



**BERMONDSEY STREET CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**  
for LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK

**JANUARY 2003**



# BERMONDSEY STREET CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

ROGER EVANS ASSOCIATES  
for LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK

JANUARY 2003

Roger Evans Associates  
59-63 High Street  
Kidlington  
Oxford  
OX5 2DN  
Tel: 01865 377030  
Fax: 01865 377050  
Email: [urbandesign@rogerevans.com](mailto:urbandesign@rogerevans.com)

Ref: 459\_Southwark/Report/Berm11.doc

Prepared by: RW

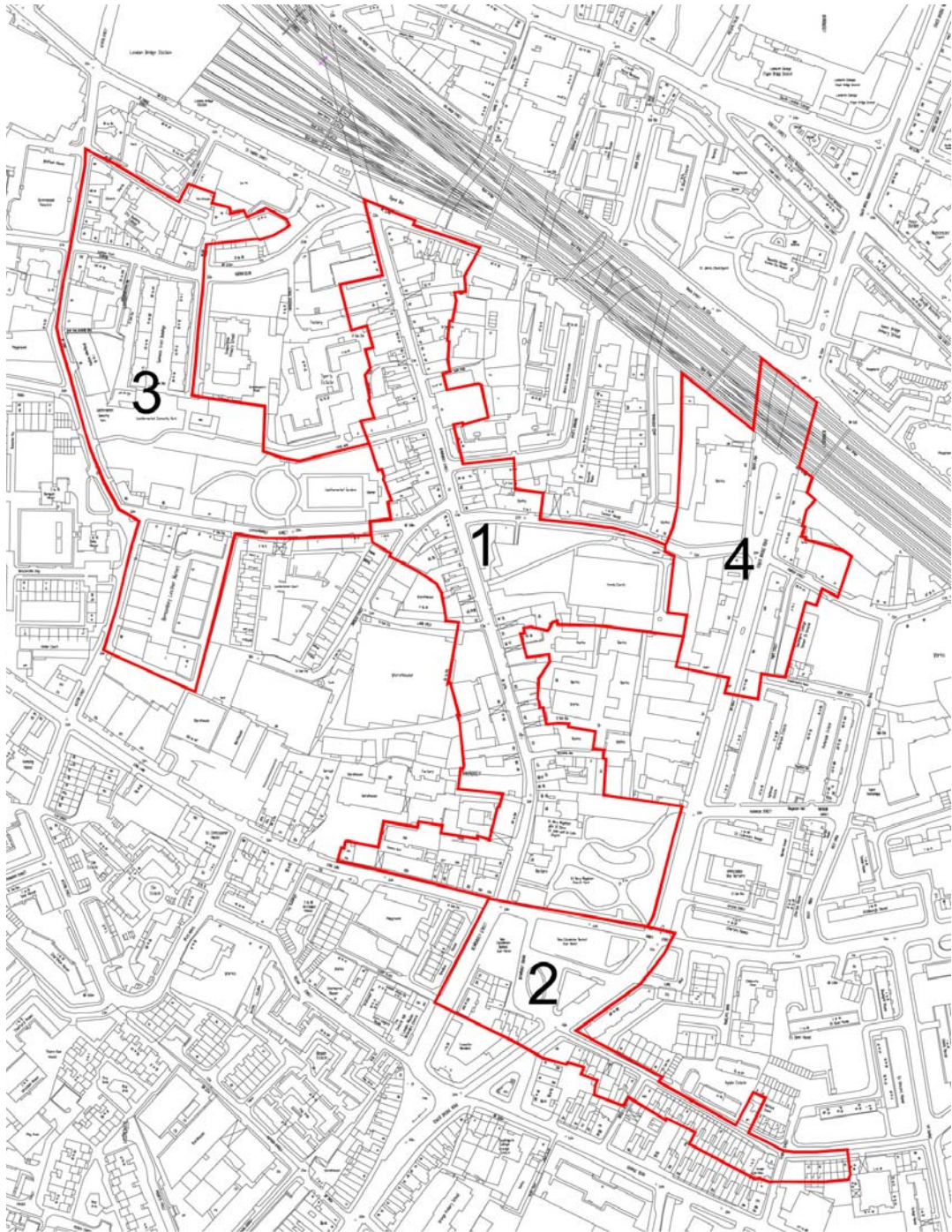
Checked by: KK

Issued: 20-1-03

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Purpose	1
1.2. Arrangement of this document	1
1.3. Bermondsey Street Conservation Area	2
1.4. Planning History	2
2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	5
2.1. Before the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century	5
2.2. 19 <sup>th</sup> century industrialisation	7
2.3. 20 <sup>th</sup> Century	8
2.4. Sub Area 1	11
2.5. Sub Area 2	12
2.6. Sub Area 3	13
2.7. Sub Area 4	13
3. 14	
THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA	14
3.1. Broad Context	14
3.2. Sub Area 1 – Bermondsey Street	16
3.3. Sub area 2 – Grange Walk	26
3.4. Sub area 3 – Weston Street/Snowsfields	29
Sub area 4 – Tower Bridge Road	34
4. AUDIT	38
4.1. Listed buildings	38
4.2. Sub Area 1 - Bermondsey Street north	38
4.3. Sub Area 1 - Bermondsey Street south	41
4.4. Sub Area 2 - Grange Walk and Bermondsey Square	42
4.5. Sub Area 3 – Weston Street area	43

---

4.6. Sub Area 4 - Tower Bridge Road area	46
Archaeology.	48
Environmental improvements	49
Improvements to buildings	49
Potential development sites	50
<b>5. GUIDELINES</b>	<b>52</b>
5.1. Introduction	52
5.2. Development form and Urban morphology	52
5.3. Public Realm	55
5.4. Improvements and repairs	56



**Sub Area 1:** based on the mediaeval Bermondsey Street

**Sub Area 2:** based on the site of Bermondsey Abbey and 17th Century houses of Grange Walk

**Sub Area 3:** separated from Bermondsey Street by Leathermarket gardens: later 18th Century redevelopment

**Sub Area 4:** separated from Bermondsey Street by Tanner Street Gardens: redeveloped in 1890's to build new road to Tower Bridge

Figure 1 Bermondsey Street Conservation Area and sub-areas: 1:5,000

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Purpose

- 1.1.1. The purpose of this statement is to provide an account of the Bermondsey Street Conservation Area and a clear indication of the Borough Council's approach to its preservation and enhancement. It is intended to assist and guide all those involved in development and change in the area, and will be used by the council in assessing the design of development proposals.
