



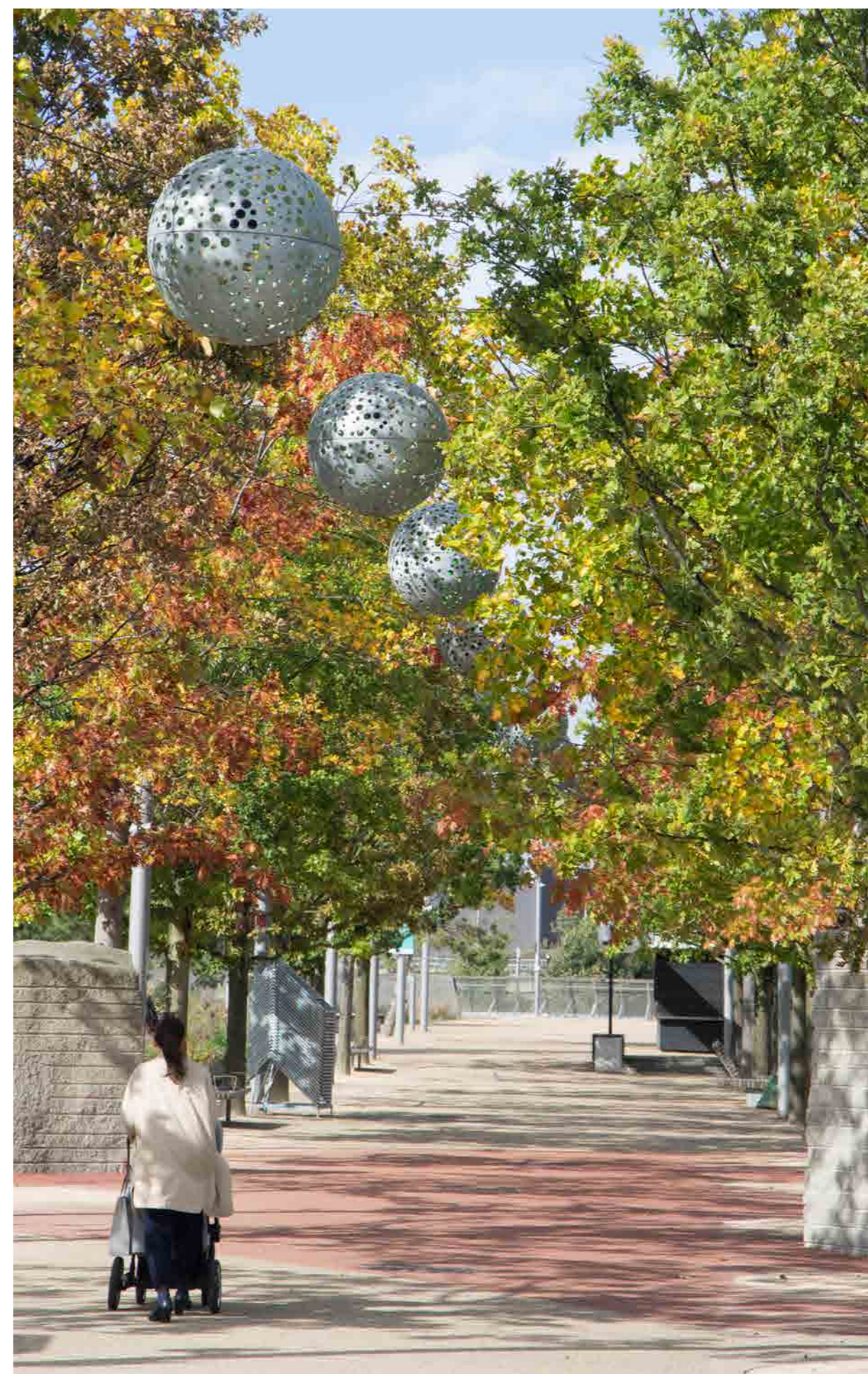
DRAFT CHARACTERISATION STUDY

OCTOBER 2018



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INTRODUCTION

The Legacy Corporation Characterisation Study has been prepared to support the review of the Legacy Corporation Local Plan and act as a reference for development proposals within the Legacy Corporation area. It provides a detailed picture of the character of the Legacy Corporation area today and how it has evolved focused around the four sub areas identified within the Local Plan.

