

**STATUS OF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE ON
OUTLOOK, AMENITY,
PRIVACY AND DAYLIGHT**

Status

This Planning Guidance, which is supplementary to Policy HSG21 of the Woking Borough Local Plan 1999, has been formally adopted by Woking Borough Council. In this respect the Supplementary Guidance has the status of a material consideration in the determination of planning applications by this Authority and in its defence of its decisions at appeal.

Statement of Public Consultation

In accordance with the advice set out in Annex A (A3) of Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1) on General Policy and Principles, the Supplementary Guidance has been the subject of wide public consultation with a total of 94 consultees, as follows:

i) Professional Practitioners

All developers and professional practitioners who had submitted planning applications for at least one residential dwelling during the previous two years, together with the House Builders Federation, which number 60 in total.

ii) Local Resident's and Amenity Groups

The Byfleet Parish Council and all resident's and amenity groups within the Borough which are known to the Council, together with the Surrey Police, which number 34 in total.

The period of public consultation allowed over 6 weeks for the above individuals and organisations to make comments on the Draft Supplementary Guidance. Altogether 12 responses were received. After careful consideration of these representations the Guidance was amended to address the valid points of concern. These amendments were considered at the Council's Executive Committee on 27 July 2000, when the Guidance was formally adopted. Full details of the representations made to the Council, together with the Council's response can be obtained on request by contacting 01483 743443.

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE
OUTLOOK, AMENITY, PRIVACY AND DAYLIGHT
(Adopted July 2000)

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This document sets out Supplementary Planning Guidance to ensure that adequate outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight is achieved in new residential developments and maintained for existing residential areas.
- 1.2 **This guidance is supplementary to policy HSG21 of the Woking Borough Local Plan** and should be considered by applicants and developers before submitting planning applications for residential development (The policy is set out in Appendix 1). The Council will also use the guidance in helping to determine planning applications for housing developments and will be apply it flexibly having regard to the circumstances and other material considerations of each case. However, additional criteria related to other housing policies will also need to be considered in this context. The following matters are considered.
- Outlook - ensuring that the close proximity of another building to a dwelling does not adversely affect the visual enjoyment of its immediate surroundings.
 - Amenity - the landscaped space surrounding dwellings which forms private gardens (the private realm) and the landscaped setting for the development (the public realm).
 - Privacy - the protection of accommodation and main garden area from overlooking.
 - Daylight - the amount of natural light required to illuminate internal accommodation.

