

STATUS OF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE ON **HOUSE EXTENSIONS**

Status

This Planning Guidance, which is supplementary to Policy HSG23 of the Woking Borough Local Plan 1999, has been formally adopted by Woking Borough Council. In this respect the Supplementary Guidance has the status of a material consideration in the determination of planning applications by this Authority and in its defence of its decisions at appeal.

Statement of Public Consultation

In accordance with the advice set out in Annex A (A3) of Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 (PPG1) on General Policy and Principles, the Supplementary Guidance has been the subject of wide public consultation with a total of 64 consultees, as follows:

i) Professional Practitioners

A selection of developers and professional practitioners who regularly submit planning applications for minor residential developments involving alterations and extensions, which number 30 in total.

ii) Local Resident's and Amenity Groups

The Byfleet Parish Council and all resident's and amenity groups within the Borough which are known to the Council, together with the Surrey Police, which number 34 in total.

The period of public consultation allowed six weeks for the above individuals and organisations to make comments on the Draft Supplementary Guidance. Altogether twelve responses were received. After careful consideration of these representations the Guidance was amended to address the valid points of concern. These amendments were considered at the Council's Executive Committee on 29 November 2001, when the Guidance was formally adopted. Full details of the representations made to the Council, together with the Council's response can be obtained on request by contacting 01483 743443.

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE HOUSE EXTENSIONS

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 **This document sets out Supplementary Planning Guidance on the suitable design of domestic extensions to dwellings but is not intended to impose detailed design control over such works. It also offers general advice for the assistance of applicants.**
- 1.2 This guidance is supplementary to policy HSG23 of the Woking Borough Local Plan and should be considered by applicants and their designers before submitting planning applications for house extensions. (The policy is set out in detail in Appendix 1). The Council will also use the guidance in helping to determine planning applications for extensions but will apply it flexibly having regard to the individual circumstances and material considerations of each case. In this regard additional criteria related to other housing and environmental policies may also need to be considered, particularly those relating to standards of amenity and those concerned with maintaining the character of an individual building or specifically defined area. Properties which are Statutory Listed or within a designated Conservation Area are subject to additional planning controls, which may require a separate approval. (A brief checklist of the relevant planning policies and associated guidance is set out in Appendix 2).

2.0 GENERAL POINTS OF ADVICE FOR PLANNING APPLICANTS

- 2.1 This Guide only deals with design advice on residential extensions, and does not cover extensions to commercial and other properties. Most types of construction will also need to satisfy Building Regulations, for which consent must be obtained.
- 2.2 Many small single storey extensions at the side and rear, but not usually at the front, can be undertaken without planning permission under **'Permitted Development Rights'**. These are set out in Appendix 3. However, always check with the Council's Planning Service first as this entitlement may have been used up, or withdrawn particularly on recent housing estates such as Goldsworth Park.
- 2.3 It is advisable to consult with neighbours at an early stage as this can avoid misunderstandings which may result in delaying the planning process. Also if your neighbour intends to carry out similar works it may be both practical and cost effective to build them at the same time, particularly if the dwellings are linked.
- 2.4 Investing in good design and using good material finishes will assist in gaining planning permission and should increase the value of the property. Poorly designed schemes are less likely to receive permission and may affect value.
- 2.5 The Council's Householder Application Guide lists all the drawings necessary for a householder application. It is advisable to get accurate plans professionally drawn at an appropriate scale (e.g. 1:100 or 1:200) as they will be useful for construction and Building Regulations approval. Both plans and elevations must show the relationship of the proposal to the relevant part of the existing dwelling and any adjoining

dwellings, especially from the street, including the position of boundaries and any significant mature trees.

3.0 GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

3.1 Providing there is sufficient land at the site, it will often be possible to extend a dwelling, as long as there is no adverse impact on the outlook, amenity, privacy or daylighting of adjacent dwellings and the design and material finishes are appropriate to the character of the property and that of the street scene. A satisfactory design solution, whether it is traditional or contemporary, will need to resolve all these different issues if it is to be successful in gaining permission.

Building Form

3.2 The architectural form of an extension will be of prime importance, particularly if it will be visible from the street. Many houses have symmetrical or balanced designed frontages and extending their length may result in a disproportionate and unbalanced appearance. Even where it is appropriate to extend the length of a frontage in this way, great care is required to 'tie in' and colour match facing materials to achieve an 'invisible join'. To avoid these problems it will often be preferable to design the extension as a subsidiary building element, such as creating a new wing or annex, so that it becomes part of a balanced composition. Changing the building line between the extension and the original dwelling can also help to overcome any problems of bonding or colour matching with the existing facing materials or other details that are difficult to reproduce.

