

# Urban Design Guide

Supplementary Planning Document  
January 2017



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# 1 Introduction

## Status of this document

1.1 The Islington Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides guidance on how urban design principles should be applied to ensure that new development successfully contributes to making the borough a better place. It is applicable to all new developments, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings.

1.2 This SPD does not create new policy. It interprets and provides further guidance based on Islington's existing adopted Development Plan policies and will be an important material consideration in helping the council to make decisions on planning applications. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between Islington's Development Plan, Local Plan and SPDs.



Figure 1 Relationship between SPDs, Islington's Local Plan and the London Plan

- 1.3 The SPD is intended to provide clarity for planning officers and developers, as well as any other interested stakeholders and is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 153. The SPD was subject to a public consultation process over the summer of 2016, and pre-consultation in 2015, undertaken in accordance with the statutory consultation requirements.
- 1.4 Policy CS9 of the Core Strategy (2011), *Protecting and enhancing Islington's built and historic environment* sets out how, at a strategic level, the Council expects new development to contribute to enhancing and protecting Islington's built environment, making it safer and more inclusive.
- 1.5 This includes identifying that areas within the south of the borough may contain some sites suitable for new tall buildings; the Finsbury Local Plan (2013) identifies these sites in Policy BC9. Policy CS9 also identifies that detailed guidance on urban design is provided in this SPD.
- 1.6 The Development Management (DM) Policies (2013) provides more detailed policies to ensure the Core Strategy is effectively implemented. Policy DM2.1 *Design* is the key policy against which applications will be assessed in relation to design quality, and this SPD has been structured to provide guidance on how to successfully meet its requirements.
- 1.7 Policy DM2.1A states:
- All forms of development are required to be of high quality, incorporate inclusive design principles and make a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of an area, based upon an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Permission will be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.
- 1.8 It goes on to state that for a development proposal to be acceptable, it is required to satisfy 13 criteria. To avoid unnecessary repetition with already adopted SPDs, this document focuses on providing further guidance on how to successfully satisfy the criteria of DM2.1A that are not addressed by other SPDs, as set out in Figure 2.
- 1.9 In this way, the SPD complements and should be read alongside other SPDs on [Inclusive Design](#), [Environmental Design](#), [Inclusive Landscape Design](#), [Basement Development](#) and the council's [Streetbook](#), the last dealing with issues pertaining the public realm including landscaping and trees. The SPD focuses on providing a reference point for development across the borough. Within Conservation Areas, applicants will also need to refer to the relevant [Conservation Area Guidance](#).
- 1.10 While this SPD is structured to assist applicants in satisfying the provisions of the borough's primary design policies, applicants should be aware that there are other DM policies relevant to the achievement of high quality design on which this SPD also provides further guidance. These include:
- DM2.2 Inclusive design
  - DM2.3 Heritage
  - DM2.4 Protected views
  - DM2.5 Landmarks
  - DM3.3 Residential conversions and extensions
  - DM3.4 Housing standards
  - DM3.5 Private outdoor space
  - DM4.8 Shopfronts
  - DM6.2 New and improved Open Spaces
  - DM6.3 Protecting open space
  - DM6.5 Landscaping, trees and biodiversity
  - DM7.1 Sustainable design and construction
  - DM7.4 Sustainable design standards
  - DM8.1 Movement hierarchy
  - DM8.2 Managing transport impacts
  - DM8.4 Walking and cycling

Policy DM2.1A Requirement		Further Guidance in UDG?
(i)	be sustainable durable and adaptable;	Yes. Refer also to Environmental Design SPD
(ii)	be safe and inclusive;	Refer to Inclusive Design SPD
(iii)	efficiently use the site and/or building;	Yes. Refer also to the Mayor of London's Housing SPG.
(iv)	improve the quality, clarity and sense of spaces around or between buildings;	Yes
(v)	enhance legibility and have clear distinction between public and private spaces:	Yes
(vi)	improve movement through areas, and repair fragmented urban form	Yes
(vii)	respect and respond positively to existing buildings, the streetscape and the wider context, including local architectural language and character, surrounding heritage assets, and locally distinctive patterns of development and landscape;	Yes
(viii)	reinforce and complement local distinctiveness and create a positive sense of place;	Yes
(ix)	sustain and reinforce a variety and mix of uses;	Yes
(x)	provide a good level of amenity including consideration of noise and the impact of disturbance, hours of operation, vibration, pollution, fumes between and within developments, overshadowing, overlooking, privacy, direct sunlight and daylight, over-dominance, sense of enclosure and outlook;	Yes
(xi)	not unduly prejudice the satisfactory development or operation of adjoining land and/or the development of the surrounding area as a whole;	Yes
(xii)	consider landscape design holistically as part of the whole development. Landscape design should be set out in a landscape plan at an appropriate level of detail to the scale of development and address the considerations outlined in Appendix 12 of this document;	Refer to DM Appendix 12 and Inclusive Landscape Design and Streetbook SPDs
(xiii)	not result in an unacceptable adverse impact on views of local landmarks.	Refer to DM Policy 2.5 Landmarks and Mayoral guidance

*Figure 2 Relationship of SPD guidance to Policy DM2.1A requirements*

## How to use this document

- 1.11 This document is divided into five chapters, including this Introduction. Chapter Two sets out the planning policy context for development proposals and Chapter Three describes the character of the borough.
- 1.12 Chapters Four and Five form the core of the document, with Chapter Four setting out the overarching principles which form the Council's approach to managing change in the borough and Chapter Five containing detailed design guidance to be considered when developing proposals.
- 1.13 For designers, developers and planning officers, clarity and transparency are essential. However, absolute prescription is inappropriate as every site and context is unique; every proposal will be judged on merit.
- 1.14 To achieve the necessary lucidity, brevity and flexibility – and in line with many other design guides and SPDs – the focus of the SPD is on the design process, with policy requirements broken down into a number of specific and measurable objectives to make clear the Council's expectations regarding design outcomes.
- 1.15 Chapter Five sets out how to deliver an acceptable development proposal in accordance with Development Management Policy DM2.1A. Depending on the application type, objectives can be met in various ways.
- 1.16 For example, DM2.1A(v) sets out that all forms of development are required to *'enhance legibility and have clear distinction between public and private space'*.
- 1.17 The SPD provides further guidance on this policy requirement by breaking it down into objectives against which a planning application will be assessed:
- Development should define and/or enclose space
  - Development should be coherent, well connected and promote community safety
  - Development should provide a suitable backdrop to the public realm
- 1.18 In order to ensure that objectives are satisfied in a way that achieves the desired outcome of the policy and is appropriate to the borough, Chapter Five sets out detailed advice in the form of specific design considerations that should be taken into account; for ease of reference these are set out in full in Appendix A, as well as included within the relevant sub-sections.
- 1.19 For example, to ensure that DM2.1A(v) is satisfied, proposals should demonstrate that they have taken into account:
- The necessary elimination of concealment opportunities that undermine community safety and security
  - The provision of legible, unobstructed pedestrian routes
  - How permeability can be enhanced to deliver accessible and convenient routes through open spaces, which promote walking and cycling and attract diverse users
  - How development is integrated within the existing urban grain and the associated isolation, of gated communities, avoided
- 1.20 In addition to these considerations and associated advice, good practice examples are provided to illustrate how schemes have successfully delivered the objectives in a range of circumstances.
- 1.21 Relevant references are included in Appendix B.

## Applying for planning permission

- 1.22 Development Management Policy DM2.1B sets out that development proposals are required to demonstrate how they have successfully addressed the elements of the site and its surroundings through submission of drawings and a written statement.
- 1.23 The level of detail required a proposal is dependent on the size, type and location of the new development, and its impact on the local area. The Council's [Local Validation Requirements](#) set out what applicants need to submit to support different types of planning applications.
- 1.24 It is a national requirement that applications for major developments, applications in relation to Listed Buildings and new dwellings within a Conservation Area include a Design and Access Statement. Design and Access Statements allow the applicant to demonstrate that their proposal is based on a thorough design process. A key part of the statement is an explanation of how local context has influenced the final design, which is of particular importance in evidencing compliance with Policy DM2.1.
- 1.25 When developing proposals and commissioning the design team, it is advisable to appoint RIBA/ARB-registered architects with an understanding of the local context. Where appropriate, the council may seek retention of architects throughout the build via S106 to ensure the necessary design quality is achieved.
- 1.26 For large sites that require a masterplanned approach, applicants should consider the merit of appointing different architects to work on the different plots/buildings within the masterplan to bring variety and a finer grain. Applicants are also encouraged to consider ways of supporting new ideas and innovation in the built environment when developing their proposals, for example through the use of design competitions.
- 1.27 The council offers a [Pre-application Advice Service](#) for all applicants. Particularly for householder applications, it is recommended that applicants engage with neighbours at an early stage, giving interested parties sufficient information to enable them to properly consider the proposal. As recommended by Government, the Council also convenes a [Design Review Panel](#) to provide independent assessment of proposals and to support high standards of design.
- 1.28 To support the retention of historic features, the Council has produced a series of [Design and Conservation Guides](#) (DCGs) focusing on the technical issues associated with the maintenance of original features in period buildings. While many of the DCGs refer specifically to Listed Buildings and buildings with Conservation Areas, the advice contained within the guidance notes is relevant to all historic properties in terms of providing practical advice on methods of enhancing or restoring original features.
- 1.29 Most alterations to a shopfront require planning permission, with the exception of repainting, reglazing or repairing a shopfront. Where alterations do not require planning permission, those carrying out the alterations are nevertheless encouraged to take account of the guidance in the Shopfront Design sections, particularly for conversions of retail premises to residential, to enable alterations to make a positive contribution to the local area.
- 1.30 Certain types of minor changes to properties can be made without planning permission. Further details on permitted development rights can be found on the planning portal website [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk) or by contacting the council.



# 2 Planning Policy Context

*Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.*

~ **National Planning Policy Framework**, paragraph 56

## National planning policy and guidance

- 2.1 Securing good design is a key element of delivering sustainable development and a core principle of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 64 of the NPPF is unequivocal that planning permission *'should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions'*.
- 2.2 The NPPF is also clear that good design goes beyond aesthetic considerations and that policies and decisions need to *'address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment'* (paragraph 61). This approach requires design policies which are grounded in an understanding of an area's defining characteristics as well as based on stated objectives for the future of the area.
- 2.3 While planning policies should not attempt to impose architectural styles of stifle innovation or originality, it is however proper for policies to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. At the same time paragraph 65 of the NPPF recognises that well-designed buildings which promote high levels of sustainability should be considered positively, even where there are concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape. In other words, both pastiche and unnecessary prescription are to be avoided to ensure that design policies contribute positively and concurrently to the three dimensions of sustainable development.
- 2.4 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is an online resource which provides further guidance on the interpretation and implementation of the NPPF. Of critical importance to the development of local policies is the guidance that design should not be the preserve of specialists. To make design a more transparent and accessible part of the planning process, local authorities should establish *'sound, clear and easy to follow design policies and processes for use by both developers and local communities'* (Reference ID: 26-005-20140306).
- 2.5 PPG (Reference ID: 26-006-20140306) also recognises good design can have a positive impact on a range of economic, social and environment objectives and that, as such, planning policies should seek to ensure that the physical environment supports these objectives, with due consideration given to promoting:
- local character (including landscape setting)
  - safe, connected and efficient streets
  - a network of greenspaces (including parks) and public places
  - crime prevention
  - security measures
  - access and inclusion
  - efficient use of natural resources
  - cohesive and vibrant neighbourhoods

## London policy

- 2.6 The [London Plan](#) includes a number of policies, both strategic and in relation to planning decisions, for facilitating high quality design, building on the positive elements of places to help inform the future enhancement and development of an area. Chapter 7: London's Living Places and Spaces contains the bulk of these policies. The *Minor Alterations to the London Plan* (MALP, 2015) adopted the Government's nationally described space standards for all homes and applied building regulation M4(2) to 90% of homes and building regulation M4(3) to 10% of new homes.
- 2.7 The achievement of these policies is further supported by a number of Mayoral SPGs. The *London View Management Framework SPG* (2012) identifies four classifications of views: London Panoramas, Linear Views, River Prospects and Townscape Prospects, and sets out the specific characteristics of each that contribute to the appreciation of London at the strategic level. Five protected vistas pass through Islington, forming a strategic constraint on development.
- 2.8 *The All London Green Grid SPG* (2012) provides guidance for designing and managing green and open spaces to bring about previously unrealised benefits, with the aim of increasing the delivery of green infrastructure for London. It focuses on four strategic elements – river and landscape corridors; established open spaces and opportunities for creating new parks; existing and proposed green connections and corridors; and designated and protected landscapes – to create a high quality multifunctional green infrastructure network of interlinked, multi-purpose spaces.
- 2.9 The *Character and Content SPG* (2014) sets out an approach to understanding character and context so that this evidence can help to guide change in the planning and design process in a way which is responsive to individual places and locations. It is central to the implementation of many of the policies in Chapter 7 of the London Plan, particularly Policies 7.1 Lifetime Neighbourhoods and 7.4 Local Character.
- 2.10 The *Town Centres SPG* (2014) provides guidance on the implementation of London Plan Policy 2.15 Town Centres and other policies in the Plan that make specific reference to town centre development and management. Islington has four designated town centres at Angel, Nag's Head, Finsbury Park and Archway.
- 2.11 The [Housing SPG](#) (2016) identifies the different sources of housing capacity that have to be explored if the London Plan's targets are to be achieved, explaining the balance which has to be struck between numbers, creating attractive places to live and respecting the character of surrounding areas. Part Two of the SPG addresses the quality and design of housing developments by setting standards that apply at neighbourhood scale as well as to individual dwellings.
- 2.12 The [CAZ SPG](#) (2016) provides guidance to ensure that the right balance is struck in different parts of the CAZ between its strategic activities – including business, culture, entertainment, shopping and tourism – and more local uses such as housing. The south of the borough, including part of Angel Town Centre, is within the CAZ.

# 3 Islington's Character

*Distinctiveness is not solely about the built environment – it also reflects an area's function, history, culture and its potential need for change.*

~ **Planning Practice Guidance**, 26-020-20140306

3.1 Character is defined by the Local Plan as 'individual distinctiveness created from a combination of natural and built elements with historic, socio-economic and other factors'. An understanding of Islington's current character is essential to directing and shaping future development in a sensitive and incremental manner. This approach recognises the particular role

and function that each area has, and could have, within the borough and the opportunities available for growth. Islington's character is best understood as a rich tapestry arising from the street patterns, built form, land uses and activity levels that defined the area during key periods in the borough's history.

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## Historical Development

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### Early history

3.2 The historic hamlet of Islington, focused on the area now known as Angel, is mentioned in an early Anglo-Saxon charter, and in the Middle Ages most of the land belonged to religious institutions. After the dissolution of the monasteries (1536-1540), much of it was given to aristocratic families.

3.3 By the 17th century, Islington had grown from a hamlet into a village, spreading along Upper Street and Lower Road (now Essex Road) where these diverged from the High Street at Islington Green. Like Newington Green to the north, Islington Green was a common area of land where local farmers had grazing rights; the fields around the village were farmed for dairy which supplied London.

3.4 Clerkenwell, in the south west of the borough, also has a long history and retains much of its medieval street

pattern to this day. The area originally developed as an adjunct to the Roman City, hosting a range of activities that were not permitted within the City walls including livestock markets, metalworks, breweries and monasteries.

3.5 The Charterhouse, the remains of the Priory Church of St John of Jerusalem, St John's Gate and Clerk's Well survive as reminders of the area's strong monastic traditions beginning in the 12th century. The traditional starting point for the Great North Road, the main highway between London, York and Edinburgh, was Smithfield Market, with Islington being an important staging post on the route.

3.6 In the 17th century Clerkenwell became famous as a resort where Londoners came to enjoy its spas, tea gardens and theatres – a retreat from the metropolis. Place/street names such as Bowling Green Lane and Spa Green reflect these



*The Charterhouse*



*St John's Gate*



*No. 54 The Green*



*Old Sessions House*



*Canonbury Square*

historic leisure uses. Sadler's Wells Theatre, opened in the 1680s and rebuilt five times, has survived as heir to this tradition. Whitecross Street Market also dates from this time. Clerkenwell is also the site of the New River Head Reservoir, the termination point of the New River Canal built in 1609 to supply London with fresh water from springs in Hertfordshire.

- 3.7 Otherwise the borough was comprised of small hamlets, such as Newington Green (the home of the English Dissenters in the 17th century); manor houses, of which only remnants of Canonbury remain; scattered houses; and farmland.
- 3.8 London's oldest surviving brick terrace, no. 54 the Green, dated 1658, is located in Newington Green. Buildings of this time were constructed from timber, stone, red brick and clay tiles. Narrow plot widths to buildings existing today are often a reminder of buildings from this period which would have been gable fronted.

### **Georgian Era**

- 3.9 In the 18th century much of Clerkenwell and most of the historic village of Islington was redeveloped to accommodate growth; public houses and inns were a common feature of the village. Both the population and the speed of building began rapidly expanding near the end of this period, with the agricultural land surrounding the redeveloped areas being converted to residential areas.
- 3.10 London's first bypass, the New Road from Paddington to Islington, was constructed in the 1750s (the section from Kings Cross renamed Pentonville Road in 1857) and City Road extended this route to the edge of the City of London in 1761.
- 3.11 To open up new areas to development, a private company was established in 1826 to build a road connecting King's Cross to Holloway Road – the present day Caledonian Road. The Camden to Limehouse section of the Regent's Canal

opened in 1820, with the privately operated City Road Basin playing a pivotal role in moving coal and building materials.

- 3.12 In Clerkenwell, edge-of-city trades such as jewellery, printing, papermaking and watchmaking occupied the area, alongside residential townhouses and, from the mid-1700s, breweries and gin distilleries. Mount Pleasant gained its name in the early years of this period, as it was a large dumping ground for ashes and waste from the City; in 1794 it was cleared to allow construction of the largest jail of the time, Middlesex House of Correction, to house 1800 inmates.
- 3.13 New residential developments of squares, terraces and semi-detached villas aimed at the middle classes were built to the north of Clerkenwell and in Barnsbury, Canonbury and Highbury, arranged off the main north-south routes through the borough. Much of the residential development was speculative building towards the end of the period and into the next, with individual landowners seeking to take advantage of new demand for houses from the expanding middle class seeking 'fresh air'.
- 3.14 The passing of the London Building Acts meant that buildings of this period were standard in form but with variation of detail. These classically inspired houses were consistently well proportioned with three to four storeys over semi-basements, regular fenestration and 'London' or 'butterfly' roofs concealed by a parapet to the front. More modest terraced housing of two or three storeys with rear gardens was also built on the periphery of these areas to house the lower middle and artisan classes.
- 3.15 Public buildings constructed during this period also took a classical form. Surviving examples include the grand Old Sessions House (1780) on Clerkenwell Green and the more modest Welsey's Chapel (1778) on City Road. Materials characteristic of Georgian architecture

include yellow stock bricks, stucco, slate roofs and cast iron railings.

### Victorian and Edwardian Eras

- 3.16 The increase in the population and speed of building near the end of the Georgian period continued at pace into the 19th century, and by the end of the period the entire borough had been urbanized.
- 3.17 The introduction of tramways and the expansion of the passenger railways stimulated residential development in the borough, with new arterial routes/stations opening throughout the period, and the majority of the borough became or stayed residential during the industrial revolution.
- 3.18 The North London Railway (NLR) opened the Camden Road to Dalston suburban line via Highbury in the 1850s, and extended the line to Broad Street in 1865. The East Coast Mainline from King's Cross to the north was built by the Great Northern Railway (GNR) in the 1840/50s with the station at Finsbury Park opening in 1961. Although the Great Northern & City Line (GN&CL) built its tunnels large enough to provide a new terminus for the GNR at Moorgate, this did not materialize and the service opened at the turn of the century as a shuttle from Finsbury Park instead.
- 3.19 The first decade of the 20th century saw the opening of several stations on the new Piccadilly and Northern lines which terminated in the borough. The station buildings along these lines were designed by Leslie Green in the Arts and Craft style with distinctive oxblood terracotta tiled facades, semicircular first floor windows and patterned tiled interiors. Many of these stations are now Grade II Listed, including Holloway Road and Caledonian Road.
- 3.20 The City and South London Railway opened Angel Station (named after the long-established pub) as the new terminus for the deep-level tube railway from Moorgate; the station became a through-route with the subsequent extension of the line to Euston.



*Highbury Station as originally built*



*Warehouses in Clerkenwell*



*Grand late Victorian building overlooking Finsbury Square*



*Red brick terrace on Baalbec Road, typical of the later Victorian period*

3.21 The main roads through Islington such as Holloway Road became lined with shops, typified by traditional shopfront design of the period. Pubs of this period often served as landmarks in the local area with their highly decorative design, and many survive today.

3.22 The opening of the Royal Agricultural Hall in 1862 was accompanied by the construction of high pavements on Upper Street and Liverpool Road to protect pedestrians from the splash from the large number of animals using the road to reach the Hall. Exmouth Market was established in the last decade of the 19th century, and although Whitecross Street Market continued to operate the area around it was in poverty.

3.23 Public buildings of the time were particularly ornate, using a number of styles and incorporating new materials such as terracotta and glazed brick in purpose-built facilities. Notable surviving examples include the Old Finsbury Town Hall (Roseberry Avenue, 1895), Moorfields Eye Hospital (City Road, 1899) and the Leysian Mission (City Road, 1904). The London School Board undertook a massive London-wide school building programme during this period, constructing impressive school buildings in red brick. These were often taller than the surrounding development, punctuating the stock brick residential terraces.

3.24 Highbury Fields and Finsbury Park were both created as public parks during this period. The latter was created three miles to the north of Finsbury to serve the population in the overcrowded south of the borough where there were no sizeable green spaces.

3.25 The south of the borough continued to be a focus for commercial and industrial activities, with distinctive warehouses and factories constructed in Clerkenwell, characterized by polychromatic brick and blue Staffordshire engineering brick, introducing a new development typology with a larger footprint to the narrow streets of the area. While some industrial

uses did establish around the new railway sidings/depots, for example at Drayton Park and Kings Cross, the borough's industrial sector was mostly small and artisan.

3.26 The early Victorian period saw the completion of many of the residential areas first established in the previous period around Islington village, with Barnsbury and Canonbury completed mid-century. Stylistically, early Victorian buildings were a continuation of the Georgian style. Mildmay Park is typical of this form of development in the early Victorian period, with substantial stucco properties on the main thoroughfares and smaller two-storey terraced houses on the cross streets. Increased pressures on land towards the end of the period meant squares, a common feature of Georgian residential development for the middle classes, were no longer created and very little semi-detached housing was constructed

3.27 Greater architectural diversity existed towards the end of the Victorian period, within the general form of well-proportioned terraced housing with regular fenestration. The early preference for yellow stock brick was replaced by cream-coloured yellow gault brick in the 1860s, which was then displaced by a fashion for red brick in the 1880s. The classically inspired housing designs of the 1840s and 1850s were replaced with Italianate designs in the 1860s and from the 1880s a number of styles influenced housing including Gothic, Arts and Crafts and Queen Anne Revival. Diversity in roof forms arose, primarily pitched but also some gabled roofs.

