

North Tyneside Design Code: Apartments



North
Tyneside
Council

Apartment buildings can help increase density on individual plots or within larger developments. When well designed, they can add character, scale and definition to a site. The design codes in this section apply to all new apartment buildings. If your proposal is part of a larger housing development, the Residential Sites design codes must also be followed.

Many of the same principles apply to care homes and sheltered accommodation. However, these buildings are often larger, so their design must take particular account of the character of the surrounding streets and neighbourhood.

Objectives

- a) Respond positively to the local character of the area and help strengthen it.
- b) Provide high-quality accommodation for future residents.
- c) Safeguard the privacy, outlook and general amenity of neighbouring homes.
- d) Connect well to nearby communities, local facilities and public transport.
- e) Promote healthy, safe and walkable neighbourhoods.

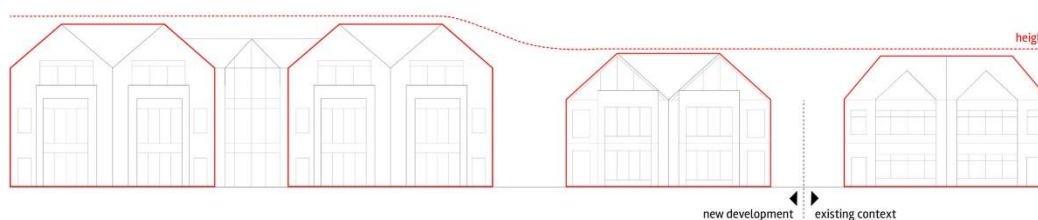
Apartment schemes will be considered well designed where they follow these design codes. If an alternative approach is proposed, it must be supported by clear evidence showing why it is the most appropriate solution for the site. Precedent alone is not a justification. Planning applications are assessed on their own merits against current planning policy and adopted guidance, which may change over time.

A1 Scale and building line

The position of apartment buildings should follow the established building line, and their scale must be appropriate to the site and the local context.



New development aligning in height with neighbouring buildings.



Building height stepping to respond to the existing context.

A2 Site topography

Proposals should respond positively to the site's topography. On sloping sites, buildings should be designed to step with the slope, with heights, entrance levels and rooflines adjusted to follow the street.

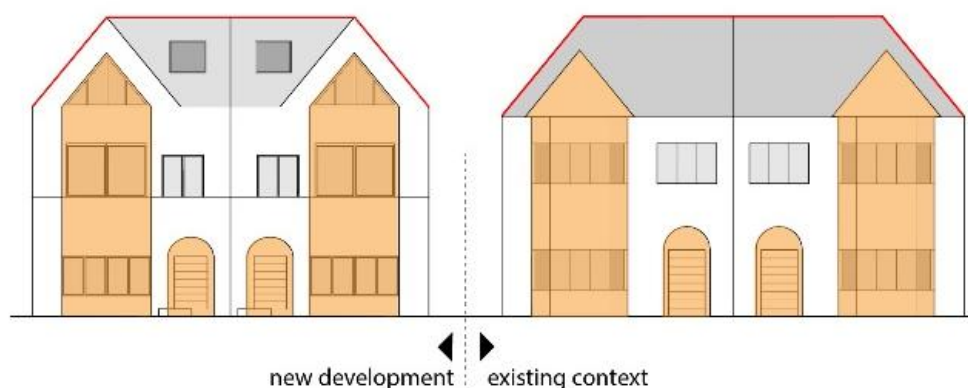


Buildings responding to site levels, maintaining visual interest and a strong relationship with the street.

A 3

Local character

The design should complement the architectural style and character of the area, referencing any repeating local architectural features where commonly present.



Replicating bay windows, roof styles and door arches from local context.

Examples of repeating local architectural features



Single-height bay windows, Wallsend.



Horizontal window proportions, Wideopen.



Curved bay windows with feature gables, Whitley Bay.

A 4

Roof type

Roof forms should reflect the common roof type found in the surrounding street or area. Where the local roofscape is mixed, there is greater scope for variation.

Replication of roof types



Examples of local roof types



Consistent hipped roof form across the street, Tynemouth.



