the flank elevations of Fieldgate Mansions, which front the street, through the prominent chimney stacks and brick banding.

Windows

Windows form a key part of the architecture within the conservation area and original or historic windows that are in keeping with the host building and wider character of the conservation area should always be retained where possible. Consistent terraces with matching details, including glazing bar profiles, glazing patterns, proportions and window reveal depths and treatment characterise the conservation area.

Decorative door surrounds

In the smaller houses the doors are just simple openings in the brickwork, often with an arched top or gauged brick arch, however, elsewhere in the conservation area grander and more interesting door cases and surrounds can be seen. For example on Cannon Street Road the doors to Nos. 116-130 have a number of pedimented door cases with decorative brackets and panelled surrounds dating from the 1790s. Other decorative door treatments can be seen in New Road where a number of the properties have vermiculated stone quoins with a Coade stone keystone.

Fanlights

Fanlights are also part of the celebration of the entrance doors. Fanlights are windows positioned directly above the door to allow light into the hall. Often the fanlights are semi-circular with small panes radiating out from the centre in a fan shaped pattern but some are rectangular. Early timber examples can be seen from the early eighteenth century but it was not until the 1740s that a composite glazing bar of metal and lead allowed a more decorative, delicate tracery to be created, and only in the 1770s that Robert Adams decorative ideas made them fashionable. Many of the Georgian properties within the conservation area have fanlights over the entrance doors.

Other historic and traditional features

Other historic and traditional features within the area cumulatively contribute to the special character and appearance of the area. These features include:

- Coade stone details, masques and quoins;
- Decorative iron work, for example cast iron railings in New Road, decorative balustrades at Myrdle Court, decorative balustrades to front areas in Settle Street;
- Historic boot scrapers in Walden Street;
- Door furniture including door knockers;
- Stone paving, for example on Walden Street and at the east end of Vine Court
- Original steps to front areas such as those on 33 New Road
- Coal Hole covers and basement grills.

5.0 PUBLIC REALM AND OPEN SPACE

5.1. Streets roads and yards

The streets within the conservation area show a distinct hierarchy. The primary routes through the conservation area (Commercial Road, New Road, Cannon Street Road and Whitechapel Road) are busy thoroughfares and their width reflects their status as important connecting routes, typically New Road is over 15m wide, and Commercial Road 24m wide. They have a generosity of scale, not evident within the secondary residential streets beyond. Roads in the hinterland are narrower and quieter; Romford Street at its narrowest is 8.5m between buildings. Rampart Street is narrower still at only just over 7m wide. These secondary roads have significantly less traffic and sometimes traffic calming measures, such as kerb build outs have been introduced, examples can be seen on Parfett Street, Myrdle Street and Romford Street.

5.2. Street surfaces

Generally the street surfaces are tarmac, however, some of the narrower streets, with less traffic access retain their historic setts or cobblestones, although sometimes these are partially obscured by a fragmentary overlaid surface. Rampart Street and Sly Street are examples of where historic setts can be seen. Some of the roads have

modern setts or brick surfaces, for example Romford Street and the southern section of Parfett Street.

Pavements vary in character; some with modern concrete flags and some with York stone flags as on Walden Street. Many pavements retain granite kerbs. In some instances granite kerbs mark former entrances (eg Cannon Street Road).

5.3. Street furniture

Most of the lamp columns within the area are modern. Some have been chosen with the historic character of the area in mind, but in the main they are of a relatively standard design, to address the requirements of the roads themselves. At the corner of Varden Street and Turner Street (on the chamfered corner of No. 33 Turner Street) there, is an appropriate wall mounted lantern.

The area contains few historic bollards, however the pair of listed bollards in Fieldgate Street and those either side of Sly Street at the junction with Rampart Street remain. Elsewhere within the conservation area there is a wide proliferation of modern bollards. These vary in style and detail, from fluted Doric bollards, to bell shaped bollards.

5.4. Open Space and greenery

This is a particularly densely built up area, with buildings sited at the immediate rear edge of pavements and very limited garden space to the rear of properties. There is very little open space, with the exception of the paved area halfway down Romford Street, which offers some relief from the narrowness of the road and the sense of enclosure which the buildings hard up to the street create.

