Urban Design and Conservation

Vision
New buildings incorporate the highest standard of accessible urban design, architecture and innovation, conservation areas are preserved or enhanced, all areas are safer, more attractive, accessible and vibrant, and Tower Hamlets is a desirable and pleasant place to live, work and visit.

Strategic Policies
SP13. To create sustainable, safe, accessible and attractive new buildings and a high quality public realm.

SP14. To secure the protection and enhancement of the historic environment and the Borough’s archaeological inheritance.

SP15. To contribute to the improvement of community safety and the prevention of crime.

Background
The quality of the environment in which we live, work, play, visit and study has a direct effect on our day-to-day enjoyment of life.

By making spaces and buildings visually attractive and barrier free, and by creating streets and public spaces that are safe, accessible, pleasant to use and human in scale, our pride in the area increases and our quality of life improves.

This is particularly important in areas that are currently suffering from a negative image brought about by poor planning, social exclusion, high crime rates and high unemployment. The regeneration of currently deprived areas must be carefully managed to minimise disruption to residents, whilst bringing about real and lasting improvements.

The scale of change expected in Tower Hamlets in the next 10-15 years is substantial. Housing provision, job creation, population increase, and demands for new and improved physical and social infrastructure, provides an exciting opportunity for the Borough to enhance the positive aspects of the existing built environment and public realm, and create some innovative and distinctive new developments and places.

It is important that with new development, the positive elements of the existing environment are kept, and enhanced wherever possible. Removing barriers between communities, improving safety, protecting and enhancing our conservation areas and listed buildings, and creating usable pleasant public and open spaces are all key elements in achieving the Community Plan themes, and improving the quality of life for all residents.
The Council embraces the London Plan’s aim to improve the look and feel of London’s streets and places through promoting world class architecture and inclusive design and by enhancing and promoting our rich historical environment.

The Council is therefore committed to raising the standard of urban design throughout the Borough.

**UD 1. Scale and Density**

Proposals must:

a) ensure the bulk, height, and density of development relates to that of the surrounding building plots and blocks, and the scale of the street;

b) create a framework of routes and spaces, including cycling and walking routes, that connect locally and more widely and which relate well to each other and reduce the need for car transport;

c) respond to desirable elements of the existing character, townscape, landscape and streetscape including the continuity of street frontages, building lines, roof lines and street patterns; and

d) respond to the regional context, availability of infrastructure, public transport, social facilities and environmental quality.

Establishing an appropriate scale requires a considered response to existing development to ensure buildings are appropriate to the local context and do not dominate their surroundings.

Density of development needs to be sustainable and will therefore vary locally, with higher densities normally focused on those places with good access to public transport provision, but also recognising other factors such as open spaces and waterways. This approach accords with the London Plan.

In the Area Action Framework locations, the proposed bulk and height needs to achieve the scale identified for the future character of the area.
UD 2. Architectural Quality

The Council expects high quality architectural solutions and proposals will be assessed on the following elements:

a) that it is visually attractive, yet practical in design, sustainable construction and usage;
b) is human in scale and composition of building elements relate well to each other and enhance the surroundings in terms of its proportion, articulation, silhouette, materials, lighting and colours;
c) the internal design and structure of the development;
d) impact on adjoining land uses, ensuring sufficient daylight, sunlight, privacy and outlook to buildings and land; and
e) promotion of legibility and permeability for all transport types and users.

Built form defines the public domain, contributes to the character of streetscapes and parks, including their views and vistas, and provides internal amenity and outlook. The design of buildings creates the image of the area, and the Council wants to create and enhance environments that have a clear image, are easy to understand, are pleasant to look at, and which all members of the community can use and enjoy.

As a result the Council is committed to achieving a high standard of architectural quality for all developments. The utilisation of sustainable design and construction principles, the use of a building, the life expectancy of a building and, most of all, the quality of life for the people who use the buildings need to be reflected in any proposal.

