

Supplementary Planning Document

Design Guidance

February 2025



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Local Plan Policy	Policy SP8: Good Design Policy GD1: High Quality Design Other relevant policies that are listed beside each standard
How the guidance will be applied	This guidance provides a list of standards that will be applied to new development within Stevenage Borough and will form a material consideration in planning decisions. They relate to all forms of development, from large residential schemes to small scale infill and modest residential extensions. The standards are broken down into those that are expected to be met and those that represent best practice and are therefore strongly encouraged. They should be read alongside Local Plan policies, other Stevenage Borough supplementary planning documents, and any other material considerations. The standards aim to ensure that developments create well-designed and sustainable places that are of high quality.
Who is this guidance for?	This guidance is aimed at developers and their design teams seeking planning permission, as well as the Council's development management officers. The guidance is largely divided into parts according to the ten characteristics of well-designed places, as established by the Government's National Design Guide. Additional parts provide specific guidance for residential extensions and shopfronts.

1 About this document

Introduction

- 1.1 This document replaces the Stevenage Design Guidance SPD 2023 and provides guidance on the policies in the adopted local plan. It is a supplementary planning document (SPD) and is therefore a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 1.2 This document was published as an SPD on 28 February 2025, following a meeting of the Cabinet of Stevenage Borough Council on 12 February 2025.
- 1.3 A draft version of this document was subject to two public consultations between 14 October 2024 and 24 November 2024. The consultations were carried out in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012, as well as the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. A summary of the representations received and the Council's response to these is set out in the statement of consultation which accompanies this document.

How to use the guidance

- 1.4 This Stevenage Design Guidance sets out clear design principles to guide future development in Stevenage. It encourages a design led approach to all development, from large residential schemes to modest residential extensions and small infill developments.
- 1.5 This Guidance provides design principles for all developments, accompanied by illustrations and good practice examples, to help deliver good design and clearly signpost where more detailed guidance can be accessed. It aims to be user-friendly and does not seek to replicate existing policy and regulations that will continue to apply to all development.

Looking forward

- 1.6 This Guidance has been prepared in the context of social, economic, and environmental change. Technological change is rapid, with developments in digital, artificial intelligence and machine learning affecting our lives at all scales.
- 1.7 The demographics of Stevenage are also driving change as the population ages, the needs of some residents are changing from those originally provided for through the development of the New Town. Young people's expectations are changing too, leading to new lifestyles and new models of home ownership.
- 1.8 We expect continuing change as a consequence of climate change, changing home ownership models and technological changes. It is likely to emerge and embed in society rapidly. It will influence the planning, design and construction of new homes and places.

Components for good design

- 1.9 Urban design is the design of towns and cities, streets and spaces, and concerns all aspects of the public realm, including the detailed design of buildings and landscapes, the way in which places work and the relationships between existing and new developments.
- 1.10 Good design translates into more than the appearance of buildings. It is important in both small residential extensions and large-scale developments that introduce form and materials and the creation of new streets and spaces. Functionality and practicality are embedded in design and are as important as the visual quality of a building or large scale development.
- 1.11 Well-designed neighbourhoods help build communities, give them a sense of belonging and make residents feel safe. Often this can be through simple approaches such as natural surveillance, an easy technique created when new streets and public open spaces are overlooked by windows (in active rooms) and doors.
- 1.12 Carefully positioned car parking and cycle storage, as well as integrated refuse and recycling bins, also help to create a sense of order and reduce litter and vandalism.
- 1.13 The quality of open space and the way in which new streets and spaces are designed directly affects how people feel about a place and the whole community benefits from a commitment to usable green space. Access to open space also has a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of those able to take advantage of it.
- 1.14 For commercial development, well designed buildings are good for business. The flexibility to respond to changing social and economic circumstances is important, as are design solutions which encourage creativity and innovation. Investment in good quality design provides a higher return on the investment made.
- 1.15 Good design in all development is inclusive and accessible for everyone, has a positive impact on the environment, integrates into its immediate and wider surroundings, provides flexibility for future change, is easily maintained and delivers a return on investment.
- 1.16 All places and spaces are different, and design is not about starting again from a blank canvas. The context and character of a place needs to be taken into account and renewal rather than demolition is encouraged where possible. There is no 'perfect blueprint' for good design and trying to apply the same rigid principles everywhere would result in a loss of local distinctiveness and, therefore, counteract the objectives of the initial application of urban design principles.
- 1.17 The Government has placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of creating well designed places. The [Design Council](#) provides an advisory service to the Government and various best practice guidance publications have since been produced. In addition, there is the [National Model Design Code](#) and the police preferred minimum security guidance, [Secured By Design](#).

The Local Plan

- 1.18 National and local planning policies influence whether a site is suitable for development and the form and nature of development. A planning review of relevant planning policy documents, including the Stevenage Borough Local Plan Policies SP8: Good Design, and GD1: High Quality Design, should be undertaken.
- 1.19 In addition, there is a series of other documents, including, Conservation Area Management Plans and Appraisals and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) which are adopted or endorsed by the Council. These are material planning considerations in planning decisions and should be considered in the design of new development.
- 1.20 In some instances, construction may be able to proceed without the need for a formal planning application/approval. This is known as 'Permitted Development' (PD) rights. They derive from general planning permission granted by Parliament rather than the Local Planning authority. Further details are available from the Ministry of Levelling Up Housing and Communities website.
- 1.21 Even if you do not need to make a planning application, you should follow good design principles, with materials, forms and architectural detailing.
- 1.22 In addition to planning policy, applicants should consider best practice in terms of sustainable design, creating better environments and the quality of the built form. Further advice is available from the Homes England and Regulator of Social Housing, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), Historic England and Landscape Institute publications.
- 1.23 Hertfordshire County Council, in partnership with the Hertfordshire District and Borough Councils, have produced [Building Futures](#); a web-based guide to ensuring sustainable development in Hertfordshire. Aimed at planners and developers, it advocates high quality urban design as a catalyst for promoting sustainability. Modules within this guide contain information on energy, air, water, waste, safety and materials, which all interrelate to form an extensive design guide for sustainable and successful development. [Building Futures](#) must be read, in conjunction with this SPD, to ensure the sustainability of all development proposals. Hertfordshire County Council is also the highways authority and its emerging guidance will be called 'Place and Movement Planning and Design Guide' which should be considered in addition to its Local Transport Plan 4. Any guidance provided by Hertfordshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority should also be adhered to when considering design of places.

Introducing the ten characteristics

- 1.24 The National Design Guide notes that well-designed places have individual characteristics which work together to create its physical character. These ten characteristics help to nurture and sustain a sense of community. They work

positively to address environmental issues affecting climate. They all contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the NPPF.

- 1.25 This document is divided up into each of these ten characteristics in order to ensure that this guidance accurately reflects the characteristics of the National Design Guide.

Part A | Context

Context is the location of the development and the attributes of its immediate, local and regional surroundings.

The National Design Guide states that an understanding of the context, history and the cultural characteristics of a site, neighbourhood and region influences the location, siting and design of new developments. It means they are well grounded in their locality and more likely to be acceptable to existing communities. Creating a positive sense of place helps to foster a sense of belonging and contributes to well-being, inclusion and community cohesion.

A	Context	Policy
A1	Response to Context	
A1.1	Development proposals should produce well-designed and managed spaces, which provide a visually attractive environment and ensure that a place is easy to move around and within, is safe and secure, and is useful for all members of the community.	SP8 GD1
A1.2	Development proposals should have regard to the New Town design principles at all stages of the development process. The principles are: <u>Sustainability</u> Incorporating principles of sustainable development from a town-wide perspective to measures incorporated into an individual property. <u>Increasing densities</u> Encouraging high densities in accessible locations. <u>Respecting existing characteristics</u> Respecting local characteristics and preserving and enhancing existing features, where appropriate.	SP8 SP13 GD1

A	Context	Policy
	<u>Legibility</u> Providing landmark developments at nodal points. <u>Design innovation</u> Showcasing Stevenage as an exemplar of high quality design; creating safer places through urban design techniques.	
A1.3	Development proposals should have regard to a site's Local Plan designations, which are shown on the Local Plan proposals map. Applicants should also carry out their own desktop analysis to identify any further site constraints.	Various
A1.4	Development proposals should ensure that heritage assets and their settings are conserved, enhanced and integrated into the design of new development. This includes buildings of local historic importance, which are shown on the Council's Local List of Heritage Assets.	SP8 SP13 GD1 NH9 NH10
A1.5	Development proposals should have regard to climate change at all stages of the development process.	SP11 FP1

Part B | Identity

The identity or character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. It is not just about the buildings or how a place looks, but how it engages with all of the senses. Local character makes places distinctive. Well-designed, sustainable places with a strong identity give their users, occupiers and owners a sense of pride, helping to create and sustain communities and neighbourhoods.

B	Identity	Policy
B1	Creating character and identity	
B1.1	Development proposals should produce places that are visually attractive and aim to bring pleasure to users and passers-by. They should cater for all users and be well-designed.	SP8 GD1
B1.2	Well-designed places should appeal to all of the senses; its enduring distinctiveness, attractiveness and beauty are all affected by its looks, feels, sounds and even smells.	SP8 GD1
B1.3	Buildings should complement or enhance local vernacular. They should: • adopt typical building forms of the neighbourhood in which they are situated • draw upon the architectural precedents that are prevalent in the local area • use local building, landscape and topographical features, materials and plant types • introduce built form and appearance that adds new character and difference to places • create a positive and coherent identity that local communities and residents alike can identify with	SP8 GD1

Part C | Built Form

Built form is the three-dimensional pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings, and open spaces. It is the interrelationship between all these elements that creates an attractive place to live, work and visit, rather than their individual characteristics. Together they create the built environment and contribute to its character and sense of place.

