



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
Department of Planning

Development in the Royal Naval Dockyard

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Development in the Royal Naval Dockyard

1. Introduction

This document provides guidance and advice to the West End Development Corporation, property owners, occupiers, agents, planning staff and advisory bodies on appropriate design in the Royal Naval Dockyard Historic Protection Area.

The guidance notes apply to matters of design related to the development of existing buildings as well as to the development of new buildings and the public realm.

2. The Intent of Guidelines

Development regulations in the Bermuda Plan 2008 are prescriptive, that is, what *shall* be required. Policies within the Plan include general principles which establish the philosophy of development envisioned for Bermuda. Guidance notes contain general principles to assist in the implementation of plan policies.

These guidelines are a complementary tool to assist users as to what is appropriate or compatible in the Royal Naval Dockyard Historic Protection Area and for listed buildings located therein. They are a framework for decision-making amongst property owners, agents, and development control officials. They are based on recognition of, and respect for:

- a) The setting, views and vistas that provide the visual context of the Dockyard building assembly;
- b) The forms, features and materials producing a unique pattern of building that gives the Dockyard its distinctive identity;
- c) The essential character of each individual existing building;
- d) The accommodation of new development that integrates well into the historic setting and the specific site in which it is to be located.

3. The Statutory Framework

Development in the Royal Naval Dockyard Historic Protection Area is governed by the Development and Planning Act 1974 and the Bermuda Plan 2008. Sections 30 and 31 of the Act give the statutory provisions for designating listed buildings and buildings in historic protection areas.

Development also includes the installation of signs on buildings, and the Advertisement Regulations Act, 1911 stipulates the nature and content of all such signs. General guidelines on signs in the Royal Naval Dockyard Historic Protection Area are contained in this document.

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4. The Bermuda Plan 2008

The guidance notes are pursuant to the Bermuda Plan 2008, Chapter 8 (Design), particularly the Objectives and DSN.4 (Bermuda Image) and DSN.5 (Design principles for urban areas); Chapter 21 (Historic Environment), particularly HSC.6 (Historic Protection Areas), HSC.9, HSC.10 (Royal Naval Dockyard Historic Protection Area), HSC.12 and HSC.13 (Archaeology) and Chapter 30 (Mixed Use), particularly MXD.5. Relevant sections of the Plan are reproduced verbatim in the Appendix to this document. The Plan also provides development criteria and regulations for this area.

5. Related Guidance Notes

In matters of design in the Royal Naval Dockyard, reference (in addition to the statutory instruments) should also be made to Development Control Guidance Notes: [GN203 Alterations or additions to Listed Buildings and/or buildings located within Historic Areas](#). This document provides guidance on procedure for planning applications and what is considered appropriate in the way of external alteration to buildings and, if listed, gives guidance on grades. However, information on typical features of buildings is not relevant owing to the distinctive building composition of the Dockyard buildings.

Of particular importance in Guidance Note: GN203 are the ***Guiding Principles for Treatment of Historic Buildings***. These principles are derived from UNESCO-approved charters as well as the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for appropriate heritage conservation. As a tool in design, they represent the preferred approach to maintaining, repairing and replacing historic materials as well as designing new additions and making alterations. Reference to these principles will be particularly useful when the repair and replacement of deteriorated features are necessary and/or when alterations or additions to the property are planned for a new or continued use:

- a) Wherever possible, a historic building should be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
- b) The special architectural or historic character of a historic building should be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property is discouraged.
- c) Each historic building represents a physical record of its time, place, and use and therefore any changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, are discouraged.
- d) Changes to a historic building that has acquired special architectural or historic significance in its own right should be treated as part of the special character of the building and, where possible, be retained and preserved.
- e) Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property should be preserved.
- f) Deteriorated historic features should be repaired rather than replaced. Where the

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- severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature should match the old in design, colour, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features should be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
- g) Archaeological resources should be protected and preserved in place (Note: The Development Applications Board may require the undertaking of a Preliminary Archaeological Assessment for any proposal impacting a Listed Building or Historic Protection Area, as referenced in the Bermuda Plan 2008, Section HSC.12. Please refer to [Guidance Note GN 119: Archaeological Assessments](#).)
 - h) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction should not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the Listed Building. The new work should be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment, while being distinguishable from older work.
 - i) New additions and adjacent or related new construction should be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the Listed Building and its environment would be unimpaired.

