

Annexe A: Amenity Standards

Tamworth Local Plan 2026–2041

Draft for Consultation

Status of this Annexe

This Annexe forms part of the Tamworth Local Plan. It provides detailed guidance to support the implementation of **Policy EP1: Safeguarding Amenity and Managing the Impacts of Development** and should be read alongside the design policies in the Design, Placemaking and the Built Environment chapter.

The standards and assessment tools set out in this Annexe will normally be expected to be met. Departures will be assessed against the test set out at paragraph 1.11.

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1. Purpose and Application

- 1.1. This Annexe provides detailed guidance to support **Policy EP1: Safeguarding Amenity and Managing the Impacts of Development**.
- 1.2. The Annexe establishes a framework of principles, standards and assessment tools which will be used in assessing amenity impacts and the relationships between buildings, spaces and uses. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have responded to this guidance.

Relationship with other parts of the Local Plan

- 1.3. The quality of internal and external residential accommodation and design is dealt with separately under **Annexe B: Residential Design Standards**. The two Annexes should be read together and a residential proposal will need to satisfy both.
- 1.4. Proposals should also have regard to:
 - **Policies DE1, DE3, DE4, DE5 and DE6, the Local Plan's core design policies, alongside which this Annexe should be read;**
 - **Policy HC8: Public Realm**, in relation to streets, spaces and community safety;

- **Policy HO1: Housing Mix and Policy HO2: Housing Density**, in relation to the mix, type and density of residential development;
- **Policy SP2: Strategic Policy on Climate Change**, in relation to energy efficiency, overheating and carbon reduction;
- **Policies TA1 and TA2 and Parking Standards Annexe**, in relation to parking, servicing and highway matters; and
- **Policies HE1, HE2 and HE3**, where development affects a heritage asset or its setting.

Who and what this Annexe protects

- 1.5. This Annexe applies to all forms of development, including residential, commercial, community, employment, industrial, storage and distribution development. It is concerned with two distinct relationships and proposals will be assessed against both:
 - **Amenity impacts on existing occupiers and land uses:** the effect of the proposed development on the amenity of neighbouring properties and on the operation of neighbouring land uses, including established employment and commercial uses

- **Amenity for future occupiers:** the standard of amenity that would be provided for the occupiers of the proposed development itself, including its relationship to existing uses in the surrounding area

- 1.6. The second of these relationships is important in Tamworth, where new development frequently comes forward on constrained sites within or adjoining established residential, employment and commercial areas. Proposals must not create conditions in which the future occupiers of a development would experience unacceptable living or working conditions, or place unreasonable constraints on the continued operation of existing lawful uses.
- 1.7. Amenity will be assessed differently according to the type of receptor affected by a proposal. The general principles in this Annexe apply to occupiers of all types of premises. However, the numerical standards and assessment tools in Sections 4 to 7 (separation distances, daylight and sunlight tests, outlook and level changes etc.) are designed to protect **residential** amenity and are applied where a residential property, whether existing or proposed, is the affected receptor.
- 1.8. Where the receptor is a non-residential use, amenity will be assessed having regard to the nature and sensitivity of that use. Certain non-residential uses (including hospitals,

care homes, schools, nurseries and other institutional uses providing sleeping accommodation or requiring quiet conditions) will be treated as sensitive receptors and the standards in this Annexe will be applied to them.

- 1.9. The guidance in Sections 8 to 10 (noise and environmental impacts, artificial lighting, and servicing, plant and external operations) applies to all development and is of particular relevance to non-residential and employment proposals.

Status and departures

- 1.10. The standards and assessment tools contained within this Annexe will normally be expected to be met. They represent the Council's view of the relationships that will ordinarily deliver an acceptable standard of amenity.
- 1.11. Where a proposal does not meet a standard set out in this Annexe, it will only be supported where the applicant demonstrates, with reference to site-specific evidence, that:

Departure test

- the departure arises from a specific and identified characteristic or constraint of the site, the host building or the surrounding context;
- a high standard of amenity would nevertheless be achieved for both existing and future occupiers; and

- no unacceptable impact would arise on amenity, the character of the area or the quality of the public realm.

The extent of justification required will be proportionate to the scale of the departure and the sensitivity of the receiving context.

Supporting evidence may include scaled sections, sightline drawings, a daylight and sunlight assessment prepared in accordance with the current Building Research Establishment guidance, a noise assessment or a lighting assessment.

- 1.12. Compliance with the standards and assessment tools in this Annexe does not automatically mean that a proposal is acceptable and a failure to comply does not automatically result in refusal. A balanced planning judgement will be made in each case having regard to all material considerations.

Relationship with the design-led approach to density

- 1.13. **Policy HO2** requires residential development to optimise density through a design-led approach. The standards in this Annexe are intended to work with that approach rather than against it. They set out the relationships that protect amenity, they do not prescribe a single built form.
- 1.14. Higher densities can be achieved consistently with these standards through design solutions including the careful orientation of buildings and windows, angled and offset elevations, back-to-side and courtyard relationships,

single-aspect frontages served by high-level or secondary glazing, and the use of level changes and landscape structure.

