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APPENDIX 4

Design and Layout Guidelines for Housing

Introduction

- A4.1 In accordance with Policy H5, Chapter 3 (page 51), this appendix details those aspects of design and layout to which the Borough Council will have regard in considering all proposals for development (including non-residential) in residential streets and in housing developments elsewhere.
- A4.2 Planning applications for new development within designated Conservation Areas will also be determined in accordance with the additional design standards as referred to in the Conservation and Townscape Chapter (Chapter 2) and contained in Appendix 2. Proposed works to Listed Buildings or those of Local Interest (as listed in Appendix 1) will be required to meet the provisions of Policies C2, C3 and C5 (pages 23 and 26) as appropriate.

DENSITY CONTROLS

Estate Developments

- A4.3 In accordance with Policy BE2 of the Essex Structure Plan First Alteration, estate development should normally achieve a density of not less than 30 dwellings per hectare (12 per acre). Where the development is proposed within an existing residential area the Borough Council will have regard to local environmental considerations, to existing densities in the area, and to the need to provide a range of dwelling types to meet local housing needs and to retain an adequate stock of small single family dwellinghouses.
- A4.4 However, in recognising such a policy the Borough Council considers that lower densities, to a minimum of 20-24 dwellings per hectare (eight to ten per acre) may be acceptable along the edge of the built-up area where a better relationship with surrounding agricultural and Green Belt land would be achieved.

Purpose-Built Self-Contained Flats and Sheltered Housing Schemes

- A4.5 To ensure that the character and amenity value of an area is not detrimentally affected by over intensive development, proposals comprising purpose built self-contained flats and sheltered housing schemes should not normally exceed the following density levels:-
- (i) Purpose Built Self-Contained Flat Developments:
- two storey : 50 to 75 dwellings per hectare
(20 to 30 dwellings per acre)
 - three storey : 75 to 100 dwellings per hectare
(30 to 40 dwellings per acre)
 - four storey : 100 to 125 dwellings per hectare
(40 to 50 dwellings per acre)

- (ii) Sheltered Housing Schemes:
- two storey : 85 to 100 dwellings per hectare
(35 to 40 dwellings per acre)
 - three storey : 110 to 125 dwellings per hectare
(45 to 50 dwellings per acre)
 - four storey : 135 to 150 dwellings per hectare
(55 to 60 dwellings per acre)

In addition sheltered housing schemes of three or more storeys in height will only normally be considered as suitable for such a use where adequate lift provision is made.

Note: For the purposes of calculating the above densities, gross site area should be utilised.

Conversion Schemes

- A4.6 In assessing the merits of conversion schemes, the Council will have regard to the likely increase in density levels and its effect on the local environment and residential amenities, especially in terms of the increase in general activity, vehicular and pedestrian movements. The conversion of properties already in use as flats to form additional flats will only normally be permitted where the Council's off-street parking, amenity open space and other relevant standards, as detailed in this Appendix, can still be achieved.

VISUAL AND BUILDING DESIGN

- A4.7 New development should be of a sensitive design with good landscaping so as to achieve a high standard of development and a visually satisfactory environment. This will be particularly important where new buildings are proposed on sites located in established residential areas, if they are to be successfully assimilated into the street scene.

General Design and Materials

- A4.8 Individual buildings should be well designed in themselves and have adequate regard for their setting by:-
- (i) respecting neighbouring development and the overall character of the locality in terms of their height, mass, elevational and roof treatment;
 - (ii) employing external materials which are sympathetic in colour and texture to the vernacular range of Essex materials and to the location in which they are situated (in Conservation Areas the design should also comply with the requirements of Appendix 2);
 - (iii) the volumes making up the block form of the building being proportioned and related to form a satisfactory composition;
 - (iv) the external materials being used in a visually appropriate manner;

- (v) the fenestration being well proportioned and well related within the elevation and also being sympathetic to adjacent buildings;
- (vi) architectural detailing being used to reinforce the character required by the design and its location.

A4.9 Within areas of predominantly single family dwellinghouses, proposals should be of a design, mass and bulk that reflects both the scale and the appearance of single family dwellinghouses located within the street.

