

balcony and terrace design guide



We all need to get out more...

In recent years we have all been reminded of the value of outdoor space, and how it can make a big difference to the quality of everyday life, and particularly for those of us living in apartment blocks, duplexes, and terraced homes.

Balconies that are large enough to sit, eat and socialise upon can make a big difference to the liveability of a home. When combined with generous glazing opening onto the balcony, it allows residents to open up their homes and expand their available living space in summer months to live more comfortably.

Balconies can also provide an important technical function, as part of the external envelop, helping to control daylight, direct solar access and overheating, as well as supporting privacy and the impacts of noise from the street below.

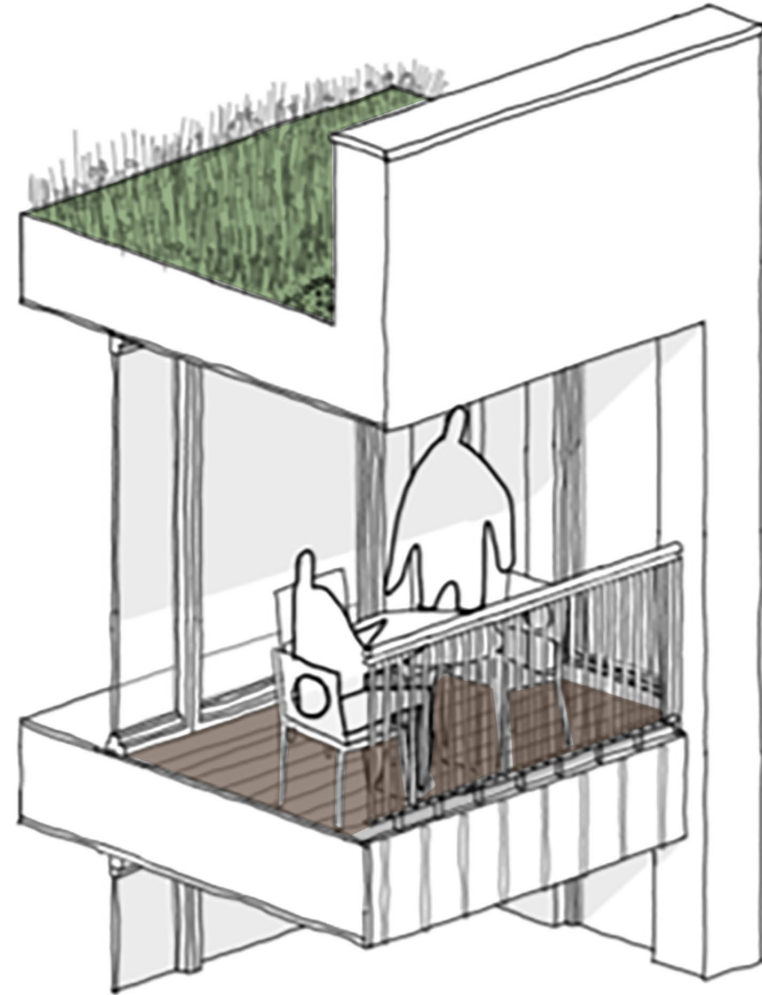
Balconies are also highly prominent within the street and are often the defining architectural feature for apartment blocks. Historically, the balcony was designed as a richly articulated element, that was used to add identity and distinctiveness to a building's character, however in recent years many buildings have used more basic, prosaic and standardised structural design and balustrading details.



Balcony and terrace design objectives

The Design and Access Statement should demonstrate how the scheme meets all four design objectives listed below. This short guide includes guidance for each of the objectives, which should be used to demonstrate how the scheme meets each objective.

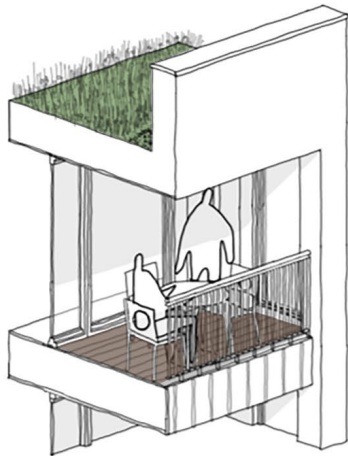
1. **Type of balcony or terrace:** Must respond to the orientation of the façade to maximise daylight, and balance solar access and shading into the apartment to minimise the risk of overheating.
2. **Visual appearance:** of the balcony structure, soffit and balustrading must reflect the building's design narrative, and contribute to the distinctive identity of the building within the street.
3. **Size:** Balconies and terraces must provide a space large enough for all apartment residents to be able to sit outside and dine comfortably.
4. **Privacy:** Design must mediate direct views onto the private outdoor space and the outlook from the space, to manage residents and neighbours' privacy and help to conceal stored items, particularly on balconies.



1 Type of outdoor space: The choice of outdoor space must respond to the orientation of the façade and local climactic conditions to maximise daylighting, balance access to sunlight with shading, and minimise the risk of overheating.

Choosing an appropriate type of outdoor space >

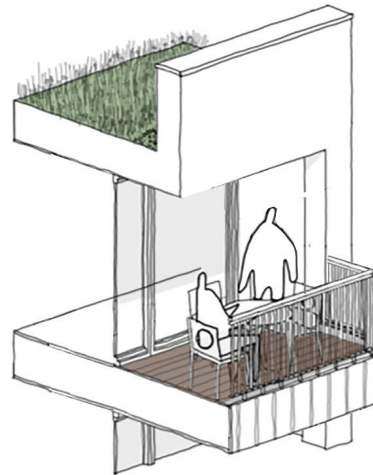
Inset Balconies



1.1

Inset balconies are best located on southern and westerly facades, where the impacts of their significant shading on the daylighting of internal rooms may be offset by access to direct sunshine. They can also be used to provide shelter from strong prevailing winds.