- 1.15. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate through design how density and amenity have been reconciled.

2. General Approach

- 2.1. Development should be designed and planned from the outset to safeguard the amenity of existing and future occupiers and to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on neighbouring land uses and environmental quality.
- 2.2. Proposals should:
- protect reasonable levels of privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight;
 - avoid overbearing or visually dominant relationships between buildings;
 - respond positively to spacing, orientation, layout and changes in ground level;
 - minimise impacts arising from noise, vibration, disturbance, lighting, odour, dust and fumes; and
 - promote safe, secure and well-overlooked environments that reduce opportunities for crime and minimise the fear of crime.

2.3. Amenity considerations should be integrated into the design process at an early stage rather than addressed through mitigation alone. The layout, siting, scale and massing of development should be carefully considered to ensure that appropriate relationships are achieved between buildings and spaces.

2.4. Particular regard should be had to:

- the position and orientation of habitable room windows and external amenity spaces;
- the relationship between proposed and existing buildings, including distances, angles and differences in level;
- the height, depth and massing of development; and
- the nature and intensity of proposed uses, including any associated operational activity and its hours.

2.5. Where potential impacts are identified, proposals should demonstrate how these have been avoided or minimised through design. Mitigation measures such as screening, obscure glazing or boundary treatments may be appropriate in some circumstances but should not be relied upon to justify a poor layout or a fundamentally unsatisfactory relationship between buildings.

3. Designing out Crime and the Fear of Crime

3.1. Development should create safe, secure and inclusive environments that reduce opportunities for crime and minimise the fear of crime. This supports safeguarding amenity and healthy, inclusive communities. Proposals should demonstrate how these principles have been integrated into the design from the outset.

3.2. Proposals should:

- maximise natural surveillance of streets, public spaces, parking areas and access routes through the siting and orientation of buildings, windows and entrances;
- provide active frontages and a positive interface with streets and public spaces;
- create clear distinctions between public, private and communal space, using changes in surface, level, planting and boundary treatment to define ownership;
- avoid concealed or poorly overlooked spaces, including rear alleys, service yards, undercroft parking, bin and cycle stores and residual land;
- provide clear, direct and well-overlooked pedestrian and cycle routes;
- ensure entrances and access points are visible and easily identifiable;

- integrate lighting to support safety and security while avoiding excessive glare or light spill; and
- ensure that the design and location of parking, servicing, plant and external areas do not create opportunities for crime or antisocial behaviour.

3.3. Measures should be proportionate to the scale and context of development and integrated with other amenity considerations, such as privacy, outlook, noise and lighting. Applicants for major development are encouraged to engage with the Designing Out Crime Officer at Staffordshire Police pre-application. Proposals should follow recognised crime prevention principles, such as Secured by Design, in accordance with Policy HC8.

4. Privacy, Overlooking and Separation Distances

Purpose of separation distances

- 4.1. The separation distances in this section are directed principally at protecting privacy and avoiding unacceptable overlooking, between habitable room windows and between such windows and private amenity space.
- 4.2. Adequate separation also supports daylight, sunlight and outlook, but does not by itself demonstrate that these are

acceptable; all must also be considered under Sections 5 and 6.

- 4.3. Overlooking can arise from direct, oblique or elevated views, and should be assessed for both habitable room windows and private amenity space, taking account of balconies, terraces, roof terraces, raised decking and platforms as well as windows.

Definition: Habitable Room

For the purposes of this Annexe, a habitable room is a room used, or intended to be used, for living purposes within a dwelling. This includes (but is not limited to) bedrooms, living rooms, dining rooms, studies and kitchens, where the kitchen is of a size capable of accommodating dining or living activity.

Bathrooms, WCs, shower rooms, utility rooms, halls, landings, staircases, garages, stores and similar ancillary spaces are not habitable rooms.

Where a habitable room has more than one window, the window to be protected is the principal window, being an existing opening of reasonable size which forms the primary source of daylight to that room. Where a room has, or originally had, two or more windows, the principal window will usually be the window overlooking the garden, normally to the rear.

Separation distance standards

- 4.4. Table A1 sets out indicative separation distances used to assess the privacy implications of development. Distances are measured as the shortest horizontal distance between the external faces of the relevant elevations at the same level, taking account of any intervening balcony, terrace or projecting bay.

