

# University Area

Conservation Area

## Character Appraisal and Management Proposals

January 2010



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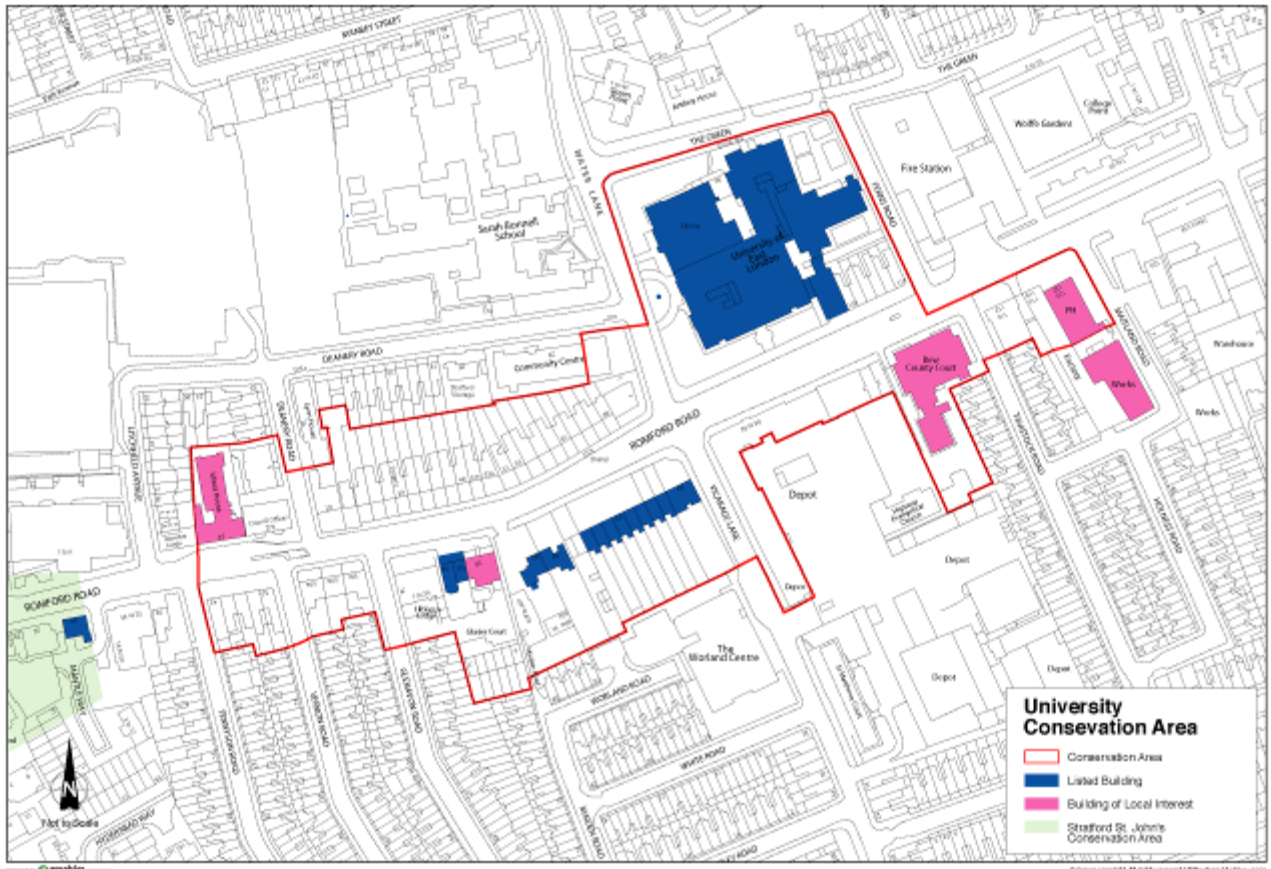
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# PART 1: CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

## INTRODUCTION

The Council has a duty to designate as conservation areas, those parts of its area that it considers to be “of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. This duty is found in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation areas) Act 1990. University Conservation area was designated in March 1996 and covers the area within the red line on map 1 below.



**Map 1: Conservation Area Boundary**

The Council is required to publish a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management plan for each of its conservation areas. Guidance published by English Heritage sets out the expected content.

The appraisal considers the factors that contribute to and influence the area’s character.

The management plan identifies action the Council may take in the next five years to further the preservation and enhancement of the area.

This document has been produced by the Council’s Urban Design and Conservation Team which sits within the Planning (Development Control) Service.

## The Planning Context

The Council is required to give proper weight to the preservation or enhancement of the area in undertaking its planning functions. The statutory planning policies that apply are as follows:

### **National Policy.**

*Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 “Planning and the Historic Environment”* sets out current national policy on conservation and heritage protection. It provides useful advice on planning powers and on the standards expected of development within conservation areas.

### **Regional Planning Policy.**

The Mayor of London’s “London Plan” (Spatial Development Strategy) states that the Mayor undertakes to work with others to protect the historic environment and expects the Council to ensure conservation of historic assets is based on their special character.

### **Local Planning Policy.**

*Newham’s Unitary Development Plan adopted 2001* sets out Newham’s current planning policy. Whilst it is in the process of being replaced by a Local Development Framework, the UDP conservation (saved) policies apply. The UDP states “The Council considers conservation has an important contribution to make toward 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”. And “Conservation Areas provide a focus for civic pride and, by preserving part of the borough’s history, contribute a sense of continuity and stability in the context of substantial physical and social change”. This approach is reflected in the appraisal and management plan. Council policies also commit to enhancing local centres, promoting mixed communities, achieving high quality design and sustainable development.

