

Tall Buildings

Hackney Tall Buildings Strategy

Phase 4 Report

TALL BUILDINGS DESIGN GUIDANCE AND APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Issue C - Final

February 2005

London Borough of Hackney

Strategy

“Love them or hate them,
one thing we cannot do
is ignore them.”

(Abel, 2003, p13)

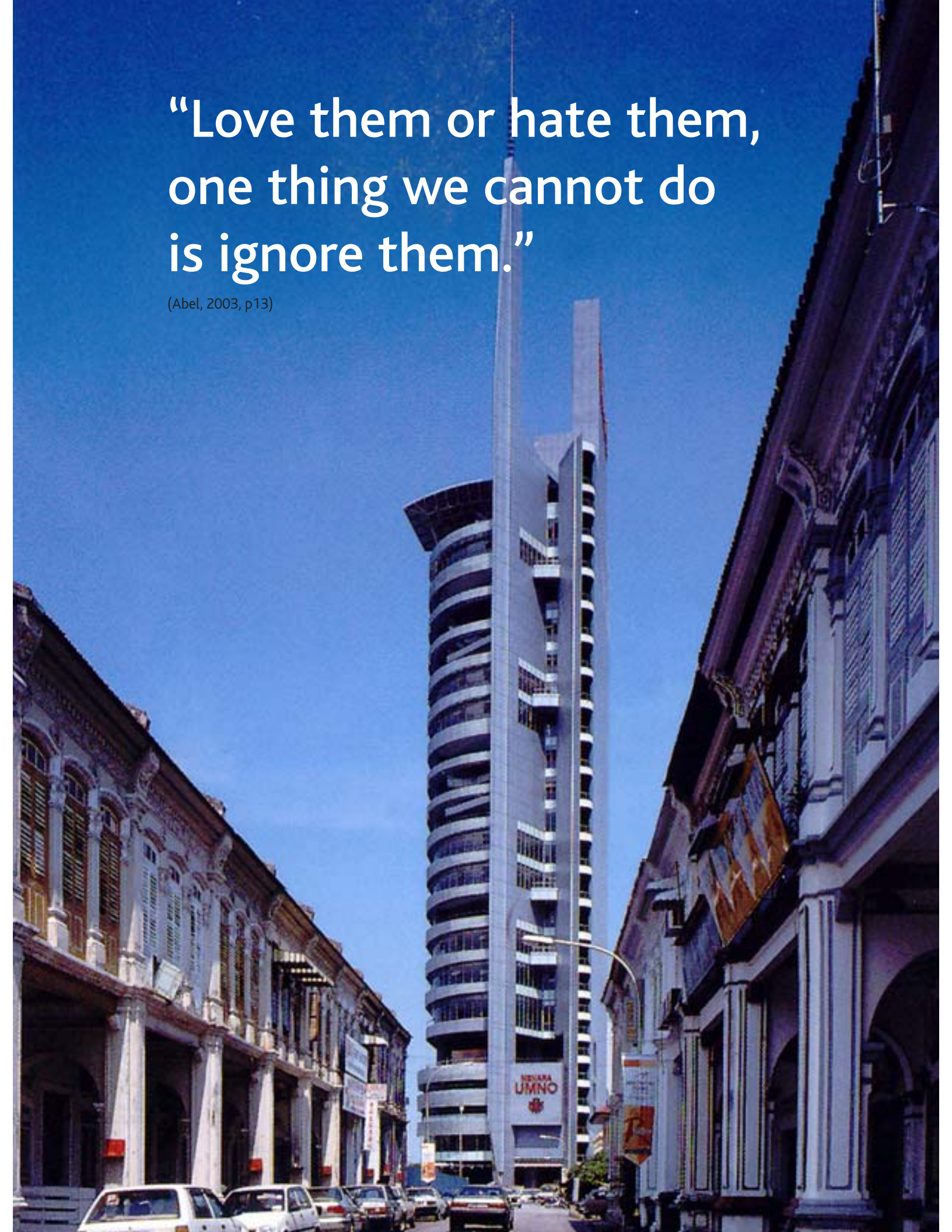


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The background image shows a city street scene. In the foreground, there's a tram lane with a red tram and a white car. To the left, there's an outdoor cafe area with tables and chairs. In the background, there are several buildings, including one with a prominent blue dome and another with a clock tower. The overall scene is a typical urban environment.

How Tall is Tall?

The definition of tall buildings in Hackney is as follows;

“Buildings or structures that are significantly taller than surrounding development”

This definition allows for the fact that areas of different character within the borough have different sensitivities and that a five storey building in a two-storey context is equally as prominent as a much taller building in a more built up context.

Is a Building ‘Significantly Taller’?

The definition is a key element of the strategy as it will be the trigger for the strategy plan set out in the phase 3 report and the tall buildings guidance contained within this report.

To determine if a building is significantly taller applicants are required to provide an assessment of the mean height of development for 100 metres in each directions of the proposed footprint and set this against the height of the proposal. Proposals that are 20% taller than the mean height of their context are ‘significantly taller’. However, it should be noted that over and above any calculations or definitions, LBH will make the final decision as to whether a building is considered to be ‘significantly taller’.

Tall Buildings Categories

In refinement of the definition, and to aid in broadly articulating the wide variety of scales associated with tall buildings, a number of sub-categories have been identified:

Mid-Rise Buildings

Mid-Rise buildings are those that are considered to be tall in the context of relatively low-rise development but that in absolute terms are in the region of 18-29 metres (6-9 storeys).

Tall Buildings

Tall buildings are those buildings, which are significantly taller than the mean height of surrounding development. These buildings are anticipated to be set within a highly urban context and be in the approximate range of 30-45 metres (10 - 15 storeys).

Very Tall Buildings

Very tall buildings are those that are excessively taller than the surrounding built form. These buildings would be from 46 metres upwards (16 storeys +)

Introduction

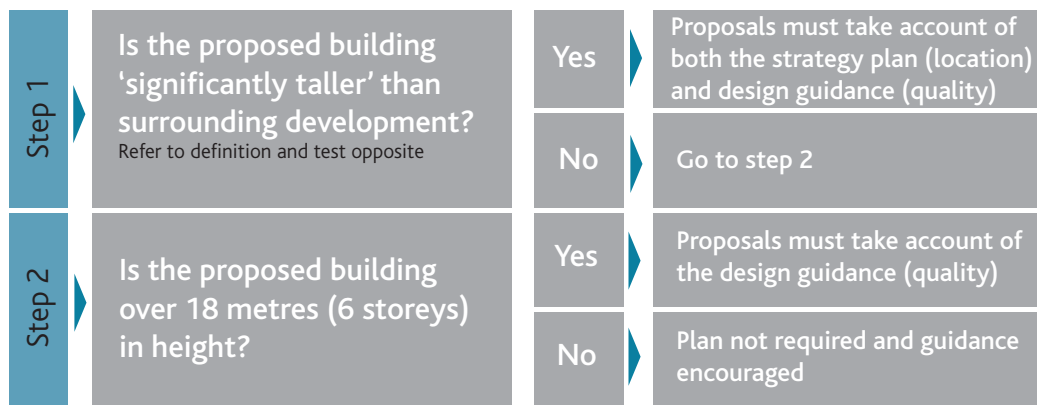
This document sets out detailed design guidance and application checklists for tall building proposals in the London Borough of Hackney (LBH). The guidance acts in support of the tall buildings strategy plan and identifies a process to be used by the Borough to ensure that tall buildings are not only sited in appropriate locations but are of a high architectural and urban design quality.

Aims of Guidance

The aim of the guidance is to provide a design standard to assist both local authority planners and applicants to achieve tall buildings of quality. In addition, the guidance sets out a clear process with which to assess tall building applications, helping to ensure consistency of approach and improving the chances of approval being granted for buildings in the right locations and of sufficient design quality.

Triggering the Tall Buildings Guidance and Strategy Plan

The combination of the tall buildings 'definition' (opposite), the 'strategy plan' (refer phase 3 report), 'design guidance', and 'application checklist' have been developed to work together in the following way:



In the context of Hackney, buildings below 18 metres in height (approximately 6 storeys) are not considered tall and therefore will not trigger the requirements of the design guidance. Such proposals would be subject to the usual planning approvals process and would be encouraged to achieve similar design standards to those set out within the following pages. Proposals 18 metres and over (approximately 6 storeys) trigger the tall buildings design guidance.

Format of Guidance

The guidance has been divided into a number of sections that articulate a variety of design considerations requiring a response from applicants.

1. Design Quality
2. Visual Impact
3. Sustainability and Environment
4. Conservation Areas
5. Transport Accessibility
6. Public Infrastructure and Facilities
7. Open Space
8. Access
9. Land Use and Density
10. Response and Urban Setting
11. Materials and Maintenance

Under each of the above headings a brief description of the issue and is set out and further illustrated through appropriate images and diagrams. Each code is supported by a 'application checklist', which applicants are required to consider when preparing tall building proposals for planning application.

Format of Response

Applications that are considered by the local authority to be 'tall', or that are over 18 metres (6 storeys) in height, are required to submit a formal response to the tall buildings guidance. In broad terms applicants are required to submit a written and illustrated 'local area analysis' which sets out the following information:

- » An assessment of the mean height (in metres) of all surrounding development within a 100m radius from the proposed footprint.
- » Diagrams illustrating the relationship of the proposed site to one of the tall buildings zones.
- » A design statement should respond to the opportunities and constraints of the site that makes it suitable for tall buildings.
- » Evidence of exploration of the viability and appropriateness of alternative (not tall) development forms.
- » A detailed response to all of the questions and statements set out in the 'application checklists'.
- » An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) if required.
- » Any additional studies required under the new planning act such as sustainability appraisals and environmental impact assessments.

Policy Recommendations

The final section of this report sets out a number of tall building policy recommendations that are aimed at informing the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF)

Status of Guidance

This guidance is currently in draft format with the ultimate intention of it becoming the basis of a Supplementary Planning Document (SDP).

A tall building with a glowing grid facade at night. The building's facade is composed of a dense grid of small, illuminated square panels, creating a shimmering effect. The building is set against a dark night sky. To the right, another building with large windows is visible, showing interior lights and some furniture. In the foreground, a street with a crosswalk and a street lamp is visible. The overall scene is a nighttime urban setting.

11 Codes: Better Tall Buildings For Hackney

1

Design Quality

New tall buildings within Hackney must be of the highest design quality. Tall Buildings require excellence in design to ensure that they make a positive addition to the skyline, maximise their ability to attract investment, and contribute to the creation of more attractive and sustainable places.

Investment in good design is of great significance in determining the practical success of the scheme and should aim to produce buildings which are permeable to the public, responsive to local environmental conditions and that embrace the principles of sustainability. Tall buildings should strive to strongly promote the progressive, diverse and culturally rich image of Hackney, through their contribution as memorable aspects of the urban experience. Above all, tall buildings should be beautiful.

