

DESIGN GUIDE FOR HOUSE EXTENSIONS

There are many ways to extend your house - single or two storey extensions, roof or garage conversions, conservatories, and porches. This Guide gives advice on how to extend your house without adversely affecting the appearance of your home, the general character of the area in which you live, or the amenity of neighbouring properties. An extension that accords with this Guide is more likely to receive planning permission than one that does not. It is worth remembering that a well-designed extension is more likely to add value to your house than a poorly-designed extension. At the end of this leaflet is a list of contacts who can provide you with further advice.



Is Planning Permission Required for the Extension?

Planning permission is required for all but very small extensions and alterations. Further advice can be found in the Department of Local Government, Transport and the Regions' leaflet called "Planning – A Householder's Guide" and the Borough Council's own leaflet 'A Householders Guide – Permitted Development'. Both publications can be obtained for free from Planning Reception at the Council. The Borough Council leaflet can be viewed on the Council website: www.surreyheath.gov.uk (click on the Planning page). The regulations which define permitted development can be complex. If in doubt, you can obtain advice on whether permission is needed for your extension by writing to the Council's Development Control service or by asking to see the duty Officer at Planning Reception (see the end of this leaflet for contact details). Please provide as much information as possible, such as sketches and dimensions of the extension. Even if your extension does not need planning permission, householders are encouraged to use the guidance in this leaflet in order that the extension is well-designed.

Building Regulations

The vast majority of all extensions to houses also require Building Regulation approval. This deals with the construction of the extension and is a completely different process to obtaining planning permission. Advice should be sought from the Building Control Division on when Building Regulation approval is required on tel: 01276 707248.

Processing the Planning Application

The planning application must comprise: 4 copies of the application forms, 4 copies of the plans (including the location plan, site layout plan, floorplans and elevations), an Article 7 Certificate relating to the notification of the application to the owners of the site, and the application fee. Please see the Council's leaflet "A Householder's Guide – Applying for Planning Permission" and "Householder's Checklist" of what information is required so that an application can be validated. The application form and

Certificate can be obtained from Planning Reception. Additional information may be required by the Council after registration of the application if this is necessary to properly consider the individual issues affecting it. The Council has a target of processing the application within 8 weeks of its registration.

The Council will consult those neighbours on the application who are likely to be particularly affected by the extension. Neighbours do not have a veto on applications but their views on relevant planning matters will be taken into account. It is sensible for the applicant to consult their neighbours on the proposed extension before submitting the application.

Most applications for extensions are approved, with or without amendments. In the event of the refusal of the application, or its non-determination within 8 weeks, an applicant has a right of appeal to the Secretary of State for Local Government, Transport and the Regions.

Local Plan Policy

Policy H17 “House Extensions” of the Surrey Heath Local Plan 2000 will be applied to planning applications for house extensions.

POLICY H17: HOUSE EXTENSIONS

PROPOSALS FOR HOUSE EXTENSIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- (a) EXTENSIONS SHOULD RESPECT THE SCALE, CHARACTER AND DETAILED DESIGN OF THE PROPERTY. EXTERNAL MATERIALS SHOULD BE SYMPATHETIC TO AND MATCH WHERE POSSIBLE THOSE OF THE PROPERTY;**
- (b) EXTENSIONS SHOULD BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE SCALE AND CHARACTER OF NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES AND TO THE CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA;**
- (c) EXTENSIONS SHOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE PRIVACY OF NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES;**
- (d) EXTENSIONS SHOULD NOT SERIOUSLY AFFECT THE AMOUNT OF DAYLIGHT OR SUNLIGHT AVAILABLE TO NEIGHBOURING**

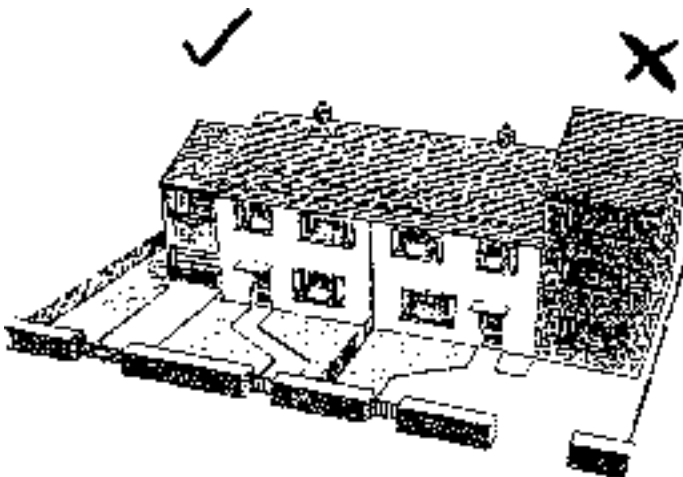
PROPERTIES;