Uniform pitched slate roofs defining local character, North Shields.



Consistent gable roof form across the street, Killingworth.

A 5

Active front elevation

The main elevation should face the primary public street, include windows that overlook it, and have a clear, well-defined and accessible entrance that is easily visible from the public realm.

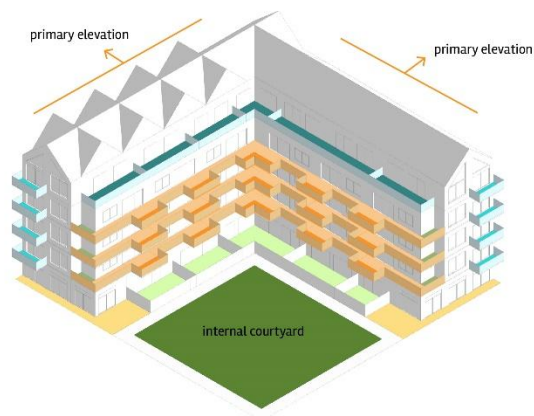


Well-defined building entrances clearly visible from the public street.

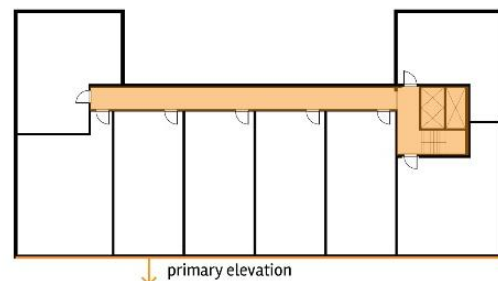
A 6

Deck access to apartments

Where deck access is proposed, it should be located on the rear elevation and designed as an integral part of the building's overall architecture.



Deck access facing internal private courtyard.



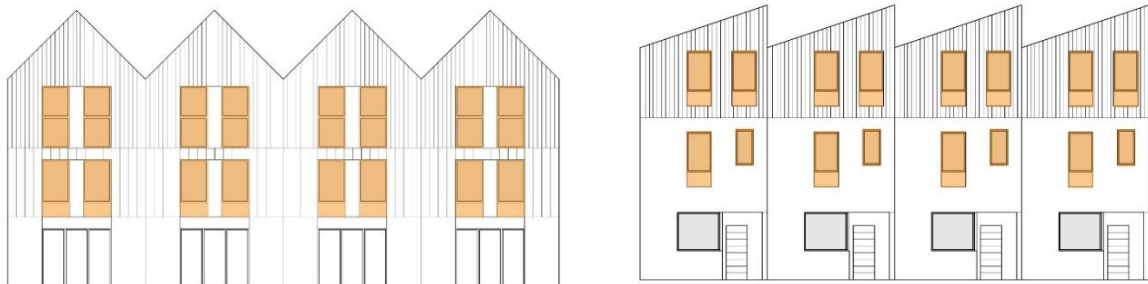
Deck access located away from the primary elevation.



Examples of deck access to secondary or internal elevations, integrated within the building design.

A 7 Window size and design

Window openings should typically form a substantial proportion of the front elevation and should be sufficient to provide visual interest, active frontages and appropriate levels of daylight, while remaining consistent with Building Regulations requirements.



Uniform and varied window arrangements creating visual interest and responding to the building design.





Window arrangements creating visual interest and responding to the overall building design.

A 8

Architectural features and detailing

Architectural features and detailing should be incorporated on the principal elevation to add visual interest. This may be achieved through projecting or recessed elements, including the careful design of windows and doors. Other forms of high-quality detailing, such as material variation, fenestration rhythm, lintels, string courses, or door surrounds, should also be used, particularly where these respond to local character.



Projecting gables and recessed balconies adding depth and articulation.



Projecting balconies creating visual interest and façade variation.



Bay windows adding depth and emphasis to the elevation.

Examples of traditional architectural detailing



Brick header and arch detailing.



Decorative brick courses and detailing.



Stone cills, headers and quoins.

Examples of contemporary architectural detailing



Feature brickwork patterns.



Timber cladding.



Louvres and screens.

