



# All Saints Church Poplar

## Conservation Area

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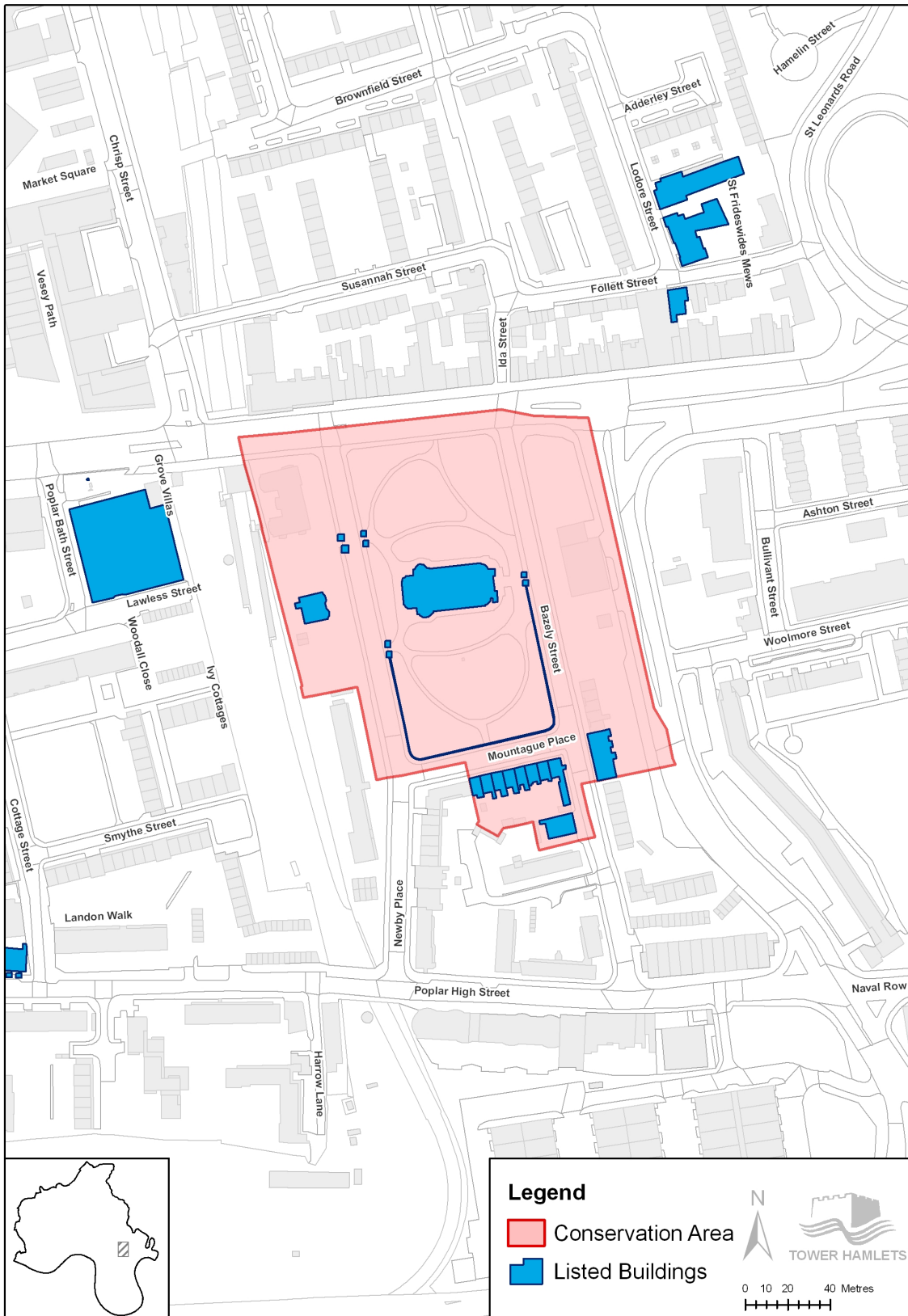
London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
Adopted by Cabinet: 7th March 2007

## Introduction

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

This guide has been prepared for the following purposes:

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



### ALL SAINTS CHURCH POPLAR 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 All Saints Conservation Area was designated in February 1986. The area focuses on the 1820s Grade-II\* listed church, grounds and rectory. It extends to the south to enclose a small group of pleasant early 19<sup>th</sup> century residential streets and listed buildings. The church forms a group with two listed terraces.

