The built environment is an important factor in the quality of life both now and in the future. It is therefore important to ensure that all new development (refer to glossary for definition) incorporates the principles of sustainable development and good design. Unsympathetic and unsustainable development should not form part of the urban fabric. In cases where strong short term benefits are presented, the need to meet best practice principles of sustainability and good design should not be compromised. In achieving the goals of sustainable development and good design the integration of elements such as the context of the area, the character of the proposed development, the quality of the landscape/townscape proposal and energy and waste minimisation is essential.

The historic buildings that remain in Watford are an irreplaceable record that contributes to our understanding of both the past and the present. Their presence enhances the local scene and sustains a sense of local distinctiveness. Watford has a number of old and important buildings and structures whose presence, character and setting are essential parts of our heritage. Preservation of non-listed buildings and conservation areas play an important role in the overall quality of the environment. The preservation and enhancement of our cultural heritage is particularly important within the context of sustainable development, allowing future generations to experience and enjoy the riches and variety of their environment.

Urban Design and Conservation Objectives

1.3(1) To promote a high standard of development that integrates principles of best practice sustainability and good design.

(2) To ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to the character of the area, including the landscape and townscape character.

(3) To preserve and enhance Watford’s historic environment.

(4) To improve the safety of the built environment.

(5) To promote the incorporation of public art in all prominent public development locations and spaces.

U1 Quality of Design

All new development should represent high quality design and should be in keeping with the Council’s objectives of sustainable development and ensuring community safety:

a) The Council will seek high quality design in all new development to enhance the quality of the built environment of the town (see Policies U2 and U3);

b) The Council will expect new development to incorporate the principles of sustainable development and to demonstrate that the design principles of energy efficiency and waste minimisation have been considered (see Policy SE4: Energy Efficient Design; Policy SE5: Renewable Energy and Policy SE6 Waste Storage, Recovery and Recycling in New Development);

c) The Council will seek to ensure that new development is accessible to all elements of the community, including the elderly, people with disabilities and people with young children (SPG 13: Accessible Environments);
d) The Council will seek to ensure that new developments incorporate Community Safety measures to discourage crime and anti-social behaviour (SPG14: Designing for Community Safety).

11.5 Good design practice in all new developments is essential to ensure a continual improvement of our environment. Elements of good design, if adequately incorporated, can assist in helping a new development integrate and enhance an area and add to quality of life. Further design advice is contained in the Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance and the Design Guide published separately.

11.6 **U2 Design and Layout of Development**

The Council will seek to ensure that all new development achieves a high standard of design and layout. All development proposals should:

a) seek to integrate with the local character of the area (see Policy U3: Integration of Character);

b) provide satisfactory levels of sunlighting, daylighting, privacy and outlook, both to the development and to existing adjoining buildings and uses (in particular see SPG 4: Privacy Guidelines and SPG 8 Extensions);

c) seek to enhance the overall quality and character of the area through the size, shape, position and detailing of spaces created within or around the new buildings;

d) ensure that adequate space and consideration has been given within the design and layout to accommodate utility and access aspects and allow opportunities for recycling, as well as bin storage (see also Policy SE5);

e) where possible, seek to retain and refurbish existing buildings, and, where new-build is involved, the new buildings should be designed with the objective of a long life for the building: the building should be capable of adaptation for a use other than its original one (see Paragraph 11.3 and Policy SE1: Making Development Sustainable. Further information will be available in a Design Guide to be published separately);

f) to minimise light pollution generated by the development (see Policy SE23: Light Pollution); and

g) ensure that the layout of development promotes walking, cycling and the use of passenger transport over private car transport to access the site (see Policy T7: Pedestrian Facilities in Developments and Policy T11: Passenger Transport and New Development).

11.7 In interpreting parts b) and f) of Policy U2, the Council will have regard to the Building Research Establishment’s “Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight; A Guide to Good Practice” and “Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution”, produced by the Institute of Lighting Engineers.

11.8 **U3 Integration of Character**

All new development should be based on an understanding of the local characteristics of the surrounding area. In particular the following:

a) height, size, massing and scale of the buildings, including roof pitch (see SPG22: Tall Buildings);

b) the use of materials, textures, finishes and colours in buildings and hard landscaping;

c) the site layout, topography, building orientation and relationship with the nearby or adjoining spaces, buildings and building lines;

d) size and scale of window and door openings;

e) the impact on the streetscene, waterways and character of the surrounding area; and
Chapter 11 – Urban Design and Conservation

f) consistency with important elements identified by the Character of the Area Study available from the Council (Map 6 shows the Historic Character Zones and Table 6 sets out the summary description of the zones) and by Landscape Character Area Assessments (see Policy SE40: Landscape Character Area Assessments).

