

STATUS OF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE ON PLOT SUB-DIVISION: 'INFILLING' AND 'BACKLAND' DEVELOPMENT

Status

This Planning Guidance, which is supplementary to Policy HSG22 of the Woking Borough Local Plan 1999, has been formally adopted by Woking Borough Council. In this respect the Supplementary Guidance has the status of a material consideration in the determination of planning applications by this Authority and in its defence of its decisions at appeal.

Statement of Public Consultation

In accordance with the advice set out in Annex A (A3) of Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1) on General Policy and Principles, the Supplementary Guidance has been the subject of wide public consultation with a total of 94 consultees, as follows:

i) Professional Practitioners

All developers and professional practitioners who had submitted planning applications for at least one residential dwelling during the previous two years, together with the House Builders Federation, which number 60 in total.

ii) Local Resident's and Amenity Groups

The Byfleet Parish Council and all resident's and amenity groups within the Borough which are known to the Council, together with the Surrey Police, which number 34 in total.

The period of public consultation allowed over 6 weeks for the above individuals and organisations to make comments on the Draft Supplementary Guidance. Altogether seven responses were received. After careful consideration of these representations the Guidance was amended to address the valid points of concern. These amendments were considered at the Council's Planning and Environment Committee on 9 March 2000, when the Guidance was formally adopted. Full details of the representations made to the Council, together with the Council's response can be obtained on request by contacting 01483 743443.

**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE
PLOT SUB-DIVISION - 'INFILLING' AND
'BACKLAND' DEVELOPMENT
(Adopted March 2000)**

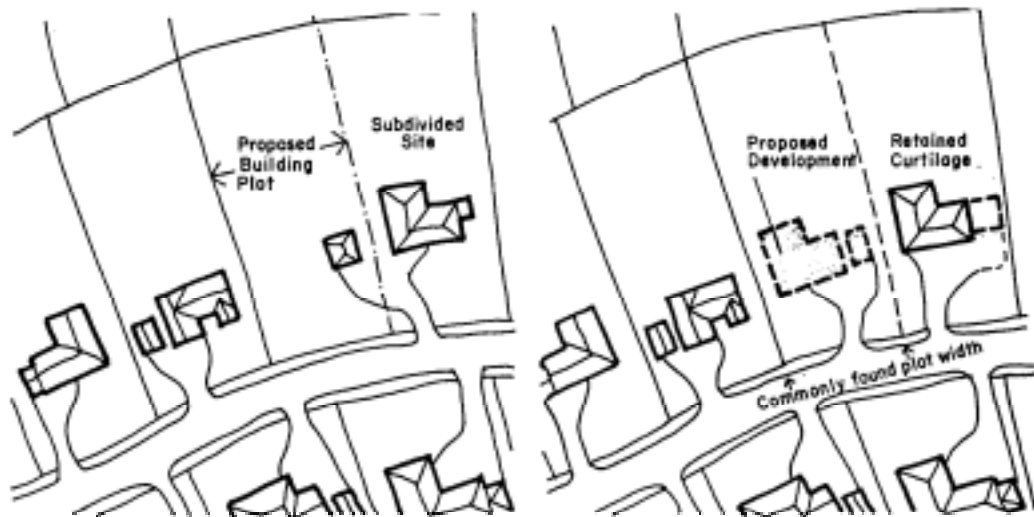
1.0 INTRODUCTION AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This document sets out Supplementary Planning Guidance on the suitability of developing land from the sub-division of existing house plots, either by infilling along a frontage or within areas of rear gardens (backland).
- 1.2 **This guidance is supplementary to policy HSG22 of the Woking Borough Local Plan** and should be considered by applicants and developers before submitting planning applications for the residential development of any subdivided house plot (The policy is set out in Appendix 1). The guidance will be applied flexibly having regard to the circumstances and other material considerations of each case. The Council will also use the guidance in helping to determine planning applications for housing developments on respective sites. However, additional criteria related to other housing policies must also be considered.
- 1.3 Infilling and rear garden development can provide a useful source of additional housing land but may not be considered favourably if it has a significant adverse impact on the character or amenity of existing housing areas. Although the comments in the guidance are based on conventional dual aspect dwellings, where appropriate, the use of innovative designs may assist in achieving a satisfactory site solution.
- 1.4 Compatibility with the character of existing residential areas will be particularly important within Conservation Areas, which have statutory protection in accordance with Local Plan Policy BE9.
- 1.5 A number of older established residential areas are also identified under Local Plan Policy HSG20 as Urban Areas of Special Residential Character. Additional supplementary planning guidance is available on this matter.

2.0 GENERAL POINTS

Plot Size

- 2.1 Building plots should normally be of similar size and shape to those prevailing in the immediate area, including the new plot and the area retained for the existing house curtilage. Plots must be sufficiently wide enough to site buildings of an appropriate frontage width and provide adequate visual separation between dwellings (see diagram following).

