



# OLD KENT ROAD CHARACTERISATION STUDY

November 2015

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Urban Practitioners



SCHOOL

TRAFFIC

LH4693



Photo: Old Kent Road, 1905

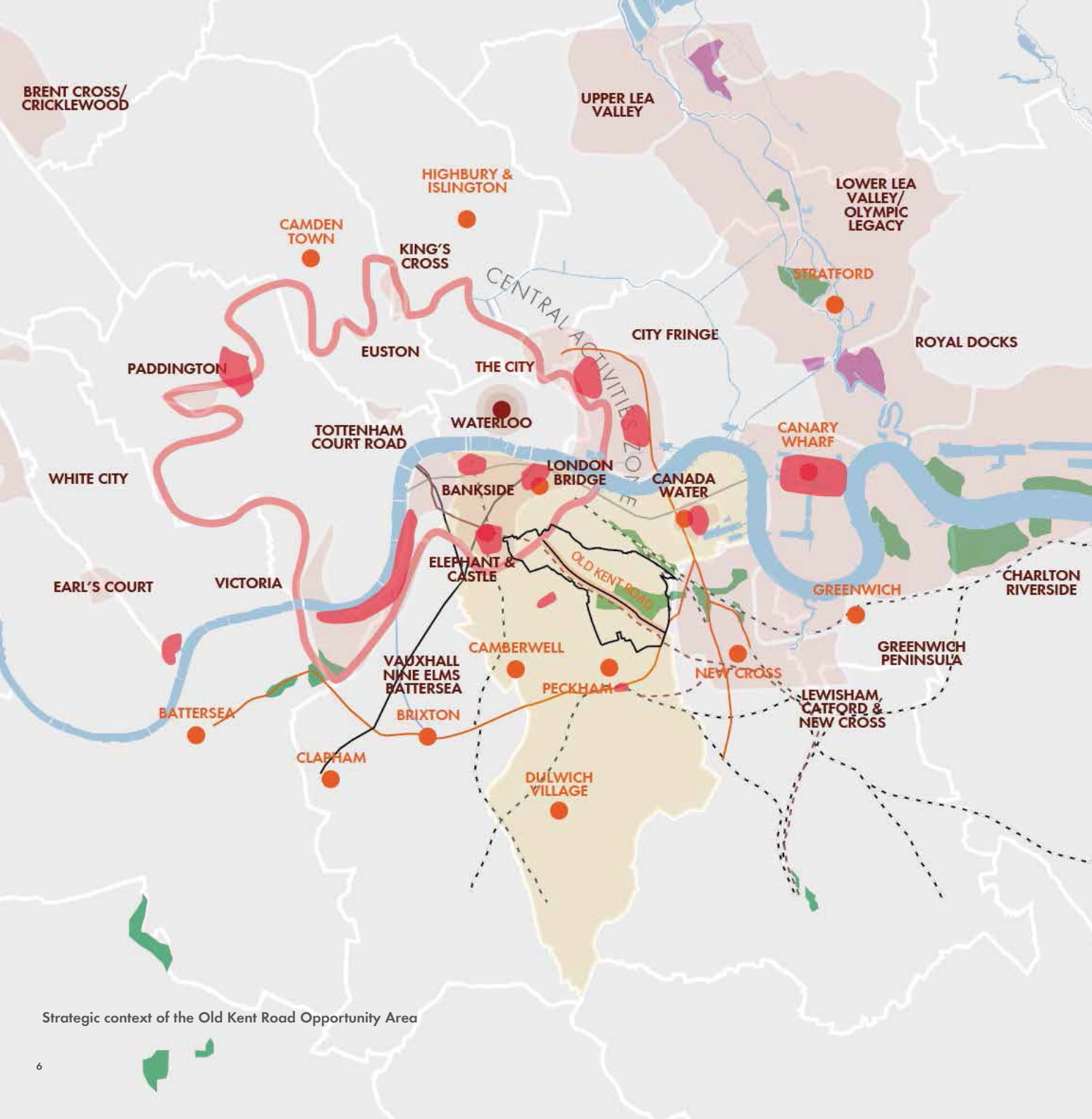
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An aerial photograph of a city, likely Los Angeles, showing a dense urban landscape with a complex network of roads, buildings, and green spaces. A prominent multi-lane highway runs diagonally across the center. In the upper right, a large body of water is visible. The text '1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT' is overlaid in a bold, red, sans-serif font in the upper right quadrant.

# 1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT



- central activity zone
- opportunity areas
- tall building cluster
- preferred industrial location
- industrial business park
- study area boundary

Strategic context of the Old Kent Road Opportunity Area

# 1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

### 1.1.1 Introduction and role

This characterisation study comprises part of the urban design evidence base which informs the preparation of an area action plan (AAP) and opportunity area planning framework (OAPF) for the Old Kent Road opportunity area.

The preparation of the AAP/OAPF will enable the borough to work collaboratively with the Greater London Authority (GLA), as the AAP/OAPF will be endorsed by the Mayor of London. The AAP/OAPF will be a spatial plan which provides a vision and framework to guide development in the area over the next 15 years.

This characterisation study has been commissioned and supported by Southwark Council, the Greater London Authority and Transport for London. It provides a detailed picture of the character of the Old Kent Road today and how it has evolved. It will influence future guidance on built development, building heights, the public realm and site specific guidance.

The aims of the study are:

- to describe the evolution of the Old Kent Road area and identify the main drivers for change;
- to identify the range, date and form of landscape and building types and relate them to the evolution of the area;
- to use the consultation process to learn about and respond to communal values;
- to describe and explain the character of the area at one or more periods of its history; and
- to differentiate character areas and describe and explain their distinctive qualities.

### 1.1.2 Background

The Old Kent Road area has a remarkable past: Roman Watling Street, the medieval Pilgrim route to Canterbury, industrialisation, commerce and housing growth, through to 20th century wartime bombardment and reconstruction and the nurturing of new communities. The characterisation study also has one eye on the future: it is a practical tool to guide decisions about the destiny of the area.

The Old Kent Road is an historic London high street recognisable across the world due to its place as a low value asset on the Monopoly board. Parts of the road continue to have a high street character, along other stretches there are larger retail premises as well as housing estates, green spaces and civic and educational uses. The hinterland on either side of the road is a mix of industrial and community uses and housing.

The Old Kent Road area has been designated as an Opportunity Area and has the potential to support significant housing and business growth. This could lead to significant change in the area. This change should result in improvements to the quality of the environment along the road, reducing pollution and noise and a change in the distribution of land uses in the area unlocking central London sites for potential housing growth. Plans to extend the Bakerloo Line along the Old Kent Road would be a key factor in driving these changes along.

## 1.2 APPROACH

The characterisation study has involved extensive survey work - both reviewing existing data and undertaking site visits - to establish a detailed understanding of the area.

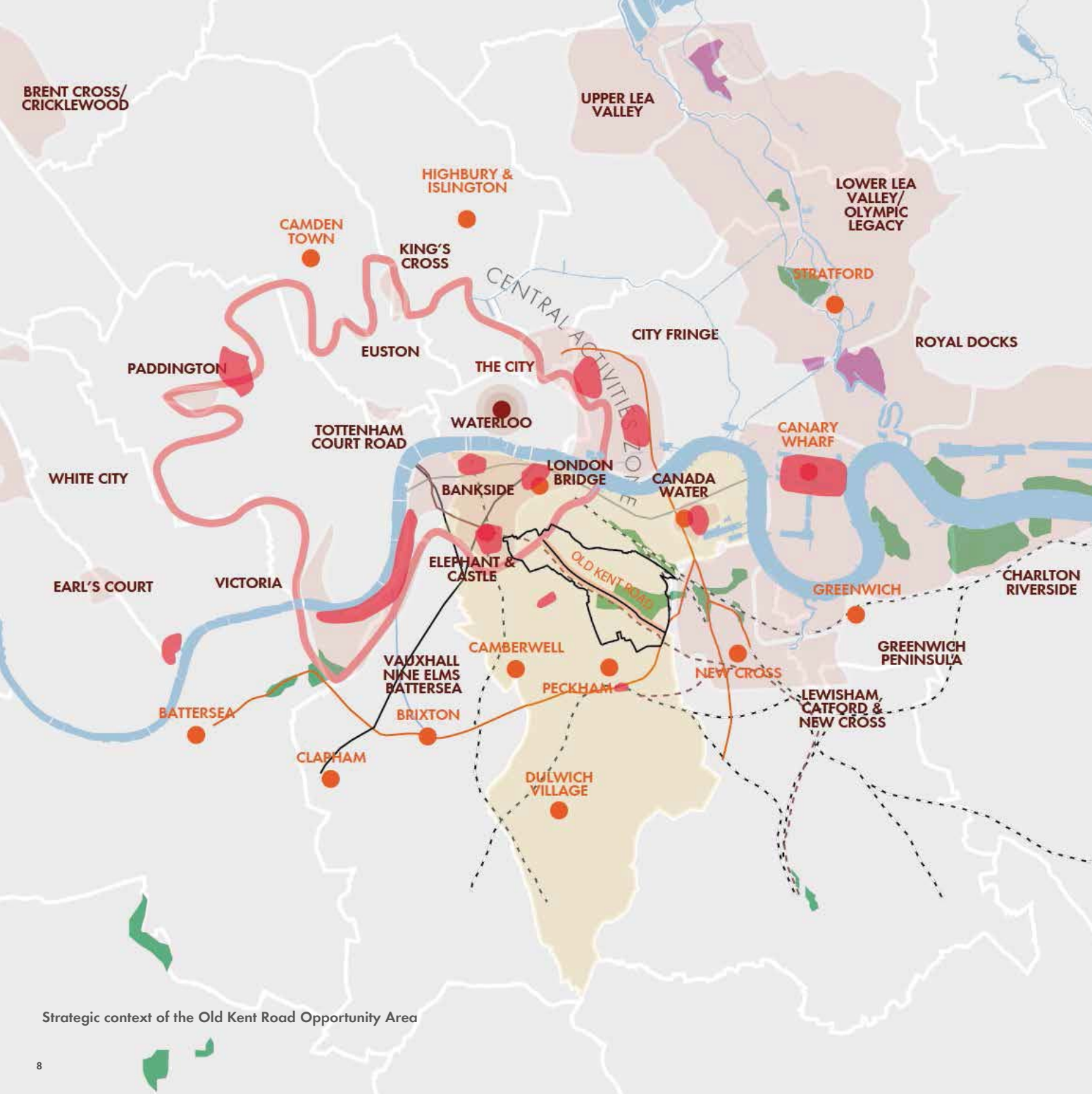
Some of the key tasks undertaken were:

- area-wide mapping of key features and conditions including public spaces, routes, street pattern and land uses;
- identification of protected heritage assets including listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeological priority zones;
- area-wide mapping of existing built character including building height, building frontage and the grain/texture of urban blocks;
- review of the contribution made by each urban block to the immediate street environment and the wider area's character;
- site visit with key officers from Southwark Council;
- consultation workshop with local stakeholders and Community Forum members;
- identification of broad character zones; and
- detailed division of the area into individual character pieces.

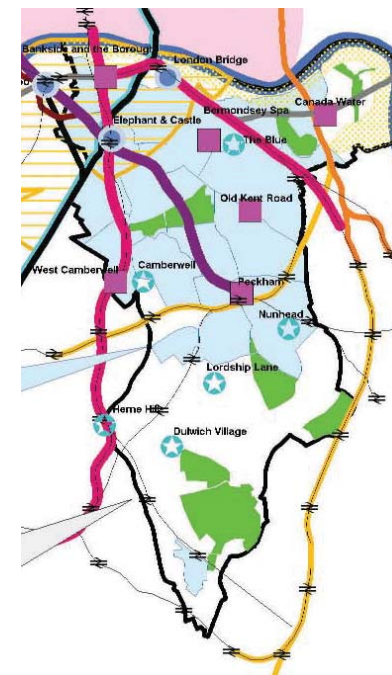
## 1.3 REPORT STRUCTURE

This characterisation study report is divided into the following sections:

2. Historical summary
3. Area-wide analysis
4. Overall character
5. Character areas - detailed analysis
6. Management framework
7. Conclusions



Strategic context of the Old Kent Road Opportunity Area



Extract from The Southwark Plan - Key Diagram

- Key centres
- Opportunity areas
- Study area boundaries
- London Borough of Southwark
- Potential Bakerloo line extension options
- Railway lines



1.4 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Today, the Old Kent Road still forms an important route into and out of London. What happens along its length has changed substantially and the nature of the residential communities around it has continually shifted with redevelopment of estates and the successive introduction of different communities.

1.5 BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

This characterisation study has been informed and steered by best practice guidance. Two key publications have provided the basis for this input:

- Mayor of London's Character and Context Supplementary Planning Guidance sets out the scope of characterisation studies. It starts with a quote from Samuel Johnson which encapsulates the role and importance of such studies: *"If you wish to have a just notion of the magnitude of this city, you must not be satisfied with seeing its great streets and squares, but must survey the innumerable little lanes and courts. It is not in the showy evolutions of buildings, but in the multiplicity of human habitations which are crowded together, that the wonderful immensity of London consists."*
- English Heritage's publication Conservation Principles sets out a general conservation philosophy for the management of change in historic places. It defines a heritage asset and shows how any such asset can be examined in terms of its cultural values, which may be evidential, historical, communal or aesthetic. The sum of the cultural values gives the overall significance of the asset.



