

Design Guide

Supplementary Planning Document



Guidance for applicants, decision makers
and the local community

June 2026

Part 2 - Area Types

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Introduction

The London Borough of Bexley (the Council) has produced a series of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to provide design guidance and support to applicants, decision makers and developers for new development across the borough.

As demonstrated by Fig.01 opposite, the guidance supports the Development Plan which comprises the [Bexley Local Plan](#) and the [London Plan](#). The SPDs demonstrate how policies within these statutory documents can be met and the guidance documents should also be read in conjunction with national and regional design guidance on placemaking, such as the [National Design Guide](#).

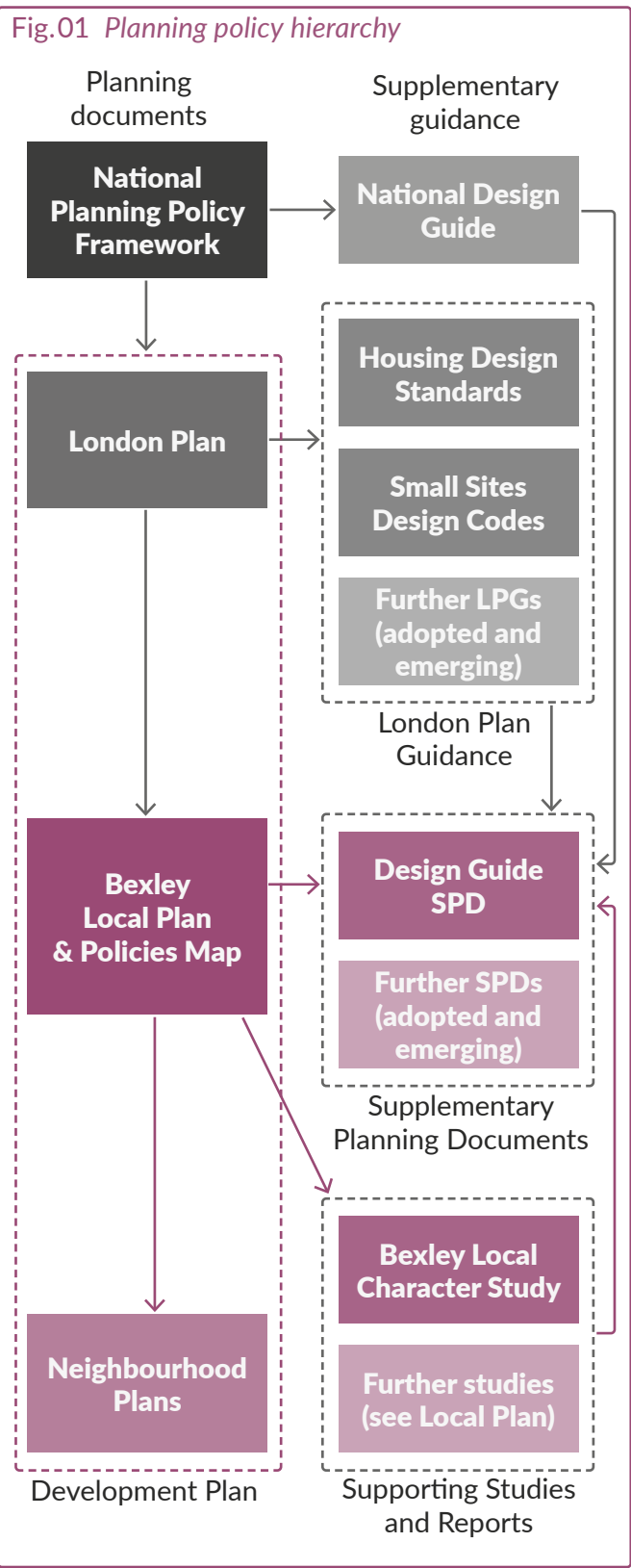
Overarching design guidance, which applies across all types of development, is provided in the [Design Guide SPD Part 1 - Design Principles](#). This should be read in conjunction with the guidance provided in Part 2 of the Design Guide SPD, which focuses on specific areas of development and comprises four documents which complement, and are structured on, the Design Principles.

Once adopted, the Design Guide SPD Part 2 will also be a material consideration in the determining planning applications. As such, proposals should conform with the guidance provided to achieve the best outcomes at determination.

This new guidance will replace the following Bexley planning guidance: Design and Development Control Guidelines SPD, Crayford Residential Design Code, Crayford Town Centre, Design and Identity Guide, and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.

The production of this document has followed best practice and been informed by a robust local evidence base. The guidance has been shaped through engagement with stakeholders and the public consultation process.

It should be noted that during preparation of the Design Guide SPD Part 2, the government published its draft NPPF. Once the final version of the new NPPF is published, it takes precedence should any conflicts arise between the two documents.



Design Guide SPD Part 2 - Area Types

This document identifies four common and emerging areas of development to equip applicants, decision makers and the local community with supplementary guidance to ensure development proposals respond to the Council's vision and priorities. The guidance signposts to other relevant documents, including those within the Design Guide SPD, and frequently links to policies within the Development Plan that must be followed.

As well as guidance specific to each type of development, the guidance identifies considerations common across all area types.

Tall Buildings and Building Heights

This chapter of the guidance addresses Bexley's approach to appropriate building heights across the borough and increased densities in appropriate locations. The guidance promotes a people-centred approach to development that prioritises responding to the existing context whilst creating opportunities for social interaction and community cohesion through developing places and spaces that support community needs.

The design guidance has evolved from, and responds to, three overarching objectives:

- To create high-quality places where new and existing communities can thrive
- To protect and enhance the local area enjoyed by residents
- To ensure residents benefit from innovative, forward-thinking and sustainable design

Public Realm, Town and Neighbourhood Centres

This chapter seeks to harness and celebrate the best of historic and new development within Bexley's town and neighbourhood centres, especially in the design of new *public realm*, to ensure these spaces benefit all residents and visitors to the area.

In addition to guidance in this documents, applicants are encouraged to refer to the Mayor of London guidance document [Expanding London's Public Realm](#) which provides design guidance on designing and delivering for the public good.

Industrial Land Development

This section of the guidance recognises the importance of a strategic approach to safeguarding Bexley's industrial land, while encouraging development and the efficient use of industrial land. Where sites are redeveloped, the guidance should be used to ensure proposals maintain and enhance Bexley's industrial capacity and continue to make a positive contribution to the borough.

Sites Adjacent to Watercourses

Guidance addresses the importance of riverside development activating spaces along Bexley's waterways for people to safely enjoy recreationally, whilst ensuring sufficient protection and enhancement of existing ecological habitats and the maintenance and enhancement of flooding and water safety infrastructure, with (adequate space for) new infrastructure provided where required.

Across each area type, built precedents provide examples of best practice and exemplars explore how certain development sites could be approached.

Summaries of key issues to be addressed and demonstrated in planning applications are provided at the end of each section for clarity, focusing on documents to be prepared to demonstrate design compliance. Applicants should engage with the Council's Development Management team to determine the full range of documents that should accompany an application.

How to use this document

The Design Guide is separated into several distinct documents. Part 1 of the Design Guide, the **Design Principles** was adopted in January 2025 and applies across all types of development in Bexley to ensure consistency and quality. This is followed by additional guidance specific to certain types of development, including:

- **Small Sites** – sites below 0.25 hectares
- **Building Alterations and Extensions** – extensions and alterations to existing residential and non-residential buildings
- **Area Types** – common and emerging development types in Bexley e.g. industrial sites
- **Site Design Codes** – design guidance for areas undergoing significant change (these will be provided as part of the new Local Plan for Bexley).

These documents are supported by a **Technical Handbook** that contains detailed specialist information and standards required for certain planning applications, including *highways*, waste, sustainability and biodiversity.

The documents are colour-coded to aid navigation and each section of design advice is given a sequential number for ease of reference. Design Principles are given the prefix **D**. Small Site codes are given the prefix **S**, Building Alterations codes **B**, and Area Types codes **A**. The prefix for the Site Design Codes will be based upon the name of the area that is being planned.

The codes either use the words must, should or could. These indicate the strength of the guidance and whether it is required to meet adopted policy or suggestive – see Fig.03. The codes only apply to relevant forms of development as judged appropriate by the planning officer assessing the relevant proposal.

The document uses precedent examples to illustrate the guidance, with text provided that explains what is deemed successful about the development. The use of these precedents does not automatically guarantee the approval of similar designs. All submissions to the Council will be determined based on their individual merits within their Bexley context.

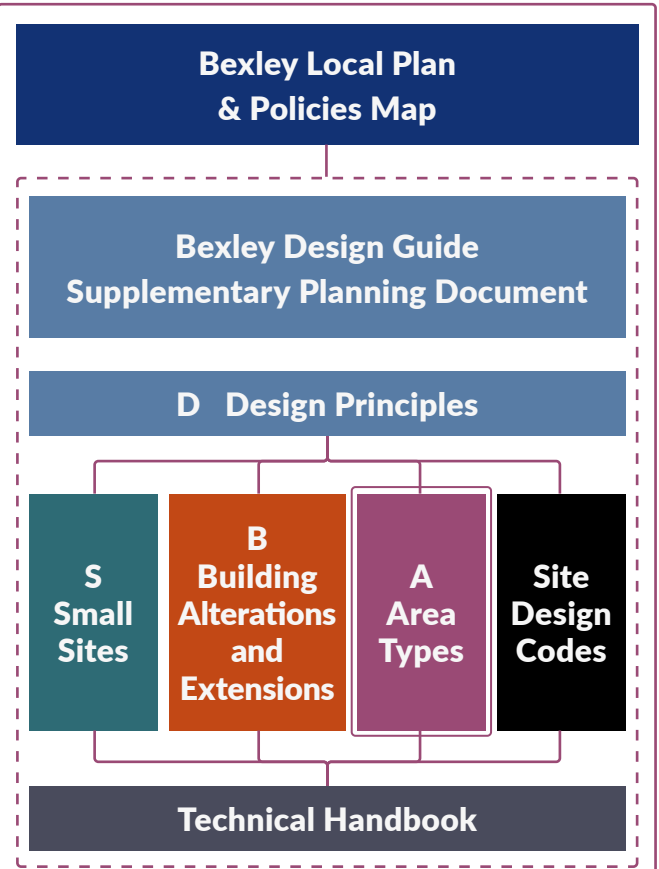


Fig.02 The documents that will form the Design Guide SPD. This consultation focuses on the documents comprising Part 2: Small Sites, Building Alterations and Extensions Area Types and the Technical Handbook

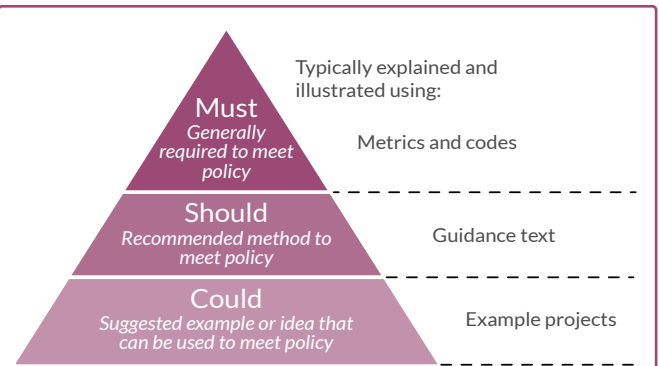


Fig.03 The strength of the guidance is indicated in the use of the words must, should or could.

Fig.04 Example pages of the document with annotated features

Section title	Design codes with a prefix (e.g. B) and a number for referencing	Document title	Chapter title
London Borough of Bexley	Design Guide SPD Part 2	Area Types	1 Tall Buildings and Building Heights
Tall Buildings and Building Heights	A05 Applicants must create high-quality, exemplary architecture that has a positive impact on the townscape <i>Bexley Local Plan Policies SP5 Placemaking through good design and DP11 Achieving high-quality design outline the Council's vision for high design quality across the borough, with new development making a positive contribution to the local area and protecting the best aspects of Bexley's character. Applicants must demonstrate how proposals successfully integrate with the immediate setting, and Bexley more widely.</i> 1.72 Increases in height and density can provide focal points and assist with wayfinding within an area. This wayfinding should not solely be a result of increased height, rather achieved through exemplary design that enhances the existing place. 1.73 Applicants should consider how their proposal will impact the streetscape, townscape and skyline, ensuring a design that works as a collective whole. 1.74 As noted in A04, the building should respond to the wider street and public realm and should be inviting, bringing vitality and vibrancy to the street. Given Bexley's typically low- to mid-rise nature, upper levels will determine how the building is viewed within the wider townscape and at long range on the skyline, thus its should be demonstrated how the design has evolved at both micro and macro levels. 1.75 Elevations must create visual interest and applicants should consider the articulation of window openings and balconies, the layering of materials and high-quality detailing to enhance façades. Buildings should be designed with sufficient depth which can also assist with thermal comfort. As a minimum, the Council will expect all homes to be designed with a full brick reveal.	1.76 Particular attention should be paid to the integration of rooftop plant and safety equipment such as window cleaning hoists and guard rails. Plant should be sufficiently obscured to complement the architectural expression and with regard to views towards the building. 1.77 Specified materials should be informed through the Character Appraisal, with applicants assessing existing surrounding materials to determine an appropriate response. Applicants should also consider materiality appropriate to the typology. A complementary or contrasting design response could be used, as set out in the metrics opposite. 1.78 Chosen materials must protect and/or enhance the area, particularly at night when combined with artificial lighting that should be sensitively located. Materials should be chosen for their longevity, particularly as the use of high-quality materials can reduce ongoing or future maintenance. 1.79 During the pre-application discussions and with an application, applicants should present a material specification with example images. These materials should also be shown on any 3D townscape views. 1.80 Subject to planning approval and typically secured by condition, for larger schemes, or those where materiality is a critical design factor, applicants will be required to construct in-situ physical samples of key façade materials prior to commencement to demonstrate suitability in their surroundings. 1.81 Applicants should consider the detailing of thresholds, soffits, door and window reveals and key junctions during design development. The Council will typically require head, jamb and sill details for windows and doors, amongst others, to be submitted by condition to satisfy that what is set out in drawings at planning will be maintained through to completion.	Sheepcote Road, Harrow-on-the-hill <i>Threefold Architects</i> The elevations draw inspiration from Harrow's interwar architecture of shopping parades and high streets. A layered composition is created using a palette of grey and rose-hued brickwork with red brick detailing and accents at lintels, podiums and thresholds, which respond to the material palette of adjacent existing buildings. Varying brick bonds, brick pillars and projection are used to add further depth and texture across the façades.   © 1:Threefold Architects; 2: Jack Hobhouse

Implementation text including guidance on when the code applies

Metrics and/or a design approach that can be used to meet the code

Imagery, including diagrams, numbered figures, example projects, tables, and maps to illustrate the text

Where underlined, highlighted text is used, this is a link to external resources. Where *italic text* is used, this word or phrase is a technical term and is included in the Glossary. **Highlighted text** indicates a link to information elsewhere in the document. **Highlighted, italic text** is used to denote figures and diagrams.

Common Considerations

The following identifies several considerations common across all four areas types. These include preparing and submitting a development proposal, ensuring compliance with the Development Plan and more general principles of good design.

Building a design team

- ▶ Developers should be advocates for creating high-quality places by engaging high-quality specialists early in the design process to provide advice, develop proposals and coordinate and submit a planning application. The [RIBA](#) and [CIAT](#) are valuable resources when seeking architects or architectural technologists.
- ▶ Other consultants required may include structural, civil and electrical engineers, landscape architects, quantity surveyors, conservation architects, ecologists and arboriculturalists. An architect or planning specialist will be able to confirm whose services are required for the project.

The planning process and the benefits of pre-application

- ▶ Given the nuances and sensitivities associated with development in the highlighted area types, utilising the Council's pre-application services is strongly recommended. This service provides the opportunity to discuss design development with relevant Council officers, offering clarity on what will be both expected and accepted by the Council at planning submission stage. A Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) can be arranged for larger schemes and should be discussed with the Council's [Development Management](#) team.
- ▶ The amount of information required with a planning application will vary according to the complexity and scale of development. This can be discussed with the Council during pre-application. To allow for a smoother application process, submissions should comply with the Council's [validation checklist](#) which details the correct format information should be submitted in.

Design Review

- ▶ Section D 02 of the [Design Guide SPD Part 1 - Design Principles](#) emphasises the importance of the Design Review process to allow an independent panel to assess a design response and provide advice on how to improve design quality. The section sets out the types of development the Council expects to attend Design Review, many of which would include those explored in this document.

Character Appraisal

- ▶ Section D 01 of the Design Guide SPD Part 1 - Design Principles sets out what information applicants should include in a Character Appraisal, which should demonstrate an understanding of the character of the site and its surroundings. This should be used to inform a contextually responsive proposal that will protect and/or enhance an area's character and its amenities as required by [Bexley Local Plan](#) Policy DP11 Achieving high quality design.
- ▶ Where there is minimal, immediately local context to refer to, applicants could refer to development sites in appropriately similar, suburban settings and present robust justification for why such a precedent is appropriate/applicable to Bexley.

Planning constraints

- ▶ Whilst undertaking a Character Appraisal, it will likely identify a number of planning policy areas, or planning constraints, applicable to a site. These areas are defined zones where additional planning controls exist and will need to be considered during design development. These include Sustainable Development Locations, [Article 4 Directions](#) and Tree Protection Orders.
- ▶ Applicants should refer to the Key Diagram in the Bexley Local Plan for significant planning constraints and the [Bexley Local Plan Policies Map](#) is a useful resource for identifying other constraints.

Conservation Areas

- ▶ *Conservation Areas* are so designated to protect the special architectural and historic value of these areas. With development located within a *Conservation Area*, applicants must demonstrate how the proposal will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area.
- ▶ The Council's *Conservation Area* and Appraisal and Management Plan for each *Conservation Area* provides guidance on what is deemed suitable development.
- ▶ At the time of publishing the Council has four Article 4 Directions applicable to *Conservation Areas*. Applicants should check these to understand whether Permitted Development rights in these locations are more limited as a result.

Listed buildings

- ▶ *Listed* are subject to *Listed Building* Consent which is separate from planning permission.
- ▶ The determination process will consider the potential harm to the features of *listed buildings* or their setting and development which falls into these categories must, therefore, be sensitively designed to respect the special architectural character or historic interest of the building.
- ▶ Applicants should refer to D 05 of the Design Guide SPD Part 1 – Design Principles which provides more detailed guidance on both *Conservation Areas* and *listed buildings*.

Response to context

- ▶ Information on the proposed material specification must be provided alongside elevation drawings which show the proposal within its surrounding context. 3D townscape and streetscape drawings should accurately depict proposed materials to allow the Council to draw conclusions on their suitability.

Ongoing maintenance and management

- ▶ Effective maintenance and management is key to the ongoing use and enjoyment of developments. A Maintenance and Management Plan should be submitted with a planning application, and evident in design choices, for example the specification of materials and layout of soft landscaping.

Movement

- ▶ Development should promote active travel in accordance with the priority set out in the Design Principles. This requires good design and the necessary infrastructure to ensure pedestrians and cyclists feel safe.
- ▶ Given the importance of bus services supporting access to jobs, education and services, development should not adversely affect bus operations, bus stop accessibility or existing and future bus priority measures.
- ▶ New and redeveloped routes should be easy and straightforward to navigate and follow the Healthy Streets concept, meaning these are designed beyond their primary movement function, also creating joyous places for all to enjoy.

Safety in the public realm

- ▶ Designing spaces that increase residents' sense of safety and belonging is vital to the success of a place. Applicants should refer to the GLA guidance [Safety in Public Spaces: Designing for Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People](#) which sets out how new development can mitigate against safety concerns and make public space more accessible and inclusive.

Climate resilience and environmental sustainability

- ▶ As set out in the Design Guide SPD Part 1 – Design Principles, applicants must follow the GLA's energy hierarchy to 'be lean, be clean, be green and be seen', and proposals that exceed minimum policy requirements will be looked upon favourably. The *Design and Access Statement* and other reports

such as an Energy Statement, Whole Life Cycle Carbon Assessment and *Circular Economy* Statement, must evidence how the energy hierarchy has been followed.

- ▶ Proposals must respond to the site's climatic opportunities and constraints, employing passive design measures and optimising the orientation, layout, form and *massing*, and design to utilise and control solar gains and natural ventilation, whilst mitigating against current and future risks. For example, applicants should balance the provision of fenestration with mitigating against excessive solar gains, particularly to south- and west-facing aspects.
- ▶ The [Design Guide SPD Part 2 - Technical Handbook](#) provides guidance on employing *circular economy* principles for all development, however for all *major* applications, applicants must evidence this consideration. The Character Appraisal should be used to identify opportunities to *retrofit* and refurbish existing structures.
- ▶ The [Circular Economy Statements LPG](#) by the GLA advocates for the completion of pre-redevelopment and pre-demolition audits, which the Council supports. This allows developers to identify structures suitable for retention and assess materials to be managed, recycled and reused following any demolition early in the design process.
- ▶ When developing a material specification, applicants must consider the *circular economy* of their proposal. Locally sourced, reused and recycled materials should be prioritised, with consideration given to waste reduction during construction and how materials perform over time. Innovative building materials and systems, especially those with low embodied energy, should be considered and specified where appropriate.
- ▶ Applicants should clearly articulate their chosen material palette in 3D *massing* images, sections and elevations provided with a planning submission. A material

palette and indicative specification must also be provided.

- ▶ In line with Bexley Local Plan Policy DP30 Mitigating climate change, applicants must consider water conservation and recycling during operation, such as the specification of water-efficient fittings and rainwater collection for reuse.

Biodiversity and ecology

- ▶ Where applicable, applicants must comply with *Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)* legislation, achieving a 10% uplift in biodiversity on-site, unless exceptions apply. Due to the benefits to building users and Bexley's wildlife alike, applicants should seek opportunities to improve the biodiversity irrespective of an exemption, and deliver enhancements. Applicants must demonstrate how all on site opportunities are maximised, before the Council will consider requests to provide BNG off-site. The Technical Handbook provides further guidance on achieving BNG compliance.

Flood risk

- ▶ As set out in Bexley Local Plan Policy DP32 Flood risk management, the borough is prone to several types of flooding and parts of Bexley, predominantly in the north of the borough, are located within Flood Zones 2 and 3. In accordance with the [Bexley Strategic Flood Risk Assessment \(SFRA\)](#), Policy DP32 identifies the criteria and requirements for all development within areas at risk of flooding.
- ▶ In line with Bexley Local Plan Policy DP33 *Sustainable Drainage Systems*, *green infrastructure*, such as raingardens, swales and the planting of trees must be embedded within proposals to support water management and mitigate against the flood risk. Applicants should consider how their scheme can contribute to existing green corridors to support Bexley's biodiversity and ecology.

1 Tall Buildings and Building Heights

- A01 Proposals should prioritise engagement with local stakeholders to deliver growth that benefits their community
- A02 Development must protect heritage, important views and natural features
- A03 Bexley’s character should be respected, enhanced and celebrated through the design of new tall buildings and high density developments
- A04 Proposals should provide residents with functional spaces to live and foster a sense of community
- A05 Applicants must create high-quality, exemplary architecture that has a positive impact on the townscape
- A06 Developments should ensure resident comfort by designing for the *microclimate* and promoting climate resilience

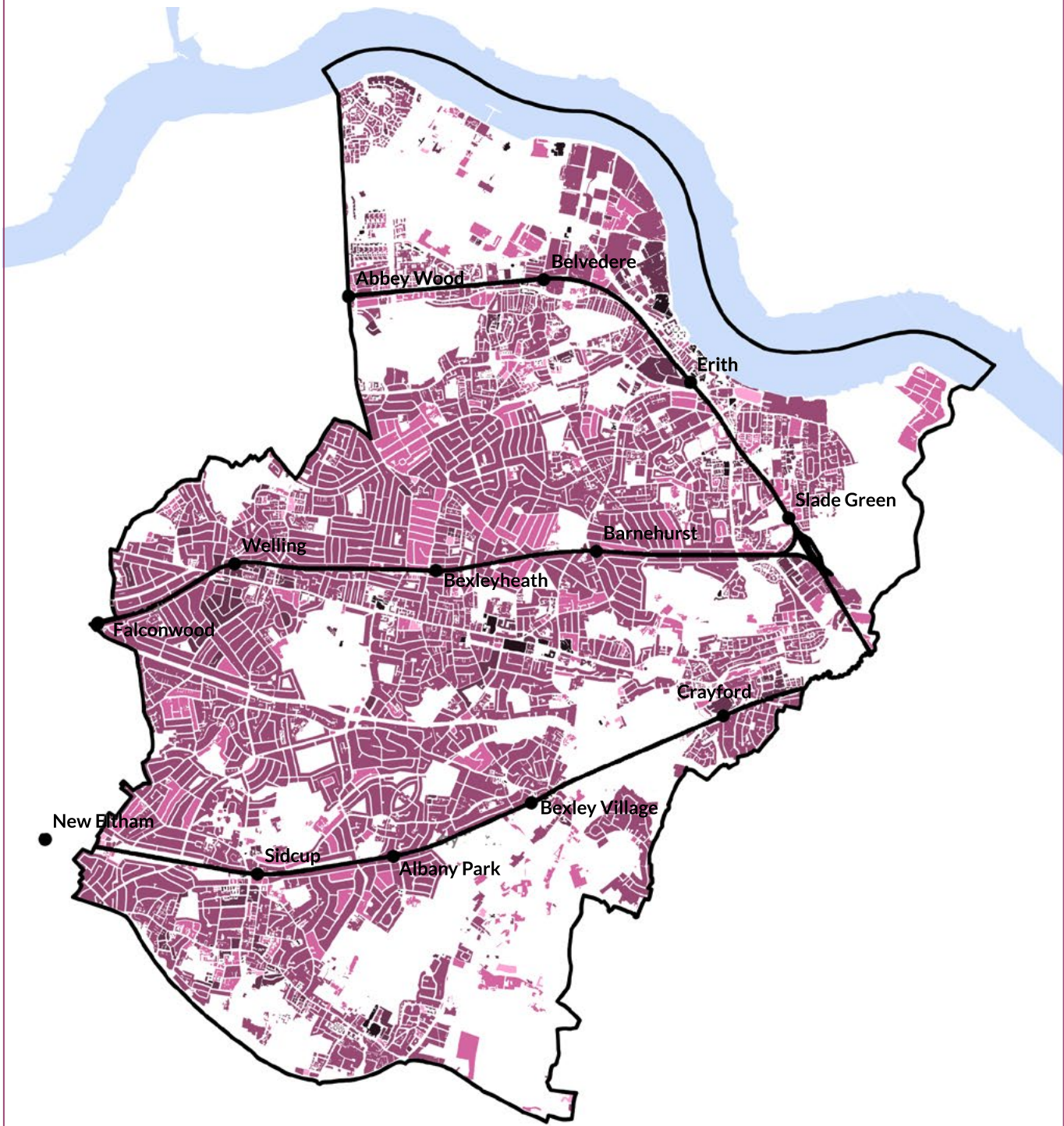
Bexley’s built character and a vision for height

- ▶ The [Bexley Local Character Study](#), and [Bexley Urban Morphology Study](#) illustrate that much of Bexley’s residential stock is relatively low rise. Building heights generally increase to the north of the borough in Thamesmead, but tall buildings are rare, as shown in [Fig.05](#).
- ▶ As an outer London borough, the suburban context is an important characteristic of Bexley, however, as Bexley Local Plan Policy SP5 Placemaking through good design states, whilst good design should respect the existing character and context, it need not be constrained by what exists as local character evolves over time.
- ▶ In sensitive locations, such as *Conservation Areas*, it may be considered more appropriate to preserve and enhance the existing setting and applicants should use their Character Appraisal to identify the most appropriate response.
- ▶ There is a need for new housing supply, which presents opportunities to increase density and building heights in a manner suitable for Bexley’s suburban context.
- ▶ In suitable locations, this might look like the introduction of tall buildings, however the development of several mid-rise buildings or vertically extending existing buildings may be more appropriate. For guidance on the latter, applicants should refer to the [Design Guide SPD Part 2 – Small Sites](#).
- ▶ Introducing taller buildings and increased densities can have an impact on an area’s activity levels. Proposals must be supported by other benefits for residents and the wider community, with a commitment to investing in the infrastructure around these developments enabling communities to thrive.
- ▶ The guidance that follows addresses how applicants can introduce taller buildings and increasing built densities, through contextually sensitive, high-quality design that creates places for all people to enjoy and live comfortably.

