

# CHARACTER ANALYSIS

## FUTURE BASELINE CONTEXT

6.7 As previously outlined, the Site lies within the Royal Docks and Beckton Riverside Opportunity Area, which will see the development and regeneration of the surrounding townscape. In addition, there are numerous committed or ongoing developments elsewhere within the surrounding townscape. The following have been identified as nearby committed and/or emerging developments that are likely to alter the future townscape context to the Site:

- Redevelopment of Minoco Wharf (11/00856/OUT), which lies to the south-east of the Site. Proposals include a residential-led masterplan, subdivided into 26 plots up to a maximum building height of 65m AOD to deliver 3,385 new homes;
- Redevelopment of Silvertown Quays (14/01605/OUT), which lies to the east of the Site. Proposals include a mixed-use development, incorporating the conversion of the Millennium Mills building and the construction of new built forms up to a maximum building height of 44.9m AOD, complemented by the provision of public open space;
- Redevelopment of Good Luck Hope (PA/14/03594/A1), which lies to the west of the Site and includes built form up to 30 storeys in height;
- Redevelopment of Leamouth Peninsula North ('City Island') (PA/10/01864), which lies to the north-west of the Site. Proposals include a mixed-use residential led development with built form rising up to 30 storeys in height;
- Redevelopment of Brunell Street Works (16/03428/FUL), which lies to the north of the Site and includes built form up to 28 storeys in height;
- Redevelopment of Wood Wharf (PA/13/02966), which lies to the west of the Site. Proposals include a mixed-use development comprising a series of towers varying in height up to 60 storeys;
- Redevelopment of Greenwich Peninsula (15/0716/O), which lies to the south of the Site. Proposals include a mixed-use development set over a series of high-rise built forms up to a maximum building height of 133.5m AOD;
- The creation of a new Thames Wharf DLR station within a central part of the Site; and
- The Silvertown Tunnel DCO, for which the Planning Inspectorate issued a report of recommendation to the Secretary of State.

6.8 The future townscape character for the surrounding area has been considered and is informed by the nearby development proposals outlined previously. In this regard the immediate context of the Site will feature a number of development blocks of varying mass, form and scale, which are generally taller than the existing built form in the surroundings.

6.9 A description of the previously identified character areas in the vicinity of the Site, taking into account the identified committed and/or emerging developments is provided on the adjacent page. In addition, an indication of the future building heights and layout of built form within the vicinity of the Site is provided overleaf.

## FUTURE TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

### Poplar Suburbs (TCA 1)

- Predominantly a residential area, with the building typology exhibiting substantial contrasts in vernacular and scale; and
- Area partially severed by the main thoroughfares of the A13 and the A312.

### Leamouth and Thames Estuary (TCA 2)

- A mix of industrial and residential uses, adjacent to the River Lea and River Thames; and
- Built form of variable height, mostly low-rise although some high-rise development on the Leamouth Peninsula extending to 30 storeys.

### Canning Town and Custom House (TCA 3)

- Predominantly residential, comprising post-war two to three storey built forms; and
- Simple and uniform area, with built form arranged across disconnected but repetitive street pattern.

### Royal Victoria Dock (TCA 4)

- The expanse of open water is the defining characteristic of the area, with mixed-use developments predominating; and
- Distinctive built forms, including the renovated Millennium Mills; the Excel Centre; and the Crystal.

### West Silvertown (TCA 5)

- Predominantly residential, comprising low-rise flats and houses between three and five storeys; and
- Broadly regular/geometric grid pattern urban structure, incorporating car parking and small pockets of amenity space.

### Minoco Wharf (TCA 6)

- A predominantly modern contemporary residential area, with built form predominantly mid to high-rise, including the distinctive Marco Polo building; and
- Elsewhere there are industrial uses present, while the Thames Barrier Park is a key feature.

### Canary Wharf and Docklands (TCA 7)

- Land use is predominantly commercial/office, with the built form tall and centered around a series of wharfs;
- The built form is modern and contemporary, with a strong sense of place, including the new Wood Wharf.

### Isle of Dogs (TCA 8)

- Predominantly residential area with built form generally four to six storeys in height; and
- Street pattern largely orientated towards the River, with a large area of open space in the centre.

### Greenwich Peninsula West (TCA 9)

- A mix of uses, but predominantly residential and commercial. Views of Canary Wharf and the O2 Arena is a defining characteristic; and
- Some large scale built form, set amongst pocket amenity spaces.

