

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

# DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL GUIDELINES



# *Design and Development Control Guidelines*

## **Introduction**

Design and development control guidelines numbers 1 to 10 originally accompanied the 2004 Bexley Unitary Development Plan, of which some parts had been saved and remained extant until the adoption of the Bexley Local Plan in April 2023. Along with other extant supplementary planning documents, the guidelines were assessed and guideline numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 are considered to support Development Plan policies up until such time that they are replaced by new guidance.

Each planning application is considered on its merits having regard to the Development Plan and all material considerations and these guidelines should not represent any constraint on good design and individuality. Their purpose is to assist developers initiating development in Bexley to create well-designed and stimulating developments.

The guidelines will be taken into account when determining planning applications but in doing so, the Council will not expect rigid adherence to every guideline. Instead they will be used to judge whether there are any significant design or planning disadvantages to a scheme and whether these are so important individually or collectively as to justify refusal of planning permission.

In places reference is made to documents issued by the British Standards Institution. Further information can be found on the [BSI website](#).

## **2. EXTENSIONS TO HOUSES**

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### **2.1. Introduction**

- 2.1.1. Extensions to houses can be a useful way of extending the range of housing and help to provide a better mix of accommodation. However their construction, if not thoughtfully carried out, can lead to problems for adjoining householders and can contribute to a general decline in environmental standards.
- 2.1.2. The guidance is divided into two sections. The first section sets out the basic design principles. This is followed by detailed design guidance on a range of extensions most commonly proposed in the borough. It is not possible to anticipate and give guidance for every type of extension. When a particular application is not covered by the guidance, the basic design principles will still apply.

### **2.2. Principles**

- 2.2.1. In general extensions should be subordinate to the existing building. In addition:
- (1) the siting, design and external appearance should respect the character of the existing building and adjacent building;
  - (2) the development should not adversely affect the privacy and amenity of adjoining properties including daylight, sunlight and outlook; and
  - (3) the development should not result in over-development in terms of scale and mass, car parking and remaining amenity area.
- 2.2.2. In determining the impact of any proposal the Council will take into account:
- (1) the need to protect the privacy and amenities of adjoining house owners;
  - (2) the need to protect daylight and sunlight available to neighbouring properties and to the future occupiers of the development;
  - (3) massing and proximity to the property boundary and adjoining buildings and other siting considerations;
  - (4) the overall form, shape and proportions of the extension;
  - (5) the roof type, layout of doors, design and style of windows;
  - (6) the external materials and appearance;
  - (7) vehicle parking arrangements; and
  - (8) landscaping.
- 2.2.3. Privacy:
- (1) A proposed extension should not result in adverse effect on the privacy of adjoining householders.
  - (2) Where loss of privacy and/or overlooking may be a problem side windows which overlook an adjoining property should have high-level or obscure glazed windows. A high-level window is one with a sill height of at least 1.7 metres above floor level.
  - (3) An extension which proposes a flat roof for use as a balcony will normally be unacceptable on privacy grounds.

#### 2.2.4. Sunlight and daylight:

Extensions should be designed to avoid unacceptable loss of sunlight, ventilation and daylight to adjoining houses (or the building being extended). The dimensions for extensions for different types of dwellings set out later in this section have been chosen with this issue particularly in mind.

#### 2.2.5. Siting considerations:

- (1) The Council will take into account the extent to which any extension is visible by the public and its effect on the street scene.
- (2) Side extensions to corner houses or properties on prominent sites should have pitched roofs of a type to match the existing dwelling. Sight lines should not be obstructed.

#### 2.2.6. Form:

The design of extensions should recognise the principle that the extension should be an additional volume subordinate to the existing building. An extension should not make a dwelling less compliant with [Part M of the Building Regulations](#).

#### 2.2.7. Doors, windows and guttering:

- (1) The doors and windows of the extension should generally repeat the proportions, design, alignment and materials of the openings in the original dwelling.
- (2) Guttering on all extensions should be fixed in such a manner that it does not over-hang the boundary.
- (3) It is usually preferable for walls on or very close to the property boundary line not to have windows in them and, in any case, windows, where provided, should be fitted so that they cannot open over the boundary line.

#### 2.2.8. Roofs:

- (1) The height of any extension should not exceed the ridge height of the existing building.
- (2) The roof lines of the extension should generally be parallel to those of the existing building and eaves lines should generally follow through.
- (3) The roofs of new extensions should follow the pattern of the main roof and have the same angle of pitch.

#### 2.2.9. Materials and appearance:

- (1) The external materials of the extension should be in harmony with the materials of the existing building and character of the area.
- (2) The design of the extension should respect the style of the existing building.

#### 2.2.10. Vehicle parking and garages:

- (1) The Council will normally oppose the loss of on-site parking provision where this would be likely to cause additional on-street parking to the detriment of amenity or traffic flow.
- (2) Where a parking space is proposed to meet parking standards, it should wherever possible be sited behind the front main wall of the dwelling in order to protect residential amenity and the appearance of the street.

- (3) Where a garage is proposed to meet parking requirements, it should be sited so as to allow a minimum of 5.7 metres from the back edge of footpath to the garage door, with the exception of garages in rear gardens served by a rear accessway.
- (4) Detached garages in rear gardens or at the rear of any premises served by a rear access should be so sited that the doors do not open over the boundary of the site.
- (5) Where access is to be obtained to a garage or parking space, other than directly from the public highway, the occupiers of the premises should enjoy the right of access and the access-way should be adequate. The parking space or garage should additionally be positioned to permit vehicles to satisfactorily turn onto and off the access-way.

#### 2.2.11. Refuse and storage areas:

A bin enclosure to accommodate at least one dustbin per dwelling should be provided in a convenient location for collection. The provisions of BS5906:1980 and of [Part H4 of the Building Regulations](#) should be followed, as regards siting and carrying distances.

#### 2.2.12. Garden size:

Usable gardens are particularly important for family houses. Proposals should ensure that adequate garden and amenity space are maintained.

#### 2.2.13. Landscaping:

Proposed extensions should avoid the need to remove such features as healthy trees and established shrubbery. Where proposals involve the felling or lopping of existing trees and hedges, suitable new planting will be required.

### 2.3. Detailed design guidance

#### 2.3.1 Roof extensions:

- (1) Loft and roof space extensions should not normally exceed the ridge height of the existing building, or by reason of design or massing be detrimental to the form of the existing roof.
- (2) Roof extensions should, if possible, have dormer windows facing to the rear; dormers on the hipped side of a pitched roof should in general be avoided.
- (3) All roof extensions should be set back from the main wall of the dwelling on which they are proposed to avoid creating the appearance of an extra storey.

