1. Architectural Details

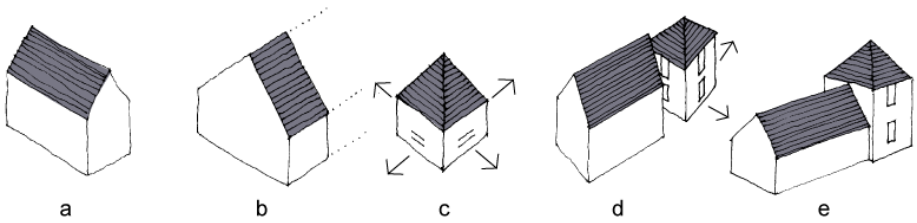
Getting the architectural details right is critical to ensuring new developments are appropriate to the setting and context. The Essex Design Guide includes a series of key principles which should be applied any new development. Noise, daylight, rear privacy and garden size are all important elements in designing appropriate developments which address key habitual needs. While elevation design, materials and fenestration design all seek ensure that building designs is based on.

Building Form

1.1 This section considers the form and design of individual buildings, a matter of architecture. Because a major proportion of the new buildings constructed in Essex are not designed by anyone with formal architectural training, it is legitimate to set out the design requirements of the planning authority.

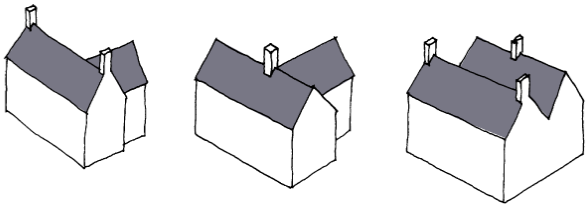
Regional Building Forms

1.2 The traditional buildings of Essex are typically made up of rectangular rather than square plan forms, with pitched roofs spanning the narrower plan dimension. Such spans are rarely greater than 6.5m in width, but more usually of the order of 5m. In order to fit in with the existing urban landscape of Essex, new buildings should also employ these forms and dimensions.



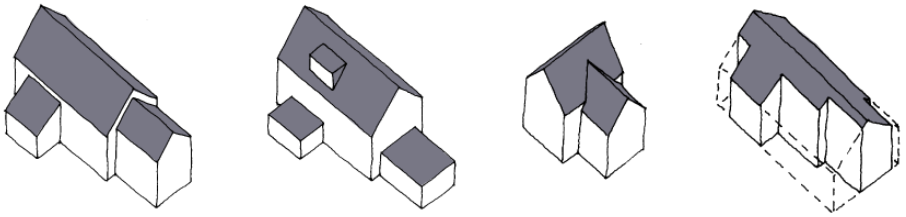
a. Roof pitches should follow the vernacular pattern and span across the narrowest plan dimension
b. Roofs like this should be avoided, as in the Essex context they appear incomplete
c. Square plan forms suggest a pyramid roof and each elevation should be treated equally
d. Such square plan forms need to be isolated in space as they otherwise appear uncomfortable in conjunction with other structures
e. One exception is with abutting blocks, where this problem is less apparent

1.3 Buildings of more complex form should be combine such forms to create (for example) L-plans, T-plans or deeper plan forms made up of parallel ranges. In all cases, each element of the plan should have a roof pitched over the shorter dimension. Such roofs should typically be pitched at approximately 50°.



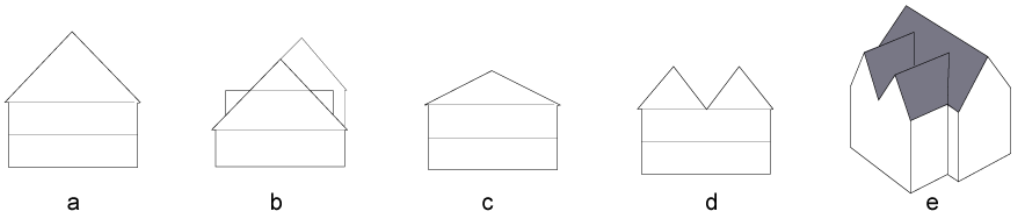
Complex forms

1.4 Each building should be composed of a 'family' of forms, with roofs of similar pitch and without discordant flat-topped elements. In any such combination of forms, there should be a principal element to which subsidiary elements are added. Complex plans should not be enclosed in an enveloping volume out of which pieces are cut to create subtractive forms.



