

# Ipswich Local Plan

## Space and Design Guidelines – Supplementary Planning Document

**November 2015**



**IPSWICH**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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## 1.0 Introduction

### What is an SPD?

- 1.1 A Supplementary Planning Document or SPD is a document that provides greater detail on the planning policies that have been adopted in the Ipswich Local Plan. This SPD seeks to support the objectives of the Local Plan, principally Objective No.1 which seeks High Standards of design in new development. New development must be sustainable, environmentally friendly, enhance conditions for biodiversity, and be resilient to the effects of climate change.
- 1.3 Upon adoption this SPD will become a material consideration and must be considered in the determining of planning applications.

### What is the purpose of this SPD?

- 1.4 The primary purpose of the SPD is to provide detailed guidance for anyone intending to develop their property by extending their house, or to develop land within the boundaries of their own dwellinghouse, or develop small infill or backland sites. Major development on allocated sites will usually be covered by their own SPD in the case of the Ipswich Garden Suburb or development briefs specific to other sites. The SPD covers the spacing of new houses within residential developments, provides guidance on external amenity space and parking, and how new dwellings relate to the existing urban fabric of the town, and natural landscape assets. In addition the SPD will provide guidance on what the Council considers most appropriate for extensions and alterations to existing residential dwellings.
- 1.5 This SPD also requires those making planning applications to assess each site, to consider how trees and landscape planting can be integrated successfully into developments from the very outset, along with the need to ensure biodiversity is enhanced.

### When is the guidance required?

- 1.6 Planning permission is not always required for minor residential extensions, as many households benefit from Permitted Development Rights. This means that some minor works can be carried out without requiring permission. However, there are occasions where the Council will remove these Permitted Development Rights, for example on some new-build properties.

- 1.7 For a full legal determination as to whether planning permission is needed for your extension you can apply for a Certificate of Lawful Development under section 192 of the Town and Country Planning Act. These certificates can be extremely useful if you ever decide to sell your property, in proving that your extension did not require planning permission at the time of its erection.
- 1.8 The Council's consent is also required, for example, for work on any part of a tree (including roots below ground) protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or trees within a Conservation Area, that might be necessary to implement some of these permitted development rights. In these cases applications for works to trees (either TPOs or within a conservation area) would be required for some minor works.
- 1.9 For further information as to when planning permission may, or may not be required please visit the Planning Portal website at [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk) and look at their '*interactive guides*'<sup>1</sup>. Alternatively phone Ipswich Borough Council and ask to speak with Development Management<sup>2</sup>.

#### How is a planning application decided?

- 1.10 Once a planning application has been validated, the local planning authority will aim to make a decision on the proposal as quickly as possible, within the statutory time limit unless a longer period is agreed in writing with the applicant. Generally householder applications and minor developments up to 10 dwellings in size are determined within 8 weeks. Larger development proposals known as 'major applications' have 13 weeks to be determined.
- 1.11 Decisions are either made by Council Officers under their 'delegated powers', or by a committee of elected Councillors at a Planning and Development meeting every month. At these meetings the merits of an application are debated, and members of the public are allowed to speak in favour of, or against the application.
- 1.12 Applicants who have their planning applications refused can appeal against the decision of the local authority, by appealing to the Secretary of State. The decision will then be independently looked at by the Planning Inspectorate within a fixed time scale. For more information on appeals look at the Planning Portal website – [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/house> - Provides interactive guidance for householders when considering extensions and alterations to homes. NB Some dwellings do not benefit from 'Permitted Development Rights' and it is prudent to contact the Council to seek advice before you start work.

<sup>2</sup> Ipswich Borough Council – Development Management Team – 01473 4 32906/14 or by email to [development.management@ipswich.gov.uk](mailto:development.management@ipswich.gov.uk)

## 2.0 Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 Planning policy is found both nationally in the form of the '*National Planning Policy Framework*' (2012)<sup>3</sup> or *NPPF*, and adopted locally in the form of the '*Ipswich Borough Council Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document*' (2011)<sup>4</sup> known as the '*Core Strategy*'. The policies contained within these two documents are given due consideration and weight when determining planning applications for development proposals.
- 2.2 This SPD along with others in a suite of SPD documents, seeks to add detail to the policies found in the Core Strategy, with the aim being to help developers and householders to receive planning permission promptly and without undue fuss. Other relevant SPD documents which will be relevant to certain planning applications are:- *Urban Character Study SPD*<sup>5</sup>; *Local List (Buildings of Townscape Interest) SPD 2013*<sup>6</sup>; *Development and Flood Risk SPD 2013*<sup>7</sup>, *Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans*<sup>8</sup>, and when adopted the *Open Space SPD 2015*.

Where development is of a major scale application reference should also be made to the *Council's Open Space & Biodiversity Policy, Equipped Play Strategy 2014, Allotments Strategy 2014* and *Tree Management Policy 2010*.

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<sup>3</sup> National Planning Policy Guidance -

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Ipswich Core strategy & Policies Development Plan Policies 2011 - <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/core-strategy-and-policies-adoption>

<sup>5</sup> Urban Character Study - <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/current-and-proposed-supplementary-planning-documents>

<sup>6</sup> To view the Local list which lists those buildings within the borough which are not on the national statutory list of listed buildings - <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/local-list-spd>

<sup>7</sup> Development and Flood risk SPD - <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/development-and-flood-risk-spd>

<sup>8</sup> To view detailed assessments of the Council's 14 Conservation Areas. Also available in an A-Z list of those roads falling within conservation areas - <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/about-our-conservation-areas> or a list of those streets within the Conservation Areas -

[https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/Alphabetical\\_list\\_of\\_all\\_Ipswich\\_streets\\_in\\_Conservation\\_Areas.pdf](https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/Alphabetical_list_of_all_Ipswich_streets_in_Conservation_Areas.pdf)

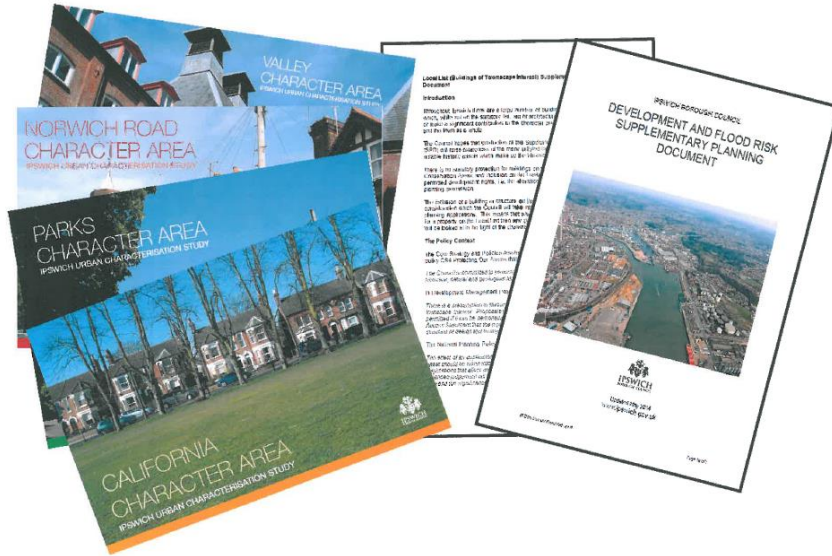


Fig. 1 – Some of the Ipswich Borough Council adopted Supplementary Planning Documents.

## National Planning Policy Framework<sup>9</sup>

- 2.3 The NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. One of the roles of the planning system in the social dimension is to create a high quality built environment that supports the health, social and cultural wellbeing of its inhabitants. In the environmental dimension, the planning system needs to help improve biodiversity and mitigate and adapt to climate change. Green infrastructure, including tree canopy cover, is a key element of any sustainable development<sup>10</sup>.
- 2.4 The NPPF states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people (paragraph 56). When considering new development Local Planning Authorities should consider when making policies and taking decisions whether developments -
- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term, but over the lifetime of the development;
  - Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes, landscaping and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> - National Planning Policy Framework.

<sup>10</sup> A large body of research and policy supports the social, environmental and economic roles of trees, for example references to the economic benefits of trees are incorporated in the National Ecosystem Assessment and the Natural Environment White Paper. - <http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/> or <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-environment-white-paper-implementation-updates>

- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;
- Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. (paragraph 58)

2.5 When looking at new design policies, the NPPF requires that Councils avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally (paragraph 59).

2.6 It goes on to state that there should be flexibility in design and that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment (paragraphs 60 / 61).

### Core Strategy Policies

2.7 The policies of the Core Strategy<sup>11</sup> seek to reinforce the principles of good design when looking at all development, whilst ensuring that development is appropriate in scale for its location, without detracting from the residential amenity of those nearby neighbours, whilst ensuring that the character and

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<sup>11</sup> Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document - [https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/Core\\_Strategy\\_Dec\\_11.pdf](https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/Core_Strategy_Dec_11.pdf) -

setting of the local area is protected and enhanced. The relevant policy details are as follows:-

### Policy DM3: Provision of Private Outdoor Amenity Space in New and Existing Developments

To ensure that new residential developments deliver a suitably high quality and environmentally sustainable living environment all such developments will be required to incorporate well designed and located private outdoor amenity space of an appropriate type and amount. Provision will be in accordance with the following standards unless this would unavoidably conflict with the need to meet other density and urban design requirements of the plan or an applicant is able to demonstrate that a lower figure would be acceptable having regard to the particular circumstances of the proposals. In all cases applicants will be expected to demonstrate that adequate provision of private outdoor amenity space will be provided for the likely occupancy of the proposed dwellings.

For all houses, bungalows, or ground floor maisonettes with 3 or more bedrooms a minimum rear garden area of 75 sq. m.