A 9

Materials

The choice of building materials should complement common materials used in the street or local area. The extent to which these materials are incorporated will depend on the architectural style and the prominence of different materials in the site context. Where a range of local materials is present, there is greater scope for variation. Different materials can also be used to highlight specific architectural features.

Example of local materials



Evenly toned red bricks in Cullercoats.



Dark red bricks in Benton.



Smooth yellow-buff bricks in North Shields.



Smooth white bricks in Tynemouth.



Mottled red bricks in North Shields.

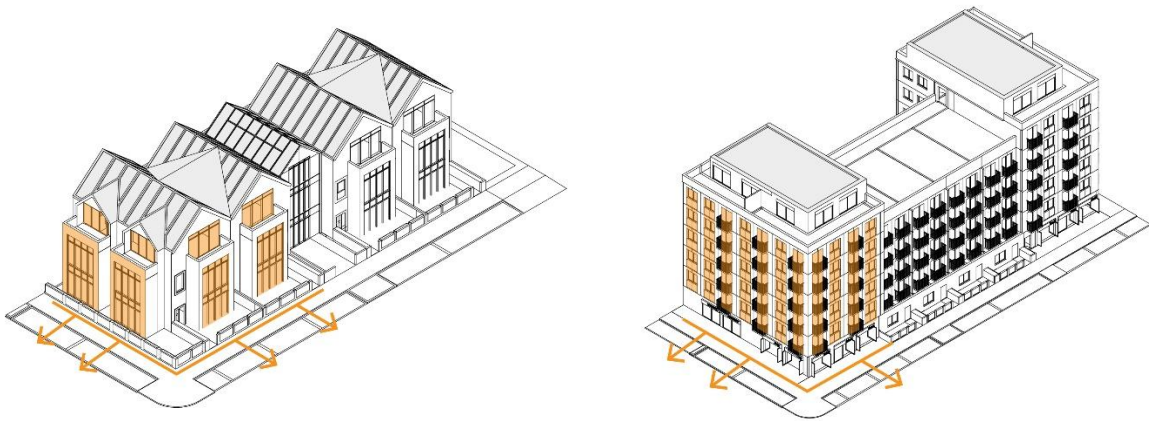


Roughcast render in Monkseaton.

A 10

Corner buildings

Corner buildings should provide active frontages, with habitable room windows addressing both streets to enhance the quality of the built environment and provide natural surveillance. Habitable rooms include living areas, kitchens and bedrooms. The design of corner buildings should ensure that the extent, proportion and specification of glazing on all elevations is appropriate to achieve high standards of energy efficiency and overall building performance.

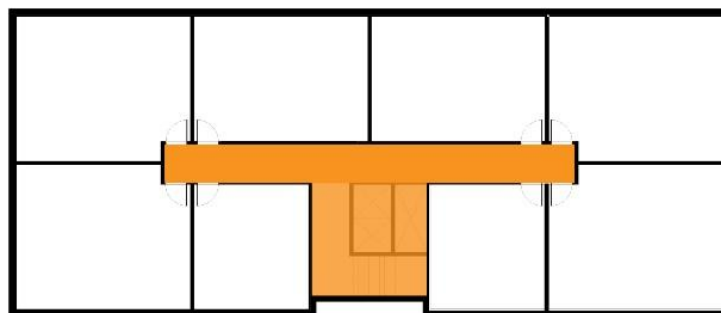


Corner buildings providing active frontages and windows to both streets, enhancing natural surveillance.

A 11

Corridors

Large apartment buildings should be arranged to limit the number of dwellings served by each circulation core, supporting resident interaction, safety, and legibility. As a guide, cores serving around 24 dwellings in total and approximately 8 homes per floor are often appropriate, although flexibility will be applied where justified by design quality.



Short corridors help create a more homely and neighbourly atmosphere. They also reduce the number of people affected by noise, disturbance or fire within any single part of the building.

