



## **Woking Borough Council**

### **Local Development Documents**

#### **Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Consultation Draft**

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**Produced by the Planning Policy Team**

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## 1.0 Introduction and Policy Context

1.1 This document sets out guidance on achieving suitable outlook, amenity, privacy, daylight and sunlight in new residential developments whilst safeguarding those attributes of adjoining residential areas.

1.2 This guidance supplements Policy CS21: *Design* and CS24: *Woking's townscape and landscape* of the Core Strategy, the design and housing policies of the Development Management Policies DPD (2016) including DM7: *Noise and Light Pollution*, DM10: *Development on Garden Land*, DM11: *Sub-divisions, Specialist Housing, Conversions and Loss of Housing* and DM17: *Public Realm*. It should also be read alongside the urban design principles set out in the Design SPD (2015). Applicants and developers should consider this guidance document before submitting planning applications for residential development, including extensions and alterations which require formal permission. Applicants should demonstrate how the relevant criteria have been addressed through Design and Access Statements as well as Daylight and Sunlight Assessments where relevant. The Council will use this guidance to help determine planning applications, but will apply it flexibly, having regard to the individual circumstances and other material planning considerations of each case, such as development within dense urban locations or the historic environment.

1.3 The following matters have been addressed:

- Outlook: ensuring that the close proximity of another building (or other controlled works) does not adversely affect accommodation by diminishing the visual enjoyment of a dwellings immediate setting.
- Amenity: the provision of landscaped space or other high quality outdoor amenity surrounding dwellings usually forming; private amenity space (private realm), and the landscaped frontage to the development (public realm).
- Privacy: the protection of habitable rooms and intimate areas of private outdoor amenity from being directly overlooked.
- Daylight: the amount of natural daylight required to illuminate internal rooms. Reference is also made to providing access to sunlight, and the safeguarding of access to sunlight for solar energy generation.

### General Points

1.4 Appendix 1 recommends a number of dimensions to achieve the minimum level of outlook, amenity, privacy, daylight and sunlight in residential layouts. However these dimensions are for advice only and evidence of design quality and compatibility with local context will be of overriding importance. Context means the setting of a proposed development, which must be well integrated with and complement the adjacent buildings and the wider street scene in terms of character, appearance, scale, density, layout and access.

1.5 Compliance with the criteria set out in Appendix 1 will usually provide most of the layout requirements for achieving satisfactory outlook, amenity, privacy, daylight and sunlight for conventional dual aspect family dwellings. However, developments designed to control aspect or which use adequate screening, as well as those located in the Borough's main high density

centres, may allow closer spacing but plans will require sufficient detailed information to justify any relaxation. The design and layout of all forms of residential development must ensure that the principal areas of accommodation achieve a satisfactory level of outlook and natural daylight.

1.6 Dwellings designed for family accommodation will need to provide a suitable area for private outdoor amenity, normally in the form of an enclosed garden to the side or rear of the dwelling. Dwellings designed for high density developments in Woking Town Centre, West Byfleet District and some Local Centres may not be able to achieve the same levels of privacy or amenity as those in lower density developments and alternative methods of provision are suggested.

1.7 Care should be taken over the siting of buildings, especially those close to existing dwellings and common boundaries, as their proximity may result in an unacceptable overbearing impact even though all other amenity requirements have been achieved.

1.8 When preparing development proposals in established residential areas with a defined character (such as by infilling) it will be equally important to retain sufficient spacing around the existing dwellings to maintain amenity as it will to achieve high standards for the new dwellings, whilst ensuring the overall arrangement is compatible with the character of the local context.

## 2.0 Outlook

2.1 Outlook is the visual amenity afforded accommodation by a dwelling's immediate surroundings, which can be adversely affected by the close siting of another structure or the incompatible treatment of adjoining land. Special care is needed when dealing with the outlook requirements of single aspect dwellings as they have no alternative provision. However, this consideration does not extend to the protection of a person's particular view from a property as this is not a material planning consideration.

2.2 Making the best use of site characteristics, e.g. open views, changes in level, retention of mature trees and shrubs, and making a positive relationship with an interesting street scene, will greatly assist the potential for achieving satisfactory outlook. In the case of single aspect developments, such as blocks of flats, it will be equally important to consider the outlook from both frontages.



*(1) Making the best use of site characteristics will assist in achieving a satisfactory outlook*

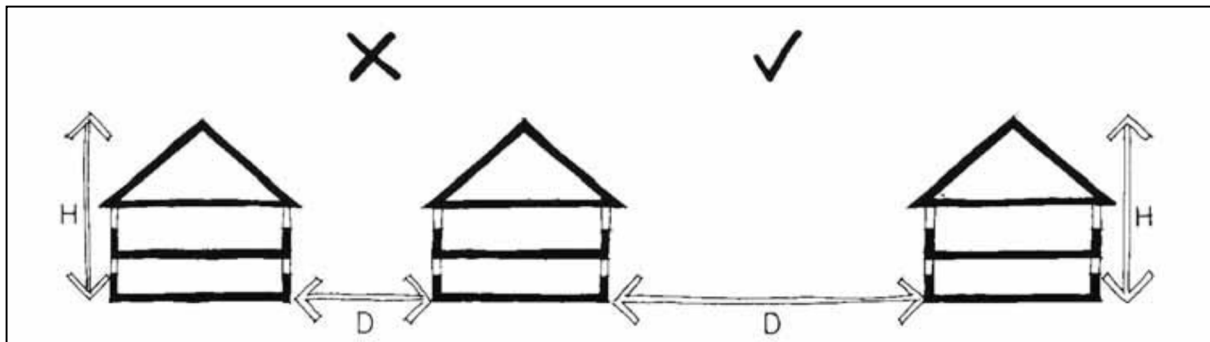


*(2) Unsatisfactory distances between buildings and trees can cause overshadowing problems and root damage.*

2.3 Developments which retain existing mature trees should ensure they are of sufficient distance away from principal windows so as not to overshadow accommodation as this may result in pressure for the trees' removal. Guidance on how to calculate the effect of trees and hedges on skylight and sunlight is set out in Appendix H of 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A guide to good practice (2011) (BRE).

2.4 Trees have high amenity value and many are protected by Tree Preservation Orders in which case works cannot be undertaken without consent. Specialist arboricultural advice should always be sought when considering trees in relation to new development. Information such as whether a tree is protected can be sought from the Council's Arboricultural Officers.

2.5 Outlook from a principal window will generally become adversely affected when the height of any vertical facing structure exceeds the separation distance from the window. When a structure is placed too close to a window so that it completely dominates the outlook it will have an overbearing impact (as shown below).



(3) Outlook may become adversely affected when the height of the building 'H' exceeds the separation distance 'D'. Differences in ground level need to be taken into account.

2.6 Outlook from a principal window may also become adversely affected where a dwelling is sited in close proximity to an incongruous feature, or treatment of the land which impairs visual amenity. Conversely, care must be taken when siting new features or uses which have an incongruous appearance adjacent to existing dwellings. Particular care should be taken when siting bin stores, and similar domestic structures, to ensure a satisfactory residential environment is achieved. Outlook onto areas such as those used for the storage of plant materials, commercial vehicles or similar incongruous features, is unlikely to be acceptable without the provision of a landscaped buffer zone of sufficient depth to screen them from view. Similarly it may be unacceptable to site grouped areas of residential parking immediately in front of a dwelling's principal elevation without the inclusion of a landscaped margin to provide a visual buffer. This would be particularly important in the case of principal windows to single aspect dwellings.



(4) An unsatisfactory residential environment is achieved due to the lack of a landscaped buffer/boundary treatments to provide a visual buffer to the highway and off-street car parking

### 3.0 Amenity

3.1 Amenity space generally comprises the open undeveloped land or other space surrounding a dwelling which creates the setting for the development, and provides space for the more private domestic and leisure uses of residents. Together these areas create the public and private realm and their different attributes are further discussed in detail below. This document recognises that different standards of amenity provision will be appropriate, depending on the type of accommodation proposed and the geographic location of the site. The recommended minimum garden amenity area requirements are also set out in Appendix 1.

