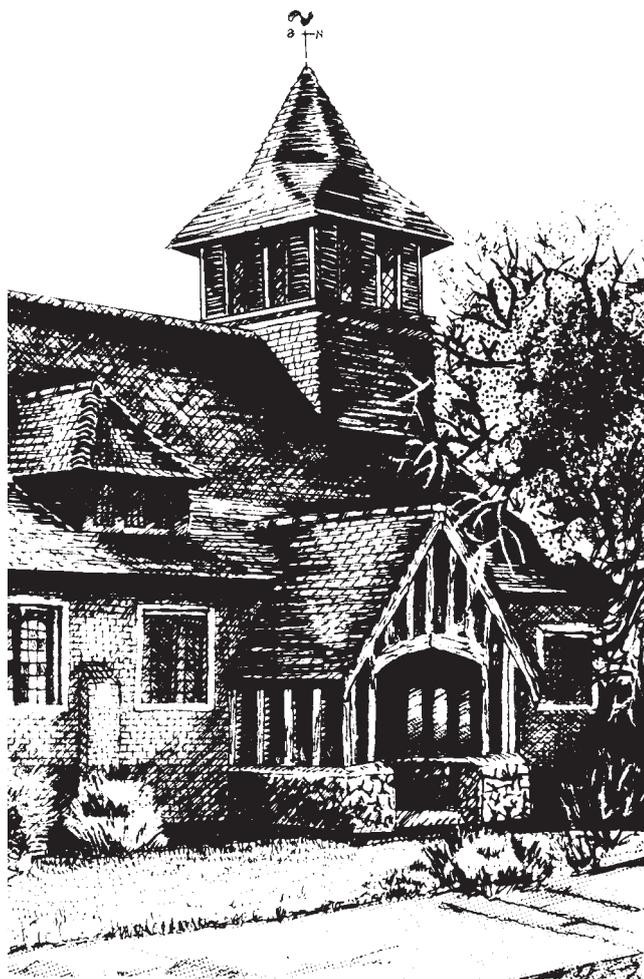


# Supplementary Planning Document Buildings of Townscape Merit

Adopted May 2015

# I. WHAT ARE BUILDINGS OF TOWNSCAPE MERIT?

**1.1** 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 of any age, even those of a recent date, can be included.



## 2. WHY HAS THIS LIST BEEN MADE?

**2.1** National policy contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. In doing so they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. The related National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) notes that local planning authorities may identify non-designated heritage assets as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated heritage assets. In the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames these buildings of local interest are called Buildings of Townscape Merit (other authorities may identify these as 'locally listed'). The criteria used and policies related to Buildings of Townscape Merit are detailed in this supplementary planning document.

**2.2** The adopted (Further Alterations to the) London Plan 2015 Policy 7.8 recognises the significance of built heritage and seeks to protect and enhance these assets. London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Core Strategy Policy CP7 and Development Management Plan Policy DM HD 3 seek to protect and encourage the identification, preservation and enhancement of Buildings of Townscape Merit.

### 3. HOW AND WHY ARE THESE BUILDINGS CHOSEN?

**3.1** 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.

**3.2** 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.



### 4. THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO BUILDINGS OF TOWNSCAPE MERIT

**4.1** 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.

**4.2** 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. 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.

**4.3** 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.

**4.4** 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.

**4.5** 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.

## 5. FURTHER INFORMATION

- [List of Buildings of Townscape Merit](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/locally_listed_buildings): www.richmond.gov.uk/locally\_listed\_buildings
- [Supplementary Planning Documents](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/supplementary_planning_documents_and_guidance): www.richmond.gov.uk/supplementary\_planning\_documents\_and\_guidance
- [Conservation Areas](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/conservation_areas): www.richmond.gov.uk/conservation\_areas
- [Listed Buildings](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/listed_buildings): www.richmond.gov.uk/listed\_buildings
- [Richmond Council Planning](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/planning): www.richmond.gov.uk/planning

External guidance on locally listed buildings and structures can also be found at the following links below:

- [Historic England Good Practice Guide for Local Heritage Listing](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/good-practice-local-heritage-listing/): www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/good-practice-local-heritage-listing/
- [Planning Practice Guidance](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/what-are-non-designated-heritage-assets-and-how-important-are-they/): http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment/what-are-non-designated-heritage-assets-and-how-important-are-they/



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Adopted May 2015

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