



building on success

Basements Visual Evidence

Partial Review of the Core Strategy

July 2013



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

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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 as conservation area 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.

Purpose of this report

- 1.2 It is commonly understood that basements can be designed to be less visually intrusive given their location below ground. It is considered that the only external manifestations of basements are light wells, roof lights, railings etc and that the structure of the basement itself is largely hidden from view after completion, with the garden generally reinstated above.
- 1.3 This report compares aerial photographs of different sites/areas of the borough from 1999 with more recent aerial photographs from 2011 and 2012. This comparison has been undertaken to understand the visual impact (if any) of basement development on the character of gardens in the borough.
- 1.4 In addition to the aerial photographs some photographs of gardens with a basement development have also been presented. This part of the report was undertaken as a desktop on-line research.

Conclusion

- 1.5 It is clear from the aerial photographs that gardens that have been subject to basement development underneath can be distinguished from those without basement development. Gardens with basements underneath generally appear artificial with a sterile appearance compared to the informal leafy character that was present before. Gardens with basements below also seem to have reduced planting. The cumulative impact of a large number of basements can change the character of the gardens in the borough and have implications for biodiversity in the longer term. This will fundamentally change the character of the borough, especially in conservation areas where there is an obligation to preserve the character and/or appearance of the area.

Aerial Images



7-10 Cottage Place 2004



7-10 Cottage Place 2011 (loss of planting), PP/10/00268



31 Brompton Square and 7-10 Cottage Place 2011
(Note the excavation at 31 Brompton Square with loss of all natural permeable ground and planting)



10 and 11 The Boltons, 1999



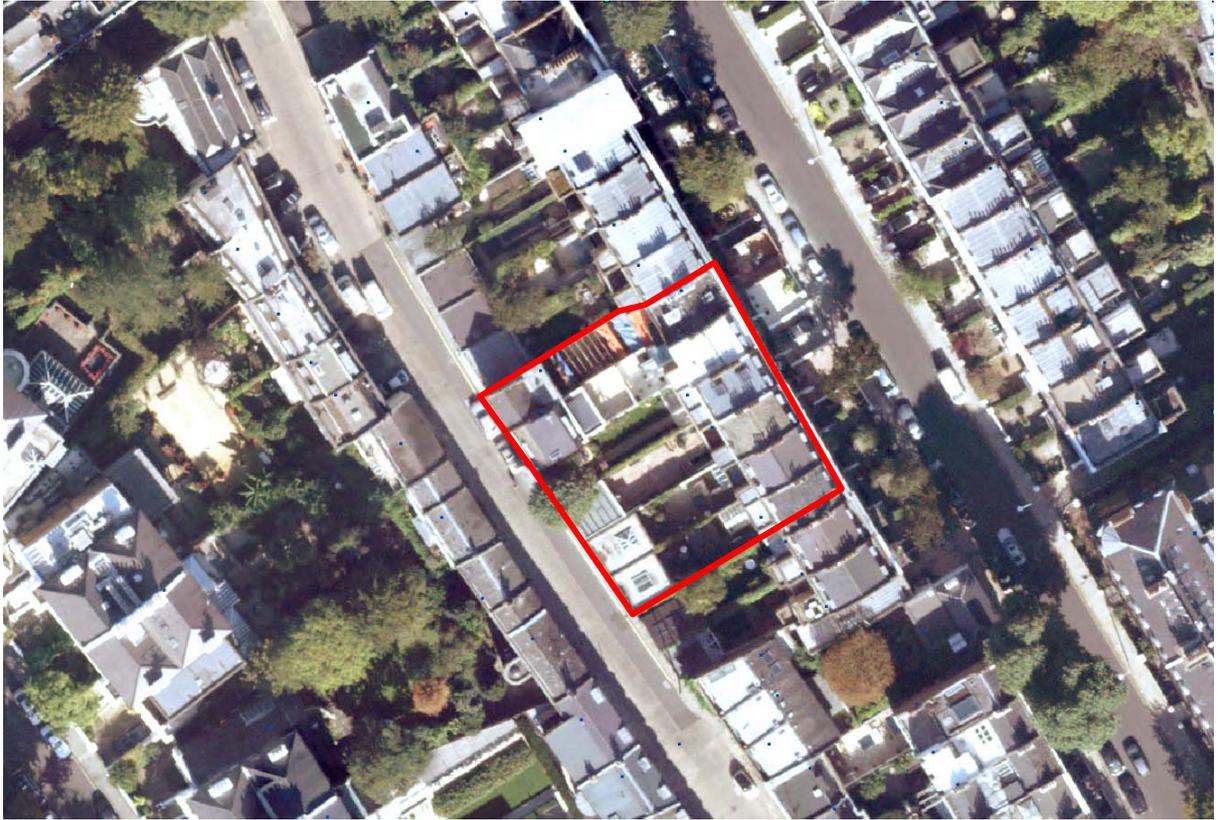
10 and 11 The Boltons 2011 (significant loss of planting, change of informal character, clipped planting around the edges), PP/05/01499, PP/03/00601



