



Coventry City Council

Design Guidance for New Residential Developments

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Coventry City Council

Contents

1 Glossary

Active frontages	Elevations that add interest, life and vitality to the public realm through the use of frequent doors and windows, narrow frontage buildings, articulation of facades with projections and lively internal uses visible from the outside or spilling onto the street.
Building line	The line formed by elevations of buildings along a street. Building lines can exist along the front and rear of a line of buildings.
Bulk	The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. Also called massing.
DAS	Design and Access Statement.
Daylight	The level of natural light which enters a dwelling to provide satisfactory illumination of internal accommodation between dawn and dusk.
Density	The number of buildings or floorspace in relation to a given area of land. In this Guide, density is more than just the number of residential units/ha.
Design principle	An expression of one of the basic ideas guiding the design of a development.
Dual aspect dwelling	A dual aspect dwelling is one with opening windows on two external walls, which may be on opposite sides of the building or around a corner.
Habitable rooms and areas	Inclusive of living and dining room/spaces, conservatories, bedrooms Where kitchens are used exclusively for preparation, these would not be considered habitable space, however, would retain a requirement for a positive level of natural light.
Focal point	A building, structure, tree or other element that stands out from its background by virtue of height, size or some other aspect of design.
Grain	The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement and the size of street blocks and junctions.
Human scale	The use within development of elements that relate well in size to the biology of an individual human being and their assembly in a way that makes people feel comfortable rather than overwhelmed.
Layout	The way buildings, routes and open spaces are placed in relation to each other.
Publicly Accessible Land	Includes streets, cycle links, footpaths, open spaces, play areas, street furniture and public art.
Private realm	Those spaces that belong to or are controlled by the occupier of individual or groups of dwellings. These include front, side and rear garden areas, parking courts and separate pedestrian links where they have been designed to connect private space, such as the rear of terraces.

Scale	The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly as experienced in relation to the size of a person.
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems (previously known as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) - drainage systems designed to reduce surface water flooding impacts from development through the use of natural systems e.g., by creating ponds and swales and using permeable materials for hard surfaces.
Vertical sky component	The Vertical Sky Component (VSC) is a measure of the amount of visible sky available from a point on a vertical plane. The reference point used for the calculation is usually the centre of the vertical face of the window.

2 Executive Summary

What is a SPD?

2.1 A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is a document which contains additional detail on how the Council will interpret and apply specific policies in its Local Plan. An SPD cannot include any new policies that do not currently form part of the Local Plan and a SPD also does not form part of the Local Plan. However, it is a key consideration in the determination of planning applications and applicants are advised to refer to the contents of an SPD, as this will provide guidance on how the Council will carry out its decision-making functions.

Aims and Objectives

2.2 This Design Guide SPD supports Local Plan design policies by setting out what the Council considers to be good residential design. Its purpose is to provide guidance to the development industry, the Council and the public on how to ensure that the city's future housing development has the required high quality and inclusive design to help deliver the great place, community and future desired for Coventry. The Guide sits alongside, and should be read in conjunction with, other design guidance documents the Council has published.

Applying the SPD

2.3 The Guide relates to all new residential development in the city. This includes:
- New housing units in the form allocated sites, windfalls and infill through to new neighbourhoods and sustainable urban extensions.

2.4 The Guide does not provide guidance on matters already addressed by national Building Regulation requirements (e.g., energy and water efficiency and disabled access). The city benefits from Local Plan Design and Heritage Policies and a number of specific and detailed conservation area character documents in the form of supplementary planning documents (SPD) and conservation area appraisals. This Design Guide sits alongside these documents and should be read in conjunction with them.

2.5 The Government and other bodies are expected to prepare or amend their policies, advice and guidance in a number of areas referred to or relevant to this SPD. Where this occurs, new or changed documents could also be material planning considerations which may need to be considered alongside this SPD.

3 Introduction

3.1 This guide sets out design considerations for all scales and types of new residential development. It works from strategic issues down to detailed matters and reflects the sequence by which successful places are designed. The SPD is structured to ensure the following key elements are covered by:

- summarising relevant Local Plan policy that is relevant along with key aspects of national policy;
- setting out the information that should be included when submitting a planning application;
- providing a checklist/questionnaire that all applicable developments can use; and
- providing guidance on good practice in residential design.

3.2 This SPD is intended principally for applicants for planning permission and their agents, and for planning decision makers. It has been produced to ensure that applicants provide the right information so that planning decision makers can assess whether development proposals comply with Local Plan policy DE1 – Ensuring high quality design.

3.3 This SPD is a material consideration in planning decisions and decision makers will use it to help determine planning applications. This SPD replaces the existing 1991 Residential Design Guide SPG.

How to use this guide

3.4 This guide sets out design considerations for all scales and types of new residential development. It works from strategic issues down to detailed matters and reflects the sequence by which successful places are designed. Particular attention should be paid to the specific guidelines set out in the blue principle boxes in chapters 5 – 9.

3.5 All developments will need to be designed in light of the Council's overarching design process principles set out in Chapter 5.

3.6 Imagery used within this document is contained in order to assist in the exploration of possible design outcomes, however inclusion of such imagery does not suggest endorsement. Proposed design outcomes will be assessed on a contextually specific basis.

4 Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The NPPF, revised in July 2021, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. Its main purpose is to protect the environment, promote healthy communities and sustainable growth.

4.2 Among the key changes to the NPPF are updated policies aiming to improve the design of new developments, in response to the findings of the government's Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission. Key elements of this approach include:

- changes to the overarching social objective of the planning system (paragraph 8b) to include the fostering of "well-designed, beautiful and safe places".
- introducing a new test that development should be well-designed (paragraph 133). This says that "development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes".
- the test clarifies that "significant weight" should be given to "development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes". Significant weight should also be given to "outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area", paragraph 133.
- paragraph 128 states that in order to "provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage", all local planning authorities "should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences".

National Planning Practice Guidance

4.3 The national planning practice guidance document is relevant as detailed in the 2019 Design: process and tools[1]. This useful document should be read alongside this guidance,

[1] www.gov.uk/guidance/design

the National Design Guide[2] sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice.

Local Policy Context

4.4 Local design policies can be found in the adopted Coventry Local Plan 2017. This Guide has been prepared to provide detailed guidance for residential development in relation to these design policies, particularly DE1 – Ensuring High Quality Design, see figure 1.

4.5 The Design Guide is intended to be read and used as a companion document to other Council design publications. At the current time this includes:

- Sustainable Urban Extensions Design Guidance SPD, 2019;
- Design Guidance on Shopfronts for Conservation Areas and Historic Buildings, 2014; and
- City Centre Area Action Plan, 2017.

4.6 This SPD replaces the following SPD/SPG:

- Residential design guide SPG, 1991

[2] www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide

Figure 1: Coventry Local Plan design policy

Policy DE1 Ensuring High Quality Design

1. All development proposals must respect and enhance their surroundings and positively contribute towards the local identity and character of an area.
2. The setting, integrity and character of heritage assets will be protected in accordance with Policy HE2.
3. All development will be expected to meet the following key principles:
   a) respond to the physical context of the site;
   b) consider the local distinctiveness and identity of the site but also have regard to opportunities to enhance the local built and natural environment through new development and enhanced design;
   c) where appropriate, retain and incorporate into the layout the protection of important views, including key views of the three spires;
   d) preserve or enhance the character and setting of the historic built, landscape and where appropriate archaeological environment;
   e) preserve or enhance the character and setting of major road, rail and canal corridors;
   f) clearly define the boundaries between public and private spaces and enclosure of space;
   g) provide attractive, safe, uncluttered, active and easily identifiable, high quality public spaces;
   h) make places that inter‑connect and are easy to move through;
   i) ensure places are easily understood by users, with clear routes and distinct physical features;
   j) seek high quality design and attention to detail in the layout of developments, individual buildings and infrastructure in terms of function and impact, not just for the short term, but over the lifetime of the development;
   k) be adaptable to changing social, technological, economic and market conditions and ensure that developments maximise the use of the site;
   l) promote diversity through mixes of uses within a site or building, which work together to create vital and viable places;
   m) be proactive in responding to climate change and adopt sustainable and low carbon construction principles in terms of their design, layout and density;
   n) consider green infrastructure at the earliest stage in the design process, to ensure that it is well planned, designed, managed and maintained. It should also be well integrated and serve multiple purposes (as appropriate);
   o) support the integration of through routes for public transport and incorporate suitable bus priority measures as appropriate;
   p) minimise adverse impact on important natural resources;
   q) conserve, restore or enhance biodiversity; and
   r) respect and enhance landscape quality including trees, hedges and other landscape features of value.

