

MATTER 5: DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT DPD

Representor: DM 20

James Guest, for Ealing Fields Residents' Association

Matter 5.2: Are they justified by an up-to-date, credible and robust evidence base?

Matter 5.3: Do they rely on standards or requirements set out in untested documents?

Character and Context Studies

1 We are particularly concerned by Ealing Council's reluctance to carry out Borough-wide Character and Context Studies as advocated in the London Plan Neighbourhood Character SPG.

2 The neighbouring borough of Hounslow is committed to preparing Borough-wide Character and Context Studies and has already completed the first round of consultation on its results. A copy of their Brentford Study has been submitted for inclusion in the Examination Library.

"To inform the emerging Local Development Framework, the council is producing a borough-wide 'Context and Character Study' to identify key character areas and develop an understanding of the quality of the landscape and built environment in the borough. Through **this analysis**, which **will explore urban design quality, heritage assets and local distinctiveness**, the council will provide design criteria for new development and make recommendations for improving the existing environment. The study will help to establish the council's approach to protecting and enhancing quality of place in the borough. This will include developing "design cues" for appropriately integrating new development and improving the public realm; yield a better understanding of locations that could be suitable for tall or large buildings, and those that are not; and help strengthen the protection of character and heritage assets, including Listed Buildings and locally significant buildings, Conservation Areas, and key landscapes."

(Draft Core Strategy July 2011, Paragraph ENV.1.5)

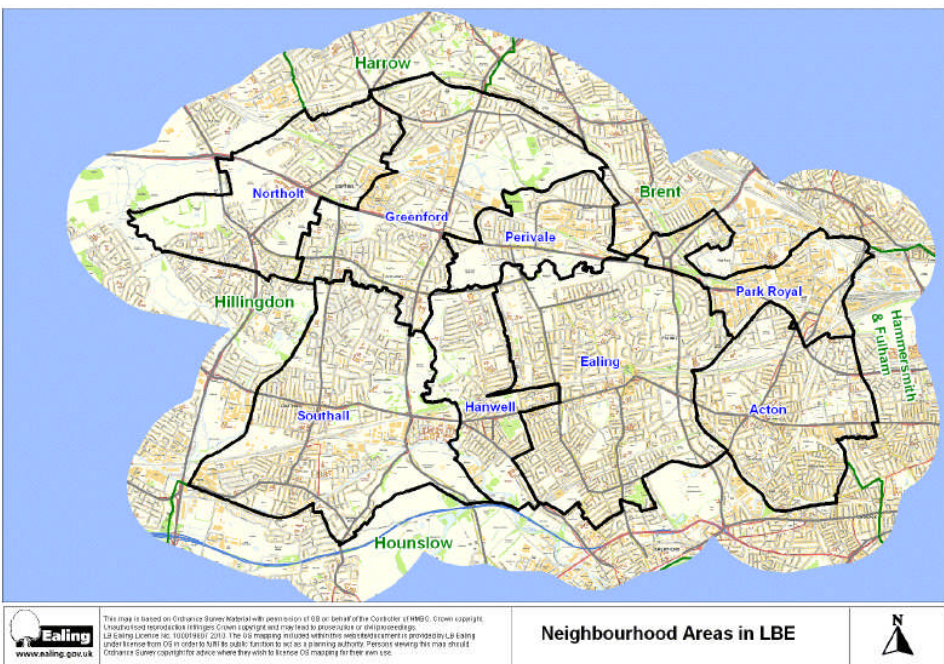
3 Hillingdon, another neighbouring borough, was criticised as follows by the Inspector who conducted the examination of their Core Strategy:

"Further to discussions between the Council and English Heritage during the Examination, I am satisfied that the Local Plan will sufficiently recognise the importance of heritage and its role in supporting sustainable development and regeneration. I agree that the formulation of HE1 would have benefited from a Borough wide character appraisal that would have provided the comprehensive overview to inform more detailed assessments of the impacts of development. Nevertheless, there is a commitment in the implementation section supporting Policy HE1 to carry out this character appraisal and for it to inform work on the detailed part of the Local Plan to follow."

(Paragraph 47 - Heritage - Inspector's report on LDF Core Strategy)

- 4 We note our concerns are also shared by English Heritage who have said:
“We would still encourage the Council to undertake a Borough-wide characterisation study, as the information gathered would help with the implementation of this (LP 7.4) policy.”
- 5 We are concerned that there will be insufficient detail in Ealing’s proposed Development Management DPD to adequately inform the reaching of planning decisions and planning appeals. Much of the Borough lies outside Conservation Areas and therefore lacks any documentation of its local character.
- 6 This shortfall is compounded by the number of backland ex-employment sites which are coming forward for redevelopment in residential areas. The lack of an adequate policy framework documenting the character of these areas means that there is insufficient protection for the amenity of surrounding residents.
- 7 As a residents’ association we border north Brentford and took part as the Rule 6 Party in the recent Reynard Mills Planning Inquiry. We were impressed by the importance which the Inspector attached to Hounslow Council’s Character Area descriptions in reaching his recommendations, which were endorsed by the Secretary of State in his Decision Letter.
- 8 This experience has convinced us of the importance of Character Area descriptions when applying LP Policy 7.4 to planning decisions and appeals. We have forwarded copies of the Inquiry Report and associated documents for inclusion in the Examination Library.
- 9 Unlike neighbouring boroughs, Ealing submitted the following map based on accumulations of administrative electoral wards as part of its Core Strategy.

