

4 OVERALL CHARACTER





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4.1 OVERARCHING CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

4.1.1 Introduction

Despite a fragmented street pattern and the standardised nature of much of its housing, the Old Kent Road area has a clear identity. It is readily distinguishable from other parts of London. That identity partly reflects the area's long history, with layers of development and rebuilding having made their imprint, but it is also because of the presence of numerous landmark buildings and incidental views towards the skyline of the City of London. The Shard at London Bridge can also be glimpsed from various points in the study area and serves as a reminder of the area's closeness to the heart of the capital.

The area as a whole is unplanned, having grown organically and opportunistically, and to some degree as a response to wartime destruction and slum clearance. However, within the area there are self-contained housing estates that reflect the organisational and economic priorities of their day.

The long and straight course of the Old Kent Road is a major artery from the heart of the city and exerts a powerful influence on the character of the area. This linear quality is its only constant; the width varies and the Road is lined with buildings of almost every form, style, scale and colour. Land uses are equally variable, albeit with retail and residential predominating. Away from the Old Kent Road itself, the area looks north to the communities of Bermondsey, west to Walworth and south to Peckham.

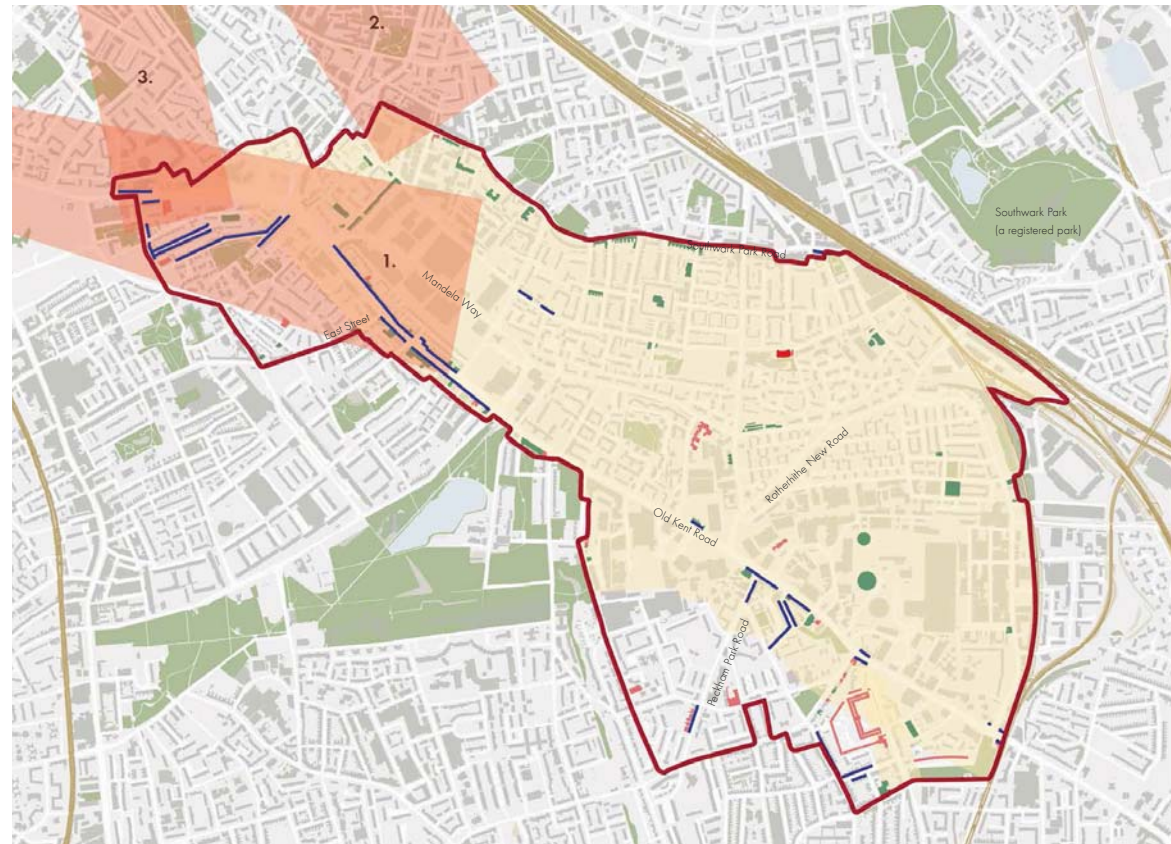
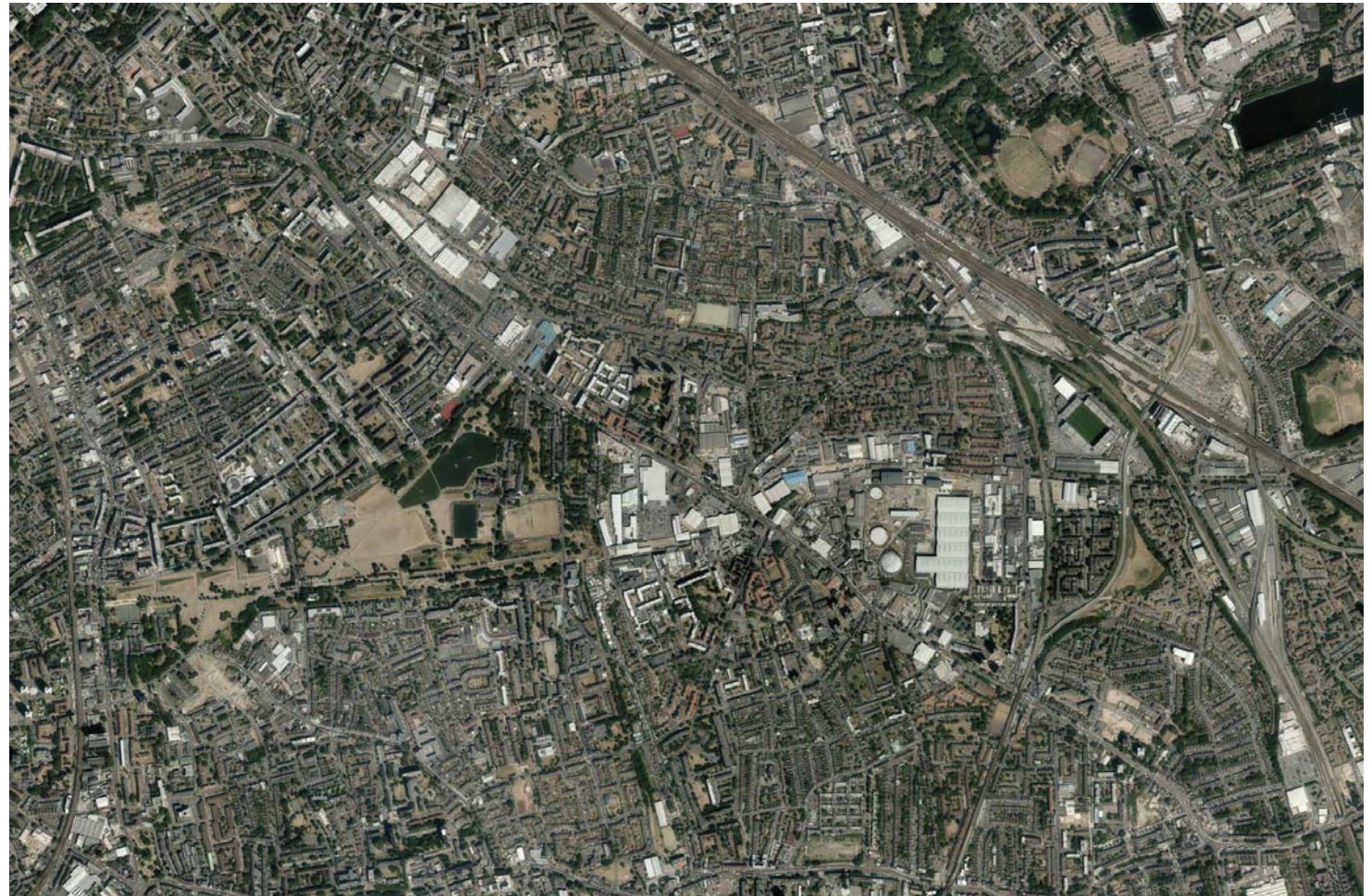


Figure 4.1: Heritage assets

4.1 KEY THEMES

INTRODUCTION

This section of the report provides an assessment of the key issues and identifies the opportunities which could shape how the area evolves in the future. A number of themes have been identified through the work and in consultation with local stakeholders.



COMPARTMENTS OF DEVELOPMENT

The Old Kent Road area is characterised by a series of pockets or compartments of development. This has arisen through a number of factors, some historic and some more recent. As the historical analysis of the development of the area has shown, the railway which once cut through the northern part of the study area still has an impact to this day. Development which sat alongside the railway naturally turned its back on the tracks and sidings. Later development which came in the 1980s, replacing the tracks then also took an inward-facing character. In part this was due to the retention of historic boundary walls which are still in evidence today and tell an interesting story in themselves. In part it also stems from the period in which development trends tended to dictate inward-facing, cul-de-sac forms.

The result of these and other decisions leaves a number of key routes through the area with minimal active frontage. This affects their character, making them less welcoming and less attractive. This in turn has an impact on perceptions of safety. The orientation of the old railway broadly parallel to the Old Kent Road means that the barriers it created cut off significant areas of housing with limited connections south to the main road. These barriers continue to have an impact today and feedback from the consultation event highlighted that many who live north of the Old Kent Road face north towards Southwark Park Road as their preferred local shopping destination. A further aspect which contributes to the sense of distinct cells of development is the number of twentieth century estates, including interwar GLC estates and later post-war developments. These tend to have a unified and distinctive character within themselves and frequently establish their own pedestrian network which does not integrate naturally with the surrounding context. Similarly, areas of industrial development and big box retail, particularly the more modern ones with larger buildings, have not been planned as integrated parts of the townscape and tend to separate themselves from neighbouring areas rather than integrating.

Opportunities

Distinct character areas can be a very positive attribute of an area – they can aid legibility and help to engender a sense of belonging and community. However, as any new development is planned in the Old Kent Road area opportunities should be identified to ensure that these distinct areas are fused successfully together, creating clear, safe and direct routes for people and allowing for more organic change over time.



URBAN GRAIN

Urban areas tend to work well when there is a clear network of interconnected streets and strong building frontages onto them. This creates an environment which promotes walking and cycling. A further factor is the density of the street network. Small urban blocks with a high density of streets - a fine-grained area - create multiple routes and allows people to pick shorter and more direct connections. This promotes easy local connections which help to reinforce the use of local facilities and to reduce reliance on cars.

Some parts of the Old Kent Road area exhibit the best of these characteristics already. The Victorian streets around Thorburn Square are attractive and easy to navigate. Other areas with less cohesive development can often create a very accessible area and plenty of choice in terms of routes. However, these routes can sometimes lack street frontage and overlooking and may not be very legible, leading to issues around perceptions of safety.

A further issue, which is particularly prevalent in the Old Kent Road area is the presence of a number of larger zone which lack good pedestrian permeability. The industrial areas on Mandela Way and around the Southwark integrated waste management facility create major areas with minimal pedestrian connections. Mandela Way is a large swathe of land which runs parallel to the Old Kent Road and only has one weak pedestrian route across it to connect communities with their local centre. Similarly the integrated waste management facility and its surrounding industrial buildings create an impermeable zone which limits access to the Old Kent Road, separating residential areas from what could otherwise be an important centre.

This characteristic is likely to have influenced the character of the Old Kent Road over a number of years. The industrial area in the east has meant that relatively few historic high street elements remain on the northern side of the road and local shops and

services in that part of the Old Kent Road are almost all on the southern side. The gradual encroachment of big box retail which serves a wider car-based catchment further exacerbates the condition.

Opportunities

Any future plans for change in the area should consider the urban grain, and particularly the scale of the blocks in the areas immediately to either side of the Old Kent Road. Certain elements, such as well-established commercial uses on Mandela Way and the integrated waste management facility are unlikely to significantly modified for some time, but there are other areas where more gradual change might be possible. In these cases a clear framework plan is required which sets out a strategy for cohesive delivery of new connections, recognising that some new routes will need to be provided as a series of elements, each brought forward by different land owners and potentially at different times.

