

Directorate of Environment and Regeneration • Planning Services

LOCAL PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTE NO.2 SPACE AROUND DWELLINGS

Background

It is important in the national context to make **the most efficient use of land**, therefore Government policies aim to minimise the loss of greenfield land to development, and this in turn is reflected in Flintshire's planning policies.

Equally, however, **residents and their neighbours are entitled to a reasonable degree of space, privacy and daylighting around their homes**. This LPG Note gives the guidance which Flintshire County Council considers necessary to protect the residential amenity of new developments and of existing properties affected by nearby new proposals.

These are minimum standards which relate to all dwellings of up to two storeys. Proposals for taller buildings, or for dwellings where outdoor amenity space is provided on a communal basis, will be considered on their merits but due regard will be given to the spirit of these standards in order to achieve satisfactory living conditions.

Policy

The Council's approach is set out in the UDP Policy HSG8e, which states that **new housing will be permitted where the density of development "makes adequate provision for privacy and space about dwellings"** (amongst other considerations). This LPG Note provides fuller guidance on how this should be done.

Distances between dwellings

To allow a satisfactory degree of privacy and daylight, **minimum separation distances between buildings are required**. Higher standards are needed between windows lighting **habitable rooms**, that is living rooms, bedrooms, studies and dining-kitchens. (Halls, landings, passageways, kitchens and utility rooms are not counted as habitable rooms for this purpose.) On **sloping ground**, where the possibility of overlooking is increased, a greater distance is required.

- The windows of two facing habitable rooms (that is, main - front or rear - elevations) where direct overlooking is possible should be at least 22 metres apart. (See Fig 1)
- A window in a habitable room facing the flank wall (or side elevation) of an adjacent house which is higher than the top of the window should be at least 12 metres from the wall. (See Fig 2)
- On sloping ground, for every 1 metre difference in height, the above standards are increased by 2 metres. (Fig 3)
- Where adjacent dwellings both have flank walls without windows of habitable rooms, the minimum distance should be at least 2 metres. (Fig 4)

In order to enable proper consideration of these matters, **submitted plans should indicate the finished floor levels of the building and the levels and positions of adjacent existing properties indicating any facing windows**.

Fig 1 Facing habitable rooms on the level

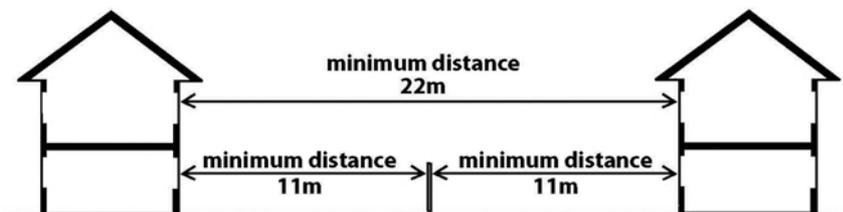


Fig 2 A habitable room facing a flank wall

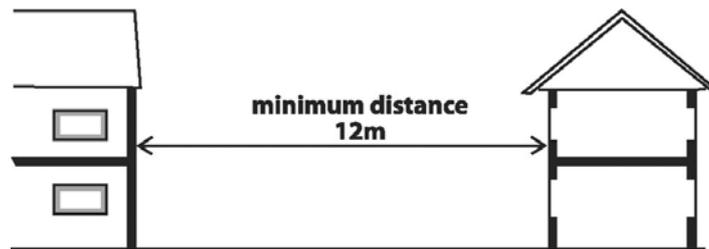
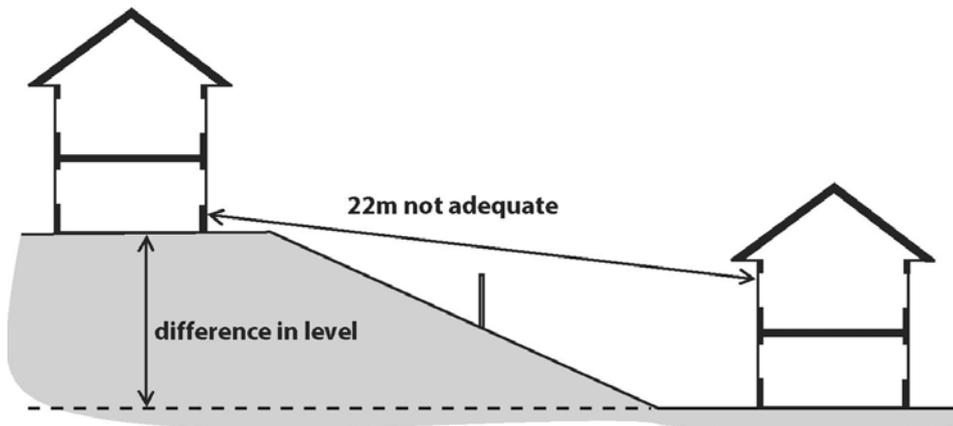


