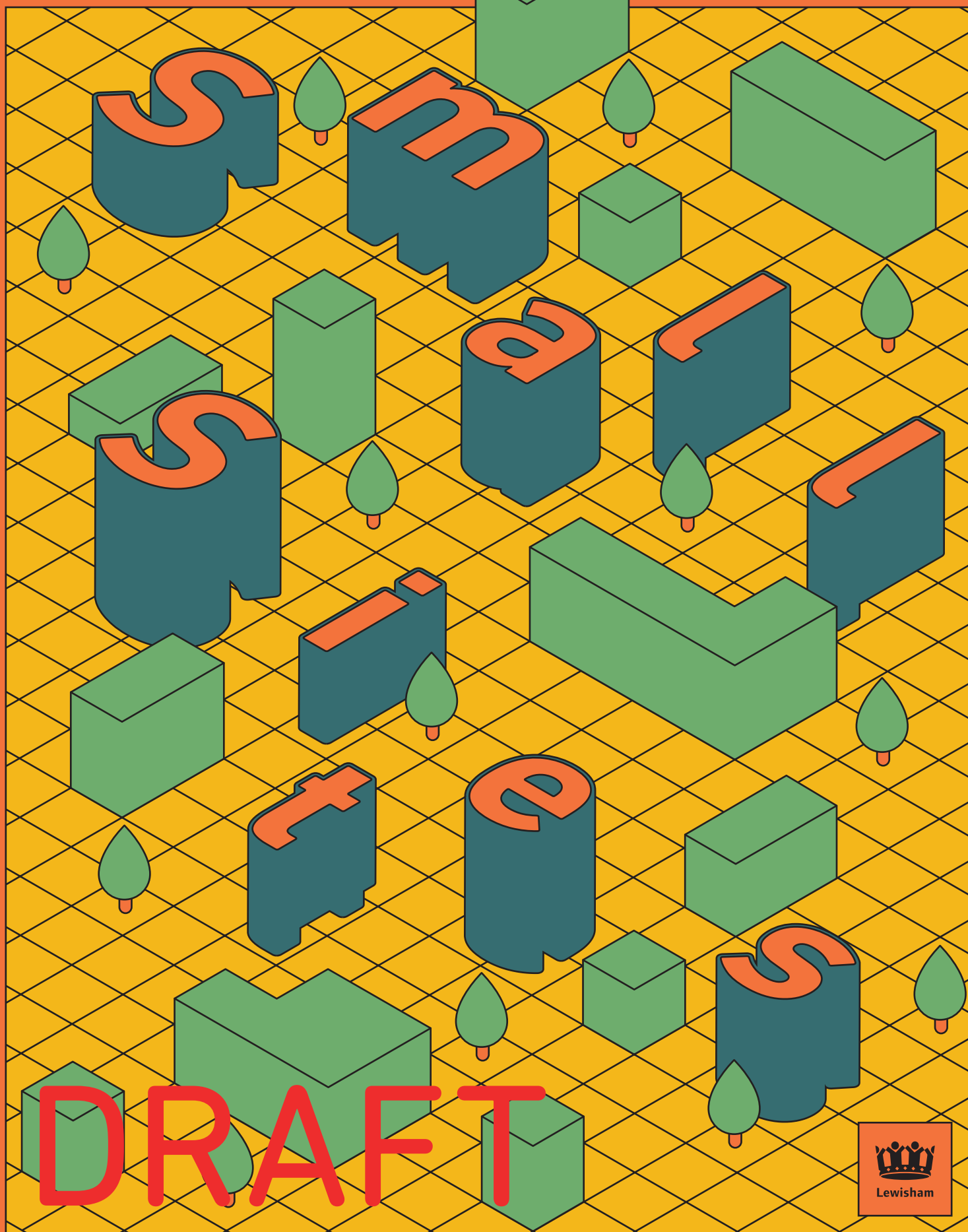


Small Sites Design Guide

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Draft March 2021





**London Borough of Lewisham
Small Sites Design Guide
Supplementary Planning Document**

This document is a design guide for small sites developments in the London Borough of Lewisham. It is the second of three documents in this series, all of which can be found on Lewisham Council’s website.



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Published TBC
This is a draft version for comment.

Some images in this document are placeholders awaiting new photography that will be incorporated ahead of issuing for consultation.

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1 What is this Document?

1.1. What is this document?

1.1.1. This document is a supplementary planning document (SPD) providing advice and guidance for anyone involved in preparing or reviewing planning applications for residential development on a small site in Lewisham.

1.2. Purpose of this section

1.2.1. This section outlines the purpose of the design guide and the value of good design when developing a small site. It explains how to use the document, its structure, who it is intended for as well as its aims.

1.3. What is a supplementary planning document (SPD)?

1.3.1. A supplementary planning document (SPD) provides advice and guidance on the implementation of policies and proposals contained in Lewisham's Local Plan. SPDs are prepared in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and Regulations 11 to 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

1.4. What is a Small Site?

1.4.1. Small sites are any site that are below 0.25 hectares in size. That is 2,500sqm, or just under a third of the size of a standard football pitch.

1.4.2. The National Planning Policy Framework states that local authorities should promote small sites developments as "Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly." (NPPF, paragraph 68). Meanwhile the London Plan says that "Boroughs should pro-actively support well-designed new homes on small sites (below 0.25 hectares in size) through both planning

decisions and plan-making" (London Plan, Policy H2a).

1.4.3. Lewisham needs to build on average 16,670 new homes over the next 10 years, with 3,790 of these coming from small sites. These sites vary in character, ownership and existing usage, but they can be found across Lewisham and encouraging them to be developed to provide new homes is vital to meeting these targets.

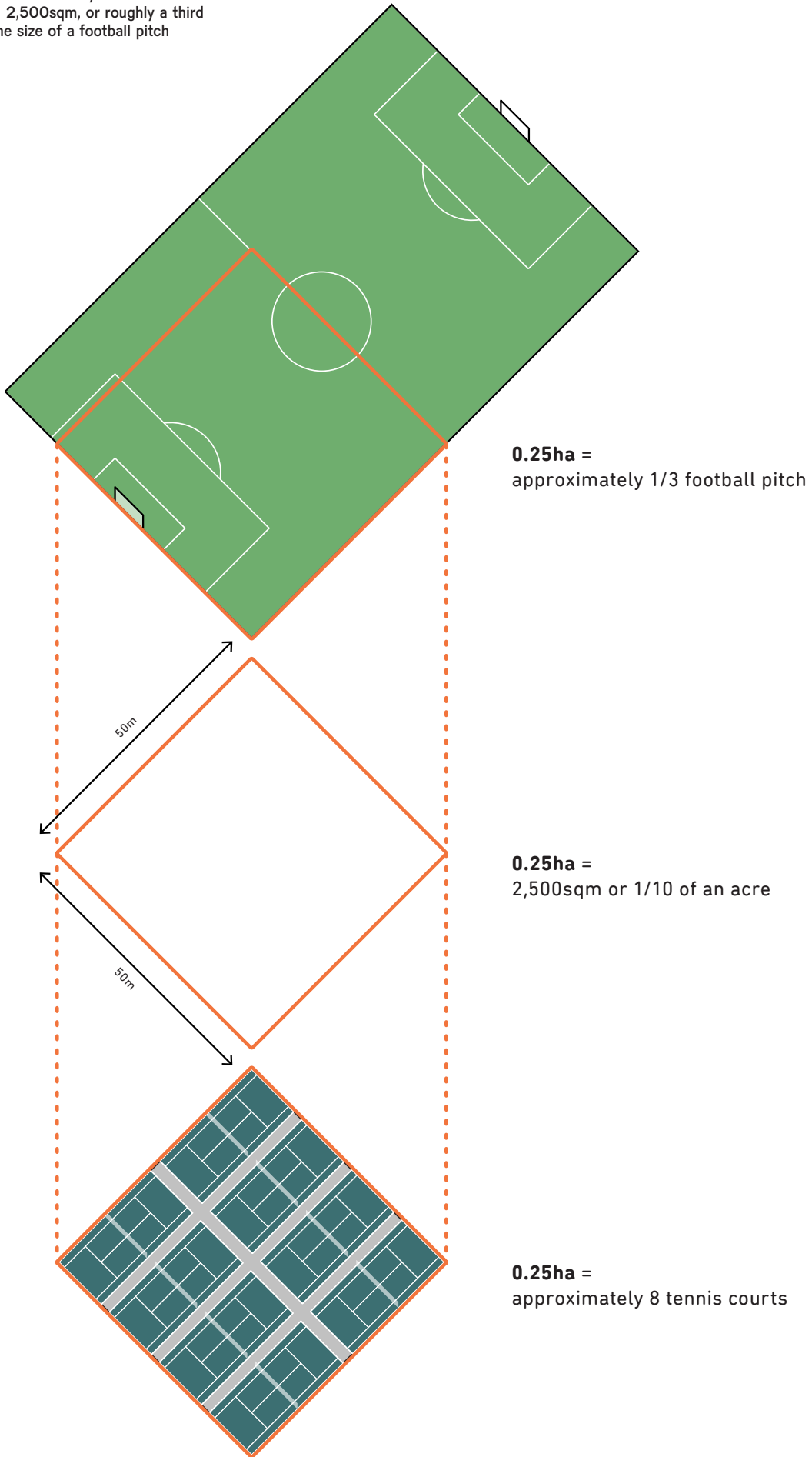
1.5. Why have an SPD on Small Sites?

1.5.1. The SPD has a number of aspirations:

- Deliver more homes, including those that are genuinely affordable
- Ensure that Lewisham achieves its annual housing targets and meets the government's Housing Delivery Test
- Diversify our housing supply to make it more open to smaller operators – Lewisham is currently heavily reliant on large strategic sites by large housebuilders
- Encourage local builders and developers to build within Lewisham thus stimulating the local economy and creating local jobs
- Increasing density/critical mass within our underdeveloped areas to help support local centres
- Help coordinate the delivery of infrastructure within the south of our borough through the collection of CIL and S106 contributions
- The emerging Local Plan is introducing an affordable homes contribution for small sites for the first time which again will help deliver Lewisham's home building programme

1.5.2. In the diagram on the next page are the key objectives that have guided the production of this document. These are expanded on in the Lewisham Small Sites Development Strategy document.

Fig. 1: A small site is any site smaller than 2,500sqm, or roughly a third of the size of a football pitch



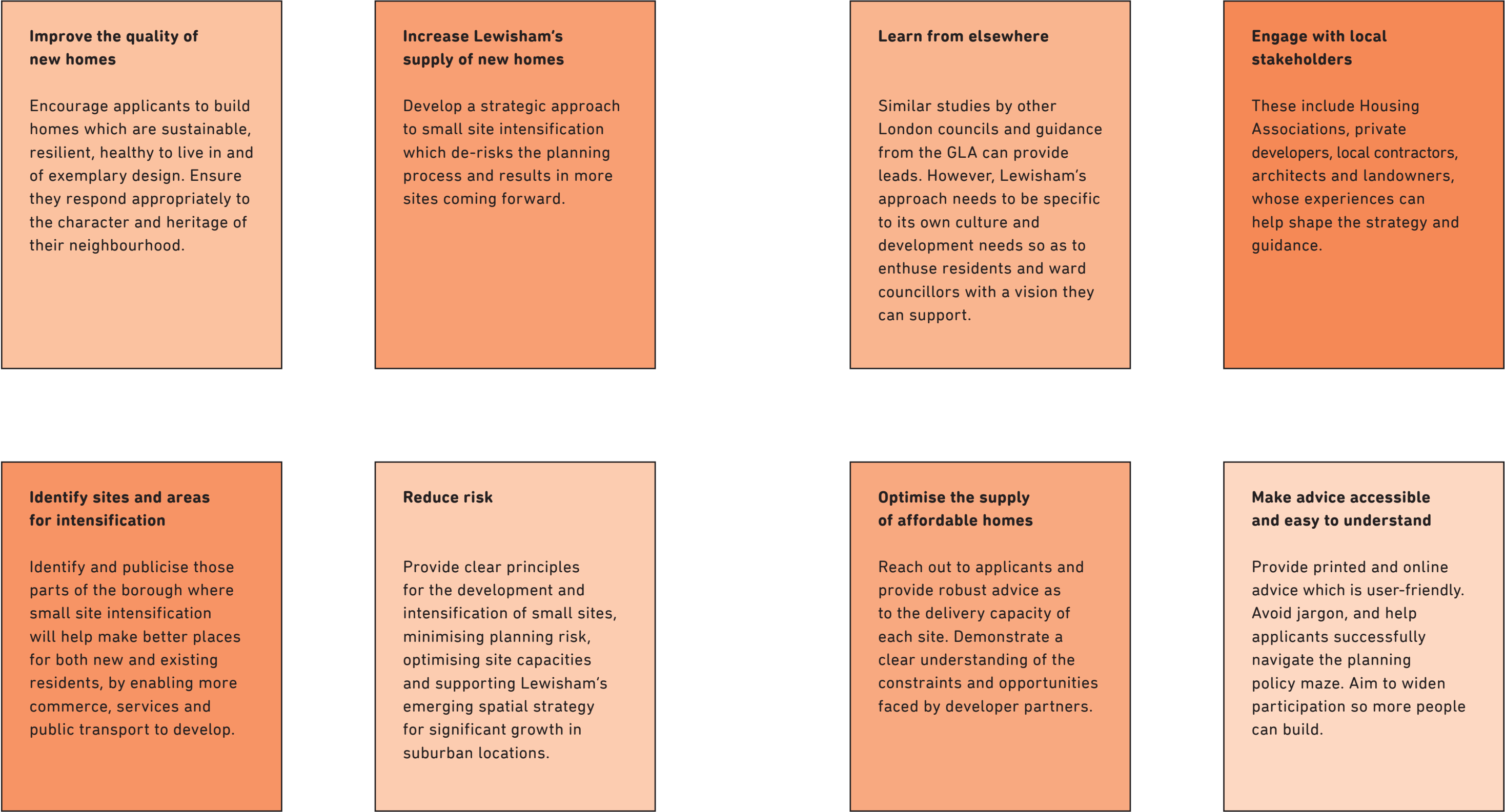


Fig. 2: Objectives of the document

1.6. Who is it for

1.6.1. This design guide is intended to be a design manual and a working tool. It is intended for frequent reference and is an essential tool for all charged with preparing or assessing the quality of planning applications for small sites developments.

1.6.2. The design guide should be read by:

- Experienced and amateur developers
- Homeowner considering development
- Commercial developers
- Built-environment professionals
- Planning officers

1.6.3. Using this design guide will help to de-risk the planning process and speed up the planning process by improving the quality of planning submissions. Following this guidance will provide comfort to smaller developers who are less able to accommodate risk.

1.7. Structure of the SPD

1.7.1. This document is the second in a set of three documents. The first sets out the vision and context of small sites in Lewisham, whilst the third is an appendix with further resources and advice. This structure can be seen on the diagram opposite (figure 3).

1.7.2. This document is the SPD, and is split into three main sections. The first is the small sites **guidance** section and offers general guidance on some of the typical issues that arise when developing small sites. It covers elements of policy that small sites projects will need to comply with, including policy designations and conservation areas. It provides advice on the process leading up to the submission of a planning application, advice on how to prepare a design, the documents required for a small sites planning application that ensures that your application

has been properly considered. Finally, it includes simple advice on how to ensure your small site development is following sustainable principles.

1.7.3. The second section is the small sites **toolkits** section. All applicants should familiarise themselves with this part as advice from this section is referred to throughout the document. It covers general design principles applicable to most small sites developments and provides a design tool box providing techniques and design methods for optimising the design of small sites developments. It also covers opportunities that can often be overlooked on small sites, as well as some best-practice tips that applicants should familiarise themselves with. Planning applications which optimise development opportunities and adhere to best-practice principles will be looked upon favourably by officers.

1.7.4. The **site types** section identifies a series of typical site types found around Lewisham and provides specific design advice for each one. Applicants should consult this section and identify which site types their site falls under and consult the relevant section early in the design process. It is important to note that real sites may not cleanly fall into one of these generalised site types, and applicants may be able to benefit from the advice in multiple of these site type sections.

1.7.5. In order to be concise the SPD covers only the most common site types, issues and opportunities in small site development. An appendix is provided to this document that contains further resources and more specific information.

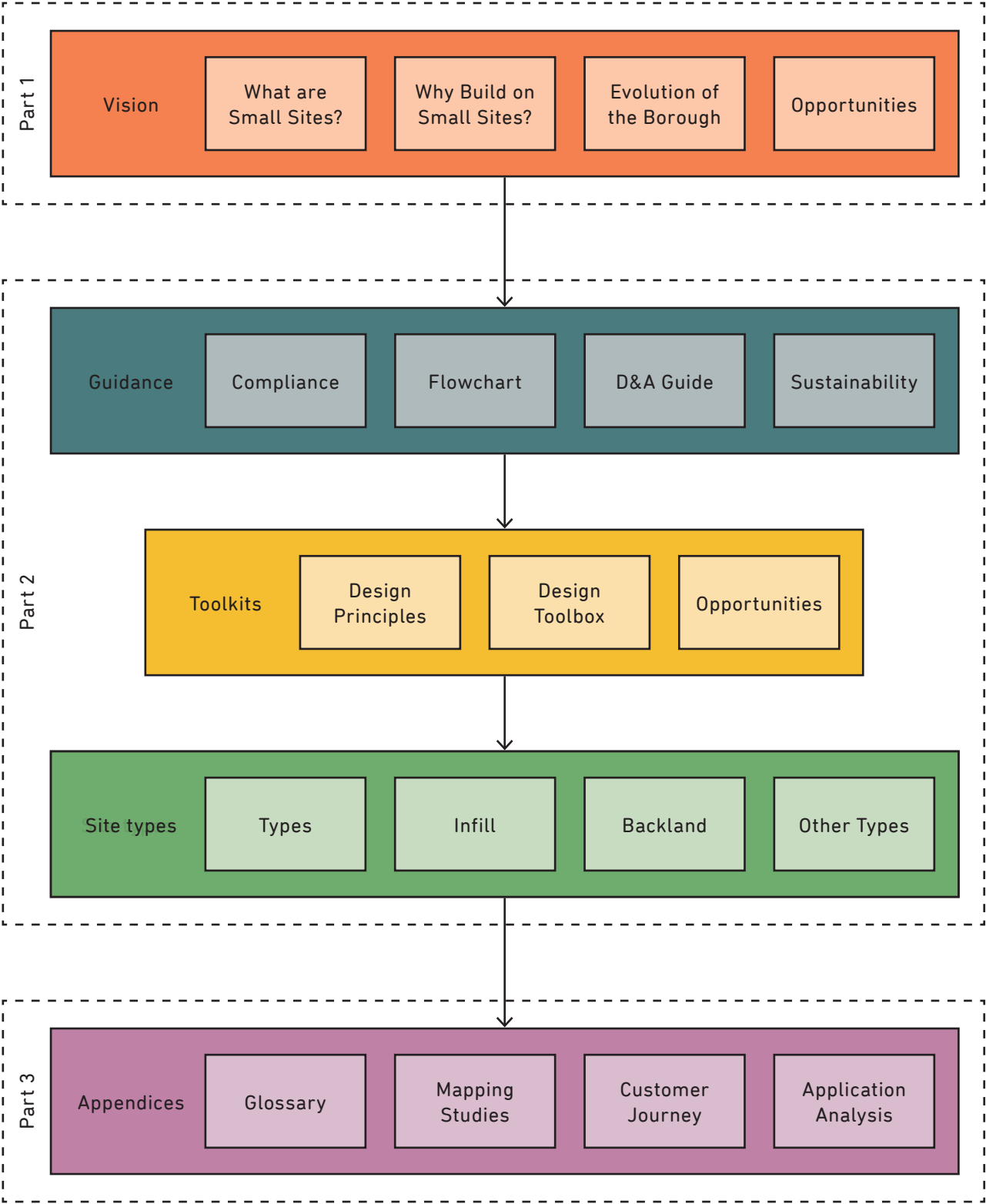


Fig. 3: Structure of the small sites documents. This document constitutes Part 2

4 FAQs

A list of some of the questions a small site owner or developer might ask — and a go at answering them.

3.7.1. Surely building on small sites is more trouble than it's worth?

There are lots of good reasons to build on small sites. They can improve the appearance of a messy or overgrown plot. They can add value for the owner or developer, and by enhancing their surroundings they add value to the whole neighbourhood. More people living in an area helps support local services such as shops, schools and public transport. And they help enable Lewisham to meet its housing requirements, including for affordable housing.

3.7.2. Affordable housing: isn't that impossible on small sites?

Lewisham Council will be looking for affordable homes and strategies which keep build costs down and the cost in use low, locking in affordability throughout the life of the buildings. For example, avoiding lifts and shared common parts, providing everyone instead with their own front door will reduce both build costs and keep service charges low on most schemes.

3.7.3. What are the main constraints on small site development?

Size: Many planning application refusals for small sites are on the grounds of over-development, trying to squeeze too much into a small plot in a way which is overbearing, or which negatively affects the amenity of neighbours or of its own future inhabitants. There is no one-size-fits-all rule for what is appropriate on any given site, but a successful development is one which is appropriately scaled to its context.

Overlooking: The architecture of small sites will need often to work harder to protect and achieve privacy and outlook of neighbours and at the same time provide adequate privacy and outlook to the new residents, especially where many homes are proposed. Courtyard houses where the windows look into the centre of the plot might provide a solution in some cases. Elsewhere, angled windows and setbacks can help preserve privacy where outward facing windows are needed.

Shading: There are specific measures that can be done to ascertain the shape, or or "envelope", within which one is free to develop. This will depend on orientation, daylight and sunlight changes throughout the year and existing adjacent windows. The resultant envelope might sometimes lead one to propose something unusual: a tall skinny house or a ground-hugging triangular house might solve issues of overlooking or overshadowing. Small sites are often located on leftover plots or backland so constraints will vary considerably, and will often need careful design to overcome.

Access: Small sites always need to provide access to emergency vehicles, refuse collection and deliveries.

3.7.4. Should new development look the same as other buildings in the street?

Not necessarily, but it is worth starting by looking carefully at the context of where you plan to build. Photographing architecture of all ages in the immediate area might well capture the character of the area; some of the more common materials, entranceways, doors, window types, roof shapes, and landscaping which work well in the street. This context will have a certain massing, including the height of particular elements and set-backs from the pavement or garden walls. In planning new homes, proposals should demonstrate an understanding of this built context. The new architecture - whether on the street or set back in the block - should relate to or reference the features of the adjacent existing buildings; its massing and visual appearance either working as a sympathetic addition in the context or working as a counterpoint which adds positively to the identity of the neighbourhood.

3.7.5. What density will Lewisham planners accept?

There are no hard and fast rules about the capacity of small sites for homes. Each application will be considered on its merits, but clever, sensitive design will enable denser development particularly if the proposal has a good mix of sizes and tenures.

3.7.6. Can we remove some trees?

Occasionally smaller trees can be taken down and new ones planted within the site, but mature trees are almost always an asset to their neighbourhood and should be retained and built around. This also helps ensure that net positive biodiversity can be achieved.

3.7.7. Can garden space be shared?

Playstreets, yards and shared allotments and gardens will be welcomed within a new cluster of homes and adjacent lanes but private amenity will still be required at ground level, as balcony spaces or as roof terraces.

3.7.8. What about parking?

Small site developments should be planned to be car free wherever possible. Cycle parking for residents and guests should be convenient to access and front-staged, as it is expected that over the coming years more forms of two wheel transport will come into regular use.

3.7.9. Should we have security gates?

Small site developments should not be gated. They should be treated as part of the streetscape and public realm. Where possible, sites should be made permeable, with through routes for walking and cycling.

Guidance

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Design & Access Guide	p36
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Sustainability	p42
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6.1. Lewisham’s small sites commitments

- 6.1.1. As part of the London Plan, each borough is assigned a 10 year housing target for net completions. With the adoption of the new London Plan in 2021, Lewisham’s total housing target is 16,670 homes, of which 3,790 (just under a quarter) will need to be developed on small sites.
- 6.1.2. Lewisham is committed to meeting and exceeding these target to deliver the housing it needs. Small sites present an opportunity not only for the delivery of overall housing numbers but also to open up the development process to more diverse sources, including home owners, small developers small contractors, community groups and self builders. Lewisham has a proud history of supporting these groups and this document is part of Lewisham’s strategy to build on this legacy.

6.2. Policy context of this SPD

- 6.2.1. This SPD provides specific advice on the development of new homes on small sites in Lewisham. It sits alongside a series of other SPDs which may also be relevant to your project and you should check the Lewisham website to see what other documents are available. This includes the Alterations and Extensions SPD, which provides advice on working with existing buildings, and the Development Management Local Plan.
- 6.2.2. It is subsidiary to Lewisham’s Local Plan, the London Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It therefore draws information from each of these documents and explains how the policies contained in these documents are applied to Small Sites in Lewisham . As such this document will frequently refer to policies in other documents, where the exact wording can be found.
- 6.2.3. It also sits alongside a series of other documents that include Neighbourhood Plans and Conservation Area appraisals that are important documents when working within or near to the areas that they apply to.
- 6.2.4. The Small Sites Design Guide SPD has been developed following considerable research into the specific opportunities in Lewisham. Much of this information can be found in the Development Strategy Document and Appendices that sit alongside this document and can be found on the Lewisham’s website.

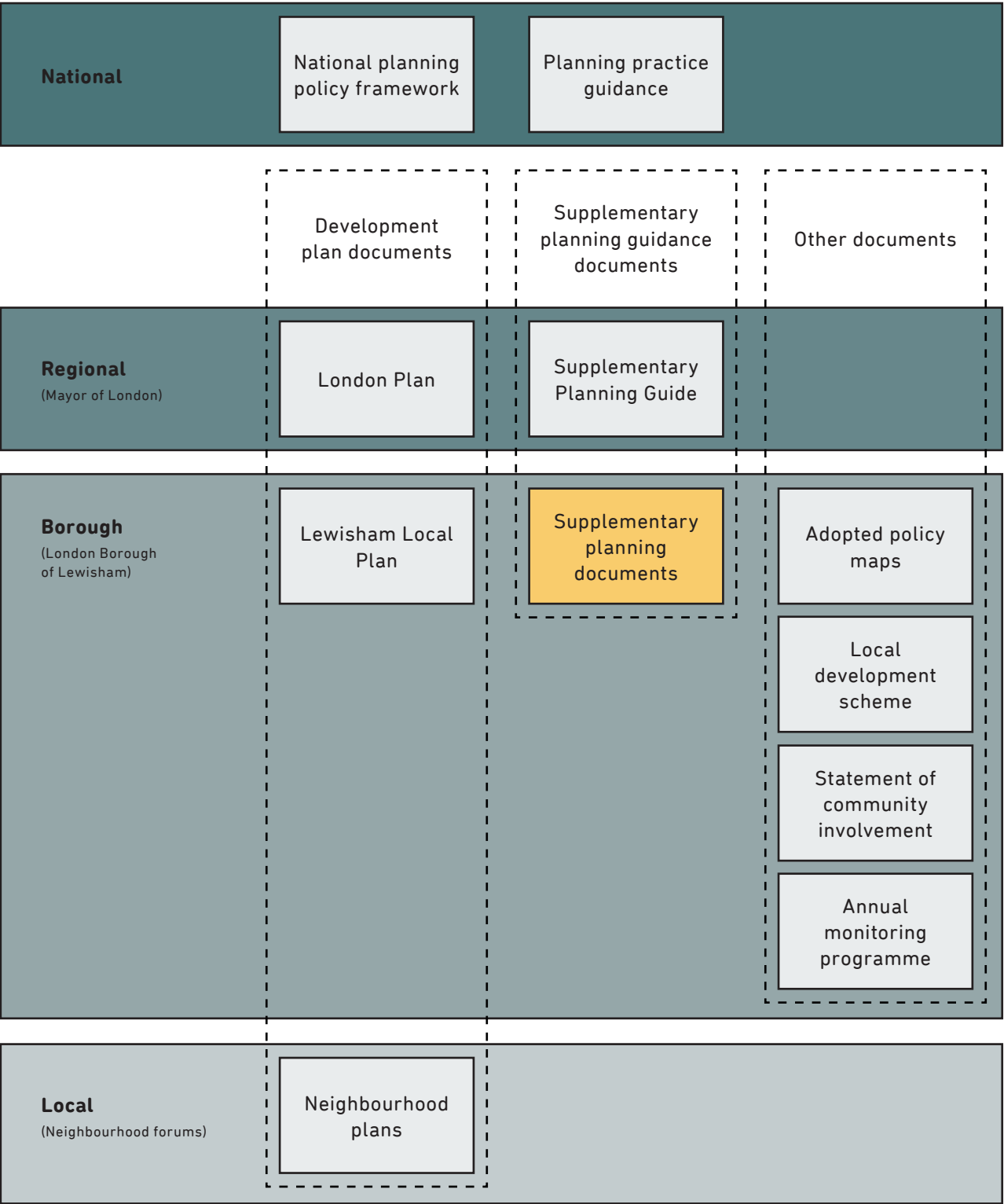


Fig. 4: The planning policy hierarchy

7.1. What are planning policy areas

- 7.1.1. Planning policy areas are defined zones where additional planning controls exist. These are typically to protect particular qualities or features in an area such as natural habitats, areas of beauty or historical importance and areas that provide important amenity.
- 7.2. Article 4 Direction / Permitted Development
- 7.2.1. Article 4 Directions are areas where the rights set out in the General Permitted Development Order have been withdrawn. This means that in these areas some of the types of developments that would typically be classified as permitted development, and therefore not require planning permission, will need to apply for permission.
- 7.2.2. There are several of these areas in Lewisham, including in some Conservation Areas where they exist to help preserve high quality architectural features and ensure that changes are undertaken sympathetically. There is also a large area in the south of the borough across much of Bellingham, Downham and Grove Park. This is as a result of poor quality houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs) being brought forward through permitted development.
- 7.2.3. This does not have a significant impact on small sites applications as generally there are advantages to following a planning application route to development even where permitted development rights exist.
- 7.2.4. You can find out where these areas are by referring to the planning section of Lewisham Council's website.

7.3. Metropolitan Open Land (MOL)

- 7.3.1. Within the London Plan, land designated as MOL is afforded the same level of protection as the Metropolitan Green Belt. MOL designation is intended to protect areas of landscape, recreation, nature conservation and scientific interest which are strategically important.
- 7.3.2. Development proposals on land close or adjacent to MOL will be considered in relation to their detrimental impact on visual amenity, character or use of the MOL. MOL designations can be found on within the London Plan or Lewisham's website.

7.4. Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

- 7.4.1. There are currently 63 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) within the Borough of Lewisham. National and regional planning policy seeks to protect SINC land.
- 7.4.2. Development proposals on land close or adjacent to SINC will be considered in relation to their detrimental impact on visual amenity, character or use of the SINC. SINC designations can be found on within Lewisham's website.

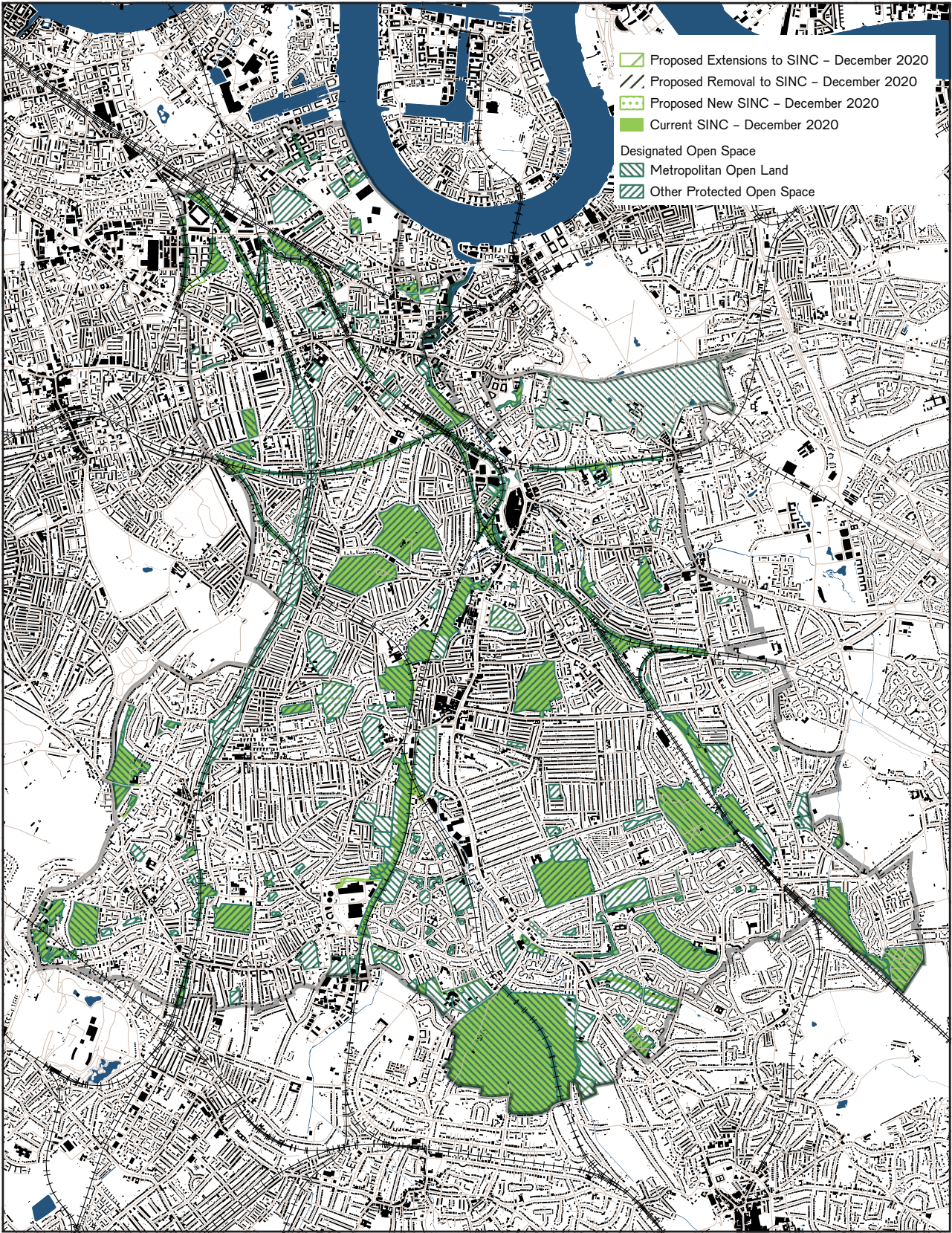


Fig. 5: Map of Lewisham and the surrounding areas showing areas designated as MOL and SINC

7.5. Site allocations

- 7.5.1. Lewisham’s local plan includes site allocation policies. Site allocations are a mechanism to facilitate development which meets the Council’s strategic objectives, and ensure targets for certain development types and provision are met.
- 7.5.2. These site allocations typically apply to sites that are larger than 0.25 ha and therefore are not small sites, but for more information on Site Allocations within Lewisham, refer to the planning section of Lewisham’s website.

7.6. Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL)

- 7.6.1. PTAL is a measure of connectivity by public transport. For any selected place, PTAL suggests how well the place is accessible by public transport services. It does not cover trips by car. PTAL values range from 0 to 6, where the highest value represents the best connectivity to public transport and therefore access to local amenities such as town centres and shops.
- 7.6.2. The London Plan sets out target housing density and parking requirements for the different PTAL ratings. A higher PTAL rating requires higher housing density, and lower parking provision. An interactive map showing PTAL ratings can be found online on the TFL website.

7.7. Policy H2 area

- 7.7.1. The London Plan sets out that “Incremental intensification of existing residential areas within PTALs 3-6 or within 800m distance of a station or town centre boundary is expected to play an important role in contributing towards the housing targets for small sites”.
- 7.7.2. The map on the opposite page sets out which areas of the borough fall within these zones set out above and are therefore priority areas for small sites development. As sites in this area are well connected sites, car-free developments should be considered. In addition to this, with the increase of home working and the improvement of cycle infrastructure, car-free small sites developments should be considered where cycle connections are available or proposed.

7.8. Flood zones

- 7.8.1. The Environment Agency maintains a map of flood risk areas. The risk ranges from Zone 1 (low) to Zone 3 (high). Depending on the flood risk of a site, a flood risk assessment may be required as part of a planning application. Sites in flood Zone 1 and under 1ha generally don’t require a flood risk assessment. More information and an interactive flood zone map can be found on the government website ‘flood map for planning’.
- 7.8.2. Where required, a flood risk assessment will set-out the risk and management / mitigation measures which you intend to put in place to mitigate the risk of flooding, such as moving sleeping accommodation to upper floors.

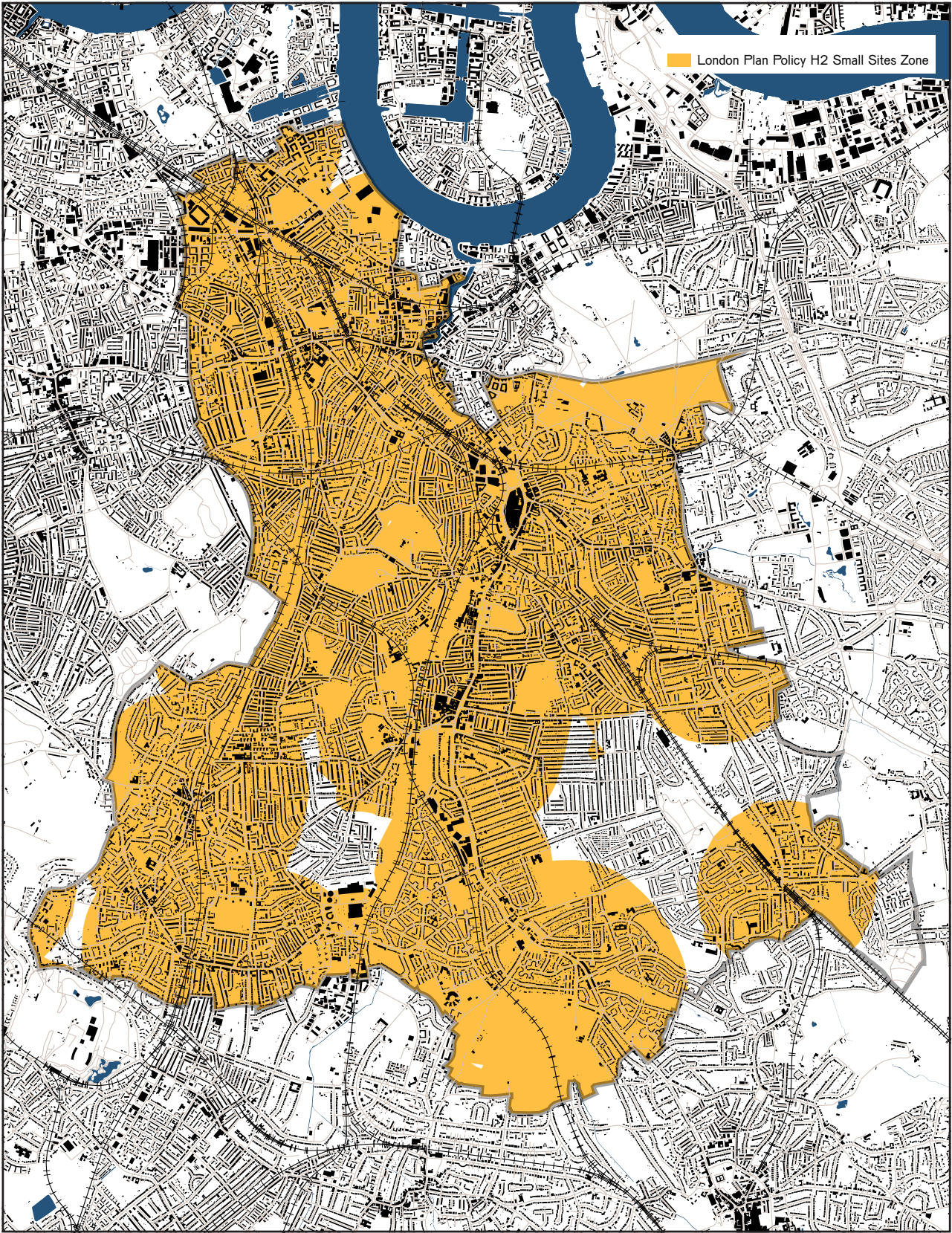


Fig. 6: Map of Lewisham and the surrounding areas showing the Policy H2 area and areas close to a cycleway

7.9. Neighbourhood forums and areas

- 7.9.1. Local people can influence the vision and planning policies for how they want their local area to develop by producing a Neighbourhood Plan. Parts of Lewisham have already prepared Neighbourhood Plans, these cover specific characteristics of an area and act as additional policy or guidance to the borough wide policy documents.
- 7.9.2. Neighbourhood areas and plans can be found on within Lewisham’s website, and should be consulted if you are developing a site in an area they relate to.

7.10. Archaeological priority areas (APA)

- 7.10.1. APAs exist in areas where there is important known archaeological interest. They require developments to take extra care to ensure that they are not damaging potential heritage assets but in the most part do not restrict development.
- 7.10.2. Developers may be required to investigate the potential for significant archaeological deposits where the ground will be disturbed, and archaeological watching briefs, excavations and reports may be required by planning condition.
- 7.10.3. More information about APAs and where they exist can be found on the Historic England and Lewisham Council websites.

7.11. Conservation Areas

- 7.11.1. Conservation Areas are a key planning policy areas that small sites developments need to consider as the way we build in conservation areas can be different to other areas.
- 7.11.2. At the time of writing, there are 29 conservation areas in the Borough of Lewisham. More information on Conservation Areas can be found in section 7.

7.12. Summary

- 7.12.1. Information relating to the above should be identified early in a project and would typically be identified as part of a desktop review. As per section 9, for small developments this would be best undertaken by a registered architect or planning consultant.

