

## **10. Built Environment**

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### Local Plan Aim

To maintain and enhance the quality, character and appearance of the built environment.

#### Key Objectives

1. To protect and enhance buildings of architectural or historic interest and their settings.
2. To protect and enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas and areas of special character.
3. To protect and enhance Scheduled Ancient Monuments and archaeological remains and their settings.
4. To ensure that shopfront design and advertisements make a positive contribution to the character of the street scene.
5. To facilitate the use of telecommunications equipment while protecting the appearance of the environment and residential amenity.
6. To minimise outdoor light pollution while balancing the requirements for public safety and the enhancement of the appearance of buildings and their settings.
7. To ensure new housing and education establishments are at least 50m away from overhead powerlines.

### 10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 The protection of the quality of the built environment is one of the most important planning issues. However, the protection and enhancement of the character and identity of the settlements in the Borough is particularly important because of the scale of the major development expected to come forward within the Plan period. Those buildings and their settings which make a contribution to the local environment are important both to the quality of life of local residents as well as the Borough's economic well-being. Investment in the Borough is influenced by the economic, cultural and retailing vitality which in turn depends to an increasing extent upon environmental quality. Major development within Kent Thameside is set to change the urban structure of the area considerably. It is essential, therefore, that the quality of the existing built environment and the amenity of local residents is appropriately protected from potential adverse impact arising from new development.

10.1.2 In some areas of the Borough, there is a strong positive character where the emphasis will be upon the need for conservation. Other areas comprise typical townscape value which is of local importance, while other areas have few positive attributes and offer scope for improvement. Policies relating to the quality of design of new development are largely covered in the Development and Design chapter. This chapter primarily, although not exclusively, sets out policies which seek to protect the amenity of existing areas in respect of development. The policy framework for Areas of Special Residential Character is set out in the Housing chapter.

### 10.2 Conservation Areas

10.2.1 Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local authorities from time to time to review the boundaries of existing conservation areas and designate new ones.

10.2.2 There are currently six conservation areas in the Borough. The boundaries of Dartford Town Centre, Greenhithe, Southfleet and Hook Green conservation areas were revised, following public consultation, in 1998. In addition, two new conservation areas - at Church Hill, Wilmington and Red Street - were formally designated in 1998.

10.2.3 Area appraisals have been prepared for each of the six conservation areas. They detail the origins and development of the conservation area, the predominant materials and styles, the contribution of individual buildings, important spaces, views and natural features and specific issues in respect of development control. These appraisals should be taken into account in the formulation of development proposals within a conservation area. The appraisals have been prepared in consultation with the public and have been the subject of a Council resolution. As supplementary planning guidance, therefore, they carry significant weight in determining applications both for planning permission and for conservation area consent. Copies of the appraisals are available from the Borough Council.

10.2.4 The broad criteria for the designation of new conservation areas and for review of conservation area boundaries is set out below. In designating new conservation areas and reviewing the boundaries of existing conservation areas during the life of the Plan, the prime consideration will be the quality and interest of the area, rather than that of individual buildings. The following criteria will be taken into account:

1. Origins and development of topographical features such as medieval road pattern, formal layouts and the relationship of buildings to open spaces.
2. Archaeological significance and potential, including any scheduled ancient monuments.
3. Architectural and historic quality, character and coherence of the buildings, both listed and unlisted, and the contribution they make to the special interest of the area.
4. Character and hierarchy of spaces and townscape quality.
5. Current mix of uses within the area and the influence of these on the plan form and building types.
6. Range of traditional materials prevalent in the area, particularly those which are characteristic of local vernacular styles.
7. Contribution made by greens or green spaces, trees, hedges and other natural or cultivated elements to the character of the area.
8. Relationship of the built environment to landscape or open countryside, including significant landmarks, vistas and panoramas, both within and out of the area.
9. Scaling and detailing of contemporary buildings.
10. Quality of advertisements, shop fronts, street furniture and hard and soft surfaces.
11. Features which detract from the special character of the area, such as traffic intrusion and its constraints on pedestrian movement.
12. Neutral features which neither enhance nor detract from the character or appearance of the area.

### **Demolition of Unlisted Buildings in a Conservation Area**

10.2.5 PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' provides advice about the role of development plans in promoting conservation policies. It sets out the general controls that apply in respect of proposals for the demolition of buildings in conservation areas. With some minor exceptions, proposals for the demolition of

unlisted buildings or structures in conservation areas require conservation area consent.

