

READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

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Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

such as granny annexes, can be one housing solution to some of these trends. However, this ancillary accommodation should not be a way of introducing new dwellings by stealth. Therefore, planning conditions and, where necessary, obligations will ensure that extra accommodation remains ancillary to the main dwelling. Ancillary accommodation could be considered a separate dwelling where it:

- Is self-sufficient in terms of facilities e.g. kitchens and bathrooms;
- Has its own front door without internal links to the main house; and/or
- Has its own external facilities, e.g. access, drive, garden; or has scope for these external facilities to be easily created.

4.4.77 There is a substantial amount of changes that a householder can now make to their property without needing planning permission. Whilst this policy cannot be applied to developments that do not need permission, it nevertheless serves as a useful guide on how to minimise effects of the development.

4.4.78 Some rear extensions, within certain size parameters, do not require planning permission, but rather need to apply for prior approval. If an adjoining neighbour objects to the application, the Council may determine the application on amenity grounds only. In these cases, the principal policy that will be used is CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity).

4.4.79 Where a house extension is proposed that would affect a listed or locally-listed building or its setting, the application should be determined in line with relevant policies for heritage (EN1, EN4 and EN6).

Private and Communal Outdoor Space

H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE

Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space, including green space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Houses will be provided with private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens.

The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity, clearly identify whether they are private or communal spaces, ensure that they are appropriately related to main entrances, enhance safety and the perception of safety for future residents and the general public, and not be compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing.

4.4.80 Access to private or communal outdoor space can make a vital contribution to a high quality of life. In addition to providing opportunities for outdoor living and enjoyment, amenity space serves functional requirements, such as refuse storage and clothes drying. Outdoor amenity space includes private spaces such as gardens or courtyards (front, back and side), shared communal spaces, balconies and roof gardens.

- 4.4.81 Reading is a comparatively dense urban area, and recent high-density developments have accentuated this pattern. Against this background, the need to ensure that dwellings have sufficient private or communal outdoor space becomes vital to ensure that a high quality of life can be achieved. The need to require provision of private outdoor space was identified by a study of residential developments in Reading⁸⁷ as a key aspect of design quality, as has the need to make sure that it is clear which areas are private, which are communal, and which are public.
- 4.4.82 This policy also fits with other areas of the strategy. For instance, there is an identified requirement for housing which will be suitable for families, and good levels of outdoor space are a necessary element of such housing. In complying with policies on design, developments will have to respect spacing and openness where this forms part of the character of an area. Inevitably that may well dictate requirements for private and communal space. In addition, requirements for privacy, and other amenity considerations may dictate distances between properties that will result in spaces to provide for private and communal space.
- 4.4.83 Flats in central Reading will not require the same amount of outdoor space as houses in other parts of Reading, and the sites are usually more constrained in any case. This is because often the needs of residents within central Reading can be different to those of the rest of the Borough. Flats in central Reading⁸⁸ are less likely to attract families, and the ability to walk to public open space nearby reduces the need for private open space.
- 4.4.84 The policy does not just relate to development of new dwellings. Other types of development, such as the conversion of a house into flats, and house extensions that would result in a loss of outdoor space, will also be judged against the policy. Whilst conversions usually only have an existing level of space to work with, they will not be acceptable where they cannot comply with the policy.
- 4.4.85 It is important to read this policy in conjunction with Policy CC8 on safeguarding amenity and Policy H8 on residential conversions, as many of the planning issues associated with the provision of private or communal garden areas have implications in terms of potential impacts on neighbours and in respect of dwelling conversions. It should be noted that requirements in this policy are in addition to requirements for public open space under policy EN9.
- 4.4.86 In determining the appropriate level of private and communal open space for the new development, the constraints of the site and the extent of deprivation of public open space within the proposed scheme will be taken into consideration. Where communal open space provision may not be considered a necessary requirement for flats within Central Reading, suitable balconies and roof gardens should be provided.
- 4.4.87 In the past, the Council has sought the following minimum provisions for private or communal outdoor space for each type of accommodation, and they provide a useful guide for proposals:
- (a) Houses: Useable private outdoor space should be no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling to which it relates (measured externally and including garage space).
 - (b) Flats outside central Reading:

⁸⁷ Residential Design and Quality of Life in Reading, Roger Evans Associates and the Survey Shop, 2007

⁸⁸ Central Reading refers to the area shown on the Proposals Map

- 1 and 2-bedroom: 25 sq m per flat
 - 3 or more bedrooms: 40 sq m per flat
 - Sheltered units: 20 sq m per unit
- (c) Development in central Reading will not always be expected to comply with the standards set above. Open space is nonetheless required, unless exceptional circumstances prevail, to accommodate modest sitting out areas and clothes drying facilities.

Development of Private Residential Gardens

H11: DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL GARDENS

Proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage or the former curtilage of private residential gardens will be acceptable where:

- 1) *The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:*
 - *The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area;*
 - *A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas, and existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage;*
 - *Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. This includes features such as the variety of trees, hardstanding/lawns and hedges, etc;*
 - *Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area;*
 - *The materials and elevational detail. These should be high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/ or complementary;*
 - *The arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and their rhythm between buildings.*
- 2) *The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking;*
- 3) *The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards;*
- 4) *The proposal does not lead to tandem development⁸⁹;*
- 5) *The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas, and avoids the need for additional physical security measures;*
- 6) *The proposal does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the amenity of adjacent and nearby occupants;*
- 7) *The emphasis is on the provision of family-sized housing;*

⁸⁹ Tandem development' is used to describe a dwelling built behind another, the rear building having no frontage and being accessed by a private roadway or track alongside the front building.