A 12

Layout and noise mitigation

The design and layout of homes should minimise the impact of noise between neighbouring dwellings and support a high standard of residential amenity. While Building Regulations set minimum acoustic performance standards, these should be complemented by careful internal planning. Room layouts should be arranged to reduce noise transfer where practicable. This will typically include aligning similar room types vertically (such as kitchens above kitchens and bedrooms above bedrooms) and locating noise-sensitive spaces such as living rooms and bedrooms away from potential noise sources, including lifts and plant rooms.

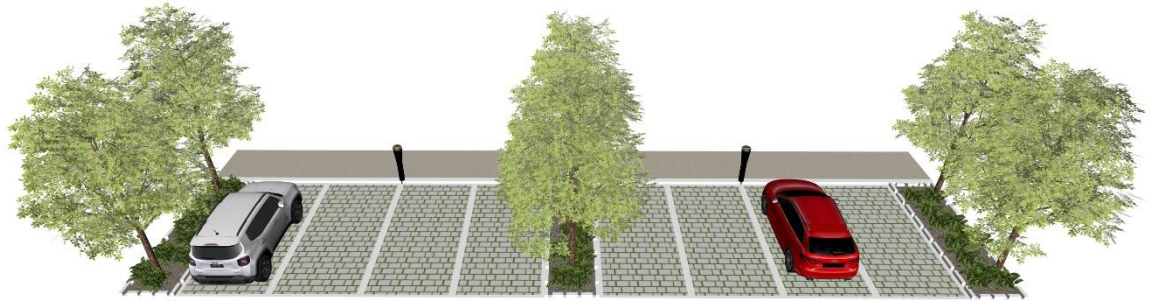
A 13

Car parking

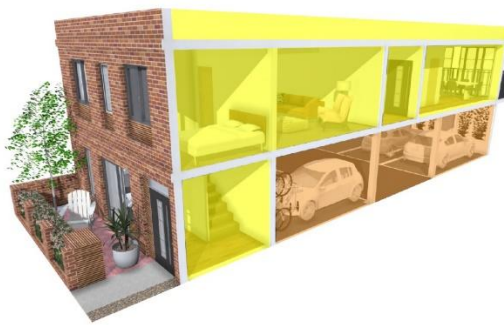
Car parking should be appropriate to the density and location of the development.

Suburban and rural areas – Courtyard parking is often the most suitable approach. Courtyards should be overlooked by apartments and have convenient, well-lit access points into the building. Parking bays should use block paving or other high-quality materials, and an area of landscaping should be provided for every five spaces.

Urban areas – Undercroft parking or underground parking is likely to be appropriate. Undercroft parking will be supported where it does not harm the street scene or compromise pedestrian safety. Underground parking should include an access-control system to prevent unauthorised entry.



Parking bays surfaced in good quality surface materials with supporting landscaping.

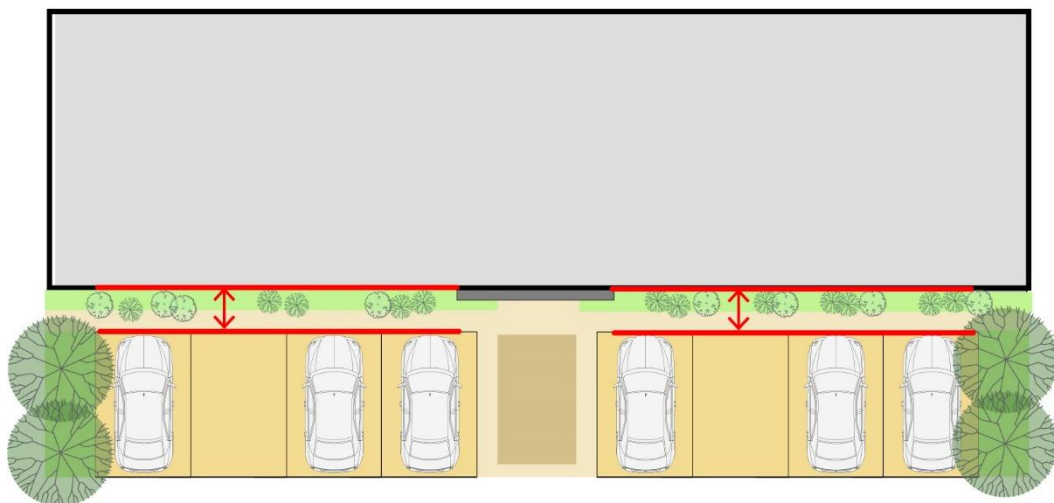


Undercroft parking at the rear with an active street scene to the front.

