

ALBION SQUARE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



Planning & Regulatory Services
London Borough of Hackney
2 Hillman Street
London E8 1FB

February 2016



This Appraisal has been researched and written by Ann Robey, ann.robey@hotmail.com on behalf of the London Borough of Hackney (LBH)

All images are copyright of Hackney Archives or LBH, unless otherwise stated

Maps produced under licence: London Borough of Hackney

CONTENTS

- 1 **Introduction**
 - 1.1 What is a Conservation Area?
 - 1.2 Location and Context of the Conservation Area
 - 1.3 The format of the Conservation Area Appraisal
 - 1.4 Acknowledgments

- 2 **Planning Context**
 - 2.1 National Policy
 - 2.2 Local Policies

- 3 **Historic Development of the Area**
 - 3.1 Archaeological Significance
 - 3.2 Origins and Historic development
 - 3.3 Geology and Topography

- 4 **The Conservation Area and its Surroundings**
 - 4.1 The Surroundings and Setting of the Conservation Area
 - 4.2 General Description of the Conservation Area
 - 4.3 Plan Form and Streetscape
 - 4.4 Views, Focal Points and Focal Buildings
 - 4.5 Landscape and Trees
 - 4.6 Activities and Uses

- 5 **The Buildings of the Conservation Area**
 - 5.1 Introduction
 - 5.2 Listed buildings
 - 5.3 Buildings of Local Significance
 - 5.4 Buildings of Townscape Merit

- 6 **SWOT Analysis**
 - 7.1 Strengths
 - 7.2 Weaknesses
 - 7.3 Opportunities
 - 7.4 Threats

- 7 **Conclusion**

APPENDICES

Appendix A Historic Maps of Albion Square Conservation Area

Appendix B Schedule of Listed and Locally Listed Buildings and Buildings of Townscape Merit

Appendix C Bibliography

Appendix D Map of the Conservation Area

Appendix E List of illustrations

Appendix F Further information

Appendix G Copy of Council's Cabinet Report Adopting the Revised Conservation Area Boundary and Appraisal
(To be added following formal adoption of the Appraisal & final recommendations)

1 INTRODUCTION

Albion Square Conservation Area was originally designated in 1975, but no detailed Conservation Area Appraisal was undertaken until 2007 and this was further revised before formal adoption in 2015. The research and assessment of the area's special interest undertaken for this appraisal has enabled careful consideration of the boundaries of the original Conservation Area to be undertaken. It comprises Albion Square itself and the remains of the ancient Stonebridge Common, both of which are scheduled London squares, as well as the surrounding residential properties that mainly date from the 1840s. The Church of All Saints and the adjoining vicarage in Livermere Road are within the Conservation Area. It also includes properties on the south side of Middleton Road located between Mayfield Road in the west and No.68 Middleton Road to the east. After assessing the area, it is proposed to extend the Albion Square Conservation Area eastwards to include Queensbridge Infants School (a fine example of a late 19th century Board School) and the surrounding playground. The Conservation Area lies in the south western part of the Borough and is located just to the east of Kingsland Road and to the west of Queensbridge Road. It is bounded on the south by parts of Haggerston Road and to the north by Middleton Road.

The Conservation Area is located between Dalston in the north and Haggerston to the south. Albion Square was developed on lands owned by the Middleton family during the second quarter of the 19th century, when much of this part of Hackney began to be speculatively developed. The Albion Square Conservation Area is centred on the garden in the heart of the square, around which the streets of this smart Victorian development were formally laid out and built up during the 1840s. Albion Square Conservation Area is notable for the excellent survival of high quality early Victorian housing much of which is listed. Bridget Cherry in *The Buildings of England* describes it as 'a satisfyingly complete picturesque Italianate composition of 1846-49'.

Housing development in the area was rapid after the opening of the nearby Regent's Canal in 1820. Large numbers of new houses were built between 1840 and 1860 and the former farmland and nursery grounds east and west of Kingsland Road were amongst the first to be developed into an urban form. The paired-villa was the most common house type built in the 1840s and many of the houses erected by Isip Odell, the main builder/developer of Albion Square, take this form. The other dominant house type in the Albion Square Conservation Area is the short terrace of four houses. The properties on the south side of Middleton Road (Nos. 22 to 68) are a similar mix of paired-villas and short terraces. The houses in this area were aimed at a middle-class resident and were lit by gas from the beginning. In 1848, houses in nearby Albion Road could be purchased for £400. Albion Square houses would have fetched a similar sum. Today the houses in Albion Square fetch well over a million pounds.



Figure 1: Albion Square in 1969

The houses within Albion Square Conservation Area remained fashionable until the 1920s, despite the square itself becoming seriously neglected in the 1890s when the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association found it in 'an abandoned condition'. Due to their public spirited actions, the gardens were restored and reopened to the general public for the first time in 1899. From the 1930s onwards there was an exodus of middle-class and professional people from South Hackney and many houses within the Albion Square Conservation Area became shabby and multi-tenanted. However, from the 1960s Albion Square, like nearby De Beauvoir Town, became one of the first parts of Hackney to regain popularity with families returning to the inner city, largely because of the fine early 19th century houses that could be purchased at bargain prices.

The garden square and the houses surrounding it were endangered by demolition during the mid-1960s when Hackney Borough Council threatened the owners with compulsory purchase. The Albion Square Action Group was formed in 1966 and pressure from that group and other national conservation bodies, encouraged the statutory listing of many of the houses and ultimately prevented the wholesale destruction of the garden square. Conservation Area status was achieved in 1975, which has resulted in a very well-preserved enclave of early-to-mid Victorian houses which today survive almost intact, with very little detrimental alteration. Where unsympathetic changes do occur such as at No. 18 Albion Drive, where the original sash window on the ground floor has been converted into French doors, the changes are particularly noticeable.



Figure 2: Stonebridge Common

Nearby on the north side of Haggerston Road is Stonebridge Common, a remnant of much larger Lammas or common lands that existed in Hackney from medieval times. Opposite Stonebridge Common, and lying just outside the Conservation Area is a modern park, Stonebridge Gardens. This was created on a site formerly occupied by small mid-Victorian cottages that were demolished after World War Two. This open space and playground has a concrete and mosaic serpent snaking across it, created by the Hackney-based Free Form Arts Trust who have been responsible for many other public artworks in the borough. Stonebridge Gardens helps to give the adjacent Albion Square Conservation Area an open and green feeling.



Figure 3: Stonebridge Gardens viewed from the Albion Square Conservation Area

Hidden between Queensbridge Road and Kingsland Road, Albion Square Conservation Area is quiet, green and secluded. The houses overlooking Stonebridge Common and the small terrace of workers' cottages in Albion Terrace have a 'rural' feel to them and a very human scale. Plenty of trees in Albion Square garden, on Stonebridge Common and in the grounds of All Saints' Church, as well as many street trees and verdant gardens, make the area unusually green for such an inner-city area. Long standing Conservation Area status has done much to prevent inappropriate alterations to the properties.

1.1 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. Conservation Areas are very much part of the familiar and cherished local scene. It is the area as a whole rather than specific buildings that is of special interest. Listed Buildings within Conservation Areas are also covered by the Listed Building Consent process.

The special character of these areas does not come from the quality of their buildings alone. The historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries; characteristic building and paving materials; a particular 'mix' of building uses; public and private spaces, such as gardens, parks and greens; and trees and street furniture, which contribute to particular views - all these and more make up the familiar local scene. Conservation Areas give broader protection than listing individual buildings: all the features listed or otherwise, within the area, are recognized as part of its character. Individual properties or sites within a Conservation Area are not just protected for their public facades. Conservation Area legislation applies to the fronts and back of buildings.

Conservation Areas enjoy special protection under the law. Below are some of the key requirements for works in Conservation Areas:

- With effect from 1st October 2013 under the provisions of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013, Conservation Area Consent is no longer needed for demolition of unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas in England. Instead works of relevant demolition of an unlisted building in a Conservation Area are within the scope of "development" and such works will instead require planning permission. .
- You must give us six weeks notice, in writing, before any work is carried out to lop, top or fell a tree in a conservation area. You can contact the Council's Tree Officer for advice and help. For further details see our page on trees.
- You will need to demonstrate that any development proposal preserves or enhances the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Hackney has greater control over building work in Conservation Areas, including materials and detailed design.

- You may need to apply for planning permission for alterations or extensions that would not normally need planning permission, such as minor roof alterations, dormer windows or a satellite dish. If you are in any doubt about whether you need planning permission, you can contact the duty planner.
- Hackney also has greater control over the erection of advertisements and signs. For instance, Hackney has the power to control shop signs, posters or estate agents boards that would not normally need permission.