## History

The original hamlet of Poplar, and the historic docks at Blackwall, lay to the south of this Conservation Area along what is now Poplar High Street. The population began to grow rapidly after the construction of the West India Docks at the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The East India Dock Road was constructed 1806-12 to improve communication between the City and the newly constructed East India Docks north of Blackwall. The Survey of London describes the development of this road in detail.

Poplar had been part of the medieval parish of Stepney. In 1813, the Improvement Act of Parliament reformed the civil administration of Poplar and Blackwall, and prompted an initiative to create a separate parish of Poplar, with its own parish church. Land was assembled for this purpose, including the purchase of 2 acres of land owned by Ann Newby between Poplar High Street and East India Dock Road.

A budget of £20,000 was set, and designs were invited for the new church. The architect Charles Hollis won the competition, and the construction contract was awarded to the builder Thomas Morris in 1821. Although the church and land would be paid for by the church rate, a loan for construction was provided by two local men – John Stock and George Green, the prominent local shipbuilder and philanthropist.

The churchyard which exists today was laid out using the constraints of Bow Lane to the east, and East India Dock Road to the north. To complete the rectangle, Montague

Street was laid out to the south, and on the west side Newby Street was extended north to East India Dock Road.

Montague Place was divided into 12 residential building lots and sold in two stages in 1823 and 1826. Houses were constructed soon afterwards, beginning to create the residential enclosure to the churchyard which can still be seen in part today.

The northern part of Newby Place was laid out when the churchyard was constructed, forming the western edge of the churchyard. This was chosen as the location for the new rectory, which was designed by Charles Hollis and built in 1822-3. Newby Place would accommodate several civic buildings, starting with a Fire-engine house in 1822 – one of Poplar's new responsibilities as a parish. Growth in the area continued at a rapid pace. A regular coach service from this area to the City along East India Dock Road was started in 1827. A school was built in 1846, and was rebuilt in 1870 along with a new Town Hall. Lastly, a Parish Institute was built in 1910.

The area's proximity to the docks meant that it was seriously damaged by wartime bombing. In 1917, in one of the few air raids on London of that war, the church was slightly damaged and some windows needed replacing. Two months before this attack, 18 primary school children had been killed in a bomb attack, which became known as the 'Poplar Outrage'. A memorial to the children was installed in the churchyard.

The Town Hall was hit by incendiary bombs in 1940, during the Second World War, and what remained of the building was demolished later. The Church itself survived the Blitz of 1940, but in March 1945 a V2 rocket hit the north end of Bazely Street, requiring a major reconstruction of the east end of the church. Although there have been no burials in the church grounds for over a century, tombs remain and there is now a Garden of Remembrance for the burial of ashes. The Parish Institute survived the earlier bombing, thanks to water brought in from the nearby Poplar Baths, but it was eventually demolished in 1961-3 to make way for the construction of Discovery House.

The area of housing to the east of Bazely Street was comprehensively redeveloped with modern housing and the new approach road to the Blackwall Tunnel.

All Saints continues to play an important role in the life of the area today.

## **Character**

The churchyard is a large garden enclosed by railings and dominated by the landmark church in the centre. The square is enclosed on three sides by streets, largely residential in character, and by the major East India Dock Road to the north.

All Saints Church itself makes an essential contribution to the architectural and civic identity of Poplar and its spire, approx 190ft high, is a significant landmark in the area. The church was built with a low granite plinth and faced in white Portland Stone. Designed to be seen from all directions, the sides have an austere, classical appearance with two rows of five windows, and the main entrance to the west is marked by a pediment with four columns.

The residential buildings around the square were built from stock brick in a simple, late-Georgian architectural style. Of these, the most important surviving buildings are the listed terraces on Montague Place and Bazely Street, and the Rectory on Newby Place.

The Montague Place frontage includes eight surviving terraced houses which form a harmonious group, despite subtle variations of height, material and fenestration. When the land for these houses was sold, a covenant required that only an open railing or steps to the houses could be built on a strip of land 6-ft wide along the frontage. This helps to unify the facade into a coherent group.

The Bazeley Street terrace of four houses, constructed in 1845, were intended to establish a new standard of housing in the area, and remain in remarkably original condition.

The original townscape character of the churchyard and its surroundings is still evident today. However, the wartime bombing and subsequent redevelopment have eroded the coherence of the buildings around the churchyard, as well as the civic identity of the area.

Discovery House, built in 1961-3 and named in tribute to the discoveries of science, does not make a positive architectural contribution to the area, and was excluded from the boundary. Its long setback from the street and its arrangement of dwellings is uncharacteristic of the area.