A 14

Proximity of car parking to windows

Car parking should be set back at least 1.5 metres away from ground floor windows.



A 15**Cycle storage**

Cycle storage should be located as close as possible to the main entrance for convenience. It should be covered, lockable and provide good protection from the weather. The store should be built from materials that match the wider development. Cycle storage and waste storage must be provided in separate enclosures.

A 16**Communal waste and recycling areas**

A suitable area for communal waste and recycling storage, including food waste, must be shown on the site plan. Where the store is integrated into the building, it must be accessed from the outside. If it is provided as a separate structure, it should use materials that match the wider development. Waste and recycling stores should be located away from windows and doors and served by a level area of hardstanding for easy access. Waste and cycle stores must be provided in separate enclosures.

A 17**Active frontages and entrances**

Buildings must provide an active frontage, with entrances that are easy to identify, accessible and located in a safe, secure position. In mixed-use buildings, residential and commercial entrances should be clearly distinguished from one another.



Separate entrances for apartments and mixed-use unit.



Entrances to apartments are clearly identified with colour or architectural features.

A 18

Nationally Described Space Standards

Planning drawings must demonstrate compliance with the Nationally Described Space Standards, including:

- a) Gross Internal Area (GIA) for each dwelling.
- b) Key room dimensions, particularly for bedrooms and principal living spaces.
- c) Indicative furniture layouts to demonstrate the functionality and usability of rooms, where this is not readily apparent from floor areas, dimensions or standard layouts.

Drawings should be sufficiently detailed to show that rooms are of adequate size, shape and layout, with appropriate circulation space, door swings and window positions.

A 19 External features

External features (including air source heat pumps, utility boxes, soil pipes, extractor vents and flues) should be located away from street-facing elevations. These features should either be colour-matched to the surface they are fixed to or appropriately screened. On larger apartment buildings, utility boxes should be located in plant rooms or service areas to minimise their visual and amenity impacts.

All vents, flues and extract terminals should be positioned to avoid causing nuisance to neighbouring properties and should not be discharged directly towards site boundaries where this would result in an unacceptable impact.