## SUMMARY OF THE AREA’S SPECIAL INTEREST

The area has a unique blend of architecture that tells the story of Stratford’s transition from a rural retreat for the wealthy, through its expansion during its booming Victorian hey-day, to present times.

The area is also distinguished by the quality of its buildings, 14 of which are listed on the national register of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Others are included on the Council’s own list of buildings of local interest.

Its special character also derives from its mix of uses and building forms. There are two principal types:-

Larger scale buildings built for community or commercial uses: The most prominent are the late Victorian complex, now occupied by the University of East London and opposite, the

grand, former electricity showrooms. Others include System House, St John's Institute and the Pigeons public house. Red brick with stone or stucco dressings are the predominant materials used on public buildings creating a visual consistency and theme.

Domestic scale residences: The area contains the only surviving group of Georgian/Regency properties in the borough. They are between 250 and 150 years old, a unique reminder of those times when the area was attractive countryside and a location of choice for gentry and affluent professionals. Whilst the substantial properties once around The Green have disappeared, many of the relatively smaller ones remain on the south side of Romford Road.

Other residential property dates from the mid to late Victorian period when Stratford grew rapidly as a centre for industry, railways and commerce. Plots along Romford Road and others behind them were successively developed to supply housing, shops, schools and other services.

The earlier Victorian houses were three storeys, with basement, maximizing the use of a main road frontage. In this way they are similar to the Georgian/regency terraces opposite. This form is relatively uncommon in Newham. It contrasts with the larger "villas" built further out on Romford Road and the two storey terraces that predominate elsewhere. Later Victorian residences, some with shops, also add to the area's interest. London Yellow stock brick with stone and stucco details is the visual theme of the residential properties.

The area's spine is Romford Road. Since at least Roman times it has provided a main route between Eastern England and The City and as a consequence the needs of traffic and parking dominate. Wide and level, it allows long views in and out of the area and of the buildings along its frontage. Its junction with Water Lane and Vicarage Lane create the area's focal point emphasised by its tall enclosing buildings and mature trees.

## LOCATION & SETTING

Stratford is in north-west Newham approximately eight kilometres north-east of the City of London, east of the River Lee and north of the Thames. University Conservation Area straddles Romford Road as it enters Stratford town centre from the east. Inevitably local economic conditions will impact on the use and maintenance of buildings in the conservation area.

The surrounding area is undergoing substantial inward investment associated with the Thames Gateway, Lower Lee Valley, Stratford City and the Olympics. It is a major shopping centre within East London and established route centre with future station connections on the Channel Tunnel and Cross Rail.

The University of East London lies at the heart of the conservation area. In recent years it has intensified and expanded its functions at this site.

The area is within the Thames Basin a chalk syncline overlain with London Clay. The land rises from the Thames to approximately 50ft in the north of the borough where there are river terraces and gravels. The alluvial floodplain of the River Lee lies to the west. The area gently rises eastwards from the River Lee and is generally flat allowing for long views uninterrupted by changes in topography. Clay and gravel deposits were used in the production of local building materials giving rise to the widespread use of Yellow London stock bricks.

## ARCHAEOLOGY

The underlying drift geology of the gravel terrace in the east and the alluvium to the west affected early human habitation. Artefacts have been discovered in the area dating from the Palaeolithic period onwards, with evidence of settlement along the terrace edge from Bronze to Iron Ages.

Scattered finds of earlier prehistoric periods may be found throughout the area and would be of regional significance. Stratford is a likely location for Bronze Age settlement. Traces of settlement have been found west of the present town centre toward the River Lee.

The Romans built a road from London to Colchester, crossing the River Lee at Old Ford. The crossing moved in the 12th century with the building of Bow and Channelsea Bridges. This remained the lowest bridging point until the 19th century. The villages of Stratford grew up on both sides of the crossing.

Parts of the Roman Road underlies the study area as sections have been discovered during past excavations though no exact route has been established. Other Roman artefacts may be discovered and evidence for the roads and their use into Saxon times may be considered of regional significance.

“Stratford” was first recorded between 1066 and 1087. Although the location of Saxon settlement is unknown many historic road alignments survive. Medieval and post 17thC evidence, including gravel pits and ponds on the north side of Stratford Green, may be found. The potential for later finds may be deduced from historic maps and past excavations.