1.2 Location and Context of the Conservation Area

Albion Square Conservation Area is largely tucked away from the nearby main routes (Kingsland Road and Queensbridge Road) that pass north to south through this part of the borough. It lies just to the north-west of an ancient road formerly called Stonebridge Lane (now Haggerston Road), that ran northwards from Hackney Road in the south, through Stonebridge Common and towards Kingsland Road. The schedule of designation includes the following properties Nos. 8-36 (even) Albion Drive; Nos. 1-30 (consec.) Albion Square; Nos. 1-13 (consec.) Albion Terrace; No. 2 Mayfield Road; Nos. 22-64 (even) Middleton Road and Nos. 250-272 (even) Haggerston Road, overlooking Stonebridge Common. The Albion Square Conservation Area also includes All Saints' Church and the adjacent vicarage in Livermere Road, built soon after the houses in Albion Square. Following examination of the Conservation Area for this appraisal it is proposed to extend the boundary eastwards and add Queensbridge Infants School, which was recently extended. In 2011 the Tomlinson Centre was added to the south side of the Board School as a Professional Development Centre for the Learning Trust, designed by Rivington Street Studio Architecture. Also to be included in the extended boundary is the surrounding playground and No. 1 Albion Drive. At the centre of the Conservation Area is the garden square and outside Nos. 250-272 Haggerston Road are the remains of an ancient common - Stonebridge Common - which survives today as a small green. A map showing the full extent of Albion Square Conservation Area is included at Appendix D.

Some of the other Conservation Areas in Hackney are adjacent to the Albion Square Conservation Area. These include Queensbridge Road Conservation Area to the east and to the west, the Kingsland Conservation Area. To the south is the Regent's Canal Conservation Area; to the west, the De Beauvoir Conservation Area and in the north, Dalston Lane (West) Conservation Area. Located just to the east is the Graham Road and Mapledene Conservation Area.

1.3 The format of the Conservation Area Appraisal

This document is an “appraisal” document as defined by Historic England (formerly English Heritage in their guidance document “Conservation Area Appraisals”.

The purpose of the document is, to quote from the English Heritage document, to ensure that “the special interest justifying designation is clearly defined and analysed in a written appraisal of its character and appearance”. This provides “a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for development plan policies and development control decisions” and also forms the basis for further work on design guidance and enhancement proposals.

The Appraisal draws on advice given in *Understanding Place: Guidance on Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (2011), and *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals* (2006), both by English Heritage. It also notes comments in the *Suburbs and the Historic Environment* (2007) and *Valuing Places: Good Practice in Conservation Areas* (2011) by English Heritage.

This appraisal describes and analyses the particular character of Albion Square Conservation Area. This includes more obvious aspects such as its open spaces, buildings, and architectural details, as well as an attempt to portray the unique qualities which make the area “special”. These include less tangible characteristics such as the quiet green spaces of Stonebridge Common with its locally listed War Memorial and Albion Square itself, and local features which are unique to the area, such as the well-preserved Italianate houses around the square, the small artisans’ cottages on the north side of Albion Terrace and the drinking fountain in the centre of Albion Square.

The document is structured as follows. This introduction is followed by an outline of the legislative and policy context (both national and local) for the Conservation Area. Then there is a detailed description of the geographical context and historical development of the Conservation Area and a similarly detailed description of the buildings within it. This is followed by a “SWOT” analysis to clarify and summarise the key issues affecting the area. Appendix A contains historic maps of Hackney Road Conservation Area. Further appendices contain supplementary information, schedules of listed and locally listed buildings. Appendix C provides a bibliography. A map of the Conservation Area is Appendix D. A list of illustrations is included at Appendix E. Appendix F notes sources of further information, and a copy of the Council’s Designation Report, endorsing the CAAP, are included at Appendix G.

1.4 Acknowledgements

Material within this Conservation Area Appraisal has been gathered from Hackney Archives Department and the London Metropolitan Archives.

For details of how to become involved with your local Conservation Area Advisory Committee please contact the Hackney Society, contact details of which are given in Appendix F.

2 PLANNING CONTEXT

2.1 National policies

Individual buildings “of special architectural or historic interest” have enjoyed a means of statutory protection since the 1950s, but the concept of protecting areas of special merit, rather than buildings, was first brought under legislative control with the passing of the Civic Amenities Act in 1967. A crucial difference between the two is that listed buildings are assessed against *national* criteria, with lists being drawn up by the government with advice from Historic England. Conservation Areas, by contrast, are designated by local authorities on more *local* criteria, and they are therefore very varied - small rural hamlets, mining villages, or an industrial city centre. Conservation Areas are designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation areas) Act of 1990, primarily by local authorities, for their special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

However, general guidance on the designation of Conservation Areas has in recent years been laid out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) and which set out the government’s policies on the historic built environment in general. These have now been superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) which states ‘When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest’. By November, 2015, the London Borough of Hackney had designated 31 Conservation Areas.

2.2 Local Policies

National legislation and guidance emphasises the importance of including firm heritage policies in the Council’s Core Strategy and Supplementary Planning Documents,

Core Strategy Policy 25 on the Historic Environment seeks to ensure that all development makes a positive contribution to the character of Hackney’s historic and built environment. Conservation areas in Hackney include the historic core of Hackney and key urban open spaces such as Clapton Common and Clissold Park. They also cover large areas of Georgian and Victorian housing, some include associated urban squares such as De Beauvoir and areas of industrial heritage like South Shoreditch and Lea Bridge. Hackney’s conservation area review process emphasises the importance of the distinctive features of a place, its spatial qualities, the significance of its historic buildings and assets.

Heritage assets as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 contribute to the townscape as do as intangible aspects such as historic

associations and former uses. Clissold Park, Abney Park Cemetery and Springfield Park are designated parks on Historic England's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.

Albion Square Conservation Area is a small planned early-to-mid 19th century speculative development, lying on land formerly owned by the Middleton family. Apart from the central garden square, there is also the remnant of an ancient common or 'Lamas Lands' known as Stonebridge Common.



Figure 4: Houses in Albion Square

3 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA

3.1 Archaeological Significance

Although there is little remaining evidence of pre-Roman occupation in the borough, a number of important archaeological finds have been made, such as the Palaeolithic stone axes found at Stoke Newington. Hackney was outside the walls of the Roman city of Londinium. It was during the Roman period that the first recognisable element of Hackney's urban form was built. This was the Roman road, Ermine Street, which remains today as Kingsland Road, which lies just to the west of Albion Square Conservation Area. Few artefacts of the Roman period have been discovered – the only notable find in the Borough is a stone sarcophagus, discovered in Lower Clapton. The tiny remnant of Stonebridge Common within the Conservation Area has existed since the Middle Ages as part of the ancient Lammas or 'common' lands of Hackney and may contain medieval remains.

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments in or near the Albion Square Conservation Area.

3.2 Origins and Historic Development

In the late Saxon period Hackney formed part of the manor of Stepney, which had been held by the Bishops of London since the early 7th century, when King Athelbert gave lands and their incomes to support St Paul's Cathedral. Hackney has no separate entry in the Domesday Survey of 1086, but the name is recorded in 1198 as "*Hacas ey*", a Saxon word meaning "a raised place in the marsh". During the medieval period archaeological evidence suggests that there were numerous small settlements or villages amongst the fields of Hackney. Those near to Albion Square included the settlements at Dalston to the north (first recorded in the 13th century) and the ancient settlements of Haggerston to the south, beyond which was Shoreditch which lay just outside the City walls.

Historically and well into the 19th century the land on which Albion Square was built was farmland. In 1800 Dalston was well known for its nurseries and market gardens. On Greenwood's Map of 1827 (Figure 5) just north of the field that was to become Albion Square, was Grange's Nursery and further north towards Dalston Lane was Smith's Nursery. The land on which Albion Square was developed belonged in the 18th century to the Acton family, whose heir Sir William Middleton began to develop further south in Shoreditch in the early 19th century. One of his fields extended into Hackney, just east of Stonebridge Common and it was here that Albion Square was built.

The Middleton family's development in Hackney began with an agreement in 1840 with Islip Odell, a builder of Upper Clapton, for the land immediately east of

Stonebridge Common. The Middleton Arms PH (now closed) on the corner of Queensbridge and Middleton Road was the first property to be built, followed by the houses in Middleton Road, leased in 1842. Odell was also a brick maker and speculator and he promoted development by others on the Middleton family lands. The Middleton's surveyor George Pownall was probably responsible for the design of the houses built in Albion Square and also the plan and layout of the garden square. Almost all the houses within the development had been completed by 1849.



Figure 5: Greenwood's Map of 1827: Stonebridge Lane runs up towards Stonebridge Common and the field to the east below Grange's Nursery is where Albion Square was developed in the 1840s

South Dalston has many good houses dating from the 1840s and '50s, some in terraces, but most built as semi-detached villas. Albion Square with a mix of semi-detached pairs and a few short terraces is set around the rectangular central garden. The 30 houses in the square are a mix of two or three storeys with a basement; some faced in brick, others stuccoed and all are high quality examples of a house type – the suburban villa, that Hackney has long been associated with. The architect isn't known, although in an early edition of *The Buildings of England*, Nikolaus Pevsner attributed them to JC Loudon, the landscape architect. This is highly unlikely even though Loudon was involved with Abney Park Cemetery in Stoke Newington. It is much more probable that the Middleton estate architect, George Pownall, designed the houses and was also responsible for the overall layout of the square.

