Report Title:	**Draft Borough-Wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document – Regulation 13 Consultation**
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information?	NO – Part I
Member reporting:	Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning and Health, including Sustainability
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet - 28 February 2019
Responsible Officer(s):	Russell O'Keefe, Executive Director Jenifer Jackson, Head of Planning
Wards affected:	All

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Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

REPORT SUMMARY

1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) identifies the creation of high quality buildings and places as being fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It also expects councils to provide maximum clarity at an early stage about their design expectations using visual tools such as design guides.

2. Broad direction of what high quality design means for the Council is set out in various polices in the adopted and emerging development plans but the Council does not have any detailed and comprehensive guidance on what it expects high quality design and design excellence to look like across the Royal Borough. The draft Borough-wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document has been prepared to provide this clear, detailed and specific design guidance to support both Council decision making on development applications and the emerging Borough Local Plan (BLP).

3. This report seeks approval to publish the draft Borough-wide Design Guide for public consultation in March 2019.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet notes the report and:

(i) Approves the publication of the draft Borough-wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation, along with necessary evidence base studies; and

(ii) Gives the Head of Planning delegated authority to approve minor changes to the draft Borough-wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning and Health, including Sustainability, prior to its publication.

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 The NPPF identifies the creation of high quality buildings and places as being fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. It also expects Councils to provide maximum clarity at an early stage about their design expectations by using visual tools such as design guides. The preparation of a Borough-wide Design Guide helps the Council meet the Governments expectations for clarity on its design expectations.

2.2 The Council's Plan 2017-2021 has a vision of building a borough for everyone with opportunities for all and has identified priorities of creating:

- Attractive and well connected borough;
- Healthy skilled and independent residents;
- Safe and vibrant communities;
- Growing economy, affordable housing.

2.3 The ambitions set out in the Council Plan for the achievement of high quality development are also reflected in the design policies set out in the Council's adopted, 'Made' and emerging development plans. These policies set out broad or generalised direction of what high quality design means for this Borough. However, they do not provide detailed, comprehensive and locally specific guidance on what the Council expects high quality design to look like across the Royal Borough. The production of a Design Guide bridges this gap. It will provide clear, detailed and specific design guidance to support Council decision making on development applications and the emerging BLP. It will also provide clear demonstration to the development industry of the Council's design expectations and give local communities and neighbourhood planning groups a detailed framework for design within which they can prepare their locally specific policies and guidance.

2.4 The first stage in the preparation of the Borough-wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document Design Guide will be the publication of the draft Design Guide (under Regulation 13 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended). This stage will allow for the Design Guidance to be developed with local communities, ultimately encouraging ownership of the document across the Royal Borough. The draft Borough-wide Design Guide can be seen in Annexe 1 of this report. A final Borough-wide Design guide will be prepared taking into account the responses from the Regulation 13 consultation. This final document will then be brought to Members later in 2019 for consideration for adoption.

2.5 Evidence documents supporting the draft Borough-wide Design Guide will be made available alongside it. These include:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report;
- Responses from key consultees to the Council's Screening Report.

Table 1: Options considered

Option	Comments
Not publish the draft Borough-wide Design Guide and necessary evidence documents. This is not the recommended option.	Officers do not consider this would be the right approach to this important matter. This would leave the Council without the detailed guidance on what constitutes high quality design in the Borough and undermine the Council's ability to secure design excellence in new development and to resist poor quality development.
Delay publication of the draft Borough-wide Design Guide until mid-2019. This is not the recommended option.	Officers do not consider this would be the right approach to this important matter. This option would leave the Council with no detailed guidance for 2019 to inform the development industry and local residents of the nature of the high quality development that it seeks in the Borough. This would make it more difficult to encourage high quality design and resist poor quality development during this time.
Publish the draft Borough-wide Design Guide in March 2019 and necessary evidence documents for consultation. **This is the recommended option**.	National planning policy requires the Council to provide maximum clarity at an early stage about their design expectations. Progressing the preparation of the Borough wide Design Guide will ensure that this clarity is provided as soon as possible and enable the Council to achieve high quality design and resist poor quality development in 2019.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

Table 2: Key implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Publication of the draft Borough wide Design Guide and	After 21 March 2019	By 21 March 2019	By 14 March 2019	By 7 March 2019	March 2019

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
relevant evidence					

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

4.1 There are no financial implications to this paper. The production of the Design Guide is being funded through Planning Delivery Fund Design Quality funding

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The NPPF (Paragraph 126) expects Councils to use visual tools such as design guides to provide maximum clarity about its design expectations.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

Table 3: Impact of risk and mitigation

Risks	Uncontrolled Risk	Controls	Controlled Risk
The Council is unable to resist poor quality new development as it does not have detailed, locally specific guidance as to what constitutes high quality design in the Royal Borough.	HIGH	Progress the preparation of a Borough wide Design Guide in early 2019.	LOW
The Council is unable to provide Neighbourhood Plan Groups preparing their locally specific design policy and guidance with clarity of what the Council is seeking at the Borough wide level in terms of	HIGH	Progress the preparation of a Borough wide Design Guide in early 2019.	LOW

Risks	Uncontrolled Risk	Controls	Controlled Risk
design expectations.			
A plethora of design related documents is created at various levels that are not co-ordinated or seeking the same design quality expectations	HIGH	Progress the preparation of a Borough wide Design Guide in early 2019 to provide an overarching and co-ordinating design document.	LOW

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

7.1 The consultation will involve staff in consultation workshops which may occur outside of normal working hours. No other potential impacts are anticipated.

7.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out for the emerging BLP which included a number of design related policies. No potentially adverse impacts were identified for any particular group arising from the BLP. As the Design Guide will only provide further detail and guidance on the adopted and emerging policies, rather than create new policy, it is not considered necessary to undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) specifically for the Design Guide.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 The draft Borough wide Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document has been circulated to relevant officers within the Council for informal comment. It is proposed that the document will be considered by Planning and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel (date tbc), and any comments will be reported to the 28 February Cabinet.

8.2 The draft Borough wide Design Guide will, if agreed by Cabinet, be published for 6 weeks consultation in March 2019 under Regulation 13 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended. The Council's Statement of Community Involvement includes a minimum requirement of 4 weeks for public consultation on draft Supplementary Planning Documents. A particular focus of the consultation will be with Parish and Neighbourhood Planning Groups, as well as statutory consultees. As it is intended to facilitate workshop consultations with Parishes as part of the process, the public consultation will exceed the minimum requirement and run for 6 weeks.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 Implementation date if not called in is contained in Table 4.

Table 4: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
March 2019	Publication of the draft Borough-wide Design Guide and associated evidence base documents

10. APPENDICES

10.1 Borough Wide Design Guide

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 This report is supported by the following background documents:

- Council Plan, available at: https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/downloads/file/3320/2017-2021_-_council_plan
- The Council's adopted and 'Made' Development Plan Documents, available on the Council website at: https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200209/planning_policy/591/development_plan
- The Council's emerging Borough Local Plan, available on the Council website at: https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/blp
- The National Planning Policy Framework 2018, available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/revised-national-planning-policy-framework

12. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
Cllr Coppinger	Lead Member for Planning and Health, including Sustainability	03/01/19	04/01/19
Russell O'Keefe	Acting Managing Director	03/01/19	04/01/19
Rob Stubbs	Section 151 Officer	03/01/19	04/01/19
Louisa Dean	Communications	03/01/19	
Andy Jeffs	Executive Director	03/01/19	03/01/19
Elaine Browne	Interim Head of Law and Governance	04/01/19	04/01/19

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
Nikki Craig	Head of HR and Corporate Projects	04/01/19	07/01/19
Kevin McDaniel	Director of Children's Services	04/01/19	04/01/19
Angela Morris	Director of Adult Social Services	04/01/19	
Hilary Hall	Deputy Director of Commissioning and Strategy	04/01/19	

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type: Key decision	**Urgency item?** No.	**To Follow item?**
Report Author: Helen Murch, Planning Policy Manager, 01628 796447		

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Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

Borough wide design guide

Regulation 13 consultation draft

February 2019

Information on consultation

This document is a consultation draft of a borough wide design guide for the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead.

It is intended that the Guide will eventually be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.

The public and other stakeholders are now invited to submit comments and views on the proposed content of the draft Borough Wide Design Guide.

The draft Guide is out for consultation for 6 weeks. Comments can be returned as follows:

- online via http://consult.rbwm.gov.uk/portal/spd/dg/dg
- e-mail to planning.policy@rbwm.gov.uk; or
- by post to: Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, SL6 1RF

All comments must be received by 6pm on Thursday **25 April 2019**.

If you have any questions regarding this document please contact Planning Policy at planning.policy@rbwm.gov.uk

Further information on how your personal data will be used is given in the privacy notice which can be viewed at: https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/3962/planning_policy_consultations_and_call_for_sites.pdf. Non personal data may be published on this website in due course.

Contents

1. Setting the scene

Introduction

1.1 The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (Royal Borough) recognises the vitally important role that the design of places, buildings and spaces have on people's quality of life. Poorly designed development and places can contribute to poor physical and mental health, whilst well designed, high quality development can generate wellbeing and pride.

1.2 The Council is committed to ensuring the design of development underpins the making of distinctive, sustainable and attractive places that will provide for better health and wellbeing and high quality environments for all who live, work, play in and visit the Royal Borough.

1.3 The preparation of the design guide has been undertaken to help deliver **design excellence** to secure the Council's vision of 'building a borough for everyone' and its priorities of:

- Attractive and well connected borough;
- Healthy skilled and independent residents;
- Safe and vibrant communities;
- Growing economy, affordable housing.[1]

The requirement for **design excellence** is at the heart of the borough's vision for the future.

Purpose

1.4 The Design Guide supports Local Plan policies by setting out in detail what the Council considers to be design excellence in the Royal Borough. The Guide has two main purposes:

- To help guide a major step change improvement in the quality of new development and places created across the Royal Borough.

[1] Building a Borough for everyone – Council Plan 2017 - 2021

- To provide guidance to council members, officers, developers and local communities on how to ensure future development has the required high quality and inclusive design to create beautiful places that function well.

Scope

1.5 The Guide relates to the majority[2] of landuses in the borough and includes

- Residential development , encompassing
  - New housing units - in the form of infill through to new neighbourhoods;
  - Conversions and residential intensifications of existing buildings;
  - Householder improvements (e.g. extensions & curtilage developments).
- Employment & retail development;
- Recreational, infrastructure, and other forms of development.

1.6 The Guide applies to all places in the borough – urban, semi rural, rural, waterways and subterranean.

1.7 The Guide covers all types of development including new buildings, extensions, demolition, changes of use, intensification and alterations. It also relates to all scales of development. For the purposes of this document development has been classified into 4 different scale categories:

Table 1.1 – Scale categories for development

		Residential	**Non residential**
XS	Extra small	Householder development - typically, alterations to dwellings	Very small development involving de minimus or no floorspace –e.g. new fire escapes, shop front changes, flues etc…
S	Small	Sites of 1-9 units, including changes of use	Single building, changes of use, mezzanine floor or infill development up to GIA 1000sqm

[2] This Guide does not specifically address the design of traveller and minerals and waste developments. This will be picked up in Development Plan Documents that deal with these particular forms of development.

M	Medium	Sites up to 100 dwelling units	Total floorspace of more than GIA 1000 sqm up to 5000sqm
L	Large	Sites over 100 dwelling units	Total floorspace more than GIA 5000sqm

1.8 The Guide only addresses those areas of design where there are specific Royal Borough requirements. It does not provide guidance on matters already addressed by national Building Regulation requirements (e.g. energy and water efficiency and disabled access).

1.9 This document provides an overarching borough wide framework for detailed guidance on design related matters. Sitting alongside this guidance is a range of detailed topic and locally specific design documents. These include the design policies in 'Made' neighbourhood plans, detailed design related supplementary planning documents (including Green & Blue Infrastructure SPD, Open Space Study and Parking & Tall Buildings studies), and conservation area appraisals. This Design Guide should be read in conjunction with them. An up-to-date list of all the applicable design related policy and guidance can be viewed on the Council's website at https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/201039/non-development_plan/1442/design

Status

1.10 This document is a draft borough wide design guide that has been prepared as a supplementary planning document (SPD) for consultation purposes under Regulation 13 of the Town & Country Planning Regulations (Local Plan) 2012, as amended. Its primary purpose is to seek public views on the scope and content of the draft Design Guide. The responses received during the consultation period will inform the final version of the Borough Wide Design Guide.

1.11 The Borough Wide Design Guide will be adopted as an SPD to support policies within the adopted Local Plan[3]. It has also been prepared to support emerging policies in the draft Borough Local Plan(BLPSV)[4].

1.12 Developers will be expected to take the Design Guide into account, along with the requirements of any use or locally specific design policies in adopted, made, or emerging plans and in other SPD's when designing any form of new development in

[3] RBWM Local Plan, adopted 1999, incorporating 2003 saved policies.

[4] The BLPSV plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination in January 2018.

the Royal Borough. Where Design and Access Statements (DAS) are required to be submitted as part of a planning application they will be expected to set out how the standards detailed in this Guide have informed the design of the residential scheme.

1.13 The Borough Wide Design Guide will be a material consideration to be taken into account by the Council when considering pre-application proposals, determining residential planning applications, and at appeals.

1.14 It is recognised that innovative, high quality design solutions may come forward that do not fully comply with the requirements of the Guide. In order to provide for a flexible approach in applying the Guide, where applications depart from the Guide's principles, the Council will look to applicants for robust design justification for this departure. This justification may be taken into account as a material consideration when considering the design merits of such proposals.

Background

Planning Policy context

1.15 The Government sees good design as key aspect of sustainable development and creates better places in which to live and work. It is also seen as making development acceptable to communities.

The Government's policy guidance on design

1.16 Creation of high quality buildings and well designed places is seen in the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (NPPF) as fundamental to what the planning process and development should achieve.

1.17 The Government expects local authorities to be clear about design expectations and how these will be tested (Para 124). They also expect authorities to develop design policies with local communities so they reflect local aspirations (Para 125). In order to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, supplementary planning documents should use visual tools such as design guides. These are seem as providing a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design (Para 126).

1.18 Local Planning authorities are expected to ensure that development:

- Functions well and adds to the overall quality of the area;

- Are visually attractive;
- Are sympathetic to local character and history;
- Establishes or maintains a strong sense of place;
- Optimises the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain appropriate amount and mix of development;
- Create safe, accessible and inclusive places which promote health and well being (Para 127).

1.19 This borough wide Design Guide is a direct response to the Government's ambitions for design. It is grounded on the principles set out in Para 127 of the NPPF, provides clear, visually rich guidance about the Royal Borough's design expectations, how proposals will be judged and is being prepared in conjunction with local communities.

1.20 Para 130 of the NPPF states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards, codes or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents.

Local Policy

1.21 Local adopted borough wide design policies can be found in the saved policies of the adopted Local Plan. The principle design related policy is DG1 -Design Guidelines which sets out 11 overarching principles that apply to all forms of new development. These design principles relate to reducing crime through layout, inclusive design, scale and design of buildings, townscape and strategic views, landscaping, parking and access, traffic and character. Other policies in the adopted Local plan relating to design include:

- DG1 Design Guidelines
- N1 Areas of Special Landscape Importance
- N2 Setting of the Thames
- N3 Landscape Enhancement Area
- SF1 Guidelines for Shopfronts
- SF2 Blinds on Shopfronts
- SF3 Security Shutters
- ADV1 Display of Adverts
- ADV2 Display of Adverts
- E10 Design and development Guidelines (Business and Industrial development)

- H10 Housing Layout and Design
- H11 Housing Density
- H12 Subdivisions and Conversions
- H14 House extensions
- T5 New Developments and Highway Design
- P4 Parking within Development
- WTC4 Townscape and redevelopment

1.22 The policies in this adopted plan are expected to be replaced by a new Local Plan in due course.

1.23 There are a number of other adopted development plan documents that provide design guidance for specific local areas, including the Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan (2011), and 'Made' neighbourhood plans. These documents provide locally specific policy detail in addition to the principles set out in this guide.

1.24 The Council has also produced other design documents in the form of SPD's and conservation appraisals and strategies. The Borough Wide Design Guide is intended to be read and used as a companion document to these other Council publications.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.25 The Council undertook a screening assessment under Regulation 9(1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 on whether or not a Strategic Environmental Assessment was required for this SPD. It was concluded from this assessment that an environmental assessment was not required.

Habitats Regulation Assessment

1.26 The SPD is not expected to adversely impact on European level nature conservation sites and therefore further work, including an Appropriate Assessment, is not required under the Habitats Regulations.

2 How to use the Guide

2.1 This guide sets out the over-arching specific design considerations for all scales and types of residential development. It works from strategic design principles down to detailed matters. The Guide's structure reflects the sequence by which successful places are designed, setting the broad strategic considerations of overall layout before thinking about the details of buildings and spaces. Particular attention should be paid to the specific principles set out in the coloured boxes in Chapters 3 - 11.

2.2 All developments will need to be designed in light of the Council's strategic design principles set out in Chapter 4. Table 2.1 should also be used to determine which of the specific guidelines in Chapters 5-10 are likely to be applicable to a particular development.

Design Checklist

2.3 Developers must also refer to the design checklist contained in Chapter 12 of this document. For small to Large scale developments [5], applicants will be expected to submit a completed checklist with their applications. This should be included with any Design & Assess Statement, where these are required.

2.4 The checklist will be used by the planning authority to help assess planning applications. It is strongly recommended that developers use it at the early stages of the design process to help guide and inform the development of the project.

