



building on success

Basements Development Data

Partial Review of the Core Strategy

February 2014



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

Contents

Background	5
Methodology	5
Planning Data	5
Spatial distribution of basement applications	9
Planning Appeals	13

Background

- 1.1 There has been a growing trend to construct basements in the Borough as a means of extending accommodation. Basements are also built as part of both new residential and commercial developments (however, this is not a new trend). Land values in this Borough are very high and in some locations are the highest in the country. The built environment is largely historic with 70% of the Borough designated conservation areas and about 4,000 listed buildings. The dense built environment coupled with its historic character limits the scope to extend properties above ground. This has led to a growing number of developments below ground and this document presents data in relation to applications which have a basement element associated with them.

Methodology

- 1.2 The data has been collated by searching the Council's planning applications database for certain key words such as 'subterranean', 'basements', 'light well', 'swimming pool' etc. The search cannot distinguish development by their size and there can be great variations in the size and scale of the applications. The data also does not differentiate between basements built as an extension or those that are part of a redevelopment or new development. Random manual checking of this data has been undertaken for quality control but as every application is not checked manually there is a margin of error. However, the data does represent a fair picture of the number of developments which have an element of basement development associated with it. The description of development has been checked to filter out those basement developments that are more than a single storey to understand scale of the issues around size of development.
- 1.3 Basements are a form of "enlarging an existing dwelling". As such permitted development rights as set out in the GPDO (as amended) apply to basements as they do to above ground extensions. The planning department does not have data on basements constructed as permitted development. Therefore, the data is supplemented with 'commencement of work notifications' for such developments, a requirement of the building control regulations.

Planning Data

- 1.4 Table 1 (and chart 1) shows how the number of planning applications with a basement element have changed over time. There has been a steady increase in applications from just 46 in 2001 to 186 in 2007. Applications then plateaued to 2011, before rapid increases in the last couple of years, to a high of 450 registered applications in 2013.
- 1.5 Chart 2 (from the figures in Table 2) considers the years 2008 to 2013 in more detail. It shows that a relatively small proportion of applications with

an element of basements are refused each year. This proportion is however, rising over time from just 7.5% in 2008 to 18% in 2012 and 22% in 2013.

- 1.6 An average of 240 applications with a basement element were registered between 2008 and 2013. On average 170 of these were granted each year. In total between 2008 and the end of 2013 1,443 planning applications with a basement element were registered and 1,108 have been granted permission by the Council. In the same period 192 planning applications have been refused permission and 379 have been withdrawn. As of 31st December 2013, 115 cases have yet to have been determined.

