



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

Going underground

Planning and subterranean development

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KENSINGTON
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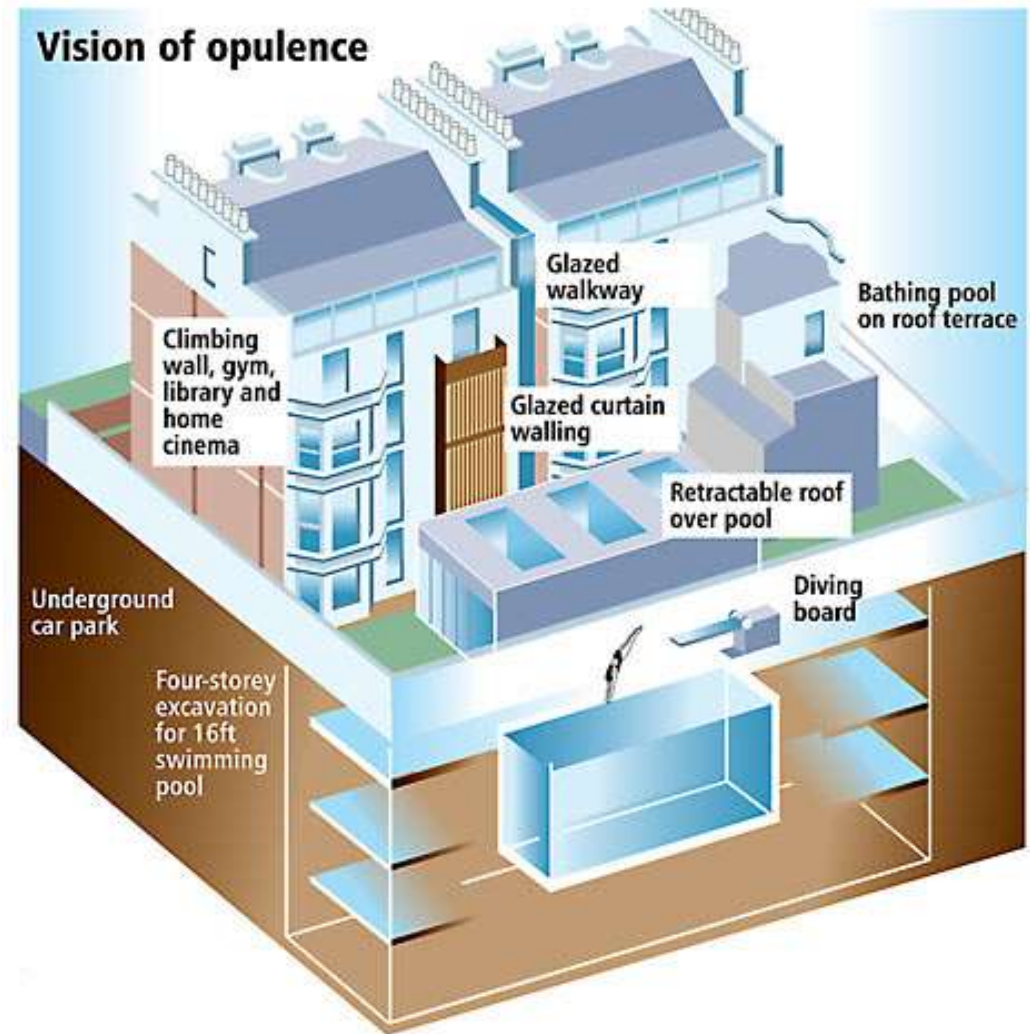
Going underground...

- Background
- Why here? Why now?
- Pros and cons
- Number of applications
- Permitted development
- Impact during construction
- Impact on completion
- Royal Borough policy
- Extent of control
- Policy review



Why here? Why now?