- 1.1.2. The statutory definition of 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 normally centred on listed buildings and pleasant groups of other buildings, open space, or an historic street pattern. A town space or features of archaeological interest may also contribute to the special character of an area. It is, however, the character of areas, rather than individual buildings, that such a designation seeks to preserve or enhance. The most recent legislation dealing with Conservation Areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 (Sections 69 to 78).
- 1.1.3. Planning legislation requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. In doing this the emphasis will be on control rather than prevention, to allow the area to remain alive and prosperous but at the same time to ensure that any new development accords with its special architectural and visual qualities.
- 1.1.4. This statement has been prepared following guidance given by English Heritage in their note "Conservation Area Appraisals". For the purpose of this statement, the Conservation Area is divided into four sub-areas shown on figure 1.

### 1.2. Arrangement of this document

- 1.2.1. Following the Introduction, Section 2 provides a brief history of the area and its development. Section 3 starts with a broad appraisal of its character and appearance, with reference to the range of materials, details and building types to be found in the area. Section 3 then goes on to describe each sub-area with specific reference to architectural and historic qualities, views and townscape, the character and relationship of public and green spaces, and any elements that detract from the Conservation Area. Section 4 provides an audit of the features of special interest of the area, including listed buildings, particular groups of unlisted buildings, and trees, planting and other streetscape elements. Section 5 provides guidelines for future development and change in the Conservation Area.

### 1.3. Bermondsey Street Conservation Area

#### Location

- 1.3.1. The Bermondsey Street Conservation Area is centred on Bermondsey Street itself, running north-south from St. Thomas Street / Crucifix Lane to Tower Bridge Road. Long Lane / Abbey Street, crosses it near its southern end. The area abuts the main railway line into London Bridge station in the north, and the Tooley Street Conservation Area lies immediately to the north side of the line.

#### Topography

- 1.3.2. The area is very level and low lying, between 2 and 4 metres above OS datum. With its proximity to the river, this fact has had some effect on its historical development. However, the natural topography has little direct visual impact on the character of the area and the main physical element is the artificial one of the railway viaduct, brought in at high level above the streets to the north of the Conservation Area.