C	Built Form	Policy
C1	Height and views	
C1.1	Development proposals should relate well to neighbouring buildings in terms of height, either maintaining consistent heights or gradually increasing from one height to another. They should not inappropriately dominate the street scene.	SP8 GD1
C1.2	Where appropriate, buildings should create landmark developments and incorporate taller buildings at nodal points, and in easily accessible locations.	SP8 GD1
C1.3	Tall buildings should be carefully positioned to mark prominent landmarks, making it easier for people to find their way around, emphasising corners, particularly at important junctions or gateways, by curving the frontage, wrapping the fenestration around the corner or terminating the roof differently.	SP8 GD1
C1.4	Tall buildings should be designed to an especially high quality, as they will become a prominent feature across the town, showcasing architectural innovation and best practice.	SP8 GD1
C1.5	Buildings of 4 storeys or higher with roof access, balconies or ledges should incorporate measures to reduce suicide potential. Where feasible and practical, the Council will require planning applications to be supported by a risk assessment and management plan in line with the UK Health Security Agency's Guidance on Preventing Suicides in Public Places 2015.	SP2 SP5 GD1
C1.6	Development proposals should protect views of and from the public realm as far as possible.	SP8 GD1

C	Built Form	Policy
C2	Siting	
C2.1	Buildings should follow the existing building line of the area and respond positively to the existing frontage of a street. Variation from the building line will only be allowed where it would not have any substantial impact on the surrounding environment and street scene.	SP8 GD1
C2.2	Buildings should minimise setback distances to ensure buildings interact effectively with the existing public realm.	SP8 GD1
C2.3	Buildings should be sited so that a clear distinction can be made between their public fronts and private backs. High walls or hedgerows may be used to separate private gardens from the public space where back gardens face out onto the public realm but in doing so, this should not create unattractive, narrow alleyways.	SP8 GD1
C3	Frontages and public realm	
C3.1	Buildings should create a sense of enclosure by minimising blank frontages and underutilised space.	SP8 GD1
C3.2	Buildings should actively add interest to the public realm. This can be achieved through design details such as a large number of windows and doors, evident internal uses, and narrow building widths, creating a variety of different frontages and building functions.	SP8 GD1
C3.3	Building frontages should create interest and add vitality at ground level and provide the opportunity for a busy social environment and a good level of surveillance. Active frontages should be visible on all publicly facing walls on multi-fronted buildings where more than one side faces the public realm.	SP8 GD1
C3.4	Building frontages should allow for sufficient natural light and ventilation into the buildings and the street below and create a balanced feel to the area by incorporating both sides of the street. Combining tall buildings with very narrow streets will not be acceptable as this creates passageways which are not overlooked and do not allow for enough natural light and air to impact upon a building.	SP8 GD1

Part D | Movement

Patterns of movement for people are integral to well-designed places. They include walking and cycling, access to facilities, employment and servicing, parking and the convenience of public transport. They contribute to making high quality places for people to enjoy. They also form a crucial component of urban character. Their success is measured by how they contribute to the quality and character of a place, not only how well they function.

D	Movement	Policy
D1	Connected streets	
D1.1	Development proposals should have regard to the hierarchy of road users, as set out in Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4.	SP6 IT4
D1.2	Streets should be designed as public and social spaces rather than simply responding to engineering requirements. Development proposals should demonstrate consideration of what activities would like to be seen on streets e.g. walking safely, window shopping, and socialising.	SP5 SP6 SP8 IT4 IT5 GD1
D1.3	Streets should feature elements of community assets, such as open space, to evoke a better sense of community between residents of the street or visitors to the street. They should provide direct and attractive connections between key facilities that are suitable for all types of movement, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.	SP5 SP6 SP8 IT4 IT5 GD1 NH7
D1.4	Development proposals should make use of existing infrastructure to minimise impacts on the environment. They should take account of the existing routes around the site from the initial design stage and improve them where necessary.	SP5 IT5
D1.5	Development proposals should demonstrate consideration of access for emergency services, delivery vehicles and refuse collection vehicles.	SP5 IT5
D1.6	Development proposals should create places which are easy to get to and from, and easy to travel within, by all modes of transport. Movement on foot or by bicycle should be made as convenient as travelling by car.	SP5 SP6 IT5

D	Movement	Policy
D1.7	Development proposals should have regard to the Council's Mobility Strategy to develop and enable the implementation of sustainable methods of transport for developments in Stevenage.	SP5 IT4
D1.8	Development proposals on the periphery of Stevenage should provide pedestrian and cycle links to connect with existing public rights of way, allowing residents of new development to easily walk and cycle from the development into the countryside for leisure purposes.	SP5 IT5
D1.9	Walking routes should be short, overlooked by surrounding buildings, well-lit and not situated between blank frontages. They should make people feel safe when using them.	SP5 SP8 GD1
D1.10	Walking routes should not be alongside busy roads. They should be convenient, direct and safe routes through an area.	SP5 SP8 GD1
D1.11	New pedestrian and cycle routes should be waymarked and supported by distance markers to encourage leisure use of these routes.	SP5 IT7
D1.12	New pedestrian and cycle routes should be supported by seating in appropriate locations to encourage all potential users of the routes to use them.	SP5 SP6
D1.13	Best practice: Cycle and pedestrian paths should be segregated to avoid conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists	SP5 SP6
D1.14	Cycle parking should be located in prominent and secure locations to make it a more attractive option than using the car. In places where there is significant demand for cycle storage, provision should be made for basic bike maintenance facilities such as public foot pumps.	SP5 SP6 IT5
D1.15	Where major traffic routes cross over major pedestrian routes, they should be defined by wide crossings on the same level, lighted and landscaped.	SP5 IT4

D	Movement	Policy
D1.16	Subways or footbridges should be well lit and as short and as wide as possible. They should be visible throughout (the exit should be visible from the entrance) and CCTV should be installed.	SP5 GD1
D1.17	Cycling routes should run alongside vehicular roads and be physically segregated cycle routes, rather than marked on the road. They should also connect to the existing cycle network.	SP5 SP6
D2	Parking, servicing and utilities	
D2.1	Development proposals should provide short and long-term cycle parking facilities in accordance with the Council's Parking Provision SPD.	SP5 IT5
D2.2	Long-term cycle parking should be secure and covered and should be integrated into the initial design of the development rather than added as an afterthought.	SP5 IT5
D2.3	Best practice: Cycle parking should be accommodated within an individual site rather than as larger communal stores in order to discourage crime.	SP5 IT5
D2.4	Streets should incorporate soft landscaping, in particular trees, to combat air pollution from vehicle emissions. They should do so without creating a tunnel-like effect that will trap pollutants in the road corridor.	SP5 SP11 SP12 FP7 NH5
D2.5	Development proposals should consider tree selection from the outset, with regard to the Trees and Design Action Group's Trees in Hard Landscape: A Guide for Delivery.	SP12 NH5
D2.6	Development proposals should provide car parking in accordance with the Council's Parking Provision SPD.	SP5 IT5
D2.7	Garages and carports should be set back from the street frontage and located close to the property that they serve in order to avoid dead frontages.	SP5 IT5

D	Movement	Policy
D2.8	Garages and carports should not be provided as segregated blocks because these are not easily adaptable, do not allow spaces to be shared, and also suffer from a lack of natural surveillance.	SP5 IT5
D2.9	Large development proposals should take a creative approach to car parking, such as undercroft or basement parking, in order to preserve street frontages and use land more effectively.	SP5 IT5
D2.10	Car parking should be landscaped in order to minimise visual impact.	SP5 IT5
D2.11	Where security is a concern, car parking should be lit from dusk until dawn with energy efficient lighting.	SP5 IT5
D2.12	Where security is a concern, parking should be provided on several storeys. The visual impact should be reduced by 'wrapping around' single aspect flats or other uses.	SP5 IT5
D2.13	Development proposals should manage vehicle speeds as a product of site layout and street design. Speeds should not be managed through barriers, excessive signage or other unnecessary traffic calming measures.	SP5 SP8 IT4 GD1
D2.14	Streets should be designed for all levels of mobility, favouring gentle inclines and wide paths and crossings.	SP5
D2.15	Best practice: Development proposals should incorporate technologies to help visually impaired people navigate streets e.g. Soundscape.	SP5
D2.16	Residential development proposals should provide Mode 2 or Mode 3 electric vehicle charging points.	SP5 IT5
D2.17	Best practice: Where electric vehicle charging points are provided within garages, they should be sited at an accessible position near the entrance.	SP5 IT5

D	Movement	Policy
D2.18	Where electric vehicle charging points are provided they should be sited so as to serve the maximum number of users at any one time.	SP5 IT5
D2.19	Commercial and employment development proposals should provide Mode 3 or Mode 4 electric vehicle charging points.	SP5 IT5
D2.20	Mode 4 charging points should be limited to a one hour stay.	SP5 IT5
D2.21	Where electric vehicle charging points are provided for commercial and employment development, they should be supported by appropriate signage, marked for “electric vehicle charging only”, protected from collision, and sited so as to avoid becoming an obstruction or trip hazard.	SP5 IT5
D2.22	Charging point controls, display and sockets or tethered plugs must be placed at a height of between 0.75 and 1.2 metres from the ground as per the British Standard on the design of buildings BS8300-1:2018 and BS8300-2:2018 .	SP5 IT5
D2.23	Electric vehicle charging points should be accessible to all. PAS 1899:2022 provides essential specifications on how to provide accessible public charge points for electric vehicles.	SP5 IT5
D2.24	All development proposals should provide electric vehicle charging points in accordance with the Council's Parking Provision SPD.	SP5 IT5

Part E | Nature

Public open spaces are open to all. They provide opportunities for comfort, relaxation, stimulation and social interaction in a safe environment, to encourage interaction in an open space, its location and structure needs careful consideration along with its activities, versatility and how it can be used and accessed by all groups of people.

E	Nature	Policy
E1	Open spaces	
E1.1	Development proposals should, as far as possible, protect, maintain and extend Stevenage's network of open spaces and green corridors.	SP12 NH1-4 NH7
E1.2	Development proposals should consider existing open space features and include them within proposals wherever possible.	SP12 NH1-4 NH7
E1.3	New open spaces should be located so that it makes the most of existing natural features such as footpaths, trees and water.	SP8 SP12 GD1 NH7
E1.4	New open spaces should be designed to be multi-functional in order to maximise their attractiveness and meet the needs of all groups within the community.	SP8 SP12 GD1 NH7
E1.5	New open spaces should be designed to integrate with existing and proposed active travel routes so that they can be used for physical activity while people are travelling to their destination.	SP8 SP12 GD1 NH7
E1.6	Best practice: New open spaces should have waymarked routes e.g. circular walking and running routes with distance markers.	SP8 SP12 GD1 NH7
E2	Biodiversity	
E2.1	Planting schemes should include wildlife friendly planting which allows for refuge for animals as well as a food source for insects and pollinators.	SP12 NH5
E2.2	Larger development proposals should provide a range of habitats, with regard to the Council's Amenity Tree Management Policy.	SP12 NH5

E	Nature	Policy
E3	Play spaces	
E3.1	Larger development proposals should incorporate play spaces, including unequipped playscapes, for children and young people.	SP5 SP8 GD1 NH7
E3.2	Play spaces should be provided in a way that provides distinct areas for different age groups, whilst allowing parents and carers to maintain visual contact.	SP5 SP8 GD1 NH7
E3.3	Play spaces should be fully accessible for young people of all abilities and should support inclusive play.	SP5 SP8 GD1 NH7
E3.4	Play spaces should include suitable tree planting to allow for shading and should provide benches, litter bins, and wider areas of open space for picnics and games. They should be highly visible and well overlooked with hard wearing, low maintenance equipment and suitable fencing to prevent access by dogs.	SP5 SP8 GD1 NH5 NH7
E4	Water Management	
E4.1	Development proposals should maximise the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to mitigate and where possible, reduce the risk of flooding.	SP11 FP2 FP3
E4.2	SuDS features should be designed to provide natural habitat and improve water quality, as well as to reduce flood risk.	SP11 SP12 FP2 FP3 FP7
E4.3	Development proposals should consider the ongoing management of SuDS features at the outset of the design process.	SP11 FP2 FP3
E4.4	Best practice: Development proposals should incorporate green or blue roofs and living walls.	SP11 FP2 FP3

Part F | Public Spaces

The quality of the spaces between buildings is as important as the buildings themselves. Public spaces are streets, squares and other spaces that are open to all. They are the setting for most movement. The design of a public space encompasses its siting and integration into the wider network of routes as well as its various elements. These include areas allocated to different users – pedestrians, cyclists and cars – for different purposes such as movement or parking, hard and soft surfaces, street furniture, lighting, signage and public art.