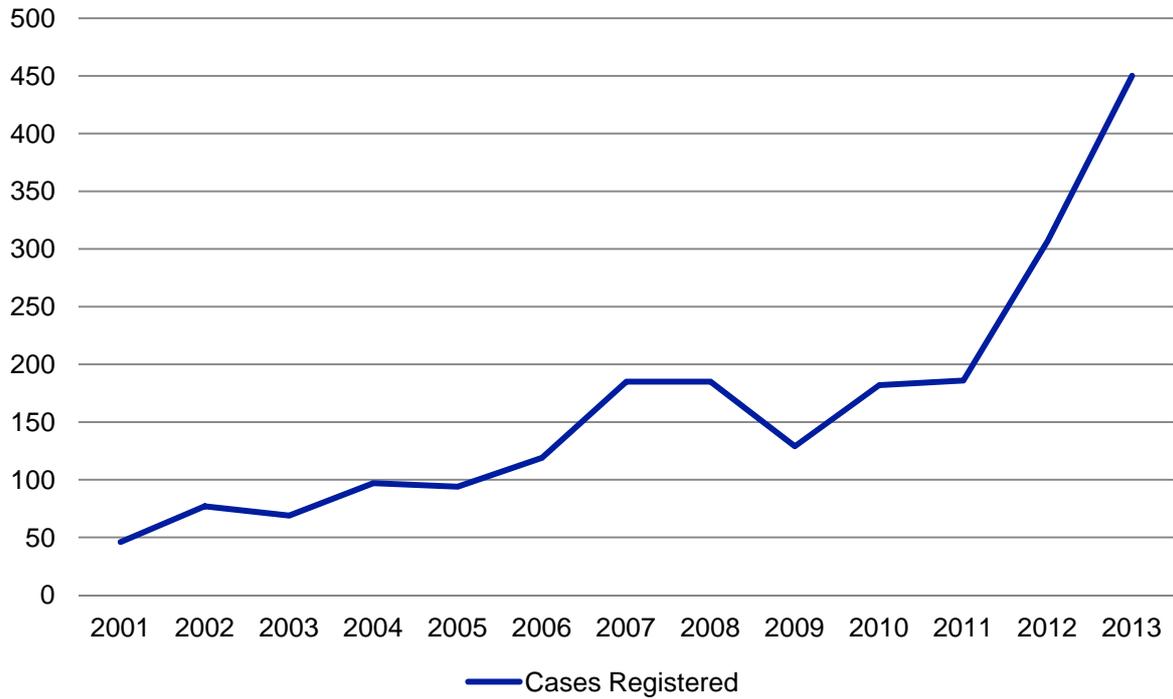
Table 1: Data on number of planning applications 2001 – 2013

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Cases Registered	46	77	69	97	94	119	186	186	129	182	181	307	450

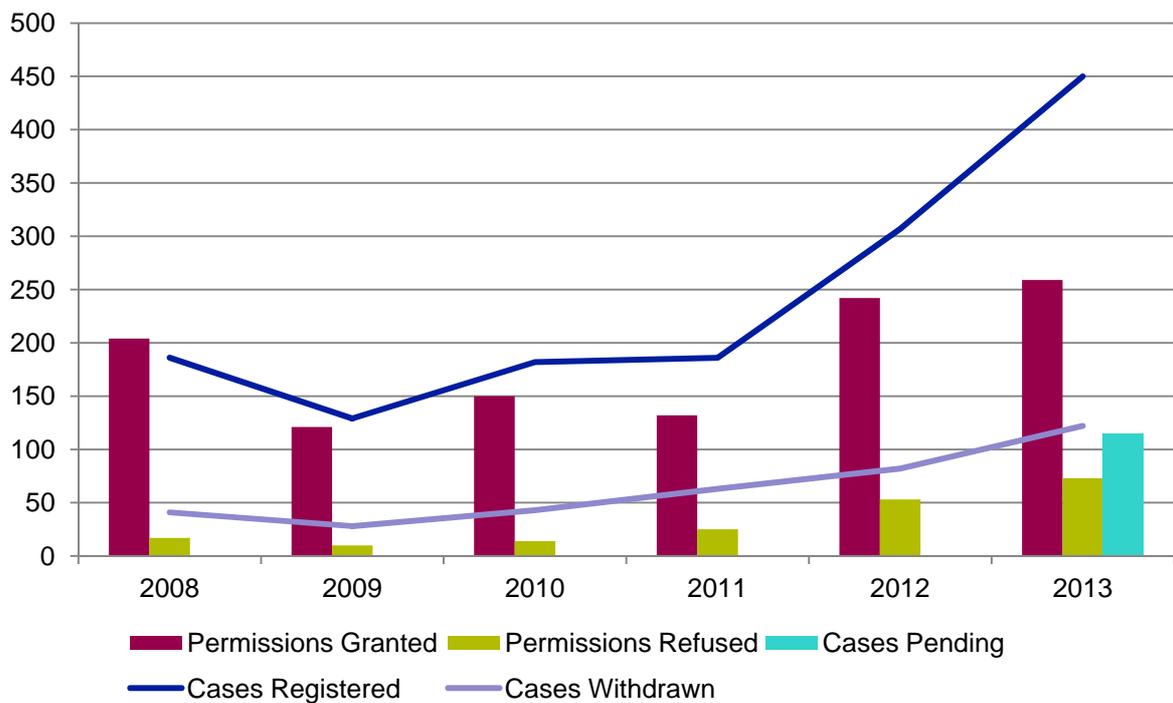
Table 2: Planning Data for applications with a basement element