Apart from the Duke of Wellington PH, Queensbridge Infants School and All Saints' Church, all the buildings within the Conservation Area are dwelling houses. Albion Square lay near to Kingsland Road and the rapidly developing Dalston Junction, both important shopping and marketing streets in Victorian Hackney. No local shops were provided in the development as extensive shopping was available nearby. From 1849, the east end of Albion Square was occupied by a large two-storey hall known as Albion Hall, which at various times housed a literary and scientific institute, a school, ballroom and concert hall, gymnasium and piano showroom. To the rear of the hall was a privately owned swimming pool of early date. These buildings are further described below.

All Saints' Church was built in 1855-6 to serve the new housing built on Sir William Middleton's land in the 1840s. Designed by Philip Charles Hardwick, and extended by T.E. Knightly it has a ragstone exterior and rather an austere Gothic style.

The houses in Albion Square built with 6 to 9 rooms, were aimed at middle-class families and from 1865 the area became even more convenient for the city worker with the opening of nearby Haggerston Railway Station. From the start, the square was exclusive with all the routes into it being fixed with wrought iron gates across the roads. All the residents had their own private keys, not only to these gates, but also to the central garden.

In 1897, when Charles Booth's social researchers visited the area, Albion Square was described rather despairingly as having 'good 2 1/2 storey houses round it, but a very badly kept square. No gates, no flowers, only mud heaps and trenches dug by street boys playing in them; 40 or 50 year old trees, remnants of former days and a dilapidated iron railing round were the only things to show it had once been cared for' (see Figure 6). The researcher noted that the 'houses better than inhabitants'. From 1894 the then owner of the estate, Lady de Saumarez and her solicitor had been in correspondence with the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association about the poor state of the garden and possible ways of improving them. Soon afterwards the gardens were rescued, restored and handed over to the care of the Borough Council.

In 1898, Queensbridge Road Board School opened on the corner of Albion Drive and Queensbridge Road. The site had previously contained a number of detached and semi-detached houses fronting Queensbridge Road, and one half of a pair of villas was demolished on the north side of Albion Drive to complete the playground. All had been part of the original 1840s Albion Square development. Constructed in red brick in 1897, it is a tall (four and six-storey) monumental example of a typical London Board School. Today the building contains Queensbridge Infants' School and the Tomlinson Centre, which was added to the south side of the Board School as a Professional Development Centre for the Learning Trust in 2011.



Figure 6: The neglected Albion Square c.1900 (note the dead rabbit in the foreground)

From 1849, the western end of Albion Square was occupied by Albion Hall, which was built between 1849 and 1850 by Islip Odell, the developer of the rest of Albion Square. It was erected for the 'Kingsland, Dalston and De Beauvoir Town Literary and Scientific Institutions', a short-lived organisation with a certain pretension and aimed firmly at the middle-class residents who were moving to Dalston and De Beauvoir at that date. The Institute was 'for the purpose of offering to the neighbourhood the advantages of the diffusion of useful and entertaining knowledge, the absence of which is felt and much regretted'.

The garden to the rear (removed for a swimming bath c.1863) had shrubs, plants as well as a lawn with gravel walks. After the literary institute closed c.1860, the building was taken over as a privately run hall and managed as a kind of assembly room with a variety of activities including a school. It was known as Dalston (Daily) College in 1864. In 1869 it became James Cox's Albion Club. In 1878 *The Times* reported that the building contained a great hall that measured 105ft by 50ft; a concert room with a

stage and gallery and other rooms that were available for hire. In addition there was a handsome library and a billiard room. To the rear, adjacent to the swimming pool, were warm (slipper) baths for both men and women. In 1888 a survey was undertaken which described the spacious assembly rooms which were 'approached by a lofty portico facing the square'. Unfortunately no drawing or photograph survives of the building, but it stood two-storeys above a basement.

To the rear of Albion Hall were the Albion Baths. Built in the early 1860s, they were first advertised in *The Times* in May 1864 when the swimming bath was said to be 'now OPEN'. It measured 100 feet by 50 feet and the advert said that swimming was taught and season tickets were available. Privately owned, it was amongst the very first swimming pools in Hackney. It is clearly shown on the 1871 OS Map (See Appendix A). Although connected to the Hall, the main access to the baths was from Albion Road. It cost 6d. To swim at Albion Baths in 1878. In 1888 the pool was described as an 'extensive and well-arranged public swimming baths fitted with dressing rooms and also with private hot and cold baths'. The dressing boxes were arranged around three-sides of the bath. In the same year the baths and the hall were let to the Albion Baths Company Ltd for £300 per annum and during the first year of occupation the company spent £1000 on upgrading the premises.

But the venture was evidently not a great success as less than ten years later in 1897 when Charles Booth's researchers visited the area they stated that 'Albion Hall, a literary institute and swimming baths is now closed. Dances were formerly given there and the baths open. Now the institute has lost its licences owing to the character of the dances given and the swimming bath is also closed'.

Soon after in 1899 the London School Board purchased the property including the swimming baths; and this was transferred to the LCC in 1906. Part of the premises were used as a clinic for public health. The LCC used the baths for swimming as a further education subject. Although the baths were never 'public', a range of clubs and specialist associations used them and sometimes during the last few weeks of the summer holidays, local children were admitted.

During the 1930s the hall and gymnasium were used for a variety of events including Girl Guide festivals and dramatic performances. The pool and hall were damaged by a flying bomb in 1944, and demolished soon after. During the post-war period a group of prefabs occupied the site. Eventually by the late 1960s the site was cleared and the LCC proposed an Albion Square Sports Centre for the site. However the LCC Town Planning Committee blocked the plans on the grounds that the quiet of Albion Square would be disturbed by young users.

The site continued as an informal play area for local children throughout the 1970s and '80s, despite proposals for various schemes to build flats and houses on the site. Eventually in 1994-5 two pairs of bow-fronted villas were built on the site, without doubt in keeping with the rest of the square, if somewhat pastiche in design (see Figure 12) .

During the early 1920s the heir to the Middleton Estate, Lady Saumarez sold off the whole estate, when properties in South Hackney had very little value and were seen to be uneconomic investments.



Figure 7: Nos. 4-8 (consecutive) on the south side of Albion Square in 1967

Albion Square as a whole was threatened in the mid-1960s when *The Daily Telegraph* reported in April 1966 that ‘another London square is threatened by development’. The article continued that Hackney Borough Council was threatening a compulsory purchase order. Local residents formed the Albion Square Action Group in 1966. Today their successor, the Albion Square Residents Association, works for the maintenance and improvement of the local environment.

3.4 Geology and Topography

The London Borough of Hackney is located on a mixture of gravel, clay, brick-earth and alluvial deposits. Alluvium lies along the Lea and under Hackney Marsh. Significant outcrops of Langley Silt (brickearth) are now only found in the north of the Borough at Stoke Newington, Stamford Hill and Clapton Common. Formerly these deposits will have been more extensive than shown on the current geological map but a considerable amount has been removed for brick making since Roman times. The area north of Stoke Newington Church Street over to Woodberry Down in the northwest of the Borough is on London Clay, and a tongue of London Clay borders the alluvium in the east of the Borough terminating at the NE corner of Victoria Park and extending westwards around Wick Road, with a further outcrop on the western margin of Hackney Downs. The remainder of the Borough is on Hackney Gravel except to the north of Victoria Park, including Well Street Common, the area round Homerton hospital and up to Millfields Road which is on Taplow Gravel³.

The superficial geology of the Albion Square Conservation Area comprises Hackney Gravel which rests on London clay bedrock¹. The area is marked on the 1:10,000 geological map as ‘worked ground’ which in this instance refers to the removal of overlying deposits of brick earth (Langley Silt) in the nineteenth century. Daniel Lysons in 1810 remarked that ‘in Hackney there were nearly 170 acres of brickfields; in the Kingsland neighbourhood the earth is to be found of so good a quality and in such abundance that £300 has been given for the liberty of making bricks besides the usual rent of the land. Vast numbers both of bricks and tiles have been made there and some of the fields in which a vein of clay is exhausted have been put back again into cultivation. The thickness of the brick earth was 4 to 10 feet and it used to be reckoned that an acre yielded a million bricks for each foot of earth’.²

4 THE CONSERVATION AREA AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

4.1 The Surrounding Area and Setting of the Conservation Area

Albion Square Conservation Area lies within the London Borough of Hackney which itself is some five miles to the north of the River Thames. The eastern boundary of the Borough is formed by the River Lea, which meanders in a south-easterly direction from Tottenham down to the Thames at Canning Town. To the west lies Finsbury Park and Highbury, and to the south, the City of London. The principal settlements are Stoke Newington, Clapton, Hackney and Shoreditch.

The Conservation Area lies in the south-western corner of the borough, just north of Haggerston and south of Dalston. It is located to the west of Queensbridge Road and to the east of Kingsland Road. It is bounded on the south by Haggerston Road and to the north by part of Middleton Road.

