

Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 1

Residential Design Guide



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Planning and
Environment Services

Bromsgrove District Council
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Planning Policy Guidance Notes

This Supplementary Planning Guidance Note is one of a series, published to help those preparing planning applications produce good designs. The Guides do not aim to remove the need for skilled professional advice but to supplement the services of the professional.

This series of Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes are to be treated as described in central government advice note PPG12 entitled "Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance" published by the Department of the Environment in 1992. The contents of this series have been cross-referenced to the Bromsgrove District Local Plan policies where appropriate, have been prepared in consultation with the public and have been formally adopted by the Council.

Topics covered in this series are:

- 1 **Residential Design Guide**
- 2 **Shopfronts and Advertisements**
- 3 **Car Parking Standards**
- 4 **Conversion of Rural Buildings**
- 5 **Agricultural Buildings Design Guide**
- 6 **Agricultural Dwellings and Occupancy Conditions**



PLEASE NOTE

This document was originally published in March 1995. Guidelines may well have been updated or changed since this date and therefore we take no responsibility for any inaccuracies contained herein.

*If you have any queries or require further information which relate to this document please contact the **Planning Policy Section**, Planning Department, Bromsgrove District Council.
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SECTION 1

Introduction

SECTION 2

Layout and Landscaping

Layouts Overall

1.0 The District Council has an important role to play in influencing essential elements of housing design in new residential areas, in older established areas where infilling takes place and where extensions to existing dwellings are proposed. This design guide is intended to encourage creative thinking in housing design so that appropriate solutions are found which satisfy both the developer's requirements and the neighbourhood's intrinsic qualities.

1.2 Government guidance "General Policy and Principles" 1992 (PPG1) states that the form of development and its impact on the neighbourhood, its scale, siting, means of access and servicing, design and external appearance are all material considerations to be taken into account when arriving at planning decisions. This design guide therefore concentrates on general design principles outlined in PPG1

2.0 Residential layouts make a positive contribution to the local environment and should respect the character of the surrounding area. Layouts should accommodate, if appropriate, the form of existing development while, at the same time, having regard to the effects of overlooking, loss of daylight and possible adverse effects on the character of the area.

2.1 Many sites have attractive natural features where the aim should be to exploit such natural features to give a development some individuality of its own. The site may be sloping or there may be views out to surrounding features such as a church tower or hilltop. Layouts should be sympathetic to the existing topography of the site so that buildings fit naturally into the landscape. Roads should follow contours wherever possible to avoid steep stepping of development along an incline.

2.2 Imaginative layouts are created by the use of variable building lines, adequate lateral space between buildings and the introduction of focal points such as landscape features. It is important to ensure that main views are properly terminated. For example, views should not focus onto open ended garage courts, parking areas or blank gable ends of buildings. Where new development adjoins potential problem areas such as a railway line or business use, dwellings should face away from such areas.

Where new development is located within or adjacent to a conservation area or listed building, sympathetic layout and design are particularly crucial.

Layout and Landscaping

Residential Roads and Footpaths

Layout and Landscaping

Landscaping

2.3 New residential development should provide safe and convenient access for all members of the community and conform to all standards for the design and construction of new highways and pedestrian routes set out in Hereford and Worcester County Council's "Highway Criteria Policy and Layouts for Car Parking and for New Developments" 1994 and the Department of the Environment's Design Bulletin 32 "Residential Roads and Footpaths" 1992.

2.4 The District Council will support traffic calming measures in new and established residential areas to ensure reduced vehicle speeds and safer living environments. Details of how these measures can be introduced are to be found in Design Bulletin 32 (pages 24-28) mentioned above.

2.5 For large developments, the overall design concept should emphasise the functions of different types of roads to help pedestrians, cyclists and drivers find their way around and to promote safety through speed restraints. Shared surface roads need to be clearly different from other roads to help indicate that drivers, pedestrians and cyclists are intended to share the same surface. Carefully designed differences in paving materials, edge restraints and lighting arrangements can also be used to help indicate the different functions of paths and roads.

2.6 The use of informal layouts and small groupings of dwellings in cul-de-sacs to create more interest, provide a sense of territory, privacy and security are encouraged. Few accidents occur in cul-de-sacs and short loops that deny a route to "through" traffic.

2.7 Landscaping plays an important role in enhancing the overall quality of residential layouts and must be considered as an integral part of the design process. The District Council generally requires that landscaping schemes are submitted at the same time as detailed planning applications. Particular importance should be paid to existing planting as this contributes greatly to softening the impact of new building. The retention of healthy trees and hedgerows will be expected wherever possible and layouts should make suitable provision by allowing for adequate space around them and by the careful siting of roads, footpaths and service runs to avoid root damage. Where appropriate, the District Council will consider making Tree Preservation Orders in addition to the protection afforded in conservation areas.

2.8 New development should also be enhanced by new planting. Care is needed in selection to ensure the types are appropriate for the soil and position and that their future size will not create problems. The predominant use of native trees and shrubs is recommended and all landscaping should be maintained for at least one year and where necessary replaced to the satisfaction of the District Council. It is essential that maintenance responsibilities for landscaped areas are clearly defined at the outset.

SECTION 3

Materials

2.9 Hard landscaping such as the erection of fencing, walls, street lighting and parking areas should be considered as part of the overall landscape scheme to ensure the sympathetic and complimentary use of both soft and hard landscaping materials.

3.0 Bromsgrove District is predominantly a “red brick” area, because of the minerals in the local clays. Lighter, more orange coloured bricks reflecting the local variation in chalk content are more appropriate towards the Warwickshire border for example in the Alvechurch and Beoley areas. Brick buildings are generally roofed with tiles or slates; plain clay red tiles are suitable or Welsh grey/blue slates. Generally, development will be expected to reinforce this local distinctiveness. Facing materials should be carefully selected so as to be sympathetic to those found locally.

3.1 Traditional materials that are appropriate in North Worcestershire include hand-made bricks, often containing distinctive raised horizontal markings and “pebbles”. Blue bricks were used in Victorian times for decorative detailing. Traditional stonework consists of local red sandstone usually cut and coursed, often with ‘picked’ or tooled surface. There are many examples of timber framing in the District either of ‘box’ framing or ‘close set studying’ types.

3.2 The use of particular materials dictates the architectural form and detail and forms an integral part of the design process. The District Council will encourage the use of natural and traditional materials but modern materials such as reconstituted stone, “asbestos” type slates and UPVC windows that reflect the character of traditional materials will also be acceptable in many circumstances. In the case of extensions to existing dwellings it is important that all materials including doors and windows match the existing. Tropical hardwoods used as construction materials should be obtained from sustainable, conserved and managed sources.

3.3 In recent years a new fashion has emerged to clad properties in reconstructed stone. This practise may be acceptable, but on occasions it is ill-advised in a predominantly “brick” environment.

If a property owner wishes to apply stone cladding it is necessary to discuss the matter with an officer of the Planning Department so that advice may be given not only on the suitability of the proposal but whether conservation area or listed building consent would be required.

SECTION 4

Extensions

4.0 New dwellings designed for family accommodation consisting of three bedrooms or more should be capable of extension to meet the occupier's changing requirements over the life of the house. This should be possible without adversely affecting the character of a street or area and without cause for ill feeling between neighbours.

4.1 The following check list and diagrams seek to provide help on the do's and don'ts involved with house extensions.

- a) Think about the appearance of the proposed extension and what it would look like from the neighbour's house and from the street and other public places;
- b) Use materials on the outside of the extension (bricks, roof tiles types of windows and doors) which match the existing house or bungalow;
- c) Use pitched or hipped roofs to match the style of the existing roof. Flat roofed two-storey extensions are not acceptable
- d) Keep the extension subordinate to the original house. The extension should be set back from the front wall and a two-storey extension should have a roof ridgeline set lower than the existing one in order to provide a design break between old and new and enable the extension to be visually subordinate to the original house;
- e) Respect the privacy of neighbouring properties - don't put clear glazed windows in the side of extensions overlooking the neighbours and don't put balconies or flat roofs where you can have clear views into neighbouring houses and gardens.
- f) Keep dormers to the rear of the property and as small as possible. They should reflect the character of the main roof and it helps to clad them in tiles matching the existing roof. Over-dominant box like extensions can visually detract from the overall appearance of a house. Roof lights should be small and preferably positioned on less prominent roof slopes.
- g) Remember the need for road safety, particularly when taking cars in and out of garages or car ports. Where they take access directly off the public highway, garages (or car ports which can be converted to garages) should be provided with a run-in of at least the length of a large car so that a vehicle can be parked off the highway while the garage doors are being opened or closed. The run-in should be at least 5.5 metres (18 feet) in length.