5 Design Process Expectations in Coventry

5.1 The Council will expect development proposals seeking planning permission to have evolved through an iterative design process. Schemes of 50+ net new units will be expected to demonstrate having followed all steps identified in Table 2.

Table 2: Design process

STEP 1	**Site analysis**	Site & its context
		Opportunities and constraints
		Understanding of policy environment
STEP 2	**Interpreting the brief**	Vision setting
		Concept plan
STEP 3	**Engagement**	Community and neighbour engagement
		Council Pre-application discussions
		Statutory consultee engagement
STEP 4	**Detailed design**	Concept refinement
		Master planning
		Plot layout plan
		Design and Access Statements
		Detailed design
STEP 5	**Submission**	Planning application

Note: Concept refinement, plot layout plans and detailed design elements will not be expected in outline planning applications.

5.2 The Council strongly recommends the design of proposals of more than 10 units to have engaged with the pre-application process. Further information on this process can be found on the Council's website[3].

[3] www.coventry.gov.uk/info/110/planning/3082/pre-pplication_advice_for_planning_highways_and_drainage

Vision setting

5.3 Successful developments are underpinned by a guiding design vision. Once established and adopted by all parties, the vision anchors and guides the design team and enables it to communicate clearly and simply what the development is seeking to be and achieve

5.4 Applicants should develop their design vision early in the development process and then clearly articulate it to the Council in order to achieve a mutually agreed approach to any given development site and proposal.

5.5 Where, innovative, contemporary design solutions are proposed it is nevertheless critical that proposals are resultant of an understanding of context, to ensure proposals make a positive contribution toward wider character. Creating outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability will be welcomed, and help continue the cities rich history of architectural innovation, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

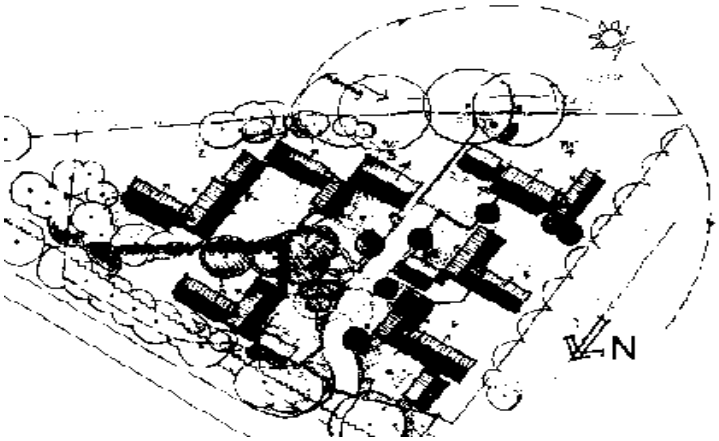
Where applicants seek to deliver innovative design outcomes, a design rationale will be required to be submitted alongside proposals in order to articulate the design development process, evidencing an appropriate grounding to local context which presents the scheme with the following points of assessment and rationale :

- Site constraints and opportunities analysis
- Key identifiers of character in local context, including;
    - Materiality
    - Architectural detailing
    - Scale, form & built environment hierarchy
    - Built form plan arrangement and urban grain
    - Landscape characteristics
    - Heritage assets and their setting
- Design vision & architectural narrative
- Design development stages, showing design evolution steps
- Evidencing responsiveness through re-interpretation, testing the proposals back to key character identifiers
- Summary of rationale and design outcomes, outlining how the proposals have sought to deliver their own innovative design solution whilst being responsive to local context and a positive contributor to local character.

Concept Plan

5.6 For medium and larger schemes the vision should be supplemented by a high level concept plan. The aim of the concept plan is to show in a simple and clear way the key design principles that underpin the layout of the proposed development. It should include an indicative layout and illustrate key components such as access points, focal points, broad street and green space layouts and key site features to be retained. A concept plan is a higher-level document rather than a masterplan, see figure 2.

Figure 2: illustration of a concept plan



5.7 Together, the vision and concept plan can sum up what kind of place is being created. This allows the developer, Council and the local community to discuss how the basic structure of the proposals can be evolved and improved.

Principle 1: Concept Plan

- **All developments will be expected to set out the guiding vision for the development. Developments of 10 or more dwellings should also provide a concept plan in the Design & Access Statement.**

Providing masterplans and plot layout plans

5.8 More detail of the design will be provided in masterplans. For medium and large sized development, developers will also be expected to provide plans illustrating the extent of public and private ownership and all plot boundaries as part of their application.

Principle 2: Plot Layout Plan

- **Developments of 10 or more dwellings will be required to provide layout plans which clearly identify plots, ownership boundaries and public/private spaces.**

Community Involvement

5.9 It is recommended that developers and designers seek the views and opinions of the local community to inform preparation of proposals. The extent of community involvement in larger developments will depend on the project's scale and complexity of issues. Applicants should refer to the Council Statement of Community of Involvement.

5.10 Details of the community engagement process and results should form part of the Design and Access Statement (DAS).

6 Layouts

6.1 The large structural elements of a residential development are vital in terms of setting whether it functions effectively. These structural elements include landscape, street and open space networks, use mixes, plot and building layouts. Carefully designed layouts create the framework upon which great places can be created and maintained. Poor layouts create poor places which are difficult to correct.

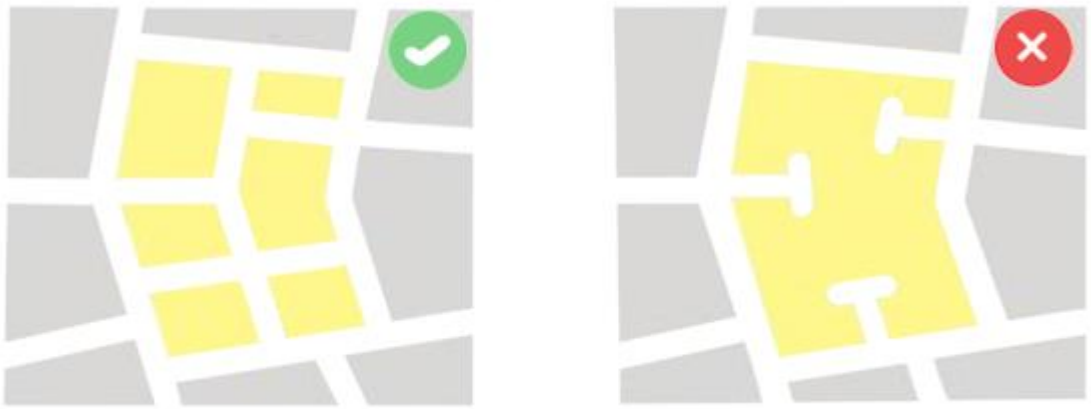
6.2 Designers and architects should pay particular regard to the following layout matters to ensure that great places can be created:

Connectivity

6.3 Woven through the urban areas of Coventry is a network of public spaces made up of streets, parks, public open spaces and paths. This framework allows people to get to where they want to go and to spend time outdoors.

6.4 Some parts of Coventry have dense networks of connected spaces and routes for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles that are easy to understand and navigate. Other areas could be better connected with streets and estates isolated by cul de sac layouts and lack of connections to surrounding areas (Figure 3). Developers may find local character guidance set out in other SPD's useful in identifying whether the development site lies in an area of good or poorly connected streets.

Figure 3: illustration of a poorly connected layout and well connected streets



6.5 New development will be expected to connect into and extend the surrounding route and space network in a high quality, safe and legible way. Although the Council does not wish to create vehicular rat runs through residential areas, cul de sac layouts will generally be resisted unless connectivity to surrounding areas can be introduced via open space or footpath/cycle links. New footpaths/cycleways should be high quality, acting as corridors for green infrastructure and generally lit by low level solar powered lighting. Designers should also look for opportunities to improving existing poorly connected places.

Principle 3: Connectivity

Residential developments should:

- **Connect into and complement the existing local network of routes and public open spaces.**
- **Ensure that the internal network of routes and public open spaces are well connected, legible, direct and safe.**
- **Ensure connections for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport are given the highest priority.**
- **Look for opportunities to create connections into/through neighbouring land so that a well-connected network can be created in the event of future land release and development.**
- **Should enable the connectivity of the natural environment in both public and private space.**
- **Deliver well-lit and surveilled cycle and pedestrian routes**

Street Design and Enclosure

6.6 Streets are the bedrock of places and make up the greater part of the public spaces within Coventry. They allow people access in, out, and through places, are spaces of social interaction and are vital in creating the character of an area. Street quality has a significant impact on how those living, working and visiting Coventry experience the city and it is important that they are legible, safe and attractive places to be in.

