



# Householder Design Guide

A design guide for households wishing to alter or extend their property



Draft Supplementary Planning Document

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## Introduction

This document has been prepared in order to offer guidance on householder extensions to domestic properties and the erection of buildings within the curtilage (garden area). The guidance is not intended to provide information as to what requires planning permission or give information regarding land ownership issues or Building Regulations.

To enquire whether any development requires planning permission please complete the Council's Householder Development Enquiry form online at:

[www.rotherham.gov.uk/planning](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/planning)

or visit

[www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

The recent changes to The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order 2008 allow householders increased opportunity to extend their property without planning permission. Those extensions that do not fall within permitted development are therefore more likely to raise neighbouring and visual amenity concerns. This document aims to ensure that extensions make a positive contribution to the local environment and do not detract from the host property and the street scene or cause undue harm to neighbouring amenity.

This guidance is supplementary to Policies HG2, HG5 and ENV3.1 of the Council Adopted (1999) Unitary Development Plan and should be read in conjunction with them. It offers detailed advice and guidance in support of Unitary Development Plan policies on how extensions can best meet the Policy criteria, promoting good practice and consistency of decision making.

The guidance supersedes the Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Householder Development' of the Rotherham Unitary Development Plan, and will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document as part of the Rotherham Local Development Framework.

The maximum distances for space standards quoted in this document have been derived from a comparative analysis of a range of sources including detailed research and minimum space standards adopted by a number of local authorities. They are also the same as those that can be found within the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide which applies to proposals of 10 or more dwellings but is also a point of reference for smaller schemes and extensions.

For further planning enquiries regarding domestic extensions and alterations please contact the Council's Development Management team.

## Contact Development Management



Online

[www.rotherham.gov.uk/planning](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/planning)



By email:

[development.management@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:development.management@rotherham.gov.uk)



By appointment:

Telephone 01709 823838

# Householder Development Guidance

## 1. General Principles

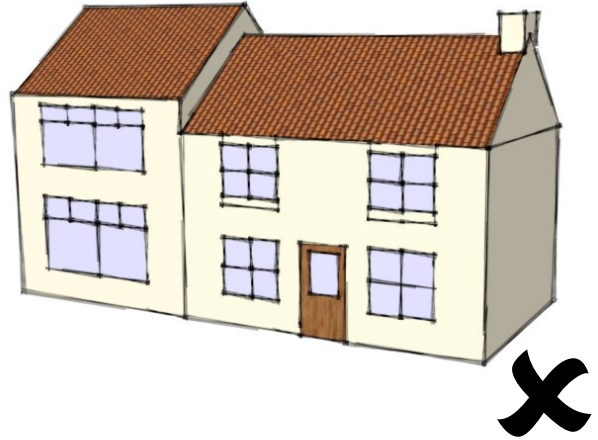
### Proportion

**Design Guidance 1.1:** The size and design of extensions should be subsidiary to the existing dwelling and allow the original building to remain dominant. Matching roof styles should be used in any new extension proposals.

It is important that an extension is in proportion with the existing house. It should not dominate the house by being bigger or higher or set much further forward (towards the street). Extending a house in that way will make it look unbalanced and incongruous, particularly if neighbouring houses are similar in design and regularly set out.

It is usually preferable for an extension to be subordinate in scale to the original house. A lower roofline, and setting back the extension behind the house's building line, will allow the existing house to remain dominant. Where an extension is to be the same height and depth as the original house the existing roofline should be carried over the extension, and the same roof style and materials should be used.

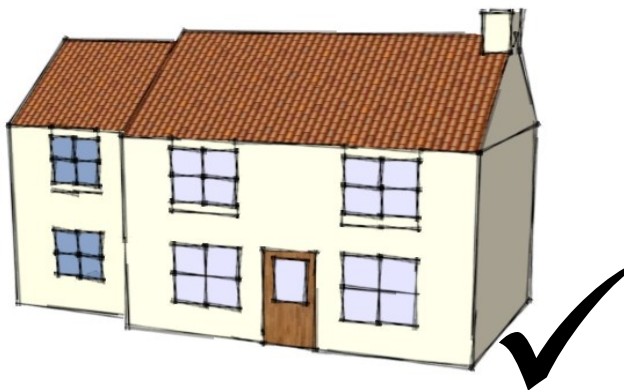
In almost all cases a flat-roofed extension will be unacceptable where clearly visible in the streetscene, unless the existing property has a flat roof. Pitched roofs are an important part of the character of houses and, wherever possible, an extension should have a pitched roof which matches the roof style of the original house.



