

# BECK ROAD CONSERVATION AREA

## APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

HACKNEY COUNCIL  
CONSERVATION  
URBAN DESIGN &  
SUSTAINABILITY  
TEAM



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1.0

# INTRODUCTION

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Designation Background

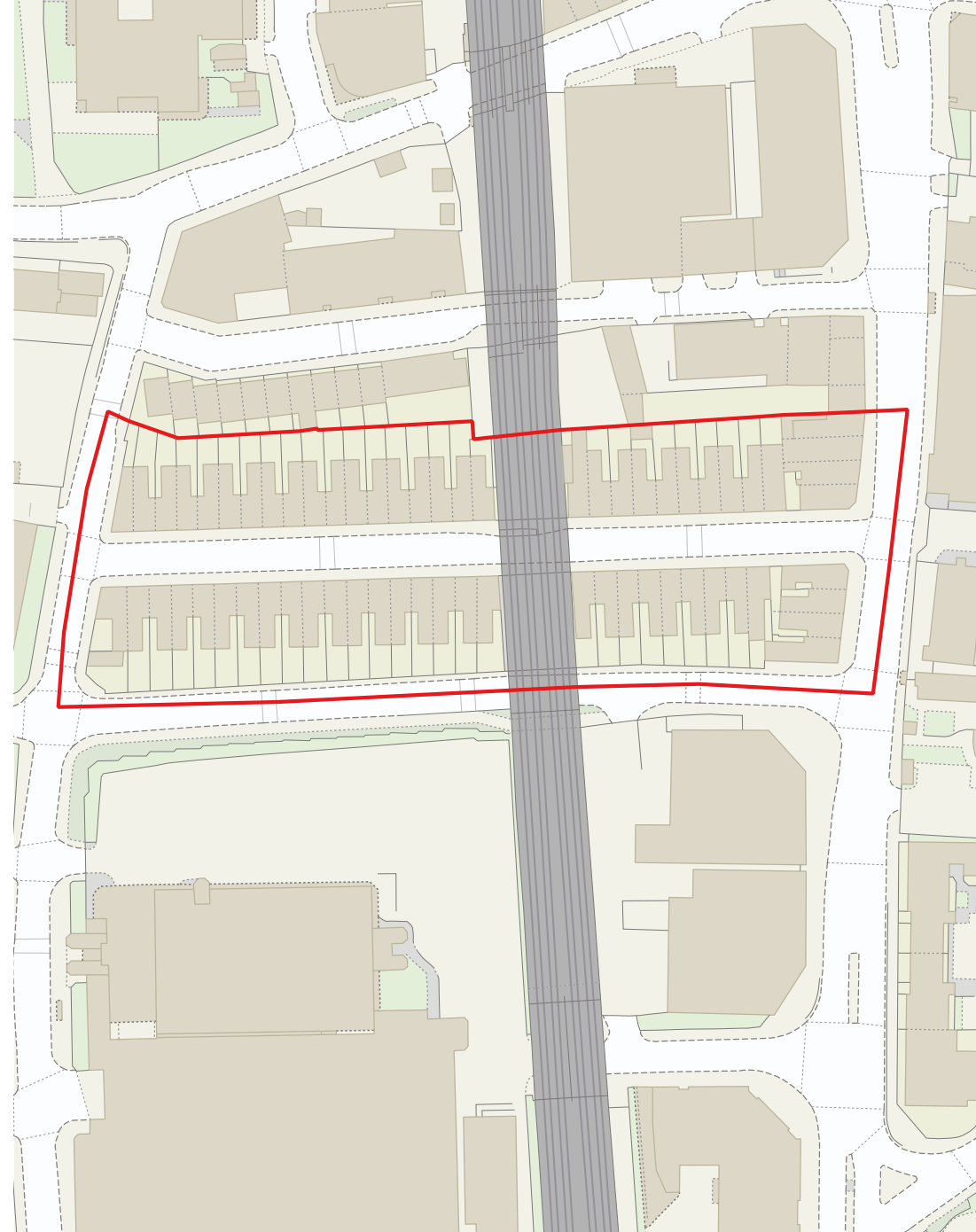
Beck Road was identified as a potential conservation area in the 2017 Conservation Area Review. This identified Beck Road as an attractive street of modest two-storey late 19th century houses, bisected by a railway viaduct. The houses are uniform and intact, with features such as decorative lintels to windows and doors, subdivided timber sash windows, and banded yellow, red and blue brickwork. The houses to the west of the railway have decorative front parapets and those to the east have eaves.

