

3. GUIDELINES FOR FRONT GARDENS AND HARDSTANDINGS



New hardstandings should incorporate permeable materials and attractive landscaping to help retain a green and biodiverse streetscape

Under the Scheme of Management, proposals to form hardstandings for off street parking, resurfacing of an existing drive with a different material and any other alterations that would change the appearance of a property, require prior written approval. Before undertaking such an application consider the impact on visual amenity of your front garden and environmental implications on your neighbourhood that a change may have given that flooding, and urban temperature is expected to increase due to climate change.

Leafy streets with planted front gardens are an important visual feature of the Estate, with planted areas forming a significant part of our natural environment. We should therefore be concerned if they are being lost. A planted front garden can also help cool air temperatures, filter pollutants, reduce noise levels, improve wellness and create wildlife habitats. Each benefit needs to be considered in making changes to a front garden that may impact negatively on these characteristics or wider environment of the Estate. There are many different reasons why front gardens are transforming from green to grey environments. This includes the provision of car parking spaces, EV charging, wheelie bins, and cycle storage. The Estate seeks to manage these different pressures through considered design and following sound principles of water and ecological management.

Creating large areas of hard landscaping in private front and rear gardens adds to the risk of wider local flooding, as heavy rainfall events are becoming more frequent, and mains drains in urban areas such as Dulwich are unable to cope. The purpose of the hard standing should be clearly identified as a need and a proposal to mitigate the negative impact described in an application. It is recognised that vehicle parking presents the primary reason behind requests to develop hard standings in front gardens.

3. GUIDELINES FOR FRONT GARDENS AND HARDSTANDINGS CONT.



Planted screening can reduce the visual dominance of parked cars within the streetscape



Example of a permeable material



Example of biodiverse planting/ wildlife friendly features

Parking cars on front driveways can have a negative visual impact on the streetscape and the hardstanding provided should be kept to a minimum, with permeable materials used to prevent any water run off to the adjacent streets. New hardstandings may not be approved where it is considered it would have a negative impact on the environmental setting and architectural character of a group of houses or the streetscape. The development of front gardens to install bin stores, bike stores and EV charging should follow the same sound principles of good design and not adversely impacting on the amenity of the space.

The following factors will be considered when a permit application is made for the modification of a front garden to install a hardstanding, resurface an existing hardstanding or install new structures in a front garden;

- Drawings will be required describing any changes to a front garden together with a clear statement of need. The proposals should include for a high level of planting to ensure that the leafy character of the streetscape is retained, and biodiversity is improved.
- When designing your front garden bear in mind that trees of amenity value should not only be retained but their roots must to be protected. Care should be taken when resurfacing and laying services to avoid damaging significant tree roots and surface tree roots which are in the top 0.5m layer of the soil. An arboricultural report should be provided as well as hand-dug root surveys, and root protection method statements. New trees and planting that provides biodiversity gain are strongly encouraged.
- As much planting is to be provided and maintained as possible and generally this will be at least 50% of the total front garden area. We stipulate this as a minimum percentage of soft planting to keep our local area green. A calculation of the existing and proposed soft planted area is to be included with your application. Areas of gravel or 'grass-crete' should not be included as soft planting area.
- Proposals should use permeable (or porous) materials which allow water to pass through them into the ground below. Small areas of surfacing can be designed to slope towards lawns or borders, or a French drain or soakaway can be incorporated into the design. The application must demonstrate that the hard landscaping will not to add rainwater into the mains drains.