- Wealth
- High density
- Attractive townscape
- World city
- Investment
- Living space
- Planning restrictions



Pros and Cons

Pros

- A way of accommodating growing space expectations
- A way of handling 'world city' pressures
- Little external impact, once construction is complete

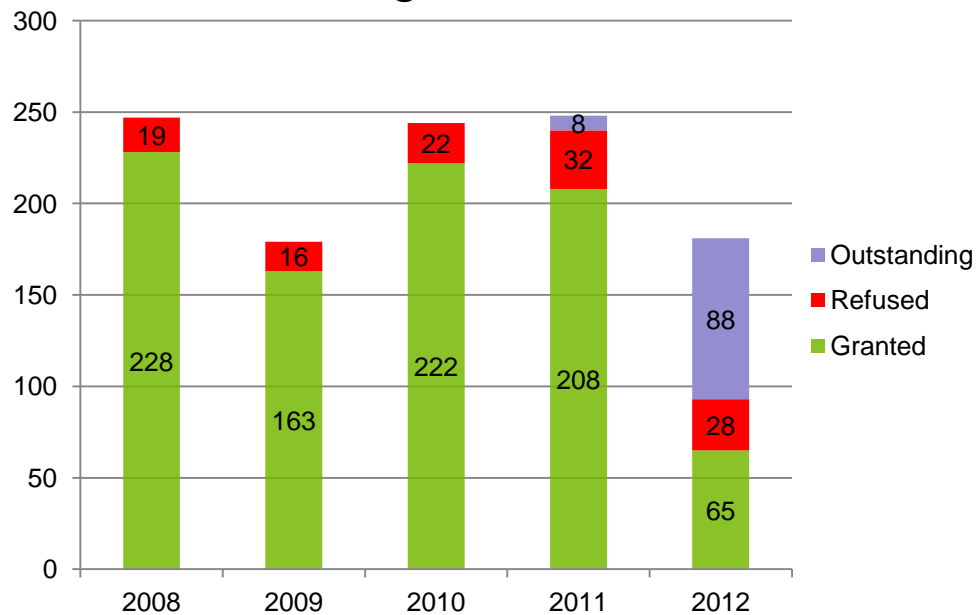
Cons

- Potential threat to historic fabric
- Construction impact – noise, transport and damage
- Social change?



Number of schemes

- Not a particularly new phenomenon in RBKC
- Continuing trend



Planning permissions granted for development including a basement extension April 2010 to March 2012



Permitted development

- The GPDO refers to “enlargement, improvement or other alteration”
- Basement development is enlargement and alteration

Parameters:

- One level down only
- Within the building footprint
- Certificates of Lawful Development. About 70 per year.



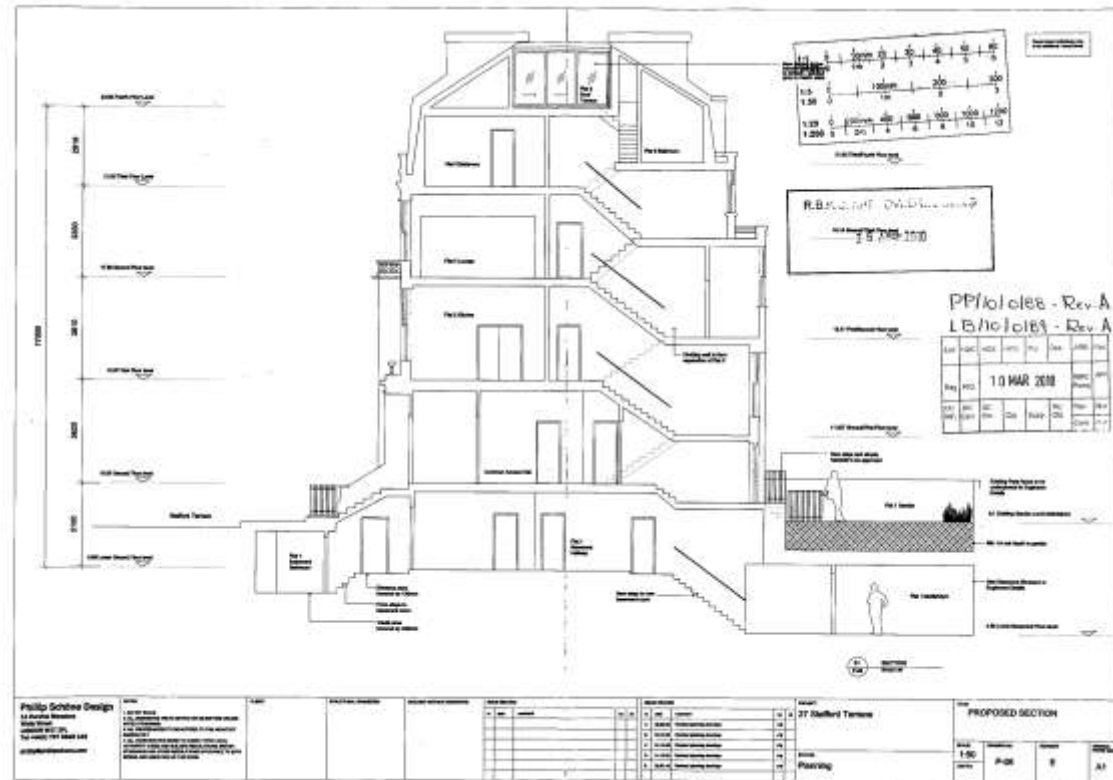
Impact during construction

- Structural stability
- Construction time
- Noise and vibration
- Use of the highway
- Cumulative impact