F	Public spaces	Policy
F1	Attractiveness	
F1.1	Development proposals should consider and integrate public spaces from the outset of the design process.	SP8 GD1
F1.2	New public spaces should be designed for use during all seasons and by all members of the community.	SP8 GD1
F1.3	Best practice: New and enhanced public spaces should incorporate public conveniences, drinking fountains and accessible seating to encourage visits by all groups within the community and to encourage people to spend time in these spaces.	SP8 GD1
F1.4	New public spaces should be designed so they are multi-functional and encourage people to visit the spaces for a range of activities.	SP8 GD1
F1.5	New public spaces should be uncluttered and should not reduce accessibility through the use of inappropriately sited street furniture pieces that can hinder access, especially for mobility impaired users and pushchairs.	SP8 GD1
F1.6	Best practice: New signage within public spaces should be mounted on existing structures.	SP8 GD1
F1.7	Development proposals should ensure the long-term viability of street furniture in order to prevent products creating eyesores in the future.	SP8 GD1

F	Public spaces	Policy
F1.8	Public spaces should include extensive soft landscaping that is integrated into the external areas of a development site, providing shelter, screening intrusive elements of the public realm, and acting as green corridors.	SP8 SP12 GD1 NH5
F1.9	Landscaping of public spaces should be designed so that it is easy to maintain and manage, wildlife friendly, and tolerant to climate change.	SP8 SP12 GD1 NH5
F1.10	Best practice: Where space for traditional landscaping is limited, buildings fronting public spaces should incorporate green walls as an alternative.	SP8 SP12 GD1 NH5
F2	Safety	
F2.1	Public spaces should be well-lit in the interests of safety. Light pollution, including glare, skyglow, light trespass and clutter, should be avoided to minimise impacts on the environment.	SP8 GD1
F2.2	Street lighting should be decorative as well as functional and should enliven the whole of the area in a visually coherent and interesting manner.	SP8 GD1
F2.3	Development proposals should coordinate lighting with adjacent sites in order to prevent excessive clutter.	SP8 GD1
F2.4	Lighting within car parking areas should be sufficient for car drivers to see pedestrians and also be appropriate for pedestrians to see and be seen going to and from parked cars.	SP8 GD1
F2.5	Lighting within car parking areas should be mounted horizontally (0 degrees tilt) at a height of 4-5m. Bollards should not be relied upon as the primary source of lighting.	SP8 GD1
F2.6	Development proposals should maximise the natural surveillance of public spaces.	SP8 GD1
F2.7	Buildings should be designed so that windows and doors face out onto public spaces.	SP8 GD1

F	Public spaces	Policy
F2.8	Buildings should be designed so that the most frequently used rooms overlook public spaces.	SP8 GD1
F2.9	Buildings should be designed so that entrances are clearly visible and accessible from both the street and within the building. Recessed entrances should be avoided.	SP8 GD1
F2.10	Natural surveillance should not be prevented by the siting of buildings or the design of landscape features.	SP8 GD1
F2.11	Development proposals should not facilitate public access to private spaces.	SP8 GD1

Part G | Uses

Well-designed and sustainable places include a mix of uses that support everyday activities. They are designed to be inclusive and to meet the changing needs of people of different ages and abilities. They are also designed to be adaptable to a range of uses over time.

G	Uses	Policy
G1	A mix of uses	
G1.1	Community uses should be co-located wherever possible in order to support linked trips by active travel modes.	SP6 HC5
G1.2	Where appropriate, uses should be integrated into the same building to encourage their use e.g. combining leisure uses with health services and community facilities.	SP6 HC5 HC7
G1.3	Larger residential development proposals should incorporate a range of dwelling types, tenures and sizes in order to promote social diversity and social mobility, and to allow families to live close together.	SP7 HO8 HO9
G1.4	Affordable dwellings should be indistinguishable from market dwellings.	SP7 HO8
G1.5	Residential buildings should be designed so that they are capable of being adapted in future e.g. with larger roof spaces and taller floor-to-ceiling heights.	SP7 SP8 GD1
G1.6	New housing for older people should be designed to conform to HAPPI design principles.	SP7 HO10

Part H | Homes and Buildings

Well-designed homes and buildings are functional, accessible and sustainable. They provide internal environments and associated external spaces that support the health and well-being of their users and all who experience them.

They meet the needs of a diverse range of users, taking into account factors such as ageing population and cultural differences. They are adequate in size, fit for purpose and are adaptable to the changing needs of their occupants over time.

Successful buildings also provide attractive, stimulating and positive places for all, whether for activity, interaction, retreat or simply passing by.

H	Homes and buildings	Policy
H1	Health, comfort and safety	
H1.1	Major residential development proposals should have regard to the Building for Life criteria.	SP7 SP8 GD1
H1.2	New residential development should comply with the Government's Technical Housing Standards: nationally described space standard.	SP7 SP8 GD1
H1.3	New residential development should be restricted to areas with low ambient noise levels.	SP7 SP11 GD1 FP8
H1.4	Residential development proposals should incorporate noise mitigation wherever necessary to make development acceptable.	SP11 GD1 FP8
H1.5	Best practice: New residential developments should achieve acceptable internal noise levels whilst retaining operable windows.	SP11 GD1 FP8
H1.6	Residential development proposals should ensure that outdoor amenity spaces are not unduly impacted upon by noise.	SP11 GD1 FP8
H1.7	Best practice: Noise levels in outdoor amenity spaces should not exceed the 55dBLAeq (16 hour) range 50-55dB.	SP11 GD1 FP8

H	Homes and buildings	Policy
H1.8	Residential development proposals should comply with the separation distances set out at Appendix C of the local plan.	SP8 GD1
H2	External amenity and public spaces	
H2.1	All new dwellings should benefit from private outdoor amenity spaces, unless: a) The dwelling is a flat; b) The dwelling would be built in a central location; c) Public open space is easily accessible; and, d) A lack of private amenity space is necessary to achieve appropriate higher densities.	SP8 GD1
H2.2	Private amenity space should be positioned so that it is convenient for residents and not overlooked by neighbouring buildings.	SP8 GD1
H2.3	All new houses should benefit from a garden with an area of at least 50m ² and a depth of at least 10m. Gardens for larger detached houses should exceed this minimum standard.	SP8 GD1
H2.4	The shape and topography of gardens should ensure that they are useable.	SP8 GD1
H2.5	All new flatted developments should incorporate communal amenity space measuring at least 50m ² . For development proposals with more than five residential units, the area should equate to 10m ² per unit.	SP8 GD1
H2.6	Where new flatted developments do not incorporate communal amenity space, private amenity space (e.g. terraces or balconies) may be considered as an alternative.	SP8 GD1
H2.7	New employment and community buildings should incorporate cycle parking (including for adapted cycles), lockers, showers and changing rooms.	SP5 SP6 GD1 IT5
H2.8	New employment and community buildings should incorporate wheelchair and pushchair parking.	SP5 GD1

H	Homes and buildings	Policy
H2.9	New major employment and community buildings should incorporate informal sports facilities e.g. table tennis facilities.	SP5 HC8
H3	Sunlight, daylight and orientation	
H3.1	New dwellings should receive an adequate amount of daylight and sunlight. Development proposals will be assessed against the latest edition of the Building Research Establishment's Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice.	SP8 GD1
H3.2	Best practice: The depth of new dwellings should be constrained in order to limit the need for artificial lighting.	SP8 SP11 GD1 FP1
H3.3	Best practice: Living rooms and kitchens should be sited away from obstructions in order to maximise daylight and sunlight.	SP8 GD1
H3.4	Best practice: Primary frontages should be orientated to face south in order to maximise passive solar gain.	SP8 SP11 GD1 FP1
H4	Waste and recycling	
H4.1	Development proposals should have regard to the waste hierarchy, as follows: 1. Prevent waste 2. Re-use, recycle and compost 3. Dispose of waste	SP5 SP11 GD1
H4.2	Development proposals should incorporate appropriate waste and recycling storage facilities.	SP5 GD1
H4.3	Development proposals should conform to BS5906: Waste Management in Buildings.	SP5
H4.4	Facilities for recycling and composting should be located in close proximity to waste storage facilities in the interests of ease of use.	SP5 GD1

H	Homes and buildings	Policy
H4.5	Waste and recycling facilities should be appropriately screened in order to limit their visual impact.	SP8 GD1
H5	Servicing and utilities	
H5.1	New building services and equipment should be integrated within buildings.	SP8 GD1
H5.2	New building services and equipment should only be provided externally where they cannot be provided internally. In these cases, they should not amount to a dominant feature.	SP8 GD1
H5.3	Plant and machinery positioned on roofs should not be visible from the street or other public vantage points.	SP8 GD1
H5.4	Plant and machinery positioned on roofs should not preclude the future installation of renewable energy facilities.	SP8 GD1
H5.5	Where positioned externally, the design and materials used for plant, machinery, ducting and ancillary structures such as screening, should be consistent with those of the building.	SP8 GD1
H5.6	Where positioned externally, building services equipment should not obstruct daylight and sunlight or result in nuisance for occupiers of the building.	SP8 GD1
H5.7	Special consideration should be given to the installation of plant, machinery and ducting on listed buildings and in conservation areas.	SP8 SP13 GD1 NH10
H5.8	Plant and machinery should be positioned as close as possible to their end use.	SP8 GD1
H5.9	Access should be provided to plant and machinery in order to ensure convenient and safe servicing, replacement and removal.	SP8 GD1

Part I | Resources

Well-designed places and buildings conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and materials. Their design responds to the impacts of climate change. It identifies measures to achieve:

- mitigation, primarily by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and minimising embodied energy; and
- adaptation to anticipated events, such as rising temperatures and the increasing risk of flooding.