The houses have been subject to some minor small scale alterations that if continued cumulatively will have an impact on the special architectural and historic interest of the street.

## 1.2 What is a Conservation Area

A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Local Planning Authorities have a duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to designate areas of special architectural or historic interest. The Council is also under a duty to review existing Conservation Areas from time to time and to formulate and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement.

Conservation Areas are not single buildings, but groups of buildings and areas, which are of special architectural or historic significance. Because the designation is of an area, significance can include the spaces between buildings and natural features, topography, the historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries and landscape features such as gardens, parks and greens, trees, street furniture and archaeology can all add to significance



*Beck Road Conservation Area Boundary*

### 1.3 Implications of Conservation Area Designation

Conservation Areas enjoy special protection under legislation and both national and local policy and guidance. Planning applications within a Conservation Area must be shown to “preserve or enhance” the character or appearance of the area. Planning Permission is needed to demolish a building in a Conservation Area, and there is a planning presumption in favour of the retention of buildings which make a positive contribution to a Conservation Area.

Certain types of more minor development, particularly in relation to single family dwellings, are subject to Permitted Development rights (under the General Permitted Development Order, 2015, as amended). These Permitted Development rights are more limited in Conservation Areas, and may be removed partially or completely through the use of Article 4 Directions. Trees above a specific size are protected in Conservation Areas. Applicants must give the Council six weeks’ notice in writing before any work is carried out to lop, top or fell a tree in a Conservation Area. There is also greater control over advertisements in Conservation Areas.

### 1.4 National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 provides national guidance. Protecting and enhancing the historic environment is a key component of the NPPF’s drive to achieve sustainable development. Section 16 of the NPPF, ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ sets out the heritage framework in detail in relation to various ‘heritage assets’. Conservation Areas are referred to as designated heritage assets in the NPPF. Although not statutory guidance, Historic England’s document, The Historic Environment in Local Plans (Historic England, 2015) and Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (Historic England, 2019) provide further guidance from the national heritage authority.

### 1.5 Regional Policy

The relevant Regional Spatial Strategy is the Greater London Authority’s London Plan (GLA, 2021) of which the policy HC1 Heritage Conservation and Growth is relevant.

### 1.6 Local Policy

Local borough-wide planning policy is contained within the Hackney Local Plan 2033. This provides specific policies that help protect the area’s special architectural and historic interest including LP1 Design Quality and Local Character, LP3 Designated Heritage Assets, and LP5 Strategic and Local Views. In addition, the forthcoming Future Shoreditch Area Action Plan provides additional area based guidance. These are supported by Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance for example the Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD and the forthcoming Historic Environment Strategy SPD.

## 1.8 Statement of Significance

Beck Road Conservation Area is a rare surviving example of late Victorian two-storey terraces opening directly onto the street, bookended by three-storey shops on Mare Street.

Although an examination of the street indicates that the houses generally have similar footprints, and similar internal layouts, there are two distinct groups of buildings. To the east of the railway viaduct the houses have pitched roofs with gable ends with party walls rising slightly above the roof pitch. These dwellings have central chimneys in both the main part of the building and in the rear projection. To the west, the properties have 'butterfly' or 'London' roofs on the main part of the house concealed from the street by a parapet. Again, the party walls rise above the wings of the roofs. These properties have two chimney stacks for the main part of the building and one on the rear projection.

The houses in the street were compulsorily purchased by the London County Council (LCC) in the period after World War II with the intention of demolishing the houses to make way for a college car park on behalf of the then Inner London Education Authority (ILEA).

Some of the houses, which by then were fairly derelict and lacked basic facilities, were squatted by artists looking for studio space in this part of Hackney (Beckett, 1996). Subsequent to this, the Greater London Council (GLC) granted licences to members of the Acme housing co-operative (made up of artists, musicians and others in the creative arts) to occupy the houses as short life housing. This unusual history and strength of the co-operative has ensured the area's long term preservation. The properties are unusually intact and retain many of the original features such as historic windows and doors.