10.2.6 The general presumption should be in favour of retaining all unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. Proposals to demolish such buildings will be assessed against the same criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings (policy BE6). Those buildings or structures specifically identified within the area appraisals prepared for each of the conservation areas as having townscape value make a positive contribution. Other buildings not specifically identified may also fall into this category.

10.2.7 In cases where proposals would affect the character of a conservation area but where they are nonetheless acceptable, conservation area consent for demolition will be conditioned or made the subject of a legally binding agreement. The condition or agreement will require evidence, such as a contractual commitment, that the implementation of proposals for the redevelopment of the site is to proceed following demolition.

#### **BE1 Demolition of Unlisted Buildings in a Conservation Area**

**Proposals for the demolition or partial demolition of an unlisted building which makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area will not be permitted unless the criteria set out in policy BE6 are met. Proposals to demolish extensions to original buildings or outbuildings will be judged on their contribution to the overall character of the area and their relationship to the main building.**

**Proposals to demolish buildings which make little or no such contribution will only be permitted if there are acceptable and detailed plans for any redevelopment. Preference will be given to conversion as opposed to outright demolition of the building.**

#### **Development within a Conservation Area**

10.2.8 Conservation area designation is not a device for prohibiting change but rather, for ensuring that it is carried out sensitively and in a manner sympathetic to the character of the area. The Dartford Town Centre Conservation Area, for example, includes most of the commercial centre of the town. The conservation of the character and appearance of conservation areas will need to be balanced by the need for controlled and positive management of change.

10.2.9 In order to assess the likely impact of a planning application and its compliance with policies, detailed plans and drawings of proposed new developments, including elevations, will need to accompany any planning application. Outline applications for development in conservation areas will not be considered.

#### **BE2 New Development within a Conservation Area**

**Within a conservation area, proposals for new development will only be permitted if the following criteria are met:**

- 1. the scale, volume, form, materials and detailing respect the characteristics of buildings in the conservation area;**
- 2. the proposal incorporates a high standard of quality of design;**
- 3. local vernacular architectural features are incorporated;**

- 4. historically significant boundaries or other elements contributing to the established pattern of development in the area are retained;**
- 5. open spaces important to the character or appearance of the area are protected;**
- 6. important views within, into and out of the conservation area are protected; and**
- 7. trees and other landscape features contributing to the character or appearance of the conservation area are protected.**

#### **BE3 Alterations and Extensions to a Building in a Conservation Area**

**Proposals to alter or extend an unlisted building in a conservation area which requires planning permission will only be permitted if the following criteria are met:**

- 1. the design, scale, materials, colour and landscaping respect the characteristics of the original building;**
- 2. traditional features such as shop fronts, boundary walls and paved surfaces are retained and, where necessary, restored; and**
- 3. the proposal preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area.**

#### **BE4 Changes of Use of a Building in a Conservation Area**

**A change of use of a building in a conservation area will only be permitted if:**

- 1. the new use will not require any changes in the appearance or setting of the building other than those which will preserve or enhance its contribution towards the character or appearance of the conservation area; and**
- 2. the new use will not have an adverse impact on the surrounding conservation area arising from traffic generation, vehicle parking, noise or smell.**

### **10.3 Listed Buildings**

10.3.1 There are 215 listed buildings in the Borough, of which 10 are Grade II\* and 7 are Grade I. Listed buildings are a key element of the Borough's environmental heritage and character. The Council has a responsibility to protect them from unsympathetic alterations and from unsubstantiated proposals for demolition. The Council administers a grant scheme to help owners meet the additional costs which may arise with repairs to listed buildings because of the need to restore particular detailing or to use specialist materials or skills. However, where owners neglect buildings, enforcement action will be taken.

10.3.2 Listed building consent is normally required for the demolition, in whole or in part, and for any works of alteration or extension which would affect the character of a listed building. This policy applies to both a listed building and to structures and features within the curtilage of a listed building.

#### **BE5 Alteration, Extension or Minor or Partial Demolition of a Listed Building**

**Proposals for the alteration, extension or minor demolition of a listed building will not be permitted unless they would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the building and its setting and do not involve the loss of features or detailing of architectural or historic interest.**

#### **Total or Substantial Demolition of a Listed Building**

10.3.3 Demolition of a listed building is seldom justified. Proposals for demolition should establish that every effort has been made either to continue the current use or to find a suitable alternative use. Evidence should be provided that the building has been offered for sale on the open market for a period of not less than 12 months. Where offers have been made and not accepted, evidence should be provided as to why they are not acceptable. Consent to demolition will not be given because redevelopment is economically more attractive to the developer than repair.