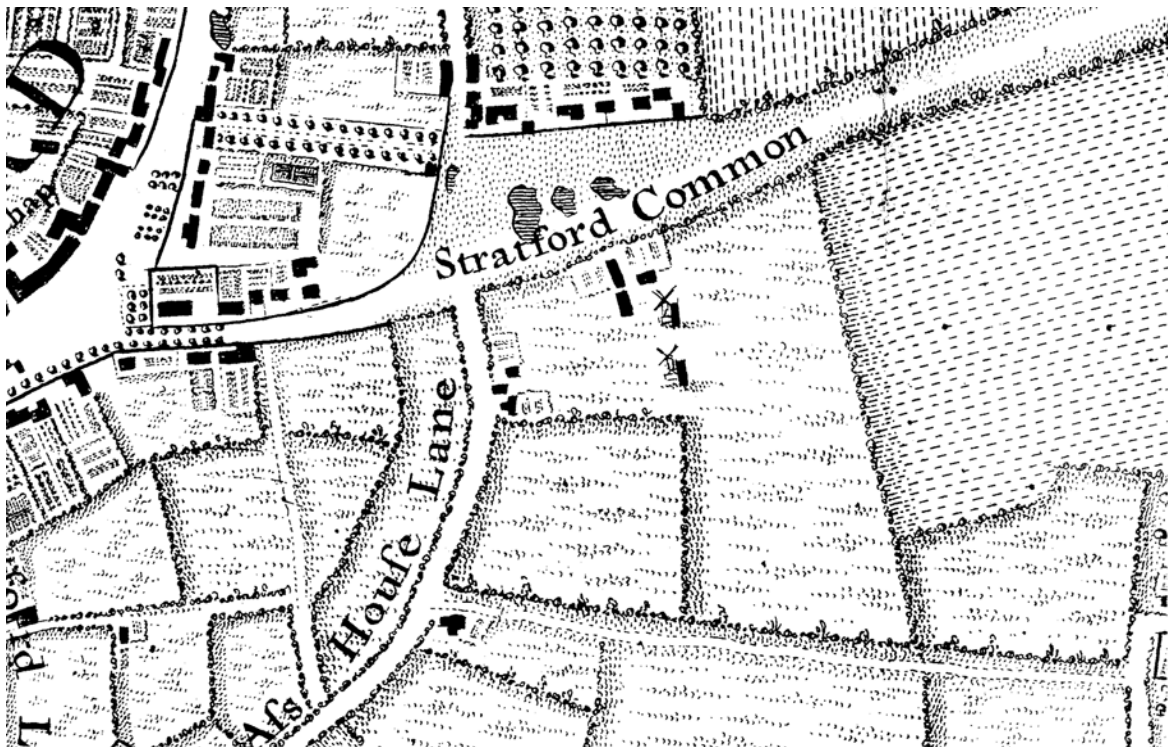
The conservation area is within an Archaeological Priority Area as defined in Newham’s UDP. These are areas with known or potential archaeological remains. An archaeological assessment will normally be required for development sites over 0.4 acres, or for smaller sites where evidence shows this is justified. Policy EQ 43 explains the information developers must provide and policy on preservation and/or recording of remains. An initial desktop study will be required prior to developments taking place. For site specific information, developers should undertake a full search of the Greater London Historic Buildings, Sites and Monuments Record and other sources.

## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

### **Pre-Victorian Development**

From the 16<sup>th</sup> Century onwards West Ham was increasingly favoured as a place of residence or resort by wealthy merchants and professional men working in London. Rateable values increased in Stratford faster than other parts of West Ham during the 18thC. In 1670 Stratford had 179 houses. About 1700 there was a spurt of growth. A new hamlet developed in forest land east of Stratford on the Ilford Road (now Romford Road). This place, mentioned by Defoe, was called Gravel Pits, and was in the area later known as Stratford Common or The Green. The common was enclosed by the West Ham Manor Court 1807-20. The street called “The Green” survives as a reminder of this former use.

Rocque's map of 1744-6 shows houses confined mostly to the north side of Stratford Common (now the site of UEL) with a setting of gravel pits, ponds, orchards and windmills within agricultural land.



*Rocque's map of 1744-6*

Chapman and Andre's map of 1777 (below) shows development had by then taken place on the south side of Romford Road. The earliest Georgian buildings in the area date from this period.



*Chapman and Andre's map of 1777*

By 1832 Piggott's Directory describes Stratford thus: "The land around here is very fertile, well wooded, and the scenery pleasing; great numbers of the inhabitants are employed in

agriculture, which the vicinity of Stratford, to the metropolis renders a profitable pursuit. By the parliamentary returns for 1831, the hamlet of Stratford contained 6,686 inhabitants". Large detached properties at Stratford Green (now the site of UEL) were occupied by gentry, including members of the clergy and officers of the army.

Larger properties also lined the south side of Romford Road (then called Ilford Road). To the east of Vicarage Lane plots were wide with deep grounds behind. Many of these grand houses survived until they were destroyed by wartime bombing. The subsequent amalgamation and redevelopment of these plots was undertaken to create the wide building frontages that now characterise this frontage. 88 Romford Road (shown below) was demolished to make way for the building of the West Ham electricity showrooms in 1930.



West of Vicarage Lane, plots are narrower. Numbers 54 and 56 survive from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. Number 58 was a Georgian property that was demolished and rebuilt in the 1990's in replica. "Vicarage Terrace" was built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. White's directory of 1855 lists numbers 1,2,3,5,6, 7 and 10 Vicarage Terrace as occupied by "gentry". These properties secured a prime road frontage but with long front gardens to provide seclusion from the main road.

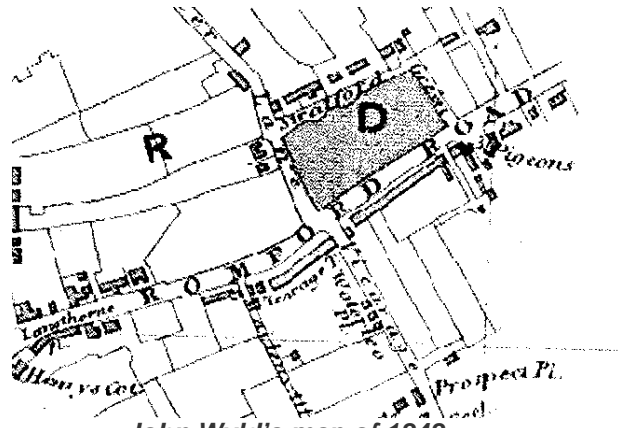
Numbers 60 and 62, a pair of early Victorian semi-detached villas, also survive from Stratford's pre-railway era, as does "Maiden Alley" adjacent to them.

Romford Road was a busy route used by those travelling by horse, carriage or coach and was also used by drovers. A "The Pigeons" pub with a drinking trough and water pump nearby is shown on early maps all serving traveller's and drovers needs. John Wyld's map of 1848 below names the pub and Vicarage Terrace..





