

General Design Principles for Extensions

Chapter 5.5
An Extract from the
Wychavon Residential Design Guide
Supplementary Planning Document

September 2010

This extract has been taken from the adopted 'Wychavon Residential Design Guide - Supplementary Planning Document' and is a material consideration when determining planning applications.

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5.5 General Design Principles for Extensions

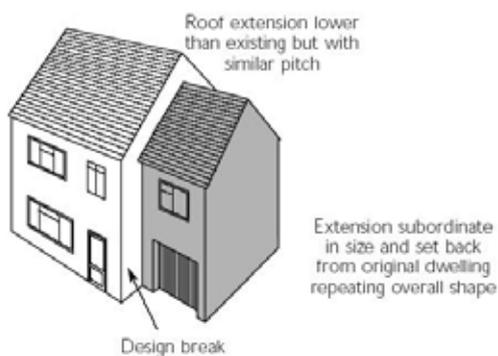
5.37 In the case of extensions, many of the principles that are mentioned earlier in this document can be applied, however there are some specific principles that need to be adhered to when designing extensions to ensure that the existing dwelling is not adversely affected and that the privacy of neighbouring households is not compromised. The following points should be considered when creating the detailed design.

- The type of housing in the locality
- The positioning of the dwelling within the locality
- Ground levels e.g. normally greater impact if ground level higher than neighbouring properties
- The design of the proposed extension in relation to the dwelling and neighbouring dwellings
- The plot's existing landscape features e.g. important trees
- The proposed extension's impact on parking provision
- Look at the proposed extension from the viewpoint of the neighbour(s)

Proposals which do not fully reflect these design points are unlikely to be acceptable.

5.38 The **size and style** of an extension are important design points as they determine whether the extension fits in with neighbouring dwellings and whether the privacy of neighbouring dwellings is significantly reduced.

Figure 1 Set back - subordinate to existing dwelling

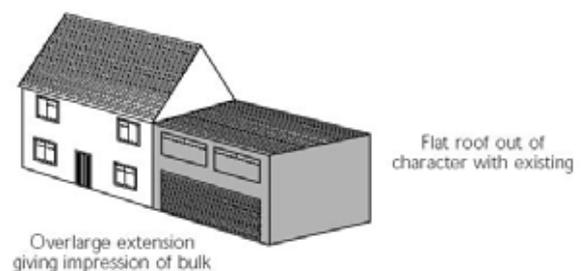


5.39 The extension should be visually subordinate to, and not dominate, the original dwelling, and have similar or complimentary design elements. Design breaks e.g. stepping back (Figure 1) can sometimes prevent an extension appearing as a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original dwelling. Merely incorporating design breaks, however, may not resolve fundamental difficulties and there will be situations where it is not possible to design an extension which would satisfy the Council's design standards.

Figure 2 Overly large extension

5.40 Size alone may not determine an extension's environmental impact as the following design elements need to be considered:

- Roof height - normally should be lower than original
- Roof pitch - normally should be the same as the original
- Eaves details - same as existing wherever possible
- Windows - should compliment the original and be of similar proportions

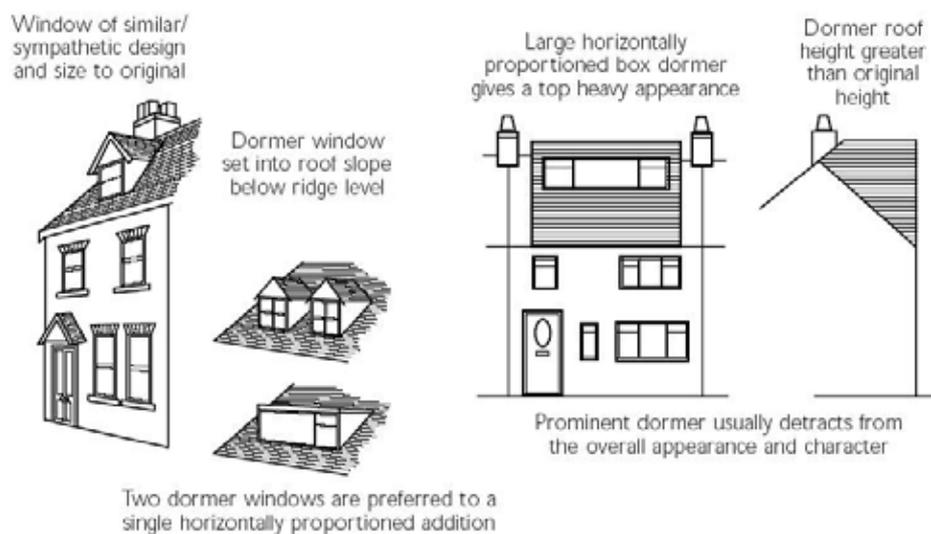


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- Materials - should in general match the existing
- Car parking - extensions should not reduce on site car parking capacity to less than the standards set out in the Local Plan particularly where highway safety would be jeopardised. It may be necessary to provide additional car parking where extra bedrooms are being provided.