5.5. Street trees

There are quite a number of trees introduced as part of traffic calming measures carried out in the area. Trees can be seen on many of the streets. In Myrdle Street itself and Parfett Street they are set on kerb build outs. The trees offer some respite from the hard urban landscape of the conservation area.

6.0 HERITAGE AUDIT

The condition of buildings and the public realm within the Myrdle Street Conservation Area varies markedly, with some buildings being in a poor condition. A lack of investment, inappropriate alterations and the loss of historic features cumulatively threaten the special character and appearance of parts of the conservation area. It is these same threats which, if addressed, offer the opportunity for significant enhancement.

There are some areas in the conservation area where redecoration, repointing and repair are required. The building material is largely consistent, predominantly brick built, with the earlier buildings in yellow brick and later ones in red brick. Some buildings are stuccoed or have elements of stucco. Timber windows prevail, with many historic timber sashes surviving, but there are also a number of buildings with Crittal windows in the conservation area. Most buildings immediately abut the pavement edge, but some with small front gardens or lightwells are bounded with a variety of railing designs.

6.1. Lack of investment and inappropriate alterations

Often a lack of investment can result in a gradual deterioration of the built fabric as maintenance is reduced and the cost of repairs minimised. The exteriors of historic buildings within the area feature rich materials and details which are a major part of its historic and architectural character, but which are vulnerable to neglect and poorly considered change. The opportunity exists to reverse this change with carefully considered investment, which retains the surviving historic fabric and builds upon it.

Some brick buildings were built with render or stucco applied to the exterior. In several cases the render is in poor condition due to the lack of maintenance or poorly carried out repairs.

Timber window frames, particularly sash windows are a key feature of the conservation area. Some window frames are in poor condition and require repainting/renovation.

In several cases, original brick facades have been painted, particularly at ground floor, to the detriment of the appearance of the building.

Some areas of the public realm are in a poor state of repair or have been covered over using unsympathetic materials, such as asphalt and concrete.

6.2. Loss of historic features

The appearance of some buildings has suffered from the removal of historic architectural features such as windows, railings and the ground floor frontages of shops and pubs. This has harmed the character and appearance of the conservation area. In some instances historic photographs or surviving historic features or precedents offer the opportunity for appropriate reinstatement.

Window frames, in particular are key historic features. The removal of historic windows and the installation of inappropriate replacements has detracted from the appearance of a number of buildings within the conservation area.

6.3. Shopfronts, fascia signs and associated features

There are a large number of retail units within the conservation area, with many featuring poorly designed replacement shopfronts and fascia signs which take no account of the architectural character of the host building and thus detract from the host building and the area generally. In many cases original decorative shopfront corbels have been removed along with original cladding materials from decorative pilasters dividing the shop units. No. 11 Parfett Street is a good example of a historic shopfront, other shopfronts at No. 34 Settles Street, Nos. 83-89 Fieldgate Street, Nos. 97, 103 and 105 Commercial Road and No. 19 Rampart Street retain various historic features such as pilasters and corbels.

There are also a number of high level signs in the conservation area, which add visual clutter to the frontage and detract from architectural features.

6.4. Vacant/underused properties and sites

The vast majority of buildings within the conservation area are occupied (at the time of writing in 2018).

Within the tight knit building fabric of the conservation area, potential vacant sites do not exist. There is a car park site between Nos. 121 and 129 New Road and Nos. 132 and 136 Whitechapel Road. This wraps around the rear of these properties on the corner of New Road and Whitechapel Road.

6.5. Development outside the conservation area boundary affecting its setting

The Myrdle Street Conservation Area is situated within a densely built up part of the borough. In many existing views within the conservation area the historic skylines of the buildings lining the streets are uninterrupted by development outside the conservation area, creating a relatively self-contained, visual environment. The surviving unobstructed skylines are an important element of the character and appearance of the conservation area, with larger scale buildings beyond the boundary not generally visible from within. The configuration of the street pattern does, however, mean that some linear views along the streets terminate beyond the conservation area boundary.

