

Quality Design - West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Document



Part 2

Residential Development

PART 2

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1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This document comprises the second of several publications which form the West Berkshire Council design guide series "Quality Design - West Berkshire". Together the series forms a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which supports the policies in the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 and the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001 - 2016. **As such, it is a material consideration in determining planning applications and if not followed, may lead to the refusal of planning permission.** It is intended that in the future this SPD series will also support relevant policies in West Berkshire Council's Development Plan Documents. It also complements other existing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs) and SPDs, including any site specific development briefs which may be produced in the future.

1.1.2 This section "**Residential Development**" sets out the urban design principles relevant to all new residential development. It should be used in conjunction with Part 3 of this series, which identifies the key character types within West Berkshire's residential areas.



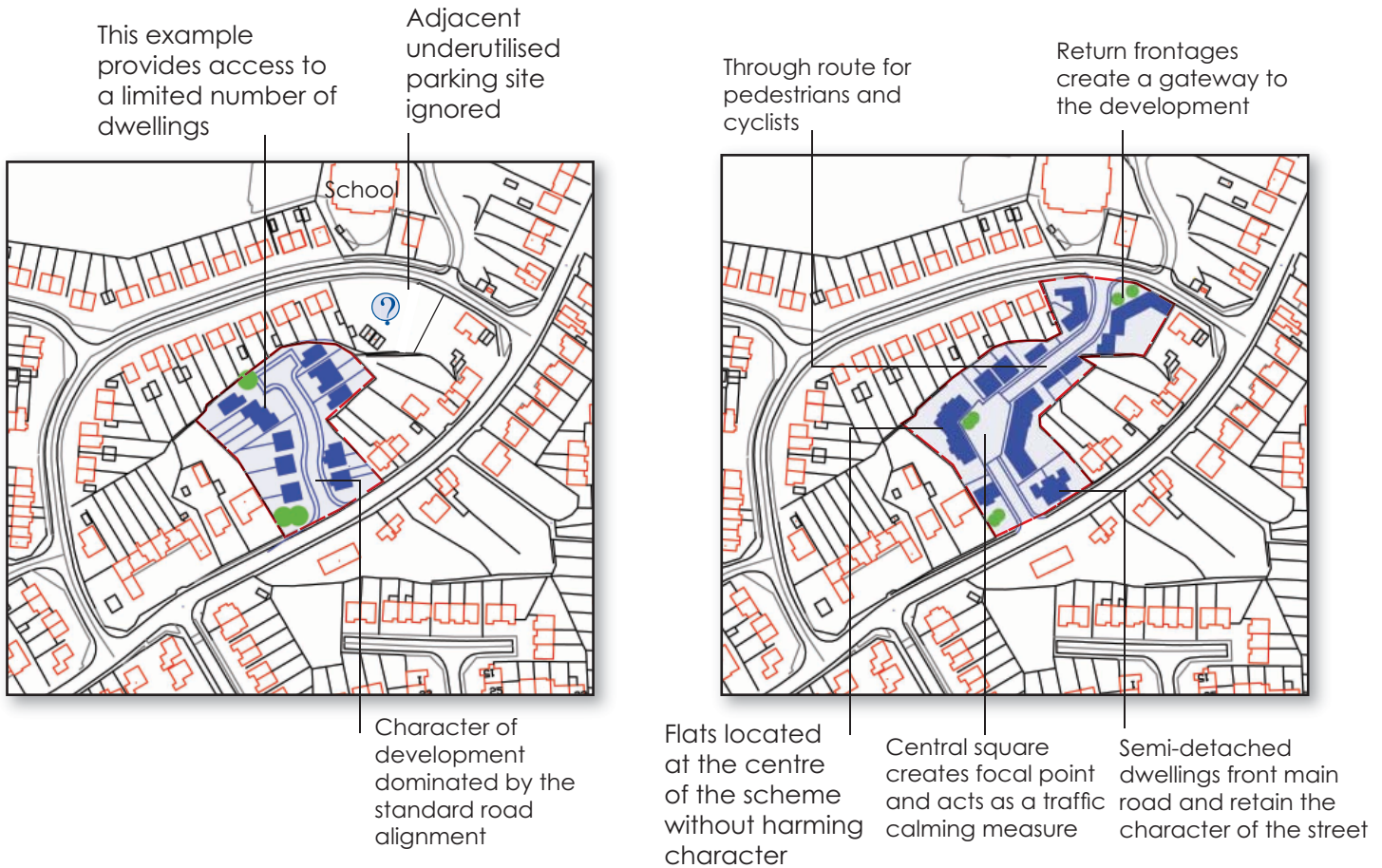
New residential development at higher densities creates interesting townscapes in this example



Frontage development addressing a main road



New residential development encloses a local open space



A comprehensive solution to infill development can make more efficient use of land, add to the development value of a scheme and enhance the quality of the urban environment.

Compared to the scheme on the left, the development on the right has achieved a generally better use of land through its comprehensive and coordinated approach

If proposals fail to respond to this guidance by neglecting to maximise site opportunities and through poor co-ordination with the surroundings, planning permission may be refused. Such schemes are likely to be considered to exhibit poor design and failure to result in efficient use of land

1.2 Coordinating Infill Development

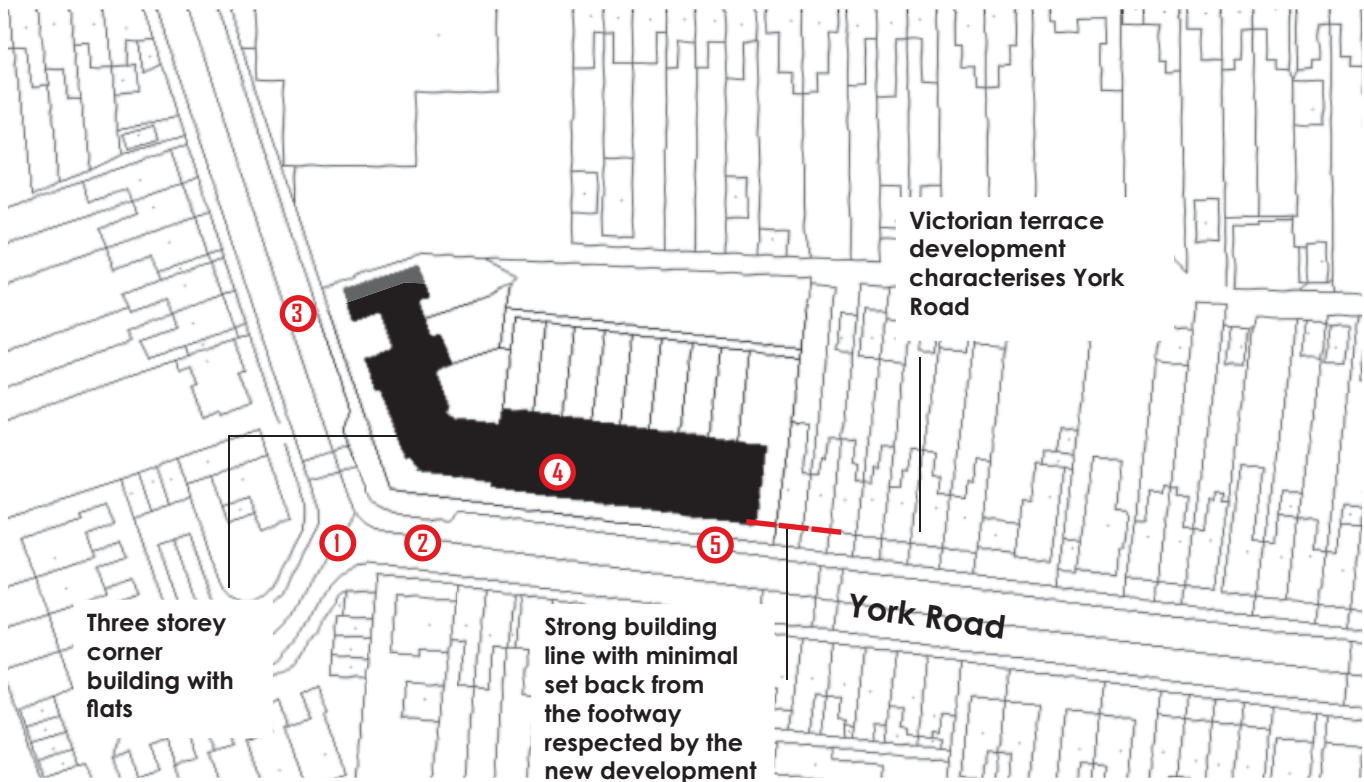
1.2.1 For a number of reasons, developers and designers often fail to consider possible opportunities for a more comprehensive approach to infill development. The Council is concerned about the cumulative impact of uncoordinated infill developments. Uncoordinated infill development is starting to fragment the existing coherent and legible urban fabric of the District's towns. It is of concern that uncoordinated development is creating inefficiencies in the use of previously developed land and a failure to deliver coordinated improvements to local facilities, infrastructure and amenities.