#### **BE6 Total or Substantial Demolition of a Listed Building**

**Proposals for the total or substantial demolition of a listed building or structure will not be permitted unless all of the following criteria are satisfied:**

- 1. the building has little intrinsic importance and scarcity value;**
- 2. the building makes little contribution to the local scene;**
- 3. the building has little architectural or historic merit;**
- 4. alternative proposals for the site would bring substantial benefits for the community by contributing to the economic regeneration of the area and enhancement of the environment;**
- 5. the condition of the building is such that retention is not feasible in the opinion of the local authority; and**
- 6. the building has remained vacant for a considerable period of time and that real efforts have been made to continue the present use or find alternative uses for the building.**

#### **Change of Use of a Listed Building**

10.3.4 In assessing proposals for a change of use of a listed building, a balance will be sought between the economic viability of a particular use and any consequential physical changes which may affect the special architectural and historic interest of the building in question. In order to help secure the re-use and refurbishment of a listed building, the Council accepts that there will need to be some flexibility where new uses will help secure a building's survival.

#### **BE7 Change of Use of a Listed Building**

**A change of use of part or the whole of a listed building will only be granted if the character and features of special architectural or historic interest would be preserved or enhanced.**

#### **BE8 Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building**

**Proposals for development will not be permitted if they would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.**

### **10.4 Areas of Special Character**

10.4.1 Some areas of the Borough have local character and historic interest, although they do not merit formal conservation area status. These Areas of Special Character (ASCs) are:

- Broadditch Pond, Southfleet
- Darenth Road, Darenth Hill, Darenth

- New Town, Dartford
- St Johns Jerusalem, Sutton-at-Hone
- Tower Road and Miskin Road, Dartford
- Westwood

10.4.2 An appraisal of the special character of each of these areas was set out in draft supplementary planning guidance, published in 2000. Following public consultation, five of these were adopted as supplementary planning guidance and will be taken into account in determining future development proposals. The remaining one (Tower Road and Miskin Road) was the subject of objection and will be resolved through the Local Plan review process.

10.4.3 In identifying new ASCs and reviewing the boundaries of existing ASCs, the prime consideration will be the quality and interest of the area, rather than that of individual buildings. Similar criteria for reviewing and designating conservation areas, set out in para 10.2.4 above will be taken into account in defining the boundaries of new ASCs and reviewing existing ASC boundaries.

#### **BE9 Areas of Special Character**

**Within the Areas of Special Character shown on the Proposals Map, development proposals for new development, alterations, extensions, demolition or changes of use will only be permitted if:**

- 1. the special character of the area is maintained or enhanced; and**
- 2. there would be no loss of those buildings, features or spaces which make a positive character to the special character of the area.**

#### **10.5 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Sites of Archaeological Interest**

10.5.1 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and PPG16 'Archaeology and Planning' state that local authorities need to protect scheduled ancient monuments from development proposals likely to affect their setting or historic value. Consultation with English Heritage will be necessary where development proposals are likely to affect a scheduled ancient monument. It is also desirable for English Heritage to be consulted about proposals affecting unscheduled sites.

10.5.2 There are currently 12 scheduled ancient monuments (SAMs) in the Borough, shown on the Proposals Map. There is a presumption in favour of the physical preservation of these SAMs, listed below, and other nationally important archaeological remains and their settings.

<b>Monument Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
Medieval woodland boundary in Darenth Wood	Darenth
Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Darenth Park	Darenth
A major Roman villa, an Anglo-Saxon settlement and prehistoric remains 600 metres SSE of Darenth Court Farm	Darenth
Faesten Dic, a medieval frontier work in Joydens Wood	Joydens Wood
Springhead Roman site	Southfleet
Roman enclosure SE of Vagniacae	Southfleet
Monastic grange at Friary Court	Southfleet
A preceptory of the Knights Hospitallers, known as St John's Jerusalem, and an associated fishpond at Sutton-	Sutton-at-Hone

at-Hone	
Palaeolithic sites near Baker's Hole	Swanscombe
Neolithic sites near Ebbsfleet	Swanscombe
Icehouse at Clock House	Green Street Green
Hawley Manor dovecote	Hawley

#### **BE10 Scheduled Ancient Monuments**

**Development on or near the site of a scheduled ancient monument which would have an adverse impact on the archaeological interest or its setting will not be permitted.**

### **10.6 Protection of Non Scheduled Sites of Archaeological Value**

1.6.1 In addition to the formally scheduled sites, there are others of more local, regional or national importance. The archaeological significance of such sites will be taken into account in assessing the development proposals which might affect them. Developers should consult the Local Planning Authority prior to the submission of a planning application, in order to establish possible archaeological implications of any proposals. In certain cases, developers may be expected to provide information on the nature and quality of any archaeological remains on the site of the proposed development. Development on important archaeological sites should be avoided, but where this is not possible, a full archaeological investigation will be required prior to any development, in consultation with the County Archaeological Officer.

