

18 Feb 2013

RBKC Basement Working Group

Section 6.1 to 6.8 – Garden basement impact on garden character

- Arboricultural / garden study is needed as a factual basis for the proposed change.
- What is the aim? Is it to make the borough either greener, increase biodiversity or to increase the number of trees or mature trees?
- If one or more of the above is the aim then there are better ways of achieving this than coarsely limiting basement size. For example requiring a proposed garden with enhanced biodiversity/greenification/tree planting than existing – there is an opportunity to promote and enforce an increase in the desired direction.
- Once proposed the revised section should go out to public consultation as the change based on the new reasons was not part of the Dec 2012 draft policy.

Arboricultural input

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- 90% of trees roots are found in the top 600mm of soil. i.e. the living part of the soil where there is oxygen and nutrient cycling microbes. There is comparatively little biological activity below this depth.
- All trees can live, support themselves structurally and grow to full size with 600mm depth of top soil. Some large trees, such as beech grow to maturity on much shallower soils on exposed, windswept downlands.
- Studies in the United States, where shade trees are prized, have shown that greater than 30% shade cover may be considered a disamenity. People like to live in optimally sunlit areas with dappled light, neither heavily shaded, nor with 100% direct sunlight.
- Large tree planting is of necessity limited to the corners / boundaries of the small gardens, typically found in the borough; i.e. such planting is likely to take place

within the undeveloped strips at the front and back of the property. The 15% provision already allows for such mature tree planting.

- The existing soil of London gardens is commonly made ground and other low fertility soil, lacking in bio diversity. Replacement soil will be more fertile and ultimately more bio diverse (attractive to roots and nutrient cycling microbes). With rare exceptions (e.g. Hampstead Heath, Richmond Park) the importation of topsoil to London will not displace important native soil and microbes.

BS 5837 already provides guidance and the Council's SPD, a policy framework with which to retain and protect existing trees through development

