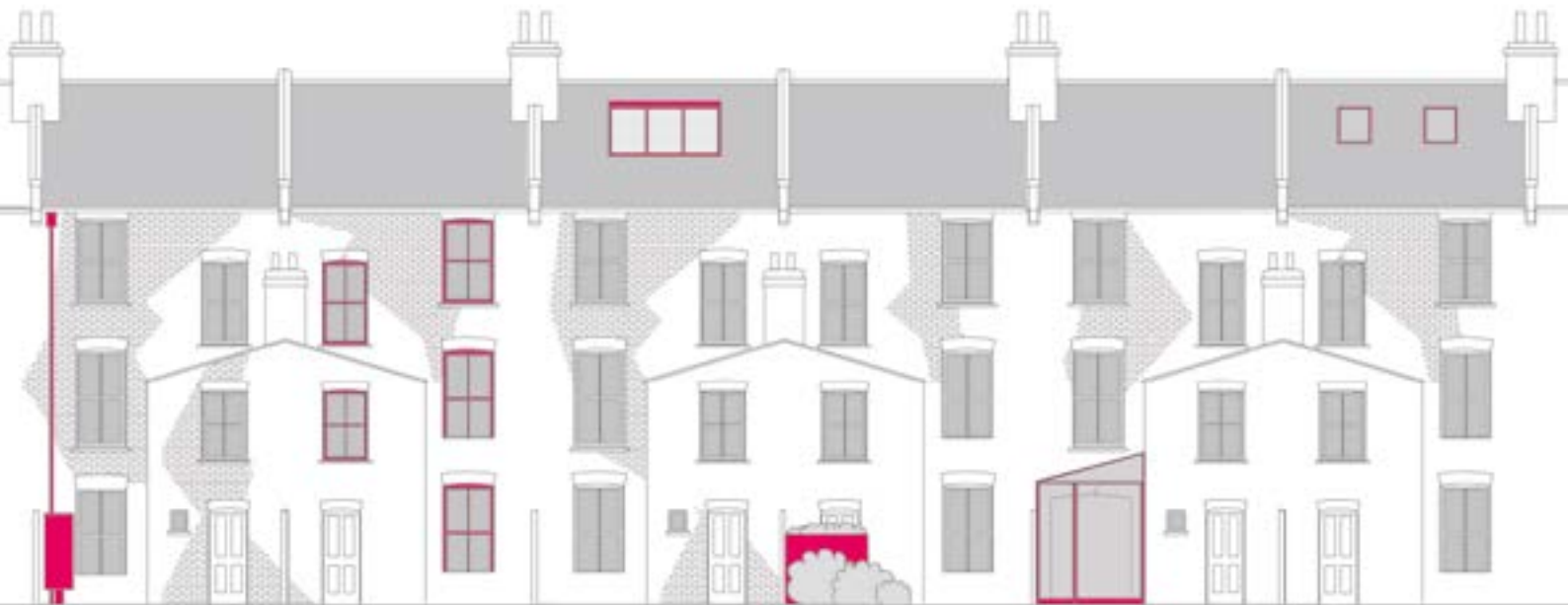


Poets Road Conservation Area Management Plan

October 2025

London Borough of Islington



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1. Introduction

1.1 About this document

1.1.1 Local authorities have a duty to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. Conservation area management plans are an important part of this. Their principal functions are:

- To set out the Council's strategy for managing change in the conservation area
- To provide guidance to all stakeholders to ensure that future change in the conservation area will preserve or enhance its special character
- To support the planning policy framework and planning decisions

1.1.2 This document describes the strategies and tools the Council will use in order to manage change in the area and identifies opportunities for enhancements. It also includes detailed guidance for development proposals.

1.1.3 This document should be read in conjunction with the [Poets Road Conservation Area Appraisal 2025](#), which describes the special character and appearance of the conservation area and its significance.

1.2 The status of this document

1.2.1 The conservation area management plan is an evidence base document and does not introduce new planning policy. The relevant policies for decision making are contained within the borough's Local Plan and other relevant policy and legislation (summarised in "[5.3 Planning policy, legislation and guidance](#)" on page 10). This management plan supports the application of existing heritage policies. It will be a material consideration when assessing planning applications affecting the conservation area.

Part 1 – Management Strategies

2. Existing Management tools

2.1 Managing change through the planning system

2.1.1 In considering development proposals in the conservation area, the Council will apply the relevant national, regional and local policies and guidance (summarised in "[5.3 Planning policy, legislation and guidance](#)" on page 10). All development in the conservation area should preserve or enhance its character and appearance and its significance.

2.1.2 [The Poets Road Conservation Area Appraisal 2025](#) will be the principal document for establishing what is important in terms of the character and appearance of the conservation area and which elements and characteristics contribute to its significance. The appraisal is not intended to be exhaustive, and the Council will take into account other information and analysis when assessing applications (including heritage statements provided by applicants if required).

2.1.3 The council will resist the loss of buildings and structures that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Any such loss will be treated as causing harm to the significance of the conservation area in line with the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 213, and there will be a strong presumption against consent being granted.

2.1.4 However, conservation area designation should not prevent all change. It is a tool to manage change, and positive changes that will enhance the character of the area or support its long-term conservation will be supported. Not all elements within the conservation area will make a positive contribution to significance. Features that do not make a positive contribution will often present an opportunity for enhancement.

2.1.5 The Council recognises the need for historic places to evolve and adapt over time in order to secure their long-term conservation. Detailed guidance has been provided in "[Part 2 - Development guidance](#)" on page 9 covering common changes and adaptations and explaining how these can be achieved while protecting the character of the area. This will support households and building owners, and ensure consistent decision making. The Council will have regard to this guidance when assessing planning applications in the area.

2.1.6 The climate emergency creates an urgent need for adaptations across Islington to reduce carbon emissions and support sustainable living. Therefore, detailed guidance on retrofitting and other sustainability measures has been included in part 2. This is to a) ensure that climate adaptations do not cause harm to buildings and will preserve the character of the area and its value for future generations, and b) to encourage appropriate adaptations so that homes remain durable, viable and useful (which is important for their long-term conservation).

2.2 Planning enforcement

2.2.1 The Council will investigate and, where necessary, take enforcement action against unauthorised works in the conservation area.

2.2.2 Notices under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) may be served on properties that 'adversely affect the amenity of the area'. The Council will serve such notices where deemed appropriate on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the provisions of the legislation.

2.2.3 [Unauthorised work can be reported via the Council's web page](#), and will be investigated.

2.3 Protection for trees

2.3.1 Trees, greenery and landscape make an important contribution to Poets Road Conservation Area. There are additional controls over works to trees in conservation areas, meaning that Council Tree officers have an opportunity to review proposals and ensure the work would not result in harm to or loss of valuable trees.

2.3.2 There is a requirement to **formally notify the Council** of any proposed works to trees in the area at least 6 weeks before commencing. This gives the Council an opportunity to object if there are concerns about what is proposed. If the tree has a Tree Protection Order (TPO) there is a requirement **apply for and obtain consent** from the Council before carrying out any work.

2.3.3 There is more [information about protected trees on the Council's web page](#).

2.4 Advice and information

2.4.1 The Council aims to provide advice and information to residents, building owners and other stakeholders about the management of the conservation area. In addition to the detailed guidance in this document and the [Poets Road Conservation Area Appraisal](#), the following resources are available.

Islington duty planning service – net zero and sustainability

This a free, appointment only service for residents and businesses considering energy efficiency measures. You will receive informal advice on general planning issues including what consents are needed and how to submit an application. Details are available on [the Council's website](#).

Islington pre-application advice

If you would like more detailed advice on planning and listed building matters that is specifically tailored to your home/your proposal, you can make use of the Council's pre-application advice service. Details are available on [the Council's website](#).

3. Recommended Steps

3.1 Changes to permitted development

3.1.1 Some specific types of work are classed as permitted development. This means the work can be carried out without applying for planning permission as long as it complies with detailed criteria in the [General Permitted Development Order \(GPDO\) legislation 2016](#). Councils can use an 'Article 4 direction' to remove or restrict certain types of permitted development within a conservation area in order to protect its character.

3.1.2 An Article 4 Direction is recommended to control certain classes of permitted development within Poets Road Conservation Area. Under current permitted development regulations there is considerable scope to alter and extend houses and to alter boundary treatments and walls. Original architectural features and detailing and the consistency of terraces and streets are important characteristics that contribute to significance. There is considerable evidence of changes made under permitted development regulations that have eroded these characteristics, causing harm to the character and appearance of the area.

3.1.3 An Article 4 Direction should be considered to restrict the following categories of permitted development:

Alterations to single-family houses

- Alterations to windows and doors
- Installation of rooflights on front roof slope
- Erection of a porch
- Alterations to chimneys

Minor operations

- Alterations to gates, fences and walls facing a highway
- Painting of previously unpainted areas

3.1.4 The Council has agreed to impose an Article 4 Direction covering these types of development. This will come into effect in October 2026. Planning permission will be required for development falling within these categories giving the Council greater control. Proposals will be required to comply with the guidance in Part 2 of this document in order to preserve and enhance the character of the area. There is [more information about the proposed Article 4 Direction on our website](#).

3.2 Monitoring and review

3.2.1 This management plan will be reviewed from time to time and amended as required in line with statutory requirements set out in section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) act 1990.

3.2.2 Ongoing monitoring of the condition of the conservation area will also be undertaken. A photographic survey has been compiled alongside this management plan to provide a dated record of the condition of buildings. This will support ongoing monitoring and enforcement work.

4. Opportunities

4.1 Landscape improvements

4.1.1 Trees, planting and landscape make an important contribution to the character of the area, particularly the linear park on Petherton Road and the large number of good quality trees in the public realm. There is an opportunity to enhance the area through maintenance and planned improvements to this landscape including:

- Highlighting and revealing the history of the linear park and its connection to the development of the area and the route of the new river
- Additional planting and greenery in front gardens to enhance character and ecology
- Ongoing management and maintenance to address soil erosion, nutrient depletion and other condition issues
- Well-designed enhancements to paving, paths, benches and other furniture to improve accessibility, safety and amenity.

4.2 Traffic and active travel

4.2.1 There is an opportunity to provide more shared cycle storage to support active travel. Most streets in the conservation area are wide, with parking bays on either side of the carriageway. Additional cycle hangers could be installed in place of parking bays without detracting from street character or adding clutter to pavements.

4.2.2 Shared electric vehicle charging points could be considered in suitable locations to support sustainable travel. Most homes in the area do not have off-street parking and

would need to rely on shared infrastructure. This could be accommodated without harm to the character of the area if charging units are discreetly designed.

4.2.3 The area is not heavily trafficked and the streets and public areas are quiet and walkable. There is potential for highways and public realm improvements in the future to further enhance liveability and promote walking and active travel. Any future public realm improvements should be designed to complement and enhance the special character of the area. There is an opportunity for Council departments to work collaboratively to achieve this.

4.3 Building maintenance and restoration

4.3.1 Incremental alterations to buildings, loss of architectural features and boundaries, and lack of appropriate maintenance have eroded the character of the conservation area. There is an opportunity for building owners to address this through appropriate maintenance and repair and, where appropriate, restoration of lost or damaged features.

4.4 Development sites and opportunities

4.4.1 There are no obvious development sites within the boundary of the conservation area, and no strategic site allocations.

4.4.2 However, proposals for redevelopment, intensification or reconfiguration of various housing estates in the wider area (or within the CA itself) could come forward in the future and would present an opportunity for enhancement through careful contextual design.

Part 2 – Development guidance

5. About the development guidance

5.1 How to use this guidance

5.1.1 This section provides guidance on common projects that require planning permission such as extensions and alterations. It explains what changes are usually acceptable in Poets Road Conservation Area and how these projects should be designed to protect the character of the conservation area and comply with heritage and design policies and legislation. Proposals that follow this guidance will usually be acceptable from a design and heritage perspective. Proposals that do not comply with the relevant parts of this guidance will usually be unacceptable.

5.1.2 This guidance covers common types of development in Poets Road Conservation Area but it isn't possible to cover every possible change. If you are planning changes to your home that aren't covered by this guidance you will need make sure that your proposal complies with heritage policy requirements (set out in 5.3) and that it would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. As a starting point, refer to the [Poets Road Conservation Area Appraisal 2025](#), which describes the character and appearance of the area. If you need further advice or want to check whether your proposal would be acceptable before submitting an application, you are encouraged to use the Council's pre-application advice service where you will receive highly detailed advice that relates specifically to your property.

5.1.3 This guidance covers householder proposals, small scale residential developments and minor works. It does not cover major developments, commercial buildings or changes of use (other than some residential conversions). We recommend using Islington's pre-application advice service in relation to these larger types of development and obtaining appropriate professional advice when preparing a planning application.

5.2 Is planning permission required?

5.2.1 Planning permission is usually required for any building work that would materially change the external appearance of a building or site. Permission is also usually needed for changes of use (including converting houses into flats). Planning permission is not normally needed for changes to the interior of a building.

5.2.2 There is more information about how to apply for planning permission and what information you need to include in Appendix 1.

5.2.3 Some specific types of work are classed as permitted development. This means the work can be carried out without applying for planning permission as long as it complies with detailed criteria in the [General Permitted Development Order \(GPDO\) legislation](#). Common changes currently classed as permitted development include some alterations and extensions to single-family houses (i.e. houses that have not been converted into flats or a HMO), some changes of use, and some minor alterations such as painting and installing paving.

5.2.4 Information about permitted development contained in this document is accurate at the time of publication, but the legislation is subject to regular changes. **If you intend to carry out work under permitted development legislation you must check that the work meets the criteria set out in the current [GPDO legislation](#).**

5.2.5 Some classes of permitted development do not apply in conservation areas (including extensions to roofs, side extensions, demolition works, and installing

render or cladding) so planning permission is required to carry out the work. Others classes of permitted development have additional restrictions that apply to houses in conservation areas (for example there are additional size restrictions that apply to rear extensions).

5.2.6 Councils can remove or restrict permitted development in conservation areas using Article 4 Directions. A new Article 4 Direction restricting certain types of permitted development in Poets Road Conservation Area will come into effect in October 2026. There is [more information about the proposed Article 4 Direction on our website](#) and in [“3.1 Changes to permitted development” on page 7](#).

5.3 Planning policy, legislation and guidance

5.3.1 The guidance in this section is based on a framework of legislation, policy and guidance dealing with heritage and conservation which is summarised below. This framework will be used to assess applications for planning permission in the conservation area. Proposals that follow relevant guidance in this document will usually be found to comply with these heritage policies and statutory requirements.

Heritage legislation

- Section 72(1) of the [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#) creates a legal duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

National heritage policy

- Chapter 16 of the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\) 2024](#) promotes the desirability of preserving and enhancing the significance of heritage assets. It says that local plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment.
- It further says that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation, that any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification, and that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. It says that loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of a conservation area should be treated as causing harm to significance.
- Significance is defined in the NPPF as “the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”

Local heritage and design policy

5.3.2 [The London Plan](#) Policy 7.8 (Heritage assets and archaeology) says that development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate, and that development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail

5.3.3 [Islington Local Plan \(2023\)](#) Policy DHI E says that the Council will conserve or enhance Islington’s heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

5.3.4 Policy DH2 B says that development within conservation areas and their settings must conserve or enhance the significance of the area and must be of a high-quality contextual design. Paragraph C says that buildings, spaces, street patterns, views and vistas, uses and trees which contribute to the significance of a conservation area must be retained.

