



REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
(PLANNING)

PLANNING SUB COMMITTEE
23/07/91

CLAPTON SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA
PROPOSED EXTENSION

Classification	Enclosure A
DECISION APPROVAL	
Ward(s) affected	
GHATHAM DALSTON	

SUMMARY

1. This report seeks approval to the designation of an extension to the existing Clapton Square Conservation Area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. (A) That the Committee resolves to designate an extension to the existing Clapton Square Conservation Area (as indicated by the boundary on the site plan attached on Appendix A) under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- (B) That officers be authorised to carry out the statutory notification and publicity in connection with this designation.
- (C) That officers be authorised to investigate the option of entering into a "Town Scheme Agreement" with English Heritage and report back to the appropriate Committees.

BACKGROUND

3. Clapton Square Conservation Area was designated in 1969 and was the first Conservation Area in Hackney. The original designation was based on the open spaces of Clapton Square and St. Johns Gardens and included and most of the important buildings, in architectural and historic terms, which directly relate to the open spaces. It has been evident in recent years that the boundary of the Conservation Area requires amending particularly as some properties of architectural and historic worth were excluded. This fact has been the subject of considerable concern to local amenity societies, such as the Hackney Society and the Clapton Square Area Community Development Association.

4. The Clapton Square Area Community Development Association objected at the Public Inquiry into Hackney's Deposit Draft Local Plan in 1988 expressing these concerns formally.

5. The Council has consistently accepted the need to review the boundary for Clapton Square Conservation Area, however, this work was restricted by the availability of staff resources and the Inspector for the Local Plan Inquiry in 1988 accepted that this was the case. Therefore, now that staff resources do permit, and Conservation issues in general are receiving more attention, a programme of new designations and extensions to existing Conservation Areas has commenced with a new Conservation Area, Underwood Street, being designated in July 1990.

6. A Borough wide Conservation Strategy Report was approved by both the Planning Sub Committee and the Environmental Services Committee on the 5 March 1991. This report recommended a strategy for further Conservation Area designation and specifically identifies the extension of the Clapton Square Conservation Area as one of five priorities for designation in 1991/92. The reason for Clapton Square's priority was recognition of the need to include the buildings of note which had been excluded from the original designation and also to acknowledge the importance of, and quality of, the character of the Narrow Way as part of one of the Borough's key shopping centres. In the Narrow Way a considerable amount of Council resources have been dedicated to achieving environmental improvements in recent years and prioritisation of Hackney Town Centre is planned to continue.

7. The remaining four areas identified in the Conservation Area strategy report for priority designation are: South Shoreditch, The Grand Union Canal, Broadway Market and De Beauvoir fringes. The general Conservation Area strategy is to offer protection to those publicly cherished historic areas under threat from redevelopment or unsympathetic change.

PROPOSALS

8. The proposed extension includes the whole of the Narrow Way from the railway bridge northwards, a terrace along the south side of Amburst Road, the properties on the north side of Lower Clapton Road which face Mare Street, all of Lower Clapton Road from Clapton Square to the Round Chapel, Clapton Passage, Urswick Road from its junction with Lower Clapton Road to Sutton House, Sutton Square and two properties which enclose the entrance to Clapton Square via Clarence Place. This is considered to be an "inclusive" approach which reflects the unity of the area as perceived by its residents and users. Furthermore the area as a whole shares a fascinating history which survives in the built environment and it enjoys a townscape which reflects this complementary growth and development. This history and urban design characteristics are fully described in Appendix B and C.

LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP

9. There are 272 properties in the areas proposed to be added to the existing Conservation Area. The properties comprise a mix of retail, commercial and residential buildings along with notable individual buildings such as the Round Chapel and Hackney Central Baths. The majority are in private ownership, with a few, such as Hackney Central Baths and Clarence House, in the Council's ownership.

PRACTICAL EFFECTS OF DESIGNATION

10. Control of demolition of all buildings (not just listed buildings) is achieved by designation as Conservation Areas. This is a very important addition to the Council's powers to control and influence the pressures which are present in all areas for change and to thus be better able to conserve the attractive historic character of this area. When new developments are proposed the Council will be able to apply high standards of design which will respect the existing character and, effectively, ensure that developers invest in Hackney's built environment. Conservation Area designation can help to advertise the positive aspects of the Borough's environmental quality.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

11. Designation of a Conservation Area must be a preliminary step on to preserve or enhance its character and the Council has a duty to draw up a scheme of enhancement following designation. In this case it is considered practical to draw up a scheme of enhancement not just for the extension but for the whole of the enlarged Conservation Area. The Council is seeking the advice and views of local residents and amenity groups on how this scheme of enhancement should be carried out and this process will continue.