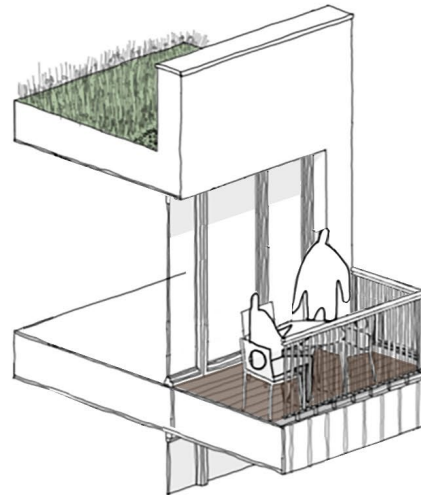
Semi-inset Balconies



1.2

Semi-inset balconies offer the best of both worlds, with good levels of shading and daylighting, while also offering more privacy for residents, and can be used in any orientation.

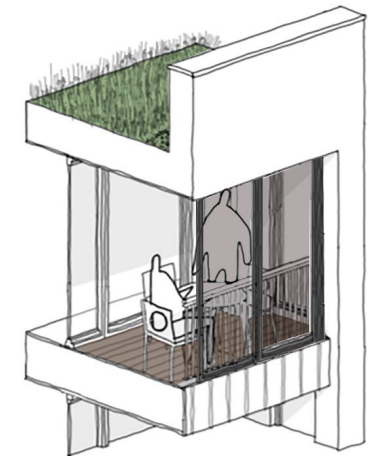
Projecting Balconies



1.3

Projecting balconies are better suited on north and east facing elevations, as they provide less shading than inset balconies, ensuring good daylighting to internal rooms.

Enclosed 'winter gardens'



1.4

Enclosed balconies / winter gardens can be particularly helpful in mitigating surrounding noise from busy streets, or neighbouring industrial facilities, as well as at higher levels where wind speeds may be problematic at certain times.

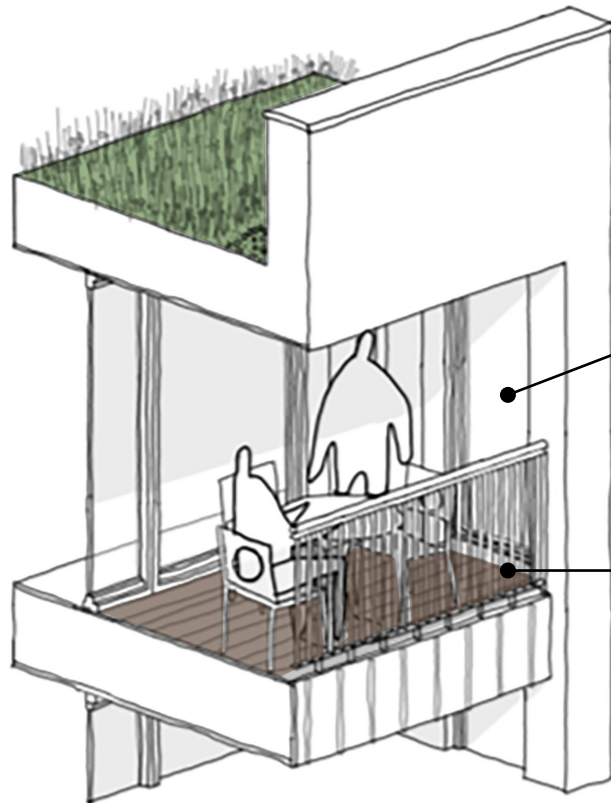
1.5

Above 6 storeys, wind speeds should be analysed to ensure balconies are usable by residents. Where high winds are expected, winter gardens may also be a practical option.

1.1 Type of outdoor space // Inset balconies

Inset balconies are generally preferred by residents, who find they offer enhanced privacy and shelter from the elements and are thus able to use them more throughout the seasons.

By inseting the balcony back from the façade, the contents of the balcony are also less visible from the street and by neighbours.



Materiality and colour of inset side walls and soffits should reflect light into the rear, to enhance daylighting within the room.

Although less prominent in inset balconies, the balustrade design should still reflect the design narrative.