4.2 The appropriate size of an extension depends on its position (front, side or rear) and on the individual circumstances of the site. Factors to consider are the proximity of the next house, changes in ground level and visual dominance. The following guidelines give an indication of the probable size which will be acceptable.

- a) Extensions should keep the character of the original house. Large dominant extensions are not acceptable and particular care is needed in the case of front extensions to semi-detached or terraced properties with respect to building lines and “open-plan” estates;
- b) Adequate space is required around the house and extension for purposes of privacy and amenity. Extensions to the side, particularly where two-storeys are added to semi-detached or small detached properties, often cause problems because of the effects on adjoining properties. Two-storey extensions should not be located on a southernmost boundary where they would overshadow a neighbour’s garden.
- c) Daylighting and outlook to adjoining properties must be safeguarded. A useful guideline for this is the “45 degree code” explained in paragraph 6.5;
- d) It is important that semi-detached or detached houses should not appear to become terraced. For this reason, two storey or first extensions should be set at least one metre off the common boundary. Greater distances will be required for large plot sizes.

Examples of Acceptable House Extensions

Fig 1

Acceptable single-storey side extension

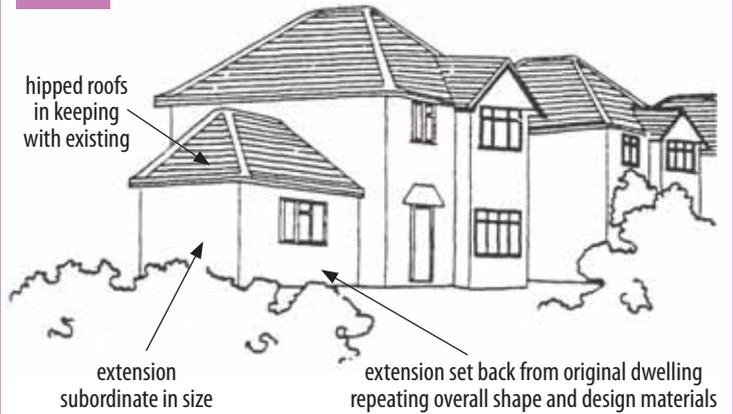


Fig 2

Acceptable two storey extension

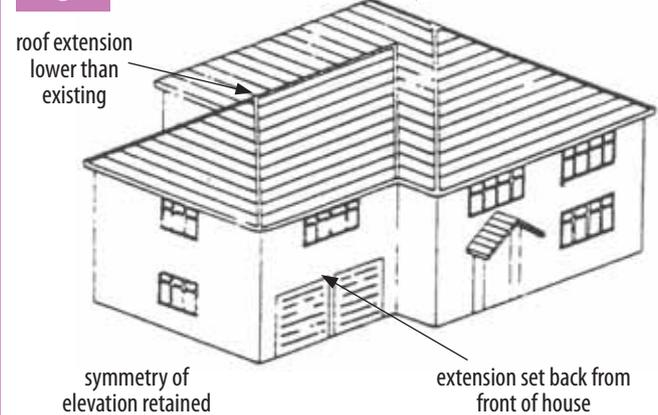


Fig 3

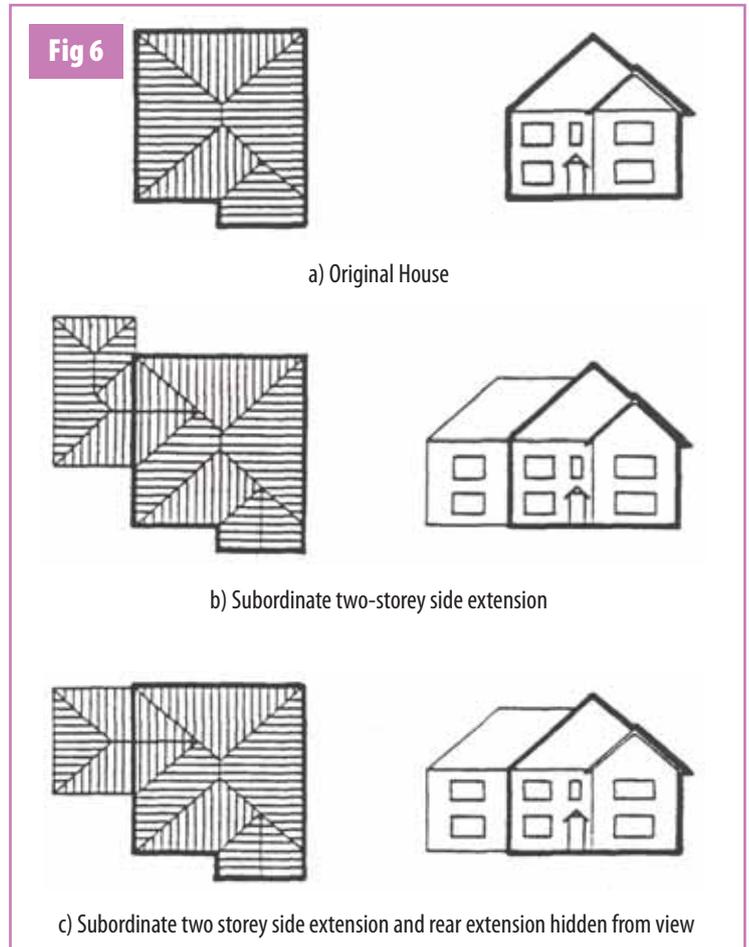
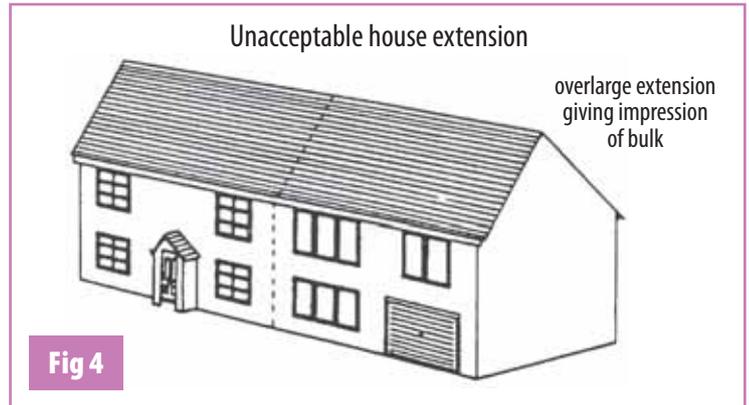
Unacceptable house extension



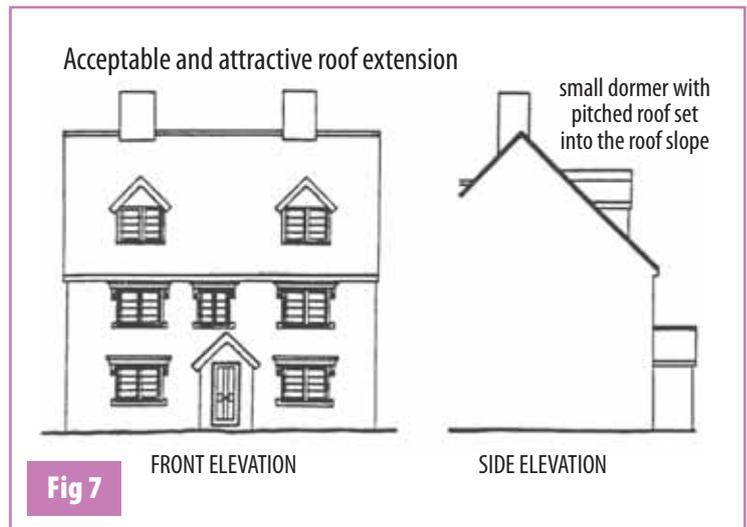
Examples of Unacceptable House Extensions