**The Pigeons Pub photographed prior to 1885**



**John Wyld's map of 1848**

### The Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the coming of the railways

Whites directory of 1848 remarks “ Stratford....is a populous and rapidly improving village” “The altered appearance of various parts of the country, produced by the formation of the railways, is nowhere more striking than in the neighbourhood of Stratford, where buildings to the value of nearly half a million of money have been erected during the last three years”.

“The Eastern Counties Railway Company built a new station at Stratford, in 1847, and adjacent to it they have just completed an extensive factory for making and repairing locomotive engines and carriages. It is the first station in Essex on the eastern Counties Railway, from which several branches diverge here.”

The first housing estates were for railway employees. Other estates were laid out north of the town centre and by 1855 building had begun on the Manbey estate. This area adjoins University Conservation Area to the north. The 1867 map (below) illustrates the difference between these densely developed estates of smaller houses and the larger, earlier residences on the south side of Romford Road and around Stratford Common. At this time much undeveloped land still remained.



**1867 Ordnance Survey and The Green, Romford Road before the building 1895-1898 of West Ham Technical Institute and Passmore-Edwards Museum and Library (the present University of East London).**

## Mid to Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century expansion

After 1870 West Ham borough, in which Stratford was located, grew remarkably fast. It became a world leading seaport and manufacturing centre. There was extensive development in Stratford, particularly as a railway centre with related industries burgeoning in the Lee Valley in particular. The professional classes and clerks working in London also moved into the north of West Ham, especially Stratford.

To meet the demand for housing, rows of high density, terraces were built. Much of Stratford Green was developed in that way with housing also filling the open frontages along the north and south sides of Romford Road and south along Vicarage Lane. Previous field boundaries became development plot boundaries and are sometimes reflected in today's roads.

Between 1871 and 1901 over 30,000 houses were built. In 1881-2, 2,400 new plans were deposited compared to 218 in 1870 and 14,000 between 1886 and 1897. The remaining open land along Romford Road in the conservation area was built upon during this period. Two and three storey houses with basements and dormers were built along the north side. Others, with shops below lined the south side. Plans for the Shirely House Estate, including Vernon, Tennyson, and Glenavon Roads, were approved in 1892.



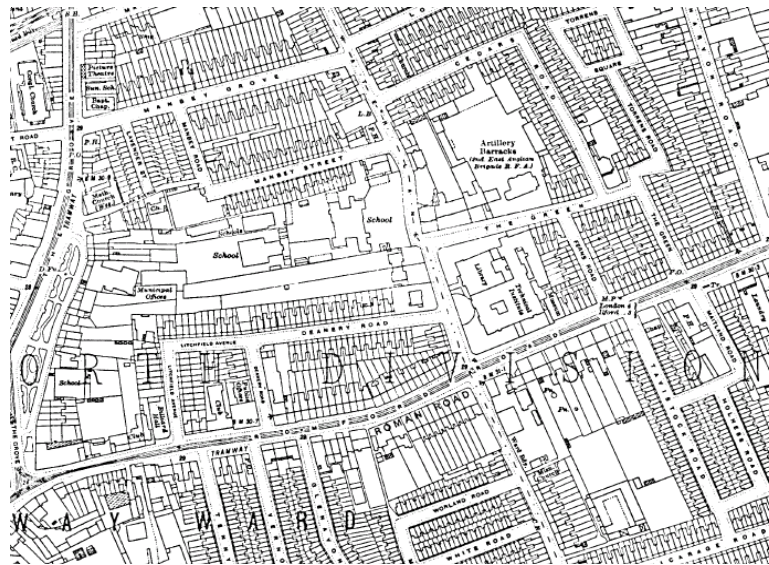
1893 Ordnance Survey Map

## Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century

The 1914 O.S. Map shows that by the outbreak of WW1 dense development covered the area. The provision of commerce and community facilities followed the new housing. The most notable addition was the West Ham Technical Institute, Museum and Library complex. Deanery House (public offices), St.John's Institute (working men's club). The Pigeons Pub had been rebuilt in 1896. These buildings survive and illustrate the expansion of Stratford and the mixed uses that located here.

The 1893 map also shows that within the area, electric tramways had been laid along Romford Road. Small scale industry had set up, intermingled with houses, for example, in Maitland Road. Doctor's premises, private schools and a chapel also opened. A large artillery barracks was established on land north of the technical college complex. These,

however, have been lost to new development reflecting the area's changing needs and land values.



**1914 Ordnance Survey Map**

## **Post-WW1**

The Georgian houses that previously occupied the south side of Romford Road, east of Vicarage Lane, were replaced or subsequently lost to bomb damage. West Ham Council obtained powers to supply electricity throughout the borough in 1892 and by 1926 had the largest municipal electricity undertaking in London. The supply of electricity was promoted to attract new industry to the borough. The borough proudly opened its first electricity supply showrooms in the 1920's on the corner of Vicarage Lane and Romford Road, replacing them in the 1927- 1930 by the grand office building seen today. Bow County Court opened in the 1950's.

