

WANDSWORTH

Standards for External Amenity Space in Residential Conversions Topic Paper

Local Plan Publication (Regulation 19) Version
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Topic Paper:

Standards for External Amenity Space in Residential Conversions

Summary:

The requirement for external amenity space in residential conversions and on small sites is set higher in the Wandsworth Local Plan (Regulation 19) than in the London Plan. The Wandsworth Local Plan seeks 15sqm for family sized housing situated on the ground floor, whereas the London Plan seeks 5sqm plus 1 sqm for each additional occupant. This approach is justified for several reasons:

- *The pandemic has emphasised the importance of having dedicated external amenity space in residential homes as part of the domestic set-up;*
- *The London Plan is a generic standard applied to the whole capital that recognises the need for locally based standards that reflect circumstances in different parts of the city;*
- *London already has the lowest levels of external amenity space in housing in the country, and reliance on the London Plan standard would perpetuate, or worsen, this position;*
- *Several London boroughs have recently adopted or proposed locally specific standards for external amenity space above the London Plan level;*
- *Wandsworth has maintained a higher standard than the London Plan for a prolonged period;*
- *Development Management consistently apply the Wandsworth standard to new development in the borough without any detriment to the deliverability or viability of schemes. Developers consistently respond to the standard and seek ways of compensating for a lack of external amenity space where the standard can't be met;*
- *The standard has been upheld at appeal;*
- *The locally set standard is a helpful way of aspiring to, maintaining and achieving higher levels of dedicated external amenity space without having to fall back on the lower standard in the London Plan. It is used as a tool to negotiate shared and communal open space where the Wandsworth standards cannot be met, improving schemes overall and ensuring that residents will have access to external amenity space.*

Preamble

The Wandsworth Local Plan has reached Regulation 19 Stage. Policies LP7 and LP26 both seek to protect family-sized housing¹ by using a threshold of 130sqm to assess development proposals on small sites that would otherwise see family housing lost. This threshold, and the motivations for seeking to retain family housing, is discussed in depth in the Small Sites Topic paper. It is considered to be justifiable for a number of reasons and compatible both with the London Plan and the approach taken by other London boroughs.

In the case of both policies, the threshold is accompanied by a requirement to see an uplift in family-sized accommodation with direct access to a dedicated rear garden of at least 15sqm. This would effectively ensure that any proposals that involved the redevelopment of existing residential properties – new build, densification, deconversions / conversions and extensions – would deliver family sized homes with direct access to, reasonably sized, outdoor space. This outdoor space would

¹Family sized dwelling is defined in the Local Plan as ‘a housing unit with three or more bedrooms’. This definition does not dictate that family housing should be located on the ground floor. The London Plan defines family housing as being of a size, layout and design that is suitable for a family to live in and generally has three or more bedrooms.

be expected to meet the different needs and expectations of adults and children who would typically comprise a family.

For the avoidance of doubt, the policies imply that direct access is level and without obstruction or obstacle and this response therefore assumes that the family accommodation is located on the ground floor.

Wandsworth Local Plan (2022), Regulation 19

Policy LP7, Residential Development on Small Sites (extract)

Criterion (C1)

Proposals involving the redevelopment of existing residential properties will be supported when: The original dwelling has a floorspace of more than 130sqm (as originally constructed) or the proposal would provide an uplift in the number of family sized dwellings with direct access to a dedicated rear garden of at least 15sqm.

Criterion (F4)

Proposals for additional housing in existing residential areas on small sites should: not result in the net loss of family sized dwellings with direct access to a dedicated rear garden of at least 15sqm.

Policy LP26, Conversions

Criterion (B1)

The conversion of any dwelling with more than 130sqm of floorspace (as originally constructed) into flats will only be permitted where the following criteria are satisfied: at least one family-sized dwelling is provided with direct access to a dedicated rear garden of at least 15sqm

The requirement is not expanded upon in the supporting text of either policy.

As written, the reference to 15sqm in LP7 is not a 'standard'; criterion C1 only looks for an uplift in family sized housing with direct access to a dedicated rear garden of at least 15sqm; it does not require this of *all* family sized dwellings within a scheme. Criterion F4, similarly, does not seek family housing with direct access to a dedicated rear garden, but protects what already exists (so would support a reduction in garden space if a larger garden pre-exists). Policy LP26 does not necessarily mean a new provision of 15sqm of open space if the proposal sees an area of external space being reduced as a result of development (e.g. the reduction in garden space through intensification). It also does not require 15sqm of amenity space for family sized dwellings if more than one was proposed.

Beyond these references, there are no locally defined standards for external amenity space within the Wandsworth Local Plan for new residential development (i.e. no size standard for outdoor amenity space in general housing schemes or on sites larger than 0.25ha²). In all of these cases, the

² The adopted plan set out standards for all new residential development at DMH7, and reiterates this in the 2018 Housing SPD. This requirement has not been brought forward in to the emerging plan, and its absence is the subject of representations at the Regulation 19 consultation stage. This is an omission that the Council would like to review, and a response to this will be the subject of further working following the submission of the plan in late April 2022.

standard is effectively set by Policy D6 of the London Plan (see below), as set out within Policy LP27. However:

- Policy LP2 requires that development proposals do not adversely impact on the amenity of existing and future occupiers, and
- Policy LP15 requires all new homes to have access to outdoor amenity space, which is required separately to access to green infrastructure.

