

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & PARTNERSHIPS		
DESIGNATION OF LEA BRIDGE CONSERVATION AREA [GENERAL EXCEPTION, SPECIAL URGENCY] Cabinet – 23rd May 2005 Council – 25th May 2005	Classification Public	Enclosures Appendices A (bound separately), C & B
	Ward(s) affected Lea Bridge	AGENDA ITEM NO. <h1 style="text-align: center;">3.1</h1>

REASON FOR SPECIAL URGENCY

This report is submitted as a late item under the General Exception (Special Urgency) procedures following the Council learning of an immediate threat of demolition to historic buildings within an area identified in the Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as a potential conservation area.

1. INTRODUCTION BY CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & PARTNERSHIPS

1.1 I commend this report to Cabinet.

2. SUMMARY

This report recommends that an area around Lea Bridge (see attached conservation area appraisal and map) be designated as a conservation area, namely the Lea Bridge Conservation Area, and that the attached Conservation Area Appraisal be adopted.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to request that Council agree:

1. That the area shown on the plan attached as Annex B, be designated as a conservation area, to be known as Lea Bridge Conservation Area, as provided for under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings &

Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Also that (a) officers carry out the notification and publicity required under section 70 of the Act and (b) the designation be registered as a local land charge.

- 2. That the conservation area appraisal prepared for the area (Annex A) be adopted as supplementary planning guidance.**
- 3. That officers be authorised to consider preparing for public consultation draft Article 4 directions (where appropriate), under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.**

4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 There will be a potential increase in the number of Planning applications, which will lead to a minor increase in income. The additional work generated by these applications will be carried out by the Development Control section, and this is not likely to have a significant effect on capacity.
- 4.2 The financial controller has nothing further to add to this report.

5. COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

- 5.1 The Monitoring Officer is satisfied that the requirements under Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15) have been duly followed for the purposes of designation of this Conservation Area.
- 5.2 The Monitoring Officer has nothing further to add to this Report.

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.6 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation areas) Act 1990 places an obligation on local authorities to determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate those areas as conservation areas.
- 6.2 The Council is committed to safeguarding the townscape of the whole borough through encouragement and by use of its development control powers. The Hackney UDP commits the council to safeguarding the character of conservation areas by resisting the loss of buildings, trees and other features that make a positive contribution to an area, and by promoting high standards of design in new development.
- 6.3 The preparation and adoption of Conservation Area Appraisals is an important tool in informing and controlling development in those areas. Appraisals which have been adopted following public consultation have greater weight in the planning process.

- 6.4 As part of the UDP a number of areas have been identified for potential designation as conservation areas: the area around Waterworks Lane at Lea Bridge is one of those areas. As part of the Planning Service Plan, officers are working on a programme of assessing these areas and preparing conservation area appraisals for them.
- 6.5 The area proposed for designation as a conservation area has recently been featured in the publication *Recharging the Power of Place: Valuing local significance*, a joint publication by the Campaign to Protect Rural England, the National Trust and Heritage Link: "...neighbourhood groups and associations... have identified through consultation and research the positive contribution the local historic environment could play in delivering safer streets, attractive play areas, new employment opportunities, and a more ecologically rich environment." (attached as Appendix C)

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 A planning application was received as valid by the Council on 11th March 2005 under reference 2004/2706. The application proposes the complete demolition of all the unlisted industrial buildings on the site of the historic Lea Bridge Dock., including the former carbonic acid gas works. Officers are minded to recommend refusal of this application on the grounds (amongst other reasons) of the inappropriate nature of the development (scale, bulk, design, etc.) within the surrounding streetscape, the harmful affect of the proposals on the setting of the Listed former school building, and the detrimental affect of the proposal on the open character of the surrounding area
- 7.2 As part of the statutory consultation on the planning application, local residents, English Heritage, the Greater London Archaeology Society and other agencies were contacted.
- 7.3 In response to the consultation process, around 20 letters of objection to the proposal were received: the majority objecting to the demolition of the existing historic buildings.
- 7.4 The Clapton Conservation Area Advisory Committee registered a formal objection, to the proposal and submitted a report requesting the designation of the area as a conservation area.
- 7.5 The Greater London Archaeology Service stated that: "A brief assessment of historic maps shows that some of these buildings [within the proposed conservation area] date from the C19th and therefore form an important group of industrial buildings which increase the archaeological value of the associated C19th dock on the site."
- 7.6 English Heritage stated that: "The existing buildings between the Lea, Lea Bridge Road and Otley Terrace constitute an interesting group demonstrating the industrial evolution of this part of Hackney (and Waltham Forest). A number of them, including the C19th factory structures and cottage terrace, appear to be of *at least* local merit. [English Heritage] would consider them to form the appropriate

setting, in terms of design, scale and historic grain, for the listed building, the riverside and adjacent open land.”