1.2.2 A more comprehensive approach to development proposals could result in positive additions to the urban structure of the town and a balanced, more coordinated approach to the provision of local facilities and infrastructure. A useful test may be: if the same pattern of development were applied to adjoining or nearby sites, would this be an acceptable way of developing a neighbourhood?

1.2.3 Set out below are a series of issues pertaining to the coordination of infill developments that developers are expected to consider.

Recent infill development - Design Appraisal

Infill development within a Victorian terraced area (York Road, Newbury)



Flats on the corner site create a landmark building and increase density



Rooms in the roof pitch provide more floorspace than a traditional Victorian terrace



Victorian terraced character maintained along the York Road frontage



The new development blends seamlessly into the existing urban form



Varied building line on this side of the development reflects the adjacent urban form



The Council will expect to see a comprehensive approach taken to infill development



The Council will expect to see consideration of local infrastructure



New housing developed at approximately 35 dwellings per hectare



New housing developed at approximately 35 dwellings per hectare

Adjacent Sites

- 1.2.4 New development should consider future development opportunities nearby leaving options open for later development to be implemented in a sensitive and complementary way. Development should occupy the site in a way which makes sense in relation to neighbouring sites.
- 1.2.5 **Where a development proposal could currently, or in the foreseeable future, form part of a potentially larger scheme, the Council will apply its relevant policies as if it is considering the larger scheme.** This particularly applies to the policies for the provision of affordable housing and other developer contributions. (See SPG4/04 Delivering Investment from Sustainable Development).

Local Infrastructure

- 1.2.6 The impact of a development on the local infrastructure and existing services of the neighbourhood should be considered. The Council's approach to developer contributions will assist in this matter by ensuring these are sought from **most developments** and that delivery is coordinated.

1.3 Making Best Use of Land – Residential Densities

- 1.3.1 The Government's strategy of securing higher density development within existing residential areas can, in some cases, cause concerns about erosion of character, increased traffic congestion, impact upon services and facilities and loss of biodiversity. It is therefore important to ensure higher densities are only secured by using the right designs in the right locations, in a manner which respects and enhances the valued character of areas.

- 1.3.2 Government guidance indicates that local planning authorities should;

- **Avoid developments which make inefficient use of land (those of less than 30 dwellings per hectare net);**
 - **Encourage housing development which makes more efficient use of land (between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare net);**
 - **Seek greater intensity of development at places with good public transport accessibility such as city, town, district and local centres or around major nodes along good quality public transport corridors;**
 - **Seek protection of the environment and to create greener residential environments.**
- (Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG3) Housing, March 2000)**

Consultation Draft Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) Housing was published in December 2005. Development proposals will need to comply with PPS3 when this is published, and any future amendments and other related documents.

- 1.3.3 The suitability of different densities appropriate for different locations is only indicative and it is essential that design, character and **context** are primary considerations. Mixing the housing type in a scheme can also result in efficient densities whilst providing a range and choice of dwelling types, including smaller homes. In all cases, early advice should be sought from the Council's planning service. The following paragraphs in this section give guidance as to how the Council interprets at the local level the national and county level planning policies on density.

Smaller villages

- 1.3.4 The move towards higher densities does not mean that all development, even at 30dph, is appropriate. West Berkshire's villages are particularly sensitive to the impact of intensification and redevelopment because of the extremely sensitive nature of the surrounding countryside and the relative lack of sustainability due to remoteness from public transport within the rural areas.



New housing developed at approximately 40-50 dwellings per hectare



New housing developed at approximately 50 dwellings per hectare

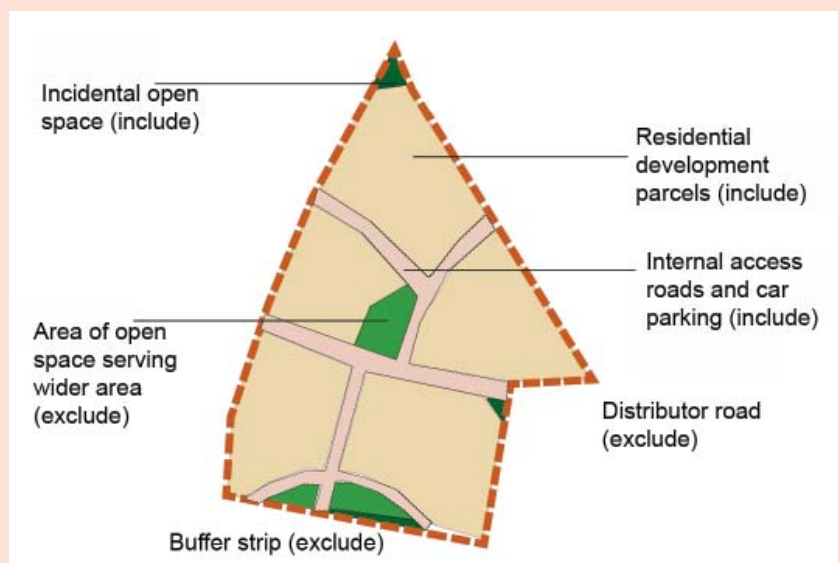
Calculating Density

The density of a site can be calculated using advice provided within Annex C of PPG3. In general, it is appropriate to calculate the net density; to include those areas that will be developed directly for housing and associated uses, such as;

- Access roads;
- Private gardens;
- Car parking areas and garage courts;
- Incidental open space and landscaped areas;
- Children's play areas.

Excluded from the calculations will be;

- Major distributor roads;
- Public open space serving a wider area;
- Significant landscaped areas or buffer strips;
- Schools.



Whatever the proposed density, the first question must always be whether the development is acceptable in principle, having regard to other planning issues.

- 1.3.5 In very sensitive village locations where some development is acceptable but, where a higher density would result in significant detriment to the character of the area, development below 30dph may be the only appropriate option.