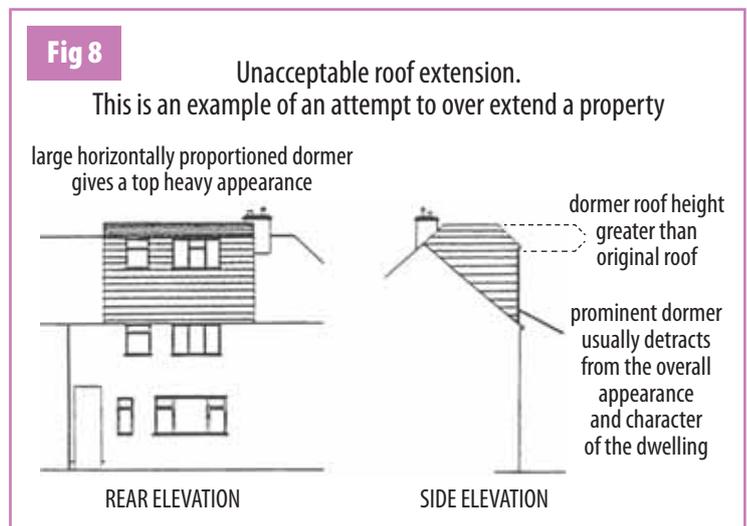
Acceptable Extensions Illustrating Roof Plans



Acceptable Roof Extension



Unacceptable Roof Extension



4.3 Small house types with minimum amenity and parking space are not considered capable of satisfactory extension. For these types of development, permitted development rights will be removed. Two-bedroom houses may be capable of extension but where rear gardens would be reduced to a depth of less than 10.5 metres by the proposal or where the site coverage does not conform with the provisions of the 1988 General Development Order, extensions will not be acceptable.

SECTION 5

Scale

Scale

Density

5.0 PPG3 'Housing' (1992) makes clear that good design and layout are achieved as a result of careful appreciation of overall scale and density of development. It emphasises that new housing well related in scale and location to existing development, well integrated with the existing pattern of settlement and surrounding land uses will achieve a worthwhile result. Whilst the housing market dictates to developers the form and function of new housing, the District Council considers that it should continue to exercise a degree of control on such matters as density, housing mix, plot sub-division and infill in order to achieve the correct relationship between buildings, intervening spaces and landscaping.

5.1 Throughout this design guide a distinction is made between family accommodation defined as three or more bedroomed dwellings and smaller house types which include single and two person bed-sits, one-bedroom flats and houses and two-bedroom flats and houses which are regarded as essentially 'non-family' or 'young family accommodation'. It is recognised that established methods of assessing density in terms of numbers of dwellings per acre or habitable rooms per acre are inappropriate for small house types. However, the District Council will accept a net density for new general housing (other than small house types) of approximately 20/25 dwellings per hectare or 8/10 dwellings per acre but lower densities will be required where:

- ◆ The site contains natural features which must be retained or where the site is a peculiar shape;
- ◆ The character of an existing lower density area is such that new development should be of similar character;
- ◆ Access difficulties impose a limit on a site;
- ◆ On larger sites excessive additional demand is likely to be placed on school facilities, open space provision and other infrastructure;
- ◆ It is needed to widen the range of housing opportunities within an area of high density housing.

Higher densities may be accepted where:

- ◆ The site is close to the centre of urban settlements;
- ◆ The existing character justifies a particular scale of building for reasons of civic design;
- ◆ Small house types are suitable.

Scale

Infill

The Advise Note on Small Homes published by the National Development Control Forum and the House builders' Federation suggests that the optimum density for small house types is the maximum number of homes capable of being accommodated so long as:

- ◆ No harm ensues to the character of the site and surroundings;
- ◆ General services and access provision is adequate;
- ◆ The proposed layout is both functional and attractive with reasonable open space as well as privacy and amenity.

5.2 On sites of less than 0.5 hectares the character of the neighbouring area will generally determine the house type. On larger sites, a mix of family and small house types is beneficial in order to provide choice, natural surveillance and an aesthetically pleasing scheme. The precise mix is a matter of judgement but regard should be given to the character and location of a site. It should be noted that Housing Associations building social family accommodation should as a general principle comply with the amenity space requirements detailed in this Guidance Note. Relevant policies are contained in the Bromsgrove District Local Plan - policies S14, S15 and S16.

5.3 Other types of housing development, including infill development, redevelopment in established residential areas, plot sub-division and backland development must comply with specific Local Plan policies DS5, S7, S8 and S9 designed to minimise further growth in the Green Belt and to limit the impact of development in older established housing areas.

5.4 Local Plan policies DS5 and S9 identify those settlements where village envelopes have been drawn and within which limited housing infill may be permitted. These settlements all lie in the Green Belt where it is important to strike the right balance between the rural communities' contribution to the continuing supply of housing land and the safeguarding of the character and amenity of a particular locality and the Green Belt in general. For these reasons, infill development in the Green Belt is restricted to larger settlements where new housing can help to sustain existing local services, schools, shops, pubs and other features of community life without damage to the character of a settlement, the open countryside and principles of the Green Belt policy. These policy objectives are contained in PPG7 "The Countryside and Rural Economy" 1992.

5.5 In locations where infill development may be acceptable there can be no presumption that this will always be the case. Some spaces within designated settlements may be essential for recreation, wildlife or amenity reasons and many are vital to the character of a settlement. Gaps within a village street for example can help to impart a rural atmosphere and this is particularly important in loose-knit villages where the spaces can be as important as the buildings themselves. Even in areas which have seen much new development, the remaining open spaces can be very important. To be acceptable, infill development must be well-designed and of a suitable scale so that it can be easily assimilated whilst avoiding problems with adjoining properties. Access must be safe and in conservation areas the development must not harm the areas' character. The diagrams below illustrate where infill development may and may not be suitable in envelope settlements.