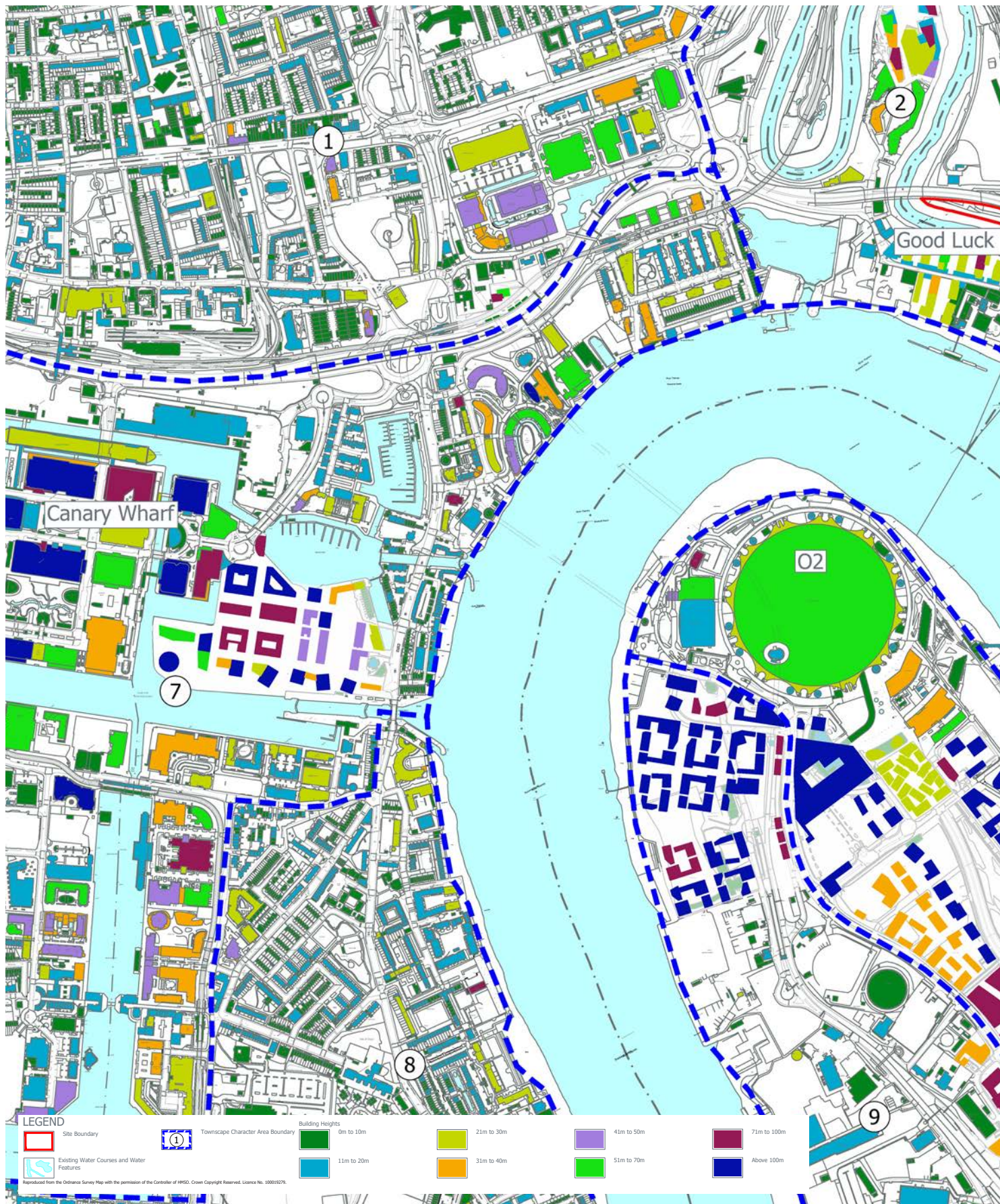
### Greenwich Peninsula East (TCA 10)

- Mixed-use contemporary development, featuring the landmark O2 Arena to the north; and
- Built form is generally tall and of a large scale, with numerous modern and contemporary residential towers and areas of public open amenity space.