3.28 While the closely packed, two- and three-story terraced housing characteristic of the Victorian period was designed for single family occupation, the changing population profile of the borough meant houses were often converted to boarding houses or subdivided and occupied by multiple families when the intended purchasers did not materialise.

3.29 The construction of the railways enabled commuting into the City from a greater distance so as the century progressed, in common with many areas of inner London, the middle classes increasingly moved beyond Islington to cleaner, more spacious suburbs and the borough suffered decline.

3.30 Towards the end of the century five/six storey mansion blocks with shared facilities had begun to appear as a means of replacing the worst slums in the south of the borough with purpose-built housing for the working classes. These were provided by either private trusts such as Peabody (for example, Whitecross and Rosecose Street estates, 1884, population c. 4000) or the newly established (1889) London County Council (LCC), both of whom were enabled to undertake slum clearance schemes due to new housing legislation in 1875. Peabody housing was constructed in a distinctive pared back Italianate style using yellow stock brick, and most later privately constructed mansion blocks were in Queen Anne Revival style constructed in red brick.

3.31 Holloway Prison, constructed in 1852, became female only in 1903 and played a significant role in the fight for equal rights for women, with a number of suffragettes imprisoned there as they fought for the right to vote.

### **The Interwar Period**

3.32 The period between the wars was characterised by the development of grand commercial and public buildings, and the continuation of slum clearance programmes to improve housing conditions in the south of the borough. There was little change in the built form and spatial development pattern of the borough established during the previous period, although new forms of development began to emerge near the end of the period, their design reflecting the social needs of the time.

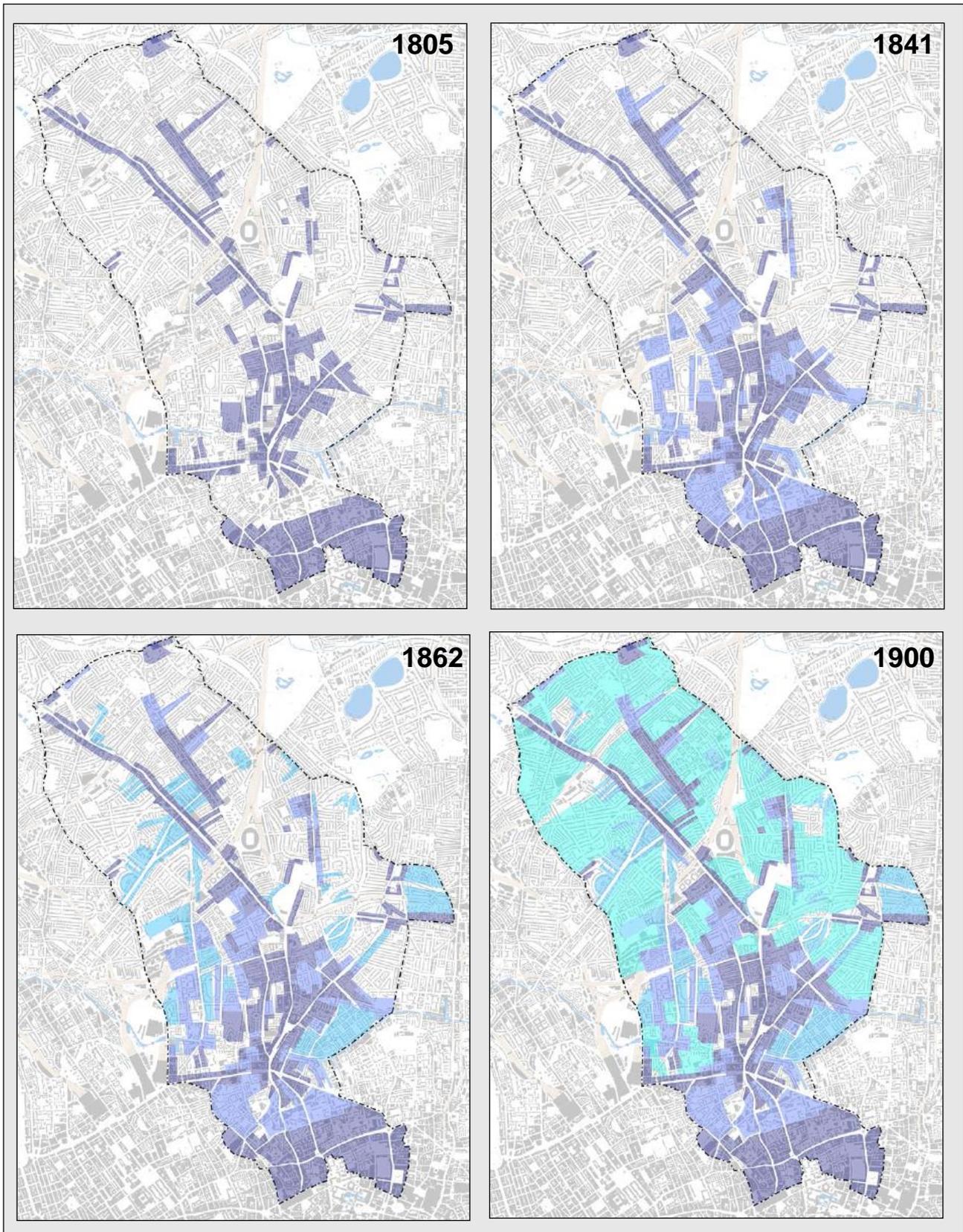


Figure 3 Rapid urbanisation of the borough occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> century  
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- 3.33 Public buildings were predominantly constructed in a stripped down Neoclassical style, as seen at Islington Town Hall and Clerkenwell Court. Commercial buildings also maintained a classical design such as the grand Portland stone examples in areas such as Finsbury Square. Other fine examples of the richness and variety encompassed by the interwar period include the art deco Highbury Stadium (constructed for Arsenal Football Club, who relocated to Highbury in 1913) and monumental cinemas constructed of distinctive faience on Essex Road, Seven Sisters Road and Holloway Road.
- 3.34 In contrast, the most notable public building of the period is the revolutionary modernist Finsbury Health Centre which was a precursor to an entirely new architectural language. Opened in 1938, the Centre integrated all services in one place in a specially designed building based on Lubetkin's belief that '*nothing was too good for ordinary people*'.
- 3.35 The Marx Memorial Library and Workers School opened at 37a Clerkenwell Green in 1933. Against a backdrop of book burnings in Nazi Germany, a delegation of trade unionists and Labour and Communist Party members agreed that a library would be a fitting memorial to Marx. The location was chosen because of its place in London's radical history – during his exile in London from 1902-3 Lenin worked on his revolutionary newspaper *Iskra* ('The Spark') from the building.
- 3.36 Residential rebuilding programmes continued to focus on mid-rise apartment blocks, although a general lack of housing construction in the south of the borough meant that this area continued to suffer from severe overcrowding; Ironmonger Row Baths was opened in 1931 as a public wash house for the working classes.
- 3.37 While some private art deco apartment blocks – incorporating balconies, a new feature for London properties – were constructed, and plans for public housing in the modernist style drawn up to clear decaying/neglected older housing, these plans were not realised until after the second world war. Both the Piccadilly and Northern lines were extended during this period, furthering opening up suburban residential areas beyond the borough.
- Post war reconstruction**
- 3.38 Much of the south of the borough was destroyed by the Blitz, and the extent of the damage necessitated large-scale redevelopment. Immediately following the end of the war, plans for rebuilding were drawn up in continuity with the principles espoused by the modernism of the previous period – a built form based on the virtues of good day lighting and intelligent planning. For example, Spa Green Estate, which was partly destroyed by bombing, was actually designed by Lubetkin in 1938 as part of a slum clearance programme but did not start until after the war and completed in 1949.
- 3.39 The population of Islington greatly decreased in the post-war period, with better off residents moving to the outer suburbs to escape the conditions in the south of the borough. Public rebuilding efforts focused on reducing densities with mixed estates of low- and mid-rise terraces/buildings and multistorey tower blocks in communal gardens. From the 1960s onwards these were designed to accommodate high levels of car parking and garages which were not a feature of earlier redevelopment. By the end of the period, nearly half of the borough's residential areas had been redeveloped in this form.
- 3.40 The shortage of building materials and skilled labour led to new forms of more cost-effective construction being developed, notably the use of pre-cast reinforced concrete and steel load bearing structures within a simplified design of plain facades with wide windows. The scale and ambition of redevelopment projects increasingly meant that later schemes were often constructed quickly of poor quality materials and some new approaches

proved expensive to maintain, particularly the new systems that provided communal heating and hot water. These new forms of development also had unintended consequences, for example garages at street and high level walkways created places that lacked natural surveillance and often facilitated antisocial behaviour.

3.41 As with residential redevelopment, the extent of bomb damage and new ideas about urban planning catalyzed ambitious plans for improvement of transport infrastructure in the borough. To improve traffic on the A1, plans were drawn up to construct dual carriageways through much of the borough. Old Street, Highbury and Archway gyratory were developed but the wider plans were eventually shelved; these plans to demolish blighted many communities.

3.42 The brutalist Archway Tower, developed as offices in the 1960s, is the most prominent reminder of the approach to town centre redevelopment associated with this period. The opening of the Victoria Line in 1968 and the quadrupling of the NLR line between Camden Town and Dalston Junction further improved the connectivity of the borough.

3.43 It was also during this time that the conservation movement gained momentum, with notable individual buildings first listed in the 1950s, and much of the borough's Georgian and Victorian housing stock included in conservation areas from the late 1960s.

3.44 Camden Passage Antiques Market was founded in the 1960s and the King's Head Theatre on Upper Street was founded in 1970 as the first pub theatre in the UK. The Upper Street area also became a focus for the radical left in the 1970s. Live music venues, artisans industries, galleries and theatres thrived. Bookshops providing feminist and socialist literature opened on Upper Street, and Islington Action Group of the Unwaged, an organisation aimed at improving the rights of unemployed people, was based there from 1980 to 1986.



*Islington Town Hall*



*Finsbury Health Centre*



*Andover Estate*



*Six Acres Estate (old and new)*



*N1 Centre*

- 3.45 Britain's first gay rights demonstration took place in the area in November 1970, when 150 men held a torchlight rally in Highbury Fields against police harassment. From 1978 to 1994 the African National Congress (ANC) had their London headquarters on Penton Street, as they worked to oppose the segregationist system in South Africa.
- 3.46 By this time, Ruth Glass had already coined the term 'gentrification' to describe the social changes she observed in Islington as an influx of the middle-classes residents, who purchased Georgian/Victorian properties for single family owner-occupation, displaced working class tenants.
- 3.47 This rehabilitation was partly triggered by the 1959 Housing Purchases and Housing Act, which identified £100 million of investment for rehabilitating older properties and infrastructure; this allowed for investment in areas where previously banks would not offer finance.

### Urban Renewal

- 3.48 With the process of gentrification continuing at pace into the 1980s and 1990s, the changing demographics of the borough began to transform Islington's character once again.
- 3.49 Upper Street established itself as a vibrant shopping street with independent boutiques and restaurants, housed in the characteristically narrow shopfronts established in Victorian times, complemented by the conversion of the Royal Agricultural Hall (largely empty since the war) to the Business Design Centre in 1986 and the opening of the N1 shopping centre in 2002.
- 3.50 Clerkenwell, with its abundance of vacant warehouses and commercial properties arising from the loss of industry during the previous period, became a highly attractive location for consultancies, charities, and design and creative firms as these characterful buildings were easily and attractively converted to studios, showrooms and offices.
- 3.51 At the same time, the fashion for loft living saw many former warehouse properties in the area converted to residential use. With an increasing residential and business population, the variety of services and amenities also increased. In the mid/late 1990s the area around Exmouth Market began to be populated by cafes opening out onto the street, and the long-closed street market was reinstated in 2006.
- 3.52 Elsewhere in the borough, larger-scale change was driven by the need to ensure that all residents benefited from the increasing development pressure in the borough. The 10-year EC1 New Deal programme focused on tackling the high levels of deprivation in the area adjacent to the City of London, including the run-down physical environment.
- 3.53 Estate regeneration and densification programmes (for example, at Packington and Market estates) greatly improved the quality of social housing in the borough. These schemes focused on street based layouts with active uses at the ground floor, and placing communities at the centre of redevelopment proposals.
- 3.54 While some new development in the 1980s and 1990s did not fully respond to their site's available opportunities (for example low-rise, low-density uses such as supermarkets underused highly accessible sites, and some residential schemes responded to their context with unimaginative design), more recent redevelopments have delivered quality alongside much wider benefits.
- 3.55 The redevelopment surrounding Kings Cross has successfully capitalised on the industrial heritage of the area in Regents Quarter, and the City Road Basin masterplan secured public access to the Basin for the first time in its history. The Arsenal on the Move stadium and related redevelopment included significant inward investment into the local area, including job creation and new waste facilities alongside 2,500 new and refurbished homes

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## Understanding Islington Today

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- 3.56 The character of the borough owes much to its population diversity and a plurality of income, social class and background. The continual development and redevelopment of the borough over time has resulted in place defined by its diversity and multiplicity of roles despite its small size, from formal Georgian residential squares that have remained largely unchanged for hundreds of years to cutting edge office buildings that house the international finance and investment companies powering London's global city status.
- 3.57 The result of the borough's location at the edge of the City of London and generally attractive character with a wealth of heritage assets is a high level of development pressure. This creates a corresponding need for the borough to provide for its multiplicity of roles in a way which further enhances its local character and distinctiveness.
- 3.58 The densely developed nature of the borough is based on buildings of eclectic and diverse architecture and age, which creates an exceptionally fine-grained character experienced at a human scale despite the borough's central/inner London location. As the most densely populated local authority area in the country, there is great pressure on the borough's green spaces to perform multiple functions.
- 3.59 The spatial development pattern established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is still largely intact, with busy mixed use town centres at key junctions and arranged along the main north-south routes through the borough complemented by smaller local centres interspersed amongst largely residential neighbourhoods. These areas, in combination with scattered business centres, often in historic premises,



*Union Chapel*



*City Road Basin*



*Market Road*



*Wesley's Chapel and C Space Workspace*



*The Park Theatre*



*Barnsbury Road*



*Tiltman Place*



*Exmouth Market*

provide important accommodation for the micro, small and medium businesses that are central to the local economy.

- 3.60 The south of the borough is within the Central Activities Zone (CAZ) and the central, high density employment dominated areas of the Clerkenwell, King's Cross and Old Street/City Road area reflect these areas' contribution to supporting London's global city role and in particular the growing role of tech and creative industries in driving the national economy. All of these areas are characterised by traditional street patterns with predominantly medium building heights, although the latter has two clusters of tall buildings at the City Road Basin and the Old Street roundabout.
- 3.61 The halo effect from the regeneration of King's Cross and expansion of Tech City Shoreditch, combined with the imminent opening of Crossrail at Farringdon, has further focused interest on this area. The Vale Royal/Brewery Road industrial area, on the edge King's Cross, has established clusters of live event and music orientated businesses and catering operations that service central London.
- 3.62 Elsewhere in the borough, other than at Archway where redevelopment in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century resulted in larger building footprints and heights, the majority of the borough's historic town centres and shopping streets are composed of predominantly low and medium rise buildings, with heights generally increasing towards the core of the centres and massing arranged along the street frontages in narrow plots; backland sites within this general perimeter block arrangement generally do not accommodate significant built development.
- 3.63 Town centres also make a significant contribution to the borough's cultural offer and evening economy, with Angel/Upper Street a well-established hub and Finsbury Park emerging as a destination in its own right with the opening of the Park Theatre, and Archway and Highbury

Corner will be further improved with removal of the gyratory system.

- 3.64 The majority of the borough's land area is covered by established residential neighbourhoods, which are broadly split into two types. The first are those residential areas predominantly developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries with traditional street patterns, narrow plots, and low to medium building heights in a perimeter block arrangement with leafy private gardens to the rear. The majority of such residential areas are included within conservation areas.
- 3.65 The second are those residential areas predominately developed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century with open block development and medium to tall building heights, although in recent years many of these areas have had traditional street patterns reintroduced through carefully designed estate renewal and infill programmes that sensitively increase densities. The sole large-scale new residential neighbourhood is centred on the Arsenal redevelopment.
- 3.66 Street based activity and a dynamic mix of uses makes Islington a vibrant place to live in, work in and enjoy, and the diversity of the borough's land uses and built form mirrors the diversity of its people. However, this vibrancy and diversity exists alongside significant challenges - Islington is a very unequal place with rising inequality and high levels of poverty.
- 3.67 In response to this, the Islington Fairness Commission was set up in 2010 to look into how to make the borough a fairer place, and as a result of the recommendations fairness is central to all that the council does. The creation of a fairer borough for all (including children and young people) to ensure that all residents benefit from the thriving economy and central location is a crucial issue for Islington today and into the future.

# 4 Principles of High Quality Design

*Urban design is often a matter of adopting good manners, recognising that every building is part of a greater whole.*

~ **By Design: Urban design in the planning system, CABE**

- 4.1 In practice, achieving a good design outcome involves an integrated approach and an iterative design process. An essential role of urban design is to make the connections and identify shared solutions that resolve various different, and sometimes competing, demands. A collaborative and interdisciplinary process that brings together the skills and expertise of a wide range of professionals and others is required to achieve this.
  - 4.2 The Council's approach to securing high quality design, as set out in the Local Plan, relies on designs being informed and shaped by four overarching principles. These principles are definitive and vital to the creation of successful places, and proposals will need to demonstrate commitment to creating an environment of the highest quality through assimilation of these principles.
  - 4.3 The SPD draws these threads together by putting forward objectives and design considerations for new development that together aim to create safe and attractive places that are sensitive to Islington's special character, sustainable and inclusive, while also enabling positive changes and allowing creative, contemporary design solutions. An iterative design process is essential in achieving this outcome, and character area analysis a useful tool
- (appraisal), proportionate to the scale of the development, of the site and possible constraints on development. The appraisal will provide a critical reference point throughout the design process; the design at a conceptual, detailed and technical level should refer back and respond to the appraisal findings. Contextual analysis should be completed before any design work starts.
- 4.5 Context is about more than built form. Factors such as landscape, traffic, activities and land uses – and critically, how these interact with each other – all contribute to the setting of a site or area. The right design solution cannot be achieved without considering all of the disparate elements that contribute to a locality's sense of place, not least of all that in practice context is dynamic, requiring designs to be inherently flexible to enable buildings and places to endure and adapt over the longer term.
  - 4.6 For example, the particular character of the area around Old Street roundabout, which has attracted a certain type of occupier, is distinctly different to that of Upper Street, despite the areas being geographically close. While some of this can be attributed to the built form, it is also about the uses and people associated with the place, and the interplay between these factors which have combined to create the distinct identities of the two areas.

## CONTEXTUAL

- 4.4 The success of any development depends largely on how it relates to and fits within its wider context. The council will therefore expect to see evidence from developers of a contextual analysis
- 4.7 In terms of built form, understanding the cumulative effect of an area's architecture is more important than a single building, and Islington's collective streetscape can best be defined as reflecting its continuous evolution over

time, composed as it is of buildings of eclectic and diverse architecture and age. The result of this densely built-up nature is that there are no sites within the borough that are so large or so detached from their surroundings that the context can be ignored and an entirely different typology, character or scale introduced.

- 4.8 The design of new development must therefore clearly relate and respond to its setting to ensure that the proposed density and uses are suited to the site and its wider context.

## CONNECTED

- 4.9 Good places are well connected, and it is essential to look beyond the red line of the site boundary and consider how new development will connect with its surroundings and integrate with the urban context and natural environment. A more vibrant and sustainable urban form results from designing places that make walking to local facilities and public transport stops as convenient and comfortable as possible. It is therefore essential that new development contributes to connecting places together and breaking down existing physical boundaries. This has the additional benefit of promoting active lifestyles.
- 4.10 To balance the needs of access and movement with creating a high quality development, designs should be based on routes that have a clear focus on achieving functional efficiency, integration with the surrounding area, and the optimal use of land. As well as considering how new development can forge links with the places and facilities that people want to get to (desire lines), issues such as road safety, legibility and durability, vehicular access to buildings, vehicle parking and public transport contribute to the anatomy of site planning. These issues should be assessed at the earliest stages of the design process to ensure connections contribute to improving the liveability of the borough.

## SUSTAINABLE

- 4.11 Sustainable design is integral to creating vibrant, liveable, cities. The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the delivery of sustainable development. In order to do so, the planning system must perform a number of roles:
- **Economic** contributing to a strong, responsive and competitive economy
  - **Social** supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities
  - **Environmental** contributing to the protection and enhancement of our natural, built and historic environment
- 4.12 These roles are interdependent and should be considered jointly and simultaneously, guiding development towards sustainable solutions. New developments should be designed to be adaptable to a variety of uses and configurations, to extend their potential useful life, and minimise premature demolition. Applicants should consider the use of life cycle assessments to ensure resource efficiency (from production and procurement to construction and disposal) alongside their practical and aesthetic value as a means of demonstrating consideration of all elements of sustainable design.
- 4.13 Islington is a densely built borough, with high levels of development pressure, set against an open space deficiency. Green infrastructure, which facilitates pollution abatement, urban cooling and climate change adaptation, is vital for healthy and prosperous communities. Striking the balance between using land efficiency and protecting and enhancing this green infrastructure is therefore a key planning issue which new development must consider.
- 4.14 Improvement to the existing building stock is also a key consideration in terms of delivering sustainable development; 75 percent of the existing building stock is expected to be standing in 2050. When considered that a significant proportion of

the nation's carbon emissions come from the built environment, the challenge is clear – all opportunities available to improve the performance of existing as well as new developments need to be realised.

- 4.15 Moreover, sustainable buildings are not just resource efficient, but provide for the health and wellbeing of occupants as a key deliverable of quality design. Healthy buildings achieve good levels of indoor air quality, are well ventilated, provide thermal comfort to occupants, access to good daylighting and connection to the natural environment. Conversely, poorly performing buildings can result in disproportionate negative impacts on end users, particularly vulnerable groups such as the elderly, disabled, children and those on lower incomes.

## INCLUSIVE

- 4.16 Inclusive Design is an approach to design that, by placing people at the heart of the design process, enhances the quality of our spaces and places, ensures their continuing relevance and minimises the need for awkward, costly and unsightly alteration in the future.