Table A1: Minimum separation distances (metres)

Relationship between elevations	Up to 2 storeys	3 storeys	4 or more storeys
Rear to rear: directly facing habitable room windows (see Figure A1)	21 m	25 m	30 m
Front to front: directly facing habitable room windows across a street, shared surface or other public space (see Figure A2)	15 m	18 m	21 m
Rear or front to side: habitable room window facing a flank elevation containing no habitable room windows, including back-to-side and angled relationships (see Figure A3)	12 m	14 m	16 m

Habitable room window to a side or rear site boundary where the adjoining land is, or could reasonably be, developed or used as private garden	10.5 m	12.5 m	15 m
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- 4.5. The storey figure in Table A1 is the height of the taller of the two facing elevations. Where a building contains habitable accommodation within the roof space served by dormer or gable windows, that accommodation counts as a storey, measured to the ridge of the roof. Habitable accommodation lit only by rooflights, without dormer or gable windows, is not counted as a storey, reflecting their more limited potential for direct overlooking.

Rear-to-rear relationships

- 4.6. The increase in the rear-to-rear standard with building height reflects the greater potential for elevated views from upper floors. This is not intended to preclude flatted or higher-density development. Where a scheme of three or more storeys cannot achieve the distances in Table A1, applicants should demonstrate how privacy has been secured through design, for example by offsetting or angling windows, deep reveals, screens, balcony privacy fins, planting, or high-level or secondary glazing to upper-floor rooms.



Figure A1: Rear-to-rear separation between directly facing habitable room windows

Front-to-front relationships

4.7. A lower standard applies to front-to-front relationships than to rear-to-rear relationships. Front elevations address the public realm, where a lesser expectation of privacy applies, and the intervening street or shared surface is itself a defensible space. The front-to-front standard should not be applied in a way that undermines the well-established building lines and street widths of Tamworth's existing residential areas.

4.8. A reduced separation distance between two front elevations which directly face each other may be appropriate where the siting of the new development reflects the existing context. This will be particularly relevant in the town centre, in terraced streets and in historic areas where a tighter urban grain forms part of the character of the area, and where a wider separation would be at odds with the prevailing pattern of development.

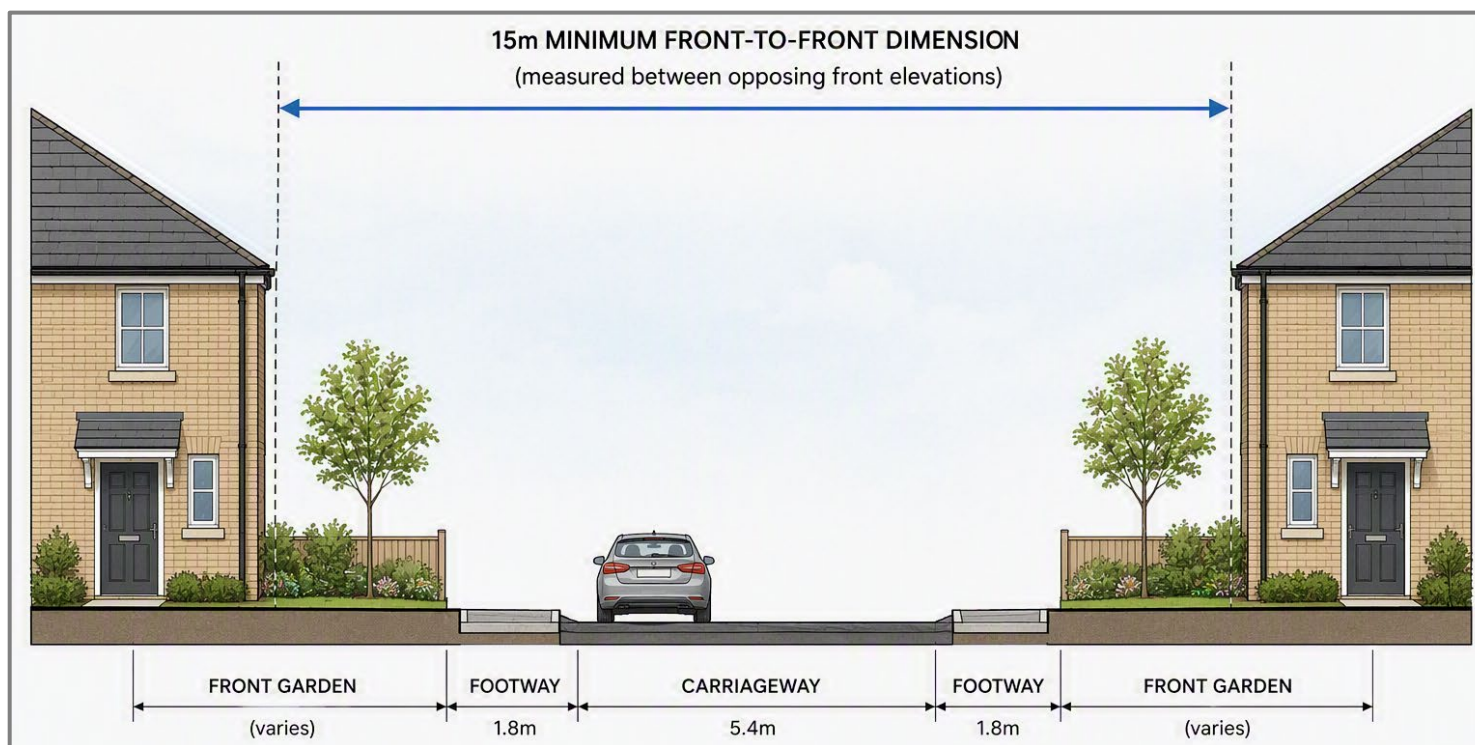


Figure A2: Front-to-front separation across a street

Back-to-side and angled relationships

4.9. Back-to-side and angled relationships can provide an effective means of achieving higher densities while protecting privacy and are supported where direct views between habitable room windows are avoided.

