

Draft February 2020

Draft Lambeth DESIGN CODE SPD Part 1: Introducing Lambeth

Part 1: Introducing Lambeth

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Introduction

1.1 This draft SPD provides guidance on the implementation of policies in the Draft Revised Lambeth Local Plan. The council envisages that the final version of this SPD will be adopted at the same time as, or shortly after, adoption of the revised Local Plan. All references in this draft SPD to “Local Plan” refer to the Draft Revised Lambeth Local Plan – Proposed Submission Version January 2020. All references to “London Plan” refer to the Draft London Plan Intend to Publish version December 2019. It should assist residents, architects, developers, builders and planning agents when designing their development proposals. The guidance provided in the SPD is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application and will inform the council’s pre-application advice.

1.2 The complete document is:

Part 1 – Introducing Lambeth (this document)

Part 2 – Design Advice for all Development

Part 3 – Design Advice for New Buildings

Part 4 – Building Alterations and Extensions

Part 5 – Basement Development

1.3 The objective of the SPD is supporting the delivery of Lambeth’s Strategic Objectives as set out in the Lambeth Local Plan. These strategic objectives are:

- a). Accommodating population growth
- b). Achieving economic prosperity and opportunity for all
- c). Tackling and adapting to climate change
- d). Providing essential infrastructure
- e). Promoting community cohesion and safe, liveable and inclusive neighbourhoods
- f). Creating and maintaining attractive, distinctive places

1.4 The Council also has separate advice notes on:

- Advertising and Signage
- Parking Survey
- Refuse & Recycling Storage – design and technical specification
- Air Quality

Challenges

1.5 The London Heat Island Effect affects the whole of Lambeth to a high degree—affecting night time temperatures in particular; global warming is also making heat-waves more common generally. Heat places great stress on the wellbeing of all, especially the vulnerable. Noise pollution from roads, railways and noisy uses is another city-wide challenge. Public health in Lambeth is significantly behind the England average on a significant number of indicators. Key local priorities include well-being and mental health issues and inclusivity of the built environment. New development should seek to address these issues to make Lambeth better for everyone.

Comply or Justify

1.6 The guidance in this SPD has been produced on the 'comply or justify' principle. Applications which comply with the principles and practice set out in the four parts of this SPD are much more likely to be successful than those that do not. That said, where a proposal departs from any of the principles and practice outlined in the guidance, the onus will lie with the applicant to provide a convincing justification on why deviation is acceptable in that instance. The case should be made within supporting documents such as the Design and Access Statement, Heritage Statement or Planning Statement submitted with the application and supported by any evidence necessary to make a persuasive case. It should be noted that:

1. Arguments based solely on the fact that similar development has been approved elsewhere will not in themselves be sufficient justification.
2. The 'comply or justify' will have limited weight where it relates to impacts on designated heritage assets because there is generally an automatic statutory presumption in favour of their preservation.

Planning Policy Context

1.7 The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF), National Design Guide 2019 and the Draft London Plan provide the broader planning context within which planning decisions must be made. The NPPF sets out government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The London Plan is part of the development plan for London that sets out the strategic vision for London, laying out an economic, environmental, transport and social framework for development.

1.8 One of the key messages from those documents is that design is an integral part of the planning process and good design is essential to creating safe, attractive and sustainable places:

“To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, plans or supplementary planning documents should use visual tools such as design guides and codes. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design. However their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified” (Para 126, NPPF)

“Good design and good planning are intrinsically linked. The form and character of London’s buildings and spaces must be appropriate for their location, fit for purpose, respond to changing needs of Londoners, and make the best use the city’s finite supply of land. The efficient use of land requires optimisation of density. This means coordinating the layout of the development with the form and scale of the buildings and the location of the different land uses, and facilitating convenient pedestrian connectivity to activities and services” (Policy 3.1.1, Draft London Plan (July 2019)

Policy Area	NPPF	Draft London Plan (July 2019)	London Plan SPG	Lambeth Local Plan
Built Heritage	Section 16	Ch. 7	London World Heritage sites (2012)	Q18 — Q23
Housing Standards	n/a	Ch. 4	Housing SPG (2016)	H5 — H6
Views	n/a	Ch. 7	London View Management Framework (2012)	Q25
Sustainable Design and Construction	Section 2	Ch.9	Sustainable Design and Construction (2014)	EN4
Quality of the Built Environment	Section 12	Ch.6	Accessible London (2014) Character and Context (2014) Play and Informal Recreation (2012)	Q1 EN1 Q2 — Q17 Q24 — Q26 H5