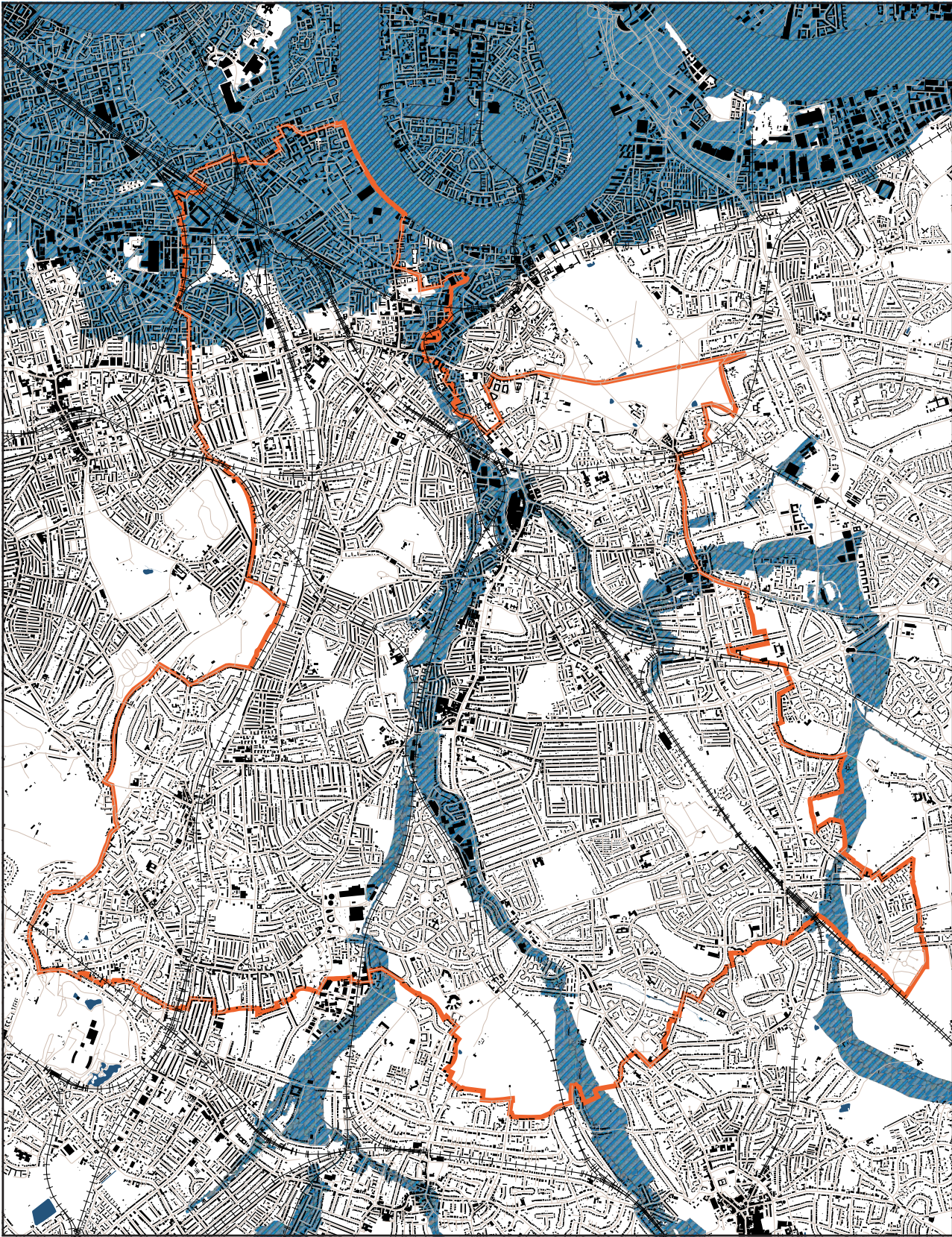


Fig. 7: Map of Lewisham and the surrounding areas showing areas at risk of flood

8.1.

What are Conservation Areas

- 8.1.1.
- Conservation Areas are planning policy areas that exist to protect the historic and architectural features of a place that contribute to its important historical character.
- 8.1.2.
- Many of these provide area appraisals and / or Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that describe why these areas are special. In order to protect the character of Conservation Areas, development will generally be subject to more stringent planning controls, such as restrictions on height, materials and building use. All trees that are visible from the public realm in conservation areas are protected.
- 8.2.
- A rich history
- 8.2.1.
- All new development, wherever it is in Lewisham will have a rich history. Within existing conservation areas, where conservation area appraisal statements have been written, this history is accessibly described and celebrated, but the architecture of Lewisham’s past has the potential to have a positive impact on the new all across the borough.
- 8.2.2.
- Almost every site will have been built on before, often many times over; previous buildings will have been demolished for all sorts of reasons, both good and bad, from pioneering projects to improve health and well-being, to the trauma of wartime bombing. Finding out about these demolished buildings will help explain the shape of plots and road layouts, the names of streets and, localities.
- 8.2.3.
- Every site will have diverse neighbours, structures built for many different reasons with different levels of skill and care. Yet all contribute to the history of an area, and are experienced - for good or bad - by hundreds, if not thousands of people on a regular, occasional or one-off basis.

- 8.2.4.
- Both the disappeared past and the still present tell stories, and what’s added today has the opportunity to enrich the narrative and should seek to do so in a positive way. Lewisham already has a forward looking attitude to conservation, in its excellent conservation area appraisal documents, the borough variously recognises the “creative spirit” of the murals and graffiti at Deptford Creek and cites Blackheath conservation area as one where modern buildings stand equal to those of earlier centuries. The brutalist concrete Lewisham College building is identified as having a positive impact, and Lewisham Park Towers, a group of high rise blocks from 1965 are recognised for their architectural interest and noted to have aged particularly well.
- 8.2.5.
- This should reassure potential developers that although the majority of the borough’s conservation areas recognise the genial character of commercial suburban expansion, there is great diversity in Lewisham’s past and a willingness on the part of the borough to embrace innovation, both within its conservation areas and beyond.
- 8.3.
- Past and present
- 8.3.1.
- To what extent should the architecture of small sites make reference to the buildings around them? The sites, be they infill, corner, vertical intensification or backland, will be in contact or close proximity to their neighbours. Should new buildings strive to be contemporary, with little reference to the past? Can they reference the past in a meaningful way without becoming trite or superficial and lapsing into pastiche? How does one make good new contemporary architecture in a rapidly evolving and vibrant multi-cultural city?

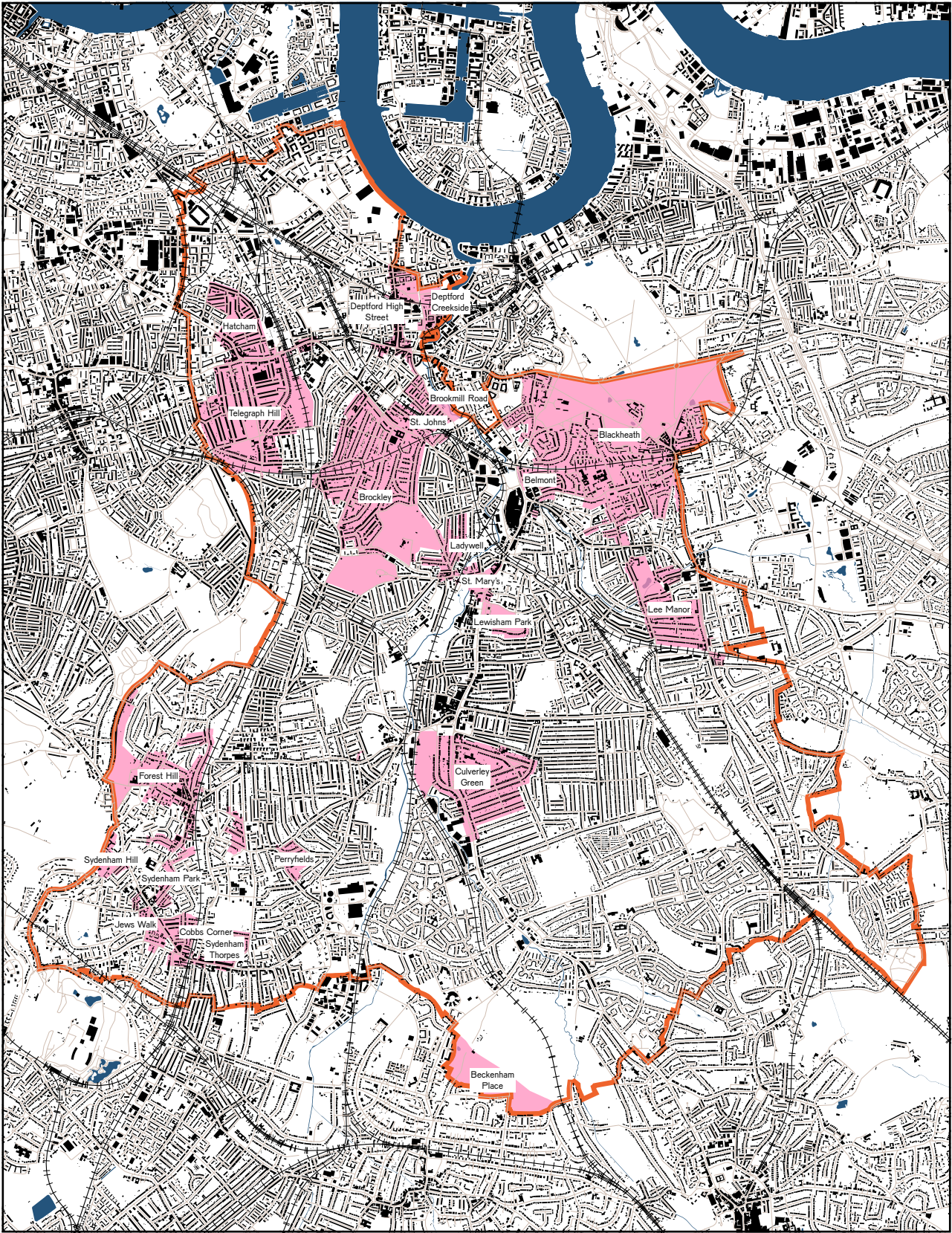


Fig. 8: Map of Lewisham and the surrounding areas showing the location and extent of conservation areas

8.3.2. Conservation Area misconceptions

- New design in a conservation area should always be modest and subservient to what’s there already
- There is no scope for new design to positively enhance a conservation area
- Only traditional materials are acceptable in a conservation area
- New developments in a conservation area should always aim to reinstate lost historic features and recreate the past
- It is always important to match the ridge and cornice heights of neighbouring properties
- Surrounding decorative details must be copied exactly and cannot be reinvented

- 8.3.3. Architecture struggled with its history throughout the C20 century, but is now experiencing a new freedom to explore tradition, pattern and decoration with a mindful playfulness which has the potential to draw on previous examples creatively where appropriate. The skills are out there both to knit together areas which are clearly fractured or damaged, and to insert new structures comfortably into established neighbourhoods.
- 8.3.4. Neither music nor fashion would see innovation or referencing the past as an either/or situation. We are totally comfortable with the concept of sampling, or being inspired by the mood of a film, or iconic photoshoot. Quoting patterns, shapes, proportions and rhythms is an acknowledgement that the past is a rich source of cultural expression, to be celebrated, critiqued and reinvigorated as

part of a lively on-going dialogue. It is second nature to artists in many fields.

- 8.3.5. Social media can encourage us all to cut and paste, to edit and embellish, for fun, for political or social comment, to create, to enjoy and share. We don’t worry that we will feel ignorant if we don’t pick up on every single allusion, and we don’t see the originality of the final product as being diminished by drawing on what has come before.
- 8.3.6. But when it comes to architecture, inhibitions set in. To reference the past can be seen as having nothing new to say, to lack imagination. Architecture is just beginning to shake off some of these restraints, and become more comfortable with its past. This is great news that’s really relevant to how we address infill sites. There will be no one correct solution for any of the sites across the borough.

8.4. Intangible heritage

- 8.4.1. Local distinctiveness can be intangible as well as physical. A great example in Lewisham is the work of Edwardian developer Ted Christmas, whose eye for design and quality of imaginative detail is rightly cherished. He named his houses (and ensured the longevity of these names by incorporating them in highly decorative stained glass front doors). What is not immediately obvious is that the initial letters of each name along the street spell out “Ted Christmas”. To live here and know this, is to be in on a secret story hidden in plain view. Are there opportunities to incorporate similar devices today? Could more be made of the memories of Lewisham’s past residents to enrich the sense of local identity?
- 8.4.2. Famous past inhabitants of Brockley Conservation areas included actress Lilly Langtry and music hall entertainer Marie Lloyd. The Tetley responsible for the world’s first teabag lies in a Lewisham church yard. There is scope for new infill projects to

reference these stories and undoubtedly many more, including stories from the more recent past, which could help today’s residents stop to ask “what was it like here back then?”, and fire an imaginative engagement and sense of belonging.

8.5. Modern lifestyles

- 8.5.1. What we need from our homes has changed. Modern lifestyles have meant that the way that our buildings look is often different.
- 8.5.2. Some things remain constant:
- We want our homes to feel safe and secure
 - We want them to give us privacy and seclusion when we want it, but we also want to get to know our neighbours and feel part of a community

- We want to be warm, dry and free from condensation,
 - We want our homes to be easy to keep clean and smart.
- 8.5.3. All sorts of aspects of day to day life have changed radically from when some of our homes were built:
- Electric car charging points, bicycles, electric bikes, scooters and electric scooters, prams and buggies (now more compact and manoeuvrable).
 - More parcels, secure drop-off when we are not at home, chilled drop-off for supermarket orders, fewer and fewer letters.
 - We want the ability to work from our homes, a greater connection with our gardens and open-plan living.



Fig. 9: Examples of stained glass being used in front doors around Lewisham, including on two houses developed by Ted Christmas (Photography: Catherine Croft & TBC)

9.1. What is Permitted Development

- 9.1.1. You can perform certain types of work without needing to apply for planning permission through “permitted development rights” (PDR). They derive from a general planning permission granted not by the local authority but by Parliament.
- 9.1.2. Change of use to residential, will require a ‘prior approval’ application, which allows the local planning authority to review its compliance with permitted development policy. This will generally be in the form of a basic set of drawings and will likely request information on flood risk, parking, waste and recycling, and ground contamination.
- 9.1.3. Permitted development legislation changes frequently, and what is – and what isn’t – considered as such can vary. In general terms, however, the following things are covered by permitted development:
 - Some changes of use, for example from offices to residential subject to prior approval,
 - Upward extension of an existing building to create additional dwellings, again, subject to prior approval being granted.
- 9.1.4. Flats, houses converted into flats, maisonettes and listed buildings may not have the relevant permitted development rights and planning permission may be required. In addition, permitted development is limited in some areas through an Article 4 direction. These areas include some Conservation Areas as set out in section 7.
- 9.1.5. Advice on whether or not planning permission or building regulations approval are required can be found on the Lewisham’s website.

9.2. Why a full planning application is usually a better option

- 9.2.1. Whilst permitted development might seem like an attractive opportunity for delivering new homes, in most cases the potential is limited by the very specific restrictions placed on what is considered permitted development. There are several ways in which a carefully considered full planning application can achieve higher density, better quality, more attractive and more sustainable homes than those approved through PDR.
- 9.2.2. **Capacity**
It is likely that by seeking approval through formal planning processes, an increased site capacity can be achieved when compared to the limitations of working within the PDR restrictions. Whilst the costs associated with submitting a Prior Approval application are usually lower than that for a formal planning application, a well-designed residential design will usually deliver more new homes than the equivalent permitted development scheme, far outweighing any savings made via the latter route. With a more certain planning outcome enabled with the use of this document, permitted development should not be considered as a fast-track route to approval.
- 9.2.3. **Higher Quality / Greater Control**
Developments achieved through PDR are often of lower quality when compared with those achieved through formal planning. For example, a change of use achieved through PDR will restrict the changes to an external façade, this could impact locations of windows and doors, leading to poor outlook and light quality. Compare this with the same change of use achieved through formal planning where you can apply for new or amended window openings – the opportunity for change is far greater. Higher quality homes result in higher values, and an improvement of the wellbeing of their occupants.

9.2.4. **Affordability**

As above, whilst seeking approval via PDR will likely cost less than a planning application, this is heavily offset by the opportunities a formal planning approval will offer and the associated uplift in value.

9.2.5. As outlined in section 9, by undertaking a feasibility study at the start of the design process, for a relatively small cost one can establish at the outset what development opportunities an application site possesses.

9.2.6. **Limits of Permitted Development**

Certain types of minor alterations and small extensions to existing houses are covered by permitted development rights. However, even some matters that appear relatively minor (crossovers, trees) may require planning permission.

9.2.7. Flats, houses converted into flats, maisonettes and listed buildings may not have the relevant permitted development rights that individual homes possess and planning permission may be required.

9.3. Use of this document

9.3.1. Most of the advice in this document will apply to all small sites. Even if a formal planning application is not required for development, the guidance set out within this SPD, other relevant planning policy documents and Conservation Area Appraisals will act as good practice guidance to help applicants achieve high quality design and place making.



Fig. 10: Street facing infill development with backlands mews development in Sydenham designed by Nissen Richards Architects (website: www.nissenrichardsstudio.com, photography: NEEDED)

10.1. Introduction

10.1.1. The process of obtaining planning permission for a small sites development can seem both vague and overwhelming to new developers and residents. The following section aims to break this down into a series of steps to help those working on small sites to understand the process and follow a working pattern that reduces the risks involved whilst increasing the quality of the outcome. More experienced developers may have their own processes, but this guidance should still provide a helpful comparison as to the expectations of Lewisham Council. The flowchart to the right (figure 11) provides an outline of the process, whilst the following text breaks down these steps in more detail.

10.2. Preparation

10.2.1. **Step 1 - Outline Brief**
Small site housing developments come in many forms, from a one-off private house, to a community of self-build homeowners working together to collectively achieve their housing needs. Going into a project it is important that you begin with a clear idea of the type of project you want to pursue. This way you will better be able to find the proper guidance, advice and consultants. Your initial brief is likely to adapt, evolve and become more specific as the project progresses.

10.2.2. If you are not sure where to start with this, lots of built environment professionals offer a service where they can help you to understand what is likely to be possible and therefore help you to define a brief. It is a good idea to consult an architect for this to help you understand the feasibility of your project, the capacity of the site or recommend other suitable professionals if appropriate.

10.2.3. **Step 2 - Finding Land / Identifying a Site**
Finding land to develop is often one of the key barriers to developing new homes. Small sites offer an opportunity to increase the diversity in housing development by encouraging development of previously unconsidered land.

10.2.4. Some people entering into a small site development will already own their site. If you own any land in Lewisham (even if it already has buildings on it), it may be worth considering if development is an option. Even when demolition of existing dwellings is involved, projects can often be more viable, increasing the overall number of homes. If you do already own the land you will need to consider whether you want to develop the land yourself, or include another developer in you plans.

10.2.5. In addition to developing a site which you own, it may be that your proposal could be of more value if delivered jointly with a neighbouring plot. See section 18 for more information on this.

10.2.6. If you don't already have land there are several options to consider. You may have seen a plot in the local area which you feel would be suitable and would consider purchasing to develop yourself - you can see in the site types section what a typical small site might look like. Land Registry provides a cost-effective service which you can use to identify the current owner of a site. You can obtain both the Title Register (which includes ownership information) and Title Plan (which shows the extent of the site) for no more than a few pounds each. (Beware of third-party sites which offer a similar service as they can be much more expensive).

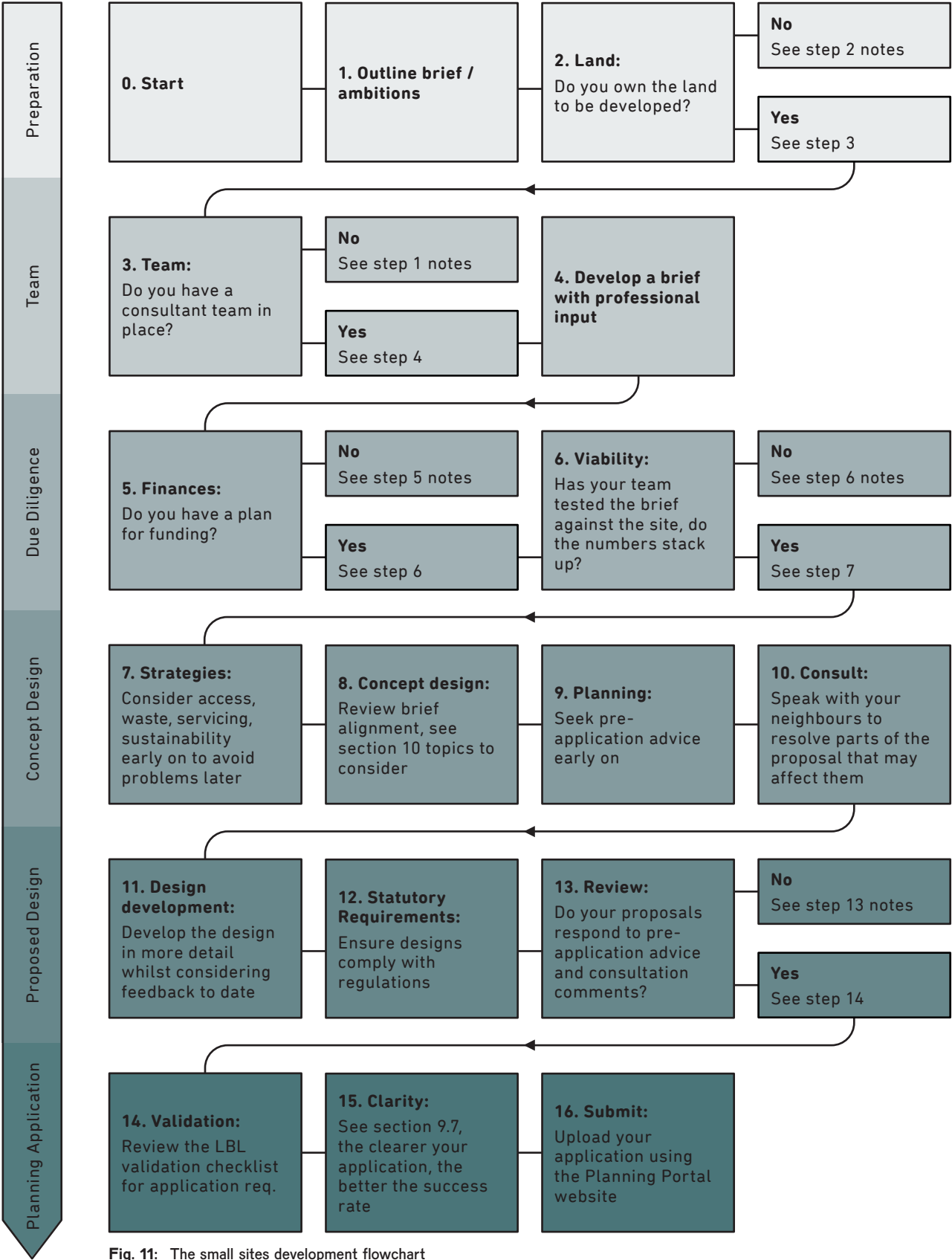


Fig. 11: The small sites development flowchart

10.2.7. Lewisham keeps a number of registers which might help, including a list of brown field land (see glossary) and the Mayor of London, and Community-led Housing London Hub websites offer guidance on alternative housing models including:

- Self-build
- Community Land Trusts
- Co-housing
- Co-operative Housing
- Affordable Housing

10.3. Team

10.3.1. **Step 3 - Consultants**
To develop a small site for housing, and to ensure a quality outcome, you will likely need to engage a range of professional services. Each site is different, its heritage context, biodiversity, flood risk etc. and as such the information required for a planning application will differ.

10.3.2. Engaging an architect and / or planning consultant will help you to develop a proposal that meets your ambitions whilst also being compliant with the relevant statutory policy and guidance. An architect will also help to identify the types of professional services a project requires and guide you through the development process.

10.3.3. It is advisable to employ a registered architect. Refer to the Architects Registration Board (ARB) or the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) for guidance on selecting a registered architect. Working with reputable professionals with good experience is more likely to achieve a high quality design, increase site efficiency, and reduce planning risk, ultimately increasing the value of a development. Note: appointing a consultant on the basis of a low fee doesn't necessarily save money on a development in the long run. It is recommended that you obtain references from potential consultants and make sure they are a good fit for you.

10.3.4. They should be able to design your proposal in order to respond to any identified constraints and may be able to develop your initial ideas to provide a more creative proposal than you originally envisaged, saving you time, economising your budget and adding value to your property. They will also help to guide you through relevant, up-to-date legislation and regulations.

10.3.5. Depending on your what financial risk you deem acceptable, it's likely secondary consultants will be needed, including a structural engineer (structure), services engineer (water, heating, and electrics), and quantity surveyor (cost). It is usually better to spend money on professional fees and understand the estimated cost of your development prior to progressing to a planning submission, to reduce the risk of getting permission for something you cannot afford to build.

10.3.6. Similarly, appointing a heritage consultant is particularly helpful if your site includes a listed building, is in a conservation area, or next to listed buildings. A heritage consultant can provide the historical context which will enable the planners to determine how your proposal enhances what exists.

10.3.7. Details of accredited Heritage Consultants can be found on the Institute for Historic Building Conservation's Historic Environment Service Provider Recognition website.

10.3.8. Use the planning portal to look at planning applications that have already been submitted where you can find which consultants have been used and their contact details.



Fig. 12: Working with the right consultants is vital to developing a scheme that both complies with policy and works with your brief

10.3.9.

Step 4 - Briefing

Regardless the size of the project, a clear written brief is an invaluable tool, especially when working with consultants, and should be developed from the outset in collaboration with the professional team you have employed. It should set out your required outcomes (e.g. floor area, sustainability credentials, sales value), and key constraints (e.g. planning, programme, funding, site access). A project brief will generally be updated and develop as the design of a project progresses.

10.4. Due diligence

10.4.1.

Step 5 - Finances

Outside of the more traditional methods of securing funding (e.g. business loan, re-mortgage), there are ever-increasing alternatives. The Mayor of London website gives extensive guidance on the resources available to those looking to develop small sites. These exist as both grants and loans and access to them varies depending on the type of development you are looking to bring forward.

10.4.2.

Step 6 - Viability

To help reduce the financial risk to a project, feasibility studies can be undertaken at a relatively low cost which will help to identify if your brief is achievable on the site, together with an estimated project cost. This will be an invaluable tool to develop a financial appraisal of a development, how do costs align with your budget, can completion / sales be achieved within your required time frame for funding?

10.4.3.

Viability studies go beyond simply understanding a budget, and take into account the potential income a project can provide, as well as the various commitments and fees involved to understand if the project is financially feasible. Small sites play a key role in providing the housing Lewisham needs, and

therefore have an important role in providing affordable homes. Viability studies help developers to understand the best approach to delivering on site affordable homes.

10.4.4.

Feasibility studies vary depending on the stage and nature of a project, but would typically be carried out by an architect, who could then work with a quantity surveyor to test for viability.

10.5. Concept design

10.5.1.

Step 7 - Strategies

There are a number of key strategies that small sites projects need to consider to ensure that they can function. These will vary from site to site as constraints will vary, but these might include optimisation, access and sustainability.

10.5.2.

In order to meet housing demand, the London Plan requires planning authorities to assess the efficiency and capacity of proposals, and to resist those which are deemed an under-provision of a site.

10.5.3.

Local and regional policy seeks to guide developments to make the most efficient use of land. As per section 9.3, a skilled designer can help to maximise the efficiency of your site, be that increasing the number of dwellings, or creating a larger garden space than you thought possible. Similarly, your proposal may be more successful if delivered jointly with neighbouring landowners. See section 18.3 for design guidance on optimising sites.

10.5.4.

A key issue on small sites is ensuring that the new homes can be serviced and provide proper access for the occupants as well as organisations such as waste collection and the emergency services. This can be particularly challenging when working on sites where the new homes do not have a street frontage.

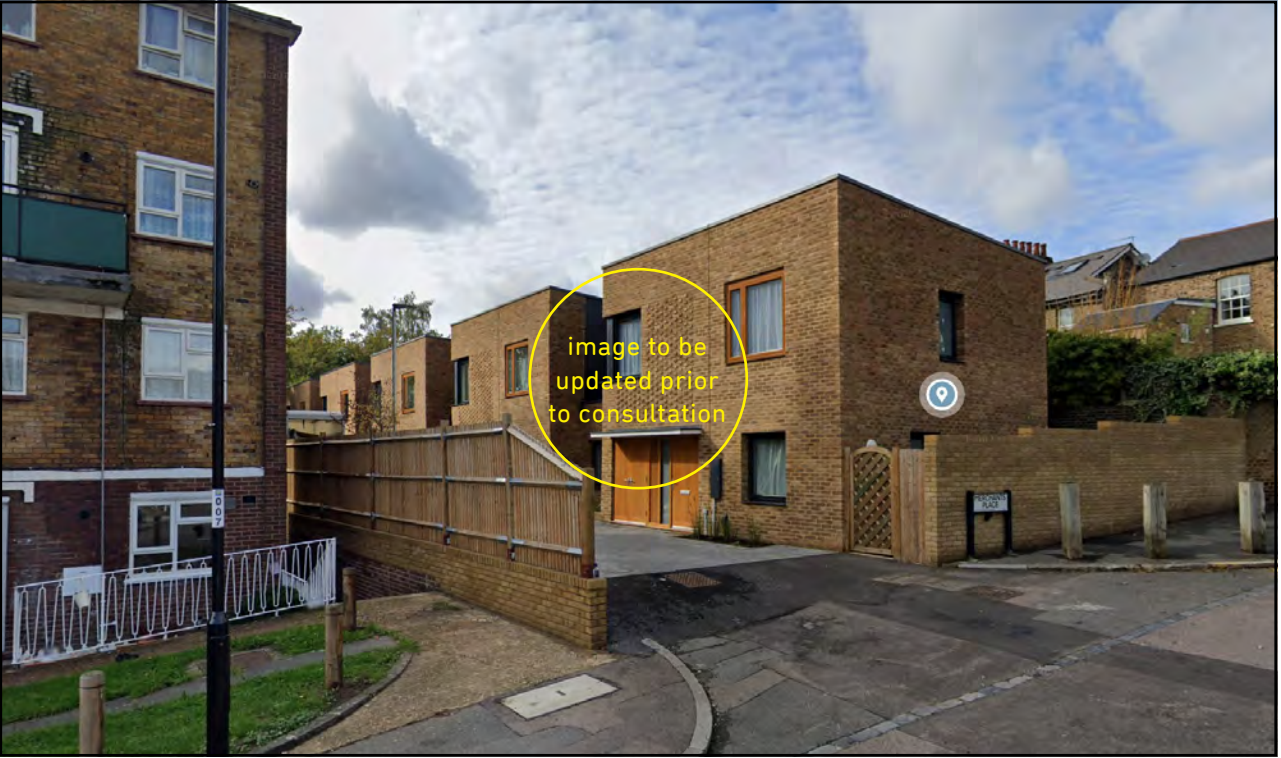


Fig. 13: New Homes at Dacre Park in Lee designed by Pollard Thomas Edwards Architects (website: www.pollardthomasedwards.co.uk, photography: needed)



Fig. 14: Hazelhurst Court in Downham designed by Levitt Bernstein (website: www.levittbernstein.co.uk, photography: TBC)

10.5.5. We are in a climate emergency, and urgently need to reduce carbon emissions. In the UK, 49% of annual carbon emissions are attributable to buildings. All planning applications in Lewisham are required to include a Sustainable Design Statement as part of the submission, setting out how sustainability design principles have been integrated into the design-led approach. Understanding what your strategy to achieving a sustainable, low energy building are early on in the design process helps to achieve these targets in a more cost effective and less disruptive way. Refer to sections 11 and 21 for more information and consider the advice of the Green design tool box in section 14.

10.5.6. **Step 8 - Concept design**
The concept design stage is important in understanding how the scheme is responding to key contextual prompts and how it is addressing the brief. As this stage is developing it is useful to build in an opportunity to review the progressing scheme and therefore de-risk it ahead of taking it forward. Some key topics that should be covered at this stage are set out in section 10 as part of the advice on writing a design and access statement, which is a necessary part of any planning application. Considering these topics early will make the preparation of a design and access statement more straightforward.

10.5.7. **Step 9 - Pre application advice**
Lewisham offers a pre-application advice service. This allows you to discuss your development proposals with a planning officer and receive advice on your potential planning application before you submit it or whilst working through your design to test some of the potentially contentious issues with officers. Applications are more likely to be approved quickly following a positive

pre-application stage. However this does not guarantee the outcome of your application.

10.5.8. Discussing your proposal early on with planning officers can reduce planning risk and helps to identify:

- If the principle of development is acceptable,
- If any changes to the design are necessary,
- What information is needed before you finalise and submit the proposal.

10.5.9. **Step 10 - Consult your neighbours**
It is generally beneficial to consult local residents and anyone else who may be affected by your proposal regardless of the size and location of your proposals.

10.5.10. Talking to people is an opportunity to let them know how you've come to your proposal, and discuss any concerns or interests they may have. A consultation process can highlight issues the proposal might create which you may not have considered, and where relevant, allows the design to develop in response to this.

10.5.11. Neighbours may also write into the council to offer support for your scheme, which could be taken into account in the planning application. Neighbours responding negatively or making objections does not necessarily mean your application will fail.

10.5.12. Consultation should be recorded as part of a planning submission to demonstrate to the planning department how the proposal has evolved and taken into account local feeling and site-specific issues.



Fig. 15: Community engagement workshops run by Archio for new homes for Community Land Trust London in Sydenham. The engagement process led to 107 letters of support being submitted from the local community for the planning application. (website: <https://archio.co.uk>, photography: Archio)

10.6. Proposed design

- 10.6.1.

Step 11 - Design development

Design is an iterative process, and there will likely be several versions of a proposal before you reach a final design. For example, as noted in step 10, a design will usually develop following pre-application discussions in order to align more closely with the planning officers’ requirements for your site. The design should develop from your brief, whilst also considering statutory requirements within planning policy and building regulations. See section 10 for more information on what sort of design development information Lewisham expects to see in a design and access statement.
- 10.6.2.

Step 12 - Statutory requirements

All small sites building projects need to comply with the Building Act to ensure that they are safe and of a sufficient standard. The easiest way to do this is usually to follow the requirements set out in the Building Regulations. These regulations include stipulations on spatial parameters as well as elements that might impact the cost and viability of the project and therefore should be considered prior to applying for planing permission.
- 10.6.3.

Understanding the requirements of planning regulations is also important for your scheme to ensure that you are applying for a scheme that can be granted permission by officers. This includes meeting Nationally Described Space Standards as well as the accessibility requirements set out in the London Plan.
- 10.6.4.

Step 13 - Design review

As at step 8, it is important to review your scheme regularly in order to de-risk the process and make sure that the proposal reflects your brief and is likely to receive planning permission. Has the design responded to the pre-application advice

received? Does the design meet your brief and is it financially viable?

10.7. Planning application

- 10.7.1.

Step 14 - Validation

All planning applications have a minimum requirement for the information required in them. If you do not provide this information then your application cannot be validated and the application process cannot begin. Lewisham council’s website sets out clearly what these are.
- 10.7.2.

To understand what you need to submit you will need to know what planning designations your site sits within. For example, there are different requirements when working in a Conservation Area or in protected open space. It is important to know these early in the design process as they can have a significant impact on the way the site is designed. Lewisham has an interactive map where you can find out the designation on your site.
- 10.7.3.

Depending on the designation, as well as the type and extent of your proposals, various documents may be required such as a heritage statement or a sustainability monitoring form. For all small sites applications a design and access statement is required. Advice on this is given in section 10.
- 10.7.4.

Step 15 - Clarity

Before submitting your application take time to ensure that the information contained in clear and concise and properly communicates your proposals.
- 10.7.5.

Once your planning application is ready, it should be submitted digitally through the national planning portal. Once this is done, it will be sent automatically to Lewisham’s planning officers for to check validation and determine.



Fig. 16: New Homes at Longfield Crecent in Forest Hill designed by Pollard Thomas Edwards Architects (website: www.pollardthomasedwards.co.uk, photography: TBC)

11.1.	Design and Access Statements	11.2.	Context
11.1.1.	All planning applications that include the provision of new homes require a Design and Access Statement as part of the submission. This document is an opportunity for applicants to demonstrate how their proposal is meeting the various requirements placed on it as well as how it will contribute to the area and create quality new homes.	11.2.1.	This section should focus on what already exists around the proposed development site.
11.1.2.	For sites in conservation areas a heritage statement is also required and can be included in the same document. This will likely have some overlap with a design and access statement, such as an understanding of the character of this site and surroundings, including reference to adopted Conservation Area Appraisals.	11.2.2.	What is the character of the buildings locally, is it consistent or highly varied and therefore allowing for a more unique, site specific character to be developed? Is there a consistent or dominant building type that should be referenced in the proposal? Is there a consistent building height, parapet, eaves or ridge height? Is there a consistent building frontage / building line (see figure 23)? What materials are used by the buildings around the site? Think about colour, surface texture, how different materials meet.
11.1.3.	Sites vary, as do the scale and complexity of small sites schemes, so it is not possible to provide guidance for every different circumstance across Lewisham, and each case will be assessed on its own merits. However, the diagram to the right and the following text set out what can be expected within a simple design and access statement and can serve as a checklist when designing your project.	11.2.3.	Is there sufficient access to amenity in the area? Will the new homes have suitable access to shops and to open green space? Is there sufficient play space provided in the local area or will your site need to accommodate this?
11.1.4.	As with other information within a planning application, the complexity of the document should be proportionate to the scale of the development. As a minimum all applications should include information on each of the five headings outlined. A good architect or planning consultant will be able to advise you on this.	11.2.4.	What is the planning policy context for your site? Have you used Lewisham's planning portal to see the types of application that have been approved and refused in the area? Are there any specific designations on your site such as being within a Conservation Area, subject to an article 4 directive or listed as Metropolitan Open Land? Is anything on the site already protected, such as a listed building or a Tree Protection Order? If your site is not within these, is it close to the border of any designations?
11.1.5.	Further guidance on design and access statement can be found in the CABE publication 'Design and access statements How to write, read and use them'.		

Writing a simple design and access statement

The following 5 headings are an example of how a simple design and access statement can be set out. Under each heading is a series of prompts that are expanded upon in the main text. These are not comprehensive but should give a useful outline of what needs to be considered.

Context

- Character of local buildings (layout, types, scale, height, building line consistency, etc)
- Materials and details in the local area (facade, landscape, roofs, etc)
- Availability of amenity and public facilities (green space, play space, shops, transport, etc)

Design development

- Proposed size, scale and massing of your proposal (and response to the position, mass and height of the surrounding buildings)
- Design strategies (optimised density, access to daylight and sunlight, privacy and outlook for you + and your neighbours)
- Choice of layout, detailing and materials. How they relate to nearby buildings
- Proposed landscaping. (biodiversity, adding trees, amenity)
- Consultation. (what happened, how has the design adapted)

Access

- Access for refuse and emergency services
- Parking strategy (associated parking / on street / car-free)
- Cycle storage
- Inclusive design (Part M compliance level)
- Safety (overlooking / lighting / legibility)

Quality

- Sustainable design techniques
- High quality living accommodation (good access to daylight / sunlight, positive outlooks in multiple directions, privacy)
- Positive contribution to the area (quality places to live, shared amenities, affordable homes)
- Biodiversity (habitats, loss of green, variety, enhancement)

Planning Policy

- Utilise planning guidance (site types, design toolkit, other resources in this document)
- Policy designations (flood, conservation, listing, MOL, Tree Preservation Orders)
- Proposed uses (differ from the existing, exiting employment use, non residential space)

Fig. 17: The small sites development flowchart

11.3. Design development

- 11.3.1. Whilst you will know the fine details of your proposal, your planning application may be the first time a local resident or planning officer has seen it. The Design and Access Statement is your opportunity to explain to the reader how you arrived at the proposed design, what decisions influenced it, why it is appropriate for the site, how it will be a positive contribution to the local context, and how it aligns with policy requirements.
- 11.3.2. Demonstrate how you arrived at the proposed size, scale and massing of your proposal. How does it respond to the position, mass and height of the surrounding buildings? How have you optimised density on site? Does your design ensure that access to daylight and sunlight is protected for you neighbours and provided to your new homes? Does your design protect the privacy and outlook of your neighbours and provide sufficient levels of privacy for the new homes?
- 11.3.3. Demonstrate how you have arrived at the choice of, layout and detailing of the proposed materials. How do these materials relate to those of the nearby buildings? Are the selected materials and their application robust? Are you utilising reused or otherwise sustainable materials?
- 11.3.4. How does your proposed landscaping improve the scheme and the wider area? Are you increasing the biodiversity of the area? Are you working with and protecting existing trees? If you are removing trees, explain why they cannot be retained. Are you increasing the canopy cover by adding new trees? Is landscaping being used as amenity space? Is the landscaping being used to provide outlook and privacy to homes? How does your landscaping relate to that of the surrounding area?

- 11.3.5. How have you included your neighbours in the design process? State what, if any, consultation has been undertaken. Key issues for consultation include matters relating to access to the development and the relationship to the surrounding buildings. How has feedback from consultation impacted the design of the proposal.