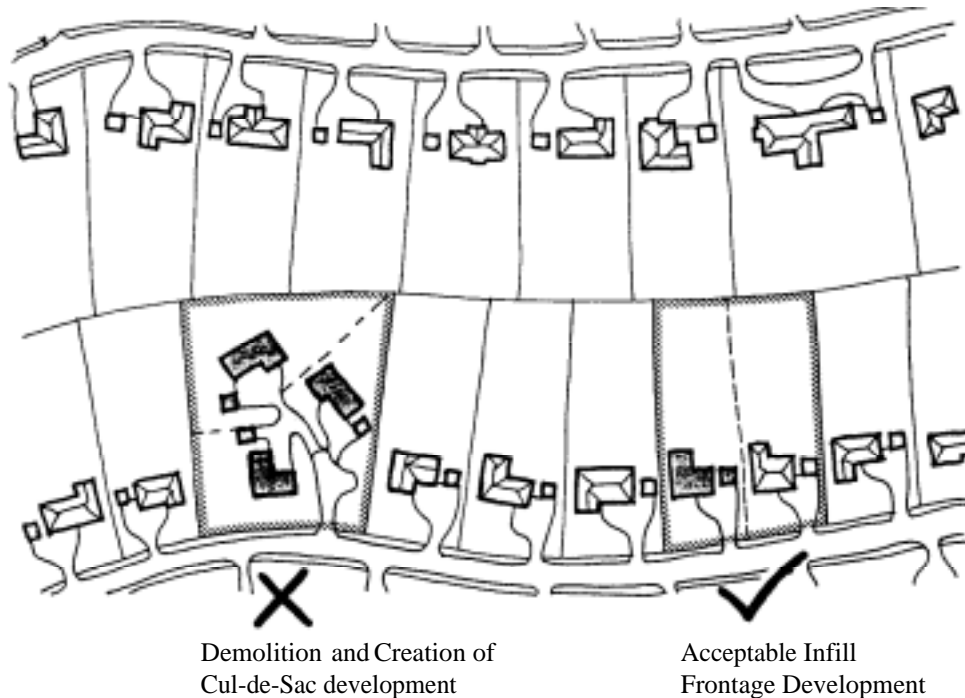


Building Size and Form

- 2.2 The height, form and extent of building proposed for each site should be similar to that prevailing in the street frontage, particularly for sites visible from the main street scene. Where there is an increase in the intensity of accommodation, consideration must be given to the visual impact of siting additional parking.

Layout

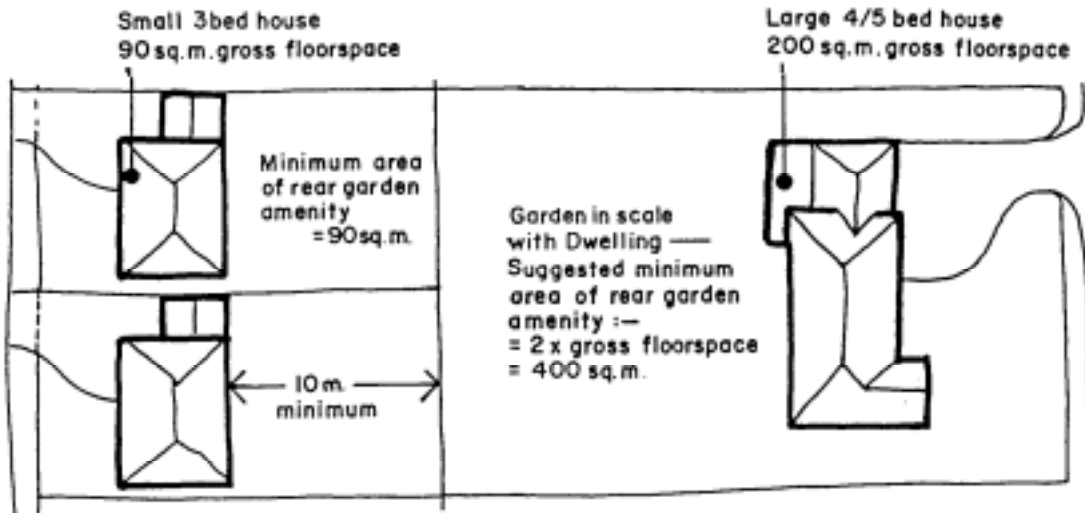
- 2.3 Site layout and building orientation should reflect those characteristic of the area, particularly in older established residential areas where traditional forms of frontage development prevail. In circumstances where a new cul-de-sac is being created, houses at the entrance should face the original road frontage to retain its appearance. Strict adherence to the form of layout will be required in the Urban Areas of Special Residential Character to maintain the appearance of the street scene.



