

Residential Extensions & Alterations Supplementary Planning Document

Design  
Rear House  
Dormers  
Conservatories  
Roof  
Gills  
Platforms  
Bricks  
Walls  
Materials  
Extensions  
Chimneys  
Doors  
Garages  
Residential  
Windows

# Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. General guidelines	6
3. Rear extensions	18
4. Side extensions	21
5. Front extensions	26
6. Detached buildings	30
7. Roofs & dormers	32
8. Balconies	35
9. Other alterations	36

# Foreword

Householder proposals comprise a large proportion of the Planning applications dealt with by Swindon Borough Council and make up a significant number of the enquiries and pre-application submissions received.

No proposal is too small to have some effect and extensions, individually and cumulatively, can have a major impact upon our ever-changing townscape. Designed well, extensions can harmonise with the character of the home and the context of the general area and provide precious additional living space.

The impact of an extension is felt not only as a physical change but also in terms of the effect on the amenity of residents. Both must be taken into account to ensure the development does not result in harm to the visual appearance of the dwelling, the character of the area, or is detrimental to those living and working nearby.





# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This residential extensions and alterations supplementary planning document (SPD) updates the existing “Good Design House Extensions” Supplementary Planning Guidance document (SPG) and to further clarify policies DS6 and H15 of the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2011. This SPD builds on the previous guidance using appeal decisions, an assessment of recent cases and consultee responses to provide a succinct and clear set of principles and guidelines to follow.
- 1.2. This SPD has been adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Planning Act (2004) as amended. It forms part of the Local Development Framework and as an adopted document it is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

## Policy Context

- 1.3. The Council requires all new residential schemes to be of a high quality, to be well designed and built to a high standard in accordance with National Planning Policy. Swindon Borough Council’s adopted policy DS6 requires consistent and high standards of design and adopted policy H15 further details the considerations necessary in determining residential extensions.
- 1.4. This document will eventually form part of a suite of design guidance that together will comprise the Design Toolkit for Swindon Borough Council.
- 1.5. A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) and a Sustainability Assessment (SA) have been undertaken for this SPD and copies may be viewed at the Council Offices and on the Council’s website: [www.swindon.gov.uk/design](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/design)

## Permitted Development

- 1.6. This guide sets out general requirements to assist those seeking planning permission and is also a useful tool to ensure the quality of design for those schemes that fall within permitted development. Current legislation does not provide permitted development rights for flats and in some cases, permitted development rights for dwellings have been removed or restricted.
- 1.7. It is advisable that advice is sought from Swindon Borough Council and if necessary through a Certificate of Lawfulness. More general advice can be found on the Office of Public Sector Information website: [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

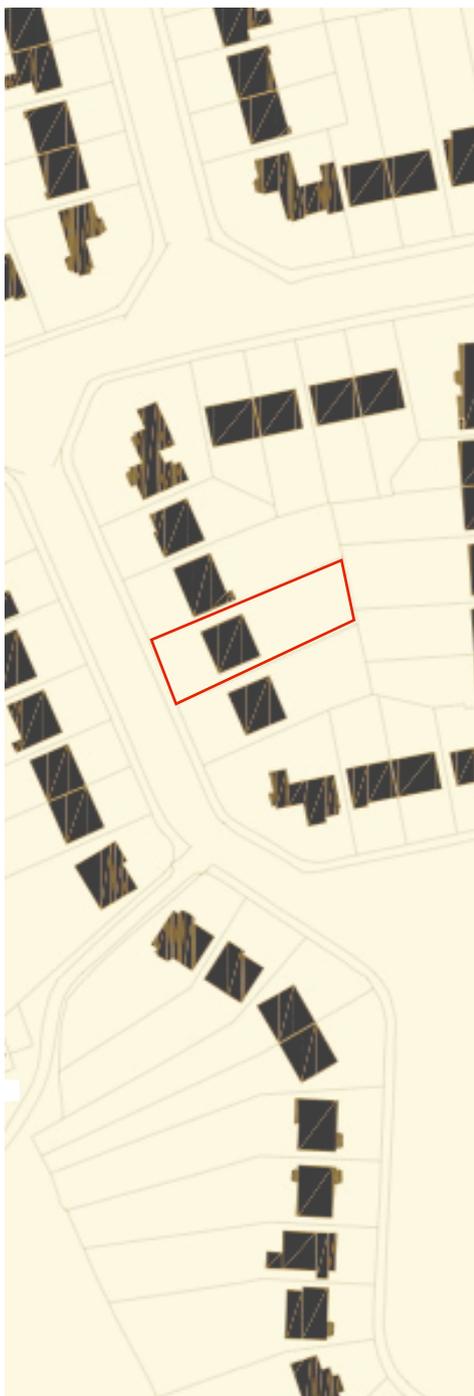
## Historic Assets

- 1.8. Listed buildings and buildings in the Borough's Conservation Areas as well as those within the AONB, fall under different categories and restrictions and may require additional consents. In such cases it is advisable to seek advice from the Borough's Conservation Officer and reference can be made to the individual Conservation Area Appraisals collated within Book 2 of the Design Toolkit.

## Pre-Application Advice

- 1.9. Swindon Borough Council offers a pre-application service to give more detailed, tailored advice prior to a formal planning application submission. This is useful for those seeking advice on potential alterations to a property not yet owned. For further information contact the Borough Council or visit: [www.swindon.gov.uk](http://www.swindon.gov.uk)





## Land Ownership

- 1.10. An extension built close to or on a boundary, may require access to the neighbour's property for construction and maintenance.
- 1.11. If any part of the extension, extends beyond the applicant's ownership (overhanging guttering or foundations), the neighbour's consent will be required and notification of this must be made within an application. This may not be acceptable to the neighbouring landowner, but without their consent, it is not possible to build the extension, even if planning permission is granted.
- 1.12. In order to avoid delay in dealing with applications, it is important that applicants and agents provide accurate plans depicting the precise position of boundaries, neighbouring dwellings and the openings within them.
- 1.13. It is also advisable before submission of a formal application, a dialogue takes place between the applicant or their agent and any neighbours that may be affected by the proposal. This can help ease the formal consultation process that will follow and eliminate any undue concerns.
- 1.14. For further information about carrying out work near neighbouring buildings refer to the booklet "The Party Wall Act" 1996 available to view at: [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

## Purpose

- 1.15. This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) builds upon the primary aim of securing design quality and protecting amenity by defining the Council's expectations for residential extensions and alterations. This document seeks to ensure the design quality of residential extensions and alterations is of a high standard by providing detailed guidelines. Proposals that only comply with minimum standards without ensuring high quality design and addressing context and character however, will not be acceptable. This guide is aimed at all those involved in the process of designing and managing change in the built environment, from residents, their agents and architects, to the planning professional and elected Members.
- 1.16. The guidelines apply to all design options for extensions and alterations to ensure the scale and form does not conflict with the existing dwelling or street and that the amenity of neighbours is protected. Swindon Borough Council encourages innovation and will consider the merits of alternative, more sustainable materials and contemporary design options. An extension must be sympathetic to the local context, character and site coverage in accordance with policies DS6(a) and H15(b).

- 1.17. The emerging draft of Chapter 2 of the Design Toolkit "Character and Context" should be referred to for guidance on the characteristics and attributes of areas of Swindon Borough.
- 1.18. Reference should also be made to the "Inclusive Design Access for All" SPD (Chapter 10) with regard to the access standards that apply to dwellings and to the "Energy and Sustainable Construction" SPD (Chapter 6 of the Design Toolkit) that provides guidance on the use of more sustainable techniques.

## Format

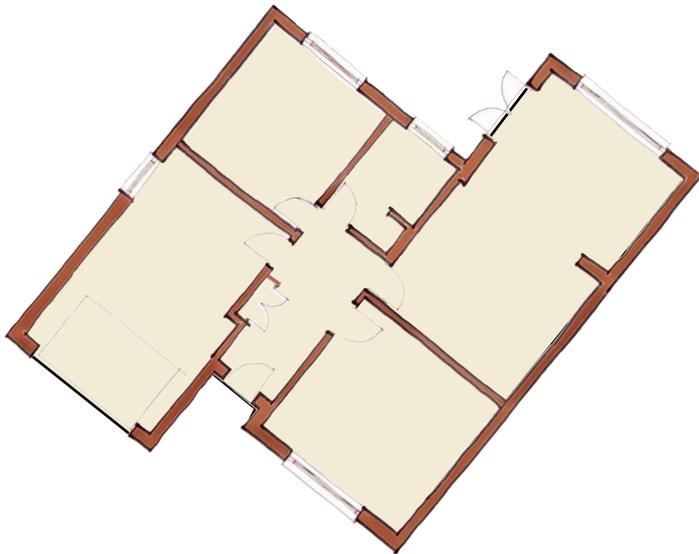
- 1.19. The first section of this document sets out general guidelines that relate to **all** residential extensions and alterations. Following sections relate to specific proposals such as front, rear or side extensions as well as other alterations. The guidelines given are not intended as hard and fast rules but do stem from good practice, practical experience and reflect previous decisions by Swindon Borough Council and the Planning Inspectorate.

### ▶ Guidelines appear in this format

- 1.20. The guidelines are set out at the start of each section on an orange background.
- 1.21. Each principle is then detailed further, explained and illustrated as appropriate.

## 2. General Guidelines

- 2.1. The following are a set of good practice guidelines that apply generally to all residential extensions and alterations. They stem from the need to address the key principles in policy DS6 and H15. The list of general guidelines is broken down one by one in the following section each with accompanying text and some illustrations to support the principle.
- 2.2. Although many properties are similar none are exactly the same and so these general guidelines will be applied with the understanding that different circumstances – such as orientation or changes in level, may require different approaches.