Inappropriate extension higher than existing property and not in proportion



Inappropriate extension coming forward of the property and dominating the host property

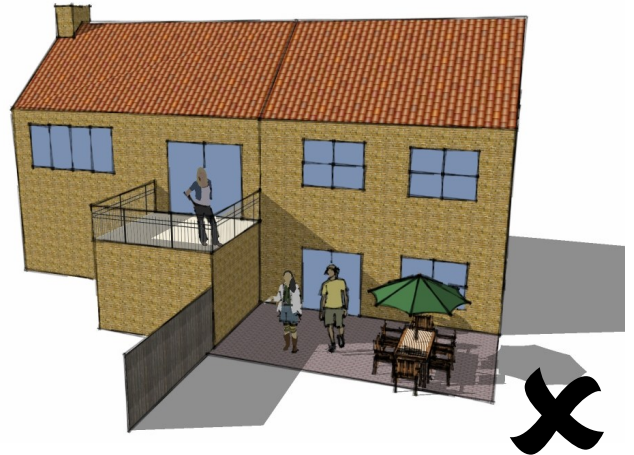


Appropriate subservient extension set back with a lowered roofline

## Overshadowing

**Design Guidance 1.2:** Extensions should not overshadow neighbouring properties to an unreasonable degree.

The Council will take account of the orientation and position of neighbours' windows in relation to the extension. Where an extension would be likely to significantly reduce the amount of sunlight and/or daylight casting a shadow over private amenity space or entering the window of a habitable room (such as a kitchen, living room or bedroom) planning permission may not be granted. See page 10 for more details of how we apply a 45° rule.



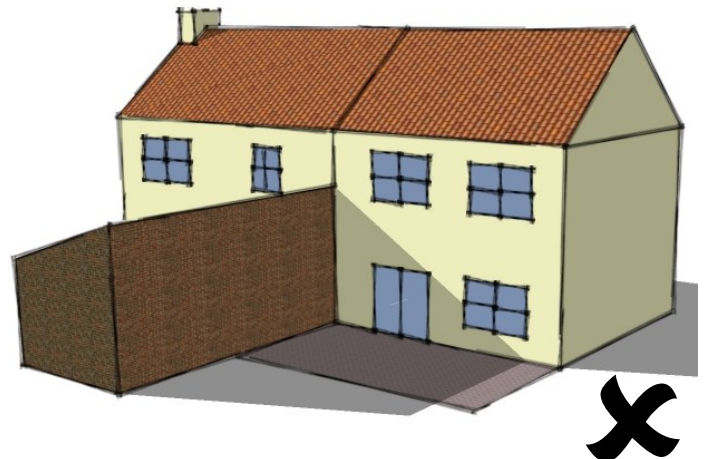
Balconies can often create overlooking, which can be avoided through careful design and screening.



Extensions close to the boundary with neighbouring properties can create excessive overshadowing especially during the winter months, casting a shadow over habitable room windows and private amenity space to an unreasonable degree.

## Outlook

**Design Guidance 1.4:** An extension close to either a habitable room window of a neighbouring property, or to its private garden, should not have an overbearing effect on that property or an unreasonable effect on its outlook.



A mono pitched roof design can often create an overbearing effect in addition to potentially reduce daylight. Mono pitched roofs should be avoided close to boundaries with neighbouring properties.

## Privacy

**Design Guidance 1.3:** Balconies, decking and windows serving habitable rooms such as kitchens, living rooms and bedrooms should be sited so that they do not directly look into the habitable windows of adjacent houses or their private gardens. To achieve this any new habitable room windows above ground floor should not be sited within 10m of a neighbours boundary and maintain more than 21m between facing habitable room windows.



## Architectural Detail and Fenestration

**Design Guidance 1.5:** Architectural details such as lintels, cills, bonding and coursing present in the existing property should be replicated in proposed extensions. The arrangement of windows, their size, material and opening style should reflect the existing design and maintain a similar solid to void ratio.



## Materials

**Design Guidance 1.6:** Extensions should be constructed in matching materials to match the host property. Bricks and stonework should be coursed and pointed to match the existing details. Tiles should match the existing tiles in terms of material, texture, size and colour.

This drawing represents an inappropriate side extension with a poor match of brickwork and roof tiles. Even small variations in materials can look out of place.

The design has no regard for the host property and the window arrangement has been designed to meet internal requirements rather than reflect the regular arrangement present on the host property.

## Garden Space

**Design Guidance 1.7:** Adequate private amenity space should be maintained in any extension proposals. This means maintaining private gardens of two bedroom houses of at least 50 square metres and for three or more bedroom houses, 60 square metres. Where new parking areas are proposed, landscaping should be maintained and provided to soften the impact.



Boundary walls, planting and lawns form an important part of the character of suburban areas. Hardstanding front gardens will erode this character with little definition between the public and private realm.

