

**King's Cross (CA21)
Conservation Area Design Guidelines**

January 2002

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Map Scale 1:4000

CA TWENTY ONE

KING'S CROSS

21.1 **The Council will operate special policies in the King's Cross Conservation Area in order to preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of the area.**

21.2 The most important qualities deserving of protection and enhancement in this area are:

- i) **Reflection of the contemporary impact of the railways** - much development is of a similar period to King's Cross Station (1852), and some parts of the area (particularly in York Way) clearly reflect the impact of the arrival of the canal and the railways.
- ii) **Variety and scale of buildings** - including a variety of architectural styles on generally narrow frontages; a hierarchy of scales elsewhere; and no competition in scale with King's Cross Station. Scale and variety are doubly important when viewed as a setting for the massive statement of the station building.
- iii) **Variety of uses, especially at ground level** - providing maximum interest and vitality at street level.
- iv) **Building to back of pavement line** - which imposes a dominant pattern on the area; helps to ensure an urban character appropriate to Central London; and allows street level activities and uses to be highly accessible.
- v) **National Set Piece** - this was originally defined in the Greater London Development Plan to cover an area from the British Library site (Camden) to Caledonian Road. National Set Pieces are described as "major groups and sequences of buildings, open spaces, processional ways, streets and monuments. They make a major contribution to the image of London as a Capital City". In Islington the Set Piece includes the junctions with York Way and Caledonian Road, the Lighthouse block and the curve of Grays Inn Road as it meets Euston Road. It is a remarkable survival of a complete early to mid-19th Century central area townscape.
- vi) **Intact Victorian 'town centre'** - displaying a hierarchy of buildings and uses from offices, flats, larger shops and entertainment, via local shops with accommodation above, down to terraces of small houses and industrial premises.

- 21.3** Where there is a variety of land uses at ground level, this should be retained in future development in order to maintain the vitality this brings to the area. Variety of uses will also be expected in developments on currently unused sites or sites currently in a single use, particularly at ground floor level. The Council is determined to avoid the construction of large scale single use buildings. Traditionally the area has supported a wide variety of industrial and warehouse activities. A new mixture of uses is required to restore vitality and activity and to avoid a single overwhelming use.
- 21.4 Variety of uses, particularly at ground floor level, has been identified as one of the most important qualities of the area deserving of protection and enhancement (see paragraph 21.2 above).
- 21.5** The Council wishes to retain all statutory and locally listed buildings together with the buildings and structures listed below, and will only grant conservation area consent for their removal where there are special circumstances or where the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Albion Yard:	Two storey factory buildings, except north west corner
Balfe Street:	Stable buildings to rear of 55
Caledonian Road:	1, 3, 5, 7, rear 7, 9 (and building at rear), 11, 13, 19 (Queen's Arms PH); 2,4,6,8,10-24
Caledonia Street:	Laundry building
Crinan Street:	4-14
King's Cross Road:	150-170, Welsh Congregational Church, 186, 188
Lorenzo Street:	1
New Wharf Road:	12, 13, 17
Pentonville Road:	237-251, 246, 248, 256-260, 266-292, 294-300 (internal fittings and rear glass roofs), 302, 304
Wharfdale Road:	48, 57-63

York Way:

**2-22, 24 (Duke of York PH), 28-34, 34b,
36-40, 52-60, 80**

- 21.6 PPG15 states that the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a conservation area. It also states that the assessment of a conservation area should always note those unlisted buildings which make such a contribution. While few buildings in the area are protected by statutory listing, there are many other non-listed buildings which are important to the historic and architectural character and appearance of the area. It is considered that the loss of any of these buildings, even if replaced by well-designed modern buildings, would reduce the historic and architectural interest of the area. However the Council recognises that the adoption of buildings and alternative uses may be necessary to ensure their continued well-being and to assist their preservation. Alterations will be acceptable where they are in keeping with the building's special character.
- 21.7 The existing scales of the area must be particularly respected with reference to:**
- (i) the hierarchy of scales northwards from Pentonville Road;**
 - (ii) the national set piece; and**
 - (iii) the subordination of surrounding development to King's Cross Station.**
- 21.8 Protecting the existing scale of the area is required in order to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area (particularly (ii), (v) and (vi) in paragraph 21.2 above); and in order to meet the Council's responsibility to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings.
- 21.9 With refurbishment proposals which involve alterations or extensions, the original design and period of the building must be respected, including scale, roof and parapet line, proportions, architectural style and materials.**
- 21.10 Infill frontage buildings must respect the existing frontage buildings in scale, height, detail, materials, proportions and quality. Existing small scale plot frontages should be reflected in the design of new buildings.
- 21.11 Where development involves long street frontages, more than 20 metres in length including corner sites, new buildings must be designed to avoid a monolithic appearance or monotonous horizontality. Materials and design must reinforce the existing character of the area. Large areas of glass, curtain walling or metallic finishes should be avoided.