Fig. 18: New homes on a private road on Forbury Road in Blackheath designed by EPR Architects (website: www.epr.co.uk, photography: TBC)

11.4. Access

- 11.4.1. This section focuses on how people and services can get to the proposed dwellings, including the residents, service providers and emergency services. This is particularly important on sites where the new homes do not have a street frontage.
- 11.4.2. Demonstrate how the proposals allow for essential access for emergency services including access for ambulances and the fire service.
- 11.4.3. Explain how the scheme allows for the management of waste and recycling. Do the proposals allow sufficient space to store waste and recycling? Is this well positioned to allow suitable access for both occupants and waste management operatives?
- 11.4.4. How does the proposal deal with parking provision? Should the new homes have associated parking or can they be car-free? If parking is provided is it provided on site street or is there capacity on the street? You may need to commission a parking survey to justify parking proposals.
- 11.4.5. Demonstrate how the proposal allows sufficient, well designed, secure storage for bicycles? At the time of writing the London Plan requires 1 space per one person dwelling, 1.5 spaces for a two person dwelling, 2 spaces for other dwellings as well as additional guest spaces. Explain how many bicycle spaces are provided and where spaces for other things are provided such as mobility scooters and alternative bikes. Have you provided other external spaces for guest bicycles?

- 11.4.6. Does the proposal allow for an inclusive experience, allowing people of differing abilities to use the scheme? What design tools and features have you utilised to make the new homes and landscape more universally accessible? Have you included at least 10% wheelchair accessible dwellings if your development has 9 or more homes? What level of the Building Regulations Part M do the proposed new homes comply with? See section 12.16 for more information.
- 11.4.7. Explain how any specific issues relating to access have been addressed. Has safety been properly considered, including overlooking of spaces and lighting? Has legibility been considered so that visitors can easily navigate the scheme?



Fig. 19: Courtyard providing access to the new homes at St Paul’s House in Deptford with new trees added to the tight space and rich planting, designed by Ash Sakula and Shape Landscape Architects (websites: www.ashsak.com, shape.eu.com, photography: Matthew Rust)

11.5. Quality

- 11.5.1. In this section demonstrate the quality in your proposed scheme, why the homes will be great places to live, how they contribute to the improvement of the area as a whole and where they represent excellence or best practice.
- 11.5.2. Demonstrate how your scheme utilises sustainable design techniques to provide low energy homes. Consult the design toolkit in Section 12.11 for tips on this and section 11 and 21 for further advice. How does the proposal meet policy requirements and where does it go beyond?
- 11.5.3. Demonstrate how your scheme provides high quality living accommodation. Do the new homes and their outdoor spaces receive adequate levels of daylight and sunlight? Are the new homes dual aspect or better, providing cross ventilation and views in multiple directions with a positive outlook and privacy? See the design toolkit in section 12.4.
- 11.5.4. Demonstrate how your scheme positively contributes to the wider area. See the design toolkit in sections 12 and 16.
- 11.5.5. Where does your scheme go beyond policy to provide high quality places to live. Are you providing great shared amenities? Are you providing affordable homes on site in excess of minimum requirements that are affordable in perpetuity? Are you improving the biodiversity of the local area (habitats, loss of green, variety, enhancing etc)?

11.6. Planning policy

- 11.6.1. In this section describe how your scheme relates to planning policy.
- 11.6.2. How does your proposal utilise planning guidance, including the advice in this document? Identify what site type(s) it falls

under and how you have responded to that guidance. Identify how you have used the design toolkit or other resources in this document.

11.6.3. How does the proposal meet the requirements of the London Plan? How does the proposal meet the requirements of Lewisham’s own policy? Identify where, if anywhere, the proposals do not comply with planning guidance and why.

11.6.4. If your site falls within any specific policy designations (flood, conservation, listing, metropolitan open land, etc), demonstrate how your scheme responds to this (if applicable). For listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas, you should provide an explanation of how the historical and architectural importance of the building – in particular its physical features and setting – has been considered when designing the proposed development should also be provided. You should also consider providing this information in your design and access statement when working with locally listed buildings and assets of community value. In more complex and sensitive developments a specific heritage statement will be required.

- 11.6.5. Are there any other protections on site, such as Tree Preservation Orders, and if so how does the proposal respond to this?
- 11.6.6. What are the proposed uses in the scheme, how are they changing from the existing condition, and how have these been designed to work in harmony with one another? If there is an existing employment use on site demonstrate that the number of jobs is being maintained or increased. Do you have any non-residential space associated with the new homes, and if so how is this managed/ designated?



Fig. 20: Park House in Harpenden designed by RCKa (website: www.rcka.co.uk, photography: Jakob Spriestersbach)



Fig. 21: New housing at Nunhead Green, Southwark, designed by AOC Architecture (websites: www.theaoc.co.uk, photography: Needed)

12.1. Benefits

12.1.1. Sustainable development is financially sound development; meeting planning criteria, delivering a better-quality project with direct benefits to occupants and maintaining value better over the long term.

12.1.2. Direct Benefits to Occupants

Sustainable buildings deliver good ventilation and better air quality, reduced energy costs and reduced water costs. They are less draughty, reducing mould and indoor toxins, reducing flooding issues on site and maximizing healthy outdoor areas.

12.1.3. Planning and Regulation benefits

Lewisham Council has declared a “climate emergency” in 2019 and will want to see projects that are part of the solution. Sustainably-designed projects will be viewed favourably given other aspects of the project are compliant. For small sites, sustainability helps to reduce strain on supplied services, and help with the Borough’s commitment to reduce carbon, as well as maintained or improve biodiversity in Lewisham.

12.1.4. Building Standards are evolving with higher thresholds for energy use expected in the near future. Even smaller sites can take time to develop, so building to high sustainable standards is critical to avoid wasteful re-design and re-fit later on if regulations evolve.

12.1.5. Investment benefits

- A building that consumes less energy and is resilient to climate-risk (with less chance of overheating and flooding) is a better investment in the long run: cheaper to run, meeting evolving building standards, attracting a wider pool of tenants and less of a risk for banks and insurers.

12.1.6. For owners who occupy their buildings, the investment benefits are large and include: lower energy and water bills, reduced or no requirements for later refit, improved maintenance, better access to mortgages in the future, higher valuation and designed protection against climate change.

12.1.7. For developers who lease their building, the building will retain or even increase in value compared to other assets, attracting a wider pool of tenants. They are valued well by banks and insurers over the long term, reduce maintenance and are less likely to require costly and time-consuming upgrades later.

12.1.8. For developers selling their investment project, energy efficient properties will be easier to sell and achieve higher valuations. In a competitive market sustainability can be a key differentiator.

12.1.9. Better sales and rental opportunities

- Sustainable properties achieve premium rents, have better tenancy retention and have access to the widest pool of potential tenants.

12.1.10. We are entering a decade of transition to a low-carbon economy. Sustainability is one of the leading drivers of innovation in the construction industry today. An increasing proportion of rental tenants are seeking sustainable properties and companies increasingly put sustainability amongst their core objectives.

12.1.11. Avoiding risk

- Building to the lowest possible standards risks the property being unlettable, uninsurable and with costly refits in the future.

12.1.12. It is good and common sense to invest in ways that future-proof the property to maintain its value. Upcoming changes in legislation (expected around 2025) will see owners of less energy-efficient properties be required to make improvements before they can let their properties, along with phasing out gas heating. There may be other restrictions introduced, and they may come sooner than expected if the government feels it is not meeting its objectives quickly enough.

12.1.13. Banks and insurers are talking about “stranded assets”, properties that are not sustainable and will require costly and time-consuming refurbishment in future.

12.1.14. Owners should also want to safeguard their properties against medium-term climate change impacts such increased flooding and overheating rather than taking a “wait-later, pay-more” approach.

12.1.15. Access to green finance

- Green finance and grants may be available for developments achieving a high level of environmental sustainability.

12.1.16. Banks and insurers are now looking to back built assets that are resilient to both to climate change and to rapidly- changing regulations and planning standards. Financing mechanisms are being developed that will capture green building value and

Owner-occupier

Developer

Healthier living environment

Improve planning case

Reduce sick days

Improve asset value

Improve comfort

Ensure asset will meet increasing regulations

Reduce energy and water bills

Enhance image

Improve image and staff retention

Improve market opportunities

Improve investment quality

Retain tenants and customers

Future-proof investment against climate change

Future-proof asset against climate change

Future-proof investment against increased regulation

Higher rental values

Fig. 22: Tables setting out some of the advantages of developing in a sustainable way for owner occupiers and developers

sustainable projects, with measurable key performance indicators (KPIs), will have access to the broadest range of finance, even at the smaller end of the market. Green mortgages are now being offered for properties with high energy efficiency (with an Energy Performance Certificate of A or B).

12.1.17. Though they are usually limited in scope and timing, it is always worth-while to check to see if any grants are available to switch to greener heating or make other energy-efficiency upgrades.

12.1.18. Applications for small sites have differing requirements in terms of documenting the performance of the proposed development. See section 21 for more information.

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13.1. Creating new homes on small sites

- 13.1.1. Although every site is different, each with its own opportunities and challenges, there is a range of general principles which are applicable to all types of small site development: access to natural daylight and sunlight, for instance; a right to privacy; and a home which is comfortable, affordable and sustainable.
- 13.1.2. On the next few pages we have set out some of the general principles with which new development is expected to comply. Unless stated otherwise, these are intended as a set of guidelines, rather than hard-and-fast rules. However, where significant deviations from these objectives is proposed, it is down to the applicant to demonstrate how the ambitions of the guidance have been achieved in other ways.
- 13.1.3. Lewisham has a history of innovation and creativity in housing design. All new contributions to Lewisham’s built environment should be appropriate, attractive, well-designed, sustainable and pleasant places to live, continuing the spirit of this tradition. The purpose of these guidelines is not to restrict the development of new homes, but to provide applicants with a degree of certainty over whether their proposals are likely to result in a successful outcome.

13.2. Height, massing and layout

- 13.2.1. All infill development should be considerate to its neighbours, taking into account the effect of new buildings on daylight and sunlight, overshadowing and privacy on adjoining properties.
- 13.2.2. **Height**
In streets with existing properties that follow a broadly consistent height, infill development within an existing street should generally respect the prevailing building height,

accepting that modern thermal and acoustic requirements may prevent new homes from exactly matching the height of older properties.

- 13.2.3. Where streets are of varied character, applications with a height of one storey above that of its neighbours will generally be supported. On some sites, depending on the site size and context, it may be appropriate to build more than one storey taller than the context subject to the scheme achieving a high degree of design quality.
- 13.2.4. For the purposes of establishing existing building heights, existing roofs can be counted as a single floor. Therefore, in most cases a three-storey development adjacent to a two-storey house with a pitched roof would be supported.
- 13.2.5. In certain cases a new building of more than one storey above the prevailing building height may be acceptable, provided that it achieves exceptional design quality and meets all other relevant aspects of planning policy.

- 13.2.6. **Massing and layout**
The existing gaps between adjacent houses should generally be maintained with new infill development. An analysis of the existing pattern of development should accompany any planning application to demonstrate how the design responds to its context.

- 13.2.7. The street-facing principal elevation of new development should generally respect the prevailing building lines established by adjacent properties. Where there is no apparent building line, then any planning application should demonstrate how new development responds to its context.

- 13.2.8. Secondary building elements, such as bay windows or porches, can project forward of the established building line if there are similar examples of this within the street.



Fig. 23: Where existing building heights are broadly consistent along a street, new infill development should not be significantly taller than the buildings either side of them.

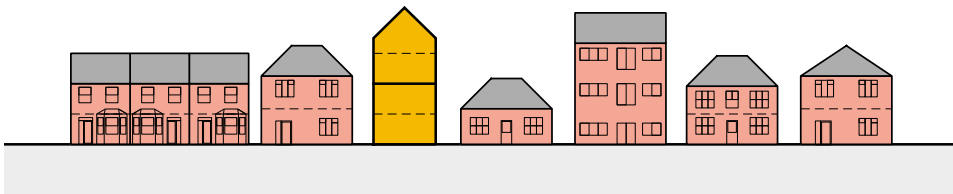


Fig. 24: Where existing building heights are varied, new infill development may be up to one storey taller than its neighbours, provided that it achieves a high degree of design quality.

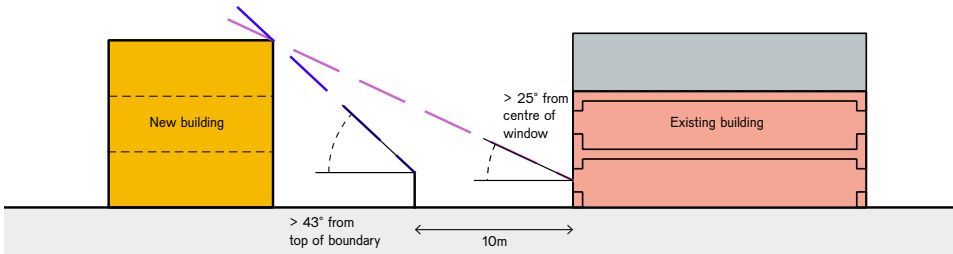


Fig. 25: New buildings should not obstruct a line drawn from the vertical centre of a habitable room window at a 25 degree angle, nor a 43 degree line struck from a point 1.6m above ground level at the boundary, where that boundary is within 10m of the rear of the existing property

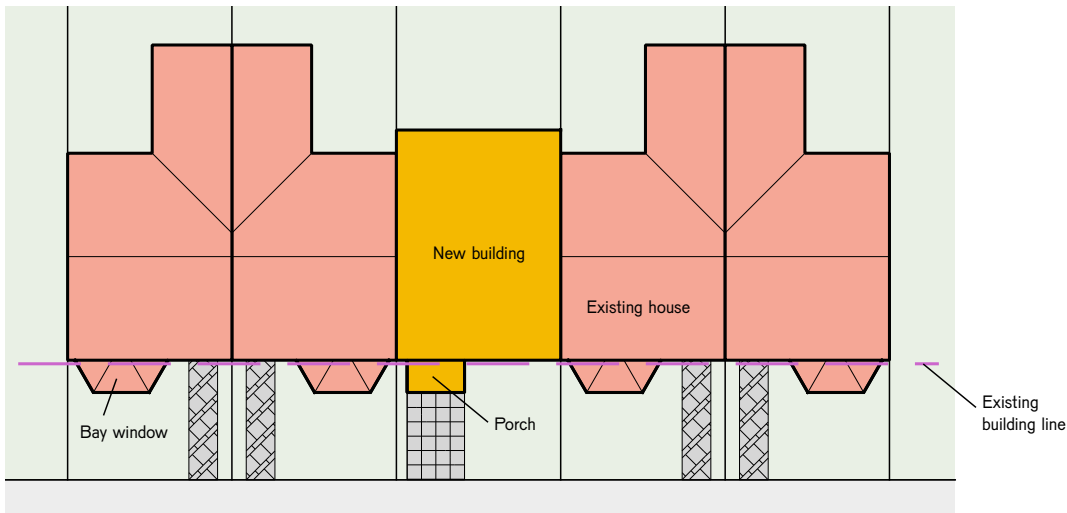


Fig. 26: The prevailing building line is defined by the principal face of an existing building or street facing the public highway. Minor projections, such as bay windows or porches, are excluded.

13.3. Daylight and sunlight

- 13.3.1. New developments should ensure that both existing and new homes receive an adequate quantity of natural daylight. The principles of the Building Research Establishment (BRE) document "Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide to good practice" should be applied to new development.
- 13.3.2. This guidance recommends that new buildings should not obstruct a line drawn from the vertical centre of a habitable room window at a 25 degree angle, nor a 43 degree line struck from the boundary at 1.6m above ground level, where that boundary is within 10m of the rear of the existing property (see figure 22).
- 13.3.3. The rear gardens of all properties, old and new, should receive adequate levels of direct sunlight. This is defined as at least one half of the available amenity space receiving a minimum of two hours' direct sunlight based on the movement of the sun on 21st March.
- 13.3.4. Where these principles are not adhered to, a daylight and sunlight assessment may be required to demonstrate that adequate levels of natural daylight and sunlight are achieved.

13.4. Privacy, overlooking and aspect

- 13.4.1. Lewisham is an inner-London borough, and expectations of individual privacy need to be balanced with the need to achieve appropriate levels of residential density.
- 13.4.2. The outlook of new homes should respect the privacy of existing ones, bearing in mind that the development of small sites can often necessitate some lessening in levels of privacy where existing homes benefit from large gardens.

13.4.3. Privacy of gardens

In general terms, the privacy of the first 10m of rear gardens (defined as the area of rear garden extending 10m beyond the furthest rear part of the dwelling, for the width of the main part of that property) should be protected from direct overlooking from habitable room windows of new dwellings. To protect these areas, conventional windows (ie. vertically aligned with clear glass) should be located more than 6m from the rear edge of this 10m privacy area.

- 13.4.4. In instances where this is not possible, windows in new development serving habitable rooms which face towards private amenity space of existing dwellings should take steps to avoid overlooking. This could be through the use of sloping roof windows, obscured glass, or projecting windows that limit direct overlooking by focussing outlook sideways or upwards. The use of such methods should not compromise the quality of outlook of new development, however, and planning applications for new homes which rely on such methods must demonstrate how the quality of new accommodation is not diminished.

13.4.5. Privacy and outlook of rooms

There should be no less than 10m between the blank wall of a new home and an existing principal window serving a habitable room; and no less than 16m between new and existing principal facing windows at upper levels, unless steps are taken to achieve privacy in some other way.

- 13.4.6. Windows within two walls that are at an angle of more than 30 degrees to one another do not generally count as facing.

- 13.4.7. Within new developments these distances may be reduced providing that applicants can demonstrate that this will not compromise the enjoyment of their homes to an unacceptable degree.

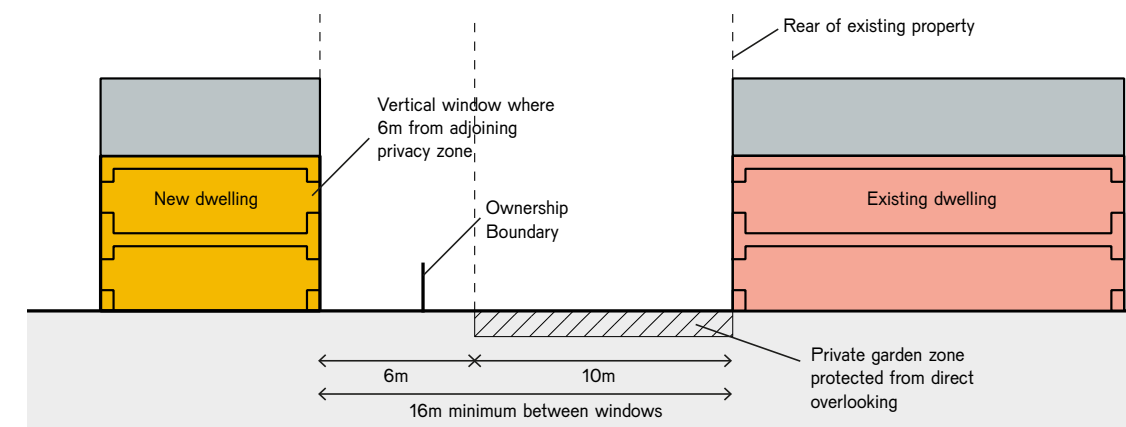


Fig. 27: Conventional windows serving habitable rooms in new dwellings should be at least 6m from the 10m private garden zone

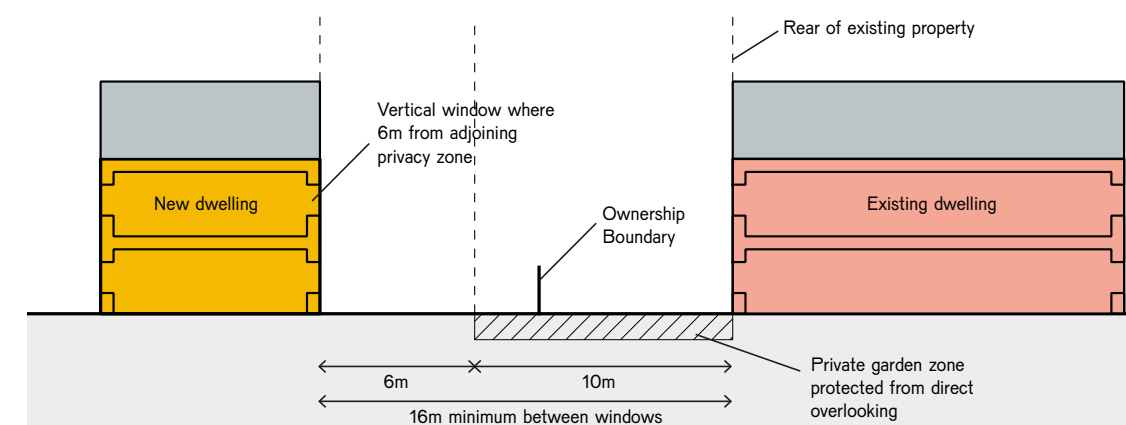


Fig. 28: Where existing gardens are less than 10m deep, new conventional windows serving habitable rooms must still maintain a minimum 6m distance from the private garden zone

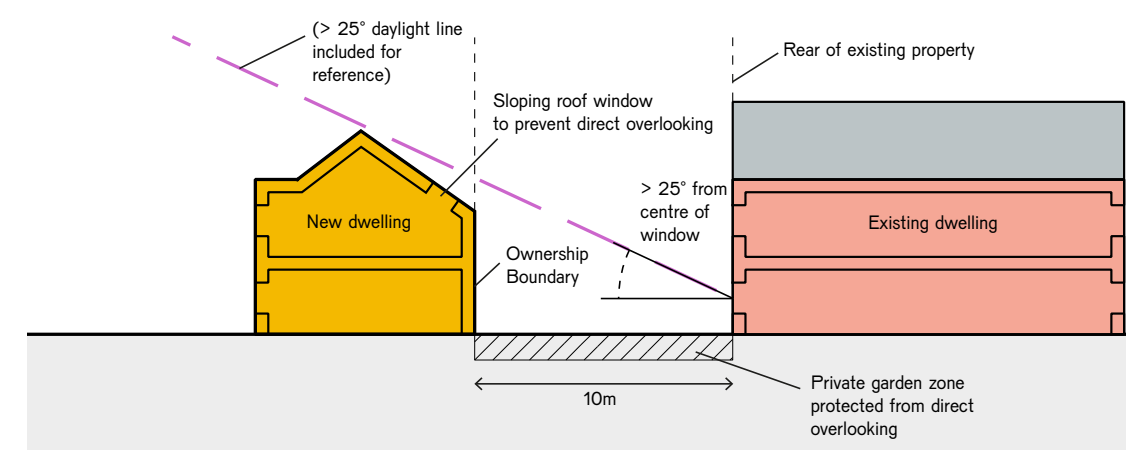


Fig. 29: The use of sloping roof windows can help avoid direct overlooking of neighbouring gardens

13.4.8. The use of projecting windows that limit direct overlooking by focusing outlook sideways can help mitigate the effects of overlooking by preventing direct views between the habitable rooms of different dwellings, or overlooking of adjacent gardens. However, the use of these should be restricted to bedrooms and non-habitable rooms, as living rooms generally require outlook as well as access to natural daylight. Attention should also be paid to achieving sufficient levels of natural daylight when relying on this method.

13.4.9. Single-aspect homes should be avoided where possible, and north-facing single-aspect dwellings will not be supported except in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that direct sunlight will penetrate the dwelling for at least two hours each day.

13.4.10. Care should be taken in the orientation and siting of windows within the boundaries of development sites to avoid prejudicing future development. Permission for new windows within walls on the boundaries with existing properties will not usually be supported.

13.5. Size of new homes

13.5.1. All new homes should meet the minimum internal standards required by the Nationally Described Space Standards and the London Plan (see Figure 27). Homes that are significantly oversized at the expense of overall housing numbers will be resisted.

13.5.2. **Family homes**
The net loss of family housing will be resisted. Where developments involve the demolition and replacement of existing homes as part of a more comprehensive development, any family houses (defined as those providing at least 3 bedrooms) lost as part of the demolition need to be reprovided within the new scheme.

13.5.3. **Unit Mix**
Lewisham needs a mixture of differently sized homes to respond to local housing need. Developments that consist solely of one bedroom or studio flats will be resisted. Flexibility may be allowed on smaller developments in order to achieve an optimum number of homes on a site, but applications which cannot clearly demonstrate why the provision of family-sized homes are not suitable will not usually be supported.

13.6. External Space

13.6.1. Outdoor amenity is a fundamental part of all developments both in supporting residents' wellbeing and the ecology and biodiversity of the local area. All new build homes must have adequate external space. This can be provided at ground floor, as a private garden accessed directly from the dwelling, or as a terrace or balcony on upper floors.

13.6.2. Shared external space is important in building communities. It may be the place you meet your neighbours, where children can play together, or even where an outdoor cinema might be located (figure 28). These should be provided in addition to the required private external amenity space and only in exceptional circumstances will shared outdoor spaces be accepted in lieu of private.

13.6.3. If terraces or balconies are provided, they should avoid overlooking of neighbouring properties and care should be taken to avoid these being located close to the windows of neighbouring bedrooms. Balconies can avoid overlooking through careful orientation, directing views in certain directions and through screening, but these measures should not unacceptably compromise the outlook of the new homes. The impact of overlooking can be reduced when views are oblique.

		Minimum gross internal floor area and storage (sq.m)				Minimum floor area (sq.m)
Number of bedrooms (b)	Number of bed spaces / persons (p)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	Built in storage	Private amenity space
1b	1p	39			1	5
	2p	50	58		1.5	5
2b	3p	61	70		2	6
	4p	70	79			7
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5	7
	5p	86	93	99		8
	6p	95	102	108		9
4b	5p	90	97	103	3	8
	6p	99	106	112		9
	7p	108	115	121		10
	8p	117	124	130		11
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5	9
	7p	112	119	125		10
	8p	121	128	134		11
6p	7p	116	123	129	4	10
	8p	125	132	138		11

Fig. 30: Required minimum standards for new homes and their amenity as set out in the nationally Described Space Standards

- 13.6.4.

Outdoor amenity should maintain the privacy of the existing neighbours. For example, outside space for upward extensions should be set within the existing building line to minimise overlooking and overshadowing of outdoor space below and should take similar measures to the design of balconies to avoid direct overlooking. Balconies to flats should not have a solely north-facing aspect.
- 13.6.5.

The size of external amenity space should be compliant with London Plan requirements. Where the space is less than 1500mm wide in its narrowest dimension it will not be included in the minimum area sum.
- 13.6.6.

Outdoor space has an important role to play in increasing tree cover and providing biodiverse environments. See section 12.8.

- 13.7.

Playspace
- 13.7.1.

Adequate external space for children to play in is important for the healthy development of young people. Where small site developments comprise more than nine homes, sufficient shared recreational space should be provided in line with London Plan requirements at approximately 10msqm per child.
- 13.7.2.

The GLA Play Space Calculator should be used to determine the estimated number of children a development might house (based on unit mix / size). It may be possible to offset playspace or shared amenity provision with a Section 106 payment provided the local area is well served with open space, parks etc. This should be discussed with planning case officers at a pre-application meeting.



Fig. 31: A child playing at Kaolin Court in Forest Hill, designed by Stolon Studio (website: www.stolon.co.uk, photography: Robert Baker)

- 13.7.3.

The principles set out in the Mayor of London’s Making London Child-Friendly publication are a useful guide on how new development can cater for the needs of Lewisham’s young people.
- 13.8.

Biodiversity
- 13.8.1.

Small sites are expected to maintain or increase the level of biodiversity on site. The London Plan sets out that predominantly residential schemes in Lewisham should achieve an Urban Greening Factor (UGF) of 0.4. This means that at least 40% of the site area should be green. Existing green areas that are retained will be counted in this calculation.
- 13.8.2.

As such the use of intensive green roofs, tree planting and the creation of habitats will be encouraged. New external spaces such as courtyards and gardens should employ permeable surfaces and sustainable urban drainage (SuDs) wherever possible.
- 13.9.

Working with existing trees and greenery
- 13.9.1.

Maintaining existing trees and planting is an important strategy, as the qualities provided by mature planting is difficult to recreate with new planting. The value of existing trees, both environmentally and monetarily, is often overlooked.
- 13.9.2.

New developments should seek to increase canopy cover in line with the Mayor of London’s aspirations to increase canopy cover in London by 10% by 2050.
- 13.9.3.

See section 19 for further advice on working with green space.

- 13.10.

Heritage + responding to character
- 13.10.1.

The guidance provided within this document applies regardless of whether a site is within a conservation area or not. Applicants should refer to specific conservation area character appraisals to establish whether there is any guidance which relates specifically to the site. Further advice on conservation areas can be found in section 7.
- 13.10.2.

All small sites should seek to respond to the existing character of the context regardless of whether they are in conservation areas or not. New homes should consider how the built and unbuilt character of the area, reinforcing existing positive aspects wherever possible.
- 13.11.

Environmental sustainability
- 13.11.1.

All new homes are encouraged to achieve high levels of environmental sustainability, where possible exceeding the minimum standards required by Building Regulations.
- 13.11.2.

Applications for homes which achieve exceptional levels of environmental performance when measured against recognised standards, such as Passivhaus, will be supported. More information on achieving a sustainable development can be found in section 21.
- 13.11.3.

While not all sustainable design techniques will be available on all small site, for example optimal orientation may not be possible, a wide view of sustainability should be taken into account. Consider:
 - Low energy design by reducing the amount of energy required for things like heating,
 - Reducing embodied carbon by using sustainable materials in the construction,
 - Encouraging sustainable lifestyles, such as reducing the need for cars and,
 - Increasing biodiversity and providing habitats for wildlife.

13.12. Car parking

- 13.12.1.

Car-free developments

In areas with good transport accessibility, car-free developments are encouraged, and in-curtilage car parking will generally not be supported. Good transport accessibility is considered to be any site with a Public Transport Accessibility Level of 3 or more, a site which is 800m from a station or town centre boundary. See figure 6 in section 6 for a map of these areas.
- 13.12.2.

Car parking

Where parking is required, applications will need to provide it on site, or demonstrate the constraints prohibiting on-site provision, or indeed the improvements to the scheme on-street provision would provide. Where on-street, capacity needs to be demonstrated through a parking survey. The draft London Plan Policy T6.1 Table 10.1 sets-out the required provision.
- 13.12.3.

Parking has the potential to affect the overall quality of a development, and the character of the local context. A successful approach to parking will vary from one area to another. Increasingly developments will be encouraged to reduce parking provision as density increases and public transport infrastructure improves. Due to the limited street frontage of infill sites, even in areas with limited access to public transport, in-curtilage car parking of fewer than 4 spaces will not usually be supported as this can reduce car parking capacity on the street.
- 13.12.4.

Parking for Disabled Persons

As a baseline, for proposals of 10 or more dwellings, 3% of dwellings each require at least one disabled persons parking bay per dwelling. Furthermore 10% of new build homes are to be designated ‘wheelchair user dwellings’, each able to have their own disabled persons parking bay if required. Proposals siting disabled persons parking on

street are required to make a payment in lieu of on site provision.

13.13. Cycle storage

- 13.13.1.

Secure, covered bicycle parking is required for every new home. The London Plan sets out the requirements for the provision of cycle storage. Storage should be in an area with good overlooking by residents / passers by or add to passive surveillance and located such that residents are not required to carry cycles through their dwelling to access. One cycle space should be provided per 1 or 2 bedroom dwelling and 2 cycle spaces per 3 or more bedroom dwelling.
- 13.13.2.

For houses with their own front door this must be within the curtilage of the home which could be a free-standing structure in the garden, or integrated into the house. Where homes do not have their own front door, storage for bikes can be clustered with one area dedicated to store bikes for multiple homes. Generally these function better as a series of smaller spaces with 2-6 homes sharing one space.
- 13.13.3.

Planning applications must clearly show how storage space for bicycles has been considered within the design of new homes.

13.14. Waste and recycling

- 13.14.1.

Where possible, all waste and recycling should be stored within the curtilage of individual dwellings, and easily accessible from the public highway for collection. Where necessary, a single, dedicated storage area for multiple dwellings in a location accessible to the public highway can be used, however, the siting and design of this must be carefully integrated into the proposed layout. This is particularly relevant in Backland developments, for which further advice can be found in section 31. Planning applications which do not make sufficient consideration



Fig. 32: These new mews houses in Sevenoaks, designed by Morris + Company, smartly integrate waste storage into the building envelope, providing a more friendly and usable public realm (website: www.morrisandcompany.com, photography: Jack Hobhouse)

of waste and recycling storage will not be supported.

13.14.2. Dedicated storage for waste and recycling and food waste should be integrated into any design in a visually discrete location so as not to detract from the principal elevation of the proposed building or the adjacent street scene. Where located externally, storage must be screened and integrated within the landscape proposal. Loose bins on the street or within the front gardens of new developments will not be supported. Waste storage can comprise either individual bins for each dwelling, or communal storage which is accessible to all residents. In either case storage for domestic waste and recycling should be secured, easy to clean and accessible.

13.14.3. Generally residents should have to carry their waste no more than 30m from their front door to a storage point, and this collection point should be positioned no more than 10m from the public highway. In some cases, where there are a sufficient number of new homes to justify it, safe space to manoeuvre, and a robust road surface, waste collection vehicles can reverse into a site up to 20m from the public highway. Early discussions with Lewisham’s waste and recycling department is encouraged to ensure that a robust strategy for the handling of waste is integrated into the design.

13.15. Emergency access

13.15.1. Ensuring appropriate access is possible for services including paramedics and the fire brigade is vital on all new homes. This can have a significant impact on the development of small sites, and in particular backland sites that have limited street frontage. Further advice on this can be found in section 31.

13.16. Accessibility

- 13.16.1. In line with the new London Plan objectives, new homes should generally be accessible to those with disabilities.
- 13.16.2. All dwellings with an entrance door at ground floor should benefit from a level threshold from the street, and if the majority of internal accommodation is on the ground floor then they should comply with the Building Regulations Part M4(2) or M4(3) standard. For small site development, dwellings with an entrance above ground floor level do not require level access from the street, but must be compliant with the Building Regulations Part M4(1) standard, up to a maximum of three floors above ground floor level, although lift access is encouraged where possible.

13.17. Road adoption

- 13.17.1. When creating a new road on site, developers need to consider whether this will be a private road, or whether the road could be adopted and become a public highway. Roads in Lewisham fall under 3 categories:
 - Public highways (maintainable at public expense)
 - Highways (public has the right ‘to pass and repass’ over, maintenance is the responsibility of the landowner or frontages)
 - Private (maintenance is the responsibility of the landowner or frontages)
- 13.17.2. Road adoption is a process where a road in private ownership becomes a public road, which is then managed and maintained by the council. For a road to become adopted it must meet certain standards in terms of layout and construction. The council does not adopt all new roads built by housing developers, and it may be in the interest of developers to not pursue road adoption. For example, the width of a road can be narrower if not to adoptable standards. This may provide opportunities

for larger amenity spaces, smaller distances between buildings etc.

13.17.3. More information can be found on the Lewisham website. Refer to the Manual for Streets for more information about adoptable standards.

13.18. Safety

13.18.1. Safety is a key consideration in all small sites development, particularly backland sites where new publicly accessible circulation areas are being added.

13.18.2. **Safety on new roads**
When creating a new vehicular access, they should be designed to consider the safety and

legibility of all users, particularly pedestrians and cyclists.

13.18.3. If pursuing an adoptable road standard then applicants will need to follow the council’s guidelines that include parameters to make these safe. If not working to adoptable standards then there are more options available, such as shared surfaces and home zones. Applicants will need to demonstrate how the safety of all users has been considered.

13.18.4. **Non vehicular roads**
Applicants should follow the principles of Secured by Design to ensure outdoor spaces are conducive with a safe environment, including appropriate lighting, passive surveillance and visibility.



Fig. 33: ‘Walk up’ houses on Chalsey Road. Four houses, each with their own front doors, but two houses have most of their accommodation on the upper floors. (PHOTO NEEDED)

13.18.5. **Security of buildings**
The safety of the new buildings themselves is also a key criteria and again the principles of Secured by Design should be followed for this. Your consultant should be able to advise on this or recommend a consultant who can.

13.19. **Utilities**

- 13.19.1. The cost of your development will be affected by the access to and availability of utilities. For example if you are developing a backland garage site and no mains sewer connection exists, you will need to allow for the cost of a new connection within your development appraisal / project costing.
- 13.19.2. Often sites which are currently vacant are empty due to challenging constraints on the site. These may be readily visible, such as protected trees or utilities passing overhead. However they can often be found passing under the site too. Drains and high voltage cables in particular can have major impacts on development, in both their design, programme and cost and therefore should be understood at an early stage.
- 13.19.3. A consultant team is best placed to advise on commissioning the relevant surveys. A utilities search report will provide information about electricity, gas, water, sewerage, and telecoms.

13.20. **Party Wall Act**

- 13.20.1. If you are carrying out works governed by the Party Wall Act you need to serve a party wall notice on your neighbours. You do not need planning permission in place to serve notice and once served you have up to a year to commence work. More information can be found on the website of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveys (RICS).

13.21. **Access over un-registered or shared land**

- 13.21.1. Occasionally access to a site requires access to be gained over shared or un-registered land (see finding land / identifying a site). For example redeveloping a site at the end of a highway or private road where ownership is either shared across several titles or is unknown.
- 13.21.2. A planning approval generally requires that access to a new development is via a road which is of an acceptable or adoptable standard. Therefore where existing roads are in a poor condition this can create barrier to permission / development. A developer in this situation may be unable to take on the financial risk of repairing a road in order for planning approval to be considered.
- 13.21.3. However to mitigate this issue, a ‘Grampian condition’ should be considered by the local authority such that an agreement is attached to a decision notice that prevents the start of a development until off-site works have been completed on land not controlled by the applicant. Pre-application discussions will help to determine the acceptability of this approach.



Fig. 34: Access into Forest Mews, designed by Stolon Studio, is via a private road which allows soft landscaping to be integrated into the vehicular access (website: www.stolon.co.uk, photography: Robert Baker)

14.1. Introduction

- 14.1.1. Good, thoughtful design will help you get the best out of your site. It will enhance the lives of its occupants and neighbours, and will provide you with added value. It can also help secure you a planning permission.
- 14.1.2. But what is good design? Can it be defined with a set of rules? Probably not. There is no single way of designing for a given plot of land. Good design comes from looking hard at a site and its context and responding to its constraints and opportunities. This is how you will create a beautiful and resilient place.
- 14.1.3. This toolbox of design tools may be useful in helping you think through what is an appropriate way to develop your site. It is in three sections:
- The Green Toolbox, looking at sustainable, planet-friendly techniques.
 - The Inside and Out Toolbox, which suggests ways to enhance the design of your development.
 - The Placemaking Toolbox which can help your development to not just be beautiful in itself but to also contribute to and enhance its neighbourhood.



Fig. 35: Integrated design on a small site

Design Principles	Design Toolbox	Opportunities	Guidance
			Toolkits
			Site Types

15.1. Introduction

15.1.1. Just as technology is developing to deliver alternative forms of energy, architecture is changing to respond to new ecological challenges. House design is evolving to

reflect a desire to live in more natural surroundings and to live more lightly on the planet, conserving precious resources.

15.2. Vertical greening

15.2.1. Issues of overlooking on small sites mean some building façades may be nearly or completely windowless. Consider clothing these otherwise stark walls with ground-planted, non-invasive vines, such as Boston Ivy. This will:

- Beautify a potentially unfriendly wall;
- Provide seasonal colour;
- Make homes cooler in summer and warmer in winter; and
- Support biodiversity.



Fig. 36: Vertical greening

15.3. Living roofs

15.3.1. Flat roofs can be green, brown or blue (flooded). All of these can be sustainable and enhance biodiversity.

15.3.2. Roofs can be inhabited, providing additional outdoor space on small plots, or for upper-level homes. They are a great place to grow food and learn about plants. Consider a small greenhouse to germinate seeds, composting bin and tap with water butt. Even a small roof will fill a water butt surprisingly quickly.

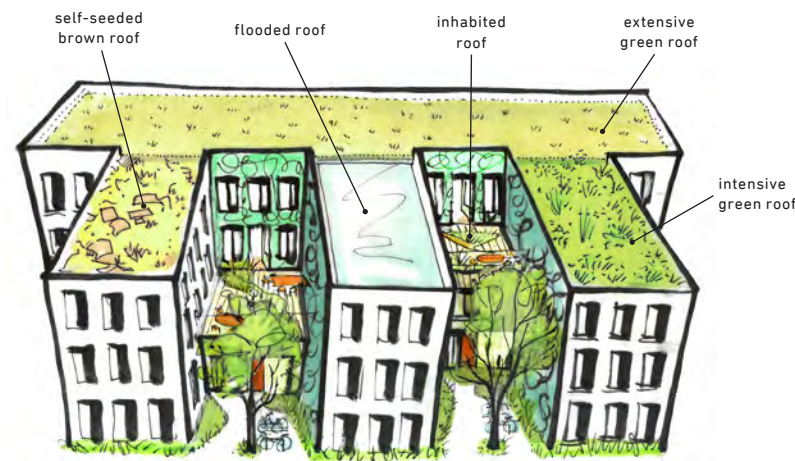


Fig. 37: Living roofs

15.4. Rainwater collection

15.4.1. Consider using inward roof slopes to collect rainwater on site for reuse for gardens or washing pets. You will be following a tradition dating back to the Romans.

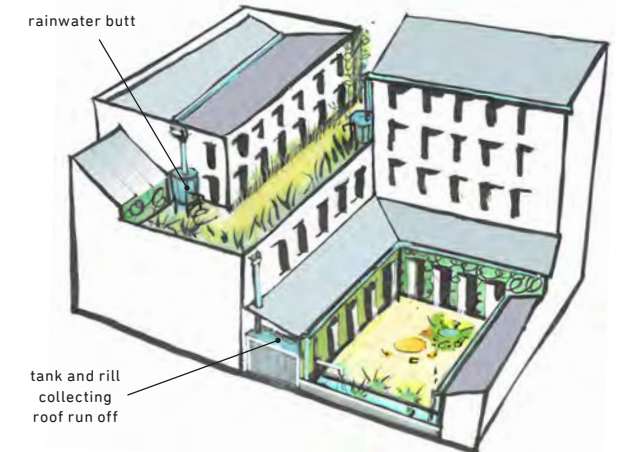


Fig. 38: Rainwater collection

15.5. Use trees to shade and to beautify

15.5.1. Trees and buildings can coexist happily, even in close proximity, and a good tree will always beautify and add value to a plot. They add to biodiversity and can provide useful summer shading.