56 Beck Road

# 2.0 CONTEXT



## 2.0 CONTEXT

### 2.1 Location and Setting

Beck Road is located in the south of Hackney and is in London Fields Ward. The street runs from east to west from its junction with Mare Street in the east and Sheep Lane in the west. The street is in two halves, with the railway viaduct of the Great Eastern Railway running from north to south approximately halfway along the street.

To the north of the houses on the north side of the western part of the street is a 1980's development of two-storey dwelling houses fronting Bocking Street, with a single-storey prefabricated office building to the east. The rear garden of houses on the south side of Beck Road back onto Bush Road, with the Ash Grove bus depot and factories to the south.

The Conservation Area sits to the south of Mare Street Conservation Area and to the east of Broadway Market Conservation Area.

### 2.2 Historical Development

The historic thoroughfare of Mare Street is located to the east of Beck Road. Mare Street was established by 1593 when the Flying Horse Inn was a staging post for travellers. Mare Street and the area of Beck Road largely began development in the eighteenth century, with many of the plots being used for market gardens. In the early 19th century the area now occupied by Beck Road was occupied by Providence House, a large family dwelling, which occupied the space of 2, 4, and 6 Beck Road. It featured a curved driveway up from Mare Street and substantial garden to the rear stretching the entire length of Beck Road.

In 1871 the Liverpool Street to Enfield branch and the Liverpool Street to Chingford branches of the Great Eastern Railway were constructed,



*2019 Aerial Photo of Beck Road Conservation Area*



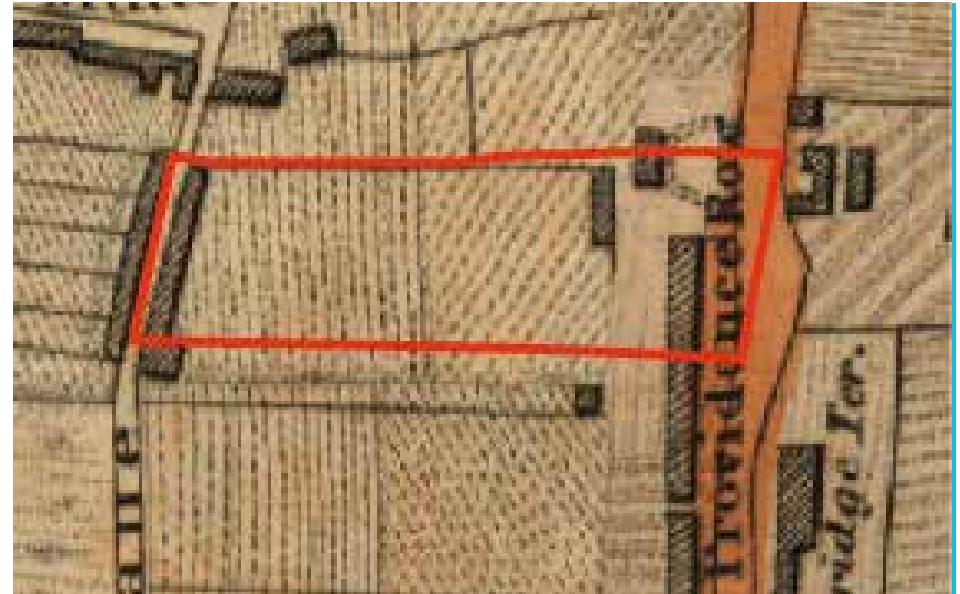
which involved the creation of the viaduct through the garden of Providence House. These were operational by 1872.

In 1891 the land of Beck Road was purchased by Josiah Goodman, a builder and lime merchant of Hackney, from Louis Friedrich Gerhard Stuckenschmidt Esq. Goodman built 56 houses to make homes for 112 families. Drainage maps indicate that the houses were constructed between 1891 and 1892, and the houses with their characteristic plan form appear on the 1890s Ordnance Survey map.

It is likely that the road was named after local hero Joseph Beck (1829-1891), an optician and local councillor. In 1884 he initiated a campaign to save Clissold Park in neighbouring Stoke Newington, one of the last remaining open spaces in Hackney.