#### The Public Realm

3.2 New housing developments should be designed with a coherent street layout which reflects the characteristic pattern of development in the local area (local context). In particular, the incorporation of any landscaped margins between the property and the road should reflect the characteristic depth of frontage and incorporate similar landscape elements such as trees and hedges, where they contribute to the character of the street scene.

3.3 Where there is no identifiable local context, emphasis will be placed on creating a high quality public realm with a distinctive sense of place. The creation of tree-lined streets and landscaped squares can make a significant contribution to public amenity. In developments which involve single aspect dwellings which face the road frontage, the treatment of the public realm will be particularly important as it will provide the principal amenity for this part of the accommodation.



*(5) New developments should create a high quality public realm with a distinctive sense of place such as through structural landscaping*

3.4 In the Town Centre and where relevant in other centres, as defined by the hierarchy of centres, the Council may seek a contribution towards the creation or improvement of areas



of the public realm in lieu of any amenity space provision reasonably required by the development, where there is limited scope or need to provide this provision on site. The contributions will be sought through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and or by Section 106 Agreement.

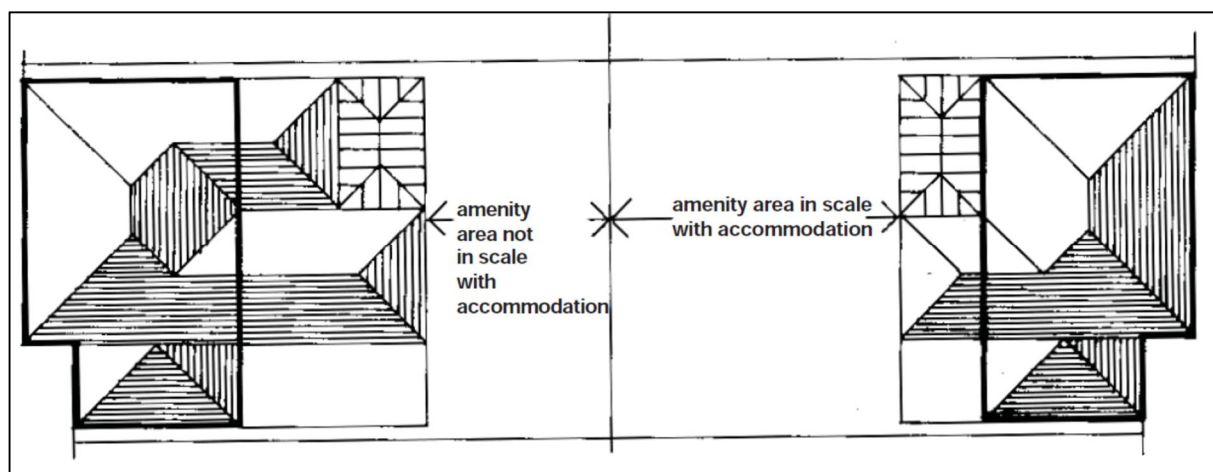
## The Private Realm – Private Amenity Space

### Family Accommodation

3.5 For the purposes of this document, family accommodation will be taken to mean all houses with two bedrooms or more and exceeding 70 sqm. gross floor space, and all flats or duplex apartments with two bedrooms or more and exceeding 61 sqm. gross floor space.

3.6 All dwellings designed for family accommodation need to provide a suitable sunlit area of predominantly soft landscaped private amenity space, appropriate in size and shape for the outdoor domestic and recreational needs of the family it is intended to support. For example, this will include space for sitting out, children's play, drying clothes and plant cultivation. Private amenity space is best provided as an enclosed garden to the rear or side of the property where it is clearly separate from more public areas of the site. Such areas should be overlooked by the accommodation and have secure boundaries to allow children to play in safety.

3.7 In established residential areas, where the existing pattern of development has a well defined character, the size, shape and position of the garden will need to reflect the existing context and be in proportion to the size of dwelling proposed. In addition, where the plot has been formed by the sub-division of an existing family dwelling, sufficient land will need to be retained to provide for the private amenity needs of the host dwelling.



(6) Garden size must be in scale with the dwelling, including extensions, an area at least as big as the building footprint is advised

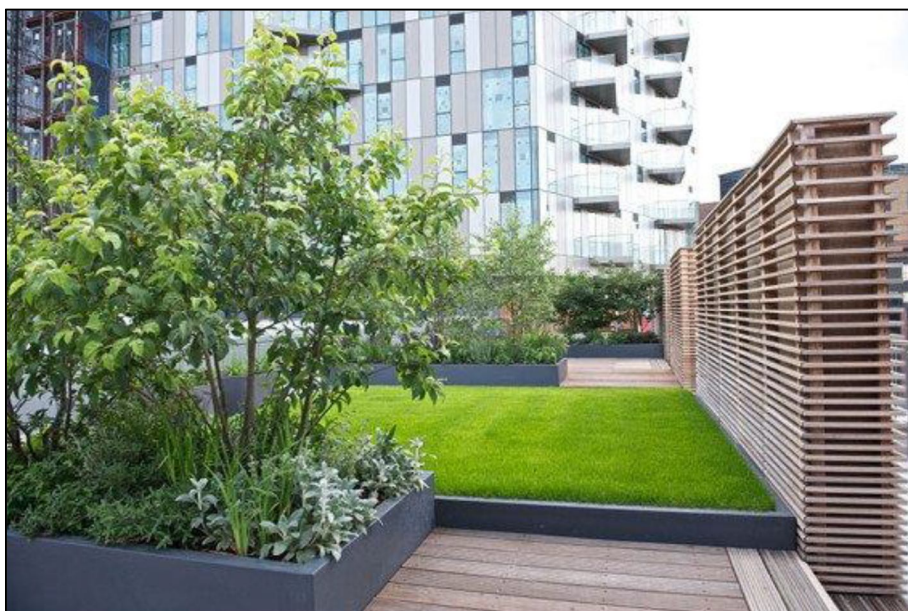
3.8 The overall size, shape and quality of the space is of more importance in providing a useful area for family amenity than achieving a particular depth of garden. Long narrow gardens and wide shallow gardens may not be acceptable as they have little amenity value compared to more regular shaped areas. Private gardens should also be reasonably flat, open and enjoy

adequate sunlight, with not more than 25% of the area prevented from receiving sunlight (measured on 21st March). Heavily treed areas, such as those protected by TPOs, or areas in perpetual shade from adjoining structures will have little private amenity value. Where appropriate, the area of private garden should approximate with gross floorspace of the dwelling but it is advised that it should generally be as large as the building footprint of the dwelling house. This principle will be subject to the existing character of the local context.

3.9 Private amenity space should enjoy a high degree of privacy from the public street and from any other public places. Front gardens therefore are not normally considered to contribute towards the provision of on site private amenity space.

3.10 In the densest urban locations such as Woking Town Centre and West Byfleet District Centre, where multi storey developments including flats, duplex apartments and townhouses are intended for family accommodation, alternative forms of on-site amenity provision may be permitted in lieu of a conventional private garden. Use of a communal amenity space or, where it is safe to do so, a suitable area of landscaped roof garden or terrace, may be acceptable for this purpose, although care is needed in siting to avoid problems of overlooking and noise disturbance other dwellings. Where communal amenity space is being provided it should accommodate a range of uses to provide variety.

3.11 However, where little or no such provision can be achieved, the developer will be expected to contribute to the cost of landscape or other local improvements to offset the lack of on-site provision reasonably required by the development, by raising the quality and amenity value of the adjacent public realm. This will be secured through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and or a Section 106 Agreement.



*(7) Alternative forms of amenity provision such as roof gardens and balconies may be acceptable in the most dense urban locations - Example from Saffron Square, London (HTA Design)*

## Non Family Accommodation

3.12 Non family accommodation will be taken to mean studio and one bedroom flats and any other forms of dwellings of less than 61sqm. internal floorspace together with specified forms of accommodation such as older persons accommodation and specialist care units.

3.13 Whilst generally dwellings specifically designed not to be used for family accommodation do not require any specific area to be set aside for each as private amenity space, applicants will be encouraged to do so where it is feasible.

