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## 6. THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- 6.1 A primary concern of the UDP is to ensure that the Borough's built environment can be maintained at its present high level of quality without compromising its future and its wider local, national and global context. This means the Borough can then remain an attractive area for people to live, work and enjoy their leisure time. A major part of this concern is the need to preserve and enhance the high quality of buildings and townscape in the Borough, and its important historic associations. Richmond is a town of national historic importance, noted points; early town plan, Georgian bridge, riverside, and Georgian and earlier buildings. There are many areas of historic importance throughout the Borough. Most of the more attractive areas are now conservation areas, which gives the Council greater control over building works, trees and, to some extent, uses. There are now 63 conservation areas. There are four Scheduled Ancient Monuments (three of them listed buildings) in the Borough and there are around 1,130 buildings on the statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. There are also many other buildings that, although not on the statutory list, make a significant contribution to the Borough's appearance and quality. These are included in the Council's own Schedule of Buildings of Townscape Merit.
- 6.2 Despite a high level of statutory protection there are still major pressures on the built environment in the Borough. Some of these are due to changes which are largely outside planning control. There are areas in the Borough which would benefit from environmental improvements to address some of these problems, but these will be limited due to lack of resources.
- 6.3 Heavy traffic and high levels of on-street and off-street parking, too many advertisements or signs, inappropriate street furniture, poor road surfacing and pavement materials, and lack of trees or landscaping, all threaten appearance and amenity. Many trees in streets and open spaces were lost in the storms of 1987 and 1990, changing the character of some areas. The character of some residential areas has been eroded, as a result of alterations to houses not covered by planning control. Shop-front design is critical to the character of all shopping centres in the Borough, many of which retain good examples of 19th and early 20th century shop-fronts. In many cases however these have been altered or damaged by unsympathetic changes and materials and often refusals of planning permission have not been supported on appeal. Another cause for concern is the continuing low standard of design submissions in applications for planning permission necessitating lengthy negotiations to achieve even a barely acceptable standard. Good design is not easy to quantify, and policies enumerating restrictive criteria can only limit obvious transgressions of accepted standards, not ensure distinctive and enjoyable buildings.

### FRAMEWORK FOR POLICIES

- 6.4 Government advice on design in Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (Revised): General Policy and Principles (1997) is that plan policies should concentrate on guiding overall scale, massing, height and layout rather than on prescriptive detail. There is a strong emphasis in revised Guidance on the need for good designs and for an understanding of the context of new development, leading to good urban design and landscape design. Local distinctiveness is to be maintained and local authorities may concern themselves with detailed design where this may have a significant effect on the character or quality of an area. For the built environment, Strategic Planning Guidance (RPG 3 1996) notes that "many boroughs also contain areas of distinctive architectural character and historic interest, which should be identified in UDPs and conserved", and recommends that boroughs apply the policies set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG 15 1994). It is stated that boroughs should include in UDPs policies to protect local views as well as following Strategic Guidance on the protection of strategic views of St Paul's Cathedral.
- 6.5 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and PPG 15 provide the principal legislative framework for the protection of historic buildings and areas. PPG 15 provides, most importantly, detailed guidance on criteria for development in conservation areas and for alterations

to listed buildings. PPG16 'Archaeology and Planning' sets out Government policy on archaeological remains on land, how they should be preserved or recorded, the weight to be given to them in planning decisions and the use of planning conditions.

- 6.6 It is acknowledged that design guidelines have a useful role to play, and this was reinforced by a statement by the Secretary of State for the Environment in November 1990 and by subsequent planning guidance, including General Policies and Principles (PPG 1 (revised) 1997).

## **STRATEGY**

- 6.7 Any proposal affecting buildings will have an effect on the quality and character of the environment and there is obviously an overlap between the policies of this chapter and many other aspects of the Plan. Thus the policies below form a framework within which the Borough's attractive and valuable features can be protected and enhanced and its poorer features improved. There is a strong emphasis on development that protects and enhances the quality of life, and improves economic and social opportunities, conservation (the careful management of existing resources), and a preference for rehabilitation over large scale redevelopment.

- 6.8 The policies in the next paragraphs are intended to implement this strategy by:

- (a) protecting and enhancing historic buildings and areas of attractive townscape;
- (b) requiring good design in new buildings which should relate well to their setting
- (c) securing a high quality of urban design, which can be defined as the complex relationships between all the elements of built space and open space, including patterns of movement and activity. This implies detailed consideration of the relationship between buildings and spaces in the public domain, the nature of the public domain itself, and the relationship of areas with each other;
- (d) improving the environment in other ways where this is required.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- 6.9 To implement the provisions of the Council's Environmental Policy Statement and in particular:

- To encourage development that protects and enhances quality of life and improves economic and social opportunities.
- To preserve and enhance areas and individual buildings of historic interest, architectural quality and good townscape character, and their settings, and to retain the distinctive individual character of different areas of the Borough.
- To ensure a high standard of design in new buildings and in alterations to existing buildings and a sensitivity to their surroundings in terms of site layout, massing, proportions, scale, materials and facade character.
- To provide a safer and more accessible environment.
- To mitigate the harmful effect of traffic and parking on townscape and amenity, and to positively encourage cycle and pedestrian routes and the provision of vehicle free or limited access areas.
- To encourage environmental improvements especially in areas where they would have the greatest benefit to amenity.
- To seek to reduce pollution and conserve energy.
- To preserve archaeological remains and, where appropriate, make provision for archaeological excavation.

# **CONSERVATION AREAS, HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

## **BLT 1 DESIGNATION OF CONSERVATION AREAS**

- 6.10 The Council will continue to protect areas of special quality by designating further conservation areas and extensions to existing conservation areas. The criteria for designation to which the Council will have regard are as follows:
- (a) that the whole area, or connected parts thereof, have a distinct physical identity such that they are visually distinguishable from surrounding development;
  - (b) that the area possesses environmental and/or architectural cohesiveness;
  - (c) that the area forms a finite spatial entity of some size such as a street, a group of streets or a square, (as opposed to a single terrace or one or two buildings); or a well-defined and extensive area of open space;
  - (d) that any buildings within the area are of a high standard of architectural or townscape quality, often including listed buildings, but also buildings that are worthy of protection but would not qualify for listing, such as important landmarks in the local scene or examples of good local or vernacular style or materials;
  - (e) that the landscape, spatial quality or general layout exhibits some special environmental character derived, for instance, from a natural or topographical feature, historic open space, landscaping, or historic street pattern;
  - (f) that the area possesses a sense of character that derives from social, economic, or historic associations.
- 6.11 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 empowers local authorities to designate as conservation areas those areas that are considered to have special historic or architectural interest, the quality of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The Borough's conservation areas contain not only the best of the Borough's townscape and natural environment, but also illustrate the evolution of the Borough and provide an historic framework for future development.
- 6.12 Local authorities are expected to keep the designation of conservation areas under review. Since 1968, 70 conservation areas have been designated. The Plan includes conservation area designations, but perception of architectural styles and environmental quality tends to change as time goes by and there may be a need to designate further areas within the Plan period.

