

APPENDIX 8

DESIGN CRITERIA

Design Criteria

- A3.1 Buildings, streets and spaces should be of the highest quality. In addition to the policies of the Local Plan, development proposals should satisfy the following more detailed criteria to ensure that new development creates a positive sense of place, does not lead to a gradual deterioration in the quality of the built environment, and that landscaping, the need for privacy and amenity space and the creation of identity in new development are taken into account.
- A3.2 It is important to note that whilst a development may be in accordance with the guidance contained in this document, in some cases it may still not be considered acceptable based on site circumstances. Likewise, certain developments may not comply with all guidance but could still be considered acceptable, particularly in Town and District Centres and other locations where high density development is considered appropriate and a relaxation of standards may be justified to enable efficient and effective use of land. All applications will be assessed and determined on their own merits.
- A3.3 The following criteria provide more detailed guidance for all new development including new dwellings, replacement dwellings, and extensions or alterations to existing dwellings.
- A3.4 For the purposes of these guidelines, habitable rooms are considered to be living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, studies and bedrooms.
- A3.5 Non-residential space is not given the same degree of protection as residential properties. However, proposals should still ensure that development provides for suitable standards of amenity for existing and proposed non-residential space to maintain these as attractive spaces contributing to the economy of the District, and that commercial development including new buildings, replacement buildings and extensions or alterations to existing buildings do not adversely affect the character or amenities of the District.

Privacy

- A3.6 All developments are expected to maintain acceptable standards of privacy for both new and existing residential buildings. The degree of overlooking and privacy inherent in a development will depend on density, layout, distances and angles between buildings, internal layout, positioning of windows, relative levels and, to some extent, the presence of trees, hedges or other landscape features.
- A3.7 In the interests of privacy and to prevent overlooking:
- a) Distances between buildings should be sufficient so as to prevent overlooking, particularly from upper floors. As an indicative figure, 22m should be achieved between the faces of single or two storey buildings backing onto each other or in other circumstances where privacy needs to be achieved. Distances should be

greater between buildings in excess of two storeys (especially dwellings/flats) with elevations which directly face one another or in situations where there are site level differences involved. Mitigating circumstances such as careful layout and orientation, screening and window positions may allow a reduction of distances between elevations.

- b) A proportion of each garden should be a private zone abutting or close to the dwelling that is not visible from the gardens or ground floor habitable rooms of adjoining properties. This should be of a minimum distance of 3 metres from a wall of the dwelling and be permanently screened by walls or fences.
- c) Development should not incorporate balconies, or first floor conservatories which overlook neighbouring properties to any degree.
- d) Trees and hedges (either existing or planted as part of the development) can provide an effective screen but should not be solely relied upon due to the loss of leaves in winter or the possibility of storm damage, disease etc.
- e) Windows of habitable rooms at first floor level should not generally be located in flank elevations. Flank windows of other rooms should be non-opening, below 1.7m (from internal floor level) and obscure glazed. High level windows with a sill height of 1.7 metres or more may be acceptable where a secondary light source is necessary.
- f) Ground floor windows should be located away from flank boundaries. Where flank windows to ground floor habitable rooms have to be incorporated, the boundary must be satisfactorily screened by a fence, wall or evergreen hedge.
- g) Reliance should not be placed on high screening fences or walls (2 metres and above) where these would form a dominant and oppressive feature.

Prospect

- A3.8 Developments which rely on outlook over garage courts, extensive parking areas, railway lines etc. will be discouraged. All residential units should have an outlook over a public or private highway, garden or other open space.
- A3.9 Where the rear of a building looks onto the side of another (for instance at a corner in a housing layout), the distance between them must be sufficient to avoid the flank wall having an overbearing effect.