[5] As set out in Table 1.1 of this Guide

Table 2.1: How to use the Borough Wide Design Guide

Design matter	Householder (XS)	Extra small non residential (XS)	Small development (S)	Medium development (M)	Large Development (L)
Strategic design themes	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
Design process					
Need for vision	X	X	X	X	X
Concept plan			X	X	X
Master & plot plans			X	X	X
Community involvement	X	X	X	X	X
Character – creating identity and sense of place	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
Layouts					
Connectivity			X	X	X
Street design			X	X	X
Open spaces			X	X	X
Blocks			X	X	X
Plots			X	X	X
Defining public/ private space	X	X	X	X	X
Parking	X	X	X	X	X
Backland development			X	X	X
Built form					
Density			X	X	X
Uses & mix			X	X	X
Building positioning	X		X	X	X

Solar design and climate change	X		X	X	X
Building scale, massing and form	X	X	X	X	X
Active frontages		X	X	X	X
Minimum internal space standards	X		X	X	X
Adaptable development	X	X	X	X	X
Architectural detailing	X	X	X	X	X
Amenity					
Privacy	X	X	X	X	X
Outlook	X	X	X	X	X
Daylight and sunlight	X	X	X	X	X
Private outdoor amenity space	X	X	X	X	X
Curtilage development					
Boundary treatments	X	X	X	X	X
Provision for cycles and bins	X	X	X	X	X
Hard standing and vehicle cross-overs	X	X	X	X	X
Further guidance for householder development					
Extensions	X				
Roof alterations	X				
Conversion and subdivisions	X		X		
Further guidance for specific locations and for non-residential development					
Design in flood risk areas	X	X	X	X	X
Rural and edge of settlement	X	X	X	X	X
Employment uses		X	X	X	X
Mixed-use developments		X	X	X	X

3 Strategic design themes for the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

3.1 Drawing upon national and local policy context, this Guide is underpinned by the following broad design themes:

Putting people first

The places in the Royal Borough where people live, work and play are important in maintaining physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. They provide for activity, rest, sanctuary, recreation and social interaction, and are powerful influences in helping people shape their own identities. Poor quality developments have a considerable negative impact on people's quality of life, life chances and sense of community and identity. It is vitally important that the design of development in the Royal Borough is human scale, supports human health and wellbeing and places people, communities and safety at the heart of decision making on design, rather than cars, or short term commercial gain.

Image 3.1

Creating a sense of PLACE

The Royal Borough has a vibrant mixture of landscape environments ranging from the heaths of the Sunnings, the extensive expanse of the Royal parks, pastoral landscapes of the Thames Valley and the waterside towns and villages. Despite the

rich diversity of places, the over-riding themes of Royal history, the presence of the River Thames and associated tributaries and the expanse of green landscapes dominate the borough. Every development should draw on the opportunities presented by the immediate local context to create a sense of place but also reflect the broad overarching themes of **Royalty**, **River** and **Green**. This will involve using landscape, streets, open spaces, buildings and fine details to create or reinforce places of excellence with a strong positive identity.

Image 3.2

Delivering sustainable places

New development represents an opportunity to help people live, work and play in a more sustainable and healthier manner. This includes bringing nature back into places where people are, establishing mixed communities and creating places where walking and cycling are the preferred means of getting around for short trips. It also means providing mixes of uses within walking distances to support communities, minimising flood risk, ensuring that development supports biodiversity and protects important ecosystems and maximising opportunities to reap the benefits of passive solar design.

Image 3.3

Improving quality

Creating a borough where there are opportunities for all is one of the key priorities of the Council. Significantly improving design quality and local distinctiveness in the Borough is part of this priority. All new development in the Royal Borough will be expected to aim to deliver design excellence, with high quality design being the minimum standard. The Council will also encourage innovation in design. New developments will also be expected to support the maintenance of existing good quality design in the locality of a site and take opportunities to improve design quality where it is lacking.

Image 3.4

Image 3.5

Principle 3.1

Designers will be expected to demonstrate how their design has addressed the Council's 4 strategic themes of:

- Putting people first
- Creating a sense of place
- Delivering sustainable places
- Improving quality

3.2 The remainder of the SPD sets out specific areas of detailed design which designers and decision makers should give particular attention to.

4 Design process expectations

4.1 The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead expects development proposals seeking planning permission to have evolved through a logical and iterative design process. Small, medium and large schemes will be expected to demonstrate that they have followed all of the steps

Table 4.1: Design process steps

STEP 1	Site and context appraisal	**Analysis of site and context**
		Character appraisal
		Opportunities and constraints
		Understanding planning policy context
STEP 2	Interpreting the brief	Vision setting
		Concept plan
STEP 3	Engagement	Community and neighbour engagement
		RBWM pre-application discussions
		D:SE Panel Review (where applicable)
		Statutory consultee engagement
STEP 4	Detailed design	Concept refinement
		Masterplanning
		Plot plans
		Detailed design
		Further pre-application discussions
		Preparation of Design and Access Statement
STEP 5	Planning application	

4.2 The Council requires the design of large projects (see table 1.1) to have been the subject of review by Design South East. This would normally be expected to be undertaken at pre-application stage and be funded by the developer. Further information on this process can be found on the council's website at https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/201039/non-development_plan/1442/design.

The need for vision

4.3 All developments need a vision. Successful developments are underpinned by a guiding design vision. Once established and agreed by everyone involved, the vision anchors and guides the design team and enables it to communicate clearly and simply what the development is seeking to be and to achieve.

4.4 The applicant's team should develop their design vision early in the design process, and then clearly articulate it to the local authority in pre-application discussions.

The Concept Plan

4.5 For medium and larger schemes the vision should be supplemented by a high level concept plan. The aim of the concept plan is to show in a simple and clear way the key design features that drive the layout of the proposed development and how it relates to surrounding areas. It should include an indicative high level layout and illustrate the key components. These features will be specific to each individual site, but may typically include: gateways and access points, focal points, key building frontages; broad street layouts, location of open space; retained and proposed landscape features; landmarks; and key view corridors. A concept plan is a higher level strategic tool than a masterplan. It sets the principles for the masterplan and is an important tool for engagement.

Figure 4.1: Illustration of a Concept Plan

4.6 Together the vision and concept plan should sum up what kind of place is being created. This allows the developer, local authority and local communities to discuss the basic structure of the proposals and how they can be evolved and improved to achieve excellence.

Principle 4.1

All small, medium and large developments (see table 1.1) will be expected to set out the guiding vision for the development. Medium and large developments should also provide a Concept Plan in the Design & Access Statement.

Providing Masterplans and plot plans

4.7 Further detail will be provided in masterplans. For medium and large developments, developers will be expected to provide plot plans as part of their application. This is to clearly distinguish the plot boundaries and the extent of public and private ownership.

Principle 4.2

Medium and large developments will be required to provide plot plans to clearly identify ownership boundaries and public/private spaces.

Figure 4.2: Illustration of a plot plan

Community engagement

4.8 It is recommended that developers and designers seek the views and opinions of the local community to inform preparation of proposals. The council will be particularly interested in understanding how the views of various people, groups and organisations have shaped the proposals it is being asked to make a decision on.

4.9 Whatever the scale of the application, applicants should set out what engagement has been undertaken, with whom, what issues were raised and how the proposals respond to the issues. For householder applications, this could be simply set out in a letter. For small and medium size schemes, the Design and Access Statement (DAS) could include a chapter on engagement. For large-scale schemes, the DAS could be appropriate or, if the issues are complex, a separate Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) may be necessary.

Image 4.1

5. Character – creating identity and sense of place

5.1 One of the council's strategic design themes is the creation of place and identity. Developments should not only reflect the strategic characteristics of the borough identified in Section 3, but also local identities.

5.2 The character of a place comes from different elements –large and small – that collectively result in a distinct identity. These elements are principally:

- Strategic landscape elements such as topography, forests, water bodies, geology and other natural elements;
- Connections and the networks of streets and open spaces;
- Layout of development blocks and plots;
- Arrangement and forms of buildings;
- Architectural details;
- Design of curtilage development such as boundary treatments, bin and cycle stores, amenity areas
- Presence and type of trees, vegetation, water and other natural elements

5.3 The Royal Borough has a rich history and diversity of land and townscapes ranging from heathlands, forests, pastoral countryside, parkland, riparian areas, historic towns and villages and modern suburbs and industrial estates. The borough has 27 conservation areas, many listed buildings and a range of international wildlife designations. The richness of the borough's character is captured in the Townscape Assessment (2010) which identified 17 distinctive townscape types and the Landscape Assessment (2004) which revealed 14 distinct landscape types and 32 discrete character areas.

5.4 Unfortunately, many recent developments in the borough are similar, have a bland feel and could be anywhere in the United Kingdom. They undermine, rather than re-inforce the sense of local identity and place. The richness and diversity of place is a key feature of the borough and valued by local communities. The council wishes to support local communities in securing quality new development that enhances their places and unique identities. Accordingly, whatever the scale or type of development, the council will expect development proposals to enhance and respond to the borough's strategic character themes and positive local character elements in order to create identity and root the proposed development in local places.

5.5 Developers should draw on their site surveys and other planning documents to identify local character and identities at an early stage to underpin the development proposals.[6]

Image 5.1

New development on the right of the street complements the character of the historic development on the opposite side.

Image 5.2

Example of a good response to a riverside and historic Windsor location

[6] This will include the borough's landscape & townscape assessments, Neighbourhood Plan policy and character SPD's and design documents produced by Neighbourhood Planning groups.

Image 5.3

New development integrating with heathland landscape

5.6 There are essentially three ways of responding to character:

- create a design that blends in seamlessly with the existing character, so reinforcing it; or
- using cues from the local area to create a design that is sympathetic to the character, while providing a contemporary interpretation – e.g. using similar form and composition with contemporary materials;
- Defining a new and distinctive character. This is more likely to be more appropriate for larger developments.

5.7 Developers will need to decide which approach is the best for their proposals. However, where a new character is being proposed, the council will expect this to be fully justified.

Principle 5.1

1. All new development must be designed to maintain or enhance the special place characteristics of the Royal Borough. The council will expect development to draw upon the following elements in the local area to create positive character and locally specific identity:

   - Strategic landscape elements;
   - Connections and the networks of streets and open spaces;
   - Layout of development blocks and plots;
   - Arrangement and forms of buildings;
   - Architectural details (including colour and materials);
   - Design of curtilage development;
   - Presence and type of trees, vegetation, water and other natural elements.

2. Where the local context is strong, high quality and positive, new development should reflect local urban design characteristics. Where the local context has a weak or negative character, new development will be expected to improve the quality of the area.

3. All new development will be expected to integrate existing features such as:

   - Topography,
   - Waterbodies (including the River Thames, streams and ponds),
   - Mature trees, forests, hedgerows, plantings and other ecological features;
   - Views to and from the site to important features (including Windsor Castle, River Thames, The Moor in Cookham);
   - Listed buildings, archaeology, historic parks and gardens and buildings and features of cultural, historic heritage and/or townscape merit;

4. New development should remove unattractive or inappropriate buildings, elements or features that detract from the quality and/or character of the site and its surroundings.

5. Where a development site is adjacent to a water body, the development should respect the water frontage and present a positive frontage to it. Particular consideration should be given to improving views of the waterbody and public access to it as well as creating a soft interface to provide biodiversity and green corridors.

6. Layouts

6.1 The large structural elements of a development are vital in terms of setting whether it functions well and is visually appealing. These structural elements include strategic landscape features, street and open space networks, block and plot layouts, use mixes and building layouts. Carefully thought out layouts create the permanent connected 'bones' upon which great places can be created and maintained. Poor layouts create poor places which are difficult to correct going forward.

6.2 Designers should pay particular regard to the following layout matters to ensure that beautiful places can be created:

- Connectivity
- Street design
- Open spaces
- Blocks
- Plots
- Defining public/private space
- Parking
- Backland development

Connectivity

6.3 Woven through both the urban and rural areas of the Royal Borough is a network of public spaces made up of streets, parks, public open spaces and paths. This framework allows people to get to where they want to go, with a choice of how they do so. It also creates public spaces where people can spend time outdoors and physically encounter and meet others. Good public places encourage positive interaction and are community spaces, as well as providing movement corridors. Maintaining and improving this network of connections is vitally important in creating high quality places in the Royal Borough.

6.4 Some parts of the Royal Borough have dense networks of connected spaces and routes for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles that are easy to understand and navigate. Other areas are poorly connected and less permeable with streets and estates isolated by cul-de-sac layouts and lack of connections to surrounding areas (Fig 6.1). Developers may find local character guidance set out in Neighbourhood Plans and other SPD's useful in identifying whether the development site lies in an area of well or poorly connected streets.

6.5 All new development will be expected to connect into the surrounding route and space network in a high quality, accessible and safe way. Larger developments may

create a new hierarchy of street space whilst small proposals have the ability to enhance existing streets, for instance by addressing them positively or adding new connections.

6.1 Layouts should be designed to encourage walking, cycling and public transport in preference to the private car for local journeys. This can be achieved by:

- Creating an integrated, permeable network of streets, paths, parks and public open spaces that offer accessible, safe and convenient connections between streets within the site as well as to neighbouring areas;
- Providing pedestrian and cycle routes along key desire lines, linking to existing communities, facilities, shops, schools, employment, public transport interchanges and other destinations;
- Carefully considering the potential to support commercially viable bus routes to, from and through the site, with larger developments including appropriate bus priority measures to reduce journey time, improve service reliability and enhance connectivity; and
- Controlling the speed and routeing of motor vehicles such that permeability is maintained, without vehicle movements dominating the development and detracting from the sense of place.

6.2 Where new street spaces are being created these are expected to be highly connected and demonstrate excellence in design. Designers of new schemes should also look for opportunities to improve existing poorly connected places.

6.3 New footpaths/cycleways should provide high quality connections, acting as corridors for green and/or blue infrastructure and generally lit by low level solar powered lighting.

Fig 6.1: Illustration of a poorly connected layout (A) and well connected streets (B)

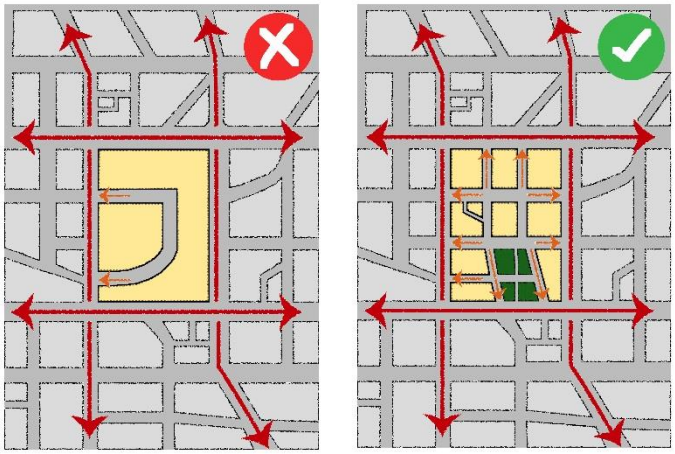


Image 6.1

A good quality green footpath link

Principle 6.1

All new development should:

- Connect into and strengthen the existing network of routes and public open spaces.
- Create or maintain connections that are direct, legible and safe.
- Ensure connections for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport are given the highest priority in the hierarchy of spaces.
- Make walking and cycling more attractive and convenient for short trips than using the private motor car. Distances by foot and cycle should be shorter and more direct than by car
- Respect existing desire lines and public rights of way and make connections to local destinations, such as schools, shopping and employment areas.
- Look for opportunities to create connections into/through neighbouring land so that a well connected network can be created in the event of future land release and development.

Street design

6.4 Streets (be they urban or rural) are the bedrock of places and make up a significant part of the public spaces within the Royal Borough. They allow people access in, out, and through places, are spaces of social interaction and are vital in creating and maintaining the character of an area. Street quality has a significant impact on how those living, working and visiting the Royal Borough experience the area. It is therefore vitally important new development helps to create high quality streets with distinctive character that are easy to navigate, safe and attractive places to be in.

6.5 A significant number of the Royal Borough's existing streets have a strong green character reflecting the rural nature of much of the borough. Another defining characteristic of the Borough is the number of streets which provide views of water, either in the form of waterways or fountains. The council wishes to perpetuate and enhance this green and blue character in its streets to re-inforce the special characteristics and identity of the borough. Designers will be encouraged to make use of green infrastructure in the form of street trees, planted verges, green walls and gardens in new residential development to help maintain the strong green character of the borough. Strong encouragement will also be given to the incorporation of blue infrastructure into the borough's streets in the form of SUDS, water based public works of art and vistas of water based features, especially the River Thames and its tributaries. Provision of public access to the borough's blue infrastructure through new street networks will be expected.

Image 6.2

Borough streets with a strong green character

Image 6.3

Borough streets following the River Thames

Image 6.4

Borough streets incorporating fountains

6.6 Street frontage and enclosure to streets help to create a sense of place and character. In most cases, streets are defined by buildings. In some rural or particularly leafy areas, green infrastructure may be the dominating enclosure element in streetscenes. All development will be expected to contribute to the creation, maintenance and enhancement of the greenness of the borough's streets. In new streets, designers should seek to include space for street trees. Long term maintenance and adoption of green infrastructure in streets should be considered early on in the design process.

Image 6.5

An example of a semi-rural street with hedges, trees and wide verges providing a strong soft green character. Along with the tall set back buildings the street is attractively enclosed.

6.7 Streets should usually have building height to street width ratios that provide for a good sense of enclosure without overwhelming people who are using the streets. Street design should fall within the following height to width ratios.[7]

	MAXIMUM	MINIMUM
Mews	1:1.5	1:1
Streets	1:3	1:1.5
Squares	1.5	1:4

[7] Street widths should be measured from the front of the building on one side of the street to the front of the building on the other side of the street. This will mean front gardens, pavements, cycle lanes, verges and road carriageways are included in the street width.

Image 6.6

An attractive urban street that is well enclosed by buildings, boundary treatments and landscaping, with a strong green character and space for both cars and pedestrians.

Image 6.7

Colour, materials, street furniture, water, and vegetation create a very high quality and visually interesting street design which provides attractive public spaces for socialising.

Image 6.8

A street where people rather than cars dominate

Image 6.9

An attractive street with a strong rural character

Image 6.10

An unattractive street dominated by cars

Image 6.11

A hard, unattractive street

6.8 It is important that streets feel safe. Whatever size or function, routes should be safe and well over looked by active building fronts, particularly where pedestrian and cycle routes lie adjacent to site boundaries. The creation of active frontages will be vital to maintain a sense of safety, as well as creating visually and socially interesting streets.

6.9 It is also important that streets should be designed so as to achieve vehicle speeds that are appropriate to the local context. This will depend on the relative importance of place and movement for each street.

Image 6.12.

Long inactive frontage created by the high fences and no windows or doors fronting onto the street. Lack of street lighting and parked cars on pavements leaves street users feeling unsafe.