Impact on completion

- Drainage and flooding
- Light pollution
- Design
- Loss of trees & greenery



Royal Borough Policy

- The first borough to address the issue
- Core Strategy
- Subterranean Development SPD
- Sound evidence base (including Arup report commissioned by RBKC, undertaken for SPD and Core Strategy).
- Alan Baxter Associates carrying out a further study for RBKC



Core Strategy Policies

CL2(g)

- Not under listed buildings
- Safeguard stability of neighbours
- No loss of trees of amenity value
- Adequate soil depth for sustainable growth

CE1(c)

- Entire dwelling should meet EcoHomes Very Good standard
(Relevant BREEAM standard later this year)

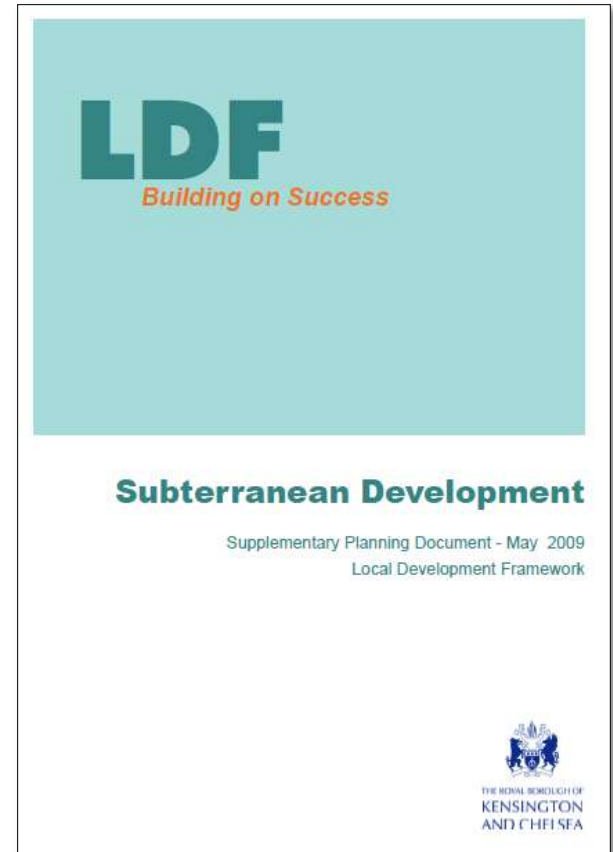
CE2

- No self contained basements in areas at risk from flooding



Subterranean Development SPD, May 2009

- 85% of garden
- 1m of soil above basement
- Construction method statement
- Design
- Trees and landscaping
- Land contamination