A4.10 In addition to the above considerations, conversion schemes involving the sub-division of a property originally constructed as a single family dwellinghouse should maintain the external appearance of the property as a house in order to preserve the character and visual amenities of an area. In particular the existing elevational character together with an appropriate front garden area (see paragraph A4.12 below) should be retained, and the entrance doors serving all units within the property should be contained behind a single external front entrance door. The external access door to the building should be on the front of the property nearest to the public footpath and/or road access, but if this is not feasible it may be via a side passage not less than one metre wide and as close as possible to the public footpath.

Landscaping

A4.11 Adequate provision for landscaping will be required as an integral part of all development schemes in accordance with Policy C14 (page 33) and Appendix 3.

Hardstandings

A4.12 In addition to good building design and landscaping in housing schemes, the Borough Council will require any hardsurfaced areas to complement the overall development and the street scene both visually and in design terms. In particular,

- (i) front gardens should not be given over entirely to car parking, nor should the hardsurfaced area extend across the whole width of the plot,
- (ii) parking spaces should be adequately screened with landscaping so as to preserve the character and residential amenities of an area,
- (iii) in conversions, existing front garden boundary walls, fences and hedges should be retained where not affected by vehicular and pedestrian entrances, so as to maintain the appearance of a normal front garden,
- (iv) hardsurfaced areas for driveways and parking spaces should normally be the minimum required to accommodate car wheels,
- (v) mass concrete or tarmac for driveways and parking spaces should not be utilised - materials such as brick pavers, paving, interlocking concrete blocks or setts should be used in defining driveways, car spaces and footpaths, and should relate to those in adjoining development and the overall building scheme.

GARDEN AND AMENITY OPEN SPACE PROVISION

A4.13 The Borough Council will seek the provision of adequate private garden (i.e. back garden) areas or amenity open space in housing schemes for the benefit of new and existing residents and to protect and enhance the local character and amenities. Such provision will be determined by the type and form of housing development proposed.

Private Gardens and Amenity Open Space

A4.14 Single Family Dwellinghouses: The Council will, wherever practical and appropriate, seek to achieve a minimum private garden area of 100m² (1076ft²) per single family dwellinghouse except where the property is:-

- (a) a single storey patio house, where a walled patio area of 50m² (538ft²) minimum will be required,
- (b) adjacent to a substantial area of well landscaped and properly maintained communal open space,
- (c) a one or two bedroom dwelling, where a minimum private garden area of 50m² will be required provided that the second bedroom is not of a size which would allow subdivision into two rooms.

Whilst having regard to the above minimum guidelines, development proposals which would utilise land forming part of the garden space of existing properties should normally ensure that gardens of new houses are no smaller than those retained by existing properties, in order to preserve the character and amenities of an area.

A4.15 Purpose Built Sheltered Housing, Residential Institutions and Self-Contained Flats: A minimum level of amenity open space providing private sitting out areas for residents will be required as follows:

- (a) for Sheltered Housing and Purpose Built Self-Contained Flats: 25m² (270ft²) per dwelling unit
- (b) for Residential Institutions:
15m² (160ft²) per bedspace.*

Such amenity open space does not include balconies and relates only to useable private amenity open space and not general landscaping, planting areas and other incidental open spaces. Such areas should be screened with planting from vehicular access and parking areas, the public highway and adjoining property.

A4.16 Conversion Schemes: The provision of an adequate area of amenity open space will be required in all conversion schemes. In particular conversions to form Sheltered Housing and Residential Institutions should attain the minimum standards as detailed above.

In conversions to general needs flat accommodation, each flat, wherever possible, should have use of and access to the rear garden area. However, where access to the rear garden can only be achieved by the provision of external staircases (which are not required for fire escape purposes) regard will be had to paragraph A4.36 (see page 198).

* See Appendix 9 - 'Definition of Terms Used'

Public Amenity Open Space Provision

- A4.17 Planning applications for estate developments and redevelopment schemes exceeding 0.5 hectares (1.24 acres) net will normally be conditional upon a minimum area of land representing 10% of the net site area being set aside for public amenity open space. Such land should be adequately landscaped with shrub and tree planting in accordance with Appendix 3. Applicants will be invited to enter into an agreement with the Borough Council in respect to dedication and subsequent maintenance of these areas.

