BARNET
LONDON BOROUGH

DESIGN GUIDANCE NOTE NO: 8
MATERIALS AND COLOUR

This leaflet is one of a series providing design guidance for development in the borough. The guidance is intended to assist owners, their agents, builders and developers and to promote principles of good practice in the use of materials and colour. The advice it contains is intended to be of assistance whether or not planning permission is required for the development (see below). It is intended to apply both to new buildings and to extensions or alterations of existing buildings and to both domestic and commercial properties.

Special considerations apply in respect of listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas and further information is provided later in this leaflet.

The guidelines set out in the leaflet supplement the policies in the borough's adopted Unitary Development Plan. Where planning permission is required, the council will determine applications in accordance with these guidelines to ensure that the character of the borough is preserved and where possible, enhanced.

Because a number of technical terms are used, a glossary is included at the end of this leaflet. All terms explained in the glossary are marked with an *.

MATERIALS AND THEIR USES

The choice of materials (and, if appropriate, the colour) for the external surfaces of a building can have a marked effect on its appearance. Informed decisions at an early stage can minimise later maintenance requirements and enhance the appearance of the building and the street scene. Where appropriate, advice should he sought from an architect or other design professional.

Most of buildings in the borough are constructed in brick in a variety of colours and shades: -some are rendered and that render* may be left in its natural state or painted . A few buildings are finished in weather boarding* or tile hanging* while some commercial buildings are clad in-a variety of materials such as glass, coated or painted steel sheeting, concrete blocks or exposed aggregate panels*. In some cases, a combination of materials may be found in the same building. Roofs may be finished in slates (natural or artificial) tiles (clay or concrete), felt, asphalt, coated steel sheeting or other metal cladding.

This variety of materials, colour and texture contributes to the overall character and attractiveness of the boroughs' residential and commercial areas. New development should respect and enhance this existing character by its overall design, the choice of materials and the way in which they are used. But the wrong materials used in the wrong place (say a stone-clad house in the middle of a brick terrace) can detract from the appearance of the individual building, the group of which it forms part and the area as a whole.

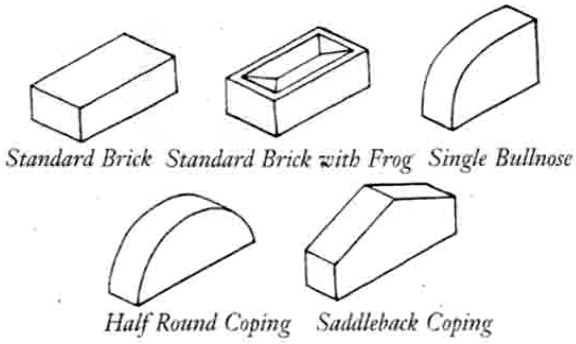
The following sections of this leaflet deal with brickwork, pointing*, stone, terracotta* and faience*, blockwork*, cladding systems* weather boarding*, roofing materials and the use of colour. Where appropriate, reference should also be made to other guidance notes in this series including "Extensions to Houses".

BRICKWORK

Brick has been widely used for building since at least the 16th century and today the majority of buildings in the borough are constructed in this material. Originally bricks were made of local clays but now a wide range of bricks are available from a variety of suppliers throughout the country.

Bricks may vary in colour, texture, strength and resistance to weathering and not all bricks are suitable for all purposes. "Common bricks" (flettons)* are the cheapest and are used for internal work. Their appearance is poor however, and they are only appropriate for external use on surfaces which are to be clad or rendered. "Facing bricks"* which have a more attractive appearance and should be used for the external walls of a building.

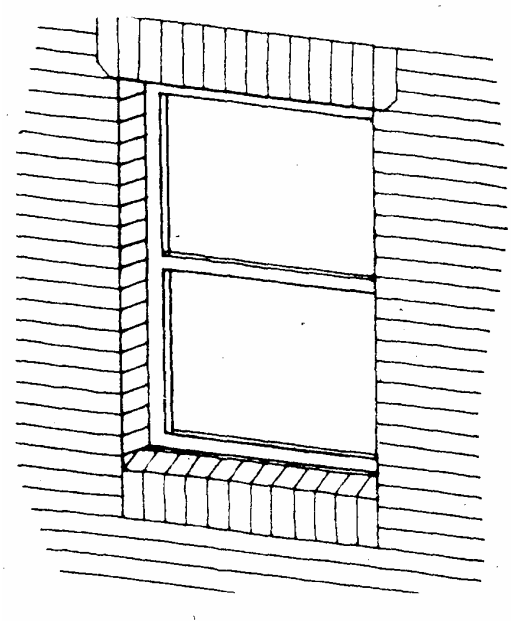
Some Brick Types



New Buildings

For new buildings (as opposed to extensions) the choice of bricks would be influenced, but not necessarily determined by the type of brickwork used on nearby buildings. Often the appearance of new buildings can be improved by incorporating details such as string courses or window cills, say in a contrasting brick. Careful consideration should also be given to the visual relationship between the colours and texture of the brickwork, the colour and style of the pointing* and the colour of window frames and doors. Good quality facing brickwork can enhance the appearance of the building and the street scene.