## **BLT 2 PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS**

- 6.13 The Council will pay special attention to the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the conservation areas by applying the relevant policies of this chapter and by:
- (a) retaining buildings, or parts of buildings, and trees and other features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area;
  - (b) allowing development (including redevelopment) which would contribute positively to the character or appearance of the conservation area or leave it unharmed;
  - (c) making directions withdrawing permitted development rights for a prescribed range of development;
  - (d) publishing supplementary planning guidance on policies to be applied to existing and proposed development within individual conservation areas;

- (e) **not granting conservation area consent for demolition which would be detrimental to the character of an area unless detailed proposals have been approved (including the resolution of relevant conditions) for an acceptable replacement;**
- (f) **seeking to retain the historical balance between buildings and their gardens or other curtilage;**
- (g) **where a key building in a conservation area appears to be in need of repair, the Council will request the Secretary of State for the Environment to authorise the use of powers under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Section 73(1) and Section 47, and Section 48(1)-(4), (6), (7) to effect repairs.**

- 6.14 Preparation of policies for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas is a statutory duty. Because of the importance of these areas very detailed control of development is necessary. The Council has control over demolition in conservation areas, in contrast to other areas where it generally has control only over the demolition of listed buildings. It also has additional control over trees above a certain size; anyone proposing to do work on trees in conservation areas which are not already protected by a Tree Protection Order (TPO) must give six weeks notice to the Council so that it can decide whether to make a TPO. The Council will use these powers to protect the character of conservation areas. In considering development proposals on sites adjoining conservation areas, the Council will take into account impact on the area.
- 6.15 National guidance stresses the need for definition and recording of features that justify designation as a basis for considering proposals for preservation and enhancement. A series of conservation area statements has been prepared to act as a broad guide to residents and developers on the special character which is to be preserved or enhanced. In accordance with requirements in PPG 15, the Council is also carrying out a programme of conservation area studies which are being published as supplementary planning guidance. These include proposals for improvement, more detailed policies on design standards, and guidance to owners on repairs and alterations. Studies of Barnes Green, Hampton/Hampton Court Green, Trafalgar Road, Old Deer Park, St Matthias and Sheen Road, Twickenham Green, Kew Green, Teddington Lock, Teddington High Street, Hampton Wick, Crown Road and Twickenham Park, Castelnau, Hampton Hill, Mortlake, Mortlake Green and Queens Road Mortlake, and Twickenham (Riverside and Queens Road) have been published; several more are in progress.
- 6.16 Local Planning Authorities can make Article 4(2) directions, which withdraw permitted development rights for a prescribed range of development, materially affecting the external appearance of dwelling houses. Local Authorities are required to publish proposals in advance and take account of local people's opinions. As part of the conservation area studies the Council will consider whether development rights relating to particular types of development should be withdrawn, and publish appropriate design guidance.
- 6.17 There will be some cases where new development will be appropriate, for example where existing buildings detract from the character or appearance of the area. In order to ensure that a high standard of design is achieved, the Council will normally seek a more detailed explanation of proposals when it first considers a scheme than it would in the rest of the Borough. Therefore, wherever possible, applications will be expected to provide a short design statement setting out the design principles adopted as well as illustrative material in plan and elevation. Where appropriate, the material should show the wider context and not just the development site and its immediate adjoining buildings. Again, where appropriate, the Council may also invite the submission of a transport statement. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Council accept a planning application in outline only. Where necessary, the Council will impose conditions to ensure that demolition does not take place until a contract for a replacement scheme has been let.
- 6.18 In operating controls over new development in conservation areas, the Council will implement the advice contained in PPG 15.

### **BLT 3 PRESERVATION OF LISTED BUILDINGS AND SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS**

- 6.19 **The Council will encourage the preservation of scheduled ancient monuments and listed buildings of special architectural or historic interest and seek to ensure that they are kept in a good state of repair by the following means:**
- (a) consent will not be granted for the demolition of listed buildings and ancient monuments;**
  - (b) alterations and extensions to listed buildings or development requiring planning permission affecting a scheduled ancient monument will only be permitted where they will not detract from the architectural or historic character or setting of the building, or affect its structural integrity. Where alterations are concerned, the Council will normally insist on the retention of the original structure, features, material and plan form. In order to ensure preservation of the building fabric, when repairs are necessary the Council will expect retention and repair, rather than replacement of the structure, features, and materials of the building which contribute to its architectural and historic interest; and will require the use of appropriate traditional materials and techniques;**
  - (c) the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Sections 54(1)-(7), and Section 47, which give the Council power to take steps to secure the repair of listed buildings, will be used where appropriate;**
  - (d) in considering proposals for development near to ancient monuments and listed buildings special attention will be paid to the need to preserve their setting;**
  - (e) when resources permit, grants or loans will be made available for the repair or replacement of original features in appropriate cases.**
- 6.20 Ancient monuments and listed buildings make a major contribution to the Borough's heritage and must therefore be preserved. The Borough's four scheduled ancient monuments are: The Brew House; Bushy Park; Ham House; Hampton Court Palace and Kew Palace. These come under the jurisdiction of the Department of National Heritage for planning control purposes. The Council's power to grant listed building consent for demolition or works to listed buildings is subject to approval by English Heritage, except for applications for listed building consent for certain categories of Grade II listed buildings on which the Council can now make independent decisions under the terms agreed with English Heritage.
- 6.21 The character of historic buildings and their contribution to the townscape can be severely diminished through insensitive alteration, extension or neighbouring development, or through neglect and dilapidation. When considering proposals for works to, or close to, listed buildings or ancient monuments, special attention will be paid to:
- (a) preserving original architectural features such as windows, doors, stacks, walls and gates;
  - (b) the scale, proportions, design and materials in relation to the existing building;
  - (c) retaining original or historic garden or landscape features;
  - (d) the effect of development on the setting of the historic building.
- 6.22 In general, detailed guidance contained in Annex C to PPG 15, Guidance on Alterations to Listed Buildings, will be followed in considering suitability of proposals. Legislation places upon those that own or manage listed buildings an obligation to ensure that they are adequately maintained. Where appropriate the Council will use its powers to ensure that this is done. The Council has recently completed a 'Buildings at Risk' survey in conjunction with English Heritage covering all listed buildings in the Borough and will not hesitate to take action against owners where buildings are considered to be at risk. The Council will aim to act proactively to improve the built environment and to reduce the buildings on the 'At Risk' Register. It will support, work closely with, and where appropriate enlist the help of, non-profit making organisations and land and building preservation charities and other building groups to achieve these ends. It has also produced supplementary planning guidance on the repair and maintenance of historic buildings.
- 6.23 The Council expects applications for Listed Building Consent to be accompanied by full information to enable it to assess the likely impact of the proposals on the special architectural or historic interest of the building in its historic setting. Applications for alterations and extensions to listed buildings need to be of a high standard of accuracy and detail. Drawings should therefore include sufficient information to convey the exact nature of the proposals and of the existing building and

should include survey drawings and plans, elevations and sections at 1:100. Further drawings at 1:20 or full size may be required in certain cases. Full information should also be provided on the history and development of the building, its structure and its condition. The Council may not accept an application for consideration until it is satisfied that sufficiently detailed information has been provided.