To assist in achieving the objective of design quality, applicants are encouraged to undertake pre-application discussions with the planning authority. In addition, depending on the scale and potential impacts of the proposal, external review bodies such as the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) may be asked to become involved in the review of certain schemes.

The following pages set out two tall building case studies that exhibit design quality and meet a number of the objectives set out in the following guidelines.

Figure 1a: The extensive use of glazing and cantilevered floor plates gives this building an ethereal quality.

Figure 1b: Innovative lighting can provide visual richness and delight to tall buildings, making them a memorable part of the urban experience.

Figure 1c: High quality materials and striking forms can make tall buildings a valued part of the local townscape.

Application Checklist

- » Provide an in-depth design statement which clearly outlines the rationale, architectural intent and design quality of the proposal.
- » Illustrate or describe in detail how the proposal achieves a safe, positive and attractive addition to the area, and if relevant, the borough and wider city.
- » To increase the probability of approval being granted the applicant is encouraged to enter into pre-application discussion with local authority. In addition, depending on the scale and impact of the proposal, LBH may insist that the applicant should consult with external review organisations such as CABE and English Heritage.
- » All tall building applications over 30 metres need to be referred to the GLA.



Aurora Place, Sydney

The mixed-use Aurora Place development in Sydney, completed at the beginning of the new millennium is an exemplar of high quality design in tall buildings. This project illustrates what may be possible for some of Hackney's future tall buildings. Renzo Piano has said of the building "The challenge is to blend functionality and sociality, to build a tower that catches the breeze and that holds a dialogue with the nearby park and the Opera House." (Source http://www.rpwf.org/frame_works.htm)

Located on axis with the Sydney Opera House and fronting the Royal Botanic Gardens the building occupies a site of great visual prominence and heritage importance and was therefore required to undergo intense study of its visual impact on the surrounding urban context. Consisting of two towers, a 44 storey office tower and a 17 storey residential tower facing the gardens, with retail space at ground level and linked by a high quality covered public space. The mix of uses creates a dynamic streetscape throughout the day and integrates the development into the surrounding context of the city centre.

The form, massing and scale of the towers relate to surrounding development with the front apartment tower being of a consistent height with its' neighbours as was required by the heritage restrictions of the area, whilst the sail like façade of the office tower enters into respectful dialogue with the Opera House . The use of high quality materials including terracotta and glass, a well detailed public open space, and a human scale to the ground floors of the building creates a welcoming environment for all users.

The building utilises recent technology advances in natural ventilation and climate control with an openable glazed façade, large uninterrupted flexible floor plates and day lighting to all areas of the building. Built for a private commercial developer the project has proved to be very popular and is seen by most as a welcome addition to the city's skyline.

Figure A1: The wing like form of the main commercial tower provides an iconic business address, and combined with the lower residential tower, provides a mix of uses that ensures the public realm is active at all times of the day.

Figure A2: High quality internal spaces overlook the Royal Botanic Gardens, maximising localised opportunities of the site.

Figure A3: Beautiful internal spaces meld seamlessly with the public realm and set a quality benchmark for the area.



No.1 Deansgate, Manchester

To illustrate some of the principles set out in this guidance, No.1 Deansgate has been used as a case study which has achieved a high quality of design. This development should be regarded as a UK exemplar for tall buildings and provides a good benchmark for new tall buildings in Hackney.

No.1 Deansgate in Manchester forms part of the overall 'Shambles' redevelopment, a central element of the Manchester City centre rebuilding strategy after the IRA bomb attack on 15th June 1986. Along with the world largest Marks & Spencer's Superstore, a new Harvey Nichols, the Triangle shopping centre and Urbis, No.1 Deansgate has helped the centre of Manchester to rebuild its urban identity as a forward looking and urbane city.

The mixed used scheme comprises two levels of retail at podium level, three levels of parking and 14 levels of residential. The tower contains 86 apartments across the 14 storeys including duplex and triplex penthouses with terraces allowing views across the City. Each apartment has access to a semi external space formed between the inner and outer skin of the glazed cladding. The translucence of the building reduces its visual impact upon the skyline. Internal terraces within the building allow vistas over Manchester towards the Peak District and the West Coast.

The superstructure is supported on raking steel legs which support a series of trusses that form the transfer structure at the first floor level. This allows the creation of a spectacular 8m high entrance to the apartments at podium level. No. 1 Deansgate is both the UK's tallest all steel residential building and the first building in Manchester to house a £2 million property, the 16th and 17th floors penthouses.



Figure B1: The striking architectural form of the building has helped to raise the profile of Manchester as a place to live, work, and invest.

Figure B2: Positioned on the corner, the building maximises the opportunity to become a gateway site for the inner city by ramping up to meet the intersection.

Figure B3: The unusual roof form makes an attractive contribution to the city's skyline.

Figure B4: Enclosed balconies provide some private 'external' space for residents of the building.



Figure 2a-2d: Visual impact and townscape sequence.

This series of photographs of the Stirling Prize winning 'Gherkin' by Foster & Partners illustrates the wide reaching impacts that tall buildings can have on their settings and is indicative of the types of views that might need to be generated by applicants in support of planning applications. (Source: Gillespies)

Visual Impact

Issues of visual impact and visual intrusion are the most frequent reason for objections to tall building proposals in the UK. As a result, applicants will be required to set out a clear case as to how their proposal maximises its positive visual aspects, such as vista termination and way finding, and mitigates its negative visual impacts, such as compromising the intimate scale of intact conservation areas.

Views

Retaining and enhancing key strategic views through the sensitive siting of tall buildings is a key objective. Tall buildings should compliment, not compromise, strategic views and important vistas in the Borough and respect significant local views.

Landform

Wherever possible buildings should align to follow slope contours to work with the topographical grain of the landscape. Siting tall buildings on a ridgeline or on top of a hill can often exaggerate the scale of the building so that it appears significantly larger than it actually is. Constructing tall buildings on lower land can result in buildings that are more easily integrated into their settings and which are less likely to block views.

Ensuring Positive Visual Impacts

Appropriately sited, an attractive and well-designed tall building can make a strong and positive contribution to the skyline of the city, attracting investment, assisting in way finding, and acting as a catalyst for regeneration.

Extension to existing structures/ buildings

Like applications for new tall buildings, proposals to add to floors to existing buildings will need to take account of the guidance set out with in this document.

Application Checklist

- » Demonstrate how the proposal sits within the existing townscape and landform: The applicant must provide 360 degree evaluations of the potential visual impact of the proposal on the urban context. This may be illustrated through visually verified montages and contextual models that analyse impacts on:
 - The built and natural environment
 - key strategic views, approaches and points of arrival
 - Conservation settings and listed buildings
 - Local views
- » In addition, the applicant is required to provide a detailed description of the positive contribution that the proposal would make to the visual quality of the area.
- » Describe the extent to which the proposal maximises local opportunities to create a cluster of tall buildings.

3

Sustainability & Environment

A heightened public awareness of environmental issues, advancements in construction technology and a raised awareness of design in general have paved the way for sustainability to be recognised as a crucial element in the future planning and development of our cities.

The principles of sustainability should form the basis of all new tall buildings in the Borough.

Sustainability

Tall building sustainability guidance works across two levels. First at a strategic level, which recognises that tall buildings have a role to play in the economic, environmental and social sustainability of their immediate area. The second level is the more detailed building specific guidance which relates to building performance, energy consumption, water management and materials selection.

Assessment Methods

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how proposals will achieve excellent ratings in the BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) EcoHomes, or a similar approved environmental rating scheme that demonstrates planning for, and commitment to, the following areas:

- Land use: The use of previously developed sites;
- Ecology: Ecological value conservation and enhancement of the site
- Energy: Consumption, efficiency, generation and CO2 issues;
- Transport: Transport-related CO2 and location-related factors;
- Materials: Environmental implications including life-cycle impacts;
- Water: Consumption and water efficiency;
- Health & well-being: issues affecting health & well-being;
- Pollution: Air and water pollution, and waste generation issues;
- Management: Overall management and procedural issues
- Climatic Considerations: Overshadowing, winds, heat islands etc.



Application Checklist

- » Describe how the proposal contributes to social, environmental and economic vitality of its local area.
- » Provide a statement outlining how the proposal will achieve best practice in sustainability. Particular consideration should be given to the maximisation of previously developed land, energy management, resource conservation, materials specification, waste management, long term adaptability of the building for other uses and climatic considerations
- » Enclose an environmental / sustainability assessment of the proposal in line with a recognised assessment method such as BREEAM.



Figure 3a: Menara Mesiniaga by Hamzah & Yeang demonstrates the principles of bio-climatic design including a naturally ventilated core, adjustable sun shades and triple height sky courts.

Figure 3b: Alternative energy production, such as wind turbines, can be incorporated into the design of new tall buildings and greatly assist in reducing the developments environmental impacts.

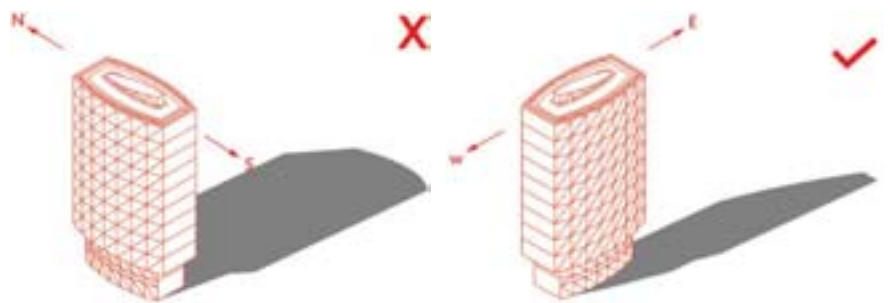
Figure 3c: A number of concept towers, such as SkyZed by Bill Dunster, seek to integrate energy production and management into the very fabric of the building.

Figure 3d: Internal courtyards can have a major positive effect on the micro climate associated with new development as well as play a strong role in managing urban storm water.