12. Clapton Square is designated as a priority Conservation Area by English Heritage and it is understood that English Heritage would be prepared to make a contribution to preserving and enhancing this Conservation Area. Grants and loans made by English Heritage for such works range from 25% to 100% with the owners of the land or building making up the remainder. Very few grants or loans made by English Heritage are to cover 100% of costs. A Town Scheme agreement would be appropriate for this area and this would involve the Council and English Heritage committing resources over a number of years. A Town Scheme Agreement would reinforce the Council's commitment to Hackney Town Centre and enable English Heritage to help fund enhancement projects.

13. In this connection Urban Programme monies which are funded 75% by the Department of the Environment and 25% by the Council could effectively contribute to funding schemes as part of a scheme of enhancement.

14. At present the proposal does not carry immediate financial implications for the Council as an enhancement scheme has not been identified as yet. However collaboration with English Heritage through a Town Scheme Agreement would involve expenditure which would involve relatively small amounts of money over a period of several years. It is anticipated that any new expenditure would not be considered until 1992/93.

15. A scheme of enhancement will be investigated and a further report with specific recommendations will be submitted to the appropriate Committees for approval.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

16. 350 letters were delivered to all premises in the areas proposed as an extension to the Conservation Area informing occupiers of the proposal. Clapton Square Area Community Development Association were also consulted and provided with 200 copies of a questionnaire on the proposal. All relevant local and national amenity societies were consulted.

17. An exhibition of photographs and explanatory information was mounted and a public meeting held. The exhibition included illustrated sketch proposals for possible enhancement projects. Observations were both on the proposals and on what projects people thought would preserve or enhance the character of their area.

18. 28 replies to the consultation exercise were received from local people. Furthermore the Victorian Society, the Clapton Square Area Community Development Association and the Hackney Society provided comments on the proposal. The major issues which are raised by the responses are:

1) The Boundary:

- i) Clarence Road and Clarence Mews should be included.

- ii) The Bus Garage adjoining to the south of the existing Conservation Area should be included.
- iii) Streets to the north of the existing Conservation Area, such as Goulton Road and Lower Clapton Road, should be included.
- iv) The terrace of nationally and locally listed buildings from 248 to 300 Dalston Lane should be included.

The issue of whether to include Clarence Road and Clarence Mews is essentially one of formal correctness in historic terms in that this area was built as part of the Clapton Square areas development in the last century against a practical assessment of policy towards the present problems.

A Planning Brief for Clarence Mews is the subject of a concurrent report to this Committee. The objective of the Clarence Mews Planning Brief is to provide guidelines for the encouragement of appropriate employment uses, upgrading of Environmental quality and the discouragement of new residential uses.

It is considered that the objectives contained in the Clarence Mews Planning Brief would be much more difficult to achieve if enhanced requirements for the design of new buildings were imposed. This is because the increase in building costs would be likely to preclude the new private sector investment in small commercial (B1 use) premises which are considered necessary in Clarence Mews. Furthermore only one building, Number 48 Clarence Mews, is, in itself, in need of protection from demolition due to its architectural quality and is to be included within the enlarged Conservation Area. The terrace of buildings in Clarence Road do have a special character but have been altered, in most cases by extensions built in mis-matching materials. To include this terrace is only practical if considerable resources can be dedicated to restoring the buildings.

The Bus Garage is part of a Town Centre Development Site (Proposal 124 of the Hackney Local Plan) in which the Council would welcome its redevelopment for retail purposes. However it is fully accepted that any new development must respect the setting of the Conservation Area adjoining it. Therefore the whole of the forecourt to the Bus Garage is to be included and this will ensure that the new development is very carefully designed and properly addresses the need to enhance the character of the Narrow Way.

A proposal to designate 248-300 Dalston Lane as a Conservation Area was approved, in 1985, by the Planning and Transport Committee. However the Housing Committees also need to approve this proposal. This approval was subject to the approval of the Housing Services Committee and the Housing Design Committee. In the event the subsequent approvals were not given. In any case to designate this terrace of houses would be contrary to the Conservation Area Strategy agreed in March 1991 which is to designate the five priority areas first.