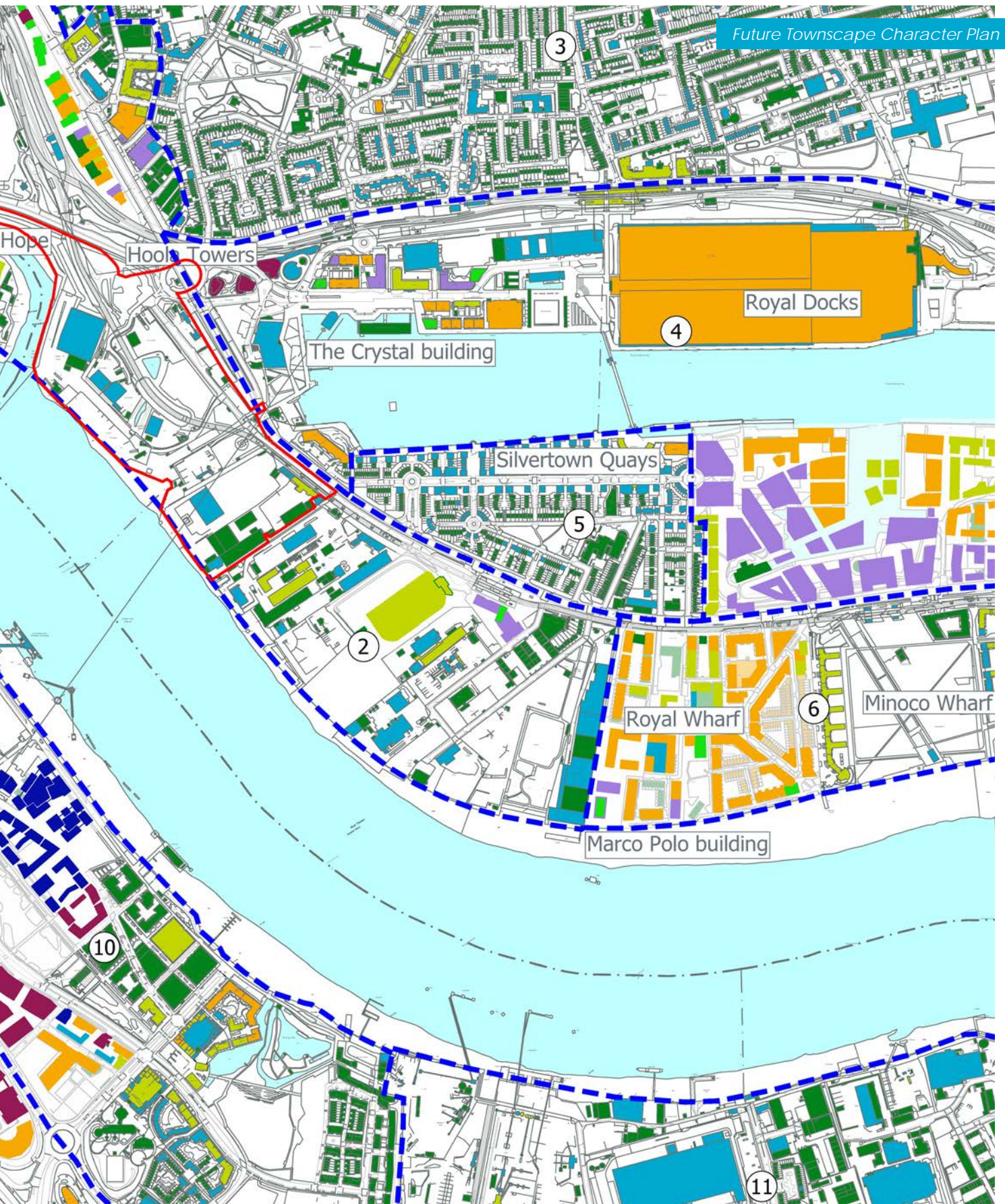
### New Charlton (TCA 11)

- Industrial area, with a number of loading jetties extending into the River Thames; and
- Warehouses are commonplace, as are spoil heaps associated with aggregate materials.