Caroline Gardens and former Asylum



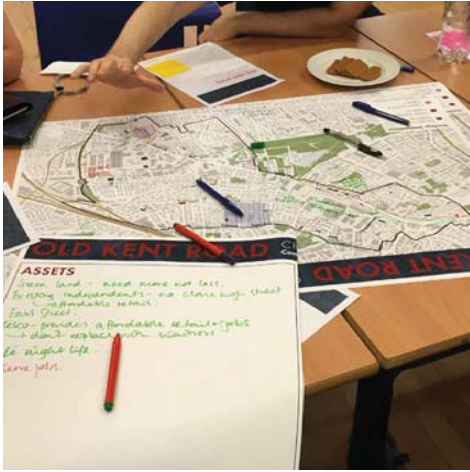
Gas holders on former gas works



Bricklayers Arms



High quality frontage on to Old Kent Road - such as the Royal London Buildings (c1900)



Selection of images from Community Forum stakeholder workshop on Tuesday 16 June 2015

## 1.6 CONSULTATION

The team has worked closely with officers across the departments of the London Borough of Southwark and the Greater London Authority. Together, there is a significant bank of knowledge of the area which has provided an invaluable layer of detail to support the data maps prepared.

In addition, this project has been particularly fortunate to benefit from a wealth of knowledge assembled by local people. The extensive work of the Community Forum in the run up to the commissioning of the characterisation study allowed the team to draw on a much wider and more detailed set of information and contributions from the outset than is normally the case, and for this the team are most grateful.

In order to test the early findings of the study two events were convened. The first was an on-site officer workshop, the second a consultation workshop with local stakeholders supported by the Community Forum.

### 1.4.1 Officer workshop

The officer workshop was held on Friday 12 June 2015. Over 20 officers from key agencies including London Borough of Southwark, Greater London Authority and Transport for London undertook co-ordinated tours of the whole area - some by bike and others by foot.

The day allowed officers to highlight some of the hidden assets of the area, and discuss where the quality of the environment had been undermined. Much discussion focused on some of the recent and emerging developments in the area, reflecting on the efforts made to integrate new interventions into the existing urban fabric. The success and failure of different examples provided a very useful basis for some of the recommendations for future development in this report.

### 1.4.2 Community Forum consultation workshop

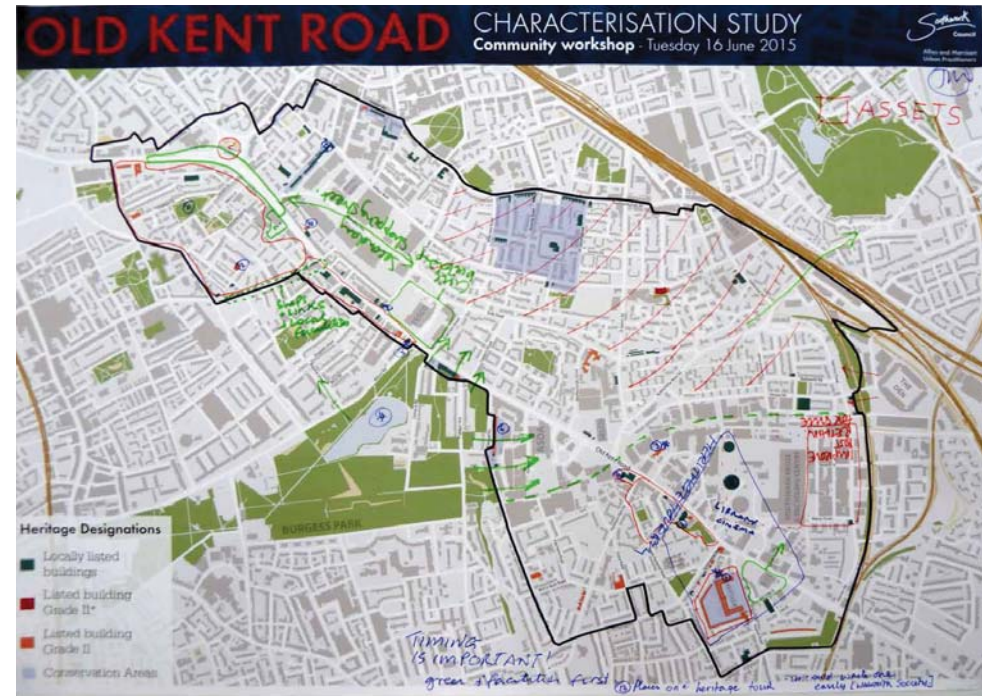
On Tuesday 16 June 2015 the team ran a consultation workshop with Community Forum representatives and local stakeholders. Twenty-five stakeholders attended the evening event enabling the team to test and review some of the early findings and steer the remainder of the study to reflect local priorities.

The event began with a presentation of the initial findings of the first stage of the study. Attendees provided some initial feedback and contributions before being split into three groups to discuss the area in more detail.

Attendees were divided into groups of 8-10 people to firstly look at a selection of character areas in detail. Each group was asked to comment on where breaks in character occur and to draw lines around areas that defined places. Groups discussed how different parts of the area function on a day to day basis and the relationship, or lack of connection, between different parts.

The groups were then asked to further interrogate the identity of the character areas, highlighting the particular qualities that should inform future change. The groups identified areas that should be protected from change and then put forward suggestions for how a selection of the non-residential areas might be redeveloped with a close eye on revealing some of the assets lost.

The event ended with a feedback session, with each group highlighting the key priorities for the area. The findings of this session have directly informed the division of character areas and the recommendations for protection and enhancement.



Example of completed worksheet from group discussions at community stakeholder workshop



167

UNLESS YOU CAN BUY & SELL

UNLESS YOU CAN BUY & SELL

POO

WINE & SPIRITS  
BREAD

LYONS TEA  
PURE M  
FAMILY  
D BARK  
CELEBRATED  
DUTY US

NOSECA  
BUNDOCK  
PLAYERS  
COUNTRY LIFE  
WINE & SPIRITS

# 2 HISTORICAL SUMMARY



## 2 HISTORICAL SUMMARY

### 2.1 OVERVIEW

All places are shaped by their past; Old Kent Road more than most. In terms of London's growth the area was late to urbanise, but it has a long history stretching back almost two thousand years, to the Roman occupation and the origins of Watling Street.

The Old Kent Road was a former area of marshland and liable to flooding due to its location adjacent to the River Thames floodplain. The underlying geology consists of alluvial silts and overlying sand and gravel deposits, with lower lying marshes and mud-flats.

The area has been through two seismic shifts to its overall form and identity. First, the unprecedented growth and industrialisation in the nineteenth century, then wartime bombardment, slum clearance and redevelopment in the latter half of the twentieth century. This in turn was followed by the decline of industry and manufacturing and its replacement with retail and service industries.

The contrasts of scale, layout and function have resulted in a fragmented, sometimes confusing physical form. The area has also suffered from heavy traffic, poor air quality and in some places, weak public realm.

There are numerous strands that make up the overall character of the area:

- Vestiges of the pre-industrial area, most evident in the street pattern rather than building fabric.
- A legacy of Georgian and Victorian streets and squares, with historic landmarks of churches, libraries and pubs. There are also set pieces such as the Licensed Victuallers Asylum.
- Interwar mansion blocks; deep plan buildings, usually six to eight storeys, particularly along Old Kent Road and in its hinterland.
- Postwar estates with slab blocks and towers in open plan layouts.
- Low rise, medium density family housing reverting to

the traditional perimeter block model.

- 'Big box' retail development and industrial units.

The area now faces another important challenge, but also a rare opportunity, of regeneration through growth. The challenges are how to harness that growth to the benefit of the present-day communities as well as to London as a whole. Charting the anatomy of the place with its strengths and weaknesses will be a vital first step.

This section details how the area has evolved, illustrating those parts which have remained largely



Old Kent Road 1905



Old Kent Road 1905, showing original Thomas a Beckett

### 2.2 KEY PERIODS

intact and seen least change, in contrast to other parts which have seen successive layers of redevelopment.

Old Kent Road follows the approximate line of the Roman Watling Street, connecting London to Canterbury. The Romans settled on the banks of the Thames just after AD43 and built a river crossing from Londinium to a settlement south of the river. From here, two major Roman roads, Watling Street and Stane Street, connected the river crossing at London Bridge with other Roman cities in the south of England.

In the medieval period Old Kent Road became a pilgrim route after the martyrdom of Thomas Becket in 1170. The area was sparsely populated but there was a manor house and friary.

By the 18th century there were houses and coaching inns on the road, with turnpikes at each end. The creation of new bridges across the Thames, including Westminster Bridge in 1750, provided a spur to growth as the city spread out in all directions. Thames Mogg's map of 1806 shows Grange Road (now Dunton Road) connecting Old Kent Road with Blue Anchor Road (today's Southwark Park Road), as it does today.

As improved communications and clean air encouraged movement out of the city, the late 18th Century was a time of grand speculative housing – The north side of Surrey Square, designed by Michael Searle, Surveyor for the Rolls estate is a notable survivor, although the Square was not completed in the form intended.

Wyld's map of 1843 shows the northern part of the study area. Walworth New Town to the west was well developed in and around East Street (then East Lane) with an almost continuous line of buildings on Old Kent Road itself. Detached and semi-detached houses predominated, but most of the north-east side of the study area was undeveloped. The Greenwich railway line shown by Wyld – the first suburban line in London – is purely schematic. The plan also

shows the influence of industry; paper mills, tanning, gluemaking, a soap factory, a rope walk and an engineering works. The area was also noted for its traders and costermongers, selling fruit and vegetables from carts. The South Metropolitan Gasworks Company (founded next to the Surrey Canal in 1834) would grow steadily and be an important employer.

The Bricklayers Arms station was opened in 1844 by the South Eastern Railway in direct competition with London Bridge, but it could not compete for convenience and passenger services ended in 1852. Thereafter it was converted to a goods depot and carriage sidings.

The Surrey Canal ran from the Surrey Commercial Docks. It opened in 1807 but was soon eclipsed by the railway, being reduced to wharfage only by 1836. The Gasworks south of the canal, in the triangle with Old Kent Road, later extended westwards to an area of housing formerly earmarked on Bacon's map of 1868 as Peckham New Town.

There were numerous shops on Old Kent Road, many of which were built out from the ground floor of former town houses, extending over their former front gardens. As the area grew, the Old Kent Road remained an important transport artery, with horse-drawn trams and omnibuses, and by the turn of the century, electric trams.

The area was fully built up by 1900. Booth's Poverty Survey (1889) reveals that the area was quite settled and prosperous. Of the seven categories, three stand out in the area:

- Yellow - (the highest category) representing the wealthy upper-middle and upper classes;
- Red - representing the well to do middle classes; and
- Blue - light blue representing the poor and dark blue the very poor. This last category was confined to an area next to the Surrey Canal.

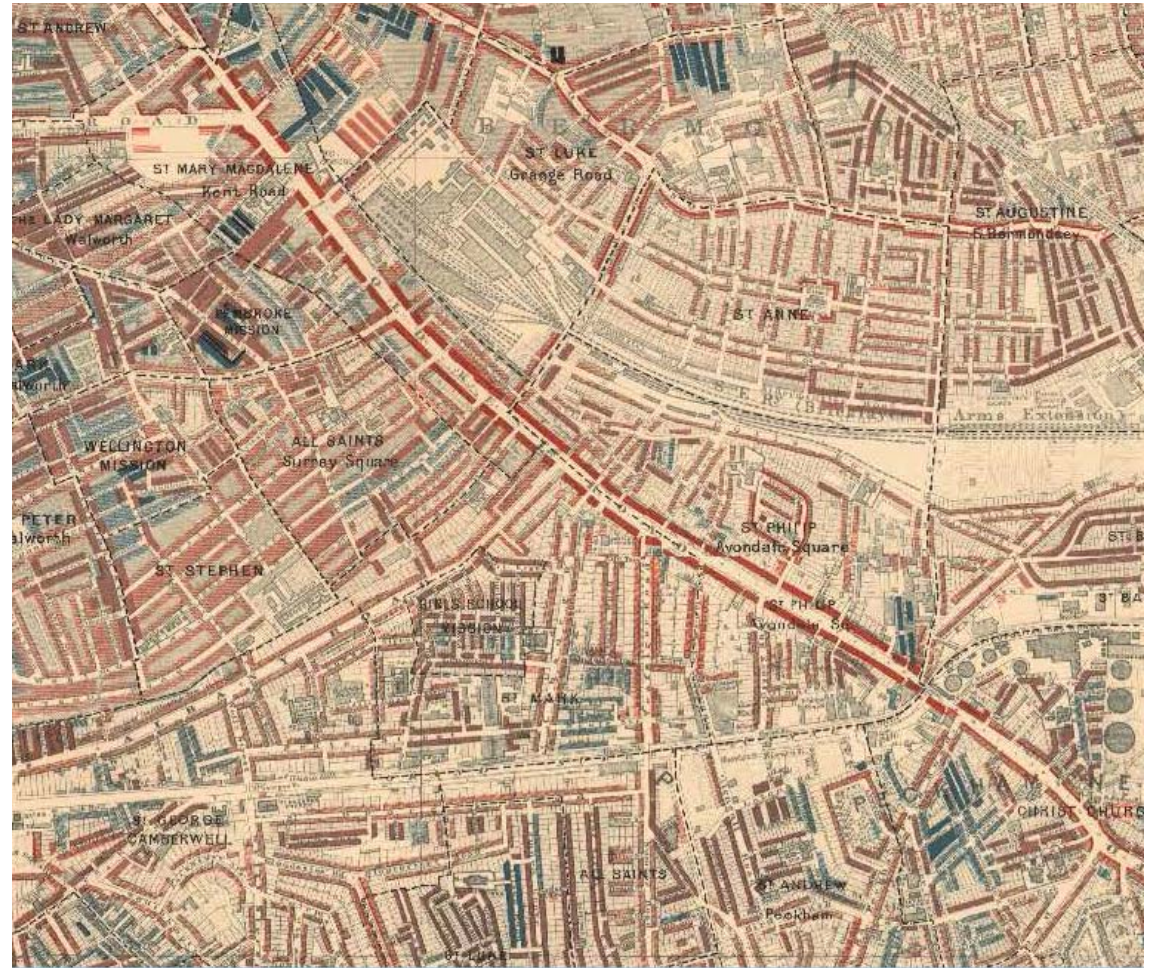
Administratively the area fell between three municipal authorities – the boroughs of Southwark, Camberwell



Mogg (1806)



Wyld (1843)



Booth's poverty map (1898)



World War II Bomb damage map (Source: London Metropolitan Archives)

and Bermondsey. In the first half of the 20th century the pace of change slowed but in the 1930s there was large scale rebuilding with housing estates including Avondale.