The streets to the north of Clapton Square, which are considered by some to be worthy of Conservation Area status are Goulton Road, part of Lower Clapton Road and Rowhill Road. It is not considered appropriate to include these roads in this proposal as these roads are part of a separate area in architectural and historic terms and are predominantly residential and not related to the town centre/open space focus of the proposed new Conservation

Moreover this present proposal is in line with the Borough-wide Conservation Strategy report which allows for further designations following the implementation of the five priority areas.

2) Area Management Issues

Many people took the opportunity to raise issues regarding Council services generally, for example street cleaning, litter bins, traffic management, maintenance of street paving and control over shop displays spilling out over the pavement. Although restrained by scarcity of resources, the Council corporately can only benefit from knowing what the problems with service delivery are and it is intended that the appropriate liaison between the Planning Division and other Council departments can go some way to improving services.

3) Enhancement Schemes

There was generally an encouraging welcome given to officers proposals on how to preserve and enhance the area. For example new street furniture/lighting, landscaping, new street paving, easier road crossing points and new signposting. Appendix B lists possible projects.

4, 16 AND 17 CLAPTON SQUARE

19. These are two Grade II Listed Buildings in the Council's ownership which are in need of urgent repair; they have been vacant since 1985 when the Council evicted the occupiers who were squatting.

20. Officers are investigating the solution of selling these houses to be re-used as single family dwellings at a price which will reflect the amount of repair works needed.

IMPLICATIONS FOR BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITIES

21. It is considered that designation of historic areas which are shared and cherished by the people of Hackney, as Conservation Areas, can help to combat negative images of the Borough. It is hoped that advertising Hackney in a positive manner will assist in combatting discrimination, bearing in mind that half of the people of Hackney belong to the Black and Ethnic Minorities Community.

IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFFING

22. Applications for Conservation Area Consent to demolish buildings would represent new work. However, given that these would normally be associated with planning applications for redevelopment it is anticipated that the increase in workload can be accommodated within the existing staff resources of the Planning Division.

OBSERVATIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL RACE RELATIONS ADVISER

23. The Acting Principal Race Relations Adviser fully supports the recommendations.

OBSERVATIONS OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

24. To be reported.

MICHAEL E. NEW

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PLANNING)

Kevin Dykes

Lead Originator (Planning Division)