#### 2.3.2 Rear extensions:

- (1) On semi-detached and terraced houses, single storey extensions at the rear and on the boundary with the adjoining half of the property should not normally exceed 3.1 metres in height (to eaves level with pitched roofs) above existing ground level or 3.5 metres in depth from the rear of the property. Pitched roofs are preferable to flat roofs on single storey rear extensions provided that they do not affect neighbours' amenities unacceptably.
- (2) Two storey extensions should normally be avoided on terraced houses in view of adverse effects on adjoining properties. Where it is considered that there will be no adverse effects, two storey rear extensions may be acceptable on semi-detached houses but should be set in 2 metres from the common boundary with the attached property at first floor level. Exceptions to this guideline may be made in certain cases as follows:

- (a) where the property as originally constructed had a rear projecting nib on the boundary, the ridge of which exceeds the height of the first floor windows of the adjoining property; or
  - (b) certain houses built on the Stevens Estate in Welling classified as small Stevens houses and characterised by a single 6-pane round-bay window to each floor of the front elevation.
- (3) On converted dwellings or new build flatted developments, applications for ground floor rear extensions that are likely to affect the amenities of other flat occupiers will be resisted.

#### 2.3.3 Side extensions:

- (1) Single storey proposals to extend at the side of a property up to the site boundary and within the depth of the property will normally be acceptable providing that the design matches the existing house. With plots that have at least 4 metres between the flank wall of the dwelling and the site boundary, the extension should be set at least 1 metre from the boundary.
- (2) Two storey side or first floor extensions over existing accommodation should be designed to be subordinate to the main dwelling. Ideally this should incorporate a set-back of the front elevation of the extension. The roof plane of the extension should respect the roof plane of the original house, thereby lowering the ridge line.
- (3) New two storey side extensions on plots with at least 4m between the flank wall of the dwelling and the site boundary should be set in at least 1m from the boundary.

#### 2.3.4 Chalet extensions:

- (1) All extensions should complement and enhance the character and appearance of the street scene. Extensions should respect adjoining properties and pay particular regard to the integrity of design and 'balance' of the chalet pair. Extensions, which are over-dominant or detract from the original style or features of the chalet, should be avoided.
- (2) Extensions should be set back from the main front wall of the dwelling (except where this would conflict with guideline (1)). Hipped roof extensions should be set back a minimum of 0.5 metres and flat roof 'box' extensions by 2 metres.
- (3) First floor side extensions should normally be limited to a maximum overhang of 300 millimetres.
- (4) Single storey rear extensions between the common boundary and the kitchen nib should not extend beyond the depth of the original kitchen nib.

#### 2.3.5 Front extensions:

- (1) The design of porches and hall extensions should respect the style, character and massing of the existing building and should relate to the general street scene. Porches should not normally exceed 1.1m in overall depth and 2m in overall width.
- (2) Front extensions of a greater depth than a porch should normally be avoided. However, in certain special circumstances front extensions may be acceptable e.g. detached houses on large plots with substantial space around the dwelling and for houses in streets with irregular building lines. These should only be considered where the extension results in a positive townscape improvement and it respects the style and character of the original dwelling.

- (3) Front extensions will normally be resisted where they would encroach upon a vehicle hardstanding to the extent that a car parked on the hardstanding would be likely to overhang the public footway.

#### 2.3.6 Detached houses:

- (1) On large plots with substantial space around the dwelling, specific guidelines are not applicable, but any proposal should conform with the principles outlined in this guidance.
- (2) On smaller plots with small houses built to estate standards, proposals to extend need careful consideration to maintain the integrity and character of the original layout and design.

#### 2.3.7 Bungalows:

Proposals to extend bungalows should pay regard to the principles outlined in this guidance. Proposals which are likely to adversely affect the character and appearance of the dwelling will be resisted.

### **2.4. Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings**

- 2.4.1. Extensions can have a detrimental effect on the character of a building and cumulatively on the character of a whole area. Listed Buildings are particularly sensitive, and any alterations or extensions will require special consideration. Extensions to the principal façades, including roofs, will not normally be acceptable.
- 2.4.2. Although no general requirements can be laid down for development within Conservation Areas, the specific dimensions of proposals will be looked at carefully to ensure they fit in with the character of the Conservation Area in which they fall.

### **3. RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS**

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#### **3.1. Introduction**

- 3.1.1. Conversions to create flats or other residential accommodation help meet the demand for smaller housing units. The Council supports this contribution to the housing stock subject to these Design and Development Control Guidelines.

#### **3.2. Vehicle parking**

- 3.2.1. Wherever possible, parking should not be placed in the rear garden where this would be detrimental to the amenity of neighbours and cause significant loss of amenity space for future occupants.
- 3.2.2. Satisfactory vehicle crossovers, access and egress arrangements must be provided for parking spaces. Where more than two converted units are to be created a vehicle turning facility may be sought.
- 3.2.3. Parking areas should have appropriate landscape screening, and boundary treatment to protect the amenity of the adjoining area. The pedestrian route between the expected parking place and the exterior door serving the dwelling(s) should be designed and, where appropriate, lit with residents' safety in mind.
- 3.2.4. Where access is to be obtained to a garage or parking space other than directly from the public highway the occupiers of the premises should enjoy the right of access and the access way should be adequate. Access to parking will not normally be acceptable along rear access ways less than 4.2 metres wide. Parking spaces should be positioned to permit vehicles to satisfactorily turn onto and off the access way.
- 3.2.5. Parking in the front garden should only be included where the garden is large enough to maintain a proper boundary enclosure to the site with planting and soft landscaping to screen the parking. Normally only single width crossovers of minimum width 2.4m and maximum width 3.0m should be provided. Individual crossovers should not normally be closer than 5.0m apart between their central points.
- 3.2.6. Residential conversions should, in addition, have regard for the highway considerations contained in Design and Development Control Guideline No.5.

#### **3.3. Conservation Areas**

- 3.3.1. Conversions in and adjoining Conservation Areas should preserve or enhance the Conservation Area. External alterations to buildings should not adversely affect their character or design. The careful selection of appropriate compatible and matching materials will be particularly important in respect of works in Conservation Areas and on historic buildings. The use of UPVC and other modern materials for replacement windows, doors or cladding is unlikely to be suitable in such cases.
- 3.3.2. Vehicle parking in Conservation Areas should not detract from the front garden layout and boundary enclosure of the site.
- 3.3.3. The location of bin stores in the front gardens may be inappropriate in Conservation Areas.



