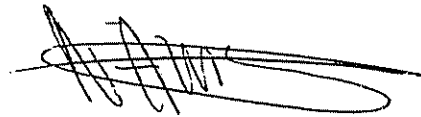


This Design Guide is a revised version of a draft document which was made available for public discussion and comment between 10th. July 1991 and 11th. November 1991.

It was approved on 20th. January 1994 by the Development Control Committee for the purposes of advice and guidance for development control following advertisement and consultations.



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Borough Planning Officer
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Design Guide 2

HOUSE EXTENSIONS

OGWR BOROUGH COUNCIL GUIDES TO DESIGN



FOREWORD

This series of guides to design prepared by the Borough Council has three main aims. They are:

1. To make clear the Local Planning Authority's expectations for the design of development.
2. To encourage, as a consequence, development of a high design standard that will result in a benefit in environmental and landscape terms.
3. To reduce the need for revision of the design of proposals, and thus to increase the speed of the determination of planning applications.

Five secondary aims clarify the criteria for judging the benefit that may be achieved by the design of a development.

Those secondary aims of the design advice are:

- A. To create a positive area image, a sense of local identity.
- B. To ensure the integration of development into the surrounding area.
- C. To ensure the protection, and preferably enhancement, of the landscape or the townscape.
- D. To ensure the protection or enhancement of the appearance or character of areas of special interest or character.
- E. To ensure the protection or enhancement of the residential amenity of people living in the vicinity of, or who will live in, a development.

HOUSE EXTENSIONS

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Design Guide 2

HOUSE EXTENSIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This guide is one of a series prepared by the Borough Council. It is about the design of extensions to detached, semi-detached, or terraced houses, and bungalows. It is intended to help anybody thinking of enlarging their home or anybody designing a house extension. The guide sets out objectives that define an acceptable extension and gives greater detail in a series of advice notes.

1.2. Not all extensions require planning consent. There are, however, many restrictions and conditions which may affect whether a particular proposal is permitted development. The nature of permitted development, and the restrictions and conditions, may change as the legislation is revised. Therefore; ***IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT BUILDING WORK SHOULD NOT COMMENCE UNTIL THE PROPOSAL HAS BEEN DISCUSSED WITH THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT AND AN OPINION ON THE NEED FOR PLANNING CONSENT HAS BEEN GIVEN, PREFERABLY IN WRITING.***

1.3. Even if planning consent is not required, consideration of these guidelines may be helpful. A well designed extension can enhance the value of a house, while a

poorly designed one may not. The guidelines can also suggest how a permitted development should be designed so that it can be later enlarged in a way that may be granted planning permission.

1.4. This booklet is for guidance. It is not a rule book. While planning applications for house extensions will be considered in relation to the objectives and advice notes the particular circumstances of a proposal will always be important. Occasionally those circumstances may outweigh the advice of this Design Guide, either for or against the proposal.

1.5. This advice has been prepared in part as a response to unsatisfactory extensions that have been constructed in the past. While the existence of such an extension in the vicinity of a proposal will be taken into account it will not automatically provide a precedent for the approval of a similar poor design in the future. These guidelines represent a material change in planning circumstances in relation to house extensions in the Borough.

1.6. It should be remembered that every house has a reasonable limit for extension. Beyond that point any further additions would be an

unacceptable overdevelopment of the site.

1.7. The aims of the Design Guide series are set out in the foreword. There are five specific objectives of this House Extension Guide within these general aims. The objectives can be set out as a group of goals that a proposed extension should meet if it is to be acceptable. The goals are:

- a. *The extension should not dominate adjoining property.* (See Advice Notes 1,2,3,4, 5,6,12 & 13).
- b. *The extended dwelling should retain an adequate private garden.* (See Advice Note 7).
- c. *The extension should not actually or potentially constitute a new, independent dwelling unit* (See Advice Note 5).
- d. *The extension should be visually compatible with the existing dwelling and the general surroundings.* (See Advice Notes 8,9,10,11, 12,13,14,).
- e. *The extension should be compatible with the protection of environmentally important trees.* (See Advice Note 15).

2. ADVICE NOTES

2.1. The concerns of the Borough Council are to safeguard residential and visual amenity. Residential amenity is considered in relation to the future occupants of the extended house and to neighbours. Visual amenity encompasses the effects of the extension on the appearance of the house and the neighbourhood.

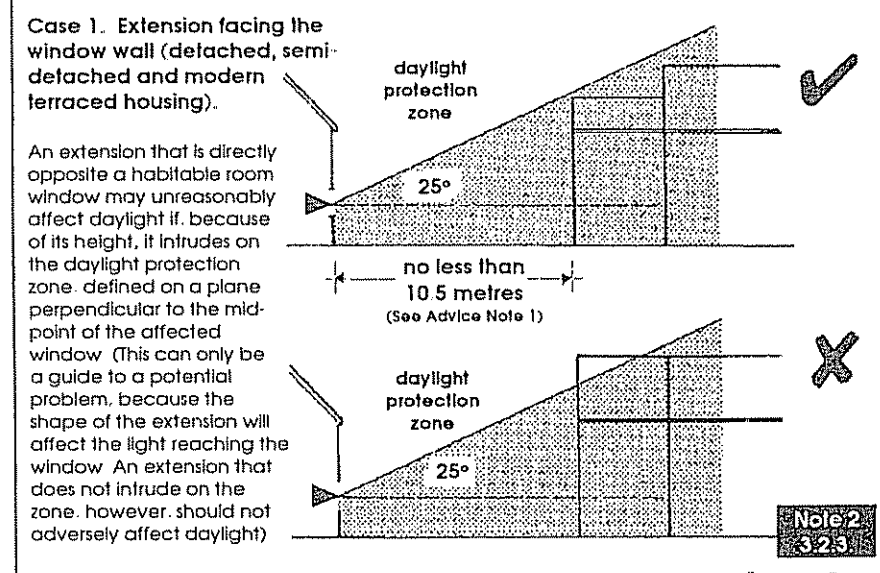
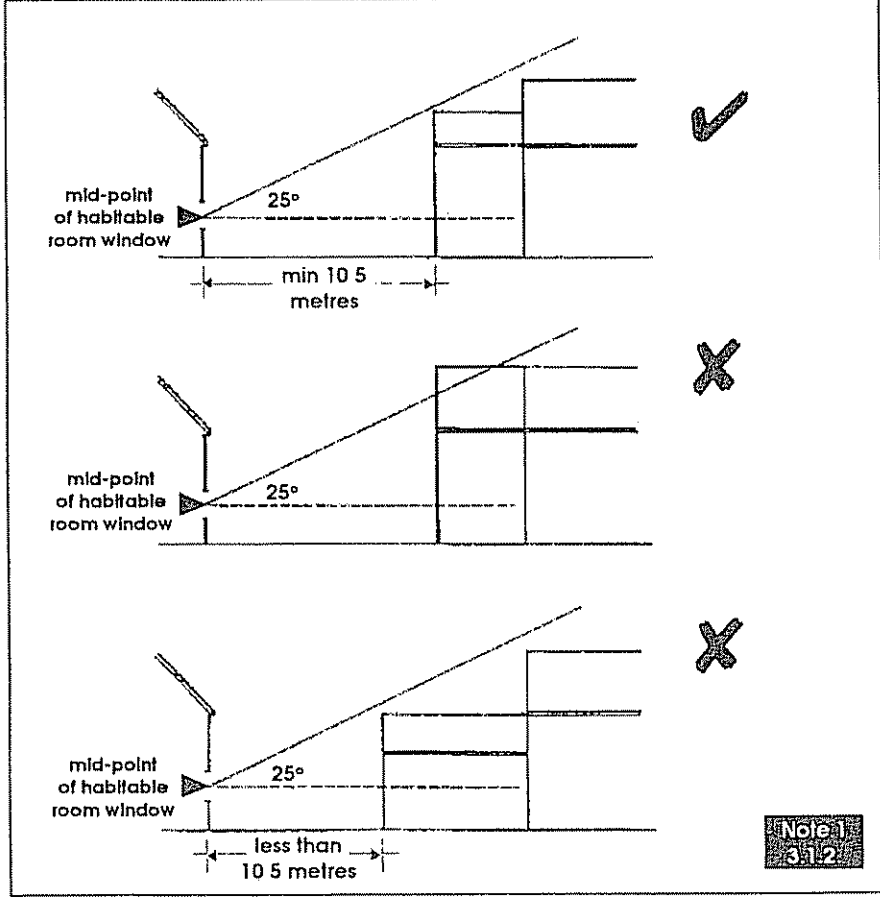
2.2. The following advice notes are grouped in accord with the concern to which they are mainly related. The categories are not exclusive. Notes aimed at safeguarding residential amenity may also have a beneficial effect on visual amenity, and vice versa.