- 4.17 As set out in the Local Plan (DM2.2), and expanded on in the [Inclusive Design SPD](#), it is defined by a set of principles that ensures development is sufficiently flexible and adaptable to accommodate evolving social and economic needs:

- ease of and versatility in use
- safety, legibility and logic
- convenience and enjoyment for all
- integrated design and management

- 4.18 Inclusive Design is ultimately achieved by bringing together the full range of interests and expertise that will produce environments that work for everyone; that are functional, flexible, aesthetically pleasing, sustainable, and that deliver value for money over the lifetime of the development. The approach recognises that people experience space in different ways, and that to deliver a successful development it is necessary to identify the varied perceptions of space to realise its future potential.

- 4.19 While the main focus in relation to the experience of the built environment tends to be visual, in practice all of the senses make a contribution. Sound in particular plays an important role in the experience of place, and designs should give consideration to management of sound and how this can contribute to inclusive places.

- 4.20 Inclusive design is an holistic approach that focuses on the design process. This ensures that relevant considerations are taken into account in a timely fashion and that optimum solutions are found. The council fosters this approach through collaborative interdisciplinary working, the provision of detailed pre-application advice, and the facilitation of a Design Review Panel and Streetbook Surgeries that support designers and developers, from the earliest conceptual stages of a proposal, through to its successful construction and completion.

- 4.21 Effective engagement with relevant and diverse potential users, from the earliest stages of the design process, is fundamental to the successful realisation of this principle.



# 5 Design Guidance

5.1 The following sections provide detailed guidance on how Development Management policies can be met and SPD objectives satisfied. It is organised

according to the stages in the design process, from site planning, to streetscape, to the detailed design of individual structures.

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## Urban Structure

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### Key UDG Objectives

- Development should restore and/or enhance connections between places and tie in with the existing street pattern
- Development should reduce the impact of vehicles on the built environment
- Development should be organised to ensure that streets and spaces between buildings feel safe without undermining residents' privacy
- Development should address the qualities of the traditional building hierarchy and respect the established order and local character
- Development should define and/or enclose space
- Development should be coherent, well connected and promote community safety
- Development should contribute to the vitality and mix of uses on commercial streets and main roads
- Development should enhance the local microclimate and not prejudice the environmental performance of neighbouring properties.
- Development should create and/or enhance good quality public and private open space
- The shape and form of open spaces should be positively determined
- Development should contribute to the play facilities and ecological value of an area

## MOVEMENT, LEGIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY

5.2 Islington, like most of London, suffers from human-made and natural barriers that inhibit connections between different areas within and outside the borough. Improved neighbourhood permeability is a core planning objective. Connectivity promotes active lifestyles and social cohesion.

5.3 Increasing the number and diversity of pedestrians in an area will also provide greater natural surveillance and improve public safety. Conversely, where access is restricted the effect is to segregate communities, to isolate residents, and/or to provide an opportunity for anti-social behaviour.

5.4 Development proposals should therefore provide open connections for pedestrians and cyclists, and good permeability through the site/area, to improve movement patterns in the wider area.

5.5 External spaces may be described in terms of their qualities as routes or places and new development should facilitate the enhancement of those qualities. When determining the layout for a larger site, careful consideration should be given to ensuring that the layout creates an appropriate number of connections into the surrounding area – too few can undermine vitality, convenience and integration, and too many can undermine legibility and community safety.

### Route making

5.6 Design teams should always explore the potential for creating new, beneficial publicly-accessible routes through neighbourhoods, particularly:

- at large development sites
- where partial routes are already available
- where there is an existing or potential pedestrian/cycle desire line

- where development sites form part of a larger urban block around which pedestrians currently have to make significant detours
- where attractors (for example public transport) warrant improved routes
- where improved access to neighbouring facilities can be delivered
- where sites are vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and could benefit from more pedestrian traffic and natural surveillance

5.7 New routes should be designed in accordance with the objectives and design considerations set out in the [Streetbook SPD](#). They should provide safe, easy and direct access to local services and facilities and should form a logical and coherent part of the surrounding network of streets.

5.8 The redevelopment of existing sites should increase and enhance the connectivity of the local area for pedestrians and cyclists to improve links between communities and open opportunities for greater integration and cooperation.

5.9 In general, new through-routes should be open to the sky and not covered by buildings. In the majority of Islington, important pedestrian routes are typically open to the sky, and the number of covered openings in buildings through which pedestrian routes pass is very limited.

5.10 As a result, a route that is open to the sky will be more recognisable as a public thoroughfare, while a route that includes covered openings in buildings would normally be less legible and may suggest to the pedestrian that the space beyond is private.

5.11 Back alleys and undercrofts rarely benefit from any natural surveillance and tend to undermine the security of users and adjacent properties alike, and are not generally supported. Undercrofts and built-over openings will only be

considered where the surrounding street frontage is fragmented and there is little opportunity of future repair; in which case an archway may reinforce the edge of the street by allowing the building frontage to continue.

5.12 Opportunities to improve the quality of existing routes should also be taken by, for instance, removing or relocating existing back alleys to create clear, well-lit and overlooked public routes.

5.13 Routes should be designed with the needs of all users considered. To create routes that are legible, lively, safe and convenient and so promote walking and cycling, it is necessary to ensure:

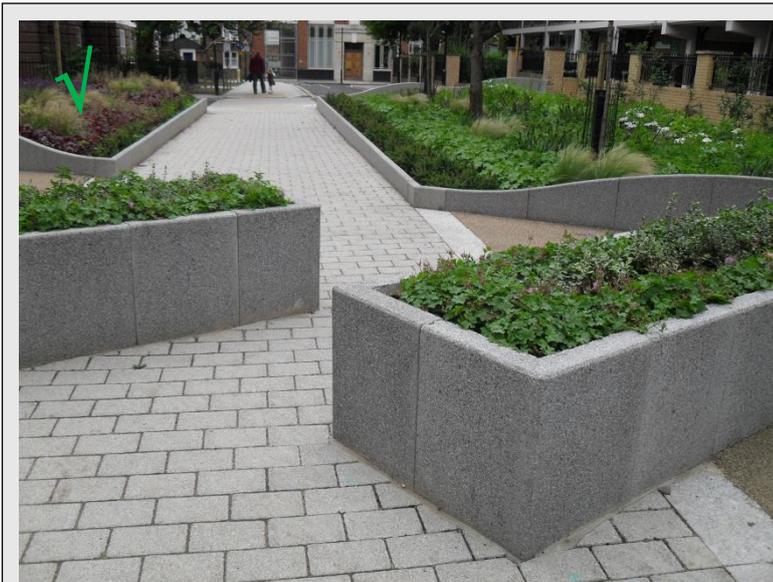
- Current and projected desire lines are taken into account
- Clear sightlines are provided, aids to assist wayfinding are visible, and turns in routes are minimised
- Travel distances between facilities and amenities are minimised
- Natural surveillance is maximised without undermining residents' privacy

5.14 The Council is committed to traffic

reduction and promotion sustainable transport, and requires new residential developments to be car-free to reduce emissions, improve community safety, deliver playable spaces and promote social cohesion.

5.15 Where new streets are created or off-street vehicle access is required for essential users, emergencies and for servicing, it is essential that they are designed to meet the objectives set out in the Streetbook SPD.

5.16 Opportunities to reduce vehicular impacts and to redress the balance between road users should always be considered. Where those opportunities exist, the place qualities of a street can be enhanced and deliver social benefits such as playable space, seating, planting and leisure facilities.



*Figure 4 Route enhancement. As shown by this scheme on Malta Street, the simple enhancement of modest spaces can make a world of difference, refreshing and connecting flanking developments. Soft landscaping, safe pedestrian routes and clear sightlines deliver an inclusive environment where wheelchair users and buggies enjoy easy access and motorcycle traffic is deterred.*

## SITE LAYOUT

5.17 Islington benefits from a rich street-based urban fabric which new development should seek to reinforce. Buildings should create a scale and form of development that is appropriate in relation to the existing built form and should provide a consistent and coherent setting for the space/street it defines or encloses that also enhances and complements the local identity of an area.

5.18 In reflection of the council's commitment to community cohesion and the value and vitality associated with diverse communities, residential schemes should be based on a layout which maximises tenure integration. Affordable housing and private housing should be built to the same standards and indistinguishable from one another in terms of design quality, appearance and location on site.

5.19 Due to the densely developed nature of the borough and the high quality of much of its built form, the existing context provides strong signals to which new development must respond in order to create a harmonious and coherent urban form. In the majority of cases this will require an approach which follows the established building line. However in areas which suffer from poor layout, the layout of new development should seek to knit the area back together and integrate with the surrounding street frontage.

5.20 All new development should be based on a layout that delivers:

- Permeability
- Sufficient light and air to penetrate the buildings, surrounding streets and any open space to the rear
- Privacy to the rear and defensible space at the front
- Consistent building lines
- Animation

- An appropriate height to width relationship between the building frontage and the street

5.21 Additionally, genuine open space free from subterranean obstruction that supports or could support larger trees and proper soft landscaping is at an absolute premium in the borough. Such space should be retained and enhanced by the layout of any new development.

### Responding to site topography

5.22 Site layout should be informed by and work with the topography and hydrology (flow routes) of the site and adopt a built form and construction techniques appropriate to the landform. Where possible, and particularly on sloping sites, buildings and landscaped areas should minimise the need for cut and fill through careful design and the use of construction techniques (for example, timber construction in areas with slope instability/load restrictions) that respond to natural contours.

5.23 Layout also needs to consider relationships with adjoining sites, and not unduly disrupt prevailing levels across a locality. For example, raised development podiums or sunken courtyards with a significant level difference to neighbouring development can create a disconnection between spaces, affecting permeability and continuity within the area and thereby undermining the objective to create legible, inclusive routes with clear sightlines.

### The perimeter block

5.24 Buildings and the spaces they define have a symbiotic relationship. Squares and streets are defined and identified by the buildings around them, and vice versa. The success of a development rests not only on the built form and the accommodation it provides but also on the quality of the interstitial spaces and the relationship between the two. Permeability, movement and multi-functioning spaces are the aim.

5.25 As a general principle, site layout should provide for well overlooked, legible and well-connected places with clearly defined public spaces and secure private spaces. A common arrangement of buildings in Islington is the perimeter block structure, where massing is located towards the edges of the blocks, with little or no development in the centre, and where the edges of the surrounding streets and spaces within are defined by the line of the building frontage. This contributes positively to the legibility of the area and provides a clear distinction between public and private spaces.

5.26 Places should be created to be well used, safe, comfortable, and attractive, and should contribute to community wellbeing and enhance the local ecology and biodiversity. In order to achieve this, when developing the layout it is necessary to take into account:

- Orientation and aspect
- Quality of the enclosure
- Accessibility and vitality of public spaces

### Natural surveillance

5.27 Where a good level of natural surveillance is achieved, more and more diverse users will be attracted to the space. A variety of activities will characterise the space and the associated natural surveillance will effectively reduce the potential for anti-social behaviour.

5.28 Layout should deliver routes focused along streets with overlooked frontages to increase the amount of pedestrian flow. Block sizes should have a built up area that is in keeping with that in the surrounding area.

5.29 The provision of good pedestrian routes with clear sightlines and good natural surveillance is a priority. Gated developments fundamentally undermine this principle by obstructing routes; their exclusivity jeopardises safety and security and effectively divides communities. Gated developments are not supported in Islington, and gating routes is not considered an acceptable solution to overcome the shortcomings of poor site layout.



*Figure 5 Gated development. Permeability is a key objective in the development or redevelopment of sites and opportunities should be taken to deliver new through routes to further connect communities and promote walking and cycling. Gated developments and/or gating routes, as seen in the images above, fundamentally undermines this principle and are not supported.*

## Defining public and private space

- 5.30 Buildings, particularly residential buildings, normally need two faces: an open, active frontage that engages with and provides a public face onto the street and a secure private area at the back.
- 5.31 All new development should therefore be based on a layout that provides a clear distinction between the public and private realm. Mixed use developments that include residential use provide additional challenges in distinguishing between public and private spaces, and the arrangement of uses across a site and/or within individual buildings should ensure sufficient privacy for residents within their home, whether from non-residential uses or other residents.
- 5.32 Boundary walls/railings should be designed in a manner that is consistent with the existing street and should provide an open aspect. Front boundary walls are typically part of the uniform design of the residential frontage, often incorporating dwarf walls and/or low-level railings.
- 5.33 Protection for residential uses from direct overlooking from the street should normally be provided by a shallow front threshold/garden area to provide the necessary defensible space between the back of the footway and the front of a residential property.

## Building lines

- 5.34 The most successful streets and places are normally well defined by a consistent building line that delivers:

- A sense of enclosure
- Coherent architectural identity and local distinctiveness
- Occasional gaps that provide light to the rear of the property but that are secured within the private realm

- 5.35 Care should be taken to ensure that future opportunities for redevelopment along street frontages are not prejudiced

by neighbouring development. Particular care needs to be taken along the boundary to ensure that light, air and privacy are safeguarded for future, as well as existing development.

- 5.36 In all cases, the building line should avoid creating:

- Blank flank walls
- Corners and recesses that offer concealment opportunities
- Set-backs that divorce buildings from their street context
- Projections that draw unwarranted attention, undermine sight lines and narrow the footway
- Gaps that expose land and structures behind that were not designed to have a public frontage

- 5.37 However, there are certain contexts where consistency with the existing building line is neither desirable nor possible, for example where there are high quality established trees along the pavement threshold that must be protected. In such cases the new building line must provide sufficient space for healthy tree growth and the provision of an accessible footway. Depending on the context the new building might be set back to create an area of useful public open space around the retained trees, or brought as close as is possible to the existing building line to avoid leftover space.

- 5.38 Certain types of development may also require a greater threshold (for example a public building such as a school or station) and if the existing public footway is narrow a setback may be required. In any event, careful consideration should be given to the treatment of any blank flank wall created by the new building's set back, and the extent of the blank flank wall minimised insofar as possible.

- 5.39 Where there is a consistent street frontage but recessed entrances are unavoidable, care should be taken to minimise the risk that they undermine

personal safety or attract anti-social behaviour. The depth of recessed entrances should be kept to a minimum unless:

- It is designed to be directly overlooked
- It is revealed in some way by way of a curved or chamfered frontage
- The adjacent front and return walls can be glazed to allow clear views in to the recessed area

5.40 Where there are breaks or inconsistencies in the building line this can sometimes be remedied by the judicious planting of street trees. The use of a single tree type, planted at regular equal intervals along the footway can provide order to fragmented streets and reinforce the formality of a uniform street frontage and or provide rhythm and punctuation points in a street. For further advice on the selection, siting and sustainability of street trees refer to the [Streetbook SPD](#).

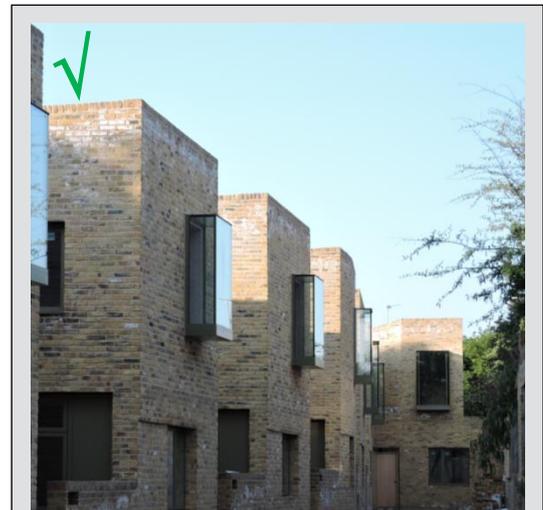
### **Mews and backland development**

5.41 Backland sites are sites behind existing buildings, often with no street frontage and usually within predominantly residential areas. These spaces are normally used as garden or other outdoor amenity spaces, accommodating little more than sheds and ancillary buildings, although the historical development pattern of the borough has also resulted in backland sites accommodating low-rise industrial or other non-residential premises. Regardless of the size of the site, in Islington where backland sites do accommodate development, this is generally subordinate to the buildings that front the street.

5.42 Backland or mews-style developments are those that are incorporated within the centres of perimeter blocks or behind street frontages. Backland sites with no development can be important for their openness in a dense, urban environment and should therefore be retained and reinstated wherever possible.

5.43 Development will generally only be considered where it replaces an existing structure and is subservient to the surrounding development, in accordance with the predominant development pattern in the borough which concentrates massing along the primary street frontage.

5.44 Backland or mews-style developments also present particular challenges to the designer insofar as access to them generally fractures the street frontage/building line. Sufficient space is required to provide the new dwellings with a good level of residential amenity (without undermining that of neighbouring properties) and to uphold community safety. The use of monopitch or barrel vaulted roofs with their lower side facing the surrounding development can sometimes assist in minimising adverse amenity impacts on surrounding development.



*Figure 7 Successful approaches to backland sites. The scale and extent of this development at Moray Mews, based on a contemporary interpretation of a mews style within a backland site, responds to the predominant development pattern in the area and is subordinate to the buildings that front the street.*

- 5.45 As set out in the [Basement Development SPD](#) the scale and extent of basement development within a site should respond to the site context and the prevailing scale of development in the area. A design response to a constrained backland site that relies on a large basement area extending well beyond the footprint of the building is not an acceptable/appropriate means of achieving sufficient residential amenity.
- 5.46 It is important to note that in some cases the open quality of backland areas can be a positive contributor to the character of a conservation area or the setting of listed buildings. In such cases backland development may be unacceptable in principle.
- 5.47 In or adjacent to conservation areas or within the settings of listed buildings, constrained backland sites (those where it is not possible to create a new through route) where development is acceptable in principle should generally be developed as traditional mews or a contemporary interpretation of the same. Generally such development should be no more than two storeys above ground level and should employ context appropriate materials.
- 5.50 Main entrances should be located on the street. Buildings with long frontages should incorporate entrances at regular/frequent intervals to maximise the interface between the street and building. This will contribute to making the area feel vibrant and will help to provide adequate levels of natural surveillance throughout the day and night.
- 5.51 Where large, single use buildings such as offices are proposed, and it is not possible to provide multiple entry points from the street, consideration should be given to incorporating smaller commercial shopfront units on the ground floor that can be self-contained from the main use.
- 5.52 The ground floor along commercial streets should be laid out to ensure that the interior of the building is organised so that it provides an open aspect onto the street. For instance, shops should avoid locating their shelves along the shop window and filling it with advertising. Conditions to this effect may be applied to planning approvals.
- 5.53 Careful attention also needs to be given to the quality of accommodation that will be provided for the ground floor use. The design should provide for usable space that would be attractive to the intended occupier as well as providing for an active frontage; an active frontage will not be delivered if the unit remains vacant.

## ACTIVE FRONTAGES

- 5.48 Every opportunity should be taken to create street or waterside frontages that engage with the street or waterside. The front elevation, particularly the fenestration, should be designed so that it provides clear views onto the street from inside, and the interior should be organised so that there are active uses at the front, particularly on the ground floor.
- 5.49 Dead ground floor frontages should always be avoided. Where the threshold space is sufficiently wide and the use does not undermine residential amenity or the accessibility of the footway, uses such as cafes that extend out into the street, should be encouraged.
- 5.54 On busy commercial streets, residential uses should normally be avoided at ground floor level because in situations where the front window is in close proximity to the street, the privacy of the occupier is likely to be undermined. Alternatively, in such streets the residential unit may be designed to turn its back on the street and the animation of the frontage and natural surveillance would be lost. To ensure activity at all times of day, a balance of residential as well as commercial is encouraged on upper floors within commercial areas, accessed directly from the street.

5.55 On residential streets, protection from direct overlooking from the street should normally be provided by a shallow front threshold/garden area to provide the necessary defensible space between the back of the footway and the front of the residential block. Any boundary treatment should be designed in a manner that is appropriate to the existing street and should provide an open aspect. In cases where the existing frontage is on the back edge of the footway, the need for a setback has to be balanced against the need for a consistent and coherent street frontage.

5.56 All homes should follow the Police's [Secure by Design](#) standards, addressing concerns related to crime and anti-social behaviour using creative design solutions that are inclusive, aesthetically appropriate and bring about other benefits.

5.57 All homes should also be built to M4(2) Category 2 (accessible and adaptable dwellings) or M4(3) Category 3 (wheelchair user dwellings) as set out in the Approved document to Part M of the of the Building Regulations, which requires that the approach and threshold are step free. Where a level change is unavoidable, the threshold should be dropped to the level of the footway and a ramp or platform lift provided internally.

5.58 In blocks of flats, circulation arrangements (specifically the requirement to limit the number of dwellings accessed from a single core) will affect the building's form. Proposals will need to ensure that this requirement is delivered in a way which ensures the building's form echoes the rhythm and proportions that give the frontage a sense of order and human scale.

## OPEN SPACES

5.59 Where the opportunity exists to redevelop a site, the feasibility of creating new open space (or improving the existing) should be identified at the earliest stages of appraisal and conceptual design. Open

spaces should be clearly defined and well overlooked by the surrounding development. Leftover or 'negative' spaces should always be designed out.

5.60 New open spaces should be designed to attract diverse users and promote positive activity. Accessible entrances and routes through that align with existing or anticipated desire lines, seating in sunny locations, carefully designed planting, playable spaces and clear sightlines will all contribute to such an inclusive environment. If there is a choice, it is generally better to have one larger space than a number of smaller disconnected ones.

5.61 Things that should be avoided include:

- Rear private gardens abutting the open space
- Poor or a lack of natural surveillance from surrounding buildings
- Negative or left-over spaces which are underused

5.62 The reconfiguration of a site should not involve any net loss of open space or tree canopy. As well as softening the built environment, tree planting can have an important role in providing order and defining space.

