



# 7. OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

This chapter utilises the baseline analysis to assess the sensitivity to change, capacity for growth, built form quality and character, socio-cultural and economic significance to devise areas of the borough that are to be conserved, enhanced or transformed and a tall building zone strategy map.

# CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION PROCESS

## Borough-wide intensification

Newham, and indeed London as a whole, is facing ever growing pressure to accommodate new homes, jobs and vital infrastructure that underpins a high quality of life for all. The London Plan (2021) places emphasis on making best use of available land through intensification of existing places, meaning the efficient use of space, increasing density in appropriate locations and encouraging a mix of uses to improve the range of services and amenities accessible to communities i.e. Good Growth. Indeed, Newham is championing this holistic approach to borough-wide intensification through well-connected neighbourhoods, a pillar of their Re-orientation and Recovery Strategy and new Local Plan.

However, intensification itself can take many forms, from the strategic regeneration of the Royal Docks and Beckton Riverside Opportunity Area, to small site infill in residential neighbourhoods with good access to services and amenities. In each case, the appropriate level and form of intensification depends on the opportunity for change and the local contexts.

## Strategic assessment and evaluation

The methodology on the following pages sets out the assessment undertaken to strategically characterise and evaluate the borough. This process draws together analysis of the historic evolution, functional character, urban morphology and socio-economic characteristics to establish the capacity for and likelihood of change for each part of the borough. The assessment reflects a granular survey of Newham at the level of the urban block.

The assessment result is a synthetic map that divides the borough into three categories - conserve, enhance, and transform - which provide a framework to establish the intensity and type of change expected and appropriate for each area. The assessment is undertaken considering the interrelation of four lenses of analysis to establish whether each area is to be conserved, enhanced or transformed:

**Sensitivity to change:** reflecting heritage and historic value, consistency of character from a specific period and concentration of high quality green spaces.

**Urban form quality and character:** reflecting the quality of architecture and urban design in each area.

**Opportunity for growth:** reflecting existing densities and development patterns, available space for significant growth, amount and extent of development sites in the pipelines, designated regeneration areas and opportunity areas, and current public transport access.

**Socio-economic and cultural significance:** reflecting the presence of intangible cultural and community assets, economic opportunities, population characteristics, essential services, amenities and social infrastructure.

This process is based on an evaluation and assessment of character that is multifaceted and should not be considered a designation or a rigid definition. It instead highlights in each area strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, contributing to establishing neighbourhood specific visions, developed in the following chapter, which will reinforce, mitigate or address the characteristics highlighted in the large scale assessment.

## A design-led approach

Each category sets an appropriate framework for a design-led approach on potential site allocations, as well as providing a steer on assessing windfall sites that come forward in these areas. These categories are conceived as a tool, rather than a designation, and should form part of a comprehensive appreciation of character, context and site conditions to inform a site by site approach to appropriate scale, massing and heights. Indeed, a design-led process should evidence a range of site layouts, typologies, scale and massing options in order to determine the most appropriate form of development for the site.

The methodology for determining which areas fall into each category closely follows the GLA guidance set out in the Draft Characterisation & Growth Strategy LPG, February 2022, now adopted (2023).

# Process Diagram

Historic Development

Urban Morphology

Evaluation →



Urban Morphology

Functional Characters

Evaluation →



Functional Characters

Emerging Context

Evaluation →



Socio-Economic Analysis

Public Engagement findings

Evaluation →



Tall building and height location

← Inform

Neighbourhood Visions

← Inform

Neighbourhood Design Principles

← Inform

↓ Synthesis



Areas of Change Map  
Conserve, Enhance and Transform

# URBAN FORM QUALITY AND CHARACTER

The urban form quality and character map evaluate architecture and urban design quality. The assessment process has been conducted with a scoring of each block against the criteria suggested by the GLA methodology (0=not satisfied; 0.5=partly satisfied; 1=fully satisfied):

- Context – A distinct sense of place that relates well to its surroundings and responds to local heritage, history and culture.
- Identity – An attractive and distinctive place with well-designed places and buildings.
- Built form – A coherent pattern of development with appropriate building, spaces, layout, orientation, scale, form and appearance.
- Movement – A well-connected place that is easy to access, move through and around by walking and cycling and all modes of transport.