6.7 Many of Coventry's existing streets have a strong green character reflecting the heavily treed nature of the city and its links to the parkland. The council wishes to perpetuate and enhance this soft green character in its streets to reinforce the special characteristics and identity of the city. Designers will be encouraged to make use of green infrastructure

in the form of street trees, planted verges, green walls and gardens in new residential development to help maintain the ever expanding green character of the city, whilst contributing to cleaning and colling of the environment.

Figure 4: Coventry street image illustrating soft landscaping character

6.8 Residential streets should have building height to street width ratios that provide for a good sense of enclosure without overwhelming people who are using the streets. Street design should consider the context and fall within appropriate height to width ratios.[4]

Figure 5: an example of buildings, boundary treatments and trees being used to enclose a street successfully

[4] Street widths should be measured from the front of the building on one side of the street to the front of the building on the other side of the street. This will mean front gardens, pavements, cycle lanes, verges and road carriageways are included in the street width.

Principle 4: Street Design

Residential developments should:

- **Be based on streets designed as places primarily for people. Particular attention will need to be given to streets needing to carry high levels of vehicle movement.**
- **Create a legible hierarchy of streets based on street character and form. Street layouts dominated by cul-de-sac type layouts will be resisted.**
- **Use street layouts that make walking and cycling more attractive and convenient for short trips than using the private motor car. Distances by foot and cycle should be shorter and more direct than by car.**
- **Create animated and active streets by using fine grain development and designing strongly active frontages on the network of streets and other routes. Blank or poorly active frontages (including buildings that turn their side or backs onto the street) will be resisted.**
- **Not contain overly engineered streets led by highway requirements.**
- **Use focal points, enclosure, setbacks, pressure vacuums, deflections and other townscape features to create visually interesting streets. Streets will be expected to be visually rich and aesthetically pleasing for people using them.**
- **Use appropriate trees, vegetation, gardens and open spaces to create a strong soft, green character to streets.**
- **Fully consider the integration of SUDS systems to positively contribute to drainage solutions, benefitting biodiversity and contributing to amenity.**
- **Design spaces within the street to facilitate social interaction. This could include pause points, small amenity spaces, seating and squares.**
- **Ensure streets are safe places by considering the needs of vulnerable users and providing active frontages, good lighting, clear, obstacle free routes for pedestrians and designing in traffic calming measures to restrict vehicle speeds.**

Shared spaces

6.9 Shared spaces are streets and areas of public realm in which all uses have equal status. They involve the introduction of features which influence driver behaviour to reduce vehicle speeds and create places that encourage a high level of social interaction between residents. They work best in short residential streets such as mews, cul de sacs and rural lanes.

6.10 Shared streets are increasingly being promoted in Coventry. Although the Council welcomes this approach, it is important the design is carefully considered to ensure that the needs of all road users (including vulnerable groups such as children, elderly and disabled) are catered for.

Figure 6: an example of a good, shared surface pedestrian friendly street

<u>Principle 5</u>: Street Design – Shared Space

Principles governing the design of shared spaces in Coventry:

- **Motorists should be treated as 'guests', who will be expecting to find other people walking, playing, and cycling in the street space.**
- **Shared spaces should generally be restricted to short lengths of streets. Developments of over 200 dwellings should contain a mixture of shared space and zones where the movement of vehicles takes a higher priority.**
- **Long stretches of surface with no refuge areas for vulnerable road users should be avoided.**
- **Materials and form should encourage safe play and social interaction between residents.**
- **Provision for car parking needs to be effectively integrated into the street in a safe and attractive manner.**
- **Street design should ensure inclusivity for all, notably careful consideration of gradients and demarcations to assist the visually impaired should be embedded into design proposals.**

Density

6.11 Coventry has a finite supply of land allocated for housing and given it is a relatively compact built up city with tightly defined boundaries, it is important that land resource is used efficiently to deliver the new residential development that the city needs. This may involve intensifying the urban fabric both in terms of numbers of houses or bedrooms(density) and in the amount of built mass.

6.12 Building at higher density, where appropriate and in accordance with the Coventry Local Plan density policy, can create a more intense environment which can be visually and socially exciting. It can also allow for additional populations to help maintain and support vital local facilities such as public transport systems, local shops and community centres. High quality, denser development at locations which are sustainably located will be encouraged, provided they are supported by adequate green infrastructure. This could include pocket parks, roof gardens, green walls, community gardens and communal amenity space. Such locations are likely to include windfall developments in the designated centres and the string of neighbourhood areas across many Wards of the city.

Principle 6: Density

- **Housing development should seek to achieve the highest density possible without adversely impacting on the amenity of neighbours and residents or compromising local character, the environment or the appearance of an area.**
- **Residential developments in higher intensity locations will be expected to be supported by green infrastructure provisions which will provide the appropriate level of amenity space referencing CCC Open Space SPD.**

Uses and mix

6.13 Mixed and balanced communities are seen as being important in delivering the sustainable, high quality great places for Coventry's residents. Mixes of densities and dwelling types, sizes and tenures are seen as being vital in the creation of attractive neighbourhoods and the city will actively pursue this in all applications. Where appropriate, mixed use developments also play a significant role in providing homes, jobs and opportunities for community, leisure and retailing needs.

6.14 Details of the Council's housing mix need in terms of housing size, tenure and specialist accommodation types are outlined in the latest SHMA[5]. Designers are encouraged to discuss with the city planning team at an early stage the specific nature of the mixes that a residential development site should seek to deliver.

Principle 7: Mix of Uses

- **All residential development should contribute to the provision of balanced communities through the provision of a mix of residential densities, housing forms, sizes and tenures. Larger residential development sites will also be expected to deliver a complimentary mix of uses within a new residential setting.**

Plots

6.15 Plots are important elements in the character of an area. Their sizes, especially the widths along a street frontage are key determinants of the rhythm of buildings and spaces along a street, how active it will be and the grain of development in an area.

6.16 Streets with regular, clearly defined plot rhythms that are fine grain create the most interesting and attractive street scenes. Development that disrupts the rhythm of existing plots can create unattractive, inactive street scenes (Fig 7).

Figure 7: sketch diagram illustrating perception of plot rhythm

[5] www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/19652/lp42_coventry_shma_2012_-_gl_hearn

Principle 8: Plots

- **New residential development will be expected to respond to the size, shape and rhythm of surrounding plot layouts.**
- **Plot boundaries to the front, side and rear will be expected to be clearly and strongly defined. Proposals with weak or absent plot definition and plot layouts that are out of context with the surrounding character will be resisted.**

Parking

6.17 Space to park cars can place a significant burden on the design of residential layouts. Balancing the expectations of residents and visitors for adequate parking spaces near to properties with the need to ensure parking does not unduly impact on the street scene and safety and amenity of people is a key consideration.

6.18 In order to create attractive and well-functioning layouts it is important that the space to park vehicles is carefully considered at the early stages of the design process.

6.19 This Council expects the parking standards to be adhere to***

General standards

6.20 Coventry is a city dominated by its urban fabric and tree assets coupled with the ancient Arden landscape and it will be expected that parking solutions will reflect this nature with significant use of soft green landscaping. Parking solutions involving large areas of hard surfacing will be resisted.

6.21 It is also expected that the quality of parking solutions will be high. Use of high quality hard and soft landscaping to provide appealing and functional parking spaces will be required. Developers will be expected to use porous surfacing for parking areas and will be encouraged to use different materials and colours to delineate parking bays and road carriageways.

6.22 Parking can be provided in a number of ways:

- On plot;
- In communal mews/parking courts; and
- On street.

6.23 The Council accepts that different parking layouts are likely to be required in different locations and developments may need a mix of solutions. Low density schemes, for instance will find it easier to predominantly accommodate parking on-plot whilst higher intensity schemes in more urban locations may need to use solutions involving undercrofts or on street provision. Whatever solution is used, it is important that it is high quality and that the residential layout is not visually and functionally dominated by parked cars.

Figure 8: example showing use of materials to delineate parking bays

Principle 9: Parking

Parking layouts should be high quality and designed to:

- **Reflect the strong urban fabric and Ancient Arden identity of the city. All parking arrangements should be softened with generous soft landscaping and no design should group more than 3 linear parking spaces together, without intervening landscaping.**
- **Ensure developments are not functionally and visually dominated by cars;**
- **Maintain activity in the street without adversely affecting the attractiveness of the streetscene;**
- **Minimise impact on the amenity of residents;**
- **Unobstructed and inclusive access to front and rear of a property by 1.2m to provide futureproofing for all users**
- **Be safe, overlooked and convenient for users; and**
- **Be spaces that are visually and functionally attractive in the street scene.**

Figure 9: Ancient Arden: An interesting grouping of buildings that have grown and evolved over time with parking arrangements integrated well within the existing landscape.