Fig 3 Facing habitable rooms on sloping ground



- On corner plots adjoining road junctions and prominent from two streets, the width of any proposed extension should not exceed half the width of the existing frontage of the property, nor should it exceed half the width of the garden/plot between the property and the adjacent highway. Where the curtilage is large enough, dwellings on corner plots should also have at least 4 metres between their flank wall and the back edge of the highway footway, unless the scheme and locality are of special character. In cases of doubt, the Council will be seeking to avoid detriment to the amenity of the area. (See Fig 4)

Private garden space for dwellings

Private garden space is important for quiet enjoyment, childrens' playspace, drying clothes, and so forth. **It will normally be provided at the rear of the property for privacy**, helped by appropriate screening from public gaze by suitably-sized walls, fences or hedges. **Front gardens** do not normally count towards the following standards. (Some existing properties have non-existent or very limited rear/side gardens. In these circumstances, the front garden must be regarded in a different light.) The **proportions** should be reasonable to allow for play and leisure, rather than being excessively long and narrow, for example.

- For single bedroom dwellings a minimum of 30 square metres should be provided, rising to at least 70 square metres for a three or more bedroom dwelling. (Fig 4)

These are minimum standards. It is acknowledged that **larger plots** could allow residents to grow more of their own food, and compost some domestic waste, thus making the development more sustainable.

Gardens should be:

- Of a usable shape.
- Well-related to the dwelling itself, so that children can be supervised, for instance.
- Designed so as to avoid overlooking and allow privacy.

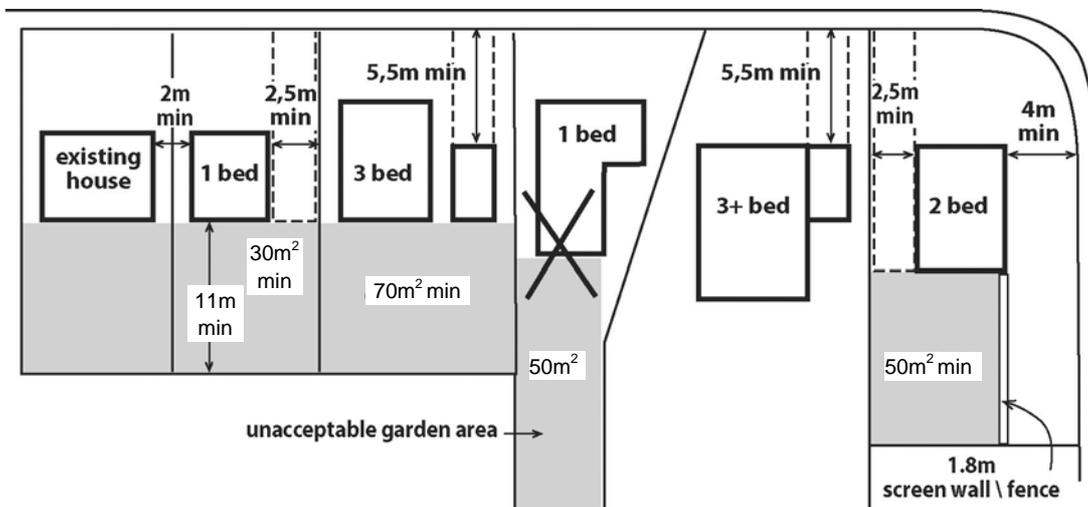
For an average, or larger, sized dwelling, a plot depth of 11 metres is a reasonable minimum standard. (Figure 4)

These standards may be varied downwards where a higher density of development is considered desirable for particular reasons such as in a town centre development or to create variety within a large scheme. Exceptions may also be made in the case of older terraced properties where basic amenities such as kitchens or bathrooms, which are wanted and cannot be provided satisfactorily within the existing dwelling, can only be accommodated by accepting a lower space standard. Generally though, the Council will seek to achieve at least these standards in any new housing layout. In some instances, **the removal of permitted development rights** for extensions would be a condition of the permission to safeguard these standards and residential amenity.