6. Retrofit and energy

6.1 General advice on retrofitting

6.1.1 The Council declared a climate emergency in June 2019, recognising the need to drastically reduce carbon emissions in the borough. Maintaining and upgrading existing housing stock to ensure its sustainable future use is essential to achieving these ambitions. This means retrofitting homes to improve energy efficiency, minimise environmental impacts and adapt to a changing climate. About half of Islington is within a designated conservation area, so it is essential that homes within conservation areas are included in this process.

6.1.2 Houses in Poets Road Conservation Area have stood for over a hundred years and have been enjoyed by multiple generations who adapted them to suit their needs. If properly cared for, they can be enjoyed by future residents of Islington into the next century and beyond. Improving these historic homes to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to a changing climate is essential if we are to meet our emissions ambitions, but is also the best way to make sure these buildings remain viable and useful and are preserved for future generations to enjoy.

6.1.3 This section provides guidance to support residents and building owners in undertaking this process. Retrofit measures covered in this section include:

- **Insulation and preventing heat loss:** Measures to improve thermal performance so that less energy is needed to keep homes at a comfortable temperature, including upgrading windows, insulation and draft proofing

- **Heating and energy:** Measures aimed at reducing energy use and switching to more sustainable energy sources, including heat pumps and solar panels
- **Shade and cooling:** Overheating is increasingly a concern due to changing climate and weather patterns. Measures to provide shade and maintain a comfortable temperature during hot weather include window awnings and shutters, planting and trees, and active cooling systems
- **Landscape and water management:** Measures to reduce water use and contribute to sustainable drainage, greening and biodiversity including water butts, rainwater harvesting and green roofs

Additional guidance

Islington's [Climate Action Supplementary Planning Document 2025](#) addresses climate and sustainability for developments across the borough and includes guidance on retrofitting.

Islington's [Retrofit Handbook 2025](#) is a detailed guide to retrofitting for households. It includes advice about how to approach retrofit works and detailed information on a range of measures.

If you would like more detailed advice that is specifically tailored to your retrofit proposal, you can make use of the Council's pre-application advice service. Details are available on [the Council's website](#).

6.1.4 Most buildings in Poets Road Conservation Area are over 100 years old. Retrofitting older buildings like these requires a different approach to ensure their value is sustained and unintentional damage is avoided, but there are lots of good options for improving energy and carbon performance and in most cases these buildings can be made significantly more sustainable. Key considerations when dealing with older buildings include:

- **Respect character and significance:** Retrofit measures should be designed to preserve the special character of buildings and conservation areas.
- **Start with the 'whole building approach':** This means considering the whole buildings, its context, and all the factors affecting energy use before devising an energy efficiency strategy (rather than just focusing on one retrofit measure). Be aware of the way that retrofit measures can interact with each other, meaning that it is not always helpful to consider them in isolation. Consider short and long term strategies and plan ahead to make sure work is carried out in a coordinated way. (The 'whole building approach' does not require that you comprehensively retrofit the entire building at once. This is not practical or affordable for many people and is not always the best approach).
- **Understand building fabric and moisture movement:** Older buildings function differently from modern ones. They are made from permeable materials and their proper functioning relies on moisture being able to freely move through the structure and evaporate away. Some retrofit measures can prevent this from happening and cause serious problems with moisture build-up, damp and mould.
- **Seek professional advice where appropriate:** Some retrofit measures are complex and carry some risks to the fabric of the building if not implemented

appropriately. Get advice from a qualified retrofit coordinator or other experienced professional who has experience with retrofit of older buildings before starting. The British Standards Institution (BSI) recommends minimum qualifications for retrofit co-coordinators in their [PAS 2035 document](#) which includes holding an ABBE Level 3 Award in Energy Efficiency for Older and Traditional Buildings.

- **Address condition issues first:** Ensure that the building fabric is in good condition and is not damp before starting. Retrofit measures are likely to be less effective if the fabric is in poor condition or there is untreated damp.
- **Consider 'whole life' costs and benefits:** It may be helpful to think about the 'whole life' costs and benefits of retrofit work when deciding what is most appropriate for your home and your circumstances. This means considering the financial costs and environmental impacts of manufacture and installation, anticipated energy savings, the probable life span of the retrofit measures, and what will happen to materials and fixtures after they have reached the end of their useful life.
- **Don't forget about low-cost simple solutions:** These can often be very effective (especially if several measures are combined together). They are often easy to achieve with much smaller financial and carbon costs at the outset making them good options overall (especially for those with a limited budget or tenants and leaseholders who cannot make major changes.)
- **Consider the long-term health of the building:** Be aware of the risks associated with retrofit projects, understand the probable useful life of retrofit measures and any ongoing maintenance requirements, and choose options that are reversible if needed.

Information and resources on retrofitting

Heritage and retrofit

[There's no place like old homes: Re-use and recycle to reduce carbon \(Historic England 2019\)](#) highlights the importance of our built historic environment and explains why it has a vital role to play in the journey towards a low carbon future.

[Historic England Advice Note 18: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency \(2024\)](#) provides an overview of how to approach retrofitting historic buildings.

Retrofit advice for older and traditionally constructed buildings

[Whole Building Approach for Historic Buildings | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) explains the 'whole building approach' and best practice approaches to retrofit of historic buildings.

[Planning Responsible Retrofit of Traditional Buildings \(STBA 2015\)](#) provides guidance on the risks and complexities of retrofitting older buildings.

[The responsible retrofit guidance wheel \(STBA\)](#) is an interactive tool allowing you to understand how retrofit measures interact, funded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change.

[Maintenance and Repair for Energy Efficiency | Historic England \(web page\)](#) provides information about how building condition, maintenance and repair are related to energy use.

Finding professional help

[PAS 2035 \(BSI 2023\)](#) specifies requirements for retrofit of dwellings, including assessment for retrofit, identification and evaluation of improvement options, design and specification of energy efficiency measures and monitoring and evaluation of projects. It also recommends minimum qualifications for retrofit co-ordinators.

[How to Find the Right Professional Help | Historic England \(web page\)](#) provides information about how to find the right professional help when working with an older building.

Embodied carbon and 'whole life' impacts

[Healthy Materials Lab | The Construction Material Pyramid \(The New School Parsons\)](#) is an online tool for comparing the carbon footprints of different materials

[LETI Embodied Carbon Primer \(London Energy Transformation Initiative\) 2020](#) provides more information on the concept of 'embodied carbon' aimed at designers, architects and engineers.

6.2 Summary table of retrofit measures

6.2.1 This table summarises the retrofit measures covered in this guidance. It should be read in conjunction with the detailed guidance in sections 6.3 to 6.12.

Retrofit measure	Permission required	Usually acceptable in Poets Road CA?	Cost	Disruption
Heating and energy				
Upgrading internal appliances and services	None	Yes	Low/medium	Low
Installing solar panels	Permitted development*	Yes	Medium	Medium
Air source heat pump	Planning permission/ permitted development*	Yes	Medium	Medium
Ground source heat pump	Permitted development*	Yes	High	Medium/high
Insulation/preventing heat loss				
Draft proofing	None	Yes	Low	Low
Improving existing windows or doors	None	Yes	Low/medium	Low/medium
Secondary glazing	None	Yes	Medium	Medium
Roof insulation	None	Yes	Medium	Low/medium
Floor insulation	None	Yes	Medium/high	Medium/high
Replacing windows or doors	Planning permission/ permitted development**	Yes	Medium/high	Medium
Internal wall insulation	None	Yes	High	High
External wall insulation	Planning permission	No	Medium/High	Medium
Shade and cooling				
External window awnings	Planning permission	Yes	Low/medium	Low
Internal shutters or blinds	None	Yes	Low/medium	Low
Air conditioning	Planning permission	No	High	Medium
Water management and biodiversity				
Water butts and rainwater harvesting	None	Yes	Low/medium	Low/medium
Green or roofs	Planning permission	Yes	Medium	Medium
Landscaping and plants	None	Yes	Low/medium	Low/medium

* Changes classed as 'permitted development' can be carried out without applying for planning permission as long as they comply with detailed criteria in the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) legislation 2016. If proposals do not comply with those criteria, then planning permission is required.

** This will change in October 2026 when the Council's proposed Article 4 Direction for Poets Road Conservation Area is confirmed. This page will be updated once any changes come into effect. [There is more information about the Article 4 Direction here.](#)

6.3 Internal appliances and services

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
Yes	Low/medium	Low

Planning permission is not required to upgrade internal appliances and systems.

Planning permission can be required for installing new vents or flues, but it is often covered by permitted development (see [“6.3 Internal appliances and services” on page 16](#) for more details).

6.3.1 Replacing and upgrading older appliances with more energy efficient models is easily achievable and will help to reduce energy use and water consumption. This

could include light bulbs and electrical goods, kitchen and laundry appliances, water fittings, boilers, radiators and thermostats, and smart meters.

Other considerations for internal appliances and services

- Upgrading to energy efficient appliances is recommended for all households. It is usually achievable with minimal disruption or risk and simple changes can be made without any special expertise (although gas appliances must be installed by a qualified installer). The cost for smaller appliances (e.g. light bulbs, shower heads) is very low.
- It is usually best to upgrade appliances when they have reached the end of their useful life. Replacing serviceable appliances with new is unlikely to be environmentally sustainable because there is a carbon cost associated with manufacture, transport and installation.
- A heat pump should be considered as an alternative to a gas boiler when replacing heating appliances. They are suitable for most homes, are more efficient than gas boilers, and run on electricity which can be generated from renewable sources.
- Make arrangements to dispose of any old appliances responsibly.

Additional information and resources

There is more information about installing heat pumps in sections [“6.5 Air source heat pumps”](#) and [“6.6 Ground source heat pumps”](#) of this document and in Islington’s [Retrofit Handbook 2025](#).



Image 1. Thermostats and heating controls can reduce the amount of energy used to heat the home and prevent waste.

6.4 Solar Panels

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
Yes	Medium	Medium

Installing solar panels on a residential building or within its grounds is **permitted development**. The work can be carried out without applying for planning permission if it meets the conditions in the [GPDO legislation](#). Planning permission is required for installations that do not meet the GPDO criteria.

Proposals should comply with the guidance below in order to preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area.

6.4.1 Solar panels convert sunlight into usable energy (electricity or heat) for your home. Most residential buildings can accommodate solar panels (usually on the roof). They provide a reliable source of clean renewable energy.

Design guidance

6.4.2 Solar installations should be designed to minimise visibility and avoid adverse impacts on character and appearance.

- Equipment should be positioned so that it is minimally visible from the ground (for example on a flat roof or butterfly roof with a parapet) or placed at the rear where it will not be visible from the street (for example on a rear roof slope or on the roof of the rear projection or extension, or within the back garden). Installing panels on roof slopes that face the street will usually cause harm to character and appearance.

- Orientation is an important factor to consider when deciding where to put solar panels. However, modern panels are capable of working effectively on roof slopes that face west, east or south or on flat roofs, and some do not require direct sunlight at all. It should therefore not be necessary to install them on the front roof slope. Solar ‘slates’ (which can be installed in place of roof slates and mimic their appearance) could potentially be installed on front roof slopes without any adverse impact on character.
- Associated cabling and electrical equipment should be installed internally, or in an unobtrusive location on the rear of the building where it would not affect the appearance of the building. External cabling and equipment should be minimised and it should not be mounted on the front facade of the building because this would cause harm to the building’s character.



Image 2. Photovoltaic panels installed on a flat roof

Other considerations for solar panels

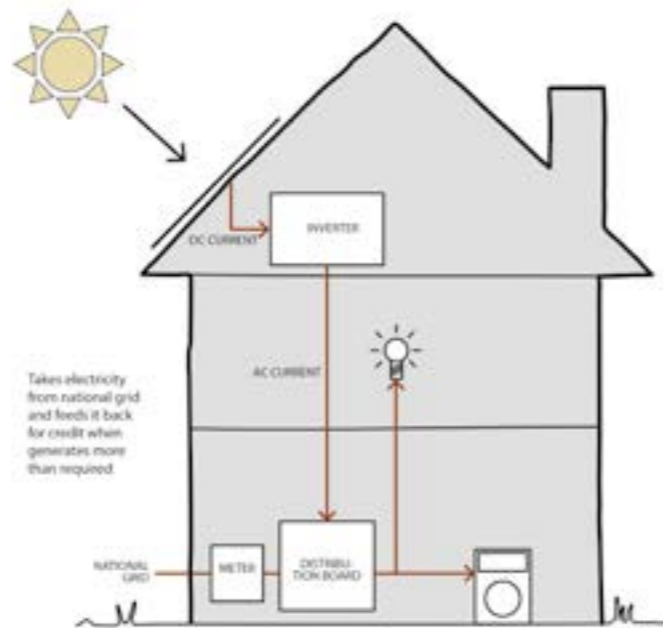
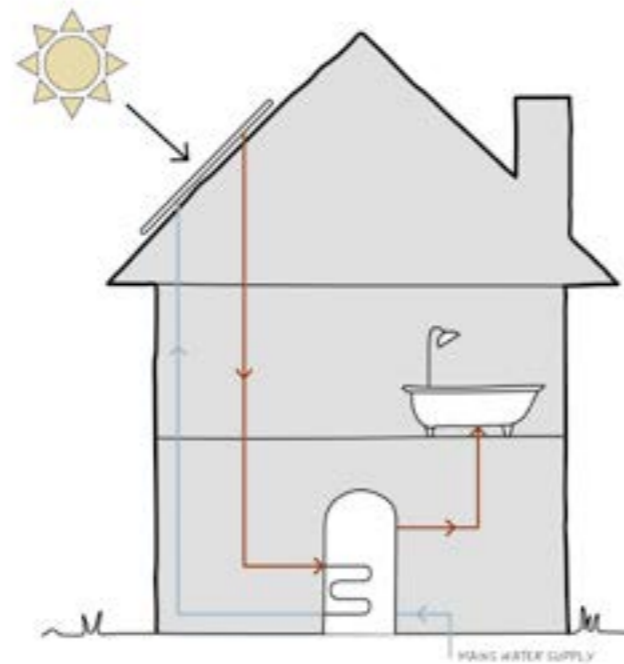
- There are two types of solar panel: photovoltaic (PV) panels that convert sunlight directly into electricity and thermal panels that use sunlight to heat water which can then be used for heating and hot water. Both types of solar panel require additional equipment to be installed inside the building (battery, converter and wiring). Solar thermal panels also require an insulated water cylinder.
- Consider the whole life cycle of solar panels when deciding if they are right for you. There is an environmental cost associated with their manufacture, transport and installation (as well as a considerable financial cost). They are generally expected to have a useful life of about 30 years but will become less efficient during this time. Solar panels are usually recyclable.

Additional information and resources

There is more information about installing solar panels in the [Islington Retrofit Handbook 2025](#) and in the Islington's [Climate Action SPD 2025](#).

There is more information about installing solar panels under permitted development in the [Islington Permitted Development Guide for Net Zero Works \(2024\)](#)

[Installing Solar Panels | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) provides detailed advice about installing solar panels on older buildings.



Images from top:

Image 3. The components of a solar thermal system

Image 4. The components of a solar photovoltaic system

6.5 Air source heat pumps

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
Yes	Medium	Medium

Planning permission is not required for internal alterations associated with the ASHP.

Installing an external ASHP on a residential building or within its grounds can be **permitted development** (depending on where it is located and other specific criteria). The work can be carried out without applying for planning permission if it meets the conditions in [the GPDO](#).

However, if the conditions in [the GPDO](#) are not met, **planning permission is needed** and applications should comply with the design guidance below.

6.5.1 Air source heat pumps (ASHPs) are a more efficient alternative to gas boilers. They use refrigerants to extract heat from the air outside the home which is then used to heat water. They are suitable for most homes and run on electricity which can be generated from renewable sources. They usually require an external unit the size of a large suitcase.