6. Character Statement: R. N. Dockyard Historic Protection Area

The Character Statement for the Royal Naval Dockyard Historic Protection Area is a formal statement of the specific character of the area, that is, the physical attributes that belong uniquely to the Royal Naval Dockyard which, when taken together, constitute a distinct environment. The statement presents an overall picture of this distinctiveness and therefore does not itemize the full range of building types, building styles, and forms of expression.

6.1 Description

The Royal Naval Dockyard Historic Protection Area comprises an assemblage of defense works, buildings, open spaces and connecting roadways, located in an area of approximately twenty-four acres at the outermost reach of Ireland Island. The defense works, which are organized formally in three precincts known as the Land Front, the Western Rampart, and the Keep, surround a large collection of structures originally associated with naval activity. Most structures are in hard Bermuda limestone. Amongst the many buildings are landmarks of national historic significance including the Casemate Barracks, the Great Eastern Storehouse (the "Clock Tower" building), and the Commissioner's House. The present character of the Dockyard is the result of evolutionary changes in land use, culminating in institutional (Bermuda Maritime Museum), recreational and commercial uses. Despite these changes, the Royal Naval Dockyard Historic Protection Area continues to illustrate in a profound manner Bermuda's strategic role in Atlantic defense and trade in the nineteenth century.

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6.2 *Character-defining elements*

- a) Bastions and rampart walls in hard Bermuda limestone lining the southern, western and northern extremities of the area, some portions containing gun emplacements;
- b) A hard-edged sea wall lining the eastern extremity of land, within which is a shipyard slip and a ferry-landing slip;
- c) Two projecting piers encasing a body of calmed water, affording berthing of large and small vessels;
- d) Buildings in hard Bermuda limestone within the Land Front defense works, rectangular in shape, with predominantly evenly-spaced windows, barrel vaulted interior roofing for defense purposes, and with flat or pitched exterior roofs, arranged asymmetrically;
- e) Buildings in hard Bermuda limestone located between the Western Rampart and the eastern waterfront, rectangular in shape, primarily one or two-storey, large in scale, symmetrical, with evenly-spaced wooden windows (many with segmental-arches), pitched roofs (presently of corrugated material), some with special features including towers, the assembly arranged in distinct, ordered groupings, and set back within manicured front lawns;
- f) Buildings in hard Bermuda limestone located within the Keep, comprising a dominant central building (the Commissioner's House), square in shape with a four-sided projecting verandah, various supporting structures, and fortifications structures;
- g) Smaller support structures and sites of commemoration within each precinct;
- h) Paved roadways, sidewalks and parking areas within landscaped borders and distinctive surfacing where appropriate;
- i) Green spaces for passive use;
- j) A programme of way-finding signage and specialized lighting.

7. Guidelines for Development

In the context of the Character Statement, and in conformance with Sections HSC.9 and HSC.10 of the Bermuda Plan 2008, development including new buildings and additions to existing buildings should adhere to the following design considerations:

7.1 *Placement (setback)*

Objective: To maintain the existing building/site relationship of the Royal Naval Dockyard

Buildings should be placed on their site in a manner that is contiguous to the building composition within its immediate surrounds and to which it will be visually related. Where buildings generally abut or are very close to roadways, new buildings should be placed in a like manner. Where buildings are located as pavilions set in landscaped open space, with front, side, or rear open or green spaces, new buildings should be placed upon the lot (or set back) in a manner that expresses the continuance of this tradition. In general, new buildings should be placed with their primary entrances

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and/or shop fronts oriented to the road or to open spaces frequented by the public, so as to encourage pedestrian activity. Doors and entrances should be directly accessible at grade, that is, without the use of step or ramps as befits development of Dockyard as a military site.

7.2 Height

Objective: To preserve the profile and silhouette of the Royal Naval Dockyard.