## 2. Extensions

In addition to the guidance in section 1, the following examples give further information regarding specific householder proposals.

### Conservatories

**Design Guidance 2.1 :** Conservatories are normally an acceptable feature on the rear elevation of domestic properties and in some instances on side elevations. Conservatories are generally not an acceptable feature on front or principle elevations, on barn conversions and at first floor level. Where conservatories are close to the boundaries of neighbouring properties obscure glazing or a brick wall should be used to prevent direct overlooking. On semi detached and terraced properties, and where they are on or close to a boundary, they should not project more than 4m beyond the neighbouring properties rear elevation.

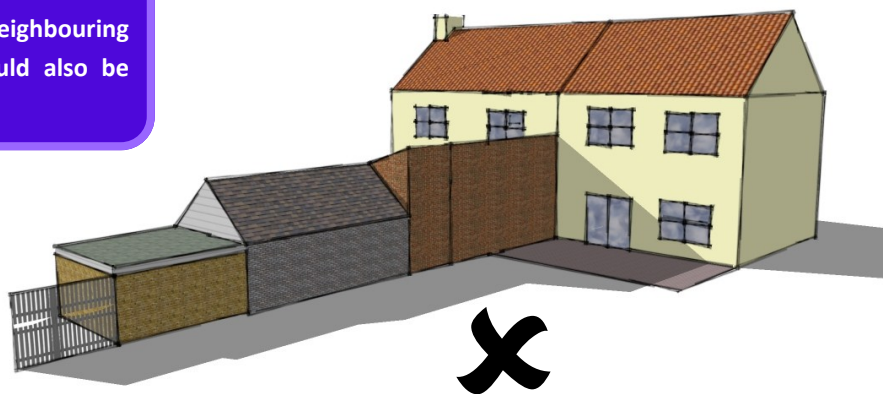


Conservatories are generally not a suitable feature on front or principle elevations and tend to look out of place in the street scene.

### Single Storey Rear Extensions

**Design Guidance 2.2:** Single storey rear extensions are generally an acceptable feature on domestic properties and the current permitted development rights allow for some extensions to be constructed without planning permission. Single storey rear extensions, on or close to a boundary, should project no more than 4m from a neighbouring property's existing rear elevation.

The cumulative impact of single storey side extensions can have an overbearing impact upon neighbouring properties. Mono pitched extensions should also be avoided.



## Single Storey Side Extensions

**Design Guidance 2.3:** Single storey side extensions are generally an acceptable feature on domestic properties and the current permitted development rights allow an extension to be constructed without planning permission up to half the width of the original house. The Council will be critical of side extensions of excessive width and for a single storey extension this should not exceed more than 2/3 the width of the original house. In addition, for side extensions on corner plots or where the extension would project towards a highway, a single storey extension should retain as a minimum, a 1m landscaping strip between the existing dwelling and the highway.

Side extensions coming between the house and a highway should be set back from the public highway by at least 1m.

Side Extensions should not exceed 2/3 the width of the original house.



## Front extensions and porches

**Design Guidance 2.4:** Front extensions are eye catching and can significantly alter the appearance of a building. In general, bay windows should be retained and on terraced and semi detached properties single storey extensions that extend across the entire frontage and two storey front extensions will normally be refused. The impact on the amenities of the neighbouring property should also be considered and any front extension should project no more than 2m, or 1m where it is within 2m of a neighbouring window. Porches should be individually designed to follow the character of the existing building and the introduction of features such as classical columns, pediments and rustic timbers etc will not be accepted unless they are a feature of the original house. Front extensions should not harm the character and appearance of the host property or be of a design out of keeping with others in the street.



Large single storey front extensions often fail to respect the character of host properties and damage the appearance of the overall street scene.



Two storey front extensions look out of keeping on semi detached properties and can often create conflicting focal points and a disorderly street scene.



A small modest front porch is acceptable on the majority of dwellings. A pitched roof should improve both the appearance and longevity of a porch extension. The introduction of features such as classical columns, pediments and rustic timbers will not be accepted unless they are a feature of the original house.



## Adding a two storey side extension

**Design Guidance 2.5** Two storey side extensions should generally be set back by a minimum of 0.5m at first floor level on the front elevation, with the roof set down and back from the main body of the house. This is in order to create a subservient extension and to prevent it unbalancing a pair of semi detached properties. In addition the roof style of the extension should match that of the host property. Where the semi is hipped, the extension should have a hipped roof and likewise with a gable roof. On a gabled property it may be acceptable to create a flush extension, not set back from the main body of the dwelling, providing it would not cause a serious terracing effect, but details of the bricks and tiles to be used should be submitted with the application, so as to assess their ability to blend in with the host property.