3.14 Whilst there is no specific requirement for private amenity provision, sufficient space will be required around all dwellings to provide for shared amenity and to provide an appropriate setting for the building as detailed below. However, all forms of dwelling should seek to incorporate some modest private sunlit area for sitting outside. At ground floor level a small semi-enclosed patio area would be beneficial, and at higher levels, particularly in the case of flats, a simple terrace or balcony might be incorporated. Access to private amenity space should not be provided from a bedroom.



*(8) Balconies and terraces provide suitable levels of private amenity space within flatted developments*

3.15 Balconies should be designed so that they can be adequately used as private amenity space, including with respect to outlook, privacy, daylight, microclimate and noise and air pollution. In order to ensure that it can accommodate some modest outside seating and circulation space, a balcony should generally be at least 1.5m deep along the entire length. When positioned close to noise sources, solid parapets and absorptive soffit materials should be considered for their acoustic benefits. In addition to clothes drying, balconies tend to be used for storage of household items, and for this reason, solid balustrades may be preferable. More detailed balcony guidance is set out in the Woking Design SPD (2015).

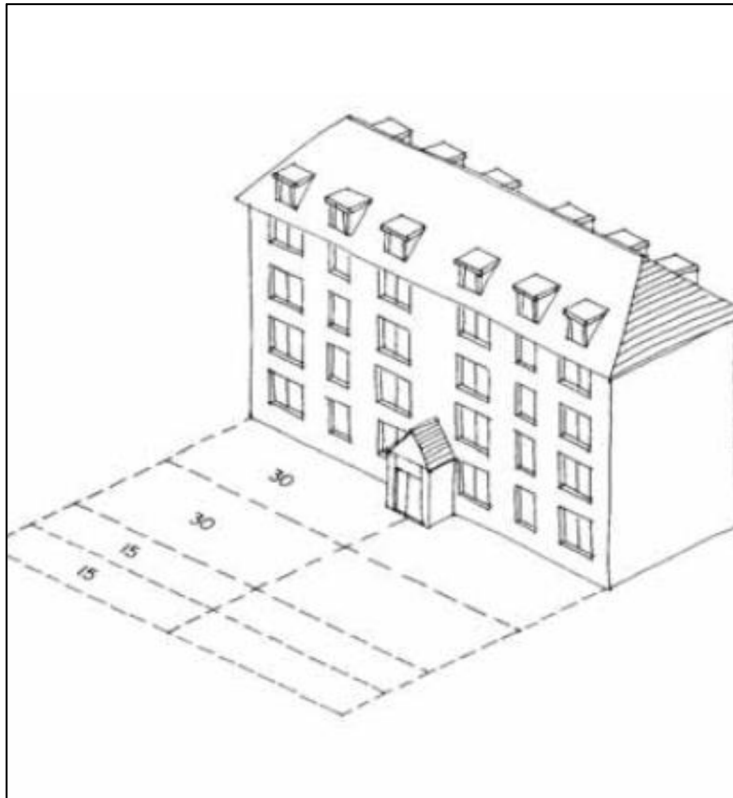
3.16 Whilst a Juliette balcony can provide some amenity value, they are not considered as amenity space as they do not add useable space to the development.

3.17 In the case of sheltered accommodation, the incorporation of a glazed conservatory or loggia, preferably on an east or west elevation, will enable residents to enjoy a degree of private amenity whilst being sheltered from the weather.

## Communal Amenity Space

3.18 All forms of dwelling need to have sufficient space around them for general amenity purposes, which should also meet the requirements of outlook, privacy and daylight and integrate the building within its context. It is suggested that an area of approximately 30 sqm. for dwellings up to two storeys high and 15 sqm. for each storey thereafter up to four storeys

high, and additional amenity space as proportionate for any tall buildings, would be sufficient for this purpose. A specific area is not suggested for sheltered accommodation as long as the area surrounding the building is in scale with the size of the building. However, it is suggested that there should be at least one significant area of shared amenity space such as adjoining the main day room.



*(9) Suggested amount of communal amenity space provision (up to 4 storeys)*

3.19 All land surrounding the building which is not required for private amenity should be treated in an appropriate manner to contribute to general amenity. The emphasis should be placed on providing soft landscaped areas using tree and shrub planting for seasonal colour and interest. Special regard should be paid to the suitable planting of margins closest to principal rooms, and the use of structural tree planting to enclose the space, for example, along boundaries, using tree species which contribute to the architecture of the surrounding treescape.

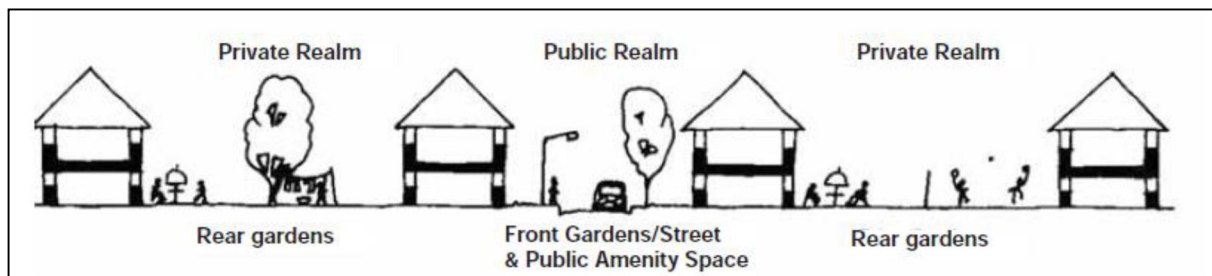
3.20 Hard surfaced areas can be designed to contribute to communal amenity. However, they will only be considered to help mitigate against a deficiency in provision of amenity space where it is demonstrated that they have been designed as a high quality hard landscape composition rather than dominated by engineering geometry. This would include the careful use of surface elements such as edge restraints, gravel and block paving, which have been selected for colour and texture, and used in a landscaped composition interspersed with structured tree planting and other vertical elements. Whilst car parking is not considered as communal amenity space, its provision should not undermine block structure or dominate the street scene.

3.21 In some cases there may be a requirement to provide children's play areas in accordance with standards of provision. Although play provision is not dealt with in this guidance, these areas can also contribute towards overall landscaped amenity and should not be considered in isolation.

## 4.0 Privacy

4.1 New developments should be designed to protect the privacy of both new and existing dwellings. This primarily covers accommodation forming habitable rooms (bedrooms and living areas) although consideration should also be given to the most intimate private areas of amenity both within and closely related to the dwelling (e.g. dining and patio areas).

4.2 Generally housing layouts are best arranged so that dwellings form a traditional street frontage where the building itself defines the public and private realms as this will most likely result in achieving satisfactory levels of privacy for accommodation. Where 'tandem' forms of development are proposed special care needs to be placed on preventing new dwellings looking into the rear private areas of existing dwellings.



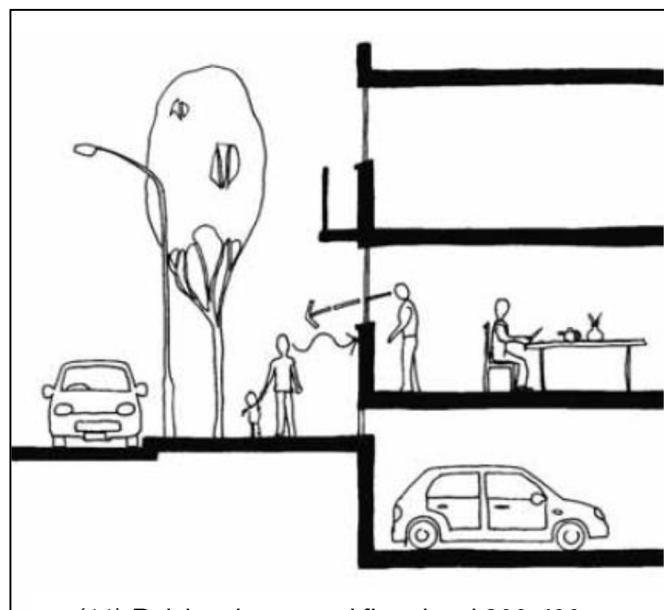
(10) Traditional separate of public and private realm (amenity areas)

### The Public Realm

4.3 Traditionally there is a lower expectation of achieving privacy at the front of a dwelling, where rooms face the street, compared to accommodation located at the rear. Where possible, accommodation should be arranged to best suit this circumstance by placing main habitable rooms to the rear of the dwelling and careful use of materials and boundary treatments.