#### **BLT 4 PROTECTION OF BUILDINGS OF TOWNSCAPE MERIT**

- 6.24 **The Council will seek to protect and encourage the preservation and enhancement of buildings of townscape merit and will use its powers where possible to protect their character and setting.**
- 6.25 Buildings of townscape merit will be identified in supplementary planning guidance. The criteria used for selecting buildings of townscape merit are set out in the Council's Planning Information Leaflet No 6 "Buildings of Townscape Merit". There are a number of buildings and groups of buildings of historic or architectural interest which contribute significantly to the townscape but are not on the statutory list. The Council has control over the demolition of those which are in conservation areas, but elsewhere its powers are more limited. There will be a presumption against demolition of buildings of townscape merit; but, should it prove necessary, a high standard of design, complementing the surrounding area, will be required in any replacement building. The Council will endeavour to protect the character and setting of buildings of townscape merit by as far as possible treating proposals for works to or close to them, which would be visible from the street or any other place used by the public, as if they were listed buildings, although these buildings do not enjoy the full protection afforded to statutorily listed buildings. The existing list of buildings of townscape merit will be reviewed as resources permit with highest priorities to areas where there is most pressure for redevelopment and as appropriate. Proposals for additions or deletions to the Schedule of Buildings of Townscape Merit will normally be subject to public consultation, whether they occur within or outside conservation areas.

#### **BLT 5 USE OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS**

- 6.26 **The Council will seek to ensure that listed buildings and buildings of townscape merit are used for the purpose for which they were originally built or a similar use. Where the Council is satisfied that change of use is required to ensure the future of a building, an appropriate alternative use will be permitted provided it does not adversely affect the appearance and architectural or historic character of the building.**
- 6.27 Generally the original use for which an historic building was designed and built should be continued, and sound reasons will be required for any change. However, in cases where the Council is satisfied that another use is needed to ensure the retention of a building, it may allow uses that would not normally be approved under land use policies. In appropriate cases where the building is no longer in its original use, it may seek a reversion to the original use. The Council is anxious that historic buildings are not used for purposes harmful to their character, appearance, setting or fabric.
- 6.28 In line with national trends, certain building types cause particular problems in the Borough when they become redundant. Victorian industrial and commercial buildings, churches and chapels, and hospital buildings, which become disused and are in a poor state of repair, are all expensive to restore and are not necessarily easy to convert without loss of character. The Council will seek to encourage suitable alternative uses, (with a preference in the case of ecclesiastical buildings and hospital buildings, for a community use in accordance with policy CCE 3). The Council will continue to monitor buildings at risk and to press for the repair and re-use of such buildings.

#### **BLT 6 ARCHITECTURAL SALVAGE**

- 6.29 **The Council will encourage the salvage and re-use of features and materials from buildings where permission has been granted for demolition.**

- 6.30 The success of the trade in architectural features and materials has reached the point where there is an incentive to remove features for their resale value; theft is also a problem. The Council does not wish to appear to encourage this trend. Where possible, items should be re-used in the same building but, unless the building is listed, this is beyond planning control. Where the owner of a building wishes to install period features removed from another building, and requires planning permission or listed building consent to do so, the Council will, in appropriate cases, require evidence of origin and legal removal.

## **BLT 7           ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES**

- 6.31 **The Council will seek to promote the conservation, protection and enhancement of the archaeological heritage of the Borough, including industrial archaeology, and will encourage the interpretation and presentation of sites, finds and research to the public.**
- 6.32 The Council is committed to developing the potential of archaeological sites in terms of education, recreation and tourism. This will involve agreements with developers who will be expected to include design, land use and management safeguards for archaeological sites affected by their proposals. The term 'archaeology' may include industrial sites, buildings, machinery and artefacts of the 19th and 20th centuries where these are of historic or architectural interest.

## **BLT 8           EVALUATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES**

- 6.33 **Where development proposals may affect archaeological remains or areas of archaeological potential the Council will encourage early discussion of the implications with developers and specialist bodies where appropriate. The Council may require the applicant to arrange and make adequate provision, including funding, for an archaeological field evaluation, according to a written specification agreed with the Council, before proposals can be considered.**
- 6.34 Prospective developers should include as part of their research into the development potential of a site which they undertake before they make a planning application, an initial assessment of whether the site is known or likely to contain archaeological remains by consultation with the appropriate specialist bodies, normally English Heritage. Where this indicates that important remains may exist the Council may require an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out before any decision on the planning application is taken. This will probably involve a ground survey and small scale trial trenching carried out by a professionally qualified archaeologist. This evaluation will help define the character and extent of the remains and thus indicate the weight that should be attached to their preservation. It will also be helpful in identifying potential options for minimising or avoiding damage. The Council will normally expect developers to provide the results of such assessments and evaluation as part of their application: where necessary it will consider service of a direction under Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Applications) Regulations 1988 to require provision of information. The Council wishes to endorse the spirit of the Code of Practice already established by the British Archaeologists and Developers Liaison Group. Map 7 shows Archaeological Constraints in the Borough.

## **BLT 9           DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES**

- 6.35 **Where development affects sites of archaeological importance, the Council will normally require that the applicant satisfies the Council that appropriate provision, including funding, has been made for the remains to be preserved in situ, or in exceptional cases where preservation in situ is not appropriate or feasible, excavated and recorded. A condition will normally be attached to any consent granted requiring these works to be carried out.**
- 6.36 The proposals map identifies scheduled ancient monuments. The archaeological constraints map identifies areas with archaeological potential where sites of importance could exist. Not all sites of archaeological importance will necessarily be on the constraints map. Established procedures of consultation and evaluation must be followed in preparing development proposals. On sites of

archaeological importance the Council will ensure, wherever possible, that archaeological remains are preserved in situ. However, this need not prevent the development of the site providing that special attention is paid to the protection of remains through the careful design of buildings and their foundations. In considering such proposals the Council will liaise with English Heritage and other appropriate organisations. Where proposals will cause significant damage to sites of acknowledged importance the Council will refuse planning permission. In exceptional circumstances, where the Council decides that preservation in situ is not justified and that development resulting in destruction of the remains should proceed, it will have to satisfy itself before granting planning permission that the developer has made appropriate and satisfactory provision for the excavation and recording of the remains. Such excavation and recording should be carried out before development commences, working to a brief agreed by the Council and with advice from archaeological consultants. To achieve this, a legal agreement may be sought, or a condition may be imposed. If, following the granting of planning permission, the site is found to contain previously undetected archaeological remains, the Council will seek to enter into negotiations and agreement with the developer to resolve any conflicts. Remains deemed to be of national importance can be scheduled by the Secretary of State in which case the developer would need to seek separate scheduled monument consent. Applications for financial assistance may be made to English Heritage in particular cases.

