

# Appendix XX - Development Standards

## Introduction

1. This Appendix provides information about standards that apply to all new residential developments in Uttlesford including conversions, apartments, houses, Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) or extensions, unless it can be demonstrated that the particular site circumstances require a different design approach.

2. The standards seek to ensure new developments will meet the needs of their occupiers, minimise the impact of new developments on surrounding occupiers and encourage higher rates of recycling. Detailed guidance is contained within XXX. Where relevant, links have been provided to other Council documents or national standards. The following standards are covered:

- Privacy and quality of the living environment
- Private amenity space
- Natural light
- Open space
- Internal space standards
- Recycling and waste.

## Privacy and quality of the living environment

3. The Council will seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of living environment for all existing and future occupants.

4. The best way of ensuring privacy for new and existing occupiers is to minimise the extent to which windows face onto private areas of adjacent properties. These private areas include habitable rooms (living rooms, dining rooms, bedrooms), kitchens and privacy zones (areas in gardens immediately adjoining the building). Privacy can be ensured through design of new buildings, but also through achieving specified separation distances between windows and neighbouring private areas. Separation distance between buildings is also important to avoid buildings feeling overbearing to neighbouring residents.

5. Where habitable rooms in a new or extended property will face the rear of an adjacent dwelling, whether new or existing, the separation distances set out in Table 1 apply (Criteria A-D). Criteria E deals with separation distances in order to safeguard against an overbearing relationship. See also Figure 1.

6. The requirements may be relaxed where privacy is 'designed-in' through careful arrangement of internal accommodation, placement of windows, window design or screening. Shorter back-to-back distances may also be acceptable when the buildings face each other at an angle, typically 30 degrees or more. If there is a change in level between buildings, it may be possible for back-to-back distances to be adjusted.

7. To ensure a good standard of living for the occupier of a new or extended property all habitable rooms must have at least one window in a wall allowing outlook and ventilation which meets these standards.

**Table 1: Privacy and proximity standards**

| Criteria  | Town Centres | Rural areas  |
|---|--------------|--|
| A. Minimum back-to-back (or front-to-back) distance between parallel 2 or 3 storey buildings with rear or front-facing windows serving habitable rooms on upper floors              | 20m          | 25m  |
| B. Minimum back-to-back (or front-to-back) distance between parallel 4 or more storey buildings with rear or front-facing windows serving habitable rooms on upper floors*          | 27.5m        | 35m  |
| C. Minimum back-to-boundary distance where new buildings, or extensions to existing buildings, have a back-to-back relationship with <i>existing</i> residential buildings**        |              | 15m  |
| D. Minimum distance between a window serving an upper-floor habitable room and the side garden boundary of an adjacent property (unless the privacy zone is otherwise protected)*** |              | 15m<br>(add 4m for each additional storey)                               |
| E. Minimum back-to-flank wall distance****  |              | 12.5m for a two storey flank wall<br>(add 4m for each additional storey) |



## Private amenity space

8. The Council expects all new homes to provide easy access to private or communal garden space. The size of the private space expected depends on the type of home and the accessibility of the location. All new residential development shall provide private amenity space to a high standard. The Essex Design Guide 2018 contains further guidance on how these spaces can be detailed.

9. The siting, orientation, size and layout should make for a secure and usable space, which has an inviting appearance for residents and is appropriate to the surrounding context. All private amenity spaces shall be designed to avoid harmful overlooking from other properties.

10. Where recycling and waste bins and bikes have to be kept in rear garden storage then direct and secure access from the street should be provided.

11. Tables 2 and 3 contain space standards for private gardens, balconies and communal garden space. See also Figure 1. In tight urban environments, quality may be more important than the quantity of space. Gardens do not have to be limited to ground level, in appropriate circumstances elevated gardens and roof gardens may be encouraged to maximise use of space.

Table 2 : Garden standards for new houses

|                                | <b>Town Centres</b>   | <b>Rural areas</b>           |
|--------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| 1 or 2 bedroom houses          | 40sqm minimum private garden <i>or</i> use of directly accessible communal garden equivalent to 25sqm per-home including 10sqm demarcated private zone for each house | 50sqm minimum private garden |
| Houses with 3 or more bedrooms | 50sqm minimum private garden  | 80sqm minimum private garden |

**Table 3: Garden and balcony standards for new apartment blocks and HMOs**

|                                      | <b>Town Centres</b>  | <b>Rural areas</b>   |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Upper floor apartments               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of a private balcony (minimum 5sqm), plus</li> <li>• Provision of 20sqm minimum per-home of communal garden (100sqm minimum in total) <i>or</i> be located within 400m of a park or recreation ground</li> </ul>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of a private balcony (minimum 5sqm), plus</li> <li>• 20sqm minimum per-home of communal garden (100sqm minimum in total)</li> </ul> |
| Ground floor apartments              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of a 10sqm minimum demarcated private zone, plus</li> <li>• Provision of 20sqm minimum per-home of communal garden (100sqm minimum in total) <i>or</i> be located within 400m of a park or recreation ground</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10sqm minimum demarcated private zone, plus</li> <li>• 20sqm minimum per-home of communal garden (100sqm minimum in total)</li> </ul>         |
| Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50sqm minimum communal garden</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80sqm minimum communal garden</li> </ul>  |

12. Communal gardens should benefit from some form of enclosure as they are intended to be semi-private spaces and should be of an appropriate shape to fulfill their function (e.g. socialising, playing, leisure, gardening, or drying washing). They should benefit from casual surveillance so that they feel safe and are accessible to all intended users. For Town Centre schemes, a communal garden area will be strongly encouraged, and if not provided, contributions towards active travel improvements to a park or recreation ground will be required.