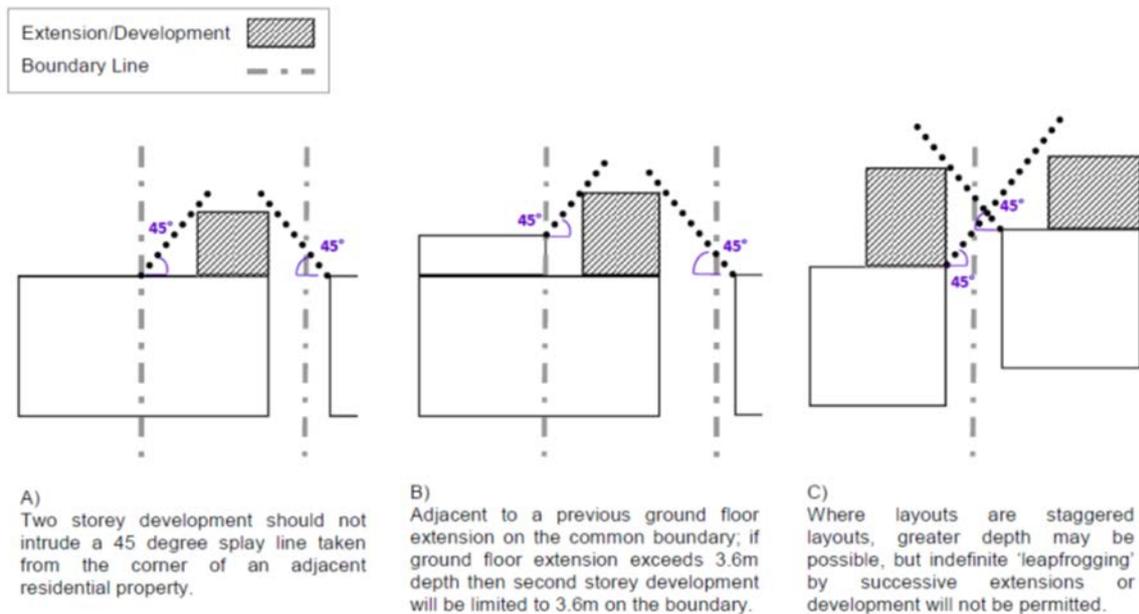
Daylight, Sunlight and Outlook

- A3.10 Development should ensure a good level of daylight, sunlight and outlook, throughout the day and the year and minimise impact on surrounding properties and spaces.

A3.11 The design of all development is required to maximise natural light into the room (subject to passive heating and cooling considerations). All dwellings should provide for direct sunlight to enter the main habitable rooms for a reasonable period of the day and living rooms, kitchens and dining rooms should preferably receive direct sunlight.

A3.12 Two storey development should not intrude into a 45 degree splay line drawn from the corner of an adjacent residential property. This principle is dependent on the spacing and relative positions of the dwellings and consideration will also be given to the juxtaposition of properties, land levels and the position of windows and extensions on neighbouring properties. Figure A.1 provides illustrative examples.

Figure A.1 Examples of the 45 Degree Splay Line Principle



Aspect

A3.13 All new residential units should be dual aspect, unless provision of dual aspect is demonstrated to be impossible or unfavourable. Where such circumstances are demonstrated, all single aspect units must:

- a) Provide a good level of daylight for each habitable room, and optimise opportunity for direct sunlight;
- b) Ensure that the aspect is not predominantly north-facing and does not face onto main roads or other significant sources of air pollution and/or noise and vibration, which would preclude opening windows;
- c) Provide a good level of natural ventilation throughout the dwelling via passive/non-mechanical design measures; and
- d) Ensure that future occupiers have a good level of privacy and do not experience adverse impacts from overlooking.

Flatted Developments

- A3.14 Proposals for flatted development, or involving the conversion of residential unit(s) into a larger number of units must provide for a good standard of amenity for all occupiers and consider the effect of development on the amenity of adjacent properties, and put in place measures to address any adverse impacts raised. This will include (but is not limited to) the following considerations:
- a) The number of units per core and storey should not normally exceed 8 in order to encourage neighbourly interaction, and a smaller number is preferable;
 - b) Internal communal corridors should be a minimum of 1.5m wide and should ideally have windows which open to promote cross ventilation and maximise daylight;
 - c) Common/shared entrances should lead to a hall large enough for people to manoeuvre with shopping and/or baby buggies, and in wheelchairs, with ease;
 - d) Access cores must provide an access control system, with entry phones in all dwellings linked to a main front door with remote electronic lock release.
 - e) Internal layouts, including the relationship of rooms on different floors within the scheme, and the position of entrances, extensions and fire escapes should ensure amenity for all occupiers;

Residential Amenity Space

- A3.15 This section refers to provision of private and semi-private communal amenity space to serve individual dwellings rather than requirements for public open space which are set out at Policy XX.
- A3.16 New residential development should provide private amenity space within the curtilage of the development in accordance with the following indicative minimum levels:
- a) Houses
 - 2 bed house – 45sqm;
 - 3 bed house – 60sqm;
 - 4 bed house - 75sqm;
 - Additional bedrooms – 15sqm each.
 - b) Flats (space may be allocated specifically to each flat or provided communally)
 - 1 bed flat - 15sqm;
 - 2 or more bed flat – 25sqm.
 - c) Specialist and Supported Housing for older people:
 - 15sqm per bedspace to be provided communally.
- A3.17 These standards provide guidance for all new residential development. However it is acknowledged that in some situations, such as where existing buildings in town centres are converted to residential use, there may be challenges in meeting these standards. Some flexibility will be applied where developments would still provide a good standard of living for future residents. This may, for example, include additional internal living space or the provision of winter gardens.