Families of form

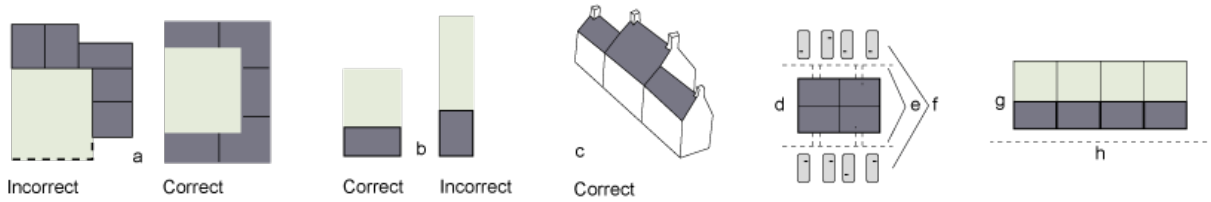
1.5 The use of deep-plan (i.e. more than 5m deep) buildings roofed with a single span results in wide gable ends uncharacteristic of traditional buildings in Essex. It can also lead to roofing problems. With the roof pitched at 50°, the depth of the plan creates an uneconomically large roof space. This can then lead to the temptation to lower the eaves level and place the upper storey within the roof. Another undesirable solution is to slacken the roof pitch to an extent uncharacteristic of traditional buildings. The traditional solution to the deep-plan form is to use parallel roof spans.



a. Uneconomically large roof space
b. Lowering of eaves with upper storey in roof
c. Untraditional slack roof pitch
d. Traditional solution: parallel roof-spans
e. Traditional solution: projecting gables

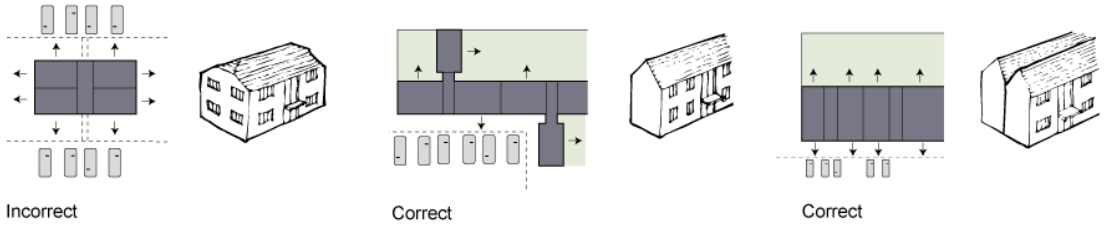
1.6 Deep-plan terraces are best avoided altogether, as the resulting narrow frontage to each dwelling means less frontage width is available for enclosing urban space. Rear gardens also have to be made inordinately long and thin to provide the minimum required area. However, if deep-plan terraces are unavoidable, the gable ends should be concealed.

1.7 Sometimes, the deep-plan form results from the placing of small dwellings back-to-back. This is seldom a satisfactory solution, due to the lack of a private garden side to the dwelling, the need to bring car parking close to both sides of the building and the impossibility of joining such a block to other buildings (due to there being windows on all sides). Small dwellings are therefore better arranged in normal terraces.



a. Deep-plan houses result in less frontage width available for enclosing space
b. Deep-plan houses result in longer, thinner gardens for the same garden area
c. Gable ends of deep-plan terrace concealed by shallow plan houses on ends
d. Lack of private garden
e. Car parking both sides
f. Small dwellings back-to-back
g. Street
h. Small dwellings in terrace

1.8 The placing of flats back-to-back results in the same problems of wide gable ends and difficulty in joining blocks together to enclose space. Furthermore, a block of flats with aspects in all directions increases problems of overlooking. Blocks one flat deep are thus a better and more flexible solution. If roads, car parks and access are located on both sides of a block of flats, this can result in a lack of screened amenity space suitable for sitting out. Sufficient space for amenity use should be provided adjacent to the building on at least one side.



