



Old Bethnal Green Road

Conservation Area

(Winkley Estate & Surrounding Area)

1. Character Appraisal

2. Management Guidelines

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Adopted by Cabinet: 4th November 2009

Introduction

Conservation Areas are parts of our local environment which have special architectural or historic qualities. They are created by the Council, in consultation with the local community, to preserve and enhance the specific character of these areas for everybody.

This guide has been prepared for the following purposes:

- To comply with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 69(1) states that a conservation area is “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”
- To provide a detailed appraisal of the area’s architectural and historic character. To assist those engaged in the area to understand the quality of the built environment and how they can protect, contribute and enhance it.
- To provide an overview of planning policy and propose management guidelines on how this character should be preserved and enhanced in the context of appropriate ongoing change.



OLD BETHNAL GREEN ROAD CONSERVATION AREA

This map is indicative only and is not a planning document. For further information please contact the Council.

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1. Character Appraisal

Overview

The Old Bethnal Green Road Conservation Area was designated in October 2008. It is focused around the roads of the Winkley Estate in the heart of old Bethnal Green. It is bounded on its western side by Temple Street, to the north by Claredale Street to include Keeling House, and to the east by Mansford Street. It projects beyond Old Bethnal Green Road to the south to include the Chalice Foundation, which occupies a non-conformist church of 1880 and Lawdale Primary School, an excellent London Board School opened in 1883. Most of the Conservation Area has a very cohesive character and little scope exists for change. The buildings contained within the area being considered form an important group worthy of protection and enhancement.

History

The Winkley Estate, which forms the major part of the Old Bethnal Green Road Conservation Area, is a small area of distinctive late Victorian development which now stands surrounded by post war local authority housing development.

By the latter half of the 19th century the area was densely populated, the population generally poor and early 19th century housing overcrowded and dilapidated. It was at this time that the area started to be redeveloped.

The southern part of Mansford Street was laid out in 1877 as a through road in a cleared area between Old Bethnal Green Road and Bethnal Green Road with building land on either side. The non-conformist Church and the board school were built on either side of the new road. Four blocks of old terraced houses between Temple Street and Teesdale Street were demolished by Henry and Charles Winkley for their redevelopment. The Winkley Estate was built between 1898 and 1904 and combined three types of residential accommodation with three small factories, numerous cabinet makers' workshops and shops on Old Bethnal Green Road.

Most of the workshops were occupied by cabinet makers, upholsterers and French polishers etc, making the estate an important centre of the East End furniture trade. The three factories are in what is now Winkley Street, with six three-storey workshops (with well lit semi-basements) around the corner in the southern part of Teesdale Street. Two storey ranges of small separate ground floor and first floor workshops occupy yards in the middle of the four blocks. The three storey terraces in Teesdale Street and Temple Street had ground floor workshops with shopfronts, and residential accommodation on the upper floors.

The estate contains the largest number of surviving purpose built furniture workshops in Tower Hamlets and is an important representative of the renowned East End furniture trade. Its special interest is enhanced by the proximity of Lion Mills in the Hackney Road Conservation Area. The Mills made braid and trimmings for the local furniture and clothing traders.

The closing years of the 19th century saw considerable change within this small area and much of the character of the conservation area we see today was formed at that time.

Character

This area is focused upon the grid of terraced houses, dwellings, factories and workshops that face on to Old Bethnal Green Road, Teesdale Street and Temple Street with Winkley and Canrobert Streets bisecting the quadrangle to form the four blocks.

The four blocks of closely packed buildings were designed to be a community in miniature, providing homes, jobs, shops and services in various forms in close proximity. Many of the original architectural details of the terraced houses, dwellings, factories workshops and shopfronts have been retained and these give the area a very special and well preserved character.

Buildings are typically three storeys, red brick and set at the back edge of the footpath with front doors and shopfronts opening directly on to the street. The scale of the buildings is important as is their uniformity and the strength of the eaves and parapet line in long views.

The frontage to Old Bethnal Green Road is made up of a shopping parade with residential above. Around the corner are Temple Dwellings, two blocks of mansion flats. There are substantial identifiable industrial buildings on Winkley Street and Teesdale Street, and the central core is individual three storey terraced houses.

The large shopfronts are typical of areas supporting the furniture trade, as goods made on the premises would be displayed and sold. Records confirm that the 11 units in the Teesdale Street Parade were historically for industrial manufacturing not shops.

At the centre of each of the four street blocks, is a yard containing a row of one or two storey workshops. There are no other surviving examples in Tower Hamlets quite like the two storey workshop ranges in the four yards. Both ground floor and first floor workshops have their own loading doors for handling timber and large items of furniture. And most of the ground floor workshops had doors onto individual back yards of about half the three storey terraced houses in Canrobert Street, allowing some of the householders to also rent an adjacent workshop. The ground floor workshops with shopfronts are also very unusual although some occupiers may have displayed their products in the window; the shopfronts mainly provided good light and allowed the workshops to be used as shops.

