

AtkinsRéalis



Townscape and Visual Assessment

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local
Government

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GRENFELL TOWER

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1. Introduction

This Townscape and Visual Assessment (hereby referred to as the 'Assessment') has been prepared by AtkinsRéalis on behalf of our client, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (the 'Applicant'), to support a non-urgent Crown Development application for full planning permission in respect of Grenfell Tower, Grenfell Road, North Kensington, London, W11 1TG (the 'Site'). The 0.51-hectare (ha) Site is located within the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

This application for Crown Development is submitted pursuant to section 293D of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

MHCLG's appointed Principal Contractor is undertaking works to carefully and sensitively take down the Grenfell Tower (the 'Tower'). These works are being conducted under permitted development (PD) rights granted to the Applicant by Part 19 Class Q of Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. This application aims to secure the necessary consent to continue the work to carefully take down Grenfell Tower through to completion. Notification to utilise these PD rights was issued by MHCLG on the 23rd September 2025.

1.1 The Proposed Scheme

The Proposed Scheme comprises the sensitive works to carefully take down Grenfell Tower. The basement will be retained and protected with a waterproof topping. An access point will be provided to ensure safe access into the existing (retained) basement.

The non-urgent Crown Development application for full planning permission is sought for the following description of development:

"The works to take down Grenfell Tower".

The sensitive works to carefully take down Grenfell Tower are being carried out using the best practicable means, in accordance with BS:6187:2011 and the Code for Deconstruction at all times. This includes specialist deconstruction equipment, diamond drilling and wire sawing, coupled with traditional deconstruction methods. All works are supported by a luffing jib tower crane located to the north-east of the building.

Larger building elements, including columns, spandrel panels/deep beams, roof-level crown and sections of the existing floor slab, are wire-sawn, detached, lifted down with the crane, then removed from the Site to suitable storage or laid to rest. Smaller materials are transported vertically within the structure, brought out using bobcat shovels, and removed from the Site to be laid to rest.

2. Assessment Background

A desk study and site visit was undertaken in 2023 for a previous report, and a subsequent site visit was carried out in January 2026, and these site visits were relied on for this report. The format of this document will also build on that of the previous report, the reason for this is that a large portion of the collected baseline information previously undertaken is still relevant to this assessment.

3. Methodology

This Townscape and Visual Assessment is based on best practice and the methodology within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment Third Edition (2013).

The full assessment methodology is provided in Appendix A.

4. Townscape and Visual Survey

The townscape characterisation survey extends to a 750m radius Study Area around the Tower as beyond this distance the townscape effects lessen.

The visual effects survey extends to 2km, as beyond this distance visibility reduces considerably due to the screening effects of intervening built form and infrastructure, including the Westway flyover.

The scope of this assessment extends to the baseline appraisal of the townscape and visual receptors identified during the survey. For each townscape and visual receptor identified, there is an appraisal of:

- The nature of the receptor and its sensitivity to the completion of the works to carefully take down Grenfell Tower; and
- The nature of the influence that Grenfell Tower exerts upon the receptor.

The survey was undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) who is a specialist in townscape and visual assessments. The scope of the survey included a desk study and site visits. The initial site visits were undertaken on 26th January 2023, 2nd February 2023, and a subsequent site visit was undertaken on 4th February 2026. Photography was captured using an iPhone camera to identify and record sensitive receptors and views of the Tower within the surrounding townscape. The baseline site survey was undertaken in winter months to establish the “most visible” scenario when deciduous vegetation is not in leaf.

The illustrative material from the desk study and site visits are included in Appendix B and includes the following:

- Figure 1 – Townscape and Townscape-related designations with zone of visual influence;
- Figure 2 – Townscape Character Areas and Viewpoint Locations (respective viewpoint photos 1-14 can be found in Appendix C).

This Townscape and Visual Assessment is intended to describe the effects resulting from the completion of the works to carefully take down Grenfell Tower.

5. Townscape Appraisal

5.1 Townscape Baseline Description

The topography within the Study Area is gently sloping from north-east to south-west and this follows the wider pattern within West London whereby the land falls away into the Thames Basin. The notable topographical feature within the Study Area is the gentle rise of Westbourne Park Road as it extends eastwards from Portobello Road towards All Saints Church to the east of Grenfell Tower. There are no notable hydrological features within the Study Area, although the Grand Union Canal runs east-west just beyond the Study Area to the north of Grenfell Tower.