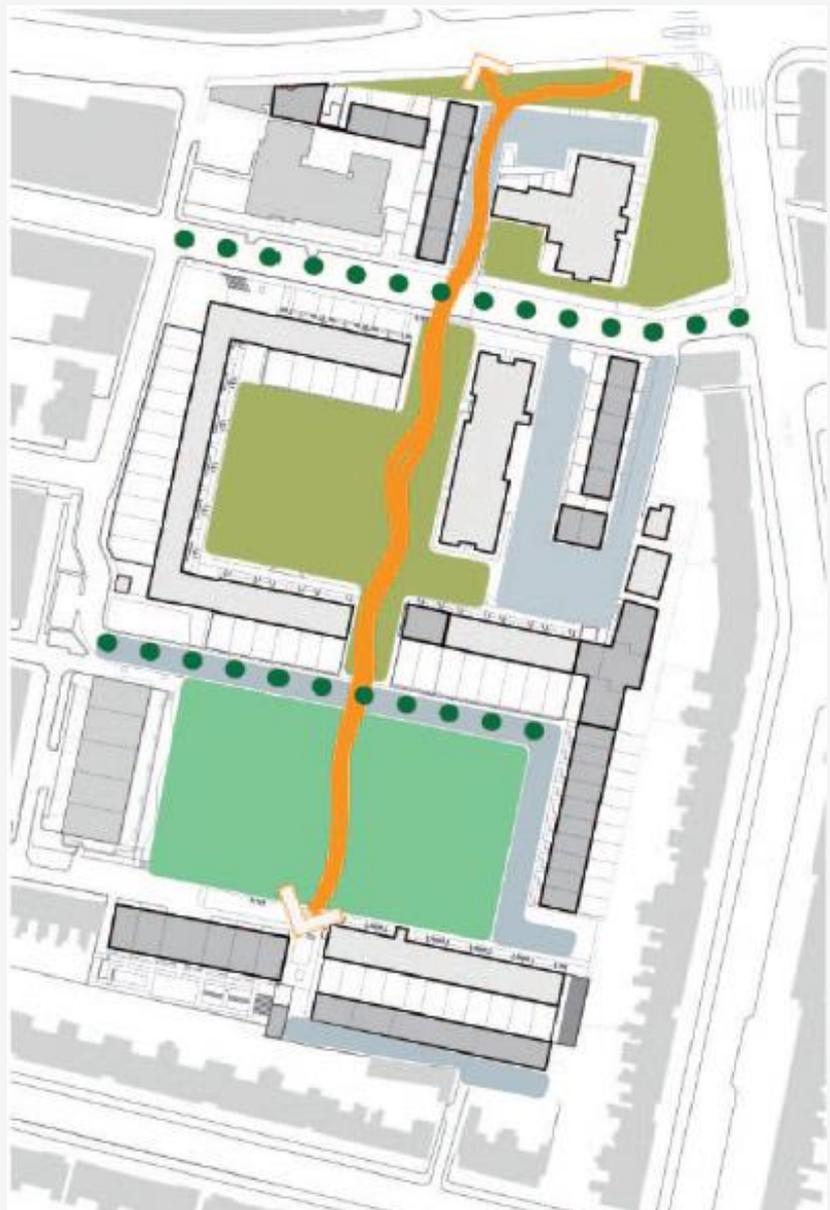
### Good practice example – Dover Court

Dover Court is popular with its residents, many of whom have lived there for more than 20 years. However, like many estates of its era, it suffers from poor quality open spaces, ambiguous or unsafe pedestrian routes, and a surplus of on-site car parking and derelict garages. Residents also identified the need for a community facility and safe, attractive play spaces for a variety of age groups.

The redevelopment knits together the existing post-war towers and apartment blocks with a series of lower scale houses and flats that define a network of open spaces and pedestrian routes. Consultation with residents helped identify nine locations appropriate for additional housing, including under-used garages and car parks, and an unsafe ball court.

#### Key principles of the redevelopment:

- To develop open views and access to the estate from the public housing areas
- Utilise the rear buildings to create clear fronts and backs and remove unsafe and unused areas.
- Redevelopment of garages to create new homes
- Prioritisation of pedestrian traffic
- Creation of a central green link with the provision of amenities including seating, play and shelter
- Relocation of community sport area (MUGA) in a central area of the adjacent park to allow better use, passive surveillance and access
- Creation of a playable landscape to maximise child exploration and outdoor activity by having the designated play area requirements spread throughout the public area
- Upgrading Dove Road into a boulevard with a proposal for mature street trees



## TALL BUILDINGS

5.63 Most of Islington's tallest buildings are located in the south of the borough (adjacent to the City of London), within the borough's town centres and/or at significant nodes. This common pattern is well established and it contributes to the legibility of the borough. Although tall buildings exist in the borough, no part of Islington is dominated or characterised by tall buildings.

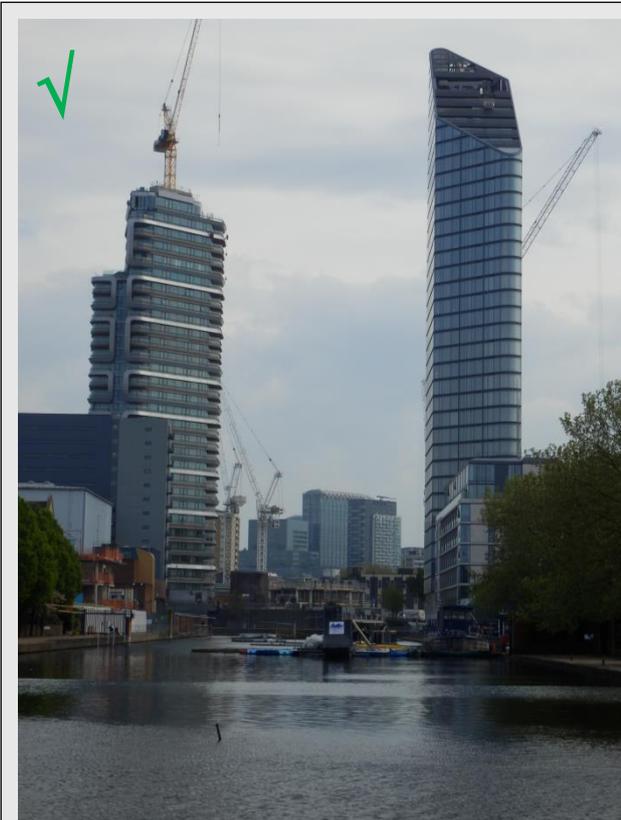
5.64 The Local Plan (Policies CS9 and BC9) defines specific areas within the borough where buildings that exceed 30 metres can be located subject to a number of criteria. As set out in The Local Plan (DM2.4), the Council will also protect and enhance strategic and local views. Islington will respond to applications for tall buildings in neighbouring boroughs on the basis of these policies and guidance.

5.65 In the locations identified by the Local Plan, a building that stands out can

sometimes contribute positively to the urban environment by:

- Becoming a focal point.
- Providing a successful contrast with its surroundings
- Reinforcing a sense of place
- Highlighting the importance of a public building
- Allowing ventilation between buildings to occur at street level (such as through breezes that disperse urban pollutants)

5.66 In all cases, a building which is substantially taller than its surroundings should be designed to an exceptional standard, with an integrity that is carried through every façade and relates to immediate neighbours and the wider surroundings.



*Figure 8 Tall buildings. City Road Basin is an identified location for tall buildings, and both Canaletto (left) and the Lexicon (right) demonstrate the required design quality. The towers were considered acceptable given their context, their impact on and contribution to the local townscape, and the quality of the materials and finishes proposed. Their orientation, plan form and profile was modified during the design process to ensure the local microclimate was not adversely affected.*



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# The Streetscape

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## Key UDG Objectives

- Development should maintain an appropriate height to width ratio between the buildings and the street they flank
- Building heights should be considered in terms of their proportion and in relation to the size of the space they define and/or enclose
- Development should maintain the prevailing plot width to height ratio
- Development should normally retain and/or repair the existing roofline
- Development should enhance the local microclimate and not prejudice the environmental performance of neighbouring properties
- Development may serve to announce a place, close a view or emphasize a junction at the intersection of streets
- Development should be resource efficient and post-occupancy energy use minimised
- Materials should be of high quality, be robust, sustainable and appropriate to their context

5.67 New development should create a scale and form of development that relates to the existing built form and provides a consistent and coherent setting for the space or street that it defines or encloses, while also enhancing and complementing the local identity of an area. The nature of the existing street frontage will therefore normally determine the extent of potential development.

## HEIGHT TO WIDTH RATIOS

5.68 The relationship between the height of buildings and the street/space they flank is of critical importance. A balance must be found between the need for enclosure, surveillance and definition and the risk of creating overbearing development that starves the street of light and air.

5.69 Considerations that should demonstrably be taken into account when deciding on

an appropriate height-to-width ratio include:

- The context of the development site. New development should complement and relate to the prevailing townscape.
- The effective definition of the route or place the development flanks.
- The benefits a new route may deliver in terms of neighbourhood permeability, connectivity and completing perimeter blocks either side of the street.
- Natural surveillance of the street and sight lines along it.
- Land uses either side of the street and their sensitivity in relation to overlooking and overshadowing.
- The need to avoid creating overlooking or overshadowing problems for neighbouring properties. Natural daylighting reduces the need for artificial light and passive solar gain can reduce

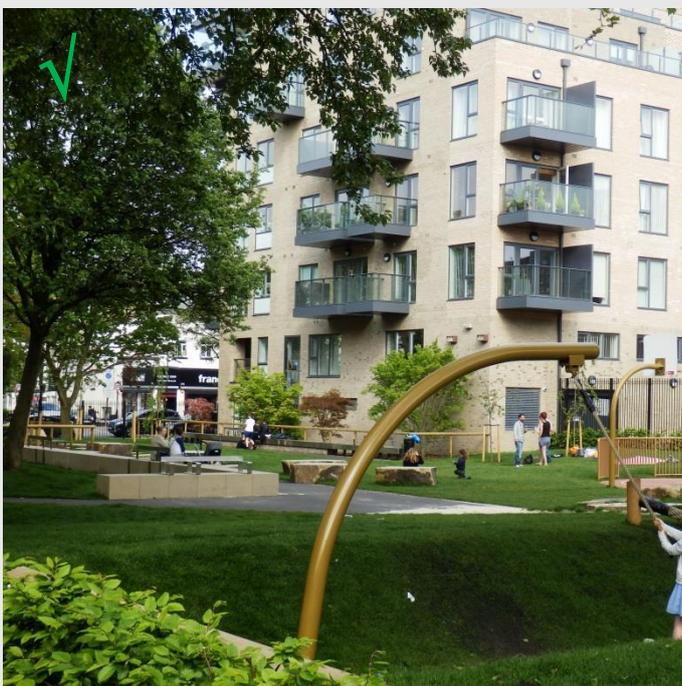
space heating requirements. Where adjacent buildings have renewable or low carbon energy supply, this will also need to be considered.

- Impact on the microclimate, including (but not limited to) temperature, wind and air quality.
- Impact on resident amenity caused by new buildings in close proximity to each other, and whether these impacts can be offset or compensated for by improved amenity provision in other respects.

5.70 Building heights should not prevent the penetration of natural light and air (necessary to the enjoyment of the space, plant growth, etc.) to street level. Greater heights may be possible when the street is orientated North-South as opposed to East-West since the sun will penetrate the former at least in the middle of the day.

## RELATIONSHIP OF FRONTAGES TO OPEN SPACES AND SQUARES

- 5.71 Where building frontages face onto public open spaces and squares, they should normally provide sufficient sense of enclosure and suitable backdrop to define and overlook the space while not overpowering it.
- 5.72 Open spaces can feel particularly threatening if they do not have an adequate level of natural surveillance from surrounding development. Nevertheless, the surrounding heights should not be so great that they unduly dominate the space.



*Figure 9 Relationship of frontages to open space. Redevelopment of the Holloway Road Scout Centre delivered substantial improvements to the adjacent Biddestone Park. The new development effectively connects to and works with the adjacent open space. The relationship is symbiotic – the greenspace allows the development to breathe and provides an attractive outlook, while the development provides a high degree of natural surveillance, encouraging a greater number and diversity of users to enjoy the space harmoniously. The simple boundary treatment retains the open aspect while providing a clear delineation between public and private space.*

## EMPHASISING JUNCTIONS

5.73 It is sometimes appropriate to have a focal point that announces or reinforces a place or closes a view. Closing a view at the junction of streets can heighten the role of architecture in giving character to space and provide an element of anticipation. Where such townscape features are proposed, they should make a clear contribution to creating a recognisable, understandable place.

5.74 It is often appropriate to emphasise a corner, particularly at an important junction. This can be achieved by exaggerating the vertical proportions of a façade by way of carefully executed devices, for example:

- Curving the frontage
- Wrapping the fenestration around the corner
- Terminating the roof differently

5.75 It is sometimes appropriate to provide further punctuation by raising the height of the corner marginally above the prevailing height to reinforce the importance of a junction. Where extra

height is proposed it should be contained so that it does not spill further down the street frontage, otherwise the punctuation will become diluted and the coherence of the rest of the frontage undermined.

## RHYTHM, SCALE, AND PROPORTIONS

5.76 In addition to its height, the scale of a building is also determined by its bulk, width and the manner in which the facade is articulated. Much of the borough's building stock is characterised by its fine grain and vertical emphasis. This is particularly notable on residential street frontages characterised by historical terraces that are divided into narrow plots where the height is greater than the width of the building. This contributes to the vertical emphasis and brings a human scale to these frontages.

5.77 Vertical proportions are expressed both in the overall dimensions of a building and in its individual elements, particularly the fenestration, and the manner in which they are composed within the frontage. It is the repeated pattern of narrow street frontages that creates a rhythm that gives many of Islington's streets harmony and

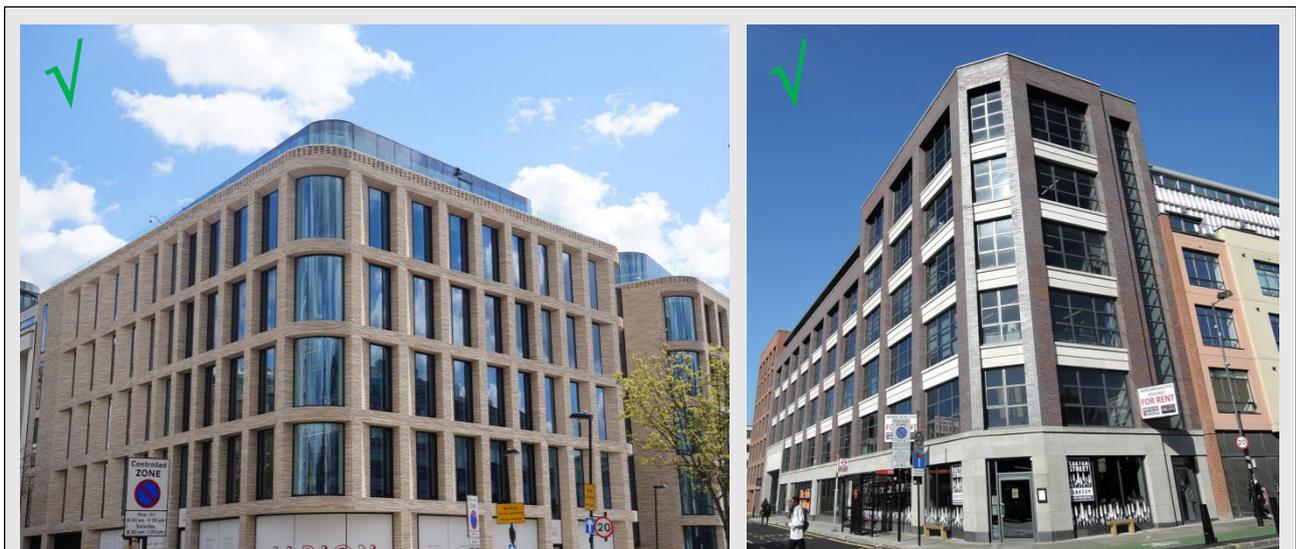


Figure 10 Emphasising junctions. Corners are often best addressed by creative articulation rather than any height increase. The Turnmill Building (top) and John Jones (bottom) show both an appropriate corner treatment with curved facade/wrapped fenestration and good rhythm, scale and proportions. Even though the buildings have relatively large footprints they do not appear out of scale with their surroundings due to vertical proportioning.

coherence.

- 5.78 High quality contemporary designs will normally be sought that are skilfully woven into their context and that respect the rhythm, scale and proportions of the existing street frontage. Where the predominant building form in the surrounding area is characterised by narrow plot widths, designs should reflect this.
- 5.79 In areas characterised by larger buildings and longer street frontages, or where the existing frontage is more heterogeneous, vertical proportioning devices can be deployed to ensure that new buildings relate to the rhythm of the wider street frontage and add interest to the area.
- 5.80 Breaking down a long street frontage into a series of separate bays, perhaps by adopting different elevational treatments, can help to prevent buildings appearing monolithic and can provide them with a more human scale.
- 5.81 Where there is an opportunity to create a whole new residential street frontage, this can be achieved by adopting the regular rhythm and articulation of a traditional

terrace, albeit in a contemporary style. Such an approach can also assist with integrating a large development site into the local context

- 5.82 Some ingenuity is required where long building frontages with large floorplates are located on a slope to deliver the requirement that all development should be inclusive and so provide step free access. On steep slopes, consideration should be given to incorporating entry points /frontages at different levels (as the building steps down the slope) to allow the threshold, as well as the roofline, to reflect the topography.
- 5.83 Alternatively, consideration can be given to modelling the roofline and frontage, on a single floor-plate building, to suggest a step but care should be taken to ensure this is not at the expense of the development's architectural integrity.



*Figure 11 Recently completed residential/mixed use developments at Melody Lane (left) and Godson Street (right). Both of these developments have delivered a successful contemporary interpretation of the terrace.*

## ROOFLINES

- 5.84 In addition to responding to distinctive local building forms and patterns of development, new buildings must also respect the height of the surrounding context. Where uniform building heights form a distinctive character, major variations to this will not normally be appropriate as such locations are generally sensitive to alteration.
- 5.85 There is usually more scope for change in the roofline and facades within streets where there are a variety of frontages and building heights, particularly where the height of frontages is relatively low in proportion to the width of the street.
- 5.86 However, even where there are existing variations in building heights, an alteration to the existing roofline is likely to be unacceptable where:

- It adversely impacts on views and landmarks
- It impacts adversely on the topography of the street
- It causes a canyon effect and/or unduly overshadows the street
- It impacts adversely on the character of an open space or the public realm
- The existing street frontages and roof profile have historical and/or architectural importance and/or contribute to an area's individual character. This will include listed buildings, conservation areas and sometimes other buildings that do not have this status.
- The alteration to a façade or roofline impacts adversely upon the architectural integrity and quality of the existing or neighbouring buildings
- A change to the roofline or façade would be out of scale with its neighbours and undermines the rhythm of the street frontage
- It creates an imbalance in height between opposite sides of the street. This may not be relevant where there is

scope for the redevelopment of the opposite side too, or on wide streets.

- Large blank flank walls would be created at the junction between buildings.

### Relationship of roofline to elevation

- 5.87 Rooflines should normally respond to the articulation of the rest of the façade. It should be possible to read the width of the plot divisions from the bottom to the top of the building. The roofline should also reflect the rhythm, harmony and scale of the longer street frontage. Stepped or sculptured rooflines can appear monolithic particularly where the shape of the roof does not pick up the sub division of the façade.

### Stepped rooflines and frontages

- 5.88 However, street frontages that run down a hill should normally have a corresponding stepped roofline, frontage and threshold, the last enabling the ground floor to synchronise with the footway and threshold space. Splitting residential buildings into narrower plot widths with a smaller number of flats served by self-contained service cores also allows street frontages to step down a sloping street.

## ELEVATIONAL TREATMENT

- 5.89 The way in which building elevations are treated can contribute to an appropriate sense of rhythm, scale and proportion. The elevation must work in terms of its relationship to its neighbours, to the public realm and its own architectural integrity. The internal (functional) and the external design requirements must be reconciled.
- 5.90 Articulation strategies should always be employed to provide street frontages with an underlying order. To deliver a successful strategy, consideration needs to be given to a range of detailed design elements including:

- Defining the roofline
- Treatment of the ground floor
- Appropriate articulation of fenestration
- Passive design principles such as solar shading
- Choice of materials/detailing

### Window arrangement and style

5.91 Windows are a key component of the façade that help define a building's character and their arrangement is an important element in breaking down the scale of building frontages. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the windows are of an appropriate scale to the façade and that windows in the façade have some relationship with each other. Key to this is identifying the appropriate shape, position and size of the windows.

5.92 Some elevations can be unduly monotonous because of the number of repeated windows. The risk of this is greatest in large façades, particularly when small windows are used, where they can appear lost within the elevation. At the same time too many different types of windows, particularly if they appear to have no apparent relationship to one another, can result in a disordered façade. Orientation and passive design principles should also be considered in window arrangement, including the relationship between orientation and the amount of glazing within the façade.

5.92.1 Structural depth can be created by employing deep window reveals and varying the depth of facing materials. Older buildings are often characterised by deep reveals as well as decorative detailing that helps enliven their façade through contrasts of light and shade.

5.93 Contemporary architecture, building technologies, materials and detailing present new opportunities to deliver a 3-dimensional façade, introducing colour, texture, depth and interest at a human scale. Breaking down the scale of a building is usually best achieved by emphasising the vertical proportions, as

appropriate to the predominant context of the majority of Islington's streets. This can be achieved by:

- Designing windows so that their height is greater than their width and/or dividing each window into a series of vertically proportioned glazing panels.
- Horizontally proportioned windows can sometimes be given more vertical emphasis by incorporating vertically proportioned glazing panels.
- Grouping windows into vertical bands that allow the fenestration to be read as a vertical grouping rather than a horizontal one.

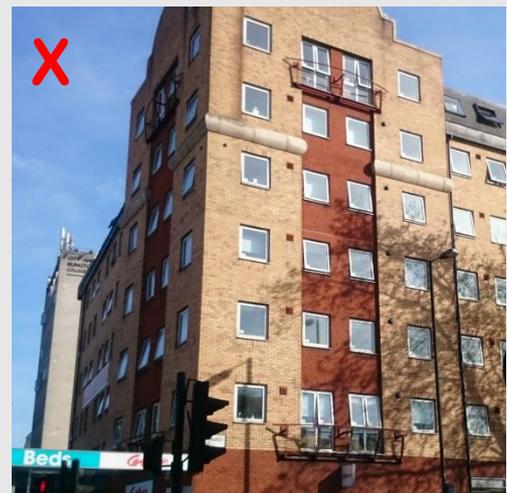
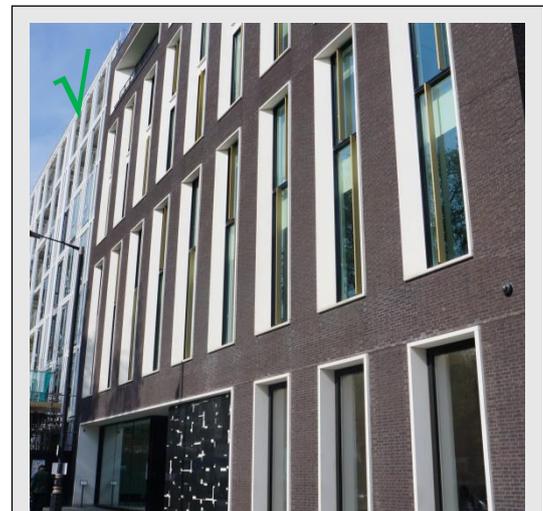


Figure 12 Window arrangement and style. Deep window reveals add structural depth and interest (top). Repetition of small windows in a large façade results in a lifeless, monotonous elevation (bottom)

5.94 For example, within traditional terraced streets individual terraced houses are often expressed by pairing windows or grouping windows, typically in a symmetrical arrangement. This design approach would have involved employing geometric proportioning devices and a hierarchy that defined and differentiated each floor by the graduation of the vertical height of the windows within an implied vertical grouping. Other elevational treatments such as projecting bays and more elaborate decoration and architraves, which relied less on vertical height differences, are also used within traditional terraced streets to articulate facades.