Temple Dwellings

1-24 and 25-48 Temple Dwellings are turn of the century mansion flats accessed from communal three storey staircases and another leading to a semi-basement. They enhance the special character of the area being of a typical scale for mansion flats of this date in a semi-industrial setting. They have a strong parapet line, are constructed of traditional materials and retain many historic features and architectural details.

Keeling House

The Grade II* listed Keeling House (Denys Lasdun, 1954-1957) is located in the eastern corner of the proposed Conservation Area and is included for its close proximity and connection to the terraces. This is a fine example of a cluster block, with balcony access to two storey maisonettes being accessed from a central service core. Lasdun thought of these balconies as streets in the sky, reflecting and replacing the traditional pattern of terraced housing on the streets locally. The pattern of the semi detached maisonettes is clearly expressed in the elevations. Keeling House was recently successfully refurbished with the addition of a new entrance foyer at ground floor level.

Chalice Foundation, Oaklands Secondary School and Lawdale Primary School

A second pocket of historic buildings to the southeast of the Winkley Estate terraces is included, which is focused around the Grade II listed Chalice Foundation Church, Oaklands School and Lawdale Primary School, a London Board School of 1883

The Chalice Foundation occupies a non conformist church from 1880. Designed by William D.Church it is Romanesque in style, constructed in yellow stock brick with red and white brick and stone dressings. Its entrance is beneath the gable facing Mansford Street and a lovely Rose window sits above the entrance. Almost directly opposite lies Lawdale Primary School designed by E.R. Robson and opened by the School Board for London in 1883 as Mansford Street School. This is a remarkably fine, well planned and largely unaltered Robson school and is an excellent example of “Queen Anne” and Neo-Classical styles

Immediately to the north lies Oaklands Secondary School. The old part of the school occupies T.J. Bailey’s Mansford Street Senior Mixed School opened by the School Board for London in 1896. The first of a small number of “multi-purpose” school buildings for occupation by a higher grade school with integral centres. Here the centres were a ground floor manual training centre for 40 boys in the northern wing and a special school for 40 children in the southern wing. In contrast to the Winkley

Estate which forms the main part of the Conservation Area and is predominantly of red brick, these three school buildings are of yellow stock bricks with red brick dressings.

All these buildings date from the later 19th and early 20th century and they work together to form a cohesive group each contributing to provide a context for the others. They present together a special character worthy of protection and enhancement.

Land Use

The area supports a variety of mixed uses in close proximity to each other. A mixture of residential types, retail units, workshops, cafes and bars all happily coexist and support one another. This variety reflects the development of the area and is what helps to give the area its vitality and character.

Scale

With the exception of Keeling House, and the pocket of development to the south of Old Bethnal Green Road which includes the Chalice Foundation an extension to Oakdale Secondary School and Lawdale Primary School, this area has a dense concentration of modest sized houses and workshops of similar construction. It is typified by a height of two to three stories with the workshops within the yards being lower at 2 storeys. This low rise character is a particular feature of the area and should be preserved.

Open Space

Across the Winkley Estate the terraces are built hard up against the back edge of the footpath - the public realm is thus limited to the streets themselves. There are few street trees and no visible garden spaces to green the area. However, to the south of the Winkley Estate is a public open space bounded by Canrobert Street, Old Bethnal Green Road and Clarkson Street on two sides. This green lung complements the dense character of the terraces and the yard workshops they enclose and offers residents an area of green space close by.

Views

The most significant views are the long views of the length of the terraces where the uniformity and the horizontal character of the terraces becomes evident. Of particular importance are the repetition of details and the uniformity of the parapet and eaves line of the terraces.

The other important view is that of the silhouette of Keeling House beyond the terraces and the interesting juxtaposition of the different scales and architectural styles.

Summary

This is a Conservation Area of contrasts, although its focus is on the cohesive Winkley Estate which forms its focus. The unified terraces, a fine cluster block, schools and faith building have architectural merit and historic interest. The character and appearance of the area enhance the environment for those living there and for other residents of the Borough.

2. Management Guidelines

Overview

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

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

Conservation Areas also promote sustainability in its widest sense. The Council is committed to this in the Core Strategy its Local Development Framework (LDF). The re-use of historic buildings and places is environmentally responsible as it protects the energy and resources embodied in them and combats global warming.

Consideration of appropriate amendments to the boundary of the Conservation Area, and recommendations for additions to the register of listed buildings, either the statutory or local list, will be considered by the Council.

Who is this document for?

This is an inclusive document which will engage with many different people and organisations. It will depend on the support of the community to achieve its objectives. It is aimed primarily at the residents, businesses, developers and others living and working in the area. The Conservation Area belongs to its residents, as well as the whole community, and their priorities are reflected in this document.

The document has also been prepared to align conservation objectives within different parts of the council, and provide a single point of reference for the management of the

area. It represents our shared commitment to conserve the special architectural and historic character, and to help manage sensitive new development and refurbishment where appropriate to successfully preserve and enhance the quality and character of the area.

Outline Guidance on Applications

Before carrying out any work in this area, you will need to apply for consent even for minor work such as replacing railings. These consents include planning, listed building and Conservation Area consent, as well as others for work such as felling trees.