5.41 Any extension should normally reflect, in its design and materials, the character and style of the original dwelling as shown in Figure 3. Unsympathetic additions can often spoil the proportion and balance of the original dwelling and, consequently, have a visually detrimental impact. Roof extensions and dormer windows are two common areas where poor design can easily have a visually unsatisfactory result. For example, large horizontally proportioned dormer windows are likely to ruin the character of the dwelling and will look out of place.

Figure 3 Examples of appropriate and inappropriate roof extensions and dormer windows



Front and Side Extensions

5.42 Front extensions can be prominent and therefore require a particularly sensitive design. They should have a positive impact on the street and not look out of place to make them acceptable.

5.43 It may be easier to incorporate a front extension where there is no obvious building line. Front porches may require planning permission (please check with a Planning Officer) and the general design principles should still apply.

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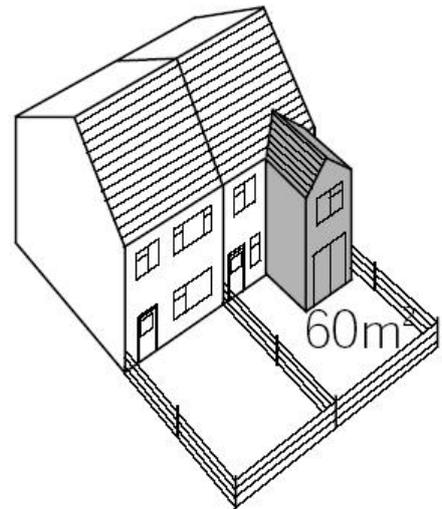
Figure 4 Terraced effect creating loss of visual gap and Councils preferred set back extension



5.44 Extensions to the side of detached and semi-detached buildings can produce a "terraced" effect, as shown in Figure 4, because of the loss of the visual gap between adjacent dwellings. To protect the character and amenity of detached and semi-detached dwellings the Council will normally require that side extensions close to a common boundary should be set back at least 1.5 metres from the front of the property at first floor level at the bottom of Figure 4. Also important here is the relationship of the proposed extension to the boundary and the adjoining property. Building on or close to a boundary/common wall could make future maintenance access difficult and also have legal implications. Please refer to the leaflet on The Party Wall Act 1996.

5.45 Private garden space (normally to the rear of a property) is a positive part of a dwelling's amenity and generally should be sufficient to meet the likely needs of the occupiers (current and future). Therefore, for example, for extensions to 3 bedroom dwellings there should be at least 60 square metres of private garden area remaining following construction as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5 Minimum garden size for extended 3 bed house



5.46 The privacy of neighbouring properties is important and therefore any extension incorporating rooms (other than toilets/bathrooms) with a window should respect this privacy by maintaining a minimum distance of 10.5 metres between the window and an adjoining private rear boundary. This distance may be reduced where there is the opportunity for effective and appropriate screening under the applicant's control. The Council may require this screening to be maintained to an appropriate height through a planning condition. (You should seek professional advice regarding choice of hedging planted as some, notably Leylandii, rapidly become too large and can cause structural damage). Although screening can safeguard privacy, daylight and sunlight reaching your extension could be reduced.

5.47 Extensions which overlook a neighbouring private garden as shown in Figure 6 are likely to be refused. Non-opening obscure glazed windows could make an extension acceptable.

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5.48 A distance of approximately 13 metres should be maintained to a blank gable wall for rear extensions.

5.49 The distance required on flat sites between a second storey extension window and neighbouring direct facing windows should normally be at least 23 metres. The actual separation distance required will depend on several factors notably the differences in ground levels, the relationship between the buildings e.g. a reduced distance may be acceptable if the facing windows are offset.

Daylight and sunlight

5.50 Extensions can significantly reduce the amount of daylight and sunlight received by your property and neighbouring properties. Daylight and sunlight are valuable in improving a dwelling's amenity as they help provide a satisfactory living environment. In assessing extension proposals, the Council will use the Building Research Establishment's report "Site Layout - Planning for Daylight and Sunlight, a Guide to Good Practice".

5.51 The 45° code shown in Figure 7 will be used to help assess the impact of proposed extensions on adjacent dwellings. The code is designed to protect the amenities of dwellings from over-shadowing or obstruction of outlook which can be caused by extensions on or close to a boundary. The amount of overshadowing will depend on the length and height of the extension, its orientation, and any difference in ground levels.

5.52 For single storey extensions, the code works by drawing an imaginary line at an angle of 45 degrees from the mid point of the nearest habitable i.e. normally excludes bathrooms, halls, landings and garages, room window which would be affected by the proposed extension.

5.53 If the nearest window is a bay or bow window the measurement is taken from the mid point at the back of the window where it joins the main wall. The proposed extension should not cross the 45° line for a distance of 12 metres as shown in Figure 7.

