Residential Amenity

Final draft: January 2008

Leicester City Council

Planning Policy & Design

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

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Leicester City Council - SPD: Residential Amenity

Introduction

This guide addresses the demand for sustainable higher density residential development whilst protecting the residential amenity of existing and future occupiers'. It is supplementary to Policy H03 & PS10 of the City of Leicester Local Pan 2006. The need to address amenity is important as it is linked to the quality of life and the well being of Leicester residents.

Definition of residential amenity

In the context of the SPD, the definition of residential amenity is considered as the benefit enjoyed from physical external space which is part of the private home. The benefit enjoyed depends on the quality of space. The level of enjoyment is also dependent on a number of factors, including location, size, orientation, sounds, noise, accessibility and enclosure. Private amenity space is not the same as public open space (see Appendix A, Glossary).

Private amenity space allows individuals to carry out household and leisure activities. This can include gardening, drying clothes, playing with children, fresh air and other hobbies. In simple terms, private amenity space is often considered as space that is outside or partly outside, where one can relax. Appendix E shows the general standard for providing a home with amenity space, and this reflects the type of home and number of bedrooms (further definitions found in Appendix A, Glossary).

What constitutes one persons amenity space requirement is not necessarily another's. It is the lifetime of the property that needs consideration. Therefore, provision for amenity space should be made to serve existing and future occupiers. The City can be characterised by three types of residential development:

- The central area, which has a higher density and compact development
- The surrounding inner urban area and denser development along transport corridors
- The outer area which is primarily suburban low density

These three area types have characteristics which require a different set of standards relating to car parking, private amenity, density, privacy, visual quality, safety and security. The document has been separated into three sections: - central area, inner urban areas and outer areas.

Objectives of the guide

1 To provide practical guidance to supplement existing development plan policies on how new residential development can protect the amenity of both new and existing residents.

2 Provide guidance to encourage residential development, which protects both the built and natural environment.

3 To provide guidance which identifies and categorises the different areas of Leicester and promotes design features in accordance with the development densities and character of the relevant area.

4 To provide guidance on how parking provision can be used as a proactive measure to improve residential amenity and to underpin the use of other transport methods.

Relevant local plan policy

UD01	–	High quality building design & local context
UD02	–	Building layout, form & positioning
UD04	–	Energy efficiency
UD06	–	Landscape design
SPA06	–	Residential development in the city centre
AM12	–	Residential parking provision
AM15	–	Design of parking provision
H03	–	Density
H06	–	Housing mix and type
H07	–	Waste disposal
H14	–	Backland development

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H15 – House extensions
PS10 – Residential amenity & new development
Please refer to Appendix H: Relevant policies in detail.

Purpose of the guidance

The purpose of the guidance is to provide criteria to assess all planning applications in relation to residential amenity. Any residential development that does not embody the principles described without good reason is likely to be refused planning permission for conflicting with Policy PS10: Residential amenity & new development of the Adopted City of Leicester Local Plan (2006).

How to use this document

The SPD emphasises the seven guiding principles which relate to residential amenity: privacy/outlook, daylight/sunlight, private amenity space, parking provision, visual quality, safety & security and pollution. Appendix D: Checklist of design principles summarizes the key principles of residential amenity.

Efficient use of land

As prescribed by Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3): Housing (para. 46), local planning authorities should develop housing policies that consider:

- The spatial vision and strategy for housing demand and availability of suitable land
- The current and future level and capacity of infrastructure, services and facilities – this includes public and private amenity space, green space and open space
- The desirability of using land efficiently and reducing, and adapting to, the impacts of climate change
- The current and future levels of accessibility, particularly public transport accessibility
- The characteristics of the area, including the current and proposed mix of uses
- The desirability of achieving high quality, well-designed housing

Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) - 2006

The draft RSS8 provides a broad development strategy for the East Midlands up to 2021. The policies contained within the draft RSS8 are in general accordance with this SPD and have been summarised below:

Policy 1: Regional Core Objective includes:

- Promoting and enhancing the quality of the environment
- Make safe and attractive places to live and work
- Improve accessibility to jobs, homes and services across,..improvement of opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of high quality public transport
- To promote good design in development so as to achieve high environmental standards and optimum social benefits

Policy 2: Locational Priorities encourages development plans and Local Development Frameworks to adapt a sequential approach to the selection of land for development. First priority is given towards the re-use of previously developed sites and buildings within urban areas that are or will be well served by public transport.

Policy 3: Sustainability Criteria – this policy requires land for development to be assessed based on supporting sustainability principles as identified.

Policy 4: Promoting Better Design – this policy aims to constantly improve the standard of design and construction. Ways to achieve this include:

- A design lead approach which takes account of the local natural and historic character
- Design and construction that minimises energy use, improves water efficiency, reduced waste and pollution, incorporates renewable energy technologies and sustainably sourced materials wherever possible

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- Architectural design which is functional, yet which respects local natural and built character
- Increased densities for new housing in line with national guidance
- Access from new development to local facilities on foot, by cycle or by public transport
- Highway and parking design that improves both safety and the quality of public space
- Design which helps to reduce crime, supports community safety and vitality, and benefits the quality of life of local people
- Approaches to design, layout and construction which takes account of, and where appropriate provide for increases in biodiversity

Policy 5: Concentrating Development in Urban Areas – development plans, Local development Frameworks, Local Transport Plans and economic development strategies should locate significant levels of new development in built up areas centred on Leicester.

Inclusive design

Inclusive design is key to ensuring that a full range of needs is accommodated (including those for disabled and older people). Appendix D & I gives more information about inclusive design and Lifetime Homes.

Density areas

Broadly there are three concentric density areas with residential density increasing towards the city centre. The boundaries are indicated in image 1. Appendix F illustrates the three density areas in more detail. The central area is expected to have the maximum density applied, inner residential area along with transport corridors (with good public transport service) would have a medium density, and the outer area would use the minimum density as prescribed in Policy H03: Density of the City of Leicester Local Plan (Adopted 2006). Consideration will also be given to applying medium density to sites located close to public transport and to local facilities.

Policy H03: Density	Policy PS10: Amenity						
	Privacy/ outlook	Pollution	Daylight/ sunlight	Safety & security	Private amenity space	Parking provision	Visual quality
All areas Principles that apply city wide	-	Page 5	Page 4	-	-	-	Page 6
Central area High density At least 50 dwellings/ha	Section 1 Page 7	Page 5	Page 4	Section 1 Page 12	Section 1 Page 10	Section 1 Page 11	Page 6
Inner urban areas Medium density At least 40 dwellings/ha	Section 2 Page 13	Page 5	Page 4	Section 2 Page 18	Section 2 Page 16	Section 2 Page 17	Page 6
Outer area Low density At least 30 dwellings/ha	Section 3 Page 19	Page 5	Page 4	Section 3 Page 23	Section 3 Page 21	Section 3 Page 22	Page 6

Table showing the seven guiding principles and density requirements within the City. Please note that these densities apply to sites that are 0.3 ha or larger in size.

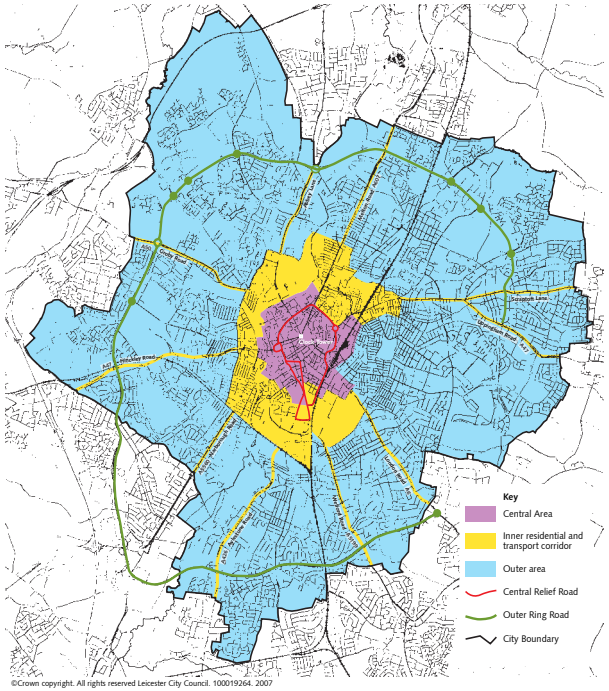


Image 1: map shows density areas in relation to the City (see Appendix F: Defining the 3 areas)

All areas (sections 1 - 3)

Principles that apply to all three areas

Summary of section

This section looks at amenity principles which will be universally applied to all three density areas. Principles looked at within this section include:

- Daylight/sunlight
- Air quality, noise and light pollution
- Visual quality

Daylight/sunlight

Consideration should be given to maximizing solar gain as referred to in UD04 Energy Efficiency of the Adopted City of Leicester Local Plan (2006). Further advice is available in the Supplementary Planning Document on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

The designer should be mindful to balance out the need to address the public realm and at the same time to maximize solar gain to habitable windows and prevent undue shadowing of private amenity space. Developments within the city centre area are likely to be higher density and it is important to consider the overall impact on the immediate environment and the loss of daylight and sunlight to existing buildings.

Taller buildings can adversely affect the light to adjacent buildings, and the blocking of light to the windows should be avoided.

Sun path diagrams should be submitted with planning applications if there is potential impact to the daylight/sunlight of adjoining properties.

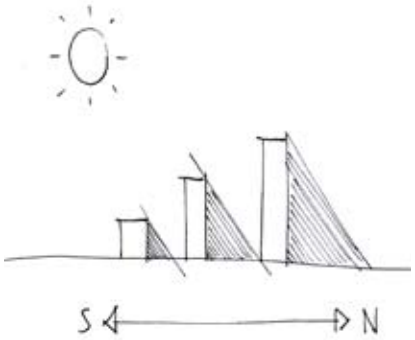


Image 2: sketch showing taller buildings towards north of the site to avoid blocking of sun and undue shadowing.

All areas (sections 1 - 3)

Air quality, noise and light pollution

Policy PS10 of the Adopted City of Leicester Local Plan requires planning applications to consider the effect on amenity of noise and vibration, air quality and odour, and light caused by the development and its use. Government advice is given in PPS23 and PPG24. There is always the potential of nuisance from static sources of noise and pollution in most areas of development and amenity should therefore be considered at the outset.

The key air quality issue in Leicester is emissions from traffic. Leicester's Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) covers frontages to the major road network and the city centre as a whole. The AQMA includes the central area, and a substantial part of the inner urban area.

Particular care needs to be given to the design, construction and use of habitable areas (principal rooms) on the lower/ground floor, where the proposed building is near to a busy road. It may be necessary to consider non-residential uses for the ground floor. Alternative uses on lower/ground floor should not impact on the amenity of residential units above.

Considerations which apply to air quality will, in many cases, apply equally to noise: Where there are high levels of pollution from traffic, there will also tend to be high ambient noise levels, so design measures that alleviate one will, to a large extent, benefit the other. Design principles within this Guide can also be used to improve protection from noise and/or poor air quality, giving multiple benefits:-

Design Features	Central	Inner	Outer
Set back upper floors / recessed balconies	p.8	p.14	-
Internal courtyards (habitable rooms facing)	p.9	p.14	-
Private amenity space (habitable rooms facing)	p.10	p.16	p.21
Ground floor & front area parking	p.11	p.17	p.22
Defensible space	p.12	p.18	-

Principles that apply to all three areas

REMEMBER - measures for noise and pollution mitigation should not conflict with other principles of good urban design set out in this Guide. Specific design to protect against noise and poor air quality may need to consider a range of features, in descending order of preference:

Arrangement of buildings within the site

This includes; appropriate distance from sources of noise and pollution. Appropriate orientation of buildings so that habitable rooms do not face directly onto sources of noise and pollution. [In the case of busy main roads, this may require the provision of barrier structures to separate residential properties from the road.] Location of play areas near family accommodation.

Arrangement of habitable rooms & engineering controls

This includes internal layout such that habitable rooms do not face directly onto a busy road, non-residential uses on the ground/lower floors; recessed balconies between habitable rooms and the façade of the building. Engineering controls include:

- Double/triple glazing - can be used to exclude noise.
- Mechanical ventilation - inlet air from sufficiently high level to avoid drawing in polluted air.
- Party floors and walls - mix use developments should avoid juxtaposition of potential noise resulting from residential use.

Light

It is now recognised that excessive or inappropriate artificial light can have an adverse effect on people and wildlife. It can also represent a waste of energy. Consideration should be given to the impacts of lighting on existing and proposed occupiers, subject to other principles of good urban design contained in this Guide (such as providing a safe and secure environment).

Please contact the Leicester City Council Environmental Health section for further or site specific advice on the matters discussed in this section.