The benefits of increasing built density can include:

- a. Strengthening the case for improved public transport infrastructure and the potential for active travel thereby reducing reliance on car travel
- b. Improving access to shops and community amenities such as healthcare facilities, schools and libraries to support communities
- c. The potential for an enhanced *public realm* and the provision of new, and improved, public spaces

Fig.05 Bexley’s building heights



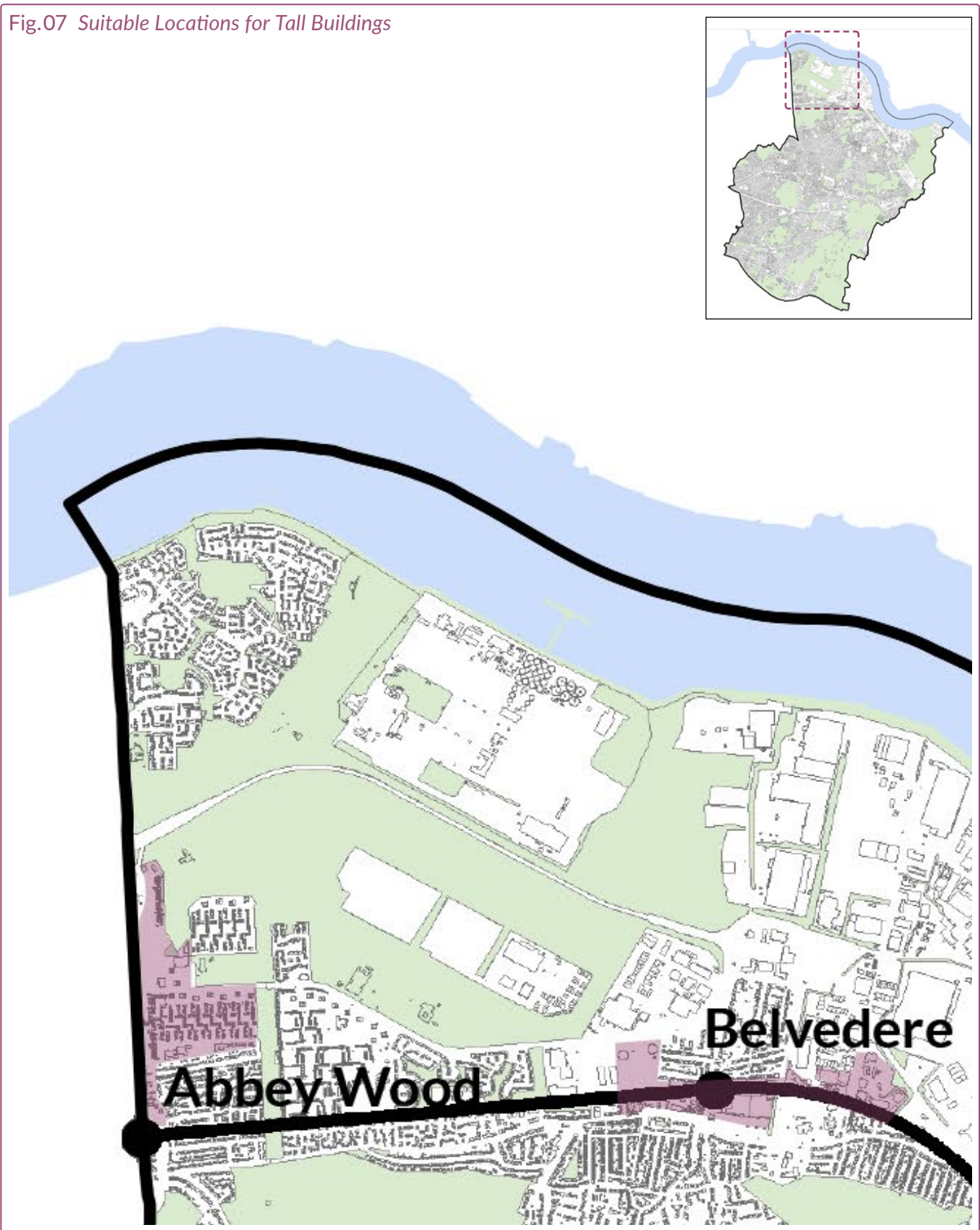
- Railway stations
- <1 storey
- 1-2 storeys
- 2-3 storeys
- 3-4 storeys
- 4+ storeys

Building heights and tall buildings in Bexley

- ▶ The term ‘tall building’ is relative to an individual place and directly correlates to the character of that place.
In Bexley, for example, when located within a predominately two-storey residential context, an eight-storey building may read as a tall building, which would differ from a more built up, urban context. Introducing height and density must, therefore, be considered relevant to the specific site context.
- ▶ Increasing building heights and densities will impact both the immediate site and its wider surroundings, whilst also prompting changes to the skyline that will have implications on the character of a place when viewed at long range.
- ▶ Such development must be appropriately located to ensure growth is delivered whilst respecting the borough’s suburban character.
- ▶ The Bexley Local Plan sets out several site allocations which play a critical role in the delivery of residential and residential-led mixed use developments. These sites are typically located in areas identified as appropriate for increased building heights and sites are identified to support the delivery of housing at a scale that responds to local needs and aspirations.
- ▶ Site allocations are supported by their own unique policies that set out appropriate land uses, targeted, minimum numbers of homes and other site-specific requirements such as providing *active frontages*, the delivery of cycle infrastructure and enhancing green wildlife corridors. When proposing development on these sites, applicants must demonstrate compliance with the site allocation policy and other relevant policy in the Development Plan. Guidance across the Design Guide SPD should be used to inform the development.

Fig.06 Tall buildings and building heights as defined by Policy DP12 in the Local Plan. See the Policies Map for boundaries of designated areas.	
Area	Maximum height
a. Suitable Locations for Tall Buildings – Refer to Policy DP12	45m – typically 15 storeys
b. Sustainable Development Locations – Refer to Policy SP1 Strategic Industrial Locations (SIL) – Refer to Policy DP7 Thamesmead and Abbey Wood Opportunity Area not within a.	25m – typically eight storeys
c. All other areas in the borough not covered by the above categories	15m – typically four storeys

- ▶ [Bexley Local Plan](#) Policy DP12 Tall buildings and building heights provides parameters for building heights across the borough as set out in [Fig.06](#). The policy defines what constitutes a tall building within Bexley and supports the intensification of housing provision in appropriate locations.
- ▶ Applicants should note that Policy DP12 Tall buildings and building heights is a policy in five parts and each must be worked through before moving to the next part.
- ▶ Part 1 of the Policy states that all development proposals should demonstrate a regard for the existing or emerging character and context of the area, whilst reflecting other design and policy requirements, and this should be done through the Character Appraisal.
- ▶ When identifying the emerging character and context of an area, applicants should refer to Development Plan land use designations, including relevant Local Plan site allocations and planning designations for the site and/or adjoining sites, to understand how the context may evolve over time.
- ▶ Part 2 of the Policy identifies building heights normally acceptable across a range of locations, and where development would not fall within a specific planning policy area, applies a 15m maximum building height.
Within areas defined as Sustainable Development Locations, Strategic Industrial Locations (SIL), and within parts of the Thamesmead and Abbey Wood London Plan Opportunity Area, maximum heights of 25m are generally acceptable.
- ▶ Bexley Local Plan Policy SP1 Achieving sustainable development – the spatial strategy, identifies several areas known as Sustainable Development Locations within the borough. These are:
 - a. Areas within 800 metres walking distance of, and including, Bexley’s Major and District Town Centres and 400 metres from Local Town Centres;
 - b. Areas in the borough within 800 metres of railway stations that have a corresponding town centre nearby and 400 metres where the station has no adjacent town centre; and,
 - c. Areas with public transport access levels (PTALs) of 3-6.
- ▶ Key to the sustainable growth of the borough, Sustainable Development Locations benefit from the most access to public transport, shops and other amenities and the policy outlines that new housing, and the associated services, facilities and amenities should be focused within these areas. The location of these public functions and amenities should be considered and evident in justifying proposals for tall buildings and increased density.
- ▶ Shown in [Fig.07](#) overleaf and in addition to the areas outlined in 2b of the Policy, two designated areas are identified as Suitable Locations for Tall Buildings. These benefit from good transport connections and the amenities provided by the town centres of Abbey Wood Village and Lower Belvedere.
- ▶ The character area studies in [Fig.08](#) identify key features that will be relevant when proposing height in these two locations, however applicants should build upon this with their own Character Appraisal. Understanding the existing character of a place is vital in ensuring these places can support the introduction of new housing.



Optimising site density

- ▶ In a largely suburban context such as Bexley, high-rise buildings should not be considered the only means of increasing densities and providing new homes and other improvements.
- ▶ To ensure sustainable density and respond to Bexley's spatial conditions, low- and mid-rise typologies, such as courtyard and mansion blocks, maisonettes and terraced housing should also be explored as these typologies will often result in an incremental increases in density, at a height more in keeping with the context.
- ▶ These typologies can be developed alongside taller structures that become key focal points in the area whilst lower-rise accommodation is developed to respond to the human scale, mediate between potentially sensitive edge conditions and enhance residential variety. This approach can avoid the over-densification of sites that can create overlooking and amenity and outlook concerns.
- ▶ As required by Part 3 of [Bexley Local Plan](#) Policy DP12 Tall buildings and building heights, when proposing development over 15m, applicants must justify their approach to height and densification through a Design Appraisal.
- ▶ Design Appraisals should communicate that the appropriateness of other mid- to high-rise typologies to achieve similar densities has been adequately explored and discounted. Justification for discounting these other typologies must be provided.
- ▶ Applicants are encouraged to apply the principles of GLA guidance on [Optimising Site Capacity: A Design-led Approach](#) LPG when evaluating different typologies.
- ▶ Each Design Appraisal will be specific to its context, evidencing consideration for the height of the immediate context and the surrounding existing typologies – and how the proposal will respond to these.

Questions to address when considering a site's suitability for height:

- a. What are typical building heights within the immediate context?
- b. Is the site in a suitable location to accommodate height above 15m?
- c. What are the unique site constraints and opportunities that can inform the height and *massing* of the development?
- d. What existing, nearby typologies can be used to inform proposals for height?

Fig.09 An example site, showing how prevailing context heights within a 100m and 300m radius should be identified when proposing tall buildings



- ▶ To demonstrate how increased heights could also come forward on adjacent sites in the future and show that the proposal will not preclude their development potential, applicants may be required to present sketch options showing their development in the context of a wider growth area.
- ▶ When assessing the local context, applicants should assess and demonstrate the site's suitability for height in line with the questions outlined in the purple box. Evidence of answers to each question should be provided with the Design Appraisal.
- ▶ To demonstrate the potential impact of the development at both short and long range, applicants should analyse the context heights within a 100m and 300m radius from the site, as demonstrated in **Fig.09**. This assessment does not negate the need to complete a Heritage, Townscape, Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA).
- ▶ The assessment outlined in **Fig.09** should be used as a starting point to ascertain an appropriate height and *massing* for the development site given the potential for tall buildings to significantly impact the townscape, skyline and character of Bexley.
- ▶ The Design Appraisal should be suitably illustrated to communicate the testing of different *massing* and typology strategies, approaches to providing communal amenity spaces within these options and initial transport and movement mapping. Applicants should provide information on access from the development to local amenities and nearby public transport links.
- ▶ The Design Appraisal must clearly identify the opportunities and constraints that have informed each *massing* option, as well as the pros and cons of each. Plans should be accompanied by contextual sections, elevations and 3D *massing* studies.
- ▶ The appointment of all relevant specialisms early in the design process, and to inform the evolution of the Design Appraisal, is strongly recommended. This includes landscape, ecology and arboricultural expertise to establish the potential ecological and biodiversity impact of each proposed typology. During this stage, applicants should address existing trees, habitats and ecosystems, demonstrating an initial, strategic approach to landscape design, urban greening and enhancing and supporting biodiversity.
- ▶ Through the Design Appraisal, applicants should evidence how development located close to existing habitats, open space and waterways will not negatively impact habitats being supported in these natural environments. Landscape, ecology and arboricultural expertise should establish a landscape-forward approach at Design Appraisal stage, mitigating the potential proposal to remove existing trees which have clear amenity and ecological value.
- ▶ Design Appraisals must be presented to Council Officers during pre-application discussions and included within planning submissions. Only once the principle of development has been established and agreed with the Council and other stakeholders, can applicants begin to further refine an approach to height and *massing*, progressing to part four of Policy DP12 Tall buildings and building heights.
- ▶ Throughout this next design stage, applicants should continue to work collaboratively with the Council and other stakeholders through further pre-application meetings and ongoing stakeholder consultation and engagement.

Tall Buildings and Building Heights

A01 Proposals should prioritise engagement with local stakeholders to deliver growth that benefits their community

National Design Guide Paragraph 17 supports working with local communities to ensure well-designed places and buildings. The guidance encourages co-design and workshops to ensure proposals reflect local community needs and preferences and are embedded within the local setting.

- 1.1 Local communities should be included in design development, ensuring the delivery of projects that create even better places for all people to enjoy. Early and inclusive engagement, proportionate to the scale and potential impact of the proposal, should be undertaken. Engaging with residents, community groups, businesses and other stakeholders can ensure that new developments are not only more acceptable, but also better integrated and more beneficial to the local area and its communities.
- 1.2 D 06 of the [Design Guide SPD Part 1 – Design Principles](#) sets out how an engagement strategy should be developed during the earliest design stage and the form engagement may take. Applicants should allow for ongoing consultation and engagement to be undertaken as the scheme evolves, rather than once a proposal has been designed and fixed. This enables local knowledge, and concerns, to shape the project.
- 1.3 Where appropriate, applicants are strongly encouraged to embed elements of co-production into their design process, working with a variety of local stakeholders to evolve aspects of a project. This could include contributing ideas towards facade design, public space around the building,

Engagement should address both strategic and site-specific issues such as:

- a. Appropriateness of height and scale in the local context
- b. The impact on the townscape and skyline, including key views and landmarks
- c. Relationships to heritage, key views and natural assets and features
- d. *Public realm* quality, access, permeability and legibility
- e. Microclimate effects, such as wind, daylight, and overshadowing
- f. Ground floor uses and community benefits
- g. Construction impacts and long-term management

- ground floor uses, landscaping and materials.
- 1.4 Applicants should demonstrate how stakeholder feedback has been considered, incorporated or balanced within constraints, providing this information within the *Design and Access Statement* and the *Statement of Community Involvement*.
 - 1.5 Given the potential impact of such schemes and the changes they can initiate within an area, applicants should work with community stakeholders to identify opportunities to ensure the ongoing social value and local benefit of a new development. Opportunities to deliver community-led facilities or provide local employment and skills training will be looked upon favourably by the Council.
 - 1.6 Engagement should extend beyond the planning submission and the community should be kept involved and updated during detailed design and delivery stages, particularly for larger and multi-phase projects.
 - 1.7 The delivery of housing provides an opportunity to embed Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) into the design process, obtaining feedback on how the development performs whilst occupied.
 - 1.8 On large scale housing schemes, applicants could implement a POE strategy that enables information gathering on building and energy use and occupier satisfaction which can inform future, similar schemes. Applicants should refer to the RIBA document [Post Occupancy Evaluation: An Essential Tool to Improve the Built Environment](#) for further information on the benefits of POE.
 - 1.9 Applicants are also encouraged to demonstrate learning from POE on other, comparable schemes when presenting their proposals to the LPA.

Citizens House, Lewisham
Archio

The design process began with a three day codesign workshop with future residents, facilitated in an on-site temporary office, enabling the interests and perspectives of the local community to be embedded in the design from the outset. In advance of a planning submission, further design workshops were conducted on-site and in addition to monthly meetings with a resident steering group that was established. As a result of working with the community, a new shared public space is central to the design enabling resident events such as the estate summer barbecue.



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Tall Buildings and Building Heights

A02 Development must protect heritage, important views and natural features

Bexley Local Plan Policy SP8 Green infrastructure including designated Green Belt protects Metropolitan Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land from inappropriate development, whilst also protecting and enhancing the biodiversity, heritage and archaeological values of the borough's open spaces and its wildlife and ecological corridors. Policy SP9 Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological assets sets out protection for Sites of Importance for Nature Conservations (SINCs) and other designated nature conservation sites and resisting development that would have a significant adverse impacts on protected species and priority habitats. Policy DP14 Development affecting a heritage asset where the Council specifies that development proposals with the potential to directly or indirectly impact a heritage asset or its setting, should meet NPPF requirements to describe the significance of the asset and demonstrate how the proposal conserves or enhances this significance. Policy DP13 Protecting local views outlines the criteria a development must meet if it has the potential to affect a designated Locally Significant Views within London Borough of Bexley.

- 1.10 Outlined in D 05 of the Design Guide SPD Part 1 – Design Principles, Bexley is home to several significant *Listed* and *Locally Listed Buildings* and boasts 23 *Conservation Areas*. Given the special architectural and historical merit of these assets and area, their designations are in place to protect them and allow people to enjoy them for years to come.
- 1.11 Bexley also benefits from expanses of green and blue spaces such as those designated as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), Green Belt, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and waterways and parks that residents, visitors and

Unity Place, Brent
Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, Alison Brooks Architects, Gort Scott

Orientated towards a Grade I-listed Church, the development re-establishes historic street patterns through mansion block and villa typologies typical of the area. Building blocks pull apart nearer the church to frame views in the *public realm*. Ranging from four to eight storeys, buildings are designed to reinstate the character and scale of the neighbourhood whilst being dense enough to deliver much needed homes and amenity.



© Paul Riddle

- wildlife benefit from. Lesnes Abbey Woods, in close proximity to Abbey Wood Village, is one such example.

1.12 Densification must not negatively harm this open space, and proposals will be assessed on whether they adequately protect and enhance the open quality and amenity of these natural assets.

1.13 Proposals for height near boundaries to *Conservation Areas*, *Listed* and *Locally Listed Buildings* must demonstrate that their proposal will preserve and/or enhance the character or appearance of areas/assets, as set out in Design Principles section D 05.

1.14 These heritage assets are often identified in site allocations and must be referenced during design development. Proposals must be suitably sensitive with regards to height, scale and *massing*, form and materiality, positively respond to any heritage assets and avoid harming them.

1.15 Bexley's Local Protected Views highlight some of the best aspects of the borough's built and natural environment, and any new development which falls within these views must preserve and/or enhance how they are experienced.

1.16 When responding to Bexley Local Plan Policy DP13 Protecting local views, within the Design Appraisal and subsequent design development, applicants must demonstrate how their proposal for height and/or density will not negatively impact these views. Proposals located within these Local Protected Views must not exceed the maximum heights set out in Bexley Local Plan Policy DP12 Tall buildings and building heights.

1.17 The potential impact of a proposals' height and *massing* must be assessed through a Heritage Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA) undertaken by a suitably qualified professional. During the pre-application process, applicants
- must agree the proposed verified views with the Case Officer and the Design and Conservation Officer(s).

1.18 In addition to the HTVIA, for *major* schemes that will have a significant visual impact on townscape, applicants should make use of Vu.City modelling software, Zones of Theoretical Visibility Testing, Accurate Visual Representations and verified views analysis throughout design development. Such tools could also be a useful design and discussion tool for smaller schemes and their use should be discussed with the Council.

1.19 These visualisation techniques should be used to ensure proposals adequately consider the local context and any heritage assets. Such testing becomes particularly important within *Conservation Areas* and near *listed buildings*, where new development must enhance and protect the special architectural and historic merit of these assets.

1.20 Applicants will be required to share their models and images from their models with the Council for review during the pre-application process, allowing the Council to independently assess the impact of a proposal.

Tall Buildings and Building Heights

A03 Bexley’s character should be respected, enhanced and celebrated through the design of new tall buildings and high density developments

National Design Guide Paragraph 71 states the importance of considering several factors in relation to the context and local character when proposing tall buildings. These include the location and siting, relationship to context; impact on local character, views and sight lines; composition - how they meet the ground and the sky; and environmental impacts, such as sunlight, daylight, overshadowing and wind.

- 1.21 Increased density and heights can be accommodated only when new development is sensitive to Bexley’s existing character. Development proposals that undermine the existing urban grain and townscape have the potential to alter a sense of a place, its character and identity and proposals that do not positively respond to and adversely impact upon the townscape are unlikely to be supported.
- 1.22 Applicants should be clear that optimising the site does not mean maximising the built form, and proposals must be sensitively designed in response to the local context, opportunities and constraints and provide clear benefits to existing and future residents.
- 1.23 A holistic approach to development is required to ensure that tall buildings respond and contribute to, and enhance, the existing context and avoid piecemeal, uncoordinated development. Tall buildings on standalone smaller sites that do not fit within a wider growth strategy have the potential to create fragmented places with inconsistent approaches to height that negatively impact the townscape and thus contravene the Development Plan.

Tower Court, Clapton Common
Adam Khan Architects, muf architecture/art, Child Graddon Lewis Architects

In an area of predominantly low- and mid-rise terraces and blocks of flats, the design team was commissioned to introduce greater density across an existing estate, which is achieved in introducing three new mansion blocks and one 12 storey tower. Extensive engagement with existing residents was undertaken to ensure the needs of returning residents are met, with particular attention paid to outdoor spaces to meet the need for gathering, socialising and play.



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- 1.24 Such standalone development will only be acceptable where it is demonstrated that it can contribute to a larger, future development. In these instances, applicants must provide drawings that show their development proposal within a reasonable hypothetical, future context to demonstrate that the proposal is compatible with an emerging context.
- 1.25 In part, planning applications will be assessed against how well the proposal responds to its immediate setting and wider context, therefore applicants must demonstrate how the additional height will positively contribute to the existing townscape, which should remain legible.
- 1.26 The proposed scale, massing and layout of tall buildings and increases in built density must demonstrate evidence how the potential impact on existing buildings has been considered and mitigated through design. In line with Bexley Local Plan Policy DP11 Achieving high quality design, applicants must demonstrate how their approach to height will accommodate an appropriate transition in scale in response to the existing townscape and character.
- 1.27 Increased building heights and densities can be sensitively achieved when these increases are planned gradually, with incremental changes in height creating less abrupt transitions between low-rise and medium-to-high-rise development. Applicants should mediate changes in scale and massing through design, for example by considering the location of height on the site and stepping the massing of taller elements or orientating buildings away from existing neighbours or designing landscaped buffers between existing and new development.
- 1.28 Tall buildings can impact upon people’s views of the sky, particularly if located close to the footpath. Buildings should therefore be appropriately located within the site to avoid their massing becoming overbearing within the public realm, with sufficient setbacks provided to enable the design of generous public realm around the building.
- 1.29 Daylight and sunlight analysis, carried out by a suitably qualified professional, should be undertaken to demonstrate the likely impact of the proposal on its setting, particularly where existing neighbouring buildings will be impacted by the development.
- 1.30 During the pre-application process and with a planning application, applicants should provide 3D massing views that demonstrate how buildings will be experienced at ground level to provide comfort that this has been duly considered.
- 1.31 Applicants should use guidance set out in the Spatial Quality chapter of the Design Guide SPD Part 1 – Design Principles to ensure adequate separation distances between existing and new buildings, providing diagrams and drawings that demonstrate how these have been met.

Tall Buildings and Building Heights

A04 Proposals should provide residents with high quality, functional spaces to live and foster a sense of community

As noted in the *Building heights and tall buildings in Bexley* section of this guidance, tall buildings and increased density will only be suitable in locations that can support residents' lives through good access to public transport, public amenities and services. Development will, therefore, typically be focused around town and neighbourhood centres.

Bexley Local Plan Policy DP9 Development within town centres defines the use classes appropriate within such contexts to contribute to the vitality of a place.

Policy SP2 Meeting Bexley's housing requirements sets out the borough's housing needs and applicants must demonstrate a housing mix that responds to these requirements.

London Plan Policy D9 Tall buildings defines tall buildings as those significantly taller than their surroundings and/or those that cause a notable change to the skyline and states that tall buildings should deliver public benefits to justify their scale and demonstrate high quality architecture that contributes positively to the local townscape.

Ground floor design

- 1.32 When designing for higher density living, designers should prioritise creating great places for people to live, work and spend time. The needs of those living within the development should be considered in tandem with those in existing communities who will interact with the new building(s) and the spaces around them.
- 1.33 The spaces created between and around built forms are opportunities to create destinations where people want to spend time, dwell and create social connections. New *public realm* should be generous and engaging and follow guidance provided in the *Public Realm, Town and Neighbourhood*

Centres chapter of this document. Ill-defined and leftover spaces should be avoided as these can lack the necessary passive surveillance and overlooking that can increase people's sense of safety.

- 1.34 In line with Bexley Local Plan Policy DP9 Development within town centres, proposed ground floor uses must contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of Bexley's town centres. Proposals should reflect community need to ensure that new spaces will be used and can bring transformational benefits to an area, whilst supporting the health and wellbeing of residents. Community and civic uses such as nurseries, healthcare facilities, supermarkets and cafés that provide key services, amenities and opportunities for social interaction should be prioritised.
- 1.35 Ground floor uses should be accessible for all and located to activate town centres. Requirements for servicing and ancillary space for non-residential uses, such as cycle and refuse stores, should be provided alongside those for residential homes and located to avoid excessive blank frontages at ground floor. The *Design Guide SPD Part 2 - Technical Handbook* provides further guidance on the design of these spaces for different use classes.
- 1.36 To support those with impaired mobility and encourage active travel, within cycle stores applicants should consider the inclusion of charging points for mobility scooters or electric bikes. Guidance on electric charging points is provided in the Technical Handbook.
- 1.37 Whilst ground floor occupants might not be known during design development, applicants should ensure that spatial requirements, such as adequate ventilation and refuse storage, are provided from the outset to avoid having to *retrofit* these upon occupation.

Eastside Quarter, Bexleyheath
RM_A Architects

Located in Bexley's Major town centre, the ground floor comprises a mixture of retail, business and leisure uses which activate the street frontages. Street-facing communal residential entrances and access to courtyard shared spaces further animate the ground floor level as residents come and go throughout the day.



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2: London Borough of Bexley

- 1.38 Routes to ground floor spaces should be legible within the *public realm*. Applicants should avoid the over provision of paths, particularly when this is detrimental to the provision of soft landscaping. Instead clearly defined routes, which benefit from passive surveillance, should be designed.
- 1.39 All building entrances should be legible, visually distinctive and provide residents and visitors with a safe means of access. Entrances should be clearly visible to the street, and the difference between access points to homes and ground floor uses should be easily identifiable.
- 1.40 Where separate entrances are provided for different tenures, these should be designed to be tenure blind, meaning that all entrances:
- a. Are designed with the same prominence in the street
 - b. Have the same scale of openings
 - c. Are designed to a high-quality and use the same equivalent material palettes and specification.
- 1.41 Along principal routes in locations deemed suitable for tall buildings, the provision of homes at ground floor is unlikely to be supported. Some exceptions may apply, for example those homes not accessed from primary streets and those within courtyard blocks. These should be accessed via front doors directly from the street to bring activity to these spaces and *defensible space* should always be provided to these homes and private amenity spaces should be located with regards to privacy, overlooking and overshadowing.
- 1.42 Where such homes are located within Flood Zones 2 and 3, applicants should follow guidance provided within the Design Guide SPD Part 1 - Design Principles regarding the location of *habitable rooms*.

Fold Apartments, Sidcup
Studio Egret West

The ground floor is designed as a continuation of the adjacent parade of shops, providing two commercial units with frontage wrapping round the building. These units are punctuated with residential entrances, ensuring passive surveillance along the route into the building.