The national picture

The Office for National Statistics reported³ that one in eight households in Great Britain had no access to a private or shared garden during the coronavirus pandemic, but in London this rises to one in five households – by far the highest percentage of any region. This percentage rises for less skilled, poorer or non-White groups. London also has the smallest median garden size in the country at 140sqm, compared to the largest in Scotland at 226sqm. Of course, in dense parts of London, the average size of gardens is even smaller and in the City of London, median garden size (16sqm) is 45 times smaller than some authorities in Scotland (Na h-Eilean Siar, 727sqm).

The UK has openly debated the size of new homes for the past fifteen years⁴, commonly concluding that sizes were inadequate and space standards needed to improve. This has led to the introduction of the Nationally Defined Space Standards in 2015, and the introduction of the same standards into the London Plan in 2021, but national standards specifically for private / dedicated external amenity space remain elusive.

This reflects the variety in circumstances experienced across the country in terms of density, opportunity and expectation, and many local authorities have undertaken work to define broad standards for external amenity space based on their own situations.

There is, however, some consensus that the availability of external amenity space is beneficial for households in creating space for purposeful interaction and addressing mental health issues as well as influencing behaviours in the home⁵. A sustainable lifestyle requires functional internal and external spaces⁶. This has become more evident during the lockdown periods of the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, when the inadequacy of some homes, the absence of external amenity space and the importance of proximity to public spaces (setting aside whether people felt safe making the journey to such space) was brought into a sharper focus.

The London Plan requirement

The **London Plan** provides Policy D6, Housing quality and standards⁷, which states that, *‘where there are no higher local standards in the borough Development Plan Documents, a minimum of 5 sqm of private outdoor space should be provided for 1-2 person dwellings and an extra 1 sqm should be provided for each additional occupant, and it must achieve a minimum depth and width of 1.5m’*. This clearly indicates a willingness to allow authorities to develop their own locally appropriate standards (or maintain existing standards) where necessary. It is in this context that the higher provisions of LP7 and LP26 can exist.

³ [One in eight British households has no garden - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/people-and-population/population-and-demography/articles/one-in-eight-british-households-has-no-garden-2020)

⁴ Examples include CABE’s ‘Space in new homes: What residents think’ (2009) and ‘Room to swing a cat’ (HATC, 2010)

⁵ Housing Matters, www.housingmattersuk.com.

⁶ Background Evidence: PSP 43 – Private Amenity Space Standards, South Gloucestershire Council

⁷ See Appendix 1 for further background to the policy

The standard in Policy D6 is a generic standard which, by necessity, has to cover all eventualities in all of Greater London. It is, therefore, an absolute minimum; it applies not only to open spaces on the ground, but to balconies, terraces and winter gardens, some of which may be on very tall buildings. The standard needs to account for central, dense locations where space is very limited, and outer suburban areas where larger gardens and bigger plots may be more characteristic. It also needs to account for varying conditions, such as construction logistics and viability. It is not logical to accept this as a minimum standard for every location in Greater London; local interpretation is essential.

Whilst the London Plan Policy D6 provides very little context for its minimum standard, the draft London Plan Guidance document, 'Good Quality Homes for All Londoners' (Module C, March 2020) does explain that private outside space is desirable in all circumstances, and that the minimum standard is set by considering the space required for furniture, access, activities and the number of occupants⁸. The minimum for two occupants is therefore 5sqm, with a minimum depth of 1.5m (thereby eliminating from the calculation of the minimum any awkward or irregular spaces). It suggests that such spaces should be capable of providing sufficient space for, 'a meal around a small table, clothes drying, or a family to sit outside with visitors'. Private amenity space, it says, should be usable, have a balance of openness and protection and should avoid high levels of noise or air pollution.

In recognition of the freedom afforded by the London Plan to set (or maintain) locally relevant standards, a number of recent Local Plans have opted to prescribe higher standards for the provision of outdoor amenity space within their plans. This includes:

- Lambeth (adopted 2021) which requires at least 30sqm private amenity space per house and 10sqm per flat either as a balcony / terrace / private garden or consolidated with communal amenity space , plus additional amenity space for larger schemes. Houses, ground floor flats and family-sized units are expected to have direct access to a private garden;
- Hammersmith and Fulham (Planning Guidance SPD, adopted 2018), where every new family-sized dwelling should have access to amenity or garden space of no less than 36 sqm. Family dwellings with accommodation at garden level should have at least one area of private open space with direct access to it from the dwelling;
- Barnet (Regulation 19, 2021) which, for houses, requires between 40 sqm and 85 sqm of space dependent on the number of habitable rooms;
- Islington (Regulation 19, September 2019) where the minimum requirement for private outdoor space is 5sqm on upper floors and 15sqm on ground floors, for 1-2 person dwellings. For each additional occupant, an extra 1sqm is required on upper floors and an extra 5sqm on ground floors.
- Southwark (adopted 2022), where new houses must provide a minimum of 50 sqm private garden space of at least 10m in length. Flatted developments containing three or more bedrooms must provide 10 sqm of private amenity space, and those containing fewer than two bedrooms should provide 10 sqm of private amenity space. For balcony space to contribute, an outside area must be a minimum of 5sqm and 1.5m deep.

⁸ See Appendix 2 for further details. It is acknowledged that this document has been superseded by the draft London Plan Guidance, 'Housing Design Standards' (February 2022), which does not contain this explanation. However, as the standards are the same as the previous document, it is reasonable to assume that the basis for the 5sqm is unchanged.

