

# Building Alterations & Extensions

## Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)



September 2015





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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is committed to supporting development that allows everyone in Lambeth the opportunity to make the most of their property in a positive way, not just for them but for their neighbours and the community as a whole. Currently there is great local interest in the 'don't move - improve' approach and the Council wishes to help residents and businesses stay in their properties by accommodating their changing needs. Good new work can increase the amount and quality of accommodation and enhance the appearance of buildings. The improvement and conversion of existing buildings also makes effective use of urban land and makes good environmental sense. Carefully considered alterations and extensions have the potential to improve and enhance the borough just as poorly considered proposals can potentially cause harm.
- 1.2 Planning applications are assessed on their merits against national and local planning policies. Guidance is prepared to assist with the interpretation of those policies. This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides guidance for those preparing to alter or extend their properties. It is written to provide further interpretation and application of the policies within the Lambeth Local Plan (Sep 2015). The Quality of the Built Environment policies in particular will be a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.
- 1.3 Draft guidance was subject to public consultation in accordance with the Lambeth Statement of Community Involvement. The consultation ran from 2 February 2015 - 30 March 2015. The comments received were taken into account when this final version was prepared. The document was adopted by Lambeth's Cabinet on Monday 14 September 2015 and went live with the Lambeth Local Plan on 23 September 2015.
- 1.4 The advice has been prepared with specific reference to the character of Lambeth and the common types of development proposals seen in the borough. The Lambeth Local Distinctiveness Study (2012) is a useful reference point for anyone trying to understand the character and built form of the borough. However, it is general in nature and can't necessarily be applied to every circumstance.

## Planning Permission

- 1.5 It is inappropriate here to outline what does and does not require planning permission. Some 'permitted development' works to dwelling houses and other premises do not require planning permission. In general terms, planning permission is required for most external alterations to flats, irrespective of whether they are purpose built or conversions. Planning permission is also required for some changes and extensions to single family dwelling houses. The Government's planning website—[www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk) and the Council's website—[www.lambeth.gov.uk](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk) provide further up to date advice on planning controls.
- 1.6 For those considering undertaking works that do not require planning permission, it is recommended that a Certificate of Lawful Development is sought from the Council, as this provides official confirmation that planning permission is not required.
- 1.7 In order to manage change better in some areas the Council has removed permitted development rights by using an Article 4 Direction to control certain external alterations. These additional planning controls mean that planning permission is required for an identified list of works. It should be noted that there is no fee for an application which is required as a result of an Article 4 Direction. Information on Article 4 Directions can be found on the Council's website, by checking the 'constraints' tab when doing a property search using the planning applications database. Each Article 4 Direction, which contains a list of controlled works, can be viewed in the Conservation Area Profiles section of the Council website.

## Heritage Assets

- 1.8 The basic presumption with all heritage assets (world heritage sites, registered landscapes, statutory listed building, conservation areas, locally listed assets etc.) is to conserve their special interest. When assessing development affecting them, the Council has a legal duty to pay '*special regard*' to protecting the special interest of statutory listed buildings and conservation areas. This document is not intended to provide specialist advice on statutory listed buildings but its content may be relevant in some cases. The advice relating to heritage assets therefore largely relates to properties on the local heritage list and those within conservation areas. However, this advice is general and will not be applicable in every case; careful judgement is therefore required and other guidance, such as area-specific Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Statements, should always be consulted when considering work.

## Building Control

- 1.9 Structural works and some other alterations such as window replacements normally require separate Building Regulations approval or compliance with those regulations. Lambeth Building Control provides this service. Telephone - 020 7926 7000 or e-mail [buildingcontrol@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:buildingcontrol@lambeth.gov.uk).

## Planning Policy

- 1.10 The Government has attached great importance to design as set out in Section 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2012. Para. 58 states:

*'Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments ... respond to local character and historic, and reflect local identity of surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.'*

Para. 60 states:

*'Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.'*

- 1.11 Policy Q11 of the Council's draft Local Plan requires proposals for the alteration or extension of buildings (including conversions) to be well designed and built to a high standard. This policy has informed much of the content of this document. However, this SPD will also be relevant to other Local Plan policies including:

- Policy H6 Residential Conversions
- Policy S3 Schools
- Policy Q1 Inclusive Environments
- Policy Q2 Amenity
- Policy Q5 Local Distinctiveness
- Policy Q8 Design Quality - Construction Detailing
- Policy Q9 Landscaping
- Policy Q10 Trees
- Policy Q12 Refuse and Recycling Storage
- Policy Q13 Cycle Storage
- Policy Q14 Development in Gardens and on Backland Sites
- Policy Q15 Boundary Treatments
- Policy Q20 Statutory Listed Buildings
- Policy Q22 Conservation Areas
- Policy Q23 Undesignated Heritage Assets - Local Heritage List

## 2. Building Alterations

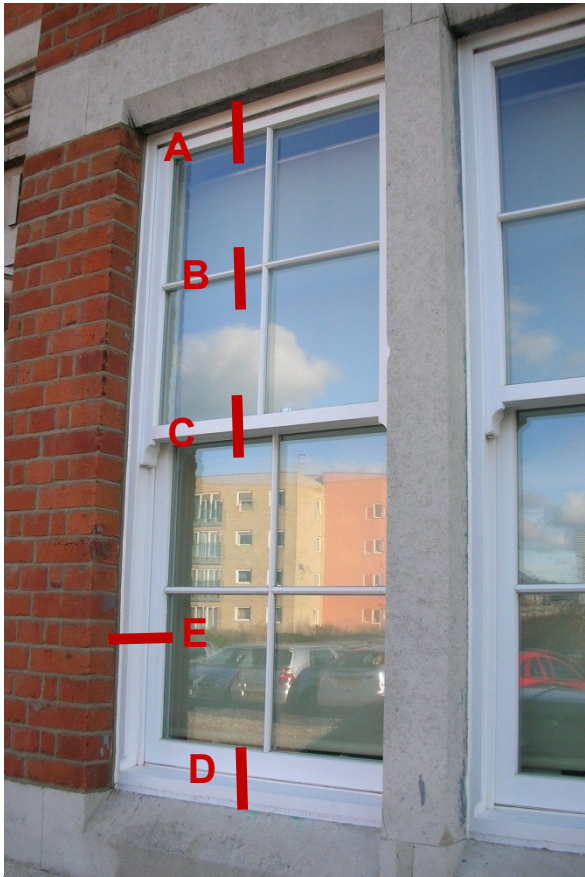
- 2.1 Policy Q11 (a) seeks alterations to be designed in a way that positively responds to the character of the host building, respecting locally distinct forms and detailing. The Council's Lambeth Local Distinctiveness Study (2012) and other relevant local studies should be consulted where necessary to inform proposals.
- 2.2 Lambeth's building stock dates largely from the 19th and 20th centuries. The vast majority of buildings in Lambeth have been carefully designed, many as part of a building group, street, housing estate or unified development. Great care will have been taken by the original designer to ensure that the building looks good and performs well. Attractive and well designed buildings are an asset for everyone in Lambeth and they contribute to our local distinctiveness.
- 2.3 Unsympathetic alterations (whether by poor design or inappropriate materials) can harm the appearance of buildings and adverse impact is often experienced by all. That is why care should be taken to ensure that all alterations positively respond to the host building, respecting important features.

### Windows - Retention and Refurbishment

- 2.4 Many old windows are finely detailed and well constructed using good quality timber; their retention generally adds to the value of period properties. Repairing and upgrading existing windows can be more environmentally sustainable too, and this should always be the first option - especially where the complexity of the original design will be difficult to accurately replicate in new work. Historic England research has shown that minor repairs, draught proofing and secondary glazing can improve their thermal performance without harming their appearance. The use of internal shutters, blinds and curtains can further improve thermal performance. For more information see: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/your-home/saving-energy/guidance/>
- 2.5 On statutory listed buildings the Council will generally always seek the retention and repair of existing windows (including historic glazing) in accordance with best practice.

### Replacement Windows

- 2.6 Replacement windows generally have to comply with thermal insulation standards as set out in Building Regulations. To meet these standards new windows will usually need to be double glazed, although there are exemptions for heritage assets. It is especially important that the new windows match the originals that they replace where the building is part of a terrace or group which shares common window detailing. Similarly, the windows of individual flats are often identical to those within the whole building to give unity of design.
- 2.7 In order to protect the character of the building, any replacement windows should replicate the appearance, detailing and opening type of the originals. This is particularly important on heritage assets. If replacement windows for heritage assets do not accurately reproduce the originals, permission is likely to be refused and retention of the originals sought. Exemptions from the building regulations are available on heritage assets to ensure new work does not harm the special interest of the building.
- 2.8 As a general rule replacement windows should:
- Fit neatly into existing openings, recessed into the established reveal depth.
  - Follow the original style of opening - such as sliding sash or hinged casement.
  - Replicate frame dimensions and detailing as closely as possible. 'Stick on' or non-integral glazing bars should be avoided—they are a poor substitute for authentic glazing bars and can loosen and fall off. Glazing should generally have a treatment externally which accurately reproduces a traditional putty finish.
  - Have unobtrusive, security rated locks and fittings.
  - Avoid visually obtrusive trickle-vents on heritage assets.
  - Be of the same material as the original windows on heritage assets.



**A = top rail and sash box**

**B = glazing bar**

**C = meeting rail**

**D = bottom rail and cill**

**E = jamb (side rail)**

Fig. 1. Image above shows the locations on a sash window where section drawings should be made.

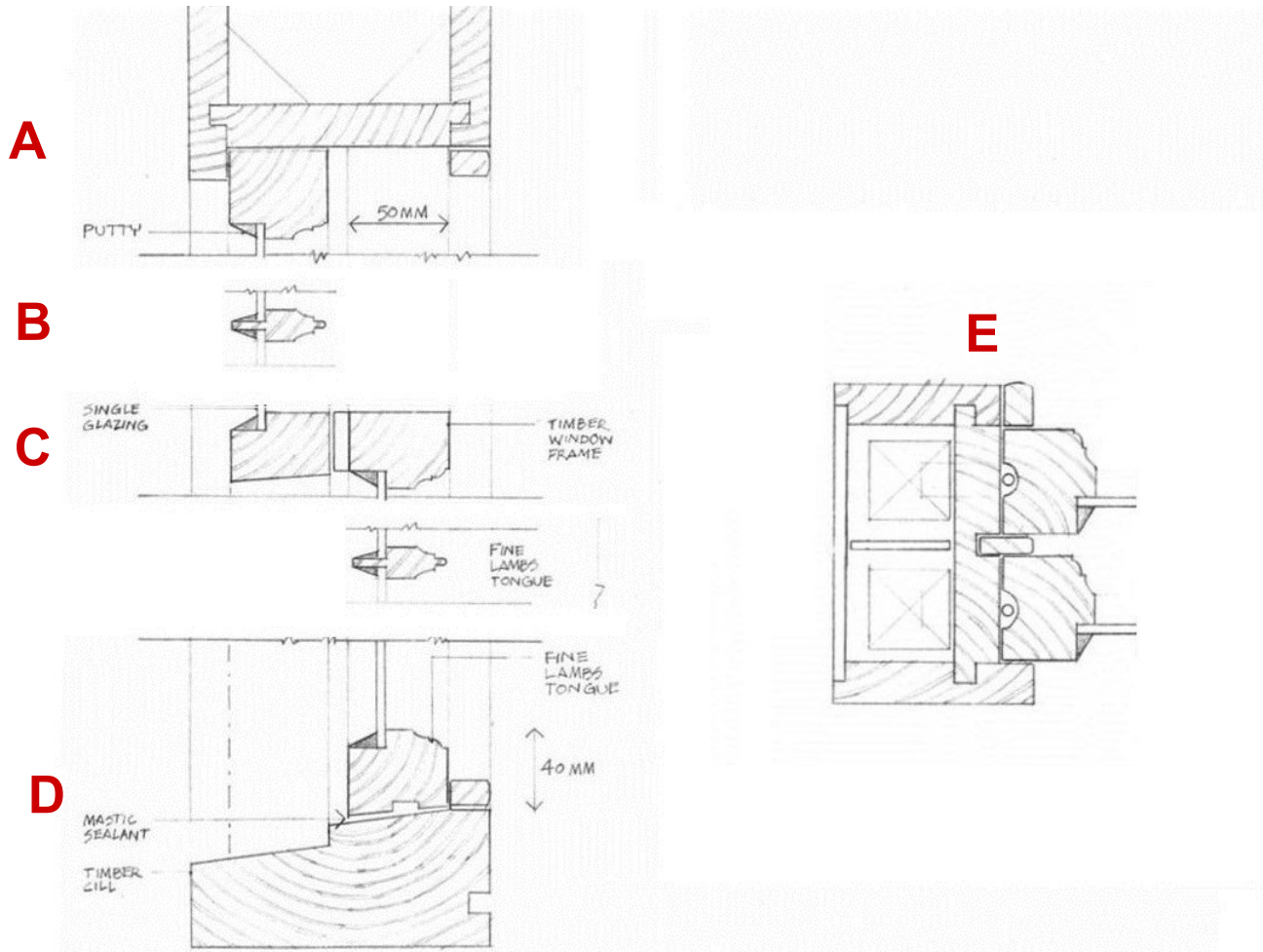


Fig. 2 Example of detailed section drawings of a single-glazed sash window.

