

# 11.0

## Homes and Buildings

- ▶ Internal and External Environments
- ▶ Inclusive Design
- ▶ Community Safety
- ▶ Private Amenity and Communal Spaces
- ▶ Waste, Servicing and Utilities
- ▶ Self-Built Plots
- ▶ Alterations and Extensions
- ▶ Roofs and Windows



# 11.0

## Homes and Buildings

Functional, healthy and sustainable.

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## 11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 This section addresses aspects of design which relate to how buildings and the immediate environment are used, as well as how to accommodate the needs and requirements of users. This section is divided into four parts focusing on the design of:

- ▶ Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environments
- ▶ External amenity and public spaces
- ▶ Waste, servicing and utilities
- ▶ Householder alterations and extensions

11.1.2 This section should be read in conjunction with chapters 8, 11, 12, 15 and 16 of the [NPPF](#), the adopted [Local Plan](#) (chapter 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18) and in association with the [National Design Guide](#), in particular sections H1 – H3.

11.1.3 This section should be viewed alongside the following guidance and resources:

- ▶ [CBC Parking Standards for New Development SPD](#)
- ▶ [CBC Forest of Marston Vale SPD](#)
- ▶ [CBC Electric Vehicle Charging SPD](#)
- ▶ [CBC Biodiversity Net Gain Guidance](#)
- ▶ [CBC Highway Construction Standards and Specifications Guide](#)
- ▶ [Tree Preservation Order \(TPO\)](#)
- ▶ [Conservation Area](#)
- ▶ [Planning Portal](#)
- ▶ [Volume 1 of the NJUG publication 'Guidelines on the Positioning and Colour Coding of Utilities Apparatus' 2013/2013 \(Issue 8\)](#)
- ▶ [Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard](#)
- ▶ [Building for a Healthy Life Toolkit](#)
- ▶ [Part B of The Building Regulations Fire Safety](#)
- ▶ [Sport England's have created 10 Active Design Principles](#)
- ▶ [Secured by Design Residential Design Guide](#)
- ▶ [The Party Wall etc. Act 1996: Explanatory Booklet](#)
- ▶ [Independent living website.](#)

## 11.2 Healthy, Comfortable and Safe Internal and External Environments

11.2.1 The way places are planned, designed, built and managed has a significant influence over whether communities are able to live healthy lives. The following sections outline the internal and external design requirements to ensure that functional, healthy and sustainable homes and buildings are created.

## 11.3 Space Standards and Storage

11.3.1 In order to protect the amenity and well-being of the future occupants, each dwelling should be adequate for the family or household which is likely to occupy it. New housing is expected to be big enough to meet the needs of the occupants for living, cooking, dining, sleeping, washing and storage of household goods with convenient access to adequate residential amenity space.

11.3.2 Policy H2 of the Local Plan requires all new dwellings to meet the internal space standards set out in the [Nationally Described Space Standards](#). This standard deals with internal space within new dwellings and is suitable for applications across all tenures. It sets out requirements for the Gross Internal (floor) Area of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home – notably bedrooms, storage and floor-to-ceiling heights. In accordance with the standards, applicants will be required to include plans that show how bedroom furniture can be accommodated within the design.

11.3.3 The Covid-19 Pandemic has also emphasised a need for appropriate space to facilitate home working. Provision of suitable space for home working should be provided for where appropriate in internal layouts and demonstrated on plans. In some cases, this may be in the form of a separate office space, or it could be a space within bedroom or a communal area. A living room would not be considered as a suitable location to accommodate a home working space.

11.3.4 There should also be direct access to storage space to the exterior, for bins, and large items such as bicycles and garden equipment.

11.3.5 Space is also needed for the switch to heat pumps as this is the Government's preferred low carbon technology for space and hot water. Heat pumps require internal space for a water tank and external space for the heat pump unit.

## 11.4 Inclusive Design

- 11.4.1 Designers, developers and housebuilders should seek to design dwellings that are equally appealing to all users at different stages of their lives. Dwellings should be fit for use by people of all ages and a range of physical and mental abilities. They should also be futureproofed – designed to allow both flexibility of use and adaptation to future standards, circumstances and technologies.
- 11.4.2 Inclusive design features can support people with a range of needs including visual, hearing, mobility, cognitive and learning. Designing dwellings to incorporate high levels of natural light and ventilation, often with dual-aspect windows, can offer the following benefits:
- ▶ All parts of the internal dwelling being visible:
    - Limits confusion and anxiety for people with dementia;
    - Helps the partially sighted or blind to navigate around the dwelling; and
    - Reduces fuel bills for people of all age groups and abilities, due to lower use of artificial light and increased passive heating from sunlight.
  - ▶ Views to the ‘outside world’:
    - Enhance natural surveillance, allowing families to view children playing outside and helping older people to feel safer thanks to the perception that the public realm is being ‘watched’; and
    - Reduce social isolation, as older or less mobile people can still view activities taking place outside, either in the wider public realm or private space, and feel connected to life in the community.
- 11.4.3 Opportunities for inclusive design should be considered in the layout of a property. For example the provision of open-plan internal layouts offering flexibility in the placement of internal walls and doors is helpful to people with dementia, as it allows them to be able to see from one room to another and rely on familiar visual prompts. Such internal layouts are also practical for wheelchair users and people with impaired mobility, as well as for families with children, who may benefit from open-plan shared space when children are young but who may want to adapt the space at a later time as their circumstances change.
- 11.4.4 Another example is the provision of appropriate sound separation. People with dementia can find it difficult to sleep and often move around their dwelling at night. This may also be the case for some of the ageing population. The provision of appropriate acoustic absorbency and the considered location of specific facilities or rooms can limit the impact on surrounding residences and their inhabitants. In addition, enhanced sound separation can also provide benefits for families with children, shift workers or those who work from home.

## 11.5 Community Safety Considerations

- 11.5.1 The physical security of a building alone does not necessarily make it ‘secure’; instead, it is a by-product of well thought out, inconspicuous crime prevention measures, that are incorporated within the whole design.

### Secured by Design

- 11.5.2 The Secured by Design Standards for new housing include a set of standards relating to the environmental design and physical security of residential developments. Environmental design standards relate to the layout and design of the development. Physical security standards relate to building construction issues, such as doors and windows of enhanced security standards, laminated glass etc. More information on Secured by Design Standards can be found on the [Secured by Design](#) website.

### External amenity and public spaces.

- 11.5.3 Successful buildings also provide attractive, stimulating and positive places for all. Well-designed homes and buildings relate positively to the private, shared and public spaces around them, contributing to social interaction and inclusion.

### Active Frontages

- 11.5.4 Active frontages allow the interaction of people between the public realm and the dwelling facing the street. They can be achieved by:
- ▶ Having frequent doors and windows with few blank walls.
  - ▶ Narrow frontage buildings to give vertical rhythm to the street.
  - ▶ Using transparent glass for windows, where privacy allows, rather than mirrored or frosted glass that only allows occupants to benefit from views out.
  - ▶ Considering level changes between the ground building level and pavement. A change of height by up to 450 millimetres can give a sense of privacy and surveillance, but only where suitable disabled access is available or included as part of the design.
  - ▶ Using projections such as bays, balconies, and porches to articulate facades, help provide a welcoming feeling and provide a more comfortable threshold in inclement weather, prolonging activities and enabling uses to overlap into the street.

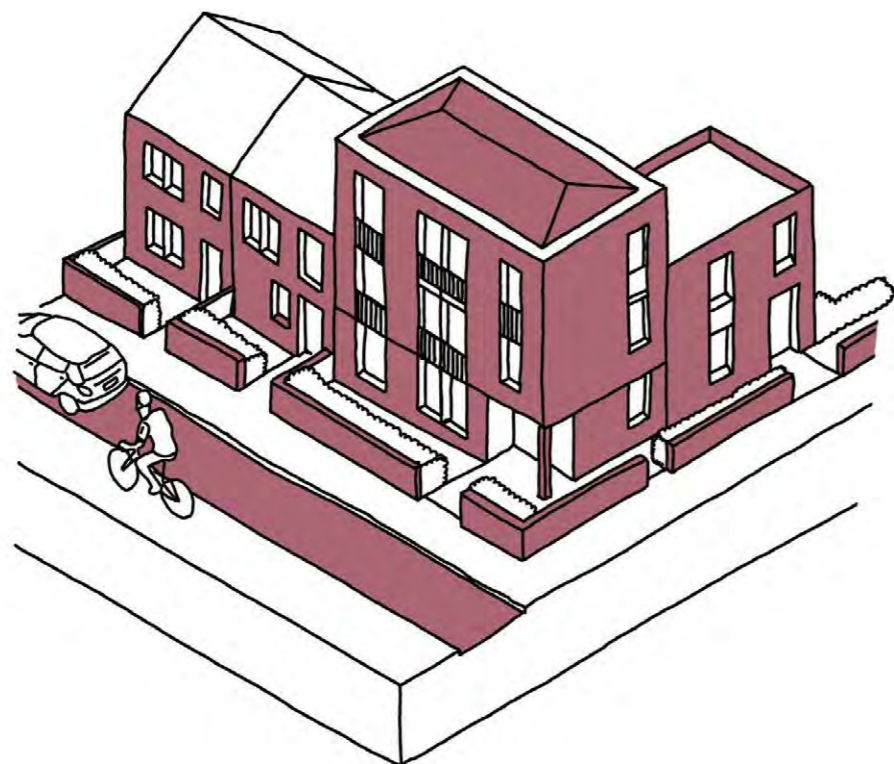


Figure 286: Rectangular plans give a pronounced axis, which can either be aligned parallel or at right angles to the street. Gentle or right-angled changes in direction can be achieved successfully with this shape

