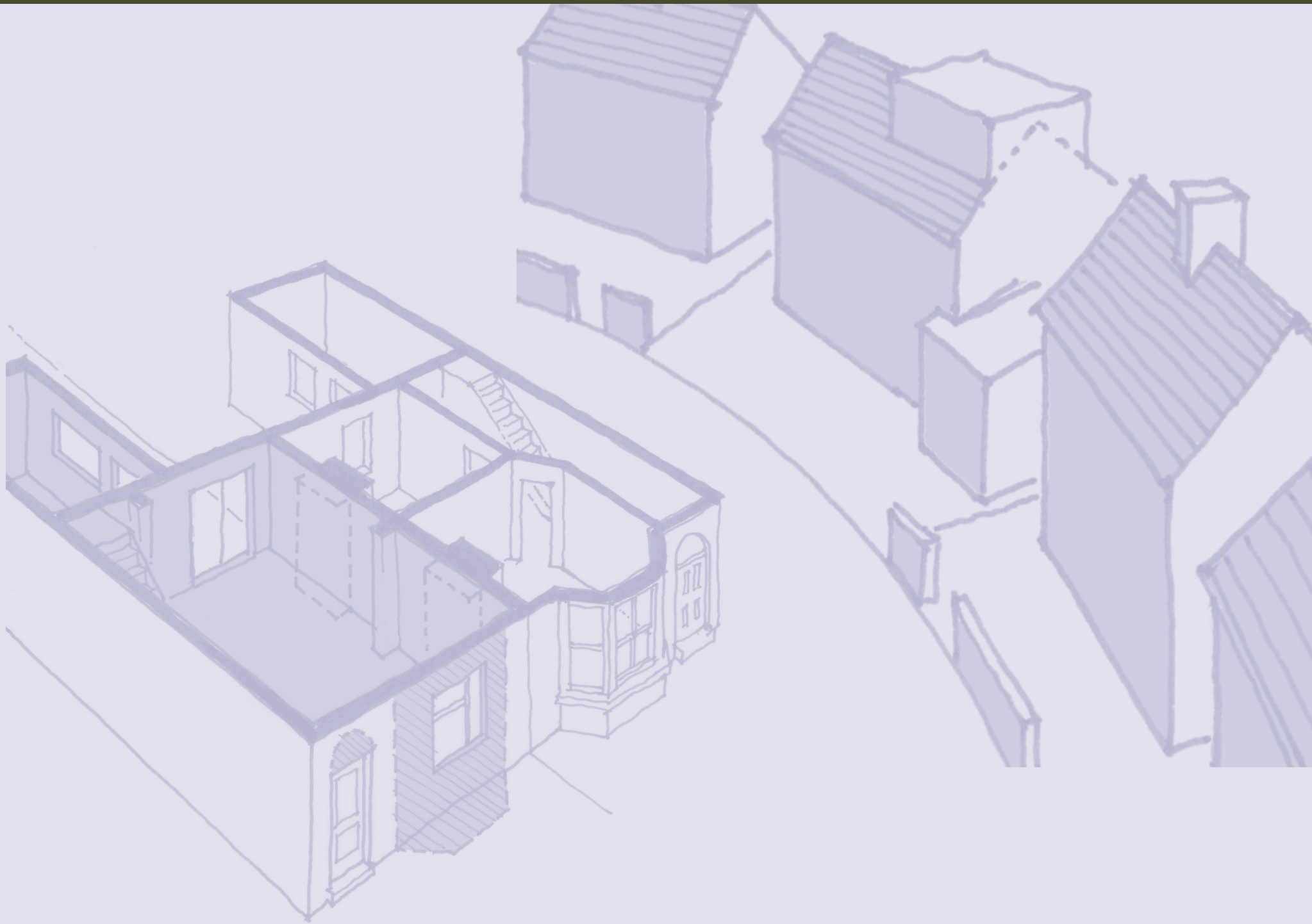


Section	7.00	Householder Alterations and Extensions	03
	7.01	Introduction	03
	7.02	Context	04
	7.03	Design Principles	05
	7.04	Assessing the Impact on Neighbours	10
	7.05	Alterations and Extensions checklist	12

# Section 7



## 7.01 Householder Alterations and Extensions introduction

### 7.01.01

Your house is likely to be your most valuable asset. Therefore it is important that any alterations or extensions that you propose will maintain if not increase the value of your home. Poorly designed alterations and extensions to your home have the potential to reduce the value and can harm the character and appearance of the area. Care also needs to be taken to ensure that the design of an extension does not cause harm to living conditions and amenity for your neighbours.