In terms of historical development within the Study Area there is a sharp contrast between post-war and pre-war townscape patterns. Victorian entrepreneurship and residential terraces dominate character in the north, east and south-east of the Study Area. The Kensington Aldridge Academy is situated directly to the north of Grenfell Tower and covers a large site and is a dominant feature within the immediate surroundings. The post-war pattern is largely defined by the Westway and other infrastructure corridors which exert a dominating influence on townscape character further to the north as well as western parts of the Study Area.

Figure 1 illustrates townscape and townscape-related designations within the Study Area. Notable historical designations include:

- 5 no. Conservation Areas;
- 1 no. Grade II* and 39 no. Grade II Listed Buildings;
- Ladbroke Grove Registered Park and Garden.

5.2 Townscape Character Areas

The townscape characterisation survey was undertaken in accordance with best practice, and this included a review of the following published guidance and townscape character assessments:

- Characterisation and Growth Strategy (GLA 2022)
- London's Historic Character (Historic England 2021)
- Kensington and Chelsea Character Study Consultation: The Character Areas (ARUP 2021)
- White City Opportunity Area Planning Framework (GLA 2013)

Based on the findings of the baseline survey, five townscape character areas (TCAs) within the Study Area were identified and illustrated in Figure 2. The key characteristics of each TCA are as follows.

North Kensington Estates TCA

The North Kensington Estate has the following townscape characteristics:

- Fragmented layout of postwar social housing estates;
- Modernist apartment blocks with four towers in Silchester Estate and Grenfell Tower occupying a plot in the north of the Lancaster West estate adjacent to Latimer Road Station;

- The elevated London Underground Hammersmith & City and Circle Underground lines bisects the TCA with Silchester Estate to the north-west and Lancaster West to the south-east;
- Distinctive “finger blocks” extend south from Grenfell Tower and define underused areas of green space;
- The local townscape around Grenfell Tower has very poor permeability and legibility with dead-ends and raised walkways;
- Grenfell Tower occupies a central location within this TCA and it exerts a notable influence on surrounding character due to its height and the presence of memorials and reminders of the tragedy;
- The Kensington Aldridge Academy which is situated directly to the north of Grenfell Tower occupies a large site and exerts a noticeable influence within close proximity to Grenfell Tower;
- The changes ongoing as part of the Lancaster West Estate Refurbishment programme are a characterising influence on the local townscape; and
- Small scale co-designed greening initiatives have resulted in interesting townscape elements within Lancaster West, such as the four green North Kensington Resource Centre Green Wall and the planting of a green screen along Bramley Road.

Freston Road TCA

Freston Road has the following townscape characteristics:

- Coherent linear pattern along Freston Road including cluster of unique Listed Buildings;
- Coarse, fragmented grain to parts of the periphery of the area;
- London Underground rail infrastructure bisects the area;
- A mix of Victorian buildings (some listed), post-war, and more recently built low-rise apartment blocks, office buildings and industrial development;
- Some green space towards the south of area; and
- The adjacent major infrastructure and tall buildings exert a strong indirect influence.

Westway and A3220 TCA

Westway and A3220 has the following townscape characteristics:

- Severance is the defining characteristic, the major infrastructure elements act as a barrier separating the surrounding neighbourhoods;
- Dominated by the linear elevated dual carriageway form of Westway running East-West, and the A3220 dual carriageway running North to South and the grade separated junction of these two routes;
- Unique visual character due to the elevated carriageway, from which kinetic views can be gained of the skyline, including Grenfell Tower; and
- A variety of associated land-use within, beneath and adjacent to the transport corridors including sports pitches and traveller site.

North Kensington Terraces TCA

The North Kensington Terraces has the following townscape characteristics:

- Includes some ground at higher elevation compared to the Grenfell Tower site;
- Continuous terraced housing;

- Fairly uniform and coherent layout;
- Historic value, the majority of the TCA is designated as a conservation area; and
- Integrated green space, with public and private parks and gardens

White City and Westfield TCA

The White City and Westfield areas have the following townscape characteristics:

- Large scale regeneration with new high-rise apartment blocks and a large shopping centre, and empty industrial areas and building sites;
- Some areas almost continuously covered and pedestrianised resulting in coarse grain in street layout; and
- The elevated London Underground Hammersmith & City rail line has an influence on pattern and character.

5.3 Appraisal of Townscape Character Areas

The temporary banner on the Grenfell Tower has the wording “Grenfell: Forever in our Hearts” and it is important to note this is a sentiment held not only locally but nationally. As such, unlike other Townscape appraisals it is not possible to state ‘value’ based on a particular location, however we can explain the extent of visibility. This has been undertaken using the findings listed above in section 5.2 and an appraisal of the extent of visibility of the five TCAs has been undertaken and is provided in Table 5-1 below.

