

Royal Borough of Greenwich

Duty Planner and Pre-Application Service Guidance Note

February 2019

Forward

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has a unique identity, with over 8 miles of riverfront set against a backdrop of historic buildings, the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage site and majestic parks.

With ongoing development on the Greenwich Peninsula, a housing zone and excellent development opportunities the Royal Borough is well placed to accommodate London's continued growth.

The Planning Service aims to work collaboratively with applicants and agents in a positive and proactive way. We are committed to delivering planning advice to improve schemes, to provide clarity and to give detail regarding the information needed at application stage.

We recognise the importance and impact that smaller scale development, including household and small business, can have to the wider environment. We have designed a tailored service to support residents in achieving high quality proposals.

For larger scale proposals, we offer a more comprehensive service to ensure the proposals deliver exemplary design and great placemaking.

This Duty Planner and Pre-Application Service Guidance Note & Charging Schedule outlines the importance of early engagement and provides details of the different services offered as well as providing advice on how to request formal advice from the Council.

Cllr Sizwe James

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I.0 The Importance of Pre-Application Discussions

Background

The council has powers under the Local Government Act 2003 to charge for the discretionary services of pre-application advice. This guidance note provides details on the procedure and the level of charges. The National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance actively encourage pre-application engagement.

Our Service Commitment

Development proposals can raise a number of complex issues and we seek to assist developers through the planning process in order to deliver high quality schemes. Pre-app advice will generally give more certainty at an earlier stage and help resolve issues, so that speedier planning decisions can be made.

By charging we can allocate more resources to this all important early stage of the process and provide quality advice from officers. We know from experience that developers and potential applicants generally welcome and benefit from such a service.

Homeowners, small businesses and developers can get formal pre-application advice before the submission of a planning application. We provide the following services:

- Duty Planner Advice – Homeowners and Small Businesses
- Listed Building Advice
- Small and Medium Proposals
- Planning Enforcement Advice
- Major Applications

Why you should apply for the pre-application service

We encourage all applicants to discuss proposals before submitting a planning application.

For homeowner and small business applications this helps you identify any areas that we think may need to be changed to make the proposal acceptable. It will also help you to understand what information you need to submit to ensure your application can be validated quickly.

For major applications we strongly encourage all applicants to come in for early discussions to establish the development potential of a site before committing to detailed design work. We will provide guidance on whether the site is considered suitable for development and the type of development we consider would be appropriate. This initial advice can then be used to inform further design work.

The planning officer will work with you to identify the level of detail required in your application and will let you know which supporting materials are required. We are keen to ensure that development proposals exhibit the highest design quality, and officers will seek assurances from you that the qualities shown at the planning application stage will be retained when a project is delivered.

For all major applications, we like to agree Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) with applicants to agree a timetable for progressing a development proposal from pre-application discussions to a decision regarding a planning application and then through implementation phase.

We offer a range of additional services, including follow up meetings. Follow up meetings MUST be booked within three months of the original meeting date.

PPA's are also encouraged for the submission of details relating to any planning permission. This will help ensure that the information provided to discharge conditions is appropriate and meets the requirements of the condition.

Please note:

We review all bookings and if we consider a different service is more appropriate we will contact you to advise. We will refund the fee if you wish to cancel or it can be used to pay/part pay for the service we consider is better for you.

If a meeting is cancelled by the developer/applicant then any costs incurred by the Council in preparing for the meeting will be charged. A minimum charge of 20% will apply in all cases.

Disclaimer:

Any advice given by council officers at pre-application stage is not a formal planning decision by the council as local planning authority. We will give you the best advice possible based on the information provided. This advice will be offered in good faith and to the best of ability, without prejudice to any formal consideration of any planning application following statutory consultation, the issues raised and the evaluation of all available information.

We cannot guarantee that any application subsequently received will be made valid or approved. However, pre-application advice should assist in helping applicants ensure that all necessary information, including the correct fee is provided. This will reduce the risk of any subsequent application being declared not valid and it should assist applicants in increasing awareness of the relevant planning issues which will inform any subsequent decision as to whether or not an application will be approved.

2.0 Duty Planner Service – Homeowner and Small Business

Homeowner – Duty Planner Service

The Duty Planner Service gives homeowners the opportunity to:

- discuss your proposal before submission
- discuss permitted development options
- make sure your proposal is in line with the development plan and other guidance
- get advice to help you develop or change your proposal
- get advice on revised schemes following a refusal or withdrawal or dismissal at appeal
- get advice on what you need to submit as part of your application.