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- The material which forms the hardstanding, drive and paths must be in sympathy with the design of the property and streetscape. Traditional and unique properties should have sensitive natural materials such as gravel, stone, bonded gravel, 'hoggin' or granite setts. Heritage block paving and resin bound gravel materials will also be considered for paths and hardstandings but samples should be provided. Details of the environmental credentials of the material chosen should be submitted as well as photographic samples. Where relevant please photograph the proposed material next to the original.
- Conservation of materials and details will be required for group developments such as the 1960s Whytefield Estate where the materials and details were part of the original landscape design. To replace the coloured asphalt, alternative permeable materials such as resin bound surfacing can be used to match.
- The width of the entrance created on the front boundary for vehicle access should be kept to a minimum to reduce the visibility of parked cars on driveways. Generally this is 3.5m - 4m. Where possible, the front garden should be designed with trees, evergreen hedges or shrubs which screen the parked vehicle from the road.
- The approved planting scheme must be maintained to provide adequate screening of a parked vehicle and to ensure the green character of the streetscape is maintained. When plants, hedges or shrubs die, the freeholder is expected to plant replacements. As our climate gets drier, we need to consider how we can reduce water consumption. Measures such as improving soil, creating shade, collecting rainwater and planting drought resistant species can help. For a list of drought resistant species please see rhs.org.uk/plants-for-places/drought-resistant
- Plan and elevation details of any proposed changes to front garden boundary structures such as fences, gates or walls should be included with your application. Generally, the design should be low level, open in character and in keeping with the design, materials and heights of those for adjacent properties. The materials and design can be specific for streets or groups of properties, such as timber palisade fencing to Estate roads such as Calton Avenue or Dulwich Common. Refer to Guideline 1 Boundary changes to walls, hedges, fences, railings and gates. Consider wildlife-friendly features such as gaps in fencing and wild areas for habitat creation.
- Permission is required for front garden structures such as bin stores and bike stores. The design should be in keeping and must not dominate. The height should be kept to a minimum, possibly by lowering the ground level and the maximum height permitted will be 1.4m. The colour and material must be in keeping and green roofs are generally required. Any front garden structure must be adequately screened with evergreen planted screening to all visible sides. They should be set back from the front boundary as far as possible to provide a planted border to the street facing elevation.
- Electric vehicle (EV) charging points can be installed to front gardens without a permit but the location should be carefully considered. The installation of Air Source Heat Pumps in your front garden may not be permitted by the Local Authority if you are in a Conservation Area. Installations that are sized and sited to minimise its impact on amenity could be acceptable subject to the detail. Further details can be found in Guideline 16 Mechanical Plant Installations and Electric Vehicle Charging Points.



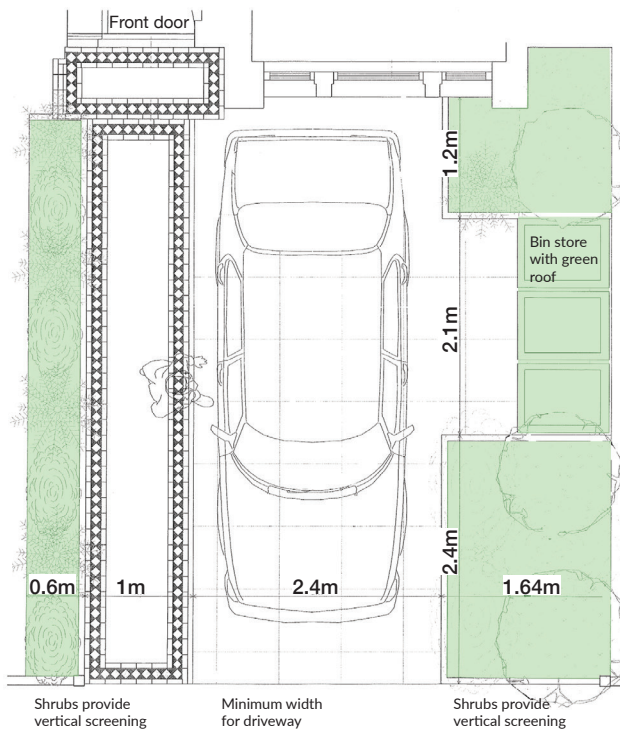
Original landscaping and coherent materials are distinctive features of the Estate