4.4 As there is a much lower expectation of privacy for rooms facing the street, separation distances between the front elevations of dwellings need only achieve the minimum distance required for outlook and daylight (approximately the height of the buildings opposite) except in 'tandem' forms of layout.

4.5 Where there is scope for planting, shrubs and hedges can also help to provide a degree of privacy for forward facing rooms. In more urban locations it may be possible to raise the ground floor level by 300-400mm using undercroft parking, as this can effectively stop views into accommodation.



(11) Raising the ground floor level 300-400mm using undercroft parking can be effective

4.6 There is an expectation that rooms at the rear of a dwelling will achieve high levels of privacy, particularly where they abut a private amenity area.

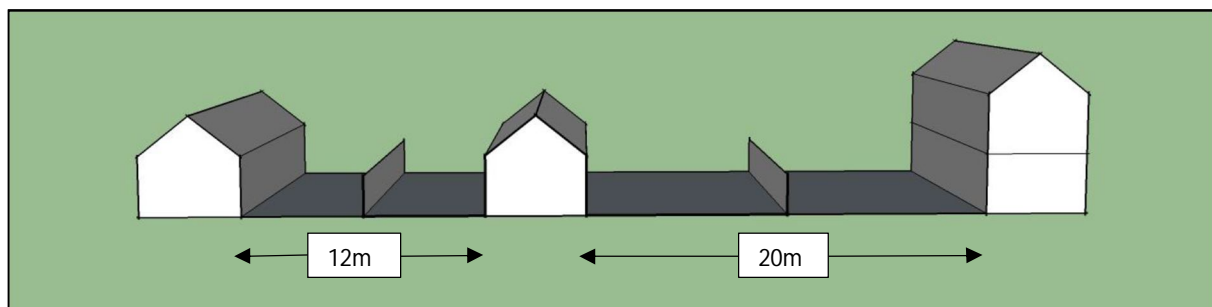
4.7 Traditionally, privacy is achieved by remote separation between dwellings, although it is also possible to achieve acceptable levels of privacy through design, such as the careful siting of windows in an elevation, or through some form of permanent visual barrier. These are discussed further below. However, where no satisfactory alternative method of preventing overlooking is demonstrated, the advised minimum separation distance between dwellings (as set out in Appendix 1) will be used as the main determining criteria.

## The Private Realm

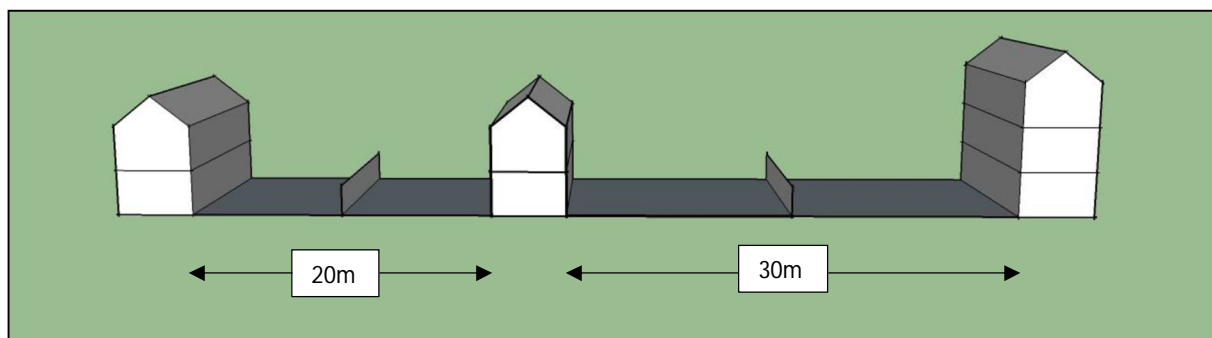
### Privacy through Separation

4.8 As privacy is eroded through overlooking of accommodation, any significant change of ground levels between buildings can alter the effect of the separation distance. In these circumstances it will be important to provide a cross section to demonstrate the relative height between opposing accommodation.

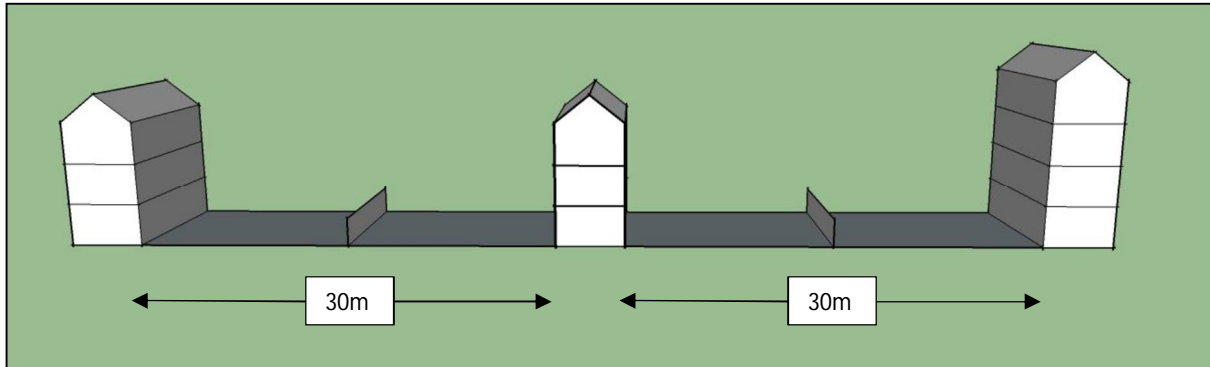
4.9 Single storey to single storey dwellings are largely unaffected as privacy can normally be achieved by the erection of a panelled fence between them, as long as there is sufficient space to achieve adequate outlook, amenity and daylight. Generally dwellings of this scale should not have any principal elevation (except a flank elevation) sited closer to a common boundary than the height of the structure, which is typically about 6m.



4.10 For two storey accommodation (including dwellings with first floor dormer windows), a separation distance of approximately 20m will be adequate to prevent overlooking of dwellings of a similar or lesser height.

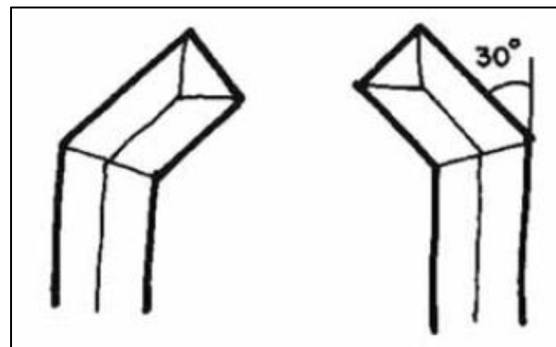


4.11 For three storey or taller accommodation (including dwellings with second floor dormer windows), a separation distance of approximately 30m will be adequate to prevent overlooking of dwellings of a similar or lesser height.



(12) Suggested separation distances to maintain privacy between different height dwellings

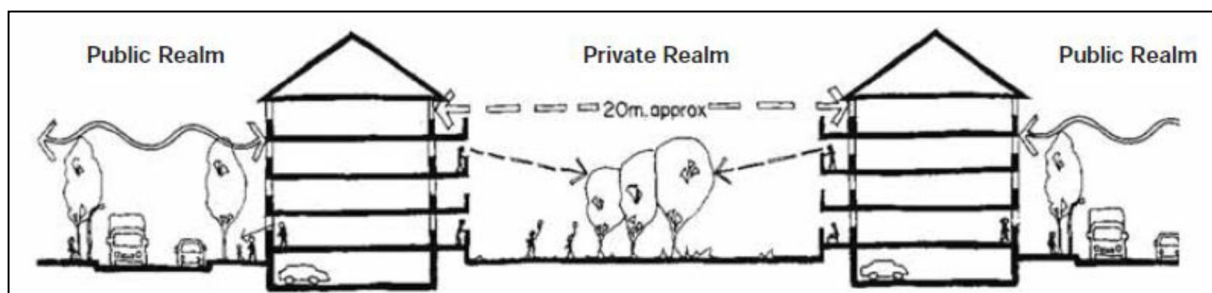
4.12 Separation distances may be relaxed by about one quarter where there is a significant change of angle of orientation between the siting of dwellings opposite (over 30 degrees).