Key relevant policies of the DRLLP PSV Jan 2020:

H5	Housing Standards	Q9	Landscaping	Q19	Westminster World Heritage Site
H6	Residential Conversions	Q10	Trees	Q20	Statutory Listed Buildings
EN4	Sustainable Design and Construction	Q11	Building Alterations and Extensions	Q21	Registered Park and Gardens
Q1	Inclusive Environments	Q12	Refuse/recycling storage	Q22	Conservation Areas
Q2	Amenity	Q13	Cycle storage	Q23	Non-designated Heritage Assets
Q3	Community Safety	Q14	Development in Gardens	Q24	River Thames
Q5	Local Distinctiveness	Q15	Boundary Treatments	Q25	Views
Q6	Urban Design: public realm	Q16	Shopfronts	Q26	Tall and Large Buildings
Q7	Urban Design: new development	Q17	Advertisements and signage	Q27	Basement Development
Q8	Design Quality: construction detailing	Q18	Historic Environment Strategy		

Other Standards and Regulations

1.9 A range of technical standards and regulations play an important role in shaping the built environment. Designers should be mindful of the need to comply with their requirements when developing proposals. The documents referred to below list some of the key standards and regulations which may be relevant to development proposals.

1. **Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide to good practice - BR 209 (2011)** gives advice on site layout planning to achieve good sun lighting and daylighting, both within buildings and in the open spaces between them and can be used to support right to light planning.
2. **Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (2015)** and the **Draft London Plan (July 2019)** deals with gross internal (floor) area within new dwellings and should be used when designing new homes.
3. **Building Regulations 2018 Part L: Conservation of fuel and power** sets out standards for the energy performance of new and existing buildings.
4. **Building Regulations 2010 Part M: Access to and use of buildings** sets out building regulations for access to and use of buildings, in dwellings and buildings other than dwellings and provides a baseline for accessibility in the built environment.
5. **British Standards BS8300-1:2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment External Environment / Buildings** provides good practice design principles to ensure built environment including streets and spaces around buildings are inclusive.
6. **Secured by Design Homes (2019)** provides police guidance for the design and build of new homes, and those undertaking major or minor property refurbishment, to adopt crime prevention measures.
7. **Crowded Places Guidance (2017)** gives counter terrorism advice for the design and management of crowded places.

Lambeth's Character

Lambeth's Character

1.10 Lambeth's built environment is a product of London's outward expansion over the course of the 19th Century when the rural hinterland of the historic city was subsumed by successive waves of new development. Much of that development was housing for the burgeoning middle classes serviced by new transport infrastructure. The first decades of 20th Century saw the completion of Lambeth's urbanisation and the beginning of a process of slum clearance and urban renewal which ran from the 1920s to the 1960s. In the 1970s, '80s and '90s the focus of renewal shifted to conservation led rehabilitation which breathed new life into many historic buildings and places. See Policy Q5 and Lambeth Local Distinctiveness Study, 2012 for more information.

1.11 In very broad terms Lambeth's built environment is characterised by:

a). Conventional housing in the centre and north of the borough generally urban in character and to higher densities than the southern part of Lambeth. Terraced housing prevails in the centre and north of the borough with semi-detached and detached properties being more common in the south. The average Lambeth rear garden is 111m² although in north and central Lambeth the average is 53m².

b). Low-rise suburban development (detached and semi-detached houses in generous plots prevail in the south of the borough. The typical rear garden size in the south of the borough is about 185m².

1.12 There are around 3,000 heritage assets distributed across the borough but with the greatest concentration in the centre and north. Housing estates large and small, are distributed across the borough. Estates vary in scale, layout, type, tenure and materiality. However the majority were built by London County Council / Greater London Council and Lambeth Council which means certain common types prevail such as walk-up blocks.

Lambeth's Positive Characteristics

1.13 Lambeth today is an attractive place to live and work as the result of a combination of factors including the quality of the built environment and open spaces, the range of cultural and leisure attractions and the richness of its historic environment. In the last 20 years development densities across London have increased significantly to meet need. Lambeth will continue to evolve to meet the housing needs of a growing population, more people living in the borough provides an opportunity to improve public services and sustainable transport infrastructure. Increased populations enable local businesses to thrive and support local shopping parades. Whilst optimising the density of development presents practical challenges there is no reason why it cannot still integrate well into its context and respond positively to local context. This is especially important given the requirement for new development to respect the settings of Lambeth's heritage assets (Policies Q20, Q21, Q22 and Q23), the River Thames (Q24), and the presence on the borough boundary of the Westminster World Heritage Site (Policy Q19).