44- 50 Drayton Gardens 1999



44 – 50 Drayton Gardens 2004



44 – 50 Drayton Gardens 2011 (significant loss of planting and introduction of hard landscape), PP/08/00875, PP/08/01674, PP/09/00550, PP/03/00274



47 Egerton Crescent 1999



47 Egerton Crescent 2011, PP/08/02064



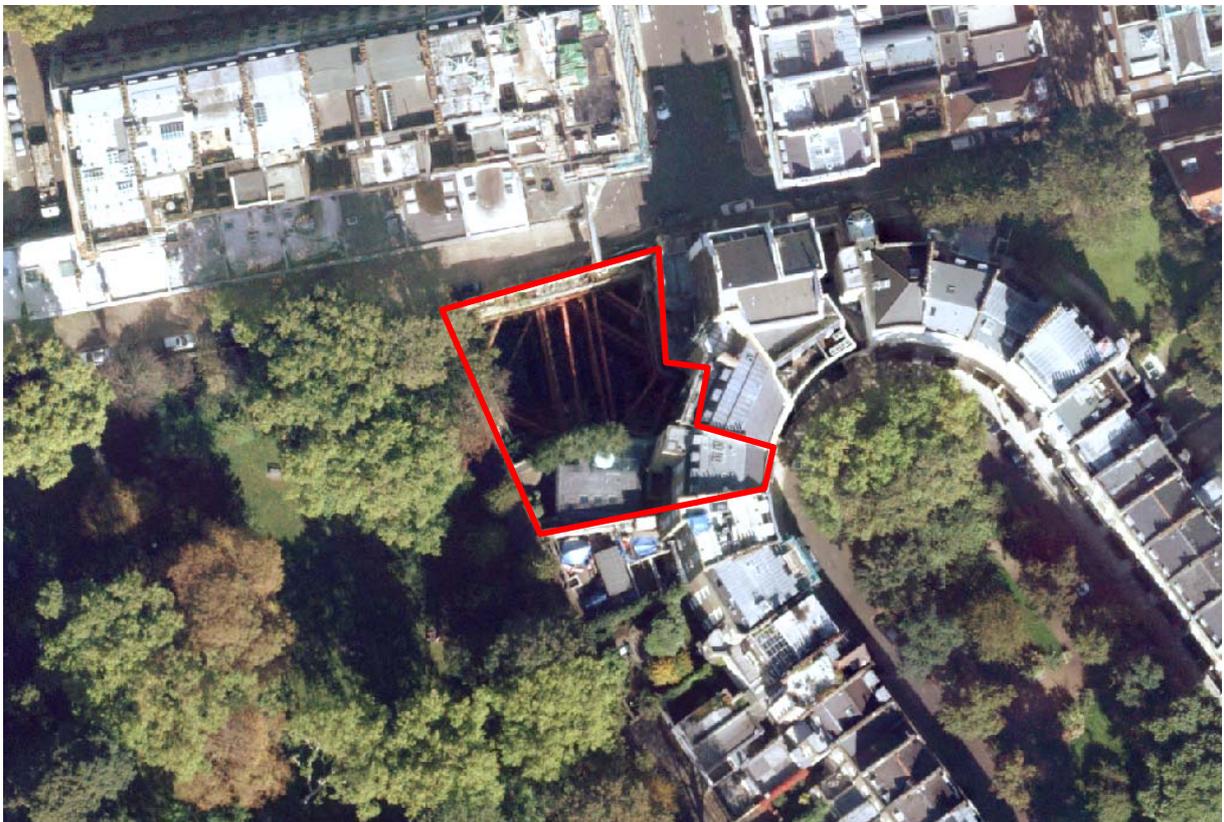
6 Cheyne Walk 1999



6 Cheyne Walk 2011 (no loss of mature trees but roof lights in the middle of the garden) PP/04/01145



31 Brompton Square 1999



31 Brompton Square 2011 (unauthorised loss of tree with a TPO, loss of natural garden)



15, 16, 20 and 21 Paultons Square 1999



15, 16, 20 and 21 Paultons Square 2012 (PP/07/03168, PP/08/03258, PP/10/02136, PP/10/01714)



3 and 5 Upper Phillimore Gardens 1999



3 and 5 Upper Phillimore Gardens 2011 (loss of planting) (CC/11/02478, PP/06/01843)



11, 13, 14, 15 and 16 Holland Park 1999



11, 13, 14, 15 and 16 Holland Park 2012 (PP/06/00707, PP/02/00102, PP/07/01274, PP/07/03166 and PP/08/01884)



