

# London Borough of Tower Hamlets

## DRAFT MANSARD ROOF GUIDANCE NOTE



Draft for consultation

November 2015



## **Draft Mansard Roof Guidance**

### **Purpose of this consultation**

The purpose of the Mansard Roof Guidance Note is to support residents who would like to make a planning application for a new mansard roof in one of the Borough's Conservation Areas.

The Draft Mansard Roof Guidance Note contains information on the most relevant planning policies that the Council must consider when making decision on planning applications; the character of historic roofs in Tower Hamlets; the elements of Mansard Roofs and best practice advice on how you should approach the design of a new mansard roof in a conservation area; and finally, the document includes some helpful tips for you to refer to when making a planning application for a new mansard roof in a Conservation Area.

In order to assist residents with planning application process, officers have also examined the following eight Conservation Areas in more detail to identify the best opportunities for properties to extend: Driffield Road; Medway; Fairfield Road; Victoria Park; Jesus Hospital Estate; York Square; Chapel House; and Tredegar Square. Officer recommendations have been presented in draft addendum to the relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisals. These addendums are also subject to consultation from 23 November 2015 and 18 January 2016. More information on these can be found via the links and contact details below.

### **How you can get involved**

It is important that this Guidance Note is easy to understand and useful. If you feel that this document could be improved and the information better communicated, we would be grateful for your feedback during the public consultation.

The **consultation runs from 23 November 2015 until 18 January 2016** and we welcome your comments and feedback during this time.

The document is available on the Council's website at [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk). Paper copies are also available in the Planning Reception at the Councils Offices at Mulberry Place.

Comments can be sent to [placeshaping@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:placeshaping@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

Comments can also be sent to  
The Place Shaping Team,  
London Borough of Tower Hamlets,  
Mulberry Place,  
PO Box 55739,  
5 Clove Crescent,  
E14 2BY

Comments must be received by **5pm on 18 January 2016** to ensure consideration.

If you have any questions regarding the proposals you can call the planning hotline on 020 7364 5009.

## Events

Six public exhibitions and drop in sessions have been organised to offer residents the opportunity to review and discuss the content with officers.

Details of these sessions are as follows:

<b>Conservation Area</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Afternoon Session 2-5pm</b>	<b>Evening Session 5.30-8.30pm</b>
Driffield Road Fairfield Road Medway Tredegar Square Victoria Park	St Pauls Church, Old Ford Road, Bow, E3 5JL	Thursday 3 December	Friday 11 December
Jesus Hospital Estate York Square	The Scott Room, Oxford House, Derbyshire St, Bethnal Green, E2 6HG	Tuesday 8 December	Friday 4 December
Chapel House	Canary Wharf, Idea Store, Churchill Place, E14 5RB	Friday 4 December	Monday 30 November

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## **1. Introduction and background**

### **What is the purpose of this guidance?**

London Borough of Tower Hamlet's understands that many residents would like to extend their properties in Conservation Areas. Many have expressed frustration that the Borough's policies do not encourage this.

In response, the Council has produced this Mansard Roof Guidance Note to help residents understand the planning application process.

In addition, to this Guidance, the Council is producing Addendums to the Conservation Character Appraisals in the following Character Areas: Driffield Road; Medway; Fairfield Road; Victoria Park; Jesus Hospital Estate; York Square; Chapel House; and Tredegar Square. Officers have been asked to consider opportunities for extensions to family homes to take place. The Draft Addendums out of consultation include the officer's recommendation on where this can be best achieved given the existing legal and planning policy framework.

### **What is the status of this guidance?**

This document is a tool for assist the Borough's residents making planning applications. The Guidance Note does not introduce new policies. It supplements existing policies and guidance on development in conservation areas.

Following public consultation, the document will be amended where appropriate and approved. Once approved, it will have a material weight in the determination of relevant planning applications.

### **What happens next?**

It is important that the Mansard Roof Guidance Note is clear and easy to follow. The Council are consulting the public on this Draft and asking for feedback to ensure it communicates as effectively as possible.

Following the period of public consultation all comments received will be considered and the document amended as appropriate.