1.14 Generally new development should assimilate the positive attributes of local context and not dominate in the settings of heritage assets. Some of the easiest ways that new buildings can reinforce local character is through sensitive external treatments and the careful selection of materials. Across Lambeth as a whole the use of brick is a unifying factor and key to local distinctiveness.

Q5

Q6

Q7

North



Middle



South



River Thames (Policy Q24)

1.15 The significance of high concentration of heritage assets along the River Thames, and the contribution it makes to their settings and to the character of the city as a whole, should not be underestimated. In this regard designers should ensure that new developments take a contextual response in terms of their form and materials. Generally new development should be subordinate in character so that landmark riverside buildings and heritage assets retain their established presence within the cityscape.

1.16 The entire length of the River Thames frontage in Lambeth is accessible as a pedestrian route which is an important amenity for the city. Much of the Albert Embankment and Queen's Walk and the River Thames fall within the immediate setting of the Westminster World Heritage Site. These locations are some of the best in London from which to appreciate the Palace of Westminster. In these locations designers should:

1. Ensure that the public realm is of the highest quality.
2. Optimise visitors' ability to appreciate the OUV of the World Heritage site.
3. Seek improvements upon the current situation when designing in these locations.
4. Avoid harm.

River Thames North of Westminster Bridge

1.17 The character of the city on either side of the River Thames between the borough boundary with Southwark and Westminster Bridge is characterised by fairly large scale development – Civic, arts and culture, commercial and residential – which is unified by a pale palette or Portland stone of similar materials (pale concrete and cream tile). This prevailing character should be reinforced and respected by new development.



River Thames between Westminster Bridge and Vauxhall Bridge

1.18 Between Westminster Bridge and Vauxhall the character is more varied. To the north the post-war buildings of St Thomas' Hospital respond to the Waterloo context of pale stone. The Victorian hospital is in red brick whilst Lambeth Palace is in red brick and stone. This natural palette of stone and red brick is considered the most appropriate for development.

1.19 South of Lambeth Bridge the character of development on either side of the river is quite varied. In the composition of the new developments along Albert Embankment a building form of 'organ pipes' has developed which has allowed for a modulation of heights within developments, opened up gaps between buildings and allowed the creation of new public realm. This approach unifies the buildings and should be perpetuated in new development. A palette of pale grey and white coloured cladding gives a degree of harmony whilst allowing the buildings to express their own individual character. Surviving Victorian buildings on Albert Embankment are important survivors of the area's industrial past and protected by conservation area designation.



River Thames between Vauxhall Bridge and Wandsworth

1.20 From Vauxhall Bridge the borough boundary with Wandsworth the character is contemporary and varied. The St George Wharf development forms the fringe of the Vauxhall tall building cluster which rises up behind. Here the layering of different development heights within the cluster is particularly sensitive in views from the Westminster World Heritage Site and requires careful consideration.



Q5

Q24

Heritage Assets

1.21 Lambeth has a particularly rich historic built environment which is multi-layered and forms a significant part of Lambeth's local distinctiveness. Collectively the Draft Revised Local Plan policies seek to preserve the significance of these heritage assets and protect their settings.

1.22 New development in Registered Parks and Gardens and within conservation areas should cause no harm. The original designation information and character appraisal (where available) for conservation areas should be consulted to inform the design approach. The demolition of buildings which make a positive contribution to conservation areas is not supported. New designs should:

1. Be respectful of prevailing heights and building lines,
2. use materials which integrate the new development into its historic context; and
3. irrespective of the chosen architectural style, have architectural rhythms and forms which reinforce the established positive character / local distinctiveness.



Westminster World heritage Site (WWHS)

1.23 Officially known as the 'Palace of Westminster and Westminster Abbey including St Margaret's Church' the WWHS is sensitive to development in Lambeth. The visibility of part of Waterloo and Vauxhall in the backdrop (wider setting) of the Westminster World Heritage Site (WWHS) means that particular care must be taken with building design to ensure no harm results to its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).

1.24 In some cases the only way to preserve OUV may be to restrict building height to ensure that the new development is not visible. Where visible development is acceptable particular care should be taken with the detailed design and appearance to ensure it is subdued and does not visually compete with the World Heritage Site.