Towns and larger villages

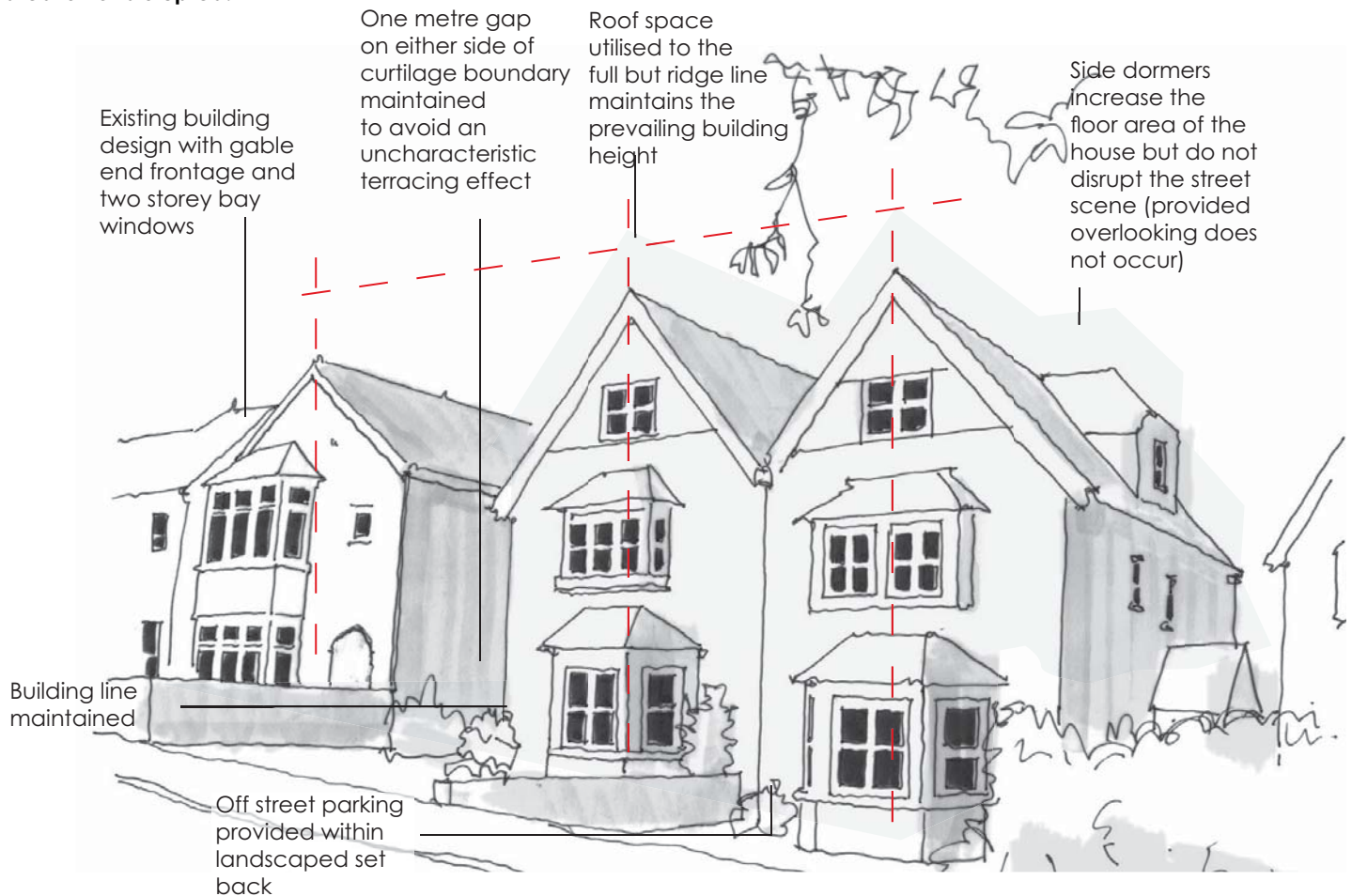
- 1.3.6 Densities of around 30 to 50 dph will generally be achievable within towns and larger villages, where development reflects existing character. Again, whatever the proposed density, the first question must always be whether the development is acceptable in all respects. Not all sites are suitable for development even if they meet national policies on density, as other issues may be critical.



New housing developed at approximately 60 dwellings per hectare, using a contemporary design. Similar results can be achieved using more traditional forms

Infill Development - Interwar character area

This example shows how density can be increased whilst the suburban character of the area is protected. The example shown could be semis or a small apartment development. More homes are created but the overall appearance of the area is not disrupted.



1.3.7 Higher densities can be achieved, in appropriate locations, without having to build at high rise. Town houses and terraces provide an attractive option for higher density living (40 – 60 dph) and can be built at two or three storeys, as well as providing a garden and parking near to the house.

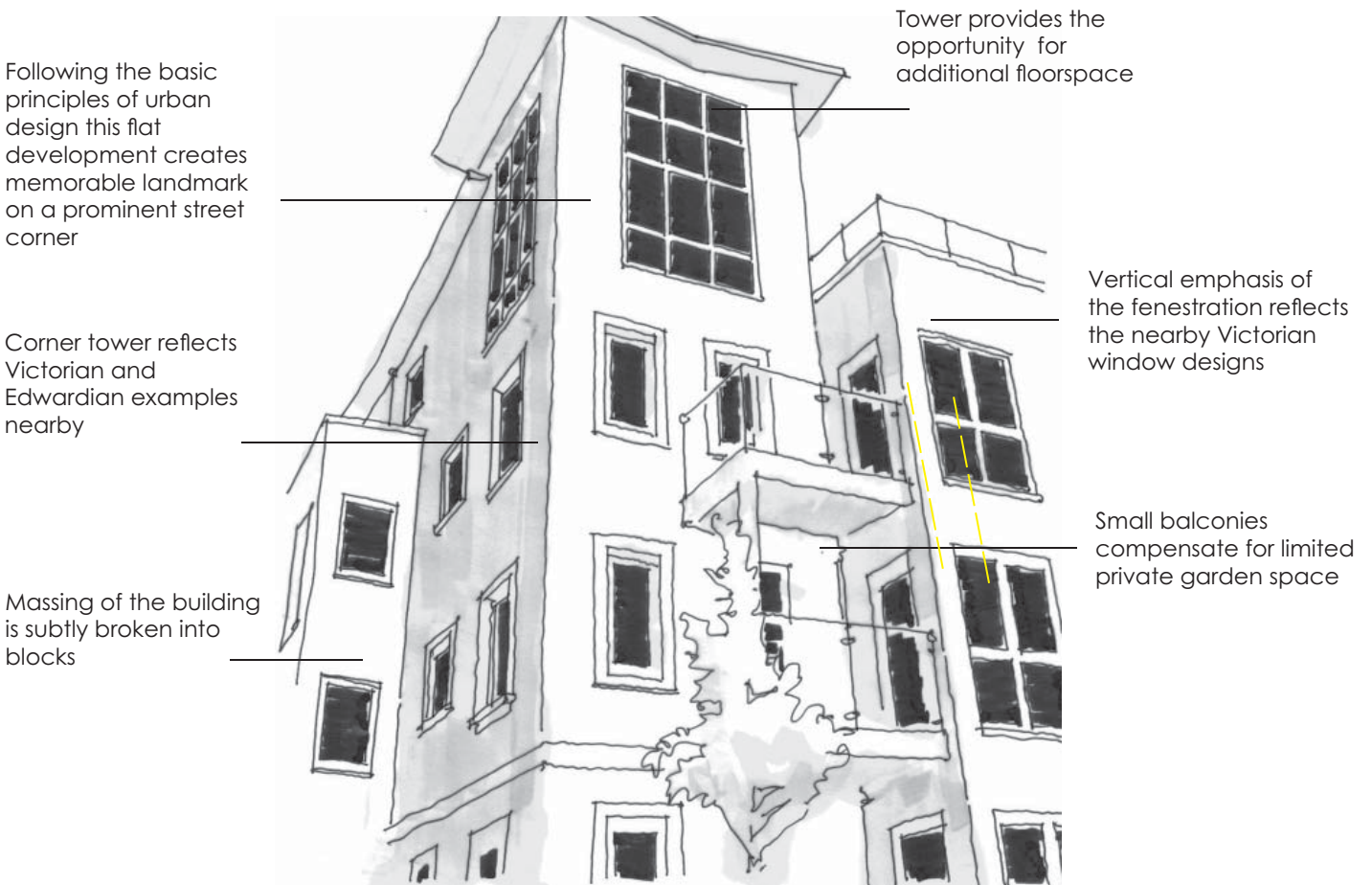
1.3.8 A design technique to achieve higher densities in areas which are constrained by character or context is to build at a higher level on the corner of the building, where the design makes a statement and also achieves a higher density. Use of roof spaces for living areas can also achieve such results though care must be taken to minimise overlooking and loss of privacy.