Examples of Appropriate and Inappropriate Infill Development

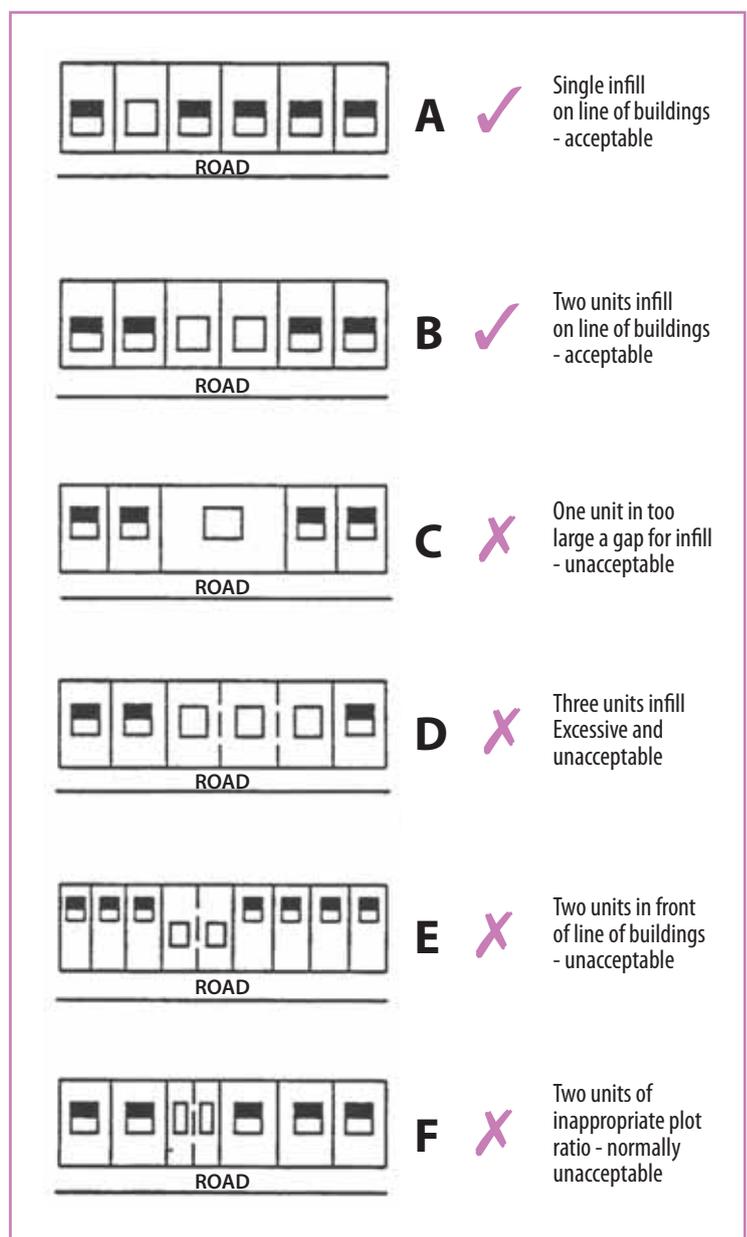


Fig 9

Scale

Development in Established Residential Areas

5.6 Housing proposals affecting established residential areas frequently generate public concern as they can involve a radical change in the character of existing environments and create a precedent for future development. In older established residential areas changing patterns of housing demand may lead to changes in the type of house required. For example, dwellings for one and two person households may be needed rather than dwellings for large households. Such development can be of benefit where there is an acknowledged shortage of smaller units and where the good use of urban land can help to take the pressure off the countryside. The District Council will exercise sensitive planning control to ensure that the cumulative effects of redevelopment do not damage the character and amenity of established residential areas. The Council will have regard to the space around any scheme and will pay careful attention to the layout and the degree of overlooking to see whether this introduces a cramped design inappropriate to the existing pattern of an established residential area.

Scale

Plot sub-division and Backland Development

5.7 Homes with large back gardens are a common feature in Bromsgrove's suburban and village areas. The District Council wishes to protect the spacious quality of particular areas in the District where trees and foliage with generous areas of garden land have produced an environment of particular quality. Development which significantly increases the proportion of ground coverage or the scale of proposed buildings is likely to be out of keeping with its surroundings. The impact is particularly noticeable, for example, where redevelopment or infilling reduces generous side gardens and leads to the loss of foliage and trees.

5.8 Sometimes it may be acceptable to develop back gardens for new housing which is in keeping with the character and quality of the local environment. Where development of back garden or backland is allowed, it will require careful planning. Access must be either from a road at the side or rear or by forming an access through a gap between the existing houses. Tandem development consisting of one house immediately behind another and sharing the same access is unsatisfactory because of the difficulties of access to the house(s) at the back and the disturbance and lack of privacy suffered by the house in front. (PPG3 "Housing" 1992 para.26).

5.9 It is particularly important that new infill development in conservation areas responds to and enhances the character of its local setting. A new building should be designed not as a separate entity but as part of a larger whole which has a well established character of its own.

Scale

External Space around Dwellings

5.10 New residential development must have a good standard of amenity and contribute to an environmentally satisfying living environment. All new schemes should provide for adequate space between buildings relative to their scale and achieve a satisfactory relationship to existing development.

In order to obtain this certain design objectives should be met:

- a) provision of adequate daylight and sunlight to rooms and rear gardens;
- b) provision of reasonable privacy for dwellings within the layout and reasonable protection of privacy of existing and adjoining dwellings;
- c) provision of satisfactory outlook both within the new development and in relation to existing development;
- d) provision of a reasonable area of private amenity space relative to the functions and scale of the dwelling;
- e) provision of a reasonable area of communal/shared open space for small house type developments.

SECTION 6

Daylight and Sunlight

Daylight

6.0 People expect good natural lighting in their homes. Daylight makes an interior look more attractive and interesting as well as providing light to work or read by. Access to daylight and sunlight helps to make a building energy efficient; effective daylight will reduce the need for electric light, while winter solar gain can meet some of the heating requirements.

6.1 The quality and quantity of natural light in an interior depends on two main factors. Firstly, the design of the interior including the size and position of windows, the depth and shape of rooms and the colours of internal surfaces is important. Secondly, external design plays a major role; whether obstructing buildings are so tall that they make adequate daylighting impossible, or whether they block sunlight for much of the year. To achieve good natural lighting within a site there needs to be a spacing-to-height ratio of just over 2:1 to allow adequate daylighting on building faces.

Daylight and Sunlight

Existing Buildings Daylight

Daylight and Sunlight

45 degree code

6.2 Where space in a layout is restricted, interior daylighting may be improved by increasing window size. The best way to do this is to raise the window head height, because this will improve both the amount of daylight entering and its distribution within the room. Another important way to plan for good interior daylight is to reduce building depth (window wall to window wall). Even on a totally unobstructed site there is a limit to how deep a room can be while remaining properly daylit.

6.3 In designing a new development or extension to a building, it is important to safeguard the daylight to nearby buildings. It is possible to reduce the quality of light arriving at adjoining land by building too close to the boundary making adjoining gardens gloomy and unattractive, annoying their occupants and even infringing their rights to light (see paragraph 6.6). A well designed building will stand a reasonable distance back from the boundaries so as to enable future nearby developments to enjoy similar access to daylight. By doing so it will keep its own natural light when the adjoining land is developed.

6.4 When considering residential applications the District Council will refer to the Building Research Establishment's guide to good practice 'Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight' published in 1991.

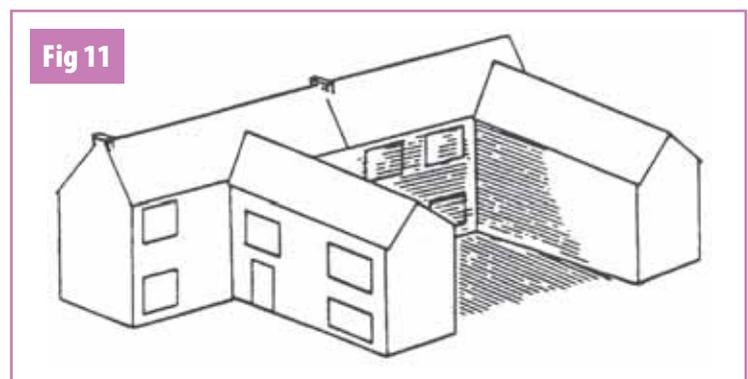
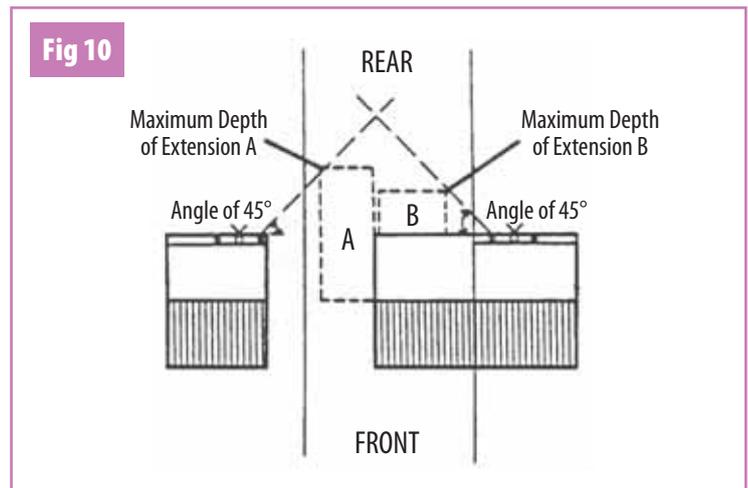
6.5 For domestic extensions which adjoin the front or rear of a house, a quick method can be used to assess the daylight impact on the house next door. It applies only where the nearest side of the extension is perpendicular to the window i.e. it is not valid for windows which directly face the extension, or for buildings opposite. Fig. 10 illustrates the application of the method, the 45 degree code. To comply with the code, a single storey extension should not cross the line(s) drawn at 45 degrees from the nearest edge of the ground floor window of the closest habitable room (including the kitchen) of the neighbouring property. In the case of two storey or first floor extensions, the line should be drawn from the ground floor or first floor window, whichever is the closer. The 45 degree code needs to be interpreted carefully and flexibly. For example, if the extension has a much larger building behind it then the daylight from that direction may be blocked anyway. 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 (Fig 10). Special care needs to be taken in cases where an extension already exists on the other side of the window, to avoid a tunnel effect as in Fig 11.