### **3.4. Dwelling size and room size and internal arrangements**

- 3.4.1. Rooms should function comfortably and efficiently for their intended purpose. Size, shape, design, position of doors and windows, natural lighting and ventilation will be taken into account in assessing applications. Separate advice can be obtained from the Council's Development Control Section on room sizes that the Council considers appropriate in residential conversions.
- 3.4.2. Corridors should be at least 900 millimetres wide. Entrance lobbies should be adequate for occupiers to circulate freely. Impediments to safe movement around a dwelling caused by steep, narrow and winding staircases and ill-defined changes in level must be avoided.
- 3.4.3. Rooms should in general lead off a lobby or hallway. For example, sanitary areas, apart from en suite bathrooms, should be accessible off a common area and not solely through a bedroom.
- 3.4.4. Each flat should be self-contained with a separate lockable entrance.
- 3.4.5. Conversions should provide storage for portable items such as bicycles, prams and lawn-mowers.
- 3.4.6. Dwellings created should be free from any feature which prohibits the safe or unhampered passage of the occupants of the dwelling e.g. narrow steep or winding staircases, absence of handrails, inadequate landings outside of bedrooms, ill-defined changes in floor level.
- 3.4.7. Where a building is to be adapted as a space for living and creative activity, for instance with a commercial or retail element in addition to residential space, the Council may be willing to show some flexibility, particularly in a recognised town or Neighbourhood Centre or Secondary Employment Area, provided that the safety of future occupants or the amenities of nearby residents is not put at risk.

### **3.5. Extensions and external alterations**

- 3.5.1. These are subject to Design and Development Control Guideline No.2 for house extensions.

### **3.6. Refuse storage**

- 3.6.1. Bin enclosure to accommodate at least one dustbin per flat should be provided in a convenient location for collection. This should be designed and sited so that enclosures do not dominate the front garden and where possible should be screened by planting. The provisions of BS5906:1980 and of [Part H4 of the Building Regulations](#) should be followed, as regards siting and carrying distances.

### **3.7. Landscaping and amenity space**

- 3.7.1. Existing trees, hedges and front boundary walls, railings, fences should be retained and where necessary repaired.
- 3.7.2. Appropriate landscape screening, boundary treatment and pedestrian access should be provided. The safety and ease with which the access routes including shared stairways or passages can be used during the hours of darkness must be considered. Boundary treatments should be designed to relate well to the established street scene, to be maintained with ease and to offer some security and privacy to the future residents of a development.
- 3.7.3. External amenity space should be provided for all units within a conversion. Where it is not possible for the garden to be sub-divided, a communal amenity area must be provided for all of the units of accommodation.

### **3.8. Sound insulation and noise**

3.8.1. In considering whether a conversion proposal could lead to its residents experiencing a noise nuisance, Planning Officers will be guided by the advice of the Environmental Health Section. The following general principles will apply:

- (1) Dwellings should be designed so that living rooms in one dwelling are not created next to (vertically or horizontally) bedrooms in another dwelling (derivation BS8233). Vertical ducts should comply with the current standards within [Part E of the Building Regulations](#).
- (2) Walls and floors separating dwellings in converted properties must achieve adequate insulation from impact, airborne and flanking sound, so as to satisfy the current standards set by [Part E of the Building Regulations](#).

### **3.9. Conversions for special needs groups**

3.9.1. The conversion of a house to provide an annexe for a dependant or flats for people with special needs must be assessed for the long term impact of a change of use as well as the short term needs of the applicant. If the development is acceptable in principle, Section 106 obligations and conditions will be necessary to prevent over-development of a site, and to ensure that if circumstances change and the use ceases then the subsequent use is in accordance with current planning standards.

## 4. CONSIDERATE DESIGN FOR THE LESS AGILE

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### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1. The Council is keen to provide and encourage opportunities for all sections of the borough's population to have access to housing, jobs, community and recreational facilities. The Building Regulations were expanded in 1991 to take some account of the needs and abilities of people with impaired sight or hearing. Their coverage was further extended over the 1998-2004 period to cover the design of new dwellings and conversions that result in a property's use as a shop, institution, public building or hotel.
- 4.1.2. The purpose of these guidelines is to set out those particular aspects of design for the less agile to be taken into account by the Council when determining applications for planning permission. Considerate designs will be welcomed even in respect of projects to which the Building Regulations do not strictly apply, and applicants are invited to submit Access Statements (M) describing how the needs of people with various disabilities are going to be met or why a particular requirement of Part M cannot, in the applicant's view, be met.
- 4.1.3. As Building Regulation authority and through other licensing powers the Council can secure a degree of accessibility for less agile members of the community. The principles set out in [Part M of the Building Regulations](#) are binding in respect of projects defined in those Regulations. The following policy guidelines supplement rather than duplicate information already published within Part M. The guidelines are presented to aid and encourage good practice over and above the minimal requirements of the 1970 Act and the 2004 Building Regulations.
- 4.1.4. The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, as amended in 1976, requires most non-domestic developments to make provision, where practicable and reasonable, for the needs of disabled users (Section 4 of the Act refers). The Building Regulations 2000-2004 (Part M) set out statutory minimum standards (mostly dimensional) that govern the design of dwellings, offices, shops, factories, educational and cultural establishments, together with all other buildings to which the public is admitted (whether on payment or otherwise). Extensions to non-domestic buildings, or to dwellings built in accord with Part M of the Regulations with a ground floor element, should also meet or exceed the standards now set by these Regulations. A planned alteration to a dwelling must be carried out such that Part M compliance does not suffer. Likewise, an extension of a dwelling need not itself comply with Part M, but it must not render that dwelling less compliant with Part M.
- 4.1.5. Service providers and employers must have regard to their further obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, and supplementary regulations. Conformity with that legislation entails some reconfiguration of doorways, porches, lobbies, ramps, lifts and stairways together with internal furniture, signage and switches and, sometimes, alterations to management and staff performance to avoid discriminatory practices. Although these brief guidelines may assist readers in meeting the requirements of that Act, that is not their purpose and they tend to concentrate on works likely to need planning permission. Please contact the [Disability Rights Commission](#) for more comprehensive advice as to the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act and how these may affect any business or voluntary organisation.
- 4.1.6. The Council recognises that the national and regional context within which this guideline has been prepared has changed significantly. It is likely that this Guideline will therefore need some

revision in the near future to reflect changing national expectations, community views and regional experience.