We will provide advice for homeowners on:

- domestic extensions and alterations - lofts, windows, porches, garages and outbuildings, walls and fences, hard standings and access for vehicles, satellite dishes, basements
- certificate of lawfulness – advice on whether your proposal is likely to be permitted development (or if you should apply for a lawful development certificate)
- what additional considerations there are if your property is in a conservation area
- Site visits can be arranged for an additional cost.
- Listed building advice is available separately under the Listed Building Duty Planner Service.

What you need to provide

- A site plan at 1:1250 so we can identify your location. The Planning Portal provides a number of options to purchase [site plans](#)
- Photographs of your property. These must show the front, sides (where possible) and back of your property (looking down your garden and looking back towards your home if appropriate). It is very useful if you also provide photos of your neighbouring properties and street.
- You do not need to provide fully-drawn-up plans if you do not want to. However, if you do have plans or sketches these are helpful and you can submit them as well.
- A short description of what work you are thinking about doing – i.e. a rear extension, a loft conversion or side extension.
- The fee
- Please note that we will prepare our response based on what is submitted in advance. We are not able to discuss anything new presented directly at the meeting.

Before booking an appointment to see us, we recommend that you look at the Planning Portal's [interactive guide for houses](#), [interactive guide for terraces \(including flats, shops and basements\)](#), [common projects](#) pages and [frequently asked questions page](#). We also strongly suggest you read our website, particularly the [Residential extensions, basements and conversions SPD](#).

Small Business – Duty Planner Service

The Duty Planner Service also gives small business owners the opportunity to:

- discuss your proposal before submission
- make sure your proposal is in line with the development plan and other guidance
- get advice to help you develop or change your proposal
- get advice on what kind of application is required – for example advertising consent, planning permission or prior approval.
- get advice on revised schemes following a refusal or withdrawal or dismissal at appeal
- get advice on what you need to submit as part of your application.

We will provide advice on the following:

- Extensions and alterations
- Shopfront alterations
- Advertising and signage
- Change of use – for example from a shoe shop to a café
- Site visits can be arranged for an additional cost.

What you need to provide

- A site plan at 1:1250 so we can identify your location. The Planning Portal provides a number of options to purchase [site plans](#)
- Photographs of your premises. These must show the parts of the building you are proposing to change.
- It is very useful if you also provide photographs of adjacent properties/ the wider street.
- If you want advice on shopfront alterations or advertisements then please provide drawings or photographs or sketches or product details of what you are considering. While you do not need fully-drawn-up plans the more detail you can provide the more detailed and helpful our response can be.
- If you want advice on change of use then please include a letter that explains what the current use is (for example a shoe shop) and what use you would like to change to (for example a café).
- The fee
- Please note that we will prepare our response based on what is submitted in advance. We are not able to discuss anything new presented directly at the meeting.

Before booking an appointment to see us, we recommend that you look at the Planning Portal's guidance on adverts and signs and change of use. We also strongly suggest you read our website, including our Core Strategy and Supplementary Planning Documents.

How to Book – Homeowner / Small Business Duty Planner

A planning officer is available on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoon 1:00pm–4:00pm. Access to the Duty Planner Service is by pre-arranged appointment only. The fee must be paid and the relevant information (drawings, photographs etc.) must be provided to the Planning Service before an appointment will be booked. This can be done online using the booking form.

Appointments are 20 minutes and are available at the following times:

- 1:00pm
- 1:30pm
- 2:00pm
- 2:30pm
- 3:00pm
- 3:30pm

A maximum of three people can attend the appointment.

Site Visits

If you have booked a site visit as part of your duty planner appointment, this will usually take place in the morning and will be arranged directly with you once the duty planner appointment is booked and confirmed. The meeting will be arranged directly with the case officer and will usually be held at the Council office later the same day.

What happens after the meeting/site visit?

A planning officer will provide a brief written response. This will be within two working days of the appointment.

If you do not wish to have an appointment and wish only to receive a written response then please let us know (please note that the charges for the service remains the same).

If after the meeting you wish to provide revised and/or additional information this will be chargeable at the follow up meeting rates detailed in the attached schedule.

3.0 Listed Building Advice

The Listed Building Advice Service provides the opportunity to:

- discuss your proposal before submission
- make sure your proposal is appropriate for a listed building
- get advice to help you develop or change your proposal
- get advice on what kind of application is required – for example listed building consent or a certificate of lawful development for proposed works to a listed building
- get advice on revised schemes following a refusal or withdrawal or dismissal at appeal
- get advice on what you need to submit as part of your application.