(13) Change in angle of orientation may mitigate privacy concerns for dwellings that do not meet the prescribed separation distances

### Privacy through screening

4.13 The incorporation of permanent screening between respective elevations can help to reduce overlooking between conventionally designed dwellings, where this can be achieved in a manner compatible with their character. In particular, where evidence of satisfactory screening is demonstrated, it may be possible to reduce separation distances below the dimensions recommended above providing adequate daylighting and amenity provision is met. All proposals which incorporate screening to reduce separation distances will be assessed on their own merits, but accurate cross sections will need to be provided with the application to demonstrate how privacy is achieved within the layout as this is not a matter which can be dealt with by planning condition.



*(14) Effective screening can be used to achieve privacy at reduced separation distances*

4.14 The retention of existing established evergreen trees and shrubs, such as holly or yew, adjacent to a common boundary can be particularly useful in screening out inter-visibility, although they may also cause overshadowing in gardens with North - South orientation. Some deciduous species also have screening properties, for example, beech and hornbeam, as they hold their leaves in winter. Any suitably sized trees and shrubs retained for the purpose of screening would need to be controlled through a planning agreement or condition. The introduction of new planting can also achieve a similar effect but will need to be planted at sufficient size to provide a screening effect until mature, using species appropriate to the area's character. All new planting should be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following first occupation of the buildings or completion of the development (whichever is sooner). Any trees or other plants which die or become seriously damaged or diseased within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development shall be replaced during the next planting season with specimens of the same size and species unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

**Privacy through Control of Aspect**

4.15 The selective position of window openings to habitable rooms on facing elevations, such as moving window openings from a front elevation to a flank elevation, particularly at the first floor level, can stop any direct overlooking of the neighbouring dwelling. The use of this type of 'controlled aspect' design can often enable specially designed dwellings to be sited much closer to each other than would normally be allowed. The use of specially designed dwellings can be very helpful in creating pinch points which can help to achieve enclosure in court yard developments.



*(15) Use of a controlled aspect design to avoid overlooking of adjacent dwellings  
- Example from Godson Street, London (Edgley Design)*



4.16 This form of design can also enable a dwelling to be sited much closer to a common boundary than normal without affecting the privacy of neighbouring dwellings, although site planning will normally require amenity areas to be arranged to reflect the position of main window openings. However, care must be taken to ensure the proximity of buildings does not result in any adverse overbearing or overshadowing effects.

4.17 It may also be possible to design individual window openings to control the direction of view both into and out of the accommodation, whilst allowing sufficient natural daylight to enter the room. The use of high level windows has been traditionally used for this purpose, although care needs to be taken when incorporating them in an elevational design. Velux type roof lights can be used for accommodation in the roofspace without affecting overlooking as long as they are 1.7m above floor level and do not prejudice Building Regulations requirements for means of escape.

4.18 Although obscured glazed windows (frosted glass) are useful for achieving privacy of bathrooms and toilets they will not normally be permitted as the sole method of daylighting a habitable room. However, it may be possible to combine obscured glazing and conventional glazing to restrict the line of sight into and out of a room, either through height or direction. Creatively designed oriel windows can also be employed to change the direction of view by 45° or 90° for rooms in awkward positions, although they should only be employed where there is no feasible alternative.

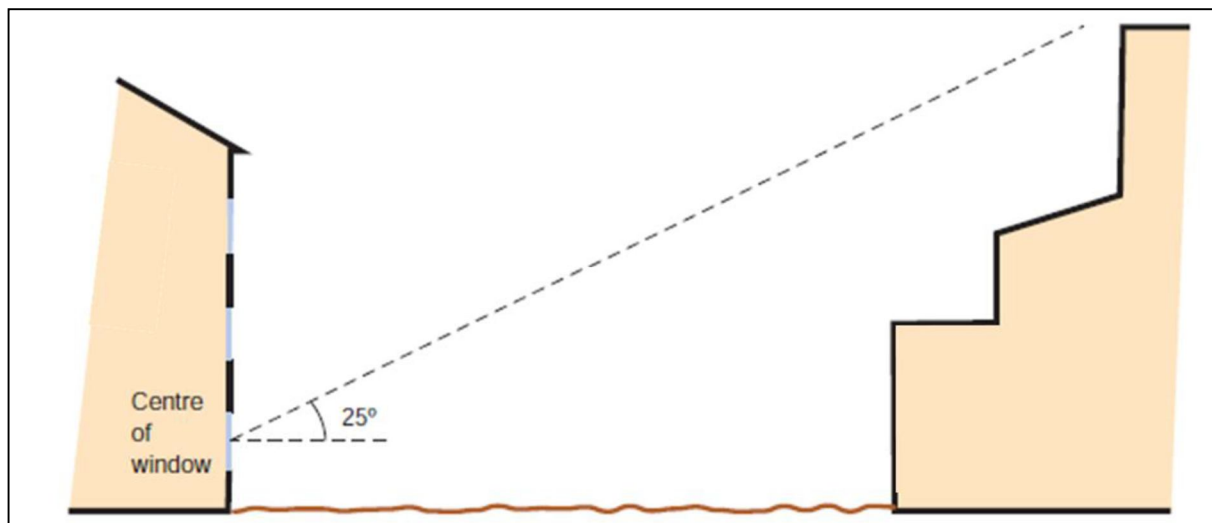
## 5.0 Daylight and Sunlight

5.1 Daylight is the volume of natural light which is required to illuminate internal accommodation from dawn to dusk. Daylight will be impaired by the siting of a structure which obstructs daylight directly in relation to its size, positioning and distance away. The Building Research Establishment (BRE) is the Government advisor on sunlight and daylight in residential developments. The BRE makes a number of recommendations in its report 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A guide to good practice (2011)'. Although these recommendations are not mandatory they are clear indicators of achieving design quality in residential development schemes.

### New Dwellings

5.2 The Building Research Establishment report 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight (2011)' recommends that suitable daylight to a dwelling is achieved where an unobstructed vertical angle of  $25^\circ$  can be drawn at the centre of the lowest window where daylight is required.

5.3 Where the vertical angle is between  $25^\circ$  and  $45^\circ$ , it is recommended that very large windows are used to provide adequate daylight provided there is no significant harm to local character.



(16) Recommended Daylight Criteria

5.4 However, if this test is not satisfied, the BRE has a second test; that the centre of the window achieves a 'vertical sky component' (VSC) of 27% or more. The VSC can be found using the BRE Skylight Indicator or Waldram diagram (both can be found within *Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide to good practice* (BR 209, 2011 edition)).

5.5 Where space is restricted it may be possible to improve the daylighting of rooms in a number of ways. Increasing the size and number of windows will assist, particularly if the window head height is raised for lower floors, such as the method used for Georgian houses. However, window size must be considered against the appearance of the overall elevation

design and the character of buildings in the area. Use of light colours for external building materials may help to reflect light but weathering will reduce the effects in time. The use of light coloured external building materials should therefore not be used as the sole means of improving the daylighting of rooms that fall below the standards set out above.

5.6 Building depth will always be a factor in achieving good interior lighting. Rooms over 5m deep will always be difficult to light adequately from a single elevation, which will limit most conventional double aspect dwellings to around 10m in depth. Clearly some non-habitable rooms, such as bathrooms, may be selectively positioned to have poorer daylight. Very deep floor plates are unlikely to achieve acceptable levels of daylighting without some form of supplementary light capture, such as the use of a light well, internal courtyard or atrium.