Principle 6.2

All developments should enhance existing streets or create new streets that:

- Are primarily designed as places for people to walk, cycle, socialise and play. In streets needing to carry high levels of vehicle movement particular attention will need to be given to designing for people;
- Create a legible hierarchy of streets based on street character and form. New street layouts dominated by cul-de-sac type layouts will be resisted;
- Make walking and cycling more attractive and convenient for short trips than using the private motor car. Distances by foot and cycle should be shorter and more direct than by car;
- Use focal points, enclosure, setbacks, pressure vacuums, deflections and other townscape features to create visually interesting streets. Streets will be expected to be visually rich and create a sense of excitement and drama for people using them;
- Design in spaces within the street to facilitate social interaction. This could include pause points, small amenity spaces, seating and squares;
- Use trees, vegetation, gardens and open spaces to create a strong soft, green character to streets. Development should not result in the loss of existing street trees and developers should look to include street trees wherever possible;
- Create animated and active streets by using fine grain development and designing strongly active frontages on the network of streets and other routes. Blank or poorly active frontages (including buildings that turn their side or backs onto the street) will be resisted;
- Do not contain overly engineered streets led by highway requirements. Street clutter should be avoided and street furniture placed with care to create attractive and vibrant spaces;
- Are safe places with the needs of vulnerable users considered by providing active frontages, good lighting, clear, obstacle free routes for pedestrians and designing in traffic calming measures to restrict vehicle speeds.

Open spaces

6.10 Together with the streets, open spaces form the structural framework on which the Royal Borough has been built. The borough has a diverse and high quality network of open spaces including natural and semi natural greenspaces, parks and gardens, playing fields, amenity green spaces, private gardens, rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and graveyards and areas for water management including SUDS, rivers, streams and ponds. This network of blue and green spaces and links is especially valued by local residents and visitors and is an integral part of the character of the borough.

6.11 These open spaces are vitally important to provide space for nature and for the health and well-being of people who are living working, playing and visiting the Royal Borough. Very often these spaces have multifunctional roles further enhancing their value to communities.

Image 6.13

A pond set in a landscaped open space will not only drain a development but may also provide habitat for wildlife, be a recreational asset for the local community, act as a visual focal point in the local townscape and provide a space to help with physical and mental health and wellbeing.

6.12 The benefits of open space are wide ranging including improved health benefits, opportunities for active lifestyles, visual amenity, recreational activities, waste water management and food production.

6.13 The health and wellbeing benefits of people having access to nature and natural elements within their living and working spaces is well documented. The Council is committed to ensure that nature is integrated into new development. This will be particularly important in expanding and intensifying urban areas.

6.14 The council intends to provide more detailed guidance on incorporating biodiversity and green and blue infrastructure into developments through a separate companion Green & Blue Infrastructure SPD. Further information on open space provision in the Borough is set out in the council's Open Space Study (2019).[8]

Image 6.14

High quality open spaces

[8] Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead - Open Space Study; 2019

Principle 6.3

1. Development proposals will be expected to provide high quality new open space at levels and types appropriate to their size and use type.

2. The role and function of public spaces must be clearly defined. Spaces should robustly connect with the existing network of streets and relate well to the wider context.

3. Public spaces should add to the existing blue and green infrastructure and include high levels of access to nature for people.

4. To be high quality, new public open spaces should:

   - Be based on existing local high quality landscape characteristics and appropriate in terms of character;
   - Contain generous amounts of green infrastructure, and where appropriate, blue infrastructure;
   - Be multifunctional and well connected;
   - Reduce environmental development impact;
   - Enhance biodiversity;
   - Be accessible and safe for all; and
   - Be functionally and visually attractive

Adoption and maintenance of streets and open spaces

6.15 Adoption or an alternative management regime is critical to ensure the successful delivery and long term maintenance of new streets and open spaces within the borough.

6.16 The adoption of trees and SUDS features within the public realm can be difficult. Where conflicts arise the council does not consider it acceptable to revert to a lower design standard and, for example to omit street trees. The landscape character is one of the principle characteristics of the borough and applicants will need to work with the council to identify suitable management strategies, such as the use of maintenance companies or community land trusts in order to ensure the desired quality.

6.17 For further detail applicants should refer to the Borough's Highway Design Guide, which sets out further detail on adoption and highway design. The Open Space study also contains some information on the maintenance of open spaces. The matter will also be addressed in the Blue/Green Infrastructure SPD. In every case this would be secured as part of a planning application.

Blocks

6.18 Within the networks of streets and open spaces lie blocks of development. Well connected and distinct places rely on a clearly defined block structure. The size of blocks influences the degree of permeability. Larger blocks provide fewer opportunities for connections and often rely on internal courtyards or cul de sacs. Small block create a higher degree of connectivity. The shape and size of blocks are an important consideration for larger developments.

Principle 6.4

Large developments (see table 1.1) should incorporate blocks that:

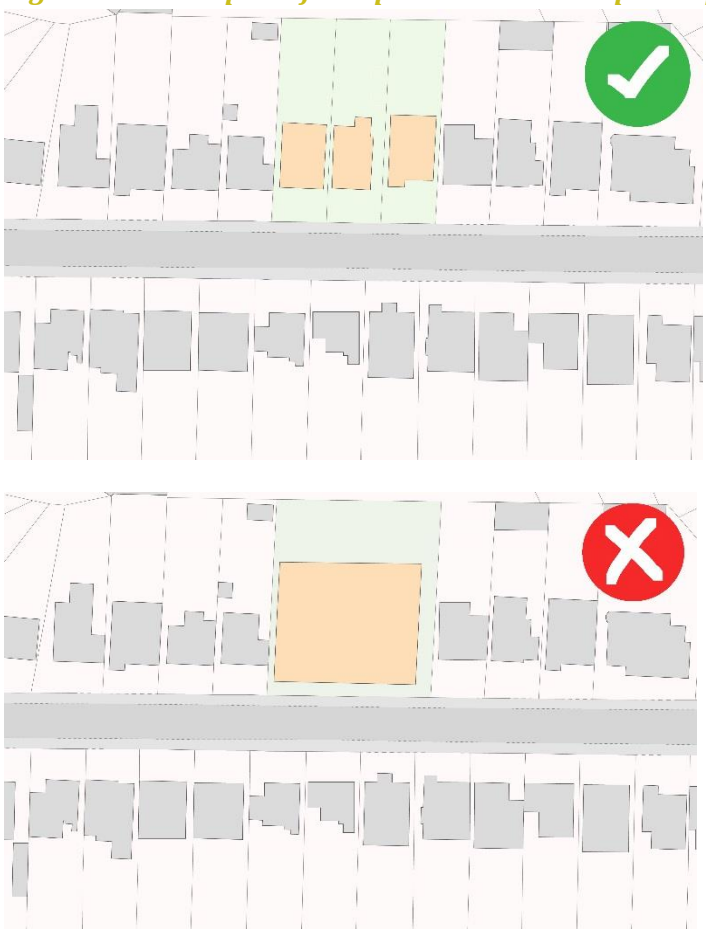
- Create a clearly defined street network;
- Avoid deep blocks or overly large blocks that reduce connectivity and/or lead to the use of cul de sacs or rear courtyards;
- Reflect local characteristics;
- Consider micro-climate, such as prevailing wind direction and solar orientation.

Plots

6.19 Plots are important elements in the character of an area. Their sizes, especially the widths along a street frontage are key determinants of the rhythm of buildings and spaces along a street, how active it will be and the grain of development in an area.

6.20 Streets with regular, clearly defined plot rhythms that are fine grain create the most interesting and attractive street scenes. Development that disrupts the rhythm of existing plots can create unattractive, inactive streetscenes and reduce visual interest.(Fig 6.2). As a result, the council will generally resist plot amalgamation that results in the loss of historic plot rhythms and visual richness in the street scene.

Figure 6.2: Examples of acceptable and unacceptable plot rhythms



Principle 6.5

1. All residential development will be expected to respond to the size, shape and rhythm of surrounding plot layouts. Plot layouts that are out of context with the surrounding character, will be resisted. In particular, the creation of large plots that are out of character with surrounding smaller grain plot patterns will not be supported.

2. Fine grain plot divisions will be supported and encouraged, particularly in intensifying urban areas. Loss of fine grain or historic plots layouts will generally be strongly resisted.

3. All plot boundaries will be expected to be clearly and strongly defined, especially those to the front of the site. Proposals with weak or absent plot definition will be resisted.

Defining Public/private space

6.21 It is important that the boundaries between public and private space are clearly defined. Poorly defined spaces create confusion as to ownership and use. This can lead to both public and private spaces becoming neglected, avoided and unattractive. This not only damages the streetscene, but also fosters a sense that the place is not safe.

Image 6.15

Traditional streets where public and private space is very clearly defined by walls and hedges.

Image 6.16

Image 6.17
Poor quality developments in terms of private public space definition.

Principle 6.6

1. In all new developments the boundaries between public and private space need to be clearly defined by either planting, walls, railings or fencing. In residential environments the boundaries will be expected to be at least 1m in height and of good quality.

2. Developments that leave space with unclear ownership will be resisted.

Parking

6.22 Space to park cars places a significant burden on the design of development layouts. Balancing the expectations of residents, workers and visitors for adequate parking spaces near to properties with the need to ensure parking does not unduly impact on the street scene and safety and amenity of people is a key design consideration.

6.23 In order to create attractive and well functioning layouts it is important that the space to park vehicles is carefully considered at the early stages of the design process.

General standards

6.24 The Royal Borough is dominated by its countryside and tree assets and it will be expected that parking solutions will reflect this green nature with significant use of soft green landscaping. Parking solutions involving unrelieved and large areas of hard surfacing will be resisted.

6.25 It is also expected that the quality of parking solutions will be very high. Use of high quality hard and soft landscaping to provide appealing and functional parking spaces will be required. Developers will be expected to use porous surfacing for parking areas and encouraged to use different materials and colours to delineate parking bays and road carriageways.

6.26 Parking can be provided in a number of ways:

- On plot;
- In communal mews/parking courts;
- On street.

6.27 The Council accepts that different parking layouts are likely to be required in different locations and developments may need a mix of solutions. Low density schemes, for instance will find it easier to predominantly accommodate parking on-plot whilst higher intensity schemes in more urban locations may need to use solutions involving undercrofts or on street provision. Whatever solution is used, it is important that it is high quality and that the development layout is not visually and functionally dominated by parked cars.

Image 6.18

Generous green infrastructure, varied and quality materials, attractive lighting and street furniture create a high quality parking layout.

Image 6.19

On plot frontage parking that does not dominate the street scene and provides space for softening vegetation.

Principle 6.7

1. Parking layouts should be high quality and designed to:
   - Reflect the strong sylvan identity of the borough. All parking arrangements should be softened with generous soft landscaping and no design should group more than 3 parking spaces together without intervening landscaping;
   - Ensure developments are not functionally and visually dominated by cars;
   - Maintain activity in the street without adversely affecting the attractiveness of the streetscene;
   - Minimise impact on the amenity of residents;
   - Be safe, overlooked and convenient for users;
   - Be spaces that are visually and functionally attractive in the streetscene.

2. Where undercroft parking forms part of the parking strategy, the council will expect:
   - Blank ground floor facades to be avoided where they face the street or other routes;
   - Entrances to residential units on upper floors to be prominent and stand out in the frontage;
   - First floor windows and balconies to provide surveillance and a sense of overlooking through the provision of large and frequently spaced windows and balconies.
   - Visible cycle parking areas and other activities at ground floor level to provide animation.

Image 6.20

Domination of frontages by car parking leading to a loss of enclosure and green character.

Image 6.21

A poor on street parking solution that does not delineate bays, create safe spaces for pedestrians or provide good levels of softening green infrastructure.

Parking space standards

6.28 For details on the number and sizes of parking spaces in proposed schemes developers should consult the borough's current Parking Strategy SPD https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/downloads/download/187/parking_strategy.

On-plot parking

6.29 On-plot parking can occur to the front, side or rear of dwellings. It may include integral or stand-alone garages and carports.

6.30 The council's preference is for parking to be to the side or rear where adverse impacts on the street scene and amenities can be more effectively managed. Where parking has to be provided to the front it is important that the visual impacts are mitigated as far as possible. Potential solutions include landscaping, staggered buildings, separation and use of boundary treatments. It is also important that buildings are set back far enough from the road to enable cars to be comfortably parked in front. Enclosure of front on-plot parking areas with vegetation will be strongly encouraged.

6.31 On-plot parking generally requires many crossovers onto the highway. In heavily treed landscapes the landscape screen along plot boundaries is a key element of local character. In such locations a single shared drive may be required from the street to serve dwellings with on plot parking.

Principle 6.8

1. On-plot parking should generally be provided to the side or rear of the property or underground. Underground parking will be encouraged, provided the site is not subject to flood risk.

2. Where front of plot parking is proposed this should be enclosed with soft landscaping. For large parking areas, parking bays should also be regularly interspersed by significant landscaping areas. Front of plot parking should not:

   - Dominate the appearance of the plot or the street scene with extensive hard surfacing or multiple or over wide vehicle cross overs; or
   - Result in vehicles overhanging the pavement or lying hard up against habitable rooms.

Parking courts

6.32 Communal parking courts are private car parking areas, typically positioned either to the front or rear of dwellings. Parking courts are used for flats and intense terraced housing.

6.33 Parking courts should be designed as attractive, busy, safe spaces in their own right.

Image 6.22

A parking court with a variety of surface treatments and with soft landscaping enclosing the court and interspersing between clusters of parking bays

Image 6.23

Hard and unattractive parking court with non-permeable surfaces and no green/blue infrastructure

Principle 6.9

1. Car parking courts should be safe and busy places that are overlooked and which accommodate a number of activities and uses.
2. Parking courts should be attractive places with high quality hard and soft landscaping.
3. Where parking courts are provided to the front of development they should not be dominant elements in the streetscene. The council will expect front parking courts on all types of development to be enclosed with strong soft landscape screens.
4. Where there are more than 5 parking bays on parking courts, the council will expect soft landscaping to intersperse every 3 bays on residential schemes and every 5 bays on all other types of development.
5. Dwellings with frontages onto streets should not have their main frontage to rear parking courts.

On-street parking

6.34 If well designed, on-street parking can add to the vibrancy and variety of a street scene. The council's preference is for visitor and non-allocated parking to be provided on-street where possible and appropriate to local character.

6.35 Where on-street parking is proposed, then the street must be purposefully designed to accommodate it. Parking bays may accommodate parallel, perpendicular or angled spaces.

Image 6.24

A lack of space for on-street parking, no marking of parking bays and lack of softening landscaping creates an unattractive, poor street environment that is unsafe for pedestrians

Image 6.25

Attractive on-street parking solutions in a landscaped setting

Principle 6.10

1. Where provided, on-street parking will be expected to be high quality in terms of layout and materials.
2. On-street parking should not dominate the street scene and must be integrated with other street features.
3. Positioning of on-street parking should not dominate adjoining plots and residential uses.
4. Street car parking will be expected to be placed in a landscaped street setting utilising hard and soft features of a very high quality. Where bays are provided, they should accommodate no more than a cluster of 3 cars.
5. Where the width of the road has been increased to accommodate on-street parking designers will be expected to employ features such as increasing building height, street trees or other planting to ensure that the street is well enclosed.

Backland development

6.36 New development that occurs at the back of plots and blocks can have a detrimental impact on character, amenity and functionality if not treated sensitively. Such development can result in the loss of trees and vegetation, affect the amenity of surrounding development and disrupt the rhythms and character of the street scene, particularly if access ways are wide.

Principle 6.11

All backland development should be subordinate and ensure that it:

- Does not harm the existing character of the local area;
- Relates positively to the existing layout and urban form;
- Maintains the quality of the environment and does not result in the loss of green or blue infrastructure;
- Creates or maintains satisfactory amenities for the occupiers of both the new and the existing surrounding properties.

7. Built form

Density

7.1 The Royal Borough has a limited supply of land for housing and thus it is important that this resource is used efficiently to deliver the new development that the borough needs. This will involve intensifying the urban fabric both in terms of the amount of built mass and amount of houses or bedrooms and commercial floorspace (density).

7.2 Building at higher density creates a more intense environment which can be visually and socially exciting. It can also allow for additional populations (residents, workers and visitors) to help maintain and support vital local facilities such as public transport systems, local shops and community centres.

7.3 Denser development at locations which are sustainably located will be encouraged. provided it is very high quality, protects amenity, enhances the streetscene, is supported by generous green and blue infrastructure and allows people access to external space and nature.

7.4 The presence of green infrastructure is vital in denser developments and developers will be expected to provide a mix of green infrastructure which could include pocket parks, roof gardens, green walls, community gardens and communal amenity space. The council will be preparing a blue/green infrastructure SPD to provide further detail on this matter.

Principle 7.1

1. Housing development should seek to achieve the highest density possible without:

   - Adversely impacting on the amenity of neighbours,
   - Creating unsatisfactory living conditions for future occupants of the new development; or
   - Compromising , the openness of the Green Belt (where relevant)local character, the environment or the appearance of an area.

2. Developments in higher intensity locations will be expected to be supported by generous green infrastructure provision.

Uses and mix

7.5 Mixed and balanced communities are seen as being important in delivering the sustainable, very high quality places for the Royal Borough. A mix of uses helps to ensure that places are well-used and occupied at all times. Places with a mix of densities, uses, types, sizes and tenures are vibrant, convenient and feel safe to use. Development with homogenous use classes, densities, tenures and sizes should be avoided.

7.6 Residential developments over 100 net new units will be encouraged to incorporate a range of non-residential uses such as shops, schools, community, leisure and health facilities, as well as employment uses. Homogenous business parks without ancillary uses and facilities for workers should be avoided

7.7 Designers are encouraged to discuss with the Borough at an early stage the specific nature of the mixes that a development site should look to deliver.

Principle 7.2

1. All small, medium and large development should contribute to the provision of balanced communities through the provision of a mix of uses, densities, forms, sizes and tenures.
2. Development which promotes very similar tenures and sizes across the development site will be resisted.
3. Larger development sites will also be expected to deliver a mix of uses.

