ROYAL BOROUGH KENSINGTON & CHELSEA

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY - DRAFT SPD

Background Report 02

Urban Design Strategy

JULY 2006

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

urbaninitiatives

Background Report 02 Urban Design Strategy

CONTENTS

The Team
Urban Initiatives

Project Director
Kelvin Campbell

Urban Initiatives
1 Fitzroy Square
London W1T 5HE
t +44 (0)20 7380 4545
f +44 (0)20 7380 4546
www.urbaninitiatives.co.uk

01

INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT OF THIS REPORT

In Autumn 2005 the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea commissioned Urban Initiatives to prepare a Draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Urban Design Strategy for the Royal Borough. As part of this work a series of reports were produced which led to the preparation of the Draft SPD. These reports were summarised into three Background Reports that provide with detailed guidance and additional information as background to the SPD document.

This report is Background Report 02 – Urban Design Strategy and summarises working stage 2. The report sets out the strategic vision & urban design objectives for the Royal in response to planning policies enclosed in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). It develops the urban design strategy along two parallel tiers covering general urban design principles and area specific urban design concepts.

1.2 GOOD URBAN DESIGN

In the recent past Urban Design has been addressed by numerous academic publications and policy documents in the UK.

Good urban design is at the core of creating high quality, sustainable places wherever new development occurs, and the Government is committed to good urban design through its policies and their application. Research on the value of urban design published jointly by CABE and the DETR in 2002 concluded that, as well as social and environmental benefits, better urban design brings economic benefits and secures more profitable and sustained regeneration activity.

PPS1 goes on to recommend that planning authorities should prepare robust policies on design and access, to ensure that developments are sustainable, durable and adaptable, optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, respond to their local context and create or reinforce local distinctiveness, create safe and accessible environments, address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

The theme of quality urban design has been taken up in a range of design guides and other publications. English Partnerships produced the "Urban Design Compendium" in 2000, which provided practical advice on urban design to the regeneration and development industry. In addition, the Mayor of London is about to publish draft supplementary planning guidance on urban design principles.

The urban design objectives used in this assessment are drawn from the Government's "By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: towards better practice ", which is referenced as good practice in Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THIS REPORT

The character assessment shows that the Royal Borough comprises a patchwork of different character areas. Many of these areas are relatively homogeneous, but along their edges and along other structuring elements such as barriers or corridors, the urban form is more diverse and fragmented. Large areas of the Borough are predominantly residential, but some quarters contain a strong concentration of visitor-based uses such as specialised shopping precincts or other visitor attractions.

To address the multitude of different aspects of urban design in the Royal Borough the following structure for the urban design strategy has been developed.

Section 2 sets out the overall urban design objectives for the Royal Borough. These translate the vision encapsulated in the UDP into good urban design practice. Throughout this document, reference will frequently be made to the elements that constitute good urban design.

In sections 3 and 4 the urban design strategy is developed in two tiers.

Section 3 sets out a general urban design framework, with recommendations on urban layout, scale, land use, frontages and appearance of development. The section also sets out general recommendations on the configuration of the public realm and provision for pedestrian and cyclists. The general framework is particularly relevant given that, for much of the Royal Borough, change will be in the form of the smaller infill developments together with a few larger development sites.

Section 4 focuses on more specific structuring or functional elements that characterise the Royal Borough. The elements concerned are either area-specific, such as conservation areas, transformation areas and central nodes, or have a major structuring role, such as barriers, edges, waterfronts and street corridors, or they relate to special uses or activities, such as shopping streets, visitor attractions and the network of leisure and green spaces. Each of the elements requires a particular approach, which is set out in tabular form.

Section 5 provides an overview of the different possibilities for the implementation of the framework.

02 STRATEGIC VISION & URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

The overall vision for the Royal Borough is set out in the UDP as follows:

To maintain and enhance the character and function of the Royal Borough as a residential area and to ensure its continuing role within the metropolitan area as an attractive place in which to live and work.

STRATEGIC VISION & URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES

Complementing this vision are seven key urban design objectives for future development in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The Royal Borough should be:

- **A place with a distinct identity**, which maintains its residential character, combines distinct and diverse character areas, protects and enhances its rich heritage and makes the most of its assets.

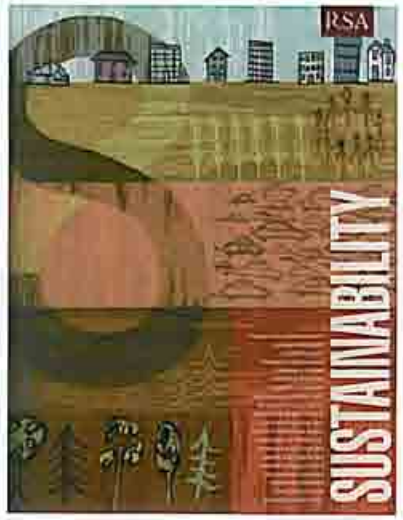
DISTINCT IDENTITY

- **A place that is legible** and easy to understand, with continuous street frontages and enclosed spaces, and a clear definition of private and public spaces.

- **A place that is easy to get to and to move around, with sub areas that are well connected and permeable**, finding a balance between different road users catering in particular for pedestrian and cyclists.

LEFT ABOVE: A LEGIBLE PLACE
LEFT: CONNECTED PLACE

- **A place with sustainable development patterns**, which make efficient use of land, integrate land uses and transport, reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of public modes of transport.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- **A place that offers diversity and choice**, with a rich mix of residential accommodation and compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places and respond to local needs.
- **A place that is adaptable**, with developments that are robust and can respond to changing social, technological and economical conditions.
- **A place that offers a quality urban environment for people** with attractive, safe and inclusive public and green spaces, which makes efficient use of available space and offers diversity and choice.

The above urban design objectives have been key guiding principles in preparing the multi-layer urban design recommendations encompassed in this report.

DIVERSITY AND CHOICE

ADAPTABLE DEVELOPMENTS

QUALITY ENVIRONMENT

03

GENERAL URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

This chapter sets out a general urban design framework to guide development in the Royal Borough. The use of the following principles will help new development to integrate into the existing structure of the Borough and add to its character.

The chapter also expands on general design principles for new public realm connected with development, and for the renewal of the existing public realm. The aim is to improve substantially the facilities for walking and cycling, enhance residential amenity and improve the visitor experience.

3.1 URBAN STRUCTURE

The urban structure concerns the framework of routes and spaces, local and strategic connections, and the way development, routes and open spaces relate to one another.

The layout of an area should be simple and easy to understand to assist legibility and way finding. A clear hierarchy of streets and spaces should be defined. The importance and role of a street in the transport network is expressed through its size and street section. Public and green spaces are also important structuring elements. As focal areas and local landmarks they attract people, help orientation and may contribute to a local identity.

The layout of areas should retain or enhance connectivity between neighbouring quarters. Streets need to be continuous and connect well with the surrounding street pattern. New linkages should follow desire lines.

Areas should be permeable with a network of streets offering different ways to move around. Truncated streets, cul-de-sacs or gated street arrangements that harm the permeability and legibility of an area should be avoided.

3.2 URBAN GRAIN

The urban grain relates to the morphological pattern of an area and the relative size of an area's pattern of blocks and plot division.

In many parts of the Royal Borough the urban grain is fine. The predominant development form is the urban street block, with buildings following the perimeter of the block. Quarters consist of medium to small sized urban blocks, whilst street blocks themselves are subdivided into fine grain development plots. This typical arrangement creates a clear distinction between external public and internal semi-private and private spaces. It also benefits phased development and enhances adaptability.

This morphological pattern is typical of the Borough and significantly contributes to its character. The layout of new development should enhance and extend the block pattern with fine urban grain, frequent plot subdivision and a clear distinction between private and public spaces.

LEGIBLE URBAN STRUCTURE AND FINE URBAN GRAIN

GEORGIAN & VICTORIAN TERRACES ARE THE PREDOMINANT DEVELOPMENT FORM IN THE BOROUGH

3.3 SCALE: MASSING AND HEIGHT

Throughout large parts of the Borough, the scale of development shows little variation. Many of the Victorian and Georgian residential estates are skilfully composed ensembles and characterised by buildings with coherent architectural expression, typologies and heights.

New developments should relate to the typical scale of development in the Borough. To obtain street qualities similar to those of the historical quarters, larger sites should be broken up into smaller development plots with shorter street frontages. The width of a typical unit ranges between 5-7.5m for terraced and town houses, and 12-18m for walk-up apartment buildings. Subdivisions should be expressed in the façade. The rhythm of vertical lines helps structure and animate the street space and visually breaks its length. Smaller frontages also relate better to human scale.

Average building heights vary across the Borough, but within particular areas building heights are often relatively consistent. Average heights range from 2-3 storey terraces in North Kensington to 3-5 Georgian and Victorian terraces and town houses, to up 8-storey Edwardian Mansion Blocks in the Ladbroke Grove Area, Notting Hill, Holland Park Area, South Kensington and Chelsea.

With the exception of a few clusters of taller buildings along main corridors, beside barriers or around central nodes, which naturally show a greater variation in massing and height, the majority of the Borough has a relatively homogenous and level roofscape. A single building height often prevails, especially within historical residential estates, and only key buildings stand out. Eaves lines are continuous and corners are rarely expressed through greater height. On opposite sides of a street, building heights are commonly similar.

At streets where the edges of different residential estates meet, the difference in height seldom exceeds more than 2-3 storeys. The homogenous height and architectural treatment of adjacent development ensembles, and also their similar scale, means that streets do not appear imbalanced or fragmented. Streets with different urban typologies on either side are a typical feature of the Borough; they enhance legibility and contribute to character.

In general the above principles should establish the pattern for the determination of building height for new development in the Borough. Where new development has existing quality surroundings, it should enhance and not disrupt the local character. This means that heights should not substantially exceed the height of neighbouring developments and the typical eaves or cornice lines should be continued.

Larger comprehensive redevelopments should themselves form a coherent ensemble, with related heights. At the scale of the street block, the addition of individual buildings should form a horizontal building mass with a homogeneous height. This will reflect more closely the typical character of the Borough than a street block with a fragmented roofscape, or a stand-alone development with a vertical format where height exceeds width. The appropriate building height should be determined through a character assessment of development heights in the surrounding area.

Further recommendations on heights are given in the section on the specific urban design elements in Section 04 (including Barriers, Urban Nodes, Corridors, Transformation areas etc.)