All areas (sections 1 - 3)

Principles that apply to all three areas

Visual quality

Policy PS10: Residential amenity & new development of the Adopted City of Leicester Local Plan 2007 refers to visual quality. In order to maintaining tidiness the development must function well. A key aspect of this relates to the storage of bins and residents' access to the bin store. At the same time the bin store must be both convenient for refuse collection and hidden from public view. Bin stores should be of adequate size to contain all refuse and recycling bins. The images on this page show examples of how bin storage can be successfully designed into the development.

Where practicable a small back of pavement area for bin collection should also be provided. This will reduce the problem of bins obstructing pavements, which is a considerable concern for many disabled people.

Image 3: photo showing terrace housing with gated shared access to allow bins to be kept at the rear of the property.

Image 4: photo showing a concealed bin storage for flats that is accessible for refuse collection.

Image 5: photo showing town houses with semi-concealed bins accessible from the street for refuse collection.

Section 1:

Summary of section 1

This section focuses on the central area image 6 shows the boundary in detail (also see Appendix F).

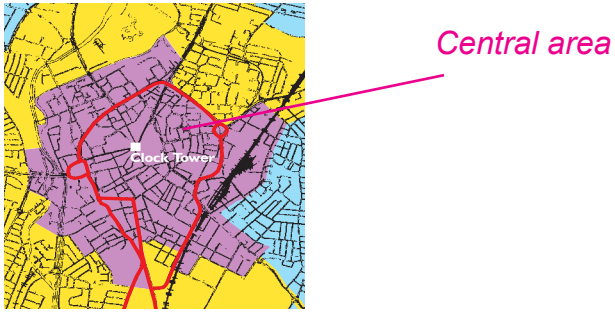


Image 6: map showing central area coloured purple

The key considerations for higher density sustainable development are:

- Privacy/outlook
- Daylight/sunlight (see page 4)
- Private amenity space
- Parking provision
- Visual quality (see page 6)
- Safety & Security
- Pollution (see page 5)

Privacy/outlook

Compact developments will affect outlook for habitable rooms and therefore the following safeguards should be considered to protect privacy/outlook.

One effective measure to protect residents from poor privacy/ outlook is to ensure the development has an adequate height to width ratio. This is often referred to as enclosure. Street widths and character of the buildings and heights can vary but the diagram below shows a safeguard for main streets and narrower side streets.

Central area (maximum density)

Outlook standards for fronts of properties

The central area has a varied building height ranging between average heights of 4 - 6 storeys. There is no overall set height and therefore, the ratio between building height to street width should be 1:1. This will allow residents to benefit from adequate outlook from principal windows.

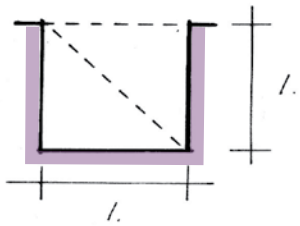


Image 7: sketch shows the ratio between street width and the maximum building height. This is to ensure that the height is equal to the distance between facing habitable rooms.

The designer will be expected to take into account the sensitivity of the proposal in context particularly to the street frontages. Consideration should be given to:

- Any adverse impact on adjoining or nearby buildings of historical and/or architectural importance and conservation areas.
- Adverse impact upon the architectural integrity and quality of the existing or neighbouring buildings
- The roofline and facade that is in scale with the neighbours and does not dominate the street and undermine the rhythm of the street frontage

Section 1:

Central area (maximum density)

Outlook standards for rear & sides of properties

Habitable room windows facing onto a wall should have a set minimum distance to avoid poor quality of outlook. Although, it is recommended that the street width to building height is a ratio of 1:1. However in some circumstances this distance could be shorter providing that there is no undue loss of outlook/privacy. Below are some examples of exceptional cases:

Exceptional cases for shorter distances at rear

By using one or more of the following techniques It may be possible to increase the building height by using:

- Set back of upper floors
- Recessed balconies
- Internal courtyards
- Screening direct facing windows for habitable rooms
- Avoid direct facing habitable windows

Applicants should demonstrate that outlook/privacy has been safeguarded, and that the design quality is not compromised and the local context has been taken into account.

Set backs of upper floors

Set backs of upper floors can increase the allowable building height and in turn improve outlook for occupiers. This would also improve the amenity at lower levels as it would allow for more daylight and possibly reduce shadowing. However, this also would depend on orientation, as a taller south facing building would overshadow a north facing building.

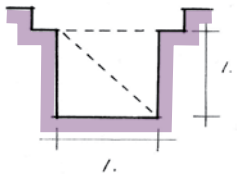


Image 8: sketch showing set back of the upper floor levels.

Recessed balconies

A recessed balcony with at least a metre depth can provide a buffer between habitable room windows and the adjacent windows/wall.

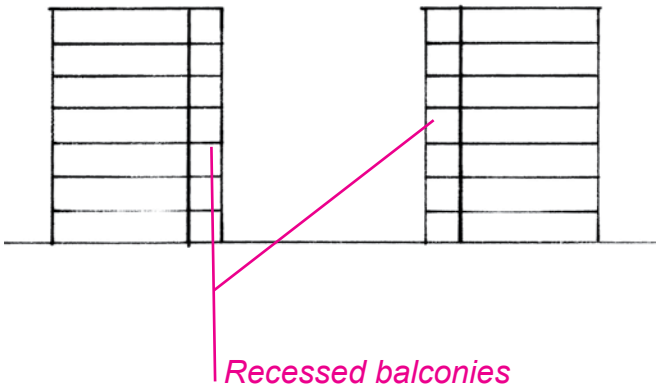


Image 9: sketch shows how balconies can help provide protection from the loss of privacy and at the same time provide some private amenity space.

Central area (maximum density)

Internal courtyards

Residential developments could incorporate internal courtyards to help provide better outlook for occupiers. The internal space can also be used for amenity and parking.

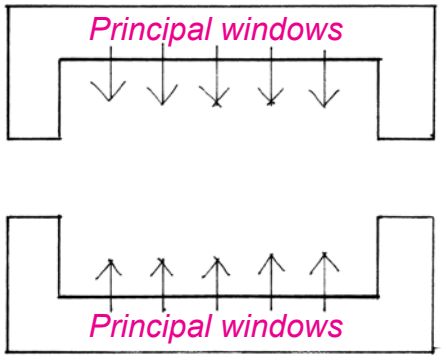


Image 10: plan showing how an internal courtyard can provide separation distances.

Screening of direct facing windows & blank walls

Landscaping and planting can be used to provide a buffer between facing habitable rooms. This method is effective at ground floor and first floor level.

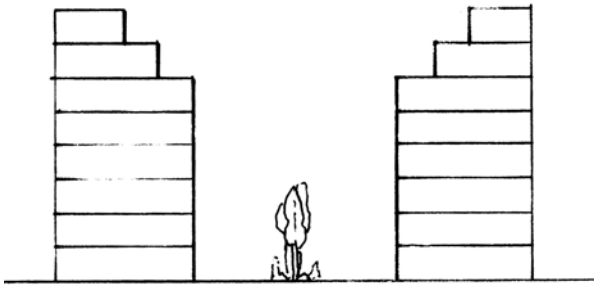


Image 11: plan showing how the internal space can screened off allowing for the maintenance of residential privacy.

Indirect facing habitable windows

Buildings that incorporate indirectly facing windows to avoid poor outlook and loss of privacy from habitable rooms should have windows facing south (or within -/+30 degrees) to benefit from solar gain.

REMEMBER - when considering this option, it will be subject to the design addressing the street and providing natural surveillance onto public or/and private realm.

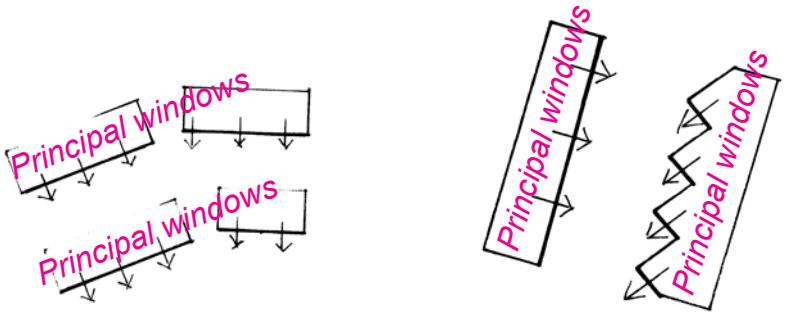


Image 12: plan shows principal windows avoiding overlooking to adjoining properties. The minimum separation distance will vary depending on height .

Private amenity space

Higher density development within the central area is likely to have two main types of private amenity space, balconies and/or shared communal space. Appendix E (Private Amenity Space) shows a standard requirement for space for all 3 main density areas.

A development of one bedroom flats should provide a minimum 1.5 sq. metres of amenity space per flat. A two bedroom flat should provide a minimum of 2 sq. metres of amenity space per flat. For further details please refer to Appendix E.

Designers should consider how the space is provided, and this is very much dependent on the orientation, design, layout and density. Images 14 and 15, on this page show examples of developments that have successfully included usable amenity space.

Developments of mews, town houses and terraces within the central area should provide at least 50 sq metres of private amenity space per dwelling.

Juliet balconies do not provide adequate amenity space.

Image 13: photo shows a quality residential development with Juliet balconies. This does not substitute the need for amenity space.

Central area (maximum density)

Image 14: photo showing flats providing residents with amenity space in the form of balconies.

Image 15: photo showing flats providing residents with amenity space in the form of balconies.

Designers should incorporate level access to balconies and other private amenity space. This will allow wheelchair users to gain easy access to private amenity space (for further information see Appendix I: Inclusive design and Lifetime Homes).

As referred to in the Housing Corporation's Housing Quality Indicators (Version 4) (www.housingcorp.gov.uk) boundaries between private and pubic space must be clear for security and management reasons. Private open space is open space accessible only to the resident. It includes gardens, roof terraces, patios, yards, and balconies. Shared open space is accessible to a restricted group of residents. It includes communal or shared gardens or courtyards. Any unit located more than 10 metres from the shared space (as measured from the closest entrance door) should not be considered to share the open space. Open space accessible by any member of the public or more than 25 units is considered to be public open space.

Parking provision

Please refer to the Council's SPG on Vehicle Parking Standards. The central area is likely to have a limited amount of parking, therefore it is important that any proposal shows how residents can use alternative means of travel. Proposals need to demonstrate that consideration has been given to access and connections for residents and visitors for:

- public transport
- accessibility & security for cycles
- ease & safety for pedestrians from dwellings to the public realm.

Parking courtyards to the rear

Access for parking at the rear should be gated to provide adequate security for residents. The courtyard uses should be clearly defined between vehicle parking, cycle parking, bin storage, and amenity space. A separation distance should be provided between car park spaces and residents windows to avoid noise disturbance. Parked vehicles should be overlooked by windows to living spaces and entrances should be provided from the courtyard. Where residential accommodation also backs onto the street, entrance doors should connect with both the internal courtyard and the street with the accommodation arranged to allow for principle windows to oversee both sides of the development.

Image 16: photo showing an access gate into the rear courtyard. The space is overlooked by windows to provide natural surveillance.

Undercroft parking

Undercroft parking can result in the ground floor frontage appearing inactive. This method is normally only acceptable if parking is located in the centre of a development, allowing the ground floors facing onto the street to have active frontage.

Ground floor parking with deck access above

This is similar to undercroft parking with a single aspect residential use facing onto the street.

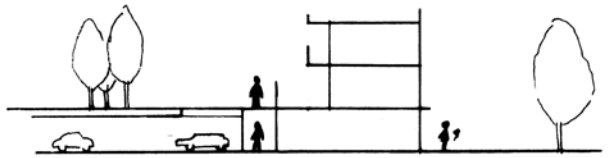


Image 17: hypothetical sketch of a deck access.

Underground/basement parking

Underground/basement parking allows more efficient use of the ground floor for amenity space. It is important to remember that there should be a clear distinction between the access for cars and access for pedestrians. The main access for pedestrians should be from the public realm and not from the underground car park.

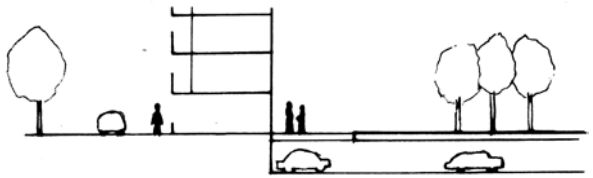


Image 18: hypothetical sketch of underground parking with amenity space at ground level.

Semi-basement parking

This allows for natural ventilation to the car park and results in the ground floor being raised. This will improve the general safety, security and privacy for residents on the ground floor and at the same time allows for surveillance of the street. The main entrance for pedestrians should be at street level. This option must also incorporate the Building Control (ADM) & British Standard (BS 8300) requirement for all principal entrances to level e.g. by having lobbies at street level, and with internal lifts to the raised ground floor.

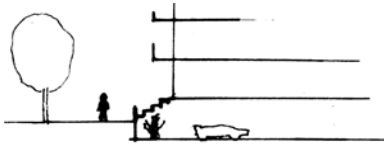


Image 19: hypothetical sketch of a semi-basement parking.