### 1.4. Planning History

- 1.4.1. Bermondsey Street Conservation Area was originally designated in 1972 by the Greater London Council under the Civic Amenities Act 1967. It included Bermondsey Street, Bermondsey Square and parts of Long Lane and Grange Walk. It was subsequently extended to its present boundaries in October 1991 and December 1993.

#### Unitary Development Plan Policies

- 1.4.2. The Unitary Development Plan for the London Borough of Southwark was adopted in 1995. There are three policies in the Plan that relate to the conservation, protection and enhancement of areas of character, buildings, ancient monuments, historic areas, parks and gardens of environmental quality, architectural interest and historical importance.

#### POLICY E.4.1: Conservation Areas

- 1.4.3. 'Where appropriate, the Council will designate new Conservation Areas and extend existing Conservation Areas. The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. The Council will prepare guidelines to identify their special qualities. Identification of the special architectural and historic qualities of an area will be based on detailed analysis of the area. This will include the architectural and historic quality, character and coherence of the buildings and the contribution which they make to the special interest of the area.'

#### POLICY E.4.2: Proposals Affecting Conservation Areas

- 1.4.4. 'Conservation Area Consent for demolition in Conservation Areas will not normally be granted except where certain conditions are met. These conditions are as follows:

- i) Consent will not normally be given for the redevelopment of, or partial demolition of buildings, or part of buildings which make a



positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area;

- ii) There are acceptable and detailed plans for the site of the building to be demolished or partially demolished. Demolition is not to be undertaken before a contract for the carrying out of the works of redevelopment has been made, and planning permission has been granted for the development.

**POLICY E.4.3: Conditions for Planning Permission in Conservation Areas**

1.4.5. 'Planning permission for proposals affecting Conservation Areas will not normally be granted except where certain conditions are met. These conditions are as follows:

- i) The design of any new development or alteration demonstrates that a high priority has been given to the objective of positively preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area;
- ii) Proposals should pay special regard to historic building lines, scale, height, and massing, traditional patterns of frontages, vertical or horizontal emphasis, plot widths and detailed design e.g. the scale and spacing of window opening, and the nature and quality of materials;
- iii) Schemes should be drawn up in detail (outline applications will normally not be accepted);
- iv) Drawings of the proposals should show the proposed development in its setting and indicate any trees to be retained, lost or replaced,
- v) A proposal for a site adjacent to or outside a Conservation Area will be unacceptable if it would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- vi) The proposed use will not adversely affect the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.'

1.4.6. The Unitary Development Plan is currently under review. A First Draft of the new plan has been placed on deposit. It is expected that the new plan will be adopted late in 2004. The new draft Unitary Development Plan, also known as "The Southwark Plan", is supported by a number of supplementary planning guidance documents relating to different themes – including design and heritage conservation – and for different areas.

**Policy 4.3.1: Supplementary Planning Guidance Clean and Green**

1.4.7. In exercising its powers under the Planning Acts 9 and Part 1 of the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953, the council must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of appearance of its conservation areas. In Southwark this requirement is satisfied in a number of ways including the formation of conservation policy (UDP), production of supplementary planning guidance and

character assessments, and in assessment of applications for planning permission and Conservation Area Consent.

**Policy 4.3.2: Supplementary Planning Guidance Clean and Green**

- 1.4.8. The Council is required from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas, and to undertake local public consultation on such proposals

**Policy 6.2: Information Requirements**

- 1.4.9. Outline proposals are not acceptable for any applications affecting listed buildings or conservation areas. Design statements will be required with all applications affecting listed buildings or conservation areas. The statement should describe how the proposal will preserve or enhance the conservation area or listed building. More information on Design Statements is available in Council's design and sustainability SPG's. Consent will not be granted for any demolition or alterations with detail proposals for:

- i) The protection of any retained fabric;
- ii) An acceptable replacement scheme;
- iii) Work requiring listed building consent without a detailed statement setting out the justification, design approach and methods for the work

- 1.4.10. Information on the review of the Unitary Development Plan, including electronic versions of the plan and supplementary planning guidance, can be found on the Council's website at [www.southwark.gov.uk/udp](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/udp)

**Further Information**

*This document is not exhaustive, and further advice and information can be obtained from the Planning Department, London Borough of Southwark.*

## 2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1. Before the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

#### Origins

- 2.1.1. Bermondsey was listed in the Domesday Book (1086), deriving its name from Ey, Beormund's Ey, or 'Beormund's Ey, island'. The name described the original settlement, which was on high land in the south of the Conservation Area amid marshes and streams that almost surrounded it. West of the area, Borough and the London Bridge area have a history dating to Roman times. Roman inhumations and other features have been found in Bermondsey. Within the Conservation Area, Saxon stone coffins were discovered during excavations of the mediaeval abbey prior to the construction of Tower Bridge Road, and it is believed that a small monastery existed around 700 AD.