3.4 DENSITY

Densities are linked to the building height, mass and footprint of development. In most of the areas of the Borough the urban street block is the dominant development form. In some of these blocks the interior is built over or comprises mews developments. Depending on building height, these very compact development patterns result in medium to high density areas. These can be found especially in central areas of the Borough including parts of Notting Hill, Kensington, South Kensington and North Chelsea. All remaining parts range from lower to medium density.

With an increasing energy awareness and the need for sustainable development, density in urban areas should relate to the degree of accessibility by means of public transport. Areas within walking distance of up to 400-600m (up to 10min walk) from public transport nodes can ideally be developed to higher densities. Higher density does not necessarily mean greater building heights; it can also be achieved by more compact development.

Higher density developments bring more people into an area and increase the intensity of uses. This directly affects local services, social, health and education facilities, shopping provision and infrastructure requirements including transport capacity.

Areas with protected historic urban fabric such as conservation areas may only have limited potential for raising densities, depending on whether higher density development would conflict with the local character.

HIGH DENSITY DEVELOPMENT AT KNIGHTSBRIDGE

MIXED USE STREET IN NOTTING HILL

3.5 LAND USE

The majority of areas in the Borough is predominantly residential. However, pockets of office use can be found in the vicinity of public transport nodes, whilst other employment zones are located along the railway lines in the west and north. Besides hotel and tourism businesses, the retail sector in the Borough is significantly developed with a number of well-established shopping centres. The Borough also contains a variety of cultural, educational, health and sport facilities. However the distribution and mix of uses varies across the Borough, yet many quarters are largely residential.

In general, each urban quarter should contain a mix of different uses related to the local needs of residents, businesses and visitors. To enhance the adaptability and robustness of a quarter, monotonous concentrations of single uses should be avoided. Often it is beneficial to bring different uses together not only within urban blocks, but also, where suitable, vertically within buildings. It is however wrong to assume that every single development should provide a mix of uses.

The appropriate mix of uses for a particular development will depend on a number of factors including market forces. A thorough knowledge of the property market together with an understanding of the needs of the local community should inform the potential mix of uses for a new development.

A mix of uses can help to animate an area at different times of the day. Commercial and employment activities for instance can counteract lower daytime activity levels that are typical in predominantly residential areas during the week. This can lead to a better activity distribution during the day and the week, and can animate the street space and help active and passive surveillance.

Along busy streets where privacy concerns may preclude residential ground floor uses, the provision of commercial units (live/work) at the ground floor of residential developments can provide a better interface with an active street space They also help in satisfying local employment needs.

Local corner shops, pubs or restaurants, and to a lesser extent social or health facilities, not only provide necessary services for local needs, they are focal points where people meet and they help to foster a personal attachment to an area. As reference points they have an important role for orientation and strengthening local identity. Where appropriate therefore these uses should be protected. They should also form an integral part of the development of large sites especially when local provision is limited. Many of these facilities require footfall and ease of reach. Suitable locations include primary access routes or prominent street corners, and a grouping of such uses will help their vitality and attractiveness.

The Borough should contain a broad range of different types and sizes of residential accommodation, which relate to the variety of housing needs of different age and income groups, in order to provide everyone with a decent home and help the creation of socially cohesive communities. Such accommodation should include younger people who want to live alone or in shared households, young families with children, and elderly people with special access or servicing requirements. The housing stock should also enable people and families over the course of their lifetime to satisfy their changing living requirements within their habitual environment and to stay in the Borough. New residential developments therefore should contain an appropriate mix of units that in particular relate to the needs of residential accommodation, particularly in the surrounding quarter.

New developments should seek to provide private or semiprivate outside amenity spaces near or linked to residential units, such as through establishment of communal garden spaces and private gardens in the interior of perimeter blocks or the provision of larger balconies or roof terraces. Location, orientation and the specific requirements of the potential user should be taken into account.

3.6 FRONTAGES AND INTERFACE / FACADES AND MATERIALS

Building frontages define the street space. Their location, size and format play a large part in determining the character and sense of enclosure of a street. Frontages can stand hard at the edge of the footway or be set back with a private front space. They may contain many openings or appear solid and rather enclosed. The attributes and qualities of the interface between the buildings, spaces and streets influence the character and definition of a street, and whether it is feels safe and attractive. This also applies to the structure and detailing of the façade and choice of materials.

The urban layout of typical Georgian and Victorian estates is characterised by the deliberate formation of clear, well-defined and enclosed street spaces. Building lines are usually continuous and follow the street. They can be straight or curved as in the many crescents in the Borough, or enclose one of the many garden squares. Terraced houses or mansion blocks often establish continuous and unbroken street frontages between street corners, giving a strong sense of enclosure. Shorter terraces, detached town houses and villas often display a rhythm, with smaller gaps between buildings, and these also provide enclosure to the street.

Street corners typically receive more individual treatment. This is achieved either with specifically designed corner buildings or by emphasising the end of a terrace using fittings, projections or extensions or more elaborate architectural detailing. Active frontages often face both streets.

The facades of Georgian and Victorian and Edwardian building groups are characterised by the skilful and balanced arrangement of vertical and horizontal elements of pilasters, decorative mouldings, recesses and pediments, and by the rhythmic repetition of plain inset or projecting elements, such as windows and doors, balconies and bay windows, porches and stairs. Although single buildings can differ from one another, they follow similar architectural codes and contribute to the formation of coherent larger building ensembles. This has helped form the beautiful unitary streets and spaces that are typical of large parts of RBKC.

In large parts of the Borough, the choice of materials is relatively homogeneous. Most of the buildings are built in brick, commonly London yellow stocks laid in Flemish bond. Face brickwork is usually used in Georgian Houses and also in the later Queen Anne Revival terraces and mansion blocks, which often have contrasting red brick. Stucco rendering to brick construction can be found in much Victorian architecture. These buildings are commonly coloured in white and cream. While the fronts commonly follow rigorous design principles with balanced proportions, the backs often remain undecorated and practical.

BALANCED FACADE

INTERFACE WITH CLEAR MODULATED ENTRANCE PORCHES

Typical of Georgian and Victorian architecture is the establishment of a clear distinction between private and public space. Streets were often raised up at the front of the house, giving access to an upper level ground floor, whilst the basement sat at the genuine ground level with access to the garden in the back. Between the pavement and the front of the house a private zone was established, separated commonly by railings. Stairs led down to the basement entrance, and steps or an elevated platform emphasised the entrance at the ground floor. Where the building line was set back, a front garden was established. This arrangement enhanced the privacy of residential units and formed entrance zones with a semi private character along the street space. These can be individually used and personalised by residents and enhance the variety and character of the street space.

With their direct relation to the street, regular and frequent openings and few blind frontages, Georgian and Victorian terraces assist overlooking and passive supervision of the street space. This makes streets feel safer and creates more attractive environments for pedestrians.

Contemporary thought on urban planning recognises the Georgian and Victorian quarters as excellent examples of good urban design. The architects and builders of those times not only created urban areas of outstanding beauty, they also established robust and adaptable urban structures, to the extent that these quarters and properties nowadays rank as some of London's most desirable living environments.

With these areas characterising large parts of the Royal Borough, good practice urban design can be found nearly at every doorstep. New development should therefore closely follow the principles represented by these architectures and reflect the typical character attributes of the immediate surroundings.

However a contemporary interpretation of the structuring and qualitative aspects of the frontages, spaces, the organisation of the façade and the materials may be found. It will also be necessary to design to energy efficiency and other sustainability standards.

New developments should harmonise with the structures in the surrounding area and enhance the local character without necessarily having to replicate historic architectural styles. Usually, following the typical building line, adhering to a similar scale and height, treating the façade with a related degree of detail and subdivision, and employing sympathetic palette of materials can successfully integrate new buildings into a historic context. Only key buildings with a special function or particular public uses should be allowed to take a contrasting approach to the typical surrounding structures.

Comprehensive developments on larger sites outside the historic areas, for example the redevelopment of brownfield sites or former housing estates, can develop their own contemporary architectural language. However, scale, frontage, materials and the mix of uses should be sympathetic to urban design principles. A multitude of different, unrelated and generic architectural styles should be avoided, since it would fragment an area and bear little resemblance to the largely homogeneous character of the Borough. The development of such an area should be guided by a comprehensive urban design framework, which also should be based on a character appraisal of the wider surrounding area.

In addition to the above recommendations, the following general design principles should also be applied for the development of successful frontage and interface conditions:

Frontages should be established along a regular and continuous building line, create an appropriate enclosure to the street and help the establishment of a balanced streetscape. Building should always orientate their fronts and main entrance to the street. Sufficient openings in the façade should assist overlooking and passive supervision of the street. Blank walls should be avoided.

Where residential units at the ground floor of developments directly face the street a privacy strip should be designed between the pavement and the building front to allow for the privacy of these units.

Uses that rely on pedestrian traffic and establish an active relationship with the public realm should be located at the ground floor at accessible locations, street corners or around public spaces. This can help enliven the street or public space, assist orientation, create reference points and shelter other vulnerable uses from adverse levels of activity.

3.7 PUBLIC REALM AND STREET DESIGN

The vision for Kensington and Chelsea is to retain and enhance its character as residential borough. Development should therefore improve the living environment and enhance the experience of the public realm. In addition, the organisation of the urban environment can help to facilitate and encourage sustainable patterns of activity.

Walking and cycling are the most energy efficient modes of movement over short to medium distances. They also contribute to physical health and vitality and encourage a personal appreciation of, and attachment to, a neighbourhood. Most of the Borough has a great advantage in that many of the desired facilities can be found close to home. However, too often, motorised modes of transport are still preferred. There may be a number of factors that deter people from walking or cycling, but a frequent cause is the poor facilities and poor quality environment for these modes. Problems include the difficulty of navigation and orientation, lack of continuity and directness, and an unattractive, monotonous or unsafe general environment.

It is important to create appropriate conditions that stimulate and enhance the attractiveness of walking or cycling. In the past, walking and cycling were often treated as subordinate to motor vehicles and were marginalised in the desire to create segregated vehicular routes. Overall, walking and cycling should be treated as equal to other transport modes, and in some locations they should take priority. A balanced solution has to be found in which the special conditions and particular vulnerability of these modes of travel are appropriately addressed. Particular concern should be given to the convenience, directness, safety and attractiveness of walking and cycling routes.

3.8 WALKING

IMPLEMENTED PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT SCHEME AT KENSINGTON HIGH STREET HAS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN AMENITY

EXHIBITION ROAD PROJECT AIMS FOR BETTER ACCESSIBILITY AND SPACE FOR PEDESTRIANS

ROUTE NETWORK

Any urban street should be configured so that it is convenient for people to walk along. Walking routes should be continuous, convenient and safe. A network of walking routes should offer variety and choice.

