

TRANSPORT AND STREETS DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT COMMENTS OF THE KENSINGTON SOCIETY

SUMMARY

The Kensington Society **strongly welcomes** this revised and expanded version of the 2008 Transport SPD.

These changes were overdue as a result of considerable changes in policy, guidance and approaches to the use of the public realm and the growing market pressures to exploit this space commercially, often in direct conflict with the Council's evolving policy and guidance. This needs to be acknowledged as the context for change and that this document is attempting to provide a definitive response to the pressures.

The Society **strongly supports**:

- maximum parking standards (3.1)
- residents' parking permit-free developments (
- loss of residents' parking permit following loss of garage (4.1.8)
- more sensitive approach to pavement cross overs based on impact on amenity and need to reinstate walls and railings (5.1.8)
- servicing management plans (6.2)
- a stronger approach to dealing with deliveries to local supermarkets (6.3)
- streetscape chapter (7), including active stewardship, improved footways
- removal of surplus street furniture (7.4) including bollards and guardrailing (7.4.4)
- minimising the number and size of signs (7.4.7)
- resisting new adverts, especially on street furniture (7.4.11)
- commitment to CTMPs, but need to be with application (8.1)
- minimise waste, materials, plant on street – presumption it should be off-street (8.2)
- stronger management of tables and chairs (9.1)
- stronger control of other structures on the highways, especially advert panels (9.2)

The comments also include proposed strengthening/improvements to text. A tracked changes version of the Draft SPD is also attached.

Main Comments

The Kensington Society welcomes the revision and expansion of the Council's SPD on Transport (2008).

The main reasons why it needed change and expansion are:

- **changes to the planning policy framework:**
These changes include:

- o the adoption of the Core Strategy (2010)
- o the adoption of the revised London Plan (2011)
- o the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

This requires more than just setting out a Key Principle and the relevant Core Strategy policies. It needs a brief statement in the Introduction of the guiding principles set out in the NPPF.

- **developments in guidance:**

These include:

- publication of Department for Transport Guidance
- publication of Transport for London guidance

The document does refer to these in passing in the text as sources of further guidance.

- **need for guidance to interpret new policy:**

This includes explaining how to apply the policy for permit-free and car-free developments

- **experience in operating the existing guidance: the need to respond to pressures**

There are a number of areas where the existing guidance – the SPD and the Council’s Streetscape Guide – have come under pressure. Examples include:

- o the need for greater clarity on the use of construction traffic management plans, including parking suspensions and retaining waste, material and plant within the site;
- o the need to interpret the Streetscape Guidance to deal with proposals within the highway, especially advertisement panels, but also tables and chairs on the highway in large quantities, such as on Exhibition Road.

General Points

This introduction needs to draw on the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 which forms the overall planning framework. Paragraphs 29, 30, 32, 34, 36 and 39 provide more of a rationale than the “key principle” at the beginning of most of the sections. Perhaps the best solution would be to use the key points in these paragraphs in this section and to add a short paragraph at the front of each section before the “key principle”. I have extracted the key paragraphs and highlighted the main points in the annex to this submission.

Proposals:

The Introduction should summarise the key policy principle from the NPPF.

Each section needs a rationale before the “key principle” and the Local Plan policy basis should be presented as an itemised list instead of a “string” of points.

More weblinks – every reference and contact point should provide a direct weblink from the website version of the SPD.

Detail:

Introduction

1.1.2 The new SPD needs to cover not only the Core Strategy (2010) but where appropriate updated for subsequent policy documents, such as the London Plan (2011) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012).

Principles:

- support a pattern of development which reduces the need to travel and facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.

Plans and decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised.

Planning policies should aim for a balance of land uses within their area so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities.

- support a transport system that is balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel, supports reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduces congestion.

All developments which generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a Travel Plan.

2. Assessing and minimising the impact of development

2.1.3 Include excavation as a phase – especially for projects that involve removal of spoil.

Table 1: what is “car parking accumulation data”?

2.2.6 These measures could be packaged into public transport, cycling, motor cycling, car clubs, home deliveries

2.3.1 The purpose of the Access and Traffic Management Plan should be to maximise the proportion using modes other than the car.