Further information about each of these is given in Appendix 3. Local variations to the London Plan, increasing the threshold for external amenity space, and defining the terms under which it is provided, are therefore relatively common across London, within both inner and outer areas.

Requirements for external amenity space through Wandsworth Plans

The standard for external amenity space in Wandsworth can be tracked back through previous plans.

The 1995 UDP contained Policy H18 which stated that, ‘all new dwellings should be provided with adequate amenity space suitable for use by the occupants, unless other suitable amenity provision is made available. The provision of a minimum of 40 sqm per family-sized dwelling (4 bedspaces) and 20 sqm for non-family accommodation...will normally be sought’.

2003 UDP contained Policy H11, which stated that, ‘new housing will be permitted if it provides adequate amenity space [and] an adequate level of privacy’. The supporting text explained that adequate amenity space meant a minimum of 40sqm for family sized housing (at least 4 bed-spaces) and 20sqm for non-family sized housing, the same standard as the 1995 plan. The plan drew on experience of delivering these levels of external amenity space, and such space being welcomed by occupants demonstrated through a 1997 satisfaction survey. Consistent with today’s standard, front gardens, parking space and awkwardly shaped spaces (i.e. space that had little function) were excluded.

A policy change emerged in the 2012 adopted DMPD, which replaced the 2003 plan. Policy DMH7 lowered the standard for external amenity space from 40sqm for family-sized accommodation and 20sqm for non-family-sized housing, to 15sqm and 10sqm respectively. The plan drew upon the 2007 New Housing Re-survey, which determined that satisfaction amongst residents with private amenity space was high, but this satisfaction had less to do with quantity than it did with quality. This is used to part justify the reduced standard, though the plan also notes that many developments were failing to meet the existing 2003 expectation. The plan therefore stresses that both the quality and usability of private amenity space is key and that the revised standards were to be treated as a minimum expectation, recognising certain situations where this might raise issues (such as overlooking).

DMH7 was carried forward from the 2012 plan to the 2016 plan, indicating that the standards were being successfully applied to schemes emerging in the borough. It also confirms that the expectation to provide external amenity space beyond the current London Plan policy is well established and likely to be well understood amongst those developers operating within the borough.

Wandsworth Local Plan, Development Management Policies Document (DMPD, 2016), adopted Policy DMH7, Residential gardens and amenity space

Planning permission will be granted for proposals for new build residential development that comply with the following minimum standards of dedicated amenity space, excluding footpaths, parking areas, access ways, side or front gardens:

- i. 10 sq ms for 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings;
- ii. 15 sq ms for dwellings with 3 or more bedrooms.

In the case of conversions, planning permission will be granted where one family-sized unit is provided with a dedicated rear garden of at least 15 sq ms. Where the overall quality of

accommodation is good and there is no potential for the provision of a dedicated rear garden of at least 15 sq ms, use of balconies and roof gardens may be acceptable subject with compliance with Policy DMS1;

Where there is no potential to meet standards through dedicated amenity space, indoor gyms and sport facilities will be encouraged to meet as far as possible, the minimum standards.

Where a communal garden is proposed, appropriate screening such as a separate patio garden or soft landscaping should be provided for ground floor units, taking care not to prejudice outlook or daylight penetration. An agreed maintenance regime must be in place, and access to the garden must be provided for all units.

Proposals for family housing will also require new playspace, or contributions to existing facilities, in line with standards for provision published in the Mayor's Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation Supplementary Planning Guidance Policies Document (Adopted March 2016) showing superseded policies March 2017 (SPG) using the Council's Population Yield Calculator, which is referenced in the SPG.

The requirement is not expanded upon in the supporting text of the policy.

The policy requires the standard to be met regardless of the form of development (flats, apartments, houses) and its height. It is reasonable to conclude that meeting this standard might be onerous in some circumstances, particularly in tall buildings, and may in some circumstances cause a reduction in the number of possible units that can be accommodated on site.

Needless to say, the availability of external amenity space for families can be a welcome addition to space indoors, and offer a place for children to run and play with a freedom often not available indoors, where there are both obstacles and domestic hazards to be found.

Bearing in mind the explanation of the minimum standard of 5sqm within the London Plan, expressed in the draft document, 'Good Quality Homes for All Londoners', the 5sqm is intended to accommodate 2 people and each further 1sqm is an allowance for each additional occupant. It follows that a child is effectively being allocated just 1sqm of play space under the minimum standard set out in the London Plan. This doesn't stand up to any reasonable scrutiny. In the case of children's play space, common sense must dictate that a space of only 6sqm, shared with two adults, will be less favourable than a space of at least 15sqm, particularly given the recent context of the pandemic and the consequences of the absence of private amenity space that has been felt and the general paucity of external amenity space within homes felt throughout London.

Wandsworth Local Plan Review

The Wandsworth Local Plan (Regulation 18) was published for public consultation in November 2020. It set out standards for new housing development at Policy LP29. This included a requirement, in the case of residential conversions, for 15sqm of dedicated garden space for all family-sized housing at criterion D. This expectation arises from the adopted policy, DMH7, but the Regulation 18 Plan did not bring forward the general standards for private external amenity space previously set out in DMH7; indeed, this requirement is absent from the emerging plan (see footnote 2).

Local Plan comments (Regulation 18)

LP29 brought forward the requirement for 15sqm to be provided in the case of conversions and for proposals on small sites where an uplift in the number of family-sized units is proposed.