The maximum height is regulated in the Bermuda Plan 2008, that is, no development shall exceed four storeys in the Mixed Use zone and two storeys in the Institutional Zone. The Development Applications Board has the discretion to approve development to a maximum of five storeys in the Mixed Use zone where the additional storey is contained within the attic or roof area of the building. Any increase in height of an existing building to these maximums should follow these criteria:

- a) the exterior design of the addition should be compatible with the existing building;
- b) the structural requirements of the addition should not involve the removal of character-defining features of the building;
- c) the addition will not block significant views or affect the character of any abutting space in the public realm.

What is considered appropriate in terms of height in the Dockyard is dependent upon the context in which a new building is to be placed, that is, whether the building will take its place as part of a row or another type of grouping, will be part of the view-scape of a visually prominent historic building, or will be a stand-alone structure, such as a cruise ship or ferry terminal. The appropriate height of a new building depends also on its proposed bulk and massing. Projections such as towers may exceed the prescribed height limit provided that their mass is vertical in orientation and they do not block important views.

There is no minimum height ascribed to the Royal Naval Dockyard.

7.3 Bulk and massing

Objective: To respect the prevailing bulk and massing of buildings within the Dockyard.

The Royal Naval Dockyard Historic Protection Area is characterized by large institutional buildings of uniform material located within formal, occasionally symmetrically-arranged settings. Their large massing is broken up with the variation presented by solids and voids, horizontal and vertical definition, variation between rough-cut and ashlar masonry, and special features such as balustrades and quoins. Roofs are commonly low in pitch and either hipped or gabled. There are many supporting structures such as gate houses and gates, walls, small outbuildings and gazebos.

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New buildings should be designed in such a way that the essential bulk and massing characteristics within the various settings are not lost. New structures of similar bulk should continue to employ solids and voids of similar rhythm and dimension, and carry features, both horizontal and vertical, that help to break up the large mass. Roof pitch should not vary significantly from that which is prevalent. Care should be taken to preserve important aspects or views of buildings and the waterfront. Supporting (smaller) buildings should remain secondary and not dominate this essential character, but they should be designed so as to be compatible with surrounding development.

Additions to existing buildings should not duplicate or mimic their architectural expression, but should employ materials and massing in a like manner without dominating the original building. Additions should be offset from existing buildings and should be distinguishable from nineteenth century work.

7.4 *Scale and proportion of buildings*

Objective: To maintain a scale in keeping with buildings of an industrial, military or institutional bearing and to ensure a harmonious pattern of buildings within a distinctive area.

The scale of most of the buildings in the Dockyard is defined by substantial floor-to-floor heights, entrances and openings, all of which are appropriate for buildings intended for military/industrial use. Most buildings maintain a predominantly horizontal orientation while building features are used to create pleasant and cohesive compositions. New buildings and additions to existing buildings should be designed to respect prevailing proportion so as to retain a sense of unity and harmony in the overall composition. Such development should not duplicate or mimic their architectural expression, but should maintain proportions in a manner similar to prevailing development.

7.5 *Exterior materials, detailing and features*

Objective: To maintain the traditional image of the Dockyard

The vast majority of buildings, fortifications, walls and gates in the Royal Naval Dockyard are constructed of hard Bermuda limestone and imported granite. Some buildings are constructed of soft Bermuda stone which is normally plastered or rendered. While there are some traditional Bermuda roofs within the area, most roofing for large industrial/military buildings is presently of profiled zinc and corrugated material. Materials used in new construction should be compatible with these materials, but need not duplicate them. Stone, high quality metal, cast concrete, wood and glass will be considered compatible when used to complement the essential character of the area.

The substantial mass of most buildings, and their scale, are compensated for by detailing and features that help to break up the mass. The towers of the Clocktower

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Buildings are the prime example, but there are also deeply recessed bays, balconies, corner treatments and decorative details elsewhere in the complex. These elements may be used to creative effect to minimize bulk in new buildings, provided they are respectful of scale and proportion. However, in terms of architectural expression, care should be taken to treat new buildings as objects of contemporary expression while being compatible with the historic environment. Detailing and features should not be used to provide a false sense of historical development. Blank walls should be avoided in highly traveled public areas.