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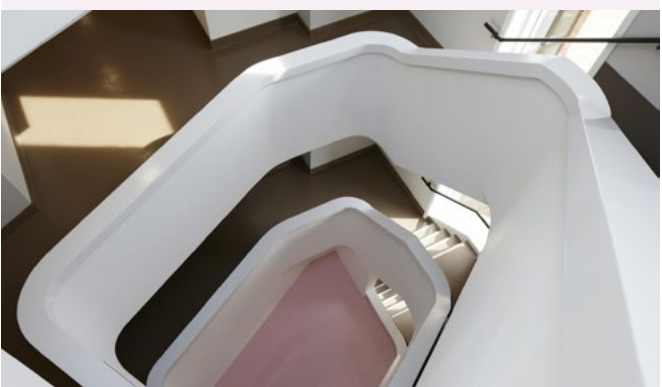
- 1.43 The design of ecologically sensitive lighting, and signage to aid with wayfinding and safety, should be considered using guidance provided in the Design Guide SPD Part 1 – Design Principles. Evidence of outline or indicative proposals should be provided during the pre-application process and the Council will typically seek to secure detailed information on a lighting and wayfinding/signage strategy by condition.

Internal spatial quality

- 1.44 Well-designed homes respond to their residents needs, therefore applicants must thoughtfully develop spatial layouts with future residents in mind. The health and wellbeing of residents should be considered, avoiding homes that are too small and badly laid out, poorly ventilated and lack natural light and adequate outdoor space, including play space.
- 1.45 The resident experience begins at building entrances, and lobbies and circulation spaces can present opportunities for interaction, cohesion and community. These spaces should, therefore, be well proportioned to create areas where residents feel comfortable to spend time.
- 1.46 Stair cores should typically be located adjacent to lift lobbies to encourage their use. Space in front of lifts should be generous to allow residents waiting during busier times and applicants should consider integrated seating to support those less mobile whilst waiting. Circulation spaces should, wherever possible, be naturally lit and avoid undefined spaces and excessive corners that do not benefit from passive surveillance and can create safety concerns.
- 1.47 Robust signage and spatial identities that include colour and lighting should be developed for lobbies and circulation spaces to aid with wayfinding. Chosen materials for signage and finishes within these spaces should be durable and easy to maintain and replace.

Forest Road, Walthamstow
Gort Scott

A perforated gate provides a visual link between the street and the communal courtyard, accessed through a lobby that provides post and parcel storage and long benches to encourage residents to dwell. A sculptural staircase runs throughout the building, with openings bring natural light into the stairwell.



© David Grandorge

- 1.48 London Plan policy dictates that housing must be high-quality, functional and provide adequately sized rooms that meet the needs of all residents. Section D 22 of the Design Guide SPD Part 1 – Design Principles provides guidance on how residents can achieve policy compliance - and strive for best practice - in line with both the London Plan and guidance in the [Housing Design Standards LPG](#). With a planning submission, applicants should provide drawings that illustrate quality, policy compliant homes, irrespective of tenure.
- 1.49 When providing family-sized homes, proposals should adequately reflect how families may live as their needs change and adapt. Storage should be maximised and where possible exceed the minimum policy provision. Where typologies permit, the provision of attics and sheds for family homes will be looked upon favourably by the Council.
- 1.50 Across all home sizes and tenures, opportunities to deliver flexible designs that enable residents to adapt their living spaces to changing needs and lifestyles over time should be considered. For example, to reflect a recent increase in home working, the provision of home offices that can also be used as a single bedroom to provide flexibility for intergenerational families or in cases of mobility issues, should be explored.

Facade design

- 1.51 The Design Guide SPD Part 1 - Design Principles provides guidance on designing for the protection of privacy, outlook and suitable daylight and sunlight levels to new and neighbouring buildings. Façade design should balance residents' need for outlook and sufficient daylight and sunlight with mitigating against overlooking and overheating. Window openings should be suitably sized and respond to the site

context without compromising on daylight and sunlight, given the importance of natural light to the quality of a space and people's mental and physical wellbeing.

- 1.52 Proposals must submit a Daylight and Sunlight Assessment undertaken by a suitably qualified professional to demonstrate adequate daylight and sunlight levels are achieved within the development and to neighbouring buildings.
- 1.53 Applicants are strongly encouraged to consider the appropriateness of full height windows, which can both limit furniture arrangements and result in both privacy and overheating issues. Their use should be justified and where used, applicants will be required to provide furniture layouts that demonstrate windows will not be obscured.
- 1.54 The location of private balconies and terraces should be designed to mitigate against overlooking between amenity spaces for different households. Material finishes should be chosen with this in mind, and applicants should demonstrate how privacy will be afforded to applicants.
- 1.55 Section D 15 of the Design Guide SPD Part 1 - Design Principles provides guidance on the design of balconies, stating a preference for inset, recessed balconies over bolt-on alternatives, particularly where these overhang the public *highway*. The same preference for inset balconies applies to high density and/or tall buildings, given the potential for increased resident comfort at height.

Communal amenity space

- 1.56 Applicants should strive to encourage cohesion and interaction through the thoughtful design of communal spaces. Where feasible, a hierarchy of different spaces, appropriate to the site's scale, should be interspersed throughout to provide several opportunities for residents to meet and interact with neighbours.

Crayford Town Hall, Crayford
Alan Camp Architects

At the centre of the development, communal amenity space, including play space, is overlooked by all homes providing a sense of safety to residents using the space. Different types of seating are provided throughout the courtyard to accommodate different users and their needs.

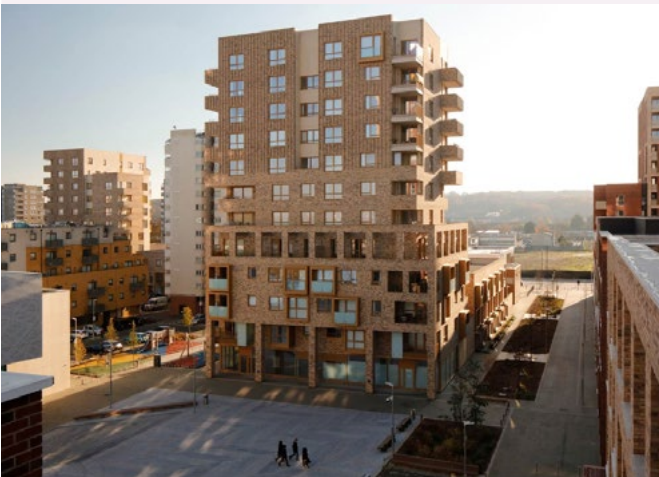


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- 1.57 On larger schemes, proposals should provide a primary communal space with features catering to a range of demographics to encourage intergenerational interaction, with other, smaller communal spaces with dedicated uses and programme.
- 1.58 Communal amenity must not be segregated by tenure and should be designed to be safe, functional and accessible to all residents, who should not have to leave and re-enter the development to access these spaces.
- 1.59 Communal amenity space should be provided as a mixture of indoor and outdoor spaces, which could include resident lounges, gardens and courtyards. Their locations should be considered from the outset of the design process, rather than provided in 'left over' space.
- 1.60 Access to outdoor space encourages physical activity and improved mental wellbeing. The activities programmed within communal space should promote these benefits, for example an outdoor gym or gardening facilities. The proposed programme of communal amenity spaces is an aspect of the design that could evolve through community engagement.
- 1.61 Guidance is provided in the Technical Handbook on designing inclusive play space within a development site. Off-site provisions or improvements to existing play space may be acceptable where on-site delivery would impact viability or where site constraints limit deliverability. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis where sufficient justification is provided by the applicant.
- 1.62 Communal amenity areas should also promote rest and relaxation and create spaces where people want to dwell. A mixture of seating options should be provided, and their arrangement should accommodate both individuals and larger

South Thamesmead Phase 1, Thamesmead
Proctor Matthews, Mecanoo

The first phase of the larger masterplan provides a new public square for residents and visitors with community facilities enclosing the square at ground level. A mixture of housing typologies is delivered through buildings of differing heights which are clustered around a series of shared courtyards, creating smaller communities within the larger whole. Playspace is overlooked from surrounding homes and provided with different seating options.



© Benedict Luxmoore Ltd.

groups. To increase resident comfort and assist with climate adaptation, shade should be designed into these spaces, either through trees or purpose-built structures.

- 1.63 Internal communal spaces should be generously sized, naturally lit and ventilated, and provide with an accessible toilet with baby changing facilities. Spaces should be flexible in their use and designers should consider the locations of plug sockets, storage space and (moveable) partitions to enable this flexibility.
- 1.64 Applicants should consider how to foster a sense of belonging across a range of residents, for example those who are neurodivergent. The design of lighting, layouts, colour palettes and ways to reduce visual and audio noise to provide a welcoming, calm space to spend time should be considered.
- 1.65 Clear wayfinding, both in the layout of paths and the provision of directional signage, should be to ease navigating these spaces.
- 1.66 The safety of users within communal space should be demonstrated in the proposed materials and boundary treatments. This is particularly important where communal amenity, including play space, is provided at roof level. Safety measures should be evidenced in drawings submitted with a planning application.
- 1.67 Some areas of Bexley can be particularly windy, therefore boundary treatments should be designed to provide adequate protection from the elements. These should not, however, prevent views across the borough and beyond which can be a benefit to developing taller buildings.
- 1.68 Access routes to all communal areas should be level, overlooked and easily accessible from homes. Communal space, particularly play space, should be overlooked by surrounding homes and other communal

spaces to ensure passive surveillance. Any internal communal amenity spaces should benefit from views out to communal areas for safety and passive surveillance.

Building management and maintenance

- 1.69 Communal space should be designed with ongoing maintenance in mind. Robust materials and soft landscaping should be used, and refuse bins provided.
- 1.70 The provision of spaces to support the management and maintenance of a development will depend on the management strategy. Where a managed approach will be adopted, applicants should demonstrate sufficient space dedicated to this, such as a concierge desk, post and/or deliveries room, welfare office and WC for a building manager and cleaner's stores.
- 1.71 Where no building management will be in place, evidence of alternatives should be provided at planning stage. For example, information where a development uses secured post boxes within the entrance lobby or letterboxes to individual front doors rather than a separate post room.

Tall Buildings and Building Heights

A05 Applicants must create high-quality, exemplary architecture that has a positive impact on the townscape

Bexley Local Plan Policies SP5 Placemaking through good design and DP11 Achieving high-quality design outline the Council's vision for high design quality across the borough, with new development making a positive contribution to the local area and protecting the best aspects of Bexley's character. Applicants must demonstrate how proposals successfully integrate with the immediate setting, and Bexley more widely.

- 1.72 Increases in height and density can provide focal points and assist with wayfinding within an area. This wayfinding should not solely be a result of increased height, rather achieved through exemplary design that enhances the existing place.
- 1.73 Applicants should consider how their proposal will impact the streetscape, townscape and skyline, ensuring a holistic design.
- 1.74 As noted in A 04, the building should respond to the wider street and public realm and should be inviting, bringing vitality and vibrancy to the street. Given Bexley's typically low- to mid-rise nature, upper levels will determine how the building is viewed within the wider townscape and at long range on the skyline and thus it should be demonstrated how the design has evolved at both micro and macro levels.
- 1.75 Elevations must create visual interest and applicants should consider the articulation of window openings and balconies, the layering of materials and high-quality detailing to enhance façades. Buildings should be designed with sufficient depth which can also assist with thermal comfort. As a minimum, the Council will expect a full brick reveal throughout.

Applicants could use one, or a combination, of the following design approaches when responding to the local context:

Complementary

- a. Where the complementary approach is taken materials are a close match and all details, arrangement of openings, and proportions of the original dwelling are reflected in the design. This approach is typically most appropriate in Conservation Areas and close to heritage assets.

Contrasting

- b. With the contrasting approach, the proposal takes cues from the materials, details, arrangement of openings, and proportions of the original building and responds positively to these features by using a design that is visually distinct from the existing dwelling.

- 1.76 Particular attention should be paid to the integration of rooftop plant and safety equipment such as window cleaning hoists and guard rails. Plant should be sufficiently obscured to complement the architectural expression and with regard to views towards the building, with this screening shown on all necessary submitted drawings.
- 1.77 Specified materials should be informed through the Character Appraisal, with applicants assessing existing surrounding materials to determine an appropriate response. Applicants should also consider materiality appropriate to the typology. A complementary or contrasting design response could be used, as set out in the metrics opposite.
- 1.78 Chosen materials must protect and/or enhance the area, particularly at night when combined with artificial lighting that should be sensitively located. Materials should be chosen for their longevity, particularly as the use of high-quality materials can reduce ongoing or future maintenance.
- 1.79 During the pre-application discussions and with an application, applicants should present a material specification with example images. These materials should also be shown on any 3D townscape views.
- 1.80 Subject to planning approval and typically secured by condition, for larger schemes, or those where materiality is a critical design factor, applicants will be required to construct in-situ physical samples of key façade materials prior to commencement to demonstrate suitability in their surroundings.
- 1.81 Applicants should consider the detailing of thresholds, soffits, door and window reveals and key junctions during design development. The Council will typically require head, jamb and sill details for windows and doors, amongst others, to be submitted by condition to satisfy that what is set out in drawings at planning will be maintained through to completion.

Sheepcote Road, Harrow-on-the-hill
Threefold Architects

The elevations draw inspiration from Harrow's interwar architecture of shopping parades and high streets. A layered composition is created using a palette of grey and rose-hued brickwork with red brick detailing and accents at lintels, podiums and thresholds, which respond to the material palette of adjacent existing buildings. Varying brick bonds, brick pillars and projection are used to add further depth and texture across the façades.



© 1:Threefold Architects, 2: Jack Hobhouse

Tall Buildings and Building Heights

A06 Developments should ensure resident comfort by designing for the *microclimate* and promoting climate resilience

Bexley Local Plan Policy DP30 Mitigating climate change sets out that developments must maximise the potential to achieve net zero at the time of construction or enable this to be achieved over the course of the building's lifespan. Proposals should respond to Bexley's current and future context and specific constraints, such as flooding risk. Policy DP33 Energy infrastructure states that developments within heat network priority areas should be designed to facilitate cost-effective connections to the existing or proposed network.

London Plan Policy D9 Tall Buildings requires the environmental impact of proposals to be carefully considered to ensure the comfort and enjoyment of open spaces around buildings, with potential impacts assessed.

The *Design Guide SPD Part 1 – Design Principles* sets out guidance for following the energy hierarchy to 'be lean, be clean, be green and be seen,' and all applicants should demonstrate how this will be achieved within their development.

- 1.82 Tall buildings can create variations in the urban environment that potentially negatively impact how residents will experience the surroundings following construction. Applicants must demonstrate an understanding of the local climatic context and consider the resultant *microclimate* that the development will sit in. This includes the potential cumulative impact of several developments coming forward over time therefore applicants should be aware of any recent approvals that may impact their proposal.
- 1.83 The potential effects of a tall building on the local *microclimate* should not be underestimated and analysis of the site's climatic conditions must be carried out during early design development to ensure

the proposal can be adapted to mitigate potential risks. Passive design solutions to minimise negative impacts, which can also reduce building operational costs should be explored.

- 1.84 Analysis should include the following:

a. Temperature – a review of annual peak high and low temperatures and average monthly temperatures to enable consideration for the annual variation and any stress points from extreme high and low weather events

b. Air movement – a review of how the building will impact air movement and how the *massing* can be designed to mitigate against pollution, whilst avoiding adverse conditions at ground floor

c. Wind – a review of the speed and direction of prevailing winds and how these will impact people's experience of open spaces within the *public realm* and private and communal amenity spaces

d. Noise – a review into the noise levels resulting from the building in use as well as air movement, and mitigating this to ensure people can enjoy full use of the spaces in and around the building

e. Solar radiation – a review into annual levels of direct and indirect solar radiation to understand whether the sun can be used to support the passive heating of internal spaces, therefore reducing heating demand during winter months. A further review into the daylight available within amenity spaces and that which can enter homes to understand the potential impact on residents' thermal comfort.
- 1.85 Where assessments highlight the need for mitigation through design, applicants should demonstrate evidence of how this is integrated into the architecture. For example, where prevailing winds are a concern, applicants should propose a suitable balcony design, whether using solid balustrades, inset balconies or winter

Gascoigne West Phase 2, Barking
White Arkitekter

The private residential amenity is designed to respond to the *microclimate* of the site, with projecting balconies provided to homes at lower levels, whilst recessed balconies are use throughout upper floors to ensure comfortable conditions for residents.



© Paul Riddle

gardens. Should winter gardens be installed, applicants should consider their long-term maintenance as this will impact upon the overall longevity of the building.

Designing for climate resilience

- 1.86 Applicants must demonstrate how their buildings respond to the climate challenges of today and the future. The scale, form and orientation of higher density developments can have environmental impacts that should be mitigated through design. Applicants should identify a sustainable design strategy early in the design process and seek opportunities to integrate this within the architectural form and expression. Evidence of early and holistic considerations for designing for climate resilience will be looked upon favourably by the Council, which supports a fabric first approach.
- 1.87 Bexley Local Plan Policy DP30 Mitigating climate change sets out the Council's expectations for the sustainable design standards new homes are expected to meet and applicants should understand the requirements of these standards at the outset of the design process to ensure these can be addressed.
- 1.88 Specific site conditions should determine the sustainable and passive design principles implemented. For example, where development is located adjacent to a busy road, the reality of residents opening their windows to enable ventilation becomes reduced. Applicants should, therefore, provide a design solution, such as an acoustic screen, that ensures residents homes will be well ventilated and thermally sound.

Orientation

- 1.89 The design of the building(s) should evidently be a response to the site orientation. *Dual*, and triple, *aspect* homes should be the baseline for all new homes

to ensure residents will benefit from good levels of natural light and passive ventilation. As outlined in the London Plan, single aspect homes should be avoided where these are north-facing, provide larger family homes or are subject to adverse noise levels.

- 1.90 The orientation of communal spaces should ensure that these areas are comfortable and enjoyable spaces where people want to spend time.

Ventilation

- 1.91 Increasing densities will often result in residents drying laundry inside their home. Applicants must ensure adequate ventilation to homes, allowing them to remain dry, warm and healthy and preventing the development of mould and damp.
- 1.92 Residents should be able to open their windows to allow natural ventilation in, therefore where site constraints may impede this, applicants should propose a suitable solution, for example positioning windows away from high-trafficked areas where noise and air pollution could cause discomfort or by introducing measures to lessen or mitigate the impact.

Solar gains and glazing ratios

- 1.93 Proposed window openings should take solar gains in summer and heat loss in winter (which can be detrimental to thermal comfort and energy consumption) into account, whilst also enabling sufficient daylight and sunlight levels to enter homes. Proposals should refer to [TM59: Design methodology for the assessment of overheating risk in homes \(2017\)](#) for further information.
- 1.94 South- and west-facing orientations can be particularly susceptible to overheating and a glazing strategy should be in place as the design develops. A passive means of mitigating against excessive solar gains,

1 & 2 Macfarlane Place, White City
Maccreevor Lavington

External shading is integrated into the design of windows across this building pair, enabling residents and tenants to regulate the temperature of their home throughout the day. The metal shutters are electrically operated inside each home and reduce the need for air conditioning or opening windows in high-traffic and high-noise conditions.



© Tim Crocker

such as designing deep window reveals and integrating external shading devices like shutters and overhangs is strongly recommended.

1.95 Overheating analysis should be undertaken during design development and applicants should present results to the Council to determine whether additional measures, such as the reduction in opening size and external shading, are required to create homes suitable in the current and future climate.

Energy generation

- 1.96 Applicants must prioritise incorporating on-site renewable energy generation sources which can minimise energy consumption. The use of alternatives to traditional gas boilers, such as Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs), Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and the connection to emerging district heat networks must be explored. Within the Energy Statement, applicants should provide justification as to why using certain sources has been discounted within the development.
- 1.97 Sufficient plant space should be designed into scheme, with necessary acoustic and heat insulation provided. Where solar PV panels are proposed, applicants should balance their use with the provision of bio-solar roofs and communal amenity spaces.
- 1.98 Where substations are required and given their specific technical requirements, applicants should ensure proper planning from the outset of the design process to minimise their impact.

Building equipment

- 1.99 Energy demand for mechanical equipment such as lifts will increase as building heights do, and applicants should seek low-energy systems that minimise this energy demand.

Water usage

- 1.100 Developments must be designed to be water efficient and encourage residents to reduce their water consumption. The installation of water-saving sanitaryware, such as low and dual flush toilets and low flow kitchen and bathroom taps and shower fittings, is strongly recommended, and applicants should implement greywater reuse strategies, where possible.

Landscape design

- 1.101 Applicants must clearly set out a landscape strategy that supports and enhances local biodiversity, provides *sustainable drainage systems* and strengthens climate resilience. Planting appropriate street tree species and the use of light coloured materials, for example, can play a vital role in mitigating against the urban heat island effect, whilst also providing moments of dappled shade for the local community and visitors, whilst also supporting Bexley’s wildlife.

Materials

- 1.102 Developments should utilise low carbon materials to reduce the overall carbon footprint and emissions associated with the project. Where possible, locally sourced and recycled materials should be prioritised. Where sites include the demolition of existing buildings, applicants should seek to reuse demolished materials on-site, for example in the landscaping design.

Kidbrooke Park Road North, Blackheath
HTA Design

The development of former brownfield land delivers 122 Net Zero Carbon homes across four blocks ranging in height from four to 10 storeys. ASHPs and electric boilers are used throughout, eliminating reliance on fossil fuels. Sustainable construction methods, such as precast concrete elements, were prioritised to reduce on-site waste. 175 new trees were planted on site alongside rain gardens managing water run off and green roofs achieving a 0.6 UGF, surpassing the London Plan targets for residential development.

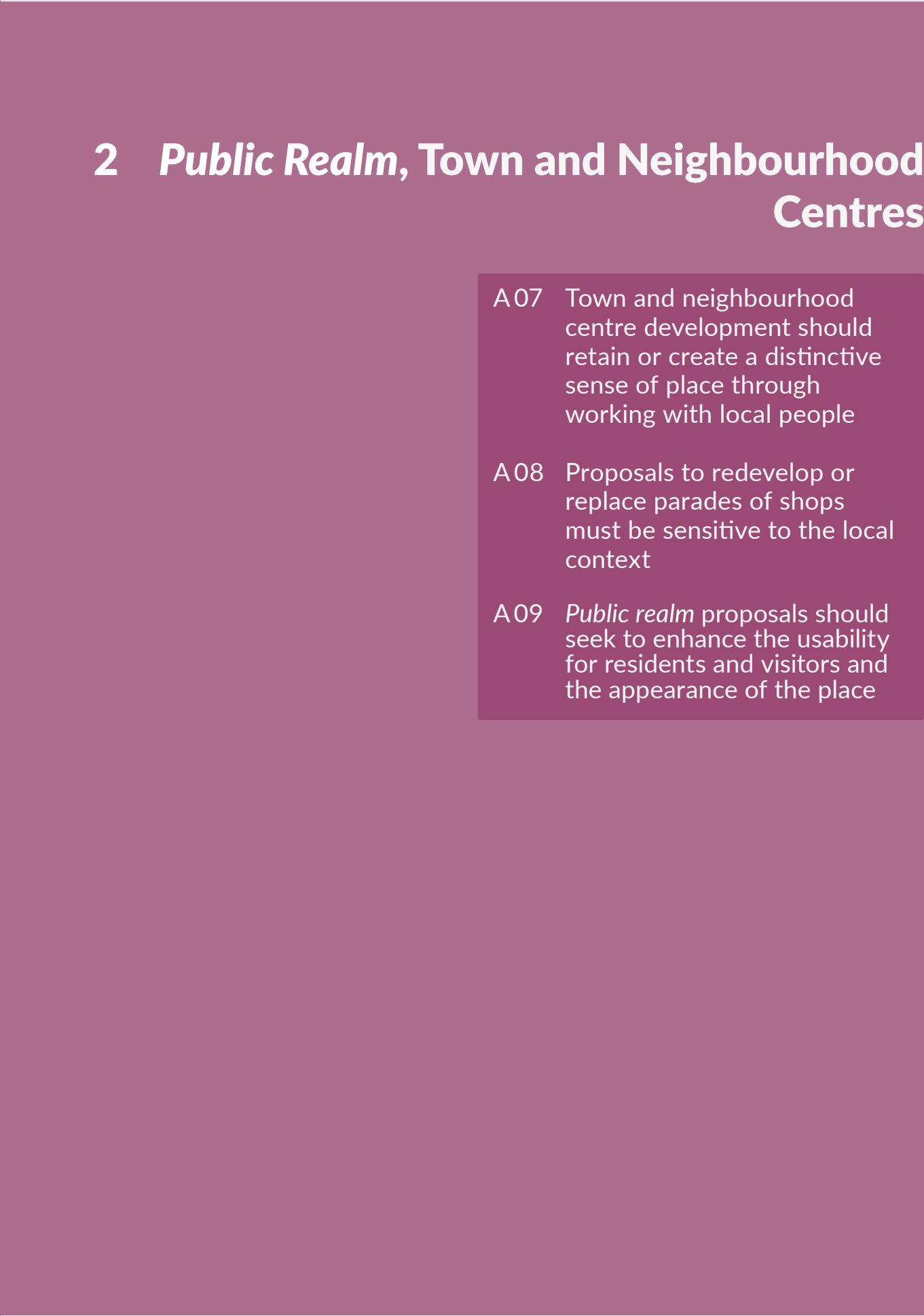


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Tall Buildings and Building Heights Checklist

- ☐ **Show that alternative *massing* and typology options have been explored, and that the proposed site layout optimises site capacity without resulting in over-development**
This should be achieved by submitting a Design Appraisal, evidencing that appropriate typologies have been evaluated and discounted, with sufficient justification for discounting a typology.
- ☐ **Show that engagement and consultation has been undertaken, and is proposed, throughout all RIBA Stages of Work (A01)**
This could be achieved by presenting an engagement and consultation strategy, followed by supporting evidence to illustrate how local stakeholder insights have shaped the development proposal.
- ☐ **Show how the proposal has been developed to ensure benefits the community and wider area (A01)**
This should be achieved by presenting how the proposal responds to the Council's wider strategic growth vision and evidencing the social value and opportunities for the local community as a result of development.
- ☐ **Show how the proposal has been informed by analysis and understanding of the local context (A02/A03)**
This should be achieved using a Character Appraisal to show how information gathered about the site and its surroundings has informed the development to create a proposal that appropriately responds to its setting. A set of diagrams and drawings should be developed to demonstrate this.
- ☐ **Show how the potential impact on heritage, important views and natural features has been mitigated through design (A02)**
This should be achieved using a Character Appraisal to evidence how these features have informed the proposal and will be respected, protected and/or enhanced following development. To support this, modelling software such as Vu.City should be used alongside drawings showing the proposal within its context.
- ☐ **Show that the proposal has been designed to respond to, respect and enhance Bexley's character (A03)**
This should be achieved by presenting a Character Appraisal containing evidence of specific aspects of the local character that the proposal responds to. Drawings should be developed to evidence how the proposal sits within its context.
- ☐ **Show how the proposal has been developed with consideration for future, neighbouring development (A03)**
This should be achieved through demonstrating how the proposal fits within a wider growth strategy and how it could fit into a larger, future development. Illustrative drawings and diagrams should be prepared to demonstrate this, particularly where the site is located on a Bexley Local Plan site allocation that sits alongside neighbouring site allocations/future development sites.
- ☐ **Show how the *public realm* surrounding the development will enable the safe movement of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, benefiting from passive surveillance and prioritising active travel wherever possible (A04)**
This should be achieved by developing a set of diagrams and drawings that show proposed movement routes for different users, locations of cycle and car parking and soft and hard landscaping layouts and specifications.