- (e) EXTENSIONS SHOULD NOT HAVE AN OVERBEARING EFFECT ON NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES;
- (f) EXTENSIONS SHOULD NOT PREJUDICE THE RETENTION OF USABLE AMENITY SPACE IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY H23 (PROVISION OF AMENITY SPACE);
- (g) EXTENSIONS SHOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT TREES WHICH MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE ENVIRONMENT OF A SITE OR STREET;
- (h) EXTENSIONS SHOULD NOT PREJUDICE THE RETENTION OF ADEQUATE PARKING WITHIN THE CURTILAGE OF THE PROPERTY;
- (i) EXTENSIONS WITHIN THE GREEN BELT AND COUNTRYSIDE BEYOND THE GREEN BELT MUST BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY RE5 (REPLACEMENT OR EXTENSION OF DWELLINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE).

This Guide elaborates on Policy H17 and will be used by the Council when determining planning applications. There are other policies in the Local Plan which could be relevant to your application. For example some areas have a designated character, such as conservation areas, which should be protected, or an extension may affect protected species such as bats. Planning officers should be contacted for advice on these other policies.

Scale and Character

The extension should look like part of the main building rather than an awkward addition. It should be sympathetic to the building's scale and character and not overwhelm it.



External materials, such as bricks, tiles, rendering, woodwork, windows, and guttering should match the main building as closely as possible. Special attention should be paid to the existing proportions of the house such as the relationship of walls to openings such as windows and doors and the shape of those openings. The vertical and horizontal emphasis of the house, such as in the alignment of the windows, eaves, cills and lintels should be reflected in the extension. Detailed features of the main building, for example the design of windows, or special brickwork such as string courses should be reflected in the extension where appropriate.

The roof should blend with the original building. This usually suggests a pitched roof for the extension, whose slope is at the same angle as the roof of the original building. The eaves level of an extension should normally line up with that of the original building with the same number of storeys. 2-storey flat-roofed extensions are not acceptable. A single-storey extension looks best with a pitched roof, although a flat one may be acceptable if the extension cannot be seen from the road. A false-pitched roof, where a short pitched roof on the front elevation hides a flat roof to the rear, should be avoided if at all possible. Matching the roof tiles of the extension to the main building can be assisted by using existing tiles from the side or rear of the main building for the extension and then using new tiles on both the main building and extension to their rear or side.



Unsightly extension ignores style and character of original house. Flat roof clashes with existing pitched roof and gable. Clumsy junction between roofs. Inappropriate windows differ in shape, alignment and materials. Different materials from existing used for walls and roofs.



Extension harmonises with original house. Pitched roof compatible with existing. Roof and ridge tiles match existing. Eaves line up with existing. Style, proportion and alignment of windows match existing. Materials and detailing match existing house.

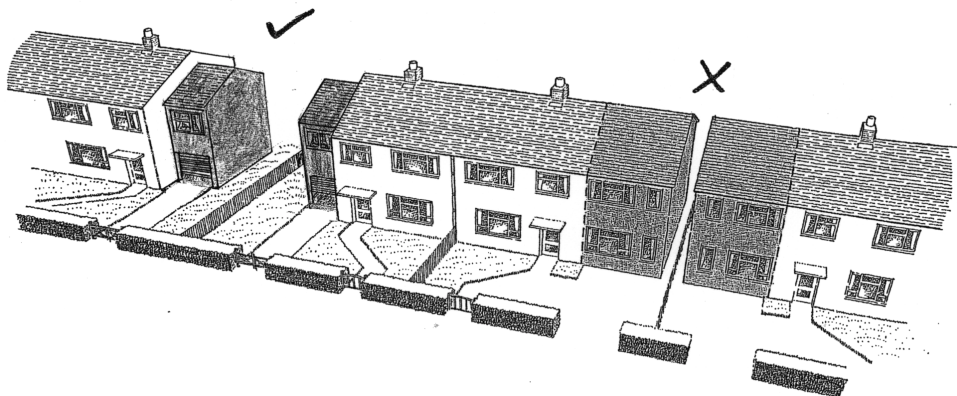
The Character of the Street Scene

The extension should respect the character of the wider street scene. This is particularly relevant to front extensions which should not normally cross an established building line. The existing house may also have a group value along with other properties in the street which should not be prejudiced by the extension. For example, a series of similar semi-detached houses will often exhibit a certain rhythm along a street: a front or side extension should not disturb the balance of one of the pair of semi-detached properties if this would affect the rhythm and character of the wider group of houses along the street.