- 2.9 Planning applications for replacement windows should contain detailed drawings (1:20 scale elevations and larger scale 1:5 or 1:2 detailed cross sections) of the original *and* proposed windows, for ease of comparison. The cross sections should show how the window unit sits within the window reveal and relates to the existing cill. Section drawings for sash windows should include top rail (including sash box), glazing bar, meeting rail (of both sashes), bottom rail and cill (including sash box). See illustration on page 5.
- 2.10 A failure to include adequate information can result in an application being considered invalid; a refusal of permission on the basis of insufficient information; or delays, while additional information is sought.

## **Balconies and External Staircases**

- 2.11 Balconies are not characteristic features of Lambeth's pre- Second World War building stock. When it comes to existing buildings, balcony additions have the potential to significantly alter the architectural composition and appearance of the host building or its group; as a general design rule they should be limited to rear elevations.
- 2.12 New projecting balconies should generally have solid floors and soffit treatments of quality design and robust materials and be effectively drained. The Council will expect the design (including balustrades) to be appropriate for the host building. Glazed balustrades should have an obscured or fritted treatment to protect amenity. Permanent screening can be used to prevent overlooking of habitable rooms or nearby gardens. However, if the resulting appearance of this screening is of poor quality, the balcony proposal may be resisted on design grounds alone or if the amenity value of the balcony itself is seriously compromised by the screening. Plants are not considered permanent screening solutions and timber/bamboo will be resisted as they are susceptible to decay. Sheds and other enclosures on balconies will be resisted, if they are considered to harm visual amenity.
- 2.13 Direct access from upper floor accommodation to the rear gardens is often desirable but can have an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring property and on security. External staircases should be of an appropriate form, design and scale for the building, avoid excessive rearward projection (this includes any access balcony); and should be positioned so as to avoid unacceptable overlooking into neighbouring properties and designed to ensure they do not aid access over adjoining garden boundaries.

## **Terraces over Shop Roofs**

- 2.14 There are numerous examples in Lambeth of single storey shop unit extensions having been built on the front of buildings. Most of these date from the 19th century and have flat roofs at first floor level. The use of these roofs as terraces will normally be resisted on grounds of poor visual impact of balustrading and screening and the adverse impact on the amenity of adjoining residents. Extensions, sheds and enclosures on these terraces will also be resisted for the same reasons.

## **Painting and Rendering**

- 2.15 Brick is Lambeth's most common building material. It unifies whole streets and areas as the prevailing material: its appearance does not degrade with age and it is largely maintenance free. It is a key part of Lambeth's local distinctiveness.
- 2.16 The painting of brickwork should be avoided. It noticeably alters the appearance, often to the detriment of the building and wider street scene. It also requires regular redecoration to retain a good appearance, which places an unnecessary maintenance burden on the building owner. Where brick surfaces have been over-painted, consideration should be given to paint removal.
- 2.17 Rendering and cladding (stone, tile etc.) of buildings can also have a similar adverse impact on their appearance - covering up original materials and features and changing the outward appearance drastically. Such an approach will generally not be supported by the Council if it is considered harmful. For guidance on insulating render please see Section 4.



## Conversions

- 2.18 The sympathetic conversion of a building can continue its life and provide a variety of new accommodation. Aside from the aesthetic impact of alterations, conversions bring with them particular issues that need careful attention in relation to amenity and quality of life, especially in relation to residential amenity space, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and refuse storage and cycle storage.
- 2.19 The external alterations required for garage conversions (the conversion of integral garages into domestic accommodation) should be in keeping with the character of the host building.

### Shop conversions

- 2.20 The conversion of shops to residential units needs careful consideration. Some conversions undertaken in the past have a poor appearance which harms the host building and the wider locality; the interior accommodation provided is also of poor quality. Poor examples should not be used to inform the design of new schemes. Part conversion (for example the conversion of the shop's rear storage area to residential use) should not compromise the long term viability of the remaining shop unit. Conversions of upper floor premises should not compromise the future use of the commercial use below. For example, in the case of public houses, sufficient external space needs to be provided for servicing, refuse storage etc. of the public house premises.
- 2.21 In cases where the property was originally residential and the shop front/shop unit is a later addition, it may be possible to return the house to its original appearance and reinstate the front garden. This approach will be sought where nearby or adjoining properties or historic photographs etc. provide a clear indication of how the restoration should be undertaken. Policy Q16 seeks the retention of shop fronts (including pub fronts, bank fronts, etc.) of architectural or historic interest. This is particularly important with heritage assets where the shop front contributes to their special interest. Design ingenuity should allow for the sensitive retention of such shopfronts while ensuring the provision of high quality conversions.

### Replacing the shop front with a new residential frontage

- 2.22 Some historic shop fronts may be of such quality that they warrant retention as part of the conversion; obscured glazing can be used to protect amenity. In other cases, consideration should be given to the appropriateness of retaining all or some the framing elements - pilasters, fascia and cornice—if they are an important part of the building, parade or terrace. Sliding sashes (below left) can be used to provide openable windows. The design of the infill needs careful consideration and proportions of new openings need to respond well to the host building.



### **Residential accommodation over shops**

- 2.23 The re-use of vacant accommodation over shops will be supported. In such schemes care needs to be taken to ensure secure, independent access and adequate refuse and cycle storage.

### **Basement accommodation in shop conversions**

- 2.24 Like all basement conversions, the appropriateness of residential accommodation in the basements of converted shops will be reliant on the quality of the accommodation, amenity, outlook and daylight and sunlight. The excavation of forecourts is unlikely to be supported, if the retained shop front is left 'floating' incongruously above the new basement area. Large light wells of this nature offer little amenity value to residents; especially in busy urban locations. Where front lightwells are essential, they should be small with pavement grilles or pavement lights on the forecourt.

### **Forecourt treatment in shop conversions**

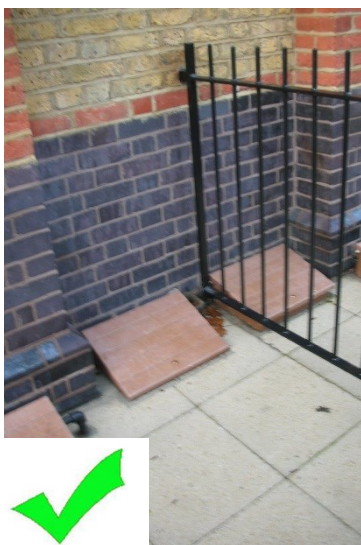
- 2.25 The character of adjoining premises will dictate the treatment of the forecourt of converted premises. In many cases, the erection of boundary railings and a gate and the creation of a front garden will be essential to provide amenity space for new occupants. However, enclosure should be avoided if the resulting space would be impractical or would look out of place in a shopping parade or street scene.

## **Plant and Equipment**

- 2.26 Policy Q2 seeks to protect amenity. Policy Q11 (a) (ii) seeks to ensure that new and replacement plant (meter boxes, pipes, cables, antennae and telecoms equipment, kitchen flues, air conditioning units, etc.) is, where possible, fully integrated into buildings in unobtrusive locations, avoiding the front. Installations of this nature, often perceived to be of little importance, can often have a detrimental effect on the amenity of adjoining residents and on the appearance of the building. The key to successful installation is unobtrusive siting and an acceptable appearance and robust materials. This section provides further guidance on design appearance.

### **Meter boxes**

- 2.27 Wall-mounted meter boxes in prominent positions are not acceptable. Their obtrusive appearance is often worsened by associated pipes and cables and is often made even worse by the inevitable loss, over time, of the meter box doors. Gas meter boxes should be sunk into the ground - taking them out of sight and electricity meter boxes placed in visually secluded places. In larger schemes consideration should be given to placing all meters in a dedicated meter room.



2.28 Installations will be resisted on front or other prominent locations. Downpipes should be run vertically – awkward bends and diagonal runs should be avoided. The following should always be sought:

- Discrete positioning away from prominent elevations, such as on concealed roof slopes, between parapet walls, on rear elevations, or behind chimney stacks.
- Use of the smallest practical size and an unobtrusive colour to blend in with background.
- The sharing of equipment between properties.
- Using matt colour finishes to blend in, or use effective permanent screening to minimise visual impact.

### **Screening**

2.29 To be effective, screening must hide the plant from view and look appropriate for its context - solid enclosures or metal louvres (appropriately angled) can be effective; mesh panels or perforated metal panels much less so. At low level, screening should be robust and be able to withstand impacts. Timber screening is not acceptable as it is not considered robust and is susceptible to decay.



### Vents, kitchen extracts and plant

- 2.30 New external vents are often required for the mechanical ventilation of bathrooms and kitchens. Care should be taken with siting of the vent and its external appearance, to minimise harm to the appearance of the building. In most cases a traditional air-brick (colour matching the wall) will be the only acceptable solution. Vents should only be set into glazing if they can be accommodated in a neat and unobtrusive manner. Flush in-line vents will be expected on roofs.
- 2.31 Commercial kitchen extracts and plant need to meet all relevant standards in relation to air quality and noise, etc. Whilst flues that extract at high level are often preferable they may be resisted where they harm visual amenity. The advice on location, siting and screening above should always be considered.



### Satellite antennas (dishes)

- 2.32 Multiple satellite dishes on premises add unacceptable visual clutter. Where planning permission is required, the Council will resist dishes on prominent elevations. Unobtrusive locations such as at low level on rear elevations and roof valleys (where the dish will not be visible) will be encouraged. In buildings containing a number of units a communal satellite system will be strongly encouraged: this allows everyone to share one satellite dish. Ideally, all installations of this nature should be in unobtrusive locations at the rear of properties—either fixed to the building at low level or on a pole in the garden.



### 3. Extensions

- 3.1 Policy Q 11 (a) seeks design that positively responds to the character of the host building. Policy Q 11(b) states that subordination is key to achieving good design. Physical subordination (modest built forms, and, where necessary, utilising set backs) ensures that the extension does not dominate the host building or overwhelm its form and composition. Using lightweight structures or contrasting materials can often be an effective way of achieving subordination.
- 3.2 Other relevant policies include Q2 Amenity, Q5 Local distinctiveness, Q8 Design quality, Q10 Trees, Q14 Development in gardens.

#### Rear Extensions—Closet Returns

- 3.3 Many early/mid 19th century buildings originally had flat rear elevations. Where these survive unaltered on heritage assets they are generally considered worthy of preservation. Many other early/mid 19th century properties have historic ‘closet additions’ on their rear elevation - these often date from the 19th century, and are associated with ‘standard’ plan properties with rear staircases. The closet addition generally comes off the stairwell at half-landing level (the stairwell window becomes a doorway) and is generally about the same width off the stairwell itself. Closet returns are generally no deeper than they are wide; and because they are at half landing level their roofs terminate a half storey below the main roof. Their combined mass and height generally make them subordinate to their host building. On heritage assets their loss will be resisted.
- 3.4 Where new closet returns are considered acceptable (amenity and outlook will be key considerations). Policy Q11 (c) requires that they follow the established local pattern. Additional floors to existing closet returns may be acceptable if there is no harm to amenity and if they terminate half a storey below eaves. On heritage assets the acceptability of extending will be judged on a case-by-case basis based on the asset and its context.



Fig 3. The closet return on the left (red) is not acceptable because it does not terminate half a storey below eaves level.

## Rear Extensions—Returns

- 3.5 Rear returns are common on buildings in Lambeth from the mid to late 19th century. They were seen as preferable to providing habitable basement accommodation which had been formerly common. Therefore it is unusual for properties with purpose-built semi-basements to have rear returns; they tend to have closet returns instead. The return is typically linear in form and projects at right angles from the rear elevation. They vary greatly depending on the age and scale of the property, from modest single storey structures to those with the same eaves height as their host building. Subordination is common - a combination of the width, rearward projection and lower roof ridge heights. Rear returns are never full width therefore allowing for windows and doors on the rear elevation of the host building. However, the amount of space retained down the side of the return varies greatly from place to place.
- 3.6 The demolition of rear returns will generally be resisted, particularly on heritage assets. Policy Q11 (d) supports new rear returns where they are characteristic of the building type and locality; subordination is key. Policy Q2 (Amenity) will be a key consideration when considering new returns - especially the impact of party walls on the outlook and amenity of adjoining neighbours.