- Nature – A place that enhances and celebrates its natural features, has a pleasant micro climate and is rich in biodiversity.
- Public spaces – Indoor and outdoor public spaces that are safe, social, welcoming, attractive and comfortable to spend time in.
- Uses – A diverse, inclusive and stimulating environment offering a range of uses, experiences and choice.
- Homes and buildings – Functional and attractive homes and buildings that are fit for purpose and have good access to external amenity and public spaces.
- Resources & Lifespan – Efficient and resilient buildings and places and a place with a strong sense of stewardship, that is made to last and can easily adapt future needs and lifestyle demands.



Layers of assessment Part 1A - Functional Character and Urban Morphology

The assessment, conducted per aggregation of blocks identified as having the same urban form typology, considers elements of the previous analysis, illustrated on page 141, such as:

- Built form and typology
- Period of development
- Street layout and public realm
- Green and biodiversity
- Town centres and high streets

The evaluation for this map is conducted as a scoring system against each of the previously listed headings:

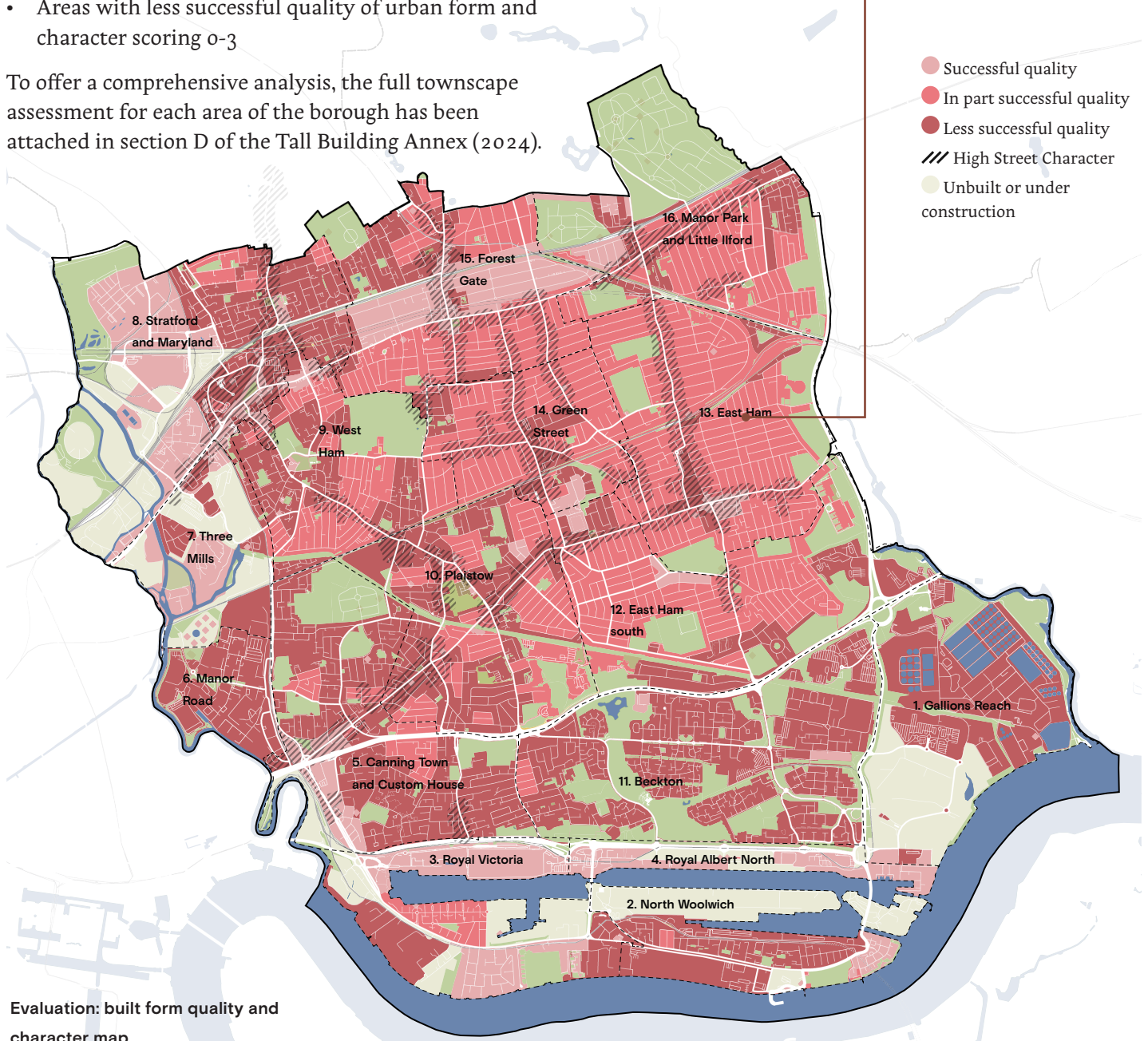
- Successful quality of urban form and character area - scoring 7-9
- In part successful quality of urban form and character with higher uses mix area - scoring 4-6
- Areas with less successful quality of urban form and character scoring 0-3