The overall scale of the conservation area continues beyond the boundary in most directions, with height gradually increasing to the west. To the north-east and south the scale of blocks increases, with larger stand-alone buildings. In most directions, the setting has a neutral impact on the significance of the conservation area, but the Royal London Hospital block to the east is harmful to the aesthetic and historical significance of parts of the conservation area. This is demonstrated by its visual impact in some views. The Royal London Hospital block well illustrates the degree of harm which could result from the scale and bulk of inappropriate proposals within the setting of the conservation area. Increasing scale on the east side of New Road is a particular threat, and care needs to be taken to ensure that new development sits comfortably with the scale of the conservation area.

6.6. Public realm and open space

This is a particularly densely built up area, with buildings sited at the back edge of pavement and garden space to the rear of properties at a minimum. There is very little open space, with only the paved area created halfway down Romford Street offering

some relief from the narrowness of the road and the sense of enclosure which the buildings hard up to the pavement edge create.

Public realm in the area is generally in a good state of repair; with many side streets, such as Rampart Street and Sly Street, retaining their historic setts , although some are partially tarmacked over. Elsewhere streets are generally tarmacked, but some such as Romford Street and the southern section of Parfett Street have modern setts. Where possible setts should be reinstated or uncovered to improve the appearance of the public realm within the conservation area. If setts are covered over, they should be retained below any new surfacing.

There are also areas where the variety of bollard designs and variation in signage adds to visual street clutter within the conservation area.

7.0 INTRODUCTION TO MANAGEMENT PLAN

7.1. Background

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 or enhancing the borough's architectural and historic built heritage 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 climate change.. Demolition and rebuilding of buildings can have a

big impact on the environment and can result in a large amount of waste and associated air pollution.

Recommendations for additions to the statutory list are considered by Historic England.

7.2. 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 NPPF;
- the London Plan alongside the City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework;
- 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 (see full list of useful links under Useful Links and Documents).

Two Archaeological Priority Areas cover the northern part of the conservation area and the area to the east of New Road and Cannon Street Road. The conservation area is within the City Fringe Opportunity Area. Commercial Road and Whitechapel Road are strategic roads.

Statutorily listed buildings

There are nineteen listed buildings or structures in the Myrdle Street Conservation Area as set out in section 2.2 of the Appraisal. Many of the list entries refer to a terrace or part of a terrace and include several addresses. If a building is statutorily listed, any alterations to the property, either internally or externally, will require listed building consent from the council. Listed building consent is required for any works of demolition, alteration or extension to the building, which would affect its special architectural and historic interest. Works within the grounds or curtilage of a listed building may also require consent. Repairs to listed buildings may also require consent. It is always advisable to inform the council of any plans you might have to carry out repairs. Replacement of any historic fabric usually constitutes an alteration and therefore requires listed building consent.

The council has a duty of care to ensure owners and prospective owners of listed buildings are aware of the need for maintenance and repair of such buildings. Regular maintenance can prevent serious and expensive problems at a later date. 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 in such circumstances.

Locally listed buildings

Local listing is a protection offered by the local authority to buildings it believes are of local significance. A heritage asset is a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest, locally listed buildings are included within this designation. The effect of an application on a non-designated heritage asset is a material consideration when deciding planning applications, and local listing

strengthens the case for retention of a historic building. There are three groups of locally listed buildings within the conservation area. Although locally listed buildings do not benefit from the statutory protection outlined previously, they have been recognised as being of local townscape importance. The council expects to see their retention and evidence that any proposed alterations enhance the building's character or appearance. Full justification for any redevelopment proposals will be sought, including convincing evidence that the building could not be retained. Economic reasons alone will not always justify redevelopment.

Article 4 Directions

Where evidence suggests that the exercise of permitted development would harm the special character of the conservation area, the council can serve an Article 4 Direction to withdraw specific classes of permitted development that would otherwise apply. It is important to note that an Article 4 Direction does not necessarily prevent the type of development to which it applies, but requires planning permission to be obtained for the specified types of development. There is no fee for planning applications required due to an Article 4 Direction.