Application of the 45 Degree Code to a Domestic Extension

A Tunnel Effect can occur if windows are obstructed by Extensions on Both Sides

Daylight and Sunlight

Sunlight



6.6 Finally, the 45 degree code deals only with daylight. Additional checks will need to be made for the sunlight which may be blocked. The windows of some existing buildings will also have rights to light. None of these guidelines here replace or necessarily satisfy the legal requirements contained in rights-to-light law.

The criterion used in rights to light is very much a minimum standard, so it is usually true that if the guidelines given here are satisfied then a new development will not infringe rights to light.

6.7 Sunlight brings light and warmth, makes rooms look bright and cheerful and has a therapeutic, health giving effect. For housing, the main requirement for sunlighting is in living rooms, where it is valued at any time of day but especially in the afternoon.

It is viewed as less important in bedrooms and kitchens where people prefer it in the morning rather than the afternoon. Site layout is the most important factor affecting the duration of sunlight in buildings.

It can be considered in two main points-orientation and overshadowing.

Daylight and Sunlight

Orientation

Daylight and Sunlight

Overshadowing

6.8 A south-facing window will receive most sunlight, while a north-facing one will receive it only occasionally. East and west facing windows will receive sunlight only at certain times of the day. A dwelling with no main window wall within 90 degrees of due south is likely to be perceived as insufficiently sunlit. This is usually an issue only for flats. Sensitive layout in the design of flats will ensure that each dwelling has at least one main living room which can receive a reasonable amount of sunlight. In flats and houses a sensible approach is to try to match internal room layout with window wall orientation. Where possible, living rooms should face the southern or western parts of the sky and kitchens towards the north or east.

6.9 The overall access to sunlight of a new development can be considerably enhanced if the layout of new buildings is designed with care so that they overshadow each other as little as possible. Access to sunlight can be improved by:

- i) choosing a site on a south-facing slope, if possible, rather than a north-facing one;
- ii) having taller buildings to the north of the site with low-rise buildings to the south, but care must be taken not to overshadow neighbouring property;
- iii) having low-density housing (semi-detached and detached) at the southern end of a site, with terraced housing to the north;
- iv) placing terraces on east-west roads (so that one window wall faces nearly south) with detached and semi-detached houses on north-south roads;
- v) opening courtyards to the southern half of the sky;
- vi) having garages to the north of houses;
- vii) avoiding obstructions to the south, such as protruding extensions or coniferous tree screens;
- viii) having low-pitched roofs on housing.

6.10 Good site layout for daylight and sunlight should not limit itself to providing good natural lighting inside buildings. Sunlight in the spaces between buildings has an important impact on the overall appearance and ambience of a development. It is valuable for a number of reasons:

- i) To provide attractive sunlight views;
- ii) To dry clothes;
- iii) To make outdoor activities like sitting out and children's play more pleasant

SECTION 7

Passive Solar Design and Energy Conservation

- iv) To encourage plant growth in spring and summer;
- v) To dry out the ground reducing moss and slime;
- vi) To melt frost, ice and snow.

6.11 The use of specific parts of a site can be planned with sunlight in mind. This could include reserving the sunniest parts of the site for gardens and sitting out, while using the shadier areas for car parking.

7.0 Good building design should seek to trap the heat generated by the sun in order to reduce consumption of conventional fuels. Where this becomes a particular priority in arranging the form and fabric of a building and the site layout, the result is a passive solar design. Passive solar homes can have a heating energy consumption up to 2000KWh a year lower than the conventional house, depending on size. These benefits depend upon the arrangement of the site to produce the best orientation (closest to the south) and reduced overshadowing. (fig 12)

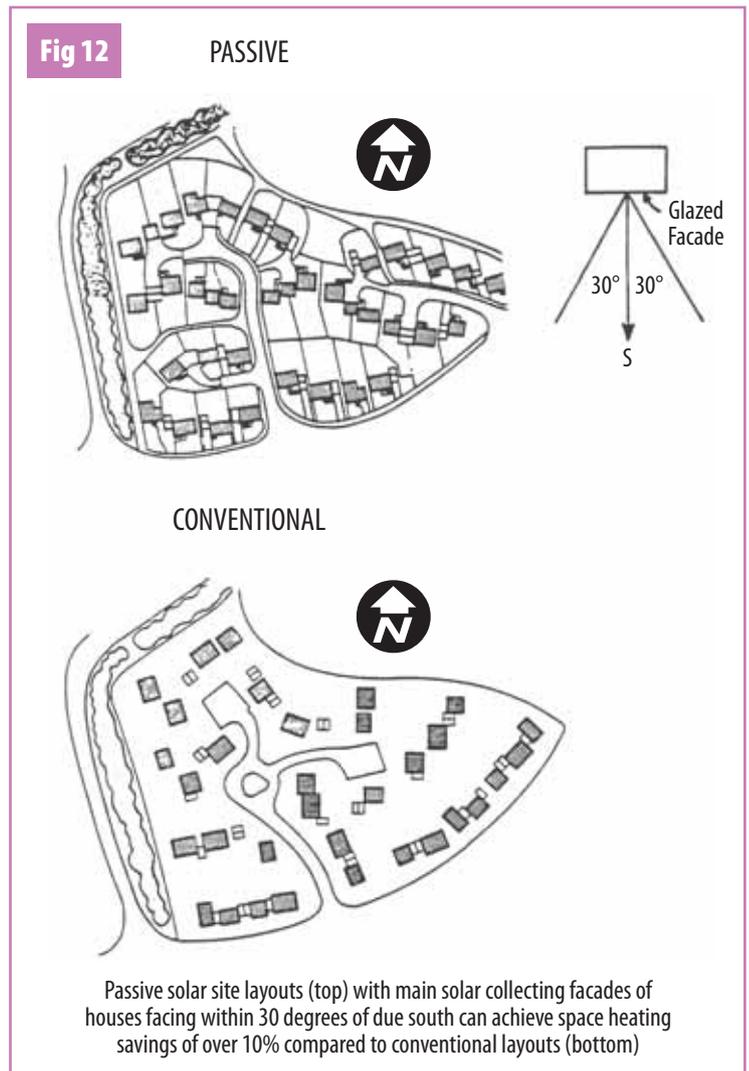
7.1 Even houses with no special design features benefit from solar energy (up to 500 KWh/yr.) if orientated in a north-south direction without overshadowing. To make the most of solar gain, the main solar collecting glazing faces must be within 30 degrees of due south. Careful design is required to compensate for the possible monotony that could result from a majority of houses facing south. To achieve a variety of forms and spaces, mixing house types, varying the siting within house plots and good landscaping are essential.

7.2 Site-related factors will determine, to some extent, passive solar design. On a sloping site, which faces north, it will be harder to reap the full benefits of passive solar design; conversely, a south-facing slope will make it easier. At very high densities, it becomes difficult to avoid serious obstruction or poor orientation for at least some of the houses. Similarly, on a small site it may be impossible to achieve the best orientation for window walls or to avoid overshadowing by nearby buildings. These factors need to be carefully considered in passive solar design if the potential energy savings are to be realised.