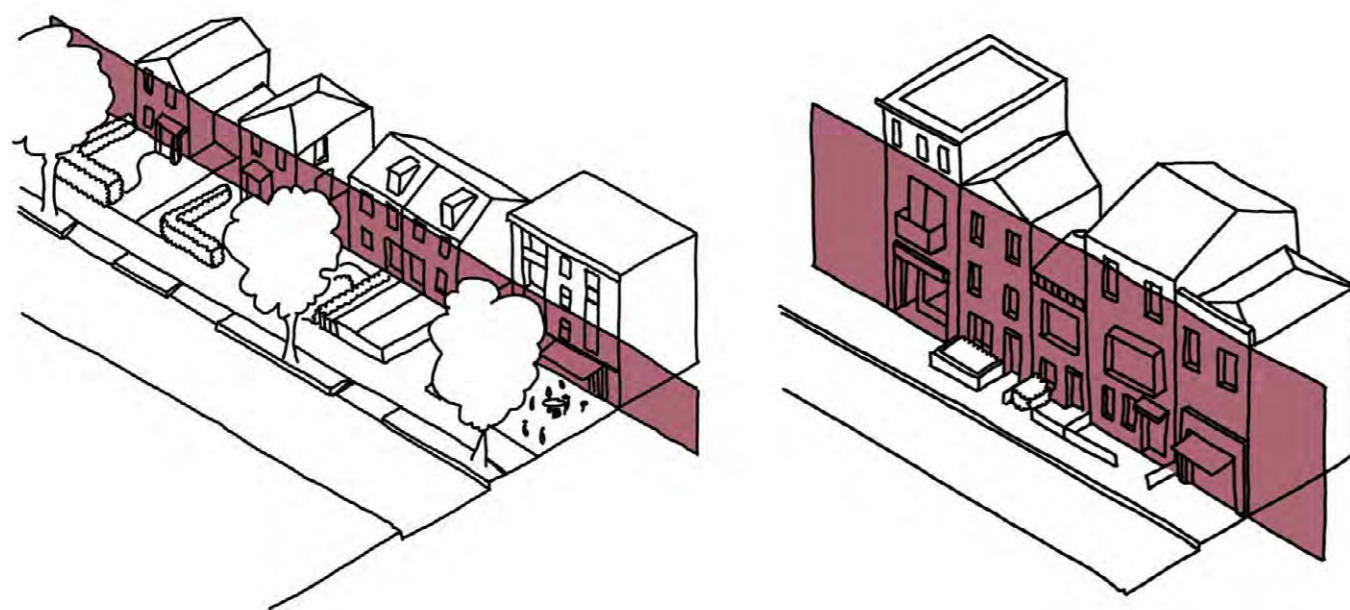


Figure 287: (left) Semi Continuous Frontage - medium density residential streets  
 Figure 288: (right) Continuous Frontage - higher density central location

## 11.6 Frontage Conditions and Setbacks

- 11.6.1 The grouping of houses to create streets of different levels of enclosure and continuity depends on the way in which frontages are designed and the plan shape of house types. The width/depth of private space between the front of the house and the back of the street (including footpath if relevant), as well as how continuous or broken a building line is, has a significant influence on the character of the street and development.
- 11.6.2 The amount of frontage amenity space or setback to a dwelling should be determined by the existing or proposed character of the street and its degree of urban, suburban, formal, or informal nature. In all but exceptional cases, the frontage should be no less than 0.8 metres (to allow for opening windows, canopies, steps, planting, bins etc) and is unlikely to be more than 6 metres. No windows or doorways should open directly onto the public highway and no canopies should overhang the public highway. The preferred approach for larger homes (3-bed plus) that are likely to accommodate children is a minimum 2 metre setback. Where there are no footpaths (i.e. shared minor streets) setbacks should be a minimum of 1.5 metres.
- 11.6.3 Generally, setbacks will be smaller (0.5-2 metres) where a more urban, higher density, pedestrian friendly character with lower traffic speeds is to be created, with larger setbacks (3-6 metres) where a more open, green, lower density character is to be created. Although this will depend on the parking layout utilised and the inclusion of features such as tree lined streets or cycle routes. Within a more urban area, building frontages should be continuous (90-100% of a street occupied by building frontages) and therefore setbacks should be more consistent, not varying in depth along the length of a street by more than approximately 2 metres. In more suburban, lower density areas, building frontages may be more broken frontages (occupying less than 60% of a street frontage) and setbacks can vary more to give a more dispersed/rural feel. In both cases the continuity of a building frontage can also help reinforce the street hierarchy contributing to legibility.
- 11.6.4 For south-facing housing along east-west aligned streets, there may be a case for larger setbacks and hence larger front gardens for solar gain capture.
- 11.6.5 Setbacks that are in between 2 and 6 metres should be avoided, as homeowners may try to convert the frontage for parking which would result in a vehicle overhanging the footway. Setbacks greater than approximately 6 metres will allow on plot parking to the front. Where this occurs, sufficient planting that complies with visibility requirements should be provided to help soften the impact cars may have on the streetscape. Planting should not directly abut the highway and should allow for vegetative growth (usually set back 1 metre from the boundary).

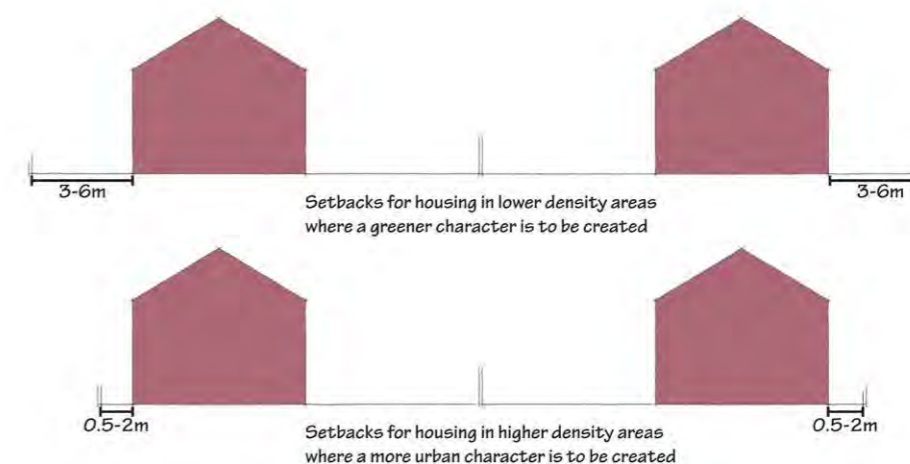


Figure 289: Setbacks should be determined by the density and character of the area

- 11.6.6 Ideally parked vehicles (whether allocated to the property or not) should not be less than 1.5 metres from the windows of a habitable room on the ground floor. This is to ensure a minimum level of amenity and freedom from disturbance/nuisance from vehicles starting up or being loaded.
- 11.6.7 The design of on street and off street parking should also be considered in line with the Parking Standards SPD and the [Electric Vehicle Charging SPD](#). In the case of electric vehicles, cabling to the front of the property is encouraged for future infrastructure and retrofitting



Figure 290:(top) Minimal setbacks to create a more intimate urban streetscene  
Figure 291: (bottom) Setbacks can be larger and more varied in lower density/rural areas or to emphasise green character. Sufficient planting should be provided to soften the impact on the streetscape of any on-plot parking

## 11.7 Boundary Treatments

- 11.7.1 Coupled with the width of private space (setbacks) to the front of the house, the nature or type of front boundary treatment can be a major influence in the creation of a certain character for a street and development.
- 11.7.2 It is a fundamental urban design principle to clearly define public and private space and appropriate boundary treatments are required to do this. All planning applications should be accompanied by details of treatments for all boundaries - front, side, and rear. Junction or forward visibility sight lines shall not pass over private areas such as gardens and should be offered for adoption as public highway. Access and driveway visibility requirements shall be met and remain free of obstruction in horizontal and vertical planes (driver-driver and driver-pedestrian).
- 11.7.3 Boundaries (particularly front and edge of settlements) should be clearly defined, using appropriate boundary markers, such as low walls, fences, and hedges. Relating design and materials with traditional local boundary treatments should be considered and used to inform design proposals. In some cases, it may be appropriate to mark the boundary between public and private space through a change in hard surfacing or through groundcover shrub planting. This may be particularly appropriate in courtyards, and mews where the objective is to create a more intimate enclosed space. An appropriate use of materials or planting can ensure that pedestrians and motor vehicles are kept away from ground floor windows, thereby protecting residents' privacy. Boundary treatments should be designed in accordance with the [Highway Construction Standards and Specifications Guide](#).
- 11.7.4 Lengths of side boundaries onto the public realm should be kept to a minimum, and rear boundaries should be avoided. Where this does occur, boundary treatments should be of brick, hedging or other appropriate materials, such as ivy screens which can soften the wall and add to the character of the street. Standard close boarded timber fencing will not be acceptable as it undermines the quality of the public realm. Bespoke boundary treatments are required for sites sensitive to noise and should be informed by the acoustic design process.
- 11.7.5 In rural areas and infill developments in particular, good boundary design can help to integrate new development with an existing environment. Green boundaries which form the interface between open countryside and a built-up area, particularly as seen from major roads or entry routes to settlements are especially significant. Closed boarded fencing upon the settlement edge is not acceptable and is to be avoided.
- 11.7.6 Existing hedgerow or tree boundaries are particularly important, and the presumption shall be that they are retained, reinforced by new planting and a maintenance and management plan.

## 11.8 Achieving Privacy through Design

- 11.8.1 The achievement of absolute visual privacy is not usually possible and is not necessarily desirable, as it would reduce social contact and could lead to a feeling of insecurity. To ensure visual privacy, back-to-back distances will be enforced. In conventional suburban environments, a minimum of 21 metres distance between the first-floor level of one 2 storey property and the rear of another 2 storey property facing it will be required. There may be circumstances where lower distances are acceptable, such as in more central locations where higher density is more appropriate, or where higher distances are appropriate, such as where properties exceed 2.5 storeys. Side to back distances should also be a minimum of 15 metres.
- 11.8.2 Side and rear boundary treatment should be at least 1.8 metres in height which will supplement this basic level of privacy. Significant level changes need to be taken into consideration when assessing boundary treatment to ensure privacy is not compromised due to views down into habitable rooms.

11.8.3 Three storey dwellings and above heights would require an increase in distance if this basic standard was applied.

