

What are Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)?

SPDs support and add detail to policies in the Development Plan. They give you guidance on how best to plan your application.

- The Development Plan (and the relevant policies) includes the Malvern Hills District Local Plan 1996-2011 and the Worcestershire County Structure Plan. A policy that you should pay particular attention to is Policy CN9 in the Malvern Hills District Local Plan



Extensions

Extensions and outbuildings can have a significant impact on your neighbours' enjoyment of their property, as well as having an impact on the streetscene or the wider character of the area. This SPD aims to provide guidance and points of reference to people thinking of extending their house or constructing an outbuilding, and to strike a fair balance between the wishes of those who want to build, the people who live next door and the interests of the wider community.

Where planning permission is required, this guidance, together with the relevant policies in the Development Plan will form the main basis for an assessment as to whether the impact is within acceptable limits. This document provides general advice only and a decision on any application will be informed by many factors following an Officer site visit.

The two main issues for consideration are design and the impact on residential amenity. These issues are explored in greater detail in the following sections.

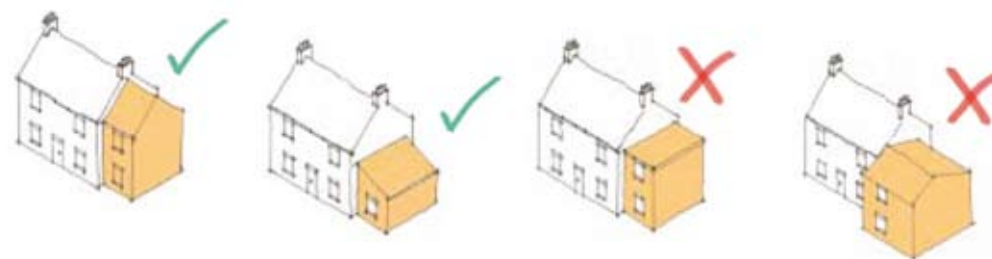
Design

The design of any extension or outbuilding needs to respect the character of the existing property. Character is made up from elements such as size, form, proportions, roof and window styles, architectural detailing and materials. These elements, together with siting, spacing and landscaping contribute towards *local distinctiveness* and the *streetscene*. If your proposal would impact on any significant trees, you should seek advice from the Landscape Officer.

Scale, Form and Detailing

Alterations and extensions should enhance rather than detract from a dwelling and contribute to that building's character and additional parking areas should not detract from the street scene. In terms of the scale of an extension, this should normally be subordinate in height and size to the original property. The main points to consider are:

- The setting down and setting back of a two-storey side extension will usually achieve a subordinate appearance. Typically a 0.5 metre set down would be sufficient to achieve this.
- The height, width and general size should normally be smaller than the house, and, whilst in proportion, clearly subordinate so as not to dominate the character of the original. The cumulative impact of previous extensions to the original dwelling since 1948 along with any proposed extensions, will have to be taken into account.



- Where a rear extension is proposed, the length should not normally exceed the existing gable width.



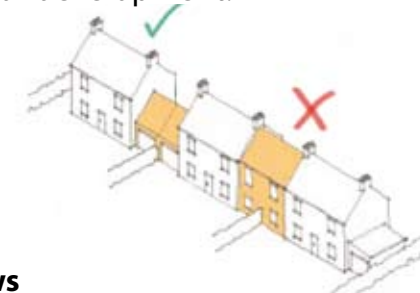
In terms of the form and detailing, the main points to consider are:

- Generally, roofs should be pitched at an angle that reflects the original building. Flat roofed extensions, particularly at first floor level, are rarely encouraged due to their harmful impact on the character of the dwelling and surrounding area.
- The design of windows and openings should respect the proportions and style of those features in the original dwelling. Similarly, this should apply to the lintel and sill treatments of existing windows and other architectural details, such as eaves and verges. Particular attention will be paid to the design of extensions in Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings, and you are advised to contact the Conservation Officer.

Front and Side Extensions

Front extensions that project significantly forward of any defined building line can appear prominent and are therefore unlikely to be acceptable.