4.2 General Description of the Conservation Area

Albion Square Conservation Area is a compact and cohesive early to mid-Victorian speculative estate of high quality. It was constructed to a planned scheme, initiated by the ground landlords, the Middleton family between 1840 and 1850. Albion Square and Middleton Road were laid out by the estate surveyor James Pownall, who was probably also responsible for the architectural design of the attractive Italianate houses. The development was undertaken by the speculative builder Islip Odell. Many of the terraces and villas are of recognisable architectural merit, both in their overall design and in their architectural detailing and many are listed or locally listed. The

¹ British Geological Survey 1999. *1:10,000 geological maps of TQ38 (NE, SE, NW and SW) Composite (Solid/Bedrock and Drift/Superficial Deposits)*

² Bromehead, C. E. N. With contributions by Dines, H. G, and Pringle, J. 1925. *Memoirs of the Geological Survey England & Wales. Explanation of Sheet 256. The Geology of North London.*

estate was aiming to attract middle-class professional residents who saw Hackney as a desirable and convenient residential location for the City of London.

4.3 The Streets and buildings of the Conservation Area

Albion Square

Albion Square comprises five pairs of houses on the north side; four pairs on the east side of which two pairs face the square and two are in the approach road from the north. On the south side of the square there are four pairs and a terrace of four houses. The west side was originally occupied by the Assembly Rooms which formed the frontispiece of the square. This building was demolished during the Second World War and the west side of the square is now occupied by two pairs of bay-fronted villas dating from the mid-1990s.

All the original houses date from the 1840s and are of two and three storeys above basements. They are diverse in character, but all show classical or Italianate influence. The layout isn't symmetrical, although the centres of the north and south sides (see Figures 8 & 9) are punctuated by houses with an additional storey in height. On the south side of the square the additional storey is gabled, while on the north side the additional storey is concealed within a mansard roof behind a parapet.



Figure 8: View of houses on the south side of Albion Square



Figure9: Nos. 17 & 18 Albion Square with mansard roof on north side of the square.

The houses in Albion Square were built from 1840 onwards; many were completed by 1844, and the last finished in 1849. The houses on the south and east sides are of slightly earlier date than those on the north side of the square. Generally most of the houses have between seven and nine rooms and attractive front gardens and spacious rear gardens. All the houses are built in yellow or grey stock brick with the windows surrounded by stucco lintels, porches and other stucco detailing, including to the eaves, cornices and banding. The houses on the east side of the square are the most diverse, with a variety of attractive pairs, including Nos. 29 and 30 with their front bows.



Figures 10 & 11: The east side of Albion Square, Nos. 29 & 30 on the right with bowed-bays to the basement and raised ground floor

The houses are generally in good condition with very few inappropriate or unsympathetic alterations, apart from some clumsy concrete balconettes at Nos. 23 and 24 Albion Square. These balconettes also occur in Middleton Road (see Figure 35).

As mentioned above, the western end of the square was originally occupied by a Scientific and Literary Institute built in 1849-50 by Islip Odell developer of the whole square. Although the Institute soon closed, the building operated as a private assembly hall for the rest of the 19th century until the music licence was revoked for undesirable behaviour at the dances. In the 1860s a swimming bath was added to the rear of the hall. The hall and the pool were eventually demolished after Second World War bomb damage and replaced by LCC prefabs, some of which remained until 1977. When the site was cleared the area became an informal play space for local children. In 1982 the site was transferred to LB Hackney by the GLC and was recognised as a suitable site for new housing by the council. Various social housing schemes were proposed for the site over the next fifteen years. But pressures from the Albion Square Action Group helped to defeat the most unsympathetic plans for the site. In 1994-5 two pairs of bow-fronted villas were built there in a yellow brick, stylistically in keeping with the rest of the square.



Figure 12: Semi-detached 'villas' built in 1994-5 on the West Side of Albion Square

The garden at the centre of Albion Square has had mixed fortunes over the years. When first designed the central garden was well-maintained, gated and used only by

the residents who all had their own keys. The 'garden' square was there to attract potential residents and emphasise the select nature of the development. At first the ground landlords and the residents contributed jointly to the upkeep of the gardens, which were laid out in a 'picturesque' or informal style advocated by the landscape designer J.C. Loudon, with meandering paths and extensive shrubberies and trees. The design is clearly shown in the OS Map of 1871.



Figure 13: Layout of Albion Square in 1871

In 1894 The Metropolitan Public Gardens Association (MPGA) came across Albion Square and described it as in 'an abandoned and deplorable condition' and 'of no use or pleasure to anybody'. They offered the owner, Lady de Saumarez and her Trustees (she was heir to the Middleton Estate) to take it from them, restore it and make it into an attractive public garden. It would then be passed onto Hackney Board of Works who would maintain it for public use forever. The MPGA had already transformed two other Hackney squares – De Beauvoir and St Thomas's. In 1898 the central garden was obtained from Lady de Saumarez and the MPGA laid out a new garden and gave it to the Hackney Vestry in 1899 on the condition that Hackney Board of Works would maintain it in an a proper manner. The new garden was laid out by Fanny Wilkinson, the landscape gardener to the MPGA for some 19 years, during which time she designed 75 public gardens in London. Her design for Albion Square garden included four London plane trees planted in a square, each having a circular seat around the trunk, with a fountain to be placed centrally. In July 1899, Albion Square Public Gardens were opened after extensive restoration. The Albion Gardens opening ceremony included light refreshments and an LCC band, and celebrated the provision of a new public recreation space for the residents of South Dalston. According to *The Hackney and Kingsland Gazette* the new garden would 'vie in beauty with some of the prettiest gardens in the West End' and the 1928 Royal Commission Report described it as 'well-kept and attractive'. The new layout was more simple and formal than the original design, with less shrubs and a central square. In 1910 a public drinking fountain donated by the philanthropist, John Passmore Edwards was placed in the centre. It is clearly depicted on the OS Map of 1921 (see Figure 14). Today it is locally listed.



Figure 14: Layout of Albion Square in 1921

During the Second World War the iron railings enclosing the garden square (and those in front of many of the houses) were taken for scrap, as part of the war effort. In the 1960s a chain link fence still surrounded the garden, and it was not replaced by new wrought iron railings by LB Hackney until 1977. A little earlier in 1973, environmental improvements had begun in Albion Square including the provision of benches, new retaining walls and re-laid footpaths. By that date the 'gardeners hut' had been added to the garden. Today, this hut has a small plaque placed above the door in 2001 that commemorates gardener David New and the care that he gave to the gardens. Further works were undertaken in 1979. In 1999 Albion Square Garden celebrated its centenary and won first prize in the Small Publicly Maintained Garden section of the London Garden Squares Competition. Groundwork East London undertook various works (funded by the HLF and Single Regeneration Budget) to the square in conjunction with local residents and heritage bodies during 2002. Works included landscaping and repairing the fountain. Today Albion Square Garden is well-maintained. It is a green tranquil space, planted with colour and treasured by local residents and others visiting for Open House and London Garden Squares Day.



Figure 15: The restored Drinking Fountain in Albion Square which is Locally Listed and Figure 16: Planting in Albion Square



Albion Drive

Albion Drive runs from Queensbridge Road to Haggerston Road and comprises two short groups of houses (Nos. 36-18) and (Nos. 16-8), which are built on the south side of the road. The south side of Albion Square bisects Albion Drive. Built by Islip Odell in

the mid-1840s, they are similar in design to the houses found elsewhere on the Middleton Estate, including those found in Albion Square and Middleton Road. Most are two-storeys in height; a few towards Haggerston Road have basements as well. All are built in dark stock brick with stucco dressings and are a mixture of paired villas and short terraces. In essence they are similar to the houses found on the south side of Albion Square.



Figure 17: Nos. 30 -18, Albion Drive

At the corner of Queensbridge Road and Albion Drive is the large playground site of Queensbridge Infants School. The site had previously contained a number of detached and semi-detached houses fronting Queensbridge Road, and one half of a pair of villas was demolished on the north side of Albion Drive to complete the playground. No 1 Albion Drive is shown in Figure 19 below. All had been part of the original 1840s Middleton Estate development. In 1898, Queensbridge Road Board School opened on the corner of Albion Drive and Queensbridge Road. Constructed in red brick in 1897, it is tall (four to six storeys) and monumental example of a typical London Board School. In 1923 it was occupied by 454 junior boys, 448 junior girls and 368 infants. Today the building contains Queensbridge Infants School and the adjacent Tomlinson Centre, the Professional Development Centre for The Learning Trust. Designed by Rivington Street Studio Architecture the new building was designed and detailed to take advantage of the benefits of reinforced concrete with the façade of the new building is modulated with strong horizontal bands corresponding to the horizontal brickwork detailing of the existing Victorian building. The aim was to sympathetically complement the existing Victorian school.



Figure 18: Queensbridge Infants School and the Tomlinson Centre from Queensbridge Road

After examination of the boundaries of the Albion Square Conservation Area it was decided to extend eastwards to include the school site and No.1, Albion Drive (which although it is in a poor condition and has suffered the loss of some original features, is worthy of inclusion in the Conservation Area. The school is a handsome example of a late 19th century Board School, and the modern extension complements the site.



Figure 19: No. 1, Albion Drive and the former Queensbridge Board School

Albion Terrace

Albion Terrace is an attractive row of two-storey cottages (Nos. 10-13, close to Albion Square, also contain basements), that run from the north-west corner of Albion Square to the corner of Mayfield Road and Stonebridge Common. These cottages are more modest in design than the houses in Albion Square and Middleton Road and generally have a single window to the ground and first floor with a simple round-headed fanlight above the front door. Brick-built and flat-fronted, they are plainer in design and were probably constructed for a more modest resident than the middle-classes of Albion Square. Many of the cottages have tiny front gardens and the street is attractive and quaint.