3. RESIDENTIAL AMENITY (Neighbours)

3.1. **Note 1: No extension should unreasonably dominate the outlook of an adjoining property.**

3.1.1. While there is no right to a view some extensions can appear unreasonably dominant and oppressive when seen from neighbouring houses. Whether or not a proposed extension will be unacceptable to the residential amenity of neighbouring property will usually need to be assessed on the merits of the individual proposal. Factors such as the shape and size of the extension, its distance from, and alignment with, overlooking windows, and the shape of the land need to be taken into account.

3.1.2. As a guide, an extension (other than one essential to provide modest enlargement or basic facilities to older terraced property) may be considered unreasonably dominating if it is directly overlooked by a main window to a habitable room in an adjacent dwelling and it is higher than a line, perpendicular to the window wall, rising at 25 degrees to the horizontal from the mid-point of the affected window, or if it is closer than 10.5 metres to the window. *(A habitable room is a room used or intended to be used for dwelling purposes, including a*



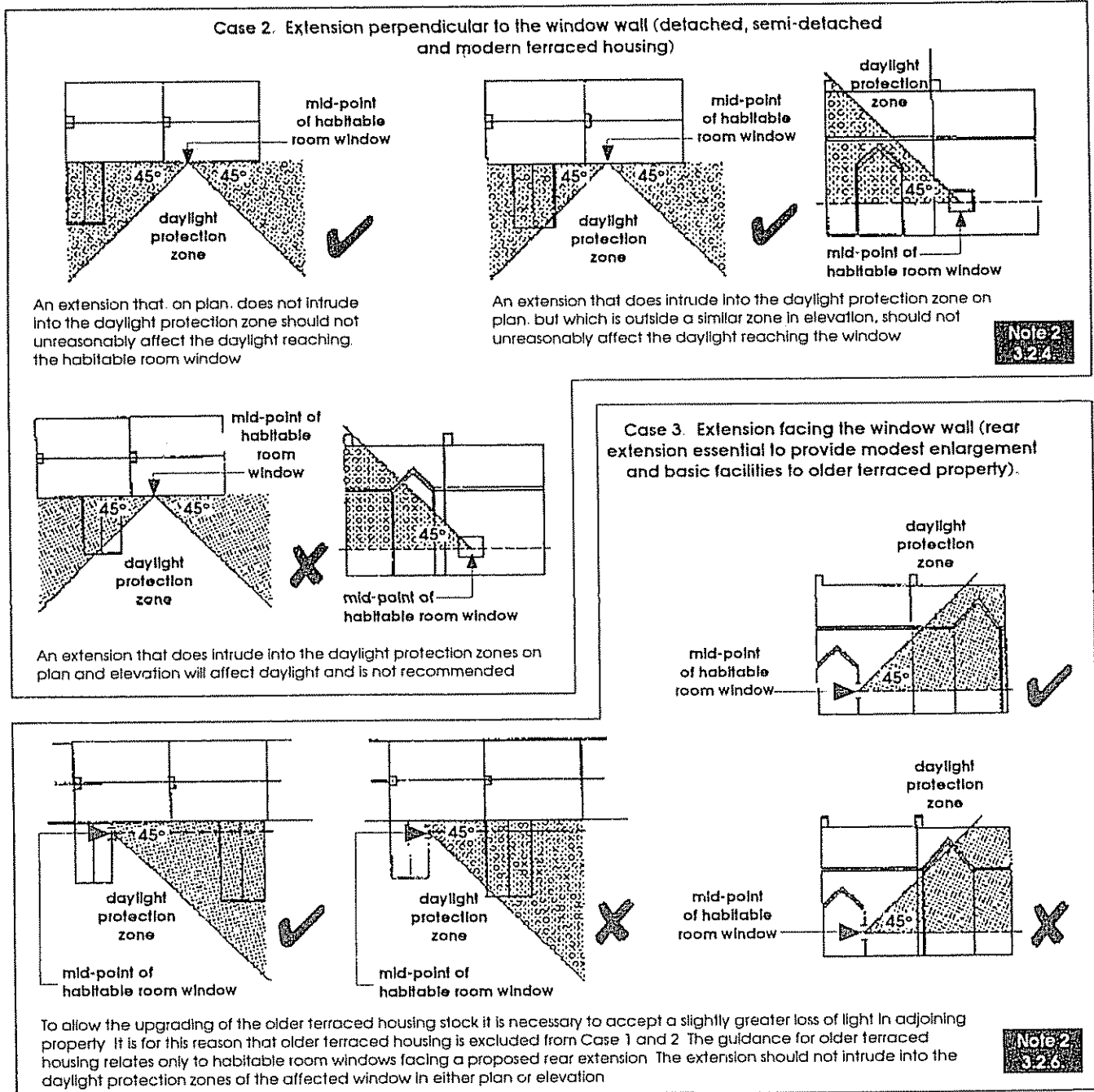
kitchen, but not any room used exclusively as a bathroom, hall, or utility room).

3.1.3. It is emphasised that this is only a general indicator of the possibility of dominance, and not a rigid definition of unreasonable dominance. In particular it is not applicable to sideways facing windows in rear extensions, and the 25 degree line is less helpful as a guide when sloping sites are involved.

3.2. **Note 2: No extension should unreasonably overshadow adjoining property.**

3.2.1. A poorly-designed extension can reduce daylight and sunlight to an unreasonable extent. Neighbouring houses and their gardens can be made gloomy and unattractive. In the worst cases rights to light may be infringed.

3.2.2. The assessment of loss of light is comprehensively covered



by the Building Research Establishment Report 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight - A Guide To Good Practice' (1991). Based on that report the following guidelines are given as an indication of possible overshadowing problems.