The first attempt at better homes were the industrial dwellings by Peabody; tenements arranged around courtyards and built on a heroic scale. Many of the schools in the area also date from this period and were designed by the architects of the LCC.

Old Kent Road and Hatcham Station, which straddled the main road, closed in 1917 as a result of the wartime economy but never re-opened.

After the First World War there was another housing shortage, fuelled by the needs of returning servicemen (Homes Fit for Heroes). Materials were in short supply and most housing was built after 1930. Much inter-war development was by the London County Council using standard plans and building types but there was also housing provided by the City Corporation building, but also the local councils.

Bombing in the Second World War precipitated a further crisis and new theories of urban living were put into practice, including tower blocks of up to 22 storeys, on open plan estates. New schools appeared in the 1960s. The population of the area began to grow again but there was also a loss of traditional manual employment as the railways and docks shed their labour needs.

The closure of the railway goods yard released land for development and industry was established east of Dunton Road (the Mandela Way Estate) with low rise

housing in cul de sacs to the east.

After the 1840s the railway sidings and Bricklayers Arms depot imposed radical change on the built form, partially severing Bermondsey from Peckham and Walworth.

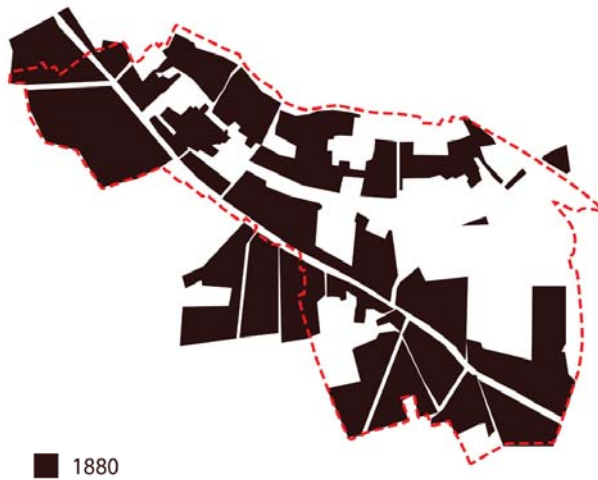
Workers housing, churches, schools, institutes and the Licensed Victuallers Asylum were all products of the 19th century. Much of the housing was developed speculatively. The main employers were the railway goods yard, food processing in Bermondsey and the Surrey docks. Many of the pubs survive as landmarks in the area, as do churches.

Since the 1970s, the area has continued to see an increase in low rise housing. Land owned by British Rail was developed into larger format industrial units and elsewhere new industrial estates were emerging, creating a new character.

Another change occurred in the 1990s when the focus shifted from light industry to providing retail for the immediate and surrounding areas. This contributed to the area's layered urban fabric that we see today.

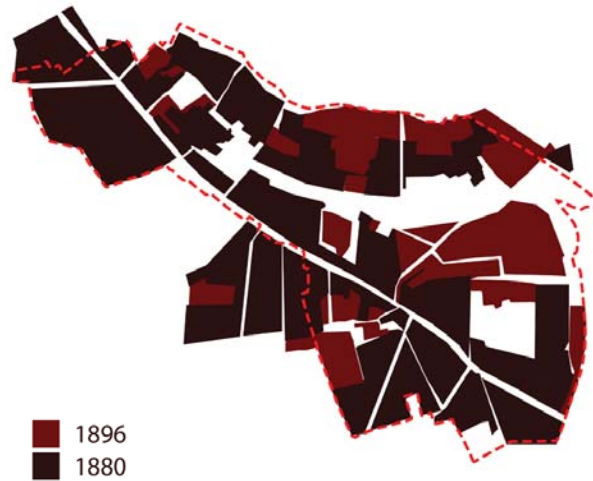


## 2.3 EVOLUTION



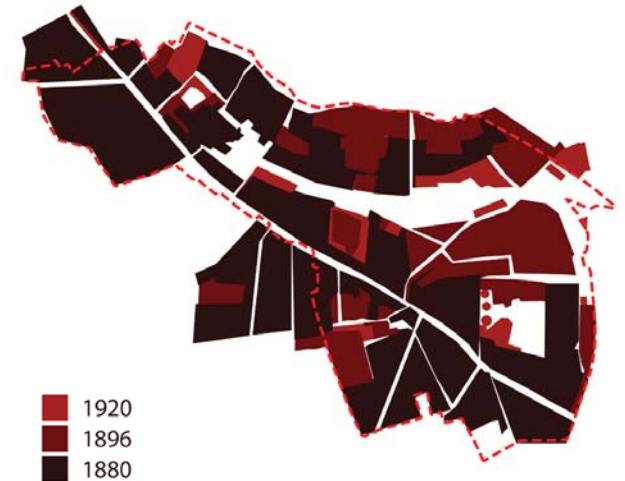
## 2.3.1 1880

By the 1880s Old Kent Road had a continuous frontage, developed on both sides and on lateral roads such as Peckham Park Road and New Kent Road. The railway lines and buildings of the Bricklayers Arms goods station impeded movement between Bermondsey in the north, and Walworth and Peckham to the south.



## 2.3.2 1896

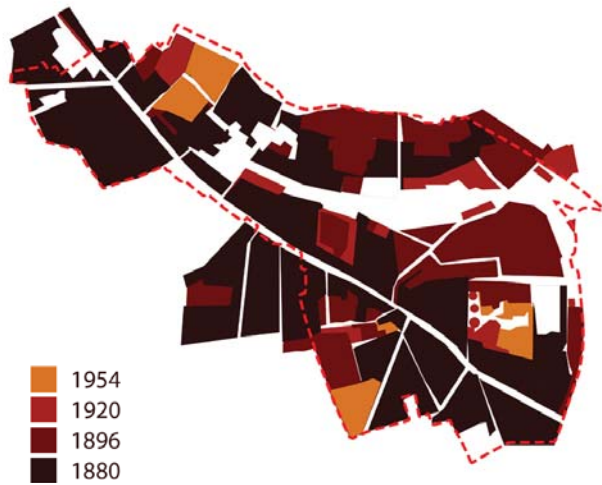
By the end of the 19th Century the development had been consolidated across the area, with schools and workers housing carved out of spare space. Industry was concentrated near the railway line and the Surrey Canal. The Livesey gasworks extended eastwards.



## 2.3.3 1920

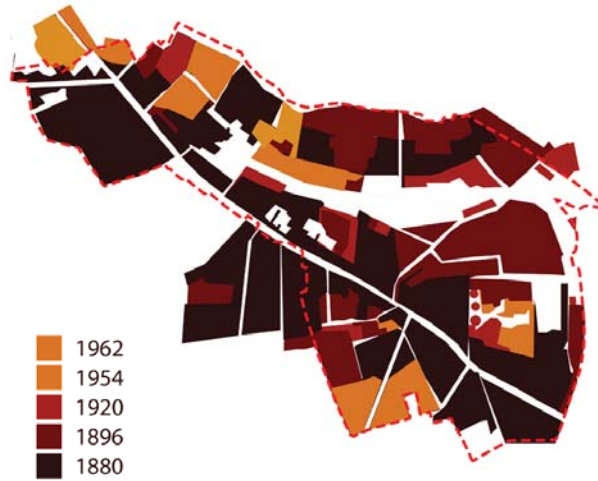
Relatively little changed during the Edwardian period and the First World War; more schools were built and there was further intensification of the gasworks, as well as a growth of industry near the canal.

As the area grew, Old Kent Road remained an important transport artery, with horse drawn trams and omnibuses, and by the turn of the century, electric trams.



**2.3.4 1954**

In the 1930s, many housing estates were built to replace sub-standard housing. At the same time roads were widened. The consequences of enemy action left a torn urban fabric with an urgent housing need. The early postwar changes were modest, gathering pace by the end of the 1950s



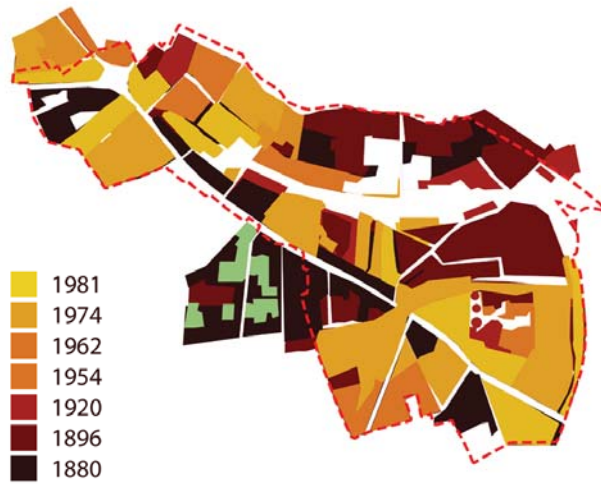
**2.3.5 1962**

By the early 1960s the skyline was being transformed by the first point blocks, in open plan estates and often with slab blocks adjacent, on the Roehampton model.



**2.3.6 1974**

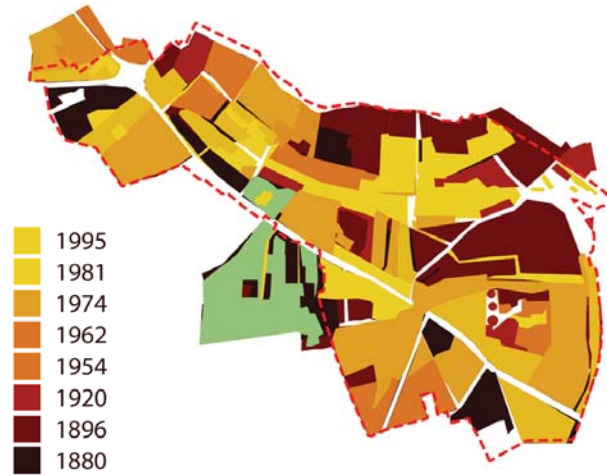
Two big changes had happened by 1974 – the creation of the Bricklayers Arms flyover and the closure of the goods yard. The goods yard was replaced by an industrial estate and a swathe of low-rise housing. Burgess Park was being carved into the area, representing an outstanding municipal gesture. It represented a long and ambitious programme of creating a new urban park on an area heavily bomb damaged.



**2.3.7 1981**

Housing was still being built on the former goods yard area. Some of the poorer council estates like the Bonamy Estate were being redeveloped and replaced with low rise housing.

The Mandela Way industrial estate opened in 1984 on the old railway lands, representing a shift to larger format industrial units and a new character.



**2.3.8 1995**

By the 1990s, much of the industry had been replaced by shopping. Clean, functional if soulless retail units, catering for car-borne shoppers from beyond the immediate locality were emerging in the east of the area.



**2.3.9 2015**

Today, Burgess Park forms the only sizeable open space in the area. Old Kent Road is now home to a range of uses including extensive industrial parks and out of town shopping.

Most recently there has been a move towards more intimate housing developments, fine grained and more responsive to their surroundings.



# 3 AREA WIDE ANALYSIS



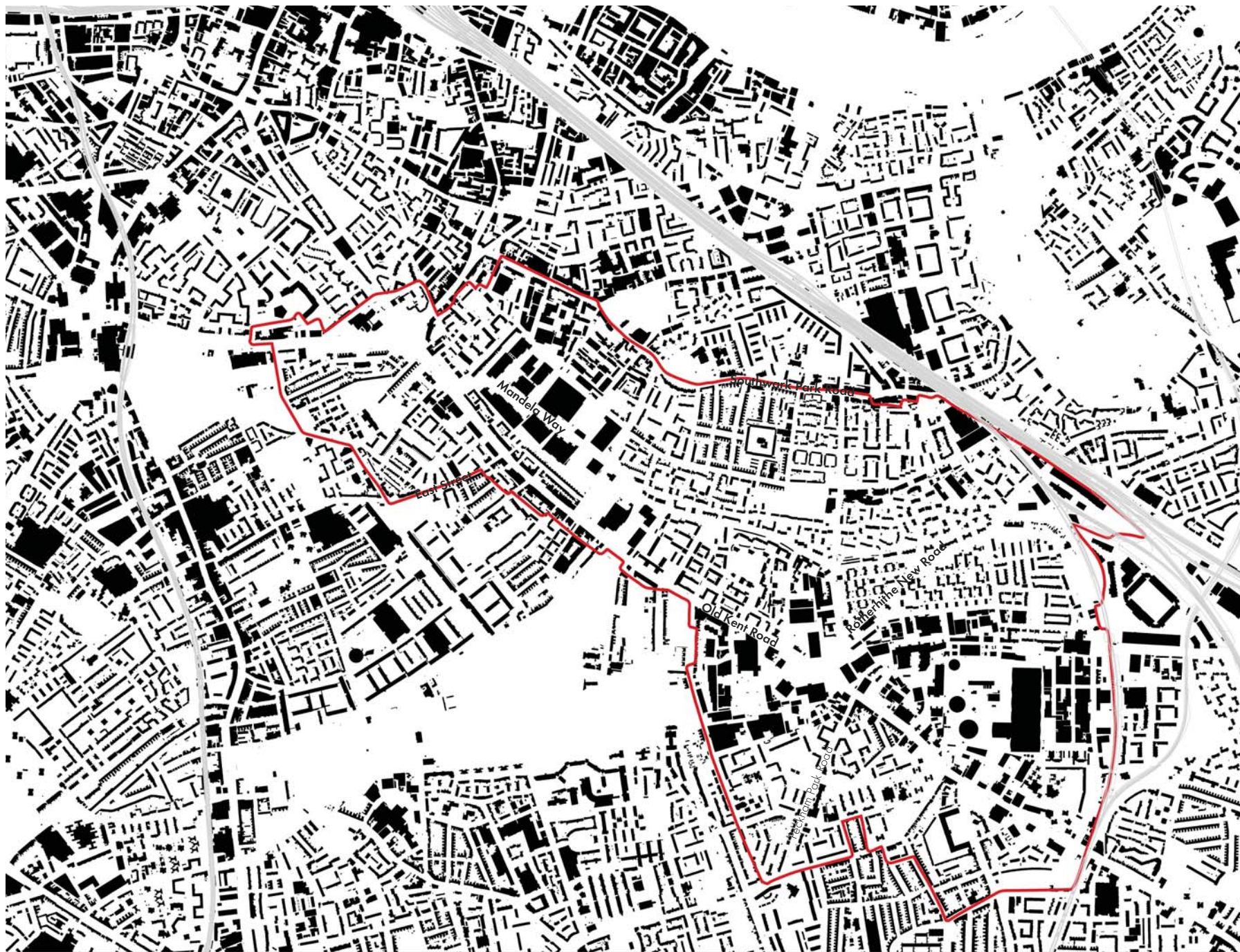


Figure 3.1: Figure ground showing building footprint

## 3 AREA WIDE ANALYSIS

### 3.1 BUILT FORM

The area has been largely unplanned, having been built and rebuilt over centuries but especially from 1850 onwards. Old Kent Road itself is the one constant in all plans of the area; an unyielding straight road following the Roman Watling Street, two millennia old.

