

# 2. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

The following chapter provide a timeline of pace of change and key development phases for the borough.

# NEWHAM'S HISTORIC URBAN EVOLUTION

## Pre 1850 - 1945

### Pre 1850-1900

The historic development of Newham can be seen in its state of urban development today. This is most prevalent with the route of Romford Road, following the alignment of a Roman Road, regarded as one of the most significant ancient routes in the Borough. It is still a defining axial route today.

All Saint's Church in West Ham is one of the oldest buildings in the Borough, and currently Grade I listed. The surrounding street patterns are remnant of the older village structure.

It is unclear, but likely there was a pocket of industrial buildings emerging along the River Lea, close to the village and away from the Wetlands near the Thames.

The three docks were completed between 1855 and 1921 on riverside marshes in East Ham and West Ham (now the London Borough of Newham) which created an economic boom in the surrounding area in combination with rapidly emerging industrialised technology.

Beckton Sewage Treatment Works is a sewage treatment plant in Beckton. It was built from 1864. The Northern Outfall Sewer was part of Joseph Bazalgette's solution to London's chronic drainage and sewerage problems. Built between 1860 and 1865, it was part of a network of over 1,300 miles of brick sewers and four pumping stations.

The Beckton Gas Works was built in 1879. It was the largest tar and ammonia by-products works in the UK.



## c.1900 - 1939

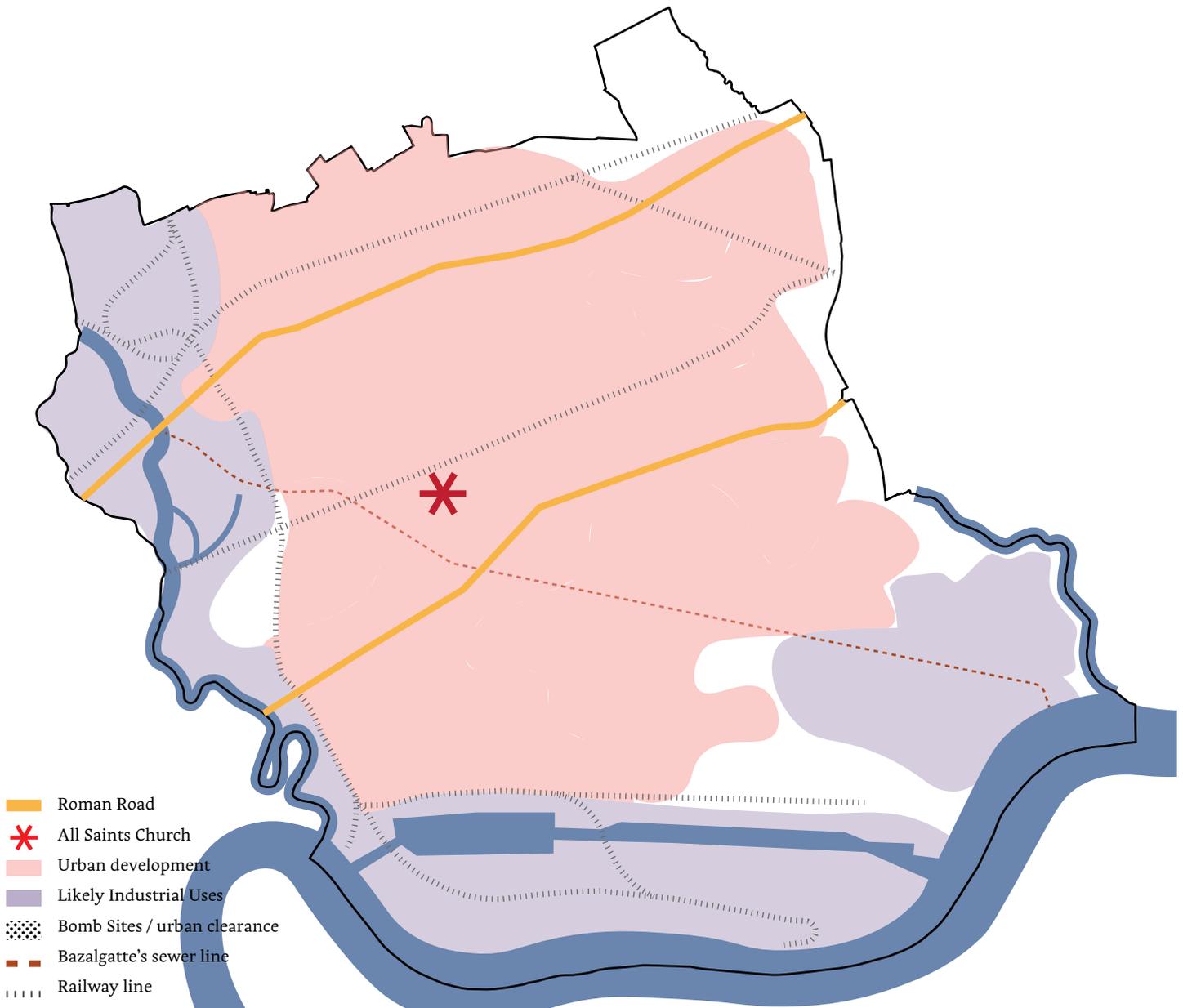
More roads were built, and railway lines were rolled out across the borough to provide a second source of connectivity to the industry along the Royal Docks, and created industrial expansion in the River Lea.