Beck Road's residents were first recorded in 1901. 112 dwellings housed artisan workers and families – carvers, dressmakers, bookkeepers, blacksmiths, cabinetmakers and clerks.

The houses were compulsory purchased by the Greater London Council with the intention that the street be demolished to provide a car park. This development did not come forward and a number of ACME residents were able to acquire their short life homes in Beck Road, Hackney from the GLC before its abolition in 1986, when demolition plans were permanently shelved.



*Greenwood 1828 Map with Beck Road Conservation Area overlaid*



*1893 OS Map with Beck Road Conservation Area overlaid*

# 3.0 TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

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### 3.1 Layout and Planform of the Conservation Area

The Beck Road Conservation Area is a linear conservation area occupying a single road on an east-west axis. The east end of the conservation area contains buildings on Mare Street. The terraced buildings are located directly onto the street with no front gardens and all contain half width rear outriggers. There is a high degree of uniformity within the conservation area with even plot widths and depths which provides spatial and architectural cohesion.

### 3.2 Density and Urban Grain

There is an overarching sense of spaciousness within Beck Road as a result of the generous width of the roads and pavements. This is largely derived from the width of the railway viaduct mid-way through the road.

### 3.3 Building Height and Massing

Buildings on Beck Road are two storeys and are notable for the absence of roof extensions. Buildings on Mare Street are three storeys.

### 3.4 Land Uses

Buildings within the Beck Road are residential with the ones on Mare Street being retail to the ground floor with residential to the upper storeys.

### 3.5 Key Views

The east-west axis of Beck Road results in limited key views within the Conservation Area. Linear views along Beck Road are framed by the railway viaduct and create views of interest.



Figure Ground Plan of Beck Road Conservation Area

# 4.0 STREETScape CHARACTER

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Streetscape is the outward facing visual appearance and character of a street or locality

## 4.1 Public Realm and Open Space

The small size of Beck Road Conservation Area results in no open space of note. The road is asphalt with 400x400 concrete blocks on the pavement and granite kerbs. The railway viaduct dominates views along Beck Road with the pedestrianised half-viaduct adding interest to the street scene. The public realm is largely dominated by high levels of on street parking.

The public facing walls to the south of the properties on Beck Road border Bush Road and are approximately 2m high and constructed of a modern buff brick in a flemish bond. This is likely to be contemporary with the Ash Grove bus depot in order to limit the noise from the adjacent bus depot.

## 4.2 Street Furniture

Beck Road is notable for the absence of street furniture with the exception of street lighting and a telegraph pole. The section on Mare Street contains bike racks and two trees.



*View east along Beck Road*



# 5.0 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

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The purpose of this section is to expand on the Statement of Significance in Section 2 and to highlight individual buildings and features that particularly contribute towards the area's character.

## 5.1 General Architectural Character

Beck Road Conservation Area is a rare surviving example of late Victorian two-storey cottages opening directly onto the street, bookended by three-storey shops on Mare Street. Although an examination of the street indicates that the houses generally have similar footprints, and similar internal layouts, there are two distinct groups of buildings. They are constructed of stock brick with red brick detailing and timber sash windows.

## 5.2 Key Architectural Features and Materials

Beck Road is notable for the consistent architectural features and materials, which include:

- Stock brick
- Red and blue brick detailing
- Stone mullions
- Decorative stone lintels
- Dentil cornices (brick and stucco)
- 2 over 2 timber sash windows (with stained glass to ground floor windows)
- Four panelled timber doors



### 5.3 Building Contribution

This section explains the contribution buildings make to the special architectural or historic interest of the area.