Table 5-1 – Extent of visibility appraisal

Townscape Character Area	Extent of visibility
Freston Road	Visibility within this TCA is partially enclosed along its western boundary by the dominating feature of the adjacent Westway. To the east visibility has a degree of openness towards the TCA’s of North Kensington Estates and North Kensington Terraces where views are permissible within gaps in the urban pattern. This includes views of Grenfell Tower and associated towers in the Silchester Estate.
Westway and A3220	Visibility within this TCA is extensive across the adjacent TCA’s due to the elevated nature of these road corridors. Along the slip roads of the A3220 views are partially obscured by retaining features.
North Kensington Estates	The main visual features within this TCA are Grenfell Tower and the associated towers in the Silchester Estate. A further dominating feature is the elevated London Underground Hammersmith & City and Circle Underground lines which forms a strong linear element.
North Kensington Terraces	Visibility within this TCA is characterised by a less dense urban pattern than adjacent TCA’s, this is identified by lower building heights and green open spaces. The uniform layout of the terraced street pattern defines a pleasant character area that is in contrast to the other TCA’s.
White City and Westfield	The visibility in this TCA is curtailed along it’s northern and eastern boundary by the elevated Westway and A3220. A large portion of this TCA

Townscape Character Area	Extent of visibility
	contains taller and larger built forms which also have the effect of restricting views into and out of the area.

5.4 Likely Townscape Effects

Grenfell Tower has an influence on the wider North Kensington Estates TCA within which it is located. Given the sensitivity of this TCA and the continued work to carefully take down Grenfell Tower, there is a potential for significant townscape effects.

6. Visual Appraisal

6.1 Visual Baseline Description

The desk survey identified the following key themes to views influenced by Grenfell Tower:

- Short range views where Grenfell and the equipment to carefully take the Tower down are the most prominent elements on the skyline;
- Kinetic panoramic views across London from the Westway and the Hammersmith & City and Circle Underground lines where the influence of Grenfell varies according to distance and direction of travel;
- Channelled views along residential streets including Westbourne Park Road within the North Kensington Terraces TCA; and
- Channelled views along the Hammersmith & City Line.

Fourteen publicly accessible viewpoints have been selected to appraise the influence of Grenfell Tower on visual receptors (see Appendix C). These represent views of users of routes as well as key views from specific locations such as public parks. Views 1 to 14 are illustrated in Appendix C.

6.2 Visual Appraisal

Using the methodology in Appendix A, the appraisal of visual sensitivity and influence for the fourteen views illustrated in Appendix C has been undertaken and is provided in Table 2 below.

Table 6-1 - Viewpoint appraisal summary

TCA	Viewpoint	Visual Value	Visual Susceptibility to Change	Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Visual Influence (winter)
North Kensington Estates	5. Walmer Road (Kensington Leisure Centre) looking west	Medium	Medium	Medium	Large
	7. Grenfell Road looking north	Medium	High	Medium	Large
	8. North Kensington Estates looking north	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
	12. Waynflete Square looking east	Medium	High	Medium	Large



TCA	Viewpoint	Visual Value	Visual Susceptibility to Change	Visual Sensitivity	Magnitude of Visual Influence (winter)
	13. Silchester Road looking southeast	Medium	High	Medium	Large
	14. Latimer Road Station looking east	Low	Medium	Medium	Small
North Kensington Terraces	1. Westbourne Park Road looking west	Medium	High	Medium	Small
	2. Westbourne Park Road looking west	Medium	High	Medium	Small
	4. Ladbroke Crescent looking west	Medium	High	Medium	Large
	6. Bomore Road looking west	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
Westway and A3220	N/A	Low	Low	Low	Small
White City and Westfield	11. Wood Lane looking east	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
Freston Road	9. Lockton Street looking northeast	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
	10. Norland Square looking north	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
N/A	3. Grand Union Canal looking southwest	Medium	Medium	Medium	Small

6.3 Summary of Visual Influence

The Area of Visual Influence in Figure 1 of Appendix B demonstrates that views of the Tower are largely restricted by built forms and notably the Westway. Within approximately 250m of the Tower visibility occurs frequently within the surrounding townscape of streets and small open spaces albeit there are notable screening elements of built form including the Hammersmith & City and Circle Underground lines, together with the Kensington Aldridge Academy and Kensington Leisure Centre. The Tower influences close range views to the south-east of the Tower as illustrated by View 3: Kensington Leisure Centre. The Tower influences medium range views from the surrounding



townscape as illustrated by View 1: Latimer Road Station, View 4: Lancaster West, View 5: Waynflete Square and View 11: Shalfleet Drive.