Design guidance

6.5.2 ASHPs can be installed in discreet locations where they would not be visible from the street and would not detract from views or from the appearance of the building.

- The most suitable location is usually the rear garden.
- ASHPs can be located on flat roofs if the unit would not be visible from the ground and would not have an adverse impact on views from nearby windows. Units should not be mounted on the external walls of buildings above ground level or on pitched roofs.
- ASHPs should not usually be located in front gardens as they are likely to adversely affect the appearance of the house and compromise access and amenity for residents.

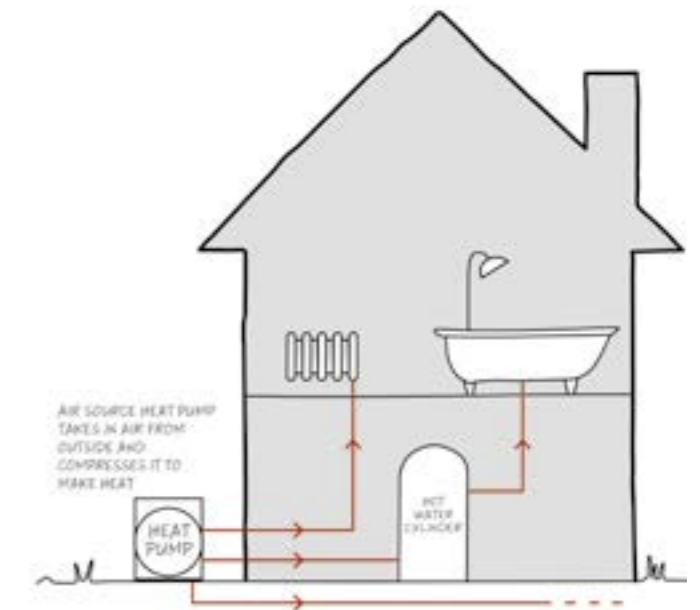


Image 5. The components of an air source heat pump system

- d. For larger buildings containing multiple flats, a coordinated approach to the installation of heat pumps will be required. The appropriate location will depend on the size and number of heat pumps that are needed and the layout of the building and site. Building owners are advised to seek pre-application advice prior to submitting an application in these cases.

Other considerations for ASHPs

- Consider combining solar panels with heat pumps as this can enable homes to be heated without use of fossil fuels or electricity from the grid. However, significant progress has already been made towards decarbonising the UK electricity supply grid, and government plans to decarbonise the grid entirely by 2035 were included in the 2020 Energy White Paper (published by the previous conservative government). This means that a large proportion of electricity used to run heat pumps from the grid will also be generated from renewable sources.
- It is not necessary to fully insulate older homes before switching to a heat pump. However, combining a heat pump with insulation and other measures to reduce heat loss will make the building easier to heat and reduce the amount of energy needed to run the heat pump.
- ASHPs emit a small amount of noise when working. They should be positioned to avoid any adverse noise impacts on residents or neighbours. There is more information about these requirements in [Islington's Climate Action SPD \(draft\) 2025](#).
- Air to water' ASHPs are the most common type. These can be used with underfloor heating or radiators, but you may be advised to upgrade some of the heat emitters in your home to ensure they work effectively. Underfloor heating is not usually

recommended for suspended timber floors where the original boards remain because wooden floorboards are not effective heat conductors and there is a risk that they will warp if exposed to direct heat. However, houses in Poets Road CA usually have solid floors at lower ground floor that are suitable for underfloor heating. Floor insulation should always be considered if you intend to install underfloor heating over a solid floor as this will prevent heat loss from the pipes (see section 2.12 for more information).

- Air to air' ASHPs are a less common type which can provide both heating and cooling. These systems are classed as 'active cooling' because they use additional energy to power cooling functions. Islington Local plan Policy S6 requires that applicants demonstrate that passive cooling strategies have been maximised prior to active cooling measures being considered in order to avoid unnecessary energy usage. See section 6.14 for more information on passive cooling measures.

Additional information and resources

There is more information about installing heat pumps in the [Islington Retrofit Handbook 2025](#) and in the Islington's [Climate Action SPD 2025](#).

There is more information about installing solar panels under permitted development in the [Islington Permitted Development Guide for Net Zero Works \(2024\)](#).

[Installing Heat Pumps in Historic Buildings | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) provides detailed advice about installing heat pumps in older buildings.

6.6 Ground source heat pump

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
Yes	High	Medium/high

Planning permission is not needed for internal alterations associated with the ground source heat pump.

Installing an external ground source heat pump within the grounds of a residential building is **permitted development**. The work can be carried out without applying for planning permission if it meets the conditions in [the GPDO](#).

6.6.1 Ground source heat pumps use energy stored in the ground to heat water for use in the home. They are more efficient than gas boilers and run on electricity which can be generated from renewable sources.

Other considerations for ground source heat pumps

- Air source heat pumps are usually preferred in urban environments because ground source heat pumps require large lengths of pipes to be laid beneath the ground and will only be feasible for properties with large gardens. This can be achieved either by drilling one or several very deep bore holes (up to 250m) or by laying the pipework in loops close to the surface. Either of these methods can

have significant adverse impacts on archaeology and ecology (e.g. by harming tree root systems). Residents may want to seek specialist advice in both areas before proceeding and should check whether there are any underground structures or services that could prevent the installation.

- Specialist equipment will be required for drilling bore holes. It may be difficult or impossible to access rear gardens of terraced houses with this equipment.
- Consider combining solar panels with heat pumps as this can enable homes to be heated without use of fossil fuels or electricity from the grid.
- It is not necessary to fully insulate your home before switching to a heat pump (as long as you choose an appropriate specification). However, combining a heat pump with insulation and other measures to reduce heat loss will make the building easier to heat and reduce the amount of energy needed to run the heat pump.

Additional information and resources

There is more information about installing heat pumps in the [Islington Retrofit Handbook 2025](#) and in the Islington's [Climate Action SPD 2025](#).

[Installing Heat Pumps in Historic Buildings | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) provides detailed advice about installing heat pumps in older buildings.

6.7 Draught proofing

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
Yes	Low	Low

Planning permission is not needed for draught proofing.

6.7.1 Older buildings are prone to heat loss through cracks and gaps, and draughts can make spaces feel colder and less comfortable. Simple draught proofing is one of the easiest and most cost effective ways to reduce heat loss. Draught proofing measures can include:

- Installing inexpensive wiper seals or compression seals around windows and doors (see section [“6.8 Improving existing windows and doors”](#) for more details), installing draught-excluding flaps on letterboxes and keyholes, and hanging curtains or blinds.
- Blocking chimneys when not in use with a register plate or chimney balloon.
- Sealing gaps between floorboards and underneath skirting with sealant, timber fillets or inexpensive compression strips.
- Filling in any cracks around pipework or poorly fitted windows.

Additional information and resources

There is more information about draught proofing in the [Islington Retrofit Handbook 2025](#).

[Draught-Proofing | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) provides detailed advice about draught-proofing older buildings

Other considerations for draught proofing

- Some degree of ventilation is essential in older buildings to avoid moisture build-up and poor air quality. Draught proofing will reduce air infiltration and it is important to make sure that rooms and other spaces (including floor voids and chimneys) are still adequately ventilated.

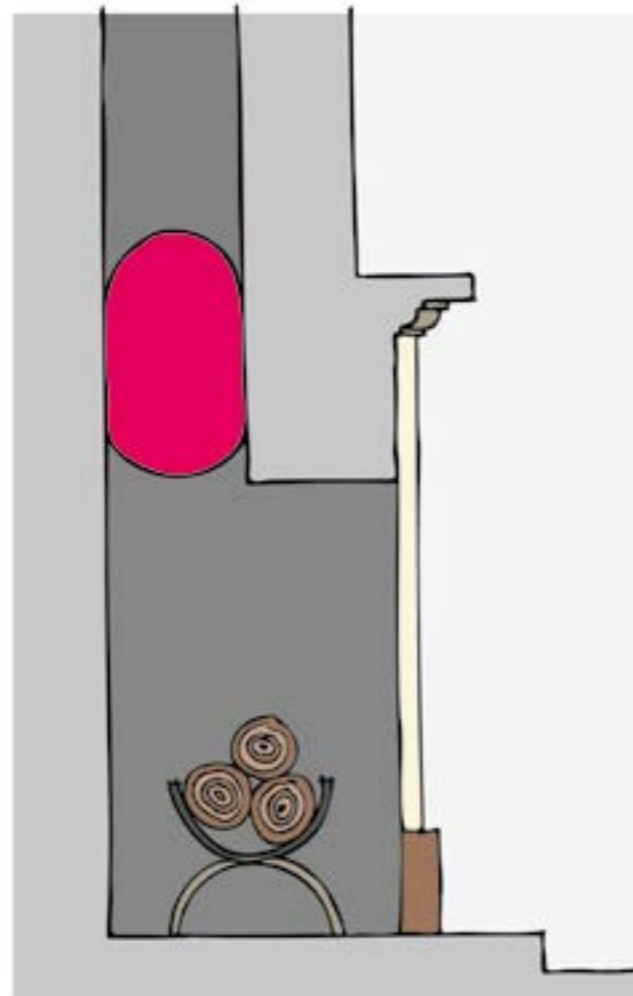


Image 6. A chimney balloon is a simple and flexible way to prevent draughts when the chimney is not in use

6.8 Improving existing windows and doors

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
Yes	Low/medium	Low/medium

Planning permission is not needed for improving existing windows and doors.

6.8.1 Older, single-glazed windows can allow a significant amount of heat loss but thermal performance can be improved by making simple affordable changes. These can include:

- Repairing any damage and rehangng poorly fitted windows
- Draught-proofing by installing inexpensive wiper seals or compression seals
- Replacing glass in existing frames: There is a range of glass products available on the market that could be installed in existing window frames to improved thermal performance. These include ‘Low E’ glass, ultra-slimline double-glazed units and vacuum glazing. Vacuum glazing has very good thermal performance while being slim and light enough to fit in most historic window frames in place of traditional glass. To protect the appearance of the window you should ensure that vacuum glazing products don’t have prominent ‘micropillars’ or visible ‘extraction ports’.
- Adhesive films can be applied to existing glass to improve its thermal performance or reduce solar gain.
- Installing (and using) shutters, blinds or curtains

Other considerations when improving windows

- Houses in Poets Road Conservation Area originally had internal shutters and shutter boxes and many of these survive today. Consider refurbishing shutters that are in poor condition or have been painted shut and bringing them back into use.
- Window improvements can also help with overheating in warmer weather. Shutters, blinds and specialised glass or window films can be used to limit solar gain in sunny rooms.



Image 7. Historic shutters can be brought back in to use to reduce heat loss and manage solar gain.

- Replacing serviceable windows with new might not be environmentally sustainable because there is a carbon cost associated with the manufacture, transport and installation of new windows, and well-maintained and repaired historic window may last longer than modern replacements. Many historic windows were made with long-lasting materials such as old growth timber that are no longer available. Sympathetic repairs will prolong the life of these materials, minimising environmental impact. Seek advice from a joiner or craftsman with relevant skills to carry out any repair work.
- Some degree of ventilation is essential in older buildings to avoid moisture build-up and poor air quality. Draught proofing will reduce air-infiltration and it is important to make sure that rooms are still adequately ventilated.

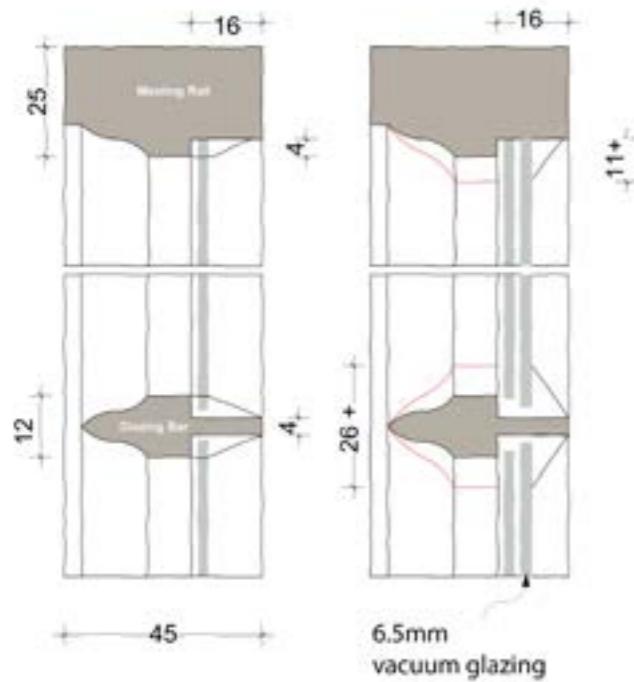


Image 8. Check that new glazed units are compatible with existing frames and will fit within the rebates on the frame.

- Check that new glass is compatible with existing frames and glazing bars. New products are usually thicker and heavier than historic panes. The new glass should be putty-mounted in the traditional style to preserve the appearance of the window.

Additional information and resources

There is more information about repairing and improving older windows in the [Islington Guide to repairing and upgrading windows in listed buildings and conservation areas \(2024\)](#).

There is more information about draught proofing in the [Islington Retrofit Handbook 2025](#).

[Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading \(Historic England 2017\)](#) contains detailed information on the history and significance of traditional windows and guidance on maintenance, repair and upgrading.

[Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Draught-proofing windows and doors \(Historic England 2016\)](#) is part of a suite of guidance documents on energy efficiency in historic buildings and provides detailed advice on draught-proofing windows and doors.

[Modifying Historic Windows as Part of Retrofitting Energy-Saving Measures \(Historic England website\)](#) provides detailed information and links about improvements to windows in older buildings.

[SPAB Technical advice note: Repair of Wood Windows \(Society for the protection of Ancient Buildings\)](#) provides guidance on repairing traditional timber windows.

6.9 Secondary glazing

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
Yes	Medium	Medium

Planning permission is not needed to install secondary glazing.

6.9.1 Installing secondary glazing to existing windows is a good option to improve thermal performance. It can usually be installed with minimal disruption or risk and can be as effective as slimline double glazing for reducing heat loss and condensation.

Other considerations for secondary glazing

- Replacing serviceable windows with new double-glazed windows might not be environmentally sustainable when ‘whole life’ impacts are considered because there is a carbon cost associated with the manufacture, transport and installation of new windows. Households who choose to retain and repair existing single-glazed windows should consider adding secondary glazing to improve thermal performance.
- There is a wide variety of good quality secondary glazing products available on the market with good functionality and discreet appearance, including some that are designed to be mounted on the interior of the staff bead and are therefore compatible with traditional shutters. Lightweight unobtrusive metal frames are usually the most suitable and least noticeable. There are also low-cost options available for those looking for an inexpensive or temporary solution.

- Some ventilation between the exterior and the air gap will limit the risk of condensation forming on the inner face of the primary window. To achieve this, it is often recommended that the primary window is not sealed or draught proofed. The secondary glazing unit should be well sealed to prevent moist air from the room entering the air gap.
- Ventilation is essential in older buildings to avoid moisture build-up and poor air quality. Secondary glazing will reduce air-infiltration and it is important to make sure the room is still adequately ventilated.
- Secondary glazing is likely to be better than slimline double glazing at reducing noise.

Additional information and resources

There is more information about secondary glazing in the Islington [Guide to repairing and upgrading windows in listed buildings and conservation areas \(2024\)](#), and the [Islington Retrofit Handbook 2025](#).

[Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Secondary glazing for windows \(Historic England 2016\)](#) is part of a suite of guidance documents on energy efficiency in historic buildings and provides detailed advice on secondary glazing.

[Slim-profile Double Glazing: Thermal Performance and Embodied Energy. Technical Paper 09 \(Historic Environment Scotland 2008\)](#), includes information about the thermal performance and ‘whole life’ environmental impacts of secondary glazing compared with other solutions.