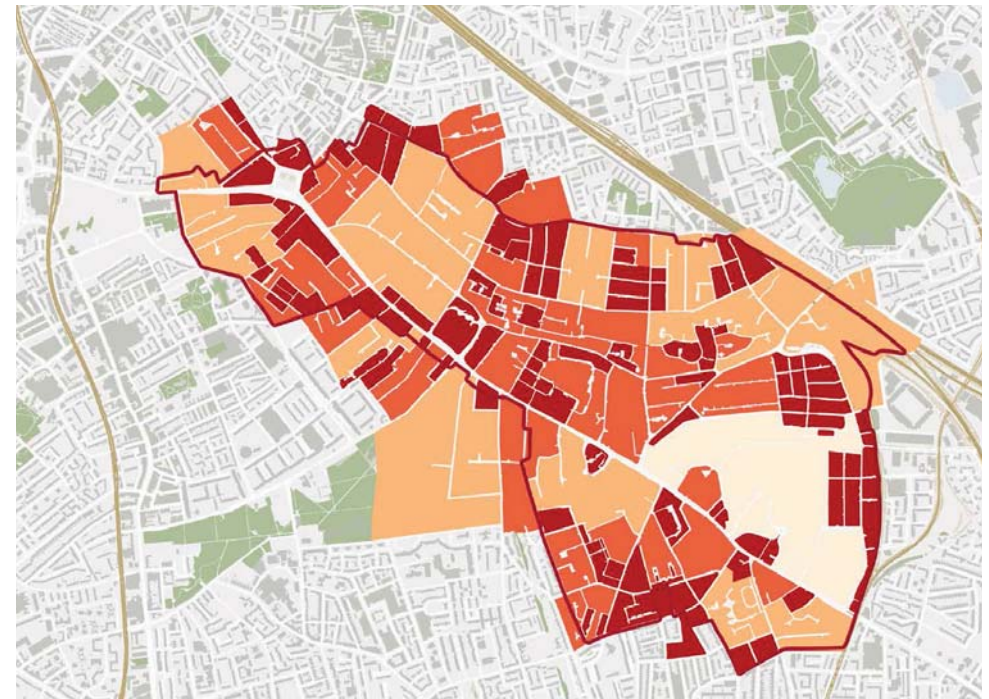
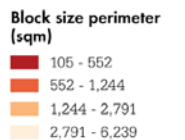


Figure 4.2: Plan showing relative block sizes, highlighting the significant scale of some of the urban blocks in the area



HISTORIC FRAGMENTS AND STORIES

One consequence of the significant levels of change which have happened in the Old Kent Road area, particularly through the twentieth century, is that much historic built fabric has been lost. However, a number of fragments remain, sometimes hanging on tenaciously in the face of major upheaval around them.

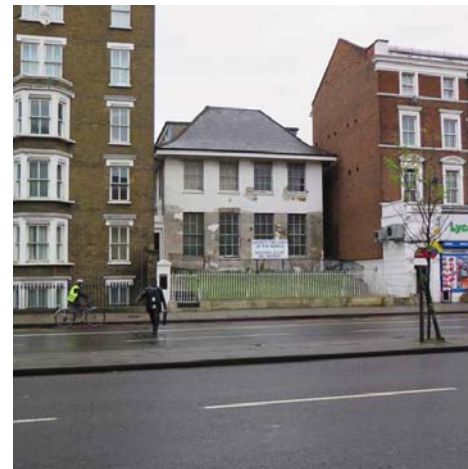
Some of these historic areas, such as the terraces found at the western end of the old Kent Road are very visible and cohesive. Their story can be easily understood and they continue to play a clear role in the form and character of the place. However, many smaller elements, sometimes just one or two buildings, are harder to spot and their stories are harder to discern. These include buildings such as 155 Old Kent Road, the Georgian home of Michael Searles, architect of the Paragon in Blackheath. This stands as the sole remaining villa fronting the Old Kent Road, now surrounded by much denser mansion block housing but hints at the more suburban and affluent character the area once had.

There are also a number of other built features which help to describe the history of the area. The band of older industrial land which cuts across the area from east to west and links towards Burgess Park tracks the line of the canal which used to trace through the area. The tucked away terrace of buildings known as Canal Terrace also bears witness to the legacy of the canal in the area.

The silhouette of the old railway lines is still visible in maps and plans of the area. The abrupt changes in urban grain, the historic boundary walls and features such as the bridge along St James's Road which climbs over the long removed tracks all help to recall its impact.

Opportunities

These historic fragments all play an important part in telling the story of the area, reminding people of the layers of previous industry and community. Many lack statutory protection, particularly the poorer quality buildings along the Old Kent Road itself. They remain vulnerable to demolition, particularly in the event of any major change. Protection and enhancements of these fragments during future development phases would be an important way of anchoring change within the history of the area and retaining important links to the past.



PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Public buildings

The Old Kent Road area has seen substantial change through the twentieth century, with large areas of housing stock replaced and railway and industrial areas gradually being adopted as housing land. In some cases the original street pattern remains as a legible legacy of what has been lost and in other areas even this has gone.

Despite this major change, a number of significant buildings with community or civic value have remained, either in their original use or as converted buildings. The area has a number of imposing Victorian schools, some of which remain in educational use. Similarly there are a number of pubs and churches with a similar story of conversion or retention.

These buildings have remained important beacons of continuity and community identity through very significant upheaval and loss of original streets and homes. In this sense they carry the spirit of the place even if they are no longer in their intended use.

Opportunities

Landmark public buildings such as pubs, churches and schools should be protected as assets for the character of the area, particularly in areas which may face significant change. They act as important anchors for community identity regardless of their listed or non-listed status.



FINE-GRAIN INDUSTRIAL AREAS

The Old Kent Road area benefits from a legacy of older, finer-grain industrial buildings thanks to the railway and canal which used to cut through the area. These buildings, some of which date well back into the nineteenth century are an important asset for a number of reasons.

Firstly, by dint of their age, they were not designed around the car and so achieve a more compact, street-based form than much of the modern industrial development. This street based approach is then important in other ways, particularly in terms of the opportunities to establish good routes and connections which help to integrate areas into their context. Secondly, the street based form is also likely to make the area much more flexible and adaptable over time, allowing for the redevelopment of individual buildings within the context of a wider framework. This helps to make areas of this character resilient and flexible.

Areas such as the Ilderton Road industrial area exhibit classic city-fringe characteristics, mixing regular trading estate and light industrial elements with more creative uses in search of cheap space. Other areas such as the industrial cluster around the Alaska building south of Grange Road have a robust character and scale which is capable of being adapted to suit a number of uses including residential and studio space.

Opportunities

Areas of older and finer grain industrial use are valuable to the area and to the wider city. They tend to be cheaper and more flexible than more modern building stock and so are capable of accommodating a greater diversity of uses, particularly including creative industries. There is an opportunity to consider the way in which this type of space can be retained or reprovided.



BIG BOX DEVELOPMENT

The process of growth and development in the Old Kent Road area has left several areas dominated by large format industrial and retail sheds. As noted above, these create significant barriers in terms of the network of streets within the area. However, they also represent a barrier to change, being inherently less flexible and adaptable than older industrial areas with a more fragmented character.

Modern industrial areas such as Mandela Way are notable for their lack of integration with the surrounding area and the ways in which they block permeability and limit gradual change. The area acts as an important hub for a number of delivery and distribution companies serving central London as well as providing premises and storage for high profile organisations including The National Portrait Gallery and the Tate. A further example is the Southwark integrated waste management facility which has a footprint of almost 3 hectares, supplemented by open operating space and adjoining industrial units. This is a relatively recent development and serves a number of other London Boroughs besides Southwark. It is therefore expected that the potential for change in these areas is likely to be very limited in the short to medium term.

Other large floorplate uses include a range of retail and trade sheds, many of which are located along the Old Kent Road itself. These include several supermarkets, retailers such as Argos, Currys Halfords, Toys R Us, and a number of DIY and trade counter retailers including Selco and B&Q. These buildings have been developed largely on an ad hoc basis, set back from the road and with large areas of surface car parking. They create little street frontage onto the Old Kent Road and draw their trade from a wide area, predominantly as car-based trips.

Opportunities

Large format industrial and retail buildings weaken the character of the area. The consultation workshop identified the need to remove surface parking and low-intensity uses along the Old Kent Road, releasing land for new development and helping to repair the road and its sense of place. In some cases, particularly with supermarkets, the original function may be retained in some form as an active ground floor within a mixed-use development. The elimination of surface parking would allow for much clearer urban form with better streets and spaces. The pressure for change of larger scale industrial uses should be balanced by a realistic approach to provision of infrastructure which has a city-wide benefit.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

This part of London used to be notable for its lack of green space. Through the nineteenth century it became one of the most densely populated areas of London, heavily built-up and with no major park.

During the interwar period new public housing established innovative forms of development with taller buildings interwoven with areas of green space. This pattern continued after the Second World War with development often featuring areas of open space. Many of the estates developed in this area through the twentieth century feature non-traditional layouts of buildings and spaces, with some towers and slabs surrounded by green space. The result can sometimes be green space which is overlooked, but where there is little access and few opportunities for active use.

These pockets of green space dispersed through the area were also complemented by the gradual development of Burgess Park. This was conceived through the Abercrombie Plan in the post war period and gradually realised through the clearance of old streets. Although outside the area of this study it plays an important role in the life of the Old Kent Road.

A further important aspect of the green infrastructure is the role that trees play in the character of the Old Kent Road. The area benefits from the presence of a large number of street trees in a number of forms. The most conventional arrangements are established Victorian streets often with mature trees of some scale. The streets around Thorburn Square provide a strong example for this, and the difference in character between Longley Street with its plane trees and the bare Reverdy Road is striking.

In other areas, new buildings have been developed around historic trees. Beckway Street in the west of the area is a good example where old street trees are now located in a small green space, still tracing the line of the historic street despite the new buildings around them.

A further interesting insight which trees offer is through the distinct change in species and scale of trees planted in modern areas of development. This is particularly evident in the east-west swathe of the former railway land where the age and species of the trees reflects its 1980s development.

A final and significant point in the green infrastructure of the area is that street trees along Old Kent Road continue to play an important role in defining the street itself. As has been noted, there are a number of stretches along the road where industrial or retail development is set back and provides little or no frontage. In these areas the trees play an important role in establishing an element of continuity.

Opportunities

The retention of existing green spaces and trees should be a high priority as part of any future change, particularly given the historic legacy of dense urban development. Street trees and pocket parks are an increasingly important aspect of climate change resilience in new and existing areas. There are also opportunities for new green spaces and particularly for new connections between existing green spaces which have been highlighted through consultation, including the concept of a greenway connecting Burgess Park with Southwark Park to the north broadly along the line of the historic canal route.



IDENTITY AND PLACE

An important aspect of the public consultation workshop was the discussion around sense of place in the Old Kent Road area and the various places with which people identify. Historically the road itself has been an important space, acting as both a through-route on the road to and from London with inns and facilities for travellers but also as a High Street for local residents.

The road remains an important transport artery, and the impact of traffic has gradually increased to the point where it now plays an important role in dictating the character of what happens around it. The western stretch of the road between the Bricklayer's Arms roundabout down to the tip of Burgess Park continues to read as a High Street, with a relatively cohesive and continuous selection of shops and local businesses. This area continues to act as an important centre, drawing people in from the hinterland and providing a clear sense of place. The limiting factors to this are the impact of the traffic which can make the road hard to cross and brings noise and air pollution.

Further east this strong sense of continuity and identity breaks down, with much smaller fragments of traditional high street areas broken up by larger retail parks which serve a car-based catchment rather than the local population. Much of the residential area to the north of the Old Kent Road therefore looks north, towards the shops and facilities on Southwark Park Road which provide a more attractive offer and sense of place.

A further important aspect to character and identity is the role of estates in the development of the area. As has been previously described, these are often relatively inward looking. Coupled with sometimes distinctive architecture this can establish a strong sense of identity within a relatively small area.

Opportunities

The presence of existing strong areas of character and sense of place around the western end of Old Kent Road and Southwark Park Road are important assets which should be supported and nurtured into the future. For the Old Kent Road area there are opportunities to strengthen the centre by tackling the impact of the road and improving connections to the surrounding residential hinterland. Towards the eastern end of the study area, where there is far less by way of established character or identity there may be opportunities for new development to re-establish a sense of place and focus. Any project considering this should work with and integrate the fragments of historic fabric which remain in the area.





