3.5 How to Create Character with Landscaping

streams make an important contribution to the ecological diversity of an area and, therefore, should be retained, protected by measures such as buffer zones and enhanced wherever possible. For example, gaps in hedgerows can be planted up with native species.

In addition, opportunities should be taken to create new habitats. Hedges, wildflower meadows, wild corners, compost heaps, ponds, hard landscaping features such as dry stone walls and rock piles, and nest boxes installed in the eaves of buildings can all make a significant contribution to species diversity.

Innovative designs, such as green roofs planted with sedum, grasses or wildflowers, and roofs designed with bats in mind can also encourage habitat creation.

Provide gardens

Gardens offer significant opportunities for species diversity, and selective planting can encourage butterflies, bees and birds. New developments, therefore, should be designed to include private or communal gardens.

Link habitats

Linking habitat areas can create increased ecological diversity and allow wildlife to move around an area. Opportunities, therefore, should be taken to link new open spaces to existing spaces and to the countryside adjoining a new development.

Choose plant species that increase ecological diversity

Landscaping schemes should use a variety of native species to help sustain and encourage ecological diversity.

Long-term management and maintenance

Details of how the landscape and biodiversity features on the site will be maintained should also be included in the planning application.

Further Guidance on Biodiversity

Oxfordshire County Council has produced useful guidance on biodiversity and planning which can be found at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/naturalenvironment in the ecology section.

358 **Red admiral butterfly, common in British gardens**

359 **Wildflower meadow**

360 **Existing site features such as streams should be retained**

3.6 How to Create Mixed & Inclusive Communities

An area needs diversity to help it function successfully as a community. This includes a variety of buildings, uses, facilities and people.

"Diversity
A place with variety and choice".

Mixed-Use Development

Mixed-use development is typical of many urban and suburban areas. In appropriate locations, development proposals should consider a mix of uses in addition to residential.

Increase accessibility and convenience with mixed use developments

Mixed use development can provide:

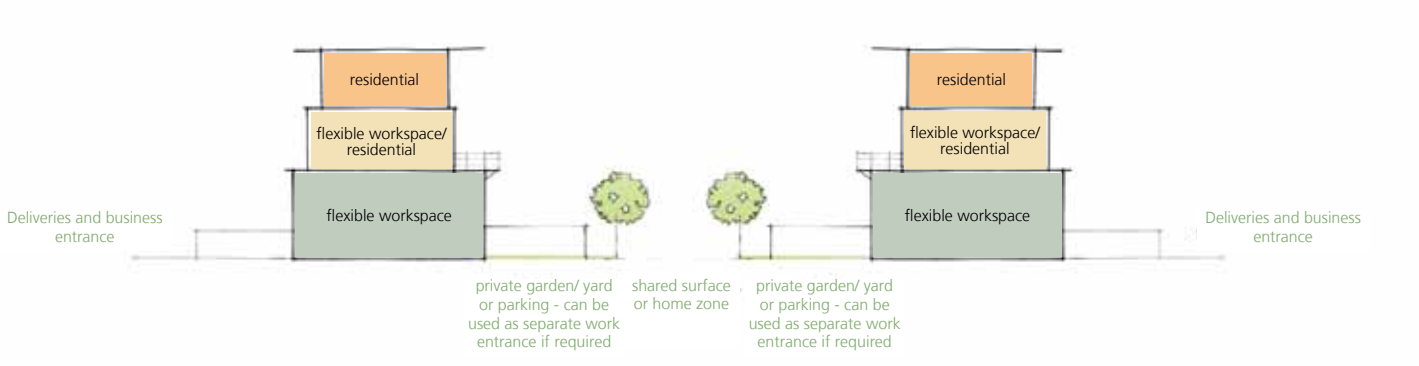
- More convenient access to facilities.
- Less commuting and other car journeys.
- Greater social interaction and activity on the street.
- Variety of building types and forms.
- Increased safety through natural surveillance.
- Enhanced viability of shops, public transport, services and community facilities.

The majority of uses can be located close together without conflict. Sometimes, however, it may be necessary to include sound insulation or ventilation measures to prevent any disturbance to residents from adjacent commercial uses. It is advisable to design mixed use developments from the outset to minimise the potential or perception of any conflict between different uses.

361 Wantage mixed use combines retail on street with residential above


362 Residential above and adjacent to commercial properties


363 Sheltered housing successfully integrated into a historical street



364 Potential Live Work layout

Live/work developments should be integrated with other uses and located on areas suitable for residential development

Live/Work Units

People are increasingly choosing to work from home, a trend hastened by advancements in technology and the sustainability agenda. Modern homes, therefore, need to be capable of adaptation to enable people to work from home. Alternatively, new homes can be designed as live/work units to enable people to carry out their whole business from home.