SITE LAYOUT

Layout Criteria

- A4.18 A good housing layout, achieved by providing adequate space and a satisfactory relationship between properties, will be required in all residential proposals, to protect the character of the area and the privacy and amenities of adjoining residents. In assessing proposals regard will be had to the orientation and proximity of adjoining properties, the position of windows and the following criteria:-

- (i) Distances Between Windows of Buildings and Boundaries - affecting main aspect of any building:

These should achieve the following minimum guidelines:

Single storey dwelling window to boundary	6.0 metres (20ft)
Second storey window to boundary	10.7 metres (35ft)
Second storey window to any window	21.4 metres (70ft)
Two storey wall without openings to any window	13.7 metres (45ft)
and for every increase in storey height, an additional	2.4 metres (8ft).

These distances relate to windows to habitable rooms.* They may be varied dependant on the internal layout of the properties and the character of the area.

Where a new property is to be located on part of the curtilage of an existing dwelling, the above distances will be applied to the existing dwelling in addition to the proposed properties.

- (ii) Plot Widths: New housing on small vacant sites with a road frontage should be of such plot widths that are compatible with existing frontages and the character of the area within which they are to be sited.
- (iii) Separation of Dwellings: Adequate spaces between properties will be required in order to avoid a terracing effect to the detriment of the visual amenities of an area.

Accordingly a minimum separation of two metres at first floor level and above between the sides of dwellings should normally be provided, this to include a minimum one metre isolation from the boundary. This shall apply to the spaces between detached dwellings, pairs of semi-detached dwellings and blocks of terraced houses or flats.

* See Appendix 9 - 'Definition of Terms Used'

- (iv) Side Windows to Adjoining Properties: Side windows in existing properties, as originally constructed, which provide the sole or main source of light to a habitable room* must be respected in any proposal for adjoining development. A 45 degree angle drawn either horizontally or vertically from the worst affected point of any such side window should be kept clear of any obstruction.
- (v) Side Windows in New Buildings: Windows which will be the sole or main source of light to a habitable room* will not normally be agreed in side walls. Secondary windows and windows serving subsidiary rooms (e.g. utility room, study etc.) will only normally be agreed where there is at least three metres (10ft) isolation from the boundary in the case of ground floor windows or unless the distances referred to in (i) above can be achieved for windows above ground floor level. Secondary windows and windows serving subsidiary rooms may be acceptable within three metres of the boundary subject to their being high level and/or obscure glazed. Windows of any kind directly on the boundary with adjacent property will not be permitted.
- (vi) Relationship Between Adjoining Properties: The Borough Council will wish to ensure that new buildings do not project unreasonably behind or in front of existing properties, as such for:
- (a) Rear Projections: buildings of two storeys and above should not infringe a horizontal line drawn at 45 degrees from the nearest corner of the main part of any adjacent properties. Such projections will normally be limited to a maximum of 3.65 metres (12 feet) beyond the main rear wall of the adjoining property, as originally constructed, irrespective of the 45 degree guideline, in order to protect the garden environment and amenities of the adjoining property. Special consideration will also need to be given to the separation of dwellings and side windows in adjoining properties (see (iii) and (iv) above).
- Buildings of more than two storeys may be subject to further restrictions regarding rear projections, dependant on their and the adjoining building's height, the orientation of the buildings and the overall character of the area.
- Single storey rear projections on the boundary will be limited to 3.65 metres (12 feet) beyond the main rear wall of adjoining property, as originally constructed, plus one metre for each metre of isolation up to a maximum rear projection of five metres.
- (b) Forward Projections: proposals to position new buildings in front of established building lines will be considered on merit having regard to the character of the area, but should not infringe a horizontal line drawn at 45 degrees from the nearest corner of the main part of any adjacent properties or side windows in adjoining properties (see (iv) above).
- (vii) Windows in "Well" Situations: Special consideration will need to be given to windows in "well" situations, particularly in relation to (i) and (iv) above (see paragraph A4.31, page 197).

A4.19 Where, in approving a housing scheme, the Borough Council considers that, due to the nature of the development site, its layout and relationship to surrounding property, future extensions or alterations to such housing could harm the amenities of adjoining residents and the character of the area, it may impose suitable conditions in any planning consent restricting or prohibiting certain permitted development rights (see also Appendix 8, Schedule 2 - Additional Parking Requirements and Design, page 233).