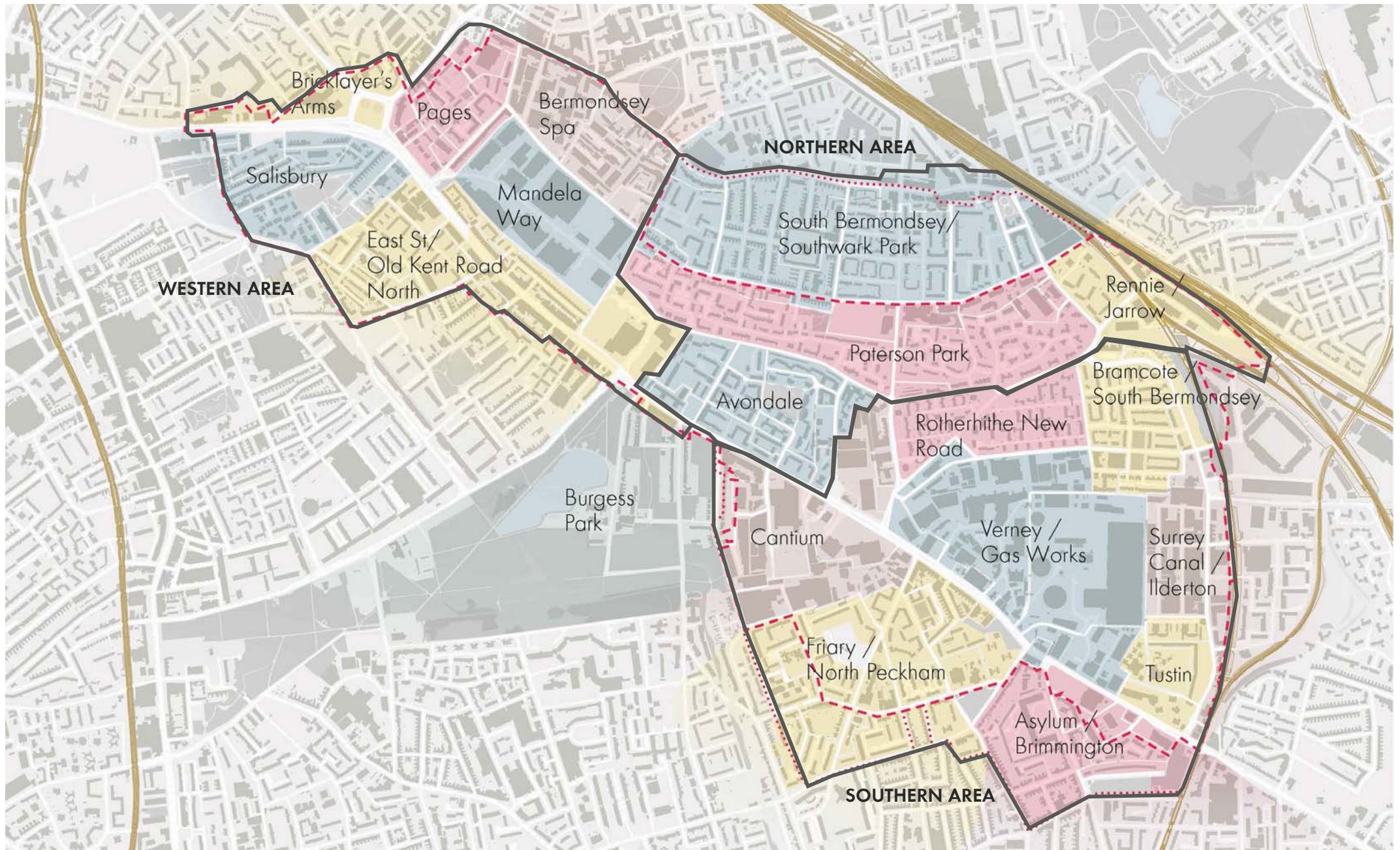


Figure 4.3: Character zones within the three broad areas

4.2 AREA DESCRIPTION

4.2.1 Key areas

The area can be examined in three main tranches; the north end of Old Kent Road, the largely residential area to the south of Southwark Park Road and the large wedge-shaped area to the east of Burgess Park.

Burgess Park is the most substantial green asset in the vicinity. Surrey Square and Coburg Road, important heritage assets, are outside the study area.

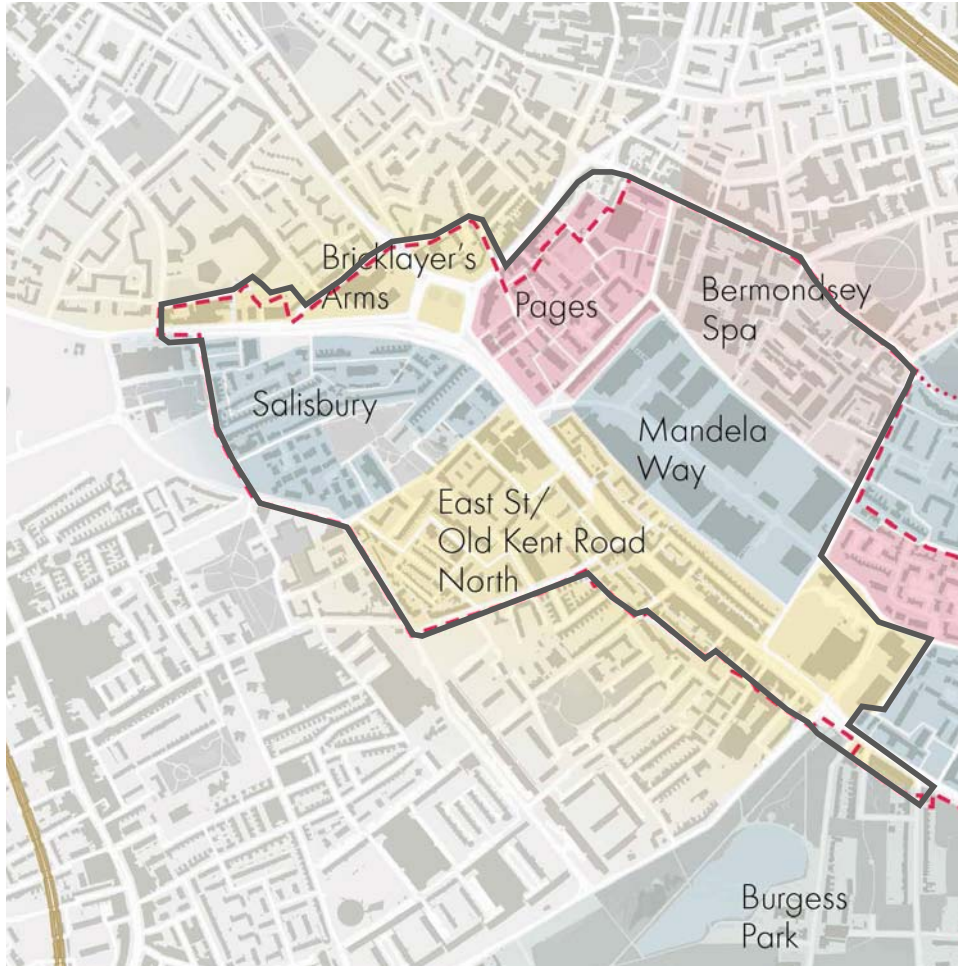


Figure 4.4: Character zones in the western area

4.3 WESTERN AREA

4.3.1 Overview

This part of the study area bears the historical imprint of the old Bricklayers Arms goods station which dominated and divided the locality for more than a century. Most of the area formerly occupied by the station and sidings is now taken up by the Mandela Way industrial estate, with its large, deep plan sheds, although their low profile masks their impact in most views. The units are most prominent on Dunton Road.

The intersection with the New Kent Road, Old Kent Road and Tower Bridge Road (all busy A roads) is manifested as a lozenge-shaped roundabout, a patch of grass and trees bounded by five lanes of traffic. This island combines with the viaduct that sweeps across it to create an intensely urban experience.

Traces of the pre-industrial character of the area are evident in the late 18th century terrace houses on New Kent Road, the beginnings of speculative growth. Fragments also survive on Old Kent Road itself. These initiatives were followed in the mid to late 19th century by the terraces of Henshaw Street and Chatham Street area; then the LCC Board schools, several of which survive to serve as local landmarks. This area is being consolidated by individual, small scale residential development, contemporary in style but generally maintaining the fine grain of the area.

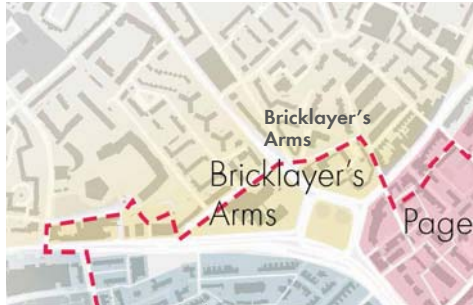
Elsewhere, this fine grain has been disrupted by eight-storey slab blocks from the 1950s including Offham House, Beckway Street that represented a leap in scale.

East Street threads between Old Kent Road and Walworth Road and includes a mix of local shops and flats, with intensive retail use (including the East Street market) at the Walworth end.

Six-storey Industrial housing (tenement) blocks are a major element on the north side of Old Kent Road. For the first half of the 20th century they were the largest buildings in the area, only surpassed after the Second

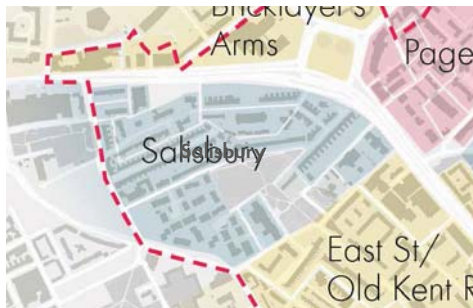
World War by the high rise tower blocks on the new estates.

With the exception of a terrace of redbrick flats, all the properties on Old Kent Road front the road and are entered from the pavement.



Bricklayer's Arms

The starting point of Old Kent road, the area is distinctive for its roundabout and flyover, that connects Old Kent Road with the London Inner Ring Road. The 11 storey tower block on Raphidim Street is located on the side away from the flyover and St. Saviour's and St. Olave's school to the west of the roundabout.



Salisbury

The area is distinct for its diversity, from three-story Victorian terraces on Searle Road, to 1970s low rise apartments on Salisbury Close. It encompasses a park to the south east, and a 1900s redbrick institutional building to the north of the area.



Pages

Page's Walk forms the boundary to the south-east of the area, where modern housing has replaced the old industrial site. Industrial units still remain off Pages Walk. To the west is Leroy Street, an area of mixed housing built after the 1960s.



Bermondsey Spa

Located to the north east of Old Kent Road, the area is partly distinguished by the Rich Industrial estate and low rise modern housing in the Curtis Street area. Butcher Church of England primary school and Kintore Way nursery are also located here.



Mandela Way

A large swathe of Mandela Way comprises of a large number of low-rise industrial and distribution units. Hendre Road is the main pedestrian connection through the Mandela Way trading area to the local centre.



East Street / Old Kent Road North

A large number of postwar municipal housing is located to the north west of East Street. To the south east lies a stretch of Georgian housing on Old Kent Road, rich in detail and distinctive from other housing in the area.





4.3.2 Origins and history

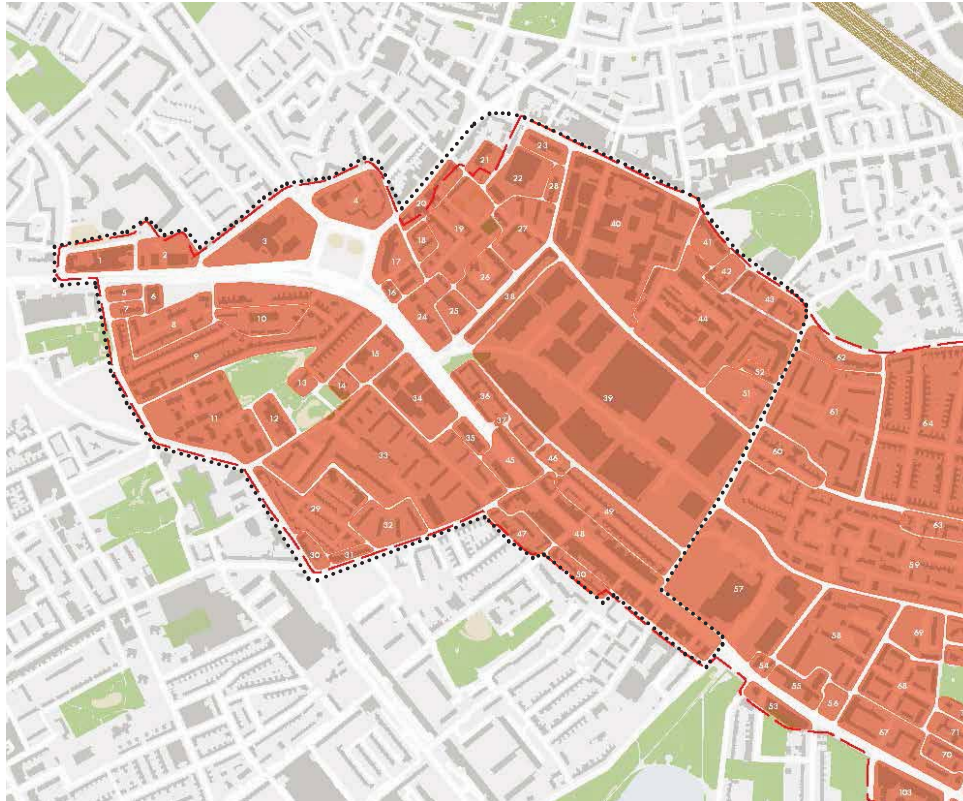
By 1898 the western end of the Old Kent Road is fully developed with terraces and small parcels of buildings squeezed into the older street plan. Schools and churches are shown in black. The dominant elements are the Bricklayers Arms station, the goods shed and the delta of railway lines that serve them. Old Kent Road, wider than other roads, stands out, as does New Kent Road and Searles Crescent. The Industrial Housing tenement blocks on the Old Kent Road stand out.