7.6 Colour

Objective: To encourage a consistent and harmonious exterior colour palette for applicable Dockyard buildings

Colour is not regulated in the Bermuda Plan 2008 although it is policy that a colour that significantly differs from the traditional palette of Bermuda colours may require planning permission. In the Royal Naval Dockyard, colour appears only sparingly, given that most structures are outwardly expressed in unadorned masonry, and are not plastered and painted. Therefore, with a few exceptions, the overall image is soft grey, with colour used simply as a detail in windows, doors, signs and landscaping elements. Where it is possible to add colour to a building, a palette of Bermuda colours in the deep-primary and earth-tone ranges, in keeping with the military/industrial character of the buildings, is encouraged. Consideration should be given to unified colour schemes for buildings which form part of a distinctive grouping.

7.7 *The public realm*

Objective: To provide attractive and appropriate amenities for users, and to provide a unified image of the Dockyard.

In the Royal Naval Dockyard, the public realm is one of the key defining features since many buildings are in themselves public buildings and they front on public thoroughways. Moreover, many buildings take prominent places near the waterfront and have a role in intermodal transport. Having a distinct identity as expressed in its buildings, the Dockyard requires paving, landscaping, furnishings, signs and supporting structures with a clear and consistent design vocabulary. Additionally, these elements should be of high quality and installed with attention to fit and comfort, bearing in mind the large number of pedestrians from cruise ships and ferries.

Where possible, and without adversely affecting the character of historic buildings, places open to the public, whether commercial or cultural establishments, or places of historic interest, should be oriented to the road or sidewalk that is traveled by the public, and newly developed areas will require corresponding improvements in public-realm infrastructure.

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The principle of public access to the water's edge is paramount in any decisions regarding the public realm. Indeed, the relationship of the Dockyard to berthing for large and small vessels is one of its character-defining elements. Public uses should be provided where possible and planned in an integrated way that is compatible with the function of the space.

The following parameters should be observed when selecting and installing street and public space elements:

- a) Design should complement the character of Dockyard, recognizing its history and pattern of development over time, and not dominate or detract from it.
- b) Design should meet the needs of Dockyard in terms of pedestrian access, traffic circulation, safety, and ease of maintenance.
- c) Traditional and non-traditional materials may be employed. Where materials are not traditional, materials should be compatible with traditional materials.
- d) Where possible, furnishings manufactured or crafted locally should be employed, provided the design is appropriate to the setting. Uniquely crafted furnishings enhance the distinctiveness of a place.
- e) Where feasible, elements such as seating, trash receptacles and public telephones should be grouped together, to promote respectful use and socialization.

7.7.1 Surfacing:

Though not historically "correct" in the Dockyard, special surfacing of roads, sidewalks, public spaces and crossing points adds texture and warmth to the setting. Materials can be used in combinations that help define a space, such as a street or public area, mark areas intended for pedestrian travel, and aid in traffic calming. Materials should be selected that are non-slip, enable movement by the physically challenged, facilitate drainage, and harmonize with buildings in terms of colour, shape, size, and texture. The use of too many varieties of paving surfaces within a single setting should be avoided.

7.7.2. Support

Gazebos, shelters, ticket booths, and other supporting structures should be designed using a vocabulary that is compatible with the historic setting. Consideration may be given to distinctive design of these elements within the Keep which houses the Museum complex.

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7.7.3 Seating:

Seating can be achieved using benches, low perimeter walls, and stone planters. Bench seating should be durable and commodious, and ideally capable of arranging so that users may socialize.

7.7.4 Trash

Receptacles for trash should be generally compatible with light standards and benches in appearance.

7.7.5 Light standards:

Lighting standards should be oriented to the pedestrian to provide a slower rhythm and “pace” to streets and public spaces. The design of light standards need not be based on historical documentation, but should be compatible with the historic environment of this area. Where feasible, lighting standards should be capable of accepting banners for celebration.