Side Extensions

A side extension should avoid a “terracing effect” by not being too close to the adjoining property. The space between buildings is important as this affects the character of a street. How closely an extension can be built to the side boundary will depend on how well it reflects the spaces between other buildings on the street. In any event, a 2-storey extension

should be a minimum of 1m from the side boundary. The dominance of an extension in the street scene, and the extent to which it contributes to a “terracing effect”, can be reduced by setting it back behind the front line of the main building. Depending on the character of the wider street scene, it may be acceptable for a single-storey extension to be within 1m of the side boundary.



Rooms in the Roof

Using roof space is a popular way to make extra rooms. Dormer windows can disrupt the roofscape of a street. They should normally only be located at the rear of a property. Dormer windows should not dominate the roof by being over large. They should be set above the eaves and below the ridge of the roof. Excessively horizontal dormer windows should be avoided. Hipped-roofed or gable-ended dormers are often preferable to those with flat roofs. Their sides should be covered in materials which match or complement the roof. Where possible the dormers should follow the vertical lines of existing doors and windows.



Porches

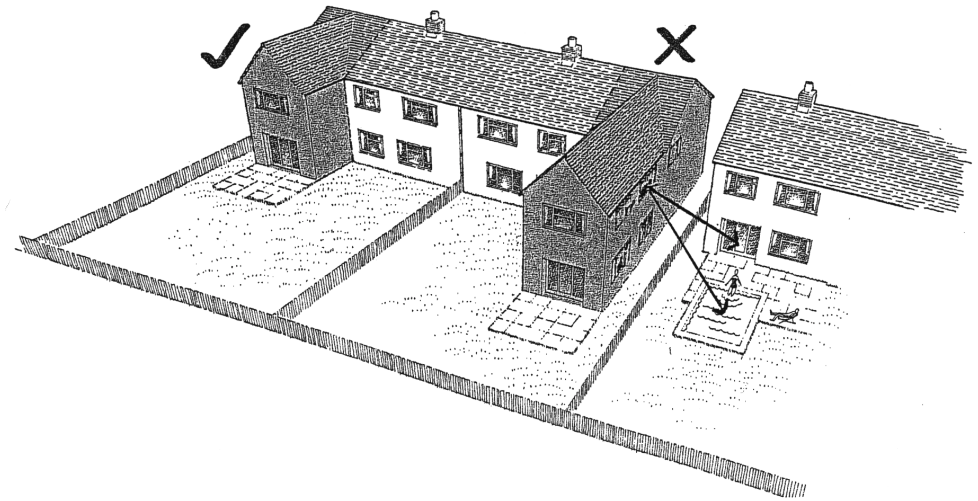
A porch can have a significant effect on the appearance of a house as it alters it at its focal point – the entrance. The design of the porch should be derived from the appearance of the house, in terms of materials and proportion so that it blends with it. Particular attention should be paid to porches on a terrace, where an unsuitable design can spoil the integrity of a whole row. Locating a porch too close to an existing window or preventing the side view of a bay window should be avoided.



Overlooking

The extension should not cause significant overlooking of neighbours' properties. The guiding principle is that the extension should be suitably located and the windows should be placed or orientated so to prevent any direct overlooking of main habitable rooms and areas in neighbouring dwellings. The “main habitable rooms and areas” include living and dining rooms, kitchens, bedrooms, and those frequently used garden areas such as patios close to the house. A severe degree of overlooking should also be avoided over other areas that have moderate useage such as towards the middle of a garden, or occasionally the end of a garden depending on the circumstances. Overlooking is less likely to occur where there is a shallow angle of view so that the occupant would have to lean out of the window in order to gain a view of the adjoining dwelling. Overlooking usually occurs from upper floor windows, although changes in levels or a

lack of ground-level screening can result in overlooking from ground floor windows.