As with single storey side extensions, the Council will be critical of two storey side extensions of excessive width. Any such extension should not exceed more than **half** the width of the original house. In addition, on corner plots or where the extension would project towards a highway, the Council will not normally grant planning permission for an extension which takes up more than half of the available width between the side of the house and the highway.

A two storey extension should not come within 12m of a ground floor principle habitable room window of a neighbouring property.

Where an extension is built on a driveway, at least 5m between the front of the extension and the front boundary with the footpath should be left. This will allow space for a car to park in front of the extension, which is important in keeping on-street car parking to a minimum. The Council is likely to be critical of a proposal if on-site car parking space is restricted whilst increasing the living accommodation in the house. Any additional front parking should be hardsurfaced in either porous material or be drained to a separate soakaway, and at least one third of the front garden area should be left for planting.



Unacceptable terracing effect created by inappropriate extensions, eroding the suburban character of the street.



A small first floor set back and hipped roof can minimise the terracing effect maintaining the suburban character and semi detached style of property.

A subservient extension set back from the main body of the house will usually achieve the best results allowing the host property to remain dominant and minimising any clash in materials.



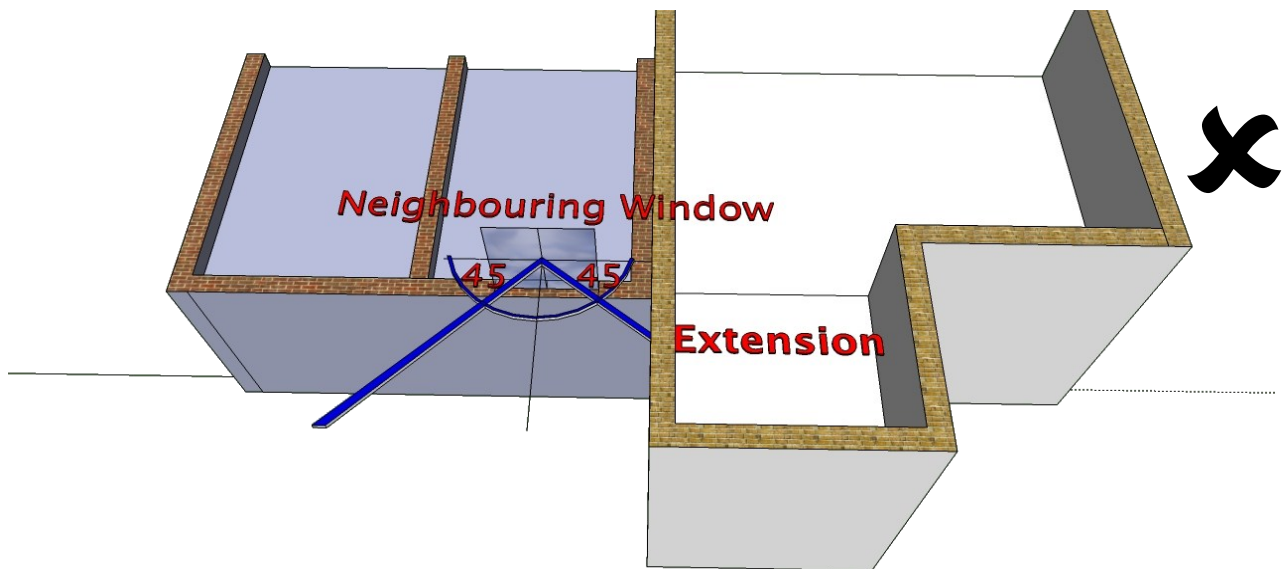
A gabled roofed side extension of a hipped roof property will look out of place and unbalance a property. A flush extension will also increase the likelihood of an awkward match in materials.

A modern flat roof style extension will not usually be appropriate and will look out of keeping with the host property. It is usually best that any extension is designed in the same architectural style and materials as the host property.