6.10 Replacing windows

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
Yes	Medium/high	Medium

Replacing existing windows with double glazed windows in a single-family house is **permitted development** if the replacement windows are of similar appearance. The work can be carried out without applying for planning permission as long as it meets the criteria in the [GPDO legislation](#). [This will change in October 2026 once the Council's proposed Article 4 Direction is confirmed. This page will be updated once any changes come into effect. [There is more information about the Article 4 Direction here.](#)]

Planning permission is required for replacing windows in a flat, a house converted into flats, or another type of building. Proposals should comply with the design guidance below.

6.10.1 Replacing single glazed windows with new double glazed or vacuum glazed windows can significantly reduce heat loss. This will usually be acceptable subject to the design guidelines below.

Design Guidance

6.10.2 Windows in historic houses or in buildings that makes a positive contribution to the conservation area can be replaced with well-designed slimline double-glazed or vacuum-glazed windows that closely match the original design and materials. In most cases these are wooden sliding sash windows.

- a. The design, materials, detailing and opening mechanism should replicate the original window.

- b. Glazing should be putty mounted in the traditional style. Applicants should clearly show this detail on application drawings.
- c. Most sash windows in Poets Road Conservation Area do not have glazing bars so it will usually be possible to accommodate thicker double-glazed units if desired.
- d. However, if the existing window does have glazing bars, these should be accurately replicated. The layout and profile of new glazing bars should match the original as closely as possible and the window should usually be constructed with integral glazing bars and individual glazed units putty mounted in each opening (not with artificial glazing bars mounted on the surface of a larger glazed unit). This will usually require the use of slim-profile double glazed units or vacuum glazing. Manufacturers generally offer 'slimline' double-glazed units of about 14mm-16mm thickness that can be used with narrow glazing bars. Vacuum glazing is slimmer and lighter than traditional double glazing and is likely to be compatible with most frame styles.
- e. Visible trickle vents and rubber seals should be avoided. The spacer bar in double-glazed units should match the colour of the window frame so that it is not noticeable. Vacuum glazing products should not have prominent 'micropillars' or visible 'extraction ports'.

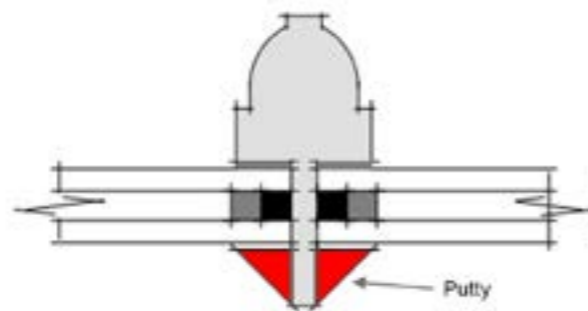


Image 9. Glazing should be putty mounted. Any glazing bars should be integral (and not surface-mounted).

- f. Where the window to be replaced has been inappropriately replaced or altered in the past, residents are encouraged to revert to the original design (which can usually be ascertained by looking at neighbouring houses in the group).

6.10.3 It may be acceptable to change the style or material when replacing windows in non-historic buildings that do not contribute to the character of the conservation area or when replacing modern windows (such as windows in a recent extension). The new windows should not detract from the appearance of the building or the character of the area. They should be appropriately designed and of good quality. UPVC windows are unlikely to be acceptable in most circumstances due to concerns over poor appearance. Refer to the Poets Road Conservation Area Appraisal section __ for descriptions of the types of buildings found in the area including the different window styles. Section __ identifies which buildings contribute to the character of the area.



Image 10. Most houses have sliding sash windows without glazing bars at the front.

Other considerations when replacing windows and doors

- Replacing windows in their entirety can be quite disruptive. Box frames for traditional sash windows are usually set behind brickwork and impossible to remove without also removing surviving internal shutters or timber window surrounds. It may be preferable (and more cost-effective) to replace sashes or casements while retaining the existing frame.
- Wood is considered to be one of the most environmentally sustainable material for windows due to its lower embodied carbon compared to other materials. It is a renewable resource and can sequester carbon, and wooden windows are also quite thermally efficient. Aluminium has a high embodied carbon due to the energy-intensive production process but is durable and long-lasting.
- The wider environmental impacts of PVC are significant. It is not currently recycled in most circumstances, and its useful lifespan is relatively short compared to timber or aluminium.
- Make arrangements to dispose of old windows responsibly. Old window material can often be effectively recycled and it is important to discuss this with contractors.

Additional information and resources

There is more information about replacing windows in Islington's [Guide to repairing and upgrading windows in listed buildings and conservation areas \(2024\)](#), the [Islington Retrofit Handbook 2025](#), and the [Islington Climate Action SPD 2025](#).

6.11 Roof insulation

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
Yes	Medium	Low/medium

Planning permission is not needed to insulate lofts or roof spaces internally.

6.11.1 Roof insulation is readily achievable in most buildings and, if not already installed, should be considered as a priority. A considerable proportion (about 35%) of heat is lost through the roof of an uninsulated home.

Other considerations for roof insulation

6.11.2 Insulation materials that are not vapour permeable can cause significant problems if installed in older buildings. The proper functioning of these buildings depends on moisture being able to move through the structure and evaporate away. Non-vapour permeable materials can disrupt this process leading to moisture build-up, damp, rot, mould growth and poor air quality.

6.11.3 Pitched roofs can be insulated at ceiling level (where the roof is not occupied) or at rafter level (if there is a habitable room in the roof space). As with all insulation, it is very important to carefully consider the detailing to avoid thermal bridges, cold spots and condensation, and to make sure there is sufficient air flow and ventilation. Ventilation for insulated pitched roofs should usually be provided at the eaves.

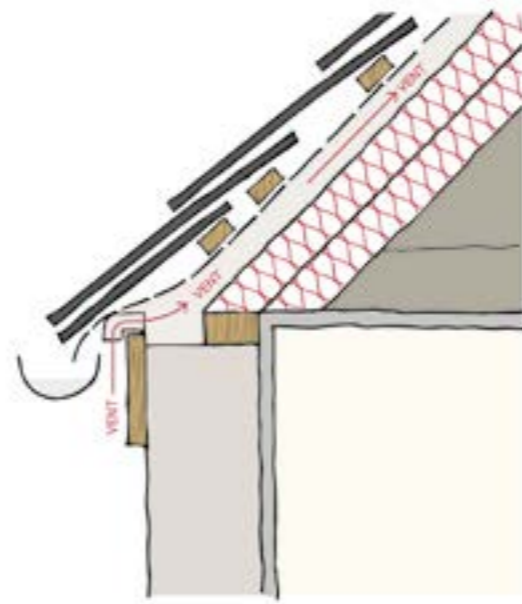


Image 11. Ventilation for insulated pitched roofs should usually be provided at the eaves.

Additional information and resources

There is more information about insulating roofs in the [Islington Retrofit Handbook 2025](#).

[Insulating Roofs in Historic Buildings | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) provides detailed information about insulating roofs, with links to technical guidance documents for different roof types:

- [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulating pitched roofs at ceiling level- cold roofs | Historic England](#)
- [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulating pitched roofs at rafter level | Historic England](#)
- [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulating flat roofs | Historic England](#)
- [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulating dormer windows | Historic England](#)

6.12 Floor insulation

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
Yes	Medium/high	Medium/high

Planning permission is not needed to insulate floors.

6.12.1 Floor insulation is suitable for most buildings. There can be significant heat loss through suspended timber floors and insulating these is generally very effective. Solid floors can also be effectively insulated (although there is usually less heat loss through solid floors so the efficiency gains are more marginal).

Other considerations for floor insulation

- Insulation materials that are not vapour permeable can cause significant problems if installed in older buildings. The proper functioning of these buildings depends on moisture being able to move through the structure and evaporate away. Non-vapour permeable materials can disrupt this process leading to moisture build-up, damp, rot, mould growth and poor air quality. Materials made from natural fibres such as hemp, cellulose or wood-fibre board are most suitable for insulating suspended floors.
- As with all insulation, it is very important to carefully consider the detailing to avoid thermal bridges, cold spots and condensation, and to make sure there is sufficient air flow and ventilation. Insulation should not impede air-flow in the floor void.
- Carefully consider moisture management when insulating solid floors in older buildings and consider seeking advice from a surveyor or specialist who has experience

dealing with older buildings. Historically, solid floor construction was moisture-permeable and moisture from the ground was able to move through the floor and evaporate away. Many materials used to insulate solid floors are impervious to air and moisture and can significantly disrupt this balance. Often, original floors were replaced with solid concrete floors in the 20th century, and there are often existing issues with moisture build-up that should be resolved before insulation is installed.

- Floor insulation should always be considered if you intend to install underfloor heating over a solid floor as this will prevent heat loss from the pipes.

Additional information and resources

There is more information about insulating floors in the [Islington Retrofit Handbook 2025](#).

[Insulating Floors in Historic Buildings | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) provides detailed information about insulating floors, with links to technical guidance documents for different floor types:

- [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulation of suspended timber floors | Historic England](#)
- [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulating solid ground floors | Historic England](#)

6.13 Internal wall insulation

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
Yes	High	High

Planning permission is not needed for internal wall insulation

6.13.1 Most of the houses in Poets Road Conservation Area have solid brick walls. Internal wall insulation can help reduce heat loss through walls without affecting the appearance of the building.

6.13.2 Later buildings in the area (including post-war purpose-built flats and late 20th century infill buildings) are likely to have cavity walls. Cavity wall insulation should be considered in these cases.

Other considerations for internal wall insulation

- Insulation materials that are not vapour permeable should not be used in older buildings with solid brick walls. The proper functioning of these buildings relies on moisture being able to move through the structure and evaporate away. Non-vapour permeable materials can disrupt this process leading to moisture build-up, damp, rot, mould and poor air quality. Suitable vapour permeable materials such as hemp, wool or cellulose-based materials or aerogel should be used instead (and work should be finished with vapour permeable finishes and decoration).
- As with all insulation, it is very important to carefully consider detailing to avoid cold spots, thermal bridging and condensation and to ensure there is sufficient air flow and

ventilation. Particular attention should be paid to detailing around window reveals and party walls, and insulation should be carried into floor voids to ensure continuity.

- Ensure that walls and surfaces are in good condition prior to installation and are not damp, cracked or otherwise damaged, as these issues will compromise the effectiveness of the insulation.
- If other internal works are planned that require rooms to be vacated, consider insulating the walls at the same time to minimise disruption

Additional information and resources

There is more information about insulating walls in the [Islington Retrofit Handbook 2025](#).

[Insulating Walls in Historic Buildings | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) provides detailed information about insulating walls.

[Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulating solid walls | Historic England](#) provides detailed information about insulating solid walls



Image 12. Insulation should be carried into floor voids and window reveals

6.14 External wall insulation

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
No	Medium/high	Medium

Planning permission is needed to install external wall insulation. Proposals should comply with the design guidance below.

6.14.1 External wall insulation (EWI) can reduce heat loss through solid walls, but will significantly alter the appearance of most buildings.

Design Guidance

6.14.2 EWI should not be installed on historic brick terraces or any other brick buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area, except on walls that already have a rendered finish (such as contemporary extensions or garden buildings).

6.14.3 EWI could be considered for buildings that are neutral or buildings that detract from the character of the area (such as later infill buildings) if the resulting overall appearance, finish and detailing would be of high quality and contextually appropriate.

- These buildings are not considered to be of any particular architectural or historic interest in their own right, but usually the use of contextually appropriate materials and coherent design details allow them to blend in well with the character of the area. External changes that detract from this or use of incongruous finishes could result in poor appearance and cause harm to the character of the conservation area. Caution is advised, and options for internal or cavity wall insulation should be explored in the first instance.

- We recommend seeking pre-application advice before submitting an application for external wall insulation.

6.14.4 Successful proposals for EWI will need to demonstrate that detailing around edges, window and door reveals, eaves, and rainwater goods are successfully resolved and that the material and finish would be good quality and contextually appropriate.

Other considerations for external wall insulation

- Insulation materials that are not vapour permeable should not be used for older buildings with solid walls. These can cause significant problems. The proper functioning of older buildings relies on moisture being able to move through the structure and evaporate away and non-vapour permeable materials can disrupt this process leading to moisture build-up, damp, rot, mould and poor air quality. Suitable vapour permeable insulation materials should be used, and any external cladding to protect the insulation should also be moisture permeable (e.g. lime renders or ventilated rainscreen cladding).
- As with all insulation, it is very important to carefully consider detailing to avoid cold spots, thermal bridging and condensation and to ensure there is sufficient air flow and ventilation. Particular attention should be paid to detailing around window reveals, party walls, eaves and at ground level.
- Ensure that walls and surfaces are in good condition prior to installation and are not damp, cracked or otherwise damaged, as these issues will compromise the effectiveness of the insulation.

6.15 Awnings, shutters and shade

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
Yes	Low/medium	Low

Planning permission is required to install external awnings. Proposals should comply with the design guidance below.

Planning permission is not needed to install internal shutters or blinds.

6.15.1 Awnings, blinds and shutters can help prevent overheating and solar gain in hot sunny weather.



Image 13. Windows on Leconfield Road with evidence of historic blind casings

Design guidance

6.15.2 External canvas awnings can be installed in the window reveals of traditional sash windows to provide shade if overheating is a problem (typically on south or west facing windows). These were common in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

- Awnings should be fully retractable and should fit inside the window reveal. A simple roller mechanism with slim metal pivot arms is most appropriate. Any cables or cable boxes for automated mechanisms should not be visible externally.
- The fabric should be plain and should be a light neutral colour. Metal elements should have a paint or powder coated finish to match.
- The awning should be angled when in the 'down' position so that it doesn't prevent airflow when the window is open.

6.15.3 This style of awning may not be appropriate for later buildings that do not have traditional sash windows (such as post-war purpose-built flats). We recommend seeking pre-application advice about any proposals for external shading in these cases.

Other considerations for awnings and shade

- Traditional canvas awnings were once widely used as a solution to over-heating but they have now largely fallen out of use. Some research may be needed to find a suitable product and installer. Traditional canvas awnings are still popular for shops and cafes. Companies frequently offer 'traditional' or 'Victorian' awnings aimed at this commercial market which could be adapted for residential windows.

- Internal shutters or blinds can help minimise overheating and do not need planning permission. Many houses in Poets Road Conservation Area have traditional internal timber shutters with shutter boxes which provide convenient adjustable shade on sunny days. Consider refurbishing or reinstating these if they are not working.
- Check that windows are in good working order so that they can be opened to provide passive cooling. Take care that shutters and awnings can be used with open windows and won't restrict air flow. Replacing or treating window glass can also help minimise solar gain (see section 2.8 for more details)
- Solar gain from windows should be considered when designing new extensions or garden buildings. Planting trees for shade and increasing soft landscaping and planting near to the house can help to reduce air temperatures and manage overheating.

