

House Extensions

Design Guide



South Bucks
District Council

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1 Introduction

1.1 This design guide sets out useful information for people who are considering extending their house.

1.2 Planning permissions will normally be granted for extensions provided that they meet the policies in the Local Plan. The main policies in the 'South Bucks District Local Plan - Adopted Version' are H10, H11, H12, H13, EP3 and GB10.

1.3 This design guide is based on the policies in the Local Plan. If the guidance is followed, your extension is more likely to be granted planning permission, and unnecessary delays should be avoided.

1.4 The guide uses the term extensions to include not only conventional extensions constructed of brickwork or blockwork, but also all forms of other additions including conservatories, porches and dormers.

2 General overview

2.1 When designing a house extension there are three golden rules to follow. Extensions should;

- ♦ be neighbourly, respecting the privacy and outlook of adjoining properties,
 - ♦ normally be indistinguishable from the original dwelling and integrated with it,
 - ♦ be in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.
- This guidance note shows how you can achieve these basic principles.

2.2 The retention of existing trees, hedges and other landscaping will often help reduce the impact of an extension on the character of the surrounding area. This is particularly important in the Residential Areas of Exceptional Character defined in the Local Plan and in Conservation Areas.

3 Two Storey Extensions

3.1 Two storey extensions, or any extension at or above first floor level, should be set at least one metre from the flank boundary of the site (see figure 1). A gap will ensure that a terracing effect is not produced and the spacious character of the area is maintained. The second reason for a 1m gap is to ensure that an extension will not have an over dominant effect on an adjacent property. In some cases, for example in Residential Areas of Exceptional Character (see policy H10 of the South Bucks District Local Plan), even greater gaps to the boundary may be required. If the extension is located adjacent to an area of open land, including for example a field, or a public highway which is likely to remain permanently open, this requirement could be waived.



Figure 1
The one metre rule

3.2 Where the original building has a pitched roof, two storey extensions should be constructed with a pitched roof. The angle of the roof should be the same as, or close to the angle of the existing roof. Flat roofs for two storey extensions will usually be unacceptable (see figure 2).



Figure 2 Pitched roof extensions will be encouraged

4 Front Extension

4.1 It is important to ensure that front extensions do not detract from the continuity of the street scene. Extensions are not generally acceptable where there is a clear and visually obvious 'building line' which would be disrupted. Conversely, where the building line is staggered or indistinct, a front extension could be acceptable.

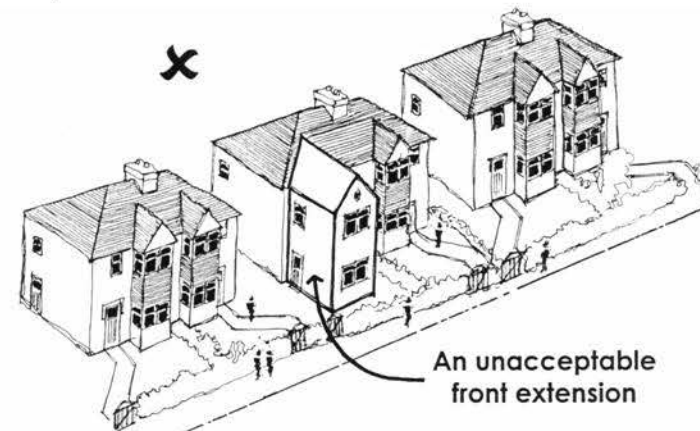


Figure 3 Front extensions and the street scene

5 Materials

5.1 To ensure that the extensions can be viewed as an integral part of the original dwelling, the materials used should harmonise with the existing materials. If your extension requires planning permission, it is likely that a condition will be imposed to the effect that matching materials should be used. Roof tiles, facing bricks and other materials should usually be the same size, colour and design as the existing ones.

Material Matching

If an exact match cannot be achieved, for example due to the effects of weathering, it is better to design the extension in such a way that the front wall is set back so that there is a slight visual break between any different materials used.