Brick Window Cill



Extensions to Existing Buildings

Extensions to existing buildings should normally be constructed in brickwork that matches that of the original building. Because of the wide variety of brick types available, it should not be difficult to secure a suitable match in most cases. Alternatively, and particularly for listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas, matching second-hand bricks should he used.

Repairs to Brickwork

Frost action can sometimes result in the spalling* of brickwork and unless remedial action is taken, water can penetrate the structure of the building and cause further damage. In such case, the remedy should be to carefully cut out the damaged brick and insert a matching replacement. A less satisfactory solution is

to make a repair with mortar* coloured to match the existing brickwork but care is required to ensure that the existing pointing continues through the repair. Brickwork can be cleaned with water or by grit or sand blasting or chemical cleaning. Any such work is best left to a specialist contractor.

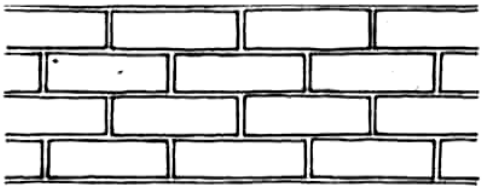
Painting Brickwork

New brickwork, and pointing should only he painted where this is necessary to match an existing surface. Painting a brick building totally changes its appearance. This can he particularly significant where a house forms part of a terrace or semi-detached pair. In such cases, the appearance of both the individual building and group as a whole is likely to be harmed.

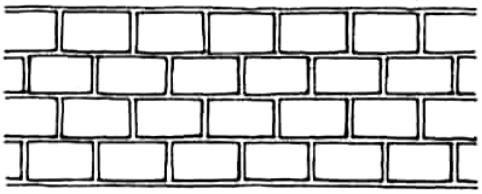
Painting walls can also promote structural damage. An unpainted wall allows any moisture to evaporate away while painting traps moisture and salts in the structure leading to decay. Once a wall is painted, its appearance is changed irrevocably and it is very difficult to remove the paint without damaging the surface of the brickwork.

Bonding Brickwork

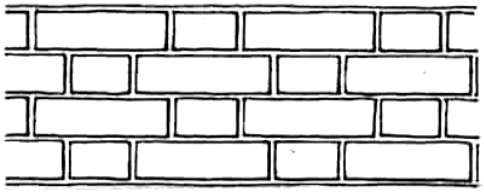
Bonding* is the pattern in which the bricks are laid. Most brick buildings constructed in the last 60 years have cavity walls* where the outer skin of brickwork is usually laid in what is known as “stretcher bond”. Other commonly used bonds include header bond, English and Flemish bond. When extending existing buildings, care should be taken to match the original bonding. For instance, when using cavity walls to extend a house built with solid walls, it is not always necessary to use a stretcher bond. The use of snapped headers to match the bond of the original house adds little to the cost and immensely improves the appearance of the wall.



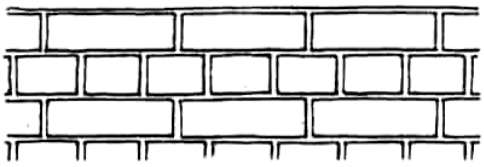
Stretcher bond



Header bond



Flemish bond



English bond

Brick Bonds / Pointing

Bricks are laid on a bed of mortar to:

(1) take up irregularities in the bricks themselves:

(2) keep out the weather.

In addition, the mortar* joints allow the bricks to breathe. The mortar between the joints can he finished in several ways and this is known as pointing*.

The finish of the pointing* affects both the appearance of the building and its ability

to keep moisture out. When repairing or extending a building, the new pointing should usually match the original.