Map 12: Neighbourhood Areas in the London Borough of Ealing¹⁰³



- 10 It will be apparent that these boundaries do not bear any relationship to the criteria set out in LP Policy 7.4 or the GLA's Shaping Neighbourhoods SPG. It therefore appears that Ealing's Local Plan lacks any useable criteria for the assessment of planning applications for sites which lie outside the designated Conservation Areas or are not explicitly mentioned in the Sites DPD.

Detailed Planning Policies

- 11 Ealing's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) contains extensive and in some cases detailed policy guidance, much of which is summarised in boxes in the UDP Document. As the UDP was subject to public examination, the policy guidance carries considerable weight when it comes to the consideration of planning applications and appeals.
- 12 This level of detailed policy guidance is absent from the London Plan, and is therefore also absent from Ealing's draft Development Management DPD.
- 13 Ealing also has a set of local Supplementary Planning Guidelines (SPG's) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) which are derived from and amplify the application of the UDP.
- 14 It appears that these Ealing SPG's and SPD's will lapse when the Development Management DPD becomes operative.
- 15 The following is a list of SPG's and SPD's according to Ealing's planning policy website.
- SPG 1: Sustainability checklist
 - SPG 2: Water, drainage and flooding (draft)
 - SPG 3: Air quality (draft)
 - SPG 4 Refuse and recycling facilities
 - SPG 5: How to prepare an urban design statement
 - SPG 6: Plot ratio
 - SPG 7: Accessible Ealing
 - SPG 8: Safer Ealing
 - SPG 9: Trees and development guidelines
 - SPG 10: Noise and vibration
 - SPG 12: Greening your home (draft)
 - SPG 13: Garden space
 - SPG 14: Indoor living space (currently superceded by The London Plan's policy 3.5)
 - SPG 15: Residential care homes
 - SPG 16: Hostels
 - SPG 17: Babycare facilities
 - SPG 18: Places for eating, drinking and entertainment and advice notes

- SPG 20: Sustainable transport: transport assessments
- SPG 21: Sustainable transport: green travel plans
- SPD 2: Community facilities
- SPD 3: Low car housing in controlled parking zones
- SPD 4: Residential extensions
- SPD 7: Car clubs
- SPD 8: Crossovers and parking in front gardens
- SPD 9: SPD9 Legal Agreements, Planning Obligations and Planning Gain (draft)
- SPD10: Conservation areas and listed buildings (draft)

- 16 In the absence of detailed policy guidance within the Development Management Document DPD, the guidance within Ealing's SPG's and SPD's will become critical for the consistent and transparent consideration of planning applications.
- 17 According to briefings provided by planning policy officers it will not be possible to replace the above guidance by the time that they will lapse following the adoption of the Development Management DPD. This would result in the London Plan policies being supported by untested local guidance and documents.
- 18 Replacing policy guidance which has been subject to an examination with guidance that has not been subject to examination could be regarded as unsatisfactory because it dilutes the importance which can be attached to the guidance. To have no extant guidance at all is likely to compound the problem.
- 19 We consider this to be inequitable for residents as well as being unsound. We therefore request that this matter is given further consideration at the Examination of the Development Management DPD.

Changes proposed in EDM2

- 20 We are extremely concerned at the late proposal to reduce the provisions for Garden Space on Table 7D.2 of the post consultation document.
- 21 We believe these late changes to be unsound in that they represent a material reduction in amenity for residents and have not been subject to the same level of consultation as the earlier versions of this document.
- 22 We also note that the deleted space standards for houses and flats are established standards for Ealing and also form the basis of Ealing's current SPG on the subject.
- 23 The existing quantum of garden space is an integral feature of the Borough.
- 24 We therefore request that the previous minimum standards are reinstated.

Supporting documents

London Plan SPG on Shaping Neighbourhoods: Character and Context

<http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/planning/publications/shaping-neighbourhoods-character-and-context>

Hounslow Council's draft Character and Context Study for Brentford

By email

Reynard Mills Inquiry - Inspector's Report and associated documents

By email

Hounslow Council's Brentford Area Action Plan – Character Areas extract

http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/index/environment_and_planning/planning/planning_policy/localplan/brentford_area_action_plan.htm