I	Resources	Policy
I1	Energy	
I1.1	Energy efficiency should be considered at the earliest stages of design.	SP11 FP1
I2	Sustainable construction	
I2.1	Development proposals should incorporate locally-sourced materials wherever possible.	SP11 FP1
I2.2	Development proposals should incorporate high thermal mass materials wherever possible.	SP11 FP1
I2.3	Development proposals should incorporate energy efficient appliances and control systems such as motion or light detection wherever possible.	SP11 FP1
I2.4	Development proposals involving the demolition of existing buildings should consider on-site recycling as an alternative to using virgin aggregates.	SP11 FP1
I3	Resilience	
I3.1	Development proposals should maximise natural ventilation.	SP11 GD1 FP1
I3.2	Development proposals should maximise passive solar gain, with frontages orientated to the south.	SP11 FP1

I	Resources	Policy
I3.3	Development proposals should limit potable water consumption to no more than 110 litres per person per day.	SP11 FP1

Part J | Lifespan

Well-designed places sustain their beauty over the long term. They add to the quality of life of their users and as a result, people are more likely to care for them over their lifespan. They have an emphasis on quality and simplicity.

J	Lifespan	Policy
J1	Management, maintenance and adaptability	
J1.1	Development proposals should be well designed to ensure that they are robust, durable and easy to look after.	SP8 GD1
J1.2	Development proposals should be designed to ensure that the maintenance and management responsibilities are clearly defined and that these roles are agreed by the necessary parties in advance.	SP8 GD1
J1.3	Development proposals should consider the changing needs in terms of health and mobility of the user. This is particularly relevant to private users of homes and gardens; such places should be designed to be flexible and able to adapt to the changing needs of the user.	SP8 GD1
J1.4	Development proposals should consider the provision of high-speed digital connectivity in order to ensure the provision of options and information for education, health, leisure, social interaction, businesses and home working.	SP8 GD1
J1.5	New shared spaces should be visible and easy to get to so that they are accessible to all users. They should also ensure that they are flexible so that they can be used for a variety of activities.	SP8 GD1

Appendix 1 | Residential extensions

The following guidance is applicable to proposals to extend or alter dwellings.

Overview

When considering a householder planning application, the main issues are usually:

- a) character and appearance; and
- b) neighbouring amenities.

In some cases, other issues may also be relevant, including but not limited to:

- c) parking;
- d) highway safety;
- e) heritage;
- f) ecology;
- g) sustainability; and
- h) flood risk and drainage.

This SPD only provides guidance on the first of these two issues: character and appearance, and neighbouring amenities. Guidance on the other issues can be found in other SPDs published by the Council and in guidance notes published by Hertfordshire County Council. If you are unsure which issues will be relevant to your proposal, you may wish to seek advice from an independent planning professional or take up the Council's pre-application advice service.

Character and appearance

For the purposes of assessing a planning application, the meaning of “character and appearance” is straightforward: the Council is concerned with how development, including householder development, will affect the look and feel of the area in which it takes place. This is reflected in Policy SP8 and Policy GD1 of the local plan, which require all new developments to achieve the highest standards of design and to respect their surroundings.

The impact a householder development will have on the character and appearance of an area depends on a number of characteristics, as set out in the table below.

Characteristic	Explanation
Form	The type of development being carried out, including how many storeys it would have and where it would take place on the property, for example a single-storey

Characteristic	Explanation
	side extension, a two-storey rear extension, a roof extension, etc.
Roof form	When referring specifically to roof form, this means the type of roof an extension would have, for example a flat roof, a gabled roof, a hipped roof, etc.
Size	The dimensions of the development i.e. its width, depth and height (including eaves and ridge height, as applicable).
Scale	How the dimensions of the development compare with other development. For example, if an extension would significantly increase the overall size of a property or cause it to appear much larger than its neighbours, the development might be considered to be “out of scale”.
Siting	Where a development would be positioned. For example, “sited to the rear of the property” or “sited 1m from the boundary of the property”.
Bulk	In the most straightforward sense, bulk simply means the three-dimensional space that a development would occupy. However, the ultimate effect of bulk on character and appearance can be influenced by other characteristics, such as roof form, materials and detailing. For example, an extension with a flat roof or an extension finished in sharply contrasting materials may appear “bulkier” than an extension of the same size which has a pitched roof and is finished in materials which blend in.
Massing	Massing is how the bulk of a development would be spread out. For example, it could be concentrated towards one side of a property or distributed relatively evenly.
Materials	Also referred to as “finishes”, this refers to the materials used on the external visible surfaces of a development and includes their type, colour and texture. For example, the walls of an extension might be finished in a textured red brick, smooth white render, or a type of timber cladding; pitched roofs might be finished with clay or concrete tiles; flat roofs are generally finished with some form of waterproof membrane; and window frames and doors might be timber (painted or stained), uPVC or powder-coated aluminium.

Characteristic	Explanation
Detailing	Any features of architectural interest, for example feature brickwork, quoins, windowsills, lintels, etc.
Roof pitch	The angle of the roof slope.
Fenestration	The arrangement of the windows.

With these characteristics in mind, general principles can be set out for how householder development should be designed.

Principle HD1: Design

Householder developments should be designed so that the form, materials and detailing are respectful of the original property and surrounding buildings.

This means that features such as windows, roof pitches, overhangs, gables and chimneys should all be consistent with those of the original property. For example, if the original property has a pitched roof, then any extensions should generally also have a pitched roof with the same roof pitch. The materials used should draw on the colour, type and texture of those used for the original building.

However, this does not mean that contemporary design will not be acceptable. Instead, contemporary design should represent a modern interpretation of the original building design, such that there remains a clear and obvious visual relationship between old and new. When done properly, contemporary design will be respectful of local character and will not detract visually from the original building.

Principle HD2: Size and scale

Householder developments should be designed to appear subordinate to the original property and should not cause a property to appear out of scale with its surroundings.

In practice, this means that any extensions should be smaller than the original property in terms of width, depth and height, whilst having the same or similar proportions. In addition, extensions should not cause a property to appear significantly wider, deeper or higher than neighbouring buildings. Where a property has been extended previously, the total effect of all of the extensions will be taken into account, rather than treating the newly-proposed extension in isolation.

Neighbouring amenities

In a planning context, “neighbouring amenities” are the things which allow the occupants of buildings surrounding a development to enjoy a good quality of life. For householder developments, the most relevant are:

- adequate privacy;
- a good outlook;
- sufficient natural light; and
- freedom from overbearing structures.

When assessing planning applications, the Council will seek to ensure that neighbouring amenities are preserved so far as is practicable. This is reflected in Policy GD1 of the local plan, which requires that new development does not lead to an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses or the surrounding area.

This does not mean that any adverse impact, no matter how small, will result in refusal of an application. It is recognised, for example, that even a very modest extension can result in some loss of light to neighbouring properties. What is important is that any impacts remain within reasonable bounds, such that neighbours continue to enjoy acceptable living conditions.

What constitutes “acceptable” will vary according to the individual circumstances of each case. For example, the occupants of a property in the town centre may not have the same expectations of privacy and outlook compared to the occupants of a property in a low-density suburb on the edge of the town.

Therefore, when considering applications, the Council will take into account the individual circumstances of each case and treat each proposal on its own merits. Nevertheless, developments should generally adhere to the principles set out below.

Privacy and outlook

Principle HD3: Privacy and outlook

Householder developments should:

- a) be orientated with regard to neighbouring dwellings;
- b) not deprive neighbouring occupiers of a reasonable outlook; and
- c) not result in new views over neighbouring private spaces.

Principle HD4: Separation distances

Householder developments should comply with the separation distances set out in the local plan (reproduced in Table 1 below for reference).

No. of Storeys	Type of Separation	Min. Distance
Between existing and new 2 storey or a mix of 1 and 2 storey dwellings	Back to back Back to side	25m 15m
Between new 2 storeys or a mix of 1 and 2 storey	Back to back Back to side	20m 12m
Over 2 storeys between existing and new dwellings	Back to back Back to side	35m 25m
Between new dwellings over 2 storeys in height	Back to back Back to side	30m 20m

Table 1 – Separation distances

Natural light

Principle HD5: Daylight and sunlight

Householder development should be designed to ensure that a satisfactory level of sunlight and daylight is afforded to the occupants of surrounding buildings.

To determine whether a proposal will afford neighbouring occupiers with adequate natural light, the Council will firstly apply one of two rules of thumb, known as the 45-degree and 25-degree rules.

The 45-degree rule is used where a proposed development would be located adjacent to a neighbouring window. The development and the neighbouring window are first viewed in plan form and lines are drawn outwards from the centre of the window at a 45-degree angle. If the proposed development intersects either of the lines, then it has failed the plan test.