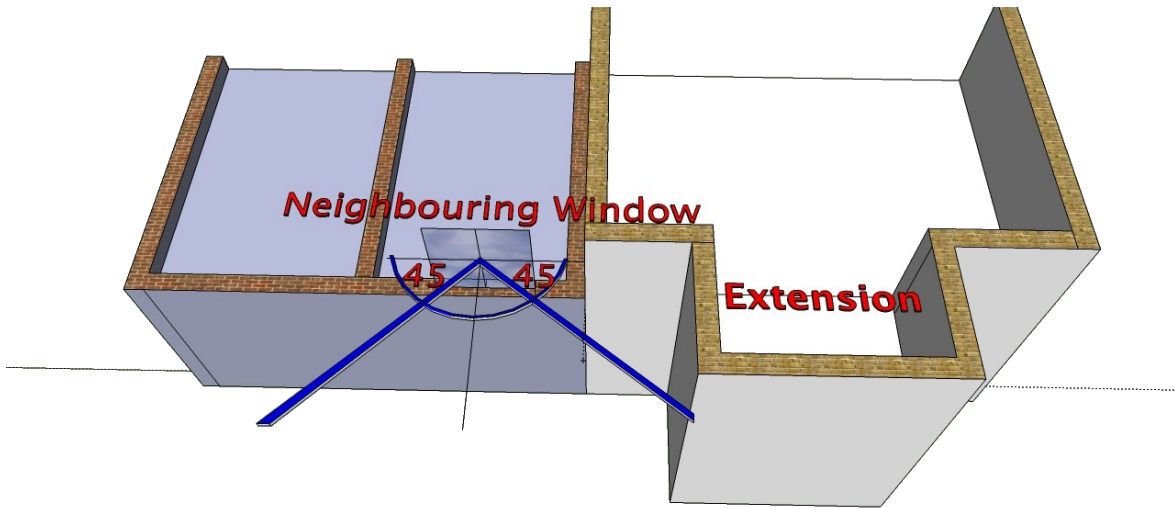
## Adding a two storey rear extension

**Design Guidance 2.6:** Two storey rear extensions should be designed so as not to come within a 45° angle of the nearest neighbouring rear elevation habitable room window (measured from the centre of the window). The Council will protect the outlook from a habitable room window for up to 10m, beyond this distance the impact is likely to be acceptable. The extension should not be a disproportionate addition to the host property and in general should not exceed 3m if close to a shared boundary or 4m elsewhere. It should also include a similar roof design. For the purposes of privacy and avoiding an 'overbearing' relationship, a minimum distance of 21m between facing habitable room windows and 10m from a habitable room window to a neighbours boundary should be maintained. A two storey extension should also not come within 12m of a ground floor habitable room window of a neighbouring property.