11.8.4 In higher density areas a more three-dimensional approach to achieving acceptable levels of privacy is required. Effective visual privacy can be achieved through:

- ▶ The careful relationship of habitable rooms of a dwelling in relationship to others (either in the proposed scheme or existing neighbours)
- ▶ The relationship of one dwelling with another (e.g. at angles to each other)
- ▶ The height, size, and shape of upper floor windows, compatible with providing means of escape (Building Regulations)
- ▶ The use of single aspect or internal courtyard housing units
- ▶ The design of screen walls and the specification of tree species to ensure privacy and colour
- ▶ The use of garages, bicycle stores and other buildings requiring little or no outlook. However, they should still be overlooked for security purposes

11.8.5 Traditional buildings and layouts found in Central Bedfordshire can provide some useful indications of established ways in which privacy at relatively high densities have been accomplished. For example, the burgage plots in Ampthill which are characterised by a long-walled plot, garden or yard, behind a building with frontage onto the street and intimate groups of buildings in most small settlements, such as Tebworth, Ridgmont and Clophill.

11.8.6 Aural privacy is a necessity where domestic music systems and vehicle noise can be a nuisance. Density of wall construction, double or triple-glazing, and the absorbency of external materials (trees, planting and timber finishes) can all help to ameliorate the worst aspects of noise transmission.



Figure 292: Achieving privacy and defensible space in higher density housing (Linslade)

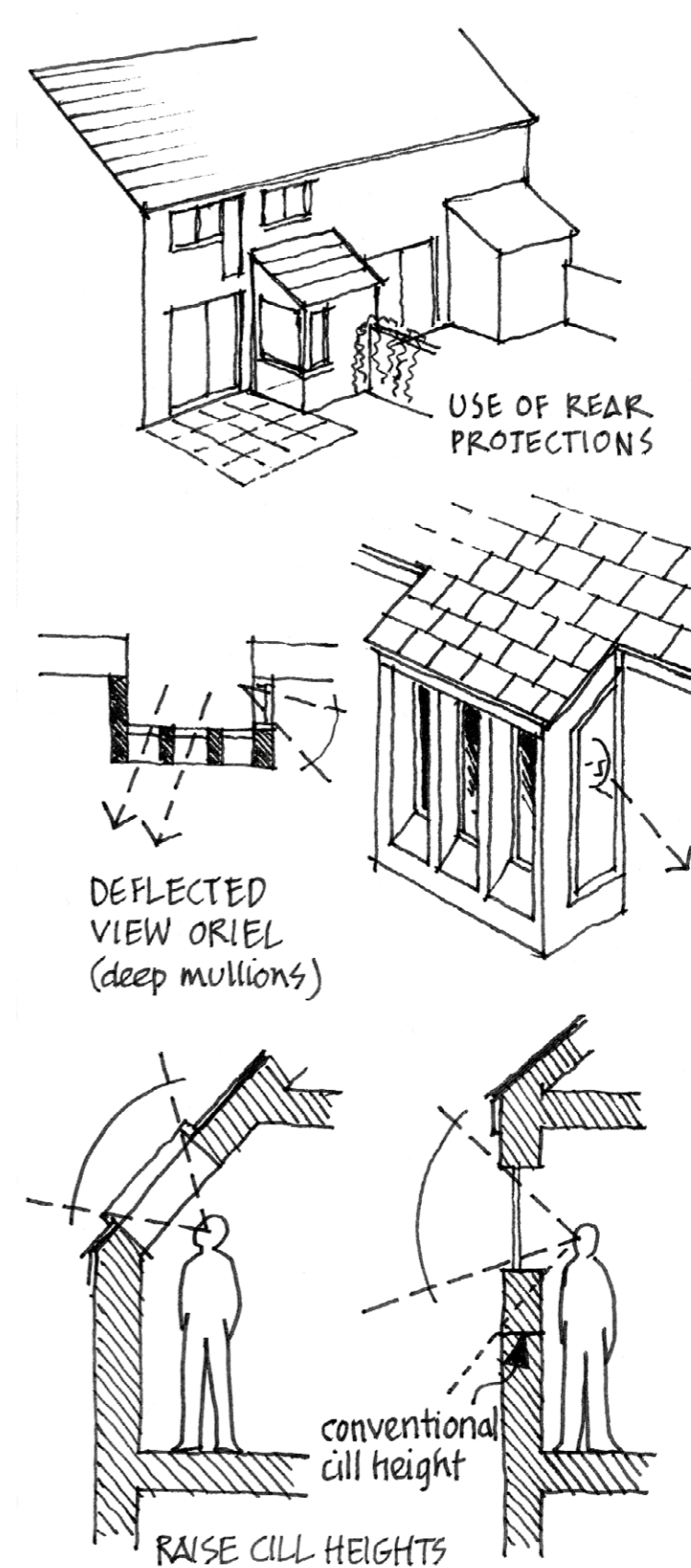


Figure 293: Some methods of achieving privacy through design

## 11.9 Gardens and Private Amenity Space

- 11.9.1 Every home should have the benefit of individual private or communal private amenity space. Private space can be provided in a variety of ways, such as private gardens, communal gardens, roof terraces and balconies.
- 11.9.2 All forms of amenity space should provide the following benefits:
- ▶ Functional
  - ▶ Safe and provide natural surveillance
  - ▶ Protection from noise (see British Standard BS8233:201)
  - ▶ Accessible to people of all ages and physical and mental abilities
- 11.9.3 In determining the appropriate garden size, consideration should be given to ensuring that the privacy of the dwelling is not compromised through overlooking or overshadowing from adjoining properties. In line with Policy EE4 of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan, existing hedgerows and trees must be integrated within the public realm, within a suitable landscape setting and not within rear gardens to ensure longevity.
- 11.9.4 The minimum depth for all rear gardens should be 10 metres to ensure that suitable levels of privacy are maintained, and that reasonable sized gardens are created. Wider frontage properties will therefore tend to provide larger gardens. Rear gardens for three- and four-bedroom homes are recommended to be 100 square metres. For dwellings that are larger in size such as 2.5 or 3 storeys, the minimum depth of the garden may need to be bigger to ensure adequate levels of privacy and separation from adjacent dwellings.
- 11.9.5 In exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the case officer, smaller garden sizes may be accepted but generally no less than 50 square metres. It is however accepted that garden size will vary according to property size. Table 11 outlines a sliding scale for garden sizes based on the size of a property. Gardens shapes must be designed to ensure they are useable. Narrow gardens or pinch points that restrict access and maintenance should be avoided.

Table 11: Garden sizes

Number of Bedrooms	Minimum areas (m <sup>2</sup> )	Minimum depth (m)
1 or 2 bed dwellings	50	10
3+	60	12

- 11.9.6 Gardens should be designed to ensure that they receive afternoon sun. Consequently, north-facing gardens may need to be longer than south-facing gardens. A direct entrance from the dwelling into the garden is favoured and this should preferably be from a communal area such as a living room, dining room or kitchen.