Garden Amenity

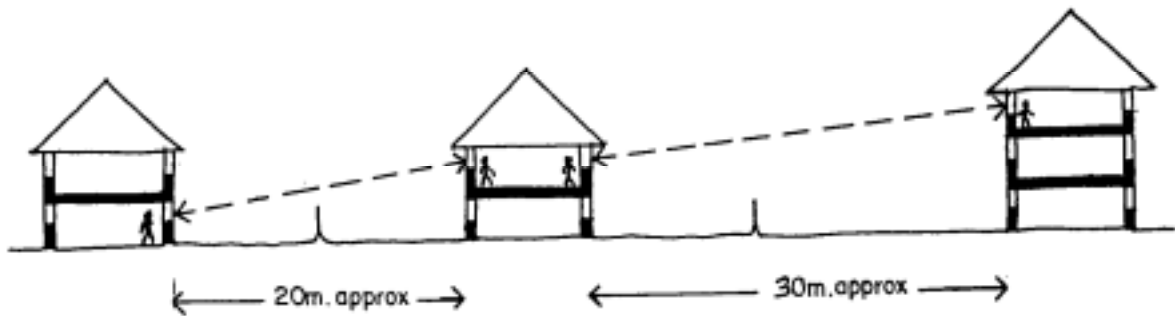
- 2.4 All dwellings designed for family accommodation need to provide a sunlit area of private garden amenity, suitable in size and shape for household recreational needs. Shared amenity areas may be appropriate for smaller types of accommodation such as flats and

elderly person accommodation. Although gardens should be in scale with the dwelling, it will usually be permitted to relax them for developments on central sites such as in the Town Centre or larger Village Centres. Further advice on garden amenity is set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on 'Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight'.



Privacy

- 2.5 Dwellings should be suitably spaced to prevent any direct overlooking of main habitable rooms from neighbouring housing (i.e. bedrooms, living rooms, and other main living accommodation). The use of high level windows or changes in the orientation of building aspect can also help to reduce problems of overlooking. Recommendations on the minimum spacing of one, two and three storey dwellings to prevent overlooking are set out in the Council's Supplementary planning Guidance on 'Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight'.

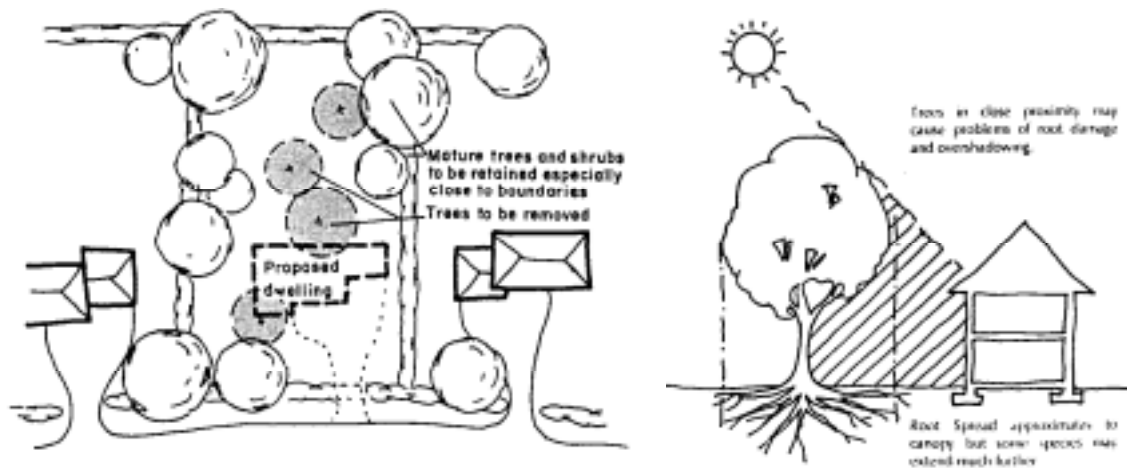


Privacy and Rear Gardens

- 2.6 Dwellings must be suitably positioned away from common boundaries to ensure that windows in principal elevations, above ground floor level, do not directly overlook the important areas of private amenity for adjoining houses.