Case Study

Clay Farm, Cambridge

PRP Architects

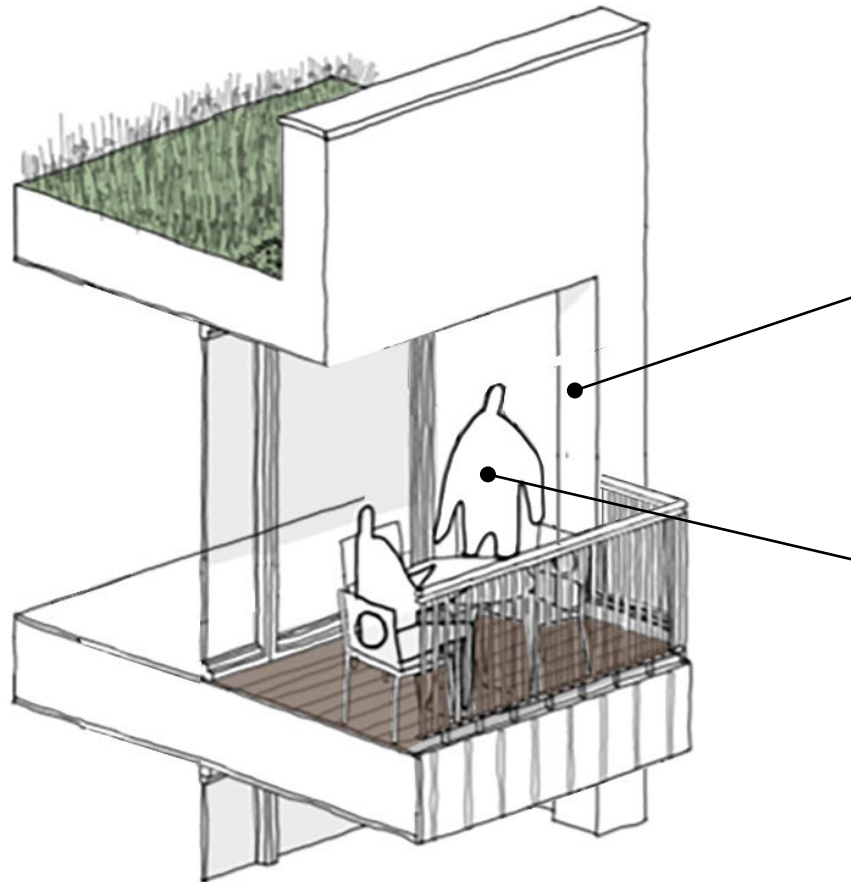
Inset balconies are used within the design narrative of a rural barn vernacular, with the inset balcony's side walls, fascia and balustrading carefully detailed to provide clean, simple lines.



1.2 Type of outdoor space // Semi-inset balconies

Semi-inset balconies trade-off a reduction in privacy and shelter for greater daylighting to the room at the rear of the balcony and are a good allrounder for all orientations.

The semi-recess also requires less of the building's internal footprint to be given over to balcony and is therefore a more viable solution in schemes.



Setback creates short side walls, which are perfect to incorporate storage avoiding clutter on the balcony itself.

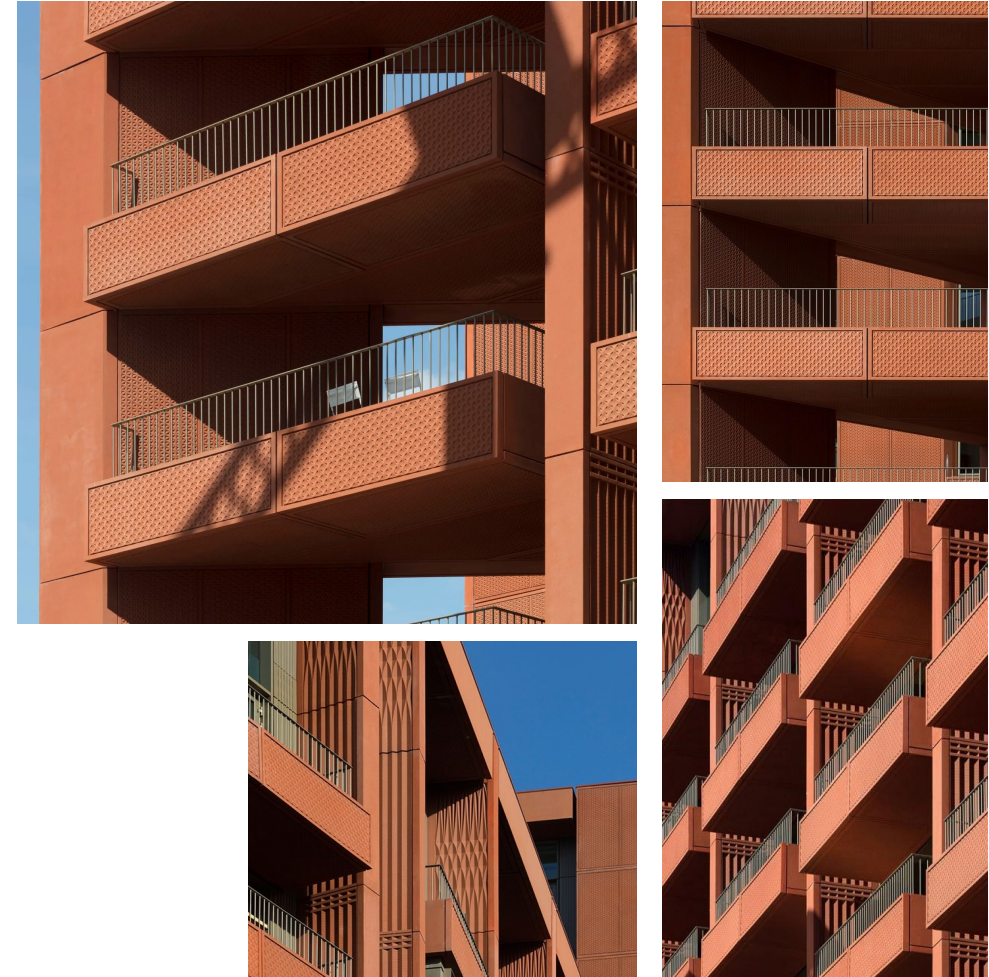
Some of the balcony footprint is set back from the façade, providing more privacy and shelter at the back of the balcony.