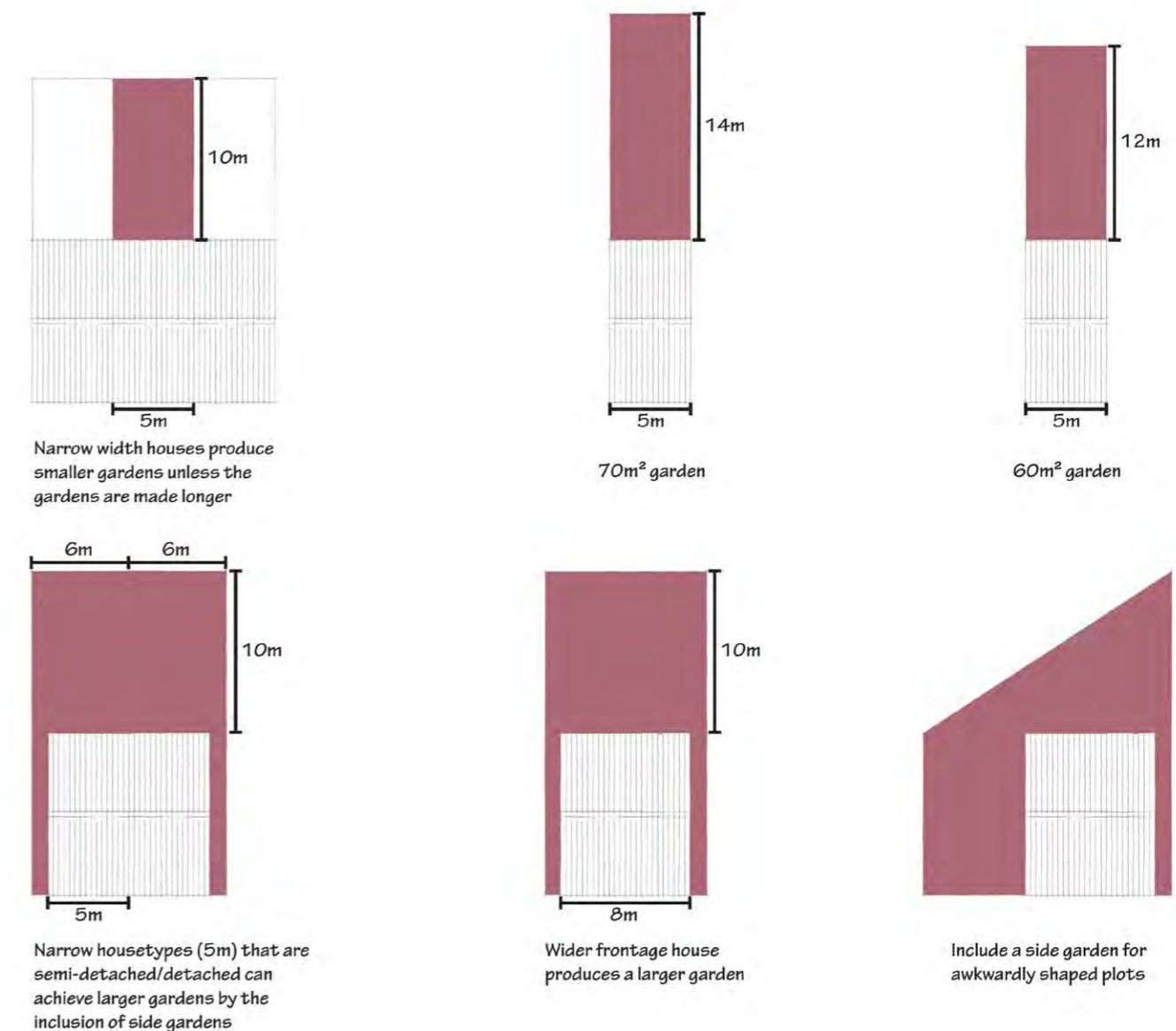


Figure 294: Garden sizes must be sized and shaped appropriately



## 11.10 Amenity Space for Apartments

- 11.10.1 Within flatted developments, each apartment must have access to private open space. This can be provided in the form of private gardens for ground floor flats, balconies, roof gardens or terraces, or private shared gardens. While balconies may take the place of a garden, easily accessible communal areas will also be required for relaxing and play as well as areas for hanging washing.
- 11.10.2 Where possible, ground floor apartments should have their own small private rear garden. Private outdoor space should not be located to the front, within the public realm, where activities of the occupants will be very visible from passers-by.
- 11.10.3 Balconies should be attached to living rooms rather than bedrooms. ‘Juliet’ style balconies will not be acceptable as the primary provision for apartments. Ground floor balconies should be designed to ensure that they are secure from external access. A balcony for an apartment should be large enough to accommodate a small table and two chairs to allow residents to sit out comfortably (see Table 12: Private outdoor space requirements for apartments). External noise levels for the balcony area also need to be considered, and the acoustic design standards set out in British Standard BS8233:2014 are expected to be achieved in this respect. All apartments should provide space to dry clothes either within the apartment or within a communal facility.
- 11.10.4 All apartments should provide space to dry clothes either within the apartment or within a communal facility.

## 11.11 Private Communal Amenity Space

- 11.11.1 The minimum area for usable communal space is 50 square metres, plus 5 square metres per additional unit over five units.
- 11.11.2 Communal gardens should be enclosed by walls or buildings with no public access or visibility from the street or other public areas. They should however be overlooked by the occupants of the dwellings they serve. They should be of sufficient size to be useable and should incorporate seating and play areas with a combination of hard and soft landscape features, including trees. Where significant numbers of children are expected to use the on-site play facilities, careful consideration should be given to layout to dissipate noise, to avoid conflict with surrounding households.
- 11.11.3 The layout and design of the communal garden should offer privacy for dwellings adjoining the space. As with private amenity spaces, external noise levels for occupiers having access to the communal amenity space also need to be considered, and the acoustic design standards set out in British Standard BS8233:2014 are expected to be achieved in this respect. Table 12 sets out the private outdoor space requirements for apartments.

Table 12: Private outdoor space requirements for apartments

Number of bed spaces	Minimum depth of balconies (m)	Minimum area of private outdoor space per flat (Balcony, roof garden or ground level patio or open space)
1	1.5m	5 m2
2	1.5m	5 m2
3	1.5m	6 m2
4	1.5m	7 m2
5	1.5m	8 m2
6	1.5m	9 m2

## 11.12 Waste, servicing and utilities

- 11.12.1 At the design stage, consideration should be given to waste, servicing and utilities so that they are unobtrusive and well-integrated into neighbourhoods.

## 11.13 Bin Storage and Collection - Key Principles for Layout & Design

- 11.13.1 Waste and recycling storage areas should be well located in relation to the property and the following key principles will apply:
  - ▶ Appropriately designed bin storage should be considered for all types of developments. Communal bin storage is particularly important for flats to ensure accessibility, safety, and odour/cleanliness.
  - ▶ To avoid conflicts between uses, bin storage must be located outside of the public highway and outside of visibility splays.
  - ▶ Drag distances must be designed in accordance with the Building Regulations BS5905:2005 Waste Management. Storage areas must be within 10 metres of an access point for collection vehicles. Residents should not have to take their waste and recycling more than 30 metres to a bin storage area.
  - ▶ Bin storage areas should avoid blocking views between occupied rooms and the street to maintain natural surveillance of the street.
  - ▶ Opportunities should be taken to integrate the design of external bin storage with the building facade, or as an element of the semi-private outdoor space between the building and the street. The visual impact of communal bin stores needs to be considered and balanced with accessibility and overlooking to create natural surveillance.

- ▶ Bin storage areas can form a significant fire risk and therefore fire-resistant separation should be provided between any bin storage area, accommodation and doors to accommodation or dwellings. Ventilation should be carefully considered in relation to bin storage so that it meets environmental and fire safety requirements without impacting upon the potential convenience of the facility.
- ▶ The means of getting waste containers from the rear of the property to the front (without having to carry waste through the house on collection days) needs to be ensured. Where that is not possible, a suitable storage area at the front of the property will be required.
- ▶ Bin storage areas must not require vehicles parked in allocated parking spaces or on driveways to be moved so that bins can be moved past. Additional width should be included on driveways to allow for this. Refer to the Parking Standards for new developments SPD for further guidance on parking space dimensions.
- ▶ A collection point near to the highway should be provided, where bins/sacks can be easily collected by collection crews.
- ▶ Communal bin stores should be fit for purpose, well located, and designed and accessible to the collection crews.

## Bin Sizes

11.13.2 The dimensions of typical wheeled bin containers are set out in Table 13: Bin container dimensions . Bin stores should be designed with these dimensions in mind. Consideration should also be given to the number of bins/caddies that a household uses. Contact the waste team for further information:

- ▶ Email [Env.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Env.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) or
- ▶ Telephone 0300 300 8302.

Table 13: Bin container dimensions

TYPE	Volume (litres)	Height (millimetres)	Width (millimetres)	Depth (millimetres)
Single	7 litres	234 mm	252 mm	229 mm
Single	23 litres	405 mm	320 mm	400 mm
Single	140 litres	1070 mm	480 mm	550 mm
Single	240 litres	1070 mm	590 mm	740 mm
Single	360 litres	1090 mm	600 mm	880 mm
Communal	660 litres	1190 mm	1220 mm	770 mm
Communal	1100 litres	1470 mm	1380 mm	1090 mm

## Single Dwelling

- ▶ Minimum space for waste/recycling storage per individual property of 0.75 metres x 2.04 metres (3 x 240 litre wheeled bins).
- ▶ Space is also required for a 7 litre or 23 litre food waste caddy.
- ▶ Appropriate space for a composting unit should be provided in private gardens.

## Communal Dwellings

- ▶ 180 litres of Residual Waste, and 180 litres of recycling capacity for dwellings up to 2 bedrooms per fortnight in a communal bin.
- ▶ Over 2 bedrooms, this capacity is increased to 240 litres for Residual Waste and 240 litres of recycling capacity per fortnight in a communal bin.
- ▶ For communal properties there is the option of an additional 140 litre bin per bin store.

## Bin Stores

- ▶ Communal properties must be provided with adequate storage to meet resident’s needs. All bin stores must allow free access by the refuse collectors on the day of collection, and it is recommended they are secure to ensure residents use only. The specific details of each bin store should be discussed and agreed with the Council. Storage should be convenient since the need to transfer recycling, as well as residual waste containers over long distances or up and down multiple building levels can be a deterrent to separating waste material streams for recycling.
- ▶ It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that a bin store is provided and is adequate in size for the number of bins required. Stores need to allow the easy manoeuvring of bins on collection day.
- ▶ Bin stores should be designed to allow ease of separation of recycling material and residual waste.
- ▶ Due to the size and potential weight of communal bins, the Council does not expect the contractor to move bins over any undulating, non-paved, uneven surface, or where the gradient is above the M4(2) Building Regulations approach to the dwelling standards.
- ▶ Where necessary drop-kerbs should be provided immediately adjacent to the dedicated storage areas for containers. The pulling area should be free from permanent obstructions and have a suitable level surface.



Figure 295: (left) Example bin store  
Figure 296: (right) Well integrated communal bin stores

## 11.14 Servicing and Utilities

- 11.14.1 Services should be considered early in the design process as an integral part of a development's layout. Statutory undertakers and other service suppliers should therefore be consulted at an early stage.
- 11.14.2 The economic use of space in a layout means that underground services will almost inevitably be located under roads and footways for maintenance access. Utilities providers typically do not wish to be forced to negotiate easements across private land.
- 11.14.3 In new developments, future disruption should be minimised by accommodating services under footways or service strips rather than under carriageways. Designs should also seek to future proof services provision by allowing space within the ducting for future technologies. Ducting should run to a point at the property boundary where it can be conveniently connected at a future date if required.

### Routing of Services

- 11.14.4 All services should be routed underground. In planning terms, the overhead distribution of electricity or telecommunications services is unacceptable. Free-standing street furniture and statutory undertakers' markers should be kept to a minimum.

### Routing of Services in Carriageways

- 11.14.5 Sewers generally take priority in the laying out of services. As space under footways is limited, sewers should typically be located under carriageways.

### Routing of Services in Footways

- 11.14.6 Volume 1 of the NJUG publication '[Guidelines on the Positioning and Colour Coding of Utilities Apparatus' 20132013 \(Issue 8\)](#) indicates that electricity, water, gas, telecommunications and cable TV services can be accommodated in a 2-metre-wide strip under a footway. This strip should incorporate features that allow for easy maintenance access (such as lighting columns) while minimising the disruption caused by maintenance work.
- 11.14.7 Services should be accommodated within a single duct wherever possible, and ducting should have space to accommodate additional services and utilities infrastructure in future – for example, district heating or waste systems. Superfast broadband should be included as standard within all new development and should be accommodated within the same single-duct design. It can then be connected to individual premises as required.
- 11.14.8 Buildings near any service mains should have sufficiently deep foundations not to impose a structural load on the mains.