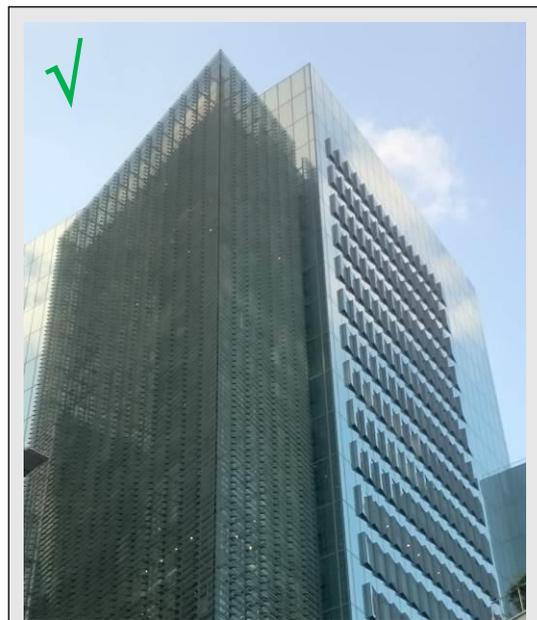
5.95 Infill development to streets dominated by a pattern of vertical articulation based on graduating the vertical heights of windows will need to carefully consider how to respond to this context by using other strategies to achieve vertical articulation and avoid the creation of an inappropriately squat or horizontally proportioned building.

### **Articulation through recess and projection**

5.96 Facades can be further articulated, and vertical proportions reinforced, by employing recesses and projections that create light and shade. For instance, repeating projecting bay windows and recessed front entrances, can help accentuate plot widths and/or individual houses. Where the sub division of a façade is less apparent, it is sometimes necessary to employ vertical shadow lines/niches to break it up. While downpipes on the front elevation should normally be avoided, consideration will be given where they can help to divide up the elevation into narrow plots, particularly if they can be neatly integrated within vertical niches.

5.97 The use of articulation within a façade should also consider the control of heat gain and heat loss to and from the building. The use of vertical and horizontal projections, if consciously designed, can significantly improve the thermal comfort of a building.

5.98 When projecting elements are used, care needs to be taken to ensure that they do not inappropriately dominate the main façade or create recesses that undermine the established building line sight lines or create potential hiding places.



*Figure 13 Articulation devices to control heat loss and gain. Ropemaker Place on Ropemaker Street uses a tilting brise soleil on the southern elevation and protruding windows in an overlaid pattern on the east façade. These design techniques serve to both add interest to the façade of a large building and significantly reduce the energy use.*

## Junctions between buildings

- 5.99 Attention to detail is important throughout the design and development process, not least because success at a strategic level (in terms of mass, proportion, fenestration, materials etc) can easily be undermined by a failure to consider the detailed design necessary to produce a coherent interface between new and existing properties.
- 5.100 This is particularly important where new development joins on to existing sensitive buildings such as heritage assets, and the Council may apply a condition requiring details, elevational drawings, plans and/or sections of locations where a proposed new building would adjoin a sensitive building.

## Balconies and winter gardens

- 5.101 Balconies and winter gardens provide valuable amenity space for flats that would otherwise have little or no private exterior space and also can play an important role in articulating elevations. Balconies should be carefully integrated, and positively contribute to the order of the whole street frontage; it will be more of a challenge to fit them into a street if the adjacent frontages have no balconies or similar features.
- 5.102 The design of balconies and winter

gardens should be considered at the earliest stages of the design process so that they are integral to the building's structure and do not compromise the thermal performance, amenity or accessibility of the accommodation. Early consideration will also ensure that balconies do not appear as 'bolt on' afterthoughts that unbalance the building, undermine natural surveillance of the street or restrict the natural light available to the habitable room they serve. The choice of materials should complement the elevations as whole.

- 5.103 Balconies tend to work best within larger developments where they can contribute to an overall rhythm across the facade. Continuous repetition of balconies can appear monotonous, but careful grouping (vertically across floors and horizontally spaced at regular intervals) can provide a genuine enhancement of the façade that contributes to the rhythm of the street frontage.
- 5.104 At the same time, balconies may obscure that rhythm where they dominate an elevation or obscure the whole frontage. Balconies that continue horizontally across the entire façade tend to – unhelpfully - accentuate both the horizontal proportions and the overall scale of the building, unless they are offset by a strong vertical proportioning



*Figure 14 Junctions between buildings. The importance of considering the interface between new and existing properties cannot be understated. In the image on the left, the design of the new building has carefully considered its interface with the adjacent listed building. In contrast, the image on the right demonstrates how both new and existing buildings are undermined by the failure to consider how the new building will join with the old.*

device. They also can also undermine natural surveillance by obscuring views from the windows.

5.105 Care must be taken to ensure that balconies work with the language of the rest of the façade. A vertically proportioned window can read as a horizontal one if the bottom half is obscured by the balcony balustrade. Glazed or transparent balustrades can address this and ensure natural surveillance is not impeded. Management or lease arrangements can be used to mitigate concerns about visual clutter, although it is preferable to consider this concern during the design process.

5.106 Balconies can provide an additional sense of structural depth when they are recessed within the façade. However, care should be taken to ensure that such an approach does not undermine natural surveillance of the street. So, for instance, the balcony depth should be limited or another living space window provided on the façade if this is a concern.

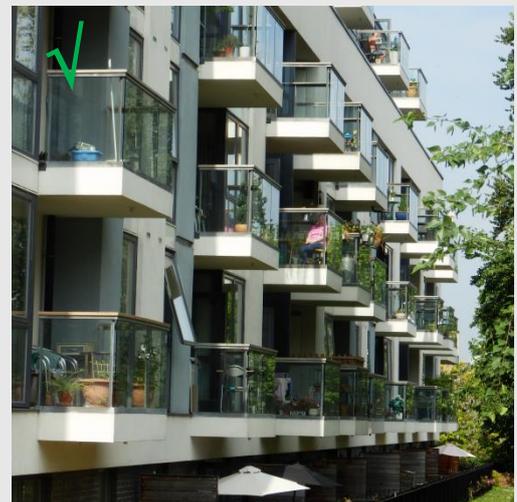
### Recladding and façade retention

5.107 Recladding is a cost-effective way of reinvigorating an existing building that requires an improved building envelope but has a structurally sound frame. It has the potential to extend building design life, improve environmental performance and enhance visual appearance. In all cases, applications for recladding should consider building performance and thermal comfort when specifying the approach.

5.108 The opportunity to make improvements to the fenestration pattern to better control solar gain should also be considered, having regard to the importance of window arrangement in delivering a context-appropriate elevational treatment.

5.109 In contrast to recladding, façade retention involves preserving only the façade of a building to allow new internal structures and layouts to be constructed. As a design approach for heritage assets,

façade retention is not normally supported; the entire form of a building is important to its architectural integrity, including all elevations, the roof, and how internal floor levels relate to the front elevation. Retaining only the façade can severely compromise the architectural integrity of the building and be detrimental to heritage assets.



*Figure 15 Balcony design. Although these buildings employ differing architectural styles, materials and detailing, common to both is a carefully considered approach to balcony design. This serves to enhance the façades of the buildings as well as delivering quality, usable amenity space for occupiers.*

5.110 Proposals that rely on façade retention will therefore only be supported where it is considered that the retention of the frontage is imperative and there is strong and convincing justification for the demolition of the rest of the building. Where façade retention is acceptable, the new development behind it must be successfully and seamlessly integrated with the old, appropriately detailed and designed so that the resultant building achieves architectural coherence. The required level of integration will not be achieved by approaches where facades are left freestanding away from a new building and/or new internal floor levels cross window openings.

## MATERIALS

5.111 The use of materials needs to be considered in terms of their innate qualities (including in relation to thermal performance), their relationship with the surrounding built environment, the articulation of the façade, and their durability and the appearance of durability. Flimsy looking materials, badly fixed, adversely affect the quality of the built environment and can undermine building performance.

## Responding to the site context

5.112 The choice of materials in any new development must take account of its context. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the new material is sympathetic with the local vernacular. Any new building should have a harmonious visual relationship with its neighbours; consistency and continuity are important. The proposed palette of materials should not jar, inappropriately draw the eye, or otherwise undermine the local character or distinctiveness of the area.

5.113 In circumstances where the quality and nature of the proposed architecture demands the use of contrasting and strikingly modern materials to produce dynamic juxtaposition in the street scene, the use of traditional materials may undermine the integrity of the proposal. However, there are also good examples of where traditional materials have been used in a strikingly innovative way.

5.114 Where a new building is located next to an architecturally important building it may be necessary to use materials that allow the existing building to continue to be read on its own terms – this may be facilitated by the use of contrasting

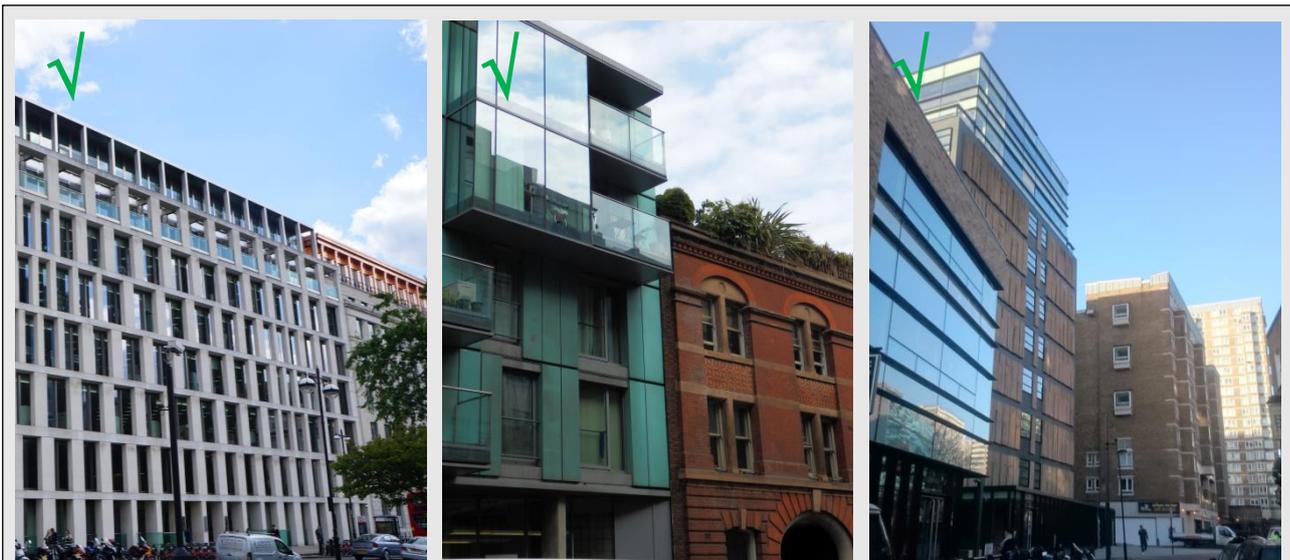


Figure 16 Materials choice and site context. New buildings in Finsbury Square (left) use Portland Stone to create consistency and continuity with adjacent buildings, whereas the use of verdigris cladding creates a positive contrast with the original building (centre). In the image on the right, traditional brick used in a modern way serves to harmoniously incorporate a new building into an architecturally diverse context.

materials that do not compete with those of the original building.

### **Quality, durability and sustainability of materials**

5.115 Good quality materials and fixings should always be used. The choice of materials should be influenced by their robustness, the way they age, their wider environmental impact, and their ability to improve the energy efficiency of buildings. The use of durable and high quality materials is necessary to ensure that buildings can withstand the wear and tear of a tough urban environment.

5.116 Consideration should be given to the weathering properties of materials at the beginning of the design process. For example, buildings designed with robust stone or engineering brick plinths will withstand their environment with minimal maintenance, whereas rendered or light coloured stone plinths can stain easily and timber cladding is prone to weather inconsistently. The council will generally seek material samples or in situ photographic evidence that shows how materials appear after they have been weathered.

5.117 The scale of units, and the detailing of joints, fixings and finishes are also crucial in terms of selecting an appropriate material that contributes to both the quality of the appearance of the individual building as well as the wider setting. Where exterior cladding is proposed – for example, metal cladding, timber cladding, glazed curtain walling, concrete or rendered surfaces – the detailing and finishing needs to be carefully considered to avoid the common pitfalls associated with these materials (for example demanding onerous maintenance requirements, poor weathering properties) particularly if they are proposed in conservation areas or within the setting of listed buildings. Carefully deployed however, high quality contemporary materials can deliver real benefits; they can for instance produce light weight and unobtrusive structures

and improve the energy efficiency of buildings.

5.118 In considering the wider environmental impacts, thought should be given to the whole life cycle costs associated with the chosen materials. Factors which should be considered include:

- Embodied energy (where and how materials are sourced)
- Value over lifespan
- Buildability
- Maintenance requirements (simplicity and durability)
- Thermal performance
- Disposal (recycling or reuse and biodegradability)

5.119 For example, large areas of render which require regular repainting are unlikely to be considered a sustainable material choice appropriate to withstand Islington's harsh urban environment. In addition, applicants are advised to refer to the [BRE Green Guide](#) which provides useful advice on the environmental impacts of sourcing materials.

### **Use of materials to articulate a façade**

5.120 The use of different materials can help to articulate and add interest to a façade. For instance, materials can be used as a framing device to group elements such as windows. However, care needs to be taken not to overload a façade; if too many materials are used then it can appear untidy or too busy. To retain the coherence of an elevation, it is recommended that the range of materials is restricted and that the same materials are employed in different parts of the façade.

5.121 The scale of a frontage can be successfully broken down by applying the classicist concept of articulating a base, middle and top through the use of different materials. This can work well on high frontages. However, care needs to be taken when employing this on lower

buildings, as it might have the opposite effect and could undermine the vertical proportions. The scale of a frontage can also be reduced by articulating the top floor as a recessive element and employing materials such as glass and steel with a lightweight appearance.

5.122 Attention also needs to be given to ensuring the right contrast is provided between different materials. Materials that work best together often have a contrasting texture as well as colour, for example a limited palette of timber, brick, metal and render. A reliance on different colour brickwork to provide the necessary articulation is usually insufficient unless the grain of the bricks provides contrast. Yellow stock bricks and smooth dark grey engineering brick can sometimes work successfully together, particularly if one of the brick types projects or is recessed against the other.

5.123 Care needs to be taken with bright or colourful materials where they inappropriately draw attention to particular buildings, and away from the street, adjacent spaces, or more important civic buildings or heritage assets. This is especially the case with large or prominent buildings that will in any event stand out, where the use of neutral colours or materials that match their context may be more appropriate. Highly reflective materials may also be problematic if they create glare. A subdued palette is appropriate for much of the borough.

### Brickwork

5.124 Brick is the most widely used material in Islington's built environment. It is a robust and durable material, with excellent weathering properties. The choice of colour, texture, bond and pointing is crucial to achieving good quality brickwork. In conservation areas in particular, it is important that any new brickwork respects the special architectural and historic interest of its surroundings. Brick slips are not generally considered an acceptable



*Figure 17 Materials choice and quality/durability. Inappropriate choice of materials can have a detrimental impact on the quality of a building. In the top image the timber window surrounds have not been treated appropriately and have weathered poorly, and in the centre image the size of the cladding panels is overly large for the curve of the façade, resulting in obvious joins and a poor quality finish. However, the bottom image of the Wallpaper Factory (Offord Road) demonstrates how robust and properly installed contemporary materials can add real interest to a building.*

alternative to brick, as they can often be of insufficient robustness and quality.

5.125 The use of appropriate bond, mortar and pointing is critical in achieving high quality brickwork. Lime based mortar and traditional bonds such as Flemish or English bonds are encouraged. Pointing should be flush or slightly recessed with the face of the brick to ensure that the mortar joints will be subordinate to the face of the brickwork to avoid the unsympathetic appearance of weather struck pointing (which projects from the face of the brick).

5.126 Brick elevations can be enriched through the use of recesses and projections, reconstituted or natural stone window/door surrounds, being 'rusticated' to the ground floor or combining yellow or gault stock brick with Staffordshire blue engineering brick. Brick arches to windows should be gauged and should be very finely pointed. Brick arches constructed from soldier courses should be avoided.

### Replacement windows

5.127 Where window replacement is sought in existing buildings, this should normally be done in the original style and materials -

for example, timber sliding sash windows on Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian properties, and Crittall windows on inter and post-war buildings - and applied universally across the elevation to ensure consistency.

5.128 This is particularly important on street frontages where the windows are visible from the public realm and where the building forms part of an historic townscape that retains the majority of its original windows. Applications for window replacement affecting designated heritage assets are subject to additional statutory controls.

5.129 Applications affecting non-designated heritage assets and period properties should refer to the relevant Guidance Note for practical advice on how to upgrade windows in a manner which is sympathetic to the host building in terms of material, profile and detailing.

5.130 Regardless of the framing material, replacement window design should deliver a context appropriate and refined profile that creates a satisfactory solid/void relationship between wall and window (glazed to unglazed area) and ensures sufficient daylight penetration to the interior of the building.



Figure 18. Materials choice and articulation of the façade. The building on the left relies on a sensibly rationalised palette of materials, with the same grey metal finish used to frame/group the windows and clad the recessed top floors; the quality and texture of the brick further adds depth the façade. As shown by the building on the right, differing materials/colours are insufficient on their own to articular a façade; profiling texture and detailing is of critical importance, and materials used in the same plane with little variation in grain – such as the expanse of smooth white render and brightly coloured panels – does not result in a successful articulating device.



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## Residential Extensions and Alterations

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### Key UDG Objectives

- Residential extensions, both above and below ground, should respect the integrity, rhythm and visual amenity of the street
- Basements should be designed sympathetically with the host building and its surrounds
- Garden rooms and outbuildings should retain a sufficiently large proportion of the original garden and be subordinate to the main buildings
- Balconies should enhance the quality of accommodation and the articulation of facades
- Proposed building technologies should be demonstrably effective and appropriate to their setting

5.131 While some extensions and alterations to single dwelling houses do not require planning permission under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England) Order 2015, those making use of permitted development rights – particularly in the case of those rights which require prior approval/neighbour consultation – are nonetheless advised to consider the guidance presented here. In some Conservation Areas, Article 4 Directions remove certain permitted development rights.

5.132 All proposals for residential extensions and alterations should take into account bulk, height, massing, materials and proportion and how they relate to adjacent heritage assets, uses, building alignment and general treatment of setting. Where the proposal is within a Conservation Area, applicants should have reference to the guidance within the applicable Conservation Area Statement. These documents provide detailed information about each area's significant features and guidance on how alterations and extensions should be designed to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the particular area.

### REAR EXTENSIONS AND CONSERVATORIES

5.133 Typically, the rear elevations of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian buildings were built with a consistent arrangement down the length of the terrace or street. While some terraces were built with a flat rear face without rear extensions, more commonly they were organised in a solid/void pattern with an extension and lightwell 'void' to maximise the amount of light and air reaching within the deep plans of many of the houses. Rear elevations generally have less formality than the more ordered front elevations, reflecting the fact they fulfil a private rather than a public function.

#### Scale, footprint and depth

5.134 Rear extensions must be subordinate to the original building; extensions should be no higher than one full storey below eaves to ensure they are sufficiently subordinate to the main building. For this reason and also in order to respect the rhythm of the terrace, full width rear extensions higher than one storey, or half width rear extensions higher than two storeys, will normally be resisted, unless it can be shown that no harm will be

caused to the character of the building and the wider area. Locating an extension on the staircase side of a terraced dwelling can assist in maintaining the established rhythm of the existing rear elevation, and this also allows retention of the original windows to the principal rooms of the property.

- 5.135 The depth of extensions must also be carefully considered, having regard to both the impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties and the host building. This is particularly important for extensions exceeding a single storey. Excessively deep extensions can adversely impact on daylight, sunlight and sense of enclosure. The 45 degree rule is a useful reference to ensure that the scale of an extension will not have an adverse impact on amenity. If the centre of a main window on the rear elevation of the neighbouring property lies within a 45 degree angle of the end of the proposed extension on both plan and elevation, the depth of the extension is likely to have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of the neighbouring property.

### **Treatment**

- 5.136 An assessment of the existing built form and options appraisal including pre-application advice from the Council will help determine the best approach for designing rear extensions. There may be circumstances when extending a building in a way which is a continuation of the existing form, using matching materials and details, is important. In other cases, such as single storey extensions, high quality contemporary contextual design, such as utilising contrasting high quality materials or a lightweight glazed form, may be more appropriate.
- 5.137 Particular care should be taken over the design of rear elevations visible from the public realm (because of gaps within the street frontage), and also over the most prominent upper part of the rear elevation that is most visible from the private realm. The upper storeys to rear extensions, which are most exposed, should usually replicate the form and materials to the

host building in order to reduce their visual impact. This is particularly relevant within conservation areas or on terraces where there is a strong historic character that contributes to the distinctiveness of the locality and continuity with the existing style and materials may be required.

### **Ground and lower ground extensions**

- 5.138 Where they can be neatly accommodated, there will normally be scope for lower ground or ground floor extensions within a lightwell or beyond the line of the existing back addition providing sufficient garden space is retained to provide high quality and useable amenity space for day to day uses (for example clothes drying, dining, relaxation, gardening, children's play) and does not result in fragmented areas incapable of supporting soft landscaping. High quality contemporary extensions are encouraged on lower floors except where conservation guidelines require extensions to conform to the design of the existing building.

### **Upper floor extensions**

- 5.139 On the upper floors, the materials, detailing and form of the extension should normally be sympathetic to the terrace. Single half-width upper floor extensions above existing extensions are often acceptable providing there is a punctuating gap between the eaves height and the top of the extension. In conservation areas, extensions above two storeys in total will not normally be permitted.
- 5.140 Many terraces have paired additions with consistent rooflines. New extensions above these types of rear projections can disrupt the natural rhythm of rear elevations and should, therefore, be avoided. Furthermore, extensions that



Figure 19 Acceptable approaches to rear extensions. Ground floor infill extensions are normally acceptable in design terms. Where there are generous gardens and they do not impede on the amenity of neighbouring properties, there is sometimes opportunity to extend out beyond the existing back line. Where there is existing variation in the rear elevations, extensions above existing rear projections will normally be acceptable providing they are visibly below the lowest point of the roof.