## Rear Returns—Infill, End and Wrap-around Extensions

- 3.7 Alterations to the basic form of the rear return (extending them sideways to be full-width, adding extra storeys, etc.) are likely to be resisted in groups where there is uniformity. Single storey infill extensions (infilling the side space), single storey end extensions (on the end of the return) and wrap-around extensions (combined infill and end) are potentially acceptable, so long as subordination can be achieved and there is no harm to amenity. However, it should be noted that wrap-around extensions are not considered appropriate on heritage assets.
- 3.8 Policy Q11 (e) states that infills should be single storey. The extent of rearward projection beyond the gable end of the return is not specified in policy. However, subordination will still be required and issues of amenity, prevailing character and retention of sufficient garden space will be important considerations. Side spaces

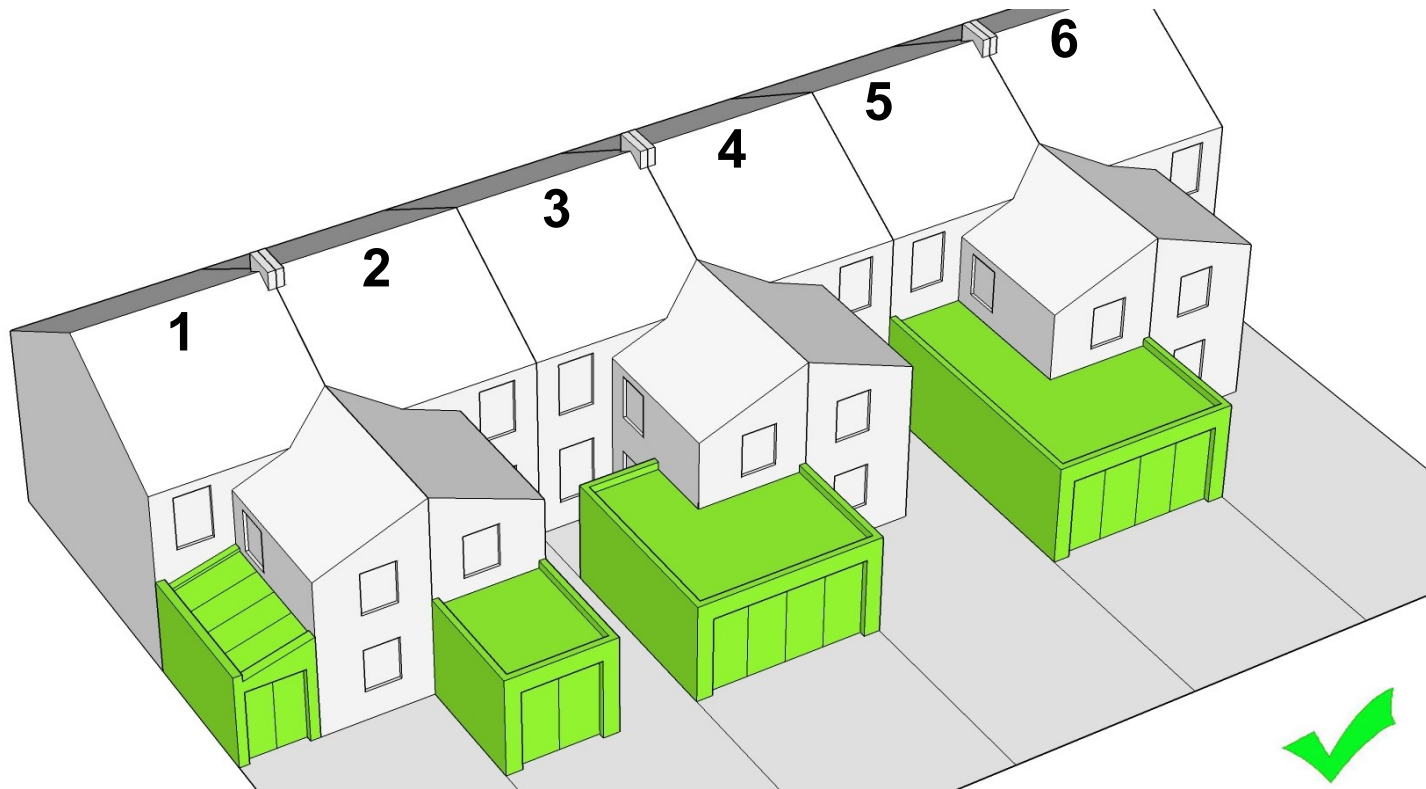


Fig. 4. Indicative infill, end and wrap-around extensions for non-heritage assets. The prevailing characteristics of the adjoining properties, especially the rear building line and size of the rear garden, along with amenity and outlook of neighbours will be a material consideration when assessing the acceptability of the rearward projection.

are quite narrow and amenity issues (especially daylight and outlook) in relation to adjoining properties will always be an important consideration. Infills should be visually light-weight (mostly glazed) in order to give the return visual primacy. However, end extensions and wrap-arounds may be treated in the same material as the main return. To minimise adverse impact, the party wall of any rear extension should be as low as possible. The fascia and gutters should not overhang onto neighbouring property; for this reason parapet walls with parapet gutters are the recommended option.

- 3.9 Figure 4 (opposite) illustrates options for properties that are not heritage assets. Property no. 1, figure 4 (below) shows a typical infill extension. Property no. 5, figure 4 (previous page) shows a typical wrap-around extension. The downside of this approach is the long flank wall which presents to the adjoining property. The longer the wrap-around the greater the flank and therefore the greater the impact on neighbours. Impact will be greatest where they are closest to adjoining property windows. One solution is shown in property no. 3, figure 4. This example leaves a small courtyard space adjoining the rear wall of the host building— allowing good daylight and ventilation to the rear room of the property. This approach is beneficial to adjoining amenity too, as it removes built mass from the flank.
- 3.10 Infill extensions on properties with semi-basements and closet returns are difficult to achieve, because of the differing floor levels. The single storey requirement of Policy Q11 (e) limits infills to basement level in these instances. Wrap around infill extensions where there is a closet return is often problematic, due to the differing internal floor areas; again such wrap-arounds are not considered appropriate on heritage assets.
- 3.11 Figure 5 (below) sets out appropriate extension types for heritage assets. All the extensions stop short of existing corners, to better emphasise their subordination; this need only be a single brick - just enough to retain the corner. Properties no. 1 and 3 have glazed infills (which is the preferred approach for heritage assets) and properties nos. 4 and 5 have end extensions. Although not shown, an infill and end extension may be acceptable in some instances so long as they are both set back from the corner of the original return. Varied roof forms are shown for illustrative purposes only. In reality, roof profiles within terraced groups will be expected to follow a uniform pattern. The party wall to the adjoining property should be as low as possible. Gutters and fascias on party walls should be avoided in favour of parapet gutters.

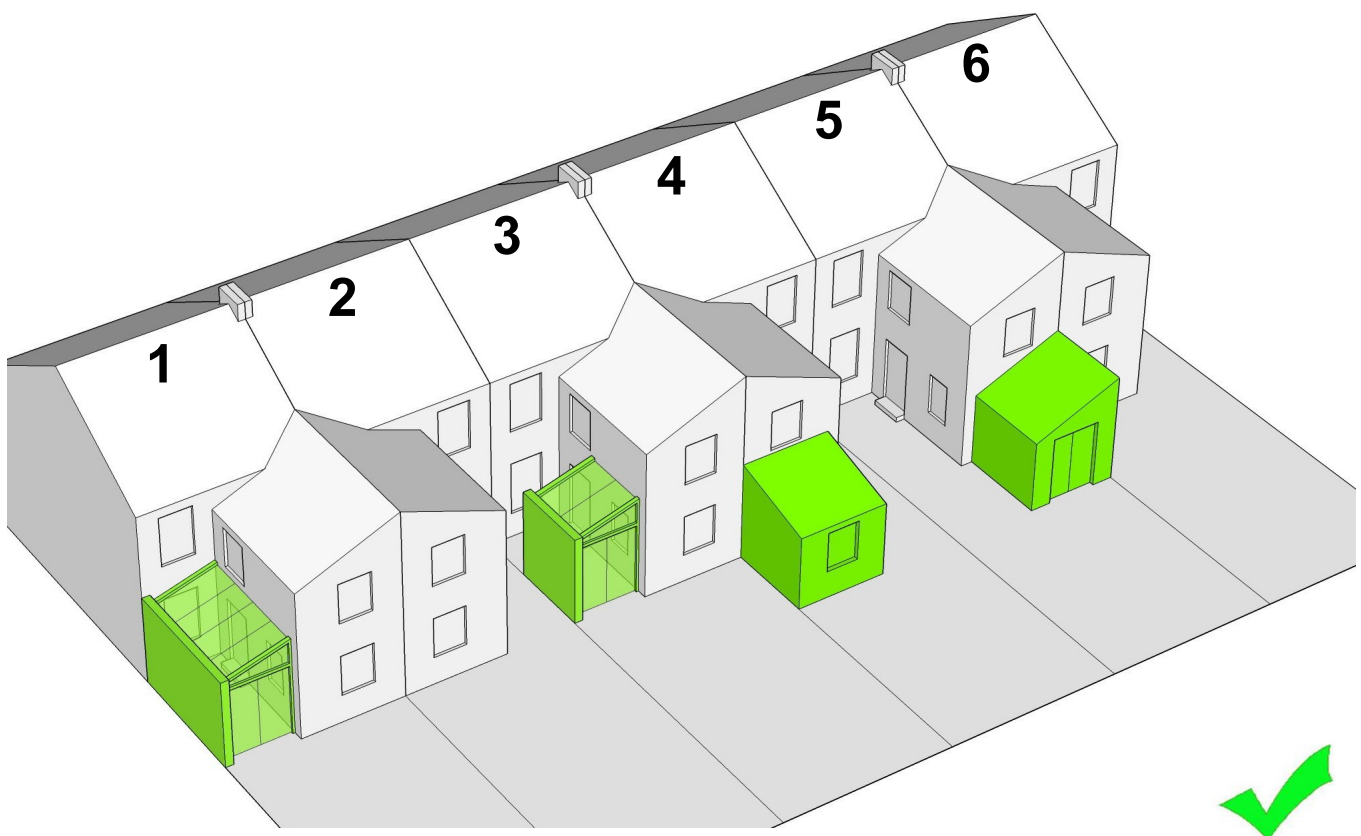


Fig. 5. Acceptable infill extensions for heritage assets such as locally listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas. The prevailing characteristics of the adjoining properties, especially the rear building line and size of the rear garden, are likely to be a material consideration when considering the extent of the rearward projection. Any prevailing characteristic of roof slopes should be respected. On statutory listed buildings the appropriateness of similar extensions will be judged on a case-by-case basis.

## Full Width Two Storey Extensions

- 3.12 Policy Q11 (f) states that full-width two-storey extensions will be resisted if they fail to meet the design requirements in policy Q11 (a) (i) or the subordination required in policy Q11 (b). Policy Q2 will also be a key consideration in relation to adjoining neighbours. It should be noted that this policy will be applied to any full width extension of two storeys or above. Design integration with the host building (especially its roof) and the amenity of adjoining properties will be key considerations.

## Conservatories

- 3.13 Conservatories and fully glazed extensions should normally be limited to single storey height and located at ground or semi-basement level, to the rear of the buildings. This is because fully glazed forms are uncharacteristic above ground floor level and the building type, at high level, often presents issues of overlooking / perceived overlooking and light spill, which can adversely affect the amenity of neighbours.

## Front Extensions

- 3.14 Policy Q11 (g) states that such extensions will not usually be appropriate if there would be an adverse impact on the host building or the building line. The existing contribution to the locally distinct forms, including any prevailing design uniformity on the street, will be key considerations; especially on heritage assets. Where considered appropriate, porches and canopies should be of a height, design and footprint that is proportionate to the size of the dwelling and the front garden.