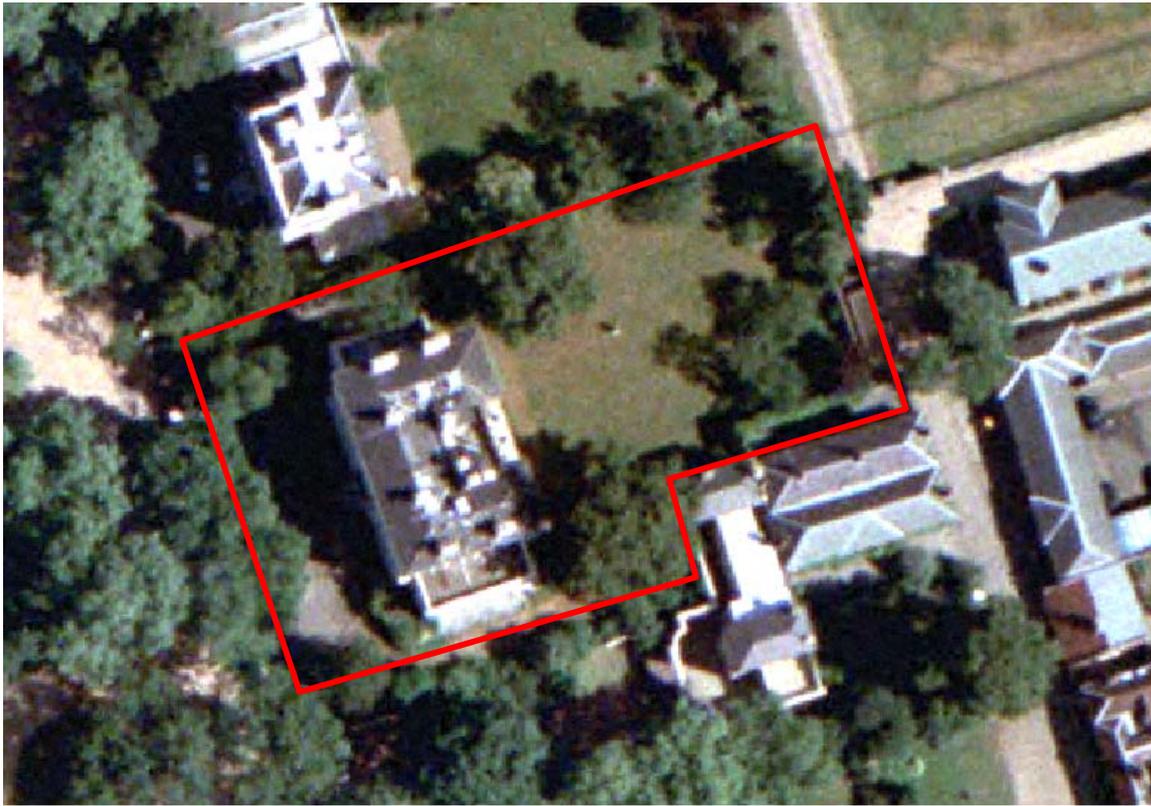
9 Holland Park 1999



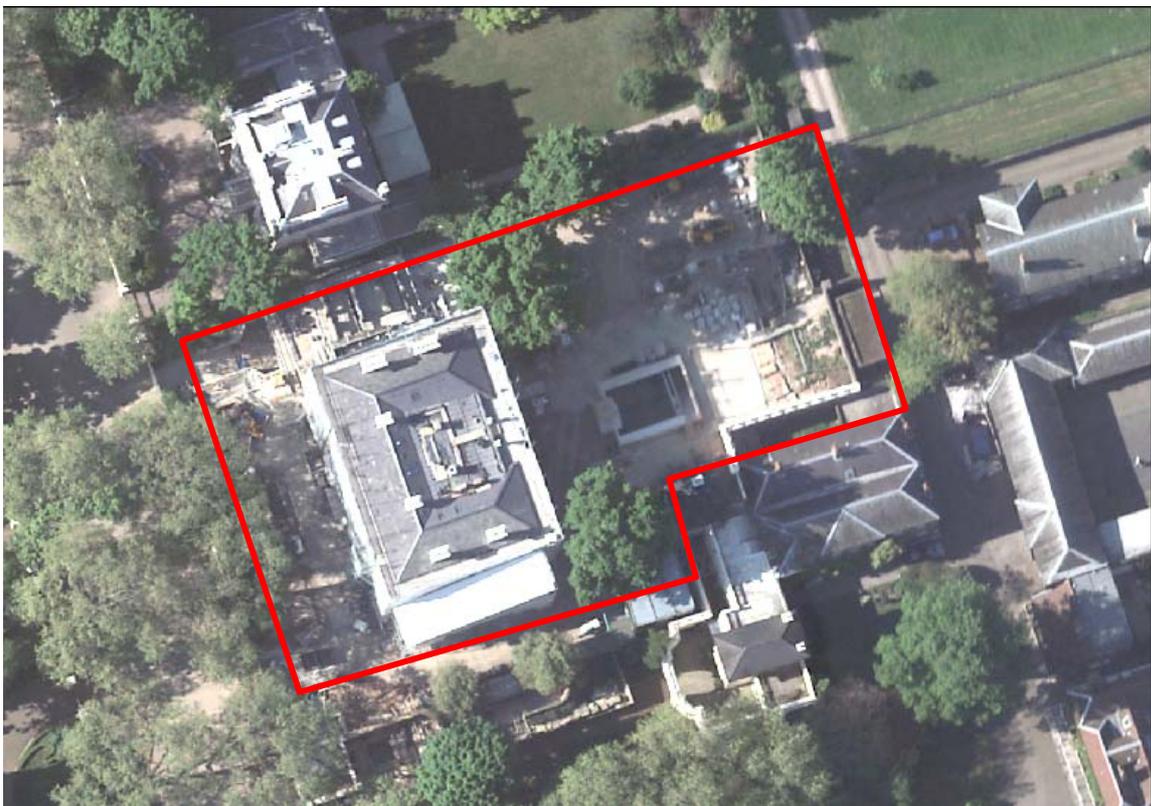
9 Holland Park 2008



9 Holland Park 2012 (PP/07/02816)

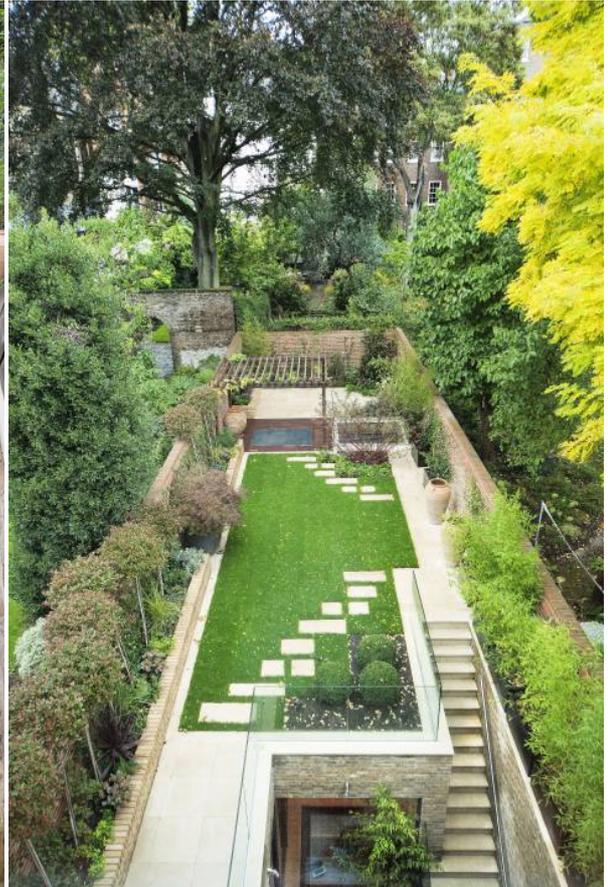


15 Kensington Palace Gardens 1999