The study identifies the physical characteristics of the area as a whole and breaks this down into character areas, identifying key positive and negative features. This is combined with planning information to determine the potential impacts on character. The aim of the study is to provide an in depth understanding of the character of the Legacy Corporation area today and how it has evolved to this point, to provide guidance and parameters to influence future development in the area through a variety of means, including:

- Describing the evolution of the Legacy Corporation area and identifying the main drivers for change;
- Identifying the range, date and form of landscape and building types and relating them to the evolution of the area;
- Differentiating character areas as well as describing and explaining their distinctive qualities.

The Local Plan contains a number of policies that address matters of character and design. Key policies are:

- BN.4 – Designing Development
- BN.5 – Tall buildings
- BN.10 – Protecting key Views
- BN.17 – Conserving or enhancing heritage assets

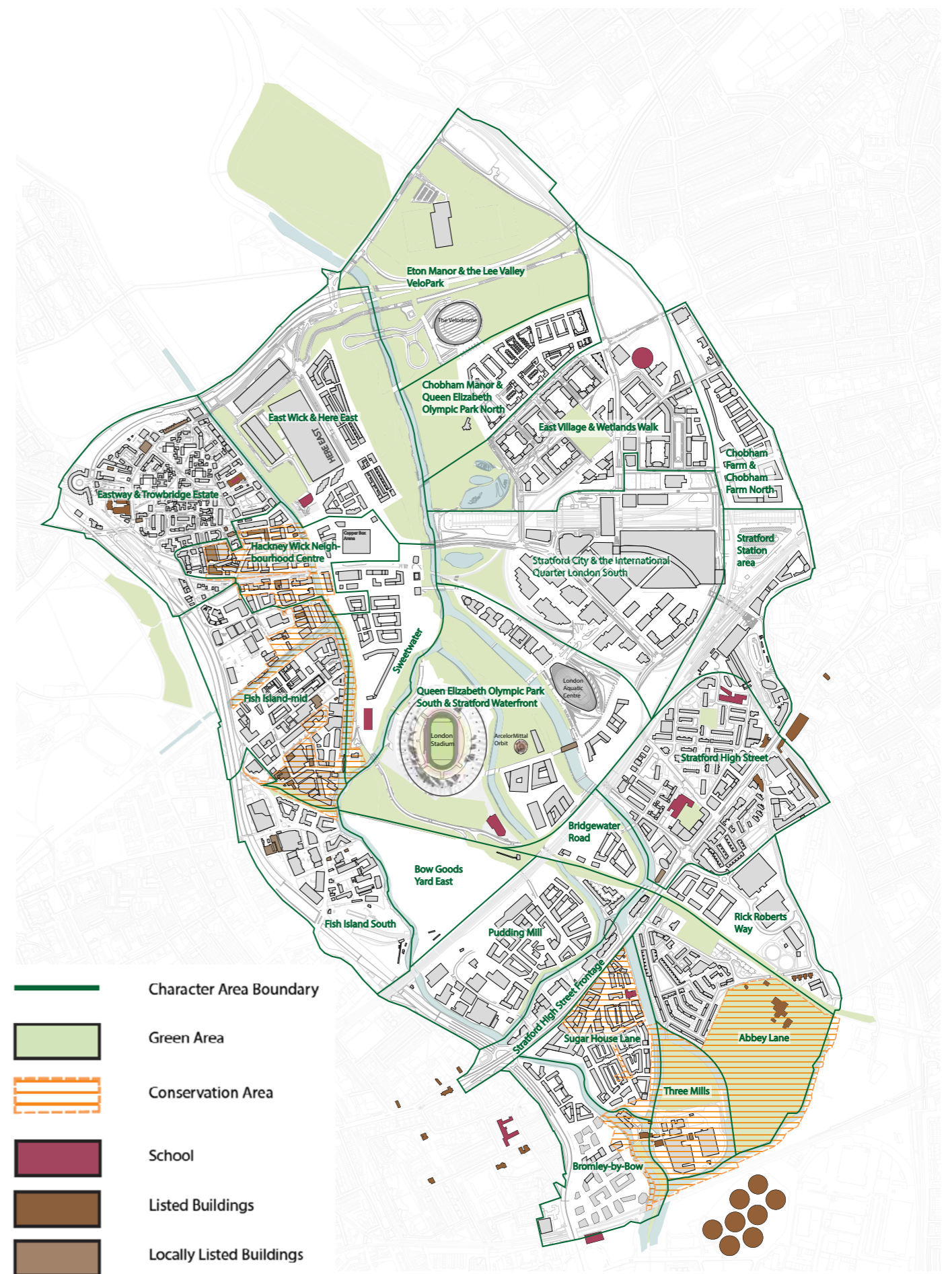
The study provides context to the approach taken in these policies, including the associated ‘prevailing’ and ‘generally expected’ heights that are identified within the Local Plan sub areas. It also provides context to the potential for intensification across each character area by drawing on the planning designations and information from the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). Therefore, scale, massing and grain, as well as constraints and sensitivities, are identified, including where identified character areas fall within Conservation Area boundaries and by providing information on heritage in these areas.