7.7.6 Vegetation:

Trees and shrubs should be selected to provide shade where needed while helping to define, or create a sense of enclosure to, selected spaces and streets, for example at traffic “choker” points, at the borders of open spaces, and at selected points on a street where feasible. Grassed or semi-grassed surfaces may be applied where a transition from hard to soft landscaping is desired.

7.7.7 Bollards:

Bollards intended to restrict vehicular access should be durable enough to resist vehicular damage, with a width and height suitable to enable double-duty as incidental seating.

7.7.8 Public art:

Murals on public or private buildings, three-dimensional art or sculpture in public places, and specially fabricated streetscape elements can act as positive visual and social enhancements which may reflect a local theme, tell an important story, or express a point of view. However, public art should act in support of the area’s historic character, not detract from it. In all cases, it should not obscure a building’s character-defining features, heavily alter the ambience of a public place, block important views and vistas,

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or harm the natural environment. The subject matter need not be historical in nature, but should be relevant to the identity of the area.

7.7.9 Contemporary elements:

To minimize the visual impact of air conditioning units, vents, exhaust fans, skylights, satellite dishes, utility structures and other contemporary service elements should be located, where possible away from public view, and should not obscure character-defining features of buildings.

7.7.10 Signs:

The Advertisements Regulations Act 1911 gives the restrictions on signs. This information is summarized in [Guidance Note: GN409 – A Guide to Advertisement Signs & Announcements](#). Essentially, a sign may announce the name of a business or institution, and the height and width of lettering may not exceed 15 inches. Signs may not be visible above the roof-line or sky-line, may not be flashing or illuminated from within the sign assembly, and may not contain the National Flag, brand names or logos.

The following are additional guidelines for signs in the Dockyard;

As a visitor destination, the Dockyard features many types of signs. They include directional or wayfinding signs, warning signs, interpretative signs or panels, and advertising signs which mark places of business or specific attractions. A popular sign type is the horizontal or vertical banner. The latter can be effective in marking the site of an attraction or a specific event or festival. Signs are mounted to buildings as flat, projecting, hanging or awning signs, or are free-standing (in-ground, sandwich-board, or banner on a pole or light-standard). As a general principle, sign types and styles should be compatible with the historic environment, should support the visual coherence of streetscapes and buildings, and should not present undue visual clutter.

Generally, signs should be compatible with the purpose, size and design of the building or place to which they visually relate. Maximum sign face area should be proportional to the building and should not dominate the building face. No more than one advertising sign per façade should be applied and buildings should never be over-signed. Signs should not be visible above the roofline or skyline of any property, and should not obscure traffic warning signs. The design of signs should follow these parameters:

- a) Signs mounted on buildings should be of a compatible material, should not dominate the façade, and should not obscure character-defining features.
- b) Freestanding signs should not hinder the relationship of the building to its associated landscape.
- c) Lighting of signs is permitted, but lighting should not dominate the sign assembly or be so obtrusive as to be a hazard to traffic. Neon or back-lit box signs are prohibited.

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- d) Wayfinding and interpretative signs, and special banners marking festivals or events, should follow a uniform pattern in terms of materials, structure and layout.

8. Related Reading

- West End Development Corporation Master Plan 2005 – establishes land uses and provides broad goals and objectives for the west end, including Dockyard.
- Bermuda's Architectural Heritage: Sandys, 1999 – Bermuda National Trust publication provides important historical context and details of the evolution of many buildings.
- Edward C. Harris, Heritage Matters: Essays on the History of Bermuda, Vol.1, Bermuda Maritime Museum Press, 2007.

Contacts

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This section contains extracts from the Bermuda Plan 2008 that are of particular relevance to the Town of St. George Historic Protection Area.

Chapter 8: Design

Design Statement

The discretionary requirement for a “design statement” includes, as one of the possible criteria for such a requirement, the treatment of listed buildings, as follows:

Bermuda Image

The “Bermuda Image” is a statement describing the visual elements that are distinctively Bermudian. It provides a general context for design in Bermuda.