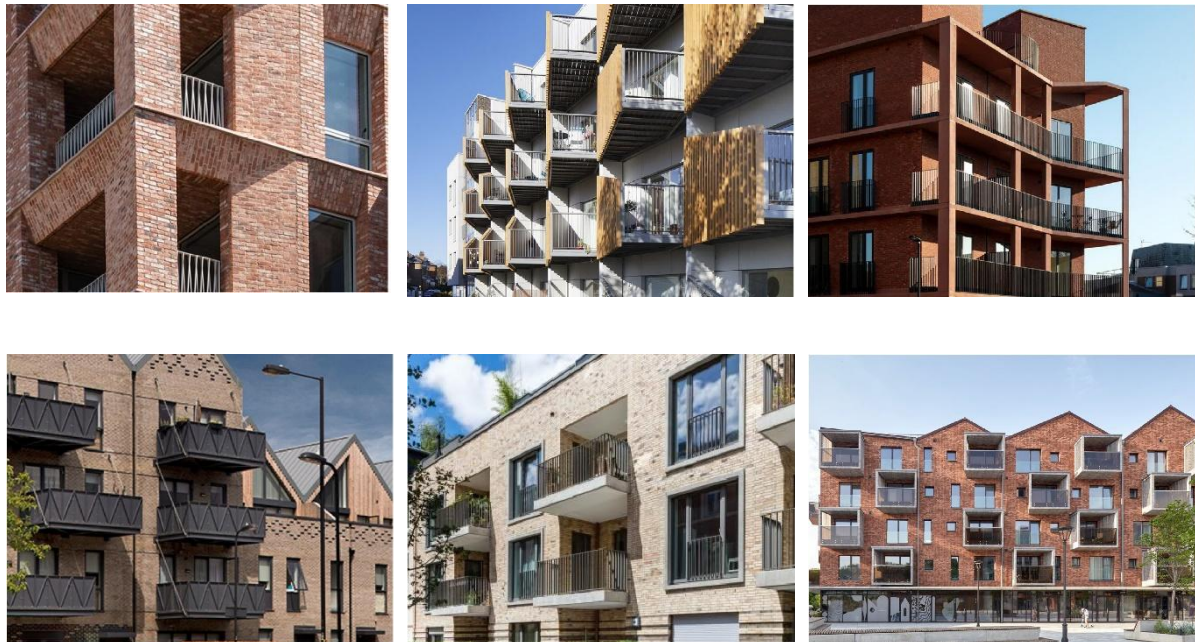
A 20 Solar panels

Where proposed, solar panels should be sensitively integrated into the design of buildings to minimise visual impact while supporting low-carbon energy. Panels should be located on less prominent roof slopes where possible, follow the pitch of the roof, and be arranged in a coherent, proportionate and, where appropriate, symmetrical layout. Installations should avoid dominating key architectural features or harming the character of the building or surrounding area, particularly in conservation areas.

A 21

Balconies

Apartments should include balconies or Juliet balconies that are designed as an integral part of the elevation. Where this is not possible, the development should provide an area of public open space on site.



Balconies integrated within building elevations, contributing to visual interest and façade design.

A 22

Electric vehicle charge points

Electric vehicle charge points should be erected on free standing poles at the end of the parking bay or boundary treatment. Charge points and parking spaces should be arranged to ensure that vehicles can be connected safely and conveniently, without obstructing access routes or footways.



Electric vehicle charging point located at boundary, integrated within parking layout.



Freestanding Electric vehicle charging point positioned at end of parking bay.

A 23

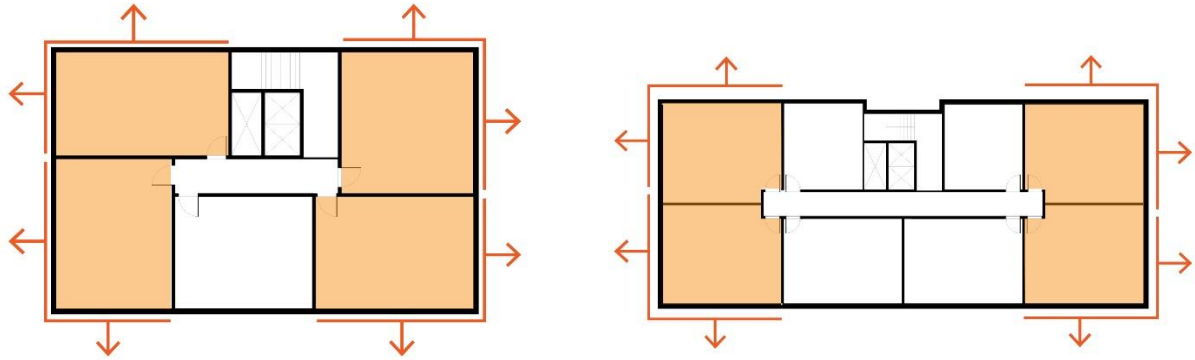
Quality of accommodation

New apartments must provide well-designed accommodation that is appropriately sized, accessible, and offers a good outlook, with rooms of suitable shape and layout. Main habitable rooms should receive adequate daylight, have an outlook that provides a reasonable sense of openness and avoids undue overlooking of blank walls or poorly designed spaces, and ensure suitable levels of privacy. Habitable rooms include living areas, kitchens, and bedrooms.