4.3.3 Structure and movement

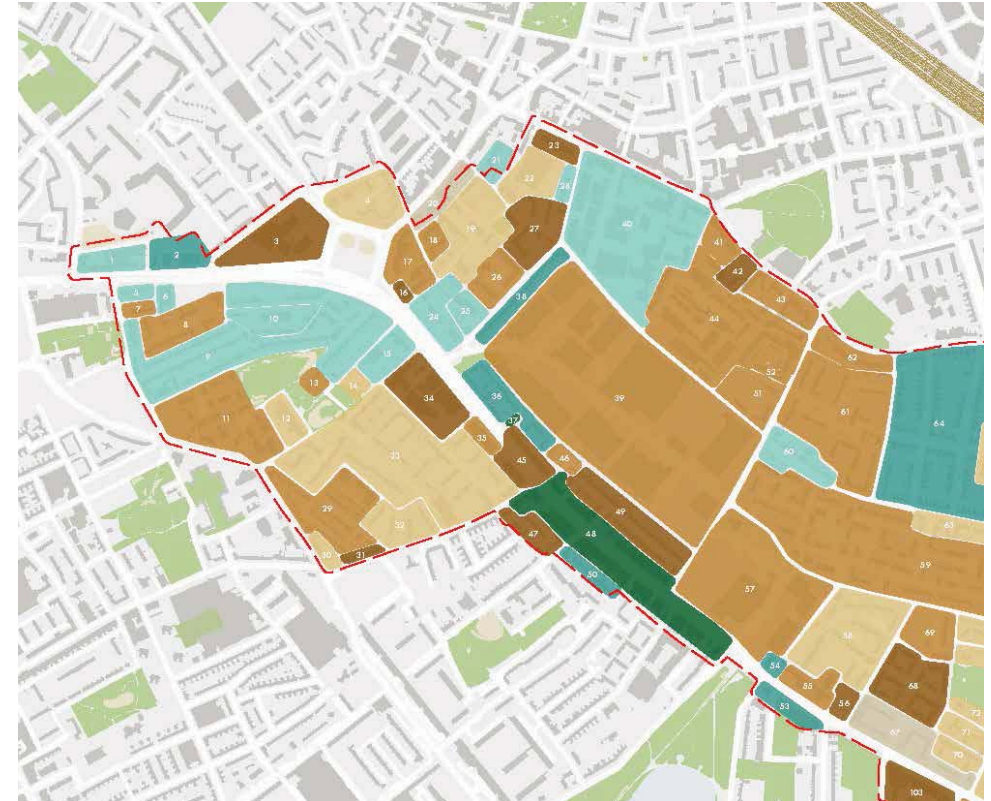
The movement pattern is part of the historic legacy, with the Old Kent Road and New Kent Road maintaining their primacy. Even the Bricklayers Arms roundabout has its origins as a hub in front of the old station, with Tabard Street leading to Southwark (Borough) and Tower Bridge Road to Bermondsey. Southwark Park Road and Willow Walk (leading to Lynton Road) continue as main through routes, with minor roads linking to them. Dunton Road, connecting Southwark Park Road to Old Kent Road, is another long-established route. Areas of poor

connectivity (shown brown on the above plan) are a reflection of the wall-like condition of the development along the main roads and the impact of the flyover development.



4.3.4 Character areas

The character areas are mostly small, reflecting the mix of housing at the western end of the Old Kent Road and the interspersing of other uses, especially retail and schools, that stand out from the housing. The bigger character areas are the more recent areas of housing in Bermondsey and the industrial units at Mandela Way.



4.3.5 Building age

This plan shows the close correlation of building age with the character areas. The oldest area is the centre of Old Kent Road, which still has early 19th century vestiges, albeit altered by later shopfronts. The more recent development reflects the closure of the railway goods yard and the creation of the industrial estate.

- Georgian or earlier: before 1837
- Early- mid Victorian 1837 - 1880
- Late Victorian and Edwardian 1880 - 1918
- Inter-war 1919 - 1945
- Postwar 1945 - 1970
- 1970 - 2000
- 2000 - 2015

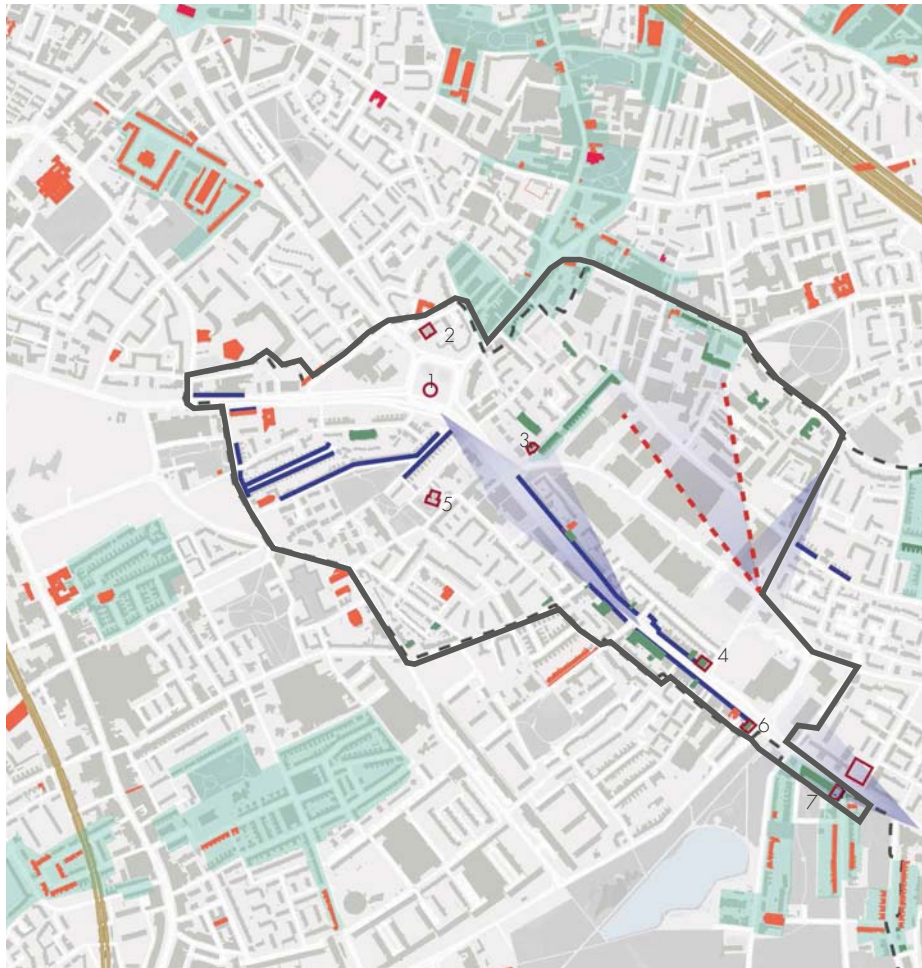


Figure 4.5: Key features and views in the western character section

4.3.6 Landmarks

The following are notable landmarks in the area, supporting wayfinding:

1. Flyover Bricklayers Arms
2. Tower to NW of Bricklayers Arms
3. Primary School, Page's Walk
4. Dun Cow public house – interwar corner pub
5. Tower blocks stand in isolation Mardyke House (Mason Street)
6. Thomas à Becket public house, on the corner of Albany St and Old Kent Road
7. Lord Nelson pub, on the corner of Trafalgar Road and Old Kent Road, terminating a terrace of mid-19th century buildings

4.3.7 Historic features

Historic assets of particular townscape significance include:

- Sequence of 19th century buildings on N and S side of Old Kent Road, with projecting shopfronts
- The White House, Old Kent Road
- Page's Walk (conservation area) fine grained, small scale
- Thomas à Becket public house, on the corner of Albany St and Old Kent Road
- Charlotte Court, Old Kent Road - facing start of flyover
- Peabody Industrial flats (Kingsley, Waleran, Dover)
- Eurotraveller Hotel (194 Old Kent Road) – former store, c.1930
- 19th Century terraces at Chatham Street
- 275 Old Kent Road – 1930s Art Deco facade
- Former Green Man public house (276 Old Kent Road), within a terrace of 19th century houses and shops

4.3.8 Views

Key views into this part of the study area are along New Kent Road towards the historic buildings on its south side, and from the Bricklayers Arms down the Old Kent Road. Local views are principally those along the corridor of the Old Kent Road itself.

The long view north from Old Kent Road towards the Bricklayers Arms flyover is a defining feature of the area today.

The Shard and the towers of the City of London can be seen from Dunton Road and Mandela Way.

4.8.9 Area management principles

There are a number of positive features of this western area which should be sustained and protected as part of any programme of change and where there are opportunities for beneficial enhancement. A number of formal heritage designations already exist, including listed buildings and provisional identification of conservation areas. However, there are a number of other elements which lack statutory protection but which have an element of individual or group value.

Historic fragments

The study has identified a number of incidences where historic fragments exist as remnants from earlier phases of development. In many cases these appear dilapidated, but they remain an important link to earlier phases of development. Their retention and regeneration could play a helpful role in anchoring and new development in its context. In the western area these include:

- the primary school on Page's Walk; and
- Lord Nelson public house at the junction with Trafalgar Avenue.

Key public buildings

As with the historic fragments, there are a number of civic and community buildings such as public houses, churches and schools which act as community anchors. Many Victorian buildings remain in areas which were otherwise cleared and redeveloped in the twentieth century and so have already survived generations of change. Their retention and continued use provides an important strand of community continuity and identity.

In the western area the primary school on Page's Walk is an example of a key public building.

Areas of cohesive form

There are a number of areas covered by the study where there is a very clear and legible street form, contributing to a clear identity and a general character of safe and attractive streets. The wider character area of "Salisbury" which centres on Salisbury Row is a good example of a neighbourhood which has a strong local identity. Local people consider this area to be cohesive, and it illustrates how a variety of different building forms and ages can sit comfortably together around a legible street structure. Broadly, a perimeter block format predominates and this has ensured

the each of the buildings contribute to the wider neighbourhood structure.

Green infrastructure

The area's trees are a major asset. They provide structure and shape to the Old Kent Road where it is left lacking by big box development. They also provide welcome shade and greenery to residential streets which will become increasingly important as an asset for climate change resilience.

The "Salisbury" area benefits from a number of green spaces and tree-lined streets. To the north of Old Kent Road the green character is less evident, particularly in the Mandela Way area. The presence of Burgess Park on the Old Kent Road is understated and has relatively little impact save for a line of street trees. Opportunities to improve the presence and impact of the park on Old Kent Road should be explored.

City fringe industry

Areas of smaller scale and often older industrial areas are an important part of the city fringe. They provide cheaper flexible space for a range of uses whilst the street-based built form is relatively well-suited to gradual organic change and development.

The Mandela Way Industrial area is a major presence in this northern area and is dominated by much larger formats than those found elsewhere in the study area. To the north of Mandela Way, estates such as the Rich Estate make an important contribution to the land use mix in the area, whilst also supporting a good quality street environment through more active and articulated frontages

4.4 NORTHERN AREA

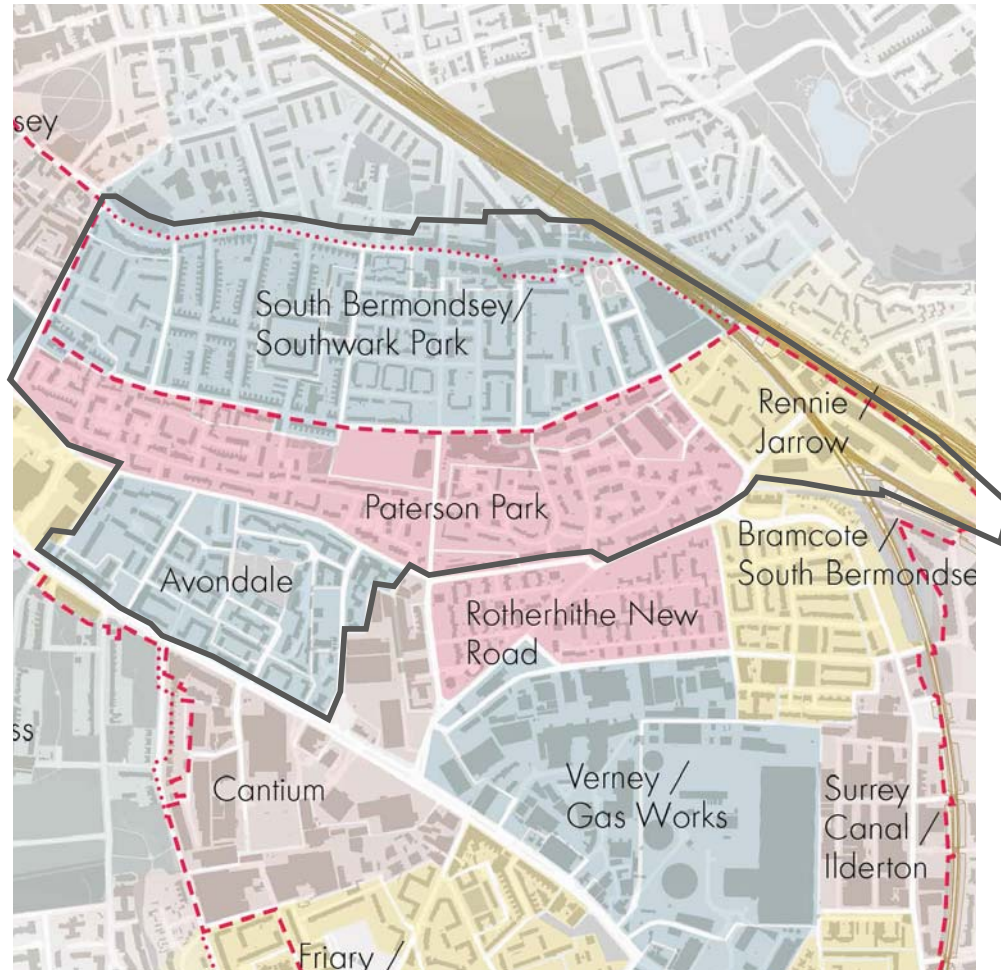


Figure 4.6: Character zones in the northern area

4.4.1 Overview

This part of the study area is characterised by low-rise housing, terraces and apartment blocks, but historically has looked towards Bermondsey, with its former factories for food processing and leather working, as well as the Surrey Docks. Lynton Road is the curving spine of the area and serves as a threshold between the rectilinear grid of Victorian houses around Thorburn Square and the much looser, more dispersed layouts to the south, built after the closure of the railway sidings. To the north the serpentine Southwark Park Road, a busier road, has local shops at the top of St James's Road and at its eastern end. Most of the houses are mid or late 20th century but there are early Victorian villas north of the Square.