### 7.01.02

Permitted development rights allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. These works can be carried out without the notification of the Local Planning Authority, although other confirmation such as Building Regulations, may be required.

### 7.01.03

Permitted development rights are predominantly associated with residential development however they do not solely relate to residential properties and can be used to change of use of buildings and for agricultural development.

### 7.01.04

Permitted development rights are subject to conditions and limitations, in order to control and to protect local amenity. It is always advised that, prior to carrying out any works under Permitted Development, the developer investigates whether permitted development rights have been removed. In some areas of the country, known generally as 'designated areas', permitted development rights are more restricted. If you live in a Conservation Area you will need to apply for planning permission for certain types of work which do not need an application in other areas.

Further information is available on <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/>

## 7.02 Context

### 7.02.01

All alterations and additions to existing buildings should relate well to the character and context of their surrounding area.

### 7.02.02

For smaller schemes, their 'context' may relate to the character of the street or estate, whilst for larger scheme, or those on elevated or prominent sites, consideration should be given to the scheme's impact on the wider area.

### 7.02.03

House alterations and extensions should be sympathetic to their context in terms of scale, positioning, detailing and materials to ensure that the development results in a balanced appearance and fits comfortably into the wider street scene, particularly if the neighbourhood has a very strong style or character. Consideration should also be given to the natural and landscape context of the area, and opportunities for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. Further guidance is provided in Design Supplement 3: Green Infrastructure, Climate Change Adaptation and Sustainable buildings.

**Please note:** Some of the following features may influence the design and layout of an extension.

### 7.02.04

**Trees** – trees can die if their roots are cut back or if the level of the site is excavated or built up under the spread of branches. It is advisable not to build within 1 metre of the spread of the branches as this is approximately the rooting zone of the tree. Check with the planning department whether the tree is the subject of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or is in a Conservation Area.

### 7.02.05

**Drains, septic tanks and soakaways** – plot the position of these and any pipes leading to them. Diversion of drains can be a considerable extra cost. Anglian Water and other water companies often have a minimum development distance from pipes.

### 7.02.06

**Adjacent foundations** – Whilst not a planning issue, if neighbouring foundations are located on or near the boundary, any proposed extensions could affect them. They may be subject to the provisions of the Party Wall Act: guidance is available from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) booklet *The Party Wall etc. Act 1996: Explanatory Booklet*.

### 7.02.07

Whilst not a planning issue, a property affected by an extension may have 'A right to light' if it has been enjoyed uninterrupted for 20 years or more, granted by deed or registered under the *Rights of the Light Act, 1959*. Planning permission does not override a legal right to light.

### 7.02.08

**Consult your neighbours** – A lack of early consultation with neighbours, local authorities (Planning and Building Control sections) can lead to problems further along the design process.

### 7.02.09

A discussion with your neighbours about your ideas early on can help to avoid objections at the planning stage. Try to see their point of view and see if you can make the changes that will address their concerns.

## 7.03 Design Principles

### 7.03.01

The success of an extension will generally be determined by its relationship to the style, character and appearance of the existing property. The proposed extension should not dominate the existing building: in other words, it should be subservient, and appear as an addition in a 'supporting' role.

### 7.03.02

The existing building should not be dominated by the bulk or volume of the extension as the character of the existing building could be lost. The approach should be that the extension is designed as an addition rather than a duplicate of the existing house.

### 7.03.03

#### Front extensions

The front elevation of a house is the most difficult to alter or extend satisfactorily. Extensions that project forward of the building line will be required to make a positive contribution to improving the character and the appearance of the area. Large extensions on the front of properties are generally not acceptable as they can have a significant impact upon the streetscene.

### 7.03.04

Small additions may be permissible, but should generally echo the style of the house and neighbouring properties, respect the existing roof pitch, windows, doors and building materials.



**Fig 7.01** Example of an unacceptable front extension



**Fig 7.02** Large front extensions can damage the streetscene

## 7.03.05

**Side Extensions – Maintaining Symmetry**

Semi detached dwellings are normally designed as a matching pair. It is important that this character is respected and not compromised by any new extension. The height and width of a side extension should be proportionate to the dimensions of the main house. The width should be significantly less than the width of the main house.

