

Wandsworth Local Plan

Supplementary Planning Document

Housing



Adopted November 2016



Housing SPD

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1 Introduction

Introduction

1.1 The Council's planning policies aim to protect and enhance the quality of life and are the basis for promoting and controlling development in the borough. The [Local Plan](#) consists of a series of documents; of particular relevance here are the Core Strategy, the Development Management Policies Document (DMPD) and the Site Specific Allocations Document (SSAD). The Core Strategy sets out the Council's spatial vision, strategic objectives and spatial strategy. The Development Management Policies Document (DMPD) supports the Core Strategy and London Plan and sets out the Council's detailed policies for managing development in the borough. The SSAD sets out the main sites where development or other change is anticipated, or where the Council has particular objectives, as well as details on waste and on tall buildings. The Council is also developing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) as part of its Local Plan and these will be a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications. This Housing SPD supports the policies in the Core Strategy and the DMPD.

Status

1.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), whilst not having development plan status, are intended to expand on policy or provide further details to support Development Plan Documents. SPDs are subject to statutory preparation procedures under Regulations 11-16 of the [Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#). Development proposals should have regard to this document, which will be a material consideration in determining applications in conjunction with the relevant planning policies. The Council's planning policies and where relevant, the London Plan, have been referenced but for a full statement of policy and how it will be applied, the Core Strategy, the DMPD, the SSAD and the [London Plan](#) should be consulted.

Purpose

1.3 The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) advises that SPDs should only be used where they can help applicants make successful planning applications or aid infrastructure delivery and should not be used to add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development." This Housing SPD will not set out any additional policy of procedural requirements; rather it will provide further guidance on existing planning policy as signposted in the adopted Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document. The aim of this Housing SPD is to expand on policy as well as including design-led good practice guidance, pulling together information in one place for common household projects which can involve a number of permissions in addition to planning permission. As such, this SPD should contribute to successful planning application outcomes and improved design and, in taking account of policies and other standards and requirements, should speed up the completion of common householder projects.

1.4 The key objectives of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to ensure that residential development in the Borough achieves the highest possible standards in design taking into account the setting of a building and the wider public realm, and to provide advice on securing planning permission. It also aims to provide specific advice on development involving "heritage assets" - usually for a property located in a conservation area, for a listed or locally listed building - where achieving the best quality design to protect or enhance the historic asset is required.

1.5 This SPD should be used to inform design proposals for residential development prior to the submission of a planning application. The guidance also aims to provide more certainty as to the issues that the Council will consider when determining applications for planning consent and the methods used to make this assessment. It is recommended that applicants use professional services such as registered architects, surveyors or planners, and structural engineers as appropriate, in order to improve the quality of the design and comply with the validation requirements for a planning application and to avoid delay in the procedure.

1.6 The SPD provides information and guidance aimed at householders, residential developers, members of the public including neighbours in receipt of a planning application consultation letter, Council officers and Members.

Policy Context

1.7 At a national level, the NPPF expects good design to be an integral part of the planning process. At the regional level, the London Plan provides specific policy guidance to all London boroughs both in the preparation of local planning policy and to guide development more generally. The following policies provide specific guidance on residential design:

- Policy 3.5 Quality and Design of Housing Developments (points a-d)
- Policy 3.8 Housing Choice
- Policy 7.1 Lifetime Neighbourhoods
- Policy 7.2 An Inclusive Environment (point a)
- Policy 7.3 Designing out Crime (point a)
- Policy 7.4 Local Character (points a-e)
- Policy 7.5 Public Realm (A and B)
- Policy 7.6 Architecture (A, B: points a-i)
- Policy 7.8 Heritage Assets and Archaeology (A-E)
- Policy 7.9 Heritage-led Regeneration (B)

1.8 Following the publication of the London Plan in 2015 and the Minor Alterations to the London Plan -Housing Standards (MALP) in 2016, the Mayor has set out specific guidance to supplement the housing policies within the London Plan in the Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). This is a key document which is reflected in the Wandsworth Local Plan. It is not the purpose of the SPD to repeat it here, but it is highly recommended that this SPD is read in conjunction with the Mayor's Housing SPG, in particular, which provides detailed guidance on the quality and design of neighbourhoods and dwellings. This includes

a comprehensive list of housing-related standards, design and good practice, including for example accessible and adaptable housing and dwelling space standards, circulation and having good quality and sustainable accommodation within the home, and achieve good quality and safe design in accessing the home "from the street to the front door". It is referenced rather than duplicated, in the relevant sections of this document.

Format and scope of the Housing Supplementary Planning Document

1.9 This SPD has been arranged into separate, sub-sections dealing with the most common aspects of residential development:

- Dwelling standards, including development of garden land
- Conversion of shops to housing
- Extensions - including alterations to roofs and loft conversions, and residential basement extensions
- Front gardens and hardstandings for cars

1.10 Implementation of affordable housing in the borough is set out in separate Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations.

List of Relevant Local Plan Policies:

Table 1.1

LOCAL PLAN POLICY	RELEVANT SECTION IN SPD
Core Strategy:	
IS3 Good Quality Design and Townscape IS5h Achieving a Mix of Housing Including Affordable Housing	Dwelling standards
Development Management Policies Document:	
DMS1 General Development Principles	Extensions; Dwelling standards; Conversion of shops to housing; Front gardens and hardstandings for cars
DMS2 Managing the Historic Environment	Extensions; Conversion of shops to housing; Front gardens and hardstandings for cars
DMS5-7 Flood Risk Management; Sustainable Drainage Systems; Consultation with the Environment Agency	Extensions; Front gardens and hardstandings for cars

LOCAL PLAN POLICY	RELEVANT SECTION IN SPD
DMH1 Protection of Housing	Dwelling standards
DMH2 Conversions	Dwelling standards
DMH4 Residential Development Including Conversions	Dwelling standards
DMH5 Alterations and Extensions	Extensions
DMH6 Residential Space Standards	Dwelling standards
DMH7 Residential Gardens and Amenity Space	Dwelling standards
DMTS8 Protection of Pubs and Bars	Conversion of shops to housing

Future Updates

1.11 This SPD will be reviewed on a periodic basis to ensure it remains relevant and up-to-date, particularly when development plan policies are modified. Changes to legislation however, such as permitted development rights or requirements under the Building Regulations may change more frequently. Whilst the Council's policies are unlikely to change throughout the lifetime of this document, the regulations controlling permitted development or the Building Regulations for example, may well change or be updated. The Planning Portal currently provides online information on permitted development, planning and building regulations for a number of common household projects, and it is good idea to check here first. [The Planning Portal](#) also provides advice on submitting planning applications. Changes to policies can be envisaged however as part of the Full Review of the Local Plan, which is due to be adopted in 2019.

2 Dwelling standards

Introduction and purpose

2.1 This section aims to provide an overview of the main standards, relevant policies and an overview of other plans and guidance primarily relating to new build housing development. It covers: general principles, the Mayor's Housing SPG, sustainable design, density, development on residential gardens, amenity space, car and cycle parking. Specific advice relevant to conversions and changes of use to residential is included at the end of this section. It has been prepared to support the policies in the Council's [Local Plan](#) particularly in the Development Management Policies Document (DMPD), and aims to pull together other consents and best practice advice that is required for common projects.

2.2 All planning applications should have regard to the guidance in this SPD which will be a material consideration in determining applications in conjunction with the relevant planning policies. For a full statement of the relevant policies referred to here, the Core Strategy, the DMPD, the [London Plan](#) and the [Mayor's Housing Supplementary Planning Document](#) (SPG) (2016), should be consulted. These documents can be downloaded from the Council's and Mayor's websites. The Planning Portal also provides an overview of issues and consents for common household projects, along with advice on submitting a planning application and on-line application forms. A list of useful links, downloads and contacts is included at the end of this section.

2.3 A wide range of planning policies and standards exist for both new housing and new homes created through conversions. The London Plan also forms part of the development plan for the borough and sets out London-wide policies for housing. The Mayor's Housing SPG includes housing standards with an emphasis on accessibility and quality, incorporating both the national housing standards and providing more detail on relevant London Plan policies. The SPG provides guidance on the implementation of housing policies in the London Plan (2015) and the Minor Alterations to the Plan (MALP) (2016). Part 2 covers housing quality and reflects the implementation of the Government's national technical standards through the MALP. It is therefore an important point of reference. The SPG takes account of the new Mayoral powers, and complements other Mayoral strategies such as the London Housing Strategy. From 1 April 2012, the powers of the Mayor substantially increased to become directly responsible for strategic housing, regeneration and economic development in the capital. The Mayor's Housing SPG is a material consideration when determining planning applications and is intended to inform developers, landowners and others when considering or preparing residential or mixed use schemes.

2.4 Whilst this SPD is not intended to duplicate the Mayor's Housing SPG, at the local level it is still considered necessary to amplify and provide guidance on Wandsworth's Local Plan policies in particular to inform and promote good quality design where development could affect a heritage asset, such as a conservation area, listed building or a locally listed building. House conversions, and other conversions to create new dwellings are a common form of development in the borough and the Wandsworth Housing SPD will provide additional advice and guidance on the local policies, particularly where these are different to London

Plan policies. This SPD aims also to promote good practice and other relevant information such as the approach to Sustainable design including energy conservation and flood risk. It is also considered useful to include practical guidance on the application of, and calculation of density in this SPD.

2.5 In nearly all cases where building work goes ahead, Building Regulations approval will be required for your work. Your deeds may contain restrictive covenants, and other consents such as party wall consents may be required.

2.6 A list of further reading, advice and contacts is provided at the end of this section.

Status of this section

2.7 To avoid any confusion, the Council's adopted Local Plan policies set out how planning applications will be determined and take account of the London Plan, with which they are in general conformity. The Mayor's Housing SPG should be referred to in all schemes as it sets out the detailed standards as well as best practice guidance, and where your proposal involves a heritage asset - eg a listed building, is locally listed or is located in a conservation area. All developments should demonstrate that they have had regard to the relevant policies and guidance.

Checklist of key permissions, requirements and standards that may be applicable to conversions and new build dwellings:

- Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent, Permission for works to trees
- Building Regulations approval/Notifiable work
- [Party Wall etc. Act 1996](#)
- Wandsworth Local Plan: Core Strategy and the Development Management Policies Document (DMPD) - in particular Core Strategy Policies IS1-5; DMPD: DMS1-7; DMH1-9 (housing policies)
- The London Plan -2016 : policies including housing choice and quality, density
- The Mayor's Housing SPG: design, sustainability, living space standards, accessible and requirements for 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' and for 'wheelchair user dwellings'.

Checklist of key permissions, requirements and standards that may be applicable to conversions and new build dwellings - /continued

Policy Context:

- Wandsworth Housing SPD: local policies, standards, conversions, density calculations and local advice (i.e. Conservation Area Appraisals)
- Town Centre Uses SPD: alterations, conversions and uses in connection with public houses
- Historic Environment SPD: heritage assets, alterations, conversions, extensions, design
- Transport for London (TfL): [Cycle Design Standards](#) (2014)

General principles

2.8 All residential developments should to be designed and built to create high quality homes and contribute to a good quality environment. The Mayor's Housing SPG sets out standards and good practice in more detail, including consideration of the entrance and approach to dwellings. In summary, each dwelling should have its own secure private entrance which leads either directly from the street or off a common entrance hall and the number of entrances off one corridor should be limited to eight per floor, subject to dwelling size mix. Layout and function should be considered carefully. There should usually be a permanent partition between eating and sleeping areas. Kitchens and living rooms that are permanently separated are preferable. However, combined kitchen and living areas are considered acceptable as long as the floor area is sufficient to allow for the greater range of activities that will take place in them. All rooms should be able to function for the purpose for which they are intended. They should have an adequate size, shape, door arrangement, height, insulation for noise and vibration and natural lighting and ventilation. They should lead off a hallway or lobby so that it is possible to access any habitable room without passing through another habitable room. You should also check with the current Building Regulations in particular in respect of conversions to residential use, on noise transmission and fire safety. Flexible construction and layout is also important: dwellings should be designed to enable greater flexibility in construction design so that they can be capable of some form of extension or adaptation to accommodate changing lifestyles and family needs. Core Strategy Policy IS5h requires that 90% of new housing meet the Building Regulation requirement M4(2) - 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' - and the remaining 10% must meet the Building Regulation requirement M4(3) - 'wheelchair user dwellings' in accordance with the standards set out in the London Plan and the Mayor's Housing SPG. Consideration on how this can be

best achieved is set out in the Mayor's Housing SPG regarding securing accessible and adaptable dwellings. The Council will require developers to discuss the specification and design of any wheelchair units and the host building to ensure that these meet potential users needs.

2.9 It is important to ensure that dwellings are capable of providing a suitable layout and adequate room sizes that reflect the use and type of accommodation. The London Plan sets out detailed policies on housing quality including minimum space standards reflecting the new national standards to ensure rooms are large enough to take on varying uses relating to the occupancy of a home rather than number of bedrooms. You should also refer to the Mayor's Housing SPG which sets out a comprehensive range of design and accommodation standards, requirements and best practice guidance. It is important to note that the standards are based on the number of persons a unit is designed to be occupied by rather than by number of bedrooms, and varies depending on whether the dwelling is a 1 storey, 2 storey or 3 storey dwelling. As such, applicants should make clear on the plans/application form/Design and Access statement the number of occupants each dwelling has been designed to accommodate.

The Mayor's Housing SPG

2.10 Proposals involving the creation of new dwellings either by new build or through conversion should refer to the Mayor's Housing SPG which provides comprehensive guidance and best practice, including arrival at the building as well as the specific design of the accommodation. It aims to ensure that housing developments are of highest quality both internally and externally, in their context within the wider environment, and have the flexibility to meet people's needs at different stages of their life. Many of the standards it contains are already referred to in the London Plan. Application of these standards should be demonstrated in the [Design and Access Statements](#) accompanying a planning application. Requirements for 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' and for 'wheelchair user dwellings' are considered in paragraph 2.8 above.

2.11 As the Mayor's SPG is widely available including online, and may be subject to change within the lifetime of this SPD, it is not intended to repeat the contents here, apart from the dwelling space standards which are also embedded in London Plan Policy, are commonly referred to and are referenced in the Council's DMPD Policy DMH6.

Minimum Space Standards for new Dwellings (includes new build, conversion and change of use)

Dwelling type: ONE STOREY DWELLINGS	Essential GIA (sq ms)	Dwelling type: TWO STOREY HOUSES	Essential GIA (sq ms)	Dwelling type: THREE STOREY HOUSES	Essential GIA (sq ms)	Built in Storage (sq ms)
1p	39 (37*)	1p	n/a	1p	n/a	1.0
1p2b	50	1p2b	58	1p2b	n/a	1.5
2b3p	61	2b3p	70	2b3p	n/a	2.0
2b4p	70	2b4p	79	2b4p	n/a	
3b4p	74	3b4p	84	3b4p	90	2.5
3b5p	86	3b5p	93	3b5p	99	
3b6p	95	3b6p	102	3b6p	108	
4b5p	90	4b5p	97	4b5p	103	3.0
4b6p	99	4b6p	106	4b6p	112	
4b7p	108	4b7p	115	4b7p	121	
4b8p	117	4b8p	124	4b8p	130	
5b6p	103	5b6p	110	5b6p	116	3.5
5b7p	112	5b7p	119	5b7p	125	
5b8p	121	5b8p	128	5b8p	134	
6b7p	116	6b7p	123	6b7p	129	4.0
<i>Where GIA is Gross Internal Area</i>						

Source: MALP March 2016

b=bedroom, p=persons-bedspaces

- * Where a one person dwelling has a shower room instead of a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39m² to 37m², as shown bracketed.
- The Gross Internal Area of a dwelling is defined as the total floor space measured between the internal faces of perimeter walls that enclose a dwelling. This includes partitions, structural elements, cupboards, ducts, flights of stairs and voids above stairs. GIA should be measured and denoted in square metres (sq ms).
- The nationally described space standard sets a minimum ceiling height of 2.3 meters for at least 75% of the gross internal area of the dwelling. To address the unique heat island effect of London and the distinct density and flatted nature of most of its residential development, a minimum ceiling height of 2.5m for at least 75% of the gross internal area is strongly encouraged so that new housing is of adequate quality, especially in terms of light, ventilation and sense of space.

2.12 In summary, the remaining standards in the SPG cover enhancement of the wider environment, 'arrival' at the building, place shaping and the design process, layout and minimum living space standards, outdoor spaces including communal spaces, appropriate play provision, designing out crime and optimising density.

2.13 Detailed standards and advice on achieving the optimal design is provided on the following topics:

Dwellings:

- From street to front door
- Shared circulation
- Accessible and adaptable dwellings and 'wheelchair user dwellings (see paragraph 2.8 above)
- Parking, cycle parking and storage of cycles
- Refuse and recycling facilities
- Internal floor area-sets out minimum sizes based on number of storeys and number of occupants
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Circulation space within a dwelling
- Living rooms, dining rooms and kitchens
- Bathrooms and WCs
- Storage and utility space
- Study and work
- Needs of wheelchair users
- Private open space
- Privacy
- Dual aspect
- Floor to ceiling heights (roof extensions and loft conversions)
- Daylight and sunlight
- Air quality

The design process:

- Aims to achieve a positive outcome against a set of design standards.

2.14 Many of these themes are covered by policies in the Wandsworth Local Plan in particular the DMPD which sets out policies on design principles, sustainable design and housing.

Sustainability, climate change mitigation and adaptations

2.15 The Mayor's Housing SPG covers these matters in much detail amplifying London Plan chapter 5 which should be referred to, and in particular Policy 5.2 (Sustainable Design and Construction). As the Council's approach is in line with the London Plan it is highly recommended that reference is made and guidance incorporated into the design process of your proposal. It is expected that the highest standards of sustainable design to improve the environmental performance of new development and make the fullest contribution to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change including by: minimising overheating; reducing flood risk; improving water efficiency; and protecting and enhancing green infrastructure as well as taking steps to minimise carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions. Guidance on the following main topics is included in the Mayor's Housing SPG:

- Environmental performance
- Energy and CO₂ - development proposals should be designed in accordance with the London Plan energy hierarchy, and meet minimum targets for carbon dioxide emissions reduction
- Energy hierarchy: The hierarchy consists of the following steps: Step 1. Be lean: use less energy; Step 2. Be clean: supply energy efficiently; and Step 3. Be green: use renewable energy

2.16 The Council is committed to sustainable design and construction principles as well as mitigation of the impacts of, and adaptation to climate change. The Council's approach in line with the London Plan and it is recommended that you refer to the Council's Local Plan Policies (Core Strategy Policy IS2 and DMPD Policy DMS3) and supporting text, the Mayor's Housing SPG and the [London Plan Sustainable Design and Construction SPG](#).

2.17 It is the aim of the Council to work with developers to achieve high standards of sustainable design and construction and you are advised to refer to the Local Planning Application Requirements checklists (LPAAR) and/or contact the Council for pre-application advice to assist in demonstrating how this has been incorporated into your proposal. It is important that principles of sustainable design and construction are considered from the outset of a development project, in order that they help shape the proposal. This is especially important when dealing with heritage assets (listed and locally listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas) and it is advisable to engage a specialist consultant dealing with retro-fitting historic buildings at the outset to inform the approach. See also the section on 'Retro-fitting historic buildings' in the Council's [Historic Environment SPD](#).

Flood risk and run-off

2.18 Flood Zones within the borough are shown on the Local Plan [Policies Map](#) and are updated by the [Environment Agency](#). You should check with the Environment Agency for detailed site-specific information, for details of any flood risk assessment, for mitigation

measures that may be required and for information on sustainable drainage systems. The London Plan and the Mayor's Housing SPG provide further detail on climate change and good practice. Section 4 regarding basement extensions provides more detail on flood risk, including Local Plan Policies (Core strategy PL2, DMPD DMS5-7) relating to flood risk management and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

Density

2.19 The London Plan sets out a Sustainable residential quality (SRQ) density matrix with the intention of optimising housing output (Table 3.2, of the London Plan) which shows appropriate density ranges in terms of location, existing building form and massing, and the public transport accessibility level (PTAL). This provides a framework for optimising housing potential, but as it is relatively coarse grained, the London Plan suggests that this can be refined to set out local approaches to implementation. The matrix is taken forward locally in Wandsworth's adopted Core Strategy and Site Specific Allocations Document which relate scale and density to the character of an area. The Mayor's Housing SPG should be referred to as this explains how densities should be calculated (including in mixed use schemes) and the specific considerations to be taken into account such as local character. Reference to the Mayor's [Character and Context SPG 2014](#) is recommended to assist, along with consideration of the relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisal if your property is located in a conservation area.

2.20 Housing development should relate satisfactorily to its surroundings and the character of the area, and meet the Council's policies on design, space and amenity. Whilst density will be taken into account in any development proposal, other site-specific factors such as the acceptability of the layout, access/egress, outlook and design will also be material considerations, particularly on small sites, in mixed developments, conversions and extensions. Proposals are treated flexibly, taking into account the individual circumstances of each case. Local context, design and general building form considerations, the type of accommodation being provided, provision of underground parking and alternative amenity provision, the character of the area, and achieving a viable mixed development, are all factors that can help to make such proposals acceptable. Similarly the considerations that are appropriate for change of use proposals (e.g. former school buildings or offices) can be different from those applying to development proposals within or adjacent to established residential areas. Updated public transport accessibility level ([PTAL](#)) information can be viewed online via Transport for London's (TfL) interactive map. The borough's [Conservation Area Appraisals](#) can be useful in providing a commentary on the local context of these areas. Practical guidance is now set available on calculating density in the London Plan and Mayor's Housing SPG, however it is considered helpful to set out here an example calculation.

Residential and Mixed Use Density Calculation

1. Net residential density is calculated using only the net residential developable area. The net residential developable area relates to only those parts of the site (or part of) which will be developed for housing and directly associated uses, including access roads within the site, private garden space, car parking areas, incidental open space and landscaping and children's play areas, where these are provided.
2. For mixed-use schemes the net residential density is based on the proportion of the net developable area attributed to the residential components of the scheme. The net residential density is calculated by applying the proportion of residential and non-residential floorspace to the net developable area. Where a component of the net developable area relates to the residential use only, this land needs to be excluded from the first part of the calculation then added back after the non-residential area has been removed. This will provide a true reflection of the net residential area.

The net developable area should take account of:

- The area of land directly occupied and associated with the enjoyment of the houses or flats, including
Access roads within the site (or part of),
Car parking areas,
Private open space and gardens,
Incidental open space and landscaping,
Children's play areas,

For the avoidance of doubt, in calculating the area the following is not to be included in the net residential developable area:

- Major distributor roads,
Land given away for educational or community purposes,
Significant landscape buffer strips,
Large areas of public open space (for sites in Nine Elms two densities should be calculated - one including and one excluding the Linear Park).

3. Example calculation:

The example site is based on a large mixed-use development with a site area of 2 ha. The proposal is for 475 dwellings providing circa 1,350 habitable rooms within 65,000 sq ms of C3 floorspace. The scheme also includes 30,000 sq ms commercial/retail uses, 0.15 ha of private open space, a 0.05 ha section of major adopted public highway and 0.25 ha of public open space.