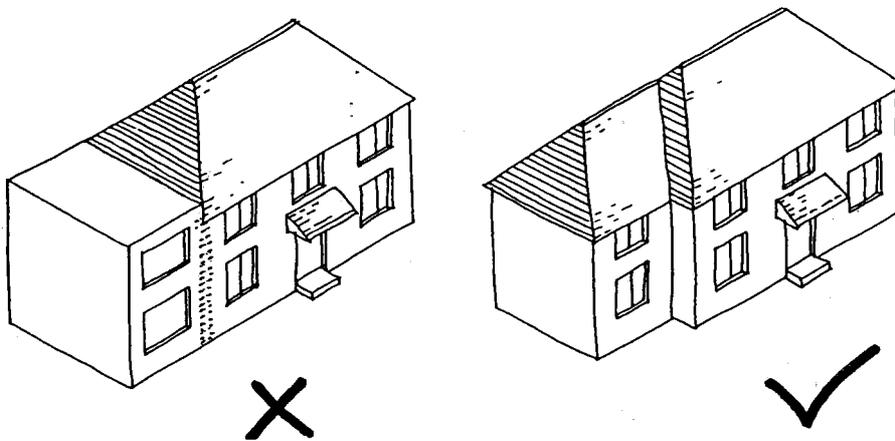


Fig. 1

Designing the extension as a subsidiary building element may help to provide a more balanced composition and can help to overcome problems of matching materials with those of the existing dwelling.

Roof Form

3.3 The roof of an extension is a prominent component of the building form. It should normally be of a similar format to that of the existing dwelling. For example, using hipped or gabled forms and the same angle of pitch, as well as terminating the roof with eaves of the same depth and configuration. In particular, houses with pitched roofs should not have flat roof extensions unless there are special circumstances. The use of false pitch roofs to disguise the volume of an extension should be avoided as they are difficult to maintain. If height is a concern the roof should be sub-divided into a number of smaller elements. Where a false pitch roof is unavoidable, the section of flat roof should be constructed to high performance standards, such as using battened lead, to reduce any long term maintenance problems.

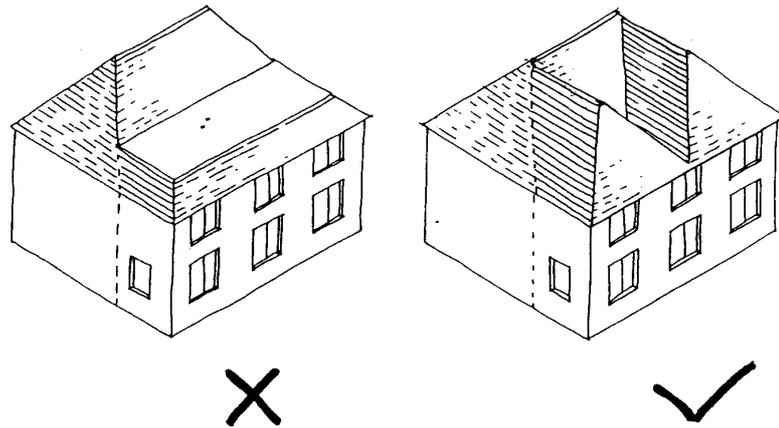


Fig. 2
Large roofs can be subdivided into a number of elements to reduce their bulk, in preference to using a false pitch roof.

Elevational Design

3.4 Elevational design, particularly for a main frontage, should respect the shape and interval of window openings on the original dwelling. In particular, the style and proportion of the windows and the extent of openings in comparison to the amount of masonry, should be repeated on the extension. Where possible window heads and sills should line up with existing openings and frames set back to provide the same depth of reveal. Ornamental architectural details such as arches to window heads, string courses and quoins can help to unite an extension even if simplified. The use of a flat roof extension to form the base of a balcony will rarely be permitted, even on a rear elevation, if it affects the privacy of a neighbour.



Fig. 3
Elevational detail should closely match that of the existing dwelling.

Materials

3.5 Generally, material finishes should match or compliment the existing building. Finishes such as painted render will be the easiest to match. However, new brickwork will require careful matching, including the colour of mortar and pattern of bonding. As older 'imperial' bricks are slightly larger than modern 'metric' units, it may not always be possible to achieve a good match, also their colour can change after years of weathering. To overcome these problems it is often advisable to stagger the junction with the existing building as described in 3.2 above, or, if appropriate, to use a contrasting material, such as render, tiles, timber or glass, to highlight the new element. In the case of pitched roofs, and tile hanging, where even a slight colour change can look incongruous, it may be preferable to remove all the tiles from a single area and then mix in the new tiles at random. Alternatively, existing tiles could be taken from the rear or side of the building for use at the front, so that all the new materials are used in a single area and do not affect public views of the house.

4.0 OUTLOOK, AMENITY, PRIVACY AND DAYLIGHT

4.1 The siting of an extension and the position of its windows needs to be carefully designed to ensure that its proximity does not result in any adverse overshadowing or overbearing impact on neighbouring dwellings and that a reasonable degree of privacy is maintained between them. For further information on this topic the Council has published separate detailed Supplementary Guidance on Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight, which gives advice on suitable dimensions.

Outlook

4.2 An extension should not be sited so close to a neighbouring dwelling that it completely dominates the outlook from a principal window to any habitable room of the neighbouring dwelling. As a guide, the separation distance 'x' between the extension and the neighbour's facing window should exceed the height 'y' of the facing wall of the new structure.