It is then anticipated that the Mansard Roof Guidance Note will be approved for use in early 2016.

## **2. Summary of key planning policies and legislation**

### **Why planning policies and legislation are important?**

The Council must take into account existing legislation and planning policies when making decision on planning applications. This framework effectively acts like a rule book, against which the Council must decide whether development is suitable or unsuitable. This ensures that the Council is meeting its duties under the law and that it is making decisions fairly and consistently across the Borough.

When the Council receives a planning application for a new mansard roof in a Conservation Area, it determines the acceptability of the development against the relevant legalisation and planning policies. It is therefore useful for you to be aware of the most relevant national, regional and local policies. These have been summarised in the section that follows for your ease of use and reference.

### **National planning legislation and policy**

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 S.69(1) defines of a conservation area is “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Section 72 (2) of the Act 1990 obliges the Local Planning Authority to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Designation of a conservation area also places a duty upon the Local Planning Authority to prepare and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. Each of the Boroughs Conservation Areas has an adopted character appraisal which forms part of planning policy considerations and must be considered when proposing development.

Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out national planning policies for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. In particular, it states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The NPPF also states 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.

### Regional planning policy

London Plan Policy 7.4 states that “Buildings, streets and open spaces should provide a high quality design response that is informed by the historic environment.”

London Plan Policy 7.6 states that “Architecture should make a positive contribution to a coherent public realm, streetscape and wider cityscape. It should incorporate the highest quality materials and design appropriate to its context.”

London Plan Policy 7.8 states that “Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form scale, materials and architectural detail.

### Local planning policy

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Local Plan is made up of two parts, the Core Strategy which was adopted in 2010 and the Managing Development Document that was adopted in 2013. All the planning policies in these plans should be read as a whole and are relevant to development in the Borough’s Conservation Areas. Of particular relevance to the historic environment are, Core Strategy Strategic Objective 22 and Spatial Policy 10, and Managing Development Document Policy DM27.

The Local Plan designated 58 Conservation Areas in the Borough. These are illustrated in the Figure 2.1 below.

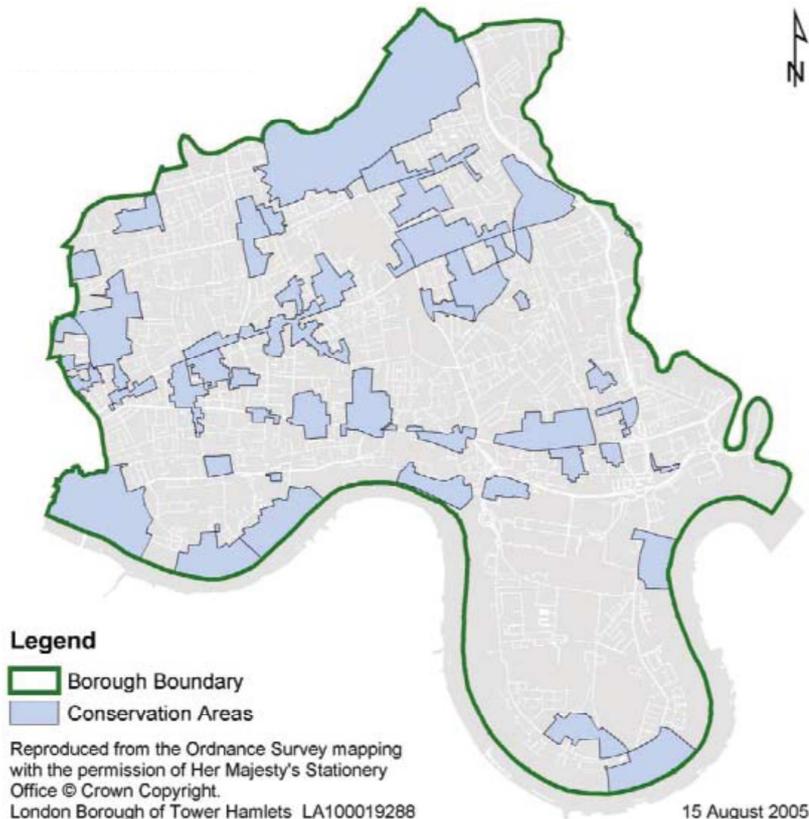


Figure 2.1: This shows the Borough’s designated Conservation Areas

It is important the applicant demonstrates that proposed roof extension is sympathetic to, and does not harm, the character and appearance of buildings or the wider townscape in the Borough.