Stage 1: Calculate the net developable area by identifying the parts of the site need to be included or excluded from the total site area based on the criteria above:

Table 2.1

Major public highway	0.05	x
Private open space	0.15	✓
Public open space	0.25	x
Circulation space/incidental open space/parking	0.85	✓
Buildings	0.70	✓

Site Area: 2.00 ha

Area to exclude:

Public open space = 0.25 ha
 Major distributor road = 0.5 ha

Net developable area = 2.00 ha - 0.30 ha = **1.70 ha**

Stage 2: Remove any components of the scheme that relate completely to either the residential or commercial component (for example gardens or parking). The residential land will be added back in stage four to calculate the final net residential area.

Table 2.2

Private open space (residential gardens)	0.15	x
Circulation space/incidental open space/parking	0.85	✓
Buildings	0.70	✓

Mixed-use area = 1.70 ha - 0.15 ha = **1.55 ha**

Stage 3: Calculate the net residential area by applying the proportion of the residential and non-residential floorspace to the mixed-use area:

Residential component
 of mixed use area = $\frac{\text{Residential floorspace (65,000 sq ms)}}{\text{Total floorspace (95,000 sq ms)}} \times 1.55 = \mathbf{1.06}$

Stage 4: Prior to calculating the total net residential area any part of the site relating purely to the residential component removed during stage 2 needs to be added back to the net residential area.

$$\text{Net residential area} = \frac{\text{Residential component of mixed-use} + \text{pure residential land}}{1.06 + 0.15} = \mathbf{1.21}$$

Stage 5: The net residential density is calculated by dividing the number of units (or habitable rooms) by the net residential area:

$$\frac{475}{1.21} = 393 \text{ u/ha}$$

$$\text{OR } \frac{1,350}{1.21} = 1,116 \text{ hr/ha}$$

*where u - units hr = habitable rooms ha = hectares
The definition of residential floorspace is Gross Internal Area (GIA)*

Design

2.21 The NPPF sets out in paragraphs 56-68 that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is key element of sustainable design. The Government has also published [National Planning Practice Guidance](#) setting out six key elements of design that provide more detailed guidance about what good design can achieve and how it can be delivered.

2.22 The guidance goes on to set out some of the characteristics that contribute to well-designed places. The NPPF points out (paragraph 62) that Local planning authorities should have local design review arrangements in place to provide assessment and support to ensure high standards of design. Wandsworth set up a [Design Review Panel](#) in 2012 and details of how the Panel operates, who the panel members are, and its Terms of Reference are set out on the Council's website.

2.23 The Panel deals mainly with large development sites at the pre-application stage with the design review being included in the Planning Performance Agreement (PPA). The criteria that trigger a design review are essentially:

- Over 50 residential units.
- Over 5000 sq ms of floorspace for commercial development.
- Significant public realm schemes.

2.24 For major sites the Council is seeking excellence in urban design in terms of the integration with adjacent areas and streets, characterisation, form and layout. Proposals should also be exemplary in architectural design particularly where proposals involve tall buildings. For proposals for housing in conservation areas, altering, extending and adapting historic buildings (listed buildings and locally listed buildings) applicants are advised to consult the Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and refer to section 4 of this SPD covering residential extensions. You are also recommended to refer to [Historic England's Guidance](#), the London Plan and the Mayor's Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (paragraph 1.4 above) which are also important in informing appropriate design. The Council's criteria set out in DMPD Policies DMS4 and DMS2 will need to be satisfied.

2.25 The Council also expects a positive assessment against the [Building for Life 12 \(BfL12\)](#) national standard which comprises 12 questions, aiming to achieve the maximum number of "greens", minimise the number of "ambers" and avoid "reds".

Development on residential gardens

2.26 The London Plan (Policy 3.5), which forms part of the development plan of the borough, and the Mayor's Housing SPG support the presumption against development on residential gardens where "locally justified". Paragraph 3.22 of the Development Management Policies Document (DMPD) sets out why developments on residential gardens in Wandsworth can have a negative impact and states: "The development of back gardens is therefore generally regarded as an inappropriate form of development in the borough".

2.27 The Mayor's Housing SPG, provides more detail and defines private garden land as "the enclosed area within a dwelling curtilage from which the public is excluded". It sets out a number of important roles of garden space including the contribution to local character, secure spaces for play, biodiversity flood risk and mitigating the effects of climate change, reflecting the roles identified in the Council's DMPD.

2.28 It is considered that there is no local justification that can be made for the development of residential gardens in the borough. It has been demonstrated with the adoption of the DMPD, that its housing targets can be met without relying on garden land. Wandsworth is a highly built-up urban area where the contribution of gardens make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the borough, particularly in conservation areas. It is therefore not an appropriate form of development in Wandsworth, for the reasons given in the Mayor's Housing SPG and in the DMPD paragraph 3.22.

2.29 The enclosed area within a dwelling curtilage from which the public is excluded, will be determined as the area within the dwelling's curtilage as at 8 February 2012, the date the first DMPD was adopted. This definition includes land to the rear and side of the property. Any areas of garden which were divided or fenced off, or sold after that date, will be deemed to be still part of the curtilage of the dwelling. Any areas of garden that were divided off or fenced off before that date will still be subject to assessment against all the Council's normal policies if a planning application subsequently comes forward for development.

Amenity space

2.30 The nature and scale of amenity space should be appropriate to the location of the development and the character of the area within which it is situated. Please note that whilst the private outdoor amenity space standards set out in the Mayor's Housing SPG are a material consideration, Wandsworth has set out borough-level standards in the adopted Local Plan, which takes precedence over the Mayor's Housing SPG. DMPD Policy DMH7 sets out a minimum requirement of 15 sq ms of space per family sized dwelling (3+ bedrooms and 74 sq ms or more) and 10 sq ms for non-family accommodation, including live/work schemes. In taking account of usable space, access ways, service and parking areas, and any front gardens or other incidental or awkwardly shaped spaces are not counted in the calculation. Generally, this level of provision will also apply to change of use except in the case of small schemes such as in conversion of a former commercial building to housing, where this is not practicable and an otherwise satisfactory standard of amenity can be achieved. Suitably-sized balconies, terraces and roof gardens may be provided as an appropriate form of amenity space in compliance with DMS1. Where the development includes non-family accommodation, the provision of other amenities, such as indoor leisure facilities for use by residents, may be appropriate to meet the requirements of DMH7. The proximity of public parks, riverside walks and other public open spaces may contribute to the setting of a development, particularly for family accommodation, but are not substitutes for private amenity space, and as such cannot be considered as part of the calculation of amenity space to be provided. A higher level or provision may be required in areas of the borough where the local character includes areas of housing with relatively large front and rear gardens, in order to fit in with the local context. Commentary contained in any relevant Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Strategies may be helpful in assessing the local context. Points to consider:

- Balconies may require adequate screening to protect privacy and avoid noise and disturbance to neighbours, taking into account the position of neighbouring windows and use of habitable rooms. They should be designed sympathetically taking account of the impact on the character of the area.
- Balconies should avoid significant overhanging of accommodation on lower floors.
- Screening between private and communal areas will be required and should avoid disturbance or overlooking of neighbours.
- Soft landscaping can contribute to biodiversity, reduce the effects of urban heating, and can reduce the risk of flooding through run-off. For larger schemes a landscaping management plan should be submitted. In all cases the design should demonstrate that these issues have been addressed.
- A pro-rata calculation on communal amenity space in addition to any private balcony (i.e. combined amenity space provision) will be taken so long as balconies are large enough to be usable amenity space, i.e. to sit out on.
- Creative solutions are encouraged, for example roof gardens and winter gardens. In developments of non-family housing, private gyms may be an acceptable solution.

- External staircases leading from upper floor flats to gardens may cause disturbance or loss of privacy to occupiers of lower flat and will need to be carefully designed if there are no other design solutions.
- Further advice is contained elsewhere in this SPD: section 4 - Extensions, and section 5 - Front Gardens and Hardstandings for Cars; and in the Mayor's SPG on [Play and Informal Recreation](#) (or any subsequent amendment) for schemes where play provision would be required in addition to private amenity space.

Car and cycle parking

2.31 DMPD Policy DMT2 sets out criteria on parking provision, and the full standards for both new build and converted dwellings are listed in Appendix 1 of the DMPD as maximum standards. Table T3 in Appendix 1 also lists the relevant considerations as to these standards would be applied on a site-specific basis. Provision for cycle parking is often overlooked and can create problems for future residents if these are stored in communal hallways or on balconies. Minimum cycle parking standards are set out in Table 6.3 in the London Plan. Transport for London (TFL) has published [Cycle Design Standards](#) (2014) which includes information on secure cycle storage and should also be taken into account. Points to consider:

- In new developments and proposals involving changes of use a maximum of one off-street parking space for each dwelling should be provided. Additional provision of one space per 5 dwellings should be provided as visitors' spaces. A higher proportion may be appropriate for larger properties (4 bedrooms or more), but should not exceed more than 1.5 spaces per dwelling in any development. Lower levels of provision, including car-free housing (without any off-street parking) may be justified in areas well served by public transport, particularly for non-family accommodation, live/work accommodation, dual/interchangeable business/housing use and housing for special needs. It may also be acceptable in situations where provision is impracticable without prejudicing other policies in the Plan.
- The size and layout of each parking space or garage should be adequate to enable a car to be parked safely and conveniently. Parking bays should be 4.8 metres long by 2.4 metres wide, with a 6 metre aisle for access and manoeuvring. Parking spaces for people with disabilities should meet the standards set out in BS 8300-2009 which includes dimensions and detailed specifications such as gradients and use of materials. Any shared parking areas must be close to the dwellings they serve and properly designed and laid out to create a safe and secure environment for pedestrians and cyclists, whilst not dominating the development. Parking spaces should not immediately abut windows of living accommodation. There should be an adequate physical separation to minimise the effects of car fumes, noise and disturbance and pollution on living accommodation.
- Car parking should not become a dominant feature of a development. Where new developments include new roads, the contribution that on-street parking spaces can make to provision will also be taken into account.

- Vehicle access routes should be a minimum of 6 metres unobstructed width to provide adequate vehicle manoeuvring space. Vehicle access to refuse storage areas will need to allow refuse collections to an individual domestic bin.
- The provision of electric vehicle charging points.
- The provision of cycle storage/parking should be considered at the outset.
- Further advice is contained in Section 5 on Front gardens and Hardstandings for Cars, and TfL's standards in The London Cycling Design Standards (2005).

Conversions and Change of Use

2.32 In addition to the above design and quality principles, there are additional considerations for conversions and changes of use to form new dwellings. This includes conversion of commercial properties. Standards and good practice advice in the Mayor's Housing SPG will also be relevant to conversions.

- **Stacking:** As far as possible, rooms in similar use should be placed vertically above one another and side by side. Internal bathrooms must have some form of internal mechanical ventilation. The arrangement of rooms and sound insulation is particularly important in conversions as there is less flexibility in how each room could be occupied, i.e. place a living room above living room and bedrooms above bedrooms. Where possible, bedrooms should not be placed above, below or next to potentially noisy rooms, circulation areas of adjacent dwellings or noisy equipment, such as lifts.
- **Layout:** The layout of adjacent dwellings and the location of lifts, plant rooms and circulation spaces should seek to limit the transmission of noise to sound sensitive rooms within dwellings. Party walls and floors of flats created by conversion must be adequately soundproofed.
- **Soundproofing:** All housing should be built with acoustic insulation and tested to current Building Regulations standards, but acoustic insulation should not be relied upon as the only means of limiting noise. Minimum levels of soundproofing are set out in the Building Regulations (currently Part E - Resistance to the passage of sound). Levels of sound insulation above the minimum are encouraged. Part B (fire safety) is also relevant to and will affect layout.
- **Refuse:** The position of refuse and recycling facilities should be considered at the outset.

2.33 In conversions of non-residential buildings, achieving a good standard of accommodation is particularly important as environmental quality is more likely to be compromised, for example by offering no potential for outside amenity space or limited outlook.

Visual privacy, outlook and amenity space:

2.34 Visual privacy, outlook and amenity space are important to the overall quality and "livability" of homes and are particularly relevant to dwellings created from conversions, where an original house or a commercial property would be occupied at a higher intensity, i.e. accommodate additional households. Points to consider:

- Refer to DMPD Policy DMS1 and Policy DMH7 (amenity space standards). Please see paragraph 2.28 above regarding the status of Mayor's private amenity space standards.
- Visual privacy and personal security must be safeguarded and undue overlooking of ground floor accommodation or neighbouring properties from extensions, roof terraces or external staircases avoided. Screening, sensitive design or planting schemes will be sought where appropriate.
- Note that this can be trickier to achieve in a conversion, i.e. use of external stairs/ shared garden may be possible, subject to the impact on neighbours' amenity.
- The outlook from converted dwellings should be kept as open as possible and improved where appropriate by simple landscaping.
- All habitable rooms should offer a good outlook including those created through extensions and conversions, including bedrooms (as there is no control over how each room will be used).
- Shared use of existing large gardens will be acceptable provided that visual privacy is protected.
- In communal or shared gardens, suitable screening of the ground floor flats must be provided.
- The impact of rear extensions must be carefully considered. Refer to DMPD Policy DMH5.

Car and cycle parking requirements

2.35 DMPD Policy DMT2 sets out criteria on parking provision, and the full standards for both new build and converted dwellings are listed in Appendix 1 of the DMPD as maximum standards. The table also lists the relevant considerations applying to appropriate levels of parking in conversion schemes, to be provided up to the maximum level.

3 Conversion of shops and public houses to residential use

Introduction

3.1 The aim of this section is to set out design guidance and to explain the Council's planning policies on the conversion of shops and pubs into residential accommodation and help applicants meet the required design standards. The definition of shops in this context includes premises originally built as shops but subsequently occupied by other uses, such as offices or cafes.

3.2 Shop premises are spread across the borough. The Town Centres and Local Centres are linked by a network of roads, many of which are lined with shops. Shopping parades and corner shops are also scattered throughout residential areas. Changing shopping patterns mean that in some locations there is falling demand for shop premises. Wandsworth is however, an increasingly popular residential area and consequently there is a demand to convert shops into flats or houses. To balance these conflicting interests the Council protects the Core and Secondary Shopping frontages in town and local centres, and the Important Local Parades from changes of use. Where change of use is acceptable or does not require planning permission for the change of use, the conversion of shops into residential units nevertheless requires careful thought and a considered approach if the change is not to damage the appearance of the property concerned or that of neighbouring properties.

3.3 The principles set out in these guidelines also apply to the conversion of pubs. These tend to be prominent buildings, often on street corner sites and originally designed to stand out from surrounding development. It is particularly important to retain ground floor exterior features which contribute to the character of such buildings.

3.4 This chapter is set out to provide guidance on the following:

- Planning Policies, permitted development and Article 4 directions.
- Protected pubs.
- Design guidance - shopfronts, maintaining privacy, windows and doors, access to upper floors, wall treatments, corner shops, forecourts.
- Other standards and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Planning policies, permitted development and Article 4 Directions

3.5 Planning permission may be required to change a shop (A1 use) to residential use depending on its location. In order to maintain sufficient shopping facilities, Policies DMTS 3-6 in the Council's [Development Management Policies Document](#) (DMPD) protect identified shopping frontages in the Town and Local Centres and Important Local Parades for shopping and related town centre uses only. Residential uses are not permitted on the ground floor frontages. Outside of these locations, proposals for a change of use will be assessed against criteria in Policy DMTS7 which takes into account local shopping deficiencies, proximity of

alternative shopping facilities catering for day-to-day needs, and which may require evidence of marketing of the site for continued retail use. If the change of use is acceptable in principle, then applicants will need to demonstrate that the property and its environment would provide adequate living standards, taking into account the criteria in Policies DMS1, DMH4, DMH6-7 and section 2 of this SPD. Residential use will only be appropriate where a satisfactory level of amenity can be assured. Design, amenity and privacy considerations are important, including where practicable by the provision of an enclosed front garden/forecourt. Recent changes to [Permitted Development](#) rights have meant that fewer types of development now require planning permission. This includes change of use away from shops and related town centre uses to residential use and other uses such as schools. At the same time, the Government acknowledges that sufficient shopping facilities must be maintained to serve the needs of the local population and therefore permitted development rights do not apply to identified key shopping parades. In Wandsworth these have been defined as the Protected Frontages and the Important Local Parades (as listed in the DMPD and shown on the Policies Map). Where planning permission is required, the Council also protects changes of use of public houses and bars with historic or community value from demolition and/or change of use by application of DMPD Policy DMTS8. Further guidance is provided in the [Town Centre Uses SPD](#). The Council is also putting in place an Article 4 direction to ensure that proposals affecting public houses and bars are subject to planning permission. Further guidance on protection of pubs is provided later on in this chapter. Permitted development rules are subject to change and it is recommended you check on the [Planning Portal](#) along with any Article 4 directions that may be in place in Wandsworth, which will appear on the [Wandsworth Council website](#).

3.6 The Council is introducing stronger protection to a number of public houses and bars in the borough in the form of [Article 4 directions](#), to be supported by Policy DMTS8 in the adoption version of the Development Management Policies Document ([DMPD](#) - March 2016). This has been in response to the increased pressure of development experienced by this type of building and the removal by the Government of the requirement for planning permission for a change of use between A3/A4 (pubs and bars) and A1 (retail) uses. This policy has important implications for all conversions or alterations of public houses and bars.

3.7 In general terms this means enhanced protection against demolition, change of use and painting of elevations for 119 public houses and bars in the borough which have been identified by the Council for their architectural or historic interest and/or for their importance as community resources. The definition of community resources includes the use of public houses and bars as venues for meetings, events, entertainment and similar functions. There is therefore a presumption in favour of retention of public houses and bars and their existing A3/A4 uses. Any proposed alterations, demolition or change of use is now subject to planning permission and must be fully justified against the presumption in favour of retention outlined in the policy. This is set out in further detail in the [Town Centre Uses SPD](#) in the section dealing with public houses and bars and sets out the methodology of approach which led to Policy DMTS8 and the Article 4 direction.

3.8 In addition, 50 public houses have been identified as being of local architectural or historic interest and have been included on the Council's [Local List](#). These are in addition to those public houses already included on the Local List and those protected as part of the (national) [Statutory List](#) of buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, as curated by Historic England. More information and guidance can be found on the Historic England [Website](#). Listed buildings will continue to require listed building consent for alterations or demolition but under the changes brought in by the Article 4 directions will now also require planning permission for change of use.

3.9 Although not carrying any additional legal weight in planning law, locally listed buildings have been identified by the Council as undesignated heritage assets and are now subject to Policy DMS2 (Managing the Historic Environment). There is a presumption against demolition, alteration and change of use now supported by the Article 4 direction. Many of these buildings are additionally located in conservation areas.

3.10 A large part of the historic and architectural importance of public houses is due to their use and the character which this use imparts to the building itself, the surrounding street scene and the wider local area, therefore a presumption exists against the conversion of public houses and bars to residential dwellings in Council policy.

3.11 There are a number of public houses and bars that are not protected by the Article 4 direction. In general conversion of public houses to residential use, if permitted should follow the guidelines on the conversion of shops in the preceding sections. Public houses tend to be prominent buildings, often on street corner sites and originally designed to stand out from surrounding development. It is particularly important to retain ground floor exterior features and frontages which contribute to the character of such buildings. A design-led approach to conversion will be expected. This includes the removal of existing inappropriate features and alterations, such as UPVC windows or painted elevations.

3.12 This document must be read in conjunction with relevant policies in the Council's adopted [Core Strategy](#), DMPD, updated guidance on residential quality standards contained in other sections of this document and in the [Mayor for London's Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance \(SPG\)](#). The advice contained within this document relates only to the external aspects of any conversion scheme.

3.13 If the building is considered to be a heritage asset, consideration will be given to the conservation or enhancement of the building and the features that are of significance. This may include the shopfront itself, particularly if it represents a historic period of design that is of value in the borough. If it is in a conservation area, historic shopfronts are normally indicated in the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal, but there will be others that are undesignated but which are nonetheless important. Any shopfront in a building that is listed or locally listed is likely to be of significance. Where conversion of a shop or any other building incorporating a shopfront is acceptable in principle, there may be a requirement to carry out other enhancements.

3.14 If the property is within a conservation area, you can also refer to the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy. If the building is listed, [Listed Building Consent](#) will be required as well as planning permission.

Questions to ask

3.15 You can check if a shop is in a location where a residential conversion would be appropriate by referring to the list of Protected Frontages and Important Local Parades in the Town Centres and Shopping chapter of the DMPD or viewing the Policies Map. The Housing chapter also contains policies on dwelling size, floorspace, amenity space, outlook and daylight that apply to residential accommodation generally. In addition to the standards set out in section 2 of this SPD, the Mayor's Housing SPG sets out comprehensive dwelling standards and good practice. These policies and standards will be a particularly important consideration if you are planning a new ground floor flat separate from the accommodation above. If a conversion is acceptable in principle, design of the new accommodation should start with a careful study of the exterior of the property in relation to its surroundings:

- Is it part of a terrace or parade of shops?
- Is it adjacent to shops that are still in use?
- Was the property built as a house that was subsequently converted or was the shop an original part of the building?
- Will the converted shop form a separate unit or will it be part of a larger dwelling including the upper floor(s) of the property?
- Is the building a [heritage asset](#) (these include, but are not limited to: listed buildings, locally listed buildings, buildings in conservation areas and archaeological priority areas)?
- Is the shopfront a well designed example of a particular period?
- What features should be kept?
- How would the new windows complement the windows in the upper storeys?
- What features does the building or terrace have that could be used in the design of the new frontage?
- Are there improvements such as removing paint or pebbledash that could be made simultaneously?

3.16 It is essential to consider the overall appearance of the property and the impact of any changes on the exterior of the property as a whole as well as on neighbouring properties. The works to the former shopfront should not be seen in isolation as this is likely to result in an unsatisfactory design as in the picture below. The [Shopfront SPG](#) and [shutter guidance](#) alongside specific design guidance in this section will help you to achieve a successful scheme.