## Side Extensions

- 3.15 The space between buildings can be an important characteristic of the street scene and is a key characteristic of many parts of Lambeth; for example in urban areas where development is dense and in suburban areas which rely on generous spacious standards as a key aspect of their spatial character. Side spaces allow for views between buildings and therefore prevent overbearing enclosure along the street frontage. Side spaces also have value as visual amenity and domestic storage areas and allow residents direct access to rear gardens without the need to pass through the property.
- 3.16 On heritage assets, especially in conservation areas, spatial character - the spaces around and between buildings- is generally considered to be an important part of the character and appearance. For this reason the loss of contributory side spaces is likely to be resisted; so too will proposals that imbalance the architectural composition of the host building.
- 3.17 Policy Q2 seeks to protect amenity. The residential amenity of adjoining residents will be a consideration when considering side extensions. Flank windows should not allow overlooking and may have to be frosted or angled. Balconies and roof terraces on flanks will generally be resisted on amenity grounds. Windows, roof eaves, gutters or downpipes should be avoided on party walls (parapet walls are preferred) so that extensions do not intrude on neighbouring properties or restrict their future extension.
- 3.18 Policy Q11 (h) seeks, as a general rule, to retain sufficient side space above ground floor level. It identifies that the *minimum* retained space should be 1m between the extension and the property boundary. There will be many instances where much more than 1m will be required; especially in areas where side space is important to local character. With heritage assets loss of side space may not be acceptable in principle, where it contributes to the special interest. Side extensions that unacceptably imbalance existing building compositions (especially semi-detached properties) are likely to be unacceptable.
- 3.19 In order to achieve subordination, it may be necessary to set back side extensions on the corners and provide lower roofs. However, in some cases this type of subordination may not be appropriate; the approach will be dependant on the character of the host building and its surroundings. Dummy roof slopes (those concealing a flat roof) should have a sufficient size and pitch to have design integrity in their own right, should be coped with conventional ridge tiles and drain discretely to the rear.



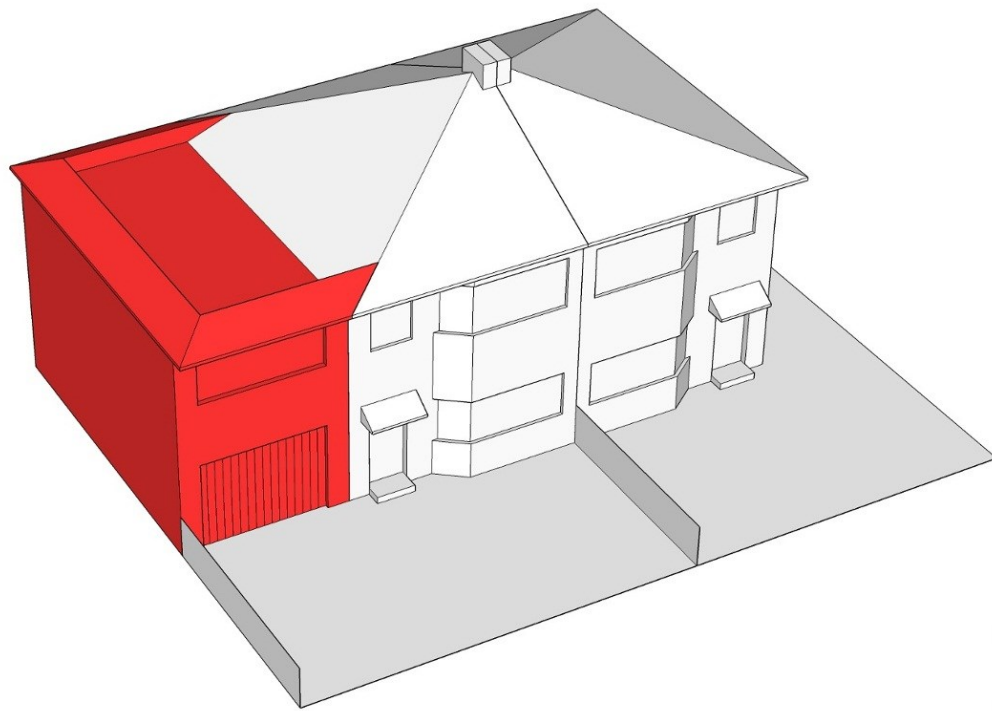


Fig. 6. The side extension above is unacceptable because it does not retain side space at first floor level, it does not show subordination in relation to the host building façade and the roof design is poor.

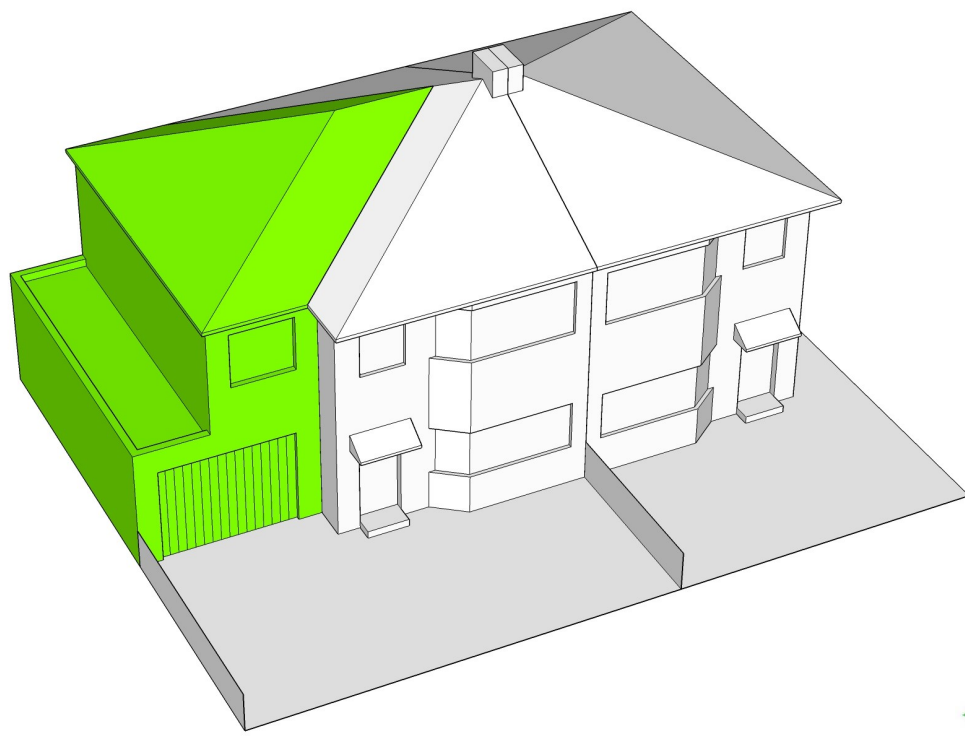
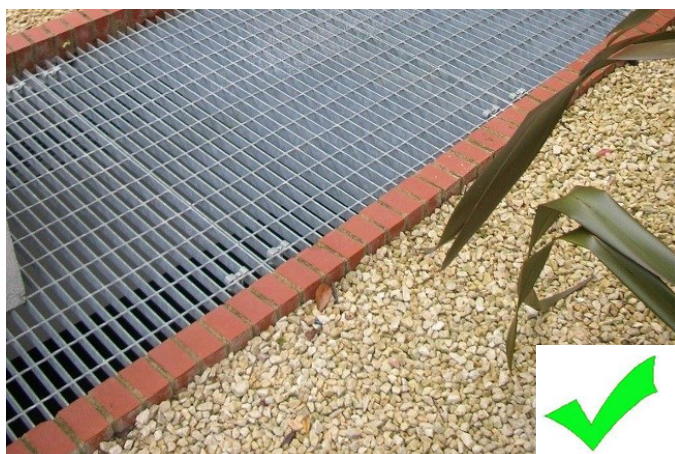
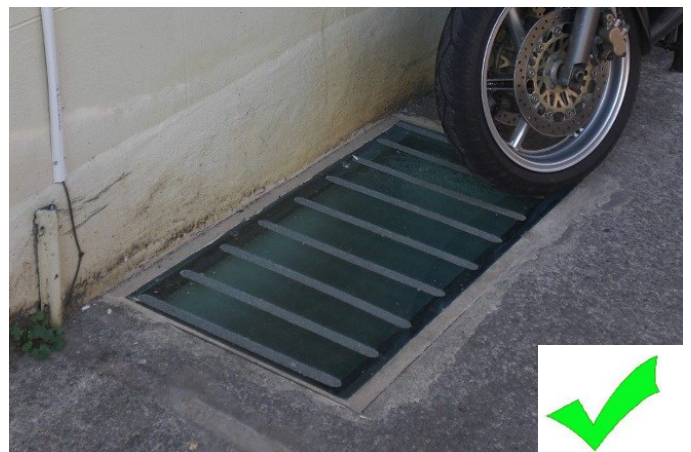


Fig 7. This side extension is acceptable because it retains the minimum 1m side space at first floor level, it is set back from the façade of the host building to achieve subordination and the roof design is integrated with the main roof in a subordinate manner. On heritage assets the desire to maintain the design integrity of buildings and their spatial setting may preclude side extensions in some instances.

## Basements

- 3.20 Policy Q11 (i) is supportive, in principle, of the provision of new basement accommodation below existing buildings. However, the outward appearance of new basement accommodation is very important and will be expected to relate sensitively to the main building, its architectural form and materials, windows and other detailing.
- 3.21 Policy Q11 (j) seeks to minimise the impact of the new basement on the host building and general street scene. The enclosure of basement areas and light wells with railings or balustrades may be required on health and safety grounds and will require good design solutions. Railing enclosures to basement areas can be visually obtrusive in front gardens and will generally be resisted in favour of pavement grilles or glass paving. Access steps should be avoided where possible at the front to minimise impact. The landscape integrity of front gardens should be retained and, where necessary, additional planting used to screen new works. Basement areas must be accessible from within the premises for maintenance, etc.
- 3.22 The loss or alteration or roofing-over of existing basement areas will be resisted. On many buildings with existing semi-basements the front garden levels often ramp up to screen historic semi-basement accommodation. The re-grading of front gardens to slope to a basement, or the excavation of a new basement area, may improve daylight to basement accommodation but such excavation may be inappropriate if exposing the lower levels of the building and changing the levels have an adverse impact on the property or street scene. Excavations and re-grading of rear gardens is less sensitive but still needs careful consideration, to ensure the host building retains its design integrity and boundary walls are maintained. Simple layouts are most effective. Where existing area railings are of interest they should be sympathetically retained; especially on heritage assets.
- 3.23 Extensions below front gardens that prohibit soft landscaping from thriving will be resisted. Policy Q10 makes a presumption in favour of retaining existing trees of value. If excavation works affect protected trees the Council's formal consent may be required.



## Building Repairs

- 3.24 For information on repairs refer to [www.maintainyourbuilding.org.uk](http://www.maintainyourbuilding.org.uk) and *Stitch in Time: Maintaining Your Property Makes Good Sense and Saves Money* available from [www.ihbc.org.uk/publications/stitch/stitch.html](http://www.ihbc.org.uk/publications/stitch/stitch.html). The Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings provides advice online - <http://www.spab.org.uk/advice/conservation-advice/>. English Heritage's *Practical Building Conservation* publications are particularly good documents for those considering repairs and alterations to traditional buildings and heritage assets.

## Building Materials

- 3.25 The use of closely matching materials will generally be sought for building alterations and extensions. This will be particularly important with work to heritage assets. However, this approach is not considered to preclude contemporary materials on modern or innovative design so long as the impact on the host building and wider area is not harmful.
- 3.26 The predominant traditional construction materials in Lambeth are brick, natural slates and clay tiles. When considering facing materials for extensions, the colour, texture and size should be taken into account to ensure a high quality design led approach that is appropriate for both the original building and wider area. Render and timber cladding will generally be resisted on new work unless the host building is already finished in these materials. This is because neither material weathers well in urban environments and they both require regular treatment or redecoration to maintain a smart appearance, placing an unnecessary maintenance burden on property owners.
- 3.27 For brickwork, the mortar mix and colour, the pointing technique, brick bond, and whether the bricks are hand or machine made can make a significant difference to the final appearance of the masonry. Existing unpainted brickwork should not be painted or rendered, as it can trap moisture within the wall and is very difficult to remove and in most cases is irreversible. It also often detracts from the architectural integrity and aesthetic quality of a building (or group) and places a maintenance burden on the owner. The re-use of existing brick and other materials is encouraged. Re-use is sustainable, often cheaper and the weathered appearance will usually be more attractive. For roofs, slates and clay tiles can often be reused on the cheeks of dormers or on new sections of roof. When replacing roofing materials the shape, texture, colour and size are important considerations to ensure a close match. For dormers, materials should blend with the main roof. Lead should generally be used on the cheeks and flat roofs but slate, clay tile or copper may be more appropriate, depending on the character of the host building.

## Construction Detailing

- 3.28 Crude or unattractive construction detailing is not acceptable. Simple designs based on local precedents are often much easier (and cheaper) to construct and detail than unusual forms and shapes. For example, parapet walls generally look better on flat roofs than conventional fascias and gutters. The Council will seek to ensure sufficient consideration has been given to ease of construction and long term durability when considering construction detailing. Policy Q8 sets out the Council's commitment to good quality design and construction. Designers must consider issues such as long term maintenance and repair when designing schemes.



## 4. Roof Alterations and Extensions

4.1 Lambeth's roofscape is rich and varied. However, there are a number of key roof forms that are found across the borough.

