

4.4

Conversion of Large Buildings to Flats

parking spaces are accommodated, they should not dominate the building, this can be achieved by either accommodating parking at the rear or by careful design, materials and landscaping. Parking at the rear of a building is likely to reduce the amount of usable amenity space available for residents.

Residential Amenity

Habitable rooms and balconies should be positioned to prevent overlooking of adjoining properties. The provision of adequate acoustic insulation to reduce the transmission of sound between floors and adjoining properties is a matter covered by Building Regulations.

Wherever possible, flats should be provided with adequate amenity space of 15 sq metres per bedroom. Balconies can contribute towards this amenity provision, provided they are of an adequate size to accommodate a table and chairs. Preferably, they should not face north. Roof gardens offer a further solution for amenity space and can be attractive to residents. The inclusion of balconies or roof gardens should ensure that neighbouring properties are not overlooked.

Bin Storage and Recycling

Sufficient covered external space should be provided to house refuse and recycling containers. The structures need to be large enough to accommodate the bins without danger of overflow, and they should be conveniently located for collection without being unduly prominent in the street scene. Bin storage should be designed as an integral part of a scheme and built with compatible materials. Additional information on bin storage and recycling is provided in Section 3.4 above.



4.5 Development in Lower Density Areas



476 Cumnor Hill

4.5

Development in Lower Density Areas

Development in areas that are typically low density can be challenging, particularly in the context of the need to make best use of previously developed land, which includes gardens. This section examines how new development can be designed to make best use of a site and still be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area.

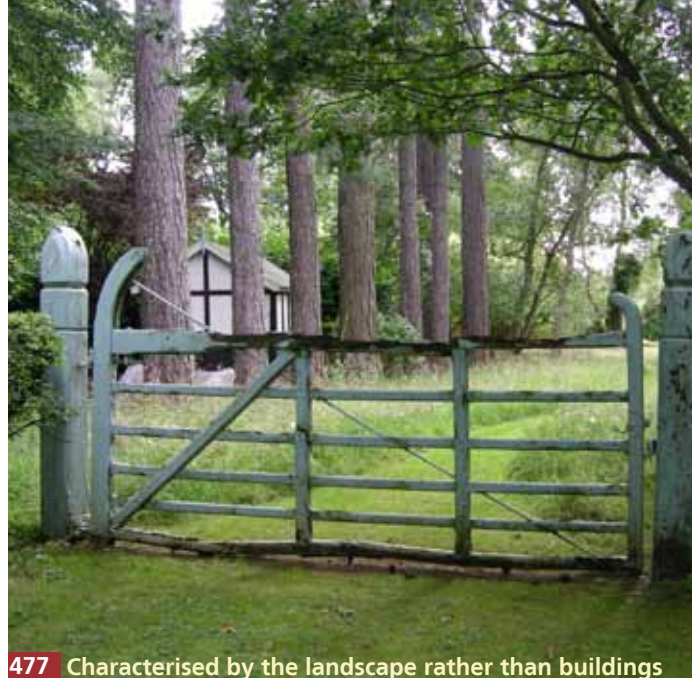
Site Layout and Design

Lower density areas such as Cumnor Hill and Oxford Road in Abingdon are characterised by residential properties set in relatively large, often well landscaped grounds and this characteristic has made such areas attractive for redevelopment proposals. Government advice set out in PPS3 stresses the need for new development to make the best use of previously developed land. However, PPS3 makes it clear that there is no presumption that previously developed land is necessarily suitable for housing development. Development which is permitted must not detract from the character of the area. While PPS3 also says that more intensive development is not always appropriate, when well designed and built in the right location it can enhance the character and quality of an area.

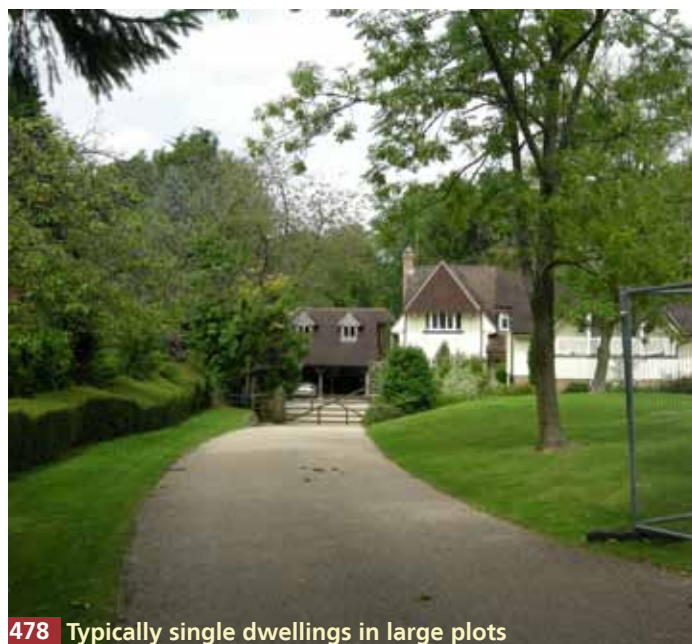
The established form and character of these low density areas should provide the context for the layout and design of any new development. The following matters need to be taken into account when designing developments in lower density areas.