Safety & security

Adherence to good design principles can help towards creating a better and more secure environment. People's perception of a secure environment can vary. Below is a check list for designers to consider in creating a safe and secure environment for residents and property:

Natural surveillance

The presence of people can discourage crime and anti-social behaviour. Front entrances and windows that face onto the public realm and onto courtyard amenity/parking areas help create an environment that feels safer and reduces the potential for crime.

Access, activity and movement

Busy movement routes heighten people's sense of safety by providing natural surveillance through pedestrian and vehicular activity. Routes should also lead to a defined destination.

Sense of ownership

When people view public space as their own, they begin to take responsibly for it. Places can be designed to foster a sense of ownership, mutual protection and belonging. Clearly defining the public, private and semi-private space is important to give residents a sense of ownership.

Defensible space

Defensible space is the space over which users of nearby buildings are able to maintain effective levels of supervision and control. While types of defensible space may differ between locations, the principle remains the same. A buffer zone can be used between a public space and the building edge. This can be also used to provide a physical barrier to allow occupiers on the ground floor privacy and security.

Central area (maximum density)

Image 20 (top left) and (top right): showing developments that provide natural surveillance to street & some defensible space in the form of a small landscaped area with railings.

Image 21: photo showing windows overlooking the public realm.

Open space and play areas

Residential developments that incorporate open space and play areas need careful consideration as they could become a focus of anti-social behaviour. Play areas should be close to the properties they serve and overlooked by windows - but far enough away to avoid noise nuisances.

Section 2:

Inner residential area (medium density)

Summary of section 2

This section focuses on the inner residential area (see image 22 showing the boundary). The purpose is to outline acceptable medium density sustainable developments and the key considerations for the design. The boundary is defined in Appendix F. The inner residential area (in yellow) surrounds the central area. The inner area also contains the major transport corridors giving good public transport connections.

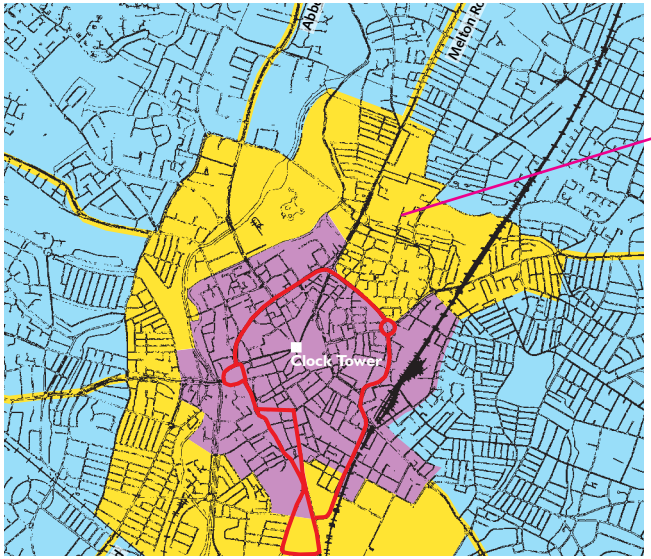


Image 22: map showing inner residential area coloured yellow (see Appendix F for details)

The key considerations for medium density sustainable development are:

- Privacy/outlook
- Daylight/sunlight (see page 4)
- Private amenity space
- Parking provision
- Visual quality (see page 6)
- Safety & Security
- Pollution (see page 5)

Privacy/outlook

Site constraints vary from site to site. However the design of any development needs to take into account the impact on outlook for habitable rooms and therefore the following safeguards should be considered to protect privacy/outlook.

Outlook standards for fronts of properties

The inner residential area has no consistent building height, but in general the buildings are between 3-5 storeys. The ratio between building height to street width should be 1:1.5, this will allow for residents to benefit from adequate outlook between principal windows.

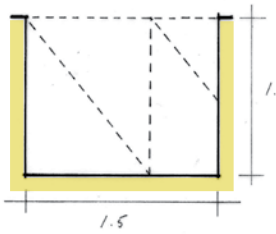


Image 23: sketch shows the ratio between street width and the maximum building height. This is to ensure that the building heights are no higher than 2/3rd the width of the street.

The designer will be expected to take into account the sensitivity of the proposal in context particularly to the street frontages. Consideration should be given to:

- Any adverse impact on adjoining or nearby buildings of historical and/or architectural importance and conservation areas.
- Adverse impact upon the architectural integrity and quality of the existing or neighbouring buildings
- The roofline and facade that is in scale with the neighbours and does not dominate the street and undermine the rhythm of the street frontage

Section 2:

Inner residential area (medium density)

Outlook standards for rear & sides of properties

Habitable room windows facing onto a wall should have a set minimum distance to avoid poor quality of outlook. Although, it is recommended that the street width to building height is a ratio of 1:1.5, in some circumstances this distance could be shorter providing that there is no undue loss of outlook/privacy. Below are some examples of exceptional cases:

Exceptional cases for shorter distances at rear

By using one or more of the following techniques It may be possible to increase the building height by using:

- Set back of upper floors
- Recessed balconies
- Internal courtyards
- Screening direct facing windows for habitable rooms
- Avoid direct facing habitable windows

Applicants should demonstrate that outlook/privacy has been safeguarded, and that the design quality is not compromised and the local context has been taken into account.

Set backs of upper floors

Set backs of upper floors can increase the allowable building height and in turn improve outlook for occupiers. This would also improve the amenity on lower levels as it would allow for more daylight and possibly reduce shadowing. However, this also would depend on orientation, as a taller south facing building would overshadow a north facing building.

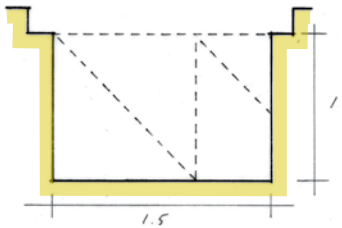


Image 24: sketch showing set back of the upper floor levels.

Recessed balconies

A recessed balcony with at least a metre depth can provide a buffer between habitable room windows and the adjacent windows/wall.

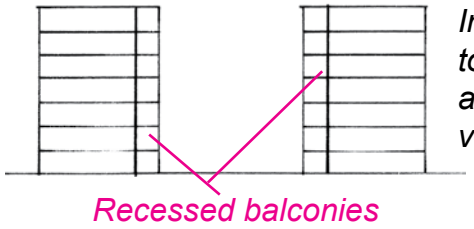


Image 25: sketch shows balconies used to help protect from the loss of privacy and at the same time provide some private amenity space.

Internal courtyards

Residential developments could incorporate internal courtyards to help provide better outlook for occupiers. The internal space can also be used for amenity and parking.

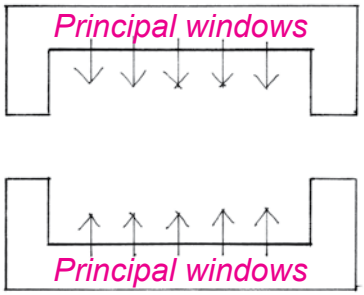


Image 26: plan showing how an internal courtyard can provide separation distances.

Screening of direct facing windows & blank walls

Landscaping and planting can be used to provide a buffer between facing habitable rooms. This method is effective at ground floor and first floor level.

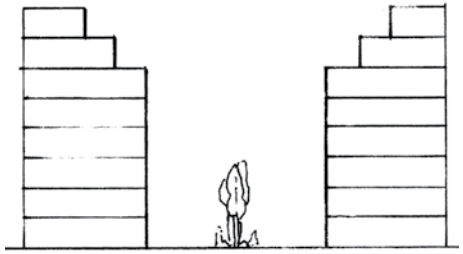


Image 27: plan showing how the internal space can screened off allowing for the maintenance of residential privacy.

Section 2:

Inner residential area (medium density)

Indirect facing habitable windows

Buildings that incorporate indirectly facing windows to avoid poor outlook and loss of privacy from habitable rooms should have windows facing south (or within -/+30 degrees) to benefit from solar gain.

REMEMBER - when considering this option, it will be subject to the design addressing the street and providing natural surveillance onto public and/or private realm.

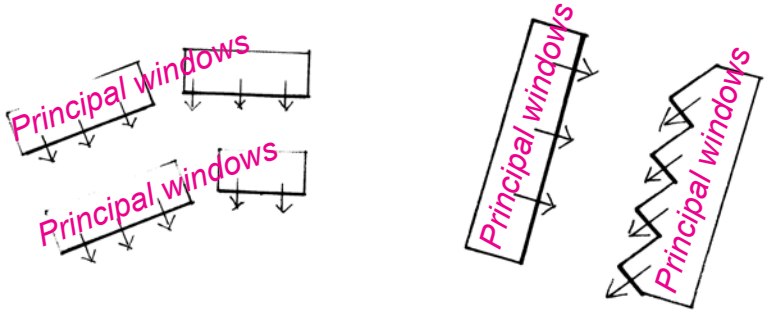


Image 28: plan shows principal windows avoiding overlooking to adjoining properties. The minimum separation distance will vary depending on height .

Inner residential area (medium density)

Private amenity space

The inner residential area is likely to have a mix of development types. Including flats, mews, terrace properties and possible some live/work units. The type and amount of amenity space is dependant on the type of development and the number of bedrooms. Similar to the central area the two main types of private amenity space are balconies and/or shared communal space.

A development of one bedroom flats should provide a minimum 1.5 sq. metres of amenity space per flat. A two bedroom flat should provide a minimum of 2 sq. metres of amenity space per flat. For further details please refer to Appendix E.

Designers should consider how the space is provided, and this is very much dependent on the orientation, design, layout and density. Image 30 shows an example of shared private amenity.

Developments of mews, town houses and terraces within the central area should provide at least 50 sq metres of private amenity space per dwelling.

Juliet balconies do not provide adequate amenity space.

Image 29: photo shows a quality residential development with Juliet balconies. This does not substitute the need for amenity space.

Image 30: photo showing internal communal space, balconies and roof gardens.

Designers should incorporate level access to balconies and other private amenity space. This will allow wheelchair users to gain easy access to private amenity space (for further information see Appendix I: Inclusive design and Lifetime Homes).

As referred to in the Housing Corporation's Housing Quality Indicators (Version 4) (www.housingcorp.gov.uk) boundaries between private and pubic space must be clear for security and management reasons. Private open space is open space accessible only to the resident. It includes gardens, roof terraces, patios, yards, and balconies. Shared open space is accessible to a restricted group of residents. It includes communal or shared gardens or courtyards. Any unit located more than 10 metres from the shared space (as measured from the closest entrance door) should not be considered to share the open space. Open space accessible by any member of the public or more than 25 units is considered to be public open space.

Section 2: Inner residential area (medium density)

Parking provision

Please refer to the Council's SPG on Vehicle Parking Standards. This section will look at how medium density developments can be acceptable within the inner area providing that key considerations have been taken into account. It is important to understand the inner area and the site context before going into design requirements.

Appendix F shows the inner residential area and the main routes into the city centre. These routes are considered to be major transport corridors that have good public transport links. Therefore, the density within this area can be up to medium as prescribed in Policy H03: Density of the City of Leicester Local Plan (Adopted 2007). Consideration needs to be given to access and connections for residents and visitors for:

- public transport
- accessibility and security for cycles
- ease and safety for pedestrians from dwellings to the public realm.

Semi-basement parking

This allows for natural ventilation to the car park and results in the ground floor being raised. This will improve the general safety, security and privacy for residents on the ground floor and at the same time allows for surveillance of the street. The main entrance for pedestrians should be at street level. This option must also incorporate the Building Control (ADM) & British Standard (BS 8300) requirement for all principal entrances to level e.g. by having lobbies at street level, and with internal lifts to the raised ground floor.

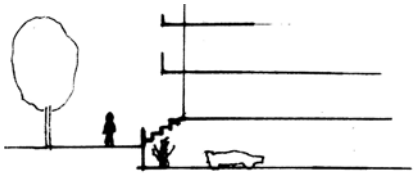


Image 31: hypothetical sketch of a semi-basement parking.

Undercroft parking

Undercroft parking can result in the ground floor frontage appearing inactive. This method is only acceptable if parking is located in the centre of a development, allowing the ground floors facing onto the street to have active frontage.

Ground floor parking with deck access above

This is similar to undercroft parking with a single aspect residential use facing onto the street.

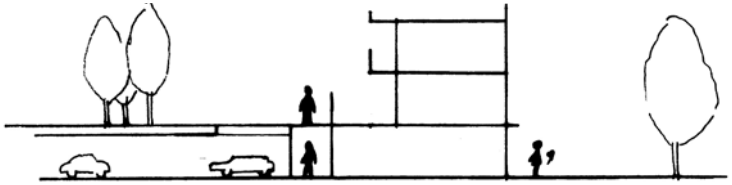


Image 32: hypothetical sketch of a deck access.