DSN.4 The Board shall ensure that all development is sensitive to and compatible with "the Bermuda Image", where “the Bermuda Image” means the appearance of Bermuda resulting from a harmonious mix of natural features and man-made elements which produce a visual quality and a character of development which are distinctively Bermudian, including:-

- (a) a scale and massing of building which are compatible with the landform and a building design which sits comfortably in its setting;
- (b) the balance and proportions of the traditional building form as exemplified in sturdy residential structures with white pitched roofs, and features and embellishments which distinguish local architecture;
- (c) the use of traditional and natural building materials;
- (d) plentiful, lush and colourful sub-tropical vegetation;
- (e) gently rolling hillsides and dense vegetation which effectively blend to screen development and to maintain the illusion of open space and a natural appearance;
- (f) Bermuda stone walls, rendered and painted stone walls, weathered rock cuts, hedging and planting alongside roads; and
- (g) natural coves, bays, beaches, rocky coastline and islands, with views and glimpses of vividly coloured waters and the ocean.

Design Principles for Urban Areas

Recognizing the special nature of built-up areas, the Bermuda Plan contains a set of design principles that are directed to urban areas zoned Mixed Use and Commercial. Their intent is to foster visual coherence, due attention to authenticity, and quality in form and materials.

DSN.5 The Board shall ensure that any proposal for development in an urban area, as designated by the Mixed Use and Commercial zones, takes into consideration the following design principles:-

- (a) design which is sensitive to and compatible with the “Bermuda Image” and respects the existing scale, proportion and detail of the area;
- (b) preservation of important features, landmarks, views and vistas;

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Development in the Royal Naval Dockyard

- (c) public access to important natural features such as waterfronts, conservation areas and amenity areas;
- (d) respect for the historical evolution of an area and buildings from different time periods;
- (e) respect for the character defining features of individual buildings as well as the building frontages, setbacks from roads, material combinations, and light and shadow characteristics of a group of buildings;
- (f) site context as a determinant in new development including the pattern and historic value of surrounding buildings and the overall topography of the area;
- (g) compatibility of new development with the setting, and historical and architectural character of the area;
- (h) paving, fixtures, signs, street furniture, and landscaping which enhance and are compatible with the character of the area;
- (i) public safety, connectivity and ease of access for pedestrians and the disabled in the design of sidewalks and public spaces; and
- (j) public utilities and parking areas which are designed to be sensitive to and compatible with the character of the area.

Chapter 21: Historic Environment

The Bermuda Plan 2008 contains policies regulating design within Historic Protection Areas that address the area's character as well as its context, as follows:

Historic Protection Areas

HSC.6 In determining an application located within a Historic Protection Area, the Board shall have regard to the provisions of section 31 of the Act, and the Board shall have the power to refuse planning permission if the development would cause detriment to:-

- (a) the established historic, architectural or cultural character of the area;
- (b) the aspect, appearance or view of the area; or
- (c) a prospect or view from one or more parts of the area.

Royal Naval Dockyard Historic Protection Area

HSC.9 In amplification of policy HSC.6, in considering any application within the Royal Naval Dockyard Historic Protection Area, the Board shall be satisfied that:-

- (a) setbacks are in general conformance with existing buildings on the street(s) to which the building is visually related;
- (b) building frontages are similar to those of existing buildings and the historic subdivision pattern of the area;
- (c) the physical attributes of buildings, including their setting, massing, height, proportions, roof pitch, doors and windows, chimneys and other elements preserve and enhance the historic character and defining features of the surrounding area; and
- (d) materials employed in the development of an existing building are traditional to its original exterior appearance or, if contemporary, are compatible with its original exterior appearance.

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HSC.10

Notwithstanding the relevant policies of Chapter 28, Institutional and Chapter 30, Mixed Use, development within the Royal Naval Dockyard Historic Protection Area shall comply with the following development regulations:-

- (a) the maximum building height in the Institutional zone shall not exceed two storeys;
- (b) the maximum building height in the Mixed Use zone shall not exceed four storeys;
- (c) notwithstanding sub-paragraph (b), the Board shall have the discretion to approve development to a maximum of five storeys where the additional storey is contained within the attic or roof area of the building; and
- (d) reflective glass shall not be permitted.

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