* See Appendix 9 - 'Definition of Terms Used'

SERVICES AND ACCESS

Car Parking

A4.20 Provision for off-street car parking should be provided in all housing developments in accordance with adopted standards as detailed in Policy T11 - Chapter 9, (page 155) and Appendix 8. Such parking spaces should be provided in an adequate and convenient manner for both residents and visitors and must be constructed before the dwelling is occupied. Regard will also be had to the following criteria:-

- (i) Car Parking Spaces: These should be a minimum of 4.8 metres (16 feet) by 2.4 metres (8 feet) (for garages these are internal dimensions). Parking spaces should be within the curtilage of the dwelling or conveniently adjoining it and should be clear of the carriageway, footway and sight splays. Garages should normally be set back at least 6 metres (19.5 feet) from the public highway. Car parking spaces should be positioned away from dwellinghouse windows in order to prevent nuisance to other residents.

Housing schemes which can only accommodate parking facilities in accordance with adopted standards by reducing garden/amenity space (see paragraph A4.13-17) to an unacceptable level or by hardstanding most or all of the front garden area in a way which detracts significantly from the character and appearance of the area, will be unacceptable.

- (ii) Crossovers and Street Trees: Properly constructed crossovers onto the highway must be provided to the requirements of the Director of Engineering Services and should be sited as far away as possible from street trees.
- (iii) Hardstandings: See Paragraph A4.12 (page 189).

Access

A4.21 Within new housing areas all modes of movement should be made convenient, safe and pleasant. In determining the acceptability of road access, vehicular turning and delivery arrangements and pedestrian facilities, the Borough Council will have regard to the design standards contained in the Essex County Council publications "The Highways Aspects of Development Control" (1987) and "A Design Guide for Residential Areas - Highway Standards" (1980) as appropriate.

A4.22 In particular, for housing developments comprising intensification of development within existing urban areas, where a private access is required to serve parking areas (e.g. an access to communal garage courts in a redevelopment/conversion scheme for flats or providing access to a backland housing development), the Borough Council will require the following standards to be attained:-

- (i) Access to a Single Dwelling: This should normally be a minimum of 2.4 metres (8 feet) in width, although a minimum of 4.8 metres (16 feet) may be required where the access is particularly long.

- (ii) Access to Two or More Dwellings: This should normally have a minimum width of 4.8 metres for the first 6 metres (20 ft) of its length, thereafter it may taper to a minimum width of 2.4 metres over the next six metres of its length. In large housing schemes (greater than 6 units), however, the access may be required to be of 4.8 metres width over the whole of its length.
- A4.23 Where the road access is less than 4.8 metres wide and of considerable length, passing bays 4.8 metres wide will normally be required. In addition, where a vehicular access abuts existing residential property, it should be adequately and attractively screened.
- A4.24 Adequate vehicular turning facilities will be required in accordance with adopted standards which should allow for vehicles to enter and leave all garages and parking spaces satisfactorily whilst other parking spaces are occupied.
- A4.25 Adequate vehicular access for fire service appliances should be provided to within 45.72 metres (150ft) of the entrances to all one and two storey premises, and to within 36.5 metres (120ft) of the entrances of three and four storey blocks of flats and maisonettes, so as to ensure sufficient tubing for internal fire fighting. Blocks exceeding 12.8 metres (42ft) in height will require special consideration in respect of access for Fire Brigade vehicles and rescue appliances.

General Services to Dwellings

- A4.26 These can be classified as water supply; surface water and sewage disposal; gas and oil; electricity; telephone and satellite supply; and refuse disposal facilities. All these services should be provided in a technically and visually satisfactory manner. In particular, the Borough Council will wish to ensure that certain types of service provision meet specific guidelines, namely:-
- (i) Gas, Electricity, Oil and Water Meter Facilities: These should be provided in a way which does not detract from the appearance of the property and the character and amenities of the area. Wherever practical they should be sited inconspicuously at the side of the property or in a concealed store room or porch or in a common hallway serving various flat units. Where there is no alternative but to position the utility box on the exterior of the building, it should be of a colour that blends well with its surroundings, and should be flush mounted where the passage of pedestrians or vehicles is likely to be impeded, unless the alteration would obliterate or remove attractive architectural detailing. Flush mounting may also be required where boxes could be damaged by vehicles manoeuvring into adjoining parking spaces.
- (ii) Satellite Antennae: See Policy C9, (Chapter 2, page 29) and Appendix 3.
- (iii) Refuse Storage Facilities: Suitably screened and covered refuse storage facilities will normally be required for flat developments. In other housing schemes, if a road access is not available for refuse freighters, a refuse store should be provided to within 30 metres (98 feet) of the public highway. These facilities should be positioned away from dwelling windows and entrance doors and should be sited to allow for convenient collection and in a way which does not detract from the appearance of the property and the character and amenities of the area. In particular, refuse storage facilities should not normally be located in front gardens unless they can be satisfactorily screened by planting and are inconspicuous.