1.25 New development in the setting of heritage assets should cause no harm. In order to respect settings designers should:

1. Avoid heights or masses which draw the eye from or dominate.
2. Use uncomplicated built forms.
3. Select material palettes which are locally distinct and blend the development into its context.

See also Historic England's 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' link below:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/heag180-gpa3-setting-heritage-assets/>

Mayor of London's 'London's World Heritage Sites - Guidance on settings SPG March 2012:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/implementing-london-plan/planning-guidance-and-practice-notes/london-world-heritage>

Q19

Q20

Q21

Q22

Q23

Lambeth - an Evolving Place

1.26 Lambeth's character today is the product of long-term evolution. Most of that change has been gradual and has gone relatively unnoticed; and development that was once bright and new soon becomes established. There remain some parts of Lambeth with fragmented, discordant built environments and instances where buildings detract. New development provides an opportunity to mend the urban fabric. Successful context driven change has enhanced neighbourhoods and enriched or reinforced local character. Applicants should show in their Planning or Design and Access Statements how their proposals optimise development potential in a manner that responds positively to local character / distinctiveness.

1.27 Making the best use of land will allow Lambeth to evolve further in a way that works for everyone. We must accommodate growth to deliver much needed homes and workspaces, while supporting local communities. The optimisation of available land can be achieved sustainably by prioritising the development of brownfield land, opportunity areas, sites which are well-connected by transport infrastructure, sites appropriate for tall buildings, sites within and on the edge of town centres, and small sites.

1.28 Different parts of the borough lend themselves to different types of new development especially small site development (Draft London Plan policy H2), and Draft Revised Local Plan Policy H6 and H7. The table opposite shows in very general terms the locations where the different types of small site development might come forward.

	South Lambeth	North and Middle Lambeth	Conservation Areas	Town Centres
Residential conversions	Extensive Opportunity	Extensive Opportunity	Limited Opportunity	Limited Opportunity
Residential extensions	Extensive Opportunity	Extensive Opportunity	Limited Opportunity	Limited Opportunity
Demolition and redevelopment of existing buildings	Extensive Opportunity	Extensive Opportunity	Limited Opportunity	Extensive Opportunity
Infill development within domestic curtilages	Extensive Opportunity	Limited Opportunity	Limited Opportunity	Limited Opportunity

Small Site Development Potential



1.29 The particular types of small site development identified by Policy H2.A of the Draft London Plan are:

- 1) Infill of vacant or underused brownfield sites.
- 2) Residential conversions, redevelopment, extensions of houses and / or ancillary residential buildings or infill development within the curtilage of a house where it is within PTALs 1-6 or within 800m of a station or town centre boundary

1.30 Development that meets the relevant policy requirements for each type will be supported.



Examples of small site new development in Lambeth

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The Design Process

Design Excellence

1.31 To achieve excellent design new development in Lambeth must be:

1. Fit for purpose (and adaptable for future)
2. Well-built (for longevity without excessive maintenance)
3. Responsive to context (fits in rather than stands out)
4. Visually attractive (rewarding visually from a distance and close up)

1.32 The Council shows its commitment to deliver design excellence by:

1. Employing urban designers, conservation officers and other specialists to review schemes.
2. Offering a paid pre-application advice service.
3. Offering design review for large or complex schemes from the Council's independent Design Review Panel.



Newport Street Gallery by architects Caruso St. John won the Stirling Prize in 2016

Q5

Q6

Q7

Q8



Lambeth Civic Centre by architects Cartwright Pickard won a RIBA London Award 2019



The Thrale Almshouses by BPTW architects were shortlisted for a national Housing Design Award in 2016

The Design Process

Applicant's Role

1.33 By learning from experience we can improve future design outcomes. Designers and developers working regularly in Lambeth should consider post-occupancy evaluations of their schemes which can range from occupier satisfaction surveys, monitoring of environmental performance, thermal imaging, fitness for purpose of the built forms, and energy assessments.

1.34 Anyone considering development should:

1. Identify the opportunities and constraints of the site and the implications of planning policy on these. Planning constraints can be viewed online at Lambeth Local Plan Interactive Map. Link below:
<https://lambeth.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/lambeths-local-plan-guide>
2. Have a clear brief setting out the desired outcome based on point 1. above.
3. Employ registered architects and competent design professionals with the right expertise and experience for the project.
4. Draw on specialist independent advice where the site constraints require it – Arboricultural, engineering, built heritage, transport, daylight and sunlight etc.
5. Ensure all drawings are accurate and to a recognised industry scale.