Case Study

Tapestry, Kings Cross, London

Niall Mcloughlin Architects

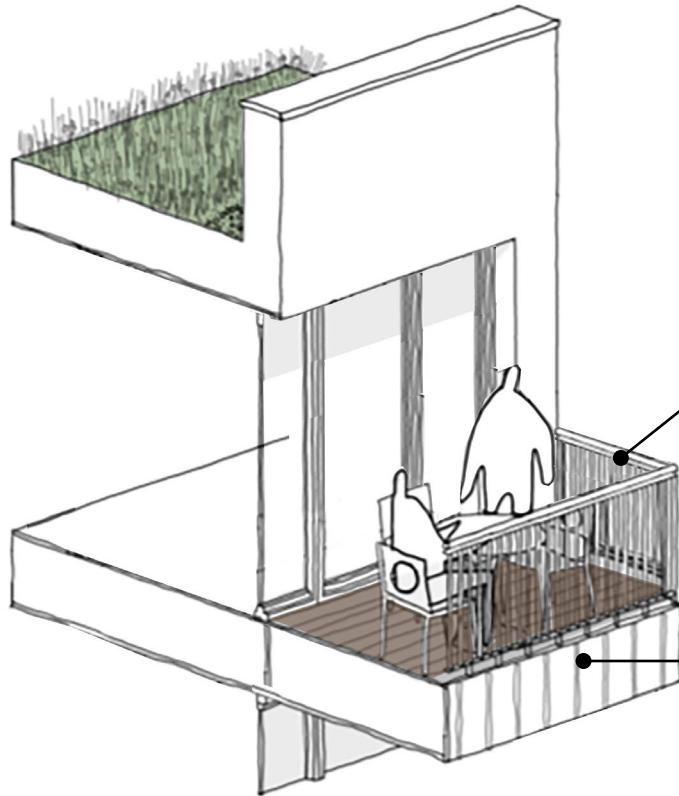
Inset balcony uses a 50/50 combination of solid textured cladding panels to conceal clutter and provide enhanced privacy for residents, with steel bars to enhance daylighting and views out.



1.3 Type of outdoor space // Projecting Balconies

Projecting balconies work well on northern facades where they still provide daylight from the sides to ensure adequate natural light to the internal room.

However, the projection of the balcony in front of the façade leads to reduced levels of privacy and concealment of items on the balcony. This needs to be factored into the design of balustrading, with more opaque balustrading preferred to mitigate these issues.



Choice of balustrade needs to provide privacy and conceal items stored on the balcony.

The detailing of the balcony deck, fascia and soffit become more prominent and need careful detailing.

Case Study

Great Kneighton, Cambridge
Proctor Matthews Architects

Projecting balconies to townhouses have been designed to respond to the agricultural vernacular design narrative of the houses, using a brick base and a timber structure with louvers to upper storeys to incorporate the balcony into the language of the house.

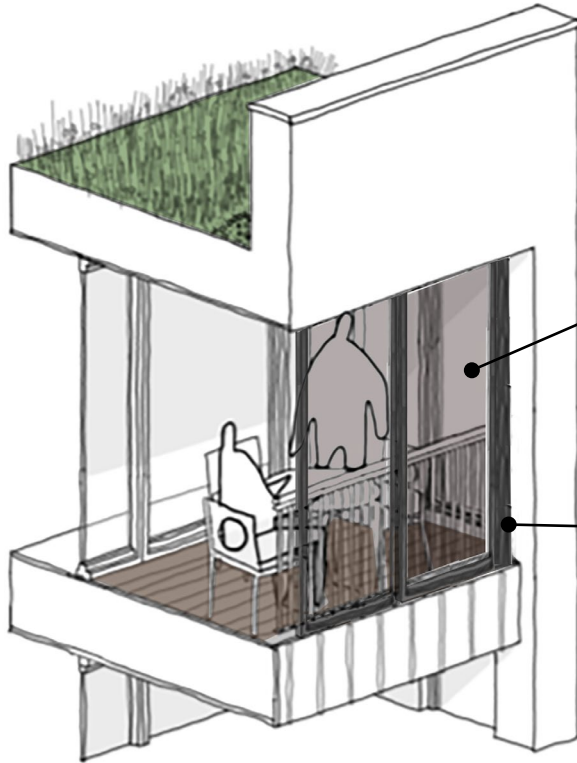


1.4 Type of outdoor space // Enclosed balcony / 'winter garden'

The introduction of a clad or glazed façade to the front of the balcony creates an enclosed space, or 'winter garden'.

This provides residents with much greater levels of shelter and privacy, allowing the space to be used throughout the year. This option should also be used where high winds might prevent outdoor space being used at all.

The area of any winter garden is additional to internal space requirements and should not be included within the gross internal floor area calculations.



The enclosed balcony is usually designed as an inset balcony, with an additional layer of glazing or cladding.

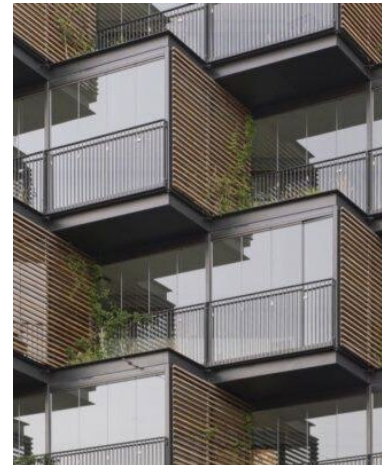
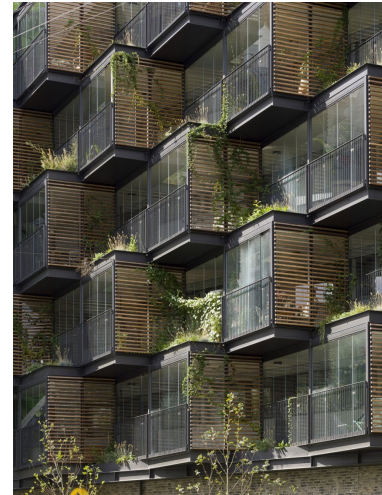
There are a broad range of design approaches to the enclosure, from fully glazed walls, to sliding and bifold doors, which can open up to allow the space to function as a normal balcony in warmer months.