Any new housing development, redevelopment or extension needs to understand the context provided by the architectural scale, modelling and language of the varying range of vernacular styles of these areas.

Any development should have a visual understanding of the residential vernacular tradition and style of the buildings and history of the area.



477 Characterised by the landscape rather than buildings



478 Typically single dwellings in large plots



479 Large plot sizes can create pressure for redevelopment

4.5 Development in Lower Density Areas

Extensions should be subservient to the existing building but in a manner that allows them to tie in with the style, form and design of the existing building.

Over intensive housing developments should be avoided. One way of increasing density without significantly increasing the number or size of buildings on a site is to incorporate a number of flats into a building which has the appearance of a large dwelling with one dominant front door.

Extensions, new developments or buildings should be set back from street/road frontages to respect the adjacent building lines and general character of the immediate area.

Side boundary separations of at least 2 to 5 metres (depending on the location) should be retained at all levels. Visual gaps that reflect the general character of the immediate area should be retained between buildings on adjacent plots.

All new buildings and extensions fronting a main road should face the street and have an active street frontage.

Buildings fronting main roads should be of an appropriate height and scale, with the potential for additional living space in the roof void. The scale and height of new developments should be in keeping with the general character of the area.

Exterior walls should generally be finished in materials that reflect the general character of the immediate area.

In traditional designs, roofs should normally be pitched, either gabled or hipped and consideration should be given to incorporation of front gables and gablets. Roofs should be tiled with materials that reflect the general character of the immediate area, normally plain clay tiles or slates. Alternatively, in appropriate circumstances the opportunity can be taken to use innovative roofing materials such as copper, zinc or lead in high quality stand-alone buildings.



480 A single building can be successful in lower density areas



481 The bulk of a large building can be reduced by simple forms and separate elements

4.5

Development in Lower Density Areas

Small gable or hipped roof front, rear and side facing dormer windows and eaves windows could be an acceptable way of providing additional living space without increasing the scale of buildings.

In traditional designs, windows should be wooden casement or sash style windows. Inclusion of bay or bow windows or other appropriate windows at ground and first floor levels could help reflect the general character of the immediate area.

Main entrance doors should be located on the front porches or under verandas. Front doors should be made into a feature through the use of surrounding detail and decoration.

Existing chimney stacks on larger properties should be retained.

Features such as Victorian lamp standards, street furniture, stone walls, fences, railings and pedestrian gates should be retained where possible.

Where possible new telecommunications and power lines should be located underground within development sites.

The front boundary of the site should be defined by either walls, timber fencing, railings and/or hedges to reflect the general character of the immediate area.

Front gardens should be provided with lawns, tree planting, hedges and only small areas of hard surfacing either aggregate or paving. Where hard-surfacing for car parking in front gardens is necessary, it should be screened from view of the street by trees and hedge planting.

Retention of all trees and hedgerows, especially along property boundaries is vital. If trees and hedges do need to be removed, they should be replaced within the site.

Sufficient parking should be provided on site in accordance with current standards. A limited quantity of parking could be provided to the



482 Care should be taken not to overdevelop the plot and ensure parking does not dominate

front of buildings and should be landscaped and designed in such a manner that it does not dominate the front garden or impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties in accordance with current standards. Permeable surfacing should be used to limit any off-site surface water impact.

Any garaging required by developments should either be incorporated into the buildings at the ground floor level or provided in detached buildings. Where there is a noticeable slope in the ground, it may be possible to cut a garage building into the slope with landscaping sweeping over the roof.

New entranceways and driveways shall be designed and constructed in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's standards.