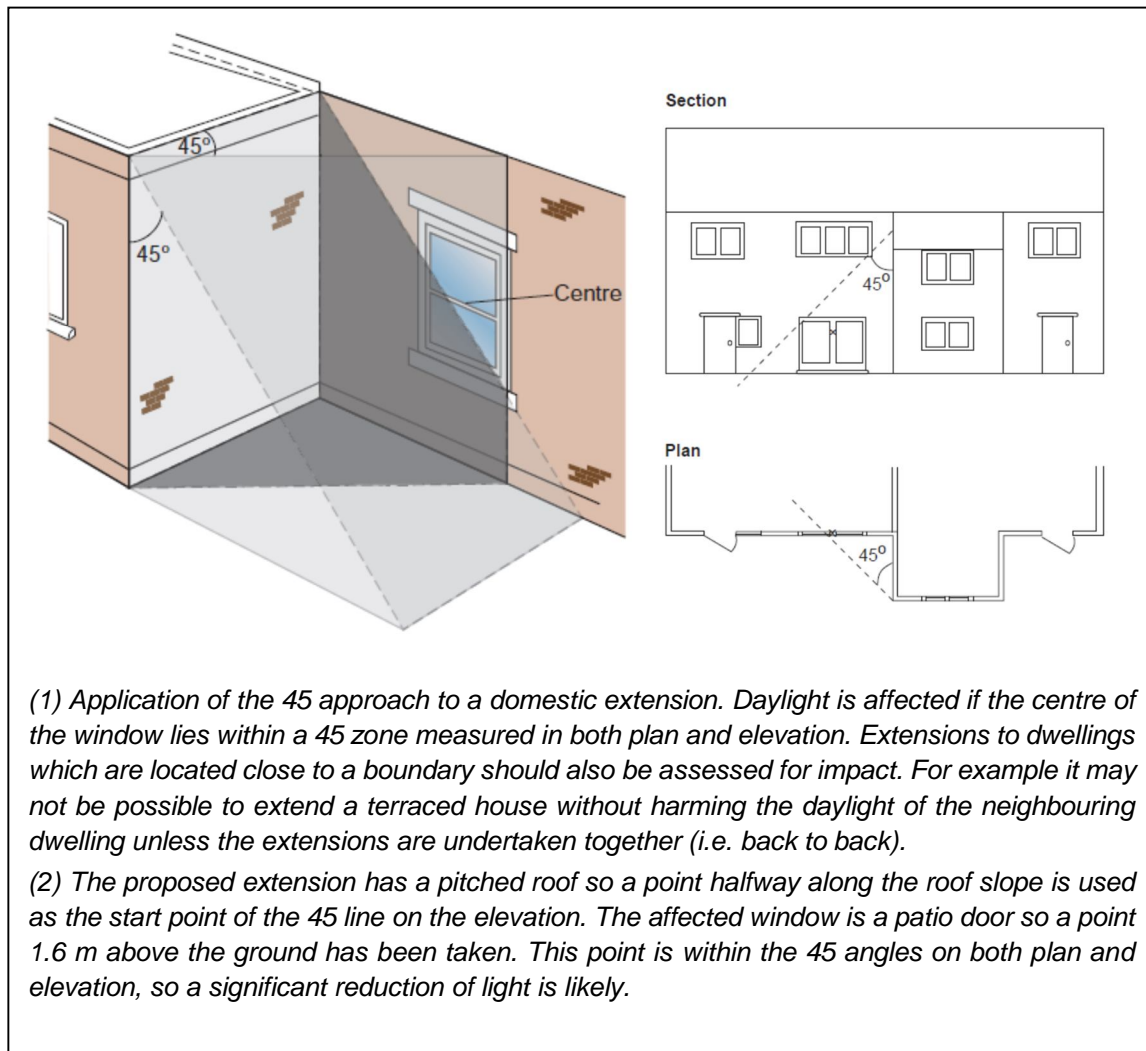
5.7 Balconies can significantly reduce light entering windows below them. Detailed balcony guidance is set out in the Woking Design SPD (2015).

### **Existing Dwellings**

5.8 Development proposals will need to demonstrate how daylighting of existing dwellings is safeguarded. Although primarily intended to be used for dwellings, the guidance should also be applied to assess the impact on other non-domestic buildings where occupants have a reasonable expectation of receiving daylight, which would normally include buildings such as schools, hotels, hostels, small workshops and offices.

5.9 A similar test to that of achieving daylight for new dwellings can be applied to existing dwellings as above, in that the 25° measurement must be taken from the middle of each of the existing window openings. Alternatively the same test as described above can be applied to assess the criteria for achieving a 27% sky component for existing dwellings (and measure not less than 0.8 of the window's previous VSC).

5.10 Where two storey extensions are added to the front or rear of a dwelling (i.e. they project at 90° to the main elevation) they may affect the daylighting of an adjoining dwelling if they project beyond 3 metres of the building elevation, especially if positioned close to a common boundary. Significant loss of daylight will occur if the centre of the affected window (or a point 1.6m in height above the ground for floor to ceiling windows/patio doors) lies within a zone measured at 45° in both plan and elevation. In the case of narrow fronted semi detached or terraced houses there may be little scope to extend the property in this way unless adjoining properties are extended at the same time to create a linked form of development.

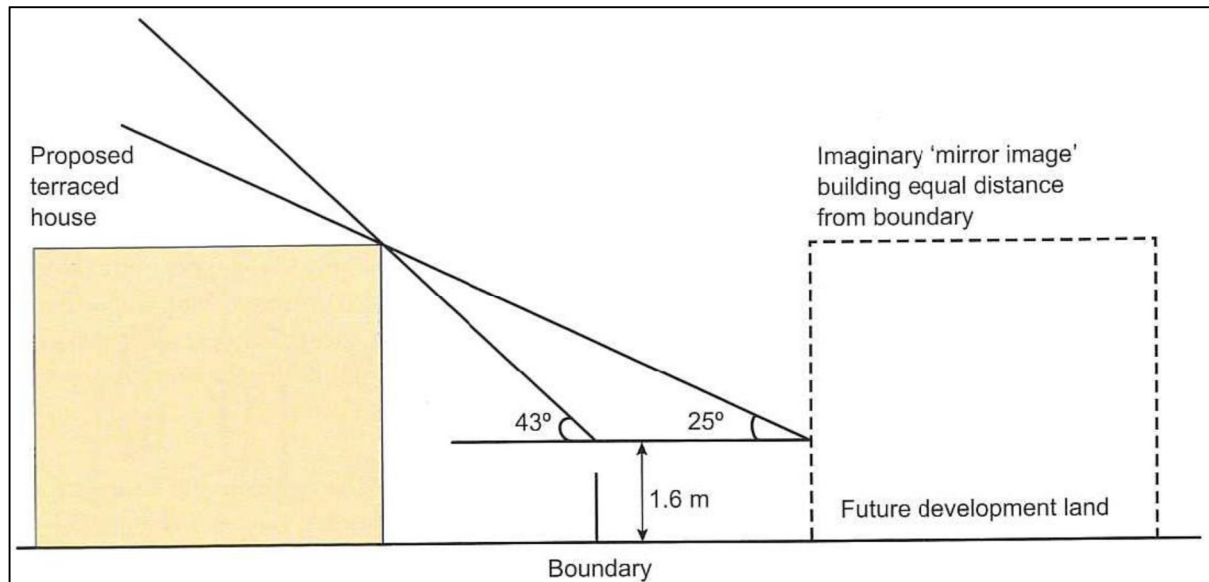


## Adjoining Land

5.11 When considering development proposals it is important not to prejudice future daylight requirements by building too close to the boundary. There are some exceptions, such as adjoining land forming part of the highway or amenity land which cannot be developed (such as common land), where a close relationship may be beneficial. In addition, development proposals should be carefully designed to ensure that open spaces such as gardens, parks, playing fields and sitting out areas including public squares receive adequate amounts of sunlight. For these areas, a detailed sunlight study such as a sun path indicator or shadow plotting should be carried out. Further guidance on this for tall buildings is set out in the Design SPD.

5.12 A suitably designed development will site buildings sufficiently well back from any boundaries to allow future development of adjacent land to receive adequate access to daylight. This will also ensure that it retains sufficient space for daylighting its own accommodation which faces the boundary, should the adjoining land become developed. The latter point will be of critical importance when considering single aspect accommodation. This provision applies to both residential and non residential developments, but does not normally apply to side boundaries next to a windowless flank wall.