Only one response was received directly in respect of this element of the policy. The GLA (response 1098) commented that, *'the requirement of draft Policy LP29 part D, which requires that family sized conversions should each be provided with a dedicated garden of at least 15sqm should be reviewed and afforded more flexibility'*.

The Council responded that, *'the policy requires that only one family-sized unit should be provided with direct access to a dedicated rear garden of at least 15sqm. This requirement is unlikely to put a strain on future development. It will generally apply to ground floor units which can be provided with direct access to a dedicated rear garden in the vast majority of cases. A 15sqm garden is more likely to deliver a more usable layout than a 5sqm garden'*.

The GLA have confirmed through the Duty to Co-operate process that took place in February 2022 that this is not a conformity issue.

There were no further comments requesting that the 15sqm requirement should be reassessed, though three representations were indirectly relevant, and expressed concern about the lack of external amenity space available for families in new development.

Northport FPR commented that Policy LP24 failed to address the undersupply of private amenity space in new residential development, particularly in the Nine Elms area. The comment highlighted the importance of private external space to individual dwellings, which had been heightened and emphasised through the pandemic.

The Putney Society commented that in respect of (Regulation 18) Policy LP29(D), balconies should be provided where a garden is absent. The representation is not clear on whether the balcony should be an equivalent size to the anticipated garden (i.e. 15sqm). However, as the emerging plan does not provide a standard for external space for family-sized dwellings on upper floors, and is inconsistent on providing external amenity space for family units generally, a locally defined and consistent standard for dedicated external space in new residential development would serve this comment more fully.

City Planning raised concern about the restrictive nature of policies for residential conversion, expressing concern that developers may be, 'forced to provide large units across upper floors with no available amenity space', a situation that they believe is, 'particularly unattractive in the current market'. City Planning argue that, 'family accommodation should not be classed as being appropriate across upper floors with no access to amenity space'.

Local Plan (Regulation 19)

The requirement set out in Policy LP29 of the Regulation 18 Plan was repeated in the Regulation 19 Plan at Policy LP26, and also introduced to Policy LP7 (Residential Development on Small Sites) to ensure that any redevelopment of existing residential property delivers dedicated rear garden space of 15sqm where family-sized units are planned.

Applying standards for external amenity space

Wandsworth Council has long experience of applying the adopted standard for external space to residential proposals that come forward. Drawing on this experience, policies LP7 and LP26 are not

considered to be a limiting factor for future development in terms of practicality, viability or construction.

During the period April 2016 to March 2020, sixteen schemes were completed on sites smaller than 0.25ha that included an element of family-sized accommodation⁹. These schemes were relatively varied, including sites in denser urban parts of Wandsworth (e.g. Hafer Road), constrained sites (e.g. Cabul Road) and more spacious suburban sites (e.g. West Hill Road).

Analysis of the Council's assessments of these schemes, and the Design and Access Statements supporting them, show that the provision of external amenity space for future occupants is a serious consideration for developers and the Council alike, and a key element to be provided. In the majority of cases, the number of family-sized units is equivalent to the number of units with amenity space of 15sqm metres or more. In cases where the 15sqm cannot be provided, there is a reasoned discussion about alternatives and / or reasons why amenity space is so constrained, which implies a flexible approach to this issue. For example, at Cabul Road, of the 13 units proposed to the main building, 9 would have a private amenity space of a basement garden or terrace area and of these only 5 would meet/exceed the minimum amenity space standard set by policy DMH7. This is considered acceptable in light of the heritage of the building which is being retained / reused. At Woodborough Road, all eight units, including the four family-sized units, have access to a shared 400sqm garden.

Applications continue to be assessed by the Council, and Policy DMH7 remains a useful and well used policy to apply. It is recognised that the availability of private external space remains an important element of dwellings and whilst some schemes will struggle to meet the standards – particularly in denser parts of the borough – the higher standard is a useful tool in ensuring that family-sized dwellings do achieve a higher level of amenity space than the London Plan.

Performance at appeals

Between April 2016 and March 2020, Policy DMH7 has been cited in thirteen appeals, twelve of which were dismissed. The policy is rarely the primary reason for a dismissal, but it often works in combination with other policies. The use of the policy suggests that it has credibility in such cases. Examples include:

- 2018/4920, Garratt Lane, where the provision of amenity space for a 1x1 bed and 1x3 bed conversion was deemed to be inadequate;
- 2018/4610, Cavendish Road, where the proposal would create a sub-standard quality of residential accommodation (including private amenity space) resulting in an unsatisfactory living environment for future occupiers;
- 2019/1597, Moring Road, where the proposal provides substandard accommodation for future occupiers, fails to provide sufficient external amenity space and causes harm to the living conditions of residents of neighbouring properties;
- 2016/6182, Ashvale Road, where, despite meeting the requirements for external amenity space, it would provide a poor quality of environment that would likely result in the space being ineffective and unattractive.

Concluding remarks

⁹ See Appendix 4 for further details.