Access ways and driveways to developments shall be designed and landscaped to be informal and have a minimal impact. Driveways should be soft (not overly engineered with kerbs and hardsurfacing), well landscaped and boundary hedgerows and plantings should be retained and/or provided. Vision splays should be provided for vehicles and pedestrians in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's requirements.

Sufficient refuse and recycling storage should be provided. Discrete out of sight secure storage with easy access to the road frontage will be required. The Council will provide advice on the required size of external refuse and recycling storage areas.

4.5 Development in Lower Density Areas

Case Study Poet's Corner, Cumnor Hill



Mix & Density

Poet's Corner provides a high density development (46 dph) in a relatively low density area. The site, however, does not appear over-developed because of the design approach adopted. The building is similar in size to a large suburban house, which is appropriate to the context. In addition, the overall bulk of the building has been reduced by breaking up the elevations with set-backs and balconies.



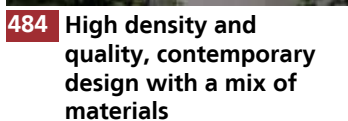
Design

Poet's Corner provides a contemporary design approach with three linked blocks arranged around a central stairwell. The window orientation offers natural surveillance of parking areas and circulation routes. The set back of the upper floor ensures that maximum height can be achieved with minimum overlooking.



Materials & Landscaping

The palette of materials provides variety and interest to the elevations, and includes a mix of zinc, render, glass and timber cladding. The mix of materials also helps reduce the perceived bulk of the building.



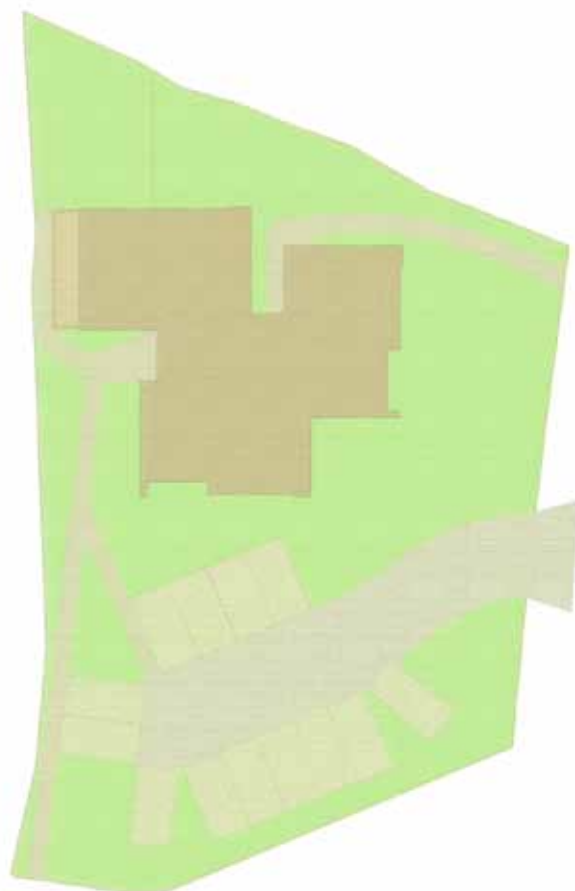
484 High density and quality, contemporary design with a mix of materials

Sustainable Development

A positive aspect of the development is the inclusion of sustainable design features. In the parking area, a mix of permeable block paving and "Ecoblock" paving has been used. The development also incorporates rainwater harvesting and photovoltaic cells on the flat area of the roof.