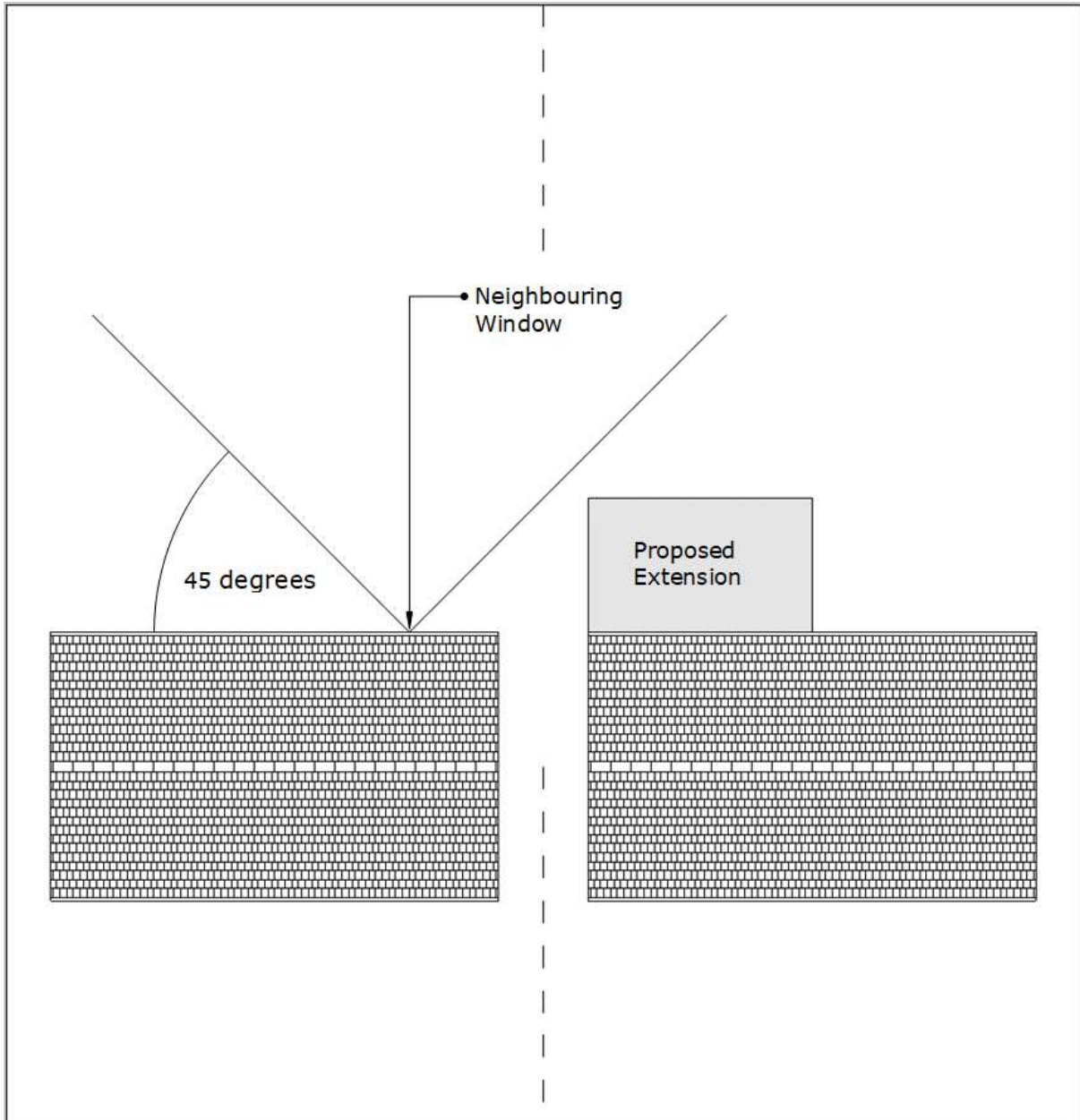


Figure 1 – The 45-degree test passed in plan

Figure 1 shows a proposed extension and adjacent neighbouring property in plan. Lines are drawn at a 45-degree angle from the centre of the neighbouring window. The lines are not intersected by the proposed extension, which means that the proposal has passed the test in plan.

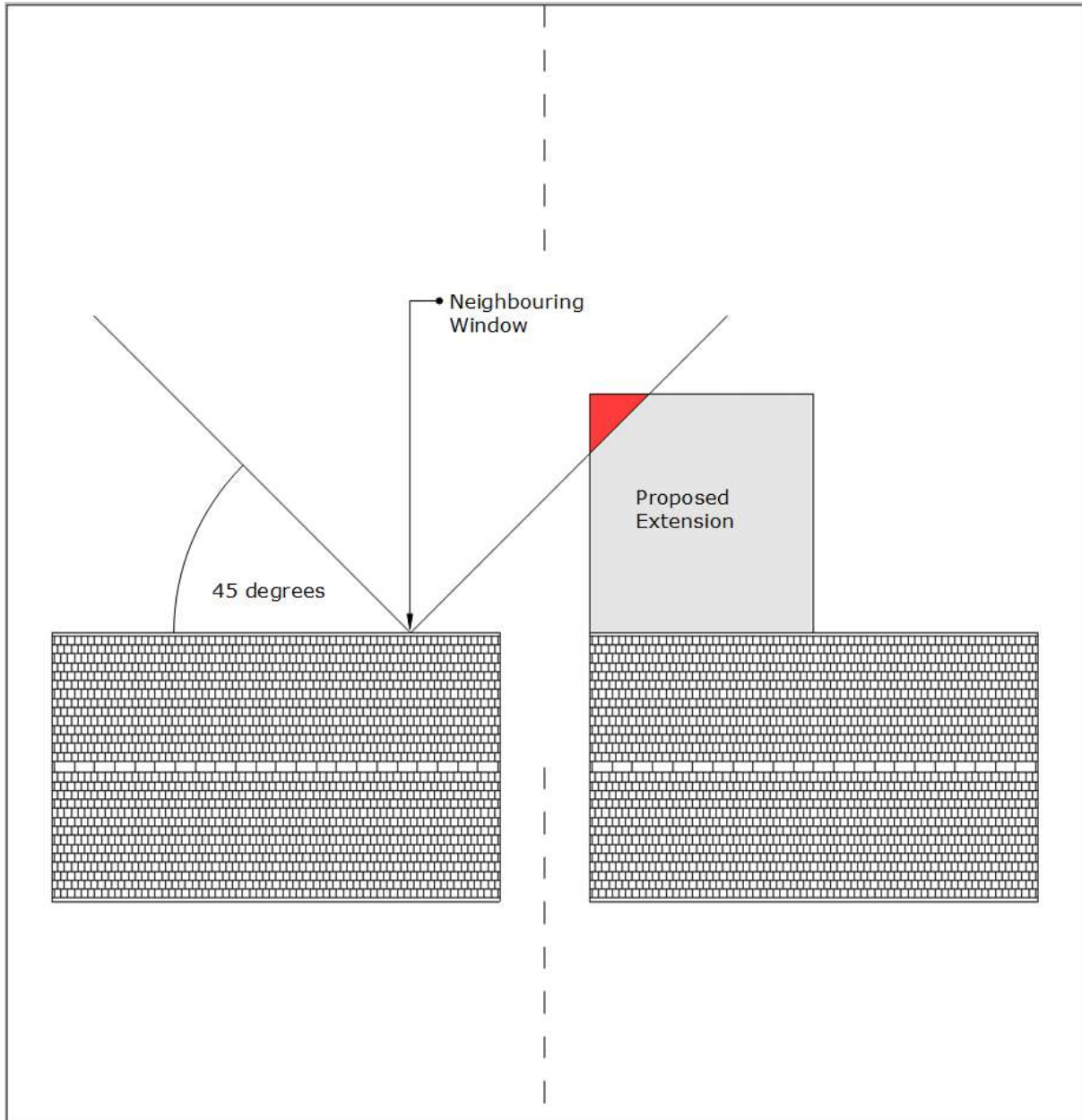


Figure 2 – The 45-degree test failed in plan

Figure 2 shows the same properties but this time the proposed extension is greater in depth. This results in a line being intersected, which means that the proposal has failed the test in plan.

The development and the neighbouring window are then viewed in elevation and lines are drawn upwards from the centre¹ of the window at a 45-degree angle. If the proposed development intersects either of the lines, then it has failed the elevation test.

¹ If the window is a floor-to-ceiling window or glazed door, the centre point is assumed to be at a height of 1.6m above ground level.

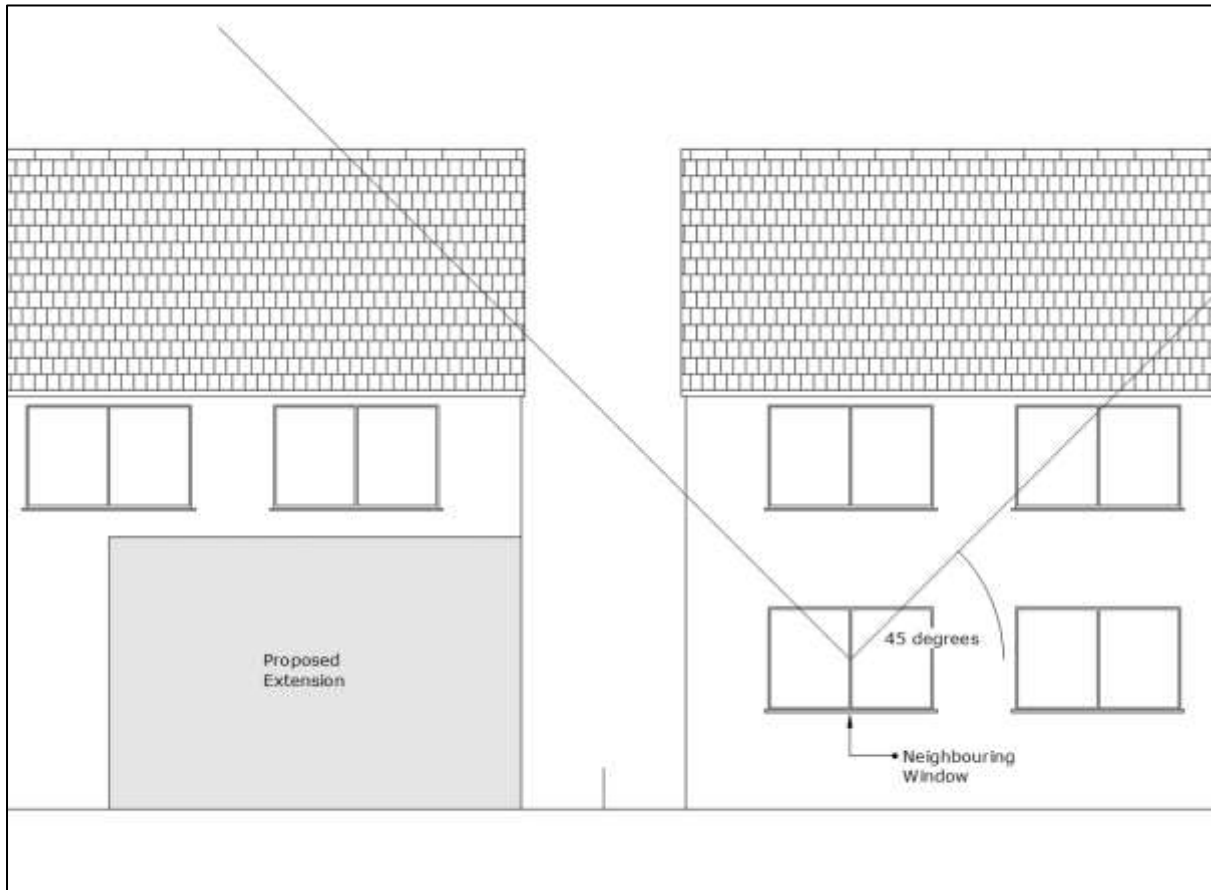


Figure 3 – The 45-degree test passed in elevation

Figure 3 shows the same properties again but this time viewed in elevation. Lines are now drawn at a 45-degree angle upwards from the neighbouring window. These lines pass comfortably over the proposed extension, which means that the proposal has passed the test in elevation.