Where these standards cannot be met fully, measures to reduce overlooking such as by the erection of **screen walls or fences** should form part of the scheme, properly thought-out, and incorporated in it.

Existing good examples of boundaries, be they walls, hedges, railings or gates, should be retained and properly maintained, especially in conservation areas.

Fig 4 Garden and driveway distances



Driveways and car parking

It is important in the interests of **safety** that vehicles parked on residential driveways do not encroach on to the pavement or road. Therefore,

- New driveways should be at least 5.5 metres in length. (Figure 4)
- Garages should be set far enough back from the road to enable the garage door to be opened and closed whilst a car is parked in the driveway.

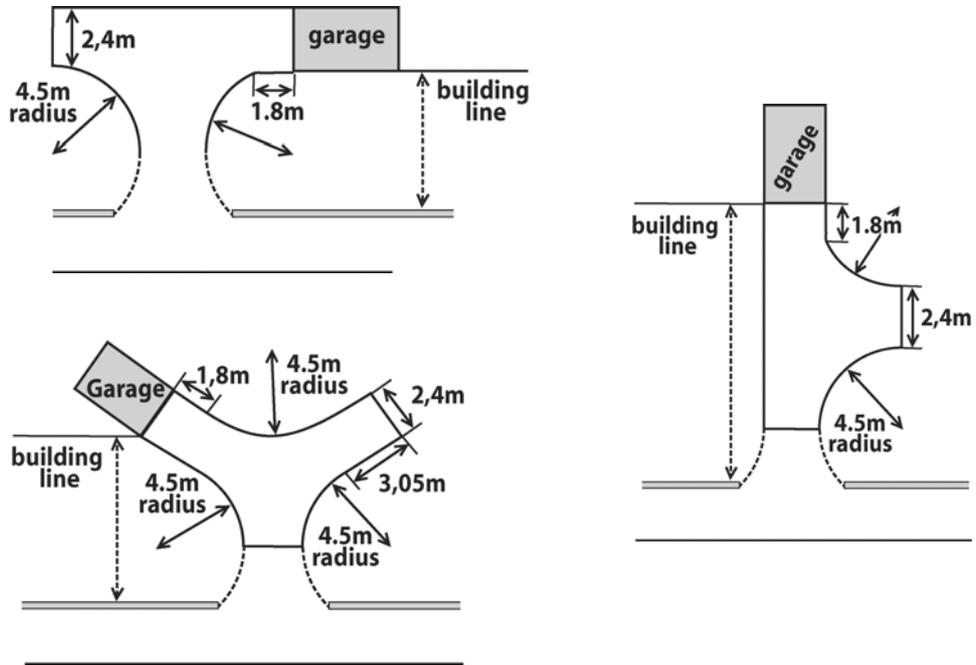
In addition,

- Driveways should be no steeper than 1 in 10.
- At least 2.5 metres width should be provided on driveways between house walls and site boundaries, to enable proper opening and closing of car doors. (Figure 4)

Planning permission is needed to construct **a vehicular or pedestrian access into a residential curtilage from a trunk or other classified road**. The main considerations when judging such proposals are highway safety and visual aspects.

- To avoid vehicles having to reverse into trunk or other busy classified roads, a vehicle turning space should be provided within the curtilage with the aim of meeting the dimensions shown in Figure 5.
- On other roads which are not busy with traffic, this standard should be relaxed for visual/amenity reasons, to avoid an excess of hard surfaces.
- To avoid or minimise the visual impression of concrete or tarmac, suitable planting and/or the use of suitable different flooring materials, such as grass-crete, should be included in the proposals.

Fig 5 Vehicle turning spaces in residential curtilages fronting on to classified roads. Three possible layouts are illustrated for different configurations of site



The number of car parking spaces required for each type of dwelling is given in LPG Note 11 Parking Standards. Where it is proposed that existing parking spaces are to be lost because of an extension, and this would create safety or congestion problems, replacement spaces must be provided, or the proposal will be considered unacceptable.