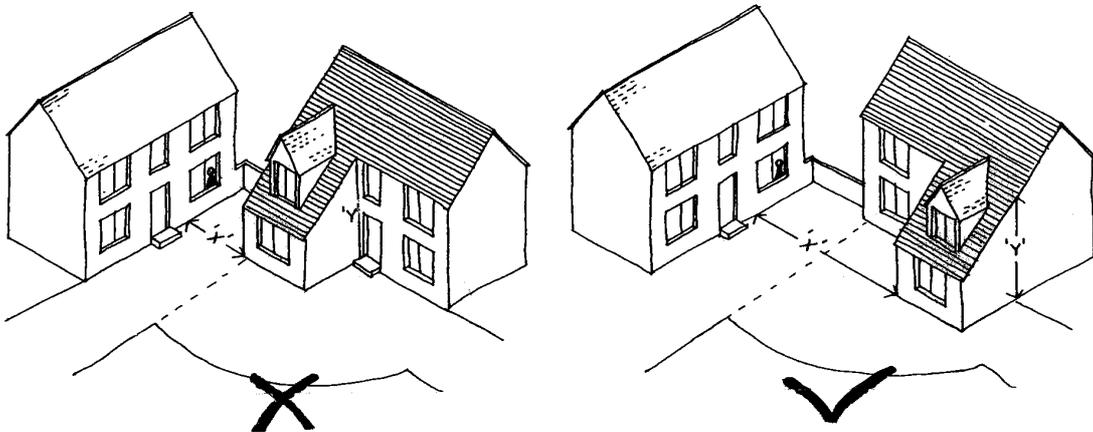


Fig. 4
Extensions must be sited to avoid harming the outlook from neighbouring dwellings (dimension 'x' should exceed 'y')

Garden Amenity Space

4.3 The size and location of an extension should ensure that it retains a reasonable area of private garden amenity for the dwelling concerned, particularly for family housing, which is in scale with the size of its accommodation and retains the characteristic spacing of dwellings in the area. Also, any extension either abutting, or close to, the boundary of a neighbouring dwelling, must be limited in height and extent if it is likely to have an overbearing impact on the neighbour's amenity area.

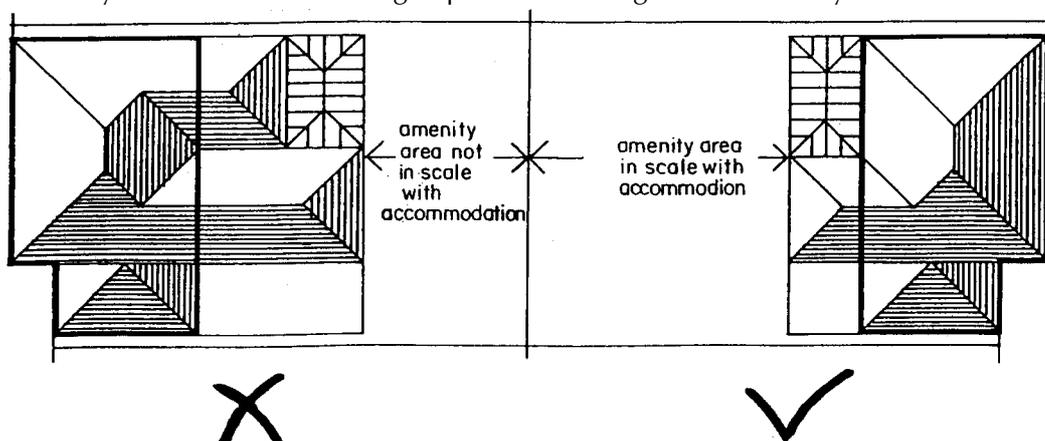


Fig. 5
Family housing must retain reasonable levels of private garden amenity in scale with the size of dwelling.

Privacy

4.4 Extensions should be designed to respect the privacy of internal accommodation, together with that of the area of garden amenity which is most closely related to the dwelling. It should be possible to achieve a basic level of privacy between two storey elevations where a separation distance of at least 20 metres is maintained and up to three storeys where a separation distance of at least 30 metres is maintained. The design and careful positioning of windows, particularly those above the ground floor level, can help to avoid loss of privacy. On less visually important elevations, high level windows can be used to inhibit views into and out of accommodation. Similarly, velux type roof lights can be used for attic conversions to help retain privacy. **Although obscured glazing can be a useful method of achieving privacy for bathrooms and toilets it will not be permitted as the sole method of providing daylight to habitable rooms. (e.g. bedrooms, living rooms and dining rooms).**

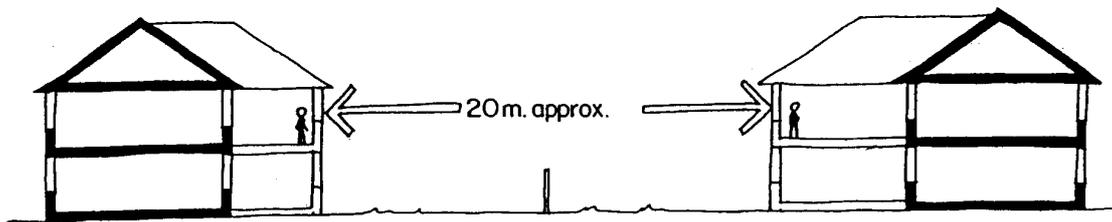


Fig. 6
Extensions must be designed to preserve privacy between dwellings and their private areas of rear garden amenity.

Daylighting

4.5 Significant extensions to a dwelling can adversely affect the daylighting requirements of its own habitable rooms, particularly if there are no opportunities to gain daylight from an alternative elevation, such as with terraced and semi-detached houses. Similarly, large two storey extensions which are positioned close to a boundary, may not be acceptable if they will result in a significant loss of daylight to habitable rooms of adjoining dwellings. A two storey extension is unlikely to be acceptable if it projects beyond a line measured at 45° from the middle of the closest window serving a habitable room on the adjoining dwelling.