Building positioning

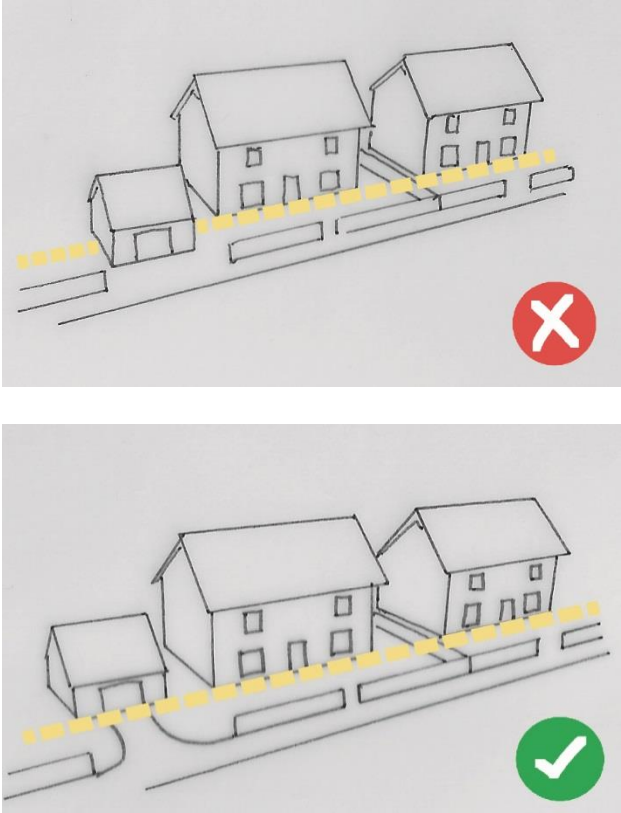
Building lines

7.8 Front building lines help to define the street and the degree of street enclosure (Figure 7.1). Rear building lines are important in protecting neighbour amenity, especially at 2 storey levels. Where dwellings are detached or semidetached, building lines along the side walls can help maintain visual gaps and protect the amenities of neighbours.

7.9 The council will expect new developments to give careful consideration to all forms of setbacks.

7.10 Occasional variation from a common front building line may provide opportunities to add visual interest to townscapes. Developers may consider using this as a design feature where positive opportunities arise and no adverse impact on neighbour amenity would be likely to arise.

Figure 7.1: A common front building line



Principle 7.3

Building lines in new developments should complement the streetscene, avoid impacting on neighbour amenity and allow for suitable landscaping and open space. Setbacks that erode character, street enclosure and amenity of neighbours will be resisted.

Solar design and climate change

7.11 The council strongly encourages designers to design buildings to minimise energy consumption by taking advantage of the sun's energy. This opportunity should be considered at the early stages of the design process.

7.12 Passive solar design involves orientating buildings to maximise the entry of low winter sun for passive solar heating. (Fig 7.2). Facades with generous fenestration with no overshadowing need to be orientated within 30 degrees of due south to gain from solar heating When employing passive solar design designers will also need to consider how to maximise solar collection during winter and minimise overheating during summer months.

7.13 Active solar gain uses building facades and roofs to collect solar energy for conversion into electricity or hot water. Any aspect within 30 degrees due south is ideal (Fig 7.3). The council is supportive of active solar micro renewable technologies where they do not have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the building and street scene.

7.14 Tree planting and ultimate tree heights and spreads will need to be taken into account to avoid future shading of solar panels. In some cases, this may mean solar panels will be inappropriate

Figure 7.2: Principles of passive solar design

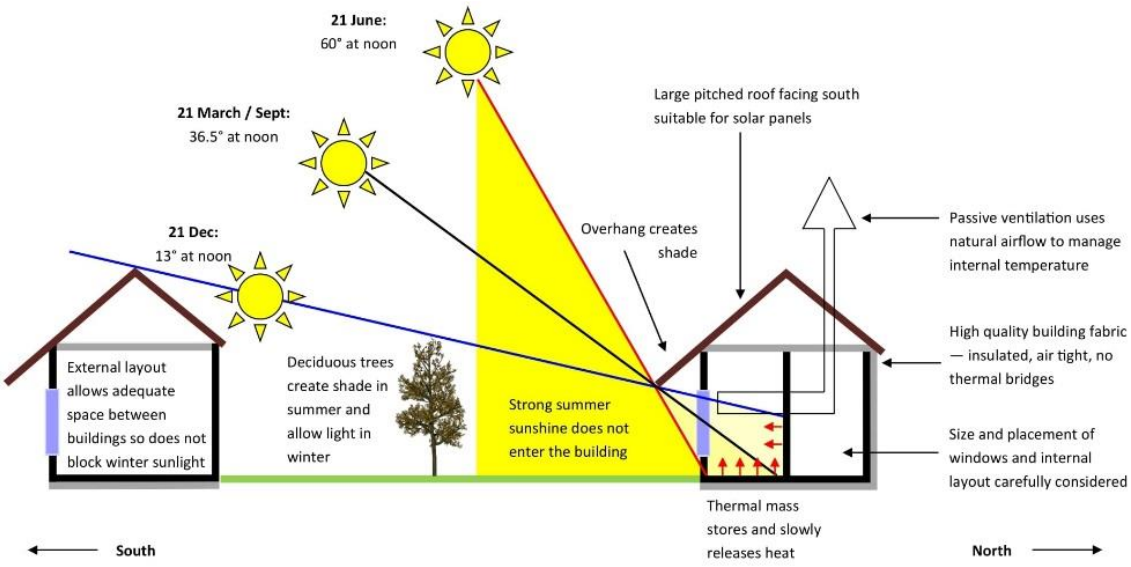
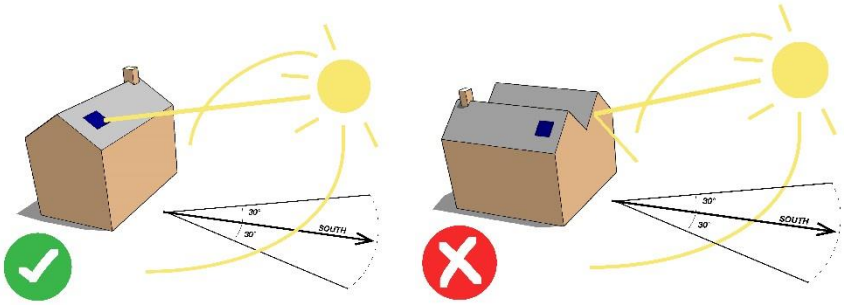


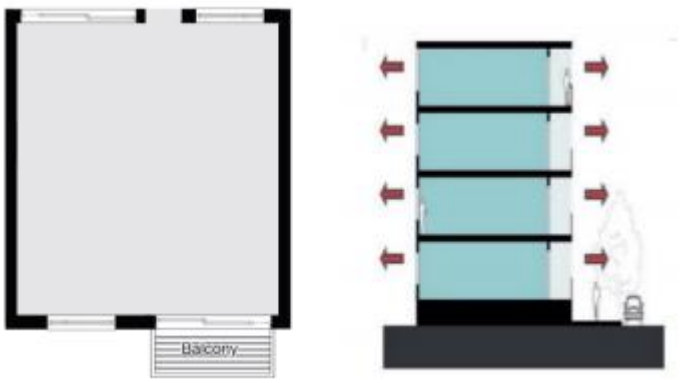
Figure 7.3: Active solar design principles



Building cooling

7.15 With hotter summers likely to become more prevalent, it is important that buildings are not only warm in winter, but can be kept cool in summer without the need to resort to resource hungry air conditioning. Provision of dual aspect accommodation enables occupants to have some measure of control over the cooling of their internal spaces by allowing through currents of air (Figure 7.4). Without this ability to produce a refreshing through air currents, buildings can become stiflingly hot and the council seeks to resist this type of single aspect accommodation.

Figure 7.4: Dual aspect accommodation enable occupants to keep internal spaces cooler by facilitating a through flow of air.



Principle 7.4

1. The Council will expect all new residential developments to make optimal use of natural light and warmth so as to minimise the use of energy for lighting and heating.

2. Proposals that fail to incorporate passive solar design will be resisted unless there is strong justification for not integrating it into a building or site.

3. Developments that overshadow existing light dependant micro-renewable technologies (e.g. photovoltaics, and solar hot water panels) on neighbouring properties will be resisted.

4. Dual aspect accommodation will be strongly encouraged for all types of development to facilitate cooling of internal spaces through natural airflows. Single aspect development that relies on air conditioning to keep internal spaces cool will be strongly resisted.

Building scale, massing and form

Height

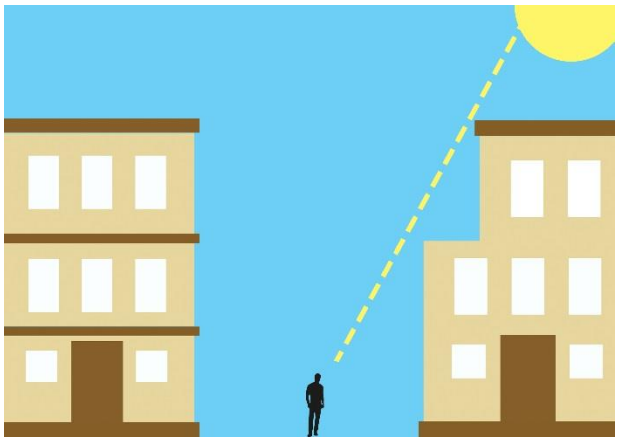
7.16 The height of a building has an important impact on the character and enclosure of a streetscene. Buildings that are too low in relation to the width of a street provide low levels of enclosure and unsatisfying street scenes, whilst buildings that are too high in relation to the width of a street create dark, overwhelmed spaces that do not feel human scale.

7.17 Buildings that are out of context with their neighbours in terms of height may also create unsatisfactory visual and physical relationships. There is also a greater likelihood of an overly tall building having adverse impacts on the amenity of occupiers of adjoining buildings and reducing the quality of adjoining public spaces through the loss of light and sunlight.

7.18 In general, the more rural and suburban areas of the borough tend to have building heights of 2 storey[9] with occasional 3 storey status or focal point buildings[10]. This low height is a strong defining element in the character of these lower density areas and the council will seek to maintain this.

7.19 In the town centres, development heights are more varied. Buildings of 3+ storeys will be supported, subject to impacts on street and residential amenities being satisfactorily resolved. Where there is concern that a buildings height could adversely impact on the street or neighbour amenities designers should consider setting the upper floor/s back from lower storeys (Fig 7.5).

Figure 7.5: Use of upper floor set back to maintain light to public and private realm.



7.20 Developers may need to supply details of the following to enable the Council to assess how a proposal's height may fit into the street scene and impact on neighbour amenities:

- Street widths to building height ratios;
- Information on topography and the scale of neighbouring properties;
- Shadow studies;
- Impact on heritage assets;
- Impact on townscape and landscape setting;
- Daylight and sunlight studies for occupants of new development;
- Daylight and sunlight impacts on surrounding public realm and neighbouring properties

7.21 The borough is experiencing an increasing number of proposals in Maidenhead town centre for developments at heights that break through the general prevailing height

[9] With ridge heights of around 7.5 – 8m
[10] Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Townscape Assessment; 2010

of 4 storeys. Such schemes have the potential to significantly alter the character of the Royal Borough town centre areas.

7.22 Tall buildings that reflect city scale development are likely to result in a significant increase in density. Unless designed carefully and of exemplar quality, such city scale developments can have significant adverse impacts on character, amenity and infrastructure provision. Developers should refer to the separate Tall Buildings Strategy SPD for further detailed design guidance on such tall building proposals.

Image 7.1

Two storey suburban residential accommodation in the Royal Borough

Image 7.2

Taller mixed use development in a tighter Royal Borough environment

Principle 7.5

The Council will expect building heights to help enclose the street without overwhelming it. In suburban and rural areas building heights will generally be expected to be 2 to 3 storeys with occasional taller buildings acting as local landmarks/ focal points (where appropriate).

Higher buildings (mid-storey) will generally be acceptable in tight urban locations such as local and town centre environments subject to impacts on street and residential amenities being satisfactorily resolved and where they are of excellent design.

Tall buildings (generally those above 10 storeys) will be resisted unless they are of exemplar design and conform with the detailed guidance set out in the borough's Tall Building Strategy.

Building heights should not result in adverse impacts on:

- The amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties; and
- Public realm environments

and will be expected to enable a building to integrate well into its surrounding context.

Scale & massing

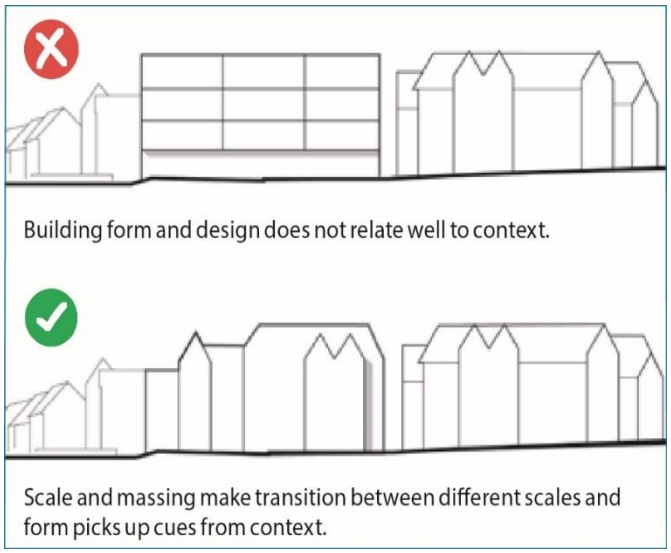
7.23 The footprint that a building makes on the ground, along with its height, and the amount of space around it determines the mass of a building and the impact it has on the street scene.

7.24 Most existing areas in the borough have discernible patterns of massing and it would be expected that new development would reflect this pattern. Many locations are historic and contain fine grained development. Insertion of large floorplates and bulky developments into such patterns (for example offices, care homes and large format retail stores) generally create strong juxtapositions in bulk and massing and are unlikely to be acceptable because of their damaging impact on neighbour amenity and the quality of the streetscene. The following approaches may allow buildings with large scale and mass to be integrated into fine grain environments in a sensitive and high quality manner:

- Articulating the form of the building as illustrated in Figure 7.6;

- Breaking down single use buildings by introducing a mix of uses and/or locating active and more public uses on the ground floor to create active frontages;
- Drawing on local characteristics in terms of rhythm of facades, plot width, materials, details and building articulation.

Figure 7.6: Integrating large bulky buildings.
Large bulky buildings can be broken down through either the massing or elevation treatment



7.25 Significant differences in height and/or bulk between neighbouring buildings are difficult to integrate sensitively and avoid issues of overlooking, overshadowing, loss of privacy and being overbearing. The form and mass of buildings can be manipulated to ease the change and moderate the perceived scale of buildings.

Principle 7.6

1. New development should reflect and integrate well with the spacing, heights, bulk massing and building footprints of existing buildings, especially when these are local historic patterns.
2. The council will resist proposals where the bulk, scale and mass adversely impacts on the streetscene, local character and neighbour amenities.

Roofscapes

7.26 Rooflines, roof shapes and chimneys can have an important influence on the character of a street scene. Designers should consider this aspect of their proposals

carefully and look to use the roofscapes they create to enhance buildings and townscapes. In higher intensity developments, developers will be expected to consider using roof spaces to provide green infrastructure.

7.27 In the Royal Borough traditional residential roof forms are based on pitches with hips and gables with various forms of dormers (Figure 7.7). More contemporary styles have explored flat and curved roof forms.

7.28 Buildings that are overly deep were historically bridged with a double pitched roof. More contemporary approaches have been to propose a large element of flat roof behind short pitched to span the depth, often leaving unattractive and contrived roof forms.

Figure 7.7: Historic double pitched form

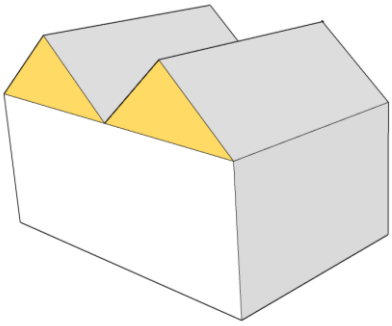


Image 7.3

Example of a good corner roofscape

Image 7.4

A richness in new townscape can also be achieved through the use of strong roof rhythms along with some variation to provide visual interest

Image 7.5

Example of poor roof design with unattractive bridging flat roof section, awkward angles and poor treatment to top of bay window.

Principle 7.7

1. Proposals to introduce roof forms on development that diverges from the prevailing character will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the proposals would make a positive contribution to the streetscape.

2. Where a building has been designed to reflect traditional pitched roof forms, flat roofs should not be used as a means of spanning overly deep buildings.

3. Developers should use the opportunities presented by corner plots to introduce variations in height to create visual interest.

Active frontages

7.29 There should be a strong relationship between the street and the buildings and places that frame it. Buildings should front onto the street and animate it with 'active' frontages to provide interest, life and vitality to public realm.

7.30 Active frontages mean:

- Frequent doors & windows, with few blank walls;
- Narrow frontage buildings, giving vertical rhythm to the streetscene;
- Articulation of facades, with projections such as bays and porches;
- Key habitable rooms fronting onto the street so that lively internal uses are visible from the public realm.

Image 7.6

Example of a place with frequent doors and windows onto a commercial street

Image 7.7

A quiet residential street with many doors and windows creating an active frontage.

Image 7.8

An inactive frontage with no openings at street level

Minimum internal space standards

7.31 In 2015 the Government produced national internal space standards covering dwelling sizes and storage requirements.[11] Developers will need to take these into account when designing new residential developments.

Principle 7.8

As a minimum, the council will expect all new housing development to comply with the national internal space standards.

Adaptable development

7.32 The council considers it important that development is flexible enough to adapt to the changing needs of occupants over time. Building regulations give practical advice and technical criteria for designing housing that can meet the needs of people throughout their lives. Lessons may also be learnt from historic housing forms such as Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian houses, which have proved very adaptable to evolving lifestyles and modern living.

7.33 Adaptability may include the ability to combine or to subdivide the space to allow it to be occupied in a different manner and by different uses. Buildings must also be adaptable to climate change threats such as flooding, and therefore vulnerable buildings or developments, especially those that contribute to flooding, will be resisted.

7.34 The council encourages applicants to consider applying the Lifetime Homes Standards to residential developments.[12] These standards look to create dwelling spaces that are accessible, adaptable and flexible. The council also encourages applicants to consider criteria for Building for Life[13] in their development design schemes.