01/07/91

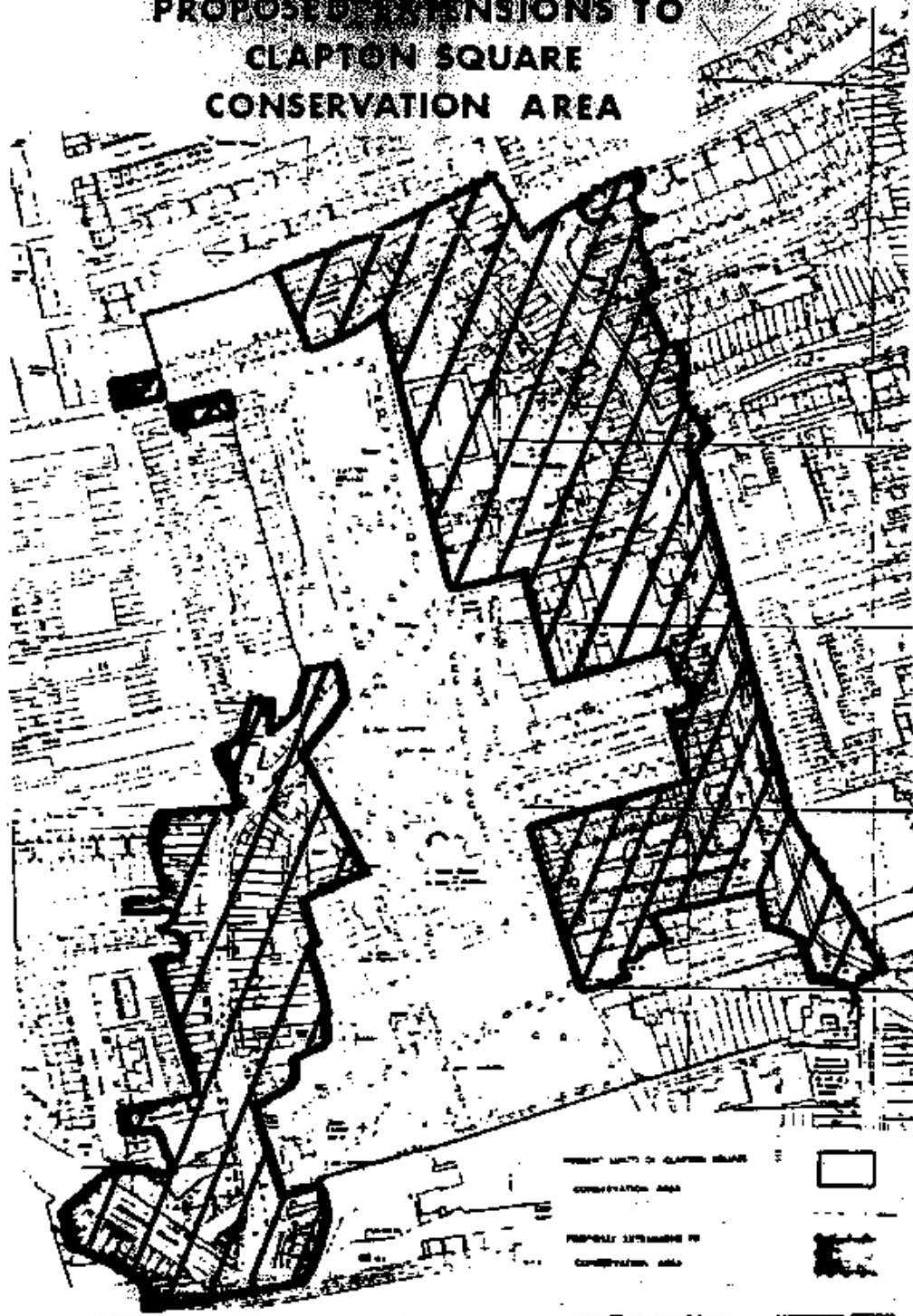
10/07/91 updated

15/07/91 updated

SCHEDULE OF DESIGNATION

1-19 Amhurst Road (consecutively)
339-419 Mare Street (consecutively)
350-422 Mare Street (consecutively)
Clarence House and 2-4 Clarence Road
1-129 Lower Clapton Road (consecutively)
12-60 Lower Clapton Road (consecutively)
Madamey Central Baths, Lower Clapton Road
The Round Chapel, Lower Clapton Road
2-22 Clapton Passage (consecutively)
3-13 Clapton Passage (consecutively)
St John's Mansions, Clapton Square
Cavendish Mansions, Clapton Square
30 Clapton Square (Social Services building)
5-27 Urswick Road (consecutively)
1-65 Sutton Square (consecutively)
Bay House, Sutton Place
22a Sutton Place
23-25 Sutton Place
48 Clarence Mews
1A Clarence Place
The Duke of Clarence Public House, Clarence Road

**PROPOSED EXTENSIONS TO
CLAPTON SQUARE
CONSERVATION AREA**



Site 



Scale 1:1250

Address **EXTENSION
TO CLAPTON SQUARE
CONSERVATION AREA**

BASED UPON THE ORDNANCE SURVEY
1:1250 MAP WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE
CONTROLLER OF HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY
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APPENDIX B

URBAN DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS

Positive Urban Design Characteristics

One of the major Urban Design characteristics of the locality is the snaking, winding link between the Railway Bridge at the extreme south of the proposed enlargement of the Conservation Area and the Round Chapel at the extreme north. The Mare Street/Lower Clapton Road thoroughfare can be seen to run in three sections, i.e. two shopping streets (The Narrow Way and Lower Clapton Road) enclosing what can be seen as a "Green Heart" of Hackney.

A. The Narrow Way

From the Railway Bridge to the Mare Street/Lower Clapton Road junction. This section is characterised by an attractively strong sense of enclosure brought about by the narrow width of the roadway and the almost unbroken terraces of tall buildings alongside. It is a busy shopping area with market stalls vitalising the street and it is a meeting place for people from all over multi-cultural Hackney. At each end of the Narrow Way the sense of enclosure is retained by the strong visual stops of the bridge which encloses to the south and the Council's Fostercare and Adoption office building which similarly encloses to the north.