Further measures should include:

- o admissions criteria to favour children living within easy walking distance
- o awareness training, including projects like walk to school week.

3. **Parking policy and standards**

3.1 The Society **strongly supports** the maximum car parking standards in the table. There is a need for greater clarity with regard to sheltered housing, housing for older people and affordable housing (para 3.1.6). Nevertheless, there should be recognised that in some circumstances some schemes could and should be car and permit free. (eg a new development at Newcombe House right next to Nottong Hill Gate station.)

3.1.8: 40% of car parking spaces being for electric cars – is this off-street or on- street?

3.4 **Cycle Parking:**

The Society **supports** the cycle parking standards.

4. **Residents' parking permit-free development:**

The Society **strongly supports** residents' parking permit-free development.

4.1.7 The Society **supports** additional dwellings generated through conversions should be both permit-free and car-free.

4.1.8 The Society also **supports** the loss of permits where a garage and/or an off-street hard standing is removed. Too many garages have been converted to additional rooms and cars displaced onto the street.

5. **Accessing development and pavement crossovers;**

Key Principle: This should also include avoiding the loss of front boundaries (walls, piers, balustrades and railings) and trees which contribute positively to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

The Society **strongly supports** a more sensitive approach to providing vehicular access which will avoid the loss front boundaries and trees – at present this is not sufficiently clear in the Core Strategy or CAPS. The amenity aspect of such developments needs to be considered as a constraint. The Local Plan policy basis does refer to Policy CR4 (g) and CL6 (a) – this needs to be reflected in this section.(see 5.1.4 3rd bullet)

5.1.4 should this be about reducing on-street parking supply **not** increasing parking demand – that would be done by more cars – what we want is not to reduce the number of parking spaces.

5.1.4 1st bullet: explain what “two residents' parking spaces overall” means: 10m?

5.1.7 Permeable surfaces: This guidance needs to quote a policy basis – refer to Core Strategy Policy CE2 (f).

Guidance includes:

DCLG, Permeable surfacing of front gardens: guidance, May 2009

5.1.8 The Society **strongly supports** removing existing hardstanding and crossovers and the reinstatement of boundary walls and gardens. Need to coordinate with changes to Core Strategy proposed by the Society.

5.2.6 Design of streets is covered in Chapter 7, not Chapter 2.

5.3 Pedestrian access to development:

5.3.3 Impact of new development and the opportunities created by new development need to be explained further. New developments are opportunities to improve conditions (eg Lancer Square development provides the opportunity to widen footways in Old Court Place).

6. Servicing development

6.2 Servicing Management Plans

6.2.2 The Society **supports** the use of servicing management plans and the contents list, especially the size and type of vehicles used, especially for deliveries to local supermarkets, coaches servicing hotels and vehicles used for the various stages of construction projects. However, nowhere are the key types of projects to which these apply set out. A list would be useful in para 6.2.1.

6.3 Local supermarkets

The Society **strongly supports** the need for intensive management of deliveries to local supermarkets, but recognises that Service management Plans can only be sought when a planning consent is needed, not when existing shops are converted to a supermarket which has much more intensive delivery patterns than its predecessor. However, this section needs unpacking in terms of what measures will be applied, including timing and duration of deliveries, size and type of delivery vehicles, management of the transfer of goods across the footway, measures to reduce both congestion and noise. This section itemises the problems but a bit vague as what the Council will be trying to achieve and how. A good case study to help articulate this section would be the delivery problems at the Tesco in Holland Park Avenue and what the Council did or did not achieve in influencing servicing, including the type of vehicles and management of deliveries.

7. Streetscape

The Society **strongly welcomes** this section as it broadens the coverage of guidance beyond the technical guidance in the Streetscape Guidance beyond the nuts and bolts and broadens the coverage of this subject from the bare bones in the Core Strategy. It is the interface between the policy and the technical implementation. We welcome the expanded coverage – 12 pages.

