

# Technical note to provide further guidance on how the 25-degree and 45-degree tests are applied

## Introduction

This technical note has been produced to support the Borough Design Guide (BDG) by providing additional clarity on how the impact of new buildings on the daylight and sunlight experienced in neighbouring properties is assessed.

## Background

Wokingham Borough Council adopted the BDG in June 2012 with the overall aim to improve the quality of design. Section 4.8 provides guidance to achieve well designed homes. Amongst other matters, R18 states “Dwellings must be designed to provide appropriate levels of daylight and sunlight to new and existing properties.”

The text following R18 continues to explain a simple method for assessing the impact of design on daylight and sunlight through the application of two tests: a 25-degree test and a 45-degree test. These tests are illustrated in the accompanying Figure 4.30.

The text continues to explain that where the design of a development proposal does not comply with the tests, a more detailed assessment should be provided.

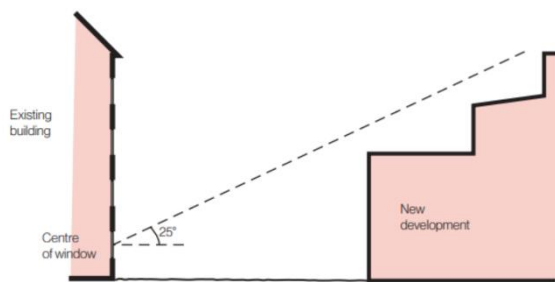
Whilst there is no legal right to light under planning law, the Council may use the 25 degree and 45-degree tests to consider the impact of a proposed development on a neighbour’s amenities.

## 25-degree test

The 25-degree test provides a simple method of considering the impact of design on windows in neighbouring properties which face the proposed development.

The test is only applied to the principal windows in habitable rooms such as the living room, dining room and bedrooms. The test is not normally applied to secondary windows in habitable room, be they on the same elevation as the principal window or another. For the avoidance of doubt, the test is not applied to windows in non-habitable rooms such as stairwell, kitchen, conservatory, utility room, or bathroom.

The 25-degree test is applied by drawing a line from the centre of the principal window of habitable rooms on the ground floor. If the proposed development is below the 25-degree line, then it is unlikely that the neighbour will experience an unacceptable loss of daylight or sunlight.

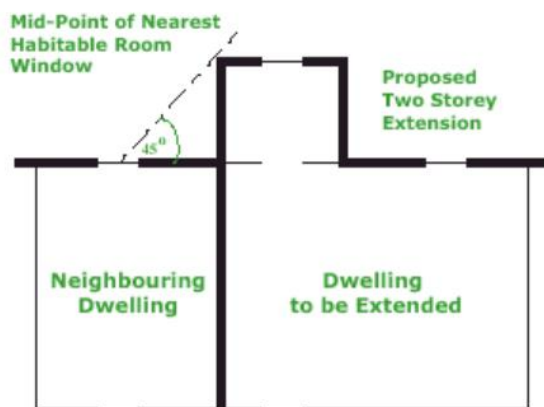


## 45-degree test

The 45-degree rule provides a simple way of considering the impact of design on windows in neighbouring properties flanking a proposed development of two or more storeys.

As with the 25-degree test, the 45-degree test is only applied to the principal windows in habitable rooms and is not normally applied to secondary windows. Similarly, the test is not applied to windows in non-habitable rooms. For the avoidance of doubt, the test is not applied to proposed single storey developments.

The 45-degree test is applied by drawing a line from the midpoint of the principal window of habitable rooms on the ground floor to the corner of the proposed development. If the proposed development does not encroach across the 45-degree line, then it is unlikely that the neighbour will experience an unacceptable loss of daylight or sunlight.



## Failure to comply with the 25-degree and/or 45-degree tests

Failure to comply with either or both 25 degree and 45-degree tests does not mean that the proposed development will automatically be refused. Other factors will be considered, for example, the distance between the proposed development and the relevant windows in the neighbouring property and the overall scale and massing of the new development. Consideration will also be given to any more detailed assessment of daylight and sunlight impacts submitted as part of the planning application.