B. The Green Heart

From the Mare Street/Lower Clapton Road junction to the Police Station. This "green heart" is actually two separate historic gardens, each of which has a unique character. Both are heavily enclosed by vegetation and offer intimate surroundings. Unfortunately this means that their ambience is obscured to passers by in busy Lower Clapton Road. A journey along this route could be unified by the "green heart" being brought into a closer relationship with the thoroughfare.

C. Lower Clapton Road and Urswick Road

From the Police Station to either the Round Chapel or Sutton House. This section is characterised by some very fine buildings, for example the Georgian houses east of the Police Station. North along Lower Clapton Road is some tightly enclosed streetscape. A highlight of a journey north along the thoroughfare is the path through the shopping street to the Round Chapel which is framed by the almost contemporary terrace and is a memorable surprise to find. Urswick Road contains an interesting collection of buildings on the west side ranging from a Georgian listed pair to an almost brand new city square and terminating at the unprepossing facade of Sutton House, which marks a building of great local antiquity and significance. East side - gaps and roof edges.

URBAN DESIGN PROBLEMS

1. The Green Heart

There is poor visibility into the open green spaces leading to a lack of awareness of the interest of these spaces and a missed opportunity. The buildings turn their backs on the "green heart" and there are few accesses into it. There does appear to be potential for a way into St John's Gardens next to the water fountain, however, the railings close it off. Perhaps a new entrance

could be created? and perhaps a new entrance into Clapton Square from the south east corner? An unlocked entrance into St John's Gardens from Sutton Square?

2. Junction at the South end of The Narrow Way

This is difficult to cross and presents a sudden break away from the "character" of the shopping area in the Narrow Way. An improvement could be wider pavements or pavement lines? less road space? better lighting? better crossings? new paving and road surfaces?

3. Junction at the north end of the Narrow Way

The view opens up in a wide junction and the character of the route becomes dominated by road vehicles. Furthermore a new backdrop, the corner of the housing estate, comes into view. From a streetscape viewpoint this is a bad design because it turns away from the street and does not frame it. Thus the enclosed character of the Narrow Way leaks away at this point.

Possible changes are a "screening" landscaping project? or new shops at the corner of Dalston Lane and Clarence Road? wider pavements? better crossings?

4. Kennure Road

At its junction with the Narrow Way is a rather stark road closure which is unsympathetic with the intimate enclosed feel of the Narrow Way. A simple alternative which could bring some green contrast would be seating surrounded by trees which would provide a small city square to escape for a few minutes peace.

5. Gateway Supermarket

There is a change of character as one approaches the "green heart". This change would be much more dramatic if the approaches to the open spaces were marked by tall buildings on either side. Atmosphere leaks out here because of the single storey buildings on the north side.

6. London Electricity Board Shopfront

The shopfront detracts from the fine facade of this locally listed building. It is a bleak, characterless addition.

7. Unauthorized Advert Hoardings

Most advert hoardings on the sides of buildings are unauthorised and detract from the appearance both of the building in question and the streetscape in general.

8. East Side of Urswick Road

The new developments do not relate to the street as they are set back and turn their backs to this main thoroughfare. Unused patches of grass do not add anything to the character of this locality. Possible improvements would be a substantive landscaping scheme? tall trees along the whole length?

9. Shopfronts in Lower Clapton Road

Some of the shopfronts along Lower Clapton Road are unsympathetic to the period character of these terraces. Over time these could be replaced with new, timber framed shopfronts of an appropriate design ideally helped by a contribution towards the cost via the targetting of a shopfront grant block funded from the Council's Urban Programme.

CLAPTON SQUARE ENVIRONS CONSERVATION AREA PROPOSAL 1991

GENERAL HISTORY

The name Clapton comes from Saxon words meaning "farm on the hill".

The Medieval St. Augustine's Clock Tower is the last surviving part of the parish church and was the centre of Hackney village. It was, and is, on higher ground near the junction of major routes. The church was largely demolished in the late eighteenth century. St. John's Church was built nearby, today the centre of the Conservation Area.

From the Medieval period to the mid nineteenth Century, the outlying areas were largely fields and market gardens. The area was renowned for its fertile soil, and watercress beds watered by Hackney Brook existed off Morning Lane until 1875.