Repointing* is necessary if the mortar is loose, powdery or missing. If the mortar is firm or only slightly recessed, it can be left undisturbed. Sound pointing* should be left undisturbed even if it has weathered back to as much as half the width of the joint. In all cases, avoid getting mortar on the face of the bricks. -

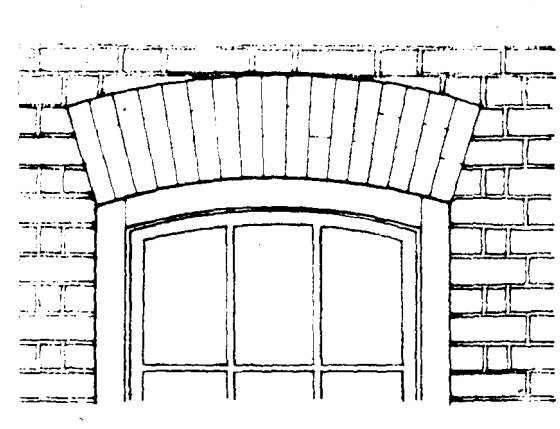
Mortar Mixes

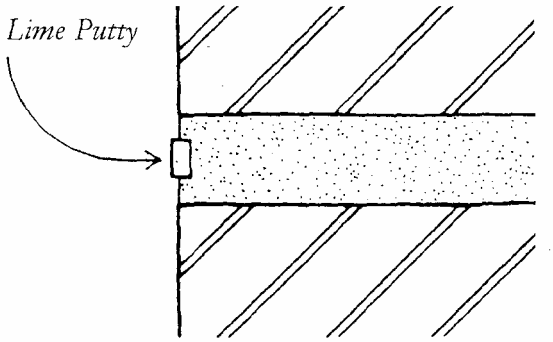
Ideally the mix of the new pointing* should be the same mix as the original. As a general principle, the new mortar* should be softer than the brick or other material it is bonding.

The colour of the sand will generally determine the final colour of the mortar* although it is possible to add colouring agents where a particular colour of mortar* is required.

In older buildings, arches over windows and doors are often formed from gauged or rubbed bricks*. Here the joints are very fine and great care is necessary to avoid getting mortar on the face of the bricks. If repointing* or repair is necessary, it should be left to a specialist.

Rubbed Brick Arch





Some old buildings incorporate a special kind of pointing* known as “tuck pointing”. Here the space between the bricks is filled with mortar* coloured to match the brickwork, then before it has hardened, a groove is made and carefully filled with a lime putty. This gives the impression of very precise joints between the bricks and requires great care. If you have a building with tuck pointing, specialist advice should be sought.

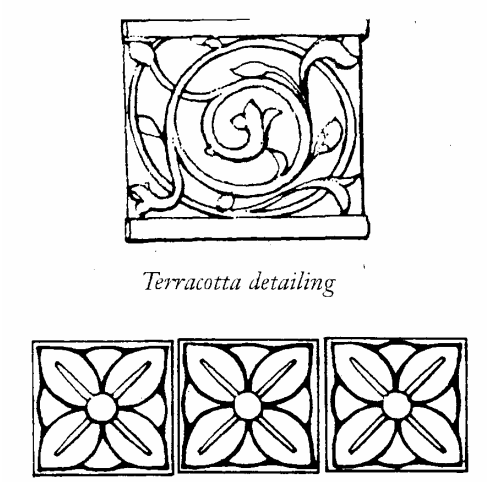
STONE

While there are a limited number of stone buildings within the borough, a larger number of buildings incorporate stone detailing. When altering or extending such buildings, care should be taken to match the original stone and detailing as closely as possible. Building stones vary in colour, texture and resistance to weathering and their cleaning and repair require specialist knowledge and equipment if irreparable damage is not to he done.

TERRACOTTA AND FAIENCE

Terracotta* is a fine grained ceramic material much used in Victorian times to decorate domestic and commercial buildings while Faience* is a glazed earthenware material. Both materials are usually very durable but can he damaged by frost action. In such cases, it is often

possible to obtain matching replacements from specialist manufacturers. As with stone and brick, they can be irreparably damaged by inappropriate cleaning methods. Again specialist advice should be sought.