Permission is required for front garden structures

3. GUIDELINES FOR FRONT GARDENS AND HARDSTANDINGS CONT.

SUITABLE PLAN FOR SOME TURNEY ROAD HOUSES



Exceptions to the 50% planting guideline

Applications for front garden designs that provide access for users of wheelchairs and wheelchair accessibility vehicles (WAV) that cannot meet the 50% area requirement will be supported. Technical drawings will be required to demonstrate that the design complies with Part M of the building regulations. A detailed landscape plan will be required showing the maximum area that is possible to be planted. An emphasis on screening plants such as trees or shrubs would favourably compensate for the reduced area. A permit would be issued on the basis that compliant wheelchair access and that the planting would be implemented and maintained to a high standard with evergreen plants. To provide a green setting to the house and the streetscape.

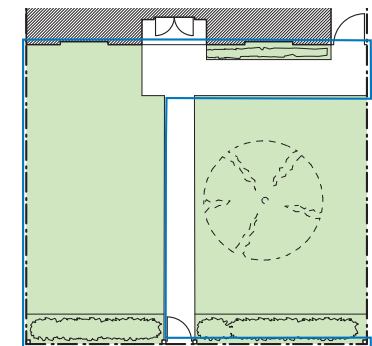
Certain properties on Turney Road (numbers 29-47, 55-133, 82-100, 108-182) and on Dulwich Common (numbers 2-32) can provide a minimum area of 28%, subject to the levels of planting provided. The template in the illustration (on the next page) was agreed with the Turney Road and Burbage Road Residents' Association. Further information can be found at turneyandburbage.org.uk. On Dulwich Common the need to safely turn a car around on the red route has established an exception.

Further exceptions may be considered if the following criteria can be demonstrated:

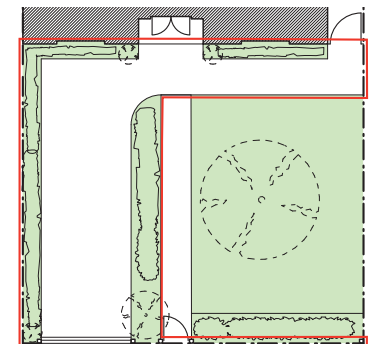
- The property is on a red route and it is essential to be able to turn a car around on the driveway to avoid reversing into traffic.
- The maximum area possible is planted and the surface material is in keeping and permeable.
- The green character of the streetscape would be enhanced overall, for example through vertical planting of trees and shrubs and with biodiverse, evergreen planting to screen parked cars.

SUITABLE ADAPTATION OF A FRONT GARDEN

Existing plan



Proposed plan



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WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR APPLICATION

- Accurate dimensioned drawings to a scale of 1:50.
- The dimensions of the hard landscaped area should be included on the drawings together with details of the materials proposed. Photographic samples of the actual materials will be required.
- Changes proposed to the front or side boundary (walls, hedges, gates and other features) must be shown in plan and elevation on the drawings, with detailed section information, materials and dimensions included.
- Details of the surface water drainage. Larger applications (new builds and re-developments) may need to provide a SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) assessment report as part of the supporting information.
- Details of the planting scheme should also be provided and consideration should be given to biodiversity – further information may be requested if these are not comprehensive.
- Details of any tree work, an arboricultural report with hand dug root surveys, and root protection method statement.

Permissions must be obtained separately from the local authority, particularly if changes are required to the pavement or kerb. The local authority will take into account road safety and will be responsible for creating the dropped kerb. If the hardstanding is larger than 5 square metres and is made of non-porous materials, you will need planning permission. Contact details for your local authority can be found on their website.

For further information on the installation of electric vehicle charging please see Guideline 16. For front garden bin and bike store see Guideline 12.

If you live on a road owned and maintained by The Dulwich Estate, permission to alter the pavement or kerb is required. Please email details to info@thedulwichestate.org.uk

For design inspiration please see the following links:

rhs.org.uk/garden-inspiration/garden-types/front-gardens

rhs.org.uk/garden-design/front-garden-designing

cprelondon.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2024/11/RHS-front-garden-guide.pdf

rhs.org.uk/plants/for-places/front-gardens