

Statement of Common Ground between London Borough of Merton and Historic England

On Stage 2 Inspectors' Matters, Issues and Questions: Matter 4 'Tall Buildings'

This revised Statement of Common Ground is in response to Matter 4 'Tall Buildings' of the Inspectors' Stage 2 Matters, Issues and Questions.

These follow the attendance from both parties at Merton's Local Plan Stage 1 Examination Hearings on Matter 13 'Tall Buildings' on 22nd June 2022 where the Inspectors raised questions on the suggested modifications that are captured in the [Statement of Common Ground between London Borough of Merton and Historic England](#), Appendix 1. This Statement of Common Ground supersedes the Stage 1 version appended.

The page and paragraph numbers within this document are based on [Submitted Document 0D1 Merton's Local Plan Stage 3 Regulation 19 July 2021](#) and [LBM05 Merton's Local Plan incorporating proposed modifications dated 20 May 2022](#).

Areas of agreement

Historic England and Merton Council are committed pro-actively managing the development of tall buildings and recognises the need for positive action. It is agreed that the plan must address tall buildings, including in the context of heritage.

Both parties agree to recommend the proposed main modifications to the Planning Inspectors.

Proposed Modifications:

MAIN MODIFICATION

p.408 (0D1) or p.418 (LBM05)

Amend D12.6 (part 2) criterion a, b and c

The council will generally support tall building in those locations set out in part 1 of this policy where:

- a. Their massing, bulk and height are appropriately sized and located and demonstrate they ~~do not undermine~~ take into account local character and heritage assets and their settings through townscape analysis of short, mid and long views; ~~taking into account individual and cumulative effects.~~
- b. They ~~enhance~~ avoid harm to the setting and significance of ~~/or relationship with~~ neighbouring heritage assets.
- c. They are of ~~exceptional~~ exemplary design and architectural quality.

Reason: to set a positive strategy for the historic environment and effectiveness, and to better align with the language of the NPPF, London Plan and statutory obligations of legislation – Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990

MAIN MODIFICATION

p.409 (0D1) or p.419 (LBM05)

Additional criterion D12.6 (part 3)

Development proposals for tall buildings should be supported by:

- a. Adequate information demonstrating how the proposals comply with all the criteria within section 2 of this policy, and within the London Plan policy on tall buildings to ensure that the proposal have considered visual, townscape and heritage impacts.

Reason: to align with London Plan policy D3 and to set a positive strategy for the historic environment.

MAIN MODIFICATION

p.411 (0D1) or p.425 (LBM05)

Amend D12.6 supporting text 12.6.5

Merton's Borough Character Study SPD provides more detail of different character areas within the borough and a framework for character-led tall buildings that highlights good practice design approaches. ~~gives holistic guidance on best practice design approach on tall buildings. highlighting the importance of a sites suitability and sensitivity.~~

Reason: to align with London Plan policy D3 and to set a positive strategy for the historic environment.

MAIN MODIFICATION

p.411 (0D1) or p.425 (LBM05)

Additional criterion after D12.6 supporting text 12.6.8

Tall buildings should be part of a positive strategy for the historic environment and avoid harm to the significance of heritage assets and their settings. In line with the London Plan, proposals resulting in harm will require clear and convincing justification, including what alternatives were explored and what public benefits outweigh the harm.

Reason: to align with London Plan policy D9 C. part D and to set a positive strategy for the historic environment.

Signatories

Both parties agree that this statement is an accurate representation of matters discussed and issues agreed upon.

Signed for London Borough of Merton by:

Name - Tara Butler

Job Title – Deputy Manager, Future Merton

Signature - 

Date – 21 September 2022

Signed for Historic England by:

Name – Katie Parsons

Job Title – Historic Environment Planning Adviser

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Date – 21st September 2022

Appendix 1

Superseded Stage 1 Statement of Common Ground on Tall Buildings between Merton Council and Historic England.