Parking courtyards at front and rear

Access for parking at the rear should be gated to provide adequate security for residents. The courtyard uses should be clearly defined between vehicle parking, cycle parking, bin storage, and amenity space. A separation distance should be provided between car park spaces and residents windows to avoid noise disturbance. Parked vehicles should be overlooked by windows to living spaces and entrances should be provided from the courtyard. Where residential accommodation also backs onto the street, entrance doors should connect with both the internal courtyard and the street with the accommodation arranged to allow for principle windows to oversee both sides of the development.

Parking/garage courts behind rear gardens where they are not under natural surveillance from dwellings will not be permitted.

Image 33: photo showing parallel parking bays.

Image 34: photo showing parking bays at right angles to frontage.

Inner residential area (medium density)

Safety & security

Adherence to good design principles can help towards creating a better and more secure environment. People's perception of a secure environment can vary. Below is a check list for designers to consider in creating a safe and secure environment for residents and property:

Natural surveillance

The presence of people can discourage crime and anti-social behaviour. Front entrances and windows that face onto the public realm and onto courtyard amenity/parking areas help create an environment that feels safer and reduces the potential for crime.

Access, activity and movement

Busy movement routes heighten people's sense of safety by providing natural surveillance through pedestrian and vehicular activity. Routes should also lead to a defined destination.

Sense of ownership

When people view public space as their own, they begin to take responsibly for it. Places can be designed to foster a sense of ownership, mutual protection and belonging. Clearly defining the public, private and semi-private space is important to give residents a sense of ownership.

Defensible space

Defensible space is the space over which users of nearby buildings are able to maintain effective levels of supervision and control. While types of defensible space may differ between locations, the principle remains the same. A buffer zone can be used between a public space and the building edge. This can be also used to provide a physical barrier to allow occupiers on the ground floor privacy and security.

Image 35: photo showing corner development that provides natural surveillance to street and an adequate defensible space in the form of a small landscaped area and low railings.

Image 36: photo showing windows and front entrances onto the public realm. The development also has a low boundary wall at ground floor to provide privacy and security.

Open space and play areas

Residential developments that incorporate open space and play areas need careful consideration as they could become a focus of anti-social behavior. Play areas should be close to the properties they serve and overlooked by windows - but far enough away to avoid noise nuisances.

Section 3:

Outer residential area (minimum density)

Summary of section 3

This section focuses on the outer area (see image 37 showing part of the area. For the boundary and detailed map please refer to in Appendix F). This area is likely to contain lower density development than the central and inner residential areas and therefore the key considerations are different.

The boundary is defined as being located outside the inner area and being more that 250 metres away from the major transport corridor and an area that is primarily residential.

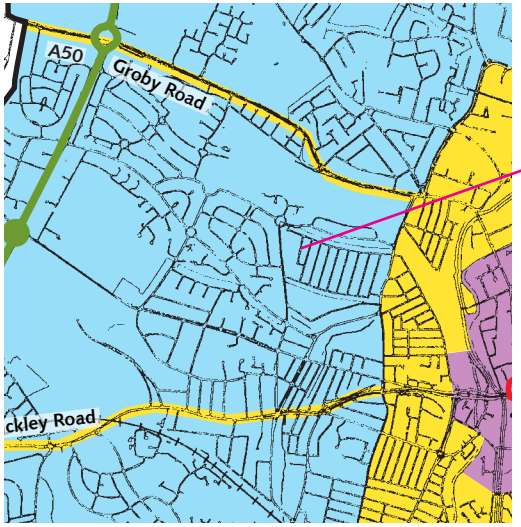


Image 37: map showing parts of outer residential area coloured blue

The key considerations for minimum density development are:

- Privacy/outlook
- Daylight/sunlight (see page 4)
- Private amenity space
- Parking provision
- Visual quality (see page 6)
- Safety & Security
- Pollution (see page 5)

The outer residential area typically has a lower density compared to the central area and inner residential area. The dwelling type is mainly terrace, semi-detached, detached houses and bungalows with flats in some areas. Like the previous density areas (section 1 & 2), any proposed development should relate well to existing urban context. Particular consideration should also be given to maintaining adequate level of privacy/outlook.

Privacy/outlook

This part of the report will look at the basic principles for safeguarding the privacy/outlook of habitable rooms. The required distance to protect privacy applies to all developments within the outer areas.

The diagrams below show the required distances between windows facing habitable rooms and habitable rooms facing onto a blank wall.

Outlook standards for fronts of properties

The outer area has a lower density and the general height of buildings is 2 storeys. The ratio between building height to street width should be 1:3. This will allow for houses to benefit from adequate outlook between principal windows, retain the character of outer areas, and allow for front gardens and parking spaces.

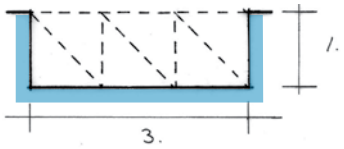


Image 38: sketch shows the ratio between street width and the maximum building height. A 1:3 ratio is applied.

Outlook standards for rear of properties

Rear gardens backing on to rear gardens allows for greater privacy and outlook for residents, better safety and security and parking should be located to the front of the property.

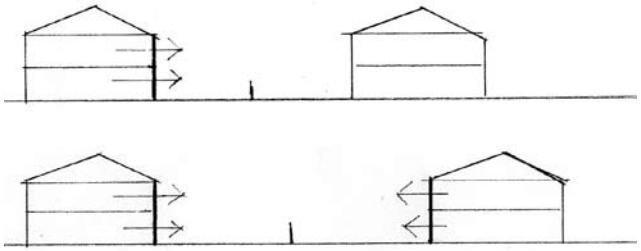


Image 39: sketch shows the distance between principal windows and a blank wall should be no less than 15 metres. Principal window facing another property with principle windows should have a distance of 21 metres.

REMEMBER - when reducing the distances it is likely to reduce the overall amenity space and therefore this maybe unacceptable especially with properties that are designed to cater for family (small or large). Appendix E (Amenity Space) clearly sets out the standard requirement.

Outer residential area (minimum density)

Private amenity space

Lower density development in the form of houses should provide private amenity space. The size should reflect the type of household as explained in Appendix E (Private Amenity Space). For example, family accommodation would require more amenity space compared to a 1/2 bedroom flat/house within the city centre area. This part of the guide will deal with a standard requirement for the outer area.

The type of home in the outer area is likely to be townhouse semi-detached, detached or bungalow.

Back gardens should back onto back gardens in order to provide maximum privacy and security. Where this arrangement cannot be achieved due to site constraints, the principle considerations will be:

- private amenity space providing adequate space that is private and not overlooked by the public realm
- no high fence/boundary walls facing onto the public realm

This will help ensure that the safety and security of the property and the residents are protected. See page 23 for further information on safety and security.

The amount of space necessary as private amenity is 100 sq metres for townhouse, semi-detached and detached. This is because of the amount of bedrooms and people expected to reside at the property. A bungalow should provide 75 sq metres of private amenity space.

Image 40 demonstrates how separation distances between principal windows and private amenity space can be achieved. This rule can be applied to townhouses, semi-detached and detached properties.

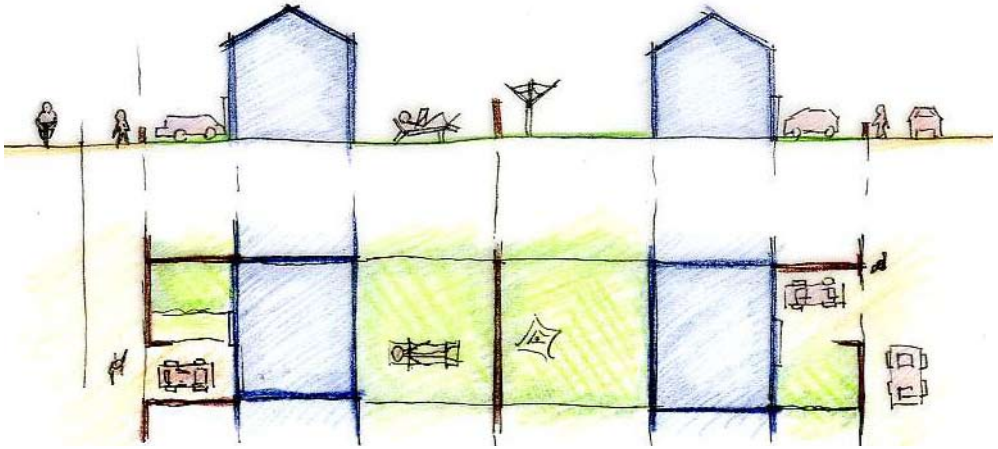


Image 40: image showing rear gardens backing on to rear gardens, this arrangement provides adequate private amenity and a separation distance to safeguard privacy/outlook.

Designers should incorporate level access to balconies and other private amenity space. This will allow wheelchair users to gain easy access to private amenity space (for further information see Appendix I: Inclusive design and Lifetime Homes).

As referred to in the Housing Corporation's Housing Quality Indicators (Version 4) (www.housingcorp.gov.uk) boundaries between private and pubic space must be clear for security and management reasons. Private open space is open space accessible only to the resident. It includes gardens, roof terraces, patios, yards, and balconies. Shared open space is accessible to a restricted group of residents. It includes communal or shared gardens or courtyards. Any unit located more than 10 metres from the shared space (as measured from the closest entrance door) should not be considered to share the open space. Open space accessible by any member of the public or more than 25 units is considered to be public open space.

Outer residential area (minimum density)

Parking provision

Please refer to the Council's SPG on Vehicle Parking Standards. Where possible, it is recommended that new houses such as semi-detached and detached properties have a drive at the side to provide off-street parking. Garages should be set back from the main elevations to avoid a street scene dominated by cars, especially with terraced properties.

Parking at the front of the property similar to the example below (image 41) allows for easy access to vehicles and the rear can be used for private amenity space.

Parking courts at the rear should be small (5-7 spaces) and overlooked by adjoining properties. The access off the highway should look private and should be protected with gates (see image 42).

Image 41: photo showing parking arrangement at the front of the property. Photo also shows a shared surface for vehicles and pedestrians.

Image 42: photo showing a secure gated access to the rear of properties to provide parking within the curtilage of the property.

Outer residential area (minimum density)

Safety & security

Adherence to good design principles can help towards creating a better and more secure environment. People's perception of a secure environment can vary. Below is a check list for designers to consider in creating a safe and secure environment for residents and property:

Natural surveillance

The presence of people can discourage crime and anti-social behaviour. Front entrances and windows that face onto the public realm and onto courtyard amenity/parking areas help towards an environment that feels safer and reduces the potential for crime.

Image 43: photo showing houses providing natural surveillance to street and individual front entrances.

Access, activity and movement

Busy movement routes heighten people's sense of safety by providing natural surveillance through pedestrian and vehicular activity. Routes should also lead to a defined destination.

Sense of ownership

A family house would naturally have a private access (drive) and garden. Houses with shared ownership or shared accesses and private amenity space will require careful consideration because when residents view private shared space as their own, they begin to take responsibly for it. Places can be designed to foster a sense of ownership, mutual protection and belonging. Clearly defining the public, private and semi-private space is important to allow residents a sense of ownership.

Defensible space

Defensible space is the space over which users of nearby buildings are able to maintain effective levels of supervision and control. While types of defensible space may differ between locations, the principle remains the same. A buffer zone can be used between a public space and the building edge. This can be also used to provide a physical barrier to allow occupiers on the ground floor privacy and security. For lower density development this is often a low boundary walls and railings with a front garden.

Open space and play areas

Residential developments that incorporate open space and play areas need careful consideration as they could become a focus of anti-social behavior. Play areas should be close to the properties they serve and overlooked by windows. Designers should consider the location and distance of the play space to avoid noise problems.

Appendices:

Appendix A - Glossary

Amenity – something that contributes to an area's environmental, social, economic or cultural needs. The term's meaning is a matter for the exercise of planners' discretion, rather than being defined in law.*

Daylight – combined skylight and sunlight. Also called natural light.*

Habitable room – a room used for living purposes, excluding kitchens with floor area of less than 13 sq m (140 sq ft), bathrooms, toilets, corridors and halls.*

Net residential area – the area of land occupied by residential development. It includes any small public or private amenity space forming an integral part of the layout, and half the width of any adjoining street, up to a maximum of 6.1 metres (20 feet).*

Open space – *1* Outdoor space...*

Outlook – a view.*

Perception – the subjective understanding that a particular person has of the environment. This will depend on such matters as their experience, mental state, social background and education.*

Private amenity space - in context to this document it refers to space owned by the occupiers. This space is often a garden, balcony or space for some recreational activity.

Quality – *n. and adj. 1* A degree of excellence. British Standard 4778, published in 1987, states that quality should be seen as 'the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs.' The Design Commission for Wales declares that quality 'should not be taken to relate only to the external appearance of buildings and their surroundings. It must also include matters of fitness for purpose, environmental performance, social and economic sustainability, responsiveness to user needs and the aspirations of the local and national community.*

Quality of life – what quality of life a person enjoys in a particular place will depend to a large extent on their own circumstances and preferences. For purposes of public policy, though, it is useful to make assessments of what quality of life particular places offer in general, and to set objectives.*

Residential density – ration between the scale of development and the size of the plot of land on which the development is proposed to take place (Adopted City of Leicester Local Plan (2006)).