Buildings and the spaces they create should be practical in design, construction and use; visually attractive; human in scale; carefully detailed in terms of its response to the internal and surrounding environment; and provide recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around. The lighting of buildings should also be considered in any proposal in line with other policies, particularly relating to light pollution.

UD 3. Ease of Movement and Access through Inclusive Design

1. The Council will require new developments to be safely, comfortably and easily accessed by as many people as possible without undue effort, separation or special treatment, and in particular to provide accessible:
a) entrances/exits;
b) external, internal space and layout; and
c) public toilets and complementary services where retail, leisure, cultural, sport and community facilities are proposed.

2. Public transport, pedestrian and cycle access is to be given precedence over car access.

Tower Hamlets wants to ensure that all of its residents, visitors and workers can get around the Borough without any barriers. This can be achieved by putting people before traffic, and integrating land uses and transport. Ease of access for all members of the community can be achieved if it is kept in mind and planned for at the start of the design process. Appropriate measures may include level or ramped access points, handrails, and widths to accommodate wheelchair users including use of materials, kerb treatments, doors everyone can use safely, lifts, wide and legible corridors, and toilets. Access for pushchair users and disabled people need to be incorporated into proposals.

The need for inclusive accessible design is likely to affect everyone at some time in their life, it aims to remove the access barriers of those with young children, older people, disabled people, and those with temporary impairments e.g. a broken leg. The Council’s Access Officers can offer advice on inclusive access good practice and it is recommended that this be done at the outset of the design process.

BS8300 and Part M (2004) of the Building Regulations are a minimum requirement, and applicants should endeavour to exceed the standards of reasonable provision of for disabled people.

Access Statements are required to be submitted as part of the planning application in accordance with UD4, to show how the principles of inclusive design, including the specific access requirements of disabled people, are being integrated into the proposed development, and how inclusion will be maintained and managed throughout.

**UD 4. Design Statements and Access Statements**

The Council expects separate Design Statements and Access Statements to be submitted as part of planning applications for most new developments including significant alterations or extensions to existing buildings.

Good design responds and contributes to its context. Context can be defined as the key natural and built features of an area. Responding to context involves identifying the desirable elements of a location’s current character or, in the case of regeneration areas, the planned future character of the area as
detailed in Area Action Frameworks and/or neighbourhood renewal strategies. New buildings will thereby contribute to the quality and identity of the area.

Separate Design Statements and Access Statements are required to be submitted for most planning applications, and may be appropriate for even small and uncontroversial development proposals, as together these can have a significant impact on the environment. In such cases only a brief statement explaining the design approach (appropriately illustrated) is likely to be necessary (ie the level of detail required in the statement should correspond to the scale and complexity of the development).

**UD 5. Safety and Security**

Safety and security within the development and public spaces should be optimised by:

- **a)** ensuring building entrances are well located, visible, safe, accessible and as functional as possible;
- **b)** ensuring there is the opportunity for casual and active surveillance through windows overlooking streets and avoiding blank walls;
- **c)** controlling access to the development;
- **d)** giving people priority over vehicles; and
- **e)** minimising opportunities for concealment.

Well-designed buildings and spaces will help ensure that our built environment is not contributing to anti-social behaviour. Maximising safety, both inside developments and within the public domain, can be achieved through measures such as: promoting mixed use development which encourages activity on streets; by designing buildings so they not only overlook public spaces, but interact with them to create an active streetscape whilst maintaining internal privacy; providing clear, safe access points; ensuring lighting is appropriate for the location and type of use that is being promoted; design windows to overlook public areas; avoid blank walls; providing quality open spaces which are visible; and making a clear distinction between what are private and what are public areas.

The management and indirect guardianship of public space needs to be considered for maintenance and accountability purposes.

Access issues of disabled people need to be taken into account when determining mechanisms for designing out crime.
UD 6. Adaptability

The Council will consider designs that enable a building to accommodate a range of uses to meet changing needs, including future whole or partial changes of use, in order to increase the lifespan of buildings and exercise sustainable practice.