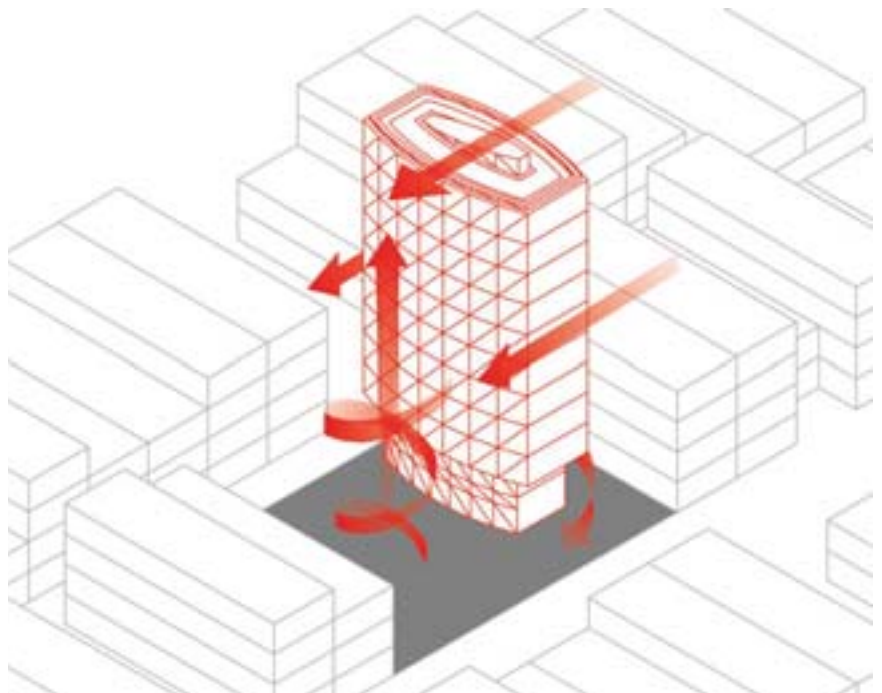
Figure 3e: Tall apartment building in Paris that has been retrofitted with hundreds of potted plants to provide shade and privacy to common balconies as well as improve local biodiversity and better manage on site drainage issues.

Climatic Impacts

Tall buildings over a certain height can adversely effect the environmental quality of surrounding areas through the diversion of high speed winds to ground level and through the overshadowing of adjacent development and public spaces. The impact of these and other issues can be mitigated through good design and sensitive siting. For example, the use of architectural devices such as screens, terraces and awnings and facade set backs can minimise the effects of high speed wind at the bases of tall buildings. Similarly the appropriate orientation of the building's mass can significantly reduce the impacts of overshadowing on the surrounding area. The access to natural light as well as privacy issues and impacts on overland flow paths and general drainage issues should also be considered.



3f The orientation of the buildings mass can be used to mitigate the effects of overshadowing on adjacent areas of development.



3f The careful siting and design of tall buildings can reduce the impacts of high level winds at ground level.

4

Conservation

There is a presumption against 'tall' buildings either within, or immediately adjacent to, any of Hackney's conservation areas on the basis that tall buildings would visually impinge on the setting of, or views to, listed buildings and conservation areas.

Proposals for tall buildings within conservation areas, or on adjacent sites that are seen to have an impact on conservation areas, will need to set out an exceptional design and regeneration for why the application should be considered.

Preserving Backdrops and Intact Conservation Settings

The presumption against tall buildings particularly applies to the backdrops of groups of historic buildings or the visual envelope surrounding single iconic buildings such as churches. All listed buildings need to have "breathing space" provided to them and this must be respected by all new development.

A Presumption Against Tall, Not Contemporary

Whilst tall buildings are seen to be potentially damaging to the experience of intact conservation areas and listed buildings, proposals of a more acceptable scale are encouraged to be of a highly contemporary nature.

Figure 4a: Tall buildings, if well designed and sited in appropriate locations can make a positive contribution to conservation areas. However, only in exceptional design and regeneration cases will taller development be considered either within or adjacent to conservation areas.

Figure 4b: Tall buildings should be designed to respect adjacent listed buildings and if deemed to be appropriate should aim to step down and meet surrounding buildings. (Refer also case study B)

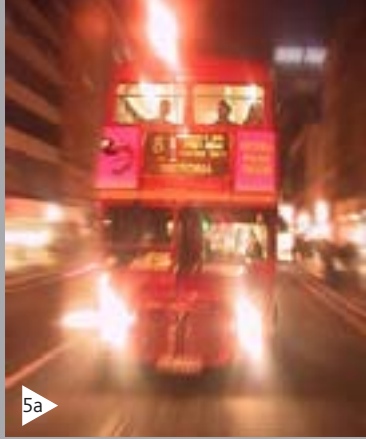
Figure 4c, 4d: Local landmarks and key public buildings in Hackney should be respected by tall buildings so that their roof line remains the dominant aspect of local views.



Application Checklist

- » Tall building proposals in Hackney will only be considered for planning approval if they can demonstrate that they contribute to the preservation and enhancement of conservation settings. Submit a statement evaluating how the proposal achieves this goal.

Transport Accessibility



5a



5b



5c



5d

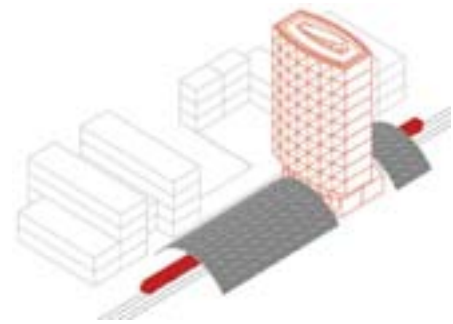
Transport infrastructure, and its ability to absorb the impacts related to increases in urban density brought about by tall buildings, is a key aspect in assessing the appropriateness of a proposal. The Borough is currently characterised by moderate transport accessibility but will be the focus of significant infrastructure investment in the coming years with the realisation of the east London line, cross rail, and investment in bus services.

In addition to any London wide or borough specific public transport initiatives, the guidance aims to reduce reliance on private vehicles by ensuring tall buildings are located in proximity to existing public transport infrastructure, minimising residential parking standards, and encouraging alternative modes such as walking and cycling. In line with best practice, and in the interests of achieving an efficient urban form, intensification of development should occur in areas that are within walking distance of rail stations and major bus routes. Concentrating tall development in proximity to existing transport interchanges contributes to a more lively place, reinforces the role and prominence of existing centres, and promotes more sustainable transport choices.

Applications will be required to demonstrate their proximity to existing public transport infrastructure as well as set out a travel plan that clearly describes the measures that will be implemented to reduce car use by occupants of the building.

Figures 5a, 5b, 5c: Public transport, such as buses, the underground, and overland trains have an important role to play in supporting increases in density and activity associated with tall buildings.

Figure 5d: Building specific travel plans should also aim to encourage residents and workers to walk rather than use the private car for short local journeys.



5d Tall buildings over, or adjacent to, train and underground stations can help residents and businesses to make more sustainable transport choices as well as assist in local wayfinding by acting as a landmark.

Application Checklist

- » Has the proposed tall building been sited within walking distance to a variety of existing transport infrastructure such as rail stations, bus routes, sustainable transport corridors or major roads?
- » The applicant should provide a travel plan demonstrating innovative and sustainable approaches to transport issues. How does the proposal contribute to reduced private vehicle use and improved public transport?
- » The applicant should undertake a full transport impact assessment.
- » Applicant should demonstrate the effect the development might have on surrounding traffic flows referencing vehicular access points to the development.

6

Public Infrastructure

The quality of, and access to, social infrastructure such as schools, health care, childcare, playgrounds, and recreational facilities is a key factor in achieving a high quality of life for residents of the borough.

All new tall building proposals must assess the current capacity of local public / social infrastructure and then identify what additional amenities and services are needed to support a new tall building in the local area. Proposals should outline the potential to incorporate some facilities within the building or the level of contribution that will be made to public infrastructure and facilities in the local area.



Figures 6a-e: The quality and provision of schools (6a), Public transport infrastructure (6b), local recreational facilities (6c), health care (6d), and parks (6e) are all key aspects of ensuring that current and future residents of Hackney attain a high quality of life

Application Checklist

- » Provide an assessment of the current capacity of location, local public infrastructure and facilities and identify what additional infrastructure and facilities are required as a result of the proposed development.
- » Can some of the identified infrastructure and facilities be incorporated within the proposal? Or are contributions to off-site infrastructure required?



Figure 7a, 7b: Private spaces such as balconies and podiums (7a) and roof terraces (7b) can provide a valuable resource for residents and occupiers of tall buildings.

Figure 7c: The public spaces surrounding taller development should strive to be of the highest quality and to maximise the capacity of the new uses to achieve urban vitality.

Open Space

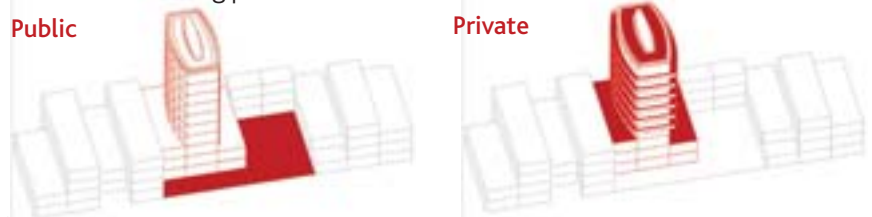
Tall buildings should be designed in such a way as to ensure safe, attractive and comfortable spaces, both outside and inside of the building. In particular, the following qualities will be sought:

The Public Realm

The spaces surrounding tall buildings should have their edges well defined by development and be enlivened by active uses and transparent facades on the ground floors. Public open space need to be functional, well lit and safe. Proposals should seek to create well-oriented and lively spaces that positively contribute, day and night, to the wider public realm.

Spaces Inside the Building

A number of international examples exist of tall buildings that successfully integrate a variety of public and private spaces within the envelope of the building. New tall buildings are encouraged to explore such possibilities which might include roof terraces, whole floors dedicated to sporting or green space use, large private balconies or viewing platforms.



7d An appropriate balance and quantum of public and private space will be sought within all new tall buildings proposals.

Planning Requirements and Contributions

The Hackney LDF outlines requirements for the provision of open space within new developments. To some extent this might be accommodated through internal solutions like roof terraces and gardens, internal courtyards, atria, and balconies. Such private spaces give occupants vital breathing space and strongly contributes to the quality of life of residents and occupiers. However, these elements alone are unlikely to be enough to ensure that all residents and workers have access to sufficient areas of open space. As a result tall buildings will also be required to proportionately contribute to the enhancement of the public realm and parks in the vicinity.

Application Checklist

- » How does the proposal meet or exceed the LDF requirement for the provision of public and private open space?
- » Does the proposed development integrate sustainable urban drainage solutions into the design of public and private spaces?
- » Applications should incorporate internal private, and some public, open space. This can be achieved through internal courtyards, indoor gardens, atria, viewing platforms, health and fitness facilities and playgrounds.
- » How has the scheme been designed to create high quality public spaces? Particular consideration should be given to high design quality, climatic comfort, solar access, adjacent uses, quality of materials.
- » State arrangements for long term maintenance and management of open space.

Access

Tall buildings should include a variety of publicly accessible functions in order to maximise their benefit to surrounding communities and aid in their integration to the local area. In particular, high quality public areas, restaurants, and community / educational facilities could be included within schemes to encourage access to the building.