The area represents a patchwork of varying urban grains and starkly different characters of development. Large pieces of the area have been redeveloped as major sections of infrastructure were removed. The line of the Surrey Canal and the influence of the old railway goods yard, with its multiplicity of sidings, in particular have shaped the area. And to the east, the viaduct crossing Old Kent Road and curving round to Bermondsey has resulted in shifts in urban grain.

Older parts of the area tend to exhibit a finer and tighter urban grain. The Victorian terraced streets such as Henshaw Street to the west of the Bricklayer's Arms and Reverdy Road around Thorburn Square represent some of the finest grain in the area.

At the other end of the scale, the area also has large swathes of much coarser and bulkier urban grain. The more modern industrial buildings and out-of-centre style retail units exhibit these characteristics, for example around the junction of Old Kent Road and Rotherhithe New Road.

There are some noticeable and rather sudden jumps between different levels of urban grain. Verney Road is one such transition between coarse industrial grain on its south side and finer grain residential to the north. Willow Walk in the northern part of the study area is a similar point of transition.

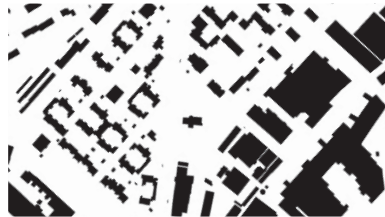
Burgess Park forms the main relief from the relatively dense building footprint. A wholly man-made green wedge, it was carved into the area from the south, marking a major shift to the urban grain and rhythm on the south side of the Old Kent Road.

### 3.2 EVOLVING STREET FORM



#### 3.2.1 Old Kent Road - mansion blocks

Some sections of strong frontage on to the Old Kent Road itself remain. At the western end of the street a set of six storey mansion blocks edge the north side of the street with lower rise blocks to the rear.



#### 3.2.2 Old Kent Road - High Street retail

Old Kent Road has a number of sections of historic retail frontage. These are dispersed along the road which creates areas of higher intensity activity. In some cases the retail fronts have been built out to the pavement edge, in other sections the historic fabric edges the pavement.



#### 3.2.3 Victorian streets

A number of original Victorian streets survive across the area. An extensive network of Victorian streets exists around Thorburn Square illustrating a fine grain pattern of perimeter blocks which has been lost in more recent redevelopments.



#### 3.2.4 Estates

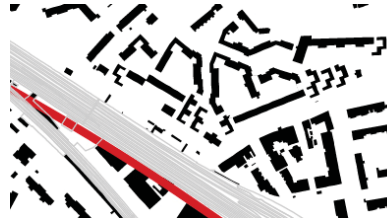
A range of styles of residential housing estates are exhibited across extensive social housing developments in the study area. Many include street facing blocks whilst not keeping to a perimeter block format, while tower developments are generally free form and angular to existing streets.





### 3.2.5 Cul-de-sacs

Along the stretch where the rail lines have been removed a series of large housing developments were constructed in the 1980s and take a cul-de-sac form. The result is much of the northern part of the study area is inward looking, with through routes devoid of frontage.



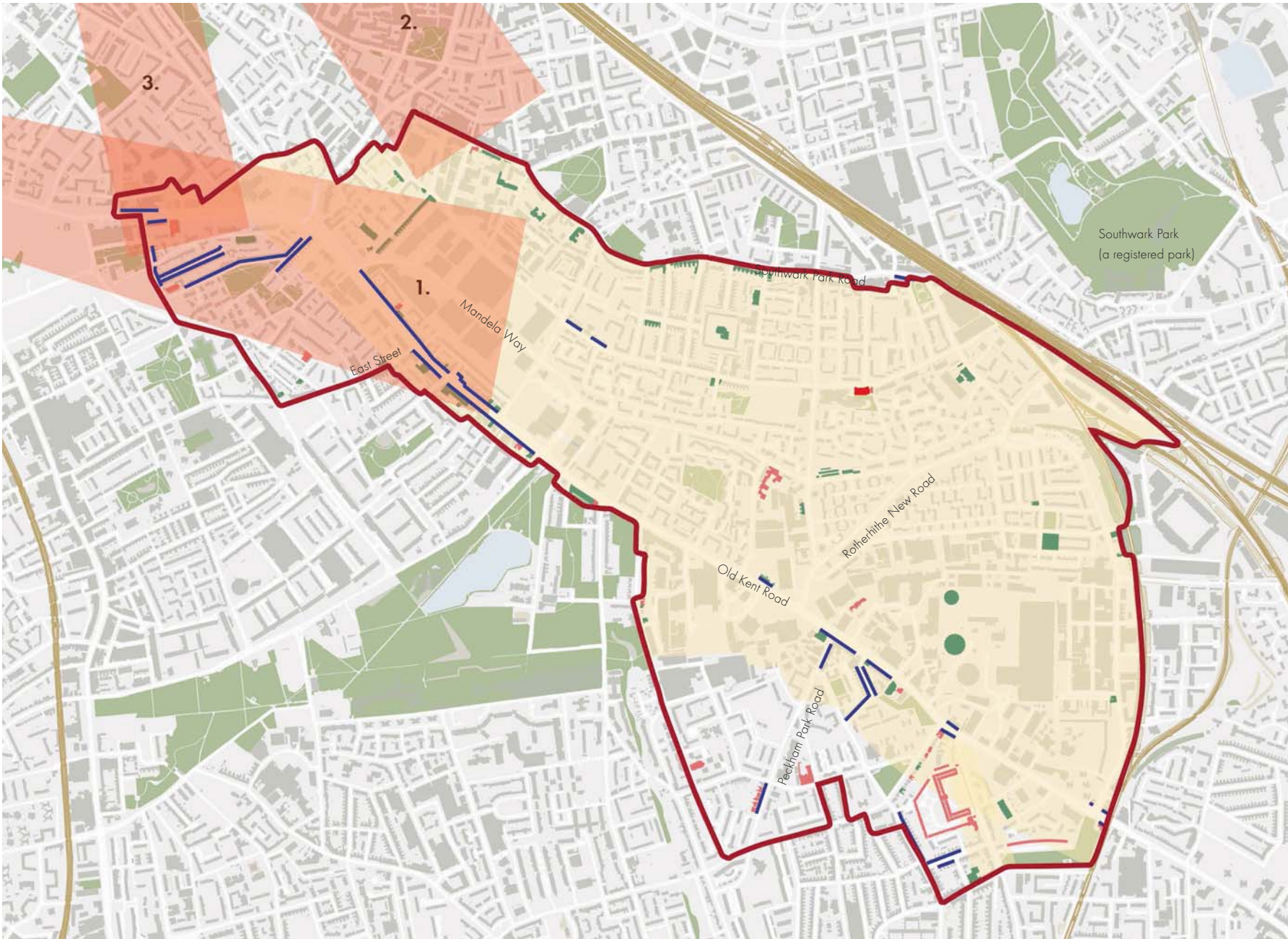
### 3.2.6 Industrial estates

Large swathes of the area are now populated by industrial uses. Much of this is in large format units set within hard standing - either as car parks or service yards. However, finer grain industrial areas exhibit a more traditional street pattern and urban grain such as those along Ilderton Road.



### 3.2.7 Retail parks

The area has many large format retail stores. These stores and retail parks sit within extensive car parks with buildings set back away from the streets and extensive blank frontages.



**Strategic Views**

1. Protected view from the bridge over the Serpentine to the Palace of Westminster.
2. Protected view from Kenwood viewing gazebo to St Pauls Cathedral.
3. Protected view from Alexandra Palace viewing terrace to St Pauls Cathedral.

**Heritage Designations**

- Listed building Grade II\*
- Listed building Grade II
- Archaeological priority zones
- Conservation area
- Townscape merit buildings
- Buildings of architectural or historic interest

Figure 3.2: Heritage designations

### 3.3 HERITAGE DESIGNATIONS

#### 3.3.1 Formal designations

Given its long history, the area is sparsely represented through formal designations. Few buildings are listed and the small number of conservation areas have their boundaries quite tightly drawn around the most significant buildings. It should be noted however that some important groups are outside the study area, such as Surrey Square and the Coburg Road, a conservation area.

The archaeological priority zone designation covers almost the entire area, reflecting its extensive history.

#### 3.3.2 Listed buildings

With the exception of the former St Augustine's Church on Lynton Road, listed Grade II\*, all the buildings are listed Grade II.

Key listed buildings include:

- Licensed Victuallers Asylum.
- Clifton Crescent.
- 155 Old Kent Road (the White House).
- Old Fire Station.
- 108-124 Peckham Park Road.

There are also two rarities; the Edwardian Driscoll House, listed in part for its pioneering concrete construction, and Phoenix Primary School (formerly Eveline Lowe), an exemplary design from the 1960s.

#### 3.3.3 Buildings of architectural or historic interest

This is a locally prepared list of buildings which highlights those assets that are regarded as worthy of note. These are buildings which have merit in their own right and many of these buildings are on the cusp of meeting the criteria for statutory listing.

Although this has no statutory force, these are buildings with some claim to protection.

#### 3.3.4 Buildings of townscape merit

These buildings of townscape merit are predominantly buildings which contribute to the quality of the townscape as part of a wider group, but may not be buildings of particular merit in their own right.

#### 3.3.5 Parks and gardens

There are no Registered Parks on Historic England's Register. Local gardens listed by the London Parks and Gardens Trust are Burgess Park (a product of the 1943 Abercrombie Plan which sought to provide green "lungs" for areas of high density housing. Caroline Gardens (named after a former resident of the Licensed Victuallers Asylum) is also listed.

#### 3.3.6 Conservation Areas

There are three conservation areas which fall wholly in the study area. These are.

- CA16 Pages Walk: Designated 30 June 1985.
  - CA17 Thorburn Square: Designated 30 January 1991.
  - CA26 Caroline Gardens: Designated 27 September 1968.
- A further three fall partially within the study area:
- CA7 Bermondsey Street: Designated 3 January 1973, Extended 23 October 1991, 13 December 1993 and 11 January 2010.
  - CA22 Trafalgar Avenue: Designated 5 February 1980, Extended 30 September 1991.
  - CA23 Glengall Road: Designated 9 July 1971, Extended October 1978 and September 30 1991.

The Conservation Areas not only include some of the most attractive historic built sections in the area, but also some of the best examples of public realm.