485 Grass block paving system allow green parking area



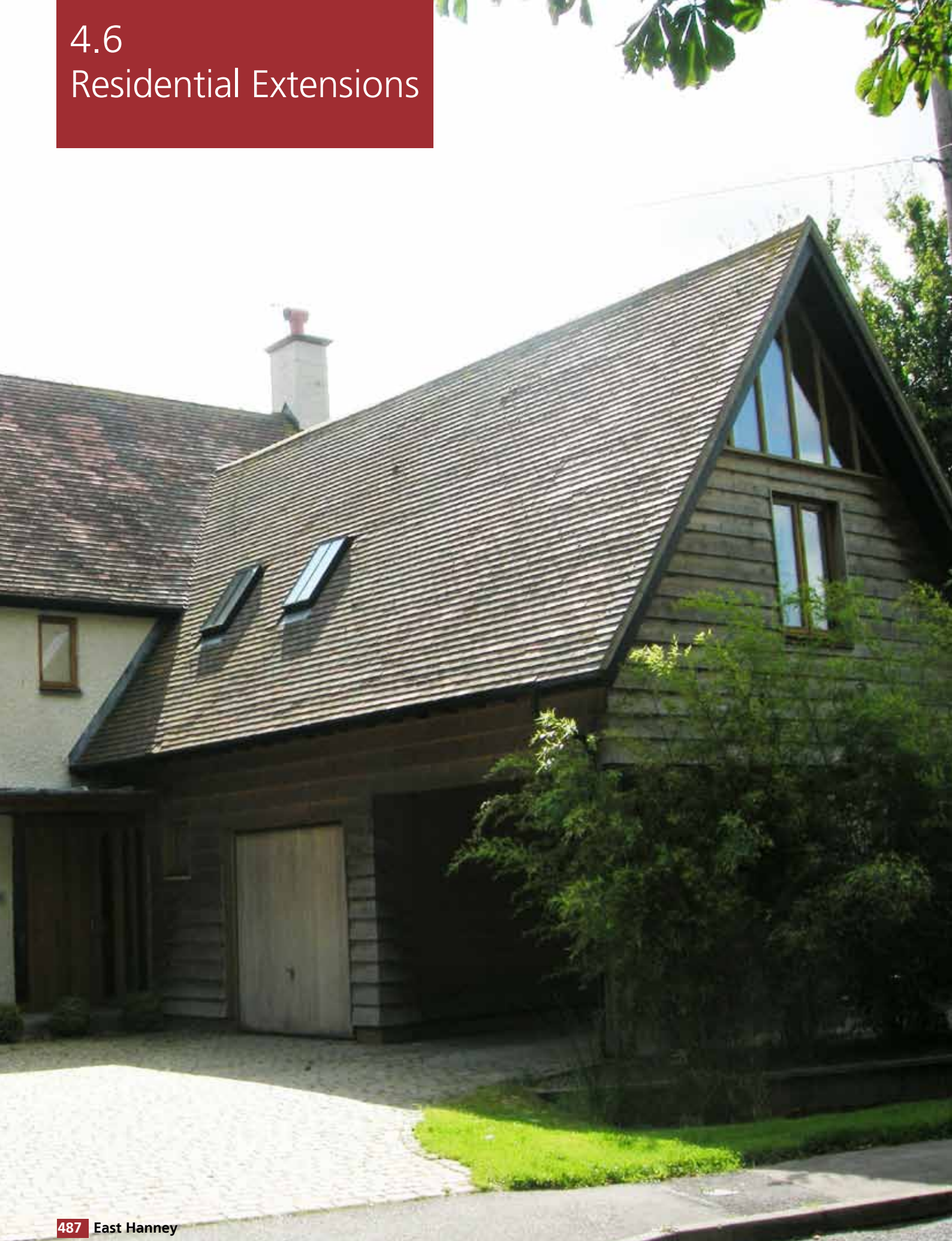
483 Poet's Corner site layout

The retention of much of the site's original landscaping provides an attractive setting for the building and helps to frame key views into the site. The landscaping is relatively mature and so offers an effective screen between the site and adjoining roads. The site's original landscaping has been supplemented with additional planting, including evergreen species such as laurel to provide screening in winter.



486 Contemporary rainwater harvesting system

4.6 Residential Extensions



487 East Hanney

4.6 Residential Extensions

Extensions to dwellings can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of a dwelling itself and the street or area in which it is set. A well-designed extension can enhance the appearance and value of a property, whereas an unsympathetic extension can have a harmful impact, create problems for neighbouring residents, and affect the overall character of the area.

Contemporary approaches which provide high quality sustainable solutions, such as green roofs, can be successful in design terms.

This section examines the design approaches that should be adopted when extending a dwelling. It sets out the differing approaches that should be adopted when designing front and rear extensions, single storey and two storey additions, porches, garages and outbuildings.

Planning

Some smaller-scale extensions can constitute “permitted development” which means they do not need planning permission. The council’s Planning Service can advise on whether planning permission is required or alternatively, the Planning Portal website provides an interactive section.

Building Regulations approval may also be required for any extensions or alterations to a dwelling. Advice on Building Regulations can be provided by the council’s Building Control Service.

Design

Extensions should be in keeping with the shape, scale, proportions and character of the existing dwelling. They should be designed to be subordinate to the original dwelling, with a lower ridge line. Two storey flat roofed extensions will not usually be acceptable on a pitched roof dwelling.