11.9 The Character of the Area Study identifies the key elements that contribute to the character of individual areas throughout the Borough. Further guidance has been produced to enable the early identification of significant historic and archaeological issues which may arise from proposed development and to help in determining appropriate mitigation to offset any adverse effects if the development is permitted – see SPG 28: Historic Environment Character Statement and Guidance Note. It is expected that all new development will reflect, and be consistent with, the findings of this study. The Streetscene Manual, to be prepared by the Council and published separately, will provide guidance on the design and location for street furniture and utilities. The manual will be aimed at assisting public utilities companies and highway engineers to design high quality residential space for all, including those with disabilities.

11.10 Each new development has a significant effect on the appearance and character of the area. The existing character of the area is therefore an important consideration in any design. New development should respect the surrounding setting. They should not seek to mimic traditional designs or styles but be sympathetic to their design principles. The Council, in principle, welcomes innovation in design where it contributes to the character of the area. It is the intention of the Council in conjunction with the County, to produce an integrated character statement, which will combine historic, ecological and landscape elements.

Table 6 WATFORD HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT CHARACTER ZONES: SUMMARY DESCRIPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>WARD</th>
<th>DESCRIPTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Surviving medieval urban topography and the majority of surviving medieval buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Potential for medieval archaeology; contains buildings from 16th to 19th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Central/Vicarage</td>
<td>Victorian and Edwardian housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Meriden</td>
<td>Inter-war housing estate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Stanborough</td>
<td>Housing 1920-1950; cemetery; Stanborough Park; moderate archaeological potential of open spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Stanborough</td>
<td>Stanborough; post-war housing; site of Leggatts manor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Stanborough</td>
<td>Garston; housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Stanborough</td>
<td>Kingswood Estate; inter-war housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Meriden</td>
<td>Meriden; mostly post-war housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tudor</td>
<td>Tudor; 1930’s semis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Tudor</td>
<td>Tudor; post-war housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nascot</td>
<td>Nascot; housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Callowland</td>
<td>Callowland; Edwardian terraces; Beulah Baptist Chapel and works on Cecil Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Some late Victorian and Edwardian, St Johns Road and Trade Union Hall, Union and Labour Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Nascot</td>
<td>Nascot; mostly post-war housing, with some Victorian along Nascot Wood Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>WARD</td>
<td>DESCRIPTIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Park</td>
<td>Park; post-war housing; school grounds and sports ground has archaeological potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Nascot</td>
<td>Nascot; post-war housing and school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Park</td>
<td>Gade Valley; undisturbed areas have high archaeological potential; canal and associated features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Park</td>
<td>Cassiobury Park; very high archaeological potential; Listed Parkland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Holywell</td>
<td>Holywell N. and part of Park; inter-war housing; Sun printing works; Rembrandt House, Wemco factory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Holywell</td>
<td>Holywell; Post 1950’s housing (east) and industrial estate (west)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Holywell</td>
<td>Riverside; undisturbed river valley with archaeological potential; leats and sluices for mill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Vicarage</td>
<td>Colne Valley; industrial estate; power station, undisturbed areas have archaeological potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Vicarage/Oxhey</td>
<td>Colne Valley; undisturbed areas have high archaeological potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Central/Oxhey</td>
<td>Oxhey Park; Colne Valley and railway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Holywell</td>
<td>KGV Playing Fields – Colne Valley pre-historic archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Woodside</td>
<td>Leavesden plateau; some archaeological potential of undisturbed areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Woodside</td>
<td>Leavesden plateau; some archaeological potential of undisturbed areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Woodside</td>
<td>Woodside; public open space – some archaeological potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Woodside</td>
<td>Woodside; post-war housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Meriden</td>
<td>Gade Valley open space; high archaeological potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Tudor</td>
<td>Colne Valley open area; high archaeological potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Tudor</td>
<td>Colne Valley open area, former gravel pit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Meriden</td>
<td>Colne Valley open area, high archaeological potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Colne Valley; pillboxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Holywell</td>
<td>Holywell; Edwardian and inter-war housing – open character from rec. ground and allotments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Vicarage</td>
<td>Vicarage north; Late Victorian to 1950’s housing; 1850’s cemetery; Red Lion PH and stable block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Oxhey</td>
<td>Watford Heath Conservation Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Oxhey</td>
<td>Oxhey: dominated by inter-war housing, with some later Victorian and Edwardian. Site of silk mill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Oxhey</td>
<td>Victorian Oxhey; Parish B marker; Villiers Road, Capel Road, Paddock Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Oxhey</td>
<td>Attenborough Fields; medieval ridge and furrow; open space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Estcourt Conservation Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Modern industrial and housing; pillboxes; college; railway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>19th century Inner industrial zone; turnpike posts, gasworks; pillboxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Central/ Vicarage</td>
<td>Hospital/Union workhouse; football ground; Victorian housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Nascot</td>
<td>Nascot Conservation Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Leggatts/Tudor</td>
<td>Mostly post-war housing; Harebreaks Estate are 1920’s; W. Herts College, munition factory; Odhams Printers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Nascot</td>
<td>Nascot; Victorian and Edwardian housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Park</td>
<td>Edwardian and inter-war housing; site of Cassiobury Park manor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Park</td>
<td>Civic Centre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11.11 **U4 Community Safety**