## 4.2 Approach and surroundings

- 4.2.1 Unless the approach to a building is safe, comfortable, well-maintained and easy to use it is likely to deter a proportion of potential users. Less agile individuals, for example, children, wheelchair riders, pregnant women, those moving luggage or bulky goods, and all with impaired sight or mobility, will particularly appreciate obstacle-free, firm, clear approaches to a building. The following aspects of a planning proposal will be considered by the Council. Those marked (M) are also addressed in the Building Regulations.
- 4.2.2 The width, surface treatment and gradients of ramps and paths. Raised path edges are helpful to cane users. Slippery surfaces or crossfall gradients above 2.5% (1 in 40) ought to be avoided. (M)
- 4.2.3 Adequate level platforms where users can pause or draw breath above and between flights of stairs or sections of ramp. (M)
- 4.2.4 Alternative stepped approaches, the visibility of step edges and the use of ridged paving within 800mm of the top of a flight of steps. Open risers and treads shorter than 280mm must be avoided and risers 150 to 170mm high are desirable. Where treads taper, their width should be measured 270mm from the narrower end. (M)
- 4.2.5 Kerbs and grippable firm handrails alongside steps and ramps are vital and should continue 300mm beyond the lowest and highest risers (M). Low-level handrails can assist and protect children.
- 4.2.6 Suitable benches and/or support rails in locations where waiting or queuing can be expected. Seats some 400-500mm above ground level with arm rests are preferable and will be usable by more individuals.
- 4.2.7 The limited and meaningful use of bollards in logical rather than haphazard arrangements.
- 4.2.8 Designs that prevent carelessly parked vehicles (and their doors) from blocking prime approach or escape routes, i.e. reducing the available width of a path below 900mm.
- 4.2.9 Space should be provided within vehicle parking areas for rear and side transfers between wheelchairs and cars or light vans (M). Hatched areas 1.2 metres wide between standard bays marked and signed with the wheelchair symbol (defined in BS 8300) may be appropriate. One side transfer space can serve two parking bays.
- 4.2.10 Designs should avoid nuisances such as overhanging branches, signs, blinds, canopies, awnings, flues or casement windows within 2.1 metres of a walking surface or cycleway, in the interests of safety. Where a path runs closely alongside a building even outward-opening doors can constitute a hazard and surface changes or guardrails may be desirable (M). Surface variations in colour or texture can also alert blind and partially-sighted pedestrians to imminent hazards such as traffic, overhanging obstacles and the underside of ramps and stairs.
- 4.2.11 Where appropriate, space should be provided for prams, push-chairs or cycles to be left or padlocked, preferably with a degree of shelter.

- 4.2.12 Dropped kerbs no steeper than 6% (1 in 17) are recommended wherever necessary, including consideration for passers-by not needing to enter a site, perhaps having to cross a private road or driveway.
- 4.2.13 Drainage slots should be aligned across the main direction of pedestrian movement and be no wider than 13mm to prevent wheels or canes from becoming trapped.

### 4.3 External equipment

4.3.1 Automatic facilities outside banks or kiosks can often speed-up transactions. Card-operated machines will be more convenient to some disabled users, including wheelchair riders, than coin-operated equipment. The following guidelines address these issues:

- (1) Alarm buttons or handles, bell-pushes, petrol pump, entry phone, cash dispenser, ticket or stamp machine control-buttons and card-slots should generally be within 1170mm of the level surface providing access for users, so that they are within the reach of wheelchair riders.
- (2) At filling stations, the design and layout of pumps, islands, forecourts, shops, counters and car-wash controls deserve particular care, the aim being to enable safe and confident use by wheelchair-using motorists. Dropped kerbs will be necessary between the forecourt and the cash desk/shop/kiosk areas of a filling station. Where designs prevent easy access, an intercom system should be installed so that customers can alert staff to their particular needs when parked next to any petrol pump.
- (3) Specialised services for people with disabilities may be secured with a RADAR lock ([Disability Rights UK](#)). All such locks can be operated by people issued with a standard RADAR key.

4.3.2 Outdoor seating areas, for example at sports or other leisure facilities, need to be designed with consideration for the needs of children, wheelchair users and other less agile individuals in mind. Again, [Part M of the Building Regulations](#) and BS8300 include useful advice and Sport England or a regional arts organisation might be able to suggest other facilities where design solutions can be inspected. Remember that some wheelchair users will want to transfer to a fixed seat during the course of a match or performance and that many will want to sit where they can talk easily to a relative or companion. Forced segregation would not represent considerate design. A number of removable seats can add flexibility to a grandstand, auditorium or dining area, enabling extra wheelchair riders to be easily accommodated. Allowance should also be made for people of large stature.

### 4.4 The entrance to a building

- 4.4.1 The principal entrance to a building is crucial in establishing its image in the mind of its users. Difficulty experienced at this entrance may quickly deter further exploration. The Building Regulations are fairly thorough on the matter of entrances and lobbies. They state quite plainly that alterations to non-domestic buildings should never reduce the accessibility or usefulness of an existing building to people with disabilities. When a building is being extended, the chance to remove barriers to movement in the original building, or relocate functions to a ground floor, is often worth taking. Such intentions can reasonably be included in a submitted Access Statement (M). A few other issues are highlighted in these guidance notes.
- 4.4.2 Clear doorway widths above 800mm are important. Broad single doors (subject to weight considerations) will generally be preferred to a pair of double doors neither of which allows room for wheelchair use (M). Designs must permit wheelchair users to safely operate a door.

The Building Regulations (M) indicate how doors should be offset in narrow gangways, porches or corridors to allow diagonal movement through the doorway by a self-propelled wheelchair-user. Where wheelchair riders are expected to close doors behind them, or generally be steered by others, then corridors should be wider than those illustrated in the Part M document as meeting minimum standards.