## **BLT 10      VERNACULAR BUILDINGS**

- 6.37 **The Council will seek to promote a greater awareness of the archaeology of vernacular buildings and will encourage co-operation between developers and a Council-approved archaeological organisation for the purposes of investigating and recording both the interior and exterior of such buildings.**
- 6.38 The Council wishes to stress the archaeological importance of modest domestic buildings in the Borough, which may remain disguised or hidden by subsequent development until uncovered during building works. It is essential that such buildings are recorded and preserved wherever possible and developers will be encouraged to carry out or facilitate investigations of vernacular buildings, using non-destructive surveying techniques, before development proposals are submitted.

## **DESIGN POLICIES**

### **BLT 11      DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.39 **The Council will require a high standard of design in new buildings and in extensions or alterations to existing buildings, while ensuring that schemes are compatible with the scale and character of existing development, its setting, and the setting of new development. The Council supports proposals whose materials, constructions, services, features and layout derive from ecological design principles. The Council accepts that in some circumstances this may result in new building forms, which will need sensitive integration into existing settlements or landscape. The Council will take account of the following factors in considering applications:**
- (a) scale of development;**
  - (b) layout and access arrangements;**
  - (c) relationship to existing townscape and between proposed buildings;**
  - (d) height;**
  - (e) form;**
  - (f) frontage;**
  - (g) building materials and colour;**
  - (h) detailing;**
  - (i) compliance with ecological design principles.**
- 6.40 The majority of the Borough has an environment of high quality, and appropriately high design standards will therefore be applied throughout, not only in conservation areas. In order to assist this

objective, the Council has issued a comprehensive range of Design Guidance. The range of topics covered in this guidance is listed in Appendix D of the Plan.

- 6.41 The Council wishes to ensure that new development is of a high standard of design and layout. Any new building, extension or alteration will have an impact on its surrounding environment, though the degree of that impact will vary with its size, location and prominence in the townscape. It is anticipated that most new buildings will be in the form of infill development where compatibility with the existing urban fabric is a most important consideration. In some cases, for example in a terrace of uniform design, there will be a need for a new building to relate closely to all aspects of surrounding development. In other cases the Council will encourage distinctive and original designs, including those whose form is dictated by ecological design principles, so long as they are of a high standard and are compatible with the scale and character of existing development. The Council will publish as supplementary planning guidance, a design checklist against which proposals will be assessed (see IMP 4). The Council will use the checklist to monitor the extent to which the above principles are incorporated within schemes and the results will be published in monitoring reports. The Council will consider the establishment of minimum standards within supplementary planning guidance, which will be subject to consultation and regular review.

Ecological design principles the Council wishes to encourage include:

- (1) Increasing density (measured in habitable rooms per net hectare) in so far as is compatible with the surrounding area and the maintenance of high levels of amenity space.
  - (2) Development with reduced parking in appropriate locations.
  - (3) Energy efficient design, including building methods and materials.
  - (4) Renewable energy supply to avoid consumption of fossil fuels.
  - (5) Re-use of grey water, and individual/communal rainwater storage provision.
  - (6) Maximum provision of external cultivatable space on buildings; e.g. roof gardens, terraces, green roofs and integral conservatories.
  - (7) Orientation to maximise light and solar energy.
  - (8) Provision for individual/communal storage for recycling, and on-site recycling wherever possible.
  - (9) Provision for cycle storage.
- 6.42 Equally important are extensions and alterations to existing buildings: these can alter not only the character of a building but also the street scene. Presentation is extremely important in enabling the Council to assess the quality of schemes. Adjoining buildings should always be shown, and accurately scaled, so that the effect of the proposed building in its setting can be judged. Some computer generated drafting techniques are not always sufficiently sensitive to the need to show detail accurately, particularly in relation to joinery. There is a particular need for accurate representation of the setting in shop-front applications.
- 6.43 It should be borne in mind that design standards can only form a minimum prescription, and restrictive criteria on scale, height, form and materials as enlarged upon below cannot guarantee that development will be distinctive or visually interesting. Therefore while integration with existing buildings or settings, based on compliance with criteria below, is important, it is not the decisive factor in determining approval for schemes. Policy BLT 11 is not intended to restrict the architect's design freedom but to enable the Council to discourage the submission of poorly considered schemes. The Council does not wish to encourage schemes which only imitate existing buildings with no element of originality, or which use characteristic features of traditional buildings unrelated to any overall design concept.

## **SCALE OF DEVELOPMENT**

- 6.44 The Council will generally be opposed to any development or re-development that might be out of scale with existing surrounding development. This could happen if a long frontage is introduced in a context of narrow frontages. In residential streets of 2/3 storey detached or semi-detached houses on generous plots, it would be difficult to maintain the prevailing scale and character if a proposed development was higher, occupied more of the plot, or comprised a larger frontage. In cases where large separate sites are to be developed (including sites created through the accumulation of

separate plots) consideration will be given to the effect upon the natural environment, and to such factors as local identity, views, topography and the general layout and scale of the surrounding area.

## **LAYOUT AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS**

- 6.45 The Council will generally be opposed to any development where layout is dominated by the requirements of cars or service vehicles. In residential areas the Council will be guided by the recommendations of Design Bulletin 32, Residential Roads and Footpaths: Layout Considerations (Department of the Environment 1992) and by the Council's Street Design Guide. Large areas of parking or servicing uninterrupted by landscaping should be avoided. Provision should be made for a range of forms of transport (see TRN 2 and TRN 3), for example, secure cycle parking. Orientation should take into account the principles of resource conservation.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING TOWNSCAPE**

- 6.46 Development should be in harmony with surrounding buildings. Elements such as windows, roofs, shop-fronts, doors, etc. should relate to one another in such a way as to maintain or complement the proportions of the surroundings, particularly as expressed in the relationship between solids and voids. Skilful design is necessary to reduce the impact of the wide and low floors of new shops and offices so that they can be integrated with the proportions of surrounding development.

## **HEIGHT**

- 6.47 Development should be in scale with the adjoining buildings and in proportion to the average street width as defined by building frontages. Where uniform building height is part of the character of a street it will not normally be appropriate to permit abrupt variations in the general roof line or eaves line, while in other areas irregular building height might be encouraged.

## **FORM**

- 6.48 The form of development should respect not only its proposed function but also important features on surrounding buildings. For example, where diversity and variety are evident, this should be taken into account in the design. Strong elements such as gable roofs or bay windows may be very important to the townscape of an area and, in some cases, may offer the basis for a well integrated design solution.

## **FRONTAGE**

- 6.49 Development should respect the scale and alignment of the street of which it is part. This usually means building to the same frontage as the existing buildings, keeping any angles which may reflect earlier subdivisions. Very good reasons would be needed to justify a substantial deviation from the existing building alignment. Building extensions may, however, be set back from the main building line to allow a clear visual break between existing buildings and the new work.