Hardly any of the buildings on John Rocque's map of 1745 survive today, but plots, roads, field hedges, and footpaths still dictate much of the existing street plan. They were mostly delineated by manorial boundaries. There was ribbon development along the principal thoroughfares, today's Lower Clapton Road, Urswick Road and the Narrowway. Clarence Road existed as "Back Lane"; to the south was "Money Lane" later Morning Lane.

Until the end of the eighteenth Century, development in what is now Hackney was centered round small villages at Hackney, Dalston, Shacklewell, Upper and Lower Clapton, and Homerton.

Although it is hard to imagine today, Hackney was in the eighteenth Century a much favoured place for "taking the air" and escaping from the City smoke and overcrowding. Samuel Pepys enjoyed coming to Hackney village to eat cherries and cream.

Several large houses and estates belonged to courtiers and rich merchants from the sixteenth Century and nearby a hundred gentlemen's carriages were kept at Hackney. Someone said there were more carriages than Christians. Hackney rarely had close links with royalty or the court.

The area was part of the extensive Tyssen Estate. The Tyssens were of Dutch descent, who bought two manors in Hackney. In the Narrowway, a large house built in 1840 acted as the Manor House, and still stands (Nos. 387, 387a and 397b).

During the seventeenth Century, wealthier and titled people started to leave Hackney and City traders moved in.

From the 1770's, large houses were built as part of terraces, rather than being built detached. This was when plots of land were sold and built on for planned, rather than piecemeal development. From the mid-nineteenth Century, longer terraces were built and plots were much more densely built on, with speculative development by private surveyors and builders.

The growth of the Clapton Square area was due to the pressure for housing. Clapton Square was designed for prestige.

The population of the parish of St John at Hackney increased from 12,730 in 1801 to 22,494 in 1821, and to 218,998 at the end of the nineteenth Century.

For most of the nineteenth Century, Hackney was still "fashionable" but partly due to better communications and the spread of the metropolis, the better off began to move north and east-wards out of the area. Their homes were then in multiple occupancy, demolished or given over to institutional uses. There had been extensive and often elaborate gardens with fountains.

There were several schools in the area in and around St. John's Church, including a Church of England, Collegiate school in Clarence Road and the all denominational Grammar School in Sutton Place. The boys from these schools once fought the poorer Parochial School, and the police were called to end the fight.

Towards the end of the Victorian era the pressure on land for development intensified. Hackney was considered to be part of East London. By the First World War the middle and upper classes moved out in large numbers.

Mission Halls and Public Houses competed for attention and there was much overcrowding and insanitation. At the same time, there remained pockets of open garden and the then private Square of Clapton Square.

CLAPTON PASSAGE AND CLAPTON SQUARE AREA

According to one historian, Clapton Passage may have been part of a secondary Roman road running from Kingsland Road to Essex. A marble sarcophagus was discovered in Lower Clapton (now in the Museum of London). By 1745 there already was a group of large houses on the south side and a road clearly marked, wider than today's passage. The name appears in a sale map of 1816 when the south area was sold (as part of the Tyssen Amhurst estate) with the Clapton Square area. A map of 1831 by Ashpitel shows three large houses with long plots running south with only one building to the north. Whereas by 1818 many houses had been built round three sides of the Square, these remained, the most important in the area. This was still the case by 1867. An unusual photograph shows Holly Villas on the north side of Clapton Passage in construction in 1882, with the builders in front. The appropriately-named Ivy Villas on the opposite site were built later.

A large house on the corner of Lower Clapton Road and Clapton Passage was lived in from 1791 to 1794 by the scientist Joseph Priestley and his wife. An adjoining house was lived in by another scientist Richard Knight, who invented a method of refining platinum and making it malleable.

Clapton Square was laid out on Clapton Field in 1816 and auctioned in lots. On the north and east sides were large houses pre-dating the Square. They were demolished in the late nineteenth Century and the mansion blocks of Cavendish Mansions and St. John's Mansions were built. In June 1869 the whole of the Square was auctioned by the Tyssen Amhurst estate, prominent in Hackney's history. There were glowing references to the Square and area ... "the convenience of the spot, its aspect of quiet retirement, combined with an agreeable vivacity, and the universally high character of the residents, several of whom have been in occupation many years, have conduced to render this Square one of the most favourable locations in the northern suburbs of Town". To the south, Lot 48 was "a most secure and desirable freehold investment comprising the capital residence, No. 1 Clapton Square, suitably arranged for the convenience of a respectable family having in the rear a long garden, with good stabling for two horses, and Coach House with entrance from the Mews", (now Clarence Mews).