- ☐ **Show how the proposed non-residential ground floor uses are designed to meet resident needs and contribute to the vibrancy and vitality of the wider area and that these spaces have been suitably designed to provide their proposed function (A04)**
This should be achieved using a set of drawings that indicate the location of non-residential uses, their ancillary spaces and evidence that these spaces have been designed to be fit for purpose.
- ☐ **Show that the entrance sequence, for residential and non-residential uses, has been duly considered (A04)**
This should be achieved using a set of drawings and diagrams that illustrate key access points to residential and ancillary spaces, an indicative lighting strategy, an indicative wayfinding strategy and soft and hard landscaping layouts and material specifications.
- ☐ **Show that high-quality, functional homes, private and communal amenity space will be provided (A04)**
This should be achieved by presenting a set of drawings illustrating internal layouts, all amenity spaces and soft and hard landscaping layouts and specifications.
- ☐ **Show how the proposal will make a positive impact on the streetscape (A05)**
This should be achieved using a Character Appraisal to evidence site-specific opportunities, constraints and significant townscape features that have informed the architectural expression. A set of diagrams and drawings should be developed to communicate how the elevations have evolved in response to the setting, details of the material palette and specification (including material reference images and relevant precedents) and soft and hard landscaping layouts and specifications.
- ☐ **Show how the proposal has been developed to protect and/or enhance biodiversity, ecology and existing habitats (A06)**
This should be achieved using the Character Appraisal to evidence existing ecological features and habitats that the project seeks to protect and/or enhance. A set of diagrams and drawings showing how the proposal connects into existing green and blue networks and the layout and specification of the soft and hard landscaping design should be developed.
- ☐ **Show how the development follows the energy hierarchy, embeds climatic sustainability and responds to microclimate analysis (A06)**
This should be achieved by developing a set of drawings and specifications demonstrating how the proposal responds to site-specific microclimate and environmental conditions, promotes a circular economy and follows the energy hierarchy. Information on the proposed materials, soft and hard landscaping design should be included.



2 *Public Realm, Town and Neighbourhood Centres*

- A07 Town and neighbourhood centre development should retain or create a distinctive sense of place through working with local people
- A08 Proposals to redevelop or replace parades of shops must be sensitive to the local context
- A09 *Public realm* proposals should seek to enhance the usability for residents and visitors and the appearance of the place

A vision for Bexley’s town and neighbourhood centres

The [Bexley Town Centres Strategy](#) (2019) sets out the vision for Bexley’s main town centres and outlines the importance of safeguarding and enhancing town centres to ensure their continued function to meet the needs of all users – residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

Town centres should embody local identity, provide convenient places for residents to visit, offer access to vital services and amenities and provide an opportunity for social interaction.

[Bexley Local Plan](#) Policy DP9 Development within town centres sets out the three hierarchy level of town centres as major, district and local centres. Bexley has 13 town centres, with several neighbourhood centres and shop parades across the borough supplementing this. [Fig.10](#) locates these town centres within the borough.

Town centre development should address the following:

Respond to the surrounding context

- ▶ Development must be place-specific and address the opportunities and constraints presented by development sites. New town centre developments and interventions should seek to improve the physical environment whilst celebrating each town centre’s distinctive character and heritage.
- ▶ Character Appraisals should be undertaken to ensure proposals enhance local distinctiveness and character, and reflect culture and aspirations of the people who use these spaces daily. As such, working collaboratively with different communities and stakeholders is key.

Provide spaces that support the health and wellbeing of residents

- ▶ High streets and public spaces should provide a strong mix of different activities such as selling goods and food, alongside leisure and, health and community services that cater to the diverse needs of residents. Providing convenient access to these facilities works to create liveable neighbourhoods for all.

- ▶ Well-designed high streets and town centres can benefit the mental health and wellbeing of residents and visitors, offering opportunities for social connection that can help combat loneliness. Spaces can be designed to support the gathering of people of all ages, interests and financial means, alongside shops, cafés and community events providing space for social interactions and foster a sense of community that can reduce social isolation.
- ▶ The landscape and *public realm* should promote a healthy lifestyle with parks, open spaces and community centres providing opportunities for play, sport and recreation, thus encouraging an active lifestyle and a benefit to physical health.
- ▶ Streets present opportunities to provide green space and can be designed to facilitate movement alongside planting and informal play.
- ▶ Town centres should cater to different types of movement, promoting the use of active travel as a priority, with infrastructure to support different kinds of movement provided.

Create spaces that are resilient to the changing climate and embed climate adaptation measures

- ▶ Climatic sustainability principles should be holistically embedded within proposals from the outset of the design process. This includes considering the maintenance of the *public realm* in the specification of materials that prioritise longevity and have a low environmental impact.

Promote economic sustainability

- ▶ Healthy, vibrant and accessible town centres are necessary to delivering good growth within the borough. Town centres should provide a varied local offering of appropriate uses that appeals to residents and visitors to promote local activity and create destinations within Bexley.

Fig.10 Bexley’s town and neighbourhood centres and small parades
Note - given their scale, please zoom in to clearly read the neighbourhood centres and small parades locations



- Railway stations
- Town centres
- Neighbourhood centres
- Small parades

Public Realm, Town and Neighbourhood Centres

A07 Town and neighbourhood development should retain or create a distinctive sense of place through working with local people

National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 137 emphasises the importance of early discussions between applicants, the local planning authority and the local community, with applications that demonstrate early, proactive and effective community engagement looked upon favourably.
Bexley Local Plan Policy SP5 Placemaking through good design outlines the Council's expectations for high-quality design across Bexley which responds to the existing character and context, whilst not being constrained by this context. Design that positively enhances the public realm, is inclusive and supports good physical and mental wellbeing and social cohesion will be supported by the Council.

- 2.1 Part of the success of a public space relies upon how well it relates to, and is embedded within, its surroundings. Well-designed and maintained town and neighbourhood centres can encourage people to adopt active and healthy lifestyles whilst also remaining socially active.
- 2.2 Changes to the public realm will often come forward as part of a wider regeneration or transport improvement scheme or as part of a development site that falls within the vicinity. Applicants must evaluate the specific, existing nature of the development site to create a proposal that either responds directly to this or develops a new, appropriate character within the area.
- 2.3 Where new development sits alongside public realm which may remain unchanged for some time, applicants should avoid emphasising the red line boundary around their proposal. Applicants should seek to integrate new paving and elements of their public spaces with the existing, or propose

improvements outside of their red line which would create seamless transitions between new and old. During the pre-application stage and where applicable, applicants should discuss other proposed/ ongoing improvements in close proximity to understand how their proposals could tie into wider planned changes.

- 2.4 Much of Bexley's publicly accessible space within town and neighbourhood centres will form part of the highway and therefore developers must seek the guidance of the Highway Authority before drawing up proposals. The Design Guide SPD Part 2 – Technical Handbook provides detailed guidance on the processes to follow.
- 2.5 Early on in the design process and alongside the Character Appraisal, applicants should carry out a study of the existing space(s) to understand their main functions as presently used. Fig.11 sets out what information should be included within this study, however applicants should note this list is not exhaustive.
- 2.6 At this stage, applicants should undertake engagement with local stakeholders, including residents and business owners, to understand the strengths and opportunities of the area from the perspective of the people who live, work and regularly spend time there. When designing town centre and public realm schemes, co-production with the local community can be particularly effective, allowing applicants to draw on local knowledge to shape the proposal whilst promoting stewardship and an increased sense of community.
- 2.7 Applicants should engage other stakeholders such as utility companies and the emergency services to determine potential constraints such as underground services and utilities and existing service routes that need to be maintained following development.
- 2.8 Dependent on several factors such as their age, gender and mobility, people experience spaces differently. It is therefore critical

Fig.11 Information to assess in a study of an existing space and present during (pre-) application stages

- How visitors currently use and move through the area, including desire lines
- How accessible is the area, especially for people with additional mobility needs
- How well lit is the area
- The character of the town centre
- Existing green space and landscaping contributing to the biodiversity of the area
- The existing provision of shelter
- The design and layout of existing seating
- Existing opportunities for socialising and gathering
- Existing opportunities for play, including informal play
- Existing materials in use
- Third Party Constraints, such as underground cables and utility routes that cannot be built over and above ground fire path and servicing routes.

that a diverse range of experiences and opinions are used to shape proposals to create inviting environments where people wish to spend time.

- 2.9 D 06 of the [Design Guide SPD Part 1 – Design Principles](#) sets out what an engagement strategy may entail across all RIBA Plan of Work stages, and this strategy should be set out at the very beginning of the design process. Engagement should not consist of presenting a finished scheme to stakeholders, but instead enable sufficient time for people’s views and opinions to shape, and be incorporated into, the proposal. The [RIBA Engagement Overlay to the RIBA Plan of Work](#) outlines core and advisory tasks for design teams undertaking engagement and consultation and applicants are encouraged to refer to this.
- 2.10 An engagement strategy could incorporate a range of tools such as site walks and co-design workshops delivered both online and in person. Quality of Life Foundation’s [Inclusive Engagement Toolkit](#) can be used to outline the key steps necessary to ensure equal access during consultation and engagement.
- 2.11 Co-production with different community stakeholders can provide opportunities to explore new crafts and skills, and design workshops can be used to co-create *public realm* features that express shared identity and pride, such as murals, community gardens or event spaces. Such activities can help to foster relationships across Bexley’s culturally diverse communities, creating spaces where different perspectives and identities are embedded into the design to make it inclusive for many people.
- 2.12 Bexley has a strong history and sense of place, with its prominent waterways, industrial heritage and rich natural environment. Consideration should be given to the area’s heritage and character, with applicants seeking opportunities to celebrate the past within the present and

68 Pier Road, Erith
Alma-nac

To transform a previously empty unit, the internal layout of the community space was designed through workshops with local community groups. These workshops also produced five different naming options for the new space, which was later put to public vote and ‘68’ was chosen. The design of the sign was created by a college student and has become synonymous with the identity of the building.



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evoke a sense of civic and community pride. This can enable town and neighbourhood centres to become an expression of Bexley’s unique spirit.

- 2.13 Applicants should thoroughly research the historic context, cultural narratives and key architectural features of the area to understand how the proposal can respond to these. Key heritage assets should be identified and, where appropriate, referenced or highlighted within the *public realm*.
- 2.14 The use of lighting and landscaping to highlight key architectural or heritage features can create visual anchors within public space, enhancing the sense of place and assisting with wayfinding. Proposals should seek to enhance the character and *legibility* of any existing heritage assets through interventions that do not harm these features.
- 2.15 Where existing materials and detailing within the *public realm* are specific to, and important within, the local area, applicants should consider how these can be reflected within their proposal. For example, interpretations of any vernacular architectural details such as lighting columns, railings and bollards could become key features within a *public realm* proposal.
- 2.16 The use of interpretive signage, plaques and digital elements such as QR codes linked to historical content, can be useful to share stories about the place, its residents and key historical events. Public art, banners and sculptures depicting local history can also be successful in further connecting residents and visitors with the place. Applicants should also consider the use of digital links to information that can be accessed when within the *public realm*, helping to maintain a digital archive of a place.

Bexleyheath High Streets for All
We Made That with POoR Collective and Bohemia Place Market

Co-designed with local residents, the project delivered a variety of *public realm* features including seating, wayfinding and identity and games tables. Developed through a series of intergenerational workshops and public events, the interventions are designed to offer spaces for people to congregate, especially young people arriving to the Broadway after school.



© POoR Collective

Public Realm, Town and Neighbourhood Centres

A08 Proposals to redevelop or replace parades of shops must be sensitive to the local context

Bexley Local Plan Policy DP6 Loss of existing housing sets out the instances where losing existing homes may be justified, for example in the replacement of significantly substandard homes with new, high-quality alternatives.

Policy DP11 Achieving high-quality design supports new development that will positively contribute to Bexley’s townscape through the good design of architecture and landscaping, and ensure appropriate levels of privacy, outlook and daylight and sunlight are maintained following development.

- 2.17 As identified in the Bexley Local Character Study, the borough is interspersed with various commercial typologies - notably purpose-built and converted parades of shops found across all town and neighbourhood centres.
- 2.18 Recent years have seen an increase in proposals for the redevelopment of buildings along these parades which has implications for Bexley’s townscape. To ensure proposals are sensitive to their context, applicants should refer to the following guidance.

Adaptive reuse

- 2.19 Existing shop parades may present opportunities to retain and retrofit or refurbish the existing building fabric, rather than demolishing and rebuilding. In the first instance, applicants are strongly encouraged to undertake a demolition audit to determine the suitability of existing structures. Refer to the Design Guide SPD Part 2 - Technical Handbook for guidance on circular economy principles in construction.

- 2.20 Where parades have redevelopment potential, applicants should refer to retrofit guidance provided in the Design Guide SPD Part 2 - Building Alterations and Extensions. The same document provides guidance on vertical extensions to non-residential buildings.

Uniformity of urban grain

- 2.21 Shop parades typically exhibit a consistent urban grain in that plots are grouped together to form a fine grain. Proposals should be sensitive to this character and promote a human scale through the articulation of façades and proposed building heights.
- 2.22 Groups of small parade shops generally share a common building line and are often set back from the plot boundary. This creates generous space between the building line and edge of the public footpath and applicants generally follow this building line to continue a clearly defined and continuous street frontage.
- 2.23 Compelling justification for any deviation from prevailing building lines should be provided, for example by demonstrating, through the Character Appraisal, that contextual factors support this deviation or evidence of exemplary design quality.

Building form and architectural expression

- 2.24 Parades are characterised by a common architectural language across plots in terms of the building form, scale and massing, proportion and fenestration patterns. Typically, parades are between two and three storeys.
- 2.25 Applicants should use their Character Appraisal to demonstrate how the architecture has evolved in response to the prevailing character, presenting a proposal that will positively impact upon the street scene.

Croxted Road, West Dulwich
Panter Hudspith

Replacing a disused dairy which fronted the high street, the development creates residential units, retail space and a GP surgery. The architecture references locally familiar design elements such as front dormer windows, whilst the buff brickwork contrasts the primarily red brick character of the surrounding buildings.



© Panter Hudspith

- 2.26 Applicants should consider how features typical to shop parades such as front dormers and bay windows can be reinterpreted to become features of new development.
- 2.27 In some instances, such as on Lewis Road in Sidcup, shop parades sit directly adjacent to residential homes and applicants must consider the impact of development on existing residential neighbours in terms of privacy and outlook and overshadowing. As noted in the [Design Guide SPD Part 1 - Design Principles](#), subject to the specific site condition, tighter separation distances between *habitable rooms* may be acceptable within town centres, but will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Plan drawings that illustrate separation distances should be provided with an application.
- 2.28 Corner plots may be suitable for taller *massing* proposals than the surrounding prevailing height, subject to compliance with Bexley Local Plan Policy DP12 Tall buildings and building heights. Where proposed, applicants are encouraged to set floors above the prevailing height back and/or introduce a change in materiality to mitigate impact on the townscape. Applicants must demonstrate how such increases in height could positively contribute to placemaking.

Vertical mix of uses

- 2.29 Bexley Local Plan Policy DP9 Development within town centres and DP10 Neighbourhood centres and small parades require proposed ground floor uses to be appropriate to their context. Whilst future occupants might not be known at application stage, applicants should demonstrate that the design of ground floor spaces will support the needs of common ground floor uses. Planning submissions must include sufficient details of the proposed refuse, cycle storage and parking provision.

Sidcup Storyteller, Sidcup
DRDH Architects

Replacing a two storey building and car park on a prominent corner along Sidcup High Street, the Storyteller locates key town centre uses - library, cinema and cafe - onto the centre of the high street, alongside nine homes. Utilising its corner location, the building rises above the prevailing building heights, creating a visual marker within the town centre. Along the high street, the elevation is set out to respond to its neighbours, rooting the development within its context.



© 1-2: DRDH Architects, 3-4: David Grandorge

- 2.30 Shop fronts which are attractive, visually pleasing and well maintained can enhance both the economic wellbeing and vibrancy of an area, attracting people to spend time within town centres. Applicants should refer to the Design Guide SPD Part 2 – Building Alterations and Extensions for guidance on shop front design and demonstrate how the appearance of the ground floor is designed to enhance the townscape.
- 2.31 The provision of new homes to upper floors must comply with London Plan policy in providing high-quality internal layouts and private amenity to all homes. For developments providing ten or more homes, as set out in the Design Principles guidance, a minimum of 45% of the plot area should comprise communal, public and private amenity space.
- 2.32 Applicants should avoid balconies that overhang the public footpath below, instead utilising recessed balconies.

Access

- 2.33 Existing parades often provide poor quality access to residential accommodation on upper levels through rear entrances. This approach is discouraged and residential entrances should be provided at ground level and accessed directly from the *highway* to ensure residents benefit from passive surveillance.
- 2.34 Entrances should be legible and easy to differentiate between residential and commercial access.

Public realm and landscape design

- 2.35 Where setbacks between buildings and the *highway* are provided, applicants should consider the design of these spaces as this presents opportunities to enhance the streetscape and create a welcoming *public realm*. Applicants should reference guidance provided in [A09](#).

- 2.36 Often, deeper forecourts are used for parking which can detract from the shop front, deterring visitors and creating obstacles for pedestrians and cyclists. Guidance on the design and use of forecourts to support the ground floor use is provided in the Building Alterations and Extensions guidance document.
- 2.37 Within forecourts, applicants should consider the provision of cycle parking facilities to encourage the use of two and three wheels for short shopping trips to shop parades. This should include parking for a range of vehicles including bicycles, cargo bikes and children’s bikes and scooters.
- 2.38 As a minimum, owners of private properties that front onto the *highway* should explore opportunities to provide, and maintain, their own greening within areas in their control for example using hanging baskets and movable planters. Under S142 of the Highways Act 1980, a licence can be obtained from the Council to introduce soft landscaping along the *highway*.

Public Realm, Town and Neighbourhood Centres

A09 Public realm should seek to enhance the usability for residents and visitors and the appearance of the place

National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 192 notes the importance of healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction through strong Neighbourhood Centres and the provision of local shops and services.

Bexley Local Plan Policy DP9 Development within town centres emphasises the importance of creating and supporting town centres that foster a thriving local economy which supports and benefits residents by providing a range of services and creating community cohesion. The policy reinforces the importance of town centre development maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the borough's town centres throughout the course of a day, whilst Policy DP10 Neighbourhood centres and small parades states the role of development in supporting the health and wellbeing of residents in providing social interaction and day-to-day facilities.

London Plan Policy SD6 Town centres and high streets reinforces the need for town centres to offer a diverse range of uses to support people in day and night-time activities and offering uses across retail, residential and employment sectors. The policy supports the adaptability of town centres to reflect changing consumer needs and the need for safe, welcoming environments for all, including disabled communities, older people and those with young families.

Policy D8 Public realm states that new public realm should be well-designed, accessible, inclusive and easy to understand, service and maintain. Proposals should encourage active travel and provide places for rest and congregation.

Movement

- 2.39 As set out in D 27 of the [Design Guide SPD Part 1 - Design Principles](#), new development should enable active travel and prioritise the creation, and enhancement, of well-connected, safe and accessible walking, wheeling and cycling routes that are direct and barrier free. Applicants should refer to [LTN 1/20](#) and TfL's [Cycle Quality Criteria and Cycleways Signing Guidance](#) for guidance on expected standards.
- 2.40 A movement strategy should be developed to follow the active travel hierarchy and prioritise integration between active travel means and the public transport network. Applicants should evidence how active travel routes can be enhanced as part of their development.
- 2.41 Proposals should provide facilities for different travel modes and consider how to organise different types of cycle and car parking to incrementally reduce emissions while making the public realm more liveable.
- 2.42 Applicants should seek opportunities to improve connections to existing destinations and key places within town centres and create clearly defined and legible layouts that make streets and public space easy to access and navigate, reducing people's risk of confusion or isolation. This is particularly important at corners where applicants should consider how to maintain key sightlines and visual connectivity and create active ground floors which assist with navigation.
- 2.43 Spaces should be designed to be safe, convenient and comfortable for all and in particular, those who may experience higher personal safety risks including young people, women and gender diverse people, those in the global majority, disabled people and the LGBTQ+ community. Engagement should proportionately encompass a spectrum of lived experiences to gain

understanding of how spaces can be designed to increase perceptions of safety.

2.44 New public space should be laid out so that visitors can easily orientate themselves through recognisable routes, landmarks and focal points around the town centre. New development should look for opportunities to introduce visual markers that strengthen legibility, alongside more traditional signage and wayfinding.

Accessibility

- 2.45 Bexley's public realm should be inclusive and accessible for all ages and abilities to allow everyone to participate fully in social, commercial and civic life. Accessibility should be considered from the outset of, and throughout, the design process to ensure the dignity and independence of all users.
- 2.46 Applicants must demonstrate that the requirements of those with mobility issues, visual and audio impairments and hidden disabilities have been addressed in the design.
- 2.47 Footpaths should be designed, and maintained, to be free from obstructions and clutter that can impede safe pedestrian movement, including any street furniture. Applicants must ensure sufficient width and clearance along footways to enable this. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving should be used to warn of hazards or surface changes, for example, at steps or road crossings. These should be designed in accordance with relevant guidance such as the Department for Transport's [Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces](#) and TfL's [Streetscape Guidance](#).
- 2.48 Applicants should use contrasting colours for steps, ramps, handrails and edges to help distinguish between changes in level and direction. Materials that are visually cluttered or have overly complex patterns should be avoided, particularly on footpaths. The use of colourful crossings

Harrow Manorway, Abbey Wood
Turkington Martin

An existing arterial route was upgraded to provide dedicated, clearly defined and segregated routes for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. New street trees and other soft landscaping was planted along the street, adding visual amenity and creating a green movement corridor towards Lesnes Abbey Woods.



© 1: Turkington Martin,
2: London Borough of Bexley

is unlikely to be supported due to their potential negative impact on a range of protected user groups.

- 2.49 Level access should be provided throughout the public transport network along with seating, shelters and clear, accessibly located information. Step-free connections between key transport hubs and town/neighbourhood centres should be prioritised, and where this is not possible, ramped access should be provided.
- 2.50 Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accessible drinking fountains to enable people to remain hydrated during hot weather and reduce reliance on single-use plastic, while potentially cooling the immediate vicinity. Integrating ground level fountain trays for dogs should be considered.

Land use and active frontages

- 2.51 In line with Bexley Local Plan Policy DP9 Development within town centres, applicants must ensure that proposed town centre uses are appropriate and encourage a blend of uses including retail, leisure, office, residential, and community spaces. The latter is vital within town centres as it provides space to support local culture, arts and events to strengthen town centre identity.
- 2.52 Creating natural surveillance should be a priority and opportunities to overlook streets should be maximised along the ground floor of buildings. Designing active street frontages that promote pedestrian activity is essential to providing this natural surveillance within town centres. Applicants must avoid excessively large blank walls, and back of house uses such as servicing yards and refuse stores should be located to avoid this.
- 2.53 Applicants should seek opportunities to create spaces that encourage social interaction such as squares, parks and green spaces and clusters of seating. Such

Erith Lighthouse, Erith
DK-CM

A temporary community space was designed and programmed to celebrate Erith's waterfront heritage, reactivate the town centre and visually and thematically reconnect Erith with the River Thames. Curated by The Decorators, across six weeks the Lighthouse popped up in two locations in the town hosting a series of activities including storytelling performances, singing workshops, a community cafe and dinners.



© Brian Eldrich

environments provide different groups of residents and visitors with informal settings to meet, gather and connect, which is essential for fostering strong communities.

- 2.54 Where they exist, vacant spaces can be used to temporarily animate pockets of space through modest interventions and light touch projects. Such projects can have a significant positive impact on footfall, vibrancy and the provision of resident and visitor services and amenities and can be used to trial activity within the town centre before changes are implemented to become permanent.
- 2.55 These meanwhile uses can have several benefits to the community, landlords and occupiers and projects have the potential to:
- Re-energise high streets, town centres and the surrounding *public realm*
 - Deliver short term improvements, with a view to these becoming permanent if successful
 - Contribute to the socio-economic development of the local community
 - Provide spaces for local community groups, small businesses and individuals to occupy, often at reduced rates
 - Occupy vacant units thus providing landlords with increased security and stability.
- 2.56 Applicants should engage with the Council's Economic Development team early in the planning process and prior to producing a detailed plan for how this will be delivered throughout occupation.

Soft landscaping, biodiversity and sustainable drainage

- 2.57 Planting can contribute to a positive sensory experience, creating attractive environments where people want to spend time and gather. The landscape should be designed at an appropriate density that will have an impact upon first planting and at full bloom, whilst not impeding sightlines.

Bromley Town Centre, Bromley
Studio Egret West

Developed through a research-led process of workshops, consultation events and temporary installations with the local community including businesses and market traders, the works sought to improve and promote pedestrian movement and create a greener town centre. A shared surface was created allowing cafes and restaurants to spill out onto the street where a green corridor of street trees were planted alongside other shrubbery and planting. Running the length of the town centre, the raised beds are shaped to reflect the motif of the Bromley Broom flower and have integrated seating.



© Jarrell Goh

- 2.58 Planting can offer natural shade and protection from the elements and reduce the impacts of urban heat island effect, and for this reason, applicants are strongly encouraged to introduce appropriate planting species where possible. Calculated relative to the area being developed, specifying 30-40% canopy cover to provide shade during summer months should be the baseline.
- 2.59 Planting can also enhance the environmental value of a scheme - improving sustainable drainage and providing habitats for Bexley's wildlife within town centres. Applicants should analyse existing and proposed wildlife corridors, and consider how their scheme can bolster these.
- 2.60 Planting species should be informed by suitability within the context, with evidence of an applicants' consideration for seasonal differentiations, growing conditions and maintenance provided.
- 2.61 Further guidance on specifying soft landscaping and enhancing Bexley's biodiversity and ecology is provided within the [Design Guide SPD Part 2 - Technical Handbook](#), and as a minimum applicants should demonstrate that:
- Planting species will support and enhance local biodiversity and are specified appropriate to the context and location
 - Planting will offer seasonal interest, with block planting of one single species avoided
 - A proper plan for the ongoing maintenance of the planting has been produced
 - Adequate surface water management, such as the use of *sustainable drainage systems* (SuDS), incorporated in line with guidance in the [Sustainable Drainage Design and Evaluation Guide](#) and the Design Guide SPD Part 1 – Design Principles.

Walnut Tree Road, Erith
Studio ONB

The existing street was redesigned to improve physical and visual links to local points of interest as it will be a key arrival moment in the town. High-quality and robust finishes have been used throughout to create a comfortable and attractive space to pass through, dwell and meet with others, reflected in the specification of footpath materials, seating and soft landscaping.



© London Borough of Bexley

Hard landscaping

- 2.62 New and improved footpaths should be designed to adoptable standards, even where they will not be adopted. All footpaths should be designed to be durable and easy to maintain. Early conversations with the Highway Authority are essential and applicants should refer to the Technical Handbook for guidance on crossovers and dropped kerbs amongst other design concerns related to the public *highway*.
- 2.63 A consistent and complementary approach to materiality should be employed to create a sense of cohesion as different developments come forward. Applicants should demonstrate how their proposed material palette responds to the wider context, using the Character Appraisal to analyse existing materials and avoid the appearance of a fragmented *public realm*.
- 2.64 Materials must be high-quality and robust and specified with a maintenance strategy that accounts for their future replacement and repair when required. Materials should be readily available for maintenance purposes.
- 2.65 The proposed material palette and specification should be shared during any pre-application discussions to allow the Council to express any concerns early on.
- 2.66 Where streets and public space are redeveloped, applicants should seek opportunities to reuse elements of the existing *public realm*, for example as crushed aggregate during construction or in landscaping proposals.

Street furniture

- 2.67 Sitting and dwelling is a key function of being able to move through a space, therefore applicants should use suitable analysis to appropriately locate street furniture where people are likely to meet or take a rest. Furniture should be located in relation to pedestrian movement through

Church Street Triangle, Edgware Road
Jan Kattein Architects

Shaped through local stakeholder engagement, shop fronts have been repaired to support small enterprises and the local economy, whilst the adjacent *public realm* has been redesigned to provide people with public space to dwell through an informal seating arrangement and range of seating options.



© Jan Kattein Architects

- the town/neighbourhood centre, and consider other uses such as residential homes to minimise the impact of seating on these uses.
- 2.68 Redundant pieces of furniture should be removed and any new furniture located to ensure it does not impede pedestrian, cyclist or emergency vehicle access.
- 2.69 Applicants should provide a mix of both formal and informal seating options. Formal seating, with back and arm rests, should cater for those with additional mobility needs whilst informal seating may offer places to ‘perch’ for shorter time periods.
- 2.70 Applicants should consider the use of smart furniture which provides multiple functions e.g. combining a place of rest with Wi-Fi connection and USB ports. Where provided, applicants should provide a proposal for their long-term maintenance.
- 2.71 Seating should be arranged for both group gathering and individuals, and positioned for easy cleaning and repairs, and where it is unlikely to contribute to issues with antisocial behaviour.
- 2.72 Shelter within public spaces is vital and applicants should seek opportunities to improve the offering wherever possible. Trees can provide dappled shade and built structures should also be considered, especially where these have a dual function, for example a performance space.
- 2.73 The placement and provision of litter bins should provide people with adequate opportunities to dispose of and recycle waste.
- 2.74 Litter bins should be sized correctly to reflect the maintenance and collection strategy. Applicants should refer to the Design Guide SPD Part 2 - Technical Handbook for guidance on waste management and engage the Council’s Environmental Services team.