## **BUILDING MATERIALS**

- 6.50 In areas where certain materials strongly predominate - for example a certain colour brick, or slated or clay tiled roofs - it would normally be expected that development would use similar materials. In areas of more diverse materials a new building of distinctive design may act as a useful foil, provided that materials are sensitively used. Where existing buildings are involved, the original materials should be respected, and neither painted nor rendered if brick or stonework is involved. Re-used and recycled materials should be used where appropriate. Materials should, wherever possible be from renewable sources because of declining natural resources and disposal problems

of materials such as PVC, or recycled, and should be selected to minimise energy use in manufacture and the operation of the building.

## **DETAILING**

- 6.51 The success of a building in its setting may depend on such details as the degree of ornamentation, skill in using materials, or the continuation of brick walls and fences. Details of this nature should be given special attention at the design stage.

## **INFILL DEVELOPMENT**

- 6.52 Where a building or plot is part of an existing pattern of development with an identifiable and consistent form, there will be a presumption against its replacement with a unit or units which do not reflect the prevailing pattern of development. This may be expressed in characteristic plot or building sizes, or the relationship of plots or buildings to each other, or the relationship of buildings to their plots, or all of these.
- 6.53 The purpose is to maintain an environment where residential streets have a clear identity. The policy is intended to encourage analysis and sympathy with existing layout and massing, but not to encourage the imitation of historical styles. New design does not have to imitate architectural forms or features, but should recognise the rhythm, height, proportion and plot relationships of existing properties.
- 6.54 Where a street has no dominant pattern or form of development, or this has already been radically altered, new development should still generally reflect the pattern of development of its wider context.
- 6.55 The above principles will also be applied to backland development, see policy HSG 12 and the Council's guidance on the development of small housing sites.

## **BLT 12 ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENT**

- 6.56 **Applications for the development, change of use, alteration or extension of, buildings open to the public and buildings used for employment, educational or recreational purposes, will be required to provide full access for all users including people with disabilities and others with mobility difficulties. The Council will ensure that streets and other public areas are designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Regard must be taken of requirements set out in supplementary planning guidance, which will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.**
- 6.57 There are large numbers of elderly and disabled persons in the Borough, who may have difficulty when visiting buildings because of poorly designed kerbs, entrances and staircases, and it is important that conditions are improved for them. Under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person Act 1970 and the Disabled Persons Act 1981, local authorities are required to provide suitable means of access for the disabled to public buildings wherever practicable and reasonable. They must also draw attention to the provisions of the Act and the Code of Practice for Access for the Disabled to Buildings wherever they grant planning permission for any development providing premises to which the public are to be admitted, such as shops, offices, factories and recreational facilities. They must also consider the needs of people with disabilities, including sight loss, when carrying out works to the highway. More recently, regard should be had to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- 6.58 In addition to making the built environment, including public areas, such as footways and public open space, accessible to people with disabilities, good access benefits everyone, particularly elderly people and people with pushchairs or prams.

## **BLT 13 PLANNING GUIDANCE**

- 6.59 **The Council will, from time to time, and in consultation with the public and other interested bodies, prepare supplementary planning guidance to elaborate on various aspects of design and other policy. Developments will be required to have regard to this guidance which will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.**
- 6.60 The purpose of guidance is to amplify policies and proposals of the Plan, and show detailed matters regarding design and layout. Guidance increases public awareness of the quality of the local environment and encourages owners, developers and tenants to carry out developments in sympathy with the surrounding area. Where relevant, the Council will use the guidance as a basis for consideration of applications for planning permission, listed building consent and consent under the Control of Advertisement Regulations.
- 6.70 The following topics will be among those considered for the production of design guidance:
- (a) aspects of development, including architectural quality, security, landscaping, boundaries, and materials including standards relating to air conditioning, extractor and other plant;
  - (b) selected sites where development is proposed, particularly large sites and those in sensitive locations;
  - (c) visually sensitive parts of the Borough, such as conservation areas, and river corridors, where guidance is needed to direct specific changes;
  - (d) standards to be met in and around residential development;
  - (e) standards in relation to sites within established residential frontages.
- 6.71 Design guidance has already been produced for shop-fronts, shop security and shop signs, parking in front gardens, residential alterations and extensions, siting of satellite dishes and other telecommunications apparatus, trees, landscape planting and care, and small housing sites. A list of supplementary planning guidance titles adopted by the Council can be found at Appendix D.

## **BLT 14 LANDSCAPE AND DEVELOPMENT**

- 6.72 **The inclusion of landscape proposals will normally be required in submissions for new development, and the Council will insist on the retention of existing trees and other important landscape features on development sites where practicable. Where trees are removed replacement planting will normally be required. There will be a presumption against schemes that result in an unacceptable loss of trees.**
- 6.73 The term 'landscape' is taken to refer to the design of all space between buildings, and includes walls and boundaries and paving materials, as well as planting. These considerations are often vital in creating an appropriate setting to new developments and in integrating new development to its surroundings. Landscape design must form an integral part of any proposals and needs to be considered in relation to the development as a whole at the start of a project. It should also relate to the character of the area.
- 6.74 Wherever appropriate, the Council will interpret 'suitable' trees and other planting as meaning native species, in support of its nature conservation policies. Planting should also take account of the advice offered in the Council's Tree Strategy.
- 6.75 Supplementary planning guidance will be prepared on drawings and information required for landscape aspects of planning submissions and on landscape and gardens.

## **BLT 15 DAYLIGHTING AND SUNLIGHTING**

6.76 **The Council will generally seek to ensure that the design and layout of buildings enables sufficient sunlight and daylight to penetrate into and between buildings, and that adjoining land or properties are protected.**

6.77 The Council will be guided by the standards set out in Site Layout, Planning for Sunlight and Daylight, and in Sun on Ground Indicators (BRE 1991); or any standards replacing them, to ensure this.

## **BLT 16 'UNNEIGHBOURLINESS'**

6.78 **In considering proposals for development the Council will seek to protect adjoining properties from unreasonable loss of privacy, pollution, visual intrusion, noise and disturbance.**

6.79 Although the Council must be concerned with the public interest when examining proposals, it considers it important that amenities of existing occupiers are protected as far as possible when development occurs. It is particularly concerned that residential properties are protected from unreasonable loss of privacy, overlooking and obtrusive development.

## **BLT 17 CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

6.80 **The Council will seek to ensure that the design, layout and use of buildings and public spaces provide for public safety, deter crime and reduce the fear of crime.**

6.89 The increase in the incidence of vandalism and street crime is a costly and disturbing phenomenon, the cause of which is beyond the scope of this document or the Council's ability to control. However, under the new Crime and Disorder Bill, there is a general duty for all Local Authorities to exercise their function with regard to the effect on crime and disorder, and this includes planning decisions. In liaison with the police, the Local Crime Prevention Panel and other appropriate local agencies, the Council can reduce the fear of and opportunity for such incidences by paying careful attention to the use, design, layout and ease of maintenance of buildings and public areas in new development and especially to the design of landscaping. Improved lighting, especially that designed for pedestrians, is important in reducing crime and the fear of crime. In certain areas the installation of CCTV may prevent crime or assist in the identification of criminals. Inclusion of, for example, arts, culture and entertainment elements can deter crime and reduce fear of crime and graffiti. For example there is a potential conflict between habitat protection and safety considerations, as dense shrubbery can result in loss of natural surveillance. Impenetrable or prickly bushes or hedges can, if appropriately located, provide a more secure boundary than walls or fences. Supplementary planning guidance has been produced with advice on security by design, and shopfront security, and this will be updated or added to as necessary.