Hyde Park







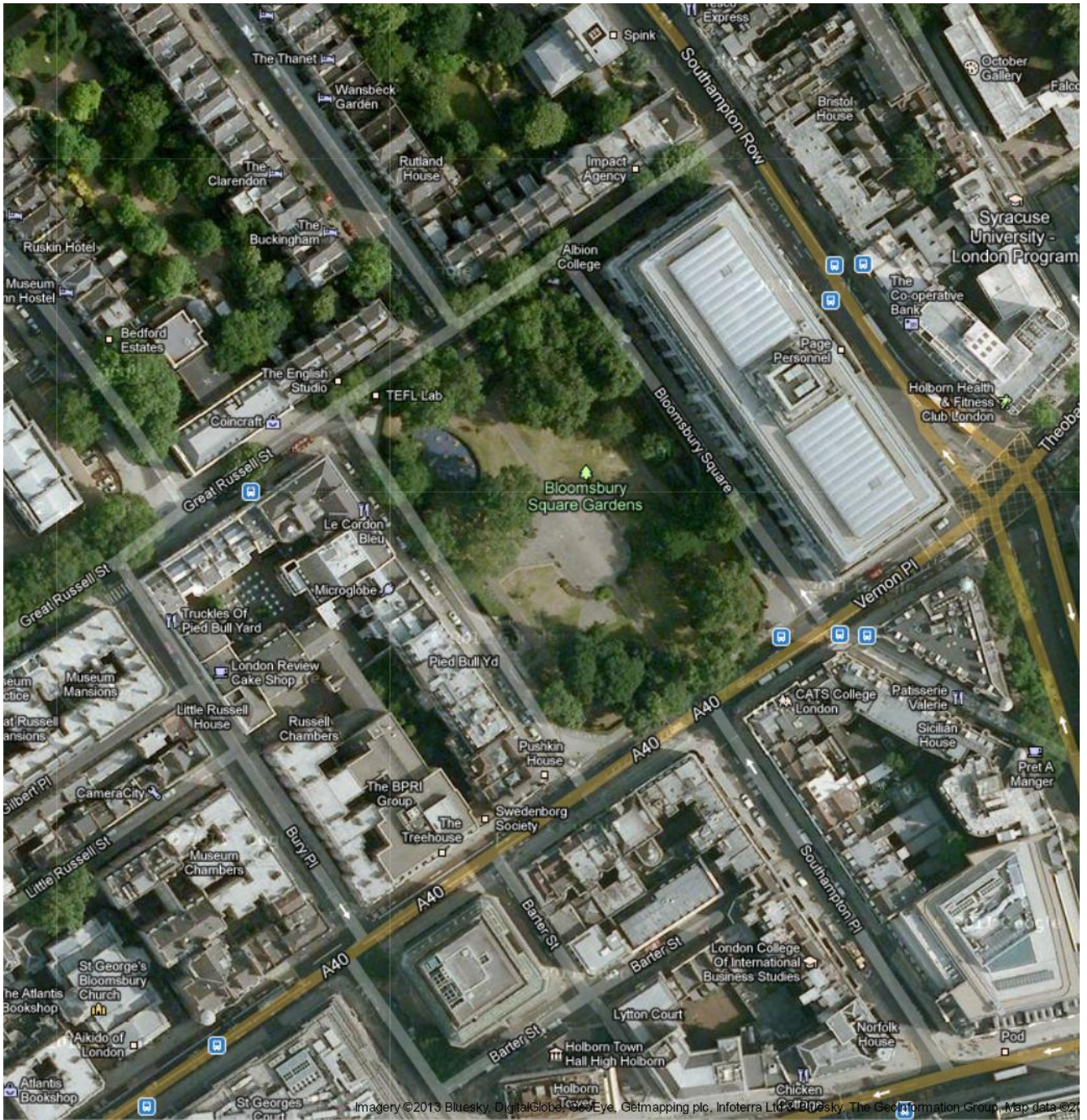
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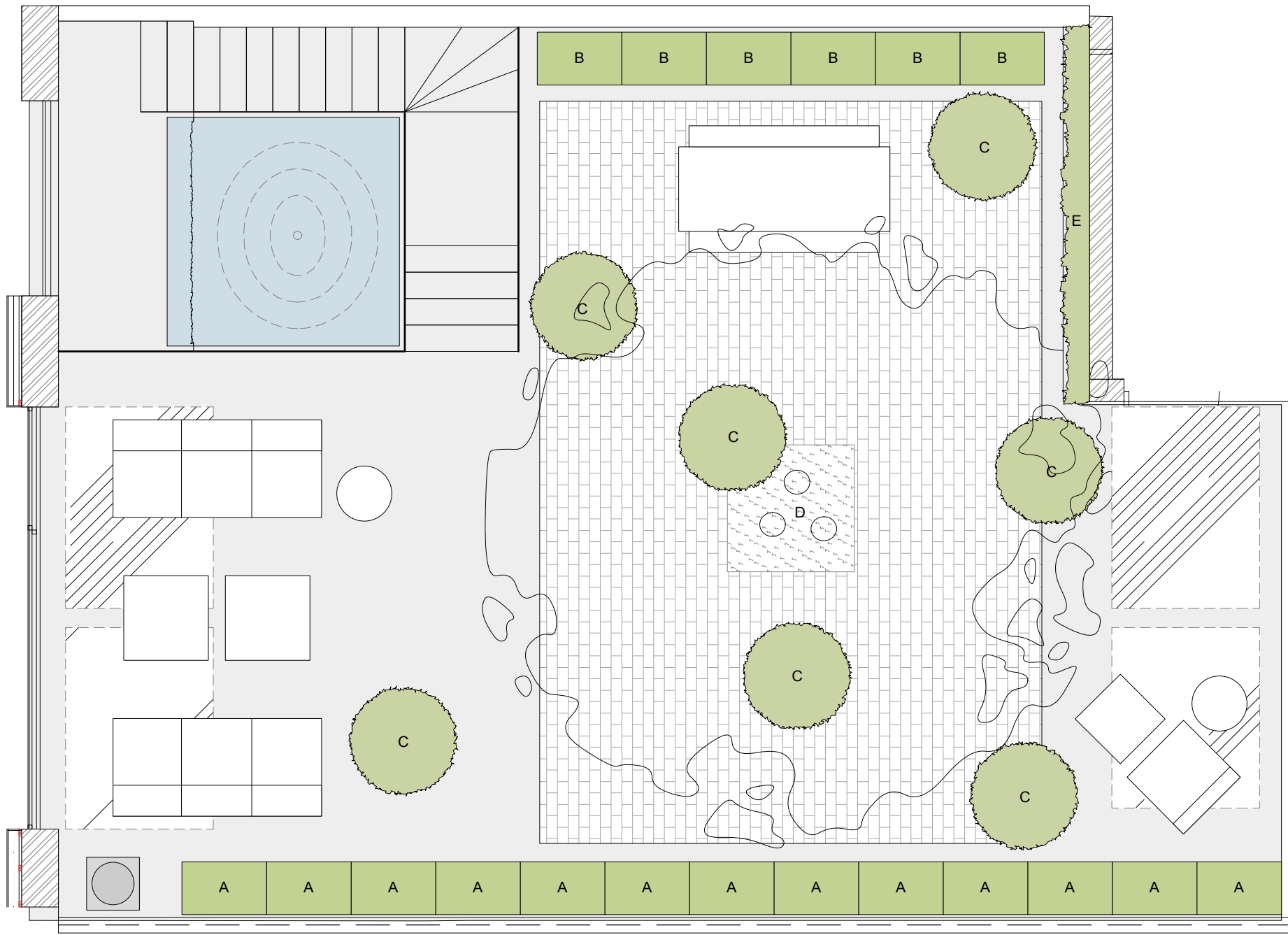