### All extensions & alterations should:

- ▶ Be of a high quality design
- ▶ Safeguard the amenity of neighbouring residents in terms of daylight, sunlight, privacy, visual intrusion, nuisance and security
- ▶ Be well sited, in scale and proportion, with a shape, mass, vertical or horizontal emphasis and roof in character with the existing dwelling
- ▶ Comprise windows and doors that relate to the existing house in terms of materials, alignment, style, size, shape and proportion
- ▶ Safeguard the internal and external space required for the extended dwelling
- ▶ Comprise materials that harmonise and correspond with the existing dwelling and protect and reflect existing architectural details
- ▶ Safeguard the access, car parking and servicing required for the extended dwelling
- ▶ Not cause harm or conflict with existing biodiversity, site features including water courses and associated flood risk zones, or open spaces

## High Quality Design

- 2.3. The location of some dwellings – tucked away at the end of a cul-de-sac or hidden in part by mature vegetation, may lead designers to believe design is less important as it is not in clear view. Swindon Borough Council considers this to be contrary to the aspiration of **high quality design** for **all** development in the Borough.
- 2.4. Obstructions or restricted views are often temporary – vegetation provides limited seasonal screening and developments or road alignments change over time. Unless these form part of the application site and their retention can be assured as part of a planning condition, these should **not** be relied upon to provide a block to what would otherwise be unacceptable levels of overlooking. In addition, the excuse that the extension is not in direct view or that the host dwelling is somehow obscured will not be considered as suitable justification for poor quality design.
- 2.5. Similarly, there may be lower quality development nearby or adjacent to the dwelling, but this should **not** be viewed as a reason to allow an inferior design. On the contrary, it is these very areas of lower quality development that most need to maximise an opportunity to raise the standard and reverse the downward trend of poor design.
- 2.6. Finally, the Borough Council does not seek to place an undue burden of cost upon a development, however the rationale that materials or a better design costs more is not sufficient alone as justification for the Council to accept poor quality



## Amenity

- 2.7. The effect of an extension will be assessed with regard to the impact upon residential **amenity** to ensure there would not be unacceptable harm by reason of **light**, **visual intrusion**, **privacy**, or **nuisance** in accordance with DS6.
- 2.8. The **siting**, **orientation** and **size** of an extension or addition is key to the level of impact on neighbours. A poorly sited oversized addition close to a neighbour's window can have a detrimental impact on the **daylight** received through the opening and result in a visual intrusion to that property. The **45° rule** may be applied to assess impact on **daylight** to a neighbouring window.
- 2.9. In addition, the impact of an extension upon **sunlight** received particularly to the rear private garden space will be assessed. An overbearing extension that causes excessive overshadowing and loss of sunlight to a property or garden will not be acceptable. Swindon Borough Council will refer to the guidance contained within the widely recognised document 'BRE Digest 209: Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight'.
- 2.10. The difference in levels present on site may also be a key aspect of assessing this impact. Even a modest single storey extension may be unacceptable owing to level differences on site.





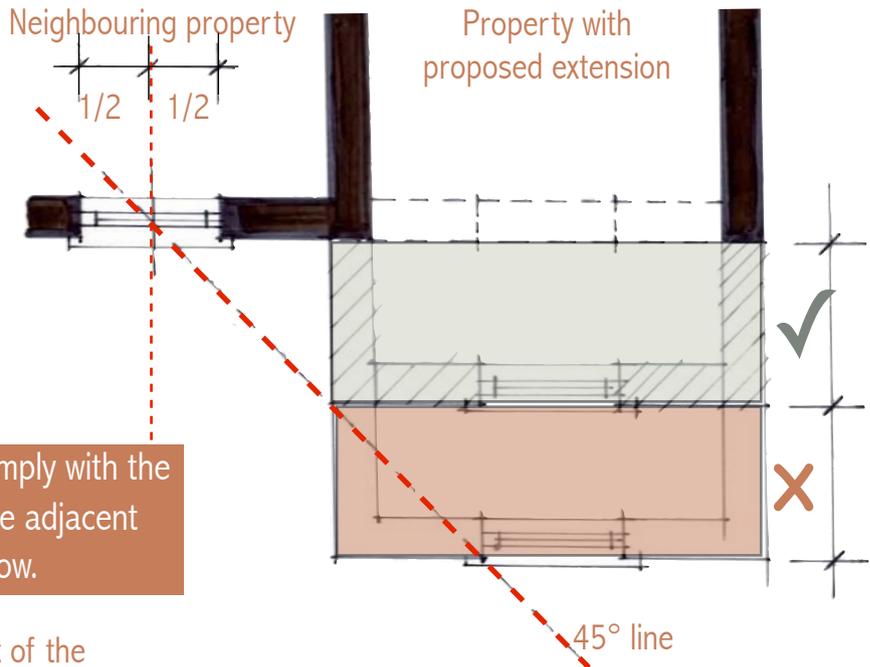
- 2.11. Where marked level changes occur on site it is important that an applicant provides accurate details of this within the planning application.
- 2.12. New windows or raised platforms that overlook private areas of a neighbouring garden or property can have a harmful impact on levels of **privacy**. Consideration will be given to existing and proposed ground and slab levels, the orientation of properties as well as their openings and the internal arrangement of rooms, to address issues of privacy.
- 2.13. **Separation distances** help ensure minimum garden sizes as well as maintaining levels of privacy. A guide to the required separations is given below.
- 2.14. **Security** of the property and the general area is also a consideration under policy DS6(c) and (f). This includes maintaining **casual surveillance**, securing side or rear accesses and openings, and avoiding designs that have the potential to screen criminal activity.
- 2.15. Casual surveillance of the general area from existing windows should be maintained or enhanced with a new extension. This is particularly important where the dwelling provides overlooking of a large public area or is the only source of casual surveillance of that part of the public realm.

## The 45° Rule

2.16. To comply with policy H15(a) the design of a residential extension must ensure there is no material detraction of light to a neighbouring property.

2.17. A proposed extension should not impinge on the 45° line or the area formed in front of it. Existing obstructions such as walls or fences, within this zone will be taken into account in assessing the impact.

## Single Storey Extension



▶ Single storey extensions must comply with the 45° rule from the mid point of the adjacent neighbour's habitable room window.

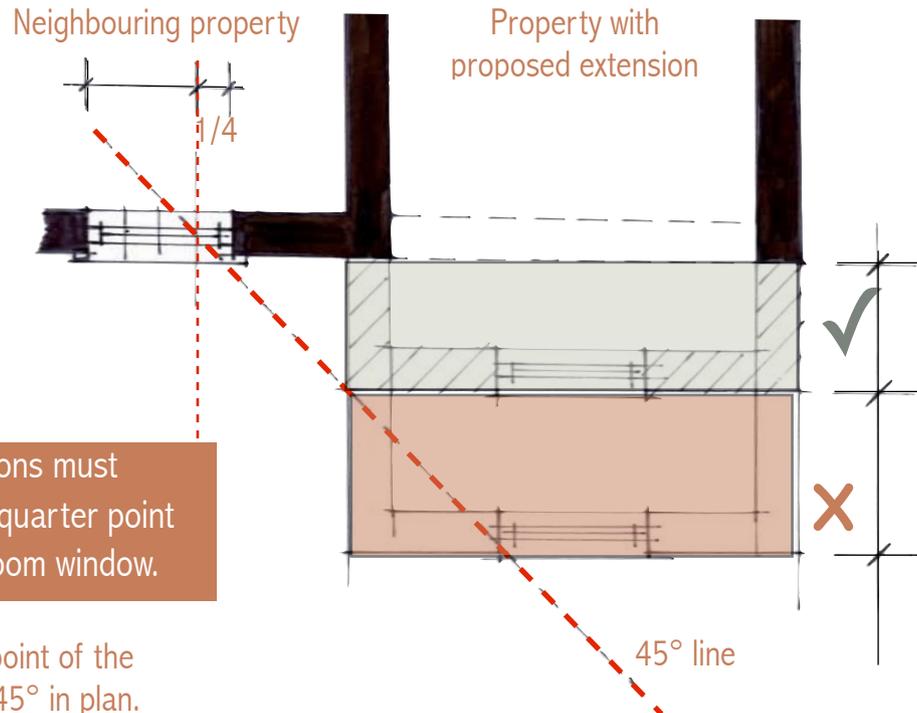
Extend a line out from the centre point of the neighbouring window at an angle of 45° in plan.

Figure 1

2.18. The 45° rule will be applied to habitable room windows to assess the impact of an extension. This is particularly relevant if the window is the only source of natural light to the room.

2.19. In order to avoid delay in dealing with applications where there may be a direct impact on a neighbour, it is important that applicants and their agents provide accurate plans depicting the precise position of neighbouring dwellings and the openings within them.

## Double Storey Extension



► First floor and 2-storey extensions must comply with 45° rule from the quarter point of the neighbour's habitable room window.

Extend a line out from the quarter point of the neighbour's window at an angle of 45° in plan.

Figure 2

## Separation Distances

2.20. Separation distances can help to relieve the impact of an extension on a neighbouring property and maintain residential amenity in accordance with policies DS6(d) and H15(a).

### Minimum separation distances:

#### A Rear to Rear

- Single storey - 18m
- Two storey - 21m
- Three storey - 24m

Plus 3m for each additional storey thereafter

#### B Rear to Side

- Single storey - 9m
- Two storey - 12m
- Three storey - 15m

Plus 3m for each additional storey thereafter

#### C At an Angle

- Rear to Side  $>45^\circ = B$
- Rear to Rear  $\leq 45^\circ = A$

**D** On sloping sites add an extra 1m separation for every half metre of ground level difference

2.21. The calculations for each situation help to ensure the separation distance is responsive to each circumstance whilst maintaining clarity and enabling consistency. The maximum height of either property must be used for the purposes of establishing separation distances.