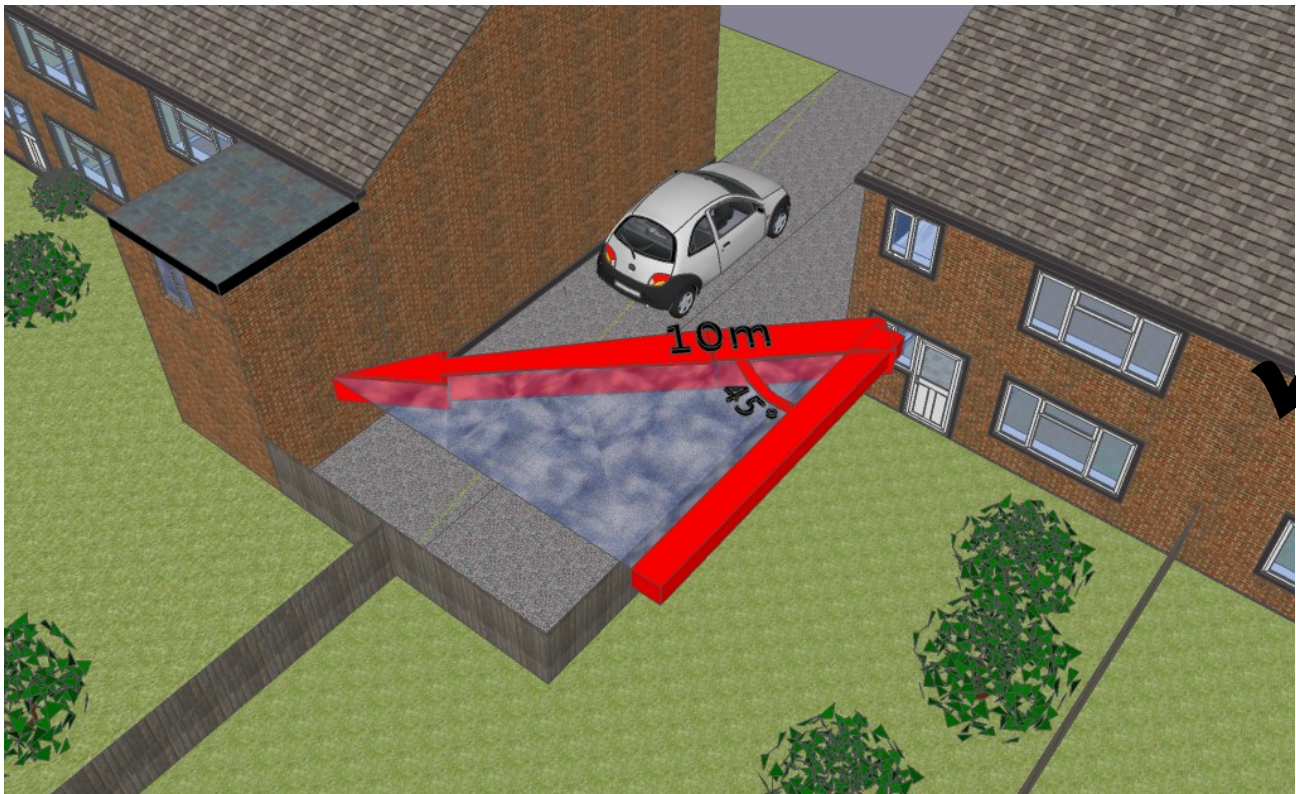


A rear extension close to a neighbour's habitable room can create an unacceptable loss of daylight and create an oppressive overbearing impact.





Setting an extension away from a habitable room window will reduce any potential loss of daylight and appear less overbearing to the neighbour.



The Council will protect the outlook from a habitable room window for up to 10m, beyond this distance the impact is likely to be acceptable

## Building a garage/outbuilding

**Design Guidance 2.7:** Garages should generally be restricted to rear and side gardens where they may benefit from permitted development. Garages that require permission should not be of an excessive size and height and the use of concrete sectional garages should be avoided in prominent locations visible from the public highway. The Council will not be supportive of garages in front gardens unless it can be demonstrated that no harm to the street scene will occur.



Garages are rarely appropriate in front gardens and can spoil street scenes and reduce surveillance of the public realm to the detriment of crime prevention.

## Making an access for a vehicle

**Design Guidance 2.8:** In most cases, making an access to a property for a vehicle means lowering the kerb outside the property. It also usually involves various works within the property, such as removing a front wall, fence or hedge and laying a drive or hardstanding.

Most such vehicular accesses are exempt from planning control. However, Conservation Area Consent, Listed Building Consent and authorisation under the Highways Act may be required. This should be checked before any work is carried out on site.

Where planning permission is needed, the Council will want to make sure that the access is as safe as possible. The location of the access, and the visibility it provides for drivers using it, will be considered. On particularly busy roads, the Council may decide that an access would not be safe unless a turning space is provided on the property, so that cars do not have to reverse into the road. If this is not possible, or if there are other traffic hazards that cannot be overcome, permission may be refused. New hardstandings should be porous or drained in a sustainable manner avoiding water flowing in to the public highway or main drains.



## Dependant Relative Annexe

**Design Guidance 2.9:** The Council is sympathetic towards the wishes of people who wish to provide ancillary accommodation for a dependant relative. Frequently, this will mean adding an extension to the family house, to provide semi-independent living accommodation for the elderly person, disabled relative, son or daughter. Most such extensions are subject to planning control, and to the same rules as any other house extension.

When dealing with any planning application for a “dependant relative annexe” the Council will consider whether the additional accommodation to be provided exceeds what is reasonably necessary for the occupant. Typically this will be limited to a single storey one bedroom unit not exceeding 50m<sup>2</sup>, where the host property has a garden of sufficient size to accommodate such an addition without harming neighbouring amenity or the host property’s amenity.

An annex should be linked to the host property to allow its conversion to other ancillary uses should the dependant relative move on. In certain circumstances a slightly larger annexe may be acceptable to provide adequate wheelchair access.

Planning permission is not likely to be granted for large detached annexes with little relation to the host property, as the Council does not wish to allow annexe’s which could easily be adapted to independent dwelling units.

This is because most “dependant relative annexe’s” are on conventional houses or bungalows, and share access, car parking and gardens with the “host property”, and for this reason are not suitable for use as independent dwelling units.

All of the above guidelines apply also to any proposal to build a free-standing building in a residential curtilage for use as a “dependant relative annexe”. The conversion of an existing out-building in a residential curtilage to a “dependant relative annexe”



## Boundary walls and fences

**Design Guidance 2.10:** Planning permission will be required for any boundary wall or fence which is higher than 1m and adjacent to a highway used by vehicular traffic. In this instance, 'adjacent to a highway' means within 1m of the highway. Elsewhere, walls and fences will require permission if they exceed 2m in height.

Where permission is required, careful consideration of the location and choice of materials should be used as the wall or fence can have a significant effect on neighbours' properties and can be a prominent feature in the street scene. The following points should be considered:

Visibility at the entrance to a drive is important in road safety terms, especially for pedestrians passing your house. A fence or wall on a side boundary can easily obstruct visibility to a drive.