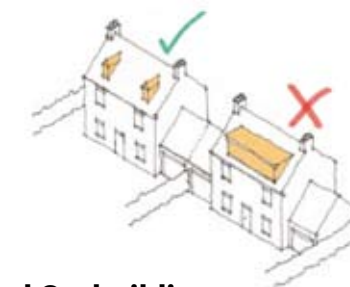
First floor or two-storey side extensions can create a terracing effect due to the loss of the visual gap between adjacent dwellings. To avoid this, a gap between the side of the extension and the side boundary or a significant set back of the front wall of the extension may be appropriate, although consideration will need to be given to the character of the area and the potential for your neighbours to carry out a similar development.



Dormer Windows

Dormer windows and roof extensions, if poorly designed, can often detract from the proportions and balance of the original dwelling. The main points to consider are:

- The size and number of dormer windows should be kept to a minimum to avoid dominating the appearance of the roof.
- Dormers should be below the ridge line and set away from the edges of the roof.
- A top heavy or unbalanced appearance is usually avoided by siting dormers in line with, but slightly smaller than, the windows below them.



Garages, Annexes and Outbuildings

- Garages, annexes and outbuildings should be designed to appear ancillary to the main dwelling. They should be sited and designed so as to perform their intended function and should not visually compete with the main dwelling.
- In general, outbuildings should be designed to be significantly smaller and lower in height than the main dwelling.
- "Granny annexes" and other accommodation which may result in a building capable of independent habitation raises other issues and you are advised to seek further advice.

Materials and Sensitive Sites

In most circumstances external materials should match those of the original house. It may not be possible to obtain an exact match and in these circumstances a match as close as possible would usually be acceptable. In the case of historic buildings, contrasting materials may be appropriate in some cases and you are advised to seek further advice. Similarly, in sensitive and historic locations a design statement may be required.

The main issues to consider when considering the effect of your extension on your neighbours' amenity are:

- overlooking
- overbearance and loss of light
- overshadowing

Loss of view is not normally held to be a material consideration, and disturbance during construction is unlikely to be a significant issue in a planning application.

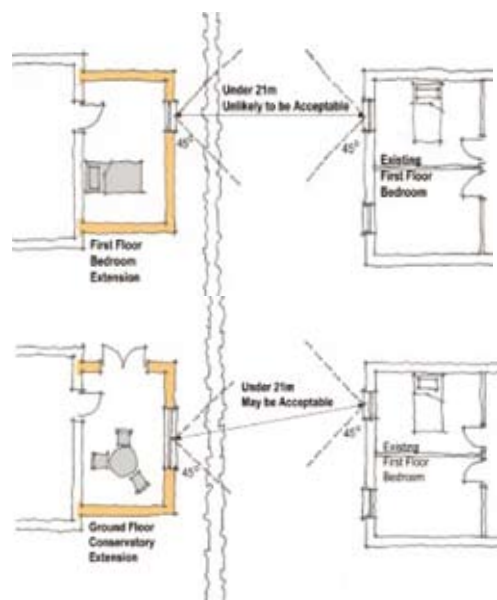
Overlooking

Overlooking is the extent to which occupants of a dwelling would, through normal use of a room, be able to view into the main habitable areas of a neighbouring property. Normally, this involves a consideration of the relationship between opposing principal habitable room windows. Overlooking of the main sitting out area of gardens may be a consideration and is described further below.

These standards are intended as general guidance only and ultimately the merits of any proposal will have particular regard to factors such as orientation, ground levels, boundary treatment and sill heights.

- "Principal habitable room windows" will normally include the largest front or rear facing window serving a lounge, conservatory, dining room, bedroom and some kitchens.

Proposals which would result in the existing uninterrupted view between both principal habitable room windows being reduced to less than 21 metres as set out below, are unlikely to be acceptable.



Existing or proposed boundary treatment, particularly between ground floor windows, may interrupt the view and prevent any significant overlooking, and overlooking across a highway or other public space is not usually a concern. In other cases, a proposed ground floor extension may be overlooked by, but not result in overlooking of, a first floor window in a neighbouring property. In such cases, a distance of less than 21 metres may be acceptable, provided that this would not result in any significant harm to your neighbours.