When planning applications in a Conservation Area are decided, the planning authority will pay special attention to whether the character of the area is preserved or enhanced. The character of Old Bethnal Green Road is described in detail in the Appraisal in the first part of this document.

In Old Bethnal Green Road, as in other Conservation Areas, planning controls are more extensive than normal. Consent is required to demolish any building, and a higher standard of detail and information is required for any application. The exact information required will vary with each application, but in general applications must include:

- A clear design statement and/or conservation plan explaining the reasons behind the various architectural, masterplanning or other design decisions.
- Contextual plans, sections and elevations of existing buildings
- Drawings, including construction details, produced at larger scale (eg. 1:50 or 1:20) clearly indicating the nature of the work proposed.
- Additional detail regarding materials and construction.
- Photos of the condition of existing building (including details where appropriate).

More details are available on the Tower Hamlets website. If in any doubt, the Council welcomes and encourages early requests for advice or information.

When alterations are proposed to listed buildings, complying with the building regulations can be particularly complex, and early consideration of building control issues can help identify potential problems early in the process.

Policies Relevant to the Conservation Area and how they are Implemented:

Any new development should have regard to national, regional and local planning policy.

- At the national level, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on Tower Hamlets to designate Conservation Areas in “areas of special architectural or historic interest”, and to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas. National policy for planning and the historic environment is set out in Planning Policy Guidance 15 (PPG15).
- At the regional level, policy 4B.1 of the London Spatial Development Strategy (or London Plan) states that ‘The Mayor will seek to ensure that developments ... respect London’s built heritage.’
- At the local level, the new Local Development Framework (LDF) of Tower Hamlets states that ‘the Council will protect and enhance the historic environment of the borough’. The Core Strategy states as an objective that we will ‘Protect and celebrate our history and heritage by placing these at the heart of reinventing the Hamlets to enhance local distinctiveness, character and townscape.

Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area

Grade II *

Keeling House, Claredale Street

Grade II

Chalice foundation, Mansford Street

Locally Listed Building

Oaklands School, Mansford Street

Highways and Transportation Issues

The quality of the space between the buildings is essential to the character of the Conservation Area. The quality of the streetscape, the surface materials, street furniture and other features can all be integral parts of the character of Conservation Areas and their design should be carefully considered. Any work carried out should respect this historic character. Anyone involved in development which impacts on public spaces should refer to the Council's Street Design Guide, TfL's own Streetscape Guidance and English Heritage's 'Streets for All' document. The ongoing cost of maintenance should also be considered carefully.

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

Opportunities and Potential for Enhancement

There are many opportunities for enhancement, both in terms of repairing and maintaining buildings and also enhancing the streetscape and open space. The Old Bethnal Green Conservation Area retains evidence of many of the original features, for example doors, windows, shopfronts, loading doors and specially lighted semi-basements. It is important that these original features should be retained and that where possible original features are matched. Particular attention should be given to the shopfront parades which retain considerable historic integrity.

Trees, Parks and Open Spaces

Across the majority of this area the buildings front on to the back edge of the footpath and the narrow pavement leaves little opportunity for street trees - although some do exist along western side of Teesdale Street and around the base of Keeling House.

There is one open space within the Conservation Area; this is bounded by Canrobert Street, Clarkson Street and Old Bethnal Green Road. Whilst a welcome green space this area needs further thought to ensure the most effective use of this important resource.

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

Equalities:

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

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

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

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

Publicity

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

Consideration of Resources Needed to Conserve the Historic Environment:

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

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

Ongoing Management and Monitoring Change:

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

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

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

Enforcement Strategy:

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

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

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

Further Reading and Contacts

- The Buildings of England (London 5: East). Cherry, O'Brien and Pevsner.
- 'Bethnal Green: Building and Social Conditions from 1876 to 1914', A History of the County of Middlesex: Volume 11: Stepney, Bethnal Green (1998), pp. 126-132. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22752>

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

Tel: 020 7364 5009

Email: dr.majorprojects@towerhamlets.gov.uk

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

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

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

English Heritage	www.english-heritage.org.uk
The Georgian Group	www.georgiangroup.org.uk
Victorian Society	www.victorian-society.org.uk
20 th Century Society	www.c20society.org.uk
Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings	www.spab.org.uk

Listed Buildings at Risk:

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

Any other threats to the Conservation Area

Inappropriate alterations which can be undertaken without the need for planning permission. These can seriously damage the character of unlisted buildings and hence the wider conservation area, particularly in areas such as this where there are few listed buildings.

Priorities for Action (1-5)

1. Prepare a detailed study of the shopfronts (including their shutters) and distribute study to shop owners to encourage appropriate repairs.
2. Yards – an important characteristic of this Conservation Area are the yards behind the terraces of the Winkley Estate. Review access to these yards and determine proposals for improving gates and access generally.
3. Work across other departments in London Borough of Tower Hamlets to see how improvements can be made to the ‘greening’ of the area.
4. Undertake further research into the history of the area to inform future development.
5. Prepare householders guide with detailed design guidance for the area.