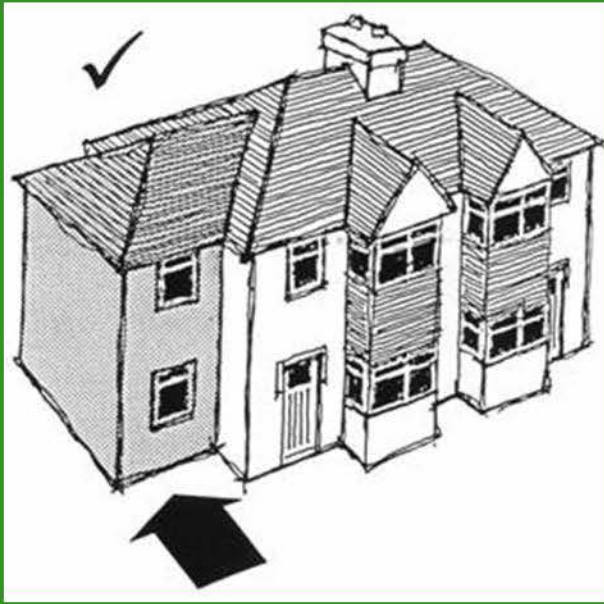


Figure 4 Extension set back to provide visual break

Design Detailing

Look at any detailing around the doors, windows and at the eaves and reflect this in the new design. Older houses in particular often have interesting arches and other special features which add character. However, unnecessary details should be avoided. Georgian columns, bow windows and other architectural features which are not in keeping with the design of the original dwelling and the area could look out of place.



Figure 5 Unnecessary detailing

Windows

To ensure that the extension is fully integrated with the original building, the windows of the extension should be aligned to the existing fenestration, both vertically and more importantly horizontally. Window design is also important, a mixture of timber and metal framed windows could appear incongruous.

6 Dormer Windows

6.1 Dormer windows should be small, unobtrusive and designed so as to be in harmony with the existing building. In general these should be considered simply as a means of lighting and ventilating the existing roof space and thereby allowing it to be used as a room, not as an extended room pushed out into the roof pitch. When the dormer is at the front of the building, it is likely to interfere with both the original design of the existing building and cause a visual intrusion into the street scene. It will therefore need to be carefully designed to be acceptable.

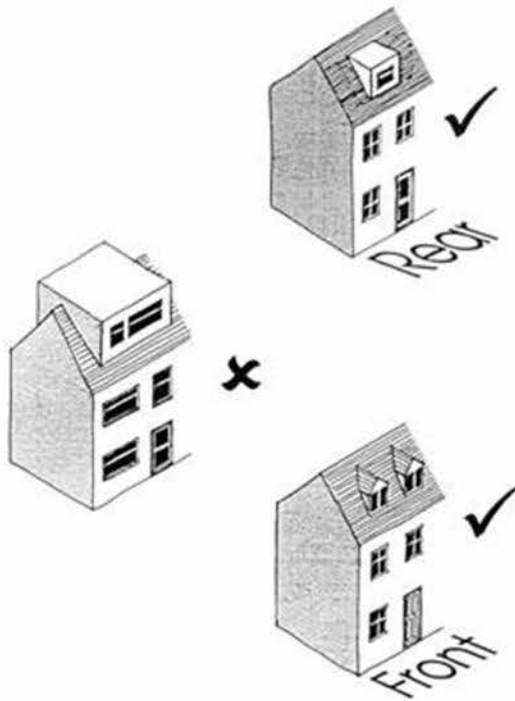


Figure 6 Acceptable and unacceptable dormers

7 Effects on neighbours

7.1 Any extension should not detract from the amenities of the adjoining property with regard to loss of privacy, loss of sunlight and daylight or by unduly harming their outlook.

Consultation

Before you apply for planning permission it is a good idea to talk to your neighbours about your proposed extension so that they are aware of your plans.

Privacy

7.2 The windows of any extension should not look directly or obliquely into those of an adjacent property. Neither should there be any overlooking of adjoining rear gardens to an unreasonable level as shown in Figure 7A. This should be achieved through careful design of the extension's internal layout. The retention of mature trees and hedges may sometimes help prevent overlooking. It is particularly important to ensure that the most private area of the garden is protected from overlooking, i.e.. that part nearest the house; see Figure 7B. Fixed non-opening windows in obscure glazing or high level windows (i.e.. those with a cill height of not less than 1.8m from the internal finished floor level) may be permissible in flank walls where no alternative is available. Additional features such as balconies and dormer windows that result in overlooking will not be acceptable.