Long life buildings, which are readily adaptable to the changing needs of an area, are encouraged where they are considered to be beneficial. Adaptable buildings may be attractive to a wide range of occupiers, maximising future re-letting potential and preserving employment opportunities in Tower Hamlets. Adaptation can occur if it is designed for at the outset including, for example:

- layouts which accommodate the changing use of rooms including adequate room sizes; and
- use of structural systems which accommodate car parking dimensions, retail, commercial and residential uses vertically throughout a building, minimising internal walls, and higher floor to floor dimensions on the ground and first floor.

UD 7. Tall Buildings and Large Development Proposals

1. Locations for tall buildings are identified in the Area Action Frameworks and Schedule A.

2. Applications for tall buildings and large developments will be favourably considered in other locations with excellent public transport facilities against the following criteria:

   a) their impact on important views and the setting of historic assets;
   
   b) their relationship to other buildings, streets, public and private open spaces, the waterways or other townscape elements;
   
   c) their appearance as viewed from all angles and their contribution to an interesting skyline;
   
   d) standards of sustainable construction and resource management;
   
   e) impact on the microclimate;
   
   f) impact on the movement of people;
   
   g) potential social impacts as a result of the development;
   
   h) impact on privacy, amenity and overshadowing;
   
   i) conformity with Civil Aviation requirements, and telecommunication networks;
   
   j) the transport capacity of the area;
   
   k) the quality and accessibility of private amenity space and public spaces;
l) the mix of uses proposed; and
m) its impact on sites in or adjoining open spaces including rivers and waterways, its impact on heritage sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings and conservation areas, views and settings from them including their buffer zones and backdrops.

Tall buildings are buildings or structures generally exceeding 30m in height, or which are significantly higher than the surrounding buildings (usually 2 or more storeys), dependent on the scale of existing development and the character of the area. In areas undergoing renewal, proposed heights need to relate to the future planning and vision for the area. Tall buildings and large developments can have a significant impact on their immediate surroundings and on skylines and views across London. However, through innovative design and in the right locations they can also contribute positively to an area through becoming a landmark feature and by promoting regeneration through improved economic confidence.

Key considerations in assessing such proposals will be that they consolidate clusters within that skyline or provide key foci within views; the buildings potential for renewable energy generation and recycling; in terms of wind, sun, reflection and overshadowing; ensuring adequate, attractive, inclusive and safe pedestrian and public transport access; capitalising on opportunities to integrate green spaces and planting and support vibrant communities both around and within the building; with good public access, such as ground floor retail and/or cafes; incorporating viewing platforms for members of the public on upper floors where possible. Proposals exceeding 25m adjacent to the Thames and 30m in other locations, will require referral to the Mayor of London.

For high density housing proposals, it is particularly important that amenity space by way of useable balconies, roof gardens, and other innovative solutions are incorporated into the proposal.

A View Analysis, Image board, and an Architectural model of the development and its surrounds will need to be submitted with applications dependant upon the overall scale.

**UD 8. Important Views**

1. **The Council will resist development that has an adverse impact on important views, including local views, panoramas and prospects.**

2. **Proposals must ensure that public access to identified viewpoints is maintained and enhanced.**
3. Proposals must preserve or enhance the community’s ability to recognise and appreciate landmark buildings.

It is important that views are managed in a manner sensitive to the benefits they bring. There are several views to be protected in Tower Hamlets as detailed in schedule G, and some proposals within view corridors may require consultation with other organisations/authorities.

**UD 9. Public Art**

1. **The provision of accessible public works of art will be expected in all large development and adjacent public spaces, as well as on prominent development sites. Where it is not provided as part of the development, it will be negotiated through planning obligations.**

2. **Where redevelopment causes public art to be lost, replacement works, in keeping with the new development and surrounding area, is required.**

3. **The Council will negotiate with developers to provide appropriate artistic works to screen development sites, which are to be boarded for more than six months.**

Public art adds greatly to the enjoyment of a development and contributes to its sense of place and identity. The Council will seek the inclusion of art/craft works in design briefs, and the employment of artists and crafts people at an early stage of the design process, and will encourage developers to incorporate works of art as integral features in large business, retail and housing proposals, on prominent sites, and where identified in Area Action Frameworks. Preference will be given to the employment of local arts and crafts people in all schemes. Where appropriate, the Council will encourage developers to contribute to the provision of public art within adjacent areas, including accessible inclusive for all art/craft.