To offer a comprehensive analysis, the full townscape assessment for each area of the borough has been attached in section D of the Tall Building Annex (2024).



Context	Fitting into the context	1
Identity	Recognisable strong	1
Built form	Clear and legible	1
Movement	Easy to navigate grid	1
Nature	Scarce beyond gardens	0.5
Public realm	Limited	0
Uses	Largely residential	0
Homes & buildings	Good quality homes	1
Resources	Low energy efficiency	0
Total		5.5

Example of Built form quality and character evaluation

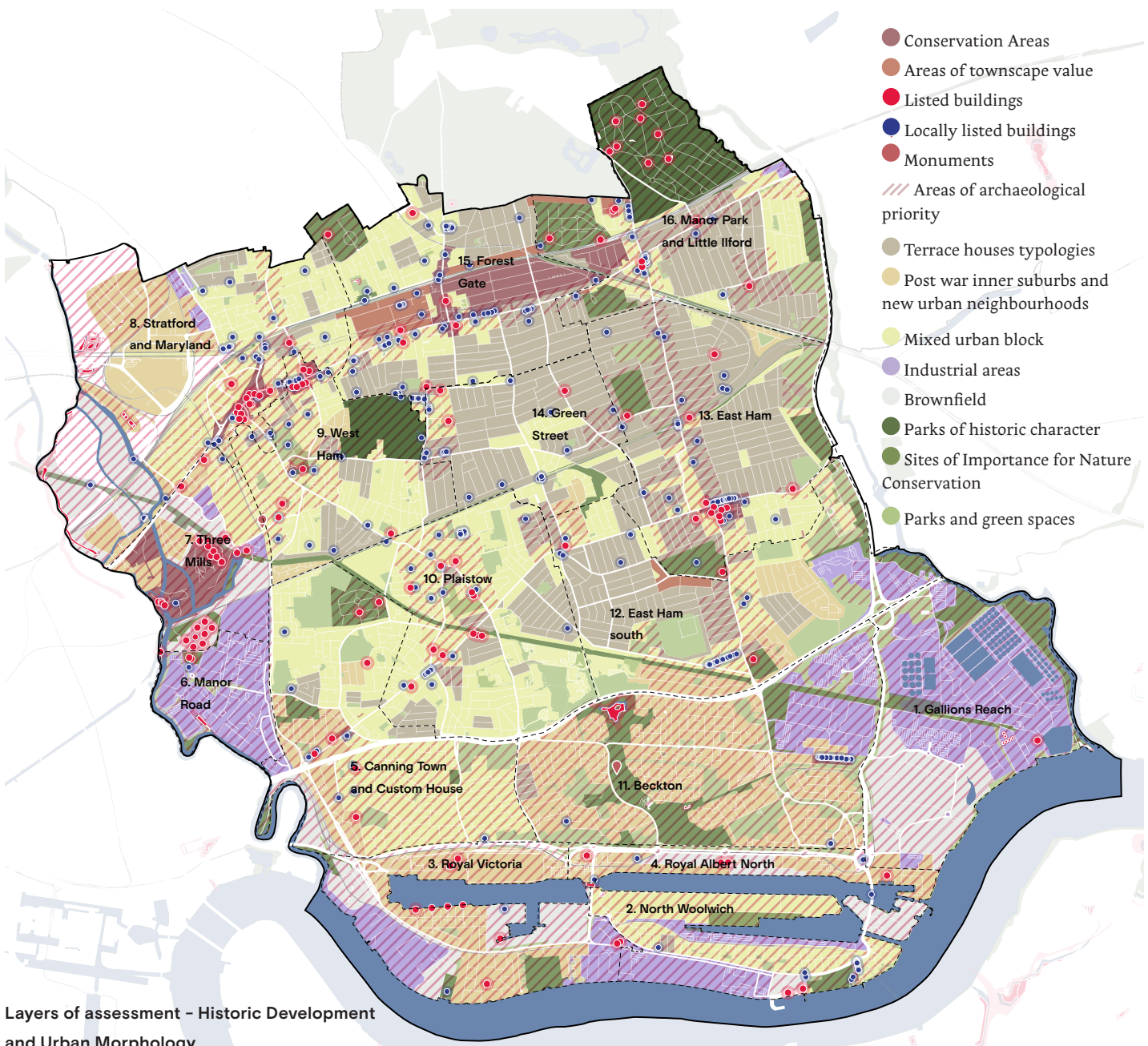


Evaluation: built form quality and character map

# SENSITIVITY TO CHANGE

The sensitivity to change map, opposite, evaluates the degree to which an area might be impacted by change and reflects the nature and coherence of its character with special regard to its historical value. In line with the London Plan methodology, the assessment considers the elements below:

- Heritage – Proximity to a concentration of heritage assets including Listed Buildings, Locally Listed Buildings, local heritage assets, Buildings at Risk or recently lost buildings of merit, or otherwise likely to affect their settings.
- Historic character – Near or within areas of Archaeological Priority or historic importance, World Heritage Sites, Conservation Areas, significant townscape value and parks of historic value.
- The quality, extent and variety of architectural periods evident and consistency of style including listed and locally listed buildings. High quality materials, detailing and surface treatment.
- Evidence of a historic urban grain or street patterns.
- The concentration of high-quality green spaces, parks, gardens, mature street trees and other rich and varied biodiversity. This may include the presence of registered parks and gardens.
- Policy protections – Presence of Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land, industrial land, protected gypsy and traveller sites or other protection policy designations including neighbourhood plans.
- The range, quality, age and use of materials, detailing and surface treatment evident
- Brownfield and industrial areas



Layers of assessment - Historic Development and Urban Morphology

The evaluation suggests four degrees of sensitivity to change that include:

- Highly sensitive to change areas that include Conservation Areas, Areas of Townscape Value and listed buildings together with their settings. The map below highlights listed buildings locations, while the extent of the settings of listed buildings needs to be assessed and considered on a case by case basis. In a separate colour, to mark the different nature of the open space assets, are also highlighted highly sensitive to change parks and green spaces, which include parks of historic character and Sites of Importance for nature and conservation.
- Sensitive to change areas that include areas of consolidated historic character where historic

patterns of development are recognisable, such as historic terrace houses streets, and parks and green spaces not identified as 'highly sensitive' to change.

- Somewhat sensitive to change areas that include development of cohesive design but no historic / architectural value.
- Not sensitive to change areas that include areas of fragmented character where buildings from multiple periods and following different styles and urban principles are present.