Direct walking routes should link transport hubs, local and district centres and facilitate fast and convenient access to important destinations. More leisurely walks should also be provided for which could be less direct. These should link residential areas with recreational spaces and areas of particular interest, passing through areas with character, atmosphere and beauty. In the following chapter, leisure routes are also addressed under the headings 'green chains' and 'discovery routes'.

A legible hierarchy of routes should be established. **Strategic routes** commonly follow major corridors and link important nodes, centres and destinations within the Borough and beyond. These are identified in the following section under the heading 'corridors'. **Distributor routes** are major access routes linking transport nodes, district and local centres, neighbourhood facilities and public open spaces. **Local access routes** link into strategic and distributor routes. The design and treatment of these routes should be distinct and reflect their role in the network.

Key buildings, landmarks, public spaces or other distinct features create variety and break the length of the route into shorter sections. At crossing points in particular, they can help orientation and enhance the legibility of the route network. Their scale and importance should reflect the hierarchy of routes.

ORGANISATION OF WALKING ROUTES

The design and size of a footway and the facilities provided on it will depend on many factors such as the purpose of the route, local character and local opportunities. The following general rules can help the convenient and functional design of walking routes. Normally, there should be footways on both sides of a street. Their design and width should reflect their role in the network, the density and type of use in adjacent buildings and anticipated or surveyed pedestrian volumes.

Functionally, a footway can normally be divided into three parts. The central and main part is formed by the walkway. This needs to be uncluttered, continuous and direct, and should have a coherent surface treatment. Between the central strip and the building, there is a threshold zone which can include footway widening at entrances or shop windows, sitting out terraces, a privacy strip, steps, equipment for utilities, and so on. Between the central strip and the street, space should be reserved for litterbins, signs, lamp posts, benches and other elements of public furniture. This strip also can accommodate

street trees and other landscape elements. This may require a widening of the zone, and on heavily trafficked streets the widened zone can serve to protect pedestrians from the adverse impact of traffic. Street clutter should be avoided, and opportunities should be explored to reduce or combine the number of individual elements.

The public realm should be of high quality, exhibit best practice design and employ a durable and coherent range of materials.

Further details for the design of walkways and the public realm, including catering for people with disabilities and impaired vision, can be found in the Borough's Streetscape Manual.

STREET CROSSINGS

Crossing facilities should correspond with pedestrian desire lines; they should continue the line of approaching routes. People tend to avoid crossing points that are inconvenient or located too far away, and under high personal risk attempt alternative ways of crossing.

On local streets with low traffic volumes, public realm design should assist frequent crossings. Where streets are busier, formal crossing points are required. At places with heavy and not spatially confined pedestrian movement, such in local centres and shopping streets, the establishment of a refuge area with different surface treatment in the centre of the road may assist informal crossing.

Within domestic neighbourhoods, pedestrians should have priority. Successful examples from continental Europe demonstrate that in residential areas with frequent pedestrian traffic, street crossings can be treated as natural extensions of the footway – requiring drivers to ascend up to the level of the pavement, reducing speed and making drivers more aware.

In general, crossing points should be legible for drivers and pedestrians. They can be emphasised by road narrowing. Travel speed at unsignalled crossings should be low enough to allow for eye contact. Mutual visibility between driver and pedestrian is of key importance. This should not be constrained by physical or landscape elements, phone boxes or parked cars. Lighting should emphasise crossing areas for pedestrians.

DIRECT CROSSING THAT RESPONDS TO PEDESTRIAN DESIRE LINES

CYCLE PARKING IN CENTRE OF KENSINGTON HIGH STREET

3.9 CYCLING

Similar rules apply for the cycle network as for the pedestrian network. Cycle routes should be direct, continuous, convenient and safe.

Ideally every street should be part of the cycle network. Primary routes should link important places in the city and Borough. On local streets with low traffic volumes cyclists must be able to co-exist happily with other road users.

Strategic corridors with high traffic volumes should be provided with cycle routes. As cyclists use their own power to drive forward, they tend to choose efficient routes and avoid unnecessary detours. The practice of defining more circuitous cycle routes on less trafficked streets does not always satisfy the cyclist's need for speed and efficiency. Despite higher risks, many cyclists tend to use strategic vehicular routes. Bus lanes are inappropriate and dangerous for the use by cyclists because they are too narrow to allow for buses and taxis to overtake cyclists safely, or to allow cyclists to pass stationary buses.

One-way streets tend to cause serious problems. They affect the connectivity of the cycle route and encourage cyclists to disobey highway rules, increasing personal risk. Where traffic management measures seriously affect connectivity for cyclists, alternative solutions must be found to create a safe, direct and continuous cycle route in both directions. In other European countries this is sometimes achieved by allowing cycles to pass in a counter direction to the traffic, or by providing dedicated cycle ways.

Book Warehouse
Book Wa
PUBLIC
SUBWAY
UNDERGROUND

04 AREA SPECIFIC URBAN DESIGN CONCEPTS

Section 4 focuses on the strategic elements that affect the Royal Borough as a whole. The elements concerned are area-specific, such as conservation areas, transformation areas and central nodes, have a major structuring role, such as barriers/ edges, waterfronts and street corridors, or relate to special uses or activities, such as shopping streets, visitor attractions and the network of leisure and green spaces.

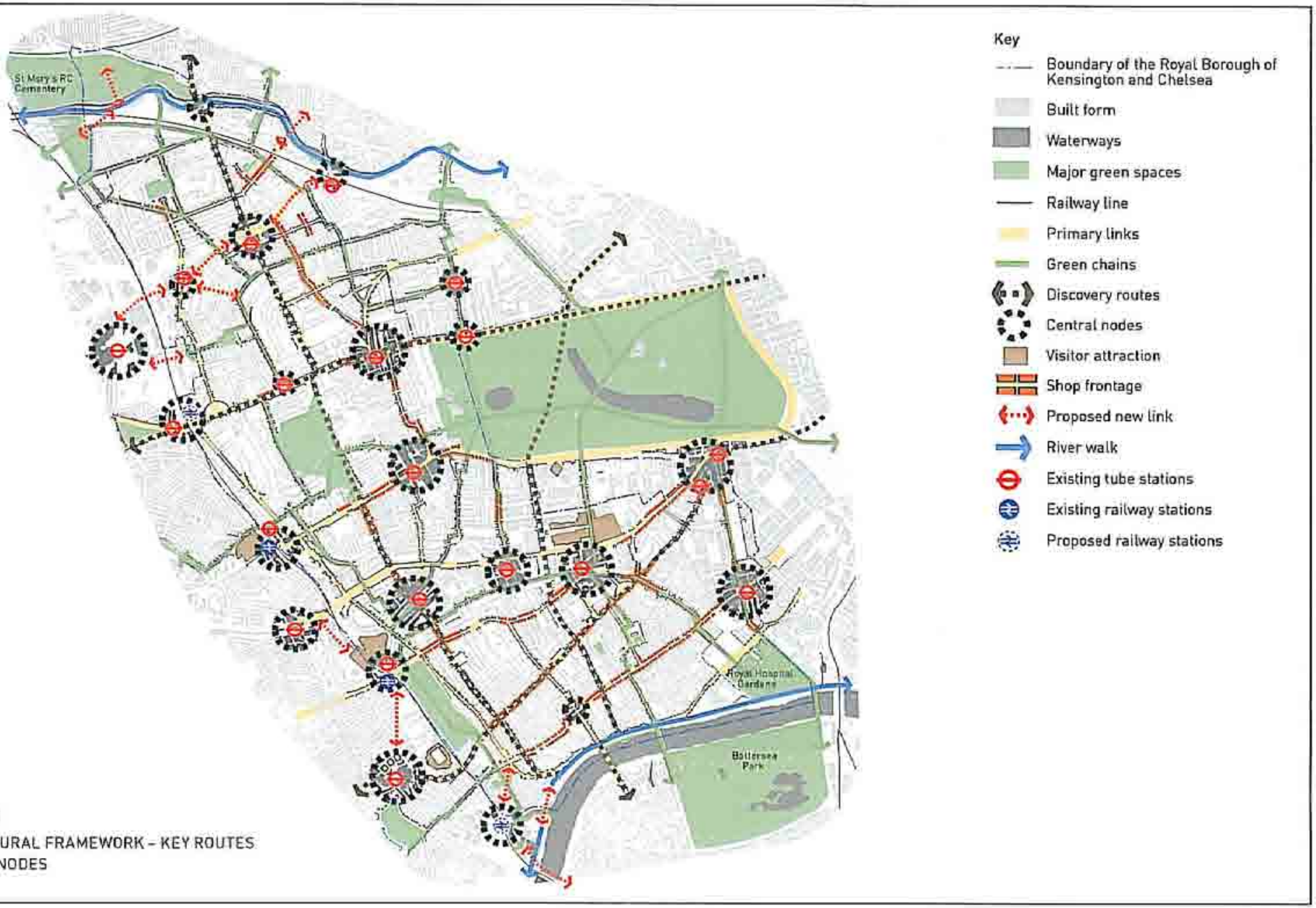


FIGURE 01
A STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK – KEY ROUTES AND KEY NODES

The urban system is highly complex and each of these elements cannot be seen in isolation. Several of them may address the same place from different perspectives. Such different readings are commonplace in urban environments, where many different interests coexist, interact and compete with each other.

The list of selected concepts is not comprehensive. It comprises a selection of those concepts, that the Royal Borough believes to be most important and that have sufficient leverage to achieve its vision.

A) SPECIAL AREAS
- Conservation areas
- Opportunity areas
- Central nodes

B) STRUCTURING ELEMENTS
- Barriers or edges
- Waterfronts
- Major street corridors

C) USE-RELATED ELEMENTS
- Shopping streets
- Visitor attractions
- Green space network
- Discovery routes

This section explains in detail each concept and develops a series of specific urban design objectives. Areas or elements relating to each concept are summarised in a plan; and principal and specific urban design recommendations are given to various development aspects (i.e. character, routes, frontages, public realm etc.).

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is part of a larger metropolitan city organism. Although it has defined borders to neighbouring authorities, the Royal Borough is integrated into a complex web of functional, economic, cultural and social interrelationships which are not confined by borders. It is important when observing aspects of the urban environment and built form not to stop at the borough boundaries but to try to understand the bigger picture. Often, and the analysis of the Royal Borough highlights this fact, problem areas are frequently located within the boundary zones. This study will therefore extend into neighbouring areas, and suggest the joint addressing of issues by the relevant boroughs.