Case Study

Orsted Gardens, Copenhagen

Tegnestuen Architects

The refurbishment of this apartment block has introduced winter garden balconies to this block in central Copenhagen, which were chosen to shield residents from the noisy road below, as well as provide outdoor space that could be used throughout winter.



2 Visual appearance : The appearance of the balcony structure, soffit and balustrading must reflect the building's design narrative, and contribute to the distinctive identity of the building within the street.



2.1

Aim to design balconies so they are inset or cantilever from the building, rather than relying on a self-supporting structural frame, to avoid cluttering the façade, particularly at ground floor level.



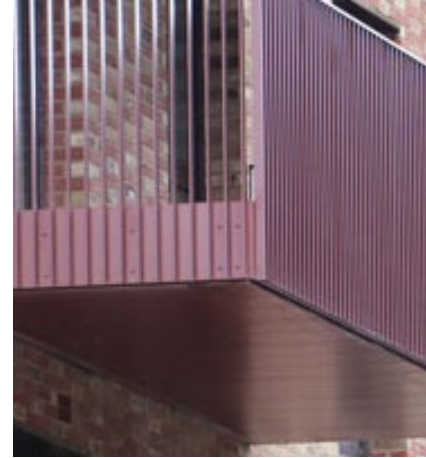
2.2

Structure: Any proposed self-supporting structural frame should be designed to reference the building narrative.



2.3

Staggering balconies between floors on north and eastern elevations will help maximise daylighting into rooms.



2.4

Soffit: Provide an attractive soffit to the underside of all balconies to conceal drainage and structure.

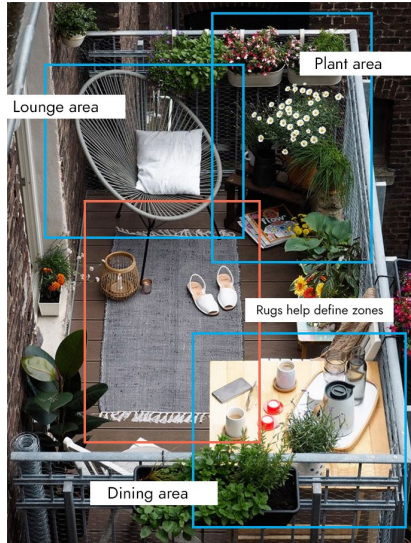


2.5

Balustrading: Avoid basic bar-based balustrades and seek to develop a distinctive balustrade design different to surrounding buildings, and informed by your design narrative*

*Design of balustrade needs to carefully consider climbability and meet local building regulations.

3 Size and comfort: Balconies and roof terraces must provide a space large enough for residents to be able to sit outside and dine comfortably together.



3.1

All private balconies and roof terraces must provide a generous balcony, that is larger than 5 m² for each 1–2-person dwelling, plus 1 m² for each additional occupant over 2 persons.



3.2

All balconies and roof terraces must have a minimum depth and width of 1500 mm.



3.3

All balconies and roof terraces must be accessible from the main living space and should aim to provide level and accessible thresholds.



3.4

All balconies must incorporate drainage that drains to a downpipe integrated into the façade to avoid dripping onto balconies below, as well as people at ground floor.

4 Managing privacy and views: Balconies and roof terraces must mediate direct views onto and from them, to manage residents and their neighbour's privacy, whilst helping to conceal items stored on them.



4.1

The design of balustrading should balance openness with enclosure, to preserve views out and mitigate views in. Sections of opaque balustrading within a balcony provides a 'storage zone' that can conceal clutter from everyday view.



4.2

Use inset or partially inset balconies, and/or privacy screens to direct / frame and manage views between balconies, and onto neighbouring gardens.



4.3

Where balconies or roof terraces are located adjacent to communal gardens, use planting rather than high walls or fences to create a layered threshold that balances privacy with the provision of a visual connection.

When considering the use of planting on balconies and terraces [please reference government's latest guidance](#)



4.4

Avoid basic square bar type balustrades, which fail to provide adequate privacy to residents, and often result in screens being retrofitted behind the balustrade.