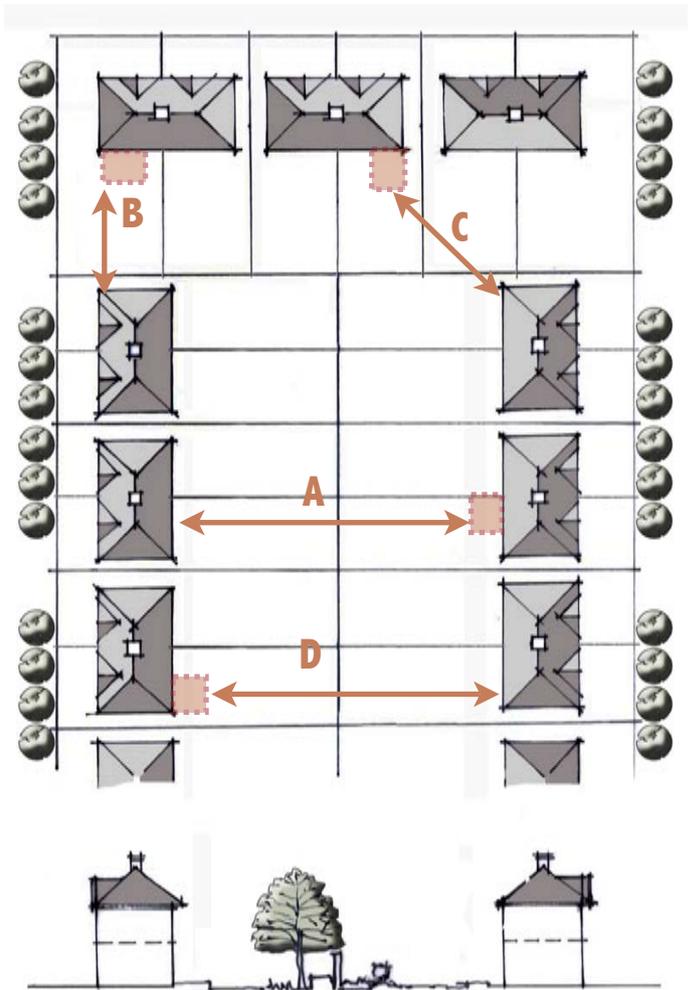
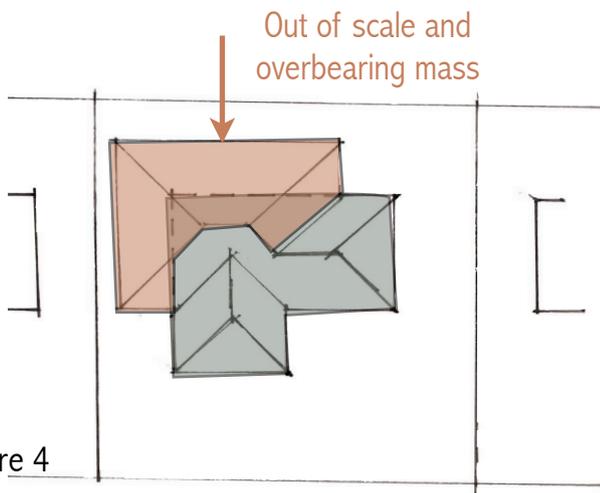


Figure 3

## In Character with Existing Dwelling

2.22. Generally an extension or alteration should be subordinate to and in character with the main house and not result in a dominant or discordant element. In accordance with policy DS6(b) applications will be assessed in terms of their **scale, proportion, shape, mass, vertical** or **horizontal emphasis**, in relation to the existing dwelling. For example, the **roof shape** and **pitch** of an extension should match and correspond with that of the host dwelling including the overhang of the eaves.

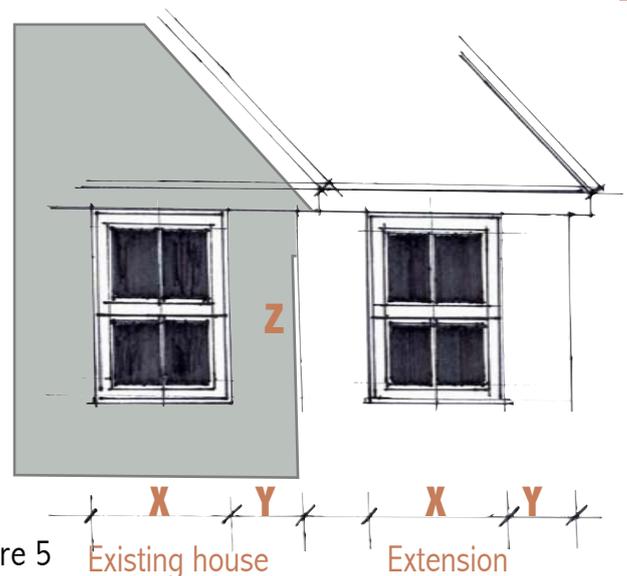
2.23. In some cases there will be insufficient space to enable an extension at all. Conversely in others, the space and context lends itself to enable a large development. In general however, the scale and design of an extension should ensure the existing house is not subsumed by an overbearing or incongruous addition.



## Openings

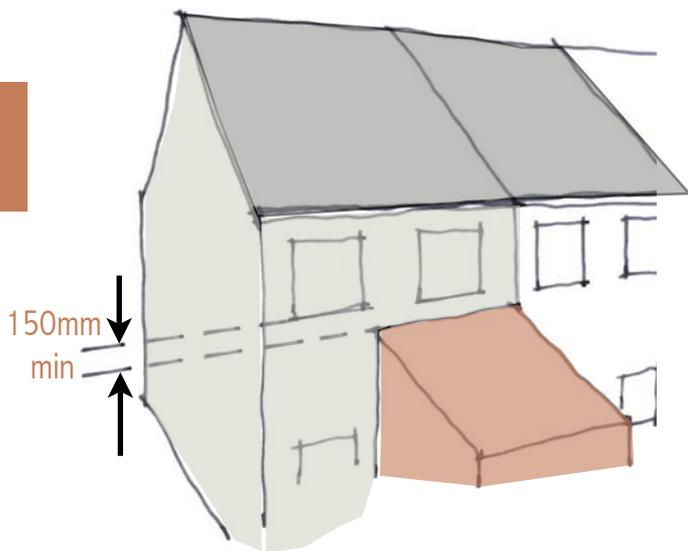
2.24. The **openings** in a building are key aspects of the design and visual appearance and this will be assessed in accordance with policy DS6(b). It is essential that new doors and windows adhere to the character of the property and general area. Generally the size, positioning, proportion, shape and materials of existing windows should be repeated in an extension and this also provides a strong clue as to the appropriate proportion for the extension itself.

The new windows should respect the proportions of **X, Y & Z**



## 150mm Gap

2.25. To ensure a single storey rear extension does not conflict with, or in any way obscure the first floor window(s) above, a minimum separation distance of 150mm between the window cill(s) and the highest point of new roof should be included.



150mm min between window cill  
and extension

Figure 6

## Space Standards

2.26. Swindon Borough Council is introducing minimum **space standards** for homes and private gardens to ensure developments are built to a high standard. The Council considers all homes should be fit for purpose, provide quality of life for occupants and not harm the **amenity** of neighbouring residents.

2.27. Extensions and alterations to existing dwellings should aim to adhere to these standards to ensure a more sustainable development of a size and design to meet the needs of current and future occupiers.

2.28. An extract of the **minimum garden sizes** is set out here for ease of reference and should be considered in conjunction with the **separation distances** given previously. Space Standards will be set out fully in Chapter 5 of the Design Toolkit.

### External space standards:

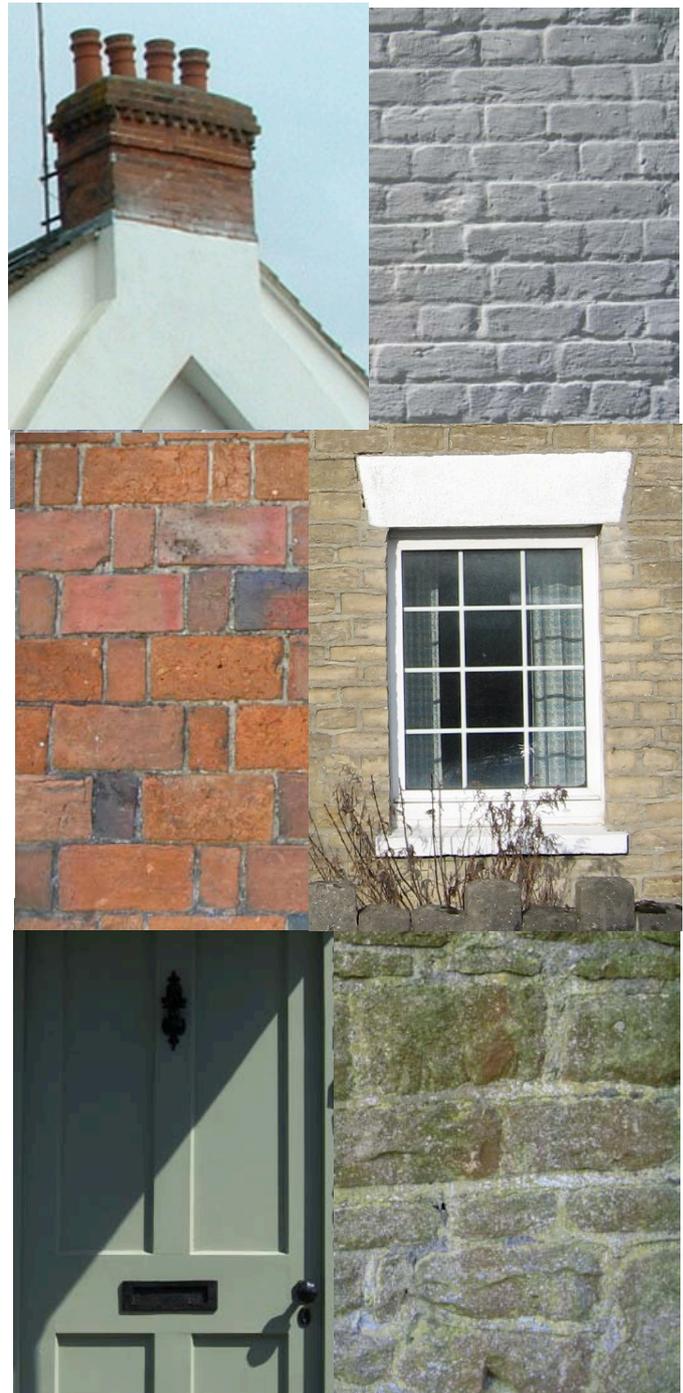
1 & 2 bed house	= 30m <sup>2</sup> min private gardens
3 bed house	= 40m <sup>2</sup> min private gardens
4+ bed house	= 50m <sup>2</sup> min private gardens

2.29. Where the existing external space and/or separation distances are already at or below the minimum limits set, it is likely that an extension that further decreases this space or separation will not be acceptable.