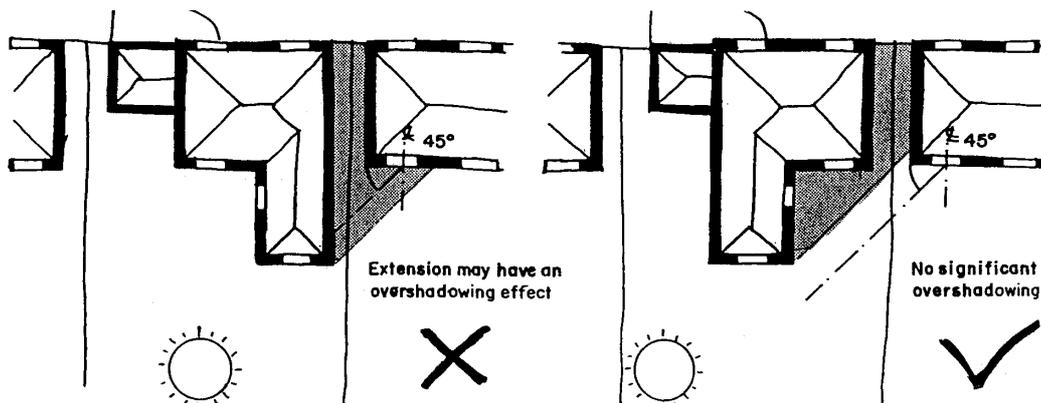


Fig. 7
Large two storey extensions sited close to a boundary can restrict daylight to habitable rooms of the neighbouring dwelling. Alternative siting may overcome the problem.

5.0 DETAILED DESIGN

Rear Extensions

- 5.1 Modest single storey extensions at the rear of a dwelling, such as to enlarge a kitchen or provide a conservatory, will usually be granted planning permission as they are unlikely to affect the public view of the building or affect the amenity of a neighbour. Two storey extensions at the rear, particularly if they extend beyond 3 metres from the building, need to be carefully sited as they can result in loss of daylight or have an overbearing impact on the adjoining dwelling unless they are kept well away from the separating boundary. (see 4.5 above). In the case of semi-detached and terraced properties, there may be limited scope to extend in this way without affecting the neighbouring dwelling. However, it may be possible to overcome this problem if both properties are extended at the same time by designing the extensions so that they are linked together. Windows above ground floor level should always face directly towards the rear garden of the property to avoid any overlooking of neighbouring dwellings or the areas of private amenity closest to the dwelling.

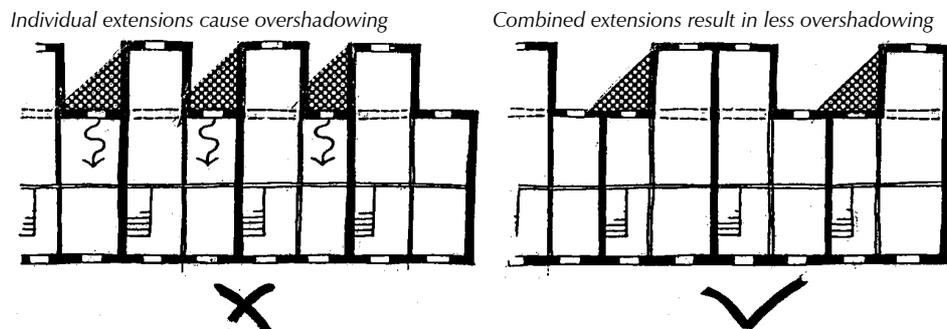


Fig.8

It may only be possible to extend a terraced house in conjunction with the neighbouring dwelling.

Side Extensions

- 5.2 Side extensions can often provide the most convenient way of enlarging a dwelling. However, they can also have a significant impact on the character and appearance of a property and that of the street scene (see 3.2 above). In particular, two storey side extensions which leave little, or no space, between adjoining dwelling will not be permitted if they create a 'terracing effect', such as those undertaken on adjacent dwellings which have uniform spacing and depths of frontage (particularly in a housing estate). To prevent this type of effect altering the character of the street it is important to retain visual separation between properties. A minimum of one metre gap should be retained between all two storey extensions and a side boundary, which will also provide sufficient room for access and maintenance. In lower density developments where dwellings are widely spaced, a much greater distance will be required to provide sufficient visual separation of buildings and retain the character of the street frontage.

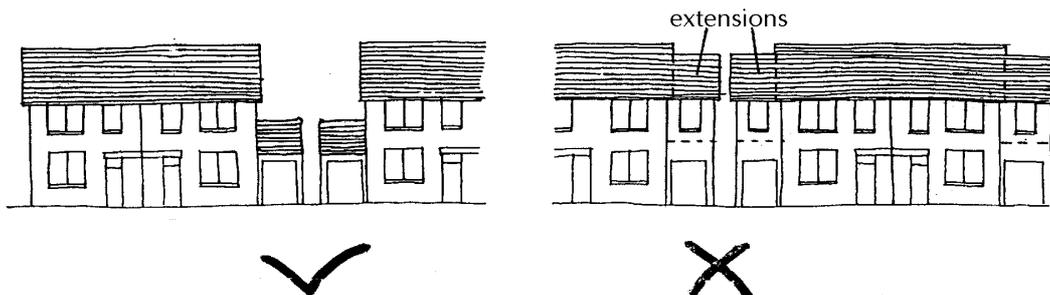


Fig.9

Single storey side extensions retain visual separation.