- 4.4.3 Powerful door-closers (having a pressure above 20 newtons, or 15 newtons if a fire door in a building with overnight accommodation) should be avoided, as should all but the largest models of revolving doors (M). Door-holders wired into a fire alarm circuit are a recommended option since these keep a door in the open position unless the alarms are triggered; delayed-action door closers are another alternative.
- 4.4.4 Thoughtfully placed glazed panels within a door will ensure that oncoming pedestrians, including children, are open to view (M). If plate glass dominates doors, facades or partitions, it should meet safety standards that are elaborated in Part N of the Regulations, in particular some form of signing at both adult and children's eye level is advisable. Glazing should not extend to within 380mm of any door threshold since this area may suffer impact damage from foot-rests, pushchairs or trolleys.
- 4.4.5 Door handles should be easy to hold, rounded with good leverage, be robust, conspicuous and set some 900 -1040 mm above the door threshold. Clearances of 50 mm or more are necessary between the handle and vertical surfaces (i.e. the door and its jamb). Where possible, users should be able to push a door instead of pulling it towards them.
- 4.4.6 The use of surfaces that contrast with each other in brightness and texture should form part of an integrated decorative scheme that enables people to use the facilities independently and indicates potential hazards. Contrasts in brightness are more important than colour variations in helping visually impaired people distinguish between different surfaces and appreciate the scale and function of various spaces and rooms. High gloss finishes and abnormally vibrant colour schemes should generally be avoided where visual perception is important.
- 4.4.7 The chance of water penetration beneath an external door will be reduced where a porch, canopy or overhanging eaves provides shelter and ground surfaces are laid with care to avoid ponding. Thresholds below 15 mm with curved nosings are required (M). Gradients steeper than 5% (1 in 20) should be treated as ramps with appropriate kerbs and handrails (M).
- 4.4.8 Entrance routes obviously act as escape routes in times of emergency and some doorways will function specifically as points of egress. Designers must anticipate that some disabled people will be assisted in leaving the building. Some occupants may clearly be injured by an incident that triggers the need to evacuate and they too will need help in using stairs or suitable lifts. Parts of larger buildings may therefore need to be designed as “refuges” where people may wait in relative safety during a staged evacuation.

#### **4.5 An integrated approach**

- 4.5.1 The design of the exterior environment should be well integrated with the design of the interior of a building. Consistent attention to these matters will cater for all sections of the community and demonstrate ‘Inclusive Design.’
- 4.5.2 To achieve this, a Design and Access Statement be submitted with a planning application. This statement, it is anticipated, will evolve through the consent process, to include both the exterior of the building and its surroundings as well as internal layout.

#### **4.6 Further design guidance**

- 4.6.1 There are many matters of detailed design of buildings and public places, which are important to people with disabilities. Reference to British Standard BS8300 is strongly recommended. A qualified Access Auditor may be located using the [National Register of Access Consultants](#).
- 4.6.2 Aspects to be covered by this additional advice include baby or child care facilities; bathroom design (e.g. in nursing homes or hotels); canopies above walkways or entrance doors; changing rooms (in shops, theatres or sports halls); gardens and lounges in sheltered housing schemes; the attributes of lifts; sites for picnics, fishing or other casual recreation; restaurant seating; and waiting rooms.

## **5. HIGHWAYS CONSIDERATIONS IN DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**

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### **5.1 Introduction**

- 5.1.1 Detailed guidelines on highway design for residential, industrial, retail, commercial and other developments are available as a separate document entitled "Supplementary Development Control Guidelines (1) - Development Affecting Highways," published in January 1992.
- 5.1.2 The purpose of these guidelines is to set out a broad range of issues that will need to be taken into account by the local planning authority when determining applications for planning permission which affect the highway. It is not an authoritative interpretation of the law or regulations and, in cases of doubt or difficulty, it is advisable to seek the views of the Council's Transport Planning Division in the early stages of design.

### **5.2 Road hierarchy**

- 5.2.1 The creation of a road hierarchy is necessary to establish layout principles which influence speed and safety conditions compatible with the accessibility and use of the road. To encourage the correct use, limitations are imposed upon the type of access allowed from each road. For these purposes, the local roads category is subdivided into major access roads, minor access roads, access ways, mews courts, housing clusters, private drives, cycleways and industrial roads. The various road types are explained below.
- 5.2.2 **London Distributor Roads (Type 1)** are the most important traffic roads except for the Strategic Roads (the A2 and A20 in Bexley). The purpose of London Distributor Roads is to provide a link between Strategic Roads. Where access to London Distributor Roads is required, an assessment of the impact of generated traffic from a development on that London Distributor Road should be carried out. This will assist in determining the viability of the road network to cater for the additional traffic as well as the type of junction necessary between the London Distributor Road and the development access.
- 5.2.3 **Borough Distributor Roads (Type 2)** are mostly routes which distribute traffic within residential and industrial areas. They form links between London Distributor Roads and other residential roads.
- 5.2.4 **Major access roads (Type 3)** are defined as loop or link roads or cul-de-sacs, which serve as an access for up to 300 dwellings. Where a development is likely to serve more than 300 dwellings, it is more appropriate to be served from a Type 2 or Type 1 road.
- 5.2.5 **Minor access roads (Type 4)** are loop roads or cul-de-sacs, which serve as an access for up to 100 dwellings.
- 5.2.6 In a few particular circumstances, consideration will be given to **access ways (Type 5)** of a shared surface type, where equal provision is made for pedestrians and vehicles. These are link roads to lower road types or cul-de-sacs serving up to 30 dwellings. In order to emphasise the change between a normal highway with footways and a shared surface, it is recommended that a ramped entry to these roads is constructed.
- 5.2.7 Shared surfaces are generally not suitable in areas where dwellings have a number of elderly people or those with poor sight or hearing. In order to relieve the anxiety of such road users, in such situations a footway of width 1.8m is recommended on at least one side of the road.



- 5.2.8 **Mews courts (Type 6)** are cul-de-sacs within medium and high density urban development which serve up to 20 dwellings. They are normally shared surface type developments and traffic speeds should be kept very low. Access into mews courts should be via a ramped entry.
- 5.2.9 **Housing clusters (Type 7)** are cul-de-sacs within medium and high density urban development, often terraced accommodation surrounding a parking area. These should serve up to 20 dwellings from an access via a ramped entry.
- 5.2.10 **Private drives (Type 8)** are private accesses serving up to 3 dwellings from an access via ramped entry.
- 5.2.11 **Cycleways (Type 9)** are routes for use by pedal cyclists. They may be totally dedicated for use by cyclists or they may be shared with pedestrian routes. Further information can be found in 'Road and Traffic in Urban Areas' and 'Design Bulletin 32' (second edition).
- 5.2.12 **Industrial roads (Type 10)** are access roads for industrial developments. These are dealt with in more detail in Section 5.6.
- 5.2.13 Details of the road geometry and junction design requirements applying to each road type are contained in "Development Affecting Highways."