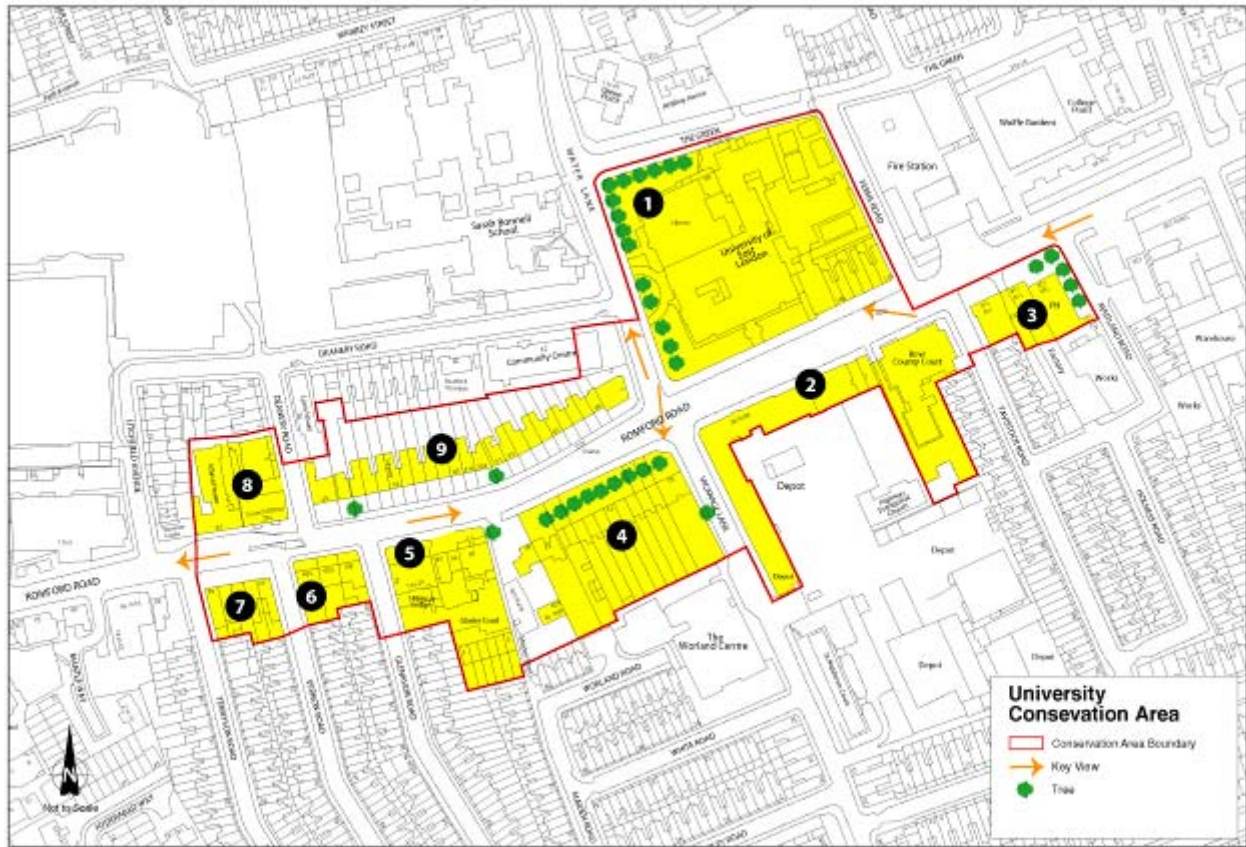
It is this larger scale and dominance of community and mixed uses that are a feature of this area. In recent years there has been an ascendancy in residential land values with the consequent conversion and expansion of the former electricity showrooms to homes and new build development replacing chapel and factory buildings adjacent to The Pigeons PH.

West of Vicarage Lane, the smaller, historic grain and scale remains dominant, albeit with a few small, neutral, post-war additions. Earlier road, lane and field boundaries still define some of today's roads and block boundaries.

Whilst significant historic character remains there has also been some negative change including degradation of front gardens, vehicular dominance and unsympathetic alterations and shopfronts.

## CHARACTER APPRAISAL

This section appraises the merits, issues and potential of the buildings of each street block and the setting of these buildings. The blocks are indicated on Map 2 below.



### Block 1

The University of East London complex is the dominant landmark of the conservation area. Its massive scale, warm materials, highly decorated architecture, deep green setting with tall mature trees combine to create a distinctive, attractive location.

It comprises three historic buildings, the West Ham Technical Institute, the Central Library and the Passmore-Edwards Museum. It is listed at Grade 2\* on the Statutory Register of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. This grade is allocated to only 4% of nationally listed buildings so indicating its special national interest.

These buildings were erected on the former Stratford Common, the Technical Institute in 1895-8 and the Museum 1898-9. The Institute is considered West Ham's finest nineteenth century building. The architects, Gibson and Russell, employed an eclectic, imposing mix of architectural styles. In Pevsner's view "Every conceivable motif is used which was available at that peculiar moment in the history of English Architecture when allegiance to forms of the past were thrown to the wind". The list description describes as ambitious and distinguished in Free Classical style with distinctive Art Nouveau emphasis. Its curved forms are seen throughout from window heads to railings.

Its exuberance and pride reflects the force that fuelled the extraordinary growth of Stratford. An aspiring and inspiring facade is achieved by strong vertical elements including a series of giant columns. This is carried through into the roofline in a series of turrets, towers, cupolas, domes and gables creating a distinctive skyline in near or long view.



The façade is highly decorated. A frieze of figures illustrates the skills taught in science and the arts. Figures of Truth and Beauty carry the arched canopy to the main entrance. The entrance on Water Lane, reconstructed after war damage Hall, has an eagle motif in a later geometric style. The adjoining Library is emphasised by a tower with a turret and gable. Figures of children enliven its frieze.

The whole complex is set within deep gardens with towering mature London Plane trees and enclosed by distinctive, ornate railings. A Listed Coade stone sculpture of Shakespeare, dated 1846, is believed to have been transferred from the Haymarket to here in 1923.



Passmore-Edwards Museum, which projects forward of the Institute, has identical roof finials and a large dome which marks it out in long views along Romford Road. The philanthropist is commemorated on a bronze panel by HC Fehr above the entrance. No longer a museum, it houses UEL Student Union.



Two storey houses with shops at ground floor adjoin the Museum. Their small scale and simple stock brickwork lends counterpoint to the grand college buildings and to their own, simple, character sadly, though not irreversibly compromised by modern shop-fronts, alterations and advertising.