All new development should be designed to provide safety and security to the environment, and reduce the opportunities and fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. Particular attention should be given to:

a) ensuring that public areas are overlooked by buildings;
b) increasing natural surveillance in public areas at different times of day through the promotion of mixed uses;
c) ensuring that main entrances are visible from the street or other public places;
d) ensuring that the streets and paths are well and appropriately lit;
e) ensuring that buildings, landscaping and planting do not create dark or secluded areas; and
f) creating clear boundaries between public and private areas.

11.12 In interpreting the above policy, the Council will have regard to the current Secured by Design document and Hertfordshire Constabulary’s Designing Out Crime, Designing In Community Safety document (available from the Crime Prevention Office at Watford Police Station) and SPG 14: Designing for Community Safety.

11.13 **U5 Access**

Development proposals relating to residential development and buildings open to the public, or used for employment or educational purposes, should provide suitable access and facilities for people with disabilities. Where barriers are required (e.g. to discourage motorcycles or animals), the provisions of BS5709:2001 Specifications for Gaps, Gates or Stiles, should be followed where relevant.

11.14 The Council will ensure that the needs of people with all types of mobility difficulties, both physical and sensory, are taken into account when considering the design of development proposals and extensions to buildings. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 required planning authorities to draw developers’ attention to the provisions of The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. The latter Act states that buildings open to the public should be accessible to disabled people and have suitable toilet and parking facilities.

11.15 The British Standard for disabled access BS.5810 is a voluntary code of practice which sets out the minimum standards with which access provision should comply. Following changes in access design, the British Standards Institution are reviewing this standard. Developers are encouraged to design to higher standards than currently set down. Part M of the Building Regulations 1992 “Access and Facilities for Disabled People” sets out requirements for new public buildings. The 1999 edition of Part M extends the regulations to cover residential properties, and also includes development involving the change of use or alteration of such buildings.

11.16 Proposals must meet all relevant requirements, taking into account advice given in the Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG 2: Lifetime Homes and SPG13: Accessible Environments) and other policies in this Plan.

11.17 **U6 Landscape Design**

All development proposals, where appropriate, including change of use are required to submit a landscape scheme as an integral part of the development proposal.

The landscape scheme should:
Chapter 11 – Urban Design and Conservation

a) seek to minimise the impact of the proposed development on the environment and the surrounding area by considering and integrating the local ecological processes and ensure no net loss of biodiversity (see Policy SE31: Species Protection, Policy SE32: Sites of Nature Conservation Importance and Policy SE33: Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Enhancement);

b) respect the existing character of the area;

c) address the retention of existing landscape elements;

d) include any new planting proposed;

e) use locally native species of plants and trees; and

f) include an implementation timetable and effective maintenance plan.

The Council will monitor and enforce such schemes as necessary. Further landscape guidance is published separately as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG 12).

11.18 The visual and environmental impact of a development or redevelopment can be greatly reduced by effective landscaping. Consequently, landscape elements should be an integral part of most development. Exceptions to this will be considered in cases where the development site has no land fronting any part of the public realm, or where only minor internal and external changes are proposed (such as small extensions, new windows, or additional plant). Most advertisement applications, householder development proposals affecting the rear of properties and alterations to shopfronts will also be regarded as exceptions to the policy. In preparing a landscape plan, it is essential that contextual factors are assessed, protection of existing quality is promoted and good practice in landscape design and aftercare is adhered to. The proposed landscape scheme should also be sensitive to existing ecological processes functioning within the ecosystem and seek to minimise the impact the development may have on the local environment.