# CHARACTER ANALYSIS



Future Townscape Character Plan





# VIEW ANALYSIS

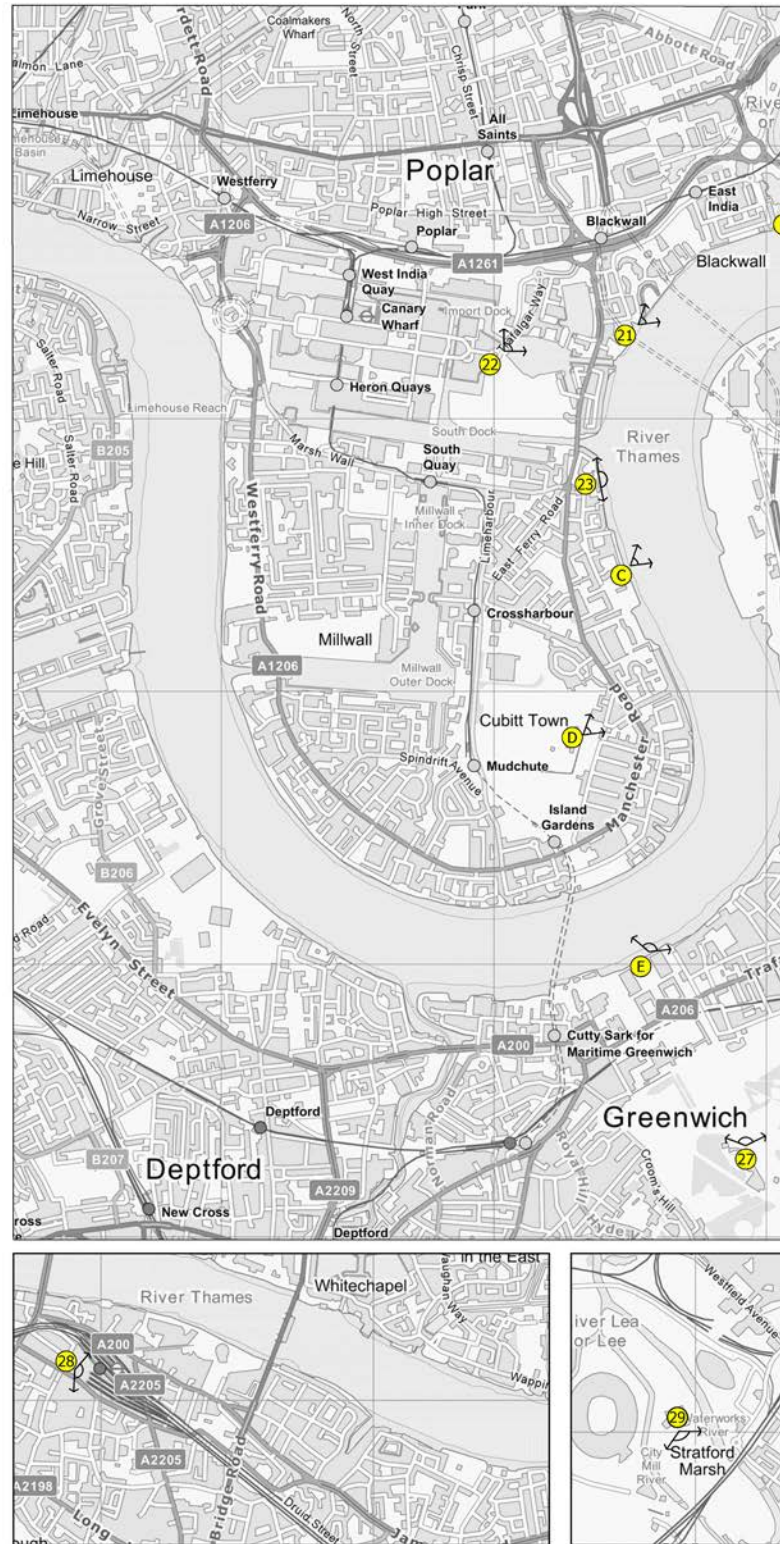
## 7. VISUAL APPRAISAL

7.1 A series of photographs were taken between December 2017 and November 2018, and again in March 2020 from a range of locations to demonstrate the character and appearance of the surroundings within which the Site lies. These photographs were taken from areas to which the public readily gain access i.e. along roads and pavements and within areas of publicly accessible open space.

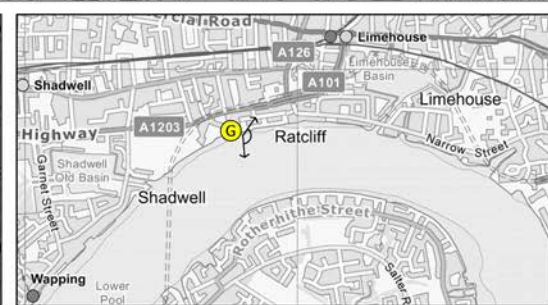
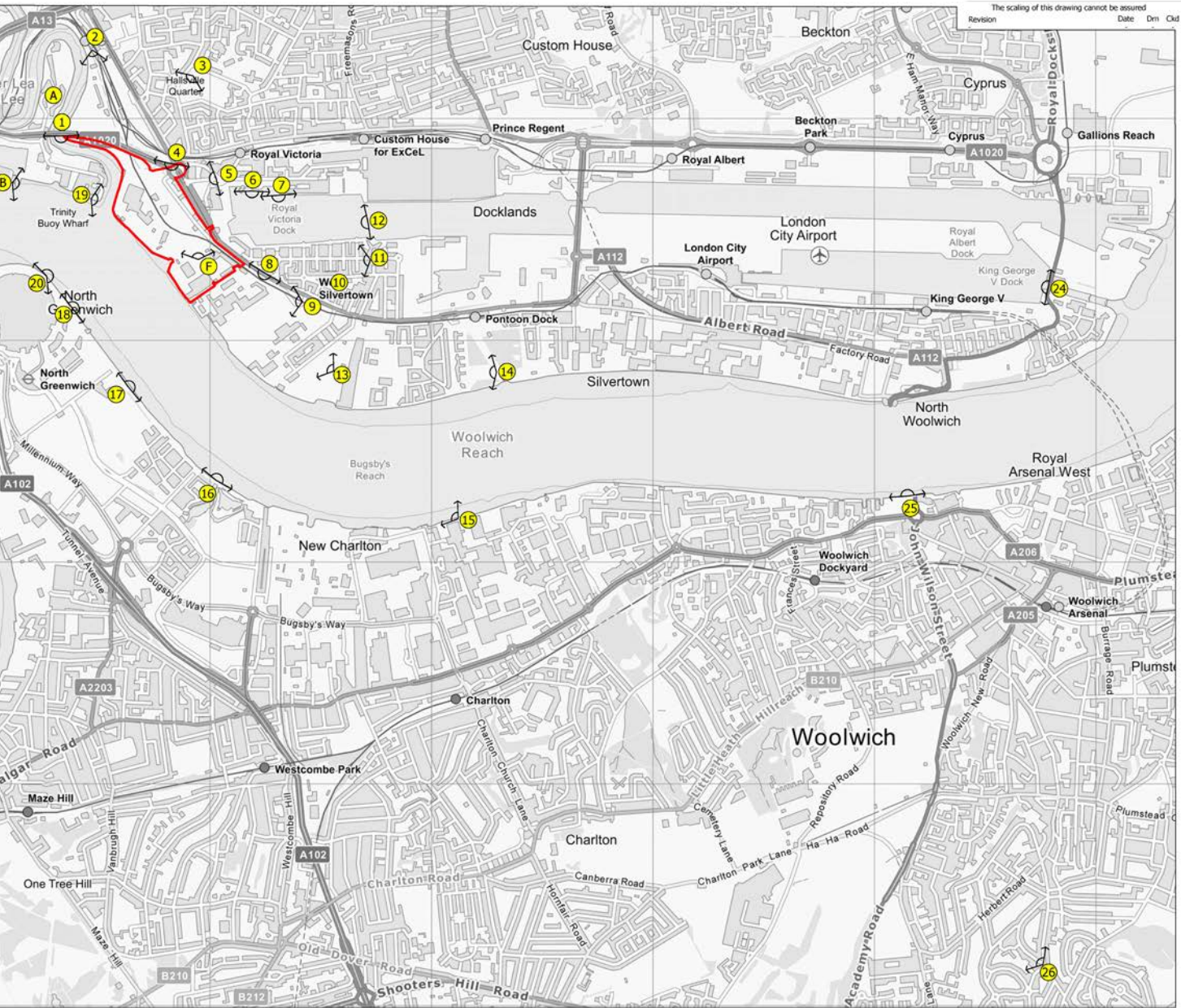
7.2 The viewpoints elected are not intended to be an exhaustive list of where views towards the Site may be obtained, but rather are selected as representative key views of visual receptor groups towards the Site, of varying distance, orientation and composition.