Percent for Art is a concept which the Arts Council has urged all local authorities to adopt. Under such a scheme, a percentage (usually 1% although this proportion may vary depending on the size, scale and location of the development) of construction costs of a development would be put aside to improve the aesthetic qualities of a project. An additional stimulus to regeneration would thereby be created, with the expectation that good design and distinctive works of art and craft can restore a sense of place and local identity to public buildings, business developments, streets and parks. Whilst voluntary to the developer, Percent for Art is something which the Council would like to encourage and which could be a matter for negotiation and agreement.
UD 10. Advertising and Signs

The Council will consider the impact of proposals on the following:

a) visual amenity;
b) public safety;
c) the position, design, accessibility, size, colour and materials;
d) the proportion of the sign relative to the application premises;
e) obstruction or damage to important architectural features;
f) illumination method, and other visual intrusion; and
g) other advertising displays in the area.

Carefully designed, well-sited and accessible advertisements, which take account of their surroundings, can make a contribution to the overall street scene; they can also play an important role in informing and directing people. Likewise, well-designed and accessible commercial frontages are an integral part of the shopping experience.

The Council will encourage developers to consider what type of signage may be required and how this can best be incorporated into the building design at an early stage. Signage must not contribute to unsightly clutter or proliferation of signs and must not cause a hazard to pedestrians and road users. Visual intrusion by virtue of light pollution into any neighbouring properties will also be a consideration. Material and finishes which discourage graffiti and flyposting should be utilised where appropriate. Special regard will be paid to the character and appearance of conservation areas and the setting and historic character of listed buildings. In certain cases, displaying adverts does not require planning consent.

UD 11. Landscaping

A fully documented landscape plan is to be prepared for all new development, excepting minor works, by a suitably qualified person at a minimum scale of 1:100. The plan is to show/take into account the following details as a minimum:

a) the features/constraints of the site, the needs of the applicant and the character of the locality;
b) all existing trees to be removed/retained are to be shown accurately and identified botanically; and
c) the intended surface treatment of all areas not occupied by buildings.
The quality of the built environment is greatly enhanced by considering site planning and the integrated use of hard landscape (e.g. paving, street furniture) and soft landscape (trees shrubs, grasses) treatments at an early stage in the design process. These need to be designed in relation to the arrangement of spaces, their usage, access, circulation and safety criteria, bearing in mind the overall location of a scheme. The Landscape Requirements SPG outlines the detail to be provided in more depth.

UD 12. Urban Design, the Blue Ribbon Network and the Thames Policy Area

1. All development on or adjacent to the Blue Ribbon Network must respect the water location and should be designed to reflect local character, be of high architectural quality, and should particularly:

   a) include a mix of uses appropriate to the water space, including public uses and open spaces, to ensure an inclusive accessible and active waterside and ground level frontage;
   b) integrate into the public realm, especially in relation to walking and cycling routes and open spaces;
   c) relate their scale, materials and colour to neighbouring buildings and those on the opposite bank
   d) respect waterway heritage;
   e) enhance opportunities for views across and along waterways;
   f) ensure appropriate access for all to the water and opportunities to enjoy the water; and
   g) provide for suitable flood defences.

2. Proposals for new structures over and into the Blue Ribbon Network should be accompanied by a risk assessment covering impacts on navigation, hydrology and biodiversity, and proposed mitigation measures. However, proposals that do not specifically require a waterside location will be resisted.