Parking space standards

6.24 For details on the number and sizes of parking spaces in residential schemes developers should contact the Councils Highways team and the Coventry Connected SPD[6] to ascertain the adopted standards.

On-plot parking

6.25 On-plot parking can occur to the front, side or rear of dwellings. It may include integral or stand-alone garages and carports.

6.26 The Council's preference is for parking to be to the side or rear where adverse impacts on the street scene and amenities can be more effectively managed. Where parking has to be provided to the front it is important that the visual impacts are mitigated as far as possible. Potential solutions include landscaping, staggered buildings, separation and use of boundary treatments. It is also important that buildings are set back far enough from the road to enable cars to be comfortably parked in front. Enclosure of front on plot parking areas with vegetation will be strongly encouraged.

6.27 On-plot parking generally requires many crossovers onto the highway. In heavily treed landscapes the landscape screen along plot boundaries is a key element of local character. In such locations a single shared drive may be required from the street to serve dwellings with on plot parking.

6 www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/5195/coventry_connected_supplementary_planning_document_spd

Principle 10: Parking on-plot

On-plot parking should not be dominated by excessive frontage parking arrangements. Where front of plot parking is proposed this should be enclosed with soft landscaping and not:

- **Dominate the appearance of the plot or the street scene with extensive hard surfacing or multiple or over wide vehicle cross overs.**
- **Result in vehicles overhanging the pavement or lying hard up against habitable rooms.**

Parking Courts

6.28 Communal parking courts are private car parking areas, typically positioned either to the front or rear of dwellings. Parking courts are used for flats and intense terraced housing.

6.29 Parking courts should be designed as attractive, busy, safe spaces in their own right.

Figure 10: Images showing front parking with a variety of surface treatments and enclosed with soft landscaping

Principle 11: Parking courts

- **Car parking courts should be designed with active frontages and to be multi-purpose.**
- **Parking courts should be attractive places with high quality hard and soft landscaping.**
- **Dwellings with frontages onto streets should not have their main frontage to rear parking courts.**
- **Secure by design standards should be fully considered in the design of parking courts**
- **Where parking courts are provided to the front of development, they should be enclosed with strong soft landscape screens and not be dominant elements in the street scene**

On-street parking

6.30 If well designed on-street parking can add to the vibrancy and variety of a street scene. The Council's preference is for visitor and non-allocated parking to be provided on-street where possible and appropriate to local character.

6.31 Where on-street parking is proposed, then the street must be purposefully designed to accommodate it. Parking bays may accommodate parallel, perpendicular or angled spaces.

Principle 12: Parking on-street

- **Where provided, on-street parking will be expected to be high quality in terms of layout and materials. On-street parking should not dominate the street scene and must be integrated with other street features. Positioning of on-street parking should not dominate adjoining plots and residential uses.**
- **Street car parking will be expected to be placed in a landscaped street setting utilising hard and soft features of a high quality.**
- **Where bays are provided, they should generally not exceed a cluster of 3 spaces without landscape relief.**
- **Where the width of the road has been increased to accommodate on-street parking designers will be expected to employ features such as increasing building height, street trees or other planting to ensure that the street is well enclosed.**

Figure 11: 2 images showing i) a lack of space for on-street parking, no marking of parking bays and lack of softening landscaping creates an unattractive, poor street environment that is unsafe for pedestrians ii) attractive on-street parking solutions in a landscaped setting

Defining Public/private space

6.32 It is important that the boundaries between public and private space are clearly defined. Poorly defined spaces create confusion as to ownership and use. This can lead to spaces becoming neglected, avoided, and unattractive.

Principle 13: Boundary Treatments

- **Where appropriate boundary treatments of at least 1m in height will need to be provided in residential environments to clearly define the boundaries of public and private space.**
- **Developments that leave space with unclear ownership will be resisted.**

Figure 12: 2 images showing i) Poor definition makes it unclear what space is in private ownership and what is public ii) good definition of public/private spaces.

Informed by Environment

6.33 Where new development can call upon informative environmental opportunities in layout designs these should be integrated into the proposals. Positive response to features such as waterways (e.g., canals and rivers) field patterns and woodlands should be positively considered in order to ensure that proposals are positively responsive to the surrounding environment. Due consideration of relevent local plan policy should be embedded in design proposals.

7 Built Form

Building positioning

Building lines

7.1 Front building lines help to define the street and the degree of street enclosure. Rear building lines are important in protecting neighbour amenity, especially at 2 storey levels. Where dwellings are detached or semidetached, building lines along the side walls can help maintain visual gaps and protect the amenities of neighbours.

7.2 The Council will expect new developments to give careful consideration to all forms of setbacks.

7.3 Occasional variation from a common front building line may provide opportunities to add visual interest to street scenes. Developers may consider using this as a design feature where positive opportunities arise and no adverse impact on neighbour amenity would be likely to arise.

Figure 13: image showing a front building line

Principle 14: Building Lines

- **Setbacks in new developments should complement the street scene, avoid impacting on neighbour amenity and allow for suitable landscaping and open space.**
- **Setbacks that erode character, street enclosure and amenity of neighbours will be resisted.**

Sustainable design

7.4 The Council strongly encourages designers to design buildings to minimise energy consumption by taking advantage of the sun's energy. This opportunity should be considered at the early stages of the design process.

7.5 Passive solar design involves orientating buildings to maximise the entry of low winter sun for passive solar heating. Facades with generous fenestration with no overshadowing need to be orientated buildings within 30 degrees of due south to gain from solar heating (Fig 14). When employing passive solar design designers will also need to consider how to maximise solar collection during winter and minimise overheating during summer months.

7.6 Active Solar Gain uses building facades and roofs to collect solar energy for conversion into electricity or hot water. Any aspect within 30 degrees due south is ideal (Fig 15). The Council is supportive of active solar micro renewable technologies where they do not have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the building and street scene.

7. 7 Applicants should refer to the latest and emerging building regulations guidance in seeking to achieve best outcomes of embedded energy in construction, and energy efficiency measures.

Figures 14: Principles of passive solar design

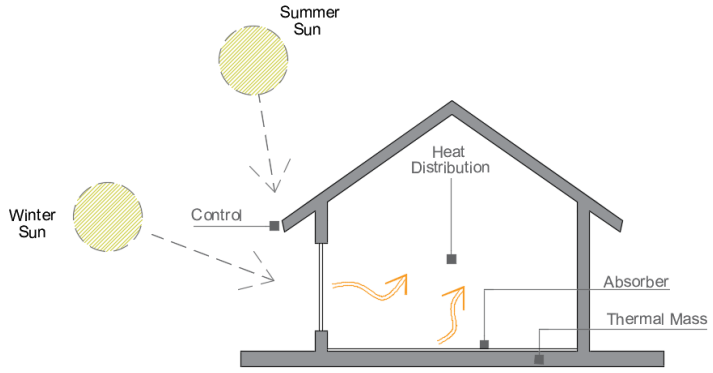
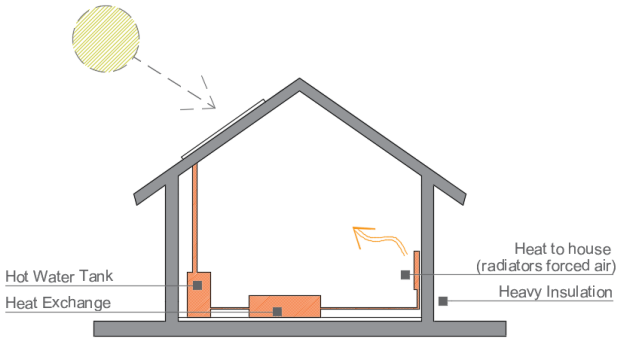


Figure 15: principles of active solar design principles



Principle 15: Sustainable Design

- **The Council will expect new residential developments to make optimal use of natural light and warmth so as to minimise the use of energy for lighting and heating where possible.**
- **Proposals that fail to incorporate passive solar design will be resisted unless there is strong justification for not integrating it into a building or site.**
- **Developments that overshadow existing light dependent micro renewable technologies (e.g. photovoltaics, and solar hot water panels) on neighbouring properties will be resisted.**
- **The integration of SUDS systems on site should always be considered**

Building scale, massing & form height

7.7 The height of a building has an important impact on the character and enclosure of a street scene. Buildings that are too low in relation to the width of a street provide low levels of enclosure and unsatisfying street scenes, whilst buildings that are too high in relation to the width of a street create dark, overwhelmed spaces that do not feel of a human scale.