15 Kensington Palace Gardens 2012 (PP/07/01773)

Photos of gardens with basements underneath



South End, Kensington



Pembroke Road



Pembroke Road



Vicarage Gate, Kensington



Vicarage Gate, Kensington



Somerset Square, Holland Park



Somerset Square, Holland Park



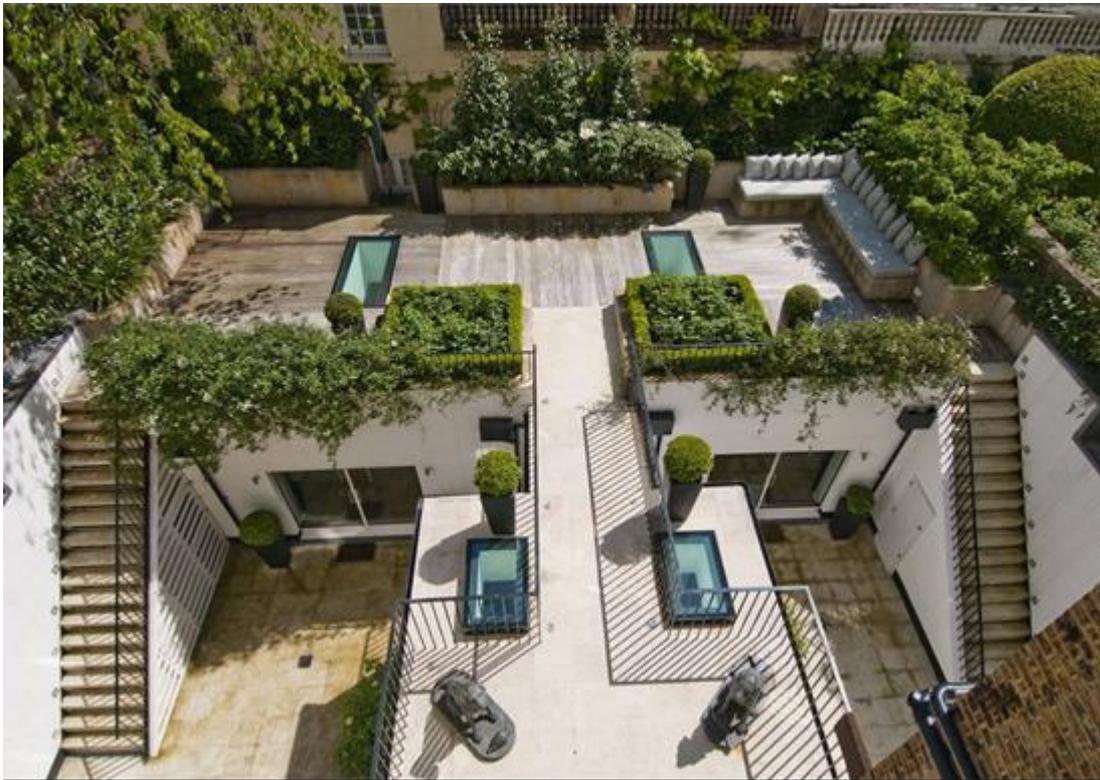
Chelsea Park Gardens



Drayton Gardens



Holland Park



Holland Park



Mallord Street, Chelsea



Millborne Grove, Chelsea



Royal Avenue, Chelsea



Wycombe Square, Kensington

Photograph removed on owner's request