Policy DM27 of the Local Plan is of particular importance to planning for mansard roofs in Conservation Areas. This states that:

1. Development will be required to protect and enhance the Borough's heritage asset's, their setting and their significance as key elements of developing sense of place of the borough's distinctive 'Places'.
2. Applications for the alteration, extension, change of use, or development within a heritage asset will only be approved where:
  - a. it does not result in an adverse impact on the character, fabric or identity of the heritage asset or its setting;
  - b. it is appropriate in terms of design, scale form, detailing and material in its local context; ... "

### 3. Tower Hamlets roof types

#### Introduction

Each of the Borough's Conservation Areas has been assessed and the significance of their historic character and varied composition documented in the Borough's Conservation Areas Character Appraisal. A contributing factor to the designation of the many of the Borough's Conservation Area designation is the special nature of their rooflines. This includes where there is a predominance of an intact original street and roofscapes.

The significance of the historic roof-scape within a conservation area is derived from a number of factors including its shape or form, structure, covering materials, and associated features. The roof plays an important part in an integrated architectural design, and trade skills can also contribute to its interest. Traditional roofs were usually constructed by local tradesmen using local materials and techniques. This local distinctiveness is frequently a key element of interest of the built environment.

The following describes the historical roof types found Tower Hamlets' Conservation Area that are predominately residential in character.

#### A. The 'London' or 'Butterfly' roof

This is the most common roofscape in the Borough and was popular in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The following images show examples of this.



Fig. 3.1.  
Tredegar Square CA.  
London Roof behind small  
front parapet.



Fig. 3.2.  
York Square CA.  
Terraces with London Roof  
behind.



Fig. 3.3  
York Square CA. 19<sup>th</sup> Century  
Terraces, showing rear of  
typical London Roof "V" form  
(gutter in centre).

#### B. The double pitched roof with central ridge

The double pitched roof has a central ridge and two pitched slopes on either side. The images that follow illustrate this type.



Fig. 3.4.  
Chapel House CA.  
Basic Victorian Terrace. Slate  
roof.



Fig. 3.5.  
Chapel House CA.  
Side elevation & streetscape.



Fig. 3.6.  
Chapel House CA. Late  
Victorian, slate roof, with bay  
windows.

### C. 'Mansard' roof

The 'Mansard' roof was used to add an extra storey without increasing the height of the building adversely. This is illustrated in the examples below.



Fig. 3.7.  
York Square CA. Victorian Terrace, traditional Mansard with slate roof.



Fig. 3.8.  
York Square CA. Detail of Traditional Mansard, shown in Fig. 3.7.



Fig. 3.9.  
York Square CA. Modern traditional mansard roof extension.

### D. 'Flat-top mansard'

This is a modern variation of the traditional mansard roof form. The images that follow illustrate this type.



Fig. 3.10  
Tredegar Square CA.  
Modern roof extension Flat-top Mansard,



Fig. 3.11  
York Square CA.  
Modern roof extension Flat-top Mansard,



Fig. 3.12  
Medway CA.  
Modern roof extension Flat-top Mansard on main commercial road.

### E. Mono-pitched or lean-to

The mono-pitched or lean-to is generally used on rear extensions.

### F. 'M' or double pitched roof

This roof form does not provide habitable roof space because of the low ridge height.

#### 4. Mansard roofs: characteristics and design considerations

##### What is a mansard roof?

The “*mansard*” roof derives its name from Francois Mansart, a French Classical architect. It became a popular type of roof form in Britain, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It provided an extra level of accommodation at roof level, without having a great impact on the appearance of the classical façade below and was partially obscured behind a small parapet. It was initially associated with 3 to 4-storey Georgian Terraces, but it is also widely used on smaller 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian terraces found within conservation areas across the London area.