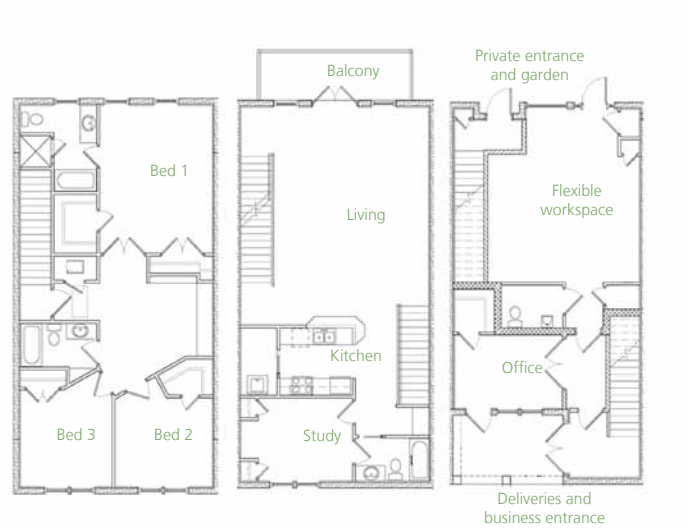
Design live/work units as an integral part of the overall scheme

The types of live/work units are wide ranging, from sole trading professionals to staffed practices. For some people, a study space with internet connection is sufficient, whilst others may require studio space or an outbuilding.

When designing live/work units from the outset, the primary use must remain residential. Any business use must be capable of being carried out in a residential area without harm to the amenity of other residents.

Appropriate sound proofing or ventilation measures may need to be installed to provide a buffer between areas used for residential and business purposes. In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to group workshops together within a block to minimise any potential conflict between residential and business uses and to enable the efficient provision of services.

365 Live work unit - Sutton Courtenay



366 Example of how family housing can be accommodated with a flexible workspace below

3.6 How to Create Mixed & Inclusive Communities

Inclusive Communities

People have differing requirements of a home, depending on cultural needs, economics, health requirements and age. The housing available should reflect this diversity.

Neighbourhoods should be designed to:

- Ensure new communities meet the needs of current and future residents.
- Enable all members of society to have the same opportunities and experiences.
- Provide well-designed environments for all.
- Meet the demand for more accessible private housing.

The benefits of a mix of housing types and tenures include:

- Lifetime residents: Residents can move to a smaller or larger home without the need to leave the neighbourhood. Several generations of a family can live close together.
- Robust community: A broader spectrum of ages and socioeconomic backgrounds creates a more diverse community.
- Flexible living: Several generations of a family can be accommodated in the same building (e.g. using an annex for grandparents).
- Community self-help: For example, arrangements for childcare and help with shopping.
- Community surveillance: A variety of social groups means more activity throughout the day, providing day long surveillance and reduced anti-social behaviour.

Development which is capable of responding to changing social, technological and economic conditions is more likely to be successful and ultimately more sustainable.

367 **Range of dwelling types**

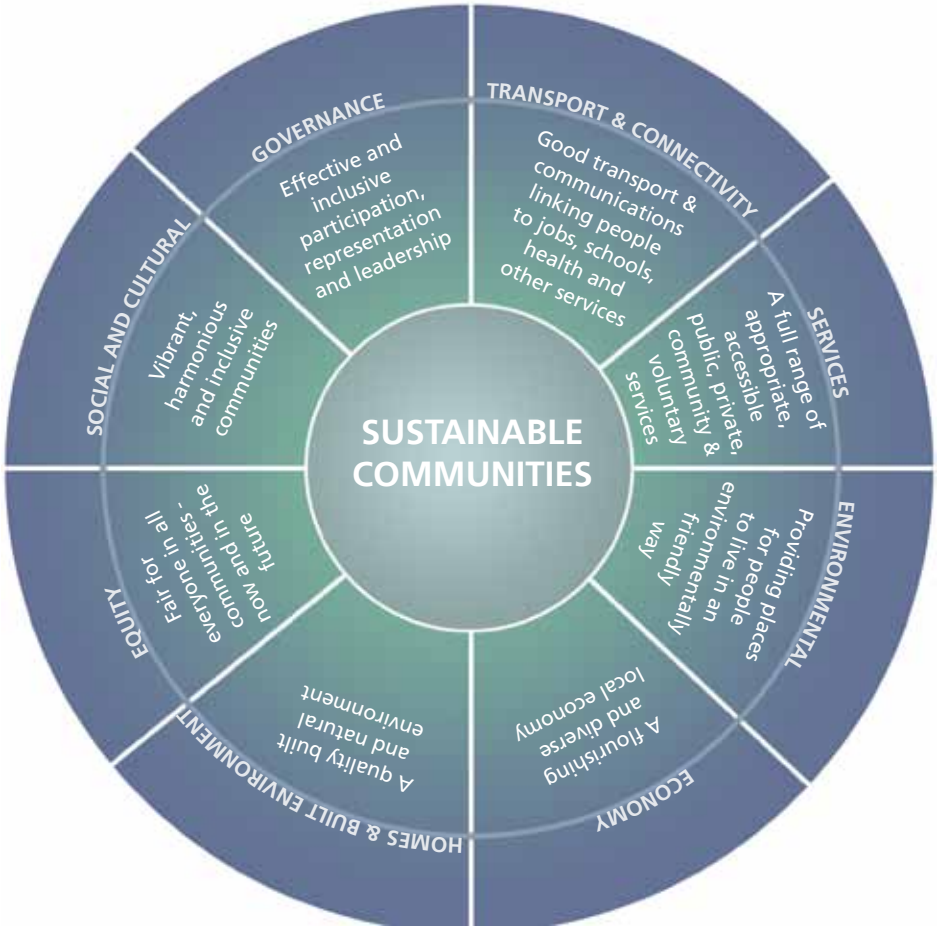
3.6 How to Create Mixed & Inclusive Communities