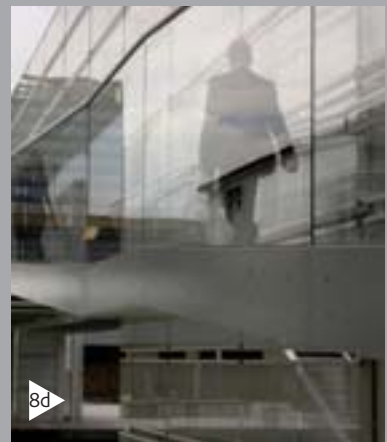
Accessibility Standards

To meet highest standards of public accessibility new tall buildings in Hackney must comply with current building codes and must also be fully compliant with all aspects of disability discrimination legislation. New development should strive to be accessible to all people through the provision of ramps, lifts, gentle rising steps with landings, clear signage, appropriate lighting schemes, non slip surfaces, contrasting colour & texture schemes, automatic opening doors, appropriately placed seating and clear & legible internal layouts.

Figure 8a: Access to the roof top of tall buildings is one way of encouraging access to the building.

Figure 8b: Including restaurants or public uses within the building envelope can help to integrate new tall buildings into the surrounding community.

Figure 8c and 8d: Accessibility standards should be met and preferably exceeded though the use of high quality materials and detailing.



Application Checklist

- » In what way does the building encourage public access?
- » The applicant must demonstrate that the proposal meets or exceeds accessibility requirements and ensure that the building provides equal access for all.



9a



9b

Land Use and Density

Issues of land use and density are important in assessing how appropriate the function and intensity of a proposed tall building is to its context.

Uses

Appropriate land uses are important in integrating new tall buildings into their urban settings. A vertical mix of uses within a tall building can help to achieve greater vitality in the public realm and encourage activity throughout the day. The LBH will strongly support and encourage mixed use development and will not accept applications that propose single use towers, which deny use diversity and discourage social inclusion.

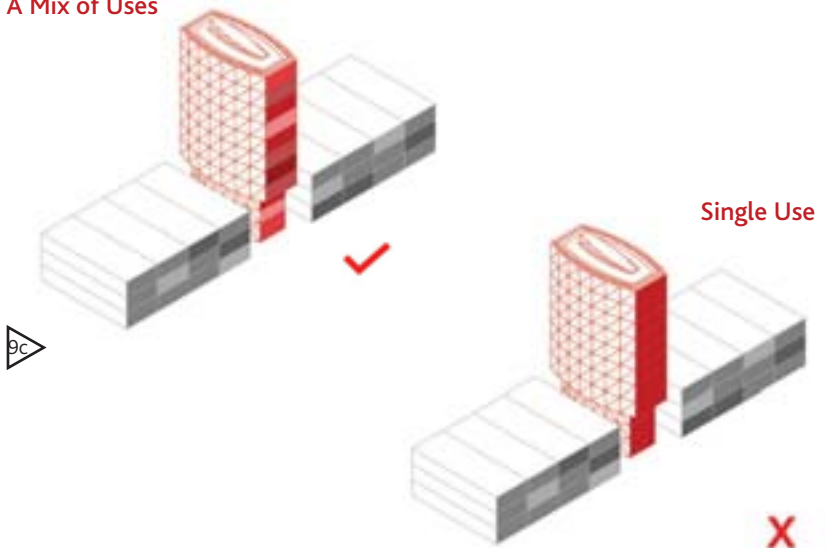
Affordable Housing

The percentage of affordable housing required to be incorporated into proposals is set out in the Mayor's London Plan and LBH Local Development Framework. Affordable housing should be integrated into the scheme rather than provided for 'off site'.

Density

The benefits of seeking higher densities, through both tall buildings and more compact forms of development, are well recognised. Higher densities can offer many economic, social, transport and environmental benefits to the wider community by creating safer, more vital, diverse and urbane environments. Proposals will be required to meet or exceed current government guidance on development densities but not at the expense of overall design quality and access to functional and well designed public and private open space.

A Mix of Uses



9c

Figure 9a: Active ground floor uses to tall buildings can be important in cultivating local street life.

Figure 9b: Tall buildings are one of many solutions to achieving increased urban densities and should be located in areas that are able to support the resultant increase in population and activity.

Figure 9c: New tall buildings in Hackney should include a variety of uses that will ensure an appropriate level of activity throughout the day, improve natural surveillance and boost the vibrancy of local streets and spaces.

Application Checklist

- » How does the proposed land use mix support and complement the surrounding land use pattern and local community?
- » What is the development density of the proposal in relation to best practice guidance and how does that relate to the prevailing average density within the area?
- » What employment benefits can the proposals bring to the borough?

Response to Urban Setting

New tall buildings in Hackney must respect the context in which they sit, and should contribute to the quality of the surrounding area by making reference to their surroundings through their form, massing, setback and architectural language. The following guidelines set out some key physical parameters for tall buildings in the borough.

Form

The highest quality architectural expression and form is expected of new tall buildings in Hackney. The built form should strive to achieve a unique and original example of contemporary architecture which also exudes a sense of subtlety, sophistication, and sensitivity, allowing the development to become a valued part of its setting.

Massing and Scale

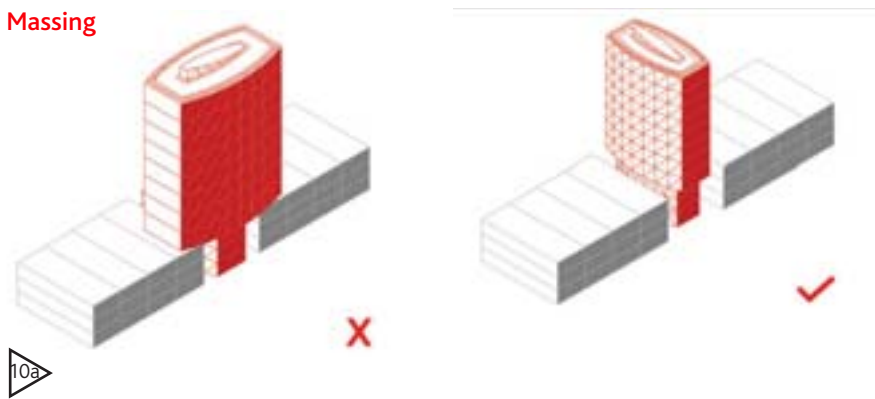
Massing of tall buildings, and the manipulation of the perception of the scale, is important in integrating new development into the established urban pattern of the borough. New tall buildings need to respect surrounding building heights, depths and frontages and avoid exacerbating the difference in scale with neighbouring built form.

In general, boxy and slab like massing should be avoided. There is a strong preference for massing that reflects a slender and elegant form that is able to contribute to an attractive skyline as well as present a more human scale at street level.

Alignment

New tall buildings need to make reference to their surroundings through the

Massing



Scale

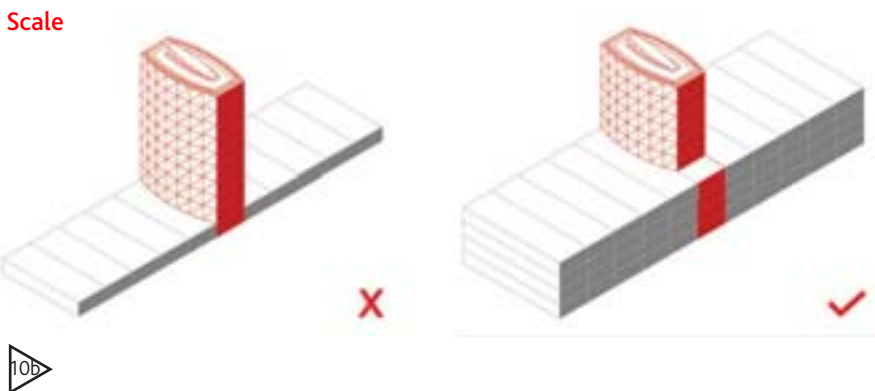


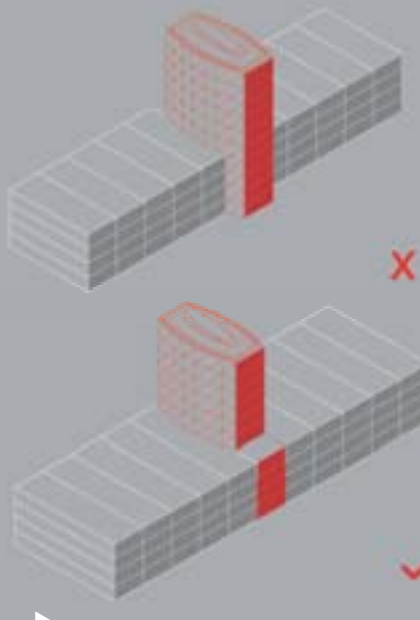
Figure 10a: It is important to orient the mass of the buildings to best reflect the local urban pattern and to mitigate negative impacts on surrounding buildings.

Figure 10b: The scale of proposals should aim to respond to the prevailing scale of development in the area or articulate the form of the building to give the impression of an appropriate sense of scale.

Figure 10c: Slender and elegant forms are preferred over boxy and slab like forms.

Figure 10d: Proposals should seek to integrate into the existing pattern of development to reinforce the character of the street

Streetscape



10e



10f

Figure 10e: Proposals for tall buildings should seek to reinforce the existing alignment of development on the street.

Figure 10f: The form of buildings can be used to actively express their location. In this example a wavy facade has been used to reflect the buildings position beside a major river.

Figure 10g: The siting of tall buildings to either frame a view of to terminate a vista provides opportunities to improve the legibility of certain areas and emphasise key views.

proportions of their footprint, and its relationship with the existing alignment of development in the area. In addition, aligning tall buildings to terminate visual axes or to frame scenes, can maximise the positive aspects of the buildings scale and contribute to improved legibility and navigation of the urban environment.



Streetscape

Tall buildings should be designed in such a way as to visually integrate with the streetscape. This can be achieved by setting back upper floors so that the lower floors reflect prevailing building heights, through the re-interpretation of local materials and details, and the integration of complementary land uses.

Application Checklist

- » Provide a statement that describes in detail the rationale for the form of the proposal. The statement should take into account silhouette and enhancement of the skyline through roof form, articulation, landmark status (if appropriate), and cultural and climatic references.
- » How does the proposal complement and respond to the character and distinctiveness of the prevailing urban pattern?
- » Describe the massing strategy of the proposal, how that strategy integrates the proposal into surrounding development, and how it creates an elegant rather than boxy or bulky form.
- » The proposal should reinforce the existing alignment and setbacks of surrounding buildings. How does the proposal respond to existing building alignments or capitalise on opportunities to frame views or terminate vistas?
- » Describe how the proposal contributes to the streetscape. Key issues for consideration include active frontages and natural surveillance, legible entrances, the relationship of the proposal to the existing streetscape and defining the public realm.
- » What strategy has been employed to integrate the building with the scale of its context as well as ensure a feeling of human scale is maintained at street level?

Materials and Maintenance

Advancements in construction technology combined with a growing body of architectural knowledge mean that the contemporary tall building can provide more sensitive design responses to their setting. New tall buildings should explore the advantages that the latest technology in construction, sustainability, and materials can provide them with to enable them to exhibit greater variety in form, massing and internal arrangement.