Across The Green to the north, the University is renewing its campus providing new buildings in scale and materials that complement the listed buildings and their setting.

## Block 2

As described elsewhere the large plots of Georgian houses have been amalgamated and developed to create wider buildings mostly in community uses. Their limited height sustains the prominence of the college buildings opposite.

The former Electricity Board marks the corner of Romford Road and Vicarage Lane. Its size and lavish treatment, a measure of local pride in the borough's electrification, is carried out in early Georgian Revival style. Red brick and stone echo the materials of the college opposite. It has a deeply rusticated ground floor with broad, arched display windows. In recent years the whole property was converted to residential with a seamless side extension along Vicarage Lane. The main entrance addresses the corner with others highlighted by stonework and small pediments and urns at the skyline. Unfortunately this skyline is severely compromised by a post-war attic storey which Pevsner describes as "offensively disrespectful". Removal would be an enhancement and illustrates that similar additions should be avoided. The adjoining Highway Church building fits in scale providing a neutral context.



The width and height of buildings is repeated in Bow County Court, designed by H.M. Office of works and built 1957-9 in a geometric post-war style. A horizontal emphasis achieved by two block massing with strong cornices and its fenestration detail (albeit replaced in modern materials). Its cool unrelieved brickwork with deeply recessed entrance surmounted by the Royal Coat of Arms conveys authority and court purpose. Its appearance and the wider townscape would be enhanced by landscaping.



### Block 3

On the corner of Tavistock Road is a new residential scheme completed in 2008 replacing a former chapel, subsequently used as a bed factory and 19thC warehouses. Its higher part marks the corner descending in scale and set back to improve the relationship with the adjacent Pigeons PH. Articulation and materials break up the massing. Its impact is neutral. Enhancement would be achieved by cessation of forecourt parking.

The present Pigeons public house building dates from 1899 replacing an earlier coaching inn. An engraved granite pilaster base notes "Henry Poston Architect and C.E. Todd Builders". It is a lively composition in a variety of warm, quality materials. These create an engaging appearance with classical details to the first floor conveying some order and respectability. Tall mature London Plane trees provide welcome shade, counter intrusion of traffic and soften the building's setting. This is an attractive landmark at the entrance to the conservation area and makes a crucial contribution to enhancing longer views along Romford Road. As is presently common to many pubs it is currently in need of repairs and up for sale. The large forecourt presents an opportunity for soft and hard landscape improvements to maximise use and enhance the pub's setting and appeal. It has been added to the Council's list of Buildings of Local Interest.



#### Block 4

West of Vicarage Lane the character changes to predominantly residential use from community use. The townscape derives here from a more domestic scale of property, narrower plots and frontages set back behind gardens and forecourts. A variety of architectural form and style charts Stratford's expansion from the Georgian period onward.

Adjacent to Vicarage Lane is "Vicarage Terrace" a four storey Regency or early Victorian terrace, its name set in its cill band. There is some structural evidence these may have been built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Although townhouses of this sort are common further into the City, this terrace is the sole survivor of this age and type in Newham. It retains the vast majority of its original features. Typically these include a plain brickwork façade without bays, panelled doors, segmental arches and gauged brickwork, steps to a raised first floor over semi-basement and sashes within window openings that diminish with height. Door-cases are also fairly flush with the front façade with number 82 emphasised by the addition of a Doric porch, unusually without pediment. It would appear from the brickwork that this house was extended at the side. The repetition of specific features and details on each façade and a continuous well-defined stucco faced parapet unifies the terrace. The original windows of one of the houses in the terrace have been inappropriately replaced with modern double glazed windows. The least obtrusive way to improve the thermal efficiency of timber windows is to introduce draft proofing measures and secondary glazing. An M shape or butterfly roof is hidden behind a parapet, except in long views. The terrace creates an important termination to views down Romford Road and Water Lane, its butterfly roof then visible, animating the skyline. There has been some deterioration of the parapet in places and this should be restored to ensure water falls away correctly.

The deep front gardens enhance the setting of the terrace and provide privacy from the public highway. Their greenery and many trees make a key contribution to enlivening and softening the townscape. However, there is the opportunity for significant enhancement works mostly through better maintenance of some gardens and tree care. The creation of an



appropriate, continuous boundary would improve the setting of these listed buildings, provide a better definition of public and private space and afford some screening to the refuse bins.



The terrace, originally listed sequentially, are now numbers nos: 66 -82 Romford Road and are Listed Grade 2. Number 64 is a neutral post-war addition.

The unusual preservation in Newham of pre-Victorian residences continues in a pair of semi-detached villas nos: 60 and 62. These are listed Grade 2 and described as early 19thC. During the 1990's both were returned to residential from use by haulage contractors. Extensive careful restoration was enabled by the addition of sensitively designed new development to the side and rear. Tall piers with low wall and railings with hedge behind lend enclosure that is appropriate here and would improve all frontages within the area. Mature trees are an important feature requiring retention and care by property owners.



### Block 5

Across Maiden Alley, a route of long-standing, are 54, 56 and 58 Romford. 54 and 56 are Listed Grade 2. Its plum coloured brickwork, gauged arches and window openings which are closer to the front façade than those elsewhere indicate their age. These rare survivors of Stratford's Georgian past are excellent examples of extensive restoration work undertaken by Toynbee Housing Group. This included removal of a Victorian shop built on the front garden and Tyrolean render to the front facade and restoration of features including door case and steps.

No 58, virtually unaltered inside and out had been a club, latterly in office use. Following damage by vandals rebuilding was required to recreate that lost.