POLICY CONTEXT

The Legacy Corporation Characterisation Study is being undertaken at a time of change within the wider planning policy context. The Mayor of London is currently reviewing the London Plan, a consultation draft of the new plan was published in December 2017, with supporting evidence based studies looking at London’s wider character across the city as a whole. Nationally an updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been published, following a consultation, in July 2018.

A review of the Legacy Corporation Local Plan is currently underway, which this study will form part of the evidence base for, whilst the current Local Plan was adopted in 2015, an early review is taking place to reflect the pace of change within the area. This pace of change has had an impact on local character which makes this a key piece of evidence. In addition to the Local Plan the Legacy Corporation has a range of other adopted policy that will inform this study, these include the adopted Bromley-by-Bow, Pudding Mill and Hackney Wick Fish Island SPDs. The Legacy Corporation area also includes conservation areas at Hackney Wick, Fish Island and White Post Lane, Sugar House Lane and Three Mills which also inform this work.

There is guidance in place to support the production of characterisation work in the form of the Mayor of London’s Character and Context SPG. This sets out the parameters and guidance around scope, methodology and analysis to ensure conformity as well as providing a framework for the production of appropriate evidence. The SPG emphasises the importance of local character, as well as context and scale and linking identified areas at any scale up to the wider area within which they site. This study has been prepared in line with the guidance set out within this SPG.



BACKGROUND TO THE LEGACY CORPORATION CHARACTERISATION STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

The Legacy Corporation area has been a focus for regeneration due to its being picked as the host location for the 2012 Olympic Games. A strong focus of the London 2012 bid was the legacy of the games, which sees the area continue to change as the venues have been adopted or removed and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park opened. At the same time housing and other development has taken place across the wider area capitalising on the improvements made to support the games. The area has therefore in recent times seen unprecedented change and the purpose of this characterisation study is to look at the historic and changing character of the area to provide a practical tool and reference to support decisions within the area.

This characterisation work will build on work already done to produce the area SPDs for Bromley-by-Bow, Pudding Mill and Hackney Wick & Fish Island, as well as the information already available in relation to the conservation areas and the other evidence based studies being developed as part of the current Local Plan Review. Building on previous work and reviewing current studies being undertaken, extensive survey work of the area will take place with site visits being undertaken in addition to desk based work to establish a detailed understanding of the area. Other key tasks have included:

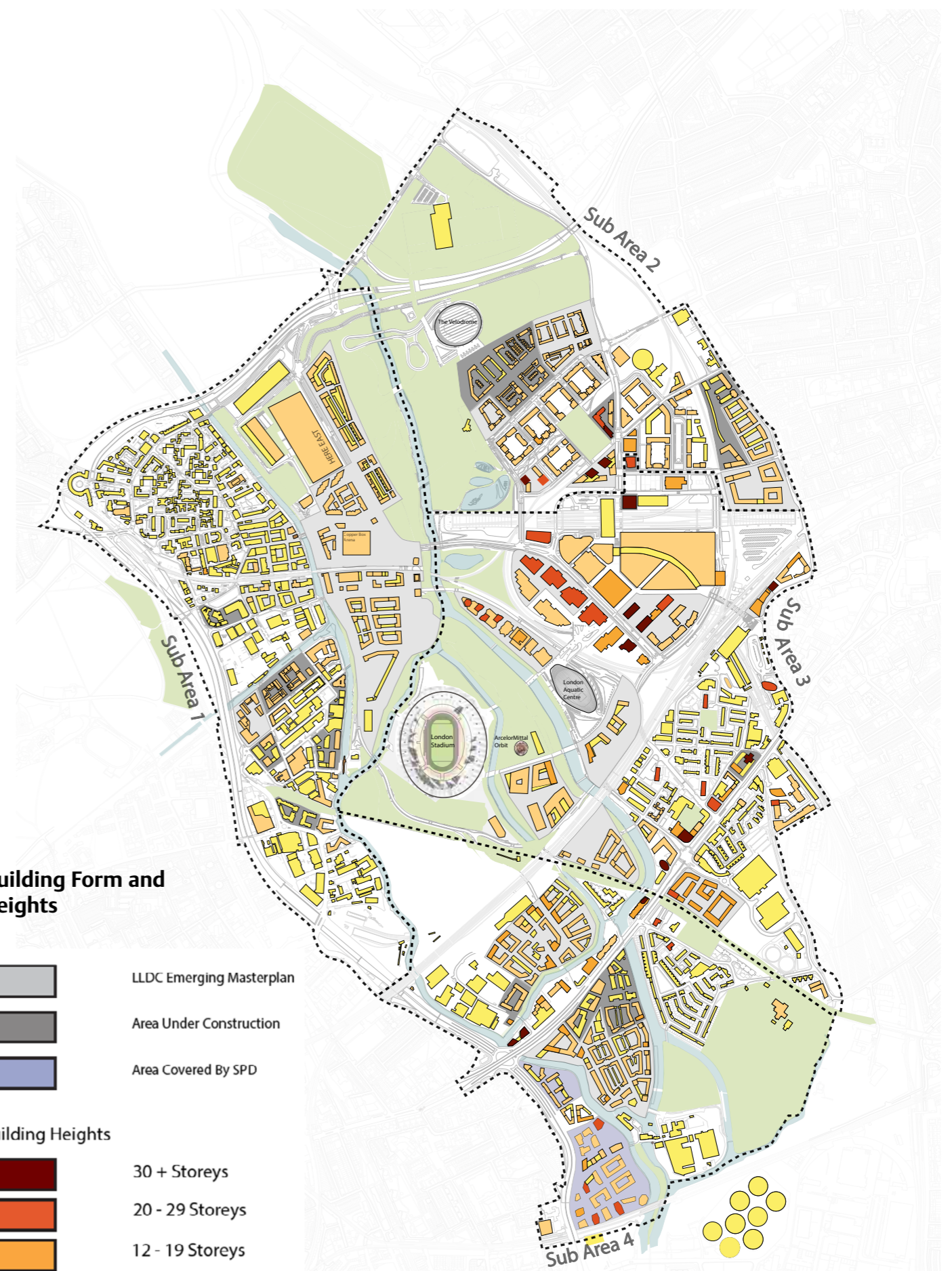
- Area-wide mapping of key features and conditions including; routes, street pattern, land use, topography, flood zones, blue/green infrastructure, conservation areas and heritage assets;
- Area-wide mapping of existing built character including building height and the grain of urban blocks;
- Review of the contribution made by urban blocks to the immediate street environment and the wider area's character;
- More localised work broken down by sub-area and within the sub-areas the detailed identification and division of sub areas into individual character areas;
- Site visits with key officers from the Legacy Corporation.

The Local Plan divides the LLDC area into four sub-areas:

- Sub Area 1, Hackney Wick and Fish Island
- Sub Area 2, North Stratford and Eton Manor
- Sub Area 3, Central Stratford and Southern Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park
- Sub Area 4, Bromley-by-Bow, Pudding Mill, Sugar House Lane and Mill Meads

Each sub area and its historic context are described in this study. In order to understand each sub area at a greater level of detail, this study breaks each sub area down into a further series of Character Areas that are then individually described. **The map on the previous page shows these.** Within this document a series of cross-sections illustrate the overall building form and heights along key routes. The cross-sections are shown within the later sub area sections. The map, opposite shows the pattern of existing development across the area along with development that has planning permission, indicating the building heights associated with this. This represents a point in time within a dynamic and changing area.

Building Form and heights



THE LEGACY CORPORATION AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Legacy Corporation area is located within east London, approximately four miles from the Central Activities Zone (CAZ). It occupies a key strategic location at the meeting point of the London-Stanstead-Cambridge-Peterborough growth corridor and the Thames Gateway Growth Corridor. Within London, the area is directly connected to the major business and growth hubs of Central London, Canary Wharf and the Royal Docks through extensive transport infrastructure.