7.3 As demonstrated in the accompanying views, the built vernacular surrounding the Site is varied, exhibiting contrasting use, materiality, scale, massing, and detailing. A common element of the views towards the Site is the presence and influence of open expanses of water, which in turns allows for generally uninterrupted views of the Site. Inevitably, the regeneration of the Site is therefore likely to be clearly visible and will therefore need to take design cues from the surrounding area to integrate with its context.

7.4 It is of note that there are a number of large scale built forms in the surrounding townscape, while there are also vast swathes of land currently undergoing intensive construction activities, which once complemented will further amplify the high-rise character of the surroundings. The Site also currently forms part of the setting to a number of landmarks, including the Crystal building; the O2 Arena; Canary Wharf; and, once completed, the Marco Polo building.



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**Legend**

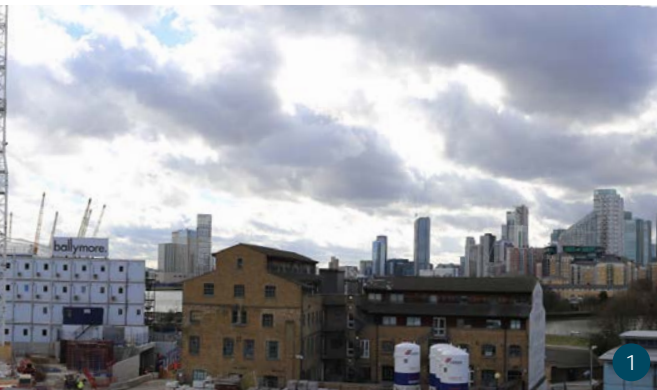
- Site Boundary
- 1 Preliminary Viewpoints