Buildings should be designed so that they can be altered internally over time without the need for regular demolition and rebuilding as needs change. By building flexible internal space, rooms can be adapted to different uses depending on family requirements and potentially to allow residents to work from home.

New residential developments should address the needs of people with disabilities by complying with Part M of the Building Regulations. This requires reasonable provision to be made for people with disabilities to gain access to and to use buildings.

368 Affordable housing 'pepper potted' throughout the site, and identical in external appearance to private housing.

369 Housing provision should include all members of society. Those with disabilities should be given careful consideration to ensure that they are not excluded from new housing developments



370 Model for sustainable communities - Egan Review 2004

3.7 How to Create a Safe Residential Environment

Creating a safe and secure environment is an essential part of designing a successful development.

The design of residential developments can contribute to crime prevention and reduction. A number of design tools have been developed to help create safer environments – these are discussed below.

Safer Streets

"Surveillance: places where all publicly accessible spaces are overlooked"

Natural surveillance takes place when people can see what is happening where they live. Crime rates are less in locations where people believe they are being watched.

Maximise opportunities for communities to become self-policing

The careful design of streets and public spaces can create safer communities, where people can meet each other, recognise local residents and neighbours and feel confident to challenge strangers. The following section sets out some of the design techniques that can be used.

Street design

Design the street network to be inviting

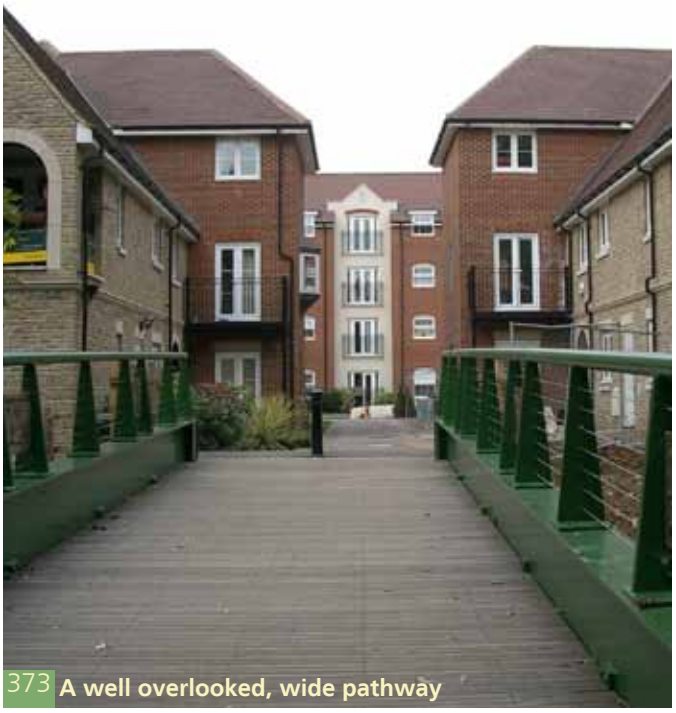
Wherever possible, routes should be overlooked by housing. Streets and paths should be well lit at night and highly visible during the day. Pedestrian routes should be wide and should not be overshadowed by vegetation or contain recessed areas.

371 **Perception of safety - a reassuring symbol.**

Narrow, unlit and uninviting path between dwellings

Path not overlooked and bordered by high fences and barbed wire

372 **Potentially unsafe routes**



373 **A well overlooked, wide pathway**

3.7 How to Create a Safe Residential Environment

Design streets to be easy to use, direct and with obvious destinations

The design of the street network should encourage use by everyone, including the elderly and disabled. Increased use of streets and paths helps maintain natural surveillance.