We will provide advice on the following:

- General refurbishment proposals
- Works involving historic interiors or architectural features
- Display of signs and advertisements
- Structural and non-structural alterations
- Conversions/change of use and associated works, e.g. fire safety, soundproofing, insulation
- Extensions

We offer two types of listed building advice for homeowners and small businesses based on the complexity of your proposal:

- Written advice only. This is generally appropriate for minor alterations to building fabric including walls, ceilings, floors, doors, windows, panelling, fireplaces, mouldings, and other minor works (whether internal or external).
- Written advice and an up to one hour meeting with a Conservation Officer. This is recommended for any proposal for major works and/or a number of alterations, including structural alterations (whether internal and/or external).

We may also be able to provide a bespoke service for very complex proposals which do not fall into one of the categories listed above. Please contact us directly to enquire.

What you need to provide

- A site plan at 1:1250 so we can identify your location. The Planning Portal provides a number of options to purchase [site plans](#)
- A description of what work you are thinking about doing and how the proposed works may affect the historic fabric and design on the building.
- Photographs of your listed building and the features you are considering altering or removing. For example chimney breasts, staircases, doorways, windows. Photographs should provide both close up of the detail of the feature as well as a wider angle showing the feature in context.
- You do not need to provide fully-drawn-up plans if you do not want to. However, if you do have plans/sketches then you can submit them as well.
- The fee
- Please note that we will prepare our response based on what is submitted in advance. We are not able to discuss anything new presented directly at the meeting.

How to Book

Access to the Listed Building Advice Service is by pre-arrangement only on a Monday and Tuesday. The fee must be paid and the relevant information (drawings, photographs etc.) must be provided to the Planning Service before advice will be booked. This can be done online using the booking form.

This service does not provide planning advice for householders and small businesses. If planning advice is required then the Duty Planner Service must be booked as well.

Site Visits and Meetings

If you have booked a site visit as part of your listed building advice request, this will be arranged directly with you once the appointment is booked and confirmed. The meeting will be arranged directly with the case officer and will usually be held at the Council office later the same day.

What happens next?

A conservation officer will provide a written response within 10 working days of the date of your booked advice request. Where a site visit is booked, written advice will be provided within 10 working days of the site visit.

If after you receive the written advice you wish to provide revised and/or additional information this will be chargeable at the follow up rates detailed in the attached schedule.

4.0 Small and Medium Proposals

The Small and Medium Proposals Service gives developers the opportunity to:

- Discuss whether or not your proposal is acceptable in principle
- Discuss the design approach that should be taken
- Understand any issues that need to be resolved
- Understand what supporting documentation you will need to include with any application.

What you need to provide

- A site plan at 1:1250 so we can identify your location. The Planning Portal provides a number of options to purchase [site plans](#)
- up-to-date photographs of your site
- Draft design and access statement if you have one; if not then
- Initial concept drawings of your proposal
- The fee.

How to Book

Access to the Small and Medium Proposals service is by pre-arranged appointment only. The fee must be paid and the relevant information (drawings, photographs etc.) must be provided to the Planning Service before an appointment will be booked. This can be done online using the booking form.

A case officer will be assigned to your case and they will contact you directly to arrange a meeting within five working days of receiving the fee and information. A meeting will be offered within 10 working days. At this stage the officer will also arrange a site visit if necessary.

If you wish to provide further information before meeting with the case officer, this must be submitted by **1pm three days before the meeting**. We will not be able to discuss anything sent to us after this time or presented directly at the meeting.

What happens after a meeting?

A planning officer will provide a formal written response. This will be within 10 working days of the appointment.

The formal response will provide guidance on the scheme presented and discussed at the meeting. It will not include any additional information presented during the meeting. If after the meeting you wish to provide revised and/or additional information this will be chargeable at the follow up meeting rates detailed in the attached schedule.

5.0 Planning Enforcement Advice Service

The Planning Enforcement Service gives homeowners, community organisations and small business owners the opportunity to:

- get advice on whether the physical works or the change of use carried out is likely to be acceptable in planning terms or if changes are required
- get advice on what kind of application is suitable – for example a Lawful development certificate, advertising consent, or a planning application
- get advice on what you would need to submit as part of your application.