4.2 **London roofs:** Two pitches normally concealed behind a front parapet and slope into a central valley that drains to the rear. These are common in Lambeth buildings built between 1800 and 1850. London roofs are a key aspect of London's local distinctiveness. Variations on this type (often running parallel to the façade) are normally always concealed behind parapets and drain to the rear. The absence of front rainwater pipes was a design objective. The basic effect is that these roofs are hardly visible from ground level, therefore reducing the perceived bulk of the building.

**Mansard roofs:** Typically rise from behind parapets and drain to the rear through concealed rainwater pipes. The absence of front rainwater pipes was a design objective. They typically have four roof pitches—two steep (70 degrees) lower slopes and two shallow (up to 30 degrees) upper slopes. On end properties mansards typically terminate in full gables but can sometimes be half-hipped or fully hipped. Some properties have a double mansard with a central roof valley running parallel to the façade; this feature is rarely discernible from ground level. The dormer heads and internal ceiling height on traditional mansards typically align with the junction between the steep and shallow roof pitches. There are often fewer dormers than windows on each floor below, in order to achieve visual subordination.

**Double pitched roofs:** Comprise a front pitch and a rear pitch and gabled ends. These can drain to parapet gutters but more commonly have conventional gutters and down pipes.

**Hipped roofs:** - Comprise front, rear and side roof pitches. Half hipped rooms have a half gable.

**Flat roofs:** Not common as the main roofs on traditional buildings (up to 1914) but can be found on extensions and closet returns. They look best enclosed by parapet walls. Many of Lambeth's post Second World War buildings have modern flat roofs.

Chimney stacks are a feature common to most Lambeth properties built before 1939. They are a key aspect of Lambeth's roofscape. Decorative gables, dormers, hips, turrets, towers and ventilators also add important richness and ornamentation in places.



London roof



Mansard roof



Hipped roof

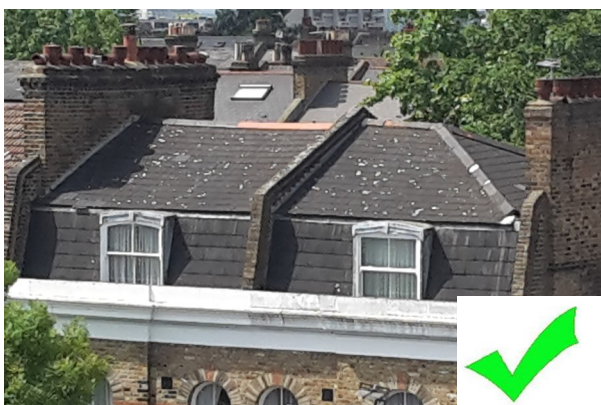


Double-pitched roof

- 4.3 Policy Q11 (a) requires alterations to be respectful of the character of the existing building. In this respect, the Council will normally resist changes to roofs that would be detrimental to their appearance. Policy Q 11 (b) seeks subordination in extensions. This is essential at roof level, given the visibility and therefore potential wider impact of proposals. The design unity of architectural groups and the prevailing uncluttered character of many roofscapes mean that most roof alterations are best located to the rear. Features such as chimneys and parapet walls should not be removed or obscured by them.

## Dormer Windows

- 4.4 With the exception of mansard roofs, dormers were not a particularly common feature of traditional buildings in Lambeth. Where traditional examples exist they are modest, of simple, robust appearance; loss of these examples will be resisted on prominent roof slopes. Many of the more modern dormers in Lambeth are unfortunately bulky and poorly detailed; their replacement with better examples will be supported. The introduction of new dormers requires a careful approach, to ensure compatibility with the main building and their wider context. Dormers are considered the most appropriate way to provide additional roof accommodation in conservation areas.
- 4.5 Policy Q11 (k) seeks to ensure dormers are appropriately sited and subordinate to the host building. They will be resisted on front roof pitches if dormers are not characteristic features of the building group, building type or street. The following design advice normally applies:
- They should be of a subordinate height to the windows on the elevation below and set in from the sides (the roof must remain the dominant element).
  - The window cill should rest on the roof slope (around 1 metre above the attic floor level or above eaves level if the floor has been lowered) and the head should run flush with the room ceiling height (normally 2.1m).
  - The window type and style should be in keeping with those on the main building.
  - The materials, construction detailing and form should all be simple and robust. Bulky construction detailing, timber fascias etc. should be avoided in order to achieve subordination.
  - On sensitive buildings (including heritage assets) they should be of modest size and aligned with the openings below.



- 4.6 Property no.1, fig. 8 shows modest traditional dormers. This type of dormer is an original feature on some buildings in Lambeth—sometimes as a single dormer and sometimes as a pair. These traditional dormers are the only ones of those illustrated in fig. 8 that may be considered acceptable on front roof slopes. They are also the only ones likely to be considered acceptable on heritage assets.
- 4.7 In conservation areas where the attics are small and where floor space is limited, the linking of small individual dormers together to make one wide dormer may be an acceptable way of increasing head-room (see property no. 2, fig. 8). Care needs to be taken to ensure that the link element is subordinate to the dormers—recessed back from the front of the dormer by one third of the depth of the dormer roof. Its front should be clad to match the roof material and the link roof should be a continuation of the dormer roof. This solution is unsuitable for listed buildings. In conservation areas it is only really suitable for small roofs, where the dormers are close together. Otherwise the linking element can be inappropriately wide and visually obtrusive as a result.
- 4.8 An inset dormer is shown on property no. 3, fig 8. These are inappropriate on heritage assets. In order to achieve subordination within the roof, adequate sections of the original roof surface must be retained to each side (aligned with the outer edge of the windows below) and below the ridge. Sufficient roof should be retained across the front to provide the balustrade to the terrace. Omission of this roof slope and the erection of conventional balustrades or projecting balconies is unacceptable. As inset dormers that are formed by cutting into the roof slope, they reduce the area of the interior accommodation but can, if large enough, provide amenity space.
- 4.9 Property no. 4, fig.8 shows a horizontal 'box' dormer, set well in from the edges of the roof to achieve subordination (aligned with the outer edge of the windows below); anything larger is unlikely to be considered subordinate and therefore would fail to meet Policy Q11 (k) (ii).

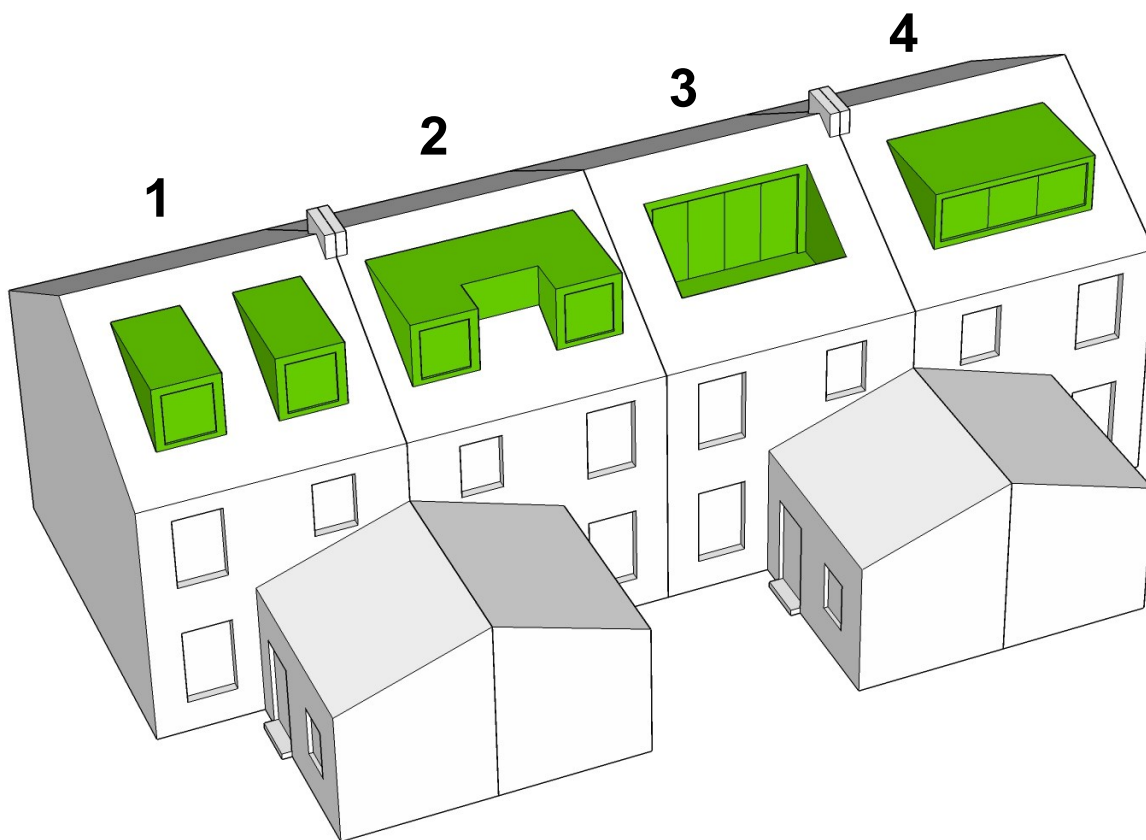


Fig 8. Examples of dormers types that may be acceptable at the rear of properties.

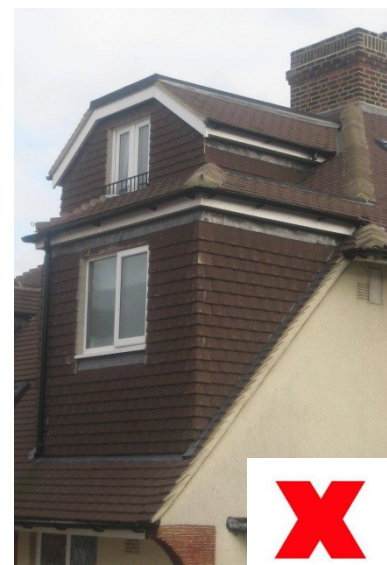
- 4.10 Blank dormers (those without windows), irregularly shaped dormers (wrapping around hipped roofs etc.) and large, insubordinate, box dormers are rarely considered acceptable.
- 4.11 With all dormers careful design and construction detailing is essential. Forms should be graceful and considered; slim enough to accommodate insulation, but not bulky. The dormer front face should contain only window - no wall. Timber fascias and bargeboards should generally be avoided as they are difficult to access for painting. Thought should be given to the careful selection of materials, the design of rainwater gutters (if required at all) etc.
- 4.12 On heritage assets, where dormers are deemed appropriate, the number of dormers, the dormer style, size and materials should be based on traditional and historic local precedents, be characteristic of the area and be appropriate to the period of the building. On some local buildings the dormers historically have casement windows while others have sliding sashes. Detailed design advice and historic examples can be found in the English Heritage Listed Building Guidance Leaflet *Dormer Windows* which is available from Lambeth's Conservation and Design team.



Slender forms and neat construction.



Too solid on the front and roofs adds additional bulk.



Too solid, bulky and poorly detailed.

## Roof Lights

- 4.13 Roof lights are generally not an original feature of Lambeth's traditional buildings. Where they do exist historically they tend to be very small and placed at the rear, to light attic spaces and tank areas. Policy Q11 (A) (i) and (L) seek to minimise the adverse impact of roof lights through careful placing and alignment.
- 4.14 Roof lights are often the most sympathetic way of providing daylight and natural ventilation to a habitable attic space as they follow the line of the roof. In most instances, proposed roof lights should:
- Be subordinate features on the roof. See property no. 1, fig. 9 below.
  - Align with window or other features on the elevations below. See property nos. 1 and 2, figs. 9, below.
  - In sensitive locations, including heritage assets, roof lights will be resisted on front and other prominent roof slopes. Roof lights should be noticeably smaller than those illustrated below.
- 4.15 Roof lights at low level on front roof pitches to provide means of escape will be resisted where they have an adverse impact on the appearance of the building. Other less visually intrusive methods of escape should also be considered; for example the upgrading of internal staircases to provide a suitable escape route through the building.
- 4.16 The insertion of roof lights on roofs with complex asymmetrical forms such as gables, hips and turrets will be resisted. They will also be resisted on the steep slopes of traditional mansard roofs.
- 4.17 On heritage assets, roof lights should be small and set flush into the roof. Traditional style roof lights are most appropriate; set flush into the roof slope, these are of slim framed black painted metal with a vertical glazing bar. Roof lights which open up to form roof terraces will not be acceptable on heritage assets.