The challenges in the last few years, which have severely tested the limited guidance and policy include broadband cabinets, JCDecaux/BT advertisement panels with an open

coin-operated payphone attached, ATM phone kiosks, loss of historic and advertisement structures and the difficulties of reconciling planning, advertising, telecoms and highways legislation and the lack of a clear policy for streetscape, clear guidance and a sufficient exploration of the Council's powers to manage the challenges and ensure that we maintain the Borough's progress in this field.

7.1 Achieving good streetscape

7.1.1 This needs to be a little more visionary in what we are trying to achieve and why – the Society proposes that it should be about place making – creating a distinctive sense of place, driving up the quality of the public realm – as well as the more mundane advantages listed. This is elaborated in para 7.1.2, but should also be in the opening list in this paragraph.

7.1.3 Change “if possible” to “wherever possible” to emphasise that the Council will take all opportunities to drive up quality and to resist the threats – eg JCDecaux advertisement panels.

7.1.4 The Society **welcomes** the commitment to active stewardship. However, the Streetscape Guidance, whilst a manual for Council officers, it is not a statement of policy and guidance that pulls together these aspects in the same way as the City of Westminster's Westminster Way - Public Realm Strategy Design Practice and Principles.

7.2 Streetscape improvements required to mitigate development

The Society **welcomes** this but found in relation to the Lancer Square that we had to take the initiative to ensure that footway widening was achieved in Old Court Place, but there is no commitment to improve the junction treatment at Kensington Church Street. This requires a more proactive approach where opportunities for improvement get identified from the outset.

7.3 Design requirements for streetscape improvements

7.3.1 The Society **welcomes** the approach and willingness to find innovative and imaginative solutions to help drive up the quality of the public realm.

Footways

7.3.2 The Society **welcomes** a commitment to a minimum footway width of 2m.

7.3.3 The Society **welcomes** the commitment that new footway areas within new developments should be laid in York stone. This should be extended to cover cases where improved footways are required as part of the S106/S278 agreement for schemes (eg De Vere Gardens). The text could be strengthened to be more explicit – matching existing is not enough to “improve the visual quality”. The opportunity must be taken to secure improvements.

7.3.5 The Society regrets that these principles were not employed to maintain/retain the

existing building lines on the Lancer Square development, especially on the Kensington Church Street and York House Place frontages.

Carriageways

7.3.7 Narrow carriageways mean limitations on the size of vehicles that can be used and the placing of skips, etc in the carriageway. There needs to be a reference here and a cross-reference to Chapters 6 (servicing) and 8 (construction traffic).

Pedestrian crossings

Zebra crossings with Belisha beacons should be preferred to signal-controlled crossings.

7.4 Street furniture

The Society **strongly supports** the Council's commitment to remove surplus street furniture, to resist additional items of street furniture, but would also like a strong commitment to retain the Borough's few remaining pieces of historic street furniture, such as the pre-1950 red telephone boxes, pre-1950 letter boxes, historic bollards. This deserves a new, separate paragraph – the Westminster document is worth using for ideas. The recent debacle with unlisted K6 telephone boxes outside the V&A Museum and the south-west entrance to Kensington Gardens highlighted the lack of joined-up working between Planning and Highways, despite the K6 kiosks at Kensington Gardens appearing in the Streetscape Guidance – which specifically featured these kiosks as examples of historic street furniture to be “preserved in situ” (see Streetscape Guidance page 31). This policy/guidance needs to appear in the SPD.

7.4.1 There needs to be clearer guidance on whether advertisement panels, such as those proposed by JCDecaux are acceptable as obstructions within the highway. (See also para 7.3.2 generally and paras 9.1.1 and 9.1.4 in relation to tables and chairs) Perhaps para 7.4.10 is the place to say that advertising on street furniture will be resisted.

Bollards and guardrail

7.4.4 The Society **strongly welcomes** the commitment to avoid the use of bollards and guardrail, but also to take every opportunity to remove them. This should be an automatic part of the paving maintenance programme – this should be stated here.

Phone kiosks, street cabinets and feeder pillars

7.4.6 The text in the printed version is different than the pdf version. The printed version needs to be updated to include phone kiosks.