For all houses, bungalows, or ground floor maisonettes with 1 or 2 bedrooms a minimum rear garden area of 50 sq. m.

For all apartments or upper floor maisonettes an average of 25 sq. m of private outdoor amenity space.

### Policy DM5: Urban Design Quality

The Council will require all new development to be well designed and sustainable. In Ipswich this will mean:

- a. layouts and designs that provide a safe, attractive, permeable, legible and useable public realm for all users, which is pedestrian and cycle orientated;
- b. areas which function well and where possible integrate residential, working and community environments and fit well with adjoining areas;
- c. the promotion of safe and secure communities;
- d. greener streets and spaces to contribute to local biodiversity, visual amenity, and health and well-being, and offset the impacts of climate change;
- e. protecting and enhancing the special character and distinctiveness of Ipswich and helping to reinforce the attractive physical characteristics of local neighbourhoods;



- f. buildings that exhibit very good architectural quality, are highly sustainable and are designed for long life by being capable of adaptation to accommodate changing needs and uses over time;
- g. ensuring that new development incorporates cycle and waste storage, public transport infrastructure and car parking if appropriate, all designed and integrated in a way that supports the street scene and safeguards amenity; and
- h. new buildings in or around Air Quality Management Areas will be designed so that their size and layout will minimise, and at the very least not increase, localised retention of polluting emissions, and will include ventilation systems that protect the health of users of the buildings.

Design that is considered not to adequately meet all these criteria will be refused.

#### Policy DM10: Protection of Trees and Hedgerows

The Council will protect and retain trees in the interests of amenity by:

- a. making Tree Preservation Orders; and
- b. only granting consent for felling, topping, lopping or uprooting if a sound arboricultural reason is provided.

Applications for development should retain existing trees and hedgerows of amenity or biodiversity value where possible. Where development affecting trees is proposed, the application must be accompanied by:

- c. an accurate survey and assessment of all existing trees on site in accordance with BS5837 “Guide for Trees in Relation to Construction” 1991;
- d. details of protective measures to be put in place during the development process to ensure the health and safety of each specimen to be retained; and
- e. where removal is proposed, a plan for replacement planting on a two for one basis and using semi-mature specimens, unless otherwise agreed by the Council.

#### Policy DM12: Extensions to Dwellinghouses and the Provision of Ancillary Buildings

An extension to, or development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse will be permitted provided that it:

- a. would not result in more than approximately 50% of the useable private garden area of the original dwellinghouse being occupied by buildings;

- b. does not lead to the creation of a terracing effect where there are not already terraces;
- c. does not detract from the amenity of neighbouring residents, particularly in terms of privacy, light or overbearing impact; and
- d. in the case of extensions or large buildings, it is designed to be in keeping with the original dwellinghouse.

Policy DM13: Small Scale Infill and Backland Residential Developments

Proposals for small scale residential development involving infill, backland or severance plots will not be permitted unless the development:

- a. is sited in a location where it would not be disturbed by other land uses;
- b. establishes a safe and secure environment;
- c. protects the setting of existing buildings and the character and appearance of the area;
- d. protects the amenity of neighbouring residents, particularly in terms of loss of privacy or light, or overbearing impact;
- e. has safe and convenient access; and
- f. has secure and lit bicycle storage and facilities for the storage of refuse, recycling and garden waste containers.

Policy DM30: The Density of Residential Development

The density of new housing development in Ipswich will be as follows:

- a. within the town centre, Ipswich Village and Waterfront, development will be expected to achieve a high density of at least 90 dwellings per hectare (dph) (the average will be taken as 110 dph);
- b. within the remainder of IP-One, District Centres and an 800m area around District Centres, development will be expected to achieve a medium density of at least 40 dph (the average will be taken as 45 dph); and
- c. elsewhere in Ipswich, low-density development will be required (the average will be taken as 35 dph).

Exceptions to this approach will only be considered where:

- d. the site location, characteristics, constraints or sustainable design justify a different approach; or
- e. a different approach is demonstrated to better meet all housing needs in the area.

## Policy DM31: Conserving Local Natural and Geological Interest

The Council will seek to conserve the nature conservation and geodiversity interest of County Wildlife Sites, Local Wildlife Sites and RIGS identified on the Proposals Map, and Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitats, by controlling the type and intensity of development. The Council will not grant planning permission for development which would be likely to cause net loss after mitigation and compensation of the relevant biodiversity or geodiversity interest, or protected BAP species, in terms of population size or loss of extent of BAP habitat or feature for which the site was designated.

***[NB: The above policies are to be updated upon adoption of draft Core Strategy and Policies DPD Review – 2015/16, and having regard to any relevant ministerial statements between this consultation version of the SPD and its adoption]*** At the time of producing this SPD, the Core Strategy and Policies DPD is subject to a review alongside the production of the Site Allocations and Policies (Incorporating IP-One Area Action Plan) DPD. The guidance contained within this SPD will remain relevant upon adoption of these DPDs.

### **3.0 General Development Principles**

- 3.1 Well designed buildings, extensions and alterations can improve the quality and character of the property and surrounding area as a whole. The Council places importance on good design when considering planning applications. However, even when planning permission is not required, the guidance in this SPD is useful in setting out the important factors to consider in the design of your alteration or extension.

### **4.0 New Dwellings Space Guidelines**

#### **Site Appraisal**

- 4.1 Most residential sites are different and due consideration should be given to the site layout and characteristics, the location of the proposed development and the needs of users. Consideration should be given as to the orientation of the proposed building/s or extensions and the relative location of walls and windows in relation to neighbouring sites, adjacent buildings, existing trees and biodiversity.

- 4.2 When considering the location of extensions and whether new dwellings will fit into plots it is important to understand how the site will be serviced, what impact the orientation will have, for example in terms of solar gain or shade from retained trees, or how surface water run-off will be dealt with.
- 4.3 The Council recognises that there is a need for new dwellings to be built to serve the needs of the town, and that because of the relatively tight Borough boundary around Ipswich not all of these new houses can be strategically planned for. Many of these new dwellings will involve unidentified infill, backland or severance sites, and these are known as '*windfall*' sites. These developments need to be carefully managed in order to protect the character and amenity of the surrounding neighbourhood and the quality of life of its inhabitants. It is also important to ensure that new residential properties are appropriately located in terms of adjacent land uses, which may impact the long term amenity of future occupiers through noise or other disturbances.
- 4.4 Windfall sites are potentially of great importance to biodiversity and perform corridor functions in the ecological network of the town, so any development in such areas should enhance biodiversity or at least result in no net loss of biodiversity or network function.
- 4.5 In the case of small developments or infilling, the standards adopted should be consistent with the character of the area in which they are to be sited. Where more than one dwelling is proposed the Council will seek to ensure that each development comprises a suitable mix of dwelling sizes to properly contribute towards meeting housing needs.
- 4.6 Good design is essential to ensure that areas, particularly where higher density development takes place, offer high environmental quality, including open and green spaces. Landscape considerations are an integral part of the design process and can make a positive contribution to environmental protection and improvement, for example to biodiversity, air quality and the protection of water resources.
- 4.7 Trees can occupy a substantial part of a development site and because of their potential size can have a major influence on the planning and use of the site. Existing or planted trees of good quality and value can greatly enhance new development, however, trees can also be a constraint when incorrectly planted or maintained.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> For an introduction on the role of trees and key best practices to ensure new developments make the most of the financial, social and environmental value trees can contribute to places please see - <http://www.tdag.org.uk/no-trees-no-future.html>

- 4.8 Layouts sited poorly in relation to retained trees, or the retention or planting of an inappropriate size or species may be resented by future occupiers and no amount of protection will ensure their retention and survival. To avoid such problems careful planning and expert advice is required from the outset.
- 4.9 Site appraisals should consider that in some areas of Ipswich there are archaeologically sensitive areas which may require found remains to be incorporated into designs to allow preservation *in situ*, or for provision to be made for mitigation and investigation.
- 4.10 Design should be considered in its broadest sense as a collaborative, creative, problem solving process – embracing, architecture, landscape, infrastructure, archaeology and urban design – that determines the quality of the environment, and will help provide the bases for a sustainable future. Collaboration and a shared ambition for quality are important at each stage of the design process.

## **Layout**

- 4.11 Understanding the site and its immediate and wider context is the basis for a meaningful and sustainable design response, and is the responsibility of all those involved in the design process, particularly planning applicants and their agents.
- 4.12 In general terms, good design will almost always be dependent on working within the natural constraints of the landscape and this should be the very starting point from which the design of development evolves. The aim should be to achieve sustainable design solutions, which maximise the topography and natural landscape assets of development sites, and minimise environmental impact on the landscape and its biodiversity. It is particularly important that proposals to amend or create new landscape are not considered as an afterthought to developments, and that the long-term impact of development on the character of an area, its landscape, trees, biodiversity and flood resilience, is fully understood and taken into consideration. The quality of implementation and the long-term management of any designed space is fundamental to a scheme's success. Integrated design elements that interrelate are essential. The Council will require that developers show landscaping, drainage and utilities are designed alongside the design of buildings.
- 4.13 New housing developments should be laid out to incorporate new and existing tree, and landscape features and should be arranged in groups reflecting

similar scale and design characteristics to their surroundings. The starting point for any new layout should be an assessment of biodiversity, topography, site conditions, and existing tree and landscape features.<sup>13</sup>

- 4.14 Dealing with trees, landscaping, drainage and any issues relating to ecology after the application has been determined, is not as effective as the consideration of these matters at the design stage.
- 4.15 Access to new and existing dwellings should be considered in terms of the ease of use and the prevailing character of the area. A secondary means of access should be provided to rear gardens of new dwellings other than through habitable rooms, be they to the side of detached or semi-detached houses or through access paths to the rear of terraces. Proposals for shared accesses will be favourably considered only if SCC parking standards<sup>14</sup>, or other adopted standards are met<sup>15</sup>, and where the developments do not result in an appearance that is dominated by parked cars. The retention of landscape features and trees or integrating new landscaping and tree planting can both aid the screening of parked cars, and help determine layouts that will have less impact to surrounding areas.
- 4.16 Having adequate space around new dwellings ensures that the physical mass of new buildings does not impose unnecessarily on neighbouring properties. Adequate distances between facing windows at the rear of houses also ensures that privacy in adjacent properties is retained.
- 4.17 There should be a distance of not less than 21 metres between main elevations of dwellings at the private side of houses, which is usually across back garden areas (i.e. rear elevation to rear elevation). Within this dimension there should usually be a distance of 9 metres (measured at right angles) between the rear elevations of dwellings and the rear garden boundary relative to it.