Two storey side extensions can create a 'terracing effect'.

5.3 Single-storey side extensions have far less visual impact on the character of the street scene as they retain a higher degree of visual separation between dwellings and therefore are less likely to result in a 'terracing effect'. Sometimes it may be possible to design a two storey extension so that the first floor accommodation is located within the roof space, such as over a garage, but outwardly has the scale and appearance of a single storey building. In some older housing estates single storey garages and other structures have been constructed to form part of the boundary wall between adjoining dwellings. However, it is unlikely that any additional extensions will be permitted in this arrangement because of their overbearing impact on the neighbours amenity area. This may also result in problems associated with the encroachment of foundations and maintenance of gutters.



Fig.10
It may be possible to locate first floor accommodation within the roofspace of a side extension by use of dormer windows or roof lights so that it has the outward appearance of a single storey structure, and retains visual separation of dwellings.

Front Extensions

5.4 The front elevation of a dwelling is of primary importance to the character and appearance of the street scene and works will usually require planning permission regardless of size. Significant extensions to the frontage will usually be resisted where there is a well established building line or where the works might reduce the provision for off street parking or vehicle turning. Where there is scope to extend, it may only be possible to achieve a satisfactory two storey extension to the frontage by the significant remodelling of the building, such as the addition of a new bay, or projecting wing, which fully integrates with the architectural form of the building and results in a balanced composition.

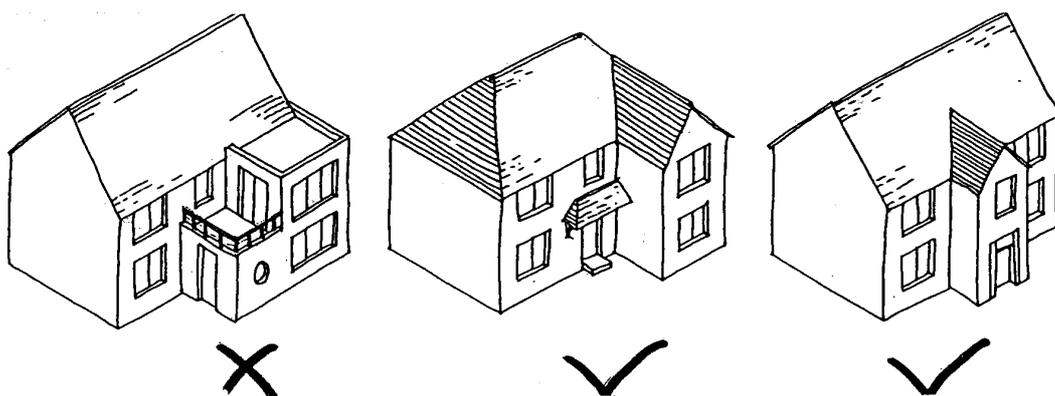


Fig.11
Extensions at the front must result in a balanced architectural composition.

5.5 Adding a small single storey extension, such as a bay window, may be approved on the frontage of an individual or detached property, providing it closely matches existing architectural detail. However, even modest additional elements to a frontage may be unacceptable on a pair of semi-detached houses, or on a terrace, if the works unbalance their symmetry or upset the rhythm of the whole elevation.

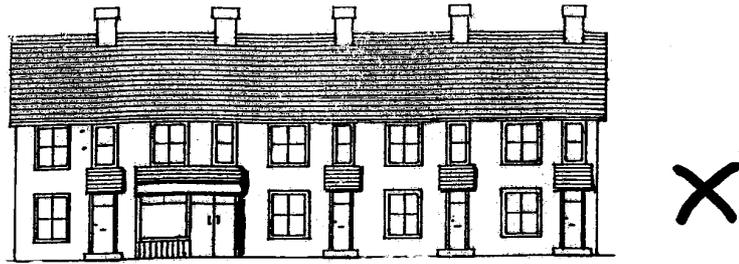


Fig.12
Even small extensions on the front elevation of a terrace, such as a bay window, can upset its balance and rhythm.

Porches

5.6 Adding a storm porch over a front door can be one of the simplest and least expensive alterations to a house, although works will usually require planning permission. However, the front entrance is also the focal point of a house and even small changes can radically alter its appearance, particularly in the case of a terraced house where it could spoil the entire row. Where appropriate, simple traditionally designed rain hoods, of approximately 1 metre depth, supported on brackets can be the most successful. Fully enclosed porches, particularly ready made timber and glass varieties, rarely have an acceptable appearance unless they closely match the character of the house. Over-elaborate reproduction 'Period Style' portico's supported on pillars can look kitsch on modern houses, even those with classical details, and a simpler design will often provide a more elegant solution.

