



DESIGN GUIDANCE NOTE 2: Screening containers at homes

Quick checklist

- *Screening solutions can help reduce the visual impact of groups of containers and wheeled-bins on the space around the home generally*
- *They can be effective for older homes where the front of the plot is the only realistic storage location – the key is to minimise the visual impact of storage on the entrance into the home and maximise the contribution towards a good looking street scene*
- *Screening solutions can be built-into the designs of new homes coming forward for planning permission*
- *Think about the amount of space required, moving to and from that space to the kerbside point of collection and the visual style/approach that would represent the best fit with the home and the street*
- *Amount of space: create a layout plan for a single group (or split into smaller groups if plot space is tight) with an all-weather hard surface*
- *Moving wheeled-bins: avoid frequent twists and turns and keep paths to the kerbside collection point level or with only shallow ramps as laden wheeled-bins can be heavy*
- *Visual style: a natural planted screen can be an attractive relatively low-cost solution that will sit well with both modern and traditional architectural styles – consider aspect, seasonal flowering, soil type, maintenance and whether any supports for plants will be needed*
- *Hard enclosures: think carefully how to make these harmonious with the overall look of the plot and home – consider combining with soft planting and role in supporting climbing plants – think about integrated solutions or options to ‘tuck away’ out of view*
- *Check with the Planning Department – however, remember that the need for any Council planning approvals that might be required will never override any tenancy restrictions or restrictive covenants that might be in force and which might prevent home alterations and improvements*
- *Check with your neighbours – take into account any concerns they raise or good ideas that they might have*

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1.0 Introduction

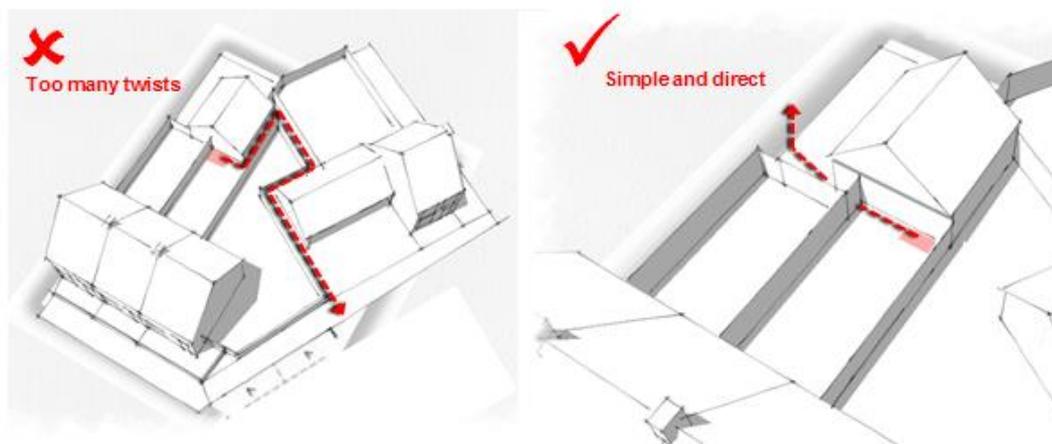
- 1.1 In 2013, Ashford Borough Council introduced a containerised collection service to help reduce the amount of waste that it sends to landfill and to help improve the recycling of paper, tins, glass and plastic. In a limited number of cases, homes have been assessed by the Council as being incapable of being serviced with wheeled bins and the Council will continue to service these homes using black sacks. Most homes have been provided with a series of containers and wheeled-bins. An optional service has been introduced for those wishing to have garden waste collected.
- 1.2 The Council's corporate and plan-making focus is on creating good quality homes and delivering good design through attention to all aspects of place-making. The purpose of this Note is to set out ideas that designers of new homes and, importantly, occupiers of older homes may wish to consider and take further as the basis for visual screening solutions.
- 1.3 Where storage on the property street frontage is either designed-in from the outset as part of a new home or is the only realistic place for storage at an older home, screening

solutions have the potential to reduce the visual impact of stored containers and wheeled-bins, making for a more welcoming main entrance to the home and a more attractive street.