Signposting should to clear and visible to all users as people can feel more vulnerable when they are lost or confused.

The street network and structure is discussed in detail in section 3.2.

Avoid the use of culs-de-sac

Culs-de-sac are generally poorly used by pedestrians because they are not through routes. Pedestrian activity is essential to natural surveillance.

Where a cul-de-sac layout is unavoidable, it should be designed as small space such as a mews or courtyard. Such layouts are easier to police and have greater community cohesion.

Integrate routes

Wherever possible, streets and paths should be integrated so that people can take the most direct route.

Whilst it is important to ensure that an area is easily accessible and permeable, it must not become a maze of routes and paths, which can confuse people and allow criminals to escape.

374 **Signposts should be clear and visible**

375 **This path appears to be a through pedestrian route, unfortunately railings prevent access to the street beyond. It offers little purpose other than somewhere potentially for criminals to hide.**

376 **Poorly sited and narrow path, made more uninviting by lack of maintenance of hedgerows.**

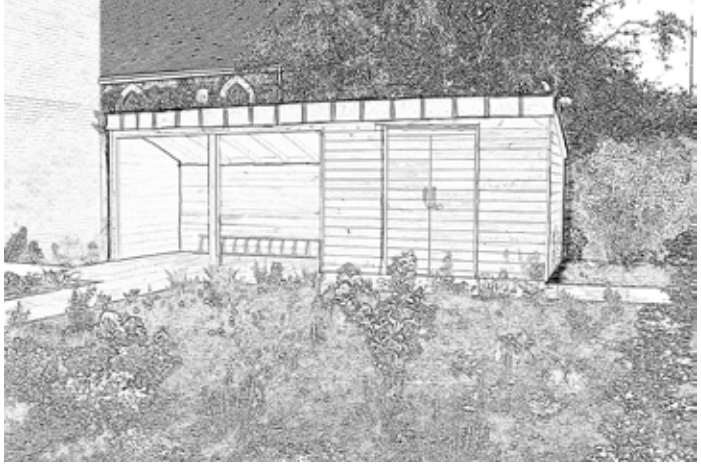
3.7 How to Create a Safe Residential Environment

Vehicles and Storage

Provide secure areas for vehicle and cycle parking

Where it is not possible to include on-plot parking or storage, these facilities should be provided in the form of rear, well-contained and overlooked courtyards, which can be gated where necessary. Private rear pedestrian access from the dwellings should also be provided.

On-street parking provision tends to be well overlooked and can be acceptable, provided it is included in the layout design from the outset.



377 **Cycle and bin storage designed into a communal garden area**

378 **Defensible front garden**

379 **Small, gated front gardens provide defensible space**

Safer Homes

Defensible Space

> "Ownership: places that promote a sense of ownership, respect, territorial responsibility and community"

Clearly define spaces as either public or private

In many historic settlements, it is common for dwellings to abut the street. However this has become a problem in more modern developments, which has led to new housing being set back from the street.

Crime and anti-social behaviour is more likely to occur if people are unclear whether a space (e.g. a front garden) is public or private. Clearly defining spaces as either public or private creates "defensible space" and provides people with information on where they can and cannot enter. This helps to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

3.7 How to Create a Safe Residential Environment

Public access to the rear of buildings or gardens should be limited to prevent opportunities for uninvited entry.

Landscape and Boundaries

Define curtilages

Private space can be defined using a variety of boundary treatments. In front gardens, this can comprise low hedges, walls or railings to enclose the space. Wherever possible, boundary treatments should be low to maintain visibility and the natural surveillance of the area.

Secure rear gardens

The boundaries of rear gardens and communal spaces can be defined by a variety of planting, walling, railings and fencing.

One alternative is to integrate fencing with planting. Some species of planting can act as a natural deterrent because of their thorny texture.

In some areas security fencing may be required adjacent to residential areas. Such fencing should not be overbearing (e.g. palisade fence).

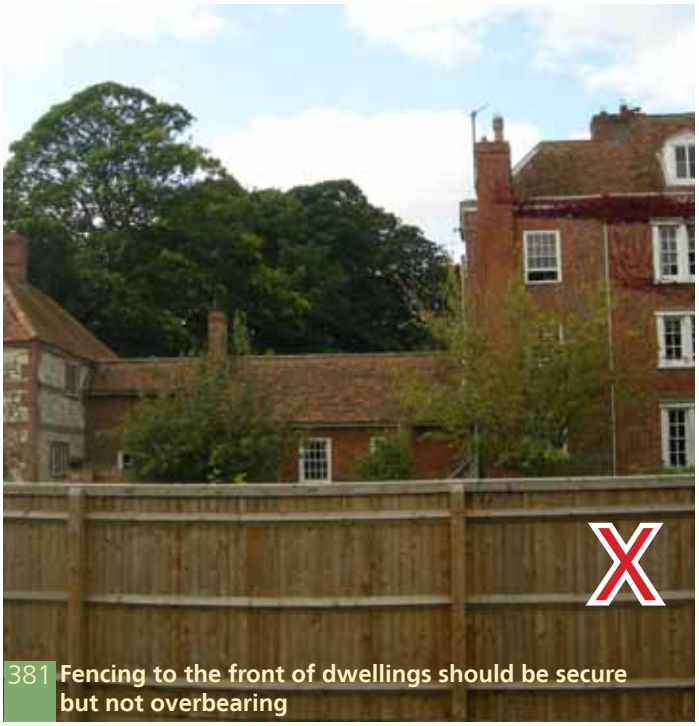
Boundary fencing, walling or railings can be made into a functional but successful piece of artwork.