For specific information on Article 4 Directions please see the General Permitted Development Order (1995) and 2010 amendment and accompanying Government Circular (available from the DCLG website), as well as the guidance provided in Historic England's Advice Note 1 (Second Edition) 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' which was published in February 2019 (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management-advice-note-1/heag-268-conservation-area-appraisal-designation-management/>)

Archaeological investigations

Any new development that lies within the Archaeological Priority Area will be required to include an Archaeological Evaluation Report and will require any nationally important remains to be preserved permanently at the site, subject to consultation with Historic England.

Trees in conservation areas

A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is an order made by the council to protect specific trees or groups of trees in the interests of amenity. A TPO prohibits the cutting down, topping, lopping, uprooting or wilful damage of a protected tree without permission and is a designation which is applied selectively. There are two trees in Myrdle Street which are covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO), these are behind the rear garden of Grade II listed No. 33 New Road.

Whilst some trees in a conservation area may be protected by a TPO all trees in a conservation area are protected by the provisions of section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, These provisions require owners to notify the council if works to trees are proposed. To do this a works to trees application form should be completed. The application must describe the works proposed and include sufficient particulars to identify the tree or trees which are the subject of works. Only one section 211 notice is need to carry out a number of different operations. Notification should be made at least six weeks before the works commence to allow the council sufficient time to assess whether the works are acceptable or not. If the works are not supported and modified proposals cannot be agreed then the trees must be protected by the council serving a TPO.

Carrying out works to trees without the necessary approval can be a criminal offence, and the council welcomes early requests for advice.

7.3. Outline guidance for applications

When planning applications in a conservation area are decided, the council as the local planning authority will pay special attention to whether the character of the area is preserved or enhanced by the proposal. The special character of the Myrdle Street Conservation Area is described in detail in the Appraisal in the first part of this document.

In the Myrdle Street 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 consent even for minor work such as replacing railings.

These consents include planning and listed building consent, as well as others for work such as felling trees. Planning permission is required to demolish any building bigger than 115m³, 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. Locally listed buildings are those of townscape value which the borough wishes to protect. Listed building consent is only required for works to statutorily listed buildings.

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 various architectural, masterplanning or other design decisions.
- A heritage statement where the impacts of the application on the significance of heritage assets or the impacts of demolition within the conservation area are set out.
- Contextual plans, sections and elevations of existing buildings (at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100).
- Drawings, including construction details, produced at larger scale (for example 1:20 or 1:10) clearly indicating the nature of the work proposed.
- Existing and proposed townscape views where relevant.
- 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 where a validation list can be found. If in any doubt, the council welcomes and encourages early requests for advice or information. More information is available on pre-application advice on the council's website. 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.

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, but grant funding, even for cases that meet the defined criteria, is extremely limited.

8.0 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

8.1. General approach

Development in the conservation area should enhance the unique characteristics of the Myrdle Street Conservation Area, reinforcing its distinctive identity and contributing to its historic sense of place. New buildings should be of a high design standard, reflecting the scale and variation typical of the historic townscape. Individual buildings should display their own identity within the historically-set parameters (scale, grain, building line). These parameters are responsible for the creation of a coherent streetscape and locally distinctive character derived from an otherwise diverse collection of different designs, styles and materials. Retention and restoration of existing buildings which contribute to the character of the area provides the foundation for the area's development. The council encourages the sympathetic re-use of existing buildings in conservation areas. Where development has harmed the conservation area it is possible, under certain circumstances, that further development may help to mitigate this harm.

8.2. Demolition

Demolition of buildings within the conservation area

The Myrdle Street Conservation Area has a well-established and distinguished character distinctive from its surroundings in terms of its grain and scale. The council will resist unjustified demolition where this is considered to be harmful to the special

character or appearance of the conservation area . Any applications including demolition will be assessed in line with national, regional and local policy and guidance including the National Planning Policy Framework.

Planning permission is required for demolition or substantial demolition of all buildings or structures larger than 115m³ in conservation areas. What constitutes substantial demolition is considered on a case-by-case basis by the local planning authority. Where a building is statutorily listed, listed building consent will be required.

Where corner buildings are threatened with demolition this can cause a wider threat to the terrace as a whole, this will be resisted. The demolition and replacement of a central building forming part of a small terrace will also be resisted as this can result in further proposals and cumulative impacts.