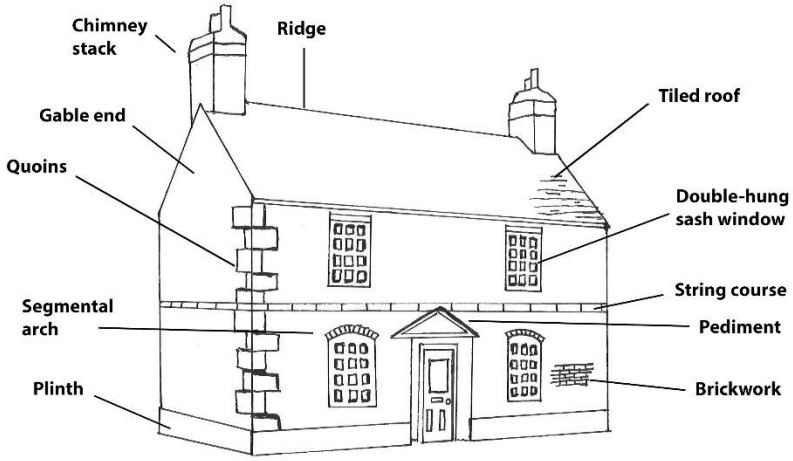
[11] DCLG; Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard; March 2015
[12] http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/pages/lifetime-homes-principles.html
[13] https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/Building%20for%20Life%2012_0.pdf

Architectural detailing

7.35 Architectural detailing has an important role to play in setting the quality of a development. It is also important in setting or re-inforcing the character of an area.

7.36 Architectural details include windows proportions and style, doors, chimneys, eave lines, cills, window to wall ratios, string courses, corners, fenestration, roof overhangs, colour, materials, gables & hips, pediments and brickwork styles (Figure 7.8).

Figure 7.8: Pictorial glossary of architectural features to consider when designing built form



7.37 The council will expect developments to exhibit high quality architecture which reinforces the design vision for the scheme. The design should be carefully considered to create a rational, coherent whole with a visually pleasing balance of proportions. The use of high quality materials will be an added important element in creating an architecturally satisfying development.

7.38 Developments can take a contemporary or traditional approach and can be designed with formal or informal styles. Attention to detail is vital to ensure that a development is successful. Buildings where the elements have been well put together will be pleasing to the eye, will last well and will complement the spaces they face, whatever the style of architecture.

7.39 Architectural honesty is expected. Pastiche designs that incorporate a mix of historic styles and detailing will generally be resisted as this typically creates a confused, poor quality visual appearance that does not specifically relate to any specific building style or age. If a traditional/vernacular language is being applied it is important that details (such as windows and doors) are convincing. Where designers seek to mix architectural styles to create a contemporary approach, the council will

look for attention to detail and high quality with strong architectural justification for the proposals.

7.40 Developers should consider incorporating features such bat, swift or other bird boxes into building design to encourage biodiversity.

7.41 The quality of new development can be spoilt by poor attention to detail. Careful consideration should be given to the design of and positioning of items such as roofs, windows, doors, porches, flues, gutters, pipes and other rainwater details, ironmongery and other decorative details.

Image 7.9

Poor architectural detailing on contemporary dwelling

Image 7.10

Householder changes that have resulted in a loss of historic detailing on one half of the building

Principle 7.9

1. Designers should use architectural detailing to create attractive buildings that positively contribute to the character and quality of an area.

2. Buildings that employ architectural detailing that is unattractive, low quality or is not honest or legible will be resisted.

3. Developers will be encouraged to incorporate features into building design to encourage biodiversity.

Windows

7.42 Windows are particularly important detailed features on a building. Designers will be expected to pay particular attention to window proportions, positioning, symmetry, frame and glazing bar thicknesses, recessing/projection and surrounding decoration (e.g brickwork arches). If a traditional vernacular design language is being applied it is important that details are as convincing, rather than paying lip service to tradition.

7.43 Window to wall ratios will also need to be considered. Public facing elevations that have large areas of blank wall with limited amounts of glazing will be unacceptable.

7.44 Ground windows that are distinctly taller than fenestration on upper floors help to maintain balance and harmony and create pleasing compositions. Additionally recessing windows, or enabling them to project beyond a façade provides an elevation with articulation and visual richness.

Image 7.11

A good example of a building where taller ground floor windows make for a pleasing composition

Image 7.12

An example of good window design on modern development

Principle 7.10

1. Window design visible in the public realm should be high quality and create visually balanced and harmonious compositions. Poor quality window design will be resisted, especially where it will be visible in the street scene.

2. Large areas of blank wall with limited glazing should be avoided on elevations visible from the public realm.

Materials & colour

7.45 Materials and colour have a significant influence on people's perceptions of the quality of a building or place, as well as the durability of a building. They are also significant components in the local character of a place. The choice of colour and materials for a scheme should be derived from an analysis of local context, in order to ensure local distinctiveness is maintained or enhanced.

Principle 7.11

The choice of materials must be carefully considered and justified. Proposals must demonstrate the following design principles have been met:

- Materials that need little maintenance to retain their appearance are preferred, for example brick is more endurable than timber cladding.
- Changes in material should have some other clearly identifiable role in the design and must not be random;
- Where materials and details are used to reflect traditional building forms or vernacular architecture, then they should be a genuine reflection of those traditions rather than 'stick-on' features. For instance, chimneys should relate to fireplaces, and weatherboarding should be timber.
- Using materials and colour to help distinguish special character areas within larger developments.
- Providing three dimensional detailing to add depth to the facade.

8. Amenity

8.1 Residential amenity, in the form of light, privacy, outlook and provision of outdoor amenity space, is a detailed but important design matter that has a very strong influence on the quality of people's living environments. Natural light and access to outdoor amenity space are also important design matters for places where people work.

8.2 New developments should provide future occupiers with high quality amenities and not undermine the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties, especially where these are residential properties.

Privacy

8.3 It is important that people are able to enjoy a degree of privacy which makes them feel comfortable inside their dwellings and also able to enjoy their private outdoor spaces without feeling overlooked or overheard. Areas of particular sensitivity are habitable rooms, the first 3m of private space behind a rear elevation and balconies or terraces which are the sole source of private outside space for a home.

8.4 Developers will be expected to use one or more of the following design solutions to maintain privacy in new development and with neighbouring properties:

- Distance

A minimum distance of 20m is this Council's generally accepted guideline for there to be no material loss of privacy between the rear of two storey buildings directly facing each other (i.e. a back to back relationship). For two storey rear to side relationships it may be possible to reduce the separation distance to 15m.

However, there are instances where this minimum separation distance to maintain privacy may not be appropriate. Extra separation may be needed where there are significant changes in level between buildings, or where new development is greater than 2 storeys in height.

Equally, in more compact contexts (in centre of towns and villages and infill plots), or where the development is single storey, it may not be appropriate to provide the conventional separation distances. Alternative design solutions to maintain privacy will be needed in such instances.

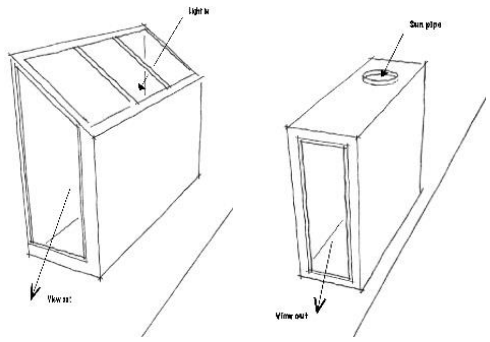
Table 8.1: Rule of thumb separation distances for residential development

1 and 2 storeys:	Front to front across street: 10m
	Rear to rear of dwelling: 20m
	Flank wall to rear of dwelling: 12m
2 storeys and above:	Front to front across street: 15m
	Rear to rear of dwelling: 26m – this measurement increases to 30m where the relationship is between 2 storey houses and a block of flats above 2 storeys
	Flank wall to boundary: 2m
	Flank wall to rear of dwelling: 15m

- Oblique angles

Positioning of buildings and angled windows to create oblique views are useful tools to reduce overlooking (Fig 8.1). Where buildings are angled at more than 30 degrees from each other separation distances can often be reduced to 15m. Angled windows need to be designed to maintain adequate light levels to the rooms they serve.

Fig 8.1: Oblique window solutions



- Window design

Roof lights, slit windows, high level windows and smaller vertically proportioned windows can be used to maintain privacy as well as provide adequate internal light levels (Figure 8.2). However, it is important to ensure that the design and positioning of windows does not compromise the need for light.

- Obscure glazing

  Obscure glazing will be appropriate for bathrooms and exceptionally can be considered for other rooms provided that there is clear glazing to another window in the room which does not overlook another property. Obscure glazing will not be appropriate to habitable rooms.

- Screening

  Provided it does not create significant overshadowing small ground floor extensions, walls, fencing, hedges, trees and general landscaping can be used to provide screening to private spaces.

Figure 8.2: High level windows

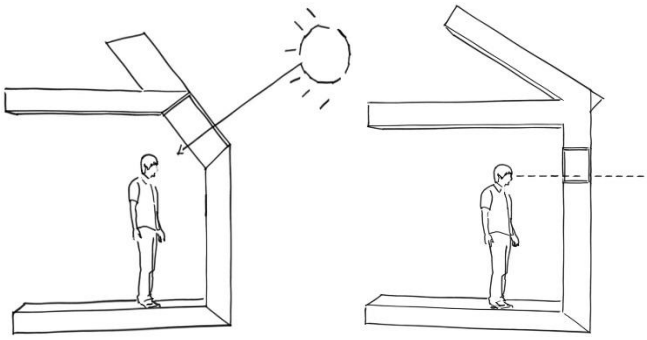
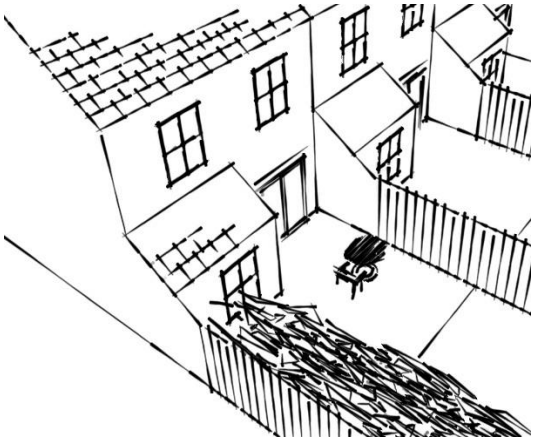


Image 8.1

Domestic kitchen lit by slit windows and rooflights

Fig 8.3: Screening provided by an extension and wall



- Gardens

  Use of small front gardens can help maintain privacy for habitable rooms facing the street (Figure 8.3).

- Room layout
  Designing the internal layout to concentrate habitable rooms away from adjacent properties where overlooking may be an issue.

Image 8.2

Small enclosed front gardens providing privacy to habitable rooms

Principle 8.1

1. All new development incorporating residential use should be provided with a reasonable degree of visual privacy to habitable rooms and sensitive outdoor amenity spaces using one or more of the following tools:

    - Distance separation;
    - Window design;
    - Obscure glazing;
    - Screening;
    - Front gardens;
    - Room layout.

2. Developments which provide a poor level of privacy for their occupants, or which have a significant adverse effect on the privacy of neighbouring properties will be resisted.

Outlook

8.5 Although there is no right to a view, residents should be able to enjoy good quality outlook to the external environment from habitable rooms, without adjacent buildings, walls, parked vehicles or storage materials being overbearing or visually intrusive. Outlook from the home to exterior spaces keep people in touch with their wider surroundings, the prevailing weather and the rhythm of the day and seasons. Contact with nature and the social life of the community people live in has been shown to be important in maintaining human health and mental wellbeing.

8.6 A poor outlook relationship is caused when the height and bulk of buildings, walls & fences or the proximity of parked vehicles, dense high vegetation or storage materials, significantly dominate the outlook of a habitable room or area. Topographical changes can also create overbearing relationships and poor outlooks.

8.7 Poor outlook is also created when rooms are only served by:

- obscurely glazed windows;
- roof lights that only provide a small sky vista;
- Small oblique windows.

Such design solutions to provide outlook are considered inadequate and should be avoided.

Principle 8.2

1. All habitable rooms in new residential development should maintain at least one main window with an adequate outlook to external spaces where nearby man-made and natural features do not appear overbearing or visually intrusive.

Daylight and Sunlight

8.8 Access to warm, sunny places are important to people's health and wellbeing. Daylight and sunlight animate and enhance people's enjoyment of interior spaces. Good natural light reduces the energy needed to provide light for everyday activities, while controlled sun penetration can also help to meet part of the winter heating requirement. Public spaces that are well lit by natural light and sunny tend to be well used, encouraging people to spend time outdoors and enhancing community activity and interaction.

8.9 Conversely, spaces that are poorly lit by natural light and are not sunny discourage use and encourage higher levels of energy consumption. Where people have to reside in spaces with poor or no natural light or sun for long periods of time, this can be injurious to mental health and physical wellbeing.

Daylight access to dwellings

8.10 It important that habitable rooms in people's homes are well lit by natural daylight to facilitate a range of daily activities. Building Regulation requirements will set the standards for internal illuminations in new dwellings but it is also important that designers consider lighting of outdoor spaces and the impact of the development on the amount of daylight reaching habitable rooms and external spaces of neighbouring dwellings.

8.11 Design solutions to achieve good quality internal lighting of new homes include:

- providing glazing areas in habitable rooms that is not less than 20% of internal floor area of room;
- dual aspect dwellings;
- Ensuring habitable rooms are served by glazing that has a vertical sky component of no less than 27%.

8.12 One or all of these solutions may be required to ensure people will have comfortable light levels in their habitable rooms.

8.13 Potential design solutions to prevent material loss of daylight to neighbouring windows and overshadowing of habitable external spaces include:

- Applying a 25 degree vertical angle from a point 2 m above the floor at the façade is not obstructed. (Fig 8.4). This typically results in separation distances of 10m;

- Avoiding obstruction to light by ensuring that the centre of an existing window serving a habitable room does not fall within 45 degrees of a line drawn from the edge of an extension or a new development (Fig 8.5).

The 45 degree rule is applicable to 2 storey extensions. A 60 degree rule is typically applied by this authority for single storey extensions. Designers should note that the 45/60 degree rule is only an indicator and the acceptability of a development proposal will also be dependent on ground levels on site and the orientation of buildings.

Fig 8.4: The 25 Degree Rule (Source: BRE Guide to Daylighting & Sunlighting)

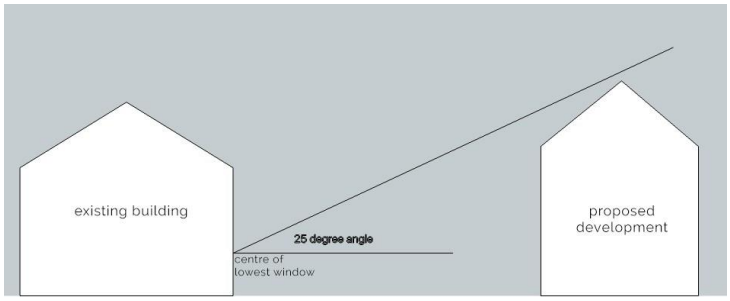
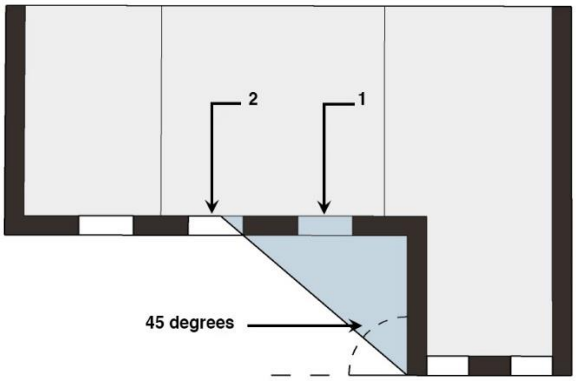
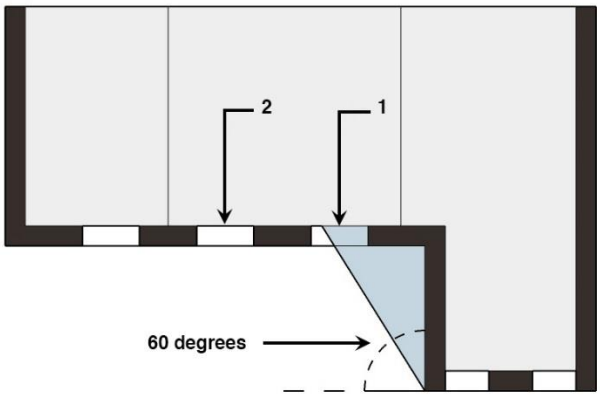


Fig 8.5: The 45 Degree Rule (Source: BRE Guide to Daylighting & Sunlighting)



Window 1 will be materially affected by light loss as the middle of the window is within the 45 degree line created by the proposed single storey extension.
As the 45 degree line does not pass through the centre of window 2 it would not be considered to be materially affected.



Window 1 will be materially affected by the light loss as the middle of the window is within the 60 degree line created by the proposed two storey extension.
As the 60 degree line does not pass through window 2 it will not be considered to be materially affected.

Daylight access for workplaces

8.14 Many people spend much of their daytime at work. Where these places have little or no natural light people are working during much of the day under artificial lights and are separated from natural light rhythms and conditions. Not only is this energy inefficient, the lack of natural light can cause negative health effects.

8.15 It is therefore important that designers consider the provision of natural light in workplaces and seek to maximise this as far as possible.

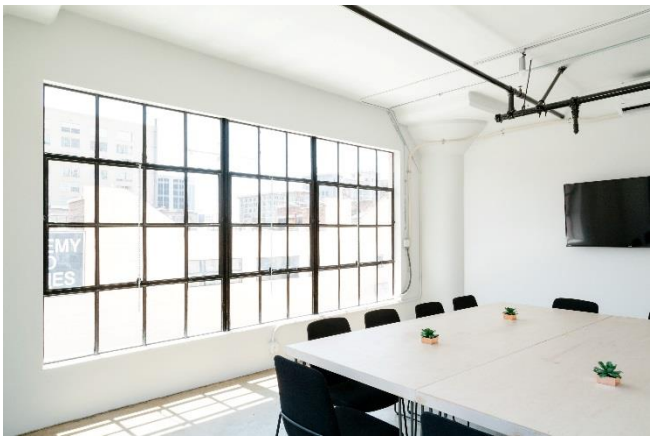


Image 8.3

An employment building with good natural light to internal spaces

Sunlight access

8.16 Provided it can be controlled, people love sunlight and likewise, its absence has a damaging effect. Neighbours will often be particularly distressed if new development threatens their existing private sunny spaces.

8.17 Accordingly, when drawing up their plans developers should consider the following sunlight needs:

- sun access for habitable indoor spaces of both new and existing neighbouring development. The needs for people who spend a large proportion of their day indoors, (including older people), will require particular consideration.
- Sun access to habitable residential outdoor spaces of both new and existing neighbouring development;
- Provision or maintenance of good sunlight to public realm social spaces and focal points such as squares, pause points, gardens and pocket parks.