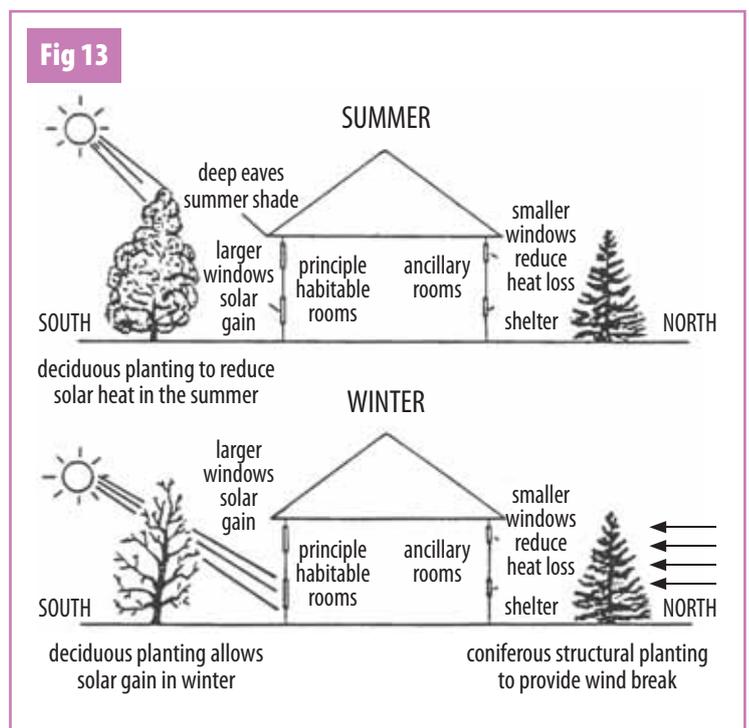
7.3 Alternatively, planting and insulation are appropriate energy saving measures. Deciduous planting can accommodate solar heat gains in winter, whilst providing shade in summer.

Coniferous planting can provide shelter from strong winds and reduce heat loss from northerly aspects. The District Council will consider favourably higher standards of insulation than those laid down in Building Regulations in order to achieve long-term environmental and financial benefits.

Passive Solar and Conventional Housing Layouts



Energy Savings through Solar Gain

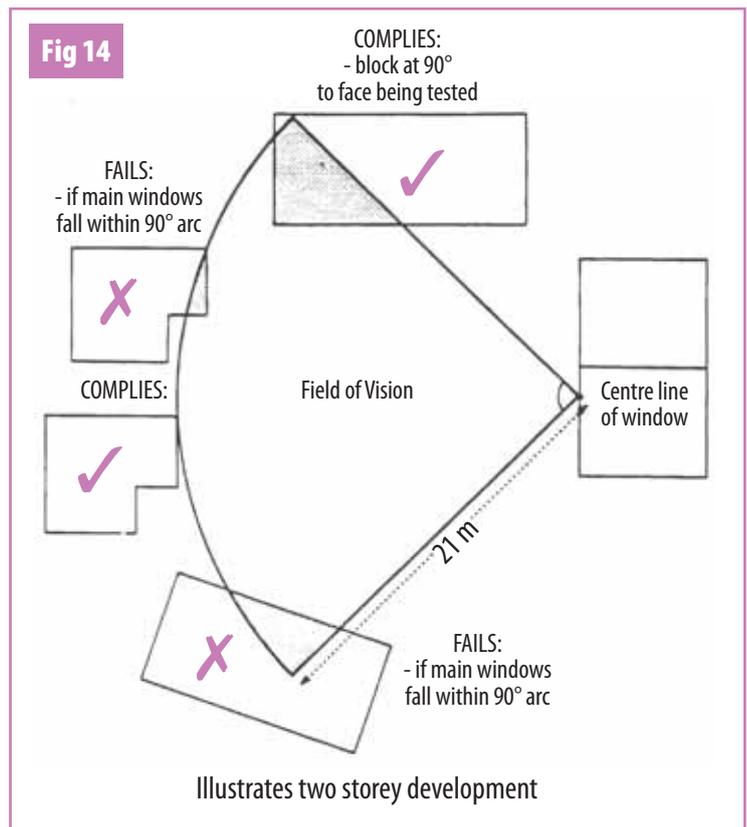


SECTION 8

Privacy

Distance Separation: Space between Buildings to ensure Acceptable Privacy

8.0 Privacy of houses and gardens can be achieved both by distance and by design. Overlooking from public roads and paths and from other dwellings needs to be considered. The way in which privacy is achieved will have a major impact on the natural lighting of a layout. One way is by remoteness: by arranging for enough distance between buildings, especially where two sets of windows face each other.



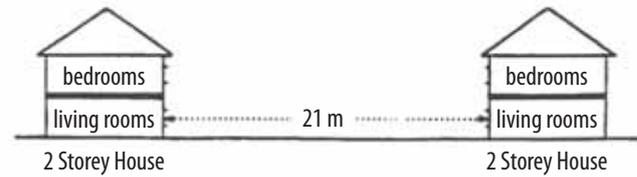
8.1 The priority is to secure an acceptable level of privacy between main rooms and distances are related to the main windows of all living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms. The aim is to secure adequate distance separation over a reasonable field of vision, considered for the purposes of overlooking to be a 90 degree arc centered about the centre line of the window concerned. (Figure 14)

8.2 A minimum separation of 21 metres is required to achieve a degree of privacy within conventional two-storey dwellings. Where three and four storey housing is proposed with main living rooms above ground floor level (such as flats and maisonettes), a minimum separation of 27.5 metres is required to achieve both privacy and adequate visual separation. This standard applies where building heights are equivalent to three and four storeys due to the slope of the site. Figure 15 illustrates typical minimum distances between new buildings.

Minimum Distances between New Buildings for Privacy

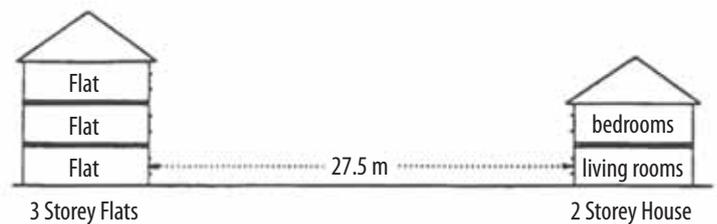
Fig 15

2 STOREY CONVENTIONAL DWELLINGS



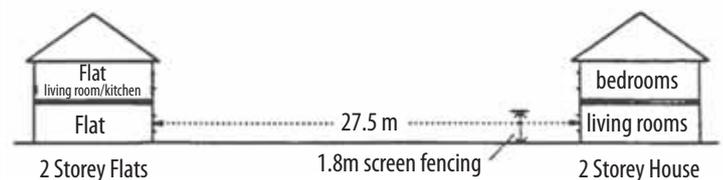
Minimum 21m distance separation to ensure privacy

2 AND 3 STOREY OPPOSING FACES



For 3 and 4 storey dwellings with main living rooms above ground floor level, a separation of 27.5m is required to achieve both privacy and adequate visual separation

MAIN WINDOWS ABOVE GROUND FLOOR LEVEL



For flats and maisonnettes, it is necessary to have greater distances because of the overlooking problems caused by living rooms on upper storeys

8.3 The second way of achieving privacy is by design.

A distance separation of less than 21 metres is only suitable where internal privacy can be secured by design. Such a design may include controlled aspect, specialist window design, use of screening features or advantageous changes in level. High walls, projecting wings and outbuildings block direct views of interiors. In this situation however, natural lighting is often reduced, both because the spacing of the visual screens themselves block it and because the spacing between buildings may be much less. It is therefore essential that good daylighting and sunlighting are achieved in addition to adequate privacy.

8.4 Privacy may be an issue in passive solar dwellings. If houses have little north-facing glazing it may be possible to reduce the spacing between them without enabling overlooking between dwellings. Other problems may arise because of the large areas of glazing on the south side of the passive solar home, and consequent loss of privacy for living rooms. Gardens may need to be extended and access roads and paths situated so as to avoid overlooking.

8.5 The need to safeguard the privacy of existing residents adjoining new development is also of prime importance. The same provisions as just described for new development will be applied in relation to existing development. The provision of screen walling or fencing, at least 1.8 metres in height should be erected by the developer on the appropriate boundary unless adequate mature screening or fencing already exists. As a general guide new development with main windows overlooking existing private spaces should be set back by a distance of 5 metres per storey from the site boundary where it adjoins a private garden area. This applies independently of the minimum spatial requirement.