### 5.3 Access to borough roads

The provision of vehicular access should be in accordance with the following standards.

#### 5.3.1 London Distributor Roads:

There will be a general presumption against vehicular access to the London Distributor Roads listed in Appendix A to this guideline. Limited access to other London Distributor Roads may be approved if:

- (1) there is no alternative access available;
- (2) a turning area of approved standard can be provided within the property; and
- (3) all of the requirements for the provision of vehicular access on other roads are met.

#### 5.3.2 All other roads:

The following requirements for the provision of vehicular access apply:

- (1) its position in relation to bends, junctions, sightlines and other features on the road should not create a hazard likely to lead to an accident;
- (2) a minimum hardstanding of dimensions 4.8m long and 2.4m wide should be available within the curtilage of the property in such a way that no part of the parked vehicle need overhang the highway in contravention of the Highways Act; and
- (3) sightlines should be provided for pedestrians and drivers to see each other and to ensure that a vehicle is not driven blindly onto the footway. Such sightlines should be a minimum of 2.4m x 2.4m between the vehicle hardstanding and the back of the footway. Within this sightline envelope no structure or landscaping should exceed 0.6m in height except individual items less than 0.45m wide, such as lamp columns.

### 5.4 Provision for pedestrians

- 5.4.1 **Footways** (i.e. footpaths next to roads) will provide for the greater part of pedestrian movement. Footpath links should be provided where the circuitous roads required for the control of speed

would otherwise inconvenience shoppers, children going to school, postmen, newspaper deliveries etc. Such links should be short and overlooked by windows nearby. Longer footpaths raise security problems and should be avoided unless direct, likely to be busy and overlooked. There should be no places of concealment and any planting should be chosen to preserve good forward visibility. Overhead lighting should provide security at night.

- 5.4.2 Footpaths will normally be adoptable only when they link highways, or where they link a highway to a major public amenity. Footways will usually be adopted if the carriageway is adopted.

## **5.5 Parking**

- 5.5.1 Applicants should make provision within their development site for car parking. This guidance applies even where the floorspace of buildings is not being altered and the application is for a change of use.
- 5.5.2 Parking spaces should not normally be part of the adoptable highway and should be located such that routes between the spaces and dwelling entrances are shorter and more convenient to use than would be the case if parking were on carriageways.

## **5.6 Industrial developments**

- 5.6.1 The design and layout of industrial developments require careful consideration. Such developments need to cater for large vehicles for manoeuvring, delivery and parking. Guidance on providing suitable layout and design for industrial developments is contained within [Roads and Traffic in Urban Areas](#) (RUTA).
- 5.6.2 The manoeuvrability of heavy goods vehicles depends upon their size, whether they are rigid bodied or articulated, the number of axles and the skills and judgement of the driver. Although some manufacturing processes employ specialist vehicles with manoeuvring characteristics that can be translated directly into a design, the majority of industrial estates will involve a range of vehicle types and sizes. Most designs will operate satisfactorily if they can cope with the requirements of a 15.5m long, articulated vehicle and a 10m long, rigid vehicle. In general, articulated vehicles are more manoeuvrable than the equivalent sized rigid vehicle because the radius of the inner swept path described by the rear axle(s) is much less. However, in designing turning areas for industrial vehicles, the types of vehicles expected to predominate should be the major consideration. Typical turning areas for heavy goods vehicles are shown in RTUA.
- 5.6.3 In many industrial areas, vehicles or trailers are required to be left overnight. They cannot be left on adopted highways, as they are subject to a night-time lorry parking ban. Apart from the areas reserved for deliveries, it may be possible to utilise the car parking spaces as overnight parking for goods vehicles. The layouts of these should still permit some car parking to take place and should be marked in a different colour to the car parking layout.

## Appendix A

### Provision of vehicular access to London Distributor Roads

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There will be a general presumption against vehicular access to the London Distributor Roads listed below:

- A2016 Eastern Way, Thamesmead
- A2016 Bronze Age Way, Belvedere
- A2016 Bronze Age Way, Erith
- A206 Queens Road, Erith
- A206 South Road, Erith
- A206 Northend Road, Erith
- A206 Thames Road, Crayford
- A207 Albion Road, Bexleyheath
- A207 London Road, Crayford
- A207 Crayford Road (part between London Road and Roman Way)
- A207 Roman Way, Crayford
- A2000 Perry Street, Crayford
- A2000 Crayford High Street, Crayford
- A221 Kestlake Road, Bexley
- A223 Bourne Road, Crayford
- A223 Bourne Road, Bexley
- A223 Bexley High Street, Bexley
- A223 Southwold Road, Bexley
- A223 North Cray Road, Bexley
- A223 North Cray Road, Sidcup
- A2018 Vicarage Road, Bexley
- A2018 Dartford Road, Bexley

## **7. DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR SHOPFRONTS AND ADVERTISEMENTS**

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### **7.1. Introduction**

7.1.1. The attractiveness and character of shopping areas owes much to well-designed shop fronts and advertisements. The Council's desire is to improve the appearance of shopping areas.

- (1) To provide a consistent basis for considering applications for the installation of shop fronts and advertisements in the borough.
- (2) To ensure that shop fronts harmonise with and enhance the character of buildings of which they form part and to raise the overall image of the borough's shopping areas.
- (3) To improve the attractiveness, accessibility and commercial benefits of new or replacement shop fronts.
- (4) To ensure advertisements are not visually intrusive.
- (5) To have regard to the effects of proposed or existing advertisements on public safety and amenity.

7.1.2. Further design advice regarding access by less agile customers is available in Design and Development Control Guideline No. 4.

### **7.2. Shopfront design advice**

7.2.1. Fascia:

- (1) The fascia should not be overlarge in relation to the building façade and the shopfront, otherwise the fascia becomes discordant and out of scale.
- (2) Common fascia lines should be respected to create an attractive street scene and ensure a shopfront retains its balance and proportion. Variations in fascia depth from one store to another should be avoided, particularly in terraced parades.
- (3) Shopfronts should avoid destroying the building rhythm. Proposals which attempt to unify adjacent premises should emphasise the discontinuities of individual shops between fascia and by the retention or incorporation of pilasters.

7.2.2. Pilasters:

Ornate pilasters should be retained intact whenever possible and should not be removed, damaged or refaced unless they are in a poor condition and in this case only materials or repainting in character with the rest of the building will be allowed.