The treelined St James's Road runs north-south, joining Southwark Park Road to Old Kent Road, with small-scale industry at the southern end.

There is a contrast in form as well as age between the various housing. The Victorian streets are laid out as straight terraces, back to back, with private gardens between. The fronts of the terraces are highly unified in their scale, style and materials, establishing strong rhythms. Even the rebuilt Thorburn Square maintains this disciplined arrangement, but with the flats facing outwards, as well as into the Square.

More recent housing is consciously looser and informal, reflecting an effort to reduce through traffic and lower vehicle speeds. Aesthetic considerations – perhaps a reaction against the modernist, large scale expression of the 1960s estates – may have been another factor.



South Bermondsey / Southwark Place

Dunton Road marks the boundary to the west of the area and Lynton Road to the south. The area is notable for Thorburn Square and the surrounding Fort Road area, a grid of attractive mid-Victorian terraces. The Simms Road area to the east is distinguished for its two-storey red brick housing built in the 1980s.



Paterson Park

The area is characterised by a mix of 1970s and 1980s residential units, namely Oxley Close, Bushwood Drive and Sheppard Drive, and listed Victorian buildings such as the former St. Augustine's Church and Galleywell Road School. The City of London Academy is also located in the Paterson Park area.



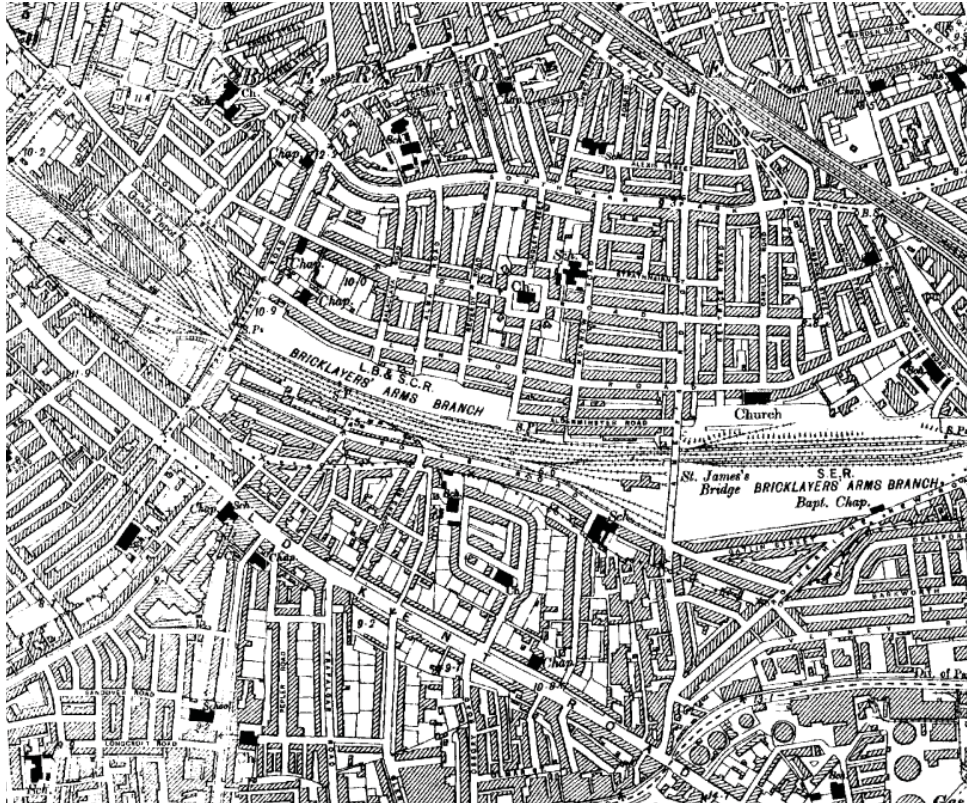
Rennie / Jarrow

Rennie Estate characterises the area with its residential towers and communal gardens. Bermondsey Trading Estate and South Bermondsey Railway Station are also situated here, with three-storey office units backing onto the railway viaduct.



Avondale

Rolls Road forms the northern boundary of Avondale. Avondale Square is in the centre, and has a rich history as the largest of the Corporation of London housing estates. To the north are three 20 storey tower blocks built in the 1960s. Rowcross Street and Coopers Road Estate is also a significant residential estate dating from the 1960s. It is adjacent to the large Tesco superstore, located to the west of Avondale.



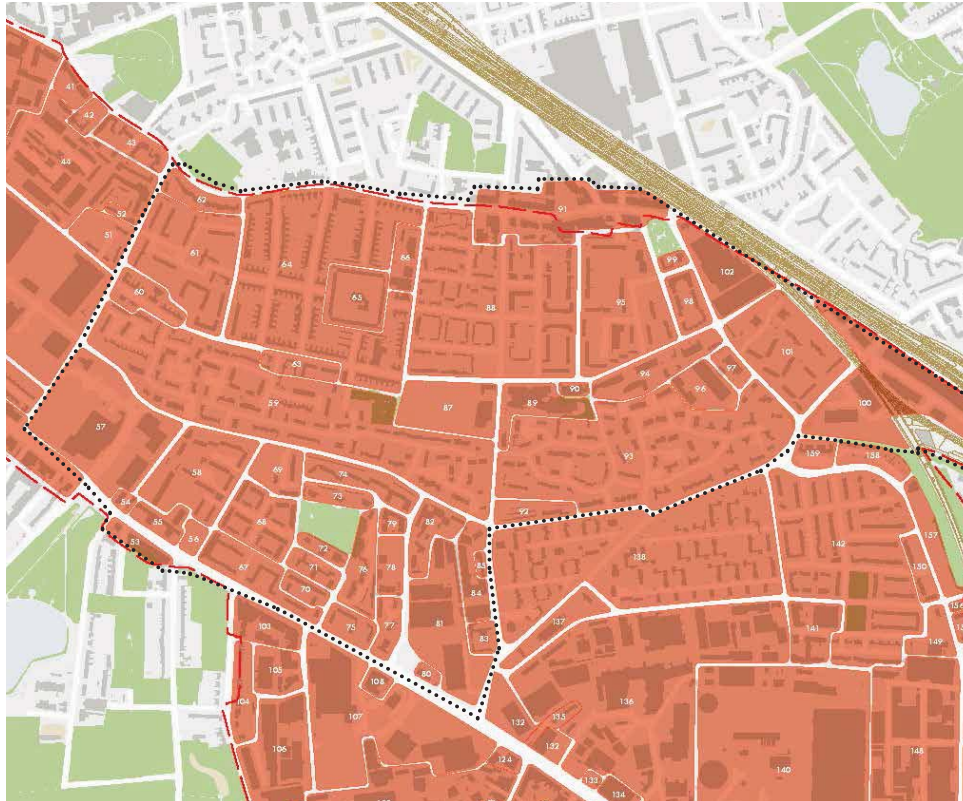
4.4.2 Origins and history

Three structural elements are evident in the 1898 plan: the line of the Old Kent Road, the Bricklayers Arms Branch and sidings, and to the north, the South-east Railway into London Bridge. The serpentine line of Southwark Park Road is shown, with the grid of streets around Thorburn Square. The only connections to the Old Kent Road are Grange Road (now Dunton Road) and James Road.



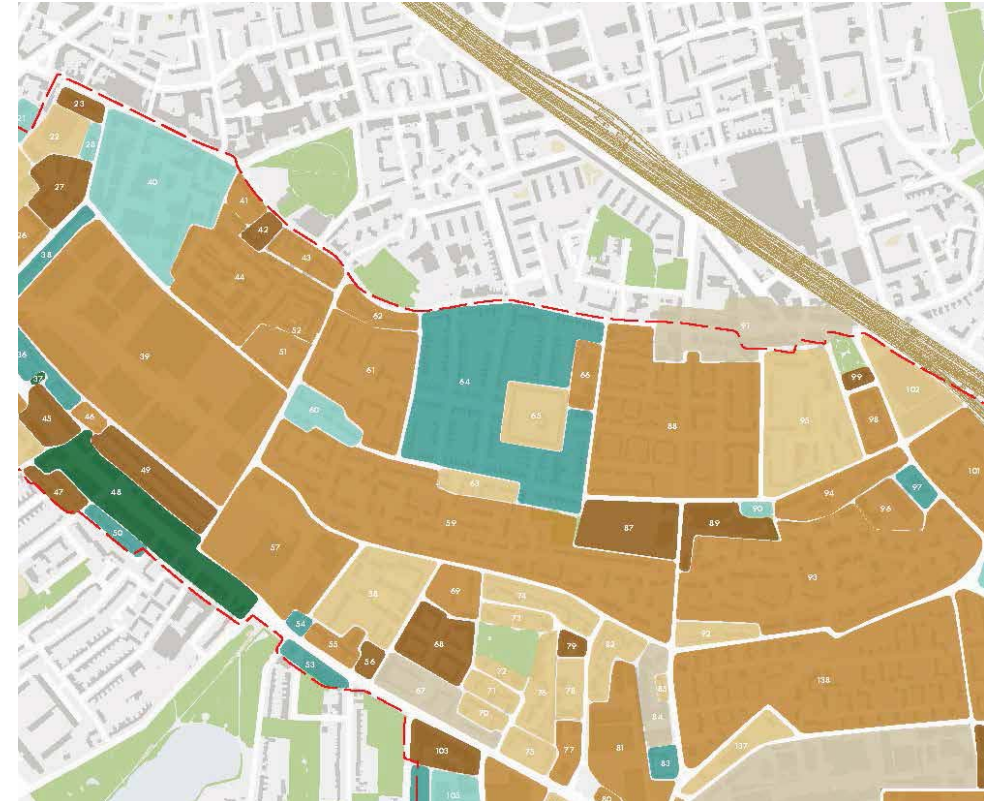
4.4.3 Structure and movement

The legacy of the Bricklayers Arms railway lines is still evident, with Dunton Road, St James's Road and Ilderton Road as the only through roads connecting to the Old Kent Road. The formal grid of terraces around Thorburn Square has been preserved, but to the south of Lynton Road the housing on the old railway lands is much more dispersed and informal. To the east and west of Thorburn Square, the estates are poorly connected to their surroundings.



4.4.4 Character areas

The northern section is dominated by larger character areas, a result of the manner in which the area evolved with large pieces released for residential development following the removal of the rail line.



4.4.5 Building age

The northern section has far less historic fabric than elsewhere in the study area, with much of the land developed following the closure of the rail line into the Bricklayers Arms goods yard.

Thorburn Square was rebuilt around the church in the 1960s but the streets that extend from it are mid-Victorian. A few clusters on Lynton Road are from the same period and there are also individual 19th century buildings on Ilderton Road.



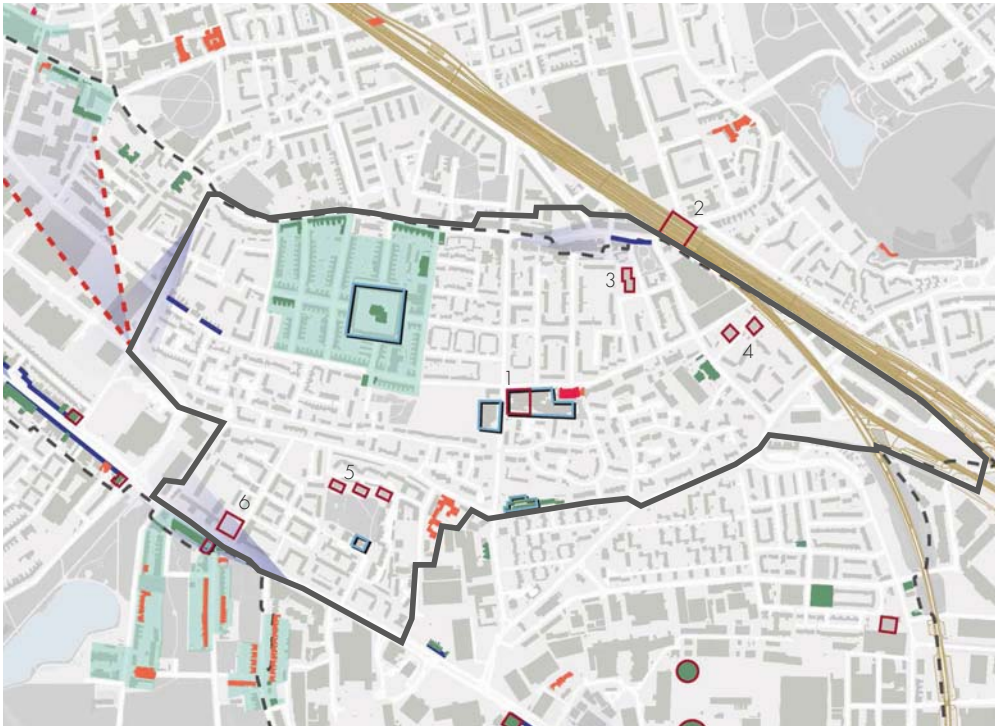


Figure 4.7: Key features and views in the northern character section



4.4.6 Landmarks

The following are notable landmarks in the area, supporting wayfinding:

1. City of London Academy, Lynton Road –assertive contemporary design
2. Railway bridge and brick arches on Southwark Park Road
3. 12 storey slab blocks, Anchor Street
4. Two 14 storey towers (Trevithick House and Landmann House) on the Rennie Estate
5. Three 20 storey towers of the Avondale Square Estate (West Point, Centre Point and East Point) distinguished by their open top loggia frames
6. New Fire Station on Old Kent Road

4.4.7 Historic features

Historic assets of particular townscape significance include:

- Thorburn Square and surroundings
- Queen Victoria public house, Southwark Park Road
- Southwark Park Primary School
- Southern Railway stables
- Former St Augustine's Church, Lynton Road

4.4.8 Views

The view along Southwark Park Road to the railway bridge contributes to the legibility of the area.