#### Mediaeval period – Bermondsey Abbey

- 2.1.2. In 1086 Bermondsey was part of a royal manor belonging to King William and consisted of a settlement and farmland. There was also a new church – St Saviours, around which Bermondsey Priory was founded in 1082 by Aylwin Child. The monks of Bermondsey were of the Cluniac order who in 1117, according to the Annals of Bermondsey Abbey (1433), found a holy cross near the Thames.
- 2.1.3. Subsequently the Abbey became a destination for pilgrims, who reached the Abbey via London Bridge and along Bermondsey Street from the north, or via Long Lane from the west. Bermondsey became one of the principal religious houses in the country and was elevated to the status of Abbey in 1399. It owned most of the land around it until it was dissolved in 1538 by Henry VIII.
- 2.1.4. The Bermondsey Street Conservation Area includes the area that grew up around Bermondsey Abbey – the square itself is on the site of the inner courtyard. Housing grew up around the Abbey for ordinary people who worked there, and in 1597 Bermondsey was described in Gerarde's Herbal as a country village. From its origins as a pilgrims' trail, Bermondsey Street became the high street of the village and the Church of St Mary Magdalene (now the oldest building in Bermondsey) was built for the people who lived and worked on the abbey land.
- 2.1.5. The first rector of St Mary Magdalene was John de Ecclesia in 1291. Between 1675 and 1679 most of the church was rebuilt incorporating its 15<sup>th</sup> century tower. The west front was rebuilt in 1830.

#### Establishment of leather working

- 2.1.6. Southwark always lived in the shadow of The City of London across the river, and provided the support necessary to maintain the capital's metropolitan way of life. As early as 1392, a proclamation gave butchers a place in Southwark to dump their refuse, and so the link with leather working as a by-product of the butchers' trade can be made. The raw materials needed for tanning leather were also at hand: water from the

## Bermondsey Street Conservation Area Historical Background

tidal streams (notably the Neckinger stream), and oak bark from south London woods.

1500 to 1800

- 2.1.7. Bermondsey became known as a resort from the 16<sup>th</sup> century (see Figure 2). In about 1780, Thomas Keyse developed an art gallery and pleasure garden around a spring near to what came to be known as Spa Road. It was a popular visiting place for people from the City of London and many social events and entertainments took place. New houses were built, including Bermondsey Square, of which only a 19<sup>th</sup> century fragment survives. Houses from the 17<sup>th</sup> century still remain in Grange Walk.



Figure 2 Illustration recorded as "Entertainments" at Bermondsey Spa (1570), but probably "Marriage Feast at Bermondsey" by Joris Hoefnagel