The Blue Ribbon Network includes the River Thames, the canal network, the other tributaries, rivers and streams within Tower Hamlets and the remainder of London, along with open water spaces such as docks, reservoirs and lakes.

Rivers, canals and other water spaces are a prominent element of the Borough and one of its main attractions for both local residents and visitors. Apart from their landscape qualities and value for informal recreation, they often function as important wildlife corridors. However, development has traditionally tended to turn its back on rivers and other watercourses, often making sections of the waterside congested, inaccessible and unattractive.
Waterways and waterside locations face multiple pressures that need to be balanced in order for it to fully contribute to making London an exemplary sustainable world city.

The London Plan recognises the strategic importance of the Thames in particular for regional drainage and water supply, as a setting for development, as an open area and ecological resource, as a transport artery and as a recreational, leisure and tourist facility. In accordance with the London Plan, the Council designates a Thames Policy Area as indicated in Figure 21: Thames Policy Area.

The Council is committed to the preparation of the Thames Strategy East, a strategy for the length of the Thames from Tower Bridge to Tilbury, which will support appropriate development objectives and ensure that the interests of the Thames as a multifunctional riverscape and landscape are protected and promoted. The strategy is being prepared in partnership with the eleven local authorities within the strategy’s boundaries, and key regional and national Government agencies. As part of the Thames Strategy East, detailed character appraisals will be carried out and future Supplementary Planning Guidance will be prepared to guide development in the Tower Hamlets Thames Policy Area.

**UD 13. Mobile Phone Masts and Apparatus**

The Council will consider applications for mobile telephone masts and apparatus where the applicant can show:

- a) demonstrable need;
- b) there is no harmful visual impact including cumulative impact through its siting and design;
- c) that opportunities for siting equipment on an existing building or structure or to sharing facilities have been fully explored and incorporated;
- d) how relevant views expressed through pre-application consultation have been taken into account; and
- e) that throughout the period covered by the permission, installations generating electro-magnetic fields (EMFs) meet the relevant government or European guidelines.

It is recognised that there are many benefits to having an efficient telecommunications system, however, there must be a balance between the need for up-to-date modern infrastructure requirements with safeguarding the environment, health and residential amenity of residents, from any associated adverse affects that can be both real and perceived.

Telecommunications proposals in residential areas in particular are of concern to the public in relation to possible health impacts. This concern may
constitute harm to their residential amenity and could, in principle, become a material consideration in determining applications.

All applicants, whether under permitted development rights or for planning permission, will be required to give full details of the location, height and appearance of the proposed installation. In addition, the details must show the frequency modulation characteristics, power output and indications of the horizontal and vertical direction of the beam of greatest intensity (scale 1:1250).

Evidence of the applicants pre-consultation outcomes with residential groups, government organisations and/or amenity bodies, and with schools and colleges where a proposal is either on or near a school or college is expected, in keeping with the ‘Operators Ten Commitments’ and as per Annex F of the ‘Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development’ (2002). The Council will take into account any relevant views expressed through such consultation.

Apparatus and masts should use design to minimise the impact of the development on the environment. Innovative design solutions are encouraged in terms of the structure of masts and antennas, and in relation to materials and colouring. Operators are encouraged to provide examples of different design solutions, including screening and planting.

The feasibility of entering into a planning obligation in order to ensure mast sites are available for sharing, will be discussed with operators and the relevant land owner.

**UD 14. Satellite Dishes, Radio Masts and Other Equipment**

1. Where this equipment needs planning permission, proposed development should be:
   a) as small in size and few in number as possible;
   b) shared by as many users as possible;
   c) as unobtrusive as possible;
   d) located so as not to interfere with the doors or windows of neighbouring property; and
   e) removed as soon as they are obsolete.

2. The equipment will not be permitted if it would harm the appearance of a building, particularly if this is a listed building or in a conservation area.
The Council will seek to minimise the visual and environmental impact of such equipment. Where it requires planning permission, it will only be granted where it would not harm the appearance of an area. Design solutions are encouraged to minimise the impact of the development on the environment. Where the owners of building complexes do not have a communal satellite dish, such a provision will be encouraged.