Materials

New tall buildings should make reference to their physical, cultural and historic surroundings through their details and the use of materials. Materials should reflect a sensitivity to their surrounds and should aim to be of the highest quality, responding to the character of the area through either utilising similar or sympathetic materials, or contrasting with it through a choice of materials which sophisticatedly juxtaposes with its surroundings.

Materials should also be chosen with regards to their sustainability. The sourcing of local materials, recycled and renewable resources, and low embodied energy materials, should be achieved wherever practicable.

Maintenance

The maintenance of tall buildings is critical to the image they project to the public realm. It is absolutely vital that all new tall building proposals have strenuously explored a variety of alternatives for internal and external materials and finishes that have long lives with low maintenance. All public open space associated with new tall buildings must also be well maintained.

A detailed maintenance assessment, outlining interior, exterior and public realm maintenance regimes must accompany the application.

Application Checklist

- » What is the palette of materials and how does it make reference to the local character? The applicant will be required to submit samples and make reference to schemes where the materials have been successfully used before.
- » Have the materials been assessed in terms of their sustainability? By what method? (Provide supporting information).
- » Describe what long term maintenance commitments will be established and outline the maintenance programme.



Key Messages from the Guidance

The guidance described in the preceding pages describe in broad terms the physical qualities, land use and spatial programs, and building performance that are expected of all new tall buildings within Hackney. The following key points outline the main messages of the design guidance.

Location and Quality

The tall buildings strategy plan provides clear guidance on those areas of the borough that are seen to be locationally appropriate for tall buildings. In support of this, the guidance will assist in ensuring that the building will be attractive and of sufficient quality.

Explore a Variety of Development Options

Tall buildings provide one of many solutions to contemporary development pressures and the urban renaissance agenda. Proposals for tall buildings should be considered in this light and tested to ensure that they are providing maximum benefit in design, land use, social, and economic terms.

Overarching Importance of Design Quality

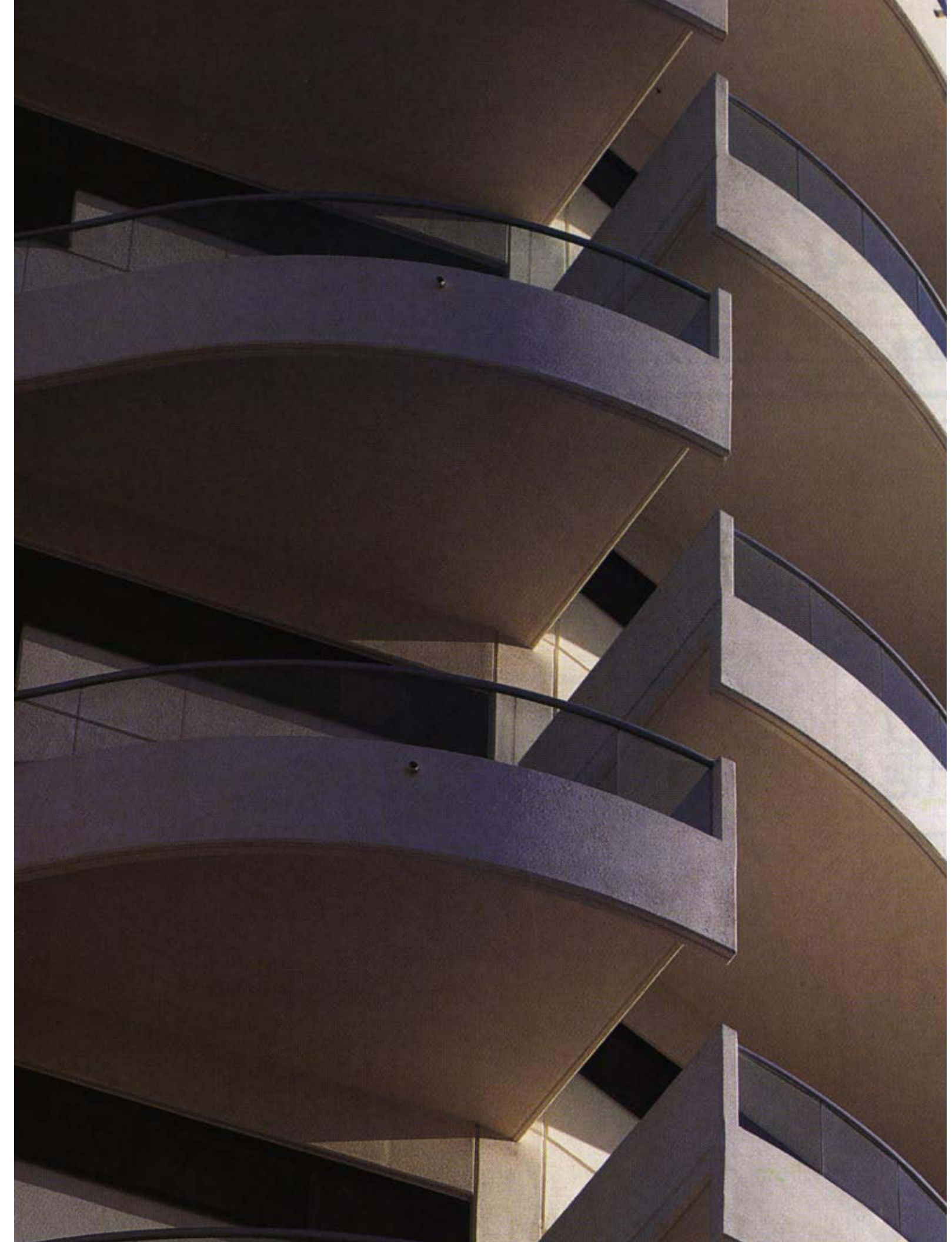
More than any other issue, design architectural quality is of paramount importance in relation to all buildings, particularly tall buildings that can have far reaching visual impacts. All tall buildings should be objects of beauty and delight as well as be respectful to the urban context in which they sit.

Thoroughly Analyse Potential Impacts of Tall Building Proposals

To ensure the best possible built outcome proposals for tall buildings need to be rigorously assessed in terms of their impact at a city wide and local level. Issues of visual intrusion, contribution to the street scene, climatic effects, as well as complementary to existing uses and community aspirations all need to be considered in detail to ensure a positive design outcome.

Use Tall Buildings as Vanguards for Sustainability and Construction Best Practice

Tall buildings offer particular opportunities because of their size and typology to raise the profile and practice of sustainable technology. All proposals for tall buildings in the Borough should strive to better current best practice standards in all aspects of sustainability.





Policy Recommendations

Policy Recommendations

This section of the report sets out a number of key policy recommendations that are intended to form the basis of planning policy for the borough within the emerging LDF.

1.0 Policy Context for Tall Buildings

This planning policy review has had regard to a number of similar guidance prepared by other local planning authorities. The following has therefore sought to address all of the main policy themes identified within these documents, although we do not necessarily recommend that all of these themes need to be reflected in any planning policy for the London Borough of Hackney.

The following documents have been reviewed, and status highlighted:

- 'High places: a planning policy framework for tall buildings' Birmingham City Council (Adopted SPG March 2003).
- Policy Advice Note No.22 'Tall Buildings' Bristol City Council (Adopted SPG October 2004).
- 'Building Heights' Islington Borough Council (Adopted SPG April 2004)
- 'Tall Buildings' Brighton & Hove City Council (Adopted SPG January 2004)

The following recommendations do not include detailed drafts of individual policies. Where appropriate, we have highlighted detailed examples of policy drafts from the above documents. This level of detail would benefit detailed consultation as part of preparing formal planning guidance for the Council.

The following guidance should apply to proposed new buildings, as well as extensions to existing buildings. It is important that the impact of tall buildings is critically assessed through the planning process and only proposals, which pass a rigorous examination progress forward to application stage and are promoted for approval. For example, there is a recognised need to strengthen the protection afforded to sensitive locations such as conservation areas where the impact of the siting and design of tall buildings can have damaging consequences.

1.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The regeneration of urban areas is key to the Urban Renaissance concept promoted in the findings of the Urban Task Force (1999). In response to this new agenda for sustainable urban regeneration, the Urban White Paper (Our Towns and Cities: the Future, November 2000) and national planning policy actively promotes:

- increased residential density,
- maximum use of brownfield land,
- high quality design;
- improvements to the quality of the built environment including public open spaces;
- greater investment in urban areas (particularly in centres);
- sustainable development;
- reduced car dependency;
- mixed use developments;

This guidance should primarily be read in conjunction with government guidance issued in Planning Policy Notes PPS 1, PPG 3, PPS12, PPG 13 & PPG 15. These address issues regarding design and sustainability, housing, transport and the historic environment.

English Heritage and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) produced their own Guidance on Tall Buildings in March 2003. They have endorsed a strategic plan based approach to identify opportunities for tall buildings, as a prelude to more detailed urban design analysis within any identified tall building zones. This development plan-led approach seeks to:

- Enable areas appropriate for tall buildings to be identified in advance within the local development plan or framework
- Enable proper public consultation at the plan-making stage on the fundamental questions of principle and design

- Reduce the scope for unnecessary, speculative applications in the wrong places
- Protects the historic environment and the qualities which make a city or area special
- Highlights opportunities for the removal of past mistakes and their replacement by development of an appropriate quality
- Sets out an overall vision for the future of a place

Guidance should respond to the EH / CABE recommendations, and endorse their view that any new tall building should be in an appropriate location, should be of first class design quality in its own right and should enhance the qualities of its immediate location and setting.

1.2 Local Planning Policy Framework

1.2.1 The London Plan: Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (February 2004)

London Boroughs are encouraged to review their high buildings policy by the Mayor in the London Plan. Policy 4B.8, Tall Buildings Locations, states:

The Mayor will promote the development of tall buildings where they create attractive landmarks enhancing London's character, help to provide a coherent location for economic clusters of related activities and/ or act as a catalyst for regeneration and where they are also acceptable in terms of design and impact on their surroundings.

It is stated that the Mayor will work with Boroughs and the strategic partnerships to help identify suitable locations for tall buildings, for example some Opportunity Areas (e.g. Bishopsgate / South Shoreditch and Lower Lea Valley in the London Borough of Hackney).

The Mayor also encourages the Boroughs to identify defined areas of specific character that could be sensitive to tall buildings. The Stage 2 process has systematically reviewed both appropriate and inappropriate areas for tall building development. The Mayor seeks to ensure that the process is transparent, with explanation of what aspects of local character could be affected and why. This may be achieved through the use of Stage 2 study in any public consultation exercise in the preparation of LDF policy.

In addition, the Council should take into account the reasons why the Mayor may support tall buildings when assessing planning applications that are referable to the Mayor. For example, the London Plan notes that the Mayor will take into account the potential benefit of public access to the upper floors and may require such access. Such issues have been covered in the policy recommendations below.