### Routing of Services & Verges

- 11.14.9 Roadside verges, whether publicly adopted or privately held, should be reserved for trees and other planting, and must therefore be kept clear of underground services. As set out in the Movement section, trees located within the highway verge are subject to commuted sums for maintenance.

### Routing of Services in Public Open Space

- 11.14.10 If a sufficiently large area of publicly adopted space is available beside a significant length of road, it may be possible to locate sewers under it. This avoids encumbering the carriageway, although sewers should be situated in such a way as not to prevent the proper planting of the space.

### Routing of Services in Shared-Surface Streets

- 11.14.11 In streets with no separate footway, services should be carefully grouped so that excavation for maintenance does not block the street. Where there is a defined pedestrian margin, this is the correct location for underground services. Multi-way ducts and/or jointing chambers may be required, depending on the policy of the individual utilities providers however, utilities should still be consolidated in a single ducting run wherever possible.

### Routing of Services and Shared Private Drives

- 11.14.12 The developer must negotiate the system of supply with the individual utilities providers, agreeing rights of access and apportioning any additional costs. Easements with individual householders should be avoided, and any general easements should be entered in the title deeds of all the properties sharing the access.

### Service Intakes to Dwellings

- 11.14.13 Meter cupboards and service intakes should be located either out of sight on flank elevations or in purpose-made joinery designed to fit the pattern of apertures on the elevation. They must also be located at least 0.5 metres from the highway.
- 11.14.14 All intakes apart from gas should be run within the building and not be visible on the exterior. These requirements should be covered by conditions of the planning permission.
- 11.14.15 All new homes should be connected to ducting spurs with capacity to accommodate future utilities infrastructure. Space should also be provided within the home for the retrofitting of new technologies – for example, battery storage.

## Substations and Governors

- 11.14.16 Electrical substations and gas governors should be subtly located, considering visual and recreational amenity and self-policing, and housed in purpose-made buildings designed and located to blend in with the adjoining housing. Aside from the visual benefits, this will minimise noises and smells experienced by neighbours.
- 11.14.17 The location of electrical substations and gas governors must be shown on planning applications and condition will be imposed withdrawing utility providers' permitted development rights. Infrastructure associated with district and ground source heating systems (and similar) should be designed to blend seamlessly into both the landscape and the built form, with the opportunity for further adaptation should the relevant technologies evolve.

## 11.15 Self and Custom Build

- 11.15.1 Self-build projects are defined as those where someone directly organises the design and construction of their own home. This covers a wide range of projects from a traditional DIY self-build home to projects where the self-builder commissions a company to build their home to their specification. Relevant community-led projects can also be defined as self-build.
- 11.15.2 Custom build homes are where an individual or group works with a developer to deliver customised or bespoke homes. The developer may secure the plot, manage the construction of an external shell, and then work with the individual to tailor the external design and internal layout to match the individual's requirements.
- 11.15.3 Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding is defined in the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 as:
- ▶ "The building or completion by:
    - Individuals
    - associations of individuals, and
    - persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals, of houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals."
- 11.15.4 In considering whether a home is a self-build or custom build, local authorities must be satisfied that the initial owner of the home will have primary input into its final design and layout. It does not include the building of a dwelling or plot mainly to plans or specifications decided or offered by the developer. The purchaser must have an input in designing the property.
- 11.15.5 Paragraph 62 of the NPPF refers to Self-Build and Custom Housing (SBCH) and the Local Plan requirement is set out in Policy H6, which sets out that development proposals for sites of 10 or more dwellings (excluding schemes for 100% flats or conversions) will be required to deliver a minimum of 10% of the sites dwelling capacity as serviced plots for SBCH.
- 11.15.6 Detailed guidance on Self Build and Custom housing is set out in the Council's Housing Policy Technical Guidance SPD, which should be reviewed alongside this design guidance. The Housing Policy SPD sets out the policy and planning application requirements, S106 and viability considerations, the approach to marketing strategies, and delivery.

- 11.15.7 The Council will ensure high quality design by considering Self Build homes against Local Plan policies, particularly HQ1 (High Quality Development), and the guidance within the Design Guide.

## 11.16 Self-build plots

- 11.16.1 A benefit of Self Build housing is the opportunity it presents in creating neighbourhoods that have greater variety, opportunity for personalisation and offer better places to live through the design and construction of new dwellings and the spaces around them.
- 11.16.2 It is good practice for plot providers to seek to provide a mix of serviced plot sizes to meet the range of demand and affordability.
- 11.16.3 This may include plots suitable for bungalows for people with limited mobility, smaller plots which provide opportunities for households seeking lower cost market housing, and larger plots suitable for semi-detached properties to cater for extended families wishing to build together. Plot providers may also choose to consult with the local community and consider the immediate demand. The use of design codes can ensure the development works as a cohesive whole.
- 11.16.4 The Self Build Register should be the first point for information on the details of the range of plots to be provided. This is the evidence base used to determine the level of demand. Other forms of evidence may also be considered alongside this, for example market research or other evidence which may indicate the ability of households to afford plots, such as information from the Help to Buy Agency, housing needs assessment, or information from the Council.

## Specialist Self Build and Custom Housing Developers

- 11.16.5 Applicants are encouraged to approach specialist developers to deliver the SBCH requirements from larger strategic sites. This will offer maximum opportunity to deliver truly innovative and sustainable self and custom build housing. For guidance on recommended specialist developers, applicants are advised to contact [The National Custom and Self-Build Association \(NaCSBA\)](#).

## Design Codes

- 11.16.6 To ensure high quality urban design, and to provide clarity at marketing stage, on sites with multiple self-build plots, the Council will seek the agreement of a Design Code, which may be produced in partnership between the Council and the provider of the self-build plots. This will help to clarify and guide what forms of development are acceptable on a site, giving greater certainty to all parties. A Design Code is a set of written and illustrated rules that establish the design parameters of a particular development. Design Codes are likely to be site specific and may vary between locations.
- 11.16.7 Design Codes are generally considered an essential tool for both helping existing communities to understand the form and design of homes to be constructed on self-build plots, and to balance flexibility of design with quality and consistency across a site or area for the future self-builder. These are subsequently referred to in conditions on the planning permission. An example of a design code in another local authority area is the [Graven Hill development in Cherwell](#).

11.16.8 Table 14 below sets out the parameters that could be addressed within quantifiable parameters by a Design Code, although this may vary depending on the level of detail required.

Table 14: Examples of parameters that may be agreed within a Design Code

Theme	Example design code parameters	Example of issues covered
1	Plot form	Plot size and plot width
2	Serviced provision	All plots will be fully serviced with electricity, water, drainage, and telecoms connections available at the boundary of each respective plot
3	Building forms	Storey heights, massing, bulk
4	Density	Dwellings per hectare
5	Building lines	Frontage continuity, boundary treatments, roofline parameters
6	Plot orientation	The design code should define the orientation and key frontages of each plot
7	Building types	Detached, semi-detached, terraced, flats, bungalows, maisonettes
8	Renewables	A provision for renewables is recommended that will assist with achieving a sustainable development using low energy carbon sources/renewables. Any number of different renewables can be considered for approval by the LPA - i.e., PV solar panels, air/ground source heating, etc
9	Car parking	Plots are required to demonstrate that the number of car parking spaces determined by Central Bedfordshire Council's Residential Car Parking Standards can be accommodated
10	Cycle storage	Requirements defined by Local Plan Policy
11	Landscaping	Plant species, lawns, verges etc
12	Bins / waste	Provision for the secure storage of bins must be demonstrated in the design. Recycling, garden, household bin waste and otherwise must not be visible from the road
13	Developable footprint	Detailing the maximum footprint of the plot which is developable
14	Building frontages	Active frontages such as materials, colours, windows
15	Roof Types	Defining whether pitched or flat roofs are acceptable



Figure 297: Self-build Houghton Conquest

## Plot Passports

11.16.9 The Council will also support the use of Plot Passports for self-build and custom housebuilding developments where supported by a Design Code.

11.16.10 Plot Passports should provide potential plot purchasers with a simple and concise summary of the design parameters for a specific plot. They should clearly show the location, permissible building lines, heights, footprints, and access to services as well as separation distances to adjacent plots. A Plot Passport should also be clear about the number of dwellings that can be built on a single plot as well as specifying car parking provision and access arrangements.

11.16.11 The [Gravenhill Self and Custom Build development](#) provides an example of a Plot Passport which can be used to provide an overview to developers of what to include within a Plot Passport as part of the supporting documentation for SBCH application.

11.16.12 Further information and guidance on Self and Custom Build is available from the Housing Strategy and Implementation Team: [SelfBuild@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:SelfBuild@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)



Figure 298: Plots under construction at Houghton Conquest

## 11.17 Householder Alterations and Extensions

11.17.1 Poorly designed alterations and extensions to homes can harm the character and appearance of the area. Care also needs to be taken to ensure that the design of an extension does not cause harm to living conditions and amenity for neighbours.

## 11.18 Permitted Development

11.18.1 Permitted development rights allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. These works can be carried out without the notification of the Local Planning Authority, although other confirmation such as Building Regulations, may be required. Formal confirmation of permitted development rights can be applied for via a Lawful Development Certification Permission.

11.18.2 Permitted development rights are predominantly associated with residential development however they can also be used to change the use of buildings and for agricultural development. Permitted development rights are subject to conditions and limitations, to control and to protect local amenity. It is always advised that, prior to carrying out any works under Permitted Development, the homeowner/applicant investigates whether permitted development rights have been removed. In some areas of the country, known generally as 'designated areas', permitted development rights are more restricted. In a Conservation Area, applications for planning permission will be required for certain types of work which do not need an application in other areas. Further information is available on the [Planning section](#) of the Council's website and the [Planning Portal](#).

## 11.19 Context

11.19.1 All alterations and additions to existing buildings should relate well to the character and context of their surrounding area. For smaller schemes, their 'context' may relate to the character of the street or estate, whilst for larger scheme, or those on elevated or prominent sites, consideration should be given to the scheme's impact on the wider area.