The emerging Wandsworth Local Plan includes a standard for external amenity space in some new residential development (residential conversions and on small sites) that goes beyond the requirement set in the London Plan. It seeks 15sqm for family sized housing situated on the ground floor, whereas the London Plan seeks 5sqm plus 1 sqm for each additional occupant. This approach is justified for several reasons:

- The pandemic has emphasised the importance of having private external amenity space in residential homes as part of the domestic set-up;
- The London Plan is a generic standard applied to the whole capital that recognises the need for locally based standards that reflect circumstances in different parts of the city;
- London already has the lowest levels of external amenity space in housing in the country, and reliance on the London Plan standard would perpetuate, or worsen, this position;
- Several London boroughs have recently adopted or proposed locally specific standards above the London Plan level;
- Wandsworth has maintained a higher standard than the London Plan for a prolonged period;
- Development Management consistently apply the Wandsworth standard to new development in the borough without any detriment to the deliverability or viability of schemes. Developers consistently respond to the standard and seek ways of compensating for a lack of amenity space where the standard can't be met. The standard has been upheld at appeal;
- The locally set standard is a helpful way of aspiring to, maintaining and achieving higher levels of private external amenity space without having to fall back on the lower standard in the London Plan. It is used as a tool to negotiate shared and communal open space where the Wandsworth standards cannot be met, improving schemes overall and ensuring that residents will have access to private space.

Appendix 1: The London Plan (2021)

Policy D6, Housing quality and standards

Criterion (F)

Housing developments are required to meet the minimum standards below which apply to all tenures and all residential accommodation that is self-contained.

Private outside space: Where there are no higher local standards in the borough Development Plan Documents, a minimum of 5 sq.m. of private outdoor space should be provided for 1-2 person dwellings and an extra 1 sq.m. should be provided for each additional occupant, and it must achieve a minimum depth and width of 1.5m

Supporting text:

Private outside space should be practical in terms of its shape and utility, and care should be taken to ensure the space offers good amenity. All dwellings should have level access to one or more of the following forms of private outside spaces: a garden, terrace, roof garden, courtyard garden or balcony. The use of roof areas, including podiums, and courtyards for additional private or shared outside space is encouraged.

Justification:

The London Plan states, 'Where there are no higher local standards in the borough Development Plan...'. This suggests the London Plan is a minimum standard that is open to alternatives.

The requirement for 15sqm is a long standing requirement of Wandsworth policy.

Appendix 2: Good Quality of Housing for All Londoners (Draft for Consultation), October 2020 – Module C

Private outside space – Key standards

1. A minimum of 5 sqm of private outside space should be provided for one-to-two person dwellings and an extra 1 sqm should be provided for each additional occupant.
2. The minimum depth and width of all balconies and other private external spaces is 1500mm.

Private outside space is desirable in all circumstances. This guide requires that all dwellings should be provided with adequate private outside space in the form of a garden, terrace, balcony or glazed winter garden. This applies to all forms of tenure from market sale to affordable rent and includes Build to Rent properties, and intermediate forms of ownership.

Private outside space standards have been established in the same way as internal space standards, by considering the space required for furniture, access and activities and the number of occupants. A minimum of 5 sqm of private outdoor space is required for all two-person dwellings and an extra 1 sqm should be provided for each additional occupant. The required minimum width and minimum depth for all balconies and other private external spaces is 1.5m. The minimum depth and width apply to all the minimum area i.e. only the area that has at least a 1.5m depth and width will be calculated in the minimum balcony area (sqm), thus triangular and irregular shaped balconies will likely need to be larger than the minimum area to achieve this standard. These minimum areas and dimensions provide sufficient space for either a meal around a small table, clothes drying, or for a family to sit outside with visitors. Plans should demonstrate this capability.

Enclosing balconies as glazed, ventilated winter gardens is an option in some circumstances, including where dwellings will be exposed to high levels of noise and/or strong wind, particularly at high level. Winter gardens should be thermally separated from the interior, and the floor should be 'drainable' to avoid standing water.

In very exceptional circumstances, where site conditions make it impossible to provide private outside space for all dwellings, a proportion of dwellings in a development may instead be provided with additional internal living space equivalent to the private open space requirement, added to the minimum GIA and the minimum combined living area of the dwelling. Justification will need to be made as to why external private outside space cannot be provided.

Private amenity space for each dwelling should be usable, and have a balance of openness and protection appropriate for its outlook and orientation. Private outside space should not be located where it will be exposed to high levels of noise or air pollution.

Balconies should be designed to provide some shelter and privacy from neighbouring properties. This can be achieved using screens or by setting the balcony back within the façade, while being mindful of achieving acceptable levels of daylight and sunlight penetration to the dwelling. Balconies should have solid floors draining to a downpipe. Where balconies overlook noise sources, solid parapets and absorbent soffit materials should be considered for their acoustic benefits. As with communal and public open spaces, exposure to air pollution should be minimised when deciding where to locate gardens and balconies.

For small developments on existing private garden or other outdoor amenity space to be acceptable, both the original and proposed homes must meet the minimum standards in London Plan Policy D6.

Appendix 3: Policies seeking external amenity space in new housing development across other London boroughs

Lambeth Local Plan (adopted 2021)

Policy H5, Housing Standards

Criterion (B)

The council will require at least the following level of external amenity space for all residential units. For new houses, 30m² private amenity space per house should generally be provided

For new flatted developments, amenity space should be provided to the following quantities: 10m² per flat either as a balcony/terrace/ private garden or consolidated with communal amenity space; and for development of 10 or more residential units a further 50m² per scheme of communal amenity space

Houses, ground-floor flats, and family-sized units should preferably have direct access to a private garden

Supporting text:

Sufficient outdoor amenity space should be provided in all new residential developments. The policy contains Lambeth-specific amenity space standards. Private outdoor amenity space is highly valued and should be provided in all new housing developments. The council expects that all developments should be able to provide amenity space in accordance with the standards set out in policy Local Plan policy H5. Front gardens should not be counted towards private or communal amenity space provision.