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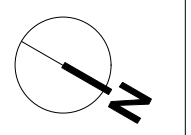
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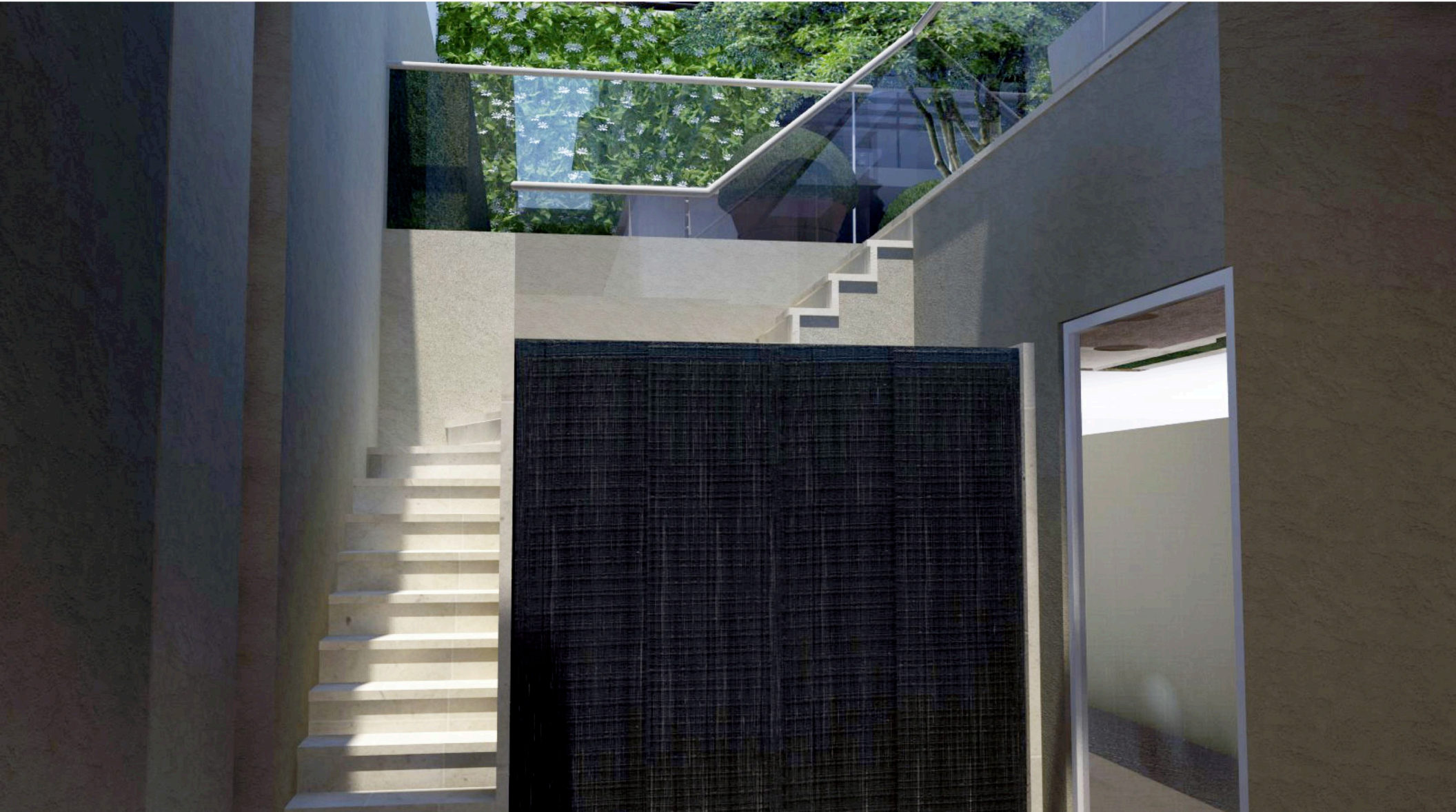