Figures 20, 21 & 22: Cottages in Albion Terrace

Haggerston Road, Stonebridge Common and Mayfield Road

To the north and east of Stonebridge Common are a number of houses in short terraces and pairs, that overlook the common (See Figures 2; 23 & 24). These include Nos. 266-272 Haggerston Road, a terrace of four cottages and Nos. 262 & 264, a pair of cottages adjacent to the Duke of Wellington PH. Just to the south is another group; a flat-fronted brick terrace of five houses (Nos. 250-258 Haggerston Road), two-storey with basement. Although smaller than the houses in Albion Square, they are a fine group with roofs set behind a stucco parapet and surviving ironwork balconettes. Their location beside the remnants of Stonebridge Common, give these small houses a very green and airy feel, more rural than urban.



Figure 23: Nos. 262-266, Haggerston Road



Figure 24: Nos. 250-258 Haggerston Road

All Saints' Church (Listed Grade II) and Vicarage

At the south of Albion Square Conservation Area, on the corner of Haggerston Road and Livermere Road stands All Saints' Church built in 1855-6 to the designs of P.C. Hardwick, in a rather old-fashioned Gothic style. Evidently popular with the growing population of South Hackney, It was extended by T.E. Knightly in the early 1860s to accommodate galleries above the aisles. It is surrounded by a small churchyard full of mature trees. It is an attractive building and survives remarkably unaltered.

Adjacent to the church and within the same curtilage, is the grey and red brick vicarage, which in design is rather austere.



Figures 25 & 26: All Saints' Church and Vicarage

Middleton Road

The houses on the south side of Middleton Road that lie within the Albion Square Conservation Area are a mixture of short terraces and two different types of paired villas. One type has a gable front and the other a more simple design with the roof hidden behind a parapet. The houses are grouped in pairs or terraces of four. All have good small front gardens with some garden trees.

The houses are two-storey (plus basement), with raised ground floors with steep steps rising to the front doors. Built in yellowish stock brick, the front doors have square or curved architraves and the ground and first floor windows are a mix of shallow-arched or square-headed with stucco dressings. The windows originally had ironwork balconettes, which survive to some houses. Unfortunately some have been substituted by concrete replacements that are heavy and should be replaced by appropriate ironwork (see Figure 28 below). No. 30 Middleton Road has an inappropriate wooden balconette.



Figure 27 & 28: Pairs of villas in Middleton Road

4.4 Plan Form and Streetscape

Albion Square Conservation Area is a planned middle-class early Victorian speculative development that is centred on the garden square. The surrounding streets of Middleton Road and Albion Drive are spacious and wide, lined with attractive and architecturally interesting houses and villas built in the 1840s. Albion Terrace and Haggerston Road beside Stonebridge Common are narrower and the properties there are smaller and comprise rows of two-storey cottages. Almost all the houses in the Conservation Area have small established front gardens (fortunately

most are too small to have been converted into parking spaces). The houses are a mix of gable fronted properties and flat fronted houses, which makes each terrace or pair visually interesting and coherent. The white stucco detailing and Italianate design of the houses in Albion Square provides strong architectural interest to the streets. The Conservation Area has much green space, both within and just outside the boundaries. There are many good trees both in Albion Square garden, in gardens and on Stonebridge Common. All Saints' Church, the surrounding grounds and the vicarage garden provide another green focal point at the southern end of the Conservation Area.

4.5 Views, Focal Points and Focal Buildings

The most important views are within and towards Albion Square and along the roads surrounding it. The view along Haggerston Road towards Kingsland Road is also eye-catching, especially the sweep down beneath the railway bridge. Many of the streets are visually attractive, especially where the roads are tree-lined. Due to the minimal amount of traffic on the roads of the Conservation Area the roads seem peaceful and there is little rubbish or graffiti. Other important views within and just outside the Albion Square Conservation Area are:

- View towards the terrace and pub on Stonebridge Common
- The view towards All Saints' from Haggerston Road
- View along Haggerston Road as it curves towards Kingsland Road under the railway bridge
- The view through the central gardens in Albion Square
- The view across Stonebridge Gardens
- Views of the artisans' cottages in Albion Terrace
- Views to the east, north and south sides of Albion Square
- The view of Queensbridge Infants School from Albion Drive
- The view across Middleton Road to Dalston Congregational Church



Figure 29: Duke of Wellington PH in 2007

The most important religious building in the Conservation Area to act as a focal building is All Saints' Church. It is the largest building in the Conservation Area. The adjacent vicarage (in Livermere Road) adds to the group value as a focal building. Another focal building is the former Queensbridge Infants' School, a tall red-brick Board School. The Duke of Wellington PH is a focal building on Stonebridge Common (See Figure 29) and the terraces surrounding Albion Square are of sufficient grandeur to act as focal buildings in the views from the central garden. Albion Square Garden is also a focal point.

4.6 Landscape and Trees

The most important green space within the Albion Square Conservation Area is the garden at the centre of the square. Today it is public space and is generally well-maintained by LB Hackney (See Figure 30). The garden is a mix of paths, shrubs, seating areas and grass with many mature and statuesque plane trees. The grass shrubs and mature trees provide a good habitat for birds and other small wildlife. The borders of the square have been well planted with mixed herbaceous and perennial plants. It is a beautifully kept rectangular garden with symmetrical planting of ornamental beds and trees, and centrally the drinking fountain is surrounded by four plane trees with circular seating around their trunks. A tiny garden pavilion stands at

the west entrance, built in wood with a pitched tiled roof. This small secluded Victorian square is a secret oasis within the area.



Figure 30: Formal planting in Albion Square in 2013

The remnants of Stonebridge Common also contribute positively to the natural environment of Albion Square Conservation Area. In 1883 the land was given to the Hackney Board of Works for a public open space. In 1928 the small triangular area in the north of the site, c. 0.25 acres, was described as a 'triangular area enclosed by posts and rails and maintained as an asphalt playground with a number of trees around the border' and was protected under the London Squares and Enclosures Preservation Act of 1906. Since then this area has been largely paved with an obelisk set in the middle and surrounded by areas of grass on mounds behind low brick walls with seat niches, and a number of planted tubs. Opposite (outside the Conservation Area) is Stonebridge Gardens, created in the 1960s. It is a green landscaped space largely for recreational use as playing fields, with some shrub and tree planting along the railway border and with a concrete and mosaic snake play sculpture constructed in 1981 by Free Form Arts.

There are a number of mature street trees on all the roads within the Conservation Area and some important trees stand in the front gardens. Albion Square Conservation Area is fortunate in retaining many well-maintained front gardens with very few being paved over for parking spaces. The most important trees and gardens are:

- Street trees outside houses in Haggerston Road
- Trees on Stonebridge Common
- Albion Square Gardens
- Trees in back garden of No. 258 Haggerston Road (Figure 32)
- The front gardens in Albion Square
- Trees in front gardens of Nos. 29 & 30 Albion Square
- Planting at the end of Albion Drive
- Mature plane trees in grounds of All Saints' Church



Figure 31: Trees on Stonebridge Common



Figures 32 & 33: Trees and planting in Conservation Area

4.6 Activities and Uses

Albion Square Conservation Area is principally a residential area. Almost all the houses were built in the 1840s as part of a planned development on Middleton family land. Today a few of the largest houses have been converted into flats but in most roads and around Albion Square, most houses are still family homes. A public house, *The Duke of Wellington*, survives overlooking Stonebridge Common adjacent to a terraced group of small houses. It is a welcome survival in an era when many small local pubs have been converted into residential use in recent years.

An important activity within the Albion Square Conservation Area is low-key recreational use, both in the garden square and on Stonebridge Common. These small spaces are used mainly as informal sitting, walking and as green havens for relaxing, rather than for active recreation which takes place on the nearby Stonebridge Gardens or further east in London Fields.

There is one religious building within Albion Square Conservation Area – the grey Ragstone All Saints' Church and the adjacent brick vicarage which form a handsome group in the south. The only public building within the Conservation Area is the former Queensbridge Infants' School and the teachers' centre located in the recently erected Tomlinson Centre.

There is no industrial or commercial (other than the pub) activity within Albion Square Conservation Area today. No empty sites have been identified and opportunities for redevelopment are limited. One potential redevelopment site is Thalia Court, a 1950s low-rise housing development at the end of Albion Drive, opposite Stonebridge Gardens.



Figure 34: Looking towards Queensbridge Infants' School from Hilborough Road

SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS IN THE CONSERVATION AREA

5.1 Introduction

Albion Square Conservation Area contains an interesting variety of buildings dating to the 19th century, some of which are listed or locally listed. The best quality buildings are the Italianate houses surrounding Albion Square, All Saints' Church, Queensbridge Infants School and some of the small terraces in the streets of the Conservation Area, which although unlisted are relatively unaltered and which make a really positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. These are called "Buildings of Townscape merit" and are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map. Very few buildings within the Conservation Area make a negative impact, although Talia Court is rather run-down.

