

APPENDIX 2: DESIGN CRITERIA

In addition to Development Management and Core Strategy policies, development proposals should satisfy the following more detailed criteria. These aim to ensure that development 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 housing layouts are taken into account.

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 still may be considered acceptable. All applications will be assessed and determined on their own merits.

1. Privacy

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. Reliance should not be placed in high screening fences or walls (2 metres and above) where these would form a dominant and oppressive feature.

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, 28 metres should be achieved between the faces of single or two storey buildings backing onto each other (see 3(a) below) 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.

2. Prospect

- (a) 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.

- (b) Rear to flank distances. 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.

3. Amenity Space/Garden Space

This section refers to space related to an individual dwelling which normally forms the curtilage of the dwelling and contributes to the occupants' privacy. This is not therefore the same as the requirements for open space as covered by policy DM11.

- (a) 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 14 metres.
- (b) For each dwelling the following amount of amenity space should be attained as either individual gardens or in part, as space forming settings for the buildings.
- (c) Indicative levels:
- 1 bed dwelling -- 42 square metres
 - 2 bed dwelling -- 63 square metres
 - 3 bed dwelling -- 84 square metres
 - 4 bed dwelling -- 105 square metres
 - additional bedrooms: - 21 square metres each
- (d) Flats:
- One bed -- 21 square metres
 - Additional bedrooms: - 10 square metres each (space can be allocated specifically to each flat or communally).
- (e) Residential Care Homes & Warden Controlled Sheltered Housing:
- At least 15 square metres per bed space (to be provided communally)

(f) Disposition of Amenity Space

Amenity space must be provided within the curtilage of all new residential developments. Depending on the character of the development, the 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. Communal space for flats should be well screened from highways and casual passers-by. Purely visual amenity space plays a different role; it should be prominent and may well include mature trees and key areas of planting, and serves as a visual asset to the development without necessarily being heavily used by the occupants.

Where space in the front of a house is assigned to that particular property, it should be defensible space in the sense of being enclosed as part of the original layout.

(g) Amenity Space/Play Space

Areas of open space or children's play spaces must be located to enable natural surveillance from as many dwellings as possible.

4. Extensions to Properties

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 1995 (as amended). 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 under the General Development Order 1995 (as amended), or the permitted development allowance has been taken up by previous works.

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. Oversized, unattractive and poorly sited additions can result in loss of light and outlook for neighbours and detract from the character and appearance of the original property and the general street scene.

(a) General Criteria: Extensions

In addition to any other policies of the Local Plan which may apply, extensions must:

- i. Not be excessively prominent in relation to adjacent properties or to the general street scene.
- ii. Have the appropriate number of car parking spaces and/or garages in accordance with the Council's parking standards.
- iii. Respect the character of the property/street scene particularly with regard to the roof form, positioning and style of windows and doors, and materials.
- iv. Not result in loss of light to the windows of neighbouring properties nor allow overlooking.

(b) 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 is 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.

(c) 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 1.2 metres 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 1.2 metres.

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 1 metre will be considered. See Figure 1.

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.

Rear extensions should not intrude into a 45 degree splay line drawn across the rear garden from a point on the joint boundary, level with the rear wall of the adjacent 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. See Figure 1 for illustrative examples.

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.

5. New Development

New development 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.

Applications for new development will be assessed on their own merits. In addition to any other policies of the Local Plan which may apply, new development must:

- (i) Not be excessively prominent in relation to adjacent properties or to the general street scene.
- (ii) Make provision for the appropriate number of car parking spaces and/or garages in accordance with the Council's parking standards.
- (iii) Respect the character of the street scene, particularly with regard to the spacing of properties, roof form, positioning and style of windows and doors, and materials.
- (iv) Not result in loss of light to the windows of neighbouring properties nor allow overlooking.

Development at first floor level and above should be set in from flank boundaries by a minimum of 1.2 metres. 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 1 metre will be considered. See Figure 1.