Pre-application advice

1.35 Pre-application advice is an important first stage. A Planning Officer will review the proposal and provide advice on whether or not it is likely to be supported at application stage. This where appropriate includes advice from the Design and Conservation, Policy and Transport teams.

1.36 For larger, more complicated projects, it will be appropriate to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA). This is a project management framework where a dedicated team of officers will input into the project development within an agreed time frame.

1.37 Further information on the pre-application service and PPAs can be found on the council website. Link to Lambeth Pre-application Advice below:

<https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-applications/pre-application-planning-advice-and-planning>

Planning Applications Guide

1.38 This guide explains the planning application process. Link below:

<https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-applications/planning-application-process-guide>

Local Planning Applications Requirements (LARS)

1.39 This document contains the requirements for each type of application area. Link below:

<https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-applications/submit-a-planning-application>

Planning Conditions

1.40 The Council adds design conditions to planning approvals as a means of controlling the quality of outcomes. The most common design conditions include the:

1. Submission of additional drawings at 1:10 scale (including sections) to show external construction detailing.
2. Approval of sample panels of materials (to be erected/ agreed on site).
3. The permanent display of property names and numbers at all entrances.
4. Tree protection during construction.
5. Submission of full soft and hard landscaping details and its maintenance until established.
6. No vents, pipes or extracts (other than those shown on the drawings).
7. Lowest 500mm part of full-height windows to be obscured glass.



Sample panels constructed on site for approval



1.42 Applicants should:

1. Inform the planning case officer of the proposed phasing of large developments so that the condition wording can reflect this.
2. Remember that the approval of conditions requires the formal submission of the information for which a fee is payable. Applicants who do not wish to submit further detailed design information via condition should provide all the detailed information up-front at planning application stage.
3. Consider entering into a Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) to assist with the submission and timely determination of planning conditions.

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Annex 1 - Lambeths Built Character

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

Early to mid 19th century (Georgian)

1.2 Generally, the housing stock is at its oldest in the north of the borough, as this area was urbanised first. However, surviving historic settlements and older groups of building such as Clapham are exceptions. In the early 19th century grand terraces houses and suburban villas developed in areas of Stockwell and Kennington. Stock brick and stucco predominate. Terraces from this period typically have semi-basements, flat front and rear elevations and London (butterfly) roofs. Mansards are common, but not prolific. It is not uncommon for 'closet additions' to have been added at the rear. These are small extensions which were built off the half-landings on the staircase; they can be one, two or even three storey but nearly always stop half a storey below the eaves of the house. Internally the standard plan form, a room to front and rear on each floor with entrance hall and staircase to one side, is most common.

1.3 Semi-detached and detached houses are common from this period. These often have flat front and rear elevations without closet additions. However, modest single storey rear returns often serve as the kitchen.

1.4 The majority of buildings in Lambeth pre-dating 1840 are designated and non-heritage assets. Many are protected by statutory listing, others are given recognition through inclusion on the local heritage list. Where they are situated in a conservation area they make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of that area.

Mid to late 19th century / early 20th century (Victorian and Edwardian)

1.5 Building forms changed gradually and from the mid decades of 19th century basements were no longer incorporated. Terraced houses became more ornate; generally, as the decades progressed, the houses got smaller. There was also a general shift from stock brick and stucco to red brick, terracotta and tile. The 'standard plan' form continued in use and it is not unusual to have a two storey rear return, which is subservient to the main bulk of the house and under a lower roof.

On modest terraced houses this often leaves only space for a small passage down the side. London roofs and mansards generally fell out of favour, with pitched and hipped roofs prevailing.

1.6 There is quite a lot of development in the borough from this period and much of it is of good quality. The very best examples are generally statutory listed. For inclusion on the local heritage list examples from this period generally need to be of recognisable high quality or distinct from similar development of the period. Again, where they are situated in a conservation area, they make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of that area. Conservation areas largely containing development from this period have often been designated because the area is a good representative example of a common type across the borough. In such instances, the presumption in favour of preservation is in order to protect the very ordinary, often modest character of the buildings and wider area.

20th Century

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

Recent residential development

1.9 Small infill developments of terraces and one-off houses have been common in the central and northern parts of the borough in recent decades; these tend to be bespoke designs on constrained sites. Residential tall buildings can be found in Lambeth from the post-war period with a number of recent schemes coming forward as part of estate renewal projects and on the Albert Embankment.

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