Safety – the relative absence of threats, real or imagined, to people. Compare SECURITY.*

ALSO – The condition of being protected from or unlikely to cause danger, risk or injury.

Security – *1* freedom from risk; the relative absence of threat to property. Compare SAFETY. *2* Measures taken to minimise risk.*

ALSO – The state of being protected from danger or threat.

* The Dictionary of Urbanism

Appendices:

Appendix B - Further reading

By Design, CABE

Designing Lifetime Homes, Ed. Brewerton, J & Darton, D (website: www.lifetimehomes.org.uk)

The Dictionary of Urbanism, Roberty Cowan

Manual for Streets, DCLG

Urban Design Compendium 1 & 2, Llewelyn-Davies

Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8)

Safer Places The Planning System and Crime Prevention, ODPM

www.cabe.org.uk
(For urban design principles and information on design and access statements.)

www.housingcorp.gov.uk

www.tcpa.org.uk/biodiversitybydesign/3-5-cs2.htm
Information on street trees

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS3 Housing

PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment

PPG16 Archaeology and Planning

PPS22 Renewable Energy

PPS23 Planning and Pollution Control

PPG24 Planning and Noise

PPS25 Development and Flood Risk

Appendices:

Appendix C - Contacts list

Highway Authority
General number: 0116 252 7272

Environmental Health
General number: 0116 252 6438

Planning Management & Delivery
General number: 0116 252 7249

Planning, Policy & Design

Policy Team
General number: 0116 252 7233

Urban Design Team
General number: 0116 252 7222

Appendices:

Appendix D - Checklist of design principles

Key principles

A designer should consider how the development will fit into the fabric of the existing environment. In doing so ensure that the development can help towards raising the quality of the built environment. Designers should be mindful of:

- *Privacy/outlook*
  No undue loss of privacy/outlook for existing and proposed residents. Is the residents' privacy protected?

- *Daylight/sunlight*
  Ensure that the development does not result in the loss of daylight and sunlight as this would impact on energy efficiency and the overall quality of life.

- *Private amenity space*
  Consideration should be given to the end users of the property, and for their needs for amenity space. Regardless of the type of property, the occupiers should have an outdoor private amenity space.

- *Parking provision*
  Pedestrians and cyclists should be considered when looking at access and parking.

- *Safety & security*
  The development should address the street, a clear distinction between public and private space would create the perception of a safer environment.

  It has been suggested by the Police Architectural Liaison Officer (0116 222 2222) that public car parks should meet the standards as required by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Safer Parking (Park Mark) scheme.

- *Visual quality*
  The layout and access plays a critical factor to the general function and visual quality of the development. If the designer considers how residents and visitors use the building, then this can help them design in all the necessary functions of the building to result in a good visual appearance. This is particularly applies to bin, recycle bins, cycle stores.

- *Street trees*
  Trees can make a positive contribution to the amenity value of the street and the City as a whole. Please refer to Policy UD06 Landscape design.

- *Flood risk*
  Applicants should refer to PPS25: Development & Flood Risk. This document includes location of development and design, and the use of sustainable drainage systems (SUDS). Applicants should seek advice from the Environment Agency concerning developments that could be affected by the risk of flooding.

- *Pollution*
  Any development that could cause an adverse impact on air quality or noise issues should contact Leicester City Council's Pollution Control Group

- *Inclusive design and Lifetime Homes*
  Inclusive design is about making places which everyone can use safety, easily and with dignity. It removes barriers that create undue effort or separation, and enables everyone to participate equally confidently and independently in everyday activities. For further information see Appendix I. Website for Lifetime Homes: www.lifetimehomes.org.uk.

- *Housing Corporation's Housing Quality Indicators*
  Please refer to the Housing Corporation's Housing Quality Indicators. Website: www.housingcorp.gov.uk

Appendices:

Appendix E - Private amenity standards

Definition of residential amenity

In the context of the SPD, the definition of residential amenity is considered as the benefit enjoyed from physical space which is part of the private home. The benefit enjoyed can also depend on the quality of space. The level of enjoyment is dependent on a number of factors, this can include location, size, orientation, sounds, noise, accessibility and enclosure.

Calculating amenity space

There are a number of factors that need to be considered when determining the requirement for amenity space for occupiers. This includes the housing type, number of bedrooms and location within the city. The appendix will look at how the amenity space should be calculated to provide a reasonable quality of life. The standard is a minimum and therefore any proposal below this is likely to be recommended for refusal.

Type of private amenity space

City centre flats are likely to be a compact development and rather than a private garden there could be good size balconies and/or shared space. The inner residential area could provide a variety of space but it would depend on the type of housing. A family home of three/four bedrooms should be provided with a private garden. A one/two bedroom terrace house may have a smaller space. The outer areas will have a lower density and in turn there will be opportunity to provide family accommodation which would need a larger garden space.

What is space used for?

The use of space very much depends on the individual occupiers. Although, it is difficult to cater for everyone, the developer and designers should have an idea for who they are designing for. The table below is to help the Council assess planning applications and benchmark them against a set of standards. These standards have taken into account the location, size, type of home and bedrooms. When space is provided it should be practical and usable.

Flats - High density flats with balconies should offer occupiers the opportunity to enjoy open air views and space for plant pots etc. Balconies also add visual interest to the building.

Mews & terrace - The occupiers are likely to require garden space adequate for possible gardening, children's outdoor space, drying clothes outside, and other incidental activities for a dwelling house.

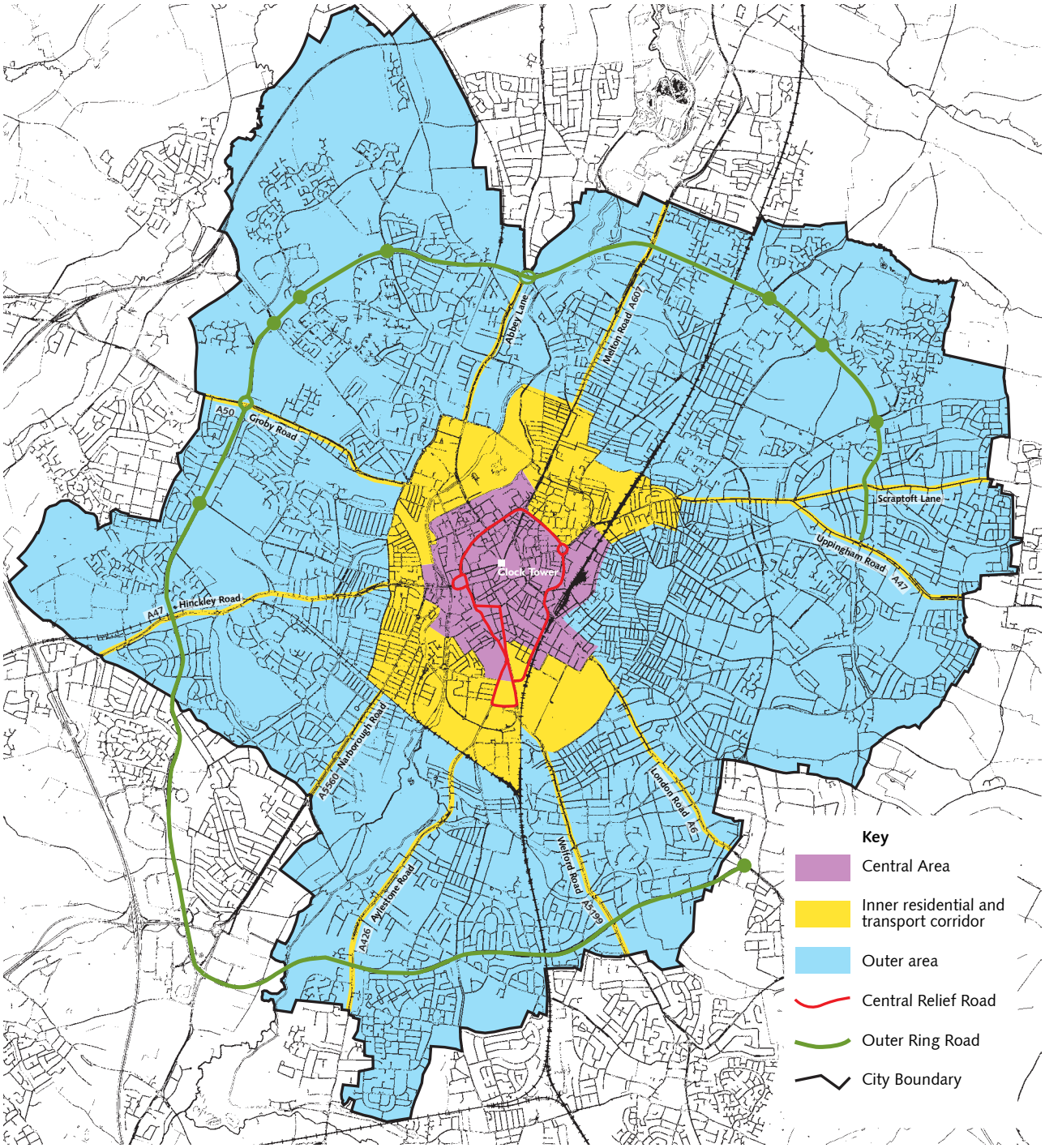
Terrace - Space for small family and children to use for play.

Semi and detached - Same as terrace but larger family and therefore larger space.

Bungalow - Can have garden space size variable between mews and detached.

Location	Type of home	Beds	Type of amenity	Typical occupiers	Space (minimum)
Central/inner/outer area	Flat	1 -	Balcony/shared space	Single	1.5 sq metres per flat
Central/inner/outer area	Flat	2 -	Balcony/shared space	Single person or shared	2 sq metres per flat
Central/inner/outer area	Flat	3 -	Balcony/shared space	Single person or shared	3 sq metres per flat
Central/inner/outer area	Mews	2+	Private/ semi private	Single person, couple, child	50 sq metres
Central/inner/outer area	Terrace	2 - 3	Private rear space	couple, small family	75 sq metres
Inner/outer area	Semi-detached	2 - 3	Private rear space	Couple, child, small family	100 sq metres
Inner/outer area	Detached	3+	Private rear space	Small/large family	100 sq metres
Inner/outer area	Bungalow	2 - 3	Private rear space	Retired/couple	75 sq metres

Appendix F - Defining the three areas



Central area

This area is zone 1 & 2 of the Council's SPG on Vehicle Parking Standards.

Inner residential area (& public transport corridors)

Policy H03 - Density, criteria B states that on sites of 0.3 hectares or more within 250 metres walking distance of main public transport corridors or defined Town and District Centres: at least 40 dwellings per hectare

A good public transport corridor is defined as being regular buses with a frequency of 10 minutes or better.

Outer residential area

Within the defined outer areas (in blue) the density is expected to be minimum (see section 2). However, some sites may qualify for medium density providing that the site complies with criteria B of Policy H03 of the City of Leicester Local Plan. There are areas within the outer residential that are within 250 metres walking distance of a good transport service.

Appendix G - design guide for house extensions

Introduction

This booklet is intended to help you if you are planning to extend your house. The extra space created by an extension should improve the enjoyment of your home and add to its value. However, if care is not taken with the design, the extension can harm the appearance of the house, cause conflict with your neighbours and damage the character of the neighbourhood.

As local planning authority, the City Council is concerned about these issues. Formal polices on house extensions are set out in policy H15 in the City of Leicester Local Plan. This booklet explains how these policies are applied in dealing with planning applications.

For any advice about planning applications contact the City Council's Regeneration and Culture Department, Planning, Management and Delivery Group telephone 252 7249 (phone and voice/textphone)

The City Council is also responsible for enforcing the Building Regulations in the City. For advice contact the Building Regulations Group on 252 6652 (minicom 252 6662)

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1. Permissions required from the Council
1.1 Planning Permission
1.2 Conservation Areas
1.3 Listed Building Consent
1.4 Building Regulations Approval
1.5 Advice

2. Protecting Amenities
2.1 Neighbouring Properties
2.2 Your Property
2.3 Privacy
2.4 Outlook, Daylight and Sunlight
2.5 Amenity Space
2.6 Building up to Property Boundaries

3. External Design
3.1 Matching the Existing House
3.2 Harmony with the Surrounding Area

List of Useful Addresses

Appendix G - design guide for house extensions

1. Permissions required from the Council

The City Council operates the law under the Planning Acts and the Building Acts. The permissions that may be required for extensions are:

- *Planning Permission*
- *Conservation Area Consent*
- *Listed Building Consent*
- *Building Regulations Approval*

1.1 Planning Permission

- *Certain extensions to houses may not always need planning permission.*

This is dependent on size and position, whether there have been previous extensions and if your house is in a terrace. The permitted development limits are specified in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. More detailed advice is available in the free booklet ”Planning: A Guide for Householders” (revised June 2006) published by the Department for Communities and Local Government and is available to download from the DCLG website. A free hard copy is obtainable from the Regeneration and Culture Department, Leicester City Council. If you are in any doubt IT IS ALWAYS ADVISABLE TO CHECK YOUR IDEAS WITH THE PLANNING MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY GROUP AT AN EARLY STAGE.