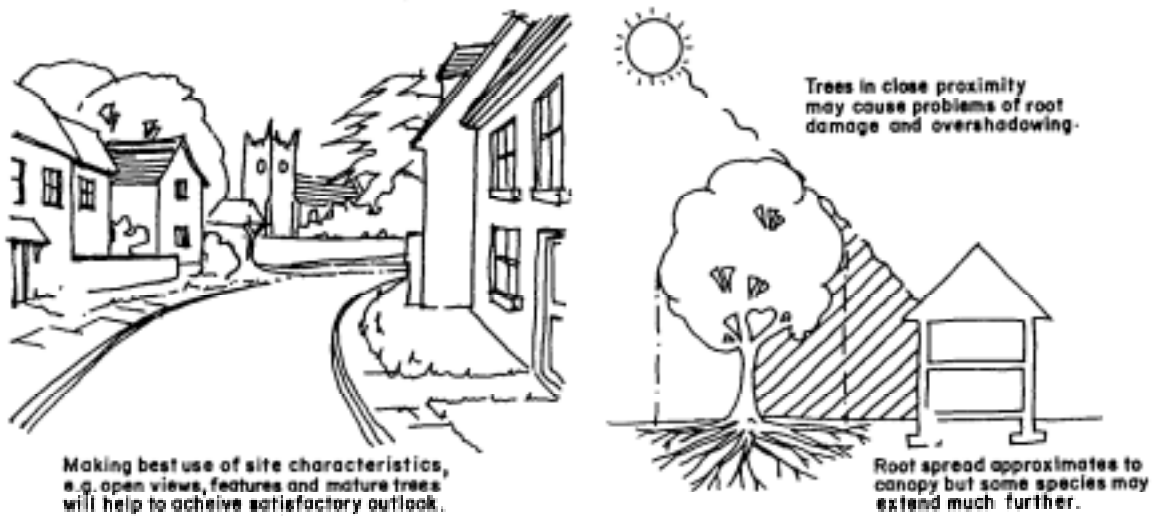
2.0 GENERAL POINTS

- 2.1 The layout requirements concerning outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight are closely related and will usually be mutually satisfied where houses are conventionally designed. The following points summarise the main issues that a housing layout needs to address :
- 2.2 The design and layout of residential development must ensure that the main living accommodation (habitable rooms) to all dwellings achieve a satisfactory level of outlook and natural daylight.
- 2.3 The siting of dwellings and the positioning of windows needs to be carefully organised to ensure that their proximity does not result in any adverse overshadowing or overbearing effect and that a reasonable degree of privacy is provided for occupants.
- 2.4 Dwellings designed for family use will need to provide a suitable area for private outdoor amenity, normally in the form of a rear garden.
- 2.5 When preparing proposals in existing established residential areas it will be equally as important to maintain suitable outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight for the occupants of existing housing as well as those for the new dwellings.
- 2.6 This Guidance recognises that standards of provision will vary between different forms of accommodation, particularly for smaller non family housing. Also, it accepts that it may be appropriate to permit reduced standards of amenity for non family accommodation in the more dense urban areas of the Town Centre and larger Village Centres where a range of leisure and other facilities are available close by.
- 2.7 The table at the back of the Guide sets out recommended minimum dimensions which will normally achieve minimum compliance for outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight in residential layouts. However, it must be stressed that the figures quoted are for guidance purposes only and individual cases must be considered on their merits in relation to building design, site location, and the character of the local context which may justify dimensions that vary from those stated.

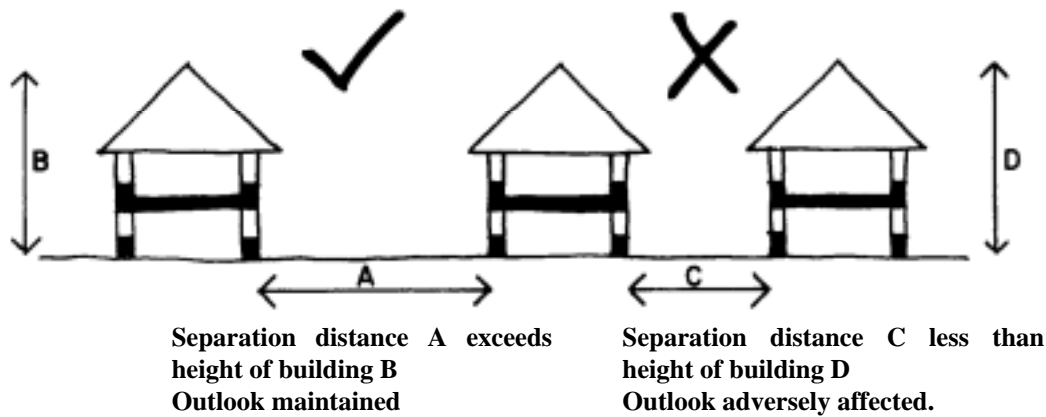
3.0 OUTLOOK

- 3.1 Outlook is the visual enjoyment afforded a dwelling by its immediate surroundings which can be adversely affected by the close proximity of another building. However, this does not extend to protection of a persons right to a particular view from a property as this is not a material planning consideration.
- 3.2 Making the best use of site characteristics, e.g. open views, changes in level, retention of mature trees and other significant features will greatly enhance the potential for achieving

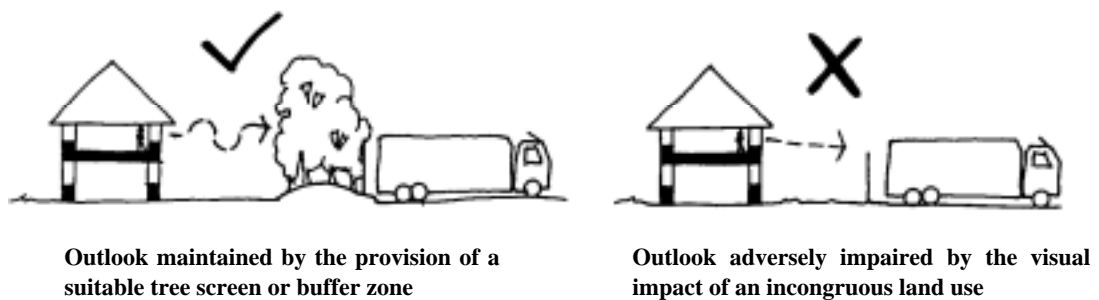
satisfactory outlook in the layout of a development. However, developments which retain mature trees should ensure that they are not so close to principal windows that they overshadow accommodation as this may result in pressure for the trees removal. Many trees which have high amenity value are protected by Preservation Orders or as a condition of the planning consent.