Pages Walk Conservation Area



Bermondsey Street Conservation Area



Thorburn Square Conservation Area



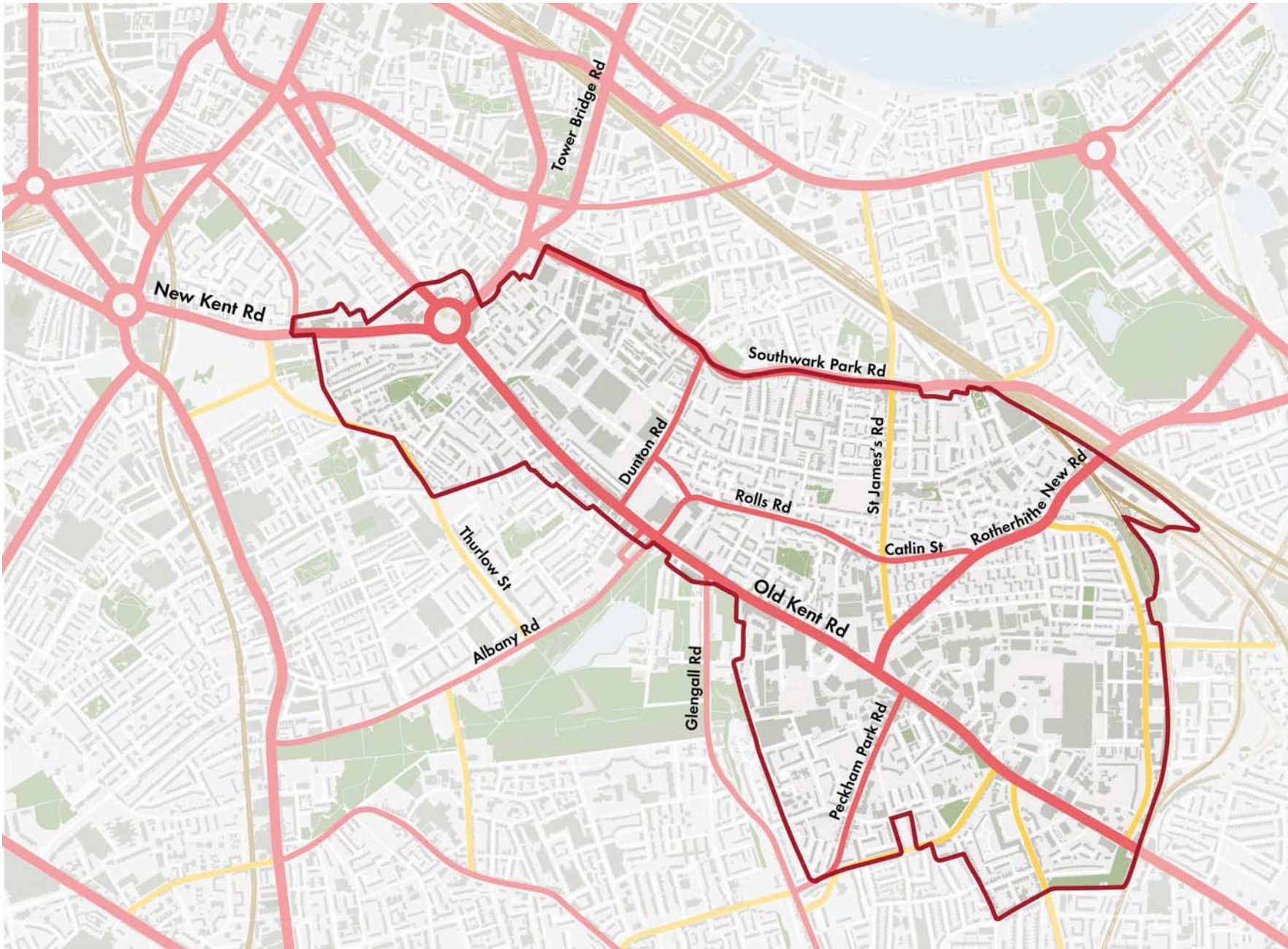
Trafalgar Avenue Conservation Area



Caroline Gardens Conservation Area



Glengall Road Conservation Area



**Vehicle Routes**  
 ■ Main route  
 ■ Primary  
 ■ Secondary

Figure 3.3: Vehicular routes

### 3.4 MOVEMENT

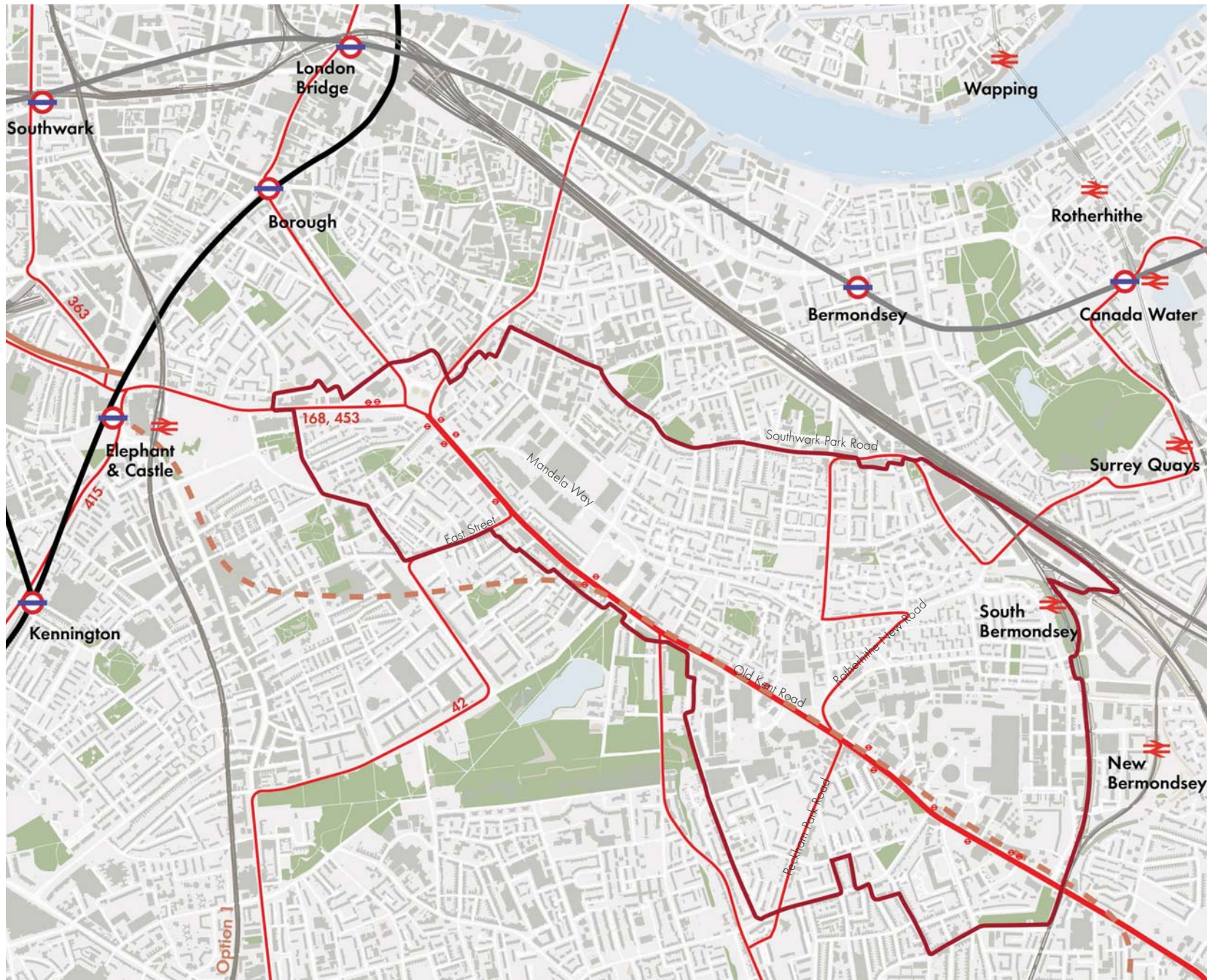
#### 3.4.1 Vehicular routes

Old Kent Road, the A2, is one of London's main arterial roads, widened in places and carrying high volumes of traffic. It is designated as a red route which significantly limits the stopping of vehicles along the entire route.

Grange Road/Southwark Park Road (A2206) runs roughly parallel to Old Kent Road and is also an important route. The two are connected at Tower Bridge Road (A100), Dunton Road and St James's Road.

An important intersection occurs along this stretch of the Old Kent Road. The north-south route of Rotherhithe New Road (A2208) and Peckham Park Road (B216) is a well used route to Surrey Quays and Canada Water in the north and Peckham to the south.

The street form of Old Kent Road itself varies through the study area. At its northern end, the road is at its widest and there is strong sense of vehicles dominating the environment. The rise of the Bricklayers Arms flyover further emphasises this dominance. Through the mid section, the road generally reduces down in width, but with a number of exceptions around junctions. At the southern end the street width has started to reduce down to one lane plus one bus lane in each direction which is the norm to the south of the study area.



**Bus routes along Old Kent Road**

21	363
42	381
53	415
63	453
78	N21
168	N63
172	P12

**Public transport connections**

- Jubilee line
- Northern line
- Bakerloo line
- Bakerloo line extension preferred route
- Bus route
- Tube station
- Train station
- Bus stop

Figure 3.4: Public transport connections

### 3.4.2 Public transport

An almost constant stream of buses runs along the Old Kent Road, reflecting, perhaps, the absence of an underground service in this part of London.

The only rail station within the study area is at South Bermondsey, providing direct access into London Bridge and out to West Croydon. Queens Road Peckham rail station just to the south east of the study area provides access to the London Overground line with services to Highbury and Islington and Clapham Junction.

The nearest tube stations are at Elephant and Castle and Borough (Bakerloo and Northern Lines) and Bermondsey (Jubilee Line).

Old Kent Road forms a major concentration of bus routes in and out of central south London. There are also bus routes along all the main roads including Grange Road / Southwark Park Road, Trafalgar Avenue, Peckham Park Road and Rotherhithe New Road.

Transport for London has recently considered options for extending the Bakerloo Line from Elephant and Castler and have confirmed the Old Kent Road as the preferred route.



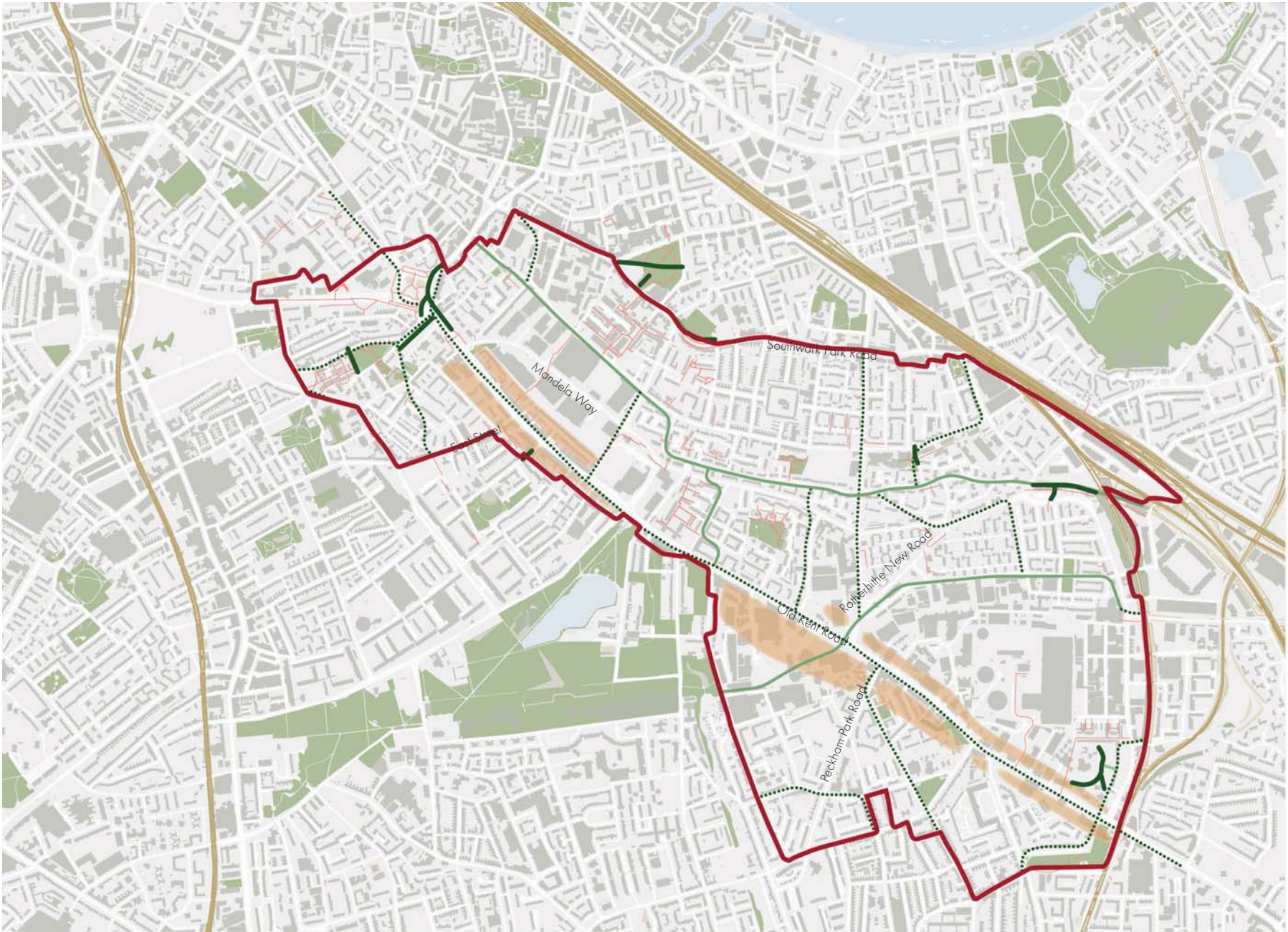


Figure 3.5: Pedestrian and cycle routes

- Cycling Routes**
- Trails
  - - - Committed cycle routes
  - ..... Future cycle routes
  - Pedestrian route



### 3.4.3 Pedestrian and cycle routes

The Old Kent Road itself has no designated cycling route. Instead, the main cycle way through the area runs parallel to Old Kent Road on its north east side along Willow Walk, Lynton Road, Chaucer Drive, Oxley Close, Abercorn Way, Stevenson Crescent before it joins up with Rotherhithe New Road. This route is being improved as part of TfL's Quietway 1.

The primary north to south cycle routes cross Old Kent Road from Penry Street to Surrey Square and from Mawbey Road to Glengall Road.

Pedestrians can make use of the footpaths along Old Kent Road. There are many crossings along the road which make crossing from north to south safe and convenient.

Both cyclists and pedestrians can use the open spaces in the area to their advantage by travelling along designated routes, such as those in Burgess Park to access other local routes, or by following the Surrey Canal Path to Peckham.