Please note:
Central Government are proposing changes to Permitted Development for Householders. This section of the document (Appendix G) may therefore in the future be subject to change.

1.2 Conservation Areas

- *If your house is in one of the City’s 24 Conservation Areas, different standards may apply and additional consent may be necessary. Permitted development rights may have been removed by Article 4 Directions.*

A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic importance. The Local Planning Authority has a (statutory) duty to only permit development, which would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of these areas. Conservation Area Consent is required for the total demolition of properties and some of our Conservation Areas also have Article 4(2) Directions removing permitted development rights. This special control means that any external alterations now require formal planning permission. A list of all our Conservation Areas including which areas have Article 4(2) Directions is available on our web site or by contacting the Conservation and Nature Team on 0116 252 7296/7219.

1.3 Listed Building Consent

- *If your house is listed as being of special architectural or historic interest, any extensions or alterations external or internal, will require Listed Building Consent.*

A listed building is a building of special architectural or historic interest. There are currently 400 listed buildings within the city boundary. The listed status also applies to any outbuildings, boundary walls or similar structures built before 1948.

Listed Building Consent is needed for all external and internal works including extensions, structural alterations, removal of historic fabric and in some cases extensive repairs. In addition to this, Planning Permission is needed for any extensions and material external alterations. Listed Building Consent is also required for the installation of satellite dishes.

It is a criminal offence to carry out works to a listed building without consent and both the owner and the contractor who carried out the unauthorised works can be prosecuted leading to a substantial fine and/or imprisonment. The City Council also has powers to serve either an Urgent Works Notice or a Repairs Notice on owners who allow listed buildings to fall into disrepair.

If you are planning to carry out any works to a listed building it is advisable to discuss this with the Building Conservation Officer before making a formal planning application.

1.4 Building Regulations Approval

- *You will almost always need Building Regulations Approval for a house extension, whether or not planning permission is required.*

This is more concerned with the construction of buildings and deals with the health, safety, welfare and convenience of people in or about these buildings.

BUILDING REGULATIONS APPROVAL IS A SEPARATE APPLICATION FROM PLANNING PERMISSION. Full details are available from the Building Control Group of the Regeneration and Culture Department.

1.5 Advice

Building an extension to your house without obtaining the necessary planning permission and/or building regulations approval could cause legal problems when you come to sell your house. The Council may also take action to enforce removal of an unapproved extension, at the owner's expense.

It is advisable to have your extension designed by an experienced qualified designer. A list of local architects is available from the Customer Service Centre B Block, New Walk Centre.

2. Protecting Amenities

2.1 Neighbouring Properties

- *An important consideration when building an extension is the effect it will have on your neighbours.*

The Council will consider any objections from neighbours when assessing a planning application. It may be helpful to discuss your proposal first with any neighbour who may be affected.

Note: your neighbour may have civil law rights or be in a position to invoke covenants, or the extension may fall within the scope of the "Party Wall etc. Act 1996", These are entirely separate matters from any planning permission, and it is your responsibility to check.

2.2 Your Property

- *It is also important to consider the effect an extension will have on the property being extended.*

An extension may harm the existing amenities of the house, e.g. privacy, outlook, daylight and external space, which could affect the quality of the house and its value.

2.3 Privacy

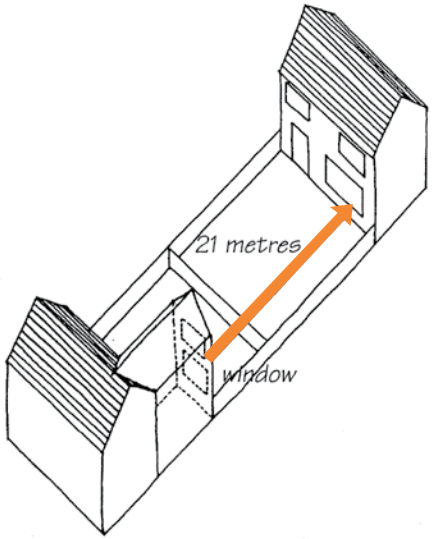
- *A new extension must not result in any substantial loss of privacy to adjoining dwellings and gardens.*

In order to protect privacy, extensions should not be built with windows near the boundaries overlooking a neighbouring house or garden. Extensions to houses should respect the following minimum distances to safeguard privacy:

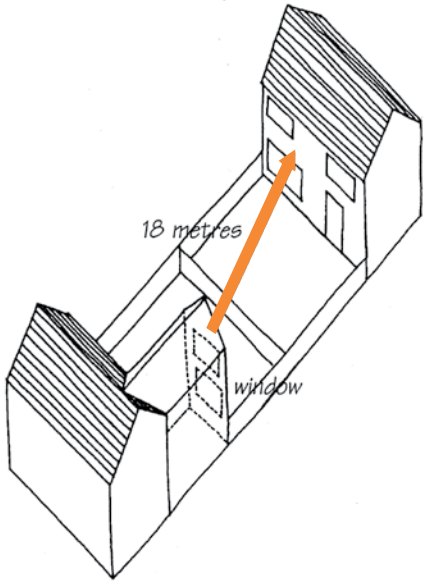
Appendix G - design guide for house extensions

Two Storey Extensions

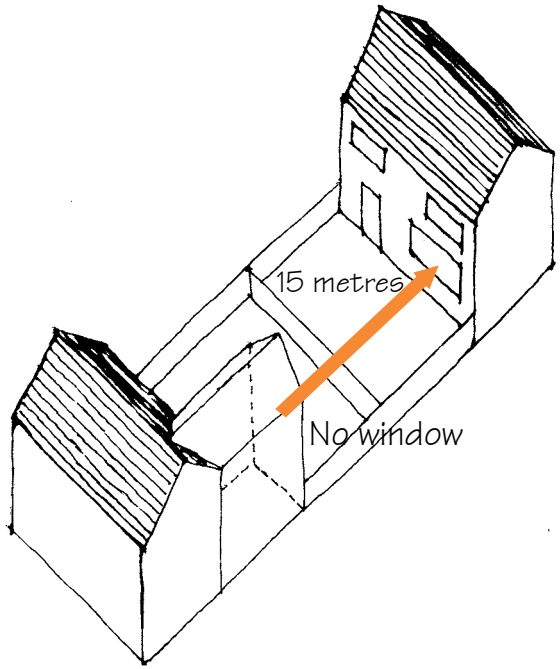
Where a window to a principal room (lounge, dining room, bedroom, kitchen) faces a similar window of a neighbouring property, the distance between them must not be less than 21 metres.



Where direct overlooking of a principal room is avoided by the positioning of the windows, then the distance can be a minimum of 18 metres.

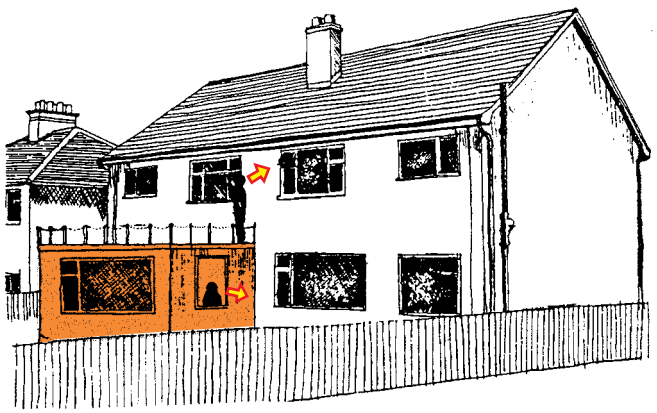


Where a wall with no window faces a wall with windows to a principle room on an adjacent property, the distance must not be less than 15 metres.



The minimum distance between any principal room windows in an extension and the boundary with undeveloped land, including gardens, should be 11 metres. This means that if adjoining land is developed in future there can still be a minimum of 22 metres between main windows and ensures some privacy for the occupiers of that land, and for the users of existing gardens.

Changes in ground level may require an increase in these minimum distances to maintain adequate privacy. It is advisable to avoid situations, which diminish the privacy of neighbours. Balconies, roof gardens, first floor conservatories and flank windows and doorways can allow views into nearby properties.

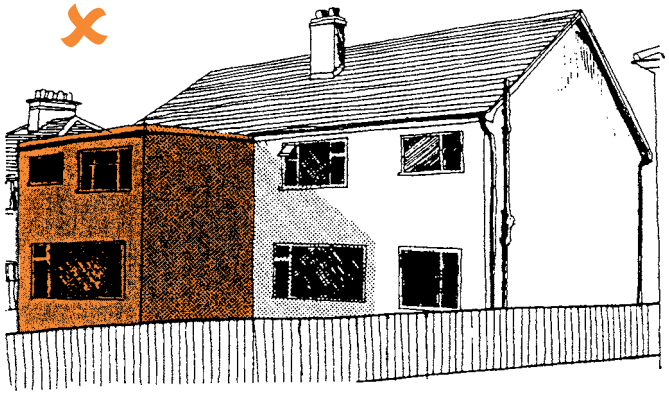


Single Storey Extensions

With bungalows and single storey extensions shorter distance may be acceptable depending on the arrangement of the windows and the levels.

2.4 Outlook, Daylight and Sunlight

- *Outlook: Although there is no right to a view across someone else's land, extensions should not spoil the outlook from the main windows of principle rooms and the gardens of neighbouring properties.*



Large extensions can dominate a neighbour's outlook to the point of being oppressive.

- *Daylight An extension must not cause any significant loss of daylight to the main windows of principal rooms in neighbouring properties.*

It is desirable to have adequate daylight within the extension itself and to adjacent rooms in the existing house.

Rear Extensions

A single storey rear extension on or close to the boundary of an adjoining house will in most cases be acceptable if up to 3 metres deep. On a detached house a single storey rear extension deeper than 3 metres may be acceptable. This is subject to the consideration of the 45 degree guidelines below and provided the extension does not appear unduly dominant when viewed from adjoining properties.

On terraced houses with small yards or gardens, rear extensions, which are bigger than the permitted development limits specified in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order 1995 are unlikely to be acceptable. Refer to 1.1.

The following 45º rules are intended to prevent undue loss of daylight to neighbouring properties, to avoid excessive overshadowing of gardens, and preserve a reasonable standard of outlook:

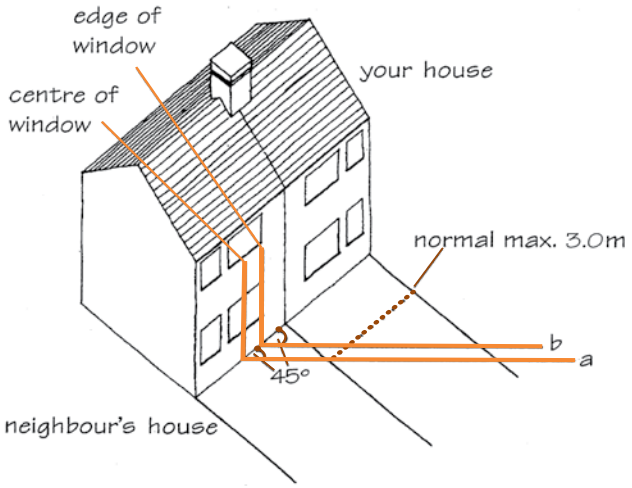
a) A single storey rear extension deeper than 3m on or close to the boundary should not go beyond a line taken at 45º from the centre of the ground floor window of any principal room in an adjoining property.

b) A two storey rear extension on or close to the boundary

should not go beyond a line taken at 45º from the nearest point of the ground floor window of any principal room in an adjoining property.

Odd wedge shaped extensions designed to comply with this rule are unlikely to be acceptable.

- *Sunlight. An extension must not cause any significant loss of sunlight to principal rooms and gardens of neighbouring properties.*



Sunlight should be considered, even where extensions comply with the 45º rule, as this can depend on orientation, house layouts, changes in level between and position of adjoining properties.

These guidelines are general rules. The Council will consider each case separately when assessing the effects of an extension.