6.90 Private residential development which includes electronically operated security gates, kept closed to improve security for residents, can have an inappropriately hostile and impermeable appearance in a neighbourhood in which private land is generally open to the street or road behind low boundary walls or hedges. The Council will discourage the inclusion of security gates particularly in new or existing development, and they will not be permitted where their existence and/or their design would detract from the character of a Conservation Area, or of adjacent historic buildings.

## **BLT 18 HIGH BUILDINGS**

6.91 **Buildings which are higher than the general height of surrounding buildings will not normally be permitted.**

6.92 The Council considers that because of the Borough's special character, views, skylines and local townscape and because it is principally a residential area with a general building height of two to four storeys, all parts are sensitive to the impact of high buildings

## **BLT 19 PROVISION OF ART SCHEMES IN NEW DEVELOPMENT**

- 6.93 **The Council will encourage visual arts in appropriate development schemes.**
- 6.94 Visual arts, including public sculpture, environmental art and high quality creative exterior and interior design, will lead to significant cultural, environmental and economic benefits for the Borough. The Council will therefore seek where appropriate to encourage percent for the arts' schemes whereby public art is incorporated into new public and private building developments or refurbishments. The Council will advise on schemes and encourage the involvement of professional artists in appropriate schemes from an early stage.

## **BLT 20 SHOPFRONTS OF ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST**

- 6.95 **The Council will seek the retention of shop-fronts of architectural or historical interest.**
- 6.96 Shop-fronts of architectural or historical interest may be part of buildings on the statutory list or included in the list of buildings of townscape merit. There is concern about the effect of modern retailing practices on the appearance of the Borough's shopping areas. Problems are caused by the often unsympathetic house styles of multiples and chains, and independent retailers often have visibility and economy as a higher priority than the retention of character. In most shopping areas, a relatively low proportion of buildings retain the original shop-fronts which make such a major contribution to the character of local streets, and many others have suffered damaging alterations. Some changes to shop-fronts do not require planning permission. Once traditional materials and details such as decorative tiling, glass, cast and wrought iron and joinery have disappeared, it is difficult or impossible to replace them to the same standard. In many areas of the Borough, shopping parades dating from the mid 19th century to the early 20th century have been designed as an entity and their unity of detail and material must be maintained. In conservation areas removal of traditional shop-fronts is likely to require consent, and will generally be resisted.

## **BLT 21 NEW AND ALTERED SHOP-FRONTS**

- 6.97 **The Council will require a high standard of design in all new and altered shop-fronts. When considering proposals, the Council will have special regard to the following matters:**
- (a) the shop-front must complement the building of which it forms a part, and the surrounding street scene;**
  - (b) the fascia must be in proportion to the shop-front;**
  - (c) blinds, canopies or shutters where acceptable in principle must be appropriate to the character of the shop-front and its setting; external security grilles will not normally be permitted; in sensitive areas, rigid and gloss finish blinds will generally be unacceptable;**
  - (d) materials must be of high quality and, in the case of alterations to an existing shop-front of architectural or historical interest, must be appropriate to its age and character and, where relevant, match existing materials;**
  - (e) details must be carefully considered, and it will be expected that features such as cornices, stallrisers and pilasters will be provided where appropriate;**
  - (f) doorways must incorporate suitably designed access for people with restricted mobility, and equipment such as cash dispensing machines should be at a height suitable for wheelchair users.**
  - (g) door design should seek to minimise heat loss.**
- 6.98 The design of new shop-fronts and of alterations to existing fronts, is important to the maintenance of a high standard of appearance in commercial areas. Replacement shop-fronts have not always been of a high standard of design, materials or detailing, and most new shop-fronts are produced to standard designs by shopfitting specialists. Frequent problems include the demand for flat-fronted

shop-fronts to replace those with recessed doors; resistance to using stallrisers; out-of-scale and internally illuminated fascias; and reluctance to use any other than sheet materials, standard aluminium sections and standard doors. Even where national chains of specialist retailers have a house style with 'period character', this may not necessarily be appropriate to the building or street in which it is located and may diminish the individual character of local centres.

- 6.99 The Council will require that applications for the replacement or alteration of shop-fronts in conservation areas or buildings of townscape merit include elevations of the full height of the building and its immediate neighbours; sections; details of materials and colours proposed, and those of adjacent properties. Supplementary planning guidance on shop-front design has been produced which the Council will have regard to in considering applications.
- 6.100 The Council will use its building control powers to ensure that shop numbers are clearly displayed on fascias and signs.

## **BLT 22 SIGNS AND ILLUMINATION**

- 6.101 **The Council will require signs and illumination of shop-fronts where acceptable to be of a standard of design which respects the immediate and surrounding environment in terms of amenity and public safety.**
- 6.102 Poorly sited or over-large shop signs and badly designed or over-bright fascias, whether in themselves or in relation to adjacent advertisements, can have a seriously detrimental effect on the visual quality of an area and may raise issues of public safety. However, there is no reason why, with care, shop signs cannot be satisfactorily integrated into a commercial centre or shopping street. Internally illuminated box fascias may not always be regarded as appropriate to a particular area and will be resisted; reflective acrylic sheet, mosaic and bright metal finishes are not generally considered suitable materials. Front lit fascias should light only the fascia and not the first floor or the rest of the shop-front. Projecting signs should preferably be located at fascia level and not impinge on architectural features. Planning guidance on shop-fronts and signs has been produced which the Council will have regard to in considering applications.

## **BLT 23 ADVERTISEMENTS AND HOARDINGS**

- 6.103 **(A) the Council will exercise strict control over the design and siting of advertisement hoardings and other advertisements to ensure that the character of individual buildings and streets is not damaged, having regard to the interests of amenity and public safety.**
- (B) powers will be used where appropriate and practical to challenge existing hoardings and advertisements that are disruptive to the environment.**
- 6.104 Advertising is closely associated with urban life and can be one of the most dominant elements of the environment. It can enhance the appearance and vitality of a street but can also cause considerable damage to visual amenity. Advertisements (defined under Advertisement Regulations) include not only hoardings, but blinds and canopies with lettering, flags with logos, balloons etc. In considering proposals for an advertising hoarding or other advertisement, including blinds and canopies where relevant, or in deciding whether to take action to remove an existing advertisement, the Council will have regard to the following criteria:
- (a) hoardings should be of good design and in scale with their surroundings;
  - (b) any advertisement display must not have an adverse effect upon road traffic conditions or public safety;
  - (c) advertising displays will not be permitted where they would have an adverse effect upon:
    - (i) a conservation area ;
    - (ii) listed buildings or buildings of townscape merit;
    - (iii) views from or within open spaces or along the Thames riverside and its tributaries;

- (iv) predominantly residential areas;
- (v) high level, brightly illuminated, or flashing advertisements will not normally be permitted especially where they might disturb residents.