Early mansard roofs comprise a steep pitched roof, normally 70 degrees or greater, with a shallower secondary pitch above. In the first half of the eighteenth century the upper slopes were clad in clay tiles. Later, when slates were used, slopes could be lower and with the use of lead, the top of the roof could almost be flat. Normally dormer windows are small and of simple construction and appearance.

Sometimes the mansards were added to an existing building, however, it was quite common for them to be designed as an integral part of the original buildings.

Full (front and rear) mansards are mostly characteristic of early 19<sup>th</sup> century properties; the other common roof of this period is the London Roof or Butterfly Roof.



Fig. 4.1. Traditional Mansard Roof, with party walls, chimney pots and dormers. Mile End Road.

### Physical Form and Characteristics of mansards

Mansards are made up of a combination of two pitches on the front and the same on the rear. They are generally set slightly back and behind a small parapet on the street side. The rear set back will vary subject to requirements for fire escape requirements. On end properties it is recommended new traditional style mansards terminate either in a gable which reflects the shape of the mansard or have a hipped or half hipped end, if appropriate, to reduce the impact of their mass.

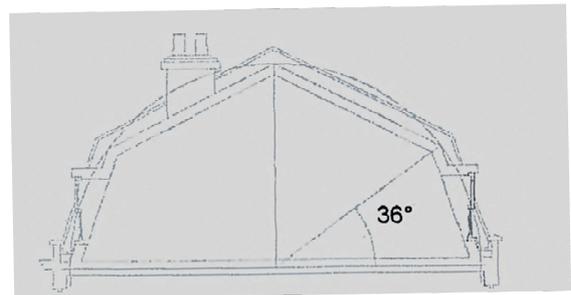
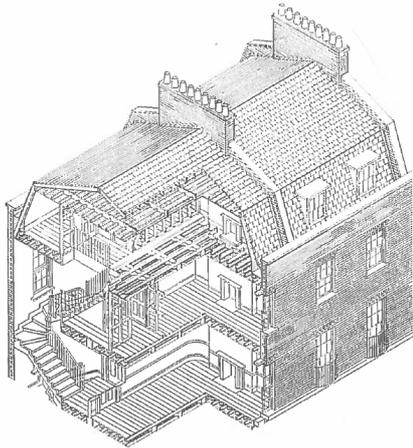


Figure 4.2 Diagrammatic section through mansard roof

(1) <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/london-terrace-houses-1660-1860/>

The lower, steep, pitch is approximately 70 degrees and the upper pitch varies from 30 to 36 degrees. However, where an existing traditional mansard already exists in the group, its roof pitches and other detailing should be replicated. The steep slope should terminate externally (so that the internal ceiling change of direction junction, is a minimum of 2.1m above the internal floor level. Pitches should be in slate with a lead flashing at the junction of the two slopes and lead on the dormer cheeks. Traditional mansards should rise from behind existing parapets. Adequate space should be provided behind the parapets for parapet gutters. Existing parapets should not be raised.

## 5. Mansard roofs: detailed design principles

### Character of the area

It is important to understand when gathering data on the setting or character of a particular site; you may need to consider not only the general significance of the Conservation Area but also the immediate surroundings and neighbouring properties. Put simply: Character means “*A Place with its own Identity*”. When designing new extensions, one must respond to “*local building forms and patterns of development*”, which “*helps reinforce a sense of place.*” (By Design, p.20, DETR).

In considering how to alter a roof it is important to understand the impact of the works on the roof itself and on the appearance of the building or street as a whole. The potential for cumulative effects of similar developments should be considered. Removal of a historic roof and replacement with an additional storey, or storeys, should only be considered where the existing roof is not of significance to the character of the building, and the new work will form a similarly subsidiary feature.

When considering new development within Conservation Areas it is important to understand they have unique or special characteristics that must be taken into consideration. Not all properties are suitable for new mansard roofs because of the sensitivity and significance of surrounding buildings. In essence what this means is; in Conservation Areas, the style and built form of existing streetscape plays an important part when considering future development.

The follow section recommends best practice design principles that officers encourage planning applications for mansard roof extensions to take into account when designing their new development.

