

# Sugar House Lane Conservation Area

## Character Appraisal and Management Proposals

January 2010



## CONTENTS

### **PART 1: CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL**

Introduction.....	2
The Planning Context.....	4
Summary of Special Interest.....	6
Location and Context.....	7
Topography and Landscape Setting... ..	7
Geology.....	7
Historical Development.....	8
Townscape Analysis.....	12
Analysis of Key Buildings and Spaces.....	16
Negative Features and Issues.....	25
Conclusion.....	26

### **PART 2: CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN**

A Vision for Sugar House Lane.....	27
Future Development.....	28
Planning Controls.....	29
Council Functions.....	29
Enhancement and Funding.....	30
Community Engagement.....	30
Public Realm.....	30
Boundary Review.....	31
Public Consultation and Monitoring.....	31

### **MAPS**

Sugar House Lane Conservation Area Boundary.....	3
John Roque 1745.....	8
Ordnance Survey 1867.....	9
Ordnance Survey 1894.....	10
Views to and from Sugar House Lane.....	13
Analysis of Key Buildings and Spaces.....	16

## **PART 1: CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Since 1967 the Council has had a duty to designate as conservation areas, those parts of their area that are of 'special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance'. This duty is found in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

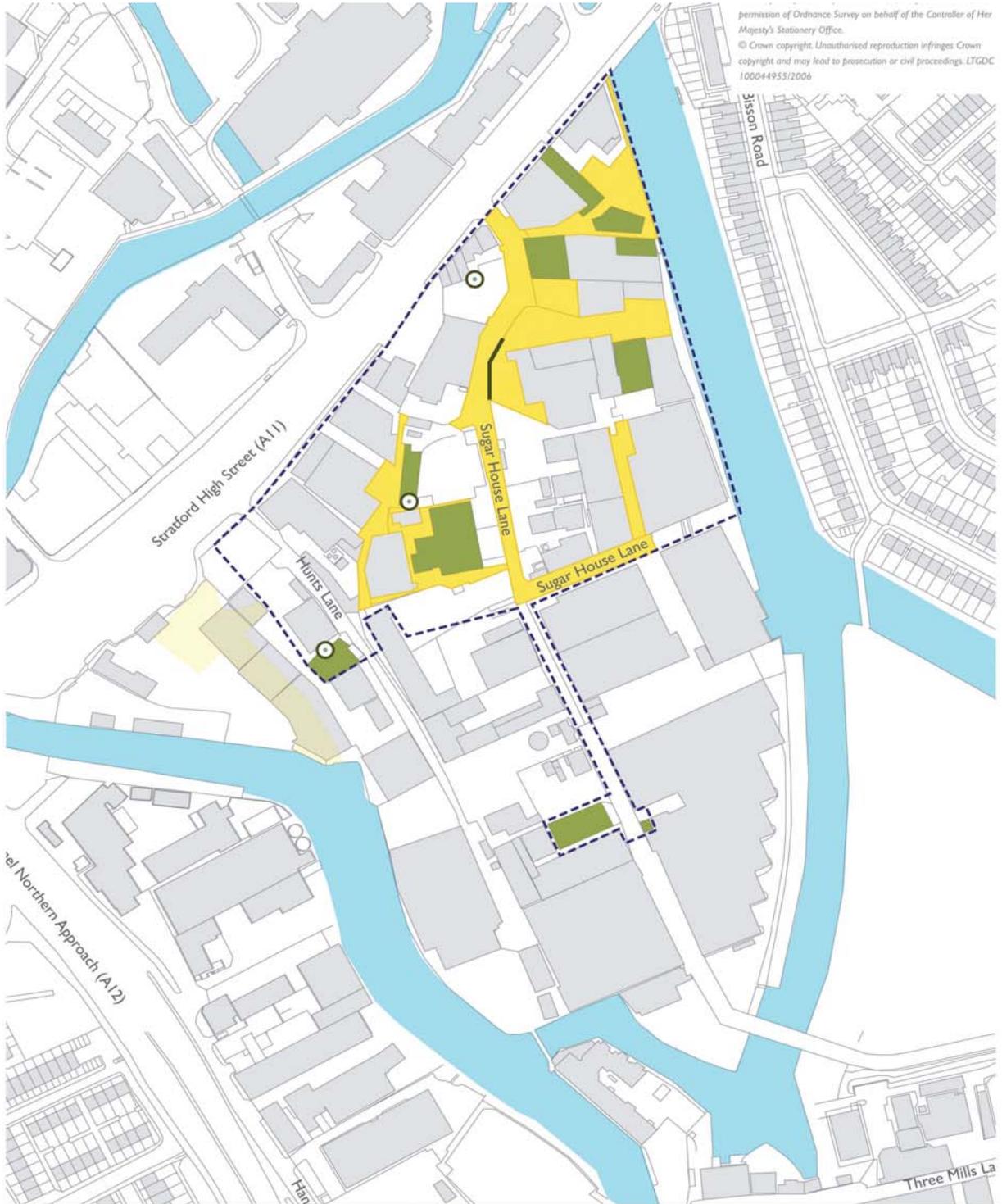
Sugar House Lane Conservation Area was designated by the Council in June 2008. The area covered is shown in Figure 1. It is one of nine conservation areas in Newham.

Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans are required for each conservation area in Newham. The Council is required by government to produce these documents. They accord with guidance published by English Heritage which sets out the matters that these documents should address. They aim to encourage appreciation of the area's history and its present qualities; to identify opportunities for enhancement; to inform and guide those who want to make changes; and to support the Council in carrying out its planning and other functions.

This appraisal analyses the development and resulting townscape of Sugar House Lane Conservation Area, identifying its distinctive appearance and character, and opportunities for further preservation and enhancement. It considers the factors that contribute to its special character – the buildings and spaces between them, and the activities that take place within them. The Management Plan identifies the actions the Council will take over the next five years to further the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.



*Sugar House Lane*



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LEGEND		SUGAR HOUSE LANE CONSERVATION AREA	
	conservation area		Chimneys of note
	Buildings of note		Walls of note
	Yards of note		

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Sugar House Lane Conservation Area Boundary

## THE PLANNING CONTEXT

In carrying out its planning functions in the conservation area, the Council is required to give proper weight to the preservation and enhancement of the area.

While the London Borough of Newham is the development control and planning policy making authority, the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation (LTGDC) has been responsible for determining all major planning applications and heritage/conservation applications. Major applications are defined as those with over 50 residential units and those with over 2,500 sq m of commercial space.