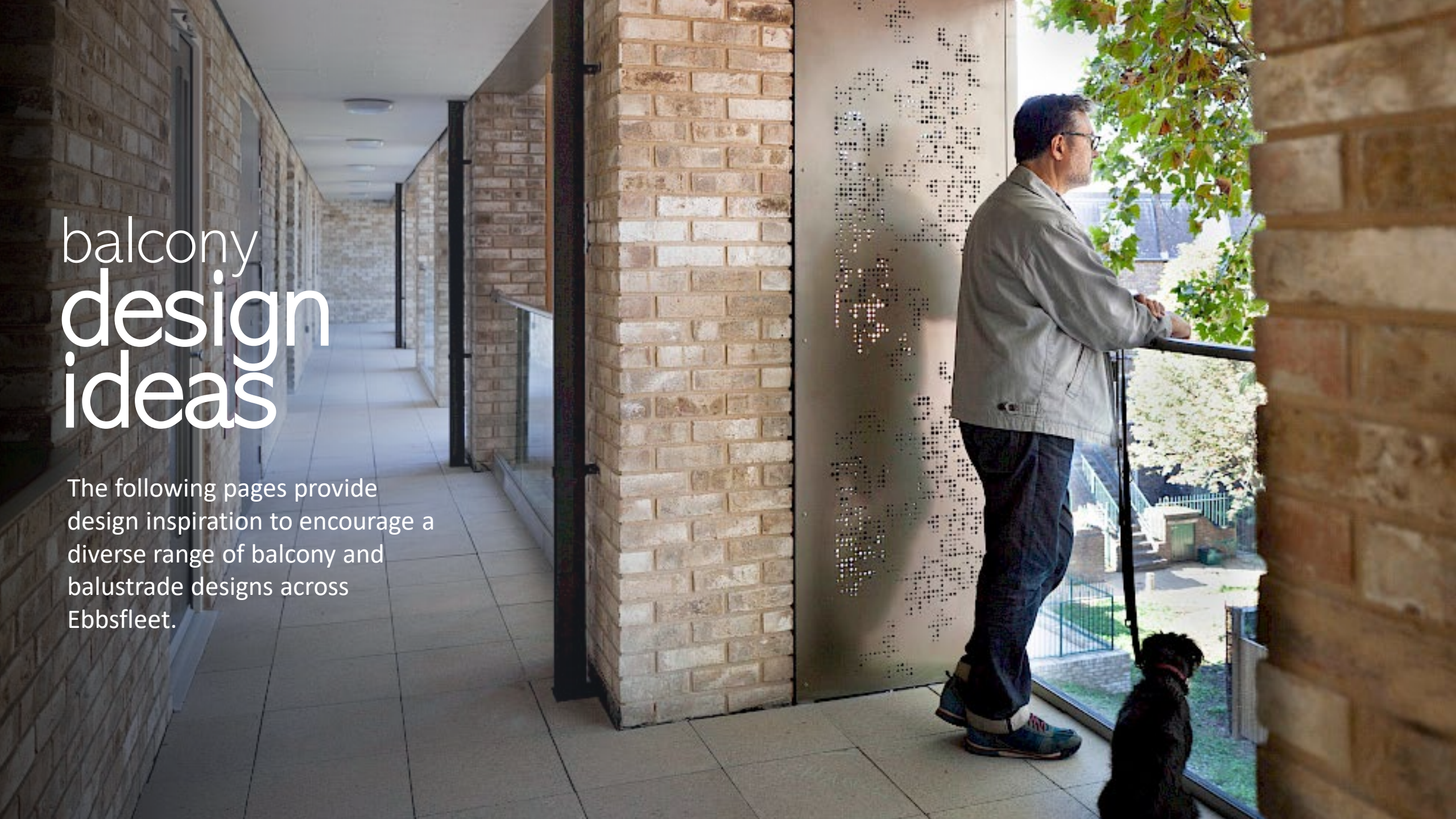
Recommend incorporating opaque cladding to the lower level of balustrading, to manage views.

4.5

Balustrades should extend to the floor and incorporate a short kick-plate to avoid the risk of items being kicked-off the balcony.

balcony design ideas

The following pages provide design inspiration to encourage a diverse range of balcony and balustrade designs across Ebbsfleet.

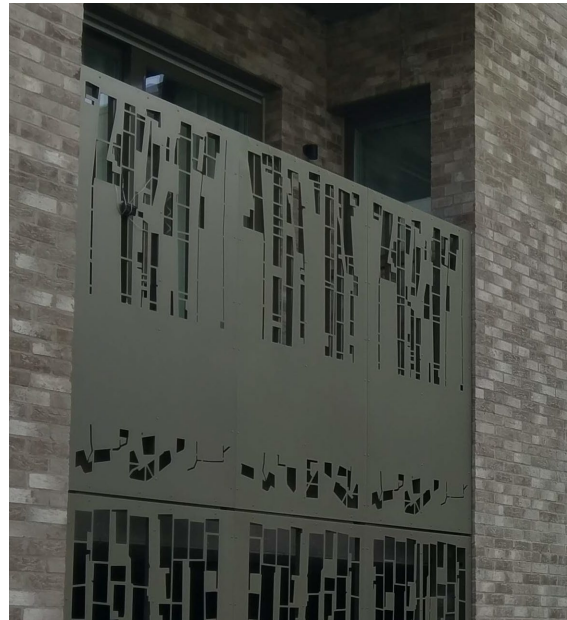


Type of outdoor space // Inset balconies



Chapter House, Lichfield
Proctor and Matthews Architects

Inset balcony uses a laser cut pattern to create an intricate decorative balustrade, with a treated timber soffit to create natural warmth to underside of the balcony.



Knights Park, Cambridge
Allison Brookes Architects

Abstract pattern responds to the local narrative is used to create a distinctive laser cut pattern in bronze coloured paint finish, toning well with adjacent brickwork.

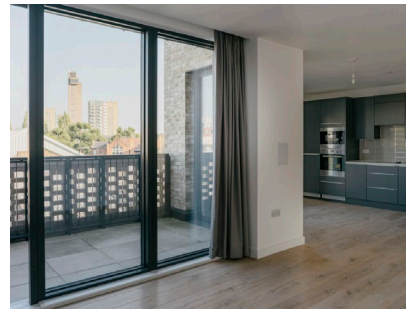


Knights Park, Cambridge
Allison Brookes Architects

Inset balconies are strongly articulated through aluminium framing, and the inclined bar balustrading adding a distinctive but economical twist to balustrading design.