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Average (2008 - 2013)	Total (2008 2013)
Permissions Granted	204	121	150	132	242	259	170	1,108
Permissions Refused	17	10	14	25	53	73	24	192
Cases Withdrawn	41	28	43	63	82	122	63	379
Cases Pending	-	-	-	-	-	115		115
Cases Registered	186	129	182	186	307	450	240	1,443

**Chart 1: Planning applications with an element of basement
2001 - 2013**



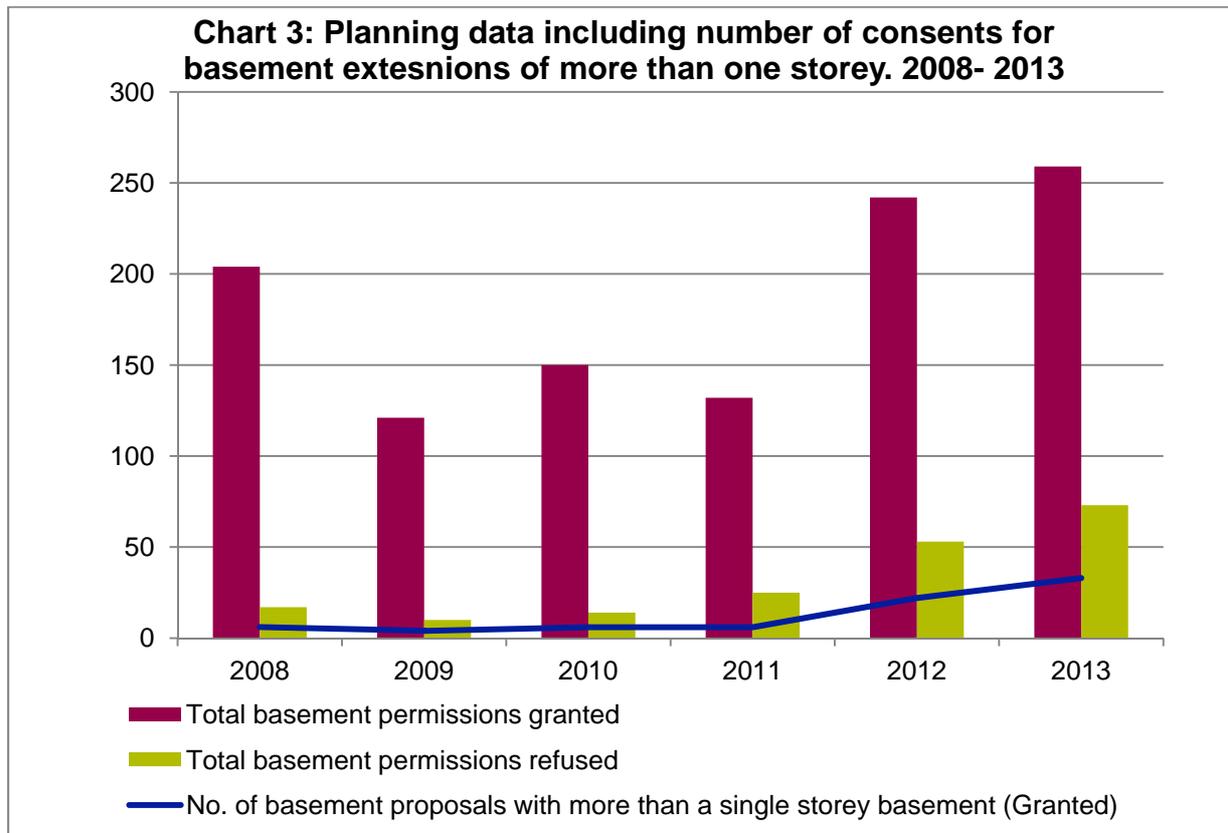
**Chart 2: Planning Data for applications with an element of
basement development 2008 to 2013**



