

PART B: CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

This part of the document contains a critical analysis of the issues and opportunities facing the conservation area and a plan for managing future change. It contains the following sections:

6.0 ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

7.0 MANAGEMENT PLAN



6.0 ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

6.1 CONDITION OF BUILT FABRIC AND GENERAL APPEARANCE OF BUILDINGS

One of the principle issues facing the conservation area is the dilapidated condition of its buildings and the inappropriate alterations and additions which have been undertaken to many. The poor overall appearance of the built fabric of the conservation area is harming its special interest and is gradually worsening over time. A condition survey was undertaken for the buildings included within the 'Enhancing Heritage in the Abbey and Barking Town Centre' Townscape Heritage Project, reproduced in [Appendix C](#), which contains detail on the condition of individual buildings in the conservation area. The following paragraphs provide an overview of the issues related to the condition of buildings in the area.

Many buildings are in need of maintenance and repair to reverse the prevalent issues in the conservation area such as foliage and shrubbery growth, slipped tiles, guano build up, blocked drainage goods, discolouration / dirt build up on render and stonework, peeling paintwork, and rotting timber windows. Appropriate and regular building maintenance will not only improve the appearance of the conservation area it will also be of considerable benefit to the buildings themselves, ensuring that they function effectively and will survive for future generations to enjoy.

In addition to maintenance, many buildings have had historic features removed or altered and other additions made which distract and detract from their historic appearance and dilute the contribution they

make to the conservation area. It is within shopfronts where decorative features have principally been lost and these and other inappropriate alterations and additions to shopfronts are considered in the following dedicated section. However other parts of buildings are also missing features include bargeboards, decorative pediment plasterwork (in Ripple Road), decorative ridge tiles. Together these contribute to weakening the visual character and cohesiveness across the conservation area.

There are also many instances of inappropriate additions to buildings in the conservation area. Of particular issue are additions to front elevations in East Street, Station Parade, North Street and Ripple Road, which are the most visible. These include satellite dishes and television aerials, electricity boxes, security alarm boxes and security cameras, exposed wiring and pigeon spikes and netting. All are modern features, alien in a historic street scene, and detract from the appearance of the conservation area and also add visual clutter.

Often satellite dishes and aerials remain on walls and roofs even after they become redundant, which leads to there being an even greater amount visible, and wiring is also often not removed leading to an excess being visible. There are opportunities to greatly improve the appearance of the conservation area through the removal of these inappropriate features, particularly items that are redundant. There are also opportunities

for future installations to be either located in a more discrete or concealed location or be more sensitively-designed so as to be less visually intrusive.

There is also an issue with the use of inappropriate materials being used in the repair and alteration of buildings. This includes using cement based mortars and renders and non-breathable paints prevents moisture from egressing traditionally constructed buildings and can therefore cause damp and other damage to the historic fabric of the building. Replacement of timber-framed windows with plastic units is also an issue for the breathability of buildings; this issue is covered within a dedicated section below. As well as causing problems for the building fabric, use of inappropriate materials can harm the appearance of historic buildings such as the replacement of traditional clay or slate tiles with concrete, rendering previously non-rendered walls and in particular replacement of traditional windows. There are opportunities to improve the appearance of the conservation area and the condition of built fabric by returning repairs and other alterations undertaken with inappropriate materials back to how they would have been historically.

Overall, there are opportunities to improve the awareness amongst local owners and occupiers of the importance of building maintenance and, where necessary, sensitive like-for-like repairs to prevent degradation and also increase awareness of what alterations are appropriate.



Satellite dishes attached to principal elevations of buildings in the conservation area.



This building has peeling paintwork to both the gable and windows, exposed wiring and a satellite dish, all of which detract from the appearance of the conservation area.



This building is in an extremely dilapidated condition due to lack of maintenance.



Pigeon spikes are used extensively in the conservation area, they detract from the conservation area and are also appear to be ineffective.

6.2 SHOPFRONTS

Barking has long been a centre of shopping, commerce and trade. Retail and cafe uses remain an important part of the character of the conservation area, centred on East Street but also in Ripple Road, Station Parade and North Street. However, there has been a gradual decline in the quality of the appearance of the retail frontages in the conservation area, particularly along East Street and Ripple Road. There are considerable opportunities for enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area through improvements to these retail frontages.

Some shop units are vacant with the shopfronts boarded up or permanently shuttered. There is a need for vacant units to be brought back into viable use to allow the bustling character of the town centre to thrive and to arrest further degradation and allow maintenance of the buildings themselves.