15.5.2. Therefore design around trees rather than felling them. If there are no trees, plant some, and position them to enhance not just your own plot, but the whole neighbourhood.



Fig. 39: Trees

15.6. Solar panels

15.6.1. South facing roof slopes are great places for PVs (photovoltaic panels). The solar energy they capture will future-proof and heat your home, cut your bills and help save the planet.



Fig. 40: Photovoltaic panels (PVs)

16.1. Introduction

- 16.1.1. Inside: space doesn't stretch, but good design can make it feel more generous. A large house badly laid out can feel pokey, while a thoughtfully designed smaller home can be made to feel quite grand.
- 16.1.2. Outside: new homes are often perceived as unwelcome. Good design prevents this.

16.2. Occupancy

- 16.2.1. How people move through rooms will dictate how and where pockets of stillness can be found for getting on with something, and where the bustle of everyday life needs to be managed. Imagining yourself into all the spaces of the home will spark ideas and create opportunities.



Fig. 41: The life lived

16.3. Courtyard plan

- 16.3.1. Designing a house around two, three or all four sides of a courtyard avoids the need for windows on the plot perimeter and can make a home feel larger. Bringing the amenity space into the heart of the home, so that you can see from indoors to outdoors to indoors again, creates long views and offers a sense of space.



Fig. 42: Courtyard house

16.4. Terraces, not balconies

- 16.4.1. Stacked balconies can work well on large blocks, but they work less well on small-scale development. A good alternative is to use set backs in the massing of the building, floor by floor, as terraces for upper storey homes.



Fig. 43: Set backs and terraces

16.5. Half houses

- 16.5.1. Traditionally-sized houses are often too big for contemporary needs, but they may have the right kind of scale to fit in with an established neighbourhood. Consider designing half houses, where one house provides two or more homes. Give each its own front door. Lower storey homes have a small garden, upper ones a large terrace.
- 16.5.2. The house can be up to four storeys tall, one duplex above another. Or a duplex above two single storey flats.

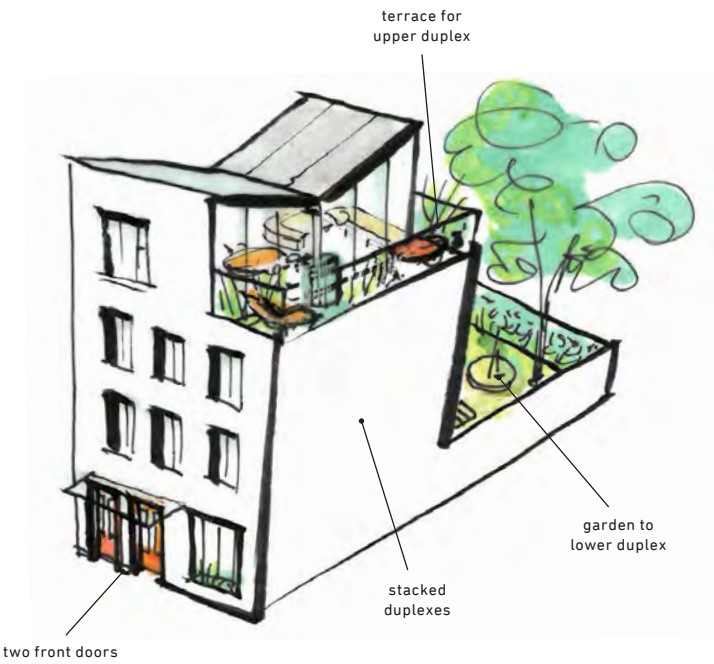


Fig. 44: Duplex homes

16.6. Skylights

- 16.6.1. Size for size, skylights give vastly more light than ordinary windows, and can light and ventilate otherwise gloomy spaces in parts of the building where windows are not possible or would not be welcome.



Fig. 45: Skylights over a bedroom



Fig. 46: Skylight over a laundry landing



Fig. 47: Skylights over a bathroom

16.7. Bring daylight to all the right places

- 16.7.1. Needing to turn on a light in the daytime is a failure of design. Many areas of a home might work well with low light levels but entrances, living areas, kitchen worktops, dining tables, and desks need good natural light.
- 16.7.2. Large windows, low window sills, light-coloured walls and ceilings, and light coloured floors all help make rooms brighter.

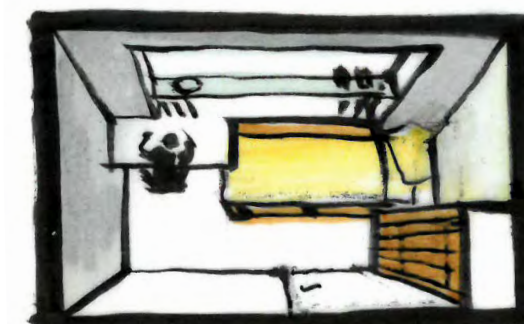


Fig. 48: Child's bedroom with desk space across the window



Fig. 49: High ceiling and large fanlight, good daylight to worktop and desks, well-lit living areas

16.8. Letting the sun shine in

- 16.8.1. Check which way your building faces and decide which spaces need sun most. Design so that low winter sun can shine right through the home, providing light and additional warmth. Skylights can provide unexpected sunlight, though be careful about overheating in summer.

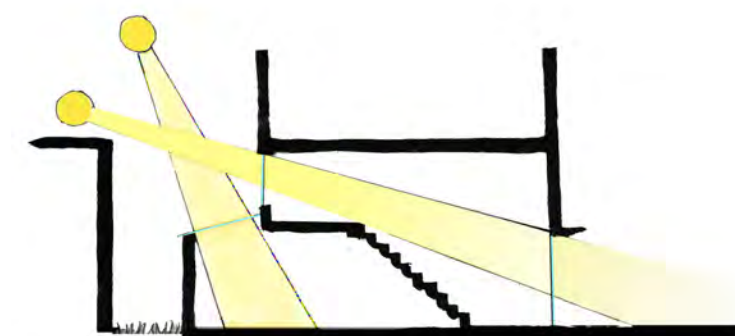


Fig. 50: Sunshine

16.9. Chinese gardens

- 16.9.1. A small garden strip around the house, setting it back from its boundary, enables the provision of windows, provides manageable gardening space and a green outlook, and adds to biodiversity.
- 16.9.2. In tightly laid out Chinese cities a high perimeter wall surrounded each family plot. Often, homes were built hard up against these whitewashed walls with just a small growing space perhaps a metre or so wide in between. Large windows meant these homes were full of light, but perfectly private.
- 16.9.3. An arrangement like this means ground floor rooms can have windows facing nearby existing houses without compromising the privacy of either household.



Fig. 51: Chinese garden

16.10. Reduce bulk

- 16.10.1. People like the intricacy of traditional houses. Modern houses are often described as 'boxy', but pastiche – copying traditional design – rarely works. A good trick is to assemble your building from more than one element. Perhaps a three storey main part intersects with a two storey projection? Or a two storey house with a higher element on the corner?



Fig. 52: Interlocking volumes

16.11. Entrances

- 16.11.1. Whether a door to a single house or to a larger block, entrances send messages to passers-by; friendly rather than forbidding; ordered rather than a chaos of open bins; cramped or with a generosity of space within and without.
- 16.11.2. Traditional front entrances, with their porches, paving, careful joinery, offer a wealth of inspiration for appropriately marking this important point of arrival and departure.
- 16.11.3. Nowadays these are some of the things that need to be considered:
- Mixed use schemes need their separate entrances to different uses clearly demarcated.
 - Level thresholds and generous widths are needed for less mobile users.
 - Sensitively integrated lighting makes entrances safer and easier to use.
 - Poor doors are to be avoided at all costs.



Fig. 53: Objects can accumulate around entrances and dominate the streetscene



Fig. 54: Paired entrances



Fig. 55: A welcoming entrance



Fig. 56: Apartment entrance with integrated bikes and bins

17.1. Introduction

17.1.1. Small backland sites can become little villages. Houses on corner sites can turn into well-loved landmarks. The plainness of an infill house might be the reason you notice the decorative details on the older homes in the street.

17.1.2. Creating more homes in a neighbourhood is a way to add variety and richness to the character of an area. Thoughtful design will be noticed, sometimes immediately and sometimes over time, appreciation developing slowly as thoughtful and sensitive architecture becomes familiar and accepted as an essential part of the street scene.

17.2. Calmness

17.2.1. Architecture often uses proportion, rhythm and repetition to create soothing vistas. Keep things simple, and avoid unnecessary eye-catching features except where there is a need to emphasize, say, an entrance or a corner.



Fig. 57: Simple, decorous architecture

17.3. Diversity

17.3.1. But not everywhere is appropriate for calmness and repetition. Many people like incident, particularity and character in their townscape. Every plot is different, so find reasons to make every home unique, adding not just visual interest but extra value too.



Fig. 58: Variety

17.4. Corners

17.4.1. Street corners are special places, and deserve special treatment. Buildings on corners have more than one front, and can be seen from a distance. Consider upping the scale here, and using both fronts for entrances.



Fig. 59: Street corner

17.5. Gates

- 17.5.1. Gates are appropriate between public and private spaces, but not between public and semi-public spaces. Gated developments should be avoided, but gates can still be useful to demarcate a boundary or to keep children and pets safe.



Fig. 60: Courtyard gate

17.6. Shared yards

- 17.6.1. Urban isolation is a growing problem. Carefully designed communal spaces with seating, play areas and community garden plots can help turn neighbours into a community.



Fig. 61: Shared courtyard

17.7. Near and far

- 17.7.1. Your development will be seen from many different angles, both near and far. Your design can provide interest and character from multiple viewpoints. Often forgotten is the oblique view from further along the street, where projections, eaves and the depths of window reveals become important.
- 17.7.2. Take the trouble to avoid clunky, jarring details, like projecting bolts on railings or balconies, oversized porch lights, or in-your-face meter boxes. All these can be designed out at little or no extra cost.

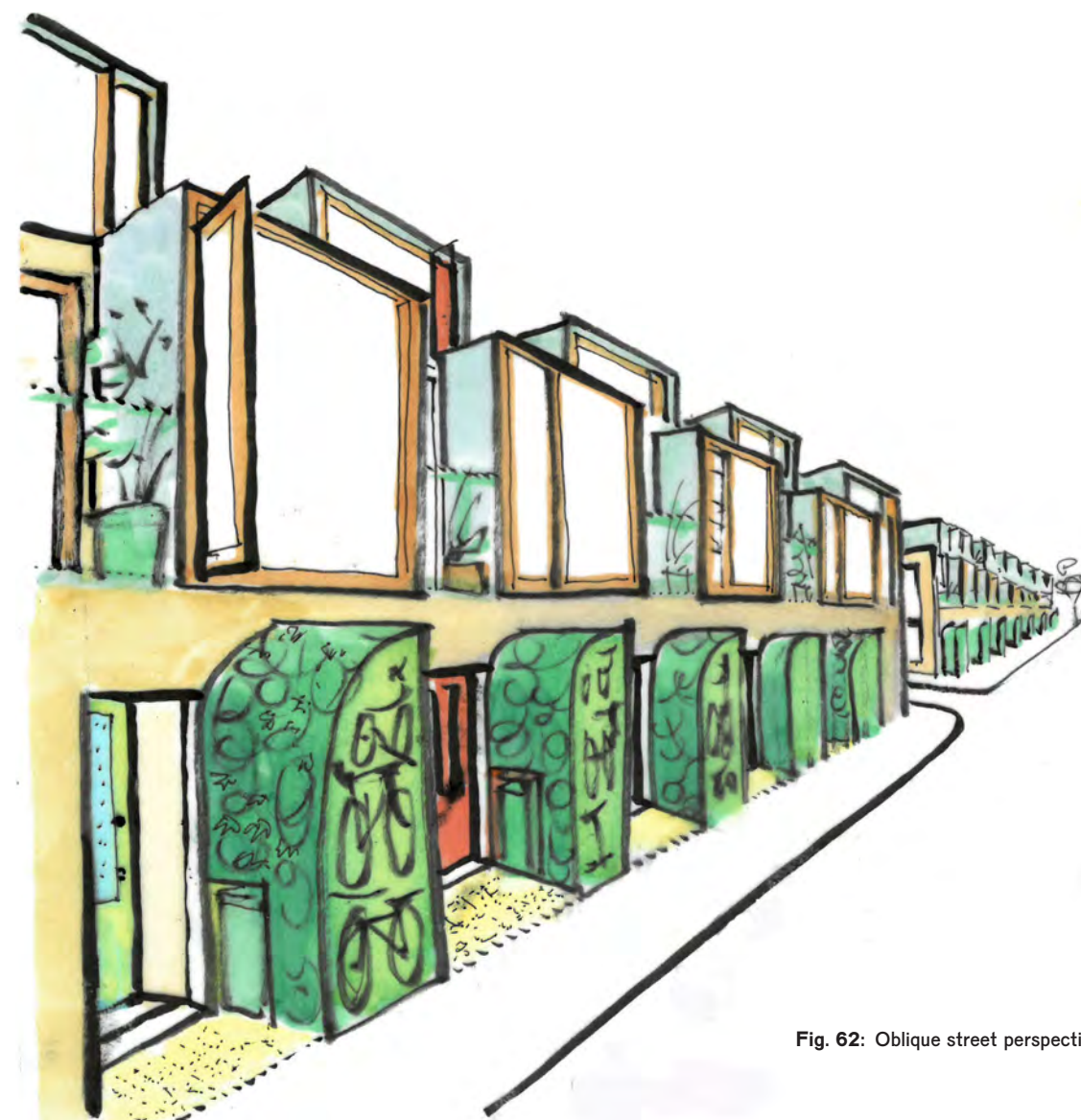


Fig. 62: Oblique street perspective

17.8. Foreground and background

- 17.8.1. Generally, residential buildings should be background architecture, avoiding ostentation, leaving grand architectural gestures (porticos, domes, columns) to public buildings. There needs to be a good reason for a building to want to say 'Look at me!'



Fig. 63: Foreground building and background buildings

17.10. Car cluster

- 17.10.1. Do cars always need to be able to park right outside the home? Where it is necessary to provide parking on plot, it will often be best to cluster the cars as close to the street as possible, reserving the rest of the site for pedestrian activity and safe children's play.
- 17.10.2. Just as important as car spaces is plentiful storage for cycles, and well-organized arrangements for refuse and recycling.

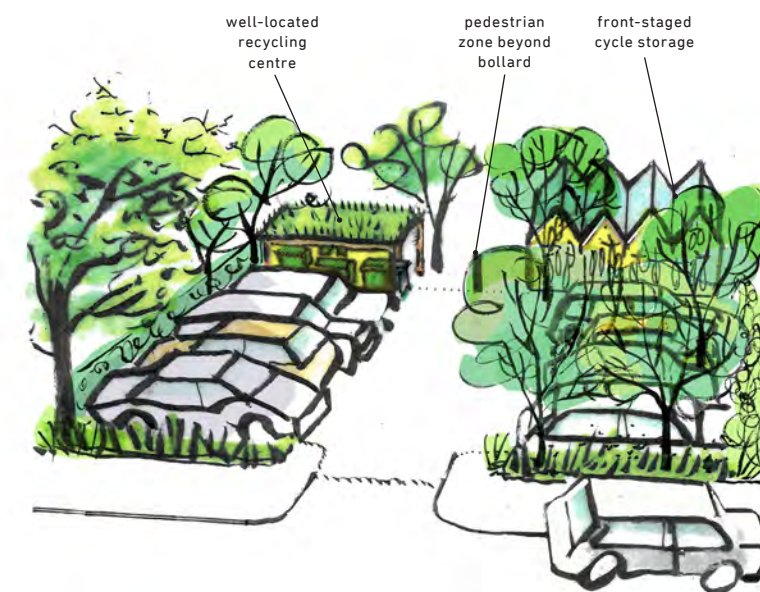


Fig. 65: Parking cluster

17.9. On-street parking

- 17.9.1. Providing a pavement crossover to parking spaces on plot not only inconveniences pedestrians, but it also takes up the space of an on-street parking space. Cars belong on streets, so perhaps they are best parked there too.



Fig. 64: Parking on street

17.11. Back-of-pavement windows

- 17.11.1. Interaction between indoors and out can often enhance the experience of both the resident and the passer by. Window boxes or an outdoor bench can give additional separation where needed, as can slightly raising the level of the indoors.



Fig. 66: Back of pavement

17.12. Tower houses

- 17.12.1. Tall slender shapes can sometimes be appropriate where more bulky massing would not. Consider the benefits of stacking bedrooms one per floor in a high, narrow tower above a larger ground floor, so as to punctuate a view rather than blocking it.

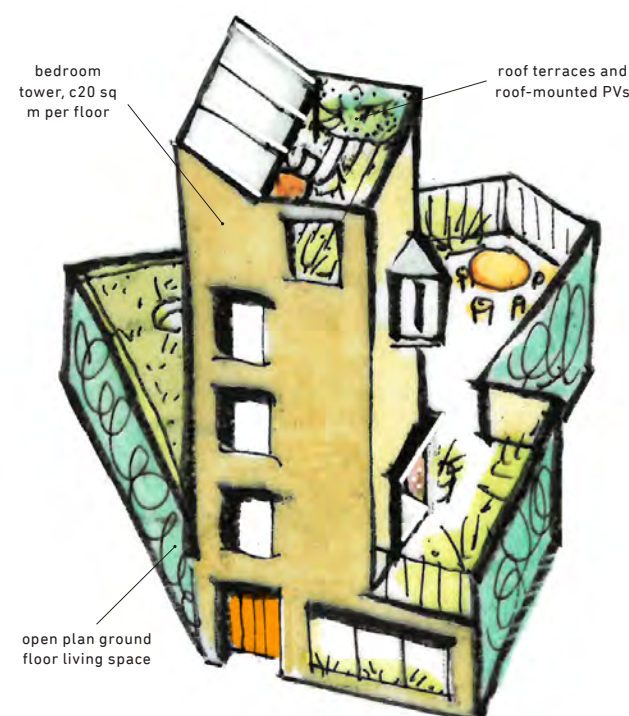


Fig. 67: Tower house

17.13. SUDs

- 17.13.1. SUDs stands for Sustainable urban drainage systems. It encourages the use of permeable surfaces, so that water can filter away naturally rather than going into pipes. This is good for sustainability, reduces the heat island effect of hard, reflective surfaces, and promotes biodiversity. In addition, it makes for attractive places.



Fig. 68: Sustainable urban drainage

17.14. End-of-terrace

- 17.14.1. Traditional terraces often end in a blank, unfriendly gable wall. This can be avoided by locating two homes back to back at the end of the terrace. Each home still has through ventilation across its two adjacent façades and can have either a garden, or an upper terrace, or both. The wraparound windows mean eyes on the street and a better looking corner.



Fig. 69: Back-to-backs

18.1. Benefits of developing your own land

- 18.1.1. Lewisham has a long history of ordinary people developing homes for themselves and their families, and the Council is keen to encourage this tradition to continue.
- 18.1.2. Depending on your appetite for getting your hands dirty, the level of your involvement in a development project is up to you. Existing homeowners with pockets of land which may be suitable for development can, with relative ease, self-develop to create a new home for themselves, their family or to sell.
- 18.1.3. It might seem a daunting prospect, but with the right design team to lead you through the project, self-build development can be immensely rewarding. Some of the benefits of self-build development include:
- 18.1.4. **Control**
Being the client, and being involved in managing the design and construction of a new home allows you much more control over the end product. Your involvement will allow you to make the decisions that matter to you and the community in which you live.
- 18.1.5. You may be able to build a larger home - or even more homes - on a site that you already own, as you may accept shorter distances between the windows of habitable rooms compared if that land is being developed by someone who doesn't live nearby.
- 18.1.6. **Quality**
Having a long-term interest in the development could result in higher quality when compared with someone else who doesn't have as much invested in the local area. This doesn't mean that you have to be involved in every single decision, or manage every aspect of the project yourself; by appointing a good architect with local knowledge and experience of designing new

- homes and who can guide you through the whole process.
- 18.1.7. For example, developing to the highest levels of sustainability has a greater upfront cost, but can create more enjoyable spaces that cost far less to run and create savings in the long run.
- 18.1.8. **Finance**
The financial economy of developing yourself can also allow you to invest in the areas that matter to you, such as architectural style, environmental sustainability, or affordable housing.
- 18.1.9. Developing a new home for yourself will reduce costs when compared with purchasing a new-build dwelling elsewhere - and as the client you will have complete control over the brief, and able to create a home suited to your individual needs.



Fig. 70: Coach House in New Cross, designed by Selencky Parsons, is developed by one of the original land owner and delivers three flats and a new house (website: www.selenckyparsons.com, photography: Richard Chivers)

- 18.1.10. Similarly, developing yourself will be more profitable than selling your land to a developer.
- 18.2. Finding land on which to build
- 18.2.1. If you're not lucky enough to already own a home with sufficient space around it to develop, you may want to consider finding land yourself on which to build.
- 18.2.2. Nothing can beat a wander around your neighbourhood to identify potential pockets of land which have yet to be developed. Using this document as a guide to the types of sites which are typically available in Lewisham, look for gaps between houses, disused garages and outbuildings and scraps of under-used space on which you might be able to fit a home.
- 18.2.3. Combining this with online research tools, such as Google Maps (www.google.com/maps) and the Land Registry (landregistry.gov.uk) you can, with relative ease, identify the owner of such sites and make a direct approach to see if they are interested in selling to you.
- 18.2.4. An alternative to this is to join one of the Community Land Trusts operating in Lewisham. The council maintains a register of self-builders, and will be able to put you in touch with one of the community housing groups in the area, which you can see on their website. There is more information on finding land on which to build in section 18.
- 18.3. Choosing an the right consultants
- 18.3.1. When developing yourself it is important to get the right consultants in place to offer their experience and advice to you. Key amongst these is an architect, who can work with you to understand your brief then recommend other consultants as necessary.

- 18.3.2. Choosing the right architect is vital to ensuring that your project has the greatest chance of success. A good architect will be able to advise you on every aspect of the design and construction process: how to define your brief; how to design a home which suits your needs; what surveys, reports and specialist consultants you will need; how to navigate your project through the planning process; how to choose a main contractor and how to ensure that the project is completed on time and on budget.
- 18.3.3. Lewisham has many excellent architects with experience of designing and delivering award-winning residential development projects across the borough. Some of the best examples have been included within this document, together with contact details for each practice.
- 18.3.4. The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) provides a "Find an Architect" service which can connect you to practices in your area. See www.architecture.com/find-an-architect for more details.
- 18.3.5. Fees for architects and other consultants vary depending on the practice and the type of project. As an outline figure, on small sites architect's fees are typically around 8-12% of the total construction value of a project. Development is definitely a case of "you get what you pay for", and it is almost certain that a good architect will more than pay for themselves in the added value they will bring to your project. In addition to the architect's fees you should expect to pay a further 5%-10% for other consultants, surveys and planning fees.

			Guidance
Design Principles	Design Toolbox	Opportunities	Toolkits
			Site Types

19.1. Embracing Lewisham’s history

19.1.1. Lewisham has an abundance of neighbourhoods that were developed as a result of groups of people coming together to develop a collection of homes. Examples of this can be found across the borough, including at Nubia Way, Walters Way and Segal Close.

19.1.2. This history is an asset to Lewisham and the council is keen to ensure that these types of developments can continue. At the time of writing two new community land trust (CLT) developments have obtained planning permission and will soon start on site.

19.1.3. **Church Grove**
The Rural Urban Synthesis Society (RUSS) is a CLT which was formed in 2009 with the view of facilitating community led housing, and now has over 800 members.

19.1.4. RUSS has worked with architects Archetype to secured planning for a project on Church Grove in Ladywell which will provide 33 new dwellings. As well as the benefits of high quality, customised homes, the nature of developing as a CLT / group has allowed for other more unusual but highly desirable features:

- Community hall and kitchen
- Generous outdoor amenity
- Allotment space

19.1.5. **Braysted Close**
Lewisham Citizens (part of Citizens UK) are working with London CLT to bring forward their first direct development on a backland garage site in Sydenham. Residents chose to work with architects Archio following a ‘pick an architect’ event where residents were able to discuss the project with multiple different practices. The proposed development will provide 11 new, genuinely and permanently affordable homes.

19.1.6. **Phoenix Community Housing**
One of the borough’s main largest housing providers is Phoenix Community Housing, a not-for-profit resident-led housing association with tenants and leaseholders forming the majority of the management board. They manage more that 6000 homes in Lewisham and are currently building new homes, including the recent development at Hazelhurst Court designed by Levitt Bernstein.

19.2. How to form a group

19.2.1. By joining together as a group your collective power is increased, opening opportunities to purchase sites and harness the talents of different individuals. Some of the benefits of this include:

- More control and input in the design
- Collective pool of resource and individual skills
- Increased finance opportunities
- Economy of scale
- Building a long-term community

19.2.2. Working collectively often results in the process taking longer overall, but if successful the benefits usually outweigh these drawbacks.

19.2.3. For further advice on what groups already exist and how to form new groups refer to the Community-led Housing London Hub website.

19.3. Working with neighbours

19.3.1. While individual development of small plots of land is vital to meeting Lewisham’s housing need, when adjoining landowners come together it can result in a more efficient development which has the potential to deliver a greater number of homes compared to each owner acting alone. More advice on working collectively can be found throughout the site types section.



Fig. 71: Nubia Way is a self build housing co-operative in Downham built in the 1990's (photography: NEEDED)

20.1. Green Space

20.1.1. Green space helps to support the ecology and biodiversity of the borough, and proposals are expected to identify and retain existing habitats and features of biodiversity value. They should also seek positive gains for biodiversity wherever possible through a design-led approach.

20.1.2. Seemingly underused sites may have important biodiversity and ecological functions. Designers should undertake analysis of such sites, supported by professional consultants where necessary. Your architect will be well placed to advise on the selection of ecologists / arboriculturalists.

20.1.3. **Green space as amenity**
As well as the ecological benefits green space provides, it offers invaluable amenity space to residents, supporting their wellbeing, and providing opportunities for play space, sports, and can serve other purposes such as reducing the noise from a busy road or providing shelter from prevailing winds.

20.1.4. **Urban Greening Factor**
The draft London Plan introduces the Urban Greening Factor (UGF) requirement for major development proposals. The UGF is a model used to provide a baseline for the amount of green cover that development will be expected to achieve. Lewisham Council will apply the recommended interim UGF factors for major residential and commercial development as advocated by the London Plan.

20.1.5. **Biodiversity offsetting**
If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, yet the benefits of development are deemed to outweigh the harm, then mitigation measures will be required. This could include biodiversity offsetting, whereby measures to improve existing habitats or the creation

of replacement habitats helps to offset any damage on the application site and compensates for this elsewhere (locally). This should be seen as a last resort.

20.1.6. If accepted by the local authority, an agreement of the offset measures will be secured by way of planning obligations or planning conditions. For more guidance see:

- Lewisham Local Plan
- New London Plan

20.2. Trees

20.2.1. Trees and the urban forest are an integral part of the Borough's network of green infrastructure and have many beneficial functions. In addition to enhancing local character and amenity, including air quality, they provide extensive areas of habitat for wildlife, which is particularly important in an urbanised setting like Lewisham. Trees also have an important role in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

20.2.2. Development proposals should seek to retain existing trees, as well as the associated habitat, and maximise opportunities for additional tree planting and green infrastructure. This is regardless of Tree Preservation Order status (TPO).

20.2.3. As per Woodland Trust guidance, trees that are removed should be replaced with a greater than 1:1 ratio. Only where removal is unavoidable should trees be removed, providing their removal is outweighed by the benefits the development offers.

20.2.4. **Root protection area**
Developments must avoid compromising and encroaching available space for trees. In addition to the visible part of a tree, designers need to consider the root protection area (RPA) located below ground. British Standards advise a rule of thumb for estimating the RPA by measuring the diameter of the

stem of tree at chest height and multiplying this by 12, although this varies by species. Developments nearby retained trees will require an arboricultural survey and method statement as part of a planning application. Your architect will be able to advise on the selection of an arboriculturalist.

20.2.5. **Benefits**
In addition to the myriad ecological benefits trees provide, they can offer benefits or solutions to the design of developments including:

- Help with overlooking
- Protection from overheating. With leaf cover in the summer, trees provide shade and protection from the sun. Where trees are deciduous, leaves fall, and winter sun is allowed to reach more of the building thus reducing heating demands.

20.2.6. Lots of people enjoy living near trees, and new homes that work with existing mature greenery are desirable. For more guidance on working with trees see:

- Woodland Trust - Residential Developments and Trees
- Urban Tree Manual



Fig. 72: A new home successfully built very closely to existing mature trees. Park House designed by 31/44 Architects (website: www.3144architects.com, photography: TBC)

21.1. Mixed use

21.1.1. There is a forecasted need for 21,800sqm of net additional employment floorspace in the Lewisham before 2038. In order to meet this need, development proposals will be expected to retain or re-provide existing workspace, and deliver net increases wherever possible. A more intensive use of employment land and sites will be necessary to meet future needs for workspace and job opportunities.

21.1.2. Making the best use of land will mean that land is used more efficiently and flexibly. This includes well-integrated, higher density and mixed-use development in appropriate locations.

21.2. Intensifying employment use

21.2.1. Retaining existing employment use needn't necessarily mean the re-provision of floor space like for like.

21.2.2. The existing usage may be able to be intensified through good design, making the provision more efficient whilst also reducing employment floor space, allowing the quantum of jobs to remain the same / increase.

21.2.3. Retaining job provision through change of employment type will generally be unacceptable, e.g. scaffold yard (high area demand per employee) into office space (comparatively low area demand per employee).

21.3. Where change of use is acceptable

21.3.1. Change of use to residential is permissible under Permitted Development with certain existing uses and will require Prior Approval (see section 8), but where possible permitted development and planning applications should seek to retain needed employment use.

21.4. Live / work

21.4.1. Live / work provides a good opportunity to incorporate employment use within residential developments. However there has been a trend of single demise live work units being used solely for residential use. In order to prevent this in future, the local authority will generally refuse single demise live work proposals.

21.4.2. Live work homes can still be achieved and the employment use protected from ad-hoc conversion, by separating the demises. This means applicants can propose separate spaces, with different use classes, for living and working.

21.4.3. Successful strategies for mixing of usage include ensuring each use has its own distinct access from the public realm, ensuring acoustic separation between the different uses and protecting the privacy of the new homes.

21.4.4. For more guidance see:

- The site types section for advice on mixed use in different sites,
- Lewisham Local Plan,
- Planning Portal.



Fig. 73: New homes sit above two commercial spaces in St Paul's House in Deptford designed by Ash Sakula. Access to the homes is kept separate from the commercial units with plenty of opportunity to meet neighbours (website: <https://www.ashsak.com/>, photography: [needed](#))

21.5. Introduction

- 21.5.1. A sustainable built environment is made of healthy and comfortable places to live and work. Sustainability brings a huge range of benefits to building owners at the same time improving the conditions around them and creating more cohesive neighbourhoods.
- 21.5.2. Small sites can be exemplars of sustainable development, with benefits including lower operating costs and improved long-term investment. People often think that sustainable projects must have certain kinds of products and technologies to be sustainable, but sustainable design is about good outcomes, not a checklist of products.
- 21.5.3. In the UK, 49% of all carbon emissions come from the building sector, a much higher proportion of carbon emissions than transport, agriculture or clothing. If we are to transition to a low-carbon economy then all new development should play its part.
- 21.5.4. The emerging Lewisham Plan outlines key requirements for sustainability in twelve sections under the heading of Sustainable Design and Infrastructure. This SPD explains those requirements in more detail, with a special section on energy use as well as links to further resources.
- 21.5.5. In this chapter we set out some key strategies to ensure your small site development is a sustainable one. The appendix provides more detailed information including:
 - Further guidance around cost and best practices
 - A glossary of sustainable building terms and standards
 - Specific guidance on Lewisham’s sustainable design policies for small sites
 - Useful external resources

21.5.6. Key sustainability issues

- Small sites are ideal candidates for sustainability
- Costs need to be considered long-term
- Requirements can be complex

21.6. What do we mean by Sustainability?

- 21.6.1. Sustainable Development reduces the use of fossil fuels, conserves water, building with environmentally sound materials, improving biodiversity and flooding management and improving the health and well-being of its occupants with good ventilation, daylight and improved comfort.

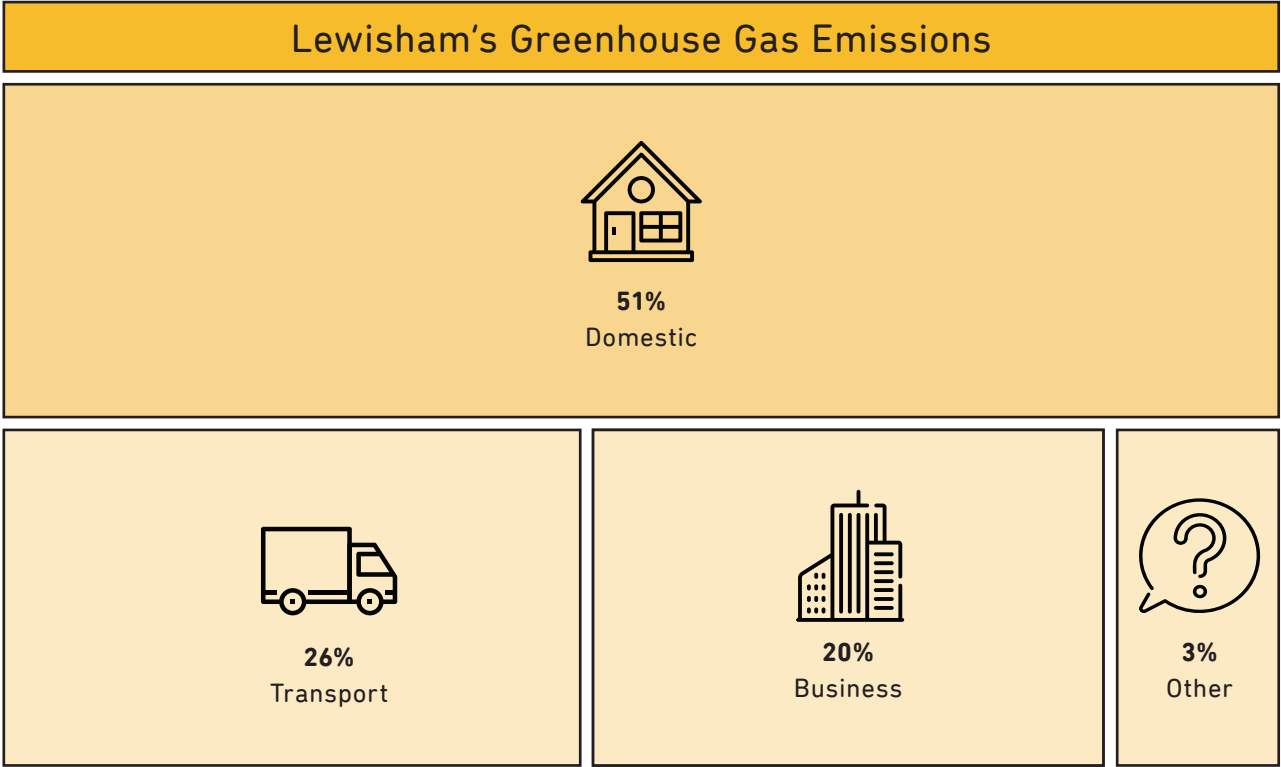


Fig. 74: Diagram showing the sectors responsible for the Lewisham's carbon emissions

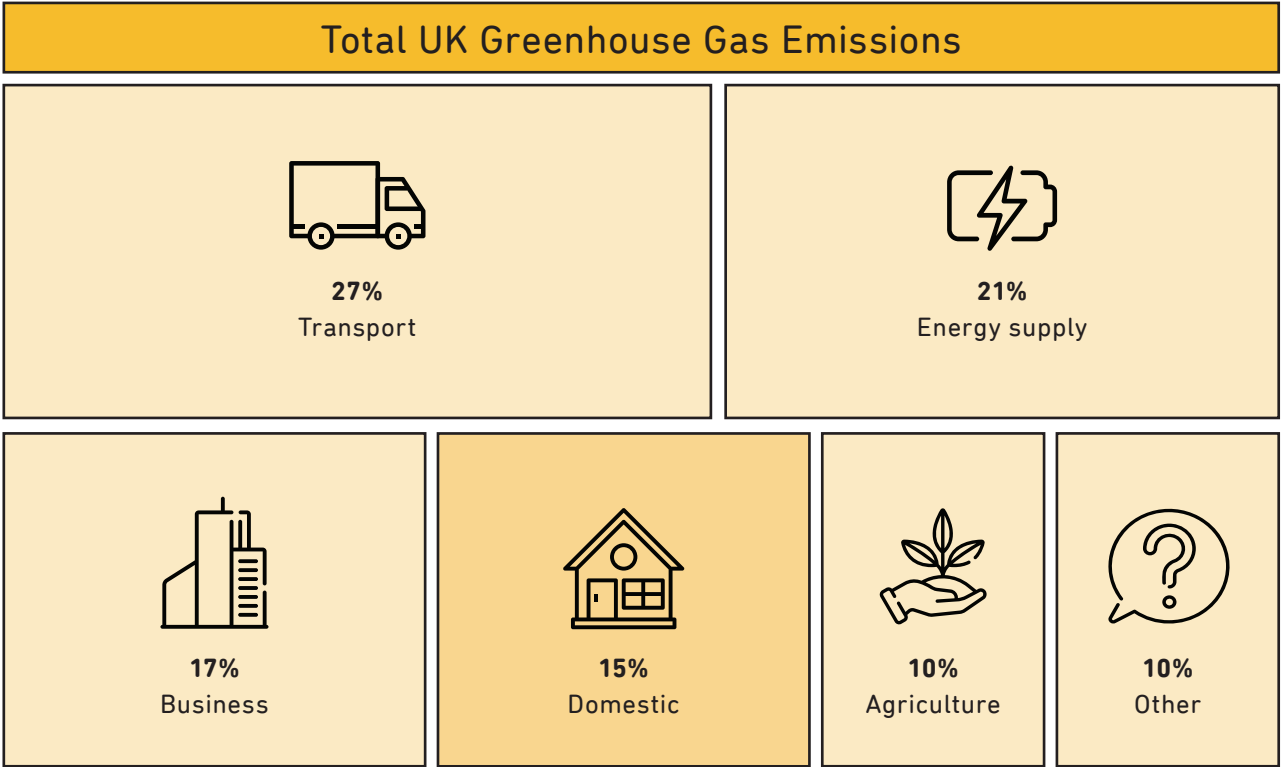


Fig. 75: Diagram showing the sectors responsible carbon emissions across the UK

21.7. Sustainable Development on Small Sites

- 21.7.1.

Projects on small sites can achieve high levels of sustainability. With fewer people in the decision-making chain, good design can take the lead.
- 21.7.2.

In addition, specific compliance requirements for projects under 500sqm, a large proportion of projects on small sites, are fairly simple, leaving owners more flexibility about how they set their own agenda whilst meeting the targets.
- 21.7.3.

Improving biodiversity, flood management and provision for cyclists all benefit the surrounding neighbourhood. For owner-occupiers the return on investment is very strong, both in reduced energy and water bills, and in improved comfort and health.

Developers also maximize asset value and minimize future risk.

- 21.7.4.

At the same time, sustainable requirements can seem unduly difficult for small sites, so how best to maximize the benefits, balance costs and comply with regulations?
- 21.7.5.

The biggest hurdle may be cost, since budgets for small sites are usually limited. The good news is that there are ways to help manage and reduce potential costs, though the best overall approach is to take a longer-term strategy and consider total investment rather than focusing solely on build cost. In many cases there is a clear return on investment, with owner-occupants being better off financially in the long run, and even the medium-term.



Fig. 76: This new home in Sydenham is designed using Passivhaus principles. It is designed by Ian McChesney Architects. (website: www.mcchesney.co.uk, photography: [TBC](#))

- 21.7.6.

For a project owner, it can be difficult to understand what to focus on. Good project planning is key, no matter how small the project, and this means understanding planning requirements from the outset.
- 21.7.7.

It is especially challenging to navigate requirements in the current environment where regulations are changing and becoming much tougher. But this might bring advantages for smaller sites, since there is still some flexibility. Developers of small sites can choose how far to push their project in terms of energy use, material sustainability and so forth. Hopefully this SPD will show some key take-aways to focus on and make the journey that much more clear.

21.7.8. Sustainable construction misconceptions

- Green building products are expensive difficult to find and build with
- Green features can be added onto a project in later stages with no extra cost
- Builders don't understand green building and will price in extra risk
- Build costs far outweigh operational costs so they should take precedence

21.8. Affordability

- 21.8.1.

One of the biggest hurdles to sustainable investment is the perceived high up-front cost. As a developer looking at a small site, cost will be one of the most important factors in determining whether a project is viable.

21.8.2. Affordability tips

- Balance capital costs, operating costs and long-term costs
- Focus on key targets with the most long-term benefits
- Let passive design do the “heavy lifting” rather than relying on expensive technology
- Sustainable goals should drive design not be “tacked on” afterwards

- 21.8.3.

Costs are falling

The green building market is evolving quickly, offering more choice, with “normal” building products playing a part, and increasingly competitive pricing. Contractors have better knowledge of sustainable construction and therefore reducing the pricing of risk. The benefits of real projects are now widely demonstrated, showing positive return on investment.
- 21.8.4.