4.10. Where such a relationship is proposed, a minimum separation of 12 metres between a habitable room window and the facing flank elevation will generally be appropriate for development of up to two storeys, increasing in

accordance with Table A1 depending on the specific relationship between buildings. Greater distances may be appropriate where the flank elevation is of substantial length or height.

4.11. Where windows are angled or offset to avoid direct views, the separation distance is measured along the line of sight from the habitable room window. Applicants should provide sightline drawings demonstrating the relationship



Figure A3: Back-to-side and angled relationships

Level differences and mitigation

4.12. Where the finished floor level of a proposed dwelling and that of the affected neighbouring property differ, the separation distances in Table A1 will be increased in accordance with the standard below, whichever is higher.

Standard: level difference uplift

The uplift is calculated by comparing the finished floor level of the proposed development with the finished floor level of the affected habitable room, or the ground level of the affected private amenity space, whichever applies.

An additional **2 metres of separation is required for every 1 metre** of difference in level between the two, whichever is higher.

The uplift is added to the rear-to-rear, front-to-front and rear or front-to-side standards in Table A1, increasing the distance otherwise required rather than replacing it.

A lesser uplift may be accepted where the applicant demonstrates, through scaled cross-sections taken through the affected relationship, that the design of the development (including window positions, roof form, screening, boundary treatment or the retention of existing landform) would prevent unacceptable overlooking.

4.13. This standard is applied once. It is not applied again under Section 7, which deals with the wider design response to changes in level.

4.14. Smaller distances than those in Table A1 may be acceptable where the potential for overlooking is genuinely designed out through:

- the orientation, angling or offsetting of windows;
- differences in level which reduce rather than increase intervisibility;
- screening, landscaping or boundary treatments of sufficient height, permanence and quality, and which are capable of being secured and maintained;
- the use of non-habitable rooms, high-level glazing or secondary windows on the affected elevation.

4.15. The use of **obscure glazing** requires particular care.

Obscure glazing may be acceptable where it is applied to a non-habitable room, or to a secondary window serving a habitable room which retains a principal window elsewhere. It will not normally be accepted as a means of resolving an unacceptable relationship where it would be applied to the principal window of a habitable room, because this would secure privacy at the expense of the outlook and daylight of the occupier. Where obscure glazing and fixed or restricted opening are relied upon, they will be secured by condition and permitted development rights may be removed.

- 4.16. The acceptability of a proposal will ultimately depend on the overall relationship between buildings and the degree to which privacy is preserved for both existing and future occupiers.

5. Daylight and Sunlight

- 5.1. Development should avoid an unacceptable loss of daylight or sunlight to neighbouring habitable rooms and private amenity spaces. These considerations are separate from, and do not replace, the need to safeguard privacy, outlook and appropriate separation distances.
- 5.2. In assessing impacts, regard should be had to:
- the height, depth and proximity of the proposed development;
 - its orientation and relationship to neighbouring windows;
 - the actual ground and finished floor levels of both the site and the affected property; and
 - impacts on both habitable rooms and private amenity spaces.

Assessment tools

- 5.3. The tools set out below provide a consistent method for identifying and evaluating potential impacts on daylight

and the relationship between buildings. They are intended to inform design and decision-making and are applied as indicators rather than as absolute standards. A balanced planning judgement will be made in all cases.

- 5.4. All measurements are taken from actual ground and finished floor levels as existing and as proposed. Where the site and the affected property are not at the same level, the assessment must be undertaken on a scaled cross-section drawn through the affected relationship showing existing and proposed levels. Assessments based on an assumption of level ground will not be accepted where levels in fact differ.

The 45-degree rule

- 5.5. The 45-degree rule is used to assess the potential impact of development on daylight to neighbouring habitable room windows and to help ensure that development does not appear overbearing. It is most commonly applied to extensions and to development close to a shared boundary. The rule is applied in two stages.

Standard: The 45-degree rule test

Stage 1:

Plan
assessment
(depth of
projection)

Take the elevation of the window wall of existing neighbouring development and draw diagonally at ground level at an angle of 45 degree from the furthest corner of the extension/new building towards the affected neighbouring dwelling (see Figure A.4).