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<sup>13</sup>In accordance with Core Strategy Policy DM10 regarding BS 5837:2012 - Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction, and BS 42020:2013 – Biodiversity -

[https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/Core\\_Strategy\\_Dec\\_11.pdf](https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/Core_Strategy_Dec_11.pdf)

<sup>14</sup>Suffolk Guidance for Parking 2014 - <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/business/planning-and-design-advice/suffolk-advisory-parking-standards/>

<sup>15</sup> Specific parking standards within the IP-One area of Ipswich are to be adopted as part of a stand alone SPD.

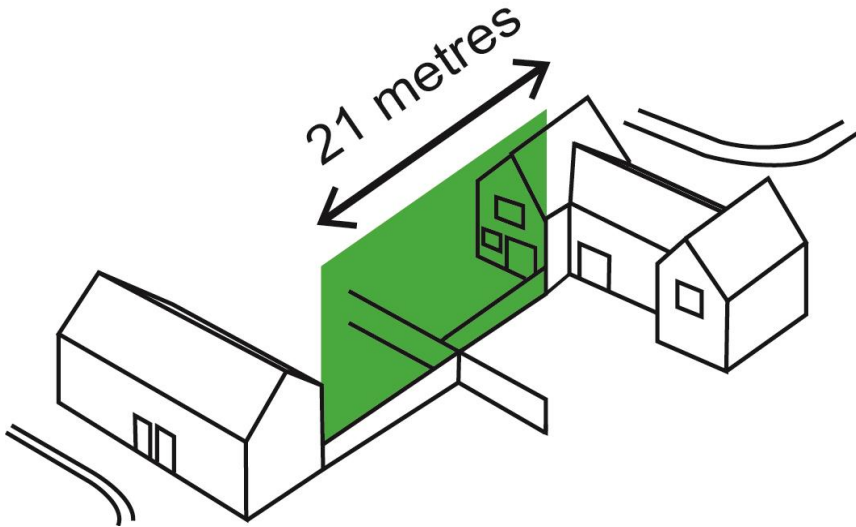


Fig. 2 – Back to Back distances between rear facing windows should be a minimum 21 metres to protect residential privacy.

4.18 Where houses are perpendicular to each other a distance of 12 metres separating the rear of one building from the side of another should be provided. Where flank walls of properties are more than 10 metres in depth, this separation may be required to be greater. Greater distances than those specified may also be required where buildings are more than two-stories high, or where there is a significant change in land levels between adjacent sites.

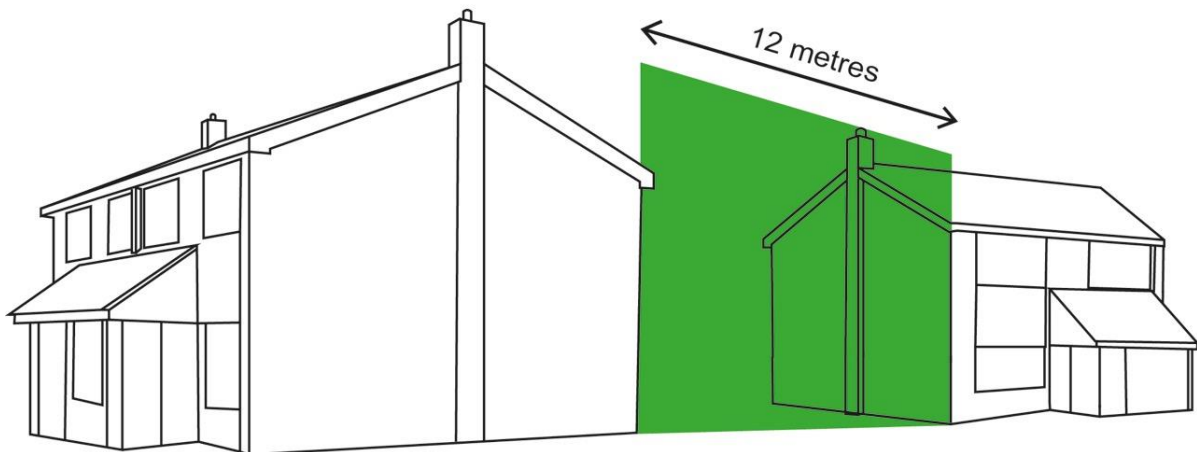


Fig. 3 – Right angle distance between rear facing window and side of adjacent properties should be at least 12 metres to protect outlook.

4.19 Design should have proper regard to the scale and character of the surrounding environment particularly protected biodiversity, trees and landscapes.

- 4.20 Alternative distances of less than the recommended figures will only be considered where there is already an established pattern of development in an area that matches proposed developments, or alternative, non-traditional layouts still result in acceptable standards of amenity to neighbours and future occupiers. These applications will be determined on the basis of their own merits.
- 4.21 Where corner plots are being developed, new properties that would sit at right angles and to the rear of the host dwelling, or adjacent to them, will be required to protect the character of building lines where they appear to be particularly prevalent. Houses which sit too close to the road, and project beyond adjacent dwellings significantly would usually detract from the established pattern and character of residential areas in the vicinity, and usually will be resisted.
- 4.22 Tandem development of backland, or rear garden sites, which rely on access beside existing properties, will only be considered acceptable where the area has a recent precedent of backland sites being developed within the site locality, and they meet the necessary spacing standards in this SPD. Tandem developments such as these will need to protect against loss of privacy, outlook or sunlight and should not result in unacceptable overshadowing. In these cases host dwellings will be required to retain appropriate standards of accommodation, private amenity space and safe car parking where this would be otherwise lost by the new development. Where new tandem development would result in an ad-hoc unplanned character that would result in an unacceptable precedent being set, these developments will be refused.
- 4.23 Planting large trees in the wrong locations is counterproductive and may simply result in later complications. Urban tree planting sites can support larger trees with longer life expectancy, whereas planting these spaces with small shorter lived species represent a lost opportunity. Big trees bring big benefits but they must be located wisely.
- 4.24 There is a direct correlation between what is provided to a tree and landscaping below ground and the result seen above ground, therefore suitable soil volumes should be provided to trees and landscaping. Wherever possible, the planting of trees and landscape in groups with shared soil space is encouraged. They can then spread out happily amongst themselves and benefit from additional soil volume. One common method is the use of continuous trench planting and this is a very good way of providing adequate volume. Available soil volume must be considered in any landscape or tree planting scheme.



## Parking

- 4.25 When considering parking layouts, and the number of car parking spaces necessary for small scale infill or backland developments, the information provided in the 'Suffolk Guidance for Parking – Technical Guidance 2014' should inform development proposals where they sit within existing residential areas, outside of the IP-One area.
- 4.26 The parking standards that are set within this countywide guidance reflect recent evidence which recognises that providing a reduced number of parking spaces for residential developments, does not effectively discourage people from owning a car, and can lead to a poor public realm as a result of inadequate parking provision. Consequently the guidance adopts a series of minimum standards for residential developments.
- 4.27 Incorporating minimum standards into residential areas, allows for consideration to be given to the appropriate amount of parking spaces within layouts dependent on dwelling size. Consideration can also be given to where visitor parking can be incorporated into designs, without there being an overly car dominated appearance.
- 4.28 In principle parking layouts should not dominate development schemes unnecessarily, by means of having too much hard-surfaced parking area that might adversely impact the character of a site or particular area. Areas of parking should be broken up with good quality planting areas where possible, to improve the overall character of the design and layout, to aid surface water drainage, and help to improve biodiversity in the area.
- 4.29 Parking spaces should be sufficiently big enough for practical access of vehicles, particularly having regard to disabled users, for opening of gates in boundaries, and the opening of garage doors. Adequate intervisibility will be required from sites onto the main highway, to ensure pedestrian and highway safety is not detrimentally affected by the development.
- 4.30 All new development will be required to provide adequate cycle parking for the end user or occupier. Cycle parking will be expected to be secure, covered and visible, and in instances where it is either a shared or communal facility, internally lit. Cycle parking levels will be expected to be in line with the Suffolk Guidance for Parking. Further guidance on cycle parking and storage will be provided in the Cycling Strategy Supplementary Planning Guidance.

## Gardens

- 4.31 With regards to private amenity space the Council's adopted Core Strategy Policy DM3: Provision of Private Outdoor Amenity Space in New and Existing Developments<sup>16</sup>, should be taken into consideration for how much private outdoor amenity space is appropriate for new dwellings. In summary the provision should be as follows:-

For all houses, bungalows, or ground floor maisonettes with 3 or more bedrooms a minimum rear garden area of 75 sq.m.

For all houses, bungalows, or ground floor maisonettes with 1 or 2 bedrooms a minimum rear garden area of 50 sq.m.

For all apartments or upper floor maisonettes an average of 25 sq.m of private outdoor amenity space.

Garden sizes need to be calculated independently of any parking space(s) that are to be provided.

