

Part F:

Residential Amenity

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This part of the Development Requirements SPD provides further detailed guidance on the interpretation of the following Core Strategy policies, as appropriate:

- CS.9 Design and Distinctiveness
- CS.15 Distribution of Development
- CS.20 Existing Housing Stock and Buildings

It provides guidance and information on how applicants can maintain and achieve a good standard of residential amenity for both existing and future occupiers. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant parts of the SPD.

The SPD will be used by Stratford-on-Avon District Council to help reach decisions on whether to approve or refuse planning applications. Making sure that applications comply with the guidance contained within the SPD will make it easier for the Council to grant permission. The Council's Planning Policies are set out in the Core Strategy available at www.stratford.gov.uk/corestrategy

Key words or terms which appear throughout the document are included in the Glossary.

F1. Daylight and Sunlight

The relative position, heights and separation of buildings should be adjusted to reduce overshadowing and loss of light to ensure that the windows of neighbouring properties enjoy reasonable day lighting.

Where loss of daylight to habitable room windows is likely to be an issue, the applicant should provide drawings to demonstrate how anticipated problems can be overcome.

Daylight in bedrooms may also be considered, but is generally less important, except where this is the main private accommodation, such as in residential homes.

Detailed proposals should also take account of local circumstances like level changes between properties and orientation.

The construction of a new building or extension which extensively blocks the sunlight to an existing properties windows or its garden should be avoided.

The Council uses a 45/25 degree test to ascertain whether, as a result of a proposed development, the amount of light reaching neighbouring windows is likely to be acceptable. This is covered in more detail below. Guidance and tables are also provided in the BRE report Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – a Guide to Good Practice published in 2012. This guidance should be used if there is any doubt about the acceptability of proposals with regard to daylighting and sunlight.

F2. Separation Distances

New development will usually have some effect on the amenity of neighbours. These effects include impacts from loss of light, overshadowing, loss of privacy and overbearing impacts. In relation to privacy, the design and layout of new development should ensure that reasonable privacy and light is provided for surrounding residents and occupiers, particularly in relation to residential use and enjoyment of dwellings and private gardens. Spacing between the windows of buildings/dwellings should achieve suitable distances for privacy and light, whilst also preventing cramped and congested layouts.

F3. Light to Internal Spaces

Good quality natural light helps to make the interior of a dwelling or a work place a more pleasant and enjoyable place to spend time. It also reduces the need to use electric lighting.

The amount and quality of natural light depends on the:

- Size, type of glazing and position of windows;
- The shape and size of rooms;
- The colour of internal surfaces; and
- The structures that surround the building.

Roof mounted 'light tubes' can bring natural light into corridors, landings and other rooms.

The size of windows to provide good day lighting must be balanced with privacy requirements within the home and the privacy of neighbouring residents. It is important that the orientation, location and use of the room are all taken into account when considering the size and location of windows.

BREEAM assessments include credits for minimum standards for natural daylight levels for non- residential buildings.

Find out more

BRE Report: Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight (2012)

https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Site_layout_planning_for_daylight_and_sunlight

In relation to loss of light to a neighbour's window a '45/25 degree' set of tests can be used. This is in order to assess whether the effect on neighbours' windows will be unacceptable.

New development should not normally cross the line of a 45 degree angle drawn (in the horizontal plane) from the mid-point of the nearest ground floor habitable room window in the adjoining property to the new development (see Figure 1). The mid-point of a window is usually measured both from a horizontal axis, taking the mid-point of the vertical axis as being 2m above ground floor level. For example, a window 3m wide would have its mid-point plotted at 2m on the vertical axis and 1.5m on the horizontal axis.

'Habitable room' is defined here as living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, studies and bedrooms.

If after carrying out the 45 degree test, it is found that a development crosses the 45 degree line, it does not automatically mean that it is unacceptable. In these cases, a second test is used to check whether the development would be so close and high in relation to neighbours' windows that it would cause unacceptable loss of light. This time the line from the mid-point of the habitable room window is drawn in the vertical plane. If the top of the new development would cross the line of a 25 degree angle above horizontal, the development will normally cause excessive loss of light and be unacceptable subject to other criteria being taken into account as outlined below.

When applying the 45/25 degree guideline, the following factors should be taken into account:

- The availability of alternative sources of natural light to the affected room(s);
- The size and function of the room;
- other buildings or features in the area which may, for example, already cause loss of light and overshadowing;
- the orientation of the building; and
- the design and character of the property and nearby properties.