Dated 13th June 2022

Statement of Common Ground between London Borough of Merton and Historic England

On draft policies D12.6 *Tall Buildings*

The comments below follows submission of [Hearing Statements](#) from both parties including proposed main modifications relating to Matter 13, Tall Buildings on 25th May 2022 and a duty to cooperate meeting 23/05/22.

Appendix 1, attached, sets out Historic England's position on the Council's revised modifications relevant to Matter 13. The amendments generally make improved references to heritage, individual assets, and the need to reinforce and respect local character. However, some additional amendments are recommended.

The page and paragraph numbers within this document are based on [Submitted Document 0D1 Merton's Local Plan Stage 3 Regulation 19 July 2021](#) and [LBM05 Merton's Local Plan incorporating proposed modifications dated 20 May 2022](#).

Areas of agreement

Historic England and Merton Council are committed pro-actively managing the development of tall buildings and recognises the need for positive action. It is agreed that the plan must address tall buildings, including in the context of heritage.

Both parties agree to recommend the proposed main and additional modifications to the Planning Inspectors

Suggested Modifications:

MAIN MODIFICATION page 408 (0D1) or page 418 (LBM05), amend criterion between D12.6 (new part 2)(b)

D12.6 (new Part 2).(b) *They enhance the setting and significance of ~~for relationship with~~ neighbouring heritage assets.*

Reason: to set a positive strategy for the historic environment and effectiveness, and to better align with the language of the NPPF, and statutory obligations of legislation – Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990

MAIN MODIFICATION Page 409 (0D1) or page 418 (LBM05), Criterion A

Adding to D12.6 (new Part 2) Criterion (a).

Their massing, bulk and height are appropriately sized and located and demonstrate they do not undermine local character and heritage assets and their settings through townscape analysis of short, mid and long views, taking into account individual and cumulative effects.

Reason: to set a positive strategy for the historic environment and effectiveness, and to align with London Plan Policy D9 part 4a regarding cumulative harm.

MAIN MODIFICATION Page 410 (0D1) or page 419 (LBM05), insert additional criterion D12.6 (3)

Justification paragraph between 12.6.6 and 12.6.7

12.6.6 Not all tall buildings need to be iconic landmarks. If tall buildings form a cluster or in close proximity to others, they should not compete and their composition must be considered.

NEW PARA Tall buildings should be part of a positive strategy for the historic environment and avoid harm to the significance of heritage assets and their settings. In line with the London Plan, proposals resulting in harm will require clear and convincing justification, including what alternatives were explored and what public benefits outweigh the harm.

12.6.7 Applicants should be prepared to provide 3D digital models to analyse how their tall buildings are placed within the context of the borough and beyond, assessing cumulative impacts of both existing and permitted, but not yet completed, schemes.

Reason: to align with London Plan policy D9 C. part D and to set a positive strategy for the historic environment.

Suggested modification

Insert new paragraph after 12.6.7

NEW PARA All proposals for tall buildings must take a design-led approach and be accompanied by adequate information demonstrating how the proposals comply with all the criteria within section 2 of this policy, and within the London Plan policy on tall

buildings, to ensure that the proposal has positive visual, townscape and heritage impacts.

This modification, in the context of the totality of the plan, provides an additional layer of heritage protection to ensure that adequate information, which demonstrates how applicants have considered criteria A, B, and C of Merton's Local Plan policy D12.6 (new Part 2) is provided upfront. In the first instance more evidence and testing would be completed at plan-making stage and so this modification is warranted as it provides a better policy justification for decision makers who may need to request further information to make a sound decision at application stage. It is also helpful for applicants and provides clarity as to what is expected in terms of demonstrating that they have taken a design-led approach.

Reason: to align with London Plan policy D3 and to set a positive strategy for the historic environment.

Amend:

12.6.5 Merton's Borough Character Study provides more detail of the different character areas within the borough. ~~gives holistic guidance on best practice design approach highlighting the importance of a site's suitability and sensitivity.~~

Reason: to align with London Plan policy D9 B, and to set a positive strategy for the historic environment.

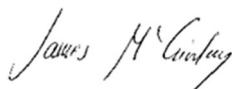
Signatories

Both parties agree that this statement is an accurate representation of matters discussed and issues agreed upon.