1.7 Table 3 shows that the number of proposals comprising two or more levels is quite small compared to the overall numbers of basement proposals (Chart 3). However, there is a marked increase in the number of planning applications for two or more levels which were granted planning permission in 2012 and 2013 compared to previous years.

Table 3: Two or more levels of basement developments granted permission

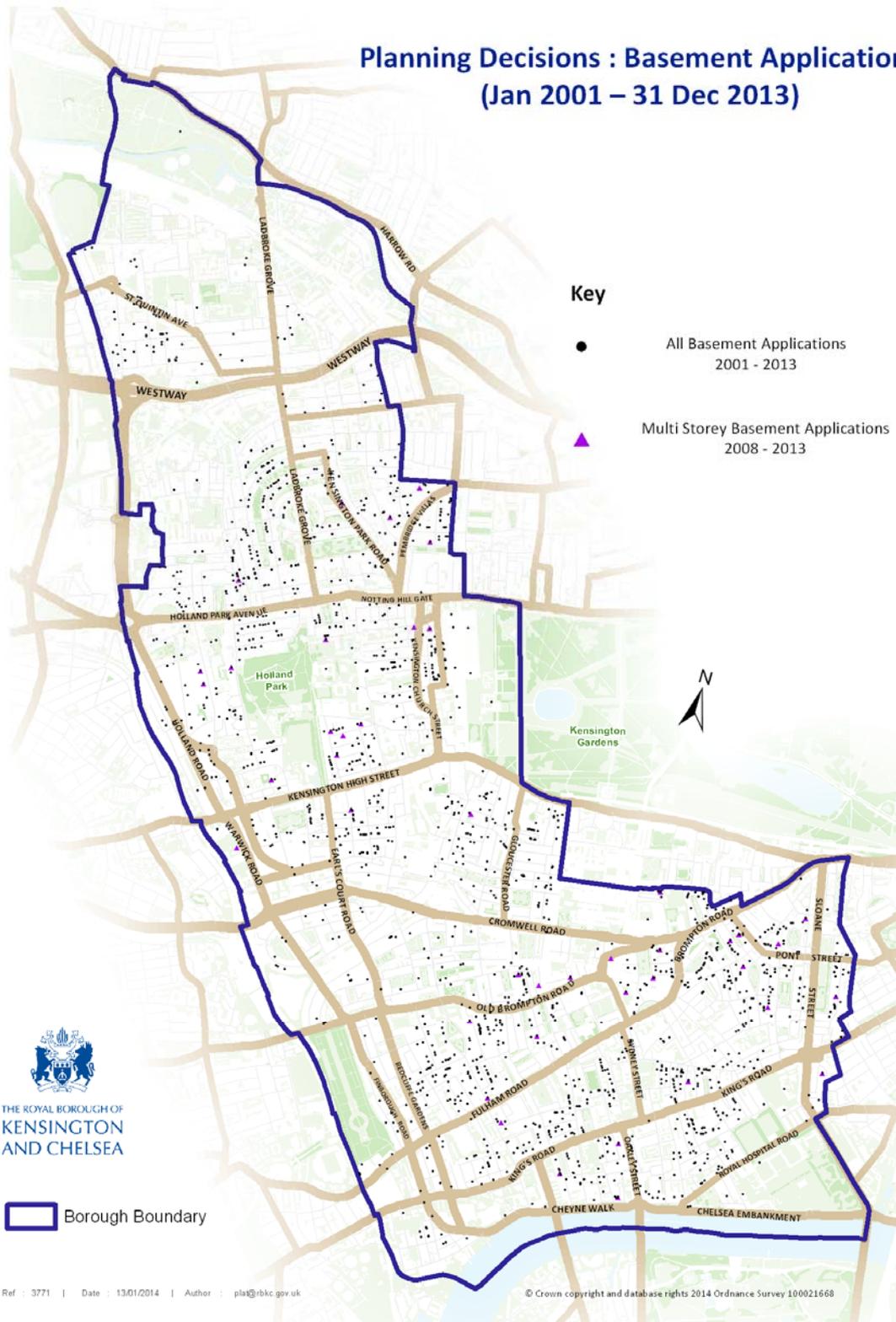
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Two or more levels of basement development - Permitted	6	4	6	6	22	33
Two or more levels of basement development - Refused	0	0	0	0	3	5