This planning application and assessment covers the completion of the works to carefully take down Grenfell Tower. This will impact the identified viewpoints, notably the ones further away as well as some closer viewpoints. The development of high-rise towers around White City has also created a more noticeable visual cluster than the towers of the North Kensington Estates (mainly the neighbouring Silchester Estate now), adding complexity to visibility. The crane was the only visible element in multiple viewpoints as it rises higher than the Tower.

Beyond approximately 250m of the Tower, visibility is sporadic and there are notable areas to the north, southeast and south-west of the Tower with virtually no visibility.

The Tower influences medium range views aligned with viewing corridors to the east and west of Grenfell as illustrated by View 2: Bramley Road, View 6: Ladbroke Crescent and View 10: Wood Lane. The Tower is less visible in long range views such as View 14: Grand Union Canal and View 15: Wormwood Scrubs.

6.4 Likely Visual Effects

There will be a visual effects both during the works and when the works to carefully take the Tower down are complete include the loss of a locally valued and/or defining element in the view.

On balance it is predicted that significant effects are likely to occur where the Tower's visibility is greatest to five visual receptors:

- Walmer Road (Kensington Leisure Centre);
- Grenfell Road;
- Waynflete Square;
- Silchester Road; and
- Ladbroke Crescent.

7. Conclusions

This planning application and assessment covers the works to take down Grenfell Tower. The purpose of this report is to analyse the predicted impacts on townscape and visual receptors as a consequence of the completion of the works to carefully take down Grenfell Tower.

This has been prepared following industry standards (methodology in Appendix A) coupled with desk studies and site visits. The findings of these exercises have found that the visibility of Grenfell Tower is restricted to within approximately 2km due to the screening effects of intervening built form and infrastructure including the Westway flyover. Vegetation including street trees provide partial screening of the Tower from the majority of the viewpoints identified in the winter survey.

The findings have established that there will be one townscape character area (North Kensington Estates) directly affected which will result in a significant effect. The following five visual receptors will also be expected to receive significant effects:

- Walmer Road (Kensington Leisure Centre) (large);
- Grenfell Road (large);
- Waynflete Square (large);
- Silchester Road (large); and
- Ladbroke Crescent (large).

The Tower also exerts limited influence on the wider townscape character and visual amenity. It is recommended that townscape enhancement measures be considered throughout the area of townscape and visual influence following the works to take down Grenfell Tower.

APPENDICES



Appendix A. Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

A.1 Introduction

The townscape and visual survey is based on best practice and the methodology within the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment Third Edition (2013).

The TVIA survey was undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) who is a specialist in townscape and visual assessments. The scope of the survey included desk study and site visits. Site visits were undertaken in winter 2023 and winter 2026. Site photography was undertaken to identify and record sensitive receptors and views of the Tower within the surrounding townscape.

A.1.1 Appraisal of Townscape Influence

The sensitivity of a townscape receptor is a combination of the value of the townscape receptor and the susceptibility of the townscape receptor to the type of change proposed, using professional judgement.

A.1.1.1 Townscape value

Townscapes, including their character and features, may be designated at a range of levels (international, national, county and local level), examples of which are set out below:

- High - Features or areas likely to be of national importance, designated at national or international level;
- Medium - Features or areas likely to be of county or borough importance, designated at county or borough level;
- Low - Features likely to be of importance to the local community but have little or no wider recognition of their value, and are not designated;
- Very Low - Features or areas with little or no evidence of being value by the community and are not designated.

The appraisal of value is based on a combination of the importance of townscape-related planning designations and the following attributes such as:

- Townscape quality (condition): the measure of the physical state of the townscape. It may include the extent to which typical townscape character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the townscape and the condition of individual elements;
- Scenic quality: the extent that the townscape receptor appeals to the visual senses;
- Perceptual aspects: the extent that the townscape receptor is recognised for its perceptual qualities (e.g. remoteness or tranquillity);
- Rarity: the presence of unusual elements or features;
- Representativeness: the presence of particularly characteristic features;
- Recreation: the extent that recreational activities contribute to the townscape receptor; and

- Association: the extent that cultural or historical associations contribute to the townscape receptor.