Capital costs vs. In-use costs and long-term costs

For small sites especially, up-front or capital costs aren't the whole picture. There are plenty of sustainable strategies that are free or low-cost, or that increase costs in one place but reduce costs elsewhere.
- 21.8.5.

Others add up-front costs but significantly lower operational costs, making a positive return on investment over time (especially in lowering energy bills). Still others, like investing in more robust materials, making buildings airtight and incorporating better site drainage, reduce future maintenance costs.
- 21.8.6.

It is also worth considering that building regulations are increasing and in only a few years some standard building practices, like

gas heating, will be on their way to becoming obsolete. Buildings are meant to last, and designing sustainably is designing for the long term.

21.8.7. Focus on low-cost passive design to make the biggest energy savings

The cheapest ways to reduce energy use with the most co-benefits for the occupants involve simple, passive design: compact building form and layout, correct window sizing and placement, and building with sufficient insulation to keep occupants warm in winter and cool in summer, all of which improve comfort as well.

21.8.8. Aiming to achieve the same levels of energy use with solar PV is not only impossible in most cases, but also far more expensive to do and with no co-benefits. PV achieves the highest value when it is applied after other energy-saving reductions are already in place.

21.8.9. Key targets

Focusing investment on a few key areas with the biggest benefit for your project can ensure they are delivered in the final building.

21.8.10. For smaller sites, it can help to focus on a few key deliverables, for instance improving insulation and ventilation, and eliminating gas heating.

21.8.11. Sustainable strategy from the get-go

Make sure the architect or builder knows what your sustainability targets are and make sure they collaborate with you to achieve your targets right from the start. There can be several ways to achieve energy savings, each with their own trade-offs. So discussing what you want to achieve right at the start when there is design flexibility will save build cost. It may help to hire an independent specialist to compare different strategies and find the "best value" way of doing things.

21.9. Steps in the Energy Pyramid

21.9.1. Figure 75 sets out a pyramid of hierarchy for sustainable design in small sites. The bottom steps of the pyramid have the lowest upfront cost (and are even sometimes cost free), whilst also having the largest impact on energy saving. The higher up in the pyramid, the more expensive and less impact the strategies have.

21.9.2. All projects should aim to use as many of the strategies in the first step as possible. For schemes to perform at a level of 35% less energy use than building regulations, the first three steps are needed, and to target a zero carbon development all steps are needed.

21.9.3. The strategies in the steps may vary depending on whether your project is a new build or a renovation as follows:.

21.9.4. New Builds

Step 1 - Passive Design

- Ensure the orientation of the building offers protection from weather but ensures natural ventilation flows
- Design spaces to encourage natural ventilation
- Build air-tight (this doesn't mean removing ventilation)
- Windows maximized for daylight and minimized for heat loss or overheating
 - Correct positioning
 - Double-glazing
- External shading or shutters
- Insulate well

21.9.5. Step 2 - Low-carbon heating

- Air-source heat pump are usually the most effective on small sites

21.9.6. Step 3 - Efficient electricity use

- LED light fittings
- Smart metering and connected home
- Energy efficient equipment including white good

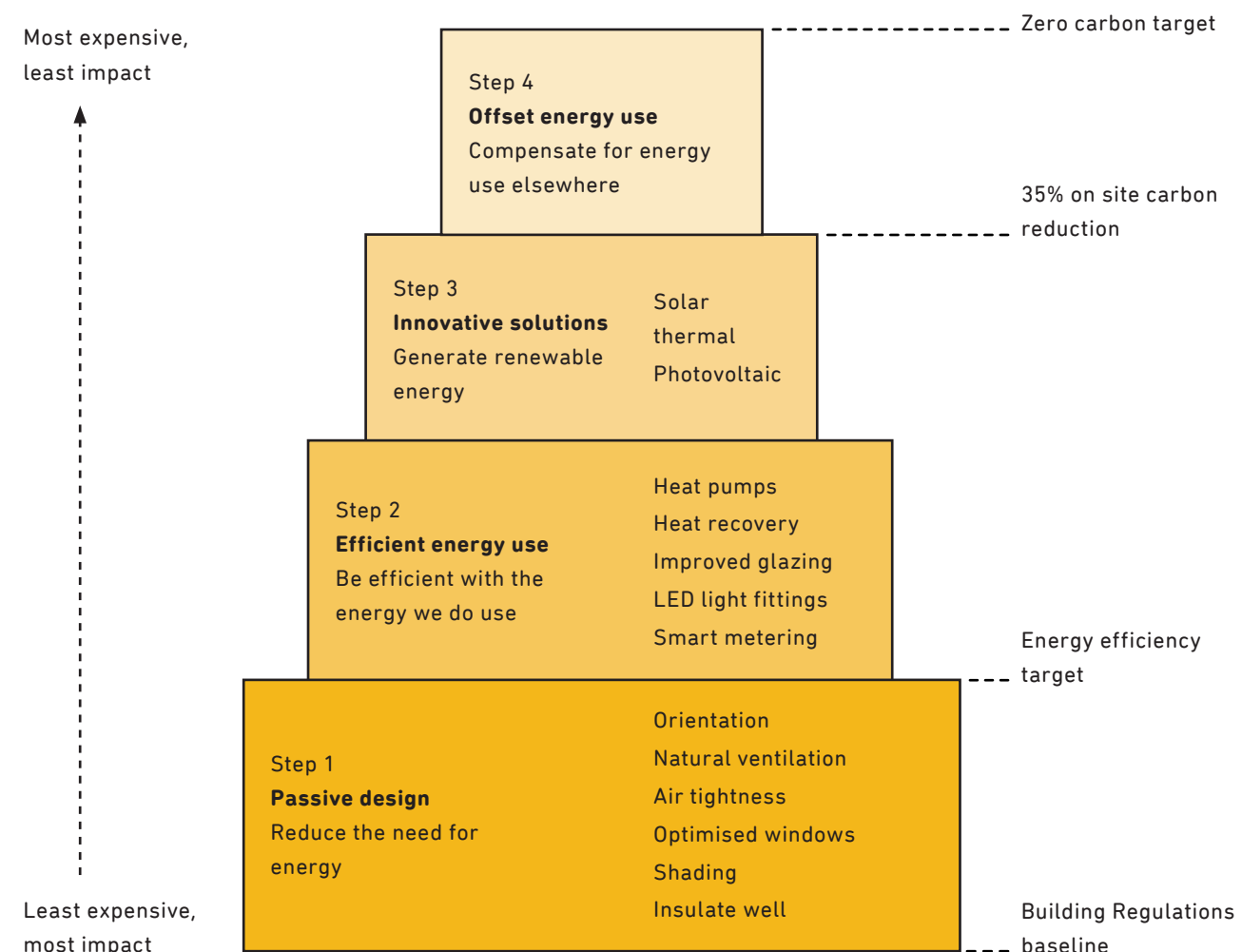


Fig. 77: The Small Sites Energy Pyramid, demonstrating that the least expensive energy-saving methods are the most effective, and increasing capital investment often results in diminishing returns.

21.9.7. Step 4 - Renewables

- Solar panels (photovoltaic) and solar water heating

21.9.8. Renovations and Extensions

Step 1 - Passive Design

- External shading or shutters
- Improve daylighting with well designed internal finishes
- Improve air tightness (this doesn't mean removing ventilation)
- Improve insulation
- Upgrade windows and doors

21.9.9. Step 2 - Switch to Low-Carbon heating

- Replace gas heating with a heat pump

21.9.10. Step 3 - Upgrade to efficient equipment

- Upgrade to LED light fittings
- Install a smart meter

21.9.11. Step 4 - Renewables

- Solar hot water and solar panels (photovoltaic)

22.1. Policy requirements

22.1.1. Some policies have quite different requirements for Small Sites depending on whether they are classified as Minor (under 500sqm) or Major (under 2500sqm). The Borough must support all sizes of project appropriately and requirements for smaller projects are accordingly much simpler in light of smaller project teams and quicker time-lines.

22.1.2. The following tables describe some of these differing requirements. Further background and explanation to the policies outlined in the Sustainable Design and Infrastructure requirements of the Lewisham New Plan can be found in the appendix.

Fig. 78: Tables setting out the requirements of the sustainable development policies for different types of planning applications in the draft Lewisham Local Plan

Sustainable Development and Infrastructure policies for Minor Developments		
Policy	Project Type	Requirement
SD2	Residential new build only	HQM Certification
SD3		None
SD4	All developments	Be able to connect in future to a HN
SD5	All developments	Describe how heat risk is minimised
SD6	In AQ focus areas	Air Quality Assessment
SD7	In Zone 2-3	Flood risk assessment
SD8	All developments	50% reduction in runoff, permeable surfaces
	In critical areas	Meet greenfield runoff rate, permeable surfaces
SD9	Residential only	105L/head/day + 5L external use
SD12	All developments	Adequate refuse storage

Sustainable Development and Infrastructure policies for Major Developments		
Policy	Project Type	Requirement
SD2	All major residential developments	HQM Certification
	All other major developments	BREEAM Certification "Excellent" rating
SD3	All major developments	On site energy reduction of 35% of energy use (compared to Part L) plus minimise non-regulated emissions
	All major developments	If zero carbon cannot be achieved on site, contribute to offset programme
SD4	All developments	Designed for future connection to heat networks
SD5	All developments	Describe how heat risk is minimised
SD6	All major developments	Air quality assessment
SD7	All major developments in Flood Zone 1, 2, 3a, and 3b	Flood risk assessment
SD8	All major developments	Meet greenfield runoff rate, permeable surfaces where possible
SD9	All major developments	No deterioration of watercourse, meet local sewerage capacity
SD10	All major residential developments	105L/head/day consumption + 5L external/day
	All major non-residential developments	BREEAM Excellent achieved for the Water category
SD11	New waste management projects	To be prioritised
SD12	All major developments	Circular economy statement
	All major developments	Adequate refuse disposal

			Guidance
Design Principles	Design Toolbox	Opportunities	Toolkits
			Site Types

23.1. Opportunities for positive change

- 23.1.1. Housing, wherever it is situated, needs to deliver more than shelter. It needs to create a sense of place, of belonging and wellbeing.
- 23.1.2. Lewisham is notable for radical developments which sought to address severe housing problems with bold new strategies (such as the LCC cottage estates and the Walter Segal self-build projects). These were imaginative not just in design terms, but in their positive attitude to fostering new communities, and encouraging residents to gain new skills. It is new schemes which share a forward-looking social agenda, as well as good quality design, which will ensure that the future heritage of Lewisham is equally rich. This could include exploratory building types to address the needs of single parents, single adults living alone, and groups of adults sharing accommodation at different life stages (including co-housing and co-investment opportunities).
- 23.1.3. A desire to achieve Passivhaus standards in new build, and to improve the environmental performance of existing building stock is also likely to impact on the character of architecture of the next decade, and we should consider how to encourage this to have a positive and legible impact as part of a public commitment to addressing climate change.

23.2. Conservation should not be seen as a barrier to positive change, and a sensitive approach should spread borough-wide

- 23.2.1. Conservation, at its best, is about enhancing the character of an area, preserving what is of key significance about an area and enhancing these positive qualities, whilst adding richness. It should be a process of gradually adding value, and ensuring that stories of past lives and activities can be read in ways which inspire and enrich the experience of inhabitants and visitors. It should also act as a quality filter, identifying what is a successful and aesthetically pleasing design solution, and encouraging longevity of those structures. These principles should not be restricted to conservation areas, but can benefit all areas of the borough. There are undoubtedly many more areas in Lewisham which could be designated as conservation areas, and this should be seen as a positive way of celebrating local identity, and not a barrier to change.
- 23.2.2. In conservation areas and adjacent to listed buildings, conservation should be seen as working not to restrict development, but as a lever to ensure quality. The only area of potential conflict worth highlighting is the positive role played by planned open spaces, particularly characteristic of the LCC cottage estates, and mixed development estates of the 60s and 70s. These greens and extended verges are design elements in their own right, making a considerable contribution to the overall character of the area. In some cases management has clearly failed to keep them cultivated as intended, and resources are unlikely to expand, so looking at how to generate more local community participation should be a priority - community orchards, allotments, public barbecue sites, etc could be considered.

23.3. On uniformity—something to be celebrated

- 23.3.1. Across the borough there are many examples of planned estates where a restricted vocabulary of carefully considered details was very deliberately used to create an overall composition which drew its strength from repetition of elements within a tightly structured syntax — a set of porch designs, distributed according to position of individual housing units in a larger terrace, for instance. In major set pieces of “heritage” architecture, such as the Nash terraces of Regent’s Park, lease controls ensure continuing conformity, but particularly in ex-local authority properties, acquisition of private ownership is often celebrated by stand-out changes, which frequently undermine the strength of the whole. Novelty for novelty’s sake is also disruptive as an approach to infill. Simplicity in terms of detailed design and number of materials used is often a virtue.



23.4. Robust detail and decoration

- 23.4.1. Many of the best buildings within conservation areas display a successful inclusion of decoration and pattern. It’s worth considering what makes this successful and sustainable. For instance, patterned brickwork or inset terracotta tiles are so much part of the core fabric and construction of a building that they are immensely durable. Joinery will probably be replaced during the life of the building, resulting in loss of detail, so design effort and expense here has less longevity. The most successful historic examples used cheaply mass produced mainstream technologies, so we need to consider what the equivalents are today — laser cut metal balcony panels, glazed tiles etc.



Fig. 79: This new house on Breakspears Road in Brockley Conservation Area, designed by Gruff Architects, carefully references the uniform character of the street on the front facade and utilises a more contemporary design responding to modern lifestyles on rear. (website: gruffarchitects.com, photography: TBC)

23.4.2. Across the borough, poor maintenance, ad hoc alterations and make-do repairs have eroded the quality of the built environment, and we need to ensure that we do all we can to minimise future maintenance problems ensuring that owners place as much care on the outside of their home as they do on the interior.

23.5. High Streets

23.5.1. Post-Covid, the decline of high streets and shopping parades seems likely to accelerate, and changing work patterns will further impact the nature of retail outlets. There will undoubtedly be opportunities for increased residential provision on high streets, with the possibility of building higher here, but with the challenge of providing amenity for residents on what in many cases are heavily trafficked roads, and with proximity of increased cafés bars and take aways.

23.6. Mews locations

23.6.1. Many of the proposed infill sites are variants on the mews/back lane situation. Conflict seems most prevalent where these are perceived as retaining a rural character. Achieving preservation of this seems fundamentally problematic, but there is scope for a positive new typology of modern mews development. New homes fronting on to these mews will inevitably require hard landscaping, but the rural character of some might be retained by encouraging home office type uses in the same ownership as the main properties, or concentrating development at each end of the mews. If development is prohibited, the ramshackle nature of present structures, garages etc. is not going to be sustainable long term—many of these are already in an advanced state of disrepair and, even if they were to be replaced on a like-for-like basis, the character of the mews will

be impacted. It is better to take a proactive stance and consider how these can be made to contribute more to exercise, health and well-being on a long-term basis.

23.7. Corner Sites

23.7.1. Corner sites present specific challenges, often seeking to reconcile development of very different periods on main and side roads. There should be no single solution to address this condition. In some instances this historic disconnect is something to be celebrated, rather than blurred as many developments seek to do: the story of development along arterial route, followed by swathes of infill residential is very characteristic of London as a whole, and Lewisham has a wide variety of types of infill resulting from different scales of development by different types of residential providers. In other cases the right thing to do will be to knot together the adjacent buildings.



Fig. 80: Corner House by 31/44 Architects extends an existing terrace, with the main frontage onto the primary street, and a secondary frontage onto the side street. (website: www.3144architects.com, photography: TBC)

Site Types

Types	p100
Infill	p112
Backland	p156

24.1. Structure of this section

- 24.1.1. This section splits the small sites developments into five types and provides advice on each. Within each site type there are a series of sub-categories, and specific guidance is provided for each.
- 24.1.2. The constraints of each type varies, with differing levels of complexity, and so the level of information provided for each is proportionate to the challenges that are likely to be faced when considering development on each.
- 24.1.3. Everyone working on or considering working on a small site development in Lewisham should use this section to help identify which category their development site falls into and consult this section for specific guidance.
- 24.1.4. The guidance given described some key guidelines for how some homes should be laid out on these sites and some of the key constraints likely to be faced. These guidelines are not hard-and-fast rules and developments may be given permission where advice is not followed if the application demonstrates exceptional design quality or achieves the policy objectives in a creative way. However for the most part, developments that follow the guidelines in this section are much more likely to be supported by planning officers and councillors.

24.2. How the site types work

- 24.2.1. The site types have been defined following extensive mapping of the borough to identify where the majority of potential for small sites development exists. Therefore they are not an extensive list, but rather represent the vast majority of small sites in Lewisham.
- 24.2.2. All sites vary. The site types in this document are generalised versions of real sites, and therefore will not be exact matches for your site, but rather have corresponding qualities and characteristics. It is likely that your site may fall into more than one category. If so, you will benefit from the advice in multiple parts of this section.

24.3. How to navigate this section

- 24.3.1. In the following pages, the key characteristics of each site are described. You should use this to identify what types and subcategories your site falls into. With this information you should then turn to the relative page indicated or click on the icons to link through to the correct pages.

				Guidance
				Toolkits
Types	Infill	Backland	Other Types	Site Types

Infill	A site with at least one street frontage. Existing use may vary. Existing typology may vary.
Backland	A site with no street frontages. Existing use may vary. Existing typology may vary.
Conversion + extension	Retaining an existing structure on site. Change to residential use. Increase in number of homes.
Garden lands	Existing usage as a garden. May be hard or soft landscape. May be visible from street.
Amenity	Existing amenity use. May be green space or other communal facility. Has specific designation.

Fig. 81: The five types of small sites that are identified and advised on in this document

25.1. Infill

- 25.1.1. **Local Plan definition**
"Infill sites are defined as sites within street frontages such as former builders yards, small workshops and garages, gaps in terraces and gardens to the side of houses. Infill sites may present urban design problems in harmonising the development with the existing built form."
- 25.1.2. **Is my site an infill site?**
The main characteristic of an infill site is that it has a street frontage. This may be a side street, a main street, or an established mews street. The site may face one street or could have a frontage onto multiple.
- 25.1.3. **Lewisham has a large amount of perimeter urban blocks, where buildings front streets and enclose garden land behind. Infill sites are often found here, such as in the gaps between existing buildings, or the extension or demolition and renovation of existing buildings.**
- 25.1.4. **The advice provided focuses on the street frontage and how it relates to its neighbours. Some sites may be deep, having an area near the front of the site with the characteristics of an infill site as well as a developable area at the back that has the characteristics of a backland site. In these instances advice from both sections should be considered.**

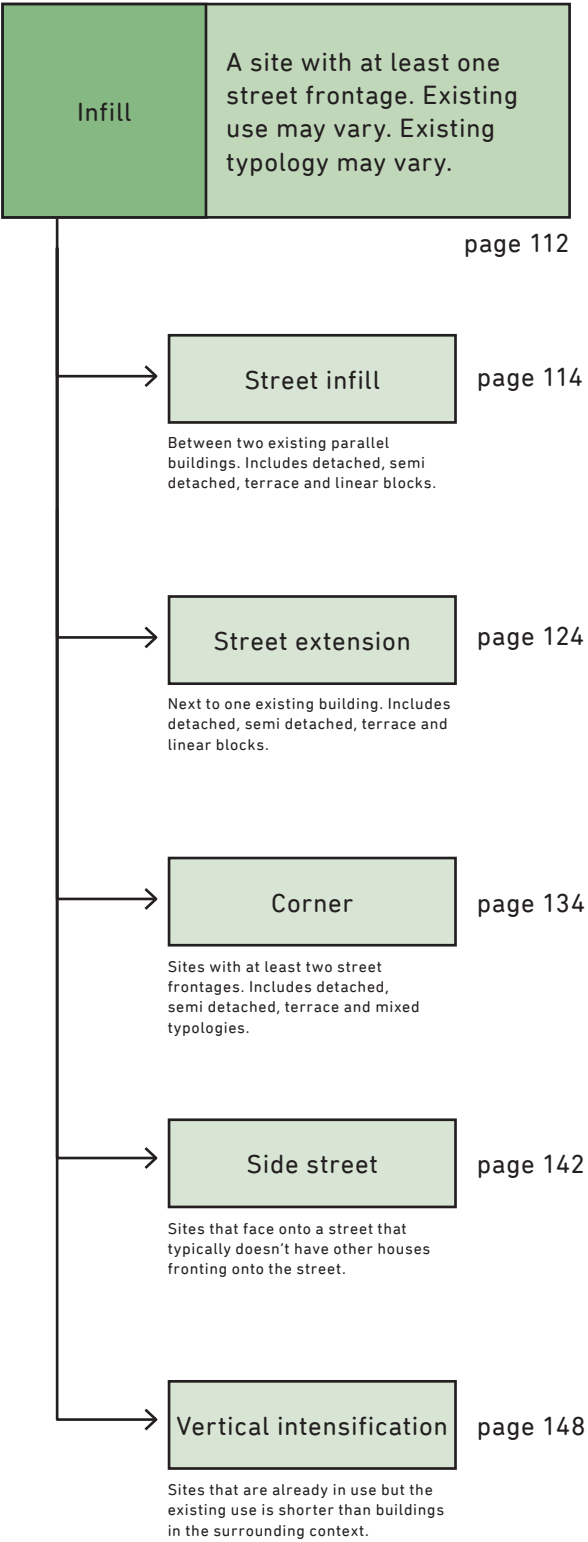


Fig. 82: Characteristics of infill sites and the subcategories that advice is given on in this document



Fig. 83: Infill development on Florence Road in Brockley designed by Harper Downie Architects. (website: www.hdar.uk, photography: **NEEDED**)

25.2. Backland

- 25.2.1. **Local Plan definition**
“Backland sites are defined as ‘landlocked’ sites to the rear of street frontages not historically in garden use such as builders yards, small workshops and warehouses, and garages. They require sensitive treatment and a high quality of design in order to achieve successful development because of the potential for visual and functional intrusion due to the close proximity to existing housing.”
- 25.2.2. **Is my site a backland site?**
The main characteristic of a backland site is that it either has limited or no street frontage. The site may already have vehicular access into it, but it might not.
- 25.2.3. Backland sites can often be found in the middle of perimeter blocks, and are often existing or former employment or storage sites such as builder’s yards or garages. In much of Lewisham these are sometimes standalone sites with their own access routes, but are often a series of smaller sites that are connected with rough alleys / lanes. The creation of a new mews street is also a form of backland development.
- 25.2.4. As mentioned in section 24.1, some deeper sites will fall into both the backland and infill site types, with development possible at the front and back of site.

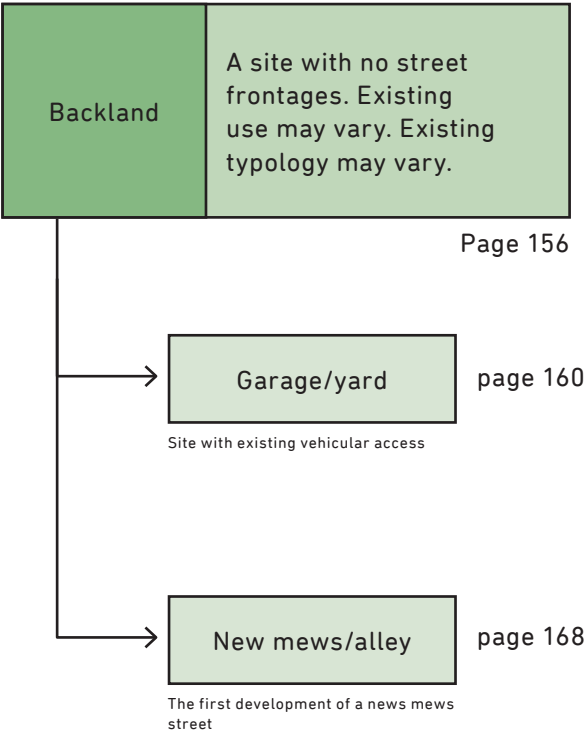


Fig. 84: Characteristics of backland sites and the subcategories that advice is given on in this document



Fig. 85: Woodstock Court in Lee designed by HFBT Architects (website: www.hfbt.co.uk, photography: NEEDED)

25.3. Conversion and extension

- 25.3.1. **Local Plan definition**
Conversion and extensions are not defined as a specific category in policy QD11 in the draft Local Plan. This is because typically it can be difficult to create additional new homes when converting and extending existing buildings.
- 25.3.2. **Is my site a conversion or extension?**
The main characteristic of conversion and extension is when an existing structure is being retained on site and forms the main part of the development.
- 25.3.3.
Conversions often come in the form of a change of use, taking an existing building that is currently in a different use class and converting it to be residential. They can also be found where larger homes are being split into multiple smaller homes
- 25.3.4.
Small sites extensions involve extending the building in order to create additional new homes. This is often as part of a conversion, but can also be found on sites where the existing building is not efficiently using its plot. Lewisham has an Alterations and Extensions SPD that gives extensive guidance that will be important for everyone working with existing buildings.
- 25.3.5.
Conversions and extensions will almost always also sit in either the infill or backland category as well, and advice from these sections should be understood in conjunction with advice in this section.
- 25.3.6.
Retaining an existing structure as part of an infill or backland development should always be considered as this may produce significant saving in both cost and embodied energy and is vital to helping the building industry respond to the climate emergency we are facing.

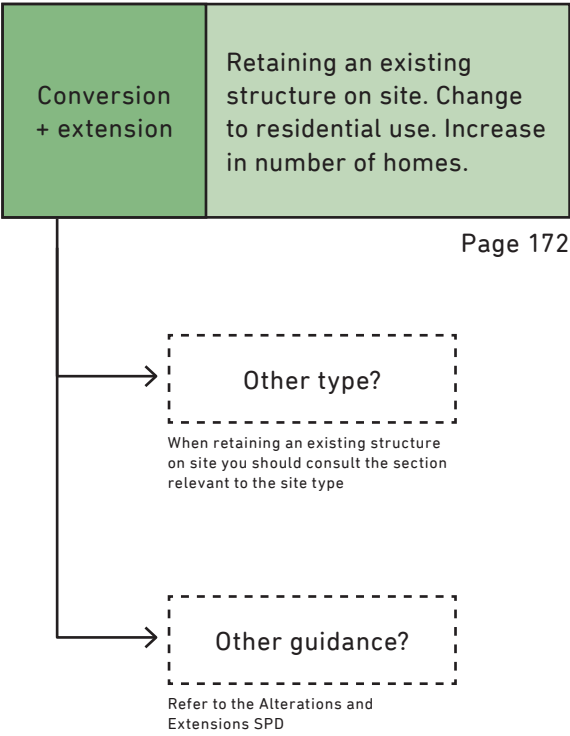


Fig. 86: Characteristics of conversion and extension sites and summary of the advice given on in this document



Fig. 87: Strange House designed by Hugh Strange Architects in New Cross (website: www.hughstrange.com, photography: TBC)

25.4. Garden land

25.4.1. **Local Plan definition**
“Back gardens are private amenity areas that were the entire back garden to the rear of a dwelling or dwellings as originally designed. Gardens used to be considered previously developed land (PDL) with a presumption in favour of development. Gardens are no longer considered to be PDL which means that there is no longer a presumption in favour of development. Back gardens in the ‘perimeter block’ urban typologies identified in the Lewisham Borough Wide Character Study (2010) (Lewisham Character Study) which have more or less enclosed rear gardens, are considered to be an integral part of the original design of these areas and provide valuable amenity space and an ecological resource. Development of separate dwellings in the back gardens of these urban typologies will not be considered acceptable. Other typologies also often have dwellings with private back gardens that do not form such a strong design feature of the development. These are typically more modern developments which feature small gardens which are rarely longer than 10 metres or are quite narrow, and are therefore not suitable for development.”

25.4.2. **Is my site garden land?**
The main characteristic of a garden land site is that its existing use is as a private garden.

25.4.3. Development of garden lands should be avoided, so it is important that if you have a site that has the characteristics of garden land, you should also consider if it fits another site type that is suitable for development.

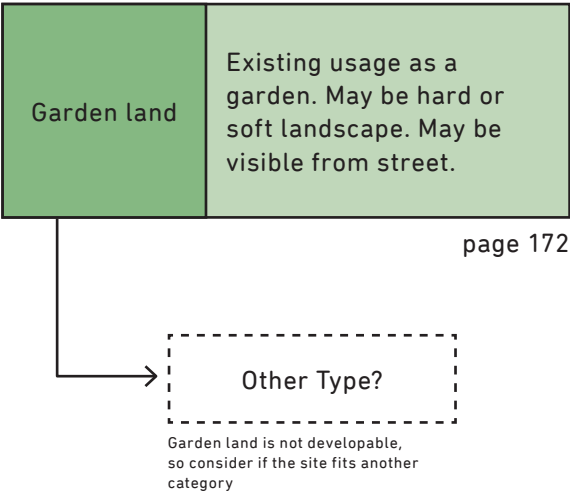


Fig. 88: Characteristics of garden land sites and summary of the advice given on in this document



Fig. 89: New house in Forest Hill built on garden land – why was this allowed? (website: www.studio-bam.com, photography: Adrian Pope and Niki Borowiecki)

25.5. Amenity

- 25.5.1. **Local Plan definition**
"Amenity areas are communal amenity areas attached to residential development."
- 25.5.2. **Is my site amenity?**
- 25.5.3. The main characteristic of amenity sites are that their current use is as some form of outside amenity or recreation use.
- 25.5.4. These sites will almost always also sit in either the infill or backland category as well, and advice from these sections should be understood in conjunction with advice in this section.

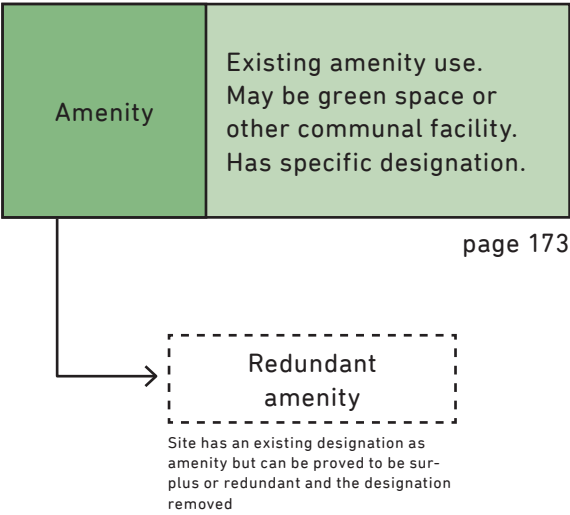


Fig. 90: Characteristics of amenity sites and summary of the advice given on in this document



Fig. 91: New homes in Forest Hill designed by David Miller Architects (website: www.david-miller.co.uk, photography: TBC)

26.1. Infill development

- 26.1.1. Infill development takes place where new homes are created on site which have a frontage onto an existing street. This might be a vacant plot of land, or a bit of space next to an existing home.
- 26.1.2. In some cases, a site might be occupied by an existing property which does not make best use of the land around it: a bungalow sitting within a street of large detached houses, for example. In these cases the most efficient way to achieve a greater uplift in the number of homes on the site might be to demolish the existing building and to replace it with a new home.
- 26.1.3. In other cases it may be possible to extend the existing home to add new rooms and make it better suited to a larger family.
- 26.1.4. Infill developments tend to provide a smaller number of new homes than other types of small site. However, if neighbours were to act together to release land, they could create opportunities for delivering more homes through coordinated development.
- 26.1.5. Infill development falls generally into one of five categories:
 - Street Infill
 - Street Extension
 - Side Streets
 - Corner Development
 - Vertical Intensification
- 26.1.6. Each of these types is described on the following pages.

26.2. What to look out for

- 26.2.1. Contemporary space standards require new dwellings, and the rooms within them, to be larger than those of some historic properties. This means that it may not be possible to replicate exactly the form and width of existing houses.
- 26.2.2. Many infill sites exist within, or at the end of, existing streets where historic patterns of development have resulted in leftover spaces. Such sites can be a challenge for small sites development, but a creative architect can exploit such opportunities to create beautiful and sustainable homes.

26.3. Relevant planning policy

- 26.3.1. Lewisham’s planning policy requires that all new infill development makes a “positive contribution” to local character which responds to the “distinctive qualities of the street”. (Draft New Local Plan, Policy QD11)
- 26.3.2. Infill development should “maximise the opportunity to repair harmful breaks in frontage”, and “sensitively integrated into the street frontage” while retaining “appropriate garden space for adjacent properties”. (Draft New Local Plan, Policy QD11)

				Guidance
				Toolkits
Types	Infill	Backland	Other Types	Site Types



Fig. 92: Street infill on Eddystone Road designed by Conibere Phillips Architects (website: www.coniberephillips.com, photography: **NEEDED**)

				Guidance
				Toolkits
Types	Infill	Backland	Other Types	Site Types

27.1. General principles

- 27.1.1. Street infill occurs on site where there is a significant gap between the walls of existing buildings, or where an existing building makes poor use of its site, and demolition and redevelopment would achieve a greater quantity of new accommodation.
- 27.1.2. Street infill tends to occur within streets occupied by terraced houses or detached and semi-detached homes where the side walls of neighbouring properties are at an angle of less than 45 degree from one another. Where this angle is significantly larger, this could be considered to be a “corner site”, which is covered by a separate chapter of this guidance document.



Fig. 93: Street infill doesn't necessarily need to match the adjacent eaves and ridge heights

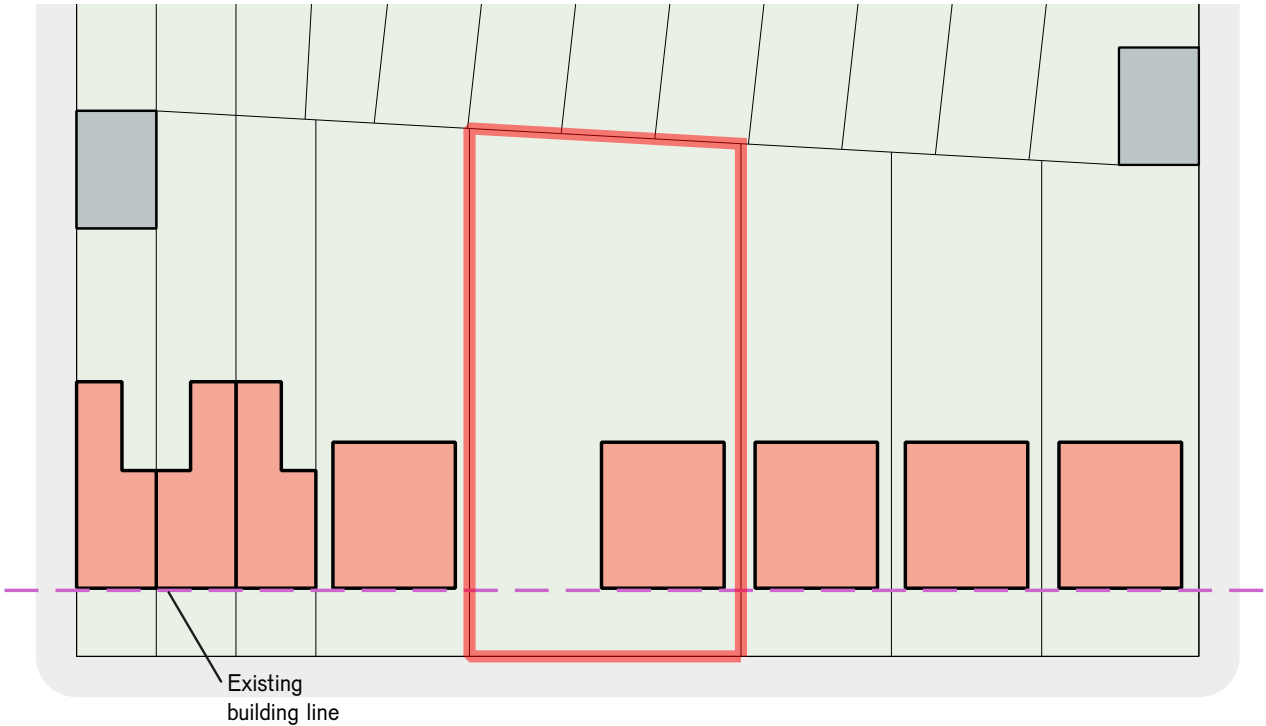


Fig. 94: Excessive gaps between existing houses provide an ideal opportunity for new homes whilst also enabling the streetscape to be repaired. These often occur on plots of land which are partially occupied by an existing property.

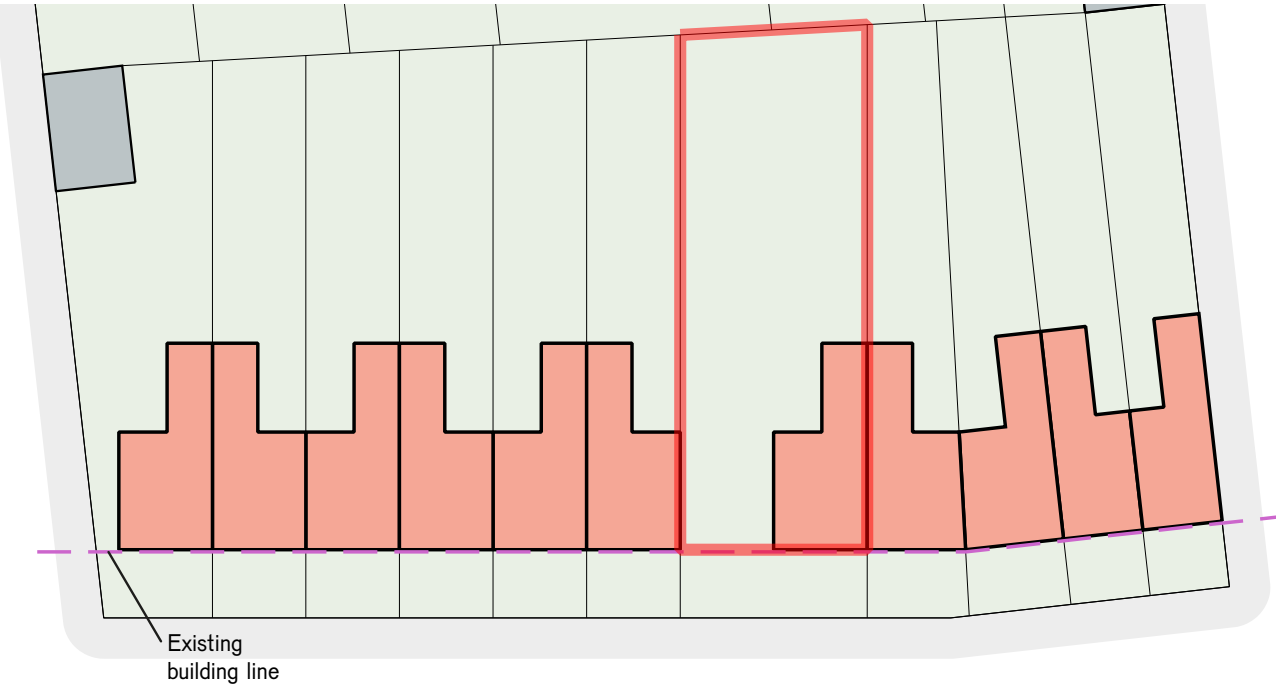


Fig. 95: Gaps between existing terraced houses can also be used to deliver new homes.

27.2. New infill homes on vacant land

- 27.2.1. Where existing gaps in the streetscape allow, existing plots can be sub-divided to create space for new homes.
- 27.2.2. In this case a new dwelling has been created on an area of land adjacent to an existing home. The larger plot has been separated into two to provide a rear garden for each.
- 27.2.3. The principal elevation of the new development maintains the building line established by adjacent buildings.
- 27.2.4. The rear elevation of new development should avoid extending further than a 45 degree line extending from the closest neighbouring windows.

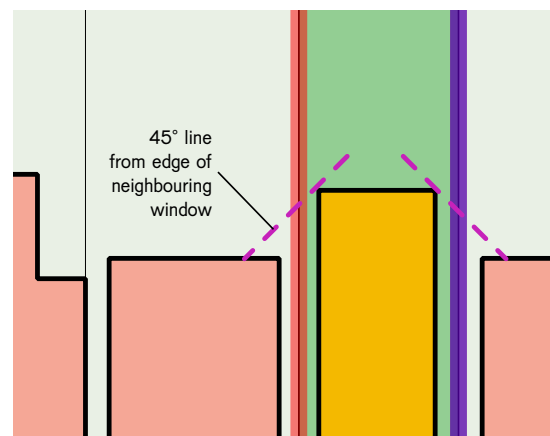


Fig. 96: 45 degree line to limit overbearing of neighbours

- 27.2.5. When new infill development is introduced into an existing street of detached or semi-detached properties, care should be taken to respond to the rhythm of gaps between

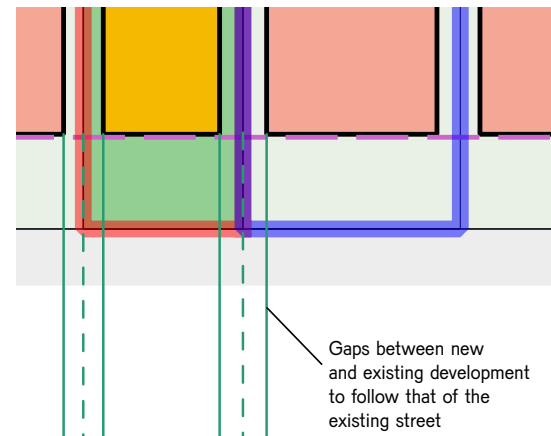


Fig. 97: Follow the pattern of gaps along the existing street

buildings. The side walls of new development should generally be offset from the boundary by the same distance as its immediate neighbour.

- 27.2.6. Taking into account the definition of floor levels established in paragraph 1.3.4, a new dwelling within a street of consistent height should broadly maintain the line established by neighbouring homes.