- 21.12 The scale, variety and narrow building frontages are important to the character of the area. Unsympathetic alterations to buildings can damage their appearance and architectural composition when, for example, inappropriate window openings are introduced and unsympathetic materials employed. Loss of details, particularly around windows and on shopfronts, would be detrimental to the appearance of the area and will be resisted in the future.
- 21.13 All plant rooms and lift over-runs should be located so as to be invisible from the street, including long views from adjacent streets.**
- 21.14 An important characteristic of the area at present is the survival of the largely Victorian scale and character of the area, including parapet lines, original rooflines and chimney stacks. Interruptions to this skyline by higher set back plant rooms are likely to detract from this character.
- 21.15 The Council is opposed to the erection of large vent pipes on the rear elevation of commercial properties, where this is harmful to amenity. Where possible existing chimney flues should be used. Any new flues should be modest in size and painted a dark colour.**
- 21.16 Large flues and vent pipes can often detract from the visual amenity of the area. The Council will therefore seek to ensure that these are appropriately located and are of a suitable size and design.
- 21.17 The Council will protect the view of St Pancras Station and Hotel from the north pavement of Pentonville Road and no infringement of what is left of this view will be permitted.**
- 21.18 St Pancras Station (W.H. Barlow) and the hotel building on Euston Road (George Gilbert Scott) are Grade 1 Listed Buildings, the setting of which is important to preserve. The view from up the hill on Pentonville Road provides a dramatic prospect of the Gothic Revival spires, towers and roofscape of the buildings made famous by John O'Connor's painting of 1884. The smaller scale and height of the other buildings in the same view emphasise the grandeur of the St Pancras buildings, which would be reduced if bulkier buildings were to intrude.
- 21.19 New development must comply with existing building lines and avoid stepping back from these. Some recent buildings have already been set back and on redevelopment the Council will require a reinstatement of the original line. If pavements need to be widened for future pedestrian traffic, consideration should be given to recessed ground floors in new development.**
- 21.20 The existing building lines impose a dominant pattern and urban character on the area that is desirable to retain as part of the character of the conservation area.

- 21.21 Where appropriate, the Council will prepare development briefs to specify planning requirements in greater detail.**
- 21.22 Development briefs, including consideration of design considerations, are required to ensure that potential applicants are aware of the Council's policy for this complex area at an early stage. Design briefs have already been approved for most of the conservation area, including the updated briefs for Areas of Opportunity identified in the UDP.
- 21.23 The Council will not give advertising consent for new hoardings and will seek to remove those which do not have consent.**
- 21.24 Advertising hoardings give an impression of clutter and lack of interest in an area. They also often obscure the nature and detailing of a building to which they are attached. The Council is opposed to the proliferation of advertising hoardings in the area and will take action against the owners, advertisers and their agents for the removal of unauthorised hoardings.
- 21.25 Internally illuminated signs will not normally be permitted. Other signs should be of appropriate scale and design and conform to the Council's standards.**
- 21.26 Advertisements and signs can often detract from the visual amenity of the area. The Council will therefore seek to ensure that signs, display panels and advertisements are appropriately located and are of a suitable size and design.
- 21.27 Yorkstone paving, granite setts and kerbstones should be retained in public and private areas of hard landscaping. Where footway repaving is required, 400mm square slabs and pavements should be avoided in favour of traditional 900mm x 600mm slabs.**
- 21.28 All surviving 19th century street furniture should be retained.**
- 21.29 The street surfaces and furniture also contribute to the character and appearance of an area. The traditional street materials complement those used in the buildings and where they exist they must be kept. Where replacement is necessary the Council will insist on a modern alternative which is the closest possible to the original.