C.10 RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

C.10.1 PRIVATE GARDENS

KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

a. Houses with 2 and more bedrooms should usually have a private amenity space of at least 60% of the internal floor space of the house.

b. Where north-facing gardens cannot be avoided, they should generally be extended to avoid excessive overshadowing.

C.10.1.1 There exists a hierarchy, ranging from gardens open to the public, which have a community or commercial purpose, communal gardens that serve a discrete number of users and private gardens that serve individual households. Public Gardens have an additional public safety aspect, that is absent from private gardens, and which needs to be part of their design brief.

Rear Gardens

C.10.1.2 There is a tendency for new housing development to reduce the size of back gardens, but the smallest gardens are limited in their usefulness for recreation, or opportunities for food growing and the resultant over-dense urban grain may conflict with the local landscape character and settlement pattern.

C.10.1.3 Larger homes ought to have correspondingly larger rear gardens as they are more likely to be used by families. A good guide for a minimum rear garden size is an area that is at least 60% of the floor space of the house. A typical 3 bedroom, 5 person house, of 100 sqm should therefore have a private amenity space of at least 60 sqm.

C.10.1.4 Rear gardens for two storey houses that are north-facing should ideally be longer than 10m as otherwise a large part of the garden will be cast in the shadow of the house for large parts of the day.

Exceptions to these rules might be appropriate where homes directly front onto or are near open green space or in town centre locations with a tight urban grain and the minimum garden length figure could be reduced for bungalows and extended for higher buildings proportionately.

Private amenity space may be provided in innovative ways such as in internal courtyards, roof terraces or balconies.

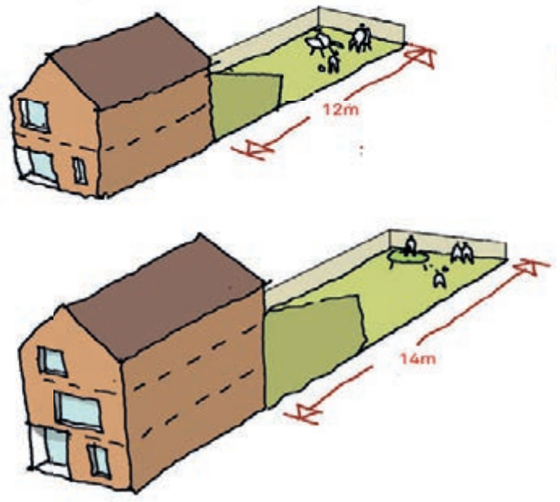

Figure 10.1: Ideal minimum rear garden lengths for northerly aspects.

Front gardens

C.10.1.5 Front gardens are characteristic of both urban and rural settlements in the National Park. They provide 'defensible' space and a good transition between the public realm of the street and the private areas of dwellings.

C.10.1.6 Large front gardens may not always be appropriate because they reduce densities, but with sufficient space they allow scope for planting, sitting out and informal social interaction. If front gardens are to be used for bin storage, it is important that structures accommodating them are integrated into the design and screened by front and party walls and sufficient space is allowed for planting.

C.10.1.7 Pedestrian gates are also highly characteristic of front gardens in the National Park and usually line up with front doors, creating rhythm in a street when repeated.

C.10.1.8 Many settlements in the National Park also include a tradition of homes which front directly onto the street. If this is part of the character of a place then it is appropriate to repeat this proportionately in new development, but defensible space should also be provided, where possible.

Figure 10.2: Front gardens can serve several functions.

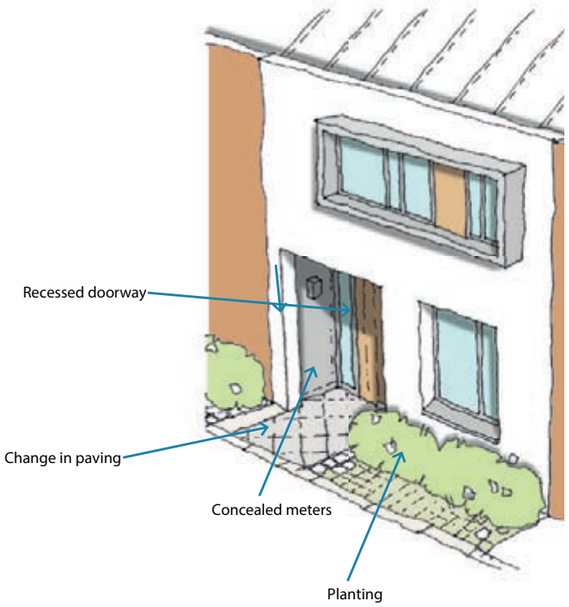

Figure 10.3: defensible space without a traditional front garden.

LANDSCAPE–LED HINT

Discover what is locally characteristic for front gardens to inform new development.

Jevington

❶ Culturally: where residents can plant up, have 'defensible space' and interact with their neighbours and passers-by.

❷ Physically: Front gardens with characteristic boundaries and pedestrian gates

C.10.2 COMMUNAL GARDENS

KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Communal residential gardens should generally consist of at least 20m2 of usable open space per dwelling and where possible incorporate multifunctional GI and SuDS.

C.10.2.1 Communal gardens (and allotments) for residents or staff and visitors in non-residential development should be designed in a landscape-led way reflecting local landscape character and providing attractive and multi-functional spaces incorporating green infrastructure enhancement (see C.9) and SuDS (see C.9.3) and contributing to **ecosystem services**.

Figure 10.4: Well-designed communal garden space between houses at Goldsmith Street, Norwich.