Terracotta detailing

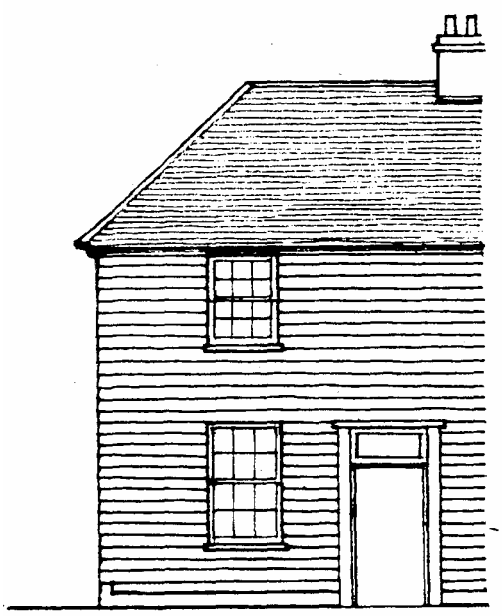
BLOCKWORK

While blocks* made from clinker, ash or cement or a combination of these materials are often used for internal partitions of buildings, some are designed for external use. These are best suited to community, commercial or industrial buildings and the colour and finish chosen will be influenced by the surroundings and the colour chosen for other parts of the building such as windows and doors.

WEATHER BOARDING

A small number of older buildings in the borough are finished with timber boarding laid horizontally on a timber frame. Traditionally, weather boarding* in Hertfordshire and adjoining areas was painted black with windows picked out in white. Where a weatherboarded property forms part of a semi-detached pair, terrace or group the boarding should never be removed and replaced with other materials such as brick. The use of a colourless timber preservative can help extend the life of the timber.

Artificial alternatives to timber boarding are now available, made from p.v.c or cellular foam and these are claimed to be maintenance-free. While these may be appropriate on modern buildings, they are unlikely to be acceptable on a listed building or within conservation areas.



TILE CLADDING

In a number of houses in the borough, the upper parts of the walls are finished with clay or concrete tiles, hung vertically and generally nailed to timber battens*. Painting such tiles detracts from their appearance and if any are broken, they should be replaced with matching tiles.

RENDER

The term “render” can be used to describe any cement or lime-based covering applied over a variety of bases. This is designed to

protect a wall from the effects of weathering, to act as a decorative covering, to cover poor quality brickwork or as part of the architectural composition of the building. Types of render include pebble-dash and stucco*.

Buildings designed to be finished in facing brick are best not rendered* as the coating hides the details of the brickwork and can lead to long term maintenance problems. While the craze for stone cladding has subsided, there are still advertisements for cement—rich renders*. These are claimed to enhance the appearance of buildings, but they can lead to long term problems and a reduction in value.

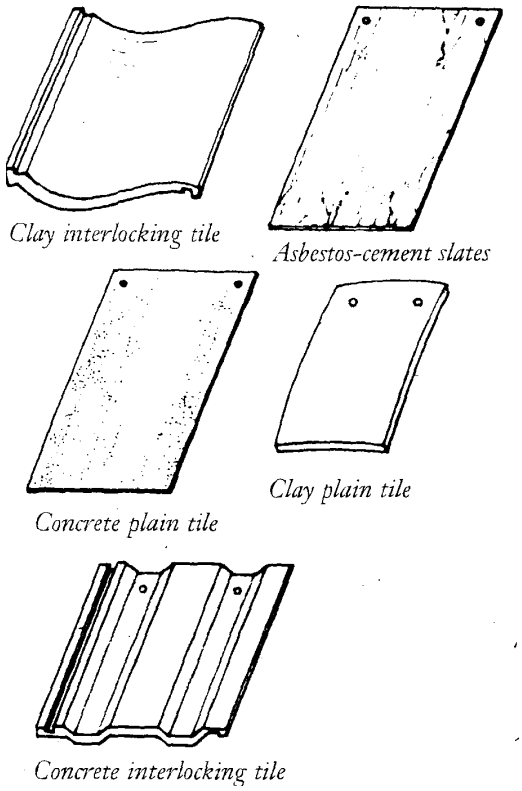
Like all rough surfaces, render* is difficult to clean and as a result, is often painted. Re-painting will be necessary periodically to retain the appearance of the building and for this purpose, a selection of mineral or microporous masonry paints are available. There are special rules on painting listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas and these are described later in this leaflet.

PROPRIETARY CLADDING SYSTEMS

A wide range of proprietary cladding systems* are available, generally used on commercial or industrial buildings but in some cases to improve the appearance or thermal insulation qualities of domestic buildings such as blocks of flats. Choice of finish and colour should be made having regard to the buildings' surroundings and to the comments on colour below.

ROOFING

The commonest forms of roofing materials found in Barnet are slates and clay tiles. Modern buildings may have concrete tiles or artificial slates while commercial buildings may have roofs of steel



sheeting in various colours and profiles. Lead, copper and zinc are also used for roofing while flat-roofed extensions often use asphalt* or roofing felt.