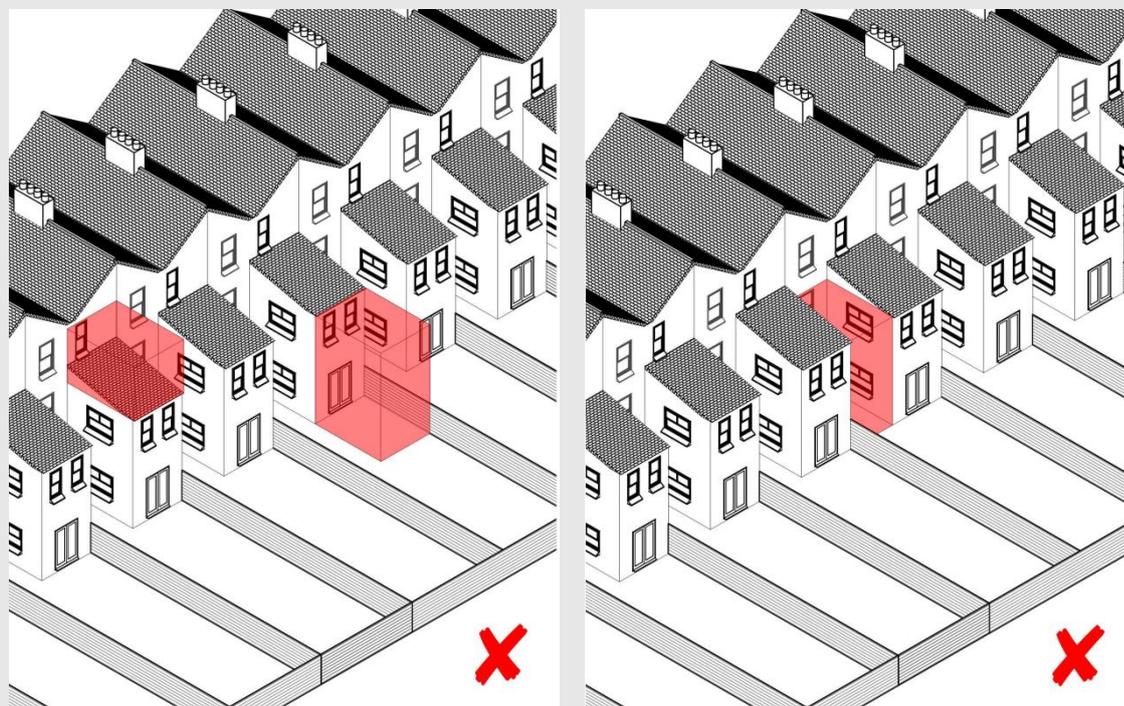


Figure 20 Unacceptable approaches to rear extensions. Upper floor extensions that project out beyond the existing line of the rear projection or extend up to the line of the roof parapet/eaves normally disrupt the rhythm/unity of the terrace. In rear elevations that have a consistent arrangement, extensions above the existing rear projections will normally be resisted. Where they project above upper ground floor level, rear infill extensions within the lightwell area can undermine the rhythm of the terrace.

project out beyond the original back line of existing rear extensions above ground floor level, will normally be unacceptable where they:

- Interrupt a consistent arrangement/rhythm
- Inappropriately dominate the garden/the main building

## SIDE EXTENSIONS AND END OF TERRACE INFILL

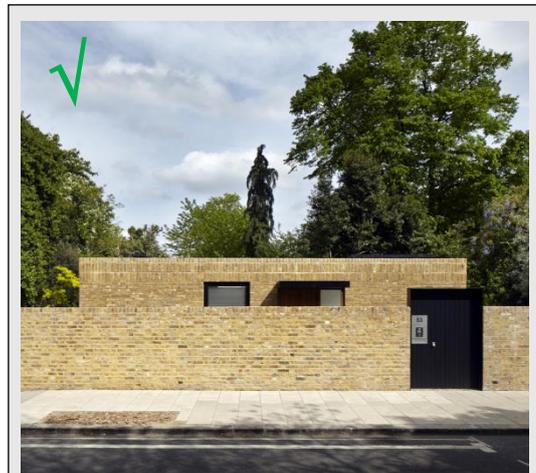
5.141 Side extensions and end of terrace infill development can have a significant impact on the character of an area and its local distinctiveness. Height, scale, proportions, elevational treatment, materials as well as impact on neighbouring amenity need to be carefully considered.

5.142 On residential streets characterised by semi-detached dwellings, any proposal for a side extension between semi-detached dwellings should take into account the rhythm and symmetry of the built form and the street as a whole. In limited circumstances it is possible that an extension would serve to restore that symmetry, but more often the effect is to undermine the prevailing rhythm and to dominate the existing building(s).

5.143 Nearly all Victorian/Edwardian residential terraces are characterised by a gap in the corner return that allows light and air in to the rear elevation and gardens. By allowing a glimpse of the rear gardens, these gaps also provide a soft backdrop to the street. For these reasons, this arrangement should normally be retained. Where there is an especially long gap or, outside conservation areas, an existing structure that is incongruous with the dominant character of the street, there may be scope for an infill building/extension that repairs and improves the street frontage.

5.144 Two approaches that can satisfactorily respond to the character of Victorian/Edwardian terraced streets are:

- A building that is designed so that it appears as part of an existing front wall that connects the two terraces, but nevertheless separate from the terraced buildings. The height of the new building should not rise appreciably higher than the existing wall because it will otherwise cease to fit within its context.
- A full height building that follows the existing scale, proportions, roofline and building line of the adjacent street frontage. The acceptability of this approach will depend on the extent of the gap in the terrace and, where the gap is at the end of a terrace, the significance of the end gap to the character of the area. In practice, land ownership and site constraints often make this solution difficult to achieve. Where a building proposal fails to respond to the scale and proportions of the existing terrace, it is unlikely to be acceptable. This will be the case if its height and width are different from the existing terrace buildings.



*Figure 21 Gap infill development. This successful development appears as part of the existing front wall. This approach retains the boundary wall and of the corner property and views into the rear gardens which are an important feature of this conservation area.*

## ROOF EXTENSIONS

5.145 The roofline is an important factor contributing to the rhythm and uniformity of a residential terrace or street. A typical terrace or row of detached/semi-detached houses is designed with a consistent height at the front and rear. A well-defined roofline throughout therefore helps give terraces their inherent rhythm and unity.

5.146 When considering the scope for roof extensions it is necessary to consider the particular terrace within which the host building sits as well as the local context. Successful proposals will be both sympathetic to the host building and harmonise with the predominant roofline in the vicinity.

5.147 An extension that projects significantly above or alters the prevailing roofline can often disrupt the characteristic rhythm/unity and introduce features that fail to respect the scale, form, and character of the street frontage. Where a roof extension also involves raising the flank boundary parapets and chimneys this draws further attention to the addition.

5.148 In all cases, applications for roof extensions, dormers and roof lights will be assessed on merit, giving due consideration to:

- The quality of design
- Materials and construction proposed
- The cumulative effect on visual amenity, unity and coherence of the street scene

5.149 On semi-detached villas, one sided extensions will normally be resisted where they undermine the symmetry of the original building. Two sided extensions on semi-detached villas and extensions above detached villas will usually only be considered where they exist elsewhere in the street on identically designed buildings.



*Figure 22 Types of mansard roof extension. The roof extensions in the top image have been designed in a style appropriate to the host buildings and to maintain the prevailing roofline. In contrast, the roof extension in the bottom image projects significantly above the prevailing roofline and its size and treatment does not respect the scale and form of the host building or the rhythm of the wider terrace.*

## Rooflines in conservation areas

5.150 Within conservation areas, the roofline is often an important feature contributing to the character of an area and therefore proposals for roof extensions anywhere along an unaltered roofline within a conservation area will not generally be acceptable. Where the roofline is broken, the scope for roof extensions will normally be dependent on the following criteria:

- The number of existing roof extensions, and the extent to which the unity and consistency of the roofline has already been compromised.
- The length of the terrace. A short terrace with existing roof extensions may have the opportunity of its unity being reconciled through allowing additional roof extensions to fill the gaps. On a long terrace with houses in separate ownership, this is less likely to occur.
- Listed buildings and terraces within conservation areas will also be respectively subject to the detailed individual consideration of listed building issues and Conservation Area Design Guidelines.

5.151 When considering the scope for change to the front roofline, it is also necessary to consider the particular terrace/uniform street frontage in question. It is not uncommon for there to be more than one type of frontage on one side of one street. What might be acceptable in one part of the street will not necessarily apply to the next terrace even if it is physically connected and on the same side of the same street. The same is true with terraces on the opposite side of the street.

5.152 In conservation areas where it is important to maintain the unbroken roofline on the street frontage it may be acceptable to have a roof extension on the rear roofline. In these cases, it will be important that any alterations to the roof will be invisible from the public realm so as to retain the unbroken front roofline.

## Rooflines outside of conservation areas

5.153 Outside conservation areas, there is more scope to introduce roof extensions where these are of a high quality design. Where a street frontage benefits from a consistent and unbroken roofline, alterations which would disrupt this consistent roofline and be visible from the public realm need to be designed in a style appropriate to the host building. Where the extension is not visible from the public realm, for example if it is generously setback from the front parapet, there may be more scope for flexibility in the design.

### Main types of roof extensions

5.154 Where they are acceptable in principle, roof extensions on residential terraces or villas must be restricted to a single storey. The profile and configuration of the existing extensions should normally be followed except in those cases where the existing design is considered out of character with the host building and/or the predominant building type. The following are the most common types of roof extension in Islington.

5.155 A mansard roof is a traditional type of roof that is generally not appropriate for contemporary buildings. There are two main types: flat mansard incorporating steep front and back and almost flat top (usually not acceptable in conservation areas); and traditional mansard incorporating a steep angled front and rear and shallow angled roof up to the ridge-line. Dormer windows are best suited to both types. Pitched ridge roofs are occasionally used for roof extensions instead of a mansard. They can accommodate dormer windows or skylights that follow the roof profile if outside a conservation area.

5.156 Contemporary roof extensions, with a lightweight appearance such as glass and steel, comprise a vertical frontage and flat roof that is usually well set back behind the front parapet. They are most appropriate on relatively modern buildings. Sometimes there is scope for

contemporary extensions on Victorian terraces where existing contemporary extensions already exist in the terrace or on corner buildings that differ from, and provide a positive juxtaposition to, the remainder of the terrace.

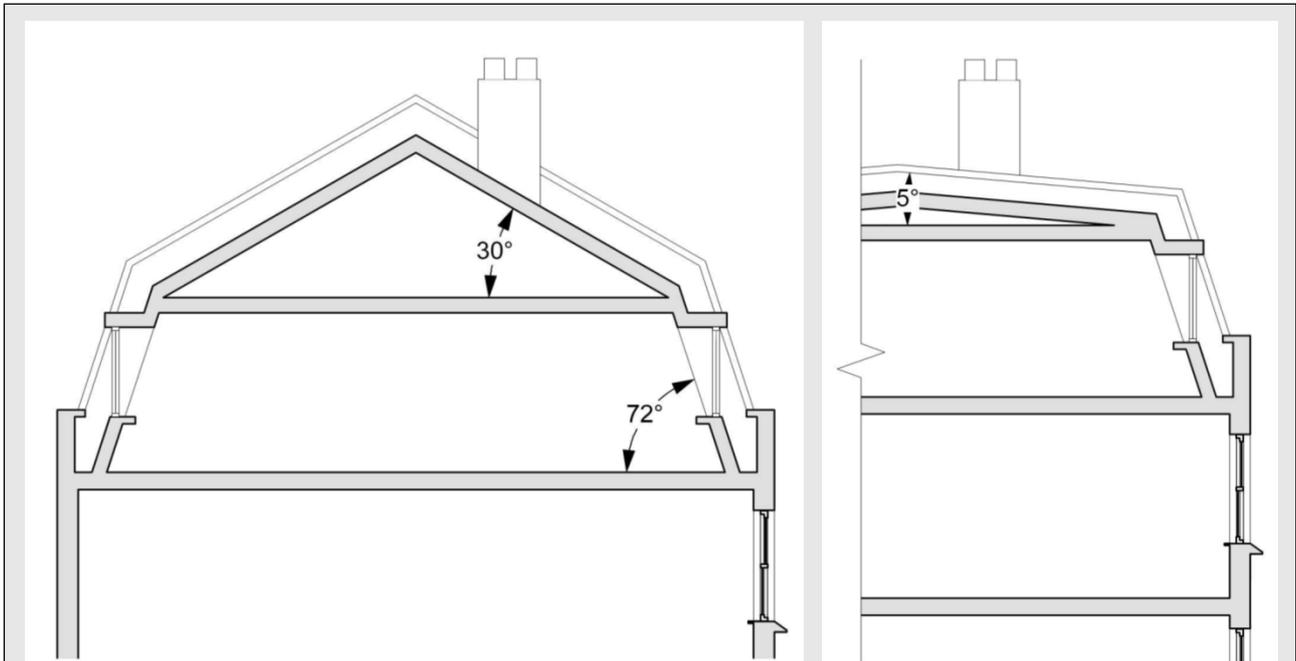


Figure 23 Types of mansard roof extensions. Traditional double pitch mansard roof with dormer windows (left) and flat half mansard roof with dormer windows (right).

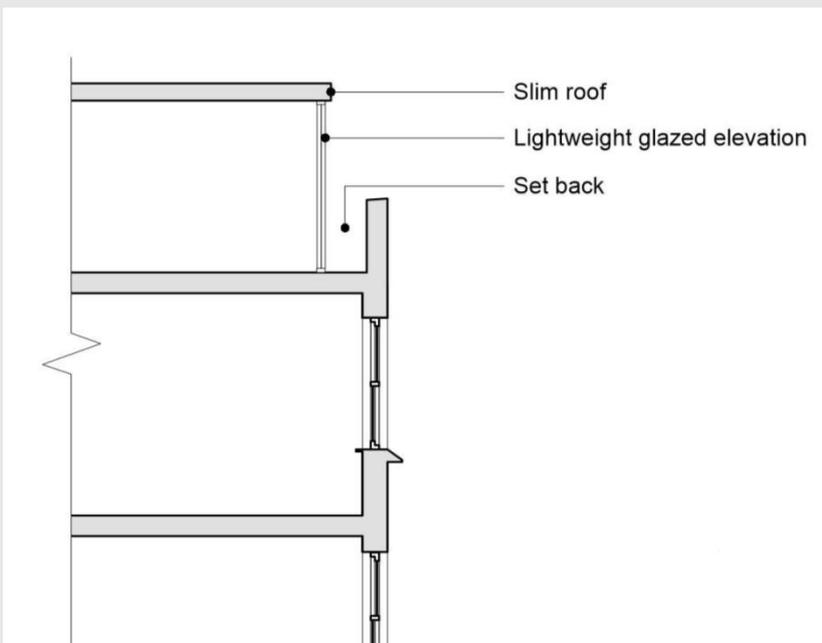
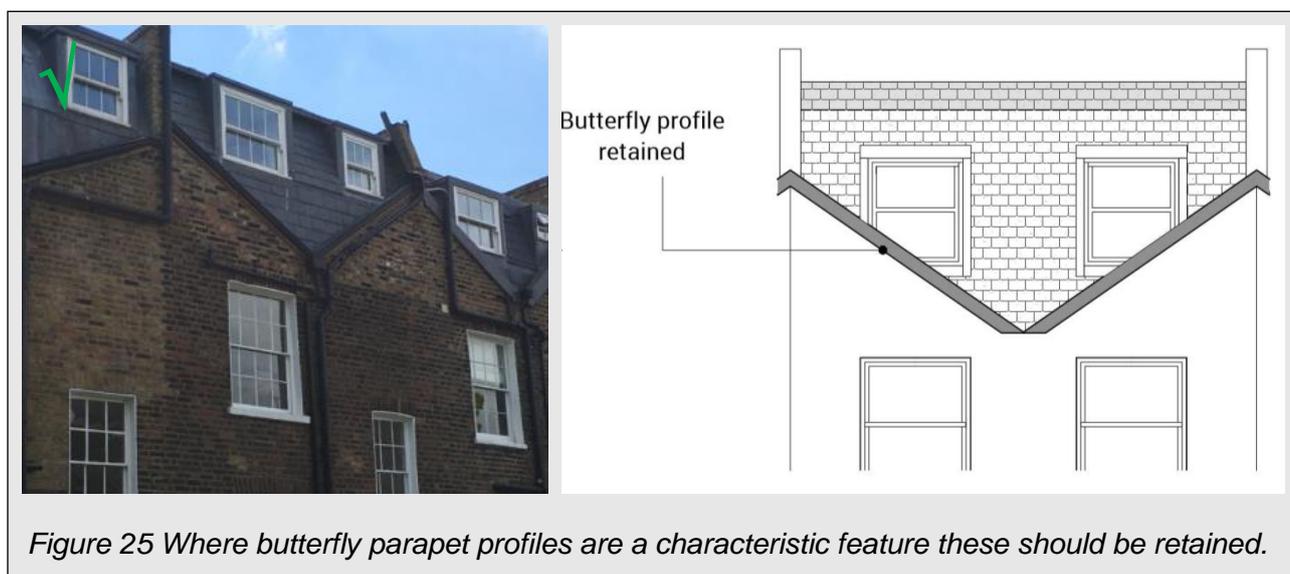


Figure 24 Contemporary lightweight roof extension. The distance of the setback will be determined by need to minimise appearance of extension from public realm.

5.157 Roof extensions to historic terraces should normally retain the historic parapet form and be set behind it. Particularly to Victorian/Edwardian terraces, the raising of the brickwork should be avoided, with a clear distinction between the host building and the roof extension above being maintained. Butterfly parapet profiles are a strong characteristic of rooflines in Islington and where these survive they should be retained. On terraces where one section of the consistent parapet line may have been lost, its reinstatement will be encouraged.

5.158 Party walls should follow the form of roof and should not include a 90 degree up stand projecting beyond the form of the roof extension to avoid unsightly protrusions. Chimney stacks should be retained and only raised where they will not disrupt the rhythm of the terrace.



## Dormers

- 5.159 Dormer windows are typically incorporated within pitched roofs and mansard roofs. Their design should be in keeping with the original dwelling and relate to the windows of the original house in proportion, detailing and position.
- 5.160 The position of dormers should take into account the composition of the windows immediately below them on the elevation. They should generally line up with and be no wider overall than the windows immediately below them on the elevation. As a result, the window within the dormer will be narrower than the windows on the main building. This ensures that dormers are appropriately proportioned to the host property, and serves to reinforce the architectural composition, rhythm and uniformity of the terrace. A small centrally positioned dormer can also be an acceptable approach, particularly on narrower plot widths.
- 5.161 The detailed design and proportions of the dormer should relate to the windows of the original house. The solid surrounds (cheeks) of the dormer should be as slender as possible; simple lead cheeks with a double hung timber sash window is often the best solution in historic buildings. Except for the window frame and cheeks, there should not be any solid face. The dormer should be positioned a clear distance below the ridge-line, significantly clear of the boundary parapets, and above the line of the eaves.



Figure 26 Acceptable approaches to dormer window design and arrangement.

## Roof lights

- 5.162 Roof lights should be designed with a slender profile and should, ideally, be flush with the roof covering to minimise their visual impact. As with dormers, the positioning and design of roof lights should relate to the windows of the original house so they do not crowd the roof, with an overall width no wider than the window apertures in the main façade.
- 5.163 When designed as per the above guidance, roof lights that follow the roof profile are an unobtrusive design feature and can be used where in locations where it is important to retain the profile of the roof slope, for example where an unbroken roofline in a conservation area precludes the use of dormer windows. However, they are generally not suitable for mansard roofs, as they would appear as a discordant feature.



Figure 27 Acceptable and unacceptable approaches to roof light design and arrangement

## LIGHTWELLS AND BASEMENT DEVELOPMENT

- 5.164 Excavation to form lightwells should respect the architectural character of the host building, not unduly impact upon amenity/garden area and its growing potential, and be designed as congruent, compatible and complementary features within the streetscape. If a lightwell is being introduced or modified, the most discreet location will generally be to the rear of the property. Lightwells should be modest in scale and be located immediately next to the rear elevation (or side if applicable).
- 5.165 Lightwells can be unsympathetic to the original frontage if they involve the loss of a verdant front garden. For front gardens, lightwell design should integrate sympathetically with the existing elevation and front threshold as well as the existing character of the street. Where a lightwell will impact on an established front garden or open area that is characteristic of the street or terrace, the majority if not all of the front garden should be retained.
- 5.166 Where the location of a lightwell is otherwise acceptable, the use of grilles in place of open lightwells with railings can provide a more discreet intervention, unless these features are characteristic of an area. Grilles should also be constructed flush with the ground level, and designed to be visually unobtrusive through the use of discreet colours and materials, and to allow light to penetrate into the basement.
- 5.167 Basement development in most instances involves changes to the existing building and/or the introduction of new above ground structures, which impact on both the character and appearance of a locality. New or extended basements should therefore be designed to ensure that any associated external manifestation responds to the prevailing streetscape.

- 5.168 New structures such as lightwells, railings, steps, plant, roof lights, and other forms of lighting should not create visual clutter or interrupt the prevailing rhythm of the street and should respect the special architectural or historic interest of heritage assets. Full guidance is provided in the [Basement Development](#) SPD.

## GARDEN BUILDINGS

- 5.169 The predominant Islington townscape is urban and densely developed in character, which underlines the importance of gardens, open space and open aspects; they provide visual and environmental relief. In some limited circumstances, outbuildings are considered to be permitted development. Otherwise, where garden rooms and studios are acceptable by virtue of their small scale, low height and location within a large garden, they will be subject to all other adopted design policies, objectives and considerations.
- 5.170 Garden buildings should be designed to be subservient to the main building on the site. They should be as low as possible, with a modest footprint and should be sufficiently set away from boundaries to prevent cumulative impact or a 'terracing' effect arising from similar built form to the end of adjoining gardens. They should normally be of lightweight construction, and will only be acceptable where sufficient garden/open space remains to provide high quality and useable amenity space that provides adequate space for day to day uses and does not result in fragmented areas incapable of supporting planting.

## ROOF TERRACES AND BALCONIES

- 5.171 Balconies and terraces provide valuable amenity space for flats that would otherwise have little or no private exterior space but they can also cause nuisance to neighbours and appear visually incongruous. When considering the

introduction of a roof terrace or balcony, the main considerations should be:

- The scale and visual prominence
- The impact on the established townscape and architectural style
- The impact on neighbouring properties (overlooking and visual amenity)

5.172 The positioning of roof terraces and balconies is also a crucial consideration; for instance the use of setbacks may assist to minimise overlooking. Another solution to address overlooking issues may be the use of screens, however, the impact on daylight and sunlight, outlook

and visual appearance must be carefully considered. There is sometimes scope for roof terraces above flat topped rear additions, subject to their impact on adjacent residential amenity.

5.173 Where roof terraces are acceptable, care should be taken to minimise the visual clutter created by balustrades and privacy screening. Metal balustrades can often be more discrete than glazed balustrades that are highly reflective and require regular maintenance. In conservation areas, both public and private views will be taken into account in the assessment of the visual impact of any application for a rear roof terrace on the character of the area.