The more important of these buildings have been described in section 4.2 above 'The Buildings of the Conservation Area'.

5.2 Listed buildings

There are a significant number of listed buildings or structures within Albion Square Conservation Area, all of which are listed Grade II. They include the houses in Albion Square and All Saints' Church. All the Grade II buildings are included in a list at Appendix B.

5.3 Buildings of Local Significance

There are a number of "locally" listed buildings in the Conservation Area. These are buildings which make a contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and which Hackney Council consider to be of local significance due to their age, architectural detailing or because of some unusual feature. They include a range of villas and terraced houses mainly in residential use and Queensbridge Infants School and the Duke of Wellington PH on Stonebridge Common. These are all included in a list at Appendix B.

5.4 Buildings of Townscape Merit

Apart from the listed and locally listed buildings, a small number of unlisted buildings in the Conservation Area have been identified as "Buildings of Townscape Merit". These are usually well detailed examples of mainly late 19th century houses or commercial premises which retain their original detailing. As such, they make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and any proposals to alter or demolish such buildings will be strongly resisted by the

Council (see Policy EQ13 of the UDP of 1995). Together, these buildings provide the cohesive and interesting historic townscape which is necessary to justify designation as a Conservation Area.

Of special note are All Saints' vicarage and Nos. 1-13 Albion Terrace which are an attractive group of small terraced cottages that are worthy of designation as Buildings of Townscape Merit. All such buildings are marked on the map of Albion Square Conservation Area.

Listed buildings

Listed buildings are more tightly controlled than unlisted buildings and are subject to separate legislation. "Listed Building Consent" is required for all alterations and extensions which affect the special architectural or historic interest of the building, and as both the exterior and interior of the building is listed, the Council's approval is therefore required for a wide range of work. Further guidance can be obtained from the Council but briefly, the type of work commonly requiring Listed Building Consent includes:

- The installation of new windows or doors
- All extensions (planning permission may also be required)
- Removing internal features such as fireplaces, walls, timber partitions, panelling, and shutters
- Removing or altering a staircase
- Altering or demolishing a boundary wall

This list is for guidance purposes only and is not exhaustive. If you are in any doubt as to whether you require Consent, please contact the Council's conservation staff before commencing work. It is a criminal offence to alter a listed building without Consent and carry out work illegally can result in a substantial fine or even imprisonment.

When considering applications for Listed Building Consent, the Council will usually require the applicant to submit a detailed archaeological evaluation or report of the building which will describe the historical development of the buildings and its site, as well as identify the special features which contribute to its architectural and historic interest. All proposals which affect listed buildings must preserve these special features, and applications which propose their removal are unlikely to be acceptable. Extensions to listed buildings will be judged in a similar way to those to unlisted buildings (Para. 7.5) but will additionally need to satisfy the following:

- Extensions should be secondary in size, bulk and footprint to the original building.
- Extensions will need to be carefully detailed to marry-in with the original building.

- Traditional materials and details will be required.

Further information about listed buildings can be found in National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012).

6 “SWOT” ANALYSIS

Albion Square Conservation Area is notable for its important and well-preserved early Victorian houses, set around a central garden square. The houses in the Albion Square Conservation Area are amongst the best in the borough. A large number are listed, locally listed, or have been identified within this appraisal as making a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area (Buildings of Townscape Merit). Together these form an interesting and unified historic streetscape, contrasting with the nearby Holly Street housing estate. Although small in size the Conservation Area has important green spaces which have a positive impact on the quality of the environment in this part of Hackney.

6.1 Strengths

The most positive features of the Conservation Area are:

- The curve of Haggerston Lane as it passes by Stonebridge Common and goes under the railway bridge giving good vistas in places
- A high number of listed and locally listed buildings
- A concentration of streets that have a coherence; are homogenous and contain a completeness of historic fabric
- Large numbers of surviving Victorian buildings, all creating a cohesive townscape
- The survival of well-kept front gardens to many houses
- The predominantly residential nature of the area and its human scale.
- Survival of 19th century houses of definable quality, with good external features such as doorcases, iron work, stucco and sash windows
- Little modern development
- Attractive green space at Stonebridge Common
- The well tended central garden in Albion Square
- Survival of Duke of Wellington PH
- Views from conservation area over Stonebridge Gardens
- Refurbished and well-maintained houses in many roads
- Many street trees; mature trees in Albion Square and in gardens

6.2 Weaknesses

The most negative features of the Conservation Area are:

- Poor maintenance of some of the houses in Middleton Road and No. 1 Albion Drive
- Poor concrete replacement balconettes in Albion Square and Middleton Road
- Loss of iron railings in some streets

- Poor maintenance of Thalia Court
- Loss of some front gardens in Albion Drive



Figure 35: Replacement balconies in concrete in Albion Square

6.3 Opportunities

The following points are “opportunities” which the London Borough of Hackney or private owners could implement, subject to the necessary funds being available:

- Consider setting up a grant scheme for the buildings within the Conservation Area
- Repair railings outside All Saints’ Church
- Preparation of design guidance on the types of designs in the area
- Educational opportunity for the public, schools, colleges exploring design and history.
- Refurbishment of Thalia Court
- Improve the planting and maintenance of Stonebridge Common
- Improved management of gardener’s hut and fountain
- Further restoration of the fountain in the Albion Square garden to remove unsightly metal plate on the west side

6.4 Threats

- Loss of original detailing, especially to single family dwellings which retain certain permitted development rights.
- Loss of small 'estate' pubs for residential use
- Neglect of publicly owned green spaces

7 CONCLUSION

Albion Square Conservation Area is a little known enclave of high quality Victorian housing dating from the 1840s. It is one of Hackney's most complete and attractive garden squares and is protected as a designated London Square. Many of the houses are well maintained and restored with sensitivity. All retain their front gardens and original features and together that enhances the overall ensemble. Although located close to major roads including Kingsland Road and Queensbridge Road and close to large public housing schemes (the Holly Street Estate lies just to the north) the streets within the Conservation Area are quiet and leafy. The short terraces on Stonebridge Common, Haggerston Road and Albion Terrace have a 'village-like' atmosphere (especially with the adjacent *Duke of Wellington* PH) unusual for such a central Hackney location. It is an area much favoured by families. The listing of the houses and protecting the square in the 1970s has ensured good levels of preservation of the area. There is an architectural integrity to the houses around Albion Square – although the houses show variety in the individual designs overall there is a unity that has not been damaged by many insensitive alterations.

In parts of the Conservation Area there are some (but relatively few) examples of neglected buildings, poor maintenance, and the use of inappropriate modern materials especially in window and balconette replacement. But overall retention of original features of the 19th century houses is high and the current regeneration of nearby Dalston will further benefit the area. New build has been limited in this area and it appears that very few inappropriate extensions to houses have occurred, (apart from at No. 18 Albion Drive).

Both within the Conservation Area and immediately outside there is a variety of green public open space, from the well-planted garden square itself, to the remnants of Stonebridge Common, to Stonebridge Park and the mosaic snake across Haggerston Road. There are bountiful trees both within these open spaces and in the gardens in the Conservation Area and plenty of well-kept street trees and planting in the streets. The survival of front gardens to the majority of the houses in the Albion Square Conservation Area adds to the 'greenness' of the area.

Many of the buildings within the Conservation Area are listed or locally listed and as a result of the research for this report, others have been designated as Buildings of Townscape Merit. They all display a variety of historic features, materials and architectural styles typical of the second quarter of the 19th century domestic middle-class villa, a building type that Hackney is famous for. Albion Square today is an attractive mix of well-kept green space and well-preserved houses.

It is proposed to extend the Conservation Area boundary eastwards to Queensbridge Road to take in two additional properties; No.1 Albion Drive and Queensbridge Infants School.