Many of the shopfronts are dilapidated, in a degraded state of repair and feature insensitive modern shopfronts and inappropriate signage. There has also been extensive loss of and damage to surviving historic shopfront features. In particular, many historic corbels or pilasters have been wholly or partly removed.

There are several recurrent historic shopfront features, remaining to varying degrees, across the conservation area. These include stone corbels, granite pilasters with stone string coursing above. Most of the historic shopfront features which do survive are in a poor condition and are in need of maintenance and repair, which detracts from their appearance. The facing to stonework is in disrepair, granite pilasters have been painted or are partly missing and architectural features have lost definition due to dirt and water damage.

There are many shopfronts that have been inappropriately altered and this incremental change has had a negative impact on the appearance of the conservation area. Oversized and poorly positioned fascia signs, signage which extends across multiple units, and the replacement of traditional timber materiality with metal or plastic framing are all quite common occurrences which negatively impact the historic appearance of the street scene. Many shopfronts have also had their traditional glazing and stall riser arrangement replaced with large full height windows that have no subdivision or their traditional stall risers replaced with brick versions. The colour, design and corporate branding of some shop signs does not respect the character of either the building in which

they are located or the character of the historic streets as a whole. There are also many internally illuminated signs, which are inappropriate within the conservation area.

Pigeons are a significant issue in the conservation area. Many projecting architectural features possess pigeon deterrent spikes, which are often damaged and have an accumulation of guano and dirt. Guano has collected on other areas of buildings which further detracts from the appearance of the area.

Other modern additions to buildings include roller shutter boxes, security cameras and plastic canopies, which are often inappropriate additions and visually detract and add clutter to the street scene. Shutters in particular have a particular impact when closed. Canopies are a historic feature and can be appropriate when using the correct material, design and positioning within the shopfront. Historically canopies would made of canvas and positioned above fascia signage. Today, many and many of the canopies are poorly positioned, of insensitive design such as using plastic materials or use a Dutch canopy style design and are in a poor condition.

There are considerable opportunities to improve the appearance and character of the conservation area through improvements to the shops. Inappropriate shopfront alteration and replacement is one of the main elements which detracts from the appearance of the conservation area. It could be greatly improved through the restoration of more traditional shopfront designs, by reinstating historic features or installation of sensitively-designed, new shopfronts. See section 7.4.4 for details of appropriate traditional shop front forms.



This shopfront has been extended across two historic units with the pilaster and corbel which would have separated them lost. The frontage also has inappropriate internally lit fascia signage and a poorly positioned and dilapidated canopy.



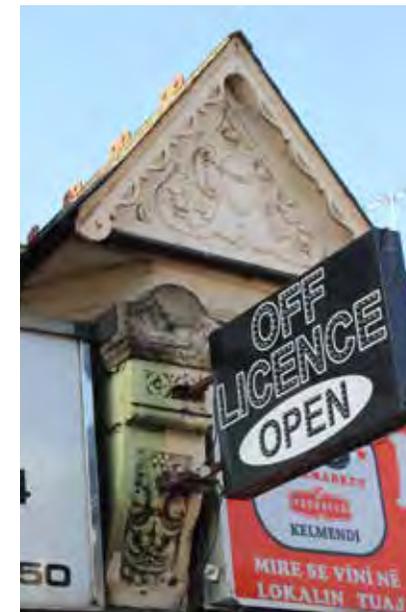
The scale, material and internally lit nature of this shop signage, both projecting and fascia, is inappropriate within the conservation area. Dutch-style canopy is inappropriate as it remains visible when retracted. The canopy is poorly positioned below the signage and is dilapidated. This shop front also has a roller shutter which also detracts.



The inappropriate signage and canopy above modern metal shop frontage detracts from the appearance of the building and the conservation area more widely.



A shop in a dilapidated condition and with inappropriate fascia sign and metal roller shutter.



Surviving but damaged historic shopfront corbels often with inappropriately attached projecting signs and pigeon spikes.

6.3 WINDOWS

Unfortunately, many traditional timber windows within historic buildings in the conservation area have been replaced with uPVC units. The change of the form and style of the window visually detracts from the appearance of the area as it is stylistically incorrect, for example changing a window from a sash to a casement. Some of these also alter the original fenestration by introducing much larger openings than the original windows. These changes detract both from the appearance and aesthetic value of the individual buildings and the wider conservation area; it also amounts to the loss of historic fabric. The use of plastic windows and doors reduces the breathability of traditionally constructed buildings, by preventing moisture from egressing the building and will cause on-going degradation and problems to the fabric of traditional buildings.