#### A) Positive Buildings

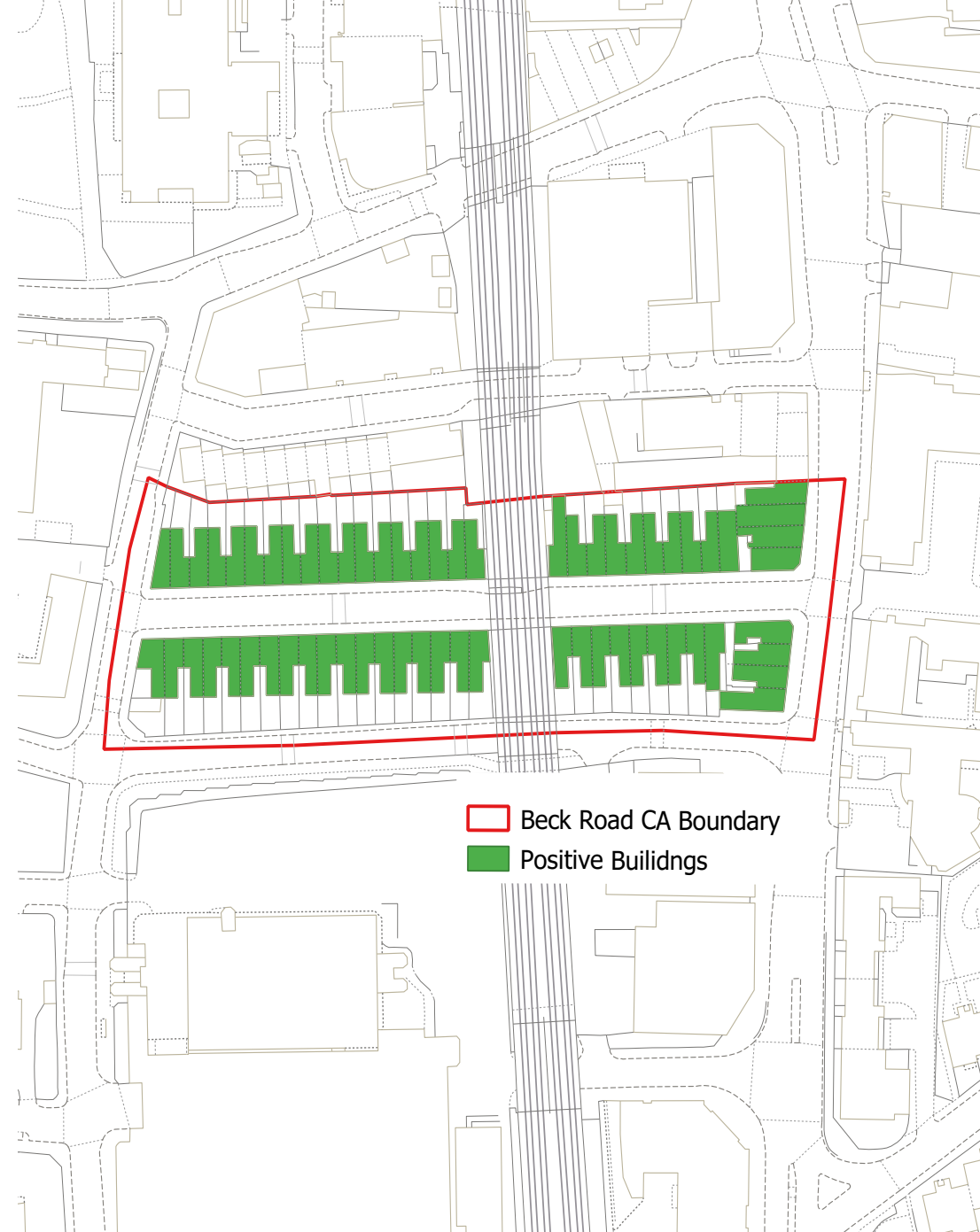
Buildings that positively contribute to the Conservation Area's overall character and appearance. Demolition of these buildings could result in substantial harm. Special attention should be paid towards preserving characteristic architectural details present on these buildings.

#### B) Neutral Buildings

These buildings neither contribute nor actively detract from the Conservation Area's special character. In principle, the loss of these buildings would not be resisted, provided the proposed replacement buildings adhere to the objectives of relevant planning policy and are of a high quality of design commensurate with the Conservation Areas special character.

#### C) Buildings that Detract from the Area's Special Character

Some development detracts from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. In principle, the redevelopment of these sites would be encouraged, provided proposals for their replacement are of a high quality architectural design and would make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.





## 5.4 Architectural Analysis

The purpose of this section is to expand on the Statement of Significance in Section 2 and to highlight individual buildings and features that particularly contribute towards the area's character.

### Beck Road

The road is occupied by terraced properties of which there are two main distinctive groups either side of the railway viaduct.