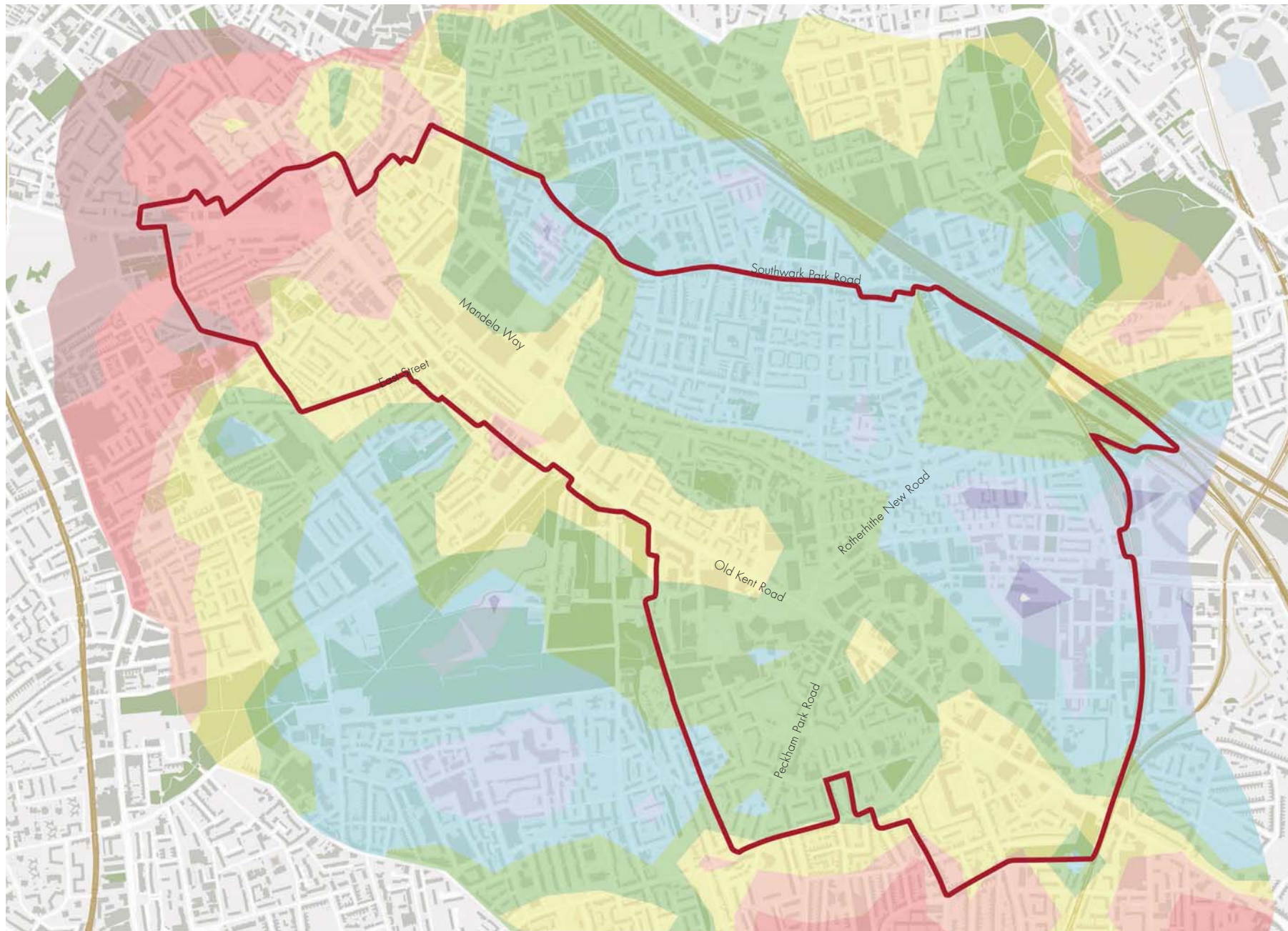


Figure 3.6: Public transport accessibility levels (Data source: Transport for London)

### 3.4.4 Access to the public transport network

Public Transport Accessibility Levels or PTALs provide a measure of how good the access to the wider public transport network is from each place in London. Areas with the best PTAL ratings of 6a or 6b have easy access to tube and rail connections, whilst areas with a PTAL rating of 0 or 1 will be some distance from stations or bus routes.

Within the Old Kent Road area, the Public Transport Accessibility Levels are highest at the Bricklayers Arms roundabout; within walking distance of two underground stations, and at a confluence of bus routes. The Old Kent Road itself is well served by bus routes and therefore has a rating of 4 for most of its extent. However, parts of the area including the Verney Road area are poorly served at present, with PTAL ratings dropping to 1a and 1b.

Transport for London has recently considered options for extending the Bakerloo Line from Elephant and Castle. The preferred option has been identified as the one which would run through the Old Kent Road area and have one or two stations along the route. This would significantly enhance the PTAL ratings in the area, and give existing and new inhabitants much better access to the public transport network.

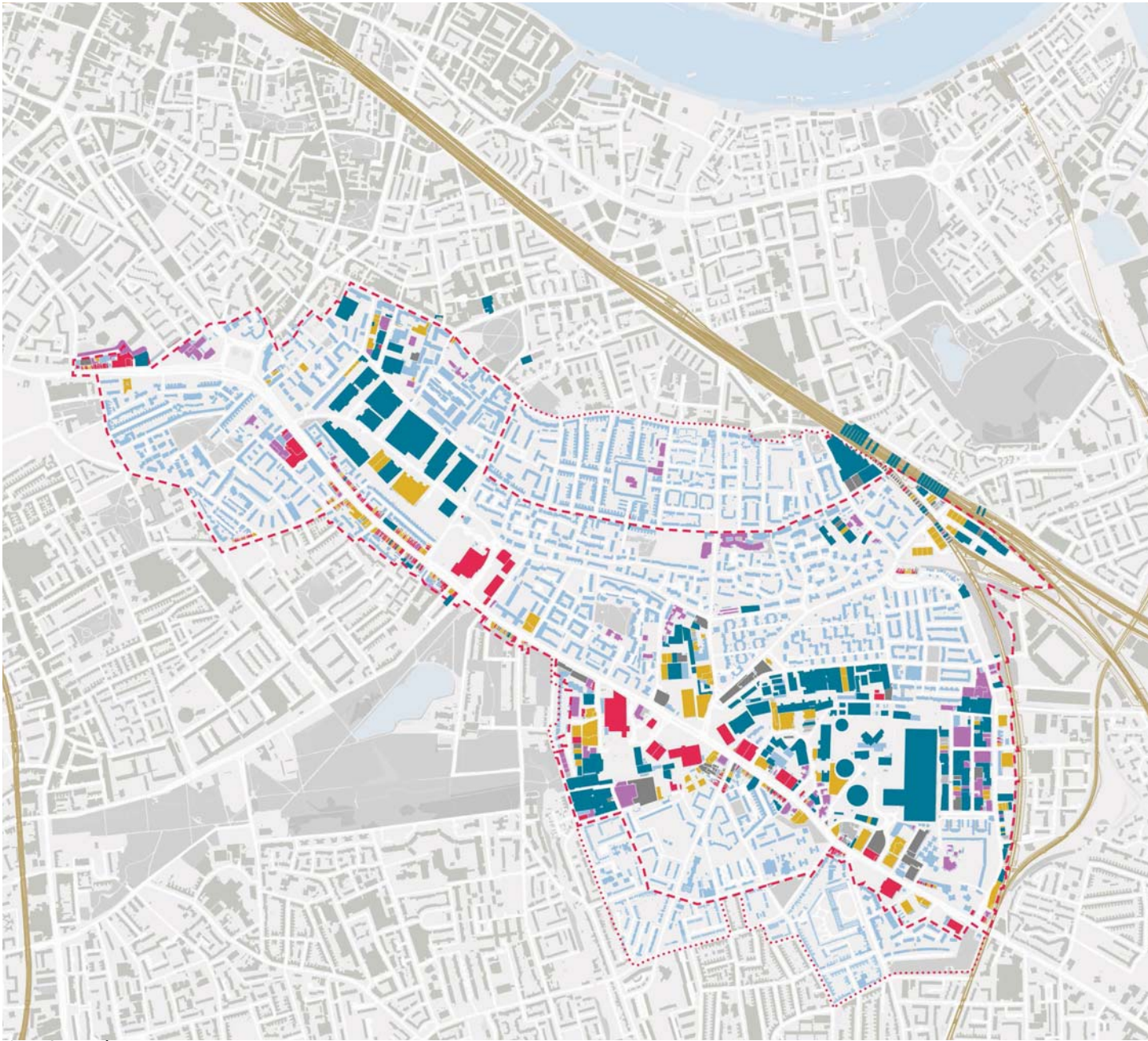
The London Plan suggests the density of new development should respond to the relative PTAL rating in an area. Therefore, central locations with a 6a or 6b rating could support much higher densities (up to 1,100 habitable rooms per hectare) whereas less central locations with a rating of 0 to 1 would only be expected to support much lower densities (up to 250 habitable rooms per hectare).



Old Kent Road



Bricklayers Arms



- residential
- transport, storage and manufacture
- wholesale and services
- retail, cafes, restaurants
- education, art, faith
- other
- vacant

Figure 3.7: Land use map

### 3.5 LAND USE

#### 3.5.1 Land use mix

The Old Kent Road includes a wide spectrum of land uses, wider than one might expect of such a central location. Alongside the expected variety of residential typologies, local shopping parades and commercial blocks, there are major industrial uses such as the integrated waste management facility and a mail sorting centre, as well as a not insignificant number of large scale retail outlets.

Within the extensive industrial land use is a wide variety of business types - from manufacturing through to artist studios. These industrial uses translate into very different urban forms, with the smaller activities taking place in a much finer grain street based block format.

Despite the variety of land uses found in the study area, the adjacent plan shows that residential uses still very much dominate. At present the breaks between residential and non-residential often happen very suddenly, with some roads having completely unrelated uses on either side of the street.



Verney Road marks a transition between residential and industrial

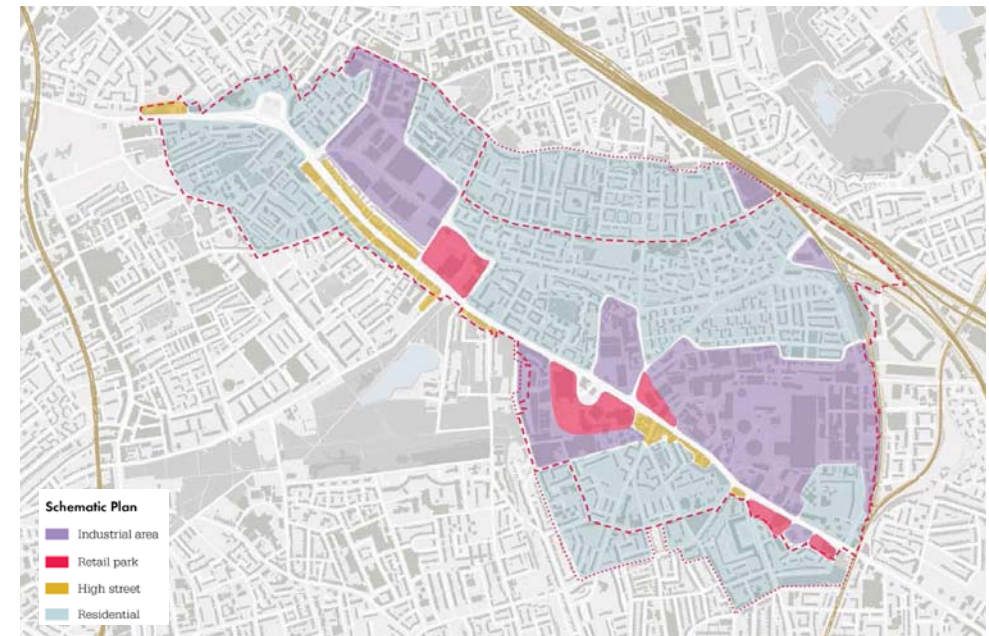
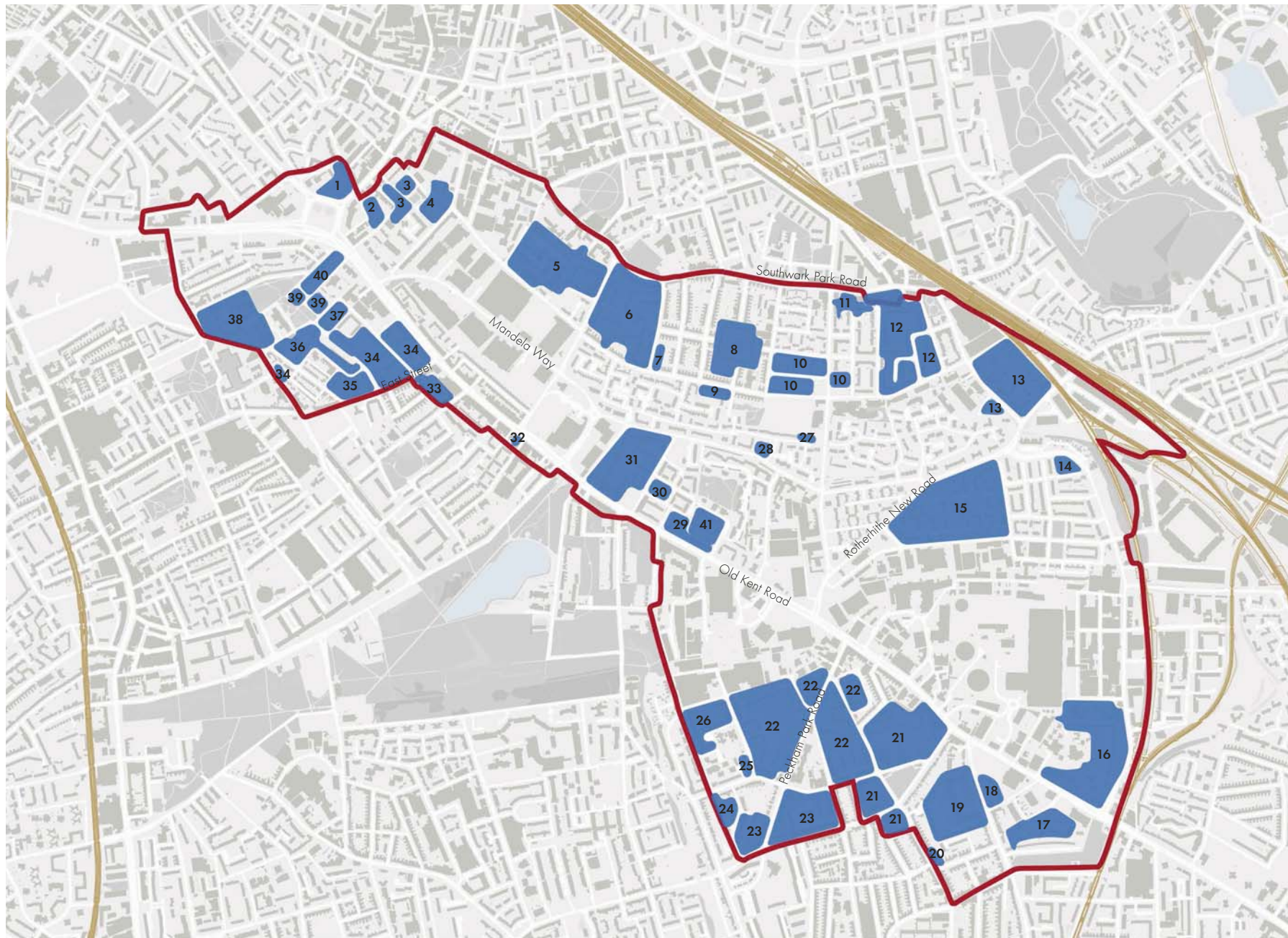