**APPENDIX A:
HISTORIC MAPS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

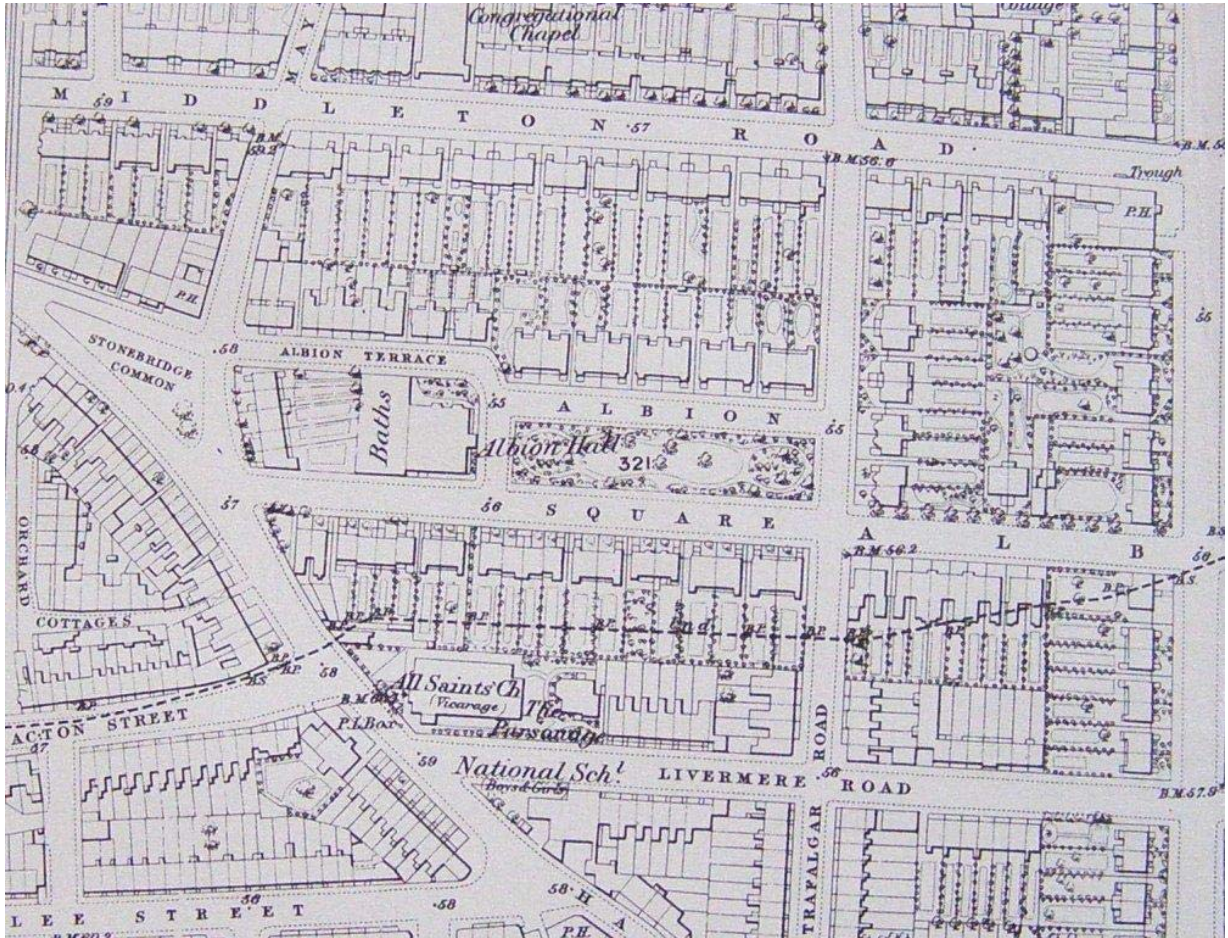
Roque's Map of 1745



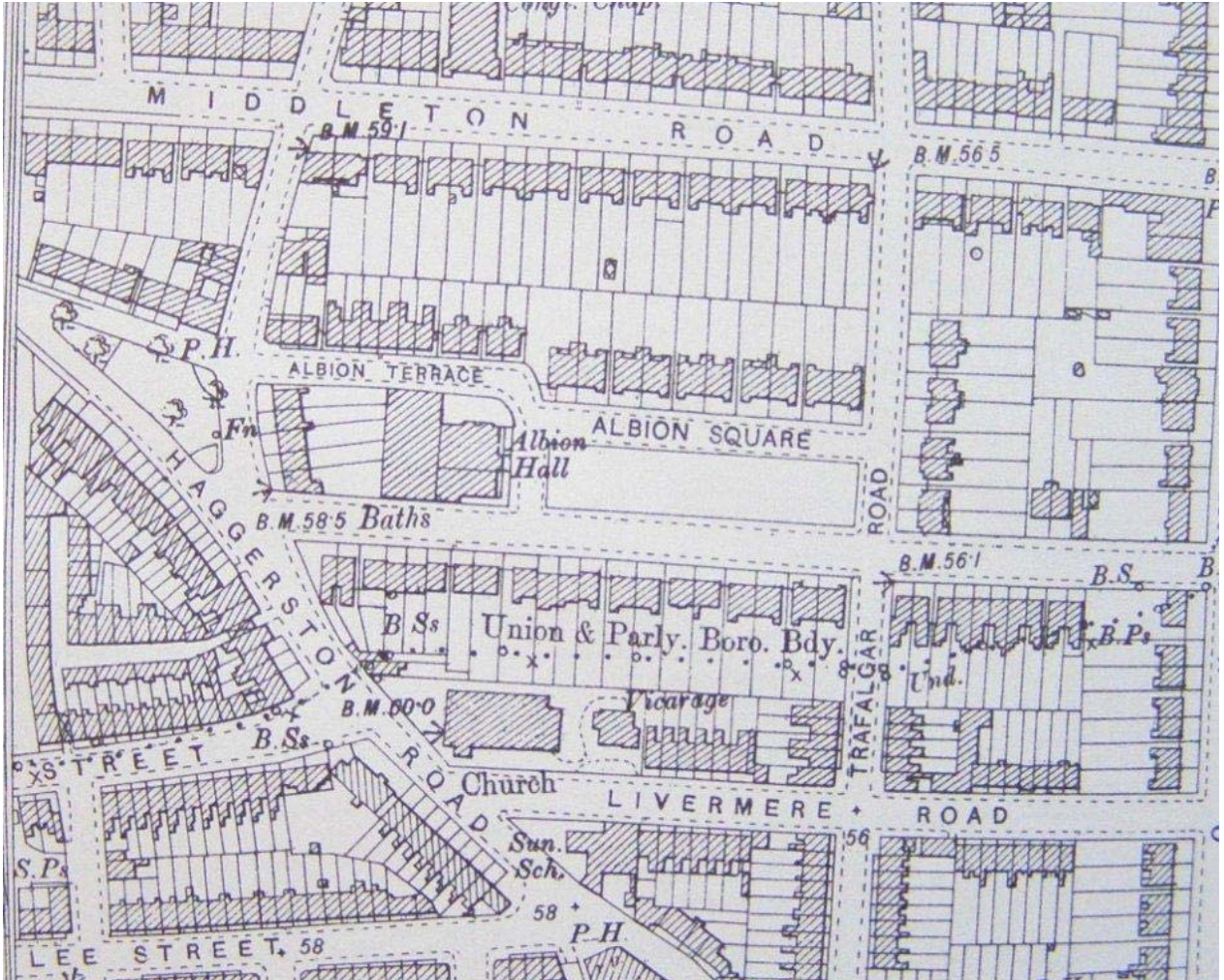
MAP of 1830



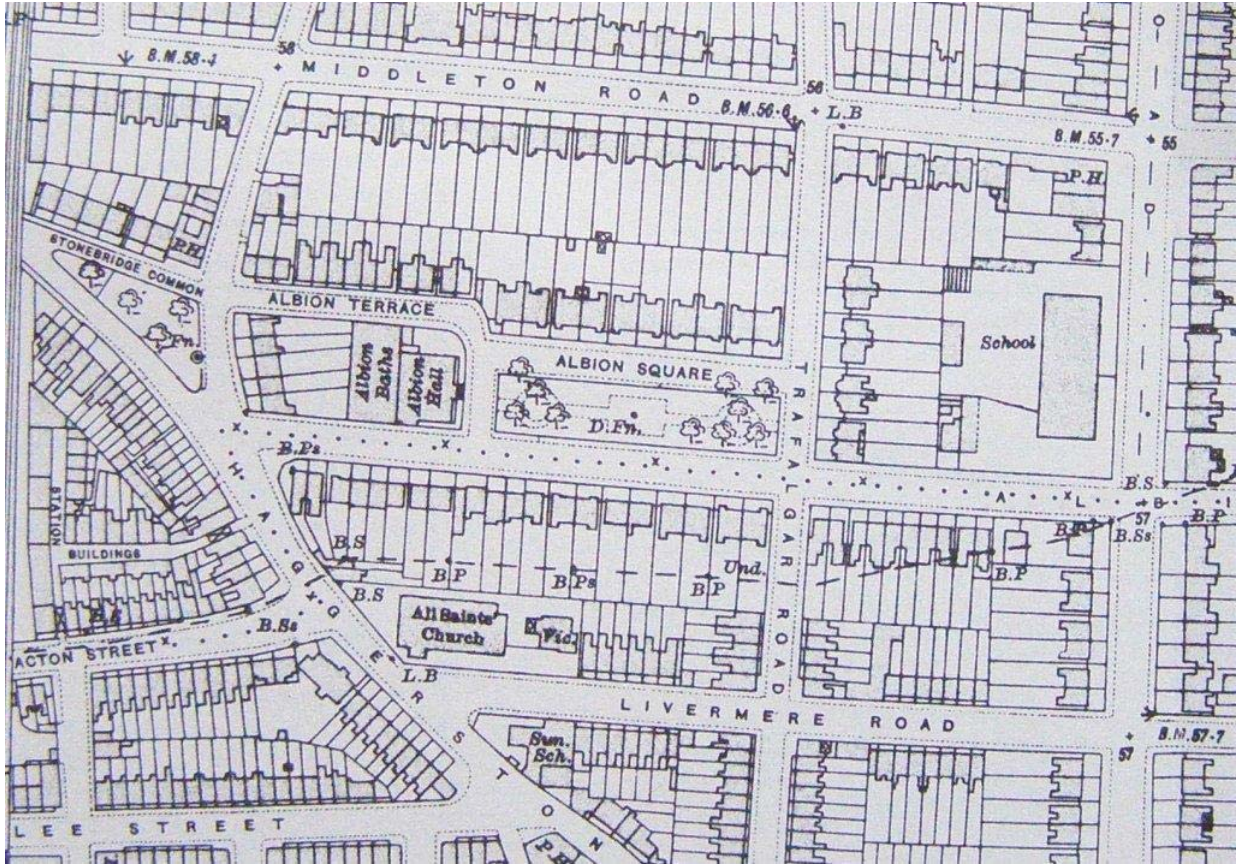
OS Map of 1870



OS Map of 1894



OS Map of 1913



**Contemporary OS Map
Showing Conservation Area in Wider Setting**

(To be inserted after Cabinet Meeting)

APPENDIX B

A SCHEDULE OF STATUTORILY LISTED AND LOCALLY LISTED BUILDINGS.