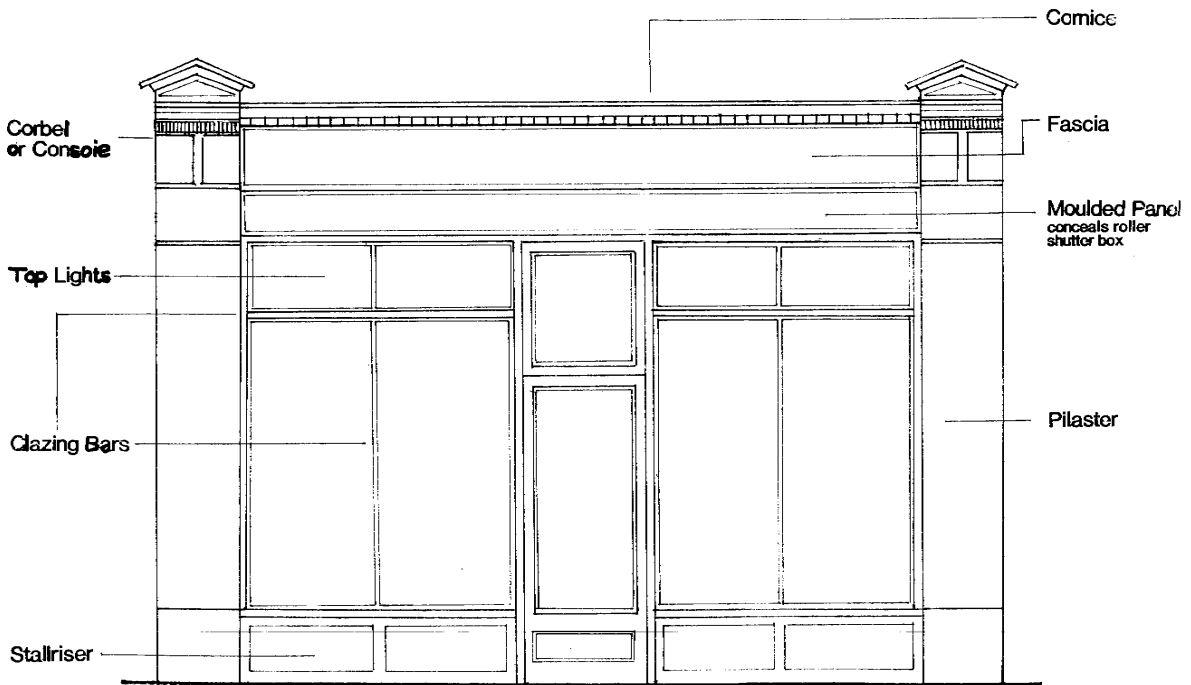
DESIGN GUIDANCE

Original shopfront features: corbels, pilasters and fascia signs

3.17 Shop buildings in Wandsworth date largely from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many incorporate decorative features which are an interesting part of the architectural heritage of the borough. Vertical divisions between adjoining shop units are marked by pilasters, sometimes tiled or faced with granite. On older parades there are projecting corbels at the top of the pilasters. The corbels separate the fascia signs of adjoining shops and are often one of the most distinctive features of older shopfronts. Fascia signs running along the top of the shopfront with the name of the shop, divide the ground and first floors. The top edge of nineteenth and earlier twentieth century fascia signs is often marked by a decorative cornice and/or the housing for a retractable canopy blind.

3.18 Pilasters, corbels and fascia signs together make up the visual “frame” of the shopfront. This frame is often part of the original building and may be much older than the shopfront which it surrounds. In many cases, it will be desirable to retain these essential elements of the frame in a conversion scheme; building new walls and windows within it. This is particularly the case if the former shop is part of a parade of shops which retain their corbels and pilasters. This is an opportune time for the safety of these features be checked, for example the corbels and the fascia, which may also conceal a structural beam supporting the floor above.

Typical Shopfront and Surround



3.19 The removal of the fascia sign and its replacement by an area of brick in an attempt to match the exterior of the first floor often causes a problem as it alters the architectural balance of ground and first floors. This is particularly marked if the shop window is replaced by a smaller window, leaving a bald expanse of wall between ground floor and first floor windows. The balance of the elevation is disturbed and the appearance of the building suffers as a result.

3.20 The photographs below depicts poor design where the shopfront has been completely removed leaving a bald expanse of wall. The new window in the image directly below has horizontal emphasis and fails to match the design of the original sash windows on the first floor. This property would also have benefited from the removal of all pebbledash to reinstate uniformity into the terrace. The photograph below left also shows a poor design where the shopfront has been removed and a new door without a fanlight has been inserted, along with a small window with an unsympathetic horizontal emphasis.

Bad Practice: Fascia sign removed



3.21 Careful detailing is necessary in the location of the fascia as it is likely to conceal the structural beam which spans the shopfront opening. This structural beam, which supports the main wall of the building above, is often in timber and the removal of the shopfront presents an ideal opportunity for the condition of this beam to be thoroughly checked.

3.22 A fascia sign will no longer be required when a shop has been converted. However, some form of visual separation between ground and first floors helps to maintain the visual balance between the floors and, if the former shop is part of a parade, the fascia also provides a link with adjacent properties. One solution may be to insert a raised band of render or brickwork linking the retained corbels, along the line of the former shopfront fascia. Where appropriate, this could incorporate a decorative cornice.

Bad Practice: Shopfront removed



Good Practice: A well executed design with retained features



Shop windows vs the need for privacy

3.23 Shops are often located on busy roads. Shop premises usually feature large display windows which were designed specifically to attract the attention of passers-by. When a shopfront is removed as part of the conversion process, one of the most important considerations is the need to create a living environment with an acceptable level of privacy. A converted shop directly adjoining the footway is unlikely ever to provide the same degree of privacy as that afforded by a house or flat set back from the street behind a garden.

3.24 The replacement of a large shop window by a smaller window can damage the appearance of the property, particularly if the altered property is situated amongst shops which retain large display windows. The proportions, size and placing of replacement windows is a key factor in determining the success of any conversion scheme. When making changes, a successful approach may be to try and match the architectural language of the building as a whole by replacing the shop window with a modified version of the upper floor windows, employing similar proportions and architectural details. It is relatively unusual for nineteenth century houses to have exactly the same windows on ground and first floors and therefore a straight copy of the first floor windows may not always be appropriate.

Good example: Victorian language used to give a larger, three sectioned sash window on the ground floor



3.25 Nineteenth and early twentieth century windows usually have a vertical emphasis. They are taller than they are wide. The appearance of many conversions suffers because a single relatively small window with strong horizontal emphasis is inserted into a space previously occupied by a large shop window. The use of sash windows divided into sections by timber or brick mullions can be an effective way of securing a degree of privacy whilst at the same time maintaining a visual balance with upper floors.

3.26 In some situations where there is no obvious historical approach to follow, glass block or some form of opaque material such as decorative acid etched glass may be the answer, allowing larger ground floor windows but maintaining a sufficient degree of privacy. Shutters may also be an appropriate solution. A design based on that of a shopfront with a large window subdivided into smaller panes may be a suitable solution in some locations.

Interesting use of glazing bars creates a sense of privacy



3.27 The internal accommodation should be carefully considered. The room nearest the street will obviously be subjected to most noise and disturbance. A “live-work” unit occupying the ground and upper floor(s) might offer a more satisfactory solution, in which case it may be possible to retain the existing shopfront.

Doors

3.28 Older shops often have high ceilings. Shop doors usually have fanlights above them (this is a window in the space between the top of the door and the ceiling). When shopfronts are removed it is important that any new door relates to the overall scale of the building. A modern door without fanlight is likely to appear rather small in relation to the scale of the building as a whole. Many shopfronts were constructed with recessed front doors set back from the street, sometimes with decorative tiling. It may be desirable to retain the recess in order to maintain a degree of privacy and shelter over the entrance and this will also allow the tiling to be retained. The floor of the recess sometimes incorporates attractive mosaic tiling which can and should be retained (taking account of access issues below) .

3.29 The [Disability and the Equality Act 2010](#) and the Building Regulations require the new accommodation to be made accessible to people with disabilities. For the shopfront, changes may need to be made to the threshold to make it level and for the approach to be ramped if necessary, and the door may need to be widened. You should contact the Council's [Building Control Service](#) for further details on this matter.

Access to upper floors

3.30 In some cases shops will be converted to form a single residential unit separate from the accommodation above. In others it will be linked with accommodation on upper floors. Where the ground floor is to be a separate unit it is probable that there will be two doors on the front elevation. An arrangement featuring a central window with doors on either side can be successful. Otherwise, two doors can be accommodated in a single recess – this method was often employed on late Victorian and Edwardian flats.

Wall treatments

3.31 There is usually a strong contrast between the wall treatments of the ground and upper floor exteriors on shop premises. The ground floor exterior will probably be mainly glass, the upper floor may comprise wall and window. Materials used for the non-glazed parts of a shopfront usually comprise timber, tile, render or marble. On older shopfronts brick was rarely used. It will often be sensible to retain some visual distinction between first and ground floor when a shop unit is converted for residential use, particularly if the converted shop forms part of a parade of similar properties. The key consideration will be the effect on the appearance of the street. Where the property to be converted forms part of an original parade, it will be important to ensure conformity with that particular parade. Ultimately, the choice of design and materials will be informed by the location, the design of any adjacent shops and to some extent, by the way that any previously converted properties have been treated where these have been carried out well.

Keeping the shopfront

3.32 In some cases, for example where a shopfront is historically, architecturally or aesthetically significant, the Council may require the retention of the shopfront as part of the conversion scheme. In this situation, blinds or areas of obscure glazing can be employed to provide privacy, particularly where a shop forecourt can be enclosed. The window could be covered - wholly or partially - by purpose made internal slatted screens or obscured glass. Often the clean lines of slatted blinds work better than net curtains over such large windows. Overall, consideration of privacy needs a solution that takes account of the external environment including that of the appearance of the street.

Good practice -privacy solution**Shops that were originally built as houses**

3.33 Some shops were originally built as houses, the ground floors of which were subsequently converted, and in some cases extended over the front garden. There may be houses within the immediate area (e.g. part of the same terrace) which retain features such as the original doors and windows with their architectural frames which were lost at the time the property was converted. A change from a shop back to a residential unit could reinstate the original features, tying the property in with its neighbours. The success of such a scheme will depend to a large extent on the accuracy of the design, the quality of the workmanship and the choice of materials.

Corner shops

3.34 Corner shops may have shop windows on two frontages. Providing an adequate level of amenity may require one of these windows (usually on the side road return) to be removed altogether. The main frontage can then be converted in line with this guidance. This option may not be suitable for heritage assets where frontages are significant and deserve conservation.

Enclosure of forecourts

3.35 Many shops are set behind a private forecourt which can be enclosed as part of a conversion scheme. Where this is practicable and desirable, the Council will make it a condition of planning permission for the change of use. The detailed design of any boundary features, including walls, fences and gates, will be an important factor in determining the success of the overall scheme. Nearby residential properties may provide a guide to the most appropriate boundary treatment, and if other shop forecourts in the group have already been enclosed in a considerate manner, this may provide a suitable model to follow.

Other standards

3.36 The conversion into residential accommodation will need to meet policy requirements relating to quality standards including sustainable design, unit size, private amenity space and accessibility/adaptability of a building which are set out in the DMPD (specifically the Development Principles chapter and Policies DMH4, DMH6-7) and elsewhere in this SPD, as well as the requirements of the Building Regulations. In addition the Mayor has produced Supplementary Planning Guidance ([Mayor's Housing SPG](#)) which sets out quality standards and best practice comprehensively. In addition the Council has produced a [Historic Environment SPD \(2016\)](#) which provides further advice on design considerations and alterations to heritage assets.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

3.37 The [Community Infrastructure Levy](#) is a new levy which local authorities and the Mayor charge on qualifying developments. Its relevance here relates to extensions over 100 sq ms of gross internal floorspace, and to developments including the creation all new dwellings regardless of size, including through change of use or conversion. Further information can be found on the Council's website.

4 Residential extensions

Introduction

4.1 The most common form of development in the borough involves extensions and alterations to residents' homes. This section of the SPD has been prepared as part of the Council's efforts to promote good, sensitive design and will advise you about the main points to consider when planning your extension. It will help you find out whether you need to apply for planning permission and how to make an application. It will also help you to design an extension that will enhance your property, will look good and does not harm your neighbours' amenity. Even though planning permission may not be required for your particular extension, you are encouraged to follow the guidance in this document. A well designed extension is unlikely to cost more to build than one which is poorly designed. A well designed extension will also be more attractive and can add greater value to your property.

4.2 Whilst there are some types of extension that may be "[permitted development](#)", the range of issues and other regulations can vary significantly with the type of extension, so for ease of reference this section has been subdivided to cover the three main types of householder development:

- **Extensions** - front and side extensions, rear extensions, and miscellaneous structures such as sheds, bike and bin stores.
- **Basements** - includes lightwells and new dwellings created in basements.
- **Alterations to Roofs and Loft Conversions** - includes guidance on extensions over "back additions" .

4.3 If you are thinking of extending your home, each of these sub-sections begins by setting out key points to consider to help you decide whether your project would be feasible before you decide to go ahead and appoint a professional designer or agent. The guidance then sets out an overview of the permissions required, details of planning policy requirements, suggests what you need to do if you live in a [Conservation Area](#), and sets out key design principles and best practice. A list of documents referred to here, further reading and other useful links and downloads are provided at the end of this section.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

4.4 The [Community Infrastructure Levy](#) is a new levy which local authorities and the Mayor charge on qualifying developments. Its relevance here relates to extensions over 100 sq ms of gross internal floorspace, and to developments including the creation of new dwellings created regardless of size. Further information can be found on the Council's website.

Extensions

Planning permission

4.5 You should always check first with the Council's [Planning Service](#) to establish whether you will need planning permission for your project. Sustainable design, including energy conservation measures is incorporated into the [Building Regulations](#). As you will see from the guidance below, in some situations and locations it may be that a loft extension is not considered appropriate or that you will have to re-think your proposals.

4.6 You may carry out certain works including some types of extension without reference to the planning authority because the Government has already given permission. This permission is known as "permitted development" and what may be built and where can change from time to time. An interactive guide showing the things you can do without making an application is available online at the [Planning Portal](#). Should you require written confirmation as to whether any particular proposal requires permission, you may apply for a Certificate of Lawful Development. The planning officer will explain how to go about this and what information you will need to submit. If permission is not required, you will receive a formal certificate confirming this.

4.7 You should note that controls are more restrictive within conservation areas. In order to protect the special character and appearance of those conservation areas that have an over-riding unified character such as Dover House, Latchmere, Shaftesbury Park and Totterdown Fields estates, selected Permitted Development rights (notably works to front facades, roofs and front boundaries) have been withdrawn by an [Article 4 Direction](#). Information regarding Article 4 Directions is available on the Council's website, however if you require specific advice regarding what requires permission then you should contact the Planning Service.

Building Regulations

4.8 You will certainly need building regulations approval and the Council's [Building Control Service](#) will tell you what is required. The Building Regulations impose certain structural and other requirements particularly where it comes to access stairs and this may limit what options are available to you. But in meeting these requirements the result may be a conflict with planning objectives concerning the external appearance of the proposed extension. It is important to find out as early as possible, as it may mean you will not easily get planning permission.

Planning Policy

Policy DMS 1 General Development Principles:

Planning permission will be granted for developments which comply with the following criteria where relevant:

- b. ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of the development provides a high quality, sustainable design and layout, that contributes positively to local spatial character;
- c. does not harm the amenity of occupiers/users and nearby properties through unacceptable noise, vibration, traffic congestion, air pollution, overshadowing, overbearing, loss of outlook, privacy or sunlight/daylight.

Policy DMS 2 Managing the Historic Environment:

a. In addition to satisfying the relevant parts of Policy DMS1, applications affecting a heritage asset or its setting will be granted where it:

- i. is in accordance with the NPPF, the London Plan and relevant English Heritage guidance;
- ii. takes full account of the Council's Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Strategies;
- iii. is accompanied by a satisfactory Statement of Heritage Significance and Impact (Heritage Statement) produced by a heritage specialist where appropriate.

b. Applications will be granted where they sustain, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance, appearance, character and setting of the heritage asset itself, and the surrounding historic environment, and where they have consideration for the following:

- i. the conservation of features and elements that contribute to the heritage asset's significance and character. This may include: chimneys, windows and doors, boundary treatments, original roof coverings, shopfronts or elements of shopfronts in conservation areas, as well as internal features such as fireplaces, plaster cornices, doors, architraves, panelling, and historic planform in listed buildings;
- ii. the reinstatement of features and elements that contribute to the heritage asset's significance which have been lost which may include any of the above items or others;
- iii. the conservation and, where appropriate, the enhancement of the space in between and around buildings as well as front, side and rear gardens;
- iv. the removal of additions or modifications that are considered harmful to the significance of any heritage asset. This may include the removal of pebbledash, paint from brickwork, non-original style windows, doors, satellite dishes or other equipment;
- v. the use of the heritage asset should be compatible with the conservation of its significance;

- vi. historical information discovered during the application process shall be submitted to the Greater London Historic Environment Record by the applicant.
- c. Development involving substantial harm to heritage assets will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, where the great weight given to conservation has been fully taken into account; and the substantial public benefit derived has been clearly and convincingly demonstrated in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF.
- d. Proposals for development involving ground disturbance in Archaeological Priority Areas (as identified on the Policies Map), will need a desk based archaeological assessment and may also require field evaluation. The recording and publication of results will be required and in appropriate cases, the Council may also require preservation in situ, or excavation.
- e. Further detail will be set out in a forthcoming Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- f. Applications affecting non-designated heritage assets (such as locally listed buildings) will be dealt with in accordance with the NPPF.
- g. Deliberate damage and neglect to a historic building will not be taken into account in any decision.

Policy DMH 5 - Alterations and Extensions

In addition to satisfying the relevant criteria of Policies DMS2, DMH2 and DMH4, proposals for extensions and alterations to existing residential properties will be permitted where:

- i. an extension is well designed, uses appropriate materials and is not so large that it dominates and competes with the original building;
- ii. an extension, dormer window or other alteration to a roof is confined to the rear of the building but where it is visible from the street or any other public place, it is sympathetic to the style of the building, not visually intrusive and does not harm either the street scene or the building's appearance;
- iii. side extensions do not cause a terrace effect by in-filling the spaces between detached or semi-detached buildings;
- iv. extensions are not erected in front of houses where they would be visible from the highway;
- v. minor modifications to the front elevations such as a small porch, and free-standing structures providing cycle storage take appropriate account of the scale, design and size of the original front garden;
- vi. in the case of conversions, refuse storage enclosures and service boxes are sited unobtrusively and do not detract from the appearance of the building or amenity;

vii. rear extensions are subservient to the original house and its setting and are not over-dominant, ensuring that a substantial depth of the original rear garden will remain free of buildings and structures including lightwells, taking account of criteria set out in Policies DMS1 and DMH7;

viii. no buildings or structures are proposed in front gardens, and where lightwells are proposed, at least 50% of the original front garden depth will remain subject in conservation areas to a minimum depth of 2ms of garden usually being retained and to Policy DMTS2b iii;

ix. hardstandings do not dominate the appearance of front gardens or cause harm to the character or appearance of the dwelling or the street. In conservation areas, hardstandings are unlikely to be acceptable in line with the relevant [Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Strategies](#). The policy relating to permeable surfacing of hardstandings is set out in Policy DMS6.

4.9 National Planning guidance for schemes in Conservation Areas (or affecting other heritage assets) is contained within the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF).

4.10 The Council's [Historic Environment SPD \(2016\)](#) sets out the principles when dealing with proposals affecting heritage assets, listed buildings, locally listed buildings, buildings in conservation areas as well as proposals affecting historic parks and gardens.

4.11 These policies are designed to protect the appearance of buildings from insensitive and harmful change that could erode the attractive and distinctive quality of the borough's various residential areas and also to ensure that a high standard of amenity for residents is maintained.

4.12 Therefore, when designing an extension to your house there are two main considerations to take into account:

1. Appearance - what will the extension look like?
2. Neighbourliness - will it affect my neighbour's amenity?

Appearance

4.13 Generally, an extension should aim to respect the form and proportions of the original house and should not be so big or prominent as to dominate its appearance. It should also aim to be sympathetic to the style and character of the house and complementary to the surrounding buildings. This does not mean that an extension that contrasts with the host building cannot be successful but these situations are exceptional and demand a higher level of design ability.

4.14 The more visible your extension will be the more important it is that it is designed to a high standard and if you live in a conservation area it is even more important to ensure that it will not spoil the appearance of either the house or the wider area.

Conservation areas

4.15 Conservation areas are those parts of the borough that have a special architectural character and/or are of historic interest. There are more than 40 conservation areas in the borough. Inappropriate alterations have the potential to spoil the special interest of conservation areas. The Council has now published Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Strategies for most of the conservation areas and these are available on the web site. The Appraisals highlight what is important about the area and there is guidance in the Management Strategies about alterations to houses. Reading the relevant Appraisal for your conservation area will help you write the design and access statement which must accompany your application for planning permission.

Front extensions

4.16 An extension located at the front of a house invariably has the greatest visual impact. Where buildings are arranged along a clearly established building line or where there is an architectural cohesiveness to the street that would be compromised, an extension at the front of a house is unlikely to be approved. It may be acceptable in some cases to consider the addition of a small porch or similar minor modification at the front of a house. In these cases alterations and additions should be sympathetic in style and materials and you should avoid arbitrary changes to traditional features that might erode a house's character.

Side extensions

4.17 A single storey extension at the side of a house is a popular way of achieving additional floor space on the ground floor. It will almost certainly be visible from the street so you should take care to ensure it fits in well. A single storey extension should follow the following basic rules:

- Set the extension back from the front facade of the house.
- Use a pitched roof as this will usually look better than a flat roof.
- Use materials to match the main house.

4.18 A two storey side extension may be acceptable if it can be designed sympathetically to be subservient to the main house. The biggest issue with two storey side extensions is that they can fill important gaps between houses - the loss of which spoils a particularly attractive arrangement. For example, in a street composed of semi-detached or detached houses the spaces between buildings are very important and infilling to the side with bulky two storey extensions can lead to an undesirable terracing effect. This is especially important

in some parts of conservation areas where the character is defined as much by the spaces between the buildings as it is by the buildings themselves. In situations like this two storey extensions at the side of a house may be resisted.

4.19 On a corner house a two storey side extension will be very noticeable and could be overbearing and intrusive if it fills in too much of the space at the end of the side road and comes too far in front of the building line on the return frontage. These spaces, typically occurring at the corners of streets in traditional grid layouts, are attractive and distinctive features and deserve to be protected from insensitive and intrusive enlargement of the corner buildings. Loss of these spaces can diminish the spatial quality of the street.

4.20 Where a two storey side extension is regarded as appropriate in principle, it should follow the following basic rules:

- Set the extension back from the front facade of the house.
- Use a pitched roof that has a lower ridge than that on the main roof on the house.
- Keep the width sufficiently modest in relation to existing elements of the house to ensure that the extension is subordinate in proportion.
- Take care on corners and set well back from the boundary to respect the quality of space.
- Use materials to match the house.

Rear extensions

4.21 Extensions at the rear are generally least likely to be seen from any public vantage point but they will be seen by neighbours and will need to be designed with sensitivity to avoid any unreasonable impact on them. Rear extensions should respect the shape and form of the existing house and not be over dominant. When planning a two storey extension it is particularly important to ensure that it will have no harmful impact on your neighbour's amenities. A large extension may cause your neighbour a loss of outlook, daylight or it may have an overbearing effect on their property. This is especially a problem for a neighbour who is on the north side of the proposed extension because this is where the impact on sunlight and daylight is likely to be greatest. Ideally a two storey extension should be sited away from the neighbour's boundary.

Neighbourliness

Daylight and Overshadowing

4.22 Any extension should be designed so that it does not harm neighbouring occupiers' daylight to an unacceptable degree. An extension which is sited close to a window belonging to a habitable room of a neighbouring dwelling or its private garden area can create a poor living environment for the occupier in terms of overshadowing and intrusiveness. Most extensions are likely to cause some degree of shadowing to the neighbour. It is the position

of the extension relative to the path of the sun, combined with its height, shape and bulk which will determine the amount of shadow that will be cast. Your extension must allow for adequate sunlight and daylight to reach adjoining properties in line with the Building Research Establishment (BRE) Standards as set out in their publication [Site Layout Planning For Daylight and Sunlight](#) BRE 2011. Each application will be assessed by a planning officer to ensure that the development does not result in an unacceptable loss of daylight or sunlight to your neighbours' habitable rooms or garden. Clearly overshadowing should be minimised and it may be that the Council will require the size of an extension to be reduced if the level of overshadowing and intrusion is considered to be unreasonable. Whilst it is possible to measure the likely impact of your extension on your neighbours' sunlight and daylight, it is more difficult to assess whether it will have an overbearing effect.