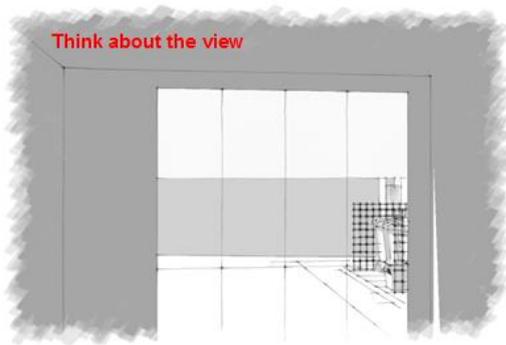
- 1.4 Design Guidance Note 1 is also available from the Council on residential layouts & wheeled-bins. It seeks to ensure that designers of new homes give careful early consideration to the practicalities of refuse and recycling collection from the dual perspectives of storage and movement. It details the suite of containers and wheeled-bins servicing homes and their respective dimensions. It may therefore be a useful source of additional information when thinking through the amount of space to be screened, the practicalities of plot layout and the most appropriate visual style.
- 1.5 New homes require planning permission from the Council. Designers can therefore include screening solutions into their proposals as part of that process.
- 1.6 For existing occupiers, this Note gives a brief overview of when planning permission / consent might typically be needed from the Council: it is not, however, intended as a definitive statement on planning law. Irrespective of whether a screen does or does not require an approval or consent from the Council, a check should always be made for any other restrictions affecting the property that might restrict the ability to carry out planting or the building of structures as a means of screening containers and wheeled-bins, such as restrictive covenants & tenancy obligations.

2.0 **Generating a layout: storing and moving containers and wheeled-bins**

- 2.1 Containers become heavier when they are full and so are more difficult to move. This is particularly the case with wheeled-bins. An all-weather hard surface is recommended for any storage area. A hard surfaced path, preferably direct and avoiding too many turns, is needed from the storage area to the kerbside to help move containers on collection day. The path should be level (or have only shallow ramps) to make it easy to use and steps are best avoided.

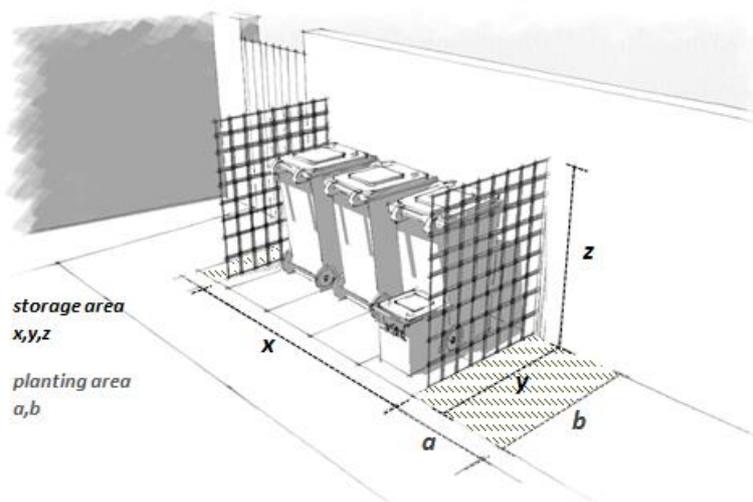


- 2.2 Where a number of locations on the plot are possible, where to store containers and wheeled-bins will be a combination of personal preference and the available space in each. Side or rear storage is generally preferred as this will help minimise the visual impact on both the main entrance into the home and also the wider street scene.
- 2.3 Grouping containers and wheeled-bins together - either as single group or split into a couple of groups if that works best or space for a single group is limited - has the advantage of helping to minimise the overall impact of storage on the qualities of the remaining area of private garden. It may also help minimise the view out to storage areas from windows to habitable rooms.



2.4 In some cases, however, bin storage at the frontage of the home might be the only workable solution, for example, a traditional terraced house without a side or rear access. Something that fits well with the architectural style of the home and the wider street should be considered, perhaps picking up elements of original streetscape that may have been removed in some parts of the street over time such as frontage walls, railings, hedges and any associated shrubs and trees.