No. 6 on the west side (damaged in 1940) was the home of a Russian emigé, Theodore Rothstein, and often visited by his friend Lenin. Lot 18 of the 1816 sale already existed as Clarence Place with seven houses of three storeys. Lot 13 was already in existence as Clapton Place.

THE NARROWAY, MARE STREET

That part of Mare Street from the junction with Lower Clapton Road to the present Town Hall was called Church Street until 1868.

The Narroway was probably part of a Roman trackway, and a road in the Medieval period.

In Medieval times there were a number of large mansions near to Hackney Church. Mare Street is from Meare, Middle English, meaning a boundary or a marsh.

On Rocque's map of 1745, the Narroway was a major thoroughfare, with large buildings and gardens on either side. Templar's House was on the east side, where the Crown Public House stands today. The house dated from the early seventeenth Century and was owned by the Knights Templars, who owned large areas of land and property in Hackney.

On the corner of Bohemia Place and Mare Street was "The Old Black and White House", a late survival of Medieval timber-framed construction. Bohemia Place is associated by legend with James I's daughter, the Queen of Bohemia.

A group of Presbyterians were established before 1636 on the west side of the Narroway.

Several religious dissenting groups came to Hackney and Clapton because of their reputation for religious tolerance. There were several different groups worshipping there.

Portuguese or Spanish Jews came to settle from the seventeenth Century. The area has for long attracted members of the black and ethnic communities. In a 1802 photograph of the old Town Hall and Clock Tower, two black young men can be seen on the right. From the 1880's Jewish refugees from Russia and the Baltic States settled in Hackney.

On the east side of the Narroway in front of St Augustine's Tower stood the Parish or Church House. Near this stood the pillory and "cage". At one time the building held the fire engine room, parish committee rooms and police station, all at once. It was built by the Rector of Hackney, Christopher Urswick, friend and advisor to Henry VIII. It was demolished in 1802. The first Town Hall was built there, which has for long been the Midland Bank.

For many years the Narroway was a village high street with a growing number of shops and services on either side. The street still retains some of this atmosphere today, which pedestrianisation has helped regain. In 1832 the street consisted "very principally of shops of numerous classes and descriptions". Then the tempo of the street changed to that of a busy shopping thoroughfare by the late nineteenth Century.

The Hackney Brook was on the line of Graham Road. It flowed across the Narrowway and carriages had only one ford, at the junction of Amhurst Road. In wet weather the Brook flooded. A bridge was built across the Brook in 1790, and it is now culverted over.

The Narrowway has long been an important transport route. In 1769 seven coach stands were set up. In 1850 the East and West India Docks and Birmingham Junction Railway was opened (in 1853 becoming the North London Railway). The railway bridge over Mare Street made an intrusive presence. The railway station originally stood on the opposite side of the road to today, by Bohemia Place. It is said that the workmen's trains, offering reasonably priced fares, did not have a great effect on Hackney's development.

Tram tracks were laid early by the North Metropolitan Tramways Company and were drawn at first by horses. The service was electrified in 1909.

The Narrowway had several shops selling fresh produce such as fruit, vegetables, dairy and meat from nearby farms. However, by the mid nineteenth Century the shops included more sophisticated trades, such as drapers. The wide variety of trades is shown by the Street Directory for 1870. In 1897-98 it was described as one of the chief market streets. "Public Houses line Mare Street ... and are used practically as club houses by the comfortable classes .. Places of amusement (in Hackney) are almost non-existent except in the immediate neighbourhood of Dalston Junction and Mare Street".

The area had not much crime in that period, whereas it had been more dangerous in previous centuries. Charles Booth's 1897-98 "Life and Labour of the People in London" said "There are some complaints of the lively character of the crowds of young people who make a promenade of Mare Street on a Saturday, or Sunday, or any fine evening, but, so far as this has come under our observation, it would not be fair to describe the conduct exhibited in very harsh terms. It is not actually rough, nor is there anything which presses the bounds of decency and propriety. To set against some danger or disorder, there is moral safety in numbers. There is hardly room for street walkers among the walkers of the street, and there is in fact very little of prostitution in this form east of Dalston Junction ... "the working men's clubs have very bad reputation". The promenade was known as the 'monkey parade'.