4.23 These general guidelines should be followed:

- Keep the height and bulk of any extension on the boundary with a neighbour to a minimum, especially on the south side.
- Two storey extensions directly on the boundary with a neighbour should be avoided.

Privacy

4.24 Your neighbours are entitled to a reasonable level of privacy, inside their homes and outside in their private gardens. In dense urban areas there is always going to be some degree of mutual overlooking but this also makes privacy all the more precious. When you are planning your extension you must be sensitive to the location of new windows and views from any terraces that could provide an opportunity to overlook your neighbours. A loss of privacy can occur when a new window or terrace will overlook a neighbour's window or allow views into parts of their back garden that were previously quite private.

4.25 Design solutions to a privacy problem may include the provision of screening along a boundary or a terrace; the use of obscured glazing on windows; and locating windows above eye level.

Other structures - garages, car ports, sheds, bike and bin stores.

4.26 A poorly designed garage, carport, outbuilding or even a bin and bike store can spoil the appearance of your house and it can have a similar effect on the amenities of neighbours as other extensions. Where planning permission is required for this form of development, detached building or structure should in general:

- Not be located in the front of the house where they can be clearly seen from the street.
- Not be too big and not visually intrusive. Trees and large shrubs may form effective screens.
- Be sympathetic to the house in style and materials and harmonise with the street scene.
- Use high quality, long lasting materials that require minimal maintenance.

4.27 In view of the contribution of cycling to sustainable travel, bike stores may be acceptable in front gardens providing that they are minimum size necessary and they are located so as to minimise visual impact on the street. They are unlikely to be acceptable in very small front gardens, in conservation areas and where there is an Article 4 Direction in place.

Basements

Overview of the Basements Section

- A. Purpose of the Guidance
- B. Summary of Controls Involved Permissions, consents and licences which may be required
- C. Planning Policy Considerations Including flood risk, extensions, quality standards for residential accommodation, and the conversion of properties into flats
- D. Further Design Considerations Detailed advice and good practice on common design matters relating to basement development; front gardens, trees, lightwells, windows, walls and retaining walls, guarding and grills.
- E. Conservation Areas Advice specific to common issues raised by basement development in these areas.
- F. Other Technical Considerations Including headroom, fire resistance and means of escape, underpinning and party wall agreements, underground services, land stability, groundwater and drainage.
- G. Advice to Neighbours Where a basement development is proposed in a neighbouring property.
- H. Construction Issues A brief overview of the Local Authority Building Control (LABC) advice note on basements, detailed advice on Construction Method Statements (CMS), and information on the Considerate Constructors Scheme.

A. Purpose of the Guidance

4.28 The general principles of carrying out an extension or alterations are set out in the introduction to this section. Basement development has become an increasingly popular home improvement in Wandsworth. The excavation and construction of basement extensions to residential properties is highly complex and can be an intrusive form of development. The cumulative impact of the construction of a number of basements in any one street can be particularly severe. Recognising the limitations of planning legislation, this section of the SPD aims to set out good practice for drawing up a successful scheme, highlights the range of controls required and provides further details on managing the construction phase effectively, particularly given the significant increase in basement applications and the more complex forms of basement development. Guidance to assist neighbours in responding to planning applications is provided. The section on construction issues provides details on, and recommends the submission of a Construction Method Statement (CMS), which is a requirement for listed buildings, to manage the impacts of construction.

4.29 This guidance is aimed primarily at householders who are considering excavating a new basement to use in conjunction with a house or ground-floor flat, or converting an existing cellar into habitable accommodation, to help you decide whether to go ahead with a project, and to anticipate the scale of works and permissions involved. It sets out the main considerations that you, your architect, and your builder will need to take into account in planning a basement extension. It explains the Council's planning policies and provides an overview of other statutory requirements. You may also need to refer to other sections in this guidance, notably on dwelling standards. As basement development usually also involves works affecting the front of a property which would be highly visible from the street, an overview of design principles and good practice advice is also set out here. If your property is a heritage asset (a listed or locally listed building or located in a conservation area), you should also refer to the [Historic Environment SPD \(2016\)](#) relevant Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy. Given the very complex nature of basement conversions, the Council encourages early discussions with the Building Control Service for site-specific advice. As such this section provides an overview of the main considerations with respect of planning and conservation areas.

B. Summary of Controls Involved

Paragraph:

- 4.30 Planning permission
- 4.31 Listed building consent
- 4.32 Building control
- 4.33 Party wall agreement
- 4.34 Highway licence
- 4.35 Skip or materials licences
- 4.36 Parking bay suspension
- 4.37 Streetworks licence
- 4.38 Thames Water permission
- 4.39 Freeholder consent - if you live in a flat or leasehold house

Planning permission

4.30 The planning regime covering the creation of living space in basements continues to evolve. Currently, you will not normally need planning permission to use an existing residential cellar or basement in conjunction with the house above. You will always need permission if you live in a flat or listed building: for a lightwell, for related works to fences and walls and trees in conservation areas and works to trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). Excavation to create a new basement which involves major works and/or alters the external appearance of the property, is likely to require planning permission. You will also need planning permission to excavate or enlarge a lightwell at the front of the house (and also in some cases at the side or rear) and you will also need planning permission for use of the basement as a separate dwelling. If your property is located in a conservation area, a planning application is likely to be required for demolition work. Alterations to listed

buildings are likely to need consent for internal and external work. If you are in any doubt, it is best to check with the Planning Service first. In a conservation area you must notify the Council in writing if you intend to cut down a tree or carry out works to trees. For trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) you must submit a TPO application for all pruning and felling works (see paragraph 4.64). You can also find detailed advice on planning and building regulations on the web through the Planning Portal. The Planning Portal also provides a summary on basement development for householders but you should check locally-specific planning and building control requirements with the Council.

Listed building consent

4.31 Listed buildings are buildings of special architectural or historic interest and are listed by the Government in consultation with Historic England. Listed building consent is required to carry out works of alteration or demolition to a listed building, both externally and internally. This consent is dealt with by Wandsworth's planning service. It is a criminal offence to carry out works to a listed building without consent so it is advisable to consult the Council's Conservation and Design team at an early stage if you are considering a basement project.

Building control

4.32 You will need building regulations approval for the excavation or enlargement of a basement, and also to convert a cellar into habitable accommodation. The work must meet the requirements of the building regulations, and habitable accommodation must also meet fitness standards, including those set out in the Housing Act (2004). Due to the complexity of the building regulations as they affect basements, it is highly recommended that you contact the Council's building control service in the first instance to discuss your project. The Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Guide on basements should also be referred to: [LABC guide](#). More detail is provided below in relation to construction issues.

Party wall agreement

4.33 You will usually need a party wall agreement under the Party Wall Act (1996) with your neighbour(s). The Council is not itself involved in party wall agreements, although the Government has produced a leaflet explaining the procedures and further guidance: [Party Wall Act guide](#).

Highway licence

4.34 You will need a licence under the Highways Act for any activities on the highway if you want to put an item on a public road or put up a temporary structure. For example, a hoarding, scaffold, portable cabin/toilet, container, mobile tower, conveyor belt and Heras Fencing. You would also need the consent of the appropriate highway authority if your proposal involves any work under any part of the highway (including the footway). For most streets in the borough the Council is the highway authority. The Council will also be able to let you know if you live on a main road which is the responsibility of Transport for London. You can apply for a highway licence from the Council online: [Highways Licence](#). As with

Skip licences, you do not need to apply for a separate bay suspension. Transport for London (TfL) seek to ensure that no skips or construction materials are kept on the footway or carriageway on the TLRN at any time. Should the applicant wish to install scaffolding or a hoarding on the footway whilst undertaking works, separate licences may be required from TfL. Further information is available on the TfL website: [TfL highway Licence](#). Regard should also be had to policies of the London Plan (Chapter 6) and TfL's website guidance on Transport Assessments and Construction Logistic Plans available: [Transport Assessment and Construction Logistics](#)

Skip or materials licences

4.35 You will need a skip or materials licence to put a builder's skip and/or materials on a public road. Materials include sand, cement, ballast, slabs and timber. You do not need to apply for a separate bay suspension. You can apply for a skip or materials licence on line: [Skip and Materials licence](#)

Parking bay suspension

4.36 In certain circumstances parking spaces may be suspended, for example, for building works. The Council must approve parking bay suspensions. The Council will refuse applications for the above licences where the location is deemed to be unsuitable. In some cases, the police approve the suspension. However, the Council cannot suspend areas where there are no parking restrictions. You must apply and pay 5 clear working days before you need the suspension to start. You should aim to submit and pay earlier because the day you submit the application is not included. You can apply for a domestic parking bay suspension from the Council: [CPZ Suspensions](#)

Streetworks licence

4.37 Permission is required to excavate any area of the public highway, you must have permission to do so. You will need to apply for a " Section 50 Licence". More detail and an application form are provided on the Council's website: [Section 50 Licence](#). Only public utilities have a right to excavate the highway by central government permission. Other companies must apply for a private street works licence required under section 50 of the Act. Any company without the rights of utilities can apply for a street works licence to prove its aptitude to safely undertake works on the highway.

Thames Water permission

4.38 This is required if you intend to build over or close to a Public Sewer. Thames Water is responsible for maintaining public sewers, which are sometimes located within the boundaries of properties. You must obtain agreement to carry out any building work over the top of or within 3 metres of a public sewer to ensure that no damage is caused to it or restrictions made to the way Thames Water use and maintain the sewer. Detailed guidance on this matter is available from them online: [Thames Water](#).

Freeholder consent

4.39 If you live in a flat, or your property is leasehold, you will need the permission of the owner, and you must notify the other occupants of the building.

C. Planning Policy Considerations

4.40 When you have decided to go ahead with a basement extension or conversion, any planning application will be assessed against the Council's planning policies. The Council's adopted policies in the Core Strategy (Policy PL5) and the Development Management Policies Document (DMPD) (Policies DMS1, DMS2, DMS3, DMS5-7, DMH2, DMH4-DMH7) set out criteria to be applied to developments relating to conservation areas, flood risk, design and housing issues. You should refer to these documents in full to inform your development and design. A summary of the main considerations are outlined below.

4.41 Flood Risk - Cellars and basements may be particularly vulnerable to flooding especially in areas that are low-lying and/or prone to surface water flooding. Many properties in Wandsworth are located in flood risk areas, so basement extension projects require specialist management, construction and design techniques. The Council's Core Strategy Policy PL2 and DMPD Policies DMS5 - DMS7 identify the approach to managing flood risk in the borough. Flooding of underground accommodation can arise from a number of different sources including the overflowing of drains and nearby watercourses, groundwater flooding and surface water flooding. Flooding occurs more frequently during periods of exceptionally heavy rainfall and in locations where sewer capacity is limited, land topography is low-lying and where drainage infrastructure is damaged. As significant parts of the borough are subject to some risk of flooding, it is important to establish the level of risk before you decide go ahead with your proposal. You should check with the Environment Agency or the Council which flood zone your property is located in and whether it is also located within an area prone to surface water flooding, in order to determine the level of risk. The flood zones identified by the Environment Agency range from flood zone 1 (low risk) to flood zone 3b (highest risk). The Council has published a Surface Water Management Plan which includes maps showing levels of risk from surface water flooding, and sets out a borough-level plan for flood risk management which can also be downloaded from the Council's website (link provided below).

4.42 A Flood Risk Assessment may be required if your proposed scheme is located within one of the zones or in an area where there is a risk from other sources of flooding. DMPD Policy DMS5 sets out the criteria for determining development within these zones and it should be referred to as early as possible and ideally before you draw up your plans, as habitable accommodation and/or self-contained residential accommodation on ground or basement level may not be permissible, or may require considerable mitigation measures covering for example safe access thresholds, internal staircases and means of escape, depending on the flood zone and/or specific location of the proposal. Where there is a flood risk, basements should not be used as sleeping accommodation. As part of the planning

application the Council will expect a Flood Risk Assessment to be carried out to determine the risk, taking account of Environment Agency advice and the Council's Surface Water Management Plan. Planning Policy DMS5 (flood risk) in the the DMPD sets out land and development restrictions for each flood zone in the borough which reflect levels of flood risk, and requires that inclusion of satisfactory flood risk mitigation measures are agreed with the Environment Agency. DMPD Policies DMS3 and DMS6 expect new development, which includes basement developments, to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). Policy DMS6 sets out criteria to be taken into account in development in flood risk zones 2, 3a and 3b in order to manage surface water. Further information on flood risk in the borough and what should be considered in a Flood Risk Assessment can be found in the Council's Level 1 and 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (December 2015 and in any subsequent update) as well as Wandsworth's Surface Water Management Plan.

4.43 Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Guidance on the design and construction of basements provides advice on matters relating to structural stability and preventing water ingress. It will assist you in choosing appropriately qualified professionals; architects, structural engineers, and waterproofing specialists and should be referred to by your chosen team.

4.44 Extensions - DMPD Policy DMH5 sets out the policy criteria covering alterations and extensions to residential properties and applies equally to basement development. It sets out criteria to be applied and expects any extension to be well designed, not so large as to dominate or compete with the original building, and to use appropriate materials. If you are located in a conservation area, DMPD Policy DMS2, Managing the Historic Environment, sets out the considerations for extensions and alterations to listed buildings and properties in conservation areas. Detailed guidance on development in these areas is provided in the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategies. Good practice advice on design considerations specifically for basement development is set out below. If you propose to create a new flat in the basement, additional considerations will apply.

4.45 As with extensions above ground which are dealt with elsewhere in this SPD, the depth of back garden you will need to retain after extending (including excavating a lightwell) will depend on your property and whether it is located in a conservation area. Policy DMH5 requires that rear extensions be subservient to the original house and its setting and are not over-dominant, ensuring that a substantial depth of rear garden will remain free of buildings and structures, including lightwells. For most properties in the borough this means the retention of a depth of at least a half of the back garden, including where a basement is proposed to be excavated under the garden. That is, a basement should be constructed under no more than half the garden. Policy DMH5 requires that a minimum depth of 2m of front garden is retained in conservation areas. Care must be taken not to damage trees and tree roots (including those in neighbouring gardens which are likely to run under your property). This is particularly important where a basement is proposed under the rear garden. It is also good practice to ensure a minimum 1m permeable soil depth is included any part of the basement below the garden to enable a range of soft landscaping to thrive so that

the impact on biodiversity can be minimised. It is important to note that natural gardens can have a sponge-like effect, reducing flood risk particularly from surface water flooding in time of heavy rainfall, which will be compromised in a basement development.

4.46 Unlike traditional extensions which have minimal impact on ground conditions, basement extensions, particularly when greater than one storey in depth, can permanently and irreversibly alter ground conditions. They are permanent fixtures, likely to exist throughout the lifetime of the building and beyond, which will result in a loss of infiltration and planting ability of a garden permanently and cumulatively. Taking this into account and given that significant areas of the borough are at risk from flooding, multi-level basements are not considered appropriate in Wandsworth.

4.47 Quality standards for residential accommodation - Whether you are extending your accommodation into the basement or creating a separate flat within the basement, all new floorspace must meet minimum quality standards. In addition to the requirements of the Housing Act 2004 and the Building Regulations, DMPD Policies DMS1, DMH4, DMH5, DMH6 and DMH7 set out criteria that will be used to assess a proposal.

4.48 Policy DMS1 sets out development principles, whilst DMPD Policy DMH4 provides specific criteria on residential quality. These standards cover the impact of a proposal on the local context looking at location and the quality of the residential environment and the need to ensure a well-designed proposal that respects the local context and protects the amenity of existing and future occupiers and of neighbours. Any proposal will need to provide a good standard of sunlight/daylight, outlook and privacy. DMPD Policies DMH6 and DMH7 set out minimum space standards for internal accommodation and for garden space respectively, including for new dwellings created through conversions. Section 2 of this SPD provides detailed information on dwelling standards to support these policies, with particular reference to the Mayor's Housing SPG which sets out strategic housing quality standards and good practice in full.

4.49 Lightwells, daylight and ventilation are specific issues in basement developments. Where lightwells are proposed, an adequate level of front garden space must remain in line with the requirements of adopted DMPD Policies DMH5 and DMH7. Excavation of a lightwell may only be acceptable in private (not shared) gardens, and that the remaining garden meets the minimum garden space standards set out in DMPD Policy DMH7: 10 sq ms for 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings and 15 sq ms for 3 or more bedroom dwellings) because of particular impacts arising from lightwells in communal gardens, including on privacy, risk and light spillage. The Mayor's Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) covers a range of standards in detail including on daylight, and this should be referred to.

4.50 Daylight and ventilation are particularly important considerations, especially if any part of the basement will form habitable accommodation for a flat rather than a house, as there will be less flexibility as to how individual rooms can be used and are more likely to be principal (habitable) living rooms rather than ancillary rooms such as studies and media/home cinema rooms.

4.51 Adequate ventilation is required by the building regulations for all habitable rooms. Where this is provided wholly or in part by windows, then half of the minimum glazed area (i.e. equivalent to 5% of the floor area) should be openable, with the top of the opening being at least 1.75 m above the floor (refer also to advice on design aspects of windows and on means of escape below). Alternative arrangements will need to be made to ventilate a basement where the lightwell is roofed over. In any event, if a kitchen or bathroom is installed in a basement, you will need to incorporate mechanical extract ventilation whether or not there is a window. Refer to the building regulations or Building Control service for further information.

4.52 Adequate levels of natural light must allow the undertaking of everyday tasks without the aid of artificial light in all habitable rooms (although not a requirement under the building regulations in the case of non-habitable rooms such as bathrooms and kitchens). The levels that can be achieved will depend, in part on the layout of rooms in the basement, the orientation of the property, and the position of nearby buildings, avoiding the need to rely on artificial lighting in normal daylight hours. DMPD Policy DMS1 sets out the general development principles to be applied to all developments including sunlight/daylight outlook and privacy. These issues are set out in more detail in the London Plan, the Mayor's Housing SPG and, depending on tenure, within the Housing Act (2004). It is also good practice that external rendered areas be decorated in light colour to improve reflected light within the basement which can improve natural light by reflecting it back into windows, but note the importance of outlook in all habitable rooms.

4.53 The London Plan seeks to ensure that all new housing is built to the highest standards of sustainable design and construction that are possible for each scheme, thereby reducing carbon emissions. Energy consumption will be reduced if there is a good standard of natural daylight thereby reducing the need to rely on artificial lighting (see below). Core Strategy Policy IS2 and DMPD Policy DMS3 set out how sustainable design and low carbon development in Wandsworth should be achieved. If you intend to rent out the accommodation, additional controls and standards may be required under the Housing Acts and you are strongly advised to check with the Council's Private Housing teams.

4.54 **Conversions policy** - One of the main aims of the Council's planning policies on housing is to ensure that smaller, family-sized houses and flats are not lost through conversion into smaller units in locations suitable for families. DMPD Policy DMH2 does not permit subdivision of properties, including into the basement or cellar, if the existing house (or flat) has less than 150 sq ms of existing habitable floorspace. Extensions carried out after the end of 2008 will not be counted, including conversion of a non-habitable cellar.

D. Further Design Considerations

4.55 The importance of high quality design of the built environment has been acknowledged in national planning policy contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and all development should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, respond to local character and history and reflect the identity of a local area.

4.56 The general principles covering the design of extensions and alterations are set out in the introduction to this section whilst design advice on specific issues relating to basement extensions is covered here. In all areas the scheme must be well designed and must conserve the character and appearance of the host building and the street. There are additional requirements for conservation areas which are set out in a separate paragraph below. Careful consideration of design and the impact on the street scene can save you time and money - helping you decide at the outset whether a basement extension would be feasible in your property and improving the chances of obtaining planning permission. You can follow up advice in this SPD as necessary with pre-application discussions planning officers.

4.57 Basements or semi-basements are an established feature of houses in some parts of the borough, and in some streets lightwells occupy part or all of the space between the house and the footway. Most streets in the borough, however, retain traditional front gardens, although many houses have cellars under at least part of the house. In streets where basements and lightwells are not a traditional feature, the excavation of a basement can have a significant impact on the appearance of the house and the street scene, both by enlarging the front elevation of the house itself and because part of the front garden may need to be removed to provide a lightwell.

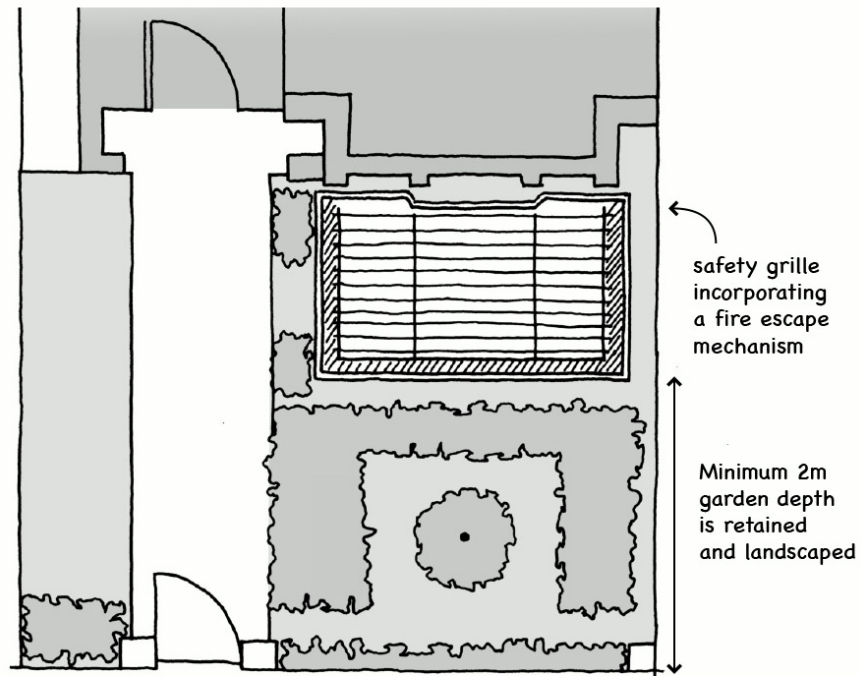
4.58 Where basements are not a characteristic feature, it is particularly important to ensure that any new one is not so prominent as to dominate the front elevation of the house, and that the front garden is not dominated by a lightwell. Construction of basements may involve an array of equipment and other features (referred to elsewhere in these guidelines), such as guard-railings, drainage and anti-flood equipment, skylights and fire escapes. These can be intrusive features, adding clutter to the front garden. Cumulatively, they may have an unacceptable impact, including on the appearance of a property and on the street scene generally. If they are necessary, their location, design and screening should be considered at the outset and not as an afterthought, so that they can be fully taken into account at the planning stage. Enforcement action can be taken against any item added later that has not been granted planning permission. Lightwells should be concealed from public view by landscaping, planting and hedging.