The local planning authorities must ensure their actions take into account wider planning policies and advice. The statutory planning context and policies that apply are as follows:

### National Policy

*Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 15 “Planning and the Historic Environment”* sets out current national policy on conservation and heritage protection. It sets out requirements placed upon planning authorities when determining planning applications for development or demolition that affects a conservation area. The principle requirement is to assess whether or not the proposal preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area.

It also notes:

- that the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. The Secretary of State expects that proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish a listed building.
- that where a building makes little or no such contribution [to the character and appearance of the conservation area] the local planning authority will need to have full information about what is proposed for the site after demolition. Consent for demolition should not be given unless there are acceptable and detailed plans for any redevelopment.

PPG15 also recognises the importance and role of stewardship that Local Planning Authorities are under.

*Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 “Archaeology”* sets out the government’s policy on archaeological remains on land and how they should be preserve or recorded both in an urban setting and in the countryside.

### Regional Policy

The principal regional policy is contained within the Mayor of London’s London Plan (Spatial Development Strategy). The Mayor undertakes to work with others to protect the historic environment (Policy 4B.10) and expects the Council to ensure conservation of historic assets is based on their special character (Policy 4B.11).

The Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework (adopted by the Mayor of London in January 2007) emphasises the importance of the character of the historic environment, encouraging sensitivity to unique local environments, including landscape character, environmental assets, and historic buildings and places. The OAPF states that “the valley as a whole has been shaped by a long history of industrial use and a unique role in London’s urban expansion. This has created a remarkably complex urban environment, which includes...a rich waterway environment and ecology, and diverse industrial areas”. Sugar House Lane is highlighted alongside Fish Island and Leamouth as an area of particular heritage character where existing character should be acknowledged and enhanced. (para 2.177). The following extract from the Three Mills sub-area text identifies the importance of Sugar House Lane: “In the northwest of the sub-area there is a group of 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial buildings on Sugar House Lane, which form an urban environment with significant historical character due to the variety of building types and sense of enclosure created, and could be considered for conservation area status as part of the historic Three Mills area.” (para 4.150) This policy guidance is a key starting point in the context of the pressure for change, and it is of paramount importance that consideration is given to the study area’s historic environment.

### Local Planning Policy

Current planning policy is set out in Newham’s Unitary Development Plan (Adopted June 2001, Saved from 27 September 2007 in accordance with direction from the Secretary of State). This is in the process of being replaced by a Local Development Framework. However the saved UDP policies supporting conservation continue to apply. The UDP states:

*“The Council considers conservation has an important contribution to make towards the future of Newham by protecting buildings which enhance the attractiveness of the borough as a place to live, visit and invest, thus supporting the regeneration process.”*

*“Conservation Areas provide a focus for civic pride and, by preserving part of the borough’s history, contribute to a sense of continuity and stability in the context of substantial physical and social change.”*

These beliefs underlie the Council’s approach to the conservation of Stratford St Johns. The following policies are particularly relevant to development in and around conservation areas in Newham.

*Policy EQ30: In considering development proposals in a conservation area, the planning authority will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of that area. Applicants will be required to provide sufficient information about their proposed development and its immediate setting to enable an assessment to be made of the potential effect of the proposal. In appropriate cases this may include the submission of design impact statements as part of the application.*

*Policy EQ31: There is a presumption in favour of the preservation of buildings which contribute positively to the character or appearance of a conservation area. Applications for conservation area consent for the demolition of buildings in a conservation area will be granted only when demolition and subsequent redevelopment of the site would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.*

Policy EQ33: *The removal of healthy trees in a conservation area will be resisted. Acceptable works will normally be restricted to judicious crown lifting and /or thinning. When removal is considered acceptable, replacements will normally be required. New development should be designed to ensure mature trees are retained and their growing conditions adequately protected.*

The UDP also includes policies (EQ 35-40) to safeguard listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments, and their settings. Policy EQ36 seeks to maintain the architectural and historic integrity of locally listed buildings.

A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) covering the town centre and the Conservation Area is currently being prepared by the Council to inform planned redevelopment.

## SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Sugar House Lane is of demonstrable special interest for the following reasons:

- It has long historical associations with particular industries, especially sugar refining, printing ink manufacture, chemicals, building trades;
- Sugar House Lane provides exceptional evidence of nineteenth century industry in the Lower Lea Valley;
- The intimate sequence of spaces and waterways;
- The plain, simple buildings but strong group value;
- The rich silhouette and skyline; and
- The palette of traditional materials including granite setts, red and London stock brickwork.

The watercourses are also a vital part of the site's special interest. Historically water power was the main source of energy for the early mills, which acted as a catalyst for future industrial development. The river also provided clean water for textile production and laying out grounds for calico, which supported the development of ancillary uses, including printing and dye works. Ordinances preventing the slaughter of cattle within a certain distance of London encouraged the growth of noxious industries at Sugar House Lane, including tanning and leather working. The rivers were navigable and as such enabled water borne commerce. Today, the rivers continue to play a strong role in defining the character of the area and allowing long views in and out. The water contributes to the setting and character of both the buildings and activities in the study area. The rivers also provide natural and ecological value.

## LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The Sugar House Lane conservation area is sited to the south of Stratford and to the west of West Ham and Plaistow within the lower Lea valley in the London Borough of Newham, close to the Borough boundary with Tower Hamlets. The wider area, including Stratford, has many positive features as a place in which to live work and invest. These are as follows:

- It is an area of very substantial inward investment and regeneration. Stratford City, a comprehensive, mixed use development is currently underway to the north east of the existing town centre. Stratford will also be the focus for the development of the Olympic Games site as London becomes the host city in 2012.
- Stratford's regeneration potential is greatly assisted by excellent transport connections and its strategic location within London and the Thames Gateway. Stratford has a regional bus and rail station served by a total of six rail and underground lines. It will also benefit from a direct connection with mainland Europe thanks to a soon to be completed International Railway Station on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Extension. Accessibility will be further enhanced by improvements to the DLR with better services from Stratford to Canning Town. Stratford will also be a station on the recently agreed Crossrail link.