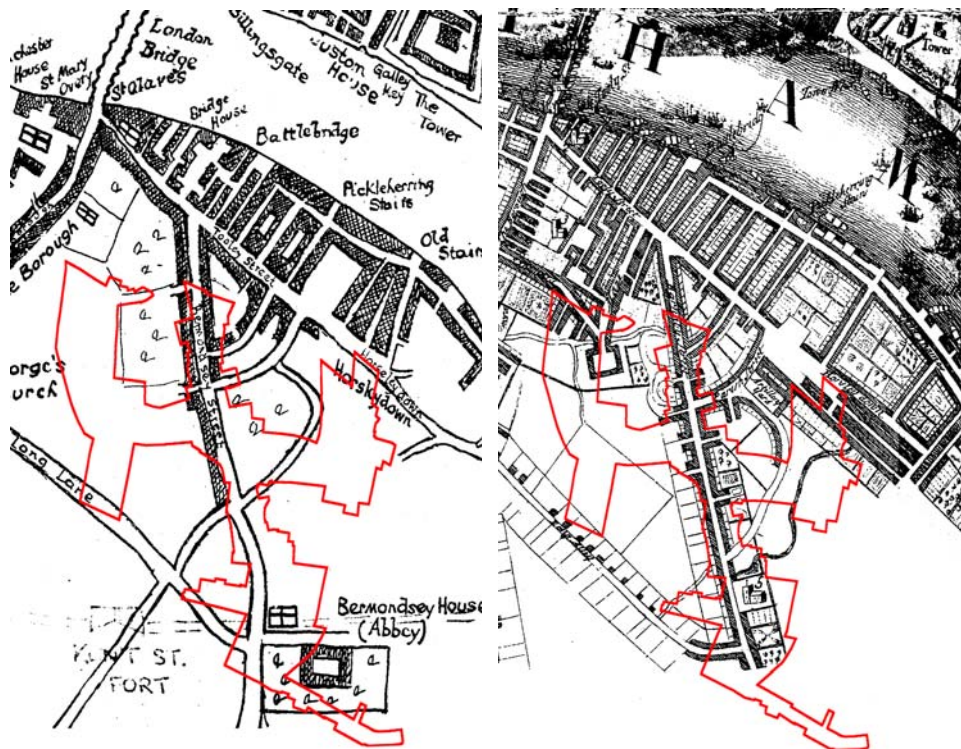


Figure 3 (left) The Conservation Area overlaid on Brett-James's 1929 map representing the area in 1603. Bermondsey Street is developed about as far as White's Grounds on the eastern side and Lamb Walk on the west. Gardens lie behind most of the frontage.

Figure 4 (right) Parker's map of 1720 shows the intensification of development north of the Conservation Area and completion of development frontage on Bermondsey Street, but still little in the plots behind.

## 2.2. 19<sup>th</sup> century industrialisation

2.2.1. Industrial activity continued to grow in Bermondsey because of the proximity of available resources, and the demand for goods by the City of London across the river. Brewing was of note, with Courages based north-east of the Conservation Area. Sarsons, the vinegar manufacturer, established a production and warehousing complex on its present site at Roper Lane in the 1820s.

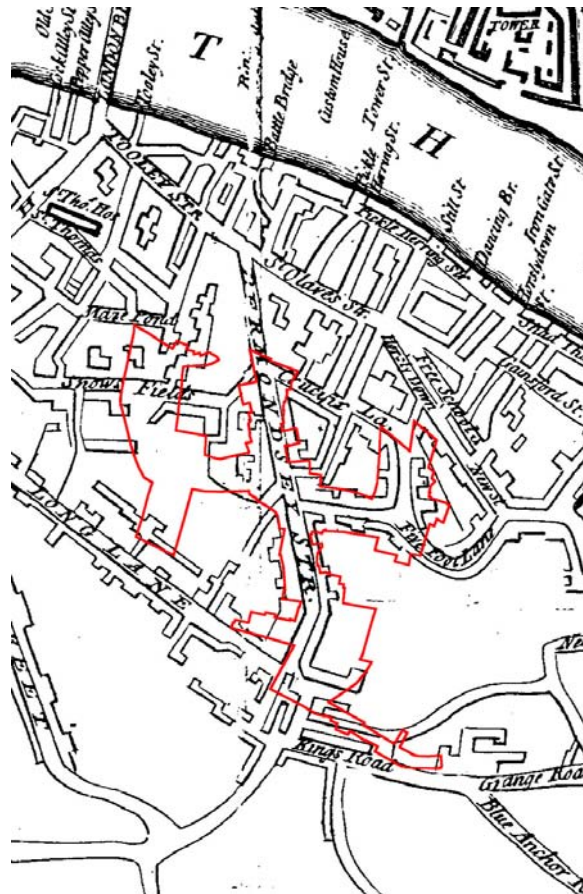


Figure 5 Map showing Southwark in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Alex Hogg 1748. The northern part of the Conservation Area had become well built-up by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

2.2.2. At Bermondsey the leather industry was particularly strongly established, and its legacy can still be identified in the local street names, such as Morocco Street and Tanner street. The industry became so prominent that the construction of a Leather Exchange was begun in 1874 and the building was formally opened in August 1879. This still stands today on Leathermarket Street, although its use has changed with conversion to smaller business units. As a result of the leather industry, associated businesses developed, in particular hatters who used the wool from the animals. The Woolpack pub in Bermondsey Street was a reminder of this until recently renamed The London Scotia Bar.