8.18 Potential design solutions to provide good quality solar access include:

- Providing for direct sunlight to enter at least one habitable room for part of the day through-out the year. Dual aspect dwellings will assist with this.

- Providing private external spaces (patios, gardens, balconies, roof terraces) that receive direct sunlight for part of the day in the period between 1st April and 30th September.

- Providing public realm social focal point spaces with direct sunlight for a good part of the day in the period between 1st April and 30th September.

8.19 Sunlight has a significant impact on thermal comfort and energy consumption. In winter it can make an important contribution to heating, but excessive solar gain can cause discomfort in summer. Careful design can control sunlight to maximise the benefits of solar access whilst minimising overheating. Further information on passive and active solar design is contained in Chapter 7.

8.20 Where there is doubt about the quality of daylight or sunlight access to new dwellings and public realm focal point spaces, or the maintenance of light access to existing neighbouring development, developers may be required to produce plans illustrating sky components and shadow paths at the winter solstice and spring/autumn equinox.

Principle 8.3

1. The occupants of new dwellings should be provided with good quality daylight and sun access levels to habitable internal rooms and external spaces.

2. Dual aspect dwellings are strongly encouraged. Where single aspect dwellings are proposed, developers should demonstrate how good levels of ventilation, daylight and sun access will be provided to habitable spaces. Single aspect residential units that are north facing should be avoided.

3. New public realm social focal point spaces should be provided with direct sunlight for a good part of the day in the period between 1st April and 30th September.

4. Developments should not result in occupants of neighbouring dwellings or nearby public realm social spaces suffering from a material loss of daylight and sun access.

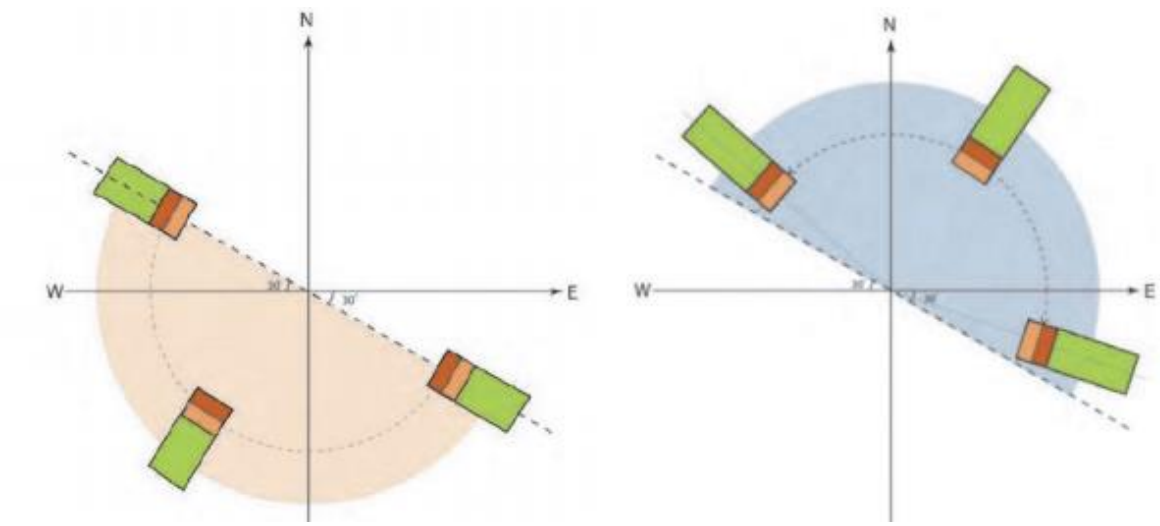
Private outdoor amenity space

Residential uses

8.21 This council considers the provision of high quality, private open space to serve homes to be a necessity. This form of space serves a number of important household functions including allowing people contact with nature as part of their home life, clothes drying, growing food and pursuing domestic leisure activities. It is considered vitally important for people's physical and mental wellbeing.

8.22 In the context of increasing intensification of residential development and the specification of minimum internal space standards, it is important to ensure that this private outdoor amenity space is provided in adequate amounts and is of a high quality. Accordingly, the council has established minimum space standards for the provision of external private amenity space in all forms of property. Developers will be encouraged to exceed these standards where the site allows for this. Where developments are not able to meet the minimal outdoor amenity space standards the council may consider accepting lower standards provided this is robustly justified and it can satisfy itself that the outdoor amenity space provided will be of a very high quality.

Fig 8.6: Differing garden space requirements depending on orientation



8.23 The amount of garden space (including front, side and rear spaces) may vary widely but new houses must provide for a minimum amount of private amenity space in the form of gardens. The minimum amount will vary depending on the orientation of the house. Homes with private amenity spaces facing predominantly north will need to provide larger private gardens than those facing the sun with a predominantly southern orientation (Figure 8.6 & Table 8.2).

8.24 As a general rule, front gardens will not count towards private amenity space as they tend to be too small and do not provide the appropriate level of privacy. In lower density areas, where houses are set back within their plots and well screened, front gardens may contribute towards private amenity.

8.25 Gardens should be of sufficient size to include trees and other structural planting, which at maturity will not adversely affect the reasonable enjoyment of the property by future occupiers.

Principle 8.4

Table 8.2: Minimum outdoor amenity space size standards for houses (sqm)

House size	Minimum standard/unit for outdoor amenity spaces facing predominantly south (sqm)	Minimum standard/unit for outdoor amenity spaces facing predominantly north (sqm)
1 bed	40	50
2/3 beds	55	65
4+ beds	70	85

Private outdoor garden spaces should:

- Be roughly rectangular in shape;
- Screened by fences or walls to provide privacy;
- Receive direct sunlight;
- Able to accommodate bin and cycle storage;
- Not be heavily overshadowed by trees and tall hedges;
- Directly accessible from habitable rooms;
- Have level access from the home.

Garden spaces that are separated from the dwellings they serve will generally be resisted.

8.26 Provision of high quality outdoor amenity space on flatted developments is very important, especially in tight urban environments. The council expects flatted developments to provide both private and communal amenity space.

8.27 Private space can take the form of small contiguous gardens for ground floor flats and private balconies for flats above ground. Balcony spaces should be large enough to accommodate chairs, tables, planting areas and space for drying of clothes (Figure 8.7). To encourage use, private spaces should provide privacy for occupants, be large enough to accommodate outdoor activities and be located in sunny, quiet positions with a good outlook. Screens, recesses and orientation are potential design solutions to provide for privacy.

Fig 8.7: Minimal standards for private outdoor amenity space in flats

8.28 Residential care homes will be expected to provide private amenity space at the same level as flatted developments.

Principle 8.5

1. Flatted developments will be expected to provide high quality private outdoor amenity space for each unit.

2. All ground floor flats should have access to a well-defined private area of amenity space which:

    a. Directly adjoins and is accessible from the flat;
    b. Has a minimum depth of 3m;
    c. Is as wide as the dwelling it serves;
    d. Is clearly identified by boundary treatments, including railings, low wall or a hedge;
    e. Has a privacy screen between dwellings.

3. Unless conservation, privacy or heritage issues negate against the use of balconies, all flats above ground floor should be provided with balconies which:

    a. Are a minimum of 2m deep and are wider than their depth;
    b. Provide a minimum floor area of 5 sqm metres for 1-2 person homes and an extra 1 sqm for each additional occupant;
    c. Provide for privacy;
    d. Are not overshadowed and have good access to sunlight;
    e. Have a good outlook;
    f. Are well related to internal accommodation;
    g. Be well related to the architecture of the building on which they are placed.

4. Predominantly north facing balconies with no access to sunlight during the year, or balconies in close proximity to adjoining main roads which will be materially affected by noise and air pollution will not be considered to have fulfilled the obligation to provide high quality private outdoor amenity space for flat occupants.

8.29 Communal gardens provide the opportunity to provide adequate space for sustainable tree planting. Designers should provide attractive communal amenity space which serves all residents. All too often, communal amenity spaces in flatted developments become neglected, unused low quality spaces which serve flat occupants poorly and make little positive contribution to townscapes.

8.30 Communal space may include balconies, roof terraces, podiums and ground floor gardens. It is vital that such spaces benefit from good levels of sunshine and microclimate (including air quality) and are placed on the quiet side of the building wherever possible.

8.31 It is also important that all types of outdoor amenity space in flatted developments relate well to the architecture of the building, play a visually positive role in the street scene and allow for informal opportunities for play. Private and communal outdoor space should not compromise the privacy of adjoining dwellings.

Image 8.4

Roof top courtyard with community garden for food production

Image 8.5

A high density scheme with communal space at upper levels and balcony provision

Principle 8.6

1. A minimum of 10 sqm of communal outdoor amenity space per flat must be provided.

2. Communal outdoor amenity space will be expected to be:
   a. Connected to the building;
   b. Easily accessible to all residents;
   c. Screened from public view;
   d. Quiet and free of vehicles;
   e. Located to receive sunlight for a substantial part of the day and to have a good microclimate;
   f. Actively overlooked to provide surveillance and security;
   g. Dominated by planting; and
   h. Allow for sustainable tree planting.

Amenity space for employment uses

8.1 Provision of outdoor amenity space for workers to use at lunchtime is important, particularly where workplaces are on estates with limited or no access to public open space, water features and nature.

Image 8.6

Sunny outdoor amenity space for workers with green infrastructure and good facilities for sitting and eating outside

Principle 8.7

1. High quality outdoor amenity space should be provided on all new employment development over 1000 sqm.

2. Employment outdoor amenity space will be expected to be:

   - Purpose built and well designed;
   - Provide space for workers to sit and eat outside in a green infrastructure setting;
   - Quiet and free of vehicles;
   - Located to receive sunlight for a substantial part of the day and to have a good microclimate;
   - Well integrated into the design of the building and site;
   - Actively overlooked to provide surveillance and security; and
   - Be accessible to all.

9. Curtilage & utility development

Boundary treatments

9.1 Boundary treatments are important in helping to define defensible space, establishing the boundaries between public and private space and setting the character of a street.

9.2 Strongly defined boundaries help to convey entitlement, clear ownership and maintenance responsibility, privacy and home security. The absence of clearly defined boundaries, between public and private space can lead to confusion over ownership and responsibility leading to neglect and poor quality spaces between buildings and public realm.

9.3 The cumulative effect of boundary treatments in a street is a very significant component of street character and quality. Good quality boundary treatments define the pattern of plots and frontages along a street and create visual interest through the provision of rhythm and variety of materials and form.

9.4 Poor quality boundary treatments erode street character and quality and can create environments that feel unsafe. This can result from:

- A lack of strong front and side boundary treatments;
- Absence, or very weakly present boundary treatments;
- Partial removal of boundary treatment to accommodate parking;
- Erosion of existing boundary treatments by the insertion of ill-considered new styles of treatments that are out of keeping;
- Long unbroken stretches of high, blank walls or fences; and
- Use of poor quality boundary treatments materials (e.g. close boarded fencing) fronting public realm areas.

Image 9.1

Boundary treatments helping to define the plots and create a strong unified character.

Image 9.2

Inactive, unrelieved boundary treatment that deadens the street scene.

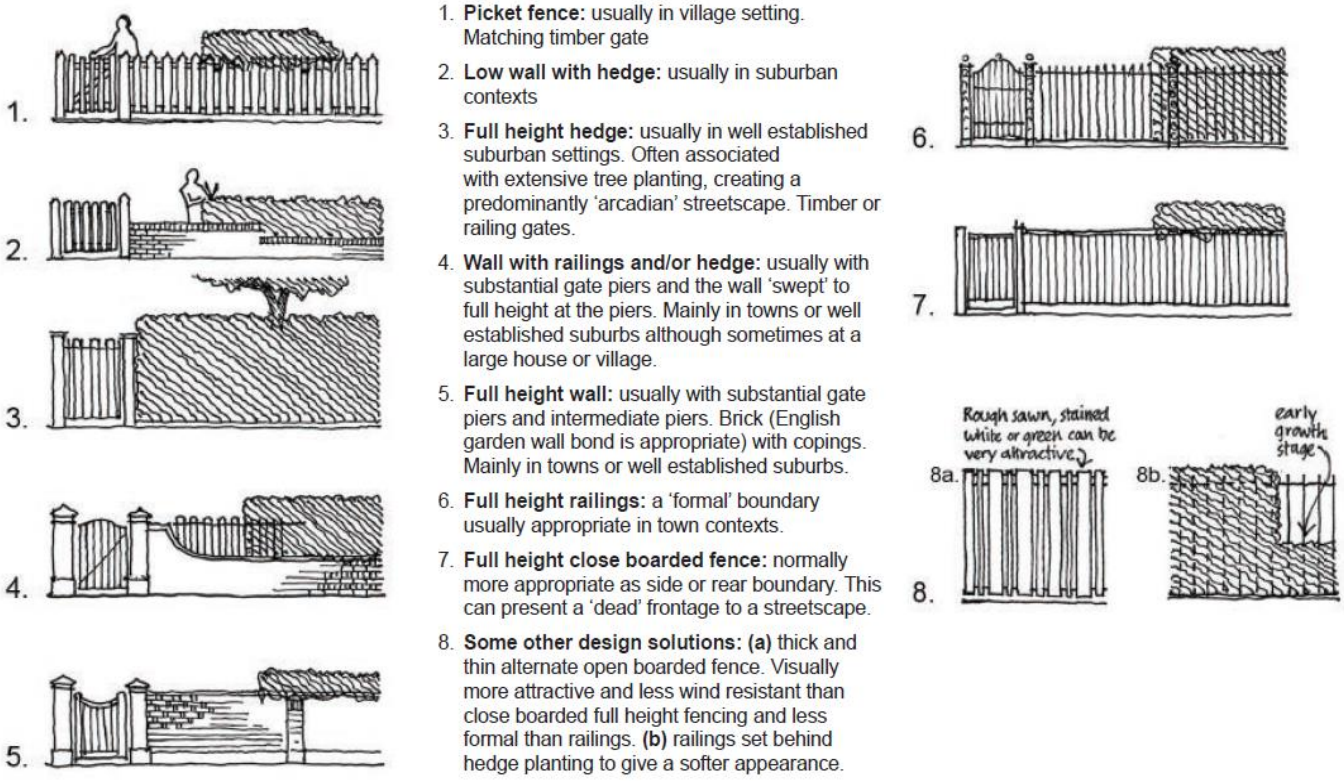
9.5 Given the importance of boundary treatments in setting the quality of a development and streetscene the council will expect developers to consider this aspect of their designs very carefully and provide a high quality design response. Particular consideration will need to be given to boundaries which are visible in the public realm. Figure 9.1 illustrates the typology of boundary treatments to public realm areas that the designers should draw upon when developing their schemes.

9.6 Where existing boundary treatments make a consistent and positive contribution to the character of the street, this design should be adhered to.

Principle 9.1

1. All boundary treatments in residential developments will be expected to be high quality and reflect the character of the development and the surrounding context.
2. Treatments to the public realm will be expected to be visually interesting and very high quality.
3. Long lengths of unrelieved hard boundary treatments will be resisted. Wooden shiplap or panel fencing will be discouraged when visible from the public realm.

Figure 9.1: Potentially acceptable forms of boundary treatments to public realm areas



1. **Picket fence:** usually in village setting. Matching timber gate
2. **Low wall with hedge:** usually in suburban contexts
3. **Full height hedge:** usually in well established suburban settings. Often associated with extensive tree planting, creating a predominantly 'arcadian' streetscape. Timber or railing gates.
4. **Wall with railings and/or hedge:** usually with substantial gate piers and the wall 'swept' to full height at the piers. Mainly in towns or well established suburbs although sometimes at a large house or village.
5. **Full height wall:** usually with substantial gate piers and intermediate piers. Brick (English garden wall bond is appropriate) with copings. Mainly in towns or well established suburbs.
6. **Full height railings:** a 'formal' boundary usually appropriate in town contexts.
7. **Full height close boarded fence:** normally more appropriate as side or rear boundary. This can present a 'dead' frontage to a streetscape.
8. **Some other design solutions: (a)** thick and thin alternate open boarded fence. Visually more attractive and less wind resistant than close boarded full height fencing and less formal than railings. **(b)** railings set behind hedge planting to give a softer appearance.

Provision for cycles & bins

Waste and recycling storage

9.7 It is important that the design of bin storage is considered at an early stage in the design process and that a high quality response is achieved.

9.8 The Royal Borough currently has a weekly domestic waste collection service.

9.9 It is important that the waste storage requirements are handled in purpose built spaces that are sufficient in size, easily accessible both to residents and waste and recycling collection vehicles and which do not generate offensive smells or negatively impact on street scenes. The Borough's specific standards for waste facilities for all types of uses, including flats or care homes are set out in the council's current waste management advice.[14]

9.10 The council's strong preference is for refuse storage areas to be located to the rear or side of dwellings, including apartment buildings, where they are invisible in the public realm, but still easily accessible for refuse and recycling collection vehicles. Bin stores in front of dwellings or flats, even when well screened, have a poor negative visual impact on the street.

9.11 Early discussion with the LPA during pre-application discussions is recommended so that waste management is considered as an integral part of the design process.

Image 9.3

[14] Currently set out in https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/4272/waste_management_planning_advice.pdf

Poor quality waste storage provision that dominates the street scene and erodes its quality

Cycle storage

9.12 This council actively supports the development of cycling as a sustainable transport mode. Good quality space to accommodate the safe and secure storage of bikes is expected to be specifically designed in at an early stage for each dwelling. This can be external or internal space but it is important that cycle parking is additional to space used for other uses (e.g. balconies, lobbies and hallways). Cycle storage facilities on balconies or in hallways will not be acceptable.

9.13 Cycle storage facilities should be easily accessible to occupiers and wherever possible, be integral to the design of the residential development. Where external cycle facilities are provided they should be constructed of durable materials, relate to the design of the main residential building, be easily accessible and not have a detrimental impact on the street scene.

9.14 Within apartments or commercial buildingsit is important that space for cycle parking is secure and room for cycle maintence is considered. In commercial premises a shower should be provided to support those willing to cycle to work.

Image 9.4

High quality cycle storage solutions that reflect and blend in with the building design

Principle 9.2

1. All new development will be provided with on-plot space for bin and cycle storage in accordance with the council's current waste storage and cycle parking standards.

2. Space for bin and cycle storage must be very high quality and function well. The council will resist bin and cycle storage development that is:

   - Poorly integrated into the design of the development;
   - Not easily accessible or secure;
   - Unattractive and visually prominent;
   - Constructed in a manner that compromises the design of the main building in terms of colour, materials and form and erodes the visual amenities of the street scene.