11.19.2 House alterations and extensions should be sympathetic to their context in terms of scale, positioning, detailing and materials to ensure that the development results in a balanced appearance and fits comfortably into the wider street scene, particularly if the neighbourhood has a very strong style or character. Consideration should also be given to the natural and landscape context of the area, and opportunities for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

11.19.3 Some of the following features may influence the design and layout of an extension:

- ▶ Trees can die if their roots are damaged either directly through excavation or indirectly through soil compaction, it is recommended to not operate within the root protection area of a tree calculated as 12 times the stem diameter or 17 times the stem diameter when dealing with a veteran tree. Above ground consider the final size of the tree and build to limit interaction between structure and the mature tree. Check the online map '[My Central Bedfordshire](#)' to see whether the tree is the subject of a [Tree Preservation Order \(TPO\)](#) or is in a [Conservation Area](#).

- ▶ Drains, septic tanks, and soakaways – plot the position of these and any pipes leading to them. Diversion of drains can be a considerable extra cost. Anglian Water and other water companies often have a minimum development distance from pipes.
- ▶ Considerations should be given to adjacent foundations. If neighbouring foundations are located on or near the boundary, any proposed extensions could affect them. They may be subject to the provisions of the Party Wall Act: Guidance is available from [The Party Wall etc. Act 1996: Explanatory Booklet](#).
- ▶ A property affected by an extension may have 'A right to light' if it has been enjoyed uninterrupted for 20 years or more, granted by deed or registered under the Rights of the Light Act, 1959. Planning permission does not override a legal right to light.

11.19.4 It is advisable to consult with neighbours at an early stage to avoid objections at the planning stage. A lack of consultation with neighbours and local authorities (Planning and Building Control sections) can lead to problems further along the design process. Pre-application advice can be sought prior to the submission of a planning application. Further details can be found on our [website](#).

## 11.20 Design Principles

11.20.1 The success of an extension will generally be determined by its relationship to the style, character, and appearance of the existing property. The existing building should not be dominated by the bulk, volume or character of the extension as the character of the existing building could be lost. The approach should be that the extension is designed as an addition rather than a duplicate of the existing house and it should be subservient, appearing as an addition in a 'supporting' role.

## 11.21 Front extensions

11.21.1 The front elevation of a house is the most difficult to alter or extend satisfactorily. Extensions that project forward of the building line will be required to make a positive contribution to improving the character and the appearance of the area. Large extensions on the front of properties are generally not acceptable as they can have a significant impact upon the streetscene. Front extensions should be considered in line with the minimum parking standards for the dwelling and should not result in a loss of a parking space.

11.21.2 Small additions may be permissible but should generally echo the style of the house and neighbouring properties, and respect the existing roof pitch, windows, doors and building materials.

## 11.22 Side Extensions

11.22.1 Side extensions must consider the following:

- ▶ **Maintaining Symmetry** - semi-detached dwellings are normally designed as a matching pair. It is important that this character is respected and not compromised by any new extension. The height and width of a side extension should be proportionate to the dimensions of the main house. The width should be significantly less than the width of the main house.
- ▶ **Gaps Between Buildings** - Side extensions can have a significant impact on the street scene. The gaps between detached or semi-detached houses are an important characteristic and their infilling with side extensions can impact upon the character and appearance of the area. The 'terracing effect' of side extensions will normally not be permitted. A minimum 1 metre distance from the common boundary should be maintained at first floor height in accordance with [Part B of The Building Regulations Fire Safety](#) and residential amenity in terms of daylight and sunlight. This could be larger if the existing properties have wider spaces between them.
- ▶ **Semi-detached Houses** - Extensions should be set back from the front elevation by at least 300 millimetres and the ridge height dropped to lower than the main ridge to achieve this. Extensions should not have an adverse impact on highway safety or car parking provision. Windows to new extensions should match with the existing in terms of style and position.
- ▶ **Detached Houses** - For detached dwellings there is greater flexibility. However, setbacks to ridge levels and building façade junctions help to ensure that new extensions appear subservient to the existing dwelling.



Figure 299: Example of unacceptable front extension



Figure 300: Large front extensions can damage the streetscene

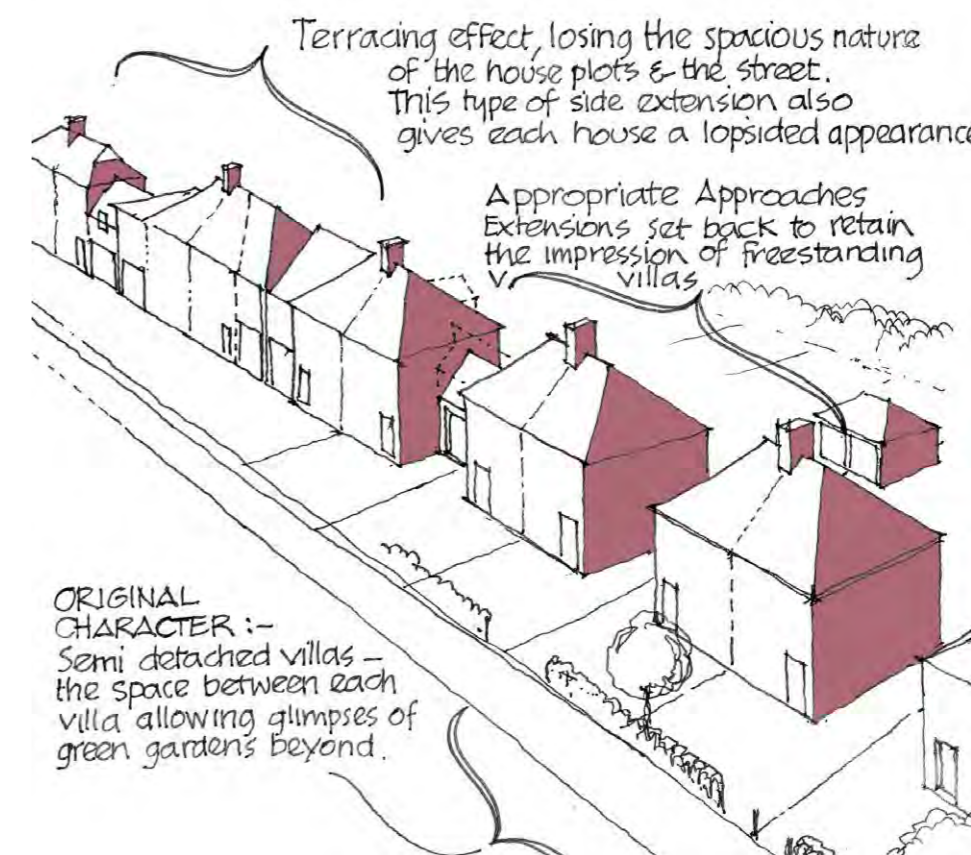


Figure 301: Side extensions should be well-proportioned



Figure 302: Side extensions can cause a 'terracing effect'



Figure 303: Side extensions should be set back and subservient

## 11.23 Extensions at Corners

- 11.23.1 Particular attention needs to be paid to the design of both single storey and two storey extensions on corner plots. This is because they can encroach over the established building line on either highway frontage and appear particularly prominent within the street scene. This can be avoided by respecting the established building line and retaining sufficient space at the side of the site to ensure that the open aspect of the corner is retained.

## 11.24 Detailing and Materials

- 11.24.1 The size, positioning, style and materials of new windows and doors should generally match and compliment those of the existing dwelling in order to achieve a consistent appearance. Central Bedfordshire is a large and diverse area characterised by a variety of settlements with their own individual character. The Context and Identity section of this Design Guide sets out detailed guidance relating to context and identity in Central Bedfordshire and should be used to inform the design of alterations and extensions to existing properties.
- 11.24.2 The architectural detailing on the existing property should be repeated, where appropriate, on any extension. This includes the continuation of plinths, stringcourses, decorative brickwork, bargeboards, sills and fascia as they are important elements in the overall design. The repeating of such elements can help to integrate the extension with the original house. All extensions and renovations should retain any existing bird/bat use and use the opportunity to provide new and or additional provision. All of this can be achieved through use of integrated bricks. Further guidance of on-plot measures to improve biodiversity is set out in the Nature section of this Design Guide.

## 11.25 Roof Design

- 11.25.1 It is important that extensions should relate to the design of the original building with matching roof shapes and pitches. Depending on the architectural style of the original building, a pitched, hipped, or gabled roof will normally be more appropriate than a flat roof.

## 11.26 Dormer windows

- 11.26.1 Dormer windows that are not permitted development will only be permitted where they can be inserted without damaging the character and appearance of the dwelling and the wider area and without unreasonably affecting the amenity of neighbours or public realm. The materials used for dormer windows must match to blend in rather than stand out from the existing building.
- 11.26.2 Dormer windows should be avoided on prominent elevations that can be clearly viewed within the streetscene and should be kept well below the ridge line and away from the edge of roofs. Large, flat roofed dormer extensions are generally considered unacceptable as they can be over-dominant and cause the property to appear 'top-heavy'.



11.26.3 Generally, dormers should take up no more than half the width of the house and should be centred on the windows below.

## 11.27 Roof extensions

11.27.1 Where a roof ridge needs to be raised to allow increased headroom in the roof space, careful consideration should be given to its impact on the street scene. In an area where most roofs are the same height, the significant raising of the roof of a house could appear dominant and out of character with the surrounding area. Such developments are unlikely to be considered acceptable. Where a roof is raised, its pitch should reflect the original, or the roofs of nearby buildings, as appropriate. Any such proposals will be considered within the context of the site and associated levels.



Figure 304: Example of an unacceptable dormer

## 11.28 Garages

11.28.1 The design of garages should generally respect the scale, character, and materials of the property. Garages, can be bulky structures taking up a considerable amount of floorspace on a plot. Therefore, they need to be sited and designed in such a way to ensure that:

- ▶ They do not dominate the house;
- ▶ They are not intrusive in the streetscene;
- ▶ They help to create privacy between properties, where appropriate;
- ▶ They should be set back from the principle elevation, unless the character and appearance of the area allows for a forward projection;
- ▶ They should be subservient and in proportion to the main house;
- ▶ The design of garages to the front of a property should also take into account the guidance in relation to front garden buildings.