Type of outdoor space // Inset balconies & semi-inset balconies



Middle Row housing, London
Prenoyre and Prasad Architects

Hit and miss brickwork is used to provide a strong degree of enclosure, with a secondary mesh screen to the rear of the hit and miss balustrade wall to prevent climbing of the brickwork from the balcony side.



PRP Architects
Parkside Estate (Hitchin Square) Tower Hamlets, London

Semi-inset balconies are used to provide a strong degree of enclosure, with a secondary opaque screen. Any proposed self-supporting structural frame should be designed to reference the building narrative

Type of outdoor space // Semi-inset balconies



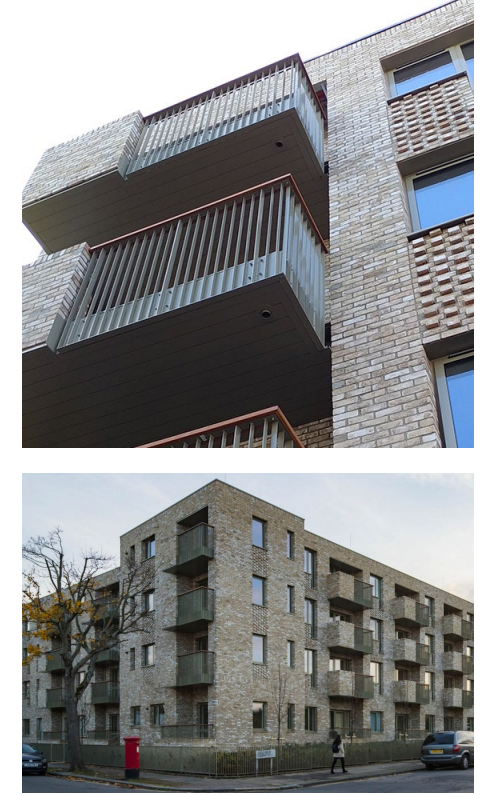
Bishopswood Court, Beckenham
Daykin Marshall Architects

Semi-inset balcony. The cranked angle in the balustrade adds additional visual interest, which combined with the bold colour helps to lift the simple but elegant balustrading. However, such open balustrading provides little enclosure or privacy for residents.



Hazelhurst Court, Beckenham
Levitt Bernstein Architects

Elegantly detailed, these balconies combine a solid brick balustrade to provide enhanced privacy and enclosure to part of the balcony, in addition to a basic bar balustrade to enable lighting and views out for residents.



Type of outdoor space // Projecting balconies



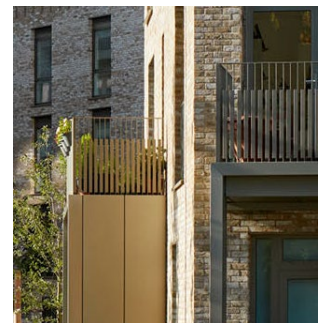
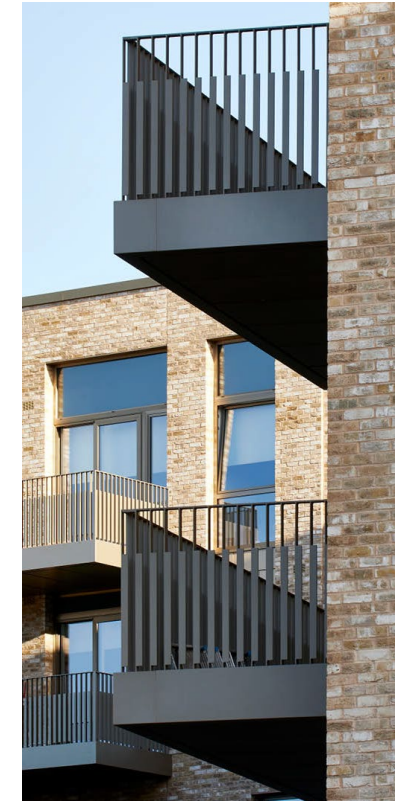
Pyrus House, Mile End
Bell Phillips Architects

Bold aluminium frames are used to define the balconies, creating a memorable and distinctive facade to an otherwise basic apartment block. The frames also help to provide concealed areas for storage, as well as enhancing privacy for residents.



Shoreline Apartments, Folkestone
Acme, Architects

Sinuous shaped balconies adorn the apartment block developed within a contemporary interpretation of the art deco narrative. Soffit design has been carefully considered to celebrate the art deco narrative, although it should also be noted the slender balustrades while elegant, do not provide sufficient privacy for residents



South Kilburn ,
Fielden Clegg Bradley Architects

Simple bar balustrade has been enhanced with an additional plate, to create a subtle but distinctive feature that also enhances privacy for residents to some degree.

Type of outdoor space // Projecting balconies



Virido, Cambridge
Pollard Thomas Edwards Architects

Bold aluminium frames are used to define the balconies, creating a memorable and distinctive facade to an otherwise basic apartment block. The frames also help to provide concealed areas for storage, as well as enhance privacy for residents.

James Voller Way, London
Studio Woodroffe / Papa

Balustrading formed from precast concrete panels with a pattern derived from leather cast, to reflect the former use of the site as a tannery.

Type of outdoor space // Projecting balconies



Regent's Park Estate
Matthew Lloyd / Mae Architects

A bold colour is used to add character to these projecting and semi-inset balconies, which use a laser cut balustrade to add a distinctive identity. The pattern also provides a high degree of privacy and concealment for residents.



Colby Lodge, Walthamstowe
Pollard Thomas Edwards Architects

A bespoke laser cut pattern provides a good balance between openness and enclosure of the balcony. Elegantly detailed soffits have been incorporated to create a high-quality finish to these balconies.