*58, 56 and 54 Romford Road before and after restoration*

The front gardens to all these properties were reinstated with strong boundary enclosure in an appropriate design. Careful landscaping and greenery has been designed to screen refuse and enhance the setting.

The block is completed by No 50, Hibiscus lodge, a contemporary residential development in red brick, well-designed by architects Stockwoolstencroft, to complement the scale, proportion and line of the adjacent buildings.

### Block 6



*50a, b & c Romford Road*

**50 a,b, and c Romford Road.** This late Victorian terrace is distinguished by the survival of its original features and front garden enclosure. Harmony derives from repeated bays, window and door openings and slate roofs with chimney stacks and pots. Its classical style uses pediments, console brackets and projecting eaves. Its single storey bays to each side of a central entrance contrasts with the taller, narrower houses elsewhere in the area. Recent work has enhanced the attractive contribution they make to the character of the area.

### Block 7

**42-50 Romford Road** is an impressive Victorian terrace, substantially unaltered, with strong window ornamentation. The original shopfront framework of pilasters and dental toothed cornice survive but are compromised by discordant and excessive signs and unsympathetic modern shopfronts. Its potential could be easily realised by better shopfront design. This

should be fostered through design guidance and planning control that allows individuality yet within a consistent framework. Removal of chimney stacks is also detrimental to rhythm of the skyline and should be discouraged.



Original gas lampposts, that survive on some forecourts, should be retained and restored. Forecourts are variously treated and would greatly benefit from resurfacing in traditional materials and the cessation of their use for parking.

Only No 42 has been insensitively altered to the detriment of the unity of the terrace and street scene. It could be greatly improved by reinstating original window openings and shopfront and fascia line and, ideally, original brickwork.

The new build at **40 Romford Road**, although not in the conservation area, has substantially improved its setting through good contextual design using materials, forms and details that match this terrace and no.38. The return elevation is animated by fenestration and diminishes in scale to relate to the terraces in Tennyson Road. It has greatly enhanced this prominent corner location.



*40 Romford Road*

The detailing matches the preceding terrace showing they were built at the same time probably as part of the Shirley House permitted for development in 1892. Future consideration should be given to extending the conservation area boundary to include these two properties.

## Block 8

**27 Romford Road.** This distinctive property was originally erected as St John's Institute, a club for working men. It was built 1904-5 by EM Thomas & Co to the design of W. Henden Winder. Pevsner describes it as modest eclectic Baroque. Its long frontage is enlivened by stone mullioned and transomed bays at first floor and a highly decorative entrance bay topped by a curved pediment and surmounted by a small dome which is a local landmark. The dome and the leaded light windows were restored using a grant from the Heritage of London Trust. The interior, as well as the exterior, retains much of historic interest. Curved forms, popular at the time, are found throughout and repeated in the arched shop windows. Removal of modern shopfronts that obscure two of these would return harmony to this highly distinctive building.



**Gable House.** This adjoining property is a neutral 1980's office building attempting to echo the red and yellow brick materials and historic forms of its context.

**System House, Deanery Road** was originally built as public offices in 1910. The date is recorded on its mansard roof. Probably by John G Morley, Borough Engineer, it is in a 17thC revival style called "Queen Anne" that was popular in Edwardian architecture. Its nine bays are set upon a deeply channelled grey brick base with classical symmetry emphasised by a central bay with pediment. A high mansard sits above strongly projecting eaves with dentil details. It remains substantially unaltered and makes a valuable contribution to the special interest of the area and to views from Romford Road.



## Block 9

### **29- 69 Romford Road and 1, Water Lane.**

29 Romford Road, a surviving detached villa, marks the corner of Deanery Road. Its classical portico between two bays lends stature and symmetry. Large original boundary piers with stone copings linked by a low stock brick wall remain and provide some enclosure. However the garden has been hard surfaced and turned over to car parking and refuse storage which is highly visible. The setting of this attractive property would be greatly enhanced by reintroduction of a hedge and railings and some soft landscaping.



**33-53a Romford Road.** This long run of two-and-a-half storey properties share repeated patterns of paired double-height bays and entrances with distinctive small attic dormers and substantial chimney stacks animating the roofscape. Their principal features remain and their original attractive qualities could be simply revived by sympathetic restoration. Destruction of front garden walls, car parking and refuse storage has destroyed their setting. This could be ameliorated by cleverly designed landscaping.



**51-69 Romford Road.** A tall mature tree of great townscape merit marks the bend in Romford road and a change to taller terraces of three storeys plus basement. Their single bays, window patterns and strong cornice indicate they were built earlier than the preceding terrace. They are more majestic with steps up to a raised first floor. Their scale and form has some resonance with the listed terrace opposite. They retain their stock brickwork facades and principal features. Their attractive qualities could be greater realised by restoration of altered windows, doors, details and front garden landscaping and control over parking, satellite dishes and signage.



**1, Water Lane,** a modern addition to the end of the terrace, reflects some of its features but projects awkwardly in front of the house it adjoins. Use of brown brick, in a terrace of yellow London stocks is also unfortunate.

**Newtec, Deanery Road.** Within this unusual building is an education and training institute for women which continues the tradition of educational establishments in the area.. Its present form results from the extension and re-cladding of a 1960's block. It was carried out in 1994-6 to a design by Cazenove Architects Cooperative. Walls faced by plywood panels sit within an exposed timber frame. The taller block at the east end is covered by a curved stainless steel roof. Although the form and materials have no local precedent, its warmth and expressive form introduce a interesting building which, whilst different in style and materials, fits quietly into its context.