The London Plan contains a number of other policies relating to large-scale buildings. These include:

- Policy 4B.1 Design for a compact city
Boroughs are encouraged to ensure that developments maximise the potential of sites, create or enhance the public realm, are accessible, sustainable, durable and adaptable, respect local context, character and communities, are attractive to look at and, where appropriate, inspire, excite and delight.
- Policy 4B.3 Maximising the potential of site
Boroughs are required to ensure that development proposals achieve the highest possible intensity of use compatible with local context, the design principles in Policy 4B.1 and with public transport capacity.
- Policy 4B.6 Sustainable design and construction
Boroughs should ensure future developments meet the highest standards of sustainable design and construction and reflect this principle in UDP policies. Applications for strategic developments should include a statement showing how sustainability principles will be met in terms of demolition, construction and long-term management.
- Policy 4B.9 Large-scale buildings – design and impact
This policy identifies that large-scale, intensively used buildings, including tall buildings, are identified as likely to have greater impact than other building types because they tend to be more visible and generate a lot of movement and activity. They therefore need to be flexible and adaptable, and of exemplary design.

- Policy 4B.15 London view Protection Framework
- Policy 4B.16 View management plans
- Policy 4B.17 Assessing development impact on designated views.

These policies firstly establish a designated set of strategically important views to be protected and managed, provides a plan framework within which development can be assessed, but seeks to avoid creating unnecessary constraints over a broader area than that required to enjoy the view.

The Mayor proposes that the current views set down in Government Directions should be replaced by this plan and forthcoming Supplementary Planning Guidance, which he will produce in collaboration with boroughs, English Heritage, the Royal Parks and other organisations represented at the EIP. The proposed view management plans will be an integral part of the proposed Supplementary Planning Guidance.

View management plans should recognise the role of landmark buildings within the views and will set down appropriate development height thresholds, viewing corridors, assessment areas and townscape guidelines for each view. These should be reflected in the Council's guidance on tall buildings.

It should be noted that buildings over 30 meters in height area are strategically referable to the Mayor. Policies 4B.8 & 4B.9 applies to all buildings that are significantly taller than their surroundings and/or have a significant impact on the skyline. The London Plan encourages Boroughs to set locally based thresholds for their tall building policies.

The plan goes on to state that the Mechanisms for the protection and enhancement of views are based on a number of different spatial areas within which development may affect the protected view. These are listed in Policy 4B.17. They cover sight lines, lateral spaces and backgrounds to landmarks and areas in the middle and front of the whole view width. Together they are referred to as view assessment areas.

When boroughs receive proposals that could affect managed views they should consult other boroughs crossed by the same view. Further details on consultation mechanisms will be provided in Supplementary Planning Guidance. This will be complemented by the Mayor's referral powers that allow for a strategic overview to be taken on proposals that affect views in London. In all cases referable to the Mayor, accurate visual representations of changes to all views affected will be required. However, two-dimensional pictures tend to flatten views and the influence of distance on impact is often reduced. In addition to the effect of perspective on size, distance effects sharpness of focus, appearance of materials, colour and details. Applicants will be expected to make every effort to take these issues into account. The Mayor will investigate the development of a three dimensional computer model to help the assessment of proposals.

1.2.2 The Local Development Framework

The study was prepared to inform the future Local Development Framework (LDF) for Hackney Borough. The primary role of the LDF is to guide the development of Hackney so as to achieve the planning related vision outlined in Hackney's Community Strategy (see below). The LDF will do this by providing clear planning policies relating to the location and design of development that will be used in the assessment of planning applications as part of the Development Control process. The Tall Building Strategy should likewise conform to the vision outlined in the Community Strategy.

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) outlines the LDF. It identifies:

- Local Development Documents (LDDs),
- LDD subject matter and geographical area to which each document relates;
- Which LDDs are to be Development Plan Documents (DPDs); and
- preparation and revision timetables.

LDDs include two types of documents:

1. Development Plan Documents (DPD), and
2. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD).

All of Hackney's LDDs must have regard to national policies, the Mayor's London Plan, the Community Strategy (2004 – 2014) and the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which is presently being drafted.

DPD require a greater level of consultation (detailed in the SCI) than SPD, and an independent examination will lead to binding recommendations imposed on the Council by an inspector. Therefore the 'weight' given to each type of plan will vary significantly. DPDs for Hackney will include:

- Statement of Vision and Core Policies
- Area Action Plans
- Specific Area Policies
- Proposals Map

Core policies will be largely led by the Community Strategy's vision, and will form the overarching goals of the LDF and all LDD will be in accordance with these core policies. It should be noted that DPDs and SPDs (including a Tall Building Strategy) will need to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Appraisal.

The Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) identifies that the Council will prepare a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for 'High Density Development'. The High Density Development Supplementary Planning Document will provide design guidance applicable to higher density development such as tall buildings and will incorporate the recommendations of this Tall Buildings Guidance.

With reference to the transitional period from Hackney's Adopted UDP (1995) to the new LDF (in the period up to 2007), Hackney's LDS will identify all plans or documents which relate to old policies that have not yet been replaced (see Adopted Local Plan below). For example, our recommendations below refer to the established 'centres' within the Borough, which we understand will remain through the LDF process.

The SCI will also identify proposals for involving the community in planning applications handled by the Development Control team, and in the development of Local Development Framework policies. The following guidance includes advice relating to the need for pre-application consultation requirements and details of supporting contextual information for Tall Building development, which may be incorporated into the SCI.

1.2.3 London Borough of Hackney – Community Strategy (Agreed July 2004)

Hackney's Community Strategy was agreed by the Council and its partners in July 2004. The Community Strategy will underpin all activities of Hackney Council in the next ten years and beyond, and was informed by a public consultation process. This process was taken into account and reflected in a final Community Strategy with six main themes. These contribute to addressing the overall aim to reduce inequality and social exclusion within communities and between Hackney and the rest of the country. The themes are:

- 'A Good Place to Grow Up'
- 'A Dynamic, Creative Economy'
- 'Thriving, Healthy Communities'
- 'Better Homes'
- 'A Safer, Cleaner Place to Live'
- 'A Sustainable Borough'

These themes would need to be reflected and cross-referenced in the preparation of the formal tall building planning guidance.

1.2.4 London Borough of Hackney – Adopted Local Plan (June 1995)

The principles contained within the following four existing UDP policies will be retained, and supplemented where appropriate, within the Tall Building Guidance. It is understood that all of these policies are 'saved' during the transitional period to 2007 for development control purposes. The key existing UDP Policies are therefore as follows:

Policy ST7 generally seeks to resist 'excessively' tall buildings, and will protect strategically important views / backdrops. 'Excessive' is not defined as part of the policy context and should therefore be supplemented by this Study's definition of 'tall buildings', with individual cases of 'excessive' being considered based upon the objective assessment identified at Page 5. The policy seeks to protect the local environment, and ensure that badly sited and unsympathetically scaled office buildings do not over dominate the Borough. It is also noted in the policy that residential tower blocks have been historically unpopular with residents. We recommended that any future tall building core policy applies to all land uses.

Policy EQ1 encourages developments that retain, enhance and/or create views, landmarks and other townscape features that make a significant contribution to the character of an area. Development should also acknowledge the height of neighbouring buildings, and not detract from important views. The principles of this policy should be taken forward in the new Tall Building Guidance, and are reflected in the recommendations below.

Policy EQ2 seeks to protect the strategic view and setting / skyline of St. Paul's Cathedral. Developments' height, location, and materials that would have adverse effect on this setting would be resisted. In assessing this, the Council would consult other relevant local authorities and other appropriate bodies where relevant. Furthermore, the improvement of the views affected by existing buildings will be sought. Likewise, proposals that would be obscured by such existing buildings will not be permitted under this Policy. Again, the principles of this policy should be taken forward in the newer tall building guidance, and are reflected in the recommendations below.

Policy EQ3 deals specifically with tall buildings. It uses the definition of "buildings which are significantly higher than their surroundings" as recommended here. Exceptions to this may be acceptable to the Council subject to the satisfaction of four design-based criteria relating to:

1. a high standard of design and materials;
2. consideration of existing adjacent building lines, wind turbulence and overshadowing;
3. avoiding horizontal domination of the local street block pattern, and;
4. not affecting the development potential of adjacent sites.

These principles are also reflected in the following recommendations.

1.3 Recommendations for Planning Applications

1.3.1 Pre application planning advice

Prospective applicants for tall buildings should be advised to enter into pre-application discussions wherever possible with the Council and other relevant stakeholders. In turn, the Council should consult with English Heritage, as a statutory consultee and CABE, as a non-statutory consultee, for tall building planning applications. Further, in accordance with existing Council guidance, the Council should also consider consultation with neighbouring Boroughs planning departments when appropriate. It is also therefore recommended that the London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Newham, Islington, Waltham Forest, Haringey, and the City of London are consulted in the Tall Building Guidance LDF process.

1.3.2 Planning Guidance - Assessment of proposals

The Borough-wide urban analysis process utilised within Stage 2 of the Strategy Study, used a 'sieve' approach, which identifies, on a 'topic-by-topic' basis, particular aspects of the Borough that either support or constrain the potential for tall buildings. Each layer of this sieve was then combined to provide an overview of areas within Hackney that are 'suitable', 'potentially suitable', or 'unsuitable' for tall development.

The 'topic by topic' basis for consideration of tall buildings is widely used by other local planning authorities' guidance, and is evident within the Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol and Islington guidance

documents. The following broad location and design-based topics are covered:

- Density (exploration of alternative forms)
- Surrounding Context (strategic views, topography, built form and skyline)
- Transport and Other Infrastructure (public transport)
- Historic Environment (protection of conservation areas & listed buildings)
- Architectural Excellence
- Sustainable Design and Construction
- Local environment (microclimate and general amenity)
- Permeability and legibility of the site and surrounding area
- Public Realm and Accessibility

Proposals that are identified as significantly taller than their surroundings should be restricted to areas where opportunities have been identified for taller development within this Study (See Stage 3 Report). Appropriate policy should be drafted to this effect, however the supporting graphical information relating to specific geographical areas should be carefully considered i.e. where identified within the formal guidance, these should be robustly supported by information contained within Stage 2 of this Study.

The following themes are suggested for consideration in preparing LDF policy:

Design Quality: Surrounding Context / Architectural Excellence

- Tall buildings should not prejudice, intrude upon or obstruct strategic views within or across the Borough. Tall buildings should also have regard to existing local views.
- All new tall buildings should be of a high quality of design, such that they can make a positive contribution to the Borough's urban form and skyline, and support urban regeneration in its widest sense.

Strategically placed and well-designed Tall buildings can be landmarks that are easy to see, and recognise and provide a geographical or cultural orientation point that can enhance the legibility of the Borough and provide an attractive element within the cityscape. However, conversely, a poorly designed and ill-conceived tall building could undermine that legibility

It is important for applicants to recognise that Tall buildings, will by their very nature, form prominent elements or key foci within the skyline that will be viewed from all angles. Proposals for Tall buildings within the Borough should ensure that the strategic designated views outlined within the London Plan are not compromised and that locally important views within or through the Borough are protected.