Should the 45-degree line lie closer to the extension/new building than the centre of the affected window then there will be no significant reduction in light. If the centre of the neighbouring window is within the 45-degree line then there is likely to be a loss of light, so stage 2 should then be carried out to confirm whether the light reduction is significant.

Stage 2:

Elevation
assessment
(height)

Assesses the impact of the height of the extension or new building. For an extension/new building with a flat roof, draw a 45-degree line from the highest point of the extension towards the affected window. (see Figure A.5)

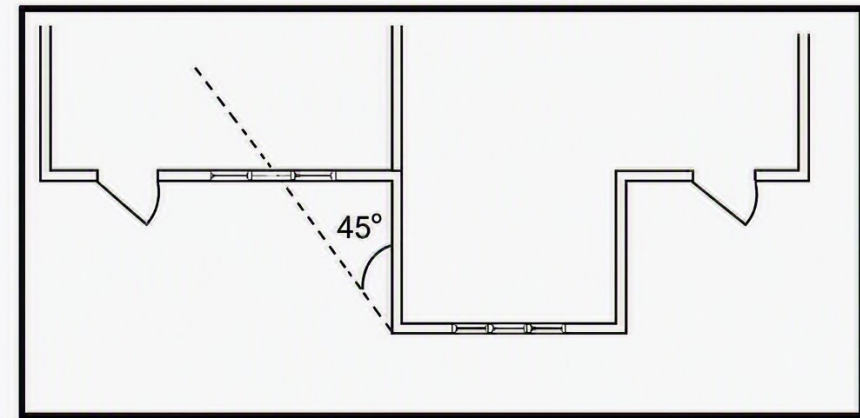


Figure A4: 45-degree rule (Stage 1 Assessment)

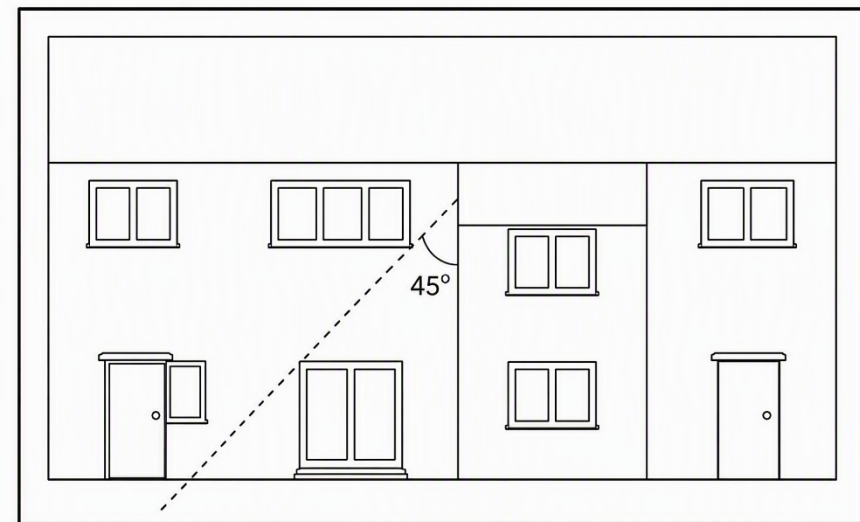


Figure A5: 45-degree rule (Stage 2 Assessment). In this example the impacted patio door is within the 45° angle on both plan (Figure A.4) and elevation, so a significant reduction of light is likely.

- 5.6. For an extension/new building with a front to back monopitched roof, draw a 45 degree line starting at a point halfway between the eaves and the ridge towards the affected window. For standard gable draw a line from the eaves. If the centre of the neighbouring window is within the 45 degree line then there is likely to be a loss of light received. In the case of a floor to ceiling window e.g. patio door, a point 1.6m above the ground on the centre line of the window may be used.
- 5.7. Figure A.6 shows both 45° guidelines being applied to a domestic extension. A significant amount of light is likely to be blocked if the centre of the window lies within the 45° angle on both plan and elevation. In this example the centre of the window lies outside the 45° angle on elevation so the extension is only likely to have a small impact. Therefore the proposal is acceptable.