C.10.2.2 Communal gardens are often associated with apartment blocks or multi-residential buildings such as retirement homes, but could equally be provided to serve houses. They should be sized to provide meaningful spaces for the residents they serve. A good guide for a minimum amount of communal garden space is 20m^2 per dwelling.

This calculation should include areas of private amenity (such as balconies) provided but should exclude areas that cannot be described as 'usable'.

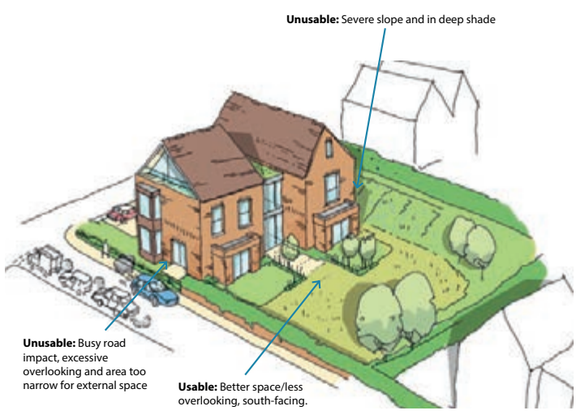

Figure 10.5: Usable and unusable communal garden space.

C.10.3 BALCONIES

C.10.3.1 Balconies are mostly a feature of apartments and can provide some much needed (semi) private amenity and fresh air for flat-dwellers. To count as useful amenity space, balconies should be dimensioned sufficiently to at least accommodate a small table with two chairs and relevant access space (*Figure 10.6*).

C.10.3.2 Balconies can assist with providing good levels of **natural surveillance** (see C.7.5) and **active frontages** (see C.1.7), making the public realm safer and animating street elevations.

Figure 10.6: Potential dimensions for balconies.

C.10.4 PRIVACY AND DAYLIGHT

KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES

a. All new development should consider the private amenity and daylighting of new and existing residents.
b. Overlooking distances for rear windows between existing and new homes should be at least 22m and 20m respectively.
c. Good daylighting in dwellings and non-residential buildings should be maximised (subject to dark night skies requirements).

Privacy

C.10.4.1 A minimum distance should be provided between opposing rear windows of neighbours. The minimum distance from rear windows of a new development to the rear windows in an existing dwelling of 22m (and 20m in wholly new development) should generally be observed. These parameters should be extended by 5m where there are three or more storeys.

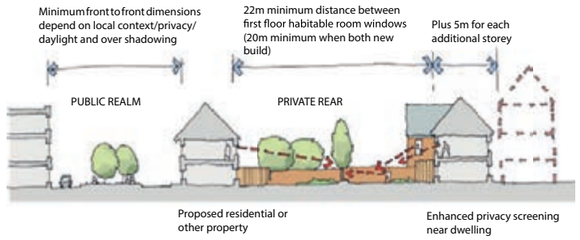

Figure 10.7: Traditional perimeter block arrangement creating a minimum back to back distance and private garden zone behind houses and a public realm in the front.

C.10.4.2 Privacy is less of a concern at the front of properties which face onto the public realm (the street) as people generally have different expectations here compared with the rear of the property.

Daylight

C.10.4.3 Good quality natural light helps to make the interior of a dwelling or a work place a more pleasant and enjoyable place to spend time. It also reduces the need to use electric lighting.

C.10.4.4 The amount and quality of natural light depends on the:

- size and position of windows,
- the shape of rooms,
- the colour of internal surfaces,
- and the structures that surround the building.

A daylight factor (DLF) for inside buildings is expressed as a percentage of the daylight experienced outside on an overcast day. In offices, a DLF of between 2 and 5 is desirable at desk height. With a DLF of 2 or below, the room appears dim, and electric lighting will likely be used.

C.10.4.5 Electric light circuit design should be zoned to take account of fenestration so that only the darker areas of the office receive electric lighting when necessary.

C.10.4.6 In all habitable rooms, the Authority requires windows. Roof mounted 'light tubes' can bring natural light into corridors, landings and other rooms where window light cannot penetrate sufficiently.

C.10.4.7 The size of windows to provide good day lighting must be balanced with privacy requirements within the home. It is important that the orientation, location and use of the room are all taken into account when considering the size and location of windows. The **dark night skies** (see C.15) requirements must also be considered. **BREEAM** assessments include credits for minimum standards for natural daylight levels for non-residential buildings.

C.10.4.8 New development must not create excessive overshadowing of the windows of habitable rooms, and should maintain adequate daylight levels in neighbouring properties. *Figure 10.8* shows how this can be calculated. Overshadowing of established solar collection, such as photovoltaic panels or tiles should also be avoided.

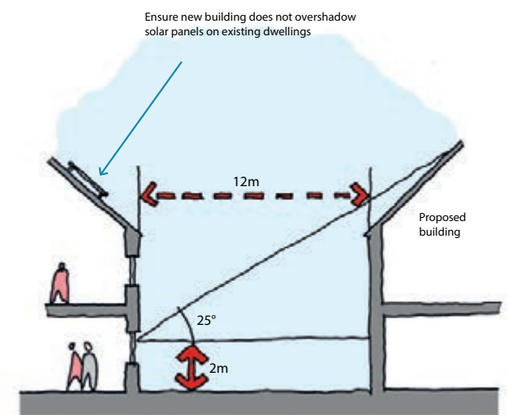

Figure 10.8: Daylighting diagram for new development adjacent to an existing property.