11.19 **U7 Development Density**

In development schemes, full and effective use should be made of urban land. Higher density development with reduced car parking will be encouraged in areas close to services and with high accessibility by non car modes of transport. Higher density development will be assessed in accordance with Policies U1, U2, U3, U4, U5, T24, L9 and H12.

11.20 Watford is a tightly constrained urban area with high development pressure. It is therefore important to ensure that full and effective use of land occurs. Higher density development, if carried out in a sensitive manner, can achieve this and add to the diversity, vibrancy and the character of an area. In addition, higher density development can help pursue the aims of sustainable development and assist in reducing the need to travel. Higher density development will not be allowed to occur if it compromises existing open space, significantly detracts from the existing character of the area or if it results in an unacceptable environment for occupiers. In addition, the Council will seek creative design solutions, such as underground car parking in areas where there are existing car parking problems.

11.21 **U8 Public Art**

The Council will encourage the provision of art work as part of development schemes, having regard to the use and character of the area. Such artwork should be visually prominent from the public realm.

Where public art cannot be provided on site, a contribution to assist in the provision of public art in the vicinity will be encouraged.
11.22 Watford Borough Council is committed to improving the quality of the environment by the promotion of public art. This brings aesthetic benefits to public places, encourages civic and community pride and benefits local artists. Public Art can help to improve cultural identity and the image of an area or town. It also contributes to environmental and economic regeneration.

11.23 The definition of public art extends beyond sculptures and can include the innovative use of different materials and media. Examples of artworks could include:
- Murals
- Decorative brickwork
- Stained or etched glass
- Tiling and mosaics on walls and floors
- Metalwork such as railings and gates
- Special lighting and other street furniture
- Water features and gardens.

11.24 One method that the Council will use to secure artwork provision is by application of the Arts Council ‘Percent for Art’ scheme, which proposes that a proportion of the capital budget for any building development is set aside for providing new works of art. Whilst 1% of the capital budget is the usual figure, the Council will offer a flexible approach to the appropriate percentage to be used in order to facilitate the provision of artwork that enhances the public realm. The scheme will be implemented as part of the Development Control process and policies incorporated into planning briefs, so that maximum value can be gained from public art. Artists should be involved early in the design process. The Council will also apply this principle to its own development work.

11.25 **U9 Urban Conservation Strategy**
The Council will update and reassess the contents of its Urban Conservation Strategy periodically to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment.

11.26 The Council has prepared an Urban Conservation Strategy to aid the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment. The Strategy contains:-
- a brief history of Watford.
- information and photographic records of Watford’s Statutory Listed Buildings (designated as being of special architectural or historic interest).
- information and assessments of Watford’s Conservation Areas at Grove Mill and St Mary’s Churchyard and the recently designated Conservation Areas:
  - part of Central Ward in the vicinity of St. John’s Church, Estcourt Conservation Area;
  - the area around Langley Road, Church Road and Bedford Street in Nascot;
  - area around Watford Heath;
  - the Central Core including part of The Parade/High Street area; and
  - “The Square” area in Vicarage ward.
- a register of buildings at risk.
- a character of the area study for Watford.
- a list of buildings of local importance.
- extensive Urban Survey – Archaeology – Hertfordshire C.C.

11.27 The Strategy forms Supplementary Planning Guidance and the Council will seek to implement initiatives from the Strategy through the control of development and direct action as resources
permit. Subject to consultation, more detailed policies for conservation areas will also be produced as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Development Affecting Listed Buildings

11.28 **U10 Setting of Listed Buildings**
In considering proposals for development, the Council will pay special attention to the desirability of preserving the setting and character of listed buildings. Development which would materially harm the setting and character of a Listed Building is unlikely to be granted planning permission.

11.29 The setting or space around a building makes an important contribution to its appearance and character. Development affecting the setting needs should be designed with particular care and sensitivity and e.g. in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment

11.30 **U11 Change in Use of Listed Buildings**
Change of use of a Listed Building will be resisted if its special historic or architectural features, both internal and external, will be adversely affected.

11.31 In considering change of use applications, the Council will also have regard to the economic viability of a development scheme and its effect on the long term maintenance and preservation of a Listed Building. The Listed Buildings are documented in Appendix 4.

11.32 **U12 Alterations and Extensions to Listed Buildings**
Alterations and extensions to Listed Buildings will be resisted where they are detrimental to the special historic or architectural character.