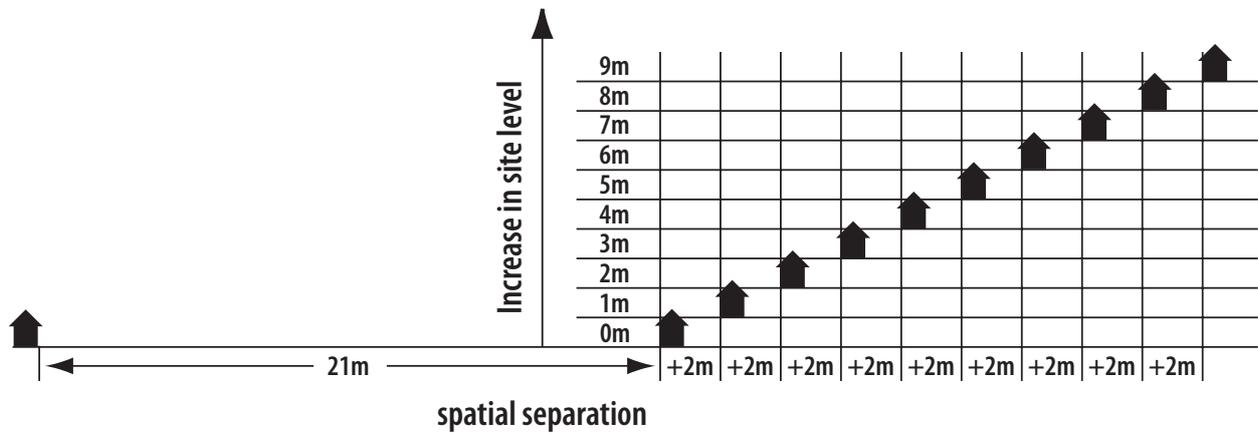
8.6 Where there are significant variations in levels between new and existing development and also between proposed dwellings on new sites, greater distance separation taking into account changes in ground level will be required in excess of the 21 metres minimum. In such circumstances developers will be expected to provide details of existing levels on the relevant parts of adjoining land and in particular the height relationship between the new, adjacent or existing development. Appropriate screening must be provided. Distance separation should be increased by 2 metres for every 1 metre rise in ground level between the new and existing dwellings as shown in Figure 16.

8.7 Care must be taken when windows overlook adjacent blank walls. Even where no windows are in the adjacent walls and overlooking is not a problem, the overshadowing and visually intimidating effect caused by the proximity of large blank walls must be avoided.

As a general guide a minimum distance of 12.5 metres for two-storey conventional houses and 15.5 metres for two-storey opposing three-storey flats is required.

Fig 16

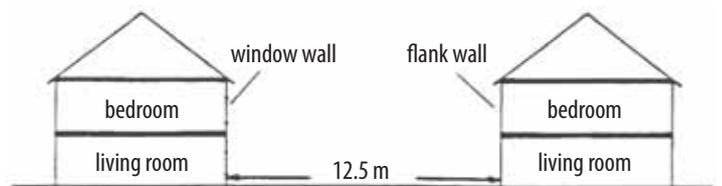
GREATER DISTANCE SEPARATION FOR CHANGES IN GROUND LEVEL



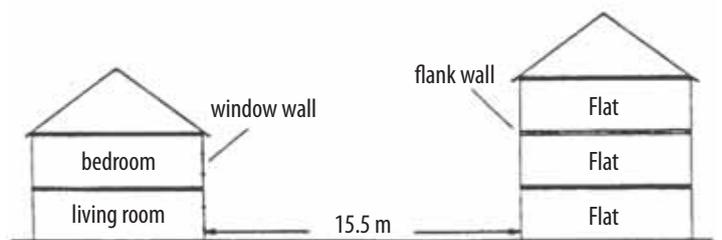
Minimum Distance Requirements between Windowed Elevations and Opposing Flank Walls

Fig 17

2 STOREY CONVENTIONAL DWELLINGS



2 STOREY DWELLING OPPOSING 3 STOREY FLAT



SECTION 9

Private Communal and Amenity Space

9.0 Private amenity space for gardens and 'permitted development' extensions must be taken into account in the overall design. It is usual to have a minimum garden depth of 10.5 metres for family dwellings with 3 bedrooms with an absolute minimum area of 70 sq. metres for dwellings with 6 habitable rooms. This area, the rear garden space should not be used for the provision of a garage or car hardstanding. A proportionally greater garden area will be required for dwellings with a greater number of habitable rooms commensurate with the scale of the intended dwelling and appropriate to the character/form of other plots in the vicinity. While variations will be considered, the garden area proposed must be considered appropriate to the house type and character of the area.

9.1 Small house types such as one-bedroomed apartments and flats do not have the same functional need for private amenity space but where they are proposed with private garden areas, a minimum garden length of 10.5 metres will be required, giving a minimum garden area of approximately 42 square metres in recognition that these house types are normally narrow fronted.

9.2 Where there is no scope for private amenity space for small house types more emphasis must be placed on communal open space with some 'sitting out' and 'drying' space together with a pleasing overall attractive visual setting. To achieve this, a minimum requirement of 30 square metres per unit should be provided and wherever possible private and useable amenity space shared by occupiers of flats will be encouraged.

9.3 Smaller private gardens may be permitted in the case of specialized housing such as for the elderly or in housing for special needs. However, the quality of a layout will be assessed as a whole and any relaxation of the minimum will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated to be in the interest of the entire scheme and where a reasonable element of privacy can be demonstrated.

SECTION 10

Children's Play Areas



10.0 Larger new housing estates cannot rely on existing open space infrastructure for very localised needs such as children's play provision and in accordance with Local Plan Policy RAT6 all new family housing on sites of 0.4 hectares or above should meet the minimum level of open space provision of 6 acres per 1000 population as recommended by the National Playing Fields Association. Exceptions to these minimum open space requirements will have to be agreed by the District Council and only in such instances where the Authority considers that the site to be developed does not warrant such standards. Where children's play areas are provided they should be designed to exclude access to dogs and to be in view of neighbouring dwellings to ensure the safety of children using them. Children old enough to play alone are at risk and their play areas should be within sight and earshot of housing. A play area downslope of houses benefits from good surveillance. At least one safe, well lit and overlooked path should be provided through recreational areas and a visible exit point should provide an alternative route back to housing groups. Care should be taken to ensure access to communal open space does not pass directly in front of main living room windows causing overlooking and loss of privacy. Children's play areas should be protected from unauthorised vehicles. The perimeter of open spaces can be protected by the careful siting of dwellings or by the introduction of landscape features such as ditches, mounding and planting. Paths can be protected by suitable barriers.

SECTION 11

Noise

11.0 The impact of noise is a material planning consideration since it can affect health and has a direct impact on local amenity. It may be a factor in proposals to use or develop land near an existing source of noise and advice will be sought from the Chief Environmental Health Officer. Development should be designed and orientated away from intrusive noise sources and an assessment of likely noise levels will be taken into consideration as they affect proposals for residential accommodation and their associated gardens. There will be minimal acceptable levels of noise beyond which residential development will not be permitted unless steps are taken to mitigate the noise source. Local Plan Policy ES 14A and PPG24 "Planning and Noise" explain the provisions of noise policy.

SECTION 12

Parking and Access Arrangements

For housing development on land adjoining motorways or major roads, the District Council will be seeking to achieve a noise standard for any new dwelling at the boundary of NEC.A and NEC.B as recommended in PPG 24.

11.1 In certain instances the use of a “Willow Wall” will be encouraged which has the advantage that it absorbs rather than reflects noise, traps dust, exhaust fumes and litter, requires minimal land and gives a good visual barrier against industrial and transport installations.

12.0 Details of the parking and access requirements for residential developments are published in Bromsgrove District Council’s Policy Guidance Note 3 1994, Hereford and Worcester County Council’s “Highway Criteria Policy and Layouts for Car Parking and for New Developments” 1994 and the Department of the Environment’s Design Bulletin 32 “Residential Roads” 1992.

