part 8
adaptability


HAVELOCK
CHAMBERS

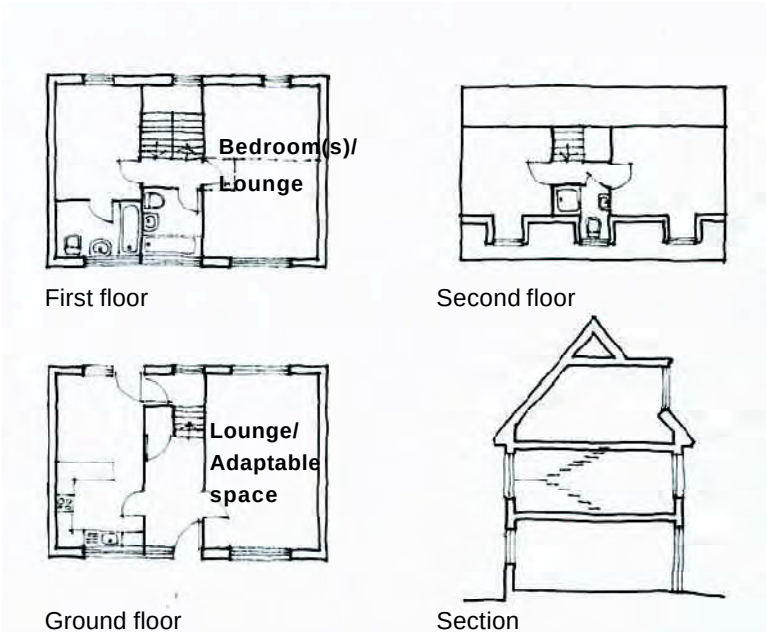
8 ADAPTABILITY

8.1 Homes should be designed so as not to limit opportunities for adaptation in the future.

8.1.1 An adaptable home is one that can be changed or modified at minimum cost to suit the changing needs of its occupants, such as running a business from home, provision of a garage or workshop, needs of a growing family, caring for relatives or simply adapting a home to maintain mobility and independence. An adaptable home often removes the need to relocate to alternative accommodation.

8.1.2 Plots and buildings with wide frontages give greatest opportunity for adaptation, allowing the potential for separate access to a converted part of the home e.g. a garage or to a new extension. However an alternative solution can be achieved using narrow plots with access at the rear where a garage, workshop or elderly person annex could be provided.

8.1.3 Consideration should be given to other spaces that might be required, especially where dwellings are grouped together, for example in a block of apartments. These might be shared meeting spaces, parking for shared and pooled cars or vans and concierge services.



Sketch plans and section for a wide frontage compact adaptable house, that could be built initially without the second floor built out, saving cost and allowing future residents to adapt when needed. The lounge space can also be modified as a garage, workshop or small elderly person annex and the first floor space above modified as appropriate.

Narrow plots that front onto and back onto a street can be developed at both front and back giving potential for separate accesses, such as this 'back of pavement' development - Harlow

Mobility houses, houses offering easy access to people with mobility diabilities, Southampton

These sketches are for a new development at Derwenthorpe, York where all homes will be built to Lifetime Home Standards. Designed by PRP Architects for Joseph Rowntree Foundation
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8.2 Lifetime Homes

8.2.1 **The design of new homes should conform, where practicably possible, to the sixteen Lifetime Homes Principles as devised by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Lifetime Homes Group.**

8.2.2 The Lifetime Homes Concept was developed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Lifetime Homes Group following their concern about the quality of British Housing and how inaccessible and inconvenient many homes were for their occupants, especially families with young children, the elderly and those with temporary or permanent disabilities.

8.2.3 A lifetime home has sixteen key design features to ensure that it will meet the needs of most households. This does not mean that every home is full of features that aren't needed, but that the homes can be easily adapted to meet the unexpected needs that arise in life.

8.2.4 Some of these standards are not relevant under planning legislation as they impact on the interior design of the home, however they may be required under Building Regulations, and are included here as guidance for best practice to allow access for all.

8.2.5 **The sixteen design standards are:**

1. Where there is car parking adjacent to the home, it should be capable of enlargement to attain 3300mm width.
2. The distance from the car parking space to the home should be kept to a minimum and should be level or gently sloping.
3. The approach to all entrances should be level or gently sloping.
4. All entrances should: be illuminated, have level access over the threshold and have a covered main entrance;
5. Communal stairs should provide easy access and where homes are reached by a lift, it should be fully wheelchair accessible.
6. The width of the doorways and hallways should be at least 750mm in a straight run; wider for awkward configurations.
7. There should be space for turning a wheelchair in dining areas and living rooms and adequate circulation space for wheelchair users elsewhere.
8. The living room should be at entrance level.

9. In houses of two or more storeys, there should be space on the entrance level that could be used as a convenient bed-space.
10. There should be a wheelchair accessible entrance level WC, with drainage provision enabling a shower to be fitted in the future.
11. Walls in bathrooms and toilets should be capable of taking adaptations such as handrails.
12. The design should incorporate provision for a future stair lift, a suitably identified space for a through-the-floor lift from the ground to the first floor, for example to a bedroom next to a bathroom.
13. The design should provide for a reasonable route for a potential hoist from a main bedroom to the bathroom
14. The bathroom should be designed to incorporate ease of access to the bath, WC and wash basin.
15. Living room window glazing should begin at 800mm or lower and windows should be easy to open/ operate.
16. Switches, sockets, ventilation and service controls should be at a height usable by all (i.e. between 450 and 1200mm from the floor).

For further information please refer to Chapter 8 (page 113) The Development Design Guide - Southampton City Centre, February 2004.

8.3 Live/Work

8.3.1 **Developers should consider the inclusion of live/work units in new developments.**

This housing has been designed with integral work units accessed directly from each dwelling. The work unit is on the left of this photo - BedZed

The work unit elevations are in the centre of this photo and have a grass roof providing amenity space for the house on the opposite side of the street - BedZed

The bridge access to the grass roof of the work units form an attractive arcade to the street - BedZed

8.3.2 In recent years advances in communications technology coupled with increased time spent travelling and the relative high costs of travelling and office space have increased the amount of people choosing to work from home. Working from home has traditionally been small-scale with a room or an out building being converted into an office or business use for one or two of its residents, and is generally acceptable for residential use.

8.3.3 "Live/work" units are different; they are designed specifically to allow more intensive business uses, such as art studios and workshops. This may be in terms of the amount of space devoted to work use or that the work element is designed to accommodate more workers than just the resident, and may be set up to encourage business growth.

8.3.4 Home based businesses, such as physiotherapy, catering or car repair that generate nuisance to neighbours due to high levels of visiting customers, odours or noise will not normally be permitted in residential environments. However, these sorts of uses can be accommodated within a live/work development if they have been specifically designed to meet these demands.

8.3.5 The City Council will normally control the uses and the intensity of uses that occur in live/work schemes through planning conditions or a Section 106 agreement.