- 2.75 Consideration should be given to the proximity of seating and litter bins to trees to avoid issues such as honeydew drop that can result in more frequent maintenance requirements.
- Activities within the public realm**
- 2.76 Town and neighbourhood centres should be inherently child friendly with facilities for children and young people. Where possible, informal play facilities should be incorporated within the *public realm* in line with aspirations set out in the London Plan. Further guidance on play is provided within the Technical Handbook.
- 2.77 Play provision does not need to be traditional and can be as simple as the creative use of paving textures or surface materials to provide stimulating environments for children and young people. Informal play features can sit well within town centre environments and provide many benefits such as additional informal seating or act as an art installation.
- 2.78 Encouraging active travel from a young age can help to establish positive travel habits and encourage stewardship and independence by instilling a positive view of the built environment. Safe walking and cycling routes should therefore be implemented.
- 2.79 Within squares and green spaces, applicants should promote activity for other ages in the provision of facilities such as outdoor gyms, gardening areas and book repositories.

Signage and wayfinding

- 2.80 Signage should help residents and visitors feel confident in navigating a town centre. When designing new signage, opportunities should be sought to consolidate information and complement existing town centre signage. Where required, applicants should include proposals to either refurbish or replace existing, outdated signage to ensure cohesion with any new proposals.



- 2.81 Installing new wayfinding and signage presents an opportunity to consider the visual identity of a place, which can celebrate the heritage and history of a place.
- 2.82 Applicants should follow guidance provided in the Design Guide SPD Part 1 – Design Principles, however the Council would expect to see consideration for the following in all instances:
 - That the signage is appropriately located and designed e.g. taller, narrower signs used where pavement space is more limited
 - Wayfinding and signage is sensitive to its surroundings being appropriate in scale, colour, materials, and where appropriate, drawing upon historic references
 - Signage is communicated in both text and visual formats
 - Tactile maps and Braille are incorporated at key locations
 - Signage and wayfinding proposals should not obscure key views for all road users or result in the proliferation of signs which can impede the easy navigation of town and neighbourhood centres.

Lighting

- 2.83 Good lighting can animate a space and maintain its sense of character and contribution to the wider *public realm* after dark. The Design Principles provides overarching guidance on lighting features, however lighting strategies within the *public realm* should address specific requirements.
- 2.84 General street lighting enhancements can improve actual and perceived sense of safety for pedestrians and cyclists, therefore lighting should be arranged creatively to highlight key points along routes. The use of even, glare-free lighting which improves visibility and safety for people with low vision should be considered.

Terry Spinks Place, Newham
Light Follows Behaviour

An underused and uninviting space beneath the A13 flyover was transformed into a public space by introducing accents of light to illuminate the space and create a sense of enclosure. Different types and colours of lighting were used to define the space, including column lights and inground light markers.



© Light Follows Behaviour

- 2.85 Light levels should be appropriate to the setting, with applicants showing consideration for the resultant impacts of different lighting sources on all users within the *public realm*. Lighting should be directed to avoid inconveniencing drivers, occupiers in neighbouring buildings and protected wildlife such as bats.
- 2.86 During design development and prior to submitting a planning application, applicants should discuss proposed lighting layouts with relevant Council teams to understand the acceptability of proposals and what fixtures and fittings will be deemed appropriate and maintainable.

Public art and murals

- 2.87 Public art and murals can appeal to a broad range of people of different ages and backgrounds, celebrating and promoting the culture of a place and contributing to the enjoyment of a space. Art can also be used in a wider wayfinding strategy, becoming a landmark referred to by residents and visitors and opportunities to introduce art into the *public realm* will be supported by the Council where it is demonstrated that the local character of a place will be enhanced and protected.
- 2.88 When commissioning public art, applicants should demonstrate:
 - Community participation in the development of new murals and artwork including participation in the selection of artist(s) and workshops to evolve proposals
 - The appropriateness of the chosen artist to the local area
 - The relevance and appropriateness of the artwork to the context
 - How the art piece will sit within its setting
 - Whether the art piece will obstruct key views or hinder pedestrian, cyclist or vehicular desire lines and points of access
 - The robustness of the piece and the required maintenance.

Was. Is. Will. Be., Thamesmead
Jasleen Kaur

Inspired by community members who took part in cooking workshops, the artwork evolved from people’s memories of the area and their hopes for the future. A community written poem is etched into the ground of Cygnet Square, leading to a weathervane that echoes the last line of the poem and celebrates the horses which historically grazed in Thamesmead. New planters were also installed within Cygnet Square and are planted with the herbs used during the earlier cooking



© Kaye Song

- 2.89** Planning permission will generally only be required for murals and artworks that are proposed on *listed buildings*, located in a *Conservation Area*, prominent within the *public realm* (such as end-of-terrace gables) or where it will change the character of a local area in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 2.90** Where murals reference local businesses, a product or call to action, then it may be deemed an advert, in which case advertisement consent may be required. The [Design Guide SPD Part 2 - Building Alterations and Extensions](#) provides guidance on advertisement consent. The Council's Development Management team should be contacted for confirmation of this requirement.

Parking

- 2.91** Town and neighbourhood centres should be people focused places, and a balance needs to be struck between the need for convenient parking facilities and the creation of safe and inviting car-free environments. New vehicular and cycle parking should be sensitively integrated into the scheme and not dominate any one area.
- 2.92** Guidance provided in the Technical Handbook should be followed in all instances, and within submissions designers should show consideration of the following:
- Pedestrian access along safe, well-defined routes with clear desire lines that are not blocked by parking
 - Proposals should respond to the character of the surrounding environment
 - Materials should be appropriate to the setting and of a high quality
 - Cycle hoops and shelters should be positioned in locations that are convenient to cyclists and benefit from natural surveillance.

Servicing and services

- 2.93** Ground floor uses fronting onto the *public realm* should be designed to activate the immediate and wider area. The amount of frontage given to servicing the building, e.g. refuse storage and plant, should be carefully considered to avoid locating this along primary routes and thoroughfares.
- 2.94** Refuse collection routes and cleaning strategies should be considered early in design development to ensure modifications to the provision of soft landscaping and open space are not required to accommodate this.
- 2.95** Safe waiting zones should be provided for food delivery drivers to rest and prepare without blocking pedestrians or vehicular traffic.

Design, construction and ongoing maintenance and management

- 2.96** When upgrading existing streets and *public realm*, cross-sector collaboration is vital and applicants should build a team of appropriate consultants such as *highways* engineers, civil engineers, transport planners and engage in early discussions with relevant Council teams to understand potential constraints and opportunities of a development site.
- 2.97** Applicants should undertake early site investigations to identify any services and utilities running beneath the development site that might inform how the design develops and enable the applicant to make adaptations where necessary.
- 2.98** Where larger sites are proposed for development, applicants should consider whether a phased approach to delivery would enable incremental changes and act as a catalyst for future investment and larger initiatives.
- 2.99** Where developments come forward incrementally, opportunities to create relatively small changes through improved

planting and lighting, meanwhile uses within empty spaces and the introduction of public art can be a way to evidence positive changes within the wider *public realm* that allows the community to benefit from improvements whilst awaiting future works.

- 2.100** Applicants should consider the potential disturbance and construction impact upon local people, such as the generation of construction waste and dust, and identify the need to divert services and temporarily close roads, discussing this with the Highway Authority in sufficient time.
- 2.101** Consistent maintenance is key to encouraging footfall and allows residents to maintain civic pride in their local area. When the *public realm* is not frequently maintained it can lead to the erasure of sightlines and visibility resulting in feelings of anxiety and discouraging people from utilising the space.

Public Realm, Town and Neighbourhood Centres Checklist

- ☐ **Show how an inclusive engagement strategy has been used to develop the proposal with the local community and relevant stakeholders (A 07)**
This could be achieved by presenting an engagement and consultation strategy, followed by supporting evidence to illustrate how local stakeholder insights have shaped the development proposal.
- ☐ **Show how Bexley’s heritage and character will be celebrated, protected and enhanced (A 07)**
This should be achieved using a Character Appraisal to evidence relevant information on Bexley’s character and heritage. A set of diagrams and drawings should be developed to highlight established links or associations in this regard. This should include the wider context surrounding the proposal.
- ☐ **Show how the proposal responds to, and is informed by, the prevailing urban grain and character (A 08)**
This should be achieved using a Character Appraisal which explores the existing urban grain and architectural character of surrounding shop parades. Drawings should be developed to illustrate how the proposal sits within its context.
- ☐ **Where new homes are provided above shop parades, show how these meet space standards and provide the required amenity space (A 08)**
This should be shown using a set of drawings that demonstrate compliance with relevant policies across the Development Plan and associated guidance.
- ☐ **Show that the *public realm* surrounding the development will enable the safe movement of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, whilst prioritising active travel (A 08/A 09)**
This should be evidenced using a set of diagrams, drawings and specifications that show proposed movement routes for different users, locations of cycle and car parking and soft and hard landscaping proposals.
- ☐ **Show how ground floor proposals balance contributing to the vibrancy and vitality of the wider area, with ensuring spaces are suitably designed to provide their proposed function (A 08/A 09)**
This should be achieved using a set of drawings that indicate the location of non-residential uses, their ancillary spaces and evidence that these spaces have been designed to be fit for purpose.
- ☐ **Show that the proposal has been designed to meet accessibility requirements and protect the dignity and safety of all (A 08/A 09)**
This should be evidenced using a set of drawings and specifications for proposed material finishes, soft and hard landscaping, street furniture and indicative lighting and wayfinding strategies.
- ☐ **Show how the proposal has been designed to make a positive impact on the streetscape (A 08/A 09)**
This should be achieved using a Character Appraisal to evidence site-specific opportunities, constraints and significant townscape features that have informed the proposal. Drawings should be developed to situate the proposal within its context and showing proposed materials, soft and hard landscaping design and any design features such as public art and murals.

- ☐ **Show how the proposal has been developed to protect and/or enhance existing biodiversity, ecology and habitats (A 08/A 09)**
This should be achieved using the Character Appraisal to evidence existing ecological features and habitats that the project seeks to protect and/or enhance. A set of diagrams and drawings showing how the proposal connects into existing green and blue networks and the layout and specification of the soft and hard landscaping proposals should be included.
- ☐ **Show how the development follows the energy hierarchy, embeds climatic sustainability and responds to site-specific environmental conditions (A 08/A 09)**
This should be achieved by developing a set of drawings and specifications demonstrating how the proposal responds to site-specific environmental conditions and promotes a circular economy. The drawings should provide information on the proposed materials, soft and hard landscaping proposals.

3 Industrial Land Development

- A 10 Development on industrial land must respond to the surrounding character and context and should exhibit exemplar placemaking to contribute to a place
- A 11 Intensification should create high-quality places and ensure the safety of all people, particularly where residential and industrial uses are co-located

Bexley’s industrial context

Given its location along the River Thames, Bexley has a rich industrial history and has long been integral in supporting London’s strategic supply chains.

The borough’s industrial land is primarily designated in two categories: Strategic Industrial Locations (SIL) and Locally Significant Industrial Sites (LSIS) as illustrated in Fig.12. These designations guide the retention and management of industrial uses to support jobs, investment, and sustainable economic growth.

Strategic Industrial Locations

Within Bexley, SILs are largely focused in key areas around the borough’s River Thames frontage, such as Upper Belvedere, Erith and Crayford. Much of this land falls within Flood Zone 2. These locations accommodate large-scale industrial, logistics, and manufacturing activities.

Through the [Bexley Local Plan](#), the Council is committed to safeguarding SIL from inappropriate non-industrial uses, recognising their integral role in maintaining employment and supporting sectors that require substantial operational space, including freight distribution and advanced manufacturing.

Locally Significant Industrial Sites

LSIS typically include smaller-scale industrial and workshop space located in industrial estates in Slade Green, Bexleyheath and Lower Belvedere, with pockets of mixed-use industrial land throughout the borough.

These sites are vital for local businesses, providing space for light industrial, servicing, repair, and small manufacturing operations that contribute to Bexley’s economic diversity and support local employment.

The Council supports the retention and enhancement of LSIS to enable the growth of local enterprise and specialist industrial activities.

London Plan Opportunity Areas

The [London Plan](#) designates two Opportunity Areas (OAs) within the borough – Thamesmead/Abbey Wood and Bexley Riverside.

These are designated for the growth opportunities presented, in terms of delivering housing and employment uses, with the latter delivered through industrial, distribution and logistics uses common in the areas, particularly the Bexley Riverside OA. At Thamesmead/Abbey Wood, the London Plan advocates for the intensification of employment sites to enable new activities and workspaces alongside housing.

Fig.12 Bexley’s industrial land



Industrial Land Development

A 10 Development on industrial land must respond to the surrounding character and context and should exhibit exemplar placemaking to contribute to a place

Bexley Local Plan Policy DP7 Appropriate uses within designated industrial land identifies two industrial land designations across the borough and states the accepted uses on these sites.
DP11 Achieving high-quality design seeks to ensure all new development will contribute positively to Bexley’s townscape.

- 3.1 The built nature of SIL and LSIS differs, with the former characterised by large-scale buildings. By contrast, LSIS typically consists of smaller scale buildings and is often found in close proximity to homes and other sensitive neighbouring uses. The prevailing built forms of SIL and LSIS give each their own distinct character, and developments proposed on each will therefore have distinct visual and usage differences.
- 3.2 Applicants must demonstrate their understanding of appropriate development within each unique context through their Character Appraisal. In addition to the analysis suggested in the [Design Guide SPD Part 1 - Design Principles](#), applicants should demonstrate an understanding of the prevailing built form as outlined in [Fig. 13](#).
- 3.3 The *Design and Access Statement (DAS)* should provide commentary on how information gathered by completing the Character Appraisal has been used to inform the proposal, both in terms of intended use and design. Applicants should describe how the impact of the new development will be managed within the context.

Fig.13 Additional topics to analyse as part of the Character Appraisal

Land uses	Identifying any sensitivities, such as homes, schools and open spaces, which should inform boundary treatments and appropriate proposals subject to the land designation
Scale and massing	Analysing building heights and <i>massing</i> within the surrounding context
Building form	Assessing industrial typologies e.g. big-box warehouses, yard-based workshops or stacked developments and their built form, including roof types e.g. sawtooth, mono/dual pitched
Plot sizes and layouts	Determining whether plots have deep yards or loading areas, where access and parking is located, how boundaries are secured and whether sites are more consolidated or fragmented
Architectural expression	Understanding what materials are common and determining a suitable response

Land uses

- 3.4 It is vital that applicants understand adjacent land uses and owners prior to proposing new development. This ensures that local sensitivities are accounted for and appropriate boundary treatments and site layouts are proposed from the outset.
- 3.5 Where sites adjoin sensitive areas such as residential development or schools, applicants should carefully consider the transitions between the different land uses. Soft landscaping and careful layouts and *massing* should be employed to create positive and active edges that address these existing uses. Applicants should demonstrate how the proposal will mitigate against the environmental impact of the proposed industrial uses on neighbours, in terms of noise, pollution and traffic generation.
- 3.6 At interfaces with non-industrial uses, applicants could explore using ancillary buildings with smaller footprints and *massing* to mediate between larger, industrial buildings and smaller-scale surroundings.
- 3.7 Early and ongoing engagement with neighbours is strongly encouraged to alleviate any concerns regarding future development, which can be beneficial in preventing delays during the planning process.
- 3.8 Applicants must demonstrate proposals are suitable to their local economic context, seeking opportunities to cluster new industrial activities with similar or complementary sectors. For example, on LSIS, the Council would typically anticipate smaller-scale light industrial and employment uses coming forward with this reflected in the proposed design. Where deviating from this, applicants should provide a robust justification for their proposal.

Industrial heritage

- 3.9 Many LSIS sites, such as that on Fraser Road in Erith, contain historic industrial buildings, and where these buildings fall within development sites, applicants must consider their *adaptive reuse*, modification and *retrofit* prior to demolition and redevelopment. Due consideration should be demonstrated to the Council, with justification provided when retention is not deemed viable.
- 3.10 Applicants are encouraged to reference distinctive industrial heritage features such as chimney stacks, signage, or brick detailing to reinforce local identity and assist with wayfinding in the area.

Plot sizes and layouts

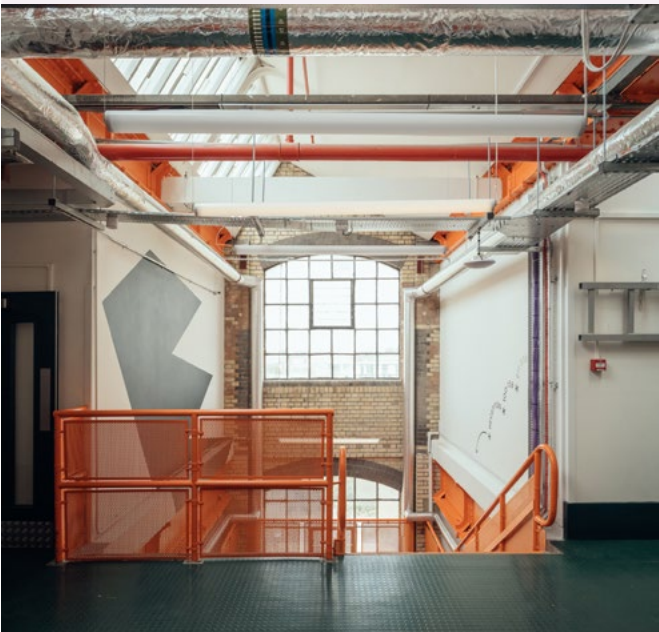
- 3.11 Where a LSIS site has a consistent rhythm of smaller unit plots, applicants should maintain this grain rather than creating large, monolithic blocks that disrupt established patterns. The provision of 'big-box' warehouses and other large-scale developments on LSIS is unlikely to be supported, unless applicants can demonstrate a site-specific design response of high design quality that responds to the site and its surroundings and shows regard for the character of the area.
- 3.12 Where proposals seek to significantly deviate from the consistent rhythm, applicants should provide a robust justification for such deviation within their DAS.

Context, boundary treatments and frontages

- 3.13 Given the visual impact industrial sites can have upon the *street scene*, the quality of the *public realm* around them will be significantly affected by the boundary treatments used. Applicants should carefully consider the most appropriate treatment to ensure high quality streetscapes that respond to the local area.

Stratford Works, Stratford
Studio MUTT

The redesign of a 1890s printworks revealed original architectural features and provides improved workspace for tenants by creating a new entrance and communal spaces throughout the building. The interior design, including bespoke furniture, and a new graphic identity draw on the industrial heritage of the building and enhance navigation within the building.



© Jim Stephenson

- 3.14 The Character Appraisal should be used to identify edge conditions that require an *active frontage*, such as along prominent pedestrian and cycle routes and along strategic road networks, rivers and railway lines. It should be demonstrated how proposals will provide this activation, for example in the layout of the site to locate more private spaces, such as loading bays, vehicle parking and operational yards to the rear of a site.
- 3.15 Applicants should identify how the function of streets and spaces around the site change throughout the day, locating appropriate frontages accordingly.
- 3.16 Building lines should be determined by the site context. For example on LSIS, setting buildings back to provide pedestrian-only forecourts that support the industrial use, positively contribute towards the *public realm* and provide opportunities for seating and greening, may be possible given the nature of typically lighter industrial uses on such sites.
- 3.17 Where building lines cannot be located close to the street edge due to site constraints such as existing utilities, applicants should prioritise natural edge conditions such as hedges and street trees over fencing to form their site boundaries.
- 3.18 Soft landscaping has both visual and biodiversity benefits, whilst fencing can be used to provide additional site security, rather than as a primary boundary treatment. Landscape proposals should not compromise visibility or personal security and maintaining clear sightlines and natural surveillance should be prioritised when setting out planting.
- 3.19 Security measures should be embedded into the architectural and landscape designs for example in the specification of robust doors and windows, rather than solely relying upon standalone fencing.

Tileyard North, Wakefield
Hawkins\Brown

Located along Wakefield's riverside, a former derelict relic from the area's industrial past has been redeveloped to reconnect with the waterfront and preserve the industrial character. The development provides workspace and event spaces, including a large, breakout communal courtyard, designed to foster a creative community. 80% of the nineteenth century building fabric was repaired and re-purposed.



© 1: Jack Hobhouse; 2-3: Hawkins\Brown

- 3.20 Where fencing is required, this should:
- Be of a high-quality specification that makes a positive contribution to the *street scene*
 - Be permeable to create visual connections into the site at appropriate locations such as views towards entrances and away from service yards, storage areas and car parks
 - Consider sightlines
 - Integrate lighting and greening
 - Provide security to the site without appearing overly aggressive i.e. shards provided on top of a boundary treatment.
- 3.21 Where sites front public streets, fully blank and inactive *frontages* will not be acceptable and applicants should mitigate this through design.
- 3.22 On both SIL and LSIS, subject to internal uses, ground floor frontages should maximise the extent of *active frontage*. The placement of doors, windows and shutters should create visual connections onto surrounding streets and their arrangement should be legible and make entrances clearly identifiable for visitors.
- 3.23 Where internal upper floor uses require natural lighting, these spaces should be located along main thoroughfares to extend activity across the height of the *façade*.
- 3.24 Applicants should creatively consider the placement of colour, signage and branding, lighting, interventions that encourage biodiversity and public art to enhance otherwise blank frontages which result from industrial developments void of openings.
- 3.25 Where vegetation such as climbing plants is used to mitigate blank frontages, applicants must provide details of a maintenance strategy that will support both establishment and growth. A condition to secure planting maintenance throughout the duration of the building's life may be sought to ensure adequate maintenance.

- 3.26 Regard for public safety, particularly after dark, should be evidenced in a proposal. For example, lighting should be designed to serve a dual purpose of illuminating the spaces of the development site for employees and visitors and in providing lighting for people on nearby streets, helping to positively impact their sense of safety by animating frontages. Lighting should not interfere with local wildlife, following guidance set out in the Design Guide SPD Part 1 – Design Principles.
- 3.27 An indicative lighting strategy should be produced and submitted with a planning application. The Council will secure details of the proposal through a condition attached to planning permission.
- 3.28 Legible signage is essential to successfully navigating industrial sites and should be considered from the outset of the design process. Designs for both building and directional signage within the site will be required, and the former should be embedded into the architecture.
- Scale, form and *massing***
- 3.29 In all instances, proposed building heights must comply with Bexley Local Plan policy DP12 Tall buildings and building heights and compliance should clearly be indicated on submitted drawings.
- 3.30 Applicants should be sensitive to the local context, particularly within LSIS which typically exhibit a more fine grain and are often surrounded by residential homes. Proposals should avoid abrupt height changes against site boundaries and taller elements should be sufficiently set back from sensitive edges.
- 3.31 The eaves heights of large industrial units should be large enough to enable mezzanine floors and internal subdivision to provide a degree of flexibility that ensures the building has a long lifespan as it may be adapted, rather than demolished and rebuilt.

Blackhorse Land Industrial Estate, Walthamstow
Europa, We Made That

New wayfinding in the form of both directional and building signage unifies five industrial estates along Blackhorse Lane. Existing posts were reused to save costs and their modular design enables adaptability as additional signage can be added at a later date.



© Jakob Priestersbach

- 3.32 Applicants should consider the rhythm of openings across the whole length of a facade to strike a balance between animated and unanimated façades. On SIL-designated land where larger-scale developments are common, applicants should pay special attention to elevation design to avoid monotonous, large and excessively bulky elevations.
- 3.33 *Massing* should be broken up through vertical breaks in the building line or by incorporating design features that create distinct separations such as variations in materiality and colour palette, window, door and shutter openings and circulation cores.
- 3.34 Where appropriate to the setting and proposed use, physical breaks in the *massing* can enable pedestrian and cyclist routes through the development site, mitigating against the creation of overly long frontages.
- 3.35 On large industrial sites there are typically different spaces that will be sized and located according to their operational needs – for example larger, unimpeded warehouse spaces alongside smaller spaces providing offices. Applicants should utilise this differentiation in volume to create a *spatial hierarchy* across the development site and minimise the bulk of the development. This can help to add a human scale to the development and provide opportunities to locate smaller uses in the foreground of the site and adjacent to high trafficked areas, to activate the site.
- 3.36 During pre-application discussions and within the *DAS*, applicants should evidence the *massing* options explored during design development to demonstrate that the proposed *massing* is considered the best response to the site's unique constraints and opportunities and specific operational requirements.

Here East, Hackney Wick
Hawkins\Brown

Developed in the former press and broadcast centre from the 2012 London Olympics, the large, open place internal form has been broken down into smaller, more human scale pieces designed to reflect the mix of uses, which include university campuses and a wide range of businesses including start-ups and smaller industry. Mezzanine floors were added internally to allow for flexibility and the previously windowless envelope was replaced with a fritted glass façade to maximise ventilation and natural light.



© 1: Jason Hawkes; 2: Jack Hobhouse

Roofscapes

- 3.37 Applicants should consider roof forms that reflect prevailing contextual typologies, whilst also designing forms that will aid natural daylight and ventilation. Through the Character Appraisal, prevalent roof patterns and forms should be studied - including any historical roof forms that contribute to Bexley's industrial heritage - and applicants should demonstrate how this analysis has informed their proposal.
- 3.38 Where roofs accommodate plant and equipment such as PV panels and flues, applicants should consider the visual impact of these, particularly on key local views and the overall *massing*. Where screening is required this should be measured in the calculation of the building height and applicants should consider its impact on significant views towards the local area.
- 3.39 On SIL land, applicants should consider the use of roofs for parking to maximise operational yard space and building footprint, particularly in areas of low PTAL or where site capacity is constrained.

Architectural expression

- 3.40 Proposals must be rooted within their locality, and it should be demonstrated how the development will respond to its surroundings. Through their choice of materials and colour palettes, applicants should consider Bexley's industrial heritage, and demonstrate an understanding of the local area, both past and present.
- 3.41 Applicants should consider specifying materials and colour finishes that complement any existing industrial buildings in the area, and in instances where other uses abut or surround the site, proposed materials should also respond to these uses. For example, the use of dark, potentially imposing materials on sites directly opposite residential development should be avoided.

- 3.42 Façades should be designed to respond to the contextual urban grain, for example larger openings may be more suitable within SIL, whilst proposals on LSIS exhibit a more human scale with smaller openings and the materials specified.
- 3.43 Materials should be specified for their quality, durability and resilience and be driven by *circular economy* principles and their *embodied carbon*. Specifying robust materials and ensuring quality design, detailing and construction can reduce ongoing maintenance costs and prevent issues arising following occupation.
- 3.44 Where different approaches to building scale and *massing* are employed as set out in 3.35, applicants should consider how the materials can respond to this.

Movement and access

- 3.45 Site layouts should separate modes of transport to avoid potential conflict. Service routes should be segregated from pedestrian and cyclist access and where sites can support multiple access points, applicants should introduce these to minimise potential congestion around the site. Pre-application discussions involving the Highway Authority should be undertaken to ensure the proposal will be safe for all users.
- 3.46 Legible, dedicated pedestrian entrances should be provided directly from the street and applicants should consider the public transport network in locating entrances.
- 3.47 Applicants should ensure that the infrastructure is provided for people to cycle safely and to enable last-mile deliveries by cargo bike from these sites.
- 3.48 HGV access to the strategic road network should be as direct as possible, and sufficient yard space should be provided within the site to ensure HGVs can turn without having to manoeuvre on the public highway.

- 3.49 Car parking should be located to allow a direct and clear relationship between the street and building entrances to improve the *legibility* of sites and building frontages.