Building Layout

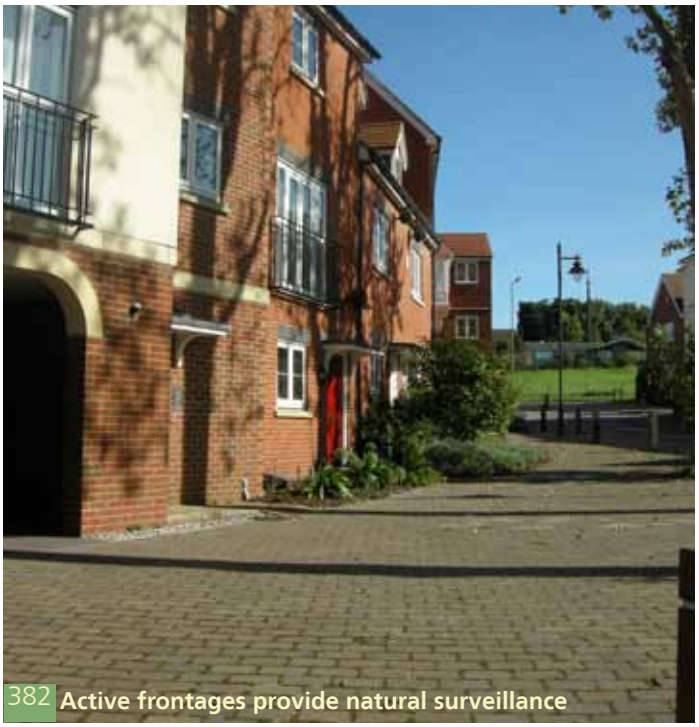
Provide active frontages

Buildings should face and be accessed directly from the street to provide active frontages. Windows should provide good visibility over the street. Wherever possible, buildings should have only their main frontage exposed to the street, with the other elevations securely enclosed.

380 Clipped hedges and estate railings are appropriate in rural locations



381 Fencing to the front of dwellings should be secure but not overbearing



382 Active frontages provide natural surveillance

3.7 How to Create a Safe Residential Environment

Lighting

Well designed lighting can help improve the security of an area.

Maximise natural daylight

Good daylighting, particularly in stairwells and entrance foyers can ensure good visibility and reduce the fear of crime.

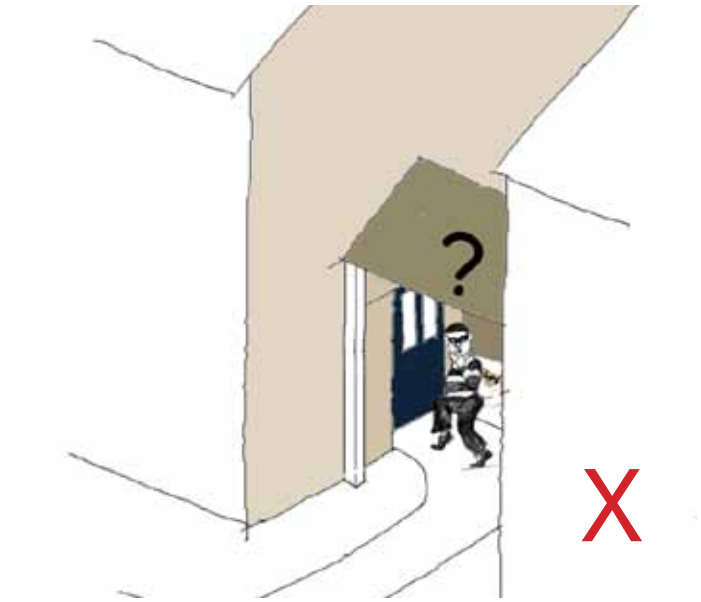
Design lighting that is appropriate to the development

Poorly designed lighting with unnecessary light 'spillage' can cause amenity problems for neighbouring properties. In addition, poorly positioned lighting can cast shadows and create potential hiding spaces, thereby increasing the fear of crime.