5.13 To check suitability, it is suggested that applicants draw a scaled section through the tallest part of the proposed development showing the accurate position of the boundary with the adjoining land. If a line projected from a point 1.6 metres above the boundary to the highest point of the proposed development is less than  $43^\circ$  then there will normally be potential for achieving good levels of daylight on the adjoining land (as shown in Figure 17). If a road separates the two sites then the centre of the road should be used for the assessment.



(17) Ensuring daylight on adjacent land for future development - It may be appropriate to check suitability by using an imaginary 'mirror' form of development

5.14 Buildings or individual elements extending beyond the  $43^\circ$  line may still be acceptable if they are narrow enough to allow adequate light around the sides. This can be quantified by calculating the vertical sky component at a series of points 1.6m above the boundary towards the proposed building using the BRE Skylight indicator. Every point should be within 4m of a point with a vertical sky component of 17% or more to achieve adequate daylight. This corresponds to the value of a continuous obstruction subtending a  $43^\circ$  angle already mentioned above.

5.15 An alternative method of checking that daylight will not be prejudiced is to test a hypothetical mirror form of development on the adjoining site, showing a building of equal height and set back an equal distance from the boundary. If the normal  $25^\circ$  test set out above is achieved for both 'developments' then acceptable levels of daylight will be met.

5.16 It is important that this test is not used to generate the profile of a development by use of a stepped form of building as this will result in dwellings placed in close proximity to the common boundary and cause overlooking difficulties. As a rule of thumb, any building elevation with windows to habitable rooms should be no closer to the common boundary than the overall height of the building.

## Sunlight

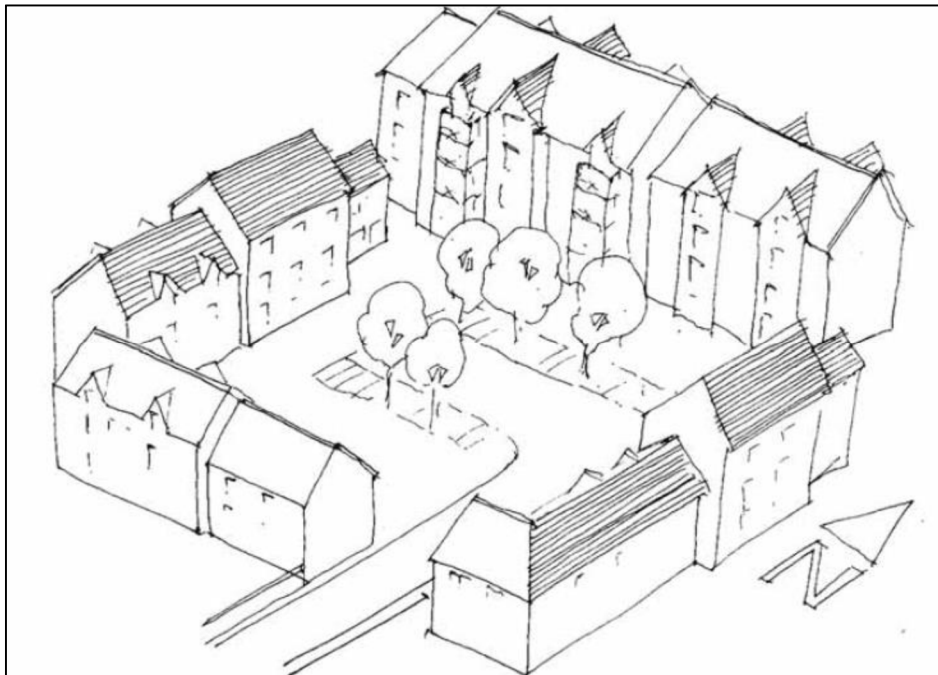
5.17 The B.R.E. guidance advises that accommodation which has access to sunlight has an uplifting effect which can be health giving. With the increasing requirement for dwellings to

provide a proportion of their energy needs through renewable forms of energy generation, greater reliance is also likely to be placed on dwellings having access to sunlight as a power source in the future.

5.18 All dwellings should have a main window to a habitable room within 90° of due south if they are to be sufficiently sunlit. This will be a particular concern for single aspect dwellings which should be sited so that their habitable rooms face as close to east or west as possible. Developments that propose a significant number of single aspect dwellings which have all their accommodation facing north may not be acceptable.

5.19 Access to sunlight in new developments can be improved if the layout is designed to avoid overshadowing by considering the following:

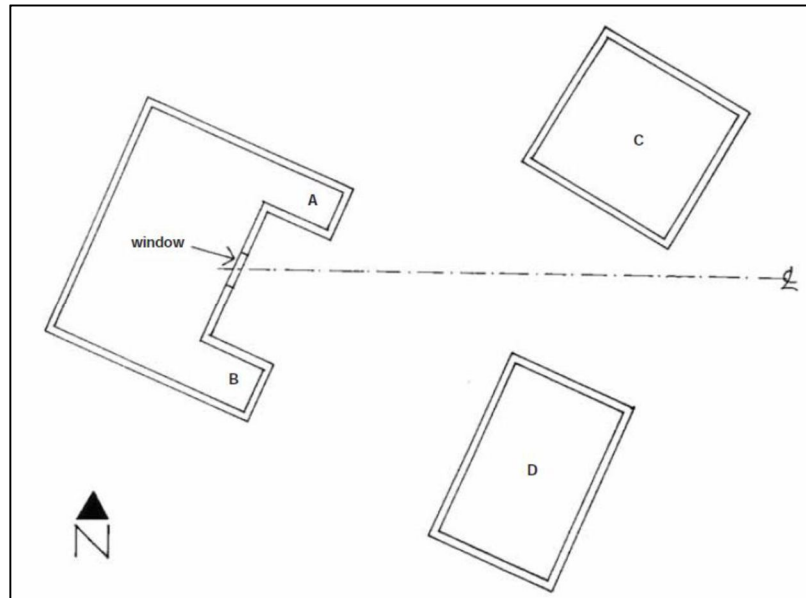
- Make best use of south facing slopes;
- Site taller buildings on the north side of the development and lower rise buildings on the southern side;
- Place terraced dwellings on east-west roads and detached, semi-detached and single aspect dwellings on north-south roads;
- Open up courtyards to the southern end and enclose to the northern end;
- Use low-pitched roofs on taller buildings; and
- Make best use of winter sunlight avoid overshadowing of buildings within 30° of due south.



(18) Place taller buildings towards the northern section of the site and lower buildings towards the south to maximise passive solar gain and avoid overshadowing of properties and public realm

5.20 New development proposals and extensions to existing buildings need to safeguard access to sunlight for all existing dwellings. Shadow path diagrams may assist assessment of developments over 6 storeys and will be required for all developments over 10 storeys or equivalent height. Obstruction to sunlight will become an issue when:

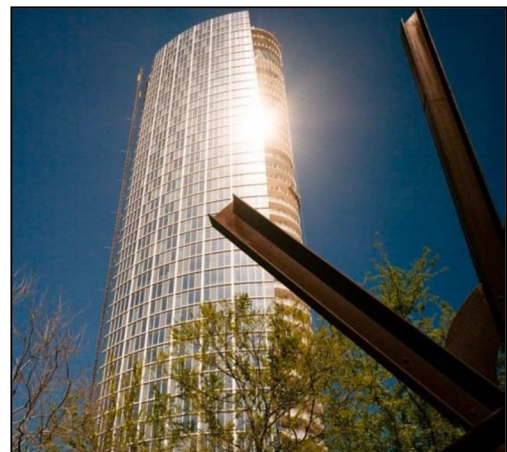
- Some part of the new development (including extensions) is situated within 90° of due south of a main elevation (windowed) to an existing dwelling; and
- The height of the development extends beyond a line drawn at 25° to the horizontal measured in section from the centre of the window.



(19) When considering sunlight impact on a window it is only those proposed developments to the south of the window which need to be checked i.e. extension 'B' and new building 'D'. The proposal to the north of the window (extension 'A' and new building 'C') will not affect sunlight.