4.4.9 Area management principles

There are a number of positive features of the Old Kent Road area which should be sustained and protected as part of any programme of change and where there are opportunities for beneficial enhancement. A number of formal heritage designations already exist, including listed buildings and provisional identification of conservation areas. However, there are a number of other elements which lack statutory protection but which have an element of individual or group value.

Historic fragments

The study has identified a number of incidences where historic fragments exist as remnants from earlier phases of development. In many cases these appear dilapidated, but they remain an important link to earlier phases of development. Their retention and regeneration could play a helpful role in anchoring and new development in its context. In the northern area these include:

- the southern railway stables
- Former St Augustine's Church, Lynton Road; and
- Queen Victoria public house, Southwark Park Road.

Key public buildings

As with the historic fragments, there are a number of civic and community buildings such as public houses, churches and schools which act as community anchors. Many Victorian buildings remain in areas which were otherwise cleared and redeveloped in the twentieth century and so have already survived generations of change. Their retention and continued use provides an important strand of community continuity and identity.

In the northern area the City of London Academy is local landmark and a strong building within the area. Southwark Park primary school is also an important public building in this area.

Areas of cohesive form

There are a number of areas covered by the study where there is a very clear and legible street form, contributing to a clear identity and a general character of safe and attractive streets. The Victorian streets around Thorburn Square can be easily identified as an example of this principle, but the extension of those principles through the modern housing area to the east demonstrates that different phases of development can be structured to work together in a cohesive way. The more recent development on the former railway land is

dominated by more inward-looking street patterns. Indeed, the former walls lining the railway still exist in parts of the area and this significantly limits the connections across and between different parts of the area. Opportunities to draw new connections through these areas would have wide benefits for surrounding communities.

Green infrastructure

The study area's trees are a major asset. They also provide welcome shade and greenery to residential streets which will become increasingly important as an asset for climate change resilience. In the northern area there is much less incidence of mature street trees and historic parks due to the evolution of this part of the study area. The redevelopment of the former railway land in the late 20th Century means there are relatively few streets with large mature street trees. Paterson Park is the main example of local green space. Opportunities to introduce more street trees and new spaces should be explored to strengthen the character of this area.

City fringe industry

Areas of smaller scale and often older industrial areas are an important part of the city fringe. They provide cheaper flexible space for a range of uses whilst the street-based built form is relatively well-suited to gradual organic change and development. The industrial areas associated with the railway line and arches are an important feature in the area. The Jerwood Industrial Estate has a positive role in the local character of the northern area and opportunities to support and further strengthen this should be explored.

4.5 SOUTHERN AREA

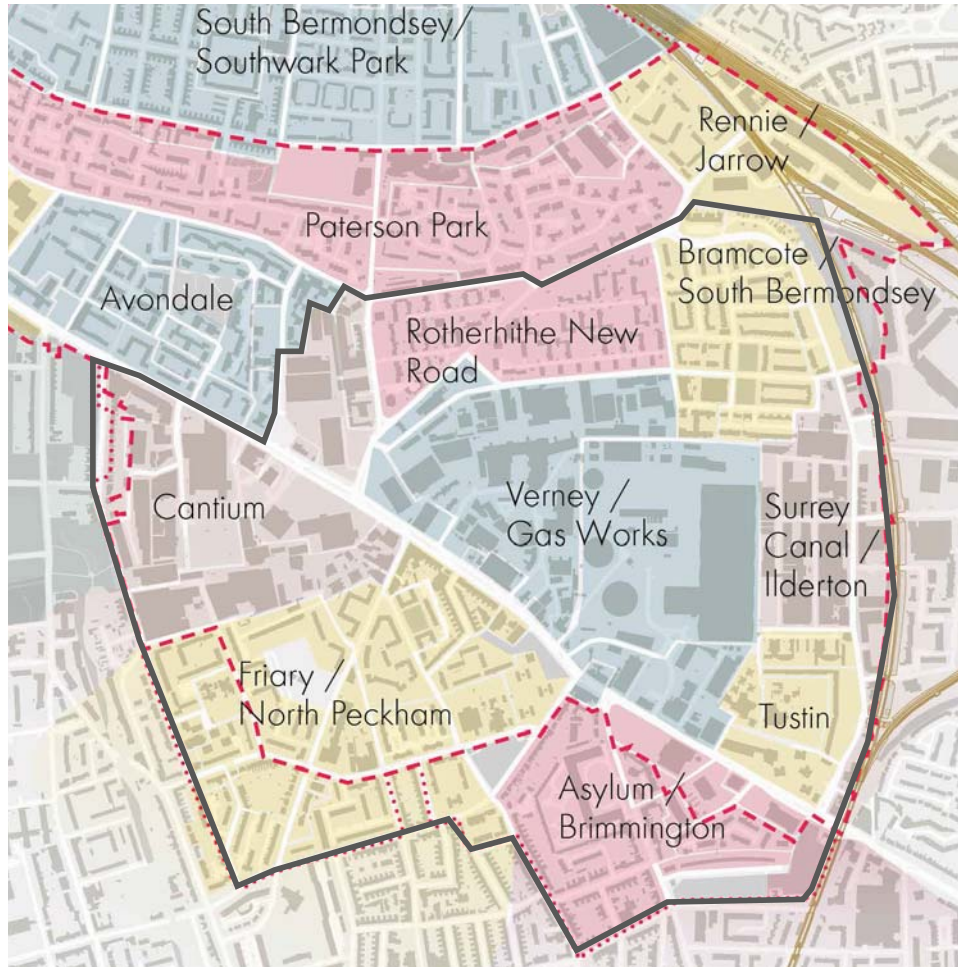


Figure 4.8: Character zones in the southern area

4.5.1 Overview

The character and form of this sub-area is influenced by the shape of the canal, governing the location of industry in the 19th Century especially the gasworks. Burgess Park, itself shaped by the canal and the streets that once stood here is another defining factor.

The area includes an historic enclave around the former Licenced Victuallers Asylum and Caroline Gardens, which has a pronounced collegiate character with low ranges of dwellings enclosing lawns. Asylum Road is part of the historic identity, with 19th Century houses and street trees making an important contribution to the amenity of the area.

The mid-20th Century LCC mansion blocks off Commercial Road (Friary Estate) are characteristic of their type and period; sturdy, Georgian - styled designs in grey brick with tile roofs, within open gardens.

Ilderton Road, a thread of industrial buildings following the curve of the railway line, interspersed with residential development and a scatter of historic buildings including two churches.

Rotherhithe New Road, laid out in the 1860s is wide and heavily trafficked, with terraces and flats set back and at an angle to it. Verney Road to the south, which ran parallel to the Surrey Canal separates the housing from industry.

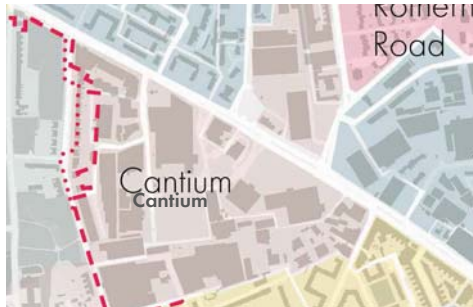
Housing south of Rotherhithe New Road built in the 1970s is typically arranged in L or S shaped blocks, interspersed with gardens, play areas and parking courts.

The junction of the Old Kent Road with Humphrey Street (opposite Albany Road) is weak and unresolved, with no enclosure and a poor pedestrian environment. It provides a poor setting for the Thomas à Becket pub.

The "big box" retail units on both sides of the Old Kent Road are fronted by shapeless, vehicle dominated spaces, uninviting for those on foot. With their big illuminated signs, the development is more strongly associated with out-of-town retail parks.

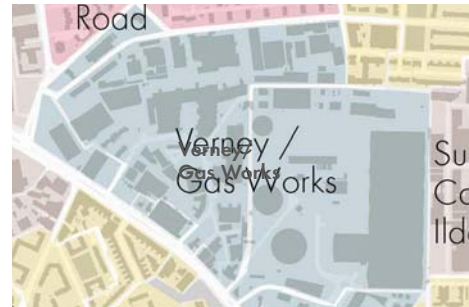
The Southwark integrated waste management facility is a very large building, generating significant traffic with access from Old Kent Road, and is a substantial footprint, presenting an impermeable element in the townscape but the shallow roof form minimises their impact.

Trees on the Old Kent Road soften the street scene and bring seasonal colour. They help to reduce the perceived width of the road and may also mitigate noise and pollution to a degree.



Cantium

The Cantium Retail Park comprises an Asda supermarket and other retail sheds and contributes to the bulkier urban grain of the area. It is further distinguished by Livesey Place, a band of industrial buildings. Located on Old Kent Road is the former North Peckham Civic Centre, with a mosaic mural depicting the history of Old Kent Road.



Verney/Gas Works

The waste transfer station is a unique feature of the eastern area of Old Kent Road. The gasholders date from the late 1890s and form major landmarks in the local area. To the west, Verney Road and Kent Park Industrial Estates contribute to the urban fabric of the area.



Friary/North Peckham

The area is largely the Friary Estate, dating back to the 1950s and built on the site of Leyton Square which was destroyed by wartime action. Bird in Bush Road runs through the centre with clusters of 1980s residential units and Victorian houses. The boundary to the east is marked by Bird in Bush park.



Rotherhithe New

Rotherhithe New Road runs diagonally through the area, with Sherwood Gardens to the west and Masters Drive to the east. These residential units are laid out in short blocks interlocking around public space, designed to discourage through-traffic. They were built in the 1970s and 1980s.



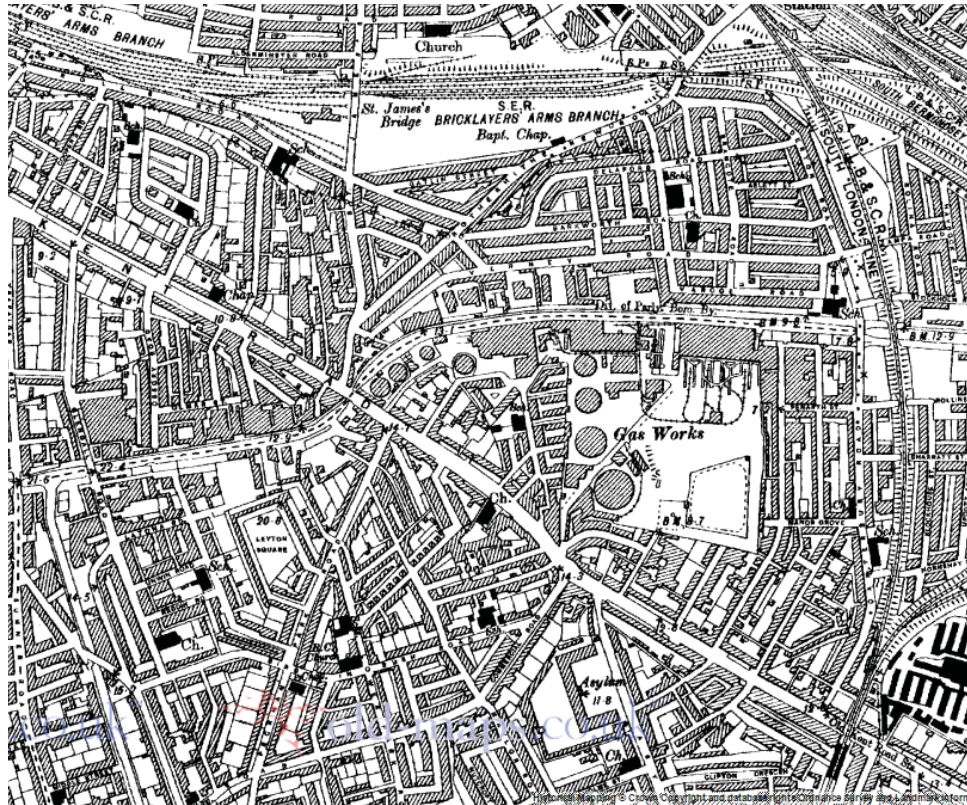
Asylum/Brimmington

The area is characterised by a high concentration of historic assets, including the former Licensed Victuallers Asylum and Caroline Gardens. The 19th Century houses on Asylum Road contribute to this historic identity. The Brimmington Park sports pitches follow the boundary of the rail line to the south-east of the area.



Bramcote/South Bermondsey

Ilderton Road curves around the east edge of the area with local shops, a primary school and builders yard, and HGV storage which backs onto the railway viaduct. Bramcote Grove, to the west of the area, comprises of two-storey residential terraces in parallel blocks. Bramcote Park is a large green space at the heart of the estate.