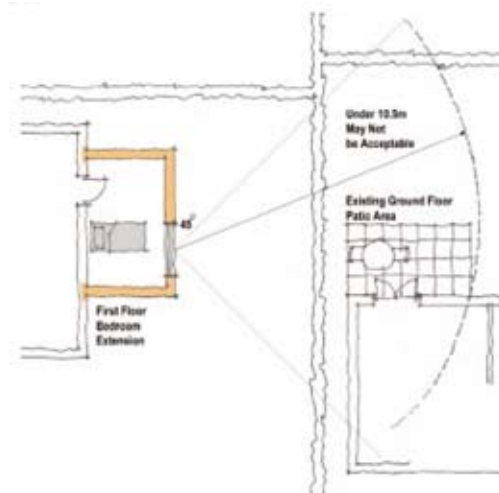
Overlooking of Gardens

Some overlooking of adjacent garden areas is inevitable in most housing layouts. The extent of overlooking will depend upon many factors such as:

- The proximity to the boundary, the angle of view, boundary treatment, the use of the room and the part of the garden overlooked.

Generally, overlooking of gardens is unlikely to result in significant harm. However, it may be unacceptable where it would result in an intrusive, direct and uninterrupted view, from a principal habitable room window, to the main sitting out area, (such as a patio), of your neighbours' house.

Proposals which would result in direct intrusion of your neighbours' main sitting out area from a principal habitable room window at a distance of less than 10.5 metres as set out below, may not be acceptable:



Balconies can often cause significant overlooking to private rear garden areas of neighbouring properties due to the wide range of view and other disturbance caused.

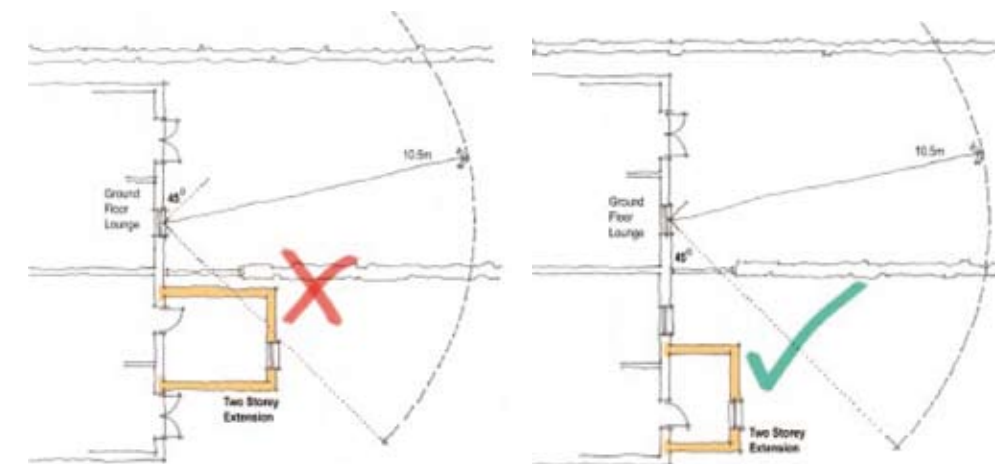
Overbearance/Loss of Light

Overbearance is the extent to which a new development impinges on the immediate aspect or outlook from the principal habitable room windows of an adjoining property.

Overbearance can result from the erection of a blank wall, and is therefore distinct from both overlooking, which involves the relationship between principal habitable room windows, and from loss of view, which involves a longer distance outlook and has little impact on the use of the room itself. Loss of light is usually a consequence of overbearance.

In order to assist in assessing the impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, the following 45 degree test measured from the centre point of the adjoining windows will be applied to all two storey extensions where an adjoining ground floor principal habitable room window is affected.

The assessment of single storey proposals will be on their merits, and all proposals will also be judged with regard to other factors such as ground levels and boundary treatment.



Overshadowing

The extent to which a property is overshadowed by a proposed development will involve an assessment of the orientation of the buildings in relation to the trajectory of the sun. It is therefore distinct from loss of light, which may result regardless of orientation. Concerns regarding overshadowing may add weight to other issues, such as overbearance, when balancing the merits of a proposal.

How to Contact Us

For further information about the Planning Department, including community involvement, viewing applications and making appointments to see a Customer Service Advisor or Planning Officer please call 01684 862151. Alternatively, visit us at the Customer Service Centre in Great Malvern Library, Graham Road, Malvern (Opening Hours Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:30pm) or visit the District Council's website www.malvernhillsgov.uk.

This SPD has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2004, including full public consultation for a 6 week period. Issue 1 was adopted on 9 August 2005. Issue 2 was re-adopted on 4th August 2006 with the only changes being updated references to the Malvern Hills District Local Plan

Issue 2/ Adopted August 2006