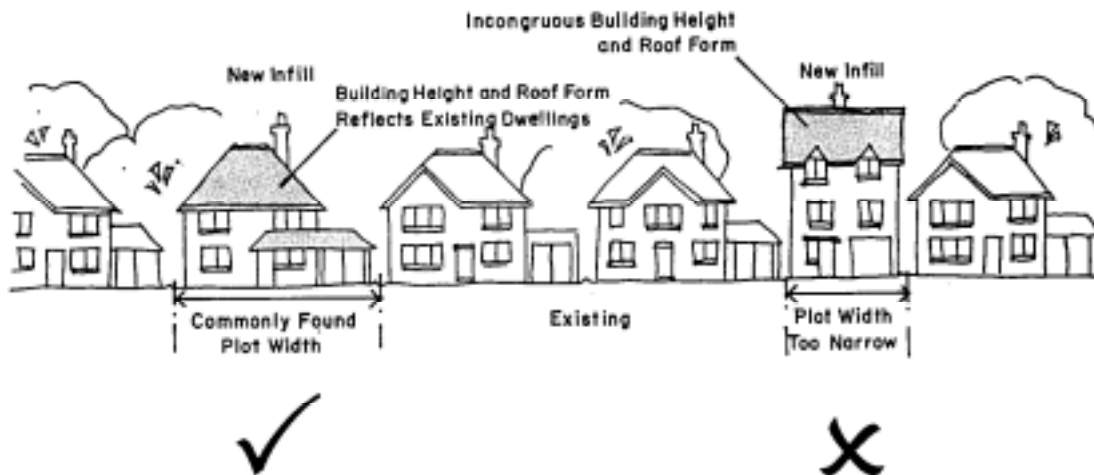
Trees and Hedges

- 2.7 Mature trees and hedges should be retained wherever possible, particularly along property boundaries or where they have high public amenity value or help maintain privacy. New houses should not be sited close to existing trees, as this may result in problems of overshadowing and root damage which can lead to pressure for the trees removal. Similarly it is advised that new trees are carefully sited to avoid these types of problem. Many trees which have high amenity value are protected by Tree Preservation Orders or by conditions of planning permissions.

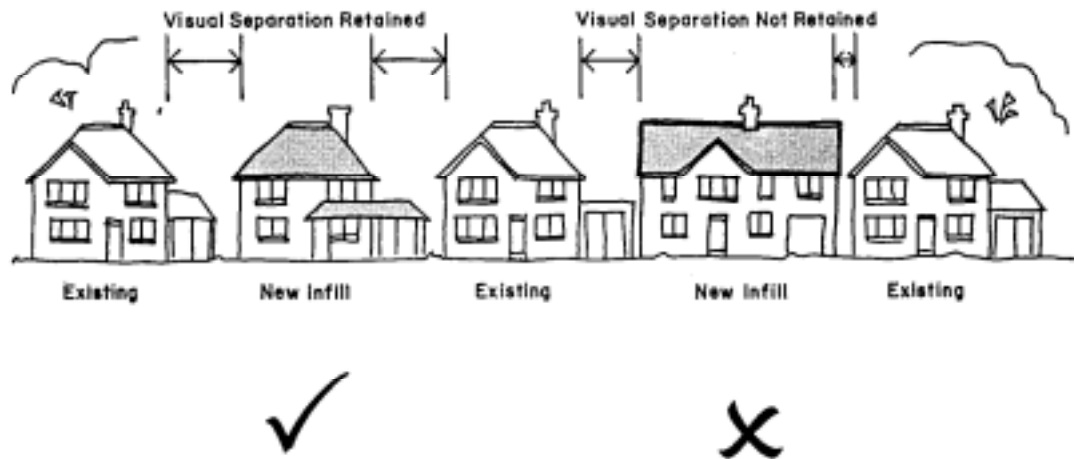


3.0 INFILLING

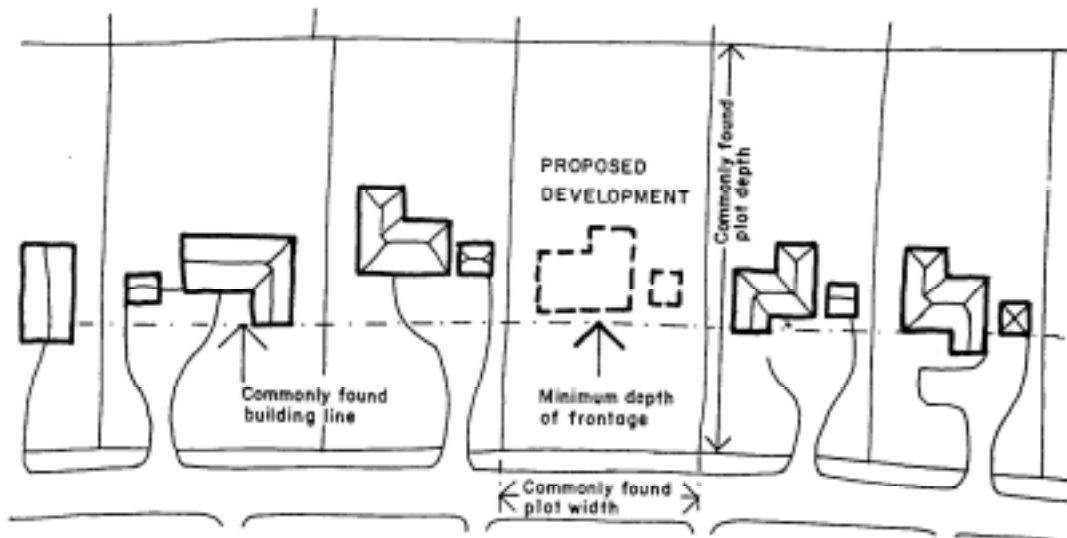
- 3.1 The width of building plots and the width of the proposed dwelling should be similar to that prevailing in the immediate street frontage. Building height and general roof form should reflect existing dwellings in the street .