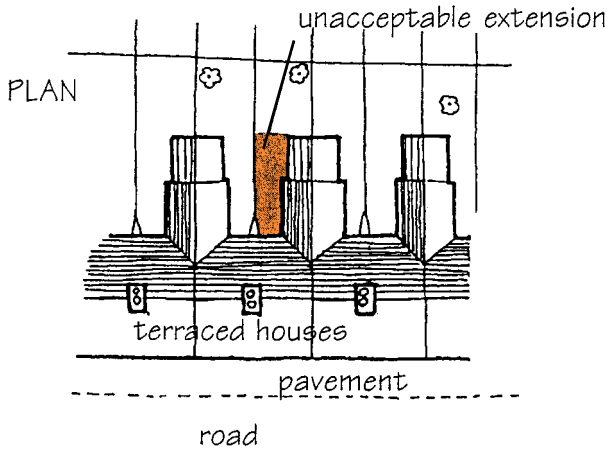
2.5 Amenity Space

- *Extension should leave sufficient garden space for general use and penetration of light and sun.*

The recommended minimum rear garden areas are:-
1 bedroom house – 50 sq. metres
2 bedroom house – 75 sq. metres
3 bedroom house – 100 sq. metres

In any event, no more than 50% of the existing rear yard or garden area should be covered by extensions.

Where planning permission is needed for rear extensions to traditional terraced houses with back additions, it is unlikely that building over the garden or yard adjacent to the back addition will be acceptable.



An extension to the front of an existing garage or a new extension incorporating a garage will require a minimum driveway length depending on the type of garage door used as shown below.

Roller shutter, sliding and inward opening doors	5.0 metres
"Up and over" door	5.6 metres
Hinged, outward opening door	6.0 metres

2.6 Building up to Property Boundaries

- *Care must be taken when building up to neighbouring property boundaries.*

Permission may not be given for an extension, which will prevent access for maintenance of an adjoining house, which is on or close to the boundary.

If you intend to carry out building work on a wall shared with another property, or build on the boundary with a neighbouring property, or excavate near a neighbouring building, you must find out whether that work falls within "The Party Wall etc. Act 1996". If it does, you must serve a statutory notice on all affected owners. This is a separate matter from the planning application or building regulations approval.

Free explanatory leaflets are available from the Customer Service Centre B Block, New Walk Centre. In order to be clear on whether your planned extension does come within the Act you may wish to seek professional advice.

A neighbour's consent will be needed if access to their property is necessary during construction or not for any future maintenance.

3. External Design

- *A well designed extension should match the existing house and be in character with the neighbourhood.*

The character of a neighbourhood is very much governed by the form and materials of the buildings and of the buildings and open space in the area. A well designed extension is likely to add more value to the property than an inappropriate design.

If an extension is to be well designed, it should follow these two main design principles:

- *It should match the original appearance of the housing materials, roof form and scale and proportion of openings;*

- *It should not adversely affect the quality and appearance of the surrounding area.*

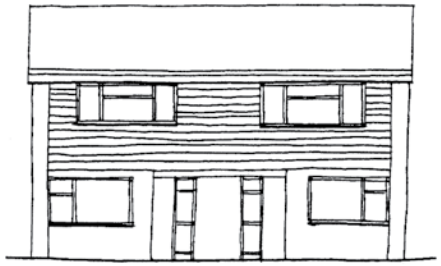
3.1 Matching the Existing House

- *The overall style of the house extension must be consistent with that of the original house.*

There are many styles of houses in Leicester; the more recognisable are illustrated here:

19th century

1930's Suburban



1960's Suburban

1980's Suburban

Appendix G - design guide for house extensions

Scale

- *The overall shape, size and position of an extension must not dominate the existing house.*

If an extension is too big in relation to a house, it can have a serious effect on its original character, particularly if built at the front.

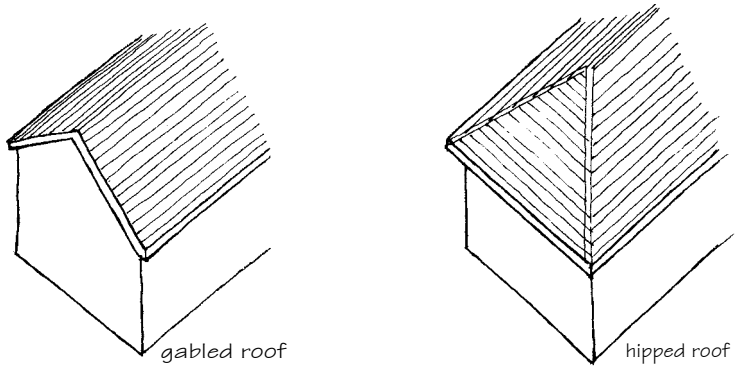
In most cases In order to ensure side extensions do not dominate the existing house they should set back from the front of the existing houses and be no wider than the front wall of the existing house.

On small terraced houses, extensions over and above the permitted development limits specified in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 are unlikely to be acceptable. Refer to 1.1.

Roof

- *An extension should have a roof that matches the original house in design, angle of pitch (slope), shape, colour and materials.*

There are basically two types of pitched roof shapes to house, hipped and gabled. All two storey side extensions must have a roof pitch to match the existing house.



Two storey side extensions must follow the roof shape of the original. Single storey side extensions look better if the roof matches.

Appendix G - design guide for house extensions

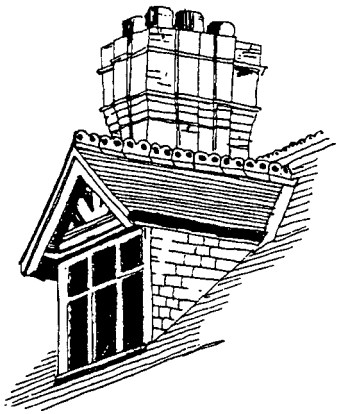
A small fake pitched roof along the front wall of an extension, concealing a flat roof behind will generally not be approved, particularly on end or corner positions.

Flat roofed extensions may be acceptable to the rear of properties with pitched roofs, if they are not visible from the street.

The construction of roof extensions and dormer windows must not dominate the original house.

Rooflights and solar panels fitted to an existing roof should wherever possible face away from the street. They should be designed to fit flush with the face of the roof tiles.

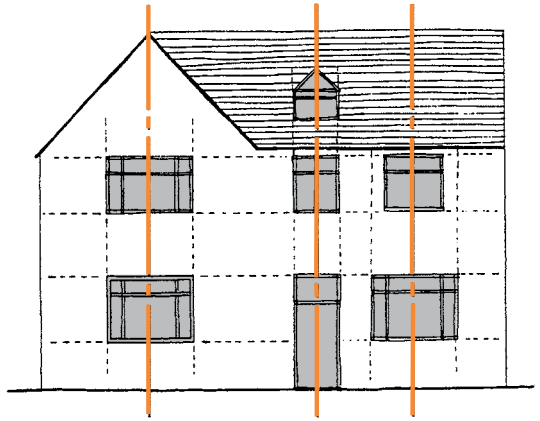
Care should be taken to retain characteristic features of the roof, such as chimney, ridge tiles etc.



Windows and Doorways

- *The type, proportions, subdivisions and materials of the new windows and doorways should match those of the original house.*

Avoid mixing different types of windows and doors on the front elevation. The new windows should normally be arranged to line up vertically and horizontally with those of the original house, to give a sense of balance and proportion. Ensure that dormer windows relate to the shape, position, design and size of the existing windows. The roof and sides of dormers should be covered in materials to match or complement the main roof.



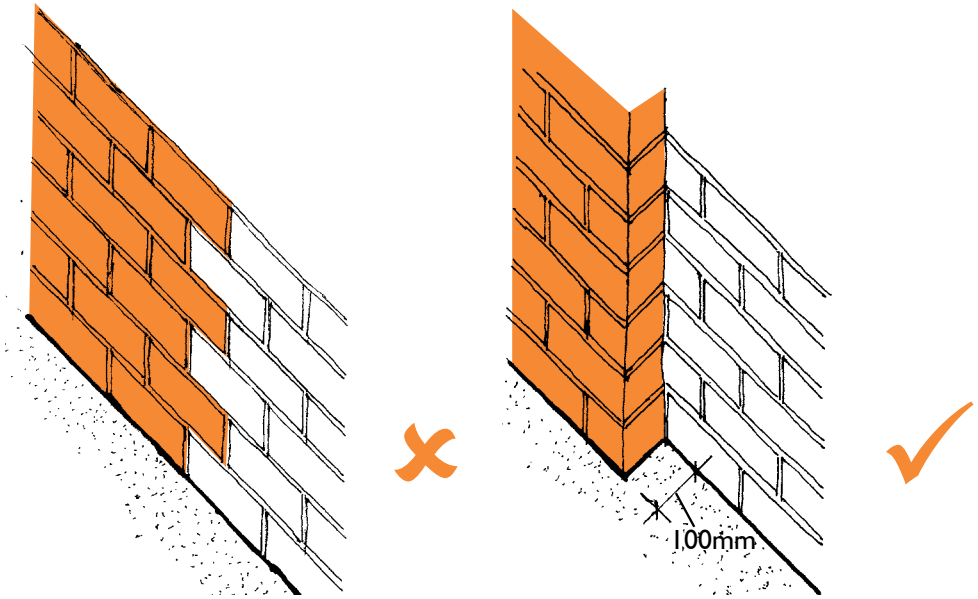
Appendix G - design guide for house extensions

Materials

- *Extensions should have external finishes to match, as closely as possible, those already found on the house.*

In newer houses the exact bricks and tiles may still be available. Good quality second-hand materials (bricks, slates etc.) can often be used for extensions to older properties.

To avoid the difficulty of keying new brickwork into existing brickwork, the extension should be set back a minimum of 100 mm behind the face of the existing house.

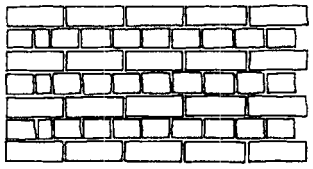


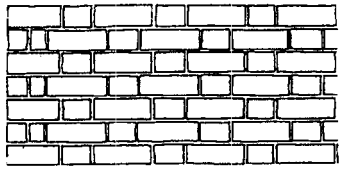
Avoid introducing new materials, which are unrelated and incompatible with the existing house, e.g. fake stone cladding, plastic boarding, felt roofing. They tend to require more maintenance in the long run and may look very unattractive within a short period of time.

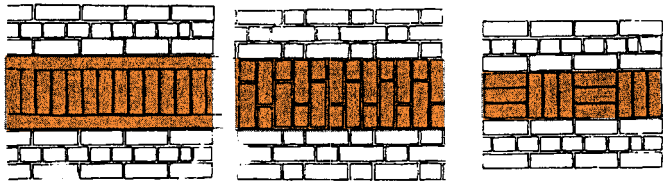
Details

- *Care must be taken in designing the details of the extension to match those of the existing house.*

It is desirable for extensions to older properties to have matching brick bonding and decorative brick courses often found at eaves and floor levels.


English Bond


Flemish Bond


Strings - decorative brick courses

The position of rainwater pipes and gutters, and the continuation of fascias, decorative ridge tiles, the window head and sill details and other details should be consistent with those of the original building.

3.2 Harmony with the Surrounding Area

- *Any extension should maintain the common design characteristics of the row or street within which a house is located.*

The quality of the street scene is usually characterised by the layout and space between the buildings, the house types and materials. In most of the 19th and 20th century housing areas the house type and materials used in a street often blend to make these streets attractive as a whole. The main points to be aware of are:

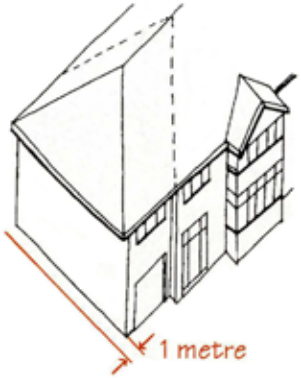
Appendix G - design guide for house extensions

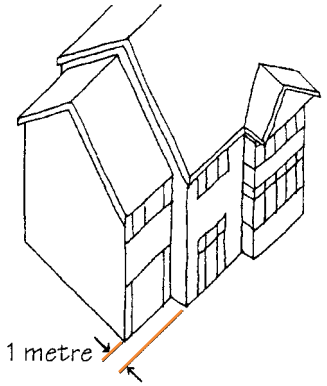
Space

- *The infilling of gaps between residential buildings can harm the character of the street.*

In traditional detached and semi-detached housing areas the infilling of the spaces between with two storey extensions could create a terraced appearance at odds with the rhythm of the streetscene.

A minimum gap of 1 metre between the side wall of a side extension and the boundary is desirable. This will allow access for refuse bins etc. and for maintenance.





If building up to the boundary is unavoidable, then the front wall of the extension should be set back behind the front elevation of the house by at least 1 metre and the ridge level lower than that on the existing house to minimise the “terracing” effect.

Extending over an existing garage

- *Extensions over existing garages need careful consideration.*

If the garage is well set back from the house, an extension with a roof of matching eaves line and slope is unlikely to create a “terracing” effect.

If a garage is level with the front of the house, as is common, then the first floor should be set back by at least 1 metre, possibly incorporating a pitched roof over the set back.

Roof Line

- *Where there is a clear, consistent roof form and line in a group of houses, no extension should interrupt the roof pro file.*

Extensions higher than the existing ridge line will generally not be approved.