If demolition work occurs without the necessary consent the council is likely to pursue planning enforcement action that may result in prosecution and a substantial fine. The demolished structure may be required to be rebuilt. It should be noted that the council will not normally grant planning permission for demolition without relevant permission having been obtained for an acceptable scheme for the redevelopment of the site.

With regard to vacant sites, or those in poor condition, it should not be assumed that any development is automatically better than the current situation.

Partial demolition

In most cases, the council would expect to see buildings retained but in some exceptional cases it may only be possible to retain a building in part; either by retaining elements of a building or through façade retention. Partial demolition will only be considered acceptable when it can be demonstrated that the proposed demolition can be carried out without unacceptable risk to the parts of the building to be retained and that any new development integrates with and respects the remaining historic fabric. This should be outlined as part of a heritage statement. A report of any structural implications will also need to be submitted. In many cases it may be possible to salvage and re-use elements of the historic fabric for example bricks, slates or window frames or external features. Any partial rebuilding will require materials to match and will be

controlled by condition. It may be necessary to record the existing building prior to alteration.

Demolition of buildings adjacent to the conservation area

Demolition of unlisted buildings outside a conservation area does not always require planning permission. However, proposals to demolish and re-develop sites adjacent to a conservation area boundary should preserve, and where possible enhance, the setting of the conservation area to ensure that the significance of the conservation area is not harmed.

8.3. New development

The conservation area is characterised by a prevailing building height of four to five storeys on New Road, Whitechapel Road and Commercial Road and two to three storeys on the minor streets. The consistent parapet line of streets such as Myrdle Street and Parfett Street is an important characteristic. On main thoroughfares such as Commercial Road, more subject to rebuilding and alteration, the cornice/eaves height varies across terraces and this variety is a characteristic and an attractive feature. It is important that proposals are informed by careful historic analysis and aim to fit into and complement the relevant context.

New developments should respect the fine grain character and straightforward legibility of the historic street pattern. Any replacement buildings should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and ensure that its significance is not harmed. Any new development on potential infill sites (as highlighted in Section 6.0 of the Appraisal) should sit comfortably with the existing character or appearance of the conservation area.

Where existing buildings have a negative impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area, it may be possible to alter the exterior of the building so that it enhances the character or appearance of the area. The council would only encourage replacement of these buildings if the replacement is of high quality and has a positive impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area.

All new developments should be sympathetic to the character or appearance of the conservation area in terms of scale, materials and design.

The design of new buildings should be fully informed by the positive aspects of adjacent buildings and how they contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The overall quality of architectural detailing will be key to producing a successful scheme which builds on the qualities already present within the area. In order to ensure necessary architectural quality, detailed design should be explored and agreed early in the planning process.

The quality of external materials will also be key to producing a successful scheme. The conservation area features a wide range of high quality materials including stone, brick, slate and terracotta. It is expected that the choice of new materials will be informed by the local context and build on this richness.

The design of shopfronts and fascia signs should not be considered in isolation and, along with security measures, should be considered at an early stage. It is essential that the scale and proportions of all elements of any new shopfronts and fascia signs relate to the overall proportions of the host building and to neighbouring properties where appropriate. Given the age of the buildings within the conservation area, this is likely to involve the design of taller shopfronts (and shallower fascia signs) than are considered standard in other areas. Older shopfronts were characterised by high quality, long lasting materials. Standard aluminium shopfronts are unlikely to be considered appropriate within the conservation area. It might be necessary to adopt a flexible approach to corporate logos, if these are considered to be harmful to the character of the conservation area.

8.4. Property conversion

The permitted development rights for this area of the borough have been removed in relation to the conversion of offices (Use Class B1(a)) to residential (Use Class C3). Where property conversion or change of use is permissible, external changes are likely to require planning permission. Any external changes should relate well to the

public realm, should respect the character of the host building and should be in keeping with the character or appearance of the conservation area.