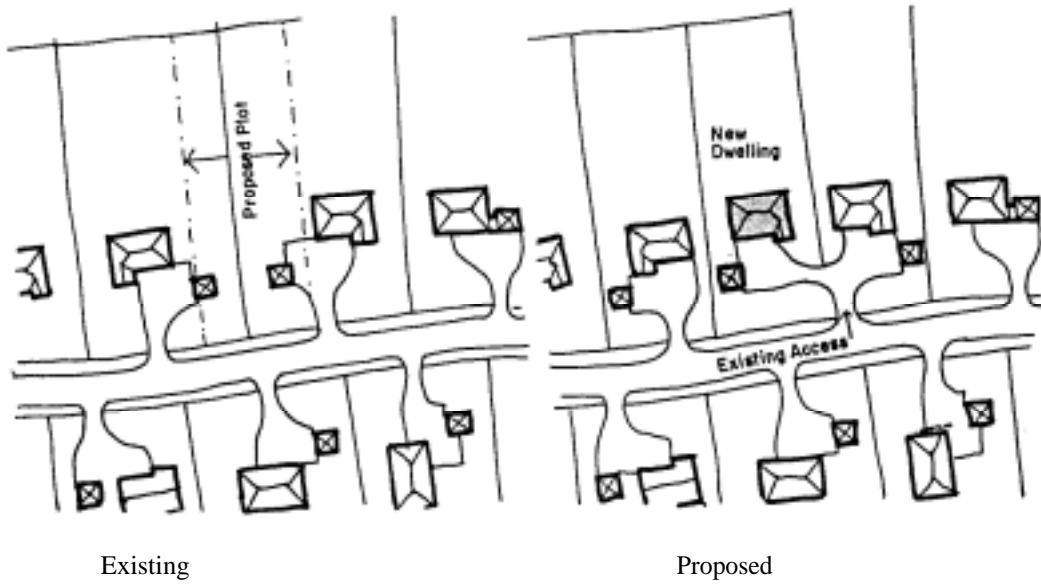
- 3.2 New developments must retain similar spacing between dwellings to that commonly found in the street frontage to maintain visual separation between dwellings. Single storey structures such as garages or kitchen extensions may have less impact on visual separation than two storey elements. A minimum separation distance of 1.0 metres will normally be required between a building and the site boundary where minimum standards are appropriate.



- 3.3 The prevailing depth of frontage should be maintained “where it is a significant feature of the area which contributes to the appearance of the street”. Where depths of frontage vary widely, the minimum depth of frontage should be similar to that of the shallowest adjoining plot.



- 3.4 Where possible, existing access arrangements should be used to serve new developments to maintain the appearance of the street frontage. It may be possible for new dwellings to share access drives.



- 3.5 Boundary treatment along the frontage should closely match that prevailing in the street scene, particularly where there are continuous hedges. Open frontages will not be permitted in streets where enclosed front boundaries prevail and vice versa.