Building Line

- *If the fronts of a row of houses are in a consistent line, extensions forward of this line will normally not be permitted.*

1) Front Extensions:

Most streets offer wide views from the front windows of houses and are generally uninterrupted by few, if any, structures between the houses and the highway. A greater degree of control will be given to protect the outlook from windows than those at the rear. Even modest extensions can obstruct the outlook from adjacent windows of terraced and semi-detached house. The criterion in '2.4 Rear Extensions' is not applicable to front extensions.

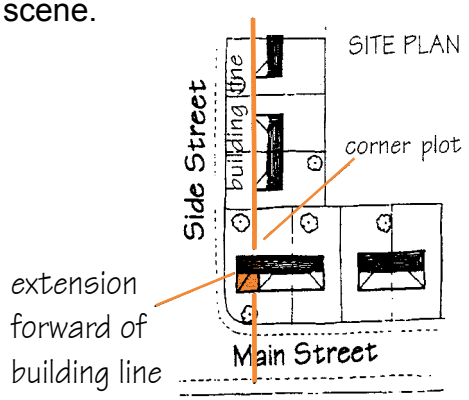
2) Corner Plots:

The side elevations of houses on corner sites are often built in line with the fronts of houses on the side street. Therefore, a side extension on a corner plot could have an effect on the "building line" of the adjoining street.

In considering side extensions on corner sites, in addition to meeting the general design criteria applying to side extensions, proposals will be judged against the following criteria:

Distance from adjacent property:

The greater the distance of the extension from the adjacent property on the side street the less the impact of the extension on the street scene.



Appendix G - design guide for house extensions

Pedestrian and vehicular visibility:
Extensions must not obstruct visibility for users of the highway or footway.

The height of the extension:
A single storey extension could have less of an impact than a two storey extension on the side street scene.

Screening / enclosure:
Where gardens on corner sites are bounded by high fences or hedges, the impact of any extension on the side street scene will be reduced. The degree to which the site is already enclosed beyond the “building line” by fences and planting will be considered in assessing the acceptability of extensions on corner plots.

Design Details
In a row of houses where features such as windows, doors, roof and wall materials, bays, porches, etc. are of a consistent design it is even more important for any extension to reflect the original character.

On terraced and semidetached houses in a road of similar houses avoid refacing the existing house in either paint, render or cladding because this will disrupt the overall appearance of the street. Such extra facings are seldom necessary and will tend to increase maintenance costs. Making your house look “different” will rarely make it more valuable and can make it more difficult to sell.

REMEMBER, IF YOU ARE IN ANY DOUBT CHECK YOUR IDEAS WITH THE PLANNING MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY GROUP AT AN EARLY STAGE.

Useful Addresses
For planning enquiries
Planning, Management and Delivery Group
Regeneration and Culture Department
New Walk Centre
Welford Place
Leicester LE1 6ZG
Tel (0116) 252 7249 (phone and voice/textphone)

For Building Control enquiries:
Building Regulations Group
Regeneration and Culture Department
New Walk Centre
Welford Place
Leicester LE1 6ZG
Tel. (0116) 252 6652

For General Enquires; list of Architects
Customer Service Centre
Block B
New Walk Centre
Welford Place
Leicester LE1 6ZG
Tel. (0116) 252 6480 252 7011 (voice/textphone)

Appendix H - Relevant policies in detail

UD01 - HIGH QUALITY BUILDING DESIGN AND LOCAL CONTEXT

Planning Permission will be given for sustainable high quality building designs, whether they are interpretations of traditional styles or not, providing proposals have regard to local context including:

a) existing landscape characteristics and features such as trees, hedgerows ponds and waterways;
b) the scale and proportion of existing buildings, building lines and heights within the street scene;
c) the detailed design of the existing building where ancillary buildings and extensions are proposed; and
d) the retention and enhancement of existing urban spaces, traditional local materials, and townscape or historic features which contribute to the character of the area.

Planning permission will not be granted for design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunity available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

UD02 - BUILDING LAYOUT, FORM AND POSITIONING

Planning Permission will be given for new development where buildings:

a) provide a positive built frontage onto public spaces, streets or waterways;
- by having windows and entrances onto the street to ensure vitality and visual surveillance of the public realm,
- by making a clear physical distinction between private and public space,
- by being positioned in front of the plot, unless an alternative can be shown to have a positive benefit for the public realm,
- by emphasising the importance of corners by either raising their height or profile or by other design treatment.

b) create a sense of identity and improve legibility;
- by the use of street widths and building heights to emphasise the importance of the public realm,
- by the appropriate use of landmark buildings,
- by incorporating key views of prominent features within, into and out of new development.

Tall buildings will only be permitted where they meet strict design and locational criteria. They must make a positive contribution to the character of the area and the City as a whole and have minimal adverse impacts on adjacent buildings and on public amenity.

UD04 - ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Planning permission will not be given for development proposals which would fail sufficiently to achieve efficiency in the use of energy and incorporate measures suitable to the proposal by:

a) maximising the benefits of solar energy, passive solar gain, natural ventilation and the efficient use of natural light through siting, form, orientation and layout whilst addressing the density requirements of buildings; and
b) using landscaping to optimise energy conservation.

UD06 - LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Planning permission will not be granted for any development that impinges directly or indirectly, upon landscape features that have amenity value including areas of woodland, trees, planting or site topography whether they are within or outside the site unless:

a) the removal of the landscape feature would be in the interests of good landscape maintenance; or
b) the desirability of the proposed development outweighs the amenity value of the landscape feature.

Where development is permitted that results in the loss of a landscape feature with amenity value, compensatory landscape works will be required to an agreed standard.

New development must include planting proposals unless it can be demonstrated that the scale, nature and impact of the development or character of the area do not require them.

Planting proposals should form part of an integrated design approach which includes overall layout, access routes, fencing, hard landscaping, lighting, services and street furniture and should be submitted as part of the planning application.

Development proposals will require maintenance of existing and new landscape for the first ten years after implementation during which time all dead or vandalised stock will need to be replaced (where appropriate with additional protection).

SPA06 - RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY CENTRE

Within the Central Shopping Core, the Central Office Core and the Central Commercial Zone as shown on the Proposals Map, planning permission will be granted for residential development where an appropriate living environment can be provided and where the primary functions of the Central Shopping Core and the Central Office Core are not prejudiced.

AM12 - RESIDENTIAL CAR PARKING PROVISION

Levels of car parking for residential development will be determined in accordance with the standards in Appendix 01 of the City of Leicester Local Plan.

Reductions below the maximum standards may be appropriate in the following circumstances:

a) in the Central Commercial Zone;
b) in the area immediately adjacent to the Central Commercial Zone, which is accessible by means of transport other than the private car;
c) in other locations within 250 metres walking distance of good public transport;
d) where other design objectives are sought (including the creation of a sense of place);
e) in locations where there is existing or surplus parking provision; and
f) in conservation areas where provision cannot be physically accommodated without detriment to the character or appearance of the area.

On-street parking may be acceptable providing access, amenity and safety are not compromised.

Where on plot parking is provided it should be provided between dwellings or within the interior of the block or underground where possible.

Appendix H - Relevant policies in detail

AM15 - DESIGN OF CAR PARKING PROVISION

The location and design of new parking provision (public and private) must ensure that:

a) the location of car parking does not reduce visual surveillance or the vitality of the street;
b) there are safe and direct pedestrian routes through the car park to the pedestrian access points;
c) there is security for vehicles and pedestrians;
d) there is visual amenity through appropriate planting and hard landscaping details including boundary treatments and surface materials; and
e) parking is in designated areas only.

Where possible consideration should be given to incorporating new parking provision underground or within the interior of a block.

H03 - DENSITY

The following minimum net densities will be sought:

a) on sites of 0.3 hectares or more within the defined Central Commercial Zone: at least 50 dwellings per hectare;
b) on sites of 0.3 hectares or more within 250 metres walking distance of main public transport corridors or defined Town and District Centres: at least 40 dwellings per hectare;
c) on all other sites: at least 30 dwellings per hectare.

On larger sites, a variety of densities may be necessary to meet the urban design objectives of this plan.

In order to achieve higher density development, a high quality of design will be sought, which incorporates environmental considerations, the need for open space and landscaping.

H06. HOUSING MIX AND TYPE

Where appropriate, large new housing developments should provide a suitable range of dwelling sizes and types in order to create mixed and socially inclusive communities.

The City Council will also seek a proportion of new dwellings on appropriate sites to the 'Lifetime Homes' Standards.

H07. FLAT CONVERSIONS AND NEW BUILD FLATS

Planning permission will be granted for new flats and the conversion of existing buildings to self-contained flats, provided the proposal is satisfactory in respect of:

a) the location of the site or property and the nature of nearby uses;
b) the unacceptable loss of an alternative use;
c) the loss of family accommodation;
d) the creation of a satisfactory living environment;
e) the arrangements for waste bin storage and car or cycle parking;
f) the provision, where practicable, of a garden or communal open space;
g) the effect of the development on the general character of the surrounding area (where a property is already in multiple occupation, this will be taken into account in assessing the impact of the proposal); and
h) the proposed or potential changes to the appearance of the buildings, and their settings.

Appendix H - Relevant policies in detail

H14. BACKLAND DEVELOPMENT

Proposals for backland development will be expected to comply with the following criteria:

a) development should ensure that any development potential of adjoining land is not prejudiced;
b) access shall be designed and provided so as to be capable of further extension, where appropriate, to serve possible future development of adjoining areas of backland;
c) acceptable densities will have regard to the quality of design and layout, space around dwellings, existing and proposed landscaping, car parking arrangements, and the relationship to, and character of, neighbouring property;
d) privacy shall be maintained for existing and new dwellings by careful regard to window positions, orientation of dwellings, levels, screening and landscaping (single storey development might be more appropriate in some cases);
(e) conditions limiting permitted development rights will be imposed where necessary to protect amenity and privacy; and
(f) tandem development will only be acceptable where satisfactory access can be achieved and the amenity of the existing dwellings safeguarded.

H15 - HOUSE EXTENSIONS

Extensions to existing houses will be approved unless they result in:

a) an unacceptable loss of outlook, light or amenity to neighbouring homes; or
b) have an adverse impact on the character of the area or the street scene.

PS10 - RESIDENTIAL AMENITY AND NEW DEVELOPMENT

In determining planning applications, the following factors concerning the amenity of existing or proposed residents will be taken into account:

a) noise, light, vibrations, smell and air pollution (individually or cumulatively) caused by the development and its use;
b) the visual quality of the area including potential litter problems;
c) additional parking and vehicle manoeuvring;
d) privacy and overshadowing;
e) safety and security;
f) the ability of the area to assimilate development; and
g) access to key facilities by walking, cycling or public transport.

Appendix I - Inclusive design & Lifetime Homes

Lifetime Homes Standard relevant to private amenity space:

1 **Car parking (where adjacent to the home)** must be capable of enlargement to 3300mm width.

2 **Car parking** to be adjacent to (or as close as possible to) the dwelling, and should be level (or gently sloping).

3 **The approach** to all entrances should be level or gently sloping.

4 **All entrances** should be
- illuminated and
- have accessible level access over the threshold level and
- have a covered main entrance
- threshold must not exceed 15mm (level at principal entrance)

15 **Living room window** glazing should begin at 800mm or lower and windows should be easy to open and operate.

Referance: website for Lifetime Homes: www.lifetimehomes.org.uk

If you require this guidance to be explained to you, or in large print or on audio or disk please telephone (0116) 252 7209 (minicom 252 7211).

اس گائڈنس میں ان ترقیاتی کاموں کی نوعیت اور اقسام کا خاکہ کھینچا گیا ہے جن کی توقع سٹی کونسل اس علاقے میں کرسکتی ہے۔ اگر آپ اس کو اردو میں سمجھنا چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی 252 7209 پر ٹیلیفون کریں۔

ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਡਿਵੈਲਪਮੈਂਟ ਸਿਟੀ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਮੁਕਾਮ ਤੇ ਚਾਹਵੇਗੀ, ਇਹ ਗਾਈਡੈਂਸ, ਉਸ ਦੀ ਕਿਸਮ ਅਤੇ ਆਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਰੂਪਰੇਖਾ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ । ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਵਰਨਣ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ **252 7209** ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ।

વિકાસનો પ્રકાર અને તેની આકૃતિ કે જેની સિટી કાઉન્સિલ આ સ્થાન ઉપર આશા રાખશે તેના માર્ગદર્શનની આ રૂપરેખા છે. જો આ બધું તમને ગુજરાતીમાં સમજાવે એવી તમારી ઇચ્છા હોય તો, મહેરબાની કરી ટેલિફોન નંબર **252 7209** ઉપર ફોન કરો.

উক্তস্থানে সিটি কাউন্সিল যে ধরনের উন্নয়ন করার আশা করছে, এই নির্দেশনাটি তার একটি সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরন । আপনি যদি বাংলা ভাষায় এর ব্যাখ্যা চান, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে **252 7209** নাম্বারে টেলিফোন করুন ।