## Materials & Details

2.30. In order to support local distinctiveness and to harmonise with the existing property in line with policies DS6(b) and H15(b) the **materials** used in an extension should usually match and correspond with those of the host building. This includes the use of string or dental courses, brick patterns and quoins as well as cills and lintels. There are a multitude of different colours, textures and shades of bricks and external finishes and it is critical to the success of an extension to ensure new external walls match the existing as closely as possible. This will be an important factor within the application and if precise details of the materials proposed are not agreed prior to determination, they may be subject to a condition requiring a separate submission and an additional fee to discharge.

2.31. Other **architectural details** of the host building may be equally important and an extension should not harm or detract from these. Instead they should be protected and as appropriate repeated within the extension. Examples include projecting bays, chimneys and oriel windows.



## Access, Parking & Servicing

- 2.32. An over intensification of the existing residential use through an extension or alteration, may result in an unacceptable deficit in the servicing requirements for the property contrary to policy DS6(f). This may be in terms of car parking, storage space for refuse and recycling or even external amenity space. This can also impinge on the overall function of the area, affect highway safety and diminish the attractiveness of the neighbourhood.
- 2.33. Garage conversions to habitable accommodation results in the loss of a potential parking space and the Highway Authority will seek to ensure there remains adequate on-plot parking for the size of property.
- 2.34. Swindon Borough Council's current parking standards are set out within Development Control Guidance Note on Parking Standards (2007).
- 2.35. For further guidance on access, car parking and servicing please contact:  
[transportdevelopment@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:transportdevelopment@swindon.gov.uk)  
01793 445500

## Site Features

- 2.36. Existing features such as trees, hedges, streams and rivers as well as incidental areas of open space often provide an important contribution to the area's character and appearance. The retention of vegetation, water features and spaces can reduce the impact of development by providing a visual screen or break and can also support the biodiversity of the general area.
- 2.37. The impact of a development or alteration on the **existing biodiversity or site features** is a key consideration in assessing a proposal in accordance with policy DS6(e) as well as policies ENV22 and ENV24. An extension that would result in the loss of or cause harm to important vegetation, protected species and their foraging areas, or that compromise site features such as watercourses and their associated flood risk zones will not be acceptable.
- 2.38. In addition extensions should not be permitted where the accommodation itself would be overshadowed by existing trees or hedges, as this could lead to pressure in the future to remove the vegetation.

2.39. In order to safeguard key natural assets different protection zones are required for vegetation, protected species and water bodies. Buffer zones for vegetation are set out in more detail within the adopted SPG “Tree Protection on Development Sites”.

2.40. Many individual species are protected by law and prior to undertaking work an applicant should establish if any protected wildlife would be affected. National guidance for protected species and their habitats is available from Natural England at:

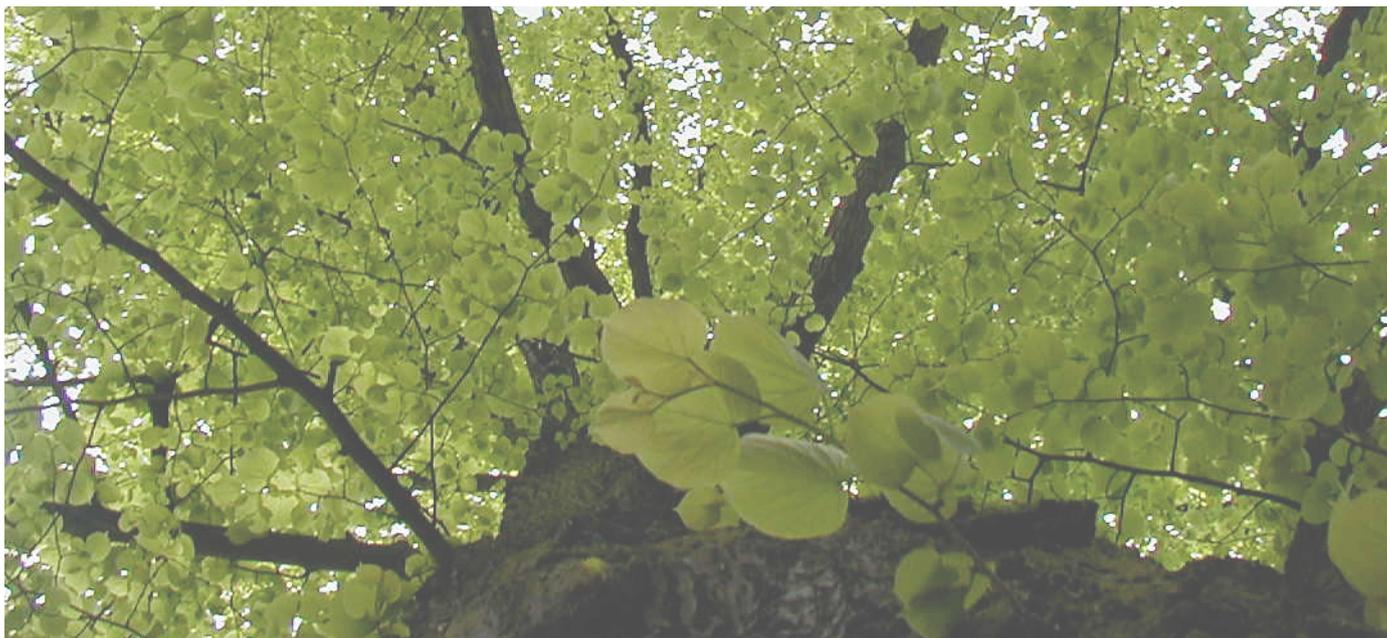
[www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/default.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/default.aspx)

2.41. Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 Swindon Borough Council as well as the Environment Agency has responsibility for water bodies within Swindon.

For further advice refer to:

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Research/FRSA\\_LPA.pdf](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Research/FRSA_LPA.pdf)

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



## 3. Rear Extensions

- 3.1. Rear extensions may not always be in public view but it is still important to ensure the design quality is of a high standard so as not to detract from the existing dwelling. A primary consideration for single and two-storey rear extensions is the impact upon the rear amenity space and the amenity of the neighbouring property. This is particularly significant when the extension would be at or near the property boundary.
- 3.2. To ensure privacy and light to neighbouring properties is protected and visual intrusion and nuisance is minimised, standards for rear extensions are generally applied in conjunction with the General Guidelines in Section 2 above (page 6) . In some cases these may not be sufficient for this purpose and in other cases more generous standards may be possible. Each application will be judged on a case-by-case basis but those guidelines given opposite have been tried and tested and are considered to be good practice.

- 3.3. These rear extension guidelines must be read in combination with the **General Guidelines** set out above including the 45 rule, separation distances and space standards.

### Rear extensions should adhere to all the following:

- ▶ The wall formed on the boundary should not contain openings
- ▶ The side walls of the rear extension must not extend beyond the side walls of the existing dwelling
- ▶ A 150mm (min) gap between the ridge of a single storey extension mono pitch roof and the cill of the first floor window above
- ▶ Adhere to the following maximum lengths:
  - ▶ 4m for single storey at or near the property boundary
  - ▶ 3m for 2-storey or first floor extension



## Boundary Wall

3.4. The side walls of extensions, including conservatories, at or near to the property boundary should be formed from a solid finished wall that requires little or no maintenance. There should also be no windows within this boundary wall to ensure privacy to both parties in accordance with DS6(d) and H15(a). In some rural or open settings this may not be necessary if there are no neighbouring properties or private gardens.

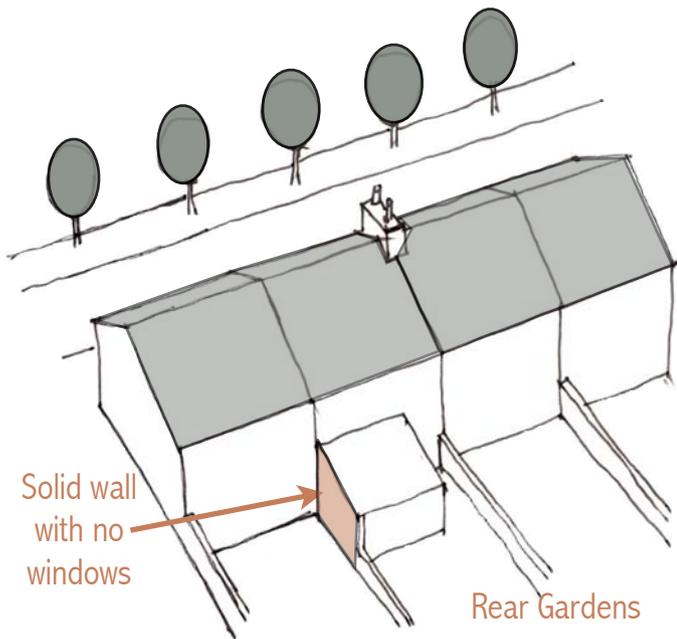


Figure 7

## Side Wall

3.5. The side walls of rear extensions should not extend beyond the existing side walls of the property. Although this may provide additional internal living space the resultant built form is not usually acceptable or in keeping with the dwelling or general street scene. Policies DS6(a) and H15(b) seek to ensure the extension does not harm the **character** and **appearance** of the house and is sympathetic to the **shape**, **mass** and **siting** of the host dwelling and Swindon Borough Council will refuse applications that do not accord with these principles.