6.105 As a general rule advertisement displays will be restricted to shopping, commercial, industrial or transport locations where they comply with the above criteria and do not cause excessive visual clutter. It must be borne in mind that the Council's level of control is limited and that a number of advertisements do not require formal consent from the local authority. A-boards will be discouraged where the Council has powers to do so.

## **BLT 24 TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

6.106 **The Council will seek to ensure that the siting of satellite dishes and other telecommunication apparatus does not harm the character or visual appearance of an area, the visual amenities of adjoining occupiers or the character, appearance or setting of a listed building. The Council will encourage the sharing of telecommunication sites by operators where this is technically possible, and visually appropriate.**

6.107 The Council recognises that the rapidly expanding telecommunications industry offers benefits both in terms of the economy and increased services for consumers. Although the Council must take into account technical and operational matters, satellite dishes and other such equipment can look alien in the existing urban environment. Where possible the Council will exercise its powers to ensure that it protects the visual and environmental amenities of the Borough. The Council will have regard to PPG 8 and the Government's code of best practice as updated by Circular 4/99. Applicants will be required to have regard to the Council's guidelines which will be a material consideration in determining planning applications. In many cases the installation of equipment is permitted development, for which an application for planning permission is not required; the guidance offers advice on siting in these cases. For any installation, there is a need for considerable care in the siting of equipment to avoid visual and environmental problems, damage to trees and paving materials. There is local concern over potential links between electromagnetic fields (EMFs) and ill health, and although there is no proven link the Council will continue to monitor research findings and will amend policy if appropriate.

## **BLT 25 STREET FURNITURE AND TOWNSCAPE MATERIALS**

6.108 **The Council will seek to maintain a safe, attractive and informative environment, accessible to all, through the co-ordinated design of street furniture and townscape materials. A high standard of design and vandal resistance will be required and care will be taken in siting. Redundant and unsightly street furniture will be removed where opportunities occur. The retention of high quality paving and townscape materials will be sought wherever possible and new materials will be carefully selected. Damage resistant paving will be used in appropriate locations, and care will be taken in selecting proper maintenance treatments.**

6.109 The Council recognises the need to ensure a safe and informative environment which is accessible to all, including tourists and visitors, and to those with mobility or visual difficulties, with appropriate surfaces, adequate signs and with sufficient facilities such as seats and litter bins. However, the Council does not have control over that part of the street scene that is managed by statutory undertakers, and the Highways Agency is responsible for works on trunk roads. The Council will ensure a high standard of reinstatement works where statutory and other bodies carry out works on public land, and on care in the siting of utilities. It is important that signs and street furniture are placed so that they do not impede pedestrian flows or obstruct people with visual disabilities and those with wheelchairs or prams, that superfluous items are removed, that official signage is kept to the minimum, and that all provision is co-ordinated to avoid visual clutter. The Council will continue to make representations to responsible authorities to ensure this and in implementing schemes will consult with relevant organisations to obtain views of people with disabilities. Special care will be taken in the siting and choice of street furniture for Thames bridges. Where appropriate, the Council will encourage public art in the form of street furniture and other townscape features under "percent for art" schemes.

- 6.110 Paving and other materials used on the footway and carriageway are often significant in creating the townscape character of an area. It is important to retain existing traditional paving materials such as granite setts, cobbles or York stone paving and to replace with matching material when repair is necessary. In some areas of sensitive townscape, aesthetics and the retention of character take precedence. High-pressure sodium (white light) is now generally used in preference to amber light. In pursuance of this policy, the Council has prepared a Street Design Guide on street furniture and materials, aimed at giving guidance to those involved in their provision for public areas.

## **POLICIES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

### **BLT 26 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS**

- 6.111 **The Council will continue to undertake and encourage improvements to the environment, in co-operation with local groups and businesses, and in connection with developments carried out in the Borough, particularly at the locations shown on the proposals map.**
- 6.112 The Council is concerned to achieve a high standard of environment throughout the Borough, by improving those areas suffering the worst environmental conditions, and by maintaining and improving the standard of existing attractive areas. Improvements are often aimed at mitigating the environmental effects of traffic and parking, and reclaiming space for pedestrians, such as those at Lower George Street, Richmond; Elmfield House, Teddington; and Church Street, Twickenham. The Council will, when finances permit, carry out further improvement schemes and will encourage local residents, community organisations and local businesses to provide, manage and undertake schemes when this is practical. In appropriate cases it will seek agreement with developers under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to secure improvements. Environmental improvements will only be sought that are reasonable and directly related in scale and kind to development proposals. The locations shown on the proposals map are those which the Council considers would benefit most from improvement schemes. Regular contact is made with local groups to keep the list of potential environmental improvements up to date. Environmental improvements include landscape projects, traffic management, and street furniture provision. Where appropriate they will be carried out as part of any area-wide improvements of residential areas. It is an objective of the Plan to ensure the attractiveness of shopping centres. The Council has powers under the Refuse Disposal (Amenities) Act 1978 to remove abandoned vehicles and in the Highways Act 1980 to deal with items illegally deposited on the highway.

### **BLT 27 VACANT BUILDINGS AND VACANT LAND**

- 6.113 **The Council will use its powers where appropriate to ensure that vacant buildings or vacant land do not have a detrimental effect upon amenity. Suitable temporary uses will be encouraged pending a decision on their permanent use.**
- 6.114 Vacant land and buildings constitute a waste of scarce resources and can often spoil the quality of a local environment and encourage vandalism. The Council has powers under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure the tidying up of any land including buildings, if amenity is adversely affected by the condition of the land. Under Sections 47,48,54 and 76 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, it can require the repair of unoccupied listed buildings and key buildings in conservation areas. Section 79 of the Building Act 1984 enables the Council to take limited action to require the repair or demolition of a building in a ruinous or dilapidated condition that is detrimental to the amenity of a neighbourhood.