## 7.03.06

**Side Extensions – Gaps Between Buildings**

Side extensions can have a significant impact on the street scene. The gaps between detached or semi-detached houses are an important characteristic and their infilling with side extensions can impact upon the character and appearance of the area. The 'terracing effect' of side extensions will normally not be permitted. A minimum 1 metre distance from the common boundary should be maintained at ground floor height. This could be larger if the existing properties have wider spaces between them. There may be exceptional circumstances whereby single storey extensions on the ground floor (PD extensions not applicable) or the ground floor element of a two storey extension may be built up to the boundary.

## 7.03.07

**Side extensions (semi-detached houses)**

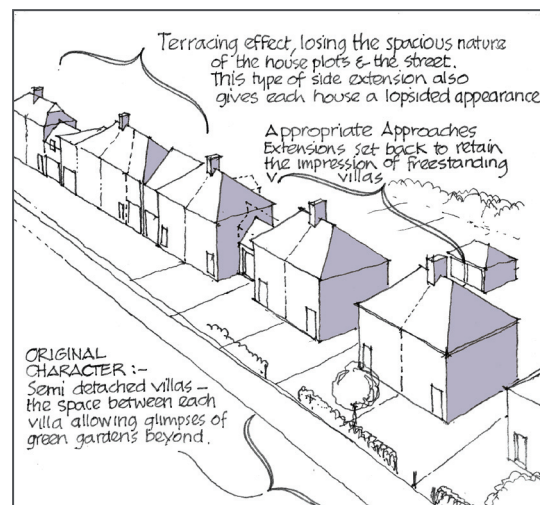
Semi detached houses are likely to be most susceptible to the terracing effect. Extensions

should be set back from the front elevation by at least 300mm and the ridge height dropped to lower than the main ridge to achieve this. Extensions should not have an adverse impact on highway safety or car parking provision. Windows to new extensions should match with the existing in terms of style and position.

## 7.03.08

**Side extensions (detached houses)**

For detached dwellings there is greater flexibility. However, set backs to ridge levels and façade junctions help to ensure that new extensions appear subservient to the existing dwelling.



**Fig 7.03** Side extensions should be well-proportioned

## 7.03.09

Extending exactly in line (on the building line) with the existing building can draw attention to the differences between new and weathered bricks, tiles and mortar joints.



**Fig 7.04** Side extensions can cause a 'terracing effect'



**Fig 7.05** Side extensions should be set back and subservient

## 7.03.10

**Retaining Rear Access**

Where an extension is proposed, access to the rear of the house should be retained, and rear access to neighbouring houses should not be compromised. A minimum gap of approximately 1 metre between a two-storey and single storey side extension and the boundary will be sought where feasible in order to prevent a terracing effect and to provide rear access.

## 7.03.11

**Extensions at Corners**

Particular attention needs to be paid to the design of both single storey and two storey extensions on corner plots. This is because they can encroach over the established building line on either highway frontage, and appear particularly prominent within the street scene. This can be avoided by respecting the established building line and retaining sufficient space at the side of the site to ensure that the open aspect of the corner is retained.

## 7.03.12

**Detailing and Materials**

All materials and detailing should reflect and complement the existing house.

## 7.03.13

The size, positioning, style and materials of new windows and doors should generally match those of the existing dwelling in order to achieve a consistent appearance.

## 7.03.14

The architectural detailing on the existing property should be repeated, where appropriate, on any extension. This includes the continuation of plinths, stringcourses, decorative brickwork, bargeboards, sills and fascias as they are important elements in the overall design. The repeating of such elements can help to integrate the extension with the original house. All extensions and renovations should retain any existing bird/bat use and use the opportunity to provide new and or additional provision. All of this can be achieved through use of integrated bricks.

## 7.03.15

**Roof Design**

It is important that extensions should relate to the design of the original building with matching roof shapes and pitches. Depending on the architectural style of the original building, a pitched, hipped or gabled roof will almost always be more appropriate than a flat roof.

## 7.03.16

**Dormer windows**

Dormer windows will only be permitted where they can be inserted without damaging the character and appearance of the dwelling and the wider area and without unreasonably affecting the amenity of neighbours.

## 7.03.17

Dormer windows should be avoided on prominent elevations that can be clearly viewed within the streetscene; kept well below the ridge line and away from the edge of roofs. Large, flat roofed dormer extensions to the front or side of a dwelling can be over-dominant and can cause the property to appear 'top-heavy'.