## TOPOGRAPHY AND LANDSCAPE SETTING

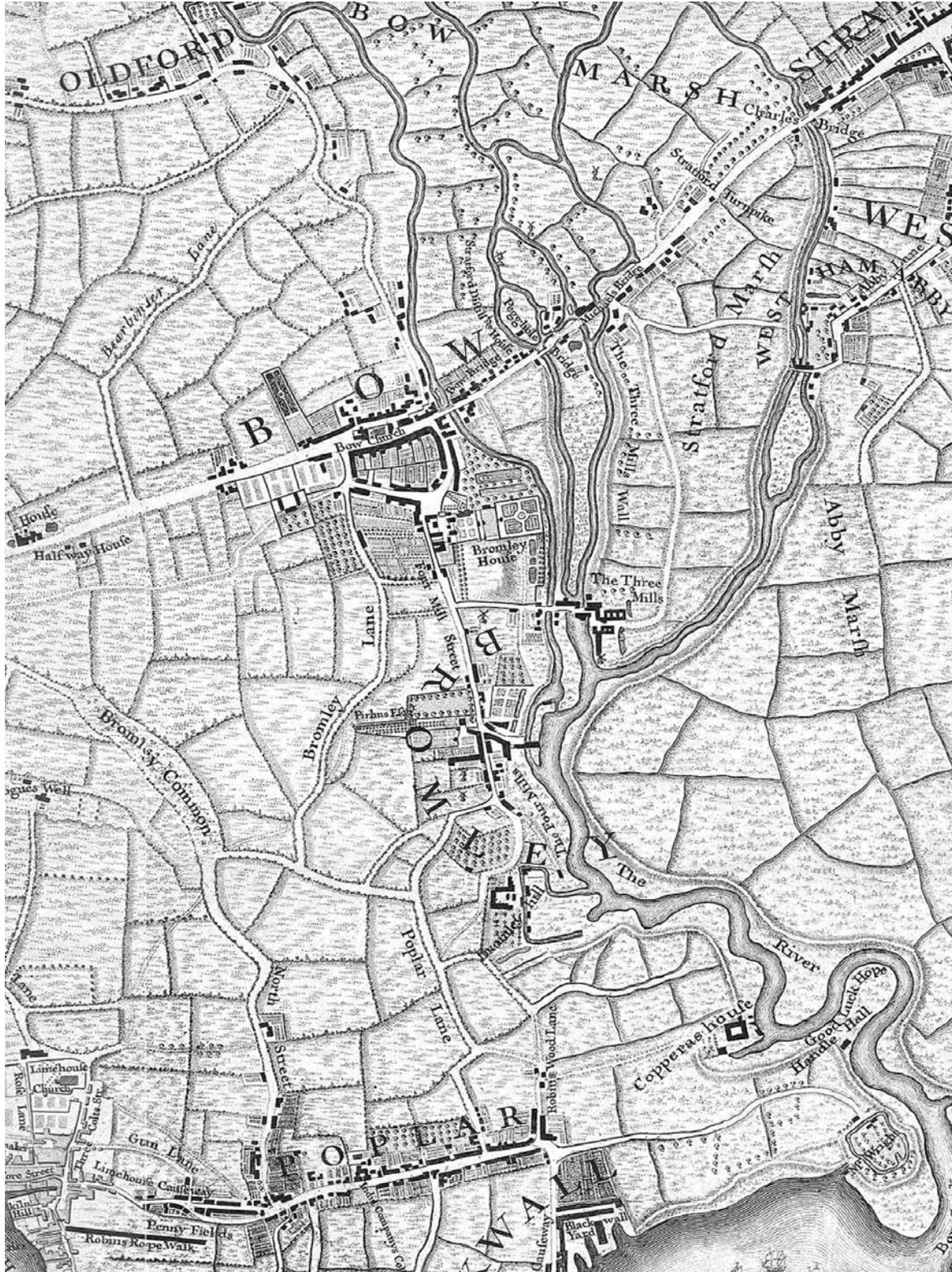
The conservation area is set within the low lying former marshland to the north of the River Thames, formerly known as Stratford and Abbey Marsh. The marsh was crossed by the braided channel of the River Lea, as it meandered south to join the Thames. The setting of the conservation area is dominated by the river channels between which the area sits and by the land-hungry industrial buildings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that exploited the cheap marshy ground to the north of the Thames, in close proximity to the City of London.

## GEOLOGY

The geology of the area is composed of London clay which outcrops on higher ground to the north in Bow with localised areas of ferruginous gravels. These have been exploited to provide the only indigenous building material in Newham. Overlying the London clay is alluvial drift, deposited in low lying areas, carved through the clay by the River Thames and its tributaries, particularly the River Lea. The southern part of the Borough is rich in alluvial drift and marine deposits from the Quaternary Period, associated with sea level change. These deposits include rich organic deposits overlaid by marine clays alongside the Thames. The deposits extend along the valleys of the Thames tributaries and, in particular, the Lea.

## HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The following maps show the development of the Sugar House Lane Area between 1745 and 1894.



John Roque's Plan of 1745 shows the braided streams of the River Lea flowing southwards into Bow Creek and the Thames. Most of the buildings are confined to the High Street between Bow and Stratford



Ordnance Survey Map from 1867. The southern half of Sugar House Lane has yet to be developed.



*Ordnance Survey Map from 1894*

The marshes of the Lea Valley were straddled by an ancient highway, now the High Street, after the building of Bow Bridge in 1110. Further north the old Roman Road, from Colchester to London crossed the Lea at Old Ford. John Rocque's map of 1745 is a vital document showing the pre-industrial Lea Valley before it became densely occupied with factories and houses. Some of the fields around Stratford were under cultivation, but the low lying Lea valley was mostly marshland and pasture on the flood plain. The serpentine form of the River Lea (or Lee) was fed by numerous meandering creeks and streams to the north, which in the Middle Ages had supported the Cistercian abbey of Stratford Langthorne. Rocque shows a scatter of buildings on the north side of the High Street, leading up to Bow Bridge. The Three Mills Back River is clearly shown, running through the middle of the triangle formed by the Lea and Three Mills Wall River. The River Lea Act 1766 authorised extensive improvement works to the Lea, formalising it as a canalised river though extensive improvement works including locks, new sections of waterway and above all, the construction of the Limehouse Cut, a straight section linking the Lee Navigation at Bromley-by-Bow to the Thames at