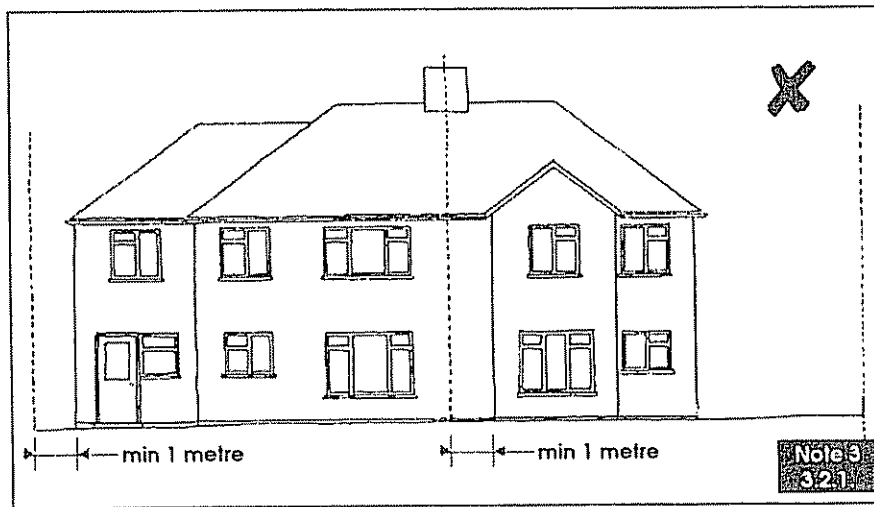
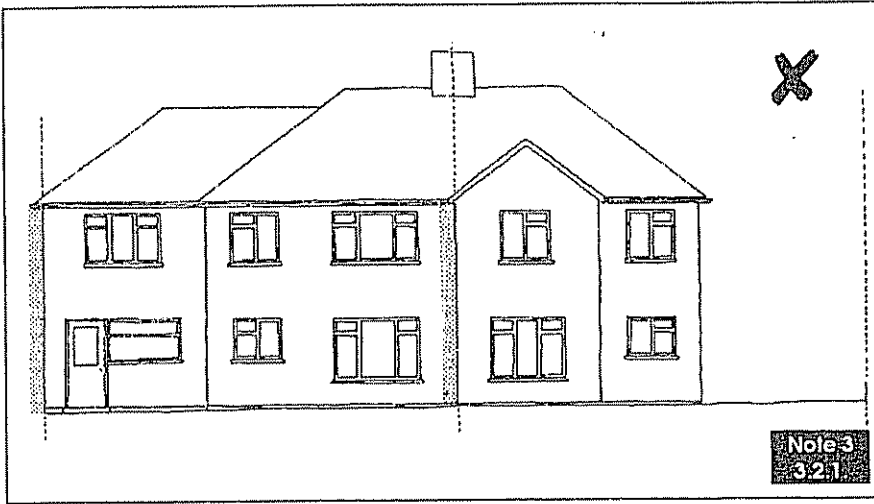
3.2.3. A habitable room window in an adjoining property may be adversely affected in terms of daylight if a new extension which it faces subtends an angle of more than 25 degrees at the centre-point of that window, or at a height of 2 metres in the case of patio doors. (The angle is measured in a plane perpendicular to the existing window)

3.2.4. A habitable room window may be adversely affected by an adjoining extension whose nearest wall is perpendicular to the window if the extension intrudes on daylight protection zones defined by lines drawn at 45 degrees from the mid-point of the window on plan and elevation. Note that if the extension intrudes only on plan, or only on elevation, the reduction in skylight received by the window is unlikely to be significant.

3.2.5. Sunlight is most important in main living rooms and conservatories in adjoining dwellings and can affect the usefulness of garden areas. Substantial loss of

sunlight due to a new extension of an adjoining property can seriously affect residential amenity. An extension that is situated within 90 degrees of due south of an adjoining property may affect the sunlighting of that property, depending on its height, size, and proximity.

3.2.6. Proposals for the extension of terraced properties should be designed to minimise overshadowing. Some flexibility in the amount of overshadowing considered reasonable for terraced houses may however be justified for extensions essential for the provision of modern amenities.



3.3. Note 3: Two-storey extensions built up to the boundary with adjoining property are not recommended.

3.2.1. This note is also intended to prevent the unreasonable imposition of an extension on neighbouring property. Where there is a need for the provision of modern amenities for an older terraced house there may be a justification for building up to the boundary. Generally however, it is recommended that at least 1 metre be left between an extension and the boundary of the

site. This allows for access for construction, finishing, and maintenance, and helps reduce the visual dominance of the extension. The Borough Council has also found that building on the property boundary is a major source of neighbour disputes. These may be avoided by leaving a gap.

3.4. Note 4: Extensions that overhang the boundary with adjoining property are not recommended.

3.4.1 Although it is possible, with

the consent of the adjoining landowner, to build an extension such that the eaves and gutters overhang neighbouring property, it is rarely satisfactory. It limits the opportunities for extending the adjacent property, it makes maintenance difficult, and it can be the cause of disputes.

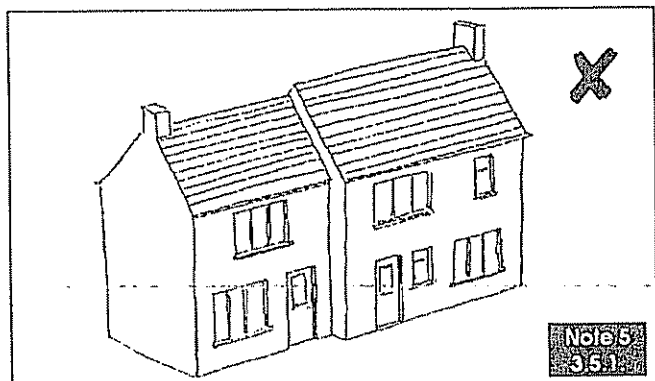
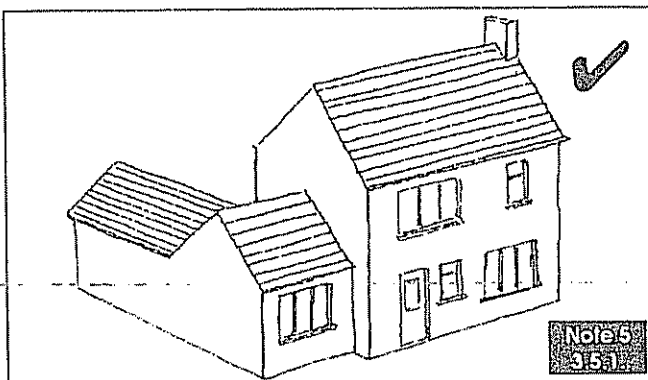
3.5. Note 5: An extension for an elderly relative should not form a separate dwelling unit and should be designed so that it can easily be re-integrated into the original house.

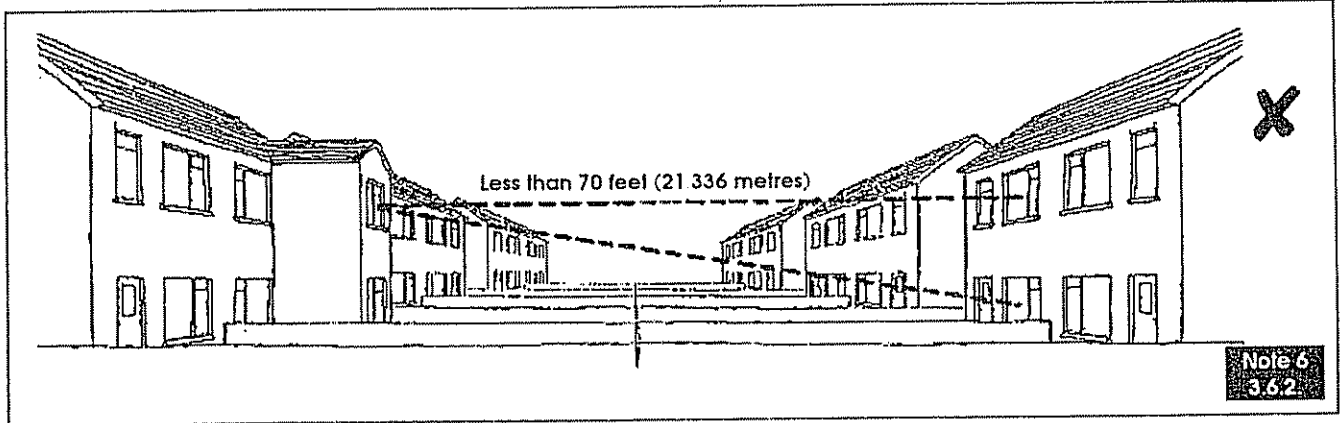
3.5.1. A common reason for house extensions is the need to accommodate elderly relatives in need of occasional care. The Borough Council will try to consider such proposals favourably provided that the extension is well integrated, does not form a separate dwelling, and does not conflict with other guidance notes.