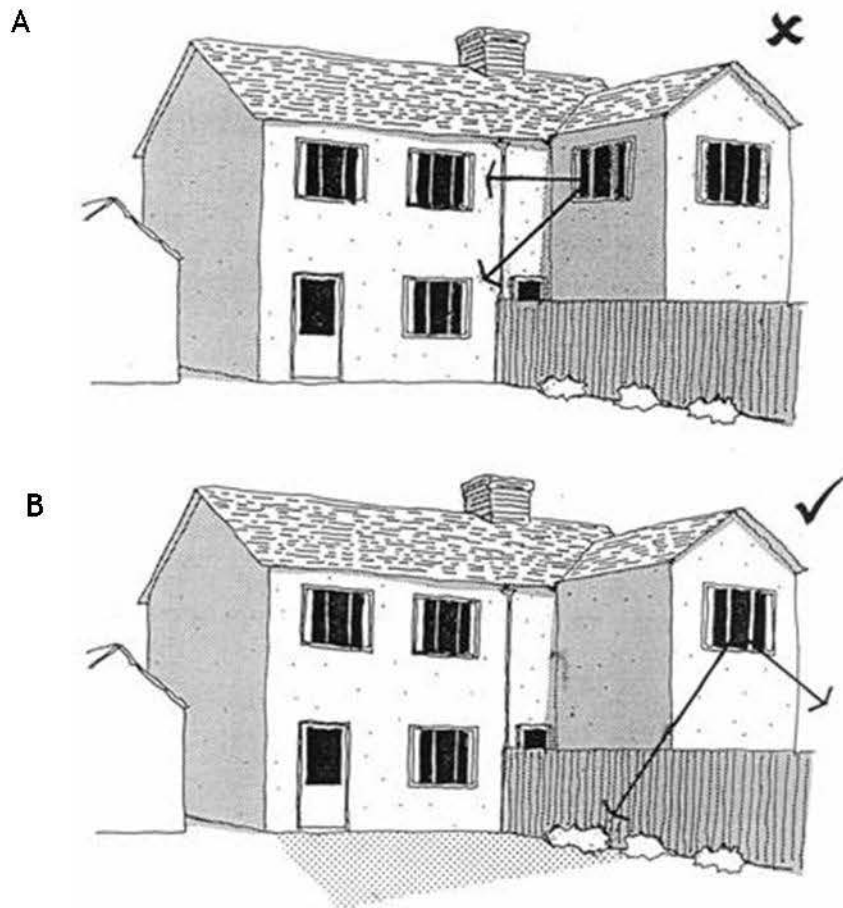


Figure 7
A shows an unreasonable level of overlooking whereas the shaded area in B has retained its privacy.

Outlook

7.3 An extension's projection can seriously affect the outlook or light provision to an adjoining owner's nearest habitable room. Two storey rear extensions to semi-detached and terraced dwellings are usually very prominent in views from adjoining dwellings and will dominate outward views from adjoining ground floor windows, appearing excessively large and dominant.



Figure 8 A detrimental impact upon a neighbour's outlook caused by a badly sited extension

Daylight and Sunlight

7.4 Care should be taken not to significantly reduce the daylight and sunlight enjoyed by adjoining dwellings. Figure 9 shows the effect of shadow at near midsummer in the case of a two storey extension constructed on the rear of an east facing house.



The daylight enjoyed in the ground floor room of the adjoining dwelling will also be greatly reduced.

Figure 9
An unacceptable example of overshadowing

7.5 Projections will be determined as shown in figure 10. Extensions should project no further than a line drawn at 60° (for single storey) or 45° (for first floor and two storey extensions) from the mid point of the window of the nearest habitable room on the ground floor of adjacent properties. Habitable rooms include kitchens, living rooms and bedrooms but exclude bathrooms, toilets, halls, landings and store rooms.