7.4.7 The Society **strongly supports** minimising the number and size of signs and putting them on buildings, walls, railings, lamp columns and existing posts wherever possible.

Adverts

7.4.11 The Society is **very concerned** that a tougher line is taken toward free-standing adverts, especially advertisements on street furniture. The Society therefore **strongly supports** the statement that new adverts on the street will be resisted, but to state specifically that adverts on street furniture will be resisted, as Westminster has done. **This will need to be inserted into the proposed alterations to the Core Strategy.**

7.4.13 Delete last sentence – it is incompatible with the rest of the text, but if kept, cross refer to Section 9.2.

236. The following points are the key issues in selection and placement:

- The function of every item of furniture or obstruction needs rigorous challenge;
- Bigger pieces of equipment will need to be more multi-functional to absorb the functions of isolated pieces of furniture;
- The use of existing posts or street furniture should always be explored wherever new signage is justified – but only up to a sensible maximum of 2 or 3 signs per post;
- Signage in any street should generally be of a consistent layout, size and height for convenient reading;
- Former decisions need to be challenged to see if the presence of any item in the street is still valid;
- Advertising on street furniture will be resisted;
- The design and supply industries may need to be challenged to provide innovative solutions to answer problems found in a world city;
- The needs of the pedestrian, particularly those with impairments, is paramount, with the maintenance of adequate clear zones;
- Regulations need to be interpreted to encourage schemes that are minimalist in their use of signage, electricity and markings;
- The less there is in the street, the more elegant the street will be and the less there is to obtain and maintain. Resources should be allocated to robust materials and support structures to give the longest life possible;
- Vigilance is required to ensure small objectives do not clutter the bigger picture; and
- Promote use of wall or railing-mounted traffic signs and plates via wayleaves where appropriate.

8. Reducing the impact of construction on the highway

8.1 Construction Traffic Management Plans

8.1.1 The Society **strongly supports** the statement that “all new developments that have the potential to cause disruption must submit a CTMP” This is a policy and should also appear in the Core Strategy – not just here or in the basement SPD.

8.1.2 third bullet: it should also include the types and sizes of vehicles, which will indicate whether the contractor has adapted to the specific conditions, such as narrow streets and highly-pressured parking.

8.1.3 The Society **strongly welcomes** the encouragement to applicants to consult on

their draft CTMP. However, **the Society would urge the Council to go a step further – the draft CTMP should be part of application documents on which neighbours are invited to comment**

8.2 Measures to reduce the impact of construction

8.2.1/2 The Society **strongly welcomes** the restatement of current SPD which makes it clear that Council wants applicants to demonstrate that they have sought to accommodate waste, materials and plant on site wherever possible (para 8.2.1) and, if they do still need to put anything on the carriageway that the extent and duration has been minimised (para 8.2.2). These principles need to be brought together at the front of this section of the document.

8.2.3 The Society **welcomes** the need for greater sensitivity because of the impact of lorry movements and use of skips, the nature of the streets, contractors will need to consider using smaller vehicles and avoiding the use of skips, and need to consider the cumulative effects of other schemes in the area.

9. Tables and chairs on the highway

9.1.1 In addition to the hours, there will be circumstances where the quantity of tables and chairs may need to be controlled and cumulative effects of successive consents may lead to the need to control the overall number. These circumstances have already arisen in Kensington Park Road, near Harrods and especially in South Kensington at the southern end of Exhibition Road.

It is not clear where tables and chairs are to be placed. In most cases they will be up against the shopfront, leaving enough clear footway between the tables and chairs and the kerb. It is not clear what happens where tables and chairs are on a larger space, such as Exhibition Road.

9.2 Other structures on the highway

9.2.1 This is where free-standing advertisement panels are covered. **The Society wants a much stronger statement that the Council will resist these structures.**

it should be clearer that because they are not essential street furniture, nor are structures of that size required to support a payphone, as opposed to cover one side of a public amenity, such as bus shelter or public toilet, the erection of freestanding advertising panels, especially those that are internally-illuminated, scroll or even have a bright regularly-changing LED or video display, will be resisted.