Houses built between the Victorian period and the end of the 1930s are reaching the point where their roofs need to be overhauled or replaced. This is because the original tiles or slates have deteriorated or the nails holding the slates have rusted away.

Roof Replacement

Generally it is preferable to replace an existing roof with one of the same material but upgraded with new battens* and roofing felt under the tiles or slates. It may be possible to re-use a proportion of the original tiles or slates and make up

the balance with matching new or second hand stock. This helps reduce the cost and retain the appearance of the property and is the preferred solution on listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas. Alternatively, salvaged tiles or slates could be used on the most prominent roof slopes and new or matching second hand ones on the less visible slopes.

If the tiles or slates are in good condition, the life of the roof can be extended by undersealing. This is where a specialist contractor sprays a foam-like material on the underside of the roof to fix the tiles or slates in position.

Extreme caution should be exercised in the use of concrete tiles to replace slates or clay tiles. Such tiles invariably weigh a great deal more than the natural product and as most old roofs were not designed to accept such loadings, strengthening of the roof timbers will be necessary if severe damage to the building is to be avoided. For this reason, the replacement of clay tiles or slates with concrete tiles requires permission under the building regulations.

A variety of artificial slates are now manufactured and these may be appropriate in certain circumstances. Some have a flat, lifeless appearance and are clearly a man-made product while others have a rough texture and closely resemble natural slates. Artificial slates would not be acceptable on a listed building.

New Buildings

The choice of roofing materials for new buildings will depend on the type of building, its overall design and the pitch of the roof slope. A wide variety of clay and concrete tiles, natural and artificial slates are available and it is important that the style, colour and texture of the material is considered as an integral part of the design of the building. For instance, large interlocking concrete tiles would give a top-heavy appearance to a small house or bungalow.

COLOUR

The use of colour requires careful consideration, both in terms of the appearance of the individual building and the whole scene of which it forms part. For new buildings, decisions will need to be made not only on the types of materials to be used but also their colour and it is important that these decisions are made in a co-ordinated way and having regard to the context in which the building will be seen. For existing buildings, decisions on colour are usually restricted to re-painting previously painted walls, window frames, gutters and downpipes. In some cases, there will already be a dominant element (say a roof of glazed green pantiles) and this should be a strong influence on the choice of colours used elsewhere.

The ways in which the eye and brain receive and react to colour are complex and are to an extent conditioned by experiences and the emotional responses they create. Reds and creams are therefore seen as warm and blues and greys as cold. Colours that compliment each other (green woodwork on a red brick house), those that contrast (black and white) or those that have some similarity in terms of light and shade (red brick and grey slate) are more likely to be successful than those which disturb the eye.

When choosing colours, the following principles can be of assistance:

If the building is part of a group or terrace, it is best to preserve the unity of the group by the common use of colour;

Be aware of the context-colours that look right in a seaside setting may not look right in a London suburb;

Choose colours which compliment or contrast with one another rather than those which disturb the eye;

Where the choice of colour was an integral part of the original design of the building or area, it is best to repaint only in the appropriate colours. This applies particularly to conservation areas and further advice is given in the appropriate Conservation Area Statements.

If in doubt, it is an idea to trace over a photograph of the building and using crayons or coloured pens, try out various colour combinations. For those interested in learning more, a useful reference book is "Your House, the Outside View" by John Prizeman, (Hutchinson and Co-, 1975)

Finally, materials never intended to be painted are best left in their natural state, i.e tiles, brickwork, mortar joints*, pebbledash*, flashing* and un-painted timber.

DO I NEED CONSENT FROM THE COUNCIL?

Where planning permission is required for new development, the type materials used and the colour of the external surfaces will form part of the application or will be dealt with by a condition requiring that such - details be submitted and approved before work commences. Such a condition would be used for instance, to require that the bricks and slates/tiles used on an extension, match those on the original building.

In terms of existing buildings, any works which materially affect the external appearance of the building will constitute development requiring planning permission. This would include for instance, painting or rendering the external walls of a brick building. However, in the case of houses (hut not flats) such alterations would normally qualify for a special exemption known as "*permitted development*". If they do, they will not require planning permission but if the building is listed, they are likely to require listed building consent (see below) or, if in a conservation area it should be noted that planning permission is now required for adding stone, timber or other cladding to a house; such changes formerly constituting permitted development. A booklet explaining the various categories of permitted development is available from the Council.