8.5. Extensions and alterations

Roof extensions

The general consistency of building heights on individual streets and hierarchy of heights based on their location is an important characteristic of this conservation area. Secondary roads have a more consistent roof line, which should be maintained and as such roof additions which will be visible from the street or which will interrupt a consistent roofline are likely to be resisted. On the larger roads, such as New Road, Cannon Street Road and Commercial Road, there is more variation in the roofline as buildings have been more frequently the subject of redevelopment. Here buildings of consistent height are interrupted with buildings of a different height. On these streets variations in the width, height and style of buildings have developed gradually within plots over time, allowing a variety of buildings to exist as a harmonious and cohesive group in a dense urban context. This subtle variety in height, accentuated by architectural treatment, creates a charming organic character and is an important attribute. As such roof additions which seek to introduce a consistency in height where none exists are likely to be resisted.

In many cases the historic roof structure and relationship to other buildings within the conservation area will either preclude roof extensions or make it very difficult to achieve an acceptable design. Where roof extensions are considered appropriate, the design must relate well to the design and proportions of the host building and must use high quality materials that respect the character and appearance of the conservation area. The impact of any roof extensions on public realm and views from within the conservation area should be carefully considered in order to ensure the character and appearance of the conservation area is preserved and enhanced.

Rear extensions

Where the opportunity exists for a rear extension, they should remain subservient to the host building both in terms of scale and proportion. Only high quality materials, such as brick, stone or, in some cases, reconstituted stone, and timber that respect

the character and appearance of the conservation area will be accepted. The visibility of proposed rear extensions from the public realm must also be carefully considered to ensure that, not only the impact on the host building, but also on the wider conservation area, is acceptable and preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area.

External alterations

Where external alterations are proposed to existing buildings, these must seek to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. Piecemeal alterations can be harmful to the special architectural and historic character of a building. Any alterations to historic fabric should be on a like-for-like basis in terms of materials and design. Where inappropriate or unsympathetic alterations have occurred in the past, these should be rectified in accordance with the historic materials and appearance. In cases where the alterations are to a building which is not historic, the design and materials used should be in keeping with the character of the conservation area. Any external alterations to individual buildings will have an impact on the wider conservation area and so must be considered within the wider context.

8.6. Energy efficiency improvements

Window replacement and alteration

Window replacement and alterations to existing windows are often a successful way of improving the energy efficiency of a building. A careful study of the existing building should be carried out in order 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 i.e. 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 historic fabric.

Cladding, rendering or painting of external walls

The council will seek the retention or reinstatement of original façade treatments of buildings which contribute positively to the special character and appearance of the conservation area. Unless it can be demonstrated that existing exposed brickwork had originally been rendered or painted, the rendering or painting over of external 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, but in most cases it is unlikely to be acceptable.

Other external changes

Alterations which change the appearance of buildings within the conservation area should be carefully considered. The council will not support the addition of satellite dishes, banners or antennae or other fixtures on elevations that front the street. The addition of grilles and louvres to the front of buildings is also unlikely to be supported. These should be placed on rear or side elevations if required and carefully designed so that they are incorporated into the overall building design. The council welcomes the removal of unwanted and unnecessary clutter from the exterior of buildings within the conservation area.. Development proposals that involve the re-use and/or conversion of existing buildings will be expected to address this issue where appropriate.

8.7. Public realm improvements

Surface finishes and street furniture

Where there are historic surface finishes such as cobblestones, setts or paving, the council will seek their retention, as these form an important part of the character of the conservation area. Any major investment in buildings should also include public realm improvements where appropriate. New schemes should aim to retain historic surfaces and any new surfaces should be sympathetic to the conservation area. Junctions between different surface treatments should also be carefully considered.

The quality of the streetscape, the surface materials, street furniture and other features can all form an integral part of the character and appearance of the conservation area. Any work carried out should respect this historic character, using natural materials and colours that are in keeping with the character or appearance of the conservation area. Consistent colours and materials should be used where possible, except where variation is required. Tactiles for pedestrian crossings should be grey where possible. For works to Whitechapel Road and Commercial Road, TfL's Streetscape Guidance should be consulted. On narrow side streets, setts and cobblestones should be reinstated where possible and, historic kerb stones retained. Any paving works should

be sympathetic to the historic character of the conservation area. Larger rectangular paving slabs ideally in natural stone or high quality composite stone, are more sympathetic to the character of the conservation area than smaller modular paving.