Housing developed in conjunction with the new railway lines and roads, enabling commuters to live in the previously rural area of London.

Typically, the industry occupied the most significant flood zones which were otherwise unsuitable for housing. Industry and residential areas are typically separated by railway corridors.



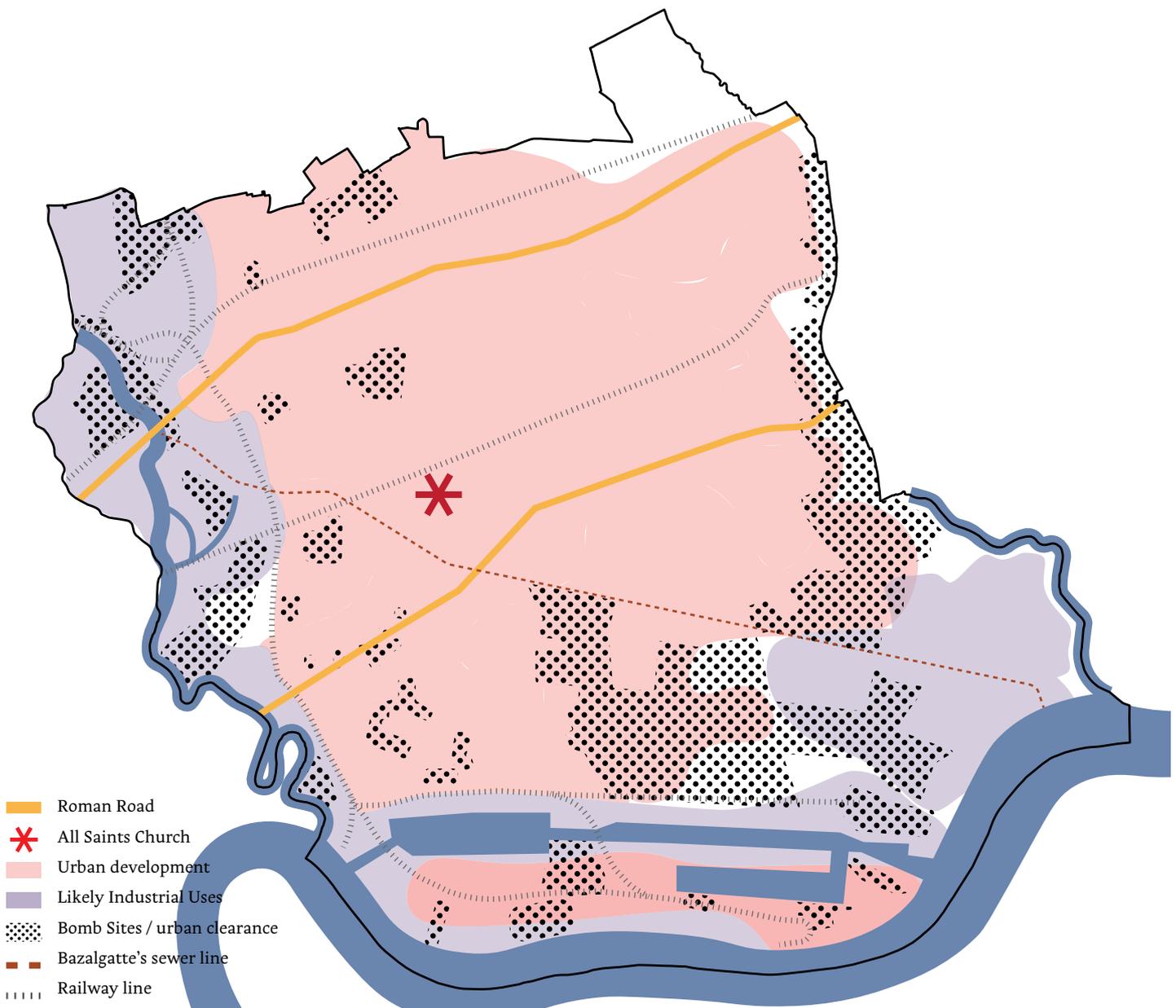
Silvertown Way was opened in September 1934 to relieve the extreme congestion on the streets which gave access to the Royal Docks in the Port of London.