4.59 Front gardens - Any development at the front of a property can have a significant impact on the street scene and particular care needs to be taken. This is especially the case in conservation areas, where DMPD Policy DMS2iii expects planning applications in conservation areas to consider "the enhancement of the space in between and around buildings in front, side and rear gardens...". The size of the front garden will determine the degree of impact a lightwell has on the street scene. In a relatively long front garden, a lightwell is unlikely to be intrusive, and the basement accommodation will remain partly hidden from the street. On the other hand, a shallow front garden could be mostly or entirely lost to a new lightwell. This is unlikely to be acceptable in streets where this is not the traditional pattern. In many locations in Wandsworth, however, a basement may be achievable, but particular care needs to be taken to make sure that the scale and design fit in with the property and the street scene.

4.60 Adopted DMPD Policy DMH5 states that at least 50% of the original front garden must remain after a lightwell has been excavated. DMPD Policy DMH5 sets out a requirement that a minimum depth of 2m of front garden should remain after construction of a lightwell in conservation areas. This will be calculated after the lightwell and its retaining wall and any other necessary installations have been measured, so it is important to find out the exact dimensions of the lightwell wall before you design the lightwell itself. The 2m depth is a minimum and not an average depth, and should be measured from the point of the property that projects furthest into the garden. If this cannot be achieved, then a front lightwell would usually be an inappropriate solution. A cross-reference in DMPD Policy DMS2iii (Managing the historic environment) seeks the conservation and enhancement of the space in between and around a building as well as front and side gardens where the development relates to an historic asset, such as a property in a conservation area. In order to minimise the impact of a new basement it is important that the remaining front garden is well landscaped and finished with an appropriate boundary treatment. The effect to aim for is that of a house, still in single ownership with all windows of similar design and finish, a well planted front garden with a hedge and other plants, finished with a front wall, railings or fence, typical for that style of house and street.

4.61 If you live in a flat and share the front garden you will need the agreement of the other owners for the necessary works and it will be important to agree with them how the remaining garden is to be re-instated and maintained. More information on managing the construction process is provided below.

The diagram below indicates a possible alternative solution where a property occupies a wider than average plot in a conservation area



For best effect and the least impact on the street scene, the lightwell should be covered by a horizontal grille and softened by planting.

Front lightwell incorporating security grille with over half the depth of the garden retained



4.62 Trees - Basements, like above ground development can have a direct or indirect impact upon the survival of trees. Developments are required to minimise any impacts on trees, shrubs and other significant vegetation, including during construction works. Proposals that affect trees should be in accordance with advice in the Council’s Tree Strategy and British Standard 5837:2012 which sets out recommendations for successfully retaining trees where development takes place and set out a process to achieve this, and tunnelling under the Root Protection Area should not be carried out. DMPD Policy DM05 protects trees and set out criteria for works to protected trees (TPOs and trees in conservation areas). It is important that trees are protected during the construction phase, and a detailed methodology should be included in a Construction Method Statement (CMS). If a basement development proposes that a tree be felled, then an arboricultural report must also be prepared setting out a reasoned justification, and where appropriate, be accompanied by a structural engineer’s report.

4.63 The Council expects that the potential impacts on trees from basements should be thoroughly assessed and minimised, to ensure that site specific impacts are avoided/mitigated. The potential cumulative impacts upon the tree composition of the borough should also be addressed – for example recent applications have proposed complete replacement of gardens with full length basement and hard standing above, as well as full length extensions with construction of a vegetation strip above the basement. Such development can have an effect on the tree roots of trees in neighbouring properties as well as those of street trees.

4.64 Lightwells - A lightwell will not usually be approved where they involve the loss of a tree. Where a lightwell is desired adjacent to a street tree, the advice of the Council's Arboricultural Officers will be sought and the application refused where the tree would be harmed by the works. In a conservation area you must notify the Council in writing if you intend to cut down a tree. Special forms are available from the Planning Service website "Application for tree works - Works to trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and/or Notification of proposed works to trees in a conservation area, and/or Notification of proposed works to trees in conservation areas": [Tree works application](#)

4.65 Windows - The design of the front of a new basement should relate to the original building. In particular the size, position and design of windows should be dictated by those in the remainder of the front of the house. They should not necessarily be as large as those in the existing ground floor, nor aligned with them, as the basement accommodation is likely to be doors are likely to look incongruous in period houses and sash windows are likely to be more appropriate.

4.66 Walls - It is important that the original wall finish to the house is copied down to basement level regardless of the finish that is used for the lightwell. That is to say that if the house is built in stock brick, then a matching stock brick should be used for the house wall at basement level. The lightwell however may be painted white to reflect light back into the basement room. If the house bricks have been painted or covered in pebbledash or render that is not characteristic for the area or type of house, then this should be removed as part of the basement scheme. In a conservation area, if this is not part of the proposal, the harm caused by the lightwell may not be seen to be mitigated by sufficient enhancement and may be refused.

4.67 Retaining walls - A lightwell has to be formed by a structurally sound retaining wall which is usually not less than 500 mm thick. The exact thickness and design of this wall must be calculated at an early stage and must be shown accurately to scale (and annotated with dimensions) on your planning drawings. The space allowed for the new front garden and the thickness of the retaining wall will determine the size of the lightwell. Your application may be refused if your drawings are inaccurate or if the lightwell is too large. Enforcement action may be taken if your lightwell is then not built in accordance with your approved plans.

4.68 The basement walls and floors and the lightwell should be designed to be capable of withstanding two-thirds storey height of water pressure. Where there is groundwater flow, the basement will tend to act as a dam, and in this case, arrangements such as suitable underground drainage should be provided to allow groundwater to flow unimpeded around the basement.

4.69 Guarding and grilles - An important consideration is the need to protect people, especially children, from falling into a lightwell. A drop of 600 mm or more should be protected. Railings (1100 mm high) can provide such protection, while allowing light to penetrate. However, in small gardens they can be an intrusive feature, competing for attention with the boundary wall at the front of the property. Therefore, in almost all cases a horizontal grille over the lightwell is less intrusive and the preferred option. It has the advantage of

providing additional security. Part of the grille should be openable to provide access for maintenance and/or a means of escape. Any such mechanism should be as unobtrusive as possible. The mechanism should be of a simple type using gravity or springs that require minimal maintenance and will function in an emergency. The metal grille can be painted to coordinate with the house or its existing railings - black or dark green are suitable colours.

4.70 One possible approach is to roof over the lightwell to provide additional accommodation. However, skylights would need to be inserted to light the basement, and you would need to ensure that adequate arrangements are made for ventilation and possibly fire escape (see below). The structure needed to cover a lightwell can be particularly intrusive, and may not be acceptable in small gardens, in which case a grille would be the best option.

E. Conservation Areas

4.71 This guidance applies throughout the borough but in conservation areas there is an additional duty to conserve and enhance the special historic and architectural character of the conservation areas and avoid visual harm. Before considering any form of development including works to walls, fences and trees, you should read the appropriate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy for the area to understand the special character that the Council is seeking to conserve or enhance. Lightwells will only be allowed where they do not cause harm to that character or the harm can be sufficiently mitigated through other enhancements.

4.72 This means that if a lightwell is to be acceptable, it should comply with all the requirements of this guidance, which supports DMPD Policy DMS2 (Managing the Historic Environment). This policy also aims to conserve and enhance the space in between and around buildings as well as front, side and rear gardens, and to secure the removal of additions or modifications that are considered harmful to the significance of the heritage asset. Original style features that have been lost should therefore be reinstated and uncharacteristic features that have been added should be removed. Items that will enhance the character of the conservation area could include authentically styled iron railings or other correct boundary treatment; and tiled or stone paths. It will normally be appropriate to remove pebbledash, render or paint from bricks so that a correct brick match can be achieved in the lightwell. Other improvements could include the reinstatement of sash windows and appropriate front doors. If these enhancements are not proposed, the scheme will normally be considered too harmful to the character of the conservation area for approval.

4.73 In conservation areas a lightwell will only be deemed acceptable if it is well designed, unobtrusive and concealed by appropriate planting within the front garden. The project should include the laying out of a traditional path (or the repair / maintenance of an existing one, if original) and the retention or reinstatement of the appropriate original boundary treatment. This is so that the harm to the appearance of the conservation area can be mitigated by planting and the restoration (or retention) of original features to the frontage of the house.

4.74 In a conservation area the following will therefore be required:

- Reinstate original style boundary treatment (often railings, but sometimes fencing).
- Reinstate or repair original path to front door (as appropriate to the type of house).
- Plant sufficient permanent living shrubs and planting in the front garden (such as traditional hedging) to ensure that the lightwell is concealed from view.

4.75 It should be noted that a lightwell may not be acceptable in a conservation area where it would be so harmful to the character or appearance of the area that it could not be outweighed by the re-introduction of lost features. If the front garden is deemed too small to accommodate a lightwell that would conserve the character of the conservation area, the development will not be allowed.

4.76 It may be possible to achieve adequate natural lighting at the rear of the property in the event that constraints exist at the front. However, this would normally provide a large single room and is not possible in any other design or reconfiguration. In addition, this may only be acceptable in a private (not shared) garden and subject to the remaining garden meeting minimum standards after the lightwell is constructed (see DMPD Policies DMH5 and DMH7). This solution may not be desirable or achievable in communal gardens where a rear lightwell could present a greater risk to other users of the garden, may reduce the amount of useable garden space and could result for additional light spillage from the lightwell detrimental to the amenities of the occupiers of other flats.

F. Other Technical Considerations

4.77 In addition to planning considerations, other factors will influence the potential for a basement development and the design of your proposal. These are summarised below.

4.78 Headroom - The depth of excavation needed to provide sufficient headroom is an important cost consideration. The headroom that you will need to plan for will depend on the way in which the basement is to be used. There is no statutory minimum requirement for ceiling heights, although the staircase should provide 2.0 m headroom. It is, nevertheless, generally recommended that residential accommodation should have a minimum ceiling height of 2.15m where possible. This is covered in more detail in the Mayor's Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), and for stairways, in the Building Regulations.

4.79 Fire resistance and means of escape - The windows in basement rooms should be openable and of a suitable size to give access to a place of safety leading to ground level outside. Alternatively a protected escape route can be provided within the dwelling that leads to a final exit. The Council's Building Control Service will be able to provide more detailed advice but if this causes changes to the design of your lightwell then you must inform the Planning Service as you may need to vary your permission. Stairs or ladders, and associated gates in any guard railings (where allowed) around the lightwell should be designed to be inconspicuous from a public place. The basement ceiling must provide a half hour fire resistance in the case of a dwelling house or 1 hour resistance in the case of flats. The

basement must also be separated from the remainder of the house by means of a half hour fire-resisting partition including the access door. You are advised to refer to the Building Control Service and/or Building Regulations for further information.

4.80 Underpinning and party wall agreements - The foundations adjoining a new basement might need to be underpinned, and this may also be necessary if you plan to lower the floor of an existing cellar. You will need a Party Wall Agreement with your neighbour(s) covering this. It is likely that your project will affect your neighbour(s), and The Party Wall etc. Act 1996 requires you to make agreement with them in this case. You should employ a professionally qualified Party Wall Surveyor to act on your behalf. Please note that Wandsworth Council has no input into Party Wall negotiations unless they are a freeholder of an adjoining property.

4.81 Underground services - You will need to establish whether any water mains or supply pipes, electricity cables, or gas pipes will need to be relocated. You should consult the utility companies to check if any of their services or equipment would be affected by excavation.

4.82 Land stability, groundwater and drainage matters - Land stability can be an issue in parts of the borough. It is recommended that you carry out a soil investigation to confirm that the subsoil conditions are adequate to maintain the stability of the existing buildings and of the development and land adjacent to it. This should also include investigations into the groundwater conditions and any water course that may be affected.

4.83 In some areas, cellars are vulnerable to groundwater seeping up through the structure, and this may be severe enough to cause flooding. Groundwater levels in London are rising. A basement to be used as living accommodation must be free from damp and, because it will be below ground, normal methods of damp-proofing will not usually work, and external tanking or other specialist waterproofing methods will need to be adopted. If you have an existing problem with water, you should check first that it is groundwater and not a leaking drain.

4.84 Further information can be obtained through the construction industry research and information website called "improving the flood resistance to your home - [advice sheets](#)".

4.85 You may also need to consider measures to minimise any damage, for example the placement of electrical circuits. The extent of basement flooding has been reduced by the completion of sewer relief schemes, and basements must incorporate a positive pumped device or other suitable flood prevention device to the development to avoid the risk of sewage backflow and sewer flooding. This is because the sewerage network may surcharge to ground level during storm conditions. A non-return valve can be fitted in the last manhole before connecting to the main sewer. Dependent upon its construction, this valve might require regular maintenance to ensure it does not stick. Thames Water Utilities Ltd can provide up-to-date advice on whether there is a known risk of sewer flooding and whether an anti-flood valve should be fitted.

4.86 You should establish the position and level of any drains or sewers before work starts, as you may need to move or lower existing drains. Any alteration to the route or level of existing drains may require approval by your neighbours and/or Thames Water Utilities Ltd.

4.87 If the drains are well below the level of the floor of the proposed basement, then conventional drainage can probably be used for any bathroom or kitchen in the basement. If, however, the waste needs to be raised from the basement, or if you need to lower existing drains under the house below the level of the sewer, you will need to install a macerator-pump system of drainage. In this case, there must also be a gravity WC available within the dwelling. Macerator-pump systems must be fitted with a storage tank of such capacity to contain 12 hours discharge, and be fitted with twin-pumps with automatic change-over, and audible and visual alarm systems in case of failure.

4.88 If you share your drainage with your neighbours, any equipment installed to prevent flooding will need to be accessible to them, as well as to Thames Water Utilities Ltd in case it develops a fault.

G. Advice to Neighbours

4.89 When a planning application has been submitted, the Council will write to neighbours to seek comments on the proposal before a decision is made. Whilst basement extensions can require a raft of different permissions, only matters relating to planning legislation can be taken into account in determining planning applications. To assist you in drafting your response, the information below aims to guide you by separating out the main planning considerations from the other controls generally relevant to a basement development.

4.90 If you are aware that a neighbour is planning to carry out a basement development, you are encouraged to speak to them in the first instance, for example if you are concerned about potential noise, dust and disturbance, or wish to know more about structural alterations, the consideration of flood risk, or how excavated earth will be removed. Communication is key to resolving issues satisfactorily before and during the build. Discussing the proposal together can help to clarify the scope of the works, and you may wish to ask them (or their agent or a developer) for a timetable which would show when each stage of works are likely to take place and request to be notified when the most noisy or dusty stages of the build are programmed to commence. This will also help you to determine whether you should instruct a Party Wall Surveyor, the cost of which is the responsibility of the applicant or their agent. By law, adjoining owners must be given notice of work covered by the Party Wall Act, which also provides a mechanism for resolving disputes. An explanatory leaflet on the Act has been published by the Government which can be downloaded: [Party Wall guide](#).

4.91 **Commenting on planning applications** - when planning permission is required, a planning application is submitted to the Council who will then publicise the application and seek the views of neighbours before making a decision. The Council welcomes comments

from neighbours to assist in making decisions on a planning application, and of course your comments may be in support of a proposal. However, it is important to remember in drafting your response that by law, the Council can only consider the issues which can be controlled by planning legislation and must not duplicate other controls, such as the Building Regulations, environmental health and licencing matters. Construction issues are not a planning consideration, however the Council provides guidance for developers to encourage them to carefully plan building works to minimise disturbance and other impacts of the build. These matters are usually covered in a Construction Method Statement, and the Council also recommends that any contractors are members of the Considerate Constructors Scheme which is discussed in more detail below.

4.92 In practice, the main planning issues, sometimes referred to as “material considerations”, are:

- design and appearance
- impact on the streetscene
- impact on garden space
- effect on trees (including during the construction process)
- effect on the Heritage Asset (conservation area, listed building or protected tree)
- impact on flood risk
- quality of accommodation in the new basement extension.

4.93 Overview of other relevant Council services and legislation related to the building process - The Council’s Building Control officers and privately-appointed Approved Inspectors enforce standards contained in the Building Regulations, such as engineering design and structural stability: [Wandsworth Building Control](#)

4.94 Noise, vibration and dust emissions, and working hours related to the Environmental Protection Act are enforced by the Environmental Health Division: [Environmental Health Services](#)

4.95 The Party Wall Act provides a framework for preventing and resolving disputes in relation to party walls, boundary walls and excavations near neighbouring buildings: [Party Wall Act](#)

4.96 The Highways Act ensures the safe and efficient use of roads, covering for example the control of builders skips and materials stored on the highway. As most of the residential parts of the borough are located within a Controlled Parking Zone, unauthorised parking or use of parking bays is separately controlled and enforced: [Licences and CPZ suspensions](#)

4.97 Further information on relevant planning policy and design matters are provided above, and may be helpful in drafting any planning application response you may wish to make.

H. Construction Issues

4.98 The Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Guide - If a basement has not been properly designed and built, problems relating to water ingress and/or structural stability of the property can occur. An LABC guide on the design and construction of basements has been produced (with LABC Warranty) to highlight key design and construction matters that can have a significant impact on the outcome of basement projects. It covers water ingress in some detail as this is often the result of failures in the construction of the basement which can be costly and difficult to rectify retrospectively. It is important to ensure that the design and construction work is carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced contractor and the Guide also provides advice on selecting your design team, which typically comprises an architect, structural engineer and waterproofing specialist. The Guide is free to download at: [LABC guide](#)

4.99 The construction of a basement is a substantial building project, involving excavation, the removal of spoil, concrete delivery and pouring, and the building work itself. Basement construction can be a lengthy process and tends to create noise, vibration, dust, air and light pollution and can therefore significantly affect the amenity of neighbouring properties. There may also be impacts on pedestrians and on the highway if the construction has not been carefully considered in advance. It is conceivable that in certain roads, a number of basements may be under construction at the same time, which will mean that cumulatively any negative impacts are compounded and therefore must be anticipated and carefully managed. Many problems can be avoided if a Construction Method Statement (CMS) has been prepared and submitted with the planning application, and if the appointed contractors are members of the Considerate Construction Scheme. More information is provided on their website: [Considerate constructors](#)

4.100 Construction Method Statement - The Council strongly encourages applicants to prepare a Construction Method Statement (CMS) in advance. This is a REQUIREMENT for listed buildings. Where a CMS has not been submitted as part of a planning application, to make a scheme acceptable planning permission may be granted on condition that a CMS is provided to the Council's satisfaction. In all cases the Construction Method Statement must be independently verified at the cost of the applicant, and Wandsworth Building Control can provide this service for you.

4.101 As the works can be particularly intrusive to immediate neighbours, you are advised to let them know in advance when work is planned to take place.

4.102 Talking to neighbours and applying for the relevant skip licences and parking permit suspensions in good time can also help make the build run more smoothly. You should ensure that your builders avoid the use of grab lorries, which can block the highway.

4.103 You are strongly encouraged to prepare a Construction Method Statement (CMS) - and this is a requirement if your property is a listed building. The CMS must be independently verified at the cost of the applicant, Wandsworth Building Control can provide this service for you. For basement projects a CMS would be expected to cover:

- appointment of suitably qualified professional (civil or structural engineer)
- a ground and hydrological condition report dealing with groundwater flow ensuring structural stability during excavation and demolition
- temporary propping/temporary works and construction work, minimising disturbance
- drilling of boreholes
- sequence of temporary works to minimise the effect on neighbours
- management of water flow
- cumulative impacts
- professional verification of works safeguarding amenity: noise vibration and dust from construction work
- construction traffic management plan (see paragraph 4.33).

4.104 The removal of excavated spoil is commonly achieved by the use of an enclosed conveyor belt, which draws excavated materials from the site, over the footway, and deposits it in a skip placed on the carriageway. The conveyor belt must be sited at least 2.3 m above the footway. Contractors must ensure that this equipment meets all safety requirements, including lighting and statutory signage. In most locations, the use of a grab lorry to empty a skip on-site is likely to cause obstruction to the highway. Skips should, therefore, be removed from the site to be emptied. If you are removing spoil from the rear of the property, such as a lightwell or beneath the garden, you need to be aware that this may have to be conveyed underneath your property if you do not have your own side access. This may have additional implications on the effect on foundations, utility infrastructure such as pipes and sewers, and on tree roots particularly from neighbouring properties.

4.105 Considerate Constructors Scheme - Excavation and construction of a basement needs to be carefully planned and co-ordinated to avoid problems such as noise, dust, disturbance to neighbours, removal of spoil and storage of materials. It is strongly advised that you sign up to a Considerate Constructors Scheme. This is a non-profit-making, independent organisation founded by the construction industry to improve its image. Construction sites, companies and suppliers voluntarily register with the Scheme and agree

to abide by the Code of Considerate Practice, designed to encourage best practice beyond statutory requirements. More information on the Code can be found online: [Considerate constructors scheme](#) The Code of Considerate Practice commits those sites and companies registered with the Scheme to care about appearance, respect the community, protect the environment, secure everyone's safety and value their workforce. Construction sites, companies and suppliers operating within the UK can register with the Scheme. The Scheme is open to construction sites, companies and suppliers of all types and size and for every type of construction activity. Registered sites, companies and suppliers are monitored, and posters are displayed around the construction site, promoting registration with the Scheme. If passers-by wish to comment, the name and telephone number of the site manager or company contact is clearly displayed, alongside the freephone telephone number of the Scheme's administration office. Registered companies also display a vehicle sticker or magnet, showing their unique registration number, on every company and supplier vehicle used on the public highway. Sites should be registered before any construction activity commences, including initial demolition work. Construction companies, including main and trade contractors, can register at any time. Construction suppliers can register at any time. As a general guideline, building operations audible at the site boundary should be confined to the hours of 08.00 to 18.00 (Mondays to Fridays) and 08.00 – 13.00 (Saturdays). Further information is provide on the Council's website: [Noise problems](#).

Alterations to Roofs and Loft Conversions

Introduction

4.106 The purpose of this guidance is to help you plan your scheme so that you are more likely to achieve a successful outcome. It will also help you to design something that will avoid harming your neighbour's amenity and ensure that the character and appearance of the house and area is protected.

4.107 The guidance starts by offering some general advice about whether you will need to apply for planning permission and approval under the [Building Regulations](#) and then sets out what the Council's planning policies are relating to alterations to roofs and loft conversions.

Format

4.108 The format of the main design guidance is in the form of a sequence of questions that you should consider when planning a loft conversion. Consider these questions in the order in which they are listed and it will help you work out what the issues are and whether you are going to encounter problems getting planning permission for the scheme that you want. The questions cover the issues that the Council will take into account when assessing your plans.

4.109 Essentially the Council's planners have two main concerns:

- Appearance: what will it look like and whether your scheme is likely to harm the appearance of your house and harm the appearance of the area generally and;
- Impact on neighbours: will your scheme cause any harmful impact on the amenities of your neighbours?

4.110 The issues concerning appearance are covered by considering the first 3 questions:

1 Is the existing loft space large enough?

If you already have a large loft space with generous headroom, it is going to be much easier to achieve a successful loft conversion. On the other hand a small loft with little existing headroom may need a large extension in order to create a viable living space and this may not be visually acceptable.