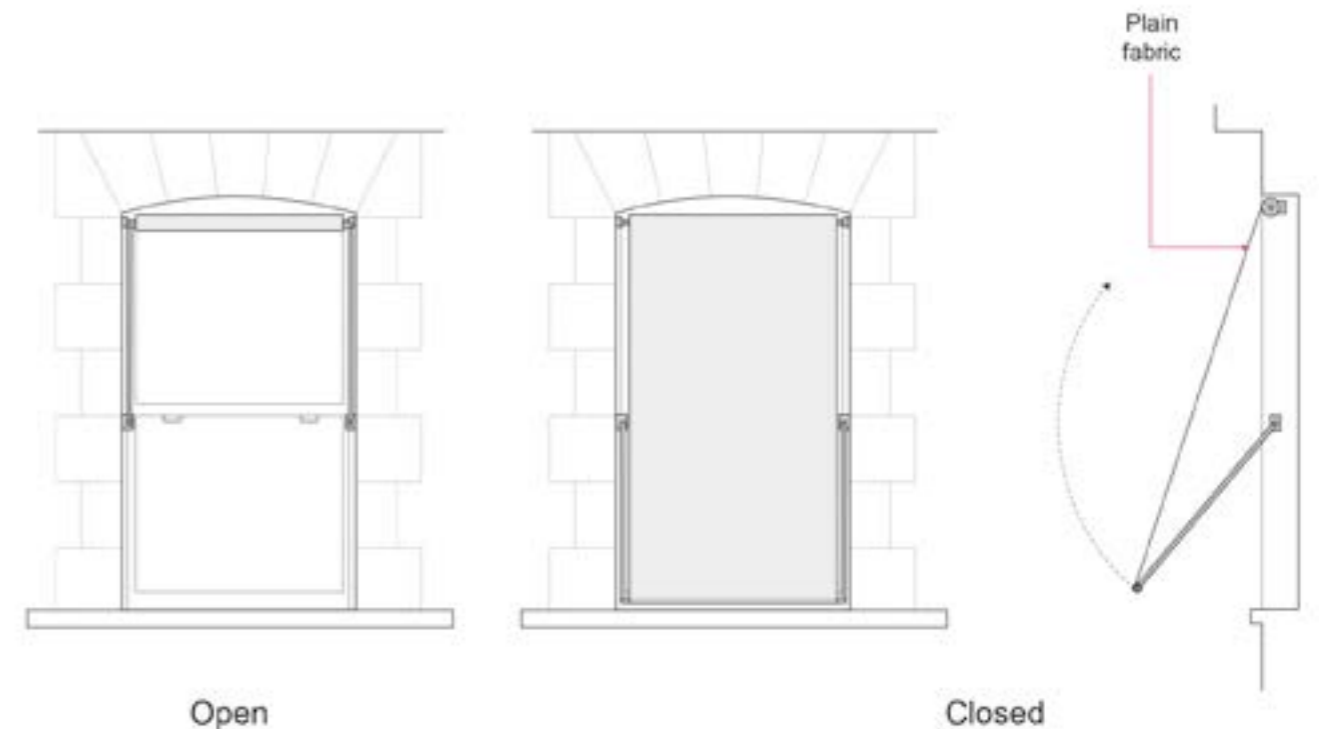


Image 14. Simple retractable canvas awnings of the type that can be installed on sash windows

Additional information and resources

There is more information about shade and cooling measures in the [Islington Retrofit Handbook 2025](#) and in Islington's [Climate Action SPD 2025](#).

[Overheating in Historic Buildings | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) provides detailed information about managing overheating in older buildings.

[The British Blind and Shutter Association \(BBSA\) \(web page\)](#) is the national trade association for companies that supply and install blinds and awnings.

6.16 Air conditioning

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
No	High	Medium

Planning permission is needed for installations of external air conditioning equipment. Proposals should comply with guidance below.

Design guidance

6.16.1 Installation of air conditioning is not generally recommended. Condenser units and other air conditioning equipment are likely to be unsightly and can significantly detract from the character of buildings.

- Condenser units and other equipment should not be installed on the exterior of buildings in any visible location (including where they would be visible from private gardens or in views from windows).
- Units should not be installed in front gardens or side gardens that are visible from the street.
- Discrete locations in rear gardens are most likely to be acceptable in terms of heritage impacts.

Other considerations for air conditioning

- Air conditioning is not energy efficient and is not considered to be a sustainable adaptation to hotter temperatures. Residents should always use passive cooling measures such as awnings, shutters, landscaping/planting and passive ventilation instead if possible. Islington Local plan Policy S6 requires that applicants demonstrate that passive cooling strategies have been fully explored

and are not feasible before considering air conditioning, and must only be employed as part of a mixed-mode cooling system that maximises passive modes.

- 'Air to air' air source heat pumps can incorporate heating and cooling functions and may be a more appropriate active cooling measures where passive cooling solutions are not adequate. (See section 6.5 for more details.)
- Air conditioning units can be noisy. They must be positioned to avoid any adverse noise impacts on residents or neighbours (e.g. away from windows, boundaries and patios). Islington Local Plan policy DH5 Part DD (I and ii) require that applicants demonstrate that noise and vibration impacts have been avoided. Applications must provide a noise and vibration assessment, and the unit may need to be contained within an acoustic housing.

Additional information and resources

There is more information about active and passive cooling in the [Islington Retrofit Handbook 2025](#) and in Islington's [Climate Action SPD 2025](#).

[Overheating in Historic Buildings | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) provides detailed information about managing overheating in older buildings.

6.17 Water butts and rainwater harvesting

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
Yes	Low/medium	Low/medium

Planning permission is not needed for installation of water butts or rainwater harvesting systems.

6.17.1 Water butts are simple water tanks that are connected to rainwater gutters so they can collect rainwater for use in the garden. This reduces demand on the mains water supply and reduces pressure on storm water drains during heavy rainfall.

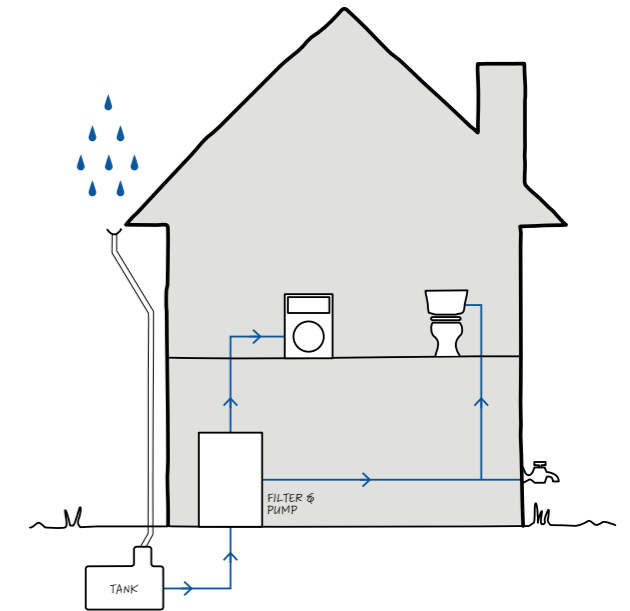
6.17.2 Rainwater harvesting is a system that collects rainwater from roofs and surfaces and redirects it for use within the house (e.g. for flushing toilets or laundry).

Other considerations for water butts and rainwater harvesting

- Water butts should usually be placed at the rear where they will be most useful and will not add to visual clutter or impede access in small front gardens.
- Water butts should always be considered when building an extension into the rear garden as they will help mitigate the impact of the additional built footprint on permeability and sustainable drainage.
- Installing rainwater harvesting systems can be disruptive as it requires changes to plumbing and frequently requires excavation to install an underground tank. Consider installing rainwater harvesting systems at the same time as other renovations or plumbing upgrades as it will be less disruptive.

Additional information and resources

There is more information about rainwater harvesting measures in the [Islington Retrofit Handbook 2024](#).



Images from top:

Image 15. A rainwater harvesting system

Image 16. A water butt

6.18 Green roofs

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
Yes (on modern additions)	Medium	Medium

Planning permission is usually required for installation of green roofs (although green roofs installed as part of a garden building **may be permitted development** – see section 4.4 for details). Proposals should comply with the design guidance below.

6.18.1 Green roofs provide cooling, biodiversity and drainage benefits and are well worth considering within retrofit projects.

Design Guidance

6.18.2 Green roofs can usually be installed on modern garden buildings, storage enclosures and extensions.

- Orientation, amount of sunlight and ease of maintenance and biodiversity benefits should be considered when selecting the type of roof and plant species.
- The roof should be well designed and detailed so that it doesn't detract from the appearance of the building.

6.18.3 Green roofs should not be installed in place of historic roofs. Original roofs are important architectural features that should be retained (and installation of green roofs is unlikely to be practicable).

Other considerations for green roofs

- Green roofs should be considered when extending into the rear garden as they will help mitigate the impact of the additional built footprint on permeability and sustainable drainage, and can soften the appearance of the extension. They may be easier to accommodate if they are incorporated into the design of the extension (rather than added after it is built).
- Consider whether the roof needs to be accessed for maintenance and upkeep, and make sure it can be accessed safely if needed.

Additional information and resources

There is more information about green roofs in the [Islington Retrofit Handbook 2025](#) and in Islington's [Climate Action SPD 2025](#), including detailed advice on planting and species.



Image 17. Leconfield Road – Green roofs can usually be added to extensions or storage containers

6.19 Landscaping, plants and biodiversity

Usually acceptable	Cost	Disruption
Yes	Low/medium	Low/medium

Planning permission is not needed for landscaping and planting.

Installing hard standing or paving in the garden of a single family house is **permitted development**. The work can be carried out without applying for planning permission as long as it meets the criteria in the [GPDO legislation](#).

You must **formally notify the Council** at least 6 weeks before carrying out any works to existing trees in the conservation area. If the tree has a Tree Protection Order (TPO) you must **apply for and obtain consent** from the Council before carrying out any work.

6.19.1 Gardens, landscape and trees make an important positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. Improvements to landscaping and planting can enhance the character of the area, contribute to sustainable water management, and support biodiversity and habitats. This might include;

- Using permeable materials for any hard standing, and increasing soft landscaping and planting wherever possible
- Incorporating bird and bat boxes, ponds, 'swift bricks' and other features to support habitats and wildlife

- Incorporating a variety of plant species and considering drought-tolerant species that will not require watering
- Practicing composting and rainwater harvesting

Other considerations for landscaping, planting and biodiversity

- Planting trees for shade and increasing soft landscaping and planting near to the house can help to reduce air temperatures and manage overheating.

Additional information and resources

There is more information about landscape and biodiversity measures in the [Islington Retrofit Handbook 2025](#).



Image 18. Ferntower Road – Trees and landscaping in gardens make an important contribution to character.

7. Householder Extensions.

7.1 General advice on householder extensions

7.1.1 This section deals with extensions to houses (or to houses that have been converted into flats) within the conservation area. The guidance may not be applicable to purpose-built blocks of flats and other building types.

7.1.2 Extensions in the conservation area should be designed to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. This generally means they should be subordinate in size and should be designed to complement the character of the area.

7.1.3 Where new extensions are proposed to houses that have already been extended in the past, the cumulative impact will be considered. If the existing extensions are large, it may not be possible to add more space without causing harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area. However, it will usually be acceptable to replace existing poor-quality extensions with well-designed new structures of a similar size.

7.1.4 Householders are required to consider sustainable design and construction principles when designing extensions, including:

- a. Following 'circular economy' principles so that waste during construction is minimised, structures are designed to last a long time and be adaptable, and disposal or recycling of materials at the end of their life has been considered.

- b. Using sustainable materials with low 'embodied' carbon and choosing recycled materials or materials that can be recycled. Natural materials (especially wood) are likely to have low embodied carbon and are suitable for use in the conservation area.
- c. Reusing materials on site wherever possible, and considering reusing or adapting existing structures rather than building new ones.
- d. Minimising new concrete slab foundations as these have a high carbon footprint. Reuse existing foundations or use low embodied carbon alternatives if possible.
- e. Carefully considering operational efficiency. Extensions should be well insulated and should also be designed to avoid overheating (e.g. by incorporating window shading, limiting the amount of glazing on south facing extensions, and making sure there is adequate passive ventilation). Opportunities to make efficiency improvements to other parts of the house should also be considered.
- f. Minimising negative impacts on drainage and biodiversity (e.g. incorporating green roofs, rainwater collection and additional soft landscaping if extending into rear gardens).

Additional information and resources

There is more information about sustainable design and construction for minor applications in chapter 2 of Islington's [Climate Action SPD 2025](#).

7.2 Rear and side extensions

Is planning permission needed?

Single-storey rear extensions extending up to 3 metres beyond the rear wall of a single-family house are **permitted development**. The work can be carried out without applying for planning permission if it meets the criteria in the [GPDO legislation](#).

Planning permission is needed for any other rear extensions, for side extensions, and for any extensions to flats. Proposals should comply with the following design guidance.

Design Guidance

7.2.1 Houses can usually be extended at the rear if the extension is subordinate in scale and is designed appropriately.

- a. Rear extensions should have a single storey and should be subordinate in scale.
- b. Side return extensions (which infill the area between the rear projection and side boundary) are often a good option. They should have a single storey and should not usually extend beyond the end of the rear projection. However, if the rear projection is small it may be appropriate to extend beyond its rear wall to provide a usable space.
- c. Extensions should reflect the scale and proportions of the original house. Floor to ceiling heights and floor levels should be in keeping with existing adjacent rooms. The ground level should not be substantially lowered to increase the floor-to-ceiling height in the extension as the resulting structure would be too large and dominant.



Image 19. Side return extensions on houses with a rear projection

7.2.2 Extensions (whether traditional or contemporary in style) should be designed and detailed to complement the existing building and the character of the area. This might include:

- a. Designing window openings with similar shape, size and proportions to those on the original house .
- b. Constructing side return extensions with visually lightweight materials and setting them back slightly from the end of the rear projection so the original form is legible.
- c. Minimising demolition and avoiding harm to existing architectural features.
- d. Respecting the proportions, articulation and floor levels of the original house.

e. Making sure details such as rainwater goods, fascias, window reveals, vents and balustrades are well-designed.

7.2.3 Materials for extensions should be good quality and should complement the character of the area. Typical materials in the area that are suitable for extensions include brick, slate, painted metalwork, painted timber (for windows and doors), and lead work (for roofs). However, other good quality materials can also be used if they would complement the character of the area. Applicants should demonstrate this as part of the application (e.g. by providing samples, precedent images and large-scale drawings). Designs should take into account longevity and how the material will age over time. Timber cladding and render are not generally recommended because they tend to weather and age poorly.

7.2.4 Green roofs should be considered for extensions in rear gardens. These can help minimise the visual impact and contribute to urban greening and sustainable water management.

7.2.5 Extensions should not result in any harm to good quality trees.

7.2.6 Side extensions (other than side return extensions) will not usually be acceptable. Gaps and spaces between terraces make an important contribution to character. Side extensions will usually detract from this and disrupt the consistency and symmetry of terraces and groups. Extensions above side entrance bays will not usually be acceptable for the same reasons.

Additional considerations for side and rear extensions

- Extending out into the rear garden will increase the built footprint and reduce the amount of permeable ground, which will adversely affect drainage. Consider a water butt, rainwater harvesting or a green roof to mitigate this impact.
- If there are any trees close to the proposed extension, an arboricultural assessment will usually be required.

7.3 Raised terraces and balconies

Is planning permission required?

Planning permission is required for construction of any raised terrace, roof terrace or balcony.

Planning permission is required for alterations to existing terraces (such as installation of new privacy screens or railings).

Proposals should comply with design guidance below.

Design Guidance

7.3.1 Permission will not usually be granted for new terraces or balconies at first floor or above because they are not in keeping with the character of the area. Existing flat roofs on rear projections or over side entrance bays should not be converted into roof terraces.

7.3.2 Alterations to existing roof terraces must be designed to preserve or enhance the character of the area and should not contribute to clutter or increase the visual impact of the terrace.

- a. Balustrades and railings should be painted metal and should be simple and unobtrusive. They should be the minimum height that is required to comply with safety standards. Where there is parapet or upstand the balustrade should be positioned behind it (rather than on top of it). Glass balustrades should not be used.
- b. Privacy screens, solid balustrades, canopies, and pergolas should never be installed on roof terraces as these add visual clutter and detract from the character of the area.



Image 20. Extensions should be designed and detailed to complement the existing building

7.4 Extensions to rear projections

Is planning permission required?