- 4.32 Where new development is considered detrimental to the site and local character, planning permission will normally be refused. The impact of development on the trees, biodiversity or habitat value of gardens will normally be considered as residential gardens make a significant contribution to biodiversity. Further details on improving ecological networks, green corridors, spaces and impacts form part of the Council's core strategy.
- 4.33 Garden spaces are an essential component of high quality design, and a key to the creation of a sustainable residential environment, in terms of contributing to liveability, recreation and health, to urban greening, and the preservation or enhancement of local biodiversity. Garden spaces should be sufficient to accommodate most household activities and at the same time be adequate to offer visual delight, receive some sunshine, and encourage plant growth.
- 4.34 The BRE report 'Site layouts for daylight and sunlight' recommends that no more than two fifths and preferably no more than a quarter of any garden should be prevented by buildings, trees, walls or fences from receiving sunshine on 21 March<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Policy DM3 pages 89-90 - [https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/Core\\_Strategy\\_Dec\\_11.pdf](https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/Core_Strategy_Dec_11.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> BRE Layout guidance measure sunlight availability during the sun's low point in the year.

- 4.35 Key characteristics of a good private amenity space are that the garden should be well shaped, which means most commonly rectangular in shape. Infill, and severance plots should not result in irregular shaped amenity spaces that fall below the minimum standards as set out in this SPD. Garden spaces should provide private seating areas of paved or hard-surfaced materials that are not overlooked by neighbouring windows. The gardens should have areas that are well screened by fencing, walls or appropriate planting and hedges to make the space feel safe to use and play in.
- 4.36 In some cases there will be buildings that are relatively close in proximity to each other as a result of infill or severance development, however good standards of outlook will still be expected. Orientation of properties will help with solar gain and ensure that gardens have access to direct sunlight and some shade from existing and proposed trees and landscaping.
- 4.37 Properties that meet minimum internal space standards will ensure that new dwellings are versatile and are attractive living spaces that appeal to a wider population. The Government seeks a set of minimum standards adopted as part of technical Housing Standards Policy<sup>18</sup>.
- 4.38 In line with current national thinking by major conservation bodies (such as RSPB and The Wildlife Trusts) and Government policy to create and enhance coherent ecological networks and halt biodiversity loss by 2020, design for new gardens should seek to protect and enhance local biodiversity and ecological network function, by;
- Preserving existing natural and semi-natural habitats of wildlife value
  - Encouraging wildlife beneficial gardening
  - Use of locally native species suitable for site soil type and reflective of plant communities in the surrounding landscape (or, where appropriate, cultivar alternatives that are beneficial to wildlife)
- 4.39 All developments and in particular all gardens adjoining other gardens or open space should incorporate permeable fencing for native species such as hedgehogs. This can be as simple as a deliberate small hole in wooden fences or iron railings spaced apart wide enough for a hedgehog to pass through.
- 4.40 A selection of wildlife home features should be incorporated into buildings that target endangered and/or protected species of local or national concern.

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<sup>18</sup> Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard - [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/421515/150324 -  
\\_Nationally\\_Described\\_Space\\_Standard\\_Final\\_Web\\_version.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/421515/150324_-_Nationally_Described_Space_Standard_Final_Web_version.pdf)

These include bat bricks, Swift bricks, other bird boxes, invertebrate habitat features, compost heaps and log piles (for Stag Beetles) in gardens. Compost heaps and log piles have the added benefit of providing ideal habitat for hedgehogs (and their prey) plus a myriad of wildlife, including reptiles and amphibians ( see *Figures 4 – Figure 7* below).



*Fig. 4 - Example of a Swift Brick*



*Fig. 5 - Example of a bat brick*



*Fig. 6 - Example of a hedgehog home*



*Fig. 7 - Example of permeable fencing.*

## **Sustainability**

- 4.41 Ipswich has an estimated 4.2 tonnes of carbon dioxide produced each year per head of population, with about 42% of these emissions coming from people's homes (2011 data). These emissions are a major contributor to climate change. Therefore improving the energy performance of existing and new residential buildings is key to reducing these emissions. Enabling tree and landscaping with species known for pollution trapping qualities near to properties will help deal with emissions at source.
- 4.42 The sustainability of new homes is covered by policies in the Core Strategy, whereby Policy DM1 will require that particular environmental standards will be met. For schemes involving conversions the relevant Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method or BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment standards should be met.
- 4.43 It is important that site appraisal should take into consideration the design and layout of a proposed housing development to maximise solar gain through

appropriate orientation of primary elevations toward south where possible. The potential of collecting and reusing rainwater, and grey water (run-off from roads, and roofs) for irrigation of gardens, and use for flushing of toilets should also be considered. It can also replace fossil fuels directly in the form of renewable energy, or wood fuel. In terms of building materials, wood is a smart choice, as timber is renewable and can replace other materials that require much larger fossil fuel inputs for their production.

- 4.44 Where decentralised renewable or low carbon energy generation is proposed in developments, they should be sympathetic to the overall design of the scheme, and/or integrated so they will not detract from the character of the surrounding area. Particular attention should be given to siting and the use of appropriate finishes and materials that will integrate well with the proposed development. Sourcing underground energy for heating and cooling of new dwellings (through ground source heating or cooling systems) is also a method of reducing carbon emissions and is likely to have a lesser visual impact than some other forms of renewable energy, such as wind turbines.
- 4.45 Trees, woods and canopy cover as a whole can provide part of the solution to limiting climate change, and to helping society to adapt to the changes that we all face. The Council is adopting set tree planting standards<sup>19</sup> for all new developments to ensure they contribute to the green infrastructure that makes the town a more pleasant and effective place to live and do business.

### **Lifetime Homes**

- 4.46 Adopted Policy DM5 refers to buildings that are 'designed for long life by being capable of adaptation to accommodate changing needs over time' and in this respect developers are encouraged to meet Lifetime Homes standards. In March 2015 the Government issued new planning policy guidance which requires planning authorities to achieve greater accessibility and adaptability of dwellings through reference to Requirement M4(2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) and / or M4(3) (wheelchair user dwellings) of the Building Regulations. These standards will enable long-term flexibility and adaptability in the use of a property.
- 4.47 The design of new homes can support accessibility and legibility for an ageing population, and help with the increasing incidence of physical and cognitive impairments. Where the Council sets a policy requiring such standards to be met, these should be considered from the outset alongside other design requirements.

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<sup>19</sup> Public Open Space SPD to be published in 2015/16

## Sustainable Drainage Systems

- 4.48 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) for surface water drainage are an important method of reducing flood risk associated with development and should be designed-in as an essential element of any new development in the Borough wherever practicable. Layout and the form of buildings and roads must be designed around SuDS bearing in mind they should be sited in lower areas, but preferably close to the source of surface water itself. SuDS should make use of the topography of the site and should be considered as part of site appraisals.
- 4.49 Ipswich Borough Council has produced a Development and Flood Risk supplementary planning document<sup>20</sup>, and this should be consulted prior to designing schemes.
- 4.50 Access to water is an essential requirement for trees and landscaping to survive. With droughts becoming more and more common in the UK (and particularly in the south east of England), there is a greater need to avoid any possible wastage of water resources.



*Figs 8 & 9 – Examples of SuDS within development.*

- 4.51 Shared soil space, permeability of the tree surface opening and associated edge treatment, and the permeability of the landscape surrounding trees, and making provision for some surface water runoff to drain into the tree-rooting environment or swales. Opportunities might also exist for some of the drainage and water management needs of the site to be fully or partially

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<sup>20</sup> Development and Flood Risk SPD - <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/development-and-flood-risk-spd>

resolved through the integration of the tree(s) with sustainable urban drainage (SuDS) components. Exploring and realising these opportunities requires an integrated approach to the design of the soft landscape elements, especially trees, and the drainage strategy.

### **Shared service ducts**

- 4.52 Wherever possible underground services should be routed in shared service ducts and avoid areas identified for landscaping or tree planting. This requires early stage co-ordination between various organisations. Ducts make maintenance easier and ensure that services do not take up so much space that there is no room for tree roots. Modern utilities in plastic ducting can tolerate deformation by tree and large shrub roots in ways that older services cannot. National Joint Utilities Group guidance strongly advises that there should be effective forward planning for trees, and recommends that tree planting should be part of development so that trees and utilities can co-exist successfully.

### **Boundaries**

- 4.53 Defensible spaces for gardens and space between frontages and adjacent footpaths will aid the security of new dwellings, as well as providing a pleasant appearance and privacy to new houses. The absence of clearly defined boundaries, especially along building frontages, can blur the edge between public and private space and lead to neglected, poor quality spaces between buildings and streets. Where the character of an area dictates that dwellings open directly onto the footpaths then this may be the best approach to take in how new dwellings align with the neighbours. Respecting existing building lines will aid in the reinforcing of character that currently exists and will prevent new development from appearing overly dominant or incoherent within the street as a whole.
- 4.54 In most cases, the fronts of houses should generally remain open to view in order to increase natural surveillance to the street, therefore walls, fences, native hedges defining the fronts of properties where appropriate should be kept low. Boundary treatments such as high railings and gates can be obtrusive and have a negative impact on the streetscene by conveying a sense of severance and being overbearing. Side and rear boundaries can increase privacy and security to the property through higher fencing or walls. Front boundaries should reinforce the prevailing character of the streetscape, especially where a continuous uniform treatment forms a distinctive character.



Boundary design should also complement the design materials and techniques used in the overall scheme. Consideration should also be given to pedestrian-vehicular intervisibility.