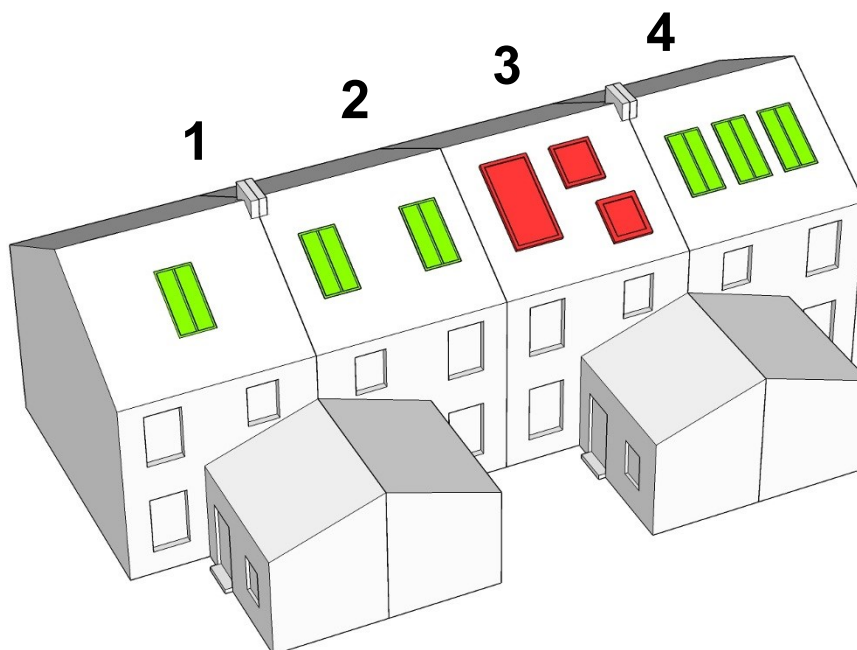


Fig. 9 Roof lights at property nos. 1, 2 and 4 are considered appropriate as a general rule. On heritage assets noticeably smaller roof lights than those illustrated will normally be sought.

## Light tubes

- 4.18 These bring light internally by reflective tube from an outside (normally roof) source. The outward appearance is normally that of a small glass dome. They can be particularly effective in bringing natural daylight to windowless spaces such as stairwells and bathrooms, reducing the need for artificial lighting. In some instances a flexible tube may allow a rear light tube to light a front attic space. Their use is encouraged where they can be accommodated in unobtrusive locations; as a general rule front or side roof slopes should be avoided, in favour of rear locations.



## Mansards and Roof Extensions

- 4.19 The Council supports the principle of optimising attic accommodation through the use of roof additions and mansards, within the constraints of achieving subordination and protecting the design integrity of the host building. Policy Q11 (B) seeks subordination of extensions and is applicable to roof additions. Policy Q 11 (m) is clear that such additions will be resisted where harm would result to the building or its group. On heritage assets a presumption in favour of retaining historic roof forms means that there is little scope for roof additions or mansards; in these instances attic conversions with modest dormers or small roof lights are the only solution. In order to maintain subordination, roof extensions that extend over rear returns or closet returns will be generally resisted. When considering proposals for terraces or projecting balconies as part of roof extensions, consideration will be given to the amenity and privacy of neighbouring properties.

### Rear mansard extensions

- 4.20 Where visible front roof pitches and hipped ends contribute positively to the group character of buildings or a wider street scene, their loss or alteration will be resisted. On traditional properties with double pitched roofs (but not hipped roofs), a rear mansard (nos. 1 and 2, fig 10) is the best option in terms of space and headroom. This approach is not considered appropriate for heritage assets. In order to maintain unity in terraces and groups care must be taken with the design dimensions. The basic principles are set out below, although the dimensions and details of previously approved adjoining examples also need to be referred to.
- In pairs or groups of buildings raising the roof ridge will not be acceptable. Therefore there must be sufficient internal headroom (2.1m) below the existing ridge or the principle of a rear mansard will not be acceptable.
  - The lower pitch of the rear mansard should be 70 degrees and hung with slate or tile.
  - The 70 degree pitch *must* terminate at the 2.3m height if all the rear mansards in a row are to link up.
  - The 2.3m top of the 70 degree pitch is linked to just below the roof ridge by the top roof. Its treatment will be dependent upon its pitch, which will be dictated by the remaining height available between 2.3m and the ridge. The top roof must terminate below ridge level, allowing adequate room for a flashing *and* retention of existing ridge tiles.
  - A simple lead flashing should mark the join between the top roof and the 70 degree pitch. A fascia is not acceptable along this junction.
  - If there is already brick upstand walls between properties, these should be extended in matching brickwork and brick-on-edge coping (following the 70 degree slope) both between properties and on flanks. Otherwise, the flanks of the mansard (on the party wall) should be in lead or hung in the prevailing roofing material/
  - Dormers should be equal or fewer in number than the windows on the elevation below and be aligned with them. The dormer should not project forward of the roof below cill level which should be at 1m above floor level. The top of the dormer should terminate where the 70 degree slope meets the top roof (2.3m). This should allow the 2.1m ceiling height inside to align with the top of the window. Windows should match those below. Dormers should have lead cheeks.
  - 1:20 scale section drawings should illustrate a to g.



Fig. 10 Acceptable rear mansards at property nos. 1 and 2. The remaining examples illustrate what is unacceptable; the irregular forms producing a discordant appearance.

### **Extensions to hipped roofs**

- 4.21 A hipped roof is a means of successfully achieving subordination and creating a sense of spaciousness between buildings. In Lambeth hipped roofs are common on detached houses, at the ends of some terraces and on semi-detached pairs; they are particularly common in suburban areas.
- 4.22 On heritage assets the loss of hipped roofs will be resisted. Elsewhere, hip to gable extensions should not harm the design integrity of the host building or its group or lead to a loss of spatial character. On residential properties with clay tiled roofs (a common characteristic in suburban locations) full hip to gable conversions will be resisted in favour of a half-hip solution.

### **London roofs**

- 4.23 These are found on early 19th century houses and are part of Lambeth's and London's local distinctiveness and the loss of such roofs on heritage assets will be resisted. Elsewhere the Council will only support the replacement of a London roof with a traditional full mansard roof in *full* accordance with the guidance in 4.25 below.

### **Traditional mansards**

- 4.24 Traditional mansards are mostly characteristic of early 19th century properties in Lambeth; their loss or alteration will be resisted. On end properties traditional mansards terminate in either full gables, half gables or have a hipped end. The dormers heads and internal ceiling height on traditional mansards typically align with the junction between the steep and shallow roof pitches. See images on pages 19 and 21.

### **Design of traditional mansards**

- 4.25 Paras. 4.19—4.23 set out when new traditional mansards will be acceptable. In order to secure design unity they must match adjoining historic examples otherwise this advice *must* be followed:
- a. The mansard should have two lower (70 degree) pitches and two upper (30 degree) pitches. However, where an existing traditional mansard already exists in the group, or where another example has been approved in the group, its levels, roof pitches and other detailing should be accurately replicated. Otherwise:
  - b. A head height of 2.1m *must* be provided internally. The steep slope should terminate externally 2.3m above internal floor level.
  - c. The roof slopes should rise from behind existing parapets. Adequate space should be provided behind parapets for parapet gutters. Existing parapets should not be raised. Sloping rear walls should be built-up to a level parapet.
  - d. Roof pitches should be in natural or reconstituted slate with a lead flashing at the junction of the two slopes. A fascia is not acceptable.
  - e. Party walls should be raised in stock brick following the profile of the roof slopes, and coped with bricks on edge. Party walls should terminate behind the front and rear parapets, not rise off them. Chimney stacks on both sides should be continued in brickwork rising six Imperial brick courses above the ridge, then have two projecting courses, then two normal courses topped by cement flaunching and pots. Where parapet copings are required, they should have a single surface sloping into the parapet gutter. Saddle copings, lead capping or paving slabs etc. are *not* acceptable.
  - f. Dormers should be equal or fewer in number than the windows on the elevation below and be aligned with them. The dormer should not project forward of the roof below cill level which should be at 1m above floor level. The top of the dormer should terminate where the 70 degree slope meets the 30 degree slope (2.3m). This should allow the 2.1m ceiling height inside to align with the top of the window. Windows should match those below. Dormers should have lead cheeks. See good examples on pages 19 and 21.
  - g. In order to achieve subordination end properties should be half-hipped - the flank wall being built up to the height of the 70 degree slope. The built up flank elevation should match the existing flank.
  - h. Flank windows and dormers are not acceptable.
- 4.26 Applicants will be expected to provide section drawings at 1:20 scale to illustrate points a to g.

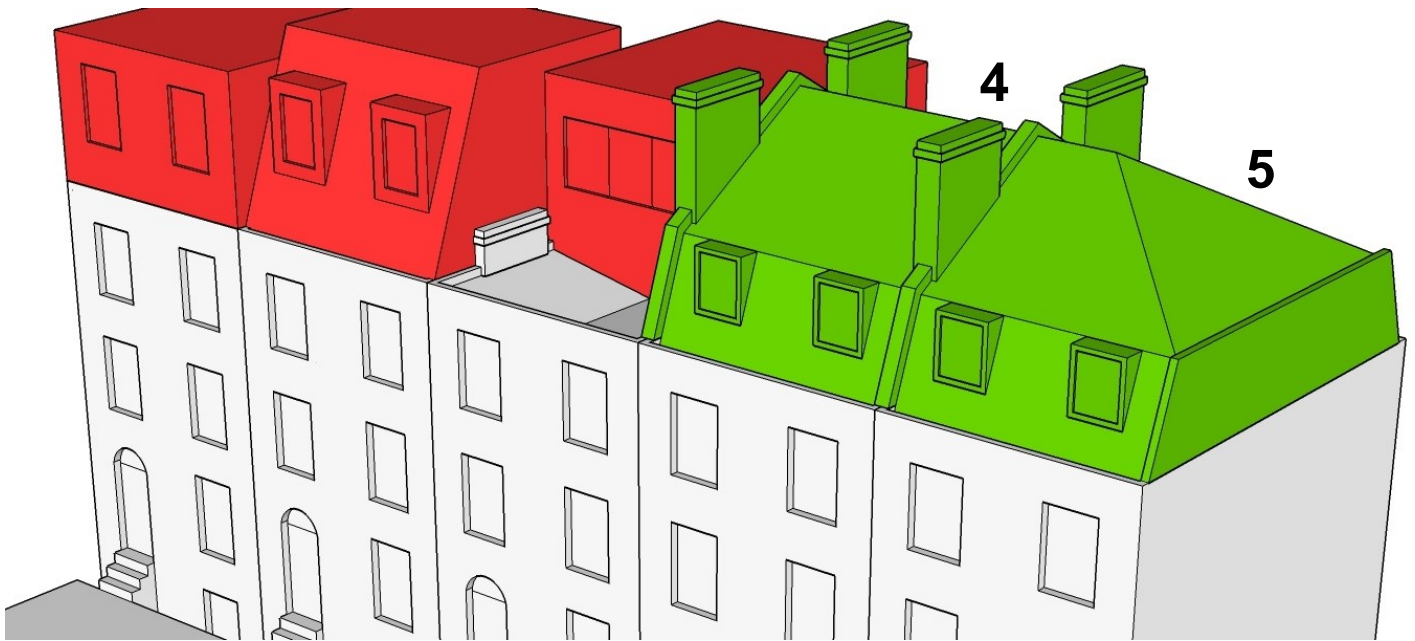


Fig. 11 This shows roof additions to a terrace of houses with London roofs which are not a heritage asset. Property nos. 4 and 5 (in green) show the preferred traditional mansard approach which can, if implemented along the whole terrace over time, ultimately result in a unified appearance. The other properties represent discordant roof extensions (in red) which are unacceptable.



Fig. 12 This shows a rear view of the traditional mansard roof additions to a terrace of houses with London roofs which are not heritage assets. The view is of the rear shows three options for dormers - a single small dormer, a pair of dormers or a box dormer no wider than the windows below.

### **Other Roof Additions**

- 4.28 One-off buildings with flat roofs are best suited to accommodating roof additions. On 19th century buildings, traditional mansards may present the best design option. Otherwise, additional storeys require a considered approach, to ensure they are well integrated with the main building. Building straight up off the existing front and rear elevations (or flanks if exposed) is unlikely to achieve the subordination required in Policy Q11 (b). Policy Q11 (n) seeks subordination of form (set backs, scale, treatment) and robust, low maintenance materials (timber, render and painted surfaces will be resisted). The development of flat roofs that serve as amenity spaces is unlikely to be acceptable.
- 4.29 Proposed alterations that introduce alien roof configurations (cut-outs and add-ons) or which propose to raise the roof ridge in a manner that would adversely affect the appearance of the building, or its contribution to the wider street scene, are likely to be resisted.

### **Roof Terraces and Roof Level Balconies**

- 4.30 Policy Q11 (o) seeks to resist roof terraces and roof balconies on building types where they would be uncharacteristic or on street facing roofs. Consideration also needs to be given to Policy Q2 which seeks to protect amenity. The removal of pitched roofs on existing buildings and their replacement with flat roofs will be resisted where it would lead to the loss of locally distinctive roof forms or harm the integrity of the host building or its group.