Obscure glazing can prevent overlooking whilst still allowing light into a room. Exceptionally obscure glazing can be considered for rooms other than bathrooms, such as bedrooms, provided that there is clear glazing to another window in the room, which does not overlook an adjoining property. In some cases, conditions may be attached to a planning permission in order to ensure that privacy is maintained. These conditions could address:

- removing the right to replace an obscured glazed window with a clear glazed one;
- requiring a window to be fixed and not open;
- requiring an obscure glazed window to be hinged on one side rather than another or from the top so it does not open out onto a neighbour; and
- removing the right to insert windows into a blank wall facing a neighbour.

The existence of a screen such as a row of trees or a hedge can prevent overlooking. However, a proposal to plant a screen would not overcome any overlooking that would be caused by the development. This is because overlooking would occur while the screen was growing. Evergreen screens are more successful at preventing overlooking than a deciduous screen. Deciduous screens may be acceptable if of sufficient width to provide an adequate screen in winter. Overlooking at ground level due to changes in levels can be prevented by fencing.

Overbearing Relationship

An overbearing relationship is caused when the height and bulk of a proposed extension significantly dominates the outlook of a habitable room or area. This is dependent on the height of the wall or roof of the extension, the proximity of the side elevations of the extension and neighbouring properties to their boundary, and the location of the main habitable rooms and areas. The above drawing which illustrates overlooking also represents an unacceptable overbearing relationship. Even a single-storey extension can have an overbearing relationship to the adjoining property to the side, if the roof or the top of the side wall extends down the garden such that it would dominate the outlook from the neighbouring property. As with overlooking, considerations of these factors are influenced by changes in levels and screening. Even if there is not a obvious overbearing relationship, a proposed extension can still be intrusive, uncomfortably close or uncharacteristically close, and should be avoided.

Daylight and Sunlight

An extension should not block significant amounts of daylight or sunlight from neighbours' main habitable rooms and areas. Daylight is the volume of natural light which enters a dwelling to provide satisfactory illumination of internal accommodation between dawn and dusk. Sunlight is direct light from the sun. The loss of daylight and sunlight is dependent on:

- the height of the wall or roof of the extension;
- the proximity of the side elevations of the extension and neighbouring properties to their boundary;
- the location of the main habitable rooms and areas including patios, and;
- the orientation of the dwelling.

If the proposed extension is to the south of the existing dwelling and may obstruct a significant degree of direct sunlight, then particularly close attention should be paid to its siting and scale. An extension should avoid casting a significant degree of shadow on the patio area of the garden immediately outside the house.

Converting a Garage to Habitable Accommodation

Converting an integral garage is another way to create an extra room. This does not require planning permission (although it is likely to require Building Regulation approval) unless a restrictive condition was applied to the original planning permission for the house preventing such a conversion. The Development Control Division at the Council should be contacted to learn whether such a condition applies to your property. These conversions are usually allowed if sufficient car parking can be provided within the property.

Garages and Car Parking

A new garage should not dominate the view of a property. This can be helped by setting it back from the face of the house. Particularly where the garage is attached to the house, it should follow the same roof shape and be of the same materials as the existing building.

The Council has standards for the number of parking spaces and their dimensions which should be provided for each dwelling. If a proposed extension contains a number of bedrooms, then this may necessitate

providing another car parking space. Similarly, an extension which results in the loss of an existing parking space may require that a replacement parking space is provided. The layout of a parking area should not dominate the garden. Garages count as parking spaces. Planning permission is needed for a new vehicular access onto a classified road. The Development Control Division can advise on the currently adopted parking standards. The Transportation Development Control Section of Surrey County Council (tel: 020 8541 9837) can advise on any requirements for the access such as sightlines along the road.

Gardens, Trees and Landscaping

An extension should not result in the loss of a significant amount of garden space. In most cases the extension will be acceptable due its relatively small size compared to that of the garden. However, with larger extensions, the remaining garden should allow for the retention of an adequate area for passive recreational requirements such as sitting out and for external drying areas.

