

Single Plot and other types of Residential Infill Development

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Environment Committee: September 2003



Chief Planning Officer
Town Hall
The Parade
Epsom
Surrey KT18 5BY
tel 01372 732000
web www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk

INTRODUCTION

This guidance note has been prepared as supplementary planning guidance to the Epsom and Ewell District-wide Local Plan. The policies and proposals of that plan set out the planning context for development. However, certain detailed matters are more appropriately considered in this supplementary guidance format.

The purpose of this note is to give guidance on the design issues and other detailed matters that need to be taken into account to successfully integrate single new dwellings and small groups of dwellings, including flatted blocks, into the existing fabric of the urban area.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

G1 In principle, the development of individual housing plots and small groups of houses is generally acceptable within the built-up areas of the Borough.

G2 Individual housing plots throughout the Borough are of various sizes and have different characteristics, which need to be taken into account in the design of new, or replacement dwellings. New dwellings on small plots must be sympathetic to, and complement the character of, the surrounding built form in terms of layout, design and materials. The particular characteristics of the area should be reflected in new development. Where development is acceptable in principle, the Council will seek to ensure that it makes a positive contribution to the quality of the built environment.

G3 The Council will resist proposals for the demolition of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the area, particularly in conservation areas.

G4 Policies **BE19** and **HSG11** of the Local Plan set out a number of criteria that need to be taken into account by applicants to achieve a high standard of development. Where more than one dwelling is proposed, the relationship of the proposed dwellings to each other and to the existing built form must be taken into account.

G5 In applying these criteria, the Council will take into account the guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (Housing), in particular the encouragement given to residential densities of between 30 and 50 dwellings to the hectare. However, it is acknowledged that this type of density is sometimes difficult to achieve on infill developments, without unduly unbalancing the character of the area. In all cases, the requirement to make the best use of land will be balanced against the need to protect residential amenity and the character of the area, and the guidelines below will be applied flexibly to the specific context of the site and the proposed development.

DETAILED DESIGN

1 SCALE, FORM AND IMPACT ON THE STREET SCENE

- 1.1 New development should normally respect the massing, scale and style of adjacent properties, and those in the street scene. New development should also respond to established building lines fronting onto the streets in which they are located.
- 1.2 Buildings of varying height and massing need to be carefully designed and located in relation to each other, in order that they complement and do not detract from other buildings in the street and the wider local context generally. Buildings with a substantial mass will generally only be considered appropriate on sites with a wide street frontage.
- 1.3 The scale, form and layout of replacement dwellings should ensure that the amenities of existing occupiers and future occupiers of the proposed dwelling(s) are not unduly compromised.
- 1.4 These considerations apply equally to the rear of the proposed dwelling as to the front.
- 1.5 The height of any replacement dwelling shall not generally exceed three storeys except within Epsom Town Centre where, exceptionally, four storey replacement residential development may be considered acceptable.

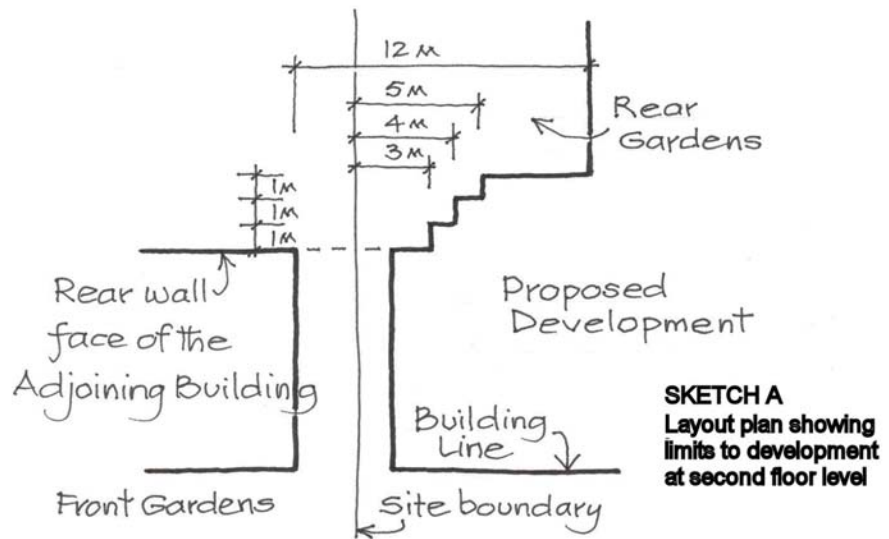
2 MATERIALS

- 2.1 The choice of materials is as important as the design of the building itself. Materials should generally reflect the surrounding buildings in terms of colour and texture. Excessive mixtures should be avoided.

