

Basement Development

A1.35 Although subterranean developments can help to make efficient use of the Borough's land it is important that this is done in a way that does not cause harm to the amenity of neighbours, affect the stability of buildings, cause drainage or flooding problems, or damage the historic or architectural character of the street scene or adversely affect the natural environment. Applicants will be required to fund the independent assessment of structural reports provided in support of proposals for basement development.

A1.36 The Council will not allow habitable rooms and other sensitive uses for self contained basement flats and other underground structures in areas at risk of flooding (Zones 2 and 3). Areas at risk from flooding can be found in the Hillingdon's Flood Risk Management Strategy and the Council's Surface Water Management Plan.

A1.37 The Council will require the submission of a flood risk assessment with applications for subterranean development in areas identified as being at risk of flooding or in an area where watercourses are present, in line with the criteria set out in Technical Guidance to the NPPF. Consideration should be given to the addition of a positive pumped device to ensure basements are protected from sewer flooding.

A1.38 For subterranean developments the Council will also require assessments, including a site investigation, to determine the flood risk and demonstrate the level of groundwater within the site over a period of time. Geotechnical and hydrological investigations and modelling will also be required from applicants to ensure that an understanding of the environmental implications are taken into account during the design phase, which can then demonstrate that basement developments do not harm the built and natural environment or local amenity. As a result there may be a requirement for structural engineering information to demonstrate that the proposal can be designed to provide suitable mitigation for any potential wider impacts of subterranean schemes and the impacts of cumulative subterranean development proposals.

A1.39 Proposals for subterranean development which would extend the full length or the full width of a property will not be supported. This is because excavation would create disturbance to the house and problems for neighbouring properties. Sufficient margins should be left between the site boundaries and any subterranean development to allow for on-site drainage mitigation and prevent surface water run-off. Developments will be required to provide a proportion of soft landscaping and planting above a basement structure where it extends beyond the building footprint. The loss of

landscaping can contribute significantly to the reduction of attenuation areas which increases the risk of flooding.

A1.40 Basement lightwells will not be acceptable at the front or side of a property, as they would introduce unacceptable changes in appearance to the front elevation and restrict access and planting opportunities.

A1.41 Proposed landscaping and planting above basement constructions should provide a variety of grassed area, shrubs and trees. A suitable soil depth to support the landscaping will be required, typically 450mm for shrubs.

A1.42 Consideration should also be given to the existence of trees on or adjacent to the site, including street trees, and the root protection zones needed by these trees. Where there are trees on or adjacent to the site, the Council will require an arboricultural report to be submitted as part of a planning application. Developments which result in the loss of on-site trees will be required to re-provide any trees lost as a result of development.

A1.43 The introduction of basements will not be considered acceptable in Listed Buildings and they may not be appropriate in Conservation Area locations, where their introduction would be inappropriate for the original style of the building.

Policy DMHD 3: Basement Development

A) When determining proposals for basement and other underground development, the Council require an assessment of the scheme's impact on drainage, flooding, groundwater conditions and structural stability. The Council will only permit basement and other underground development that does not cause harm to the built and natural environment and local amenity and does not result in flooding or ground instability. Developers will be required to demonstrate by methodologies appropriate to the site that their proposals:

- i) avoid adversely affecting drainage and run-off or causing other damage to the water environment;**
- ii) avoid cumulative impacts upon structural stability or the water environment in the local area;**

B) Schemes should ensure that they:

- i) do not harm the amenity of neighbours;**
- ii) do not lead to the loss of trees of townscape or amenity value;**
- iii) do provide satisfactory landscaping, including adequate soil depth;**
- iv) do not harm the appearance or setting of the property or the established character of the surrounding area, for example through the introduction of front lightwells; and**
- v) do protect important archaeological remains.**

C) The Council will not permit basement schemes which include habitable rooms and other sensitive uses in areas prone to flooding.

D) The Council will not permit basement schemes in Listed Buildings and will not permit them in Conservation Area locations where their introduction would harm the special architectural or historic character of the area.