- 27.2.7. Where the buildings on the street have inconsistent heights, new development can generally extend to one storey taller than the tallest of its immediate neighbours.

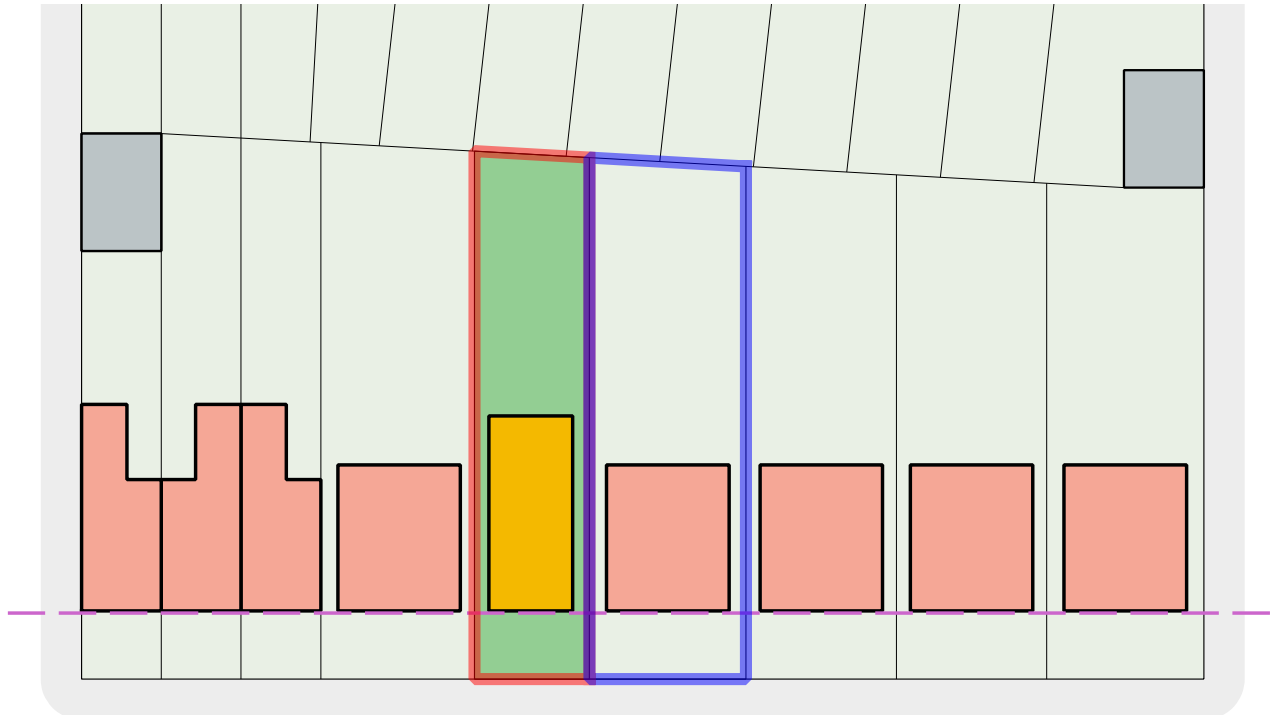


Fig. 98: A large plot occupied by a single detached dwelling can be sub-divided into two smaller plots to make way for a new infill development.

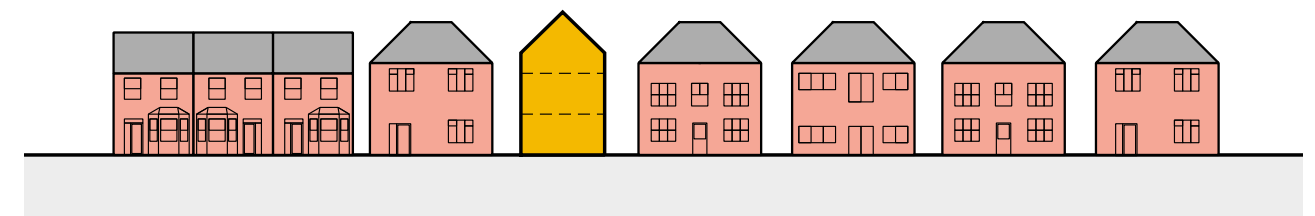


Fig. 99: Where existing building heights are broadly consistent along a street, new infill development should not be significantly taller than the buildings either side of them.

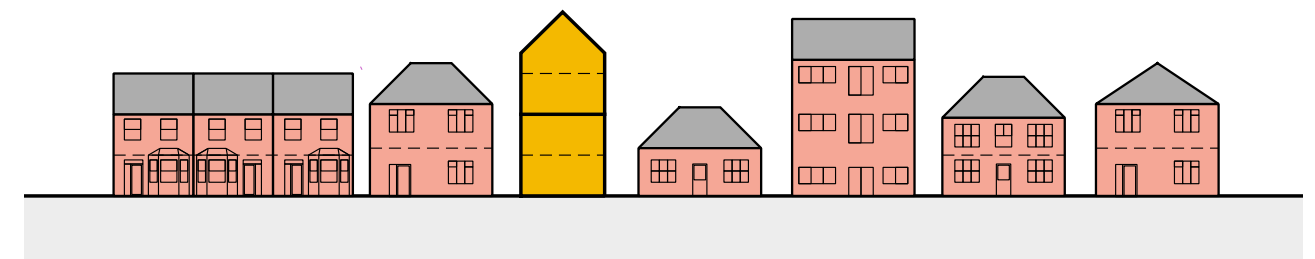


Fig. 100: Where existing building heights are varied, new infill development may be up to one storey taller than its neighbours, provided that it achieves a high degree of design quality.

27.3. Replacement infill development

- 27.3.1. Where existing properties sit within large plots and make poor use of the space around them, more extensive development may be preferable.
- 27.3.2. For example, single-storey detached dwellings, such as bungalows, usually represent an under-use of space.
- 27.3.3. In these cases the replacement of existing buildings, a significant increase the number of homes on a site will generally be supported where this meets all other planning policy requirements.
- 27.3.4. The replacement of a small single dwelling which under-occupies a large plot could result in three or more family homes.



Fig. 101: This project by architect Groupwork slots a contemporary new residential development into a narrow site on a street of varied character in Hackney. (website: groupwork.uk.com, photography: Groupwork)



Fig. 102: Forster House in Whitefoot designed by Levitt Bernstein Architects (Website: www.levittbernstein.co.uk, Photography: **NEEDED**)

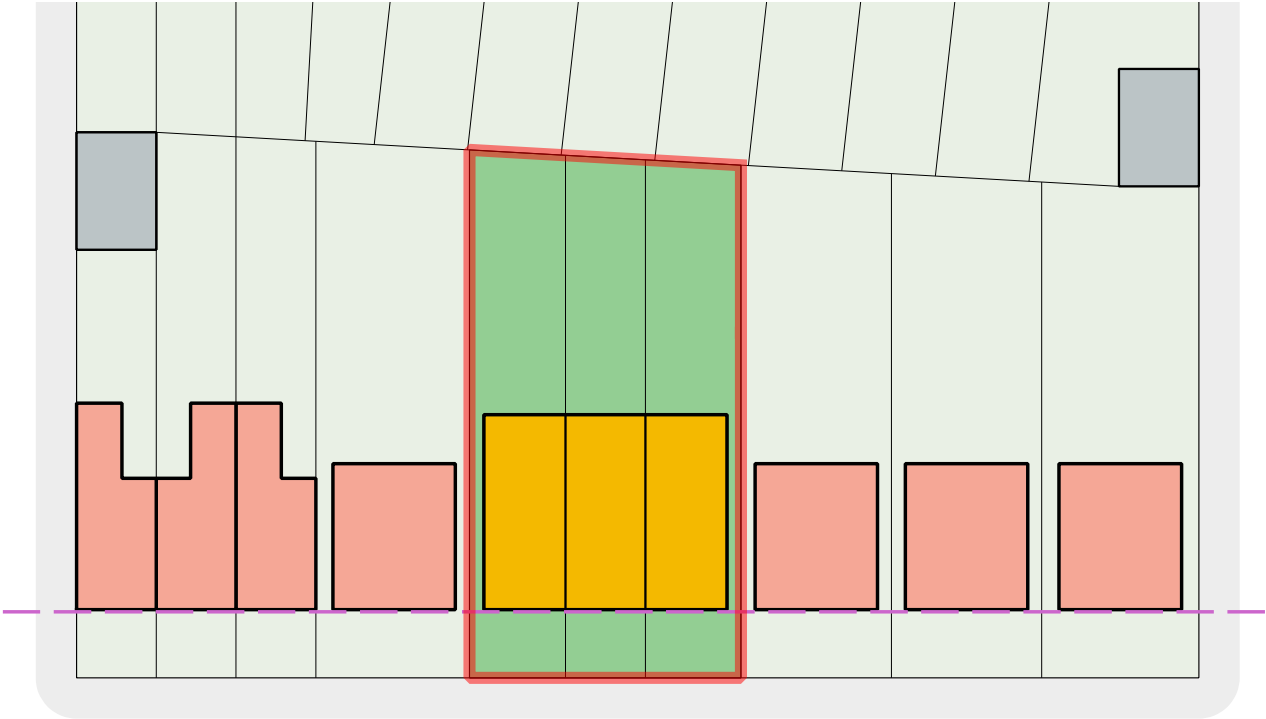


Fig. 103: By removing a single dwelling which fails to make optimum use of its site and replacing it with new homes can deliver new family homes while repairing the streetscape.

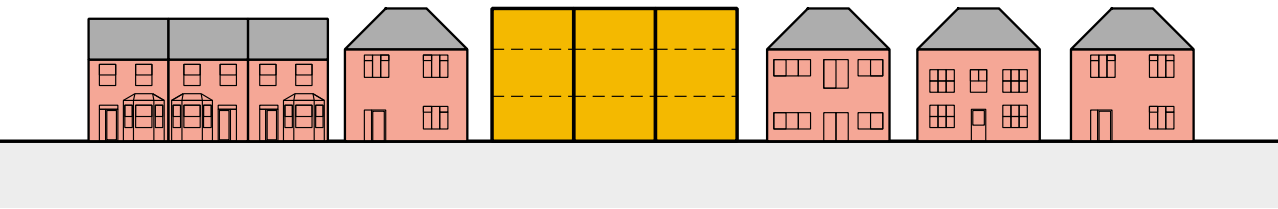


Fig. 104: In streets which have a consistent height, new development should generally follow that of its neighbours.

- 27.3.5.

An alternative arrangement for a replacement infill development might include the demolition of an existing family-sized property and its replacement with apartments.
- 27.3.6.

Note that a net loss of family homes will not usually be supported unless there is a strong case otherwise. Wherever possible, any development of this nature should include a dwelling with at least the same number of bedrooms as the property which was removed to make way for it.
- 27.3.7.

Where there is a clear prevailing roofline, new development should not be significantly taller than its neighbours, taking into account the definition of a storey to include pitched roofs.
- 27.3.8.

Where new development is proposed within a street with varying height and character, new development can be up to a storey taller than neighbouring properties, providing that the quantity of natural daylight and sunlight reaching the existing principal windows of habitable rooms are not diminished to an unacceptable degree; and that the siting of new windows, terraces or balconies do not compromise the privacy enjoyed by adjacent homes.
- 27.3.9.

New development which is significantly taller than its neighbours will need to be of exceptional design quality.



Fig. 105: This project by Stolon Studio replaces single-storey workshops and offices with a four-storey development of new homes. The scheme employs a central courtyard which has enabled the use of the whole site. (website: www.stolon.co.uk, photography: Jonathan Gooch)



Fig. 106: New homes in Crofton Park designed by Brooks Murray Architects. (website: www.brooksmurray.com/, photography: **NEEDED**)



Fig. 107: Infill development in Sydenham designed by Nissen Richards Architects (website: www.nissenrichardsstudio.com, photography: **NEEDED**)

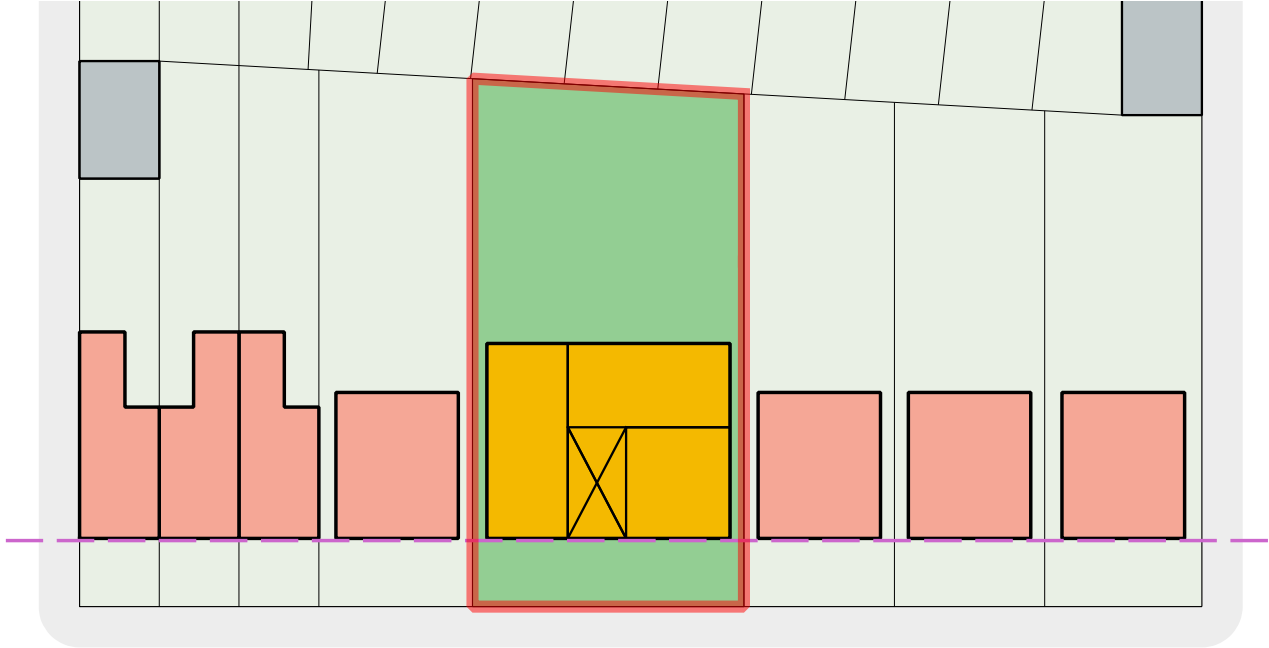


Fig. 108: Excessive gaps between existing houses provide an ideal opportunity for new homes whilst also enabling the streetscape to be repaired. These often occur on plots of land which are partially occupied by an existing property. Where existing houses make poor use of space, such those which are significantly lower than their neighbours, for example, then replacement or upward extension to optimise the use of the site will be encouraged.



Fig. 109: Where the height of existing buildings is broadly consistent, new infill development should respect the prevailing height of its neighbours.

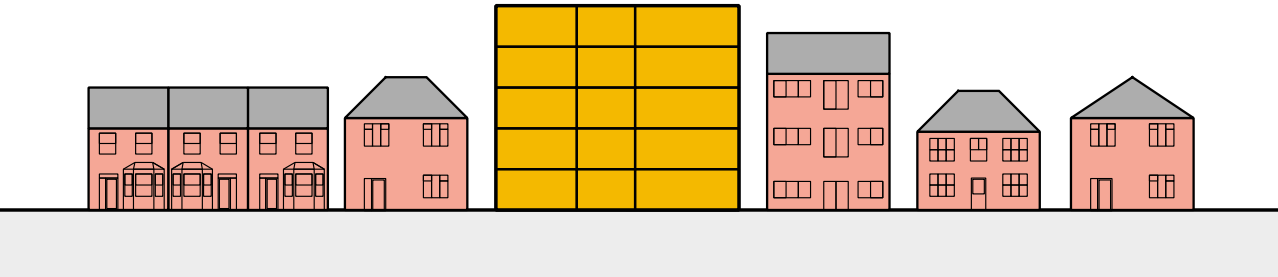


Fig. 110: Where a street consists of buildings with varying height and character, a new development of up to one storey taller than its neighbours is usually possible.

				Guidance
				Toolkits
Types	Infill	Backland	Other Types	Site Types
				Guidance

27.4. Infill development in terraced streets

- 27.4.1. Where gaps exist within a street of terraced houses, these are usually appropriate for new infill development providing there is sufficient width to achieve an internal layout which meets space standards and other planning policy requirements.
- 27.4.2. The principles of terraced infill development should follow those in this section and section 12.
- 27.4.3. The street-facing elevation of new infill development should maintain the principal building line established by adjacent buildings.
- 27.4.4. The rear elevation of new infill development should be positioned to ensure adequate natural daylight reaches the principal window of habitable rooms. Usually this means that new development should not project any further back than a 45 degree line set out from the closest edge of neighbouring windows.
- 27.4.5. New development at the end of an existing terrace, and the site is at the intersection of two roads, counts as corner development and are discussed in section 28.

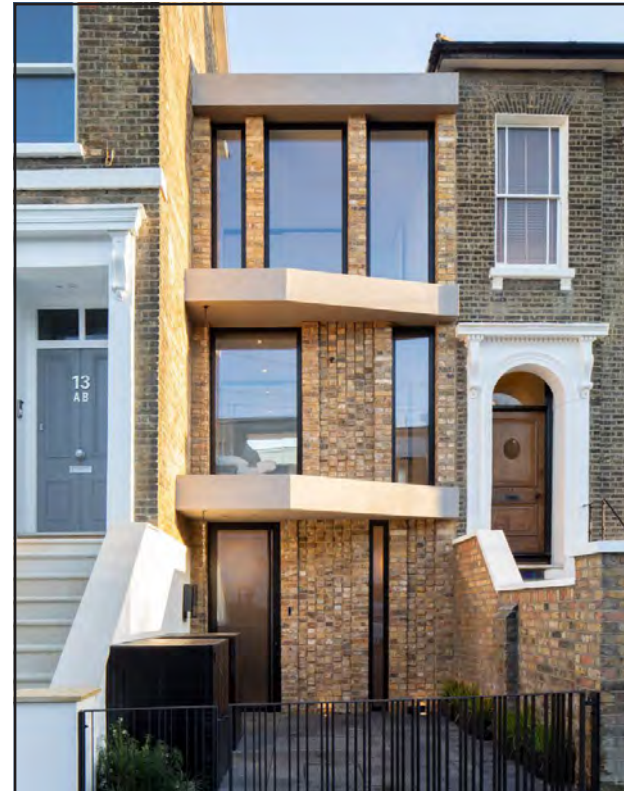


Fig. 111: Replacing an existing two-storey coach house, this infill development by architect Selencky Parsons creates a new family home from a narrow plot. (website: www.selenckyparsons.com, photography: Richard Chivers)

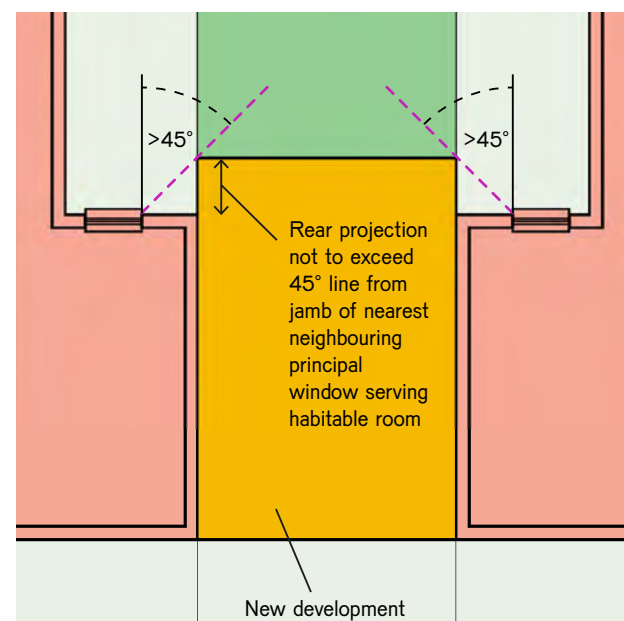


Fig. 112: New development should generally project no further back than a line projected 45 degrees from a neighbouring window

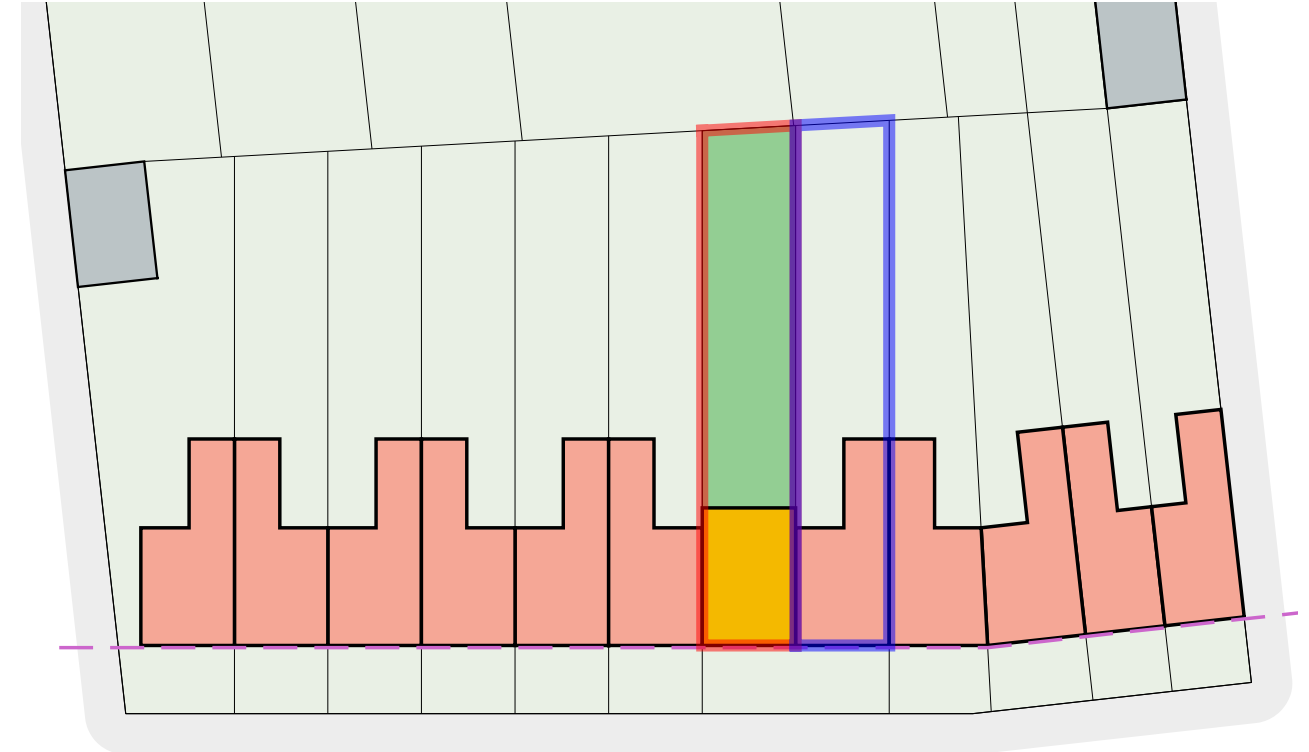


Fig. 113: The sub-division of an existing plot within a terraced street into two can create the opportunity for the construction of a new home.

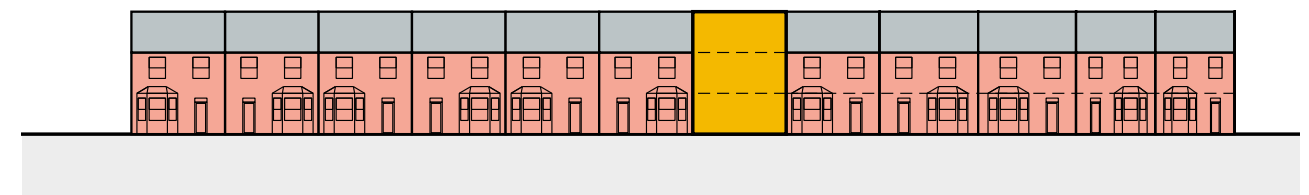


Fig. 114: Where the height and appearance of existing buildings is broadly consistent, new infill development should respect the prevailing height of its neighbours.

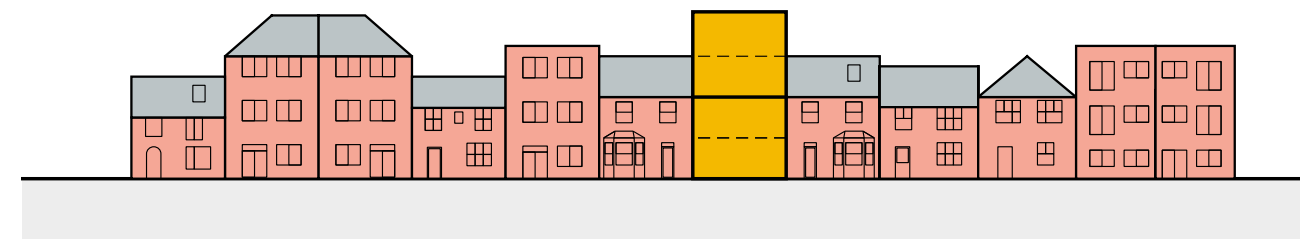


Fig. 115: Where a street consists of buildings with varying height and character, a new development of up to one storey taller than its neighbours is usually possible.

28.1. General principles

- 28.1.1. Street extension occurs at the end of rows of terraced, detached or semi-detached houses where a plot of land is, or can be made, available for redevelopment.
- 28.1.2. Such sites often exist along secondary streets where a row of terraced houses meets the rear garden of property facing a primary street. These sites are sometimes occupied by existing garages or outbuildings, or in other cases form the end of long gardens with a boundary onto a road.
- 28.1.3. To qualify as a street extension a site must have a frontage directly onto a public highway.



Fig. 116: Extending a an existing terrace within a consistent context

				Guidance
				Toolkits
Types	Infill	Backland	Other Types	Site Types



Fig. 117: Long gardens which benefit from a side-facing street frontage provide an opportunity to extend a secondary street providing new homes.

28.2. Single dwellings

- 28.2.1. The simple extension of an existing terrace or row of houses can often provide sufficient space for a new family home.
- 28.2.2. The height of street extension development should generally follow that of the closest neighbour on the street it is extending, taking into account that, in most cases, a pitched roof can be counted as a floor.
- 28.2.3. Street extension development should generally maintain the existing building line established by the street that it is extending. Bay windows, projecting windows and porches are an exception to this rule, providing that they are subservient to the main building.
- 28.2.4. Street extensions providing a single dwelling will usually be limited in depth to the width of the plot in which they sit. In this case external amenity space will usually be required to one side of the dwelling, rather than at the rear of it.
- 28.2.5. To accommodate the required internal floor area, and to provide all habitable rooms with an aspect, the primary aspect for new dwellings will usually be towards the street, with the potential for further windows in the side or rear.
- 28.2.6. However, direct overlooking of rear gardens should be avoided where possible, and permission for new homes which include windows serving habitable rooms will not generally be allowed where these look directly onto the first 10m of a rear garden.



Fig. 118: Replacing disused garages, House on the End by architect 1200 Works extends an existing Victorian terrace to create a new family home. (website: www.1200works.com, photography: TBC)

- 28.2.7. More flexibility with regards to overlooking of rear gardens can be applied between new and existing properties where these are part of the same development plot.
- 28.2.8. Distances between the principal windows serving habitable rooms should generally exceed 16m, however flexibility can be applied for new dwellings constructed within the boundary of an existing property, or where adequate steps have been taken in the design of these windows to maintain privacy.

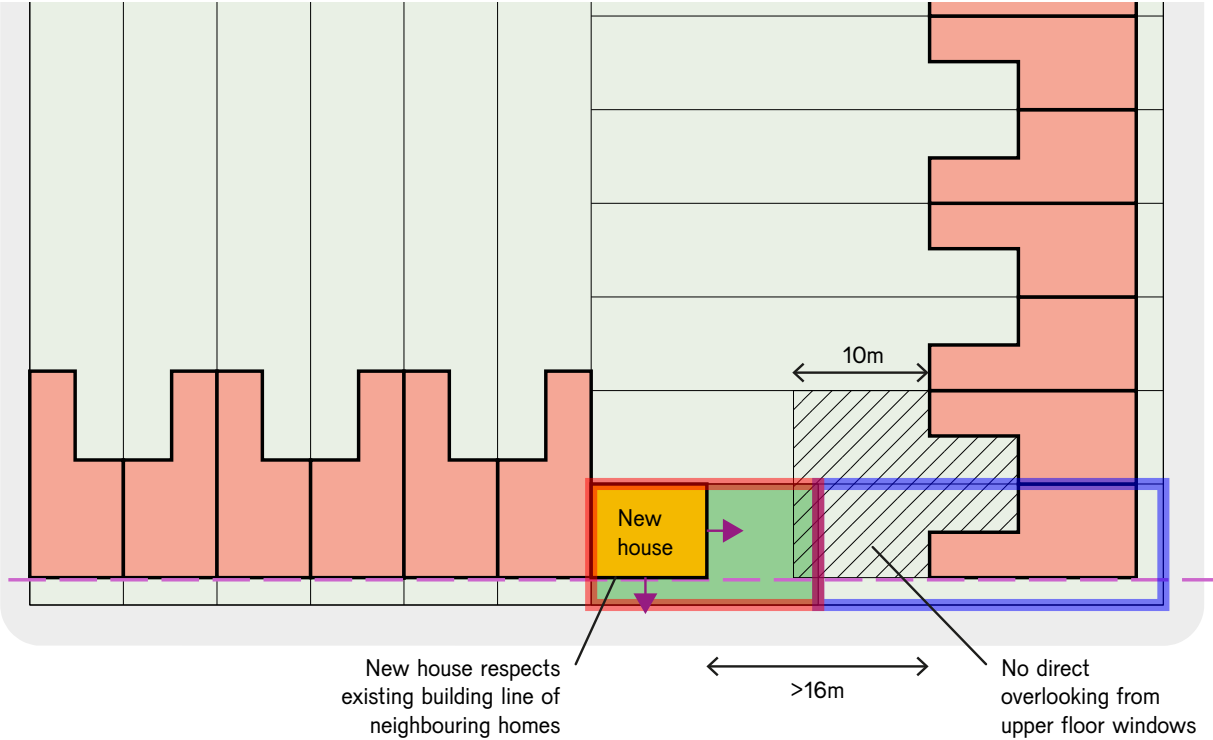


Fig. 119: A modest street extension can often provide space for a new family home.



Fig. 120: New street extension should generally respect the height of the street they are extending.

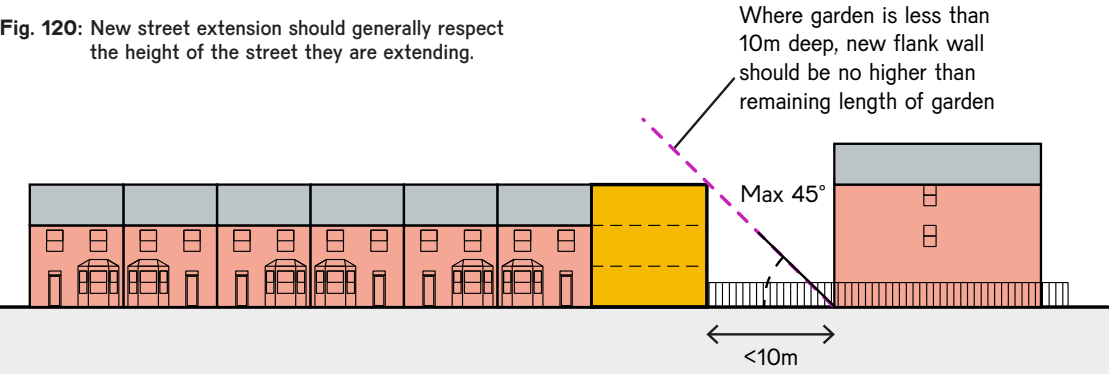


Fig. 121: Where the gap between the rear of an existing property and new dwelling is less than 10m, the height of new development should be no greater than the depth of the garden measured from the rear of the existing property.

- 28.2.9.

Such development may result in a largely blank wall facing onto an existing neighbouring garden. In this case, even where such elevations lack windows to avoid overlooking, the design and choice of materials used should be carefully considered. Applications will need to demonstrate how the design of side elevations are not overbearing when experienced from the rear gardens of neighbouring properties. Vertical greening of such walls is one mitigating strategy.
- 28.2.10.

Where the distance between the primary window serving a habitable room and the side elevation of new development is less than 10m, the height of the new wall should not exceed the depth of the garden measured from the rear part of the existing house. The principles described on section 12 should also be taken into account to ensure existing windows receive adequate natural light.
- 28.2.11.

To ensure that the gardens of the host property continue to enjoy sufficient natural daylight, the principles of the BRE Guidance should be adhered to, and applications will need to demonstrate that new development does not reduce daylight reaching existing gardens to an unacceptable degree.



Fig. 122: Respecting the height and detail of the neighbouring houses, this new family home by 31/44 architects extends an existing Victorian terrace in Southwark. (website: www.3144architects.com, photography: Rory Gardiner)



Fig. 123: This house by architect Tikari Works extends an existing Victorian terrace with a modest contemporary home, making the most of a small site. (website: www.tikari.co.uk, photography: Edward Sumner)

28.3. Street extension with mews and alleys

- 28.3.1. Street extensions can also apply in areas where existing properties are more widely spaced apart. Often this condition coincides with the presence of an entrance to existing mews or alleys, or to a backland site.
- 28.3.2. Depending upon the distances between proposed and existing properties, the prevailing building line can vary from the primary to the secondary street.
- 28.3.3. Where a 10m or more gap exists between the new dwelling and its nearest neighbour, the building line of the host property can be adopted if this is closer to the public highway (example A, right).

- 28.3.4. Where a gap of less than 10m exists between a new dwelling and its immediate neighbour, the new dwelling should adopt the building line of this property (example B, right).
- 28.3.5. Proposed dwellings without a frontage to the public highway fall under the category of backland development. See section 31 for guidance on this type of development.



Fig. 124:This new house by Stolon Studio cleverly utilises a site at the entrance to an existing mews to create an attractive family home. The front door is set back from the pavement and ground floor windows use hit-and-miss brickwork to provide privacy. (website: www.stolon.co.uk, photography: [TBC](#))

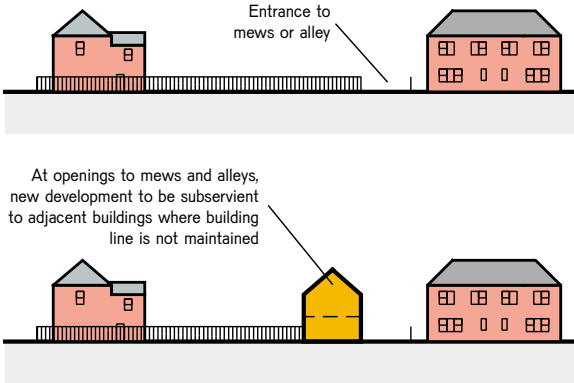
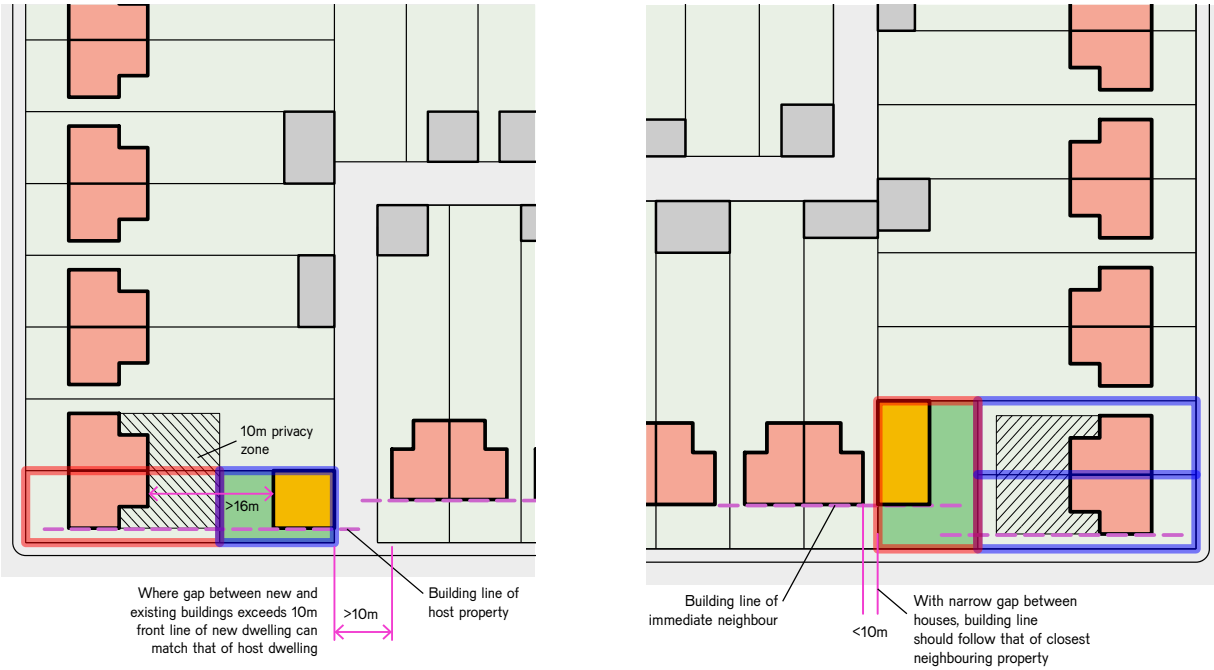


Fig. 125: Where new development takes place at the entrance to existing mews or alleys, it should generally be subservient to neighbouring homes where the building line of the closest property is not maintained.

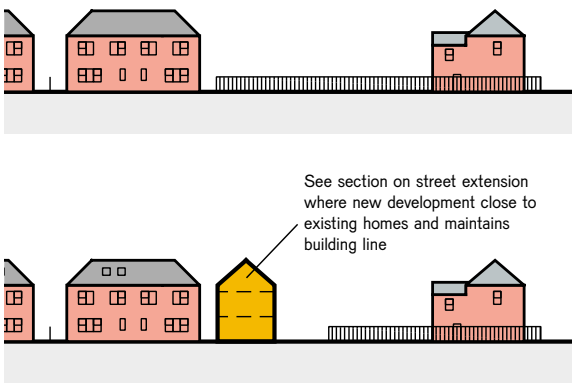


Fig. 126: Example of street extension where new dwelling adopts building line of immediate neighbour and building line of existing street is maintained.

28.4. Collective development

- 28.4.1. Where neighbours collaborate on development, a greater number of homes can often be delivered compared to when householders act alone.
- 28.4.2. A minimum acceptable distance between the principal windows of habitable rooms in the rear of the existing dwellings and blank walls must be achieved. Generally this distance should be no less than 10m.
- 28.4.3. Care must be taken to avoid significant overlooking of neighbouring gardens. Steps should be taken to avoid direct overlooking of rear gardens and planning applications should demonstrate how existing residents' privacy is not unacceptably compromised by new development. Overlooking of the first 10m of a neighbouring garden will not usually be acceptable. More flexibility can be applied where some overlooking of gardens longer than 10m occurs, and in this case the avoidance of overlooking should not prohibit the construction of new homes where all other planning policy ambitions are achieved.

- 28.4.4. An analysis of the impact new development has on adjacent homes should be provided as part of a planning application, demonstrating that adequate levels of natural daylight are maintained to the principal windows of habitable rooms, and that existing gardens are not unacceptably overshadowed.
- 28.4.5. Demonstrating compliance with the principles of the BRE "Site Planning for Daylight and Sunlight" publication is usually sufficient for infill development. Where these requirements cannot be met, more detailed computational analysis may be required.
- 28.4.6. All new dwellings will need to be compliant with current space standards, as outlined in the Nationally-Described Space Standards and the London Plan. Note that minimum room widths set out in these documents will need to be achieved.



Fig. 127: Greater density and a stronger street frontage is often possible when working with neighbouring land owners

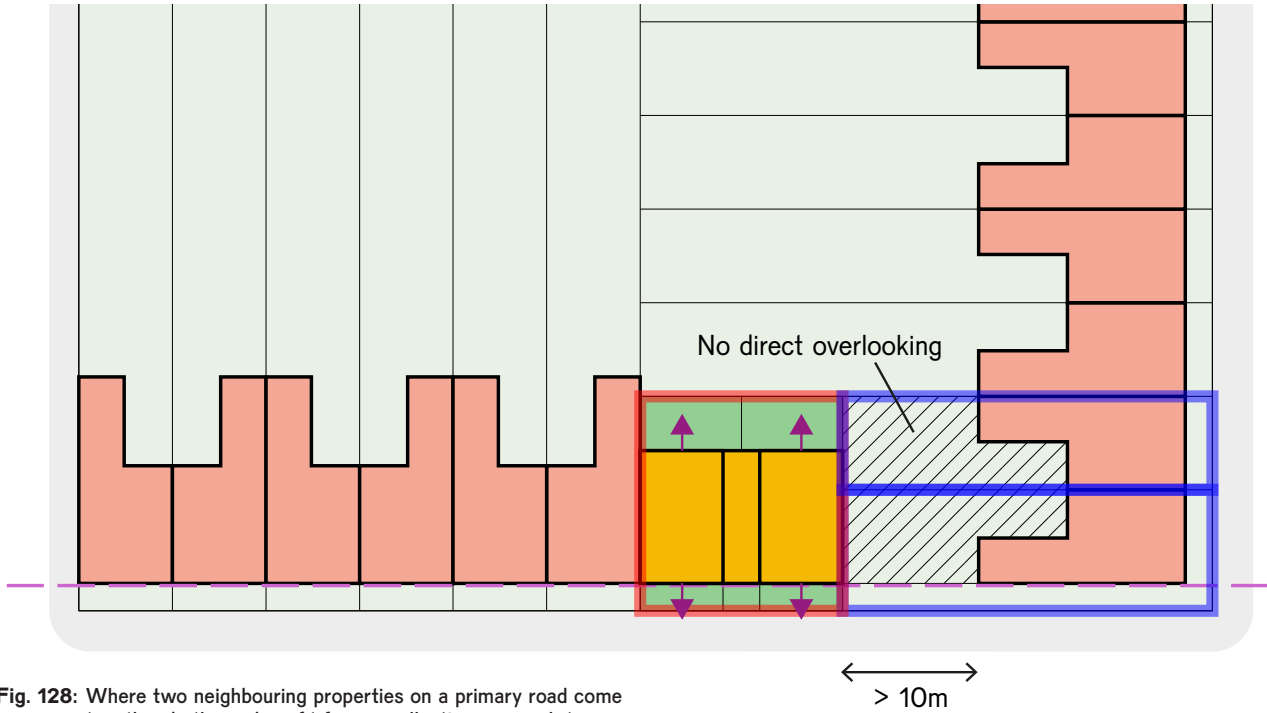


Fig. 128: Where two neighbouring properties on a primary road come together, both can benefit from a collective approach to development. Here, two family houses and two flats can be built where a single site might accommodate only one house.