Viewpoint Location Plan

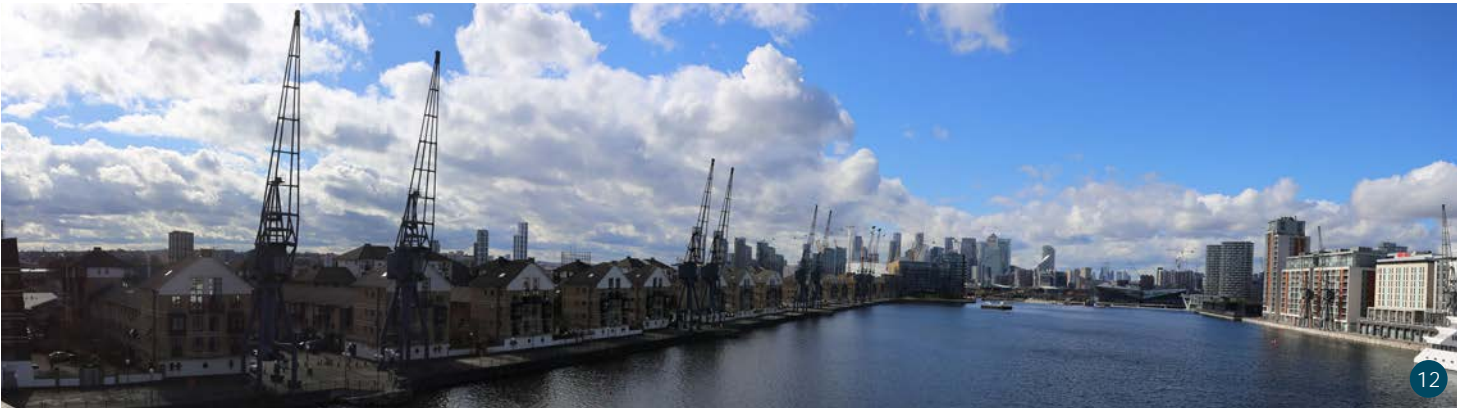
# VIEW ANALYSIS

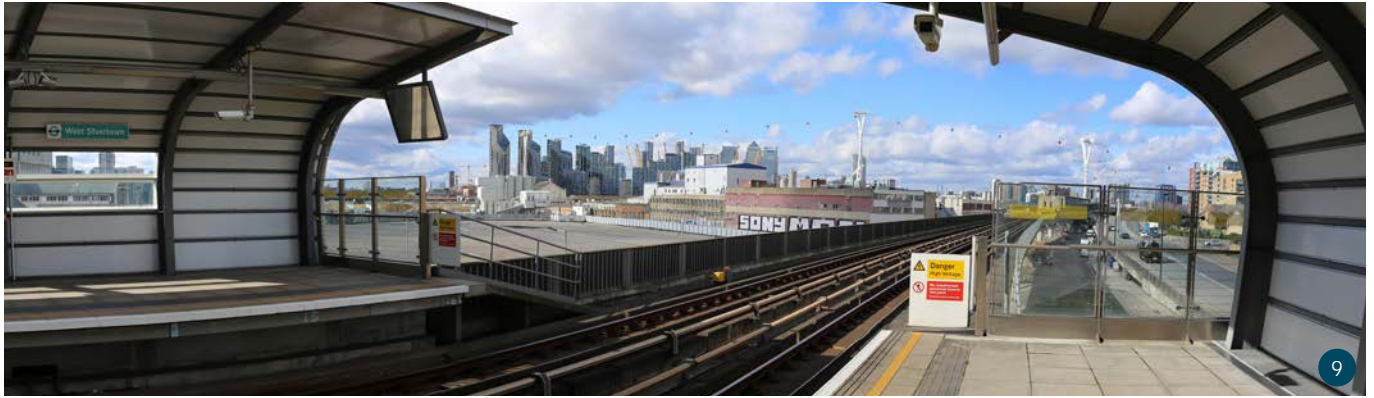




- 1 - View from the A1020 Lower Lea Crossing
- 2 - View from Canning Town Station
- 3 - View from Keir Hardie Recreation Ground
- 4 - View from Charrington Steps / A1011 Silvertown Way
- 5 - View from Tidal Basin Road
- 6 - View from Emirates Airline Terminus Royal Docks
- 7 - View from Royal Docks waterfront

# VIEW ANALYSIS

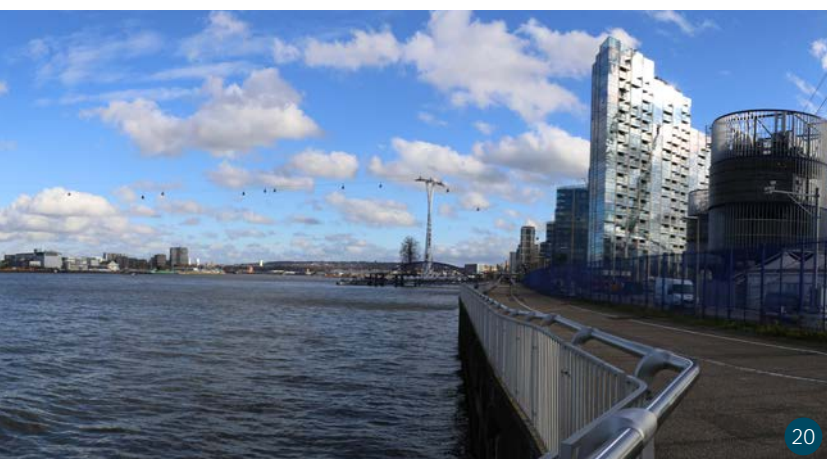




- 8 - View from A1020 Silvertown Way
- 9 - View from West Silvertown DLR station
- 10 - View from West Silvertown near Evelyn Road
- 11 - View from Wesley Avenue near Millenium Mills
- 12 - View from Royal Victoria Dock Bridge
- 13 - View from Lyle Park
- 14 - View from Thames Barrier Park

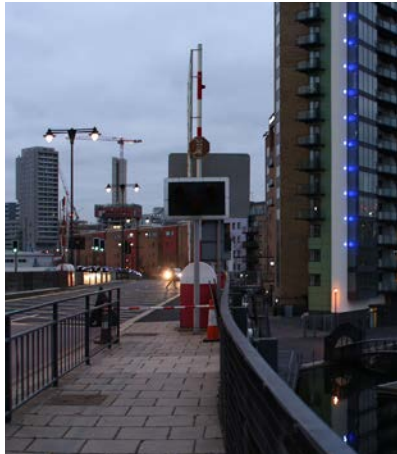
# VIEW ANALYSIS





- 15 - View from Thames Path near the Thames Barrier
- 16 - View from Thames Path near Peartree Wharf
- 17 - View from Thames Path at Bugsby's Reach
- 18 - View from Thames Path near North Greenwich Pier
- 19 - View from Trinity Buoy Wharf
- 20 - View from the O2 Arena / Thames Path

# VIEW ANALYSIS

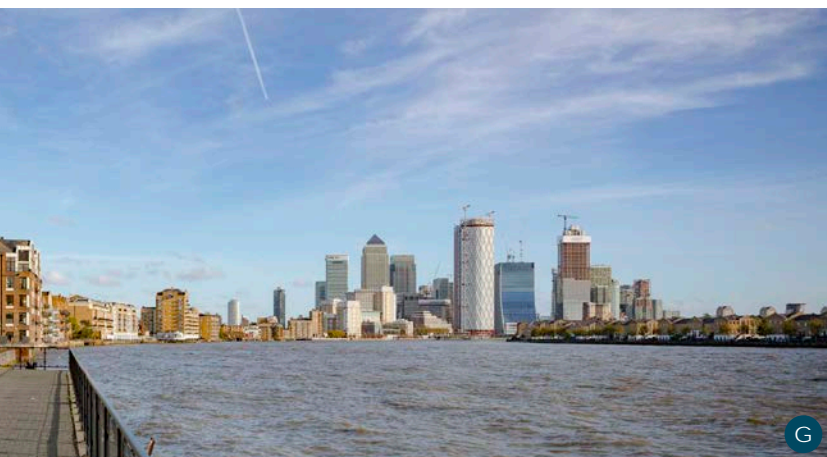




- 21 - View from Balckwall Stairs
- 22 - View from Blackwall Basin
- 23 - View from Blackwall Read / West India & Millwall Docks
- 24 - View from Woolwich Manor Way / London City Airport
- 25 - View from Woolwich Ferry South Pier
- 26 - View from Brent Road, Shooters Hill
- 27 - View from Greenwich Park (LVMF Viewpoint)