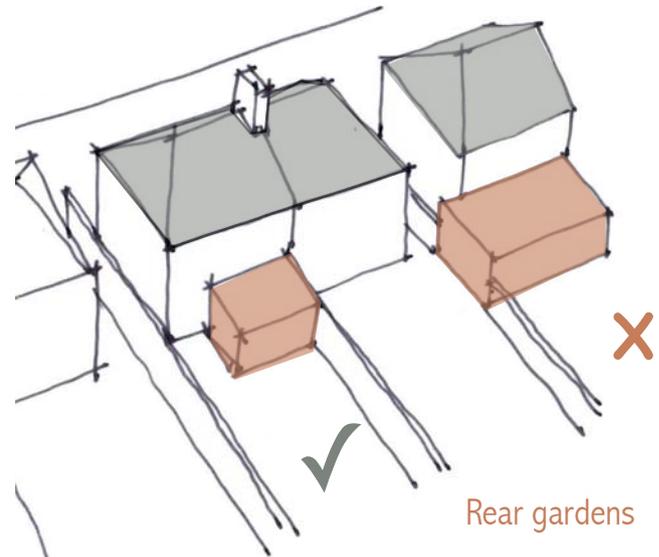


Figure 8

## Maximum Lengths

3.6. The length of a rear extension is a key consideration when assessing the impact on a neighbouring property. Where the host dwelling is attached and the extension is at or near the property boundary, the impact is greatest. In addition there may be an impact upon the internal living conditions within the property. A long extension to an existing room can adversely affect the amount of light received inside the extended property, resulting in a tunnelling effect within the house.

3.7. Rear extensions must adhere to the **separation distances** and the **45° rules**, but in addition, the maximum lengths are used to ensure compliance with policies DS6(b) and H15(b). These maximum lengths help make sure rear extensions are of a scale, proportion, shape, and mass that does not harm the character of the host dwelling and to avoid long rear extensions forming blank boundaries to neighbouring gardens resulting in visual intrusion. In addition, to limit the effect on loss of light to the neighbour and the internal rooms of the host dwelling as well as the impact on the neighbour's outlook, the maximum limits are applied.

3.8. On detached properties a different standard may be appropriate depending on the size of the plot and the position and orientation of the dwelling in relation to neighbouring properties. Conversely, in some cases these limits are still not enough particularly where the properties are in a staggered alignment and any extension into this space may not be acceptable. Where properties are not set at the same building line, the maximum length will be measured from the rear building line of the neighbouring property nearest the extension.

- ▶ 4m length for single storey at or near the property boundary,
- ▶ 3m length for 2-storey or first floor extension

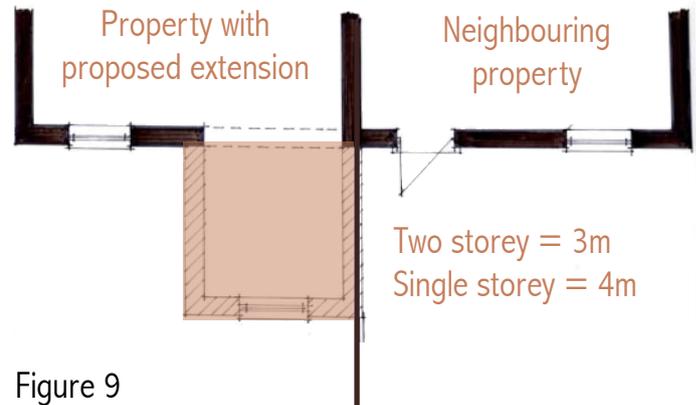


Figure 9

## 4. Side Extensions

- 4.1. This section covers all side extensions including attached garages. It should be read in conjunction with the **General Guidelines** given previously.
- 4.2. Gaps and views between buildings give a spacious, more open appearance to an area and provide rhythm to a street contributing to an areas character. Even in areas of relatively high density, a sense of openness may prevail owing to the spaces between buildings along a frontage. Filling in these breaks in the built frontage can result in a shape and mass that is unsympathetic to the general character of the dwelling and the local area, contrary to policies DS6(a) and (b) and H15(b).
- 4.3. Side extensions should not result in a tunnelling effect between properties reducing light to the side garden area and limiting the view between properties to the detriment of security and contrary to policies DS6(c) and H15(a).
- 4.4. Side extensions that extend beyond the rear of the existing dwelling should also satisfy the requirements of rear extensions as set out previously.

### All side extensions should:

- ▶ Resist the terracing of properties
- ▶ Extend no more than half the width of the principal elevation, or equal the width of an existing front gable
- ▶ Ensure a minimum clearance of 75mm between eaves of extension and boundary
- ▶ Ensure the external side wall is parallel with existing side wall of dwelling

### 2- storey & 1st floor side extensions:

- ▶ Should ensure a minimum 900mm set back at first floor from the principal elevation of the dwelling
- ▶ Should ensure the ridge height is below the existing ridge height and the eaves height is at or below the existing eaves

### Extensions at or adjacent to corner plots:

- ▶ Should not extend beyond the building lines of properties on all adjacent roads

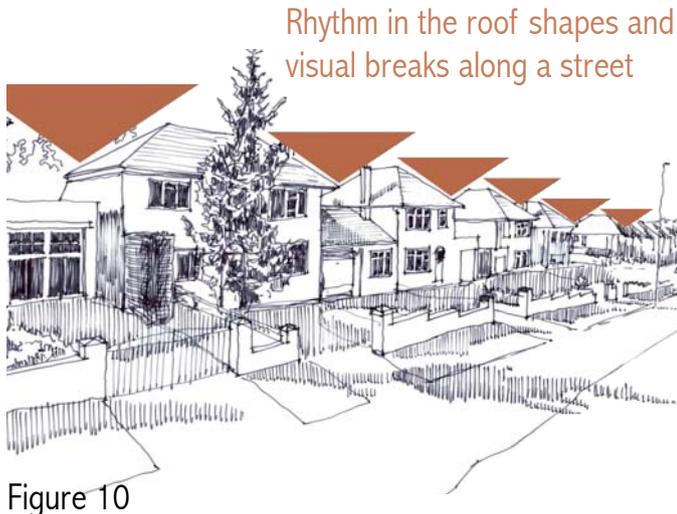
### Beyond the rear plane of the dwelling:

- ▶ Comply with the requirements of rear extensions

## Resist Terracing

- 4.5. Side extensions should not result in a row of detached or semi-detached properties taking on the character of terraced housing, with no relief along the built frontage. Such a change to the shape and mass would be unsympathetic to the general character of the dwelling and the local area, contrary to policies DS6(a) and (b) and H15(b).
- 4.6. The visual imbalance that can result where a side extension is proposed should also be avoided, especially in one of a pair of otherwise symmetrical and matching semi-detached houses.
- 4.7. To ensure there is sufficient separation between properties, both visually and for functional purposes, a minimum gap of 75mm will be expected (see page 23).

22



## Half Width of Principal Elevation

- 4.8. Oversized side extensions can cause significant disruption to the balance of the host building and harm to the character and appearance of the house and the general street scene. Whilst internal space will be important to the occupier the frontage width is a key consideration in assessing the quality of the design of the extension in accordance with policy DS6.

Wider than half the original width and out of proportion

Visual imbalance in a pair of semi-detached houses



Figure 11

- 4.9. The new front window in a side extension should often repeat the existing adjacent front window and this provides a strong clue as to the appropriate proportion for the extension. The new window should be centrally placed with the same off-set distance each side as that of the existing window.

## Minimum 75mm

4.10. A minimum gap of 75mm from the furthest extreme of the extension (incl. gutter etc) to the boundary with the neighbouring property will be expected. This should result in a combined separation distance of 150mm for semi-detached properties. Such a separation is intended to ensure that visually the individual properties retain their independent form, but also to provide adequate space for future maintenance of the extension and elements such as guttering and aerials.

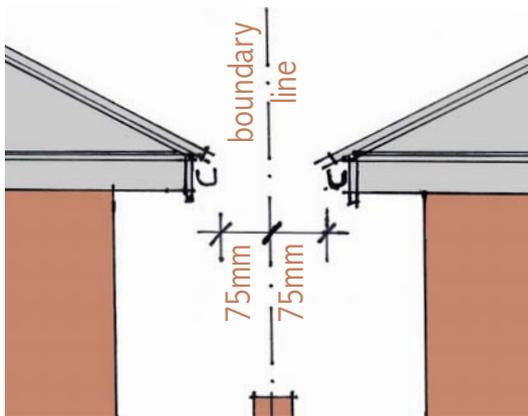


Figure 12

## External Side Wall Parallel

4.11. The side wall of an extension should run parallel to the original side of the house to respect the established character of the property and ensure the integrity of the street is maintained.

4.12. Although the internal space may be increased by maximising the footprint of a side extension this is not usually a good design solution and may result in an inharmonious addition to the building and the street scene generally. Such proposals are likely to be contrary to policies DS6(a), (b) and H15(b) and would be refused.