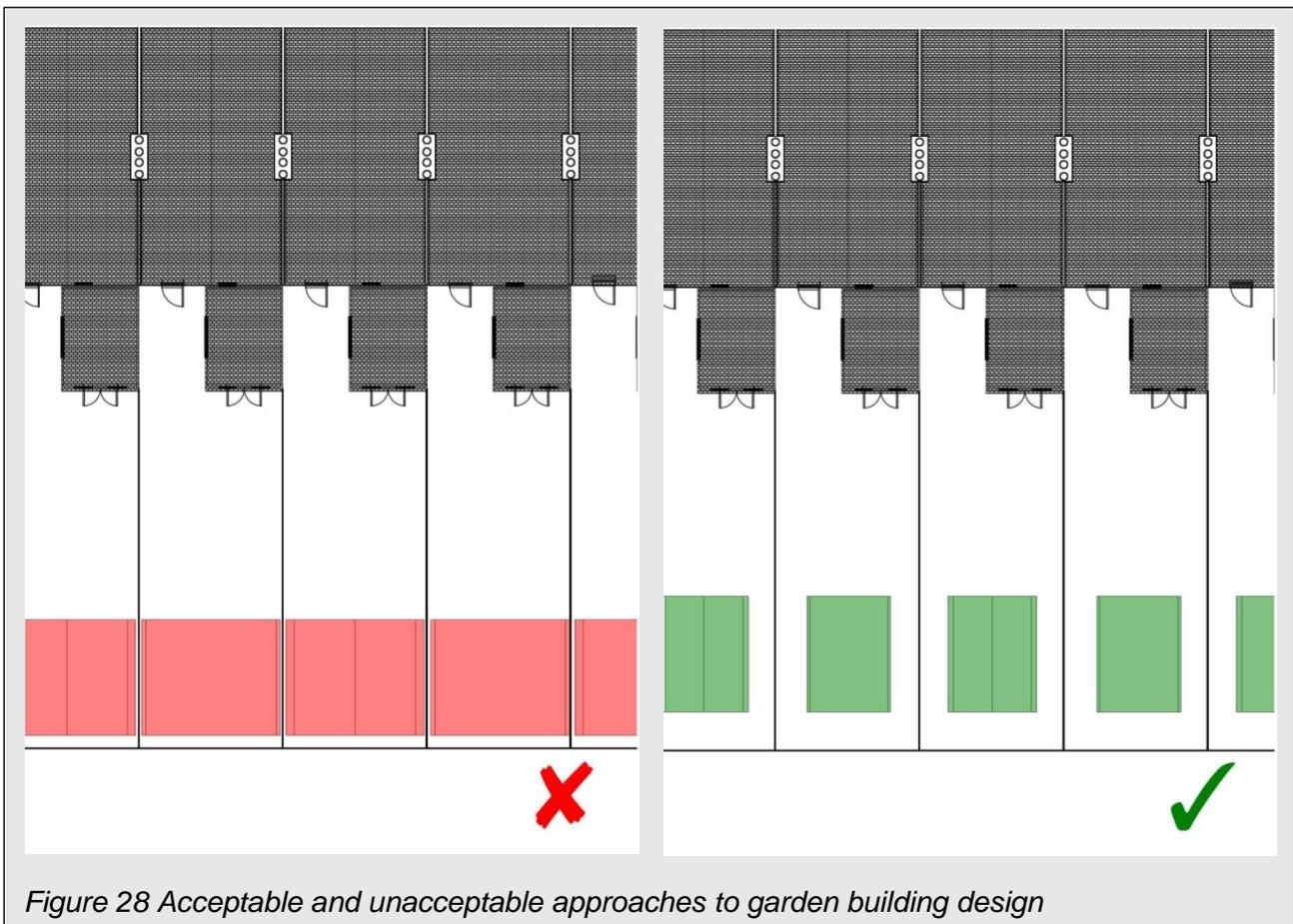


Figure 28 Acceptable and unacceptable approaches to garden building design

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# Energy Saving Measures and Renewables

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## Key UDG Objectives

- Energy saving measures should be considered at the earliest stages of design and their effectiveness considered alongside their potential impacts on the character and distinctiveness of the area
- Proposed building technologies should be demonstrably effective and appropriate to their setting

## PHOTOVOLTAIC PANELS

5.174 PV (photovoltaic) panels will be encouraged where they deliver appreciable benefits, operating efficiently without harming the appearance of the building. There are many different solar panels on the market with some designs able to be integrated in the roof structure and can be much less visually intrusive. In sensitive sites (such as listed buildings and within conservation areas), consideration should be given to the visual impact of PV panels on the host buildings and their surrounds, and appropriate technologies adopted to avoid any significant harm.

## EXTERNAL WALL INSULATION

5.175 Solid walls, by the nature of their construction, are not energy efficient. A home with uninsulated solid walls will lose 45 percent of its heat through these walls; almost all pre-WWII houses and flats built up to the 1970s have solid wall. External Wall Insulation (EWI) therefore represents a highly effective means improving the energy efficiency of the borough's existing building stock and alleviating the fuel poverty of residents in homes with solid wall construction.

5.176 There are a wide range of materials and finishes that can be used for EWI. These should be carefully selected to ensure they are both in keeping with neighbouring buildings/local context as well as being the most appropriate and best performing for the type of building. Detailing is critical to the successful installation of this cladding, both in terms of its visual appearance and performance in terms of delivering the specified improvements to energy performance.

5.177 Particular care should be taken at joints and junctions; where building elements project from the elevation (for example, sills, balconies, and building services equipment); where items are re-sited on the new face of the building; and the junction of the cladding with the ground. For example, where there are external fixings such as rainwater pipes these should be removed and re-fixed after the insulation has been installed, rather than fixing the insulation around the pipes. Where possible, the extent of externally fixed services should be reduced as part of the process. Consideration will also need to be given to how the important original features of a building are preserved in a sympathetic way, where applicable.

5.178 The Insulated Render and Cladding Association (INCA) is the recognised trade body for the EWI industry and has published a Best Practice Guide ([INCA](#)

[EWI Guide](#)) that includes guidance on choice of finishes, detailing and installation to help design and ensure the finished development matches the quality envisaged by the designer. The Council will expect applicants for EWI to have reference to this guide, and may request further details to ensure that installation is undertaken in a way that will deliver the specified thermal benefits, be aesthetically pleasing and ensure that the EWI lasts for its design life.

## ENERGY EFFICIENT WINDOWS

5.179 Energy efficient windows are a key component in keeping homes warm, alleviating fuel poverty and reducing carbon emissions. The U-value of a building material is a measure of how effective a material is as an insulator, with lower values indicating better insulating properties. While technologies continue to advance, as a general rule the U-value of double glazed windows is significantly lower than single glazing, regardless of framing materials.

5.180 In considering upgrading existing windows to double glazing, various factors should be taken into account, including energy performance, cost and appropriateness to context. The chosen solution should deliver improved energy performance alongside a design which is sensitive to the architectural period of the building. For example, in period properties where the original windows are characterized by glazing bars, replacement double glazed windows should have internal glazing bars of the same profile as the original windows.

5.181 In particularly sensitive areas/buildings, alternatives to replacement windows, such as draft proofing existing windows and internal secondary glazing, will be encouraged. Unless it can be demonstrated that the original windows are beyond repair, the replacement of historic windows to listed buildings is not acceptable.



*Figure 29 External wall insulation. The Holly Park Estate before (left) and after (right) installation of external solid wall installation. The use of high quality materials and attention to design details such as the brick render used for the horizontal banding between windows, brick slips at the ground floor level, coloured render and the quality of the installation were critical to the success of this project*

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## Services and Facilities

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### BUILDING SERVICES AND EQUIPMENT

- 5.182 It is important to consider, from the outset, where cables, pipes, flues, gas meters, alarms, air conditioning equipment and other building services equipment will be located. Where these services are introduced as an afterthought, or where external fixing is determined by a cost cutting exercise, what was a well-designed building is visually compromised to the detriment of the street scene. In most cases, therefore, a condition is likely to be applied to any planning permission prohibiting external fixing.
- 5.183 Any plant or machinery associated with the operation of a commercial flue should be located within the building if possible. If it is necessary to install plant on the outside of the building, it should be located at a low level (preferably within a courtyard or rear garden area) and either obscured from view by existing structures such as parapet walls or housed within a suitably designed enclosure.
- 5.184 Commercial extraction equipment should be located to the rear of commercial properties and should not be visible from public views. Flues should not discharge above the highest point of the roof, unless this is necessary in order to avoid noise or odour nuisance to neighbouring properties. Extraction ducting should be narrow and affixed with anti-vibration mounts close to the face of the building.
- 5.185 Where substations front the street, these should be treated appropriately to provide an animated, high quality frontage that makes a positive contribution to the streetscene. Innovative design solutions are encouraged over a standard louvered finish, for example laser cut metal, as

these provide for the required technical compliance, ventilation and safety as well as an attractive street frontage. Operational requirements should be considered early in the process to ensure appropriate siting of substations and to avoid retrofitting solutions that add unnecessary clutter to the public realm.

### WASTE AND RECYCLING STORAGE

- 5.186 In addition to Islington's Recycling and Refuse Storage Requirements (refer to [Guidance for Architects](#)) bin stores should be designed so they neatly integrate with building frontages and thresholds and do not undermine community safety. Particular care needs to be taken with tall or bulky bins, such as 'eurobins', which require bin stores that might block sight lines.
- 5.187 It is normally unsuitable to locate them in the front threshold area where their height can block sight lines particularly around residential entrances. For convenience as well as community safety reasons they are normally better located behind the building façade next to the building entrance.
- 5.188 Very large communal bin stores should be avoided where they occupy a long dead frontage. They will also be unacceptable if they result in long walking distances from the residential units they serve.

## **AERIALS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT**

- 5.189 Telecommunication aerials and equipment often contribute to physical clutter. Every opportunity should be made to rationalise and reduce their impact within the public realm.
- 5.190 When they are affixed to a street frontage or a part of the roof visible from the public realm, satellite dishes often adversely impact upon the streetscape and inappropriately obscure or draw the eye away from a building façade. For this reason they should normally be located out of view from the public realm. While their impact is less, standard television antennae should preferably be located towards the rear of the roof. On blocks of flats and larger buildings, consideration should be given to providing a communal aerial that serves the entire building.
- 5.191 Particular care needs to be taken with mobile phone/telecommunication masts to ensure their size, height and positioning does not dominate the surrounding public realm. Where it will not have a detrimental impact on performance, they should be located where they are largely obscured from the surrounding public realm and do not impact adversely upon the skyline from longer views.

## **OTHER ROOF STRUCTURES**

- 5.192 Roof structures that are not an integral part of the building such as plant or railings should normally be avoided, particularly if they are visible from the public realm or would undermine residential amenity. If space for plant machinery is required this should be accommodated within the building envelope.
- 5.193 Lift overruns that project above the roofline should be avoided. If this is not possible, they should be incorporated on the rear part of the roof, where they are not visible from the street.

# Shopfront Design

## Key UDG Objective

- New or refurbished shopfront designs should respect the local street scene, the building as a whole and its design detail.

5.194 Islington's traditional shopping streets make a substantial positive contribution to its character and distinctiveness. However, the quality of many of Islington's traditional shops has been eroded by poor quality replacement shopfronts and inappropriate alterations. Although there has been an improvement in recent years, poor quality shopfronts detract from the quality of Islington's built environment.

5.195 It is important that historically and architecturally significant shopfronts are retained and restored, and that new shopfronts to historic buildings are of high quality traditional design, with appropriate signage and constructed from robust materials. Likewise, shopfronts to modern or new buildings should be high quality contextual design and successfully integrated into the overall building design.

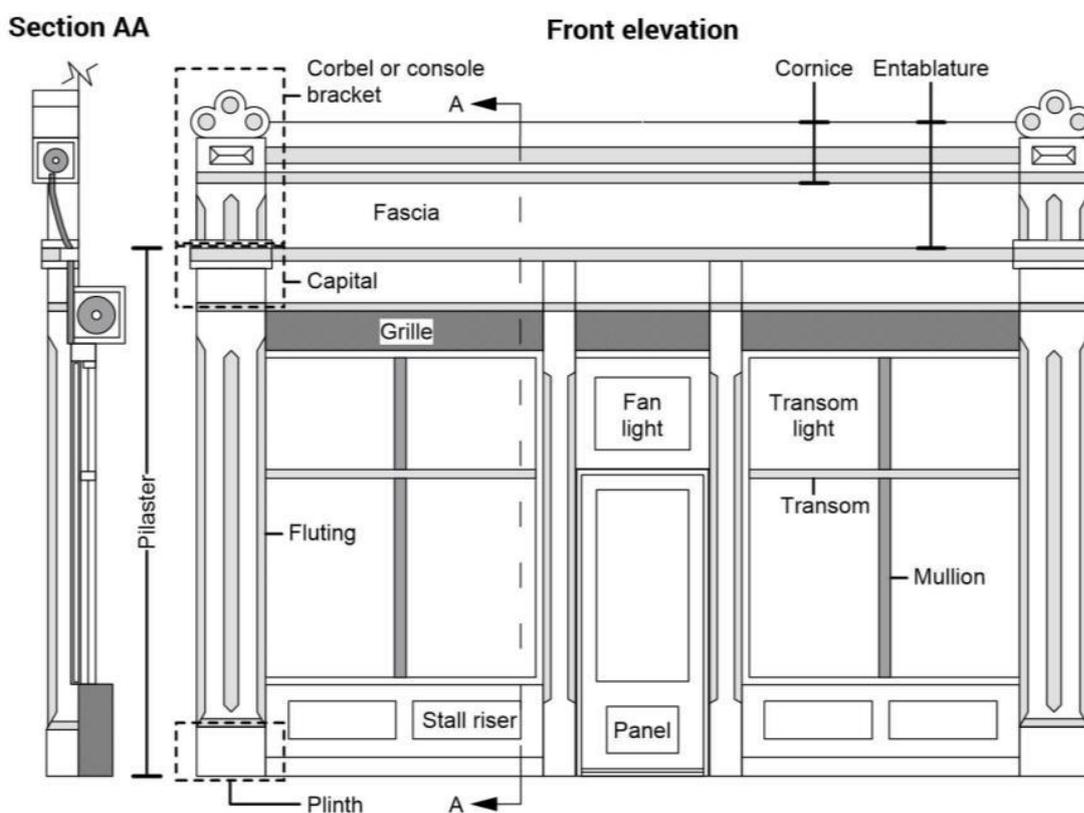


Figure 30 Basic elements of a traditional shopfront design

## SHOPFRONT TYPES

5.196 Islington's historic shopfronts can generally be divided in to four types: Georgian, Victorian, early/mid twentieth century and late twentieth century. Georgian shopfronts in Islington are rare and all are listed. They are characterised by classical architectural detailing and shop windows, often bowed, divided with glazing bars in to a number of small panes.

5.197 The majority of shopping areas in Islington date to the Victorian period and it was during this time that what is referred to as traditional shopfront design was established. Victorian shopfronts are well proportioned and comprise of pilasters, corbel brackets, cornice, fascia, clerestory, a shopwindow divided with mullion and a stallriser. Signage will usually comprise of hand painted letters to a timber fascia or back painted glass with gold lettering, in addition there may be a projecting hanging sign. Entrances might be recessed and the threshold tiled with mosaics or terrazzo.

5.198 Victorian pubs are some of the most prominent and architecturally interesting

buildings in Islington. Most were built from the early 19th century to the early 20th Century. Their style changed considerably during this period from a simple late Georgian style to a more elaborate form decorated with glazed tiles, terracotta, marble, stained glass, and borrowing from many architectural traditions such as Classical, Gothic, Baroque, Italianate, and Arts and Crafts.

5.199 While many have been lost in recent years Islington also retains some high quality early twentieth century shopfronts. These are often characterised by Art Deco or Moderne design and constructed from materials such chrome, steel, bronze, Vitrolite (a self coloured glass, often black), leaded glass, often with terrazzo and mosaic thresholds.

5.200 The poor quality late twentieth century shopfront is typified by an aluminium shopfront, bulky internally illuminated plastic box fascia and projecting sign and external solid security shutter with bulky shutter box. Solid security shutters are visually unsightly, prevent natural surveillance, attract graffiti, obscure the shopfront and window display and create hostile and unsafe streets.



*Figure 31 Typical shopfronts from (clockwise from top left) the Georgian period, the Victorian period, a new shopfront in the contemporary style, and a new shopfront in the traditional style.*

## ELEMENTS OF SHOPFRONT DESIGN

5.201 Good shopfront design, whether modern or traditional, recognises the importance of various elements of the shopfront, and integrates the aspirations of the shop owner without detrimentally affecting the building or its context.

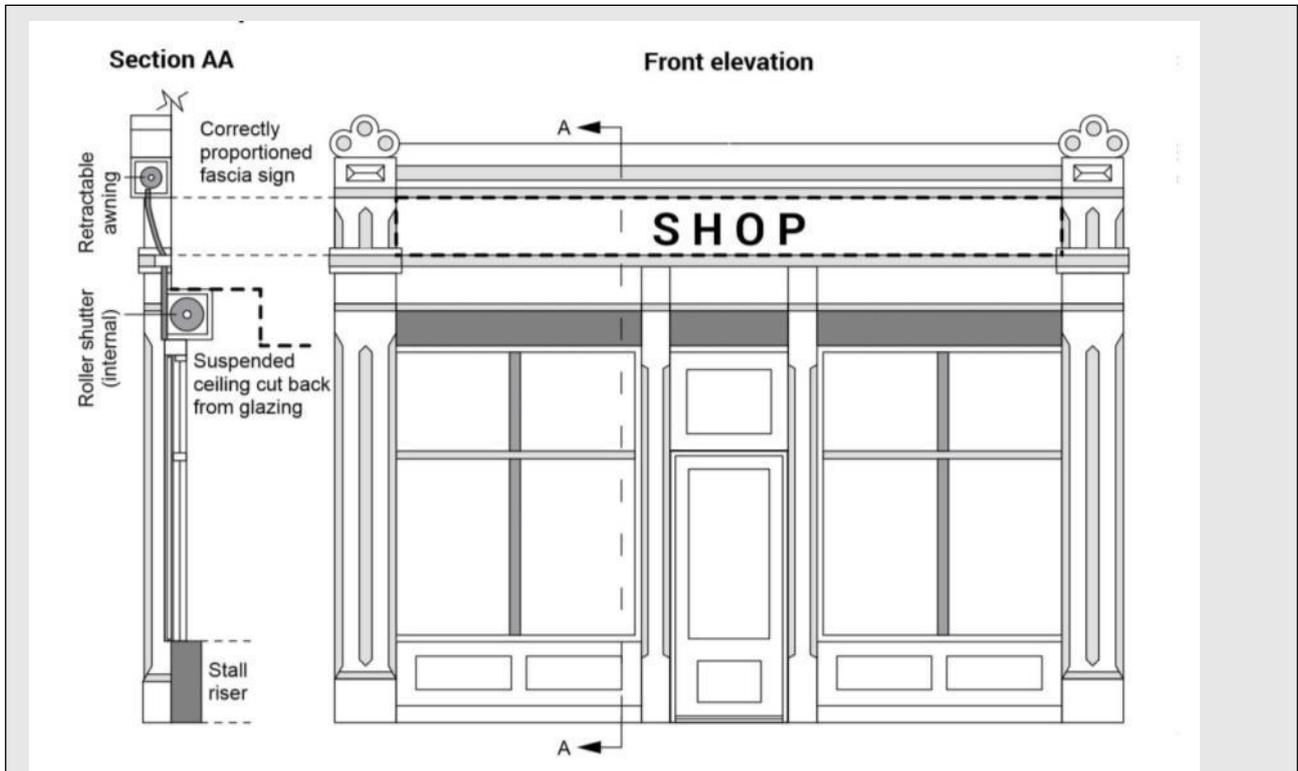


Figure 32 Good shopfront design

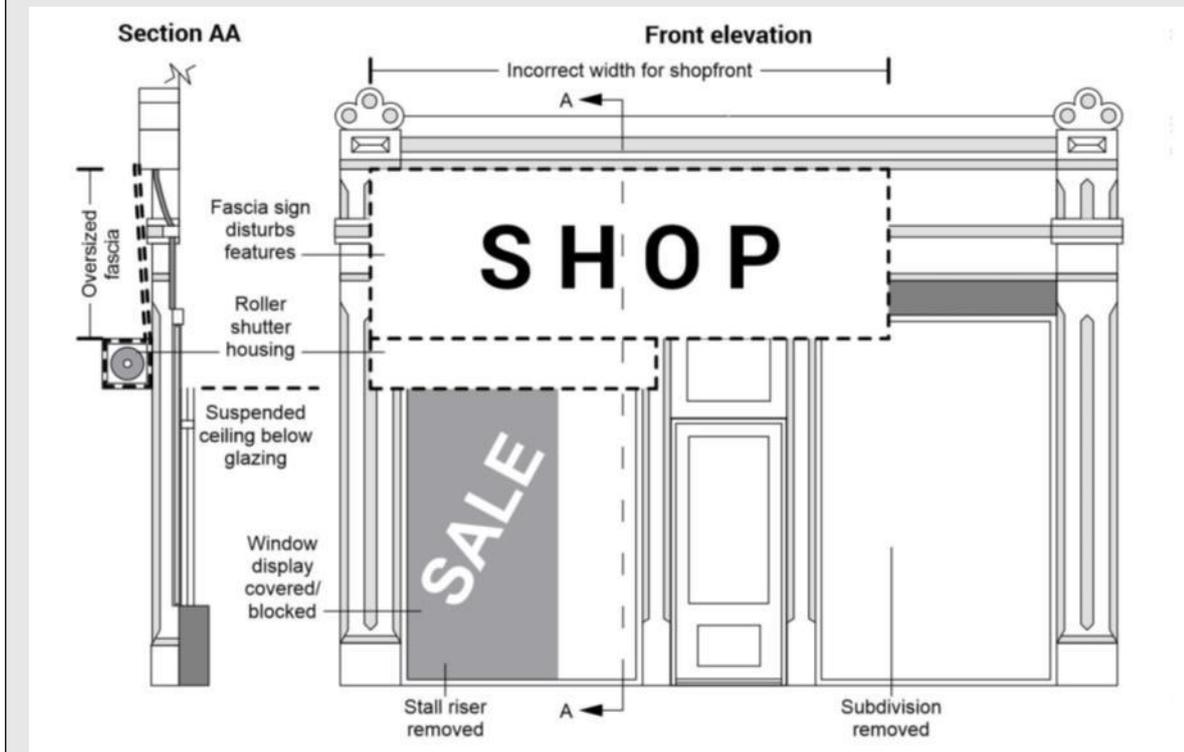


Figure 33 Bad shopfront design

## Choosing the appropriate style and materials

- 5.202 New or refurbished shopfront design should respect the local street scene, the building as a whole and its design detail.
- 5.203 New shopfronts to historic buildings should follow the principles of traditional shopfront design. They should be well proportioned and comprise of pilasters, corbel brackets, cornice, fascia, clerestory, a shop window divided with mullions and a stallriser. Signage should comprise of hand painted letters to a timber fascia or individually applied letters and a single modestly sized projecting or hanging sign illuminated by discrete individual light fittings.
- 5.204 Traditional shopfronts should be constructed from painted timber and may have a more robust stallriser made from dark coloured hard stone or coloured glazed bricks. A traditional style canvas awning should always be integrated within the shopfront. Security shutters should always be placed internally and be of an open mesh or grille design.
- 5.205 Where contemporary shopfronts are appropriate, whether in a new building or to replace a poor quality shopfront within a modern building, these should be constructed from robust materials such as steel and hard stone. Painted aluminium shopfronts are unacceptable in sensitive areas and unpainted aluminium and uPVC shopfronts are always unacceptable. Painted render is not an appropriate material for shopfronts as it is not sufficiently robust and requires regular maintenance.
- 5.206 When contemporary shopfronts are designed to be substantially glazed with minimal framing, a clear signage strategy needs to be considered taking account the needs of future occupiers as well as appropriate appearance. Consideration should also be given to the legibility of signage placed behind the glass to those with visual impairments.