## 7.03.18

Generally dormers should take up no more than half the width of the house and should be centred on the windows below.

## 7.03.19

**Roof extensions**

Where a roof ridge needs to be raised in order to allow increased headroom in the roof space, careful consideration should be given to its impact on the street scene.



**Fig 7.06** Example of an unacceptable dormer



## 7.03.20

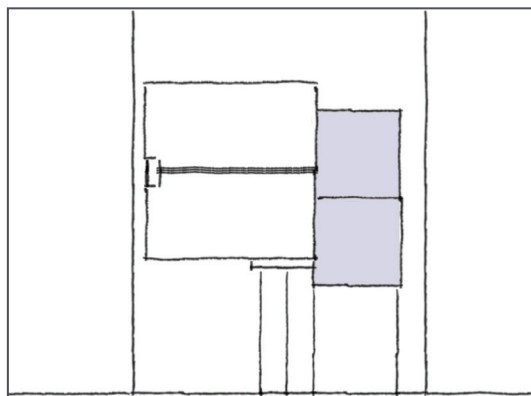
In an area where most roofs are the same height, the significant raising of the roof of a house could appear dominant and out of character with the surrounding area. Such developments are unlikely to be considered acceptable. Where a roof is raised, its pitch should reflect the original, or the roofs of nearby buildings, as appropriate. Any such proposals will be considered within the context of the site and associated levels.

## 7.03.21

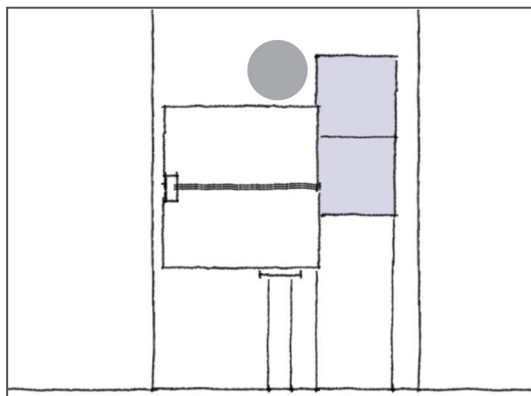
**Garages**

The design of garages should generally respect the scale, character and materials of your property. Garages, especially double garages, can be bulky structures taking up a considerable amount of floorspace on a plot. Therefore they need to be sited and designed in such a way to ensure that:

- they do not dominate the house;
- they are not intrusive in the streetscene;
- they help to create privacy between properties, where appropriate.



**Fig 7.07** Garages set forward dominate the street scene



**Fig 7.08** Garages set back help to create privacy

## 7.03.22

**Annexes and Dependent Relatives Accommodation**

If the purpose of the extension is to provide accommodation for a dependent relative, the annex must form part of the same planning unit and share facilities, including access, parking and garden areas.

## 7.03.23

The layout, design and physical relationship between the house and the proposed annex are important considerations, and the proposed annex must demonstrate clear connections with the main dwelling. The size and scale of the accommodation to be provided should be proportionate to the main dwelling. As a guide, the scale should be such that the annex could be used as a part of the main dwelling once the dependency need has ceased.

## 7.03.24

**Front Garden Buildings**

Detached buildings are not normally acceptable at the front of terraced or semi-detached houses because of their dominant impact on the streetscene.



## 7.03.25

On detached houses, they will only be considered acceptable where detached buildings in front gardens form part of the existing character of the street. For instance, where detached buildings were built as part of the original form and layout of the estate.

## 7.03.26

**Extensions to Dwellings within the Greenbelt**

Notwithstanding the design advice above, an addition to a dwelling in the Green Belt will not be appropriate if it results in a disproportionate addition.

## 7.03.27

Government policy in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012) states that extensions should not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. In the case of a dwellinghouse, the term “Original Dwellinghouse” means the house as it was first built or as it stood on the 1st July 1948.  
(if it was built before that date)

## 7.03.28

As well as the external appearance and design of an extension in or adjacent to the Green Belt, extensions should not adversely affect the openness or visual amenity of the area.

## 7.03.29

As a guiding principle, in order to be considered as proportionate the original building should not

be added to by more than 60%. The impact of the extension in terms of floorspace, volume, massing and design will be considered.

## 7.03.30

Proposed demolitions can be deducted if they are an integral part of the original building (dwelling).