Policy Q2 is supportive of development if, *'adequate outdoor amenity space is provided, practical in layout, free from excessive noise or disturbance, pollution or odour, oppressive enclosure, unacceptable loss of privacy, wind/downdraught and overshadowing'*.

Note: Lambeth make their own standard for private amenity space. The 10sqm requirement is below Wandsworth's level, but the additional 50sqm communal space for every 10 dwellings would bring it in line with our 15sqm.

Merton – Reg 19 document adopts London Plan Policy D6 standard.

Hammersmith and Fulham Local Plan (adopted 2018) – Planning Guidance SPD

Key principle – HS1 Amenity Space

All new dwellings should have access to an area of amenity space, appropriate to the type of housing being provided. The council will expect to see a more generous provision of outdoor amenity space than the minimum provision standards in the Housing SPG and the Play and Informal Recreation SPG accompanying the London Plan.

Every new family (3 or more bedrooms) dwelling should have access to amenity or garden space of no less than 36 square metres. Family dwellings (3 or more bedrooms) with accommodation at garden level should have at least one area of private open space with direct access to it from the dwelling. For family dwellings on upper floors this space may be provided either as a balcony or terrace and/or communally within the building's curtilage.

Supporting text:

Access to high quality and adequate amounts of private open space significantly adds to the quality of life of all occupants. The space standards for private amenity space have been established by considering the space needs for furniture, access and activities and in relation to the number of occupants. In relation to the provision of private gardens and amenity space the council will expect to see a more generous provision of outdoor amenity space than the minimum provision standards in the Housing SPG and the Play and Informal Recreation SPG accompanying the London Plan. The council will also aim to ensure that housing appropriate for families has direct access to garden or amenity space.

Balconies, terraces and gardens are multifunctional allowing occupants to engage in a range of passive and active recreational activities such as gardening and play. This is especially important in a heavily built up inner borough like Hammersmith and Fulham. Children in particular will benefit from having access to adequate areas of private open space for play activities. Where communal open space is provided it is important that it is well designed and safe and can be used by all residents including wheelchair users and has a range of functional uses.

Where family dwellings are proposed in a residential conversion scheme, they should be located at a level which gives direct and normally exclusive access to the garden. Conversion schemes often require ground floor extensions to provide the necessary accommodation, but such extensions should meet other guidance in this SPD. If the property is of sufficient size to allow family dwellings at upper levels then these should be provided with open amenity space. Such space may be in the form of a roof terrace but its provision will have to ensure that the amenities of neighbouring properties are adequately protected.

Balconies and terraces can provide dwellings with valued private open space. It is important that these are designed so as not to overlook surrounding properties as this can potentially adversely impact both upon the privacy and amenity of neighbours and the character of the area. They should also provide reasonable levels of sunlight and access to daylight. It is important that any balconies and terraces that are to be provided, are large enough to permit a range of functional uses such as accommodating seating and dining furniture.

Barnet Local Plan (Regulation 19), 2021

Policy CDH07, Amenity Space and Landscaping

Development proposals should as a minimum provide:

- i. Amenity space standards as set out in Table 11.

Table 11: Outdoor amenity space requirements

For Flats:

- A minimum 5m² of private outdoor space should be provided for 1-2 person dwellings and an extra 1m² provided for each additional occupant.

For Houses:

- 40 m² of space for up to four habitable rooms
- 55 m² of space for up to five habitable rooms
- 70 m² of space for up to six habitable rooms
- 85 m² of space for up to seven or more habitable rooms

Development proposals will not normally be permitted if it compromises the minimum outdoor amenity space standards. Householder Outdoor amenity space should be designed to cater for all household need

Brent Development Management Policies (November 2016)

Policy DMP19 (will be superseded by new Core Strategy)

All new dwellings will be required to have external private amenity space of a sufficient size and type to satisfy its proposed residents' needs. This is normally expected to be 20sqm per flat and 50sqm for family housing (including ground floor flats).

Supporting text:

The policy seeks to ensure a suitable level of provision of amenity space in association with residential development. It identifies for Brent a locally distinctive target reflective of historic approach to provision of amenity space, rather than the minimum standards set in the London Housing SPG Provision of Amenity Space.

The London Plan Housing SPG sets out a baseline minimum standard amount for the provision of amenity space in new developments and the characteristics it is expected to have. It also deals with children's play space. Brent has historically sought and often delivered within higher density schemes higher levels of amenity space based on its own standard which it considers should be maintained.

New developments should provide private amenity space to all dwellings, accessible from a main living room without level changes and planned within a building to take maximum advantage of daylight and sunlight. Where sufficient private amenity space cannot be achieved to meet the full requirement of the policy, the remainder should be supplied in the form of communal amenity space. The calculation of amenity space does not include any parking, cycle or refuse and recycling storage areas

Note: Brent Design Guide (2018) promotes the standards set by DMP19, but doesn't set its own standard. There appears to be a danger that the lapse of this policy would mean a deferral to the adopted London Plan.

Islington – Strategic and development management policies (Regulation 19), September 2019

Policy H5, Private outdoor space (extracts)

All new residential development and conversions will be required to provide private outdoor space, in the form of gardens (for houses and ground floor maisonettes) or balconies (for upper floor dwellings). Any provision must be of a good quality which is designed – in terms of its shape, position and location within development proposals – to ensure a good level of amenity with regard to daylight and sunlight, noise, enclosure, overlooking, privacy and security.