7.8 Buildings that are out of context with their neighbours in terms of height may also create unsatisfactory visual and physical relationships. There is also a greater likelihood of an overly tall building having adverse impacts on residential amenity. Varied building heights can add interest to a streetscene and are encouraged as long as they are contextually appropriate in the Streetscene judged on their individual merits.

7.9 In general, more rural and suburban areas tend to have building heights of 1 to 2 storeys with ridge heights of around 7.5 – 8m with occasional 3 storey status or focal point buildings. This low height is a strong defining element in the character of these lower density areas and the Council will seek to maintain this.

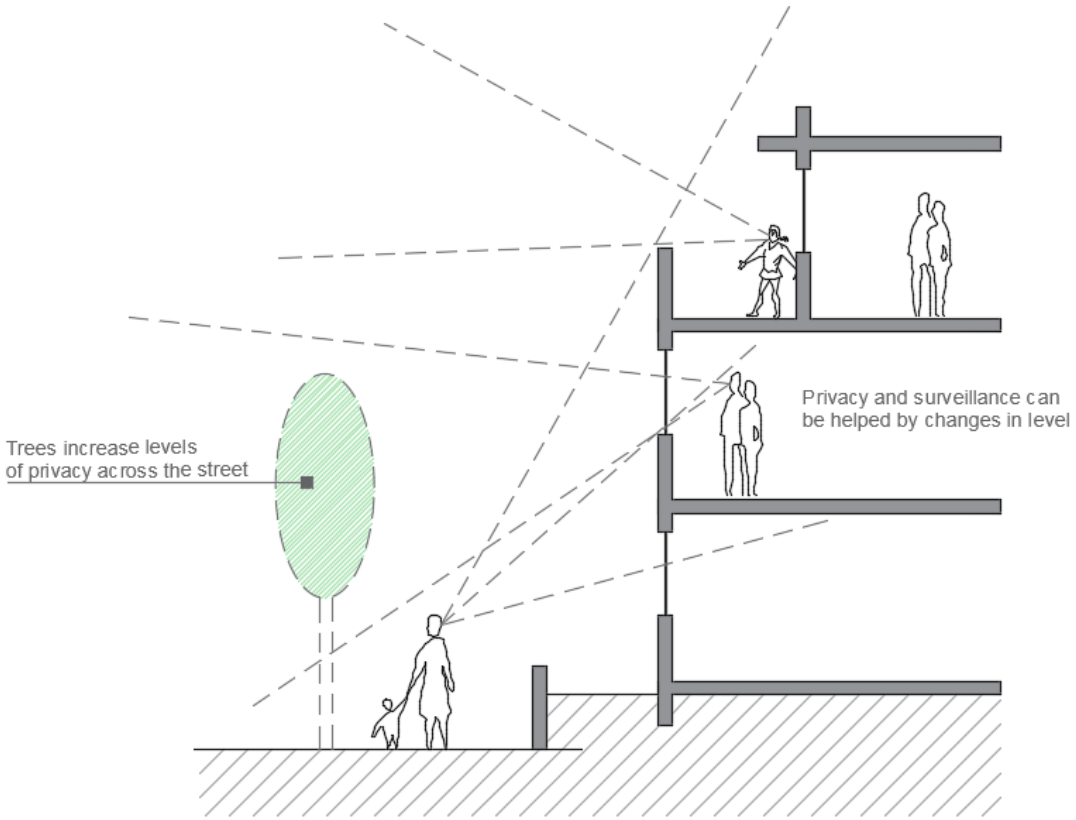
Figure 16: Images showing i) two story suburban residential accommodation and ii, iii) taller residential development in the city center.

7.10 Building heights are more varied in tighter urban environments and can often be in excess of 3 storeys. In the city centre, residential buildings of 3 storeys or more will be encouraged, subject to impacts on street and residential amenities being satisfactorily resolved.

7.11 Full assessments will be required where proposals may impact upon the significance and setting of heritage assets, where reference should be made to the LPA's associated conservation policy supplementary planning documents

7.11 Where there is concern that a building height could adversely impact on the street or neighbour amenities designers should consider setting the upper floor/s back from lower storeys (Fig 17)

Figure 17: sketch diagram showing use of upper floor setback to maintain light to public and private realm



7.12 Developers may need to supply details of the street widths to building height ratios along with information on topography and the scale of neighbouring properties to enable the Council to assess how a proposal's height may fit into the street scene and impact on neighbour amenities.

Principle 16: Building heights

- **The Council will expect buildings heights to help enclose the street without overwhelming it. In suburban and semi-rural fringe areas, building heights will generally be expected to be lower with occasional increases acting as visual focal points. Taller buildings will be more acceptable in city centre locations.**
- **Building heights should not result in significant adverse impacts on residential amenity and will be expected to enable a building to integrate well into its surrounding context.**

Scale & massing

7.13 The footprint that a building makes on the ground, along with its height, and the amount of space around it determines the mass of a dwelling and the impact it has on the street scene.

7.14 Most existing residential areas have discernible patterns of massing and it would be expected that new development would reflect this pattern.

Principle 17: Scale and Massing

- **New residential development should be responsive to the spacing, heights and building footprints of existing buildings, especially when these are local historic patterns such as the Ancient Arden landscapes.**

Roofscapes

7.15 Rooflines, roof shapes and chimneys can have an important influence on the character of a street scene. Designers should consider this aspect of their proposals carefully and look to use the roofscapes they create to enhance buildings and townscapes. In higher intensity developments, developers will be expected to consider using roof spaces to provide green infrastructure.

7.16 In Coventry residential roof forms are based on pitches with hips and gables with various forms of dormers. More contemporary styles have explored flat and curved roof forms.

7.17 Buildings that are overly deep were historically bridged with a double pitched roof. More contemporary approaches have been to propose a large element of flat roof behind short pitched to span the depth, often leaving unattractive and contrived roof forms, whilst utilising roof areas for additional spaces may be welcome, impact of this from all aspects must be taken into consideration.

Figure 18: Image showing a corner plot, which are particularly good locations to consider opportunities to introduce variations in roofscapes for visual interest and the creation of focal points

<u>Principle 18</u>: Roofscapes

- **Proposals to introduce roof forms on residential development that diverge from the prevailing character of residential development will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that the proposals would make a positive contribution to the streetscape.**
- **Where a building has been designed to reflect traditional forms and styles, roofscape should be similarly responsive to contextual precedents.**
- **Opportunities for roof terraces and balconies are welcomed, provided they are in keeping and context to their setting.**

Active frontages

7.18 There should be a strong relationship between the street and the buildings and places that frame it. Buildings should front onto the street and animate it with ‘active’ frontages to provide interest, life and vitality to public realm.

7.19 Active frontages mean:

- Frequent doors & windows, with few blank walls;
- Articulation of facades, with projections such as bays and porches; and
- Key habitable rooms fronting onto the street so that lively internal uses are visible from the public realm.
- Where schemes provide communal functions the use of highly transparent façade treatments can positively contribute to the delivery of active frontage.
- Where communal areas offer opportunity for public interaction/use would be welcomed

Figure 18.1, 18.2 and 18.3 - images showing i,ii) a place with frequent doors and windows facing a street and iii) an inactive frontage with a blind façade at street level

Minimum internal space standards

7.20 In 2015, the Government produced national internal space standards covering dwelling sizes and storage requirements[7]. Developers will need to take these into account when designing new residential developments.

Principle 19: Space Standards

- **As a minimum, the Council will expect new housing development to comply with the national internal space standards.**[8]

Adaptable Homes

7.21 The Council considers it important that homes are flexible enough to adapt to the changing needs of occupants over time. Lessons may be learnt from historic housing forms such as Victorian and Edwardian terraces, which have proved very adaptable to modern living. National Design Guide standards look to create dwelling spaces that are accessible, adaptable and flexible.

Principle 20: Adaptable Homes

- **Buildings should be designed so that they have the ability to be adaptable to future needs.**

Architectural detailing

7.22 Architectural detailing has an important role to play in setting the quality of a development. It is also important in setting or reinforcing the character of an area.

7.23 Examples of Architectural details may include windows proportions and style, doors, chimneys, eaves lines, cills, window to wall ratios, string courses, corners, fenestration, roof overhangs, colour, materials, gables & hips, pediments and brickwork styles (Fig 19).

[7] www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard

[8] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard/technical-housing-standards-nationally-described-space-standard

Figure 19: Image showing architectural features that may be considered when designing built form.

7.24 The Council will expect developments to exhibit high quality architecture which reinforces the design vision for the scheme. The design should be carefully considered to create a rational, coherent whole with a visually pleasing balance of proportions. The use of high quality materials will be an added important element in creating an architecturally satisfying development.