## Solar Dazzle / Glare

5.21 Glare or solar dazzle can occur when sunlight is reflected from a heavily glazed façade or a large area of metal cladding. This can affect road users line of sight as well as occupants of adjacent buildings. Where glare is likely to have an adverse impact on the micro-climate then further assessments should be carried out including identifying key junctions and windows of nearby buildings and working out the number of hours of the year that sunlight can be reflected to these points. The impact of glare can be mitigated by reducing the areas of glazing, reorienting the building or replacing areas of tiled glass with either vertical or nearly horizontal glazing.



(20) Glare reflected from a heavily glazed façade

## Appendix 1

### Recommended Minimum Layout Dimensions For Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight

The following Table sets out guidance on layout dimensions which should achieve the minimum level of outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight in residential developments. **However, these dimensions are for advice only and evidence of design quality and compatibility with context will be of overriding importance.**

- Higher standards may be required to maintain the well defined character of existing residential areas, such as those within or adjacent to conservation areas or older residential areas with an established character.
- Standards of amenity may be relaxed for housing in Woking Town Centre and West Byfleet District Centre which are close to a range of facilities although the Council may seek a contribution towards improvements to the public realm in lieu of on site amenity provision.
- Dimensions for achieving adequate outlook and daylight should always be maintained as they can affect the health and well-being of occupants. Maintaining a separation distance between main elevations equal to the height of the opposing structure will normally satisfy requirements. An imaginary 'mirror' form of development can be used to assess any vacant land adjoining the development site.

#### Recommended Minimum Separation distances for achieving privacy

Number of storeys	Measured Dimension	Distance (metres)
<b>One</b>	Front to front elevation	6
	Rear to rear elevation	12
	Front or rear to boundary/flank	6
	Side to boundary	1

Number of storeys	Measured Dimension	Distance (metres)
<b>Two</b>	Front to front elevation	10
	Rear to rear elevation	20
	Front or rear to boundary/flank	10
	Side to boundary	1

Number of storeys	Measured Dimension	Distance (metres)
<b>Three and over</b>	Front to front elevation	15
	Rear to rear elevation	30
	Front or rear to boundary/flank	15
	Side to boundary	2

- Dimensions are based on conventional dual aspect accommodation with main habitable rooms facing towards the rear.



- Dimensions for both front and rear elevations of single aspect dwellings should be treated as other rear elevations. Where a proposed development would result in residential and commercial or mixed use buildings being adjacent to each other, the commercial or mixed use building should be treated in the same way as a residential building for the purposes of this assessment.
- Proposals which involve front and rear elevations facing each other are not generally encouraged. In cases where they are considered to be otherwise acceptable, the privacy implications will be assessed on a case by case basis, using the recommended distances above as appropriate.
- Dimensions may be reduced where some form of effective screening has been demonstrated where separation will be judged on its merits.
- Dimensions do not apply to controlled aspect dwellings as long as all other attributes of outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight are demonstrated.

#### Recommended Minimum Garden Amenity Area

Type of Dwelling	Type of provision
<b>Large family dwelling house – e.g. over 150 sqm gross floorspace</b>	A suitable area of private garden amenity in scale with the building. E.g. greater than the gross floor area of the building.
<b>All other dwelling houses two bedrooms or more and 70 sqm or more gross floorspace</b>	A suitable area of private garden amenity in scale with the building but generally no smaller than the building footprint (depending on existing context).
<b>Flats or duplex apartments with two bedrooms or more and 61 sqm or more gross floorspace</b>	A suitable area of private garden amenity as a first priority – recommended minimum of 30 sqm for each dwelling. However a shared amenity space, roof garden or balcony/terrace may be acceptable if it has equal provision for family amenity.
<b>One bedroom houses, flats or apartments, studio flats, other houses of less than 70sqm gross floorspace, other flats of less than 61 sqm gross floorspace, dwellings otherwise not suitable for family accommodation including retirement (non-sheltered) accommodation</b>	An area of shared garden amenity to provide a setting for the building – recommended 30 sqm for each dwelling up to two storeys and 15 sqm thereafter up to four storeys only. Some small private sitting out area such as patios or balconies are encouraged.
<b>Older people sheltered accommodation (including extra care units), managed hostels, student accommodation, micro-apartments and cluster flats</b>	An area sufficient to provide a setting to the building which is in scale with its mass.

In all cases evidence of quality of amenity provision and compatibility with the character of the local context will be of greater importance than dimensional compliance with the table above. In calculating amenity space, footpaths, car and cycle parking areas, servicing areas, refuse storage areas, driveways and shared surfaces should not be taken into consideration.

The outdoor amenity standards above will be applied irrespective of a proposed dwelling's compliance or otherwise with the nationally described space standards.

## Appendix 2

### Review of privacy separation distances used by other Local Planning Authorities

A review was carried out of other Local Planning Authorities' extant Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents, with respect to the use of specified separation distances between dwellings for the protection of privacy. The authorities selected were those in Surrey and nearby parts of Hampshire, Berkshire and London (as well as the London Plan). The results of the review are illustrated in the table below.

Before reading the table, it should be borne in mind that it shows only whether separation distances are featured at all in a given authority's extant planning documents- not the weight each authority gives to those distances. Some documents appear to treat these distances as strict minima to be applied at all times, while many more describe them as 'guidelines', 'rules of thumb' or similar, or specify various situations in which they can be departed from.

The review has been carried out strictly for the purposes of policy development at Woking Borough Council and the information shown should not be used for any other purpose.

Local Planning Authority	Back to back distances (slash indicates different standards for 2 and 3 or 3+ storey development)	Back to side distances	Distances for flats specifically	Distances for street facing rooms specifically
Croydon LBC	12-18m			
Mayor of London	18-20m			
RB Windsor and Maidenhead, Surrey Heath BC	20m	15m		
Basingstoke and Deane BC	20m/28m			
Richmond-upon-Thames LBC	20m			
Epsom and Ewell BC	21m			
Runnymede BC	22m		22m	
Elmbridge BC	22m			
Waverley BC	21/26m			
Spelthorne BC	21m/30m	13.5m/21m		
Bracknell Forest BC	22m/30m		22m	12m
Guildford BC, Reigate and Banstead BC, Tandridge DC, Rushmoor BC, Hart DC, Slough BC, Hounslow LBC, Surrey Design Guide (2002)	No set distances (although in some cases there is detailed guidance on design for privacy)			

## Other sources of information

### Planning Policy and Guidance

Whilst this supplementary planning document provides guidance on outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight, it is important that development also complies with the other policies and guidance of the Local Development Plan. In particular,

- The Woking Core Strategy (2012):
  - Policy CS20: Heritage and conservation
  - Policy CS21: Design
  - Policy CS24: Woking's landscape and townscape
- The Development Management Policies DPD (2016):
  - Housing and Economic Policies DM9 to DM16
  - Design Policies DM17 to DM20
- The Design SPD (2015)
- Relevant Neighbourhood Plans

All of the Council's Planning Policy documents can be found at [www.woking2027.info](http://www.woking2027.info).

Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: A guide to good practice (BRE, 2011) also provides detailed technical information relating to daylight, sunlight and glare.

### Pre-application advice

If you have any planning questions or queries or would like to submit for pre-application advice, then initial contact should be made with Development Management on 01483 743843 or alternatively email [developmentmanagement@woking.gov.uk](mailto:developmentmanagement@woking.gov.uk). For the latest information on pre-application advice including the cost of the service please visit the Council's website [www.woking.gov.uk/planning/service/preapp](http://www.woking.gov.uk/planning/service/preapp).

### Building Regulations

Building regulations are a national set of regulations that new development is required to comply with to ensure that buildings are designed and constructed safely, conserve energy and promote access for all. Development that requires Building Regulation approval include the erection of a building, an extension to an existing building, most external and internal alterations, conversion of a roof space and replacement windows and doors. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

More information on Building Regulations and details on how to contact the Council's Building Control Team can be found at [www.woking.gov.uk/planning/building](http://www.woking.gov.uk/planning/building) or by calling 01483 743841.

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