In addition to the TfL guidance, for developments which impact on public spaces, the Council's Street Design Guide and Historic England's Streets for All: London document should be referred to. An important aim should be to reduce street clutter, such as obsolete signage and modern phone boxes.

All trees in conservation areas are protected, and some trees are also covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Additional information on trees can be found in the Policy and Legislation section of this document and on the council website.

8.8. Shopfronts and signage

The richness in the variety of details to shopfronts and buildings is integral to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Existing timber fascias, pilasters and corbels should be retained or restored where they have been lost. In cases where shopfront corbels do not survive, careful study should be made of adjacent shops to see if any appropriate examples remain – these should form the template for re-instatement.

It should be noted that a standard corporate approach to signage may not be considered appropriate due to size, colour or illumination. As such, proposed designs and/or materials may have to be amended to suit the historic context. Any hanging or projecting signs should be well designed, bespoke timber hanging signs of an appropriate size for the shopfront or building. Traditional materials should be used and plastic signage will not be supported. No upper level signage, projecting signs or banners will be supported.

Hand painted timber fascia signs or fascias with individually applied lettering are encouraged throughout the conservation area. Internally illuminated plastic fascia signs are not appropriate and will not be supported.

8.9. Vacant sites and hoardings

Vacant sites must be carefully managed to ensure that they cause minimal harm to the conservation area. These sites must be maintained and should not be allowed to fall into disrepair. Where hoardings are used around vacant sites or on sites that are currently undergoing building works, these must be consistent in terms of height, materials and appearance. Hoardings should be maintained in a good state of repair so as to not detract from the character or appearance of the conservation area. Where possible, hoardings should be used positively to inform the public of the history of the site or wider area.

8.10. Development affecting the setting of the conservation area

The increase in scale of the development outside but close to the boundary of the conservation area threatens to cause significant harm to the character, appearance of the conservation area. This is particularly the case to the east, as identified in section 6.0 of the Appraisal, but also to the west where the step up in height is gradual. The large scale buildings associated with the Royal London Hospital have a significant impact on views from within the conservation area looking east and also on views into the conservation area from the surrounding area causing harm to its significance.

The overall scale of the conservation area continues beyond the boundary in most directions but the Royal London Hospital block introduces a much larger scale in some views. The predominant setting of the conservation area should be preserved, with any new developments within its setting considered carefully so as to not exacerbate the harm caused by the hospital buildings to the east. The gradual stepping up of buildings heights to the west of the conservation area should also be maintained, with increases in height kept away from the conservation area boundary, in all directions. Views from outside the conservation area are limited due to the alignments and orientation of the streets and important views of buildings within the conservation area are largely contained within the conservation area.

It is important that development proposals on the edge of the conservation area and in surrounding areas include a fully detailed assessment of any impact on the historic significance of the conservation area.

To enable the council to assess relevant applications, the council will expect applicants:

- to identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected by a proposal;
- assess whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s);
- assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance of the heritage assets; demonstrate that they have explored ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

9.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

9.1. Ongoing management and monitoring change

The council recognises the contribution of the local community in managing conservation areas, and will welcome proposals to work collaboratively to monitor and manage change in the area. Public meetings will be held to maintain communications between all stakeholders and identify new opportunities and threats to the conservation area as they arise. In addition, the borough's Annual Monitoring Report, prepared with the new Local Plan will assess progress on the implementation of the whole Local Development Scheme, including policies relevant to conservation.

9.2. Planning Enforcement

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 illegal. It is therefore essential to obtain planning permission and/or listed building consent before works begin.

An enforcement notice, served by the council may require works to rectify unauthorised alterations. This notice is entered on the Local Land Charges records which could make the future sale or financing of the property more difficult.

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.

10.0 USEFUL CONTACTS AND REFERENCES

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: planning@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 organisations for further information:

- Historic England <https://www.historicengland.org.uk>
- The Georgian Group www.georgiangroup.org.uk
- Victorian Society www.victorian-society.org.uk
- 20th Century Society www.c20society.org.uk

MYRDLE STREET CONSERVATION AREA

- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings www.spab.org.uk
- East London Postcards www.eastlondonpostcard.co.uk