Figure 3.7: Broad pattern of non-residential uses



- 1 Haddonhall Estate
- 2 Creasy Estate
- 3 Swan Mead
- 4 Harold Estate
- 5 Setchell Estate
- 6 Longfield Estate
- 7 Cragie House
- 8 Thornburn Square
- 9 Lynton Estate
- 10 Esmeralda Road Estate
- 11 Avondale Estate
- 12 Manor Estate
- 13 Rennie Estate
- 14 Delaford Road
- 15 Bonamy Estate
- 16 Tustin Estate
- 17 Brimington Estate
- 18 Gervase Street Estate
- 19 Caroline Gardens
- 20 Holme House Estate
- 21 Ledbury Estate
- 22 Friary Estate
- 23 Lindley Estate
- 24 Colgrave Estate
- 25 Haymerle Road
- 26 Unwin Estate
- 27 Abercorn Way
- 28 Acanthus Drive
- 29 Mawbey Estate
- 30 Coopers Road Estate
- 31 Astley Estate
- 32 Kinglake Estate
- 33 Minnow Walk Estate
- 34 Congreve Estate
- 35 Alvey Estate
- 36 Barlow Estate
- 37 Cornus Place
- 38 Salisbury Estate
- 39 Mardyke Estate
- 40 Darwin Street
- 41 Avondale Estate

■ Housing Estate

Figure 3.8: Southwark housing estates (Data source: London Borough of Southwark)

### 3.6 SOCIAL HOUSING ESTATES

#### 3.6.1 Public sector housing

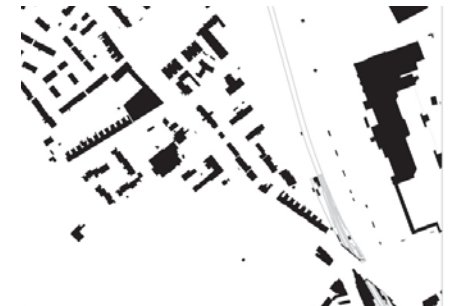
The Old Kent Road area is home to a high proportion of the borough's social housing provision. The adjacent plan illustrates the extent of the housing provided by the Council in the study area.

The legacy of this housing is the result of a number of different providers – Peabody, London County Council, Corporation of London, Southwark, Bermondsey and Camberwell Boroughs (after 1930) and London Borough of Southwark (after 1965).

This housing comes in a wide variety of typologies, including terraced houses, blocks of flats and maisonettes. The block layout also varies hugely with perimeter blocks, open plan, regular grids and cul de sacs all exhibited. However, the megastructure estates found elsewhere in Southwark or Lambeth are not found here.

The scale and form of the housing ranges from cottages through to slabs and point blocks. Whilst the style varies from neo-Georgian to modern movement to neo-vernacular.

The materials and colours used throughout the housing estates are diffuse, but with an emphasis on brick.



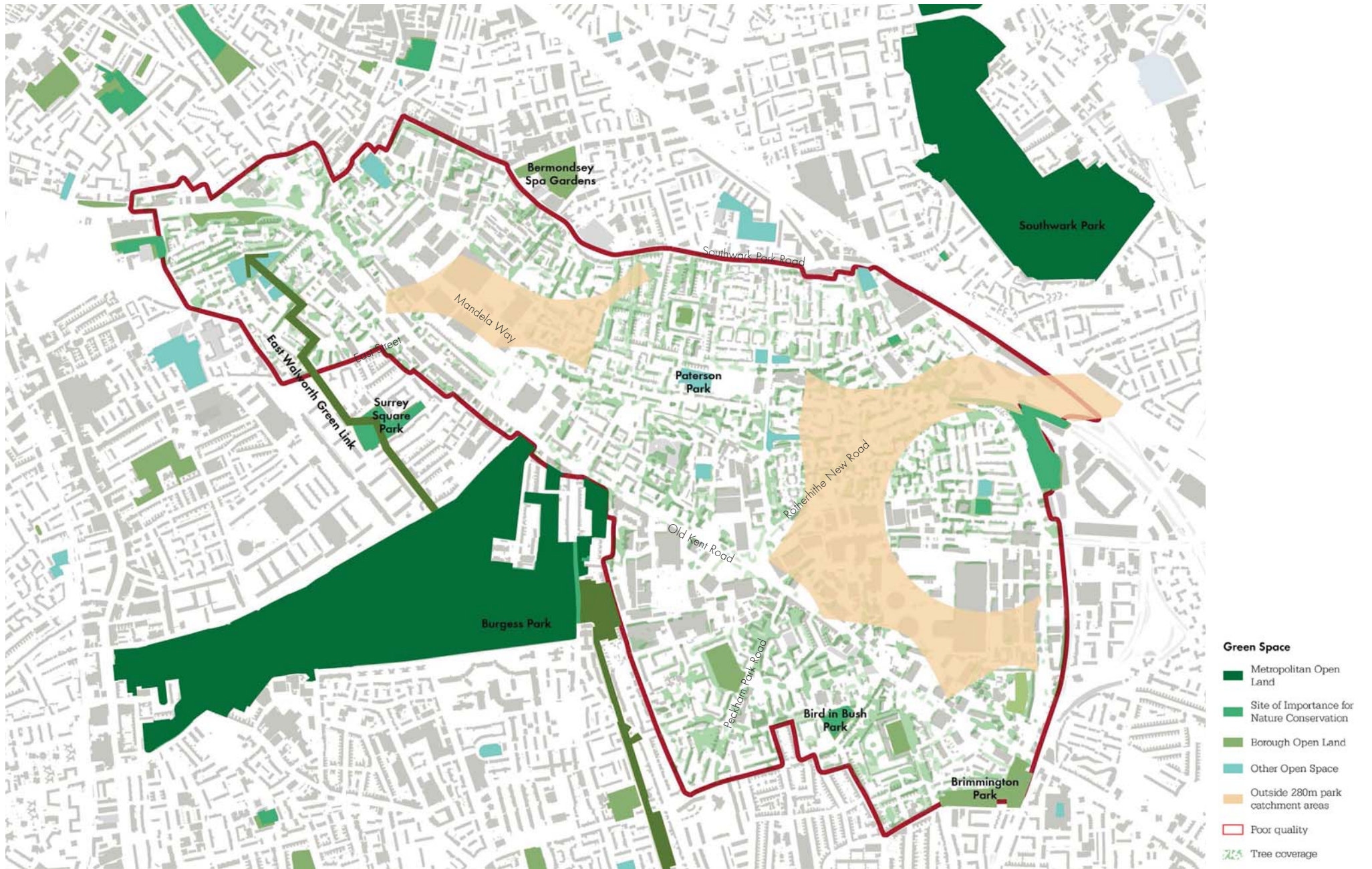


Figure 3.9: Green infrastructure



### 3.7 PUBLIC SPACE

#### 3.7.1 Green infrastructure

With the very considerable exception of Burgess Park, the area is sparsely supplied with green spaces. Surrey Square Park, just outside the study area, is a survivor from an incomplete Georgian plan and others are, like Burgess Park itself, largely new creations from former housing plots.

Southwark Park, like Burgess Park, is an area of Metropolitan Open Land. Both just outside of the study boundary, these parks are the largest in the area.

There are smaller areas of borough open land such as Paterson Park which has a ball court and play area and Bricklayers Arms Recreational Park which also has play area facilities.

Pocket parks like Bird In Bush Park are also part of the pattern of open space created from former housing. Caroline Gardens is the main exception, being part of the original design and amenity of the former Licensed Victuallers Asylum.

Other open space includes smaller, more private areas of open space which have been created as a result of a style of housing estates that exists in the area. During the interwar period new public housing established innovative forms of development with taller buildings interwoven with areas of green space. This pattern continued after the Second World War with development often featuring areas of open space. Many of the estates developed in the Old Kent Road area throughout the twentieth century feature non-traditional layouts of buildings and spaces, with some towers and slabs surrounded by green space, such as Avondale Square Estate.

Street trees contribute significantly to the character of the area. There are marked differences in the quality of the public realm across the area and street trees form a key indicator of quality. Street trees are especially important along Grange Road and

the northern, wider stretches of Old Kent Road. At the southern end of Old Kent Road the street trees successfully support the enclosure of the street, creating a much more human environment than might otherwise be the case.

Larger species and more mature street trees exist in the areas which have seen less redevelopment. The streets within the 1980s housing which filled in the space left by the goods yard rail lines have much smaller, more ornamental style trees which contribute far less to the street scene and general enclosure than the mature plane trees found along Old Kent Road itself and the Victorian streets.

#### 3.7.2 Network of public space

Over the last decades some important physical linkages have been forged between the parks in the area. A green link between the green space of Salisbury Row through to Burgess Park has been achieved. In addition a well-used quiet greenway is now well established along Surrey Canal Linear Park to the east of Burgess Park.

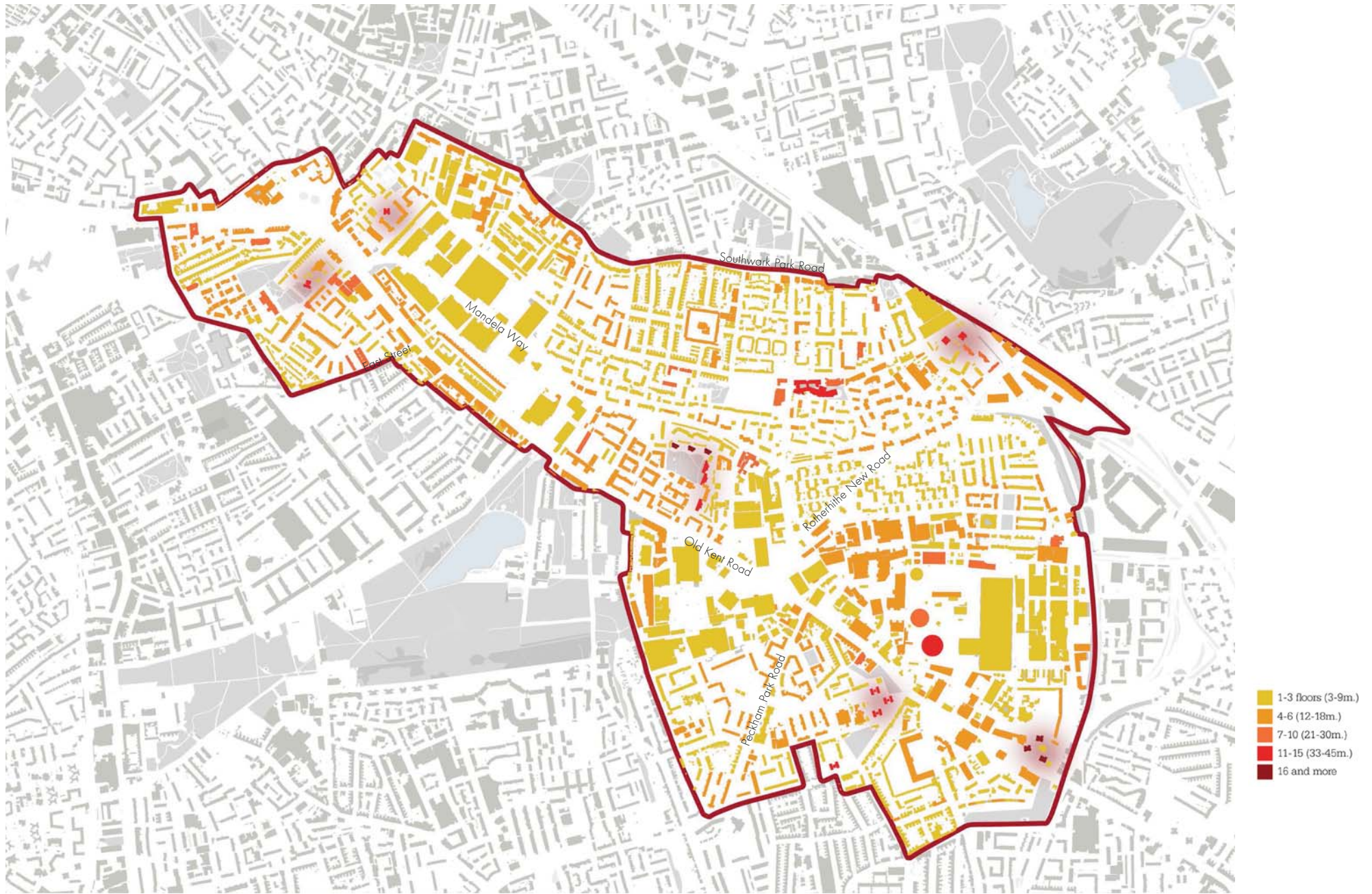


Figure 3.10: Building heights

### 3.8 BUILDING HEIGHT

#### 3.8.1 Overall pattern

Across the whole area the predominant height is under four storeys. This is largely due to the extensive residential areas away from Old Kent Road itself and the industrial areas running through the central and southern belts.