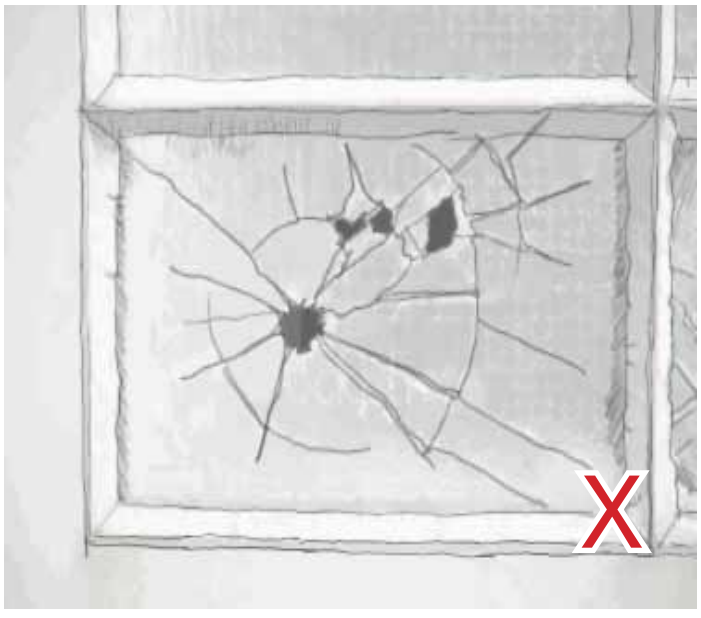
The design of lighting should be carefully considered as part of the comprehensive design of the overall development. Vandal resistant fittings should be used if necessary.

In private areas, lighting activated by movement helps deter crime as it can create a feeling of being discovered. It is also less costly than lighting being left on permanently. The design of such lighting needs to consider the potential disturbance to neighbouring properties when the sensor turns the lights on.

383 **Entrances should not be recessed or poorly lit**



384 **Covered side entrances, set well back from the street do not allow for easy visibility and can therefore make opportunistic crime easier**



385 **Buildings should be well maintained, as poor quality environments encourage crime and vandalism**

3.8 How to Protect Neighbouring Properties

Developments should aim to create vibrant, sustainable and cohesive communities. An essential part of this is to ensure new developments do not have a harmful impact on neighbouring properties, particularly through loss of privacy or overshadowing.

Higher density developments are more likely to cause neighbour impact problems. However, through careful design, such problems can be avoided. This section, therefore, looks at how residential amenity can be protected through good design.

It is important to discuss proposals for development with neighbouring residents as early as possible in the development process. This will enable any concerns relating to residential amenity to be taken into account at the design stage. Further information on community engagement is set out in section 5.2.

Overlooking & Privacy

The relationship of buildings to each other, their height and the positioning of windows can all have an impact on the privacy enjoyed by neighbouring properties. It is important, therefore, that the following key principles are taken into account when designing new developments.

Provide appropriate height to width ratio

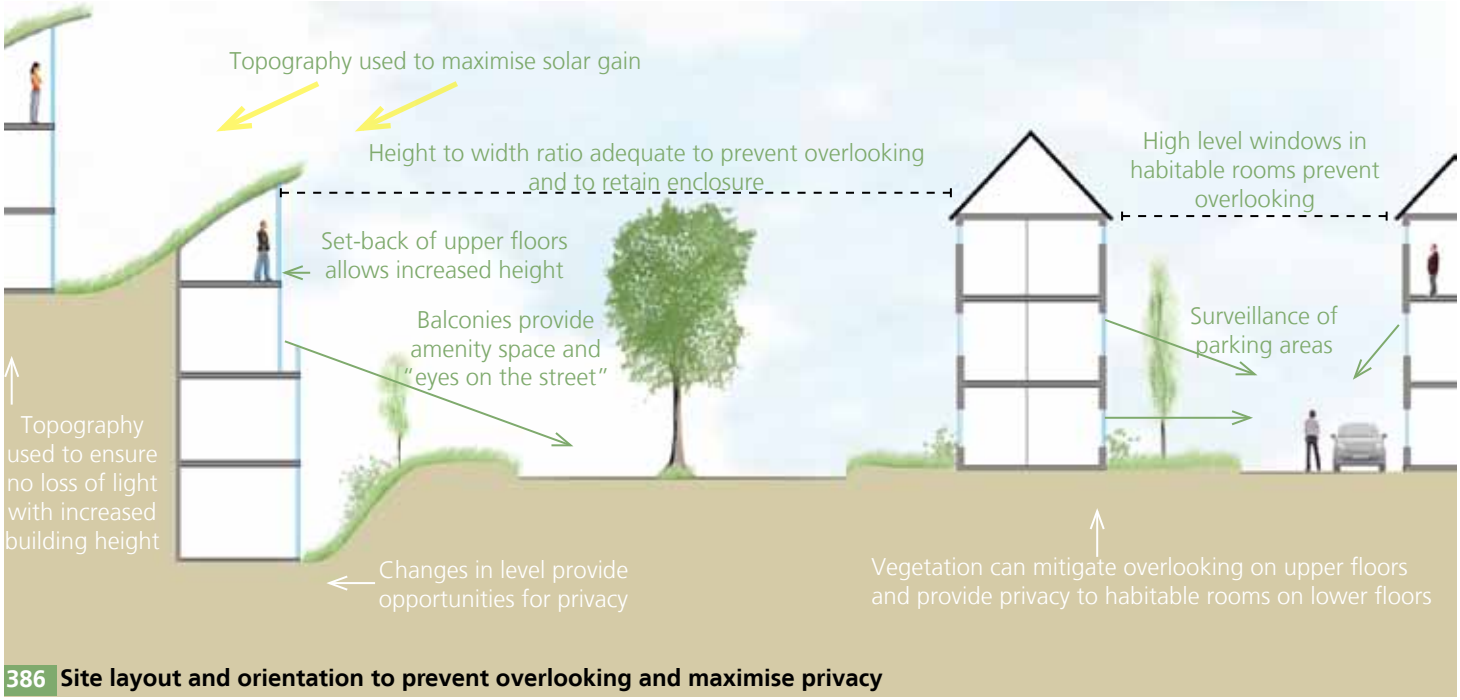
The height of properties and the distance between facing habitable rooms can have a direct impact on the privacy levels enjoyed by both neighbouring residents and residents of the new development. Development proposals should demonstrate how the privacy of neighbouring properties has been respected and how a reasonable level of privacy will be achieved for new residents.