- (iv) **Provision of Water Supply in Flat Conversions:** In a number of past conversion schemes, the single mains water pipe serving the original single family dwellinghouse has been utilised to serve all new dwellings within the converted property. This has led to problems of inadequate water pressure in certain of the new flat units. The Borough Council will, therefore, expect every self-contained dwelling unit created by subdivision to be provided with a wholesome water supply with satisfactory pressure and will wish to see the installation of a separate supply of water from the street main to each unit as part of the overall building conversion work.

EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING PROPERTY

General Principles

- A4.27 The Borough Council wishes to ensure that all extensions to existing property are of a good standard of design that respects the overall character and amenity of the area and the amenities of adjoining occupiers. In assessing planning applications for extensions, regard will be had to the orientation and proximity of the existing property to those adjoining, any existing extensions and the position of windows, with reference to the distances set out in paragraph A4.18(i) above (see page 191). All extensions should be harmonious in character, scale, form, appearance and materials to that of the existing property and the overall street scene. In addition to these general principles, a number of detailed guidelines are set out below.

Single Storey Extensions

- A4.28 (a) **To the Rear of a Property**

Single storey rear extensions on the boundary to terraced properties will not normally be permitted to exceed 2.74 metres (9 feet), and for semi-detached and detached property 3.65 metres (12 feet), beyond the main rear wall of adjoining properties. However, an additional 1 metre projection may be permitted for each metre that the extension is set-in from the boundary up to a maximum rear projection of five metres. Larger rear extensions to detached properties situated in extensive grounds may be permitted having regard to the need to retain existing residential amenities of adjoining properties.

Single storey extensions of greater than normal height (e.g. due to a change in ground levels or the type of roof slope) or bulk may be considered in accordance with paragraph A4.29 below if their impact on adjoining property is likely to lead to a loss of amenity.

- (b) **To the Side of a Property**

Single storey side extensions will be determined on their merits, but should not infringe a 45 degree angle drawn either horizontally or vertically from the worst affected point of any side window which provides the sole or main source of light to a habitable room* in an adjoining property.

- (c) **To the Side of a Property Situated Adjacent to a Road Junction**

Where a side extension abuts a road junction, the extension will normally be permitted up to the boundary but should be constructed with a roof design in keeping with the existing property, avoiding the use of parapet walls, to ensure that the visual amenities of the area are not harmed.

* See Appendix 9 - 'Definition of Terms Used'

Two Storey Extensions

A4.29 (a) To the Rear of a Property

In order to prevent excessive overshadowing of neighbouring properties and to protect the garden environment, rear extensions of two storeys and above shall be sited to ensure that their projection does not form a horizontal or vertical angle greater than 45 degrees from the worst affected point of a window situated in the flank wall of the adjacent property which provides the sole or main source of light to a habitable room*. Where the adjoining property's flank wall has no openings, or windows which serve only non-habitable rooms, the rear projection should not infringe a horizontal line drawn at 45 degrees from the nearest corner of the main part of the adjacent property. In addition, the extension will normally be restricted to a maximum length of 3.65 metres (12 feet) beyond the main rear wall of the adjoining property.

Rear extensions of more than two storeys may be subject to further restrictions in the interests of protecting existing residential amenities.

Such extensions will not normally be permitted along party boundaries, and a minimum one metre isolation from the boundary and two metres between buildings should normally be maintained at first floor and above.

(b) To the Side of a Property

Two storey side extensions should not infringe a 45 degree angle drawn either horizontally or vertically from the worst affected point of any side window which provides the sole or main source of light to a habitable room* in an adjoining property. In order to retain significant gaps in the streetscene where such gaps are an important element of the character of the area, the Borough Council will normally seek to maintain a minimum isolation from side boundaries of at least one metre at first floor level and above. Where the character of the street is one of generous isolation between properties, an isolation of more than one metre at first floor level and above may be sought. To enhance the visual effect of isolation a significant set back of extensions behind the main front wall of the original dwelling will also be sought where appropriate. The roof design of side extensions should match that of the existing building.