12.1 Experience suggests that few drivers are prepared to use parking spaces more than a few metres away from their destinations and there are increased risks of theft and vandalism when cars are parked out of sight. Consequently, the aim should be to make each small group of dwellings self-sufficient with regard to its off-street and on-street parking provision by locating:

- a) garages, car ports and hardstandings within the dwelling curtilages;
- b) grouped garages, car ports and hardstandings immediately outside the entrances of the houses or flats they are intended to serve and within sight of kitchen or living room windows. Where there is no direct road access, at the ends of access footpaths within sight of dwellings and passers-by;
- c) casual parking spaces for visitor’s cars and service vehicles as an integral part of the carriageway layout immediately outside or in proximity to the dwellings they are intended to serve.

SECTION 13

Access for the Disabled



13.0 Designing the housing requirements of disabled people should normally include the following:

- a) entrances to dwellings should have a level or gently sloped approach, and have flush thresholds;
- b) where a dwelling is accessed by lift, the lift should be accessible to wheelchair users and have accessible controls;
- c) a w.c. and at least one habitable room at entrance level;
- d) a bathroom and toilet large enough to permit internal transfer from wheelchair to w.c./bath;
- e) door widths and internal planning for wheelchair manoeuvre into and within all principle rooms;
- f) kitchen layout designed for easy access by wheelchair users;
- g) for dwellings of more than one storey or level, a staircase designed to allow for possible future installation of a stairlift;
- h) parking provision for one space per unit adjacent to the dwelling in accordance with Hereford and Worcester County Council's "Highway Criteria Policy and Layouts for Car Parking" 1994.

13.1 When considering applications for disabled people, the District Council will refer to ACE "Criteria for Accessible General Housing" published in "Building Homes for Successive Generations" 1992 and development must satisfy the Building Regulations 1991, Part M: "Access and Facilities for Disabled People".

13.2 In larger residential developments, the District Council may require a certain percentage, to be justified according to local need and site suitability, for "wheelchair housing". Very little existing housing or new conversions are suitable for people who permanently use a wheelchair.

SECTION 14

Security

Local authorities are now limited in their scope to provide special needs housing and therefore the provision of special housing requirements must be shared with the private sector. To enable more people to remain in their homes if they become disabled, a proportion of new build general purpose housing needs to be built for adaptation for people whose mobility is provided by use of a wheelchair permanently. Since there is an additional cost in providing the more generous than average space standards required, it is appropriate that wheelchair housing is provided in larger schemes, close to public transport and community facilities.

14.0 Crime prevention is one of the social considerations to which, in accordance with the Town and Country (Development Plan) Regulations 1991, regard must be given in development plans. The District Council will place emphasis on the need for good security in all housing schemes. Developers should be familiar with security guidance given in the Police Architectural Liaison Manual of Guidance published by the Home Office and the District Council will consult the Estate Development Safety Officers of the West Mercia Police on all large new housing proposals.

14.1 The location of dwellings to face and overlook most stretches of road will help to enhance security. Cul-de-sacs, loops or through roads may be designed to enhance security by encouraging natural surveillance. A range of house types will increase surveillance of all public areas, through a mix of occupancies. Cul-de-sacs make a discouraging target to criminals only if they serve small numbers of houses with no other means of pedestrian access which could be used for “escape routes”.

14.2 There may be occasional conflicts between site layout design for security requirements and provision for adequate sunlight and daylight. These may occur in a number of ways:

- i) to ensure good overall sunlight and daylight in a housing estate it is usually better to space out dwellings evenly, while grouping homes in small clusters promotes neighbourliness and natural surveillance;
- ii) it may be necessary to erect high walls, for example where the rear of a property faces open ground;
- iii) windows may need to be positioned so that occupants can view areas immediately adjacent to a building. These may not be the best positions for access to sunlight and daylight;
- iv) for maximum sunlight in gardens and planted areas it is best to park cars in shaded areas. However, for security, cars should be easily seen from the occupied building.

These conflicts can usually be resolved by careful site layout design. The National House Building Council gives advice on site layout for security.

APPENDIX 1

Definitions

1. Density is determined by assessing net area of a proposal which includes the sum of the area of:
 - i) The site of the dwelling houses and other residential buildings in their curtilages;
 - ii) Any small public or private open spaces included in the layout;
 - iii) Half the width of any road on which land mentioned in i) and ii) abuts (except a Trunk or Class 2 road where any 20 feet of the width is to be included).
2. Habitable rooms – bedrooms, lounges, dining rooms, breakfast rooms and studies. Breakfast/kitchens or dining/kitchens will not be counted where a separate dining room or breakfast room is proposed. Combined lounge/dining rooms which are capable of being used separately will be counted as two.
3. Backland development – the siting of a dwelling or other building behind a line of buildings fronting a road or lane, usually in a garden, paddock or orchard which forms part of the curtilage to the existing buildings on a frontage.
4. Tandem development – the development of a single dwelling in the rear garden immediately behind an existing dwelling, sharing the same access. This type of development is generally unsatisfactory because of the difficulties of access to the house at the back and the disturbance and lack of privacy suffered by the house in front.
5. Infill development – the filling of an undeveloped plot in an otherwise built-up frontage following the existing building line. It should be borne in mind that in some instances open spaces form an essential feature in a village environment. Therefore, not all vacant plots will be suitable for development.

APPENDIX 2

Conservation Areas- Bromsgrove District

Conservation Area	Designation date
Bromsgrove (Town Centre)	1968
Bromsgrove (A&B)	1983
	1989
Alvechurch	1968
Belbroughton	1969
Belbroughton extension	1975
Dodford	1975
Beoley	1980
Clent and Holy Cross	1981
Worcester – Birmingham Canal (part)	1987
Hagley (Station Road)	1987
Barnt Green	2000

Further Reading

LAYOUT AND LANDSCAPING

Department of the Environment “Residential Roads and Footpaths” Design Bulletin 32, 1992. Pages 24 – 28.

Hereford and Worcester County Council “Highway Criteria Policy and Layouts for Car Parking and New Developments” 1994.

EXTENSIONS

Bromsgrove District Local Plan. “Settlements”.

SCALE

Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 “Housing” 1992.

Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 “Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance” 1992.

Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guide Note 7 “The Countryside and Rural Economy” 1992.

Bromsgrove District Local Plan: “District Strategy”, “Settlements”.

Royal Institute of British Architects and House Builders Federation “Good Design in Housing” 1990.

Gillespies for the Scottish Office Environment Department “Consultants Design Manual Annex to PAN 44 – Fitting New Housing into the Landscape” 1994.

DAYLIGHT AND SUNLIGHT

British Standards Institute. “Code of practice for daylighting” BS 8206: Part 2, 1992.

Building Research Establishment, “Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight. A guide to good practice” by P.J. Littlefair 1991. Pages 2 – 8 and 9 – 14.

PASSIVE SOLAR DESIGN and ENERGY CONSERVATION

Building Research Establishment “Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight. A guide to good practice” by P.J. Littlefair 1991. Pages 15 – 18.

CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS

National Playing Fields Association "The Six Acre Standard, Minimum Standard for Outdoor Playing Space" 1992.

Bromsgrove District Local Plan: "Settlements".

Bromsgrove District Council Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 11 "Outdoor Play Space in the District of Bromsgrove" 2004.

NOISE

Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 "Planning and Noise" 1994.

PARKING and ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Bromsgrove District Council Planning Guidance Note 3 "Car Parking".

Hereford and Worcester County Council "Highway Criteria Policy and Layouts for Car Parking and New Developments" 1994.

Department of the Environment Design Bulletin 32 pages 34 – 36, 59 – 62, 66 – 67.

ACCESS FOR THE DISABLED

A.C.E. "Criteria for Accessible General Housing" published in "Building Homes for Successive Generations" 1992.

A.C.E. and R.T.P.I. "Access Policies for Local Plans" 1993.

SECURITY

Home Office Crime Prevention Centre "Police Architectural Liaison Manual of Guidance" 1987.

British Standards Institute: "Security of Buildings Against Crime" BS 8220: Part 1, 1986.

National House Building Council, "N.H.B.C. Standards: Improving Security" Amersham, N.H.B.C. 1990.





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