In higher density developments, it may be possible to include higher buildings without adversely affecting privacy by using the following techniques:

- Set back upper floors
- Recessed balconies
- Internal courtyards

Make the most of topography and landscaping

Existing landscape features and new planting can help to mitigate the impact of taller buildings. Image 386 illustrates how landscape features can be used to lessen overlooking. This is particularly important at the rear of dwellings, where people normally expect a higher level of privacy.



386 Site layout and orientation to prevent overlooking and maximise privacy

3.8 How to Protect Neighbouring Properties

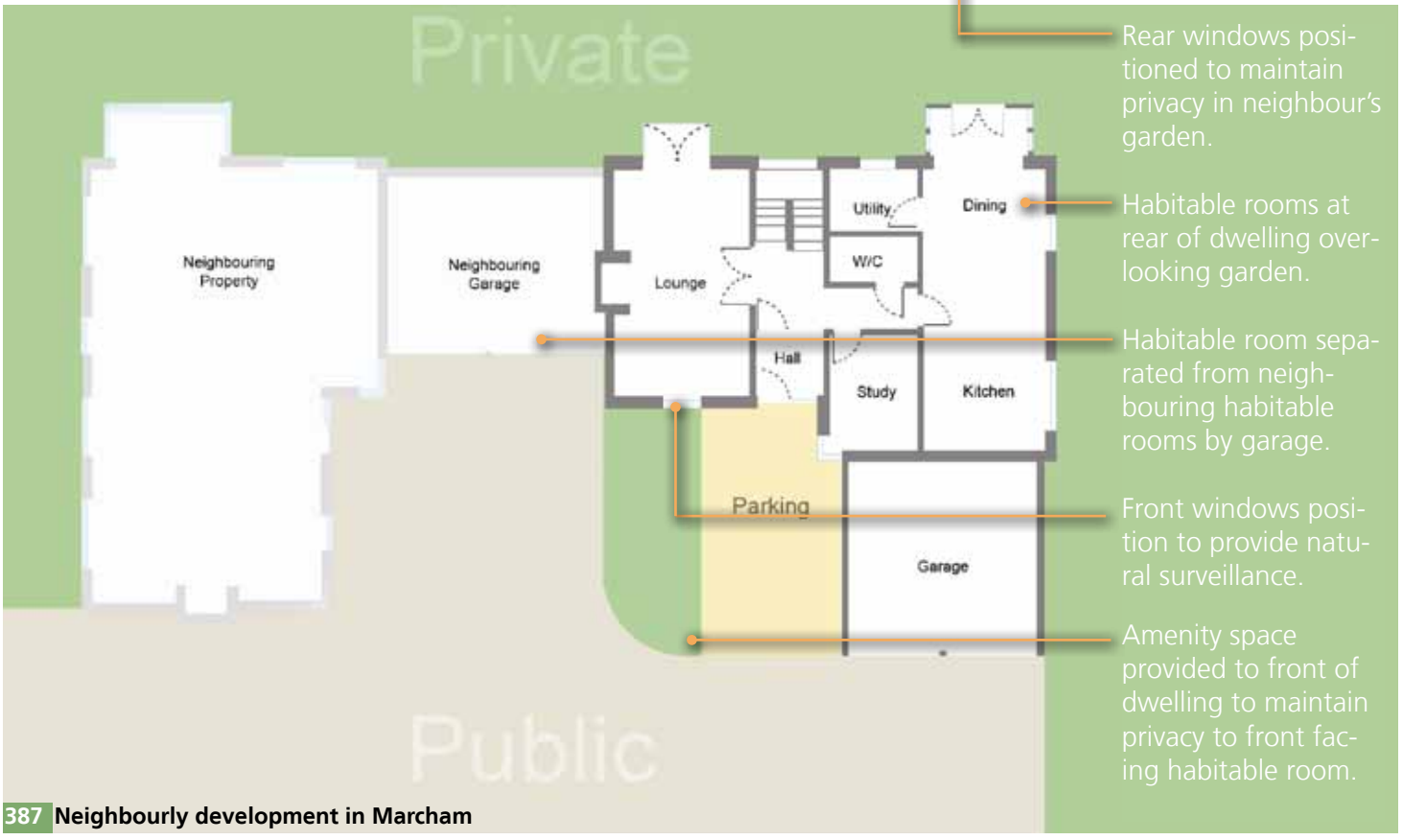
Arrange habitable rooms appropriately

The internal layout of properties should be arranged to ensure that habitable rooms, particularly on the upper floors, are afforded maximum privacy and do not overlook neighbouring properties.

Facing habitable room windows on upper floors should normally be at least 21 metres apart.

Design amenity space for privacy

Private amenity space should be conveniently located for residents and designed to ensure privacy is maintained. Direct overlooking of private amenity space by habitable rooms in neighbouring properties should be avoided. Garden space at the front of properties can be used to increase privacy in front facing rooms. Balconies can contribute to outside amenity space. However, they must be positioned to ensure they do not cause overlooking of neighbouring properties.



387 Neighbourly development in Marcham

3.8 How to Protect Neighbouring Properties

Sunlight, Daylight & Overshadowing

The relationship of buildings to each other, their height and orientation, and the positioning of windows can all have a direct impact on the amount of sunlight and daylight enjoyed by properties and their gardens.