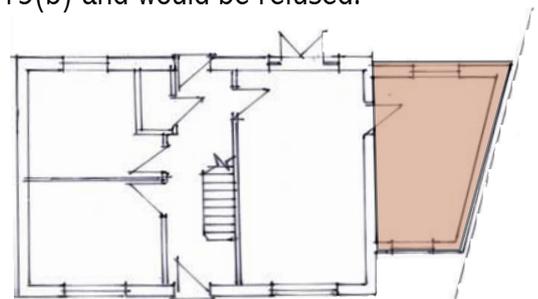


Figure 13

Side extension maximises footprint to the detriment of the design. Side access to the rear is lost and the extension shape is out of context with the dwelling.

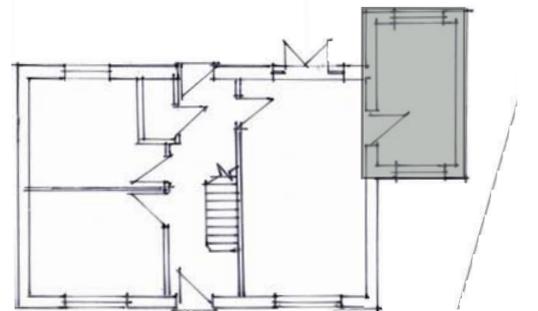


Figure 14

Side extension maintains access to the rear garden from the front and is in keeping with the shape of the dwelling without causing harm to the character of the street.

## The 900mm set back at first floor

4.13. A two storey or first floor side extension should be set back a minimum of 900mm from the principal elevation to allow the original form of the building to remain apparent and help retain the rhythm of the street in accordance with policies DS6(a), (b) and H15(b).

4.14. There will be cases where even a larger set back from the front elevation will not be enough to prevent an unacceptable effect on the dwelling's appearance or the area's character. Conversely in some instances a setback may actually be less appropriate than extending 'in-line'. Each application will be assessed in relation to its context.

24



Figure 15  
900mm set back  
in elevation

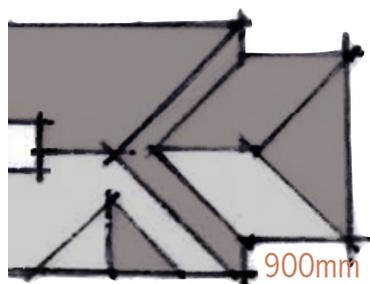


Figure 16  
900mm set back  
in plan

## Ridge Height Below Existing

4.15. To ensure the proposed extension is not dominant or out of scale or proportion with the host dwelling, the ridge height should be at least half a metre below the ridge height of the existing property. To accord with the general guidelines the angle of the extended roof must match the pitch of the host dwelling. In doing so this may result in the ridge height being slightly higher than 0.5m below the existing. An assessment of each case will be undertaken and the appropriate design solution for the roof height considered but generally the ridge height of the extension should be below the existing ridge. Similarly, the eaves height of the extension should respect that of the existing property and be at the same level or just below.



Figure 17

## Not extend below the building line

4.16. An extension on a corner plot may be visible within two streets and it is important that it is subservient to the host dwelling and not dominant within either street scene. To ensure this a side extension on a corner plot must be set behind the building lines of properties on both streets and adhere to the width criteria set out above. Dominant, elongated side extensions that extend beyond the building line or seek to fill the space between two dwellings will be considered contrary to policies DS6 and H15 and will not be acceptable.

4.17. There may not always be a clear building line and in such cases a view will be taken on an individual basis.

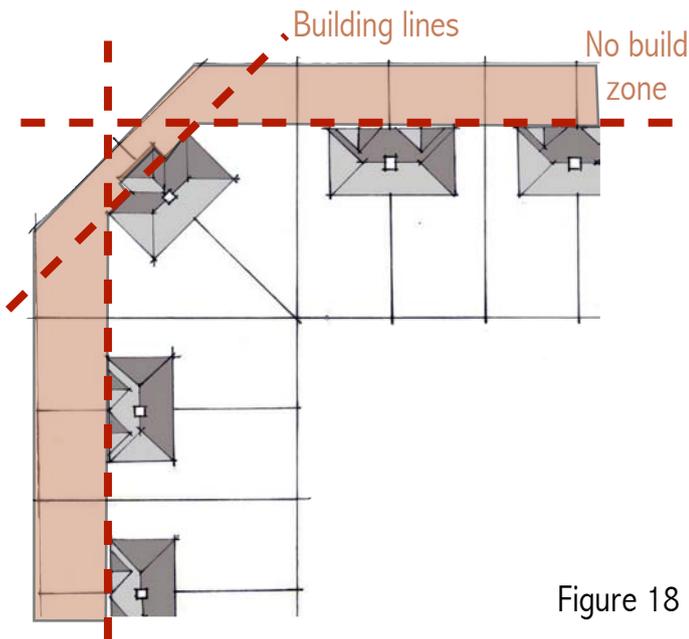
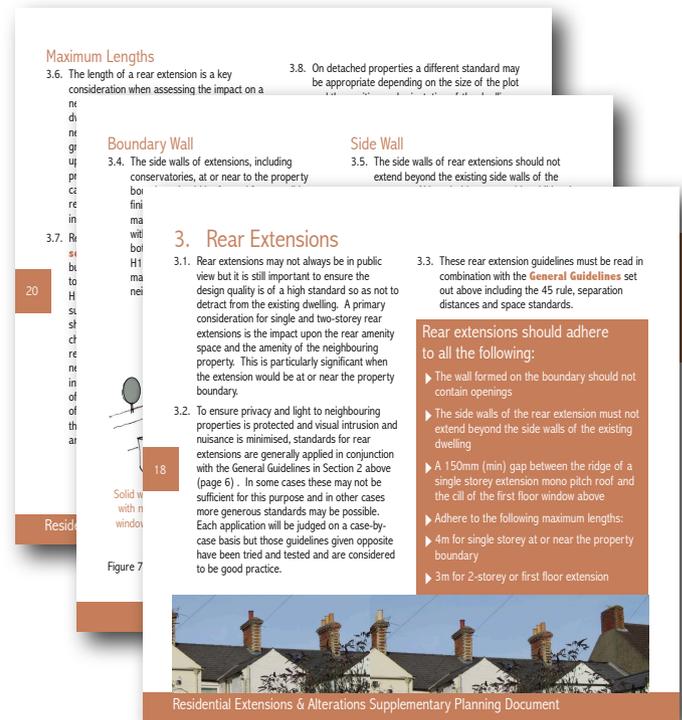


Figure 18

## Side extensions beyond the rear plane

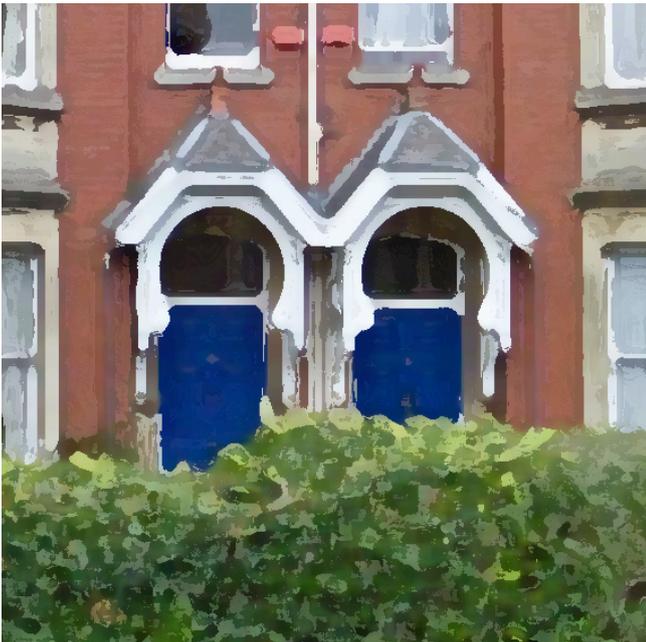
4.18. Where a proposed side extension continues beyond the existing rear of the property its impact may be greater and felt by adjacent neighbours to the rear. As such additional assessments in relation to the rear projection will be made with reference to the requirements for rear extensions including separation distances and the 45° rule.



## 5. Front Extensions

5.1. The most important consideration for a front extension is likely to be its impact on the character and appearance of the dwelling and surrounding area. The first guideline deals with the impact on the character of the area and the second highlights the effect on the host dwelling. The remaining guidelines relate to those rare occasions where a front extension may be acceptable and provide limits and matters to consider in the design. These front extension guidelines must be read in conjunction with the **General Guidelines** given previously.

26



### Front Extensions

- ▶ Are largely unacceptable, particularly two storey and not at all where it would upset the character or rhythm of the street scene
- ▶ Should not dominate or be incongruous with the host dwelling or introduce a discordant or inharmonious element
- ▶ Should not span the entire width of the dwelling or imbalance the existing façade
- ▶ Should not project beyond the front plane of any existing feature such as bay windows
- ▶ Should be set back and not form the front boundary with the street
- ▶ Should retain clear views to the front door from the street and/or neighbouring properties for security

### Porches

5.2. There are specific permitted development rights applicable to the addition of a porch to a dwelling. Where these are exceeded and a porch would require planning permission, it will be treated as a front extension and the above criteria will be applied.

## Character and Rhythm of the Street

- 5.3. A front extension may often result in a dominant or inharmonious addition to the general area or street scene. This may be particularly apparent in a unified street scene with a strong rhythm, but may equally apply in a street where each dwelling has an individual character. If a front extension is the first element of the façade that is noticed it is generally not in keeping and this can adversely impact on the character of the street scene. For these reasons, front extensions are rarely appropriate.
- 5.4. Extensions that would adversely impact upon key elements of the areas character as identified by the assessments within Book 2 “Context and Character”, will not be accepted.



Front extension compromises streetscene character

Figure 19

## Respect the host dwelling

- 5.5. Front extensions have the greatest impact on the public façade of the host dwelling. A front extension should not dominate the existing facade, but size alone is not the only measure of whether a front extension is truly in harmony with the host dwelling. Even an extension that is subservient in size or massing can add an incongruous shape or form that is out of character with the front elevation of the dwelling or creates an unbalanced façade. This may be in the form of a gable end protruding out from an existing pitched roof, or a flat fronted element alongside a more articulated façade.
- 5.6. As with all extensions, the excuse that the façade of a house is not in full view from the street is not a sufficient reason to allow a poor design.