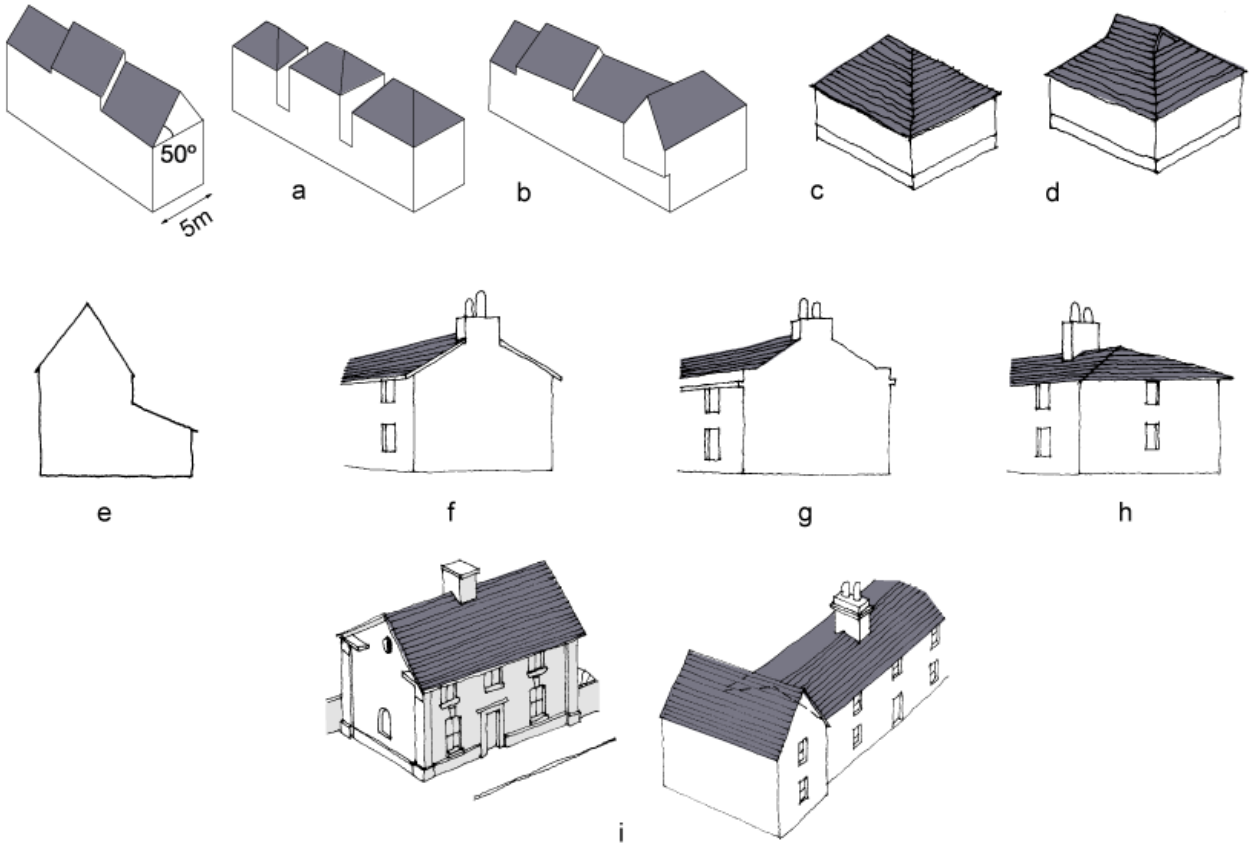
Flats

1.9 Typically, in order to conform to the traditional Essex roofscape, roofs should be pitched at approximately 50° over spans not exceeding 5m. Such roofs are more attractive gabled than hipped. The use of hips on both ends of a house gives it a suburban look and makes it difficult to integrate into the street scene. Hips should therefore be used sparingly, for example on the rear end of a cross wing, or on a freestanding house. A hipped roof at the end of a terrace will lead the eye round and provide continuity into the adjoining street.

1.10 Roof pitches in the range 35°-40° may be used in exceptional circumstances, for example for a rear lean-to or a deeper plan house. In the latter case, this roof pitch should only be used in conjunction with either a wide eaves overhang or a parapet, as well as with substantial chimney stacks centred on the ridge-line.

1.11 If the stack is not situated on the gable end, it should be centrally positioned and the gable should be replaced by a hip with a wide eaves overhang. Centrally placed windows on the end elevation can help break up the width.

1.12 In the case of a longer terrace or the important exposed end of a deep-plan house with 36°-40° pitched roof, the treatment of the gable end may be strengthened by brick relief detail, to give the impression of a pediment resting on corner pilasters (see picture K). These measures will bring such a building into the vocabulary of forms typical of the 19th century and frequently encountered in Essex. In such cases, slates should be used in roofing. It may also be preferable to conceal an otherwise unsightly wide gable end with a front-to-back cross wing at right angles, thereby presenting a narrow gable to the street.



a. Hips are difficult to integrate into street scene
b. Correct use of a hip in the urban context
c. Hips with a short ridge should be avoided
d. Gables can sometimes provide a solution
e. Shallower roof pitch on rear lean-to
f. Deeper plan with eaves overhang
g. Deeper plan with parapet eaves
h. Deeper plan with eaves overhang
i. Narrow, steep-pitched cross wing conceals wide, shallow-pitched gable end