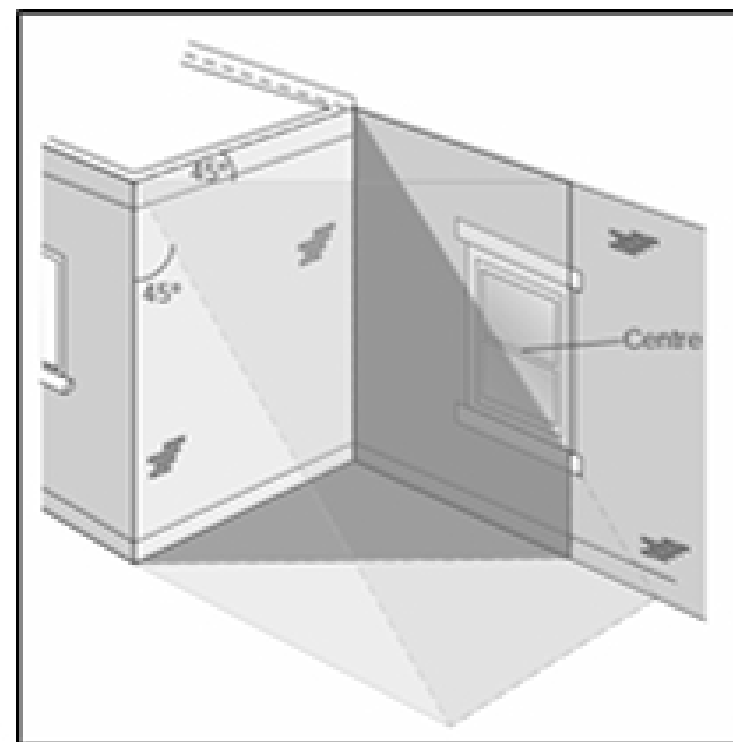


Figure A6: 45-degree rule (Stages 1 and 2 Assessment)

The 25-degree vertical angle test

5.8. The 25-degree vertical angle test is used where an existing principal habitable room window faces directly on to a development.

Standard: The 25-degree rule test

To apply the test:

- a line is drawn in section at an angle of 25 degrees above the horizontal, from the mid-point of the affected habitable room window towards the proposed development (see Figure A7);
- for floor-to-ceiling windows, the point is taken at approximately 1.6 metres above internal floor level;
- where the proposed development falls below this line, adequate daylight is likely to be retained;
- where any part of the development breaches this line, it may indicate a material reduction in daylight and a fuller assessment will normally be required.

5.9. Where these tools indicate a potential impact, or where the proposal is of a scale or complexity that warrants it, the Council may require a daylight and sunlight assessment prepared in accordance with the current Building Research Establishment guidance, *Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice*.

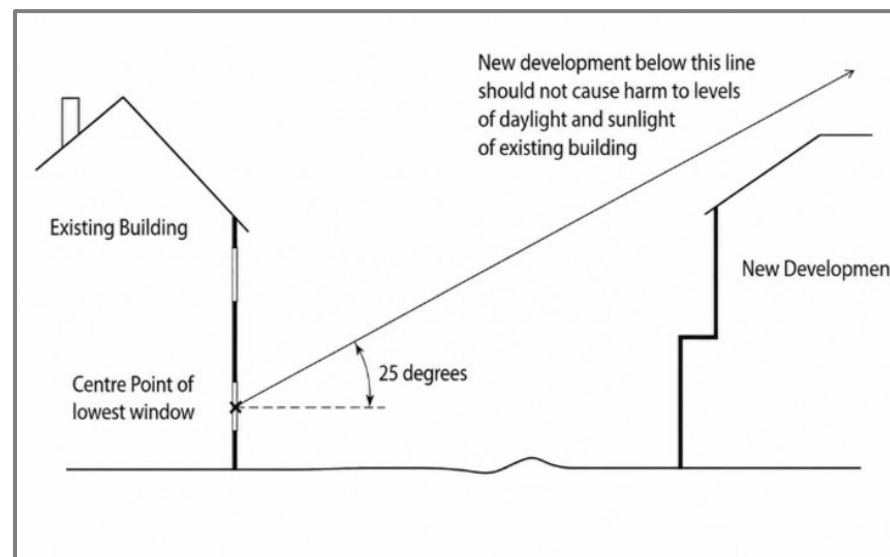


Figure A7: 25-degree vertical angle test

Limitations

5.10. The 45-degree rule and the 25-degree test are tools to inform assessment and identify potential impacts. They do not replace consideration of:

- privacy and overlooking (Section 4);
- outlook and sense of enclosure (Section 6);
- separation distances (Section 4); and
- site levels and orientation (Sections 5.4 and 7).

5.11. The assessment tools set out above will be expected to be met in the majority of cases and provide a clear indication of acceptable relationships between development. Where

a proposal does not comply, it will only be supported where the departure test at paragraph 1.11 is satisfied.

6. Outlook, Dominance and Enclosure

6.1. Development should be designed to ensure that occupiers retain a reasonable outlook and are not subject to an unacceptable sense of enclosure. Outlook is a distinct consideration from privacy and from daylight and sunlight. A development may achieve the separation distances in Table A1 and pass the daylight tests in Section 5 while still presenting an oppressive or overbearing relationship, for example where it is of substantial length or height along a boundary, or where it wraps around a neighbouring garden or window.

6.2. Loss of outlook or an overbearing impact can arise where development is of excessive height, depth or proximity in relation to neighbouring windows or amenity spaces.