Natural environment and green infrastructure

- 3.50 The provision of soft landscaping on industrial sites has the potential to enhance the environmental and spatial quality of these developments by contributing towards biodiversity, adding visual interest and helping to integrate buildings into the surrounding environment. Landscape architects should be engaged early in the design process to inform a holistic approach to urban greening.
- 3.51 Industrial estates are often located close to ecologically sensitive areas such as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and natural buffers between SINC and the development may be required. Discussions between the Council and the applicant team’s ecologist and/or arboriculturist should determine this need.
- 3.52 Much of Bexley’s ditch and dyke network is located within industrial locations and these provide important habitats for water voles and amphibians. Soft landscaping around industrial premises should be designed to support and enhance these existing habitats. This offers an opportunity to retain or create ground level open mosaic habitats that are disappearing as brownfield sites come forward for development.
- 3.53 Planting should be used to break up parking spaces and the use of *Sustainable drainage systems* (SuDS), such as rain gardens, swales and permeable paving to manage surface water run off, must be demonstrated in line with Bexley Local Plan Policy DP33 *Sustainable drainage systems*.
- 3.54 Planting schemes should be site specific and designed to support and enhance existing blue and green movement corridors. Opportunities to provide access

to surrounding green spaces and waterways should be exploited and utilised to create characterful workspaces that support employees’ physical and mental health and wellbeing.

- 3.55 The design of soft landscaping should take into account soil conditions on existing industrial land, and applicants may be required to carry out tests to determine if land contamination is a concern.
- 3.56 Roofs should be used to contribute to the on-site urban greening and biodiversity enhancements. As a minimum, the use of *biodiverse* and bio-solar roofs should be explored, especially where access is not required.

Environmental sustainability

- 3.57 The extension of a building’s lifespan is especially relevant for industrial uses as consumer needs constantly evolve, and buildings should be designed to reflect this. Creating flexible structures that can adapt to these changes reduces the need to demolish and rebuild. Structural elements should be designed to enable such adaptations, such as the vertical extension of existing buildings and the ability to accommodate changes to internal layouts.
- 3.58 Excessive solar gains and overheating can be exacerbated by some industrial uses, which should be reflected in the building’s design. The use of appropriately sized openings to manage solar gains and the provision of natural ventilation can protect employees’ wellbeing, without relying upon mechanical systems. Applicants are also encouraged to use vegetation such as trees to assist in managing solar gains.

Mitigating environmental impacts

- 3.59 Air pollutants associated with industrial sites can negatively impact amenity, especially when considering the cumulative impact of developments. Proposals should mitigate against this by implementing

**BloQs, Edmonton
5th Studio**

A 32 000ft2 workspace with facilities for woodworking, metalworking, fabric and sewing and engineering alongside, the project is part new build and part *adaptive reuse* of a former vehicle testing facility. The latter provided an opportunity to create a large workshop whilst maintaining the *embodied carbon* in the existing structure. The new steel-framed building extends the language of industrial built forms and the development is heated using waste material from the timber machining workshops on site.



© 1:5th Studio; 2:Timothy Soar

- energy, heating and cooling systems that limit the omission of these pollutants. Mitigation measures must be outlined in the Air Quality Assessment submitted with all *major* applications, though it is recommended that the report is submitted with all industrial applications, irrespective of size.
- 3.60 Infrastructure should be installed that allows low emission operational service vehicles to be used. The Technical Handbook provides guidance on Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs).
- 3.61 Opportunities to reduce noise and vibrations associated with industrial uses should be sought. In the first instance, applicants should locate noisy operations away from any sensitive neighbouring uses.
- 3.62 As noted in the context, boundary treatments and frontages section of this chapter, acoustic screening can be provided through soft landscaping. Built structures such as acoustic screens and enclosures can also be specified around noisy equipment and machinery to mitigate their impact.
- 3.63 Bexley’s SIL is commonly located along the rivers that run through, and adjacent to, the borough. Applicants must demonstrate how the potential negative environmental impacts of development will be mitigated against, balancing industrial needs with wildlife health, pollution control and habitat protection.
- 3.64 Industrial development can alter natural floodplains and increase flood risk for both the industrial site and downstream areas. As much of the borough’s SIL is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3, and is therefore vulnerable to tidal flooding from nearby rivers, applicants must account for this in development proposals in accordance with Bexley Local Plan Policy DP32 Flood Risk Management.

- 3.65 Applicants should engage the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) early on and carry out flood risk assessments at the outset of the design process to adequately mitigate against risk through design, such as through using *SuDS*. The submission of a Drainage Strategy will be required for all *major* developments.
- 3.66 Where appropriate, applicants should seek opportunities to activate river edges with planting and other ecological enhancements. Where possible, the provision of riverside amenity space for employees and customers should also be considered, encouraging employees to enjoy and benefit from improved connections to the river.
- 3.67 Applicants should note that much of the borough’s Strategic Industrial Land is located adjacent to the Thames Tidal Flood Defences. In these locations, appropriate setback distances from the defences will be required, and some activities that could undermine the defences may not be appropriate. Applicants should refer to guidance in the *Sites Adjacent to Watercourses* chapter of this document.
- 3.68 Developers are encouraged to request a screening opinion from the LPA before submitting a planning application to determine whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required.

Industrial Land Development

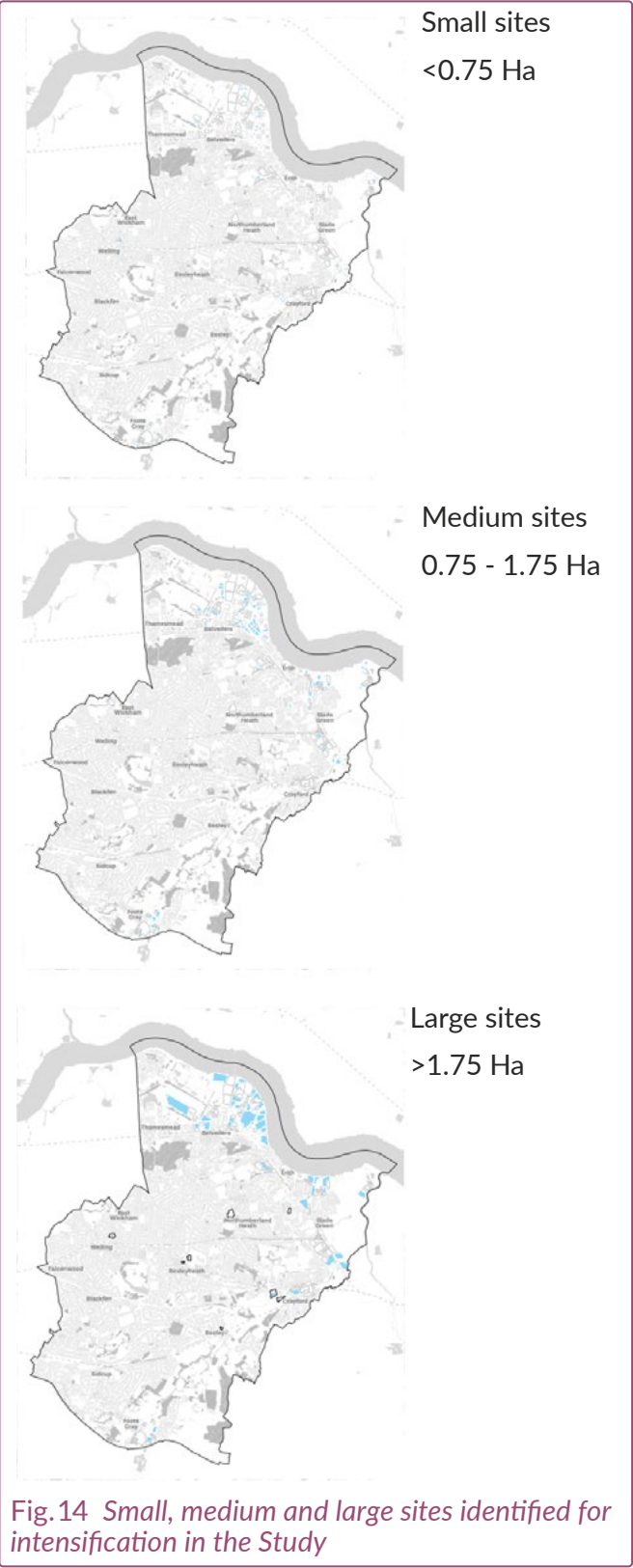
A 11 Intensification should create high-quality places and ensure the safety of all people, particularly where residential and industrial uses are co-located

The [National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 200](#) makes clear that it is the responsibility of new development to mitigate the impact of noise and other nuisances caused by surrounding existing developments, businesses or facilities in accordance with the agent of change principle.

[Bexley Local Plan](#) Policy DP7 Appropriate uses within designated industrial areas states that in Strategic Industrial Locations (SIL) and Locally Significant Industrial Sites (LSIS), use Class B2 and B8 and E(g)(ii) and E(g)(iii) will be permitted. The policy calls for development proposals to, where possible, intensify, renew and modernise business uses and supports the co-location with non-industrial uses on LSIS, subject to no net loss of existing industrial floor space. This approach to optimising sites is set out in the 2021 [Industrial Land Intensification Study](#). The Study sets out the case for intensification given the current inefficient use of sites, many of which have a low floor to area ratio and a high potential for an increase in built area on sites to make sites more viable and efficient.

Policy DP11 Achieving high quality design states that the Council will use the agent of change principle such that the developer is responsible for managing the impact of the change for both the existing and proposed uses.

3.69 The Industrial Land Intensification Study categorises sites suitable for intensification into small (<0.75Ha), medium (0.75 - 1.75Ha) and large (>1.75Ha). As identified in the Study and shown in [Fig.14](#), small sites typically have a more limited potential for intensification, with development potential increasing as site size increases.



- 3.70 Development potential is also dictated by accessibility, the proximity to the transport network and the appropriateness of accommodating non-industrial uses on these sites. Sites suitable for intensification typically have existing plot coverage at 40% and below.
- 3.71 Accounting for economic factors and the local policy context, the Study identifies six intensification drivers specific to Bexley and outlined in the purple box opposite. In considering a site's constraints and opportunities, applicants should also consider which of these intensification drivers become relevant to enabling intensification.
- 3.72 The Study goes on to categorise several sub-areas which are formed of small pockets of industrial sites. These areas tend to host similar industrial uses, exhibit similar spatial qualities and present common constraints and opportunities. Applicants should refer to these sub-areas and the associated analysis when completing a Character Appraisal.
- 3.73 The Industrial Land Intensification Study acknowledges that a diversity of building typologies will be required to deliver intensification across Bexley's industrial sites and identifies six to consider:
- a. Multi-storey workshop
 - b. Adjacent workshop and warehouse
 - c. Adjacent workshop and stacked warehouse
 - d. Stacked warehouse
 - e. Stacked workshop and residential
 - f. Stacked warehouse and residential
- 3.74 Options a. - d. are deemed workspace intensification, whilst e. and f. would result in the co-location of industrial and residential uses to support intensification and address other policy objectives, such as the delivery of more housing.

Bexley's industrial intensification drivers

- a. **Connectivity**
Access to public transport enables higher density employment uses to be co-located with larger industrial typologies
- b. **Placemaking**
A changing context surrounding industrial areas require industrial areas to work harder in creating integrated, accessible places
- c. **Infill**
Changing market conditions trigger a more efficient use of underutilised sites through infill development
- d. **Heritage**
Adaptation of industrial fabric with heritage value attracts new sectors into industrial areas
- e. **Access**
Good access to the strategic networks and major markets creates demand for larger industrial space types
- f. **Grain**
Large sites enable a variety of efficient configurations that accommodate a mix of types of employment space

- 3.75 The most suitable development typology will depend on the size, context and location of the site. The Study provides exemplar developments for each typology which applicants are encouraged to reference, however a site-specific approach must be adopted in all instances.
- 3.76 Once the principle and proposed type of intensification have been identified and as the development proposal evolves, applicants should follow the design principles provided in [A 10](#) as well as those later in this chapter.
- 3.77 [Industrial Intensification and Co-Location Study: Design and Delivery Testing](#) produced by the Mayor of London provides space specifications for several common typologies and applicants are encouraged to refer to this as the spatial layouts are in conception stages.
- 3.78 The following guidance provides a framework for the delivery of more intensive uses of industrial land whilst ensuring existing land is not compromised and residential and other uses are delivered to a high standard and create places where people will want to live.

Workspace intensification

- 3.79 Multi-storey and stacked industrial uses provide industrial uses on upper floors. Such development is particularly applicable to small and medium sites as it optimises land use and can enable multiple, different industries to be located on one site.
- 3.80 It is recommended that an audit of the existing structural elements is undertaken prior to developing a scheme.
- 3.81 Applicants should demonstrate that safe and efficient vertical circulation – for people and goods – will be provided alongside separate access points for staff, visitors and deliveries.

Florentia Village, Harringay Warehouse District
Turner Works

Evolving the industrial, creative heritage of Florentia, a 100 000m² extension to Florentia Clothing Village creates space for local small businesses requiring light industrial workspace. The site replaces storage containers with a variety of stacked maker spaces - larger, double height ground floor workshops with smaller studios to upper levels. Natural light and ventilation is maximised throughout and buildings are designed along a repeated grid to minimise waste and enable dismantling and reuse at the end of their lifespan.



© Turner Works

- 3.82 Stacked and multi-storey typologies enable parking to be integrated within and dispersed throughout the building footprint, rather than at ground level within traditional parking courts. Applicants should explore the suitability of this when laying out a site, particularly on smaller, more constrained sites.

Co-locating industrial and non-industrial uses

- 3.83 Co-location will be permitted on LSIS designated land provided there is no net loss of existing industrial floor space. Co-location can be used as a transition between industrial and residential uses and presents an opportunity to provide additional amenities near to residential areas. Co-locating these uses also provides opportunities for industrial proposals to support Bexley's small businesses and local economy by providing typologies such as affordable and smaller workspaces.
- 3.84 The *massing* of co-location proposals should be developed according to the site's opportunities and constraints and can therefore take many different forms.
- 3.85 Building on the typologies explored in the Industrial Land Intensification Study, the following examples in [Fig.15](#) - [Fig.20](#) explore potential development models alongside strengths and weaknesses for each option. These are illustrative and applicants should appraise each individual site to identify the more appropriate form of development.
- 3.86 Where relevant, applicants should use guidance provided in the [Design Guide SPD Part 2 - Small Sites](#) document to inform proposals.

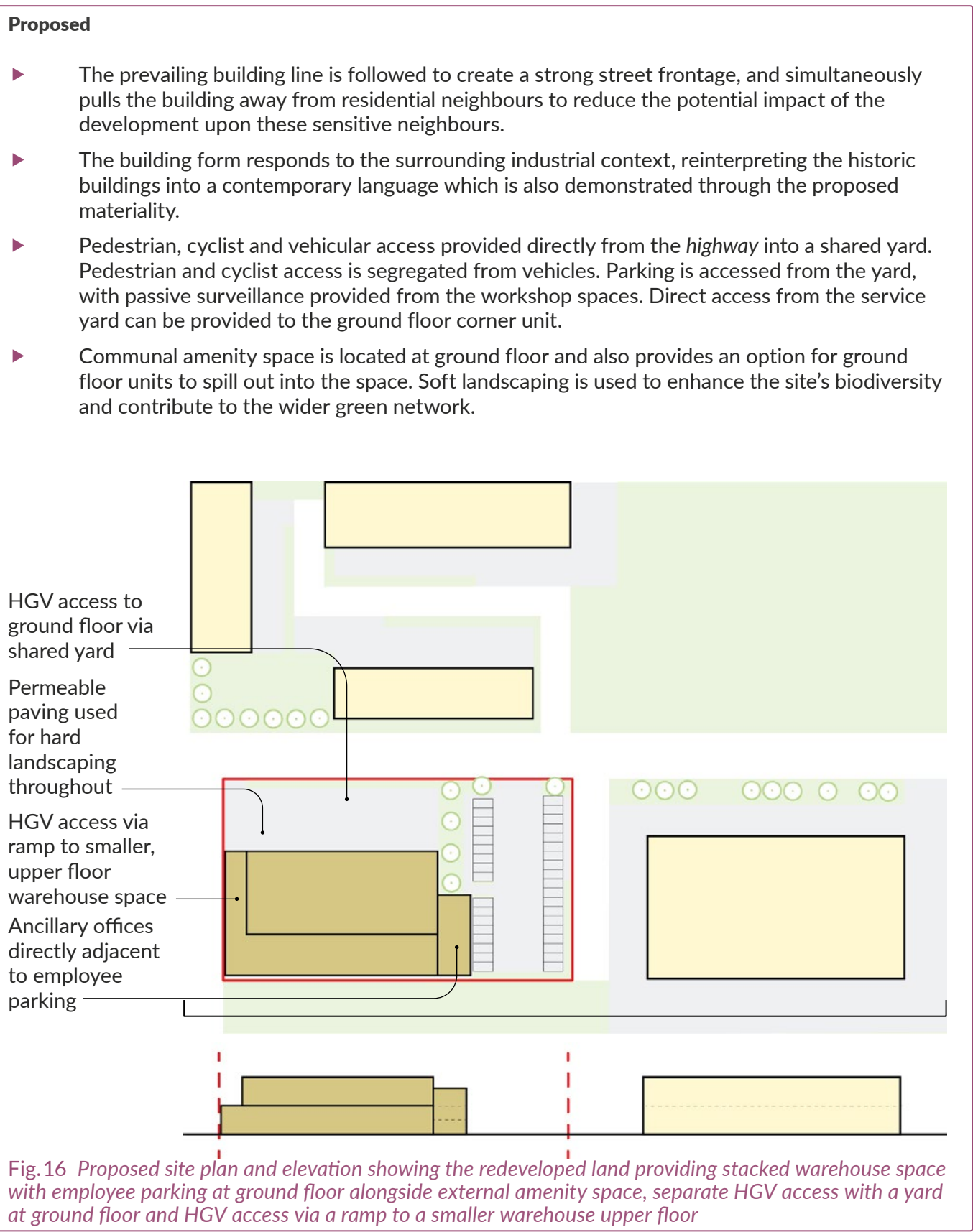
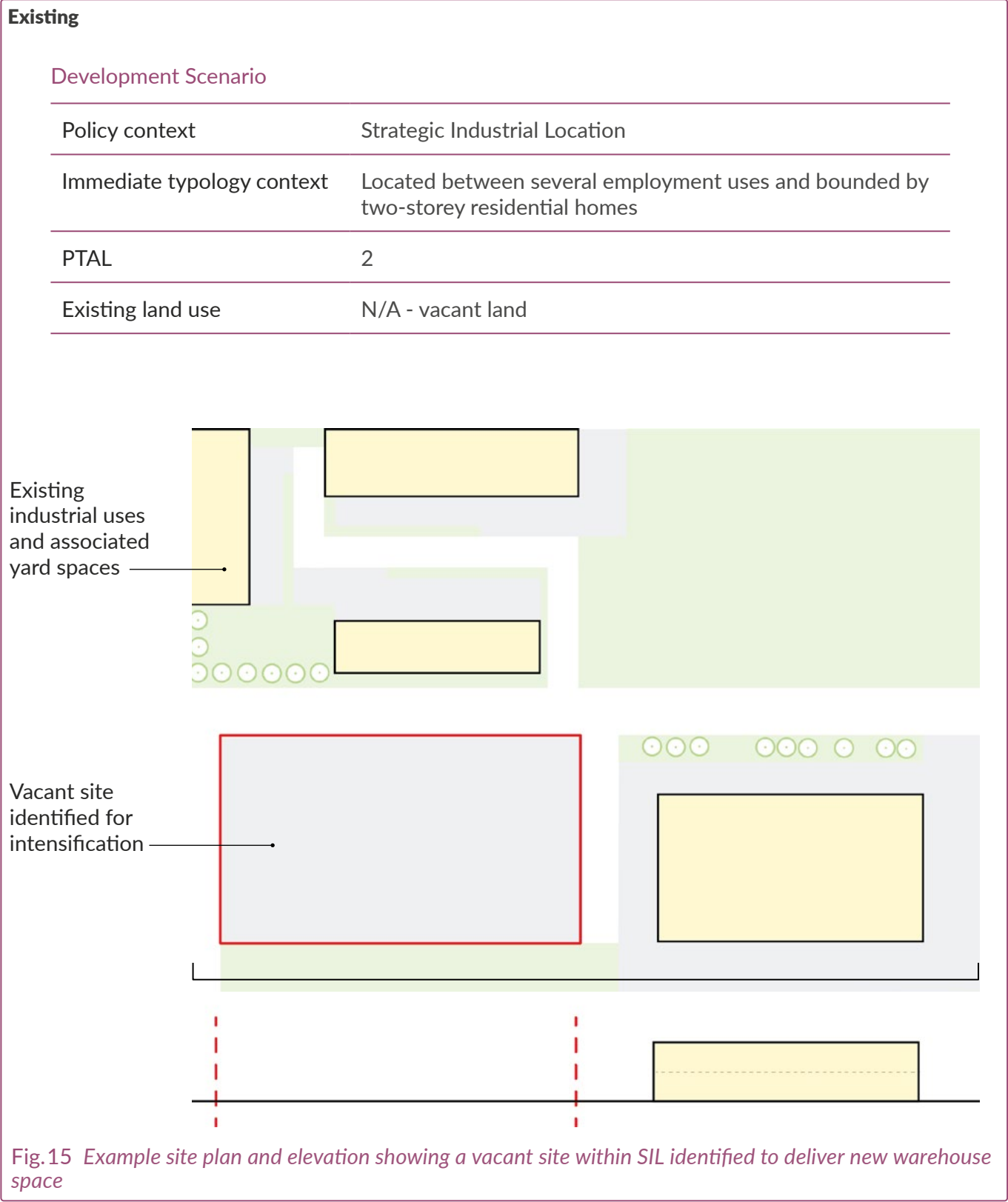
Bloom Brixton, Brixton
Chetwoods Architects

Located adjacent to a locally *listed building*, the development was designed to intensify existing industrial uses by providing a series of spaces suitable for varied tenants of both traditional and modern industrial uses. Detailed design elements such as the building heights, fenestration patterns and materiality respond to the setting. Urban greening along the primary street frontage provides visual amenity and on-site biodiversity improvements.

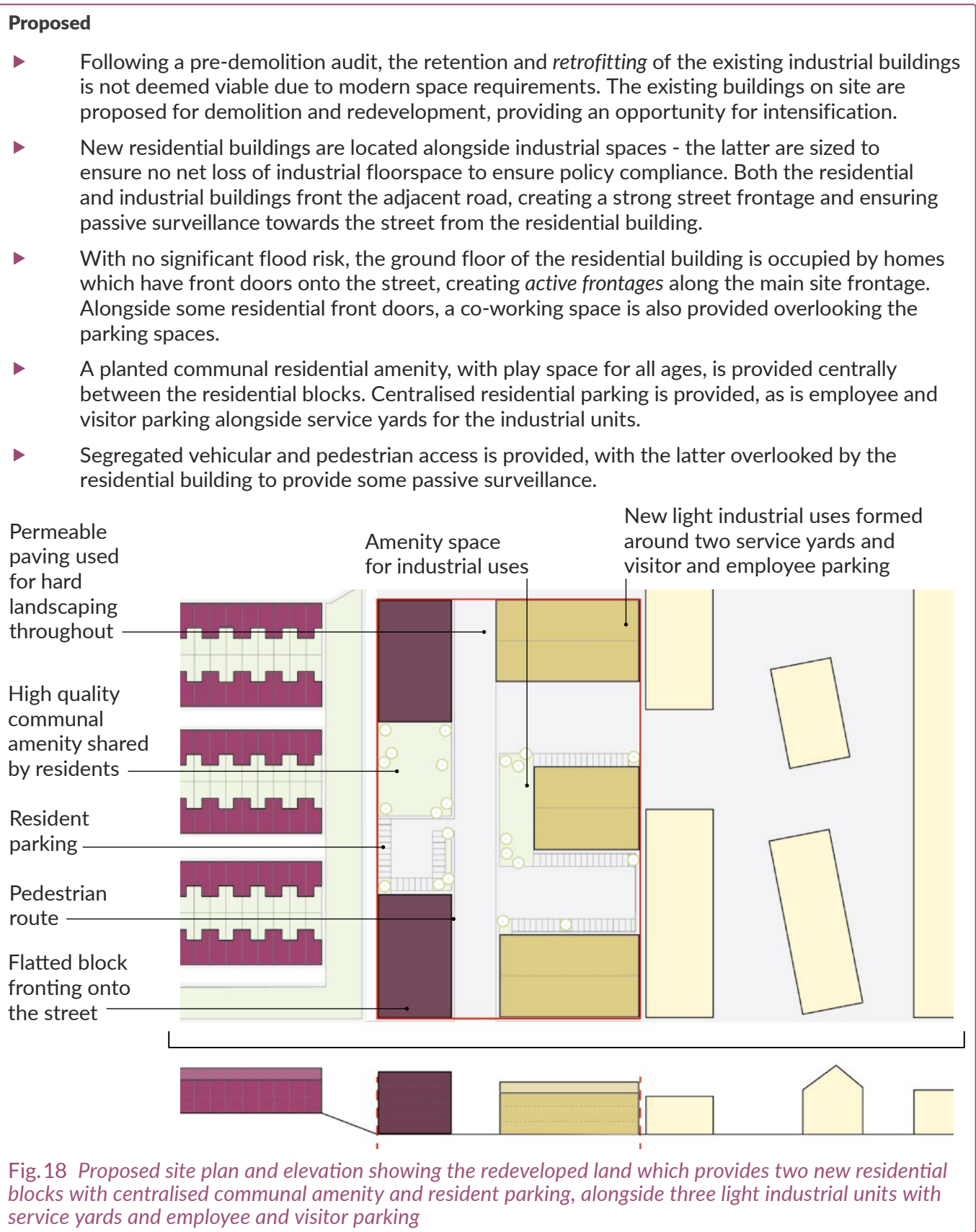
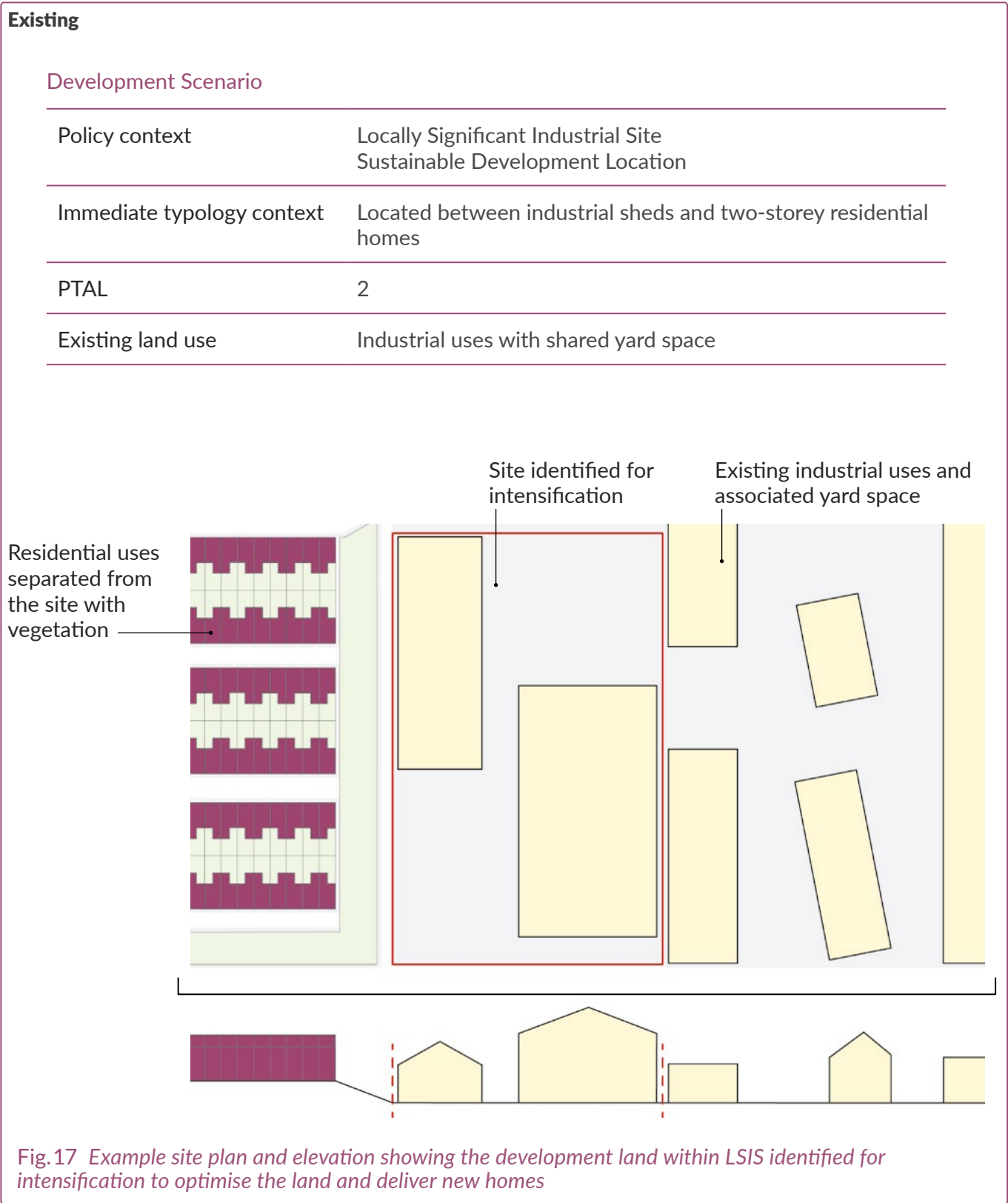