Contemporary design reflects nearby Victorian Villas with corner tower features

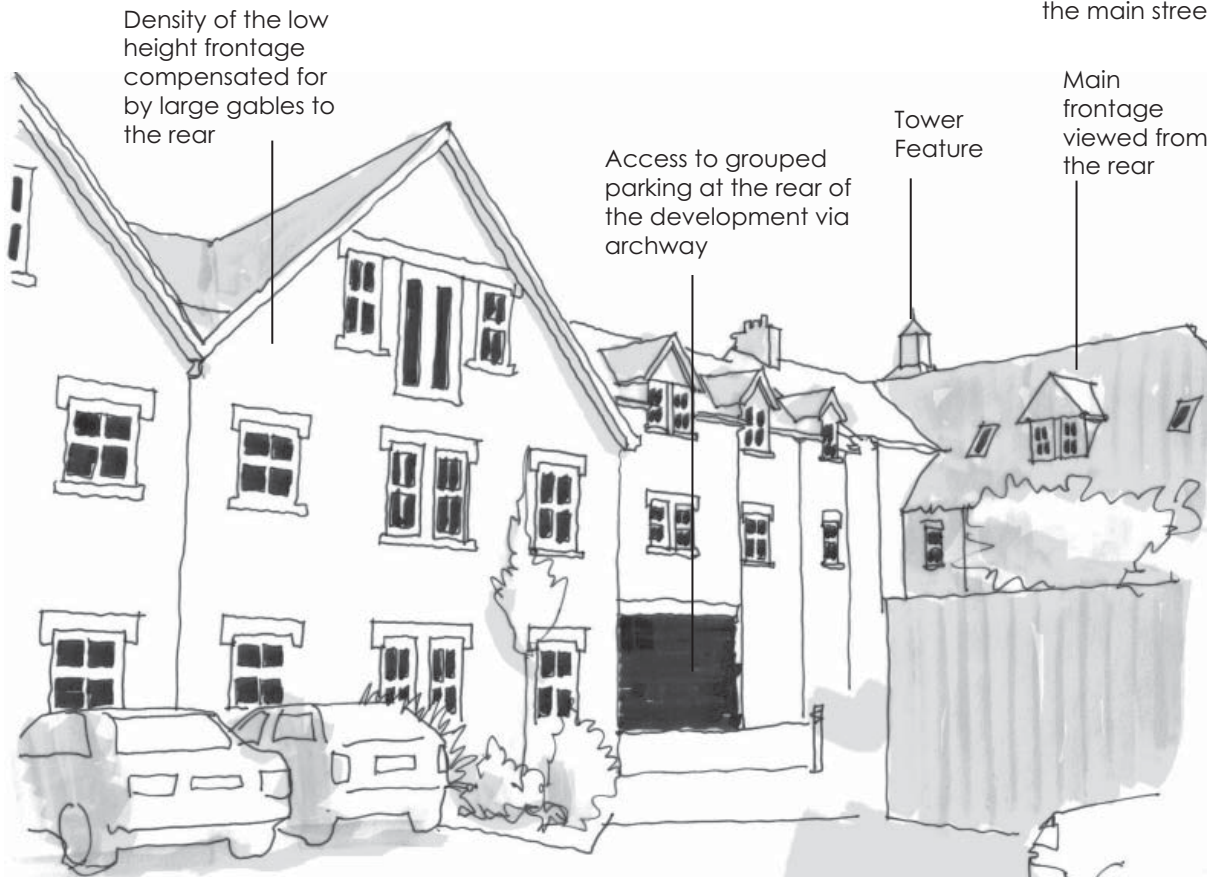
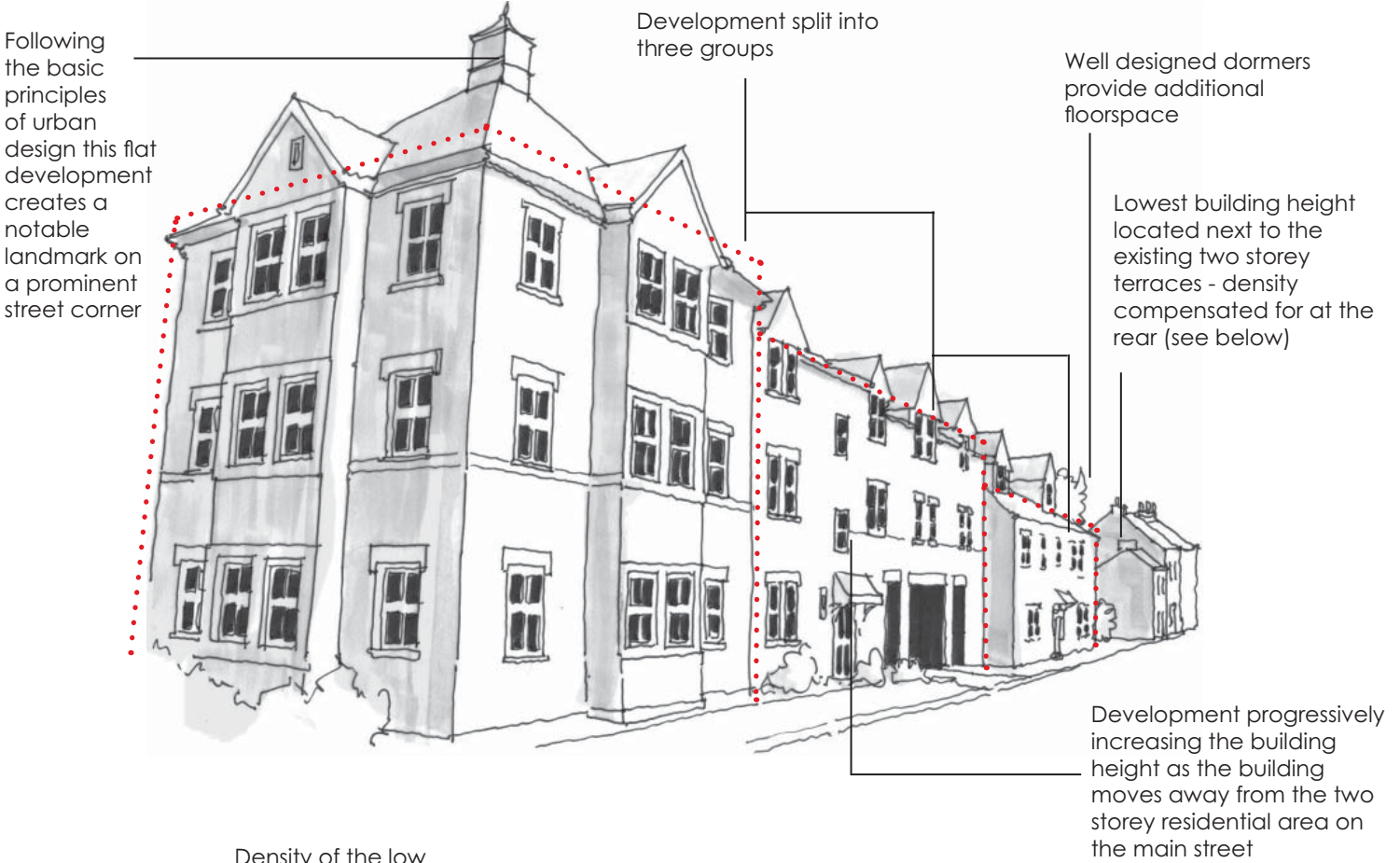
Infill Development - Contemporary Landmark Building

High quality contemporary infill building can enhance the urban fabric of an existing residential area, where appropriate similar results can be achieved using more traditional architectural styles



Infill Development - New flats within Victorian terrace area

Sensitively designed higher density flats enhance legibility and protect character within close proximity to two storey Victorian terraces.