11.33 Proposals to change the use, alter or extend a Listed Building require the submission of detailed planning and listed building consent applications. Although the best use for a Listed Building is usually its original use, the Council recognises it may be necessary in exceptional circumstances to allow an appropriate change of use in order to secure the future of the building. Alterations and extensions may be required in conjunction with the change of use. Specialist recording and archiving will be requested prior to development.

11.34 **U13 Demolition of Listed Buildings**
Very exceptional circumstances will be required to demonstrate justification for the demolition of a Listed Building.

11.35 Listed Buildings are assets for future generations to experience and enjoy. Only in very exceptional circumstances and where all alternatives have been explored, would demolition be allowed. Such criteria are detailed in PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment, Paragraph 3.5 and Paragraphs 3.16 to 3.19. Where demolition is proposed, the Council will require the submission of a statement assessing the historic, architectural and archaeological importance of the structure prior to the determination of the application. The Council will also require the submission of a simultaneous planning application for any replacement building or proposed work.

11.36 Where appropriate, the Council may require historic materials and/or components arising from demolitions or other works to historic buildings, to be set aside and reincorporated in alteration works to the building, or disposed of to a bona fide architectural salvage firm.
Chapter 11 – Urban Design and Conservation

11.37 Where there is sufficient architectural or historic interest for doing so, the Council will require the investigation and recording of the construction, design and other features present, prior to demolition, and which are exposed during the demolition of Listed Buildings. This recording work will be carried out in accordance with a written scheme agreed in advance with the Council and a full report of the results of the work will be submitted.

11.38 Where demolition of a Listed Building is permitted, the Council will seek to ensure that the impact of any permitted demolition works on archaeological remains will be assessed and measures taken to ensure that such remains are not disturbed prior to appropriate archaeological investigation.

11.39 **U14 Repair and Maintenance of Listed Buildings**

The Council will serve Urgent Works and Repairs Notices where reasonable steps to repair and preserve a Listed Building are not being taken.

11.40 There is no specific duty on owners of Listed Buildings to keep their buildings in a good state of repair, although it is usually in their interest to do so. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 allows local authorities to carry out urgent or emergency works to unoccupied parts of Listed Buildings, after giving notice to the owner, and recover costs from them. Also a Repairs Notice may be served on owners of occupied Listed Buildings, requesting measures to be taken to restore the building to its condition at the time of listing.

11.41 **U15 Buildings of Local Interest**

Proposals for development affecting the appearance, character or setting of Buildings of Local Interest should ensure that due regard is paid to safeguarding the relevant features of the building and its setting. Proposals that involved the demolition of the building are unlikely to be approved.

11.42 The list of buildings considered to be of local importance documented in Appendix 6 is also contained within the Urban Conservation Strategy. The list will be reviewed periodically. Such buildings are important to the local street scene and unsympathetic alterations may be detrimental to the local amenity. Detailed guidance is set out in SPG 27: Buildings of Local Interest. Where demolition of a Locally Listed Building is proposed, the Council will require the submission of a statement assessing the historic, architectural and archaeological importance of the structure, prior to the determination of the application. In addition, where there is sufficient architectural or historic interest for doing so, the Council will require the investigation and recording of the construction, design and other features which are present, prior to demolition, and which are exposed during the demolition of Locally Listed Buildings. This recording work will be carried out in accordance with a written scheme agreed in advance with the Council and a full report of the results of the work will be submitted.

11.43 **U16 Conservation Areas**

The Council will designate or modify Conservation Areas as appropriate and will operate detailed policies, including those set out in this Plan, in order to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the area.

11.44 The Government requires local authorities to identify Areas of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. As part of the Urban Conservation Strategy, the boundaries of Conservation Areas have been reviewed and new Conservation Areas have been designated (see Policy U8). Conservation
Areas have existed for St Mary’s Churchyard since 1977 and Grove Mill Lane since 1973 and are identified on the Proposals Map. New Conservation Areas were designated on 22 January 2001 and are identified on the Proposals Map; these include:

- part of Nascot Ward (extended 28 November 2001);
- Watford Heath;
- The Parade and Hempstead Road Central Core;
- Vicarage Road Cemetery and ‘The Square’ area; and
- part of Central Ward in the vicinity of St John’s Church, Estcourt Conservation Area.

The areas designated were subject to public consultation as part of the 1st Deposit Draft consultation process. The quality of such areas depends on much more than the quality of individual buildings. Important factors may include the historic layout of property boundaries, a particular mix of uses, characteristic materials, scaling and detailing of contemporary buildings, street furniture and surfaces, vistas along streets and spaces between buildings.