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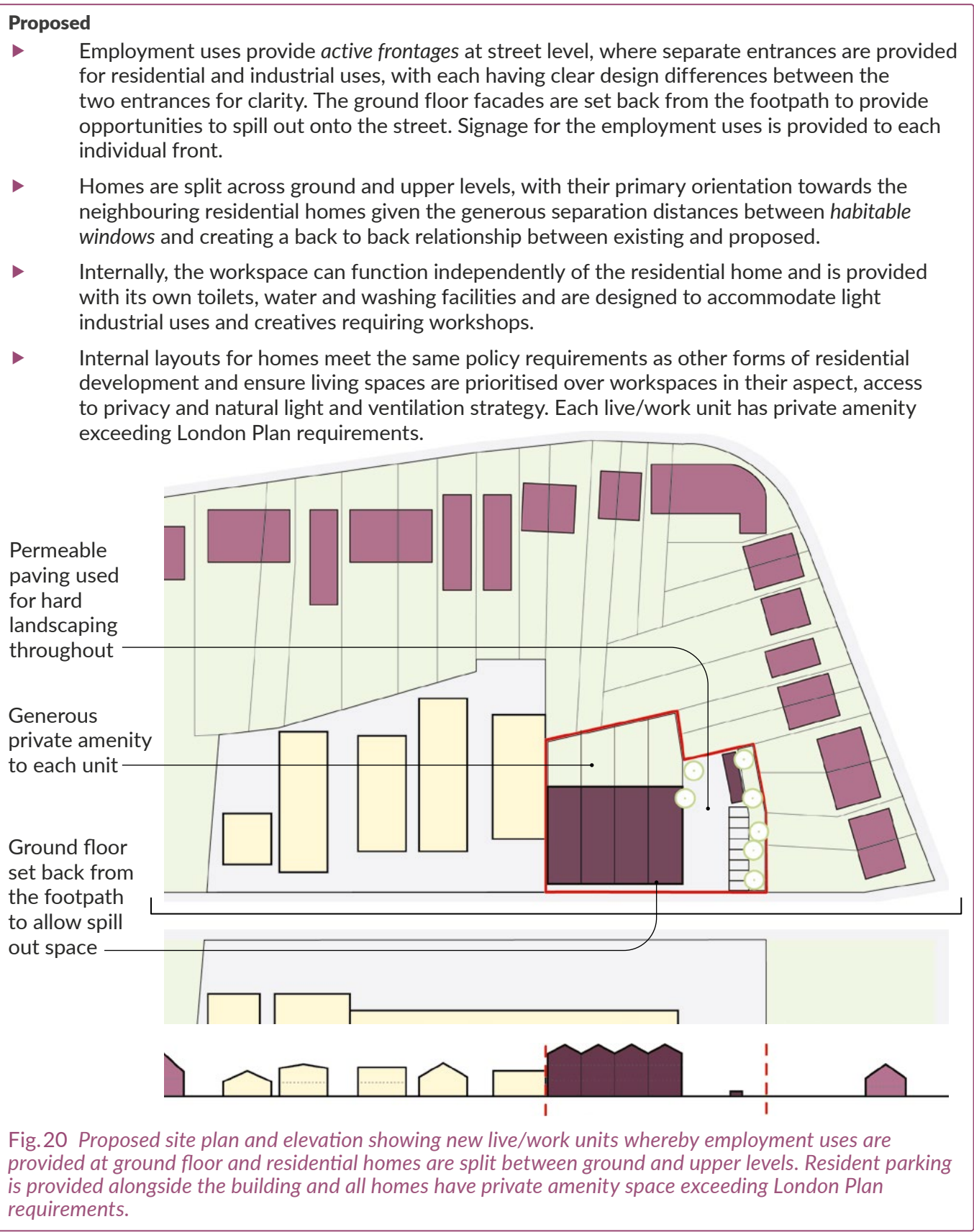
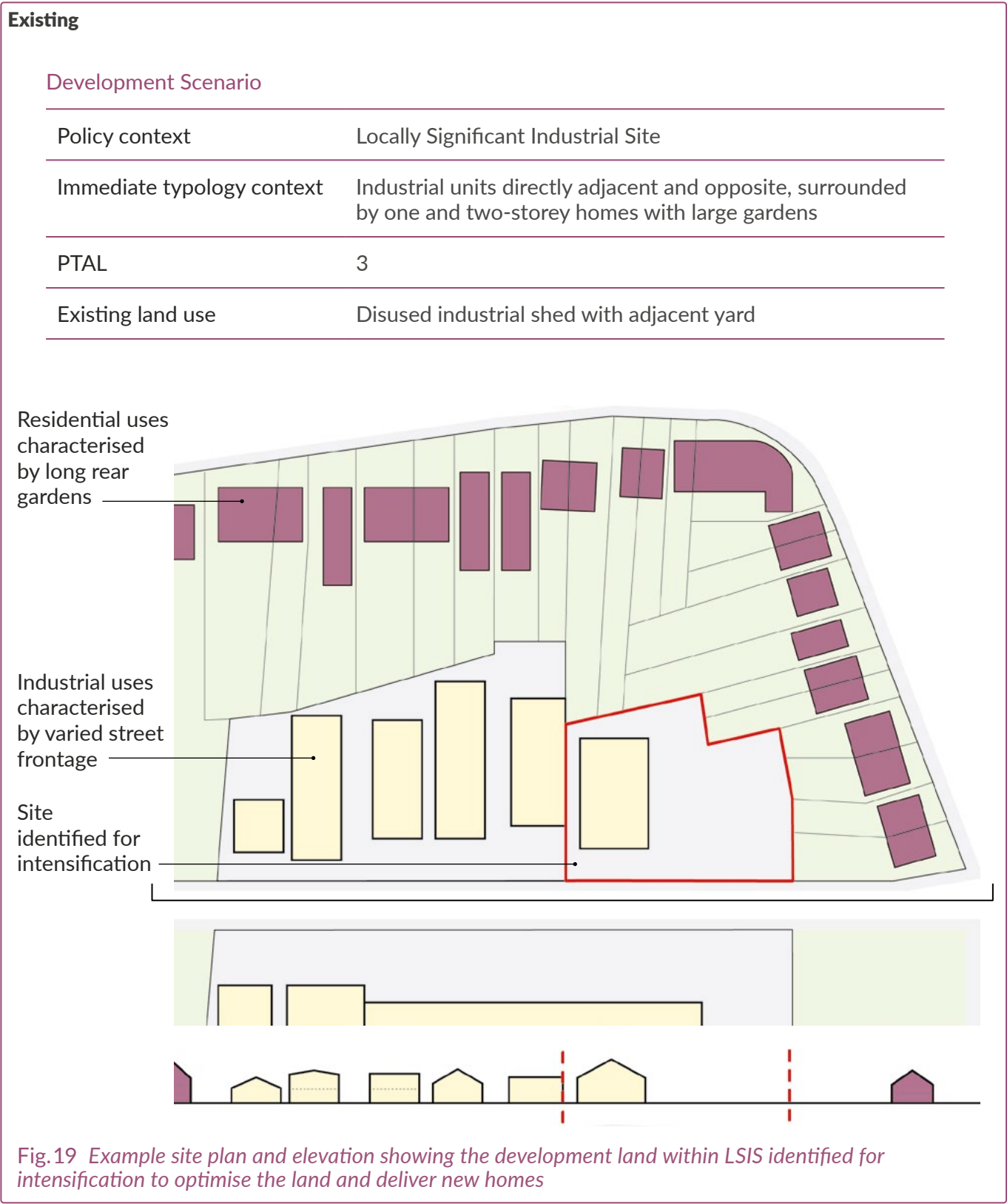
Stacked Warehouse example



Stacked Warehouse and Residential example



Stacked Workshop and Residential example



Design principles for co-location

3.87 In addition to the principles outlined in the exemplars, all co-located developments should adhere to the following guidance, and relevant clauses in [A 10](#).

Site layout, movement and access

3.88 Sites should be laid out to maximise the separation between operational areas and homes. Applicants should define operational hours that may impact the residential component, which will typically be secured by planning condition. Where industrial space is used outside of standard office hours, all operational activities should be kept separate from residential buildings, streets and entrances.

3.89 Site layouts should be developed to shield new and existing homes from noise and other environmental impacts generated through operation. This should be achieved using both natural and built elements.

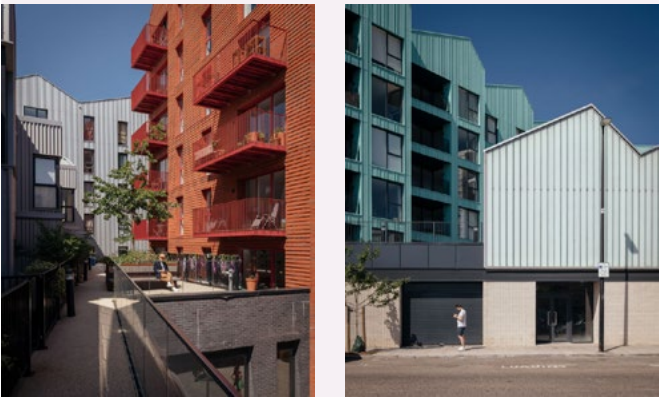
3.90 Proposals should be supported by an Active Travel Zone (ATZ) assessment to identify the primary routes for the development site and any deficiencies that can be addressed through the scheme. The [Design Guide SPD Part 2 - Technical Handbook](#) provides further guidance on completing ATZ assessments.

3.91 The safe access and passage of residents, operations and servicing vehicles, employees - including any nighttime staff - and visitors is critical, and segregated access points for different users should be provided. Where the co-location of business and residential access is unavoidable, *public realm* and *highways* design must ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.

3.92 During pre-application discussions, and with a planning application, applicants should provide evidence of an access strategy, informed by the ATZ assessment, that demonstrates how different users will navigate the development site.

Wick Lane, Hackney Wick
dRMM

A mixed-use neighbourhood that brings together homes, industrial and creative spaces where commercial spaces act as a buffer between the homes and industrial uses. The architectural and landscape design evolved to reflect the area’s manufacturing heritage.



© Jim Stephenson

3.93 Resident and employee pedestrian and cyclist access should be provided separately to vehicular access, directly from the primary street frontage and designed to accommodate all abilities. Ramps should be designed where required and applicants should ensure that there are no obstacles along primary routes, with sufficient door widths, tactile materials and automatic openings provided where necessary.

3.94 Both residential and industrial entrances and routes should benefit from passive surveillance, be well lit and clearly signposted to support the safety of all.

3.95 Developments are encouraged to promote the use of greener service vehicles and last mile logistics approaches, such as cargo bikes by providing sufficient space and infrastructure to support use upon occupation or in the future. The Technical Handbook includes guidance on the provision of cycle parking and Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs).

3.96 Where located adjacent to other businesses and/or co-located sites, the applicant should explore the consolidation of access and service roads. Where feasible, working across site boundaries with neighbouring landowners is encouraged.

Parking, yards and servicing

3.97 Combining residential and industrial parking through a managed scheme can maximise the occupancy of spaces. Applicants must have a clear management strategy and discuss this with the Highway Authority during pre-application stage.

3.98 Where possible, site layouts should be developed to avoid residential homes overlooking service yards. If unavoidable, applicants should consider the use of canopies and roof structures over yards and operational space to mitigate visual, polluting and noise impacts where residential and industrial uses are in close proximity.

12 Thames Road, Barking
BPTW Partnership

Two new towers - eight and 16 storeys - are located to create new landmarks within the local area, whilst low-rise buildings are located to mitigate the impact of the development on existing homes. Light industrial uses are centrally located in the site for ease of access and to create distinct separation from residential homes. This also allows residential uses to line the site’s perimeter to activate the street frontage. Communal amenity is provided at podium and roof levels to provide residents with a range of spaces segregated from industrial uses.



© McLaren Construction/BeFirst

Architectural design details

- 3.99** Using top lighting to industrial spaces can mitigate against windows that overlook adjacent residential uses and simultaneously prevent light spill onto these homes if businesses operate outside of typical working hours.
- 3.100** Where overlooked, the appearance of roofs to industrial units should be duly considered and treated as a fifth elevation. Applicants should seek opportunities to activate these roofs, for example in providing safe and secure access for on-site food growing in greenhouses, moveable planters or similar.
- 3.101** The Council will look for applicants to incorporate enhanced acoustic performance for any walls and floors separating residential and employment uses to mitigate disturbance to residents. Subject to planning permission, the provision of detailed drawings at 1:10 will be required by condition to satisfy this need.
- 3.102** Applicants should consider the location of exhausts and vents to ensure these do not negatively impact homes by contributing to unsatisfactory levels of air pollution. Other environmental conditions associated with the industrial operation can be mitigated using triple glazing, winter gardens, non-openable windows and mechanical ventilation to homes and acoustic fences within industrial areas.

Amenity space

- 3.103** Applicants must meet the requirements for private and communal amenity space, ensuring this is distinct from any industrial uses on site, to ensure resident safety. Refer to section D 23 in the [Design Guide SPD Part 1 – Design Principles](#) for guidance on the provision of communal and private amenity space within residential development.

- 3.104** The proposed locations for amenity spaces should be designed to ensure residents can make full use of their amenity spaces. Amenity should take advantage of the site orientation and where possible offer a variety of spaces that can facilitate a range of uses.
- 3.105** Subject to the quantum and mix of homes proposed, on-site play space should be provided in line with policy requirements and in accordance with guidance in the Technical Handbook. Applicants should ensure play space is in a safe, overlooked location that is distinct from industrial uses.
- 3.106** Applicants must meet the Urban Greening Factor requirements set out in Bexley Local Plan Policy DP21 Greening of development sites and the London Plan, and where possible, should exceed these minimum requirements. Both the residential and industrial elements will be required to meet 0.4 and 0.3 respectively. Applicants should consider approaches to greening the site from the earliest design stage to ensure it is embedded into the development proposal.
- 3.107** Urban greening presents an opportunity to mitigate against noise and air pollution which can be critical when co-locating uses. Planting is most effective in reducing noise when used in combination with other mitigation measures such as acoustic barriers or earth mounding. Applicants should consider:
- The use of planting to provide noise buffers close to the source i.e. the strategic road network
 - Creating a layering effect by planting trees, hedges and shrubs together to improve sound reduction
 - Choosing planting that absorbs both particulates and CO₂, whilst outputting oxygen, such as pine, which is effective in trapping particulates and providing a year-round filter.

Industrial Land Development Checklist

- ☐ **Show how an engagement strategy has been used to develop the proposal with relevant (local) stakeholders (A 10/A 11)**
This could be achieved by presenting an engagement and consultation strategy, followed by supporting evidence to illustrate how local stakeholder insights have shaped the development proposal.
- ☐ **Show how the proposal has been informed by analysis and understanding of the local context (A 10/A 11)**
This should be achieved using a Character Appraisal to show how information gathered about the site and its surroundings has informed the development to create a proposal that appropriately responds to its setting. A set of diagrams and drawings should be developed to demonstrate this.
- ☐ **Show how the proposal is appropriate to its SIL/LSIS designation and optimises the site in the context of needing to densify industrial land uses within these designations (A 10/A 11)**
This should be achieved using a set of diagrams and drawings to demonstrate this, including design iterations to evidence the evolution of the proposal.
- ☐ **Show how opportunities for the *adaptive reuse* of existing buildings have been duly considered (A 10/A 11)**
This should be achieved by providing evidence of investigations into the usability of existing buildings for redevelopment.
- ☐ **Show how the potential impact on heritage and natural features has been mitigated through design (A 10/A 11)**
This should be achieved using a Character Appraisal, with evidence of how these features have informed the proposal and will be protected and/or enhanced following development. To support this, drawings showing the proposal within its context should be developed.
- ☐ **Show that the proposal has been designed to respond to, respect and enhance Bexley's character (A 10/A 11)**
This should be achieved by presenting a Character Appraisal containing evidence of specific aspects of the local character that the proposal responds to. To demonstrate how this is achieved, drawings should be developed showing the proposal within its context to demonstrate how this is achieved.
- ☐ **Show how the *public realm* surrounding the development will enable the safe movement of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, benefiting from passive surveillance and prioritising active travel wherever possible (A 10/A 11)**
This should be achieved by developing a set of drawings that show proposed movement routes for different users, locations of cycle and car parking and soft and hard landscaping layouts and specifications.
- ☐ **Show how employees, visitors and, where co-location is proposed, resident safety and ease of navigation has been considered (A 10/A 11)**
This should be achieved by developing a set of drawings and diagrams that illustrate indicative lighting and wayfinding strategies.

- ☐ **Show how, when proposing the co-location of residential and industrial uses, sufficient separation is provided between uses (A 11)**
This should be achieved by preparing diagrams and drawings that illustrate the distinctions between residential and industrial uses.
- ☐ **Show how the proposal will make a positive impact on the streetscape (A 10/A 11)**
This should be achieved using a Character Appraisal to evidence site-specific opportunities, constraints and significant townscape features that have informed the architectural expression. A set of diagrams and drawings should be developed to communicate how the elevations have evolved in response to the setting, details of the material palette and specification (including material reference images) and soft and hard landscaping layouts and specifications.
- ☐ **Show how the proposal has been developed to protect and/or enhance biodiversity, ecology and existing habitats (A 10/A 11)**
This should be achieved using the Character Appraisal to evidence existing ecological features and habitats that the project seeks to protect and/or enhance. A set of diagrams and drawings showing how the proposal connects into existing green and blue networks and the layout and specification of the soft and hard landscape design should be developed.
- ☐ **Show how the development follows the energy hierarchy, embeds climatic sustainability and responds to site-specific environmental conditions (A 10/A 11)**
This should be achieved by developing a set of drawings and specifications demonstrating how the proposal responds to site-specific environmental conditions and promotes a circular economy. The drawings should provide information on the proposed materials, soft and hard landscape design.

4 Sites Adjacent to Watercourses

- A 12 Waterfront development should balance people’s enjoyment of waterways with adequate life and ecological protection
- A 13 Development within the Thames Policy Area should enhance people’s experience of the place

Context to Bexley’s rivers

In addition to the River Thames, which gives the borough its northern border, Bexley has two main rivers running through it - River Cray and River Shuttle. A section of the River Darent runs along the borough’s eastern boundary. Rivers Cray and Darent are chalk streams, globally rare and precious habitats, rich in wildlife and boasting extremely pure water. All four rivers are designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and their protection and preservation is a priority for the Council.

There is a network of dykes in Belvedere and Crayford which are classified by the Environment Agency (EA) as main rivers. These are home to fish, aquatic plants and invertebrates, as well as rare water vole and birds like kingfishers and provide important green corridors for people and wildlife.

Development adjacent to these rivers can present flood risk and drainage issues that must be addressed to enable proposed development. Such issues can present limitations to development coming forward, principally due to borough-wide capacity issues in sewerage infrastructure and EA requirements that inform the extent of built form permitted along rivers. All development in flood risk areas should demonstrate how it is adaptable for higher floor levels and risk as the climate continues to change.

Riverside development also presents many opportunities and a holistic approach to riverside development is essential to maximising the quality of the riverside. As such, developers are encouraged to work with neighbouring site owners to establish benefits for local communities.

Produced by the Environment Agency (EA), the [Thames Estuary 2100 Riverside Strategy Approach](#) identifies the work required to protect land adjacent to the River Thames from flooding risk through the raising of flood defences incrementally by 2100. The TE2100 Plan identifies known intervention points, such as the expected requirement for the first stage of downstream tidal defence upgrades by 2040. This will alleviate pressure on the existing Thames Barrier and extend the time until major upgrade or replacement is required.

Raising the flood defences presents opportunities to enhance the resident and visitor experience of the riverside, improve biodiversity and highlight the importance of the riverside.

Through the Port of London Act 1968 (as amended), the Port of London Authority (PLA) has the primary responsibility to maintain safe access and manage and support the safety of vessels, the public and all users of the River Thames.

[Port of London Authority – A Safer Riverside](#) provides best practice guidance for development alongside and on the tidal River Thames to ensure developers consider the potential risks to those using riverside developments and incorporate design features that mitigate this risk whilst enabling people to enjoy the river. The guidance reinforces the importance of ensuring sufficient provision of public rescue equipment (PRE) at high-risk locations and at all new developments and crossings along the Thames.

Applicants should also refer to the [Estuary Edges](#) guidance by the Thames Estuary Partnership which provides design principles to maximise the ecological value of the riverside on land and in water.

Fig.21 Bexley’s main rivers



- Railway stations
- ▨

 Thames Policy Area
- Main rivers

Sites Adjacent to Waterways

A 12 Waterfront development should balance people’s enjoyment of waterways with adequate life and ecological protection

Bexley Local Plan Policy DP18 Waterfront development and development including, or close to, flood defences, is clear in the importance of development activating spaces along the waterfront and maintaining and creating new access that is safe, whilst protecting and enhancing biodiversity and mitigating the negative impact of development. *Policy DP19 The River Thames and the Thames Policy Area* sets out the importance of proposals within this area considering the impacts of their development on the ecology of the River, its priority habitats and protected species, with ecological enhancements sought from all proposals. *London Plan* Policy SI 17 Protecting and enhancing London’s waterways outlines the need for development proposals to respect, support and improve the protection of the distinct character, heritage and biodiversity of the waterways.

- 4.1 Prior to developing their proposal, applicants are strongly encouraged to develop a Riverside Strategy Approach (RSA) to understand the opportunities and constraints of a development site from the outset, before using this to shape a proposal. An RSA should comprehensively outline how the development will be managed and protected to ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of riverside environments. Fig.22 sets out details applicants should consider and include within their RSA.
- 4.2 Undertaking the RSA will identify that the EA has several design guidelines that will influence the extent of development and that aim to balance protecting natural features and allowing people to enjoy them. Some of these are listed in Fig.23 overleaf,

Fig.22 Details to be included in a Riverside Strategy Approach

Topic	What should be addressed?
Flood risk management	How communities and their infrastructure will be protected from flooding through both natural and engineered defences, as outlined in this chapter
	Consideration for how floodplain restoration and natural water retention can be incorporated
	How the development site, or part thereof, is not required for present or future flood risk management infrastructure
Environmental protection and enhancement	Preserving and restoring riparian habitats and biodiversity
	Improving water quality by reducing pollution runoff and managing land use
Land use planning	Guiding where and how development occurs along the river to minimise environmental impacts and flood risk through methods that require minimal interventions such as introducing setbacks and buffer zones
Public access and restoration	Providing safe and enjoyable access to riverside areas using parks, trails and recreational facilities that encourage community engagement and stewardship of the river.
	Supporting population health by enabling and encouraging physical activity and contact with nature
Cultural and heritage conservation	Protecting historic sites, landscapes and views connected to the river.
Economic development	Supporting sustainable river-based economic activities that can bolster the local community.
Integrated stakeholder collaboration	Involving key stakeholders in both planning and implementation, including local community members and groups, environmental groups, businesses, agencies such as the EA and the Port of London Authority (PLA).

however applicants should note this list is not exhaustive and early engagement with the EA is strongly encouraged to identify the full extent of design guidelines and any site specific considerations.

- 4.3 These guidelines, along with other constraints and opportunities of an individual site, should be responded to creatively. The 16m setback, for example, can provide opportunities to enhance the townscape and people’s enjoyment of the place through delivering *public realm* that improves access to nature and ecology.
- 4.4 Some activities and uses typically permitted within the riverside setback include:
- Natural vegetation and habitat restoration, which is encouraged to maintain or restore native plants to stabilise riverbanks, provide habitats and a riparian buffer
 - Low-impact access and recreational uses such as footpaths and docks that will not negatively impact the riverside and enable riverside access
 - Agricultural activities like gardens and landscaping that do not harm the water quality or riverbank stability
 - Maintenance and repair work that is essential to maintaining the flood defences.
- 4.5 Proposed activity within the 16m setback, measured from the landward extent of the overall flood defences, including any buried elements, may require a permit from the EA. At planning stage, proposals within the 16m setback should be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) to evaluate the potential impacts of development on flood risk and drainage and an Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken to ensure the development does not harm local wildlife and ecosystems.
- 4.6 Works within the 16m setback may also trigger a River Condition Assessment (RCA) as part of the requirement for achieving *Biodiversity Net Gain*. The RCA helps to

Fig.23 Examples of Environment Agency design guidelines

- Applicants should develop and implement a Riverside Strategy Approach (RSA) to development
- Proposals should accommodate a minimum 16m setback for all development along the Thames Tidal Flood Defences, in which no built structures should be proposed
- This setback can be used to accommodate communal amenity space, but this cannot impede the maintenance of the flood defences
- Ecological, main river buffer zones should have a separate area for biodiversity than recreational open space, ensuring people don’t disturb the area whilst balancing connection with the river
- Biodiversity enhancements to the buffer zone and riverbank should be proposed
- The EA is supportive of reducing the carbon impact of constructing flood defences, and applicants should demonstrate that the defences will have a residual life commensurate with the development
- Proposals should not obstruct reasonable levels of daylight and sunlight into main rivers and buffer zones to ensure the protection of ecological habitats
- Access to flood defences for repair, inspection, maintenance and future raising or replacement is required and should be considered in any proposals
- Lighting design within the buffer zone should take ecology into consideration
- Signage near ecological buffer zones and habitats should be installed to enhance public knowledge and understanding, whilst also aiding with safety along these areas.

understand the restoration techniques required to improve the river condition.

- 4.7 The design of the space within the setback should not impact access for flood defence maintenance and developments should demonstrate that routes for plant and vehicular access to the flood defences will remain in place using a vehicle tracking diagram showing routes from the nearest public *highway*. This access should be provided separately from any pedestrian and cyclist access.

Improving river walls and embankments

- 4.8 Flood defences are essential for protecting people and property, and development to them and in their adjacencies should contribute positively to their context whilst meeting broader planning and sustainability goals. Changes may be permitted to support climate resilience, address sea level rise, or enable new development.
- 4.9 Before designing alterations or replacements to flood defences, applicants should undertake a FRA to understand the local and site-specific flood risk. This should take into consideration all sources including river flooding, surface water, ground water and tidal influences.
- 4.10 When raising the flood defences, development should be designed as part of a coordinated approach, with a broader strategic vision in place to avoid piecemeal development that could impact the usability of the riverside. Applicants should consider the wider implications of these changes beyond their development site such as changes to water flow and the displacement of flood risk.
- 4.11 When sections of flood defence walls are raised, either as part of the development or in the future, the impact on people and place must be considered. Landscape design solutions must address the preservation of access to

Riverside Gardens, Erith
Root and Erect

The existing park was redeveloped to address the connection with the River Thames which was severed by 1980s flood defences. The park levels were redesigned to reinstate this connection, whilst providing play features and spaces for gathering and enjoying the riverside views. The provision of rain gardens throughout the park provides a solution to water management whilst bolstering biodiversity in the park and surrounding area.