## **Landscaping**

- 4.55 Any scheme should create a harmonious synergy of low maintenance and environmental enhancement, which is sustainable and resilient to modern urban living. Landscapes that are designed to be in phase with buildings, coordinated and integrated and not as an after-thought, will most likely succeed. The Council has a duty to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains where possible. Development should contribute to halting the overall decline in biodiversity, establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
- 4.56 Hard and soft landscaping in developments will generally be expected to contribute both to the visual appearance of developments, and to help mitigate against the loss of ecological features that might be present. In some instances off-site mitigation for the loss of habitat may be the most appropriate method. However landscaping schemes will be expected to be integral to new development considerations and should make up part of the design process, from assessing the existing features, plants and wildlife features on the site that might be retained as integral to the new development, to the appropriate replacement planting plan, use of hard surfaced areas, and lighting. Plans for tree planting, hard and soft landscape design, and lighting all need consideration at the earliest stages of design, so conflicts are minimised and the original essence of the design can be realised.
- 4.57 The use of appropriate soft landscaping can help to make a development sit within an urban area more appropriately by softening the built form of new dwellings, and by integrating developments within character areas by means of replicating locally common native species of trees and/or shrubs.
- 4.58 A tree may take a century or more to reach maturity but it can be damaged or felled in a few minutes. Such damage is frequently caused unwittingly because of a failure to appreciate the vulnerability of trees, particularly the root system, and how easily and often insidiously they can be damaged. Where trees are damaged during development of a site and subsequently decline and die, or where inappropriate or poor design leads to conflict, trees become a constant source of complaint and ultimately, any positive benefits are lost. Early involvement of an arboriculturist and erection of tree and landscape protection to form the construction exclusion zones before work commences on site is essential.



4.59 Whilst the Council does not expect to include the planting of large specimen trees into every development, consideration will be expected to be given as to how the use of landscaping will make the development more attractive. Inclusion of feature trees and landscaping, hard and soft, as landmarks add to an area's character and encourages personal identity with the place.



*Fig. 10 & 11 - Good examples of where existing trees have been incorporated into landscaping schemes, and development layouts.*

- 4.60 Building foundations require special attention to ensure that trees, any proposed landscape scheme, and buildings can safely co-exist. This is of particular importance in shrinkable clay soils where there is a risk of subsidence. For instance, foundations of a development on clay soils should be designed from the outset with a view to accommodating the expected size at maturity of trees and shrub masses set out in the landscape scheme.
- 4.61 Highway sight lines, lighting, signage and CCTV cameras should not be designed and installed without taking into account the presence of trees and proposed landscape requirements; and vice-versa.
- 4.62 Landscaping should not be considered less important than these other aspects of the development and it is vital to ensure that the importance of landscaping is recognised in the development process i.e. applicants should avoid having to retrofit trees and landscaping into an already designed development: by this stage it may be too late to incorporate larger species.
- 4.63 A common complaint about trees is that they obstruct light or create too much shade. This can be prevented by ensuring that appropriate species are selected when planting. As the effects of climate change increase, the shade

provided by trees and large shrub masses are likely to become more valued as is their contribution to reducing the urban heat island effect.

- 4.64 Planting of healthy, vigorous trees and shrubs that have been adequately conditioned will thrive in the environment in which they are destined to live.<sup>21</sup>
- 4.65 Post-planting care is vital if longevity in the landscape is to be achieved. A landscape maintenance programme with budgetary provision should be in place for all major planting schemes. This maintenance programme should be in place for at least five years and include not just watering but also formative pruning and monitoring and adjustments to the support systems.
- 4.66 The adverse impact trees and large shrub masses can have when overshadowing nearby buildings is often raised during planning applications when tree planting requirements are raised. This can be addressed through good design, species selection and a right tree – right place approach. Location and choice of trees must be based on a sound understanding of the future canopy size, growth habits and foliage density. e.g. trees with a lateral spreading canopy form such as English Oak (*Quercus Robur*) are not suited to tight spaces.
- 4.67 Development should create places where tree, hedges and shrub masses species can thrive and deliver their full range of benefits without causing harmful nuisance. Trees, are naturally growing and shedding organisms. Leaves of some species can cause problems, particularly in autumn, by blocking gullies and gutters. Fruit can cause slippery patches, and accumulations of honeydew cause problems for surfaces and vehicles. Buildings, footpaths and hard-standing should be designed with due consideration to the proximity of trees especially in terms of foliage, flowers and fruit. Where conflicts might arise, design should address these issues e.g. use of non-slip paving, provision of leaf guards or grilles on gutters, provision of access and means of maintenance.
- 4.68 Biodiversity is a material consideration in the formal planning system, whether or not the feature (habitat or species) benefits from any statutory protection. All trees, whether benefiting from statutory protection or not, are material considerations in the formal planning system. The council will seek the protection and the care of trees and increase of canopy cover in the interest of amenity.

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<sup>21</sup> Landscape design guidance -

<http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/WhiteRoseForest/pdf/treesFromNurseryToIndependenceInTheLandscape.pdf>

- 4.69 Some biodiversity, tree and landscape features are of such importance and sensitivity as to be a major constraint and prevent development occurring or to justify substantial modification of its design and layout. If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission may be refused. Care should be taken to avoid misplaced tree retention, attempts to retain too many low value or unsuitable trees on a site can result in excessive pressure on the trees during demolition or construction work, or post-completion demands for their removal.
- 4.70 Appendix V of this SPD identifies those species of trees and shrubs that would be most appropriate for different planting scenarios and should be consulted.



*Fig.12 - boundaries to parking areas help soften the affected appearance of the hard surfaced areas.*



*Fig 13 – Lack of soil volume and compaction have harmed the tree growth rates in this car park.*

## 5.0 Householder Extensions and Alterations

### Getting Started

- 5.1 The extension of homes to meet the changing needs of families is a type of proposal frequently submitted to the Council. Well designed and built extensions can add to the value of homes. Poorly designed and badly built additions will harm the appearance of the house and reduce its value, and detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding area.
- 5.2 If your home is a Listed Building, additional controls apply and a special approval known as Listed Building Consent may be needed. If you're in doubt as to whether this applies to you, contact the Conservation and Urban Design

Service at Ipswich Borough Council or alternatively you can check the status of your property and whether it is in a conservation area or listed on the Ipswich Borough Council website.<sup>22</sup>

- 5.3 Having regard to the character of the surrounding area and its environment can also help to determine the type or style of extension that might best suite your dwelling. Details such as roof design, window type, and external materials may be similar within particular areas or streets, and these could help to guide how your extension should be designed. The Council has produced an extensive Urban Character Study SPD that covers much of Ipswich and provides detail on such matters.<sup>23</sup>

## General Principles

- 5.4 Sizes of residential extensions can affect the amenity of an existing property. Future access for car parking and bicycle storage should therefore be considered. The retention of passageways and access to the rear of dwellings should be considered for the storage of refuse and recycling bins. It is also important to consider retaining space around dwellings for the long-term maintenance of building exteriors and for access to services, and gardens.
- 5.5 The impact of residential extensions on the amenity of neighbouring properties is also something to be considered before proceeding with a planning application. Speaking to your neighbours about your proposals will help you to understand any concerns there may be about the future development, and enable you to modify the proposals before getting involved in the planning stage of the process. If an extension might affect your neighbours property then an agreement by both parties may need to be drafted under the terms of The Party Wall etc Act 1996<sup>24</sup>.
- 5.6 Consideration should be given to the location of extensions, and how they might benefit from orientation and location of windows. Of equal importance is how extensions may impact on your neighbours through overlooking, loss of outlook, and/or loss of sunlight and daylight. Access to the exterior of extensions for long term maintenance should also be considered, and will aid in the appropriate choice of materials.

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<sup>22</sup> Conservation Areas - <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/services/historic-buildings-and-conservation>

<sup>23</sup> Urban Characterisation Study - <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/current-and-proposed-supplementary-planning-documents>

<sup>24</sup> The Party Wall etc Act - <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/buildingregulations/buildingpolicyandlegislation/currentlegislation/partypwallact>

- 5.7 Extensions and alterations to houses should respect the character and design of the original building and its environment. In general, one modest extension will look better than a cluster of smaller ones around a house. It is also worth noting that some houses cannot reasonably be extended (either from original construction or further to any previous additions). This is particularly the case where dwellings sit within small plots with tight boundaries. Extensions should seek to replicate where possible the type of roof on the existing dwelling, external materials and window sizes, method of opening, and alignment.
- 5.8 The following advice illustrates some of the features that should be considered when designing an extension. Whilst useful, it cannot cover every eventuality and it is recommended that the services of a competent person such as an architect or qualified designer are employed at an early stage. Employing a professional will help to ensure you get the best quality result and will frequently expedite the process. Pre-application advice can be sought from the Council's planning department, as to whether a development is suitable – and this will generally help the application process<sup>25</sup>. Crucially, involvement of an architect or surveyor can ensure proper supervision on site and control of costs.
- 5.9 The visual impact of extensions can be grouped into three categories:
- Overall shape and proportions
  - Layout of doors and windows
  - Materials and detailing
- 5.10 *Overall Shape and Proportions*
- The shape and proportions of the extension(s) should be in harmony with the original property. Shape is heavily influenced by the type of roof chosen. Usually, the shape of the roof on the extension should be of a similar shape and style to the roof of the original building. Complicated floor plans can lead to odd roof shapes which can be difficult to match with the existing roof, and can be visually unsatisfactory and technically difficult to build, therefore adding cost to a project.
- 5.11 The size of extensions should not dominate the existing dwelling or its environment. Setting extensions back from main front elevations can help them to appear subordinate and less dominating.