6.3. Proposals should:

- avoid locating large or tall buildings in close proximity to habitable room windows;
- ensure that the scale and massing of development does not dominate neighbouring properties;

- consider both horizontal and vertical relationships between buildings, including the length of built form presented to a boundary;
- avoid enclosing a neighbouring habitable room window or private amenity space on more than one side; and
- break up and articulate long or continuous elevations facing a boundary.

6.4. In assessing outlook, dominance and enclosure, regard will be had to:

- the height, depth and massing of the proposed development;
- the distance between buildings;
- differences in ground and finished floor levels;
- the proportion of the view from the affected window or amenity space that would be occupied by built form;
- the orientation and use of the affected rooms; and
- the character of the surrounding area and the relationships that already exist within it.

6.5. Applicants should support proposals with scaled cross-sections and, where appropriate, verified views taken from the affected habitable room window or amenity space, demonstrating the relationship that would result.

- 6.6. Development proposals will be expected to achieve acceptable relationships in terms of outlook, dominance and enclosure. Where they do not, the departure test at paragraph 1.11 applies.

7. Changes in Levels

- 7.1. Differences in land levels can significantly influence the impact of development on neighbouring properties. Even where separation distances are maintained, development located on higher ground, or involving raised floor levels, terraces or platforms, may result in increased overlooking, loss of privacy and a more pronounced sense of dominance.

- 7.2. Where the proposed development would sit above the level of the affected property, the numerical uplift to separation distances at paragraph 4.12 applies. This section sets out the wider design response expected in addition to that uplift.

- 7.3. Proposals should:

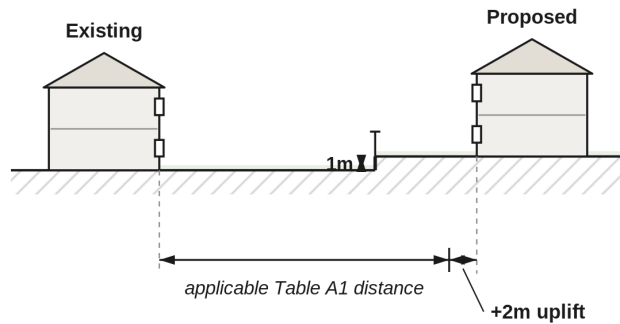
- take account of differences in ground levels between the site and surrounding properties from the earliest stage of design;

- avoid raising land levels, finished floor levels or external areas in a way that would materially increase impacts on neighbouring occupiers;
- ensure that the siting, height, roof form and window arrangement of development respond appropriately to changes in level;
- avoid raised terraces, decking and balconies on elevations facing neighbouring gardens where these would introduce elevated views; and
- apply the window orientation, screening, landscaping, boundary treatment and non-habitable room techniques set out at paragraph 4.14 where these would mitigate the effects of the level change.

- 7.4. Applications on sloping sites, or which propose any change to existing levels, must be accompanied by an existing and proposed levels plan and by scaled cross-sections through the affected boundaries. Applications which do not provide this information may not be capable of being validated or determined.

- 7.5. The effects of level changes should be considered alongside other factors such as building height, orientation and window placement. As illustrated in Figure A8, even modest differences in level can increase overlooking and visual impact.

Where the proposal stands on higher ground, the distance otherwise required by Table A1 is increased. For every 1m of difference in level, add 2m. The uplift applies to each relationship in Table A1 and at any building height.



The proposed dwelling stands 1m higher, so 2m is added to the distance required by Table A1 for the relationship in question.

Figure A8: Impact of level differences on amenity

8. Noise, Disturbance and Environmental Impacts

- consider the timing, frequency, duration and intensity of activities;
- use the internal layout of buildings to place less sensitive rooms towards the source of noise; and
- address both construction and operational phase impacts.

8.4. In accordance with the agent of change principle, where a proposal for a noise-sensitive use, including residential

8.1. Development should avoid, minimise or appropriately mitigate impacts arising from:

- noise and vibration;
- general activity and disturbance, including hours of operation;
- odour, dust, fumes and emissions.

8.2. These considerations are particularly important for non-residential and employment uses, including industrial, storage and distribution activities, and at the interface between such uses and residential areas.

8.3. Proposals should:

- provide appropriate separation between potentially incompatible uses;
- locate and design buildings, access routes, servicing areas and plant to minimise disturbance;

development, is brought forward close to an existing business, community facility or other established use, the applicant is responsible for providing suitable mitigation. Existing lawful uses should not be placed at risk of restriction, curtailment or enforcement action as a result of new development in their vicinity.

8.5. Where necessary, mitigation measures such as acoustic screening, building orientation, glazing and ventilation

specification, layout or operational controls may be required. Noise assessments should be prepared in accordance with the Noise Policy Statement for England, the current British Standards and, where applicable, ProPG guidance. Reliance on mechanical ventilation to enable windows to remain closed will not, by itself, be regarded as an acceptable solution to an unsatisfactory relationship.

- 8.6. Proposals for development which would generate significant construction or operational impacts should be supported by a Construction Environmental Management Plan in accordance with Policy EP1.