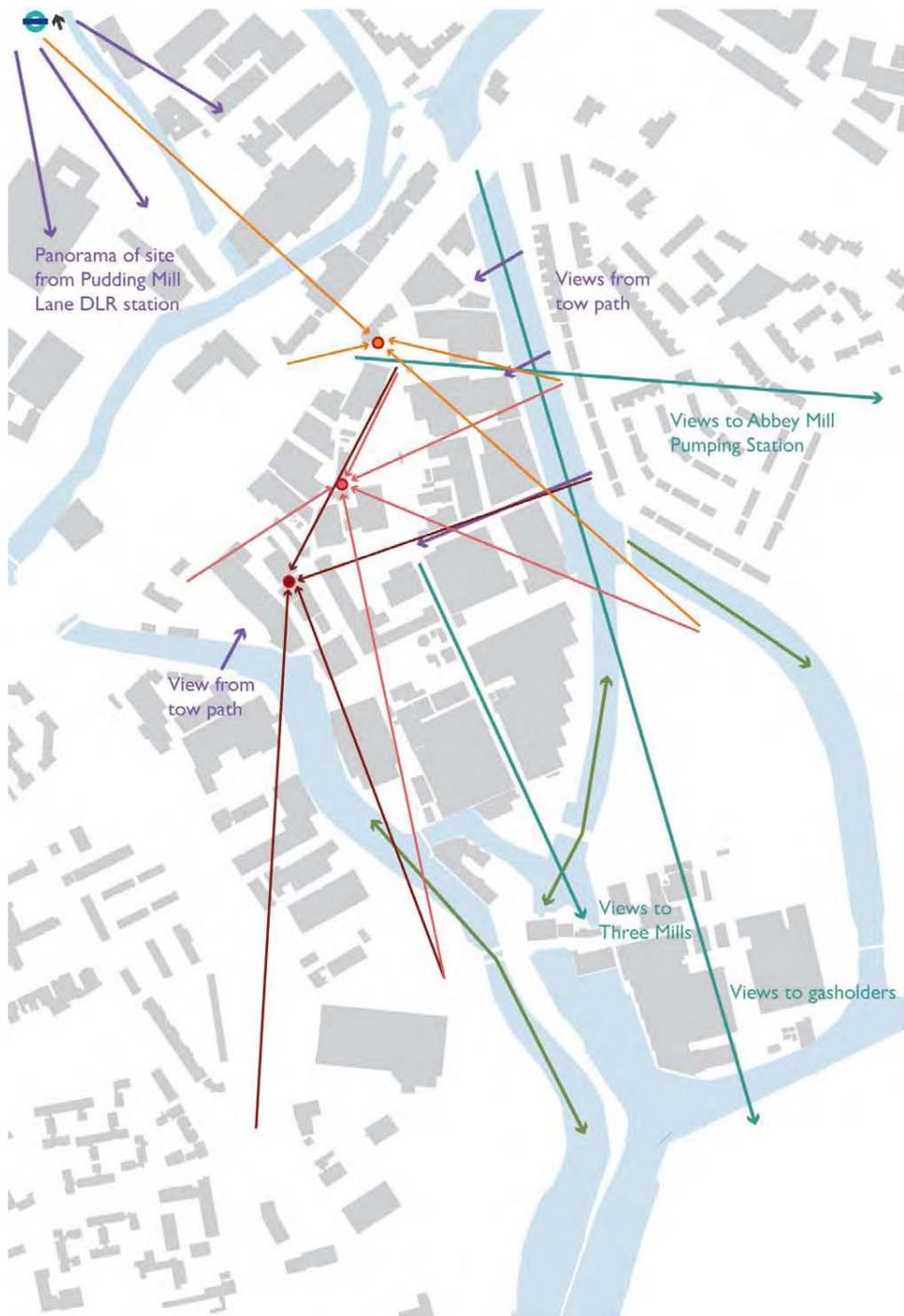
Limehouse. Chapman and André's map (1777) shows windmills on Bow Marsh, north of the High Street. Clayton (1821) outlines a dock to the south of the High Street, reached from the Lea by a short channel. This was West Ham's earliest proper dock and may have been built by the Middlesex and Essex Turnpike Trust, which owned and occupied the site in 1843 and 1854. It was initially known as Stratford Dock, but later became Meggs Dock, possibly named after local ladder-maker John Meggs. The dock was filled in at the turn of the 20th century when it became known as Mill River Wharf.

From the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, London began its sustained growth and transformation into the world's first metropolis. The River Lea was the boundary between Middlesex and Essex and the Essex side became a convenient location for heavy industry and manufacturing, whose noisy, fume-ridden and often dangerous works could not be accommodated within the city. The abundant water supply was important for many processes and the navigable waterways, which together with the profusion of railway lines and railheads after 1840 ensured the ready transport of goods and materials. In 1867, the First Series Ordnance Survey map of the area was published and it provides a valuable detailed record of the Sugar House Lane area. Narrow fingers of development extend on both sides of the High Street and numerous factories and works are shown, including copper, lime, chemical, tar, emery, starch, ammonia, cork carpet and match production. The map also records the area's long associations with the printing and ink industries. To the west of the Lea on the Middlesex side were Lloyd's Paper Mills, next to St Mary's Church. The northern part of Sugar House Lane at the junction with the High Street is shown, although it is not named on the map. The southern half of the triangle between the Three Mills Back River and the Three Mills Wall River is shown as two unbuilt parcels of land. By 1895 the picture had changed again. Sugar House Lane is now at its full extent, reaching to the confluence of the Back and Wall rivers and providing a spine for more works, often packed in tightly around the river Wharfs.

In the 1930s the area underwent a major change. In 1930 Parliament passed the River Lea Act, to improve drainage and navigation in the area. The Prescott Channel was subsequently constructed to serve as a flood bypass, from Three Mills Wall River to the Channelsea River. To the west of Sugar House Lane the Three Mills Back River was filled in, and the southern section was paved over to form Hunts Lane. Shortly after this date a number of light industrial buildings were built on Stratford High Street, taking advantage of ready access into and out of central London. The docks and factories of east London were a prime target for aerial bombardment during the Second World War and parts of West and East Ham were badly hit. Many homes and businesses were destroyed or severely damaged through enemy action, resulting in extensive post-war reconstruction. Six high explosive and incendiary bombs fell on Sugar House Lane in 1940 and 1941, one of the casualties being the Usher Walker printing ink works which had opened in 1892, but otherwise the area escaped relatively unscathed. After the war the area continued its role as a place of manufacturing, with transport uses on the High Street and warehouses squeezed in and around the various factories and Nicholsons Distillery at the southern end of Sugar House Lane. Any remaining land was used for vehicle manoeuvring or open storage. The present Bow Bridge was built in 1967 by the Greater London Council as part of a flyover and link to the Blackwall Tunnel approach road. The Ordnance Survey plan of 1969 shows Sugar House Lane at its most intensively developed, with the triangle between Stratford, Three Mills Wall River and the Lea crammed with factories and warehouses including, at the south end of Hunts Lane, the 'Invicta Industrial Estate'. Amongst the industries present are two printing works, representing a continuity of trade of over a hundred years. Traffic in commercial barges on the Lee Navigation ended in the early 1980s, leaving the waterfront as a quiet backwater.

## TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

The Sugar House Lane area is roughly heartshaped and is bounded by the River Lea, the Three Mills Wall River and Stratford High Street. The High Street is a heavily trafficked and somewhat hostile environment, but the almost continuous wall of buildings on the south side absorbs much of the noise and Sugar House Lane itself is surprisingly tranquil. The overriding character of the area is that of a practical, no nonsense place. The highly informal layout reflects the piecemeal growth of the area in the nineteenth century, with buildings jammed opportunistically into gap sites and corners. The buildings themselves are functional and unadorned, mostly with simpler rectangular footprints but often occupying irregular plots conditioned by the position of the water courses. The height and scale of the buildings varies considerably; from one to five storeys, and from small cellular buildings to deep plan modern industrial sheds. Doorways are commonly set back from the road and reached from delivery yards. The variety in building heights allows the chimneys and taller buildings to be glimpsed over the rooftops, contributing to the legibility of the place.

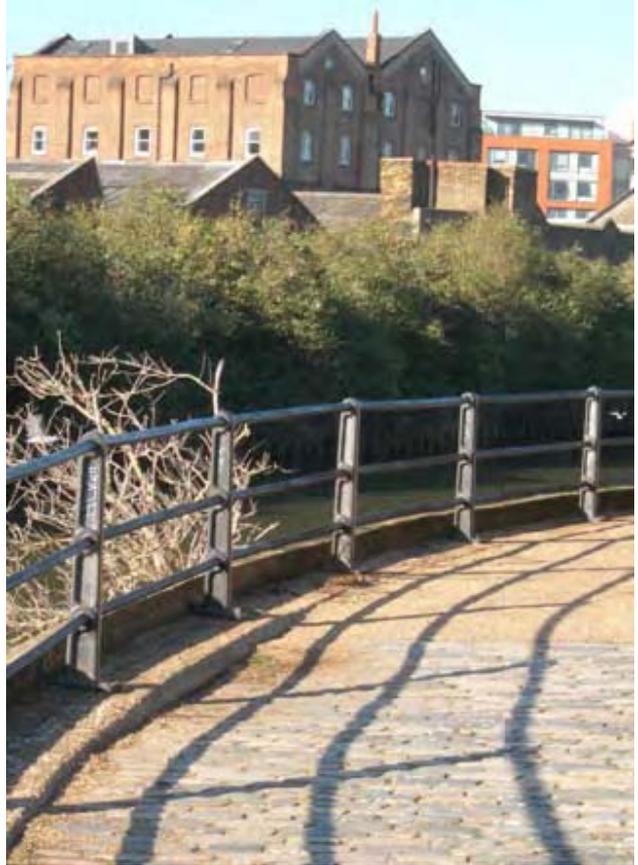


MAP OF VIEWS TO AND FROM SUGAR HOUSE LANE





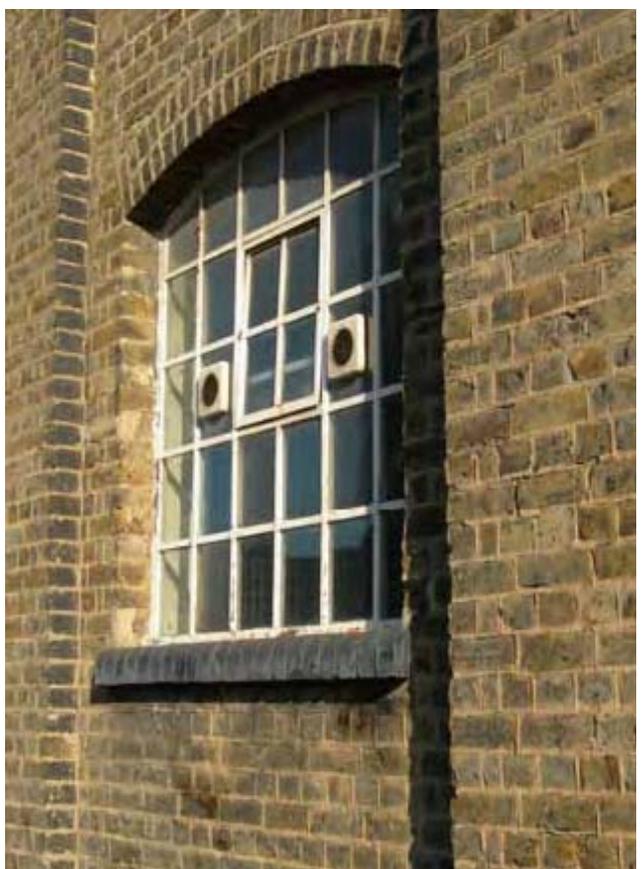
*The tallest of three chimneys and a powerful landmark from every direction*



*The Sugar House seen from the east side of the 3 Mills River*



*Sugar warehouse, Stratford High Street: an imposing and well preserved facade*



*Industrial detailing: steel windows, yellow stock brick with bullnose engineering brick cills*



*Granite setts, Sugar House Lane. There is extensive evidence of original surfaces in the streets and yards*