Spatial distribution of basement applications

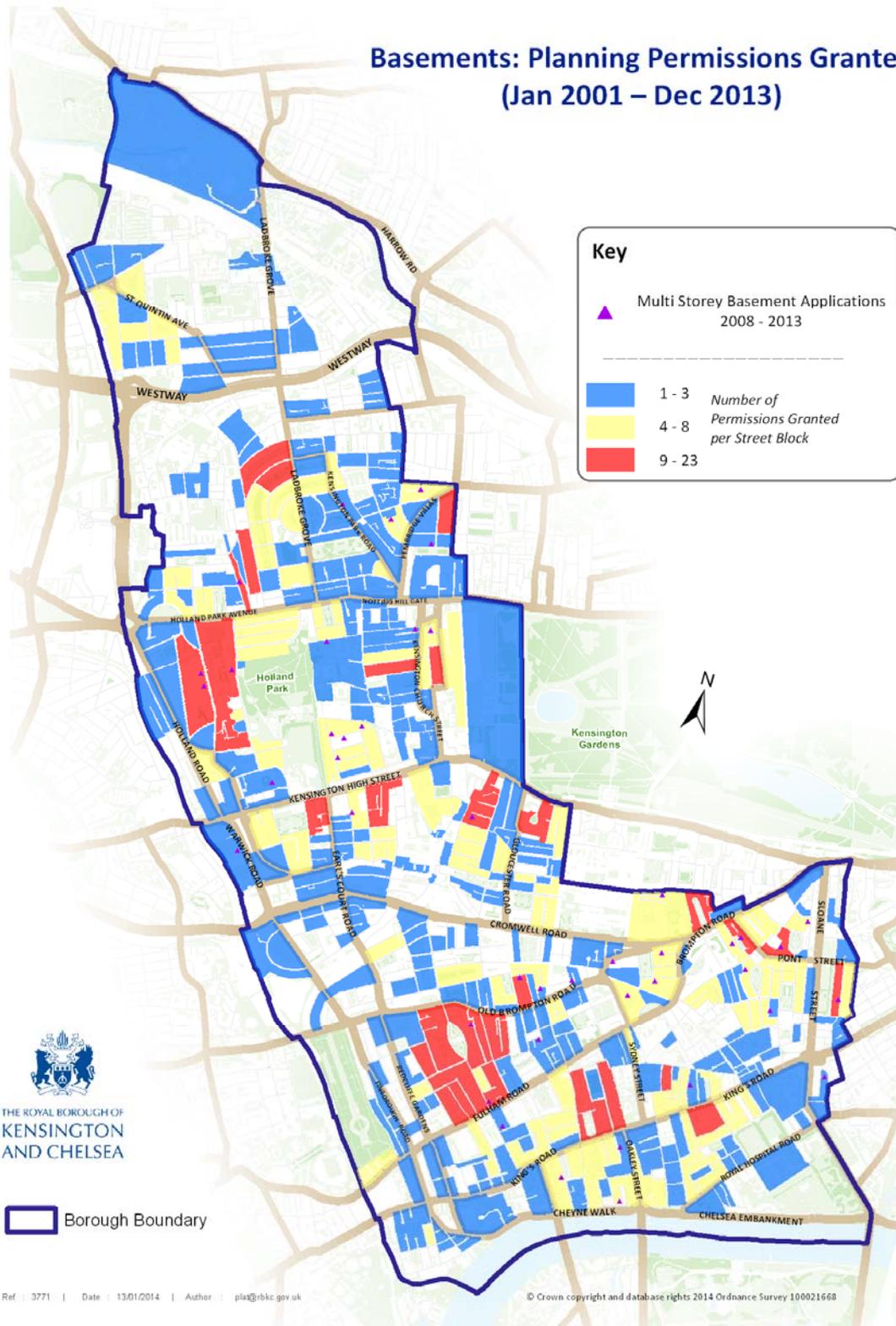
- 1.8 Map 1 shows all planning applications that have been made to the Council with a basement element since 2008. It shows that the number of cases is significant in what is a small urban area of 3.5 sq miles. The cases are prevalent in all residential neighbourhoods in the Borough with the exception of areas where there is a high concentration of social housing, particularly in the north of the Borough. In addition areas that are characterised by institutional buildings such as in South Kensington with its museums and university buildings do not have any cases. Other gaps are in areas with mansion blocks, hotels, designated Employment Zones, garden squares or within parks.
- 1.9 Map 2 shows the distribution of planning permissions within a block bounded by roads on all sides. It confirms that little of the borough does not contain permissions with an element of basement, with significant parts containing very high concentrations. These concentrations are not just confined to a few areas, but are widely distributed. The greatest concentrations are, however, largely to the south of the Old Brompton Road in the Chelsea, Knightsbridge and the Bolton's areas.
- 1.10 Map 3, is similar in nature, but maps permissions on a grid basis. As such it may show finer detail in those areas characterised by larger street blocks.
- 1.11 The maps also show a distribution of proposals involving two or more levels of basements.