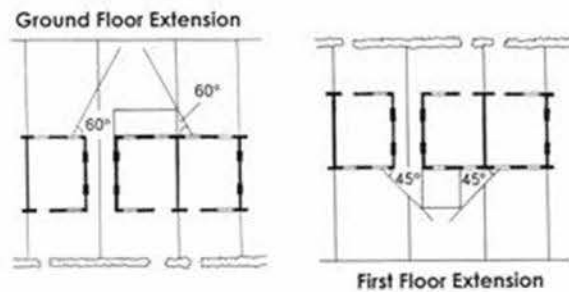


Figure 10 Code for house extensions projection

Conservatories

The principles that apply to house extensions also apply to conservatories. Ensure that the materials and design of the conservatory harmonise with the rest of the house so that it will not look out of place.



Figure 11 A well designed conservatory

8 Self Contained Residential Annexes

8.1 These are sometimes referred to as granny annexes. Typically they are house extensions for relatives to live with their family but with a degree of independence. Such annexes would only be granted permission when they would clearly be subordinate in scale to the existing dwelling. If this were not the case, the proposals would be rather like creating another dwelling on the same site.

8.2 Annexes should be designed so that they will be capable of being fully integrated within the existing dwelling. This can be achieved in a number of ways. The entrance to the annexe should be via the entrance to the main dwelling, a separate entrance at the front elevation will not normally be acceptable.

8.3 The accommodation should be linked internally to the main dwelling and should be designed in such a manner as to easily enable the annexe to be later used as an integral part of the main dwelling.

9 Garages and Outbuildings

9.1 Buildings within the residential curtilage such as garages, sheds and greenhouses will only be permitted where the building would be very subordinate in scale to the existing dwelling. As with extensions, the building should not adversely affect the character of the area, for example by being over-dominant or obtrusive. The Council will take account of the scale of the building in terms of both floorspace, height and the level of visibility of the building from the surroundings.

9.2 As with extensions to dwellings, it is important to ensure that buildings within the residential curtilage, whether in the front or rear gardens do not affect the privacy, sunlight or daylight provision to any neighbouring properties, and do not unduly restrict their outlook.

9.3 Buildings within the front gardens of properties will have to possess a scale and design appropriate to the character of the area. Incongruous designs may interrupt the street scene. To be acceptable, any outbuildings in front gardens should be unobtrusive in scale and design.

9.4 To ensure the highway is not blocked while the door is being opened, new garages or car ports which give access to the public highway should retain a 5 metre driveway within the residential curtilage. Those which give access to a shared private driveway should be at least one metre into the residential curtilage in order that the garage door does not cause an obstruction.

10 Green Belt

10.1 If your property is in the Green Belt it will be subject to additional restrictions, particularly in relation to its size. You can find out if your property is in the Green Belt by checking in the Local Plan.

10.2 Permission will not be granted for an extension where the floorspace of that extension, together with any others (including buildings close to the house) already built, would be more than one half of the floorspace of the original house which existed at 1 July 1948. For example, if the original house had a floorspace of 120m²

permission will not normally be granted for extensions which take the total floorspace of the house over 180m².

10.3 In the case of very small houses lacking basic modern amenities, or houses which are in a Green Belt settlement specified in the Local Plan, slightly larger extensions may be permitted.

Design Against Crime

When undertaking any building work on your home, it is important to consider how it will affect your security. It may also be a good time to review the security of the whole house. Thames Valley Police have provided the following advice.

A high proportion of burglars enter houses from the privacy of the rear garden. It is therefore very important to make it difficult to get into the back garden or down the side of the house. This can be achieved by erecting side fencing and a locked gate, preferably at the front of the building line to prevent a recess or hiding place. If a side gate is not locked, then a bolt in the mid rail could be used, but must not be reachable from the public side of the gate.

Make sure fences and walls cannot be used to gain access to windows. When the extension is finished, you could think about planting prickly bushes such as berberis below windows. This will make them less accessible.

Back doors are far more vulnerable to burglary than the front door, and should therefore be of equivalent strength if not greater than

the front door. It should be fitted with three hinges, two locks and two mortice bolts. The locks fitted should conform to British Standard 3621. All ground floor and climbable windows should be installed with a key operated window lock. Automatic window locks are now available and are far easier to use. Handle locks are only as strong as the handle or window to which they are attached, a separate window lock always adds strength. UPVC windows range greatly in quality and thus the security they provide. Ask your supplier if the window complies with BS7950. This is a very good security standard. If you can't afford the most secure windows everywhere, why not specify them on the ground floor back and side windows, and opt for a cheaper version for other less vulnerable windows.