3.3 Outlook from a principal window may become adversely affected when the height of any facing structure exceeds its separation distance from the window. When a structure is placed so close to a window that it completely dominates the outlook it will have an overbearing impact.

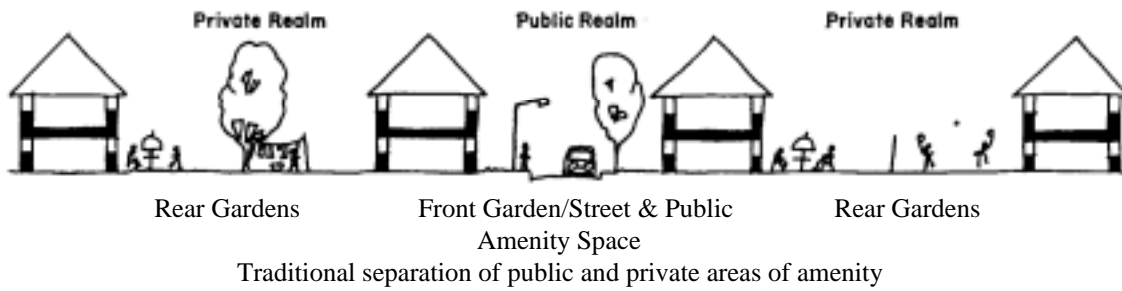


3.4 Where residential development is proposed adjoining another non-residential use, particularly commercial uses, the quality of outlook will be significantly impaired if main habitable rooms face directly towards features which have a detrimental impact. Outlook onto areas such as those used for the storage of plant, materials or commercial vehicles or similar incongruous features is unlikely to be considered acceptable without the provision of a significant landscaped buffer zone to screen them from view.



4.0 AMENITY

- 4.1 Amenity space comprises the undeveloped land surrounding dwellings which forms the landscaped setting for the built development and provides for the domestic or leisure uses of individual residents , together these areas create the public and private realm.



- 4.2 Within traditionally designed developments the amenity space which forms the more publicly visible areas to the front of the dwelling that are associated with the street, are usually known as ‘The Public Realm’ and the private amenity areas to the rear of dwellings are known as ‘The Private Realm’.

- 4.3 Specific functional areas such as tarmac parking areas or those used for bin storage, domestic storage or drying areas do not contribute to amenity. Exceptionally open landscaped parking areas may contribute to amenity where they have high quality finishes and contain significant structural landscaping , particularly extensive tree planting.

Public Amenity Space (The Public Realm)

- 4.4 Major housing developments should be designed with a coherent street layout incorporating squares or other well defined urban features to provide a suitable element of visual amenity in the development. The use of established urban design features, such as tree lined avenues and enclosed landscaped squares which provide a sense of place will be particularly welcomed. Areas specifically designated for public amenity space should either have group management or offered to the Local Authority for adoption of maintenance (see diagram following).

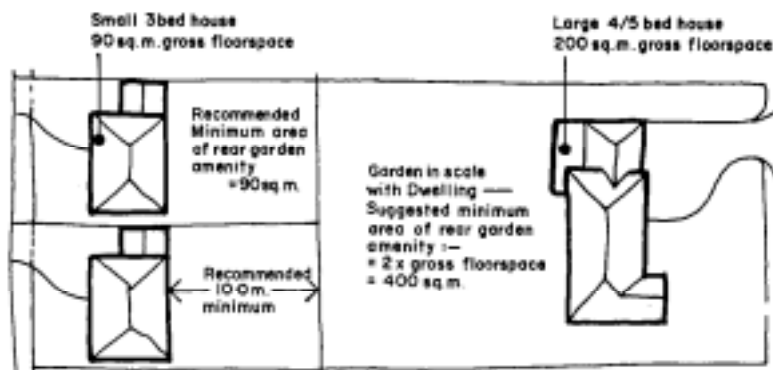


Public amenity Space within a Major Housing Development

- 4.5 The landscaped space between dwellings together with the landscape treatment of building frontages also make a significant contribution to the amenity value of the public realm. Individual dwellings intended to be detached should be adequately separated. Terraced developments with repeated elevations should have frontages with a uniform treatment that compliments the architectural treatment.