Evaluation: sensitivity to change map

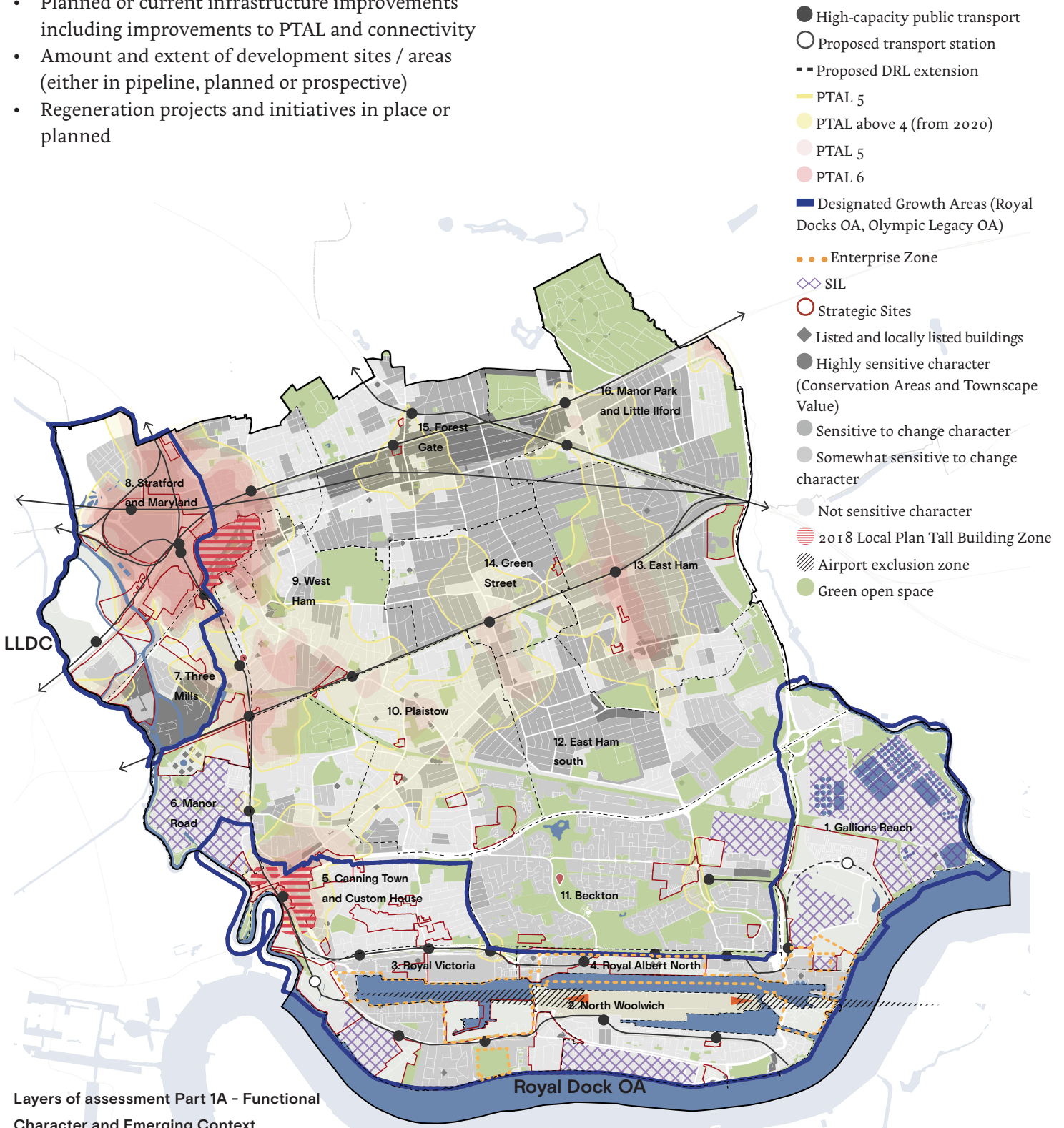


# OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH

The opportunity for growth map assesses the degree to which an area might be able to accommodate change and reflects the accessibility of the area, the emerging context and the availability of space for growth. In line with the GLA methodology, the map considers:

- Existing urban form such as density, height and urban grain
- Existing high PTAL and connectivity
- Planned or current infrastructure improvements including improvements to PTAL and connectivity
- Amount and extent of development sites / areas (either in pipeline, planned or prospective)
- Regeneration projects and initiatives in place or planned

- Identified as an Opportunity Area, growth area or regeneration area
- Recent development pattern and past levels of growth (likelihood this will continue)
- Planning policy constraints limiting capacity for growth e.g. Metropolitan Open Land or London City Airport Public Safety Zone



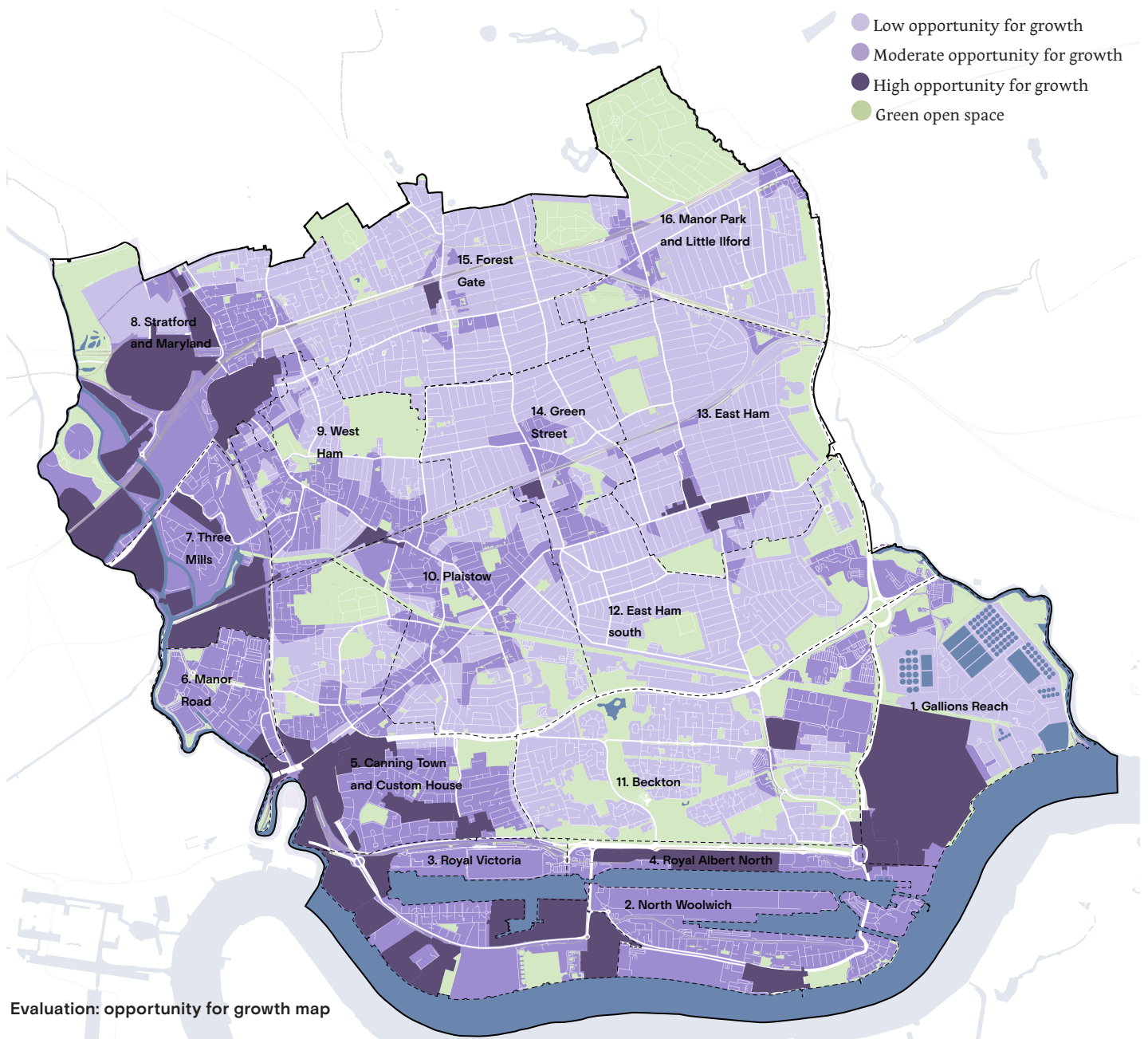
Layers of assessment Part 1A - Functional Character and Emerging Context