Signed for London Borough of Merton by:

Name -

Job Title –



Signature -

Date – 13th June 2022

Signed for Historic England by:

Name – Katie Parsons

Job Title – Historic Environment Planning Adviser

Signature - 

Date – 25 May 2022

Appendix 1. HE comments on proposed modifications dated 20th May 2022 – Matter 13

Consistent use of terminology (in [LBM04 - Proposed Additional Modifications to Merton's Local Plan dated 20 May 2022](#))

				HE comments
AM1.9	14	3 rd para under 'Density and mixed uses'	In accordance with the London Plan 2021, taller buildings are one form of high-density development that can be appropriate in some the locations identified in this plan, subject to excellent design, good public transport accessibility and impact on existing character, heritage and townscape. ...	Agree This provides additional clarity and overcomes our concerns in this respect of terminology
AM1.9	93	Site Allocation CW2, Approach to tall buildings	A mixed-use redevelopment within the site could include taller buildings subject to consideration of impacts on existing character, heritage and townscape and based on the principle of the existing Britannia Point being the pinnacle height of a family of buildings of varying height, forming a coherent cluster that enhances the wider Colliers Wood area.	Agree This provides additional clarity and overcomes our concerns in this respect of terminology
AM1.9	121	Site allocation Mi1, Approach to tall buildings	The size of the site allows for a masterplanned approach which could contain taller buildings...	Agree This provides additional clarity and overcomes our concerns in this respect of terminology
AM1.9	161	Site allocation Mi16, Approach to tall buildings	A mixed-use redevelopment of the site could include taller buildings...	Agree This provides additional clarity and overcomes our concerns in this respect of terminology
AM1.9	202	Site Allocation Mo4, Design and accessibility guidance	In accordance with the Strategic Heights Diagram for the Morden Regeneration Zone a plan-led approach (MM3.1), taller buildings would be acceptable in this town centre site, to ensuring the best use of this land that benefits from excellent public transport accessibility.	Agree This provides additional clarity and overcomes our concerns in this respect of terminology

AM1.9	233	Site Allocation RP3, Approach to tall buildings	The size of the whole site RP.3 allows for a master planned approach which could contain taller buildings...	Agree This provides additional clarity and overcomes our concerns in this respect of terminology
AM1.9	383	12.2.5	The design of new buildings, particularly taller buildings, on sites in close proximity to designated open spaces and MOL needs to consider the amenity, quality and use of the open space.	Agree This provides additional clarity and overcomes our concerns in this respect of terminology

AM9.1	267	Wimbledon Policy N9.1 part e	Respecting views from Wimbledon Hill through the town centre and beyond, with taller developments set at St George's Road , away from the historic core, located around the station, St George's Road, Hartfield Road and Broadway East .	Agree We note the additional explanation provided by the Council regarding the retention of the word 'taller' in Policy N9.1 part e – the Council consider it to be appropriate, because in this context 'taller developments' is referring to an approach or strategy, rather than the defined criteria of a 'tall building'. This explanation resolves our concerns. Ideally this explanation might be referenced in the supporting text of the plan to provide clarity for readers and decision makers to justify the exception.
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Site Allocations (in [LBM03 - Proposed Main Modifications to Merton's Local Plan dated 20 May 2022](#))