Statutorily listed buildings (all listed grade II):

Albion Square: Nos. 1 -12 (consec.) South Side
Nos. 13-22 (consec.) North Side
Nos. 23-30 (consec.) East Side

Haggerston Road: All Saints Church and Railings

Locally listed buildings:

Locally listed buildings are those which are on the Council's own list of buildings of local architectural or historic interest. The Council's policy (EQ20) in the Unitary Development Plan is to retain the character and appearance of these when determining planning applications.

Albion Drive: Nos. 8-16 Albion Drive
Nos. 18-32 Albion Drive
Nos. 34-36 Albion Drive

Albion Square: Stone water fountain at the centre of Albion Square Garden

Haggerston Road: Nos. 250-258 (even)
Gunpost on corner of Livermere Road
Duke of Wellington PH
War Memorial on Stonebridge Common

Queensbridge Road: Queensbridge Road Infants School

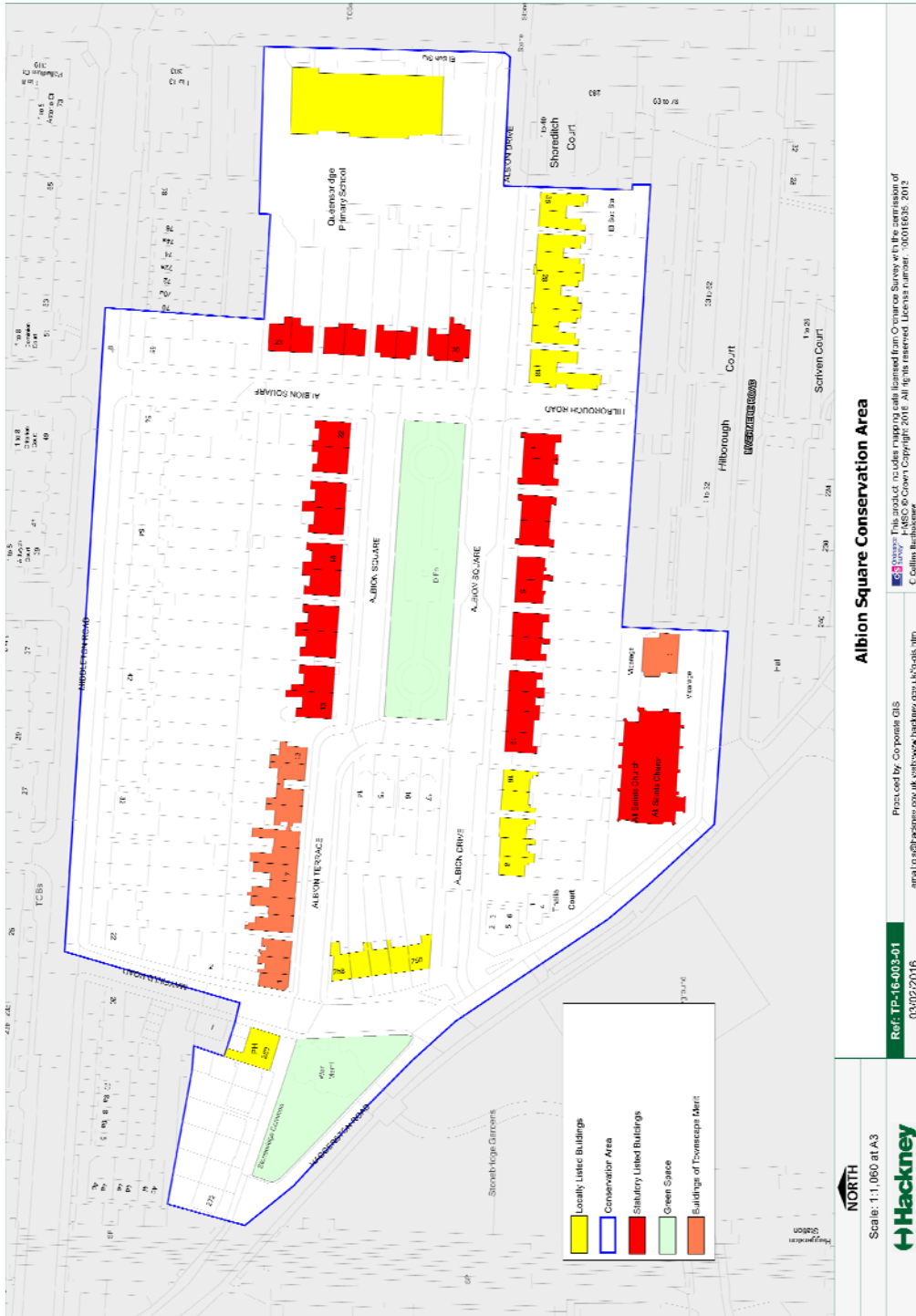
APPENDIX C

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Buildings of England: London 4 North* Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner
(Penguin Books 1999)
- Historical walk through Shacklewell
and Dalston* *Keith Sugden*
(1990)
- Lost Hackney* Elizabeth Robinson
(Hackney Society publication 1989)
- From tower to tower block:
The buildings of Hackney* Written and published by
The Hackney Society 1984
- Victoria County History: Middlesex*

APPENDIX D

MAP OF THE CONSERVATION AREA



APPENDIX E

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Figure 1: Albion Square in 1969
Figure 2: Stonebridge Common
Figure 3: Stonebridge Gardens viewed from the Albion Square Conservation Area
Figure 4: Houses in Albion Square
Figure 5: Greenwood's Map of 1827: Stonebridge Lane runs up towards Stonebridge Common and the field to the east below Grange's Nursery is where Albion Square was developed in the 1840s
Figure 6: The neglected Albion Square c. 1900 (note the dead rabbit in the foreground)
Figure 7: Nos. 4-8 (consecutive) on the south side of Albion Square in 1967
Figures 8 & 9: View of houses on the south side of Albion Square and Nos. 17 & 18 with Mansard roof on north side of the square.
Figures 10 & 11: The east side of Albion Square, Nos. 29 & 30 on the right with bowed-bays to the basement and raised ground floor
Figure 12: Semi-detached 'villas' built in 1994-5 on the West Side of Albion Square
Figure 13: Layout of Albion Square in 1871
Figure 14: Layout of Albion Square in 1921
Figure 15: The restored Drinking Fountain in Albion Square which is Locally Listed
Figure 16: Planting in Albion Square
Figure 17: Nos. 30 -18, Albion Drive
Figure 18: Queensbridge Infants School and the Tomlinson Centre from Queensbridge Road
Figure 19: No. 1, Albion Drive and the former Queensbridge Board School
Figures 20, 21 & 22: Cottages in Albion Terrace
Figure 23: Nos. 262-266, Haggerston Road
Figure 24: Nos. 250-258 Haggerston Road
Figures 25 & 26: All Saints' Church and Vicarage
Figure 27 & 28: Pairs of villas in Middleton Road
Figure 29: Duke of Wellington PH in 2007
Figure 30: Formal planting in Albion Square in 2013
Figure 31: Trees on Stonebridge Common
Figures 32 & 33: Trees and planting in Conservation Area
Figure 34: Looking towards Queensbridge Infants' School from Hilborough Road
Figure 35: Replacement balconies in concrete in Albion Square

All images are copyright of Hackney Archives / London Borough of Hackney, unless otherwise stated

APPENDIX F

FURTHER INFORMATION

LB Hackney

Conservation Team
Planning & Regulatory Services
London Borough of Hackney
2 Hillman Street
London E8 1FB

www.hackney.gov.uk/planning

Historic England

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/>

For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas

For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas

The Victorian Society

<http://www.victoriansociety.org.uk>

The Victorian Society is the national organisation that campaigns for Victorian and Edwardian buildings

The Georgian Group

<http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk>

The Georgian Group is the national charity dedicated to preserving Georgian buildings and gardens. Has an excellent range of technical advice leaflets and courses on Georgian architecture

The Hackney Society

<http://www.hackneysociety.org>

Hackney's local amenity society and umbrella organisation for conservation area advisory committees The Society was formed in 1967 to involve and support local people in the conservation and regeneration of Hackney's built environment and public spaces.

APPENDIX G

COPY OF COUNCIL'S CABINET REPORT ADOPTING THE CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY AND APPRAISAL

(To be added following formal adoption of the Appraisal & final recommendations)