The following is a list of the identified urban elements and a description of their relevance and attributes, together with policy guidance and objectives.

MARSH
PARSONS
Tate

A1

CONSERVATION AREA

AIM: To preserve, consolidate and enhance conservation areas and strengthen their specific residential character

A1

CONSERVATION AREA

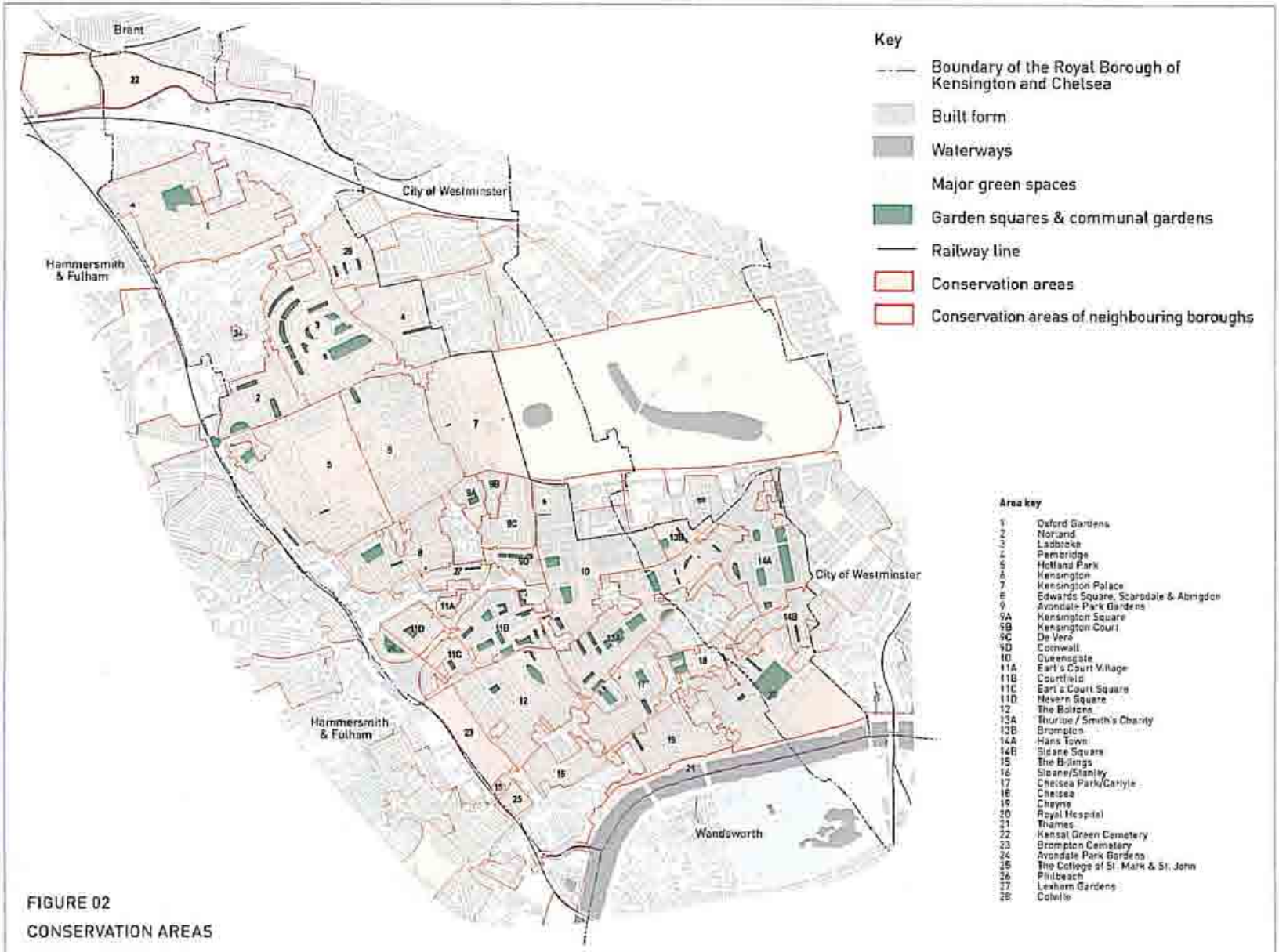


FIGURE 02
CONSERVATION AREAS

CONTEXT

The image of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is intrinsically linked with its Victorian and Georgian Quarters. The fine ensembles of villas and townhouses, terraces and mansion blocks, arranged around a set of well defined streets and garden squares, are emblematic of the Borough. The high quality and desirable residential environments associated with them are one of the Royal Borough's most important attributes. The variety and diversity encapsulated in these historic areas have made the Royal Borough unique.

The special architectural or historic interest of these areas is reflected in their designation as conservation areas. Each conservation area is covered by a proposal statement which identifies the characteristics that contribute to the special nature of the conservation area and includes guidance to ensure preservation and enhancement.

The urban design strategy recognises that these areas should be protected and their special character enhanced. The recommendations below address overarching urban design principles that aim to strengthen conservation areas, and are additional to the guidance in the proposal statements.

A1

CONSERVATION AREA

URBAN DESIGN GUIDANCE

ASPECT	URBAN DESIGN ASPIRATIONS	GUIDANCE
CHARACTER	Preserve, consolidate and enhance conservation area, strengthen its specific character.	■ Development that would have an adverse effect on the existing character should not be permitted. ■ Those elements of the urban fabric that are typical or have a key role in determining the character of an area should be particularly protected.
LEGIBLE BOROUGH INITIATIVE	Make Borough more legible and foster local identity by providing information about the history, context and structure of its conservation areas.	■ The community should be involved in gathering, preparing and presenting information on the history of their neighbourhood. ■ Information and route maps should be displayed along important routes and outside key buildings. At this cluttering should be avoided.
EDGES	Define the edges of conservation areas and create an appropriate interface with neighbouring areas of different character, i.e. Central Nodes and Corridors.	■ The edges of conservation areas should be reviewed, and the introduction of an intermediate zone should be explored near areas with an adverse character or greater pressure for change, such as corridors and nodes. This zone should protect the special character of the conservation area and allow an appropriate development response to external requirements and conditions.
LAND USE	Maintain and enhance the residential character and aim for a greater mix of residential typologies and unit sizes.	■ Diversification in residential land uses should be promoted, such as a wider housing mix including the provision of homes that are affordable and relate to the needs of the young and old, and young families with children.

ASPECT	URBAN DESIGN ASPIRATIONS	GUIDANCE
FRONTAGES	Create enclosed and defined street spaces with active frontages and overlooking.	▪ The continuous building line should be created or repaired; new development should relate to, or replicate, the typical setting in relation to the street. ▪ Passive supervision and overlooking of the public realm should be created through the placing of openings, doors, windows, balconies and so on. ▪ The privacy of residential units should be protected through set-backs, or a raised ground floor, where they sit adjacent to a frequented movement route. ▪ The creation of impermeable barriers towards the public realm must be discouraged, particularly when they adversely affect surveillance and the quality of the pedestrian environment.
PUBLIC REALM	Create a high quality and consistent public realm throughout the conservation area that relates to special local character, through the choice of materials and street furniture.	▪ A streetscape / public realm strategy should be developed to assist the coordinated creation and maintenance of a consistent and high quality public realm. Such a strategy would specify design, choice of materials and street furniture, maintenance and enforcement measures. ▪ An appropriate public realm treatment should be promoted that sensitively relates to the special character of the conservation area. ▪ The public realm around key buildings should be expressed and emphasised.

A1

CONSERVATION AREA

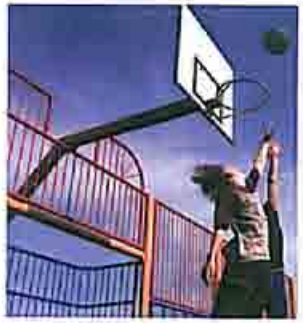
URBAN DESIGN GUIDANCE

ASPECT	URBAN DESIGN ASPIRATIONS	GUIDANCE
PUBLIC REALM	Create high quality consistent public realm throughout the conservation area that relates to special local character, through choice of materials and public furniture	▪ . Public realm improvements areas should cover the entire length of a street and create clear defined edges to older parts of the public realm. ▪ New development is expected to contribute to the development of a high quality and consistent public realm in the vicinity.
NEW DEVELOPMENT OR INTENSIFICATION OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT	New development should consolidate and enhance existing structures and be sympathetic to local context	▪ The character, scale, building grain, interface and choice of materials of new development should relate directly to the local context ▪ There should be sufficient private open space that has public amenity and townscape value. New development should contribute to the creation or enhancement of public open space as part of the development or in the neighbourhood ▪ Access should integrate with and extend the existing street network, and enhance connectivity and permeability ▪ There should be sufficient car parking on-site as underground or under-croft parking without visually intruding into the street space or causing blank frontages

A2

AIM: Transformation of areas of poor character into attractive places to live and work in.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES



A2

OPPORTUNITY AREA

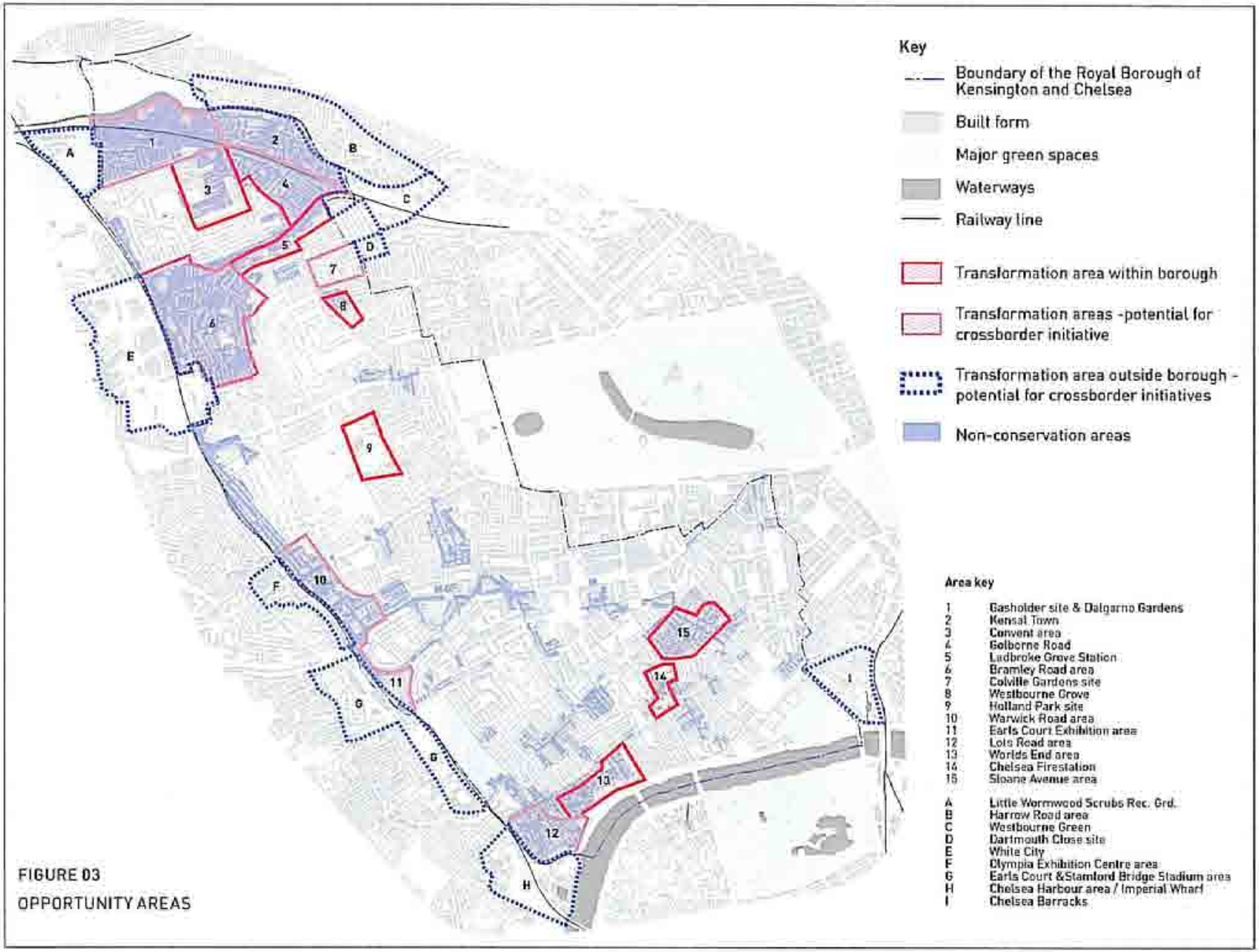


FIGURE 03
OPPORTUNITY AREAS

CONTEXT

The character assessment undertaken in Stage 1 of this study has highlighted a number of areas with adverse or poor character. The majority of these areas are typical fringe locations and suffer from segregation. They are located along the West London Line and in the extreme north of the Borough. They are characterised either by their industrial past with a loose set of industrial, storage or commercial buildings, or comprise post-war social housing estates with their typical shortcomings. Although these areas suffer from a number of problems they also represent significant opportunities for improvement through redevelopment and intensification of land use.

This framework identifies a number of opportunity areas. Some are a combination of adjacent character areas with similar issues. Each is described below, together with an outline of the relevant urban design considerations.

In general these areas are likely to become the subject of private development initiatives. A coherent development framework is needed to pre-empt piecemeal and partial development which may fail to address strategic issues such as infrastructure provision, linkages and public amenities. The preparation of such a framework will require consultation with stakeholders and the local community to identify local problems and aspirations. The framework plan would set out key development principles which would be material planning considerations for planning applications and pre-planning discussions, inform the development plan process and would also be important for team-building and communicating the vision. Some of the opportunity areas lie adjacent to borough boundaries and should be addressed by cross-border initiatives though the joint working of the relevant councils and other stakeholders.

A2

OPPORTUNITY AREA

A2

OPPORTUNITY AREA

LIST OF PROPOSED OPPORTUNITY AREAS

LIST OF PROPOSED OPPORTUNITY AREAS

The following table lists the identifiedopportunity areas, associated areas in neighbouring boroughs and the scope of intervention required. For all areas detailed development briefs have to be prepared, which fall outside of the scope of this study.

CODE	OPPORTUNITY AREA	ASSOCIATED AREA OUTSIDE THE BOROUGH	OBJECTIVES
A2.1	Gasholder Site, Eurostar Site & Dalgarno Gardens 	Little Wormswood Scrubs Recreation Ground (Hammersmith and Fulham)	■ Opportunity for comprehensive redevelopment of brownfield sites as mixed-use residential quarters. ■ Sites need to be appropriately linked with each other and the surrounding neighbourhoods. ■ Local assets such as the canal side, the cemetery and the recreation ground should be explored and opened up as amenities for the wider area. See also B1 Barriers, B2 Waterfronts, C3 Green space network.
A2.2	Kensal Town 	Harrow Road Area (City of Westminster)	■ Intensification and densification of land uses ■ Enhancement of urban structure and historic street pattern ■ Improvement of public open space ■ Better integration of Kensal Town with surrounding quarters, especially the Harrow Road area. See also B1 Barriers, B2 Waterfronts, C1 Shopping streets, C3 Green space network.

CODE	OPPORTUNITY AREA	ASSOCIATED AREA OUTSIDE THE BOROUGH	OBJECTIVES
A.2.3	Exmoor Street/ St. Charles Square Area		▪ Opportunity for partial redevelopment and an intensification of land uses. ▪ Improvement of permeability, legibility and connectivity across site. ▪ Enhancement of the setting of the hospital, the monastery and the schools.
A.2.4	Golborne Road Area 		▪ Opportunity for partial redevelopment and intensification of uses. ▪ Enhancing the role of Golborne Road as local centre. ▪ Reintegrate local street system into principal network and establish set of linked and enclosed streets, with active frontages. ▪ **Extend and link Wornington Road with Ladbroke Grove, and establish better continuation and link across Westway with Lukes Road.** ▪ Enhance character and access into Athlone Gardens . See also C1 Shopping streets, C3 Green space network.

A2

OPPORTUNITY AREA

LIST OF PROPOSED OPPORTUNITY AREAS

A2

OPPORTUNITY AREA

LIST OF PROPOSED OPPORTUNITY AREAS

CODE	OPPORTUNITY AREA	ASSOCIATED AREA OUTSIDE THE BOROUGH	OBJECTIVES
A.2.5	Westway Corridor 	Westway/ Paddington Railway Corridor (City of Westminster)	■ Opportunity to intensify development and improve environment along and below the West Way. ■ Establish continuous surface route (pedestrian, cyclists and where appropriate vehicles) along the corridor linking Westbourne Park Station with Ladbroke Grove Station, potentially extending to Latimer Road Station. ■ Active frontages from uses below the Westway and other potential new or enhanced developments should enclose this route. ■ Development should aim to better integrate the neighbourhoods segregated by the corridor. See also A3 Central Nodes, B1 Barriers and C1 Shopping streets.
A.2.6	Bramley Road Area 	White City (Hammersmith and Futham)	■ Opportunity for partial redevelopment with intensification of land uses and enhancement of the urban environment. ■ Improve permeability and connectivity across entire area. ■ Through enhanced/new links better integrate the Latimer Road triangle with neighbouring quarters, particularly with Ladbroke Grove and White City. ■ Establish local centre along Bramley Road

CODE	OPPORTUNITY AREA	ASSOCIATED AREA OUTSIDE THE BOROUGH	OBJECTIVES
A.2.6	Bramley Road Area	White City (Hammersmith and Futham)	■ Enhance Latimer Road Station and promote higher value use of railway arches. See also B1 Barriers and C1 Shopping streets.
A.2.7	Colville Gardens	Dartmouth Close (City of Westminster)	■ Opportunity for partial redevelopment. ■ Frontage improvement. See also A1 Conservation areas.
A.2.8	Westbourne Grove		■ Opportunity for partial redevelopment. ■ Frontage improvement. ■ Potential for provision with retail units and active (ground floor) frontage towards Portobello Road, Westbourne Grove. See also A1 Conservation areas and C1 Shopping Areas.
A.2.9	Holland Park site 		■ Opportunity for partial redevelopment and intensification of use. ■ Character improvements and enhancing permeability and connectivity across site, particularly linking Holland Walk and Holland Park. See also A1 Conservation areas, C3 Green Space Network and C4 Discovery Routes.

A2

OPPORTUNITY AREA

LIST OF PROPOSED OPPORTUNITY AREAS

CODE	OPPORTUNITY AREA	ASSOCIATED AREA OUTSIDE THE BOROUGH	OBJECTIVES
A.2.10	Warwick Road area 	Olympia Exhibition Centre (Hammersmith and Fulham)	■ Significant mixed-use development opportunity along the railway. ■ Character improvement and enhancement to the setting of Olympia station node. ■ Better enclosure and framing of Warwick Road with active frontage. ■ New public open space and corridor improvement. ■ Promoting public access along the railway and greater permeability across site. See also A3 Central Nodes, B1 Barriers, B3 Street Corridors and C2 Major Visitor Attractions.
A.2.11	Earls Court Exhibition Centre 	Earls Court and Stamford Bridge Stadium area (Hammersmith and Fulham)	■ Opportunity for partial redevelopment of sites along railway. ■ Intensification of uses ■ Enhancement of Earls Court Exhibition Centre and Earls Court Tube Station ■ Character and public realm improvement.

CODE	OPPORTUNITY AREA	ASSOCIATED AREA OUTSIDE THE BOROUGH	OBJECTIVES
A.2.11	Earls Court Exhibition Centre	Earls Court and Stamford Bridge Stadium area (Hammersmith and Fulham)	■ Establish greater permeability and connectivity across site, particular with a new link between Earls Court and Stamford Bridge Stadium/ Fulham Broadway . See also A1 Conservation areas, A3 Central Nodes, B1 Barriers and B3 Street Corridors, C2 Major Visitor Attractions, C3 Green Space Network, C4 Discovery Routes.
A.2.12	Lots Road Area 	Chelsea Harbour / Imperial Wharf / Sands End (Hammersmith and Fulham)	■ Significant opportunity for higher density mixed use and residential development, particularly along railway line, Chelsea Creek and the River Thames. ■ Potential for establishment of a new focal/character area around a converted power station and Chelsea Creek. ■ Improvement to the urban environment and creation of a better setting to the Westfield Neighbourhood Space. ■ Enhance legibility and permeability of the street network. Open up access to the riverfront. ■ Consolidate public open space.