11.28.2 Garages are often repurposed as utility rooms, storage or converted to be used as a room, particularly if attached to the property and served by utilities. The June 2022 Householder Travel Survey results show that only 14% of residents in Central Bedfordshire use their garage to park a car. 61% of residents that have a garage use it for another purpose, such as storage, a utility room, hobby room or gym.

11.28.3 This results in on-street parking that often is not factored into the road layout design. Whilst a single garage will not count as a parking space, a developer can still provide a single garage or storage area which could accommodate cycle storage, powered two-wheeler storage or other general storage. Where a single garage is provided, the dimensions of the garage do not need to allow for a car to fit into it and could be reduced in size compared to a standard sized garage. Further details on parking and garages can be found in the Movement section as well as the Parking Standards for New Development SPD.



Figure 305: (left) Garages set forward dominate the street scene  
Figure 306: (right) Garages set back help to create privacy

## 11.29 Annexes and Dependent Relatives Accommodation

11.29.1 If the purpose of the extension is to provide accommodation for a dependent relative, annexes may be permitted where:

- ▶ The accommodation forms an extension to the main dwelling and is capable of being used as an integral part of the dwelling; or forms a separate outbuilding which is close to, well related to and have a clear functional link to the main dwelling.
- ▶ The scale of the annexe does not dominate the existing dwelling and should be proportionate and play a subservient role. The annexe should provide the minimum level of accommodation required to support the needs of the occupant.
- ▶ Sufficient space to park vehicles for both parts of the dwelling served from the same (or existing) access, in accordance with standards set out in the Parking Standards for New Developments SPD, is available and appropriately located in design terms within the curtilage of the plot.

## 11.30 Front Garden Buildings

- 11.30.1 Detached buildings are not normally acceptable at the front of houses because of their dominant impact on the streetscene. They will only be considered acceptable where detached buildings in front gardens form part of the existing character of the street. For instance, where detached buildings were built as part of the original form and layout of the estate.

## 11.31 Extensions to Dwellings within the Greenbelt

- 11.31.1 Notwithstanding the design advice above, an addition to a dwelling in the Green Belt will not be appropriate if it results in a disproportionate addition.
- 11.31.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) states that extensions should not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. In the case of a dwelling house, the term “Original Dwelling house” means the house as it was first built or as it stood on the 1st July 1948 (if it was built before that date).
- 11.31.3 As well as the external appearance and design of an extension in or adjacent to the Green Belt, extensions should not adversely affect the openness or visual amenity of the area. As a guiding principle, to be considered as proportionate the original building should not be added to by more than 60% of footprint and volume. The impact of the extension in terms of floorspace, volume, massing and design will be considered. Proposed demolitions can be deducted if they are an integral part of the original building (dwelling).
- 11.31.4 Replacement dwellings will be judged based on national guidance within the NPPF and replacement dwellings cannot be materially larger than the existing and should not include what could be done under permitted development. When assessing whether or not a building is ‘materially’ larger, the proposal will be judged on footprint, scale and massing.
- 11.31.5 Given the sensitivity of Green Belt related development, it is important that proposals are discussed with the Council at the earliest opportunity. Pre-application advice may be sought and further information can be found on the Council’s website.
- 11.31.6 General guidance notes:
- ▶ The LPA’s guidance is based on national advice within the NPPF at paragraph 149 which states that ‘the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building’ is not inappropriate in the Green Belt.
  - ▶ For purposes of applying the 60% rule, extensions to buildings will usually refer to additions that are physically attached to the host building.
  - ▶ However, in certain cases, depending on the proximity of any outbuilding(s), the LPA will consider, as a matter of fact and degree, whether to include such outbuildings within the calculations or not. (Original outbuildings may be considered if within 5 metres of the existing dwelling on a case-by-case basis.)

## 11.32 Assessing the Impact on Neighbours

### Overbearing Impact

- 11.32.1 Extensions should not be overbearing to neighbours or result in an unacceptable loss of daylight or sunlight to neighbouring properties. Two-storey extensions should be subservient to the main dwelling and limited in depth, width, and height to avoid an overbearing appearance, significant overshadowing and loss of privacy and should avoid an un-neighbourly impact

### Loss of Light

- 11.32.2 On assessing proposals for rear extensions, the Council will use the BRE 25° and 45° guidance.
- 11.32.3 The 25 degree guidance relates to the consideration of windows which are opposite a proposed new building or extension. The BRE guide states that the procedure is as follows: measure the angle to the horizontal subtended by the new development at the level of the centre of the lowest window
- 11.32.4 The 45° rule seeks to:
- ▶ Maintain a reasonable relationship between existing buildings and extensions.
  - ▶ Avoid an overbearing visual impact in terms of bulk and proximity to boundaries both from inside adjacent properties and from neighbouring gardens.
  - ▶ Prevent excessive daylight loss or overshadowing to habitable rooms of neighbouring properties.

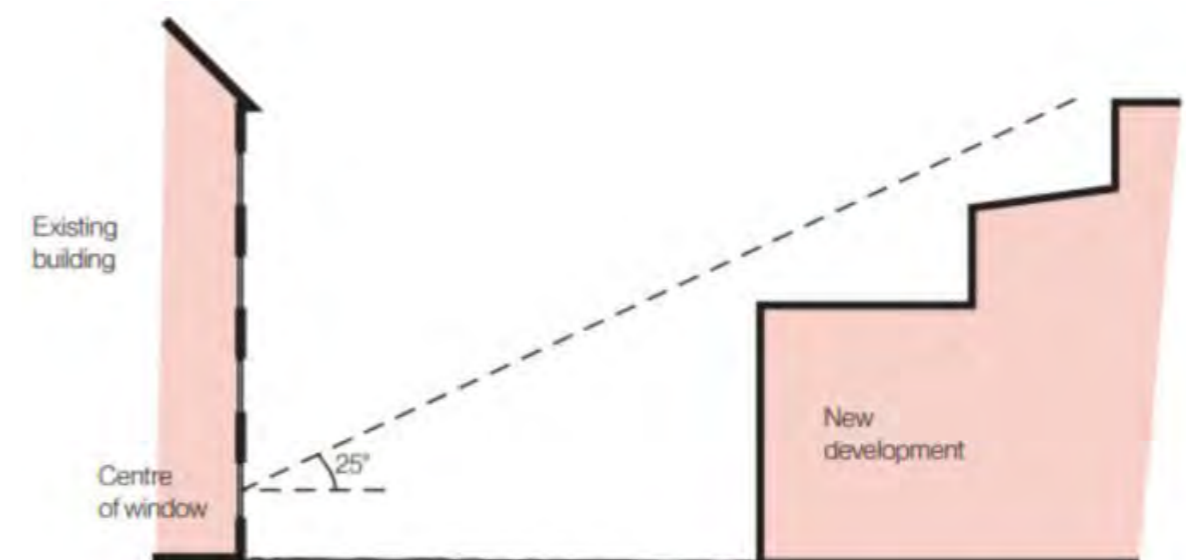


Figure 307: 25 degree rule (Source BRE)

- 11.32.5 The reference point is the centre of the neighbour's nearest habitable room window. If the extension has a pitched roof, then the top of the extension can be taken as the height of its roof halfway along the slope.
- 11.32.6 If the rear of the property is facing south, southeast, or southwest, it is particularly important to minimise loss of sunlight to neighbouring gardens. If the rear is facing in a northerly direction, loss of daylight could result in a gloomy outlook.