In addition to the benefits of high quality design, there are many positive regeneration aspects related to Tall Building development, such as the attraction of major investment, meeting identified commercial requirements for modern accommodation, and contributing to the positive image of an area.

Tall buildings can help to enhance the legibility of the Borough, add to the distinctiveness of the character of particular areas and help people to find their way around.

The Council should ensure that an applicant considers the provision of rooftop plant and equipment during the initial design stages. A profusion of plant and telecommunications equipment can severely detract from the form and quality of a building and subsequently appear as incongruous features within the roofscape and skyline.

Visual Impact

- Opportunities for removal or replacement of inappropriate tall buildings would be considered favourably

Many tall buildings within the Borough represent poor quality architectural solutions, bear little relationship to their surroundings and fail to contribute to the quality, form and legibility of their surroundings.

When opportunities arise to remove, replace or re-clad such inappropriate tall buildings, their existing height, bulk or massing should not be regarded as a precedent for the scale of any replacement; an appropriate reduction in height could be sought. Each new proposal should be treated on its own merits against the relevant policy and design guidance.

Sustainability and Environment: Local environment / Sustainable Design and Construction

- Tall buildings should be responsive to environmental conditions and embrace principles of sustainability.

A heightened public awareness of environmental issues, advancements in construction technology and a raised awareness of design in general have paved the way for sustainability to be recognised as a crucial element in the future planning and development of urban areas.

Proposals should consider their effect on the local environment in terms of shadowing and microclimate. Sun-path, daylighting and sunlighting studies will show the impact of shadowing, whilst wind tunnel analysis (or equivalent) will ensure that uncomfortably high wind speeds are not created around the buildings base and in the spaces which surround it. Promoting use of natural energy; building adaptability etc

Conservation Areas: Historic Environment

- Tall building development should seek to protect and enhance Conservation Areas and their settings

Conservation Areas have generally been considered as being inappropriate for tall buildings as provided within Policy EQ12 and EQ15 (and EQ18 – Setting of Listed Buildings – common within Conservation areas) of the Adopted Plan. That is not to say that tall development will never be acceptable. However, a significantly greater level of information justifying the exceptional circumstances of any proposals (with regard to PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment) would be required within these areas to ensure that the Council can appropriately assess the proposals.

There will be a general presumption against tall buildings in both existing and new or extended Conservation Areas. It will also be important to respect the setting, or views into or out of Conservation Areas in any application for a tall building. The graphical representation of this area is difficult to express given the varying nature of the settings of key buildings within each Conservation Area, and therefore each case will be considered on its own merits. There are also large areas of the Borough not identified as Conservation Areas, which contain high quality, domestic scale housing, which would also be generally inappropriate for tall building development.

Policy EQ24 and EQ30 of the Adopted Plan seeks to protect the Special Landscape Character of the canal. Existing views, skylines and nature conservation (Policy EQ26) in canal-related environments are therefore relevant considerations in any tall building proposals, acknowledging the fact that tall buildings can act as focal points. The Council presently considers that buildings of approximately four storeys are generally acceptable on canal frontages. It should be noted that the Council is presently considering the potential to identify aspects of the canal-environment as Conservation Areas. This protective principle is also considered appropriate along the River Lea in the east of the Borough, where openness of land adjacent to the river should be protected.

Transport Accessibility

- Tall building development should be well located in relation to established (and planned) public transport networks

In line with best practice, and in the interests of achieving an efficient urban form, intensification of development should occur in areas that are within walking distance of either rail / tube stations or good quality bus routes. Concentrating tall building development in proximity to existing transport interchanges contributes to a more active and vibrant sense of place and strongly promotes a more sustainable approach to urban living.

Detailed assessment of existing public transport routes and nodes (800m or 10 minute walk) should be provided to support a planning application. In line with Government guidance, the policy principle assumes that locations within 10 minutes of key routes and nodes are in a better position to support dense development (and therefore potentially large generators of movements) in the form of tall

buildings. It should be noted that this study has not had the support of a, more robust, PTAL analysis (Public Transport Accessibility Level - the degree of access to the public transport network - London Plan, February 2004).

It should be noted that although parts of the Borough have been identified as having relatively high accessibility levels, with a particular emphasis on bus travel, this should be set within the context of wider and particularly more central London areas, which benefit from even greater accessibility. The infrastructure corridors identified in Stage 2 do not necessarily represent a particular quality of service, but merely acknowledge established routes with the potential for an acceptable level of service. It is also important to note that the East London line is incorporated as part of this work; with the anticipated benefits of increasing underground services within the South West of the Borough anticipated to be realised within the 'lifetime' of the LDF.

Public Infrastructure and Facilities

- Tall building proposals must assess the current capacity of local infrastructure and facilities

The developer should be required to undertake an assessment of the capacity of the road network, local retail facilities, waste water/ sewage disposal systems, public transport services, open spaces, playgrounds, schools, and child and health care facilities. This analysis should form the basis of any negotiation of planning obligations (s106 agreements).

The supporting text to this policy should also promote the use of planning agreements and conditions as an appropriate method for securing improvements to infrastructure such as sewerage and on public transport, where such developments require.

- Development proposals should seek to contribute to the provision of new facilities where there is a proven deficiency.

The residents and employees associated with a tall building will typically generate significant additional demand on existing infrastructure. Applications should be required to address any shortcomings in local infrastructure and contribute to the provision of new educational, retail, health and recreational facilities.

The sequence / time scale of delivery of infrastructure in relation to new higher density developments must be made clear by the Council. The Council should refer to other relevant background information and studies (such as the Open Space Assessment) in pursuing such policy. In the same way as other physical and social infrastructure, the existence and capacity of open space is an important consideration in the location of tall buildings.

Land Use and Density

- Tall buildings should seek to contribute to maximising efficient use of land.

The development of more intense urban forms should encourage sustainable transport choices. The aim is to reduce reliance on the car, either by reducing the required levels of parking associated with new development in central areas, encouraging shared use of vehicles, encouraging public transport use, and by encouraging greater trips on foot or by cycle.

'Major Centres' and 'District Centres' within the Borough are considered to be generally appropriate areas for more intensive forms of development, based upon the variety of uses which exist, accessibility levels and the nature of the built form. Tall buildings are not considered to be necessary design forms for more intensive development. The following centres, identified within the existing adopted UDP and The London Plan are recommended areas that are appropriate for tall building activity:

Centre	Stage 3 Area	London Plan Allocation
Dalston	Area 5	Major Centre
Mare Street, Hackney	Areas 13 and 14	District Centre
Stoke Newington	Area 12	District Centre
Finsbury park (Outside Borough)	Area 1	District Centre

There are a number of planned regeneration initiatives that should be considered in relation to the appropriateness of tall buildings. For example, the five planned Area Action Plans (AAPs) within the Borough at this time – South Shoreditch, Woodberry Down, Lower Lea Valley, Dalston, Hackney Central (see AAPs below). In addition, the London Plan identifies Bishopsgate / South Shoreditch and the Lower Lea Valley as Opportunity Areas, and encourages the Council to identify suitable locations for tall buildings within such areas. The general presumption is not necessarily in favour of tall buildings within identified areas, however such areas will allow applicants to identify the 'regenerative benefits' of locating a tall building within such areas.

Response and Urban Setting: Surrounding Context / Permeability and legibility / Public Realm and Accessibility

- Tall buildings should seek to provide an acceptable mix of uses, including publicly accessible areas where possible.

Tall buildings should create opportunities to reinforce and enhance the public realm and to provide a lively mix of uses (especially at ground floor level), which contribute to creating an attractive pedestrian environment. In accordance with the London Plan, publicly accessible areas at upper floors should also be sought where practicable.

- Tall buildings should be well integrated into the public realm

The inclusion of a mix of uses can help give greater vitality to the public realm and create activity throughout the day creating a perception of greater safety. The Council should promote mixed-use development, and encourage use diversity and social inclusion. Encouraging tall buildings to have some community or public function can significantly help in integrating new development into existing communities, as encouraged by the Mayor. Applicants should also consider wider opportunities of land assembly in securing the necessary infrastructure / services for a proposed tall building.

- Tall building development should seek to protect and enhance significant areas of open space and their setting

Adopted Plan Policies EQ21 and EQ22 certainly resist development within existing open space, however Policy EQ23 goes further in respect of Lea Valley Regional Park and the careful control of development in the surrounding area. Tall building development at the edge of such an asset can have potential impacts relating to visual amenity and microclimatic conditions. This principle of development control is also considered appropriate in respect tall building development on the edge of less geographically 'significant' areas of open space within the Borough. Policy EQ28, which refers to protecting the character and amenity of London Square is relevant and is supported within these recommendations. Views from the higher Finsbury Park / Woodbury Down area south across the Borough should also generally be protected from tall structures.

Materials and maintenance

- Tall buildings will be expected to deliver design excellence and reflect the palette of local materials

Tall Buildings should seek to achieve the highest standards of architectural and design excellence and they provide the opportunity to be icons in their own right. The design solution should however reflect the character and vernacular of its surroundings and draw from the palette of local materials. Applicants should demonstrate how the building responds to the existing urban character and provide an understanding of how the historical context has informed the design solution.

The Council should insist on the highest quality of materials and material finishes and these should be agreed prior to determination of any application. At application stage all materials and material finishes should be restricted by means of a pre-commencement condition.

Applicants should also demonstrate how the materials perform in sustainability terms. The use of local or recycled materials and / or materials from renewable resources will be expected, and where appropriate those materials should be drawn from local sources.

- Tall building proposals must be supported by a detailed maintenance assessment

The Council should ensure that any tall building proposals are accompanied by a long-term maintenance programme to ensure that image of the building is sustained throughout its life. Applicants should demonstrate that all materials and material finishes have a long lifespan and have a low maintenance requirement. Best practice sustainability standards should also be demonstrated.

1.3.3 Planning applications – Recommendations for Supporting Information

Applicants should be discouraged from submitting outline planning applications (where design issues are dealt with as reserved matters). Given the substantive implications that a tall building could have on its locality and wider hinterland, and the desire to ensure architectural excellence, it is important that applicants submit full detailed planning applications.

All planning applications for tall buildings should be treated in an objective and consistent manner. In order to do so, applicants will be required to provide the following information in a comprehensive statement as part of a coherent explanation of any tall building application.