The Mermaid on the west side was one of Hackney's most important and popular hostels. The pleasure grounds were situated on the west side of Mare Street, north of Hackney Brook. The premises were used as Assembly Rooms, with often heated political and parish meetings. Many balloon ascents were made from the pleasure grounds. Other hostels were the King's Head on the east side, and the Old Mermaid, close to the churchyard. When the Landlord of the King's Head failed to change the name of the public house on the restoration of the monarchy, from 'Cromwell's Head', he was put in the pillory.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1913 shows that the Assembly Rooms, pleasure grounds and open land had been built over. The Street Directory shows that a wide range of services was available.

LOWER CLAPTON ROAD

Lower Clapton Road was a Roman trackway, and a Medieval road. On Rocque's map of 1745 it was part of a tree-lined major thoroughfare, between Clarence Road and Irswick Road. The east side's layout was largely determined by the large grounds of Hackney House, built in 1727 and demolished c.1800. In the former grounds were

built "the five houses", a prominent group. The layout still can be seen in plots of today. Lesbia Road was built on one of the houses where the health centre now stands. Roads were built to gain access to the River Lea.

The Round Chapel, the United Reformed Chapel, was the centre of a large congregation of worshippers. Other non-conformists flourished in the area. The Round Chapel was built from 1869-71, designed by Henry Fuller. The west side of the street had a variety of trades, including confectioners and saddlers. In 1789, 12 coach stands were set up and in the nineteenth Century there was a tram service.

Nos. 21-35 Lower Clapton Road (Clapton Place) were in existence in 1816, with the same houses (with shops in former front gardens) extant today. They were the first of the houses to be built on the former Clapton meadow by the local surveyor and resident of Clapton Square, William Hurst Ashpital. Ashpital held copyhold land from the Manor of Lordshold and responded to the growing need for housing the less well-to-do than the larger houses around.

To the right of these were three houses and the Portland Arms with skittle alley, stable and cottage at the rear. These were demolished for the Bath's site. The 1841 Census shows residents of largely independent means, with one or two servants.

The Hackney Baths (1893-97), the King's Hall, were the first municipal baths to be built in the area and admitted 148,619 people in the first five months.

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY

The eminent scientist Joseph Priestley lived in Clapton from 1791 to 1794. He discovered oxygen and made other significant discoveries with gases. He was also a radical philosopher and theologian and dissenter, helping to found Unitarianism. Priestley was at times persecuted for his religious and political views. He came to Hackney from Birmingham where a mob had destroyed his house and laboratory.

Hackney appealed partly due to the radical climate. "On the whole" he wrote "I spent my time even more happily at Hackney than ever I had done before". He took a lease on a large house which formerly stood at the corner of Clapton Passage and Lower Clapton Road, opposite the Round Chapel. Priestley also preached at the Gravel Pit Meeting House in Ram Place by Morning Lane. Due to his pro-French Revolutionary stand, he was still persecuted in "loyal" Hackney. Servants would not stay long. By 1794 despite happiness in Hackney, persecution was such that he decided to emigrate to America. His house later became a prominent radical college.

URSWICK ROAD

Urswick Road was in 1745 a major thoroughfare continuous with Lower Clapton Road. On the east side were already several major buildings with gardens and woodland beyond.

Urswick Road is named after Christopher Urswick, an advisor and friend of Henry VIII, who rebuilt the old St. Augustine's Church in 1509.

The land on the west side was the estate of Isaac Hensley, and was open ground up to the late eighteenth Century adjoining the church yard. There were two paddocks south of Sutton Place, and a School Board Truant School, later Upton House School.

An example of the residents in the area was a family of religious Dissenters named Ryder, who ran a draper's business in the City in the early eighteenth Century.

In the nineteenth Century the road was Upper Homerton Road and by 1870 there were several substantial houses with long gardens on both sides.

There was a freehold land society for the Conservatives built on land by the road in 1860, but development was held up by the building recession and the land was built on over the next 30 years. By 1913 the Ordnance Survey shows most of these houses to have been demolished. It was common when the more well-to-do left such houses, for them to be made over as schools, workhouses or asylums etc. On the east side was Upton House Industrial School where children were taught useful trades.

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