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<sup>25</sup> Pre-application enquiry service - <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/planning-fees>

5.12 With regards to roof extensions dormer windows will not suit every house design, but if being proposed they should be lower than the roofline and ideally set back so that much of the original roof is visible beneath them. Dormer windows should be used to provide natural light rather than as a means of increasing floor space. More substantial alterations to the roof should be restricted to the rear of the house. Care should be taken to avoid problems of overlooking neighbouring private amenity areas. Planning applications for poorly designed or over-dominant structures will not be approved.

#### 5.13 *Layout of Doors and Windows*

General rules include: continuing the pattern of openings from the original building; positioning openings to complement the balance created by the new extension; and ensuring the proportions, finish and style of the windows replicate those of the main dwelling.

5.14 A pattern of openings similar to those on the original house will usually look best. If the extension has a narrow frontage, positioning the windows so they emphasise the central axis of the building will help to create balance. On two storey extensions, it's important that the ground floor looks capable of supporting the floor above. Using oversized windows or positioning windows very close to the corners of the building can have the opposite effect.

#### 5.14 *Materials and Detailing*

Materials for the exterior of extensions should be chosen to make the extension seem as if it's part of the original property. The detailing will seldom look wrong if it is 'borrowed' from the original building, for example window lintels, and sills, brick banding or corbel detailing.

5.15 Careful matching of materials is important. Many houses are built of bricks that are no longer available, and therefore care should be taken to find a good match. Always check more than one brick from a batch against the original building, as colours may vary. It may be worth asking your builder to make up a sample panel to help. Reusing the tiles from where the new roof connection is made or using second hand tiles of a similar colour can help. If a precise match cannot be made, often the best solution is to break up the building by setting the extension back.

5.16 Locate down pipes carefully. Rainwater pipes can cover unsightly junctions between the original house and the extension. Waste water pipes should be hidden from view from the street if possible, as prominently located soil pipes may harm the appearance of your house.



5.17 Details such as string courses on the original building should be carried across to the extension if appropriate. Door and window openings should have all of the features of those on the original building. If ornamental lintels and sills are used on the main house they should be repeated – it is important that they appear large enough to bear the load above. Most windows and doors on older houses will be recessed slightly and it will look best if this is repeated on the extension. Recessing windows also helps to protect the frames from damage by rainwater, and will add solidity to the appearance.



*Fig.14 - Good example of side extension with sympathetic roof, and brick detailing. Windows are an appropriate design and alignment.*



*Fig.15 - Bad example of extension with mismatched materials, and windows, and unsympathetic 'dummy' pitched roof.*

### **Extensions visible from the street**

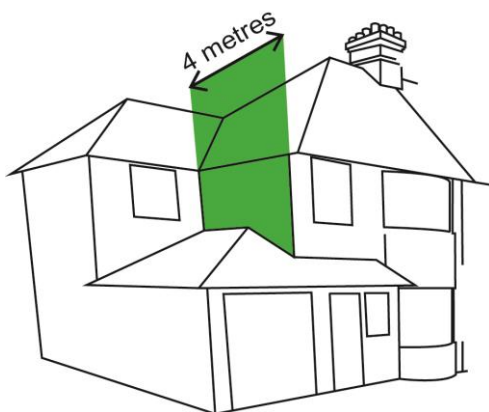
5.18 Extensions to dwellings that are at the front, or side of a dwelling will have the most impact on the appearance of the existing dwelling and the character of the surrounding streets, particularly if they are corner properties. Therefore the design of these types of extensions should be sensitively undertaken so that they relate well to the scale, form and appearance of the existing dwelling. They should not appear discordant with the character of the surrounding area, by being out of scale or by having an uncharacteristic form or use of materials. For example large flat roofed extensions on dwellings that have sloping roof forms will generally be resisted.

5.19 Two storey side extensions can damage the character of an area by closing the natural spacing between buildings and creating a 'terracing effect'. Such proposals need to be designed with care.



*Fig.16 - Inappropriately large two-storey side extension that blocks the natural spacing between the existing dwellings, and forms a 'terracing effect'.*

5.20 Normally, the Council will look for the first floor of such extensions to be set back from the front of the house, and where possible set-in from the side to provide adequate pedestrian access. Set backs at first floor level can be expected to be up to 4m in certain circumstances to enable these visible gaps to be retained, and to ensure that the extensions remain subordinate to the original dwelling. This helps to ensure that the appearance of space between the houses is preserved in the street scene.



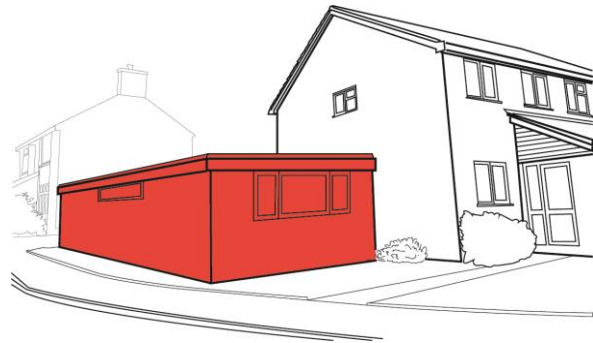
*Fig.17 - Ordinarily to prevent a terracing effect the first floor level of any side extension should be set back by up to 4 metres. This retains the appearance of spacing between the houses and protects the character of the street.*



5.20 Large extensions that are at the side of dwellings or are highly visible should respect the proportions of the host property. If an extension is overly wide, tall or deep this could detract from the appearance of the existing dwelling by looking cramped, poorly planned, or by and overwhelming it. The rhythm of windows, doors and bays from the existing dwelling is a good means of establishing what would be a natural width for extensions.



*Fig. 18 - Good example of side extension on a corner plot. it has appropriate scale, with a sympathetic roof design. The extension keeps good separation to the side road, and retains the mature tree and front garden planting to soften its appearance.*



*Fig. 19 - Bad example of corner plot extension. With roof that is an inappropriate scale and design, and which does not retain the natural features and planting of the site.*

## Rear extensions

5.21 Single storey side extensions can often be added without difficulty, with those examples to the rear of dwellings generally having little impact on the street scene. The size of a rear extension may not require planning permission however consideration should still be given to how it will relate to the original building in terms of scale, external materials, and long term maintenance. Those extensions in close proximity to boundaries with neighbouring properties should be given the same consideration as to the finished materials and detailing as those parts of the extension that would be visible from the occupants.

5.22 In most cases the design of the extension should respect the built form of the original dwelling, which in most instances will mean a sloping tiled roof of some form. Large flat roofed additions tend to result in there being unattractive fascia's and visible felt roofs on display. Parapet designs are sometimes considered to be a more acceptable alternative where they are not overly large.

## Roof extensions

- 5.23 Many roof extensions are allowed under the permitted development rights of a dwelling, and do not require planning permission (See Appendix II).
- 5.24 Where planning permission is required for roof extensions they will be expected to be well proportioned, and designed to be sympathetic to the roof of the original dwelling. The unbalancing of dwellings which are semi-detached will be resisted. Roof dormers should be sympathetic in scale to the existing roof plan, and should not over dominate the host roof or appear overly box-like, or result in the dwelling appearing top-heavy.

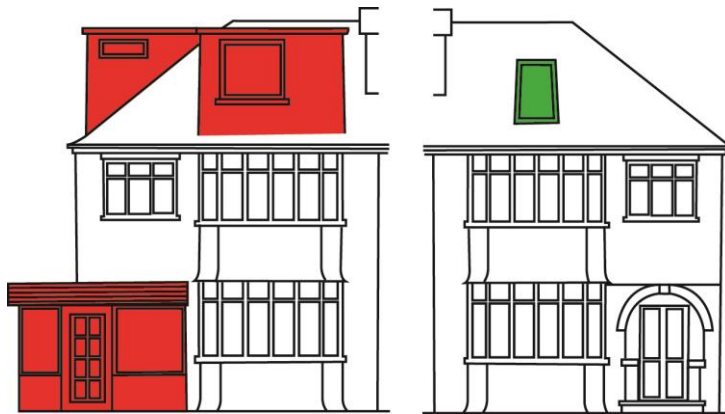


Fig.18 - Bad example (left) of roof development with bulky roof dormers of inappropriate scale that over dominates the appearance of the dwelling.

## Parking

- 5.25 Garden space is an important amenity for the occupiers of residential properties. The space around homes also influences the character of the street. The Council will encourage proposals for extensions to be kept to a reasonable size relative to the space around the house in order that an adequate area of garden space is retained. Usually an extension should occupy no more than 50% of this space.
- 5.26 Similarly, the Council may resist proposals for extensions that result in the loss of off-street car parking spaces. Large extensions providing additional bedrooms may lead to additional parking spaces being required. Suffolk County Council parking guidance standards should therefore be checked<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Suffolk Guidance for Parking – Technical Guidance 2014 - <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/suffolk.gov.uk/Environment%20and%20Transport/Planning/2014%20Suffolk%20Guidance%20for%20Parking.pdf>

- 5.27 It is common for homeowners to create a hardstanding or extend an existing area to enable the parking of private cars 'off-street'. Although this is considered to be a relatively minor operation, developments such as this can require planning permission and it is important that homeowners check with the planning department prior to commencing work.
- 5.28 The key issue is whether dropped kerbs are being extended onto a classified road, and how surface water is drained from the new area of hard surfacing. Where new areas of hardsurfacing are created and water is able to flow freely into the roads outside the dwelling, it can contribute to flash flooding and therefore should be resisted. The government has produced a guide<sup>27</sup> on how to design hardstandings to prevent this from happening, and consideration must be given to using permeable materials, and/or grassed or planted strips for allowing this water to soakaway naturally.
- 5.29 When creating parking areas to the front of dwellings care should be taken to ensure that visibility to the highway is adequate. High walls or fences can impede the visibility of pedestrians and other road users, and adequate space should be created to ensure vehicles can move safely from the site. Dropped kerbs should not impede other rights of way, accesses or the optimum siting of a bus stop.
- 5.30 Hardstandings can also result in a street appearance that is over dominated by cars, which can affect the site and its surroundings if repeated. It is important therefore to ensure that trees and areas of planting are retained and boundary treatments are kept where possible. Off street parking in forecourts and gardens that result in the loss of tree(s) of amenity value (including street trees) would be resisted. This will help to keep the attractive qualities of the property and to soften the overall appearance of the hardsurfacing. If undertaken correctly the integration of hardstandings to the front of properties can be achieved with minimal effect on the appearance of the property.