Proposals should therefore be required to include a Tall Buildings Document, which would include a series of statements. This submission must include written and illustrative supporting information in the following form:

- [a survey plan and calculations](#) illustrating the proposal's relationship to the mean height of all surrounding development for a radius of 100m from the development site, for the purpose of calculating whether the proposed building is significantly taller than its surroundings,
- [a design statement](#) that sets out the rationale for the proposal, its architectural intent and design philosophy and the particular qualities of the site that make it suitable for tall buildings. If outside an area identified for tall buildings - evidence of exploration of the viability and appropriateness of other forms of high-density development. 5 copies of plans and elevations should be submitted, including photo montage (digitally verified photos / montages) contextual models etc
- [Environmental Impact Assessment \(EIA\)](#) is likely to be required where development is on a significantly greater scale than the previous use under Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (EIA) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999. The threshold of 0.5ha development area is often used in determining the requirement for an EIA in respect of 'urban development projects'.
- [Sustainability statement](#). Particularly where EIA regulations are not triggered, applicants will need to:
 - Describe how the proposal contributes to social inclusion, environmental health and to the economic vitality of the Borough.
 - Provide a sustainability statement outlining how the proposal will apply best sustainable practices. Particular consideration should be given to:
 - maximisation of brownfield resources
 - explanation of the density of development
 - energy management, including production
 - resource conservation
 - materials specification
 - waste management
 - A recognised method (e.g BREEAM) must be used to assess a proposal's sustainability.
- [Land use statement](#). Applicants will need to describe the land use mix and how the proposed mix of land uses supports and complements the surrounding land use pattern and local community needs, and assists in delivering relevant housing and/or employment opportunities. It should also identify areas of public access within and around the proposed development.
- [Infrastructure statement](#). Applicants will need to:
 - Assess the current capacity of local public infrastructure and facilities.
 - Identify additional infrastructure and facilities required as a result of the proposed development, and how these will be achieved and delivered.

- Transport statement. Applicants will need to:
 - Describe which, if any, existing transport services such as rail stations, bus routes, or sustainable transport corridors are within walking distance.
 - Assess the suitability of local transport infrastructure and services to accommodate the needs derived from new developments, and identify means by which transport deficiencies will be overcome.
 - Provide a transport assessment/ statement, and travel plan (for non-residential development) demonstrating innovative and sustainable approaches to transport issues.
 - Describe the measures incorporated in the proposal, which will help to achieve the overall objective of reducing private vehicle use and improving access to public transport.

1.4 Future Action

1.4.1 Core Policy

The Council may consider developing one or a number of core policies, which provide the outline framework for decision making on Tall Building development across the Borough. In particular, the core policy or policies in respect of tall buildings would focus on:

1. The location;
2. The design;
3. Other social, economic and environmental benefits.

This core policy, or policies, may then be supported by additional guidance in the form of a Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Area Action Plans (AAP). The broad policy may seek to outline core themes, which should be addressed in any tall building proposal, such as some or all of the 11 themes identified above. These themes would then be considered at a more detailed level (geographically, land use etc.) within the related SPD and AAPs.

Consideration of best practice from other tall building studies / SPG's identified only Bristol as having a specific development plan policy relating to tall buildings. It is however noteworthy that this document is the most up to date guidance document, having been adopted in October 2004. By way of example, Tall Buildings Policy B7A of the Proposed Alterations to the Bristol Local Plan (2003) states:

Proposals for tall buildings will only be considered where a satisfactory response has been made to each of the following criteria:

- (i) Relationship to context, including topography, built form and skyline;
- (ii) Effect on the historic environment at a city-wide and local level;
- (iii) Relationship to transport infrastructure particularly public transport provision;
- (iv) Architectural excellence of the building;
- (v) Contribution to the public spaces and facilities, including the mix of uses;
- (vi) Effect on the local environment, including microclimate and general amenity considerations;
- (vii) Contribution to permeability and legibility of the site and wider area; and
- (viii) Sufficient accompanying material to enable a proper assessment including urban design study / masterplan, a 360 Degree view analysis and relative height studies.

Clearly, the above picks up on many of the location and design based themes of this Study. Policy B7A is supported by Supplementary Planning Guidance in the form of Policy Advice Note No.22 'Tall Buildings', which was published by Bristol City Council in October 2004. The purpose of the SPG is to assist in the understanding and implementation of the policies of the Local Plan, expand on the core assessment criteria, and provide detailed guidance to inform discussions between scheme promoters and assessors.

The 'triggers' identified earlier in this Study (page 5) could be reflected in core policy / policies, with supporting explanation of definitions of 'tall' including the three tall building categories. These height categories relate closely to the threshold for the Mayor's strategic referrals for tall buildings (30m), as well as reflecting similar planning policy guidance in surrounding authorities, such as Islington.

The locations deemed broadly acceptable for tall buildings through this study could be identified conceptually on the Key Diagram. The locations, identified as 'areas of search', should be viewed as strategic in nature, given the basis of analysis upon which they have been constructed. Being that the Key Diagram is a DPD, this will give these locations more weight over being in an SPD.

Should the Council wish to include specific locations within the Core Policy / Key Diagram in which tall buildings may be considered favourably (i.e. the five 'areas of search'), it should be noted that any graphical and supporting material would be the subject of an Examination in Public as part of any DPD process.

The areas of search could be shown as 'illustrative only' within the Core Policy, however legal guidance on the robustness of this approach should be considered. One advantage of the use of clear geographical boundaries would be through development control practice, particularly if a sequential assessment could be adopted, however, such boundaries could be the subject of significant challenge throughout the development plan process.

Alternatively, the AAPs and their identified boundaries would be able to provide further, more detailed, guidance on 'appropriate' locations for tall buildings. This however, may lead to a 'gap' in planning policy for the areas of search that are not the subject of AAPs, such as Stoke Newington centre.

The Council may therefore wish to give differing policy emphasis in how they would consider applications within and outside of the identified areas of search. We would suggest that the general presumption against inappropriate tall buildings across the Borough should be pursued, subject to the policies and checklists identified in this Study. Outside of the identified 'areas of search' the Council could consider tall buildings only where exceptional circumstances are provided. This distinction would likely provide developers greater certainty over the Council's view of appropriate locations for tall buildings within the Borough, and may reduce the number of inappropriate applications or proposals received.

General Development Control Policies can also be incorporated to specify broad location and design parameters that can be used in the determination of applications. These policies should be performance based and will be supported by location-specific AAPs and theme-based SPDs.

1.4.2 Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

It is proposed that the Council will produce a number of SPDs to support the DPDs (outlined above) that will also be produced over the next three-year period.

A number of Supplementary Planning Documents should be developed to support the Core Strategy. Hackney's draft Local Development Scheme approved by Cabinet in September 2004 for submission to the Government Office for London has already identified a number of SPD. Those applicable to Tall Buildings include:

- Affordable Housing
- Live Work
- Crime & Disorder
- Design & Sustainability
- High Density Development
- Mixed Use Development
- Planning Obligations
- Residential Design Guide
- Landscaping and Trees
- Waste and Recycling
- Access, Parking and Road Design
- Equitable Access
- Green Travel Plans

There are a number of stages that a SPD must go through before it is adopted by the Council. This is further detailed in the SCl. The SPD should:

- Be a specific document to provide guidance for both developers and decision-makers when addressing the issues surrounding Tall Building development;
- Informed by this Hackney Tall Buildings Strategy Study;
- Address each of the key themes;
- Provides Design Guidance;
- Identifies 'Appropriate' Areas for Tall Buildings and guidance for appraisal of such development inside and outside of these areas.

1.4.3 Area Action Plans

The Council will identify, through the LDS, a number of Area Action Plans which will be developed over the next three years.

Area action plans provide the planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed. They focus on implementation and delivery, particularly in relation to planned growth areas, and areas requiring regeneration. They can also be used to resolve conflicting objectives in areas subject to development pressures (PPS12).

The Council may wish to set criteria in the Core Strategy or Core Policies for identifying locations and priorities for the preparation of AAPs, to include reference to Tall Building SPD and how it would be applied to the individual areas.

In areas of change, AAPs should identify the distribution of uses and their inter-relationships, including specific site allocations. They should also set an implementation timetable. Guidance, relating to design requirements can be provided in the relevant AAP or in one or more SPDs in the form of a 'master plan'. The Council is encouraged to consider the potential for the siting of tall building development within such areas during their preparation as discussed in Stage 3 of this Study. Each AAP could simply be cross-referenced with the Tall Building SPD.

A number of Area Action Plans and Specific Area Policies should be incorporated within the LDF to support the core strategy at a more detailed site specific level. These documents should investigate the appropriateness of specific sites and area for tall buildings and apply site specific criteria to ensure the location and design of tall buildings reflect the specific character and regeneration needs of the area.

1.5 Conclusion

The policy recommendations contained within this report seek to address and provide guidance on best practice for addressing the complex issues that surround tall building development. Stage 3 of this Study concluded that all areas outside of 'areas suitable for tall buildings' should be seen as areas of exclusion, the visual impact of tall buildings was identified as a critical factor, and the fact that tall buildings bring significant opportunities for attracting regeneration investment and improvement was also highlighted.

The recommendations provided within this document have sought to expand upon those earlier conclusions, to address them in greater detail and to ensure that each of the issues raised are comprehensively addressed by any tall building development. It is envisaged that these recommendations will provide a framework within which the Council can formulate detailed and specific policies that can be taken forward into the LDF.

It is considered that the most appropriate approach would be for the Council to formulate a specific core policy supported by additional guidance within an SPD. An adopted core development plan policy that has been tested through the plan Inquiry process would provide the Council with a robust platform, which sets out the key issues / criteria that will be required to be addressed by any tall building proposals. The core policy would then be supported by a tall building SPD, which would address in more detail the key themes outlined within this document and provide a checklist for the quality and content of any submission. The content of these documents can then be used to inform and be cross referenced within the AAP's and tailored to suit each specific area.

The combination of a core policy and an SPD would provide the Council with a strong framework for controlling, guiding and shaping the nature of tall building development within the Borough and is an approach that has been successfully adopted elsewhere within the country.

The following documents have been referred to and could be referenced within any tall building planning policy guidance:

Key Policy Documents

ODPM (2004)
PPS1: Creating Sustainable Communities
HMSO

DETR (2000)
PPG3: Housing
HMSO

DoE
PPG6: Town Centre and Retail Development
HMSO

ODPM (2004)
PPS12: Local Development Frameworks
HMSO

DoE (1999)
PPG13: Transport
HMSO

DoE (1994)
PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment
HMSO

ODPM (2004)
PPS12: Local Development Frameworks
HMSO

DoE/DoT (2nd Edn. 1992)
Design Bulletin 32, Residential Roads and Footpaths – Layout Considerations.
HMSO

DETR (1998)
Places, Streets and Movement, A companion guide to Design Bulletin 32, Residential Roads and Footpaths.
HMSO

DETR (1998)
Planning for the Communities of the Future.
HMSO

DESIGN GUIDANCE

English Partnerships (Aug 2000)
The Urban Design Compendium
English Partnerships

CABE (Mar 2003)
Guidance on Tall Buildings
CABE & English Heritage

DETR (1999)
Towards an Urban Renaissance

By Design
Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards a Better Practice
DETR / CABE (2000)

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