

**London Borough of Richmond upon Thames**

**Supplementary Planning Document**

**Buildings of Townscape Merit  
Guidance Document**

**Consultation Draft**

**February 2011**

## **What are Buildings of Townscape Merit?**

Within the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames there are many buildings and structures that, due to their historical associations, architectural style and visual interest, as well as possibly their siting within an area, are of significance to the history and character of the environment. However, they may not possess sufficient interest to warrant statutory listing as being of 'special architectural or historic interest' by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. The majority are found in the 72 conservation areas within the borough. Many different types of buildings and structures are designated as being of townscape merit ranging from houses and cottages, which form the vast majority of entries, to shops, churches, public buildings, historic boundary walls, war memorials, under-ground buildings, railway stations and industrial premises. Buildings and structures from any age, even of a recent date, can be included.

## **Why has this list been made?**

National policy contained within Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5) encourages the care of heritage assets. It permits Local Planning Authorities to formally identify heritage assets through local listing and to prepare planning policies for them. The criteria used and policies related to Buildings of Townscape Merit are detailed in this supplementary planning document.

The adopted London Plan (Consolidated with Alterations since 2004) and consultation draft replacement London Plan (2009) both recognise the significance of built heritage and seek to protect and enhance these assets. In the London Borough of Richmond saved UDP policy BLT4 (this is likely to be superseded by Development Management Policy DM HD3) and Core Policy 7 of the Core Strategy, apply to Buildings of Townscape Merit. Both of these local policies seek to protect and encourage the identification, preservation and enhancement of Buildings of Townscape Merit.

## **How and why are these buildings chosen?**

Buildings of Townscape Merit have been identified during monitoring of plan policies, survey work and reviews of conservation areas. A schedule of all Buildings of Townscape Merit is available separately.

Buildings of Townscape Merit are designated according to the following criteria:

- Any building or structure which dates from before 1840.
- Later buildings or structures which are considered to be of definite quality and character, including the work of important architects and builders. Particular attention will be paid to buildings which:
  - (a) Have important historic associations, in terms of famous people or events;
  - (b) Illustrates an important aspect of social or economic history or use;
  - (c) Represent an exceptionally good example of a specific and distinctive architectural style;
  - (d) Demonstrate excellence in building craftsmanship, use of materials, technical

- innovation, architectural features and detailing;
- (e) Form part of a distinctive and cohesive group of buildings;
  - (f) Retain its original architectural interest and integrity, and not subject to insensitive alterations;
  - (g) Have landmark quality or make a unique and positive contribution to the quality of the townscape or an open space.

### **The Council's Approach to Buildings of Townscape Merit**

It is hoped that by drawing attention to the historic, architectural and townscape interest of such buildings and structures, owners and others will regard them more carefully when considering any proposals for alteration, extension or replacement. The removal of original or characteristic features, or the introduction of unsympathetic windows, doors or materials can not only destroy the visual quality of one building but erode the entire character and interest of an area. Many Buildings of Townscape Merit play a crucial role in the character of local areas. The sympathetic maintenance and adaptation of these buildings can preserve and indeed increase the attractiveness of an area.

It must always be borne in mind that these buildings and structures are not the same as listed buildings and that unless they are within a designated conservation area they enjoy no legal protection from demolition. Within conservation areas, most buildings require Conservation Area Consent for demolition and there will always be a presumption against the demolition of Buildings of Townscape Merit. Consent for demolition will only be granted when the Council is assured that retention and adaptation is not possible and where the proposed replacement is consistent with other policies and exhibits a high standard of design that would complement the surrounding area. Indeed the Council will endeavour to protect the character and setting of all Buildings of Townscape Merit through negotiation of a sympathetic scheme, as far as possible treating proposals for works to or close to them as if they were listed buildings.

Normal permitted development rights are not affected by designation as a Building of Townscape Merit. If minor types of external development are considered to threaten the character of a Building of Townscape Merit, consideration will be given to making an Article 4 Direction. This removes the automatic right to carry out development and will require planning permission to be obtained from the Council.

If an unoccupied Building of Townscape Merit, considered by the Council to be important to the character of appearance of the conservation area, falls into disrepair then the Secretary of State can be asked to confirm an order under Section 76 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring urgent repairs to be carried out.

It is unlikely that many other buildings and structures will be added to the statutory list issued by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in the near future. However, it is possible that where a threat of demolition to a Building of Townscape Merit is evident, and the Council considers it to be worthy of statutory listing, it will approach the Secretary of State for it to be "spot listed", or will serve a Building Preservation Notice under Section 3 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

**If you would like to view the list of Buildings of Townscape Merit please visit the link on:**

**[www.richmond.gov.uk/home/environment/urban\\_design/buildings\\_of\\_townscape\\_merit.htm](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/environment/urban_design/buildings_of_townscape_merit.htm)**

Detailed information regarding design is contained in the following leaflets, available from the Development and Street Scene Department.

### **Design Guidelines**

- 1 Shopfronts and Shop Signs
- 2 Car Parking in Front Gardens
- 3 & 4. External Alterations to Houses and House Extensions (Combined leaflet).
5. Trees: Planting, Care & Landscape Design
6. Small Housing Sites
7. Siting of Satellite Dishes
8. Wildlife in Front Gardens
9. Nature Conservation & Development
10. Security by Design
11. Shopfront Security

### **Planning Information Leaflets**

1. Conservation Areas
2. Listed Buildings (important information for new owners)
3. Historic Buildings
4. Historic Buildings, Maintenance and Repair
5. Trees: Legislation & Procedure

### **Contact numbers at the**

#### **London Borough of Richmond upon Thames**

Development Control

E-mail: [envprotection@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:envprotection@richmond.gov.uk)

Planning Support Centre for Development Control Inquires

Tel: 020 8891 7300

Environmental Health

Tel: 020 8891 7892

Building Control

Tel: 020 8891 7356/7357

Urban Design

Tel: 020 8891 7941/7335

If you need this leaflet in Braille,  
large print, audio tape, or another language,  
please contact us  
on 020 88917322 or  
minicom 020 88316001  
Civic Centre 44 York Street  
Twickenham TW1 3BZ  
website:[www.richmond.gov.uk](http://www.richmond.gov.uk)