Virginia House, named in commemoration of the historic voyage from Blackwall Docks to the New World, makes a poor architectural contribution to the corner of Montague Place. Its scale breaks the rhythm of the terrace and the lack of street entrances detracts from the character of the frontage.

The Greenwich Pensioner public house provides an important historic community focus, and is a valuable part of the area's character.

## **Land Use**

Apart from the church itself, there is a mix of uses in the area. The area south of the church is predominantly residential in character. The area north of the church, along East India Dock Road, is mainly commercial at ground floor level with residential units above.

The buildings in the area originally consisted of several civic buildings – the town hall, the institute, the school and the fire station. These uses gave the buildings extra significance and meaning, in addition to their architectural merit. Although some of these buildings have been lost, there is still an important cluster of public buildings in the area – the church, the health centre, the Idea Store and the (now disused) Poplar Baths. These civic land uses around the west of the Conservation Area and along East India Dock Road are an important characteristic of the area, as they contribute to a strong sense of place and identity.

## Scale

The area is generally low-rise in character, the only exceptions being the landmark church itself, and a recent tall residential building on the north side of East India Dock Road, outside the Conservation Area.

The Rectory is the largest of the existing residential buildings – a 3-story double-bay fronted brick structure with a basement. The terraced houses along Montague Place are generally 3-4 storeys with a basement, and those on Bazeley St 2-4 storeys. The Greenwich Pensioner public house is two storeys.

## Open Space

The churchyard is the main area of open space in the area, and is essential to the setting of the Church. It is characterized by occasional ornamental trees in the centre, and large mature trees around the edge, particularly at the northern and southern ends. The enclosing railings (some original) give great definition to the edges. There are further significant trees in other parts of the Conservation Area.

## Views

There are many long views to the spire of All Saints from outside the Conservation Area. Within the area, the views to the church across the churchyard are important from all directions, including diagonal views across the gardens.

The views along the streets bordering the churchyard are important as the character of the residential edge to the square is still largely evident. The view east along Montague Place is particularly valuable, as it is defined by surviving historic buildings in relatively good condition.

## Summary

This is an area of particular special architectural and historic interest, illustrated by its rich history, and significant architecture, dating from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The



character and appearance of the area, as described in this appraisal, define its special qualities. There are a few gap sites and some minor inappropriate buildings in the Conservation Area, but overall these have little impact on the qualities that led to its designation.

## 2. Management Guidelines

### Overview

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

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

Conservation Areas also promote sustainability in its widest sense. The Council is committed to this in Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy its Local Development Framework (LDF). The re-use of historic buildings and places is environmentally responsible as it protects the energy and resources embodied in them and combats global warming.

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

### Who is this document for?

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

The document has also been prepared to align conservation objectives within different parts of the council, and provide a single point of reference for the management of the area. It represents our shared commitment to conserve the special architectural and historic character, and to help manage sensitive new development and refurbishment where appropriate to successfully preserve and enhance the quality and character of the area.

### **Outline Guidance on Applications**

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

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

In All Saints Poplar, as in other Conservation Areas, planning controls are more extensive than normal. Consent is required to demolish any building, and a higher standard of detail and information is required for any application. When applying for listed building consent, please note that all parts of the building, including its interior walls, ceilings and all other internal features, are protected. Some buildings are nationally (statutorily) listed, and some are locally listed by the Borough to indicate buildings that the Borough wishes to protect.

The exact information required will vary with each application, but in general applications must include:

- A clear design statement explaining the reasons behind the various architectural, masterplanning or other design decisions.
- Contextual plans, sections and elevations of existing buildings

- Drawings, including construction details, produced at larger scale (eg. 1:50 or 1:20) clearly indicating the nature of the work proposed.
- Additional detail regarding materials and construction.
- Photos of the condition of existing building (including details where appropriate).

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

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

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

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

- At the national level, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on Tower Hamlets to designate Conservation Areas in “areas of special architectural or historic interest”, and to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas. National policy for planning and the historic environment is set out in Planning Policy Guidance 15 (PPG15).
- At the regional level, policy 4B.1 of the London Spatial Development Strategy (or London Plan) states that ‘The Mayor will seek to ensure that developments ... respect London’s built heritage.’
- At the local level, the new Local Development Framework (LDF) of Tower Hamlets states that ‘the Council will protect and enhance the historic environment of the borough’. This is described in detail in policy CP49 of the Core Strategy of the LDF. In addition, applicants should note policy CP46 to ensure that access issues are properly addressed in work carried out in a Conservation Area.