#### **BE11 Protection of Non Scheduled Sites of Archaeological Value**

**Planning permission will only be granted for development which would have a detrimental effect upon the remains of non scheduled sites of local, regional or national archaeological value if the importance of the development outweighs the local value of the remains. If planning permission is granted, conditions will be imposed to ensure that the remains are properly recorded, evaluated and, where practicable, preserved.**

### **10.7 Design of Shopfronts**

10.7.1 Shops and their shopfronts form a very important visual element in the street scene, both individually and in terms of their collective design and impact. The design of shopfronts should have proper regard to their relationship with their surroundings. Good shopfront design should respect the form and character of the structure above and be seen as an integral part of the building. The architectural style, form and character of the building where the shopfront is proposed should be reflected in the shopfront design. Where appropriate, designs should develop and enhance local character and avoid presenting blank frontages to town centres. They should add interest and variety and reflect the local context.

10.7.2 Businesses should adapt their "house style" in order to take account of the character of both the building and the area, including the existing street frontage. While acknowledging that changes in retailing methods, maintenance, protection and a desire for innovation lead to pressures to replace and change the character of traditional shopfronts, this needs to be balanced against the contribution a shopfront design makes to the character of the building and the local area.

10.7.3 Supplementary planning guidance on the design of shopfronts, which gives both details and examples of good design, is available from the Council.

## **BE12 Design of Shopfronts**

**A new shopfront or an alteration to an existing shopfront will only be permitted if it preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the building and its setting by:**

- 1. treating the shop front as part of the design, scale and character of the whole building and its location in the street scene. Traditional shop fronts are most appropriate for historic buildings (pre-1950), while high quality modern design will be preferred for newer buildings;**
- 2. repairing and retaining an historic shop front or historic features in a shop front;**
- 3. ensuring the entrance is a strong element in the composition. Recessed doorways should be retained where present;**
- 4. designing the stallriser not less than 50 cm high as a general guide, and incorporating a cill in buildings with a traditional shopfront;**
- 5. avoiding large plate glass windows in traditional buildings by using mullions and transoms to break up the window into smaller compartments;**
- 6. designing the fascia in scale, depth and width relative to other elements of the shopfront and height of the building as a whole. As a general guide, the depth of the fascia should not exceed a fifth of the shopfront height. The fascia should not encroach above first floor level and not extend uninterrupted across a number of buildings;**
- 7. incorporating pilasters, corbels and cornice as framing elements to the composition of the traditional shopfront;**
- 8. making any blind or canopy an integral part of the design and detailing of the shopfront. Retractable, canvas flat roller blinds are preferred in traditional shopfronts. The use of plastic, wet-look or stretch fabrics for blinds may be appropriate but will not be acceptable in conservation areas;**
- 9. using traditional or natural materials. Painted softwood will usually be appropriate - the use of non-sustainable tropical hardwoods will not be acceptable. Other materials, such as aluminium, perspex and plastics materials may be appropriate for modern shopfronts. Rich, dark colours will be preferred in traditional shopfronts; and**
- 10. using either internal lattice, toughened glass or removable grilles, incorporated into the basic shopfront design. External shutters will not be acceptable in conservation areas.**

## **10.8 Advertisements**

10.8.1 Excessive or poorly sited advertisements can have a damaging effect upon the quality of the local environment. Clear, legible and informative signs can make a positive and worthwhile contribution to the street scene. However, there is a need to avoid clutter and the duplication of information. Illuminated advertisements in predominantly residential areas, such as petrol-filling stations and bus shelters, must not materially affect the amenity of the neighbouring residential properties.

10.8.2 Advertisement hoardings frequently detract from their immediate environment and are not compatible with the aim of maintaining and enhancing the quality, character and appearance of the built environment. In most locations, advertisement hoardings would be detrimental to the quality of the environment.