*Twentieth Century Industry: 107-109 High Street*



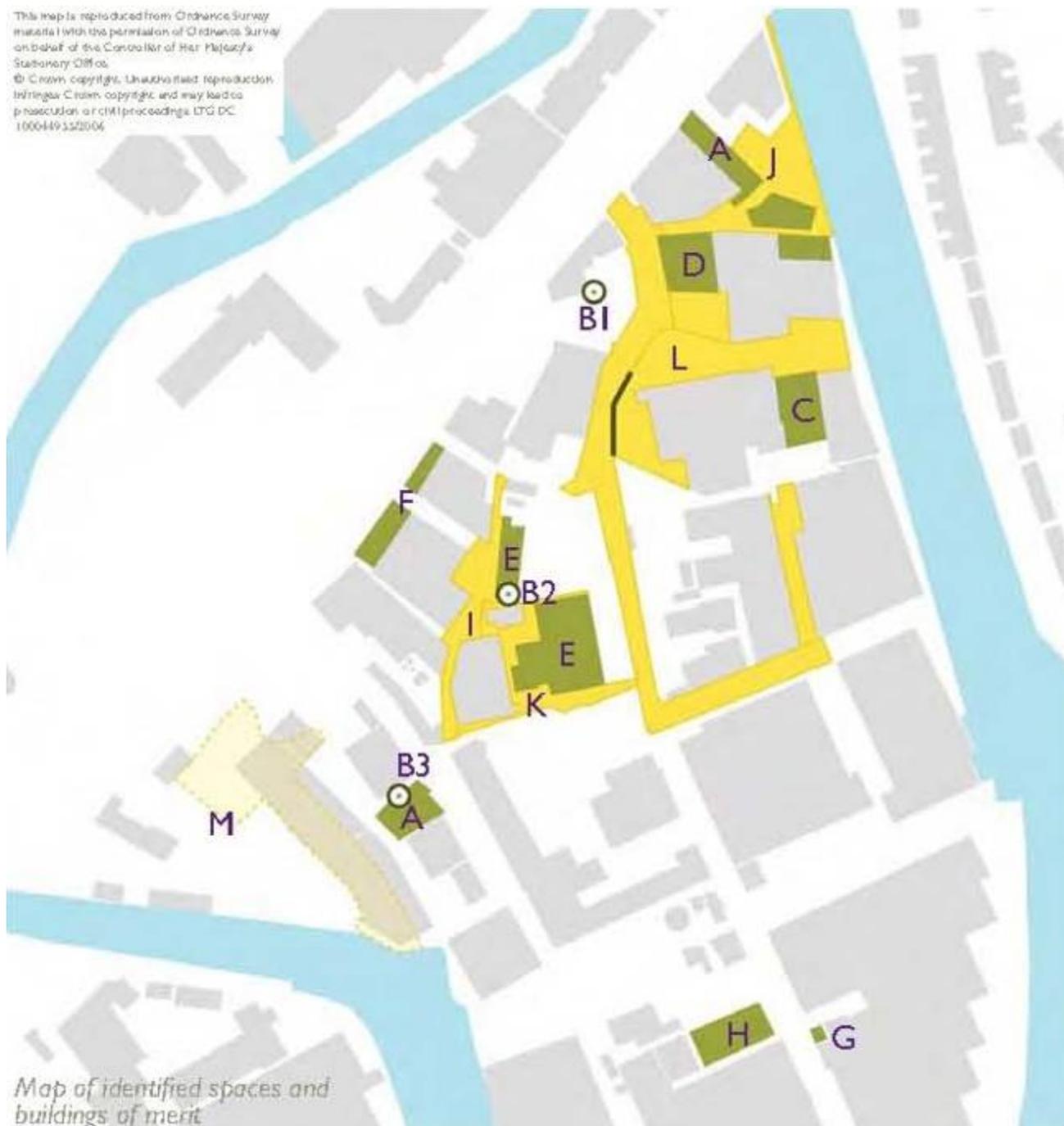
*The wider heritage of the area is evident in the nearby 3 Mills Conservation Area. These buildings are picturesque survivors from the age of water powered industry.*



There is sparse vegetation in the area but the waterways exert a strong character and there are important long views into and out of the conservation area. The towers of Canary Wharf can clearly be seen from Sugar House Lane.

## ANALYSIS OF KEY BUILDINGS AND SPACES

This section provides a review of the key buildings and spaces in the study area and demonstrates their historic value in the context of the conservation area.



**Map of Identified Spaces and Buildings of Merit**

## Buildings of townscape importance

For the most part the older survivors are simple industrial structures, built between 1880 and 1930 to accommodate a range of industries. They are collectively important as physical reminders of London's manufacturing heyday, but they also have group value and contribute to the distinctiveness of the area.

Building materials are those common to Victorian industrial London namely yellow stock bricks with slate roofs and evidence of timber sashes or cast iron, fixed light windows. Later buildings, including the chimneys, are in red brick, with the most recent being in machine-made buff brick and lightweight steel truss roofs.

### A. 133 - 135 Stratford High Street



This is the best preserved industrial building in the Sugar House Lane area. The building has group value with others on the Three Mills Wall River. The building dates from the latter part of the 19th or early 20th century. It was almost certainly a warehouse rather than a factory and it may have been part of the former sugar refinery that is believed to have stood on the site. The building is four storeys, including an attic storey. The building has three bays by nine, London stock brick with metal (possibly cast iron) windows in segmental openings with segmental lintels triple banded with yellow brick headers. There are modern flues and downpipes. The roof is gabled on the High Street, and is hipped to the rear. The roof covering was presumably slate originally, but is now sheet covering (corrugated asbestos or steel). Loading doors are situated in the rear (S) elevation to provide access to the wharf. The High Street façade is in yellow brick with red brick window arches with keystones. The

ground floor openings have been altered and modern signs introduced, but the original windows survive above. There is an oculus window in the gable to serve the attic space.

## Chimneys



**B1**



**B2**



**B3**

The three chimneys are simple, functional structures but each is slightly different in height, profile and silhouette so they form important markers on the skyline. Their purpose is unknown, but at one time the area would have been studded with chimneys to provide boilerhouse updrafts and the escape of noxious fumes. Coal was the universal fuel. All are thought to date from the late nineteenth or early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The chimneys are important to the legibility and understanding of the site, being visible from numerous vantage points, including the Blackwall Tunnel approach, Tesco and the Pudding Mill Lane DLR station.

The three chimneys can be described as follows:

- “Chimney No 1” red engineering brick with a simple cylindrical shaft, the most conspicuous and the tallest of the three chimneys.
- “Chimney No 2” red brick with a square plan, plain shaft. Reinforced with metal banding. Its original function is unknown.
- “Chimney No 3” is located to the rear of 119 High Street and is within the yard of CW Plant Hire. It is constructed in red brick on a square section, with a corbelled brick cap.