HISTORY OF THE LEGACY CORPORATION AREA

The Legacy Corporation area has a fascinating and varied history. Historically the area was marshland and farmland along the spine of the River Lea, before settlements started to appear during the Roman period at Stratford. During the medieval period, the area included eight tidal mills, a Cistercian abbey at Stratford Langthorne and the early development of industry that would come to characterise much of the area began to take place.

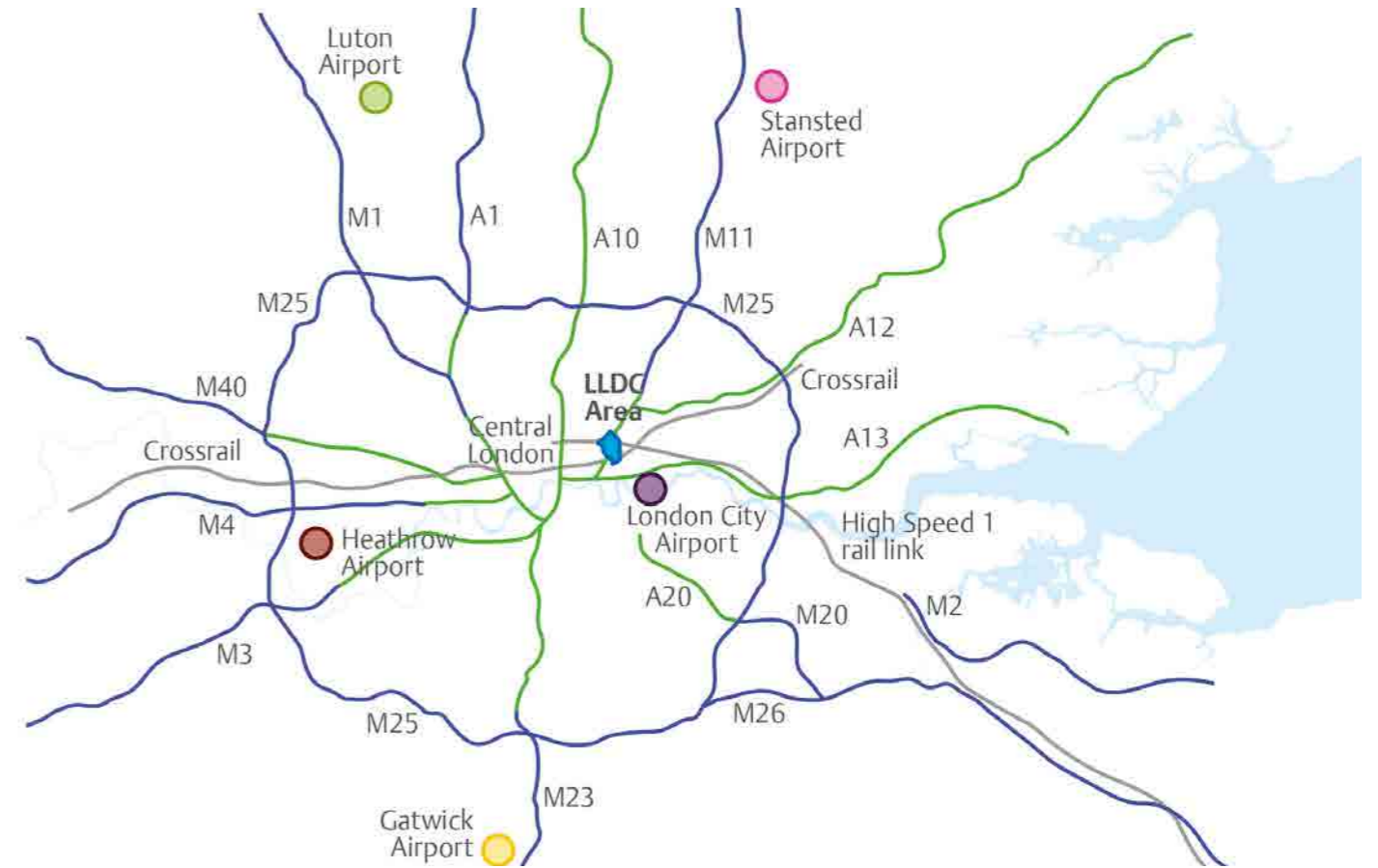
Industry began to rapidly expand within the area from the 18th century, focused around the waterways and railways (including the River Lea) that continue to bisect the area. Industry at Fish Island was intermingled with back-to-back terraces to house those working in the area's factories. The area around Sugar House Lane became a focus for brewing and distilling. Many of the structures and buildings identified as non-designated heritage assets across the area have their origins in this history. As the 20th century dawned many newer industries had an association or origin in buildings and yards of Hackney Wick & Fish Island, including early plastics, chemicals and petro chemicals.