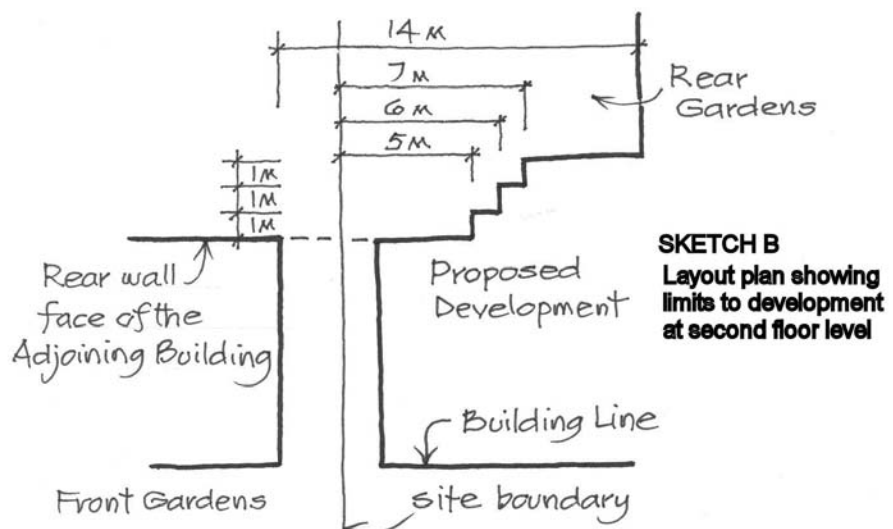
3 NEIGHBOURLINESS

- 3.1 If a new building is built adjacent to an existing building it can be perceived as being un-neighbourly if its rear wall projects substantially beyond that of the neighbouring property, or if it is too close to existing buildings.
- 3.2 The rearward projection of any new building **at first floor level** should not therefore normally exceed the rear building line of the adjoining building where the new building is within **3** metres of the common boundary.
- 3.3 Where the new building is between **3** and **4** metres of the common boundary, the rearward projection of the new building may exceed the rear building line of the next door property by 1 metre. Further increments can be achieved by siting the new building further away from the common boundary, as shown in sketch **A**.

- 3.4 The **first floor** should not extend beyond **3 metres** of the rear wall of the adjoining building, unless that building is more than **12 metres** away.



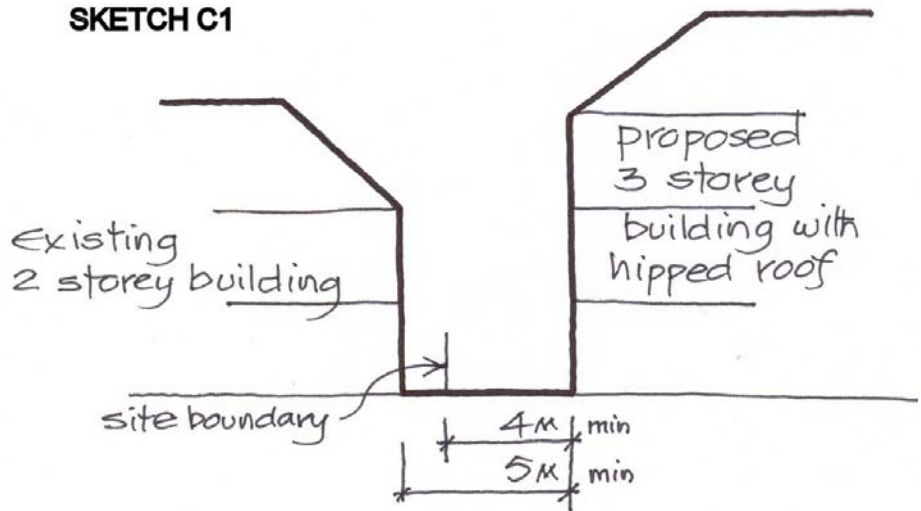
- 3.5 The rearward projection of any new building at **second floor level** should not therefore normally exceed the rear building line of the adjoining building, where the new building is within **5 metres** of the common boundary.
- 3.6 Where the new building is between **5 and 6 metres** of the common boundary, the rearward projection of the new building may exceed the rear building line of the next door property by **1 metre**. Further increments can be achieved by siting the new building further away from the common boundary, as shown in sketch B.
- 3.7 The **second floor** should not extend beyond **3 metres** of the rear wall of the adjoining building, unless that building is more than **14 metres** away.