11.45 Planning control in Conservation Areas is more stringent than elsewhere. For example, permission is required for the removal of any tree and permitted development rights are also more restricted. The Council may, in appropriate cases, seek Article 4 Directions to remove permitted development rights within any Conservation Area in order to meet its particular special architectural or historic interest. Article 4 Directions would only be used following consultation with residents, occupiers and owners of properties within a Conservation Area.

11.46 **U17 Setting of Conservation Areas**

Development which adversely affects the setting of a Conservation Area will be resisted.

11.47 Development adjacent to a Conservation Area may have a significant impact on the appearance or character of an area. Activities may be considered inappropriate, for example, by disrupting important views or generating excess traffic. Detailed applications and drawings must therefore be submitted to assess the appropriateness of development.

11.48 **U18 Design in Conservation Areas**

Development within a Conservation Area will be resisted if considered inappropriate in terms of scale, setting, massing, siting, and detailed appearance in relation to surrounding buildings and the Conservation Area as a whole.

11.49 **U19 Small Scale Development in Conservation Areas**

Planning permission will be resisted for small scale development which could lead to a number of similar applications, the cumulative effect of which would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area.

11.50 High standards of design are expected in all Conservation Areas whether for new or replacement buildings, extensions, alterations or small scale development requiring planning permission, which may have a detrimental cumulative effect. To ensure the preservation or enhancement of conservation areas the re-use of materials removed through demolition or alteration is encouraged, as well as the use of appropriate new materials sympathetic to existing surrounding buildings. In general, traditional materials and craftsmanship will be needed to harmonise new development with the existing buildings and proposals involving new materials and innovative techniques will especially need to demonstrate a positive contribution to the enhancement of the area. In order to properly consider the effect of new
developments on the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and whether preservation or enhancement in the particular instance can be achieved.

11.51 Detailed applications and drawings must therefore be submitted for all developments in, or adjacent to Conservation Areas. Proposals must show the relationship of the scheme to its surroundings both in plan and elevation and where necessary, in section. Accurate surveys of adjoining buildings will be required to show such features as roof ridges and eaves heights, proportions and glazing of windows etc. Drawings should be to an appropriate scale (not less than 1:100).

11.52 **U20 Demolition in Conservation Areas**

Demolition of buildings or structures that are not statutory listed, but are within a Conservation Area, will only be permitted where;

a) its removal or replacement would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area, OR

b) it is beyond economic repair.

11.53 The Council supports the advice in PPG 15 that “the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area”. As such, consent for demolition will not be given unless there are acceptable and detailed plans for redevelopment which would enhance the character and appearance of the area. To ensure that a site does not remain vacant and become an eyesore for any significant length of time after demolition, the Council will require the simultaneous submission of applications for planning consent and Conservation Area consent. Where appropriate the Council will impose a condition on any Conservation Area consent or will expect the owner to enter into a planning obligation, for development to be completed within an agreed time from the grant of Conservation Area consent.

11.54 **U21 Historic Parks and Gardens**

Historic Parks and Gardens are important environmental assets and will be protected by:

a) refusal of proposals for development that would adversely affect its special character and appearance, or which would detract from its setting;

b) encouragement for the conservation of their landscape and architectural features; and

c) where development is permitted, the use of planning conditions and/or legal agreements requiring an appropriate programme of maintenance and restoration work, based on comprehensive historical research.

11.55 Both unregistered, important historic parks and gardens and those included in the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England, which is maintained by English Heritage, will be afforded protection. Cassiobury Park has been assessed as a Grade II Historic Park and its extent is shown on the Proposals Map. Historic Parks and Gardens are mentioned in PPG 15 which notes that the grading of parks and gardens is independent of the grading of any Listed Building within the area.

11.56 In considering development proposals that may affect Historic Parks and Gardens, the Council will have particular regard to the need to safeguard the appearance, character or setting of the park or garden and will not permit development that will have an adverse impact. Where development is permitted, the Council will expect the owner to enter into a legal agreement to safeguard the landscape through a programme of management and restoration. Applications for development affecting a park or garden will be required to be accompanied by
an environmental assessment and a survey of its historic interest. The Council may seek independent advice where proposals warrant specialist expertise.

11.57 Designation of a park or garden as historic can be made for both existing and new spaces. Advice can be sought from the Council. Advice on Registered Parks and Gardens may be obtained from English Heritage and also from The Garden History Society (Station House, Church Lane, Wickwar, Glos GL12 7NB) and the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust, c/o Gorhambury, St. Albans, Herts AL3 6AH.