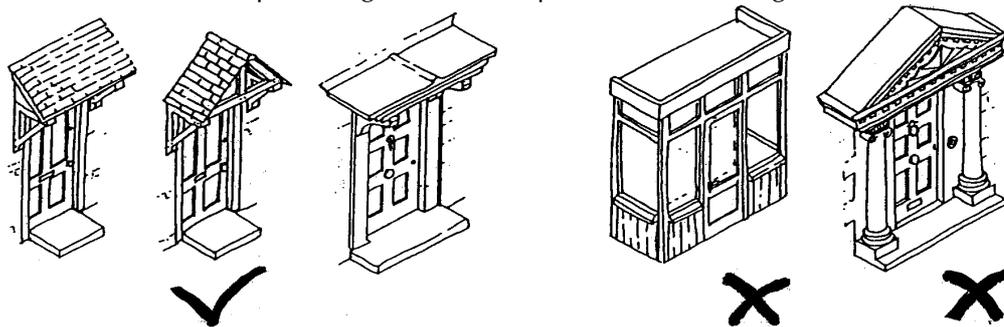


Fig.13
Traditionally designed rain hoods are less likely to appear incongruous than 'off the shelf' porches or fussy reproductions

Garages

5.7 As with other forms of extension, garages are usually best set back from the main building frontage especially if they are attached to the dwelling (see 5.8) The roof form and facing materials should always closely reflect those used on the dwelling, even for detached garages. Double garages with one large entrance door look out of scale and are best divided into two doorways separated with a pier. Open roofed structures or linking structures to form car ports are unlikely to be permitted where they are in public view, unless they are well designed and constructed from high quality materials. Flimsy structures using plastic sheeting roofs will be resisted.

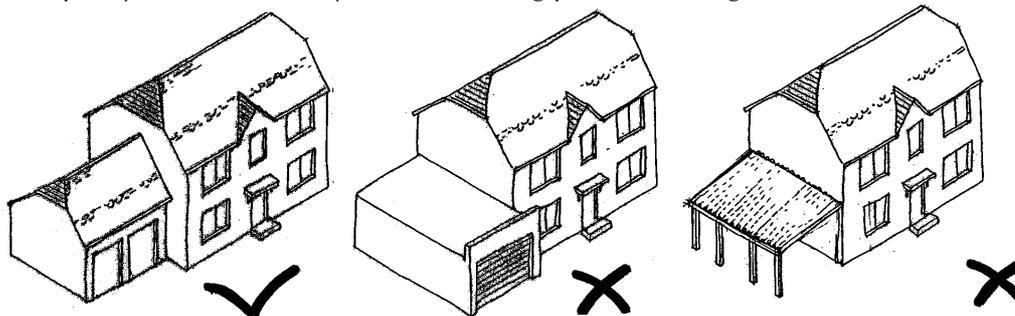


Fig.14
Garages are best sited back from the main frontage and should match the form and material finish of the dwelling.

5.8 It is unlikely that permission will be granted to site an attached garage immediately in front of a dwelling without significant remodelling of the front elevation, so that the extension is part of a coherent architectural composition. A detached garage will only be permitted in front of a dwelling in exceptional circumstances, where the building's frontage is either sufficiently deep, or sufficiently wide, so that the garage does not impact on the setting of the dwelling or on the character and appearance of the street scene. Where garages are sited in front of a property, particularly those of double width, it is always preferable that the entrance doors are positioned at 90° to the dwelling so that they do not dominate the front elevation.

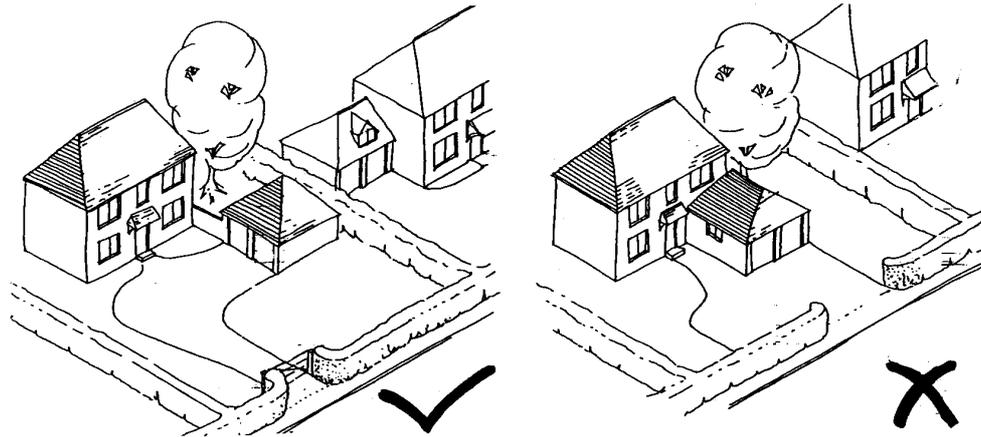


Fig.15
Garages placed in front of a dwelling must not impinge on the appearance of the dwelling or that of the street scene.

Roof Extensions and Dormer Windows

5.9 Converting an attic space is the simplest way of enlarging a dwelling to provide extra accommodation. Planning permission is not normally required for any internal conversion works or the insertion of flush fitting roof lights, or for the insertion of small dormer windows if they are located on a rear roof slope (apart from Statutory Listed Buildings). Elsewhere permission will usually be granted for the installation of traditional dormer windows if they are a subordinate feature of the roofscape, and they are in character with the dwelling and that of the street scene, and do not affect overlooking. Where possible, hipped roof or gable ended dormer windows should be used which vertically align with other windows in the elevation and have a significant pitched roof margin both to the side and edge of the roof. However, any substantial enlargement of the roof to provide extra accommodation, such as by the insertion of large flat roof dormers which completely dominate it, or changes in height, form or profile, such as the creation of a false mansard roof, are unlikely to be permitted.