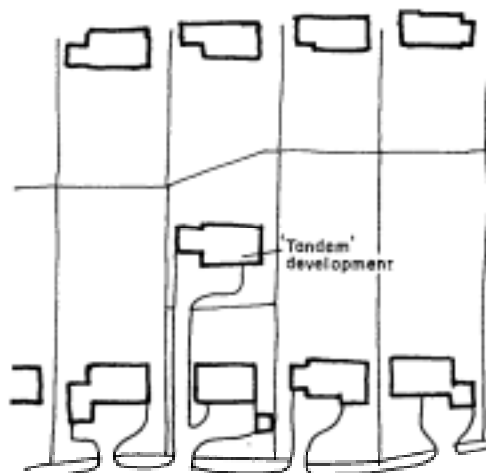


4.0 BACKLAND DEVELOPMENT

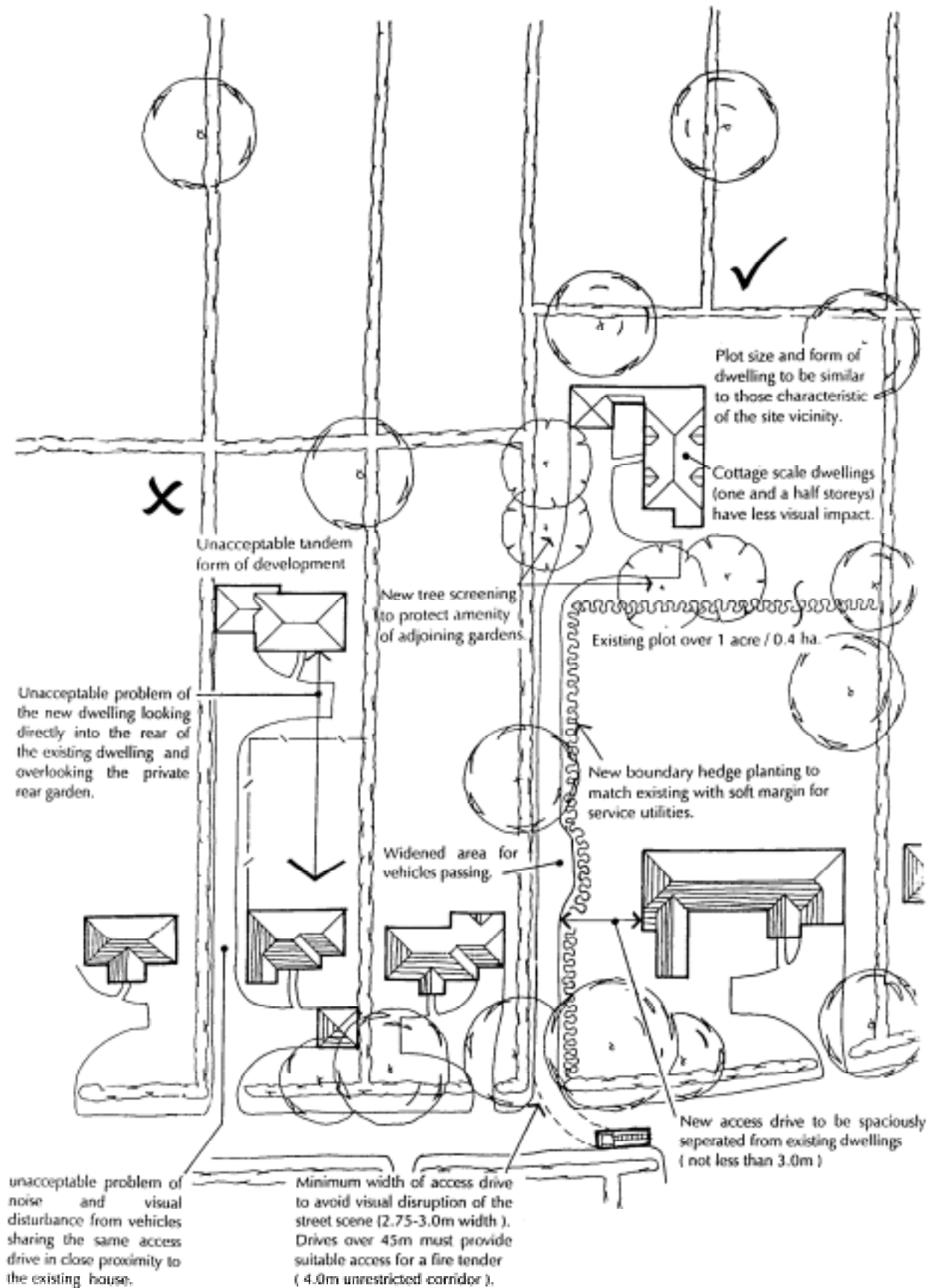
4.1 Backland developments which create multiple new access points in the existing road frontage will be discouraged. Access arrangements must be organised to avoid any adverse disruption to the appearance of the street scene. Where possible existing access positions should be used (see following page).



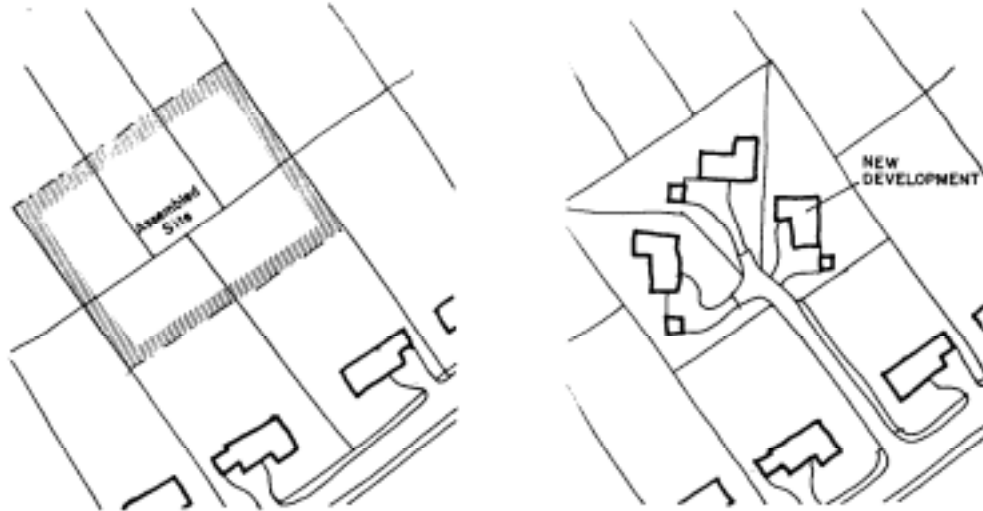
4.2 'Tandem' forms of development, where a new dwelling is placed immediately behind an existing dwelling, particularly when sited on smaller sized plots or sharing the same access, will not normally be permitted, because of problems of overlooking, noise disturbance, loss of amenity, cramping and adverse impact on the character of the area.