## TREES

Some notable mature trees soften this urban setting and act as local landmarks. They include those at No 33, 53a and 60 Romford Road and those surrounding the University and Pigeons Public House. Trees also enhance the setting of Vicarage Terrace and the view down Vicarage Lane. The planting of additional street trees has also improved the street scene.



The area benefitted from some grant-aided tree planting in front gardens during the 1980's although some unauthorised works since have reduced the benefits achieved. Occasional light pruning may be desirable to ensure dense growth doesn't restrict natural surveillance, or prevent the ability of other plants to flourish. However, work to any tree in a conservation area requires prior, written consent from the Council. Those who do work without this are liable to prosecution with fine on conviction.

Where planning permission is required for building works the Council may require the retention or reinstatement of trees and soft landscaping. It may also extend its planning and other controls to oppose the loss of any more hedges or greenery from front gardens.

## PUBLIC REALM

The scale and intensive use of Romford Road dominates the experience of the public realm and works against a sense of visual cohesion and place. It also showcases properties to passers-by. Highways design and management should aim to achieve sensitive enhancement of this space as far as practical requirements allow. This applies, for example, to the selection of new surface materials and street furniture, retention of those of historic merit, keeping clutter to a minimum and the addition of street trees to screen and counteract sensory intrusion.



## PRIVATE SPACE

Private spaces provide a transition between buildings and the public realm. The tall trees, lawns, decorative railings and boundary walls that enclose UEL illustrate the value of greenery and enclosure to the streetscene. A tall wall of aged brickwork is an important visual and historic feature along Vicarage Lane that should be protected. The restoration of front gardens, or, where car parking remains, its greening, would greatly enhance residential amenity and townscape quality. Appropriate boundary treatments for different properties or terraces throughout the area would promote a more cohesive and historically appropriate townscape.



## SETTING

Adjoining areas impact on the setting of the conservation, principally affecting views in and out. Although the current boundary defines the University Conservation Area satisfactorily, the area adjoining to the north is of historic and architectural interest and defined in part in the UDP as an Area of Townscape Value. Further work is necessary to assess its worth as a future conservation area. However, the long views along Water Lane of mature trees and the impressive Victorian Board School, Sarah Bonnell School, create a pleasing and sympathetic context to University Conservation Area.





## CONCLUSION

University Conservation Area has unique historic and architectural interest and a distinctive townscape which the Council will work to preserve or enhance in conjunction with those who influence it. The accompanying Management Plan details its approach to its conservation over the coming five years.

## PART 2: CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

The environmental quality of this area impacts on the lives of those who live, work, study or visit there. It also affects the perception of Stratford Town Centre, as it straddles the entrance into it, influencing its attractiveness to investors and the area's economy.

### FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The Council will therefore work to preserve and enhance this conservation area and encourage others to do the same. To that end the Council will:

- exercise its powers under the Planning Acts to promote new high quality development that preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area. This will also apply to development not in, but affecting the setting, of the conservation. In addition to building design, special attention will be paid to encouraging suitable uses, good boundary enclosure and landscaping;
- ensure the impact on long views is fully considered, particularly in relation to the scale of landmark buildings and skyline features;



- issue design guidance on specific types of development such as shop-fronts, advertising, sustainable development and boundary treatment, as well as appropriate materials, in order to promote better standards and understanding; negotiate shop front design and advertising that will enhance the character of terraces and the setting of listed buildings; promote restoration of altered, incongruous facades;



## PLANNING CONTROLS

The Council will:

- encourage good garden maintenance, boundary treatment and screening of refuse bins;



- take action against unauthorized works including demolition of walls and lopping or removal of trees;
- discourage front garden car parking and, where possible and appropriate, require reinstatement of front boundaries and greenery and use of permeable paving;
- enforce against unauthorised development, alterations, changes of use and other breaches of the Planning Acts, if expedient;



- serve notices under the Planning Acts on owners that require improvements where their land or buildings are adversely affecting the amenity of the area, when expedient;

- assess the need to extend planning controls to cover works currently exempt where this is needed to support conservation objectives;
- continue to review the Council's schedule of locally listed buildings and consider the inclusion of buildings within the conservation area on that list;
- take available action against unauthorized use of forecourts harmful to the appearance of the area and the safety and mobility of traffic and pedestrians;



- every four years, undertake a photographic audit of the area including noting features of historic interest in the public realm and use this to review change, plans and aid enforcement action.

## ENHANCEMENT AND FUNDING

The Council will:

- provide, or assist in securing, specialist advice and, where available, financial assistance on repairs to listed and locally listed buildings and others that contribute to the special character of the area;



- promote area improvements, by influencing, or establishing schemes, as and when opportunities become available;

## PUBLIC REALM

The Council will:

- tackle crime and anti-social behaviour; fly-tipping, graffiti, dumping of rubbish and abandoned cars; seek adequate, convenient and screened refuse storage;
- encourage best practice in Council works to, or management of, the public realm; influence other highways authorities and users to be similarly sensitive in their proposals; retain items of historic interest and reduce street clutter; consider the impact of in-curtilage parking on the street scene; improve access for all;
- take fully into account the contribution of trees to the conservation area, townscape and local amenity when making decisions on applications for works to trees;
- promote additional tree planting and soft landscaping on the highway and in new development;

## COUNCIL FUNCTIONS

The Council will:

- Engage and work with the community;
- promote understanding of the requirement for listed building consent, conservation area consent for demolition and for planning permission through publicity and design guidance;

The above actions will be undertaken as resources permit and within the context of the Council's wider obligations, policies and duties.

## **BOUNDARY REVIEW**

The conservation area boundaries have been reviewed and are considered, at present, satisfactory for their purpose. The area northwards along Water Lane has been noted as of potential quality for conservation area status and this will be investigated in the future.

## **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.