				HE comments
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MM3.2	93	Site Allocation CW2, Approach to tall buildings	<p>A mixed-use redevelopment within the site could include taller (AM1.9) buildings subject to consideration of impacts on existing character, heritage and townscape and based on the principle of the existing Britannia Point being the pinnacle height of a family of buildings of varying height, forming a coherent cluster that enhances the wider Colliers Wood area.</p> <p><u>The Strategic Heights Diagram for the Colliers Wood Town Centre, in D12.6 'Tall buildings', sets out the height limits for this. However, all building heights will be subject to consideration of impacts on existing character, heritage and townscape in accordance with policies D12.3 'Ensuring high quality design for all developments', D12.5 'Managing heritage assets' and D12.6 'Tall buildings'</u></p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>The policy is clearer and added heritage considerations are supported.</p>
MM4.2	146	Site Allocation Mi11 Raleigh Gardens car park, Approach to tall buildings	<p>Approach to tall buildings: Development of the site could include taller buildings subject to consideration of impacts on existing character, heritage and townscape.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Site is not appropriate for a tall building.</p>
MM4.3	159, 161	Site Allocation Mi16 Mitcham Gasworks Western Road, Indicative site capacity (p 159), Approach to tall buildings (p161)	<p>Indicative site capacity: 200-400 <u>Around 650 new homes</u></p> <p>...</p> <p>Approach to tall buildings: A mixed-use redevelopment of the site could include taller buildings <u>of up to 10 storeys</u> subject to consideration of <u>design policies, along with a replacement telecoms mast on top of the tallest building.</u> impacts on existing character, heritage and townscape.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>The policy is clearer and added heritage considerations are supported.</p>
MM9.3	281	Site Allocation Wi2	<p>Approach to taller buildings.</p> <p>Development of the site could include taller buildings subject to consideration of impacts on the setting of the adjacent listed building, existing character and townscape and in line with the height parameters set out in the Future Wimbledon SPD. <u>The Strategic Heights Diagram for Wimbledon Town Centre, in D12.6 'Tall buildings', sets out the height limits for this.</u></p> <p><u>However, all building heights will be subject to consideration of impacts on existing character, heritage and townscape in accordance with policies D12.3 'Ensuring high quality design for all developments', D12.5 'Managing heritage assets' and D12.6 'Tall buildings' and have regard to the Future Wimbledon SPD.</u></p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>The policy is clearer and added heritage considerations are supported.</p>
MM9.3	288	Site Allocation Wi5	Approach to tall buildings.	Agree

			<p>Development of the site could include taller buildings subject to consideration of impacts on the setting of the adjacent listed building, existing character and townscape and in line with the height parameters set out in the Future Wimbledon SPD. The Strategic Heights Diagram for Wimbledon Town Centre, in D12.6 'Tall buildings', sets out the height limits for this.</p> <p>However, all building heights will be subject to consideration of impacts on existing character, heritage and townscape in accordance with policies D12.3 'Ensuring high quality design for all developments', D12.5 'Managing heritage assets' and D12.6 'Tall buildings' and have regard to the Future Wimbledon SPD.</p>	<p>The policy is clearer and added heritage considerations are supported.</p>
MM9.3	290	Site Allocation Wi6	<p>Approach to tall buildings.</p> <p>Development of the site could include taller buildings subject to consideration of impacts on the setting of the adjacent listed building, existing character and townscape and in line with the height parameters set out in the Future Wimbledon SPD. The Strategic Heights Diagram for Wimbledon Town Centre, in D12.6 'Tall buildings', sets out the height limits for this.</p> <p>However, all building heights will be subject to consideration of impacts on existing character, heritage and townscape in accordance with policies D12.3 'Ensuring high quality design for all developments', D12.5 'Managing heritage assets' and D12.6 'Tall buildings' and have regard to the Future Wimbledon SPD.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>The policy is clearer and added heritage considerations are supported.</p>
MM9.3	299	Site Allocation Wi9	<p>Approach to tall buildings.</p> <p>Development of the site could include taller buildings subject to consideration of impacts on the setting of the adjacent listed building, existing character and townscape and in line with the height parameters set out in the Future Wimbledon SPD. The Strategic Heights Diagram for Wimbledon Town Centre, in D12.6 'Tall buildings', sets out the height limits for this.</p> <p>However, all building heights will be subject to consideration of impacts on existing character, heritage and townscape in accordance with policies D12.3 'Ensuring high quality design for all developments', D12.5 'Managing heritage assets' and D12.6 'Tall buildings' and</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>The policy is clearer and added heritage considerations are supported.</p>