Infill Development - New flats within an established residential area adjoining a main road

Sensitively designed higher density flats enhance legibility and protect character within close proximity to older properties

Massing drops down to three storey town houses when viewed from the main public realm frontage

Four storey flats create distinctive features on the corner of two key streets



Three storey town houses when viewed from the main public realm frontage

Historic character of area protected and enhanced through the retention of the mature tree on the main street frontage. Development is set back to accommodate spread of tree

Style of nearby development reflected in the architecture of the main street frontage

Flats articulated as three storey town houses when viewed from the main public realm frontage

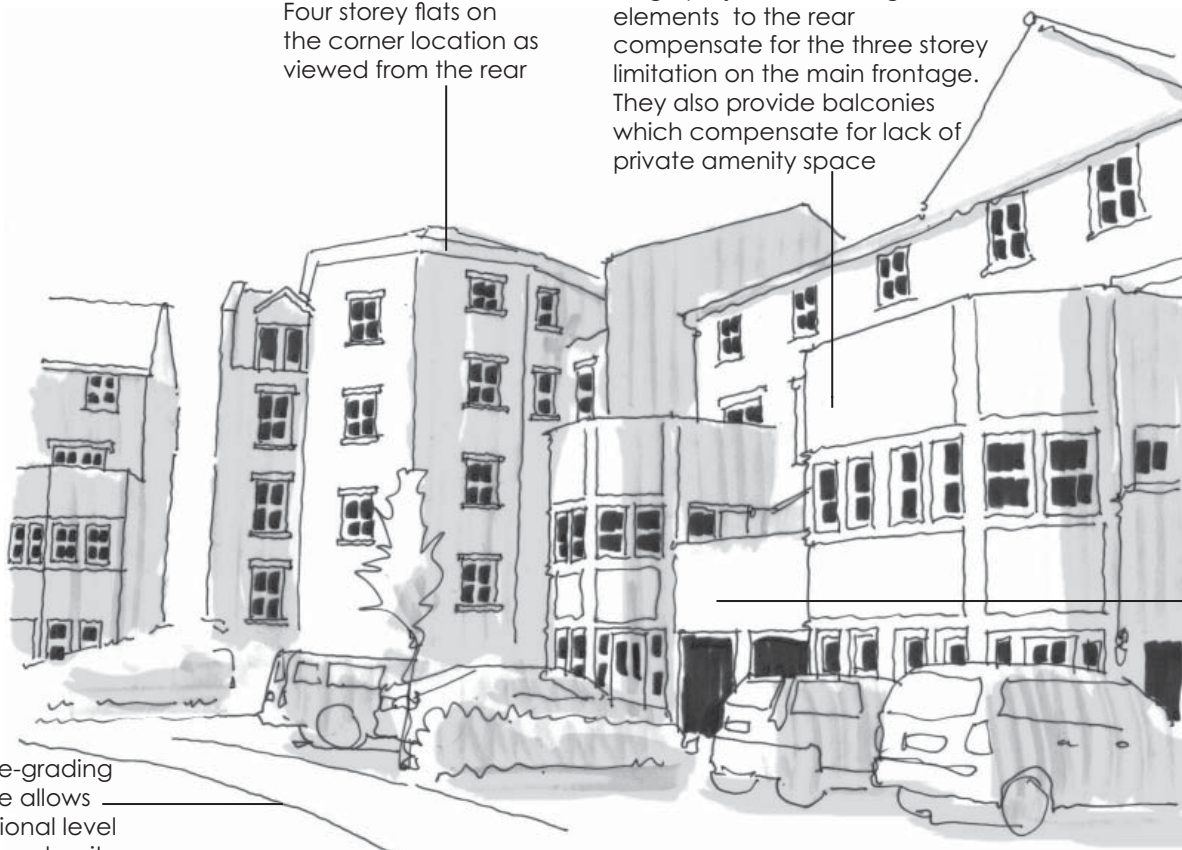


Front doors articulated with traditional porticos actually provide access to shared lobbies

Infill Development - New flats constructed in town house style

Four storey flats on the corner location as viewed from the rear

Large projected building elements to the rear compensate for the three storey limitation on the main frontage. They also provide balconies which compensate for lack of private amenity space



Limited re-grading of the site allows for additional level and higher density

The 3 storey town houses (opposite) are actually four storey flats which utilise a change in level to accommodate a single aspect storey with internal garaging

Town centres, transport routes and nodes

- 1.3.9 Densities above 50 dph will mainly be achievable in town centres, along main transport routes and close to transport nodes where the existing scale of buildings is greatest and a range of public transport options exist. In some cases in West Berkshire, densities of 100 dph plus have been successfully achieved, mainly located in town centres and along public transport routes.

Reference should also be made to

www.cabe.gov.uk

for further information on density and design

1.4 Relationship to the Open Countryside and Landscape Setting

- 1.4.1 Settlement edges in West Berkshire tend to provide glimpsed views of development between mature landscaping with long distance views of key landmarks such as church towers or spires. **New development on sites close to the edge of a settlement will need to demonstrate how the inter-relationship between open countryside and development form is respected.** Particular care and attention should be taken to protect and enhance the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and other protected areas such as Areas of Special Landscape Importance (ASLI), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Historic Parks and Gardens, and Gaps between settlements.



West Berkshire has an attractive and distinctive landscape character



New development located on the edge of settlements must include appropriate landscaping



Roofscape of new development glimpsed through retained structural landscaping

1.4.2 In general, development should be outward facing with a reduction in density on the outer edge of development. The development pattern should visually recede and soften at the edge and provide a harmonious transition using strong structural landscaping. 'Hard' edges must be avoided. Such structural landscaping should be the starting point of a development from which the rest of the design flows.

1.4.3 New development should seek to set individual dwellings and clusters of buildings within the dominant landscape setting. Where development is proposed at a settlement edge, an attractive interface and controlled views of individual dwellings or building groups should be created which are carefully designed to fit in with the setting.

1.4.4 To create a traditional development edge and sensitive interface with the adjoining countryside the following guidelines should be used;

- Building materials should be in tune with the locally distinctive palette identified in paragraph 1.13.1 and 1.13.2 of this document;
- Roof forms and building heights should be varied;
- Substantial planting on edges and within development adjacent to the countryside, aiming to soften views and subdivide the urban form into groups of buildings. The use of native species of local provenance is encouraged.;
- Development boundaries broken up by planting and open space. Further guidance on landscaping, planting and biodiversity can be found in **Part 4** of this SPD series, and **Part 1** for advice on open space.