3.6. Note 6: An extension should respect the privacy of neighbouring houses.

3.6.1 A sense of privacy within the house and a freedom from overlooking in the garden are justifiable aspects of residential amenity. The Borough Council is concerned that new house extensions should not unreasonably diminish those qualities in nearby housing

3.6.2. As an indicator of privacy inside the house the distance of 70 feet (21.336 metres) between facing habitable room windows in adjacent properties has long been used. *(A habitable room is a room used or intended to be used for dwelling purposes, including a kitchen, but not any room used exclusively as a bathroom, hall, or utility room).* The target over-





looking distance of 70 feet will be used in assessing the acceptability of a proposed extension but reductions may be acceptable where:

- * permanent screening can be provided between facing ground floor windows.
- * the angle of overlooking between windows is less than 45 degrees.
- * the overlooked window is itself in a later extension to an original dwelling

3.6.3. While few rear gardens are

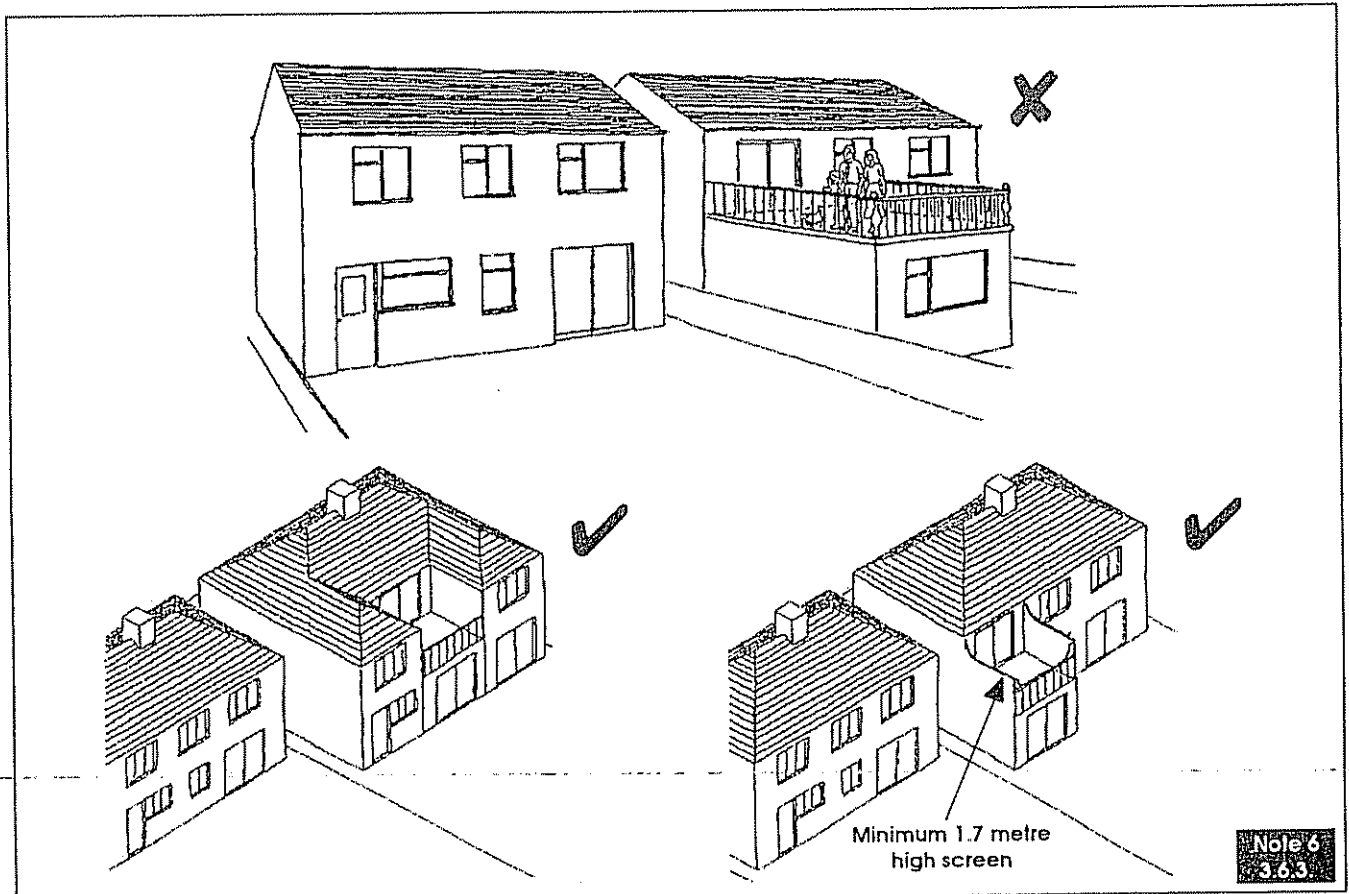
entirely private some features of extensions can create a sense of unreasonable overlooking in neighbouring property. Balconies often cause the greatest difficulty, but sideways facing windows can also be undesirable. If a balcony is proposed it should be located or screened to prevent overlooking. Sideways facing windows to habitable rooms should be avoided.

4. RESIDENTIAL AMENITY (Occupiers of the extended house)

4.1. Note 7: Any extension should leave an adequate garden area

for private use around the house.

4.1.1. While an individual may accept a window box as sufficient garden space the Borough Council believes that generally there should be a reasonable private outdoor area for enjoyment of the present and future households. An extension that covers more than 50% of the private outdoor area is considered to be overdevelopment. If the extension is added to, or creates, a family house (one having 3 or more bedrooms) a proportionally larger garden area may be appropriate to facilitate children's play.



5. VISUAL AMENITY

5.1. A poorly designed extension can adversely affect visual amenity in two ways. It can so jar against the appearance of the existing house that the enlarged building becomes an eyesore, attracting attention to itself by its unfortunate appearance. A series of poor extensions can also damage the appearance of a neighbourhood. A medley of various unsympathetic extensions can weaken and ultimately destroy the harmony of an area of houses previously united by common materials, form, and details. Alternatively, even if materials, form and details were respected, an area characterised by the spaciousness of its housing can become congested and cramped in appearance, if houses are over-extended and jostle each other for space.

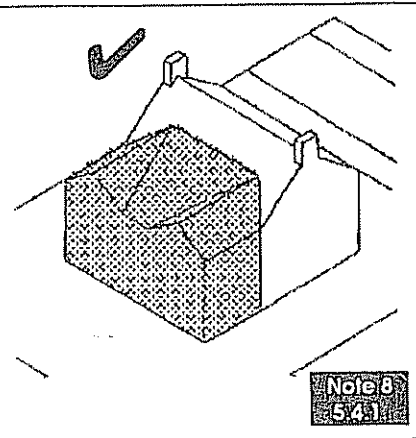
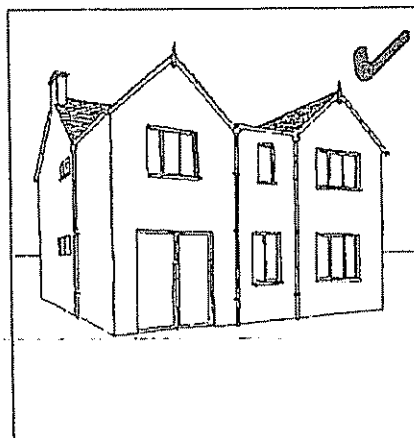
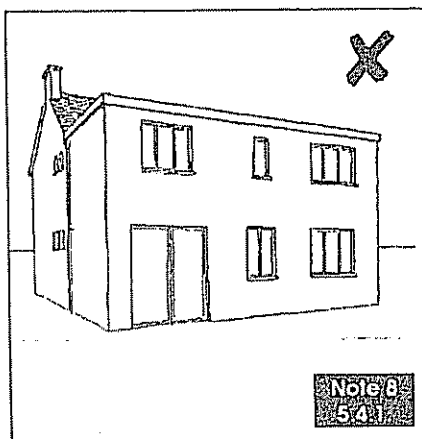
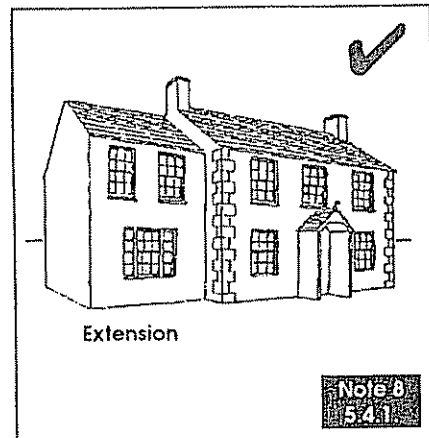
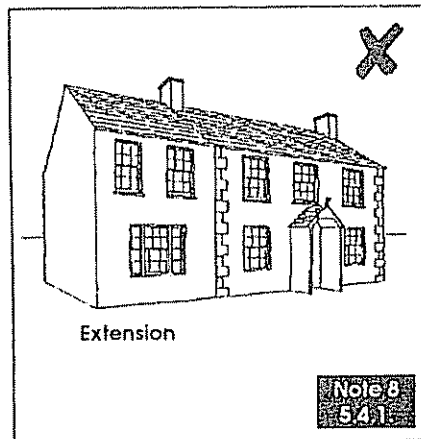
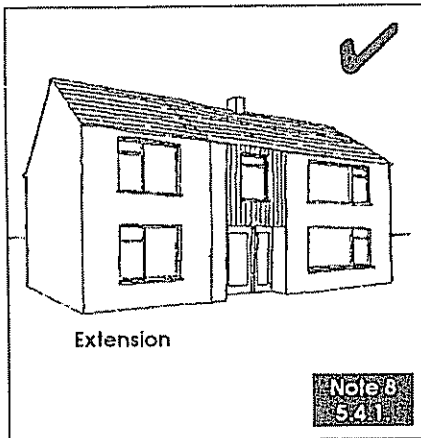
5.2. In its guidance notes aimed at safeguarding visual amenity the Borough Council primarily recommends the achievement of harmony between the extension and the existing building. There is an alternative view that an extension should contrast with the existing building to emphasise its difference, and that it is 'of today'.