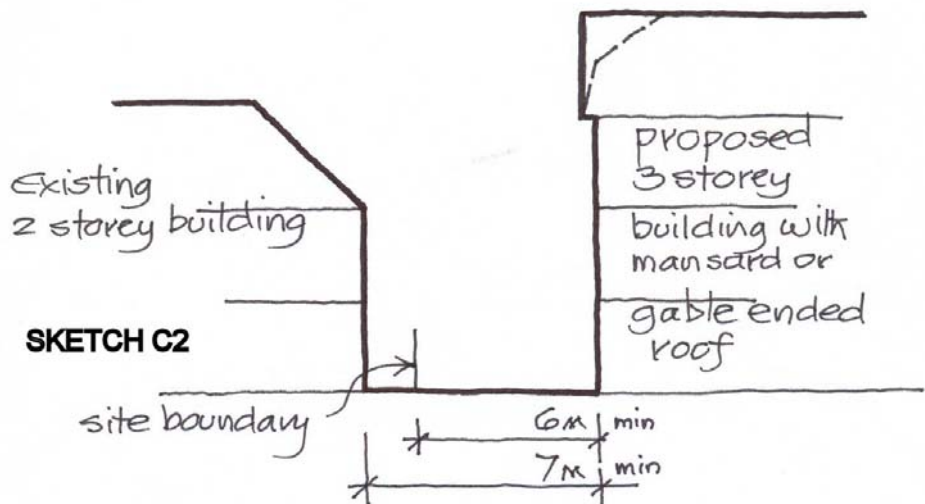
- 3.8 The same proportional increases will be applied to **third floor** projections.

- 3.9 In general, three storey buildings, when proposed next to two storey buildings, should be at least **5 metres** from the flank wall of existing neighbours, and not less than **4 metres** from the common boundary, where the roof of the new building is hipped. Where the roof is gabled, or is of a mansard or pseudo-mansard form, the distance to boundary should be increased by at least **2 metres**; see sketches **C1** and **C2**.
- 3.10 Flank windows serving living rooms, kitchens, bedrooms or common stairways will be allowed only at ground floor level, or elsewhere when the proposed dwelling is sited **12 metres** or more away from the common boundary; see sketch **D**.