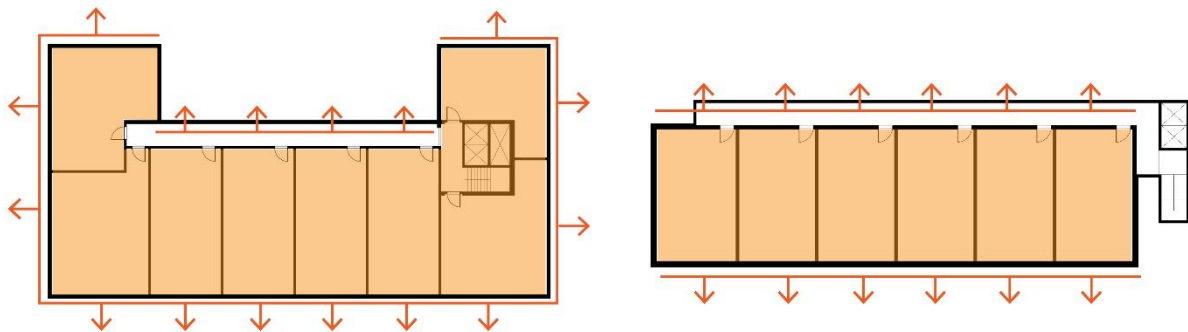
A 24

Dual aspect layouts

Apartments should be dual-aspect, with windows on two or more external walls. This improves daylight, supports natural ventilation, and reduces the risk of overheating. Where single-aspect apartments are proposed, applicants must demonstrate that a high standard of residential amenity is achieved, including adequate levels of natural light, ventilation, and thermal comfort.



Internal corridor layouts maximising dual-aspect apartments for improved daylight and ventilation.



Deck access layouts enabling dual-aspect apartments and natural ventilation.

Checklist

The Design Code is a key consideration when planning applications are assessed. The Design Code Compliance Checklist is a simple tool to help applicants explain how their proposals respond to these requirements. While completing the checklist is not mandatory, submitting it with your application can make the process clearer, quicker, and more robust.

Why complete the checklist?

- It clearly shows how your proposal meets the Design Code.
- It reduces the likelihood of follow-up questions from the Council.
- It helps avoid delays in the determination of your application.
- It strengthens your case if an application is refused and appealed.

Submitting a completed checklist at the point of application is the simplest way to demonstrate compliance with the Design Code and support a timely decision.

Design Code	Key points to address	Applicant Response
A 1 – Scale and building line	Follow established building line; ensure scale responds to site and local context	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 2 – Site topography	Respond to site levels	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 3 – Local character	Reflect architectural style and repeating local features where appropriate	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 4 – Roof type	Use roof forms that reflect local roofscape; variation acceptable in mixed contexts	☐ Yes ☐ No

A 5 – Active front elevation	Provide street-facing elevation with windows and clear, accessible entrance	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 6 – Deck access	Locate on rear elevation and integrate into building design	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 7 – Window size and design	Provide sufficient glazing for daylight, interest and active frontage	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 8 – Architectural features and detailing	Include features and detailing to add visual interest and respond to context	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 9 – Materials	Use materials that complement local context; variation acceptable where appropriate	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 10 – Corner buildings	Provide active frontages on both elevations with appropriate glazing	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 11 – Corridors	Limit number of dwellings per core; support safety, interaction and legibility	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 12 – Layout and noise mitigation	Design layouts to reduce noise transfer and protect amenity	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 13 – Car parking	Provide parking appropriate to location, density and design approach	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 14 – Parking proximity	Set parking at least 1.5m from ground floor windows	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 15 – Cycle storage	Provide secure, covered storage near entrances; separate from waste	☐ Yes ☐ No

A 16 – Communal Waste and recycling	Provide accessible, well-located communal storage; separate from cycle storage	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 17 – Active frontages and entrances	Provide clear, safe and accessible entrances; distinguish uses in mixed schemes	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 18 – Space standards	Demonstrate compliance with NDSS	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 19 – External features	Locate services away from street frontages	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 20 – Solar panels	Integrate panels into design; minimise visual impact and avoid harm to character	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 21 – Balconies	Provide balconies or alternative shared open space; integrate into design	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 22 – EV charge points	Provide safe, convenient and well-integrated EV charge points	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 23 – Quality of accommodation	Provide well-designed homes with good outlook and privacy	☐ Yes ☐ No
A 24 – Dual aspect	Provide dual aspect layouts; justify single aspect with high amenity standards	☐ Yes ☐ No
Further information in support of your answers		

North Tyneside Design Code

North Tyneside Council

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