**C. Warehouse behind Sugar House Lane (“The Sugar House”)**



The height of the building with its asymmetrical gables makes it a prominent landmark, seen from the platform of the Pudding Lane DLR station. With Chimney No 1, this building is one of the two leading landmarks in the area and it forms part of a group with other buildings on the Three Mills Wall River waterfront. The 1896 Ordnance Survey map shows it being on the site of a former cooperage. The building was built in the late 19th century as a warehouse, and is six storeys high (including attic) with a double ridged roof, five by five bays (one roof stretching over three bays). The finish is red brick with strong vertical accents through the buttresses, which emphasise its industrial function. There are modern sash windows replacements and a remodelled ground floor on the north side. The building is now converted into separate business units. The adjoining office block that faces the river dates to the early twentieth century, probably from the inter-war period. The main architectural feature is the first storey Diocletian window, with some art deco embellishment in the surrounding brickwork.

**D. 7 Sugar House Lane (Dane Group building)**



Built around 1900, 7 Sugar House Lane is solidly constructed in London stock brick and occupies a prominent position on the bend of the road. It is six bays wide, including a double height loading bay, with small pane steel windows on the ground floor. The upper windows are modern replacements.

**E. Sugar House Yard buildings**



A tight-knit group of buildings off Sugar House Lane, two and three storeys in height, built with red brick with characteristic industrial detailing, such as the bullnose engineering bricks which are used for the window cills.

**F. 107 and 109 Stratford High Street**



Post-war industrial offices and works, with lightweight steel framed curtain wall construction and prominent horizontal glazing. The big fascias with oversized lettering were designed to draw the attention of passing motorists. Once common on all the main roads into London, such buildings are becoming rare.

**G. Building at 3 Mills Studios, Sugar House Lane**



This two-storey stock brick building is characterised by broad casement windows with modern replacements of possible tripartite sashes and a modern sheet metal roof. The wide entrance has been altered, but the building retains its late nineteenth century character. It was possibly a small works but is now part of the 3 Mills Studios complex.

#### H. Riverbank House, Sugar House Lane



Riverbank House has a symmetrical red brick façade of seven bays with the central three being narrower and projecting slightly. The building has original steel windows beneath flat soldier course lintels and has an artificial stone stepped entrance surround. Riverbank House (c.1930) was probably used originally as offices or for light manufacturing. The fascia above entrance reads "Towler & Son Ltd, Established 1892".

## Key spaces

The intimate sequence of yards are a vital part of the character of Sugar House Lane. The yard spaces play a strong role in defining place identity at the study area. The following yards and spaces are of particular significance:

- I. **Three Mills Back River Yard** is typical of the area; a composite space of linked yards.



- J. **Dane Yard** is irregularly shaped by the old buildings around it and is partly paved in granite setts. It allows a glimpse through to the old wharf on the Three Mills Wall River.



**K.** The current **Sugar House Yard** has an interesting flow of spaces and chimney No 2 closes the view along one of the passages at one point, reinforcing its former industrial character.



**L.** 'Cooperage Yard' to the east of Sugar House Lane is contained by a stock brick wall and some of the granite setts survive. Its layout is substantially that shown on the 1894 Ordnance Survey map.



**M. Meggs Dock** has long been filled in, but part of the space remains and with it something of the history of this remarkable area. It was constructed in 1821 as Stratford Dock and its site is of interest as being one of the main operational assets in the former industrial landscape.



## NEGATIVE FEATURES AND ISSUES

The negative features and issues of the area listed below detract from the special character and appearance of the conservation area:

- At the principal gateway into the area, the public realm of the High Street is particularly inhospitable to pedestrian. Traffic and highways signage and paraphernalia dominate.
- Several buildings are abandoned and derelict which lends the area a feeling of abandonment.
- Parts of the public realm, but particularly Hunts Lane suffer from an abundance of litter and industrial waste. Fly-tipping is also a problem in this area.
- Prior to the construction of the Three Mills Lock the waterways had a semi-natural quality that was easily marred particularly at low tide, by dumped rubbish for example.

## CONCLUSION

From the eighteenth century onwards, hundreds of enterprises were crammed into the river corridor to support London's economic growth. Much of the physical evidence has gone, but Sugar House Lane is a rare survivor of this former activity, with the remains of old works, warehouses and yards concentrated in a small triangle to the north of the Three Mills. There is nowhere else like it in Newham.

Parts of the area are neglected and vulnerable, but there are already signs of renewal and there is an opportunity to breathe new life into the old buildings and yards that survive at Sugar House Lane. Through a combination of repairs, conversion and new build, the heritage of the area can be a powerful factor in the regeneration of Stratford and the Lower Lea Valley.

## **PART 2: CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Stratford is undergoing radical change. The 2012 Olympics and legacy works, dramatic transport improvements, the substantial development at Stratford City and in the Lower Lee Valley will have a profound effect on the profile of this area. This has led to a step-change in the speculative development interest in fringe Olympic sites such as the area around Sugar House Lane

The Council recognises the value placed, by local people, on conservation of their history, the architectural interest of the buildings, its landmarks, human scale townscape and its role in community memory and continuity. Each place has its own story and it is that story which makes a place special. Sugar House Lane tells much about the industrial history that led to the pre-eminence of Stratford. The Council will therefore seek to ensure that these features of merit and historic record are safeguarded.

The London Thames Gateway Development Corporation along with Newham Council has commissioned consultants Urban Practitioners to produce a masterplan for new development in Sugarhouse Lane. A draft masterplan was produced in September 2008 and circulated to the steering group of stakeholders in the area. Since then, discussions have taken place with the London Development Agency (LDA) about extending the masterplan to include 3 Mills Island. The project is set to recommence shortly.

The conservation area was designated to ensure that the cumulative impact of an unfettered market approach would not erode the character of the area and that new development highlights the defining spatial and built features of merit to ensure that the renewal of Sugar House Lane creates a distinctive location which has a sense of continuity with the past. It is important that proposals take into account the widespread loss of heritage in the Valley. Alongside the welcome new development there is an opportunity to use the historic environment to champion the distinctiveness of the area and offer something different to the other major redevelopment schemes in the wider area.

The Council and partners will be aiming to achieve new development that sets high standards of urban design creating a well-integrated place with a special identity. The importance of the waterway history and how it influenced the development of the site in the past should also be recognised and interpreted on site, as part of any future development.

### **A VISION FOR SUGAR HOUSE LANE**

Sugar House Lane is an urban quarter in waiting. Unexplored and largely forgotten today, its fortunes could be transformed almost beyond recognition into a vibrant new destination in Newham, full of activity and colour, becoming a magnet for visitors. The industrial heritage of the area is the key to unlocking this potential. The success of areas like Camden Lock and Southwark's Borough Market demonstrate how the re-use of industrial buildings, particularly where they can be combined with an active waterfront or inspired new development, can create a cherished local resource and spur on the regeneration of a wider area. Sugar House Lane has all the essential ingredients: a strong identity, robust yet adaptable old buildings, potentially enticing outdoor spaces and two stretches of water front with an abundance of natural planting. The area is well served by public transport and a transformed Sugar House Lane would be a natural partner to the bigger but more conventional attractions of Stratford town centre and the new Stratford City.