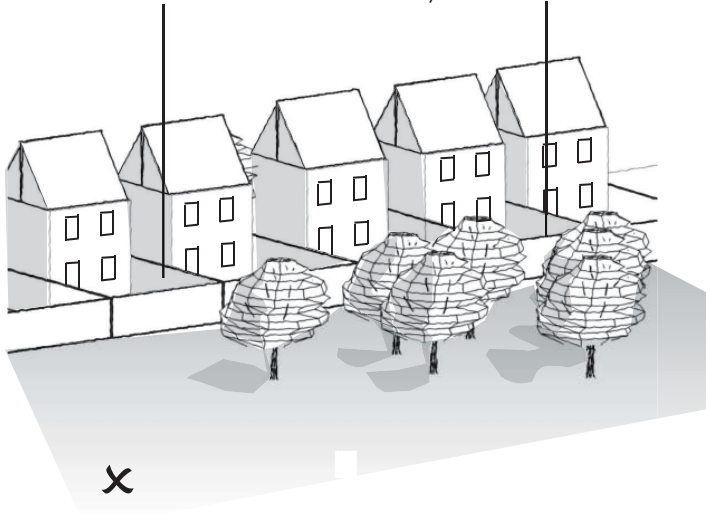
1.4.5 According to the Countryside Agency's Countryside Character Volume 7 (1999) survey, West Berkshire is covered by five countryside character areas;

- **Thames Basin Heaths;**
- **Thames Valley;**
- **Berkshire and Marlborough Downs**
- **Hampshire Downs**
- **Chilterns**

1.4.6 These character areas, the Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2003), the North Wessex Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment (2002) and the Council's District-wide Landscape Assessment (1993) should be referred to when designing development close to the settlement edge.

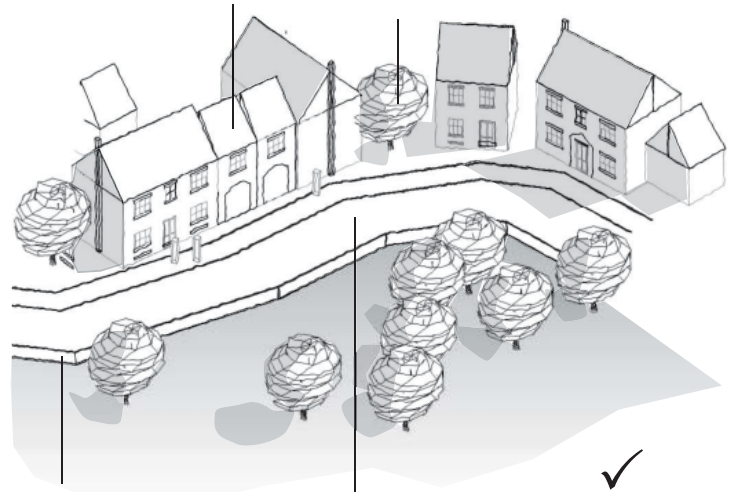
Residential development 'backs' onto the open countryside with rear gardens

Rear fences in a straight line create a hard edge against the open countryside



Urban form is aligned to create a sculpted edge to the development

Gaps in the urban form break development into groups and provide opportunities for tree planting to soften the edge



Stone Wall or hedgerow used to define the edge of the development area and create a transition from enclosed to open space - this can be breached in places to allow access

Local access roads in the form of informal drives allow access to the frontage development and keep the edge 'active'



Post war street structure in Hungerford



Organic street structures in Lambourn

1.5 Street Structure

- 1.5.1 The street structure relates to the pattern of streets and development blocks within the neighbourhood. This could be an informal network of organically formed historic streets with gentle curves, narrowings and widenings at various places or a rigid 'grid' of Victorian development. **A key feature of character will be the ratio of street width to building height. For infill development this proportion should be respected.** Medium sized development proposals should ensure that the proposed street structure is integrated with existing layout and articulated in the same manner.
- 1.5.2 **Gated developments**, where several dwellings are cut off from the wider urban form, are not inclusive places and **should be avoided**. This is particularly important where gates would sever pedestrian desire lines or public rights of way, reducing permeability and accessibility during the day. **Part 1** of this series provides detail on the advantages of permeable development. Where gates are proposed the developer will be required to justify the need.
- 1.5.3 Physical barriers should be used sparingly and not be visually prominent. Instead of physical barriers, it is better to use more subtle design cues, such as landscaping, different paving types and textures can be used to signify transition to private residential spaces.



Frontage composition of interwar housing



Frontage composition of Victorian housing



Traditional on-street parking with planters providing landscaping



Parking courtyard located at the back of a new housing block

Make reference to www.cabe.gov.uk for further information on parking design

- 1.5.4 Controlled access may, however, be used sensitively to provide secure areas in higher density schemes in town centres, where other uses and passers by will need to be restricted from 'wandering into' private residential spaces. (E.g. apartment blocks with a number of access points may require gated access onto the street frontage). It may also be necessary to limit and control access into communal residential car parking areas, particularly undercroft parking where visibility and overlooking will be limited.

1.6 Frontage Composition

- 1.6.1 Frontage composition is the pattern of fenestration, wall material patterns, projecting features such as bay windows and the broad rhythm, proportion and scale of frontages along a street. New development should seek to encompass the pattern of these elements.

1.7 Parking

- 1.7.1 Parking provision should reflect national parking standards and the Council's parking strategy. The appropriate level of parking will vary from place to place and according to the type of development proposed.

- 1.7.2 The manner in which car parking is arranged can have a fundamental effect on the quality of the place. In the case of limited infill development, (1 or 2 dwellings), in areas where parking provision is provided on-street (e.g. Victorian residential areas), street parking may be acceptable. Parking can also be successfully contained within secure parking courtyards, ideally at the back of development blocks. In these scenarios, consideration should be given to providing dwellings which overlook the courtyards to provide natural surveillance over the space making it safe for pedestrians accessing their vehicles. Vehicles should not be allowed to dominate the space or to inconvenience pedestrians or cyclists.

- 1.7.3 On higher density developments, underground or undercroft parking should be considered. This could be a particularly appropriate approach for developments where it is necessary to preserve or create substantial gardens or landscaped areas.

1.8 Building Line and Boundary Treatment

- 1.8.1 The position of the front of the building in relation to the street is commonly referred to as the '**building line**'. The building line is either set back from the street or located directly onto the pavement – it may be very distinct, for example as in terrace development, or more informal, as seen in some village locations. Where buildings are set back, a separate boundary is also provided, often in the form of a low wall, railings or shrub planting. The line of buildings and associated features contribute to the character of a street or neighbourhood and should be respected unless there are sound design reasons for varying the pattern.
- 1.8.2 **Boundary treatments** play an important role in shaping the character of an area and contributing to the street scene. They should respect and reflect their surroundings, having regard to the existing prevailing forms of boundary treatment. Particular care is needed in choosing any boundary treatments that are required in rural settings and historic environments. Where boundary treatment is required, every effort should be made to use quality materials and designs for walls, fences and railings. Hedgerows will need to be planted up with suitable shrubs if these are also required. Fast growing and non-native species should be avoided to ensure that hedgerows do not become over-dominant and to ensure that natural surveillance onto the street is not interrupted. Native species of local provenance are preferred.
- 1.8.3 Building lines and boundary treatments have a significant role to play in clearly defining public and private spaces. Where this is left ambiguous there is a tendency to generate spaces which are poorly maintained and in turn generate anti-social behaviour and security problems. In higher density developments where buildings are located close to the street, a small set back (up to 1 metre) may be required for functional use such as the location of bins. These 'threshold' areas should be separately surfaced with appropriate materials to delineate the semi-private nature of the space.