## **BE13 Advertisements**

**Consent will only be given for the display of an advertisement, including an advertisement hoarding, which accords with the interests of public safety and amenity if the following criteria are met:**

- 1. it will not detract from the appearance of the area;**
- 2. the size, design, siting and degree of any illumination of an advertisement is in character with the building, if the advertisement is attached to one, and the surrounding area;**
- 3. there is no proliferation of advertisements and signs which would adversely affect the visual amenity of an area; and**
- 4. it will not present a hazard to pedestrians or other traffic.**

**Shopfront signs and advertisements should achieve high quality design by**

- 1. designing the lettering to reflect the proportions of the fascia and the quality and character of the shopfront;**
- 2. using small, traditional hanging signs rather than bulky, modern, projecting box signs. In conservation areas and on listed buildings, wooden hand-painted hanging or projecting signs will be preferred.**
- 3. using externally illuminated signs rather than those which are internally illuminated. Signs where the illumination directly forms any part of the legend of the advertisement, such as neon signs, will not be permitted where there is likely to be a material adverse impact on visual amenity; and**
- 4. restricting the display of advertisement material on shop premises to fascia level.**

**Consent for proposals for illuminated signage on petrol-filling stations or other roadside facilities will only be given where they do not have an adverse visual impact upon neighbouring residential properties.**

### **Area of Special Control of Advertisements**

10.8.3 An Area of Special Control of Advertisements (ASCA) is proposed to cover the Metropolitan Green Belt within the Borough. Public consultation is to be carried out separately from the Local Plan Review and was undertaken in spring 2000. Following public consultation in spring 2000, an ASCA was made and submitted to the Secretary of State for approval in October 2000. A decision is still awaited. The scale of development proposed within Kent Thameside over the coming years could generate pressures for certain advertising over which there is currently only limited control. An area of special control of advertisements covering the Green Belt would provide a stricter degree of advertisement control in order to conserve the visual amenity of the rural area of the Borough.

### **10.9 Telecommunication Masts and Aerials**

10.9.1 PPG8 'Telecommunications' states that it is Government policy to facilitate the growth of new and existing telecommunications systems whilst keeping environmental impact to a minimum. In connection with this, developers will be encouraged to provide cabling for broadband access in all new developments. In sensitive locations, masts and other structures can cause adverse impact upon the built or natural environment. The Green Belt, sites of special scientific interest and conservation areas are of particular concern, and it is important for the visual impact of radio and telecommunications equipment to be kept to a minimum.

10.9.2 The Council will seek to ensure that the siting and design of the equipment provide a visually acceptable solution consistent with operational requirements. Much minor telecommunications development is permitted development, but is subject to a prior approval procedure. However the smallest antenna systems will normally be

regarded as de minimis. If the Council believes a particular area is vulnerable to the visual impact of telecommunication proposals, it may serve an Article 4 Direction and require planning applications.

10.9.2a The Council has prepared a register of sites in the Borough that might be suitable for new telecommunications development. These comprise existing masts, buildings and other structures where mast sharing is encouraged. The register is available from the Borough Council.

10.9.2b Telecommunications operators have a responsibility towards the general public under health and safety legislation. It is for the Health and Safety Executive to enforce these requirements, rather than the local planning authority. Current scientific research suggests there is no general risk to the health of people living near to base stations.

10.9.3 Where planning permission is required, legal agreements may be sought with developers that spare capacity within new installations will be made available for shared use with other organisations requiring similar facilities. Conditions may be imposed requiring the removal of masts and structures upon the cessation of use, controlling the design and colour of masts and their fittings, and the landscaping and screening of masts.

#### **BE14 Telecommunication Masts and Aerials**

**Proposals for telecommunications developments will be permitted unless:**

- 1. there would be a material adverse impact upon the landscape quality of the rural area, the openness of the green belt, the amenity of the urban area, or the architectural or historic quality of a listed building, Conservation Area, area of special character, or area of special residential character;**
- 2. there are other less obtrusive, suitable sites available;**
- 3. there are practicable and desirable alternatives of securing the development either by mast sharing or use of an existing structure;**
- 4. the proposal would result in a loss of mature trees; or**
- 5. the proposal would adversely affect the visual integrity of the building on which it would be sited.**

**Any development should be sited and designed so as to minimise its visual impact, having regard to technical and operational considerations, and must be removed once it is no longer required.**

#### **10.10 Satellite Dishes**

10.10.0a The installation of most satellite dishes is permitted under the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1995, and therefore does not require permission from the local authority. However, it is a condition of the permitted development right that a satellite antenna should be sited so as to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building on which it is installed. If the local authority consider an antenna has not been installed in the best position, it may intervene by serving a breach of condition notice requiring its re-siting. The circumstances in which the Council may intervene will be where a satellite antenna has been installed above a ridge line of a dwelling or in close proximity of an overlooking window of a neighbouring property.