### **Living Roofs**

- 4.31 Green/brown roofs can be very efficient in reducing rainwater run-off, providing new habitats for wildlife in urban areas, helping to reduce heat loss and reduction in energy use and can be visually attractive. Careful consideration will need to be given to ensure that green/brown roofs integrate with the parent building and the wider context. Green/brown roofs should not be considered an adequate mitigation for the loss of rear gardens; each has its own unique ecological contribution.

## 5. Sustainability

- 5.1 The Council supports efforts to reduce consumption and generate energy from sustainable sources. The three most important influences on a building's energy use in operation are:

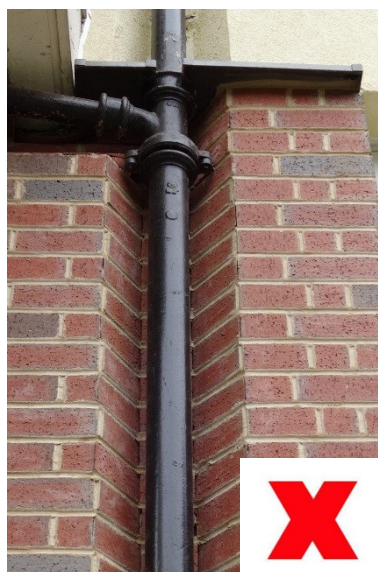
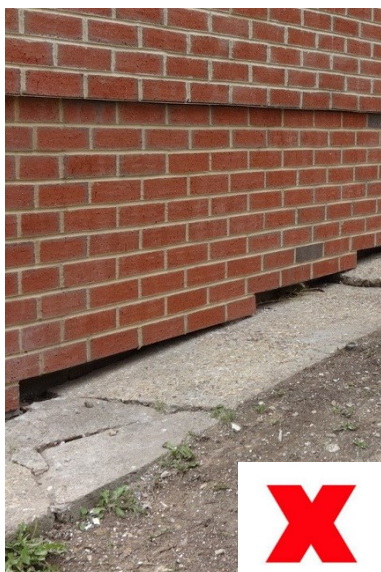
**Built fabric:** the effectiveness of the building envelope in providing a suitable indoor environment. Heating and cooling, natural ventilation, lighting etc.

**Equipment:** the users of the energy— building services (heating, lighting, hot water etc.) and appliances or electrical goods.

**People:** how the building is occupied and used.

### Built Fabric

- 5.2 The built fabric of an existing building should be assessed to understand its strengths and weaknesses. For example, a conservatory is generally wasteful of energy because of its poor thermal performance. It can be upgraded to help its performance and to reduce its energy demand.
- 5.3 Improved insulation can significantly reduce heat loss and energy consumption. With all insulation, care must be taken to ensure buildings remain ventilated and that the insulation does not pose a risk of condensation etc. Cavity wall insulation and internal insulation are strongly recommended in the appropriate circumstances. Externally applied insulation normally comprises an insulation layer with a weatherproof finish (render, brick slips, cladding panels). It needs very careful consideration because it can have a significant impact on the outward appearance of buildings, obscuring architectural detailing to ill effect and potentially offers high technical risks as the loss of original mouldings and details can lead to water ingress. The build-out needs to be accommodated where it meets the roof, adjoining buildings and boundary walls. External pipes and vents also need to be removed and repositioned to ensure continuity of insulation.
- 5.4 Over insulating is not acceptable if it harms the appearance of traditional buildings (especially those built before 1939) as these tend to be the most architecturally ornate. It is not considered appropriate on heritage assets. Where it is proposed, care must be taken to ensure that the design integrity of the building is retained and or improved. In most cases reproducing the colour palette, finishes and textures of the original architecture will generally be expected. Where a change of treatment, design colour is proposed, care must be taken with the treatments on large and tall buildings, as they have a significant visual presence over their wider localities. Colours and treatments will generally be expected to reflect local distinctiveness—buffs, creams and natural stone tones. Proposals will only be considered acceptable if it can be shown that they will address Policy Q11 (a) (i).



Lack of attention to construction detailing on external insulation installations can result in very poor final outcomes.



Before and after: the application of external insulation has successfully respected the architectural character of this tower.

- 5.5 Draught proofing (doors, floors and windows) and making the most of heavy curtains, blinds and carpets are important steps towards minimising heat loss. For information on window upgrades, secondary glazing and double glazing see paras. 2.4 to 2.10.

## Equipment

- 5.6 Energy consumption can be significantly reduced by using efficient appliances and equipment. It is advisable to carry out an energy audit to identify current consumption; smart meters (gas, water, electricity) can assist with this. Measures to reduce energy consumption can include the installation of a condensing boiler, efficient appliances and using low energy lighting. Water efficient toilets, taps and shower heads can also significantly reduce water usage. When it comes to new boilers, care needs to be taken to ensure that flues are not on front or other visible elevations; Policy Q11 (a) (ii) needs to be considered.

## People

- 5.7 For all these measures to be effective, building occupiers must be aware of their own energy use and seek, where possible, to reduce it. Switching off lights, appliances and gadgets when not in use, adjusting thermostats, wearing adequate clothing, etc. are simple measures that everyone can make. Drying clothes outside prevents problems of condensation internally and reduces energy consumption. Water butts reduce the need to use the mains water supply to water plants.
- 5.8 When making changes to properties internally, consideration should be given to their heating etc. The removal of internal doors and walls to create open plan interiors makes it more difficult to heat spaces. Removing doors and walls to stairwells will allow heat to rise unimpeded. By contrast, traditional cellular rooms can be individually heated to suit each user's personal needs.

## Energy Generation

- 5.9 For highest efficiency of photovoltaic (PV) cells and panelling for solar water heating systems, an unshaded south facing aspect is best, although an unshaded southeast and southwest aspect can still be viable. The cells or panels should preferably be integrated into the existing roofing systems or laid to the same angle as the roof pitch. The installation must respond well to the character of the host building and not detract from it. On heritage assets, panels will generally only be supported if they can be located in places that are not readily visible.
- 5.10 Wind turbines are not particularly efficient in urban areas and other options for generating renewable energy can be more effective. They are also normally visually prominent and vibration can make integration into existing buildings difficult. When considering a wind turbine, there is also a need to assess issues such as siting, structural loading, vibration, noise generation, height, prevalent wind direction and average speed, and proximity to trees and other buildings or structures. Noise and visual 'strobe' effect may be an amenity issue. Turbines are not normally considered appropriate on heritage assets.

## 6. Gardens

- 6.1 Policy Q14 of the Local Plan recognises the importance of gardens to amenity and biodiversity in Lambeth; Policy Q9 seeks to secure high quality landscaping; Policy Q10 recognises the importance of, and seeks to retain, existing trees and encourages the planting of new trees; Policies Q12 and Q13 set out the Council's approach to refuse storage and bicycle storage respectively; while Policy Q15 provides the policy approach to boundary treatments. The Council does not consider gardens to be development opportunities.

### Gardens

- 6.2 Gardens are important for amenity, habitats and natural drainage. The value of rear gardens is increased where they collectively make up a large tract of green space. Front gardens and forecourts are particularly important as they provide a landscaped setting for the building and mediate between public and private space. Gardens are particularly important to the character and appearance of conservation areas, their settings and the settings of heritage assets generally.

#### Parking and crossovers

- 6.3 The amenity value of front gardens, especially small urban front gardens, is particularly vulnerable to hard paving and car parking, with its associated loss of soft landscaping and boundary walls. The paving itself can be problematic as it often prevents natural drainage. Many small front gardens are no bigger than a parking bay and when a vehicle is parked it often affects the outlook of residents and can restrict daylight into habitable rooms. The creation of a vehicular crossover necessitates the loss of an on-street parking bay. As on-street parking is an amenity to the whole community, its loss, in order to provide private parking in front gardens therefore has an adverse impact on the community as a whole. In extreme cases, locally, the impact goes well beyond visual amenity. The loss of all or the majority of on-street parking bays removes parked cars from the road and the resulting open carriageway allows motorists to drive faster. The Council wishes to resist this from happening across the borough.
- 6.4 For the reasons outlined above, the Council will generally resist car parking proposals in front gardens, unless it can be demonstrated that no harm will result (including the special interest and setting of heritage assets). The resulting parking bay *must* meet the Council's minimum standards— 2.4m x 4.8m and can be accessed without risk to highway or pedestrian safety.

#### Paving and hard standing

- 6.5 To improve the appearance and performance of new paving or hardstanding consideration should always be given to securing natural drainage by using permeable paving and soak-aways, maintaining a sense of enclosure through the use of appropriate boundaries, gates, and soft landscaping. The use of appropriate traditional surfaces such as natural stone slabs or granite setts is strongly encouraged especially in conservation areas, along with suitable soak-aways. The texture and colour of any new materials should be sympathetic to the setting of the building and wider street scene. Loose gravel will be resisted as it tends to drift out onto the footway, becoming a hazard to pedestrians and blocking gutters.



### Development affecting gardens

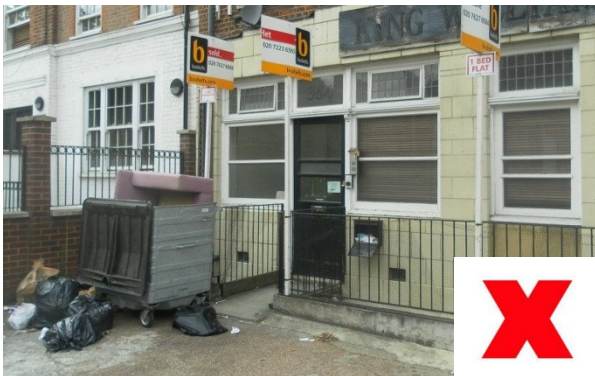
- 6.6 Front gardens and side gardens (return frontages) are not considered appropriate for development. Any development proposals that come forward in these locations will be required to meet the requirements of Policy Q2, Policy Q11 (a) and (b), and Policy Q14 (d). The latter is considered relevant to new extensions as well as stand-alone development proposals. Development that leads to unacceptable loss of garden, harms amenity, is poorly designed or does not respect established building lines, etc. will not normally be acceptable. Development proposals that entail the creation of a new separate plot by the subdivision of an existing rear garden will be expected to keep 70% of the rear garden with the original host property in order to protect the residential amenity of existing residents. Indeed, as a general rule the Council will seek to ensure that 70% of any garden is left undeveloped when it considers proposals for extensions and garden structures etc. This is particularly relevant in city centre and urban locations where even small gardens are of high amenity value.

### Structures in gardens

- 6.7 The Council wants all residents to be able to enjoy their gardens and optimise their use as private amenity space. It is supportive in principle of development such as garden sheds / greenhouses, domestic garages, summer houses / home offices etc. However, structures in gardens need to be carefully considered to ensure that they don't harm visual amenity, lead to the unacceptable loss of garden space or harm the amenity of adjoining neighbours etc. For that reason Policy Q14 (c) seeks, among other things, to keep such structures 1m from boundaries with neighbours; this removes the physical bulk of structures away from neighbouring properties and allows adequate space around the structure for the maintenance of it and the boundary treatment. Garden sheds and other large structures in front gardens (especially small front gardens) will rarely be acceptable due to their adverse impact on amenity.

## **Refuse and Recycling Storage**

- 6.8 Policy Q12 recognises the importance of well designed refuse storage in terms of visual and residential amenity. Visual blight caused by storage containers can be extreme - impact of bins standing in forecourts and front gardens can be adverse both for residents of these premises and the passing public. Inadequate refuse storage presents a threat to public health - vermin are attracted to uncontained refuse, bringing the potential for disease and infection. Unpleasant odours emanating from bins and storage areas can blight the amenity of adjoining residents. Bins standing permanently on the street can obstruct the footway. This can be particularly problematic for wheelchair users and people with pushchairs and can restrict the view of drivers and therefore can affect highway safety. For more information please see the Council's *Refuse and Recycling Design Guide* and NHBC's guidance *Avoiding Rubbish Design*, Feb. 2015.





## Cycle Storage

- 6.9 The Council encourages cycling and considers that one of the best ways to support it is to ensure that cycle storage is covered, secure, convenient and attractive. Policy Q13 of the Local Plan sets out the standards necessary in achieving this.
- 6.10 Low 'bike boxes' are the only suitable option for front gardens because they can sit unobtrusively behind garden walls and hedges. Bike stands and garden sheds are not acceptable for cycle storage in front gardens. An award winning, secure on-street bike locker - the Lambeth Bikehanger - is designed to stand in an on-street parking bay. They have been installed across the borough (see below right) and provide a viable alternative to front garden bike storage and their use is strongly encouraged, especially in residential conversions. Technical information can be found at [www.cyclehoop.com](http://www.cyclehoop.com).