Planning permission is needed for extensions to rear projections. Proposals should comply with the design guidance below.

7.4.1 Most houses in the conservation area have rear projections (sometimes called 'closet wings') that are common features of Georgian and Victorian terraced houses. These can sometimes be enlarged to provide additional space.

Design guidance

7.4.2 Historic rear projections and closet wings are an important architectural feature and should not usually be demolished.

7.4.3 Rear projections that are arranged in pairs with pitched roofs (typical of later Victorian terraced housing) should not usually be enlarged or altered as this would disrupt the symmetry of the pair and the consistency of the terrace at the back.

7.4.4 Smaller rear projections with flat roofs (typical of older houses) can be less consistent in their size and arrangement and can sometimes be extended upwards, adding an additional storey.

- The extended rear projection should finish at least one full storey below the eaves of the main house and the extended height should be in keeping with the prevailing height of rear projections in the group. The width should not be increased.
- The extensions should usually be detailed to match the storey below.
- If a house has no rear projection but they are a consistent feature of the rest of the group, it may be possible to add an extension matching the typical width, footprint and height of rear projections in the rest of the group.



Image 21. Examples of extensions to rear projections.

7.5 Roof extensions

Is planning permission required?

Planning permission is required for roof extensions. Proposals should comply with the design guidance below.

7.5.1 There are various styles of roof in the conservation area. Proposals for extensions or alterations at roof level should consider the style of the existing roof and follow the relevant guidance.

Design guidance for butterfly roofs

7.5.2 These houses have a parapet at the front while the butterfly roofline is visible at the back. Butterfly roofs are important architectural features and should not be altered or replaced. They are not suitable for roof extensions or roof terraces and are typically too shallow to be converted into attic accommodation.

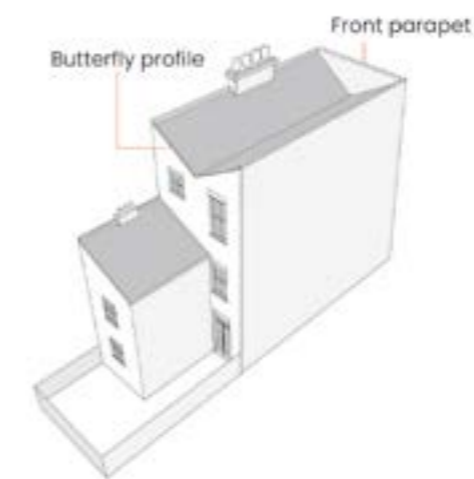


Image 23. A house with a butterfly roof

Design guidance for pitched roofs

7.5.3 Small dormer windows can usually be added to the rear roof slope of these houses to improve attic accommodation. The following size guidelines will ensure dormers are subordinate.

- The total width of the dormer or dormers should not usually be more than half of the width of the ridge.
- Dormers should be positioned at least 1 metre from the edge of the roof slope and 1 metre (measured vertically) above the eaves. The top of the dormer should not be higher than the ridge and should not usually be more than 2.3m above the eaves. The position of the ridge and the angle of the roof should not be altered.
- Inset terraces or 'Juliet' balconies will not usually be acceptable.
- The roof and walls of the dormer should be clad in traditional lead or another dark roofing material that would blend in with the roof.

7.5.4 Dormer windows should not be installed on front or side roof slopes, or on rear projections.

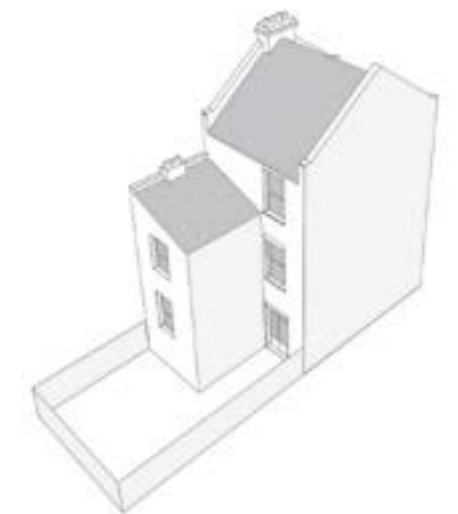
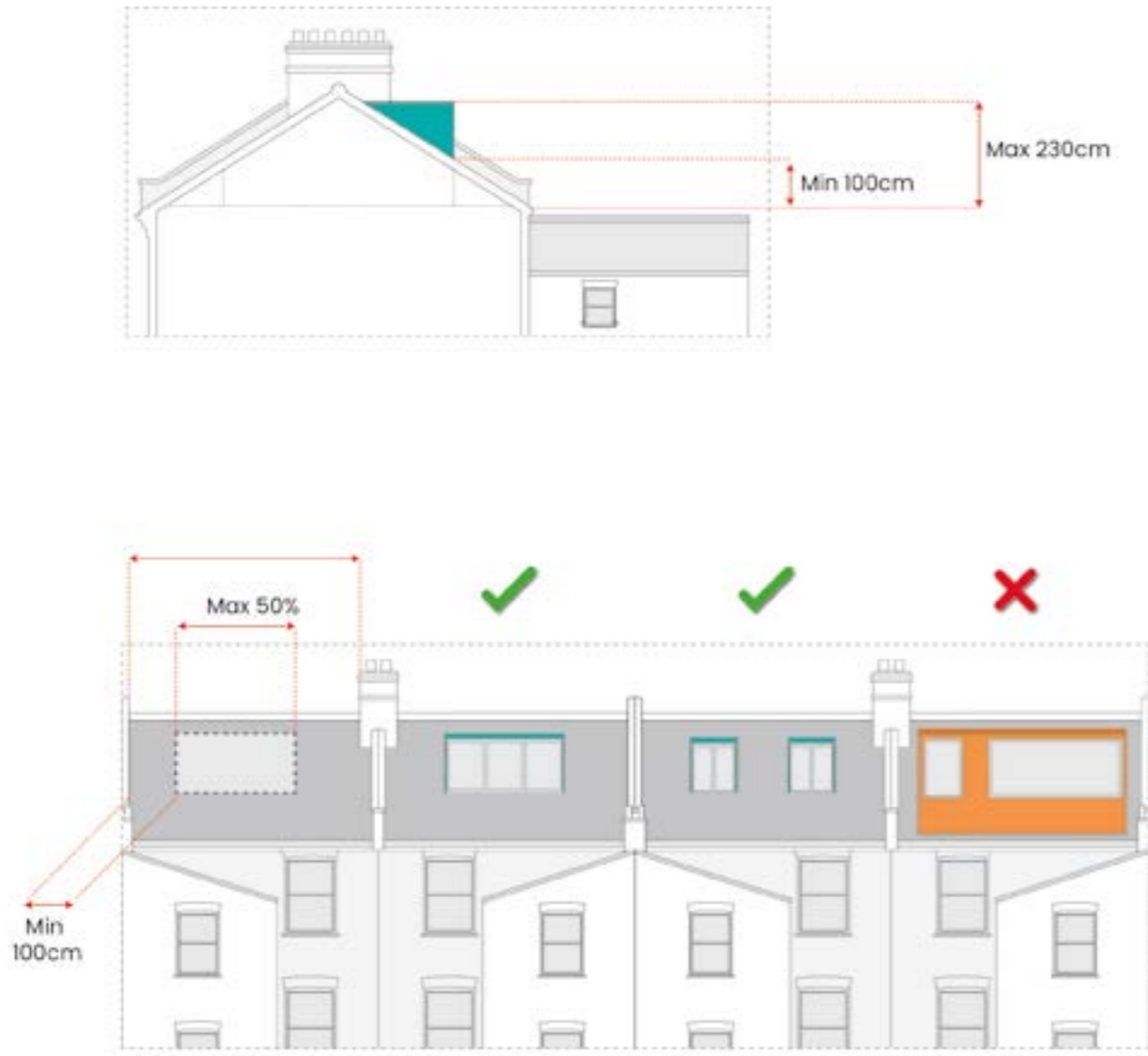


Image 24. A house with a pitched roof

Image 25. Size guidelines for dormers on houses with pitched roofs.



Design guidance for mansard-style roofs with dormer windows at the front

7.5.5 Some terraces on Petherton Road have large mansard-style roofs with existing attic accommodation and dormer windows at the front. These dormers are thought to have been added in the late 19th or early 20th century and are a consistent feature of the group.

- Front dormers should not be altered or enlarged. They can be replaced if needed with a new dormer in the same position. If front dormers have been previously enlarged or altered and now require replacement, owners are encouraged to restore them to the original size and position to enhance their appearance.
- Windows on front dormers should be timber sliding sash to match the original style. If windows have previously been altered, any replacement should follow the original style.
- Any new or enlarged dormers at the rear of these houses should follow the guidelines set out in section 7.5.3 above.

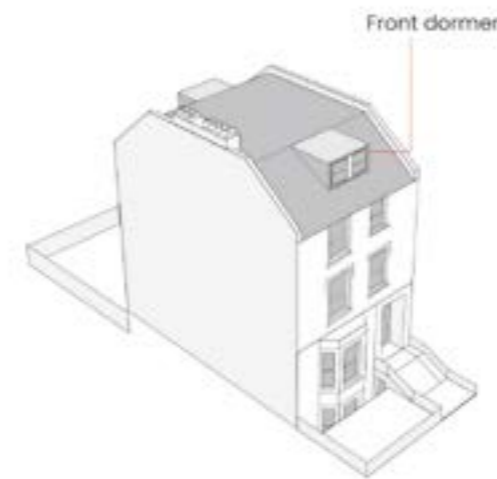


Image 26. A house with a mansard-style roof and dormer window at the front

Design guidance for pitched roofs behind parapets

7.5.6 These houses have existing attic accommodation with dormer windows that are concealed from view behind parapets. They are arranged in groups, and houses on the ends of groups have hipped roofs and paired side entrance bays that provide a visual break.

- Front dormers behind parapets are not generally visible from the ground so they can usually be altered, enlarged or replaced as long as their height does not increase and they are set in from the front and side of the roof slope.
- The rear roof slopes of these houses do not have parapets and are visible. The total width of any new or enlarged dormers at the rear should not be more than half of the width of the ridge and the height and set-back should follow the established pattern.
- Extensions should not be added above side entrance bays.

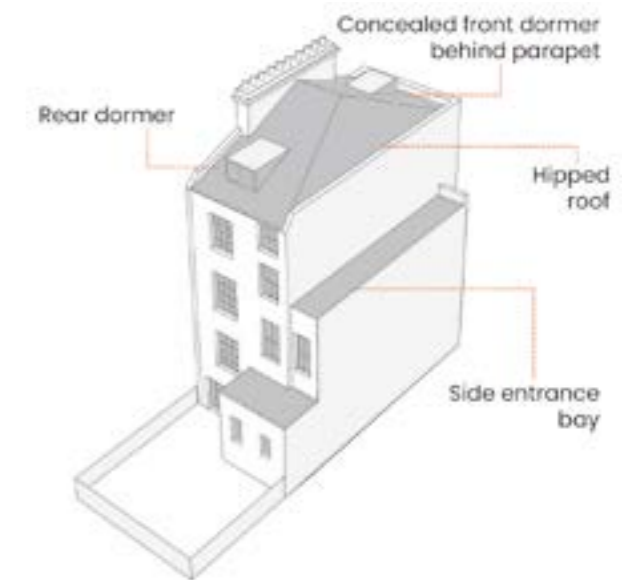
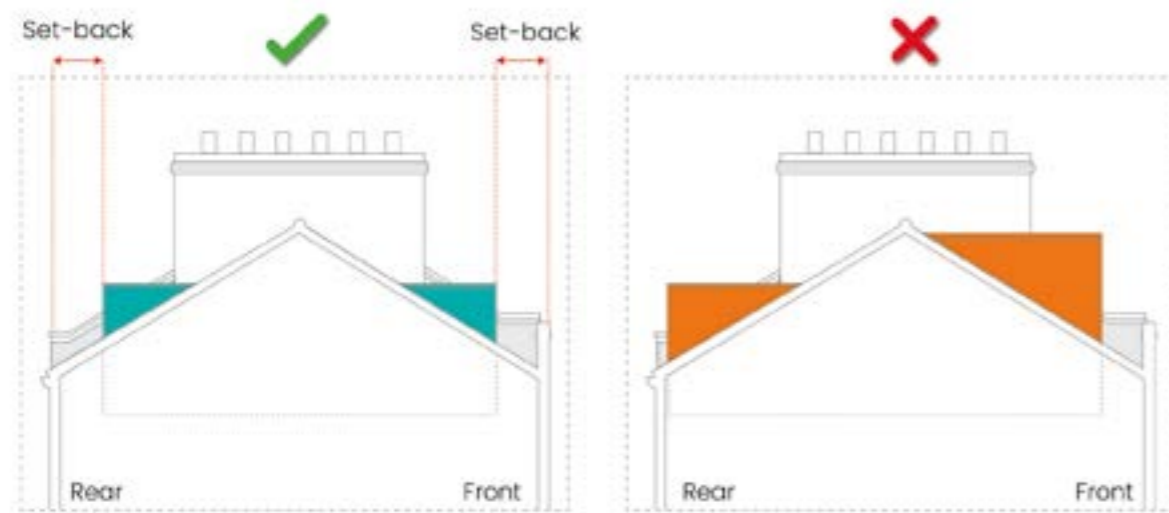


Image 27. A house with a hipped roof behind a parapet and a side entrance bay

Image 28. Guidelines for alterations to houses with dormer windows concealed behind parapets



7.6 Loft conversion and Rooflights

Is planning permission required?

Planning permission is not needed for internal alterations to the roof space.

Installing rooflights to a single-family house is **permitted development**. The work can be carried out without applying for planning permission as long as it meets the criteria in the [GPDO legislation](#). [This will change in October 2026 when the Council's proposed Article 4 Direction is confirmed. This page will be updated once any changes come into effect. [There is more information about the Article 4 Direction here.](#)]

Planning permission is required to install rooflights to a flat. Proposals should comply with the design guidance below.

Design Guidance

7.6.1 Rooflights can usually be installed on front or rear roof slopes or on rear projections.

- a. Rooflights should be 'conservation style', meaning they should have a dark finish and should be flush with the roof surface.
- b. There should not be more than two rooflights on a front roof slope. Rooflights on the same roof slope should be the same height and size and should be symmetrically arranged
- c. Rooflights on front roof slopes can be up to about 80cm in width and 120cm in height. They should usually be set 1 metre or more (measured vertically) above the eaves and 30cm or more below the ridge. They should also be set in from the sides of the roof slope.



Image 29. Placement of rooflights on front roof slopes

8. Boundaries and gardens

8.1 Boundaries and entrances

Is planning permission required?

Planning permission is required to demolish any gate, fence or wall in the conservation area.

Erecting a new gate, fence or wall, or altering an existing one, is **permitted development** as long as the resulting height is less than 1m (facing a highway) or 2m (elsewhere). The work can be carried out without applying for planning permission as long as it meets the criteria in the [GPD legislation](#). [This will change in October 2026 when the Council's proposed Article 4 Direction is confirmed. This page will be updated once any changes come into effect. [There is more information about the Article 4 Direction here.](#)]

Design Guidance

8.1.1 The typical boundary treatment for houses in the conservation area is either a dwarf brick wall with cast iron railings, or cast iron railings mounted in a stone plinth. Side garden walls at the end of terraces have high brick walls. Many of the original boundary treatments have been lost or altered, but good quality examples remain. These make an important contribution to character and should not be altered or removed.

8.1.2 Where boundary treatments have previously been lost or altered, residents are encouraged to restore them with a similar design to the original.

- a. Any proposals to alter or replace boundary treatments should respect the original design, height and materials.
- b. Hedges and planting in front gardens can provide additional privacy if desired. The height of brick walls should not be increased. Solid fences or screening should not be added to walls as this will adversely affect the street scene.

8.1.3 Most houses in the area have prominent stone steps up to a raised front door. These contribute to the character of the street and should not be altered (for example by covering treads with tiles or asphalt). Repairs and replacement should usually be in stone to match the original design.

Additional considerations for boundaries and entrances

- It can be challenging to adapt historic entrances to improve accessibility or provide level access, especially where there is a raised ground floor. Residents needing to make adaptations to improve accessibility are encouraged to use the pre-application advice service to discuss their needs. The Council will always support residents with different access needs to adapt their homes and can advise on the best approach.

8.2 Cycle and refuse storage

Is planning permission required?

Planning permission is required to build or install cycle stores or bin stores in front gardens. Proposals should comply with design guidance below.

Design Guidance

8.2.1 Secure enclosed cycle or bin storage can be installed in front gardens if it is not too large or dominant and is positioned discreetly. Front gardens in Poets Road Conservation Area are generally small and constrained (due to level changes and lightwells) but there will usually be enough space for one standard sized storage container with a footprint of about 100cm x 200cm. This should be suitable for 2-3 cycles (or 2 wheelie bins). Larger gardens may be able to accommodate multiple containers or containers with larger footprints.

- a. Containers can be up to about 130cm in height (or 140cm if they have a green or roof). Materials and finishes should be unobtrusive and of suitable quality and appearance (such as painted or treated timber or painted or powder-coated metal).
- b. Wherever possible, containers should be positioned against the side boundary on the opposite side to the front door. There should be a suitable gap between the container and the front wall of the house. (About 50cm is usually sufficient).
- c. If it isn't possible to put a container against the side boundary, a standard sized container can be placed against the front boundary at the opposite side from the gate. In this position there should be a larger gap between the container and the front wall. (About 1 metre is usually sufficient). Consider containers with the door at the end or with a sliding or lift-up opening mechanism if space is limited.

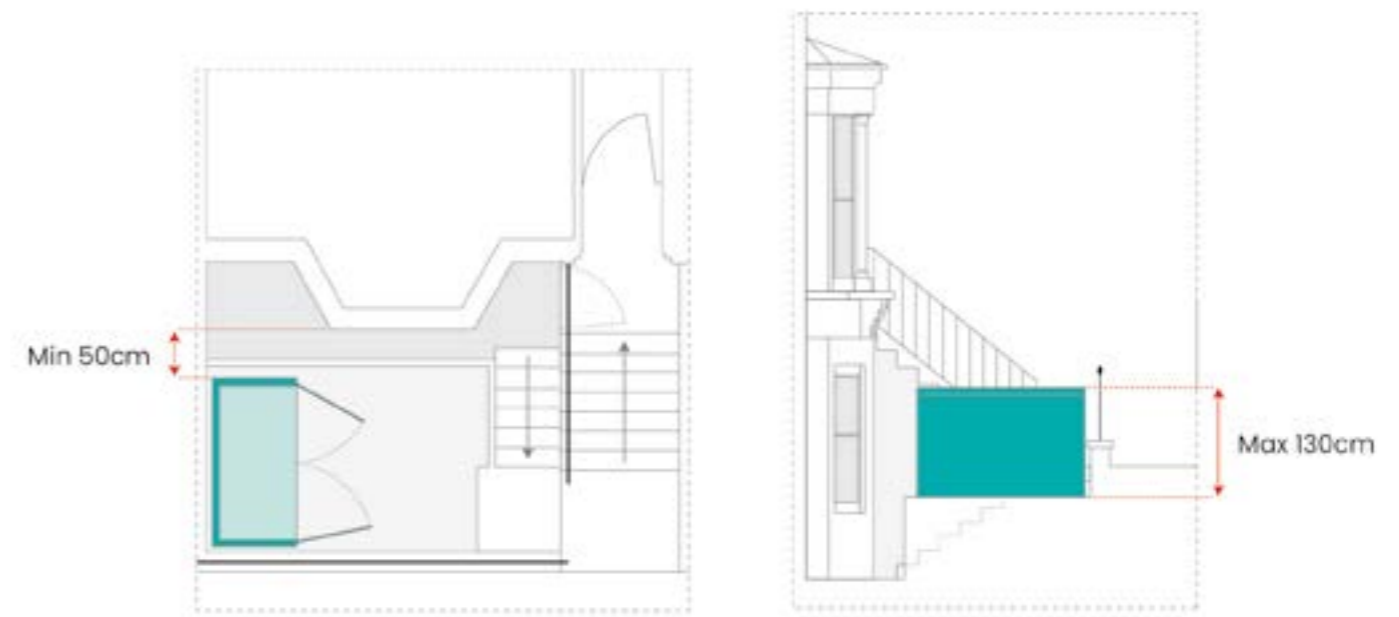


Image 30. A standard sized cycle container placed against the side boundary in a typical front garden

8.2.2 If there is additional space, consider adding planting between the container and the front boundary to minimise its visibility from the street. A green roof can be added to soften the appearance of the container and contribute to urban greening.

8.2.3 Containers should always be placed inside boundary walls or railings and should be accessed from inside the garden. Cycle containers should never be installed in place of the boundary wall or fence as they are too tall and would appear incongruous. Original boundary treatments make an important contribution to character and should not be demolished or altered.

8.2.4 It will not always possible to provide enough cycle storage for everyone in the front garden, especially where houses have been divided into flats and there are multiple households sharing a small front garden. Additional storage can be provided in rear gardens or inside the building, or residents can make use of shared cycle hangers located in the street.

Additional considerations for cycle storage

- Larger storage containers may be needed for adapted bikes or other mobility aids, and more space may also be needed to access the unit. The layouts suggested above will usually maximise access space in front of the container, but this might not be sufficient in smaller gardens and other adaptations may be needed. In these cases, residents are encouraged to use the [Islington pre-application advice service](#) to discuss their needs. The Council will always support residents with different access needs to adapt their homes and can advise on the best approach. [Further information about adapting homes is available on the Council's website.](#)
- Any proposals that will create new residential units (such as conversions to a house into flats or vice versa) will need to provide policy compliant cycle and refuse storage which meets accessibility requirements.

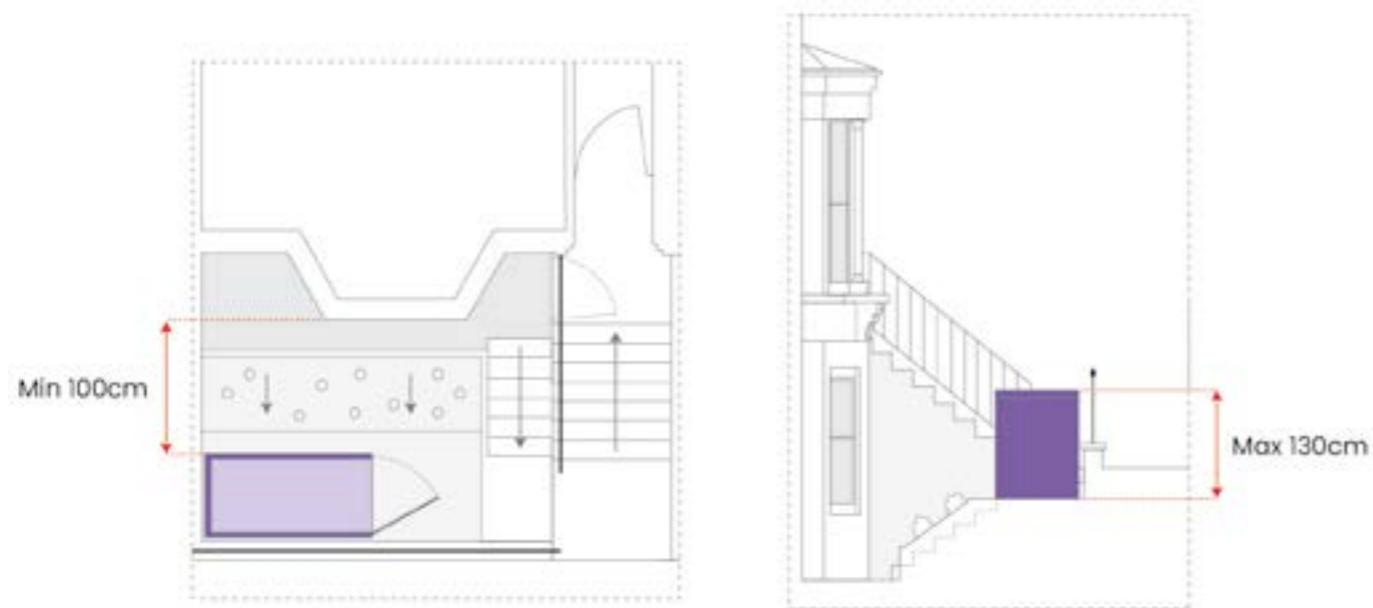


Image 31. A standard sized cycle container placed against the front boundary. In this garden, it can't be placed against the side boundary because of the level changes.

8.3 Basements and lightwells

Is planning permission required?

Planning permission is required to enlarge or alter lightwells and retaining walls in front gardens. Proposals should comply with the design guidance below.

Design Guidance

8.3.1 Many of the terraces in the conservation area have raised ground floors and semi-basements that can be accessed via shallow lightwells in the front garden. This arrangement is part of the original architectural design and should not usually be altered by enlarging or reducing the area of the lightwell or substantially altering the height of the retaining wall.

8.3.2 Houses with entrances at ground level do not have lower ground floor accommodation or lightwells at the front (although there is frequently lower ground floor accommodation in the rear half of the house with windows to the back garden). This arrangement should not be altered. New lightwells should not be created where they are not an original feature of the house as it will disrupt the proportions of the house and the consistency of the group.

8.3.3 Small openings at ground level covered with a horizontal grill or glazed cover can be installed to provide additional daylight to basement accommodation if needed.

Additional considerations for basements

- Refer to [Islington's Basement Development SPD](#) for more detailed guidance on basement extensions.



Image 32. A house with a raised ground floor and shallow front lightwell on Beresford Road

8.4 Garden buildings

Is planning permission required?

Ancillary buildings in the garden of a single-family house (such as sheds, garden rooms or home offices) are **permitted development** (subject to size and height restrictions). The work can be carried out without applying for planning permission if it meets the criteria in the [GPDO legislation](#).

Planning permission is needed for buildings in the gardens of flats. Proposals should comply with the following design guidance.

Design Guidance

8.4.1 The open aspect and greenery in garden areas makes an important contribution to the character of the conservation area. In order to protect this, buildings in gardens should be subordinate in size so that they do not dominate the garden.

- a. In a typical garden of a terraced house, garden buildings can have a footprint of up to about 12 square metres. Larger gardens may be able to accommodate a larger building footprint. Garden buildings should be as low as possible and should not usually exceed about 2.7 metres in height.
- b. Garden buildings should be positioned away from boundaries on all sides and should not occupy the full width of the garden. This is to prevent a cumulative impact as a result of multiple garden buildings located close together. A space of about 1 metre between the building and the boundary is usually appropriate. This also allows access to the boundary walls and building for maintenance.

- c. Garden buildings should be positioned away from the rear wall of the house.
- d. Garden buildings may appear less dominant if they are situated perpendicular to the rear wall so that the smaller side aspect is visible.
- e. Suitable materials and finishes include timber cladding, shingles, green roofs, and other natural and materials that will blend in with the garden setting.

Additional considerations for garden buildings

- If the house has been converted into flats, garden buildings that face back towards the house can give rise to overlooking issues. Window placement and orientation should be carefully considered to avoid this.
- Building in the rear garden will increase the built footprint and reduce the amount of permeable ground, which will adversely affect drainage. Consider a water butt or a green roof to mitigate this impact.
- If there are any trees close to the proposed building, an arboricultural assessment may be required.



Image 33. Guidelines for garden buildings

9. Maintenance and minor works

9.1 Painting

Is planning permission required?

External painting is **permitted development**. The work can be carried out without applying for planning permission if it meets the criteria in the [GPDO legislation](#). [This will change in October 2026 when the Council's proposed Article 4 Direction is confirmed. This page will be updated once any changes come into effect. [There is more information about the Article 4 Direction here.](#)]

Design Guidance

9.1.1 Brickwork and other unpainted finishes should not be painted over. This causes harm to the character of the building. It also creates a maintenance burden and can cause harm to underlying surfaces by trapping moisture.

Other considerations for painting

- If brickwork has been previously painted over, consider having the paint removed. The work will need to be carried out by a specialist and an appropriate paint-removal technique will need to be selected that will not damage the underlying surface. We suggest carrying out a patch test before starting.



Image 34. Painted brickwork can detract from the appearance of the house and the consistency of the terrace.

9.2 Ventilation and chimneys

Is planning permission required?

Installing or altering a chimney, flue or soil pipe on a single-family house on a wall or roof that does not face the street is **permitted development**. The work can be carried out without applying for planning permission if it meets the criteria in the [GPDO legislation](#). [This will change in the future when the Council puts an 'Article 4 direction' in place to remove certain types of permitted development in Poets Road Conservation Area (as recommended in section 2.3 of this document). This paragraph will be updated once any Article 4 Direction comes into effect.]

Planning permission is needed for installing a chimney, flue or soil pipe on a wall or roof that faces the street or on any other type of building.

Design Guidance

9.2.1 Historic chimneys are an important architectural feature and should not be altered or removed.

9.2.2 Vents and flues should be located to minimise visibility wherever possible and should usually be at the back of the house.

- a. All external fixtures should be chosen to minimise visibility. Flush 'air-brick' type vent covers with a dark finish are usually the best option for any ventilation in visible locations. External pipework should usually have a black finish.
- b. Boiler flues and plumbing waste pipes should not be installed on the front facade.

9.3 Brickwork and pointing

Is planning permission required?

Planning permission is not needed for repointing or for like for like repairs to brickwork.

Other considerations for brickwork and pointing

- Repointing should always be carried out with lime-based mortar carefully chosen to match the original mortar. Lime-based mortars are permeable, allowing moisture to move through the wall and evaporate away. repointing with hard cement-based mortars can cause serious damage to brickwork because they disrupt this process. Moisture can accumulate in the wall and cause damage to the bricks.
- Mortar joint should be raked out by hand to avoid damage to bricks.
- Mortar joints should be finished with a flush or slightly recessed profile (not a 'weather-struck' profile).

9.4 Communications equipment

Is planning permission required?

Installing a satellite dish or antenna on a single-family house on a wall or roof that is not visible from the street is **permitted development**. The work can be carried out without applying for planning permission if it meets the criteria in the [GPDO legislation](#).

Planning permission is needed to install a satellite dish or antenna on a wall or roof slope that is visible from the street, or on any other type of building.

Planning permission is not usually needed for fibre-optic cables unless they would materially alter the appearance of the building.

Design Guidance

9.4.1 Antennae and satellite dishes will not usually be acceptable unless minimally visible. If needed, these should be located at the back of the building in a discrete location and should be as small as possible.

9.4.2 Fibre-optic cables and cable boxes can add clutter to buildings and detract from their appearance, especially if there are multiple installations or the layouts are not well-considered. They should always be discretely located; ideally at the side or rear of the building or internally.

9.4.3 For larger buildings containing multiple flats, a coordinated approach to the installation of communications equipment is recommended.

9.4.4 Old or defunct communications equipment should always be promptly removed to prevent clutter.

10. Conversion, subdivision and redevelopment

10.1 Demolition and redevelopment

Is planning permission required?

Planning permission is required for demolition of buildings, gates, fences or walls in the conservation area. Anyone carrying out unauthorised demolition could be liable for a criminal offence, so it is important to get consent before starting.

Design guidance

10.1.1 Demolition of any building, boundary or structure that makes a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area would cause harm to significance and is unlikely to be considered acceptable.

10.1.2 Demolition of buildings, boundaries or structures that are neutral or detract from the character of the area could be acceptable if accompanied by a suitable proposal for redevelopment or replacement.

- a. Buildings that are identified as 'neutral' are not considered to be of any architectural or historic interest in their own right, but usually have positive characteristics that allow them to blend in with their context (such as complementary height and massing, use of brick and other traditional materials, coherent design and detailing). Any proposal for replacement should match or exceed the quality of the existing building, and should respect the established pattern of development.
- b. Pre-application advice should be sought in relation to any such proposals.

10.2 New development in gardens or open areas

Is planning permission required?

Planning permission is required for new developments in gardens.

Design guidance

10.2.1 Proposals for new residential or commercial buildings in the gardens of terraces are not supported. Sites should not be subdivided. This would cause harm to the character of the area by filling in gaps and views, eroding the open aspect of the garden area and disrupting the established pattern of development.

10.2.2 Any proposals for new buildings within the grounds of larger sites (for example within the grounds of purpose-built blocks of flats) must preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area and respect the established pattern of development and hierarchy. Pre-application advice should be sought in relation to any such proposals.

10.3 Subdivision or conversion of houses

Is planning permission required?

Converting a house or flat into a small 'house of multiple occupation' (HMO) or vice versa is **permitted development**. The change of use can be carried out without applying for planning permission if it meets the criteria in the [GPDO legislation](#).

Planning permission is needed to convert a house into flats or vice versa.

Planning permission is needed to convert a house or flat into a large 'house of multiple occupation' (HMO) or vice versa.

Proposals should comply with the design guidance below.

Design guidance

10.3.1 Subdivision and conversion of houses can usually be carried out without any adverse impacts on the character of the conservation area. However, applicants should consider the following:

- a. If there is a shared entrance for multiple flats it should be via the main front door. Existing doors at lower ground floor that are accessed via the front garden lightwell can be used as private entrances to individual flats, but are not generally suitable as a shared entrance.
- b. Applicants must demonstrate adequate refuse and cycle storage can be provided without causing harm to the character and appearance of the area. Any enclosed storage in front gardens should comply with guidelines in section 4.1.
- c. Any associated extensions should comply with guidelines in section 3.

- d. Any other external alterations (such as porches, changes to boundaries, changes to railings or steps, or external lighting) must be detailed in the application and should comply with relevant guidelines in this document.

10.3.2 Rear gardens should not usually be subdivided. Visually impermeable fences and boundary treatments would generally be required for privacy and this would erode the open aspect of the garden area. Where houses are converted to flats, the ground floor flat should usually have use of the garden. Shared gardens do not harm character and appearance, but may not be supported due to management and privacy issues.

Additional considerations for conversions

- Developments creating new residential units will need to comply with other applicable local plan policies including housing standards.
- There will be additional sustainable design and construction requirements for this type of development. More information is available in Islington's Climate Action SPD 2025.

11. Appendices

Appendix.1 Applying for planning permission

11.1.1 Planning applications take up to 8 weeks to be decided, and can take longer if there are problems with the proposal that need to be resolved.

11.1.2 The best way to ensure your application is successful is to follow the relevant design guidance in this document (as well as any other relevant policies and guidance) and to make sure you submit all the necessary information with your application.

11.1.3 The documents and information required for different types of application are set out in Islington's validation requirements on the Council's website and the national information requirements. The relevant requirements are summarized below along with tips and suggestions for what to include for different types of applications..

Requirements for all planning applications

Application form

Location plan

A plan at a scale of 1:1250 with the application site outlined in red

Existing and proposed drawings

These should be drawn to a recognised metric scale (usually 1:50 or 1:100) and should include a scale bar. Neighbouring properties and windows should be shown on plans and elevations

If demolition is proposed this should be clearly marked on drawings. (Areas proposed for demolition can be marked in red on existing drawings).

- **Elevations** should show all altered sides of a building and details of proposed materials and finishes should be annotated on. They should show adjacent buildings and openings where appropriate. The existing and proposed ground level should be marked on.
- **Plans** for all floors should be provided. A roof plan should be included if there are any alterations proposed to the roof. They should show the relationship with adjacent buildings and openings where appropriate. The ground level plan should show the whole site including external areas.
- **Sections** should show the whole building and site including external areas so that officers can understand floor levels, ceiling heights and external ground levels. A long section (from the front of the site to the rear) and a short section across the site should usually be provided. Include more sections if needed. They should show the relationship with adjacent buildings and openings where appropriate.

Heritage assessment/heritage statement

You must identify any heritage assets that would be affected by the proposal and describes their significance (including where there would be an impact on the setting of the asset). For minor householder applications this information can be included in the DAS, planning statement or site appraisal rather than in a separate document.

In most cases the relevant heritage asset will be Poets Road Conservation Area. If the site is near the boundary of the conservation area, the development could affect the setting of other nearby heritage assets including adjacent conservation areas and listed or locally listed buildings. The Poets Road Conservation Area Appraisal (2024) describes the character and significance of the conservation area and should be consulted as a starting point.

The heritage statement might include a written description, site photographs, and other evidence as needed. The level of detail should be proportionate and relevant to what is proposed, so focus on areas that would be affected by the proposed work.

Design and Access Statement

This is a concise report in which to explain how the proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting and how it will ensure adequate access for users. It must:

- Explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development; and
- Demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development, and how the design of the development takes that context into account.

A DAS is required for major developments, proposals that would create one or more new dwellings (including conversion of a house into flats or vice versa), and proposals for a new building or extension with a floor area of 100 square metres or more.

However, we recommend including a DAS for all proposals in the conservation area because it is a useful tool to describe your proposal, explain the rationale for the design, and provide any additional detail that is needed for the officer assess the application. We recommend including

drawings, photographs and images in the DAS to illustrate your proposals. The level of detail should be proportionate and relevant to what is proposed. For minor proposals it might be a short, written document. For larger or more complex proposals it should usually include additional drawings and analysis and would usually be prepared by the proposal's architects.

Sustainable design and construction statement

This is a written statement demonstrating that the proposal meets all relevant sustainable design policies.

The level of information in the statement should be proportionate and the most relevant policies to address for householder applications will usually be S4 Minimising Greenhouse Gas Emissions, S6 Managing Heat Risk, S9 Water Management and sustainable drainage and S10 Circular economy and adaptive design. There is more information on what is required and links to templates you can use to prepare your statement in [Islington's Climate Action SPD 2025](#).

Suggested for householder extensions

Additional information on materials and details

To show that the extension would be high quality and would complement the character of the area. This might include:

- Images and samples of proposed materials and fixtures, or precedent images (photos of other buildings using similar materials and finishes)
- Large scale drawings showing key design details like window reveals, door surrounds, cladding or brickwork detail, eaves, rainwater goods, etc.
- Details of any proposed planting, landscaping or green roofs

An arboricultural assessment

Required if there are any trees close to the proposed footprint.

Suggested for window or door replacement

Large scale drawings of proposed windows

Elevations at 1:20 and sections/details at 1:5 with materials, colours and finishes clearly marked. These must show the window and masonry surround. You must provide an elevation drawing of each individual window (unless they are identical to each other). But 'typical' sections and frame details can be provided if these details are the same for all the windows. Drawings must show integral glazing bars and trickle vents and should explicitly indicate where glazing would be putty mounted.

Product details and specifications

Details and specifications for new windows and doors should be included where available

Suggested for Installation of a heat pump

Acoustic assessment

An acoustic assessment should usually be provided to demonstrate that noise impacts have been addressed. If an acoustic housing is required, details and drawings of this should be provided.

Suggested for external awnings

Large scale elevation and section drawings

Drawings at 1:20 or larger showing the proposed awnings, windows and masonry surrounds/reveals. Section drawings should show blinds in both open and closed position.

Suggested for garden buildings

Detailed drawings

Plans and sections should show the whole site including boundaries and other buildings. Elevations should show all sides of the proposed structure (1:50 or 1:20) with materials and finishes clearly annotated.

Arboricultural assessment

Required if there are any trees close to the proposed footprint that could be affected

Suggested for cycle or refuse storage

Detailed drawings

Existing and proposed drawings must accurately show other structures in the front garden (lightwells, boundaries, ground levels, steps, and the front of the house with openings shown).

Elevations should be provided showing all sides of the proposed storage (1:50 or 1:20) with materials and finishes clearly annotated.

Suggested for applications for alterations to boundary treatment, stairs or railings

Scale existing and proposed plans, sections and elevations at an appropriate scale should be provided showing the front garden area and the wall, railing or step, with the extent of proposed demolition clearly marked. Proposed materials and finishes should be clearly annotated. Larger scale detail drawings should be provided if needed to illustrate the proposal (e.g. to show the details of proposed railings).

Suggested for applications for external wall insulation

Specifications for insulation including material, build-up and finish

Large scale drawings showing detailing of window and door reveals, eaves, edges, rainwater goods, and other construction details

Details of any associated vents or flues

Suggested for applications for vents, flues and other building services

Scale elevations should be provided showing the size and position of proposed external fixtures. Any existing fixtures should be shown on existing drawings (and should be marked in red if you're proposing to remove them)

Details of the proposed fixtures including product details and images, size, material, colour and finish

Suggested for applications for conversions (house to flats or HMO or vice versa)

Details of how you propose to provide adequate **cycle and refuse storage** for the new units. If new enclosures are proposed in front garden, refer to the advice on Cycle or Refuse Storage above.

If the proposal includes extensions refer to the advice on householder extensions above.

Landscape plan showing the layout of shared and private amenity

Appendix.2 Where to get advice and help

Islington duty planning service – net zero and sustainability

This a free, appointment only service for residents and businesses considering energy efficiency measures. You will receive informal advice on general planning issues including what consents are needed and how to submit an application. Details are available on the Council's website.

Islington pre-application advice

If you would like more detailed advice on planning and listed building matters that is specifically tailored to your home/your proposal, you can make use of the Council's pre-application advice service. Details are available on the Council's website.

Professional advice and services

This guide covers planning and heritage matters only. You should always seek appropriate professional advice when planning works to your home.

- **The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC)** is the UK's professional body for historic environment professionals. They provide links to several public registers for specialist contractors or tradespeople on their website and business listings for accredited historic environment service providers via their HESPR database.
- **The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)** is the UK's professional body for architects. The RIBA Conservation Register includes architects specialising in all aspects of historic building conservation

- For comprehensive domestic retrofit proposals consider getting advice from a qualified retrofit coordinator. **The British Standards Institution (BSI)** recommends minimum qualifications for retrofit coordinators in their PAS 2035 document. For traditionally constructed dwellings this includes holding a Level 3 Award in Energy Efficiency for Older and Traditional Buildings.
- Advice on building regulations and building control is available from the **Council's Building Control service.**

Appendix.3 Resources

Legislation and planning policy

[The Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990](#)

[The National Planning Policy Framework 2023](#)

[The Islington Local Plan 2023](#)

[The Islington Climate Action SPD 2025](#)

Guidance on heritage, planning and conservation areas

[Planning Practice Guidance – Historic environment](#)

[Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment \(Historic England,2008\)](#) provides key principles for management of the historic environment.

[Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1 \(Historic England 2019\)](#) provides best practice guidance on designating and managing conservation areas.

Guidance on retrofitting

General

[Islington Retrofit Handbook 2025](#) contains detailed information on retrofitting aimed at households.

[Islington Permitted Development Guide for Net Zero Works \(2023\)](#) explains what consents are required for various energy efficiency and retrofit measures.

[Historic England Advice Note 18: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency \(2024\)](#) provides guidance on making energy efficiency improvements and assessing impacts.

[Whole Building Approach for Historic Buildings | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) explains the 'whole building approach' and best practice approaches to retrofit of historic buildings.

[Retrofit and Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings \(Historic England website\)](#) provides guidance on retrofit including links to a range of resources and information

[Planning Responsible Retrofit of Traditional Buildings \(STBA 2015\)](#) provides guidance on the risks and complexities of retrofitting older buildings.

[The responsible retrofit guidance wheel \(STBA\)](#) is an interactive tool allowing you to understand how retrofit measures interact, funded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change.

[Healthy Materials Lab | The Construction Material Pyramid \(The New School Parsons\)](#) is an online tool for comparing the carbon footprints of different materials

[LETI Embodied Carbon Primer \(London Energy Transformation Initiative\) 2020](#) provides more information on the concept of 'embodied carbon' aimed at designers, architects and engineers.

Heating and Energy

[Installing Solar Panels | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) provides detailed advice about installing solar panels on older buildings.

[Installing Heat Pumps in Historic Buildings | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) provides detailed advice about installing heat pumps in older buildings.

Insulation and avoiding heat loss

[Maintenance and Repair for Energy Efficiency | Historic England \(web page\)](#) provides information about how building condition, maintenance and repair are related to energy use.

[Draught-Proofing | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) provides detailed advice about draught-proofing older buildings

[Insulating Walls in Historic Buildings | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) provides detailed information about insulating walls.

[Insulating Floors in Historic Buildings | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) provides detailed information about insulating floors, with links to technical guidance documents for different floor types:

- [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulation of suspended timber floors | Historic England](#)
- [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulating solid ground floors | Historic England](#)

[Insulating Roofs in Historic Buildings | Historic England \(Web page\)](#) provides detailed information about insulating roofs, with links to technical guidance documents for different roof types:

- [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulating pitched roofs at ceiling level- cold roofs | Historic England](#)
- [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulating pitched roofs at rafter level | Historic England](#)
- [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulating flat roofs | Historic England](#)
- [Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Insulating dormer windows | Historic England](#)

Windows and doors

[Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading \(Historic England 2017\)](#) contains detailed information on the history and significance of traditional windows and guidance on maintenance, repair and upgrading.

[Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Draught-proofing windows and doors \(Historic England 2016\)](#) is part of a suite of guidance documents on energy efficiency in historic buildings and provides detailed advice on draught-proofing.

[Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Secondary glazing for windows \(Historic England 2016\)](#) is part of a suite of guidance documents on energy efficiency in historic buildings and provides detailed advice on secondary glazing.

[Modifying Historic Windows as Part of Retrofitting Energy-Saving Measures \(Historic England website\)](#) provides guidance on upgrading windows as part of retrofit works including links to a range of resources and information.

Research and reports

[Islington climate action typology study 2025](#)

[There's no place like old homes: Re-use and recycle to reduce carbon \(Historic England 2019\)](#) highlights the importance of our built historic and its vital role in the journey towards a low carbon future.

[Research into the Thermal Performance of Traditional Windows: Timber sash windows \(Historic England 2018\)](#)

[Improving the Thermal Performance of Traditional windows: Metal-Framed Windows \(Historic England 2017\)](#)

[Thermal Performance of Traditional Windows: Improving the Performance of Traditional Windows, Technical Paper 01 \(Historic Environment Scotland 2010\).](#)

[Slim-profile Double Glazing: Thermal Performance and Embodied Energy, Technical Paper 09 \(Historic Environment Scotland 2008\).](#)

Other sources of information on retrofitting historic buildings

[The Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance \(STBA\)](#) is a collaboration of organisations that act as a forum for sustaining and improving traditional buildings.

[Planning Responsible Retrofit of Traditional Buildings \(STBA 2015\)](#) provides guidance on the risks and complexities of retrofitting older buildings.

[The responsible retrofit guidance wheel \(STBA\)](#) is an interactive tool allowing you to understand how retrofit measures interact, funded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change.

[The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings \(SPAB\)](#) is a building conservation charity. They offer a range of advice on their public website including detailed advice on windows and improving energy efficiency.