While not wishing to stifle good imaginative design the Borough Council does not favour that view. More often than not it seems to lead to unfortunate, rather than uplifting, extensions. The designer of a scheme that does not accord with the following guidance notes is strongly advised to discuss his proposal with Officers of the Planning Department before submission.

5.3. Of the following guidance notes, numbers 8 to 11 indicate the matters taken into account in assessing the effect of a proposed extension on the appearance of the existing house. Notes 12 to 14 indicate the matters taken into account in assessing the effect of a proposed extension on the appearance of the neighbourhood.

5.4. Note 8: The form, materials, and details of an extension should match those of the existing house.

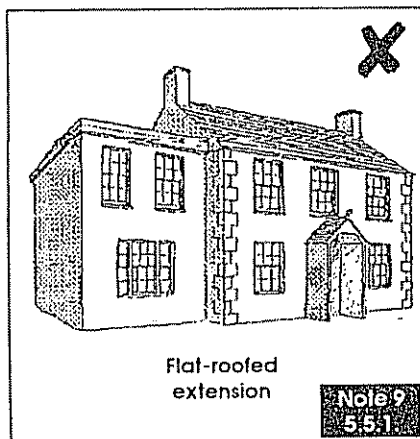
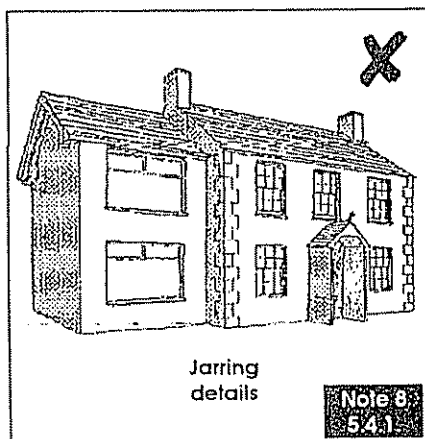
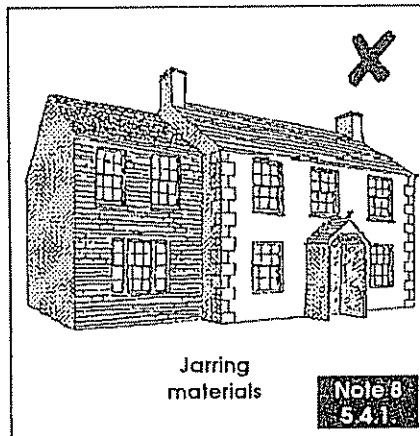
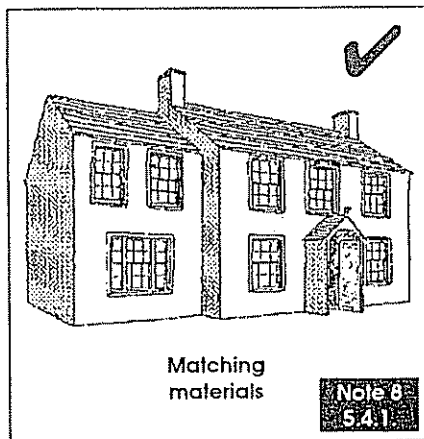
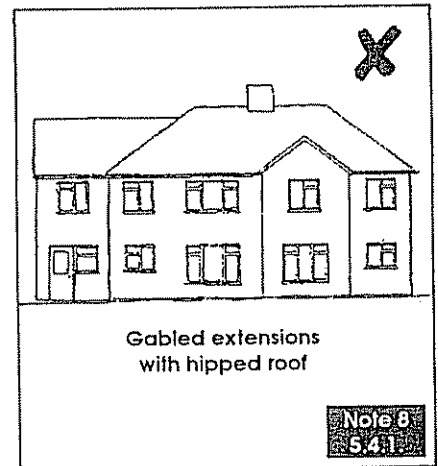
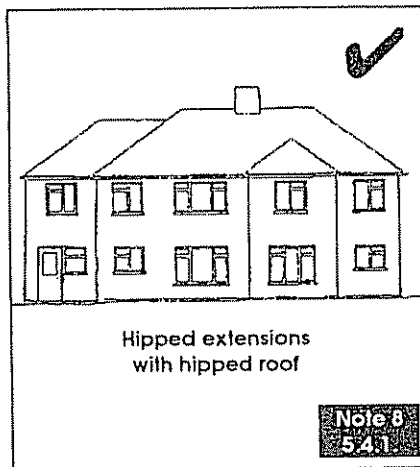
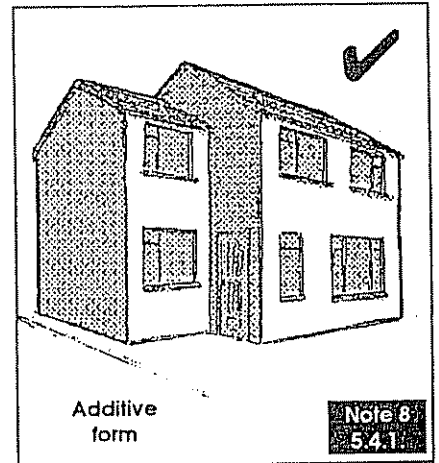
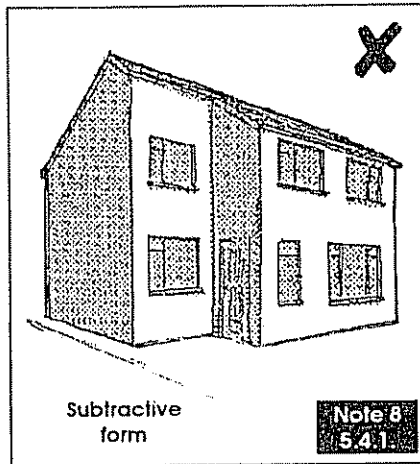
5.4.1. A house usually has a character of its own, derived



either from the imagination of its designer or from the exercise of traditional building skills and techniques. A good extension will reinforce that character by appearing to be a natural part of the building. Where an exact match is not possible, for example, in the addition of a conservatory, or if the original materials are no longer available, the design of the extension should at least respect the character of the house. This may be done by reflecting the architectural rhythms of the house, its period characteristics, and its colour and textural values. An extension that does not match, however, can be more difficult to design successfully.