A2

OPPORTUNITY AREA

LIST OF PROPOSED OPPORTUNITY AREAS

A2

OPPORTUNITY AREA

LIST OF PROPOSED OPPORTUNITY AREAS

CODE	OPPORTUNITY AREA	ASSOCIATED AREA OUTSIDE THE BOROUGH	OBJECTIVES
A.2.12	Lots Road Area	Chelsea Harbour / Imperial Wharf / Sands End (Hammersmith and Fulham)	■ Lots Road area and the neighbouring development zones Imperial Wharf, Sands End and Chelsea Harbour should develop as integrated and coherent urban quarter around the proposed West London Line railway station. See also B1 Barriers, B2 Waterfronts, B3 Street Corridors, C3 Green Space Network.
A.2.13	Worlds End 		■ Potential for redevelopment/ infill development and diversification of residential and use mix. ■ Character improvement. ■ Improve enclosure to surrounding streets. ■ Improve legibility and permeability. ■ Establish a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces that are overlooked by active frontages. ■ Create a legible distinction between private and public spaces. ■ Enhance and better define the public space south of Kings Road as a focal community space surrounded by various public institutions. See also A3 Central Nodes, B2 Waterfronts, B3 Street Corridors, C1 Shopping Streets, C4 Discovery Routes.

CODE	OPPORTUNITY AREA	ASSOCIATED AREA OUTSIDE THE BOROUGH	OBJECTIVES
A.2.14	Chelsea Fire Station and Chelsea Market 		■ Partial development opportunities. ■ Character and frontage improvement. ■ Enhance setting of Royal Brompton Hospital and Chelsea Market. ■ Improvement to public and green spaces. ■ Facilitate green chain (see C3). See also A1 Conservation areas, B3 Street Corridors, C1 Shopping Streets and C3 Green Space Network.
A.2.15	Sloane Avenue area 		■ Partial development opportunities. ■ Character and frontage improvement. ■ Define a hierarchy of streets and spaces that are overlooked by active frontages. ■ Create a clear distinction between private and public spaces. See also A1 Conservation areas, B3 Street Corridors, C1 Shopping Streets and C3 Green Space Network.

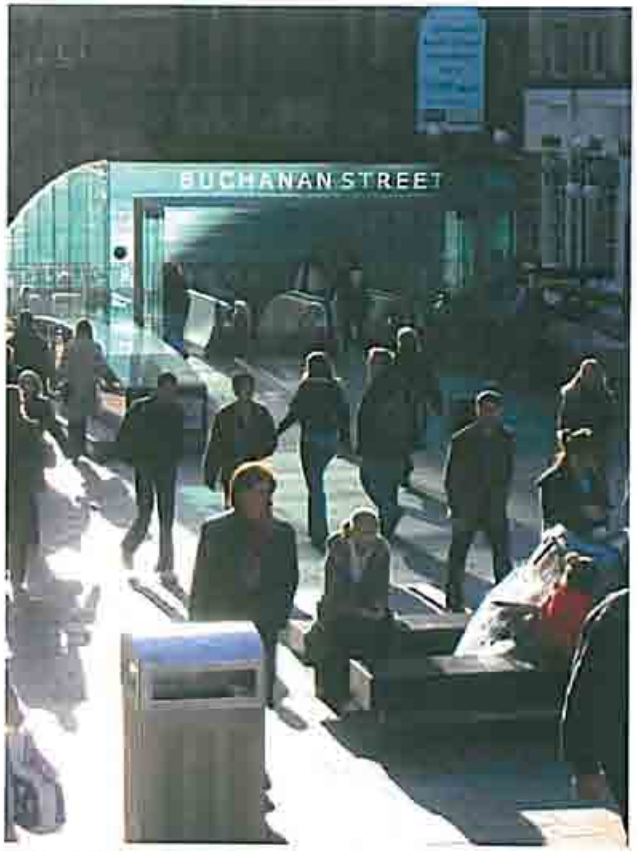
A3

CENTRAL NODES

AIM: Maintain and enhance central nodes and make them attractive, legible and welcoming places

WOODGREEN

BRISTOL



GLASGOW

LONDON

A3

CENTRAL NODES

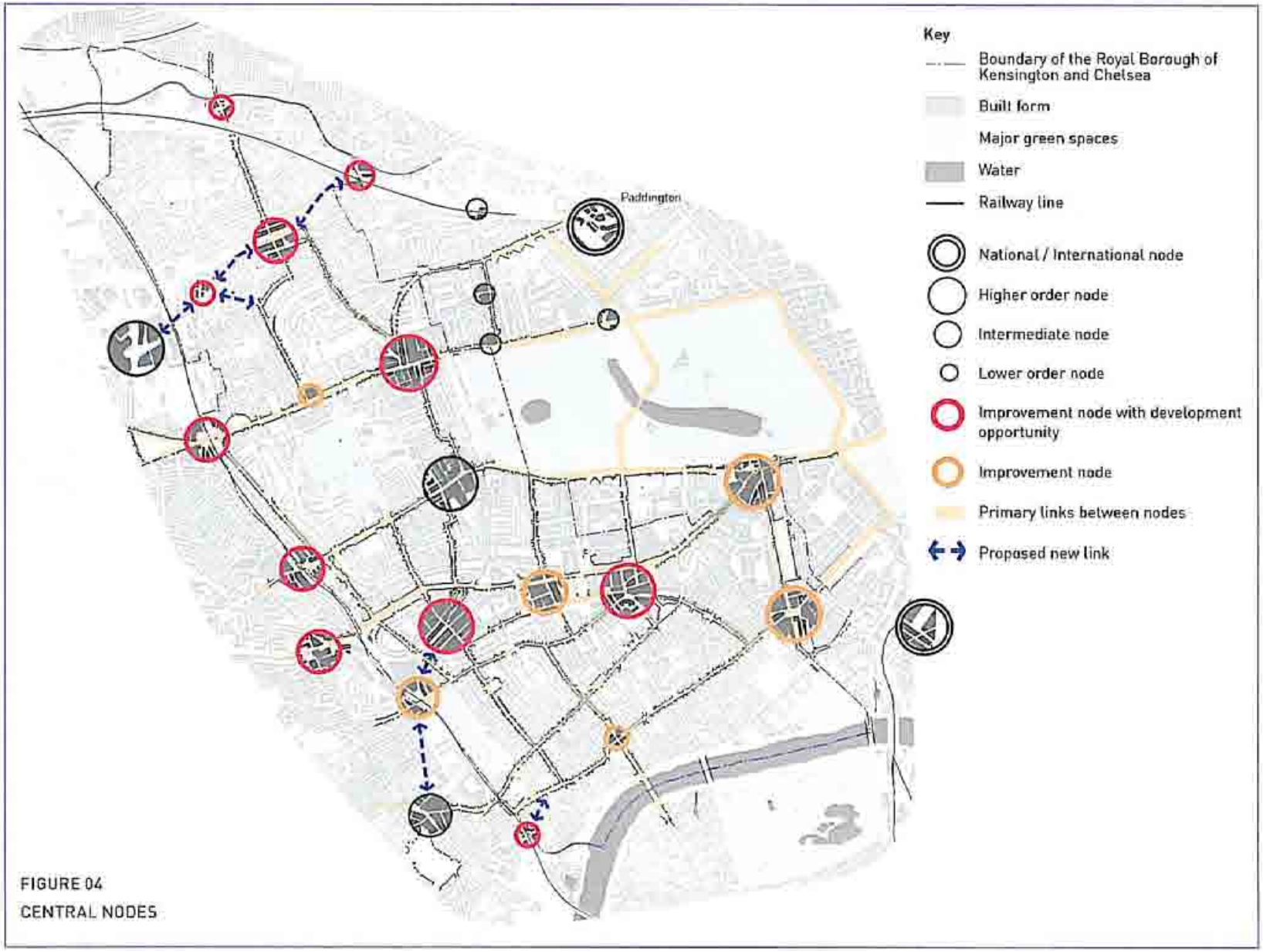


FIGURE 04
CENTRAL NODES

CONTEXT

Central nodes are places located around a public transport hub at the intersection of important streets. They offer high public transport accessibility on a metropolitan and local level. As access and entrance points into the urban fabric they have an important role in the Royal Borough. Associated levels of footfall commonly attract other uses, such as convenience and neighbourhood shopping facilities or local services and food and drink uses. Due to high accessibility and visibility, central nodes are often attractive for commercial uses, leisure, cultural or institutional facilities as well as large scale retailers.

Responding to the sustainable development objective, central nodes are places with potential to accommodate higher densities in relation to their degree of accessibility and connection.

The public transport analysis for the Borough identified a number of nodes and ordered them into three categories relating to their degree of accessibility. This was determined by ranking the type and number of available services for each surface and underground rail station and bus interchange in the Royal Borough.

Following the development of the rail system, the sites surrounding the stations became focal points for development, including large scale visitor-based attractions. Sloane Square and Kensington High Street for example in the beginning of the 20th century saw the building of renowned department stores, whilst exhibition centres were built near Earls Court and Olympia Station.

With the rise of individual transport, nodes at main road intersections became important junctions in the transport network. With highway and public realm design geared towards vehicular road users, the pedestrian environment was often neglected. Frequently this resulted in narrow footways, extensive guard railings and inconvenient pedestrian crossing facilities. Such places suffered, and became unattractive and overcrowded bottlenecks, to be navigated, rather than to spend time in. Typical examples for this development are Notting Hill Gate and South Kensington Tube Station.

The return of developer interest in inner-urban sites with high public transport accessibility offers great opportunities for the substantial transformation of some of these nodes together with significant improvements to the pedestrian environment.