5.54 For two storey extensions the line is drawn at an angle of 45° from the closest quarter point from the nearest room window as shown in Figure 8. The impact of a two storey extension is normally greater than of a single storey, particularly on narrow fronted properties, so even though a proposal satisfies the 45° rule it could still be unacceptable because of its impact on the adjoining property.

Figure 6 Over looking of private gardens

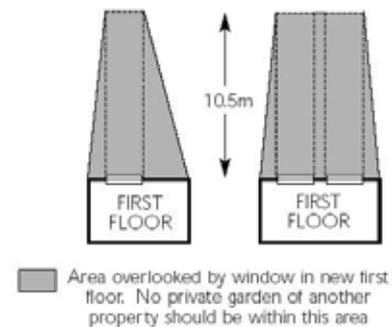
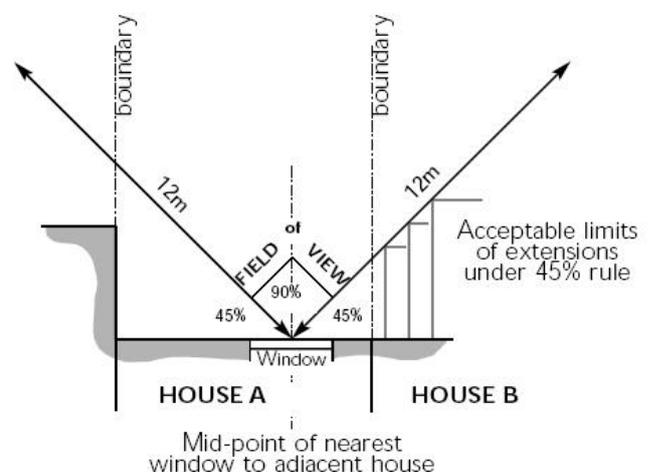
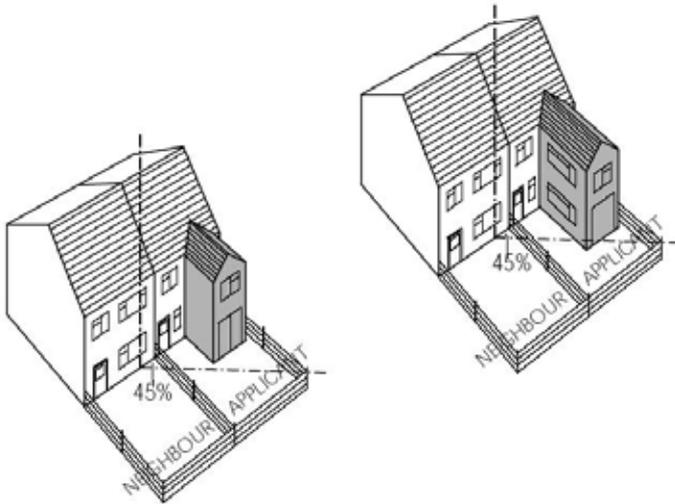


Figure 7 Basic principle of the 45 degree rule



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Figure 8 45 degree rule and the impact on neighbouring properties



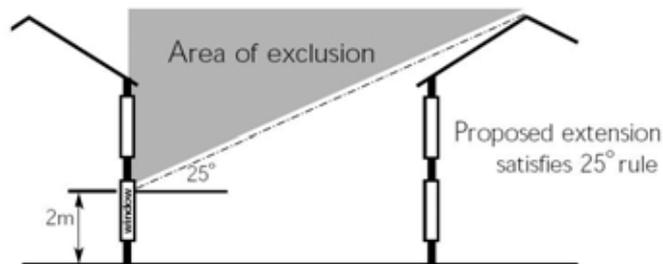
5.55 For side extensions the 45° Code is applied if the extension protrudes beyond the front or back of the neighbour's house.

5.56 Conservatories are subject to the 45° rule. The amount of 'see through' materials in the proposal will influence the extension's impact on neighbouring properties. If the neighbouring property has an extension principally constructed from 'see through' materials the 45° line will be drawn from the centrepoint of the original window opening in the wall.

5.57 Please note that satisfying the 45° Code does not necessarily make a proposal acceptable as it must satisfy the other design principles in this Advice Note.

5.58 The Council will also use the 25° Code, as shown in Figure 9, in order to assess applications to see if they would cause a significant reduction in daylight and/or privacy to/of adjoining properties.

Figure 9 25 degree code



Before submitting a planning application you are encouraged to:-

- Check online using the following link or contact the Planning Department directly before commencing with any work as Some extensions and alterations to existing dwellings may not require planning permission and are 'permitted development'
<http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/cms/business/planning/planning-application/household-planning.aspx>
- Discuss your proposal with a Planning Officer and Building Control Officer (if you live in a Conservation Area or in a Listed Building you should also speak to the Conservation Officer), as they can provide advice which will help avoid delays at a later stage.
- Consult with your neighbour(s) as potential problems could be addressed before they are consulted by the Council.

This Residential Design Guide is also available in a larger print and Braille, on CD or in other languages. To request a copy in a different format please ring 01386 565565.

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