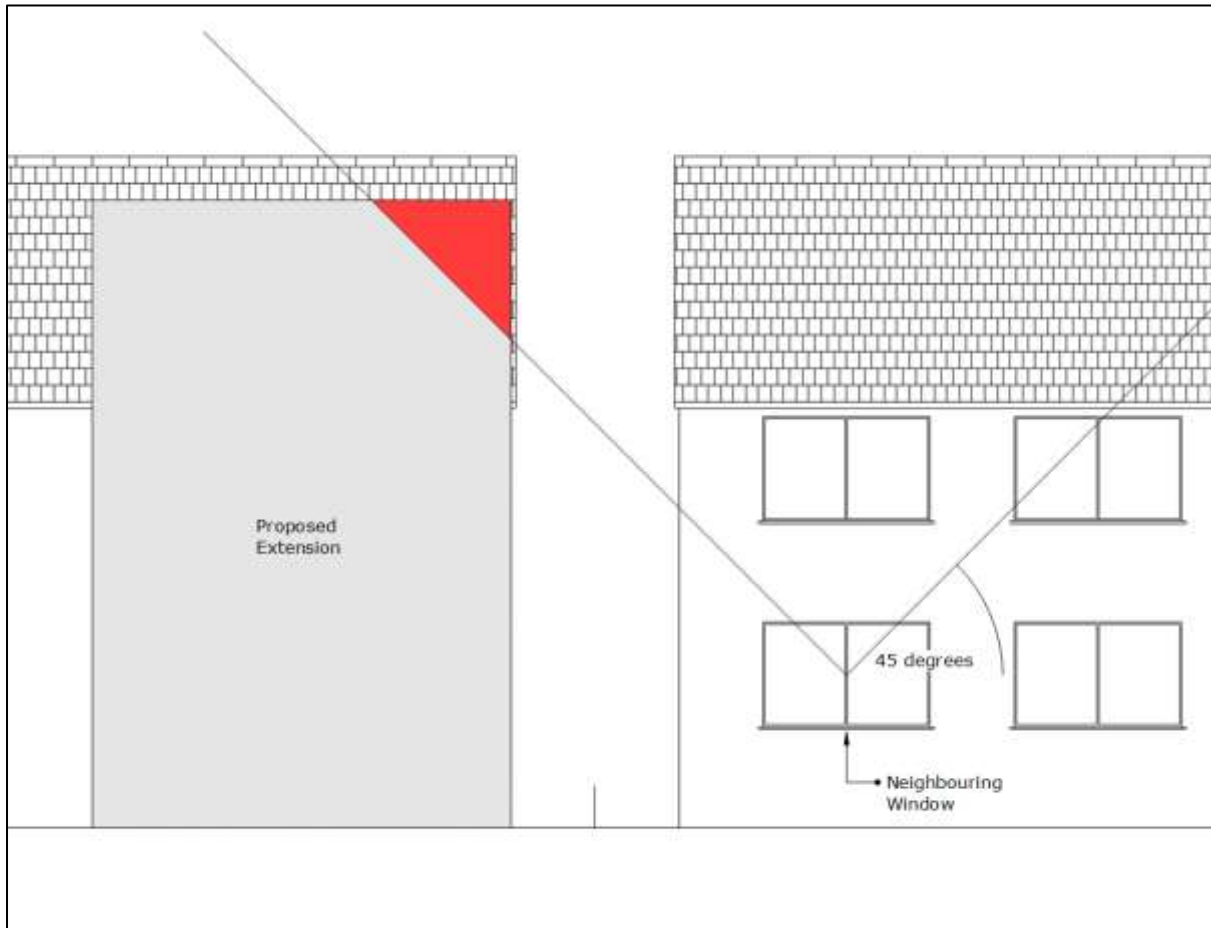


Figure 4 – The 45-degree test failed in elevation

In Figure 4 the test is repeated with a much taller extension. The additional height causes a line to be intersected by the extension, which means that the proposal has failed the test in elevation.

If the proposed development passes either the plan test or elevation test, then it complies with the 45-degree rule overall. It is only if both tests are failed that the proposed development violates the rule.

The 25-degree rule is used where a proposed development would be located opposite to a neighbouring window. For this test, the development and the neighbouring window are viewed in section and a line is drawn outwards from the centre of the window at a 25-degree angle. If the proposed development intersects the line, then it has failed the test.

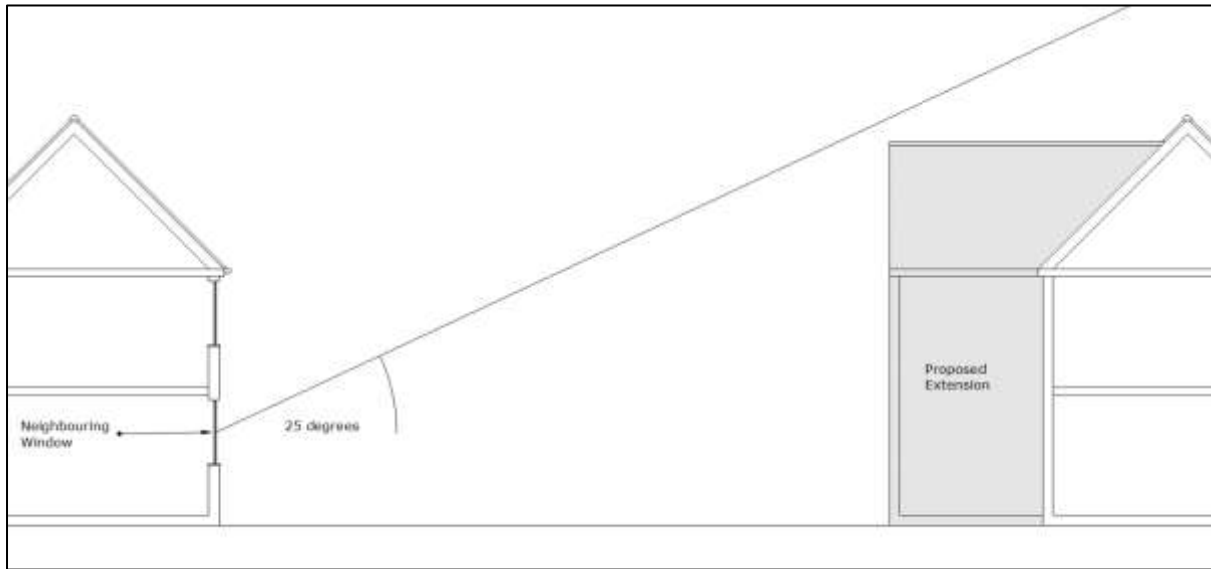


Figure 5 – The 25-degree test passed

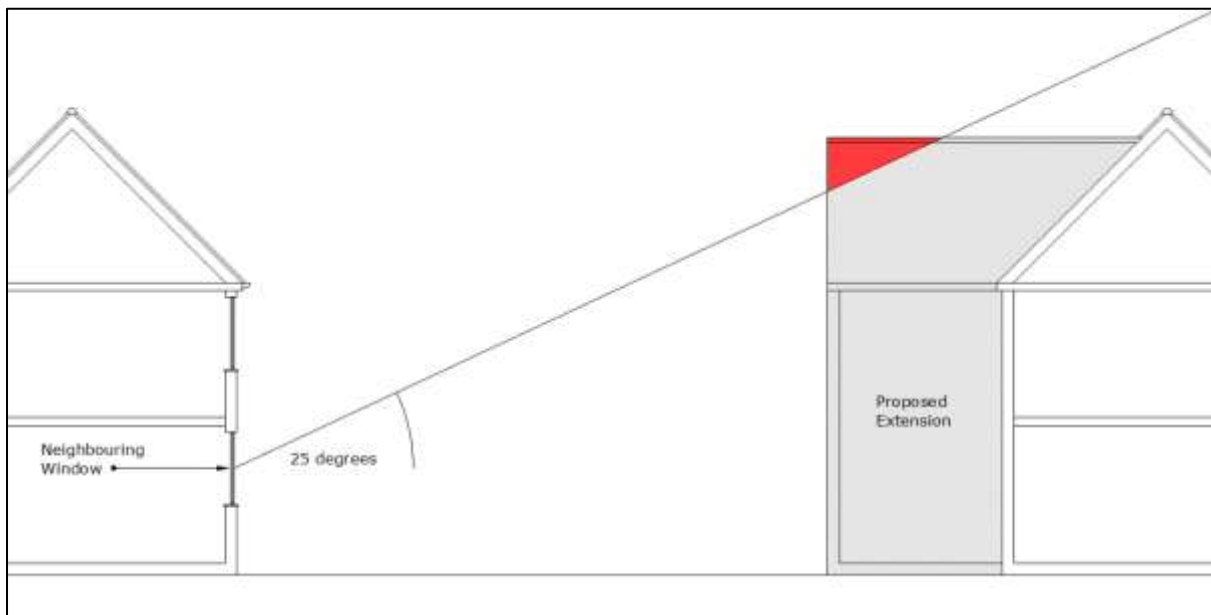


Figure 6 – The 25-degree test failed

If the test is passed, the proposed development complies with the 25-degree rule; if the test is failed, it violates the rule.

As with all rules of thumb, the 45-degree and 25-degree rules should not be applied rigidly. There may be occasions where the Council has reason to be concerned about natural light even where a development complies with the applicable rules and conversely, there may be occasions where sufficient light is provided despite a development violating the rules. In these circumstances, the Council will expect

applications to be supported by a daylight and sunlight assessment prepared in accordance with the latest Building Research Establishment (BRE) guidelines².

Overbearing appearance

Principle HD6: Overbearing appearance

Householder developments should not appear overbearing when viewed from neighbouring properties.

A structure is described as overbearing when it appears to dominate or loom over its surroundings from a given viewpoint. This is usually due to a combination of being too large in size and too close to a shared boundary but other factors can play a role, such as the form of the structure and the underlying land levels. It is also highly context-dependent, such that what may be considered to appear overbearing in one context may be judged to have a negligible impact in another.

Porches and front extensions

Principle HD7: Porches and front extensions

Porches and front extensions should:

- a) be limited to a single storey;
- b) project no more than 1.5 metres from the front elevation where they abut the boundary of another property;
- c) appear subordinate to the original property;
- d) respect the architectural integrity of groups of homes and maintain the balance between semi-detached properties or terraces; and
- e) ensure that parking remains in accordance with the latest published standards.

The front of a property is usually its most visible side and the entrance to a property is its focal point. Porches and front extensions can therefore have a much greater impact on the appearance of a property than a similarly-sized rear or side extension. For this reason, they must be carefully designed so that they integrate well with the original property and other properties on the street.

Two storey front extensions will rarely be acceptable due to their impact on character, appearance, and neighbouring amenities. However, where the site

² For further information see bregroup.com

context is such that these impacts would be diminished, a two storey front extension may be approved.

Rear extensions

Rear extensions generally have the least impact on character and appearance, since they are usually largely hidden from public view. For this reason, the rear of a property will often offer the most opportunities for extensions. However, it remains important to consider neighbouring amenities, with the depth and height of the extension, as well as its proximity to any shared boundaries, being the key considerations.