Private Amenity Space (The Private Realm)

- 4.6 All dwellings designed for family accommodation need to provide a sunlit area of private garden amenity, suitable in size and shape for outdoor household recreational needs. Private amenity space also helps to provide a setting for the building and contributes to the character of the area.

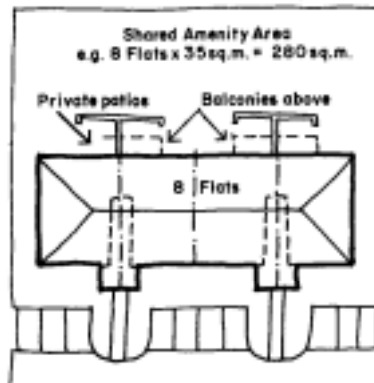


- 4.7 It will usually be possible to achieve the minimum requirements for private garden amenity within a 10 metre garden depth. In the case of a modest sized three bedroom family dwelling this would usually result in an area of 70 - 90 sq. metres of private amenity. Whereas in the case of a small two bedroom dwelling this would result in an area of 40 - 60 sq. metres of private amenity. Long narrow gardens and wide shallow gardens are unlikely to provide the most usable areas of private amenity.
- 4.8 However, in order to provide a suitable setting for the dwelling, the size of private garden amenity needs to be in scale with the building it accommodates and should be greater than the gross floorspace of the dwelling it supports. In the case of larger properties, particularly those over 150 sq. metres floorspace, it is recommended that an appropriate area would be approximately twice the gross floor area of the property.
- 4.9 Notwithstanding these recommendations the rear gardens to properties in established low density areas may need to exceed these dimensions to maintain the outlook and visual amenity of existing dwellings and the overall spacious character of the area.

Shared Amenity Space (Public or Private Realm)

- 4.10 Where developments comprise flats and smaller types of accommodation, such as studio accommodation and elderly persons dwellings, which are not designed for family use, it may

be preferable to combine areas of amenity together to maximise the visual benefit of the space and the potential for adequate sunlight.

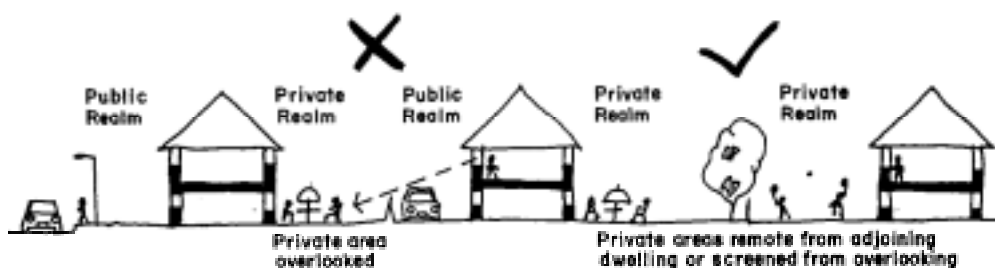


Shared amenity areas may be appropriate for flats, elderly persons dwellings and other small non family accommodation. An area of 35 sq.m. soft amenity should be provided for each dwelling.

- 4.11 Where amenity space is designed for communal use it is recommended that an area of approximately 35 sq. metres of outdoor amenity should be provided for each dwelling located close to the main living accommodation. For sheltered accommodation for elderly persons a lesser provision of approximately 25 sq. metres of outdoor amenity is recommended for each apartment. Shared amenity areas will normally need to have group management and be designed to form a continuous area of landscaped amenity. However, where possible, it is suggested that dwellings with ground floor accommodation should have access to a small private patio and that dwellings on upper floors have access to a private balcony or veranda located directly over each other, which would count towards the amenity space provision.
- 4.12 Within larger estate developments there may also be a requirement to provide children's play area in accordance with the Councils adopted standards as set out in Local Plan Policy REC1. Although the provision of play areas is not dealt with in this guidance, they can often help to contribute towards the overall landscaped amenity of a development and should not be considered in isolation.
- 4.13 In very urban developments which are not suitable for family accommodation there may be scope to provide areas of general public amenity within the development as an alternative to areas specifically designed for children's play, or alternatively, to make a contribution towards planned off site play provision in the locality.

5.0 PRIVACY

- 5.1 New developments should be designed to protect the privacy of internal accommodation for both new and existing dwellings, together with that of principal areas of amenity closely related to the dwelling (see diagram following).