### **Boundaries – biodiversity**

- 5.31 Front boundary walls should respect those in the vicinity and should not be so tall that they have a particularly overbearing impact on pedestrians using the street. Where corner plots have side gardens it is accepted that there may be a need to create privacy to rear gardens by having higher boundaries. These

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<sup>27</sup> Guidance on the permeable surfacing of front gardens - [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7728/pavingfrontgardens.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7728/pavingfrontgardens.pdf)

should not usually project beyond the front elevation of the building as this could impact on both highway visibility and the character of the street. In the cases of side boundaries to corner plots, these should usually not be greater than 1.8 metres in height.

- 5.32 Consideration should be given to the use of locally native hedging and nectar rich species as a method of screening gardens and providing security to them. Blackthorn, Buckthorn and Hawthorn are all examples of native hedging that might be considered appropriate. Appendix V provides details on planting and the appropriate species types.

## **Materials**

- 5.34 Contemporary and contrasting materials such as rendered finishes, zinc roofs, and timber cladding are becoming more common because of their sustainable credentials and modern appearance. Care should be taken when specifying such materials on older properties to ensure that the extension or alteration will not appear overly conspicuous or unsympathetic to the original building. The use of contrasting materials will only be approved where the development is of exemplary design and complements the existing building in proportion and scale, and it does not detract unduly from the prevailing character of the surrounding area.

## **Sustainability**

- 5.35 Improving energy efficiency can help to keep the affordability of running homes to a minimum. Improving the home to make it more sustainable may not always require planning permission however there are some general good practice measures that will ensure that alterations do not have a harmful impact on the appearance of the property.
- 5.36 *Solar panels* – Try to ensure that solar panels are at the manufacturer's optimum direction and angle to maximise their efficiency. When attaching solar photo-voltaic panels and/or solar water collectors, these should not be arranged so they appear randomly placed on roofs, as a rectangular arrangement will usually be best. The retention of an amount of tiling surrounding the panels will ensure that they do not overwhelm the roof slope.
- 5.37 *Wood burning flues* – Chimneys should be located so that smoke and fumes do not impact on neighbouring properties. The external colour of a flue can look out of place or unnecessarily industrial for domestic properties. Chrome or black surfaces can be the most appropriate depending on the age of the

property or how visible the flue would be. It is often the case that existing chimneys can be used for installing such equipment.

- 5.38 *External insulation* – To minimise the impact from the application of external insulation, the finished surface should replicate that of the existing property where possible. Under normal circumstances this will be through the use of brick slips or a painted render finish. The re-use of detailing around the windows and doors will further protect the appearance of the original house and should not be overlooked.
- 5.39 *Green flat roofs / walls* – The use of green roofs or planted roofs and walls as a means of improving the insulation to extensions and houses, will only be approved where the design is considered to enhance the overall appearance and biodiversity value of the extension on which it will be located.
- 5.40 In all instances of home improvements that relate to the sustainability of a dwelling, home owners should seek advice from the Building Control department at the Council, as some of the works may require formal consent. Also of help is the Energy Saving Trust<sup>28</sup>, which is a social enterprise with a charitable Foundation formed in 1992, who give impartial advice to communities and households on how to reduce carbon emissions, use water more sustainably, and save money on energy bills.

## **Outbuildings**

- 5.41 Outbuildings can be incorporated successfully for the purposes of ancillary storage, hobbies, sunrooms, and on occasions, as space for incidental working from home. The scale of outbuildings should respect the garden area as a whole and should not take up a significant portion of it.
- 5.42 Outbuildings should remain single-storey in size and protect the amenity of neighbouring properties, by being located in a position that they do not result in loss of privacy through overlooking.

## **Annexes**

- 5.43 Extensions and alterations which assist households adapt to changing circumstances, by the formation of residential annexes, can be successfully incorporated into existing dwellings when some element of shared facilities

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<sup>28</sup> Energy Saving Trust website - <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>

are retained. For example an annex could form a separate bedroom, kitchen and bathroom, but retain shared lounge, main entrance, and garden areas.

- 5.44 The main consideration is that to qualify as an annex, the new accommodation should have a degree of dependency on the main dwellinghouse, which could be incorporated back into the main house once the annex use is no longer required.
- 5.45 Planning applications for detached annexes will be considered against the normal criteria for new dwellings. Those applications which do not demonstrate that they meet these criteria will not be approved.

## **6.0 Amenity of Neighbours**

### *Privacy*

- 6.1 People expect more privacy on the private garden side of their homes which is usually at the rear. In urban areas a degree of overlooking may be inevitable and should be expected, however, every effort should be made to avoid overlooking of rear facing living room windows and garden 'sitting out' areas such as patios and decked areas. This can be achieved through distance and design.
- 6.2 Windows should face into your own garden, or yard, rather than directly towards neighbouring properties. Other techniques may be used to avoid loss of privacy, if you intend to have a window that could overlook your neighbour's garden or living room, you should incorporate an eye level fence or similar screen to maintain privacy. It is also important to avoid side-facing windows at ground floor level that overlook your neighbour's garden.

### *Outlook*

- 6.3 Whilst nobody has a right to keep the existing view from their home, the Council will consider the effect an extension may have on the outlook from a principal window in a neighbouring property. The emphasis here is not on preventing a change in outlook, but in avoiding undue intrusion to windows that make an important contribution to the amenities of occupiers of affected properties.
- 6.4 A method can be used to assess the diffuse skylight impact on the dwelling next door where extensions adjoin the front or rear of a house. It applies only where the nearest side of an extension is perpendicular to the window and is

not valid for windows which directly face the extension or for buildings opposite. In this method a significant amount of light is likely to be blocked if the centre of the adjacent window lies within 45 degree lines on both plan and elevation. See Appendix IV for details.

### *Sunlight/daylight – BRE daylight sunlight good practice guide*

- 6.5 Good levels of natural daylight (light available generally from the sky), and direct sunlight, make dwellings more attractive, pleasant and energy efficient. The size and position of extensions will affect the amount of light available to both the extended house and neighbour's homes. The impact of your extension on light levels in the living rooms, dining rooms and kitchens of yours and your neighbour's home are important. Bedrooms should also be considered but are less vital.
- 6.6 The Council will assess the plans for your extension against a set of standards known as the 'BRE Report Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight - A Guide to Good Practice 2009'. Proposals that do not conform are likely to be refused. A summary of the most important points can be found in appendix IV. However, as a guide, extensions that cross both a horizontal and a vertical line drawn at 45 degree from the centre of a window will significantly affect the amount of light entering that window.

### *Overshadowing*

- 6.7 Problems of overshadowing or visual intrusion are greatest when extensions are built close to boundary lines, for example, extensions to the back of semi-detached or terraced houses. Usually, unacceptable overshadowing and visual intrusion is avoided if single storey rear extensions do not project more than 3.5 metres from the adjacent building along (or close to) the common boundary. Larger extensions may be allowed under permitted development rights or if they are further from the common boundary, but the general principals of protecting neighbour amenity should be taken into account on deciding how large an extension should be. Appendix IV sets out standards in relation to overshadowing.
- 6.8 The height of the extension will also affect the amount of available light. Two storey rear extensions close to common boundaries may have to be restricted to 3 metres in depth or less in order to prevent unacceptable overshadowing and visual intrusion.

- 6.9 Differences in site levels and orientation will also influence the effect a new building has on daylight and sunlight and should be taken into account when designing the extension.
- 6.10 Some houses are mutually dependent on their access to sunlight with the neighbouring property. In these cases, the Council will not give undue weight to the amenities of neighbours where the neighbour has carried out works which prejudice their own amenity.



# Appendices

## **Appendix I - Making a Planning Application**

Your local planning authority (LPA) – in this case Ipswich Borough Council – is responsible for deciding whether a proposed development should be allowed to go ahead. This is called planning permission and can relate to anything from an extension on a house to a new shopping centre.

Most new buildings, major alterations to existing buildings and significant changes to the use of a building or piece of land need planning permission. This process is administered by the LPA, and decisions are made in accordance with adopted policies set out for the development of the town.

Policies for the development of Ipswich are found in the Core Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document <sup>29</sup> or Core Strategy. The Core Strategy sets out a suite of strategic policies which cover the long term objectives of the Council, and a suite of Development Management policies which cover how to consider planning applications for new housing schemes, and the extensions and alterations to dwellings which are covered in this SPD.

Householder applications can be made by the homeowner in most instances, however a full set of plans drawn to scale will be required, to enable the LPA to consider the development proposed. For a full list of the validation requirements for a planning application a local validation list can be found on the council's website.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Core Strategy and Policies DPD - [https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/Core\\_Strategy\\_Dec\\_11.pdf](https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/Core_Strategy_Dec_11.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Local Validation List for Ipswich Borough Council - <https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/local-validation-lists>

## **Appendix II - Permitted Development**

However, certain minor building works do not need planning permission as they are considered to be only minor operations. These operations are known as 'permitted development' and don't need planning permission. This is because the effect of such developments on neighbours, or the surrounding environment is likely to be small – e.g. building a boundary wall below a certain height, or building a minor extension to a house.