The extension should retain important landscape features where possible such as trees, large shrubs and hedges. Planning Reception can advise on whether any trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The plans submitted with the application should show any significant planting which is proposed to be lost or may be threatened and include relevant information such as the species, spread and trunk diameter. In assessing which landscape features could be lost, the Council will evaluate the significance of these features, particularly where they contribute to the street scene and character of the area, against the merits of the proposed extension. Conditions may be attached to a permission requiring the protection of existing landscaping. This can be achieved, for example, through fencing, during construction. Additional landscaping may be required if this is necessary to soften the impact of an extension or integrate it into its setting. The Council's Arboricultural Officer can give advice on trees and landscaping.

Extensions to Dwellings in Rural Areas

The extension of houses in Green Belt countryside and Countryside Beyond the Green belt is restricted. This is intended to prevent a gradual change in the character of the countryside over time. Policy RE5 of the Local Plan states that:

“proposals for the extension or alteration of dwellings will not be permitted where this would result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building”.

The “original dwelling” as referred to in the policy is that as it existed on the 1st July 1948, or as originally built if constructed after that date. Proposed extensions should also not detract from the rural character of the area, and should not detract from the scale, character and appearance of the existing property and its setting.

Extensions to Small Dwellings in Rural Areas

In the countryside areas of the Borough, including the rural settlements of Bisley, Chobham, West End and Windlesham, there are restrictions on the extent to which small dwellings can be extended. This is governed by Policy H12 of the Local Plan which seeks to ensure the continued provision of small dwellings in the rural areas. The Development Control Division can advise on whether your house is classed as a small dwelling, and what scope there may be for extending it.

Listed Buildings, Locally Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

Any works to Listed Buildings affecting their character and appearance require Listed Building Consent. This applies even to extensions and alterations that do not need planning permission and also applies to internal alterations.

Similarly, some works to houses in conservation areas may require Conservation Area consent.

Works to Locally Listed Buildings do not require any separate consent. You are advised to seek specialist advice as the local listing will be taken into account in determining any planning application.

You should contact a planning officer to check if your house falls within any of these categories. Stephanie Hewitt of the Forward Planning Division (tel: 01276 707245) can advise on whether the proposed works require the additional consents referred to above, and on the particular design requirements affecting extensions to these buildings. A list of buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest can also be found on the Council's website or in a free leaflet available from Planning Reception.

FURTHER ADVICE

Planning officers at the Council and Planning Reception can be contacted as follows:

Tel: 01276 707222

Fax: 01276 707218

Email: development-control@surreyheath.gov.uk

Enquiries in writing should be addressed to:

Chief Planner (Development Control)

Surrey Heath Borough Council

Surrey Heath House

Knoll Road

Camberley

Surrey GU15 3HD

The Planning Reception is open Monday–Thursday 8.30am–5.30pm and Friday 8.30am–5.00pm. Planning officers are available at the reception desk from 10.00am–12.00 noon, Monday to Friday, to discuss development proposals.

Trees and Landscaping: Planning Reception can advise on whether a tree is covered by a Tree Preservation Order (tel: 01276 707222). The Council's Arboricultural Officer, Ian Wright (tel: 01276 707240) (Ian.Wright@surreyheath.gov.uk), can advise on how trees or landscaping may affect the proposal for your extension.

Surrey Heath Local Plan 2000: The Forward Planning Division at the Council can advise on the policies of the Surrey Heath Local Plan 2000 on tel: 01276 707222. Copies of the Local Plan are available at Planning Reception and at local libraries. The policies of the Local Plan, but not the Proposals Map, can also be viewed on the Council website: www.surreyheath.gov.uk General queries can also be sent to forward-planning@surreyheath.gov.uk.

Listed Buildings, Locally Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas:

Advice on whether your property falls within any of these categories can be obtained from planning officers on tel: 01276 707222. Detailed advice on the particular design requirements affecting extensions to these properties can be obtained from Stephanie Hewitt of the Forward Planning Division on tel: 01276 707245, or Stephanie.Hewitt@surreyheath.gov.uk.

Building Control: Advice on whether Building Regulation approval is required can be obtained from the Council's Building Control Division on tel: 01276 707248. General enquiries can also be sent to Building-Control@surreyheath.gov.uk.

Highway standards: Advice on standards for accesses onto roads can be gained from the Transportation Development Control Section of Surrey County Council on tel: 020 8541 9837.

*The Council wishes to acknowledge the following local authorities
for giving permission to use their illustrations in this leaflet:
Elmbridge BC, Chiltern DC, RB of Kingston upon Thames.*