The assessment considers elements of the previous analysis, illustrated on page 139, such as:

- Conservation Areas, Listed buildings and locally listed buildings
- Public transport access and PTAL levels
- Building character and whether it has the ability to provide uplifts in density
- Designated areas such as strategic sites and opportunity areas
- Protected areas such as strategic industrial land

The evaluation suggests three degrees of opportunity for growth:

- Low opportunity for growth areas include areas of consolidated character that can not provide uplifts in density or areas of mixed character that have low PTAL levels
- Moderate opportunities for growth areas include areas of mix character with high PTAL, industrial areas that can be intensified, or areas that are designated are areas of growth, such as Olympic Legacy OA or the Royal Docks OA. These areas could provide moderate uplift in density through incremental intensification.
- High opportunities for growth areas include strategic sites and large masterplan sites.



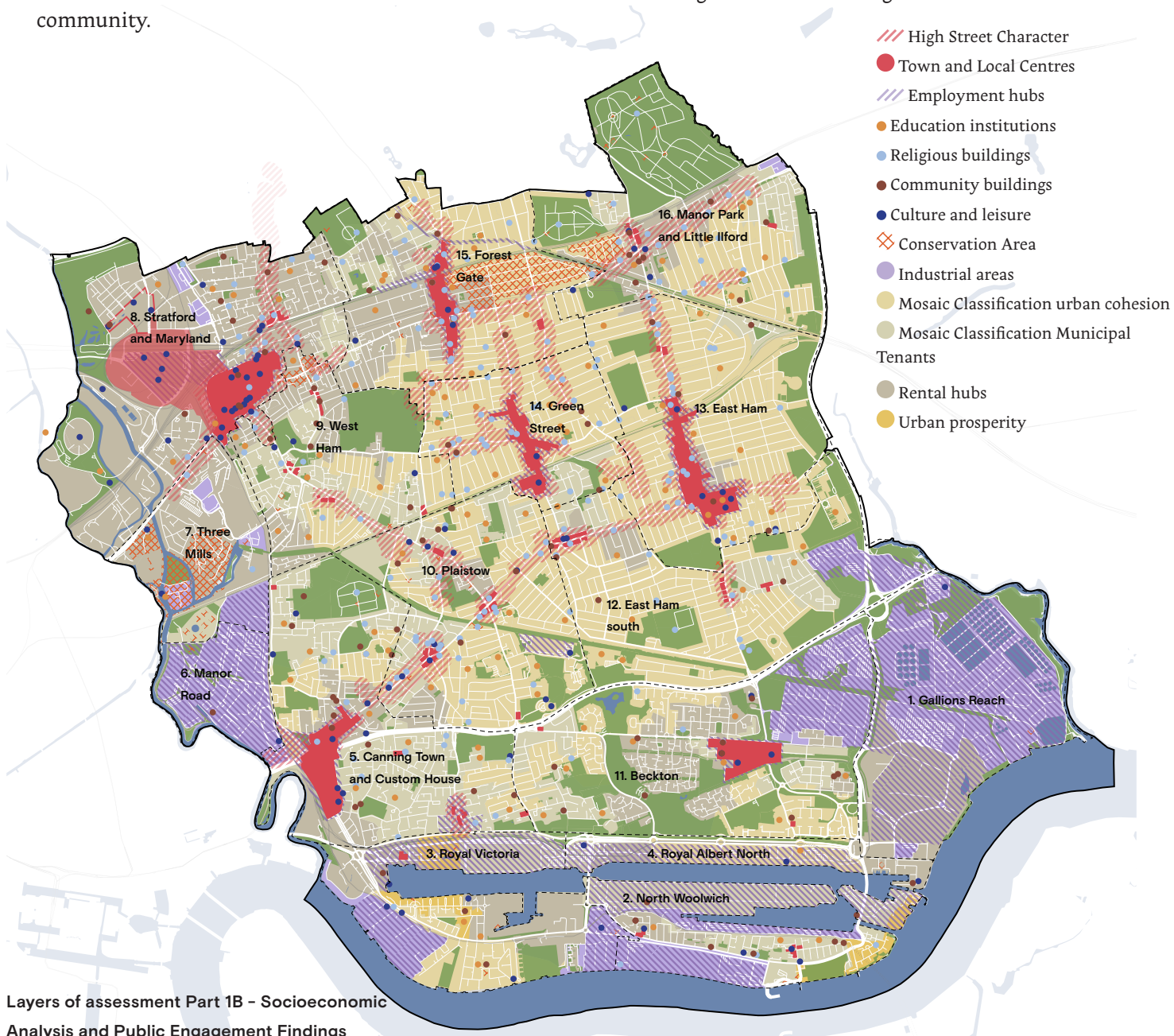
Evaluation: opportunity for growth map

# SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The socio-economic and cultural significance map evaluates the importance of each area for the social life of the local community, reflecting elements such as the presence of community and cultural assets, economic opportunities, and demographic characteristics. In line with the GLA methodology, the map considers intangible aspects emerging from the public engagement and the socio-economic analysis:

- Intangible assets – Presence of positive intangible characteristics that make a place unique or distinctive.
- Cultural assets – Presence and significance of attributes, spaces and activities that celebrate the artistic, historic, cultural and creative character.
- Community assets – Presence and significance of highly valued community uses, spaces, services or infrastructure that meet the needs of the local community.

- Local features – Physical features that are unique and have meaning to the local community.