2 Is your house or flat in a conservation area?

The guidance given here will tell you how to ensure that any alterations to your property will preserve its attractive appearance.

3 Will the alteration or extension to your roof be clearly visible from the street?

If the alteration you are proposing will be visible from the street it is important to ensure that it is well designed and will not spoil the appearance of your house. The guidance here looks at the different locations that commonly arise and suggests what you will need to do to design an acceptable scheme.

4.111 The issues concerning the range of possible impacts on neighbours are then covered under question 4:

4 How will the scheme affect your neighbours?

This explains how to avoid affecting your neighbour's privacy; daylight and sunlight and how to minimise visual impact generally.

4.112 Finally, the guidance goes on to provide advice on both large and small scale details - for this, see questions 5 & 6. Here you will find advice about what to consider when designing a hip to gable extension; extensions over back additions; mansard roofs and traditional dormer windows.

4.113 At the end you will find a list giving suggestions for further reading and contact details.

Will I Need Planning Permission and Building Regulations approval?

4.114 You should always check first with the Council's [Planning Service](#) to establish whether you will need planning permission for your project. You will generally need planning permission if the house is in a conservation area and the works involve altering the shape of the roof. Outside a conservation area you must obtain planning permission if the works involve extending the front of the roof or raising the height of the ridge or if you are extending the roof by more than a certain amount. Some loft conversions may be permitted development, but as the rules are complex you should check with the Council and consult the householder guide on the [Planning Portal](#). Planning permission is always required for flats and maisonettes, and in conservation areas. Regardless of whether you require planning permission, a roof extension can be a prominent feature on your property and on the street scene, and this document will be a useful guide to achieving good design. Sustainable design, including energy conservation measures are incorporated into the Building Regulations. As you will see from the guidance below, in some situations and locations it may be that a loft extension is not considered appropriate or that you will have to re-think your proposals.

4.115 You will certainly need Building Regulations approval and the Council's [Building Control Service](#) will tell you what is required. The Building Regulations impose certain structural and other requirements particularly where it comes to access stairs and this may limit what options are available to you. However, in meeting these requirements the result may be a conflict with planning objectives concerning the external appearance of the proposed extension. These issues should be established in the initial stages of your project to ensure that the requirements are embedded in the final design to be submitted for planning permission.

4.116 Due to the complex nature of the Building Regulations, and the individual circumstances of each building or project, it is strongly advised that you contact the Council's Building Control service in the first instance to discuss your project.

Planning Policy

4.117 The Council's planning policies are contained within the [Local Plan](#): the Core Strategy, and the Development Management Policies Document (DMPD).

4.118 The relevant policies that apply to loft extensions are:

- Core Strategy Policy IS3
- DMPD Policy DMS1 (c)
- DMPD Policy DMS2 (a) and (b) (i), (ii), (iii), and (iv)
- DMPD Policy DMH5 (i) and (ii).

4.119 In particular, Policy DMH5 (i) and (ii) state: "...extensions and alterations will be permitted where: (i) an extension is well designed, uses appropriate materials and is not so large that it dominates and competes with the original building and; (ii) an extension, dormer window or other alteration to a roof is confined to the rear of a building but where it is visible from the street or any other public place; it is sympathetic to the style of the building, not visually intrusive and does not harm either the street scene or the building's appearance."

4.120 National policy guidance for schemes in conservation areas (or affecting other heritage assets) is contained within the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF).

Design Guidance

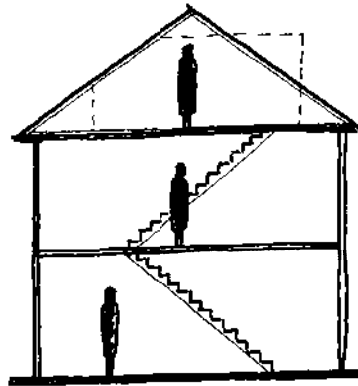
1. IS THE EXISTING LOFT SPACE LARGE ENOUGH?

4.121 Roof forms vary and some loft spaces are more suited to conversion than others in terms of size, shape and construction.

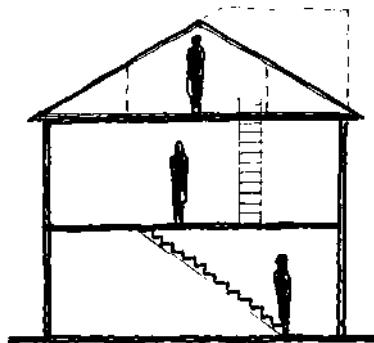
4.122 Stand in your loft and see if there is enough space for a room just as it is. Remember also that the headroom now would be reduced when the loft floor is strengthened.

4.123 Ideally, your existing loft should be large enough to accommodate the room(s) you want without any need for major extensions. All you should then need are dormer windows – i.e. vertical windows inserted in a structure protruding from the roof slope – or even just a roof-light.

An existing loft with a generous headroom means that large extensions are not necessary for successful conversion



The headroom in this small loft space is poor and a large extension will be necessary to make a viable space. The large, bulky extension necessary will mean that it may not be possible to get planning permission for the scheme.



4.124 More often though, roofs are extended to create headroom where none exists at present. Generally there is no minimum ceiling height requirement in the Building Regulations, but a ceiling lower than 2.1m (7'0") will seem cramped. Remember also that a new structural floor and roof will have to be built and this means that the finished headroom will be about 300mm (1'0") less than the headroom you have in your loft at present. To achieve a reasonable amount of space with adequate headroom may mean major alterations to the loft, which could alter the look of your house quite dramatically. This could mean that the scheme would be ruled out because of its poor appearance.

4.125 If you have a modern house with a trussed roof construction it may be possible to convert the loft space but you may find that it will be a complicated and expensive job.

4.126 The existing roofs of 'back additions' will invariably be incapable of adaptation due to the low pitch in which case a substantial extension will be required to create a viable space. The 'London' or 'Butterfly' Roof is similarly also incapable of adaptation. Any scheme in these locations will effectively involve the construction of an entirely new roof. There is specific advice on each of these types of alteration later in this guidance.

4.127 The most common design problem is the need to extend the roof to accommodate the new access staircase and meet the Building Regulations requirement for headroom over the stairs. The general requirement for headroom over staircases is 2.00m. This can be reduced to a minimum 1.90m on the centre-line of the flight at pinch points, and in this case the headroom on one side must be 2.00m and on the other not less than 1.80m.

4.128 In the case of many semi-detached and terraced houses the existing stairs are located beside a party wall (this is the wall dividing one house from another). This means that the most efficient and logical location for the new stair into the loft is also against the party wall i.e. directly above the lower staircase. Since the new stair rises into a part of the loft near the eaves, there will be insufficient headroom and it may well be necessary to provide an extension to the roof right against the party wall. In the case of a mid-terraced house where the roof cannot be clearly seen from the street this is not usually a problem. However, if the roof can be seen from the street this is something we try to avoid because the extension would almost certainly look bulky and out of proportion to the roof. This may mean that it is not possible to design a satisfactory roof extension.

4.129 It is important to carry out thorough calculations with regard to room heights and the angle of roof slopes at the start of the design process. As built, any extension must correspond exactly with that which received planning permission otherwise you may be liable to enforcement action by the Planning Service.

2. IS YOUR HOUSE OR FLAT IN A CONSERVATION AREA?

4.130 [Conservation areas](#) are those parts of the borough that have a special architectural character and/or are of historic interest. There are more than 40 conservation areas in the borough. Inappropriate alterations have the potential to spoil the character and appearance of conservation areas. The Council has published [Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Strategies](#) for the conservation areas and these are available on the web site. The Appraisals highlight what is important about the area and there is guidance in the management plans about alterations to houses. Reading the relevant Appraisal for your conservation area will help you write the [Design and Access Statement](#) which must accompany your application for planning permission.

4.131 Roofs are obviously an important feature of every urban scene. Distant views are often dominated by roofscapes. In conservation areas proposed changes to the appearance of buildings are closely scrutinised to ensure that the special quality of the area will be preserved. If your house is in a conservation area any alterations to the roof should preserve or enhance the special character or appearance of that particular area. This may mean that the possibility for acceptable schemes is more limited than elsewhere, particularly if the

alterations will be visible from public areas - and particularly if the gaps between the houses are significant. It will depend on the type of roof you have, the amount you want to alter it and how visible the alteration will be. In conservation areas it will be most important to preserve the original appearance of those parts of the house that can be most easily seen from the street and the way the house contributes to the street scene.

4.132 In a conservation area it is very important to ensure that the original appearance of the house is preserved. The following is a list of the significant component features of a roof that combine together to make up the appearance of a house. Look at each feature listed below and think about how it could be affected by your proposal. This will help you to judge whether the attractive appearance of your house will be preserved.

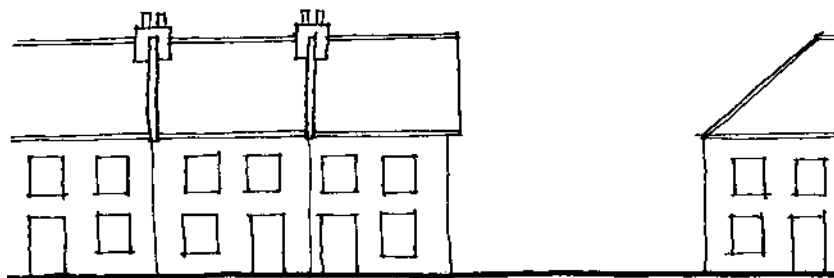
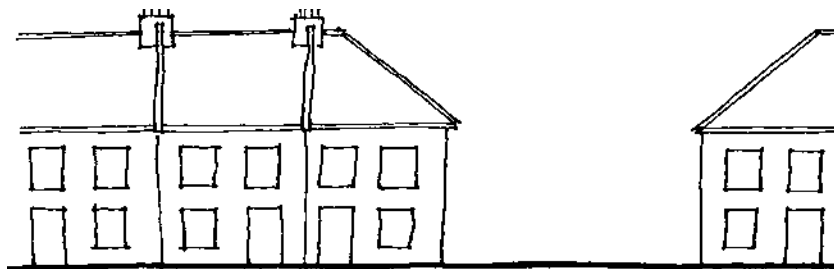
Roof Form

4.133 The pitch (steepness) and the shape (gabled or hipped) of a roof are important features and should be retained. In particular hipped roofs on semi-detached pairs of houses or on end of terraced houses are often characteristic features and must always be retained. It is rarely possible to change a hipped roof to a roof with a gable end without spoiling the appearance of the house and harming the appearance of the conservation area. Similarly, gables at the ends of terraces are also significant features and their profile should not be altered. Building up a gable will significantly increase the sense of enclosure in a narrow street, making it feel more cramped and oppressive, as well as generally looking less elegant than a hipped roof.

Changing the hipped roof to a gable spoils the appearance of this semi detached pair of houses



Hipped roofs at the ends of terraces are attractive features and should be retained. The lower sketch shows how altering a hipped roof can reduce the space between buildings and spoil the appearance of the roofscape



4.134 The relationship of the roof with features like bay windows and chimneys is important. The sense of unity created by a run of similar roofs is likely to be an important and welcome feature. Conversely, the variety of original roofs that exists in some conservation areas reflects the piecemeal way the area developed and should not be unthinkingly evened out.

Sometimes a street is made up of different buildings which produces an attractive variety to the roovescape. This is a distinctive characteristic and should always be maintained



Poor design: The same street but with alterations to the roofs that have reduced the variety between buildings and changed the distinctive character of the street



4.135 Roof designs reflect changing architectural tastes. The roofs of Georgian and early/mid Victorian terraced houses, for example, are often entirely concealed behind parapets, or have very shallow pitches (covered with slates), appearing as flat roofs from ground level. Later Victorian and Edwardian houses often have steeper roofs that are the dominant feature of the building-often these are covered with clay tiles and these frequently incorporate decorative features such as bracketed eaves, elaborate barge boards, crested ridges and finials. Architectural features that are characteristic of the historic period of the house should be retained.

Dormer Windows

4.136 Many older houses incorporate modest accommodation within the roof as part of the original design. Original small dormer windows may be an attractive part of the original design and a valuable part of the street scene. They should be retained.

4.137 Where new dormer windows are proposed it is important that the original architecture of the building is studied carefully so that window details relate to the original building and that scale and location is carefully considered in relation to the exterior of the building as a whole. Internal factors should not be allowed to dictate the placing of windows to the extent that the appearance of the exterior of the building suffers. New dormer windows on the front of the houses of uniform design are generally not welcomed.

Chimney Stacks

4.138 Chimneys are key features of the historic environment; they often incorporate decoration such as corbelling out at the top or brick ribs, which emphasise the overall style of the building. It is expected that all chimney stacks and chimney pots within conservation areas will be retained or, if necessary, rebuilt as part of approved roof alteration schemes.

4.139 Changing the profile of the roof can dramatically reduce the impact of important chimneys thus having a detrimental impact on the appearance of the building. Restoration of previously removed chimney stacks would be a welcome part of a roof conversion project.

4.140 Where a chimney stack is 'live' - i.e. it is in use, the Building Regulations require that it must terminate at a minimum height above any roof abutting it. This could be a minimum of 600 mm or 1000 mm above the abutting roof depending upon the location of the chimney stack to the ridge. This dimension is measured from the abutting roof surface to the top of the chimney stack not including any chimney pot or other termination.

Proper Mansard and Mansard Style Roofs

4.141 Very few buildings in the borough were originally built with mansard roofs. The true mansard has a steep lower slope and a less steep upper slope, whereas most so-called mansards today incorporate only a very steep single slope with a large flat roof on top. The addition of a mansard can be a highly intrusive roof alteration. It is unlikely that the addition of mansard roofs will be considered as an acceptable alteration to roofs, which are visible from public areas within conservation areas.

4.142 However, mansard style additions (i.e. one steep pitch with a flat roof over) to the rear roof slope of mid-terraced houses where the roofs are subdivided by party walls are usually acceptable where these cannot be clearly seen from the street.

4.143 However, for houses at the end of a terrace and on a corner, the rear mansard style addition should be avoided. This type of change would result in an unsightly alteration to the shape of the gable end that would be clearly visible from the street and so harm the

appearance of the conservation area. In these situations a well proportioned and traditionally detailed dormer on the rear roof slope, that is set in from the edge of the roof and preserves the shape of the gable end, would be more appropriate.

Roof extensions - an additional floor

4.144 In some locations variety between buildings at roof level is an important characteristic of a conservation area. It may not be appropriate to add an additional floor and, for example, raise a two storey building to three storeys simply because the adjacent building was built with three storeys. It is important to maintain variety between buildings where this is a distinctive feature of the street.

Materials

4.145 Roof materials are important. Clay tile and Welsh slate are the most common historic roof coverings. Roof extensions should incorporate materials to match the original roof material. The use of concrete roof tiles and artificial slates has detracted from the overall appearance of many historic roofscapes. Historically the use of lead has usually been limited to the cheeks (sides) of dormers and sometimes the flat roofs of bays and porches and it must be carefully detailed if the scheme is to be successful. A good standard of workmanship is always very important in obtaining a satisfactory result.

3. WILL THE ALTERATION OR EXTENSIONS BE CLEARLY VISIBLE FROM THE STREET?

4.146 Will it be possible to see the alteration from the street outside or from neighbouring streets? If it will, then the external appearance of your extension is going to be particularly important because your roof is part of the street scene. This is especially important if you live in a conservation area.

4.147 Look at the roofs in your street to see if any have been altered already. Where surrounding roofs have not been altered it may be that the Council considers it an inappropriate location for roof extensions, as they would spoil the appearance of a group of houses. For example where a terrace has 'London' roofs concealed by a parapet and none have been extended.

4.148 In an area where none of the roofs have been altered it is particularly important that any alterations set a good example for the rest to follow. The good schemes can then be copied to ensure a consistently high standard of appearance. On the other hand, just because a particularly bad alteration has taken place this does not justify further harm by allowing similar alterations to occur. So don't look at a neighbour's ugly extension and use it as an excuse to do the same thing. Many very bad alterations were carried out before the planning legislation was tightened up.

4.149 Look at the following locations and consider the advice given in each case.

Front roof slopes

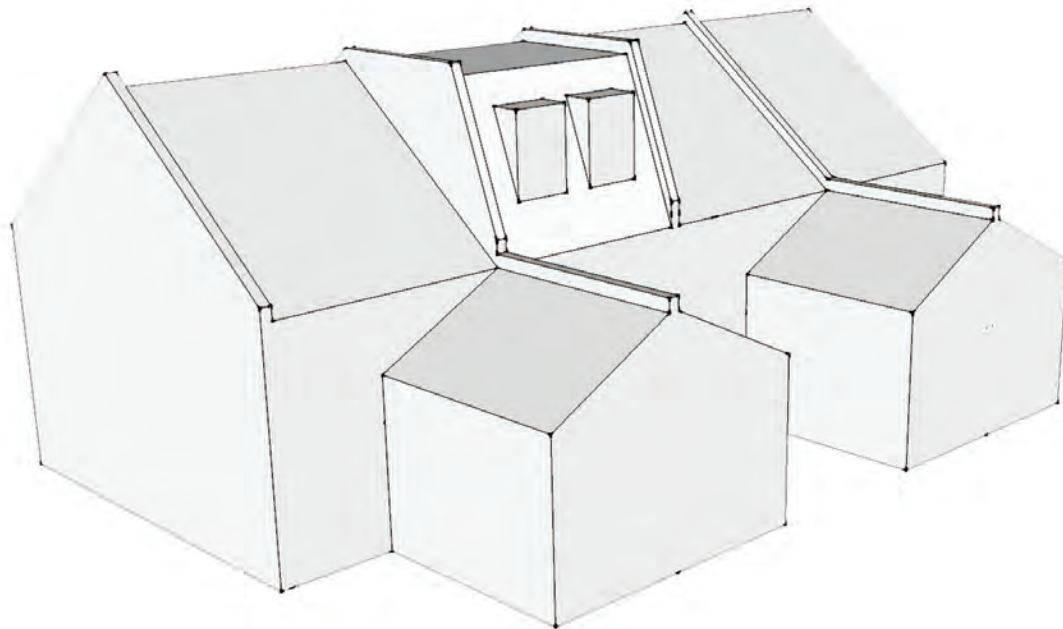
4.150 Because they usually affect the most visible part of any house, loft extensions that involve alterations to front roof slopes are always sensitive and difficult to achieve successfully. An inappropriate alteration or extension to the front of the roof can spoil the appearance of many houses. Consequently, alterations to the front of houses are rarely acceptable.

4.151 Raising the ridge of the roof in order to achieve more head room in a loft is an increasingly common alteration. However, raising the ridge to make the pitch of the roof steeper is not acceptable on a terraced house where this would make the front roof slope different from its neighbours. Sometimes it is acceptable to retain the pitch of the roof at the front and extend the slope up to form a higher ridge. Always avoid a vertical step at the ridge as this is likely to be visually intrusive. You should bear in mind that the objective is to make the alteration as unobtrusive as possible and do not attempt to increase the height of the ridge more than a very modest amount.

Rear roofs of mid-terraced houses

4.152 The rear of the roof on a mid terraced house is the area likely to be least visible from the street and often present the most straightforward opportunities for substantial alteration and successful loft conversion projects. This is especially the case for traditionally constructed Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing where party walls typically extend up through the roof and separate each individual house from the next. In this case the simplest, most efficient form of extension can be achieved by extending the party walls up to enclose an extension that spans the full width of the house. This type of extension is best finished with an outward facing mansard-style, steep sloping roof with a flat roof on top. The rooms inside should be lit by traditionally detailed dormer windows projecting from the steep rear slope. A vertical face to the extension should normally be avoided as the additional bulk can be more intrusive and over-bearing on the neighbouring property.

Extending the full width of the house with a mansard style between built up party walls works well with a 70 degree pitched roof on mid-terraced houses. This type of extension should not be used on corner houses or houses where there are no exposed party walls



4.153 The Building Regulations require a minimum standard of fire resistance for party walls, and also for sound attenuation across them. Where a party wall is intended to be extended it is best done in 225mm brickwork. The construction is structurally robust and easily meets all other requirements of the Building Regulations. If a neighbouring property is similarly extended, there will be minimal constructional difficulties in meeting the requirements and thus provide good separation between the two dwellings. Neighbour disputes caused by noise penetration through a party wall will therefore be less likely.

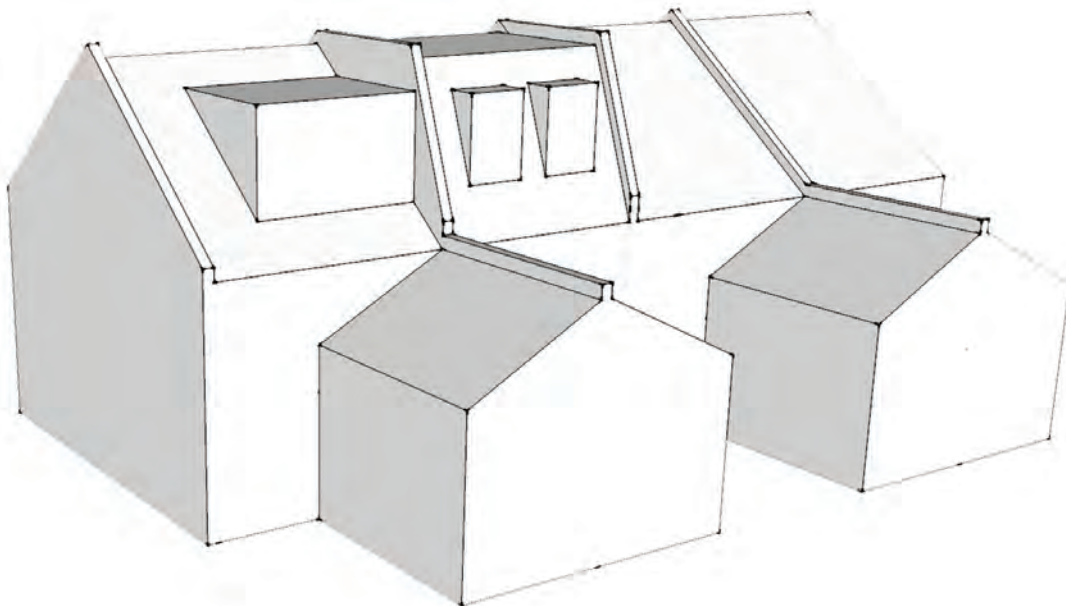
4.154 Some terraced houses have been built with no subdivision of the roof by party walls and the entire terrace can appear to sit under one long unbroken roof. In situations like this it is not appropriate to consider a design that proposes an extension across the full width of the property between newly constructed party walls. Inevitably the new party walls would be visible at the front of the house and intrude above an unbroken ridge line. Here a simple dormer extension at the rear, that is set below the ridge, above the eaves and in from the property boundary at the sides is usually the most appropriate design solution.

4.155 An extension over a back addition in a mid-terrace situation is likely to be less widely visible. However, care should be taken with the bulk and design of the extension to ensure that it does not cause unreasonable harm to your neighbours' amenities. The external appearance of an extension over the back addition is still important and you should look at the advice given later under the heading - "Are the Large Scale Details Right?" In particular the mass of the extension should respect the hierarchy of the rear addition and should not appear top heavy.