7.25 Developments can take a contemporary or traditional approach and can be designed with formal or informal styles. Attention to detail is vital to ensure that a development is successful. Buildings where the elements have been well put together will be pleasing to the eye, will last well and will complement the spaces they face, whatever the style of architecture.

7.26 This Council values architectural honesty. Pastiche designs that incorporate a mix of historic styles and detailing will generally be resisted as this typically creates a confused, poor quality visual appearance that does not specifically relate to any specific building style or age. If a traditional/vernacular language is being applied, it is important that details (such as windows and doors) are convincing. Where designers seek to mix architectural styles to

create a contemporary approach, the Council will look for attention to detail and high quality, with strong architectural justification for the proposals.

7.27 Coventry has a strong legacy of public art, particularly from the post war period where public art formed an integral part of the redevelopment of the city, it is an important element in defining the character and identity of a city, locality or community. To build on this legacy, public art will be encouraged to be incorporated into new developments particularly where they have significance to local communities and reflect the character and history of an area.

Figure 20: Local precedents of good building form and architectural detailing

Principle 21: Architectural Detailing

- **Designers should use architectural detailing to create attractive buildings that positively contribute to the character and quality of an area. Buildings that employ architectural detailing that is unattractive, low quality or is not honest (para 7.26) or legible will be resisted.**

Windows

7.28 Windows are particularly important detailed features on a building. Designers will be expected to pay particular attention to window proportions, positioning, symmetry, frame thicknesses, recessing/projection and surrounding decoration (e.g brickwork arches). If a traditional vernacular design language is being applied it is important that details are as convincing, rather than paying lip service to precedent.

7.29 Window to wall ratios will also need to be considered. Public facing elevations that have large area of blank wall with limited amounts of glazing will be unacceptable.

7.30 Ground level windows that are distinctly taller than fenestration on upper floors help to maintain balance and harmony and create pleasing compositions (Fig 7.6). Either recessing windows or enabling them to project beyond a façade provides an elevation with articulation and visual richness.

Figure 21: Taller ground floor windows, symmetrical glazing that is well proportioned and taller on the ground floor than at upper levels.

Principle 22: Architectural Design

- **Window design visible in the public realm should be high quality and create visually balanced and harmonious compositions.**
- **Poor quality window design will be resisted, especially where it will be visible in the street scene.**
- **Large areas of blank wall with limited glazing should be avoided on elevations visible from the public realm.**

8 Amenity

8.1 Residential amenity, in the form of light, privacy, outlook and provision of outdoor amenity space, is a detailed but important design matter that has a very strong influence on the quality of resident's living environment.

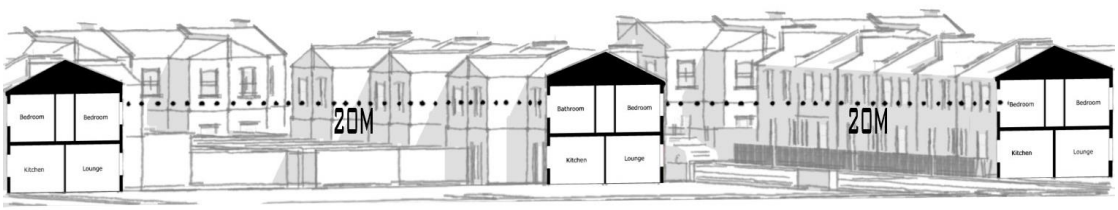
8.2 New residential developments should provide future occupiers with high quality amenities and do not undermine the residential amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Privacy

8.3 It is important that people are able to enjoy a degree of privacy which makes them feel comfortable inside their dwellings and also able to enjoy their private outdoor spaces without feeling overlooked or overheard. Areas of particular sensitivity are habitable rooms, such as the first 3m of private space behind a rear elevation and balconies or terraces which are the sole source of private outside space for a home.

8.4 A number of design solutions for maintaining privacy in new development and with neighbouring properties are available:

Figure 22: image showing 20m separation distance



Distance:

- A minimum distance of 20m is this Council's generally accepted guideline for there to be no material loss of privacy between the rear of two storey buildings directly facing each other (i.e., a back-to-back relationship).
- Where residential development exceeds 2 storeys it would be expected that separation distances should increase this will be assessed on a case by case basis, taking account for local context
- For two storey rear to side relationships it may be possible to reduce the separation distance.
- However, there are instances where this minimum separation distance to maintain privacy may not be appropriate.
- Extra separation distance may be needed where there are significant changes in level between buildings.
- Equally, in more compact contexts, or where the development is single storey, it may not be appropriate to provide the conventional separation distances.
- Alternative design solutions to maintain privacy will be needed in such instances.

Oblique angles:

- Positioning of buildings and angled windows to create oblique views are useful tools to reduce overlooking (Fig 22).
- Where buildings are angled at more than 30 degrees from each other separation distances can often be reduced
- Angled windows need to be designed to maintain adequate light levels to the rooms they serve.

Figure 23: images showing oblique window solutions

Window design:

- Roof lights, slit windows, high level windows and smaller vertically proportioned windows can be used to maintain privacy as well as provide adequate internal light levels.

Obscure glazing:

- Obscure glazing will be appropriate for bathrooms and exceptionally can be considered for other rooms provided that there is clear glazing to another window in the room which does not overlook another property. Primary Habitable spaces must always be primarily served by unobscured glazing.

Screening:

- Provided it does not create significant overshadowing small ground floor extensions, walls, fencing, hedges, trees and general landscaping can be used to provide screening to private spaces.

Figure 24: Image showing screening for both front and rear gardens

Gardens:

- Use of small front gardens can help maintain privacy for habitable rooms facing the street.
- Front gardens are also key contributors to character in many areas of the city and should be sought to be retained and respected in proposals.

Room layout:

- Intelligent layout design may be employed to offset direct relationships of habitable rooms, to contribute to maintaining privacy, and mitigate perception of visual intrusion into private spaces.

Figure 25: internal habitable room layout relationships

Principle 23: Habitable Rooms

- **New residential development should be provided with a reasonable degree of privacy to habitable rooms and sensitive outdoor amenity spaces.**
- **Developments which have a significant adverse effect on the privacy of neighbouring properties will be resisted.**

Figure 25: image showing small, enclosed gardens providing privacy to habitable rooms

Outlook

8.5 Although there is no right to a view, residents should be able to enjoy good quality outlook to the external environment from habitable rooms, without adjacent buildings, walls, parked vehicles or storage materials being overbearing or visually intrusive. Outlook from the home to exterior spaces keep people in touch with their wider surroundings, the prevailing weather and the rhythm of the day and seasons. Contact with nature and the social life of the community people live in has been shown to be important in maintaining human health and mental wellbeing.

8.6 A poor outlook relationship is caused when the height and bulk of a development, or the proximity of parked vehicles, dense high vegetation or storage materials, significantly dominate the outlook of a habitable room or area. Level changes can also create overbearing relationships and poor outlooks.

8.7 Poor outlook is also created when rooms are only served by:

- obscurely glazed windows;
- roof lights that only provide a small sky vista; and
- small oblique windows.

Such proposals that provide poor outlook are considered unacceptable.

Daylight and Sunlight

8.8 Daylight and sunlight animate and enhance resident's enjoyment of interior spaces. Good natural light reduces the energy needed to provide light for everyday activities, while controlled sun penetration can also help to meet part of the winter heating requirement.

Daylight access

8.9 It important for the maintenance of people's health and well-being to ensure that habitable rooms in people's homes are well lit by natural daylight to facilitate a range of daily activities. It is possible for people to manage light levels in dwellings if there is too much daylight but impossible to do anything about it if there is too little. Building Regulation requirements will set the standards for internal illuminations in new dwellings but it is also important that designers consider lighting of outdoor spaces and the impact of the development on the amount of daylight reaching habitable rooms and external spaces of neighbouring dwellings.

Principle 24: Outlook

- **All habitable rooms should maintain at least one main window with an adequate outlook to external spaces where nearby man-made and natural features do not appear overbearing or visually intrusive.**

8.10 Design solutions to achieve good quality internal lighting of new homes include:

- providing glazing areas in habitable rooms that is not less than 20% of internal floor area of room;
- dual aspect dwellings (Fig 24); and
- Ensuring habitable rooms are served by glazing that has a vertical sky component of no less than 27%.