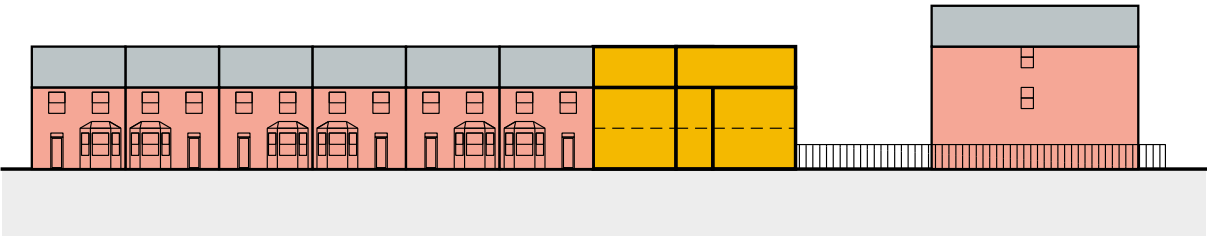


Fig. 129: New street extensions should maintain the prevailing building height of its neighbours, taking into account the fact that pitched roofs can generally be counted as a floor.

29.1. General principles

- 29.1.1. Corner development occurs on the junction of two streets, either through the demolition of an existing building where this makes poor use of available space, or where it result from piecemeal development that has occurred over a long period of time.
- 29.1.2. Generally corner sites are considered to be those where two streets meet one another at an angle less than 135 degrees.
- 29.1.3. New development on the corners of streets can help establish, or reinforce, local identity and assist with orientation and wayfinding.
- 29.1.4. Any new development on street corners must achieve a high degree of design quality. These are typically locations suitable for distinctive buildings which are marginally taller than their neighbours.

- 29.1.5. It is important that active frontages are provided to both primary and secondary frontages, with front doors and windows to the street.
- 29.1.6. On larger sites the ground floor of corner buildings can be occupied by non-residential uses such as retail. Applications which propose such uses will generally be encouraged, provided that all other planning policy objectives are met.



Fig. 130: Corner development addressing both street frontages with new trees

				Guidance
				Toolkits
Types	Infill	Backland	Other Types	Site Types

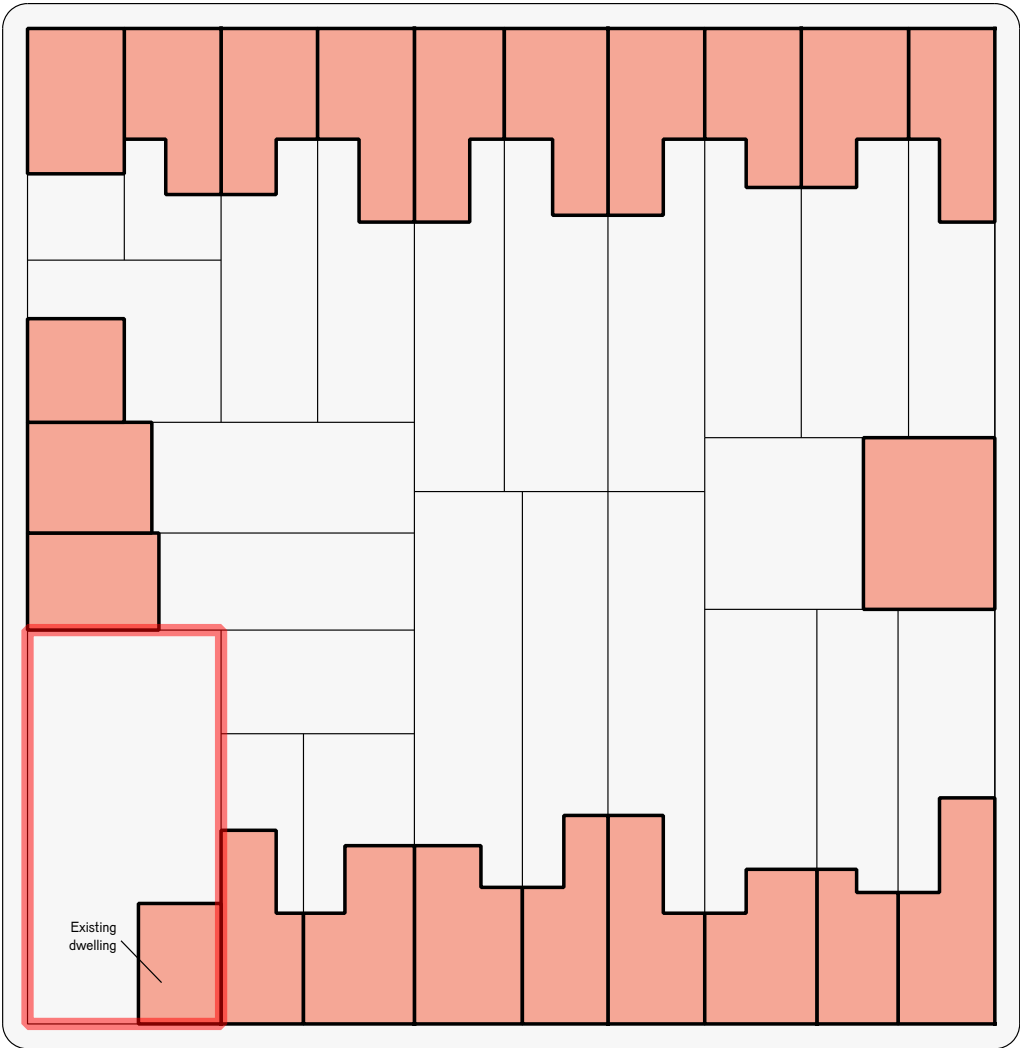


Fig. 131: Corner sites present an ideal opportunity for the creation of a new local landmark, helping with orientation and wayfinding

29.2. New development on corner sites

- 29.2.1. Generally, corner plots present an opportunity for slightly taller buildings than might be possible within the middle of a street. A building of architectural character and high degree of design quality can help establish a sense of place, contribute to a neighbourhood’s sense of identity and assist with orientation within a wider setting.
- 29.2.2. Where new development which is taller than its neighbours is proposed, planning applications should demonstrate a high degree of architectural quality.
- 29.2.3. Where corner sites are already occupied by existing homes, a creative reuse, retention and extension is more sustainable, and therefore preferable compared with demolition and rebuilding. Creative ways of achieving this will be recognised in planning decisions.
- 29.2.4. Planning applications which propose a net loss of family housing will not be supported, and any existing family homes which are lost due to demolition will need to be replaced within any proposals for new development.
- 29.2.5. Corner sites tend to benefit from a significant frontage to the street, and less to rear gardens.
- 29.2.6. External amenity space should be inset from street-facing elevations and should not overhang public footpaths or the public highway.

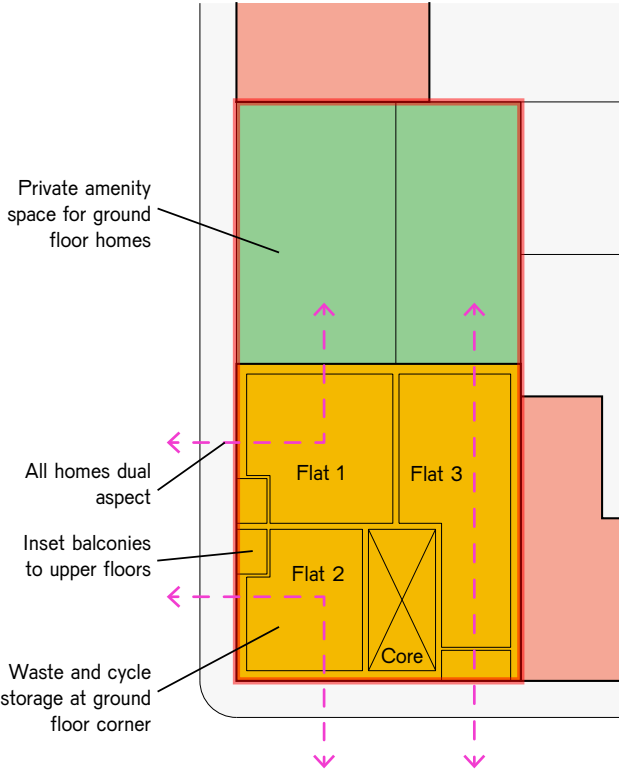


Fig. 132: Potential upper floor plan of corner infill development to achieve dual-aspect homes

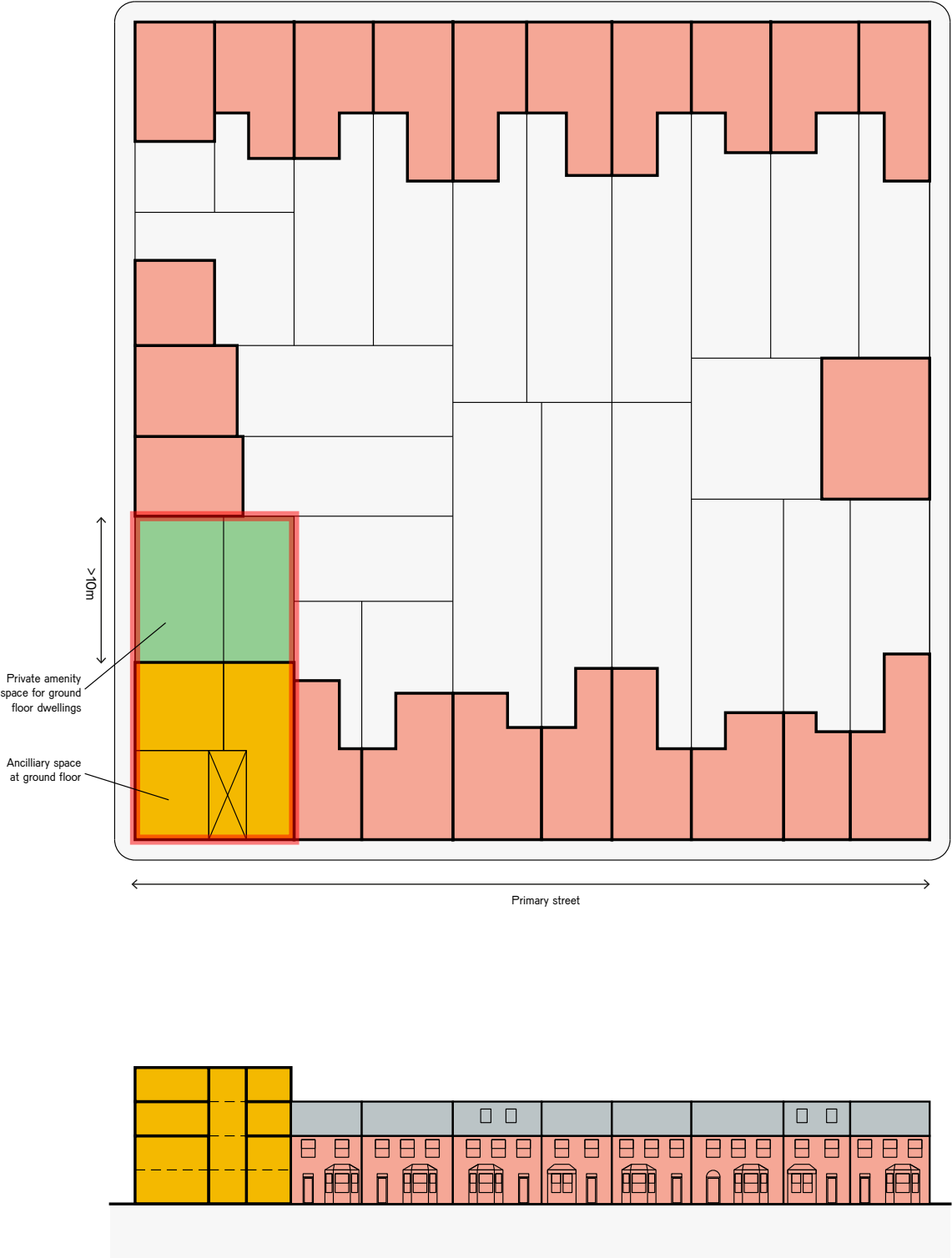


Fig. 133: Corner development which is marginally taller than the homes that surround it can help provide orientation and identity to existing streets.

- 29.2.7.

Active frontages to the street are encouraged, but this should not be at the expense of providing future residents with acceptable privacy. Ground floor, street-facing balconies are discouraged, as are new single-storey dwellings with only a street-facing frontage.
- 29.2.8.

Where the layout of new corner development results in ground floor accommodation with frontages facing only directly onto the street, non-residential uses in this location are encouraged: either shared cycle storage for the development, or alternative planning uses, are encouraged.
- 29.2.9.

All planning applications for corner infill development should demonstrate how their design positively responds to an understanding of local character and its immediate context.
- 29.2.10.

Corner development can be combined with other forms of infill development, such as side street infill, providing that all requisite planning policies are complied with.



Fig. 134: The small residential development on the corner of two streets in Crofton Park replaces a school keeper’s cottage with three flats and a small house. (website: www.chancedesilva.com, photography: Tim Crocker)



Fig. 135: This development in Croydon by OB Architecture creates a striking, high-density residential development on a prominent corner, with a building taller than its neighbours. (website: obarchitecture.co.uk, photography: Martin Gardner)

29.3. Mixed-use developments

- 29.3.1. Because of their prominence within the streetscape, corner development presents an opportunity to introduce or enhance non-residential uses.
- 29.3.2. Because street-facing residential accommodation should generally be avoided on corner plots, an active frontage can be provided through small-format retail (planning use class A1), restaurants and cafés (planning use class A3) and so on.
- 29.3.3. Where commercial uses are proposed for the ground floor of mixed-use developments it is likely that a taller floor-to-ceiling height will be required. This can help accentuate the prominence of the building and differentiate between the different uses within the building.
- 29.3.4. On sites with limited pavement width, careful consideration should be given to the footprint of the ground floor. A mitred or rounded corner can help pedestrians navigate their way around tight corners.
- 29.3.5. A clear distinction should be made in the exterior design of new development between residential entrances and those of non-residential uses.
- 29.3.6. Provision must be made for the secure storage of bicycles and waste at ground floor level. This should be fully integrated into the proposed layouts, and applications which do not allow sufficient space for these items will be opposed.



Fig. 136: This small site development in Islington is designed by Groupwork + Amin Taha. It references its surroundings in a contemporary way and includes a shop, show room and three apartments above. (website: groupwork.uk.com, photography: TBC)

- 29.3.7. On small developments providing a mix of commercial space at ground floor and new residential accommodation above, level access to upper floor homes is not mandatory but is encouraged where this can be achieved economically and without compromising other aspects of the design.
- 29.3.8. Where mixed-use development includes ground floor uses which involve food preparation, or other commercial uses, careful consideration should be given to the coordination of extract equipment and other associated plant with the residential uses above. Extract ducts must be located well away from opening windows and vertical ductwork must be integrated successfully within the overall design of the building and not tacked-on as an afterthought.

				Guidance
				Toolkits
Types	Infill	Backland	Other Types	Site Types

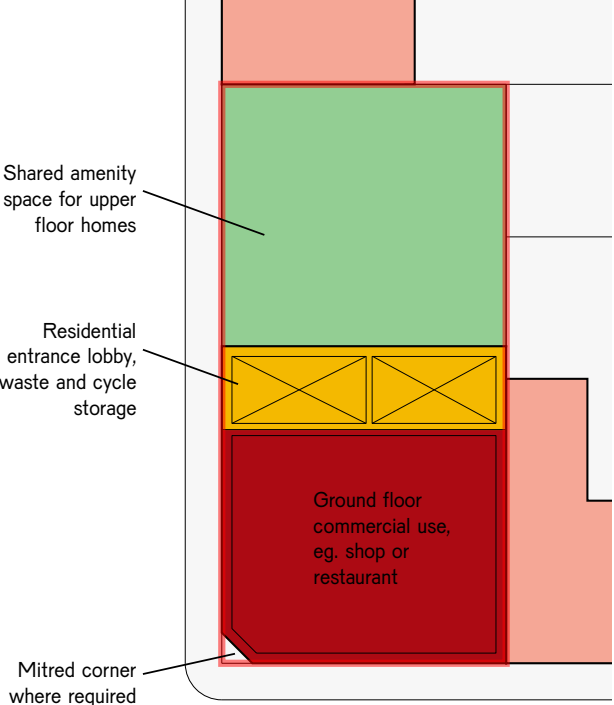


Fig. 137: The ground floor of a mixed-use development can provide commercial uses such as shops or cafes.

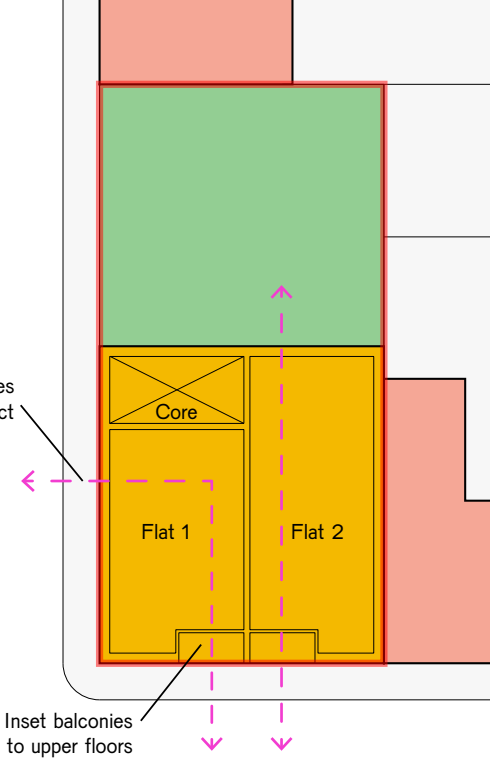


Fig. 138: Residential dwellings on the upper floor of mixed-use corner developments should be dual aspect.



Fig. 139: Corner development which is marginally taller than the homes that surround it can help provide orientation and identity to existing streets.

				Guidance
				Toolkits
Types	Infill	Backland	Other Types	Site Types

30.1. General principles

- 30.1.1. These sites occur where existing garages or other outbuildings, or rear amenity space face directly onto a secondary street, and the distance from the rear of a house on the primary street is sufficient to allow new dwellings to be developed in place of existing structures.
- 30.1.2. Side street development must benefit from direct access to the public highway. The development of rear gardens without a street frontage will not be supported.
- 30.1.3. New houses should generally be subservient to those fronting the primary street; the highest point of the new house should be below that of the property on the corner.

- 30.1.4. There should be clear separation between the backs of existing houses and sides of the new one. A minimum distance of 10m is usually required to ensure sufficient rear garden space, maintain privacy, and achieve visual separation between existing habitable room windows and the blank walls of new development. This should be increased to 16m where windows serving habitable rooms face one another.
- 30.1.5. New homes should respect their neighbours. Usually there should be no less than 10m between the blank wall of a new home and an existing window serving a habitable room; and no less than 16m between facing windows (unless steps are taken to achieve privacy in some other way).



Fig. 140: A side street development that protects existing trees



Fig. 141: The side boundaries of secondary streets can provide an opportunity to construct one or more modest homes. Often such sites are occupied by existing garages or outbuildings.

- 30.1.6. Street-facing windows at ground floor should be designed to ensure adequate privacy for inhabitants.
- 30.1.7. Upper floors should avoid direct overlooking of adjacent gardens. Roof windows can be used to allow daylight into bedrooms but prevent views down into others' private space.
- 30.1.8. Where possible, houses should have opening windows on more than one elevation to ensure acceptable living conditions, providing adequate sunlight and cross-ventilation.
- 30.1.9. Dwellings with only north-facing windows will not be supported.
- 30.1.10. Front doors should be set back from the street to provide privacy and shelter, and where possible, defensible space should be provided for ground floor windows facing the street.
- 30.1.11. Because side street development is usually within close proximity to the public highway, is it generally not necessary to provide special means for handling waste and recycling. However, storage for waste bins should be integrated into the design of new dwellings so that they do not clutter the pavements.
- 30.1.12. A new house cannot directly overlook the first 10m of a rear garden of neighbouring houses, nor can they create significant overshadowing of external space. The standards set out on page 5 should be adhered to for new side-street development.
- 30.1.13. A creative architectural response is usually required to make the best use of these sites, and design excellence is expected in any planning applications for new homes in these locations.

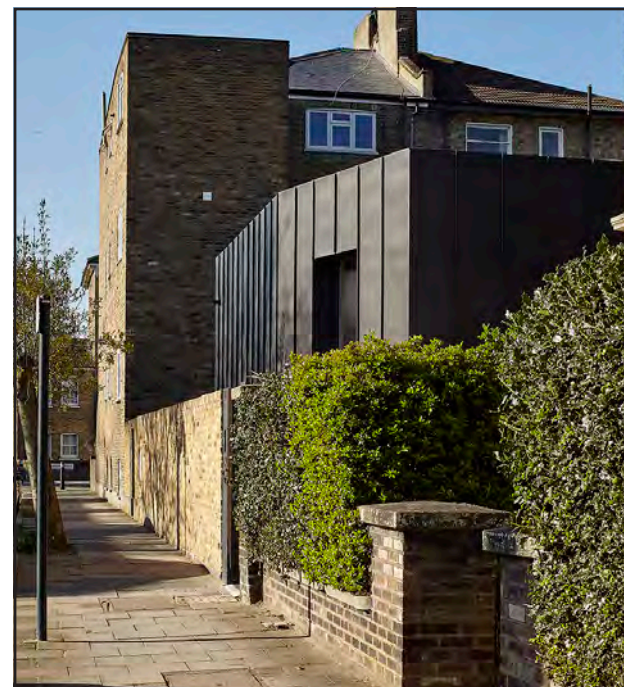


Fig. 142: This scheme by Tectonics Architects achieves a certified Passivhaus home on a small side-facing site in Hackney. (website: www.tectonics-architects.com, photography: TBC)



Fig. 143: New house near St Paul's Church in Evelyn designed by Oval Partnership (website: www.ovalpartnership.com, photography: TBC)

				Guidance
				Toolkits
Types	Infill	Backland	Other Types	Site Types

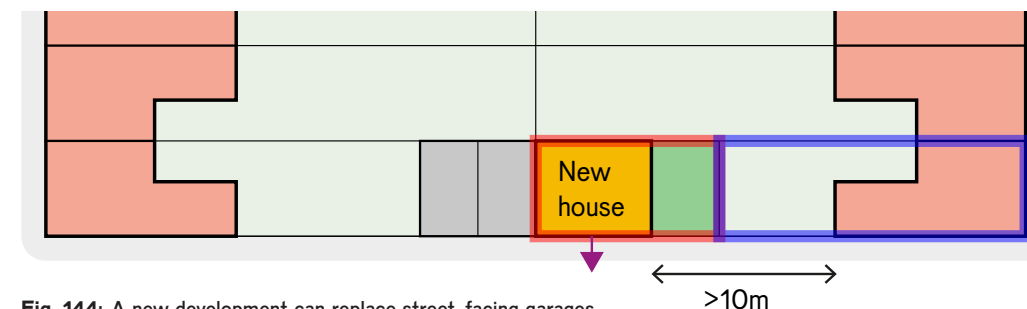


Fig. 144: A new development can replace street-facing garages or outbuildings, providing that a minimum distance of 10m from the rear of the existing house on the site is maintained.

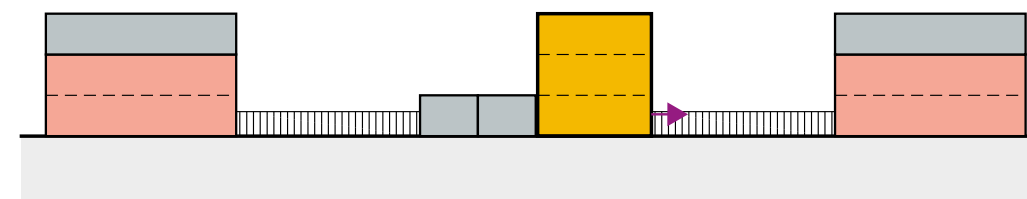


Fig. 145: New side street development on secondary streets should be subservient to the properties either side, and no taller than the highest point of those buildings.

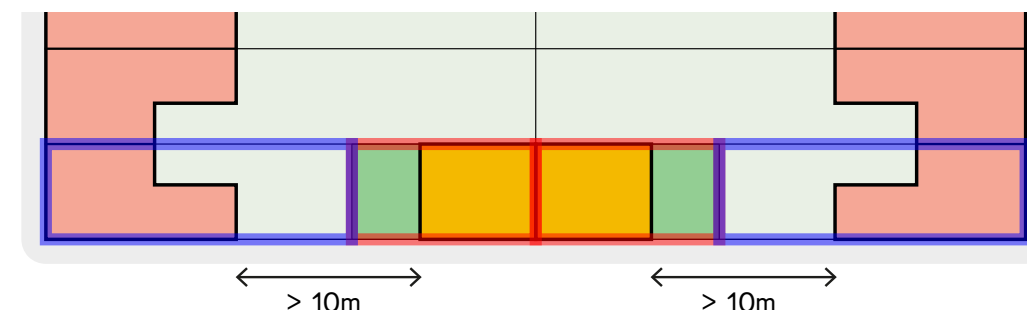


Fig. 146: Where two existing properties have back-to-back gardens, there exists the potential for two new dwellings to be provided.

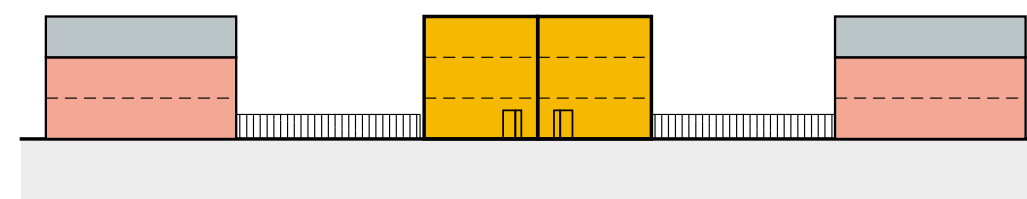


Fig. 147: Window positions should be carefully considered to avoid direct overlooking of the first 10m of neighbouring gardens, and the height of new buildings should ensure that adequate daylight and sunlight reaches existing habitable rooms and rear gardens.

30.2. Collective development

- 30.2.1. When adjoining landowners work together it may be possible to encourage more homes to be built in a coordinated and sustainable manner.
- 30.2.2. Although isolated new homes within the rear gardens of existing properties will not be supported, where access to a public highway is available and sufficient separation distances can be achieved between new and existing properties, side street development can achieve a greater number of new homes than may be possible if each owner acted alone.
- 30.2.3. Maintaining adequate privacy distances between new an existing homes is a requirement of any scheme. Facing upper floor windows must maintain a separation distance of no less than 16m, and there should be no direct overlooking of the first 10m of adjoining private gardens.
- 30.2.4. In such arrangements, care must be taken to ensure that adequate provision for waste and recycling collection is made. New residents should not have to carry their rubbish any more than 30m to a communal collection point, and this point must be no more than 15m from the public highway.
- 30.2.5. Where such mews developments are being considered, it is desirable for an active frontage to be provided on the street-facing property, ensuring that adequate measures to address privacy are considered.



Fig. 148: New homes in Forest Hill designed by Clague Architects (website: www.clague.co.uk, photography: TBC)

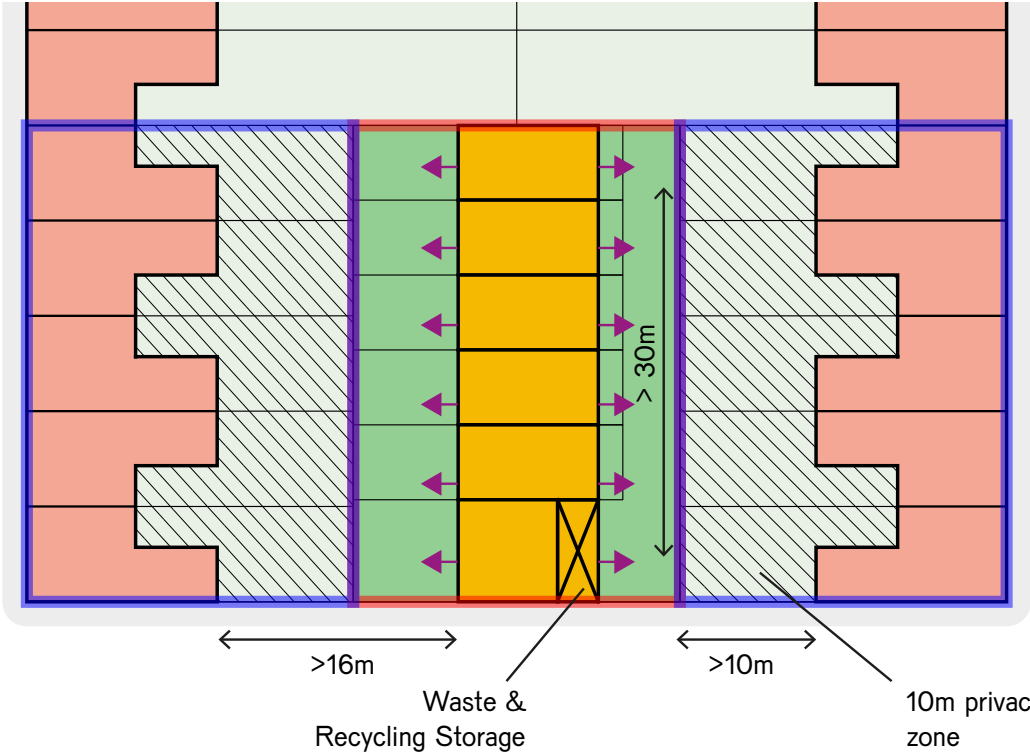


Fig. 149: Coordinated development can achieve a greater number of new homes than when individual homeowners act alone. This diagram shows how a new mews development of six family houses could be created.

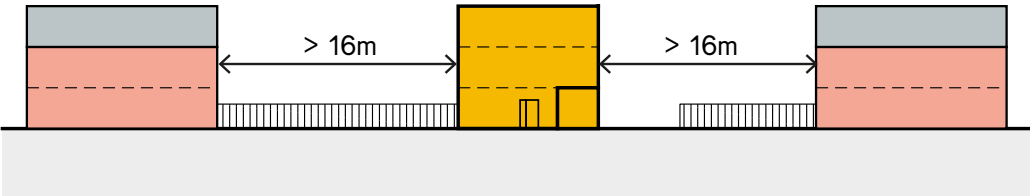


Fig. 150: Adequate separation distances of at least 16m should be achieved between new and existing habitable room windows. Where possible, new dwellings should present an active frontage to the street, providing that adequate privacy can be achieved.

31

Infill Development

Vertical intensification

31.1. General principles

- 31.1.1. Adding additional floors to existing buildings can provide much-needed new homes in sustainable locations close to public transport, high streets, and places of work.
- 31.1.2. Adding new floors to existing houses can enable new dwellings to be created through a combination of the reconfiguration of internal layouts together with the creation of new floor space.
- 31.1.3. Creating new accommodation on top of existing non-residential uses, such as shops, which make a poor use of the available land area or are significantly lower than neighbouring buildings, will generally be supported provided that all other planning policy issues are met.

31.1.4. Note that adding residential uses to non-residential buildings can present challenges in terms of access, fire safety and so on, which - while outside the planning process - can have a significant impact on a scheme's layout and design.



Fig. 151: Vertical intensification can sometimes take place without the need to alter the existing homes

				Guidance
				Toolkits
Types	Infill	Backland	Other Types	Site Types

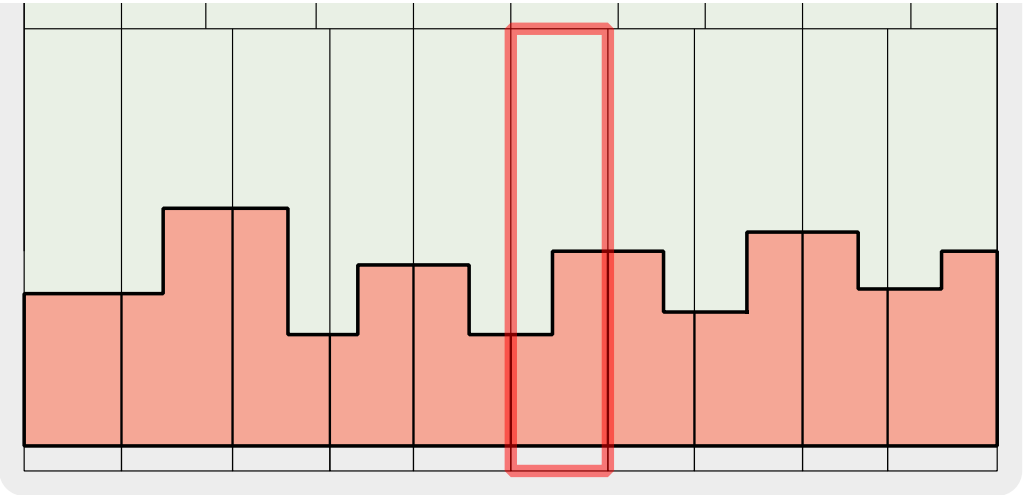


Fig. 152: Terraced streets with an inconsistent character and height provide an opportunity for incremental intensification through upwards development



Fig. 153: In most cases, where neighbouring buildings are of varying heights, a modest increase in individual properties will be supported where these result in a net increase in the number of dwellings.

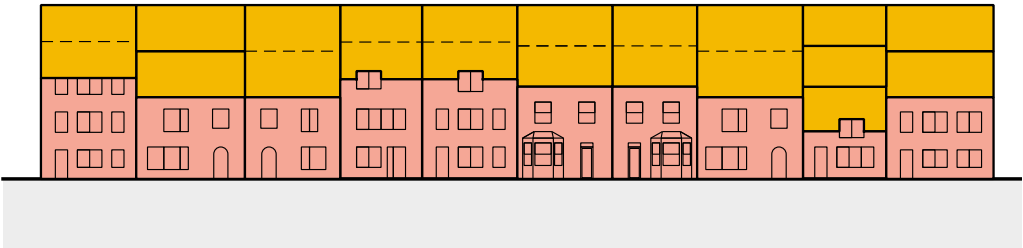


Fig. 154: Over time, adjacent homes can be extended to the same height to achieve uniformity along the street.

31.2. Vertical intensification of existing homes

- 31.2.1. Note that extensions which provide additional floor space without creating a new dwelling fall into the category of Alterations and Extensions, and are subject to a different Supplementary Planning Document.
- 31.2.2. The vertical extension of existing properties can set a precedent for wider intensification within a street, although this needs to be managed in a coordinated way to ensure that the intermediate condition does not create a disjointed and inconsistent streetscape.
- 31.2.3. In most cases the net loss of family homes (defined as those with 3 or more bedrooms) will not be accepted.
- 31.2.4. In streets with a varied character and height, the vertical extension of existing houses to provide additional homes will generally be supported where sufficient analysis of local context and street frontage has been provided, and this successfully demonstrates that individual intensification will not be harmful to local character.
- 31.2.5. Generally, an additional storey will be acceptable where the host dwelling comprises at least three storeys (for the purposes of this definition, pitched roofs are considered to comprise a storey).

- 31.2.6. Where streets have a varied character and inconsistent height, existing properties can generally be extended to one storey higher than the tallest property in the street, excluding corner buildings (those which sit on the junction of two public roads).
- 31.2.7. The maximum height acceptable once a vertical intensification has occurred to an existing home is generally four storeys.
- 31.2.8. New homes created through upward intensification should meet the space standards set out in the London Plan, as well as providing adequate external private amenity space - although this can be formed via a subdivision of the existing external private amenity space (such as rear gardens) at ground floor level.
- 31.2.9. The net effect of incremental intensification can have unforeseen consequences on local services. Planning applications for upward extensions to existing homes will need to show how bicycle storage and waste and recycling collection have been accommodated within the design.

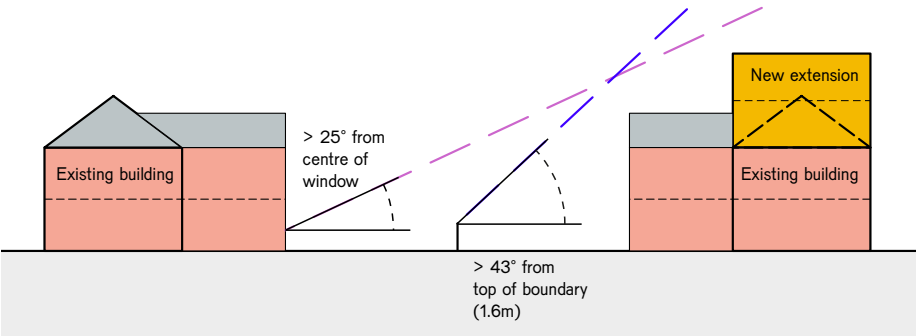


Fig. 155: Where upward extension are proposed to existing houses, the general principles for providing adequate daylight and sunlight to existing homes should be respected.



Fig. 156: The refurbishment and vertical extension of Astra House in New Cross by RCKa provides new dual-aspect residential accommodation through the intensification of a formal commercial building. (website: www.rcka.co.uk, photography: Jakob Spriestersbach)



Fig. 157: Extension to Raymont Hall by Hawkins\Brown providing new student accommodation. (website: www.hawkinsbrown.com, photography: Francesco Montaguti)

31.2.10. Generally, houses which do not benefit from in-curtilage storage for waste and recycling cannot be upwardly extended where this will result in bins cluttering the pavement.

31.2.11. Existing dwellings which are extended to create additional residential space but without creating additional homes are subject to the advice provided within the Alterations and Extensions SPD.

31.3. Collective development

31.3.1. Where streets have a consistent height and character, individual planning applications for vertical extension to provide additional homes will generally not be supported.

31.3.2. However, where neighbouring properties come together to undertake collective development, joint applications may receive support. In this case, no fewer than four adjacent homes must be extended together under a single planning application to provide a net increase of no fewer than four new dwellings. The use of planning conditions may be used to ensure that no new home can be occupied until all four dwellings are complete.

31.3.3. Collective development of this nature is expected to achieve a high degree of design quality and should demonstrate a thorough understanding of the character of the street.

31.3.4. Consideration must be given to the impact of new extensions on daylight and sunlight reaching adjacent properties, particularly those to the rear. The general guidance outlined in section 12 should be applied. Where this cannot be achieved, a daylight and sunlight report should accompany any planning application to demonstrate that neighbouring properties are not affected to an unacceptable degree.



Fig. 158: The refurbishment and vertical extension of St Paul's House in Deptford by Ash Sakula (website: www.ashsak.com, photography: Ash Sakula)



Fig. 159: Vertical extension to Malden Court in Merton designed by Paul Murphy Architects (website: www.paulmurphyarchitects.co.uk, photography: Paul Murphy Architects)

				Guidance
				Toolkits
Types	Infill	Backland	Other Types	Site Types

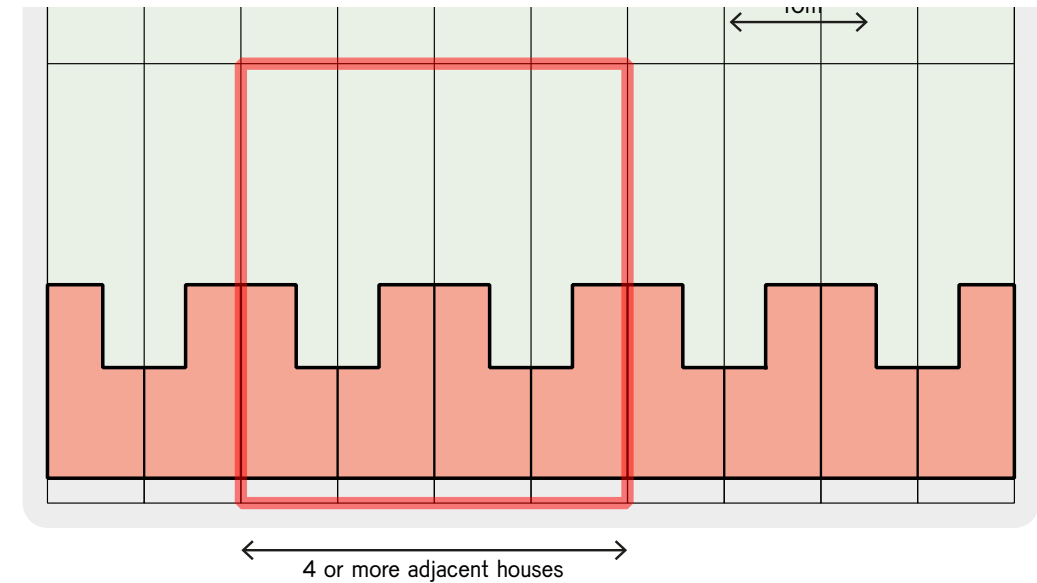


Fig. 160: Individual planning applications which increase the height of houses within a terrace of consistent character will not generally be supported.