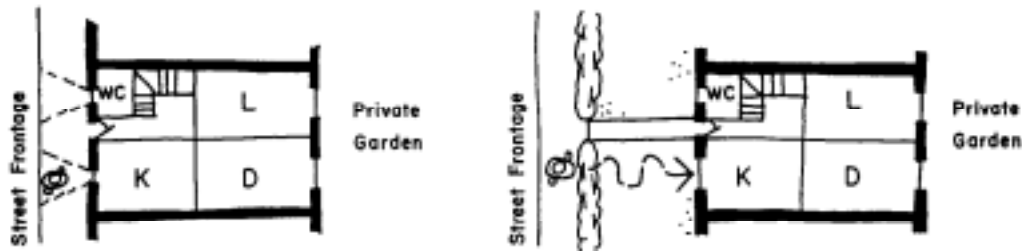
Housing layouts should provide clear separation of the public and private realm.

- 5.2 Housing layouts which have traditional arrangements for the separation of the public and private realms are most likely to achieve satisfactory levels of privacy.

The Public Realm

- 5.3 The level of privacy which can be expected at the front of a dwelling, where windows face the street, will be significantly less than that for accommodation at the rear. However, the following advice should be followed:

- 5.4 Dwellings which have open frontages, such as those which are very close to, or directly abut the highway, should normally be designed so that principal areas of habitable accommodation face towards the rear of the dwelling where greater privacy can be afforded.



Narrow windows can reduce public views into rooms which face an open frontage

Hedges and walls can help to block out public views into rooms at the front.

- 5.5 Where circumstances do not allow all the principal rooms to be sited at the rear, the use of narrow windows on front elevations can help to reduce public views into front rooms. Alternatively, small front gardens which are bounded with walls or hedges will usually create a reasonable degree of privacy for accommodation sited at the front of the dwelling.

- 5.6 As there is a much lower expectation of privacy for rooms facing the street separation distances between front elevations of dwellings can be less than those for the rear elevations but adequate daylight and outlook must be achieved.

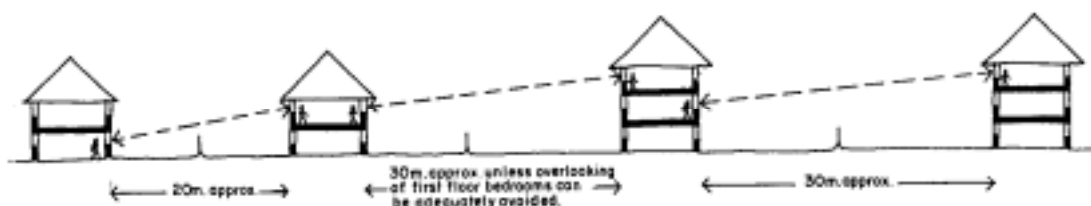
The Private Realm

- 5.7 There is a much higher expectation of privacy for accommodation at the rear of a dwelling where it faces towards a private garden. Most conventional dwellings are designed to suit this arrangement.
- 5.8 In lower density developments where houses are physically remote from one another, especially where gardens are bounded by mature hedges and trees, there is considerable potential to achieve good levels of privacy.
- 5.9 In higher density developments such as those associated with housing estates and more urban forms of housing it will only be possible to avoid overlooking between dwellings by careful siting or through design measures to control the line or direction of sight between respective windows.

Siting

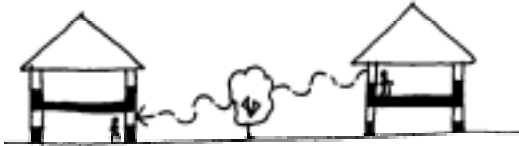
- 5.10 It should be possible to achieve a basic level of privacy for accommodation in conventional two storey dwellings where rear elevations have a separation distances of approximately 20m. Closer distances will require some form of screening.
- 5.11 A greater separation distance of approximately 30m. is normally required between the rear elevations of dwellings which are three storeys and higher, where there is a greater possibility of overlooking adjacent first floor bedrooms. A similar separation distance may be required between two storey and higher dwellings unless the layout of accommodation can be arranged to avoid overlooking of first floor bedrooms, in which case a 25m separation distance would be required.

- *For these purposes accommodation in the roof space which uses velux type roof lights will not usually count as an additional storey because the outlook restricts overlooking.*

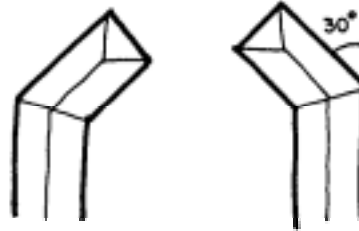


Recommended Minimum Separation Distances

- 5.12 Separation distances may be slightly relaxed where there is a significant change in the angle of orientation between dwellings (over 30 degrees). .
- 5.13 The incorporation of rear boundary fences , tree screens, and other screening devices can greatly reduce overlooking of ground floor accommodation and areas of private amenity. The careful siting of small single storey structures such as traditional outbuildings and garages can often help to achieve privacy in this way providing there is sufficient space within the garden to site them.



Modest tree planting on a rear boundary can reduce overlooking of ground floor rooms

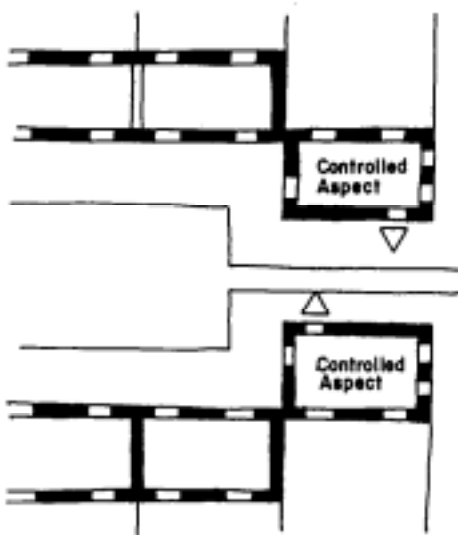


Separation distances may be relaxed where there is a significant change in building orientation.

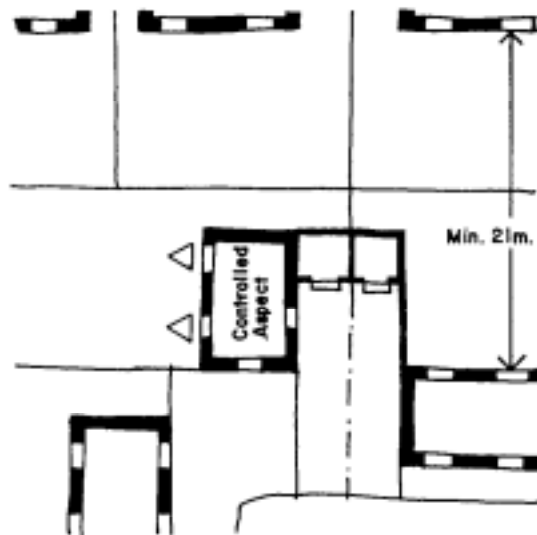
- 5.14 In some older established residential areas where dwellings benefit from a high degree of privacy because they are spaciouly separated, it may be appropriate to secure high levels of separation in new developments.

Control of aspect

- 5.15 Altering the respective position of windows to habitable rooms on facing dwellings, such as from a front elevation to a flank elevation, particularly at the first floor level, will usually stop any direct overlooking of the neighbouring dwelling. This type of arrangement can often enable specially designed dwellings to be sited much closer together without affecting privacy. Similarly this type of arrangement may also allow a dwelling to be sited much closer to a rear boundary without affecting the privacy of the neighbouring dwelling or its amenity area. However, the close proximity of buildings can sometimes result in overshadowing or overbearing effects which may not be acceptable.

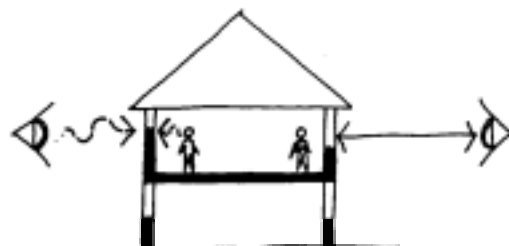


Use of 'Controlled Aspect' building frontage facing another building frontage



Use of 'Controlled Aspect' to site a dwelling close to a rear boundary

- 5.16 On less visually important elevations, the use of high level windows can effectively inhibit views into and out of accommodation. Similarly velux type roof lights can often be used for accommodation in the roof space without affecting privacy.



High level windows can restrict views into and out of accommodation to protect privacy

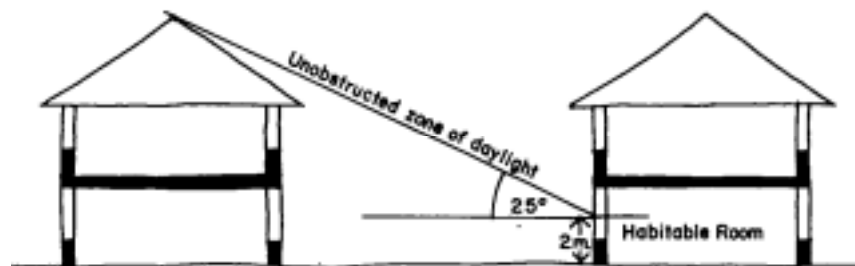
- 5.17 Although obscured glazing is a useful method of achieving privacy for bathrooms and toilets it will not normally be permitted as the sole method of providing daylight to a habitable room (i.e. bedrooms, living rooms, dining rooms and similar accommodation).

6.0 DAYLIGHT

- 6.1 Daylight is the volume of natural light which is required to enter a dwelling to provide satisfactory illumination of internal accommodation between dawn and dusk.

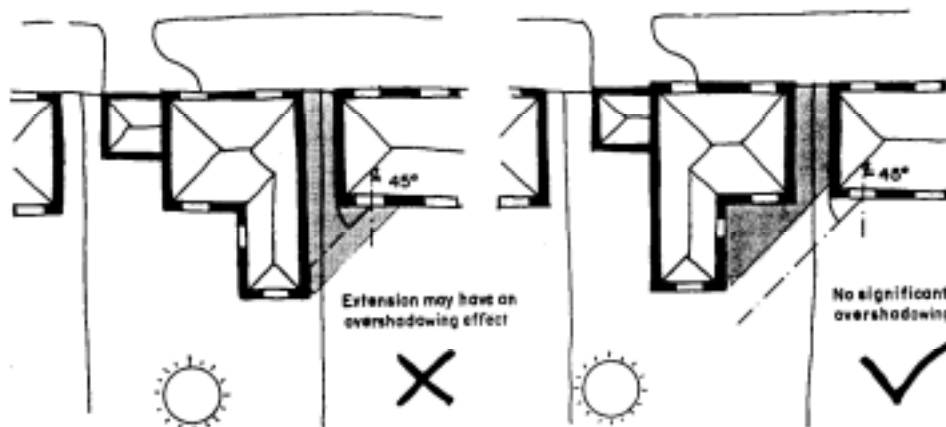
- 6.2 The Building Research Establishment's report ' Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight 1991 ' recommends that suitable daylight to habitable rooms is achieved where a 25° vertical angle taken from a point 2 metres above the floor of the fenestrated elevation is kept unobstructed. When this criteria is applied to the rear of a dwelling the resulting dimension will normally be satisfied within the length of the smallest recommended size for a private garden. However, where main habitable rooms are located to the front of a dwelling daylight may be affected if dwellings on the opposite side of the street are very close (i.e. less than 10 m. in the case of two storey dwellings).

- *Habitable Rooms do not include conservatories, kitchens under 2 metres wide, bathrooms or toilets, but do include kitchens over 2 metres wide, bedrooms, living rooms, dining rooms and all other living accommodation.*



Building Research Establishment – Recommended Daylight Criteria

- 6.3 Similarly, large two storey extensions which are positioned close to a boundary, may not be acceptable if they have a significant overshadowing and overbearing effect on the habitable rooms of adjoining dwellings. In this respect any two storey extension extending beyond a 45° horizontal angle measured from the middle of a principle window to a habitable room on the adjoining dwelling may not be acceptable. Depending on orientation smaller two storey extensions may also cause significant overshadowing. Two storey rear extensions on semi detached and terraced dwellings are likely to be problematic unless undertaken with the neighbouring property.



Large two storey extensions sited close to an adjoining dwelling can overshadow habitable rooms of the neighbouring property (depending on orientation). Alternative siting may overcome the problem.

- 6.4 Although it would be unreasonable to require that all dwellings enjoy sunlit rooms, single aspect dwellings which are sited so that every habitable room is facing due north and have amenity areas which are usually in shade, may not be acceptable.

RECOMMENDED MINIMUM LAYOUT DIMENSIONS FOR OUTLOOK, AMENITY, PRIVACY AND DAYLIGHT

The following Tables set out guidance on layout dimensions which will normally achieve the minimum requirements for satisfactory outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight in residential developments. However, individual cases must be considered on their merits.

- Higher standards may be required to maintain the character of existing established residential areas, particularly within the area covered by Policy HSG20.
- Standards of amenity may be relaxed for non family housing in the Town Centre and large Village Centres which are close to a range of facilities although dimensions for outlook and daylight should always be maintained.

TABLE 1: Recommended Minimum Separation Distances (Metres)

No. Storeys	Measures Dimension	Privacy	Outlook/Daylight
1	front to front elevation	6	6 or height of structure facing habitable room
	back to back elevation	12	
	front or back to boundary/flank	6	
	side to boundary	1	
2	front to front elevation	10	10 or height of structure facing habitable room
	back to back elevation	20	
	front or back to boundary/flank	10	
	side to boundary	1	
3 and over	front to front elevation	15	15 or height of structure facing habitable room
	back to back elevation	30	
	front or back to boundary/flank	15	
	side to boundary	2	

*Dimensions are based on conventional dual aspect accommodation with main habitable rooms to the rear. As there is a lesser expectation of achieving privacy for rooms facing the street separation distances for front elevations are lower. Controlled aspect dwellings need to ensure that outlook and daylight are satisfied for each habitable room.

TABLE 2: Recommended Minimum Garden Areas (sq.m)

Dwelling Type	Minimum Garden Area
Large family dwelling over 150 sq.m gross floorspace	suggested twice gross floorspace but always greater than the gross floorspace of building
Other family dwellings under 150 sq.m floorspace	10m garden depth
Non family accommodation. Flats, one bed dwellings.	35 sq.m per dwelling up to two storeys and then 17.5 sq.m per dwelling thereafter
Elderly persons dwellings (shared amenity areas)	25 sq.m per apartment for elderly persons' sheltered accommodation

*Garages, parking areas, bin storage areas are not considered for the purpose of garden amenity requirements.

Appendix 1

Woking Borough Local Plan 1999 – Policy HSG21

HSG21 ü OUTLOOK, AMENITY, PRIVACY AND DAYLIGHT

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THE DESIGN AND LAYOUT ACHIEVES THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:-

- i) SUITABLE OUTLOOK AND DAYLIGHT IS PROVIDED FOR ALL HABITABLE ROOMS TO DWELLINGS;
- ii) ADEQUATE PRIVACY IS AFFORDED BETWEEN THE HABITABLE ROOMS OF RESPECTIVE DWELLINGS TOGETHER WITH THEIR ASSOCIATED PRIVATE AMENITY AREAS;
- iii) A SUITABLY LOCATED AREA OF SOFT LANDSCAPE IS PROVIDED FOR THE AMENITY OF EACH DWELLING APPROPRIATE IN SIZE TO BOTH THE TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION AND THAT CHARACTERISTIC OF THE LOCALITY;
- iv) THE SITING OF NEW DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE OUTLOOK, AMENITY, PRIVACY AND DAYLIGHTING OF EXISTING DWELLINGS.

JUSTIFICATION

- 6.90 The habitable rooms to all dwellings need to enjoy a reasonable degree of outlook and daylight. The siting of dwellings and the positioning of windows needs to be organised to ensure that their proximity does not result in any overbearing or overshadowing impact on respective habitable rooms.
- 6.91 To ensure an adequate degree of privacy between the habitable rooms of all dwellings, it is essential that they are separated by a suitable distance to avoid any overlooking or the windows are organised or designed for controlled aspect. It is similarly important that private amenity areas are not overlooked by adjoining dwellings.
- 6.92 All dwellings which are suitable for family accommodation should have an adequate area of private garden amenity for the use of residents which is contiguous with the dwelling. The size and shape of the garden should reflect the dwelling it serves and must be of a format suitable for practical use. Groups of smaller, one bedroom dwellings and flats may benefit from sharing an area of joint amenity, but again, the overall size should be adequate for the aggregate level of accommodation. Areas such as for bin storage or car parking will not count as contributing towards the area of amenity.
- 6.93 The Council has prepared Supplementary Planning Guidance to illustrate options for ensuring the criteria in this policy are met. Many of the established residential areas of the Borough, particularly those identified under Policy HSG20, are characterised by their spacious layouts which provide much higher levels of privacy and amenity than more recent residential areas. Where new dwellings are proposed within or in close proximity to established residential areas, higher standards of building separation will be required to ensure that the outlook, amenity, privacy and daylighting of existing dwellings is not adversely affected nor development is injurious to the character of these areas. Similarly, in those locations which are more urban in character, particularly those associated with the town centre and village centres it may be appropriate to apply a more flexible approach to the standards of privacy and amenity.