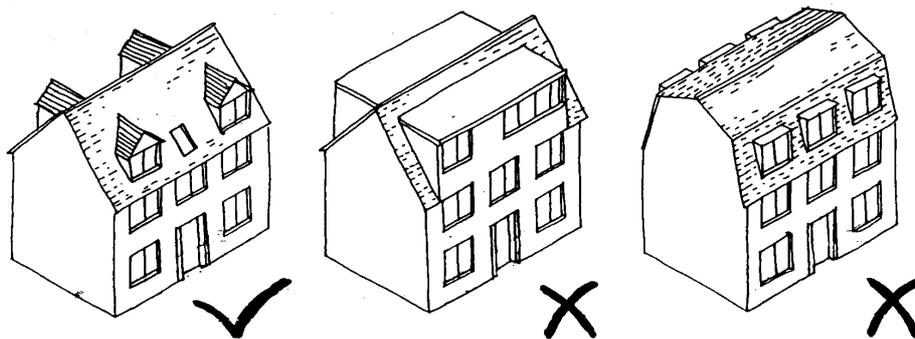


Fig.16
Only modest extensions to the roof will be permitted which do not dominate its form and appearance or alter its character.

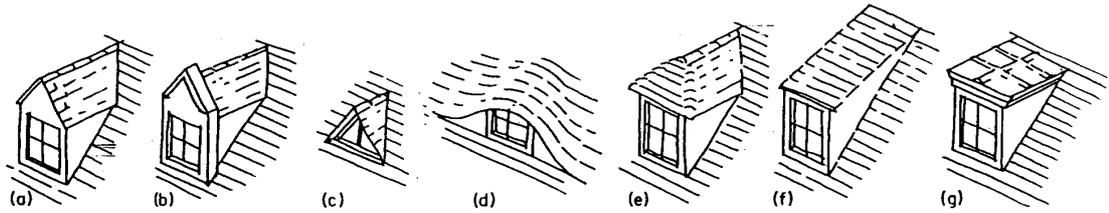


Fig. 17
Traditional forms of dormer; (a) gable, (b) projecting gable, (c) gablet, (d) eyebrow, (e) hip, (f) catslide, (g) lead flat roof.

6.0 TREES AND LANDSCAPING

Trees

6.1 Many trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders or as a condition of planning permission, or where the property is within a Conservation Area. However, many unprotected trees will have high amenity value and should be retained wherever possible. An extension should not be built too close to a tree because it may damage its roots (these usually extend as far as the canopy). Also there may be pressure to remove a tree if its proximity restricts daylight to accommodation. With some types of tree it may be possible to increase daylight by removing intermediate branches (crown thinning) or removing lower branches (crown lifting), but always consult a qualified tree surgeon for advice.

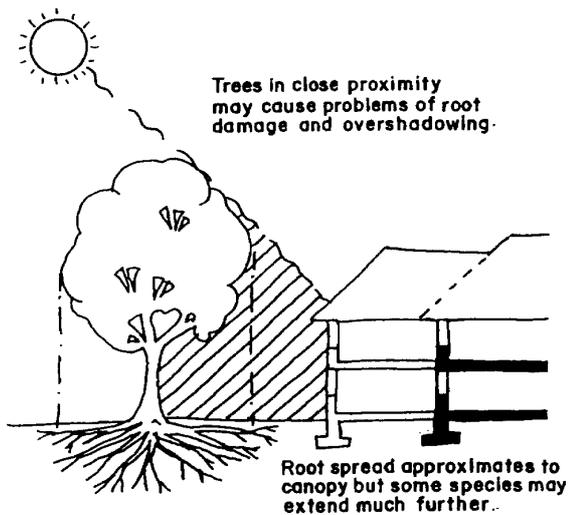


Fig.18
Extensions should not be placed close to mature trees as this may damage roots and reduce daylighting to accommodation.

Landscaping

6.2 Existing landscape features such as mature shrubs and hedges, especially those close to a side boundary, can make a significant contribution towards the privacy and amenity of a private garden as long as they are properly maintained. When extending a property it is important to try and retain these areas of mature planting, which will often mean protecting a sufficiently wide margin between a side boundary and the extension from construction works. If significant areas of mature planting will be lost through construction, there may be a requirement to supplement the planting with additional landscaping.