Front elevation sensitive to existing host dwelling

Figure 20

## The Width of Dwelling

5.7. Front canopies or extensions that span the entire width of a property or dwelling will not normally be permitted unless such extensions form the predominant character of the street or the host dwelling.



The full span of the front extension introduces a dominant horizontal element, uncharacteristic of the host dwelling.

Figure 21

## The Front Plane

5.8. Front extensions should not adversely affect existing features such as bay windows or architectural elements such as string courses or quoins.

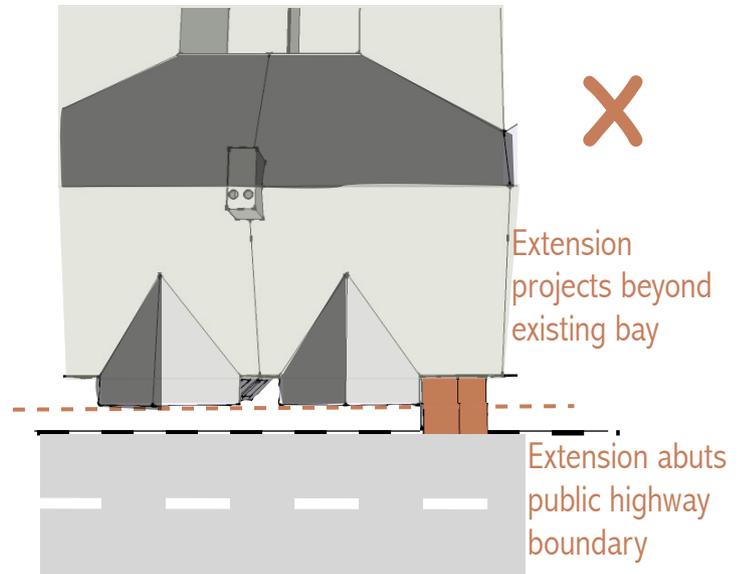


Figure 22

## Set back from Street

5.9. Many front gardens are limited in size and extensions into this small space close to the public realm are unlikely to be appropriate. This is particularly the case where the new front extension would immediately abut the public highway to the front of the property leaving no defensible space.

## Retain Views

5.10. In addition it is important to retain views to entrance points of properties to aid casual surveillance from the street and in the interests of general security.

5.11. Views from the street to the front doors of properties should also be maintained wherever possible. High front walls, fences or the positioning of a garage or structure at the front of the property should be resisted to avoid the potential for criminal activity to be hidden from view.



Surveillance onto street compromised by proposed front extension

Figure 23

## 6. Detached buildings

- 6.1. Garages and other domestic buildings, such as workshops, hobby rooms, sheds or greenhouses can have a significant impact on the character of an area and affect neighbours' living conditions.
- 6.2. These guidelines must be read in conjunction with the **General Guidelines** given previously.

### All garages and ancillary buildings

- ▶ Should be subordinate to the existing dwelling, ancillary in use and single storey height to 4.2m maximum ridge height
- ▶ Should be set back 1m minimum from the principal elevation, away from the back edge of an adjacent highway and 75mm minimum from all other boundaries
- ▶ Should be set back 3m minimum from the centre line of the backway
- ▶ Should have no double width doors

## Subordinate and Ancillary

- 6.3. Such buildings must be ancillary in use and scale to the dwelling. As such the design and fenestration should reflect this with limited openings and no dormer windows. New dwellings (including “Granny Annexes”) and workshops for trade and employment do not fall within this category.
- 6.4. Detached garages and outbuildings should be confined to single-storey height so that they are clearly subordinate to the original dwelling and the residential setting in general. A garage or outbuilding may not be acceptable where changes in level result in an over-dominant building significantly higher than normal domestic single storey height relative to a neighbouring property. Generally garages should adhere to Swindon Borough Council's current parking standards. Existing oversized outbuildings or garages do not provide a rationale for additional structures that are out of scale with their setting.

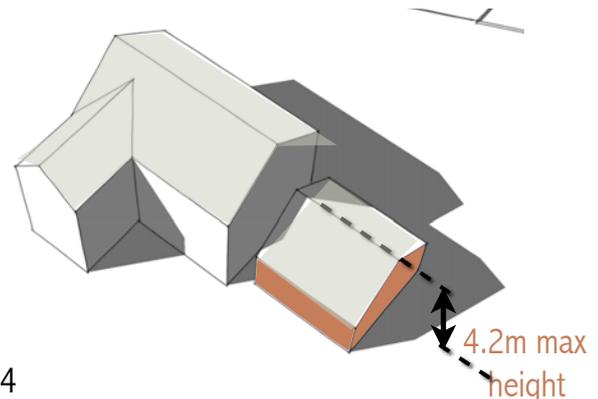


Figure 24

## Set Back

- 6.5. It is unacceptable for ancillary buildings to be over prominent and generally they should not be set at or forward of the principle elevation. Instead, they should be designed and sited to ensure a subservient relationship to the host dwelling and neighbouring properties and landscaped accordingly.
- 6.6. A garage for example, is often best placed between the front and rear building-lines of the host dwelling. As with side extensions, detached garages should be set back at least 1m from the front main wall of the house to respect the character of the street. If located too far back it might result in a driveway that would cause unacceptable noise and disturbance to neighbours, as well as causing an excessive loss of garden space.

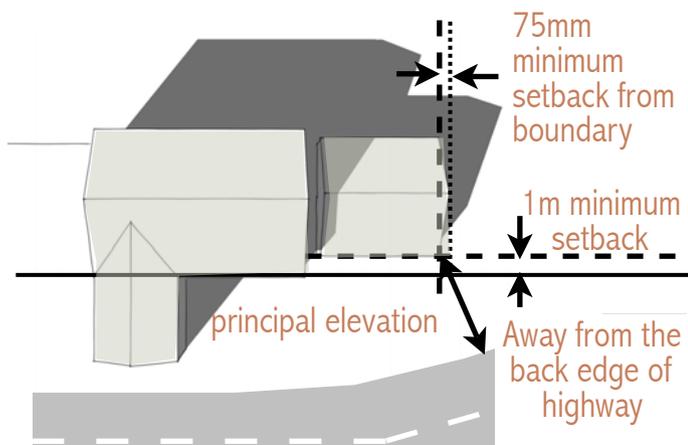


Figure 25

## Double Doors

- 6.7. To ensure the garage or outbuilding retains a sense of domestic scale and is appropriate for use by a greater range of people, the doors should be a maximum of single garage door size. Double width doors may be more difficult to open and are considered out of proportion with a domestic setting. To ensure a sense of balance and proportion, double garages should be accessed by two separate doors between 2.1 and 2.4m wide divided by a pier.

## Backways

- 6.8. In many parts of the town vehicular access is taken from a rear access or backway. In such circumstances the construction of a garage must be set back to ensure sufficient manoeuvrability. A 3m setback from the centre line of the backway has been found to be the minimum acceptable.

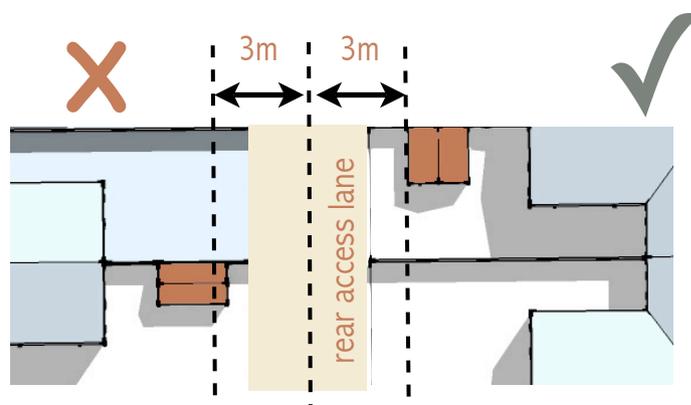
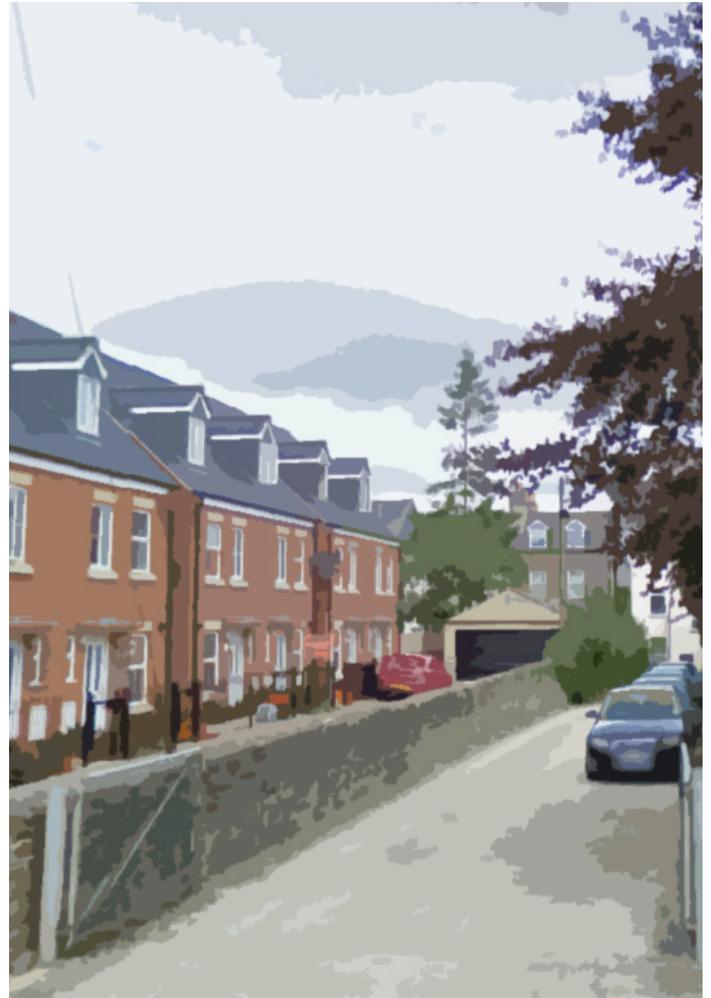


Figure 26

## 7. Roofs & Dormers

- 7.1. The roof of a dwelling has a major impact upon the character of the building and performs an important role within the wider street scene. Alterations to the main roof of the house by changing its shape, pitch or raising the ridgeline will not normally be permitted.
- 7.2. This section contains guidance on the insertion of **dormer windows** only and not skylights that do not involve the addition of any cubic volume to the property. Front dormers are likely to be the most visible within the street scene. Unless they form part of a common architectural element in the area, they are unlikely to be acceptable.
- 7.3. Side dormers also have a significant impact upon the shape and form of the roof and may result in an inharmonious extrusion to the view of the façade and the street scene in general. It is uncommon for side dormers to be an established element within the character of an area and for this reason they are generally considered unacceptable.
- 7.4. For the purposes of this document dormers have been separated into two categories: **Traditional Dormers** and **Box Dormers**.