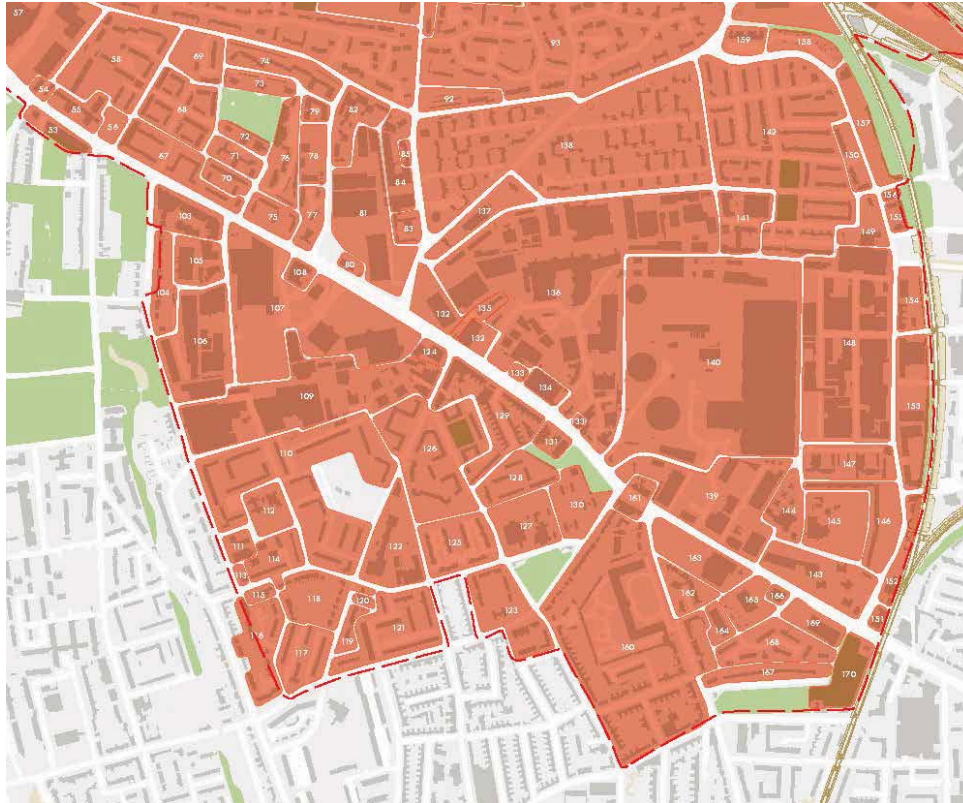
4.5.2 Origins and history

In 1898 the congested, almost chaotic nature of the southern part of the Old Kent Road was evident. In addition to the main road and the two railway corridors, the earlier Surrey Canal has exerted an influence, with industry (notably the gasworks) pressed up against its southern bank. Rotherhithe New Road, Peckham Park Road, Commercial Road and Asylum Road are the other principal streets. The Old Kent Road is continuously built up with Leyton Square and the Licensed Victuallers Asylum as the main set pieces.



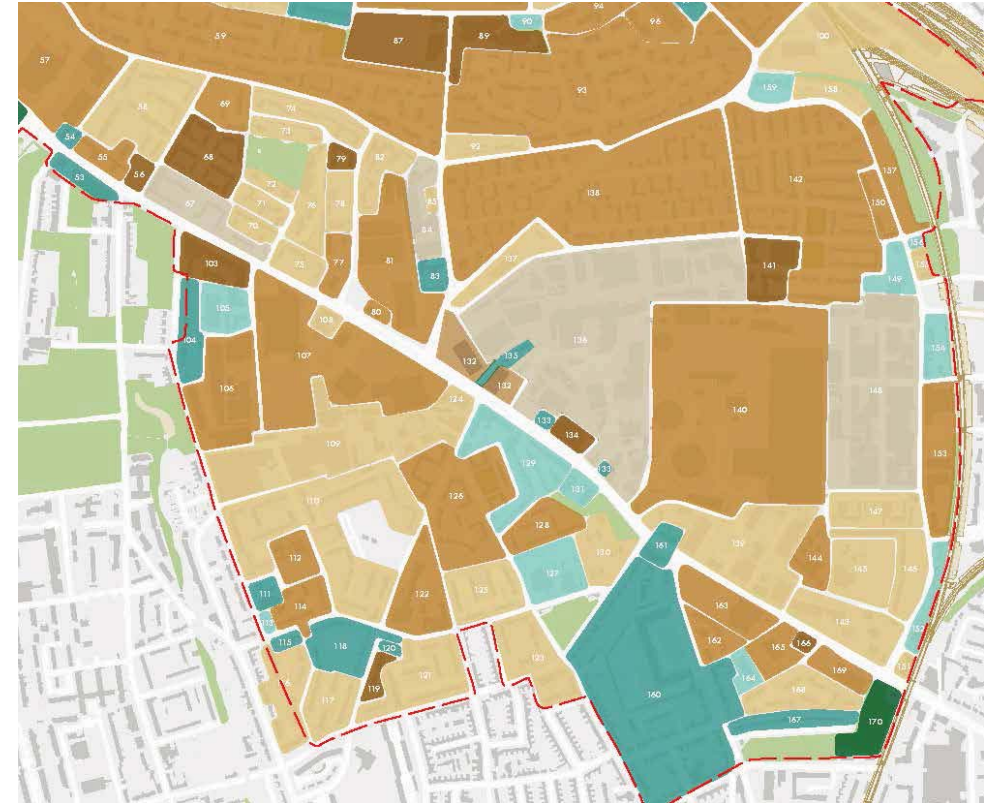
4.5.3 Structure and movement

The areas of poorest connectivity are those former industrial areas close to the canal or on the railway lands. The main thoroughfares are those shown on the 19th century maps, even where most of the buildings have long since been replaced. The figure ground shows the contrasting footprints of the buildings, with large buildings in open spaces following the line of the canal (including the retail stores on Old Kent Road).



4.5.4 Character areas

The size of the character areas are very mixed in this zone. Historic fragments occur throughout which create very small pieces alongside large expanses of industrial areas.



4.5.5 Building age

The former Asylum complex and its surroundings stands out as the oldest substantial part of the study area but as elsewhere there are 19th century survivals dotted around the area, especially churches, schools and pubs. The industrial areas are of mixed ages, with old buildings being extensively remodelled and extended, while the housing estates, pre-war and post-war, are relatively homogenous.



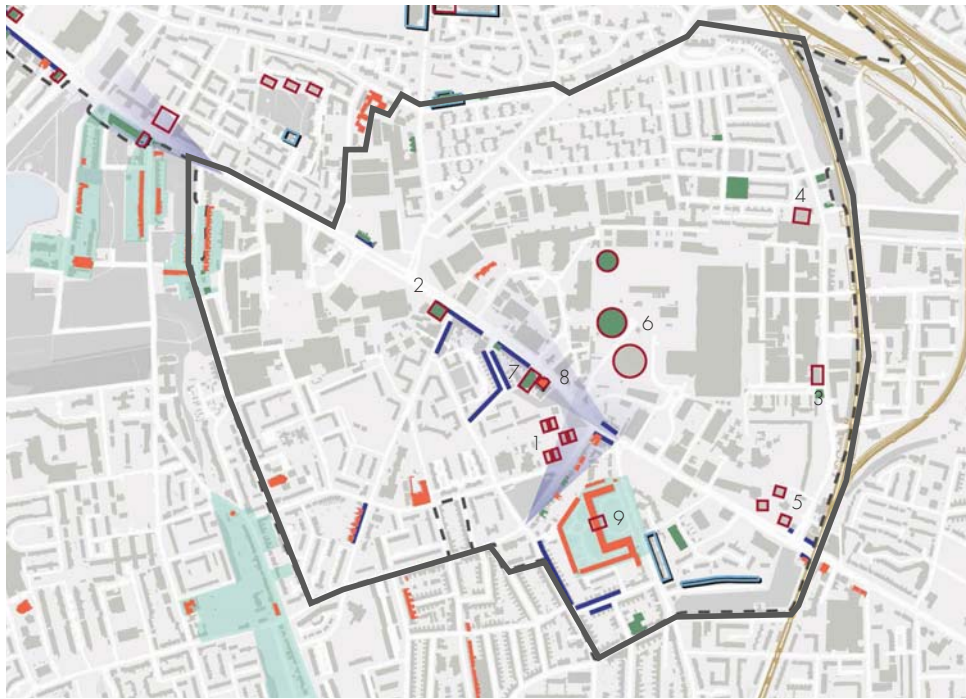


Figure 4.9: Key features and views in the southern character section



4.5.6 Landmarks

The following are notable landmarks in the area, supporting wayfinding:

1. Three 14 storey towers on Ledbury Estate on Commercial Way (Peterchurch House, Samesfield House, Skenfrith House), angled obliquely to Old Kent Road
2. Former North Peckham Civic Centre - distinctive corner building, pavilion form on columns, ceramic murals
3. Christ the King Chapel on the corner of Manor Grove and Ilderton Road
4. Ilderton Road Primary School – Victorian school, one of several in the study area and taller than its immediate neighbours
5. Three 20 storey towers of the Tustin Estate (Ambleside, Windermere and Grasmere Point) dark brick with slab expressed in white, striped profile distinctive
6. Three gas holders from the former South Metropolitan Gas Company works
7. Christ Church, Old Kent Road
8. Former Livesey Museum, Old Kent Road, now Treasure House
9. Former Licensed Victuallers Asylum

4.5.8 Views

The following views are notable in the area:

- Channelled view of gasholders looking north along Commercial Way
- View north west beyond the area along the Old Kent Road towards the Thomas à Becket pub

The Tesco store, by virtue of its size, position and advertising, is a current landmark at the mid-point of the Old Kent Road. Similarly, a slight bend in the Old Kent Road ensures that the Tustin Estate towers are a major landmark in the approach to New Cross.

4.5.7 Historic features

Historic assets of particular townscape significance include:

- Former Licensed Victuallers Asylum – major historic complex, grid of streets, intimate scale green spaces, undisturbed backwater that casts a wider influence over the area through its order and repose
- Sequence of early Victorian houses on the E side of Commercial Way
- Christ Church, Old Kent Road
- Old Fire Station (on the corner of Shorncliffe Road) of group value with the Thomas à Becket
- Clifton Crescent – grand composition of early Victorian houses, gentle bow for, symmetrical composition.

4.5.9 Area management principles

There are a number of positive features of the Old Kent Road area which should be sustained and protected as part of any programme of change and where there are opportunities for beneficial enhancement. A number of formal heritage designations already exist, including listed buildings and provisional identification of conservation areas. However, there are a number of other elements which lack statutory protection but which have an element of individual or group value.

Historic fragments

The study has identified a number of incidences where historic fragments exist as remnants from earlier phases of development. In many cases these appear dilapidated, but they remain an important link to earlier phases of development. Their retention and regeneration could play a helpful role in anchoring and new development in its context. In the southern area examples of historic fragments include:

- Canal Terrace and dental surgery behind Currys PC World;
- Christ Church and former Livesey Museum; and
- Christ the King Chapel on the corner of Manor Grove and Ilderton Road.

Key public buildings

As with the historic fragments, there are a number of civic and community buildings such as public houses, churches and schools which act as community anchors. Many Victorian buildings remain in areas which were otherwise cleared and redeveloped in the twentieth century and so have already survived generations of change. Their retention and continued use provides an important strand of community continuity and identity. In the southern area the Ilderton Road Primary School and the former North Peckham Civic Centre are examples of key public buildings. Opportunities could be explored for the civic centre building given its key location on the junction of Old Kent Road and Peckham Park Road.

Areas of cohesive form

There are a number of areas covered by the study where there is a very clear and legible street form, contributing to a clear identity and a general character of safe and attractive streets. In the southern area much of the area on the south side

of Old Kent Road has a good street structure and is reasonably legible. The exceptions are the Cantium Retail Park area which divorces the neighbourhoods to the south from the Old Kent Road. On the north side of Old Kent Road there is much less permeability. The extension industrial areas, together with the gas works and integrated waste management facility, form a major barrier to connections between the Old Kent Road and the communities to the north. Opportunities to introduce more legible street structures and finer grain development could significantly improve this situation.

Green infrastructure

The area's trees are a major asset. They provide structure and shape to the Old Kent Road where it is left lacking by big box development. They also provide welcome shade and greenery to residential streets which will become increasingly important as an asset for climate change resilience. In the southern section the trees along the Old Kent Road do a very important job of enclosing the street in the absence of street frontage. This strong green character should be retained when sites are redeveloped, and opportunities to introduce street trees in areas where they are absent should be explored.

City fringe industry

Areas of smaller scale and often older industrial areas are an important part of the city fringe. They provide cheaper flexible space for a range of uses whilst the street-based built form is relatively well-suited to gradual organic change and development. The Hatcham Road industrial area is a good example of such a form. This area is likely to be flexible to change and should be able to respond to the demand for new types of uses and spaces.

4.6 THE OLD KENT ROAD

Figure 4.10: Detailed analysis of the Old Kent Road environment



Thomas A Becket pub

Lord Nelson pub

This section is dominated by the Bricklayers Arms junction and flyover. The road is at its widest and most imposing. Relatively few buildings face on to the route, indeed for the most part buildings turn away from it. On the south side in particular, trees and green space act as a substitute to edge the road and create a more comfortable boundary.