The use of good-quality materials will greatly improve the appearance of the fence or wall. A structure of utilitarian appearance, especially at the front, will spoil the look of the house. Hedges are very attractive garden features if properly cared for. If they are allowed to get out of control they can become unsightly and a nuisance to neighbours and passers-by on the street. Neighbours can cut back overhanging growth, and the Council can take action against a householder under the Highways Act, 1980, if a highway (including a footpath) is obstructed by an overgrown hedge.

## Roof Alterations

**Design Guidance 2.11:** Loft conversions, or rooms in the roof-space, are often advertised as a simple way of providing extra living space. However, there can be problems. The following points should be considered:

Increased overlooking of neighbours' properties can be a problem, especially with a bungalow where dormer windows in the loft can overlook previously private areas. The Council will be critical of all proposals which have a significant effect on neighbours' privacy.

Roof lights are cheaper to install and maintain, and will have less visual impact on the appearance of a house. They will also reduce possible overlooking problems.

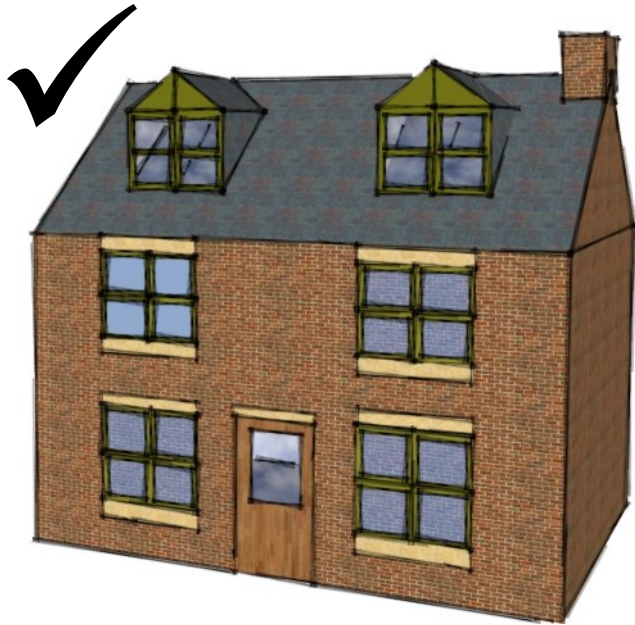
Where a dormer is to be built on a front elevation, it should be modest in size relative to the size of the roof and should be designed to reflect the architectural character of the house. The Council will be critical of front dormers if they are an uncommon feature in the locality or would appear out of character on the host dwelling. Dormer cheeks should be clad in tiles or slates to match those on the roof. Pitched roofed dormers will normally be preferable on a front elevation, and are likely to be more durable than flat-roofed dormers.

The conversion of an existing hipped-end roof into a gable, in order to allow extra space for a loft conversion, can make a house look odd and unbalanced, particularly if it is semi-detached or the houses in the area are generally of uniform or similar in design.

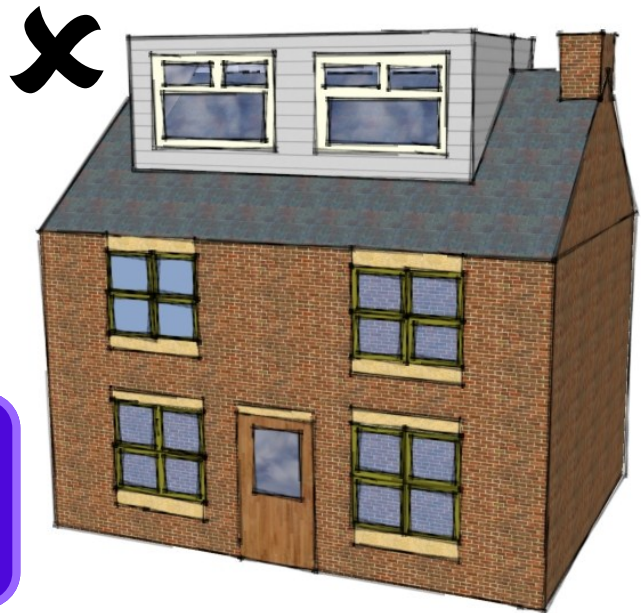


High front boundary walls create a poor street scene and can be visually oppressive.





Large flat roof dormers look out of place and rarely respect or improve the appearance of the host property. The use of white U-PVC cladding will accentuate the appearance of a dormer and overtime may discolour or stain. A large flat roof will also create an awkward and long term expensive maintenance problem.