## 1939 - 1945

In the period spanning the Second World War, Newham experienced large destruction of urban areas as a result of bombing. Newham was particularly affected in comparison to other London boroughs for its connection to industry via the Royal Docks. Most bombs were dropped around the Royal Docks, and the east / west edges of the borough, containing most of the industrial stock. Residential areas also suffered bomb damage, as well as urban clearance shortly after the war.

Bombing during the Second World War resulted in substantial damage, particularly in the south of the borough where the target was the industry and docks.



# 1946 - 2021

## 1946 - 1970's

Following the war, the Royal Docks was the most heavily damaged area of the Borough. Large scale rebuilding of the industry supporting the Docks operation began, in combination with the new residential area of North Woolwich.

Canning Town also suffered bomb damage and the council proceeded with slum clearance of the poor quality worker housing. This area witnessed the most extensive rebuilding.

During the post-war period, the local authorities comprehensively developed housing across large areas of Canning Town, West Ham and North Woolwich, with infill development elsewhere.

The majority of this new development centred around accommodating increased car-based travel and roads for cars and parking.



Canning Town in the 1960's. Modernist housing is prevalent in the rear of this image, replacing the previous housing.



## 1970's - 1999

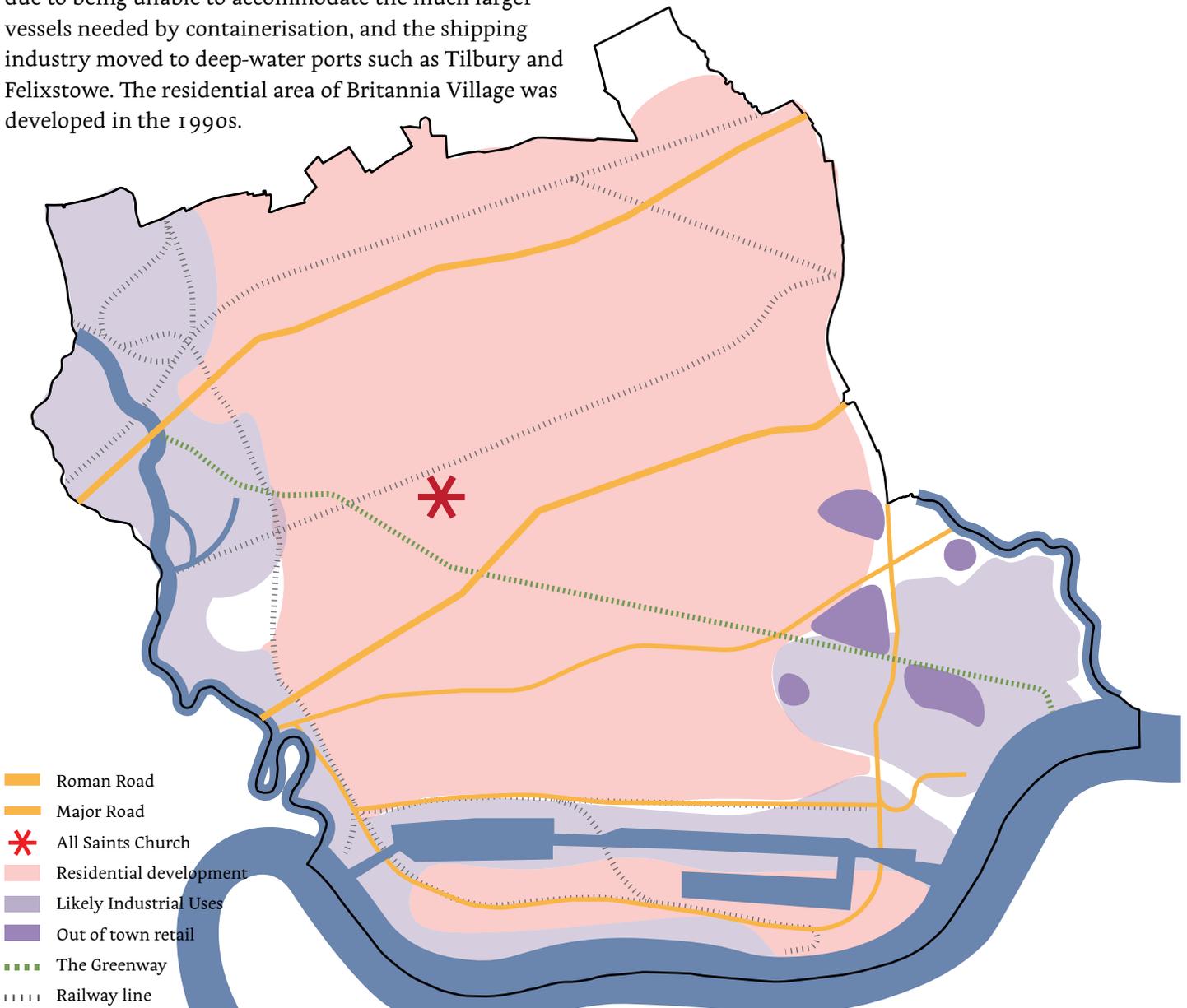
The Royal Docks closed by 1981 causing the largest change in the Borough's urban morphology and character since the Second World War. The London Docklands Development Corporation cleared the majority of the industry in the south in anticipation of redevelopment.