## 7.03.31

Given the sensitivity of Green Belt related development, it is important to discuss your proposal with the Planning Department at the earliest opportunity.

**Notes**

- The LPA's guidance is based on national advice within the NPPF at paragraph 89 which states that 'the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building' is not inappropriate in the Green Belt.
- For purposes of applying the 60% rule, extensions to buildings will usually refer to additions that are physically attached to the host building.
- However, in certain cases, depending on the proximity of any outbuilding(s), the LPA will consider, as a matter of fact and degree, whether or not to include such outbuildings within the calculations.
- The same approach will be used for replacement buildings in the Green Belt.

## 7.04 Assessing the Impact on Neighbours

### 7.04.01

#### Overbearing Impact

Extensions should not be overbearing to your neighbours or result in an unacceptable loss of daylight or sunlight to neighbouring properties.

### 7.04.02

As a minimum, there must be a one metre gap, preferably more at first floor level and above. Two-storey extensions should be subservient to the main dwelling and limited in depth, width and height so as to avoid an overbearing appearance, significant overshadowing and loss of privacy and should avoid an un-neighbourly impact

### 7.04.03

#### Loss of Light

On assessing proposals for rear extensions Central Bedfordshire Council will use as a rule of thumb the 45° rule.

### 7.04.04

The reference point is the centre of the neighbours nearest habitable room window. If the extension has a pitched roof then the top of the extension can be taken as the height of its roof halfway along the slope.

### 7.04.05

The 45° rule of thumb seeks to:

- Maintain a reasonable relationship between existing buildings and extensions;
- Avoid an overbearing visual impact in terms of bulk and proximity to boundaries both from inside adjacent properties and from neighbouring gardens; and
- Prevent excessive daylight loss or overshadowing to habitable rooms of neighbouring properties.

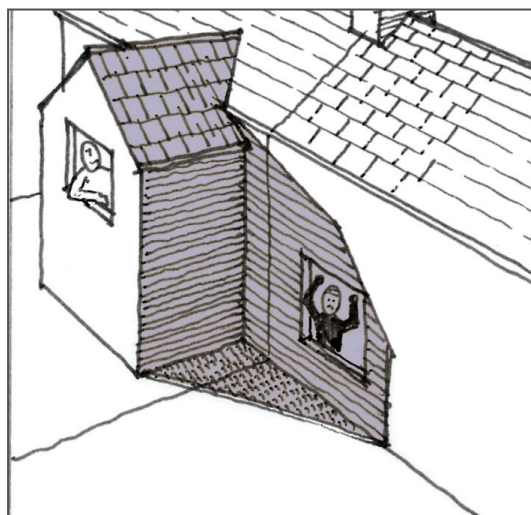


Fig 7.10 Significant overshadowing is unacceptable



Fig 7.09 Extensions should avoid un-neighbourly impact

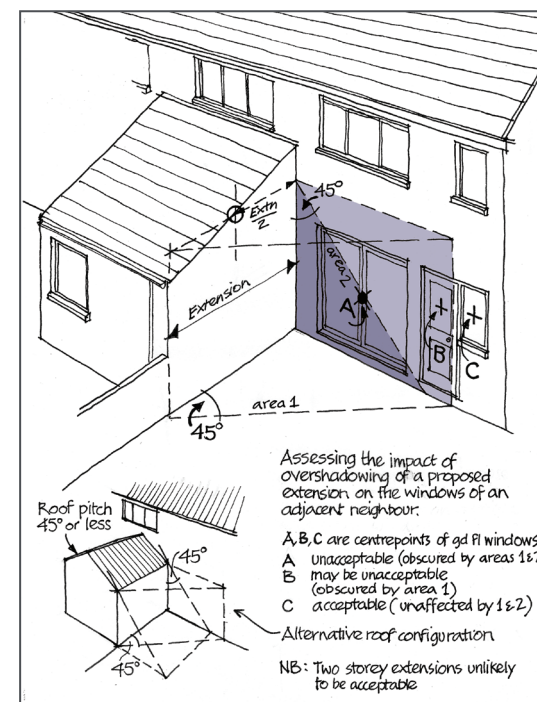


Fig 7.11 Extensions should conform to the 45° rule of thumb

## 7.04.06

If the rear of the property is facing south, southeast or southwest, it is particularly important to minimise loss of sunlight to neighbouring gardens. If the rear is facing in a northerly direction, loss of daylight could result in a gloomy outlook.