- The area lies within the area covered by the Leaside Area Action Plan (AAP), and All Saints falls within the East India North Sub-Area. The AAP identifies the area around All Saints for residential use.
- All Saints Church is identified in the LDF as a local landmark, and views of it from publicly accessible places will be protected.
- The churchyard and the area of green area to the east of Bazely St are designated as public open space. The churchyard is also designated as an area of importance for nature conservation.

## Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area

### Grade II\*

- All Saints Church with St Frideswide

### Grade II

- Nos 5-12 (consec) Montague Place
- Nos 45-51 (odd) Montague Place
- Greenwich Pensioner Public House, Bazeley Street
- Railed Wall and Gate Piers to All Saints Church
- Gate Piers to the Children's Playground and All Saint's Rectory

## Highways and Transportation Issues

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

East India Dock road is the major traffic route along the northern edge of this Conservation Area. Newby Place, Montague Place and Bazeley Street are more residential in character.

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

### **Opportunities and Potential for Enhancement**

There is potential for redevelopment on the east side of Bazely St, where very high quality new buildings could restore a sense of definition to the square. Development would not need to be in a neo-Georgian style, but the materials, scale, proportions and rhythm should be consistent in character with the existing historic frontage to Montague Street. A pedestrian link through to Cotton Street should also be retained.

There are minor improvements that could be made. The street lighting could be replaced with higher quality lighting, and in time higher quality paving could be used to re-surface the area. Work to eliminate and remove graffiti and litter from the streets is ongoing. The bus stops in the wider area could also benefit from higher quality furniture, particularly in front of the Poplar Idea Store.

The clock on All Saints Church was made by John Moore of Clerkenwell. It was restored recently, although there appears to be some staining on the stone below, which detracts from the otherwise very good exterior condition of the church.

East India Dock Road itself is a major traffic route, with traffic cutting through Chrisp Street between Bow Road and East India Dock Road. If the traffic could be calmed, and the road markings and other highways infrastructure reapplied in a more sensitive and subtle way, then this would significantly enhance the setting of the Conservation Area.

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

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.

### **Enforcement Strategy:**

Appropriate enforcement, with the support of the community, is essential to protect the area's character. The Council will take prompt action against those who carry out unauthorised works to listed buildings, or substantial or complete demolition of buildings within a Conservation Area. Unauthorised work to a listed building is a



criminal offence and could result in a fine and/or imprisonment. Likewise, unauthorised substantial or complete demolition of a building within a Conservation Area is also illegal. It is therefore essential to obtain Conservation Area or Listed Building Consent before works begin.

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

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

### **Further Reading and Contacts**

- The Survey of London, volume 43: Poplar, Blackwall and the Isle of Dogs.
- The Buildings of England (London 5: East). Cherry, O'Brien and Pevsner.
- Docklands Heritage. LDDC (1989).

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

Tel: 020 7364 5009

Email: [dr.majorprojects@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:dr.majorprojects@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

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

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

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

English Heritage	<a href="http://www.english-heritage.org.uk">www.english-heritage.org.uk</a>
The Georgian Group	<a href="http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk">www.georgiangroup.org.uk</a>
Victorian Society	<a href="http://www.victorian-society.org.uk">www.victorian-society.org.uk</a>
20 <sup>th</sup> Century Society	<a href="http://www.c20society.org.uk">www.c20society.org.uk</a>
Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings	<a href="http://www.spab.org.uk">www.spab.org.uk</a>

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

#### **Poplar Baths, East India Dock Road E14 (just west of Conservation Area)**

Priority – C (C)

Designation – Listed Grade II

Condition – Poor, Vacant

Ownership – Local Authority

#### Summary

Former public baths, slipper baths and vapour baths. Built 1932-4 for Poplar Borough Council to the designs of Harley Heckford, Borough Engineer and R W Stanton, Chief Assistant. Vacant and in poor condition. Planning brief issued by local authority in 2005.

#### **Action Proposed to Secure:**

- The Council is investigating options for the appropriate re-use of this building.

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

- General poor and inappropriate alterations to building stock, particularly works allowed under Permitted Development.

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

1. Detailed Stakeholder Guide to be prepared for the area.
2. An audit of the trees and street furniture should be carried out.
3. Propose improvements to street furniture and paving.
4. Liaise with the 'Better Tower Hamlets Team' (BTHT) on environmental issues.
5. Secure appropriate new use for Poplar Baths.