- A3.18 Amenity space provided should be of practical shape and utility, with care taken to ensure the space offers a good standard of amenity. Where privacy is achieved by means such as careful layout, screening, or differing levels, rear gardens may be of varied lengths. However, where rear garden length alone is relied on to provide privacy the minimum length should be 11 metres.
- A3.19 The minimum depth and width of balconies and other private external spaces should be 1500mm.
- A3.20 Depending on the character of the development, the amenity space provided may be in the form of private gardens or in part, may contribute to formal spaces/settings for groups of buildings or existing mature trees. In the latter case this can help avoid problems which can arise from the proximity of large trees to houses.
- A3.21 Communal space for flats should be well screened from highways and casual passers-by but should benefit from good levels of natural surveillance. Amenity space that lacks clear landscape proposals and consists of simple grassed or hard surfaced areas will not be acceptable.
- A3.22 Where space in the front of a dwelling is assigned to that particular property, it should be defensible space in the sense of being enclosed as part of the original layout.
- A3.23 Purely visual amenity space plays a different role; it should be prominent and may well include mature trees and key areas of planting, and serve as a visual asset to the development without necessarily being heavily used by the occupants.

Built Form

- A3.24 All proposals should be in keeping with the prevailing landscape/streetscape, reflecting the variety of local building types by using complementary building materials and designs, and should not result in overdevelopment or unacceptable intensification by reason of scale, form, bulk, height, spacing, density and design.
- A3.25 New development, including extensions to existing properties should take into consideration impacts on neighbouring properties, both within and surrounding the development, and visual impacts generally. Oversized, unattractive and poorly sited development can result in loss of light and outlook for neighbours and detract from the character and appearance of the street scene, or original property in the case of extensions.
- A3.26 Few properties are designed to incorporate future extensions, therefore any additions built need to take into consideration their effect on neighbouring properties and their visual impact generally.
- A3.27 Most dwellings in the District are terraced, semi-detached or detached. Limited enlargements or alterations to these types of properties may be 'permitted development'

under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended). Permitted development rights may also allow for extensions and alterations to commercial buildings. The local planning authority has no control over these works unless there are restrictions imposed by a planning condition, there is an Article 4 Direction, or the permitted development allowance has been taken up by previous works.

- A3.28 Where permission is required, applications will be assessed on their own merits but new development and extensions or alterations to existing properties must:
- a) Not be excessively prominent in relation to adjacent properties or to the general street scene.
 - b) Have the appropriate number of car parking spaces and/or garages in accordance with the Council's parking standards.
 - c) Respect the character of the property/street scene particularly with regard to the spacing of properties, roof form, positioning and style of windows and doors, and materials.
 - d) Not result in loss of light to the windows of neighbouring properties nor allow overlooking.

A3.29 The following guidelines will apply:

Single Storey Extensions

- Side extensions: proximity to the flank boundary will be individually assessed.
- Rear extensions: generally, the maximum depth should be 3.6m, or 4m in the case of detached dwellings. This distance may be reduced if the extension would adversely affect adjoining properties or be unduly prominent.
- Front extensions: applications will be assessed on their individual merits but should not result in loss of light to windows of a neighbouring property nor be excessively prominent in the street scene.

Two Storey Extensions

- Side extensions: in order to prevent a terracing effect and maintain an appropriate spacing between properties in character with the locality:
 - First floor extensions (i.e. over a garage or previous ground floor extension) shall be a minimum of 1.2m from the flank boundary.
 - Two storey extensions may be positioned on the flank boundary provided that the first floor element is set in by a minimum of 1.2m.

This distance must be increased in low density areas or where the extension would have an adverse effect on an adjoining property. In high density areas an absolute minimum of 1m will be considered. See Figure A.2 for illustrative examples.