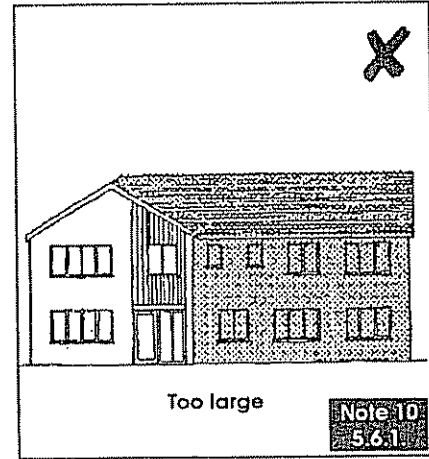
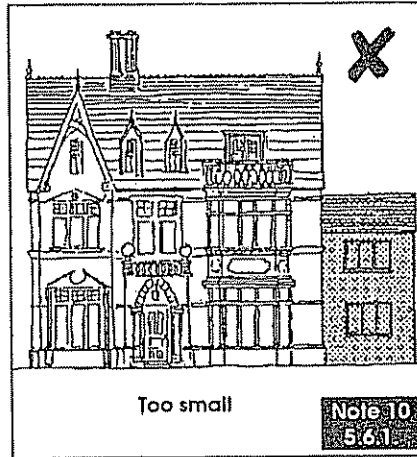
5.5. Note 9: No two storey extension that can be seen from the street or other public area should be finished with a flat roof.

5.5.1. Note 9 is a particular example of the general guidance in Note 8. It is emphasised because the two storey, flat roofed extension is a very common proposal which is very damaging to appearance.



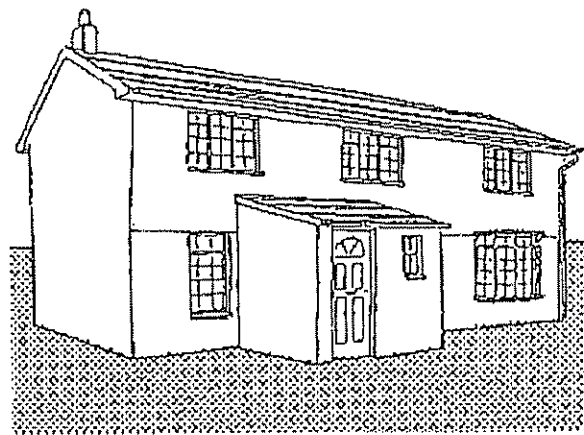
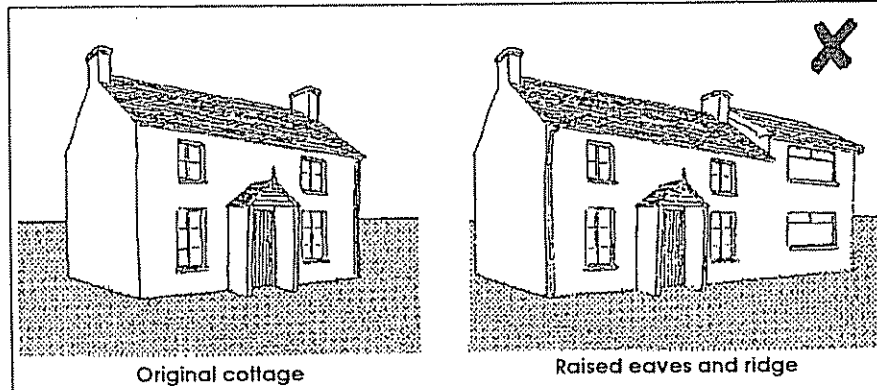
5.6. Note 10: An extension should be in scale with the existing house.

5.6.1 Some dwellings have a character and charm which can be destroyed by an excessive extension. To retain the contribution that such buildings make to the environment extensions should be kept to an absolute minimum. In the countryside, particularly, the original gross floor area should not be more than doubled. In addition, if the original ceiling levels are low, the extension should be carefully designed to avoid dwarfing the existing house.



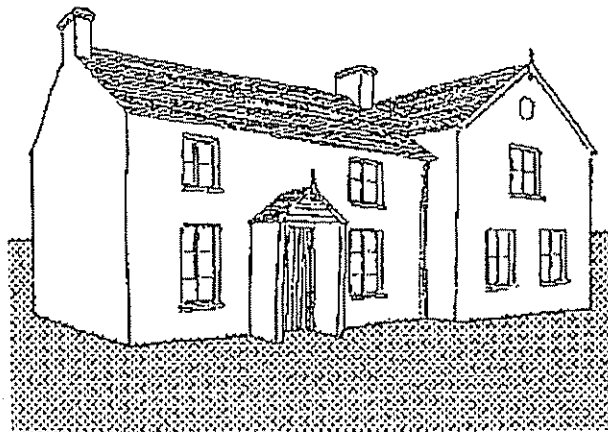
5.7. Note 11: Dormer extensions should be sympathetic to the existing house in their shape, position, scale, and material.

5.7.1. Changes to the roof of a house or bungalow should be very carefully considered. They are almost always prominent, and can easily be very damaging to appearance. Windows in dormers can also affect the privacy of neighbouring property because of their elevated viewpoint. Large roof extensions rarely appear satisfactory if they affect the front or side roof slopes or if they rise above the ridge of the existing building. Box-like flat roof dormers are invariably unsightly.