Figure 24: sketch diagram to show floorplan and elevation for a dual aspect dwelling

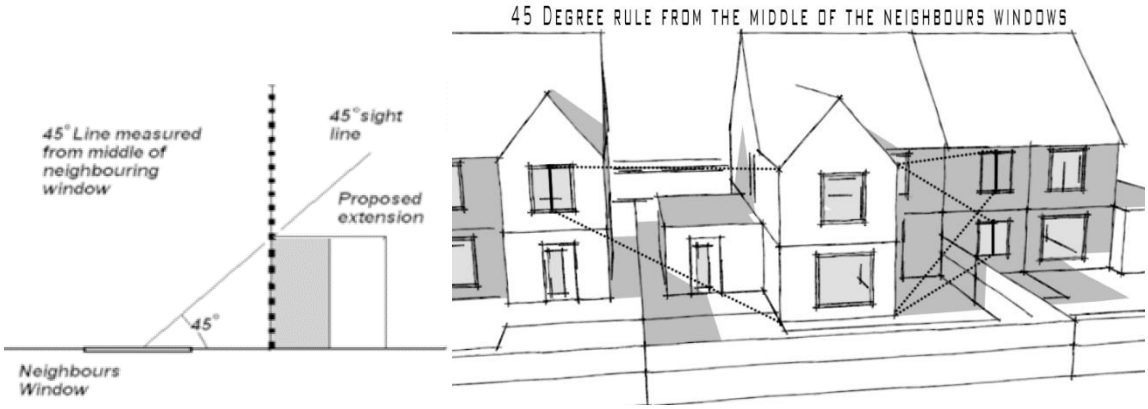
8.11 One or all of these solutions may be required to ensure people will have comfortable light levels in their habitable rooms.

8.12 Potential design solutions to prevent material loss of daylight to neighbouring windows and overshadowing of habitable external spaces include:

- Applying a 25 degree vertical angle from a point 2 m above the floor at the façade is not obstructed. This typically results in separation distances of 10m; and
- Avoiding obstruction to light by ensuring that the centre of an existing window serving a habitable room does not fall within 45 degrees of a line drawn from the edge of an extension or a new development (Fig 26).

The 45 degree rule is applicable to extensions exceeding 2.5m in height Designers should note that the 45degree rule is only an indicator and the acceptability of a development proposal will also be dependent on ground levels on site and the orientation of buildings.

Figure 26: diagram to illustrate the 45 degree rule



Sunlight access

8.13 Provided it can be controlled, people enjoy sunlight and likewise, its absence can have a detrimental effect to health and wellbeing. Not only does sunlight have beneficial health effects for people, it also has the potential to reduce energy consumption in homes.

8.14 Accordingly, when drawing up their plans, developers should consider the needs of both new and existing neighbouring development to retain sunlight in habitable spaces. The needs for people who spend a large proportion of their day indoors, demand particular consideration.

8.15 Potential design solutions to provide good quality solar access include:

- Providing for direct sunlight to enter at least one habitable room for part of the day through-out the year. Dual aspect dwellings will assist with this.

- Providing private external spaces (patios, gardens, balconies, roof terraces) that receive direct sunlight for part of the day in the period between 1st April and 30th September.

8.16 Sunlight has a significant impact on thermal comfort and energy consumption. In winter it can make an important contribution to heating, but excessive solar gain can cause discomfort in summer. Careful design can control sunlight to maximise the benefits of solar access whilst minimising overheating.

8.17 Where there is doubt about the quality of daylight or sunlight access to new dwellings, or the maintenance of light access to existing neighbouring development, developers may be required to produce plans illustrating sky components and shadow paths at the winter solstice and spring/autumn equinox.

Principle 25: Daylight and Sunlight

- **The occupants of new dwellings should be provided with good quality daylight and sun access levels to habitable internal rooms and external spaces.**
- **Dual aspect dwellings are strongly encouraged. Where single aspect dwellings are proposed, developers should demonstrate how good levels of ventilation, daylight and sun access will be provided to habitable spaces.**
- **Single aspect residential units that are north facing should be avoided.**
- **Developments should not result in occupants of neighbouring dwellings suffering from a significant loss of daylight and sun access.**

Private outdoor amenity space

8.18 This Council considers the provision of high quality, private open space to serve homes to be a necessity. This form of space serves a number of important household functions including allowing people enjoying contact with nature as part of their home life, clothes drying, growing food and pursuing domestic leisure activities.

8.19 In the context of increasing intensification of residential development and the specification of minimum internal space standards, it is important to ensure that this private outdoor amenity space is provided in adequate amounts and is of a high quality. Accordingly, the Council has established minimum space standards for the provision of external private amenity space in all forms of property. Developers will be encouraged to exceed these standards where the site allows for this. Where developments are not able to

meet the minimal outdoor amenity space standards the Council may consider accepting lower standards provided this is robustly justified and it can satisfy itself that the outdoor amenity space provided will be of high quality.

Private outdoor amenity space standards for houses

8.20 The amount of garden space (including front, side and rear spaces) may vary widely but new developments must provide for a minimum amount of private amenity space in the form of gardens. The minimum amount may vary depending on the context of the house. Homes with private amenity spaces facing predominantly north may need to provide larger private gardens than those facing the sun with a predominantly southern orientation (Figure 27 & Table 3). For conversion schemes, private outdoor amenity space will be considered on case by case basis depending on the type of use being sought.

Table 3:Guidance minimum outdoor private amenity space size standards for houses (sq m)

House size	Minimum standard/unit for outdoor amenity spaces facing predominantly south (sqm)	Minimum standard/unit for outdoor amenity spaces facing predominantly north (sqm)
1 bed	40	50
2/3 beds	55	65
4+ beds	70	85

Outdoor amenity space standards for flats & maisonettes

8.21 Given the benefits of people having access to good quality private outdoor amenity space, especially in more intense living environments, the Council will expect developers of flatted proposals to provide high quality outdoor amenity space which is an important visual and functional focal point of the design.

Principle 26: Outdoor Amenity – Private Garden Space

Private outdoor garden spaces should, wherever possible and feasible:

- **Screened by fences or walls to provide privacy;**
- **Receive direct sunlight;**
- **Able to accommodate bin and cycle storage;**
- **Not be heavily overshadowed by trees and tall hedges;**
- **Be inclusive of access not dependent upon routes through internal spaces**
- **Directly accessible from habitable rooms; and**
- **Have level access from the home.**
- **Garden spaces should not be separated from the dwellings they serve.**

Communal amenity space

8.22 Designers should provide attractive communal amenity space which serves all residents. All too often, communal amenity spaces in flatted developments become neglected, unused low-quality spaces which serve flat occupants poorly and make little positive contribution to townscapes.

8.23 Where space at ground floor level is limited, innovative solutions such as the provision of communal garden space at first floor levels or above will be encouraged.

Principle 27: Outdoor Amenity – External Communal Space

External Communal amenity space should be:

- **connected to the building;**
- **easily accessible to all residents;**
- **screened from public view;**
- **free of vehicles;**
- **located to receive sunlight for a substantial part of the day; and**
- **Actively overlooked to provide surveillance and security.**

The Councils Open Spaces SPD provides more information on the provision of public open spaces as part of new development

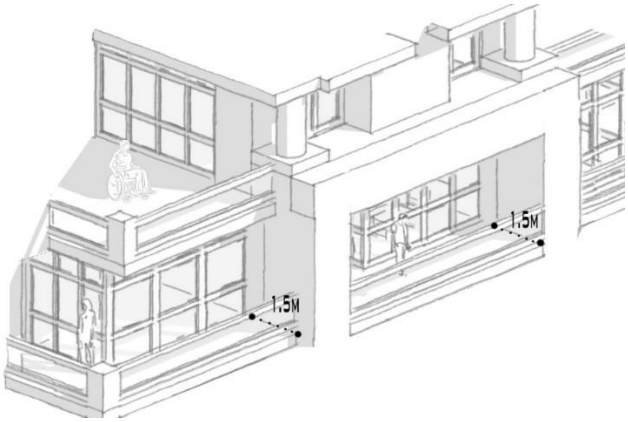
Private amenity space for flats

8.24 Private outdoor amenity space on flatted developments is also considered important, especially in tight urban environments and the Council will expect this space to be provided, particularly in new build developments. Private communal space can take the form of small gardens for ground floor flats and private balconies for flats above ground (Figure 28).

8.25 The provision of private amenity for all residents will be expected, however conversions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be expected to provide alternative outdoor amenity provisions where private amenity is unable to be delivered subject to sufficient justification.

8.26 In many respects, this private outdoor space is considered more important for people than communal space and thus it is important that it is high quality. Equally it is important that this private outdoor space does not compromise the privacy of adjoining dwellings

Figure 28: Illustration of private amenity space in apartment design.