Rules

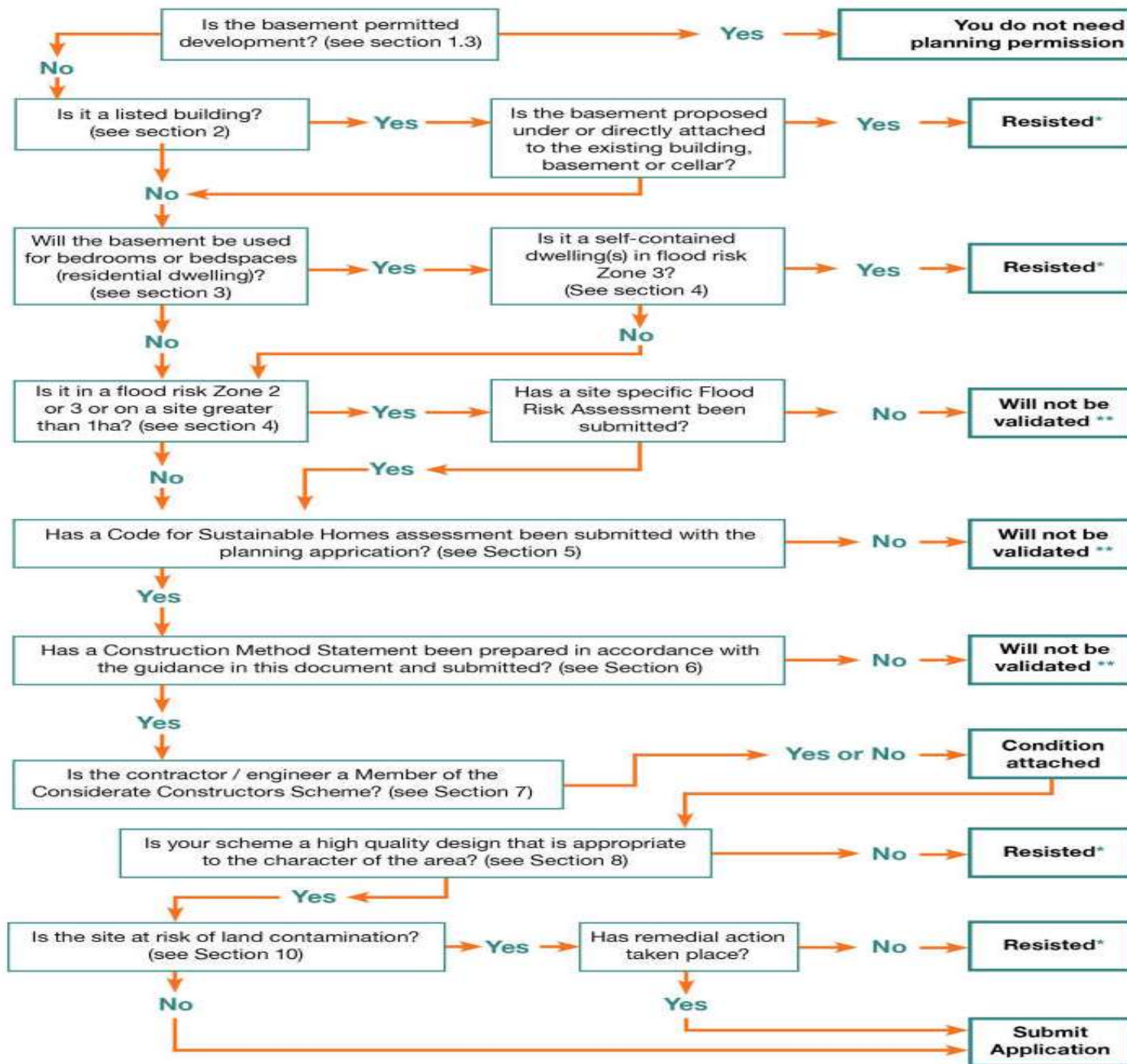
- Detailed Construction Method Statement by chartered engineer or structural engineer before an application is validated
- Subsurface and hydrological investigations in CMS to ensure that engineering and architectural design reflects the ground conditions
- But CMS not binding during construction: it is there to demonstrate that the scheme can be constructed, but during construction ground conditions may require a different approach
- Works to be supervised by chartered engineer or structural engineer – a condition of a planning permission
- Construction traffic management plan required by condition
- Membership of Considerate Constructors' Scheme required by condition



Listed Buildings

- Historic fabric
 - Integrity of the building and hierarchy of spaces
 - Character
 - Foundations / cumulative impact
-
- Normally basements not permitted under listed buildings but may be permitted within the garden.





Extent of control

- Planning deals with finished product: appearance, character and use
- Construction Method Statement is only there to show it can be done, not to control damage to neighbouring property
- Damage to neighbours' property is outside planning control
- Party Wall Act / civil matter between parties
- Construction impact largely outside planning control. Planning permissions can include reasonable conditions such as:
 - Considerate Constructors' Scheme
 - Planning conditions – traffic management plan, noise conditions
- Controls under environmental health and highways legislation
- Construction phase not controlled by building regulations



Policy review

- What we are looking at....
 - Getting developers to consult neighbours before putting in planning applications
 - Getting developers to draw up Construction Traffic Management Plans, talk to their neighbours about them and have them agreed by the Council's Transportation Team before planning applications are submitted
 - Examining whether to apply a tighter limit on under-garden excavations to allow for more planting and drainage
 - Examining whether there is any justification for limiting depth in certain circumstances
 - Examining whether to use Article 4 directions to bring permitted development basements under planning control
 - Making more effective use of Environmental Health powers