Buildings on or close to corners

4.156 Corner buildings are always prominent and all parts of the roof are often clearly visible from the street and any alteration to the roof must be designed sensitively. In some very prominent locations it may not be possible to achieve a satisfactory loft conversion if this would involve a bulky extension that would appear incongruous and not sensitive to the original design of the house. For example, changing a hipped roof to a gabled roof on a corner house could be disruptive to a consistent and harmonious roofscape where the hipped roof form is a common feature. If it is considered acceptable to create a gabled roof it should not be combined with the mansard style addition at the rear. This is appropriate only on mid-terraced houses and a mansard style extension should not be applied to the back of a corner house where it will be clearly visible from the street. On corners, it is recommended that extensions to the roof should consist of a well proportioned and traditionally detailed dormer on the rear roof slope; set lower than the ridge and sufficiently far in from the edge of the roof in order to preserve the shape of the gable end.

Good practice dormer extension set in from gable end and down from ridge. The adjoining mansard extension shows how the raised party walls should be at 70 degrees with well proportioned projecting dormers

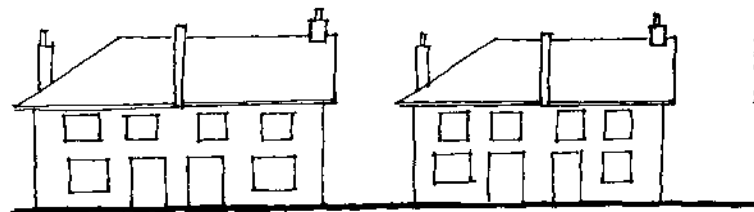
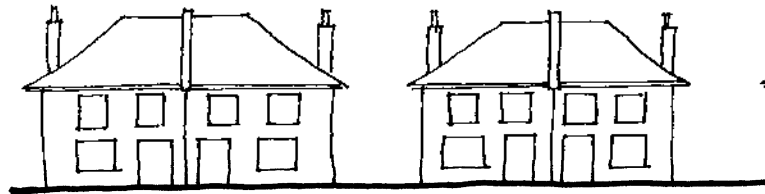


4.157 Extensions over back additions to corner houses or houses close enough to corners that are clearly visible from the street are potentially very visually intrusive. They must be sensitively designed and detailed to a very high standard in order to ensure that they do not harm an attractive street scene. It is important to understand that a corner house may not be capable of being extended the way other similar, mid-terrace houses have been.

Roofs of semi-detached and detached houses

4.158 Due to the gaps between buildings, the sides of the roof of semi-detached and detached houses will be visible from the street and in some cases the rear of roofs may also be visible from the street. Semi-detached houses are almost always designed with similar, complementary architectural features and are seen as a symmetrical pair. It is very important to preserve the essential roof shape of one half of the pair so that the overall symmetry is maintained. Changing a hipped roof to a gable on one half of an unaltered semi-detached pair is unlikely to be supported, so consider the addition of a well proportioned dormer to the side roof slope instead.

The top sketch shows an attractive, unaltered group of semi detached pairs of houses. The bottom sketch shows how insensitive alterations can spoil the distinctive arrangement of roofs and harm the appearance of the group



A small, traditionally detailed dormer can be located on the hipped end of a semi-detached house without harming the appearance of the pair. The same solution can be applied to end of terrace houses with hipped roofs



4.159 In the case of an individual detached house it may be possible to alter the roof to make the pitch steeper and so increase the amount of space available in the loft. This is usually acceptable if the increase in roof pitch is modest and the resultant roof still retains its original shape and proportions. It is not acceptable to alter the pitch of a roof where the roof is considered to be a particularly interesting feature of the building and a key part of its character and appearance. Early Victorian houses with shallow-pitched slate-covered roofs are one example, and this is especially the case where a particular roof design is a distinctive and consistent feature in the area and a noticeable alteration to one would be inconsistent and out of keeping with the others. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, hipped roofs on detached houses should always be retained especially in conservation areas.

4. HOW WILL THE SCHEME AFFECT YOUR NEIGHBOURS?

4.160 Generally, where gardens are longer it is possible to see more of the surrounding roofs. Where the backs of buildings are closer, views of the roof are more likely to be confined to just a few of your neighbours but because they are closer their amenities may be affected. This may arise because the new windows in the extension will overlook their private space to an unreasonable degree. The bulk of the extension may also take away sky views and be overbearing or oppressive when viewed from their property. This is particularly a problem if the scheme includes an extension over the back addition because these can be more intrusive.

4.161 It is important that your neighbours should not suffer unreasonable harm to the normal enjoyment of their homes as a result of your proposal. Harm to your neighbour's amenities could include:

- Loss of privacy as a result of overlooking.
- Loss of daylight and sunlight.
- Visual impact.

Privacy

4.162 A new window (or windows) in your converted loft space could overlook one of your neighbours' windows and cause an unreasonable loss of privacy; especially where the room overlooked is a bedroom or living room. Similarly, there may be an unreasonable intrusion caused by a new window overlooking a patio or sitting out area that previously enjoyed a high degree of privacy.

4.163 If the extension would enable access to an existing flat roof or includes a roof terrace or balcony this could seriously affect your neighbours' privacy. Roof terraces often allow unrestricted views over back gardens and into other people's windows, which can be a particular nuisance. So ensure that your scheme will not include new windows or a terrace that will enable you to see more of your neighbours!

Daylight/Sunlight and Visual Intrusion

4.164 Sky views from buildings and back gardens are often limited especially where back gardens are small, in which case they can be even more valued. Depending on the orientation, i.e. which side of your roof is being extended and the direction from which the sun shines over it, your extension could cast extensive shadows over your neighbours' property. Look closely at the amount of sun that reaches your neighbour's house and garden and think how this might be affected by your scheme. Your extension must allow for adequate sunlight and daylight to reach adjoining properties in line with the Building Research Establishment (BRE) Standards as set out in their publication "[Site Layout Planning: A Guide to Good Practice](#)" [BRE 2011](#). Each application will be assessed by a planning officer to ensure that the development does not result in an unacceptable loss of daylight or sunlight to your neighbours habitable rooms of garden. Whilst it is possible to measure the likely impact of your extension on your neighbours' sunlight and daylight but it is more difficult to assess whether it will have an overbearing effect. Try to design a scheme that keeps any impact on your neighbour to a minimum.

Roof Extensions to Rear 'Back Additions'

4.165 Conversions/extensions which also include the roof of the rear 'back additions' of terraced houses can cause particular problems in terms of the impact on the adjoining property by reducing the amount of light to an already narrow space between two 'back additions'. Extensions to these roofs can also contribute to overlooking problems from insensitively sited new windows. Where buildings are particularly close together and an extension over the back addition will cause some loss of amenity to neighbours, be it a reduction in light or a loss of privacy, then it might be that you will have to restrict the length of the extension and if this is the case then a good 'rule of thumb' is to extend over only 50% of the length of the back addition. Where there is more space between buildings and if there will not be any harm to any neighbour's amenities then there is a possibility that an extension over the back addition can be longer. Whatever the length of an extension above a back addition, care should be taken over the design, placement and size of the new structure in order that it respects the scale, form and hierarchy of the rear addition and avoids appearing top heavy.

Roof Terraces

4.166 A private roof terrace can enhance the amenity of any home, especially if you live in an upstairs flat with no access to a garden space. However, it is very difficult to secure planning permission for a new roof terrace proposed as part of a loft conversion or alteration at roof level. This is because terraces at upper levels can cause great concern to neighbours because of the potential for intrusion on their privacy and the possibility of disturbance from noise. When badly designed, roof terraces can appear like alien features and look ugly, incongruous and visually intrusive.

4.167 Bearing all these things in mind, any terrace proposed must be adequately enclosed with screening to ensure that there is no possibility that anyone on the terrace will be able to look into adjoining windows, or look down into private gardens. The screening will need to be sensitively designed to be unobtrusive and integrated with the roof and it should not appear like an incongruous add-on. You should also avoid making a terrace big enough to host large, potentially noisy gatherings of people. So a small, well screened and sensitively designed terrace is more likely to be acceptable in planning terms.

By answering all these questions you should, by now, have a clearer idea of the general size and shape of extension which is likely to be acceptable. Now it is time to consider the details of its appearance.

5. ARE THE LARGE SCALE DETAILS RIGHT?

4.168 Just another reminder of what DMPD Policy DMH5 says: "...extensions and alterations will be permitted where:

- (i) an extension is well designed, uses appropriate materials and is not so large that it dominates and competes with the original building and;
- (ii) an extension, dormer window or other alteration to a roof is confined to the rear of a building but where it is visible from the street or any other public place; it is sympathetic to the style of the building, not visually intrusive and does not harm either the street scene or the building's appearance."

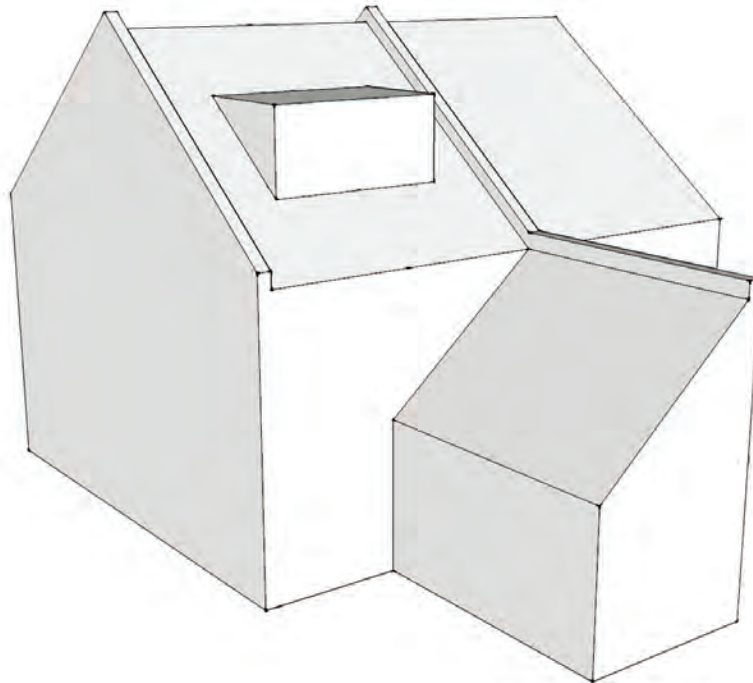
4.169 The large scale details are those that determine the size, shape and overall appearance of the extension. The scale and proportions of the extension should be sensitive to the style and character of the house. Bearing in mind that historically, accommodation in the attic was always modest and secondary in importance, there is an obvious need for caution in aiming to create a new room that will be the biggest room in the house. The objective should be to produce an addition that looks as if it belongs to the house - the best schemes often go unnoticed because they appear to have always been there.

Dormers

- They should be regularly and logically spaced in relation to the new internal layout and not necessarily lined up immediately above the windows below.
- As a general rule the number of dormers should be one less than the number of windows on the floor below.
- The size of the dormer should be smaller than the windows on the top storey below.
- If the building is plain – the dormers should be plain as well.

- Often a simple flat topped dormer is preferable to one with a pitched roof on it.
- All of these principles are intended to maintain the appearance of new space within a roof – rather than the appearance of another full-blown storey – and avoid the house looking top heavy.

Good example of a rear dormer extension



Altering the pitch or raising the ridge

- Do not change the pitch of the front roof slope of a terraced house.
- Do not change the pitch of a traditional shallow pitched roof that is a distinctive and important feature of a house.
- Do not raise the ridge of a terraced house with an abrupt, visually intrusive step.

Hip to Gable

- Do not change a hip to a gable where the alteration will spoil a harmonious and consistent roofscape where hipped roofs are a characteristic feature.
- On corner houses a hip to gable conversion, if acceptable, should not be accompanied by a mansard style extension of the rear roof slope as well.
- Hip to gable conversions are generally not acceptable in conservation areas.

Mid terraced houses with traditional exposed party walls

4.170 At the rear of mid terraced houses where the roof slope can't be widely seen from public areas an extension which extends between raised party walls may be appropriate. The important features of this type of loft conversion are:

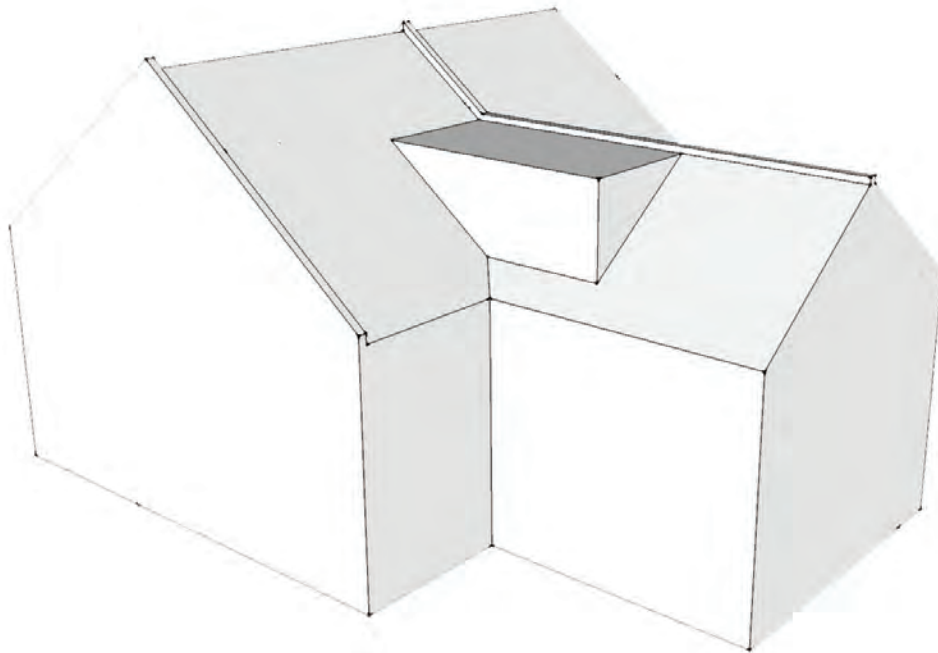
- Flat roof extends back from ridge.
- Extension to the rear roof slopes back at 70 degrees.
- Party walls built up on each side.
- Dormer windows project from the sloping roof section at the rear.
- Roof covering matches original.
- Existing chimney stacks retained.
- The existing chimney stacks might have to be extended - see paragraph 4.107 above.
- No part of the rear roof extension should be visible from the front of the house, including the extensions to the party walls.

Extensions over back additions

4.171 Extensions over back additions to corner houses or houses close enough to corners that are clearly visible from the street are potentially visually intrusive and will need to be very sensitively designed. It may not be possible to achieve this if the party wall would be raised significantly, as this type of alteration could appear awkward and visually intrusive. Care should be taken with the bulk and design to ensure that an extension over the back addition does not cause unreasonable harm to your neighbours' amenities or harm to the building itself or the street scene if it is visible from the public realm.

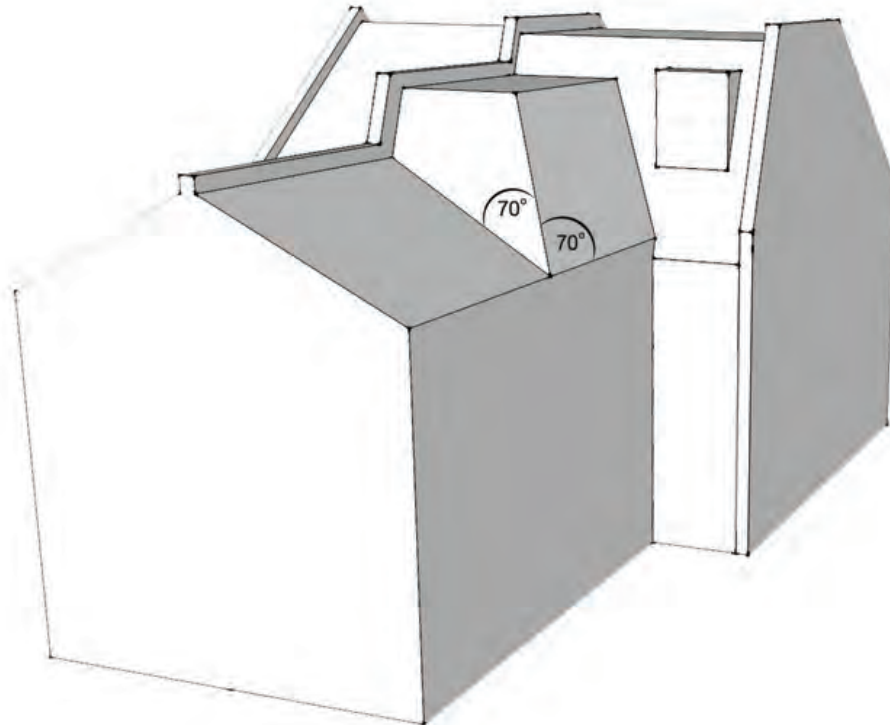
- The simplest and sometimes most sympathetic form of extension can be achieved by raising the height of the back addition in brickwork finished with either a flat or shallow pitched roof.
- To avoid harming your neighbour's amenities it may be that you will not be allowed to extend over the full length of the back addition. In these cases it will be necessary to restrict the length of the extension to the area closest to the main house to leave up to 50% of the original back addition unaltered.
- Care should always be taken in order to avoid a top heavy appearance that would upset the hierarchy of the rear addition. Designs resulting in top heavy and dominant structures would not be acceptable and should be avoided.

This sketch shows that where vertical elevations are to be used, the extension over the back addition should be set up significantly from the eaves



- Sometimes it may be possible or desirable in design terms to build the rear addition's flank wall up to form a parapet. The roof extension can be built behind the parapet in order to reduce its bulk and avoid it appearing dominant or top heavy and upsetting the hierarchy of the existing building.
- To minimise the impact on neighbours it may be necessary to reduce the bulk of an extension by setting in from the edge of the back addition. There are two ways of doing this: either with a sloping (mansard-style) outside face to the extension or; with a vertical face set up from the eaves. Where the extension over the back addition is likely to be unobtrusive and will not be visible from the street it is acceptable to use the sloping design. However, where an extension will be more noticeable, a higher standard of appearance is required and the vertical design is preferred.

This sketch shows an acceptable way to reduce the bulk of an extension on a mid-terraced property and minimise the impact on your neighbour by restricting the depth of the extension over the back addition to less than 50% of its length



The 'Butterfly' or 'London' Roof

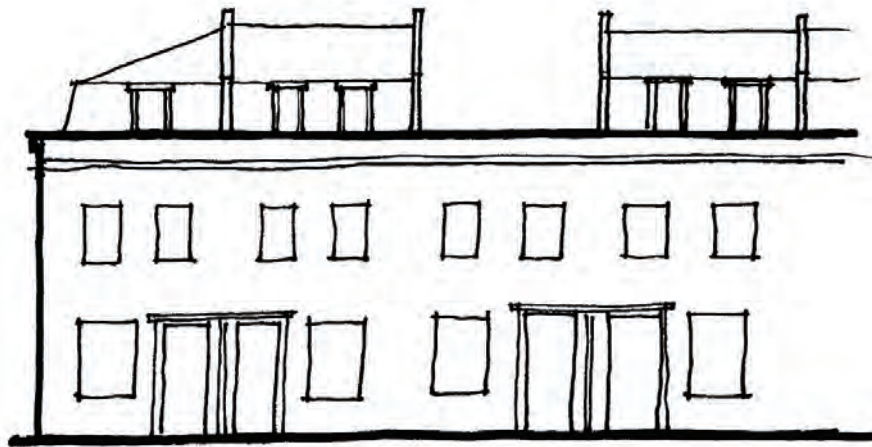
4.172 Some older houses were designed to keep the roof from view behind a parapet. Roof extensions in these cases are effectively an additional floor placed on top of the building which will obviously have a big visual impact. If similar neighbouring properties have not been altered it may be difficult to achieve a solution which is satisfactory. Extensions on terraces such as this have great potential to damage the appearance of a unified terrace and extensions will only usually be permitted where no part, including flank walls, is visible from the street. Where none of the houses in a terrace have been previously altered in this way it is generally inappropriate to extend at roof level and thereby lose the appearance and design of the original roof structure.

4.173 Where an extension on this type of building is judged to be appropriate in principle, then the following guidance regarding large scale details should be considered:

- A traditional, proper mansard, i.e. a double pitched roof, is almost always required, especially in a conservation area.
- At the end of a terrace the double-pitched mansard form should be hipped on the non-attached side, i.e. should slope upwards in two steps from the eaves to the ridge – just as it is at the front and the back, and not finish with a raised party wall.

- The steep mansard slope should be set behind a parapet at the front. Often, the parapet is returned a short way along the exposed flank return.
- Small dormer windows should be partly concealed by the parapet.

It is important to faithfully replicate the details of a traditional mansard roof when extending a house with a 'London' or 'Butterfly' roof



6. ARE THE SMALL SCALE DETAILS RIGHT?

4.174 Small scale details are vitally important in achieving a quality result. Roof extensions are obviously highly vulnerable to the weather. They must be constructed of robust materials appropriate to the location. Many houses have been spoilt by poorly implemented roof extensions using cheap or inappropriate materials.

4.175 Details such as window frames should be copied from the house. This means repeating where possible the type of construction and materials found in the original construction – although bear in mind that houses with large double-hung sashes sometimes had simple side-hung casements in the small dormers. If you cannot copy original details from your house then look for a building of the same style and period and replicate this feature.

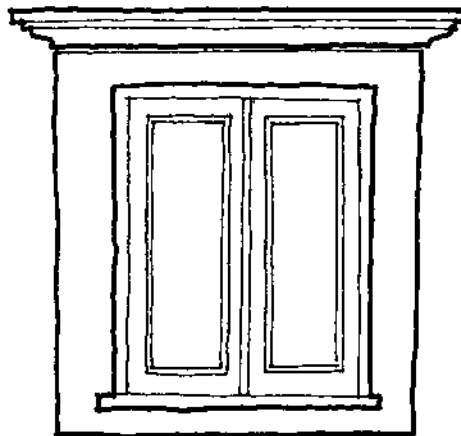
4.176 You may prefer to attempt a contemporary design approach where the new work stands out from the old. This is not easy and will require exceptional skill on the part of the designer to ensure that the whole building remains a harmonious and attractive composition and that it does not detract from the setting and appearance of its neighbours.

4.177 Small scale details are important to the success of a scheme. Generally, dormer windows should be as simple as possible and problems arise through clumsy detailing.

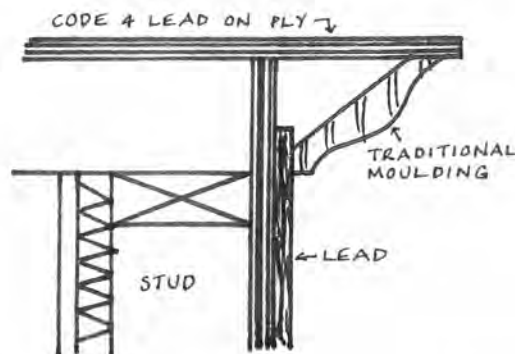
The right way to detail a simple dormer

- The top of the dormer should be formed by a simple moulding to cover the edge of a projecting flat lead roof. A gutter is rarely needed if the roof of the dormer is made to fall back to the main roof. Lead flashings should be carefully detailed.
- The thickness of the cheeks or sides of the dormer should be only slightly wider than the window frame. The cheeks should be in lead or sometimes clay tiles (where the main roof is clay tile).
- Whether a sash window or casement would be appropriate depends on the style of the house - often a simple side-hung casement is easier to fit within an appropriately modest dormer.