**2-20 (even) Beck Road and 1-17 (odd) Beck Road:** The properties are two storeys and constructed of a mixture of red and stock brick with blue brick detailing. The ground floor is constructed of red brick with courses of blue bricks providing additional detail. The upper floors are constructed of stock brick with red brick detailing to the windows and distinctive brick cornice. The use of contrasting bricks provides architectural interest and variety within the streetscene.

The windows are all two over two timber sash windows. The ground floor includes handmade small glass panes which decorate the top of the sash windows. The ground floor includes substantial stone mullions with decorative window headers above. First floor windows feature stone window headers above. Front doors are good quality timber four panelled doors. Roofs are pitched and although originally slate, the majority now feature clay tiles. The chunky chimneys are constructed of stock brick with red brick detailing at the edges and projecting courses. All properties include historic rear outriggers with additional chimneys.



*4 Beck Road with pitched roof*

**22-54 (even) Beck Road and 19-53 (odd) Beck Road:** Buildings to the west of the viaduct at first glance appear identical but the subtle variations add to the interest within the street. They are two storeys and constructed with a mixture of red and stock bricks. The buildings are predominantly constructed of stock brick with the use of red brick courses or provide additional interest to the facades. The windows are all two over two timber sash windows. The ground floor includes handmade small glass panes which decorate the top of the sash windows. The ground floor includes substantial stone mullions with decorative window headers above. First floor windows feature stone window headers above. Front doors are good quality timber four panelled doors.

The properties feature butterfly roofs with substantial parapets to the front which includes a dentil cornice. The additional height as a result of the parapet gives the impression of more substantial properties owing to the increased massing when viewed from the street.

**56 Beck Road:** This building contains the same frontage as it's neighbour but is unusual in that it is a wedged shaped property shoehorned into a tightly constrained site. The west elevation contains sash windows with slightly curved brick headers above.

**Rear of 53 Beck Road:** This is a two storey workshop building, likely contemporary with the properties on Beck Road. It is constructed of stock brick with red brick detailing in a simpler more utilitarian style. It has double doors to the ground floor with a red brick arch above.

## Mare Street

**63-77 Mare Street:** The entrance of Beck Road is flanked by two identical three storey late Victorian short terraces with shops to the ground floor and flats above. They are constructed of red brick with contrasting blue brick and stone detailing and canted corners. Windows were originally



*Beck Road with hidden butterfly roof behind chunky parapet*



timber sash but have been replaced with unsympathetic UPVC. There is a chunky parapet to the roof with cornice and butterfly roofs behind. The shops to the ground floor are modern but have retained historic corbels with potential for reinstatement of more appropriate shop fronts in the future.



*63-77 Mare Street*

# 6.0 CONDITION AND THREATS

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## 6.1 General Condition

Beck Road Conservation Area is generally in a good condition with well maintained buildings and a consistent public realm. A number of properties have replaced historic windows and doors with inappropriate replacements such as UPVC which has resulted in some harm to the uniformity of the street. The public realm is well maintained although none of the historic street paving survives.

## 6.2 Key Threats and Negative Issues

- Loss of historic windows, including the distinctive colourful stained glass to ground floor windows and replacement with UPVC
- Pebble dash of historic buildings
- Satellite dishes
- Rendering of chimneys
- Roof extensions that are visible from the public realm
- Loss of architectural features
- Poor quality cement pointing

## 6.3 Condition Survey

A condition survey was carried out in summer 2020 to assess the current street facing elevations of buildings within the conservation area. The survey demonstrated that although there have been some window replacements within Beck Road the majority of properties retain their historic windows which in this area are particularly important due to the colourful stained glass to the ground floor. The vast majority of properties also retain the original four panelled front doors. In order to prevent the further erosion of the area's special interest it is recommended that an Article 4 direction is applied to the conservation area.



*Innapropriate pebble dash render obscuring historic detailing*



*Satellite dishes detract from the conservation area*

# 7.0 MANAGEMENT PLAN

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This Management Plan provides area specific guidelines for development, maintenance and enhancement of the Beck Road Conservation Area. Under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local planning authorities have a statutory duty to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas in their districts from time to time.