Principle 28: Outdoor Amenity – Apartment Schemes

Flatted developments will be expected to provide private outdoor amenity space for each unit. Wherever possible, all ground floor flats should have access to a well-defined private area of amenity space which:

- **Directly adjoins and is accessible from the flat;**
- **Has a minimum depth of 3m;**
- **Is the same width of the dwelling it serves;**
- **Is clearly identified by boundary treatments, including railings, low wall or a hedge; and**
- **Has a privacy screen between dwellings.**

Unless conservation, privacy, design or amenity issues negate against the use of balconies, all flats above ground floor should be provided with balconies which:

- **Are a minimum of 1.5m deep;**
- **Are wider than their depth; and**
- **Provide for privacy. Screens, recesses and orientation are potential design solutions to provide for this.**

Private outdoor amenity space standards for Residential Care Homes

8.27 Residential Care Homes will be expected to provide private amenity space at the same level as flatted developments. Usable, high quality private outdoor amenity space will be required for all new Residential Care Home developments.

Principle 29: Outdoor Amenity – Residential Care Homes

- **Usable, high quality private outdoor amenity space will be required for all new Residential Care Home developments.**

9 Curtilage Development

Boundary treatments

9.1 Boundary treatments are important in helping to define defensible space, establishing the boundaries between public and private space and setting the character of a street.

9.2 Strongly defined boundaries help to convey ownership and maintenance responsibility, privacy and home security. The absence of clearly defined boundaries, between public and private space can lead to confusion over ownership and responsibility leading to neglect and poor quality spaces between buildings and public realm.

9.3 ‘Secure by design standards should be referenced in design development, and the authority recommend early liaison with secure by design officers.

9.4 The cumulative effect of boundary treatments in a street is a very significant component of street character and quality. Good quality boundary treatments define the pattern of plots and frontages along a street and create visual interest through the provision of rhythm and variety of materials and form.

Figure 29: boundary treatments helping to define the plots and create strong unified character

9.5 Poor quality boundary treatments erode street character and quality and can create environments that feel unsafe. This can result from:

- A lack of strong front and side boundary treatments;
- Absence, or very weakly present boundary treatments;
- Partial removal of boundary treatment to accommodate parking;

- Erosion of existing boundary treatments by the insertion of ill-considered new styles of treatments that are out of keeping;
- Long unbroken stretches of high, blank walls or fences;
- Use of poor quality boundary treatments materials (e.g. close boarded fencing) fronting public realm areas.

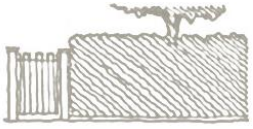
9.6 Given the importance of boundary treatments in setting the quality of a development and streetscene, the Council will expect developers to consider this aspect of their designs very carefully and provide a high quality design response. Particular consideration will need to be given to boundaries which are visible in the public realm. Figure 30 illustrates the typology of boundary treatments to public realm areas that the designers should draw upon when developing their schemes.

9.7 Where existing boundary treatments make a consistent and positive contribution to the character of the street, this design should be adhered to.

Figure 30: Examples of acceptable forms of boundary treatments to public realm areas

Picket Fence – usually in rural and semi-rural settings, with matching timber gate

Low wall with hedge – suburban settings



Full hedgerow – usually in well-established sub-urban settings, often associated with extensive tree planting

Wall with railings and/or hedge – Often with substantial gate piers – usually seen in well-established suburbs

Full boundary wall – usually with substantial gate and intermediate piers – usually seen in well-established suburbs

Full height railings – a formal boundary treatment, often appropriate in urban contexts

Full height close boarded fence – normally only appropriate to side or rear boundaries, as this can produce a 'dead' frontage.

Principle 30: Boundary Treatments

- **All boundary treatments will be expected to be high quality and reflect the character of the development and the surrounding context.**
- **Treatments to the public realm will be expected to be visually interesting and high quality. Long lengths of continuous and unbroken hard boundary treatments will be resisted.**
- **To a front garden, boundary treatments predominantly in excess of 1.2m will be discouraged.**
- **Wooden shiplap or panel fencing is considered an unacceptable boundary treatment when visible from the public realm.**

Provision for Cycles, Bins & meter cabinets

Waste and recycling storage

9.8 It is important that the design of bin storage is considered at an early stage in the design process.

9.9 The Council currently has a fortnightly domestic waste collection service. Normal householder bins are as follows:

	Refuse Collection (fortnightly)	**Recycling Collection** (fortnightly)	**Food and Garden Waste Collection** (fortnightly)
Single Household (Individual property)	240 litre green lidded wheeled bin	240 litre blue lidded wheeled bin	240 litre brown lidded wheeled bin, 5 litre food waste caddy
HMO (As defined in the Waste Policy)	240 litre green lidded wheeled bin	240 litre blue lidded wheeled bin	240 litre brown lidded wheeled bin, 5 litre food waste caddy
Flats or Apartments (Properties containing several individual properties within one building)	Share Euro style containers (See Annex 2)	Share Euro style containers (See Annex 2)	240 litre brown lidded wheeled bin (shared use of residents – not for commercial use i.e. by paid gardener)

9.10 Shared bins may need to be provided in flats or care homes.

9.11 It is important that the waste storage requirements are handled in purpose-built spaces that are sufficient in size, easily accessible and which do not generate offensive smells or negatively impact on a street scene's character and quality.

9.12 The Council's strong preference is for refuse storage areas to be located to the rear or side of dwellings where they are invisible in the public realm. Where rear and side storage

opportunities are not available, well considered frontage storage may be acceptable should it be evident that the solution delivers a high-quality outcome.

9.13 Early discussion with the LPA during pre-application discussions is recommended so that waste management is considered as an integral part of the design process. Distances beyond 25m between collection point and storage points will be resisted.

Figure 31: example of discrete sustainable bin storage design

Cycle storage

9.14 The Council actively supports the development of cycling as a sustainable transport mode. Good quality space to accommodate the storage of bikes is expected to be specifically designed in at an early stage for each dwelling. This can be external or internal space but it is important that cycle parking is additional to space used for other uses, e.g. balconies, lobbies and hallways. Cycle storage facilities on balconies or in hallways will not be acceptable.

9.15 Cycle storage facilities should be easily accessible to occupiers and wherever possible, be integral to the design of the residential development. Where external cycle facilities are provided, they should be constructed of durable materials, relate to the design of the main residential building, be easily accessible and not have a detrimental impact on the street scene.

Figure 32: cycle storage solution that reflects and blends with the wider design

Meter cabinets

9.16 It is recognised that utility companies prefer meter cabinets to be located on external elevations that are easily accessible from the street. However, it is also important that the meter cabinets do not undermine the attractiveness of buildings and the street scenes by virtue of their design and positioning.

9.17 Meter boxes need not be standard white units and the council would encourage a bespoke approach that fits in with the character of the building they are positioned on and the wider area. However, they should be designed to and positioned to ensure a balance between accessibility and unobtrusiveness.

Principle 31: Meter Cabinets

- **All new residential development will be provided with meter cabinets and space for storage of cycles & bins in a manner that functions well and does not compromise the visual amenities of the building and street scene.**

Hardstanding and vehicle cross-overs

9.18 If not carefully designed, driveways and hardstanding areas can create hard, unattractive environments that break down the rhythm of plot definitions and landscaping, increase flooding and reduce biodiversity.

9.19 Provision of new vehicle crossings can result in a loss of front boundary definitions and if inadequate space is available in front of a dwelling for parking, result in vehicles:

- hanging over pavement areas, potentially causing problems for pedestrians; or
- lying hard up against habitable rooms, affecting outlook.

9.20 It is important for this Council that new vehicle crossings and areas of hardstanding on residential properties do not contribute to a deterioration of the streetscene, a loss of biodiversity, reduced pedestrian safety or increased flooding.

9.21 Potential solutions for minimising adverse impacts of hardstanding include:

- using porous materials such as gravel or blocks;
- keeping driveways and parking areas only as large as necessary;
- Integrating areas into the overall landscaping schemes;
- Ensuring the spaces is enclosed as much as possible by soft planting, walls or other boundary treatments which are in keeping with the character of the area.

Principle 32: Vehicle crossings and hardstanding

- **New hardstanding areas will be expected to be constructed in porous materials and cover only the minimum space necessary. Hardstanding that is not designed as part of a soft landscaping scheme, or which results in a deterioration of the streetscene, will be resisted.**
- **Hardstanding should be considered to meet the needs of both vehicle and pedestrian use, providing definition of routes, and maintaining unobstructed access to dwellings.**

If you need this information in another format or language please contact us

Telephone: (024) 7683 1109

e-mail: planningpolicy@coventry.gov.uk