Dover Court, Islington
Pollard Thomas Edwards Architects

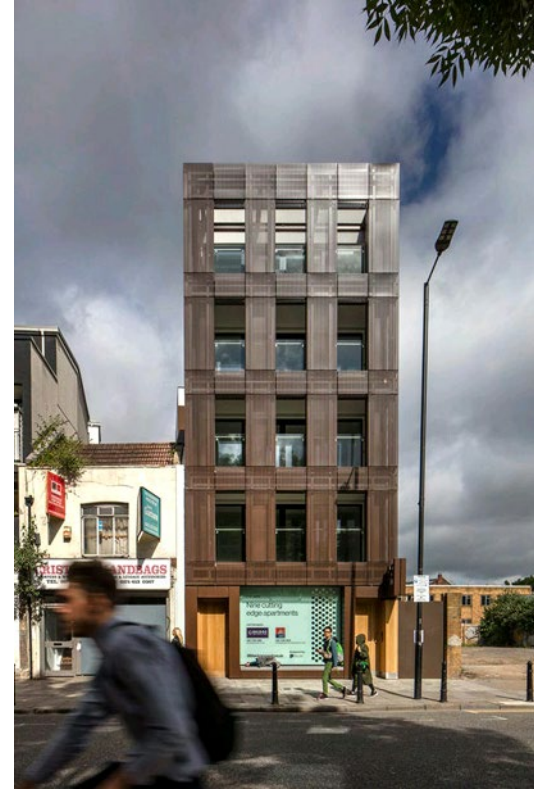
Apartment balconies combine an aluminium laser cut panel with an open basic bar balustrade, to balance openness with enclosure.

Type of outdoor space // Projecting balconies



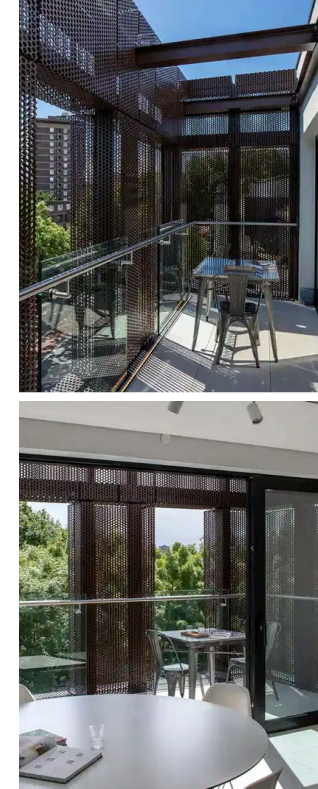
Apartment House
Sadar and Vuga Architects

A bold colour is used to add character to these projecting and semi-inset balconies, which use a laser cut balustrade to add a distinctive identity, providing a high degree of privacy and concealment for residents.



95 Hackney Road
Stephen Marshall Architects

The balcony structure has been clad in a perforated cladding panel helping to provide privacy, whilst still allowing good levels of daylight into the rooms behind.



Type of outdoor space // Enclosed balconies / Winter gardens



Lighter Quay, Auckland
Studio Pacific Architects

Balconies opening onto the quayside are in shade all day and receive no direct sunshine. Enclosed balconies have therefore been used to provide more usable space, whilst helping to enhance privacy at lower levels where apartments have high surveillance from the surrounding quayside public realm.



Pegasus Life Hortsley, Seaford
RCK Architects

Communal deck access provides individual balcony spaces for each unit, with openable windows allowing the space to function as both an enclosed winter garden, and an open balcony.



Type of outdoor space // Enclosed balconies / Winter gardens



PRP Architects
Watling Place South Kilburn, London

This site is built on a narrow railway-side site, so semi-enclosed balconies have been used to provide more usable spaces, without being too heavily impacted by the adjacent railway line. Screening has been used to increase privacy at lower levels, whilst balconies on higher floors have also included glazing to provide full enclosure.

How will schemes be assessed?

When assessing schemes, EDC's planning team will use the following questions to assess whether the scheme meets the design performance threshold required.

Compliance with the balcony design objectives will also be incorporated into the assessment of category 4 'Homes for all' and category 6 'A memorable character' within the Building for a Healthy Life design tool and reported to planning committee.

Balcony Design outcome	Supported	Further development needed	Not supported
Type of balcony or terrace: Must respond to the orientation of the façade to maximise daylight, and balance solar access and shading into the apartment to minimise the risk of overheating.	Balcony types are generally appropriate to the façade	Some balconies are appropriate, but concern on particular facades or locations	Inappropriate balconies used across the scheme, not considering the orientation of the facade
Visual appearance: of the balcony structure, soffit and balustrading must reflect the building's design narrative, and contribute to the distinctive identity of the building within the street.	Design narrative is clearly recognisable within the design of balcony and is distinctive to surrounding buildings.	Design is not distinctive from other surrounding buildings, or doesn't relate to the design narrative of the building	No clear reference to the design narrative, and balcony is broadly similar to surrounding buildings
Size: Balconies and terraces must provide a space large enough for all apartment residents to be able to sit outside and dine comfortably.	Balcony meets all EDC space standards		Balcony area is smaller than the EDC standard, or the depth is less than 1500mm.
Privacy: Design must mediate direct views onto the private outdoor space and the outlook from the space, to manage residents and neighbours privacy and help to conceal stored items, particularly on balconies.	Balustrade provides sufficient enclosure to balance residents needs for privacy with daylighting, and to conceal items on the balcony.		Balustrade does not provide sufficient enclosure to enhance residents privacy, or conceal items on the balcony.