(c) To the Side of a Property Situated Adjacent to a Road Junction

The extension should normally achieve a minimum one metre isolation from the boundary at first floor level and above, depending on the character of the area. The roof design should match that of the existing property.

Front Extensions

A4.30 These should respect the established building line, but should not form a horizontal or vertical angle greater than 45 degrees from the worst affected point of a window situated in the flank wall of the adjacent property which provides the sole or main source of light to a habitable room*. Where the adjoining property's flank wall has no openings, or windows which serve only non-habitable rooms, the front projection should not infringe a horizontal line drawn at 45 degrees from the nearest corner of the main part of the adjacent property. The roof design should match that of the existing property.

* See Appendix 9 - 'Definition of Terms Used'

Proposals for all extensions will also be considered having regard to any "well" situations and side windows in the extension as detailed below.

Extensions in the "Well"

- A4.31 (a) Single Storey Extensions: Proposals for single storey projections which would result in a window (which provides the sole or main source of light to a habitable room*) of an adjoining property having walls of more than one metre in length projecting at right angles from either side of it, so forming a "well" situation, will require careful consideration to ensure that light, outlook and spaciousness to the adjoining property is retained.

Accordingly, these extensions should be so sited that their projection does not breach a line drawn at an angle of 22½ degrees from the inner corner formed by the neighbouring property's existing projection.

Small single storey extensions up to 2.74 metres (9ft) in length may exceptionally be permitted at the end of very deep "wells".

If the proposed extension is more than 3.65 metres (12 feet) from the boundary or situated more than 6 metres (19.5 feet) from the neighbouring property's projection, or the "well" has no openings, or windows which serve only non-habitable rooms, then this criteria will not normally apply. In either case, however, regard will also be had to criteria contained in paragraphs A4.28-30 above, as appropriate.

- (b) Two Storey Extensions

Two storey extensions which will create, or which worsen, a "well" situation will normally be refused.

Side Windows in New Extensions

- A4.32 Proposals for side windows in extensions which will form the sole or main source of light to a habitable room* will not normally be permitted. Secondary windows and windows serving subsidiary rooms (e.g. utility room, study, etc) will only normally be agreed where there is at least 3 metres (10 feet) isolation from the boundary in the case of ground floor windows, or where the distances referred to in paragraph A4.18 above (see page 191) can be achieved for windows above ground floor level. Secondary windows serving subsidiary rooms may be acceptable within 3 metres of the boundary, subject to their being high level and/or obscure glazed. Windows of any kind directly on the boundary with adjacent property will not be permitted.

NOTE: Whilst each proposal will be considered on its particular merits, as a general rule in calculating the above, existing extensions at adjoining properties are normally ignored unless they have been in existence for 20 years or more. Where the 45 degree guideline has already been breached by the relationship of the existing buildings, the extension will be considered on its merits.

* See Appendix 9 - 'Definition of Terms Used'

- A4.33 The extension should be so sited that the building form is contained entirely within the curtilage of the application property, including foundations and guttering. For the provision of balconies on rear or side extensions see paragraph A4.35 below.

Other Forms of Extension

- A4.34 (a) Rooms in the Roof/Dormer Windows: Proposals for additional accommodation in the roofspace of properties should respect the scale and form of the existing roof design. Those schemes which will be visible from the public highway will only normally be permitted where such provision can be satisfactorily provided within the existing roof structure and are lit by small unobtrusive dormers which are in keeping with the building's existing fenestration and roofscape. Substantial roof slopes or margins should be maintained to the sides, above and below the dormer. These dormers will normally be required to have pitched roofs. Large quasi-mansard roofs have proved unsuccessful in visual terms and should be avoided.
- (b) Provision of Additional Floors: Applications for the construction of additional floors on existing properties will be considered on their merits having particular regard to the impact of the development on the appearance of the building, its relationship to adjoining properties and the street scene, and the effect on any important local views.
- (c) Extensions to Purpose Built Blocks of Flats and Sub-Divided Properties: Proposals for extensions to purpose built blocks of flats and properties converted to flats (including sheltered housing, residential institutions and non-self-contained accommodation) should meet the criteria detailed in paragraphs A4.28 to A4.33 above as appropriate. In addition, where extensions to such properties would provide for additional housing units, compliance with the Borough Council's standards relating to density of development, landscaping and amenity open space as detailed in this appendix, together with car parking standards (see Appendix 8) will also be required.