There are opportunities to improve the appearance and the condition of the built fabric of the conservation area by returning uPVC windows and doors back to traditional timber units. Future change of traditional timber windows to uPVC would be resisted.

Some of the windows in historic buildings have not been replaced. However, almost all cases the windows have been neglected and are poorly maintained. They are therefore degraded to varying degrees. Regular maintenance and, where necessary repair, of these historic windows would both improve the appearance of the conservation area and also allow the historic fabric to survive longer.



In insensitive replacement of traditional windows with uPVC units is harming the appearance of the conservation area.



Inensitive replacement of traditional windows with uPVC units is harming the appearance of the conservation area.



Many of the surviving timber windows are in a poor condition from neglect and lack of maintenance

6.4 PUBLIC REALM AND STREET FURNITURE

The appearance and condition of some parts of the public realm of the conservation area is another issue which is detracting from the area's special interest. There have, however, been public realm improvements in some parts of the conservation area with higher quality, durable surface treatments and street furniture being installed in Station Parade and Ripple Road and in front of the Town Hall. These areas have a modern character but use a sympathetic palette of materials including granite setts. A recently completed new street lighting scheme in East Street has also successfully removed much of the clutter from the public realm by stringing the lights from the elevations on either side. A new area of public realm has also been on the north side of the Town Quay. However, considerable areas of East Street remain tired and, particularly at the south-west end, in a dilapidated condition. The area in front of Curfew Tower and on the east side of the Town Quay have likewise suffered from neglect and vandalism which makes them unpleasant places to be. There are opportunities to undertake similar high quality public realm improvements using high quality, durable materials to those parts of the area which do not yet benefit from them, ensuring that they are in keeping with the work already undertaken and sympathetic to the special interest of the area. Opportunities to sensitively incorporate planting into refurbished public realm would also be beneficial.

Within Abbey Green the pathways are also in need of maintenance in places due to damage from tree roots and pooling of water. There are also some issues

with erosion of the grassed areas where people use alternative route to the hard-surfaced paths. There is an opportunities to review the path layout within Abbey Green to ensure it is still fit for purpose. Within the area containing the Abbey remains, there are some maintenance issues including damaged steps and surface treatments, any works in this area would need to consider and take account of the highly significant and Scheduled remains and may require Scheduled Monument Consent to undertake.

Much of the street furniture in the conservation area is in a poor condition and in need of maintenance, repair or replacement. Damage has been caused by vandalism, neglect and wear and tear. The dilapidated appearance of street furniture has a negative effect on the special interest of the conservation area. Furthermore, replacement of street furniture has been piecemeal over time which has led to an array of different styles and designs, in particular this relates to bollards and litter bins. This lack of consistency also detracts from the appearance of the conservation area. There has recently been replacements to the street furniture in Ripple Road, Station Parade and parts of East Street, and there are opportunities to replace the rest of the street furniture across the conservation area in a similar style in order to provide some unity across the area. There are also opportunities to reduce the overall clutter from street furniture, as has already been undertaken in East Street. In particular reducing the amount of signage, street lighting and bollards at the east end of East Street and in front of the Curfew Tower would be beneficial.

The final issue related to the public realm is the inappropriate positioning of broadband cabinets. Units have frequently been placed indiscriminately within the street often hindering pedestrian movement as well as being visually intrusive. Broadband cabinets are an alien, modern feature and detract from the appearance of the conservation area. There are opportunities to consider the relocation of existing cabinets to more discrete locations and whether such features are appropriate for installing in the conservation area in the future.



Erosion to the grass at the edge of the park, the footpaths should be reviewed to ensure their alignment is correct.