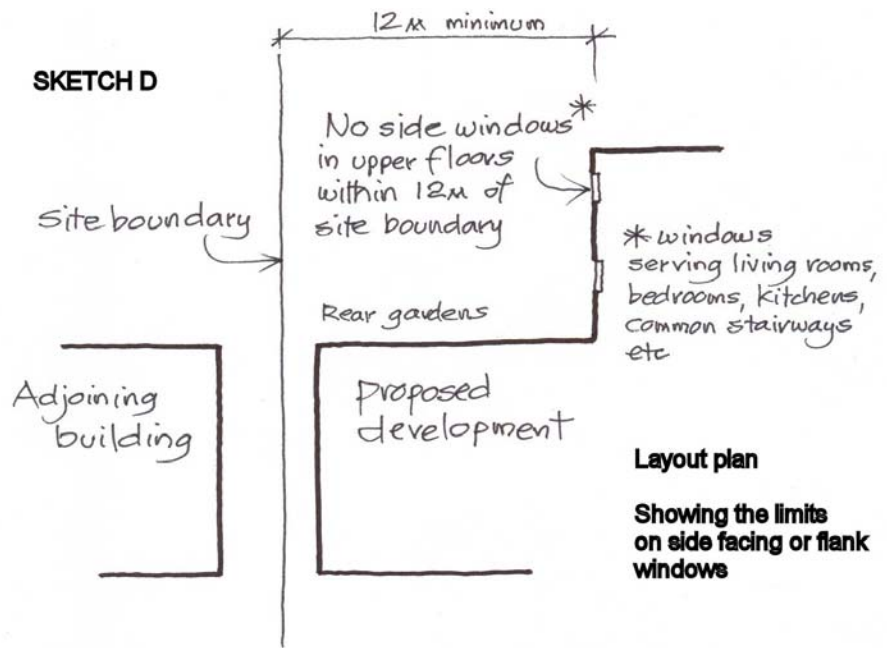
SKETCH C1



Elevations showing the required side gaps

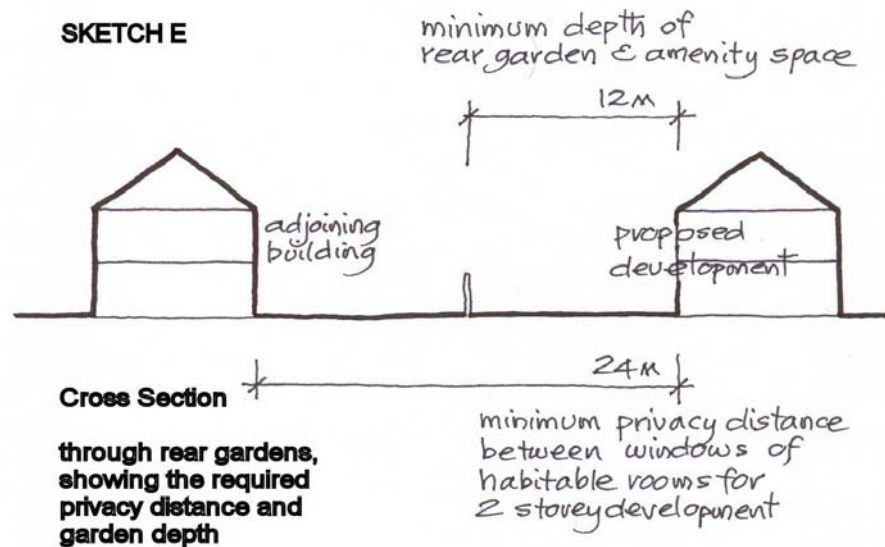


SKETCH C2



4 PRIVACY

- 4.1 Where properties are not more than two storeys in height, the rears of buildings facing each other with habitable room windows in facing elevations require a minimum separation distance of **24 metres (80')**. Where one of the properties is more than two storeys in height, a correspondingly greater separation distance will be sought; see sketch **E**.
- 4.2 Thus rear garden depths should be less than **12 metres (40')**. Rear garden privacy should be enhanced by the use of fencing, landscaping or other suitable boundary treatments.
- 4.3 Where communal amenity space is proposed, this should be screened from public areas, parking areas and access roads, and preferably screened through distance, and not just by a fence, and should be landscaped and planted. A minimum allowance of **20 square metres** per unit should be set aside for amenity space, drying areas, and bin and cycle stores.
- 4.4 The rear amenity space of a block of flats, or the distance of the flats to the rear boundary, should not be less than **12 metres**, with a distance between facing flanks of windowed walls of not less than **24 metres**.
- 4.5 Care needs to be taken to ensure that where houses are close to the highway, they are designed in such a way as to avoid unacceptable degrees of overlooking. Smaller window openings should be employed where houses are close to the highway boundary.



5 ROAD DESIGN AND TURNING FACILITIES

- 5.1 The SCC guide "Surrey Design: A Strategic Guide for Quality Built Environment" gives detailed information on this aspect of estate design. However, it is not enough simply to rely on complying with the numeric requirements of that guidance. A degree of skill is also required in siting the houses around those roads so that a pleasant environment is created.

6 PARKING AND GARAGING

- 6.1 In accordance with the government's aim of securing sustainable residential environments, an average of 1.5 parking spaces per unit will be sought, less in the town centre and other highly sustainable locations. (Any sites more than 1 kilometre from the town centre are unlikely to be considered to be "highly sustainable").
- 6.2 The car parking standards will be applied flexibly, particularly in cases where in-curtilage parking is proposed.
- 6.3 Garages will normally be expected to be sited not less than 5 metres from the highway, so that the doors may be opened with the vehicle off the highway.
- 6.4 Innovative design solutions are encouraged to prevent communal parking areas dominating the appearance of the development.
- 6.5 An absolute maximum of 10 spaces only should be provided in groups, with soft landscaping between groups, but ideally this figure should not exceed 6. In addition, communal parking areas should be sited away from the main highway and other publicly accessible areas.
- 6.6 Provision should be made for covered and secure cycle parking in the ratio of 1 cycle space per 2 car parking spaces provided.

- 6.7 Access roads leading to communal parking areas shall be at least **4** metres from the flank boundary of any existing adjoining gardens, and that space shall be densely landscaped with soft planting to safeguard the occupiers from undue noise and disturbance.
- 6.8 Shrubs around parking spaces and access roads should be of a type that will on maturity reach a height of at least **1.5** to **2** metres. However, trees and shrubs should be carefully located, to avoid loss of lighting to nearby windows.

7 GREENING AND SETTING

- 7.1 High quality landscaping should be an integral part of the design of all new development, and existing landscape features such as walls,, fences, hedges and trees should be retained wherever possible. This particularly applies at the front, in the public areas, where planting will have a great impact on the setting of the development, and on its impact on the street scene. Spaces at the side of buildings, and around parking spaces and access roads in flatted developments, also need to be planted sensitively.

8 REFUSE BIN COLLECTION POINTS

- 8.1 Refuse bins can be unsightly and can produce unpleasant smells. Their location, proximity to windows and screening are important considerations when designing residential schemes. Purpose designed and built bin stores shall be provided, away from the rear garden areas of other houses, where insufficient space is available for refuse vehicles to accommodate the boxes provided for the Borough's recycling collection scheme. The location of the bin store must be included in layouts at an early stage, not added on as an afterthought.

9 DESIGN AGAINST CRIME

- 9.1 All developments should be designed to improve personal security and reduce crime and the fear of crime. The Council will therefore examine the design, layout and access arrangements with a view to their impact on crime and ease of maintenance, seeking to incorporate anti-graffiti materials, unobstructed views, well lit spaces and natural surveillance, as appropriate. Developers are encouraged to seek the advice of the Police Architectural Liaison Service at an early point when preparing their development schemes.

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