9. Artificial Lighting

- 9.1. External lighting should be carefully designed to minimise its impact on neighbouring occupiers, on the wider environment and on biodiversity. Poorly designed lighting can result in glare, light spill and intrusion into neighbouring properties, particularly in residential areas and at the interface between residential and non-residential uses.

- 9.2. Proposals should:

- limit light spill, glare and sky glow;

- direct lighting downwards and away from neighbouring properties, using full cut-off or fully shielded luminaires;
- use light levels, colour temperatures and fittings appropriate to the context, with warmer colour temperatures used adjacent to residential areas, watercourses, green corridors and habitats used by bats;
- control the hours of operation of lighting, including through timers, dimming regimes and part-night operation where security requirements permit; and
- ensure that lighting is proportionate to its function and does not result in excessive illumination.

- 9.3. Lighting associated with commercial, industrial or other non-residential uses should be designed to ensure that it does not result in unacceptable impacts on residential amenity, particularly where it forms part of external operations, servicing or security measures.

- 9.4. Where external lighting is proposed as part of a development, or where lighting is likely to be required to serve car parks, servicing areas or external operations, a lighting scheme should be submitted. This should include a layout, luminaire specifications, mounting heights, and isolux or light spill contours demonstrating compliance with the obtrusive light limits set out in the Institution of

Lighting Professionals *Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light* for the relevant environmental zone.

10. Servicing, Plant and External Operations

10.1. Development should ensure that servicing, plant and external operational areas are appropriately designed and located. These elements can have a significant impact on amenity, particularly in relation to noise, visual impact and disturbance, and are often a key consideration for non-residential and employment development.

10.2. Proposals should:

- locate servicing areas, plant and equipment away from sensitive boundaries and neighbouring properties wherever possible;
- incorporate screening through the arrangement of buildings, walls, enclosures or landscaping;
- minimise the visual and functional impact of external storage and operational activity;
- design plant, including air source heat pumps, refrigeration, extraction and ventilation equipment, so that its noise output at the nearest sensitive receptor is controlled, and locate it away from habitable room windows and private amenity space; and

- ensure that access, delivery and servicing arrangements do not result in unacceptable impacts on neighbouring occupiers.

10.3. Particular care should be taken where development adjoins residential areas, or where activities are likely to take place outside normal daytime hours. Where necessary, the Council will use planning conditions to control hours of servicing and delivery, the location of external activity and the specification of plant.

11. Assessing the Existing Context

11.1. In assessing proposals, regard will be had to the existing context of the site and its surroundings. This includes:

- the current arrangement of buildings and spaces;
- previous extensions or alterations, whether to the application property or to neighbouring properties;
- established relationships between neighbouring properties, including any existing shortfall against the standards in this Annex; and
- the prevailing pattern of development, plot width, building line and spacing in the surrounding area.

11.2. Development will be assessed on the basis of the existing situation rather than solely the form of the original

building, where the property or its surroundings have been materially altered over time.

11.3. Where an existing relationship already falls below the standards in this Annexe, that does not of itself justify a further reduction. The Council will have regard to whether the proposal would make an existing unsatisfactory relationship materially worse, and to the cumulative effect of successive alterations over time.

11.4. Equally, where the prevailing character of an area is one of closer spacing than the standards in Table A1 would produce (for example in terraced streets, historic areas or the town centre), the Council will apply the departure test at paragraph 1.11 having regard to that context, in accordance with paragraph 4.8.

Appendix A1: Summary of Standards

This appendix summarises the numerical standards contained in this Annexe for ease of reference. It does not replace the full text and the departure test at paragraph 1.11 applies to each standard.

Table A2: Summary of amenity standards

Standard	Requirement	Reference
Rear-to-rear separation, directly facing habitable room windows	21 m (up to 2 storeys) 25 m (3 storeys) 30 m (4+ storeys)	Table A1
Front-to-front separation, directly facing habitable room windows	15 m (up to 2 storeys) 18 m (3 storeys) 21 m (4+ storeys)	Table A1
Rear or front to side (flank) elevation	12 m (up to 2 storeys) 14 m (3 storeys) 16 m (4+ storeys)	Table A1
Habitable room window to side or rear site boundary	10.5 m (up to 2 storeys) 12.5 m (3 storeys) 15 m (4+ storeys)	Table A1
Uplift where finished floor levels differ between the proposed development and the affected property	+2 m separation for each 1 m of level difference	Para 4.12
Daylight (plan test)	45-degree line from mid-point of affected habitable room window	Standard: The 45-degree rule test (Section 5)

Standard	Requirement	Reference
Daylight (elevation test)	45-degree line in elevation from mid-point of affected window	Standard: The 45-degree rule test (Section 5)
Daylight (detailed test)	25-degree vertical angle from mid-point of affected window	Para 5.6
Obtrusive light	ILP obtrusive light limits for the relevant environmental zone	Para 9.4