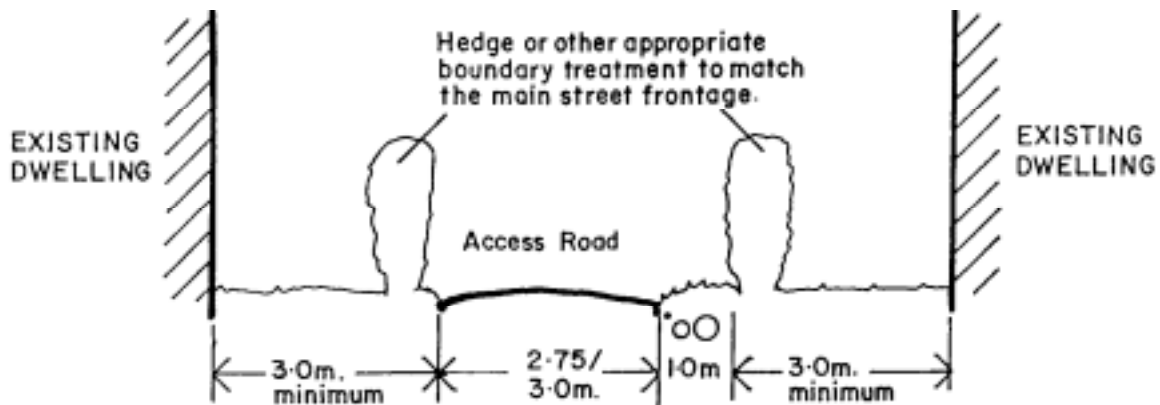
4.3 Exceptionally, on very large, individual plots, it may be possible to achieve sufficient separation between dwellings to overcome difficulties of overlooking noise disturbance and loss of amenity, to permit a further dwelling within the rear garden of an existing dwelling, providing that suitable access can be achieved. It is unlikely that a satisfactory two storey development could be achieved on a site less than 0.4ha/1acre to overcome these difficulties. Single storey dwellings or those with the second storey largely contained in the roof space may have less impact on amenity and privacy compared to conventional two storey dwellings. Buildings must be suitably sited away from common boundaries to ensure they do not have any adverse overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impact on important areas of private amenity to adjacent properties (see diagram on following page).



- 4.4 Where circumstances permit, it may be possible to assemble sufficient land from a number of adjoining rear gardens to enable a small group of houses to be developed. In this type of arrangement, such as around a small cul-de-sac or courtyard it should be possible to achieve conventional separation between public and private areas and safeguard any overlooking of accommodation or private amenity areas. It is unlikely that a development of less than 3 dwellings would be satisfactory in achieving this aim.