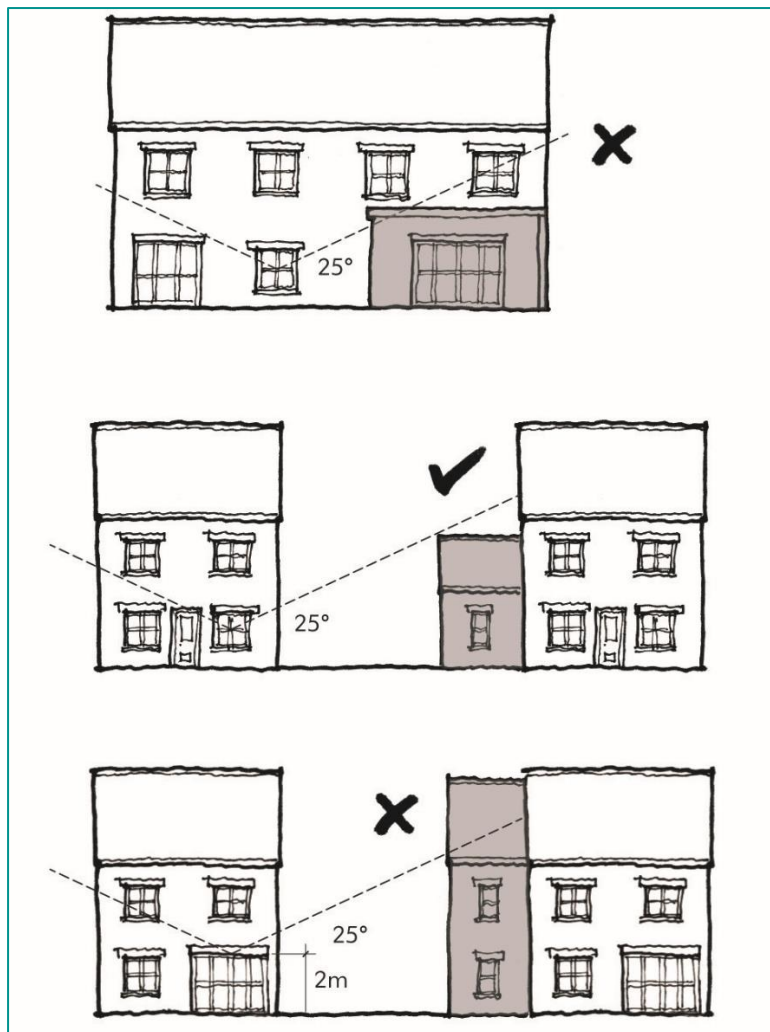
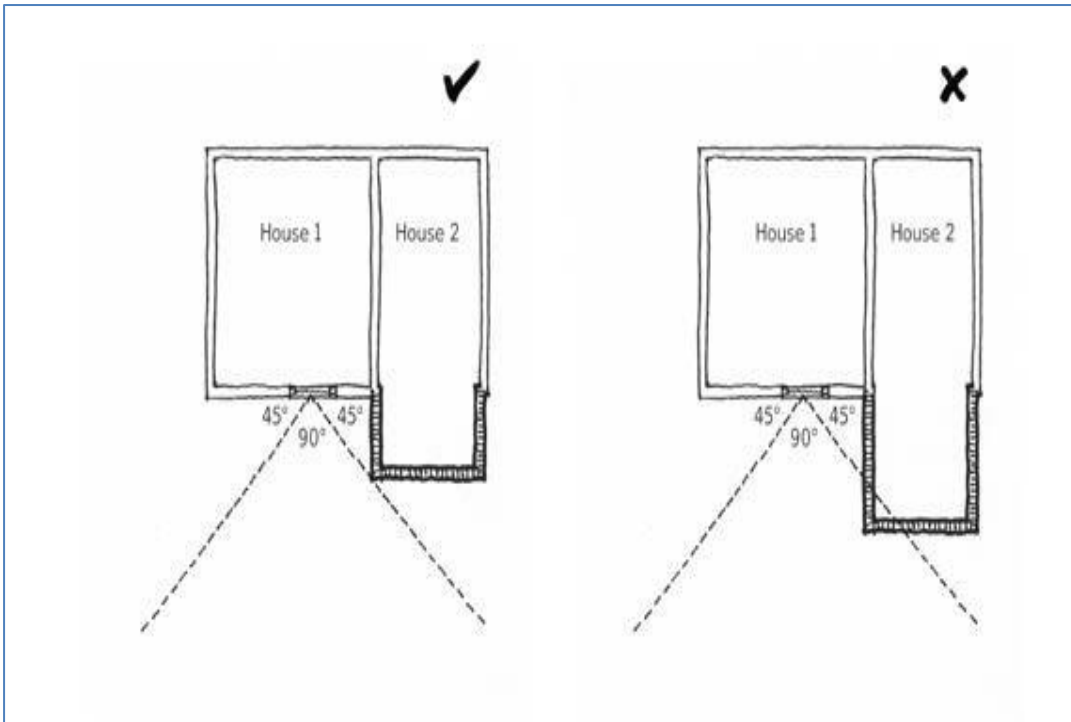


Fig. F1 - The diagrams above illustrate the principles of the 45/25 Degree Code.