## 7.04.07

**Overlooking and a Loss of Privacy**

Overlooking should be avoided as your neighbour has a right to privacy. This is a material consideration and will influence whether your extension will gain planning permission.

## 7.04.08

A recommended distance of 21m between the rear habitable rooms of houses which back directly onto one another is normally required to avoid overlooking and to protect neighbouring amenity.

## 7.04.09

Where there is an established development pattern or in the case of larger houses, the above guidelines may not be appropriate. In these instances, the size and character of the existing house and garden, and of the surrounding area, will inform the extent of the development that may be accommodated on the site.

## 7.04.10

The relative impact of an extension on the amenity of neighbours' property may be increased should there be a significant change in level between the properties. In such situations it may not be possible to design an extension that would be acceptable.

## 7.04.11

If first floor windows are proposed in the side wall, they should be at a high level, non-opening and fitted with obscured glass.

## 7.04.12

**Overlooking from Balconies**

First floor balconies can have a significant impact on the amenity of adjoining neighbours and should be avoided where this is likely.

## 7.04.13

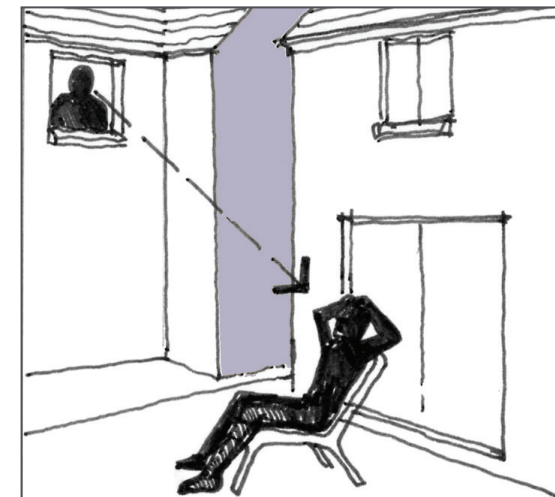
**Loss of Amenity Space**

Extensions should leave sufficient usable private garden space for the enjoyment of residents and to reflect the established character of the area and size of house. Dwellings of three bedrooms or more should provide a reasonable garden area for family living. Normally no more than half the existing garden space should be covered by extensions.

## 7.04.14

**Overdevelopment of the plot**

There is a limit to the number of extensions which can be added to a property or to a site without causing harm to its character. What constitutes overdevelopment will vary from site to site, as each set of circumstances is unique. If extensions are beginning to overwhelm a property or if there is a large number of outbuildings in close proximity to each other, site boundaries or the main house, it may be that a site is already overdevelopment. In such circumstances additional development may not be appropriate.



**Fig 7.12** Overlooking should be avoided

## 7.05 Alterations and Extensions checklist

- Does the proposed extension or alteration relate to the character and context of the surrounding area?
- Has consideration been given to existing features which could influence the design of the extension such as trees, adjacent foundations and drains, septic tanks or soakaways?
- Have potential impacts on neighbours been considered and have they been consulted on the proposals? (Impacts include loss of light and privacy, overlooking, loss of amenity space or overbearing impact)
- Are extensions proportionate and subservient to the property being extended and reflect its character in terms of design and materials used?
- Have opportunities for biodiversity enhancement been considered, such as integrated bricks for bird and bat use?

### Front extensions:

- Does the front extension provide a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, echoing the style of the house and neighbouring properties (such as materials and roof pitch)?

### Semi detached and detached extensions:

- In semi detached properties, does the extension maintain symmetry and is its subservient by being set back, having a reduced ridge height and matching materials?
- Are appropriate gaps between buildings retained to protect the street scene?
- Is rear access to the property and car parking provision retained?

### Dormers and roof extensions:

- Are the dormer windows and/or roof extensions sympathetic within the street scene and any windows proportionate and centred on the windows below?

### Garages:

- Does the garage respect the scale and character of the property?
- Is the garage subservient to the property and the street scene?

### Annexes:

- Does the annex demonstrate clear connections with the main property and is it proportionate?

### Extensions and alterations in the Green Belt:

- Does the extension or alteration meet the general design considerations set out above?
- Is the extension proportionate and sympathetic and does it reflect the openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt?

Further guidance on extensions and alterations can be found at [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)