# VIEW ANALYSIS





- 28 - View from the Shard
- 29 - View from the ArcelorMittal Orbit
- B - View from East India Dock Basin
- C - View from Thames Path near Crossharbour
- D - View from Mudchute Park
- E - View from Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich
- F - View from Emirates Air Line
- G - View from King Edward VII Memorial Park



# DESIGN RATIONALE

## 8. SCOPE FOR DEVELOPMENT

### LANDSCAPE / TOWNSCAPE GUIDELINES

#### National Guidelines

8.1 With respect to the Greater Thames Estuary NCA Profile (81), the following Statement of Environmental Opportunity of relevance to the Site and the Proposed Development is provided:

*“SEO 4: Encourage a strategic approach to development that is informed by and makes a positive contribution to local character, incorporates green infrastructure which provides ecosystem services where they are needed most, and promotes recreation and addresses climate change, while maintaining important open mosaic and coastal habitats, and historic and geological features.”*

#### Regional Guidelines

8.2 The following ideas for future place-making within the Lower Thames Floodplain Natural Landscape Area are provided:

- *“...Embankments, stepped terraces and viewing mounds as a contrast to larger scale, open marshes...;*
- *No hedgerows, fences or upstanding boundaries;*
- *Wet scrapes, ponds, swales and ditches surrounded by open wet grasslands...; and*
- *Incorporate industrial archaeology within the public realm - as seats, signs and structures for adventure play or artworks...”*

#### Local Guidelines

8.3 A series of design clues are provided within the Newham Character Study, which states that new development could emulate the below:

- *“Introducing iconic and innovative / imaginative design styles with good consideration of local context and composition in terms of rhythm, height and massing...;*
- *Apply urban design principles consistently, paying particular attention to visual composition, legibility and integrates with neighbouring buildings, streets and areas that creates permeability...; and*
- *Improving the public realm on main streets to encourage development to address major streets rather than turn inwards...”*

8.4 The following design principles are provided in relation to Tall Buildings:

- *“Focus: tall than normal buildings are more appropriate along major roads where they are key public transport routes, at public transport nodes and in town centres or other important destinations rather than scattered within the urban grain;*
- *Existing tall buildings: a tall building may not be appropriate simply because other tall buildings currently exist in the locality, as many of these are poorly integrated with the local context;*

- *Masterplanning: a key means to achieve coherence and mitigation of impacts (including negative impacts on microclimate) will be the masterplanning of large development sites/areas where tall buildings are otherwise appropriate;*
- *Composition and legibility: not all tall buildings should be iconic or the same height - overall composition and legibility is important, and clustering and staggering of heights around an important focal/activity point can help achieve this;*
- *Retrospective mitigation: in areas where piecemeal tall buildings development has occurred, it may be appropriate to seek to raise the average height of buildings on the street to maintain enclosure...;*
- *Active ground floor uses and streets: tall buildings like other buildings need to provide for active ground floor frontages and the formation of animated streets and external spaces...;*
- *Amenity space: innovative means of incorporating amenity space may be required, including roof top community gardens, large balconies, and flexible public open space at the base of towers...; and*
- *Alternative high density formations: similar densities can be achieved at lower heights..."*

8.5 In relation to sensitivity and capacity to absorb new development it is noted that:

*"...the areas that have most straightforward capacity for innovation are generally those where there are large development sites providing the space and spacing to enable comprehensive master-planning, and absorb well-conceived departures in various dimensions from patterns evident elsewhere in the area (for example significantly taller buildings). In Newham, this equates to most of the Arc of Opportunity..."*

8.6 Specifically relating to the southern part of the borough, including the Royal Docks, the following priorities are identified:

- *"Enhance or provide new street-based local centres...including public realm improvement;*
- *Address the poorly connected street network and major barriers...and missing links between development sites to improve permeability and legibility;*
- *Consider the potential to provide active frontages and streets facing onto parks, together with cycle routes through and connected with parks and open spaces to animate and overlook the spaces...; and*
- *Realise the potential of attractive waterside locations, ensuring access for all, and creating/maintaining key through views..."*

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

8.7 Based on the findings of the townscape and visual baseline analysis, the Site is considered to provide the following opportunities for development:

- The Site is identified within the Royal Docks and Beckton Riverside 'Opportunity Area' within the London Plan;
- Consistent with the Newham Character Study, the large scale of the Site in combination with its location within the 'Arc of Opportunity' means that there is a greater capacity to absorb the type of development proposed;
- The Site offers the potential to contribute to the overall urban greening of the area through the provision of a high quality landscaping scheme, while its location adjacent to the watercourses means that there is the potential to improve access to the blue infrastructure network;
- The Site is not covered by any national, regional or local landscape/townscape designations;
- The Site does not lie within any protected viewing corridors as identified in the LVMF;
- There is the potential to accommodate high-density multiple land uses as per the Mayoral vision in the City For All Londoners;
- The Site comprises previously developed land, which is in a poor state of repair. The public realm is poorly defined and diminishes the visual amenity experience;
- There is some existing vegetation structure within the Site, which could be incorporated within the design of the scheme to aid in integrating development and form part of an enhanced public realm offering while contributing to green infrastructure linkages;
- The Site is positioned at a unique location in the townscape, lying at the confluence of the River Lea and River Thames; in the setting of Canary Wharf and Greenwich Peninsula; in proximity to ongoing regeneration in the Opportunity Area and 'Arc of Opportunity'; and corresponding with the location of a proposed new DLR station and the proposed Silvertown Tunnel;
- West Silvertown / the Royal Docks is already typified by built form of varying scale and mass, while the Sites' location adjacent to a proposed new DLR station provides the opportunity for the introduction of tall built forms to contribute to legibility and create a new local centre; and
- Redevelopment of the Site allows for the opportunity to introduce iconic and innovative design, with the overall scale of the Site meaning that there is the potential to provide a comprehensively planned area of waterfront development that ties in with the surrounding emerging land uses (addressing and improving legibility and permeability), while also appropriately defining its own distinct character and sense of place at a human and strategic scale.

8.8 Development of the Site could respond positively to the stated aims of the NPPF in contributing to the enhancement of the built environment and the NPPF Core Principles, by improving the places in which people live and the effective re-use of land that has previously been developed.

8.9 Sensitively approached development within the Site could ensure the delivery of good design and create a strong sense of place and add to the overall quality of the area, creating an attractive and comfortable place to live, work and visit while reinforcing local distinctiveness.

8.10 Development of the Site could also respond positively to the London Plan in promoting green infrastructure as part of the design, as well as urban greening through landscaping in both publicly accessible and private areas. Similarly, this type of substantial regeneration could respond positively to Policies 7.6 and 7.7 of the London Plan, particularly through the introduction of high quality architecture and materiality that relates well to the surroundings, and the introduced built form could improve the legibility and permeability of the area.

8.11 Further to the ways in which development of the Site could respond positively to the NPPF and London Plan, its' redevelopment could respond positively to the policies set out in the London Borough of Newham Core Strategy DPD, and the Detailed Sites and Policies DPD. The Site offers the potential to enhance the character of the neighbourhood while aligning to the vision of the Core Strategy, capitalising on investment in the 'Arc of Opportunity'.

## CONSTRAINTS FOR DEVELOPMENT


8.12 Nonetheless, there are some constraints to development of the Site from a townscape and visual perspective, which include:

- The Site is in a low lying position and is adjacent to the waterfront, as such it is visible from close range locations and longer range elevated locations in the surrounding townscape; as well as being visible across the open and expansive waterbodies. However, sensitive massing of introduced built form can respond positively to the existing visual amenity and improve the composition of the available views;
- The Site also lies in the setting and/or direct viewing corridor of a series of well-known landmarks and skylines, including Canary Wharf; the O2 Arena; the Crystal building; and the as yet unbuilt Marco Polo building. However, through a sympathetic layout and massing arrangement of the introduced built form, the views towards these landmarks and skylines could be complemented rather than compromised;
- Existing infrastructure lies within the Site, including the elevated DLR and the Emirates Air Line, while future planned infrastructure including a new DLR station and the Silvertown Tunnel correspond with the Sites' location. However, these elements could be incorporated within the design and layout of the introduced built form; and
- The type of development proposed would likely represent a marked change to the character of the Site and its locality.

# DESIGN RATIONALE

## 9. MITIGATION-BY-DESIGN RATIONALE

### Contribute Positively to Townscape Character and Local Distinctiveness



The layout, massing and overall scale of the introduced built form should draw on the positive examples within the surrounding townscape, responding positively to both the existing and emerging context. The form of the introduced built form should enable a reduction in its perceived massing and bulk through appropriate facade detailing and sympathetic materiality. The design should attempt to create a distinctive sense of place and improve connections and interactions with the surrounding area while introducing high quality architecture into the area.

### Strengthen the Green Infrastructure Network

Retain quality existing trees and introduce new tree planting and ornamental planting as part of a multifunctional green space network as well as to provide visual interest and soften the appearance of the introduced built form. Green infrastructure linkages should be incorporated within the Site, improving its permeability; biodiversity value; and visual amenity interest. A new publicly accessible park should be incorporated within the design.

### Integrate with and Enhance the Blue Ribbon Network

The introduced built form should be set back from the waterway, allowing the built form to more sympathetically integrate with the waterside environment. Access to the waterside environment should be enhanced, incorporating walking, cycling and recreation routes that are overlooked by the introduced built form, thereby providing passive surveillance. Waterside ecology should also be improved. Physical and visual permeability through the Site towards the River should be incorporated in the layout of the development, maintaining and creating new views towards landmarks.