PLANTING SCHEDULE							
LETTER	NAME	SIZE	HEIGHT	ROOTBALL	QTY	WEIGHT	NOTES
A	BUXUS SEMPERVIRENS HEDGING	0.8m x 0.5m	1.5m	0.6m x 0.5m	13	TBC	ALL PLANTS TO BE FIRST CLASS AND PRE-CLIPPED AT LEAST ONCE
B	BUXUS SEMPERVIRENS HEDGING	0.8m x 0.5m	1.0m	0.6m x 0.4m	6	TBC	ALL PLANTS TO BE FIRST CLASS AND PRE-CLIPPED AT LEAST ONCE
C	BUXUS SEMPERVIRENS DOMES	1.0m Ø	0.6m	0.8m x 0.5m	7	TBC	ALL PLANTS TO BE FIRST CLASS AND PRE-CLIPPED AT LEAST ONCE
D	MULTI-STEM TREE	5.0m Ø	4.5m	1.0m x 0.8m	1	TBC	MINIMUM THREE STEMS. NATURAL CROWN
E	GREEN WALL PLANTING				TBC		SEE SEPARATE DETAIL













Additional points made at Basement Working Group meetings

Simon Haslam

7 March 2013

Comments below were raised during the meetings but have not been recorded in the meeting notes.

Meeting 1 - Thursday 14th February, 3.00 – 4.45, Kensington Town Hall

Garden basements and drainage / effect on groundwater / surface water run off

Comments made that borough is divided between ground of clay and river terrace gravels.

Clay is impermeable. There is no significant water penetration through the clay. Putting a basement into the clay has no impact on water drainage downwards. In areas of clay there is no logical basis for using a decrease in vertical water drainage as a basis for limiting the size of garden basements.

River Terrace Gravels have very high permeability – water runs freely through them. Water falling on river terrace gravels moves directly downwards through the gravels and sands until the underlying London Clay is reached. Water needs very small areas in which to move downwards – far less than the 15% current area of garden left unbuilt. In areas of River Terrace Gravels there is no logical basis for limiting garden basement size to less than the current allowable 85%. The proposed 75% and 50% limits are not supported on the basis of water drainage through River Terrace Gravels.

Meeting 2 - Monday 18th February, 3.00 – 5.05, Kensington Town Hall

Garden basements:

All trees can live, support themselves structurally and grow to full size with 600mm depth of top soil.

Any tree or plant can be grown to full size and maturity within the current one metre of soil required under RBKC basement planning rules.

Therefore limiting the size of garden basements on the basis of preserving or increasing green or potentially green garden space has no logical basis.

RBKC basement planning policy could include conditions about garden planting that would positively improve the greenification, biodiversity and mature tree planting of the borough.

Single storey basement limitations.

View expressed that any and all multi-storey basements, whether commercial or residential, should not be permitted anywhere in the borough under any circumstances.

'Additional storey' – view expressed that the current Permitted Development rules provide a sound and practical basis for deciding what counts as an additional storey.

Exceptional circumstances and multi-storey basements.

If impact on residents is a valid planning consideration then neither site size nor accessibility are the most appropriate criteria for judging what exceptional circumstances are. The most suitable criteria would be the construction impact on the local residents.

Meeting 3 - Wednesday 20th February, 11.00 – 1.35, Kensington Town Hall

No comments

Meeting 4 - Wednesday 27th February, 10.00 – 11.45, Kensington Town Hall

No comments