Two storey development at the rear of properties should not intrude into a 45 degree splay line across the rear garden from a point on the joint boundary, level with the rear wall of the adjacent property. This principle is dependent on the spacing and relative positions of properties and consideration will be given to the juxtaposition of properties, land levels and the position of windows and development on neighbouring properties. See Figure 1 for illustrative examples.

6. 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.

7. Roofs

a) Crown 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.

b) Increasing Ridge Height

Increases to ridge height will be assessed on their own merits at the time of a planning 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.

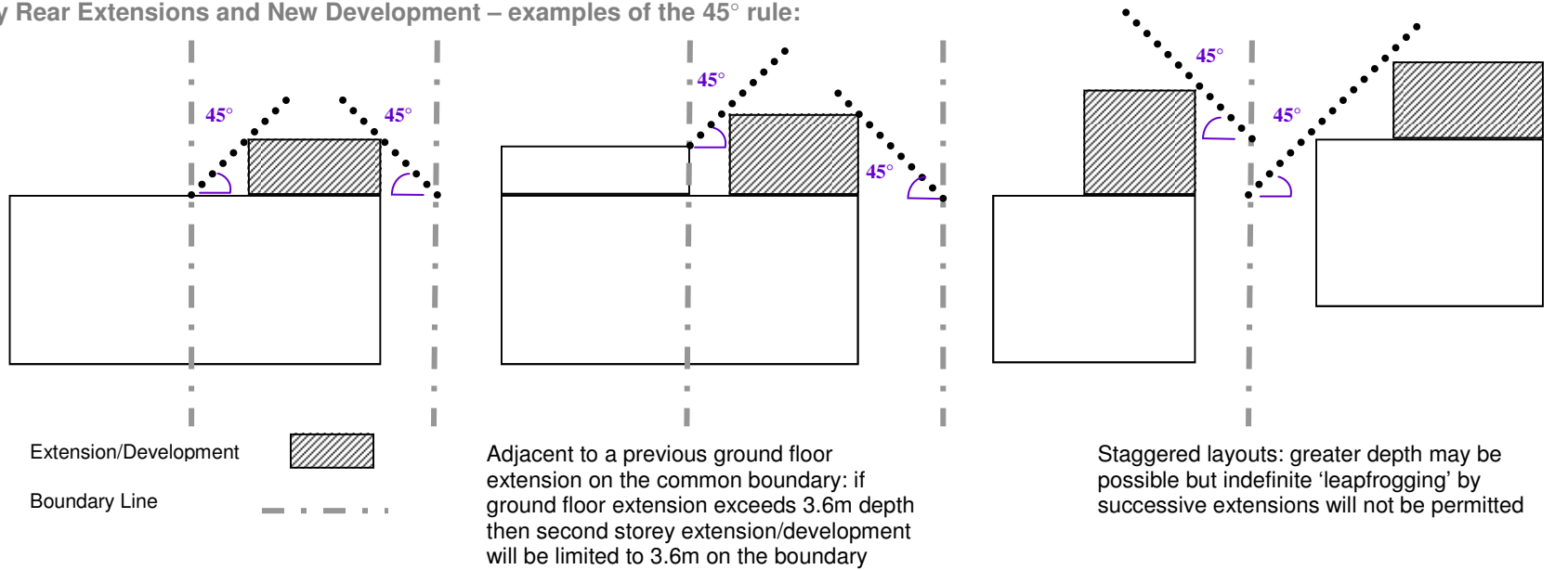
Applicants are encouraged to submit a proposed streetscene plan as part of an application which involves a proposed increased in ridge height.

c) Hip to Gable Extensions

This type of extension is 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 1 Design Guidelines for Extensions and New Development. (These sketches are illustrative only and should not be taken as implying that a particular form of development is likely to be granted planning permission).

Two Storey Rear Extensions and New Development – examples of the 45° rule:



Single and two storey side extensions/development and flank to boundary distances