Principle HD8: Rear extensions

Single storey rear extensions should:

- a) project no more than 3.5 metres from the rear elevation where they would be within 1m of a shared boundary;
- b) project no more than 4 metres from the rear elevation in all other cases;
- c) measure no more than 3 metres to the eaves; and
- d) measure no more than 4 metres to the ridge.

Two storey rear extensions should:

- e) project no more than 2.5 metres from the rear elevation where they would be within 1m of a shared boundary;
- f) not exceed the eaves or ridge heights of the original property;
- g) ensure that side-facing windows are obscure-glazed and non-opening unless the lower sill is more than 1.7 metres above the floor of the room in which the window is installed.

In all cases, balconies or roof terraces will be likely to have an adverse impact on the privacy of neighbouring occupiers and for this reason, will rarely be considered acceptable.

Exceptions to the above criteria may be considered where joint or simultaneous applications are made for adjoining dwellings.

It should also be noted that where adjoining properties have different building lines or land levels, the size of the proposed extension should be adjusted to compensate. For example, if the land slopes down to a neighbouring property, the extension will appear taller, so its height or depth should normally be reduced. Conversely, if the

neighbouring property has already been extended, the extension will be less likely to appear overbearing or adversely impact light and outlook, so it may be possible to increase its size.

Side extensions

Principle HD9: Side extensions

Side extensions should:

- a) appear subordinate to the original property;
- b) respect the openness of the area and the rhythm of spaces between properties on the street;
- c) avoid creating the appearance of a terrace where one does not exist already;
- d) maintain the balance between semi-detached properties or terraces;
- e) not appear overbearing or create an alleyway effect when adjacent to a road or footpath;
- f) ensure that parking remains in accordance with the latest published standards.

Side extensions which project to the front or rear of a property will be considered against Principles HD7 and HD8, as appropriate.

The simplest way to ensure that a side extension will appear subordinate is to set the front face of the extension back from the front elevation of the original house. For two storey extensions, it may also be necessary to set the ridge of the extension below the main ridge of the property.

To avoid a terracing effect, two storey side extensions should normally leave a gap of 1 metre to the adjacent side boundary of the property. Terracing is unlikely to be an issue for single storey side extensions but it is good practice to leave sufficient space for rainwater goods.

Roof extensions

Roof extensions can have a significant impact on the appearance of a property and the street scene as a whole. Light and ventilation can often be provided by rooflights, which are less visually intrusive, limit overlooking, and are also usually permitted development.

Principle HD10: Roof extensions

Roof extensions should:

- a) be contained within the footprint of the original property;
- b) occupy less than half of the existing roof slope;
- c) not exceed the height of the ridge of the original property;
- d) not extend below the sill height of any new windows;
- e) provide a gap of at least 500mm to the eaves and to either side;
- f) respect the architectural integrity of groups of homes and maintain the balance between semi-detached properties or terraces;
- g) respect the roof form of the original property; and
- h) respect the existing fenestration of the property.

The raising of the ridge height of a dwelling will rarely be acceptable.

Appendix 2 | Shopfront design

The following guidance is applicable to proposals to create or alter shopfronts.

Window Displays

Shop frontages should be largely glazed to maintain a window display. Solid frontages (including obscured glass) will be discouraged.

Vertical glazing bars (mullions) should be used to subdivide large windows in traditional shopfronts to help visually relate the shopfront with the upper elevations of the building.

Entrances

The design of the door should be in keeping with the other elements of the shopfront. The solid bottom panel should align with the stallriser. The top of the door should align with the transom (if present).

Decorative tiling should be retained (if present) and reinstatement is encouraged.

All new build shop units and shopfronts should be designed to be fully accessible to everyone.

In the case of existing buildings, particularly where a new shop front is proposed, the following guidance should be followed:

- Shops that have a change in level from pavement to shop floor surface can usually incorporate ramped access into or within the shop.
- Entrance doors should be accessible to all, particularly wheelchair users and people with limited manual dexterity. 1000mm minimum clear door width in new buildings and 775mm door width in existing buildings where a new shop front or alterations to a shop front are proposed.

Shopfront Recess

Existing shopfront recesses should be retained.

Removable timber or metal lattice style shutters are often more appropriate to protect recessed shop entrances than horizontally-operated lattice security gates, but they should not extend across windows.

New recesses in shopfronts will be strongly discouraged due to their potential for attracting anti-social behaviour.

Fascia

The fascia should be of a suitable size and proportion in relation to the building and should not normally extend above the cornice or below the architrave as it would upset the overall balance and proportions of a shopfront or parade

Fascia signs should not obscure or damage existing architectural features. Deep box fascia which project beyond the shopfront frame should be avoided

Lettering on fascia signs should be proportionate to the scale of the shopfront. To aid identification, fascia signs should include the street number of the premises

Where a shopfront and fascia extend across two or more shop unit bays, it is not acceptable to remove the intervening pilasters as it would:

- weaken the frame's visual support to the upper floors; and
- disrupt the character and rhythm of a shopping frontage created by the widths of individual shopfronts

Pilasters

New pilasters are preferably placed in line with solid wall, not windows above, to emphasise their function. This is particularly important in the case of shopping frontages on sloping sites where existing stepped profiles of fascia and stallrisers should be preserved or reintroduced wherever possible.

Stallrisers

Stallrisers consist of solid elements below shop windows. They form a base to the shopfront display, and prevent the glazing from being damaged or soiled.

Where stallrisers are provided, they should be at least 300mm high or to the top of the pilaster base or door panel and faced in appropriate materials for the context. They should not provide ledges that can be sat upon. Glazing should be brought to the front of a stallriser.

Stallrisers should be retained and generally incorporated to any new shopfront on a period building.

Colour and materials

Materials should be chosen for their durability and appropriateness to their location. Traditional materials such as timber, stone and render are the most appropriate for new shopfronts, particularly for listed buildings and in conservation areas.

More contemporary materials such as colour-coated steel, aluminium and bronze instead of timber may be appropriate in some circumstances.

Existing glazed brickwork or tiling should be retained.

Colour schemes for shopfronts and in particular the projecting framework should be carefully considered, particularly in conservation areas and for listed buildings.

Proposals should be accompanied by full details of materials, finishes and colours (or sample and specification cards).

Folding shopfronts

Folding shopfronts are not generally acceptable, particularly those on historic buildings such as listed buildings and those in Conservation Areas. When open, they erode the appearance of the shopfront, creating a visual void, and can increase disturbance to neighbouring properties, particularly in the case of food and drink premises. When closed they appear as a row of doors rather than a shopfront. This creates a heavier appearance than a shopfront mullion and reduces the area of glass in the shopfront.

Lightwells / grilles

Pavement lights or small lightwells covered with metal grilles are typically found in front of shopfronts. These provide light into the areas beneath whilst allowing shoppers close inspection of the window display.

Creating open lightwells with railings in front of a shopfront is not generally acceptable as it prevents window shopping and disrupts the buildings relationship to the rhythm of the street. This is also the case if the shopfront has been converted into residential accommodation.

Signs, advertisements and hoardings

Shop and business signs should relate well to the character, scale and architectural features of the building and respect their local context.

Properties should only have one main fascia sign and one ancillary projecting or hanging sign per street frontage. Two projecting signs may be appropriate in cases of large shopfronts stretching across two or more shop units.

Too many adverts/signs on a property contribute to visual clutter and can detract from the appearance of the street scene. Whilst signs that are unsympathetically designed can cause significant harm to the building and the local townscape.

Projecting and hanging signs

Projecting and hanging signs should normally be level with the fascia rather than below or above it. They should be positioned to the side of the shopfront at fascia level.

Signs at upper floor levels will be discouraged. Advertising for upper floor premises by lettering on windows or by suspended banners on large frontages will only be considered acceptable where advertising a specific event for a temporary period.

Advert signs, including those on canopies/blinds, should:

- be considered as an integral part of a shopfront or building, designed in from the outset with new structures; and
- be in harmony with the existing building, and neighbouring ones, in terms of their proportions, design and materials.



Canopies, awnings and blinds

Blinds can add colour and interest to the street scene. However, it is important to ensure that they do not dominate a shopfront or shop parade.

Shopfront canopies and blinds are only likely to be acceptable where they are:

- retractable;
- traditional canvas;
- blind box integrated with the overall design;
- attached between the fascia and shopfront; and
- flush with the fascia level.

In general, all blinds should be designed and installed to:

- ensure public safety;
- incorporate a minimum of 2.3 metres between the bottom of the blind and the pavement; and
- incorporate a minimum of 1 metre between the blind and the kerb edge.

Retractable awnings and blinds

Retracting awnings and blinds do not normally require planning permission, although they may require advertisement consent in certain cases. They should:

- not obscure or damage the fascia and other important features of the shopfront and buildings;
- be appropriate in position, design and materials to the character and scale of both the shopfront, building and locality and not have conflicting and over-dominant shapes.

Fixed canopies require planning permission. Acrylic / plastic “Dutch blinds”, or similarly reflective materials will be strongly discouraged, due to their bulk and materials and the resulting visual clutter.

Canvas blinds are often characteristic features of historic shopfronts and should therefore be retained or replaced using a similar design – acrylic or plastic blinds are not normally suitable.

Canopies or blinds with signage (a letter or words for advertising purposes), are treated as advertisements and therefore advertisement consent will be required rather than planning permission.

Shopfront security

Security shutters can be visually unattractive and create a 'dead', hostile appearance (especially out of opening hours), which can affect the commercial viability of an area and harm the pedestrian experience. We want to minimise the impacts on the appearance of the shopfront, the building and the character of the area.

Shutters

SBC strongly encourages internal rather than external shopfront security measures. Other forms of enhanced shopfront security should be considered instead of external shutters. For example, improved internal lighting, alarm systems, the use of toughened or laminated glass, etc.

