

Application F/26/101013 – Inner Courtyard Separation Distance

Project No	Project Name	Client	Date
25069	Boorley Green Retirement Living	McCarthy & Stone	26/05/2026

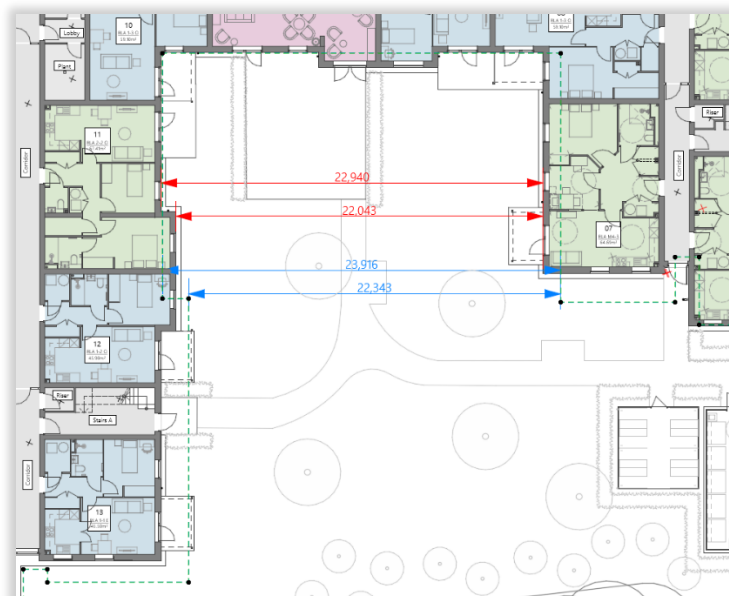
Re-Format, as architect to the scheme, notes the officer's observation that the separation distance between the inner courtyard elevations has been marginally reduced compared to the previous application (ref. F/24/97945) and responds as follows.

The Distances Proposed

As shown on the submitted floor plans, the separation distances across the courtyard in the current scheme are as follows:

- Between inner courtyard elevations (face to face): approximately 22.04m at the closest point and 22.94m at the wider dimension
- The previous scheme achieved approximately 22.34m and 23.91m respectively

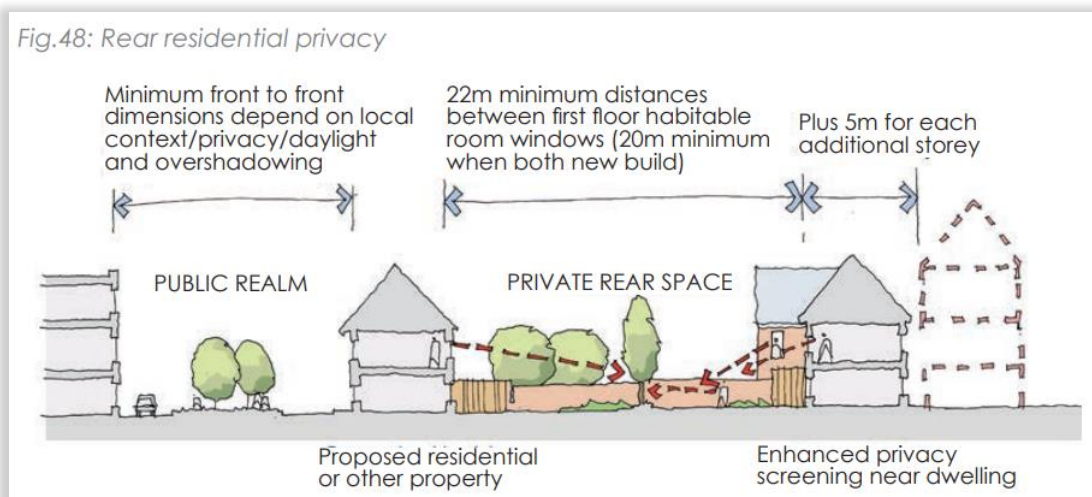
The reduction is therefore in the order of 300–980mm, representing a modest refinement arising from internal plan optimisation, and does not reflect any substantive change in the development's spatial approach.



Eastleigh Quality Places Design Guide – Applicable Standard

Eastleigh Borough Council's adopted Quality Places SPD sets out minimum separation distances between facing habitable room windows at Figure 48 on page 32. The guidance specifies a minimum of 22 metres in general circumstances, reducing to 20 metres where both facing buildings are new build, with an additional 5 metres required for each storey above first floor level.

As this is an entirely new-build scheme of three storeys to the inner courtyard, the strictly applicable standard under Quality Places would be $20\text{m} + 5\text{m} = 25\text{metres}$. Re-Format acknowledges that the proposed courtyard separation of approximately 22 metres does not meet this threshold as a matter of strict numerical compliance, and the following submissions are made in support of the view that this represents a justified and acceptable departure in the specific circumstances of this scheme.



The Courtyard Typology – A Materially Different Relationship

The Quality Places guidance on separation distances is explicitly framed around the relationship between facing habitable room windows, with particular reference to back-to-back and front-to-front residential arrangements between separate dwellings. The courtyard arrangement proposed here is a fundamentally different building typology and one that Quality Places itself identifies as a successful model for residential development, describing the perimeter block as the most effective layout for promoting permeability, legibility and a positive sense of place.

In a courtyard arrangement, the facing elevations do not address the private amenity space or rear gardens of neighbouring properties – they address a shared, landscaped communal courtyard that is an intentional and integral element of the design concept. The degree of enclosure that results is a deliberate quality of the form, not an incidental consequence of overdevelopment. It is submitted that applying the full back-to-back separation standard to this typology would be to misapply guidance designed for a different spatial relationship.

Design Measures Mitigating Separation

Notwithstanding the above, Re-Format draws attention to the following design measures that together serve to mitigate the effects of the reduced separation distance:

- The wings of the building are parallel but feature staggered ends, which serves to break the regularity of the facing elevations and reduce the extent of direct face-to-face sightlines between habitable room windows of opposing apartments
- The courtyard itself is generously landscaped with soft planting, which provides a degree of visual screening and contributes to a sense of enclosure that reads as an amenity rather than a constraint
- Projecting balconies articulate the inner elevations, breaking up the plane of facing windows and reducing the perception of direct overlooking
- The development is a specialist retirement living scheme for residents aged 60 and over, whose outlook onto an attractive, landscaped communal courtyard is a positive amenity feature rather than a source of harm

Daylight, Sunlight and Privacy

Re-Format is satisfied that the separation of approximately 22 metres across the courtyard provides an adequate standard of daylight and sunlight to facing habitable rooms, and that the level of privacy afforded to residents is appropriate to the courtyard typology and the nature of the development. The reduction of less than one metre compared to the previously considered scheme has no material impact on any of these considerations.

Conclusion

Re-Format submits that whilst the proposed courtyard separation distances do not meet the numerical standard set out in Quality Places when the additional storey increment is applied, this represents a justified departure in the specific circumstances of this scheme. The courtyard typology is materially different from the back-to-back residential relationships to which the guidance is principally directed; the enclosure proposed is an intentional and positive design quality; and the separation achieved of approximately 22 metres remains substantial and is supported by a range of design measures that together ensure an acceptable standard of amenity for future residents. We therefore request that this element of the scheme be accepted as submitted.