11.58 The Council will treat the presence of the Historic Park as a material consideration in dealing with any proposals which affect the site and, in association with other bodies, will seek to promote the appropriate management of the site.

11.59 **U22 Archaeological Remains**

The Council will ensure the preservation in situ of important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or unscheduled, and their setting and will refuse consent for any development which is likely to adversely affect them.

The Council will require the submission of the results of an archaeological field evaluation before a planning application is determined for any development which is considered likely to have an adverse affect on important archaeological remains. Where the Council considers that archaeological remains do not merit preservation in situ then the Council will seek an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation, recording and publication of the results. This will be achieved either by agreement or by attaching appropriate conditions to the planning permission. Where appropriate, the Council will seek to secure the enhancement of archaeological remains.

Every effort will be made to ensure that these sites, and any finds recovered from them, are made available for public viewing.

11.60 Watford’s archaeological potential has been assessed by the County Council and is presented in the Extensive Urban Survey Document, which forms part of the Urban Conservation Strategy (Policy U9). The Extensive Urban Survey sets out, in summary form, what is known of the archaeological and historical development of Watford and provides an assessment of the priorities for the management of the archaeological resources of the town. In conjunction with Hertfordshire County Council, Watford Borough Council has prepared an SPG which seeks to define character areas for urban conservation and sets out management priorities for each area – see SPG 28: Historic Environment Character Statement and Guidance Note, Map 6 showing the Historic Environment Character Zones and Table 6, which sets out the summary description of the zones. In addition to these sources of information concerning archaeology in Watford, reference should be made to the Sites and Monuments Register (SMR) maintained by Hertfordshire County Council. This contains a detailed record of the known archaeological sites in Watford (and the County). The County Planning Archaeologist should be consulted by all those considering development proposals which may have an impact on the archaeological resources of the town.

11.61 Early appraisal is the key to minimising the impact of development on an archaeological site. The Council may require proposals to be modified or may refuse to grant planning permission where assessment indicates the existence of important remains. PPG 16 ‘Archaeology and Planning’ stresses that preservation in situ is nearly always to be preferred to preservation by
recording; developers will be required to have regard to this advice in formulating their proposals.

11.62 **U23 Civic Core**

The Council will encourage the protection and enhancement of the Civic Core Area.

11.63 The area around the Town Hall and Library is an important civic space which provides a gateway to the Town Centre from the North. The area contains many buildings of civic importance, many of which have local architectural and historic interest, but there is scope for improvement. Improvements should define a high quality public space and reinforce a strong relationship between buildings and their civic function. This area should aim to balance and complement the retail part of the Town Centre. The Civic Core area is defined on the Proposals Map.

11.64 The Cultural Strategy, produced by the Council, identifies part of the Civic Core area as being suitable for the development of new cultural facilities. The Council intends to prepare a planning brief, as set out in Policy IMR1.

11.65 **U24 Shopfronts**

The Council will require a high standard of appearance of all shopfronts and associated awnings, roller shutter grilles and signs. New shopfronts should be in keeping with the character of the upper part of the building and relate well to adjoining frontages. Traditional signs and fascias should be preserved wherever possible.

11.66 A well designed shopfront adds greatly to the attractiveness of a shopping area. Particular attention must be given to the proportion of fascias and their lettering, and the size and shape of glazed and solid areas. The nature of grilles and shutters is important for night time safety. SPG 16: Shopfront Design Guide should be consulted.

11.67 **U25 Advertisements and Signs**

The Council will consider all applications for the display of advertisements, and decide on appropriate action with regard to existing advertisements, on the basis of their effect on local amenity and public safety in terms of the:

a) character and appearance of the building or locality of display;

b) advertisement size, location, design, illumination or colour;

c) likely effect on traffic safety, including pedestrian safety and convenience; and

d) environmental benefits of display.

Where advertisement consent is granted for special reasons, such as to screen an area of land, consent may be granted for a period of less than 5 years.

11.68 **U26 Telecommunications — Submission of Applications.**

The Council will, in principle, support the growth of new and existing telecommunications development, subject to other policies in the Plan. When submitting applications for prior approval or planning permission, applicants should:

a) demonstrate the need for the service on a given site;

b) engage in pre-application discussions;

c) submit rollout plans; and

d) provide a statement for each site indicating its location, the height of the antennae, the frequency and modulation characteristics, and details of power outputs.
11.69 Applicants for telecommunications development should submit detailed information to enable the Council to give full consideration to the issues in accordance with SPG23.