The minimum requirement for private outdoor space is 5sqm on upper floors and 15sqm on ground floors, for 1-2 person dwellings. For each additional occupant, an extra 1sqm is required on upper floors and an extra 5sqm on ground floors.

Supporting text:

Given the high density built form and low level of open space in Islington, private outdoor space is an important factor in providing good quality housing within the borough. Many recent new

buildings and converted houses do not have access to a garden or any other private outdoor space such as a balcony or terrace. This is not satisfactory as it does not provide space for future occupants to be outdoors in a private setting.

Policy H5 requires provision of private outdoor space proportionate to the level of occupation of proposed dwellings. In a densely built up borough such as Islington, ground floor units offer the greatest scope to increase provision and ensure that family accommodation benefits from a good level of amenity which enables secure and safe play by children; therefore, the Council considers that higher standards should be required for ground floor dwellings.

It is acknowledged that the provision of individual private outdoor space can be challenging on some sites and that accessible, well maintained and managed communal provision can provide a workable solution where it would not be practical to provide individual areas for each unit of accommodation.

Lewisham Local Plan (Regulation 18), November 2020

Policy HO5, High Quality Housing Design (extract)

Proposals for new housing development must meet, and wherever possible seek to exceed, the housing standards set out in the London Plan, including the minimum standards for private outside space, having regard to:

- i. Outside space adequate for the intended number of occupants;
- ii. Minimum depth and width of balconies or other private outdoor spaces.

Supporting text:

We will apply the London Plan space standards when considering housing proposals (including for internal and outside space, communal amenity space and children's play space). Development proposals must meet and should seek to exceed the minimum standards.

Southwark Local Plan (adopted 2022)

Policy P15, Residential Design (Fact Box)

Private amenity space - **New houses** must provide a minimum of 50 sqm private garden space. The garden should be at least 10m in length. **Flatted developments** must provide 10 sqm of private amenity space for units containing three or more bedrooms, For units containing two or less bedrooms, 10 sqm of private amenity space should be provided. Where this is not possible, as much space as possible should be provided as private amenity space, and the shortfall added to the communal amenity space requirement. Balcony space – an outside area must be a minimum of 5sqm and 1.5m deep to count towards private amenity space.

Supporting text:

We believe all residents are entitled to the same quality homes irrespective of tenure. Our residents have told us it is important for communities that neighbours and visitors should not be able to tell the tenure of a home by its appearance. It is important that family housing provides private amenity space to ensure that children have somewhere safe to play or provides an outdoor space to dry clothes and to enjoy the outdoors. Communal play areas are important for children, parents and carers to exercise and get together.

Appendix 4: Residential completions on small sites where family accommodation was included

During the period April 2016 to March 2020, sixteen schemes were completed on sites smaller than 0.25ha that included an element of family-sized accommodation. The table below lists these applications with the split of accommodation type by number of bedrooms and the amenity space provided. Family-sized accommodation – 3-beds and above – should see amenity space provided at 15sqm or above.

The dark green shading denotes occasions where family housing is being provided (i.e. 3-beds and above), and where external space is provided at 15sqm and above. The sum of the dark green under ‘number of bedrooms’ can be compared with the figure in dark green under ‘amenity space provided’ to understand whether the policy provision is being met.

Application	Address	Site Area	Proposal	Number of bedrooms						Amenity Space provided				
				proposed studio unit	proposed 1 bed unit	proposed 2 bed unit	proposed 3 bed unit	proposed 4 bed unit	proposed 5+ unit	0 Amenity	0.1-4.9m Amenity	5-9.9m Amenity	10-14.9m Amenity	15m +Amenity
2009/3929	253a, 253-255 Putney Bridge Road	0.15	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of four storey frontage building (including basement and undercroft to provide access to rear) two retail (Class A1) units (total 155sq.m) and 183sq.m of Offices (Class B1) and with two maisonettes above; erection of terrace of seven, three-storey plus basement houses at rear with parking in central courtyard.	0	0	1	8	0	0				1	8
2013/4946	4-8 Hafer Road (Peter Barber Associates)	0.08	Demolition of existing residential block and redevelopment of the site through the erection of a four storey building (plus basement level) comprising 16 x residential self-contained flats and maisonettes with private amenity space, cycle storage and plant room.	0	1	11	2	0	2			4	5	7