If you are in any doubt as to whether planning permission is required you can apply to the council for a Certificate of Lawful Development. The certificate confirms whether or not planning permission would be required. The application forms and an explanatory leaflet are available from the council and should be submitted with the appropriate fee.

Special Rules in Conservation Areas

The Council has designated a number of conservation areas which are of particularly high environmental quality. When assessing development proposals in such areas, the council will have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the appearance of such areas and will require a higher standard of design and materials than elsewhere.

A number of conservation areas are subject to Article 4 Directions which remove premitted development rights and require that planning permission be obtained for alterations and extensions

including the painting of external walls and surfaces and roofs. A leaflet describing the borough's conservation areas is available from the Council.

For residents of the Hampstead Garden Suburb, any external change to a property including restoration of original work is likely to require the formal consent of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust Ltd. In some cases, consent for internal building work is required. Residents should always check first with the Trust at the earliest possible stage.

ENFORCEMENT

Failure to obtain planning permission can lead to enforcement action being taken to secure the re-instatement of the building if the works are considered unacceptable in planning terms.

LISTED BUILDINGS

A listed building is a building of special architectural or historic interest which is "listed" by the Secretary of State for the Environment. Because the contribution such buildings make to our built heritage listed building consent is required for any works which involve the demolition (or part demolition) of a listed building or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. The need to obtain listed building consent is a separate procedure from the need to obtain planning permission.

Therefore the painting or rendering of walls (where the walls were previously unpainted or un-rendered) or the replacing of the roof covering in such a way that the character or appearance of the building is changed, will require listed building consent. Repointing can also in certain circumstances, affect the appearance of the building and therefore require consent. Re-painting previously painted surfaces may require consent depending on whether the character of the building is changed. Simple cleaning of a listed building with water would not normally require consent but more extensive restoration work might. If you are considering works to alter or extend a listed building you are strongly advised to discuss your proposals with the planning department at an early stage. Failure to obtain listed building consent is a criminal offence punishable by a fine or even imprisonment.

GLOSSARY

AGGREGATE PANELS

Pre-cast concrete panels with a surface of rough stones.

ASPHALT

A material used to waterproof flat roofs.

BATTENS

Strips of wood to which slates are nailed or over which tiles are hung.

BLOCKWORK

Walls of blocks of cement, ash or clinker.

BONDING

The pattern in which bricks are laid.

CAVITY WALL

A wall usually comprising an outer skin of brickwork and an inner skin of bricks or blockwork with a gap between.

CLADDING

Any material fixed to a frame and forming the outer skin of a building.

COMMONS/FLETTONS

Low-cost bricks used for internal walls or walls to be rendered.

FACING BRICKS

Bricks of a consistent colour used for the outside of buildings

FAIENCE

A glazed earthenware material.

GAUGED/RUBBED BRICKWORK

Soft facing bricks “rubbed” together to achieve very fine joints, used in arches over windows or doors.

ROUGHCAST

A render in which the final coat contains large pebbles.

MORTAR

A sand/lime. sand/cement or cement/lime/sand mixture for laying bricks or blocks

PAVIORS

Clay or concrete bricks for laying on a flat surface such as a path or drive.

PEBBLE-DASH

A finish comprising fine stones thrown against the final coat of render, pushed in and left exposed.

POINTING/ RE-POINTING

The outer finished face of mortar joints between layers of bricks/blocks and their renewal.

RENDER

A cement-based covering on an outside wall

SNAPPED HEADERS

Half bricks used end-on to create a particular bond.

SPALLING

The disintegration of the surface of bricks due to the effects of the weather

STRING COURSES

Horizontal bands of projecting/contrasting brickwork, stonework or stucco.

STUCCO

Render, scribed with lines to look like stone and usually painted cream or white.

TERRACOTTA

A hard fired clay made into decorative panels

TILE HANGING

Tiles hung vertically on the outside walls of a building

WEATHER BOARDING

Horizontal overlapping lengths of timber, forming the outside wall of a building and usually nailed to a timber frame.

This document supplements and expands upon the policies within the Unitary Development Plan. The advice it contains is consistent with those policies and therefore has the status of supplementary planning guidance.

The document has benefited from Council resolution and a consultation exercise. This has enhanced its status, and due weight will be accorded to it as a material consideration in the determination of development proposals.

Following boundary changes in April 1993 and April 1994, several small areas formerly within Hertsmere district and the London Boroughs of Camden. Enfield and Haringey are now included within Barnet. Pending the statutory review of the UDP. the policy context in these areas remains the relevant statutory development plan of the former local authority.