Set back from the footway provides room for a small garden and respects the prevailing building line



Set back from the footway provides room for a small garden and parking area

1.9 Contributing to Character with Landscape Features and Gardens



Front and rear gardens can contribute significantly to residential character



Mature shared garden at the back of a development block

- 1.9.1 Planning Policy Statement 3 confirms that whilst gardens are considered to be brownfield land this does not necessarily mean that they are suitable for development. Many established residential areas within West Berkshire are defined by the mature landscapes within both front and rear gardens. Gardens, open spaces and landscaping can significantly add to the character of a place. They can also be important for nature conservation, including the role they sometimes have in providing feeding areas for bats.
- 1.9.2 Proposals which would result in the loss of garden land, either through infilling or through wholesale redevelopment of residential properties, should be carefully considered. This does not mean development of gardens is ruled out but it will be necessary to consider how existing garden land contributes to the character of an area. It will also be necessary to consider the cumulative effect of proposals on this aspect of an area's character.
- 1.9.3 Designers and developers need to fully assess the landscape constraints and opportunities of a site and work with mature landscape features such as trees, hedgerows, local open spaces, water courses and ponds by making them key features of design proposals.
- 1.9.4 Within areas defined by mature landscaping, developers will need to consider the scale and design of front and rear gardens to ensure that they are in keeping with the character of the street. There may be opportunities for more intensive development in locations characterised by large plots which would minimise any loss of important garden land. For example, a development of apartments in a single block – possibly with underground parking – which retained much of the existing garden land may be acceptable. An alternative of infilling with multiple individual houses may be unacceptable because of the loss of garden land and the overall disruption to the character of the area and the prevailing pattern of development. (See **Part 1** of this series regarding landmark buildings.)
- 1.9.5 In places where there are no front gardens, development proposals should not include such spaces as they are likely to look incongruous in the street scene. Infill development should respond to context in terms of garden size.

1.10 Building Type and Height

- 1.10.1 Respecting the physical massing of an existing residential area is a critical part of protecting residential character. The physical bulk of the building should be considered in terms of its footprint, length, width and height. Designers will also be expected to consider the relationship of the building to the boundary of the curtilage and street.
- 1.10.2 Respecting Height – The prevailing height of neighbouring buildings should be respected. If these parameters seem to restrict development options, habitable rooms could be located in the roof space. The use of dormers may be acceptable as long as the positioning of windows is not out of place with the prevailing pattern of fenestration.
- 1.10.3 Introducing Corner Buildings – Buildings on corner plots can, where appropriate, be increased in height to enhance legibility within a neighbourhood. Legibility can be further enhanced by creating strong architectural styles on corner buildings and emphasising detailing elements. Higher corner buildings should gradually rise up by stepping up from the height of adjacent properties.



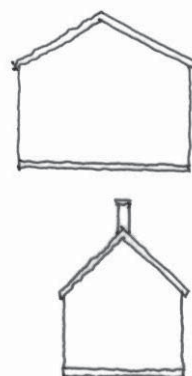
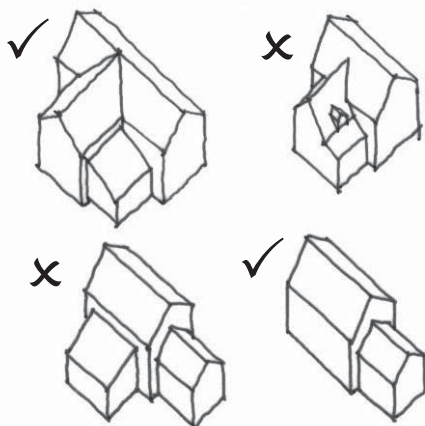
A new building creates an increase in height at a corner location

Roof Form

In this example we demonstrate how simple building forms can be versatile, allowing for larger floor areas whilst maintaining a human scale.

To maintain a human scale, the footprint of a building should not be enlarged too much as it upsets the balance of the design and lowers the roof pitch.

Roof pitches of between 40 degrees and 50 degrees for tiles and between 20 degrees and 35 degrees for slate are sensible parameters to work within.



Traditional roof designs can often account for as much as half of the building height. However, pitches should reflect those of surrounding buildings. Gabled and hipped roofs should not usually be mixed on one building. Consistent roof design can help to create an attractive coherence in a development. This can contrast strongly with a mix of shapes that will often contribute to a jumbled appearance.

The most appropriate way to increase the size of a dwelling is to use a combination of smaller units. These can be assembled in a variety of ways that retain the traditional housing style.



The combination of red and blue brick is a distinctive feature of the area



Thatch is locally distinctive to West Berkshire



Locally distinctive roof line and detailing

Town and Village Design Statements provide guidance on prevailing roof types, materials and locally distinctive detailing

1.11 Roof Form

- 1.11.1 A combination of roof form, building height, topography and the predominance of chimneys combine to create **roofscape**. Roofscapes often unconsciously shape our perceptions of a place - when a roof is out of character with neighbouring properties, it is often incongruous. In West Berkshire, roof form is particularly important because of the areas' topography of hills and valleys.
- 1.11.2 Traditional roof forms tend to have steeper pitches (in excess of 30 degrees) than more recent suburban development forms. A traditional approach in respect of roof form and pitch should be applied to new development unless there are overriding reasons to create alternative forms. Contemporary roof designs may work well in the context of innovative design proposals.
- 1.11.3 Roofing materials should reflect and respect those adjacent to the proposed development. Further details of locally distinctive materials are provided within **Part 3** of this series.
- 1.11.4 The use of photovoltaics (solar panels) within the roof should be considered (see **Part 4** of this series), particularly where a south facing roof pitch exists. However in some cases their installation may be visually sensitive and inappropriate to the street scene.

1.12 Locally Distinctive Detailing

- 1.12.1 New development is expected to respond to locally distinctive features where appropriate. Examples include chequer board brick work, distinctive soldier coursing and the use of locally quarried flint. The Residential Character Analysis contained within **Part 3** of this series provides further details of locally distinctive architectural detailing and should be read alongside this section. **Town and Village Design Statements** also provide similar local guidance.

1.13 West Berkshire's Traditional Building Form, Details and Materials

- 1.13.1 Consistent with the variety of local landscape characters and geologies, buildings in West Berkshire vary as much in design as in materials with a variety of styles rather than a single local style. A summary of the locally distinctive building materials, primarily associated with the visual identity of Vernacular, Georgian, Regency, Victorian and Edwardian eras is summarised below;

Bricks – if there is a dominant facing material in West Berkshire it is a red mottled brick with blue brick detailing. Initially produced locally but with the advent of canal and rail, the bricks were imported and a wider colour range appeared;

Coloured Brickwork – The use of a coloured wash and later paint appears in limited locations, often in the middle of a terrace contrasting with the adjacent red brick;

Render / Plaster finishing – render was originally used in panels between timber framing, rendering was used on larger Regency, Victorian and Edwardian villas;

Flint – The local geology provided flint as a distinctive material to add interest and variety to traditional housing elevations;

Tile Hanging – tile hanging is found on traditional and Victorian buildings in Hungerford and the western half of the district in particular. Often used on side elevations and at first floor level;

Weather boarding is seen in a number of locations;

Roof tiles and slate – a mix of small plain clay red / brown tiles and imported Welsh slates;

Thatch is an important roofing material in many West Berkshire villages.



Red brick used to highlight key elements of the frontage composition



Flint is used to render elevations and walls

1.13.2 The type of materials used reflects the architectural detailing of traditional buildings, such as ornate detailing used on landmark buildings to emphasise importance. A summary of the locally distinctive architectural details are set out below;

Brickwork – on the smaller terraced housing brickwork is generally plain with arched or flat brick heads to windows and doors. Stone lintels are also used but on larger houses. Brick detailing in the form of corbelled eaves or contrasting brick patterning is also used to give interest to the elevation;

Window openings – the scale of openings in relation to the elevations and their proportion is historically related to the window type. Sash windows have a vertical emphasis;

Roofs – generally buildings have pitched roofs spanning the narrowest dimension with gabled ends. Hipped roofs are more frequently found on detached houses;

Gables and eaves – gables have tiled verges with or without a brick on edge detail. Timber barge boards are simple in design. Eaves project from the main face with either boxed or exposed rafter feet. Corbelled brickwork or dentil course is more often found on larger houses;

Dormer Windows – are typically small in size with narrow cheeks and a pitched gabled roof in tiles or slate to match the main roof;

Chimneys - are a traditional feature of both terraced and detached houses, the latter being more ornate;

Porches and canopies – are there to provide shelter and a lobby to the house. They take various forms but are in proportion to the rest of the house.