Make the most of orientation

The orientation of properties in relation to the sun and the distance between buildings have a direct impact on the amount of overshadowing.

- Wherever possible habitable rooms should benefit from a south facing aspect.
- Orientation and topography should be used to increase solar gain.

Ensure the relationship of buildings does not cause overshadowing

Buildings close to the boundary of neighbouring properties can increase overshadowing or loss of daylight to neighbouring properties. The 40° rule for two storey buildings and extensions, as illustrated in Image 388, is intended to prevent undue overshadowing. Habitable room windows should normally be at least 12 metres away from the flank wall of the neighbouring property.

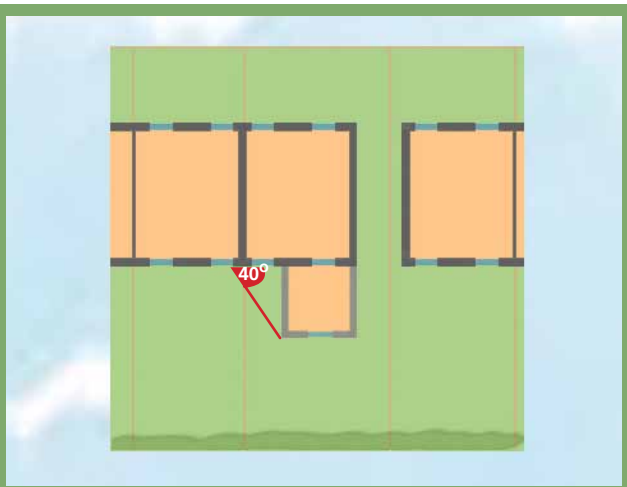
Design landscaping appropriately

Deciduous trees can be included in landscaping schemes to provide shade in the summer months without causing overshadowing in the winter months. Developments should be carefully designed to ensure that existing and new trees will not cause undue overshadowing of windows.

Design amenity space for sun and shade

Private amenity space should be designed to ensure it receives adequate daylight and sunlight and so provide attractive spaces for residents. Landscaping proposals should take into account the need to provide shading in the summer. Balconies should receive direct sunlight for at least part of the day.

388 Illustration of 40° rule



40° Rule:

A two storey rear extension should not go beyond a line taken at 40° from the nearest point of the first floor window of any principal room in an adjoining property.

The potential loss of sunlight to neighbouring properties should be considered, even where developments comply with the above rule, as this can depend on orientation, layout, topography and position of adjoining properties.