Fig. 161: Individual planning applications which increase the height of houses within a terrace of consistent character will not generally be supported.

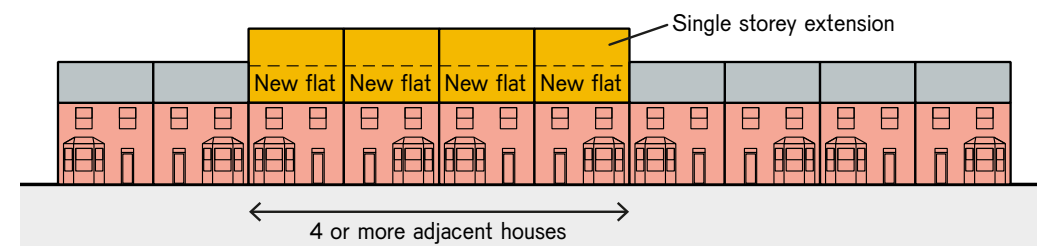


Fig. 162: Collective development, where four or more adjoining householders apply for planning permission as a single application, may be acceptable provided that the proposal achieves a high level of design quality.

31.4. Vertical intensification above other uses

- 31.4.1.

The space above non-residential uses, such as parades of shops, can help deliver new homes in sustainable locations such as high streets and district centres which are usually close to public transport and local amenities.
- 31.4.2.

Sites such as this which are suitable for vertical intensification are often occupied by single-storey buildings. The addition of new floors which create new homes will usually be supported where there is limited impact on neighbouring dwellings.
- 31.4.3.

Where individual commercial units exist within a wider, inconsistent street, the general guidance on vertical intensification will usually apply. However, where adjacent properties can be extended together a greater quantity of new accommodation can often be provided compared to individual owners acting alone.
- 31.4.4.

When new homes are created in the space above existing non-residential uses, care must be given to the design of circulation space, both inside and outside the new development. Single-aspect homes will usually be resisted, and ground floor entrance lobbies should usually be located within a primary elevation rather than concealed along side elevations, unless it can be demonstrated that access is safe, secure and attractive for residents and visitors.
- 31.4.5.

The height of new vertical intensification will be determined by a number of factors including local context, overshadowing, structural bearing capabilities of the host building, and so on. All planning applications for extensive vertical intensification will need to demonstrate how development can be achieved safely and effectively, and how it will provide high-quality accommodation for residents.



Fig. 163: Vertical intensification in Southwark designed by Panter Hudspith (website: www.panterhudspith.com, photography: Panter Hudspith)



Fig. 164: Vertical extension to Neptune House in Merton (TBC)

- 31.4.6.

Other than to make way for adequate means of access to the new dwellings for residents, emergency services and so on, the loss of employment space at ground floor will be resisted.
- 31.4.7.

Special consideration must be given to the safety of new development in respect of fire: including access for fire-fighting, escape routes for residents and adequate fire separation between different uses. The fire brigade should be consulted as part of any planning application and significant weight will be applied to their analysis in this regard. It is recommended that a specialist fire consultant be engaged at an early stage in the design process to ensure that compliance with the relevant legislation can be achieved.

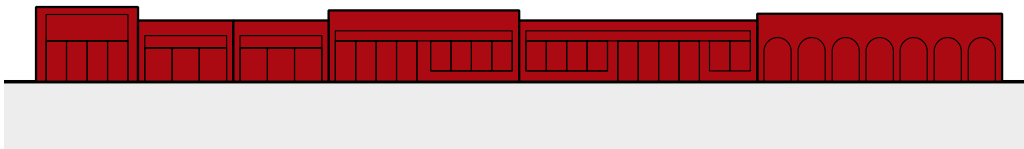


Fig. 165: Single-storey parades of shops or other non-residential uses provide an opportunity for vertical intensification in sustainable locations close to existing amenities.

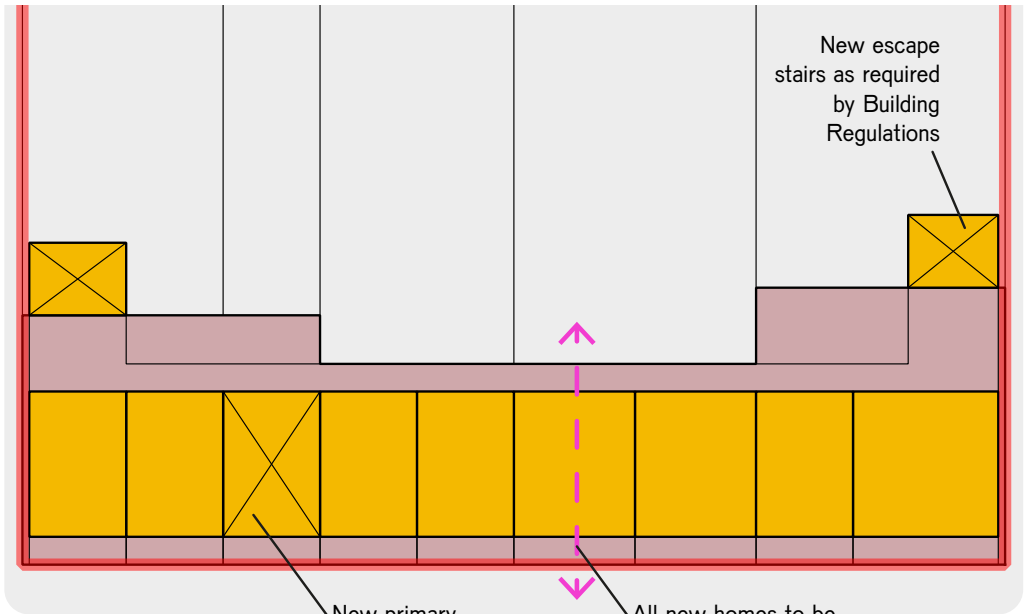


Fig. 166: Collective development, where four or more adjoining householders apply for planning permission as a single application, may be acceptable provided that the proposal achieves a high level of design quality.

32.1. What is backland development?

32.1.1. Backland development takes place on sites which are largely landlocked by surrounding development.

32.1.2. Such sites might be occupied by existing garages, redundant workshops or unused open space, and generally fall into one of two categories:

- Garages and Yards
- Mews and Alleys

32.1.3. Garages and Yards are defined by backland sites which are accessed via a single passageway from the public highway. Any vehicles entering the site must turn within it and leave via the same way they came in.

32.1.4. Mews and Alleys are a common feature across Lewisham, and usually comprise long, narrow passages which can be accessed from both ends. These are typically used to provide access to the end of rear gardens serving houses around the edge of the urban block, but many remain largely undeveloped.

32.2. What to look out for

32.2.1. Permission for new development on backland sites will not usually be granted where this land is designated as open space, where it has an unusually high biodiversity value, or where it supports existing non-residential uses which are still in operation. However, where sufficient space for such activities can be reprovided as part of a wider development which includes new housing, such proposals may be supported provided that other policy requirements are met.

32.2.2. A key constraint for backland development is access for services, including waste and recycling, deliveries, and the emergency services. Applicants should consider these constraints from the outset as they can have a fundamental impact on the viability of a

development proposal. Where new homes are proposed with front doors more than 20m from the public highway, access routes should be wide enough to allow larger vehicles, such as ambulances, box vans and delivery vehicles, to traverse them while allowing safe access for pedestrians. In this case there should also be sufficient space for these vehicles to turn around within the site rather than having to reverse.

32.2.3. Piecemeal development of backland sites is not usually acceptable as adequate artificial lighting and safe road surfaces must be provided between the public highway and the front door of every property. Therefore such developments should usually come forward as a single planning application, and built in a single construction phase. The use of planning conditions or Section 106 agreements may be necessary to ensure that no occupation of new homes is allowed until such provisions are put in place.

32.2.4. Backland sites present an opportunity to achieve high-quality placemaking and a sense of identity. As these sites are often some distance from neighbouring properties, they can often allow a good architect to create a high-quality living environment which is visually distinct from its surroundings.

32.2.5. Backland sites can often incorporate complex site ownerships or rights of way which might not be obvious. A full investigation of such restrictions should be carried out prior to preparing a planning application, and applicants will be required to demonstrate that new dwellings can be safely accessed without the risk of future claims from existing landowners.

32.2.6. Where backland sites include existing non-residential employment uses, the loss of space will not be supported unless it can be reprovided within the new development.



Fig. 167: Backlands development at Capitol Walk in Forest Hill (TBC)

32.3. Backland trees and biodiversity

- 32.3.1. Trees within backland sites make a significant contribution to both biodiversity and the quality of the public realm. Views of trees glimpsed through gaps between buildings provide important visual interest and depth to otherwise built-up urban areas.
- 32.3.2. Previously undeveloped backland sites are important for sustaining birds, insects, plants and animals. The development of such sites can have a detrimental effect on local wildlife, so planning applications should demonstrate how a net biodiversity gain will be achieved.
- 32.3.3. The loss of trees within backland plots to make way for development will be resisted, and planning applications for new homes will need to demonstrate how existing trees will be protected during construction works and how the layout of accommodation responds positively to existing trees. All planning applications for sites with, or close to, existing trees must be accompanied by an arboricultural survey and method statement.
- 32.3.4. New external surfaces should be permeable wherever possible, and the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be considered where appropriate.
- 32.3.5. Green or brown roofs can help mitigate the loss of green space and their use is encouraged wherever possible.



Fig. 168: 8 new homes in Crofton Park designed by Inhouse Design Associates Architects (website: www.inhousearchitects.co.uk, photography: TBC)

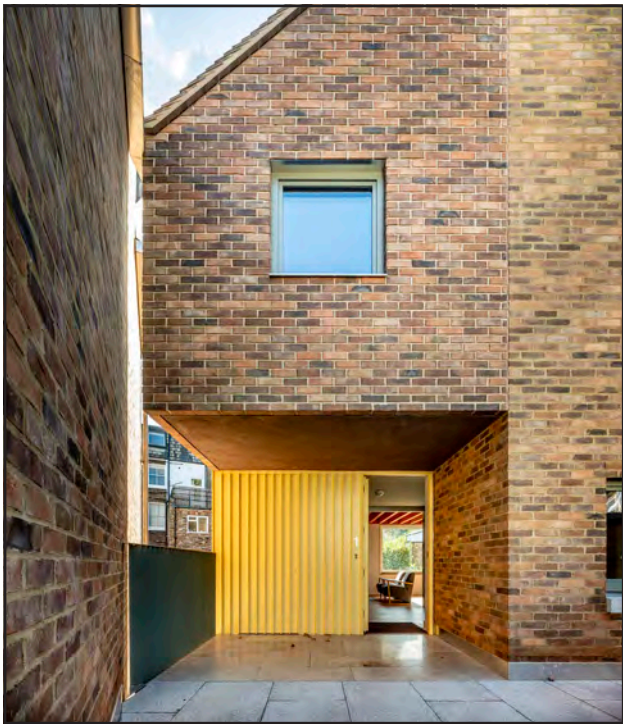


Fig. 169: Moore Park Road in Hammersmith is a backland development desinged by Stephen Taylor Architects (website: www.stephentaylorarchitects.co.uk, photography: TBC)

32.4. Waste and recycling

- 32.4.1. Provision must be made for the storage of household waste, and adequate access provided for collection.
- 32.4.2. Where refuse vehicle access and turning cannot be provided, refuse should be stored no further than 10m from the adopted highway, and no more than 30m from a proposed dwelling. On sites of this type, this means that dwellings can be located up to 40m from the highway.
- 32.4.3. In some cases it may be possible for refuse vehicles to reverse a maximum of 20m into a development on the basis that turning access can be provided from the highway, and the design of the road junction allows. This increases the distance of the furthest dwelling from the highway to 60m.
- 32.4.4. This approach will only be accepted where there are a sufficient number of homes within the development to justify it. Early engagement with the Lewisham’s waste and recycling team is advised to ensure that proposals are acceptable.
- 32.4.5. Where these distances are not achievable, it may be possible to implement a management strategy where waste and recycling is moved from outside the entrance to dwellings to a collection point. Because this will likely result in additional service charges, and is heavily reliant on ongoing management, such an approach will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances. It may be necessary to secure this service through a Section 106 agreement.
- 32.4.6. All developments with on-site refuse collection will require the road surface to be sufficiently robust to withstand the weight of vehicles. Key dimensions are also required to show that the movement of collection vehicles does not compromise the safety of pedestrians.

32.5. Privacy and overlooking

- 32.5.1. By their very nature backland sites are usually located in close proximity to the gardens of existing homes. The design of new development should limit, where possible, direct overlooking of existing neighbouring gardens, particularly within the first 10m of the rear of the existing dwelling.
- 32.6. Access for cars, emergency vehicles and deliveries
- 32.6.1. Car-free developments will be encouraged in areas with good access to public transport or close to town centres. In most backland developments it will not be necessary for private vehicles to enter, and access only needs to be provided for emergency vehicles, deliveries and, in some circumstances, waste collection vehicles.
- 32.6.2. Where there is limited access to the public transport network and where sites are some distance from town centres, car parking may be provided within developments. In this case car parks serving new development should be located close to the entrance to the site with the public realm outside new homes restricted to pedestrians only. Proposals which provide excessive quantities spaces, or space for parking within the curtilage of individual homes, will be resisted, except for spaces reserved for those with disabilities.
- 32.6.3. The Fire Brigade requires access for a pumping appliance to be within 45m of all points inside the dwellinghouse, or within 18m of a dry fire main inlet. Dead-end access routes longer than 20m require turning facilities. Refer for Building Regulations Part B for more details of the requirements for access for the purposes of fire-fighting.

33.1. General Principles

- 33.1.1. Disused garages and yards often occupy space between the end of long gardens within urban blocks, and are usually reached via a narrow access from the public highway.
- 33.1.2. In many cases such garages have fallen in disrepair as they are no longer large enough to accommodate modern cars, and can be a source of anti-social behaviour.
- 33.1.3. Planning applications which propose the replacement of existing garages or workshops will need to demonstrate these structures are no longer required. A parking survey may also be required.
- 33.1.4. Where backland sites are occupied by non-residential uses, the change of use to residential will be resisted unless sufficient allowance is made within the scheme for these uses to continue. Where the

- development itself will involve the temporary disruption of non-residential activities, assurance may be sought that temporary relocation of any businesses occupying the site is secured, and that provision for their return once work is completed has been made.
- 33.1.5. The development of new homes on such sites can bring benefits to adjoining residents, including increased security.
- 33.1.6. Where a site has more than one access point from the public highway it is defined as a mews rather than a garage or yard site. See the appropriate section of this document for specific guidance on mews sites.



Fig. 170: Backland development with clustered parking and cycle stores

Guidance			
Toolkits			
Types	Infill	Backland	Other Types
Site Types			

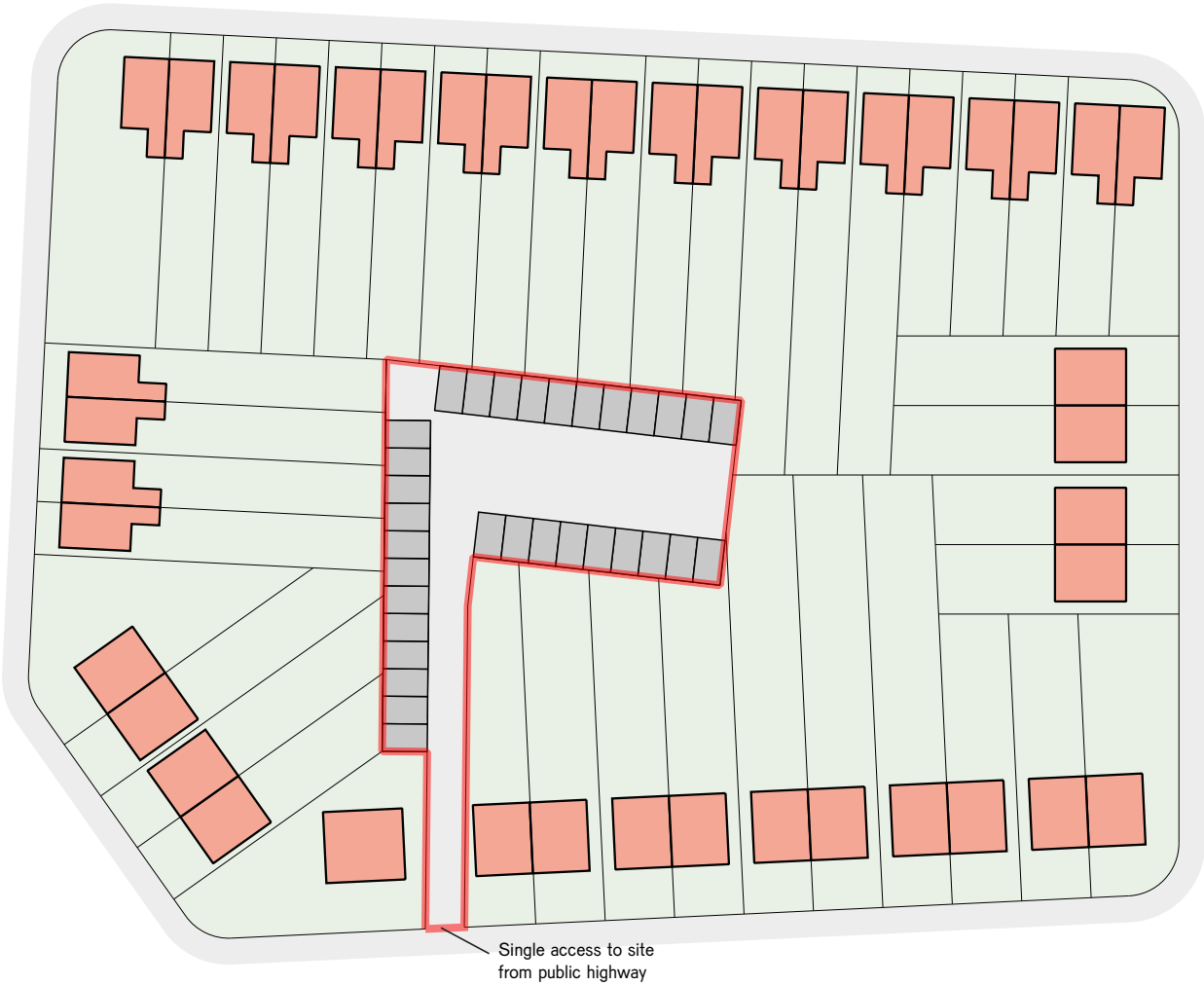


Fig. 171: Plan showing typical garage site at the rear of suburban block. Here a single narrow route from the public highway provides access to garages at the rear of existing properties.

- 33.1.7.

New residential development on sites previously occupied by garages and yards should make adequate provision for safe access for pedestrians, including artificial lighting, even road surfaces, passive surveillance and, where necessary, sufficient width for vehicles and pedestrians to pass one another without pedestrians having to step to one side.
- 33.1.8.

In areas of Lewisham which benefit from a high level of accessibility to the public transport network, car-free developments will be supported; conversely, developments which propose car parking will not generally be supported, with the exception of spaces dedicated to wheelchair parking.
- 33.1.9.

Where new dwellings are located some distance from the public highway it may be necessary to make an allowance for certain vehicles to enter the site, eg. for deliveries and emergency vehicles. In these cases a turning head should be provided, although steps should be taken to ensure that this is not used as a parking space for residents' own vehicles.
- 33.1.10.

Under no circumstances will gates across the entrance to access routes into backland development be supported. Rising bollards or similar devices which prevent vehicle ingress, but do not inhibit pedestrian access, are acceptable, providing that there exists a strategy for allowing emergency and other service vehicles into the site where necessary.
- 33.1.11.

Access for waste and recycling collection must be considered from the outset in any design. In general terms, operatives are able to drag waste and recycling bins up to 10m from outside the front door of dwellinghouses, or a dedicated collection point, to the highway.
- 33.1.12.

Where dwellings are proposed with front doors more than 10m from the public highway, a dedicated waste and recycling point should



Fig. 172: Backland development in Grove Park designed by Fraser Brown Mackenna Architects (website: www.fbmaarchitects.com, photography: TBC)

be designed into the development. Residents should have to carry their waste no more than 30m from their front doors to this collection point. In most cases this places an effective limit of 40m between the public highway and the front door serving a new dwelling.

33.1.13.

In limited circumstances it may be possible for waste collection vehicles to reverse up to 20m into an access way serving a backland development, however, this depends on the geometry and safety of the junction with the public highway and an adequate width to allow both waste collection vehicles and pedestrians to pass safely. Furthermore, given the complexity of this manoeuvre waste collection vehicles cannot be expected to reverse into backland sites serving few than 10 dwellings.



Fig. 173: The development of backland garage sites can provide high-quality new homes, provided that these are carefully designed and respond positively to their context. In most cases, access and parking space for private cars will be resisted.

- 33.1.14.

Where insufficient provision is made for the storage of waste, this can result in unhygienic conditions and contribute to a cluttered and untidy public realm.
- 33.1.15.

In all cases early engagement with Lewisham’s waste and recycling team is encouraged to ensure that sufficient provision is made within the layout of the site for this purpose.
- 33.1.16.

In any planning application for backland development where access to new dwellings is reliant on a single route from the public highway, the applicant will need to demonstrate that a high-quality, safe and even surface can be secured. The use of planning conditions to ensure that necessary improvements are implemented prior to occupation of new homes may be applied to any planning approvals. Applicants are encouraged to check, and secure where necessary, the right of way or ownership over any area of the site which falls outside the application boundary.
- 33.1.17.

Due to their proximity and relationship to existing homes, backland development must take care to respect the privacy enjoyed by neighbouring properties. New development should avoid, where possible, direct overlooking of adjoining rear gardens, and applications that propose new dwellings where the windows of habitable rooms look directly over the first 10m of existing rear gardens will not be supported.
- 33.1.18.

Within new development itself, privacy and overlooking distances can in some cases be relaxed to ensure the optimum use of a site, although applicants will need to demonstrate how the spirit of the policy is being achieved in other ways.



Fig. 174: George Lane backland development designed by Stephen Bradbury Architects (website: www.sbarchitects.co.uk, photography: TBC)

- 33.1.19.

New development should make efficient use of available space. In most cases terraced or semi-detached dwellings are preferable to detached properties.
- 33.1.20.

The height of new development should generally follow that of the predominant height of the properties surrounding it. In this case, the number of floors is considered to include substantial pitched roofs.
- 33.1.21.

Where development is proposed within Conservation Areas, the accompanying character appraisal takes precedence and applications should demonstrate how proposals are in accordance with it.

Guidance			
Toolkits			
Types	Infill	Backland	Other Types
Site Types			



Fig. 175: In areas with limited access to public transport, on site car parking may be provided. This should be clustered together in a single location rather than scattered throughout the site.

33.2. Backland sites and existing employment uses

- 33.2.1. Many backland sites in Lewisham are occupied by existing commercial uses such as workshops. These premises provide vital accommodation for small businesses, and planning applications for new homes which involve the net loss of employment space will not be supported.
- 33.2.2. However, where the intensification of an existing site can be achieved without the net loss of employment space, development will usually be supported, provided that all other planning policy requirements are met.
- 33.2.3. Depending on the nature of the existing employment use, some consolidation may be acceptable, for instance, where single-storey buildings could be replaced by two-storey accommodation without compromising the operational requirements of the incumbent business.
- 33.2.4. In exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that there is no longer a demand for a particular type of employment space, a reduction in floor space may be accepted where the new accommodation is of a superior quality than the premises being replaced. In this case, evidence should be provided that a change in planning use class (for example, from E(g)(i) to E(g)(ii)) will result in not net loss of jobs, and will result in a use which is more in demand in the local area.

- 33.2.5. The process of redevelopment itself can be disruptive to existing businesses, and where appropriate a guarantee may be sought through legal means to temporarily re-house an existing tenant so that their ongoing business operations are not put in jeopardy by
- 33.2.6. These sites are often reached by narrow accessways from the public highway. In this case the principles set out on the preceding pages should apply.
- 33.2.7. There should be a clear separation between the residential areas and the commercial uses. Vehicles serving the commercial buildings should not have to pass through a residential zone. Likewise, access to new homes should not be through the non-residential zone. Shared accessways from the public highway will be accepted. In these circumstances special care should be taken in the design of shared surfaces to ensure that they are safe for pedestrians.



Fig. 176: Backland sites which include employment uses, such as workshops, are a common feature in Lewisham.



Fig. 177: The addition of new residential accommodation can help intensify an under-utilised site, but a net loss of employment space will usually be resisted.

34.1. General principles

- 34.1.1. Mews and alleys are a common feature of Lewisham, with many such examples found across the borough.
- 34.1.2. For the purposes of this document mews and alleys are considered to be continuous narrow passageways which are accessible from the public highway at both ends. Sites which are accessible from only one end generally fall under the definition of “garages and yards” and in this case the guidance for that section applies.
- 34.1.3. Historically mews and alleys will have been used to provide service access to the rear gardens of properties facing the street, and many feature outbuildings and garages facing directly onto the mews. Consequently they can fall under multiple ownerships or with rights of way, so permanent access for the purposes of development can be difficult to secure.

- 34.1.4. Piecemeal development along mews and alleys, including the conversion of existing workshops and outbuildings into new dwellings, will not be supported.
- 34.1.5. Where street-facing sites exist at the entrance to mews and alleys, development may be possible in line with street extension principles (see section 27).
- 34.1.6. New street-facing dwellings can act as a catalyst for further development along mews and alleys, but this should come forward in an coordinated way. That is not to say that all mews development should appear identical in character - in fact a variety of architectural styles is an attractive characteristic of such development - but that where new homes are proposed the installation of appropriate infrastructure (such as utilities, road surfaces, artificial lighting and so on) should be in place prior to development taking place. The use of



Fig. 178: When establishing a new mews street it is important to develop a strategy for the public areas

				Guidance
				Toolkits
Types	Infill	Backland	Other Types	Site Types

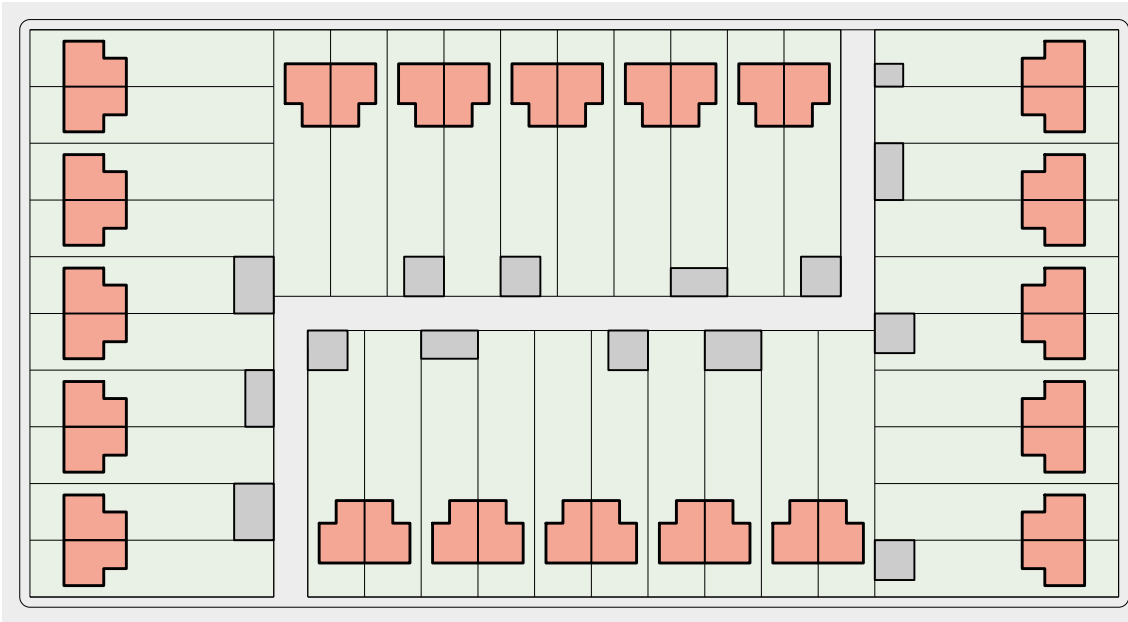


Fig. 179: Mews and alleys generally consist of narrow, continuous routes along the rear of existing houses, often providing access to garages and outbuildings at the back of gardens.

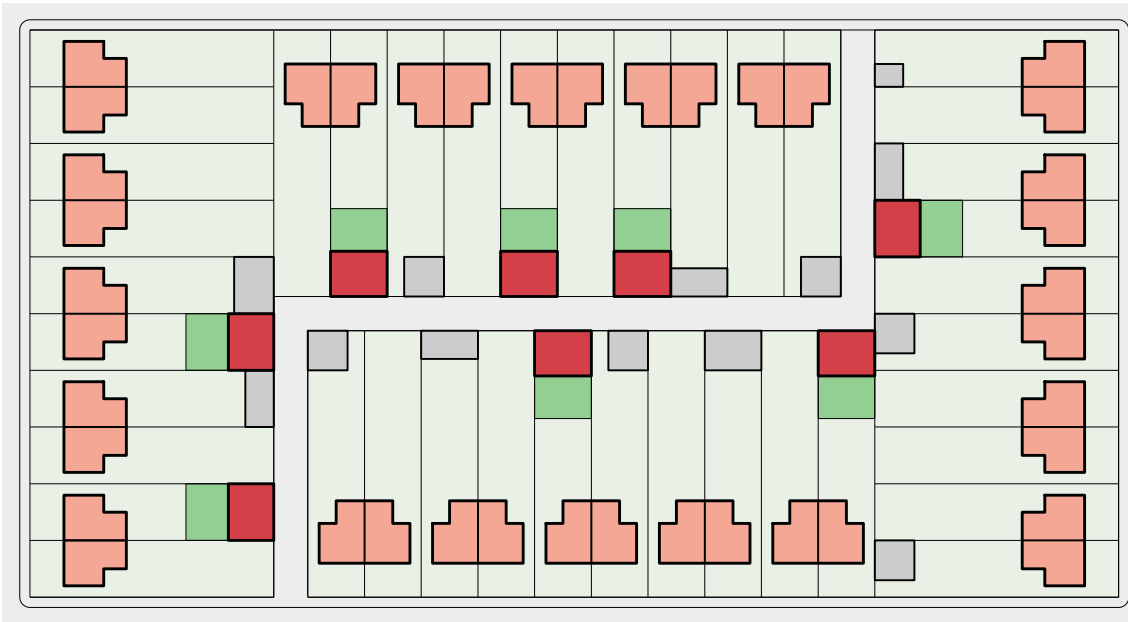


Fig. 180: Piecemeal development along mews and alleys, such as those shown in red above, will not be supported.

pre-commencement planning conditions could be used to ensure that such provisions are in place at the appropriate time.

34.1.7. Any development along mews or alleys should ensure that sufficient space is allowed for the safe movement of pedestrians and vehicles. In most cases mews which are narrower than 6m will not be supported. The use of shared surfaces is required, and proposals which include a separate pavement and roadway will be resisted.

34.1.8. Due to the length of many mews and alleys found in Lewisham it is unlikely that development beyond the first 40m is likely, due to the limitations of waste collection. This can, in some cases, and if there are sufficient homes to justify it, be extended to 60m where waste collection vehicles are able to reverse safely up to 20m into a site. Where this is being relied upon, applicants will be required to provide evidence (through tracking diagrams, or similar) to demonstrate that waste collection vehicles can undertake safe and efficient manoeuvring without endangering pedestrians.

34.1.9. Where a high-quality road surface, artificial lighting, right of way, and sufficient turning capacity can be secured along the full length of the mews or alleys - from public highway to public highway - coordinated development along its full length may be acceptable where it is of sufficient width to allow access for waste, delivery and emergency vehicles, and for pedestrians to pass safely.

34.1.10. Occasional gaps between buildings are a characteristic of many mews developments, providing long views for homes within them and planning applications for such schemes should demonstrate a thorough understanding of local context and character. Design and Access Statements explaining how mews development responds to local character should accompany any submission.



Fig. 181: New mews house in New Cross designed by Kennedy Twaddle (website: www.kennedytwaddle.com, photography: TBC)

34.1.11. Gates across the entrances to mews and alleys will not be permitted, although rising bollards or other methods of controlling vehicle access which do not inhibit pedestrians are allowed where appropriate.

34.1.12. Acceptable privacy distances can be difficult to achieve when new dwellings face one another across a narrow mews or alley. In these cases flexibility can be applied to the requirement for privacy distances, although steps should be undertaken to ensure that residents' enjoyment of their homes and their right to privacy are not compromised to an unacceptable degree. Staggered windows, the use of projecting or "oriel" or sloping roof windows can be employed to achieve these objectives and applicants will be expected to demonstrate how adequate privacy is achieved.

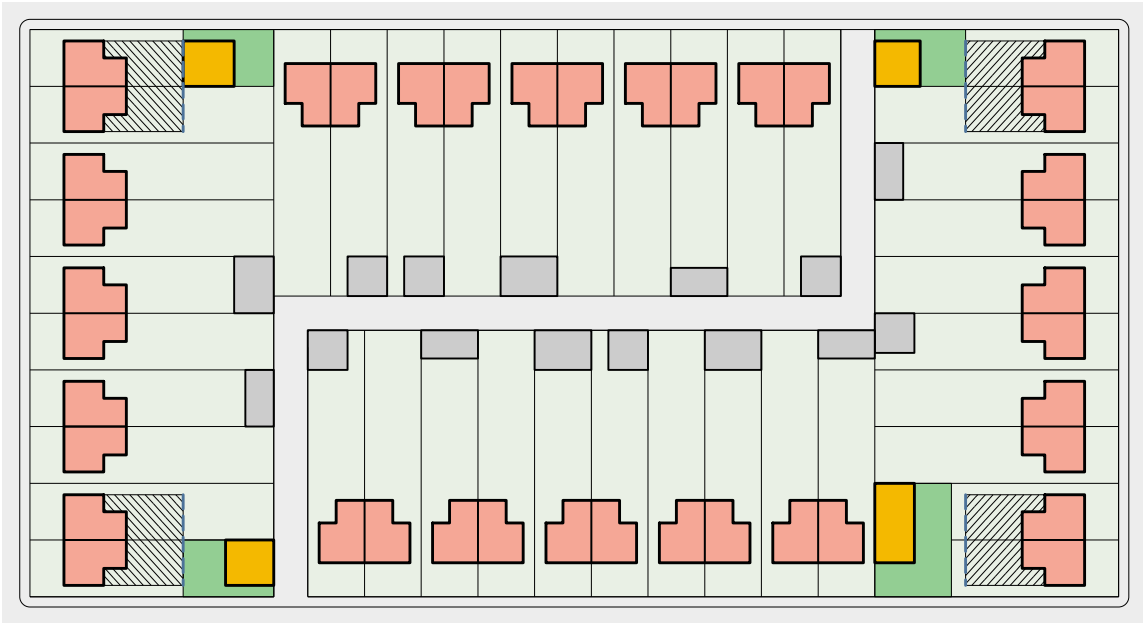


Fig. 182: New dwellings at the entrance to mews an alleys may be acceptable in line with the principles of street extension (see section 27).



Fig. 183: Coordinated development may allow new homes to be built along mews and alleys provided that safe access for pedestrians, delivery and emergency vehicles can be secured, and a robust strategy for the removal of waste and recycling is in place.

35.1. Conversion and extension

- 35.1.1. If your site falls under the conversion and extension site type there is advice available in a number of places.
- 35.1.2. The first place to look will be if your site falls into another site type. As laid out in section 24, conversions and extensions will almost always also site in either the infill or backland category as well.
- 35.1.3. It is important to consider conversion and extension as part of infill or backland development as retaining existing structures is vital to helping the building industry respond to the climate emergency we are facing.
- 35.1.4. **Alterations and Extensions SPD**
When working with existing buildings, extensive advice is available in the Alterations and Extensions SPD that is available from the Lewisham Council website.
- 35.1.5. This document provides advice on how to extend buildings both vertically and horizontally. The advice in this document focusses on enlarging existing dwelling, but the principles set out will also apply the extending and converting e in order to create new homes as part of a small site development.

35.2. Garden land

- 35.2.1. As set out in the Local Plan, the development of garden lands should be avoided as they "make an important contribution to local character and amenity and often have ecological value. Development on garden land should therefore be avoided in favour of development opportunities elsewhere in the Borough, particularly on brownfield sites and previously developed land, consistent with the spatial strategy for the Borough."



Fig. 184: Vertical extension and re-cladding of an existing house following the principles of Street Infill development. Designed by Alma-nac (website: www.alma-nac.com, photography: TBC)

- 35.2.2. **Infill and backland characteristics**
When working with garden land it is important to consider if it can be classified also as an infill or backland site that are more favourable development opportunities. It is therefore key that garden sites have clearly distinct access arrangements, such as a street frontage or mews/lane access, and do not rely upon passing through the demise of another property.
- 35.2.3. Having at least one street frontage makes a site significantly more favourable.

- 35.2.4. **Mitigating losses**
The Local Plan also says that the garden development should only be considered "where appropriate re-provision of garden land is provided to mitigate losses as much as possible." As such, when developing garden land re-providing, or working around, the important role that existing gardens play is important, including their role in providing biodiversity and habitats.
- 35.3. **Amenity**
As with garden sites, amenity land provides an important role in the borough and therefore should be considered carefully before putting it forward for development.
- 35.3.2. In order to develop these sites applicants will need to prove that the amenity function of the site is either no longer required or is oversupplied in the area and therefore not needed.
- 35.3.3. If the amenity function can be proven to be redundant then applicants should identify the other characteristics of the site as most amenity sites will have characteristics of either infill or backland sites. Once this has been identified, applicants will be able to find advice from the corresponding site type section in this document.

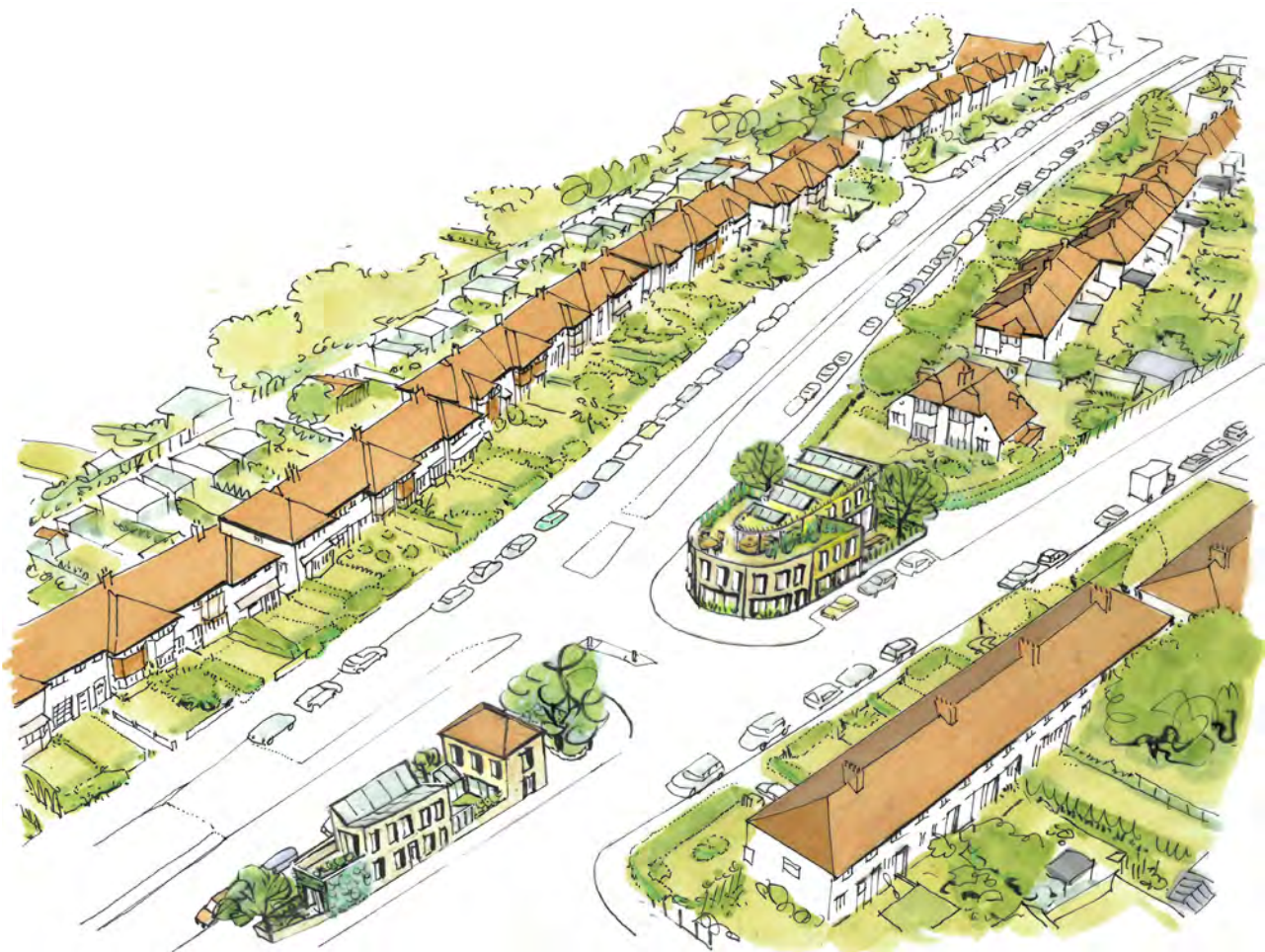


Fig. 185: Awkward green verges can be a places for new homes