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The area around Waterworks Lane / Lea Bridge has been identified in the UDP as a potential conservation area. The area has been assessed and a conservation area appraisal has been prepared. The Appraisal demonstrates that the area satisfies the criteria for conservation area designation. Designation of the Lea Bridge Conservation Area and adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisal are recommended for approval.

9 IMPLICATIONS OF DESIGNATION

- 9.1 Conservation area designation allows the Council to ensure, through the planning system, that the special quality and value that has been identified in these conservation areas will be protected. Extension of existing conservation areas allows this control to be extended over a slightly larger area.
- 9.2 Conservation area designation means that development within the area is more closely controlled. The Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 outlines how permitted development rights that exist generally are restricted in conservation areas. In particular, Article 4 of the Order allows the Council to exercise greater control over alterations to individual properties including changes to windows and front doors, porches, extensions, alterations to front boundary walls and fences, and vehicle hard standings. Such changes, if uncontrolled, can cumulatively erode the character of a conservation area, especially if the existing buildings are well preserved and retain most of their original architectural features.
- 9.3 Conservation area designation also gives the council powers under section 54(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to require an owner to carry out urgent repairs to an unlisted building in a conservation area. The council must first seek a direction from the Secretary of State, under section 76 of the Act, on the basis that the building makes a positive contribution to the conservation area. The types of works covered by the powers are restricted to emergency repairs, for example works to keep a building wind and weatherproof and safe from collapse, or action to prevent vandalism and theft. In the absence of suitable action by the owner, the council can carry out the repairs and recover the costs involved.

10. NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

- 10.1 Section 70 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the council to notify the Secretary of State and English Heritage of the

designation, and to advertise the designation in the London Gazette and a local newspaper (e.g. Hackney Today).

Councillor Guy Nicholson - Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Partnerships

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Background papers

The following documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:

Description of document	Location	Date
Lea Bridge Conservation Area Appraisal	Annexe A attached	May 2005
Lea Bridge Conservation Area Map	Annexe B attached	May 2005
Recharging the Power of Place	Annexe C attached	July 2004
Report from the Clapton Conservation Area Advisory Committee	Planning Department	28 April 2005
Correspondence from the Greater London Archaeological Society	Planning Department	2005
Correspondence from English Heritage	Planning Department	10 th May 2005
Council's Unitary Development Plan	Planning Department	1995
PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment	Planning Department	September 1994

ANNEXE B



ANNEXE C

A joint Campaign to Protect Rural England, National Trust and Heritage Link report

Recharging the Power of Place

Valuing local significance



Recharging the Power of Place

There are similar problems in the wider countryside. A developer may convert a series of farmsteads without a clear understanding of why certain building designs were used, or of the relationship between buildings and their immediate

setting. Agricultural land may gradually become denuded of hedgerows, headlands and other features that give the landscape its distinct appearance. Loss may be on a large scale. An inappropriately located telecommunications mast, retail store or

Case study:
Clapton Lea riverside

The Clapton Lea Riverside area in Hackney, London, provides a useful illustration of a widespread problem: that of a failure to integrate heritage into future proposals for an area. This is a stretch of the Lea Navigation, an ancient trading artery, characterised by a range of waterside buildings and structures which bear witness to past communities and industries. They include large timber-frame warehouses, recently vacated, with their gables cantilevering out over the water; cobbled walkways; an inland dockway, now filled-in; a small nineteenth century school or 'mission room' (latterly used as an engineering workshop); and a boarded-up Edwardian pub which local people are trying to save.

Of all these historic landmarks, only the mission room is afforded statutory protection by being listed as Grade II. Other historic buildings, spaces and features remain relatively neglected and vulnerable to demolition and disposal. This is despite the very lively connections that exist between the different features – between the stone of the school house and the hefty sets under-foot, the street names referring to distant trading places, the pockets of green set against the backdrop of Walthamstow's rustling marshes – and the overall strength of character of this urban quarter.

The area needs revitalisation. There is an acute shortage of play areas and vandalism is widespread. Unemployment is high. Transport links need improving and the streets remain unsafe at night. These and other issues have been identified by neighbourhood groups and associations and fed into wider regeneration agendas. These groups have identified through consultation and research the positive contribution the local historic environment could play in delivering safer streets, attractive play areas, new employment opportunities, and a more ecologically rich environment. Such resourceful initiatives could put Clapton Riverside on the map and engender a shared sense of pride in both the area's vibrant past and potentially exciting future.¹⁵

Instead, the local historic environment seems to have been lost from sight, suspended somewhere between the past and the present. It is neither seen as sufficiently 'historic' to be worthy of protection nor sufficiently immediate to be of relevance to neighbourhood renewal. The one building that is listed remains disused, unattached as it is from any wider vision for the revitalisation of the area that could help inform a sensitive strategy for its reuse. A similar situation exists for locally listed buildings.