Hard standing and vehicle cross-overs

9.15 If not carefully designed, driveways and hardstanding areas can create hard, unattractive environments that break down the rhythm of plot definitions and landscaping, increase flooding and reduce biodiversity. If inadequate space is available in front of a dwelling for parking, it can result in:

- Vehicles hanging over pavement areas, potentially causing problems for pedestrians, mobility scooters and buggies, and/or
- Cars lying hard up against habitable rooms, affecting outlook.

9.16 Provision of new vehicle crossings can result in a loss of front boundary definitions and open up unsightly holes in the streetscene.

9.17 It is important for this council that new vehicle crossings and areas of hardstanding on residential properties do not contribute to a deterioration of the streetscene, a loss of biodiversity, reduced pedestrian safety or increased risk of flooding.

9.18 Potential solutions for minimising adverse impacts of hardstanding include:

- Using porous materials such as gravel or blocks;
- Keeping driveways and parking areas only as large as necessary;

- Integrating areas into the overall landscaping schemes;
- Ensuring the spaces is enclosed as much as possible by soft planting, walls or other boundary treatments which are in keeping with the character of the area.

Image 9.5

Hardstanding area that dominates the front of the property and has resulted in the loss of soft landscaping and plot enclosure

Image 9.6

Enclosed green approaches to hardstanding that make positive contributions to the street scene and help to reduce the potential for flooding

Principle 9.3

1. New hardstanding areas will be expected to be constructed in porous materials and cover only the minimum space necessary. Hardstanding that is not designed as part of a soft landscaping scheme, or which results in a deterioration of the streetscene, will be resisted.

Utilities and other minimal development

Meter cabinets

9.19 It is recognised that utility companies prefer meter cabinets to be located on external elevations that are easily accessible from the street. However, it is also important that the meter cabinets do not undermine the attractiveness of buildings and the street scenes by virtue of their design and positioning.

9.20 Meter boxes need not be standard white units and the council would encourage a bespoke approach that fits in with the character of the building they are positioned on and the wider area. However, they should be designed to and positioned to ensure a balance between accessibility and unobtrusiveness.

Image 9.7:
Visually dominant meter cabinets that are unattractive features on the building and in the street scene

Other small development

9.21 Buildings and their curtilages can become cluttered and unsightly from small scale development such as aerials, satellite dishes, rainwater goods, telephone lines, electricity cabling, multiple drainage runs and manhole covers. It is important that these small but functionally important features are considered and designed into the whole development to create a visually pleasing appearance.

Principle 9.4

1. Utilities related development and other small infrastructure requirements should be well integrated into the design of the building and/or curtilage in conveniently accessible positions.

2. All such development should be designed in a high quality manner to function well and minimise visual prominence.

10. Further guidance for householder development

10.1 This section provides additional guidance for those looking to extend or alter their existing homes.

10.2 Although some householder development will benefit from permitted development rights and permission will not be required, designers and home owners are encouraged to follow the principles and guidance set out in this section and elsewhere in the Design Guide to achieve a development that functions well and looks good.

Extensions

General guidance on extensions

10.3 Extensions to houses, both individually and cumulatively can have a profound effect on the appearance of an area and on the amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of adjoining properties.

10.4 Inappropriately designed extensions can result in a loss of privacy, be overbearing and over shadow adjoining properties. Chapters 8 sets out a series of design solutions that designers of extensions can use to ensure that neighbour amenities are protected.

10.5 Extensions also have the potential to erode the amount and quality of existing amenity spaces on the property. Designers should ensure that even with the proposed extension, occupiers are left with good quality amenity space that is adequate in size and functions well.

10.6 Extensions can also erode garden spaces and gaps which contribute to visual amenity and character. Designers should pay careful attention to the character of the area and the nature of the gaps between buildings and plot boundaries to ensure that streetscenes and general character is not undermined.

10.7 Extensions also need to respect the main building they relate to in terms of style, form and detailing. They also need to be subordinate.

10.8 Design solutions to achieve subordination and consistency in extensions include:

- Using lower ridge heights, setbacks and extensions widths no more than half the width of the existing dwelling;
- Using the existing building as the main reference point for appearance, materials and details such as ridge, eave finishes, head and cills, rainwater goods, brick coursing, dressing and quoin work;
- Using a roof form & slope that reflects the main building. Flat roofed extensions will generally be resisted;
- Matching window style, form and positioning ;
- Matching brickwork of the existing house in terms of colour, type, size and brick bond and mortar joints;
- Matching roofing materials in terms of colour, type, size;
- Copying windows, joinery and doors detailing in terms of design, proportions, recessing and positioning.

Principle 10.1

1. Extensions will be expected to be subordinate and respond positively to the form, scale and architectural style & materials of the original building. Developments that are over-dominant or out of keeping will be resisted.
2. Extensions should not result in a material loss of amenity to neighbouring properties as a result of overshadowing, eroding privacy or being overbearing.
3. Extensions should not result in properties having inadequate or poor quality amenity space.
4. Extensions which erode garden spaces and gaps which contribute to visual amenity and the character of the street scene will be resisted.

10.9 The following sections provide detailed guidance for common forms of extensions to houses.

Front extensions

10.10 Although consideration needs to be given to amenity issues, the primary consideration for the design of front extensions (including porches) will be the impact on the streetscene and local character.

10.11 Generally front extensions will only be acceptable where the building is set well back from the street frontage in a large plot, or where the building is set back further from the street than the prevailing building line.

Principle 10.2

1. Front extensions should not protrude forward from the main building line, or be prominent in the street scene. Two storey front extensions will only be acceptable where the building is set back an adequate distance from the street and the scale of the extension would not appear harmful.

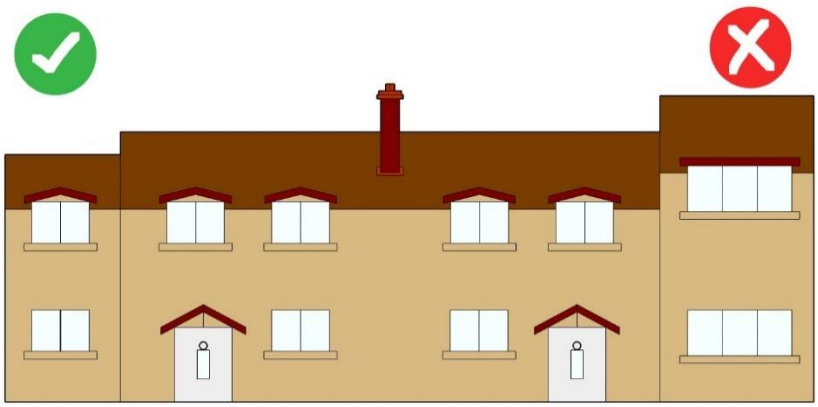
Side extensions

10.12 Amenity issues and impact on the street scene and local character are both important considerations for the design of side extensions.

10.13 Side extensions should remain subservient to the main building and maintain the design of the original main building (Fig 10.1).

10.14 In many areas of the Royal Borough gaps between buildings are important components of street scenes and the character of the area. Locality specific design documents for the borough should also be consulted when designing side extensions as they will often identify and detail the nature of important gaps in residential areas. Gaps between buildings are also important for amenity reasons. Typically, a gap of 1m from a building side to the boundary is needed to allow for adequate light, servicing and rear access.

Figure 10.1: Acceptable and unacceptable side extension designs



Principle 10.3

1. Side extensions should not erode neighbour amenities or the character of the street scene and local area. Proposals should remain sympathetic and subservient to the main building and not project beyond the building line on the street.

2. Important gaps between buildings should be maintained. A minimum gap of 1m between the building and the side boundary should normally be retained to provide for light, access and servicing.

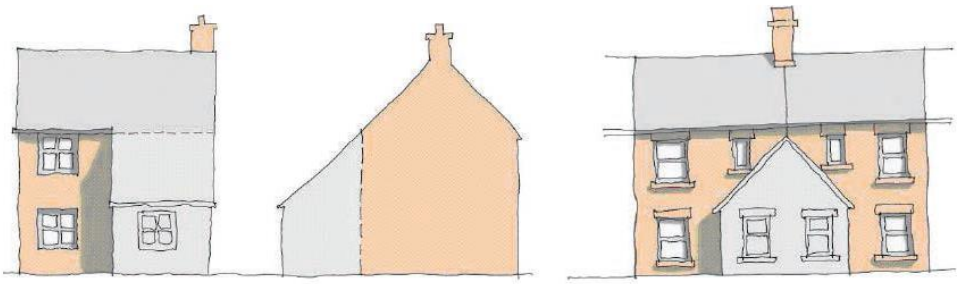
Rear extensions

10.15 Amenity issues will be the primary considerations in the design of rear extensions.

10.16 Rear extensions should be sympathetic and subservient to the original design of the building (Fig 10.2). Particular regard needs to be given to potential overshadowing and loss of privacy, outlook and light of adjoining properties. This is especially important with 2 storey extensions which can create an unacceptable sense of enclosure or have an overbearing impact and are likely to adversely affect light and sunlight access to neighbouring properties.

10.17 Use of flat roofed rear extensions as balconies will not generally be acceptable.

Figure 10.2: Sympathetic single storey rear extensions



Principle 10.4

1. Rear extensions should not materially erode neighbour amenities.
2. Proposals should be sympathetic and subservient to the design of the main building.
3. Eaves heights of single storey extensions should not exceed 3m within 2m of a side or rear boundary.

Roof alterations (including dormers)

10.18 Additional residential space in existing dwellings can sometimes be created by altering and increasing roof spaces through the use of dormers, roof lights and extension of gables and ridge and eave heights.

10.19 Changes to roofscapes can be particularly prominent in the streetscene and it is important that their design is well considered and high quality. In conservation areas, or locations where overlooking would be material, roof alterations may not be appropriate.

10.20 Acceptable design solutions for converting roof spaces include:

- Positioning dormer windows within the main roof, by being set back from eaves, hips and ridgelines (Fig 10.3);
- Ensuring dormers do not dominate the roof or existing building. They should be the same size or preferably smaller than the windows below and occupy no more than half the width or depth of the roof slope (Fig 10.4);
- Aligning dormers with windows below (Fig 10.5);
- Keeping dormer cheeks as narrow as possible and finished in lead, tiles, slates or other traditional materials;

- Using gable end extensions where full gables are part of the existing street character;
- Raising roof and eave heights, but only where appropriate to local context;
- Using roof lights that are flush with the roof slope and located on rear roof slopes. Roof lights should not dominate roofscapes that are visible in the street scene.

A - A good quality response to dormers – proportionate, set back from the eaves, aligning with fenestration of the façade and reflecting historic vernacular

B – A poor quality response - dormer windows that are asymmetrical and misaligned

C – A poor quality response – This wrap over dormer is out of proportion, unattractive and out of keeping with the design of the dwelling.

Image 10.1

Figure 10.3: Dormers should be of an appropriate size and position

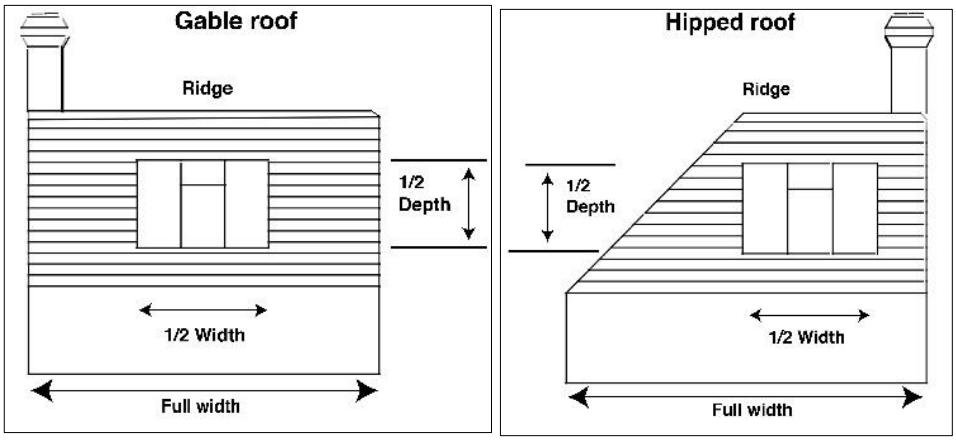


Figure 10.4: Relationship to existing roof design and bulk is important

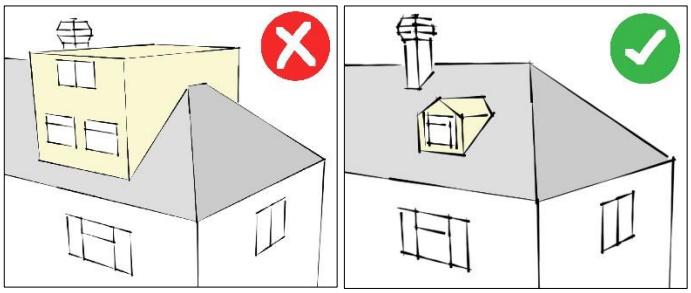
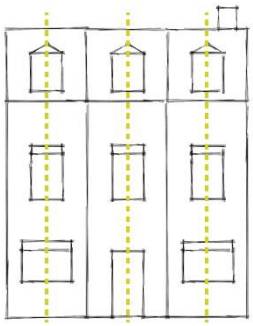


Figure 10.5: Dormer windows need to complement and align with the fenestration of the façade



Principle 10.5

1. Roof alterations should be sympathetic and subservient to the design of the main building and not undermine streetscene or local character.

2. Dormers must be set back from the sides and ridgeline of the roof and not occupy more than half the width and depth of the roof slope.

Conversion and subdivisions

10.21 Conversions and subdivisions of buildings can help to intensify development in an area, adding vibrancy and additional use to support activities and functioning of places. However, the increased use can also bring negative impacts, straining infrastructure and eroding character and amenity.

10.22 It is important that additional parking can be accommodated without a negative impact on the character and streetscene. The new use should be provided with adequate amenities, including outdoor space and it should not compromise the amenities of adjoining development. The newly created units will also need to comply with guidance on internal space standards as set out in Chapter 6.

Principle 10.6

1. Conversions and subdivisions to buildings should provide good quality amenities and space standards for future occupants of the new space. They should also not erode the amenity of neighbouring properties.

2. Conversions and subdivisions should not undermine the streetscene or local character.

3. Parking should be well integrated and meet the standards from Chapter 6

11. Further guidance for specific locations and for non-residential development

Design in flood risk areas

11.1 The River Thames, its tributaries and other watercourses create a beautiful setting for many existing homes and places in the Royal Borough. However, fluvial and other forms of flooding affect wide areas of the borough and place existing and new development at risk, especially more vulnerable uses such as housing.

11.2 The consideration of flood issues in the design of new development is relevant to all types and scales. Although it is vitally important for new development to be designed to be flood safe and flood resilent in flood risk areas, it is also important that this does not lead to design solutions that are unattractive, undermine existing positive characteristics or create inactive frontages. Consultation with both the Environmental Agency and the Local Planning Authority at the earliest point in the design process is strongly recommended to ensure proposals are developed with full knowledge of flood constraints[15].

11.3 There is an increasing trend for new and existing houses to being raised in order to lift the living areas above flood levels. There are three standard approaches to this:

- building a higher foundation;
- creating under croft for storage, and/or car parking that can be submerged in a flood event; and
- integrating less vulnerable uses on the ground floor, such as commercial, retail and office space.

Designers should consult with the Local Planning Authority and the Environment Agency as to which of these approaches would be the most appropriate. Whichever strategy is used, it is important that the design does not erode local character, visual appearance and the safe functioning of the area.

11.4 Development proposals in flood risk areas must avoid:

- Creating blank ground floor frontages and street scenes;
- Ground floors dominated by undercroft parking and service areas;
- Unsightly undercroft areas;

[15] Developers should consult the council's Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the Environment Agency's published Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea).

- Creating inactive frontages; and
- Blocky, unattractive upper floors on platforms above the flood plain.

11.5 Where blank walls and edges at ground floor level cannot be avoided these must be:

- Limited in length and height;
- Compensated with large windows, balconies and animation on first floor;
- Designed to reduce the impact of blank walls, by using a mix of attractive materials and landscape; and
- Avoid unsightly holes to allow water to pass through. These details must be as well designed as the remainder of the building.

11.6 Large development sites that adopt a strategic approach to flood mitigation must ensure that the sites integrates well with the surrounding area and avoids:

- Unsightly and arbitrary steps in ground levels; and
- Blank walls and façades – backs or fronts – onto adjacent streets and plots.

11.7 In recent years more innovative approaches to building in flood zones have been developed, such as floating houses that have the capability to float upwards in an event of flooding (Figure 11.1). The council welcomes innovative approaches that overcome flood constraints and allow designs to be attractive and in keeping with existing characteristics.

Figure 11.1 Innovative example of a floating house that floats itself upwards to escape flooding on the River Thames. Marlow, Buckinghamshire by Baca Architects.

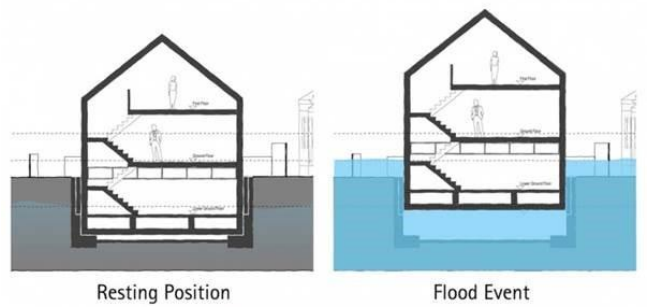


Image 11.1

A local and historic response to flood risk that provides for water compatible uses on the ground floor and more vulnerable residential accommodation above.

Image 11.2

A high quality design that has raised floor levels and provided void space in a visually pleasing and historically sensitive manner

Traditional boat houses – a design influence

Replacement buildings that adopt a historic / traditional architectural approach to flood risk should take on board design influences from the historic boat houses that can be found alongside the Thames: The design principles are:

- Clearly defined articulation of upper floors (living areas) and adoption of different architectural approach;
- Articulated transition between residential floors and flood zone, e.g. balconies and terraces; and
- 'Lighter' more open architecture on upper floors.

Lifting buildings above flood levels

11.8 The council is receiving an increased number of applications to improve flood resiliency of existing buildings by using replacement dwellings or raising the existing accommodation above predicted 1 in 100 year flood levels. Proposals for replacement houses or raising of existing dwellings must be carefully considered otherwise the lifting of the groundfloor can lead to massing that is not proportionate, bulky and does not relate positively to the character of the local area.