## Trees

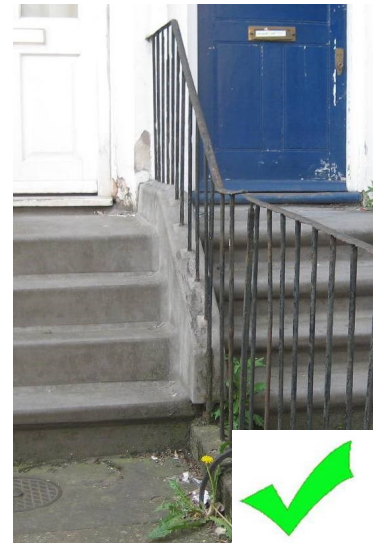
- 6.11 Policy Q10 recognises that trees have important amenity value and habitat significance and seeks their retention for those reasons. Before undertaking works to a tree, it is advisable to check whether it is protected. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are in place to protect the best examples and nearly all trees in conservation areas are protected automatically. Details of TPOs and conservation area designations are available from the Council's website.
- 6.12 Tree surveys are required on schemes where trees might be affected by development or construction. These should be undertaken by suitably qualified professionals. The Council will expect all development affecting trees to accord with established best practice.

## 7. Boundary Treatments

- 7.1 These vary in form and detailing depending on their date and purpose but general patterns can be found. See *Lambeth Local Distinctiveness Study (2012)*. Late 18th to mid 19th century urban properties tended to have front railings, with matching gates, on a stone plinth (total height about 1.1m). The great majority of these were lost for the war effort during the Second World War but examples survived around basement areas, etc. Between front gardens, a traditional estate rail is common. A significant amount of reinstatement of these railings occurred in the 1970s and 1980s as part of conservation initiatives. Rear gardens tend to be enclosed by brick walls about 2m in height.
- 7.2 Urban properties from the mid 19th century to c1914 often had cast iron front boundary railings (with matching gates) on a cast iron plinth or a brick dwarf wall. Heights are around 1.1m and again, these were largely lost during the Second World War. Between front gardens, a traditional estate rail remained common. Rear gardens tend to be enclosed by brick walls about 2m in height. While surviving fragments can be found, there has been little reinstatement of this boundary type (presumably on grounds of cost). Suburban properties often exhibit ornamental timber gates and close-boarded timber fences to reinforce a semi-rural character. These survive in some places.



- 7.3 Twentieth century development often has brick dwarf walls enclosing front gardens and or verge rails. Timber gates and post and chain detailing can be found in suburban locations. Rear gardens are typically enclosed by timber fences. On some housing estates, surplus iron stretchers were re-used after the war as boundary treatments. These are of historic interest and should be retained. Estate renewal projects have introduced hoop railings in communal areas in order to better define space and improve security. In recent decades there has been a tendency towards installing boundary railings across the borough. In places these have exceeded the traditional heights to ill effect on visual amenity. High front boundaries are not characteristic of Lambeth and their presence can have a detrimental impact on the character of a street, creating an overtly defensive environment and restricting natural surveillance.
- 7.4 Policy Q15 relates to boundary treatments. It seeks to retain treatments that are characteristic of the locality, limit heights to street frontages and between properties and to secure good quality design solutions when boundaries are being raised. Boundaries are especially important to the character and appearance of heritage assets. Every effort should be made to authentically reinstate missing boundaries in these instances.
- 7.5 Generally street facing boundaries should not exceed 1m in height for the reason outlined above. Timber should be avoided unless it is an essential characteristic of that particular street, because it rots, looking unattractive and placing a maintenance burden on the owner.



7.6 Ideally, boundaries between front gardens should not exceed the height of the front boundary. Where a change of height is required between houses, the boundary should increase gradually at a point back from the street frontage, ideally between the properties themselves. Traditionally, these boundaries are plainer than the front treatment - the vertical bars without spikes or finials (above right); and often took the form of a simple estate rail (below left); these have a more neighbourly character than the street boundary. New boundaries between traditional properties should replicate this approach, if possible.

7.7 Where garden rear boundaries front a street, care should be taken to ensure the materials and details are appropriate. Low brick walls are generally encouraged as they are much more robust than timber fences. Where fences are considered appropriate (in some conservation areas for example) they should be in hardwood, very carefully detailed and robustly constructed.



7.8 In relation to blocks of flats, care must be taken when reconfiguring landscaping and gardens, in order to protect visual amenity and community safety. Where communal gardens line a street frontage or larger communal open space their subdivision into private spaces for the ground floor flats will generally be resisted. This is because the loss of communal landscaping would harm amenity and the privatisation of the spaces normally bring with them associated alterations in the form of higher boundaries (for privacy) and sheds and outbuildings. The resulting harm to visual amenity and reduction in natural surveillance will, in the vast majority of cases, be considered unacceptable.

# Annex 1 Lambeth's Built Character

- 1.1 The *Lambeth Local Distinctiveness Study*, (2012) is a useful starting point for anyone wishing to understand Lambeth's character. Section 5 of that study provides a detailed explanation of the borough's built form and character, looking closely at common building types, detailing and materials. Much of the stock of purpose-built houses is a product of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when London expanded rapidly. Developments of flats are largely a product of the 1920s onward. Tall buildings began to appear from the late 1950s onward.

## **Early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century (Georgian)**

- 1.2 Generally, the housing stock is at its oldest in the north of the borough, as this area was urbanised first. However, surviving historic settlements and older groups of building such as Clapham are exceptions to this general development. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century grand terraces houses and suburban villas developed in areas of Stockwell and Kennington. Stock brick and stucco predominate. Terraces from this period typically have semi-basements, flat front and rear elevations and London (butterfly) roofs. Mansards are common, but not prolific. It is not uncommon for 'closet additions' to have been added at the rear. These are small extensions which were built off the half-landings on the staircase; they can be one, two or even three storey but nearly always stop half a storey below the eaves of the house. Small single storey outhouses were often attached to these at ground floor. Internally the *standard plan form*, a room to front and rear on each floor with entrance hall and staircase to one side, is most common.
- 1.3 Semi-detached and detached houses are common from this period. These often have flat front and rear elevations without closet additions. However, modest single storey rear returns often serve as the kitchen.
- 1.4 The majority of buildings in Lambeth pre-dating 1840 are heritage assets. Many are protected by statutory listing, others are given recognition through inclusion on the local heritage list. Where they are situated in a conservation area the vast majority will be considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of that area.

## **Mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century / early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Victorian and Edwardian)**

- 1.5 Building forms changed gradually and from the mid decades of 19<sup>th</sup> century basements were no longer incorporated. Terraced houses became more ornate; generally, as the decades progressed, the houses got smaller. There was also a general shift from stock brick and stucco to red brick, terracotta and tile. The 'standard plan' form continued in use and it is not unusual to have a two storey rear return, which is subservient to the main bulk of the house and under a lower roof. On modest terraced houses this often leaves only space for a small garden passage down the side. London roofs and mansards generally fell out of favour, with pitched and hipped roofs prevailing.
- 1.6 There is quite a lot of development in the borough from this period and much of it is of good quality. The very best examples are generally statutory listed. For inclusion on the local heritage list examples from this period generally need to be of recognisable high quality or distinct from similar development of the period. Again, where they are situated in a conservation area, the vast majority will be considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of that area. Conservation areas largely containing development from this period have often been designated because the area is a good representative example of a common type across the borough. In such instances, the presumption in favour of preservation is in order to protect the very ordinary, often modest character of the buildings and wider area.

## **20<sup>th</sup> Century**

- 1.7 In the inter-war years suburban development in the form of short terraces and symmetrical semi-detached pairs can be found in the southern parts of Lambeth. These properties are typically two storeys high. There is normally amenity space to the side of end terrace and semi-detached properties. Purpose-built blocks of flats also became common at this time. Post Second World War housing provision varies greatly. Infill on bomb-damaged sites is common throughout Lambeth. So too are large housing estates, with a mix of flats and houses in landscaped parkland settings. Lambeth's Council housing, designed under Ted Hollamby from 1965—1980, is considered to be some of the best from that period. Much of its work is carefully considered in brick and slate, in order to reinforce local character.

- 1.8 Only the very best buildings of this period are statutory listed. Inclusion on the local heritage list is reserved for the best examples, the same goes for conservation area designation. The Council has identified a need for better understanding of the post-Second World War period, especially Lambeth Council housing, in order that future designation decisions can be made in an informed manner.

Recent residential development (contemporary)

- 1.9 Small infill developments of terraces and 'mews' style houses have been common in the central and northern parts of the borough in recent decades; these tend to be in limited sites often with very small areas of garden or amenity space. High density building in recent years has resulted in more flats than houses being constructed but the redevelopment of some post-war estates has led to a return to traditional terraced housing with front and rear gardens. The Council seeks to ensure that new development responds well to the established local character through the use of appropriate building forms and materials.

# Glossary

Amenity		A useful facility or a pleasant environment.
Article 4 (Direction)		A form of town planning control where Permitted Development Rights are removed so that the Council can better control change. Most commonly used in conservation areas.
Basement area		An excavated external area at basement level. It is normally larger than a lightwell.
Building Regulations		National construction standards.
Closet return		A small addition often found at the rear of early to mid 19 <sup>th</sup> Century houses. The closet return is typically accessed from the stairwell half-landings, square in plan and generally no wider than the stairwell.
Conservation area		An area designated for its special architectural or historic interest. The Council has a statutory obligation to seek the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the area, and its setting when making planning decisions.
Contemporary style		The architectural / building style which prevails at the time of writing.
Cornice		The architectural moulding, often in stucco, stone or timber, which can be found running at parapet level or across the top of shop
Dormer		A structure which protrudes from a sloping roof and which contains a window.
Edwardian		The period between 1900 and 1914.
Forecourt		A paved area to the front of a building.
Flank wall		The side wall of a building.
Georgian		A general term used to define architectural style from the 18 <sup>th</sup> Century through to the early – mid 19 <sup>th</sup> Century.
Half-landing level		The level of the landings on a stairwell which is halfway between the principal floor levels. Sometimes there are winders on the
Hardstanding		An external paved surface.
Heritage Asset		A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance because of its heritage interest.
Hipped end		Where the end of a roof finishes in a roof slope rather than a gable.
Jamb		A vertical element forming the side of a door or window.
Juliet balcony		A balcony which is flush with the face of a building rather than projecting from it.
Building Control		The Council section responsible for ensuring construction work and development accord with the Building Regulations.
Lightwell		An external excavated shaft providing daylight to a basement window.
Listed Building Consent		Formal approval from Lambeth Council for any works of demolition, alteration or extension to a statutory listed building that the Council considers would affect the special interest of the building.

Local heritage list	Archaeology, buildings of designed spaces or landscapes identified by Lambeth Council as being of local (or greater than
Local List	See above.
Local Plan	Lambeth Council's planning policy.
London Plan	The Mayor of London's planning policy
National Planning Policy Framework	The government's planning policy for England.
National Planning Policy Guidance	The government's planning guidance for England.
Permitted Development Rights	Works of alteration or extension to a single family dwellinghouse that do not require planning permission.
Pilaster	A pillar which is partly attached to a wall – often frames either side of a shop front or building entrance.
Planning Permission	Formal approval for development from Lambeth Council. This requires the submission of an application form, drawings and associated documents. Fees apply.
Planning Portal	The national web resource for planning.
Return	A rear wing of a building that normally dates from when the building was built. Also sometimes known as an 'outrigger'.
Reveal	The vertical side of a projecting element.
Roof light	A window in a roof which follows the slope of the pitch.
Semi-basement	Basement accommodation which is partially above ground level.
Single Family Dwellinghouse	A single family home which is not subdivided into flats or units.
Standard Plan	Most common plan form for a terraced house with stairs immediately ahead on entry though the front door. Stairwell lit by half-landing windows on the rear elevation.
Statutory Listed Building	A building on the government's statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	A document produced by the Mayor of London to provide interpretation and guidance on London Plan policies.
Supplementary Planning Guidance	A document produced by Lambeth Council to provide interpretation and guidance on Local Plan policies.
Vehicular Cross-over	The dropped kerb and associated route across a pavement over which vehicles drive to enter a property.
Victorian	The period from the mid 19 <sup>th</sup> century until the turn of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century.
Visual amenity	Something which has an attractive quality which contributes to our appreciation or enjoyment of the environment.
Velux	A product name for a type of roof light. This term should only be used when that particular product is proposed.

## Further Information

### Planning Information

For advice on the need for permission, on making planning applications, on policy:

Planning Portal — [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

For information on planning and heritage designations in Lambeth, planning policy and guidance:

Lambeth Council — [www.lambeth.gov.uk](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk)

### Planning Agents

For independent planning agents:

Royal Town Planning Institute—[www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)

### Heritage Agents

For independent heritage consultants:

Building Conservation — [www.buildingconservation.com](http://www.buildingconservation.com)

This document was prepared by

Lambeth Planning

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