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- in-channel structures, buildings and along thoroughfares, for all, including those with additional mobility requirements or pushing buggies.
- 4.12 Proposals should demonstrate how views over the defences will be preserved to maintain visual connections with the adjacent watercourse. Transparent defences will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that there is no alternative and that the increased risk and maintenance requirements can be fully managed for the development's lifetime.
- 4.13 When upgrading or replacing flood defences, developers will be required to show how the new flood defences will tie into adjacent, existing defences to demonstrate that the proposal will be structurally sound.
- 4.14 Where feasible, flood defences should prioritise a nature-based approach where green space is integrated to improve public experience. Applicants should consider the use of green embankments such as planted earth berms or grassed bunds instead of walls, particularly in parks or open areas. These can soften edges, whilst also providing publicly accessible open space for people to enjoy. Green space could be designed to strategically provide flood storage for the river in tidal events, whilst also creating activated spaces along the river and enhancing biodiversity and ecology.
- 4.15 Where walls are raised, adjacent walkways may need to be elevated or re-graded to maintain access. In these instances, applicants should ensure that existing river access points are protected and/or amended as necessary. Creating hidden and narrow spaces between raised walls and existing ground levels should be avoided as these can contribute to feelings of a lack of safety which can discourage recreational use of waterways.

- 4.16 Flood defences should be demonstrated to have a lifetime no less than that of the development on that site. Applicants must design for the ease of inspection, maintenance and repair, with structural design solutions development to enable the testing and inspection of flood defences. A Maintenance and Management Plan that outlining key milestones and responsibilities should be submitted with a planning application.
- 4.17 Where flood defences must be replaced, no riverward encroachment will be acceptable due to the impact this has on flood storage and biodiversity. Applicants also need to ensure space is maintained for habitat features where river walls are replaced. Applicants should also include river habitat features where river walls are replaced and ensure space is provided for those features without encroachment, like the intertidal terraces within the Thames Tideway, for example.
- 4.18 The future need for upgrades and adaptations should be considered, with applicants proposing designs that account for predicted climate change impacts such as sea level rise and increased rainfall. Where flood defences may require raising or adapting in the future, a detailed raising strategy and feasibility plan will be required at the application stage, unless it can be demonstrated that a workable solution will be achievable pursuant to a condition.
- Activating spaces to, and along, the waterfront**
- 4.19 Where proposals seek to raise defences, preserving a visual and physical connection to the water is vital as these connections can positively impact people's mental and physical health and wellbeing. Similarly, where key views towards the river exist at a distance, for example at the end of an existing road, it is important to maintain these sightlines for wayfinding and *legibility* within the area.

Neptune Wharf at Fish Island Village, Hackney Wick
Haworth Tompkins

Transforming a site of disused industrial warehouses, a collection of mid-rise residential buildings were introduced along the canal. Buildings designed to reflect the industrial heritage of the place are punctuated with a series of public spaces, such as squares and courtyards, that front the canal, which was previously inaccessible. Planting and seating along new canalside walkways create *public realm* where people can take a moment to pause.



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- 4.20

Sections where the height of flood defences differ can provide opportunities for stepped or terraced structures that can integrate seating and spaces for recreation and leisure, which should be explored where appropriate.
- 4.21

Consideration for different users and how they will arrive at, and access, the water should be reflected in design proposals. Existing pedestrian and cyclist routes towards the site should be identified through the Character Appraisal and opportunities to enhance and/or supplement these routes, and access points along the water, should be explored during design development.
- 4.22

Applicants should demonstrate consideration for all users and their different needs when framing new views. For example, providing lower openings and seating options and viewing platforms to accommodate people who are different heights and/or have additional access requirements.
- 4.23

Flood defences should never become barriers that restrict movement and access to the watercourses or publicly accessible spaces, and evidence of how this has been achieved should be provided in the *Design and Access Statement*. Flood gates or other movable defences that may create weak points in flood defences should be avoided unless unavoidable. In which case, the nature, use and management of the site should facilitate sound operating procedures.
- 4.24

All proposals should meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and must ensure physical accessibility for all people as required by London Plan Policy D3 Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach. Continuous, level access routes along the riverside should be provided and shallow ramps at a 1:20 maximum installed alongside any stepped access to ensure access for all. Tactile paving at level changes and handrails for steps and steep sections should be provided.
- Enhancing the appearance and quality of the water space

4.25

Bexley has distinct geology and the borough's watercourses contain rare ecological habitats that must be recognised, protected and enhanced. The Rivers Cray and Darent, for example, are two of few chalk streams in the world. Managing and protecting these waterbodies is vital to managing flood risk and maintaining waterways free from pollutants that can be damaging to both humans and wildlife.

4.26

Blue-green infrastructure should be designed into schemes to improve water quality by managing stormwater run-off, reducing pollution and preventing flooding. Infrastructure that can capture, store and recycle water, therefore reducing the amount of water needed during operation, should be prioritised. Such infrastructure can also have the benefit of enhancing the appearance of the water's edge.

4.27

Applicants should consider the infrastructure most appropriate for their development and its location and work with a specialist to integrate these into the proposal, providing details during pre-application stage and within reports submitted with a planning application. These can include:
 - Bioswales
 - Permeable paving
 - Tree trenches
 - Wet woodlands
 - Wetland scrapes
 - Urban forests and woodlands

4.28

The chosen blue-green infrastructure must not undermine the flood defences. Trees, for example, should be planted with sufficient space to ensure the roots will not
- impact the flood defences over time.

4.29

Where space allows, applicants should explore stepping back flood defences to allow the introduction of saltmarsh or wetland planting zones between the defence and water. Saltmarshes are natural flood buffers that slow water flow, support biodiversity and help to filter out pollutants. Raising saltmarshes can help avoid losing critical habitats to rising sea levels.

4.30

Along the Thames, applicants are encouraged to incorporate living shoreline interventions which can simultaneously create a habitat for wildlife and filter pollution from the water.

4.31

The integration of flood basins or wetlands that can also be used as recreational or educational spaces during dry periods should be considered where possible.

4.32

All proposals should be designed to minimise the need for ongoing maintenance, and with long-term maintenance in mind, and this must be demonstrated within the Maintenance and Management Plan. Applicants should work with the PLA, the EA, local environmental groups and community stakeholders to identify appropriate locations for habitat enhancements along flood defences.

4.33

Applications for land crossed by or abutting a watercourse must assess and demonstrate the potential for river restoration improving a river's environmental health by re-establishing its natural processes. This can include de-culverting or de-canalising and naturalising or semi-naturalising the channel.

4.34

Supported by the Development Plan, river restoration has the potential to increase river resilience and improve flood management whilst enhancing biodiversity and creating accessible river environments for recreation, boosting mental and physical health.

Wandle Park, Croydon
LDA Design

In the 1960s, to alleviate flooding issues that faced the park, the River Wandle was culverted and buried beneath playing fields in the park. Flood issues persisted, and a decline in park usage informed proposals to de-culvert the river to address this. Other improvements to the park such as a new play landscape, skate park, community gardens and cafe, have resulted in a public space for the local

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4.35 Where development provides opportunities to undertake such works, applicants should refer to guidance and case studies prepared by the [River Restoration Centre](#). The [European Centre for River Restoration](#) is another useful resource.

4.36 River restoration requires expertise and rigour and applicants should ensure that a suitably-qualified team is assembled from the outset.

Protecting and enhancing biodiversity

4.37 Applicants should prioritise on-site biodiversity improvements using suitable riverside planting, wetland creation, and *green infrastructure*. Planting locally appropriate, low-maintenance native species should be prioritised to ensure resilience and ecological value.

4.38 Where compliance with BNG is required, and where proposals may impact upon protected species or habitats such as nesting birds and bats, and/or where works are in or near SINC, applicants should undertake Ecology Assessments such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA). Results should be presented to the Council during pre-application discussions and be used to inform design development that does not negatively impact the existing natural environment. Detailed guidance is set out in the [Design Guide SPD Part 2 - Technical Handbook](#).

Promoting safety along the water's edge

4.39 The Port of London Authority (PLA) states that applicants must achieve compliance with Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999), the Occupiers Liability Act (1957) and the Occupiers Liability Act (1984) to ensure the safety of people engaging with the development.

4.40 It is recommended that a competent designer with experience in the marine environment and/or a marine risk and safety consultant forms part of the design team to carry out risk assessments and appropriately address this within the design proposal.

4.41 Flood defence structures should contribute to a safe, comfortable *public realm*. The design of barriers and railings should provide edge protection at all drop edges in line with building regulations and guidance from the EA. Applicants should employ site-specific approaches to preventing people from climbing over or through barriers and use a mixture of hard and soft edge boundaries such as parapets and fencing alongside landscaping and planting. The ongoing maintenance of this edge protection should be factored into the design.

4.42 Applicants should embed passive surveillance and overlooking into the design to avoid creating spaces where antisocial behaviour can thrive.

4.43 Proposals should demonstrate how the use, misuse and maintenance of public rescue equipment (PRE) will be managed, with applicants undertaking early engagement with the PLA, Local Planning Authority and other relevant stakeholders to understand the needs and requirements for new developments. PRE should be embedded into the design of the scheme, rather than implemented as an afterthought and should be installed alongside signage.

4.44 To ensure the safe rescue of individuals, the PLA recommends the provision and maintenance of the following equipment:

- Life buoys and rings
- Throw bags and lines
- Ladders, steps and means of egress
- Grab chains / hand holds
- Vertical grab chains

- Sloping revetment walls / tidal terracing
- Bridge piers.

4.45 Adequate lighting should be provided along routes near flood defences to promote safety after dark to eliminate unlit, secluded spaces along footpaths and enable people to identify riverside hazards such as steps and changes in level. An ecologically sensitive lighting strategy should be developed and presented to the Council during pre-application discussions and with a planning application.

4.46 Proposed lighting should ensure an even distribution of light with sufficient light levels for users, whilst avoiding excessive light pollution that can disturb wildlife. Directional lighting that reduces light spill within an ecological buffer zone and into the water, upward sky glow and glare is preferred. Lighting proposals should not have a negative effect on the safety of navigation.

4.47 Clear signage and maps should be located to assist navigation across and around flood defences. Signage should be minimal and avoid excessive coverage to maintain *legibility*. Signs should clearly indicate areas that must be kept clear of obstruction or that are used in emergencies, such as at flood gates or openings.

4.48 Signage should be appropriate for the location and need, whether instructional, directional, warning, prohibitive or supportive. Applicants should consider the use of pictorial signage with few words for non-native English speakers. Where text is used, it should be clear, concise and consistent both within the development site and in other areas along the water.

4.49 New developments are encouraged to include signage or plaques of the location of flood defences, raising public awareness of the infrastructure in place to protect people and developments from flood risks.

4.50 Applicants should refer to the PLA's [Drowning Prevention Strategy](#) that sets out the practical steps to be taken to improve waterside safety for those close to the river and includes guidance on appropriate suicide prevention measures, which can include signage integrated along waterways.

4.51 Signage should identify where a landowner is responsible for maintenance to the flood defences and that permission from the EA is needed prior to undertaking these works. Signage should be appropriately sized, with durable fixings, and located to avoid the proliferation of signage in any one place.

4.52 Applicants should refer to the [TfL design standards](#) that promote high quality and consistent communications and the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities' document [Navigation Signs and Symbols: An industry standard for UK inland waterways](#) for further guidance.

4.53 To supplement the signage implemented within a scheme, developers are strongly encouraged to provide education and training programmes from the emergency services to equip those enjoying the river and residents moving into new developments with adequate water safety education and practical skills such as throw line training.

4.54 Educational signage should also be considered near ecological buffer zones and habitats near main rivers to enhance the public's connection to the rivers and the wildlife and ecosystems they contain.

Sites Adjacent to Waterways

A 13 Development within the Thames Policy Area should enhance people’s experience of the place

Bexley Local Plan Policy DP19 *The River Thames and the Thames Policy Area refers to the Thames Policy Area (TPA) defined on the Bexley Local Plan Policies Map and the need for development proposals in these locations to integrate ecological and habitat enhancements, improve access to nature within the TPA and consider the development’s potential impact on the ecology of the River Thames, its priority habitats and protected species. The Policy advocates for improved access to nature and the creation and enhancement of habitats.*

- 4.55 Bexley’s sections of the Thames Path run for ten miles and pass through Thamesmead, Erith and onwards to Crayford Marshes and Crayford Ness to the east of the borough. The character of these sections varies as the townscape changes from more residential and industrial at Thamesmead towards Crayford Marshes’ marshland that is rich with wildlife and nature.
- 4.56 Bexley’s stretch of the Thames Path is well served by public transport, presenting a opportunity to both encourage active travel and welcome visitors from further afield. The Port of London Authority’s *Tidal Thames Masterplan* has designated Bexley as the first borough for strategic enhancement, with proposals to maximise the use of the borough’s safeguarded wharves, promote riverside sporting facilities and highlight the ecological and environmental benefits of the Tidal Thames and other local watercourses.
- 4.57 Given the recreational value of the Thames Path and its importance as a walking and cycling route, some areas of the route present opportunities for improvements to enhance character. Proposed improvements

should create a welcoming, resilient and inspiring riverside environment for current and future generations to enjoy. Works should blend high quality *public realm* design with a robust flood management proposal that follows the design principles outlined in A 12.

- 4.58 Applicants should prioritise early and ongoing engagement with local stakeholders and visitors, particularly those who frequent the area, who can provide knowledge and insights into how the area is used and where improvements could be made. Using guidance set out in D 06 of the *Design Guide SPD Part 1 - Design Principles*, applicants should demonstrate how a consultation strategy has been mapped out for the duration of the project and demonstrate evidence of how consultation and engagement has been used to develop proposals.

Public realm enhancements

- 4.59 Proposals should respect and reinforce the unique character of the riverside setting. Applicants should undertake a Character Appraisal to understand the current and historic characteristics of their development site and its surroundings.
- 4.60 Enhancements proposed along the Thames Path present opportunities to provide spaces that support the mental and physical health and wellbeing of Bexley’s residents and visitors through the provision of green space, areas for sports and leisure activities and spaces for people to gather and meet.
- 4.61 Applicants should, where practical, introduce seating and lighting to provide areas of rest at regular intervals. Interpretation boards could be incorporated to raise awareness and interest in the site’s history, and more widely regarding ecology and climate change adaptation.

Pier Square, Erith
BDP

At the entrance to Erith Pier, *public realm* enhancements were undertaken to provide a community space for gathering and events. The square also provides those walking the Thames Path a place to pause and sit whilst overlooking the River Thames. A range of seating options are provided to accommodate a range of visitors and lighting enhances the space. Robust species are planted to withstand the strong winds common in the area and visually enhance the space and local biodiversity.



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- 4.62

The visual enhancement of the Thames Path should be considered through proposals for new public art that can also shape the identity of the place. Applicants should explore opportunities for community-led design to evolve art, heritage markers and visual identities that reflect the local character. Realising public art projects with local artists and groups is strongly encouraged and will be looked upon favourably by the Council.
- 4.63

Applicants should integrate appropriate wayfinding around the site and to provide connections to areas further inland near the Path. This can also be used to provide information about rich local heritage and history of the Thames Policy Area. Directional signage should also be considered to alert people to distances to key landmarks, public transport connections and cycle networks within the local area.
- Conserving and enhancing existing, and creating new, habitats and ecology
- 4.64

At the outset of design development, applicants should undertake surveys to identify key existing habitats such as reedbeds, mudflats, saltmarshes and veteran trees. These baseline surveys should be used to identify the presence of protected species such as water voles and bats and invasive species like Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam.
- 4.65

Where invasive species are found, applicants should develop a control strategy for these and where required by law, engage a licensed contractor to remove them. Applicants are also encouraged to report invasive non-native species (INNS) to the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat.
- 4.66

When proposing ecological enhancements, applicants should prioritise the reinstatement or supplementation of native riparian vegetation, particularly:
- Marginal species i.e. reeds and sedges
 - Native grasses and wildflowers that are pollinator friendly
 - Hedgerows and trees such as alder, willow and hawthorn.

4.67

Species selection, establishment conditions and ongoing management requirements must all be considered to ensure long-term maintenance beyond the year of planting, for example by avoiding species with a high water demand that requires frequent irrigation, and highly flammable species.

4.68

Non-native ornamental species should be avoided, particularly within ecological areas. Where near-native and non-native species are considered to demonstrate greater climate resilience, ecology function and long-term viability compared to a purely native palette, applicants must provide evidence and justification for their use.

4.69

Near-natives and non-native species should only ever be used to supplement and complement a native-led planting palette, not replace it entirely. The Council will not support landscape schemes that consist of predominantly of non-native ornamental species where native or near-native alternatives could be accommodated.

4.70

When creating new habitats, priority should be given to:

- Floating and other wetlands, that enhance aquatic habitat without compromising flood defences
 - Wildflower meadows, to replace or supplement mown verges and increase biodiversity
 - Hibernacula, providing log piles, stone stacks and bug hotels
 - Artificial nesting features such as bat and bird bricks such as swift bricks
 - Ponds and scrapes, introducing seasonal wetland features where appropriate and space allows
 - Living river walls, useful where space
- is at a premium in supporting algal and invertebrate wildlife.

4.71

Landscape proposals must be designed for projected climate conditions over the lifetime of a development, rather than solely for present day conditions. The long-term viability of proposed planting should be demonstrated, taking account of anticipated changes in temperature, rainfall patterns, summer drought frequency and urban heat island effects.

4.72

Habitats should not be created in isolation and applicants should seek opportunities to create links with existing and proposed wildlife corridors using *green infrastructure* such as hedgerows, ditches and treelines. The Thames Path Area boasts several existing wildlife corridors including the Ridgeway Link, Thamesmead Link, Thames Marshes corridor, and the River Thames. Applicants should demonstrate how their proposals make use of, and contribute to, these existing wildlife routes.

4.73

New planting along the Thames Path should ensure sightlines are maintained and avoid hidden and enclosed areas that can contribute to antisocial behaviour. The ongoing maintenance of vegetation and planting will be essential to ensuring people can use the Path in safety throughout the year. Applicants must consider an appropriate maintenance strategy when developing proposals, evidencing this during pre-application discussions and within planning submissions.

Improving access to, and understanding of, nature

4.74

The ecology, habitats and wildlife found within the Thames Policy Area are unique and present opportunities for improved knowledge of these ecosystems. Applicants should seek to enhance and encourage public understanding of the importance of this natural environment through their proposal.

Waterman's Green, Putney
Project Centre

Through engagement with local stakeholders, a largely inaccessible, narrow stretch of land running alongside the River Thames has been transformed into a pocket park that offers a chance to pause and enjoy views of the river. The new park also create a green corridor for wildlife to thrive, using native trees and diverse planting to restore previously lost vegetation and habitats to improve local biodiversity and ecology.

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4.75 Where appropriate, built structures such as bird observation hides and visitor centres alongside habitat enhancements can support public learning about these habitats without disturbing the wildlife. Proposals should, where possible, be co-designed with the community to encourage community stewardship following completion, empowering residents to actively protect their built environment.

Permissions and consent

4.76 Depending on the proposed extent, nature and location of works along the Thames Path, in addition to seeking planning permission from the Local Planning Authority, applicants should engage other relevant stakeholders to understand the required permissions.

4.77 Fig.24 outlines these stakeholders and likely permissions, and applicants should engage early with each relevant party to understand the requirements for individual their scheme.

4.78 Where proposals interact with Cycleway networks, applicants may need to seek permission from TfL, and Network Rail should be consulted where development is proposed near rail infrastructure.

Construction

4.79 A phased construction should be planned to maintain path usability where possible, with on-site notices and digital updates providing ongoing updates to the public. Details must be provided within a Construction Management Plan submitted with a planning application.

4.80 Proposals should take account of protected habitats and species, and the mitigation measures required where these are found. For example, developers should time construction to avoid disturbing protected habitats and species by planning works outside the bird nesting seasons, typically March – August.

4.81 Buffer zones should be used to prevent damaging and polluting existing habitats, with applicants using pollution control measures like sediment fences and silt traps.

Fig.24 Consents which may be required for development

Consent type	Consent required from	When required
Planning permission	Local Planning Authority (LPA)	Most physical improvements i.e. any significant construction, resurfacing, lighting, new/ replacement signage, proposed changes to public access
Flood Risk Activity Permit	Environment Agency (EA)	Works within 16m from landward extent of tidal defences including any buried elements and within 8m from the top of riverbank of fluvial main rivers, such as digging, piling or foundations; surface changes or structures within the setback zone; discharge of surface water or creation of outfalls
Marine Licence	Marine Management Organisation (MMO)	Works below the high tide mark i.e. new pontoons, steps or structures into the river or foreshore
River Works Licence	Port of London Authority (PLA)	Works affecting the riverbed or foreshore
Landowner Consent	The Council / PLA	All works on public of PLA-owned land
Listed Building Consent	LPA	Works affecting listed heritage structures such as bridges, historic river walls or embankment features
Rights of Way/Highway Consent	Highway Authority	Modifications to the public path that include temporarily closing, diverting or modifying the path

Sites Adjacent to Watercourses Checklist

- ☐ **Show how an engagement strategy has been used to develop the proposal with relevant (local) stakeholders (A 12/A 13)**
This could be achieved by presenting an engagement and consultation strategy, followed by supporting evidence of how local stakeholder insights have shaped the development proposal.
- ☐ **Show how the proposal has been informed by analysis and understanding of the local context (A 12/A 13)**
This should be achieved using a Character Appraisal to show how information gathered about the site and its surroundings has informed the development to create a proposal that appropriately responds to its setting. To demonstrate this, a set of diagrams and drawings should be developed.
- ☐ **Show how the proposal complies with design guidelines set by the Environment Agency and other bodies (A 12)**
This should be achieved by developing a set of drawings and diagrams that illustrate how the proposal responds to these guidelines.
- ☐ **Show how the potential impact on heritage and natural features has been mitigated through design (A 12/A 13)**
This should be achieved using a Character Appraisal, with evidence of how these features have informed the proposal and will be protected and/or enhanced following development. To support this, drawings showing the proposal within its context should be developed.
- ☐ **Show that the proposal has been designed to respond to, respect and enhance Bexley's character (A 12/A 13)**
This should be achieved by presenting a Character Appraisal containing evidence of specific aspects of the local character that the proposal responds to. To demonstrate how this is achieved, drawings showing the development within its context should be developed.
- ☐ **Show how the proposal has evolved to activate spaces along watercourses and increase access to, and an understanding of, the natural environment (A 12/A 13)**
This should be achieved using a set of diagrams and drawings that illustrate the proposal within its context and communicate how the scheme responds to site-specific opportunities. Information should include details such as the proposed location and specification of seating and soft and hard landscaping layouts and specifications
- ☐ **Show how the proposal has been designed to improve public safety along watercourses (A 12/A 13)**
This should be achieved by developing a set of drawings and diagrams that illustrate indicative lighting, wayfinding, signage and life-saving equipment strategies.
- ☐ **Show how the proposal will make a positive impact on Bexley's watercourses and surroundings (A 12/A 13)**
This should be achieved using a Character Appraisal to evidence site-specific opportunities, constraints and significant townscape features that have informed the architectural expression. A set of diagrams and drawings should be developed to communicate how the elevations have evolved in response to the setting,

- details of the material palette and specification (including material reference images) and soft and hard landscaping layouts and specifications.*
- ☐ **Show how the proposal has been developed to protect and/or enhance biodiversity, ecology and existing habitats, whilst also enhancing the appearance and quality of Bexley's watercourses (A 12)**
This should be achieved using the Character Appraisal to evidence existing ecological features and habitats that the project seeks to protect and/or enhance. A set of diagrams and drawings showing how the proposal connects into existing green and blue networks and the layout and specification of the soft and hard landscape design should be developed.
- ☐ **Show how the development follows the energy hierarchy, embeds climatic sustainability and responds to site-specific environmental conditions (A 12/A 13)**
This should be achieved by developing a set of drawings and specifications demonstrating how the proposal responds to site-specific environmental conditions and promotes a circular economy. The drawings should provide information on the proposed materials, soft and hard landscape design.

Glossary

Active frontage

The design of frontages can add interest, life and vitality to the street and *public realm*. Frontages are considered active if they have:

- Frequent doors and windows without blank walls
- Articulated façades with bays and porches
- Lively internal uses visible from the outside, or spilling onto the street
- Concentrations of activity at particular points.

Adaptive reuse

The process of reusing an existing building in a different capacity to its original use.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Biodiversity Net Gain delivers measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development. Biodiversity Net Gain can be achieved on-site, off-site or through a combination of on-site and off-site measures.

Conservation Area

Areas identified as being of special architectural or historic interest.

The London Borough of Bexley has 23 Conservation Areas, please check with Development Management to ascertain if your proposals is located within one.

Circular economy

A circular economy is an industrial system that is restorative or regenerative by intention and design. It replaces the linear economy and its ‘end of life’ concept with restoration, shifts towards the use of renewable energy, eliminates the use of toxic chemicals and aims for the elimination of waste through the design of materials, products, systems that can be repaired and reused.
- Source: [LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide](#)

Design and Access Statement (DAS)

A report submitted to accompany and support a planning application that outlines the social,

visual and physical impact of a proposed development, with reference to how the development sits within, and draws from, its context.

Defensible space

A buffer zone created between a development and the *public realm* to provide privacy to residents, particularly those in ground floor accommodation.

Dual aspect

A dual aspect dwelling is one with opening windows on two external walls, which may be on opposite sides of a dwelling or on adjacent sides of a dwelling where the external walls of the dwelling wrap around the corner of a building.
- Source: [Housing Design Standards LPG](#)

Green infrastructure

A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Green roofs (used interchangeably with biodiverse roofs)

A rooftop fully or partially covered with plants and/or vegetation.

Habitable room

A habitable room is one used, or intended to be used, for dwelling and domestic purposes. *The use of habitable room is subject to its context and applicants should refer to individual Building Regulation Approved Documents for clarity.*

Highway

A way over which members of the public have a right to pass and repass, either on foot or dependent on suitability, in a vehicle motorised or otherwise.

Listed Building

A listed building, or structure, which has been placed on the statutory list (the National Heritage List for England - NHLE) which is maintained by

Historic England.

Statutory listing covers 3 grades, being Grade I, Grade II* and Grade II. Grade I listed buildings are of exceptional interest; Grade II* are particularly important buildings which are of more than special interest; and, Grade II are of special interest. Most buildings and structures are Grade II, with examples which are of particular historic or architectural interest being graded higher.

Any works, generally speaking, which would involve the alteration or extension to a listed building would require the benefit of Listed Building Consent.

Legibility

How easy it is for people to understand and find their way around a place and how memorable it is.

Major project

Any application that involves:

- Mineral extraction
- Waste development
- Residential development of 10 or more dwellings
- Residential development on a site area of 0.5ha or more and the number of dwellings is unknown
- Development of floorspace of 1000m² or more
- Development on sites over 1ha.

Massing

A building’s three dimensional shape, made up by its height, width, depth and form.

Microclimate

The distinct weather pattern in a small, localised area, differing from the broader regional climate due to factors like shade, surfaces, or elevation, affecting temperature, humidity, and wind.

Operational carbon (kgCO₂e)

The carbon dioxide and equivalent global warming potential (GWP) of other gases associated with the in-use operation of the

building. This usually includes carbon emissions associated with heating, hot water, cooling, ventilation, and lighting systems, as well as those associated with cooking, equipment, and lifts (i.e. both regulated and unregulated energy uses).

- Source: LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide

Public realm

Publicly accessible spaces between buildings allowing movement and interaction.

Retrofit

The process of adding new or modified components or systems to an existing building to improve its performance, efficiency or safety.

Spatial hierarchy

The relationships between buildings and the spaces between them created by the scale, layout and architectural expression of buildings and the spatial qualities of the *public realm*.

Street scene

The appearance of all elements of a street, including the carriageway, footway, cycle paths, street furniture, planting, trees and the buildings or structures along its edges, particularly the composition of buildings on each side of the street.

Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)

Features designed to reduce flood risk, which are built to receive surface water run-off, such as constructed wetlands, permeable surfaces, retention ponds, green roofs and swales.

Whole life carbon

This includes *embodied carbon*, as defined above, and *operational carbon*. The purpose of using whole life carbon is to move towards a building or a product that generates the lowest carbon emissions over its whole life (sometimes referred to as ‘cradle-to-grave’).
- Source: LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide

