

St John's Wood Society City Management Plan Options: March 2011

1. Advertisements

The St John's Wood Society believes that clear and unambiguous guidance and policy is essential to ensure that outdoor advertising is of high quality, well suited to the building or street for which it is proposed and makes a positive contribution to the appearance and character of an area.

Option 1.1 is therefore rejected.

Option 1.2 should form the central policy. We accept that outdoor advertising is important to the success of many businesses but only on the basis that it is thoughtfully and sensitively designed and does not detract from the environment and locality in which the advertising is to be placed. Proliferation of advertising and associated visual clutter does have a harmful impact on individual buildings, the character of the conservation area and the overall visual amenity. We therefore agree that it should be an overriding principle of planning policy to ensure that the size, design and actual location of advertising is always carefully considered in relation to the use of the building where the signage is to be erected and does not cause harm to the visual or residential amenity and does not impact harmfully on highway safety. The principles set out in option 1.2 will go a long way to preserving these overriding objectives and will give applicants and planning officers far greater objective criteria to consider applications than is currently available today. However, it must be incumbent on planning officers to rigorously enforce the policy considerations contained in option 1.2 in order to avoid at the outset applications for advertising that would be damaging to visual amenity particularly in Conservation Areas

Option 1.3, Disagree. .

Option 1.4 Agree

Option 1.5 Strongly Agree

We have recently seen a sudden proliferation of inappropriate advertising hoardings enclosing building sites and dominating the streetscape within the St John's Wood Conservation Area. We strongly agree that there should be a policy preventing the negative impact that these hoardings have on visual amenity especially as some building works continue for years.

Option 1.6 Agree

Local Estate Agents do not respect the current Regulation 7 directions within the St John's Wood Conservation and we request that this City management Plan option is more rigorously enforced than previous policy.

Option 1.7 Agree

Option 1.8 Agree

4. Alterations and Extensions

4.1 – Disagree. Policy is required therefore reject

4.2 – Strongly agree. This option is appropriate and in accordance with our usual comments when we are consulted on applications by Westminster Council.

4.3 – Unlikely to be relevant in SJW Conservation Area where a significant number of buildings are listed or of architectural merit..

4.4 - Agree

4.5 – Agree but needs some flexibility in approach

4.6 – Agree but requires some flexibility in approach

4.7 – Agree

4.8 – Agree and commented on frequently by SJWS

4.9 –We agree that living roofs are generally inappropriate in an historic context as they are only viable on flat roofs but there may be occasions when a living roof properly installed and maintained could be appropriate within the Conservation Area. We think therefore that a blanket ban is not appropriate,

4.10 – Disagree as this could lead to noise /overlooking issues for neighbours.

4.11 – At odds with previous options

4.12 - Strongly agree as boundary walls and railings are very important to the character of many of the streets within the St Johns Wood Conservation Area.

4.13 – Disagree. The size of balconies should be determined by how they best relate to the building architecturally.

5. Alternative–fuelled vehicles

We encourage the support presently given to Alternative–fuelled vehicles by Westminster council.

We believe Option 5.2 is reasonable. All off street car parks should have charging points in a larger ratio than at present but most importantly the policy for using them has to be compatible with preserving battery life. The current Westminster limit to four hours is in fact damaging as it takes longer than this to recharge and failure to recharge fully damages battery life leading to earlier replacements and recycling issues. Naturally battery technology is changing rapidly so flexibility is necessary.

6. Amenity

6.1 – disagree. Policy is required therefore reject

6.2 – Agree but please note that the St John's Wood Society believes that 50% garden retention will be too low in many cases especially when gardens are small or in cases when a mature trees will be lost.

We therefore suggest that the wording for this option should be: “ *ensuring at least 50% of the original garden is maintained and that in any case the remaining garden must be of a sufficient size to allow the growth of mature trees and the creation of a viable garden.*”

Whilst 50 % of a large garden may still allow occupants, neighbours and wildlife to continue to enjoy the amenity of the garden, in the case of a small garden, the council should ensure that the remaining 50% is of an adequate size to grow trees and create a reasonable viable garden. If that is not the case then the basement size must be reduced accordingly.

7. Basements

7.1 – Disagree. Policy is required therefore reject

7.2 – Agree but there should be a qualification stating that although the basement should never extend under more than 50% of the original garden, the remaining 50% of the original garden must be of an adequate size in real terms to allow the growing of mature trees if desired by future occupants of the property.

7.3 – Strongly Agree

7.4 – Agree

7.5 – Strongly Agree. Extensive subterranean developments are contrary to the government's sustainability policies.

7.6 – Agree. Hydrology reports must be obtained to assure neighbours that groundwater flow will not be altered to the detriment of the area.

7.7 The character of an historic building must be respected in terms of the size of a proposed basement and how it relates to the existing house. Nonetheless the basement should be viewed as a new element and should be designed and expressed as such. Therefore room sizes need not be limited by original room proportions.

7.8 – Disagree :Basements should not extend under an adjacent highway

8. Biodiversity

We support Policy options 8.3, 8.6.

12. Carbon Targets

The St John's Wood Society believes that there is an urgent need for development to incorporate exemplary standards of sustainable and inclusive urban design and architecture . With this in mind we query how the council can continue to support extensive basement developments which include large swimming pools requiring both heating and artificial ventilation and lighting.

We support policy options 12.2, 12.3 and 12.4 which provide carbon target standards for new development in terms of regulated carbon targets.

We support Policy Options 12.5-12.6 to become carbon neutral and zero carbon Policy Option 12.7.

We also support Policy Option 12.8 which sets out a requirement

for the submission of an energy statement to demonstrate how the targets will be met.

18. Design

All development within a conservation area must be of the highest sustainable architectural and urban design quality.

The Society's preferred Policy options are therefore Options 18.2, 18.3, 18.4 and 18.8

25. Heritage Assets

The St John's Wood Society supports the adoption of policy options 25.4, 25.5 and 25.6.

We do not support the demolition of buildings within our conservation area unless the existing building has little merit and there are exceptional circumstances. If a building is demolished then it must be replaced with a building of substantial architectural merit. It should also be replaced within a closely monitored period of time. We have recently had a few poorly maintained, rat infested sites left vacant for long periods after demolition.

21. Enforcement

The SJW Society supports Option 21.2 Enforcement.

Proactive enforcement is vital in maintaining the amenity of residents within the Conservation Area as well as protecting residents from unscrupulous developers.

27. Lighting and Light Pollution

We support Policy Options 27.2-27.5, and in particular Policy Option 27.4 which develops the current approach to lighting and allows a more effective implementation. This is especially important within the St John's Wood Conservation Area because of the floodlighting for Lords cricket ground and the equally contentious floodlit sports areas recently proposed for the Marlborough Hill Development.

29. Noise and Vibration

We support policy options 29.3,29.4, 29.5, 29.8, 29.12 to achieve the fullest contribution to reducing noise levels. We are pleased to note that Violet Hill Gardens has been listed in policy option 29.4 and has been defined by Westminster council as a special tranquil space which needs to be protected.

Other

In addition our members have also notified us of their support for the following policy options

Public Art : Policy Option 38.2 supported

Car Clubs are to be encouraged and Policy option 11.3 is supported

Buses Option 10.3 supported

Road Safety Option 45.2 supported

NO POLICY OPTION TO PROTECT FRONT GARDENS WITHIN CONSERVATION AREA.

We cannot find a policy which specifically protects against crossovers and the resultant sacrifice of front gardens and hedges for off street parking within a conservation area. Please could you guide us to the relevant policy within the CMP, if any, as front gardens are an integral part of the character of the SJW Conservation Area and should be protected by policy. Other than policy options which protect front walls and railings, there does not appear to be a specific CMP policy option to protect front gardens.

Submitted on behalf of the St John's Wood Society by:

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St John's Wood Society

THE 
ST JOHN'S WOOD
SOCIETY