### **BLT 28 FORECOURT PARKING**

- 6.115 **The parking of vehicles in front gardens will be discouraged, especially where this will result in the removal of architectural features such as walls, gates and paving, or of existing trees and other vegetation, and where such parking would detract from the streetscape or setting**

**of the property or the use of the access would create a road or pedestrian safety problem. The Council will seek to restrict permitted development rights for forecourt parking through Article 4 directions, where important townscape issues exist. The Council will have regard to the impact of forecourt parking in considering proposals to extend or convert existing residential property.**

- 6.116 Parking presents difficulties in many residential areas of the Borough, particularly in those areas where houses are not able to have garages. There is increasing demand for forecourt parking, often aggravated by the introduction of controlled parking zones. This has often been achieved without consideration for its impact on the surrounding environment, both in terms of the loss of individual front garden features and in damaging the unity and character of groups of houses and the streetscape in general. The aim of any design for parking in front gardens should be to maintain as much sense of enclosure as is practical, through the retention of existing walls or fences, the provision of gates, and generous planting. In order to minimise visual intrusion, cross-overs must be constructed in materials that match surrounding paving. In many cases alterations to front gardens fall within the terms of permitted development for which an application for planning permission is not required. The local authority, therefore, has limited control over the creation of forecourt parking. In order to draw the public's attention to this matter and to encourage an environmentally acceptable solution to the problem the Council has produced planning guidance. In cases where forecourt parking involves the creation of a vehicular access that requires planning permission, such applications would be refused where the use of the access is likely to adversely affect road and pedestrian safety or where the proposal would be detrimental to the environment. The Council will generally discourage extensions when this results in the loss of existing off-street parking spaces. When forecourt parking is unavoidable as a result of the extension or conversion of large properties, the Council will apply the guidelines in full. Regard must be taken of requirements set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance which will be a material consideration in determining planning applications.

## **BLT 29            EXISTING INJURIOUS USES**

- 6.117 **The Council will use all its powers to restrict and control existing injurious uses such as activities generating unacceptable noise levels or various forms of air and water pollution.**
- 6.118 Aircraft noise is a major source of disturbance in the Borough and the Council will oppose changes in aviation activity which appear likely to worsen the situation. Noise, fumes and other pollutants produced by traffic including that on the river and commercial premises can be a major source of nuisance and can be prejudicial to health. The transport and storage of toxic and radioactive material is of particular concern. The Council can use its planning powers in some cases to control or extinguish injurious uses but has far more scope to take action against causes of pollution using its powers under the Public Health Act 1936, the Clean Air Acts 1956 and 1968 and the Control of Pollution Act 1974 and the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Under these Acts the Council has a statutory duty to monitor, and powers to identify and take action to deal with, all matters that might cause pollution, including the contamination of land and the quality of water courses. The Council through its Charter for the Environment is committed to eliminating products which are harmful to the environment.
- 6.119 Traffic is a major source of nuisance both from noise and a risk to health from vehicle exhausts. The GLA has considered levels of road traffic reduction necessary to achieve strategic objectives, including compliance with the objectives of the National Air Quality Strategy. At the local level the Council is assessing air quality and has declared an Air Quality Management area under the Environment Act 1995. An Action Plan has been drawn up to reduce traffic pollution.

## **BLT 30            PROTECTION FROM POLLUTION IN NEW DEVELOPMENT**

- 6.120 **New development including changes of use should not cause an unacceptable increase in noise or pollution levels. Noisy or other development likely to cause pollution should generally be located in areas where this would not be a major consideration or where its**

**impact can be minimised. Noise levels within the development should be within acceptable levels compatible with the use. As far as practicable, noise or in other ways sensitive development should be located away from existing sources of noise or other pollution. It should be designed so that existing sources of noise and pollution do not adversely affect it. The Council will provide supplementary planning guidance as to appropriate on or off site noise levels and design to reduce problems, and this will be regarded as a material consideration when processing planning applications.**

- 6.121 The Council recognises the need to control noise (including vibration) and pollution by making sure that new development does not generate unacceptable levels of noise and pollution, by ensuring that new development is not adversely affected by existing sources and by controlling noise and pollution within the development itself. The policy seeks to ensure that potential pollution problems are minimised by keeping incompatible uses apart and requiring that developments are designed to eliminate or reduce pollution to acceptable levels.
- 6.122 Housing, schools and hospitals are particularly sensitive to noise, while noise sources could include roads, aircraft, railways, certain commercial uses, waste disposal sites and sport/entertainment uses. As far as is practicable, sensitive development should be located away from existing sources of noise or other pollution. Where new developments would be subject to noise levels in excess of the supplementary guidance the Council will require remedial measures to be taken at the design stage.
- 6.123 Noise can be reduced by a suitable site layout and the provision of walls and landscaping which can act as an acoustic barrier. Appropriate juxtaposition of uses between and within buildings, both horizontally and vertically, can help prevent the problem of noise transmission, and soundproofing can also significantly reduce the level of noise within new buildings; this is covered by the Building Regulations which set out required levels. Planning conditions may also be imposed with the aim of reducing the impact of noise and pollution, e.g. restriction the type of use or the hours of opening. Whilst the Council prefers appropriate uses, remedial action or the use of suitable conditions rather than the under-utilisation of land, where these are not practical and the problem cannot be overcome, development may be refused.

## **BLT 31 ENERGY AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION**

- 6.124 **The Council will seek to ensure that the design, orientation, and use of materials in new buildings, extensions and external works maximise potential for energy generation from renewable sources and resource conservation, take into account the principles of energy and water conservation and collection, and that materials are obtained from renewable sources and whenever possible are obtained by re-use or recycling. Proposals for development to enable the exploitation of renewable energy resources will be encouraged subject to impact on amenity.**
- 6.125 The Council recognises the need to reduce energy consumption to conserve national energy resources and to minimise the effects of global warming. Energy consumption can be significantly reduced by ensuring new buildings are energy efficient. The Council has some control over the conservation of fuel and power through the Building Regulations 2002 which aim to ensure that buildings are adequately insulated, and unacceptable levels of heat loss do not occur due to badly designed heating and hot water systems or excessive provision of windows and roof lights. However, these are minimum standards only. It is important that energy generation and conservation are taken into account when considering the design and layout of buildings and their landscape settings. For instance the orientation of buildings in relation to sunlight and shadows can alter energy consumption. The Council will encourage proposals for developments to exploit renewable energy sources, including small non-commercial energy sources for domestic use, for instance wind turbines and solar power providing there is no impact on local amenity. In other than minor developments the Council may require applications to be supported by whole-life energy audits of buildings. The Council will develop supplementary planning guidance to include appropriate minimum standards. (see policy BLT 11, paragraph 6.41 and Policy IMP 4)

6.126 In order to prevent depletion of non-renewable resources, it is essential that materials from enduring sources are used and that any materials which adversely affect the environment in their production, use or disposal should be avoided. The direct re-use of materials (such as bricks) or their recycling for re-use, (aggregates, glass, plastic, rags, aluminium etc.) reduces the need for new raw materials as well as, in many cases, saving the energy used in processing new raw materials. The Council will aim to secure a target of 50% of recycled aggregates in all developments in accordance with GLA's strategic guidance . The overall aim should be to encourage reduction in the consumption of all materials which deplete non-renewable resources, but the Council has limited control over the content of the waste stream which it is required to process. PPG 22 describes the various renewable forms of energy, notes the considerations which should apply when it is intended to locate renewable energy installations in designated areas, explains when environmental assessment is required, sets out the environmental implications of renewable energy and refers to planning conditions, temporary permissions and other consents/permissions. Later annexes refer to energy from waste digestion, landfill gas and active solar systems.