Planning Decisions : Basement Applications (Jan 2001 – 31 Dec 2013)



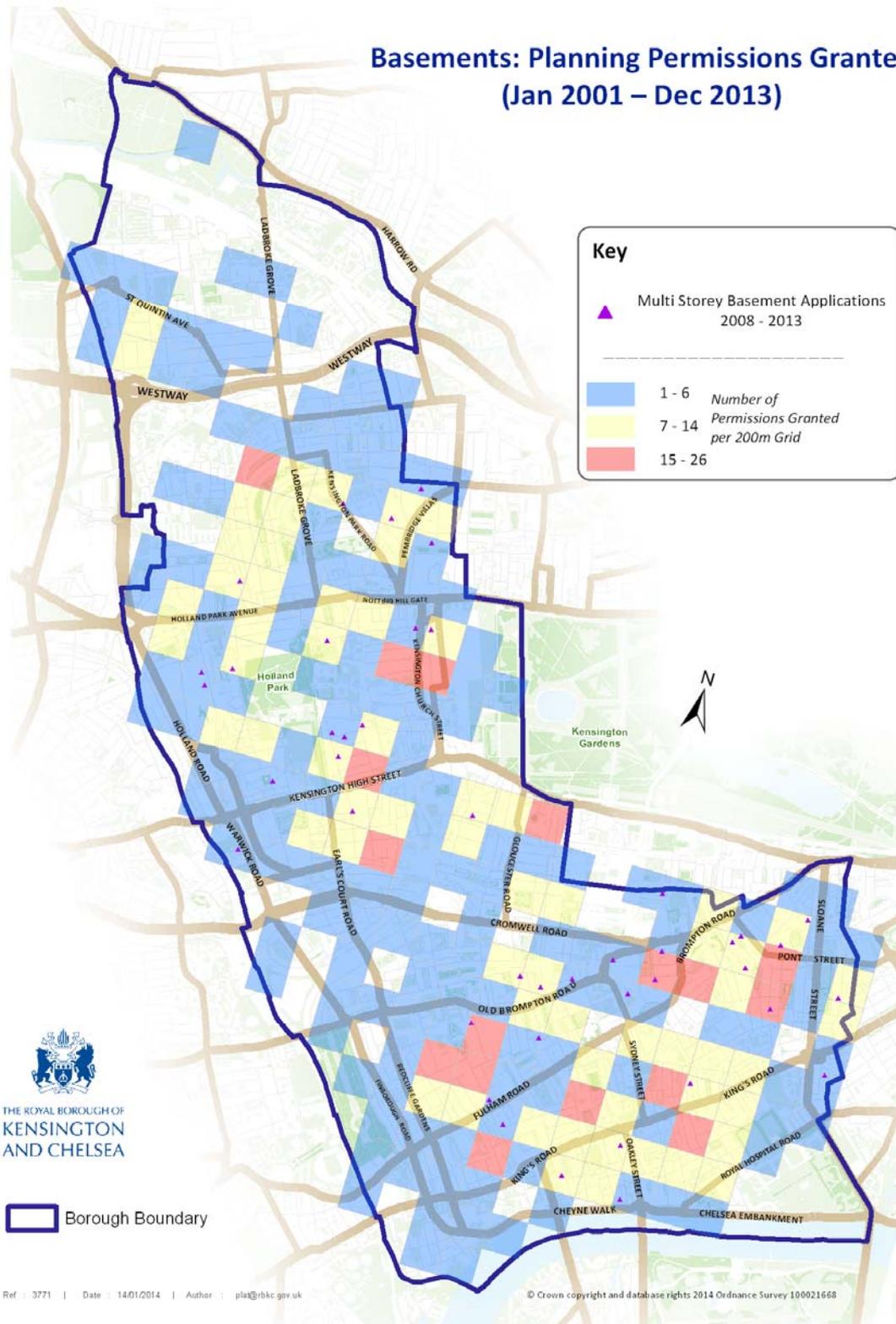
Map 1: Spatial Distribution of Basement Applications 2001 – 2013

Basements: Planning Permissions Granted (Jan 2001 – Dec 2013)



Map 2: Basement Planning Permissions: 2001 – 2013. By block.

Basements: Planning Permissions Granted (Jan 2001 – Dec 2013)



Map 3: Basement Planning Permissions: 2001 – 2013. By grid

Planning Appeals

- 1.12 Table 5 shows the number of planning appeals pertaining to basement issues since 2008. The greater number of appeals in 2012 and 2013 corresponds with the larger number of applications for these years. In total 37 appeals relating to basement issues have been made between 2008 and the end of 2013. Of these 24 were dismissed and 13 allowed.
- 1.13 The Council have looked at the appeals made, and considered the main issues raised, be these by the Council as reasons for refusal and/or the key issues identified by the relevant planning inspectors. The impact of the proposed basement upon the special architectural or historic interest of listed buildings was the factor most often considered for such appeals. The impact of lightwells on either a listed building or upon the character of the surrounding area was also frequently raised. In 2013 greater reference has been made upon the impact of proposals upon the soil depth of gardens, upon structural stability, upon trees and upon drainage.

Table 5: Basement Appeals Decided

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Allowed	1	0	0	3 (1 part – allowed)	3	6	13
Dismissed	1	3	1	2 (1 part-dismissed)	3	14	24

Table 6: Key Issues in appeal decisions

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Listed Building		2		1	1	8	12
Light well				2	4	8	14
Soil Depth			1	2	1	4	8
General character and appearance						5	5
Structural Stability					1	4	5
Car Stacker	1						1
Intensity	1						1
Trees		1				4	5
Roof light				1		1	2
Extent			1	1			2
Drainage						2	2

The total number of basement related appeals may not match with those presented in Table 5. This is because in some appeals there could have been more than one issue.