## Combining shopfronts and corner shopfronts

- 5.207 Shopfronts spanning more than one property should avoid disrupting the vertical emphasis of the host building and reflect the break between properties with pilasters. Corner shopfronts have an important visual and practical role to play in shopping areas. Special care will be required for shops of 'double' aspect and window displays.

## Openable/folding shopfronts

- 5.208 The removal of traditional shopfronts and stallrisers to create openable/folding shopfronts is generally not appropriate in sensitive areas as when open they create a void and when closed appear as a row of doors rather than as a shop window, eroding the character and appearance of the shopfront and locally distinctive areas.
- 5.209 In some circumstances it might be possible to design a new shopfront which has a traditional appearance but is partly openable. For example, some shops and pubs had shop windows which incorporated large sash windows which could be opened.



*Figure 34 An approach to designing an openable shopfront which successfully maintains an appropriate solid to void ratio.*

## Shop windows

5.210 Shopfronts should comprise of a sizeable shop window, to provide visual interest from window displays that animate a shopping street and provide passive surveillance. Large areas of obscured glazing or solid frontages are not supported. Shop windows should be divided by mullions where a vertical emphasis characterises the streetscape.

## Doors

5.211 Shopdoors should be primarily glazed (often with the lower part solid aligning with a stallriser) and so distinguished from residential entrances which should be solid. Historically significant recessed entrances should be retained as these make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of an area.

5.212 New shopfronts should avoid recessed entrances and provide level access. Existing shopfronts should be carefully adapted to provide level access where possible, by for instance ramping any level change internally to retain and historic or architectural significance.

## Stallrisers

5.213 Stallrisers are important for providing a base to the shopfront and protecting the shop window from damage and dirt. Stallrisers should generally be around 300-450mm high, but will differ depending on the proportions of the shopfront.

5.214 Painted render is not an appropriate material for stallrisers as it is not sufficiently robust and requires regular maintenance. Timber stallrisers can require regular maintenance and may be prone to decay, therefore, where timber is specified it should be of hard wood and regularly maintained. More robust forms of stallriser such as a dark coloured hard stone, coloured glazed brick, and engineering brick should be considered if appropriate to the character of the shopfront.

5.215 Proposals to remove sections of stallriser to provide glazed openings to light a basement floor will generally not be permitted. However in some circumstances it might be possible to conceal glazing behind an ornate iron grill.

## Pilasters and consoles

5.216 Pilasters and console brackets frame the shopfront and provide vertical emphasis between adjacent shopfronts. They should generally divide premises in alignment with the party walls. Their design should reflect the level of detail used in other elements of the shopfront.

## Ventilation

5.217 Natural ventilation to traditional shopfronts is best provided by an openable clerestory. Vents to shopfronts, usually to the stallriser, should only be proposed if absolutely necessary, their size should be minimised, they should be appropriately located and they should comprise of ornate iron grills. Contemporary shopfronts should have the ventilation built into the design to ensure it will not add visual clutter and appear as an afterthought.



*Figure 35 When ventilation grilles are proposed to a traditional shopfront they should be sensitively integrated into the stallriser.*

## **FASCIAS, SIGNAGE/ ADVERTISEMENT AND LIGHTING**

- 5.218 Fascias should not obscure windows or architectural detailing and should be in proportion to the rest of the building. Generally the depth of the fascia should not exceed one quarter of the height from the pavement level to the underside of the fascia. The fascia should not extend below the head of the pilaster nor above the perceived floor level below the first floor windows. Corbels above the pilasters have traditionally contained the fascia and also determined its height. Where corbels no longer exist, they should be reinstated.
- 5.219 Signage should be of an appropriate size (in line with the principles of inclusive signage) and not dominate a shopfront or building. On traditional/historic shopfronts, fascias should be painted timber with either hand painted lettering or raised individually applied letters. Plastic and projecting box fascias are unacceptable. Lettering to fascia signage should be proportionate to the scale of the shopfront. Vinyl signage to shop windows is discouraged as this can create a blank frontage to the street.
- 5.220 A single traditional slim projecting or hanging sign to a shopfront may be acceptable but should not have attached lighting as this can result in an overly bulky appearance, they should be illuminated by discreet light fittings attached to the fascia directed towards the sign. Signage will not be permitted to upper floors. Projecting or hanging signs should provide at least 2.4m clearance from ground level.
- 5.221 Shopfronts should generally be illuminated with either traditional or discrete contemporary light fittings. Flashing internally or externally illuminated signs and bulky fascia or projecting signs will not be permitted. Internally illuminated signs are often bulky, detract from historic areas and will generally be resisted.

- 5.222 However, individually lit lettering, fascia fret cutting or 'halo' lighting may be appropriate in some cases particularly on modern shopfronts. Bulky trough lights will not be permitted in sensitive areas and are discouraged elsewhere.

## **AWNINGS**

- 5.223 Awnings should be traditional straight canvas and capable of full retraction. They should be carefully integrated within the shopfront so when retracted the awning is fully concealed and flush with the shopfront. 'Stuck-on' awnings and 'Dutch canopies' are not acceptable. Awnings should be the full width of the shopfront.
- 5.224 There may be scope in some circumstances to add a traditional awning to an existing shopfront within a timber awning box provided it that it is not too bulky and is integrated into the existing shopfront. Awnings should provide safe and adequate ground clearance (minimum 2.4m above ground level).

## **CORPORATE STYLES**

- 5.225 Company logos, signs and standard shopfront designs may not be suitable either to individual buildings or in sensitive areas. The overall appearance of the building and the area is more important than uniformity of design to promote a 'corporate house style' for different branches of the same company. Care should be taken to appropriately adapt the design and incorporate the company logo in the overall design.

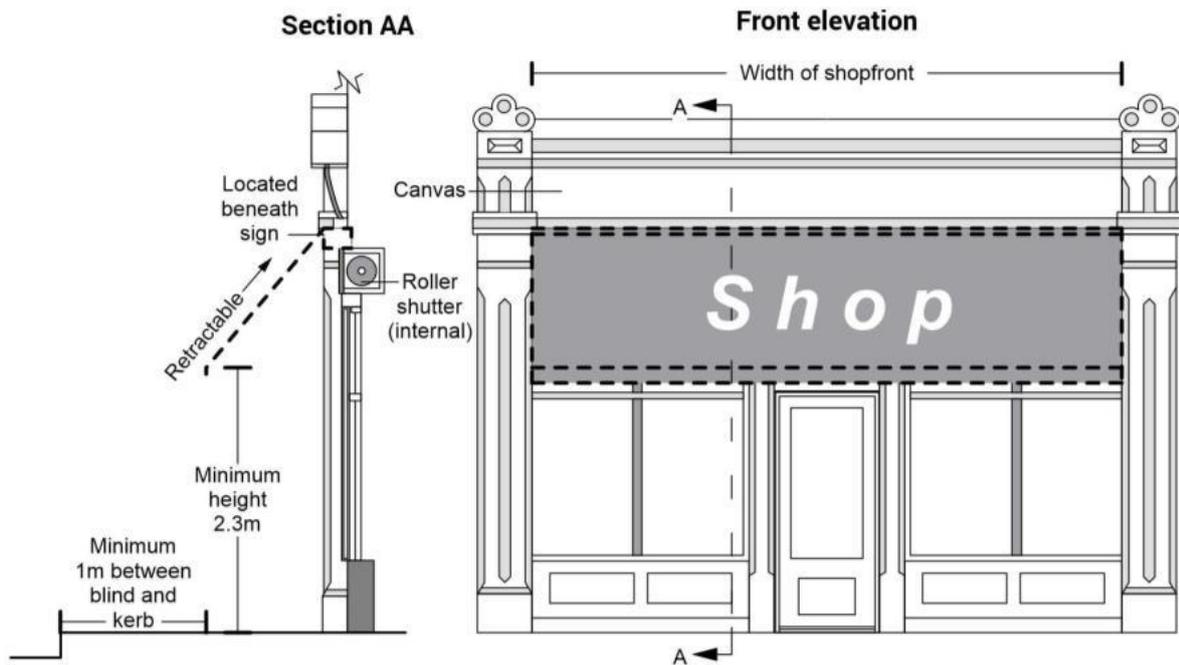
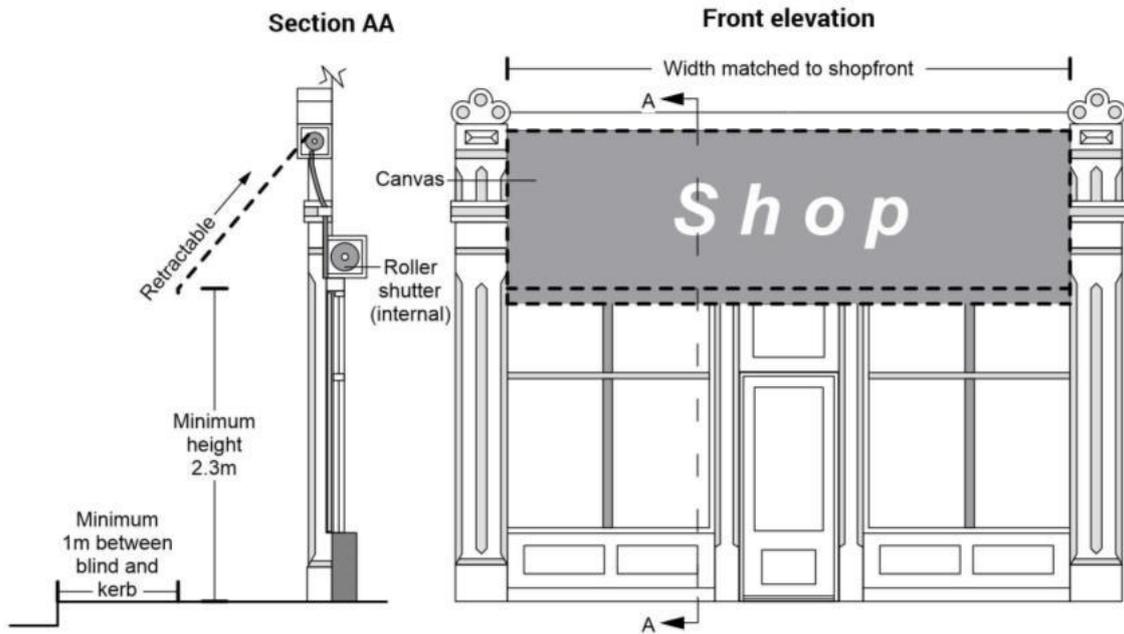


Figure 36 Appropriate ways to add an awning

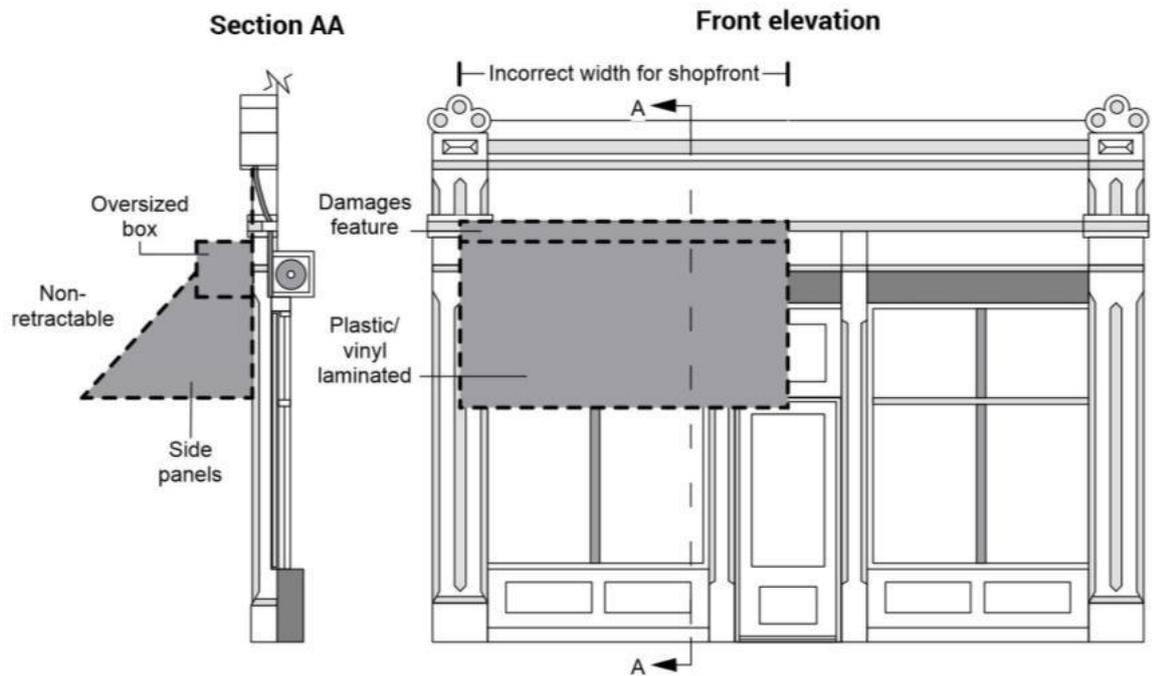
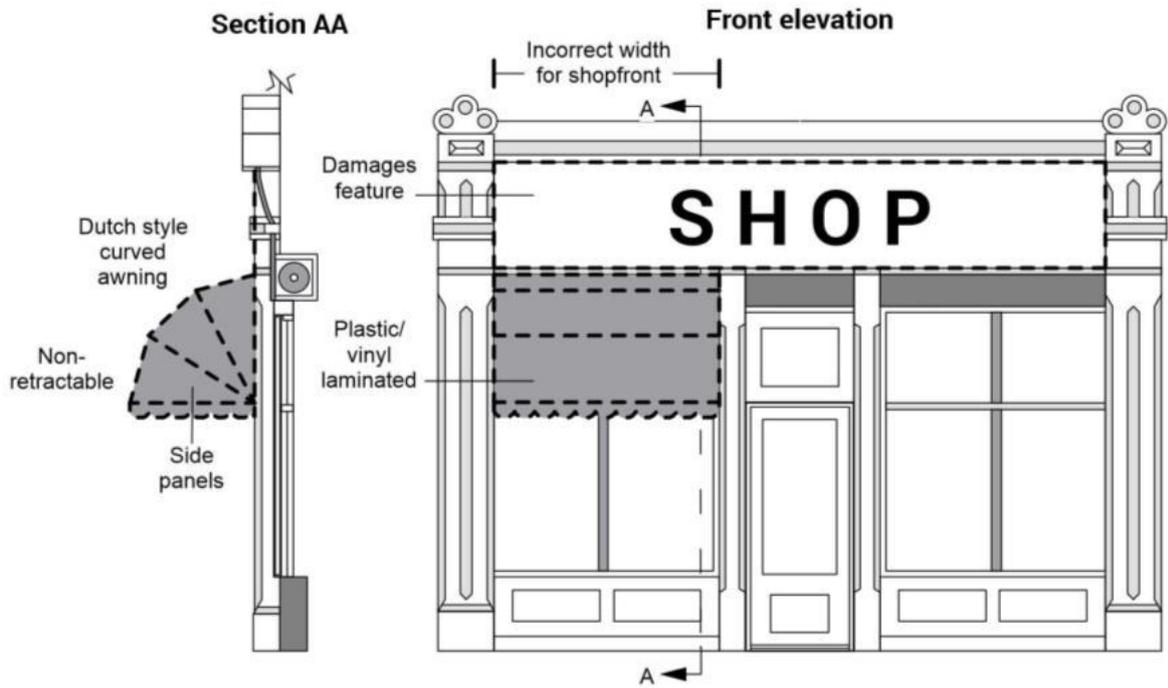


Figure 37 Inappropriate ways to add an awning

## SECURITY SHUTTERS

- 5.226 Security shutters should always be placed internally and comprise an open mesh or grille because, when in use, solid security shutters are visually unsightly and prevent natural surveillance; they attract graffiti, obscure the shopfront and window display and create hostile and unsafe streets. External security shutter boxes are bulky and visually unattractive.
- 5.227 Permission will not be granted for external security shutters unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. Such circumstances might include an historically or architecturally significant shopfront that cannot be adapted to allow for internal security shutters, in which case external grilles might be permitted provided that these are removed during the day. In other possible circumstances external security shutters should be integrated as part of the shopfront, not requiring an external box, and should be an open mesh or grille so not completely solid.
- 5.228 However, there will be very few cases when exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated as security glass (from standard 7mm laminated glass to bullet proof glass) provides an ideal security solution with no visual impact on a shopfront.

## SHOP TO RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS

5.229 Many former shops and pubs in Islington have been converted to residential use. In nearly all cases the best approach to convert a shop to residential use will be to retain the shopfront as these often contribute to local character and distinctiveness; in some cases this may require upgrading the current shopfront to a style that is more appropriate to the building/local area. This will be especially important in conservation areas. Replacement of shopfronts with solid walls and fenestration do not generally successfully integrate with the upper floors of a building originally designed to incorporate a shopfront.

5.230 In order to provide natural ventilation clerestories can be openable. Privacy should ideally be provided by internal blinds rather than opaque film. Proposals to remove sections of stallriser to provide glazed openings to light a basement floor will not generally be permitted. However, in some circumstances it might be possible to conceal glazing behind an ornate iron grill.

5.231 Permitted development rights are available for change of use from retail (A1) to residential where the floor area (GIA) does not exceed 150sqm. This presents the designer with a challenge; how to retain the character of the street, the animation of the facade and the natural surveillance provided by a shopfront, when a homeowner is likely to demand greater privacy. Solutions reached are not subject to planning controls but the following example of good practice is offered by way of inspiration.



*Figure 38 The conversion on the left has retained the external features of the original shopfront, using internal blinds to achieve privacy, to successfully introduce a residential use without compromising the character of the immediate surroundings. In contrast, the conversion on the right has not responded to the character of the building or the immediate surroundings and has a negative impact on the area.*

# Appendix A UDG Design Objectives

## Policy Requirement DM2.1A(i) be sustainable, durable and adaptable

### UDG Objectives:

- Development should be resource efficient and post-occupancy energy use minimised.
- Proposed building technologies should be demonstrably effective and appropriate to their setting.
- Development should enhance the local microclimate and not prejudice the environmental performance of neighbouring properties.

## Policy requirement DM2.1A(iv) improve the quality, clarity and sense of spaces around or between buildings

### UDG Objectives:

- Development should reduce the impact of vehicles on the built environment
- Development should be organised to ensure that streets and spaces between buildings feel safe without undermining residents' privacy.
- Development should create and or enhance good quality open space (public and private)
- Building heights should be considered in terms of their proportion and in relation to the size of the space they define and/or enclose

## Policy requirement DM2.1A(v) enhance legibility and have clear distinction between public and private spaces

### UDG Objectives:

- Development should define and/or enclose space
- Development should be coherent, well connected and promote community safety
- Development should provide a suitable backdrop to the public realm

## Policy requirement DM2.1A(vi) improve movement through areas, and repair fragmented urban form

### UDG Objectives:

- Development should normally retain and/or repair the existing roofline
- Development may serve to announce a place, close a view or emphasise a junction at the intersection of streets
- Development should maintain an appropriate height to width ratio between the buildings and the street they flank
- Development should maintain the prevailing plot width to height ratio.

**Policy Requirement DM2.1A(vii) respect and respond positively to existing buildings, the streetscape and the wider context, including local architectural language and character, surrounding heritage assets, and locally distinctive patterns of development and landscape**

**UDG Objectives:**

- Development should address the qualities of the traditional building hierarchy and respect the established order and local character.
- Development should restore and/or enhance connections between places and tie in with the existing street pattern
- Residential extensions, both above or below ground, should respect the integrity, rhythm and visual amenity of the street scene
- Basements should be designed sympathetically with the host building and its surroundings
- New or refurbished shopfront design should respect the local street scene, the building as a whole and its design detail.

**Policy Requirement DM2.1A(viii) reinforce and complement local distinctiveness and create a positive sense of place**

**UDG Objectives:**

- The shape and form of open spaces should be positively determined
- Development should contribute to the play facilities and ecological value of an area
- Materials should be of high quality, be robust, sustainable and appropriate to their context

**Policy Requirement DM2.1A(ix) sustain and reinforce a variety and mix of uses**

**UDG Objectives:**

- Development should contribute to the vitality and mix of uses on commercial streets and main roads

**Policy Requirement DM2.1A(x) provide a good level of amenity including consideration of noise and the impact of disturbance, hours of operation, vibration, pollution, fumes between and within developments, overshadowing, overlooking, privacy, direct sunlight and daylight, over-dominance, sense of enclosure and outlook**

**UDG Objectives:**

- Energy saving measures should be considered at the earliest stages of design and their effectiveness considered alongside their potential impact on the character and distinctiveness of the area.
- Balconies should enhance the quality of accommodation and the articulation of facades
- Garden rooms and outbuildings should retain a sufficiently large proportion of the original garden and be subordinate to the main buildings

# Appendix B References

A Play Strategy for Islington  
Biodiversity Action Plan  
Character and Context SPG  
Conservation Area Guidance  
Housing SPG  
Environmental Design SPD  
Inclusive Design in Islington SPD  
Inclusive Landscape Design SPD  
London Plan  
London View Management Framework SPG  
National Planning Policy Framework  
Planning Obligations (Section 106) SPD  
Streetbook SPD  
Towards a Fairer Islington (Corporate Plan 2015-19)  
Tree Strategy  
Trees in the Hard Landscape (TDAG, 2014)  
Tress in the Townscape (TDAG, 2012)