**UD 15. Minor Works**

Proposed alterations and extensions to existing buildings which require planning permission will be favourably considered where they:

a) do not adversely affect the elevation of any building, nor the visual integrity of the street;

b) are architecturally sympathetic to the age and character of the building;

c) are designed to minimise impacts on the amenity of neighbouring properties including privacy and overshadowing;

d) do not compromise or block an important view or gap; and

e) do not protrude over the front building line altering the streetscape.

Alterations, including extensions, should respect the architectural character of the building and its surroundings. Even small changes to a building can have a detrimental impact on the street scene and/or interrupt or are damaging to views. The need to maintain the amenity of adjoining properties in terms of privacy, and access to daylight and sunlight, should be considered when planning the design of any extension or alteration.

These factors will be considered in evaluating applications and developments that have a negative impact based on the policy criteria will not be considered appropriate. In order for the Council to better assess the impact, colour and material samples must be submitted to Council when lodging a Planning Application.
Conservation

UD 16. Ancient Monuments and Areas of Archaeological Importance or Potential

1. The Council requires the protection of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and their settings and sites of archaeological importance or potential.

2. Where development would adversely affect areas of archaeological importance/potential or remains, and where the archaeological assessment enables these options, permission may be given to:
   a) modify designs to avoid adverse effects;
   b) design suitable land use and management strategies to safeguard any important remains with the option to seek an agreement covering access and interpretation arrangements; and/or
   c) preserve in-situ: where the assessment process demonstrates this is not feasible, archaeological investigation, excavation and recording by an approved archaeological organisation will need to occur.

Tower Hamlets has a long and rich history. Archaeological remains are an important source of evidence of this history from the Roman times to the recent industrial past. Evidence can easily be destroyed in the development process, and therefore sites which may be of interest need to be properly investigated, and records made of any finds, before development takes place. An archaeological field evaluation may therefore need to occur before planning permission is given.

Scheduling of Ancient Monuments is carried out by the Secretary of State, and therefore all applications for scheduled monument consent are to be made to the Secretary of State and not the local planning authority. English Heritage hold the Sites and Monuments Record for the Borough. However, the Council will endeavour to complement this protection by requiring any development affecting a scheduled monument to have an impact evaluation, including an archaeological assessment. Along with other organisations, the Museum of London has expertise in the evaluation of scheduled monuments and archaeological sites, and it is usually a quick process involving ground survey and small-scale trial trenched.
UD 17. Protecting and Enhancing Statutory Listed Buildings

Statutory Buildings and their settings will be protected and enhanced by:

a) allowing internal and external alterations to the building which do not cause harm to its special architectural and historic interest;

b) permitting changes of use where the special interest of the building and its setting are not harmed, and where the change would ensure the building was well maintained;

c) resisting development that would harm the setting of a listed building; and

d) enabling the recording of architectural and archaeological details of the building by an approved organisation.

There are close to 2,000 buildings and structures that have statutory listing within the Borough. These buildings make a major contribution to the character of the built environment and heritage of the area. These buildings are strongly protected and can not be altered, demolished or extended without Listed Building Consent (internally or externally). Buildings are graded as follows: Grade 1 Buildings of exceptional interest, Grade II * particularly important buildings of more than special interest, and Grade II Buildings of special interest.

Applicants will be expected to seek specialist advice on how any alterations can be undertaken so the character and unique aspects of the building remain intact. Where appropriate, original plan form and architectural features of interest should be retained or reinstated. English Heritage will be consulted on proposals and their advice sought about recording details of the buildings.

UD 18. New Uses for Statutory Listed Buildings

The Council will consider potential new uses for long term vacant listed buildings in a flexible way, where new uses respect the character of the building and its setting and enable it to be kept in good repair, and in keeping with the other policies contained in the UDP.