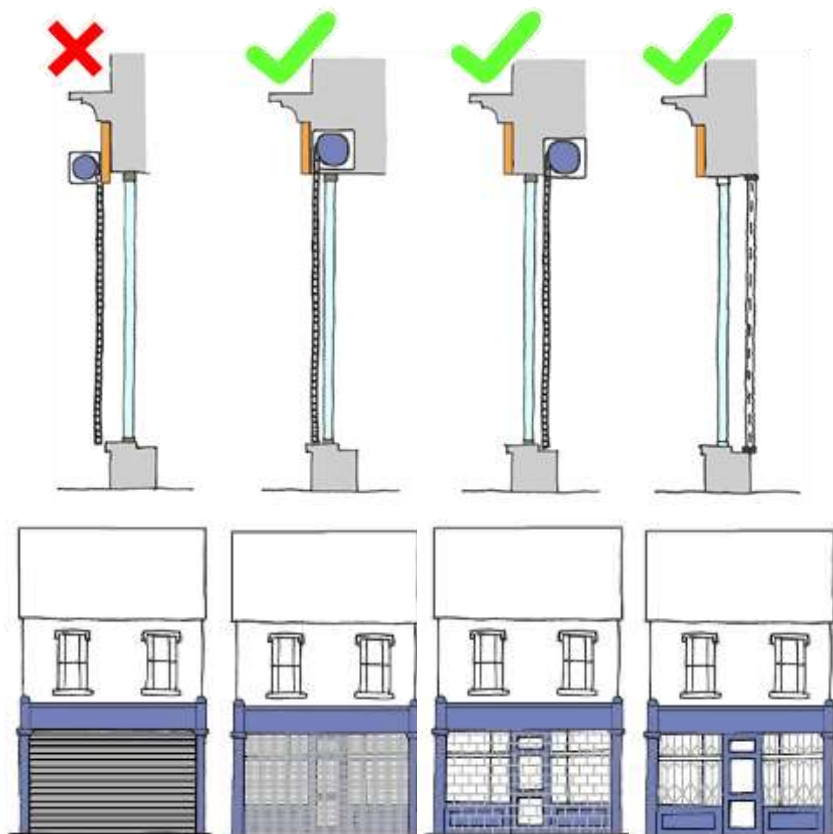
In cases where external measures (shutters, grilles or alarm boxes, etc.) are proposed they would only be permitted where they do not harm the character of shopfronts, such as internal brick bond grilles or collapsible gates.

External security shutters will normally require planning permission, whilst internal shutters normally do not. Where internal shutters are installed they should be set back to leave a window display.

In the case of listed buildings, the installation of any shopfront security measures, external or internal, will require listed building consent. On listed buildings, there will be a presumption against the use of external security shutters and grilles in favour of internal.

Where an external shutter is proposed it may only be considered acceptable provided it is integrated into the shopfront in terms of design, materials and colour. External measures should avoid using solid roller shutters. This includes the 'pin-hole' versions that rely upon internal illumination for any transparent effect. These designs have negative environmental impacts including:

- obscuring the shopfront and hiding window displays;
- attracting graffiti;
- preventing natural surveillance;
- creating a hostile and unsafe appearance in streets and shopping centres; and
- being visually unattractive.



Grilles

Roller grilles are preferable to solid or pin-hole shutters as they provide security without obscuring window displays and allow views of the shop interior, which enhances surveillance and security.

Removable or collapsible grilles can be used internally or externally and in both cases allow a certain degree of visibility. These only require planning permission if installed externally. However, listed building consent will also be required for internal grilles in listed buildings.

Removable grilles are expected to remain in place only outside trading hours and should be stored inside at all other times. Any fixings should be discretely placed and must not harm architectural features or mouldings.

Where there is a recessed entrance, it is preferable to install 'Concertina style gate' between the openings.

Shutter boxes

Shutter boxes should be discrete and should not project forward of the fascia or obscure any architectural features. They should be concealed wherever possible, for example set behind or within the fascia panel, the guide rails concealed within the frame of the shopfront and the shutter should close onto the stallriser.

Finishes

All grilles and shutters should have an acceptable finish. They should:

- be coloured (painted, powder coated or stove enamelled) to match the rest of the shopfront, including signs.
- not be uncoated shutters, galvanised steel, a milled finish or anodised aluminium as these are not considered acceptable finishes.

In the exceptional cases where solid shutters are acceptable, original designs by artists will be encouraged provided they respect their location, particularly in Conservation Areas.

Burglar Alarms

Burglar alarm devices must be sited so that they are both adequately visible as a deterrent but do not detract from the visual character of the shopfront.

Outdoor seating & spill out displays

Many shops, particularly cafes, restaurants, greengrocers or hardware shops use an area in front of the shop for tables and chairs or to exhibit goods for sale.

Such areas must ensure that fire tracks throughout pedestrian areas are kept clear to ensure access for emergency vehicles. Outdoor areas may require planning permission and advice should be sought from the Development Management Team. Care should be taken to avoid obstruction and to allow access for all users.

Properties wishing to use the public realm for tables, chairs or to exhibit goods for sale must ensure that waste and recycling is managed to avoid it escaping and causing street litter. Businesses have a duty of care to dispose of their waste correctly.

Cash machines

Cash machines require planning permission and, in the case of listed buildings, listed building consent. Illuminated advertising for cash machines should be discreet and is subject to advertisement consent.

Cash machines are only likely to be acceptable provided they are:

- treated as an integral part of a building's design wherever possible;
- not dominant in the shop display frontage in terms of size or materials;
- positioned sensitively and not be located where queuing could cause problems;
- with minimal amount of display material;
- located on the busiest elevation of a building to reduce the risk of robbery;
- fully accessible to people with disabilities in both location and detailed arrangement; and
- in existing bank buildings of traditional design, they are most successfully inserted into existing stone recesses or beneath window bays.

Advertisements

All advertisements affect the appearance of the building, structure or place where they are displayed, to the extent that they can sometimes be the most dominant feature in an urban setting.

Guidance on advertisements is contained within Outdoor advertisements and signs: A guide for advertisers³. The guidance in this document should still be applied as a matter of good practice where advertisements have deemed consent and do not require formal advertisement consent.

Advertisements and signs should:

- respect the form, fabric, design and scale of the host building and setting;
- serve as an integral part of the immediate surroundings; and
- be constructed of materials that are sympathetic to the host building and the surrounding area.

³ Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007. Available from [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

Interesting and unique styles of advertisements and signs will be considered acceptable where they are compatible with the host buildings and surrounding environment. Generally, advertisements will:

- only be acceptable at fascia level or below;
- not be considered acceptable where they impact upon public safety, such as being hazardous to vehicular traffic (e.g. block sight lines, emit glare) or pedestrian traffic (e.g. disrupt the free flow of pedestrian movement); and
- require detailed consideration if advertisements are proposed in conservation areas and on or near listed buildings given the sensitivity and historic nature of these areas or buildings. Any advertisements on or near a listed building or in a conservation area must not harm their character and appearance and must not obscure or damage specific architectural features of buildings.

A-boards

The licensing of portable advertising boards on the pavement (public highway) should be carefully controlled. Pedestrians can be put at risk through poorly sited advertisements.

Anyone proposing to place portable advertising boards on a highway that is maintained at public expense will require a highways licence from the Highways Authority. Where it is proposed to place a portable advertising board on a privately maintained forecourt, over which the public have limited access, a licence will not be required.

Advertising on street furniture

Free standing signs and signs on street furniture will not normally be accepted where they contribute to visual and physical clutter and create a hindrance to movement along the pavement or pedestrian footway.

Illumination

The illumination levels of advertisements should be in accordance with the standards set by the Professional Lighting Guide PLG05⁴.

The type, appearance and method (internal, external, lettering, neon, etc.) of illuminated signs should:

- be sympathetic to the design of the building on which it is located.
- be determined by the design of the building.
- not be flashing or intermittent, whether internal or external.
- be unobtrusively sized and sited.

⁴ Institute of Lighting Professionals, 2022. Available from theilp.org.uk

- be fixed and sized as discreetly as possible, particularly spotlights and trough lights.

Corporate designs involving internally illuminated signs may need to be modified where they are considered unsuitable, especially in residential areas, or conservation areas, or on listed buildings.

To ensure that an advertisement does not become unduly dominant in the street scene, disturb adjoining residents at night, or cause safety hazards to drivers, consideration should be given to the:

- intensity of illumination;
- surface area to be illuminated; and
- positioning and colours.

Internally illuminated box signs are discouraged. Generally, the internal illumination of individual letters, rather than the whole fascia or projecting sign on a shopfront, will be more appropriate.

Hoardings

Where advertisement consent is required for the display of hoardings, the following guidance will be applicable.

Advertisement hoardings or posters will not usually be acceptable, or will be carefully controlled:

- in predominantly residential areas.
- in conservation areas.
- on or near listed buildings to ensure that they do not detract from the areas and building's character and appearance.

However, if an area has a mix of uses or is predominantly in commercial use some poster or hoarding advertising may be acceptable where they satisfactorily relate to the scale of the host building or feature and its surroundings.

They should be designed and positioned as an integral feature of the building. Hoardings will not be considered acceptable:

- in locations where they may prevent or significantly damage views or obscure light;
- where they are forward of the face of adjoining buildings;
- where they project above roof ridge/eaves level;

- where they obscure architectural features or landmarks (including windows or window recesses); and
- on side walls where they would be unduly dominant.

Temporary poster hoardings used to screen buildings or construction sites while work is being carried out have deemed consent under The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 for commercial, industrial or business uses only. This deemed consent is not available for any residential development and is also not available in conservation areas.

The impact of illumination will be taken into consideration and where it is considered to be a nuisance or out of character with the area then it will not be considered acceptable.

Shroud / banner advertisements

Shroud advertisements come in a range of forms but are generally large- scale and can cover the entire elevation of a building. As a result of the scale and size of shroud advertisements their appearance can create a conflict with the surrounding environment and the streetscene and, where the advertisement partially obscures a building, the visual appearance of the building itself. However, they can help to shield unsightly construction work.

Therefore, given the scale and size of shroud advertisements these types of advertisement proposals will only be considered acceptable primarily:

- in commercial areas
- where they screen buildings under construction, alteration or refurbishment

If considered acceptable they will only be allowed for a temporary period and should be removed upon completion of the works or at the end of the approved period, whichever is sooner. Longer consents will require additional advertisement consent.

The erection of a banner or shroud advertisement may require a specific licence from the Highways Authority. If advertisement consent is granted for a banner or shroud, this does not indicate that a licence will also be granted.

Shroud on scaffolding will only be permitted where:

- the scaffolding covers the entire elevation of the building and the netting on the scaffolding contains a 1:1 image of the completed building which is undergoing construction work (scaffolding is only to be erected for the purposes of carrying out building works and will be removed upon completion of the works); and

- the advertisement covers no more than 20% of each elevation and is not fragmented. It must respect the architectural form and scale of the host building. Where shroud and banner advertisements are considered acceptable on listed buildings or in conservation areas the advertisement should not cover more than 10% of each elevation and should not be fragmented. The location of the advertisement on the shroud will depend on the character of the local built form and the nature of views within it.
- in some highly sensitive locations or where the building plays a particularly important role in the appearance of the area, a visual representation of the building that is shrouded may be considered necessary to mitigate any harm to the appearance of the area.
- they relate to landmark or unique buildings, such as festival venues, museums, and do not detract from the appearance and form of the host building or the surrounding environment.
- in some commercial areas flags or banners may be considered a suitable form of display. Within residential areas, conservation areas, and on or near listed buildings we will be primarily concerned with safeguarding the amenity, character and appearance of these areas and buildings and therefore it is unlikely that such advertisements will be supported.