7.2.3. Windows and doors:

- (1) The design of shop windows and doors should reflect the features and proportions of the building's exterior, particularly in older premises.
- (2) Where doors giving access to upper floor premises exist their design and finish should be considered in any redesign of the shopfront.
- (3) Windows should retain stall risers which add to the character of the property and the surroundings.

- (4) All shop doorways should be easily accessible by all shop users. Proposals should pay regard to the advice in the Council's Design Guideline No. 4 on 'Considerate Design for the Less Agile.'

#### 7.2.4. Materials:

- (1) Schemes should not employ a large number of different materials or use materials likely to clash with those of adjoining premises or the street scene in general.
- (2) Advice on the use of materials in section 7.4.3 is generally applicable throughout the borough and will always be a material consideration within Conservation Areas and on buildings of architectural or historic interest.

#### 7.2.5. Ventilation:

- (1) Natural ventilation from opening casements, decorative grilles or the fanlight is preferable. Where there is no alternative, mechanical fans may be acceptable. They should be located in unobtrusive positions and avoid creating a noise nuisance to nearby residential property.

#### 7.2.6. Security:

- (1) Security measures should be effective but their impact on the appearance of the shop and the street scene in general needs to be considered.
- (2) Mesh grilles (both internal and external) are preferable to solid shutters which look bleak and may attract graffiti. These will normally only be allowed where the shop is open-fronted or where special security considerations apply or vandalism is a proven problem. Account will be taken of national advice such as that included in [Circular 5/94 Planning Out Crime](#).
- (3) Grille boxes should be concealed, and their projection minimised behind the main fascia, or, if this is not practicable, colour finished to tone with the fascia or window frame.

#### 7.2.7. Burglar and fire alarms:

The shopfront should be kept tidy by mounting these in unobtrusive positions. Further advice on the installation of any security measures can be obtained from Circular 5/94.

#### 7.2.8. Blinds and canopies:

- (1) Blinds and canopies should enhance both the shop itself and the street scene.
- (2) Blinds and canopies should suit the style of the frontage and relate to the form of the shop unit itself.
- (3) Large or long stretches of canopy which overwhelm a building, or the street scene should be avoided.
- (4) Blinds, canopies and their supporting brackets should not project within 2.1m of footway level.

Note that planning permission and air space licences may be necessary for fixed canopies.

#### 7.2.9. Upper floors:

- (1) Alterations to their appearance may require planning permission. Changes which detract from the appearance or character of the building will normally be resisted. Signs at first floor level will not normally be permitted with the exception of modest signwriting on window glass.

### 7.3. Advertising and illuminated signs

#### 7.3.1. General:

- (1) The erection of signs may need a separate application under the Advertisement Regulations. In addition to the guidance, the Council may seek the removal of unsightly advertisements or signs which are likely to affect public safety or amenity under the Advertisements Regulations.

Clear and effective advertising makes commercial sense and contributes to an attractive street scene. The main advertising area will be the fascia board and window display of goods at ground floor level in the 'Area of Change' (see Diagram below).

- (2) Advertising on the building above the 'Area of Change' will not normally be allowed. Exceptions to this may include hand painted pub signs, and traditional ornamental signs.

#### 7.3.2. Illuminated signs:

Individually illuminated or halo lit letters are often preferable to an evenly illuminated box. Darker background colours are easier to read and preferred to white, opal or yellow backgrounds.

- (1) The intermittent lighting of illuminated advertisements will be resisted on the grounds of amenity and public safety. Traffic signal colours are particularly inappropriate where they may be a distraction to traffic.
- (2) Brightly lit signs can have a detrimental effect on the surrounding area particularly on residential accommodation. The surface brightness of illuminated advertisements should not exceed the following levels:
  - (a) 700 candelas/m<sup>2</sup> in Major and District Centres;
  - (b) 350 candelas/m<sup>2</sup> in Local and Neighbourhood Centres and residential areas.

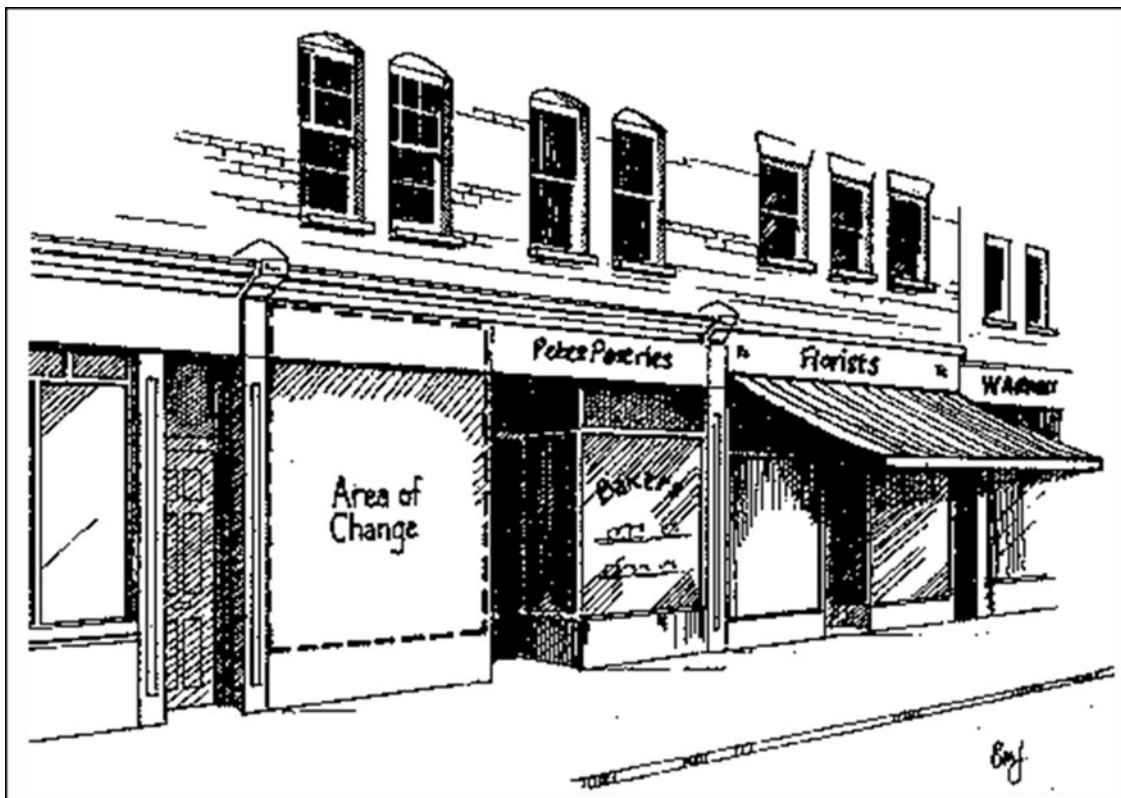


Figure 1: Depiction of 'Area of Change' set out in paragraph 7.3.1 above

#### 7.3.3. Projecting signs:

- (1) Only one per shop is normally acceptable. They should be positioned on the fascia wherever possible rather than on the pilasters and should be no deeper than the fascia.