- Health and wellbeing – A place that encourages active travel and has overall positive benefits for the mental and physical health and wellbeing of Londoners.
- Need and deficiency – A place with a wide range of economic opportunities.
- Employment – A place with a strong and diverse range of employment opportunities.
- Town centres and high streets – Presence of a vibrant town centre or high street that provide varied economic, civic and cultural offers.
- Education – Presence and significance of high-quality and renowned educational and training facilities.
- Housing types and tenure – A place with a variety of housing suitable to the needs of diverse communities, including affordable housing.



Layers of assessment Part 1B - Socioeconomic Analysis and Public Engagement Findings

The assessment considers elements of the previous analysis, illustrated on page 146, such as:

- High streets and town / local centres  
Distribution of social infrastructure, including community, leisure, culture, religion, education
- Areas of employment and economic opportunity  
Valued local assets identified through public engagement
- Mosaic characterisation of the borough demographic

The evaluation suggests three degrees of socio-economic and cultural significance:

- Areas of high cultural significance include town centres and local centres, high streets and

employment areas, which concentrate a variety of uses that support the social life of the community.

- Areas of socio-economic and cultural significance include areas classified in the socio-economic assessment as majority “municipal tenants” and “urban cohesion”. These generally have residents holding long-term tenancies and with established ties with their local community.
- Highly valued green and blue assets include the parks and landscape features that were highlighted during the engagement or that are of historical value. It is worth highlighting that the community generally values all parks in Newham, however the parks here marked were directly mentioned in the engagement.
- Areas of moderate socio-economic and cultural significance cover all other areas.



Evaluation: socio-economic and cultural significance map