A.1.1.2 Townscape susceptibility

The GLVIA 3 Glossary defines landscape [townscape] susceptibility as: “The ability of a defined landscape ... receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences”.

The following criteria is taken into consideration in the assessment of townscape susceptibility, although not all criteria are equally applicable or important within a given townscape / type of development proposed:

- Landform;
- Pattern/Complexity;
- Composition;
- Landcover; and
- Relationship of a given townscape area to any existing settlements or developments.

Townscape susceptibility of the character of the townscape / of the features is categorised as High, Medium or Low, as set out below:

- High - The receptor is likely to have little scope to accommodate the type of change proposed without undue effects upon its overall integrity.
- Medium - The receptor is likely to have some scope to accommodate the type of change proposed without undue effects upon its overall integrity.
- Low - The receptor is likely to be able to accommodate the type of change proposed with little or no effect upon its overall integrity.

A.1.1.3 Townscape magnitude of influence

The townscape magnitude of influence is informed by judgements about the size and extent of the change brought about by the works to carefully take down Grenfell Tower in terms of the existing townscape character and townscape elements / features and the removal of townscape elements / features as set out below:

- Large - Total alteration to the existing townscape receptor; may also affect an extensive area
- Medium - Partial alteration to the existing townscape receptor; may also affect a wide area
- Small - Slight alteration to the existing townscape receptor; may also affect a restricted area
- Very Small - Very slight alteration to the existing townscape receptor; may also affect a limited area
- None - No direct change to the existing townscape receptor or a change that is so inconsequential that it does not alter the existing townscape receptor.

A.1.2 Appraisal of Visual Influence

In order to appraise the visual effects, the sensitivity of the visual receptor and the magnitude of influence experienced as a result of the works to carefully take down Grenfell Tower are considered.

A.1.2.1 Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

The sensitivity of a visual receptor is a consideration of the value of the view and the susceptibility of the visual receptor to the type of change proposed, using professional judgement.

A.1.2.2 Value of view

The assessment of value is based on the following criteria:

- High - A location that is likely to be of national importance, either designated or with national cultural associations, where the view obtained forms an important part of the experience.
- Medium - A location that is likely to be of local importance, either designated or with local cultural associations, where the view obtained forms part of the experience.
- Low - A location that is not designated, with minimal or no cultural associations.

A.1.2.3 Visual susceptibility

The assessment of visual susceptibility is based on the following criteria:

- High - People at their place of residence; People engaged in outdoor recreation, whose attention is likely to be focussed on the townscape; and People travelling along recognised scenic routes or where their appreciation of the view contributes to the amenity experience of their journey.
- Medium - People engaged in outdoor sport and recreation, where their appreciation of their surroundings is incidental to their enjoyment; and People travelling on secondary roads of lanes, rail or other recognised transport routes.
- Low- People travelling on major roads; and People at their place of work.

Based on the combination of value and susceptibility, an assessment of visual sensitivity is reached, defined as High, Medium or Low.

A.1.2.4 Magnitude of Visual Influence criteria

The magnitude of visual influence exerted by the Tower on the visual receptor is based on the following criteria:

- Very Large – The Tower is a dominating influence in the view.
- Large - The Tower is a pronounced influence in the view.
- Medium - The Tower is a noticeable influence in the view.
- Small - The Tower is an unobtrusive influence in the view.
- Very Small - The Tower is a barely perceptible influence in the view.

A.1.2.5 Establishing the visual zone of influence

Google Earth Pro was used to calculate viewsheds showing potential visibility of the Tower. Approximately 50 locations were identified and surveyed on site to establish the visual influence of the Tower within a radius of approximately 2km of the Tower. 15 representative views were selected to appraise the likely visual effect of the works to carefully take down Grenfell Tower. Photographs of these 15 views are included in Appendix B.

A.1.3 Limitations

Representative views from the Westway and the A3220 were appraised in Street View as it was not considered safe to undertake site work and photography within a moving vehicle.

Representative views from tube trains on the Hammersmith & City Line were surveyed on site albeit no photography was undertaken within moving trains.

A.1.4 Study Area

The townscape characterisation survey extends to a 750m radius Study Area around the Tower as beyond this distance the townscape effects lessen.

The visual influence survey extends to a 2km as beyond this distance visibility reduces considerably due to the screening effects of intervening built form and infrastructure, including the Westway flyover.