During the 20th century the area experienced heavy bomb damage due to its industrial nature and proximity to strategically important infrastructure, such as the docklands. The combination of bomb damage and reduction in traditional industries led to an increasing period of decline during the second half of the 20th century, leading the area to be earmarked for regeneration in the 1990s and eventually being picked as the site for the successful London 2012 Olympic bid.

The Olympics has become a catalyst for regenerating the area at an unprecedented rate, as transport and other infrastructure developed for the games has made the area more connected and accessible than before. Legacy is a key part of the post games transformation of the area, using the momentum built up around the games to continue to regenerate the area. As part of this many sites both within and outside of Legacy Corporation ownership have been earmarked for development and many are in the process of being developed. The Legacy Corporation has a large outline permission on a number of sites called the 'Legacy Communities Scheme' (LCS), this is playing a key role in shaping much of the area.

Due to this varied history the Legacy Corporation area includes a range of nationally and locally Listed buildings and four conservation areas:

- Fish Island and White Post Lane Conservation Area
- Hackney Wick Conservation Area
- Sugar House Lane Conservation Area
- Three Mills Conservation Area



LEGACY CORPORATION AREA ANALYSIS

The position of the Legacy Corporation area within the Lea Valley and the historic waterways that characterise it, as well as its proximity to the river Thames means that it includes zones of both high and low flood risk. The area also contains infrastructure that is designed to provide strategic flood relieve for other locations further downstream. This has an impact on the way that development has taken place and is an important consideration for development coming forward.

The central part of the Legacy Corporation area is the focus of large amounts of open space, much of this designated as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) and therefore heavily protected. As part of the evidence base for the Legacy Corporation's Local Plan Review an Open Space and Play Space Assessment has been undertaken to ensure that there is appropriate high-quality provision. The area benefits from areas of green open space, which creates opportunities for new developments to not only access but link to these resources.

The natural topography of the area is reflective of the high volume of waterfrontage, and is therefore relatively low lying and flat. Built form varies across the area, with tall buildings predominantly focused around Stratford Station and Stratford High Street. This is reflective of density increases within new developments located close to transport nodes. Low rise housing can be found to the south of Stratford High Street around Abbey Lane. In much of the area new development coming forward is in a mid-rise form, and in the Hackney Wick & Fish Island area the design of these mid-rise buildings often reflects the industrial and warehouse type buildings that have historically been located in this area.

The Legacy Corporation area has historically been well connected by canals and rail infrastructure due to its industrial nature. Further infrastructure development took place at the end of the 20th century with High Speed 1 (HS1) and at the start of the 21st century to support the staging of the 2012 Olympic Games.

The area includes six stations:

- Stratford
- Stratford International
- Hackney Wick
- Bromley-by-Bow
- Pudding Mill
- Stratford High Street

Currently the area is served by National Rail, HS1, four London Underground lines, the London Overground, DLR, TfL Rail and an extensive bus network, and is near City Airport, with links to other airports. In 2019 the new Elizabeth Line will also serve Stratford Station.

Conversely the rail, water and road networks that provide such a high level of strategic connection also bisect the area, creating challenges within localised connectivity and accessibility. This continues to be a challenge and has a strong impact on local character. A focus and feature of many new schemes is improved connectivity and the creation of local connections for cycles and pedestrians. There are still areas to the North West which do not enjoy the same Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTAL) as those to the east and south. These local connections are key to improving access to these areas.

The nature of development and development sites within the Legacy Corporation area is one dominated by large sites and with large, often multi-phase, development schemes that have a planning permission in place. This results in limited opportunity for small sites to become available for development. This study identifies the level of potential for small development sites within its Character Area analysis sections and the map on this page.

