



The countryside charity
London

Grey2Green

Front gardens on the front line

November 2024

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↔ Hackney



Elgin Road, Ilford London Borough of Redbridge

Historic image <https://thecorbettssociety.org.uk/the-estates/ilford/>.
Current image from [Google Maps Streetview](#)



What can you do?



With driveway/parking

- Reinststate your garden / park in the road
- Introduce permeable surface + greenery + rainwater management

Without driveway/parking

- De-pave, plant and/or rewild
- Introduce planters
- Introduce rainwater planters (downpipes from rooftops)

Ealing Front Gardens Project [link](#)



43 Reasons



What You Can Do



Be Inspired



Blog

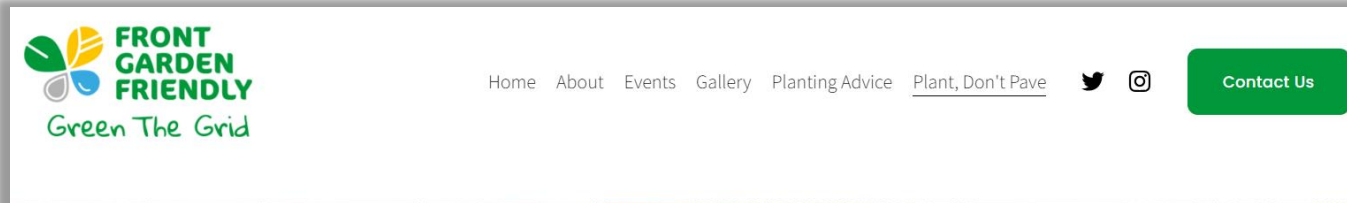


Our Research

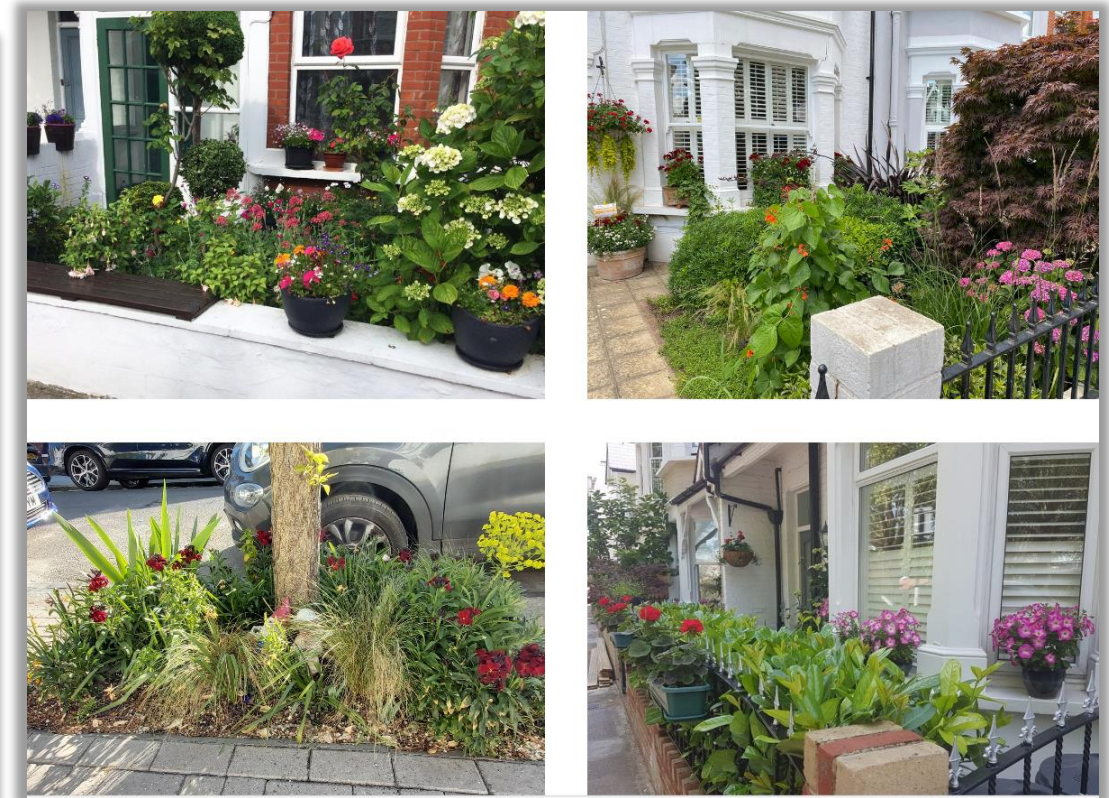


Resources

Front Garden Friendly: Green The Grid

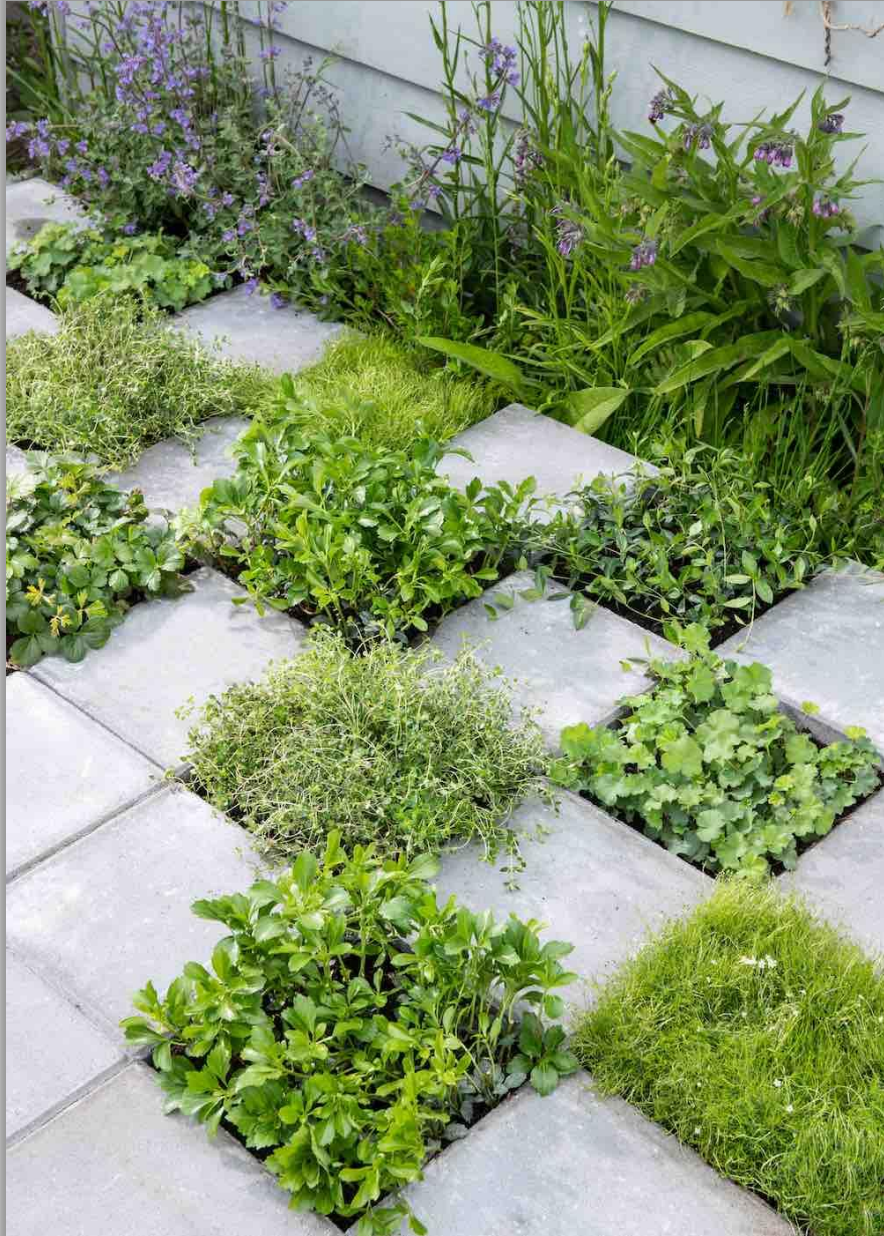


[General 2 — Green the Grid](#) – a ‘how to’ guide



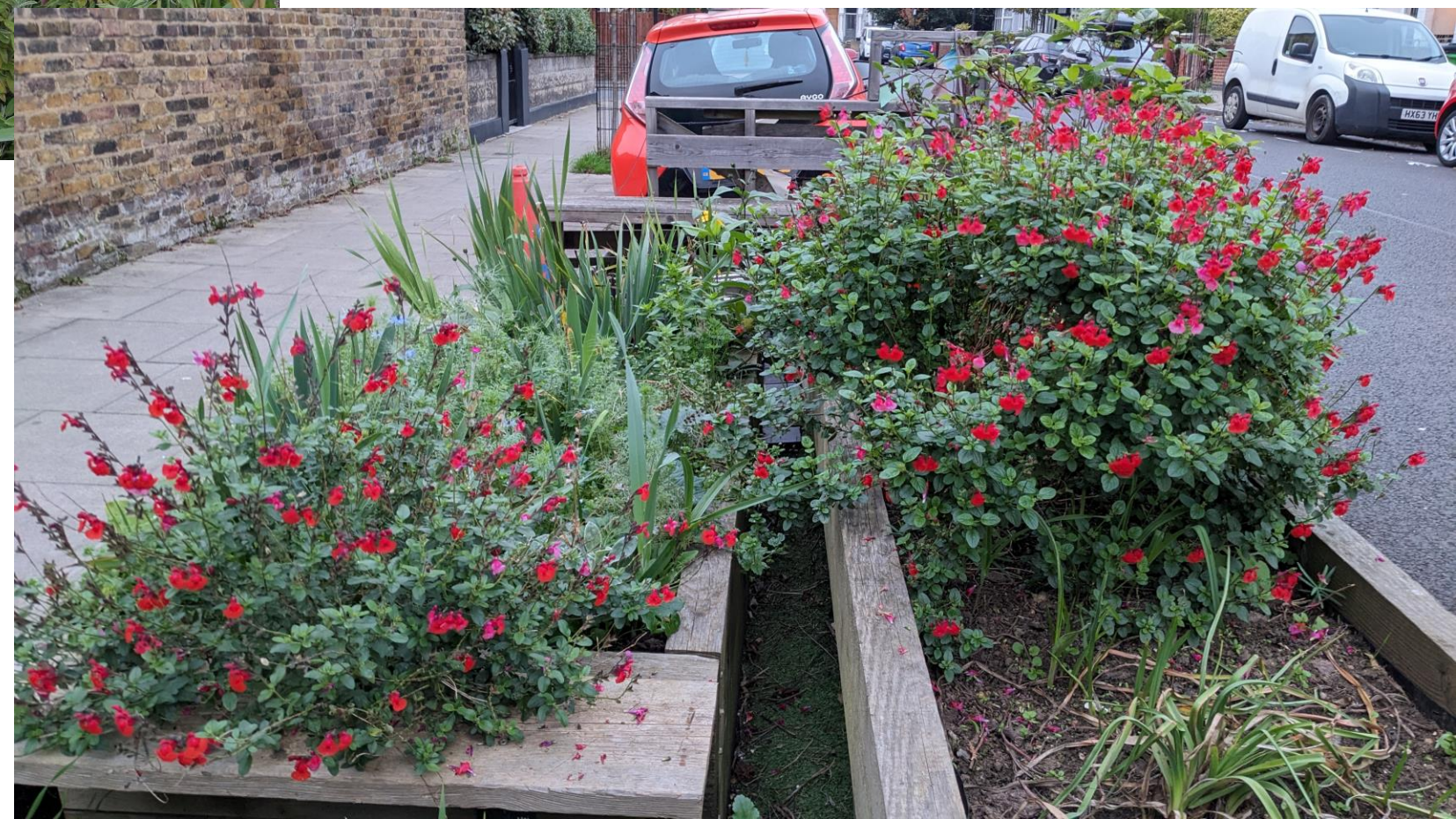
[Gallery 1 — Green the Grid](#) Lots of inspiration

<https://groenvandaag.nl/tegelwip-seizoen-is-weer-begonnen/>



<https://www.nk-tegelwippen.nl/project/tegels-wippen-hoe-dan/>







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Driveways – blocking use of public kerbside

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Front Garden Parking – the techy stuff



- Converting a front garden for parking does not require planning permission ('permitted development rights' apply)*
- *It is possible for boroughs to apply for these rights to be retracted (an 'Article 4' direction), for example in a conservation area but this is rare. Gunnersbury Garden Estate is an example.
- HOWEVER, to legally park in a front garden, a householder needs to apply, and pay, for a pavement crossover AKA *footway crossover* or *driveway* or *drop kerb* (a one-off charge, no annual fee like CPZ)
- Councils use crossover policy to control front garden conversions
- Unintended financial incentive to convert front gardens for parking (now even more so, as EV charging is cheaper from home)
- There are a LOT of illegal crossovers.