2013/0499	Copplestone House, 811 Garratt Lane	0.03	Demolition of existing building and out buildings. Erection of two-storey building with third storey in the roof together with amenity space to provide 4 x 2-bedroom and 1 x 3-bedroom units (terraces to the rear).	0	0	3	2	0	0			3	2	
2012/5640	11 Roedean Crescent	0.13	Demolition of existing dwelling. Erection of a new three-storey dwelling with basement.	1	0	0	0	0	1				2	
2009/1295	1 & 2 St James Close	0.04	Erection of three new houses following demolition of existing houses at 1 and 2 St James Close. (OUTLINE)	0	0	0	3	0	0				3	
2013/6515	and 151 Battersea Rise, 125-126 Bolingbroke Grove (Bolingbroke Terrace)	0.06	Demolition of 125 and part of 126 Bolingbroke Grove. Erection of roof extension to 151 Battersea Rise and elevational alterations. Erection of part three/ part four storey building, including basement, as an extension to retained 151 Battersea Rise. Provision of 108 sqm of B1 floorspace at ground floor and basement fronting Battersea Rise. Provision of 5 No. 2 bedroom and 2 No. 3 bedroom self-contained flats with associated terraces in the refurbished and new build element at 125 Bolingbroke Grove/151 Battersea Rise. Provision of 2 townhouses with associated terraces and garden in the new part of the building at 126 Bolingbroke Grove. Associated landscaping, cycle parking and bin storage..	0	0	5	3	0	1	5			4	
2015/0226	7 Burston Road	0.08	Demolition of existing building, rear garages and front boundary. Erection of four-storey building and single storey house at the rear of the site to provide 9 residential units together with car parking (2 spaces), cycle storage, roof terraces/balconies, communal gardens, landscaping and felling of 2 trees. Erection replacement front boundary. with railings above. Relocation of an existing electrical sub-station to subterranean level in front garden.	0	3	5	1	0	0			5	1	2

2014/3690	2 Roehampton Gate	0.15	Demolition of existing residential property and erection of two three-storey plus basement semi-detached houses; including single-storey basement back addition with ground floor level rear garden terraces and excavation of rear basement lightwells with associated works. (Revisions to planning permission dated 13/09/13 ref 2013/2693 for: Demolition of existing property. Erection of two, three-storey plus basement houses fronting Roehampton Gate.).	0	0	0	0	0	2					2
2010/0722	74 St Rule Street	0.04	Demolition of existing public house building. Redevelopment of the site to provide a five-storey building with shops and a cafe/community area on the ground floor and nine flats above with balconies/terraces, with 10 basement parking spaces.	0	1	5	3	0	0			7		2
2015/2434	Land adjacent 75, 75 Putney Bridge Road	0.10	Demolition of existing building and redevelopment of the site by the erection of two buildings of two to four-storeys high to provide 16 residential units fronting either Putney Bridge Road or Fawe Park Road, including balconies/terraces and with associated cycle parking provision.	0	1	9	6	0	0				7	9
2011/3253	27 & 28 Dighton Road	0.05	Demolition of 2 semi-detached houses. Erection of 4 x three-storey (top floor in roof) terraced houses. (Renewal of planning permission dated 13.10.2008 ref. 2008/3474).	0	0	0		0	4					4

2014/7206	19-37 Cabul Road	0.09	<p>Change of use of no.19 Cabul Road from offices (Use Class B1) to provide 2 x 2 bed flats (Use Class C3), with basement excavation, ground floor side/rear extension and roof extension to main rear roof slope and over part of rear addition.</p> <p>Change of use of no. 21 Cabul Road from photography studio (Use Class B1) to provide 13 residential units (Use Class C3) as 3 x 1-bed, 6 x 2-bed and 4 x 3-bed units. Extensions to no. 21 including excavation to provide lower ground floor floorspace with side and rear courtyards, rear extensions at ground, 1st and 2nd floor levels, alterations to roof with provision of dormer extensions, raising of main roof ridge level, raising of glazed side element and creation of accommodation and associated amenity space (in the form of garden areas and roof terraces).</p> <p>Demolition of nos. 31 to 37 Cabul Road and erection of 4x family dwellinghouses with lower ground floor excavations.</p>	0	4	9	6	0	0	7	1	2	3	6
2018/0170	30 Woodborough Road	0.12	<p>Variation of the description and condition 2 pursuant to planning permission dated 23/06/2017 ref 2017/1971 (Demolition of existing building and erection of a two-storey (plus basement and roof levels) building to provide 2 x 1-bedroom, 2 x 2-bedroom and 4 x 3-bedroom flats with front and rear roof terraces, associated landscaping, car parking, cycle and refuse storage.) to allow changes to window positions, formation of open front lightwells and change of description to Demolition of existing building and erection of a two-storey (plus basement and roof levels) building to provide 4 x 2-bedroom and 4 x 3-bedroom flats with front and rear roof terraces, associated landscaping, car parking, cycle and refuse storage.</p>	0	2	2	4	0	0		5	1	2	

2016/6119	56 Keswick Road	0.08	Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of two-storey building (with accommodation at roof and basement levels), to provide 4 x 3-bedroom, 4 x 2-bedroom and 1 x 1-bedroom flats with associated roof terraces to north, east and south elevations; cycle and refuse storage, five car parking spaces and associated landscaping. Erection of replacement front and side boundary wall and railings with pedestrian and vehicular gates up to 1.3m high.	0	1	4	4	0	0			1	2	6
2016/3297	32 Malbrook Road (Former 32 now 32-34)	0.09	Demolition of existing house and erection of 2 x two-storey semi-detached houses with accommodation at basement and roof levels; rebuilding of front and side boundary walls and associated landscaping.	0	0	0	0	0	2					2
2017/0466	25 West Hill Road	0.19	Demolition of existing house and erection of 4 x three-storey (including basement) 5-bedroom houses (2 x detached and 2 x semi-detached) with associated landscaping and provision of 4 off-street parking spaces (Amendments to planning refusal 2016/2724).	0	0	0	0	0	4					4

For more information write to:
**Planning Policy and Design,
Environment and Community Services,
Town Hall,
Wandsworth High Street,
London SW18 2PU**

Telephone: (020) 8871 6000
email: planningpolicy@wandsworth.gov.uk
or visit our website: www.wandsworth.gov.uk/planning