11.9 The existing areas that see the most development pressure for improving flood resilience fall within the following townscape character areas[16]:

- Leafy Residential suburbs;
- Villas in Woodland Setting; and
- Victorian/Edwardian and Riverside Villa suburbs.

These areas contain a large number of detached houses that lend themselves to be replaced on an individual basis to make them flood resilient.

[16] Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Townscape Assessment 2010

11.10 For replacement homes in flood zones designers will be expected to:

- Assess, illustrate and justify any increase in height in regard to the existing character;
- Avoiding unsightly undercroft areas;
- Ensuring the whole house, its massing and proportion remains a well balanced and attractive building, whilst employing design solutions to flood risk;
- Reflect the varied built vernacular, particularly the roofscape character and detailing;
- Take account of spacious plot and block sizes in the new design;
- Provide internal flood resilience measures (e.g. sockets at higher levels);
- Conserve and use trees to retain the leafy characteristics, avoiding the loss of boundary planting, retain existing mature trees and allow space for planting to mature.

11.11 Sensitive contemporary design to address flooding concerns which responds to its immediate context will be appropriate, where it makes reference to existing building height, scale and massing and proportion, or stylistic references. Reference to existing materials and traditional boat house architecture may also be appropriate.

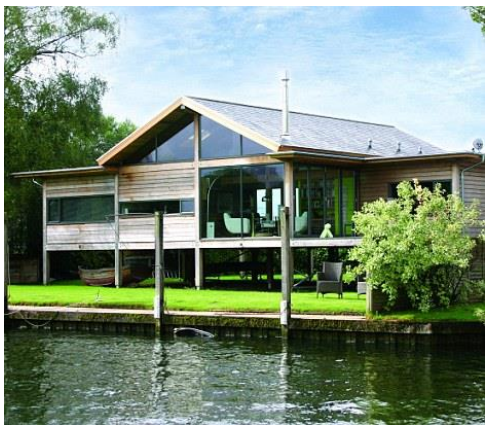


Image 11.3

Contemporary example with the ground floor raised above flood levels of the floodplain. This clearly distinguishes the living areas from the floodzone, by raising the house on stilts.

Principle 11.1

1. All development subject to flood risk must provide high quality architectural design, as well as appropriate mitigation measures in line with Environmental Agency guidance.

2. The Council will not accept poor design of buildings or a negative impact on the streetscene or character of the area as a result of flood mitigation measures.

3. Existing or replacement buildings raised out of flood plain areas should not:

   - Undermine the amenities of adjoining developments;
   - Create inactive frontages or unattractive void areas; or
   - create hard or unattractive street scene;
   - Undermine the character of the area, including it greenness and scale.

4. Where the design approach elevates buildings on stilts the architecture should be contemporary and include large openings rather than elevating a traditional brick building.

Rural and edge of settlement

11.12 The majority of the area within the Royal Borough is designated as Green Belt and is rural in nature. Therefore, the design of development in countryside areas and on the edges of settlement has a particular importance in the character of the borough. This section provides guidance on how to sensitively integrate development within the existing landscape character where development complies with policy requirements. This section does not define whether development is acceptable or not.

11.13 Development in rural areas and on the edge of settlements will be expected to:

- Respond to the unique character and setting, including a thorough understanding of the settlement pattern, its setting within the wider landscape and how this has developed over history; and
- Celebrate what is distinct and positive in terms of rural characteristics and topography in each locality.

11.14 Design solutions to achieve this include:

- Relating proposals to the defined landscape character areas set out in the Landscape Character Assessment[17];
- Retaining, enhancing and incorporating characteristics of the existing settlement pattern – in particular where development is located in existing villages;
- Not harming the setting (where this is positive) of the village or existing building in the landscape;
- Carefully composing the design in relation to views in and out of the settlement edge as well as to key buildings such as church spires;
- Responding to typical buildings forms, materials, details and colours; and
- Retaining the landscape character by:
    - Maintaining gaps between buildings;
    - Retaining features that contribute to the landscape character;
    - Retaining characteristic soft vegetation, such as verges and hedgerows;
    - avoiding urbanisation through highway features, such as white lining, pavement and street lighting;
    - ensuring the relationship between private and public, including boundary treatments relate to the existing character; and
    - Not undermining the wider landscape character, in particular in woodland areas, by removing mature trees along plot boundaries and replacing them with immature and/or non-native species. Appropriate

[17] Landscape Character Assessment for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead; 2004

space must be provided to allow replacement and new trees to mature to their full height.

Principle 11.2

1. New development and associated landscaping should retain, incorporate and enhance features that contribute towards the landscape character and biodiversity of the area, including elements such as field patterns and lanes; landscape features (such as trees and hedgerows; wetlands and watercourses) typical species of vegetation and characteristic local habitats.

2. The site setting and design of new developments located on the edge of settlements must be carefully designed to create a soft, feathered edge to the built up area. The character should relate to the local pattern and soft landscaping with an emphasis on openness.

3. The form, or massing of replacement dwellings should relate well to its context and to local character. The relationship between the form of the building, the topography and landscape, will be of particular importance.

12. Guidance for non-residential development

12.1 Non-residential development includes a wide range of uses, including employment, retail, community, education, health and leisure. The design principles in other sections of this document apply to all non-residential uses but this section provides further guidance on detailed and common design considerations around non-residential uses, in particular mixed-use and employment developments.

12.2 Common design issues for non residential uses include ensuring being 'good neighbours' and integrating often large floorplate uses into the townscape or landscape positively.

Employment uses

12.3 Well-designed new employment development of a variety of types is a key strand in sustaining existing communities and to supporting the diversification of the economy.

12.4 High quality employment development will:

- ensure complementary facilities and services are easily accessible. People at work also need to be able to reach other facilities and services, for instance public transport, shops, cafés, sports and leisure facilities, child care and schools.
- Encourage people to walk and cycle to and from work and from work to local amenities instead of driving. For example, by providing convenient and direct pedestrian & cycle routes to nearby facilities, showering facilities and places to safely store cycles (See also Chapter 9).
- arrange developments so that it is easy for a visitor to find their way around and to create a positive impression on arrival;
- Consider the needs of people arriving by all means of transport, not just the car;

- Integrate servicing and infrastructure sensitively into the design of the building i.e. storage, tanks, refuse and other servicing requirements should not dominate on arrival;
- Ensure buildings front onto the street so that it is well supervised by windows and entrances. Where buildings are set back from the street tree planting or other landscape will be required to enclose the street space – see Chapter 3;
- Consider building height, bulk and scale in relation to the existing context. The scale of business development is almost always greater than that of dwellings in terms of plot size, footprint and, in some cases, height – see also Chapter 3;
- Choose the material carefully in relation to views and use of the buildings;
- Position car parking unobtrusively, well designed and landscaped as well as connected to entrances via attractive pedestrian routes. In general, limited areas of car parking for the use of visitors should be positioned between the building and the street frontage. Where parking is provided on the street frontage, then high quality boundary treatments will be required to the street frontage (See also Chapter 6);
- Provide good natural internal lighting and ventilation; and
- Provide external and green amenity space for employees to use (See Chapter 8).

12.5 Health impact assessments will be encouraged for large new employment developments covering construction and operational phases. These will be expected to consider the impact of the schemes design on the health of surrounding occupiers.

Mixed-use developments

12.6 Mixed-use development will mostly be appropriate within centres where a greater mix of uses contributes to the vitality and viability of the centre. A variety of uses within a single building is likely and encouraged. To create a successful mixed-use building designers will be expected to:

- Carefully plan the building and surrounding environment for all occupants and appropriate for each use;
- Ensuring that services, such as mechanical ventilation, or lifts, are integrated into the scheme from the early stages, so that plant and ducting are well

considered and do not have any adverse impact (noise, vibration or visual) on the upper floor use, particularly where this is residential;

- Minimising the visual impact of service areas upon the public realm and private amenity for nearby residents should be minimised through locating them sensitively and screening;
- Making sure that the entrance to upper floor uses is safe, convenient, attractive and easy to find, preferably from a street frontage of the building; where the upper floors are residential providing private amenity space wherever possible, potentially in the form of roof terraces (where ground floor uses are deeper in floor plan) or alternatively balconies;
- Ensuring good levels of natural light and ventilation; and
- Ensuring that there is adequate noise insulation between different uses.

Integrating large floorplate uses

12.7 Large floor plates are common for retail uses, such as supermarkets and out of town shopping areas and industrial development. In particular supermarkets are challenging to integrate into what is often a context with a finer urban grain, such as town centres. A positive integration can be achieved by:

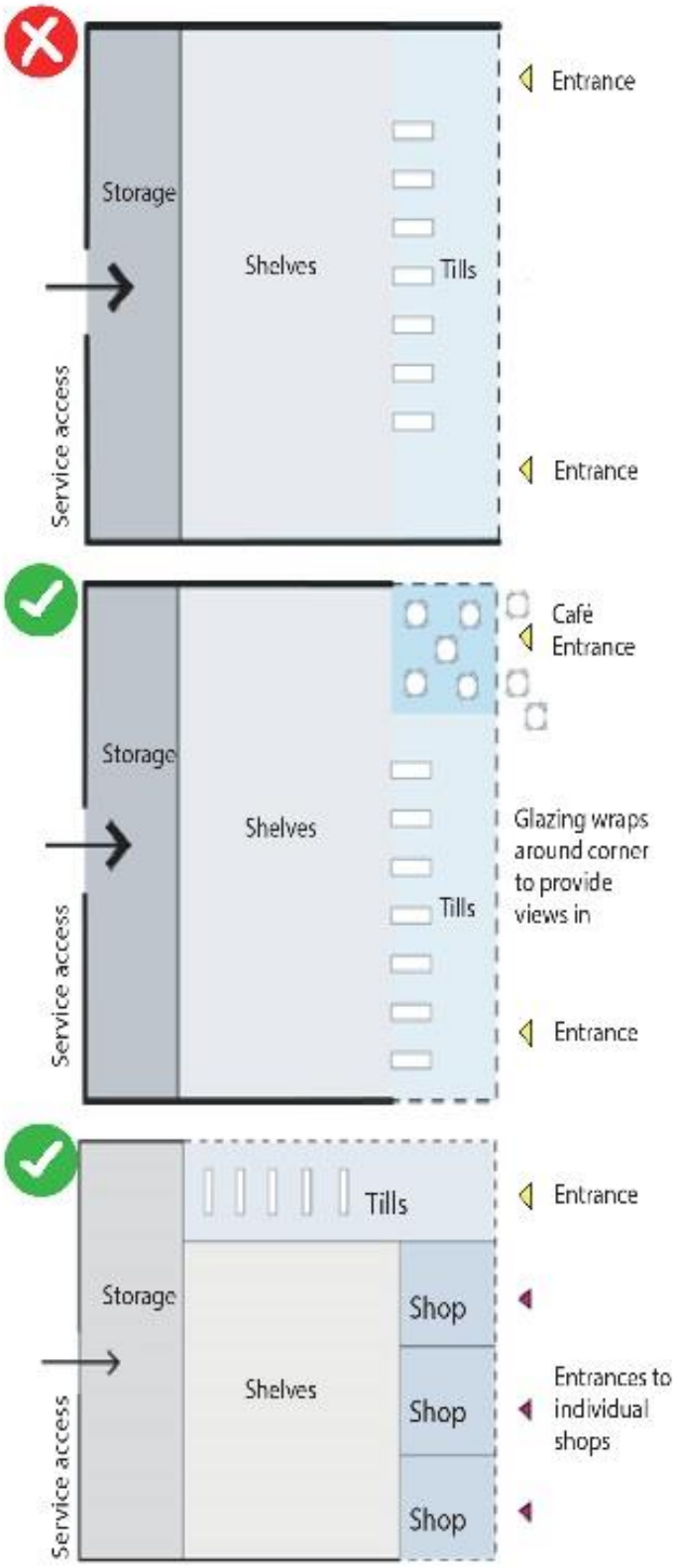
- Introducing a mix of uses, for example:
- Upper level use may introduce additional entrances and more supervision than would be possible for a single use development; or
- A mix of uses or unit types can be used to wrap the perimeter, so avoiding blank walls onto the street, or screening service areas;
- Locating active internal uses, such as a café or dining area to animate the street frontage;
- Reducing the visual impact of large elevations by the use of materials of colours to break down the scale and relate it to other buildings in the surrounding area;
- Providing internal natural lighting.

Principle 12.1

1. In addition to complying with the design principles set out in chapters 3 – 10 of this document, all non-residential development will be expected to:
   - Integrate other complimentary facilities and services, or have them easily accessible by public transport or direct walking or cycling routes;
   - Encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport;
   - Integrate servicing and infrastructure sensitively into the building;
   - Provide good natural light and ventilation to internal spaces;
   - Minimise the impact of service areas on the public realm and private space; and
   - Ensure entrances to the building are easy to find, safe and attractively designed;

2. Large floorplate uses will be expected to be integrated into existing environments by:
   - Providing a mix of uses;
   - Reducing visual impact by using architectural detailing, articulation, materials and colour to break up large elevations;
   - Avoiding blank elevations and inactive frontages;
   - Providing internal natural lighting; and
   - Adding additional doors and entrances to service upper floors.

Figure 12. 1: A mix of uses helps to integrate this supermarket into its context, creating an urban scale of development and providing more activity and supervision of the public realm than a single use development



13. Design checklist

Check Number	Section	Description	YES	PARTIALLY - with design justification provided	NO - with design justification provided	NO - with no design justification provided	N/A
1	4	Are the strategic design themes met					
3	5	Is the proposal set clearly in the Design and Access Statement (DAS)					
4	5	Does the development connect and strengthen the existing network of streets and spaces					
5	5	Does the development propose site layouts with active frontage, clear legibility, and a good network of open space to encourage walking and cycling					
6	5	Do the streets provide good sense of enclosure and coherent character that fit the context of the area					
7	5	Have the streets and spaces been designed as places primarily for people with strong legibility					
8	6	Are shared spaces designed with all users in consideration, including people with disabilities					
9	6	Is the design high density without negatively impacting on local residents, future residents, amenities, character and environment					
10	6	For large developments - Is there mixed use development that is complementary incorporated to enrich the local area					

11	6	Does the residential development propose a variety of tenure types and sizes that are integrated well and where affordable housing should not be differentiated by lower quality					
12	6	For large developments - Do blocks create a defined street network that reflect local characteristics					
13	6	Do development plots contain positive character creation, strong plot rhythm, sensible orientation and accommodate all requirements necessary					
14	6	Does car parking contain convenient, attractive and safe design that contributes to a sense of place and not undermine the quality of the environment.					
15	7	Has the development established clear boundaries to define public and private spaces					
16	7	Is the building scale, height, shape and massing in cohesion with the surrounding context					
17	7	For residential development - is it in compliance with the national internal space standards					
18	7	Is the building designed for longevity, which can be easily adaptable					
19	7	Does the development take a proactive approach to climate change mitigation and adaption, by ensuring future resilience to climate change impacts such as flooding					
20	7	Architectural style reflects the local materials, colour and detailing					
21	8	Do habitable rooms provide reasonable levels of visual privacy					
22	8	Do habitable rooms contain at least one main window with an adequate outlook to the external environment					
23	8	Does the dwelling provide appropriate levels of daylight and sunlight making use of passive solar design					

24	8	Do residential dwellings and employment developments have easy access to usable and appropriately sized outdoor space					
25	9	Do boundary treatments contribute significantly to the borough's green character					
26	9	Has the service and infrastructure elements such as meter boxes and bin & cycle stores, been well integrated into the design of the building					
27	10	Do alterations and extensions respond well to the original building and local character, and also sensitive to neighbour amenities					
28	11	For flood risk areas - Does the development provide high quality architectural design that supports the character of the area, as well as appropriate flood risk mitigation in line with Environmental Agency guidance.					
29	11	For rural development – does it incorporate features that contribute toward landscape character and biodiversity?					
30	11	For non-residential development - Is it a good neighbour and has it been designed to provide good amenities for users					

Glossary

Active frontages	Frontages that provide an active visual engagement between those in the street and those on the ground floors of buildings. This quality is assisted where the front façade of buildings, including entrances and windows, open towards the street.
Building line	A limit beyond which a house must not extend towards a street. Building lines can exist along the front and rear of a line of buildings.
Bulk	The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. Can also be referred to as massing.
DAS	Design and Access Statement
Daylight	Volume of natural light which enters a dwelling to provide sufficient illumination of internal accommodation between dawn and dusk.
Density	The number of buildings or floorspace in relation to a given area of land. In this Guide, density is more than just the number of residential units/ha.
Design principle	An expression of one of the basic ideas guiding the design of a development.
D:SE	Design South East
Dual aspect building	A building that has been designed with openable windows on two or more walls, allowing for greater daylight provision and views in more than just one direction.

Focal point	A building, structure, tree or other element that stands out from its background by virtue of height, size or some other aspect of design.
Grain	The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement and the size of street blocks and junctions.
Habitable rooms & areas	Defined as living and dining rooms, conservatories, kitchen, bedrooms and those frequently used garden areas such as patios close to the house.
Householder development	Developments within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse which require an application for planning permission and are not a change of use.
Human scale	The practice of measuring and designing things to match the characteristics of humans. This includes ranges of time, speed, weight, temperature, force, energy, pressure, distance, attention span and perception that humans can comfortably or safely withstand.
L	Large scale development
Layout	The physical pattern of paths, buildings and open spaces.
Lifetime Homes	This refers to 16 design criteria that together create a flexible blueprint for accessible and adaptable housing in any setting. The standard is managed by Habinteg Housing Association and the criteria are set out in full on www.lifetimehomes.org.uk.
M	Medium scale development
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework, 2018

Private realm	Privately owned space that is not usually open to the public.
Public realm	Those parts of a village, town or city (whether publicly or privately owned) available, for everyone to use. This includes streets, squares and parks.
S	Small scale development
Scale	The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly as experienced in relation to the size of a person.
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement
Sense of place	Either the intrinsic character of a place, or the meaning people give to it, but, more often, a mixture of both.
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
Sunlight	Direct light from the sun
Vertical Sky Component	The Vertical Sky Component (VSC) is a measure of the amount of visible sky available from a point on a vertical plane. The reference point used for the calculation is usually the centre of the vertical face of the window.
XS	Extra small scale development