The Borough’s heritage is an important asset, and provided the key special characteristics of the building and its setting are retained, the Council would rather see a sympathetic reuse if the building than allow it to fall into disuse and disrepair.
UD 19. Demolition of Statutory Listed Buildings
Demolition of listed buildings will be resisted and any application will be assessed on the:

a) importance of the building both architecturally and historically;
b) condition of the building and the estimated costs of its repair and maintenance in relation to its importance, and to the value derived from its continued use;
c) adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use; and
d) merits of any alternative proposal for the site.

Applications for the demolition of a statutory listed building will generally be refused. Exceptional circumstances must apply for the Council to consider any application for demolition based on the criteria in the above policy. Redevelopment plans must be submitted and approved by the Council where an applicant submits a proposal for demolition.

UD 20. Locally Listed Buildings
1. The Council will protect and enhance the character of locally listed buildings.

2. Proposals for demolition and alterations will be discouraged unless alternative use of the building is not viable or the planning benefits outweigh the loss resulting from demolition.

Over 700 buildings are currently locally listed in Tower Hamlets. These buildings don’t have statutory protection, but have been recognised as being of local importance. In order to retain these buildings the Council expects to see evidence that any proposed alteration to the structure or its setting enhances its character and appearance. Full justification for redevelopment of any locally listed building may also be sought including convincing evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or find new uses for the building. Economic reasons alone will not justify redevelopment.

Features such as cranes near waterways, milestones, walls, historic street furniture and the like that are not included in the statutory list, will be protected through planning conditions, sensitive maintenance, consultation with owners and supporting agencies which help retain and maintain such features.

UD 21. London Squares and Historic Parks and Gardens
1. Development on or under or effecting the setting of a London Square will be refused where:

a) it harms its character; or
b) is for a use other than an ornamental garden, pleasure garden for play, rest or recreation.

2. The character, appearance and setting of sites on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens will be protected, and their restoration supported.

There are 16 protected squares in the Borough, and the Council will use its planning powers to ensure that their distinctive character is maintained. Development proposals adjacent to or in, the immediate approaches to a square are to be of appropriate layout, form, height, bulk and detailing to the character of the square.

Tower Hamlets has three open spaces on the register of historic parks and gardens: Arnold Circus, Island Gardens and Victoria Park.

**UD 22. Conservation Areas**

1. The Council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas and their settings.

2. New development and uses within or adjacent to conservation areas will be assessed against their impact individually and cumulatively on the character, fabric or appearance of the area and/or its setting. Special regard will be had for the following:

   a) character, scale and pattern;
   b) bulk and height;
   c) proportion and rhythm;
   d) roofscape;
   e) materials; and
   f) landscaping and boundary treatment.

There are over 40 Conservation Areas within the Borough representing the best of the different characteristics of the built environment. The character of areas varies and as a result, the type of development permitted may also vary between conservation areas. So residents can have a better idea of what sort of character their area has, the Council will produce detailed design guides in consultation with local residents, for each area.

Full details and drawings of proposals in Conservation Areas may be required so the Council can fully assess how a proposal enhances the special character and appearance of an area and its settings, including the spaces, buildings and structures, landscape, green settings, historic features and views into the area.

It is the Council's intention to review conservation areas as appropriate.
UD 23. Demolition in Conservation Areas

Demolition or substantial demolition of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area will be resisted, and any application will be assessed on the same criteria as for demolition of a listed building.

The Council wants to improve and enhance its Conservation Areas. When a building is considered to make little or no contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, the Council will assess the contribution made by any replacement against that of the existing building. Replacement buildings must be of at least equal, but preferably greater quality.

UD 24. World Heritage Site

The historic significance of the Borough’s World Heritage site and its setting must be safeguarded and enhanced and a buffer of open space must be maintained to achieve the safeguarding of the setting.

The Tower of London is an UNESCO World Heritage site, and its preservation, accessibility and setting are required in order that it can be appreciated both now, and for generations to come. A Management Plan has been produced, and must be referred to in the assessment of any proposals in the vicinity.