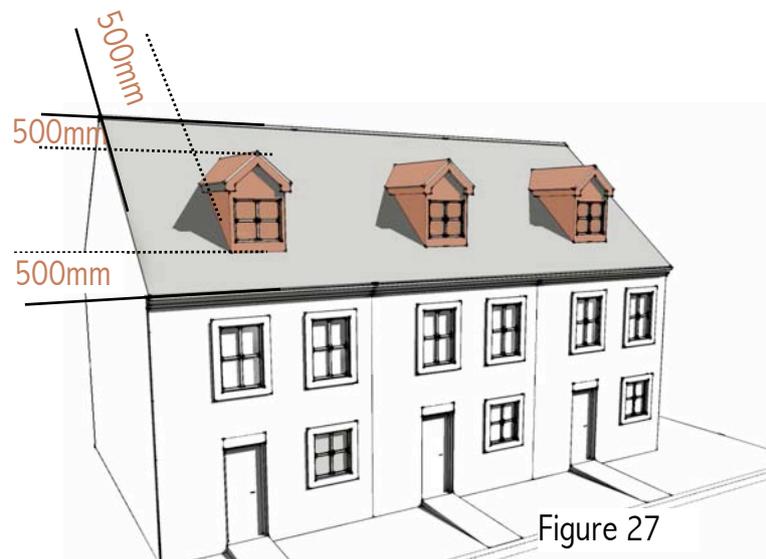
## Traditional Dormers

- 7.5. Generally, to ensure they are not overbearing or dominant features, the sum total width of dormer windows within any one roof plane, should comprise less than **50%** of the overall width of the roof. In addition traditional dormers should be sited so their roof is at least **500mm** below the ridgeline of the main roof of the dwelling and their base at least **500mm** above the eaves of the main roof of the dwelling. This is illustrated opposite.
- 7.6. In addition they should not extend too close to the edges of the roof and a minimum set-in distance of **500mm** will be expected at each side. Finally, the face of the dormer must be clearly set back behind the plane of the principal elevation.
- 7.7. Generally, the roof shape and design of a dormer window should be in **character** with the original dwelling. This may reflect an existing architectural feature such as a gable or porch roof, or the general design of dormers within the wider street scene. The design of the glazing and openings should also reflect the existing architectural character.
- 7.8. The **siting** of dormer windows is key to ensure they harmonise with their surroundings. They should be aligned with the existing fenestration below or arranged centrally and symmetrically to the elevation of the property.

## Traditional Dormers should:

- ▶ Extend less than the 50% of the width of the roof plane
- ▶ Be sited 500mm below main ridge
- ▶ Be sited 500mm minimum above
- ▶ Include 500mm minimum roof space either side
- ▶ Be sited back from the face of the principal elevation.
- ▶ Be in character with the dwelling and aligned with existing windows below, or sited centrally and symmetrically.

33



## Box Dormers should:

- ▶ Only be considered on single storey properties where the accepted and established character includes box dormers on that relevant roof plane
- ▶ Be aligned with, in proportion to and of a design to reflect the existing dormers present
- ▶ Be sited 300mm below the main ridge
- ▶ Be sited 300mm from the side edges of the roof
- ▶ Be sited 500mm above the eaves
- ▶ Be set back from the principle elevation
- ▶ Not be sited above existing gables.

34

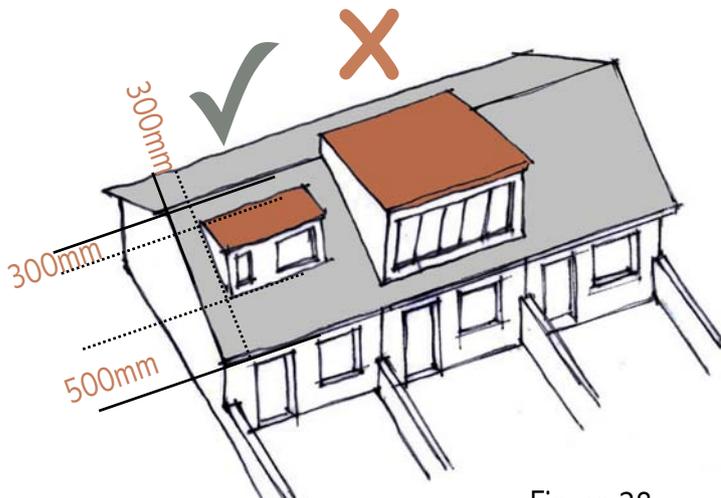


Figure 28

7.9. Unless box dormer windows on a single storey property are a clear feature of the character of the area or have become **established** as an **accepted addition** within the townscape, they are not normally considered appropriate. Box dormers on two-storey properties rarely result in an acceptable addition. The insertion of an intrusion into an otherwise uninterrupted roofscape can cause a significant detrimental impact upon the character of the dwelling and the street scene.

7.10. Where existing box dormers are present on adjoining properties the new box dormer should only be considered on the **same roof plane**. Box dormers on the side roof plane of hipped roof properties are rarely acceptable and can result in significant harm to the character and rhythm of the street.

7.11. The design of the box dormer including the windows, should match and correspond with those existing in terms of proportion, design and siting. In some cases, the minimum set-in dimensions here will require a new dormer to be formed slightly smaller or less-dominant than those present. The front plane of the box dormers should be sited back from the principal elevation and they must avoid conflict with existing gables or changes in roof shape as this can result in a poor design and compromised window arrangement.

## 8. Balconies

- ▶ “Juliet” and small balconies will only count towards external space when they extend to 2m<sup>2</sup> or more
- ▶ Balconies are only acceptable in areas where established character includes such features and it would not disrupt the pattern or symmetry of the street scene
- ▶ All balconies and raised platforms must satisfy the separation distances and amenity criteria for two storey extensions

- 8.1. Balconies and external platforms can provide useful and meaningful outside amenity space particularly in areas where garden sizes are limited or non-existent. The **size** of a balcony or platform is key to ensuring its use and its design is essential to ensure its harmony with the host dwelling and the character of the area.
- 8.2. Small or non-usable balconies such as “Juliet” balconies are often an unnecessary interruption to the façade of a building and do not provide any meaningful additional amenity or living space. where they are smaller than 2m<sup>2</sup>, such additions will not count towards external amenity space.

- 8.3. Generally, unless balconies are a clear feature of the **character** of an area or have become established as an accepted and appropriate addition within the townscape, they are not normally considered acceptable on the side or the principle elevation. The insertion of an intrusion into an otherwise uninterrupted facade even in profile at the side, can cause a significant detrimental impact upon the character of the dwelling and the street scene. The Council will resist such additions where they would not be in keeping with the character of the area of the host building.
- 8.4. Balconies and raised platforms will also be assessed in terms of their impact on residential amenity. Where overlooking to neighbouring properties including private garden space, is considered to be unacceptably extended beyond existing levels, balconies will not be permitted. Such first floor features must satisfy the same criteria as those of extensions and the Council will apply the **45° rule** and **separation distances** and the relevant **General Guidelines** (Section 2 p6).
- 8.5. Consideration must also given to the impact of the reduction in light to ground floor windows immediately below a structure and those adjacent to it.

## 9. Other Alterations

- 9.1. There are numerous additional alterations to properties from walls and fences to wind turbines; garden sheds to satellite dishes, many of which require planning permission.
- 9.2. Generally all additional structures and all means of enclosure should be designed to reflect the existing character of the host building with consideration of context, through their height, form, materials, location and detailing. The impact of the alteration particularly on the principal elevation should be carefully considered as well as the collective impact to avoid visual clutter within the street scene.
- 9.3. Even small or temporary structures can have a considerable impact upon neighbours in terms of overshadowing, or loss of privacy and so amenity remains a key consideration.
- 9.4. The function of a dwelling is also an important consideration to ensure the design allows for lifestyle changes as well as day-to-day use. Extensions, alterations and additions should not compromise the servicing and use of a home. This extends from the access required by emergency and refuse vehicles; to the areas required for drying clothes or parking a car and even internal space for the storage of recyclables or bikes.

- 9.5. Front gardens and areas of hard surfacing particularly between the principal elevation of the dwelling and the public highway, are often highly visible from the public realm. As such they should be laid out to respect the pattern of development and the character of the street with consideration of sustainable methods of drainage. All proposals will be assessed in the context of policy DS6 and with regard to the **General Guidelines** on page 6.



Produced by **Masterplanning & Design Team**

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