In the majority of cases, it is advisable to use



488 Simple, successful extension design



489 Small successful side extension



490 Successful contemporary extension

4.6 Residential Extensions

materials that match those of the existing dwelling. Roof tiles, facing bricks, stone, mortar colour, lintels, sills and other materials should usually be the same size, colour and texture as the existing.

Buildings often have distinctive architectural features that contribute to their character, including ornate brickwork, plasterwork and arches. When extending a house, it is important to ensure the details of the extension complement those of the existing dwelling. Architectural features that are not in keeping with the design of the original dwelling and the area could look out of place and so should be avoided.

The position, size, proportion, height and style of new windows and doors and the ratio of solid wall to openings all help to define the character of a dwelling. It is important, therefore, that the extension continues the existing pattern and type of window and door openings.

Differing materials on an extension or a different design approach may result in a development appearing incongruous. Whilst, exceptionally, an extension may intentionally be designed to be contrasting, such an approach will need to be carefully justified and its success will rely on a high quality design

Landscaping

Mature trees and hedges can make an important contribution to the character of an area and, wherever possible, they should be retained.

When constructing an extension, all building work, including laying driveways and underground services, should be carefully planned and undertaken to ensure that existing trees and hedges are not harmed.



491 Successful materials matching



492 Successful details matching



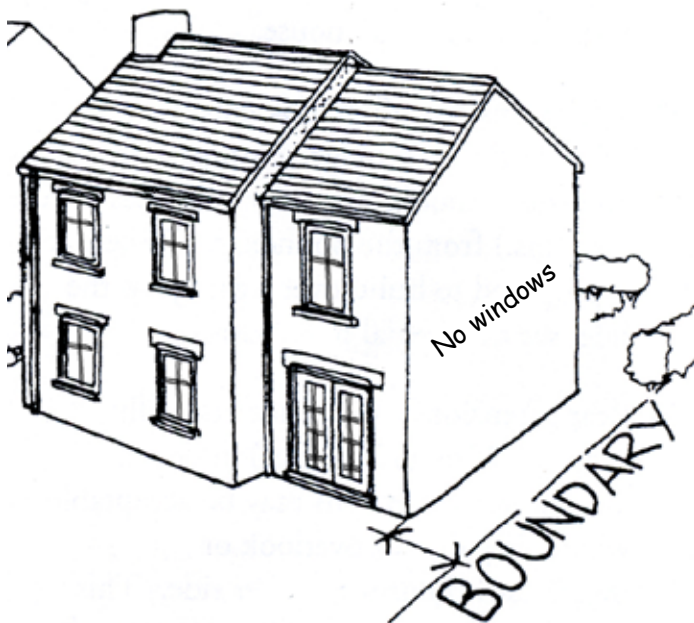
493 Successful fenestration matching

4.6 Residential Extensions

Privacy and Amenity

The design of all extensions should take into account the impact on neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking, overshadowing and overdominance. Section 3.8 provides information on how to prevent harm to neighbouring properties.

In particular, two storey extensions should not encroach beyond a 40 degree line taken from the edge of the nearest first-floor window of a habitable room of a neighbouring property. Any side facing upper floor windows to habitable rooms (e.g. bedrooms) need to be carefully located and/or designed to ensure they do not cause overlooking problems for neighbouring properties.



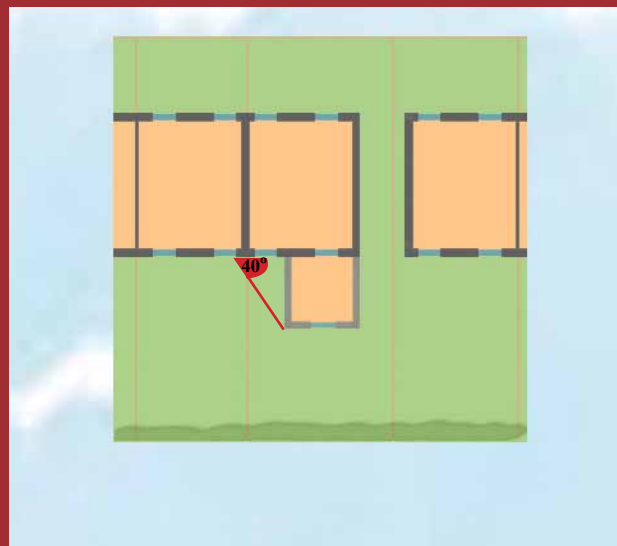
494 Successful extension to maintain privacy



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.



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