



*Minutes
of CPD*

FACT SHEET 1

25 And 45 Degree Rules of Thumb



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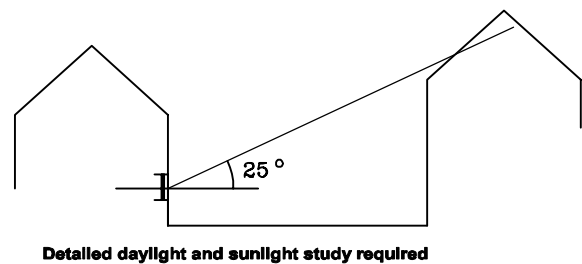
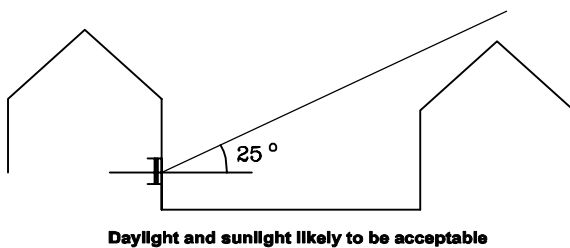


Local Planning Authorities will usually only approve a planning application if it does not have an adverse effect on daylight and sunlight to neighbouring properties. The daylight and sunlight tests normally used by Local Planning Authorities when considering planning applications are set out in the Building Research Establishment (BRE) document 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A guide to good practice (2022)'. The BRE guide gives two helpful rule of thumb tests which determine whether or not further detailed daylight and sunlight tests are required. The further detailed daylight and sunlight tests are covered in Fact Sheet 2.

Daylight and sunlight to neighbouring windows

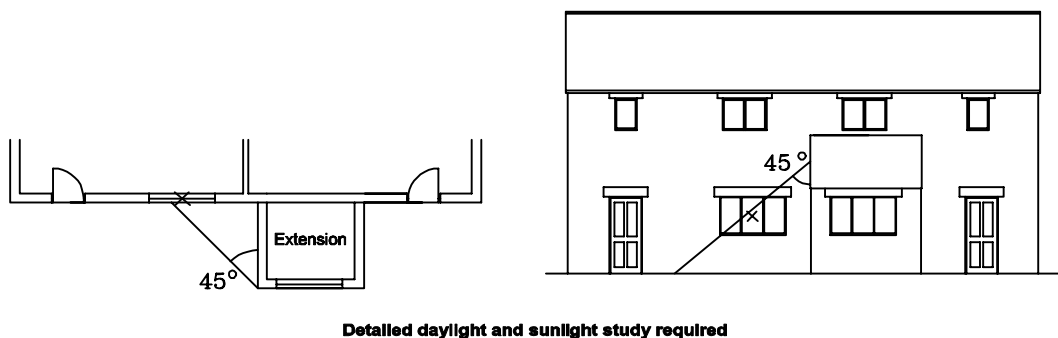
25 degree test

The 25° test is used where the development is opposite the window, as shown in the diagram below. The centre of the lowest habitable room window should be used as the reference point for the test. If the whole of the proposed development falls beneath a line drawn at 25° from the horizontal, then there is unlikely to be a substantial effect on daylight and sunlight. If the proposed development goes above the 25° line, it does not automatically follow that daylight and sunlight levels will be below standard. However, it does mean that further checks on daylight and sunlight are required. The further checks can be undertaken using the detailed BRE daylight and sunlight tests listed overleaf and covered in more detail in Fact Sheet 2.



45 degree test

The 45° test is used to check extensions that are perpendicular to a window - as in the example below.



If the centre of the neighbour's window lies on the extension side of both of the 45° lines (on plan and elevation), then the more detailed BRE tests are required. Otherwise, daylight and sunlight levels are unlikely to be adversely affected because light will continue to be received either over the roof, or beyond the end of the extension.

In the above example, the extension has a sloping roof. In this situation the BRE guide states that the height of the extension should be taken halfway along the slope of the roof.

The detailed BRE tests

Where the 25° or 45° tests are breached, daylight and sunlight levels should be checked using the BRE's detailed tests:

- Vertical Sky Component
- Daylight Distribution / No Sky Line (where room layouts are known)
- Daylight Provision (where Appendix F applies)
- Annual Probable Sunlight Hours (APSH)

The BRE guide also contains the Overshadowing to Gardens and Open Spaces test. This test can be applied where there is potential for overshadowing of outdoor amenity areas.

Daylight and Sunlight within the development

The 25° test can be adapted to check whether or not the proposed development will itself achieve an acceptable standard of daylight. The BRE guide gives the following advice on window design. If the obstruction angle is:

less than 25°, conventional window design will usually give reasonable results.

between 25° and 45°, special measures (enlarged windows, changes to room layout) are usually needed to provide adequate daylight.

between 45° and 65°, it is very difficult to provide adequate daylight, unless very large windows are used.

more than 65°, it is often impossible to achieve reasonable daylight, even if the whole window wall is glazed.

Notwithstanding the above rule of thumb guidelines, it is still often possible to achieve adequate daylight and sunlight (even with the larger obstruction angles noted above) using the following BRE tests as tools to guide the design:

- Daylight Provision
- Exposure To Sunlight

For full planning applications, the BRE's Overshadowing to Gardens and Open Spaces test can be applied to check the quality of proposed amenity areas. For prior approval permitted development applications, the statutory requirement is for habitable rooms to achieve adequate natural light. Since the rules do not extend to outdoor amenity areas, the overshadowing test does not usually form part of a planning assessment. However, it can still be useful to apply the test in order to facilitate good design.

Fact Sheet 2 gives more information on these tests. To maximise compliance with the tests, where possible, the following design features should be implemented:

- Light coloured interiors
- Large windows
- High transmittance glazing
- Shallow room depths
- South facing living room windows

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This fact sheet is intended as a general introduction to ideas and concepts only. It should not be treated as a definitive guide, nor should it be regarded as legal advice. For project specific advice, please contact us.

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