Front garden parking is 'permitted development' but boroughs must give permission for a pavement crossover.

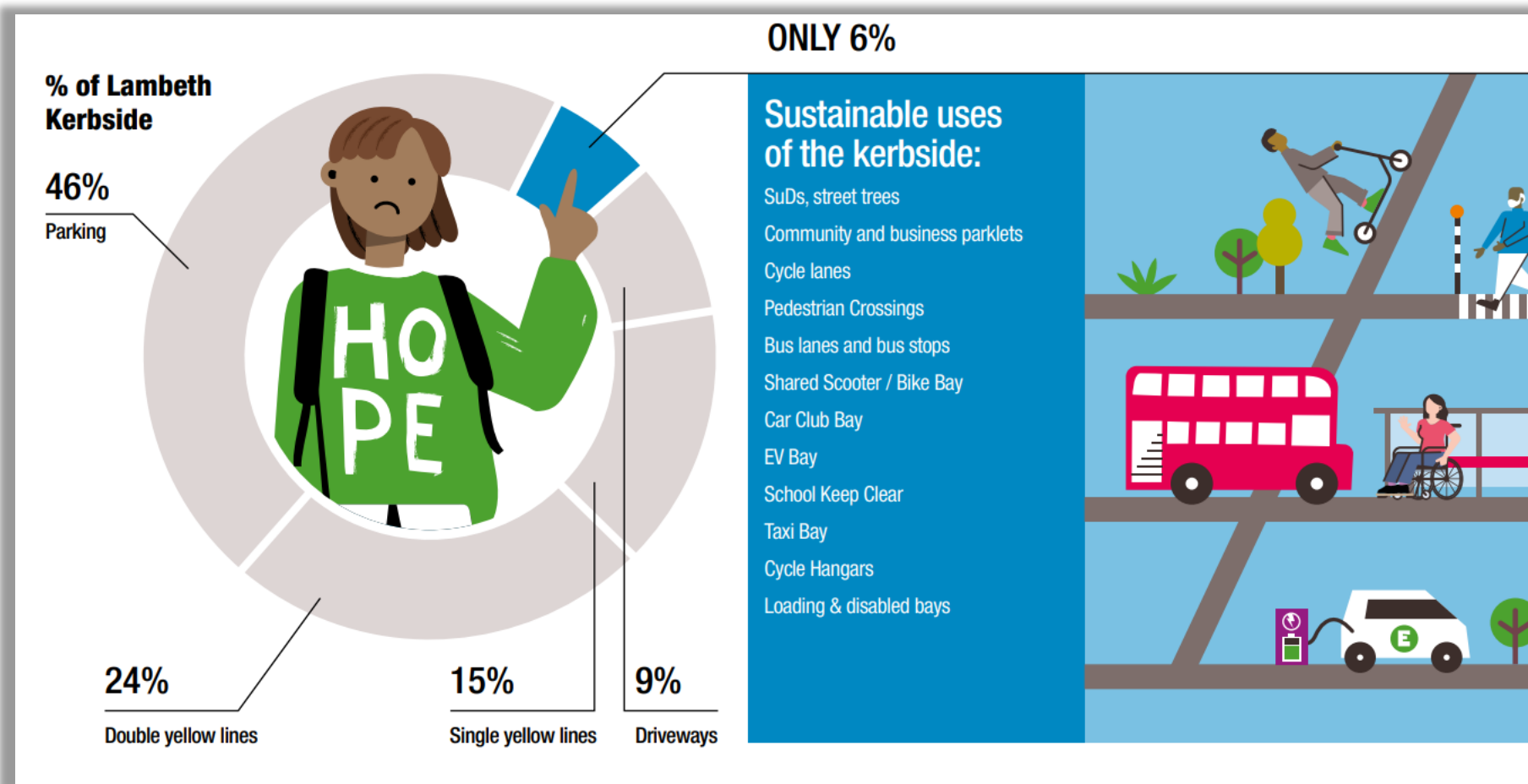
Problems with front garden parking (& associated footway crossovers)