### Roof details for new mansards

Alterations within Conservation Areas should take into account the character and design of the property and its surrounds. In general new extensions should be subordinate and respectful of their surroundings and setting. It is important that the materials and design details closely match or compliment the surrounding or adjacent heritage buildings. The reason for this is to ensure the character, significance and values of the surrounding area are maintained.

In regards to best practice, it should be noted that in a number of inner London Councils planning guides and also advice by Historic England (English Heritage’s “London terrace houses 1660-1860, A guide to alterations and extensions” p.6), that: “... *new mansards in conservation areas should be a traditional mansard rather than flat top mansard.*” (1)

However, it’s also noted that in exceptional cases, a flat top mansard may be considered if the adjacent built form is also a flat top mansard and we the aim is to fit in and compliment a specific local roof-scape form or type.

### **Rear gables showing butterfly roof form**

Where the original roof form was a Butterfly or London type, it is preferable to retain the original v shaped back wall to show the earlier roof form before the alteration.



Figure 5.1: Examples of rear gables, clearly showing the butterfly roof shape and form

### **Party wall extensions**

The party walls between adjacent properties should be raised above the new roof line (for fire separation reasons), and finished with a brick on edge coping course similar to the original wall top that is being extended. An alternative to this may be the use of a stone coping where this has been used in adjacent properties. Concrete copings are not considered acceptable.



Figure 5.2: Examples of party walls that are raised above the roof line

### **Chimney stacks and pots**

Chimney stacks and pots are important features of heritage roofscapes and contribute significantly to the character and appearance of conservation areas. Therefore it is important to retain them, even if they are no longer in use.

Where there are chimney stacks they should be continued in brickwork, rising six imperial brick courses above the ridge, then two projecting courses, two normal courses and a cement flaunching to pots. If modern flues and ducts are necessary then these should be run through existing flues wherever possible. If this is not possible, it is important to ensure that such equipment is located carefully and painted or finished to minimise its visual impact. Chimney pots of a traditional style should be retained or reinstated on the raised stacks and the original detailing to the top of the stack reinstated.

### **Cornice, parapets and balustrades**

The original parapet height should be maintained. If parapets have been raised in the past to a consistent level in a terrace, then it may be appropriate to continue this level to ensure uniformity within the terrace. The parapet coping should always fall towards the terrace

When building a new mansard it is important to check that original features are in good condition. If they are not, original cornice, parapet and balustrade details should be rebuilt when deteriorated or removed and should be incorporated into the design of the new extension. Repairs to existing fabric should match the original used, in terms of the detailed design and finished appearance.

### **Materials**

In historic areas, wherever possible, you should use traditional materials such as brick, stone, slate, timber and render that complement the colour, texture and materials in the original building's historic fabric. All roof coverings should be of high quality and laid in a traditional manner. Materials for new extensions such as mansards, should weather well, so their ageing process contributes positively to the character of the building, and the site's wider context.

Traditional finishes should be retained or replicated (as necessary) wherever possible, as they are central to the architectural design / character of the building. These may cover the entire building or façade, the roof elements (such as roof tiles, slates or roof ridges), or special architectural features (such as terra-cotta details or cast iron-work). Natural slate is the most common covering and this should be laid with a traditional overlap pattern. Within conservation areas, they should normally be traditional Welsh roof slates, or where appropriate Westmorland slates, either new or second hand. Slates should be used on the 70 and 30 degree roof slopes. On very shallow pitches lead is the most appropriate material. The traditional material for lining parapet gutters is lead.

Alterations or repairs to brickwork or stonework should match the original in all respects while satisfying the needs for durability and maintenance. This should include matching the original bond, mortar mix, colour and texture. Retention of any existing pointing is encouraged wherever possible. Painting, rendering or cladding of brickwork will normally be resisted, as it is often unsightly and can damage the appearance of a building by obscuring the texture and original colour of the façade. Painting or cladding may also trap moisture, which can cause major damp problems in the masonry.