Finally, burglar alarms and movement sensor lighting are effective, as are a number of lower cost items which may deter the burglar by increasing one of three key elements; TIME, VISIBILITY AND NOISE.

If you require any further advice on crime prevention, please contact

For Crime Reduction :

Mrs Lucy Groves
Crime Reduction Department
Police Station
King George V Road
Amersham
Bucks
HP5 6AL
Tel 01494 736645 / 0845 8 505 505

For the Crime Prevention Design
Adviser (CPDA) for Developers &
Architects :

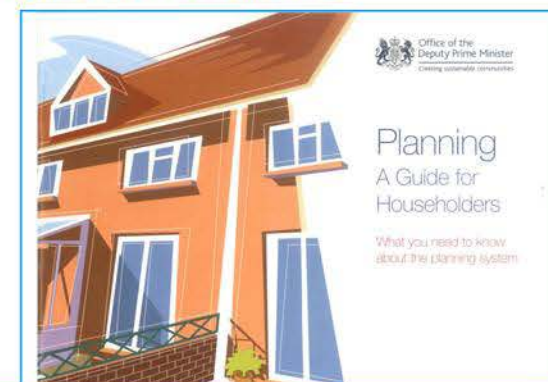
Mr Michael Clare
Crime Prevention Design
Thames Valley Police
124 Bath Road,
Taplow
Nr. Maidenhead SL6 0NX
Tel 01628 601554 / 0845 8 505

For detailed advice about other designs and standards to prevent crime please visit the web site at www.securedbydesign.com

Permitted Development

Not all extensions and ancillary buildings need permission. However, if you do not require permission, it is still advisable to follow the guidelines in this note. If you are unsure whether your extension need planning permission, you should write to Planning Services with a sketch plan of your proposals. In some cases we may need to visit the site. It is very difficult to give advice in response to a telephone call, because mistakes could be made without seeing the proposal clearly and properly checking planning records.

Further general information on permitted development can be found in '[Planning - A guide for Householders](#)' available at the Council's Reception desk or by calling the Planning Administration team on the numbers on page 16.



Measurements

To avoid delays in the planning process, please ensure that the plans submitted as part of a planning application are fully annotated with metric measurements. This particularly applies to distances from boundaries.

If your property is within an **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** or a **Conservation Area** or if it is a **Listed Building**, it will be subject to additional controls. Officers of the Planning department will be happy to advise you further.

How to contact us:

South Bucks District Council

Planning Services

Capswood

Oxford Road

Denham

Bucks UB9 4LH

Telephone 01895 837284, 837293 or 837254 or,

email planning@southbucks.gov.uk

A copy of this document may be found on our website at

www.southbucks.gov.uk

This note is published in order to help guide proposals to make them more acceptable. However it provides general advice which may not necessarily be relevant to every site. There may therefore be occasions where proposals which follow this advice are unacceptable.

STOP!

**YOU MAY NEED BUILDING REGULATION APPROVAL IN
ADDITION TO PLANNING PERMISSION**

South Bucks District Building Control Service aims to provide a responsive service which is of a high standard and gives value for money to help our customers achieve quality in building.

Building Control Service

We are dedicated and know our job and are here to help you with yours. We are pleased to assist and support your building project at all stages. Inspection requests received by 10.00am are guaranteed a same day visit.

Messages can be left on the 24 hour hotline service.

Phone 01895 837212

Fax 01895 837269

You may also

email us

Buildingcontrol@southbucks.gov.uk

Or visit our website

www.southbucks.gov.uk

You can expect, Availability at short notice with specialist and expert knowledge on local conditions and needs.

Also, Quality Assured Services registered to ISO 9001. A fast plan checking service. Pre-submission advice. Qualified professional staff. LANTAC Type and Systems Approvals. SAP ratings calculated. Completion certificates on satisfactory completion. Direct dial telephone service. Mobile telephone. In house structural advice.

Further Information

A number of FREE guidance publications are available to assist you through the Building Control process. These are available by telephone, email, on our website or at the Council's Reception.