The impression of the area, however, is of greater height, as much of the frontage along Old Kent Road itself tends to be over three storeys.

#### 3.8.2 Taller buildings

The biggest and tallest buildings are those closest to Old Kent Road. There are three clusters, each of three point blocks from the 1950s and 60s:

- Tustin Estate: three 18 storey towers of Windermere Point, Ambleside Point and Grasmere Point;
- Ledbury Estate: three 14 storeys towers of Skenfrith House, Peterchurch House and Sarnesfield House; and
- Avondale Square Estate: three 21 storey towers of East Point, Centre Point and West Point.

There are also a pair of 14 storey towers near South Bermondsey station, which are part of the Rennie Estate.

Whilst these taller residential buildings form useful landmarks, it is the gas holders in the area that have more impact on local people's image and understanding of the area. A cluster of three gas holders exist close to Old Kent Road off Ruby Street and Sandgate Street. The largest holder sits closest to Old Kent Road and has a presence on the street due to the lack of other development between it and the road. The holders decrease in size as they step away from Old Kent Road.

There is however no overall pattern; the tallest point blocks were often consciously set alongside lower slabs (on the Roehampton model) providing visual contrast as well as a mix of accommodation.



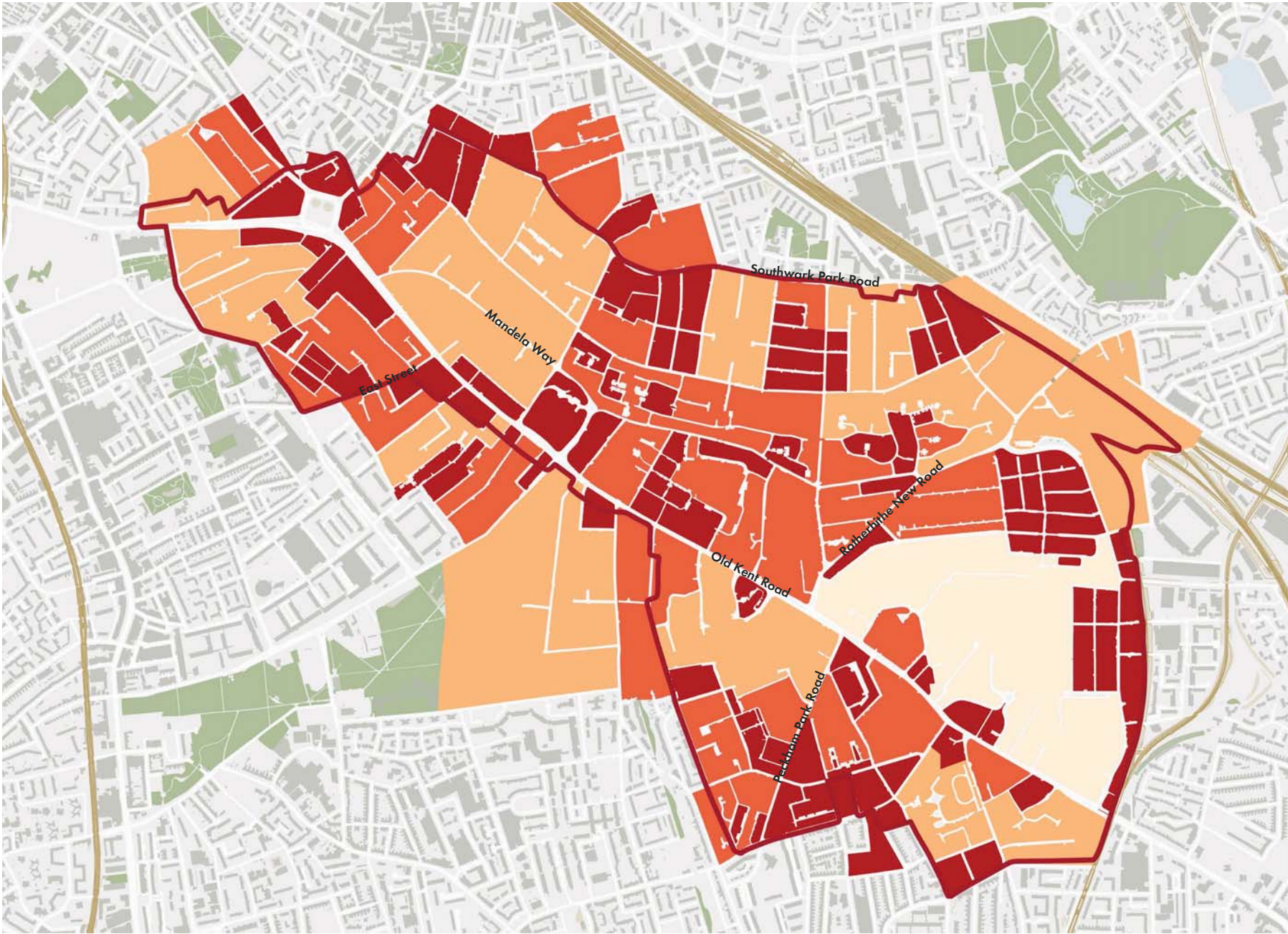
View from north over Old Kent Road



View from north over Old Kent Road



Avondale Square Estate Towers



**Block size perimeter (sqm)**

- 105 - 552
- 552 - 1,244
- 1,244 - 2,791
- 2,791 - 6,239

Figure 3.11: Block size

### 3.9 BLOCK SIZE

#### 3.9.1 Range of block sizes

The area exhibits a large range of urban block sizes. This is part a function of the range of land uses, but more a result of the evolution of the area. The adjacent plan graphically shows this range in block sizes. A line has been drawn around each impenetrable block and then measured. Those blocks with a short perimeter distance have been shaded in a dark colour, those with a large perimeter are shown in a light shade.

Unsurprisingly, there is a correlation between the age of streets and the size of blocks. On the whole, the older the area, the smaller the block. The older roads such as Dunton Road, Peckham Park Road, Southwark Park Road, Albany Road, and Old Kent Road itself determine the edge of many of the blocks. The largest blocks are the more recent industrial and commercial areas.

#### 3.9.2 Impact on movement

The size of the urban blocks has a significant impact on people's ability to move across the area. The permeability of the eastern half is impeded by the impenetrability of the large industrial blocks. This means that residents around South Bermondsey station are physically cut off from the Old Kent Road.

In the western half a cluster of much smaller blocks make for a much more penetrable area, and thus supports the role of Old Kent Road itself as a centre in this section.



Burgess Park

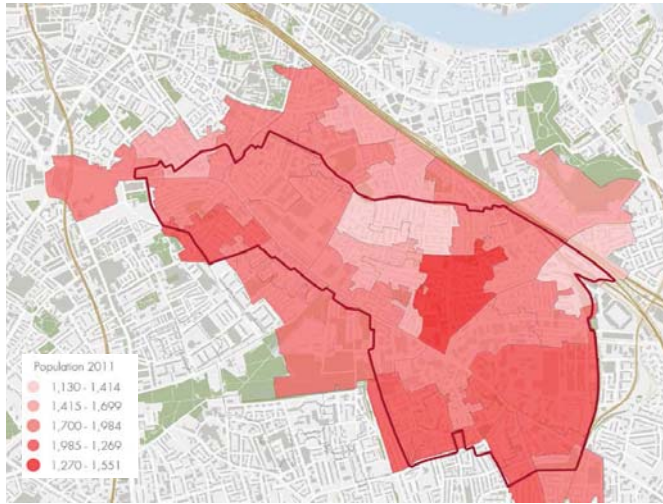


Southwark integrated waste management facility



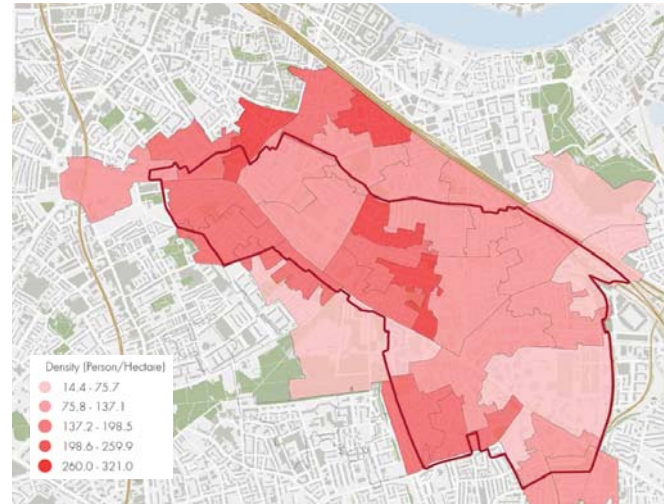
Mandela Way Industrial Estate

### 3.10 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTER



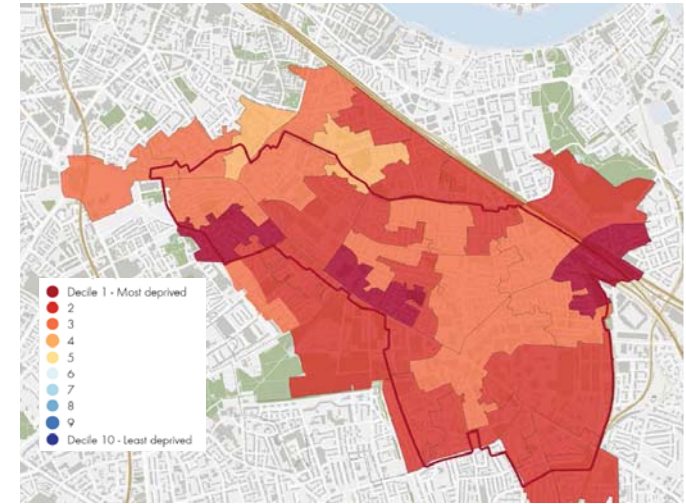
#### 3.10.1 Population

The distribution of population varies across the area, mainly as a result of land uses. The areas with greatest population are in the central and southern parts, which have a high proportion of land area taken up by residential uses.



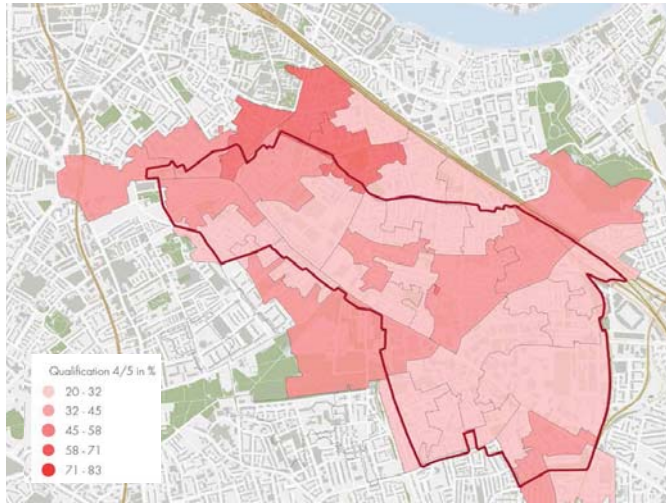
#### 3.10.2 Density

Interestingly, those areas with the densest number of people per hectare are in the north and west, where high density residential format predominate. Here there are more Victorian terraced streets and high rise free form residential estates.



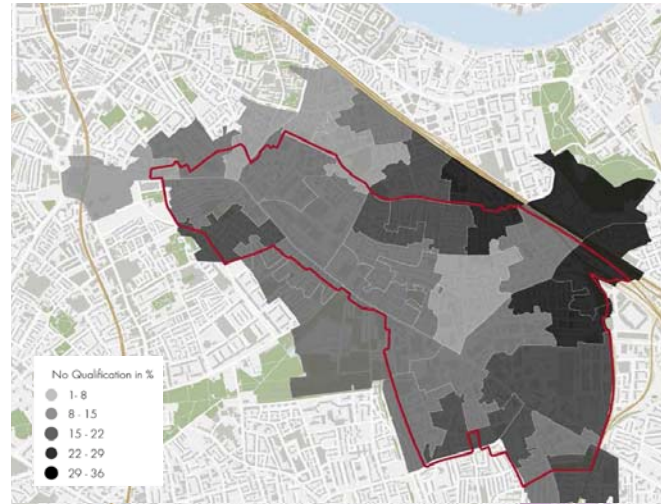
#### 3.10.3 Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation combines a number of indicators of deprivation into a single rank to give an idea of the overall deprivation felt in an area. The map above illustrates how the different parts of the study area perform against this ranking. This illustrates that the area generally is deprived, with parts among the most deprived the country.



### 3.10.4 Qualifications - Levels 4/5

Between 20 and 45% of adults in the study area have an educational qualification of level 4 or 5, equivalent to a university degree. In some of the most northern parts of the area over 45% have this level of qualification. This pattern likely reflects the growth of city style apartments in Bermondsey.



### 3.10.5 No Qualifications

Whilst the area is home to many residents with very high levels of qualifications, there are also significant numbers without any qualifications at all. In the north east of the study area around South Bermondsey up to 36% of the resident adults are without any educational qualifications.



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REVERDY ROAD

FORT ROAD SE1