13. A demarcated private zone for ground floor apartments should be provided as a small garden, patio or deck, with direct access from the property. Where ground floor apartments cannot provide a sufficiently enclosed private zone, windows and doors should be separated from public areas through hard and/or soft landscaping.

14. For street facing ground floor apartments, the building should be designed to interact with the street, so an enclosed private zone facing the street may not be appropriate. To avoid a street facing single aspect property, dual aspect or duplex apartments are encouraged. Individual entrances to ground floor apartments or duplexes are also encouraged to enliven the street scene and create sociable places.

15. Exceptions to the above standards may be considered on physically constrained sites where development is desirable in the wider public interest.

## Natural light

16. New housing development and extensions should provide an adequate level of natural light for new and existing dwellings. Good natural light makes dwellings more attractive, pleasant and energy efficient. Housing layouts should be designed to maximise daylight and sunlight to dwellings as far as possible, as long as the development adheres to other policies and standards.

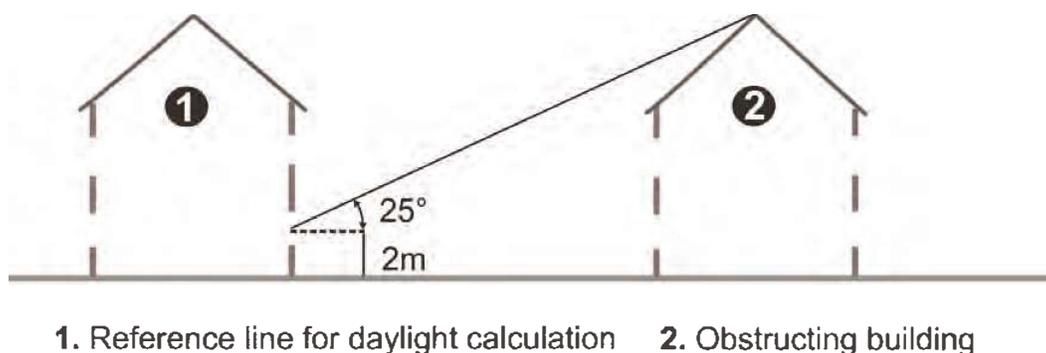
## Sunlight

17. A sunlit room is achieved where a window faces 90 degrees due south. It is not a reasonable requirement to expect this of all dwellings in a development, but good levels of daylight and a pleasant outlook can compensate for a lack of direct sunlight.

## Daylight

18. Acceptable daylight in existing building interiors is likely to be achieved if a 25 degree vertical angle from a point 2m above the floor at the building facade is not obstructed, see Figure 2. The BRE report "Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight" recommends that certainly no more than two fifths and preferably no more than a quarter of the garden should be prevented by buildings, walls or fences from receiving sunshine on 21 March.

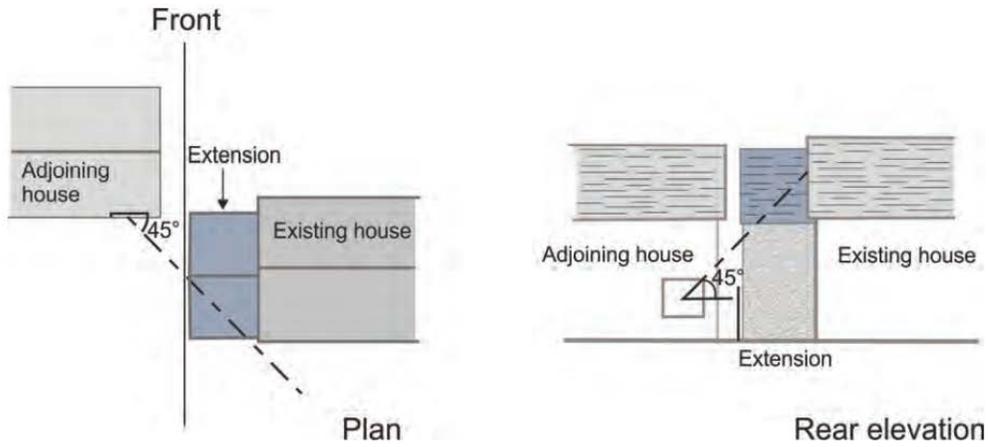
**Figure 2 : Relationships between new and existing buildings I**



*The obstructing building (No 2) does not breach the 25 degree angle, hence acceptable daylight should be achieved within property No 1. Source: Essex Design Guide 2018.*

19. Projections at right angles to a main building range should not infringe a 45 degree angle drawn in plan and elevation from the centre of the closest ground floor habitable room window in neighbouring properties, see Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Relationships between new and existing buildings 2**



*The extension at the neighbouring property breaches a 45 degree line both in plan and elevation.*

## Internal space standards

28. In 2015, the Government introduced a space standard, 'Technical housing standards - nationally described space standard' which sits alongside Building Regulations as an optional standard. This space standard deals with internal space for new houses and flats and applies across all tenures of housing. It sets out requirements for the gross internal floor area (GIA) of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of homes.

29. According to research by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the average new home in England is only 92% of the recommended minimum size. This means there might not be enough space for furniture, storage, working, socialising or spending time in quiet.

30. Uttlesford generally has a standard and wide ranging mix of house types within its area and therefore the Government standards appear to fit well with the housing stock in Uttlesford. There are no particular issues within Uttlesford's housing market that would require a departure from the national standards. To meet the needs of occupiers, all new residential development should be built in accordance with the nationally described space standard. The standard requires that:

- A dwelling provides at least the GIA and built-in storage area set out in Table 7
- A dwelling with two or more bedspaces has at least one double (or twin) bedroom
- In order to provide one bedspace, a single bedroom has a floor area of at least 7.5 sqm and is at least 2.15m wide
- In order to provide two bedspaces, a double (or twin bedroom) has a floor area of at least 11.5sqm
- One double (or twin bedroom) is at least 2.75m wide and every other double (or twin) bedroom is at least 2.55m wide
- Any area with a headroom of less than 1.5m is not counted within the GIA unless used solely for storage (if the area under the stairs is to be used for storage, assume a general floor area of 1sqm within the GIA)
- Any other area that is used solely for storage and has a headroom of 900-1500mm (such as under eaves) is counted at 50% of its floor area, and any area lower than 900mm is not counted at all
- A built-in wardrobe counts towards the GIA and bedroom floor area requirements, but should not reduce the effective width of the room below the minimum widths set out above. The built-in area in excess of 0.72sqm in a double bedroom and 0.36sqm in a single bedroom counts towards the built-in storage requirement
- The minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3m for at least 75% of the GIA

**Table 7: Minimum Gross Internal Floor Area and storage (sqm)**

| <b>Number of bedrooms (b)</b> | <b>Number of bed spaces (persons)</b> | <b>1 storey dwellings</b> | <b>2 storey dwellings</b> | <b>3 storey dwellings</b> | <b>Built-in storage</b> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1b                            | 1p                                    | 39 (37) *                 |                           |                           | 1.0                     |
| 1b                            | 2p                                    | 50                        | 58                        |                           | 1.5                     |
| 2b                            | 3p                                    | 61                        | 70                        |                           | 2.0                     |
| 2b                            | 4p                                    | 70                        | 79                        |                           | 2.0                     |
| 3b                            | 4p                                    | 74                        | 84                        | 90                        | 2.5                     |
| 3b                            | 5p                                    | 86                        | 93                        | 99                        | 2.5                     |
| 3b                            | 6p                                    | 95                        | 102                       | 108                       | 2.5                     |
| 4b                            | 5p                                    | 90                        | 97                        | 103                       | 3.0                     |
| 4b                            | 6p                                    | 99                        | 106                       | 112                       | 3.0                     |
| 4b                            | 7p                                    | 108                       | 115                       | 121                       | 3.0                     |
| 4b                            | 8p                                    | 117                       | 124                       | 130                       | 3.0                     |
| 5b                            | 6p                                    | 103                       | 110                       | 116                       | 3.5                     |
| 5b                            | 7p                                    | 112                       | 119                       | 125                       | 3.5                     |
| 5b                            | 8p                                    | 121                       | 128                       | 134                       | 3.5                     |
| 6b                            | 7p                                    | 116                       | 123                       | 129                       | 4.0                     |
| 6b                            | 8p                                    | 125                       | 132                       | 138                       | 4.0                     |

'Where a one person flat has a shower room rather than a bathroom, the GIA may be reduced from 39sqm to 37sqm.

## Recycling and waste

32. Putting materials in the black bin for general waste should be considered a last resort. Disposing of materials in landfill or by other methods such as Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) comes at a high cost to the Council and tax payers, and is a poor choice for the environment.

- All bin stores should be as close as possible to the highway and collection operatives should not have to wheel or carry receptacles further than 20m
- Communal bin stores should be located no further than 30m away from flats or apartments served by this store
- Communal bin stores should be in the form of dedicated bin store rooms in the ground floor of buildings or in the form of robust and covered external compounds sited in unobtrusive locations
- Schemes to be designed to avoid collection vehicles reversing; if reversing is necessary it should be no more than 12m; if the vehicle has to turn, sufficient space needs to be provided for this in the layout.