HOUSE ENVELOPE AND CURTILAGE

Balconies

- A4.35 The Borough Council recognises that balconies are a traditional feature in a seaside town such as Southend. However the provision of balconies can give rise to overlooking and loss of privacy to neighbouring curtilages. Accordingly, proposals will only normally be permitted where the scheme is of a good design that respects the appearance of the building and the amenities of surrounding properties, and achieves a minimum 2 metre isolation from plot boundaries.

External Staircases

- A4.36 The provision of external staircases in development proposals will normally be resisted by the Borough Council, as these tend to be visually obtrusive and can create daylighting and overlooking problems. In particular, primary access to residential accommodation via an unprotected external staircase to units above ground floor level will not be permitted. Only where an external staircase is required to conform with means of escape regulations or to provide access to rear garden areas from upper floor flats in conversion schemes, where an alternative arrangement is not feasible, will the Borough Council consider allowing external staircases. However, such access to the rear garden will not normally be permitted where:-

- the staircase is likely to affect adversely the amenities of the housing units themselves and/or adjoining properties, or

- the rear garden is small (less than 8 metres (26 feet)) in depth.

A4.37 The location of external staircases in "well" situations should be avoided, although they may exceptionally be permitted where the "well" is very deep or where there are no windows positioned in the "well" (see paragraph A4.31, page 197). Where considered acceptable, external staircases should be designed in a "folded" form or alongside a wall where possible, and should not project excessively down a rear garden, obliterate the windows on lower floors or allow unreasonable overlooking of adjoining properties. Straight projecting staircases should be located centrally on the plot with a minimum two metre isolation from plot boundaries.

Prevention of Noise Transmission and Disturbance in Conversion Schemes

A4.38 The most common problem in older conversions is that of noise and vibration transmission between flats. In order to prevent such disturbance, the layout of each unit should be planned so that noise sensitive rooms are not adjacent, either vertically or horizontally, to rooms likely to generate significant levels of noise. In addition, to prevent noise transmission through party walls and floors, conversion schemes are now required to meet the standard set out by the Building Regulations 1991 (Approved Document E : Sound).

Internal Space Guidelines for Conversions to Self-Contained Flats

A4.39 In assessing the merits of schemes for the conversion of properties to self-contained flat units, the Borough Council will wish to ensure that the property is of an adequate size to provide for a satisfactory level of accommodation for residents in each of the units proposed. Accordingly, reference will be made to the minimum guidelines for room sizes as set out in Table 7 overleaf.

Table 7 - Guidelines for Minimum Room Sizes in Conversions to Self-Contained Flats

Figures in square metres (square feet in brackets)

a) MINIMUM SIZES FOR BEDROOM PROVISION

Main Bedroom:-	For 1 person	8.0 (90)
	For 2 persons	11.00 (120)
Other Double Bedroom		10.0 (110)
Single Bedroom		6.5 (70)

b) OTHER MINIMUM ROOM SIZES, BASED ON NUMBER OF PERSONS IN OCCUPATION.

Room Description	1 person	2 people	3 people	4 people	5 people	6 people	7 people
Dining/Kitchen	8.0 (90)	9.0 (100)	11.0 (120)	11.0 (120)	12.0 (130)	13.0 (140)	14.0 (150)
Galley/Kitchen	5.5 (60)	5.5 (60)	5.5 (60)	7.0 (80)	7.0 (80)	7.0 (80)	9.0 (100)
Living Room	11.0 (120)	12.0 (130)	13.0 (140)	14.0 (150)	15.0 (160)	16.0 (170)	17.0 (180)
Living/Dining Room	13.0 (140)	13.0 (140)	15.0 (160)	16.0 (170)	17.5 (190)	18.5 (200)	20.0 (220)

Bedsitting Rooms - Total Area 32.5 square metres (350 square feet) including circulation space.

Note: The above room sizes relate to the area of habitable rooms* enclosed by the internal faces of walls. However, any irregularity in the shape of the habitable room should also be taken into account, and although the recommended superficial floor area can be achieved by including recesses and small projections etc., it is at the discretion of the Council whether such floor area is considered acceptable.