This section includes area specific principles that respond to the particular challenges and opportunities for proposed development in the Beck Road Conservation Area. All development proposals should preserve or enhance the Conservation Area's character and appearance and conform to local policies. For advice on whether Planning Permission is required for works please contact the Council.

## 7.1 Article 4 Directions

The properties in the Conservation Area of architectural merit both in their overall design and their architectural detailing. In order to preserve the features that give these streets their special character such as original windows, doors, brick detailing, distinctive porches and the like, the Council is seeking an Article 4 Direction over Beck Road Conservation Area.

Article 4 Directions remove specific permitted development rights as set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended).

The Article 4 Direction will mean that the following development will require planning permission:

Schedule 2, Part 1 Development within the curtilage of a dwelling house

- Class A, enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house
- Class C – other alterations to the roof of a dwelling house
- Class G – chimneys, flues etc on a dwelling house
- Class H – microwave antenna on a dwelling house

Schedule 2, Part 2 Minor Operations

- Class C – exterior painting

## 7.2 Demolition

Planning permission from the Council is required for the demolition of buildings larger than 115 cubic metres within the Conservation Area.

The Council will resist demolition of locally listed buildings and buildings that make a positive contribution to the special character of the Beck Road Conservation Area. Demolition of buildings identified in this document as making a neutral contribution to, or detracting from, the Conservation Area's special character will only be supported where there are acceptable plans for the site following demolition.

## 7.3 New Development

All new development should respect the established layout, siting, height, scale and massing of buildings within the Conservation Area, it should be of a high design quality, that is sympathetic and responds to the area's special character. New development should preserve or enhance the special character of the Conservation Area. Materials should be carefully chosen to complement the Conservation Area's existing palette of materials. There are limited areas for new development within the Conservation Area.

## 7.4 Development Affecting the Setting of Beck Road Conservation Area

All proposed development in close proximity to the Beck Road Conservation Area should seek to preserve and enhance its setting.

All development proposals affecting the setting of the Conservation Area will be assessed against the Historic England guidance document 'The Setting of Heritage Assets.'



## 7.5 Extensions

Front extensions of street facing buildings will not be permitted due to the resultant disruption to the appearance of buildings and the character of the Conservation Area.

The rooflines within the conservation area are currently unbroken and therefore roof extensions that are visible from the street will generally be resisted, due to the disruption in the overall proportions and character of buildings and the resultant dominant massing.

There may be some scope for rear extensions to properties, subject to their subservience to the main building. The Hackney Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD should be consulted for further detailed information.

It is recognised that there have been some unsympathetic roof extensions to buildings in the Conservation Area that occurred prior to its designation. These extensions should not be used as a precedent for further inappropriate extensions.

All proposed extensions should be of a high quality design and materials to complement the area's historic character. Proposed extensions should not disrupt the balance and appearance of distinctive groupings of buildings.

## 7.6 Window Replacement

A significant proportion of properties within the Conservation Area have timber sash windows. If possible, original or replica windows should be retained and repaired. Following advice from a professional joiner, if windows are beyond reasonable repair, then replacements should match the original window design and materials. It is likely that planning permission will be required for proposed replacement windows not in a similar style or materials to the existing windows.

The use of uPVC framed windows as a replacement material for original or traditional style timber windows will not be considered acceptable as their proportions, opening methods, shiny plastic appearance and light reflection are all

at odds with the character of historic buildings. For similar reasons aluminium is also not considered to be an acceptable alternative material to timber fitted framed windows.

To improve the thermal performance of windows the Council recommends that all replacement window units should be slim double glazed with a maximum dimension of 12mm. Alternatively, internal secondary glazing could be installed, which does not require planning permission. Draught proofing around all window frames would also be beneficial and cost effective to maintain thermal performance.

## 7.7 Architectural Features

Key architectural features as defined in Section 5.3 of this document, such as brick chimney stacks, brick banding or contrasting brick detailing should be retained due to the valuable contribution they make to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

## 7.8 Cladding, Rendering or Painting of Walls

Originally exposed brick walls, often part of a building's original design, make an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and should not be clad, rendered or painted. External rendering or painting can also cause problems with damp and condensation.