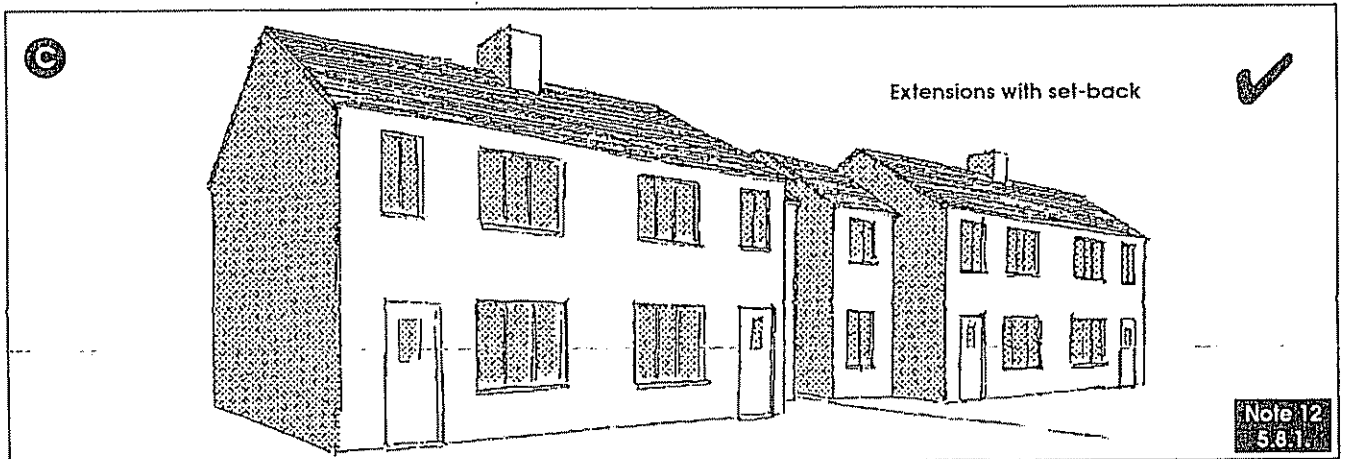
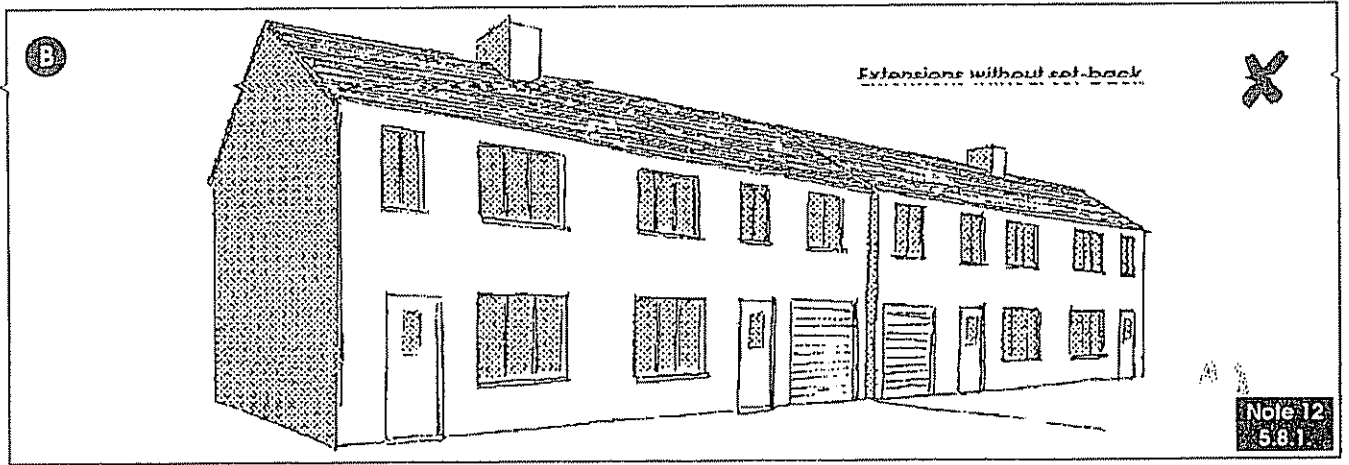
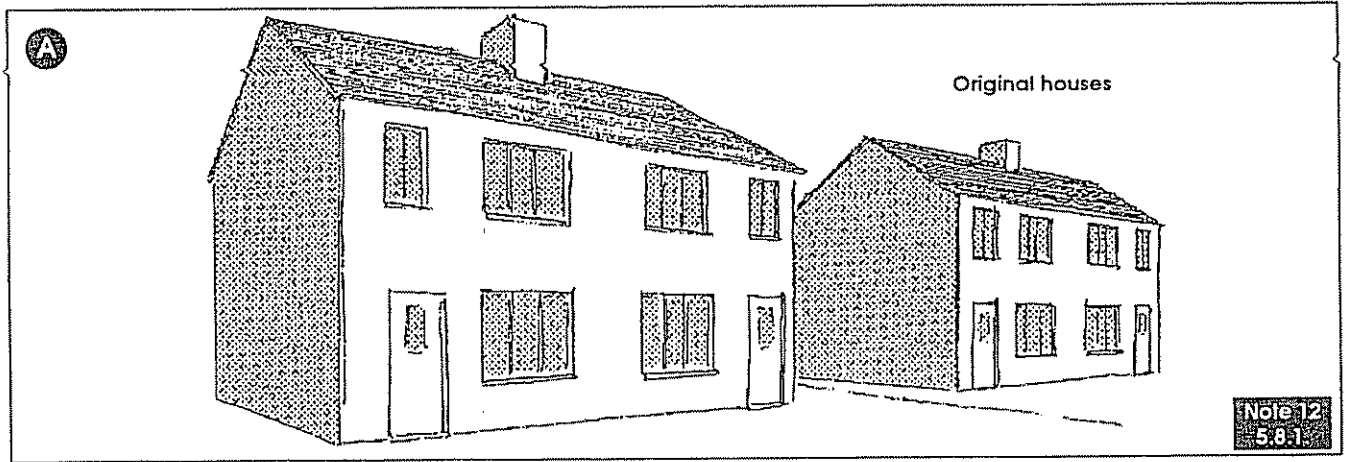
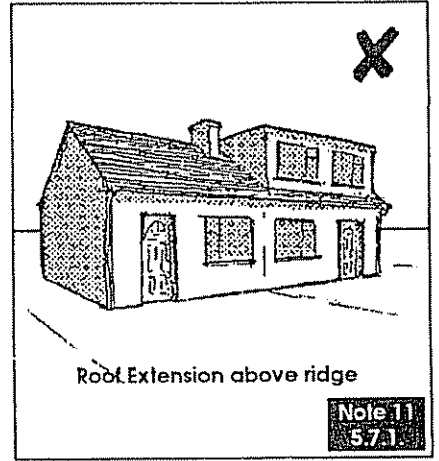
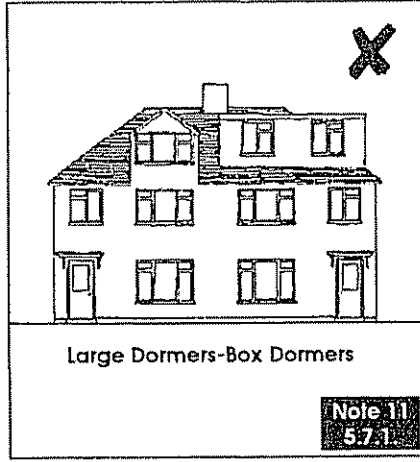
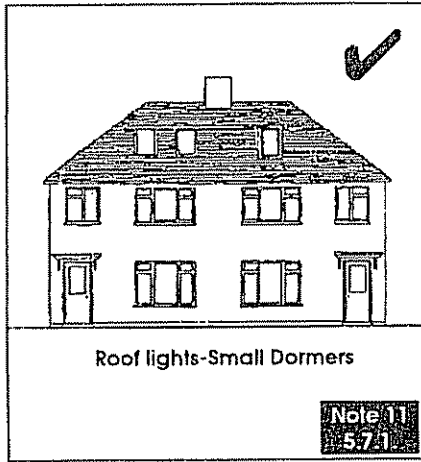


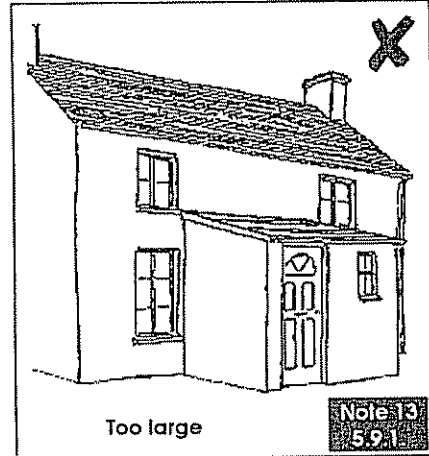
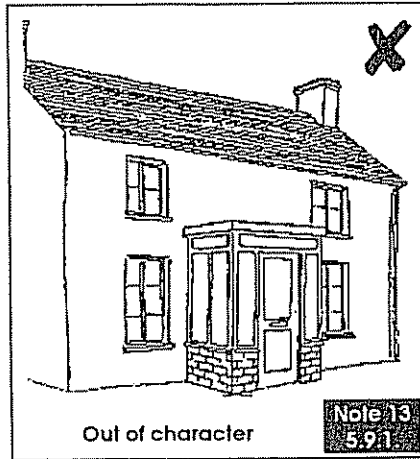
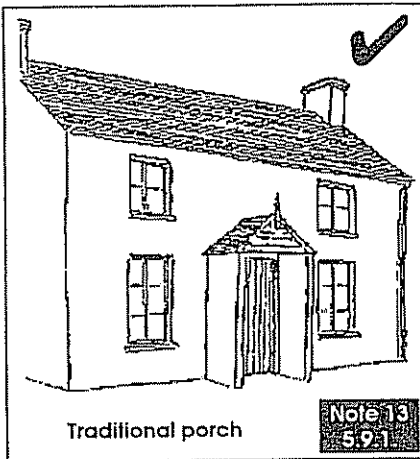
5.8. Note 12: No side extension should have a design which, if, repeated on adjoining property, would create the appearance of terraced housing.

5.8.1. Extensions to the side of houses are a particular problem in areas of similar semi-detached properties. The spatial character of the area can be substantially changed as extensions to adjoining houses almost meet, creating the appearance of terraced development. It is the Borough Council's intention to prevent this happening in the future.