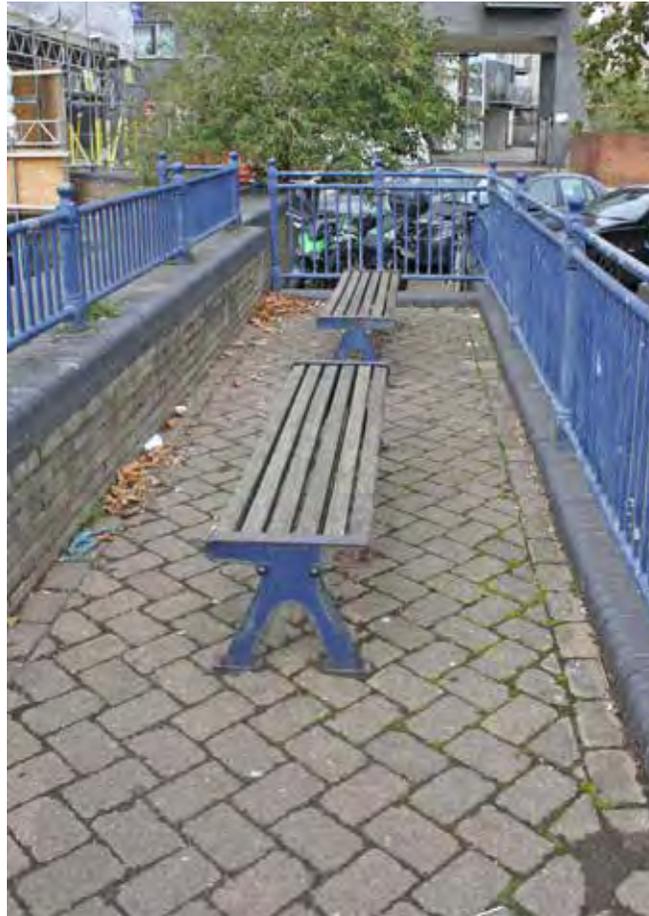
Damage to steps in the Abbey remains; the steps are made from former gravestones.



Damage to the granite setts in front of the Curfew Tower and loss of the feature trees.



Dilapidated seating in Abbey Green.



Outdated and neglected public realm around the Town Quay.



A very poorly positioned broadband cabinet.



Redundant signage in Abbey Green.

6.5 DETRACTING BUILDINGS

As identified in section 5.0, there are a number of buildings in the conservation area which detract from its special interest. These are frequently post-war period buildings which are insensitive in terms of their scale, massing or materiality or detailing to the historic character of the conservation area. These include for example 10-30 East Street and Glebe House on Vicarage Drive. The inclusion of these buildings in the conservation area, whether or not they are fit for purpose, dilutes its special interest. Detracting buildings therefore offer great potential for enhancement of the conservation area either through refurbishment but more likely through their replacement with sensitively-designed buildings which respond better to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



East Street detracts from the conservation area primarily due to the building's horizontal appearance and lack of an active frontage on the upper floors.



Glebe House on Vicarage Drive detracts from the conservation area due to its insensitive massing and appearance.

6.6 SETTING OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

There are some elements of the conservation area's setting, such as busy road noise, that make a negative contribution to the experience of the area, but are beyond the control of the Council and local community to change. There are, however, opportunities to improve the setting of the conservation area through the removal of detracting buildings or features visible from the conservation area when opportunities arise and their replacement with high quality, sensitively designed insertions. There are also opportunities to ensure that protection of the conservation area and its setting is taken into consideration as part of Local Plan preparation and Site Allocations, particularly with regard to the suitability and positioning of tall buildings within the setting of the conservation area.

6.7 CAR PARKING

East Street is pedestrianised allowing it to be free for market stalls on market days and a more pleasant car-free environment for shoppers and other pedestrians. There are periods in the morning and evening when vehicles are able to use the street for loading and unloading the market stalls and for rubbish collection. However despite these restrictions, there remain issues with vehicles parking, sometimes illegally, at both ends of East Street, either on the pedestrianised parts, on the pavement or on the double yellow lines at the south-west end of the street. This causes both visual clutter and physical impediment within the street scene. In addition, the area in front of Elim Church and the adjacent hall on Axe Street, is used for parking despite bollards in place to restrict this. There are also often cars parked on the area of public realm in front of the Curfew Tower. There are opportunities to improve the appearance and experience of the conservation area by enforcing against inconsiderate and illegal parking and this should be considered as part of future car parking strategies.



Cars parked illegally along the pedestrianised East Street.



Cars parked on the public realm in front of the Curfew Tower.

6.8 RAISING AWARENESS OF BARKING'S HISTORY AND SPECIAL INTEREST

It is recognised that there is already interpretative signage and information boards across the conservation area, which primarily provide information about the history and remains of Barking Abbey. There is currently a range of signage which is not consistent in appearance and some of which is dilapidated or has been vandalised. There are opportunities to improve dissemination of the town's history and special interest beyond its associations with the Abbey including the centuries old market and its highly successful fishing industry, as well as information about individual buildings such as the former Magistrates' Court. In addition to this, there is an opportunity to take a holistic approach to interpretative signage across the conservation area which would also be beneficial in terms of appearance but also assist in uniting the different sub-areas of the conservation area and generally raising awareness about the conservation area designation.



The different types of interpretation board within the conservation area.