11.70 **U27 Telecommunications – Siting Considerations**

In considering the siting of new equipment, the Council will adopt a precautionary approach (as outlined in PPG 8) and will have regard to the effect on the locality, Landscape Character Areas (see Policy SE40) and amenity of the area.

Telecommunication related development will be resisted where:

a) siting and appearance will have a detrimental effect on the locality and the amenity area;

b) siting and appearance would have a detrimental effect on sensitive locations such as green belt and wildlife areas, the Colne Valley Linear Park or areas or buildings of historic interest;

c) equipment would be out of scale or out of character with the building on which it is to be erected;

d) only means of access to the site is by a footpath or bridleway;

e) the applicant fails to submit a certificate of conformity to demonstrate that the proposed installation will comply with the requirements of the ICNIRP (International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection) guidelines at all times (or other subsequent advice) in terms of limiting exposure to electromagnetic fields; or

f) where a mobile phone base station is added to an existing mast or site, the operator should submit a certificate of conformity to demonstrate that the cumulative exposure will comply with the requirements of the ICNIRP guidelines at all times (or other subsequent advice) in terms of limiting exposure to electromagnetic fields.

The above criteria will be applied, having regard to the technical and operational constraints of telecommunications development, the need for the proposed development and the benefit that the proposed development would bring to the area. The Council will encourage operators to provide the local authority with alternative design solutions which minimise any impact on the environment.

Telecommunications apparatus should be sited in line with PPG8, Paragraphs 7.4-81 inclusive and Annex 1 Paragraphs 12-14 inclusive, SPG 23 (Telecommunications Apparatus) and other relevant plan policies. Telecommunication related development where reasonably possible should share masts and sites and erect antennae on existing sites and structures, such as electricity pylons.

Applications relating to alternative sites must be justified. Applications that do not demonstrate that alternative locations and potential to share facilities have been investigated, will not be considered favourably. The Council will encourage licensed mobile telecom operators (currently Hutchinson 3G, Orange, O2, T-Mobile and Vodafone) to discuss their rollout plans for the area with the Local Planning Authority on an annual basis.

11.71 Telecommunications are becoming an increasingly essential and beneficial element of our local community and in the national economy. Technical advance in telecommunications is enabling people to work, shop, gain access to services and be entertained from home, thus reducing the need to travel. It also helps to increase accessibility to services and reduce social exclusion. Government advice in PPG8 ‘Telecommunications’, advises that Local Planning Authorities should respond positively to telecommunications proposals, especially
where the proposed location is constrained by technical considerations. Local Authorities should not question the need for the service, nor prevent competition between different operators. Many proposals are permitted development under the current regulations and therefore do not require planning permission. For example, the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, currently permits a maximum of one satellite dish per dwelling house without the need for planning permission, other than in Conservation Areas and subject to size and precise location on the building. However, for certain types of apparatus, the operators must apply to the Local Planning Authority for a determination as to whether their prior approval of the details of the siting and appearance is required.

11.72 In developing a telecommunication network it is important to create a balance between addressing public concerns and the protection of amenity, and the demand for transmission coverage, subject to technical and operational requirements. The sharing of facilities wherever possible will be encouraged to achieve this balance. A Register of Existing Telecommunication Transmitter Apparatus is held by the Council and updated on a regular basis. Telecom equipment should be located on the existing sites (identified on the register) where these are capable of accommodating additional operators and where the additional equipment would have a limited impact on the character of the surrounding area.

11.73 The final report of the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones (the Stewart Report) found that the balance of evidence showed that there was no conclusive evidence to link electromagnetic fields to health problems. However, the report recommended that a precautionary approach be adopted on a number of principles, including a requirement that installations comply with the guidelines issued by the ICNIRP and NRPB (National Radiological Protection Board) on exposure to electromagnetic fields. The Government accepted this recommendation of the Stewart Report as a ‘Precautionary Principle’ and has been adopted in PPG8. The Council will need to be satisfied that an installation has been assessed prior to planning permission or prior approval being considered.

11.74 **U28 Temporary Buildings**

The Council will consider the erection of temporary buildings against the same relevant policies as permanent buildings of a similar use. The removal of the temporary building will require the reinstatement of any surfaces, landscaping or other pre-existing features or facilities.

11.75 In certain circumstances, a temporary building will be required instead of a permanent one. The Council will, however, have to be satisfied of the need for a temporary building and will not renew such planning permission if the initial reasons for the building are considered no longer to apply or if the original permission has not been implemented.