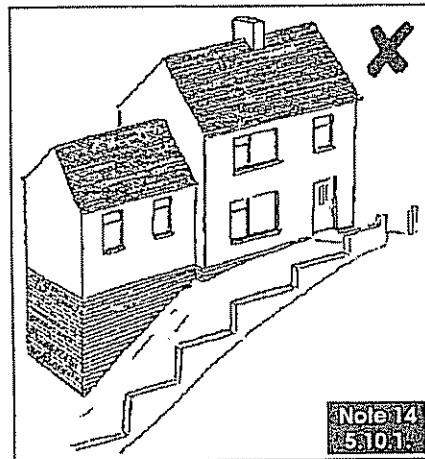
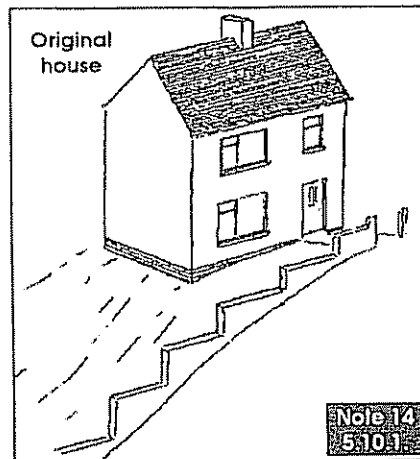
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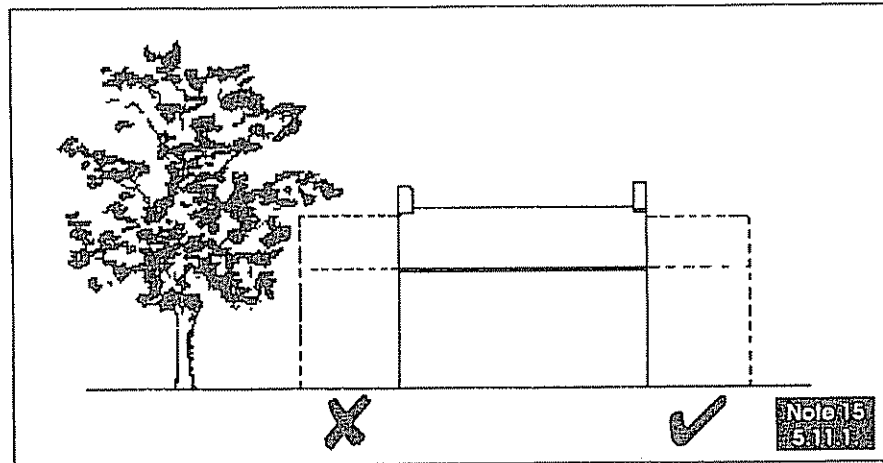


5.9. Note 13: Front extensions which come forward of a definable building line are not recommended.

5.9.1. The guidance against building forward of the building line is not intended to be a rigid and inflexible rule. It draws attention, however, to the strong effect that a projecting extension can have on the general spatial character of an area and the focus of attention that such an extension will become. A proposal for such a front extension will therefore have to be persuasively justified in terms of its relationship to the general character of the area and of the particular design quality of the extension.



5.10. Note 14: An extension built on a sloping site and which is visible from the street or other public area should be related to the slope rather than being imposed upon it.



5.10.1. With many houses in the Borough on sloping sites, Note 14 draws attention to the need to take account of the slope in designing extensions. Too often, extensions are planned as if the site were flat, leading to large areas of unsightly brickwork as a support for the new accommodation. This is not recommended if the extension is in public view. It is better to introduce internal changes of level to make use of the slope, rather than to try to ignore it.

5.11. Note 15: The construction of an extension should be compatible with the preservation of any environmentally important trees.

5.11.1. To ensure that important trees are not damaged it is recommended that no building or work of excavation takes place within the appropriate distance of the trunk of any tree. (Further advice on appropriate distances for different species of trees is available in the companion

publication DG7 'Trees and Development') This restriction may suggest the direction in which a house close to an important tree can be extended. It is thought, however, that rejection of an otherwise acceptable extension solely on the grounds of the loss of a tree will be an exception.

6. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

3.1 The Development Plan for Ogwr incorporates the relevant policies of the Mid Glamorgan County Structure Plan and the policies of the Ogwr Borough Local Plan.

3.2 The County Structure Plan Incorporating Approved Structure Plan Alterations No 1 became operational on the 12th. September 1989. There are no directly relevant Structure Plan policies, but a poor extension may be considered to conflict with one or more of policies H11, LC12, or LC13, depending on the circumstances. Those policies are:

H11. Wherever possible existing residential areas characterised by high standards of privacy and spaciousness will be protected against overdevelopment and insensitive or inappropriate infilling.

LC12. The County Council proposes that those buildings and artefacts which make a special contribution to the quality, character, and interest of the environment should be protected and where necessary restored.

LC13. There will be a presumption against development likely to affect adversely the character of conservation areas.

3.3 The Ogwr Borough Local Plan has passed through its deposit stage and will be the subject of a public local inquiry commencing

on the 8th. March 1994. The relevant Local Plan policies are H14, EV7, EV17, EV19, EV24, and EV27. Those policies are as follows:

H14. In residential areas characterised by high standards of privacy and spaciousness, development which would result in the loss of both private and public open space will not normally be permitted, particularly where this would constitute overdevelopment or insensitive and/or inappropriate infilling.

EV7. Where development is acceptable in the countryside, it must have a scale, siting, design, and external appearance which will be compatible with any existing related structure and preserve or enhance the surrounding landscape.

EV17. Development likely to cause an unacceptable and adverse impact on the surrounding locality in terms of pollution and/or visual amenity will not normally be permitted.

EV19. Development within conservation areas which does not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of those areas will not normally be permitted.

EV24. Listed Building Consent for development which would harm the interior or exterior character of a listed building/structure will not normally be granted.

EV27. Development which adversely affects a building, structure, or site identified as being of local architectural or historic importance to the Borough will not normally be permitted.

7. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Borough Council publishes a leaflet "Notes for Applicants" intended to assist the making of a planning application. The following checklist adds to those notes with particular reference to applications for house extensions

To minimise any delay in the consideration of a planning application the following should be included:

- 1** Four copies of the completed planning application form. (Forms available from the Council Offices).
- 2** One copy of the correct Certificate under Article 12A of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1988.
- 3** The correct fee. (A guide to the current fee for different types of application is available from the Council Offices)

4 Four copies of a plan (not less than 1:2500 scale) showing the location of the application site. The site should be shaded or outlined in **RED**. Any adjoining land owned or controlled by the applicant should be shown in **BLUE**.

5 Four copies of a site plan (not less than 1:500; scales of 1:200 or 1:100 are recommended for single dwellings). This plan should show features of the site, including trees, the location of the building and of the proposed extension. It will

assist the determination of an application if the location of adjoining buildings can also be shown.

6 Four copies of plans and elevations of the existing building (not less than 1:100 scale).

7 Four copies of plans and elevations of the building with the proposed extension (not less than 1:100 scale). Details should be given of the materials and colour of the external finishes of the existing building and the proposed extension.

NOTE: Plans should be signed by the applicant or his agent. All duplicates should be true copies of the original. Plans are open to public inspection. Applicants are not, however, required to disclose any proposed security arrangements. If a house is listed, listed building consent will be needed for its extension, in addition to planning permission.

8. FURTHER INFORMATION

8.1. These notes can only offer general advice. If it is not clear how the advice notes apply to a particular house extension the proposal may be discussed with staff of the Borough Planning Department. Letters should be addressed to:

Mr. N. A. McGaw B.Sc., MRTPI
The Borough Planning Officer, Ogwr Borough Council,
P.O. Box 4, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend,
Mid Glamorgan. CF31 1LX.

If telephoning, ring Bridgend (0656) 643643 and ask for the Planning (Development Control) Section. The Design Guide reference to quote is **DG.2**.