The conservation area appraisal has shown how the physical form of the Sugar House Lane area is the product of a burst of entrepreneurial activity during a short period, roughly 1850 to 1940. The combination of the imperatives of manufacturing with the particular topography of the Lower Lee Valley has left the area with its own distinct personality, of a kind that is now rare in London and practically unique in Newham. The gritty functionality of the building groups and the informal spaces between them are the prime assets of the area, awaiting a new, postindustrial life.

All the buildings are capable of imaginative, even radical adaptation and extension without sacrificing the essence of their character or the evidence of their former purpose. The older buildings in Sugar House Lane and Three Mills have already demonstrated their suitability for small and medium sized businesses. Their flexible interiors and strong character have made them particularly appropriate for the creative industries that could help to raise the profile of the area.

The more fragile or decayed buildings may be beyond repair and amongst the older stock there are some eyesores that should be removed. If the intensity of the area is to be recaptured, there will be a need for high quality new buildings to be woven into the historic fabric. This is a tremendous architectural opportunity, offering developers and architects the chance to take creative inspiration from the area's history, whilst adopting new techniques and materials to forge a new spirit.

An intriguing web of passages, yards and roads are central to the distinctiveness of the area. There is scope to intensify these spaces, framing views of the Abbey Mills Pumping Station, the Bromley-by-Bow gasholders and, closer to hand, the three chimneys in and around Sugar House Lane. Apertures could be formed to give views of the rivers or access to their banks.

Elsewhere there may be scope for containing some of the spaces with new buildings to create sunny, sheltered enclaves. The interaction between the yards and the outdoor spaces could be enhanced through lively public uses – cafés, market stalls, performance spaces and public art displays. There might be a hierarchy of lesser, more private spaces and courtyards that would add variety to the pattern of development and provide tranquil corners for residents and workers. A public lighting strategy would ensure that the Sugar House Lane area retained its appeal in the evening as a welcoming and secure place.

The River Lee and the Three Mills Wall River are no longer the industrial open sewers they once were and commercial barges have not been seen on the Lea since the early 1980s. Leisure craft and wildlife habitats have taken their place and the towpaths are now popular with walkers. There is a chance to establish a dynamic, positive interrelationship between the waterways and the buildings, possibly creating new inlets or moorings. British Waterways have recently completed a new lock on Prescott's Channel which will support increased use of the tidal river. An assessment of the condition and historical significance of waterway walls should be carried out, with the retention of any original waterway wall features and consideration should be given to opening up and animating the waterspace for leisure and recreation possibilities. A waterscape strategy would be useful to identify issues and opportunities so that the potential both on and around the water can be maximised.

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The Local Planning Authorities will exercise their powers under the Planning Acts to require that new development meets high quality design standards that also preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The Council will:

- Be pro-active in working with other public sector organisations with interests in the area, including the London Development Agency and London Thames Gateway Development Corporation in order to achieve the regeneration of the area and conservation objectives.
- Issue site specific design advice to guide development proposals so they positively contribute to conservation objectives;
- Require new development to pay regard to context, compliment or enhance established urban grain and townscape, whilst representing the time in which it is built and the culture it accommodates;
- Issue design guidance on specific areas of development;

## PLANNING CONTROLS

The Council will:

- Enforce against unauthorised development, alterations, changes of use and other breaches of the Planning Acts where expedient and in the interests of the conservation of the area;
- Serve s215 notices under the Planning Acts to improve sites that adversely affect the amenity of the area, where expedient;
- Every four years undertake an photographic audit of buildings, land and the public realm noting especially features of historic interest. This will be used to monitor and review progress and also aid effective enforcement;
- Investigate the necessity and desirability of serving an article 4(1) Direction to bring certain “permitted development rights” under planning control. These would be those that adversely impact on conservation of the area and would follow detailed survey and justification;
- Consider designating an Area of Special Control to increase the extent of its planning control powers over advertisements;
- Review the Council’s list of buildings of local interest and consider the inclusion of buildings within the conservation area in that list.

## COUNCIL FUNCTIONS

In carrying out its functions the Council will:

- Strive for best practice; ensure consistent and co-ordinated project management and decision-making based on published policies and guidance;
- Provide specialist expertise in conservation and urban design to advise on proposals for the area.

## ENHANCEMENT AND FUNDING

The Council will:

- Seek funds to secure enhancement of the public realm and refurbishment of land and buildings in the interests of promoting conservation objectives. This will involve securing grants from government and other sources and financial contributions connected to the granting of planning permissions (called S.106 agreements).

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Council will:

- Pro-actively engage with the local community, its representatives, stakeholders, commercial interests and other relevant bodies to promote preservation and enhancement of the conservation area; the upgrading of the local environment; and regeneration.
- Promote better use and maintenance of property. This will include proactively seeking redevelopment that will bring needed new uses to the area; liaising with owners to bring vacant or underused property into suitable use.

## PUBLIC REALM

The Council will:

- Ensure consistency and quality in the treatment of the public realm;
- Safeguard elements of the public realm that are of historic significance wherever possible (granite kerbs and setts for example);
- Keep to a minimum, and where possible, reduce street clutter and advertisements on the public highway, acting in the interests of conserving and enhancing the area;
- Aim to improve access for all including reducing visual clutter and physical obstruction;
- Address issues such as crime and anti-social behaviour; community safety, taking action against fly-tipping, graffiti, dumping of rubbish.

Action by the Council in any of these areas will be undertaken subject to the availability of necessary resources and funding and within the context of its wider obligations, policies and duties.

## BOUNDARY REVIEW

Conservation Area boundaries have been reviewed and are considered, at present, satisfactory for their purpose. Further review will take place as development of the area progresses. A future review of the boundary

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND MONITORING

The appraisal and management plan has been subject to public consultation with the local community, relevant stakeholders, and others with an interest in the area. It was made available on the Council's website and hard copies were placed in the local service centre/library. Adverts were placed in prominent locations within the Conservation Area. Comments received have been taken into consideration in the final drafting of these documents.

A review of these documents will be undertaken every five years.