A3

CENTRAL NODES

URBAN DESIGN GUIDANCE

ASPECT	URBAN DESIGN ASPIRATIONS	GUIDANCE
CHARACTER	Create a memorable place with a distinct character and identity.	▪ Existing character should be enhanced ▪ New buildings must be of high quality architecture and respond to the local character ▪ The variation in building grain and land uses should be maintained and enhanced in new development
GATEWAY	Create an appropriate gateway experience with the central node as attractive entrance point into the Borough – a place that welcomes, orientates and guides people.	▪ Appropriately designed and equipped public space should be created close to transport interchange as arrival space – for orientation, meeting and spending time ▪ The distinct physical expression of this node should be enhanced, possibly including a special landmark development (not necessarily a tall building) that arouses interest and places the node on mind map of the Borough
LEGIBLE BOROUGH INITIATIVE	Make Borough more legible by providing information about the node, uses and key routes.	▪ Information should be provided about the place, the transport interchange, land uses and walking routes into the surrounding neighbourhoods, to important destinations and nearby nodes. Clu ▪ Legible routes should be established that link this space with surrounding neighbourhoods
TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE	Create a convenient transport interchange.	▪ Ways between station exits and bus stops should be direct, uncluttered and legible ▪ Bus stops should be grouped together where appropriate and may be expressed by a combined (lightweight) shelter

ASPECT	URBAN DESIGN ASPIRATIONS	GUIDANCE
TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE	Create a convenient transport interchange.	■ Waiting areas should be of sufficient size, overlooked and well lit, and provided with appropriate facilities and amenities, such as shelter, bins, ticketing facilities and travel information. ■ Bus priority schemes should improve bus services
STREET DESIGN	Make urban nodes attractive places for pedestrians and cyclists. Space provision needs to balance the requirements of motorised transport against the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.	■ Footway width should be maximised with the carriageway reduced to the minimum acceptable dimension ■ Wherever possible, additional space for cyclists should be provided, segregated or clearly marked on street ■ Footways should be of sufficient width corresponding with intensity of use. ■ Car parking or servicing bays should not preclude the establishment of adequate footways ■ Formal pedestrian crossings should be frequent, direct and follow desire lines ■ A refuge area in the centre of the road can assist the commonplace informal crossing ■ The use of pedestrian guard railings should be avoided or kept to the very minimum and when used should assist rather than impede the passage of pedestrians
SCALE: HEIGHT AND MASSING	Maintain variation in building scales, with variation in building grain, height and roofscape to	■ When contributing to diversity and choice and not conflicting with local character, buildings of different massing and height may coexist within central nodes

A3

CENTRAL NODES

URBAN DESIGN GUIDANCE

ASPECT	URBAN DESIGN ASPIRATIONS	GUIDANCE
SCALE: HEIGHT AND MASSING	Maintain variation in building scales, with variation in building grain, height and roofscape to enhance diversity	▪ Buildings of larger scale need to have regard to smaller scale neighbouring developments ▪ Extreme contrast in scale to neighbouring developments especially at the periphery of central nodes should be avoided ▪ Specific guidance on higher buildings is enclosed in the tall building section of this study (forthcoming)
LAND USE	Create a mix of land uses that respond to the central location and creates diversity and choice	▪ Central nodes should offer a variety of retail, leisure, service and food and drink uses that relate to the needs of the local catchment population, commuters and visitors ▪ Developments at the core of the node should, taken together, offer a variety of land uses that benefit from the exceptional location and high accessibility i.e. commercial uses, civic or cultural institutions or leisure and sports facilities ▪ Appropriate residential uses should be encouraged in places where they do not suffer from lack of privacy, air and noise pollution or excessive street activity. These could be located at the top floors of mixed use developments in the heart of the node, above shops in approaching streets and along the periphery of the node ▪ New developments should contribute to diversity and adaptability with the creation of a variety of space with a degree of flexibility to adapt to changes

ASPECT	URBAN DESIGN ASPIRATIONS	GUIDANCE
FRONTAGES	Create enclosed and defined street spaces with active frontages for a vibrant, vital and safe street scene	■ Buildings should establish a continuous frontage line with strong enclosure of the street/public space ■ All developments should establish an active frontage towards the street space that contributes to overlooking and passive surveillance ■ Primary entrances to developments should be located on the street ■ In general servicing and car parking areas should be internalised ■ Blank and bleak frontages such as back or sides of developments facing the street at ground floor level should not be permitted. ■ In the core of the node and along primary pedestrian routes, ground floor uses should establish an active relationship with the public realm, create interest and overlook public open spaces. Tables and chairs of retail, drink or food uses could be allowed temporarily in streets and squares on designated areas. ■ Uses surrounding public open spaces should help to animate the space by attracting people and making them linger, with the potential for sitting out terraces or the like
LINKS	Enhance routes between Central Nodes	■ The legibility and quality of routes between central nodes should be enhanced ■ The creation of new routes should be explored where neighbouring nodes are poorly connected

URBAN DESIGN GUIDANCE

ASPECT	URBAN DESIGN ASPIRATIONS	GUIDANCE
PUBLIC REALM	Enhance the quality of the public realm	■ The quality of paved areas throughout the central node should be enhanced, with wide footways which are free of clutter and incorporate attractive lighting and appropriate amenities ■ Significant public spaces should be created or enhanced as part of, or next to, transport interchanges (see point on Gateway above)

SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

The following nodes have been identified. They are ordered according to their degree of accessibility, with outline recommendations for potential improvements.

HIGHER ORDER NODES

CODE	CENTRAL NODES	OBJECTIVES
A3.1	Notting Hill Gate 	■ Character and gateway improvement ■ Improvement of pedestrian environment and public realm ■ Potential for redevelopment and intensification of uses ■ Improve linkage between Portobello Road and Kensington Church Street ■ Enhancement of transport interchange ■ Explore creation of public space

CODE	CENTRAL NODES	OBJECTIVES
A3.2	Kensington High Street	■ Limited potential for redevelopment and intensification of uses ■ Maintain and extend implemented showcase project
A3.3	Earls Court Station 	■ Character and gateway improvement ■ Improvement of pedestrian environment and public realm ■ Enhancement of transport interchange ■ Improve linkage between Earls Court Station (East) and Earls Court Exhibition Centre ■ Create legible routes to Kensington High Street and Gloucester Road Station ■ Limited potential for redevelopment and intensification of uses

A3

CENTRAL NODES

SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

CODE	CENTRAL NODES	OBJECTIVES
A3.4	South Kensington 	■ Character and gateway improvement ■ Improve pedestrian environment and public realm ■ Enhance transport interchange with better relation of bus stops to station ■ Improve linkage between Exhibition Road and Station ■ Create Public Space outside station ■ Significant potential for intensification above and adjacent to station
A3.5	Sloane Square	■ Improve pedestrian environment and public realm ■ Create an attractive public space that is easy to access by people ■ Enhance transport interchange with more legible links between station and bus stops ■ Sloane Square is currently being addressed by the Council
A3.6	Knightsbridge	■ Improve pedestrian environment and public realm ■ Cross border initiative required for coherent improvement ■ Opportunity for new public space and a landmark, such as public art (currently being addressed by the Council).

INTERMEDIATE ORDER NODE

CODE	CENTRAL NODES	OBJECTIVES
A3.7	Ladbroke Grove (includes area north of Westway between Ladbroke Grove and Portobello Road) 	■ Character and gateway improvement ■ Improve pedestrian environment and public realm ■ Significant potential for redevelopment and intensification of uses ■ Improve linkage between Portobello Road and Ladbroke Grove ■ Create a better transport interchange ■ Explore creation of new public space as part of redevelopment ■ Maintain and enhance the use of spaces below the Westway
A.3.8	Shepherds Bush Node 	■ Character and gateway improvement to establish better enclosure to Shepherds Bush roundabout ■ Improve pedestrian environment with signalised wide surface crossings and spacious footways ■ Enhancement of linkage between Shepherds Bush Tube Station and Holland Park Avenue as legible and attractive route for pedestrian
A3.9	Kensington Olympia	■ Character and gateway improvement ■ Improve pedestrian environment and public realm

A3

CENTRAL NODES

SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

CODE	CENTRAL NODES	OBJECTIVES
A3.9	Kensington Olympia 	■ Substantial potential for redevelopment and intensification of uses especial southeast of the railway crossing ■ Create better linkage including disabled access across railway at place of current station bridge ■ Better link between station and bus corridor along Hammersmith Road/ Kensington High Street ■ Address as cross-border initiative
A3.10	Gloucester Road 	■ Character and gateway improvement ■ Improve pedestrian environment and public realm ■ Limited potential for redevelopment and intensification of uses ■ Create legible route to Earls Court Station
A3.11	West Brompton 	■ Character and gateway improvement ■ Improve pedestrian environment and public realm along Old Brompton RoadEnhancement of transport interchange ■ Improve linkage between Station and Chelsea Football Ground and Earls Court Station – potentially across site of exhibition centre ■ Limited potential for development and intensification of uses ■ Address as cross-border initiative

LOWER ORDER NODE

CODE	CENTRAL NODES	OBJECTIVES
A3.12	Latimer Road 	■ Enhance nodal function of Latimer Road Tube Station ■ Significant potential for development and intensification of uses ■ Enhance mix of uses, provide especially with neighbourhood retail and food and drink uses ■ Attract higher value uses to vaults below Hammersmith and City line ■ Improve station and transport interchange ■ Character and gateway improvement ■ Explore potential for creation of public space outside station ■ Improve pedestrian environment and public realm ■ Create new link with White City ■ Create pedestrian way alongside the viaduct and improve linkages with Ladbroke Grove
A3.13	Holland Park 	■ Character and gateway improvement ■ Potential improvement of pedestrian environment and public realm ■ Limited potential for redevelopment and intensification of uses ■ Create legible route to Latimer Road Station

A3

CENTRAL NODES

SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

CODE	CENTRAL NODES	OBJECTIVES
A3.14	Ladbroke Grove North bus node 	■ Create attractive bus interchange ■ Significant potential for development and intensification of uses ■ Create an urban setting with sufficient enclosure and active frontages ■ Create a mix of uses, provide especially with neighbourhood retail and food and drink uses ■ Create legible, attractive and safe walking routes into Kensal Town, the Gasholder opportunity site and along Ladbroke Grove
A3.15	Kings Road / Beaufort Street bus node	■ Create attractive bus interchange ■ Enhance pedestrian environment ■ Explore potential for creation of new public space as focal place at this end of Kings Road

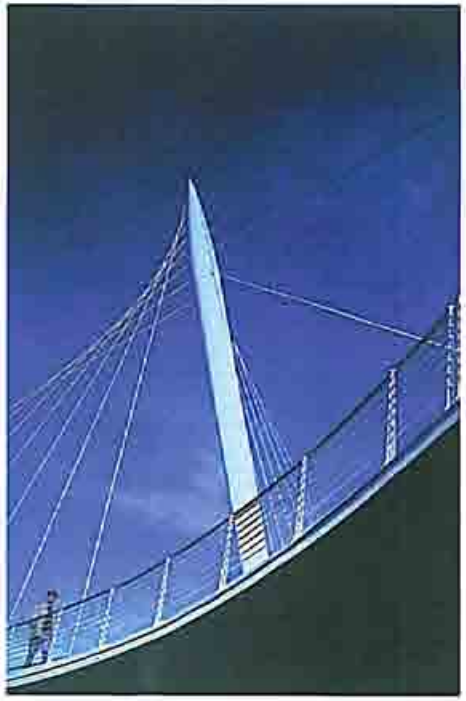
OTHER IMPORTANT NODES IN NEIGHBOURING BOROUGHS INCLUDE