Large new roads replaced most of the original railway tracks serving the industry. Large parts of Beckton Gas Works was decommissioned to make way for new suburban style housing in its place. The Greenway was introduced along the Bazalgette sewer line in the 1990s.

Although some industry appeared during this time such as the expanded sewage facility at Gallions Reach, the later stages of this period are characterised by out of town retail typologies. The Royal Docks closed in 1981 due to being unable to accommodate the much larger vessels needed by containerisation, and the shipping industry moved to deep-water ports such as Tilbury and Felixstowe. The residential area of Britannia Village was developed in the 1990s.



The closure of the Royal Docks in 1981 caused the greatest character shift in the Borough since WW2.



## 2000 - 2021

This period is characterised by an acceleration of development on former industrial sites, the largest being Stratford, fuelled by the 2012 Olympic Games, which has grown into a metropolitan town centre. Substantial industrial uses were relocated to the Royal Docks / Royal Albert. Today this is characterised by a mix of open space, high density residential development and out of town retail at Beckton.

Other significant developments during this time are the ExCeL Centre and the high-density development at Canning Town. Canning Town has seen the emergence of contemporary and tall commercial typologies around the growing district centre.



Stratford: High density residential and destination shopping

Newham Way was grade-separation completed 2013 to make way for increasing car usage.