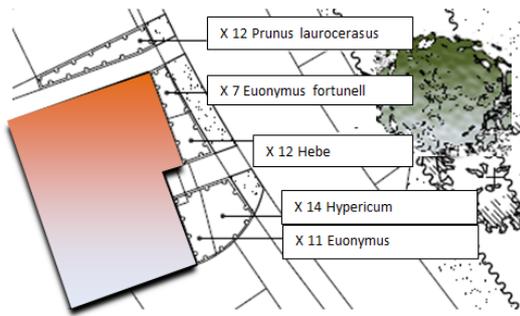
2.5 Once the best location for storage on the plot becomes clear, the suggested next step is to sketch a layout in terms of usable width and depth for container and wheeled-bin storage together with space for any proposed screening solutions whether those involve construction, soft planting or a combination of the two. A plan has the advantage of allowing ideas to be thoroughly checked for feasibility – space for movement / space for planting - and can help avoid the cost of work having to be aborted. A plan can also be double checked on the ground by pegging out the proposed area on the ground and living with it for a few days to make sure it feels right.



3.0 Screening by planting

3.1 Hedging and shrubs can provide a natural soft screen that can reduce the visual impact of stored containers and wheeled-bins. Planning permission will not usually be required for such planting.

3.2 However, if the home is a relatively new one, a check should be made with the Council that the planting proposal would be *'in addition to'* – as opposed to a *'replacement of'* – any elements of a previously agreed initial planting arrangement forming part of the planning permission for the home. The image below is an example of the type of grass and shrub planting scheme that is agreed with the developer as part of the planning permission process. A planting scheme can also involve on-plot trees.



- 3.3 Where 'replacement' planting would be the case with a proposed planting screen for containers, the altered planting would need approval from the Council unless the time limit in the planning permission for maintaining it from first planting into maturity – usually 5 years - has already expired.
- 3.4 In some existing neighbourhoods, homes may have been deliberately designed to have open plan frontages. A check should be made as to whether there are restrictive covenants or tenancy arrangements in place that would prevent new planting. Even if there are no such restrictions, an approach that would minimise the amount of disruption to an open plan layout will work best visually.
- 3.5 If the area of the plot already has a strongly soft planted character then continuation of that visually soft approach – through further shrub, hedge and tree planting - may be the best visual screening solution rather than introducing visually harder such as a wall, fence or trellis.

4.0 Plants that might be considered

- 4.1 Key considerations for a successful planting scheme will be the extent of planting space that is available around the hard surface storage area, the orientation of that planting space and micro-climate, the nature of the soil, the necessity for any supporting elements to aid plant growth, the rate and extent of growth in width and height, the extent of any flowering, maintenance requirements and whether sufficient space is available to accommodate planting that is beginning to mature taking into account the proximity of the home. This information can all be sourced in a number of ways from books and magazines, from information obtained at garden centres, through to specialist gardening advice and opinions on the internet.
- 4.2 Some plants have a form and nature that will create a strong visual impact. The following might be worth considering if that is the desired planting outcome;-

Bamboo (non-invasive) / Stag Horn Fern / Japanese Angelica (grown as shrub or small tree) / Grasses (evergreen and herbaceous) / Japonica Fatsia (evergreen) / Yucca (evergreen)



- 4.3 The amount of direct sunlight that a location will receive will be important. The following might be worth considering from that perspective;-

Sunny position: Rock Rose, Hebe Great Orme, Green Globe artichoke

Out of direct sunlight: Christmas Box, Skimmia Japonica



- 4.4 Although some plants are self-clinging, most will usually require a supporting structure of some kind. The weight of a matured climber will need to be factored into the design of the supports for the long term success of a planted screen. The following climbing plants might be worth considering;-

Needing a supporting structure: Honeysuckle / Flowering quince (against a wall or fence) / Golden Hop / Crimson Glory Vine / Passionflower, various Clematis (Alpine - spring flowering / Jackmanii - summer flowering / Orientalis - autumn flowering / Cirrhosa var. balearica - winter flowering) / Star Jasmine

Self-clinging: Climbing Hydrangea (useful for north facing positions), Virginia Creeper