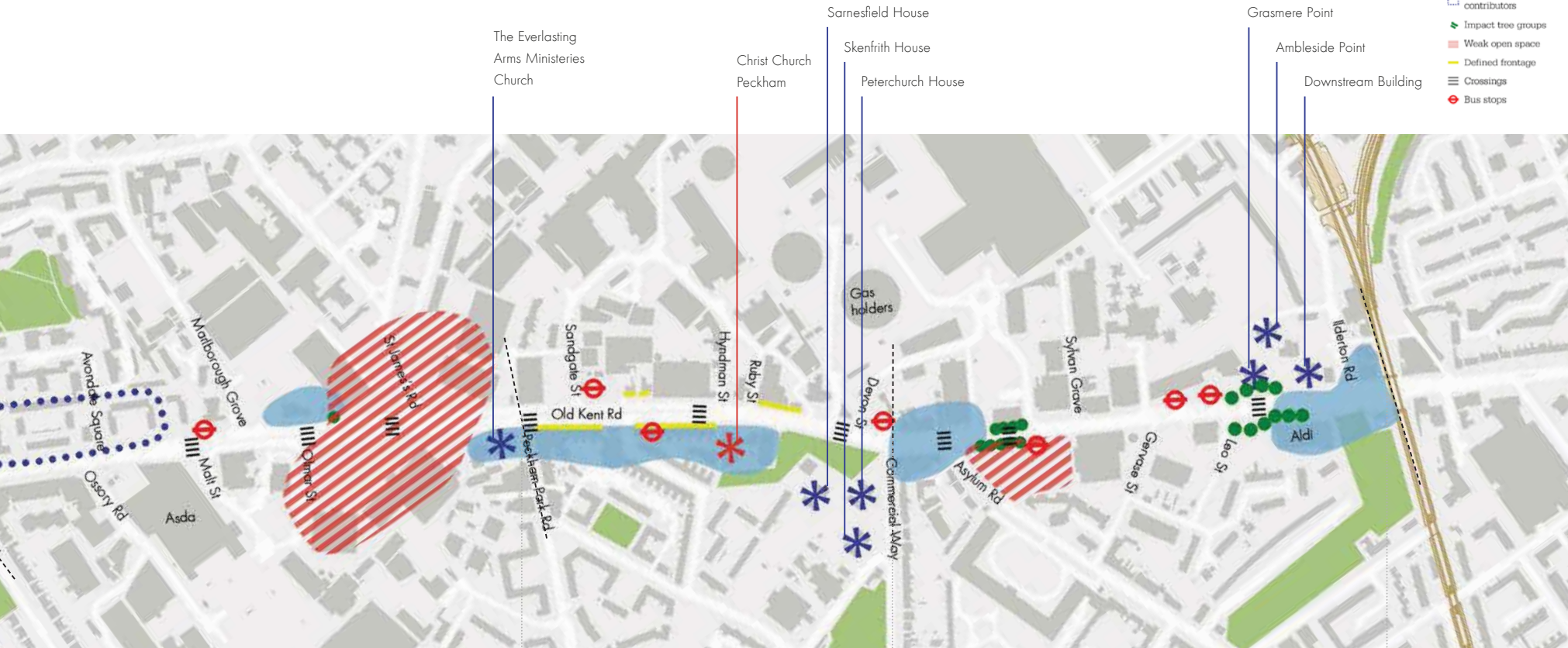
Set of confident buildings front on to the road creating a strong building line up to the pavement edge. This section has very few street trees and the road is still wide.

This section forms the "town centre" of the Old Kent Road. Between East Street and Albany Road there is a relatively consistent line of shops supported by East Street itself. The supermarket can be seen as functionally supporting this role. The road is thinner in this section generally, although still forms a barrier to pedestrian movement across it.

Burgess Park has an important influence in this section, with street trees and green space affecting the street character on both sides.

Legibility and key features

- * Prominent historic building
- * Other landmark
- 19th century plan or/and building form
- Other positive contributors
- * Impact tree groups
- Weak open space
- Defined frontage
- Crossings
- o Bus stops



The road width thins and widens in this section, with the building line generally further back, or buildings angular to the street. Much of the frontage is modern, developed following the removal of the canal. The stepped crossing of the north-south route of Peckham Park Road and Rotherhithe New Road is an important focus for activity and represents an important opportunity for enhancement.

The road thins again in this section, and the character on the north side is divorced from that on the south side - shown in plan form by the very different building line and footprints on either side. This section has few street trees, but green space on the south side hints towards an opportunity to enhance the street environment.

Street trees play an important role in this section. Despite the route widening again as it approaches the rail bridge, the stronger presence of street trees means this section of street is well enclosed. Here the route has become less dominant and in parts less of an obstacle.



5 CONCLUSIONS



KEY ISSUES AND PRINCIPLES

Issue: Big boxes

Large formal industrial and retail uses are a major issue for the Old Kent Road, particularly in the eastern half of the study area where they account for a substantial proportion of the Old Kent Road frontage whilst contributing little to the urban form and not being particularly focussed towards the needs of the local population. Many of these uses also bring with them large areas of surface car parking, further worsening the breaks in urban form.



Principles for the future

There is a need to reduce the impact these uses have on the local environment. There are a range of opportunities which would support this:

- Where these uses are considered appropriate, opportunities to redevelop them into more integrated street based blocks should be explored. This could mean redeveloping them in situ or on adjacent sites to take a more perimeter block format and include other uses at upper levels such as residential.
- Where redevelopment is not feasible, consideration should be given to addressing the expanse of car parking that these uses sit within. Many of the big box retail character areas include an excessive amount of parking considering their central location. Decking over or redeveloping parts of these car parks to create new street frontage could be considered.
- In some cases these uses may no longer be appropriate in a Zone 2 location. Here relocating them out of the area would release large sites for redevelopment.

Issue: Urban severance

The cellular nature of some areas of development, combined with the large footprints of some industrial and retail uses creates urban severance in significant areas of the Old Kent Road. Links are particularly poor between the Old Kent Road and the residential areas which lie to the north. This is a legacy of the railway lines which used to divide the area and as a consequence the Old Kent Road is not seen as a primary centre for larger areas of housing.



Principles for the future

In any redevelopment opportunity, it will be vital to significantly improve the permeability across the larger sites. Many of the industrial and big box retail sites are obstacles to connections with Old Kent Road itself and therefore represent important opportunities for introducing new streets.

Where whole sites are being redeveloped, a full analysis of the wider context should inform the structure of streets and blocks to be introduced.

A number of routes in the north of the area represent stark transition points between different character areas, of which Verney Road is one example. Here opportunities to tie the two sides of the street better together through redevelopment, introducing new frontage and public realm improvements should be explored.

Issue: Areas with poor legibility

There are a number of areas where there is good pedestrian permeability but poor legibility. This condition is most often found in the twentieth century housing estates where the conventional arrangements of streets and urban blocks have been fragmented. Pedestrian links which cut through to create direct routes sometimes lack active frontages and may not provide safe and obvious connections.

Poor legibility through complex residential areas can be tackled in several ways. In some cases, public realm treatments and wayfinding are relatively inexpensive and quick, although this approach does not tackle the lack of frontage which some routes suffer. Some housing areas provide opportunities for infill developments which can tackle this. Where more comprehensive building or estate renewal projects are being considered, opportunities for much clearer connecting routes should be a priority.

In existing residential areas there may be opportunities for small interventions to deliver significant improvements to wider connections. Connecting dead-end streets, formalising pedestrian routes and introducing new development to provide frontage to existing linkages, would all support movement across the area – particularly for pedestrian and cyclists.

Issue: Character of the road

The existing Old Kent Road is dominated by high volumes of traffic, with a particular impact of tidal flows during peak hours. In some places the road is six lanes wide with a further central reservation. This makes it difficult to cross, reducing its ability to act as a cohesive service centre to its hinterland. It also impacts on access to schools, public transport and community facilities.



Principles for the future

The Old Kent Road will remain an important thoroughfare providing access into central London for private vehicles and buses. However, it should be possible to maintain the route's capacity for traffic whilst reducing the dominance of the traffic on the character of the street.

In some sections there will be opportunities to reduce the width of the route. As it currently varies in the number of lanes, the redesign of some of the junctions could support the reduction of lanes and thereby gain spaces for pedestrians.

Whilst small sections of the route benefit from mature street trees, much of the street is largely devoid of street greenery. Introducing new large specimen street trees along a selection of stretches would, over time, improve the enclosure of the street and enhance the environment for pedestrians. A full public realm and movement strategy for the street should be prepared as part of the Area Action Plan work to

identify key sections for improvement. Where sites come forward for redevelopment on the route itself they should include proposals to enhance the street environment in line with this strategy.

A public realm and movement strategy should also look at introducing new crossings – not just across Old Kent Road, but also across the linking roads to support movement along either side.

The "town centre" area between East Street and Albany Road should be a focus for public realm and shop-front improvements. Scope to tie together the character of frontage on either side of the road should also be considered – and shop-front improvements would be an easy win in this regard. Crossings across Old Kent Road and the side roads such as East Street should be introduced or enhanced.

Issue: Existing housing stock

There are several areas which contain substantial blocks of twentieth century housing at relatively low density. These are principally found along the line of the former railway south of Lynton Road. These areas were planned and developed during the 1980s to a much lower density than would be the case today. However, they remain relatively unlikely to change as the existing buildings are relatively modern.



Principles for the future

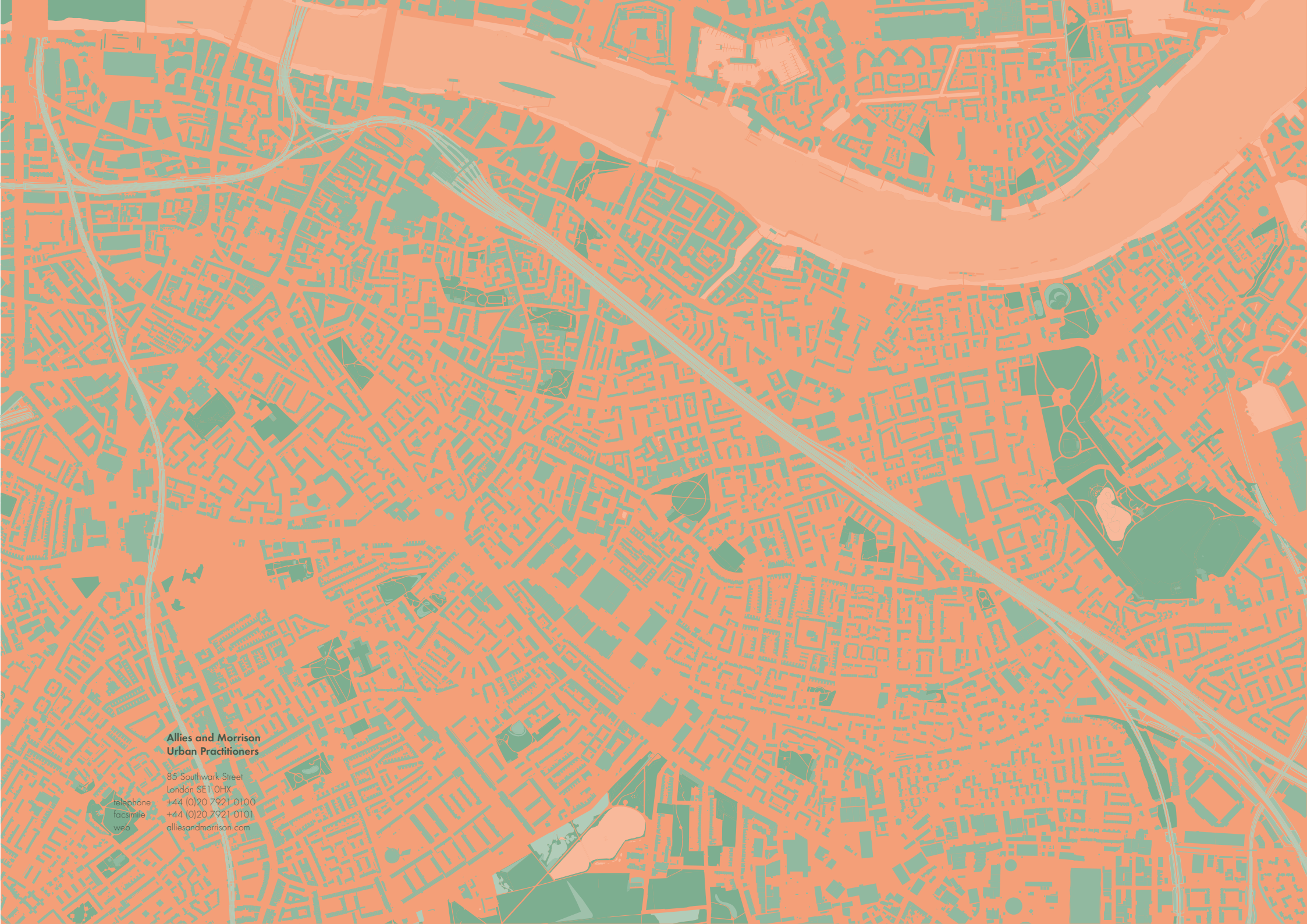
The existing low density housing stock along the former line of the railway presents limited opportunities for change in the short or medium term. Areas which remain predominantly in Council or housing association ownership may provide opportunities for redevelopment at higher densities. However, the relatively young age and the good condition of the buildings is likely to limit the potential for any significant change. Changes which would be beneficial include creating greater clarity to pedestrian routes and promoting development around the edges of the areas which create street frontage on to main routes.





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