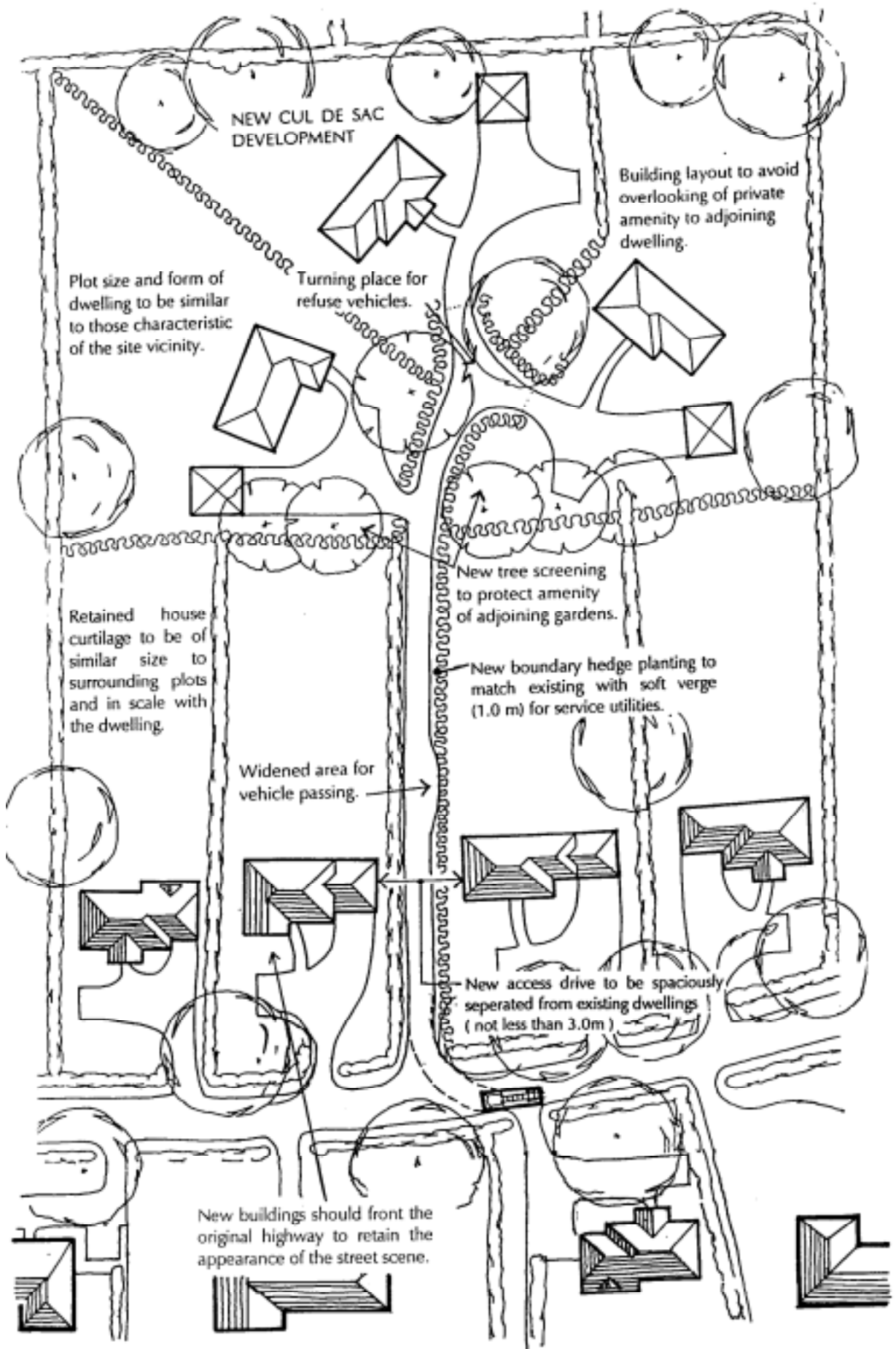


- 4.5 Access drives serving backland sites must be suitably located away from existing dwellings to avoid noise and visual disruption. It is suggested that a minimum separation of 3 metres should be provided together with screening by an appropriate boundary treatment to match that of the street frontage, to overcome these difficulties, although individual circumstances may require greater separation.



On long access drives, particularly those over 4.5 m where fire tender access is required, a 1.0 m grassed margin should be provided alongside the road surface to achieve a suitably wide access corridor and to site statutory services to the dwellings.

- 4.6 A 2.75 metre wide access drive is the minimum required to serve a development for up to 5 dwellings. Where the access drive exceeds 25 metres in length a wider access drive of 3 metres is required together with turning provision suitable for a refuse vehicle, unless alternative arrangements for refuse collection can be made. All drives over 36 metres in length must be suitable for use by service vehicles. It is imperative that access drives over 45 metres long are designed to provide access for a fire tender, with a minimum unrestricted corridor of 4.0m width and suitable turning clearance at the highway junction. Long access drives need to provide a widened section for vehicles to pass one another and include a narrow soft margin (minimum 1.0 m) for underground services (see diagram on the following page).



Backland Assembled to Form a Suitable Cul -De- Sac Development.

Appendix 1
Woking Borough Local Plan 1999 – Policy HSG22

HSG22 ii PLOT SUBDIVISION - INFILLING AND BACKLAND DEVELOPMENT

THE SUB-DIVISION OF EXISTING HOUSING PLOTS TO PROVIDE EITHER INFILL DEVELOPMENT ALONG A FRONTAGE OR REAR GARDEN DEVELOPMENT WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE ALL THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET:

- (i) THE EXISTING AND PROPOSED BUILDING PLOTS ARE OF A SUFFICIENT DIMENSION TO MEET THE CRITERIA SET OUT IN POLICY HSG19
- (ii) THE PROPOSED LAYOUT AND SPACING OF DWELLINGS REFLECTS THE PREVAILING PATTERN OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA AND DOES NOT RESULT IN ANY TANDEM FORM OF LAYOUT OR LOSS OF PRIVACY TO SURROUNDING RESIDENTIAL AMENITY LAND; (SEE ALSO POLICY HSG 21)
- (iii) ANY ACCESS ROAD INTO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT CREATE AN UNACCEPTABLE DISRUPTION TO THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE EXISTING ROAD FRONTAGE;
- (iv) ANY ACCESS ROAD OR PARKING AREA IS SUFFICIENTLY SEPARATED OR SCREENED FROM EXISTING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SO AS NOT TO ADVERSELY AFFECT THESE PROPERTIES THROUGH NOISE OR VISUAL INTRUSION;
- (v) THE DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT PREJUDICE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP ADJOINING LAND WITH SIMILAR POTENTIAL.

JUSTIFICATION

- 6.94 Infilling and backland development may be a useful source of land for additional housing supply but will not necessarily be considered favourably. Through successive developments the character of an area can be radically altered and may eventually result in cramped forms of development which greatly reduce the outlook and landscape amenity currently afforded to existing dwellings. The insertion of narrow or awkward access drives to serve land to the rear can greatly disrupt a street scene or affect adjoining properties through the noise or visual intrusion of traffic movements.
- 6.95 Where there is sufficient land to provide development to the rear of properties care should be taken in the design and layout to avoid any overlooking of existing properties or their gardens. Small groups of buildings which form informal culs-de-sac with a sense of place may provide an acceptable solution. “Tandem” development, involving the placing of one dwelling immediately behind another, will not be acceptable.