			have regard to the Future Wimbledon SPD.	
MM9.3	302	Site Allocation Wi10	<p>Approach to tall buildings.</p> <p>Development of the site could include taller buildings subject to consideration of impacts on the setting of the adjacent listed building, existing character and townscape and in line with the height parameters set out in the Future Wimbledon SPD.The Strategic Heights Diagram for Wimbledon Town Centre, in D12.6 'Tall buildings', sets out the height limits for this.</p> <p>However, all building heights will be subject to consideration of impacts on existing character, heritage and townscape in accordance with policies D12.3 'Ensuring high quality design for all developments', D12.5 'Managing heritage assets' and D12.6 'Tall buildings' and have regard to the Future Wimbledon SPD.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>The policy is clearer and added heritage considerations are supported.</p>
MM9.3	305	Site Allocation Wi11	<p>Approach to tall buildings.</p> <p>Development of the site could include taller buildings subject to consideration of impacts on the setting of the adjacent listed building, existing character and townscape and in line with the height parameters set out in the Future Wimbledon SPD.The Strategic Heights Diagram for Wimbledon Town Centre, in D12.6 'Tall buildings', sets out the height limits for this.</p> <p>However, all building heights will be subject to consideration of impacts on existing character, heritage and townscape in accordance with policies D12.3 'Ensuring high quality design for all developments', D12.5 'Managing heritage assets' and D12.6 'Tall buildings' and have regard to the Future Wimbledon SPD.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>The policy is clearer and added heritage considerations are supported.</p>
MM9.6	308	Site Allocation Wi12	<p>Approach to tall buildings</p> <p>Development of the site could include taller buildings <u>of up to 10 storeys</u> subject to consideration of impacts on existing character and townscape. subject to consideration of impacts on existing character and townscape in accordance with policies D12.3 'Ensuring high quality design for all developments' and D12.6 'Tall buildings'.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>The policy is clearer and added heritage considerations are supported.</p>
MM9.3	311	Site Allocation Wi13	<p>Approach to tall buildings.</p> <p>Development of the site could include taller buildings subject to consideration of impacts on the setting of the adjacent listed building, existing character and townscape and in line with the height</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>The policy is clearer and added heritage considerations are supported.</p>

			<p>parameters set out in the Future Wimbledon SPD. The Strategic Heights Diagram for Wimbledon Town Centre, in D12.6 'Tall buildings', sets out the height limits for this.</p> <p>However, all building heights will be subject to consideration of impacts on existing character, heritage and townscape in accordance with policies D12.3 'Ensuring high quality design for all developments', D12.5 'Managing heritage assets' and D12.6 'Tall buildings' and have regard to the Future Wimbledon SPD.</p>	
MM9.3	314	Site Allocation Wi15	<p>Approach to tall buildings.</p> <p>Development of the site could include taller buildings subject to consideration of impacts on the setting of the adjacent listed building, existing character and townscape and in line with the height parameters set out in the Future Wimbledon SPD. The Strategic Heights Diagram for Wimbledon Town Centre, in D12.6 'Tall buildings', sets out the height limits for this.</p> <p>However, all building heights will be subject to consideration of impacts on existing character, heritage and townscape in accordance with policies D12.3 'Ensuring high quality design for all developments', D12.5 'Managing heritage assets' and D12.6 'Tall buildings' and have regard to the Future Wimbledon SPD.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>The policy is clearer and added heritage considerations are supported.</p>
MM9.3	318	Site Allocation Wi16	<p>Approach to tall buildings.</p> <p>Development of the site could include taller buildings subject to consideration of impacts on the setting of the adjacent listed building, existing character and townscape and in line with the height parameters set out in the Future Wimbledon SPD. The Strategic Heights Diagram for Wimbledon Town Centre, in D12.6 'Tall buildings', sets out the height limits for this.</p> <p>However, all building heights will be subject to consideration of impacts on existing character, heritage and townscape in accordance with policies D12.3 'Ensuring high quality design for all developments', D12.5 'Managing heritage assets' and D12.6 'Tall buildings' and have regard to the Future Wimbledon SPD.</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>The policy is clearer and added heritage considerations are supported.</p>