What you need to provide

- A site plan at 1:1250 so we can identify your location. The Planning Portal provides a number of options to purchase [site plans](#)
- Photographs of the work that has been carried out and is the subject of the enforcement complaint. These should show the works from the front, sides (where possible) and back of your property (if appropriate). It is very useful if you also provide photos of your neighbouring properties and street.
- You do not need to provide plans, however, if you do have plans then you can submit them as well.
- A description of what work was carried out.
- The fee
- Please note that we will prepare our response based on what is submitted in advance. We are not able to discuss anything new presented directly at the meeting.

How to book

Access to the Planning Enforcement Advice service is by pre-arranged appointment only. The fee must be paid and the relevant information (drawings, photographs etc.) must be provided to the Planning Service before an appointment will be booked. This can be done online using the booking form.

A case officer will be assigned to your case and they will contact you directly to arrange a meeting within five working days of receiving the fee and information. A meeting will be offered within 10 working days. At this stage the officer will also arrange a site visit if necessary. The meeting will be approximately one hour long and will be with both a planning enforcement and a planning officer.

This service does not provide planning advice for householders and small businesses. If planning advice is required then the Duty Planner Service must be booked as well.

What happens after a meeting?

A planning officer will provide a formal written response. This will be within five working days of the appointment.

The formal response will provide a summary of the advice provided at the meeting and advice on the most appropriate way to resolve the enforcement complaint.

6.0 Major Proposals and Planning Performance Agreements

For all major proposals, we strongly encourage all applicants to come in early on in the process to establish the development potential of a site before committing to detailed design work. We will provide guidance on whether the site is considered suitable for development and the type of development we consider would be appropriate. This initial advice can then be used to inform further design work.

While we will meet with applicants for individual pre-application meetings we would prefer to work more collaboratively with developers. We encourage all developers to meet with us several times as design work progresses. We strongly encourage all major proposals to use our PPA service. We find this results in a more resolved scheme with clarity around any issues

What you need to provide

- A site plan at 1:1250 so we can identify your location. The Planning Portal provides a number of options to purchase [site plans](#)
- up-to-date photographs of your site
- Draft design and access statement if you have one; if not then
- Initial concept drawings of your proposal
- The fee.

How to Book

Access to the Major Proposals service is by pre-arranged appointment only. The fee must be paid and the relevant information (drawings, photographs etc.) must be provided to the Planning Service before an appointment will be booked.

If you wish to provide further information before meeting with the case officer, this must be submitted by **1pm three days before the meeting**. We will not be able to discuss anything sent to us after this time or presented directly at the meeting.

A case officer will be assigned to your case and they will contact you directly to arrange a meeting within five working days of receiving the fee and information. A meeting will be offered within 10 working days. At this stage the officer will also arrange a site visit if necessary.

Before the meeting, you will need to submit the following:

- Site plan at 1:1250. The Planning Portal provides a number of options to purchase [site plans](#)
- Up-to-date site photographs
- Draft design and access statement
- Vu.City model technical requirements (if required)
- The fee.

What happens after a meeting?

A planning officer will provide a formal written response of the matters discussed at the meeting. This will be within 10 working days of the appointment.

Design Panel

The Royal Borough of Greenwich, in partnership with Design Council Cobe, has established the Greenwich Design Review Panel. This offers independent, impartial advice on the design of new buildings, landscapes and public spaces. We encourage all major development proposals to be assessed by the Greenwich Design Review Panel before a planning application is submitted. More information about Design Review Panel is available on our website.

Vu.City

We use Vu.City software as part of our pre-application process. This enables us to consider development proposals in their full local context and instantly test the impact of height, scale and massing both within the existing context and alongside future planned development.

Details of the technical requirements for providing your proposals to be inserted into the Vu.City are below:

- A massing model in native format (fbx, dwg, rvt or max for example)
- Geolocated by either OS Grid Coordinates or Lat/Long

General information about pre-application meetings

- We ask that you bring no more than four people to the meeting. You must provide the name and job title of each attendee in advance so that we can inform reception.
- Please bring hard copies of all the information submitted.
- Officers will only be able to comment on the plans provided before the meeting. There will not be an opportunity for officers to review drawings brought to the meeting or other changes to your scheme and any such request will incur an additional fee (outlined in the table below).
- Follow-up meetings will follow the same format as above.
- Before booking an appointment to see us, we strongly suggest you read the guidance on our website, including our Development Plan.

If you wish to provide further information after booking your appointment, this must be submitted by **1pm three days before the meeting**. We will not be able to discuss anything sent to us after this time or presented directly at the meeting.