Some permitted development does require the home owner to go through what is known as a prior notification process for larger extensions to homes, whereby the LPA will conduct consultation with the adjacent neighbours to ensure that they are satisfied that there will be no impacts on their amenity as a result of the development. If the Council receives no objections then the proposals can go ahead. If objections are received then the proposals will be considered against the relevant policies of the Core Strategy.

The Government has a very helpful website [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk) which explains the planning system and when and where planning permission would be required. There are useful householder interactive guides available for help in deciding whether planning permission is needed. Alternatively it is always advisable to speak with the Ipswich Borough Council planning department – Development Management section if you are unsure.

### **Appendix III - Non-planning matters – Building regs (Contacts) Party Wall Act**

Planning control is the process of managing the development of land and buildings. However there are other issues that do not fall under Town Planning which are still important to consider when looking to extend your property or undertake some other form of development.

The manner in which you build your development will need to comply with the Building Regulations. In some cases this will require the approval of the Building Control department of the Council. Building Regulations make sure that new building work is safe and energy efficient. The Councils Building Regulations department will be happy to talk through what would be required.

Ipswich, Babergh, and Suffolk Coastal Councils work together in a Building Control partnership. Together they have produced a guide to take you through the Building Control process. It is not a substitute for professional advice but it aims to show how your project will be affected by the Building Regulations. The guide is divided into chapters that contain advice about typical building projects and it is hoped that when you have read the guide you will have a better understanding of what is involved in a domestic building project<sup>31</sup>

The Party Wall etc. Act 1996 is a separate matter from Building Control, whether you are using the Local Authority Building Control service or that of an Approved Inspector. The Government has published a free guide which explains all of the situations and necessary notices and appeal procedures<sup>32</sup>.

It can be a good idea to receive advice from an expert in party wall matters concerning the procedures of the Party Wall etc. Act 1996 and the rights and responsibilities it confers. A list of party wall practitioners is available on the Party Walls website [www.partywalls.org.uk/](http://www.partywalls.org.uk/).

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<sup>31</sup> Building Regulations - Building Regulations Guide to Extending Your Home - [https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/A\\_Guide\\_to\\_Extending\\_your\\_Home.pdf](https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/A_Guide_to_Extending_your_Home.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> Building Regulations booklet - <https://www.gov.uk/party-wall-etc-act-1996-guidance>

## **Appendix IV - BREdaylight sunlight good practice guide**

The following information is taken from the BRE Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight Good Practice Guide (2009). The Council will use these standards to judge the impact new extensions may have on surrounding buildings in terms of daylight, sunlight and overshadowing. Living rooms, dining rooms and kitchens are important when considering the impact of extensions on existing buildings. Bedrooms should also be analysed although they are less important.

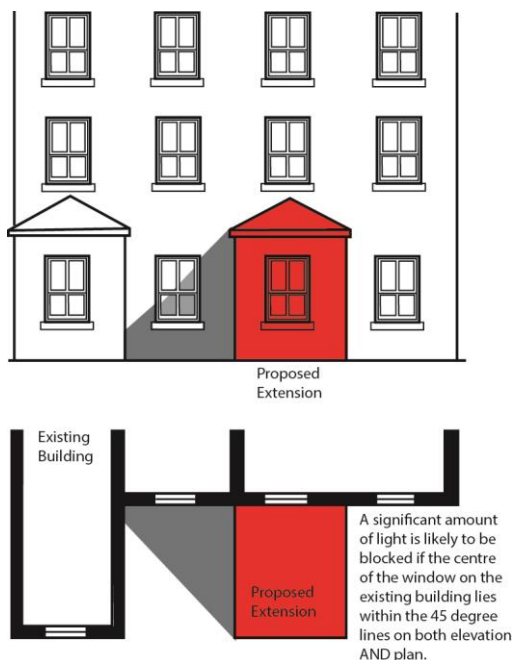
### Daylight –

The access to diffuse daylight in neighbouring properties may be affected if any part of a new extension measured in a vertical section, perpendicular to a main window wall of the neighbouring house crosses a line drawn at 25 degrees from the centre of the lowest window. This will be the case if either:

- the vertical sky component measured at the centre of an existing main window is less than 27%, and less than 0.8 times its former value; or
- the area of the working plane in a room which can receive direct sunlight is reduced to less than 0.8 times its former value

### The 45 Degree Approach -

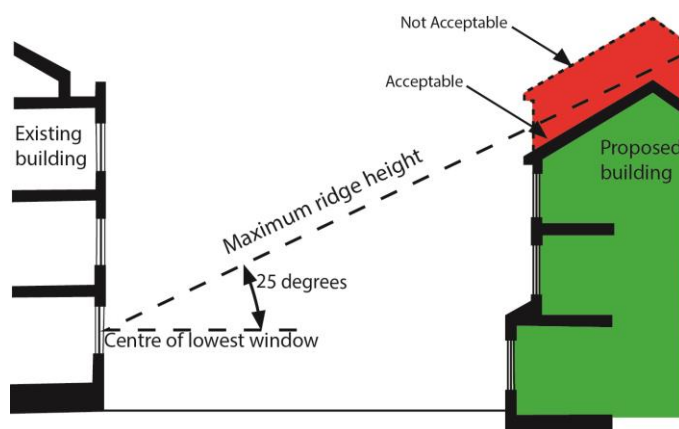
This method can be used to assess the diffuse skylight impact on the house next door where extensions adjoin the front or rear of a house. It applies only where the nearest side of an extension is perpendicular to the window and is not valid for windows which directly face the extension or for buildings opposite.



In this method a significant amount of light is likely to be blocked if the centre of the window lies within 45 degrees on both plan and elevation.

### Sunlight -

If a living room of an existing house has a main window facing within 90 degrees of due south, and any part of a new extension subtends an angle of more than 25% to the horizontal, measured from the centre of the window in a vertical section perpendicular to the window, then the sun lighting of the existing dwelling may be adversely affected. This will be the case if a point at the centre of the window, in the plane of the inner window wall receives in the year less than one quarter of annual probable sunlight hours including at least 5% of annual probable sunlight hours between 21 September and 21 March, and less than 0.8 times its former sunlight hours during either period.



### Shadows -

No more than two fifths and preferably no more than a quarter of any garden or amenity area should be prevented by buildings from receiving any sun at all on 21<sup>st</sup> March. If as a result of a new development, and existing garden or amenity area does not meet these guidelines, and the area which can receive some sun on 21<sup>st</sup> March is less than 0.8 times its former value, then the loss of sunlight is likely to be noticeable.

## **Appendix V - Tree types and sizes**

In section 4.53 – 4.68 of this SPD it describes the benefits that planting schemes can have on the overall appearance of new developments and on the quality of biodiversity in the area. Planting can also be a highly efficient manner of dealing with surface water drainage given the right circumstances (see Appendix 6), intercept rain in heavy rainstorms, provide shade for hotter summers and help tackle urban heat island effect, to say nothing of aesthetic or biodiversity value.

Tree work can require spate approval from the Council where the tree is specifically protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), is growing within a Conservation Area, or part of a protected landscape design subject of a planning condition. If you are unsure as to whether a tree is subject to such protection contact the Planning Team on 01473 432000.

As the Tree Council puts it, the overriding consideration for successfully choosing a tree is that “unborn generations should thank you for it” (Trees in Your Ground, p40).

Below are a number of links that will aid developers and homeowners in choosing the correct type of planting for their proposed development. They have been broken down into separate categories to provide information for different forms of planting, however landscaping schemes for larger developments should not consider just one type only. Moreover the advice of a qualified landscape designer or arboriculturalist should be sought.

Information regarding ‘right tree – right place’ can be found on page 31 and appendix 4 of the councils Tree Management Policy 2010

Native trees – <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=848> and trees for smaller gardens <https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=117>

Shrubs and general landscaping – <https://www.rhs.org.uk/Advice/Profile?PID=670>

- a) Hedges – Details on native hedge planting can be provided from Royal Horticultural Society.
- b) SUDs – For larger schemes where SuDs are proposed there may be specific planting requirements. <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-8AEHPX>
- c) Sewers for Adoption 6<sup>th</sup> Edition gives a useful guide for planting adjacent to sewers. This includes the following advice:- low lying shrubs - no problems, larger hedge type bushes should be 3 metres distance from the pipe; Ash , Oak , Elm type trees 6 metre distance, and Poplar / willow type trees 12 metre distance.

[http://sfa.wrcplc.co.uk/Data/Sites/4/GalleryImages/WebImages/pdfs/SFA7smalldev\\_sep2013.pdf](http://sfa.wrcplc.co.uk/Data/Sites/4/GalleryImages/WebImages/pdfs/SFA7smalldev_sep2013.pdf)

- d) Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance -  
<file:///ipswich/ibc/PTRSupportMyDocuments/carlos.hone/My%20Documents/Natural%20England%20-%20Green%20Infrastructure%20guidance.pdf>

## **Appendix VI - Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs )**

With regards to sustainable drainage Ipswich Borough Council has an adopted Development and Flood risk SPD:-

<https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/www.ipswich.gov.uk/files/SPD%20for%20Dev%20and%20Flood%20Risk%20ver17.pdf>

Permeable surfacing advice for homeowners and developers:-

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7728/pavingfrontgardens.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7728/pavingfrontgardens.pdf)

The following document explores the practical challenges and solutions to integrating trees in 21st century streets, civic spaces and surface car parks, detailing process, design and technical options.

Trees in Hard Landscapes: A guide for Delivery (2014):-

<http://www.tdag.org.uk/trees-in-hard-landscapes.html>



## **Appendix VII - Documents superseded by this SPD**

Development Control Policies and Design Guidelines 1992.

Supplementary Planning Guidance – Good Practice Guide to Extending Your Home  
1999.