- Rear extensions: in terms of size and volume, each application will be assessed on its individual merits according to the characteristics of the particular property.
- Front extensions: applications will be assessed on their individual merits but should not result in loss of light to windows of a neighbouring property nor be excessively prominent in the street scene.

New Development

- Development at first floor level and above should be set in from flank boundaries by a minimum of 1.2m. This distance may be increased in low density areas or where

development would have an adverse effect on an adjoining property. In high density areas, an absolute minimum of 1m will be considered. See Figure A.2 for illustrative examples.

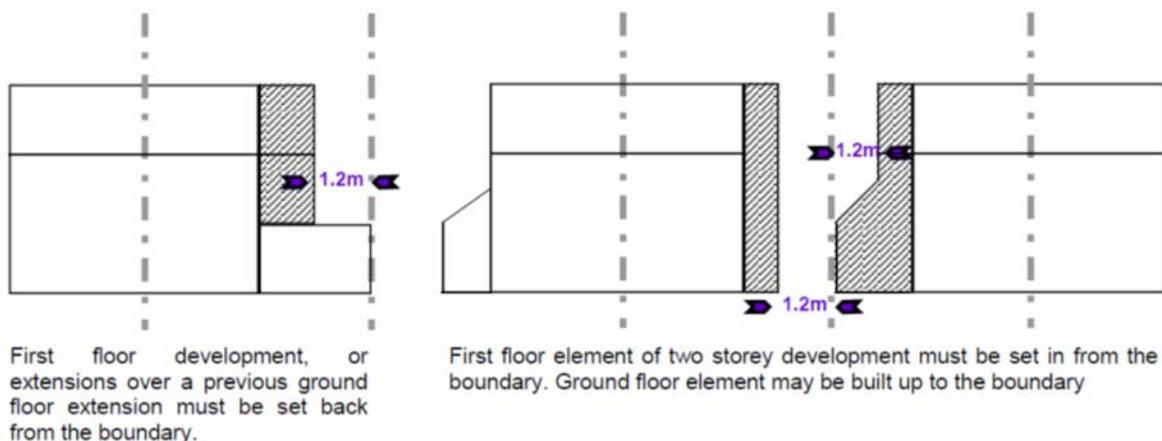
Dormers

- Dormer windows should always be subordinate to the main roof. They should be set below the existing ridge level, set in from either end of the roof and set back from the plane of the front or rear wall. The roof form should respect the character of the house if possible.
- Front dormers may not always be appropriate in the street scene.
- Multiple dormers should be proportionate in scale and number to the host roof.

Roofs

- Crown roofs can exacerbate the depth of properties and often result in an inappropriate bulk and massing. As such, they are generally discouraged and more traditional pitched roofs are generally favoured.
- Increases to ridge height will be assessed on their own merits at the time of a planning application, and a street scene plan will be required as part of any application. Where roof forms are of a uniform style/height and appearance, it is unlikely that an increase in ridge height will be supported by the Council.
- Hip to Gable extensions are discouraged in the case of semi-detached houses as it is considered that this unbalances the pair and results in a loss of symmetry. In some cases, roof forms in a street may be uniform and therefore this type of alteration may erode the group value of the street and will not be supported by the Council.

Figure A.2 Examples of Single and Two Storey Side Extensions/Development and Flank to Boundary Distances



Servicing and Ancillary Facilities

A3.30 Careful consideration should be given to services for dwellings, bin and bike storage, access to meter boxes, space for clothes drying and places for deliveries. These should be designed

to ensure that they are discreet and can easily be used in a safe way and should be designed as part of the building envelope wherever possible.

- A3.31 In all cases facilities should be designed to minimise visual impact on the street scene and ensure the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.
- A3.32 Provision of sufficient and accessible external storage space for the accommodation of containers for refuse and recycling is particularly important, and must be carefully designed and located to be accessible to the occupiers of developments and waste operatives and to minimise impacts on the character and amenities of an area.
- A3.33 The layout and location of parking areas are key features affecting the overall quality of residential and commercial schemes. There are many different approaches that can support successful outcomes, such as on-street parking, in-curtilage parking and basement parking.
- A3.34 The provision, location and type of car parking and service areas will be considered in context to ensure the most successful outcome can be delivered in each case, with consideration for factors including:
- a) Safety and security, including suitable levels of natural surveillance for parked cars;
 - b) Degree of impact of parking on the street scene and public realm;
 - c) Suitable and safe access for all users, including from the highway and between parking and buildings;
 - d) Landscaping and materials.