F4. Preventing loss of privacy, overshadowing and overbearing impacts

The 45/25 degree guideline ensures sufficient light reaches neighbours' windows, but care should also be taken to protect neighbours' garden areas from overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing impacts. This particularly relates to the area immediately outside the rear of the house, such as patios, which is often used as a sitting out area. Separation distance guidelines help to ensure that both windows and gardens are not unreasonably affected. The separation distances in the table further below will normally be required where the development is higher than single storey.

Where properties directly face one another, except where overlooking a street or public space, a distance of at least 21 m between facing habitable room windows (living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, studies and bedrooms) is normally required. This distance should increase by an additional 7 m for every storey above 2 storeys.

A separation distance of 13 m for 1.5 or 2 storey walls and 16 m for 2.5 or 3 storey walls between windowed elevations and opposing gable end walls provides a reasonable outlook. Table 1 below will assist for distances between windows/buildings in other circumstances.

Table F1: Separation Distances

Relationship of new development to neighbouring property	Minimum separation* 1.5 or 2 storey building	Minimum separation* 2.5 or 3 storey building
Front to Front**	13 metres	16 metres
Back to Back / Back to Front	21 metres	27 metres
Front to Side / Back to Side	13 metres	16 metres
Side to Side	See 'Side Facing Windows'	See 'Side Facing Windows'
Windows looking towards neighbour's garden (near to their house)	10 metres unless obscure glazed	13 metres unless obscure glazed

Notes:

* Separation distances are between habitable room windows. Windows are 'facing' if they both fall within a pair of 45 degree cones drawn from the middle of the 2 windows.

NB: The 45° angle should have equal portions of 22.5° either side of the line that passes through the window at right angles.

Where there is a significant change in levels, the minimum separation distance increases by 2 metres for every 1 metre that the floor level of the development would be above the affected floor or ground level of the neighbouring property.

** House fronts normally face onto public routes so there is less need to protect privacy and therefore these distances are lower.

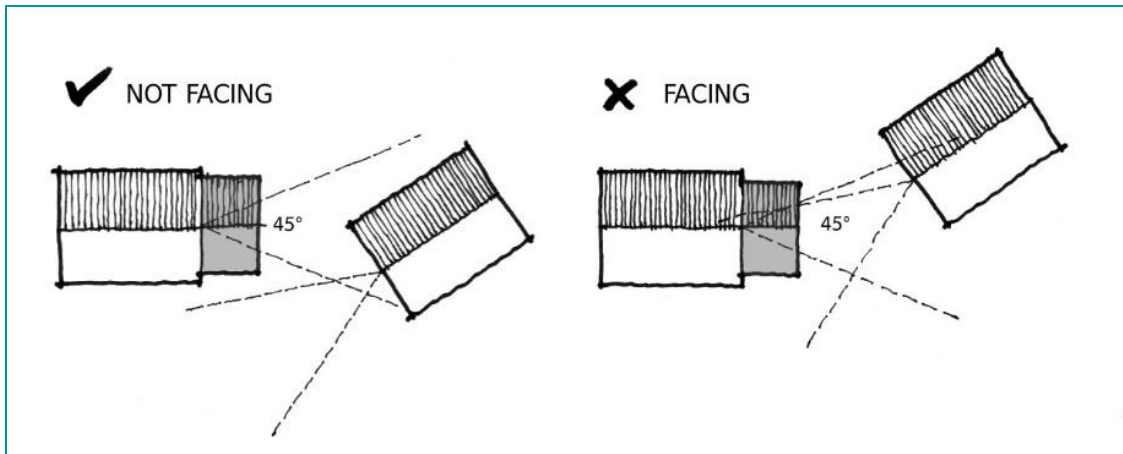


Fig. F2- diagram illustrates the 45 degree guideline for side facing windows.

Neighbours' Side Facing Windows

For both the 45/25 degree guideline and separation distances, neighbours' side facing windows on adjoining properties which get their light across another properties land will not normally be given the same degree of protection as front and rear facing windows. These cases will be judged on their individual circumstances.

Overlooking and Obscure Glazing

Overlooking problems can often be addressed by obscure glazing the windows. Where this is necessary, the Council will require glazing that prevents detailed views through the window glass. The application of obscure film to clear glazing will not generally be considered acceptable.