- Uneven pavement – harder to negotiate for pedestrians and wheelchair or mobility aid users
- Bigger cars now often cause pavement obstruction – see images (hard to enforce, apparently)
- Crossovers introduce road danger onto pavements
- Introducing controlled parking becomes complex because crossovers can't be blocked (+ drivers avoid parking controls / costs, so removing a key lever for discouraging car trips)
- Kerbside (public land) in front of a house cannot be used for other things like rain gardens, cycle hangars, protected cycle track etc.
- It's an eyesore / degrades the local streetscene
- Front gardens can't absorb rainwater (though resolved with genuinely permeable surface); loss of habitat and natural air-cooling

"Pushing someone in a wheelchair for a couple of months this summer, I found conventional drive crossovers a real problem – it was a real effort to keep in a straight line."
See this [thread](#) on Twitter.



Lambeth kerbside analysis





Street trees can block pavements. **NEW STREET TREES** should be placed on build-outs on the road (see centre image), taking space from parking, not on the Street pavement where they take space from pedestrians, wheelchairs etc.

Where **EXISTING STREET TREES** block the pavement, a pavement should be built out into the street around the tree – as seen in the image on the right.



Electric Vehicle CHARGING POINTS should be placed on the road, taking space from parking, not on the pavement where they take space from pedestrians, wheelchairs etc



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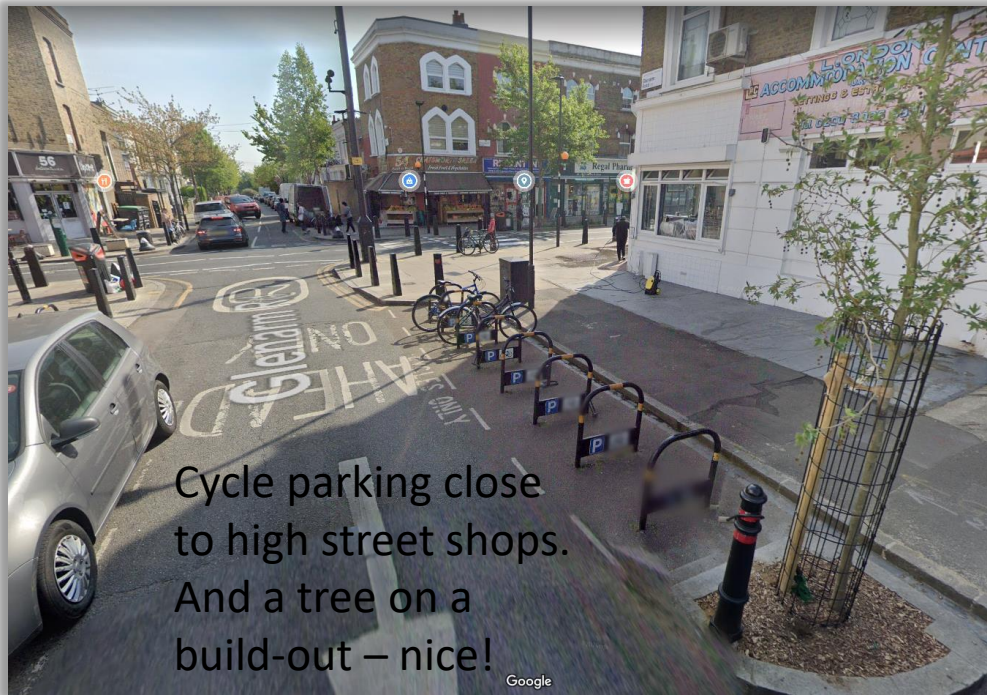


Green infrastructure / sustainable urban drainage.
Parking spaces can be replaced with much-needed 'rain gardens' aka Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, like this one in Hackney (the image to the right shows the same space when it still had parking).





Parklets. Parking spaces can be used for community seating or flower beds



Cycle parking close to high street shops. And a tree on a build-out – nice!

Google



Image: [We Rode And Ranked London's Cycle Hire Schemes](#) | Londonist



Space for cycle hire, including dockless, to avoid this situation.





Protected cycle lanes can be created where parking is removed, like in the road shown here, before and after.



Bus lanes. Often parking for private cars is given priority over buses.

The road in the image to the left (Hackney Road near to the junction with the A10) is in central London and hosts two high frequency buses, the 26 and 55.

The image to the right, Dalston Lane, also in Hackney, shows a section where parking has been removed in favour of a bus lane (though the single yellow lines indicate this is not 24/7 – which we would advocate it should be).





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View gallery



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