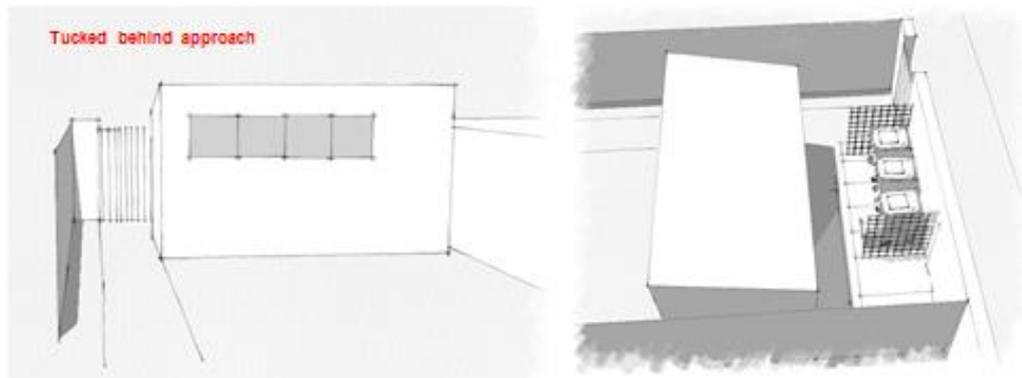


5.0 Screening through building an enclosure

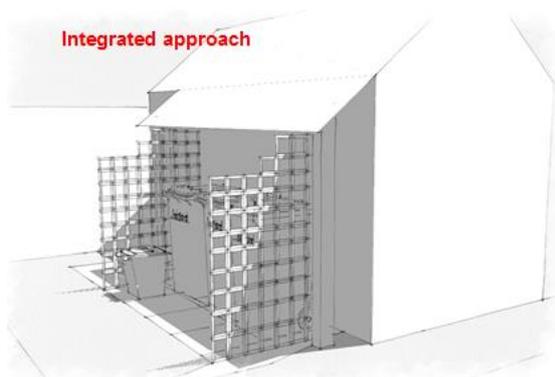
- 5.1 The starting point when considering the merits of a visually harder screening solution is whether it would be harmonious with the architectural style and appearance of the home in order to avoid creating something that would jar visually. This will be especially important for homes that are located within a designated conservation area: the Council can be contacted if this needs to be checked. Creating something that fits appropriate with architectural and historic context will be crucial where a building enclosure is being considered either in the grounds of, or directly attached to, a designated listed building.

- 5.2 A harmonious approach may typically involve the use of identical or very similar materials, similar or complementary colours and attention to detailing. Brick faced and rendered walls, timber fences and screen panels and trellis would be typical enclosure solutions.

- 5.3 In some instances, something different in terms of materials, colours and detailing might overcome difficulties involved with trying to follow very closely the architectural language of the home. With sensitivity, this type of juxtaposition can still create a visually harmonious end result.
- 5.4 'Tucking away' an enclosed storage area behind other outbuildings such as a covered parking building or a garden / cycle shed can have the practical advantage of helping remove bins from key views out of habitable room windows.



- 5.5 A storage area can also be actively integrated into the design of an outbuilding. Creating a catslide roof extension from the eaves can be coupled with trellis to create an attractive covered area with sides capable of supporting climbing plants.



6.0 Planning permission and listed building consent

- 6.1 Planting: Paragraphs 3.1 – 3.4 deal with planting to help screen containers.
- 6.2 Listed building consent: In respect of proposed walled, fenced or trellis screen enclosures for containers, where the proposed construction would physically be attached to a listed building (including attachment to pre-1948 outbuildings within the grounds of a listed building) then listed building consent would be required to be obtained from the Council. This is separate to the issue of planning permission. Free-standing screens within the garden of a listed building will not require listed building consent.
- 6.3 Planning permission: Supplementary planning legislation means that in many instances small acts of 'development' at homes will not require planning permission to be obtained from the Council (save for enclosures serving flats where the opposite will apply). The legislation is complicated and beyond easy summary for the purposes of this Note. Further enquiries can be made by e-mail to planninghelp@ashford.gov.uk or via the general customer.care@ashford.gov.uk address. Telephone enquiries can be made via Ashford Gateway Plus (01233-331111) or Tenterden Gateway (03000- 414141).