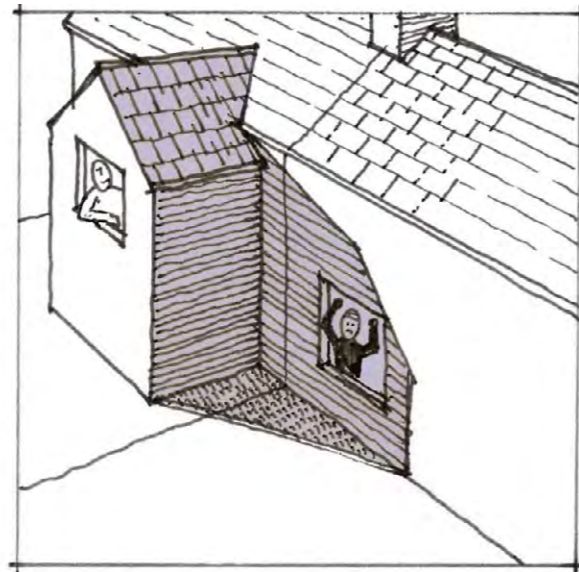


Figure 308: Significant overshadowing is unacceptable

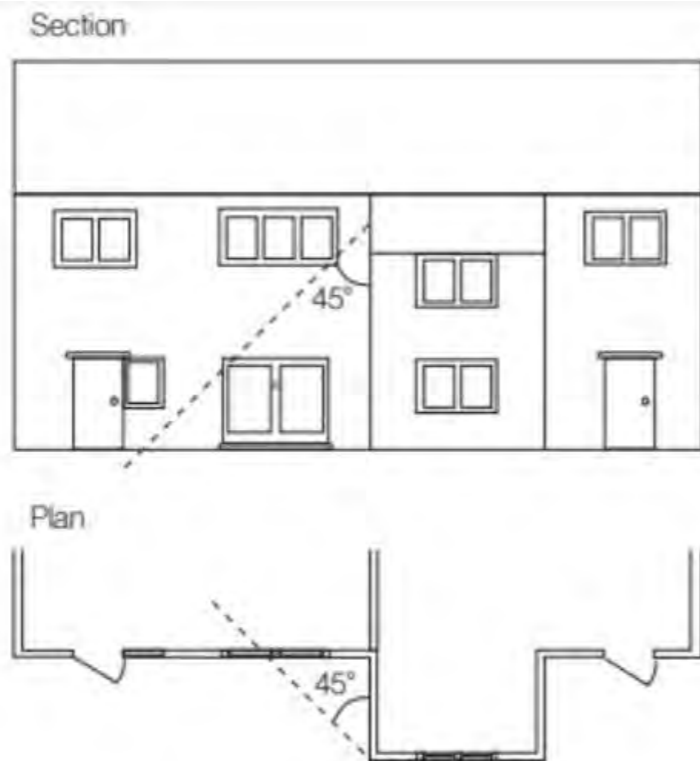
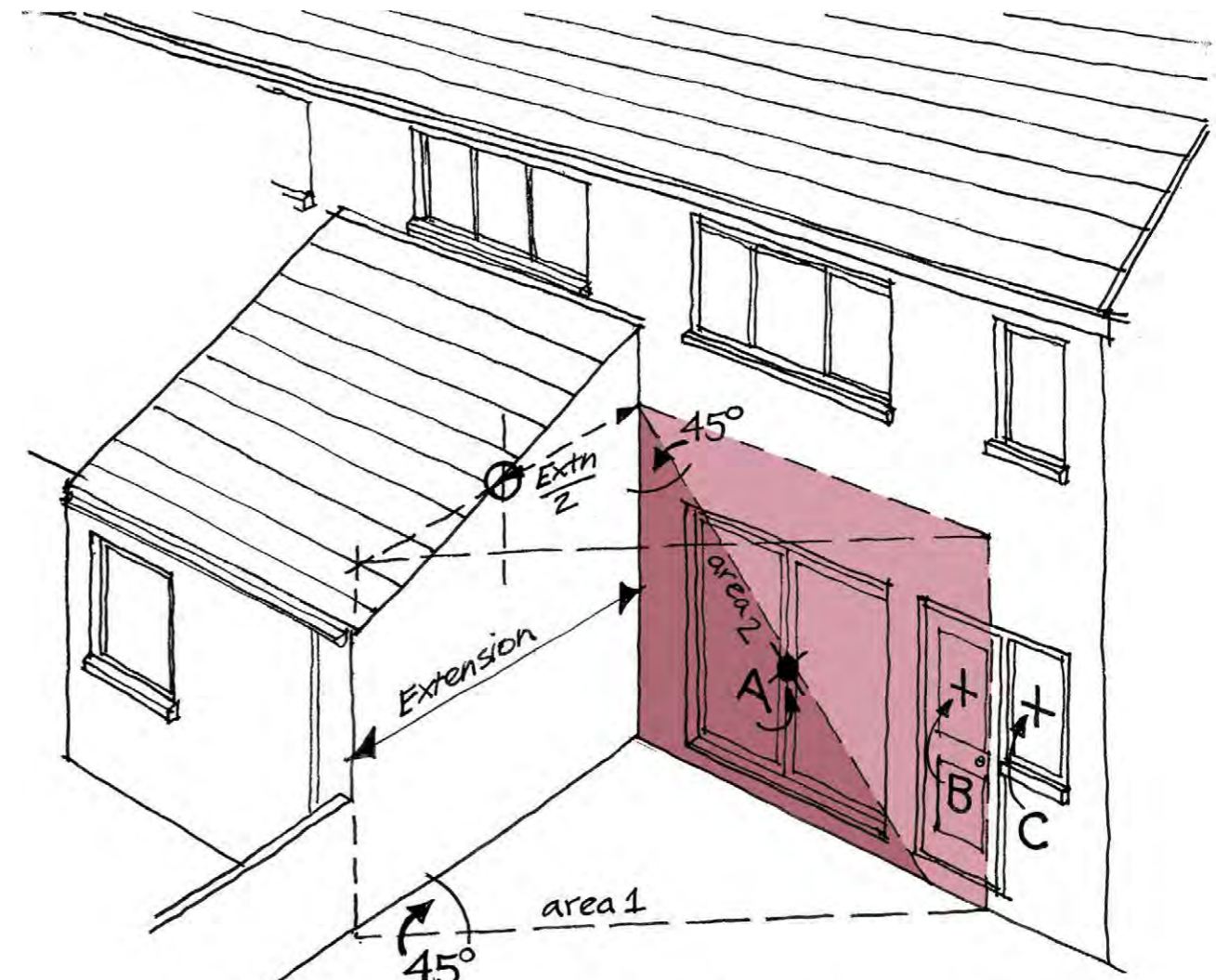


Figure 309: The 45 degree rule (Source BRE)



Assessing the impact of overshadowing of a proposed extension on the windows of an adjacent neighbour.

A, B, C are centrepoints of gd fl windows

- A unacceptable (obscured by areas 1 & 2)
- B may be unacceptable (obscured by area 1)
- C acceptable (unaffected by 1 & 2)

Alternative roof configuration

NB: Two storey extensions unlikely to be acceptable

Figure 310: Extensions should conform to the 45° rule

## Overlooking and a Loss of Privacy

- 11.32.7 Overlooking should be avoided as neighbours have a right to privacy. This is a material consideration and will influence whether an extension will gain planning permission.
- 11.32.8 A recommended distance of 21 metres between the rear habitable rooms of houses which back directly onto one another is normally required to avoid overlooking and to protect neighbouring amenity. Where there is an established development pattern or in the case of larger houses, the above guidelines may not be appropriate. In these instances, the size and character of the existing house and garden, and of the surrounding area, will inform the extent of the development that may be accommodated on the site.
- 11.32.9 The relative impact of an extension on the amenity of neighbouring properties may be increased should there be a significant change in level between the properties. In such situations it may not be possible to design an extension that would be acceptable.
- 11.32.10 If first floor windows are proposed in the side wall, they should be at a high level, non-opening and fitted with obscured glass.

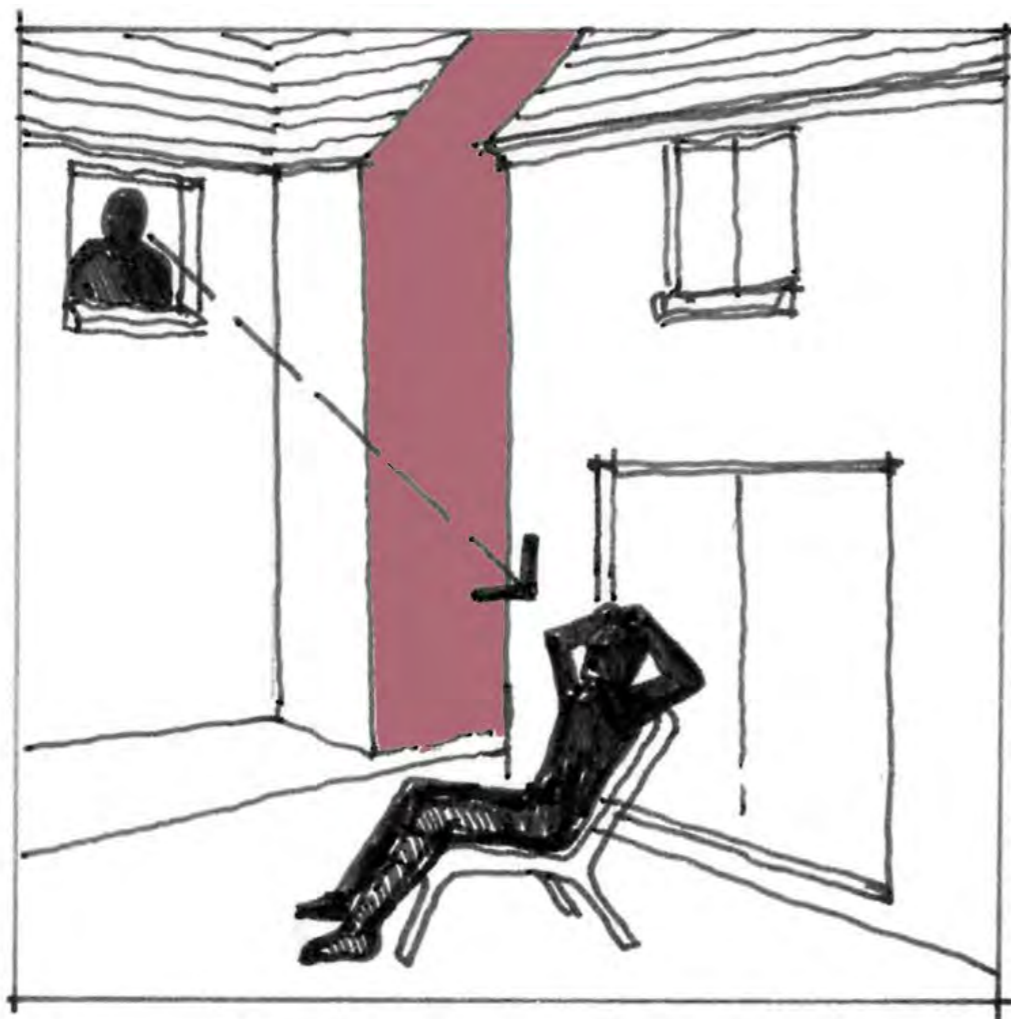


Figure 311: Overlooking should be avoided

## Overlooking from Balconies

- 11.32.11 First floor balconies can have a significant impact on the amenity of adjoining neighbours and should be avoided where this is likely. Consideration should be given to screening possibilities. Flat roofs will generally be discouraged to avoid use as balconies.

## Loss of Amenity Space

- 11.32.12 Extensions should leave sufficient usable private garden space for the enjoyment of residents and to reflect the established character of the area and size of house. Dwellings of three bedrooms or more should provide a reasonable garden area for family living. Normally no more than half the existing garden space should be covered by extensions. Loss of parking spaces should also be considered in accordance with the Parking Standards for New Developments SPD.

## Overdevelopment of the plot

- 11.32.13 There is a limit to the number of extensions which can be added to a property or to a site without causing harm to its character. What constitutes overdevelopment will vary from site to site, as each set of circumstances is unique. If extensions are beginning to overwhelm a property or if there are a large number of outbuildings in close proximity to each other, site boundaries or the main house, it may be that a site is already overdeveloped. In such circumstances additional development may not be appropriate.
- 11.32.14 Further guidance on extensions and alterations can be found at the [Planning Portal](#).