#### 7.3.4. Advertisements in non-retail areas:

- (1) Signs should be simple and few and have regard to clarity and the townscape.
- (2) Advertising signs should not distract motorists. On main roads or junctions, behind traffic signals or within visibility splays, or where traffic is heavy, advertising signs need to be fewer than in pedestrian areas and may be refused on grounds of road safety. Traffic signal colours should not be used on advertisements, where they could prove a distraction or create confusion. Applicants are advised to contact the Engineering Department for further details concerning their proposal.

#### 7.3.5. Advertisement hoardings:

- (1) Large hoardings will generally be opposed except where required for a temporary period to screen vacant sites, unsightly premises and building or demolition works.
- (2) Large hoardings will not normally be allowed in locations where they could distract pedestrians or motorists to a degree that could adversely affect public safety; where the amenity of neighbouring residential properties is likely to be affected; or where they would be an intrusive element in an historic townscape or areas of high amenity value.

#### 7.3.6. Free-standing advertisements:

- (1) The Council will not normally permit free-standing advertisements or other displays to be sited on the public highway or attached to highway structures unless it is satisfied that they will not prejudice the free flow and safety of pedestrians and vehicular traffic and character and appearance of buildings and the street scene generally.
- (2) Advertisements on the private forecourts should not be illuminated or exceed 4.5m<sup>2</sup> in aggregate surface area and should be located with due regard to the factors outlined in section 7.3.6 (1) above.

### **7.4. Conservation Areas and buildings of architectural interest**

#### 7.4.1. General:

- (1) Shopfronts are often prominent features within the borough's Conservation Areas. A poorly designed modern shopfront can ruin an otherwise attractive building and spoil an historic street scene. Restraint is necessary if this scenic quality is to remain. Consent for the demolition of all or part of a shop front within a Conservation Area or forming part of a listed building may be required. Where consent is required it is an offence to undertake such works without prior approval, in writing, from the Local Planning Authority. The advice of the Council's Development Management Division should therefore be sought before commencing work.
- (2) The Council will require shop owners and specialist firms of shopfitters to design their new shop fronts in sympathy with the character of Conservation Areas. In these areas the Council will require shopfront design and detailing of a particularly high standard.

In addition to the borough-wide advice contained in this guidance, which will always be a consideration in determining applications in Conservation Areas or affecting buildings of architectural interest, the following detailed advice will also apply.

#### 7.4.2. Shopfronts:

- (1) Many of the older shopfronts are Victorian in design these should be preserved intact where ever possible as few survive. Even shopfronts erected in the 1920s and 1930s are worthy of retention and very careful consideration should be given before any alterations are proposed.
- (2) Painted fascia boards with lettering applied by professional signwriters is the most authentic approach. Where the original fascia is too narrow for advertising, an alternative might be a plain fascia with the shop name signwritten on the window below.

#### 7.4.3. Materials:

- (1) The use of materials in new shopfronts should be in character with the building's façade and surrounding architecture.
- (2) Traditional materials such as stone, timber, brickwork, tiles, slate are normally more appropriate. Synthetic materials such as anodised aluminium, plastic or fibreglass are rarely appropriate, and their use will be resisted within Conservation Areas and on historic buildings.
- (3) Where existing natural materials are in good condition on shopfronts, they should be retained and preserved whenever possible.
- (4) Wood is nearly always more appropriate for window framing and should be incorporated in new shopfronts wherever possible. In the interests of the conservation of natural resources, applicants are encouraged to specify the use of hardwoods from sustainable and properly managed sources.
- (5) Where brickwork is to be incorporated into new shopfronts it should always attempt to match the colour and type of that above the shop's fascia.

#### 7.4.4. Signs:

- (1) Illuminated aluminium box signs are usually out of character and their use will be resisted.
- (2) The Council will expect large retailers and organisations that have adopted a 'corporate image' or 'house style' to use discretion with regard to the application of their routine designs and 'corporate colours', and these may need careful modification to respect the character of a building or area.
- (3) Flank wall signs will generally be resisted.

#### 7.4.5. Detailing:

- (1) Shopfront detailing should be to a high standard with special attention given to items such as letter-boxes and handles.

#### 7.4.6. Listed buildings:

- (1) Any significant alterations to a listed building will require Listed Building Consent.
- (2) Applications for alterations to shopfronts within or immediately adjoining a listed building will be expected to sympathise with the existing character of the building and surroundings.



## **8. INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS**

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### **8.1. Industrial development**

- 8.1.1. Any industrial or warehouse development should provide vehicle parking spaces to meet current parking standards.
- 8.1.2. Applicants will be required to show that turning and manoeuvring space is provided within industrial and warehouse sites sufficient to manoeuvre a 15 metre articulated lorry within the curtilage.
- 8.1.3. Any storage of alcohol, oil, pollutants and so on should be bunded to control any accidental spillage.
- 8.1.4. Controls will be imposed requiring planting and landscaping to soften the visual impact of the development. In most cases native species should be used; however it is recognised that in certain locations non-native species may be more appropriate.

### **8.2. Shops and offices**

- 8.2.1. The provision of access for rear servicing will be required wherever possible in new developments and the improvement of rear servicing to existing shops will be sought when the opportunity arises.
- 8.2.2. Where modernisation and improvement of existing shop premises occurs, any external alterations should be in keeping with the existing character of the building and the street (see Guideline No. 7).
- 8.2.3. Any shop or office development should provide vehicle parking spaces to meet current parking standards.

### **8.3. General**

- 8.3.1. Industrial and commercial development proposals should have regard for the highway considerations contained in Design and Development Control Guidance No. 5.
- 8.3.2. All workplaces or extensions to workplaces should be designed taking into account the needs of people with disabilities. Statutory provisions are explained in the introduction to Design and Development Control Guideline No. 4.