Eaves and gables form a strong roof line



An effective mix of traditional and contemporary materials in modern residential design

- 1.13.3 Reference should also be made to the **Town and Village Design Statements**, providing detailed local guidance on materials and design details.

Living Conditions

1.14 Privacy

- 1.14.1 **Privacy** in residential development needs to be taken into account and created, as it is a fundamental feature of creating attractive, sustainable communities for existing and new residents. The **perception of privacy** at the front of a dwelling varies depending on location; therefore distances between building frontages will vary and in selected locations can be as close as 9 metres. However, where the distance between frontages is less than 21 metres, the design of the buildings will need to be carefully considered in terms of window design, location and internal arrangements to minimise overlooking and create privacy.
- 1.14.2 At the rear of a dwelling the expectation of the resident will be that they should experience a high level of privacy and that overlooking windows, whether in neighbouring workplaces or other homes, should be avoided or be some distance away. There is a long established good practice guideline of 21 metres as a privacy distance between houses backing onto each other and this has determined the length of rear gardens being at least 10.5 metres long. However, where the character of the area is of large houses with large mature gardens, areas of long gardens, or in rural fringe locations, **where established expectations of privacy are higher, the development will normally be expected to achieve greater levels of privacy.**
- 1.14.3 It is not just overlooking of windows and interior space which needs to be considered. A reasonable level of privacy needs to be created for gardens and balconies, especially in the areas immediately outside the building.



An effective mix of traditional and contemporary materials in modern residential design



Parking courtyards can be accommodated in the back of blocks and increase privacy distances



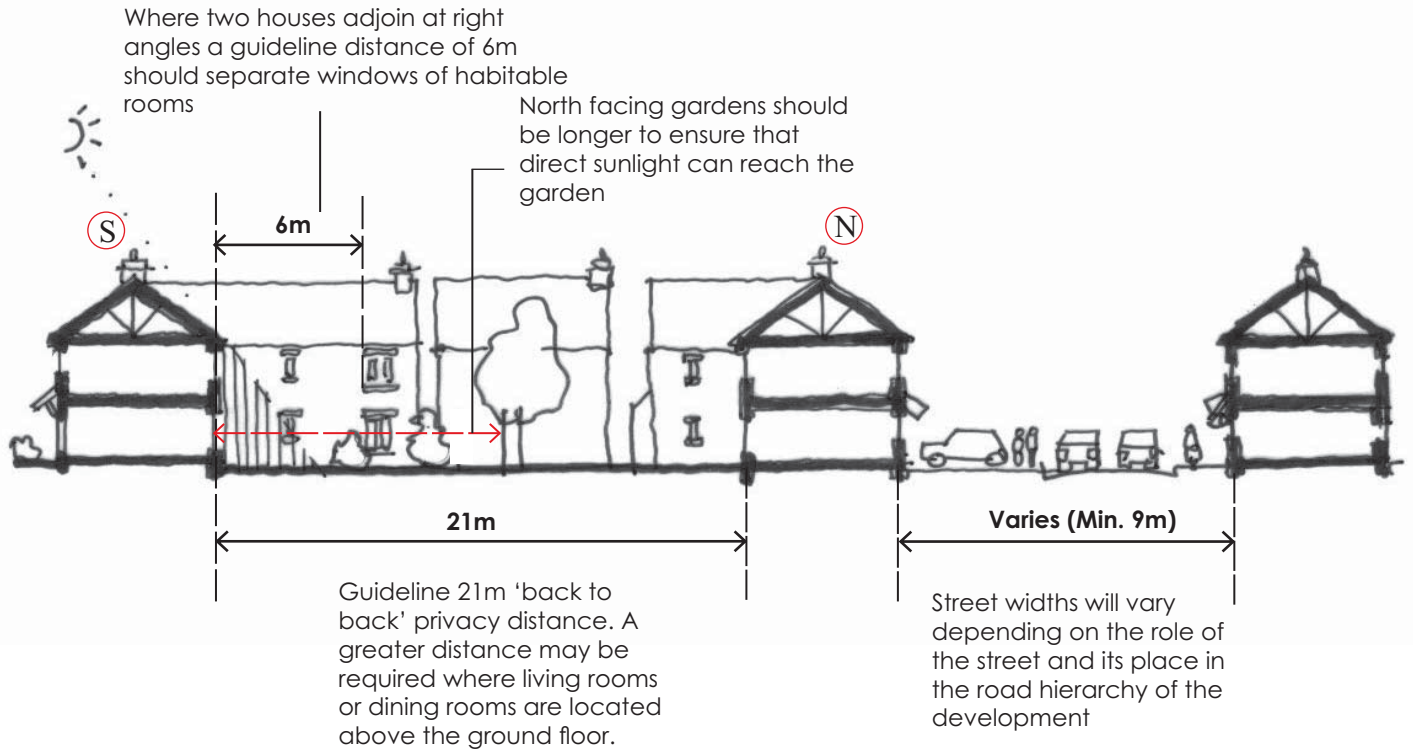
Front to front distances can be reduced to 9m as long as each dwelling is carefully designed

1.15 Daylight and Outlook

- 1.15.1 New developments should ensure that the living conditions of both future residents of new development and of neighbouring residential properties are not compromised by lack of daylight or unduly restricted outlook. The Council's SPG 04/2 House Extensions provides useful guidance on protecting daylight and outlook which can be applied to new residential development.

Block Widths - Maintaining Privacy and Daylight

The means of securing privacy for both new and existing dwellings will be dependent on the individual circumstances of the site. The following distance guides should ensure a reasonable level of privacy in most cases.



Long inter war front gardens

1.16 Outdoor / Private Amenity Space

1.16.1 Some flexibility in traditional garden standards is now needed to accommodate PPG3 densities. To ensure that land is used more efficiently, garden sizes in new development will on average be smaller than much of the post war development. However, **the Council considers that it is still essential for the living conditions of future residents that suitable outdoor amenity space is provided in most new residential developments.**



Shared gardens separate rear elevations of flats

1.16.2 Where appropriate, gardens and other outdoor private spaces (patios, decked areas, balconies, roof gardens) can be provided without compromising on density. Roof gardens are a good way of providing green private space within apartment blocks, leaving ground floor areas for small gardens or parking, though care must be given to minimising any adverse impact of overlooking and loss of privacy to neighbouring properties and amenity areas.



Simple Victorian rear gardens



Long gardens of detached properties on settlement edges



Small front gardens incorporating driveways within new development

- 1.16.3 Depending on the size of the dwelling, a garden should be large enough to accommodate such features as garden shed, washing lines and other domestic features and should allow for opportunities for sitting outside in comfort and reasonable privacy and, in family dwellings, for children's play.
- 1.16.4 It is the quality of outdoor space, as detailed above, that matters most but as a general guide the following garden sizes are suggested for houses;
- 1 and 2 bedroom houses and bungalows, from 70 sq.m;
 - 3 or more bedroom houses and bungalows from 100 sq.m
- 1.16.5 For flats, a reasonable provision of communal outdoor space is suggested. However, it is noted that there are a variety of approaches to providing outdoor amenity space for flats which will vary according to the location and character of the proposed development;
- 1 and 2 bedroom flats; from 25 sq.m communal open space per unit
 - 3 or more bedroom flats; from 40 sq.m communal open space per unit.
- 1.16.6 The above guideline figures relate to the garden's functional role. As explained in earlier sections, it may be important to the overall character of an area for new or retained gardens to be larger.

Local
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Prepared by Halcrow on behalf of West Berkshire Council