A.1.5 Reference Materials and Sources of Information

The baseline review identified a considerable volume of online documents and mapping including, but not limited to, the following:

- GLA (2022). Characterisation and Growth Strategy. Available at: [GLA Characterisation and Growth Strategy](#)
- Historic England (2021). London's Historic Character. Available at: [Historic England, London's Historic Character](#)
- ARUP (2021). Kensington and Chelsea Character Study Consultation: The Character Areas. Available at: [Kensington and Chelsea Character Study](#)
- GLA (2013). White City Opportunity Area Planning Framework. Available at: [GLA White City Opportunity Area Planning Framework](#)
- Digital mapping provided by Historic England was downloaded and reviewed to obtain the latest Listed Buildings and Conservation Area information within the Study Area.
- Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) planning policy and guidance.
- London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and White City Opportunity Area policies and guidance.
- City of Westminster policies and guidance.
- Published townscape character documents.
- GLA planning policy and guidance documents.
- The Memorial Commission Website: [The Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission](#)
- W11 Neighbourhood Strategy including Lancaster West Green Refurbishment; and
- Lancaster West Residents Association, [Lancaster West Residents Association](#)

Appendix B. Townscape and Visual Illustrative Material

Figure 1 - Townscape and townscape related designations with area of visual influence



Figure 2 - Townscape Character Areas (TCAs) with viewpoint locations



Appendix C. Viewpoint Photos



Viewpoint number 01 - Westbourne Park Road looking west



Viewpoint number 02 - Westbourne Park Road looking west



Viewpoint number 03 - Grand Union Canal looking southwest



Viewpoint number 04 - Ladbroke Crescent looking west



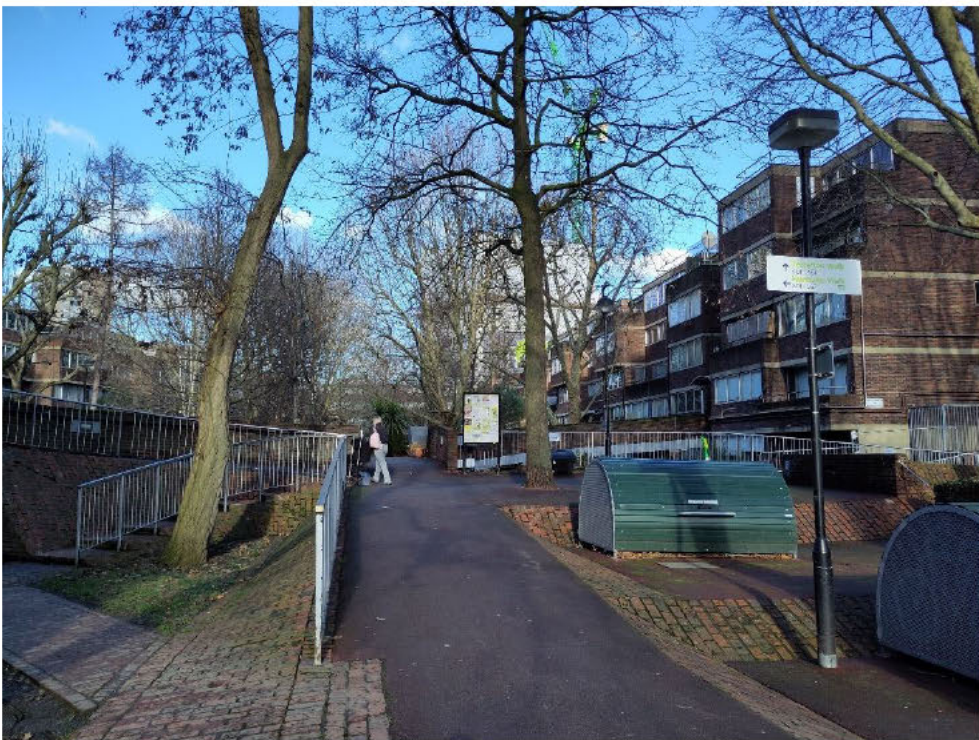
Viewpoint number 05 - Walmer Road looking west



Viewpoint number 06 - Bomore Road looking west



Viewpoint number 07 - Grenfell Road looking north



Viewpoint number 08 - North Kensington Estates looking north



Viewpoint number 09 - Lockton Street looking northeast



Viewpoint number 10 - Norland Square looking north



Viewpoint number 11 - Wood Lane looking east



Viewpoint number 12 - Waynflete Square looking east



Viewpoint number 13 - Silchester Road looking southeast



Viewpoint number 14 - Latimer Road Station looking east

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