An example of a traditionally detailed dormer window



A detail showing how the traditional dormer roof should be constructed



Compliance with the approved plans

4.178 It is important to understand that the extension or alteration that is built must correspond exactly with the plans that received planning permission. Any changes to the scheme subsequent to planning permission may result in enforcement action being taken by the Council.

5 Front gardens and hardstanding for cars

Introduction and Purpose

5.1 The purpose of this section is to provide advice on what to do when you want to create a car parking space in your garden – what permission you may need and what problems you may meet, and how to safeguard the appearance of your home and the street you live in.

5.2 Wherever you live it makes good sense to look after the appearance of your property. An off-street parking space may seem like a good idea, but not if the look of your home and your street suffers.

5.3 A vehicular crossover is required under the [Highways Act 1980](#) in order to drive across the footway to park on your property. This involves reinforcing the footway to take the weight of the vehicle and the kerb is dropped to form a ramp. Converting your front garden to create a hardstanding area for your car will have a direct impact on the street scene and on the environment. The loss of plants and greenery from your front garden will make your street look hard and bleak, whereas careful landscaping will help to soften the area, also absorbing more noise and dust than fully hard surfaced areas. The Royal Horticultural Society has produced a leaflet called [Gardening Matters](#) which gives useful information including ideas for designing your parking space and gives details of plants and materials you can use to achieve an attractive result.

5.4 Of wider concern is the effect, particularly the cumulative effect, of hard surfaces increasing the risk of flooding and contamination from spillages directly entering drains and polluting local watercourses. The government has produced guidance on the permeable surfacing of front gardens. This includes a summary of issues and flood mitigation options and a list of further contacts. The [Environment Agency](#) has identified areas of flood risk within Wandsworth and can provide further advice on this matter. What is more relevant to proposals for hardstandings is the effect of localised flooding from groundwater, sewers, drains and run-off from land and other small water courses, which occurs as a result of heavy rainfall. The Council has published a [Surface Water Management Plan](#) which includes maps showing levels of risk from this type of flooding, and sets out a borough-level plan for flood risk management. This document can be downloaded from the Council's website (link provided below). Surface water can be drained using permeable surfaces such as concrete block paving with gaps, porous asphalt or gravel, wheel track only paving or through installation of 'soak-away' systems. The [guidance booklet](#) "Guidance on the permeable surfacing of front gardens" published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), and the online [Planning Portal](#) also offer advice to householders on this topic. Installing a soakaway will prevent rainwater run-off and avoid overloading the drainage network, reducing the risk of flooding. The area of hardstanding need only accommodate vehicle tracks and paths, leaving the opportunity to incorporate porous materials and greenery creating a softer appearance.

Will I need permission?

5.5 You will need to [Apply to the Council](#) to get a pavement vehicle access (PVA) - also known as a crossover - which is the area of public footway between your property and the road over which the car will drive. The application process can take up to 6 months before the PVA can be built, so it is important to apply as early as possible. **It is best to make your planning application first if necessary** or at least an application for a [Lawful Development Certificate](#) (see the advice on best practice). If your property is in a conservation area, planning permission is required for the demolition of existing walls, gates, fences and railings, and for listed buildings, listed building consent may also be required. It is generally preferable if all related applications are submitted together so that they can be considered at the same time.

5.6 In certain conservation areas where [Article 4 Directions](#) are in force, there are additional controls in place requiring permission to demolish existing front boundary walls, gates, railings and fences as well as the erection of new boundary treatment and hardstandings and a planning application will need to be made for this work, which would otherwise have been "permitted development". Further details can be found on the Council's [website](#).

5.7 Operational Services evaluate PVA applications for Highway Approval by ensuring that an access would not compromise the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers, by checking the distance from junctions and other hazards and that sight lines are not impeded. They will also consider whether the proposed access would adversely affect the operation of an existing or newly approved [Controlled Parking Zones](#) (CPZ). Normally only one access per property is permitted in a CPZ.

5.8 To ensure that a parked vehicle would not overhang the public footway they will also check:

- That the vehicle hardstanding will meet the **minimum** required dimensions: 4.5m between the back edge of the pavement and the nearest face of the building, and at least 2.3 m wide, clear of obstructions (such as a tree or a bay window) to allow easy access to and from the vehicle when parked and avoiding obstructing pedestrian access to the front door. The minimum size specified by the Council is intended to avoid the problem of vehicles overhanging their hardstanding and obstructing the pavement. You will need much more space to ensure the aspect of your garden is not spoiled and becomes simply a car park – please read the advice later in this document.
- That the proposal would not result in the total number of vehicular accesses in your the street taking up fifty per cent or more of the available kerbside space.
- Whether the access width and the lengths of associated yellow line necessary either side of it would exceed one average vehicle space in the CPZ.
- Whether there is a street light, a sign, inspection box for underground services nearby, or other street furniture that may need to be moved. Existing metered or residents' parking spaces may also need to be moved. You will be advised whether this is possible, and what the cost would be. There will also be liaison with the Planning Service and

advice what other applications you need to make. But please remember that approval for a crossover/dropped kerb will be subject to any other approvals that are needed.

5.9 Other issues that will be considered are:

- Whether the access would cross a cycle route or cycle lane.
- The proximity of the proposed vehicle crossover to a junction.
- Road gradients and bends in the road.

Will planning permission be required?

5.10 Please refer to the [Local Planning Application requirements](#) which set out what needs to be submitted also as well as providing links to download the relevant application forms, including for works to listed buildings and trees.

- If you live on a classified road (an "A" or "B" road in a map book) you will need to get planning permission for the access from your hardstanding to the highway. Again, this is mainly a road safety issue.
- Where planning permission is required, Development Management Policies Document ([DMPD](#)) Policy DMT1d will apply which states: *"For developments, including new developments that require new or additional crossovers, it will need to be demonstrated they would not cause a road safety hazard or interfere with the safe operation of buses, particularly bus stops..."*
- If you live in a house (rather than a flat), making a hard surface for parking a car is normally "permitted development" which means you do not need to apply for planning permission, but see below! You will not need planning permission if a new or replacement driveway of any size uses permeable (or porous) surfacing, such as gravel, permeable concrete block paving or porous asphalt, or if the rainwater is directed to a lawn or border to drain naturally.
- If the surface to be covered is more than **5 sq ms** planning permission will be needed for laying traditional, impermeable driveways that do not provide for the water to run to a permeable area.
- If your property is a flat or maisonette you DO need to apply for planning permission for making a hard surface for a car.
- You will also need planning permission for any sort of car port at the front of the house.
- If you install a new fence, wall, gate or railing over 1 metre high (or any height in certain conservation areas) you will need planning permission.
- Where consent is required, you should refer to the following policies: [Core Strategy](#) Policy PL3, which seeks to minimise flood risk, and [DMPD](#) Policy DMS5 which provides detailed criteria covering flood risk management. Core Strategy Policies IS2 and IS3 (Sustainable design and good quality design), DMPD Policies DMS3 (Sustainable design) and DMS2 (Managing the historic environment) may also be applicable.
- If you live in any conservation area you will need planning permission to demolish a complete boundary treatment such as a wall, fence or railings where the overall height

exceeds 1m at any point. You may not need consent if you are only removing a small part of the boundary and it is less than 1m high. If your building is covered by an Article 4 direction then you are likely to need planning permission to demolish any part of your existing wall, gate, fence or railings and the erection of new boundary treatment. Please check with the Planning Service.

- In certain conservation areas the Council has extra controls which mean you **DO** need to apply for permission for vehicular parking in the front garden (a hardstanding). Please check with the Planning service.
- In a conservation area you must notify the Council in writing if you intend to cut down a tree and forms are available to download from the Council's website as set out above, or you can apply online at the Planning Portal.
- Any application in a conservation area must be accompanied by a Design & Access Statement which should describe the significance of the heritage asset and explain the impact of the proposal on that significance.

How to make your application

5.11 To apply for Highway Approval please submit an application to the Council and the application form can be downloaded from the Council's website. There is an administration fee to assess the application. You will know within the first month whether Highway Approval has been granted.

5.12 You should also contact the [Planning Service](#) to find out if you need planning permission as well as advice on the Design and Access Statement.

What is the advice on best practice?

5.13 The front garden, whatever its size, provides an opportunity to soften or enhance the setting of the building. This is largely a matter of taste, though paths, edging, ornament etc, should retain the original materials, reinstate them or introduce those which would not have been out of place when the house was built.

5.14 Generally, only the front gardens of the larger Victorian villas that were designed for carriages, or later houses with drives and garages, can satisfactorily accommodate cars. With smaller houses and gardens, the setting of the house and character of the street and area will suffer greatly if cars dominate the frontage.

5.15 Unless there are special circumstances, such as where access for a person with a disability outweigh normal criteria, no attempt should be made to accommodate a car in a front garden unless there is sufficient width not to interfere with the original path, and sufficient depth to erect inward-opening gates which can be closed when the car is parked. Hard surfacing should be kept to a minimum, be in a sympathetic material, and leave sufficient space for shrubs and other planting close by.

5.16 This guidance applies throughout the borough but in conservation areas we have an added duty to conserve and enhance the special historic and architectural character of the conservation areas and avoid visual harm. Hardstandings are normally inadvisable in conservation areas unless the front garden is of such size and so well planted that they would have minimal impact on the character and appearance of the street. Where planning permission is required, should comply with all the requirements of this guidance, which supports Policy DMS2 (Managing the historic environment). This policy aims to conserve and enhance the space in between and around buildings as well as front, side and rear gardens, and to secure the removal of additions or modifications that are considered harmful to the significance of the heritage asset. Original style features that have been lost should therefore be reinstated and uncharacteristic features that have been added should be removed. Items that will enhance the character of the conservation area could include authentically styled iron railings or other correct boundary treatment; and tiled or stone paths. Guidance is often given in the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Strategies for individual conservation areas which set out the character that we seek to conserve or enhance. You should consult these documents before designing your parking space.

5.17 Some cars are longer than 4.5m (the minimum space you must have before the Council will approve your application for a vehicle access). If you park a longer vehicle, or if you park badly so that a car overhangs the footway, the Council can take enforcement action.

5.18 Front gardens less than 7m wide and 8m deep are unlikely to accommodate a car without harming the setting of the house and street scene.

5.19 The traditional appearance of front gardens is enclosed rather than open, so this means retaining as much as possible of existing walls and fences and introducing appropriate gates for any new vehicle access. This also helps keep your front garden private and your car more secure. Planning permission is required for the demolition and erection of walls, gates, fences and railings where adjoining a highway, as set out above. Generally speaking, traditional front garden boundaries are around 1.2m to 1.4m high overall. This maintains privacy while allowing the front of the house to be seen from the street, which is important for public safety and security. A "fortress" approach should be avoided, and walls, fences and railings adjoining a road and exceeding this height would not be appropriate. Similarly, garden gates should also follow this approach, and should allow for general access including postal deliveries. Boundaries should always be in keeping with the architectural character of the house.

5.20 If you do have any original boundary treatments, then you are strongly advised to keep these and repair them as necessary. In conservation areas, consent is unlikely to be granted for the removal of significant original features for the the provision of car parking. Some properties have attractive tessellated tile paths to front doors and these should be retained.

5.21 Consider landscape design and generous planting for front gardens. Hedges are recommended as a good means of fulfilling a number of objectives which include greater privacy, keeping litter out of your garden, screening your car from view, softening hard architecture and being of benefit to wildlife and the natural environment.

5.22 Trees are important to the pleasant appearance of the area, whether they are in your garden or in the street. Making a space to park a car is not usually a good enough reason to remove a tree.

5.23 In respect of flood control, CLG's booklet referred to above provides practical advice on this aspect and with regard to design, the RHS booklet referred to above, provides good advice.

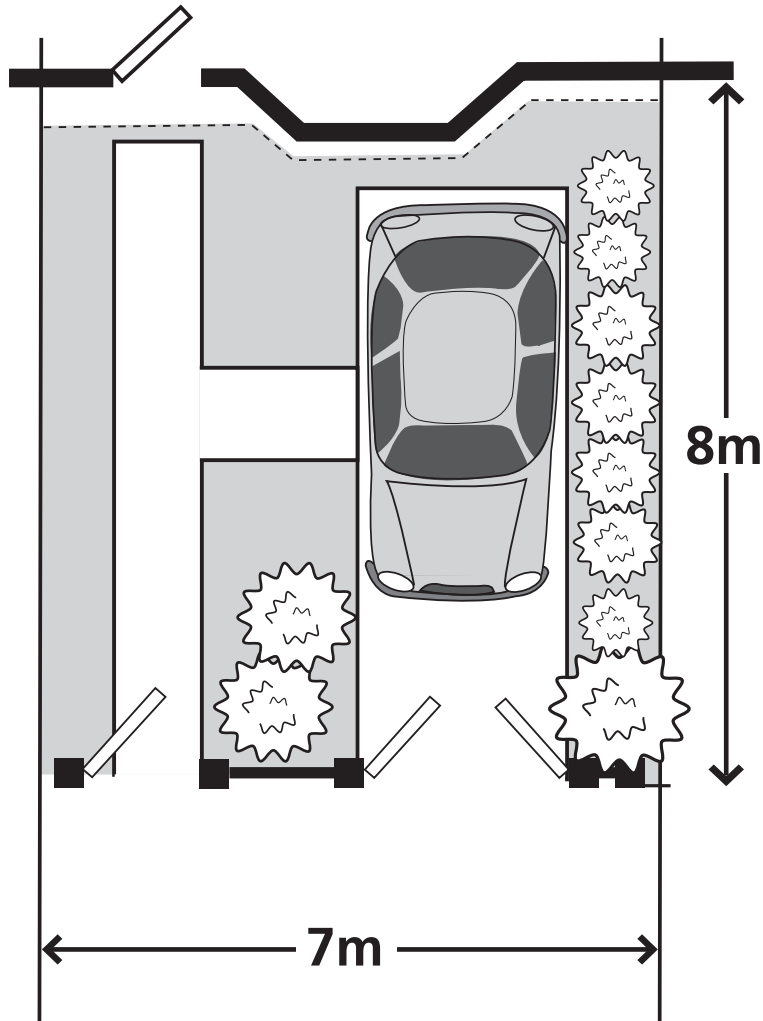
5.24 Whether or not you need planning permission for your hardstanding, you should follow the advice in this leaflet. The Council will take it into account when dealing with your application if you do need permission.

What is the most suitable material for the hardstanding?

5.25 Again, the CLG guide referred to above, the RHS booklet and the Planning Portal provide practical advice and an overview of options.

- Surface water can be drained using permeable surfaces such as concrete block paving with gaps, porous asphalt or gravel, wheel track only paving or through installation of 'soak-away' systems.
- Gravel is ideal, but loose gravel must have retaining edges to stop it spreading.
- Sealed gravel – where the gravel is set in a clear resin binder – is more practical.
- Natural stone is strong and attractive but needs protection from oil stains (e.g. a gravel inset under the engine).
- Brick pavements are attractive and practical.
- Concrete and tarmac are cheap and look the least attractive; tarmac needs a proper sub base or it will fail quickly.
- Where space is limited or the car will always be parked in the same place, two narrow strips beneath the wheels may be all you need, and will minimise the impact on your garden.

This example demonstrates how parking can be accommodated whilst retaining parts of the boundary, adding access gates and keeping a path to the front door.



Points to consider

- Do you live on a classified road?
- Are you using permeable paving? If not, is the surface to be covered more than **5 square metres** ?
- Has a Flood Risk Assessment been carried out?
- If you are proposing a soakaway, have you contacted Building Control and [Thames Water Utilities](#)?
- Is your property listed or in a conservation area?
- Is your property covered by an Article 4 direction?
- Do you have an original garden wall, railings or other boundary treatment?

- Do you have an original tile path?
- Is the garden big enough to take a car safely and without harming the setting of your house and the continuity of the street scene?
- Can you add sufficient planting or hedging to screen it from view?
- Will you be able to park easily without obstructing the pavement?
- Will the car obstruct the path to the front door?
- Will you need to cut down any trees or remove a hedge? (Permission may depend on planting replacements.)
- Will there be room to have gates?
- Will the garden still be a garden, or will it be a car park?

6 Glossary

Article 4 Direction - An Article 4(1) or Article 4(2) direction brings into planning control certain small scale developments or alterations that are normally permitted under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended). In effect, Article 4 directions usually mean that planning permission will be required to change external elements that are visible from a public place, such as, windows, front doors, roof coverings or to paint or pebbledash an elevation or to alter, demolish or rebuild a garden wall.

Conservation - The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and where appropriate enhances its significance.

Conservation Area - An area designated by a local planning authority in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as being of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Planning permission is required for the demolition or partial substantial demolition of unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas. Permitted development rights are reduced meaning that planning permission is required for certain external alterations. Other restrictions also apply, contact the Planning service for further information or see www.planningportal.gov.uk

Capital / Corbel/Console bracket - These terms refer to the decorative bracket or block projecting from a wall and supporting (or appearing to support) an architectural element above it. On a shopfront, the corbel appears to support the cornice above the fascia. It also allows the fascia to be installed at an angle more easily visible from street level.

Cornice - The cornice is the uppermost section of moulding along the top of a wall or just below a roof. It defines the top of the shopfront, distinguishes the shop from the rest of the building and directs rainwater away from the shopfront.

Density - The number of habitable rooms per hectare (hrph). Appropriate density ranges in London are detailed in the London Plan (Table 3.2: Sustainable Residential Quality (SRQ) density matrix) showing both habitable rooms and dwellings per hectare.

Development - Development is defined under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as "the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any building or other land". A subsequent legislative amendment now includes the demolition of heritage assets and a number of other specific types of development within the definition (please refer to the Planning Act 2008, Part 4, Section 32).

DMPD - Development Management Policies Document. Supports the Core Strategy and sets out the Council's detailed policies for managing development in the borough.

DPD - Development Plan Document. Documents that make up the Local Plan.

Dropped Kerb - A small ramp built into the kerb of a pavement to make it easier for vehicles to pass from the pavement to the road.

EA - Environment Agency - a UK government agency concerned mainly with rivers, flooding, and pollution and providing public information.

Energy Assessment - An assessment to demonstrate the expected energy and carbon dioxide emission savings from the energy efficiency and renewable energy measures incorporated in a development, including the feasibility of CHP/CCHP and community heating systems.

Fascia - The fascia provides space over the shop window to display the name of the shop.

FRA - Flood Risk Assessment - In circumstances where the Environment Agency consider there is a risk of flooding they may require a Flood Risk Assessment to accompany a planning application.

GLA - Greater London Authority - The Greater London Authority is a strategic city-wide government for London made up of a directly elected Mayor - the Mayor of London - and a separately elected Assembly - the London Assembly.

GPDO - General Permitted Development Order - the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, and as amended (2008), grants rights (known as permitted development rights) to carry out certain limited forms of development without the need to make an application for planning permission. Permitted Development (PD) rights for householders significantly changed in 2008.

Gross Internal Area (GIA) - The whole enclosed area of a building within the external walls taking each floor into account and excluding the thickness of the external walls.

Habitable Rooms - Habitable rooms are living rooms, (including living/dining spaces) and bedrooms. Large rooms (over 32 sq ms) and rooms that could reasonably be sub-divided into two rooms are counted as two habitable rooms for the purposes of this calculation. Kitchens greater than 13 sq ms are also counted. Smaller kitchens, bathrooms and WCs are excluded.

Habitable floorspace - All habitable rooms as well as kitchens, bathrooms and WCs, halls, landings and other circulation space (including the horizontal area occupied by staircases – counted once for each flight). Cellars and loft space that have not been rendered habitable are excluded. Only that habitable floorspace which is currently, or has previously been, occupied is counted for the purpose of determining size thresholds in the house conversion policies.

Heritage Asset - A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets (such as listed buildings and conservation areas) and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process (including local listing).

Historic environment - All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora. Those elements of the historic environment that hold significance are called heritage assets.

Historic Environment Record - Historic environment records are information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use. Typically, they comprise databases linked to a geographic information system (GIS), and associated reference material, together with a dedicated staffing resource. The Greater London Historic Building Record is hosted by Historic England (1 Waterhouse Square, 138 - 142 Holborn, London, EC1N 2ST, Tel: 020 7973 3000 Fax: 020 7973 3001 Email: london@HistoricEngland.org.uk). The Council's historic archive is managed by Wandsworth Heritage Service and held at Battersea Library.

Listed Building - A building of special architectural or historic interest included on the statutory list. Listed Building Consent is required for their demolition or alteration to any part of the building and this applies equally to the interior as well as exterior and may include fixtures and fittings and external curtilage structures.

London Plan - The plan is a spatial development strategy for the Greater London area, to deal with matters of strategic importance to the area. The current London Plan was published by the Mayor of London in July 2011.

Major development - Defined as 10+ (gross) residential units or developments of 1,000 sq ms or more of non-residential floorspace.

Parapet - A low wall guarding the edge of a roof, balcony etc: or that part of a house wall which passes above the roof.

Party Wall - A wall that is shared by two buildings. Any building owner wishing to undertake work to the party wall must get permission from the owner of the adjoining building. It should be noted that the London Building Acts, and now the Party Wall etc. Act 1996, also govern excavations close to a boundary. In order to guard against damage to adjoining buildings by undermining, a building owner must serve notice before carrying out certain types of excavation.

Pilaster - A pilaster is a vertical support that resembles a flat column. Pilasters distinguish each shop from its neighbours, and are particularly important within a parade as they define the width of each building by coinciding with party walls. Their base and decorated top (capital / corbel) along with the stallriser and fascia are essential parts of traditional shopfront design that combine to frame each individual shopfront.

PTAL - Public Transport Accessibility Level - a measure of the relative accessibility of buildings and uses by public transport. The higher the PTAL score, the better the accessibility.

PVA - Pavement vehicle access - also know as a crossover.

SFRA - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment - an assessment of flood risk in Wandsworth based on maps produced by the Environment Agency showing which areas are most likely to be affected by flooding. The maps show three different zones referring to the probability of river and sea flooding, ignoring the presence of flood defences. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will also take into account other types of flooding, to produce more detailed flood risk maps that can be used to help guide land use allocations within the borough.

Significance (of heritage) - The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, aesthetic or historic.

SPD - Supplementary Planning Document - a document expanding on policies set out in development plan documents or providing additional detail.

SPG - Supplementary Planning Guidance - as SPD, being replaced by SPDs at the borough-level, and continue to be produced by the Mayor of London.

SSAD - Site Specific Allocations Document - supports the Core Strategy and includes Area Spatial Strategies for the areas of greatest change in the borough and site allocations for over 100 strategic sites.

For more information write to:

Policy and Design
Planning and Transport
Wandsworth Council
Town Hall
Wandsworth High Street
London SW18 2PU

Telephone: (020) 8871 7620

Email: planningpolicy@wandsworth.gov.uk

www.wandsworth.gov.uk/planning

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