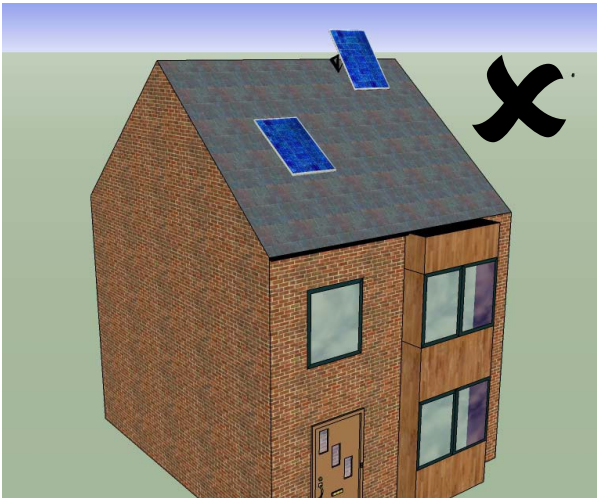
Dormers should be modest in size and evenly positioned on a roof slope. The use of tile or lead cladding and pitched roofs will minimise the visual appearance of dormers and reduce long term maintain costs.



A hip to gable extension rarely looks acceptable and on a semi detached property can create an awkward imbalance. Front dormers may not be acceptable on semi detached properties and in areas with no existing front dormers.

## Renewable energy/technology

**Design Guidance 2.12:** The Council will support proposals for renewable technologies on residential properties, unless there is clear evidence that the equipment will have a severe effect upon neighbouring amenity or where the impact upon the host property and street scene is so severe as to outweigh the benefits of carbon reduction.



Solar panels should be evenly positioned and fitted flush with the roof slope and should not protrude above the ridge height.

## Making a bungalow into a two-storey house

**Design Guidance 2.13:** It is not the Council's usual practice to support bungalows being altered to two-storey houses, as in most cases this would have a serious effect on neighbours' amenity and on the appearance of residential areas. The Council will consider such proposals for "upward extensions" very carefully, having regard to the following guidelines:



Where a bungalow is semi-detached or terraced, the Council will not grant planning permission for an upward extension.

Planning permission may be granted for an upward extension on a detached bungalow in certain circumstances:

(i) where the dwellings in an area are of varied types, with little uniformity of design and layout, and there is already a mix of single storey and two-storey dwellings, and

(ii) where new habitable room windows at first-floor level would be more than 21 metres from habitable room windows of existing dwellings to the front, side or rear and more than 10m away from a neighbours boundary.

Where an upward extension is considered acceptable in principle, it is essential that it be designed to minimise the effect on neighbours' properties by overshadowing and overlooking.

Furthermore, the most appropriate design solution will depend on the design of the property and neighbouring properties. It may be appropriate to create a "dormer bungalow", by building a more steeply-pitched roof with dormer windows in it. Dormers should be modest in size, relative to the size of the roof, and should be designed to reflect the architectural character of the house. Dormer cheeks should be clad in tiles or slates to match those on the roof. The dormers should not project above ridge level, and should be small proportionate pitched roofed dormers rather than flat roofed.

## 3. Other Issues

### Site Boundaries

Applicants should make sure that no part of an extension including rainwater goods, foundations, canopies and overhangs extend beyond the site boundary. Such boundary disputes, although not a planning consideration, can often lead to lengthy and expensive civil disputes between neighbours.

### Party Wall Act

Applicants should be aware that the planning process does not address issues raised by the Party Wall Act, where a neighbour's consent may be required prior to carrying out building works close to the boundary of your property, albeit on your land.

### Crime Prevention

It is important to consider at an early stage the impact the proposal may have on the security of a dwelling and neighbouring properties. Security measures should be unobtrusive and designed as an integral part of the overall scheme. Opportunities to break in, such as flat roofed areas providing easy access to first floor windows, should be avoided. Extensions and high walls that block the surveillance of the public realm should also be avoided.

### Trees & Hedges

Important trees and hedges may need protecting during the construction period and the Council may include relevant planning conditions in any approval requiring applicants to do so. Trees within Conservation Areas, and trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders cannot be felled or pruned without the consent of the Planning Local Authority.

### Sustainability

Current Building Regulations require new extensions to be built to a high standard and to be well insulated. New extensions can also offer the opportunity for residents to introduce new renewable technologies such as solar panels in order to reduce the carbon footprint of a property and reduce running costs.

### Flood Risk

Extensions within a zone of medium-high risk flooding will require a Flood Risk Assessment. Applicants should consider designing extensions to cope with possible flooding as well as considering how their own proposals, such as hardstandings, may increase the likelihood of flood occurring.

### Wildlife

Birds and bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and it is a criminal offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats, damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time) or intentionally/recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost. Where bats or birds have been found present in a building adequate care should be taken to protect nesting sites and where necessary construction work should be delayed to avoid nesting or hibernation periods. Where necessary bat and/or bird boxes should be provided within extensions or alterations to mitigate the loss of wildlife habitat.