10.10.1 Revised PPG8 explains the circumstances when planning permission is likely to be required for the installation of satellite dishes and aerials. Where permission is

necessary, the visual impact upon the locality should be minimised, particularly in conservation areas and on listed buildings. Proposals to erect satellite dishes on any listed building will require listed building consent.

#### **BE15 Satellite Dishes**

**Proposals for satellite dishes which require planning permission or listed building consent will only be permitted where the size, colour and design respect the character of the area and cause minimal harm to the visual amenities of the street or rural scene. Dishes should be mounted in unexposed positions wherever possible.**

### **10.11 Outdoor Lighting**

10.11.1 Outdoor lighting is important both for public safety, including crime prevention, and enhancing the visual appearance of buildings and their settings. However, light spillage can be intrusive in certain areas, particularly in the countryside. Poorly designed and badly aligned lighting can blur the separation between town and countryside. Urban areas also suffer from insensitive lighting to buildings, distribution depots, car sales and transport infrastructure. Sports floodlighting can be similarly intrusive, especially for adjoining residential areas.

10.11.2A lighting impact appraisal will be required in order to assist in the assessment of proposals in sensitive locations such as residential areas. Planning conditions will be imposed regulating lighting intensity, directional shielding and hours of use.

#### **BE16 Outdoor Lighting**

**Proposals for lighting which require planning permission will only be permitted if the following criteria are met:**

- 1. the lighting is designed as an integrated element of the development;**
- 2. low energy lighting is used;**
- 3. the alignment of lamps and the provision of shielding minimises spillage and glow;**
- 4. the lighting intensity is no greater than necessary to provide adequate illumination;**
- 5. proposals to floodlight building façades, shop fronts and signs must respect the character and appearance of the area and not result in a significant loss of privacy or amenity for nearby residential properties, arising from unnecessary glare and light pollution;**
- 6. proposals to floodlight sports fields and sporting facilities, business premises and places of entertainment must not result in a significant loss of privacy or amenity for nearby residential properties or cause unnecessary glare to pedestrians and other road users.**

### **10.12 Overhead Power Lines**

10.12.2 Overhead power lines (defined as power lines supported by steel latticework towers carrying more than 66 kV of electricity supply) can have a significant impact upon the visual amenity of a development. Placing underground or removing existing overhead power lines would over time result in a significant improvement to the visual amenity of the area, particularly in the immediate environment of North

Dartford. However, this is likely to be a gradual process which may take some time. The Borough Council will work with the public utilities liaison organisation to enhance the visual amenity of the area by seeking a reduction in the number of overhead power cables and phone lines.

10.12.2a For reasons of amenity, it is important that overhead power line-sensitive development is located sufficiently far from overhead power lines to minimise intrusion. Steel latticework towers are large and dominant structures and the opportunities to mitigate their effect on new development adjacent to an existing overhead line are restricted. Overhead lines and substations also generate noise, particularly those carrying high voltages. A low frequency hum from high voltage overhead lines can be particularly audible during rainfall and can cause disturbance. As with visual impact, the opportunities to mitigate significantly the effects of noise from an overhead line are limited.

10.12.2b It is important for the purposes of good planning to ensure that sensitive development is located at a sensible distance from highly-intrusive overhead power lines. The infrastructure associated with overhead power lines can have a significant detrimental impact upon amenity, particularly residential amenity. A 50 metre margin either side of a power line will reduce the impact arising particularly from visual intrusion and noise associated with high voltage cables.

10.12.3 As a precautionary measure, therefore, developers will be expected to reduce the impact of overhead power lines upon people. The preferred planning solution is for the power lines either to be removed or placed underground. However, proposals for alternative methods of mitigation will be considered provided these are compatible with the objective of securing high quality design. Sensitive forms of development will be required to be located a distance of 50 metres from overhead power lines to help reduce both the visual and noise impact of power lines and pylons. These forms of development will vary from place to place but in general, overhead powerline-sensitive development is defined as new build or conversion to residential development, new schools, colleges and other places of higher education. It therefore does not include extensions or alterations to existing buildings.

**BE17 Overhead Power Lines**

**Planning permission will not be granted for overhead powerline-sensitive development in locations which lie within a distance of 50 metres either side of an overhead power line to safeguard visual amenity and minimise intrusion from noise.**

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