- Shepherds Bush / White City
- Fulham Broadway
- Westbourne Park
- Paddington
- Victoria

B1

BARRIERS AND EDGES

AIM: Enhance and express barriers, create attractive gateways and reduce severance



MANCHESTER CALATRAVA BRIDGE

PUBLIC ART AT RAILWAY VIADUCT (LOCATION UNKNOWN)

MILE END PARK

CORK "CITY GATE" PROJECT

B1

BARRIERS AND EDGES

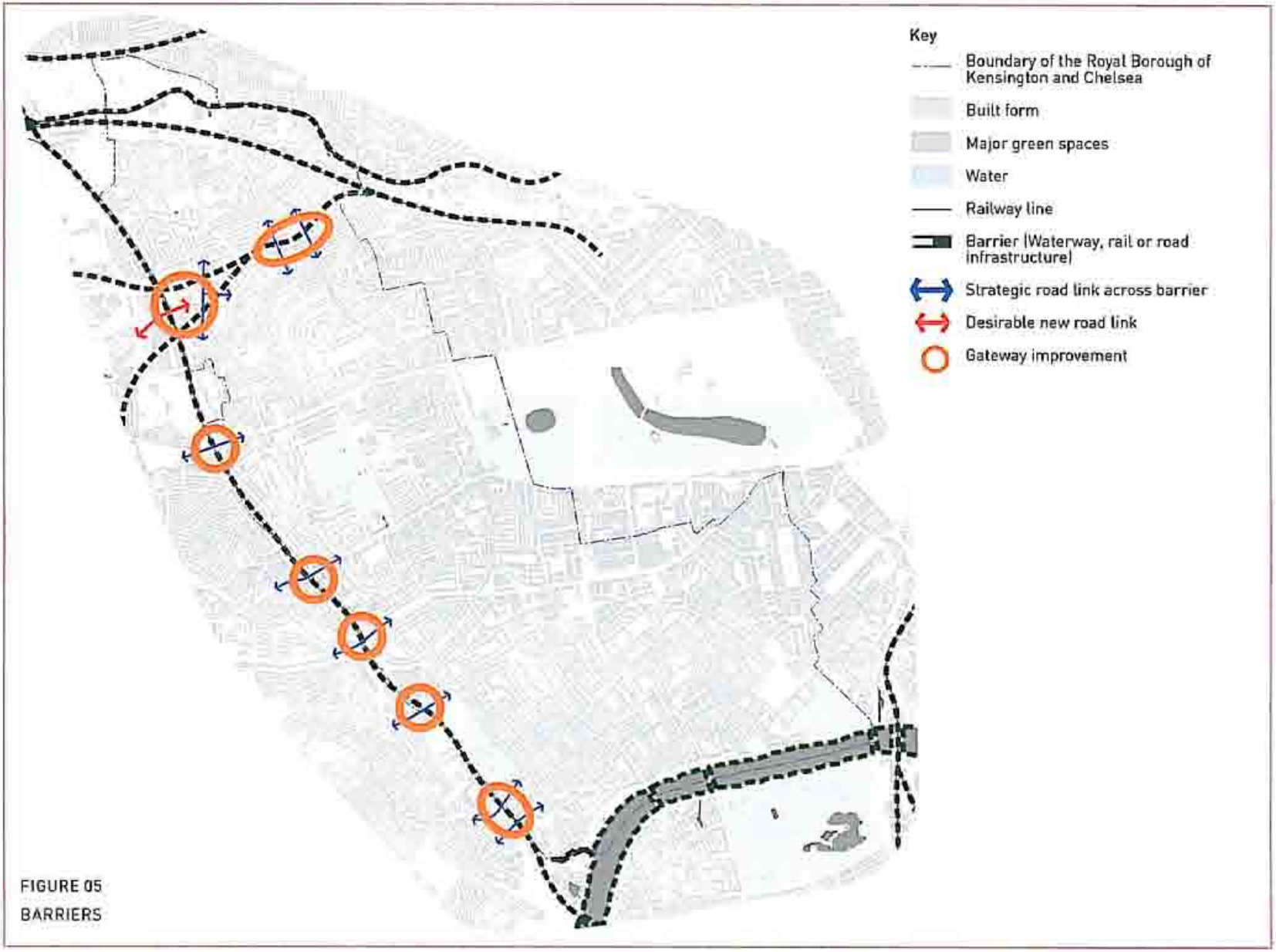


FIGURE 05
BARRIERS

CONTEXT

B1

BARRIERS AND EDGES

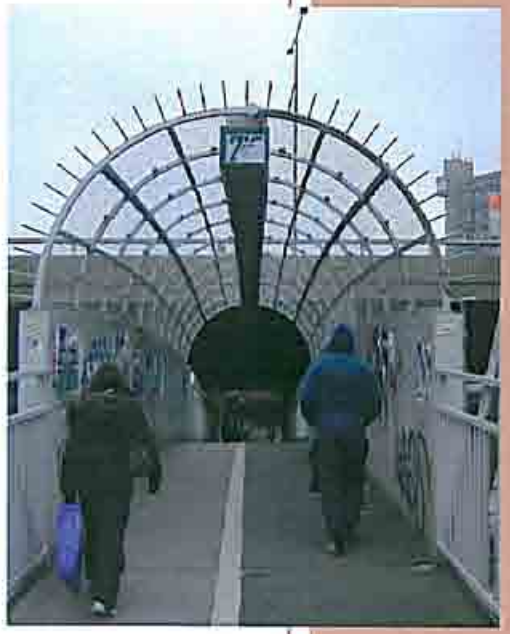
Transport infrastructure, waterways or topographical features can be physical barriers, but are important elements that determine the structure and development pattern of urban areas. They constrain and concentrate development and define the edge and size of urban quarters. While the barrier breaks the urban fabric, it creates an element of contrast and interest and may have its own special character. Barriers are important for legibility as they become references that assist orientation. People tend to use them to describe the location or relation of places, such as "behind the railway" or "at the edge of the river" etc.

Ways across barriers such as bridges, tunnels or cuts are important linkages between neighbouring quarters. They form the interface between quarters and can become important gateways which, through their design and form, celebrate the leaving of one place and arrival into another. The frequency of links across the barrier determines the degree of connection between adjacent areas. Less connected areas usually developed as fringe areas; they tend to have overall lower activity levels and below average intensity of land uses.

Areas alongside transport infrastructure are often poorly regarded. They may suffer from higher levels of noise and air pollution, a poor quality and inhospitable environment with poor definition of the street space and lack of overlooking. Historically, they were the locations for lower value developments and industrial premises. Nowadays, with higher urban development pressures, these areas have become attractive for redevelopment.

The Borough contains a number of major barriers, some of which mark the boundaries with neighbouring boroughs. These include the West London line to the west, the Grand Union Canal Paddington branch to the north and the River Thames to the south. Other barriers as the Westway, the Hammersmith and City Line and the Great Western Railway Line intersect the northern part of the Borough.

The web of barriers in the north creates a number of segregated small urban quarters lacking connectivity. Containing a number of urban problems, all of these areas are identified as opportunities areas (A2).



URBAN DESIGN GUIDANCE

ASPECT	URBAN DESIGN ASPIRATIONS	GUIDANCE
CHARACTER	Enhance the special character of the barrier and immediate environment by expressing its qualities and creating interest	■ The visual appearance of the barrier should be enhanced through, for example, cleaning and greening. ■ Higher value uses should be encouraged to make beneficial use of associated spaces such as vaults to create interest and attract activity
GATEWAYS	Create attractive and legible gateways	■ The bridging structures can be expressed, for example through form, appearance, special lighting or public art, to emphasise the crossing and create an interesting experience ■ Pleasant crossing facilities should be provided for pedestrian and cyclists. These should have sufficient space and should be protected from the adverse impacts of traffic, and exhibit attractive public realm and appropriate lighting ■ Developments at bridgeheads should form a welcoming entrance for the urban quarter with active frontages enclosing the street space and an appropriate architectural treatment in response to the special location. ■ Major entrance routes into the Borough could be enhanced by 'District Landmarks' (see also High Building Strategy).
LINKS ACROSS	Improve connectivity of areas that suffer from segregation	■ The creation of new linkages across barriers or the improvement of existing linkages should be explored in places indicated in Figure XX

URBAN DESIGN GUIDANCE

ASPECT	URBAN DESIGN ASPIRATIONS	GUIDANCE
ADJACENT RE-DEVELOPMENT AND INTENSIFICATION	Maintain and increase density of areas along the barriers and around bridge nodes and improve environment	■ The potential for intensification and greater mix of development along side the barrier should be explored ■ Developments should respond to the barrier with a clear definition of spaces and frontages and a clear setting ■ Ambiguous and leftover spaces should be avoided and a well-maintained, quality, public realm should be provided ■ The adverse environmental impacts of the barrier on neighbouring development, arising from noise, air and light pollution, should be mitigated through sound barriers, and through the positioning of adjacent development. ■ Adjacent areas should be integrated and addressed through cross border initiatives

SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

The following list identifies the barriers in RBKC and gives respective urban design recommendation.

CODE	BARRIER	OBJECTIVES
B1.1	West London Line Corridor	■ Gateway improvement to all existing bridge crossings, with potential for intensification of uses ■ Enhance character and perception of this barrier ■ Create new link between Latimer Road and White City ■ Cross border initiatives

B1

BARRIERS AND EDGES

SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

CODE	BARRIER	OBJECTIVES
B1.2	Westway/ Hammersmith and City Line Corridor	■ Gateway improvements to all existing crossings ■ Enhance character and perception of the corridor ■ Encourage intensification and development along the corridor that enhances the environment and makes beneficial use of existing vaults. ■ Create a continuous route below and along the corridor for pedestrians and cyclists, connecting Westbourne Park Station with Latimer Road. ■ Improve pedestrian/ cycle link across the barrier between Wornington Road and St. Lukes Road
B1.3	Great Western Railway	■ Gateway improvement at Golborne Street and Ladbroke Grove ■ Explore creation of pedestrian/ cycle links from Bosworth Road across to Wornington Road and from the gasholder site to North Kensington
B1.4	Grand Union Canal	■ Gateway improvement at Ladbroke Grove and Great Western Road. ■ Explore creation of pedestrian/ cycle link that continues Golborne Road across to Harrow Road, and links the gasholder site towards the north navigating Kensal Green Cemetery through to Harrow Road. ■ Further guidance see following section on waterfronts
B1.5	River Thames	■ See guidance on Waterfronts