APPENDIX 1 POLICY HSG23 “EXTENSIONS” OF THE LOCAL PLAN

SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE CRITERIA SET OUT IN POLICY HSG18 AND RELATED DETAILED POLICIES, EXTENSIONS WILL BE PERMITTED WHERE THEY ARE APPROPRIATE IN SCALE, FORM AND CHARACTER TO THE EXISTING DWELLING AND DO NOT RESULT IN ANY SIGNIFICANT LOSS OF PRIVACY TO ADJOINING DWELLINGS OR ASSOCIATED GARDEN AMENITY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FOLLOWING:

- (i) EXTENSIONS EXCEEDING ONE STOREY IN HEIGHT WILL BE PERMITTED TO THE SIDE OR REAR OF A DWELLING SUBJECT TO SATISFACTORY SPACING BETWEEN DWELLINGS; AND
- (ii) EXTENSIONS TO THE FRONTAGE OF A DWELLING WILL BE RESTRICTED TO MINOR SINGLE STOREY DEVELOPMENTS SUCH AS PORCHES UNLESS THEY ARE CLEARLY WITHIN THE PREDOMINANT BUILDING LINE; AND
- (iii) EXTENSIONS WITHIN THE ROOF-SPACE WILL BE RESTRICTED TO THE REAR SLOPE IN THE FORM OF TRADITIONAL DORMERS WHICH DO NOT TAKE UP THE WHOLE HEIGHT OR WIDTH OF THE ROOF AND ARE NOT DOMINANT IN APPEARANCE.

JUSTIFICATION

- 6.96 Dwellings can often be enlarged without any detrimental change to their appearance or any adverse impact on adjoining dwellings providing extensions are suitably designed and positioned. In the majority of cases it will be necessary for extensions to be subordinate in size and to take their architectural cues from the original dwelling, in order to meet the criteria in this policy. However, larger extensions may be acceptable where buildings have little architectural merit and the site is large enough to retain suitable spacing between dwellings without detriment to the character of the area.
- 6.97 Detached and semi-detached houses can usually be extended satisfactorily to the side or rear providing that suitable space is retained between dwellings particularly along a frontage to avoid any terracing or cramping effect. Pitched roofs should be of a similar form to those existing, and windows and materials should also reflect those of the original dwelling.
- 6.98 Where buildings share a common boundary as in the case of terraced houses it may only be possible to undertake a rear extension, particularly at the second storey, if a pair of adjoining properties are extended at the same time. Large rear extensions projecting beyond 4 metres will be critically examined to ensure they do not have an adverse impact on the amenity of surrounding properties.
- 6.99 It may be possible to provide a two storey extension to the frontage of a property where the existing house design readily lends itself to this form of extension, such as the infilling of a recess or the provision of a second wing to balance an existing wing. Similarly, it may be possible to site free-standing structures such as a garage or store forward of a property where there is a very deep curtilage between a dwelling and the road frontage and the design is complimentary to the existing dwelling. The Council may prepare supplementary planning guidance to assist in the design of suitable forms of extension.

APPENDIX 2 :

Checklist of Related Local Plan Policies and Associated Supplementary Planning Guidance

BE1 Design of New Development

BE9 General Policy on Conservation Areas

*The Council has prepared separate guidance for certain conservation areas

BE11 Alterations and Additions to Listed Buildings

BE14 Locally Listed Buildings

GRB1 Control of Development in the Green Belt

HSG16 Conversions of Existing Dwellings

HSG18 Residential Development in Urban Areas

HSG20 Urban Areas of Special Residential Character

*Supplementary Planning Guidance

HSG21 Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight

*Supplementary Planning Guidance

HSG24 Annexes to Dwellings

WTC1 Design of Town Centre Development

APPENDIX 3 : PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

The following works can usually** be undertaken without the need for planning Permission ;

- Demolition of any building or structure less than 50 cubic metres*.
- The insertion of a flush velux type roof light in a roof slope or installation of a flat solar panel.
- The replacement of any window and door joinery including the use of UPVC or aluminium products, as long as the size of the opening is not changed.
- Any works required for repair or maintenance of the property or internal alteration.
- The extension of a property by up to 70 cubic metres* as long as its height does not exceed 4.0 metres and it is not forward of the building elevation which faces the highway, unless it is separated from the highway by at least 20 metres. (assuming the property has not previously been extended). This limit is reduced to 50 cubic metres* for terraced houses and all dwellings in Conservation Areas.
- The insertion of dormer windows in a rear roof slope providing they do not increase the overall height of the roof, or increase the volume of the house by 50 cubic metres* (or 40 cubic metres* for terraced houses).
- The erection of any shed, garage, outbuilding or swimming pool which is up to 4 metres high and has a volume less than 10 cubic metres* which is sited over 5 metres away from the house but is not forward of the building elevation that faces the highway, unless it is separated from the highway by at least 20 metres.
- The construction of any hard surface surrounding the dwelling such as for a patio or driveway/parking area which is for domestic purposes. However, the formation or widening of a driveway will need a highway licence and require planning consent for classified roads.
- The erection of a wall or fence up to 1.0 metres which faces a highway and up to 2.0 metres elsewhere.
- The installation of a T.V. aerial or single satellite dish if the dish is no greater than 90cm in size and does not project beyond the roof line.

** Always first check with the Council's Planning Service as these limits may not apply for Statutory Listed Buildings and buildings within Conservation Areas which are subject to additional planning controls. Also some properties may have had their permitted development rights removed as a condition of planning permission, such as The Goldsworth Park Estate and other recent housing estates where planning permission will be required for most minor developments.

The Government pamphlet – 'Planning a Guide for Householders ' by D.E.T.R. provides a useful guide on permitted development rights and is available free from the Borough Council.

* To calculate the (cubic) volume of a building multiply the area of its plan by the height of the structure, taking the measurement from the outside of the walls. For example a flat roofed building measuring 5m. long x 4m. wide x 3m. high will have a volume of 60 cubic metres (often written 60m.³).