External cladding or rendering of buildings in Conservation Areas requires planning permission, which is unlikely to be supported. The careful removal of existing paint or render to brickwork is encouraged.

## 7.9 Doors

Historic timber doors should be retained as they are important features that contribute towards the character of the Conservation Area. All necessary replacements should be of timber and of a design that complements the building within which it is situated.

## 7.10 Extraneous Fixtures

Modern extraneous fixtures, including satellite dishes, meter boxes and cabling, should not be visible from the street. The removal of existing fixtures cluttering front elevations is encouraged. However care should be taken to ensure that surfaces affected are repaired.

## 7.11 Shopfronts and Signage

Where buildings are in commercial or community use it is accepted that signage may be required. The Hackney Shopfront Design Guide SPD provides detailed information on the type of signage appropriate within Conservation Areas. This often includes a more muted colour palette and simplified branding limited to simply the name of the shop.

The loss of historic shopfronts will not be considered acceptable. There are a number of historic shopfronts, which make a positive contribution to the architectural and historic interest.

The use of illuminated projecting signs will not be considered acceptable as this will appear incongruous.

## 7.12 Trees

Works to or removal of trees in the Conservation Area require 6 weeks prior notification to the Council.

## 7.13 Design Guidelines

The Council's Residential Extensions & Alterations Supplementary Planning Document gives general guidance on extensions and alterations, which is relevant for properties across the borough. However, to ensure the special character of the Conservation Area is not adversely affected by incremental alterations, the following types of development will generally be resisted by the Council.

- Painting/rendering of unpainted brickwork
- Installation of non-traditional window types/materials (upvc/metal)

- Installation of satellite dishes on street facing elevations
- Installation of window bars or door gates

The Council's Shopfront Design Guide provides general guidance for traditional shopfront styles and is particularly relevant for Conservation Areas. The guidance advocates traditional, well-proportioned timber shopfronts with stall risers, integrated fascias and external lighting.

Both documents can be found on the Council's website, [www.hackney.gov.uk](http://www.hackney.gov.uk)

# 8.0 ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

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Homeowners are encouraged to undertake minor works that will improve the condition and appearance of their properties, which will have a wider positive impact on the Conservation Area as a whole. Much enhancement of buildings and the wider area does not require planning permission; please contact the Council for further advice. The Council welcomes and supports enhancement schemes proposed by property owners or the local community.

## 8.1 Maintenance

Much of the Conservation Area's special character derives from the high number of interesting architectural features present. In order to ensure their long-term survival, regular attention is required to stop them falling into a state of disrepair. The Council therefore recommends that regular maintenance is undertaken to retain the collective value of the attractive features present in the area. If minor repair works are left unattended, it may result in unnecessary decay and damage, which could lead to the need to conduct more complex and expensive repair works that may require planning permission. Basic maintenance recommendations include:

- The regular clearing of debris in gutters and rainwater pipes
- The pruning of vegetation near to buildings
- The re-fixing of loose roof tiles or slates
- The regular re-painting of timber

## 8.2 Repairing, Restoring and Reinstating Architectural Features

The Beck Road Conservation Area could be much enhanced through the repair, restoration or reinstatement of the following damaged or lost architectural features:

- Brick Chimney Stacks
- Timber sash windows
- Timber four-panelled doors
- Cast iron rainwater goods

The use of traditional materials and methods is an important element in preserving the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Re-pointing should be undertaken only when necessary and must be done in an appropriate manner, for example a lime-based mortar must be used in older buildings for reasons of appearance and performance; cement-based mortars are generally inappropriate for historic buildings. Joints should be flush or slightly recessed (not weather struck or raised) and finished and brushed to expose brick edges. In addition the following would also result in an enhancement to the area:

- The re-siting of satellite dishes and TV aerials where their location has a negative impact on the Conservation Area
- The careful stripping of inappropriate paint or render using a non-damaging method to reveal originally exposed brickwork.
- The replacement of non-traditional roofing materials with natural slate tiles
- The removal of UPVC windows and replacement with timber alternatives that are in keeping with the Conservation Area's special character

## 8.3 Proposals for Public Realm

Granite kerbstones survive throughout the area and are a positive feature. These should be retained. Where street surfaces are being replaced high quality materials should be used for example yorkstone.

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