### **Window design details**

The cill height of any new dormer window should generally not be lower than 1m above the floor and at its head should terminate where the steep and shallow slopes meet (achieving an internal minimum of 2.1m ceiling line, subject to building regulations). Window details should match the original windows. Dormer windows should only be on the front or rear elevations, but not on side elevations. Where timber is the traditional window material, new windows should also be timber framed.

In most cases a mansard roof is subordinate to the main elevation and will have fewer windows than the storey below.

For example:

- Where the main building has 2 windows below the roofline; the mansard roof should have no more than 1 dormer (see example above) ;
- Where the main building has 3 windows below the roofline; the mansard roof should have no more than 2 dormers ;;
- Where the main building has 4 windows below the roofline; the mansard roof should have no more than 1 dormer 3 dormers



Figure 5.3: This shows the subordinate relationship between the windows in the mansard roof and the main building below.

The dormers should be visually subordinate to the main windows on the facades below by being smaller and simpler in detail.

## **6. Helpful tips when making a planning application**

### **Introduction**

If you would like to extend your property in one of the Borough's Conservation Areas to include a mansard roof then you will need to apply to the Council for planning permission for the development.

The Council's website [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk) has useful information on how you make a planning application. This includes links to forms, plans and drawings you will need to submit to support the planning applications.

In order to help you navigate the planning applications process the Council has made a planning officer available from Monday to Friday for your assistance. The 'duty planner' is available to see at the Council's Mulberry Place offices from 9am to 1pm. In the afternoons the duty planning service will only be available over the phone. You do not need an appointment but, at busy times, you may have to wait to see the duty planner. Whilst the duty planner will not be able to visit your property during this time, you can bring photographs and plans to assist your discussions.

The Council's website also has a number of other Council Guidance Notes that you might find helpful at the initial stages of the planning application process. This includes notes on making planning applications for development in or for:

- Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings
- Extensions and Roof Additions

### **Planning policy considerations**

The Council must refer to the relevant planning policies and legislation when making a decision on planning applications for new development. As explained in more detail in Section 2. Key Planning Policies and Legislations, this ensures that the Council is making its decisions within the law and is doing so in a fair and consistent way across the Borough.

Before making an application in a Conservation Area, the applicant needs to consider carefully the character of the conservation area, the role of the building in the Conservation Areas and consider how the development will protect and enhance the historic environment of the designated area.

The three main physical aspects to consider when designing a mansard roof extension are:

- i. Pitches and profile:
- ii. External covering; and
- iii. Windows.

**In preparing your application it will be useful to:**

- a) refer to the relevant Tower Hamlets Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans to gain an understanding of the general significance of their Conservation Area and also any unique or special group identity or characteristic that would relate to their property. For example, it is useful to consider:
- what are the features of the existing streetscape;
  - how unique is the street in significance and character;
  - what is the predominant roof form in the immediate area;
  - are there listed buildings within close proximity ie is the subject building within the setting of a listed building;
  - the streetscape details and character of whole terrace as a whole;
  - is this a unique or individual streetscape, what are the building styles and roof forms;
- b) prepare documentation that identifies the significance or character of the individual property and its immediate setting and street-scape contribution. For example, it is useful to consider:
- the impact on the host building and host terrace;
  - how would a mansard roof impact on the existing streetscape form;
- c) prepare a case for adding a new extension in the form of a mansard suitable and appropriate for the site. This would include whether there are any other mansards in the immediate locality. This is important as it may assist establish a case where there is an established form of roof addition or alteration to a terrace or group of similar buildings and where continuing the pattern of development would help to unite a group of similar buildings or townscape. For example, it is useful to consider:
- how would a new mansard design relate to or have an impact on the significance of the overall Conservation Area
- d) would it have an impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties;
- e) is it of an appropriate scale and size for the area;
- f) generally traditional Mansards are preferred, except in exceptional circumstances where it is not possible for technical reasons or where they are designed to complement a set of existing flat roof mansards adjacent;
- g) respect and preserve existing architectural features; such as chimneys, party dividing wall extensions (above roof line), parapets and cornice elements and new roofs detailed to allow for these;
- h) ensure that any roof extensions or alterations are architecturally sympathetic to the age and character of the building and retain the overall integrity of the roof form;